



Umsebenzi

Call for Price



Bheka was born in Thokoza, South Africa, a township located east of Johannesburg which means 'Place of Peace' in Zulu. Despite its alluring name, Thokoza has a dark history of violence.

Between 1991 and 1994, from Nelson Mandela's release to the first democratic election in South Africa, it is estimated that 3000 people were killed in Thokoza. The apartheid government is widely believed to have ignited the Black-on-Black violence. Today, Thokoza is plagued by a complex web of issues that trace back to the segregationist Apartheid-era laws, and is marked by shanty huts and sprawl with dusty unkempt streets associated with crime and poverty. However, Bheka believes that understanding a place is about engaging with its harsh realities and also facing the illusions one may

have about it. This body of work defies the preconceived notions of our overlooked and stigmatised neighbourhood to reveal the intricacy and loveliness of daily life in Thokoza. This is not an easy mission because Bheka shoots mainly at night. If the night embodies a world of dreams and possibilities it also epitomises danger and violence. His photographs snap and play with all these truths. Light and colour play a predominant role in his work, influencing both the outcome and his creative process on a conscious and subconscious level. The yellow-orange light and pitch-black shadows in his work refers back to the high-mask lights built in all the townships of the country during the apartheid. These lights were used by the police and the military to control all the comings and goings of people of colour who were not allowed to circulate freely. His work is a testimony to this violent past as well as a celebration of the intense beauty that can be found in the details of daily life in a township. Bheka reveals the poetic truth behind the complexities of any nation wounded and yet full of hope.

Edition Size	7
Medium	Inkjet Print on Ilford Fine Art Texture Silk Paper
Location	Johannesburg, South Africa
Height	80.00 cm
Width	100.00 cm
Artist	Sibusiso Bheka
Year	2018

