HUMAN STORIES

NOW
GALLERY

nowgallery.co.uk

FEATURED ARTISTS

ANITA HLAZO 2 — 15

BEN MOYO 14 — 15

NIKKI ZAKKAS 16 — 21

FEDE KORTEZ 22 — 26

BEE DIAMONDHEAD 27 — 35

AART VERRIPS 36 — 41

KARABO MOOKI 42 — 47

ARCHIVE LIBRARY 48 — 51

HUMAN STORIES:
A YOUNG SOUTH AFRICA

For the seventh iteration of the annual photographic series; Human Stories, NOW Gallery is in dialogue with young South African artists and creative practitioners who are documenting its diverse culture, framed by a complex and sometimes turbulent political, socio-economic and cultural landscape. Disconnected and politically apathetic youth are facing 'load shedding', a decline in basic services like clean water and rapidly rising youth unemployment.

South Africa's young generation 'Ama2000s', are boldly and irreverently injecting a fresh creative energy into the global cultural scene through visual culture, music, and fashion. 50 years after the Soweto student uprisings and 30 years into the new South African democracy, we feature six photographic diegeses, surveying South African cities. These new works celebrate creative empowerment through artistic provocation, individualism, and authorship through a lens of youth-subcultural movements.

Collectively the exhibition reveals a rich collage of visual and cultural identities of South African cities.

Curated by Kaia Charles

ANITA HLAZO

In *Afrogrunge*, fashion designer and stylist Anita Hlazo situates her lens in the townships of Langa and Nyanga in Cape Town (eKapa). Cross-cultural approaches characterise the Ama2000s (GenZ) aesthetic. Her evolving style and identity of a Black 'Alternative' presenting girl mixes pop and grunge subcultures. Piercings, tattoos, and platformed boots express the unapologetically creative 'goth girl'. Hlazo's portraits are contextualised by the built environment and communities of her township (Ekasi). Hlazo collaborates with photographer Luxola Witvoet and musician Sanele Blaai. She also shares intimate portraits of herself and her late friend and early collaborator, photographer Ben Moyo.

Iintsimbi zaBelungu
(English steel)
ANITA HLAZO

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

uLaurna ezigusheni eNyanga
(Laurna at "The Sheep's" in Nyanga)
ANITA HLAZO

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

eRankini ngasezContaineni eKapa
(At the rank, near the containers in Cape Town)
ANITA HLAZO

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

KwiiRhontsi zakwaLanga
(The Allyways of Langa)
ANITA HLAZO

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

Exhibition Catalogue

KwaBoxer
(At Boxer)
ANITA HLAZO

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

ezBhasini eKapa
(At the bus station in Cape Town)
ANITA HLAZO

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

Exhibition Catalogue

uLoa ezigusheni eNyanga
(Loa at "The Sheep's" in Nyanga)
ANITA HLAZO

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Abantwana abazigodukelayo
(Kids who go home - from school - by themselves)
ANITA HLAZO

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

The series captures the Afrogrunge girl, contextualised within black communities eKapa (Cape Town). Hlazo's Afrogrunge girl is characterised by being a person of colour who portrays the rock / alt scene within their way of dress which is still uncommon in the streets of eLokshini (The Hood).

The scenes take place in Langa, one of the oldest townships in Cape Town as well as the notoriousNyanga township. In contrast, Hlazo then shot in the Cape Town, CBD (Central Business District) framed by commuters travelling from work to their homes.

Hlazo focused on the bus station and taxi ranks in the CBD; forms of transport are predominantly used by working black communities, to emphasize the cultural discourse.

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

Afrogrunge
ANITA HLAZO

Year: 2023
Medium: Video
Duration: 00:02:14
Director: Ayabulela Zonke
Musician: Sanele Blaai @couch_surf_co

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

'Prior to our shoot date, a taxi strike broke out affecting areas like Khayelitsha and many spaces predominantly occupied by people of colour causing a shutdown of services. Taxis and buses were scarce and videos emerged of individuals attacking people just trying to take people to work.

The team were late to set and had to work on top of a burnt-out table that was in the process of being rebuilt in the Streets of Nyanga, in between the bus station as well as the taxi rank. We were approached by a man who told us that we were working on top of what was left of his table.'

Anita Hlazo

ANITA HLAZO AND BEN MOYO

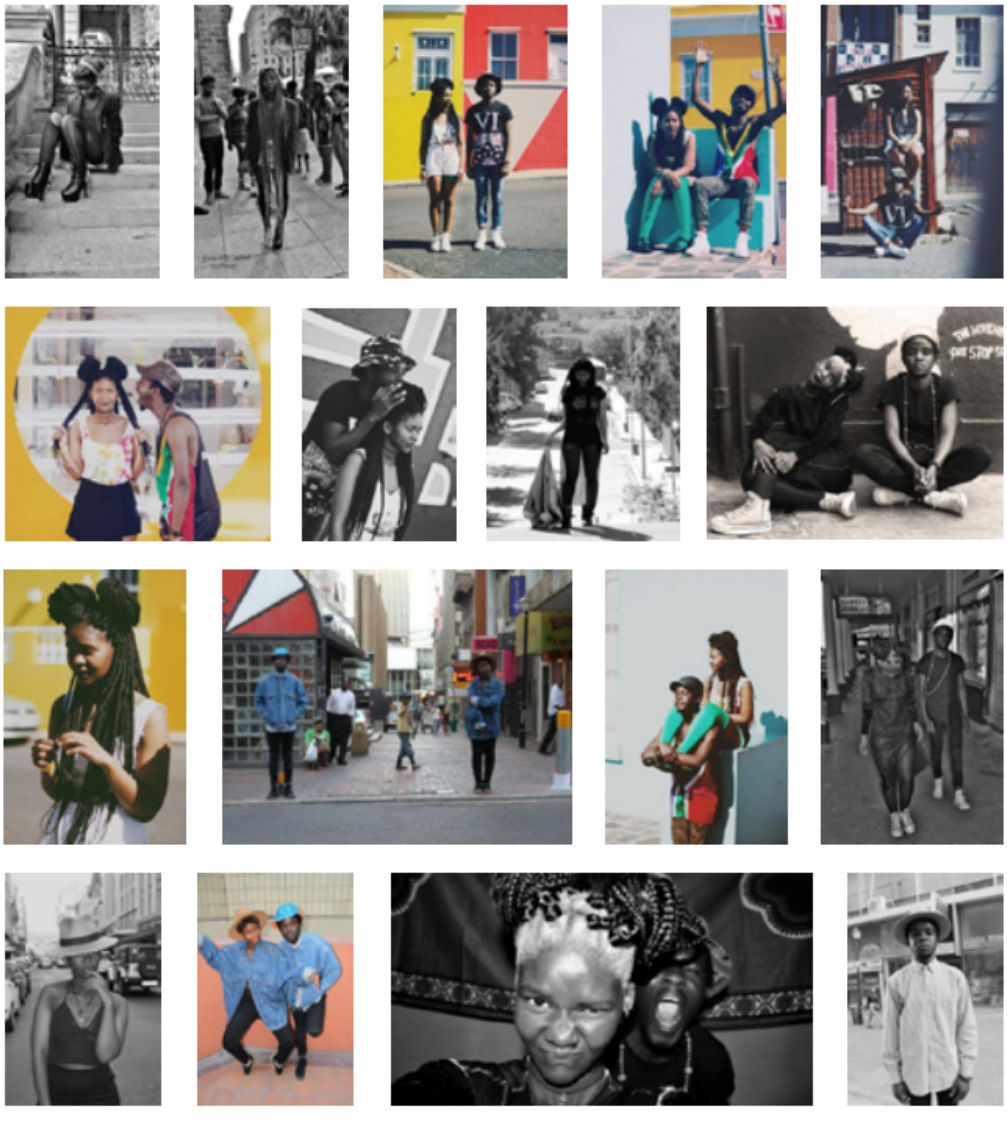
A series of early Afrogrunge images taken by Anita Hlazo and Ben Moyo between 2014 and 2016. The work highlights the early stages of the artist's personal identity, which evolved into her brand.

'Ben was a photographer originally from Zimbabwe who came to South Africa with his Iphone and a vision to become a well-renowned photographer. He took perfect stills which shaped our Tumblr page.

We would pitch ideas to our creative network, hoping to bring our visions to life. Ben's goal in life was to occupy the biggest spaces in the world. He is survived by his son, Ben junior, who will continue his legacy.

It has been an honour to know Ben and watch him grow. I hope in this moment he is with us in spirit to witness this grand gesture of what his ideas have now become.'

Anita Hlazo



Long Live Ben Moyo (Series)

Top Row (L-R): Jeffrey on Stairs, Rapunzel's Box Braids, Uniformed in Bo-Kaap, Ukuba ubusaphila, Sunbathing
Second Row (L-R): Silence, Nantoni Na, Mayenzeke, Bottle Legs, The Movement
Third Row (L-R): Ndim Lo, Ben's Perspective, Kungcono ndicimele, Jam that Session
Bottom Row (L-R): The Best Man, Denims, A Test Scene, Odd Circus, The Chocolate Brother

ANITA HLAZO AND BEN MOYO

Year: 2014-16
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt

nowgallery.co.uk

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

NIKKI ZAKKAS

Johannesburg based photographer; Nikki Zakkas co-creates the narratives of the people she photographs. She captures a diverse cast of young people within significant urban environments. The images are populated by symbolic clues to their personalities and cultural backgrounds. Zakkas is keen to share cultural richness, diversity, and pride through a vibrant tapestry of experiences.

Oratile Mokwena, Lucas Moripe Stadium, Atteridgeville, City of Tshwane
NIKKI ZAKKAS

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Oratile Mokwena, a 22-year-old powerhouse in professional soccer, proudly represents both the Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies Team and the South African Senior women's team. Her soccer journey began at age 7 in Kgabalatsane, initially a hobby that evolved into a serious passion by age 10.

With her first pair of soccer boots, she fearlessly played alongside boys in games and tournaments. A turning point came at a Rustenburg tournament, where she was scouted for Basetsana Academy at the High Performance Center in Pretoria. After three years of dedicated training, her exceptional talent caught the eye of a Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies coach, propelling her into professional soccer at just 15.

As the first scouted female player from Kgabalatsane, Oratile became a beacon of hope and inspiration for younger girls in her community, showing them that they too can aspire to reach her level of success.

nowgallery.co.uk

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

Bhungane Mehlomakulu, Vaalpark, Sasolburg
NIKKI ZAKKAS

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Bhungane Mehlomakulu is a 24-year-old professional ballet and contemporary dancer from the Vaal Triangle in Gauteng.
"Dance discovered me, aligning circumstances just right," he shares.

His dance journey began in grade 9 at school in Sasolburg. Fate led him to volunteer as a male dancer and discover his passion. His journey led him to Johannesburg's National School of the Arts in grade 11 and, after graduating, he secured scholarships for his 2nd and 3rd years at Cape Academy of Performing Dance.

Now a part of Cape Town City Ballet, Bhungane is poised to join London's Ballet Black professional ballet company, as his dual passions for dance and fashion design continually drive his pursuit of excellence.
Zakkas captured Bhungane in his hometown of Sasolburg, where he spent his formative years.

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

Exhibition Catalogue

Rabia Ghoor, Linden, Johannesburg
NIKKI ZAKKAS

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Rabia Ghoor, the founder and creative mind behind Swiitch Beauty, began her entrepreneurial journey at 14 years old, from her bedroom in Pretoria.

As the youngest of 40 first cousins, Rabia's upbringing immersed her in a community where a vibrant culture of business and entrepreneurship was an integral part of daily life. She reflects, "Evening dinners often turned into sound-boarding sessions about business ideas." With encouragement from her family and a passion for makeup as a tool for self-expression, Rabia took a bold step away from high school at just 15, dedicating herself entirely to her burgeoning business.

At 23, her brand has flourished into one of South Africa's most successful cosmetics companies, exemplifying South African innovation at its finest. In the accompanying portrait, we witness her daily ritual of applying makeup—a ritual imbued with her brand's identity and her personal journey.

nowgallery.co.uk

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

Red Robyn, Lower Marine Parade st, South Beach, Durban
NIKKI ZAKKAS

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Ashleigh Robyn de Gee, known as Red Robyn in the world of music, is a multi-talented artist hailing from Durban, South Africa. Red Robyn's diverse musical path includes being a part of the jazz fusion band Black Crystals and collaborating with a variety of artists.

In close collaboration with South African composer MISSU, she's carved her niche in the Durban music scene, where she's known as an alternative indie artist with a penchant for pop, creating music that resonates with dreamers. In her own words, Red Robyn shares her music as "a message of hope, embodying a never-give-up, anything-is-possible attitude".

Zakkas captured Ashley at Durban Funworld, a shuttered beachfront amusement park in the city's central business district. The park remains an iconic feature of the promenade, evoking a sense of nostalgia while serving as a visual reminder of the economic challenges of the local area.

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

Exhibition Catalogue

Joda Nkosi, Orange Grove Seventh Day Adventist Church, Johannesburg
NIKKI ZAKKAS

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Joda Nkosi, a 21-year-old, Johannesburg-based African R&B and soul singer-songwriter, draws profound inspiration from her faith and her close connection to the church community.

In her own words she says, "As an artist, my Christian faith and relationship with the church have played a significant role in shaping me." She views her talent as a divine gift meant to uplift others, and the church has been a wellspring of guidance, support, and artistic growth for her.

Joda's portrait, captured at her denomination's church, serves as a visual ode to her unyielding faith and its ability to inspire.

Ying Yang
NIKKI ZAKKAS

Year: 2018
Medium: Vinyl Print

nowgallery.co.uk

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

FEDE KORTEZ

Fede Kortez's *Mother City Vibes* captures vibrant portraits imbued with saturated colour, typified by the Bo-Kaap and Woodstock neighbourhoods in Cape Town. The vibrant Bo-Kaap houses, celebrate the district's Muslim identity and have been historically painted by the Cape Malays in celebration of Eid. Kortez seeks to convey the aesthetic energies of these areas as well as capturing a Pan African pride and connection to people he photographs.

Mother City Vibes 1
FEDE KORTEZ

Year: 2022
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

This portrait captures a young woman posed in front of a pink technicolor façade typified by Bo-Kaap.

Brotherhood
FEDE KORTEZ

Year: 2022
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

This image was captured in Cape Town in 2022. Kortez documents the tender bond between these siblings, with one brother braiding the other's hair. Kortez is challenging tropes often perceived as feminine and masculine traits.

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

Exhibition Catalogue

Contrast
FEDE KORTEZ

Year: 2022
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

This image titled ***Contrast*** was also captured using the vibrant architecture of Bo- Kaap. Kortez celebrates the model's rich skin tone offset set against deeply saturated colour.

Mother City Vibes 2
FEDE KORTEZ

Year: 2022
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Mother City Vibes 2 captures the area of Woodstock, Cape Town, famous for its art and vintage style.

The "Fresh Boys" vintage look is a classic of many areas of the city of Cape Town. This photograph was specifically shot in Woodstock, an area filled with art. Kortez creates a bohemian feel through a soft use of pastels and iconic vintage car.

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

In *Back to Soil*, Bee Diamondhead celebrates the beauty, softness and vulnerability of 3 Queer male musicians, debunking cultural stereotypes of the South African music industry. Diamondhead critiques perpetual toxic masculinity and acknowledges that her country South Africa has the no1 gender-based violence rate in the world. Her nudes are painted with elemental-coloured clays and earth. The sitters engage in 'a ritual of remoulding' themselves, 'channelling back with the soil or giving back to it'.

Desire Marea nº1
BEE DIAMONDHEAD

Year: 2023
Medium: Digital Print on Polyester Woven Canvas

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

Exhibition Catalogue

Thuthuka Sibisi nº1
BEE DIAMONDHEAD

Year: 2023
Medium: Digital Print on Polyester Woven Canvas

Muneyi nº2
BEE DIAMONDHEAD

Year: 2023
Medium: Digital Print on Polyester Woven Canvas

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

Desire Marea nº2
BEE DIAMONDHEAD

Year: 2023
Medium: Digital Print on Polyester Woven Canvas

Muneyi nº1
BEE DIAMONDHEAD

Year: 2023
Medium: Digital Print on Polyester Woven Canvas

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

Thuthuka Sibisi n°2
BEE DIAMONDHEAD

Year: 2023
Medium: Digital Print on Polyester Woven Canvas

Back to Soil is a work of symbolic return, rootedness and recognition. Diamondhead has chosen musicians whose work is rooted in healing, ancestry and vulnerability, the portraits facilitate a different kind of seeing – away from the stark glare of popularity, fame and its forms of fractured visibility.

Stripped to skin and covered in clay, these images celebrate the transparency, openness and care evident in the practices of Desire Marea, Muneyi and Thuthuka Sibisi – all of whom resist and refuse the hyper – and toxically masculine. These artists instead mould meaningful, magical and moving music as a practice of freedom and reflecting its sonic power.

The work is a recognition of a foundation that is generational and a reality that moves beyond gendered expectations and societal demands, as these artists move from the soil and the soul – towards the truly healing and restorative.

Printed on lightweight fabric that echoes this sense of vulnerability, and the unweighted and unadorned, their fluidity, grace, imagination, care, power, tenderness and intensity are the life forces that inspire and produce these photographic portraits, as they mould themselves anew – in conversation with those who have walked this earth before, returning to the soil.

Back to Soil 1
BEE DIAMONDHEAD

Year: 2023
Medium: Video
Duration: 00:02:15
DOP & Post-Production: Travys Owen
Talent: Desire Marea, Muneyi, Thuthuka Sibisi
Music: Composed by Thuthuka Sibisi, with vocals by Muneyi,
Xolisile Bongwana & Nokuthula Magubane and mix by Riffi Wacho
Make Up Artist: Lyn Kennedy
Art Assistant: Siyabonga Mtshali
Production Assistant: Thapelo Molefe
Jewellery: Celokuhle Ntlatseng, Philisa Zibi Creative Production: Sillage Network
Studio: Shamase Studios

AART VERRIPS

In *My Liewe Land [My Great Land (Afrikaans)]* photographer Aart Verrips, reimagines 'the rainbow nation' through self-expression, featuring a collective of individuals who are driving the culture. Verrips explores the intersection of music, performance, and fashion through subcultural movements like Amapiano and vivid vogue nights.

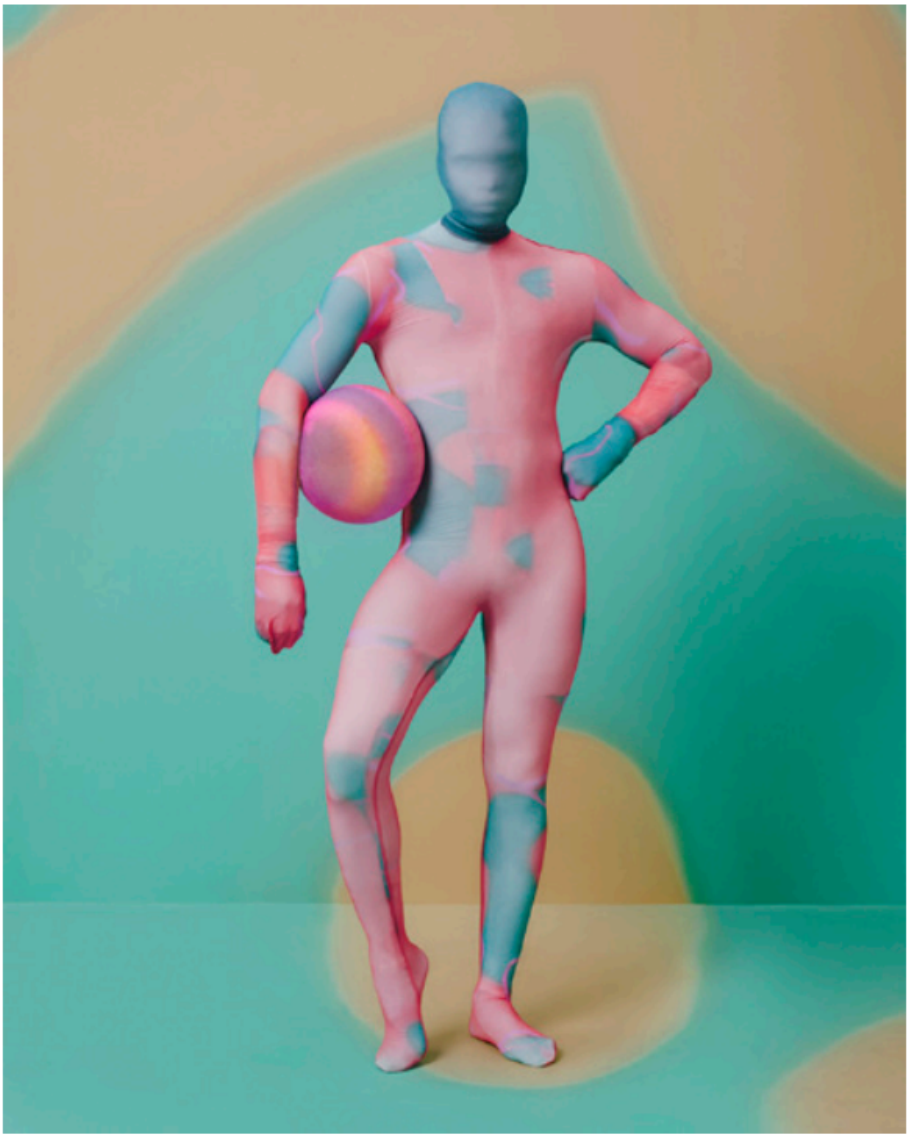
Vogue
AART VERRIPS

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed
Direction & Photography: Aart Verrips
Set Design: Francois Ferreira

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

Design
AART VERRIPS

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed
Direction & Photography: Aart Verrips
Set Design: Francois Ferreira



Artistic Sphere
AART VERRIPS

Year: 2022
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed
Direction & Photography: Aart Verrips
Set Design: Francois Ferreira

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

AmaPiano
AART VERRIPS

Year: 2023
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed
Direction & Photography: Aart Verrips
Set Design: Francois Ferreira

My Liewe Land is an artistic journey spanning over a decade, exploring the profound influence of culture and the creative community in South Africa. Through an interplay of silhouettes, this collection of portraits unveils the transformative power of change-makers who have left an indelible mark on the world stage, reshaping global perspectives and propelling South Africa's prominence across various industries.

A series of striking silent but potent profiles of individuals and communities whose collective efforts have led to the elevation and success of South Africa on a global scale.

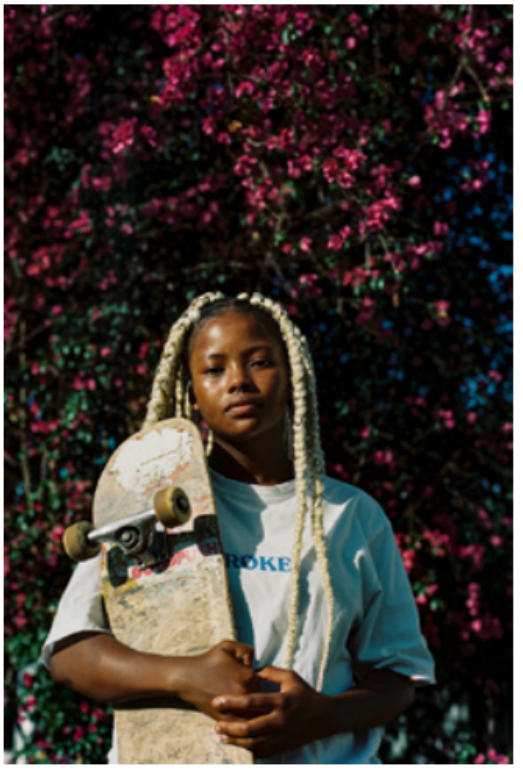
KARABO MOOKI

Island Gals by photographer Karabo Mooki is a photo-documentation of the lives of "Island Gals" a skateboarding community, made up of a tightly knit crew of Black women and queer identities based in Johannesburg and Soweto. The young women in this series are pushing borders, and gaining greater recognition within skateboarding by reclaiming their right to appear in the places they skate. The collective are declaring the right to protest to South Africa's tumultuous history of gender-based violence.

Harmony
KARABO MOOKI

Year: 2022
Medium: Vinyl Print

Human Stories: A Young South Africa



Thato Moet
KARABO MOOKI

Year: 2022
Medium: Vinyl Print

Soweto Gals
KARABO MOOKI

Year: 2022
Medium: Vinyl Print

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

Exhibition Catalogue

Jeanne
KARABO MOOKI

Year: 2022
Medium: Vinyl Print

Human Stories: A Young South Africa

Linda
KARABO MOOKI

Year: 2022
Medium: C-Type Fuji Matt, Framed

Island Gals Stories: Karabo Mooki in conversation with Linda Mbambo

Why do you skate?

I skate because it feels free, skateboarding provides a space that isn't defined by gender. Skateboarding offers me the opportunity to tap into a fun and free tool to gain fitness, physical strength and it feels good to accomplish tricks. When you have a hobby and you move onto the next level, it is rewarding in a non-stressful way, in protest to the way that capitalism controls us. It feels good and it allows me to feel free.

What does skateboarding feel like for you?

Well, what does skating feel like for me? Well, I am not going lie, it is a little frustrating to progress slowly, but I am a beginner, and to see others move so swiftly and boldly is inspiring. I feel inspired to get to that level at a suitable pace. It feels liberating, it feels empowering, it feels bold to be brave enough to step into skate parks that are mostly taken up by cis heterosexual men. But to also to feel like, I can do this, because historically we've always been made to feel shy to skate around boys, but now I don't care, and it's an awesome feeling!

How did you get into skating?

I got into skating in during the pandemic, I found myself with a lot of free time and stuck in the house, but also continuing in really harmful habits of mine, being a fulltime musician, DJ and sound and light technician, so most of the time I'm at the bar, clubs, theatres, and I found myself only going out in the evenings and consuming alcohol which contributed to building very narrow minded relationships with people in these alcohol fueled spaces. I had a deep desire to build a lifestyle where I could spend more time outside, I wanted to reduce my substance intake and I wanted to feel good about my health, without having to battle a tequila hangover the next morning. And that's how I got into skating and it's been awesome, I spotted Island Gals skate posts on my timeline increasingly and I thought, what the heck, let's go! And I went to meet the community of girl skaters at Skateistan, and Empire skate park and I thoroughly enjoyed it, everyone was so welcoming, everyone was so cool, creative, edgy, I found my tribe through this warmth. There are no limits to age, no limits to gender and I rocked with it so hard.

What skating is like for you as a Black woman in Africa?

Skateboarding as a Black woman in Africa, feels revolutionary. I have a story like most women in skate, where you are skating on the street and you land a trick, or worst-case scenario, you fall. And I get up and I see a bunch of taxi drivers yelling out "Woah woah woah, cherry!" which is absolutely hilarious but it feels good to break barriers, it feels like a small sense of playing part in the revolution, it doesn't need to be me protesting or rioting or require lengthy paragraphs in news articles to feel like I am an activist and a revolutionist. By simply walking through downtown Johannesburg with my board and my buddies, it really does feel like I'm changing the world. I see girls around me spark up with interest, excitement, and pride. That's why I do what I do and why I'm a girl skater, a female DJ and I couldn't be prouder of the girls and myself.

2000 AND FREE

A Has-Been's Observations about Ama 2000

Ama 2000, the centennial generation in South African popular culture. With an in-your-face attitude and a bad rep, this generation of digital natives are the bane of the existence of my own generation (Generation X). But that's most likely because *Ama 2000* are brave enough to say it like it is and with the carefree tone (often read as 'rude) that we only wish we could. No freer a generation of youth has there been in our history of physical oppression and social captivity.

Our youth, born in the 2000s, are the subversion previous generations of youth have stop-started on since the advent of democracy in 1994. Armed with a general disdain for establishment and a distaste for social prescriptions, I can only envy the level of don't-give-a-fuck these ones approach the slightest judgments made on them as individuals, as a generation and as a movement.

Some will tell you *Ama 2000* are entitled, over-stimulated and under-parented. If that's the case, then that just might be what it takes to instill a sense of INDIVIDUALISM, to have a personal relationship with SPIRITUALISM and to feed a sense of SOCIAL AND POLITICAL JUSTICE.

The *Human Stories exhibition* is an apt visual representation of this fiery, self-assured, what-you-see-is-what-you-get youth culture.

In the era of isms and an expectation to fall into some category of principles, it would appear the only ism *Ama 2000* are willing to ascribe to is individualism. The quest to define oneself in whatever terms said self chooses, as well as the fluidity to change and do so with neither expectation nor judgement, feels paramount to this youth subculture. And the first indicator to let you know just who one is as an individual, is in the fashion of the day.

The avant-garde, neo-gothic, all-black and silver studded bodies of the 'afro-goth/grunge' is just one subculture of individualism (per the muses of Anita Hlazo's imagery). An oxymoron, I am sure you are shouting out. But that would be semantics. Because even in the quest for autonomy, no man is an island and we're all just trying to find our fellow islanders who feel like us, think like us and dress like us. In the 1990s I belonged to what they'd call *'abo mrapper'* ('the rappers') which was usually said with disdain, as we were regarded as African Lite (a lesser African) because of our preference for rap music and culture. This was always contrasted against the seemingly more proudly local styles of dress and music. And this is where *Ama 2000* intrinsically are just doing better. These divisions between the existing youth subcultures feels to have left with the ageing of Generation X. For *Ama 2000*, how you choose to dress or identify is not a cause for negative judgement or comparisons. Who you are is who you are. If your taste leans towards the nostalgia appropriation of a bygone era, then 'slay'. Disclaimer: in this instance 'appropriation' is not used with a negative inflection, as the word has come to be used. Looking at Fede Kortez' *Cape Town Vibez* imagery, the aesthetic needs no translation. Images of Foxy Brown and Shaft likely jump into one's mind (at least in my mind that is the first reference). The era is unmistakable and the appropriation of it, not frivolous. This is a statement of blackness and proudness (again, in my mind).

To speak of *Ama 2000* (albeit admittedly subjectively), is to speak of identity, the cousin of individualism. And the personal identity of Karabo Mooki's Island Gals speaks for itself.

Exhibition runs 11 Oct – 19 Nov 2023

Beyond the threads, looks, and accessories *Ama 2000* is a socio-political movement. Whereas my generation was the era of political apathy, this new youth is anything but. This youth is vocal with their opinions and principles when it comes to the social and political climate in South Africa, and they do not mince their words. Known to be rather brash and even 'disrespectful', the young ones take anti-establishment to a more nuanced level. Having attended predominantly white, Catholic schools, I grew up knowing that school rules are school rules, and we just followed them. But when in 2016, high school learners protested their school's policy around hair, I watched with shame as 16-year-olds did the thing I never knew I could do. Vehemently refusing to accept that their afros and dreadlocks were deemed 'untidy' and 'impractical', youth born at the turn of the century turned school culture on its head. As loud as they are, one could argue that their political activism remains in the digital space, of which they are natives. Accused of being twitter warriors, they also lean heavily into cancel culture – a questionable and debatable approach to social activism.

Establishment is possibly the antithesis of this generation. The word itself seems to stand against the fabric of personal identity and they will raze it if it stands in their way of finding their place in the world. One of the most recent victims of their quest for self-identity is religion. And thank God for that.

Religion, and particularly Christianity, has been a vociferously debated topic in South Africa. Our country is largely Christian, but over the last few decades, there has been push back against organized religion being part of our South African identity. Of course, this goes back to the very history of how Christianity came to be part of African society, but increasingly, Christianity has come to be seen as a conscious colonial quest to undo the African identity. Though most young people still attend church and identify as Christian, the movement towards spiritualism and African spiritualism as opposed to ascribing to religion is fast gaining ground. Content on traditional entertainment platforms as well as online content, is creating a new narrative around our historical spiritualism as Africans. Podcasts like *Unpopular Opinion* lean specifically into conversations about the reclamation of an African way of being, spiritually and otherwise. Where previously *ubungoma* (a calling/gift from the ancestors to become a health and spiritual healer) was seen as backward and 'satanic'; black South Africans are once again embracing their spiritual culture. More young people, even from *Ama 2000* are hearing and heeding the call. Bee Diamondhead's aptly named Back to Soil collection of photographs, is the visual representation of how the reclamation of African Spiritualism is no longer something fringe or marginalized but is the status quo.

Every generation looks at themselves and thinks they were the agents of change; that they were pioneers of something or the other; that 'in my time, things were right'. But if I'm being honest with myself, it is *Ama 2000* I envy; it is them I feel I should have been; it is their unrestricted comfort in their own skins that I envy. They are rude and they are loud. But you know what… The kids are alright.

Written by Nonzi Bogatsu

Nonzi is a South African screenwriter by profession and self-confessed 'disturber of the peace' by birth. Her writing credits span across different media and genres and she has written crime, drama, comedy, action and animation. In her spare time she people watches as the basis for her creative inspiration.

ARCHIVE LIBRARY

South African music has always been ahead of the curve and is the pulse of the youth subcultural movements. From experimental jazz in the 60s, 70s, Bubblegum pop of the 80s through to the electronic and hip hop inspired sounds of Kwaito. The country is taking the world by storm with 'Kwaito's Daughter' Amapiano.

We have curated a library of books, music and essays centered on South African youth culture then and now for visitors to explore.

Selected Album Artworks and Archival Imagery:

Peacock, Splash
King Kong All African Jazz Opera, King Kong Original Cast
Black Reggae, The Movers
African Dream, Vicky Sampson
Zvuaya Sei?, Oliver Mtukudzi
Let's Groove Tonight, Patience Africa
Repeat After Me, The Movers
Moving, 340ml

Brenda Fassie Performing, 12 January 1985

Iconic Afropop singer Brenda Fassie (aka MaBrrr) at The Concert In The Park. Ellis Park Stadium, Johannesburg, South Africa.

The benefit concert was organised by the Operation Hunger charity organisation, attended by a 125,000 strong *multi-racial* audience — probably the first of its kind — and has been dubbed the "biggest concert ever held in Africa" (if not one of). 22 diverse bands performed including Brenda Fassie & The Big Dudes, Harari, Steve Kekana, Hotline, The Rockets, Blondie Makhene, The Working Girls, Marah Louw, Street Kids and Savuka (with Johnny Clegg) amongst others. 1985 was a volatile period in South Africa with violence sanctioned by the apartheid regime, counter violence from banned political movements' armed forces, assassinations of community leaders and separate existence of black and white communities.

The page 9 headline read: "*INVINCIBLE: MaBrrr is a hard act to follow.*" Photographer: Joe Sefale © Sunday Times.

Books:

A Dry White Season, André Brink
AFROSURF, Mami Wata, Selema Masekela
Children of Soweto (Drumbeats S.), Mzamane Mbulelo
Collective Amnesia, Koleka Putuma
Down Second Avenue, Ezekiel Mphahlele
How to Write About Africa, Binyayanga Wainaina
I Write What I Like: Selected Writings, Steve Biko
Irma Stern and the Racial Paradox of South African Modern Art: Audacities of Color, LaNitra M. Berger
Jump and Other Stories, Nadine Gordimer
Marabi Dance, Modikwe Dikobe
Queer Africa Vol.1 New and Collected Fiction, Karen Martin, Makhosazana Xaba
Separation, Babette Brown
The Hidden Star, K. Sello Duiker
We are no longer at ease: The struggle for #FeesMustFall, Wandile Ngcaweni, Busani Ngcaweni
Youth In South Africa: (in)visibility and national development, Ariane De Lannoy, Malose Langa, Heidi Brooks

Music:

Grazing in the Grass, Hugh Masekela
Greatest Hits: Brenda Fassie, The Queen of African *Pop*, Brenda Fassie

Halloween, Tkzee
Hugh Masekela: The Collection, Hugh Masekela
Pata Pata, Miriam Makeba
The Hurricane, Msawawa
Top Dawg, Thebe
Words of Wisdom, Boom Shaka
Yakhal'inkomo, Mankunku Quartet

Collection curated in collaboration with Kwelagobe Sekele

Associated essay written by Nonzi Bogatsu

NOW
GALLERY

nowgallery.co.uk