

**\*\*Born in Mochudi, Botswana, multidisciplinary artist Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum has at times called various parts of Africa, Southeast Asia and the United States home. Motivated by her experiences in these diverse locales, Sunstrum explores how one's sense of identity develops within geographic and cultural contexts. Her investigation takes various forms, including large-scale installations, stop-motion films, performances, and works on paper.**

**\*\*The work of Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum (b. Mochudi, Botswana; lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa and Ontario, Canada) is grounded in drawing, but also encompasses installation, animation, and performance. Her practice is often rooted in autobiography, addressing the development of transnational identities, human connections, and cross-border rituals. Having lived in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the United States, Sunstrum developed an alter-ego, Asme, to convey her unfixed, evolving selfhood. The image of Asme is often superimposed with overlapping gestures as a means of suggesting compounded time, illustrating her universal, atemporal existence.**

**\*\*Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum's (b. 1980, Mochudi, Botswana) multidisciplinary practice encompasses drawing, painting, installation and animation. Her work alludes to mythology, geology**

and theories on the nature of the universe. Sunstrum's drawings take the form of narrative landscapes that appear simultaneously futuristic and ancient, shifting between representational and fantastical depictions of volcanic, subterranean, cosmological and precipitous landscapes.

\*\*Sunstrum layers visual information using pencil and oil paint to create imagery that exists as a rich "collection of citations – building a code into the meaning of the work". These citations include (post)-colonial portraiture as well as intertextual conversations with art historical works, such as Robert S. Duncanson's early 19th century romanticist landscape paintings. These references are further enriched by Sunstrum's experiences with nature and science, encompassing a developing journey of self-discovery:

"I like thinking of all forms of knowledge-seeking-systems – the so-called 'hard sciences' as well as cosmological, spiritual and mythical belief systems – in a non-hierarchical way and enjoy finding moments of coincidence between them. I think about contemporary theories in genetics; I think about ancestral archives; I think about shamanistic portals; I think about quantum physics; I think about divination; I think about bodies; I think about love. Being devoted to any one of these notions requires a certain leap of faith. I try to imagine how these leaps may allow us to confront hierarchies of power, or may generate new ways of gathering our story" – Sunstrum.

WIKI

**\*\*Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum is a visual artist. Her practice includes drawing, painting, installation, and animation. Her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions,**

**\*\*Sunstrum has had a number of solo exhibitions including: There are Mechanisms in Place at Michaelis School of Fine Art (2018: Cape Town); Cape Town Art Fair 2018 (2018: Cape Town); Earth and Everything at Artpace (2018: San Antonio TX); Omphalos at the Interlochen Centre for the Arts (2016: Interlochen MI); Polyhedra at Tiwani Contemporary (2016: London); Beacon at VANSA, (2015: Johannesburg) and pamelaphatsimosunstrum at Conduit Gallery (2010: Dallas TX).**

### Bio/Style, etc.

Patricia Phatsimo Sunstrum is a mid-career visual artist whose multidisciplinary practice encompasses painting, drawing, stop-motion animation, installation art, and performance. Born in Mochudi, Botswana, Sunstrum grew up in southern Africa and southeast Asia, and as a young adult came to the United States to pursue her college education.

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undergraduate studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where she earned a BA degree in International Studies. For her graduate studies, she attended Mt. Royal School of Art at the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, receiving her MFA degree in 2007.

Sunstrum currently lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa, and Ontario, Canada.

Sunstrum's work has been featured globally in numerous exhibitions and performances, including "I have withheld much more than I have written," Galerie Lelong, New York (2022); Greater Toronto Art 2021, MOCA Toronto, Canada (2021); "Born in Flames: Feminist Futures," Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York

(2021); “WITNESS: Afro Perspectives from the Jorge M. Pérez Collection,” El Espacio 23, Miami, Florida (2021); “Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum: All my seven faces,” Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio (2019); Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa (2019); The Wiels, Brussels, Belgium (2019); Kunsthaus Zürich (2019); The Nest, The Hague (2019); Michaelis School for the Arts at the University of Cape Town (2018); Artpace, San Antonio, Texas (2018); Phillips Museum of Arts, Lancaster (2018); Interlochen Centre for the Arts, Interlochen (2016); NMMU Bird Street Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth (2016); Tiwani Contemporary, London (2016); VANSA, Johannesburg (2015); Brundyn Gallery, Cape Town (2014); FRAC Pays de Loire, France (2013); Havana Biennial (2012); and MoCADA, New York (2011).

In 2017, Sunstrum was appointed assistant professor in the Department of Visual Art & Art History of York University, Toronto Canada. She is currently represented by Galerie Lelong, Paris and New York City, and Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and London.

The proposed painting, *Front Room*, features the Sunstrum’s alter-ego Asme (“as me”) seated centrally in a domestic interior accompanied by three other women. Two of the women hold Asme’s hands, offering comfort and assurance, while the third appears distracted, attending to her personal appearance. Sunstrum’s composition references a similar scene in the 1866 painting *La Fiancée Hésitante (The Hesitant Fiancée)* by 19th-century French Salon painter Auguste Toulmouche (1829-1895). In contrast to Toulmouche’s painting, in which a bride-to-be reveals momentary doubt, here Asme expresses barely restrained rage, an acute reaction to her realization of powerlessness over social and cultural expectations that frequently regulate women’s

roles, behavior, or appearance. One may assume Asme will not be mollified.

The proposed mixed media painting by Pamela Sunstrum—Front Room—is a major example of the artist’s fully developed practice, one that examines themes of transnational identity, cross-border rituals, human relationships, and hierarchies of power within a loosely autobiographical, narrative framework.

human connections, and cross-border rituals

As such, it would be an important addition to the museum’s still modest holdings of socially-engaged art by prominent female African American artists, an ongoing collecting goal for department curators.