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His Masters' Tools: Recent Work by Allan deSouza Opens Jan. 23 at the Fowler Museum at UCLA



His Masters' Tools: Recent Work by Allan deSouza—on view at the Fowler Museum from Jan. 23–May 29, 2011 explores the oeuvre of the San Francisco-based performance and photo-conceptual artist, Allan deSouza. The exhibition includes nearly thirty works that engage with the effects of Euro-American empire and the racial underpinnings of colonial power. The works on display run the gamut from large-scale, gorgeously colored and sensuous abstractions to modestly-sized photographic prints.

His Masters' Tools focuses on two new series created especially for this Fowler exhibition—*Rdctns* and *The Third Eye*—which explore issues of race in relation to western art history by reworking primitivist paintings by Paul Gauguin and Henri Rousseau and self-portraits by canonical artists such as Chuck Close, Pablo Picasso and Andy Warhol (left). Both series use digital manipulation to play with notions of artistic and technological mastery and to blur the boundaries between photography and painting.

The exhibition also draws on work from earlier series, *The Searchers* (2003), *The Lost Pictures* (2004/5), and *X.Man* (2009), to provide a conceptual and formal context for deSouza's newest experiments. *The Searchers*, a series of landscape photographs that displace deSouza's own anxieties and preoccupations onto those of a group of tourists on safari outside Nairobi, is the outcome of his efforts to reconnect with the country of his birth on a return trip to Kenya in 2002. The series also alludes to the colonial frontier and raises questions about the desire to view and encounter the cultural and ethnic other from a distance.

The Lost Pictures represents a related attempt to bridge a divide—this time a temporal one—as deSouza reworks his father's archive of 35mm slides in an effort to reconcile family histories with his own fragmented memories of the family's African past.

About the Artist

DeSouza, who is of South Asian descent, was born in Nairobi, Kenya in 1958. He lives in San Francisco, where he is professor of new genres at the San Francisco Art Institute. His work has been exhibited in the United States and internationally, including at the Walther Collection, New York; Pompidou Centre, Paris; 2008 Gwangju Biennale, Korea; 3rd Guangzhou Triennale, China; ev+a

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Festival, Ireland; and in recent solo exhibitions at the Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, IL; Talwar Gallery, New York; and Photoworks 1998-2008, at Talwar Gallery, Delhi. DeSouza's works have also been included in the large-scale traveling exhibitions *Looking Both Ways* (Museum for African Art, New York); *Africa Remix* (Museum Kunst Palast, Dusseldorf), and *Snap Judgments* (International Center for Photography, New York).

Additional Information

His Masters' Tools: Recent Work by Allan deSouza will be on view in the Fowler Museum's Goldenberg Galleria. This exhibition is curated by Gemma Rodrigues, the Fowler Museum's curator of African arts, and Steven Nelson, associate professor of African and African American art history at UCLA. Support for this exhibition has been provided by the Dean's Office, UCLA Humanities Division, and the University of California Humanities Research Institute.

The Fowler Museum at UCLA is one of the country's most respected institutions devoted to exploring the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA Arts, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$10 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310/825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu.

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