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Mikhael Subotzky & Patrick Waterhouse: Ponte City (Walther Collection)



Synopsis

Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse worked at Ponte City, the iconic Johannesburg apartment building which is Africa's tallest residential skyscraper, for more than six years. They photographed the residents and documented the building-every door, the view from every window, the image on every television screen. This remarkable body of images is presented here in counterpoint with an extensive archive of found material and historical documents. The visual story is integrated with a sustained sequence of essays and documentary texts. In the essays, some of South Africa's leading scholars and writers explore Ponte City's unique place in Johannesburg and in the imagination of its citizens. What emerges is a complex portrait of a place shaped by contending projections, a single, unavoidable building seen as refuge and monstrosity, dreamland and dystopia, a lightning rod for a society's hopes and fears, and always a beacon to navigate by. This long-term project obtained the Discovery Award at Les Rencontres d'Arles in 2011.

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