



EXHIBITION

Phumulani Ntuli: A navigation guide to Kwanqingshe

The Bag Factory, Johannesburg, South Africa
29 May 2021 - 23 Jun 2021



Phumulani Ntuli, *Swaving through portholes (detail)*, 2021, Mixed media collage on canvas © Phumulani Ntuli

In an intimate exploration of the journey from boyhood into manhood, Phumulani is influenced by the idea of reflection, in an analysis of not only the self, but how we come to define ourselves through our personal and collective stories. Working on canvas and with collage, the real and the fantastic are blended because he believes that we cannot find the self without delving into both our realities and our imaginations.

Human beings are then, a beautiful, complex tapestry of these kinds of contradictions – and only in blending seemingly opposite ideas can there be any harmony with, or the revealing of the self. Since the self is a mass of realities and fantasies that all seem to exist at the same time, each time we observe ourselves, we influence a different definition of who we are.

Phumulani explores this reflection and observation by embracing reality, fantasy, science fiction, a dystopian past, and a hopeful Black future.

His work is vivid, sharp, and colourful, yet it evokes a fluid, otherworldly quality – like a dream in which you are not quite sure if it is a nightmare or not.

Referring to Kwanqingshe as a figurative end of the road, he also raises questions about the current political status quo and the nuances around the pandemic in relation to a fictional geography, where every option has been exhausted.

In getting anywhere, he feels there can be no progress towards understanding the self or our collective futurity without embracing the darkness that has influenced and even created us.

Loosening the boundaries between the real and the occult, he offers a glimpse at who we are and how we have come to define ourselves, while evoking a playful sense of wonder and still understanding the need to observe and embrace reality.

Phumulani Ntuli, born in 1986, obtained a Bachelor of Fine Art degree in 2012 from the University of Johannesburg, where he majored in sculpture. He holds a Masters of Fine Arts – Arts Public Sphere from (ECAV) Ecole Cantonale D'Art du Valais in Sierre-Switzerland and was awarded Prix-excellence for his ongoing research project *Permutations of an event* centred around notions of archives and surveillance. His work merges the ambit of artistic research, sculpture, video installations and performative practices. He consistently engages diverse publics/audiences and attempts to make visible history's gaps/breaks/silences/pauses and remnants.

Curated by **Ruzy Rusike**, this is the artist's third solo exhibition.

Viewers will also have the opportunity to meet the artist and curator to discuss the exhibition further at a walkabout on 12 June 2021, 11am at the Bag Factory.

www.bagfactoryart.org.za (<http://www.bagfactoryart.org.za/a-navigation-guide-to-kwanqingetshe/>)