

UMFANEKISO UYOPHA IKUNGU/AN IMAGE OOZES MIST

PHUMULANI NTULI

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Umfanekiso Uyopha Inkungu | An Image Oozes Mist

An Image Oozes Mist brings together Phumulani Ntuli's most recent big-scale mixed-media collages on canvas, a series of works on paper produced during 2023 with artist Kim-Lee Loggenberg through a collaboration with the David Krut Workshop, and his latest stop-motion animation films. The convergence of these multiple techniques—from developing his own mixed-media collage language to printing with a traditional, manually operated etching press and working within the digital realm of artificial intelligence—is characteristic of Ntuli's versatile practice. Continuing his longstanding enquiry into processes of image-making, more recently the artist has been reflecting on the front end and back end of coding; the front end being the resulting image (what we see on our screens) and the back end the code (which is normally inaccessible or unreadable to most of us). Hence, An Image Oozes Mist is

about an image covered in mystery; an image which isn't accessible to the onlooker in its full complexity.

It is precisely through a close engagement with visual material and the history of the media in South Africa that Ntuli's work provides an elaborate reading of the country's socio-political past and present. As is the case for many authoritarian regimes, South Africa looks back on a complex history of censorship and media control during the decades of apartheid. For instance, due to the government's fear that it could be a threat to their power, television was only introduced as late as 1976, the same year as the Soweto uprising.

Throughout the first years, only one channel existed with airtime divided between English and Afrikaans. Language, then as today, continues to be an index for the local (and global) distribution of power, as Ntuli's film essay Synthetic Fibers (2024) reminds us. The video features a 3D-generated human who reads out loud the steps

that have to be taken to make clay casts which will help in the production of silicon rollers with repeatable patterns used for the first time in the mixed-media collages shown in the exhibition. The software receives the instructions in Zulu, but the available open-source AI voice-over accents do not offer the option of a native Zulu speaker. Ntuli recalls how he tried to trick the software into forcing an African accent—nevertheless, the accentuated English pronunciation turns the reading into a caricature.

Throughout the preparations for this exhibition, Ntuli started an enquiry into how open-source coding frameworks could be related to his artistic practice, particularly in terms of what could be equivalent to reusable samples in his collage-making technique. This led him to work on his first own 3D silicone rollers, with patterns such as parallel lines, waves and dots which he could then transfer onto

his mixed-media collages on canvas. This process expands his artistic language beyond traditional collage-making methods which tend to use found materials, such as the colourful wrapping paper which has been a recurring element in his works. Conceptually, it reflects his preoccupation with thinking further about the transparency of image-making processes. In the same way that open-source software are back-end data sets made available to a larger community, Ntuli's silicone rollers are a series of experimental samples that transfer patterns onto the canvas, standing for the possible formation of what we could call a data set around his collage-making practice.

Curatorial Text: Sofia Steinvorth



Amanzi Azwiwa Ngobhoko, 2024. Mixed collage, acrylic and transfer on canvas, 1750mmX1520mmX50mm.



State Auction, 2024, Mixed collage, acrylic and transfer on canvas, 1800mmX1540mmX50mm.



Temporal monument, 2024. Mixed collage, acrylic and transfer on canvas. 1750mmX1520mmX50mm



The landlord, 2024. Mixed collage, acrylic and transfer on canvas. 1750mmX1520mmX50mm.



Broadcast, 2024. Mixed collage acrylic and transfer on canvas. 920mmX750mmX50mm.



Injobo Ilengene Umsinsila, 2024. Mixed collage acrylic and transfer on canvas. 920mmX750mmX50mm.



Iqhawe Namuhla, Isitha Kusasa, 2024. Mixed collage acrylic and transfer on canvas. 920mmX750mmX50mm.



Recent Graduate, 2024. Mixed collage acrylic and transfer on canvas. 920mmX750mmX50mm.



Iphuzu Elibomvu Nobumhlophe filter I, 2024. Mixed media collage, acrylic and transfer on canvas. 500mmX500mmX50mm.



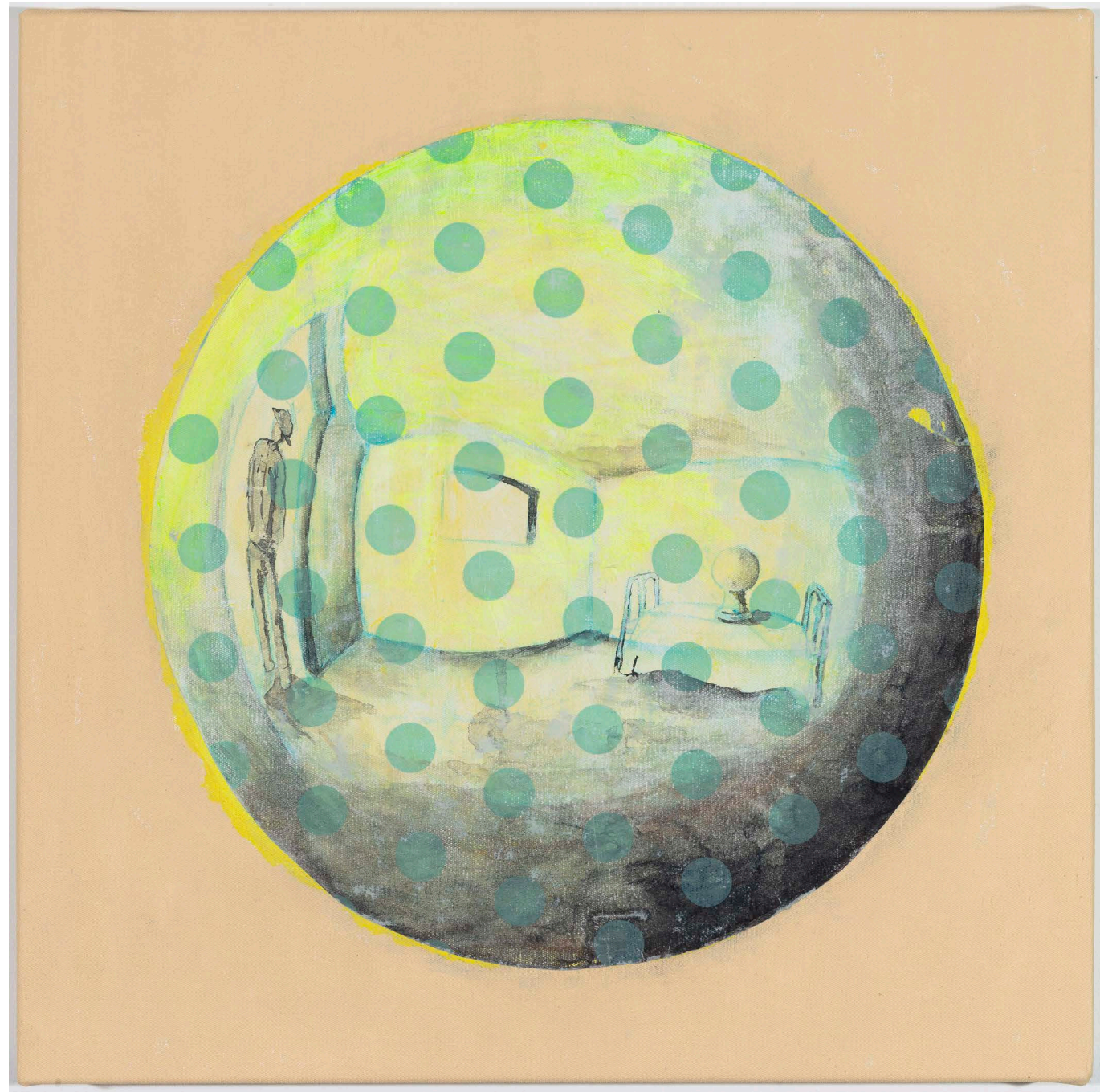
Iphuzu Elibomvu Nobumhloshana filter I, 2024. Mixed collage, acrylic and transfer on canvas. 500mmX500mmX50mm.



Iphuzu Elibomvu_filter 2024_1. Mixed media collage, acrylic and transfer on canvas, 500mmX500mmX50mm.



Iphuzu Eliphuzi Filter I, 2024. Mixed media collage, acrylic and transfer on canvas. 500mmX500mmX50 mm.



Iphuzu Olusatshani Filter I, 2024. Mixed media collage, acrylic and transfer on canvas. 500mmX500mmX50mm.



Iphuzu Olusatshani Nemivimbo filter I, 2024. Mixed media collage, acrylic and transfer on canvas. 500mmX500mmX50mm.