

9 July – 13 August 2022

STAGE

LEBOGANG MOGUL MABUSELA UKWATILE?





Colman

Stevenson is pleased to present *Ukwatile?* by Lebogang Mogul Mabusela. This is the third exhibition in our *STAGE* series, a platform for younger, unrepresented artists, and the first to take place in Johannesburg.

Mabusela's practice reflects on 'the reality of navigating within misogynoir'. Comprising prints, drawings and sculptures, *Ukwatile?* brings together works from her ongoing series *Johannesburg Words* (2021-) and *Makoti: A bridal gifts shop* (2017-). Together, these foreground the necessity of humour in extracting the constant threat of violence from its absurd mundanity.

Utlhalaphi?, the first image in *Johannesburg Words*, was inspired by a 1987 etching by Robert Hodgins titled *Jo'burg Words*. Hodgins' storyboard-like print sparked Mabusela's body of work about language, catcalling and voyeurism, 'subverting the male gaze, interrogating male desire, and showing how dangerous it can be'. The artist explains that she chose a comic approach 'to reflect on how this is not taken seriously'. Beyond the mockery of jest, her levity critiques a society which limits its understanding of the experience of Black womanhood to one of struggle and lamentation, devoid of joy and laughter. In specifically recalling the work of a notable artist, Mabusela references a lineage of protest, remarking:

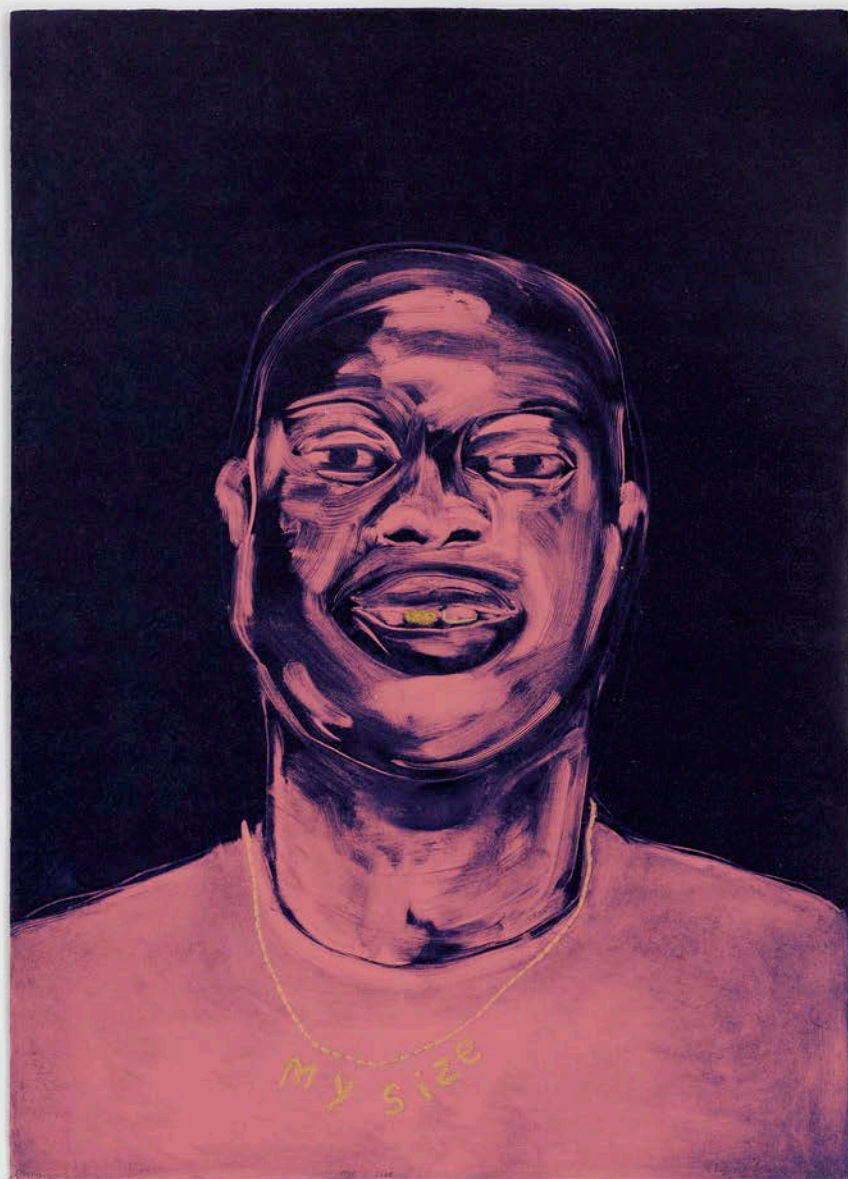
What I like about Robert Hodgins is the fact that he's critiquing imperialism in these rich, fat cats. It shows that calling things out is not only part of a Black woman's identity. White men also complain about shit all the fucking time. Ya, I make angry work but I'm not the only angry person.

Mabusela plays with vernacular phonetics to bring into focus how the streets of Johannesburg become a school of cultures: familiar oral encounters with unfamiliar men bridging structures of power over winding roads intersecting at collective sites of vulnerability. Early prints foreground the speakers' words like speech bubbles, depicting their shamelessness and open acceptance. More recent portraits have words scrawled across the bottom or featured on gold chains, offering reminders that this form of violence is a timeless fashion, made insidious by how ubiquity lends it subtlety. Mabusela says:

I decided to keep [the oil pastel portraits] backwards like a mirror because another thing I grapple with is that for us - people who go through this - we understand what's happening. We can laugh because we understand the seriousness. But do they see that I'm critiquing them? Are they just also going to laugh and walk past it? The mirroring gesture calls for that introspection.

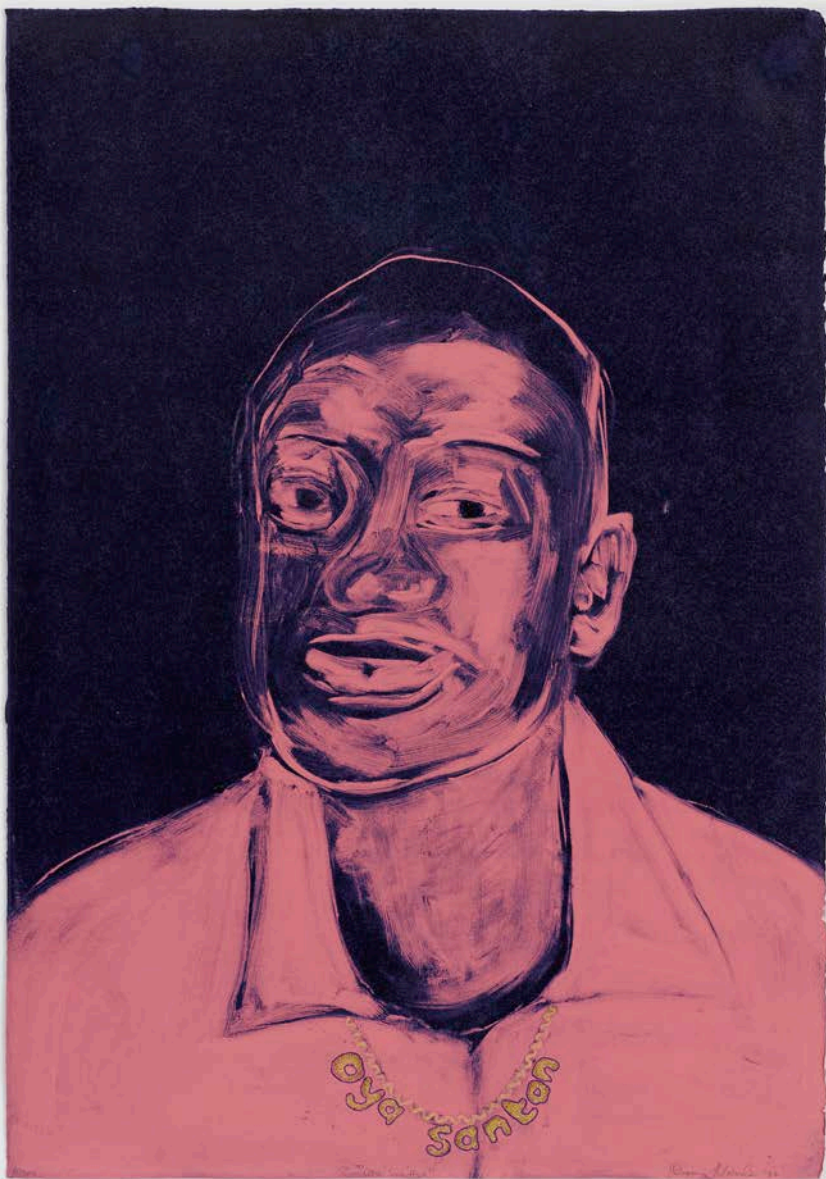
Through her paper and lace sculptures, Mabusela teases out how this absence of accountability produces the need for women to take responsibility for their own safety. *Makoti: A bridal gifts shop* offers 'a dynamic range of guns, tools and technologies that enhance women's desires and roast the patriarchy'. Each gun in *Cutlery*, the new collection of wares on show, is accompanied by a user manual which clearly states: 'WARNING! Our products have a tendency to cause irritation to people who like their women nice. If irritation occurs, plz cuntinue.'

Ukwatile? transforms a common refrain - used to patronize and placate - into a collective reflection, a reclamation, a readying, with nods to Sara Ahmed's notion of the 'feminist killjoy' and Ama Ata Aidoo's 1977 novel *Our Sister Killjoy*.



My Size, 2022

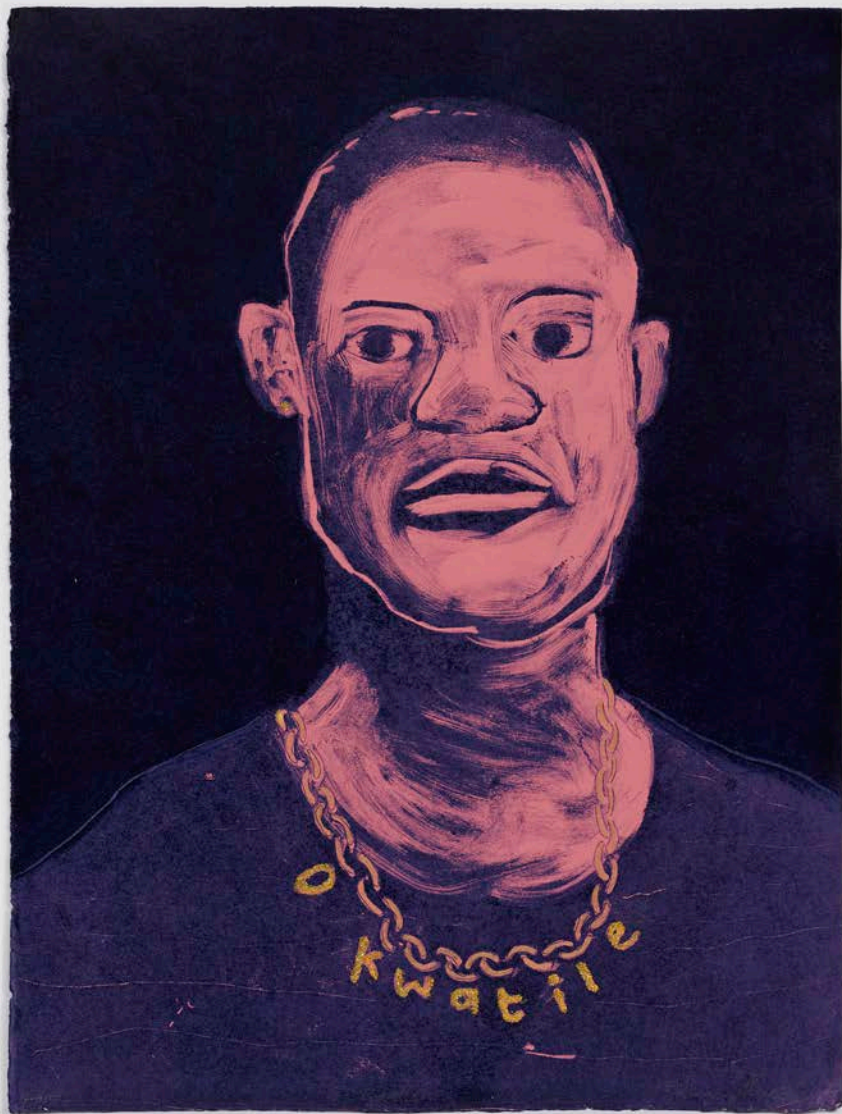
Oil-based monotype, acrylic and glitter on paper
49.5 x 35.5cm unframed, 63 x 49.5cm framed



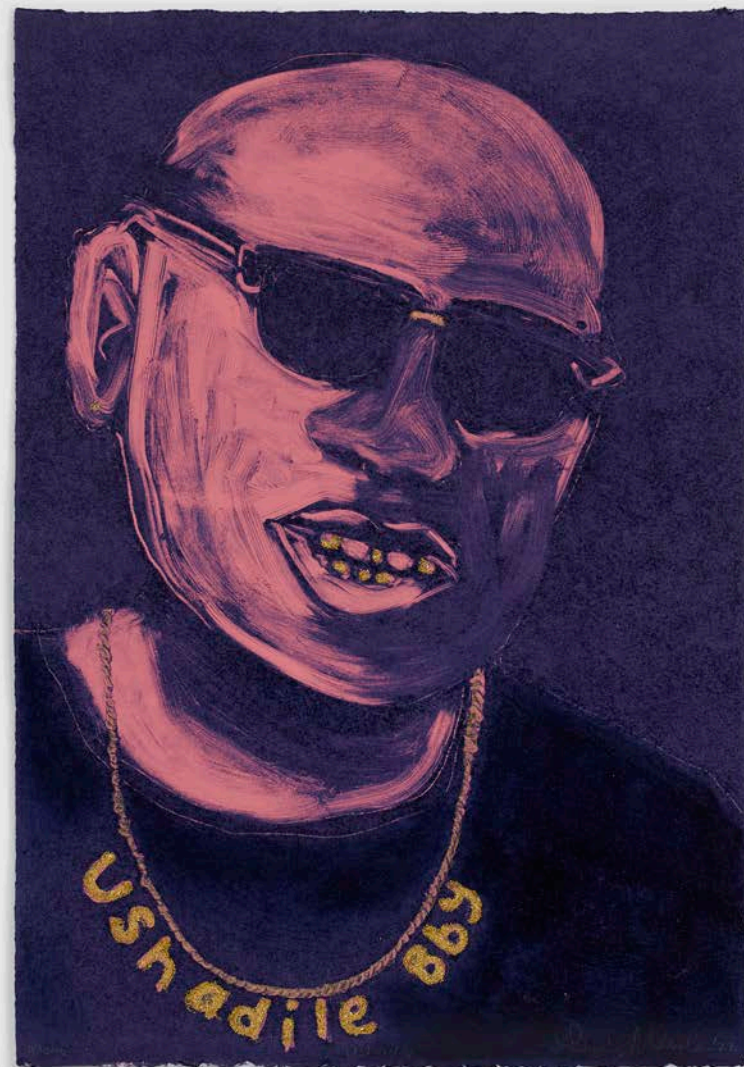
Oya Santon, 2022
Oil-based monotype, acrylic and glitter on paper
49.5 x 35.5cm unframed, 63 x 49.5cm framed



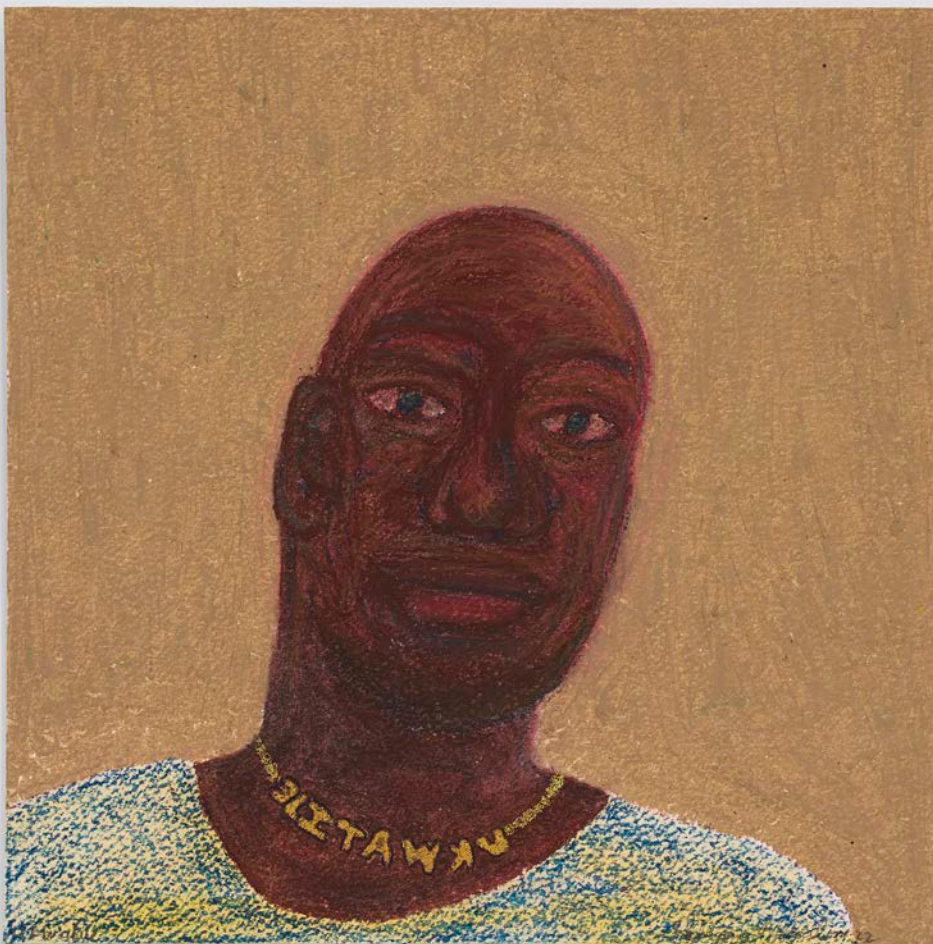
U muhle yezwa, 2022
Oil-based monotype, acrylic and glitter on paper
49.5 x 35.5cm unframed, 63 x 49.5cm framed



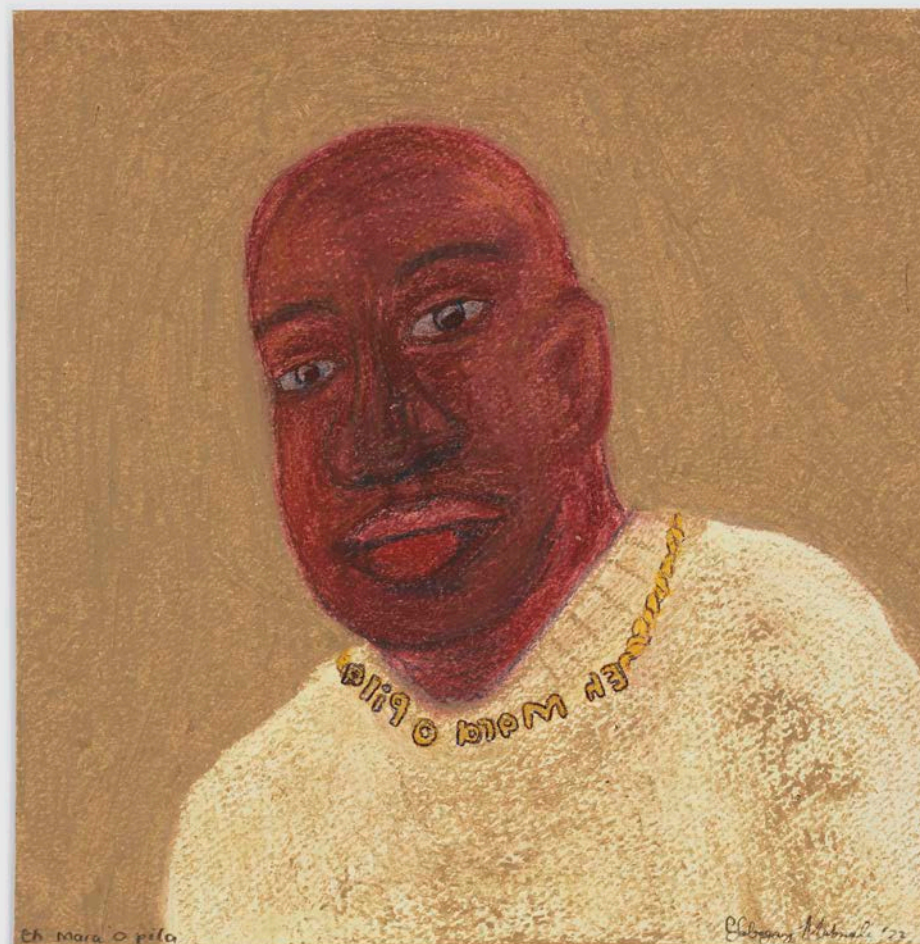
O kwatile, 2022
Oil-based monotype, acrylic and glitter on paper
45.5 x 27cm unframed, 49 x 40.5cm framed



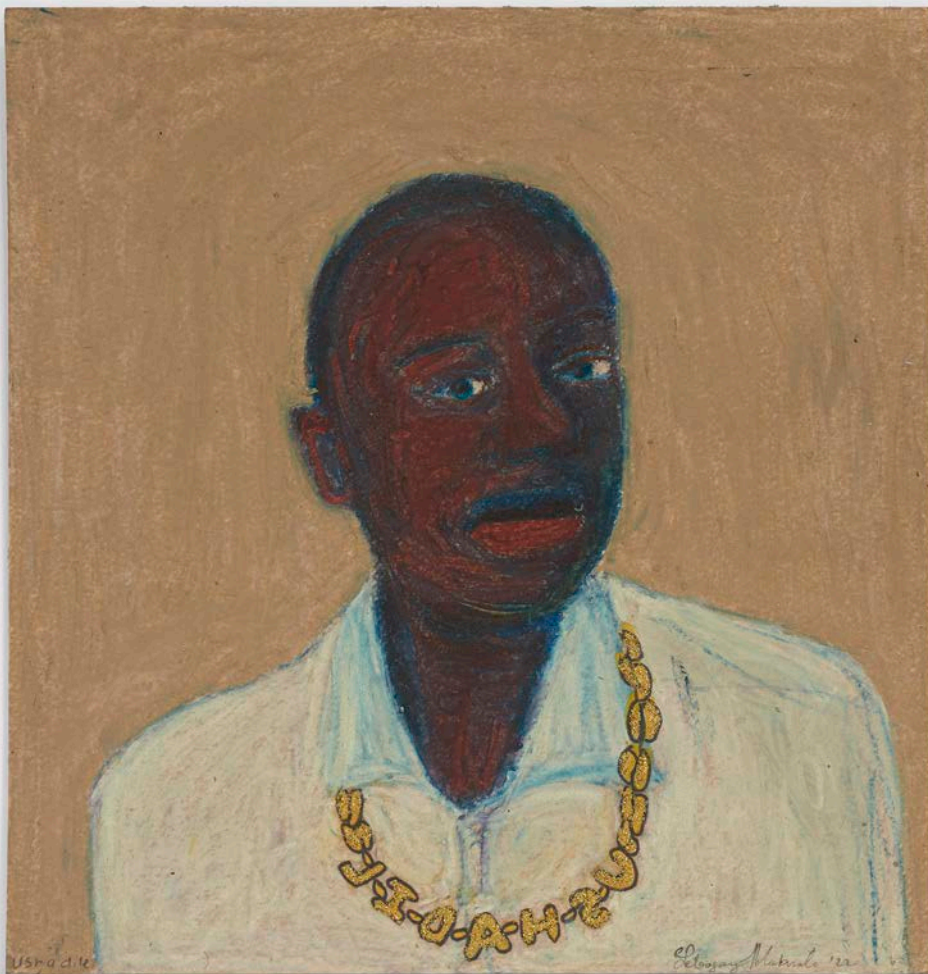
Ushadile Bby, 2022
Oil-based monotype, acrylic and glitter on paper
33 x 23cm unframed, 49 x 40.5cm framed



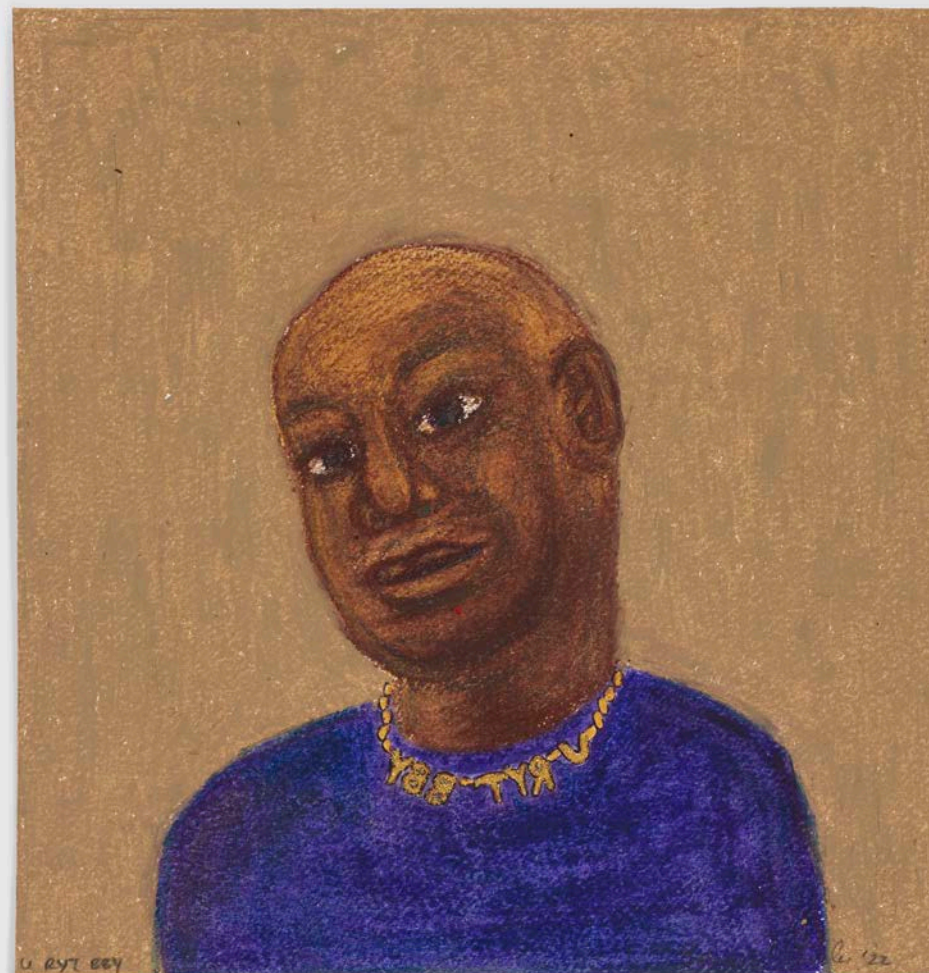
Ukwatile, 2022
Oil pastel and glitter on paper
24 x 23cm unframed, 35.5 x 34.5cm framed



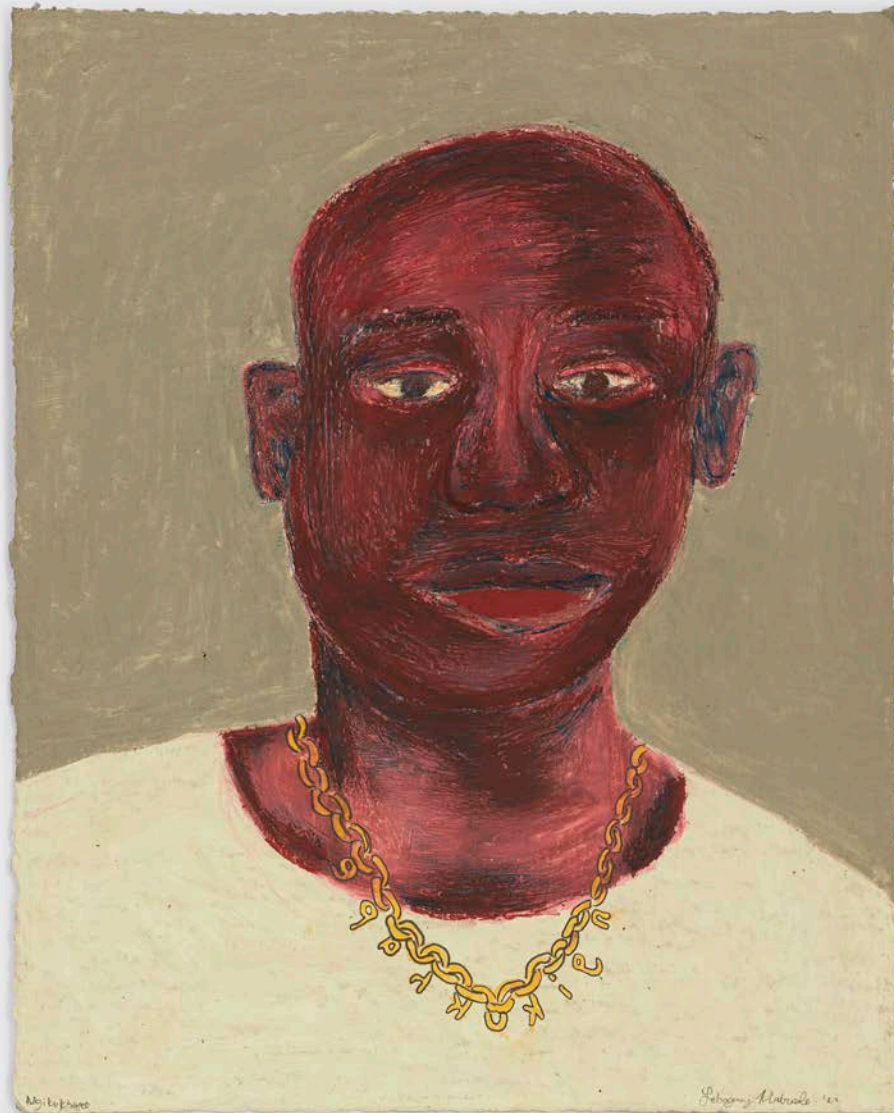
Eh Mara Opila, 2022
Oil pastel and glitter on paper
24 x 23cm unframed, 35.5 x 34.5cm framed



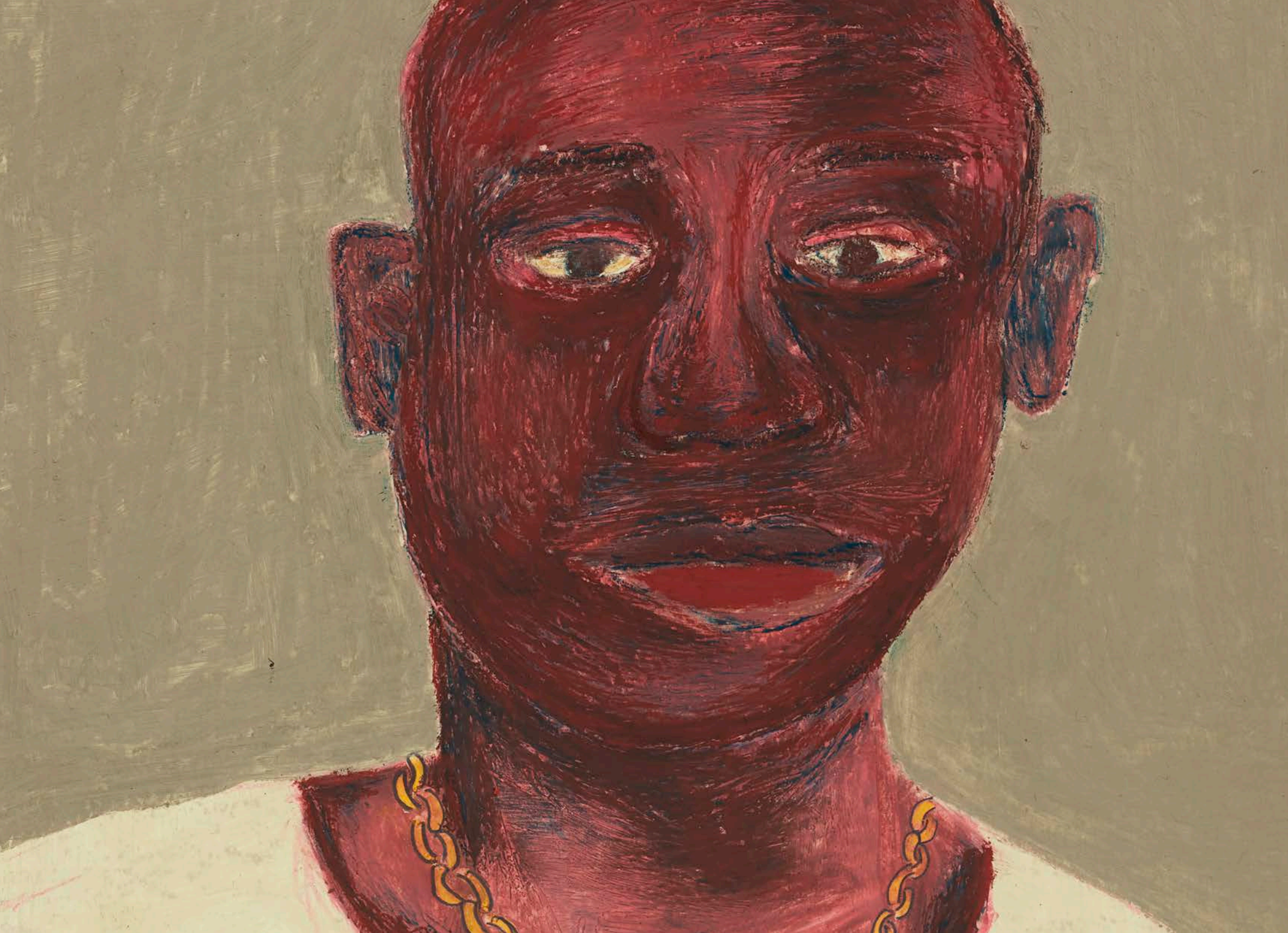
Ushadil, 2022
 Oil pastel and glitter on paper
 24 x 23cm unframed, 35.5 x 34.5cm framed

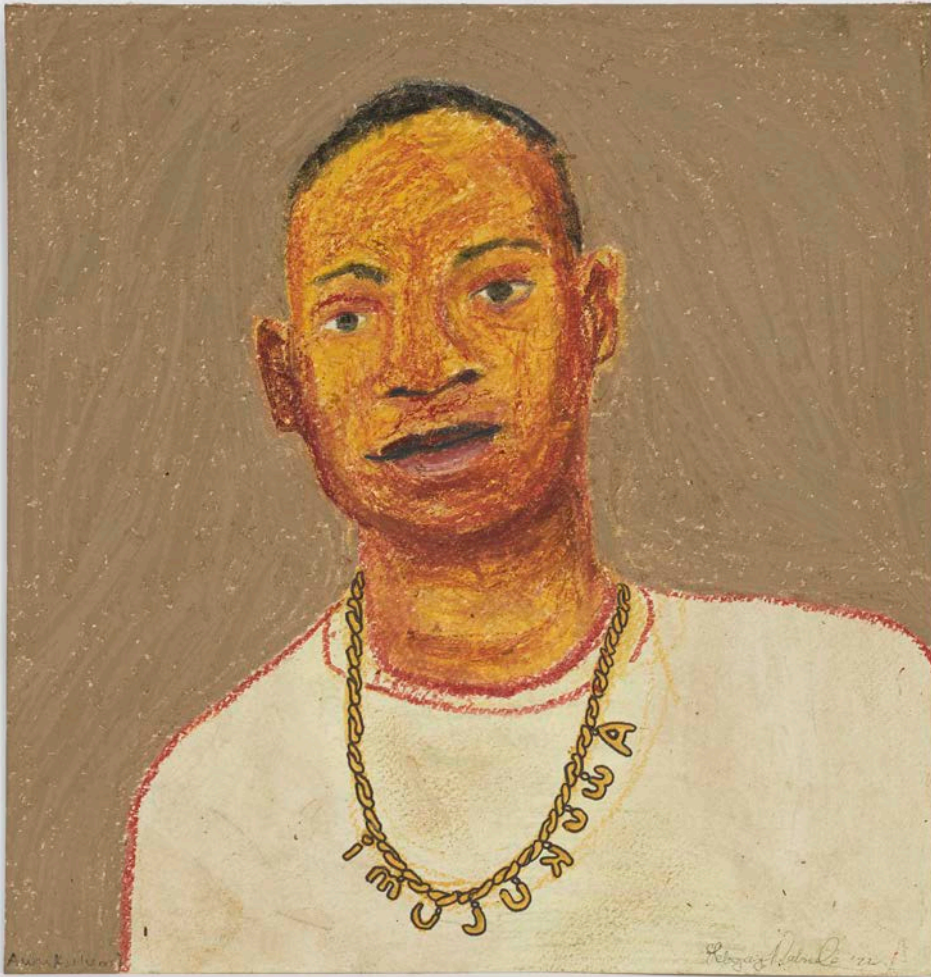


U ryt bby, 2022
 Oil pastel and glitter on paper
 24 x 23cm unframed, 35.5 x 34.5cm framed



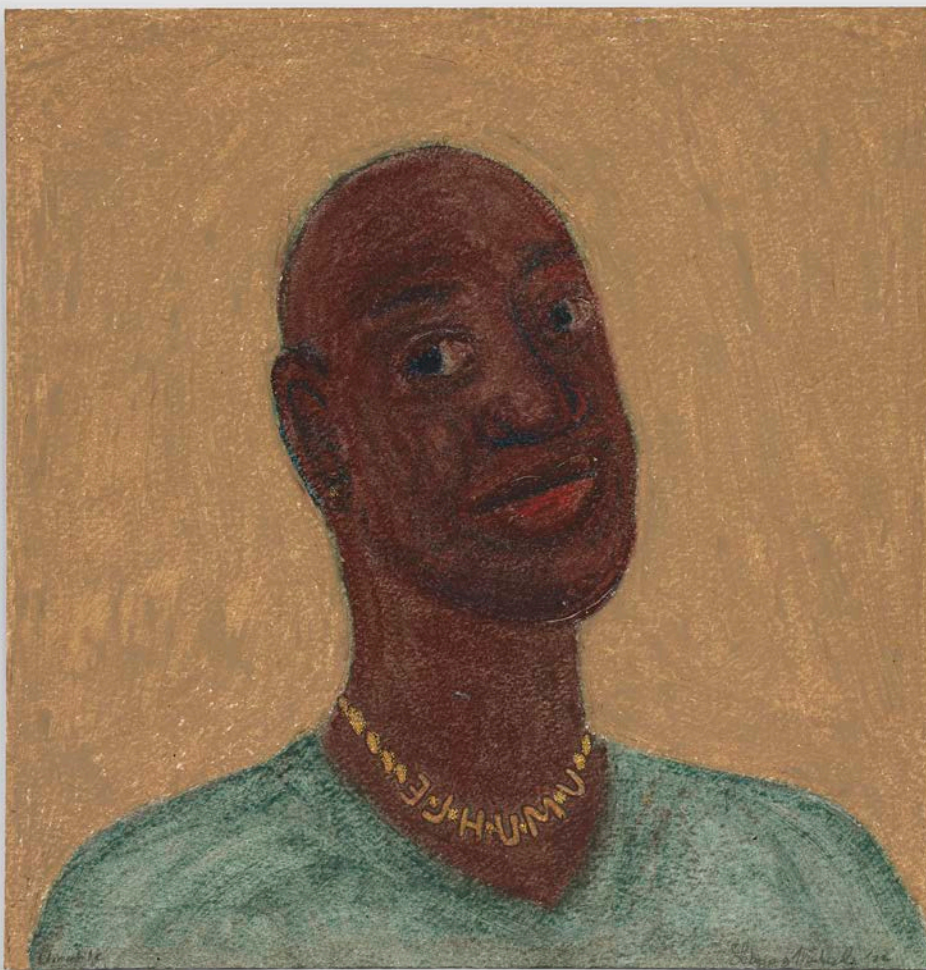
ngikukhabe, 2022
Oil pastel on paper
30.5 x 25cm unframed, 42 x 36.5cm framed



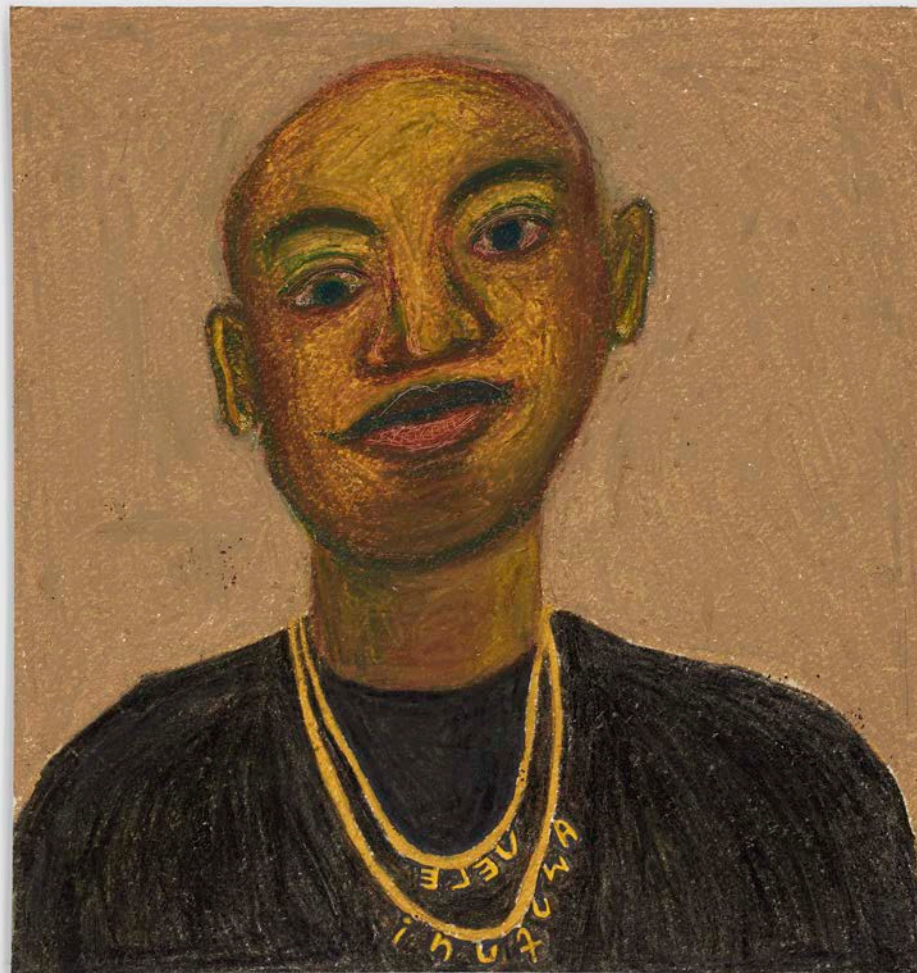


Awukulumi, 2022
 Oil pastel on paper
 24 x 23cm unframed, 35.5 x 34.5cm framed

Eh Mamakhe, 2022
 Oil pastel and glitter on paper
 24 x 23cm unframed, 35.5 x 34.5cm framed



Umuhle, 2022
Oil pastel and glitter on paper
24 x 23cm unframed, 35.5 x 34.5cm framed



Vele Awufuni, 2022
Oil pastel on paper
24 x 23cm unframed, 35.5 x 34.5cm framed



Weh Peach Black Afro, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17 x 24cm



inwele zakho, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17 x 24cm



Hello Sexy, 2022
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



Umuhle, 2022
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



Yo Baby, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm





MY SIZE



AWUKULUMI

My Size, 2022
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm

Awukulumi, 2022
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



Ukwatile, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



U rite dali?, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



Umuhl yezwa, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17 x 24cm



U lahli ring makoti?, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm





Onna kae luv, 2022
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm

Ngikukhape, 2022
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



Umuhle luv, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



Ao Beyontse, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



Nkaofuthumatsa, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm





?U Kwatile, 2022
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



Umuhle yezwa, 2022
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



Oya Santon, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



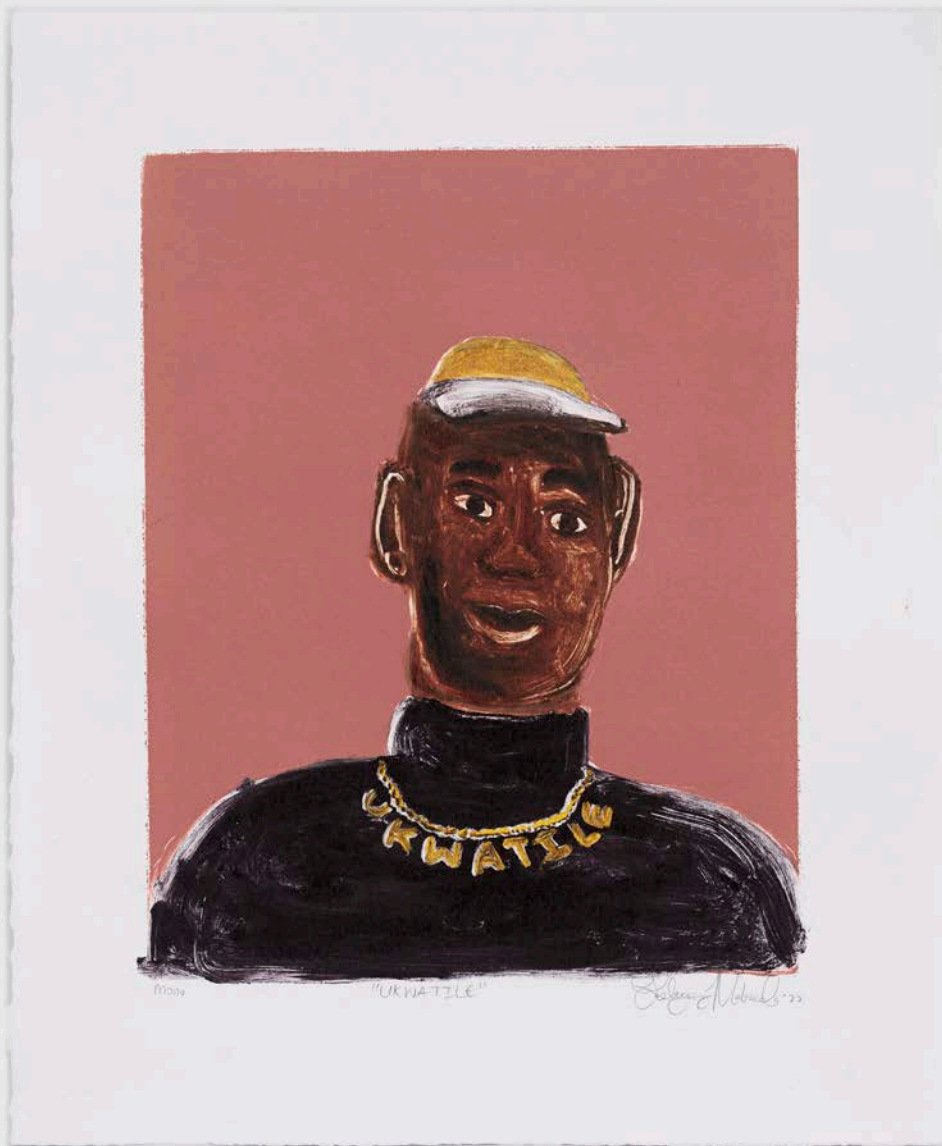
I nwele zako, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm

Uhlala phi, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm





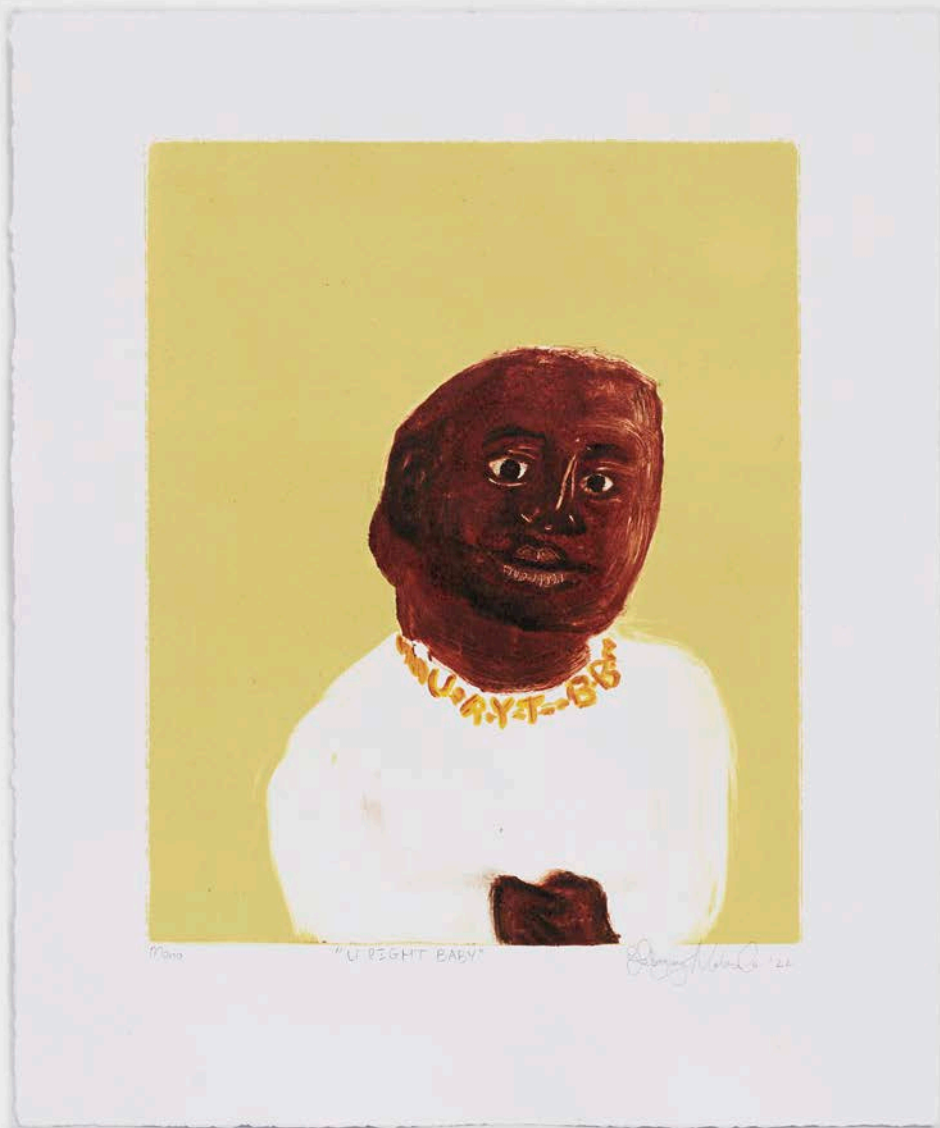
Awufuni?, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
17.5 x 24cm



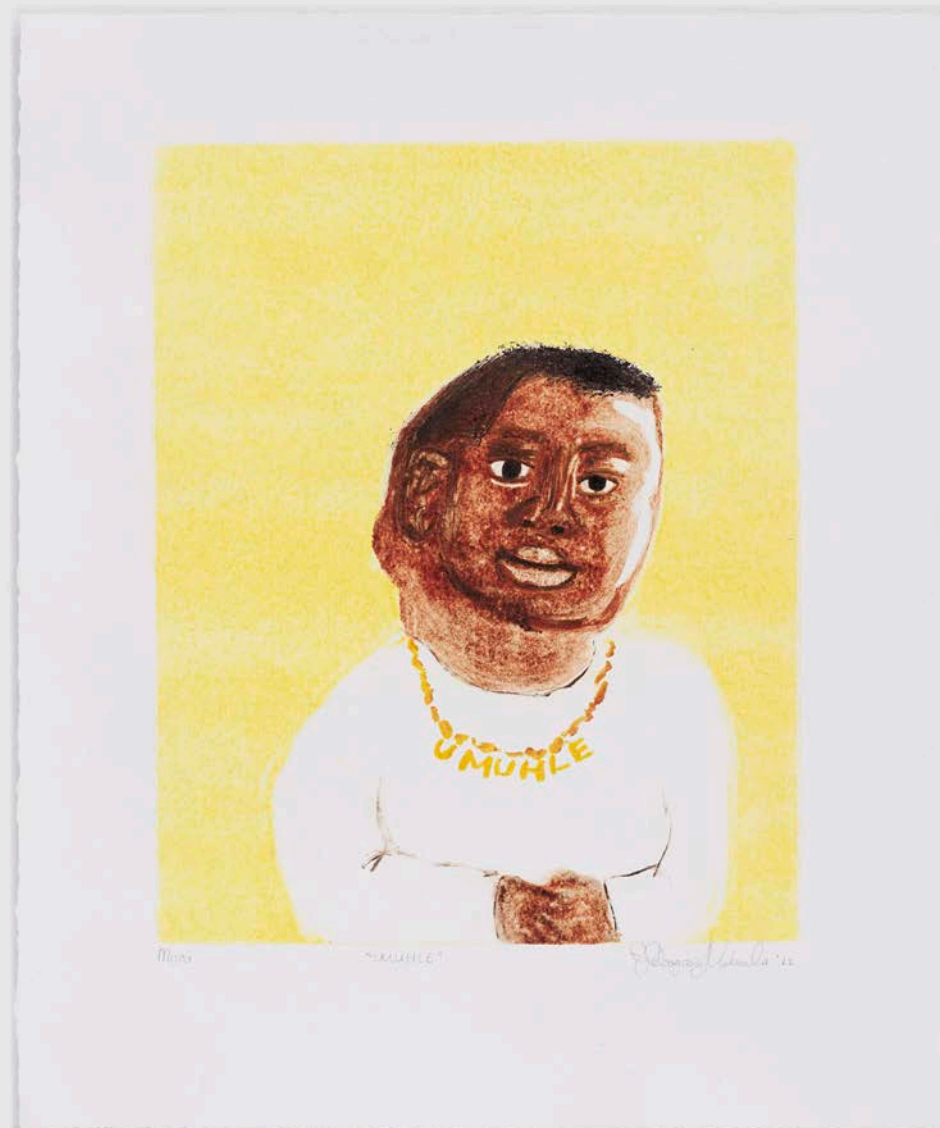
Ukwatile, 2022
Oil-based monotype on paper
30 x 24cm



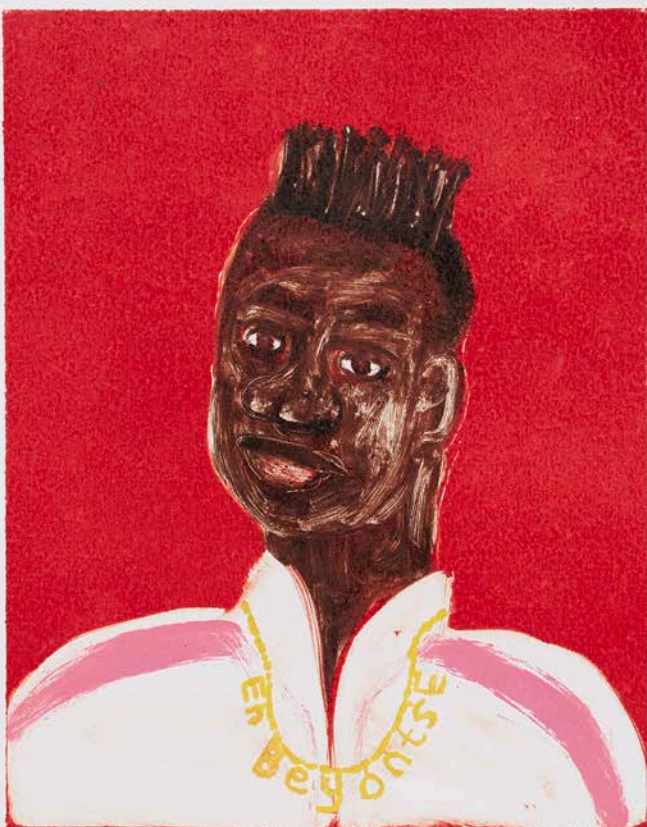
U hlalaphi, 2022
Oil-based monotype on paper
30 x 24cm



Uryt Bb, 2021
Oil-based monotype on paper
30 x 24cm



Umuhle, 2022
Oil-based monotype on paper
30 x 24cm



Eh Beyontse, 2022
Oil-based monotype on paper
30 x 24cm

Eh My Size, 2022
Oil-based monotype on paper
30 x 24cm



Sisi, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
15.5 x 22.5cm

My African Princess, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
15.5 x 22.5cm

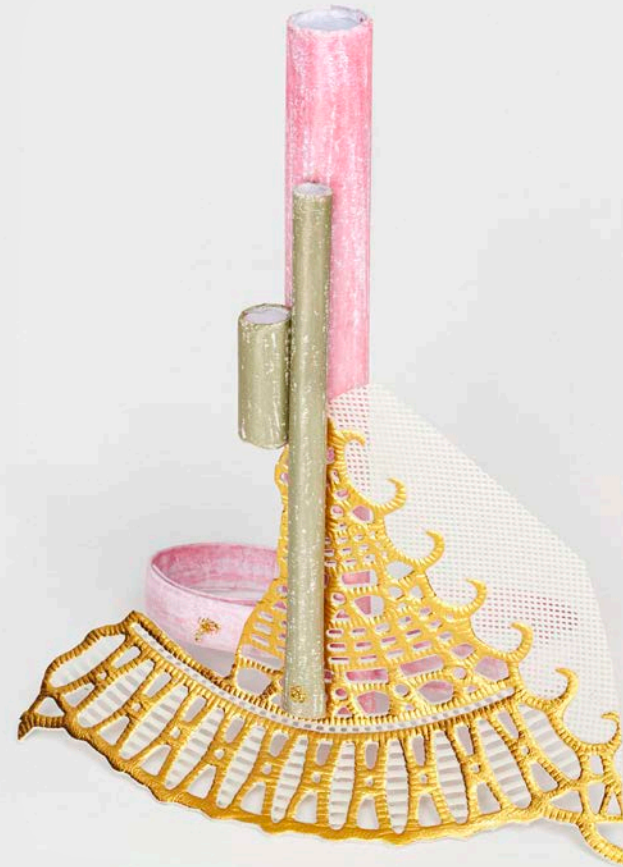


OyaSanton, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
15.5 x 22.5cm

Ngikukhape, 2021
Watercolour monotype on paper
15.5 x 22.5cm



Cutlery IV, 2022
Paper and vinyl doily
16 x 7.5 x 3.5cm



Cutlery VIII, 2022
Paper and vinyl doily
10 x 8.5 x 4cm

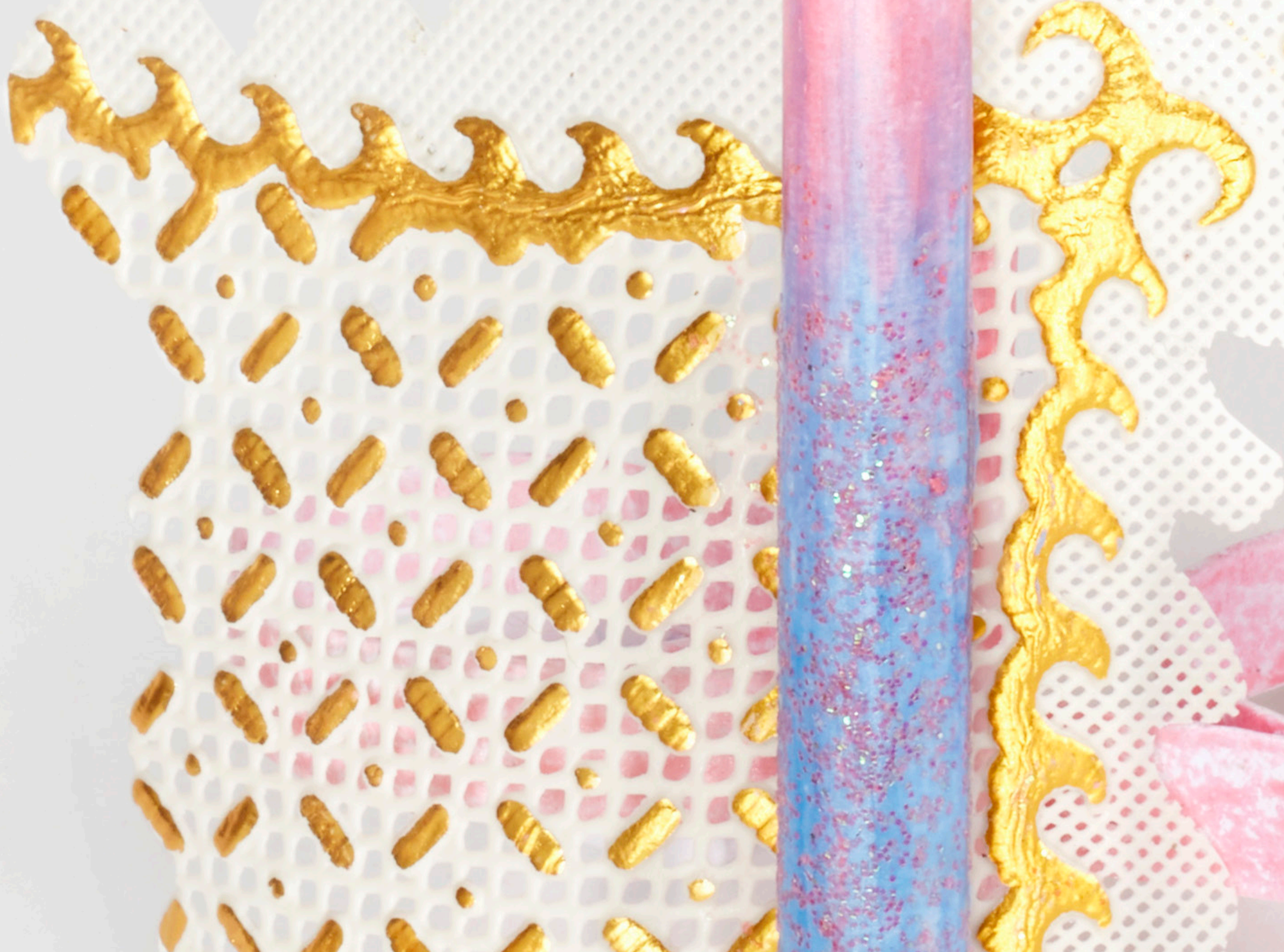




Cutlery V, 2022
Paper and vinyl doily
15 x 7.5 x 4cm



Cutlery VI, 2022
Paper and vinyl doily
16 x 6 x 3.5cm





Cutlery IX, 2022
Paper and vinyl doily
12.5 x 7 x 3.5cm



Cutlery X, 2022
Paper and vinyl doily
17.5 x 9.5 x 3.5cm

Lebogang Mogul Mabusela was born in Mabopane, in 1996 and lives in Johannesburg. In 2019 she graduated with a BA in Fine Arts from the Wits School of Arts, where she was awarded the Standard Bank Fine Arts Prize.

She has participated in group exhibitions at the Wits Art Museum, The Project Space, Turbine Art Fair, Latitudes Art Fair and at Design Indaba, as one of the Top 50 Emerging Creatives of 2020. In the same year she was a runner-up recipient of the Young Womxn Studio Bursary, sponsored by Sam Nhlengethwa and the Bag Factory Artists' Studios.

Currently she runs a printmaking curatorial scheme called The Monotypebabe Curatorial.



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