



22 Rue de l'Échiquier, 75010 Paris

(xlv)

Bernice Mulenga
Malembe, Malembe

Exhibition 20 June – 19 July 2025
Open Thursday - Saturday 14h – 18h

Goswell Road is proud to present *Malembe, Malembe*, the first solo exhibition in France, and outside of the UK, by British-Congolese artist Bernice Mulenga. With a practice rooted in care, visibility, and queer kinship, Mulenga's work explores the notions and nuances of intimacy — within themselves, within the Black queer community, and the shared experiences that shape them.

The exhibition title is drawn from the Lingala¹ phrase “*malembe, malembe*”, meaning “slowly, slowly” — evoking the idea of gradual, meaningful transformation. It resonates with Mulenga's approach to image-making: sustained, attentive, and grounded in consent.

For this exhibition, Mulenga draws on their expansive and ongoing project *#friendsonfilm* — a visual archive documenting LGBTQ+ BIPOC nightlife and their relationships forged within it — as 2025 marks its tenth anniversary. The works on view here center specifically on images of couples or groups — friends, lovers, and chosen family — captured in moments of affection, deep connection, and mutual trust.

Malembe, Malembe features two distinct bodies of work: throughout the space are cyanotype prints on cotton canvas, and the acetate negatives used to create them, extracted from Mulenga's *#friendsonfilm* photographs. These spectral blue bodies, and their negative counterparts, evoke presence and memory, hovering between image and imprint — a gesture toward the traces we leave with and on each other. For Mulenga, the cyanotype hue is not associated with sadness or ‘the blues’, but rather, fluidity, security, stability, and connectivity.

“*Blue transcends the solemn geography of human limits.*” Derek Jarman, *Blue* (1993)

Alongside these fabric and acetate works, we show a series of analogue photographs from *#friendsonfilm*: four are presented on aluminium with chrome finish frames, without glass. The aluminium is brushed, hairline or non-directional, to further alter its reflectivity. The other two are framed in cobalt blue and show Mulenga's sister and her best friend. These delicately framed pieces capture the full, vibrant context of their source material — bodies in relation, in movement, connected. Here are couples, sustained or transient: some are still together, some are best friends, others were only coupled for the night; all are forever linked.

Mulenga understands the dancefloor as both archive and communion — a charged space of expression, vulnerability, and resistance. Through their lens, the club becomes a sanctuary for self and collective memory. As they describe it, these images are “*from love, for love.*”—a document of consenting marginalised bodies.

Malembe, Malembe offers a space of reflection — a measured, generous unfolding of what it means to be seen, held, and remembered.

Alongside the exhibition, we're publishing the first book dedicated to Mulenga's work, in particular, their ongoing photo series *#friendsonfilm* — a foundational and evolving body of work that has been central to their practice since it began in 2015, now marking its tenth year. It will be available at the space in a first edition of fifty copies, signed, under our new Road House moniker.

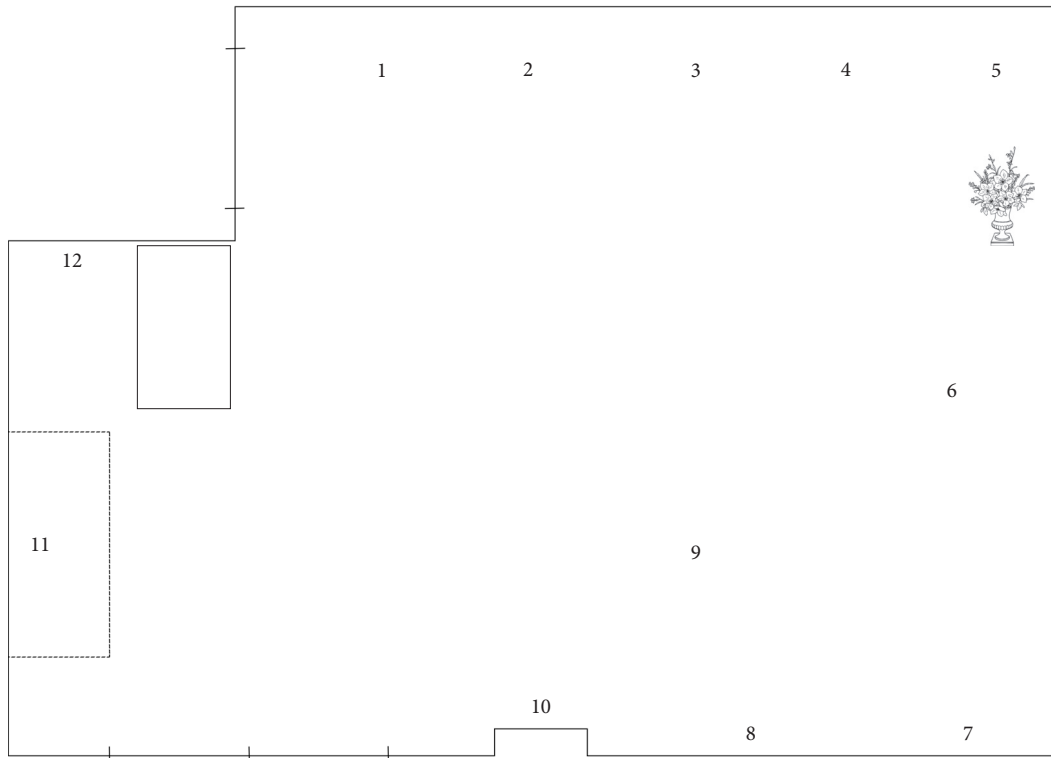
¹ Lingala is a Bantu language used by over 8 million people as a *lingua franca* in northern parts of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire).



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Malembe, Malembe



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| 1 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Lime</i> , 2018/19 (photo in aluminium frame) | 7 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Meeting at Your Waistline</i> , 2025 (negative on acetate) |
| 2 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Together Again</i> , 2023 (photo in aluminium frame) | 8 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Don't Let Go</i> , 2017 (negative on acetate) |
| 3 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Home Again</i> , 2021 (photo in aluminium frame) | 9 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Drift</i> , 2024 (negative on acetate) |
| 4 Bernice Mulenga, <i>1, 2, Step</i> , 2025 (cyanotype on canvas on fabric) | 10 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Abby & OJ II</i> , 2021 (photo in cobalt frame) |
| 5 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Shy Savage</i> , 2023 (photo in aluminium frame) | 11 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Abby & OJ I</i> , 2021 (photo in cobalt frame) |
| 6 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Don't Let Go</i> , 2025 (cyanotype on canvas on fabric) | 12 Bernice Mulenga, <i>Drift</i> , 2025 (cyanotype on canvas on fabric) |

Bernice Mulenga (b. 1996) is a British-Congolese artist and photographer based in London. Mulenga's practice seeks to archive, document and interrogate the world around them, primarily focusing on themselves, Black queer global and local communities, and the experiences found within them. Their work centres on bonds, kinship and the search for intimacy. This is exemplified in their ongoing photo series *#friendsonfilm*, a living archive that has been growing since 2015 and continues to evolve with time.

Their first solo show, *Between Me and You*, was in 2022 at HOME. and their work has been shown in group shows at Whitechapel Art Gallery (2022) and Gathering London (2023). In 2024, they won the CIRCA prize for their film *Let's Move On*, and on 17 July 2025, they open their first major institutional solo at Auto Italia, London, *LMK WHEN U REACH*.