



MICHELA NEGRINI  
[dip] contemporary art

**Pebofatso Mokoena**  
**Troy Mazaka**  
**FORM AND SURFACE**  
Galleria Michela Negrini, Lugano

Exhibition: 07.11.2024 - 02.02.2025

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Michela Negrini is delighted to present  
Form and Surface

The exhibition brings into dialogue the practices of two young African artists who, through different languages and materials, sharply interrogate the relationships between space, politics, history, and everyday life: Pebofatso Mokoena (b. 1993, Johannesburg, South Africa ) and Troy Makaza. (b. 1994, Harare, Zimbabwe).

By juxtaposing their practices, the exhibition foregrounds form, material, and composition as critical tools of inquiry. Mokoena's controlled spatial systems contrast with Makaza's materially driven processes of accumulation and weaving.

Together, their works articulate a nuanced reflection on the social, political, and global conditions shaping contemporary African art today.



## The exhibition

By bringing together Mokoena and Makaza, the exhibition highlights how two distinct artistic trajectories converge around a shared urgency: the use of form, material, and composition as critical tools to interrogate the present. While Mokoena operates through structure and restraint, Makaza advances through accumulation and entanglement; where the former constructs spaces of analytical observation, the latter activates physical and sensory experiences. Together, their works open a field of reflection on the multiple scales—personal, urban, political, and global—that shape contemporary experience, offering a complex and dynamic perspective on a new generation of African artistic practices.

Emerging from an early background in printmaking, Pebofatso Mokoena has developed a painting practice grounded in precise mark-making and a rigorous division of space. His works unfold as visual systems in which micro and macro scales mirror one another: minute details become metaphors for broader structures, while architectures, landscapes, and compositional grids allude to political, environmental, and social dynamics. Mokoena's paintings do not seek to describe reality but to analyze it, functioning as tools for reading tensions between order and instability, control and transformation. The early local and international recognition his work has received testifies to the strength of a practice that successfully combines formal rigor with conceptual depth.

Trained as a painter yet consistently drawn to form and texture, Troy Makaza has progressively developed a hybrid language that moves beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Through the use of silicone—a material that can be cast, painted, woven, and tied—Makaza constructs dense, vibrant surfaces in which painterly gestures intersect with processes reminiscent of weaving and tapestry. Over the past years, his work has evolved into a space for both visceral and philosophical reflection on issues of politics, history, and power, seen through the lens of a young Zimbabwean artist and a globally engaged millennial. Rooted in African visual traditions yet unequivocally contemporary, Makaza's works actively contribute to redefining what African—and specifically Zimbabwean—contemporary aesthetics can be: a paradigm that is locally grounded and internationally resonant.



**Pebofatso Mokoena**

Pebofatso Mokoena, born 1993, Johannesburg, South Africa, where he lives and works.

In 2014, he completed his N. Dip (Visual Art) at the University of Johannesburg and subsequently, apart from working towards his BTech qualification, Pebofatso teaches drawing and presentation at the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, at UJ. Emerging from early practice in printmaking, Mokoena's painting practice is formally underscored by precise mark making and division of space, while exploring ideas around micro and macro scales of politics, architecture and the environment. Pebofatso's work has received early recognition and support, locally and internationally.

Mokoena has held two solo exhibitions - The Pebofatso Experience at HZRD and Inside Jobs at the Bag Factory as well as curated exhibitions including Diptych; Disclosure at SMAC; Fresh Produce 2014, Inner Nature, Fortunes Remixed, and South African Voices: A New Generation of Printmakers in Washington DC and is in the Springs Art Library Collection, the South African Embassy Art Collection (in Washington, D.C.), and the JP Morgan Global Collection amongst other private collections.

**Troy Mazaka**

Troy Mazaka, born in 1994, Harare, Zimbabwe, where he lives and works.

Having specialized in painting in art school but always interested in form and texture, Makaza decided to develop his own hybrid medium which would enable him to unite his artistic goals. After experimenting with various materials, Makaza arrived at silicone a material which can be cast, painted with as well as woven and tied. Over the past eight years Makaza's works progressively developed as an opportunity to speak both viscerally and philosophically to the issues Makaza finds compelling as a young Zimbabwean concerned with politics, history and power and their impact on daily lives of ordinary people as well as a globally engaged millennial. Resonating with traditional modes like weaving and tapestry but unequivocally contemporary, Makaza's works articulate the conversation of what African and uniquely Zimbabwean contemporary can be – a paradigm internationally engaging and locally compelling. Makaza's works has received early critical and collector acclaim, taking part in the 2018 survey of Zimbabwean contemporary art at Zeitz MoCAA, winning the Tomorrows/Today prize at the Investec Cape Town Art Fair in 2019, joining important institutional collections like that of Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden in Marrakech, Rollins College museum collection and noted private collections like Jorge Perez personal collection in Miami.

Recent Exhibitions include the 2024 Venice Biennale, Zimbabwe National Pavilion, Venice; Art Basel Miami Beach, 2021; Welcome Home, Museum of Modern African Art al Maaden, Macaal, Marrakesh, Morocco and Kubatana – Contemporary African Art Survey, Kunstlaboratorium, Norway.



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Pebofatso Mokoena  
Skinny Methods  
2024  
Oil on canvas  
51 x 61cm



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Troy Mazaka  
The Conquest of Lost Promises Part  
silicone infused with pigment  
cm 55 x 77

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Visits: Tuesday-Sunday h.10-20.00  
(appointment only)

