

Press Release | 19 March 2021

Artist in Residence: Sethembile Msezane



I Grow Tired of Telling You, They Are Already Here I, 2018. Courtesy the Artist/Sethembile Msezane

High-resolution images available for download: <https://bit.ly/3clOa8Z>

Multidisciplinary South African artist Sethembile Msezane comes to the University of East Anglia's Sainsbury Centre between March and May 2021, as an artist-in-residence and UEA Global Talent Fellow.

Msezane is well known for her embodiment of Chapungu, the Great Zimbabwe bird, during the removal of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town in 2015. Her artistic practice includes performance, photography, sculpture and film to explore ideas of spirituality, memory and African systems of knowledge.

Taking as its starting point an ivory snuff spoon in the Sainsbury Centre collection, Msezane's project will connect historic objects in UK museum collections and the tobacco ban during South Africa's recent COVID lockdowns. During her fellowship, Msezane will explore the role of snuff and museum objects as ways of connecting with ancestors.

Based predominantly at the Sainsbury Centre, Msezane will develop an intervention towards the end of her residency.

Developed together with UEA host researcher, Chris Wingfield, Associate Professor in the Arts of Africa, this fellowship is the first to be hosted collaboratively between the Sainsbury Centre and the Sainsbury Research Unit. It follows the successful residency of First Nation artist, Sonny Assu, in 2019.

Ghislaine Wood, Acting Director of the Sainsbury Centre said: “Msezane will be engaging with objects in the Sainsbury Centre collection and through her work, will challenge us to understand our collection and its objects in new ways.”

Steven Hooper, Director of the Sainsbury Research Unit said: “We are delighted to be working with a talented artist who will contribute to our collaborative work, bringing ideas and dialogue of mutual benefit.”

Sethembile Msezane said: “If the ghosts in the collection decide to speak, I will listen. If they wish for me to relay the message let it be a dope ass track.”

The fellowship is funded through the UEA Global Talent Research Fellowship:
uea.ac.uk/research/research-with-us/fellowships/global-challenges-research-fellowships

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Notes to Editors

Press Enquiries

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About Sethembile Msezane

Sethembile Msezane was born in 1991 in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. She lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa. She was awarded a Masters in Fine Arts in 2017 from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town, where she also completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2012.

Msezane has been a Mellon Artist Residency Fellow in partnership with Gallery of the University of Stellenbosch and the English Department (2020), a National Institute for Human Social Sciences Award nominee (2020) and an OkayAfrica 100 women 2018 Honoree. Msezane was a TEDGlobal Speaker in Arusha, Tanzania (2017).

Msezane’s work has been exhibited across South Africa and internationally and was included in *All Things Being Equal...*; the inaugural exhibition of the Zeitz MOCAA (Cape Town). Her work is in the collection at of Zeitz MOCAA, as well as the Iziko South African National Gallery (Cape Town), the Royal Ontario Museum (Canada), the University of Cape Town, the University of South Africa (UNISA), J.P Morgan (Johannesburg) and William Humphreys Art Gallery (Kimberley).

Recent solo presentations include *Speaking Through Walls*, Tyburn Gallery, London, England (2019); *All Things Being Equal...*, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa (2017) and *Kwasuka Sukela*, Gallery MoMo, Cape Town, South Africa (2017).

sethembile-msezane.com

Instagram: [sthemse](https://www.instagram.com/sthemse)

About the Sainsbury Centre

The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts is one of the most important public university art galleries in Britain. It was founded in 1973 at the University of East Anglia (UEA) with the support of one of the nation's great philanthropic families, Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury, who donated their extraordinary art collection which includes works dating from prehistory to the late 20th century from across the globe. A radical new building by Norman Foster was designed to house the collection and was his first public work.

The Sainsbury Centre holds one of the most impressive art collections outside of the national institutions. It includes a significant number of works by modern masters of European art such as Pablo Picasso, Edgar Degas, Alberto Giacometti, Henry Moore, Francis Bacon, Jacob Epstein, Jean Arp, Chaïm Soutine and Amedeo Modigliani. There are major holdings from Oceania, Africa, the Americas, Asia, the ancient Mediterranean cultures of Egypt, Greece and Rome, as well as Medieval Europe. Alongside these permanent collections, it hosts a range of exhibitions in the largest suite of temporary exhibitions galleries in Eastern England.

sainsburycentre.ac.uk

About the Sainsbury Research Unit

Based in the Sainsbury Centre, the Sainsbury Research Unit is a centre for the study of the arts of Africa, the Pacific region and the Americas. It was established in 1988 with the support of Robert and Lisa Sainsbury and forms part of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of East Anglia. The unit runs a successful masters programme in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, trains doctoral researchers and regularly hosts visiting researchers.

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