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## **Sabelo Mlangeni** **Honeymoon. The happily ever after?**

**8 February - 29 March 2025**

blank is pleased to present *Honeymoon. The happily ever after?*, a solo exhibition by Sabelo Mlangeni and his third with the gallery. Developed over the past five years, *Honeymoon. The happily ever after?* is the artist's latest body of work, inspired by a honeymoon trip to eThekweni (Durban) following the release of his wedding documentary series, *Isivumelwano*. This series interrogates the notion of 'happily ever after', and the problematics or shortcomings of such a concept within the context of the contemporary South African experience. Divided into multiple chapters, the series serves as a portrait of the tropical seaside city of eThekweni, captured by Mlangeni in all its glamour and decay. Despite being the country's third largest metropolis and its largest port of trade, eThekweni has been marred by years of political instability and neglect, environmental disaster and infrastructural collapse.

Mlangeni's photographs present an intimate account of eThekweni's multifaceted life: smiling portraits of musclebound men and women and pleasure-seeking beachgoers are juxtaposed with images of the fallout from two of the most violent events in recent South African history - the floods of 2022 and the riots of 2021 - both of which cost hundreds of lives and brought the city to its knees. A fifth chapter in the series documents the iconic architectural heritage of the South Beach area, languishing in a state of semi-disrepair. Exhibited for the first time, *Honeymoon. The happily ever after?* testifies to the broken promise of South Africa in the post-democratic era and the society that thrives in spite of it.

**Sabelo Mlangeni** (b.1980, Driefontein, South Africa) graduated in 2004 from the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg, where he currently lives and works. He has had numerous solo exhibitions to date, including most recently *Imvuselelo: The revival* at Cantor Arts Center in Stanford (2023) and *Ngiyabona Phambli* at the Institute of Ideas & Imagination in Paris (2023). His work has been widely exhibited both locally and internationally, including at The 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (2024), A4 Arts Foundation in Cape Town (2023), Haus der Kunst / The Walther Collection in Munich (2023), Para Site in Hong Kong (2022), Huis Marseille in Amsterdam (2022), K21 in Düsseldorf (2022), Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2021), Frestas Triennial of São Paulo (2021), Lagos Biennale (2019), Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (2019), Huis Marseille Museum of Photography (2019), Wits Art Museum (2018), Savvy Contemporary (2018), Kunsthal KAdE (2018), Museum Africa (2015), Liverpool Biennale (2013), Lubumbashi Biennale (2012), Lagos Photo Festival (2011), V&A Museum (2011), Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum (2010), and Johannesburg Art Gallery (2010). Mlangeni has been awarded several prizes including the Columbia University I&I fellowship and artist residency (Paris, 2022), Africa MediaWorks Photography Prize (London, 2018), POPCAP'16 Prize for Contemporary African Photography (2016), and the Tollman Award for Visual Arts (2009). He has also had residencies at A4 Arts Foundation (Cape Town, 2018), Centre de Art Waza (Lubumbashi, 2017), Walther Collection (Neu-Ulm, 2017), Akademie der Künste (Vienna, 2014), Akademie der Künste (Berlin, 2013) and Centre for Contemporary Art (Lagos, 2010). His work is represented in several institutional collections, including the Tate Modern, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Walther Collection, Art Institute of Chicago, KADIST, and CNAP - French national collections.

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