



*a line  
beyond*

Curated by Olga Speakes

An ArtReach co-production

## A LINE BEYOND

Paul Klee is famously quoted as saying that 'a drawing is simply a line going for a walk'. This exhibition explores, using Klee's expression, on what kind of a walk, or perhaps a flight or even a transformative journey, contemporary artists take drawing or line, as a particular way of mark-making, today. Their engagement may involve any number of moves, surprising, precocious, subversive, and unbounded by drawing's history but strengthened by its heritage.

Historically, the skill and the art of drawing have been seen and practiced as the core of art education and practice. But like many other traditions, the practice of drawing has been transformed in the way it is perceived, theorised, understood, and applied. Drawing has long enjoyed appreciation in its own right; its significance is widely recognised beyond that of a precursor for painting or other art forms. Many artists see it as an important part of their studio process, their form of thinking in the studio; but some take it even further, pushing at the traditional boundaries of drawing with the use of often unexpected, new media, going beyond the two-dimensional surface into spaces and forms that are as unpredictable as they are subversive. In the words of Cornelia H. Butler and Catherine de Zegher, in many instances, their work may be characterised by the non-representational use of the line and by their interest in the formal and relational aspects of drawing, like linearity and surface tension\*, mark-absence, and presence. Yet, in others instances, they may explore its conceptual potential or its somatic quality.

This exhibition does not claim to offer a concise overview or to map direction for contemporary drawing in southern Africa, rather it is an opportunity to take another careful look at the practice of drawing and its most intrinsic gesture and key component – the line – through the work of eleven artists working in the region today. Each one of them offers something new and different in the way they engage this essential practice.

Zyma Amien and Shamilla Aasha may still work on a two-dimensional surface but, utilising the material potential of their chosen media (ink pen and thread-based stitching respectively), they attempt to start socially-engaged conversations that they see as conceptually imbedded in their materials. Pierre Fouché and Igshaan Adams shape their lines into three-dimensional sculptural installations that carry human stories and intervene into our spaces with their poetic force and unsettling beauty. Jared Ginsburg uses the line as material in his studio laboratory resulting in spatial drawings of quieting power. Bronwyn Katz creates her own poetry on the walls by distilling her found materials to reveal their essential qualities and baring their stories. She gives them the power to shape the spaces they occupy.

Bonolo Kavula and Amanda Mushate allow their process to take them on journeys that explore their inner worlds and map out routes, which are as entangled as they are irreverent. They don't shy away from subversive collisions between the literal and the abstract in their work. For Cathy Abraham, the practice of drawing a continuous line for 11 minutes every day for eleven consecutive days offers an opportunity for bodily meditation. Often working with the significance of numbers, she uses Eleven as the number of Infinity in the material world and explores the performative nature of line-making and its impact on physiological and emotional states.

Performance and video may not seem like likely participants in the conversation about line and drawing, but for Donna Kukama and Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum drawing is an important part of their multimedia practices. It is manifest, through the use of the line, either as the embodiment of their thinking processes or as the acknowledgment and residue of their performative practices, meant to disrupt spaces whether physical or institutional. Apart from offering an opportunity to trace the history of Donna Kukama's vision, her performance, captured on video in 2009, introduces the unsettling power of estrangement and world-shifting into the exhibition space.

This group exhibition aims to go beyond drawing and to trace, where the line, so intrinsic to drawing historically, is taking contemporary artists today. It highlights different media used by artists, extending the application of the line in unexpected and transgressive ways. Like in a line of poetry, we follow and we may be guided by its form, but the beauty and wisdom of a poem cannot be reduced to its structure, however intricate; the whole is so much more than its parts. Similarly, works of art included in this exhibition are not reducible to their underlying structures or media, but the selection is meant to invite the viewer to recognise the role that the line, taken for a walk and then allowed to veer off the beaten track, plays in opening up new possibilities in contemporary art practice.

**Olga Speakes**  
Curator

\*C. H. Butler and C. de Zegher (eds.), 2010. *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*. New York: Museum of Modern Art.



**Igshaan Adams**

*65 Bloem street, 2021 (detail)*

Stainless steel and memory wire, silver and gold link chain, plastic, glass, bone, metal, stone beads, metal charms (knives, disks and ornamental), fringe, found chandelier and paint.

Approx. 320 cm x 160 cm x 170 cm

Image courtesy of the artist and blank projects, Cape Town.

R 820 000 incl. VAT

In *65 Bloem street*, Adams continues to reflect on the memories, histories, and life stories that are embedded in the materiality of his chosen media, and which he sculpts into delicately beautiful spatial interventions. Part of the body of work *Kicking Dust*, it takes inspiration from rieldans, an indigenous southern African dance traditions. The dust cloud-like formations embody the history-filled ephemerality of dust, its particles composed of shed remnants of our bodies and environments, the literal residue of our past. The eruptive coiling lines of wire that make up the installation reflect the intensity of the powerful disruptive rhythmic kicking of the hot, dry earth - the essential element of rieldans, the holder of indigenous cultural knowledge. Tracing the intricate pathways ungraspable in their multitude, we are drawn into the world that offers glimpses of intense inner battles along with moments of serenity and subtle joy.



**Pierre Fouché**

*The Last Time You Let Me Do This To You*, 2016

Acrylic rope and binding wire

78 cm x 44 cm x 30 cm

Image courtesy of the artist and Whatiftheworld gallery, Cape Town

R 86 250 incl. VAT

Known for his multimedia works and, particularly, for putting into conversation traditional and transgressive uses of lacemaking and macramé techniques, Fouché's understanding of line and its potential is enforced through his lacemaking expertise. In *The Last Time You Let Me Do This To You* (2016) the artist blends the worlds of drawing, sculpture, and macramé into a three-dimensional work that is sexually suggestive and alludes to the power struggles and hierarchies that define not just artistic genres and practices but human relationships. The exquisite use of the line forces the viewer to confront the allure of the transgressive and the ephemerality of Fouché chosen media.



**Bonolo Kavula**

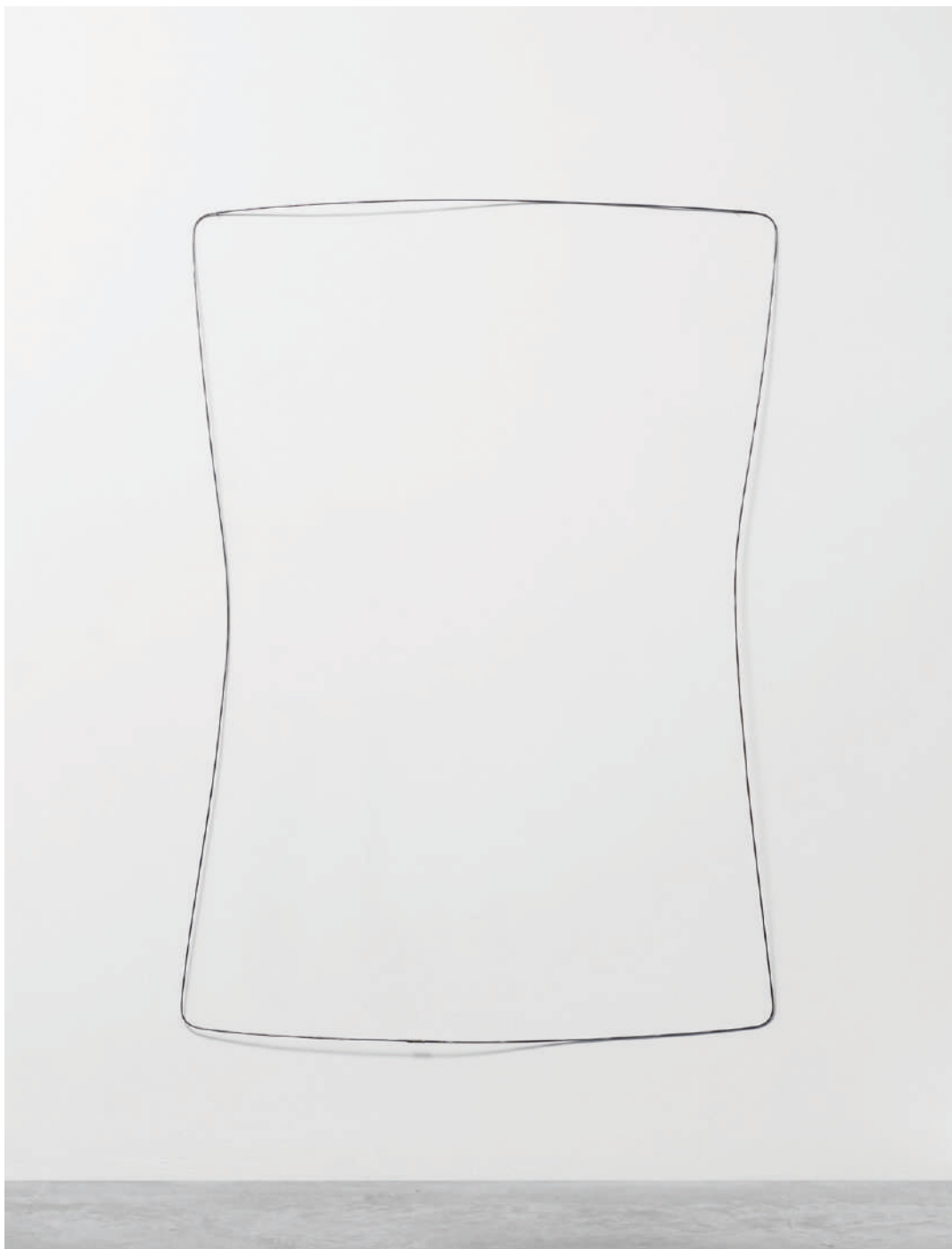
*Anything for You, 2020*

Acrylic paint, canvas, cardboard

18 cm x 44 cm x 12 cm

On loan from a private collection

Bonolo Kavula's background is in printmaking, but her approach to media combines radical experimentation with playfulness. She enjoys toying with traditions and elevating the status of mundane materials, like a bundle of cardboard and canvas strips tied with a string of paper, in the most provocative ways. Concerned with taking back the cultural spaces that have long been denied to certain groups of people, she infuses her work with openness and subtle confrontations that are both beguiling and challenging. Kavula describes herself as an artist who likes words and poetry; and while her journey with each artwork stems from interrogating the possibilities embedded in her chosen media and testing its limits, she also enjoys exploring more personal aspects of her life through her creative process



**Bronwyn Katz**

*A-B (I) (LET IT)*, 2019

Salvaged bedspring frame

195 x 135 x 17 cm

Image courtesy of the artist and blank projects, Cape Town.

R 310 000 incl. VAT

Bronwyn Katz's work makes us reflect on place and space as lived experience while using the language of abstraction to subvert the certainties of western modernism's narratives. Her choice of materials – found and salvaged mattresses and bedsprings that often come from places, which the artist herself had inhabited – act as subtle yet visually powerful interventions that combine the echoes of storytelling residing in those materials with the practice of mark-making extended beyond traditional applications. They could read as three-dimensional drawings or poetry on the walls. Katz evokes the power of space that holds us and our memories; she creates an opportunity for this space to be re-entered and re-/imagined.



**Jared Ginsburg**

*Hanging Drawing IIX*, 2019

Bamboo, rubber, string and wire

Approx. 210 cm x 360 cm x 5 cm

Image courtesy of the artist and blank projects, Cape Town.

R 183 000 incl. VAT

Jared Ginsburg uses line as a material that actively participates in his ongoing investigations, which the artist refers to as 'his uncertain inquiries', within his studio laboratory. Their transformation into artworks takes place in the gallery space, through the conversations that emerge between them, with the audience, the space, and the artist himself. Ginsburg's explorations of materiality extend to the pauses between the material markers that inhabit the wall or the gallery. For the artist, both are imbued with agency and their interactions are as unpredictable as they are generative. His engagement with his media, whether it is drawing, line, or object is on the opposite side from authoritative. The resulting gentle polyphony of voices and silences fills the air with visual music and invites the viewer to lower their own voice and listen.



**Amanda Shingirai Mushate**

*Whatsapp Gold*, 2019

Oil on canvas

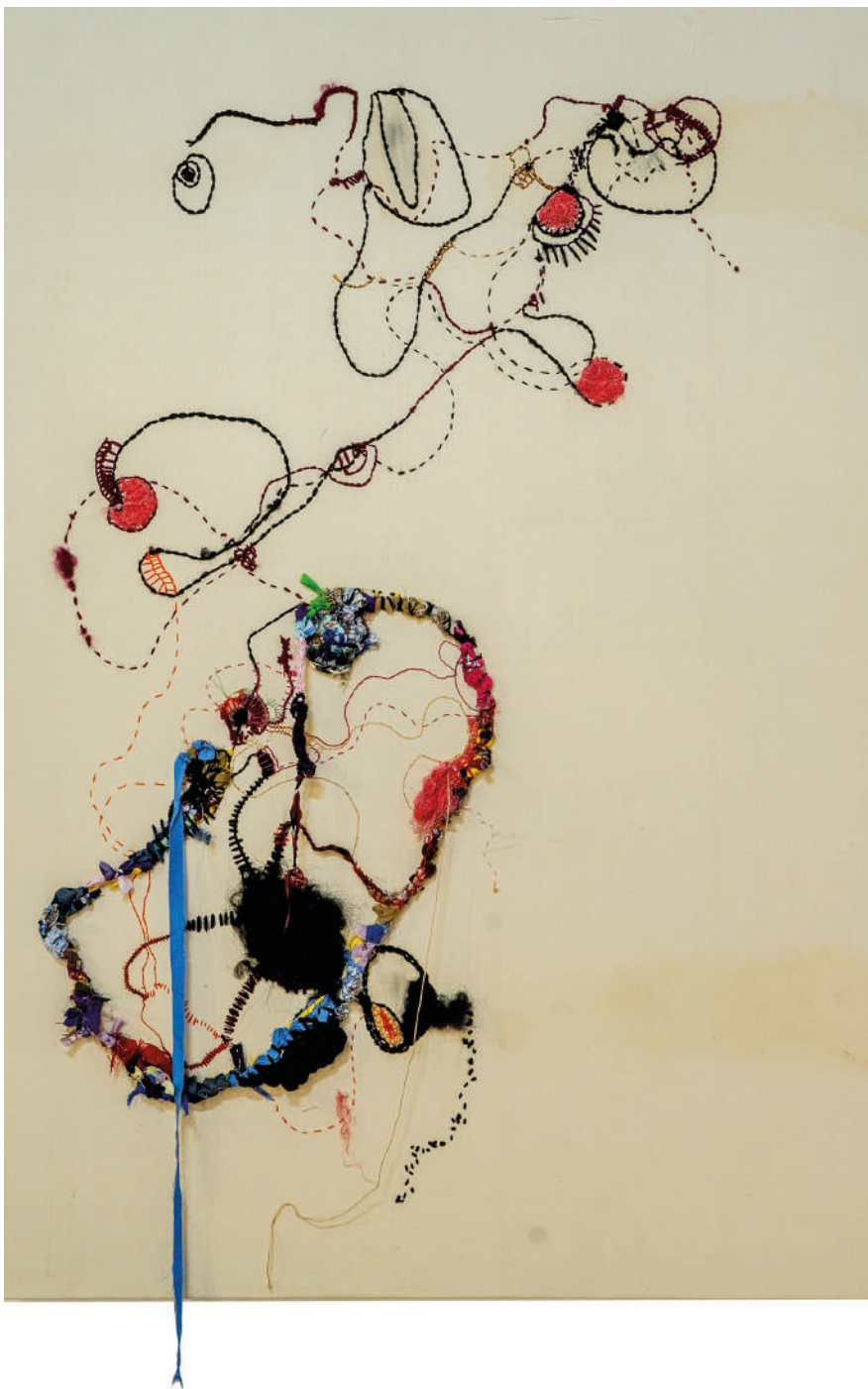
180 cm x 120 cm

Image courtesy of the artist and First Floor Gallery, Harare

R 41 400 incl. VAT

Amanda S. Mushate's paintings often combine looping linework traveling across abstract fields of colour. They invite the viewer to find their own paths across the canvas and to construct their own worlds always balancing precariously between figuration and abstraction. The tension between the flowing rhythm to be enjoyed and the desire 'to see' points to the generative possibility of uncertainty and the immersive quality of the work that draws us into its intense emotional landscape.





**Shamilla Aasha**

*Boundaries, 2021*

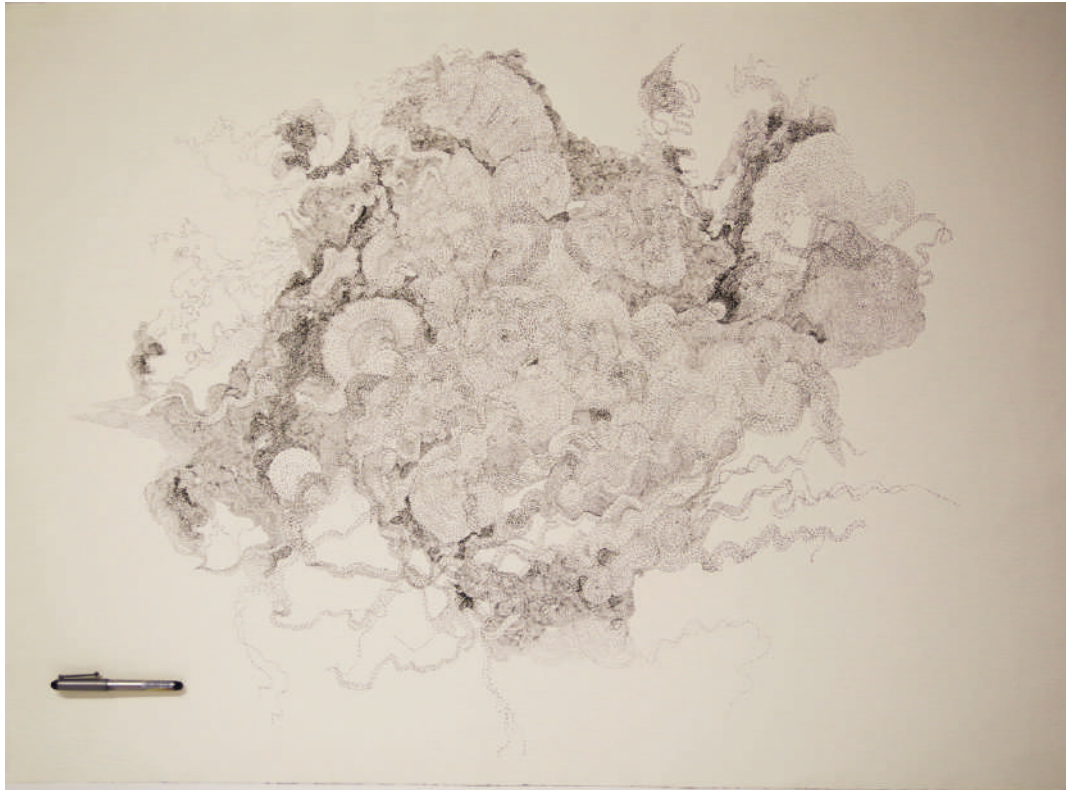
Embroidery and found fabric on canvas

140 cm x 95 cm

Image courtesy of the artist and First Floor Gallery, Harare

R 17 250 incl. VAT

Exploring the complexities of her background as a Shona and Indian woman living in the Matabeleland, Shamilla Aasha's work speaks to the complex networks of origin and genealogical routes that define contemporary Zimbabwe. Her textile and stitching-based works defy attempts at categorisation, incorporating weaving, tapestry as well as engaging with the history of art and its canonical hierarchies. Using stitching as her primary medium of mark-making, her goal is to reflect the complex, expressive stories through the simplicity of a basic, even stitch inspired by the Japanese Sashiko embroidery style. By asserting the use of stitching she is reclaiming her own voice as an artist and woman, and the voices of other women, in the contexts of family, community, and society at large.



**Zyma Amien**

*Iteration*, 2018

Hand drawn stitching lines using V pen, pilot pen,  
on Hahnemühle paper

90 cm x 120 cm (framed)

Image courtesy of the artist

R 41 400 incl. VAT

Zyma Amien's family background is several generations of garment and textile industry workers. Bound to the tools of their trade they spend their lives in one position and at one station for the entire working day. The days turn into weeks, months, and years. The repetitive and alienating nature of this labour becomes the point of departure for *Iteration* (2018). The artist marked the paper with stitching lines continuously in an intricate pattern until the pen ran dry. Working alone in a repetitive, focused manner required endurance and concentration. Amien's goal is to highlight the plight of the garment industry workers and the human cost of the beautiful things we want to fill our lives with.



**Cathy Abraham**

*Elevenelevens - 11 minute continuous line drawings*

*Double handed in blue and red, 2021*

Pastel on Italian cotton canvas

169.5 cm x 56.5 cm

Images courtesy of the artist

R 9 200 incl. VAT unframed

I found myself in a dark wood and searched for a line to draw me out.

Pulling myself up and down in spirals and curves without lifting my hand but moving my body up and down as needed. Setting this project up with the intention to find a transformative moment through the process of moving and drawing a continuous line in spirals up and down.

The totemic drawings are both the reflection and the outcome of a series of performative uninterrupted drawing actions that Cathy Abraham performed for 11 continuous minutes over eleven consecutive days. Following on from kundalini yoga practice, whereby the energy could be shifted through bodily meditation and breath, the artist added the dimension of drawing to find a path out of a dark emotional space she was grappling with, breaking loose from the entanglements of the mind.



**Cathy Abraham**

*Eleveneleven - 11 minute continuous line drawings*

*Day two: single handed in red, 2021*

Pastel on Italian cotton canvas

159 cm x 55 cm

Images courtesy of the artist

R 9 200 incl. VAT unframed

I found myself in a dark wood and searched for a line to draw me out.

Pulling myself up and down in spirals and curves without lifting my hand but moving my body up and down as needed. Setting this project up with the intention to find a transformative moment through the process of moving and drawing a continuous line in spirals up and down.

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### **Donna Kukama**

*The Swing (After after Fragonard)*, 2009.

Video 00:04:55, Edition of 3

Image by Matthew Burbridge, image courtesy of the artist and blank projects, Cape Town.

On loan from the artist and *blank projects*

Donna Kukama crosses the boundaries between works in two-dimensional media and forms of art practice like performance or activist interventions. Critical of the hierarchies and ideologies of the art world enforced through conventions of art practice and exhibition-making, her performances could be read as spatial performative drawings, while her recent two-dimensional works are records, or remnants, of performances that take the artist across time and space, beyond the rational and bounded dimensions of the genre, media or art-historical sense-making. Just like there is poetry in the way the simple and ordinarily familiar line is manipulated by artists, through drawing, to evoke other realities and other worlds, so does Kukama's performance can be seen as a performative poetic drawing in space that is inserted into the everyday forcing us to see it differently.



**Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum**

*Polyhedra*, 2016

Duration: 1 min 36s

Single channel animation with sound

Image courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town

R 121 350 incl. VAT

The animation *Polyhedra* is a poetic cosmogony and personal interpretation of the order of things: stars, earth forms, the insides, the outsides, and the beyond-what-we-can-see. Part of a multi-media body of work, in *Polyhedra*, I began with the idea of 'seeing through': seeing through the earth, seeing through bodies, seeing through to the stars. I was interested in finding a visual language that superimposes forms—geological forms, astronomical forms, and human forms-- in such a way that we might see through them and see the congruencies between them. Although drawing is at the core of Sunstrum's interdisciplinary practice, the mythological trans-geographic, trans-temporal and trans-cultural narratives, which permeate her work, take the artist on explorative journeys, across genres and media, and into the space of imagination rich in radical possibilities.

With deep appreciation and gratitude to all the artists:  
Shamilla Aasha, Cathy Abraham, Igshaan Adams, Zyma Amien, Pierre Fouché, Jared  
Ginsburg, Bronwyn Katz, Bonolo Kavula, Donna Kukama, Amanda Mushate, Pamela  
Phatsimo Sunstrum

as well as  
the galleries: blank projects, Goodman Gallery, First Floor Gallery, Harare; Whatiftheworld;  
private collectors,  
Association for Visual Arts,  
The AVA team

Title lettering by Werner & Pierre

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