



STILETTO STYLE: Nkateko 'Takkies' Maswanganye, dancer and founder of the Rockingheels fitness class in Hurlingham, Johannesburg

Picture: MOEKETSI MOTICOE

## Sexual heeling

You can just get fit — or you can get fit while discovering your inner vamp. Leigh-Anne Hunter puts on her stilettos

**F**ITNESS used to be simple, but these days there are a gazillion options: should I CrossFit today, or trampoline, or run around at full moon in neon Lycra?

G'bye takkies — heels are the latest fitness fad. Nkateko Maswanganye calls her workout in high heels "Rockingheels" — ironic, since her nickname is Takkies. (Her teacher came up with it because she would race out the classroom for dance rehearsals with a pair of takkies in her hand.)

Maswanganye is small and muscular, with long purple braids she keeps stroking. She becomes even shinier when she talks about what draws her to dance.

"There's a feeling of freedom, yet security, like there are no problems in the world." She wanted to share that. "As dancers, we get fit quickly, just by doing a few rehearsals. I felt there was a gap for me to do a workout class for ordinary women who want to get fit the fun way." She added the high-heels factor —

something she first saw in a class in Los Angeles — because "you work harder on a platform", and women "feel great" in them. Takkies are, you know, tacky.

"It feels more like a night out than a workout. Women rock up here in their dinner shoes. You know those shoes you can only wear sitting down?" (She's banned those as they pose an injury-risk.) "They want to look good."

She slips on her heels and flips to a song on her phone (she prefers to feel the music instead of planning the set). What Maswanganye does, in essence, is turn the simple act of walking

into a slow-motion burn. "Let go of your hip, but not too much, otherwise everything's gonna go offline. Yees! Boom! And don't forget to SMIZE!" That is, smile with your eyes if you haven't heard the term coined by Tyra Banks. Apparently showing your teeth looks desperate.

Things like good posture, which Maswanganye, 25, teaches as part of the class, come naturally to the dancing prodigy, who even while talking, stands with feet akimbo, in plié pose.

"I'm trained in everything — ballet, jazz, contemporary." She's taken those basic professional moves, and zhoosh-ed them up with club grooves. The Butt Tilt ("Pop it. Just pop it out"). Side dips and rolls. "Do that snap again. Boom," she says, followed

**'I love my hair. I love my boobs. Boom'**

by another orgasmic, "Yeeees."

I do that frightful, involuntary snorting thing when I see myself smizing in the mirror.

Maswanganye reassures me. "It's common to feel self-conscious. I help ladies with their confidence. I teach them how to walk in heels, how to stand straight, so that they own it wherever they go, even if it's just walking to the bathroom." You never know who's watching. "You know when you're in the mall and feeling awkward and start looking at your phone? I tell ladies to drop that phone, and smiiiiize. No one wants to look lost and lonely."

We writers tend to poo-poo such egotistical pursuits, preferring to skulk along in our turned-up trenchcoats, lest we become one of those vainglorious bastards who look at themselves in shop windows.

Maswanganye says there's nothing wrong with flaunting it. "Women are meant to be strong. That's something I teach in my class." On her arm is a tattoo of the date her father died — he was also active in the entertainment industry.

Maswanganye has clearly embraced her body (kind of a must for a dancer) and to get other women to do the same, she incorporates moves that require touching commonly offending body parts.

"A lot of women walk into class and don't want to touch their bodies at all. They're scared of rolls [a type of dance move] because you almost reveal your cookie, but I tell them, the cookie is yours. You need to work it." Embrace all your bits, even the saggy ones. "People only know what's wrong about your body when you sing about it."

Demonstrating a move, she caresses her breasts in front of the mirror and I hear someone's tongue thud on the floor. "Sloowly melt your arms down your body," she instructs. "I love my hair. I love my boobs. Boom." This isn't just a dance class, she says. "It's female empowerment. Women come up to me after class and say they feel so much better." There it is: that shine in her face again. "I'm always dancing. I can't get it out of me."

Maswanganye lives in Paulshof with her partner, who, she says, has two left feet. Lucky for him he has a good teacher. Boom. **LS**



## NO, I HAVE A HEADACHE

A new exhibition about sex (imaginatively titled 'SEX') could have offered so much. But it's a cadaverous lay, writes Oliver Roberts

**T**HE slightly warm earphone pads could well have been part of the whole thing, but they weren't. It was a Tuesday morning and I was at the "Sex" exhibition at Stevenson Gallery, Braamfontein, and it was empty except for me and another dude about my age who was wearing shorts and shoes without socks. And at certain points there were these earphones, hanging from the wall, that you felt compelled to listen to because it's an exhibition about sex so you're thinking, "What on earth am I going to hear?"

What I heard was just a kind of vague history about South African sex and porn and politics since the mid-1990s, narrated by an Angolan man who sounded like he was trying to sound like what he imagined Barry White sounded like if/when the late singer spoke about sex. The earphone pads were warm because I kept having to use them quite soon after this other guy, this lurker, had finished using them. I could have waited for the pads to cool but I was impatient to get out of the gallery, yet in the interests of journalism I had to gather information.

Also, at one point while I was studying a work — a crude "love letter" between two men, feverishly scribbled on a scrap of one-ply toilet paper — this guy with his sockless shoes and pale legs laughed out loud at whatever he'd just heard through the earphones, and then looked at me with a creepy grin. It was as if, because we were the only two men sauntering through this sordid exhibition, he'd decided we obviously had something in common and was now going to try to make friends. Though considering he was standing a few feet from a large screen showing five muscular black dudes partaking in a loud orgy, he might have been suggesting something else.

I mentioned I was impatient to get out of the gallery. The explicit gay porn film was part of it (by the way: I'm not homophobic, just not keen on seeing guys banging each other, especially if it's in an art gallery and therefore being passed off as "art" [which of course it isn't — it's just a gay porn movie]). It wasn't the unambiguous nature of the exhibition that made me in a hurry to leave (there's a warning at the beginning about explicit content and the need to be over 18 et

cetera), but rather the sheer banality of the whole thing.

The invite to this exhibition lit up my inbox with the word SEX flashing in neon colours. Apart from listing the artists involved, it offered no other information.

I was intrigued, but later, after enduring the actual exhibition, I realised that the reason there was no other information on the invite was because there's pretty much nothing to say about it.

Maybe I'm naïve. Maybe I shouldn't be writing about art. Maybe there is some kind of social, artsy motif I missed in the video of a woman licking the camera lens; maybe I didn't see the deeper meaning in the champagne bottles on a table made to look like they've just popped and are now squirting their white foam up in the air like ejaculate; maybe I just didn't get the work made to look like a wall of yellow, pink and black bananas with the words, "The woman made me do it. Genesis 3:12-14" in the middle; and maybe I didn't see the intellectual significance of the black

**Of course it isn't art — it's just a gay porn movie**

box with a peephole that you looked through to see a video of an orange fish nibbling at a woman's slightly submerged vagina.

I was a little disgusted, sure. But mostly I was just bored, and mainly I was disappointed. Sex has got so many layers. Despite the fact that we're confronted with it every day and that plenty of us regularly indulge in it, there's still so much we don't understand about it. Sex is intriguing and complex and has been interpreted through thousands of years' worth of really great art, and when it's done well it brings us to an understanding, about the act, about ourselves.

This exhibition fails to do that almost completely. But that's just me. If you can stomach the triteness — the sight of, say, one guy licking another guy's balls being passed off as worthy of being in an art gallery — then go check it out. Like I said, maybe I just don't get it. Let me know if you do.

• **'Sex' is on at Stevenson Gallery, Braamfontein, until June 3**  
• **Read Roberts's piece, 'The 10 unsexiest things about sex' at [www.timeslive.co.za](http://www.timeslive.co.za)**