



PULSE PRIZE 2017 Awarded to Tony Gum for “Ode to She” Series

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by Pat Rogers

South African artist Tony Gum was awarded the 2017 PULSE PRIZE for her portrait series “Ode to She.” Presented in one of PULSE Miami Beach’s Solo Sections by Christopher Moller Gallery of South Africa, the PULSE PRIZE is given to an artist of distinction at the fair and selected by a panel of judges. Tony Gum receives a cash grant of \$2,500.

The jury selecting Tony Gum included Tommy Ralph Pace, Associate Director of the [Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami](#); Lolita Cros, independent curator; Kathryn Mikesell, founder of [Fountainhead Residency](#); Roya Sachs, Curator of [Lever House Art Collection](#) and Artistic Director of [Spring Place](#); and Piper Marshall, curator and PhD student at Columbia University.

The presentation at PULSE Miami Beach featured five portraits from her new series “Ode to She.” The work was made to commemorate Women’s Month 2017, held annually in August. It considers what it means to be a Xhosa woman in a changing world through narrative portraiture.

“Through this work, I want to re-iterate the power and representation of each woman, acknowledging all the women I have encountered throughout my journey,” explained Gum in a statement. “I needed it to be a ‘poem,’ a ‘song,’ ‘a letter to she’ ... and I don’t mean ‘SHE’ in the gender confined or prescriptive sense. I speak of SHE, the Being, who understands HE/SHE to be a FORCE, like nature, a person who has been beaten, battered but is still able to rise.”



“Xhosa Woman – Umfazi” by Tony Gum, 2017. Courtesy Christopher Moller Gallery and PULSE Miami Beach.



“Xhosa Woman – Intombi I” by Tony Gum, 2017. Courtesy Christopher Moller Gallery and PULSE Miami Beach.

Earlier this year, Christopher Moller Gallery exhibited Gum’s series in a solo show at the Cape Town

gallery. Her fashion sense (and her hip knowledge of Cape Town) caught the attention of Vogue, who featured a story on Gum in August 2015 with a headline that speculated the twenty-something year old might be “[the Coolest Girl in Cape Town](#).” Gum currently has over 44,000 followers [on Instagram](#) which includes her art and lifestyle images. Her Instagram mantra? “*(artist in learning). do not be easily swayed, think for yourself.*”



PULSE PRIZE Winner Tony Gum. Courtesy PULSE Miami Beach.

The PULSE Prize has been awarded annually since 2006, one year after PULSE Art Fair’s founding. This year’s fair was the first edition under Director Katelijne De Backer, whose previous art fair experience includes 12 years as Executive Director of The Armory Show, a Director of Exhibitor Relations at Scope and [launched Art Miami New York](#)’s inaugural edition in 2015 for the Art Miami LLC.

BASIC FACTS: PULSE MIAMI BEACH 2017 was held December 7 – 10, 2017 at Indian Beach Park, 4601 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33140. www.pulseartfair.com.

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