



Dinaledi III

Call for Price



This artwork was created during a three month residency period at the Bag Factory, which Mbete participated in as the 2023 Cassirer Welz Award Recipient.

During her residency, Mbete explored new ways of working with textiles through researching and trialling different techniques. In these new works, the artist establishes an expanding visual language as she makes a departure from her earlier blanket and bead soft sculptures, by presenting new experiments with natural dyes using manjista powder and Imphepho on raw silk. Although aesthetically distinct from her previous oeuvre, the marrow of the thematic explored within her artistic practice are present and expanded upon in this exhibition.

She writes:

'My project endeavours to document and archive the anecdotes of "ordinary people" and their encounters with South Africa's rich and poignant history. I am reflecting on the intersection of issues such as labour, migration, economy, sustainability, ethical forms of creation, gender and feminism, social origin, and social use.'

Mbete references historical methods of working with textiles, which have largely informed her experimentations during the residency period

'I use textile manipulation techniques, including weaving, sculpting, beading, and natural dyeing, to showcase women's labour and histories. This approach will draw on the influences of Southern African textile traditions and will aim to reflect contemporary perspectives on South African history ... in the creation of new textile works.'

Mbete's fascination with textile is centred around being able to turn a material into something functional or an object of admiration. 'I have always been inclined [towards textiles], I'm interested in abstractionism, not necessarily aesthetically, but in the [notion] that an idea can be contained within something that isn't figurative or a symbol in the conventional sense.'

Mbete probes us to consider 'challenging and reshaping our relationship with culturally specific textile materials from Southern Africa.'

Text excerpt from *I've known rivers*

Frame	Framed in natural kaaat, no glass
Medium	Imphepho, Onion Skin Dye and Beads on Cotton
Location	Cape Town, South Africa
Height	127.50 cm
Width	92.50 cm
Artist	Bulumko Mbetse
Year	2023

