



ARTIST

[Peter] Max Kandhola

TITLE

blue, black, red sky (triptych 1- 3), from the series 'No Birds Do Sing in Blue Sky' (series of 6 triptychs)

DATE

1996

DIMENSIONS

16 in H x 20 in W

MEDIUM

Gelatin Silver Print, Gelatin Silver Print, Gelatin Silver Print

IMAGE NOTES

3 Unique Gelatin Silver Prints, Selenium Toned, Additional Selective Toning

CATALOGUE NUMBER

1998.102, 1998.103 and 1998.104

CURRENT LOCATION

Peter Max Kandhola Portfolio

[PETER] MAX KANDHOLA

BORN

1964

GENDER

Male

CITIZENSHIP

United Kingdom

CULTURAL HERITAGE

British-Indian-Sikh

LIGHT WORK RELATIONSHIP

Artist-in-Residence, 1996
Main Gallery, 2002
Artist-in-Residence, 2002
Lecturer, 2002

LIGHT WORK PUBLICATIONS

Contact Sheet 92
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BIOGRAPHY

Max Kandhola is a British photographer and a practicing lecturer in photography at Nottingham Trent University School of Art and Design. He participated in Light Work's Artist-in-Residence program for the second time in April 2002.

circa 2002

ESSAYS

We represent Jesus in icons at home and at church as a European Gentleman with blue eyes and blonde hair. All of which suggests that the people in the New Testament world were closer to Europe and European values than Africa. Similarly, we use a colour symbolism in our theology which makes whiteness the colour of purity and all things dark the colour of sin and destruction. Robert

Beckford Throughout history, religious imagery, particularly the representation of Christ, has both inspired and incited responses from artists and critics alike. In 2001, artist Renee Cox squared off with former New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani over her photograph *Yo Mama's Last Supper*, which was presented in the Brooklyn Museum's *Committed to the Image* exhibition. In Cox's reinterpretation of DaVinci's *Last Supper*, the artist is featured nude at the center of the table in the role of Christ flanked by black apostles, with the exception of one white model in the role of Judas Iscariot. In her work, Cox addresses the stereotypes and misconceptions of blacks represented in the history of art, and in this work, critiques the role of women in the Catholic church. The depiction of Christ as a nude African-American woman was more than Giuliani could stomach. Whether it was political grandstanding, or an expression of his own religious convictions, he made a failed attempt to revoke the museum's funding, as well as an attempt to form a decency task force to monitor New York City's museums. The representation of Christ has provoked a certain degree of controversy throughout the history of photography. In 1898, American photographer and philanthropist F. Holland Day produced nearly 250 negatives of sacred subjects depicting the events around the crucifixion. The artist took great pains at making these works as authentic as possible. The last, and most well known, was a series of self-portraits entitled *The Seven Words*. While Day was not considered to be a religious man, it is believed that he saw the image of the crucified Christ as a metaphor for the suffering artist. It is also widely assumed that Day was a homosexual, which adds to the interpretation of his intentions. Day's images were initially met with criticism from religious leaders, but were eventually praised. Although British artist Max Kandhola was raised in the Sikh religion, he recognizes the political power behind the iconographic symbols of the Christian church and its veneration of the image of the crucified Christ. In 1997, nearly 100 years after Day created *The Seven Words*, Kandhola produced his own version of the work using a black model. In the first version of this work he manipulated the final output of the images, printing the image as a negative and shifting the color. During Kandhola's residency, he revisited this work to create the version reproduced here. Of this series Kandhola writes, 'The visual interpretation is obvious and deliberate in its subject, and in dealing with identity, religion, and the political agenda. F Holland Day's photographs are self-portraits, its significance is such for its time that his sexuality is projected through this icon, as a statement to his gender. The implications are challenging the notions of the identity and its morale situation for its time.' Kandhola continues, 'The photographs that I have made, again challenge the idea of the individual and its positioning within society. The Christ figure is black, with dreads, and a crown of thorns, which blend into the hair.' There are multiple layers of interpretation when considering this work. The historical significance of Day's original photographs, his own sexuality, the rise of the black theology movement in Britain in the late twentieth century, and in Kandhola's reinterpretation of work in relation to the representation of individuals of African descent, or more specifically non-European descent, in what Kandhola refers to as 'the dilution of history through literature, and paintings within Western culture.' The difficulty of overcoming nearly two millenniums of social conditioning is daunting. One of the cornerstones of the Christian church is the belief in the humanity of Christ, and while it would be preferable for many Christians to embrace a mental image of a Christ that appears as they do, such a narrow association to a specific race only serves to diminish the teachings on which the church is founded. Gary Hesse 2003 1. Robert Beckford. 1995 'Towards Post-Colonial, Post-Modern, Black Churches in Britain.' Paper presented at the Consultation between the World Council of Churches and African and African-Caribbean Church Leaders in Britain. Leeds, England. Max Kandhola lives in Birmingham, England, and participated in Light Work's Artist-in-Residence program for the second time in April 2002. *Train of Thought: Serial Images from the Light Work Collection* *Train of Thought* presented the work of five photographers from the Light Work Collection, including Hollis Frampton, Arnold Gassan, Peter Max Kandhola, Judy Natal, and Aaron Siskind. Several photographs from each artist were exhibited with the intention of providing viewers, especially students, an opportunity to follow an artist through many different stages and approaches to one idea or subject and the chance to witness and consider their creative process through multiple images. Through the generosity of Robert and Joyce Menschel, Light Work recently received a donation of 150 photographs, including fifteen silver gelatin prints by preeminent photographer and educator Aaron Siskind (1903–1991). The images by Siskind included in this exhibition are strong examples of his interest in exploring the formal and abstracted views of urban decay—peeling paint, torn signs, and bits of graffiti. Like the other artists in this exhibition Siskind's work documented and ordered the world he encountered around him, with a unique ability to show us the profound beauty of the ordinary. Siskind viewed the photograph as a unique physical object in its own right, in contrast to many images today that exist only virtually. He stated, "When I make a photograph I want it to be an altogether new object, complete and self-contained, whose basic condition is order —(unlike the world of events and actions whose permanent condition is change and disorder)." *Train of Thought* included a variety of "altogether new objects," as each of the artists included can be said to have uniquely documented and ordered their world. Artist Judy Natal combined images made over a ten-year period while traveling the world to create her portfolio, *The Hermetic Alphabet*, a series of twenty-six silver gelatin prints. Natal used the alphabet as a structure on which she could organize and connect a series of seemingly random, ambiguous images. As the work moves us through the alphabet from A to Z, Natal investigates language, landscape, and travel. Arnold Gassan, a widely recognized authority on photographic processes as well as the history of photography, created the series *Elegy* in dedication to his mentor and teacher Minor White. The rich, elegant surfaces and tonal range of Gassan's images are created using the labor-intensive, antiquated process of photogravure. His images show familiar rural scenes of clotheslines, picket fences, landscapes, and portraits of friends and family. The exquisite care he takes in printing points to his belief that, "the photograph often leaves a residue of un-verbalized meaning." *No Birds Do Sing in Blue Sky*, a collection of eighteen unique silver gelatin prints by Peter Max Kandhola, continues his exploration of death and grief, an idea he has approached with several different photographic mediums over the years. In this series the artist scratches and distresses his negatives as a visual metaphor. His purpose for manipulating the negative is described in his statement that, "images come and go, they flicker unsolved, and time builds itself around them. We invent explanations which also remain unsolved, but we also retain the meaning of episodes in our past life, a museum of images." *ADSVMVS ABSVMVS* is a portfolio of chromogenic prints by Hollis Frampton, an artist and educator who worked in both still photography and the avant-garde film movement known as "New America Cinema," which flourished in the 1960s and 1970s. He used his camera to record and order his unique collection of plant and animal specimens found in his travels, including road kill and delicacies from an Asian grocery. Each color photograph is paired by text of the object's Latin name, history, and mythology. Although his texts borrow the language and model of scientific classification, his version is quirky, personal, and humorous. His array of oddities and the stories of their discovery relay an artist's creative process of trolling his neighborhood for inspiration. Photographers and artists often seek an underlying structure or pattern in the world around them. As hundreds of students walked through this exhibition, some carrying cameras and a photo assignment, they were able to see how five different artists went fishing for inspiration and made, as Siskind said, "order out of chaos." Mary Lee Hodgens