

Micha Serraf: Hope Is a Dry Colour

1-54 Contemporary
African Art Fair Location:
Harlem Parish
258 W 118th Street
New York, NY

VIP Preview:
May 19, 10am–7pm

Public Open Hours:
May 20, 12–8pm
May 21, 12–7pm
May 22, 12–5pm



Micha Serraf, *Tebah*, 2021, archival print on Hahnemühle Baryta paper, 20.2 × 23.6 in. (51.4 × 60.0 cm). Courtesy of the artist



Micha Serraf, *Beneath the concrete runs a river*, 2021, archival print on Hahnemühle Baryta paper, 15.75 × 23.6 in. (40.0 × 60.0 cm). Courtesy of the artist

The International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) announces *Hope Is a Dry Colour*, a selection of works by Micha Serraf as part of 1-54 New York 2022 Special Projects. Serraf is the recipient of the Ritzau Art Prize 2021, a prize that provides global visibility, professional development, and career enhancing residencies to promising visual artists from the African continent and of African descent in New York. In pursuit of memory, identity, and a place to call home, Zimbabwean artist Micha Serraf's uncanny photographs and handsewn tapestries are motivated by a drifting sense of nostalgia for personal and familial experiences.

The evocative presence of people of color is foregrounded throughout the project, symbolized by the ancestral totemic monoliths in the tapestries and by the anonymous figures of the photographs. The African landscapes depicted here are actually now inaccessible military bases, or restricted nature reserves owned and operated by families of colonial descent, but they are all places that would have been passed through freely by the artist's ancestors. Serraf feels caught between considerations of ancestral history and utopic optimism.

Most of the works were conceived while Serraf was in residence at ISCP in New York in 2021. The residency is a collaboration between Tauck Ritzau Innovative Philanthropy, International Studio & Curatorial Program, and 1-54. This special project, organized by ISCP, is generously supported by Tauck Ritzau Innovative Philanthropy.

About the artist

Micha Serraf is a photographer who explores the construction and deconstruction of identity, belonging, Blackness and masculinity through photography. The artist was born in Zimbabwe and fled to South Africa at a young age. This mobility prompted Serraf to observe his behavior and that of other foreign nationals regarding the safest shape to inhabit in new environments. This fluid presentation of self, and the ability to be malleable, are used to access forms of acceptance and camouflage. Through his practice, Serraf is interested in demonstrating the evolutionary, fluid, and emotional entanglements related to the purpose, interpretations, and performance of race and origin. Serraf has exhibited work at Foam, Amsterdam; Unseen Photo Fair, Amsterdam; C/O Berlin, among others.

About 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair

With annual editions in London, New York, and Marrakech, 1-54 is the leading international art fair dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora. Drawing reference to the 54 countries that constitute the African continent, 1-54 is a sustainable and dynamic platform that is engaged in contemporary dialogue and exchange. Initiated by Touria El Glaoui in 2013, April 2022 will mark 1-54's return to Paris following the success of its pop-up edition last year and continue the fair's 10th edition in London celebrations that will take place all year round.

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About the Ritzau Art Prize, a commitment to artists from Africa and African descent

The Ritzau Art Prize is funded by Colleen Ritzau Leth, Executive Director at Tauck Ritzau Innovative Philanthropy, a private family foundation that since 2017 has supported residencies for young, promising African artists at the International Studio & Curatorial Program in Brooklyn, New York. The Ritzau Art Prize builds on the foundation's commitment to providing artists from the continent with dynamic, immersive residencies that create visibility and advance their careers. TRIP has supported ISCP residencies for artists from the African continent including Younes Baba-Ali (2019), whose wry, subversive art often takes place in the public streets of North Africa; Nigerian artist Modupeola Fadugba (2018), whose affecting paintings and works on paper explore issues of identity representation and access; and Kiluanji Kia Henda (2017), a self-taught Angolan artist whose work was recently acquired by Tate Modern in London and the subject of a major solo show (2020) in Museo d'Arte Provincia di Nuoro in Italy, his first in Europe. Cameroonian painter and installation artist Adjani Okpu-Egbe (2020), whose raw, expressive art investigates African colonial history and political activism, was the inaugural Ritzau Art Prize recipient. Micha Serraf, whose uncanny photographs and hand-sewn tapestries are motivated by drifting nostalgia for personal and ancestral experiences, was the prize winner in 2021.

About ISCP:

Founded in 1994, ISCP is the fourth-largest visual arts residency program in the world and a global leader in the field of visual arts residency programs. ISCP supports the creative development of artists and curators and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries, ISCP organizes exhibitions, events, and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences. Over 1,800 artists and curators from more than 90 countries, including the United States have undertaken residencies at ISCP.