

Shaun Motsi
Spectacles II
30 October - 29 November 2025

blank is pleased to present *Spectacles II*, a solo exhibition by Shaun Motsi.

In *Spectacles II*, Motsi's second exhibition with the gallery, the artist brings together a new body of work that extends his thinking across cut-outs, drawings, sculptures and videos.

The exhibition title holds a double meaning. On the one hand, the word refers to the charged appearance of something extraordinary like a staged event or an image that seizes the gaze. But on the other hand, spectacles frame, distort, and direct vision, functioning as optical tools.

What we see in the exhibition is deliberately restrained: white walls and sparse marks form a choreography of interruptions. In this environment, Motsi's works operate as gestures and fragments that point towards moments where perception is partial, embodied and often structured by an external force. Installed in the gallery are white masks, set flush into the wall's surface. In certain cases, the eyes (or pupils) are removed entirely. By arranging the scene and casting the public as peeping toms, Motsi lures viewers into a kind of spectator sport. We lean into certain masks for the chance to catch views that alternate between the public and private spheres. Other masks deny us that prospect and instead protrude outward from the wall. Two works embed fragmented videos, offering partial views into the source material. Together, these works mark a new series in the artist's practice that develops around themes of spectatorship, power, and the circulation of images.

Accompanying these mask works is a group of drawings that are demarcated by holes. On a few, a cast of characters from a 19th century cartoon titled *Les Curieux en extase ou les Cordons de souliers* appear in the margin or near a hole that leads into another hole or holes that meet the wall. The cartoon satirises the reactions of the French public to the figure widely known as 'Sara Baartman' (also referred to as "Hottentot Venus") public display in the early 1810s. The expressions range from "ah, how funny nature is" to "what strange beauty" and to a reference to roast beef. In Motsi's drawing series, Baartman herself is omitted.

As the exhibition unfolds, it becomes a stage where visibility is constructed, recalling spaces of viewing that range from the panopticon and the anatomical theatre to the peep show and to the white cube. Across the exhibition, the body is both a subject and an instrument of perception. Drawing, mapping, and abstraction are tools the artist employs to this end, interweaving fragments of image and form into a tale of historical entanglement. Ultimately, the political dimension of spectatorship is at the root of Motsi's conceptual concerns.

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Born in Harare in 1989, Shaun Motsi spent his childhood in Zimbabwe and South Africa before relocating to Canada in 2005. He is a graduate of the HfbK Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main (2020), and has recently completed a residency at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam. His work has been presented at KIN, Brussels (2025); blank projects, Cape Town (2024); Auto Italia, London (2023); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2023); Freiburg Biennial, Freiburg (2023); Juf, Madrid (2023); Goethe Institut Paris (2022); CFA, Milan (2021); The Wig, Berlin (2021); Shedhalle, Zürich (2020); Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (2020); PAGE (NYC), New York (2019); Longtang, Zürich (2019); and 3HD Festival, Berlin (2019), among others. Motsi currently lives and works between Brussels and Berlin.