

THE FUTURE WHITE WOMEN OF AZANIA
Performance
ATHI-PATRA RUGA
Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2014, 7pm

Curator: To Whom It May Concern*
Art Directors: Dr. Bonaventure S.B. Ndikung, Dr. Elena Agudio
SAVVY Contemporary | Richardstraße 20 | 12043 Berlin-Neukölln



(c) Athi-Patra Ruga

Since his emergence as an artist, Athi-Patra Ruga has worked on creating alternative identities that sublimate marginalized experience into something strangely identifiable. As a part of his agile, defiant artistic practice, Ruga broadly explores the tropes of myth as a contemporary response to the post-apartheid era.

In **The Future White Women of Azania**, he addresses an idea intimately linked to the fiction of Azania of the apartheid era—the myth of the South-African decolonialised arcadia. Rejecting the long-established politicized interpretations underlying the ideology of a nation state, Ruga perceives of Azania as a region of tropical chromatic colours, populated with characters whose identities are in a state of constant transformation. In the centre of this panoply stands *The Future White Woman*, whose cosmetic metamorphosis in a cocoon of multi-coloured balloons appears as bitterly disturbing and abstruse, as something that questions the processes of troublesome cultural assimilation. It is here that the veracity of the myth of future arcadia is challenged, if not entirely rejected.

In this lavish self-portrait, Ruga places himself among other characters of Azania, playing the part of a clown or jester, and pushing himself to the niche of interpreter who is a cultural product of controlling forces. Ruga's Azania is a world of pompous, motley and confusing transformations. This myth is not a place of peaceful harmony, but rather an attempt to move over the traumas of the last 200 years: place them at the distance and contemplate the wounds outside the frame of usual personalized grief and subjective defensiveness.

* *To Whom It May Concern* is the SAVVY curatorial collective, which consists of Dr. Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, Dr. Elena Agudio and Saskia Köbschall.

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