Katlego C.L Twala
Boswa: The shadow of my mother
23 July - 22 August 2026

blank is pleased to present *Boswa: The shadow of my mother*, a solo exhibition by Botswana-based artist Katlego C. L Twala (b. 2000, Gaborone). Working primarily in oil on linen and cotton, Twala is recognised for her figurative portraits which, though contemporary in their subject matter, borrow from the visual language and techniques of the Old Masters, informed by her studies at the Swedish Academy of Realist Art and the Barcelona Academy of Art.

In describing the exhibition, the artist explains, "this body of work explores the dialogue between the womanhood I inherited from the women in my family and the womanhood constructed through the Setswana language and cultural expectations. Proverbs like "Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka fa bogaleng" (a mother holds the knife by the sharp end) are part of a language through which I first encountered ideas of womanhood."

Beginning with a visual excavation of family archives, this body of work centres on photographs of the artist's grandmother, Sekhane, and mother, Morwetsana. These archival images serve as her primary sites of inquiry, selected for the distinct agency and self-determination projected by the subjects. Through an exploration of their deliberate gazes, postures, and spatial presence, the work unpacks the historic and contemporary modalities through which women occupy space. By translating these intimate family portraits into a broader dialogue, the exhibition interrogates the intersections of maternal lineage and visibility, and offers a quiet subversion of the female gaze.

In her essay *Polyglot Internationalism and the Matriarchive: The Case of Keorapetse Kgositsile*, Dr. Uhuru Phalafala makes the strong case for oral traditions passed on from matrilineal members of the family to their (grand) children as a key system of knowledge that has informed and shaped intellectual culture and radical worldviews. In reaching a concise definition of this generational dialogue, Phalafala adopts the heuristic of the 'matriarchive' which holds together locally specific matrilineally inherited worldviews, intersubjective relations, vernaculars, and aesthetics.

In this body of work, Twala questions the tension between the social conditioning and the lived experiences of the matriarchs in her life. She states, "I was raised within a matriarchy, but society rarely reflected the agency and strength that these women possessed", hinting strongly at what we could consider to be Twala's own personal 'matriarchive' that shapes her customs, culture and community.

In the artist's words,

"As an ode to the matriarchs who raised me, it felt necessary for them to serve as the foundation of my work. The triad of grandmother, mother, daughter became especially important, as it is the familial relationship within which I identify myself, as opposed to the conventional father, mother, daughter articulation of the family unit. This lineage of women became a way of examining inheritance, identity, and of how womanhood is carried across generations."

Boswa: The shadow of my mother is Twala's first exhibition with blank projects.

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