



DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL ART 2024

3rd Year BA Visual Art End of Year Exhibition

Lemé Arends - Tamryn Dunkerley - Reinhard Giezing
Jude Hide - Shui Hoppenstein - Manqoba Mabaso
Arthur Mahlangu - Bongwiwe Malepe - Ntsako Maluleke
Michaela Maritz - Lesedi Modisane - Lemogang Moitaletsi
Thashen Moodley - Lesege Nhlapo - Mpendulo Nkabinde
Keonah Nyembe - Cameron-Lee Olivier - Luncendo Phillip
Hannah Saunders - Leela Stein - Anele Turdon
Alyssa van Niekerk - Cara van Zyl



Lemé Arends



Mass Trauma on Trial

“The colonised man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people and they behave in the same violent way” (Fanon 1963:52). My research analyses how the systemic factors of apartheid, can create an environment in which oppression and violence is normalised and how these breeds “culprits”. Structural legacies such as the historical trauma of the collective, come to manifest in different ways and persist, and even though it may sometimes be subtle or invisible - the consequences are vast. As a result of this history of mass crimes and its generational implications, as Benjamin and Fourie argue, victims frequently become perpetrators themselves. The unresolved trauma leading to violence eventually takes hold and becomes ingrained, causing this intergenerational transmission of trauma. This evidence together with my own ongoing investigation of communities in the South and communities I grew up in, as well as my family, led to my chosen research. A media statement released by the South African Police Service on the 22 June 2024, addressed issues about an increase in gang-related violence in neighbourhoods such as Eldorado Park, Sophiatown, Westbury, Riverlea, South Hills (where I currently reside) and other areas (Statement 2024:sp). The statement goes on to make mention of intervention and extra deployments in these said areas, further perpetuating violence but in an attempt to curb it.





Tamryn Dunkerley



The Harder a Wife Works, The Cuter she Looks

My artistic journey began in direct response to my mother's fervent expectation for me to marry—a notion that felt misplaced for a young woman of twenty-two who had no desire to conform to traditional roles. I have always resisted the domestic stereotype society often imposes upon women. I find the stereotypical expectations of previous generations to be suffocating. This journey sparked a deep inquiry into the complexities of female identity, challenging the entrenched social narratives of domesticity. In my work, I explore the concept of "domesticity," which, according to various definitions, embodies the traditional roles assigned to women as wives and mothers. This theme resonates strongly throughout my exhibitions and writings, particularly in light of references such as "The Female Gender Being Performed" by Liang Fei Chen, which highlights the repetitive performance of gender norms. I support my claims by referring to texts such as Laura Elkin's "Art Monsters, Unruly Bodies in Feminist Art" and Betty Friedan's seminal work "The Feminine Mystique," which dissect the expectations placed on women. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines structural social expectations as a collective belief system that distorts society's perception of women's capabilities. These prescribed roles are deeply ingrained; an idea that women exist to give birth, nurture, and settle into the confines of domestic life.





Reinhard Giezing



The Three Dimensional Line

Drawing a line on a piece of paper classifies it as a drawing.

Crumpling or folding this piece of paper makes it a sculpture.

Is the sculpture made less of a drawing? or is the uncrumpled piece of drawn-on paper less of a sculpture?

Within the strict categories, we have placed on art, a different style or new subject matter can only expand till it has reached the limit of its medium.

What would a world be like where these categories, like sculpture and drawing fade away? Who is to stop a drawing from becoming a sculpture or a framed sculpture from being a drawing?

Language makes this type of freedom difficult because words have associations and associations categorise. The solution to this problem is the spectrum of art that is possible: the process an idea takes to become a reality. Small steps that change a drawing into a sculpture and a sculpture into a drawing to the point where they become the same thing.





Jude Hide



Art Materiality: Exploring Contemporary Art's Role

This body of work compiles a series of sociopolitical commentaries that function as conceptual “time capsules,” preserving pivotal national and international events from the past year. Each work in this collection delves into pressing socio-political issues, narratives, and commentaries, exposing disparities that demand reflection and dialogue. Through these themes, I aim to examine and question key moments in recent history, presenting an introspective and retrospective view on contemporary challenges. A central focus of my work from a more philosophical and metaphysical-narrative is an investigation into the “material necessity” of art. I explore whether art’s significance relies on its physical embodiment or if its meaning can exist independently of this. To pursue this question, I use experimental methods that push beyond traditional boundaries, employing unconventional techniques that challenge and expand our perception of art’s material and conceptual properties. Through these explorations, I aim to deconstruct “artistic value” itself, exploring it by looking at consequent material association with art, and the role physical embodiment plays within the interpretation of the work at hand. By blending atypical forms with theoretical insights, I engage with art’s philosophical and physical dimensions, creating dialogues that redefine its role and purpose.





You Too Shall Age One Day

My body of work investigates old age and the youth, focusing on different fears of ageing and the apathy and ignorance of the young, who feel they will never age. The intention behind my practice is to convey to the youth that they too shall age one day, and should be sensitive to the needs of their elders. Just as one would not wish to be abandoned to their ailing mind and body as they grow older, so too should one take care not to neglect and overlook the elderly within their own life. Old age can be a waiting room for death, a place without agency where living people are set aside as if they are already deceased.

Shui Hoppenstein



Within these artworks, elements of flow are incorporated to convey the flow of ages and passing of time, and the body's ubiquitous mortality. Nuanced close looks at familial relationships are a focus of the artworks, as well as how ageing is imprinted upon the flesh, and how one's legacy becomes forgotten or overridden.

Video work can be viewed at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DHMkeX-79dTJ6py0HrE490YJ1e4FFIrE/view?usp=drive_link





Manqoba Mabaso



Unyawo, Inkanyamba, Mntungwa, Ingwenya

My work is about the religious experiences I have had in my life where I changed religion/cultural belief to another. There came a point in my life where my whole family stopped believing in the Zulu religion of my ancestors and we transformed to only believing in Christianity. After worshipping Christianity we converted back to traditional Zulu cultural belief systems- but without neglecting Christianity, merging both religions.

My work specifically focuses on navigating those different identities, bringing them into the light of a specific phase of who I was when I identified solely as Zulu then who I was as a Christian to who I am now that I have merged into both. Each piece that I make speaks to a specific phase of my life: when I had no identity of my own, progressing towards a change for the better, yet realising that something was missing.

My sculptures and drawings focus on rebuilding connections with my lost Zulu roots.





Arthur Mahlangu



I Draw What I See

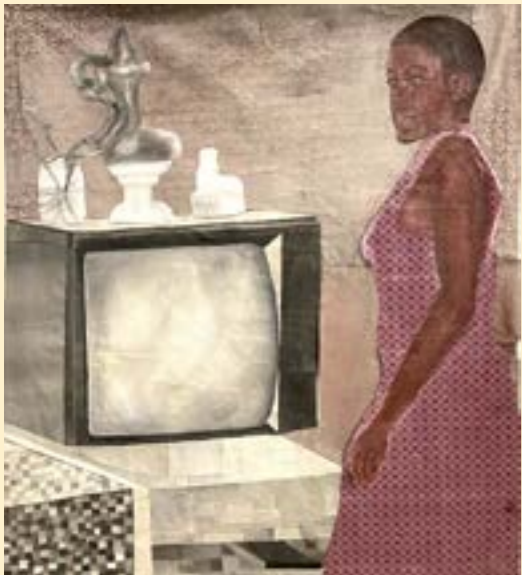
As an artist, I believe that our stories, our experiences, and our lives matter. The stories deserve to be told, to be celebrated and to be honoured. This is why I choose to capture and portray the true reality of my life in my township. I choose to present the township as it is, through my constructions. My art does not sugarcoat the struggles of my people, nor does it diminish the beauty and resilience of our community.

My art does not romanticise township life. It is about revealing the harsh truths and exposing the realities of crime, poverty, and despair. I want to challenge the false narratives that paint a sanitized picture of our lives, and instead offer a new and honest glimpse into the realities of life in a township, I use materials that symbolise the scars and effects of living in my township. I capture the struggles and resilience of it's residents especially the youth through the act of burning the surface I am working on to create the image. This process of burning is physically destructive and leaves behind scars and marks that serve as a metaphor for the violence and injustice inflicted upon township communities. By burning the surface that I am working on, I am scarring the material with the memory of struggle and resilience.





Bongwiwe Malepe

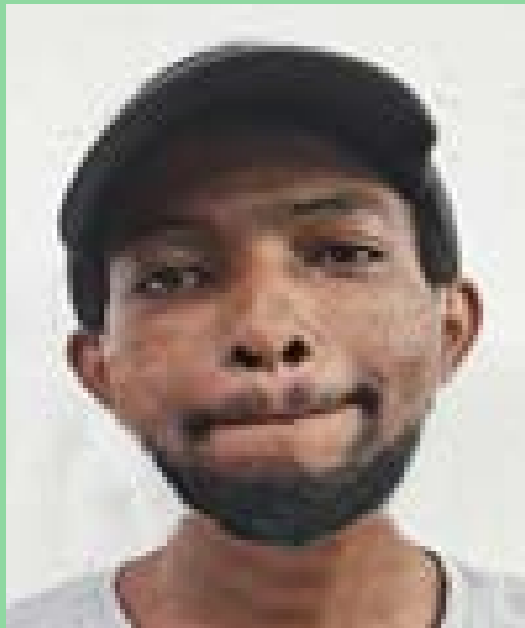


Morero wa Bomma

Born and raised by a strong and independent single mother, she has influenced how I incorporate my collages and think carefully about my surfaces through her storytelling and how she used her past experiences to help me learn some life lessons and guide my path as a young lady. In my artworks I explore themes of memory, matriarchal and family archives, and cultural identity, passing on her stories and teachings to the next generation.

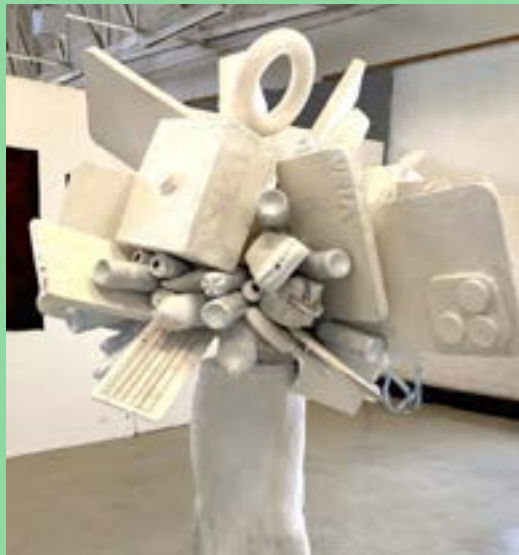
My mother's stories inspire the narratives I create in my artworks. I would usually sit in the kitchen with her whilst she was cooking, and she would tell me stories of how it feels being the head of the family and how she overcame the societal struggles she faced growing up in the apartheid era as a woman. In my paintings I make use of old family albums which I found in a small and untidy storeroom. The albums demonstrate my mom's stories since they were taken back from the end of the 1980s and beyond. In my works I carefully highlight the spaces in which the photographs were taken and carefully decide on how I place each within the format. Collage helps me give value and importance to my mom's stories together with the photographs. The collaging gives life to her stories and demonstrates nostalgia.





Ntsako Maluleke

My work and the thought process behind it comes from how I make sense of the world around me. Being someone who has grown up and lives in Johannesburg, I notice differences in priorities and values systems of the people who occupy the city. Johannesburg is a city that attracts people from all corners of the country and the world. The city in itself is a catalyst for people to move around and put themselves through situations that they hope to get something out of. What I have observed and what is most important to me and this body of work, is the distinction between “what am I doing?” vs. “who am I doing this for?” in people. A lot of people come from conditions or situations that they never want to experience again (rightly so). For some, that influences them to become more interested in the finer things in life. These “finer things”, for a lot of people, is an indication that they are far away from what/who they used to be, and will forever chase those things to keep them away from their previous lives. For others, they just want a better life for themselves in extreme labour and ordeals for their loved ones. Although these are two polar ends of the spectrum, I believe that everyone is somewhere in between, influenced by socio-economic or environmental factors. My body of work is a reflection of this and the fact that we should always be aware of the factors that influence our lives.





Michaela Maritz

Connecting Disconnection

In this work I explore materiality in the form of hair, spice, and fabric in relation to Islam. Using Daniel Miller's idea of materiality, I look at how these everyday objects that go unnoticed hold deeper meanings and are important in expressing identity, culture, and religious values in Islamic contexts. For example, hair is not just for appearance but is linked a lot to ideas of spiritual and modest practice, I use hair to depict these figures performing their daily routines such as prayer, however majority of it is just the figure that is made up of hair not so much the clothes as it is the figures themselves that experience. Similarly, spice does not only carry rich flavours but also cultural heritage and has connections to sacred and daily rituals.

Fabric – in the form of religious clothing – has a role in expressing devotion and connecting people with Islamic traditions. My hair drawings consist of fabrics that have been collaged mostly using neutral colours with significantly brighter green as green has its own significance in Islam. By using and studying these materials, I show how they go beyond their practical use to shape social and cultural experiences in meaningful ways, and as a metaphor for unvarnished honesty.





Lesedi Modisane



Dineo

This exhibition marks a profound journey through the spiritual and material realms, as I explore the complex relationship between identity, culture, and the environment. Through my drawings and paintings, I offer an immersive experience that invites viewers to reflect on the impact of modernity, environmental degradation, and ancestral connection. In the landscape drawings of the Knysna Forest I offer a poignant meditation on the deforestation of a sacred land that was once home to many elephants, a totem animal of my clan. The drawings question the destruction of these habitats, asking, "Why are the people killing me?" This statement, embedded in the artwork, links my own spiritual identity to the elephant, suggesting that the loss of natural habitats and cultural identities are intertwined struggles. The viewer is confronted with the harsh reality of ecological loss and the erasure of cultural narratives in the face of modern development. The works emphasize the need for a more harmonious relationship between humanity and the natural world. In the paintings I shift focus to the spiritual world, investigating the role of ancestral deities and their influence on the material world. Initially, the paintings explored the intrusion of modern culture into spiritually sacred spaces, but my understanding evolves to consider the ways in which these spiritual beings, particularly ancestors, are believed to have a profound impact on our daily lives.





Lemogang Moitaletsi



Otherness

In my drawings and paintings I criticise traditional research techniques for failing to adequately capture the complexity and breadth of marginalised populations' experiences.

I suggest an approach that seeks a more flexible and inclusive depiction while embracing the complexities of identity. The investigation of "otherness" which can take many different forms in a world that is becoming more interconnected and globalised, whether it be racial, cultural, or ideological, is at the heart of my work.

In order to get the audience to think about their own identities and the systems of inclusion and exclusion in society, I create a mirror that reflects the intricacies of modern belonging by using this feeling of estrangement as a structural and thematic device.





Thashen Moodley



Both Perspectives

My focus in this body of work is on my domestic space and is divided into two perspectives. The drawings are how I see my family and the paintings are how I believe my family perceives me, or at least how it feels. The paintings are oil & acrylic on board and feature a variety of colours and a grimy texture as opposed to more refined and smooth textures in the drawings. I wanted to create this conversation between the two halves with figures in the painting being very loose except for myself as I am the focus. In the drawings, my loved ones are more detailed and more delicately drawn to show this sort of calm innocent view. I know myself best and what I display concerns them of my well-being. On the contrary my view of my family is more idealistic as I see a serenity when I see them doing various activities but this is not the case as that is just what they show. We all have our respective hurdles in life but we don't always let each other know what we are going through for the sake of a functioning household. I love my family and I wish things were all well but life is not dandy. A household is supposed to be a space where one can recuperate and unwind which we as a family do, but sometimes we experience things which taint this atmosphere leading to a disconnect - in this case a disconnect between myself and my family.





Lesego Nhlapo



The Otherness Always Arrives

I am in the process of discovering my voice and what I want to express or bring to people's attention. The idea of this ongoing sense of 'otherness' has strong psychological roots. Through the creation of animal-human hybrid creatures, I aim to externalise and challenge the unseen factors that influence human connection and belonging by giving these feelings a physical embodiment. Through my art practice, I show these figures that struggle to fit in, having no sense of belonging. By showcasing these hybrid forms, I want the audience to access my own experience of 'otherness' and face the unease that accompanies feeling alienated. However, the ambiguity of these creatures leaves room for the viewer's own interpretation, creating a shared but individual emotional sensation of alienation. These beings, these bodies, have a strangeness to them; something that is unusual and shows their 'feeling out of place'. I make these drawings that have a human body with animal features, to show not necessarily being different but the feeling thereof. The textures of internal conflict are reflected in the materials I use, whether they are smooth charcoal or rough graphite. I can convert vague feelings into tangible, visible things due to the feel and weight of each medium. In this way, my drawings and paintings allow me to explore the marginal regions of life, identity and emotional experience.



Investigating Psychological Torture

This body of work explores contemporary power structures that continue to perpetuate Western dominance by obliterating or dismissing values, knowledge systems, and ways of living of the collective individuals. It contrasts ways of being in the world and on Earth by spotlighting the objective and epistemic violence enforced by intangible / systemic barriers present within modern civilisation. It extends by spotlighting the segregation of relatives and the violation of the relationship between humans, land, and language at the cost of social advancement (industrialisation, politics, economics, education, and religion). It recognises and honours the forbidden which is deemed outdated indigenous knowledge systems.

My passion for reflecting on this owes much to my upbringing in the absence of my parents due to urbanization, resulting in me spending my days with my grandmother, sharing tales, hymns, and melodies with the means of embedding a dogma that later got devalued by institutionalised education as demanded by western modernity. In my etchings, acts of blocking out and exposing and the action of the acid become metaphors for defining systemic violence and control.



Mpendulo Nkabinde





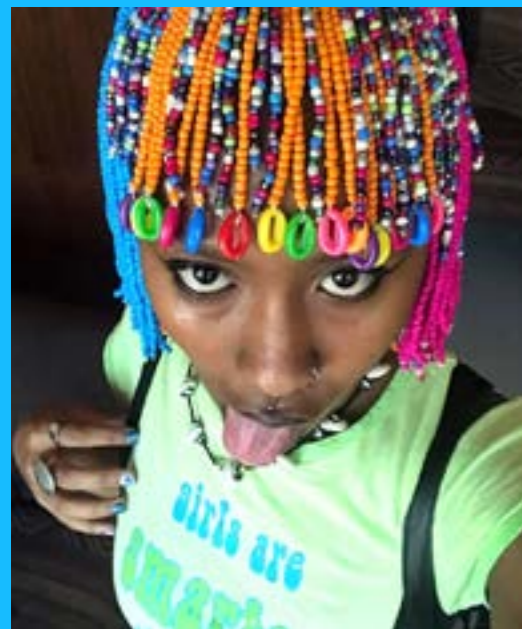
Keonah Nyembe



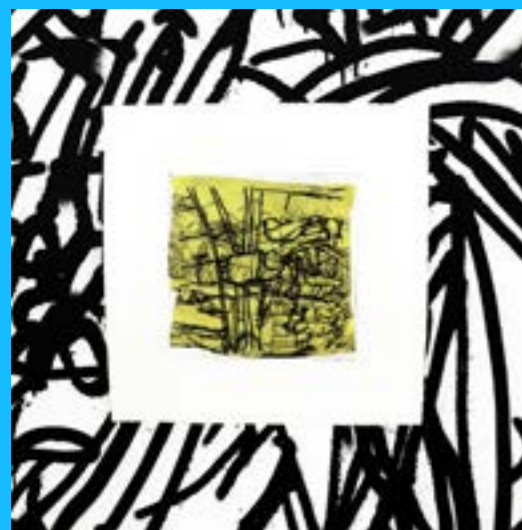
***In the Night Garden:
A Multi-Sensory Installation Through the Lens of
the Anthropocene***

My artistic practice is rooted in a deep fascination with the interplay between the natural and the artificial, the human and the non-human. Through my work, I explore the potential of art to challenge traditional notions of identity and reality. My installation is a manifestation of this exploration, inviting viewers to immerse themselves in a fantastical world where the boundaries between the organic and artificial are blurred. Inspired by the figure of *Awet*, a mythical being embodying the spirit of the garden, I aim to create a space where nature reclaims its dominance. By utilising unconventional materials such as plastic and glue, and combining them with natural elements such as aloe leaves, I challenge traditional notions of art and materials. This approach not only reimagines the potential of these materials but also serves as a metaphor for the resilience of nature, even in the face of human-induced degradation. Through the use of vibrant colours, organic forms, and immersive experiences, I invite viewers to recognise their relationship with the natural world and to acknowledge the urgent need for a more sustainable future. My processes include printmaking, sculpture and installation being particularly drawn to the tactile and sensory qualities found in the diverse materials I use.





Cameron-Lee Olivier



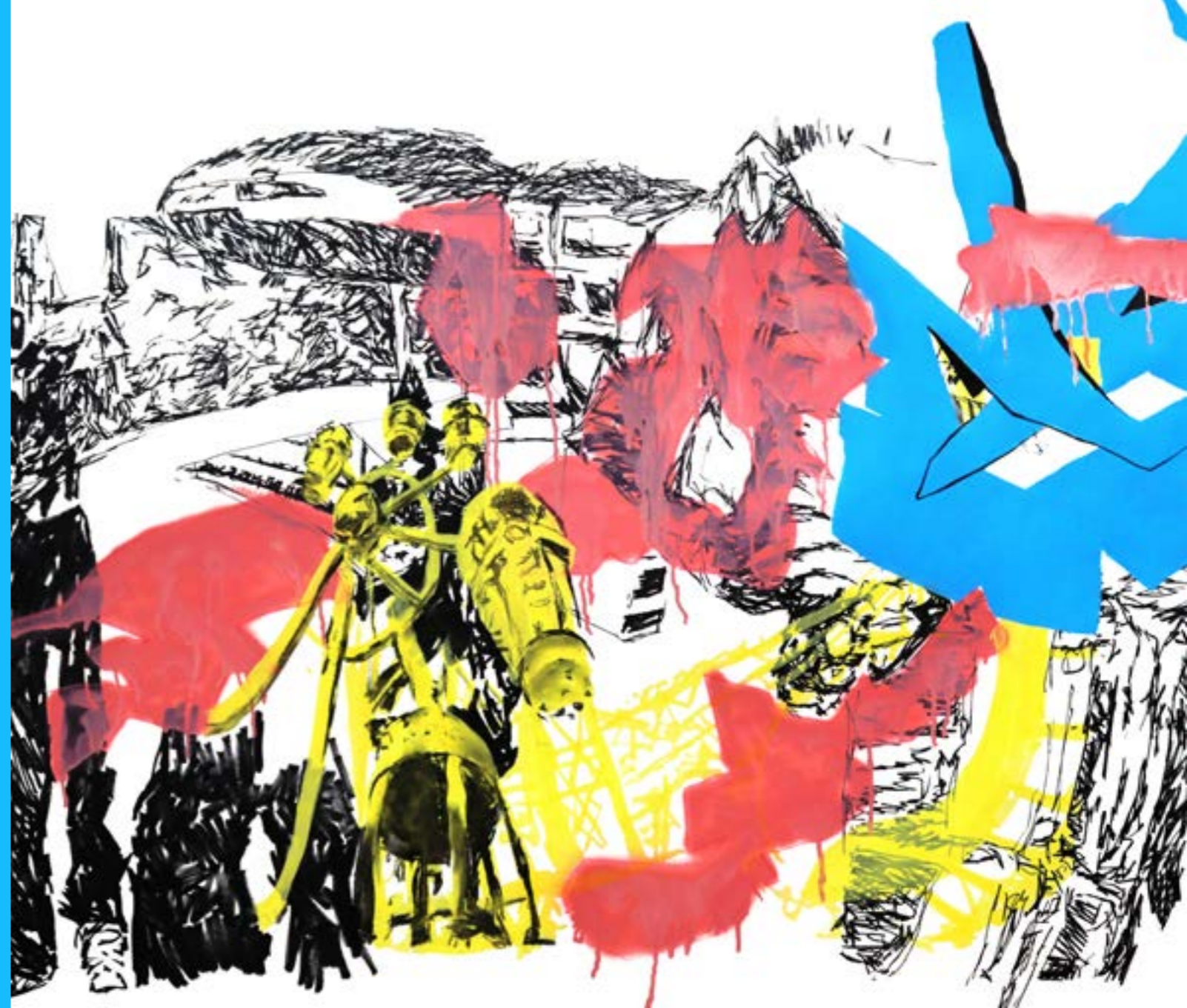
Gold Thief City

My body of work in this exhibition draws inspiration from my earlier work *These Dream-Paved Streets* (2023) that takes viewers through a reimagined Johannesburg, where the city's heartbeat resonates in layers.

In my exhibition, streets, skyscrapers, and narratives intertwine revealing the complex relationships between Jozi's promises and its often unpredictable realities.

Here, each piece reinterprets familiar spaces, transforming them into sites of vibrant energy. The work merges the thrill of discovery with a playful lens, inviting viewers to find wonder in the city's most mundane corners.

Infused with the spontaneity of linework and cartoon-inspired aesthetics, *Gold Thief City* turns Johannesburg into a dynamic, almost surreal landscape, where memory and myth meld, and everyday scenes pulse with imagination. Each piece becomes an open-ended narrative, capturing Johannesburg's allure as a place where possibility and reality meet, echoing the city's layered, ever-shifting essence.





Luncendo Phillip

Ndizamela Wena Mntanam

Ndizamela Wena Mntanam is a song my granny sang to me during her early-morning can collecting adventures. Her beautiful smile, framed by bright teeth, always accompanied the heartfelt lyrics that translate to "I am trying for you, my child."

This body of work is my response to a traumatic incident from earlier this year, with each piece reflecting my psychological state throughout the journey. I'm grateful to say that I am healing at my own pace, and image-making has become a lifeline for me. I am actively working to break the generational curses that have plagued my family, a challenging yet transformative process. Through this work, I've gained profound insights into myself.

My interests lie in psychology, particularly how childhood trauma affects learning and information processing. I am deeply passionate about early childhood development, as it serves as the foundation for nurturing greatness. My art stands as a powerful voice for those who are seldom heard, and through vivid storytelling, I hope to inspire conversations about respect, empathy, and fair treatment for domestic workers, and giving visibility to marginalised communities.





Hannah Saunders



Flesh and Ties – Unravelling Family and Self

My art functions as a form of therapy, due to this my work explores past trauma that affected me while I was growing up. I deal with notions of feeling like an 'other' in my family as well as being molested when I was three but only realising what it was over a decade later and how that created a disconnect and subsequently, my rejection of myself and my body. The experience of making my work is far more important to me as the many hours taken to produce the work becomes cathartic and has lessened the effect these issues had on me in the past. Everyone who views this work will experience and interpret it differently based on their personal life experiences the same way my experience was different in making the work.

No one will see this body of work the same way as another individual, much like we all experience a life unique to ourselves. With every layer of ink or paint and the minutes of drying between them, I have to sit and stare at the uncomfortable picture of myself and confront all the thoughts and feelings that arise when I see what my body looks like. For me, the intimacy experienced while making the work is comparable to the intimacy of a session with a psychologist.





Leela Stein

Stains of Silence

22, 21, 20, 19, 18, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10, 9,

8 years old

This body of work (video, photography and drawing) follows my story of sexual abuse by my grandfather and the nuances that come with that ...





Anele Turdon

Liminal Loop

In my body of work, I confront head-on the pervasive cycle of violence and oppression against women. Through provocative mixed media, I disrupt societal complacency and challenge the normalisation of gender-based violence.

Inspired by my family's history and the banality of evil theory, I create unsettling works that disturb and awaken. Using ink and thinners, I deliberately distort women's faces, symbolizing the emotional and physical injuries inflicted during abuse. These distorted forms serve as metaphors for the corrosive effects of mistreatment on the inner self.

By rendering the invisible visible, I aim to expose the insidious dynamics of abuse, normalise conversations around women's experiences, and create an urgent need for change.

Liminal Loops is an act of rebellion, refusing to silence violence and oppression. As an artist, I seek to amplify marginalised voices, honour survivors' strength and resilience, and break the cycles of violence.





Alyssa van Niekerk



Mourning Lamb, Beautiful Violence and the Abject

The concept of the abject refers to a state of being devoid of pride or dignity, often characterised by experiencing something profoundly negative—something vile, unsettling, or other. I explore the idea of the abject in my work through painting and drawing. Abjection encompasses not only the unclean or ill but also elements that disrupt identity, order, and societal systems (Kristeva 1980:4).

In my exploration, I examine the connection between the abject nature of meat, the act of slaughter, and how these themes relate to female experiences. The context of slaughter brings a visceral quality to this connection: the act of killing a sheep—its innocence and softness betrayed by inevitable violence—parallels how female bodies often endure scrutiny, control, and devaluation. Just as the lamb becomes abject in its moment of death, the female body is made abject under the burden of cultural expectations and exploitation. This process of 'slaughtering' transcends the physical; it is also psychological, reflecting a continuous stripping away of agency and wholeness. Additionally, I incorporate khaki material in my work to establish a more personal connection to my identity, my culture, and my individual experiences.





Cara van Zyl



Surveillance

My practice delves into the existential experience of observation and the fluid boundaries between the viewer and the viewed. Through sculpture, drawing and print-making, I explore how we navigate self-perception within contemporary spaces, where both subtle and overt forms of surveillance influence identity. Drawing on theories of phenomenology and absurdism, my work examines the uncanny presence of everyday figures—such as pigeons—within public and private realms, positioning them as symbolic intermediaries who observe without entanglement, blurring the line between participant and observer. In my work, I probe into the concept of the ‘fourth wall’ and its role in existential inquiry. By situating pigeons as silent witnesses to human behaviour, I invite viewers to confront their own awareness of being watched, considering how these innocuous animals, both ignored and omnipresent, shift our sense of reality. This lens of existential viewership interrogates authenticity and selfhood, pushing viewers to question what it means to ‘see’ and ‘be seen’. My works aim to engage viewers on a visceral level, encouraging them to confront the layers of observation that shape our everyday interactions and personal identities. In embracing absurdism, my pieces reflect the gravity of these invisible boundaries, asking us to consider the silent dynamics that play into our sense of self in an increasingly monitored world.



**Department of Visual Art
University of Johannesburg
Bunting Road Campus
Auckland Park
Johannesburg**

**PO Box 524
Auckland Park
Johanneburg
2006**

T: +27 11 5591117

F: +27 11 5591136

E: eldam@uj.ac.za

W: <https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/fada/visual-art>

