

Opening speech: **I am because you are: A search for Ubuntu with permission to dream.**

To Standard Bank –

- Thank you for the foresight to grow and to continue to build on a collection of this nature.
- Thank you for understanding the important role that the arts play in our development as humans and for supporting the arts through programs like this gallery and the National Arts Festival and the Joy of Jazz ...amongst others.
- Thank you for the invitation to curate this exhibition and the absolute privilege of working with this incredible collection.

It has been a special experience and I thank you for this opportunity

This exhibition talks about the ability to dream. It gives us permission to have a vision and even if just for a short while, to imagine the ideal (whatever that means for you). This exhibition is a desire (expressed through these artworks) for conscious inter connectivity. It's not asking us to connect with each other. It's saying that we are already connected to each other whether we acknowledge that or not. And because this relationship is so innate, indeed I am because you are and you are because I am. And so our actions affect each other. In fact, even our thoughts affect each other. Individually and collectively, we are both responsible for, and have the power to change an oppressive government. We are both responsible for, and have the power to change a corrupt leadership. We are both responsible for, and have the power to change a sick school principle who abuses his position of power. Because his sickness, is not an individual sickness, it is a collective one. And therefore the healing of these and other sicknesses is equally a collective one. And until we take individual responsibility for that, we will continue to produce Minister's of Enterprises (as in the work of Kudzenai Cherui).

The works of Penny Siopis, and Dumile Feni and William Kentridge make real our pain, our struggle and the complexity of what it means to be human. We do indeed experience terminal hurt and terminal longing.

The artworks representing the indigenous people of our country are included in this exhibition to remind us of a world before borders. A time when we not only respected each other but also the environment which we shared with others and with nature. A time devoid of accumulation, power and control. And at the same time, the presence of these works through colonial eyes speak precisely of power and control and accumulation.

Diane Victor shows us what it would look like to have blind faith. And Andrew Shabangu's photograph points towards a different kind of journey. One that we are all aware of, but often forget.

Downstairs, the euphoria of South African nationalism is disrupted by the realities of the violence we experience and those that we accuse. And while we strive for a rainbow nation, the reality is that there is a lays chips packet in that picture, reminding us of the imperfection of that ideal.

And then works like that of Tommy Motswai, convey to us that despite our circumstances, and despite our history, there is a place for colour and joy and humour and fun.

My personal intention in the curation of this exhibition is that you allow yourself to converse with these works. Because if you look at them with your heart instead of your eyes, and you listen to them with your being instead of your ears, they will share something with you in a way that only an artwork can, and we can (if we allow ourselves) walk away from this experience questioning who we are in this world and the impact that we have on those around us.

An exhibition of this scale and nature is not easy to put together. There are many many individuals who have contributed to creating this narrative. I would like to acknowledge and thank all these contributions very briefly: thank you to Standard bank, and to Sue, and Barbara and Same. Thank you Julia, and Joseph and Themba and Toni and Christene. Thank you to the catalogue contributors, designers, and editors. Thank you Chris, and Kevin and Cliff. And Diane and all the marketing, communication and events people involved. And thank you to my beautiful family for your continued support.

Please do enjoy the exhibition.