

FLUID IMAGINARIES

LYRENE KÜHN-BOTMA University of the Free State

In this exhibition, each artist discovered a conceptual underpinning for their work in the innate derivation of humans to construct systems – and to then playfully engage with and confront it. The title of this exhibition, *Fluid Imaginaries*, is drawn from the uniquely fluid characteristics of the playful and creative imagination and its ability to flow through, from, over, into, and to overwhelm previous and sometimes perceived constructs of space and site. The selected works in this exhibition each investigate how the intangible and ephemeral space that is an interaction, conversation, confrontation, or authentic experience, is negotiated in the neighbourhood of human playing. Humans have been in and at

play since prehistoric times. It is in the past and present neighbourhoods of cultures where humans have negotiated and constructed the social and personal systems and techniques we engage with.

Mine Kleynhans' work *Abacus for Emotional Transactions* is the springboard of this interrogation of systems of credence and exchange. A reflection on this interactive work leads to a further exploration into neighbouring relationships that are often negotiated through so called terms of engagement. These works intimately confront and investigate disparate experiences in our dwelling of being. Pre-existing and contested systems are questioned

and confronted by Bontle Tau, while traumatic exchanges are investigated by Adelheid von Maltitz. Janine Allen (The Brusher) provokes systems of exchange in academic thought and scholarship, while my own contribution challenges the authority of pre-existing and inherited dogmas. Johandi du Plessis-Kleynhans investigates the exchange in sites of dwelling, while Leon Witthuhn discovers – through statistic and interactive analysis – a mutually beneficial relationship between humans and objects.

Fluidity is intrinsically connected to shapeshifting, and this changing quality is central to this specific group of curated works that deal with neighbouring

relationships. Viewers are confronted by the pain and flaws in the previous and current proximities in life and of being human. We are asked to question human interaction and the rationalisation of the systems we willingly and unwillingly engage in. As a result, the selected artists' conceptual approaches can be interpreted as small acts of erasure, or soft knockings on structures that were previously perceived as unchangeable and static, to get to the point, to subvert, re-negotiate, recombine, or topple such elements.