

TERRAINS OF POSSIBILITY

**KELANI ABASS
PULENG MONGALE
KARL OHIRI
VALERIE AMANI
GLORIA**

Terrains of Possibility

In his 2009 essay *Space is the (non)place: Martians, Marxists and the Outer Space of Radical Imagination*, scholar Stephen Shukaitis writes, “For even if it is not possible literally to step outside the world or existing reality, the capacity to imagine other possible worlds creates a terrain where it becomes possible to work towards the creation of another world”. In recent times, the imagining of alternative realities and narratives of existence has become increasingly relevant in addressing the shortcomings of contemporary society, particularly with respect to oppressive policies and environments which actively contribute to the marginalisation and repression of divergent ideas and voices amidst constant calls for social, economic and political reforms. The events of the past year have brought to the fore the need for mapping out landscapes of alternative possibilities that primarily

center the needs and development of the people beyond socio-political posturing and empty promises. Amidst promises of a better future, developmental goals and Afro-futurist rhetoric it is important to interrogate the unfolding histories of past and present and their contributions to future-making.

As such, *Terrains of Possibility* aims to dialogue with present-day and past events in hopes of imagining new worlds. The importance of memory as an approach to yet-to-be landscapes, bodies and societies cannot be understated. The exhibition poses the question “To what extent is the creation of individual and collective identities influenced by the actions of today and yesterday?” “How do we imagine the making of new bodies and landscapes from the reading of current

actions?’ The future as a constantly evolving present. If Nigeria’s and by extension Africa’s tenuous relationship with history is anything to go by, we realise the cyclical nature of events in which we seem to constantly go around in circles, stuck in a never-ending loop of corruption, oppression and apathy towards the general populace and marginalised peoples.

Terrains of Possibility invites five African and diasporan artists — **Kelani Abass, Karl Ohiri, Puleng Mongale, Valerie Amani and GLORIA** — to dialogue with issues like identity-making, history and rememory, the nature of work, gender and sexuality among others which explore present-day realities in mapping out new textures, realities and worlds. What does it mean to exist in the present as descendants of the past? How

do bodies form and exist in the now? and What might possible futures look like? The exhibition hopes to function both as recollection and imagining.

In thinking about the experience of place, anthropologist Steven Feld explains the lived body ‘as an ecstatic/recessive being engaged both in a leaping out and a falling back’. This notion of simultaneously leaping out and falling back serves as a starting point for the exhibition.

Curator

adeoluwa oluwajoba

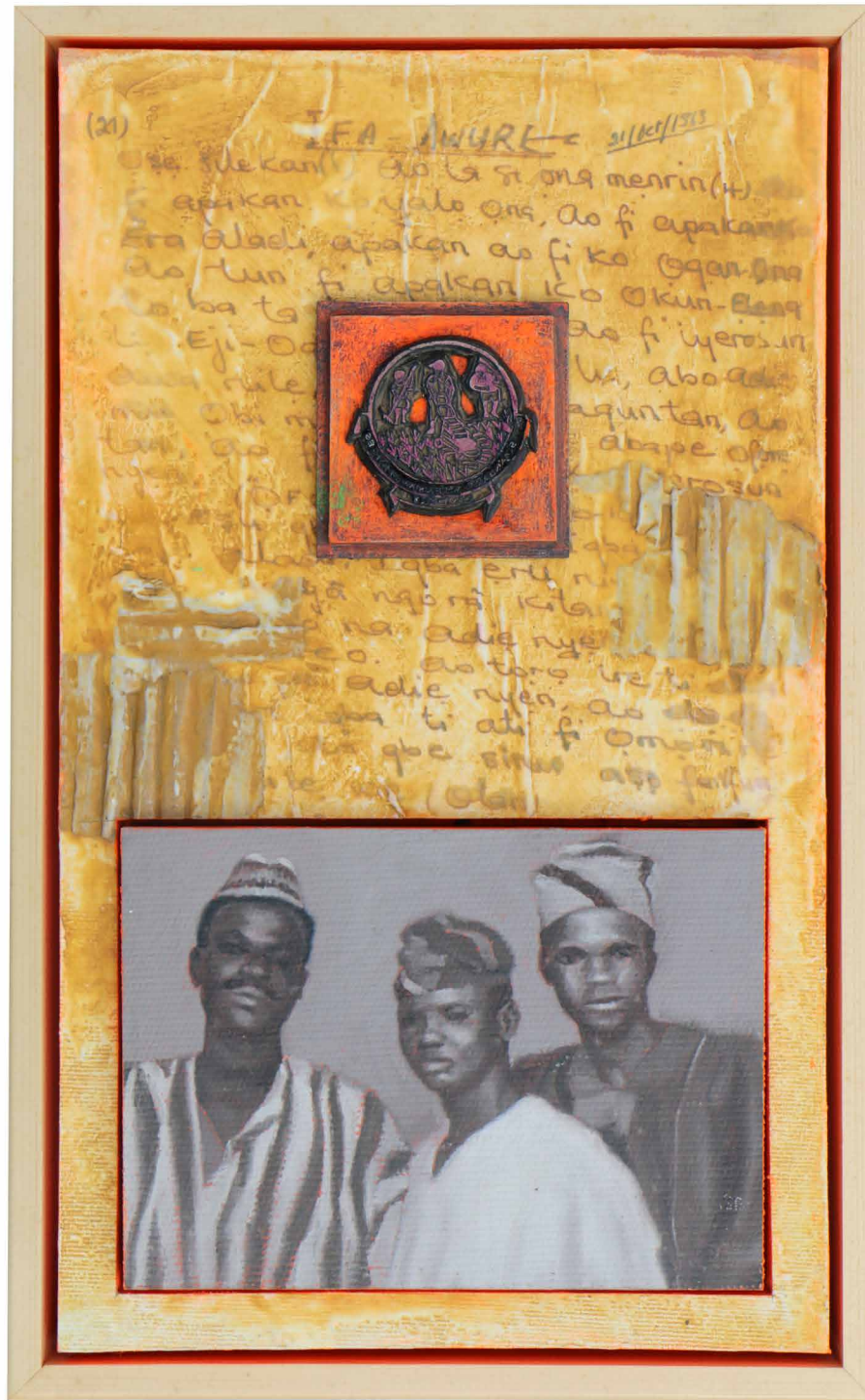
This exhibition is inspired by contemporary artist Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum’s ‘Leaping Out’ a part of essays featured in the ‘African Futures’ publication edited by Lien Heidenreich and Sean O’toole.

Kelani Abass

Born in 1979, Kelani Abass's work explores material heritage and the archive as an object of junction between the past and the present. His work increasingly employs assemblage in presenting evidences of the past and objects of memory.

Presenting work from his 'Scraps of Evidence' series, Abass explores the use of archival images and objects inherited from his father's printing company in creating intimate, multi-layered memorabilia. His engagement of personal and societal histories examines the relationship between memory and the archive, shedding light on fragile and intimate testimonies and realities of a bygone era from newly independent Nigeria. Abass's act of collating and reassembling diverse and often fragmented pieces of history not only points to the role of the archive as support for memory, it also presents a different context in which these objects of memory can be read.

Kelani Abass has exhibited in Nigeria and internationally. Recent solo exhibitions include *irántí* at 31 PROJECT, Paris, and [Re:] *Entanglements, Contemporary Art and Colonial Archives* at the National Museum, Lagos in 2020 as well as *If I could save time* at CCA, Lagos in 2019. He lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria.



Scrap of Evidence, (Egbejoda)

Mixed media

21 x 34cm

2020

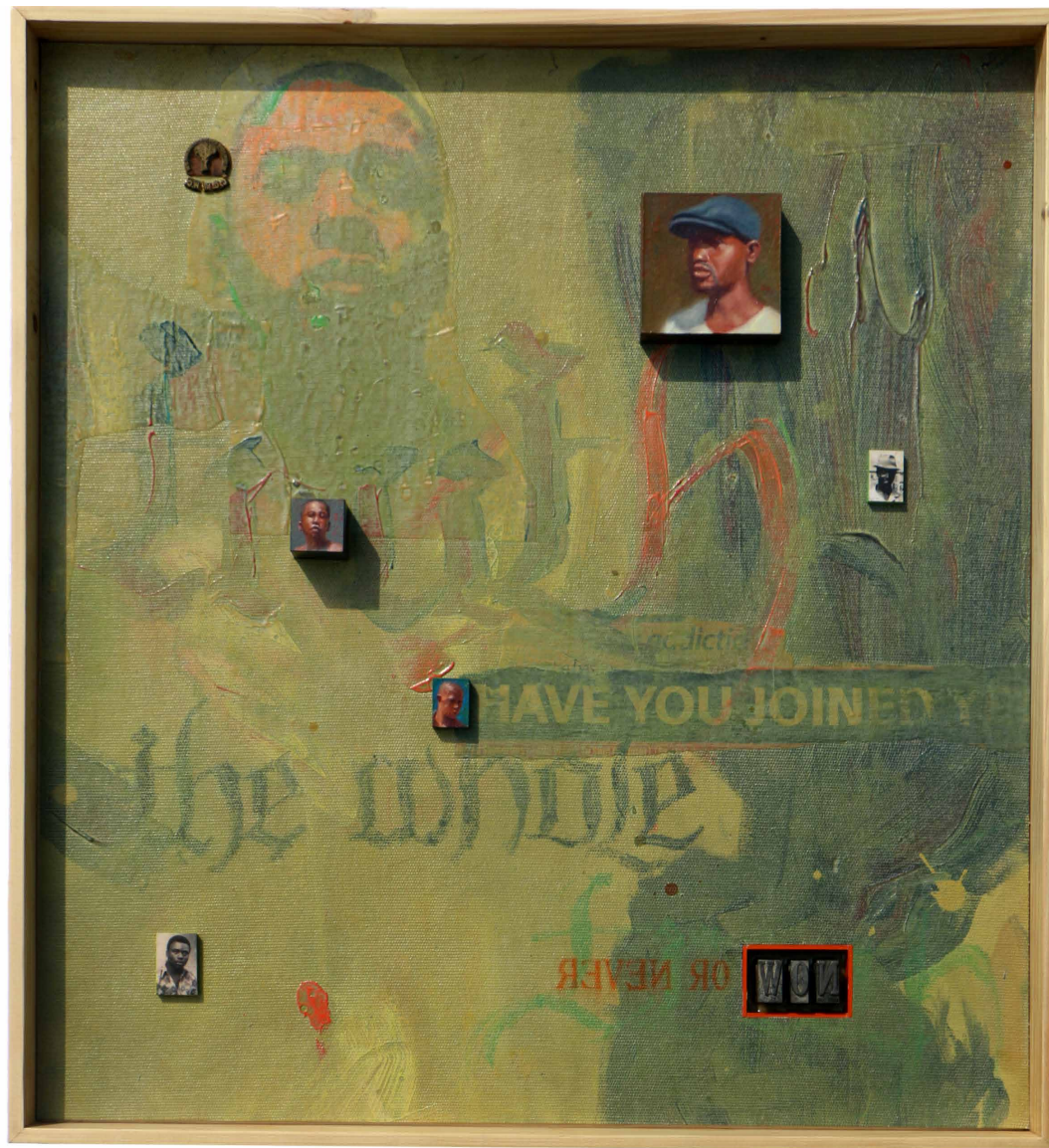


Scrap of Evidence, (Egbejoda)

Mixed media

21 x 34cm

2020

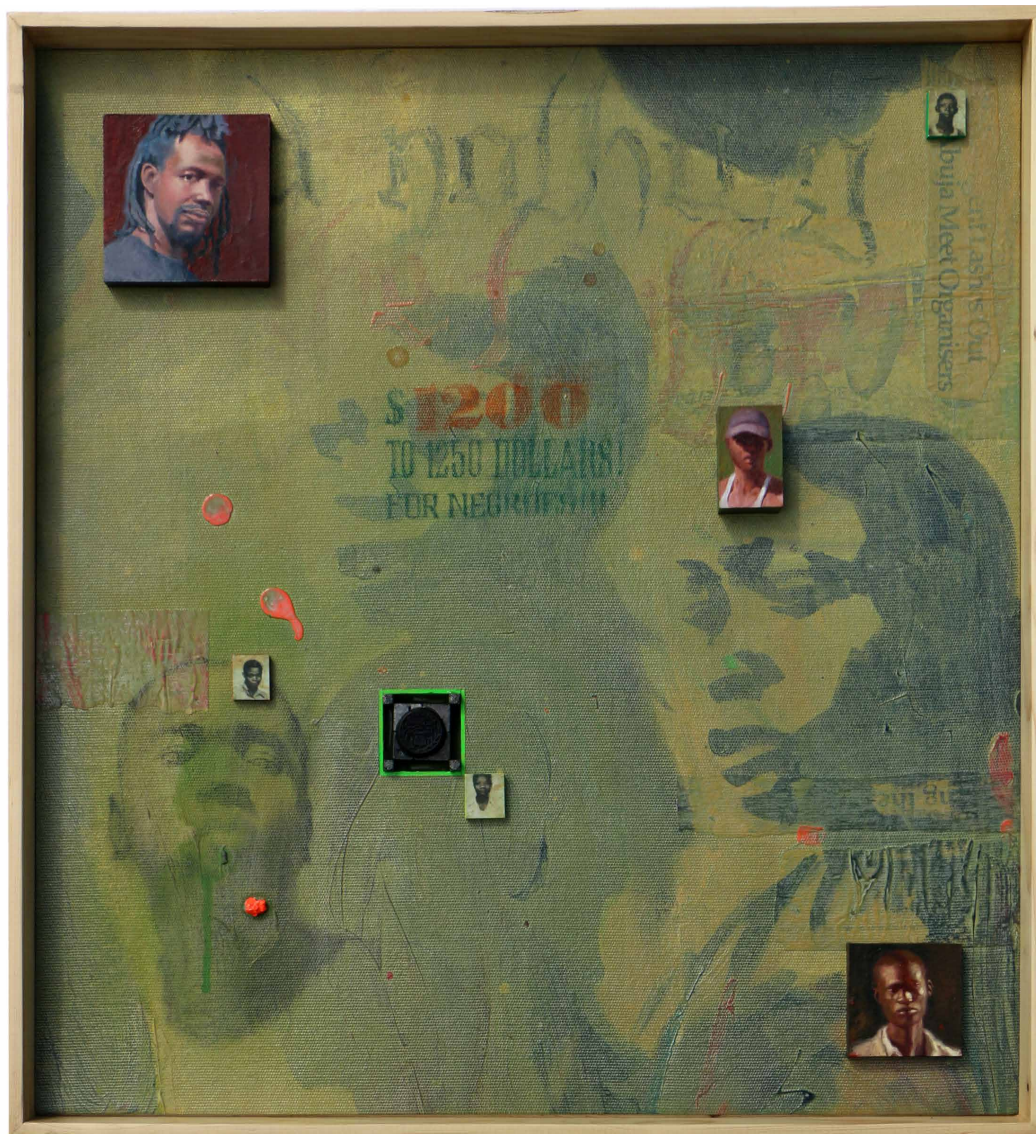


Scrap of Evidence 1

Mixed media

20 x 34cm

2020

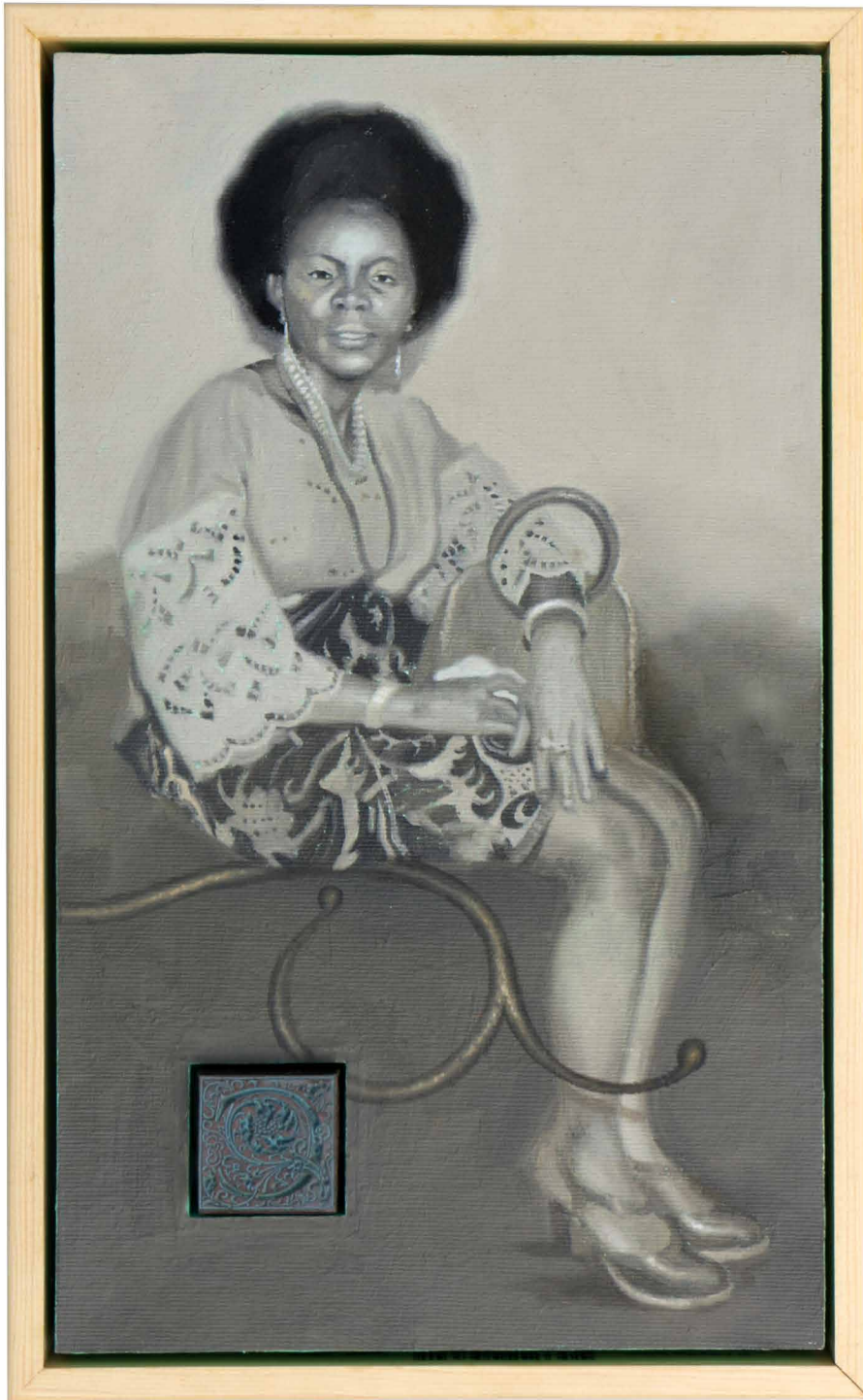


Scrap of Evidence 2

Mixed media

20 x 34cm

2020



Scrap of Evidence, (Caro)

Mixed media

20 x 34cm

2020

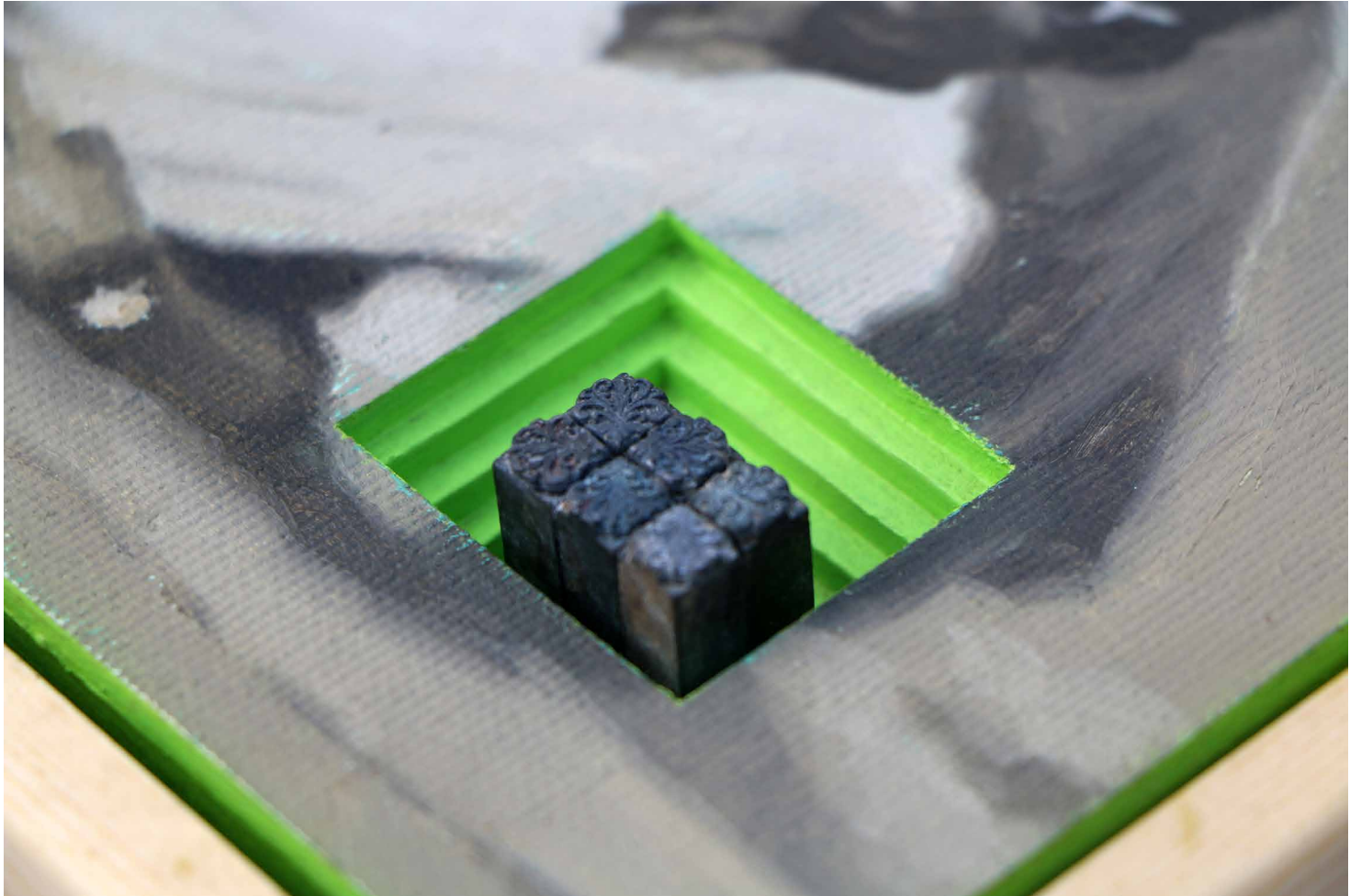


Scrap of Evidence, (Caro)

Mixed media

20 x 34cm

2020



Scrap of Evidence, (Irepodun 2)

Mixed media

20 x 34cm

2020



Scrap of Evidence, (Irepodun 2)

Mixed media

20 x 34cm

2020



Scrap of Evidence, (Irepodun)

Mixed media

20 x 34cm

2020



Scrap of Evidence, (Irepodun)

Mixed media

20 x 34cm

2020



Scrap of Evidence, (Welfare Council)
Acrylic, rubber, frame and digital print
20 x 34cm
2020



Scrap of Evidence, (Welfare Council)

Mixed media

20 x 34cm

2020

Karl Obiri

Born in 1983 in London, Karl Ohiri is a British-Nigerian artist living and working in London. His conceptually driven practice explores the human condition by merging two inseparable strands of existence; *The Self* (Autobiographical works based on personal experiences, identity and belonging) and *The Other* (Societal works based on current affairs, social issues and everyday observations). The use of appropriation and recontextualisation feature playfully within his work, in a minimalist approach that seeks to create art from the everyday, incorporating the use of photography, video, text and everyday objects.

Ohiri's presented work *Power Without Power* (Signs for Future Protest) in an ongoing series that uses slogans to explore ideas around power, distribution and democracy in Nigeria. The phrase *Power Without Power* is a cultural expression and political slogan coined by the artist as a response to ongoing 'power struggles' present within Nigeria. The statement is designed as both a declaration against injustice and oppression as well as a statement to enforce independence and empowerment.

Karl Ohiri has been exhibited widely locally and internationally. Selected exhibitions include *Go On Being So*, Newlyn Gallery and The Exchange, Cornwall, UK (2020), *How to Build a Lagoon with Just a Bottle of Wine?*, Lagos Biennial, Lagos, Nigeria (2019), *Time Has Gone*, LagosPhoto Festival, Lagos, Nigeria (2018) and *Rencontres a Reattu*, Les Rencontres d'Arles, Reattu Museum, France (2017).



Power Without Power (Sign for Future Protest)

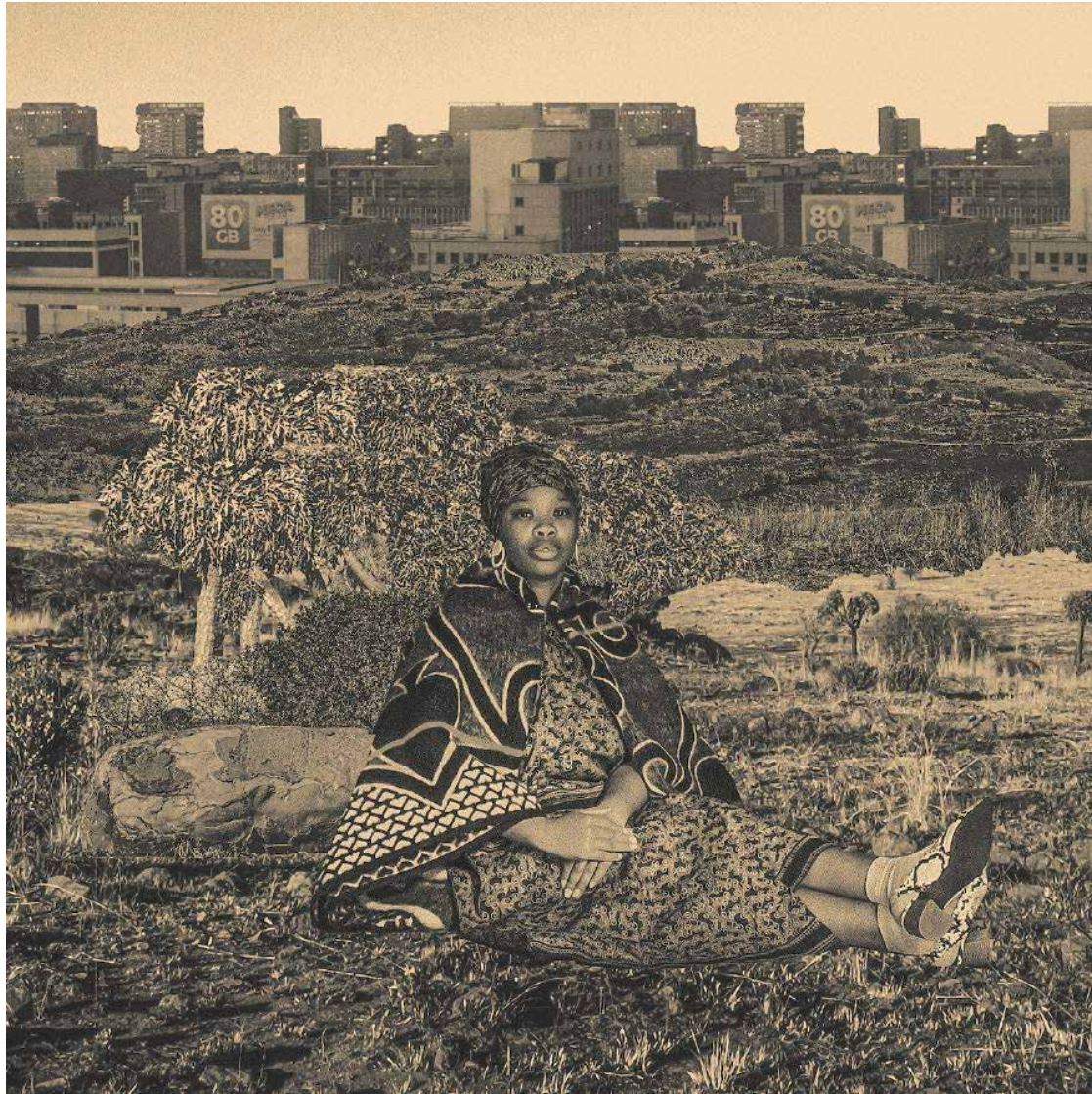
100 x 85cm

2021

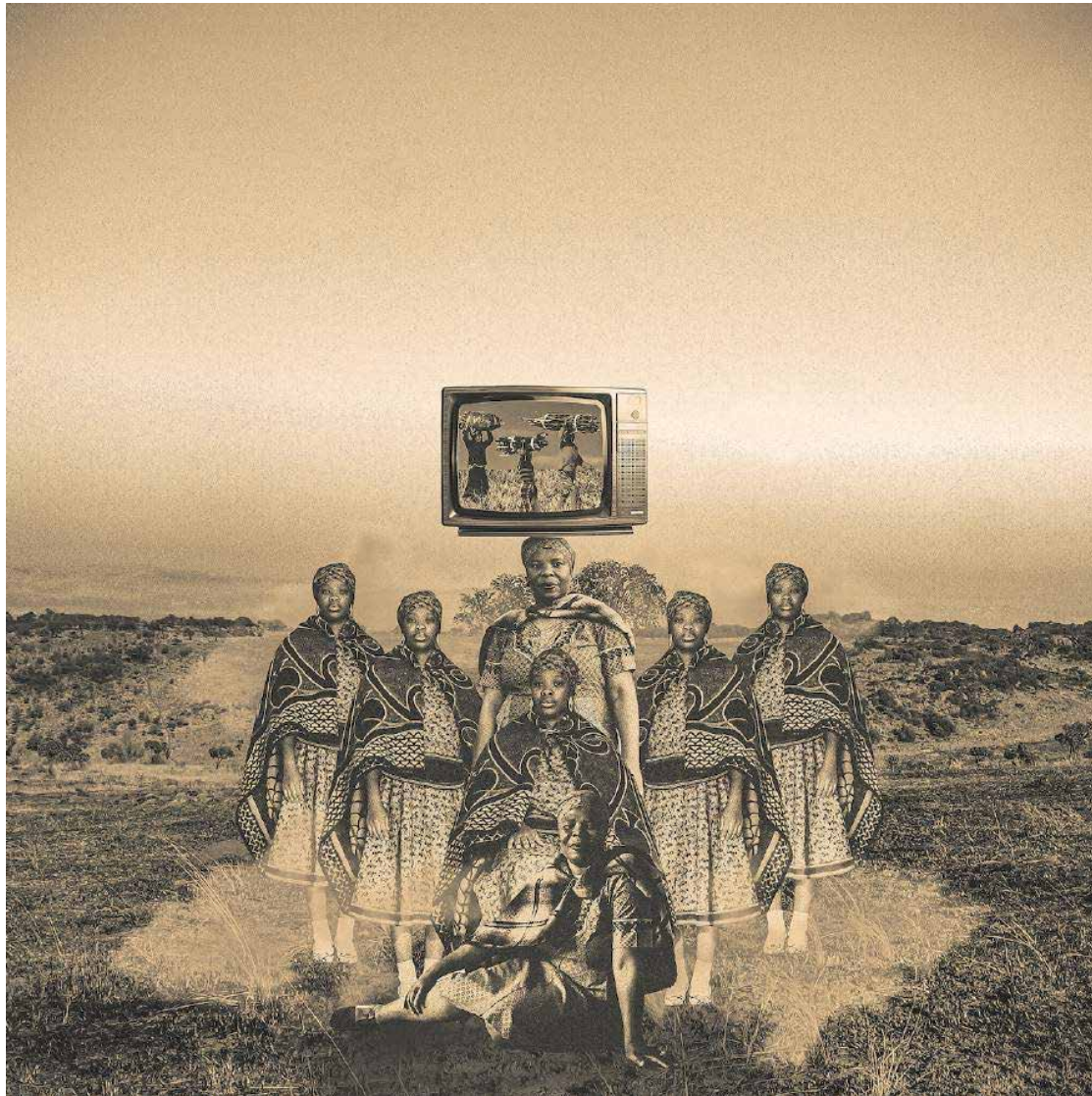
Puleng Mongale

Born in 1991 in Soweto, Puleng Mungale is a South African artist working with photography and digital collage. Her work explores identity through internal dialogue that revolves around a re-imagined history, the establishment and maintenance of ancestral relationships, black womanhood, and re/claiming heritage. Incorporating self-portraits into her collages, she is able to inhabit past worlds as well forge futuristic narratives.

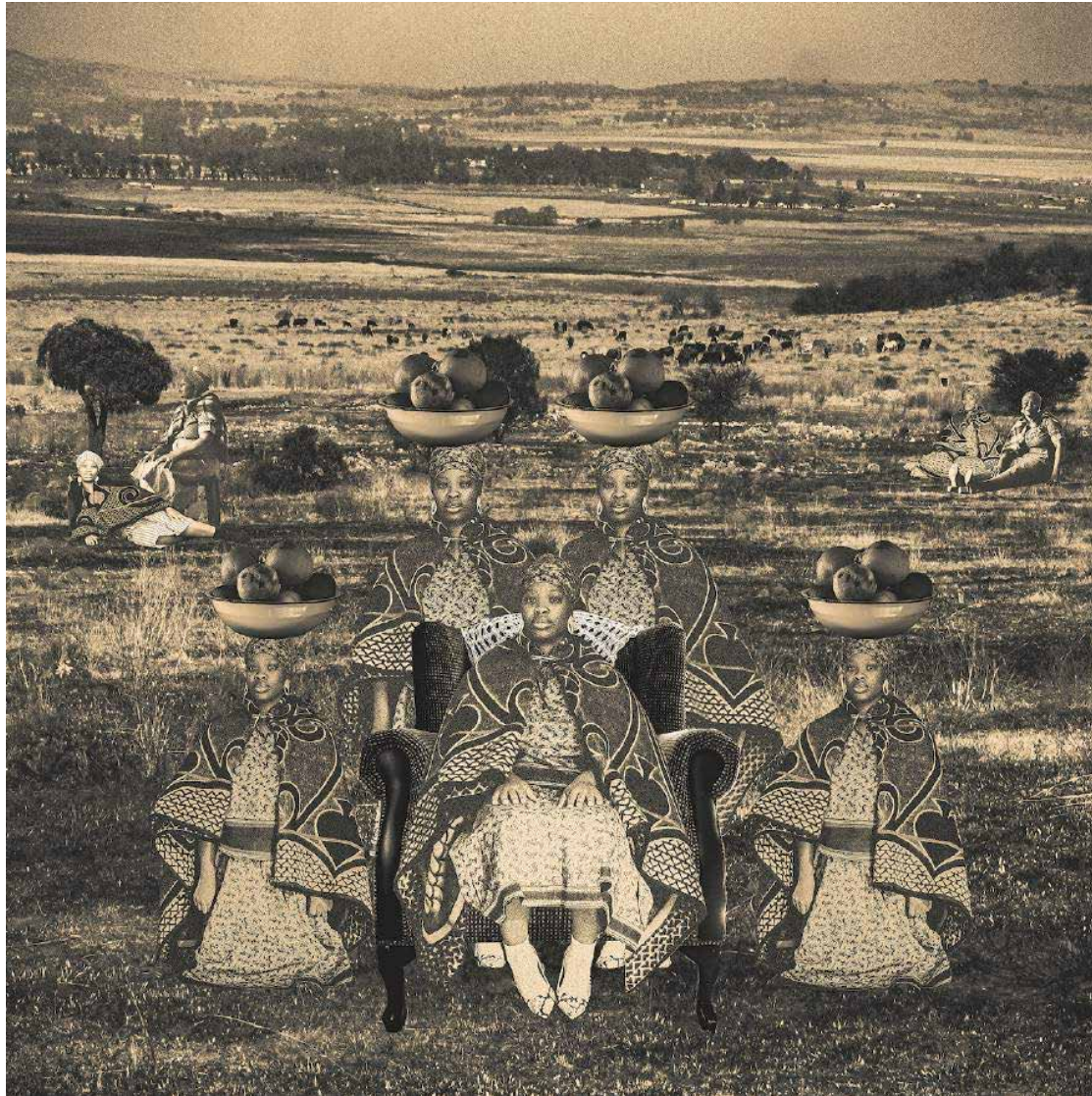
Mungale's presented works further explore and invoke her connection to a personal and collective past, demonstrating the living reciprocity and significance of such visual manifestations. Dialoguing with the idea of home and history through a process of self-imagining, she reflects and reconstructs a relationship with her own heritage, particularly absorbing the lineages of the women who surround her.



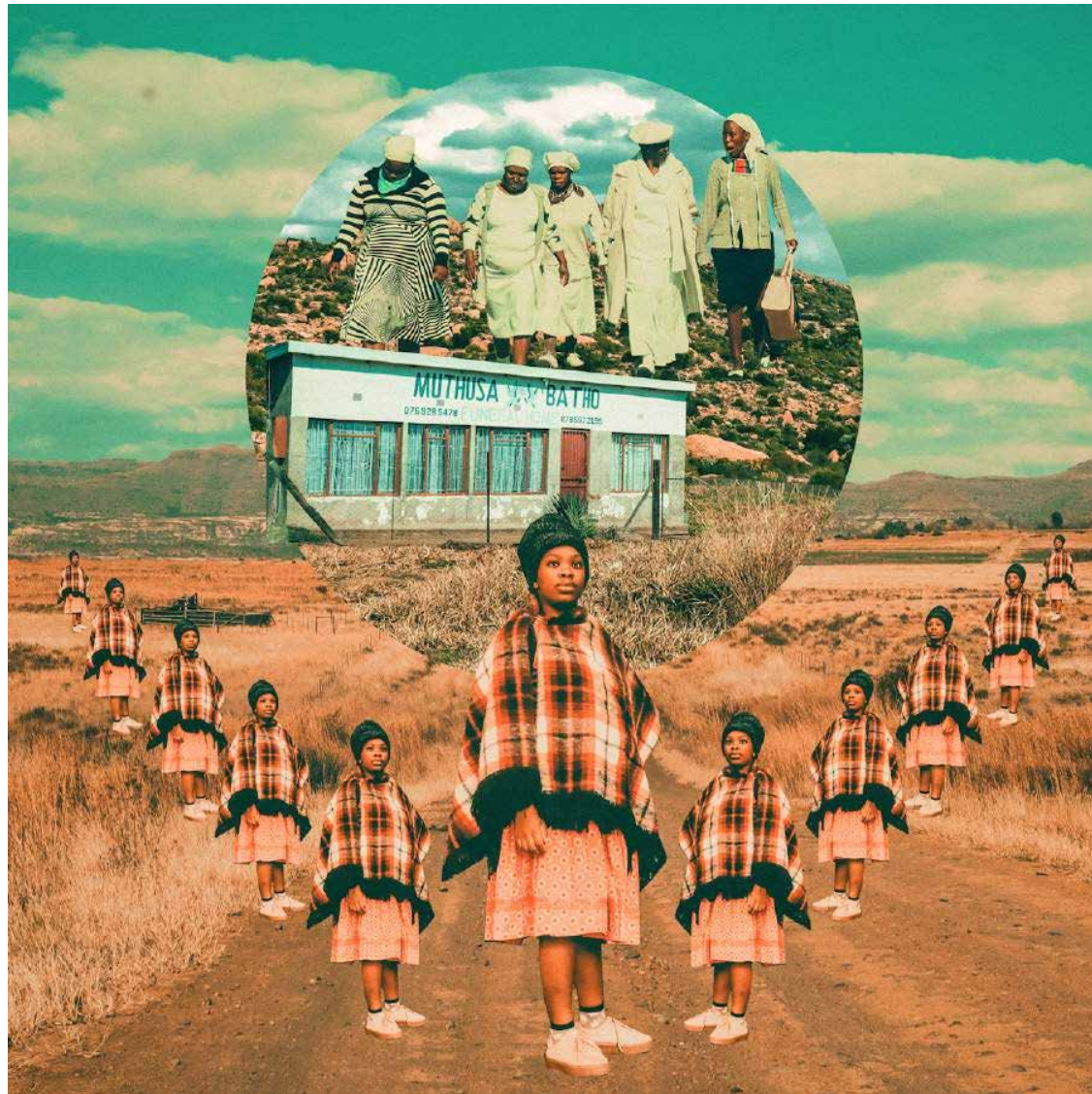
Cravings of a City Girl I
Print on Fine Art Textured Silk
50 x 50cm
2020



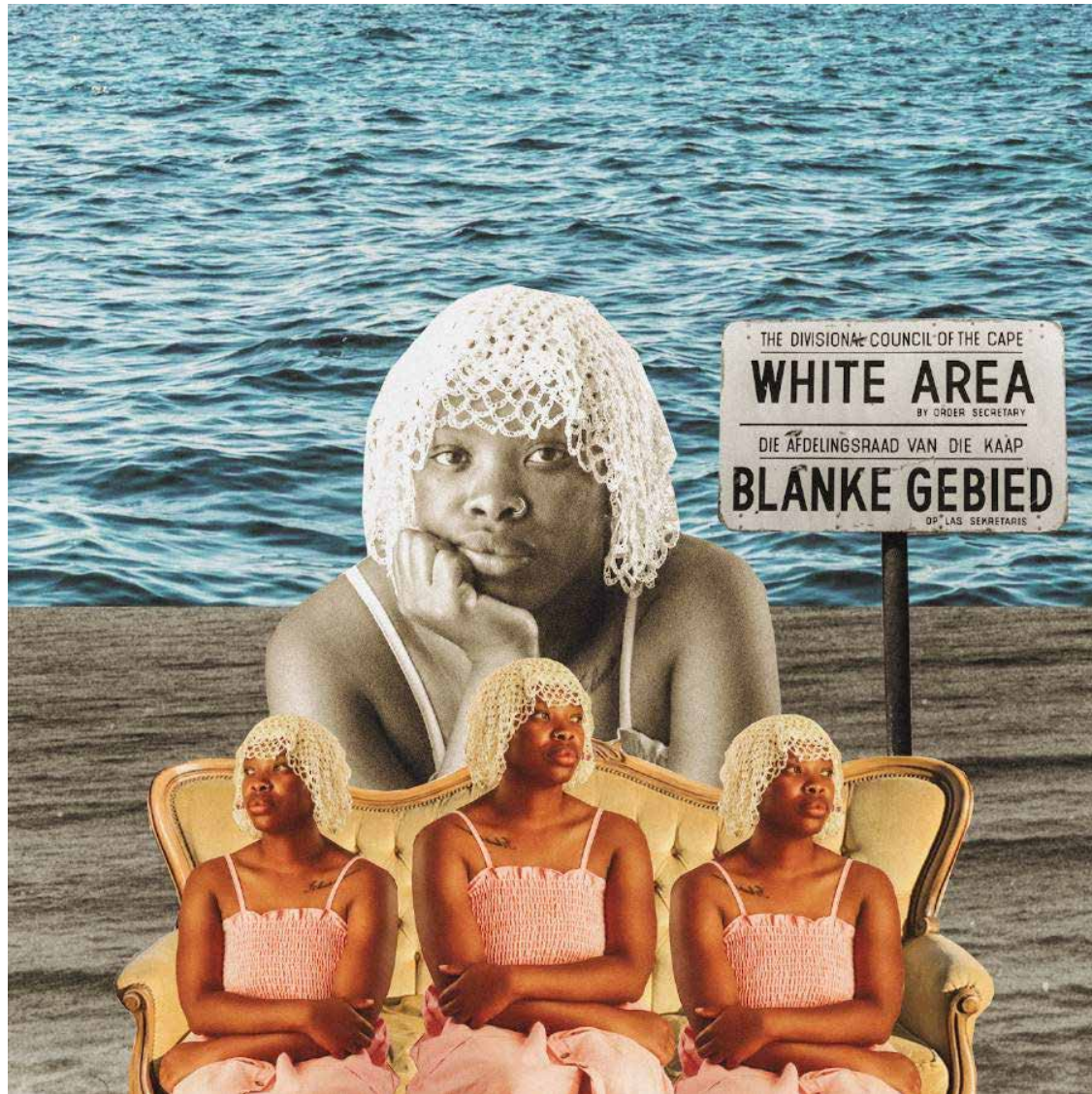
Cravings of a City Girl II
Print on Fine Art Textured Silk
50 x 50cm
2020



Cravings of a City Girl III
Print on Fine Art Textured Silk
50 x 50cm
2020



Home is a Feeling
Print on Fine Art Textured Silk
60 x 60cm
2020



White Fragility
Print on Fine Art Textured Silk
60 x 60cm
2019

Valerie Amani

Valerie Asiimwe Amani, is an artistic explorer born in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Her multi-disciplinary approach incorporates textile, poetry, moving image and digital collage; experimenting with notions of memory, hybrid spirituality and the complexities of the body.

Amani's body of work 'The Pathological Museum' started off as a form of self-exploration and acknowledgement of the effects — conscious and subconscious — of colonisation. The “sickness” or pathology identified as being ‘colonial parasites’ of religion, imperialism and language and the artist's body as host. A religious, consumerist, English speaking product of assimilation. 'The Pathological Museum' serves as a critical outlook on the recording of history, perspectives of identity (specifically the westernised African) and the ignorance of archives.

Valerie Amani is also a writer, curator and art educator - mentoring emerging artists within her community. Selected exhibitions include *Ferengi (The Strange)*, *Villa Mondriaan, Winterswijk, Netherlands (2021)*, *Altered States, Nafasi Art Space, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania & FRISE Art Center, Germany (2020)*, *Magician: Black body and Portraiture, Fellows Of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, U.S.A. (2020)* and *The Main Complaint - Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa*. She is currently completing a MFA at the University of Oxford.



The Host
Single-channel video
Size variable
2019



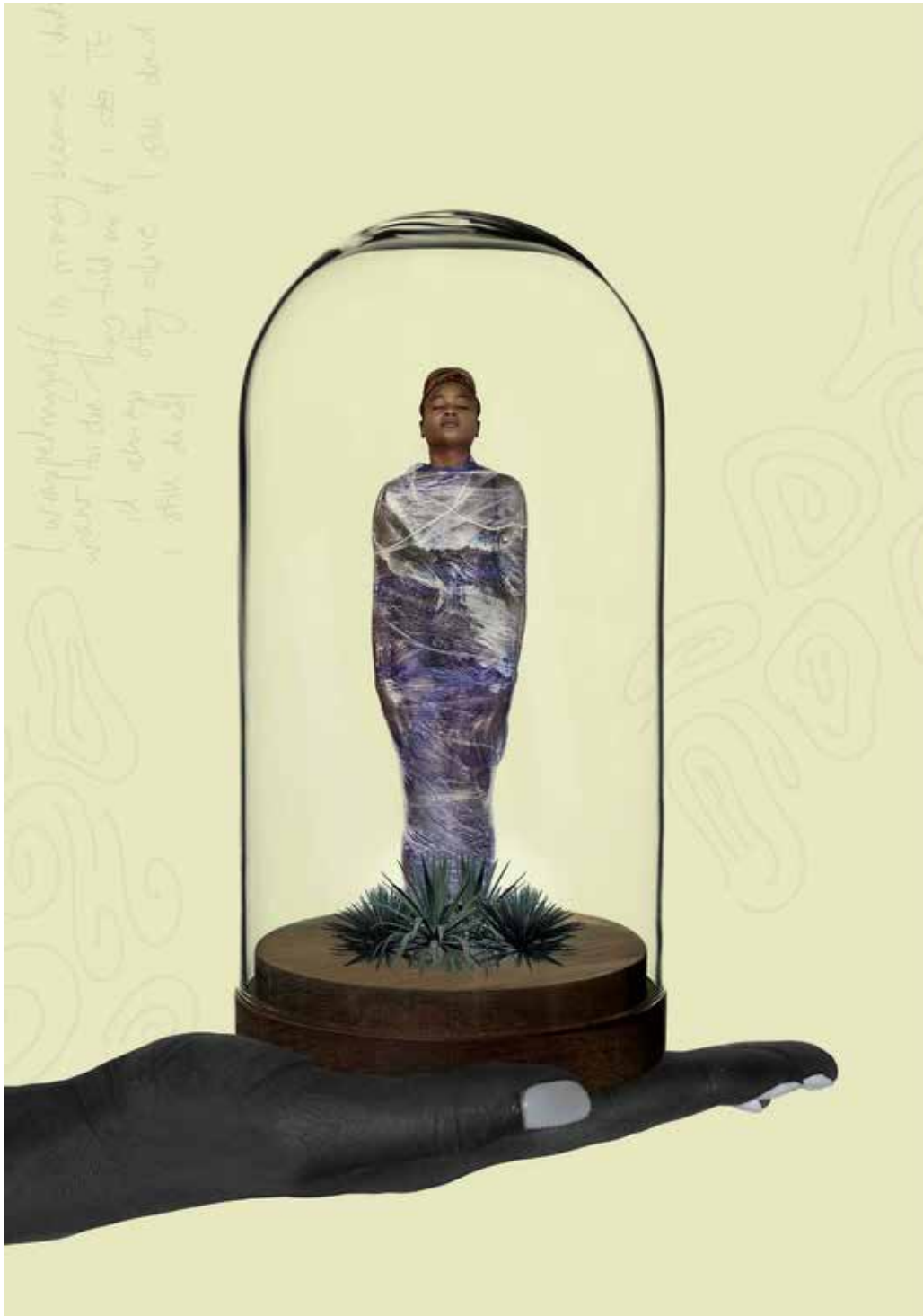
The Pathology
Single-channel video
Size variable
2019



All the English You Ate
Digital print
84 x 59cm
2019



Blind Faith
Digital print
84 x 59cm
2019



Harvest Season
Digital print
84 x 59cm
2019

GLORIA

GLOR1A is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice is rooted in music and technology-driven visual art, creating worlds in reality and for online audiences. Pushing the intersections of art, music and technology, her work explores Black futurism, science fiction and human emotion.

GLOR1A's presented film *Dark Matter Inc* is a fantastical essay and performance exploring the concept of a global nation-state for black people who own their own and profit from their own data. It raises questions of Black capitalism and socialism as well as the need for a more connected global infrastructure for Black people in the race for the future.

Her work has featured in many online, print and radio platforms including The Wire Clash Magazine, The Metro, BBC 1 Xtra and BBC Introducing. In 2020, she premiered a piece as part of British Council Amplify Artist Residency, to develop technology-based work alongside an online-only performance and talk series *Dystopian Futures*, collaboratively exploring art activism and technologies' effects on shaping our future. Other notable commissions include an Augmented Reality live performance for Somerset House and FACT Magazine in 2020.



Dark Matter Inc,
Single-channel video,
Size variable
2021

TERRAINS OF POSSIBILITY

KELANI ABASS
PULENG MONGALE
KARL OHIRI
VALERIE AMANI
GLORIA