
Rhizome

13 July – 27 August 2023
Latuvu Gallery, Bages, France

Curator: Elfriede Dreyer

Artists: Susan Roux | Gwenneth Miller | Ingrid Coerlin | Mary-Jane Morris | Rosa Wessels |

Rhizome presents the artworks of five female artists with strong connections to Africa: Some were born elsewhere and immigrated to South Africa; some were born and live in South Africa; and one was born in South Africa and immigrated elsewhere. Irrespective of such connection, their identities are rooted both in ancient African nature, and in urban Africa with its expansive, cosmopolitan African cities. The lives of people living in Africa have always been characterised by nomadic movement induced by its tumultuous colonial and postcolonial histories of the last two centuries. Physical and social displacement has occurred and is still endemic, also racial discord; both of which often lead to hybridity in identity and a struggle for survival.

Volatility, instability and changeability in the human condition can be aptly described by the metaphor of the rhizome, which is defined as a subterranean growing stem which continuously sends out shoots and roots. Rhizomes have short internodes, growing roots from the bottom of the nodes and generating new upward-growing shoots. It is typically a bulb, tuber or succulent that has a shallow root system and transplants easily. In *A thousand plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (1987:7) coined the idea of the rhizomatic being, a type of identity that continues to exist in contradiction and predicament since it is always in process and transitional. Nomadic identity is grounded in fragmentation, complexity and multiplicity and characterises much of African identity today. The artworks on *Rhizome* deal with such a rhizomatic condition. The artists' work comment on how women experience their relationship to the African environment and how they construct their identities psycho-geographically.

Keywords: volatility, change, roots, movement, transition, complexity, hybridity.

Elfriede Dreyer, Pretoria, July 2023.