

unmourned bodies

curated by Jo Rogge

Maria Caley

Stephané Conradie

Actofel Ilovu

Ju/'hoansi artists

Tangeni Kambudu

Maria Mbereshu

Tuli Mekondjo

Lynette Musukubili

Ndako Nghipandulwa

Jo Rogge

Rudolf Seibeb



9 March - 20 April 2023, AVA Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

Unmourned Bodies

“(Namibia) Southwest Africa is a vast, sun-bleached land. The dry riverbeds, freckled with small bushes, wander wistfully through plains of tall yellow grass, thorn-trees and scrub. The huge domed sky changes mood from tired blues to resentful yellows.”

These are the words chosen by Olga Levinson to start the chapter ‘A New Life in Africa’, in her exhaustive book on the life and work of the German-born Namibian painter Adolph Jentsch (1888 – 1977). She could as well have been describing any one of Jentsch’s many landscape paintings created in the country that was to be ‘home’ for the rest of his life, some of which now form part of the archive of the Namibian Arts Association (NAA)/ Arts Heritage Trust collection.

Archives are important. Not least because they tell stories. They also increase our sense of identity and understanding of cultures. They can even ensure justice. The archive of historical and contemporary Namibian artworks and artefacts held by the NAA in trust, is the focal point for an exciting exhibition of new artworks being exhibited in Cape Town by a group of emerging and established Namibian artists. Conceptualised and curated by artist Jo Rogge, and facilitated by the Project Room Namibia, the exhibition at the Association for Visual Arts (AVA) opened in March, coinciding with the month in which Namibia celebrates its independence.

The exhibition ‘Unmourned Bodies’ takes a multifaceted approach to showcase the work and talent of Namibian artists to a new audience in South Africa.

Historically, the venue of this exhibition has close ties to the development of art in Namibia. With the concerted efforts of some individuals, the South West African Association of Arts (SWAA), based in the capital city Windhoek, was established as a branch of the South African Arts Association (SAAA) in 1947. In Namibia at this time, considered a remote “5th province of South Africa,” almost all of the important local artists were of German extraction, notably men like Adolph Jentsch and Fritz Krampe. One year later, the first official exhibition in the Cape Town premises of the SAAA included 61 paintings and 500 objects from Namibia, divided into what was called the ‘White’ section, including painters Axel Eriksson, Adolph Jentsch, Otto Schröder, Joachim Voigts, among others, and the ‘Native’ section, described as being mostly ‘handcrafts’.

It is in this regard that the current exhibition, while paying homage to the historical links between the two associations, seeks to redress the colonial presentation of Namibian cultural production through inclusion, and to highlight the contemporary blurring of art and crafts, by selecting artists that work with non-traditional materials. These artists were invited to visit the archive of the NAA, to select a work from the collection that personally resonated with them, and to recreate a unique artwork of their own in response, with some interesting and surprising results.

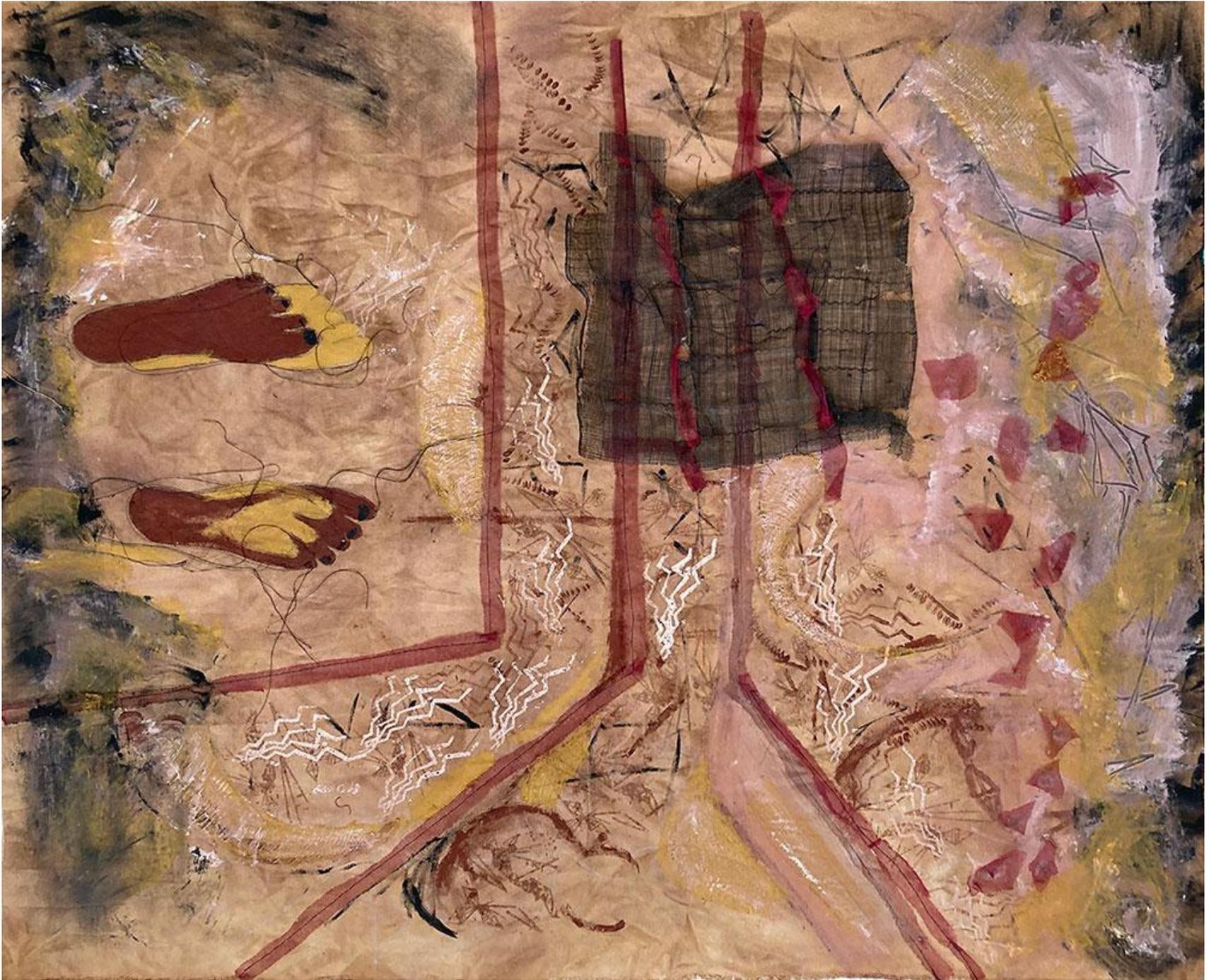
For some, this was their first visit. Until fairly recently considered a “Whites Only” place, the archive is a contentious space, further thrown into sharp relief with the current debate on the repatriation of looted and stolen artefacts during Germany’s colonial rule of the country. The stated aim of the permanent return of these objects to Namibia is to “support our Namibian partners in reconstructing the history of their country.”

Established artists Tuli Mekondjo and Stephane Conradie, each with their accomplished research-based creative practices firmly rooted in their respective cultural and traditional backgrounds, have chosen objects from the collection on which to base their new work for this exhibition.

Talented designers Tangeni Kambudu and Maria Caley are also included in the exhibition, as well as artists Rudolf Seibeb, Actofel Ilovu, Maria Mbereshu and Jo Rogge.

Interestingly, young emerging artists Ndako Nghipandulwa and Lynette Musukubili were inspired by the paintings of Themba Masala and Adolph Jentsch respectively. The Caprivian artist Musukubili who works with recycled plastic waste, says that she was struck by the quietude and calm of Jentsch’s painting, and his ability to capture the endless vistas, unique light, and ambiance of Namibia’s expansive landscapes.

“Unmourned Bodies” is on view at the AVA, 35 Church Street, in Cape Town, from 9 March to 20 April 2023.



Maria Caley

Nkata

Natural dyes, Namibian ochre, fabric paint, thread and tulle on cotton

98 x 116 cm

2023

8000,- ZAR



Maria Caley

Unknown
Natural dyes, Namibian ochre, fabric paint, thread and tulle on cotton
98 x 116 cm
2023
8000,- ZAR



Stephane Conradie

**Deur die venster se diefwering
(Through the burglar bars)**

Mixed media assemblage

110 x 44 x 10 cm

2023

90 000,- ZAR



Actofel Ilovu

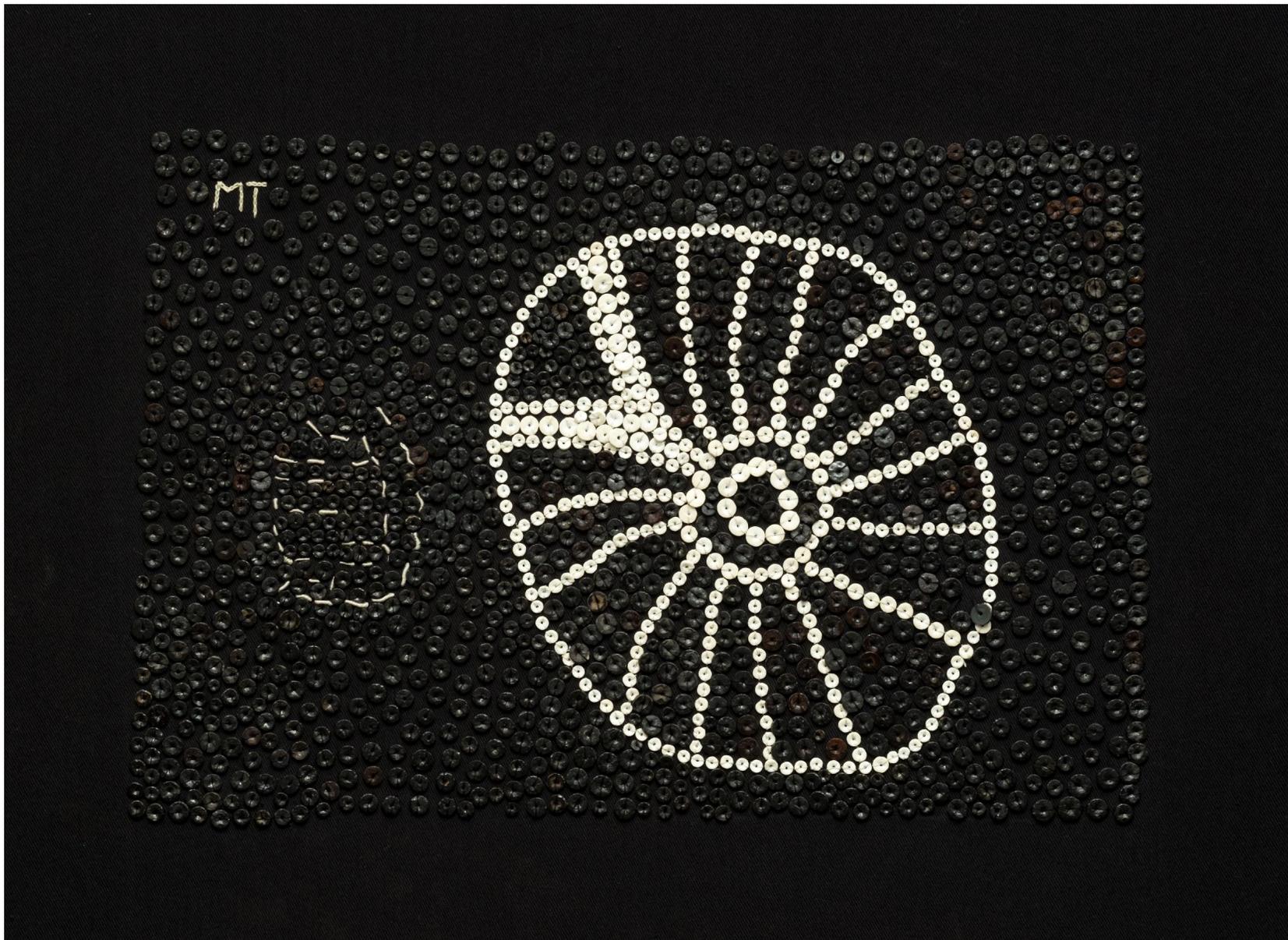
I can see blind eyes

Soft charcoal, fire charcoal,
ash, smoke and Acrylic
on canvas
60 x 91.5 cm
2023
6 000,- ZAR



Maria Thasi / Omba Arts Trust

Jū/hoa Orokhoe (Spirit of the Moon)
Ostrich eggshell beads on black cotton
72 x 62 cm (framed)
2022
16 000,- ZAR



Maria Thasi / Omba Arts Trust

Um!ā Mammasi ma ku #nau /hö a khoe !gubusi
(Our ancestors walked in circles and rows)

Ostrich eggshell beads on black cotton

72 x 62 cm (framed)

2022

16 000,- ZAR



Maria Thasi / Omba Arts Trust

!Hū Tsi (Water Pan)

Ostrich eggshell beads on black cotton

72 x 62 cm (framed)

2022

16 000,- ZAR



Ju/'hoansi/ Omba Arts Trust

è !gam /gausi arè-é !ga #khā /ā /xoa /haū (Pride in our history)

Ostrich eggshell beads, embroidery cotton on linen (6 parts)

64 x 57 cm each (framed)

2022

100 000,- ZAR



Tangeni Kambudu

Skulls, Facial Features and Eye Colour

Glass, mirror and paint with

Framed newspaper article

188.5 x 83.5 x 11.5 cm

2023

80 000,- ZAR



Maria Mbereshu

Homestead
Acrylic on canvas
100 x 100 cm
2023
8 000,- ZAR



Maria Mbereshu

Rukere (Wooden Spoon)

Acrylic on canvas

38 x 31 cm

2023

4 000,- ZAR



Maria Mbereshu

Lipata
Acrylic on canvas
100 x 100 cm
2023
6 000,- ZAR



Tuli Mekondjo

**Omawi mo va Kwamhungu
(Ancestral Voices)**
Suede, cotton fabric, seeds,
cowrie shells, makalani,
glass beads, cotton yarn,
copper wire, copper beads,
red ochre, buttons
65 x 30 cm
2023
NFS



Lynette Musukubili

Greener Pastures

Plastic and thread

180 x 63 cm

2023

16 000,- ZAR



Lynette Musukubili

Movement Restrictions

Plastic and thread

43 x 100 cm

2022

9 600,- ZAR



Ndako Nghipandulwa

Father and Daughters

Nails, string, fabric, stone and braids on Supawood

178 cm diameter

2023

90 000,- ZAR



Ndako Nghipandulwa

Insatiable
Nails, string, fabric and oil paint on
Supawood
76 x 77 cm diameter
2023
10 000,- ZAR



Ndako Nghipandulwa

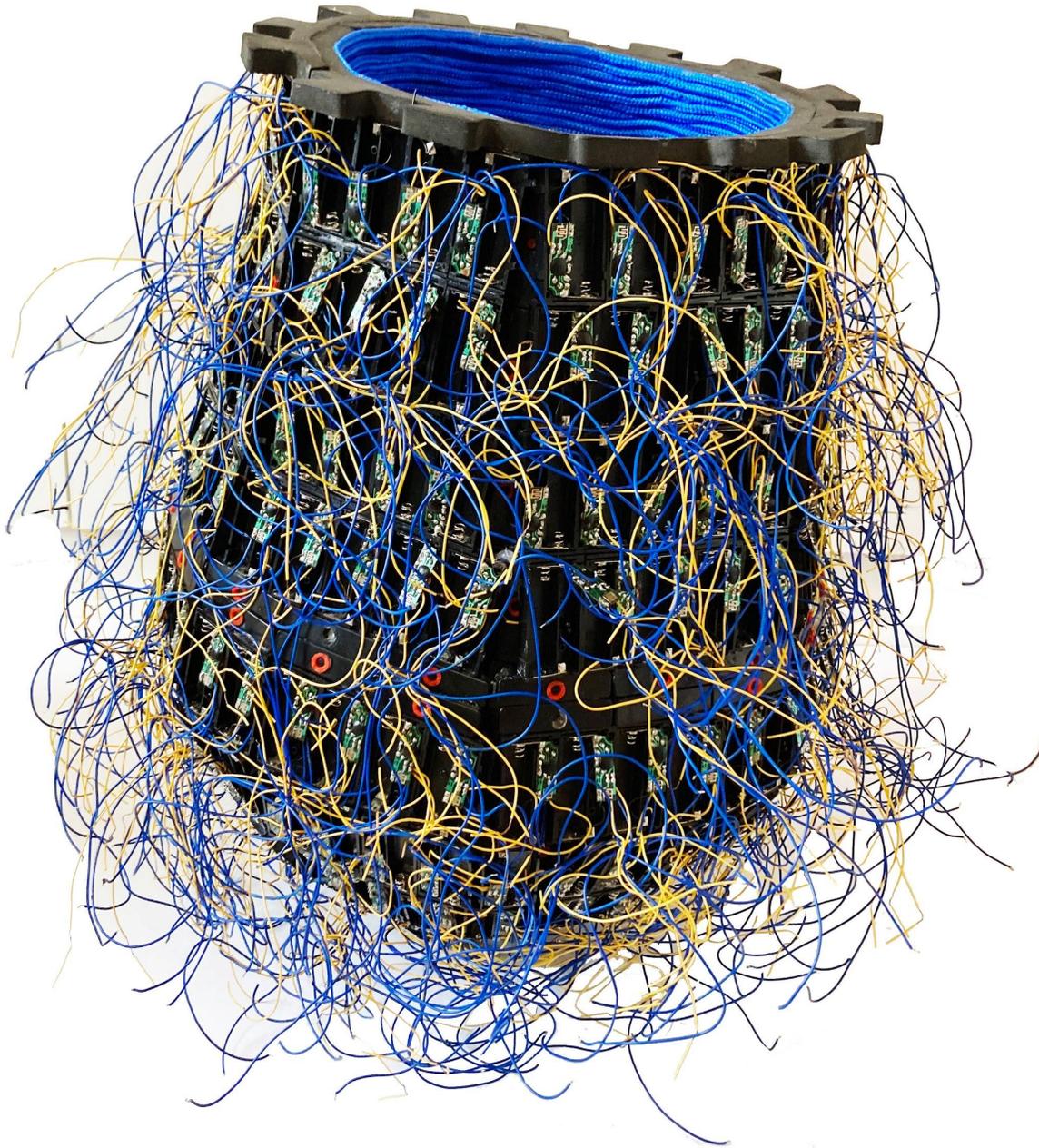
Nghidinwavali (Don't underestimate me)

Nails, string, fabric, stone and braids on Supawood

62 x 41 cm diameter

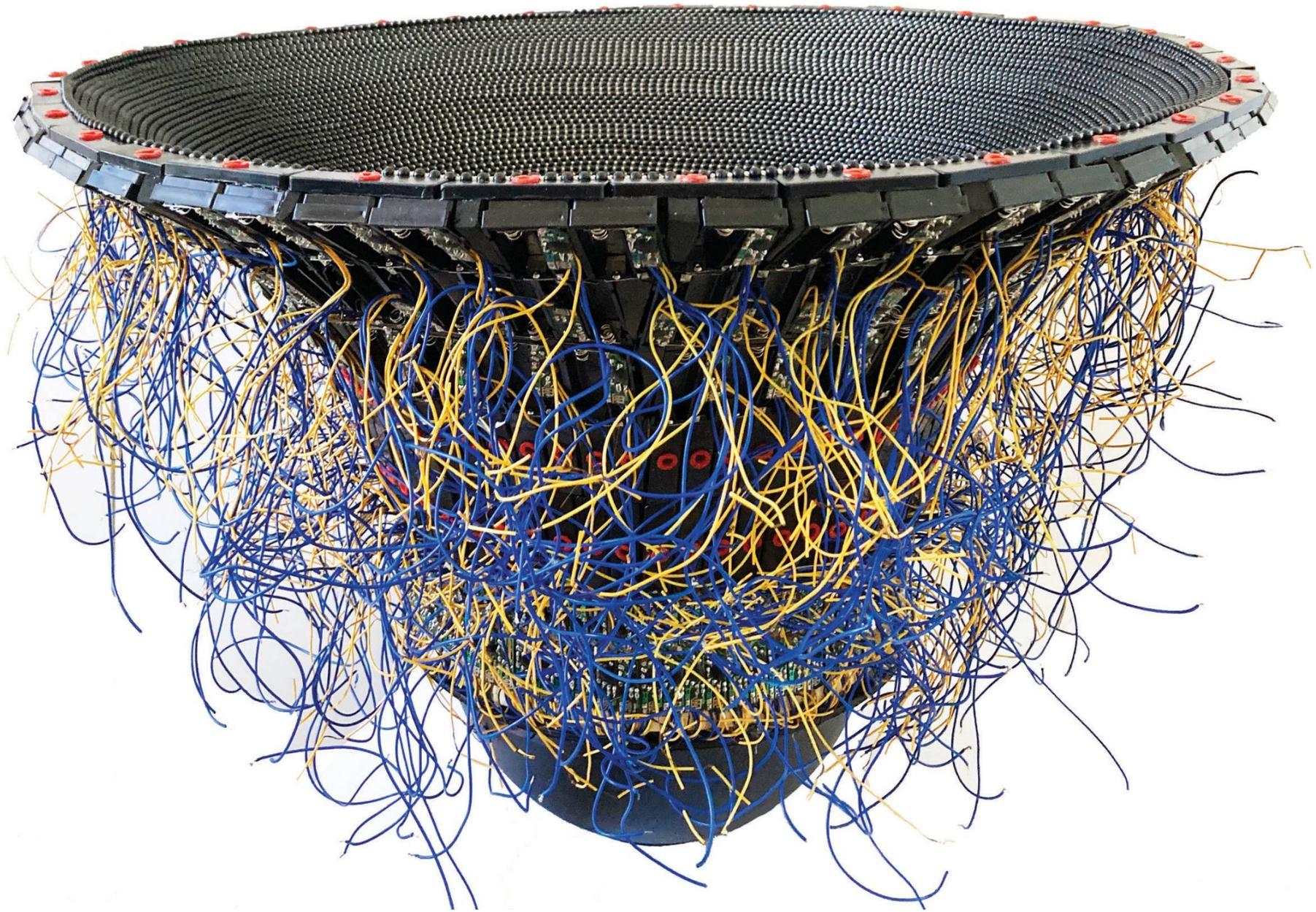
2023

6 000,- ZAR



Jo Rogge

My Skin on Steroids
Mixed media assemblage
58 x 30 x 30 cm
2022
46 000,- ZAR



Jo Rogge

Ninani musali yomunde (I have a good wife)

Mixed media assemblage

45 x 65 x 65 cm

2023

50 000,- ZAR



Jo Rogge

Met die Helm Gebore (Born with a Caul)

Mixed media assemblage

85 x 38 x 38 cm

2022

40 000,- ZAR



Jo Rogge

Queer AF

Mixed media assemblage

74 x 35 x 35 cm

2023

24 000,- ZAR



Jo Rogge

Improbable/Touch and Go

Mixed media assemblage

80 x 45 x 45 cm

2023

16 000,- ZAR



Rudolf Seibeb

People see democracy in progress

Acrylic on canvas

78 x 100 cm

2023

12 000,- ZAR



Rudolf Seibeb

People make peace with the environment

Acrylic on canvas

78 x 96 cm

2023

12 000,- ZAR

Unmourned Bodies will open at the AVA cm Cape Town on the 9th of March and will run until the 20th of April 2023.

For more information please contact [Jo Rogge](#) or [Frieda Lühl](#)

In collaboration and with Thanks to:



the
project room