



**Freedom on The Table**

**R 26,800.00**



Freedom on the Table is a contemporary acrylic painting by South African artist Shana Ellappa, examining the contradictions between promised liberation and lived reality within histories of indenture and colonial labour systems. The work reflects on how “freedom” was often presented as an offer, an imagined future placed before individuals, yet remained fundamentally inaccessible upon arrival.

Central to the composition is the metaphor of the table as a site of negotiation, expectation, and illusion. What is offered is not always what is received. The promise of autonomy, dignity, and opportunity is revealed as fragile and unfulfilled, exposing the gap between colonial rhetoric and lived experience.

A hidden fish within the scene becomes a quiet but potent symbol of this tension. It is present, yet concealed, suggesting sustenance, abundance, or freedom itself, always just out of reach. This subtle absence speaks to the experience of being shown possibility without ever being granted access to it.

Ellappa’s practice engages deeply with memory, ancestry, and postcolonial narrative reconstruction, using painting as a means of reclaiming silenced or distorted histories. Through this work, she interrogates how systems of power shape desire and expectation, while also shaping disappointment, endurance, and survival.

Frame	Black wooden frame
Medium	Acrylic on 300 gsm (Cold Press) Strato Watercolour Paper
Location	Cape Town, South Africa
Height	99.00 cm
Width	74.00 cm
Artist	Shana Ellappa
Year	2026

