

26 September 2016

Letter of recommendation for Marieke Kruger

Re: The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Residency (Bellagio, Italy).

Dear Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio,

I was honored to be witness to the development of artist Marieke Kruger over a period of 7 years as curator at The Gallery at Grande Provence in Franschhoek (2009-2013) and Equus Gallery at Cavalli Estate near Stellenbosch (2014-2016). Both are Award Winning Contemporary Galleries in the South African Winelands Region where Marieke is situated and works from her studio in close proximity.

Marieke's work was included in a number of group exhibitions at both galleries over the years and I presented her Solo show in 2014. Apart from her visually powerful work and excellent, constant work ethic, her systematic character, pleasant demeanor and excellent verbal and written command of the English language result in outstanding exhibition outcomes. Her field of research and visual representation inspire an in-depth understanding and connection with the challenges that affect disadvantaged communities in South Africa, with specific attention to Winelands communities.

In the last 5 years, her focus intensified to include subjects/themes from the Victor Verster Prison in Paarl (where Nelson Mandela spent the last years of his incarceration). Marieke's contributions in developing specific rehabilitation programs involving her skill as a fine artists for the purpose of ultimately uplifting whole communities that are desperately disrupted by high crime-levels, have had a profound influence not only on her work and the lives of her subjects and their communities, but also on the viewers of her work, determined by the overwhelming response and local and international interest in her work.

Marieke's work developed to monumental scale to effectively convey her intensified thematic exploration and powerful depictions of her subjects and research.

In 2014, her solo exhibition at Equus Gallery successfully captured all the elements of her academic research, dedicated work ethic, outstanding medium manipulation, professional conduct and excellent visual communication ability. The incredible body of visually thought provoking work and the processes involved were accurately described by Prof. Elizabeth Gunter (Chair of the Department Fine Art) from Stellenbosch University during the opening address and I attached the address for the purpose of insightful perusal.

Marieke Kruger's subsequent success as a finalist for the Celeste Art Prize in Italy in 2015 confirmed her extraordinary abilities and her continued devoted productivity and commitment to her field of study sets her apart as a force to be reckoned with. I believe that international exposure and encouragement for this artist will develop her skill to have further far reaching outcomes and awareness as a result to inspire positive changes in disadvantages communities within a country riddled with socio-political and socio-economic challenges.

Kindly contact me for any further information at carina.durandt@gmail.com or +27 (0)84 412 4107.

Best regards,

Carina du Randt (Curator)

Focus of particular Rockefeller Bellagio Residency: For mid-career artists, writers etc. Their focus is on transformation of the community/concern for humanity as well as issues related to resilience. You could maybe refer to their website for more information if necessary through the Africa Centre.

The particular letter of recommendation needs to specifically refer to the following aspects:

- competence and capabilities of applicant in regards to her proposed project
- merit and substance of the proposed project and its possible contribution to the particular field of research
- applicant's ability and inclination to engage with a multidisciplinary community of scholars, policy makers and artists at the Bellagio Centre, where most conversations take place in English
- and lastly, how the referee became acquainted with the applicant

Lastly I might add, that my main reasons for wanting to apply towards this particular residency is as follow:

- I would like to reconnect with particular Italian painters/drawers whose work I have been introduced to in Italy (in November during my selection as finalist in the Celeste Art prize in Italy)and possibly incorporate some aspects in their work (particularly thinking of particular large scale paintings and selected drawings of the Italian artist Alessandro Papetti and the South African artist Johann Louw' s recent solo exhibition of drawings entitled "Gestalt'es") . (The Italian sculptor, Medardo Rosso is also a source of inspiration)
- If selected, I would be going in the beginning stages of my project and the residency could possibly assist towards creative production and the effective formulation of further creative ideas and thoughts surrounding this project in its particular serene environment.

- My study would be particularly related to core issues of concern of this particular residency programme which is also focussed on issues regarding “transformation” and “resilience”.
- If selected, all costs would be covered by the Residency programme.

My intention is that my proposed PhD study will be a natural development from the body of drawings which I wish to incorporate in my next upcoming solo exhibition of drawings entitled “Carcerated spaces” (anticipating the sublime through suggestive drawing trace) that will be hosted at the Reservoir gallery, Oliewenhuis museum in July 2017.