

Press Release

Defiant Visions

Curated by **Marie Meyerding**

On view:

June 1 - July 29, 2023

Tues. - Sat., 11am - 6pm

Opening Reception: **June 1, 6 - 8pm EST**

Location:

291 Church Street, NYC, and 3D Online

Featuring work by:

**Mabel Cetu - Jansje Wissema - Lesley Lawson - Zubeida Vallie - Mavis Mtandeki -
Deborah May - Georgina Karvellas**

Defiant Visions showcases women photographers' resistance to the apartheid regime through the lenses of their cameras. Apartheid was a system of institutionalized discrimination against people of color that existed in South Africa between 1948 and 1994. During decades of oppression, these women took photographs to expose not only racist but also gender-discriminatory social, economic and political structures.

This exhibition explores the work of practitioners employing black and white imagery to focus on the women surrounding them. Mabel Cetu's appearance in the 1950s magazine *Zonk!* sheds light on her own training and her portrayals of modern womanhood. Jansje Wissema depicted women's ordinary lives in the extraordinary site of District Six before and after its destruction by the government during the early 1970s. As members of the photographic collective Afrapix, Zubeida Vallie and Lesley Lawson captured women's grief and struggle at the height of eruptive violence during the 1980s, while Mavis Mtandeki recorded township life and the changing women's political organizations during the country's democratic transition in the early 1990s. The exhibition also presents the short documentary *You Have Struck A Rock* (1981), edited by Deborah May and Georgina Karvellas to document the famous 1956 Women's March and its aftermath.

Alongside photographic prints and film, magazines and photobooks will be on display, highlighting the work of women photographers on life under apartheid.

Defiant Visions is an apexart NYC Open Call Exhibition. For more information on the exhibition and related events, email visit apexart.org/meyerding.php or email ash.hagerstrand@apexart.org.

Marie Meyerding is a PhD candidate at the Department of African Art History at Freie Universität Berlin. Her research explores the representation of women in the field of photography in South Africa. She holds an MA with Distinction in the History of Art from the Courtauld Institute of Art.

apexart's program supporters past and present include the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, the Kettering Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Buhl Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Spencer Brownstone, the Kenneth A. Cowin Foundation, Epstein Teicher Philanthropies, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., William Talbott Hillman Foundation/Affirmation Arts Fund, the Fifth Floor Foundation, The Puffin Foundation, the Trust for Mutual Understanding, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, public funds from Creative Engagement, supported by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and administered by LMCC, funds from NYSCA Electronic Media/Film in Partnership with Wave Farm: Media Arts Assistance Fund, with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, as well as the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the New York State Legislature.

#DefiantVisions

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Mavis Mtandeki, *Jean Benjamin at the United Women's Congress General Council Meeting at a Church in Bellville, 1989.*