



AMITA MAKAN
Nomalungelo: Threads to Freedom

CONSTITUTION HILL

WEBBER WENTZEL
in alliance with > Linklaters

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Curated by Brenton Maart

13 March – 4 April 2014

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Foreword

This year South Africans are celebrating 20 years of democracy. Over the past two decades we have been touched by icons who have inspired our people through music and imagery.

Through this exhibition we remember these icons and how their stories intertwine with our own. We also pay tribute to one of them in particular – Miriam Makeba. Known as Mama Afrika, Miriam Makeba played a significant role in our cultural and musical heritage.

The works by artist Amita Makan were inspired by Makeba's final biography, *The Miriam Makeba Story: Miriam Makeba in conversation with Nomsa Mswamuka*, following the death of her (the artist's) own mother.

As the mixed media in these artworks merge to form images and tales, we come together to celebrate our South African story.

As a truly South African law firm we strongly believe in this country's potential, which is why we support our local artists and invest in preserving our heritage.

I trust you will be inspired by the artworks displayed in this exhibition.

David Lancaster
SENIOR PARTNER, WEBBER WENTZEL

Phatha Phatha: For Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuku
2014
Embroidery with silk and metallic thread on silk organza
with Swarovski crystals, sequins and vintage saris
156 x 123 x 24 cm



Brenton Maart

Evidence of the mediated archive in the work of Amita Makan

Perhaps the mistake lies in establishing that at the beginning I and a telephone are in a finite space such as my house would be, whereas what I must communicate is my situation with regard to numerous telephones that ring; these telephones are perhaps not calling me, have no relation to me, but the mere fact that I can be called to a telephone suffices to make it possible or at least conceivable that I may be called by all telephones.

Italo Calvino's text is taken from his book, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*, written in 1979. The title itself conjures up the anticipation of a tale of enchantment, made possible by the extraordinary use, at the start, of that most conjuring of conjunctions: *if*. *If* – by definition – is a magical word; one that creates a situation in which two or more things happen at the same time, or in the same place. *If* denotes the result of something that may happen or, if that something did not happen, it denotes an imagined result. But, whether real or imaginary, true or untrue, the word signifies that, for one thing to happen, something else should happen before. It is a word of cause and effect; it is a word of relationship.

If on a Winter's Night a Traveller hints at the association of one concept with another; the title of the book seems to

set the stage for a continuous tale. But each chapter is discrete – different in character and narrative to the one before and the one thereafter. It is only when the characters in different chapters start demonstrating commonalities, or when the effect of relationships between characters in different stories can be seen, that the interplay between chapters becomes legible. A dynamic crossing is established between all players in a complex overtone that enmeshes back upon itself; where the future, present and past replay across each others' terrain in actions that both confuse and illuminate these assumedly separate tenses. The pervading sense, at the end of the book, is that linear chronology, so loved by western modernity, has here been replaced by the possibility of an altogether more exciting notion; one that may be described as a web of complexity. To drive home this interpretation: Calvino's words derive from his chapter titled *In a network of lines that enlase*.

At its simplest level, Amita Makan's exhibition *Nomalungelo: Threads to Freedom* may be read as a series of eight embroidered portraits, book-ended chronologically by *Loose Ends* (2009), a portrait of the artist's deceased mother, and *My Black President* (2014), a portrait of deceased musical legend Brenda Fassie.

Loose Ends: A Story About My Mother
2009
Embroidery with silk and viscose thread on dupion silk
with brocade, beads and Swarovski crystals
106.5 x 88 x 3.5 cm

Between these are a series of portraits of Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuku, two further goddesses of South African music, along with self-portraits of the artist. What holds together this seemingly disparate collection is: the subjects are all women; they are all brought to life using the threads and swatches of sari's belonging to the artist's mother; they are certainly all divas, and objects of worship; and they are all – in various sectors whether public or private, social or domestic, local or international – vocal and pioneering advocates of the right to freedom.

The first striking thing when encountering Makan's work is her exuberant use of materials: swatches of silk and silken threads, sequins and crystals and ribbons come together on fabric that shimmers or is netted, like a veil, to reveal both the front and the back. She is lavish in her choice of media. With abandon, she creates light streams that visually jump, like nerve impulses, into the shimmer of graphic outlines and glassy pools. Her base fabrics form flat matt substrates for reflective animations. The viewing experience is sensuous and seductive. Presenting one medium against another, the textures emerge. Matt and gloss interface to create physical relief, visual buckles, additional dimensions, and varied topographies. Narratives are told through these animations; new things always emerge. Each viewing moment is different from the next, and this is part of the works' enticement: continual flux, signs of tension, drawing the viewer closer. Whenever systems change radically, a paradox is established between the formative significance of everything while nothing

else matters, a conflict that may explain the viewer's reaction to move closer . . .

Archival photographs are the visual starting point for the artwork: Makan's mother in an unnamed studio; Sally Shorkend's image of Fassie, Gopal Naransamy and Jurgen Schadeberg's images of Makeba; snapshots of the artist . . . Photographs are able to capture, hold and demonstrate an ideology of its time. They are graphs – visual representations – of the interaction of societies and social forces with landscape and spatial agency. These stationery objects become indicators of change.

By combining these two elements – the archive and the relic – the artist brings together that rare combination of memory with 'thing' – the tangible and the intangible – allowing a bridge to be constructed between history and the contemporary. Here, Makan appears to function partly as facilitator to release the potential energy stored within the seemingly latent records, and partly as activist in allowing the agency to do its work. The methods she employs are translation into an evolving language, interpretation into evolving meanings, and mediation from one medium to another. By giving these different subjects the same treatment, the artist adamantly calls into question, and defiantly overthrows, the arbitrary nature of the act of bestowing importance.

Nomalungelo brings to the fore multiple layers of value. The archives, including as they do precious material, are of course economically valuable. They are also important in terms of history and heritage. Their significance is intellectual in critical

scholarship. Their role as contemporary cultural products leads to an appreciation that many find invaluable. Due to their temporal scope, they are essential as markers of highly specific shifts, and allow patterns to develop. It then becomes Makan's role to utilise this scientific trope – selecting, categorising and presenting information – as the building blocks for creative practice, mediating between the didactic, analytical trope on the one hand, and the poetic aesthetic on the other.

In effect, the individual items – the photographs and fabric samples – become micro-historical quotations that collectively work to paint the 'bigger picture'. Ordinary items – photographs, and also fabrics that once belonged to Makan's mother – here become archaeological items, sequentially transformed first into simple narrative aids and then into complex signs. Initially utilitarian objects (and photographs are also utilitarian in their function in memory) later become words and chapters in stories, thus consciously or inadvertently addressing institutionalised attribution. Drawing on Hal Foster's writing on the 'theoretical elaboration of museological temporality and cultural temporality', Okwui Enwezor – in *Mirror's Edge*, 1999 – writes that 'like institutions dedicated to collecting, categories of meaning accrue and are built up over time and reframed according to institutional ideology'. Enwezor's writing on 'representations of representation' engaging 'new modalities of engagement' may be used to describe the artworks on exhibition. Phrased differently, the show highlights its epistemology of self-criticality, where the artist and her works interrogate the fields within which they operate.

As with Calvino's text, Makan defines a discrete space, and establishes fluid possibilities of movements into and from that space. The evidence of cause and effect finds an analogy in *The Logic of Practice* (translated in 1990), a sociological theory of Pierre Bourdieu. He writes that conditional freedoms, manifest in dispositions, imply the possibility of 'the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production'. Initially used to explain cultural production, Bourdieu's theories may here be applied to the agency inherent in contemporary archival practice, where 'a change in agent's position necessarily entails a change in the field's structure'. It may not be too great a rhetorical leap, then, if the works on exhibition become partly an attempt to demonstrate how agents change position, and cross between fields, to enact constantly changing relationships. (In other words, proactive archive practitioners have the agency to change their environment.) Bourdieu postulates that fields are a range of structured spaces, each with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force independent of those of politics and the economy. In other words, the power wielded by political agency may potentially have a counterpoint in the agency exerted by creative archival practice. At its simplest level, this logic replaces the rigidity of dogma (the grand narrative) with the fluidity of cultural agency (new and constantly evolving narratives that shift with each context). And herein is vested the most important question of the exhibition: could the situational and the specific – as evidenced in the diversity of subjects –

work as tools against the violent omissions arising from the presentation of the 'norm' and its negation of dissenting voices and experiences? Is this in counterpoint to preconceived conclusions of a research process? In other words, the dogmas prevailing during the lifetimes of Makan's subjects may not be as strong as we initially assumed.

Bongani Mkhonza (2014), in a personal communication on Makan's interpretation of Makeba, underlines this concept when he writes that the artwork 'is an expressive embodiment [of human rights]. She stands bigger than life, in a posture of celebration, and surrounded by intertwined threads symbolic of her journeys. The re-enactment of Schadeberg's image replays Makeba's advocacy. Embedded in this name is a catalyst rather than a victim, and *Nomalungelo* becomes the voice, the thinker who recreates herself as a pioneer of her own liberation and rights. In this way, Makeba continues to empower the course of women across the globe.'

With each viewing of the show, the linearity of the research process and the mode of storytelling (and story-reading) becomes increasingly fragmented. Sequences become splintered. Instead of generating a bigger picture, *Makan's* greatest strength is in laying bare provisional change; seems to revel in a situational contingency that flies in the face of the traditional approach to researching, recording, analysing and presenting historical information. This, in effect, subverts the arrogance of the modernist method of writing history: one ideology, one writer, one story that – through its prescription – becomes the

prevailing dogma. Instead, Makan uses a decentralised, postmodern approach to presenting her African modernist subjects.

This freedom of self-expression and self-representation leads to sets of data, each characterised by their modernist traits – as defined by Mary Klages – of 'impressionism and subjectivity; multiple narrations; blurring of distinction between genres; emphasis on fragmented forms and discontinuous narratives; self-consciousness a rejection of elaborate formal aesthetics in favour of spontaneity and discovery; and a rejection of the distinction between high and low (or popular) culture.

Makan's approach attempts to decentralise the power, allowing for – again drawing on Klages – an increased focus on ambiguity, simultaneity, and an emphasis on the destructured, decentred, dehumanised subject. Instead of lamenting the loss of unity, coherence and meaning, this new approach to creating an artwork from a life story celebrates the reality of fragmentation, provisionality and incoherence.

The works are demanding in their method of insisting that we imagine the affect – the feeling – of the subjects. And it is this word – imagine – that forms the baseline of my experience of the works on show. In this sense, 'imagine' may be deconstructed into 'image in', a challenge to project beyond the lateral cuts or the vertical delimitations, to interpret the scars as indicators of transition, to transform the literal photographs into vestibules of memory, capable of yielding subjective and ever-changing snippets of history in hard copy. Mkhonza (2014) notes, in relation to Makan's portrait of Fassie, that

'Makan allows the viewer to complete the reading by introducing empty spaces in the canvas. By allowing the viewers to fill in the blanks, we become active participants in Fassie's life, and in her struggle for freedom. We begin to imagine what it may have been like, being Fassie: a popular musician and a black woman fighting for liberation ...'

This is the key metaphor of the process of mediation, a metaphor that threads its way through the entire show, speaking of transition and change, movement between poles, cause and effect, the dual occurrence of the physical and spiritual. The process becomes a proxy that presents to the viewer an imaginative space for a transcendental shift. The metaphor is given weighting by the two self-portraits on exhibition where the artist, here, becomes the mediator between the commonality and fragmentation between her subjects.

The initial intention of the self-portraits – to interrogate what it means to have a trans-national identity – may further be transposed to Makan's subjects. Thus the works act informationally in altering the 'traditional canon' within which their critical assertion occurred, a concept developed by Chika Okeke in his essay titled *Modern African Art* (1999). Makan's methodology, in effect, is an extension of mid-century African aesthetics, which first analysed and reflected on the notion of otherness, then regenerated according to an African perspective: defence and legitimation. Thus, effectively, decolonising the mind. Here, black Africa is adopted as a source of inspiration, tools for analysis are generated from within, and an epistemology is created. For me, the greatest strength of

these works is in allowing Makan and her work to speak directly. In direct counter to the modernist negation of African agency, these works challenge the notion of difference as definitive, insisting on the assertion of the self and on the facilitation of the process of externalisation. Identity is not a given, nor is it an innate, state of being. Instead, the variability of the term comes about through interactions and continually transforms through conference. This process of internal reflexivity – started during the Negritude movement and extended into the current state of Pan-Africanism – insists on the originality of African cultures in the making of modernity and post-modernity. It is this anti-racist racism – written about by Okwui Enwezor in his 2002 introduction to the catalogue *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945–1994* – that was applied as a tool of synthesis and as a strategy for subversion and rebellion to contradict colonial alienation. It is this concept, writes Enwezor, that western modernity – and colonial-inspired post-coloniality – could neither digest nor negate.

But that is just my opinion; you may experience the work differently, thus drawing attention to the subjectivity of interpretation. This is just one interpretation, greedy in its haste to assign meaning. For writer James Elkins, it is an example of 'the avaricious snap of rhetoric', an exercise that requires increasingly tricky thinking. In this quagmire of meaning, the murky terrain of interpretive authority, it is wise and infinitely more generous to get back to the thrill made visible. Back to where we started, to Amita Makan's delight in making visual art.

Loose Ends: A Story About My Mother

2009

Embroidery with silk and viscose thread on dupion silk with brocade, beads and Swarovski crystals

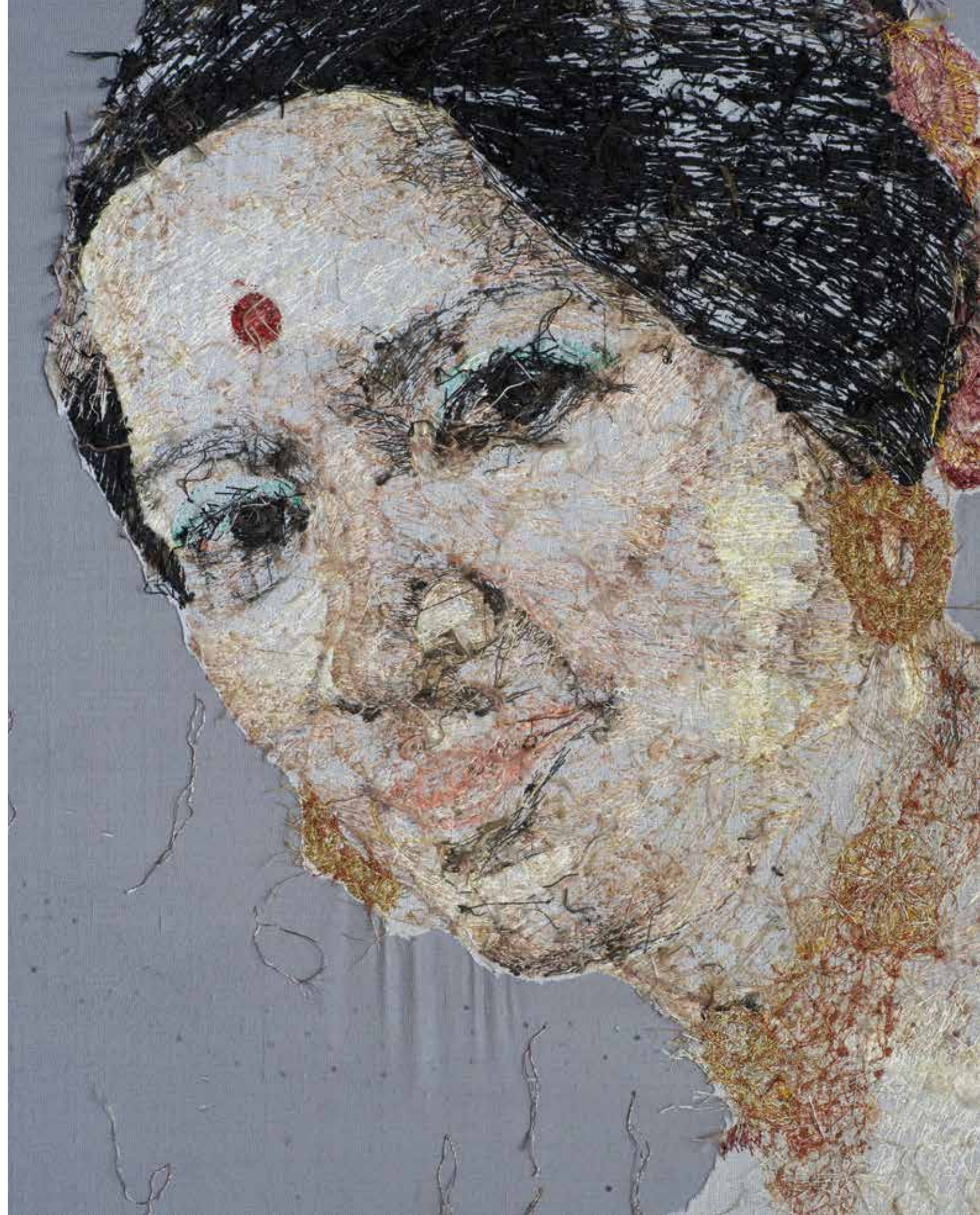
106,5 x 88 x 3,5 cm (recto and verso)

ARTIST STATEMENT

This hand-embroidered portrait of my mother is somewhat Bollywood, somewhat kitsch, with its vibrant colours, beads, brocade and crystals. On closer inspection however, I feel that the disintegrating halo and hanging threads intimate something altogether more sombre. For me, the work explores the universal law of the impermanence of life. Youth and beauty embroidered with delicate silk threads on fragile silk canvas suggest *Memento Mori* and *Tempus Fugit*. There is tension in suspending 'the magic of the stopped moment', and in the inevitable decay that time brings.

In 2008 and 2009, attempting to preserve my mother and my memories of her, I painstakingly recreated her, stitch by stitch – a gradual process, mimicking the stealth of the Alzheimer's disease from which she suffered. Yet I fail to portray her as intact, as the disease steadily intruded into our lives. The title *Loose Ends* signifies our journey's end. The reverse of the work, with plaques and tangles, signifies the disease and the unravelling of my mother. It alludes to our entangled, frayed and interrupted lives.





Self Portrait: African Renaissance

2013

Embroidery with silk thread on silk organza, tulle, vintage sari and sequins

146 x 89.5 x 2.9 cm (recto and verso)

ARTIST STATEMENT

This self-portrait is based on a photograph of myself taken in October 2009, a month after the passing of my mother. The photograph documents my irrevocable loss and grief, and is testimony that 'time is living me'. It seems to ask whether fulfilment could ever be felt as deeply as loss?

In the reworking of the photographic image, I reinvent my Self through Flora, the Goddess of Flowers, referencing Sandro Botticelli's *Primavera* of 1485. Richly embossed flowers, salvaged from my mother's now-abandoned sari, cascade into my hair and are garlanded on my neck.

I attempt to capture my Self, obscured through layers of silken tulle and organza. The circle of organza represents the Self and 'samsara', the endless cycles of death and rebirth.

I carefully trace the contours of my face with fine and fragile stitches. Snake-like chain stitches, lifted from another of my mother's saris, are woven through my head to form my hair. The chain-like stitches are called 'mochi bharat', named after my Mochi (cobbler) ancestors who introduced this stitch to court garments and shoes in 19th-Century India.





Self Portrait

2012

Embroidery with silk thread on tulle, vintage sari and sequins

153.2 x 99.3 x 3 cm (recto and verso)

ARTIST STATEMENT

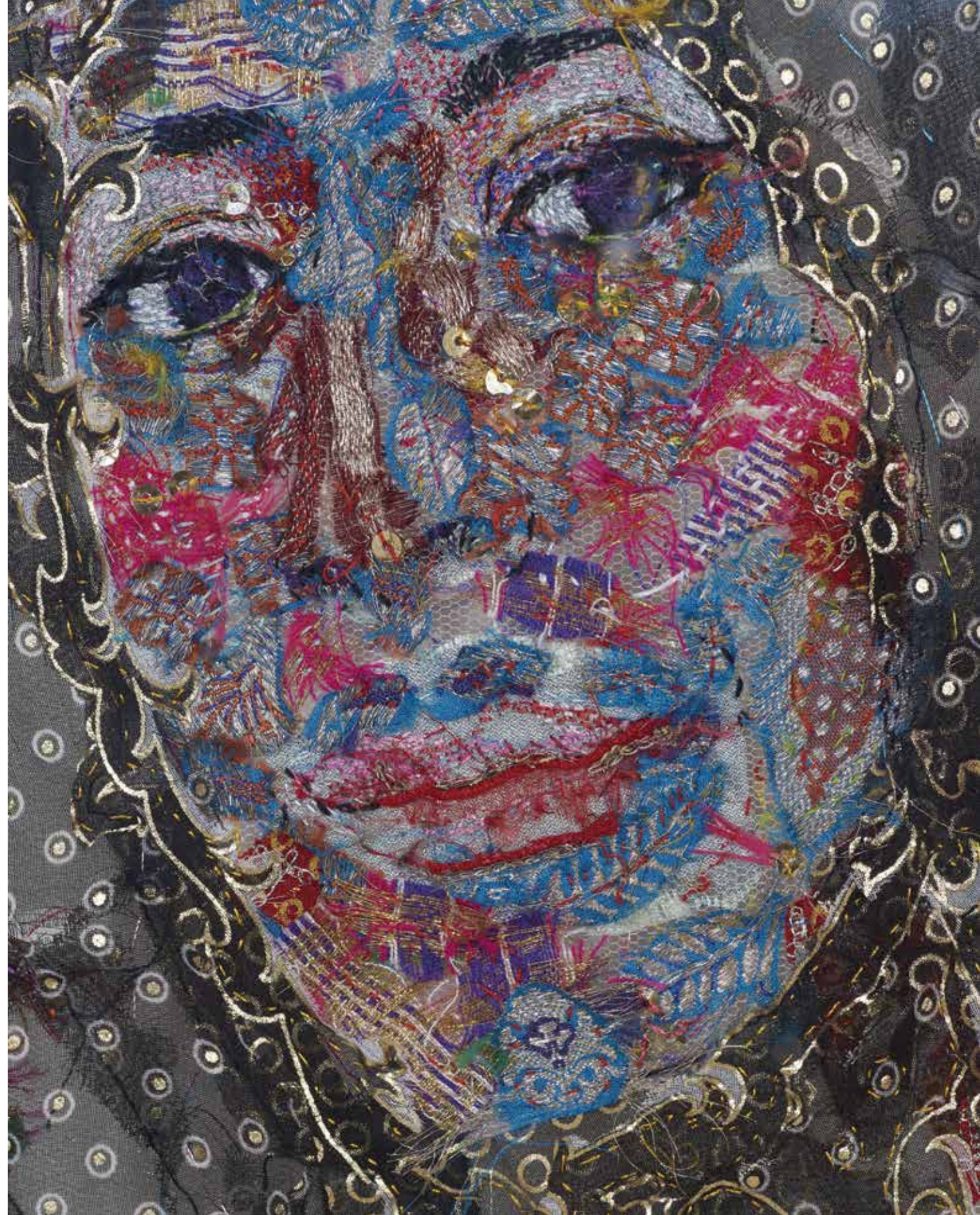
In this work I reflect on the Hindu philosophy of Maya derived from the Sanskrit *ma* ('not') and *ya* ('that', that is 'illusion'). Ancient Hindu texts purport that what one sees is true in itself, but untrue when compared to the absolute truth. Maya prompts me to pierce through the veil of illusion to find my true self, to pierce through the veil of my Indian-self in search of my identity. The shiny sequins are mirror-like and self-reflexive, and induce dream-like states of illusion.

I have recreated myself from fragments of vintage saris belonging to my late mother. The sari dissected, transformed and reinvented reminds me of loss, and is a symbol of my Indian ancestry and evolving

identity. I use my ancestor's stitches to 'pin down' and capture my Self on fragile tulle. My face is stitched together with fragments of saris and makes an 'Indian' face. The reverse of the self-portrait expresses a more nuanced, somewhat abstract form, and I find this a more comfortable reflection of my identity.

My portrait, like identity itself, is in transition, unfixed and continually undergoing metamorphosis. I am surrounded by a myriad of western shoes, 'cut outs' from saris which together metaphorically express journey, class, caste, modernity, migration, mobility, and freedom.







Phatha Phatha: For Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuku

2014

Embroidery with silk and metallic thread on silk organza with Swarovski crystals, sequins and vintage saris
156 x 123 x 24 cm (recto and verso)

ARTIST STATEMENT

A photograph shows Miriam Makeba being welcomed by Dorothy Masuku on her arrival in Nairobi in 1962, capturing a wonderful energy and rapport between these two iconic African women, songwriters, singers and comrades both forced into exile. In the photograph, the outline of their combined silhouettes is heart-shaped, a motif repeated in their profiles with outstretched arms. Dorothy Masuku and Miriam Miriam both had

written songs titled *Phatha Phatha* (or *Pata Pata*), and this, combined with the photograph, served as inspiration for this double portrait. *Phatha Phatha* is a sensual urban dance meaning to 'touch-touch', and I thought to fuse the meaning of the song with that moment fixed in the photograph. Their Phatha Phatha extends beyond the physical, and seems to touch each other's emotions.





Nomalungelo (After Jurgen Schadeberg and Gustav Klimt)

2013

Embroidery with silk thread on dupion silk and vintage sari, silk cord, sequins and Swarovski crystals

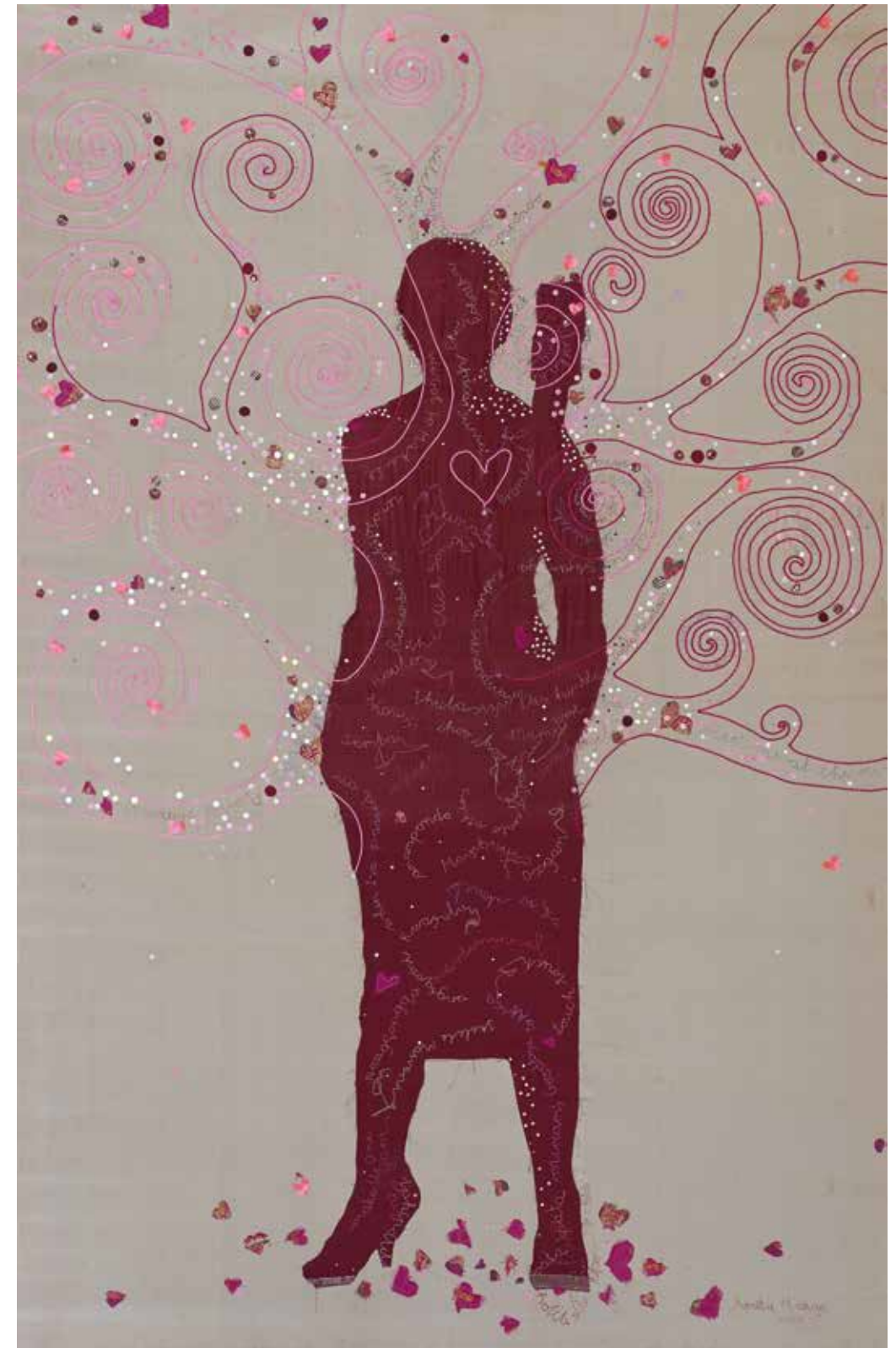
140.5 x 208.5 x 9.5 cm

ARTIST STATEMENT

Jurgen Schadeberg's iconic photograph of Miriam Makeba first appeared on the cover of *Drum Magazine* in 1955, and is now deeply embedded in South Africa's collective memory. For me, it is a photograph of Makeba's heroic status. The artwork *Nomalungelo* – named after the Zulu girl's name interpreted as 'the pioneer of human rights' – here become a tribute to Makeba, the human rights activist.

Makeba's silhouette is cut out from my late mother's sari, and Makeba's songs of activism weave through her body: *Nomalungelo, Table Mountain, The Click Song, Phata Phata, Soweto Blues, Hauteng, I'm so Alone, Mayibuye, Mama, Sophiatown,*

Goodbye Poverty, Miriam's Goodbye to Africa, Make Us One, Amampondo, Do Unto Others, West Wind, Iphindlela, Meet me at the River and When I Have Passed On. The titles of the songs spiral into the concentric circles of Klimt's *Tree of Life*, and are reminiscent of musical notes and vinyl records. Hearts, cut from vintage saris, symbolise the love she expressed through her music, and her unfailing commitment to human rights and democracy in South Africa. The fallen hearts at her feet allude to her sadness. Makeba's silhouette is illuminated with Swarovski crystals and transformed into a constellation, suspended in time.





Iphindlela (After Gopal Naransamy)

2011

Embroidery with silk and viscose thread, silk cord, organza ribbons and Swarovski crystals on dupion silk
134 x 194.3 x 9.5 cm (recto and verso)

ARTIST STATEMENT

My dear mother had passed away on 24 September 2009, and I was grieving when I started reading Miriam Makeba's final biography – *The Miriam Makeba Story: Miriam Makeba in Conversation with Nomsa Mwamuka* – in December 2009. I was moved by Makeba's story, and mesmerised by the archival photographs documenting her life and her beauty. She had an indomitable spirit and great courage, and triumphed in the face of political and personal adversity throughout her life. Her narrative awakened me from my personal grief, and inspired me to start making work again. I started tracing her early years in South Africa and in exile through hand embroidered works inspired largely by photographs of her. During her exile, South Africans were denied her youthful 'Divasque' presence. This embroidered work is inspired by a song – *Iphindlela* – written and sung by Makeba before she went into exile in 1959.

Of the song she had said: 'In *Iphindlela* I was saying, "show me the way". It was like a meditation. I was asking my ancestors and all my people for good and safe passage until I came back.'

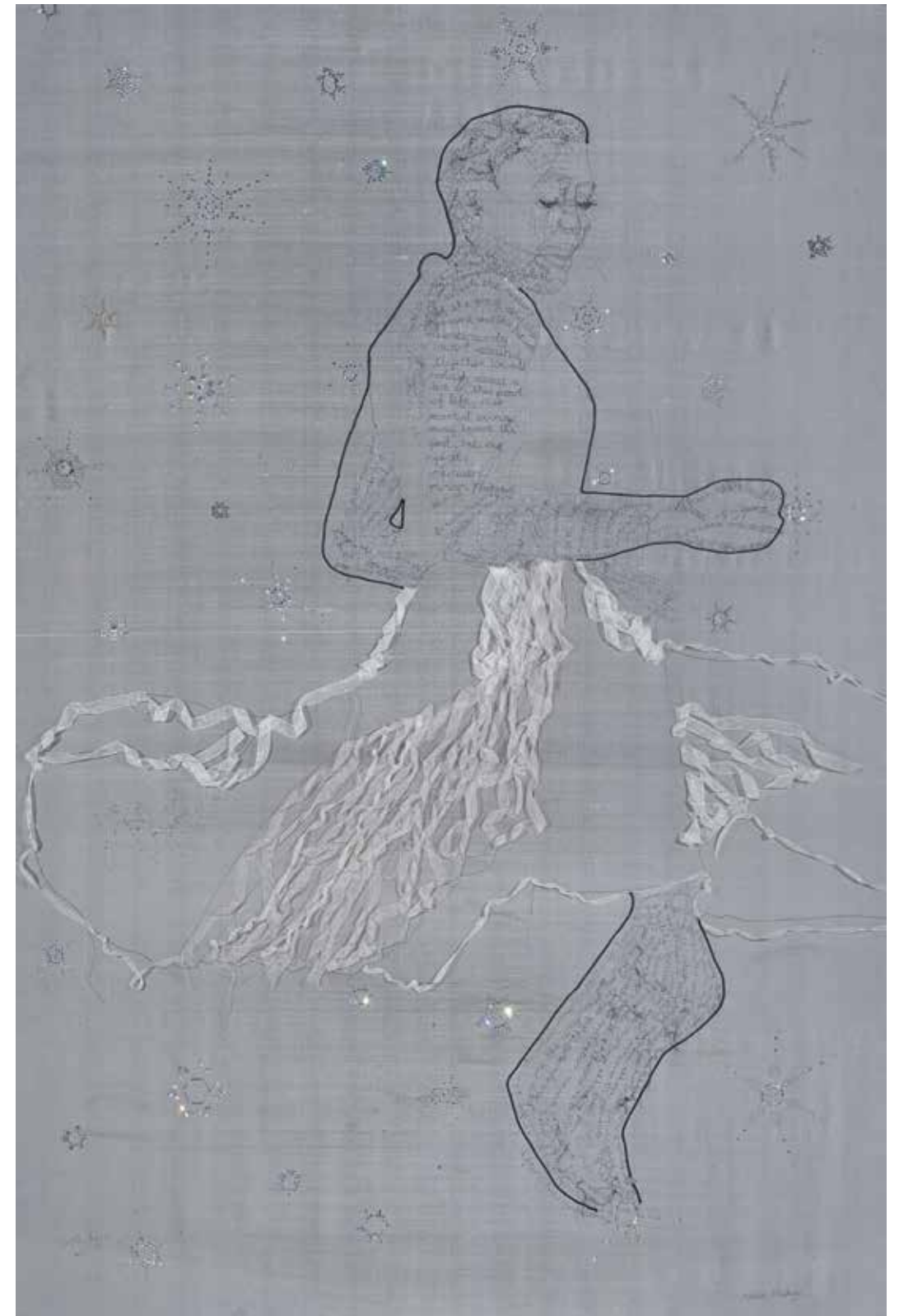
Iphindlela is an interpretation of South African veteran photographer Gopal

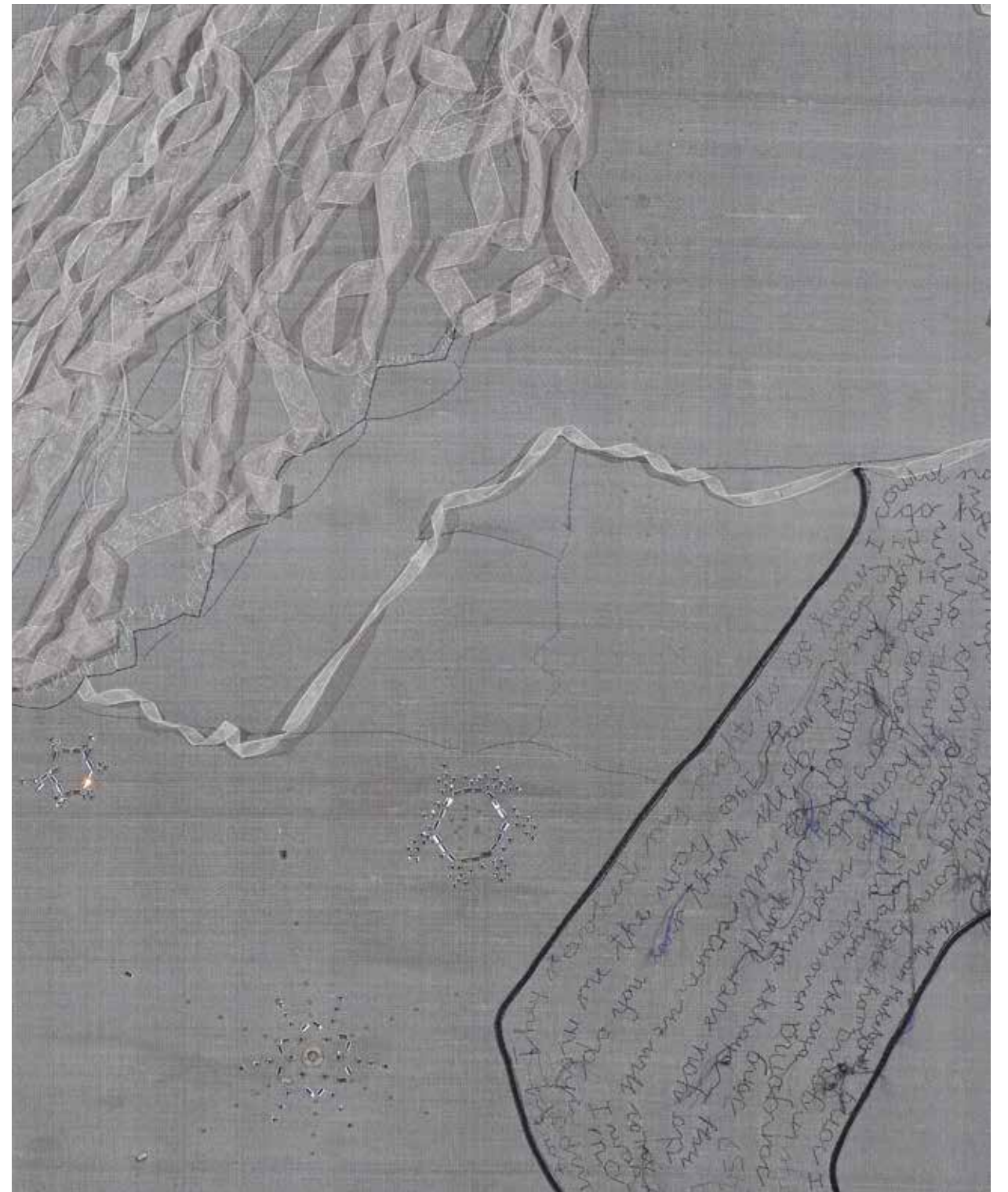
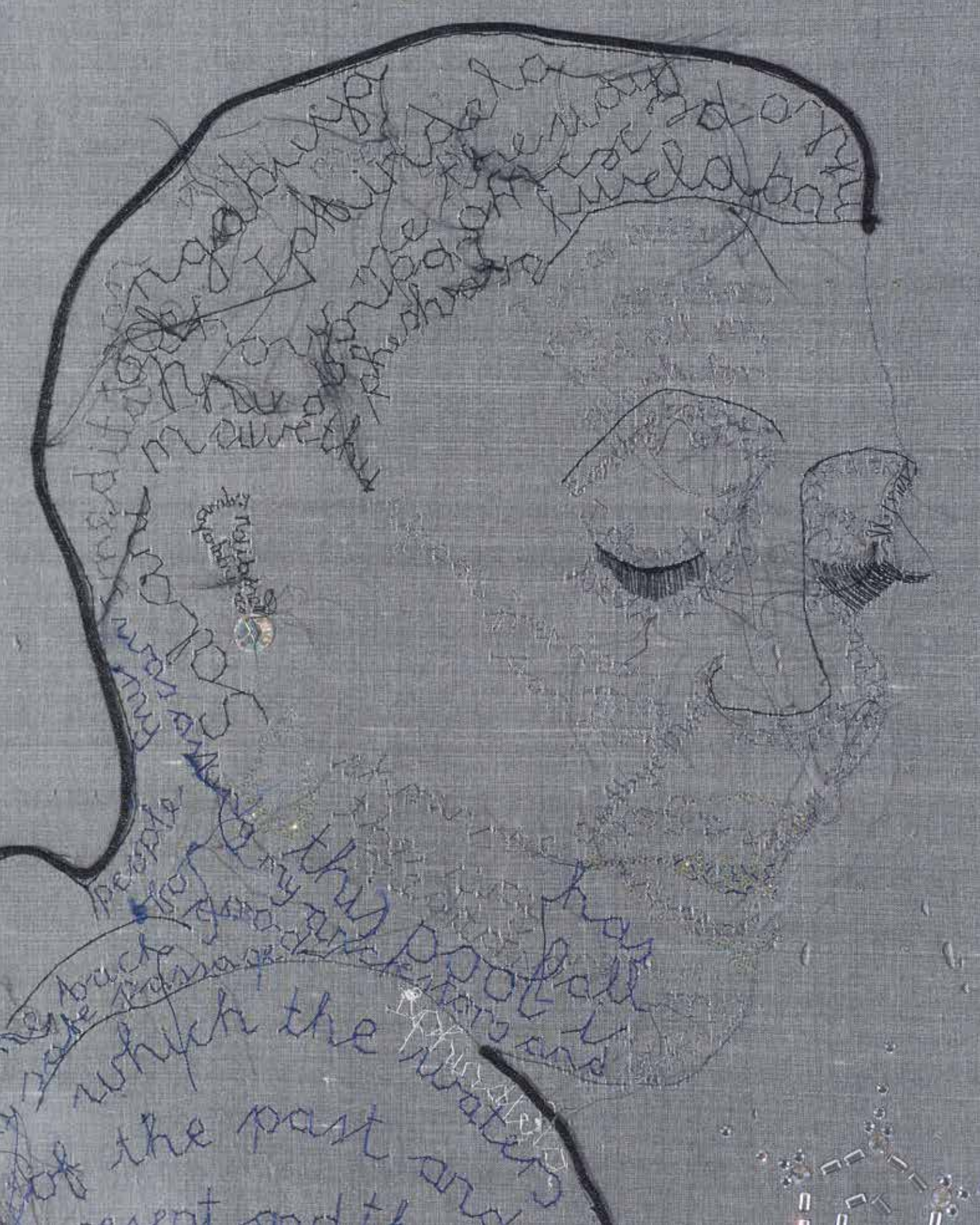
Naransamy's photograph of Makeba performing with the Manhattan Brothers in South Africa in 1956. Makeba's swirling silhouette is hand embroidered on silk canvas and the texts throughout the work express Makeba's recollections of her preparations to leave South Africa and the loneliness and sadness of the three decades of her exile. Makeba went into exile with 'two little suitcases', leaving her baby behind. Her music was to be banned in South Africa and, when she tried to return to South Africa to attend her mother's funeral, she was refused entry and her passport was revoked. With her mother's words 'Makeba you got to get up' ingrained in her, she got up and continued. In 1963, at the age of 31, she appeared before the United Nations Committee Against Apartheid to call for the international boycott of South Africa.

During her long years in exile, Makeba told author Hank Bordowitz, 'I always wanted to leave home.' 'I never knew they were going to stop me from coming back. Maybe, if I knew, I never would have left. It is kind of painful to be away from everything that you've ever known. Nobody will know the pain of exile until you are in exile.'

On her return to South Africa after 31 years, she immediately visited her mother's grave. The 'reverse' of the work depicts a Makeba 'exiting' the frame, signifying her departure both from the country at the time of her exile but also her passing from our lives.

Water is central to the work *Iphindlela*. Photographs of hexagonal water crystals from Masuru Emoto's book *The Hidden Messages in Water* are interpreted with Swarovski crystals on a silky grey canvas. Water is used in the manufacture of these crystals. Crystal, like water, is radiant, reflective, transparent and mutable, and becomes a metaphor for Makeba's crossing of the water into exile, into her tears, and into her movement. Miriam Makeba likened her own life to water thus: '... my life has been this pool in which the past and the present and the future continuously swirl around together. We splash about a bit in this pool of life; our mortal beings may leave this pool, but our spirits remain.' Makeba wished that, when she passed away, her ashes were to be scattered at Cape Point where the Indian and Atlantic oceans meet. As she said, she 'wanted to flow'.





Ubuyile

2011

Embroidery with silk and metallic thread and wire on dupion silk, sequins and vinyl record

53 x 53 cm

ARTIST STATEMENT

This work takes inspiration from by a deeply touching song written by Gibson Kente for Miriam Makeba upon her departure from South Africa in 1959. The song is titled *Miriam's Goodbye to Africa*, and she recorded the track just a few days before leaving South Africa. While listening to the song, I wrote the lyrics on the vinyl record, thus encircling the embroidered portrait of a photograph of Makeba around the time of her return to South Africa. The vinyl record may also be a record of her 31 years in exile. *Ubuyile* means 'she has come back home; she has returned'. Makeba is joyous.

LYRICS TO MIRIAM'S GOODBYE TO AFRICA BY GIBSON KENTE

*Brothers and sisters
Today we say goodbye to Africa's Freedom Song, Miriam Makeba
Good luck Miriam and please do come back to us soon.*

*Goodbye mother, goodbye father and to you my little baby,
Goodbye until we meet again
Farewell dear friends,
I am leaving
May the Good Lord be with you all;
Though I am leaving
My heart remains with you;
I'll miss all my relations
And the sunshine of my homeland;
Farewell,
God bless you all.*

*Goodbye mother, goodbye father and to you my little baby,
Goodbye until we meet again
Farewell dear friends,
I am leaving
May the Good Lord be with you all;
Though I am leaving
My heart remains with you.*



My Black President (After Sally Shorkend)

2014

Embroidery on silk organza and tulle with silk and metallic threads, vintage saris, sequins and Swarovski crystals

89 x 69.1 x 2 cm (recto and verso)

ARTIST STATEMENT

Sally Shorkend's photograph of Brenda Fassie in the *Mail & Guardian* (2 August 2013) inspired me to prepare an embroidered portrait of Brenda. The photograph, taken in 1994, captures a liberated, uninhibited and courageous Brenda. Brenda had written and released the prescient song *My Black President* in 1983 about the then imprisoned Nelson Mandela. The song had been banned. In April 1994 Brenda, adding another verse, sang it at President Mandela's inauguration. My hand-embroidered portrait of Brenda expresses her identity and strength, along with her fragility and vulnerability.

MY BLACK PRESIDENT SONG LYRICS

*The year 1963
The people's president
Was taken away by security men
All dressed in a uniform
The brutality, brutality
Oh, no, my black president*

*Him and his comrades
Were sentenced to isolation
For many painful years
For many painful years
Many painful years
Of hard labor*

*They broke rocks
But the spirit was never broken
Never broken
Oh, no, my, my black president*

*Let us rejoice for our president
Let us sing for our president
Let us pray for our president
Let us sing, let us dance
For Madiba, Madiba's freedom*

*Now in 1990
The people's president
Came out from jail*

*Raised up his hand and said
'Viva, viva, my people'
He walked the long road
Back, back to freedom
Back, back to freedom
Freedom for our president*

*Let us rejoice for our president
Let us sing for our president
Let us pray for our president
Let us sing, let us dance
For Madiba, Madiba's freedom
Hmm maa [x3]
Mama
Hmm maa [x3]
Mama*

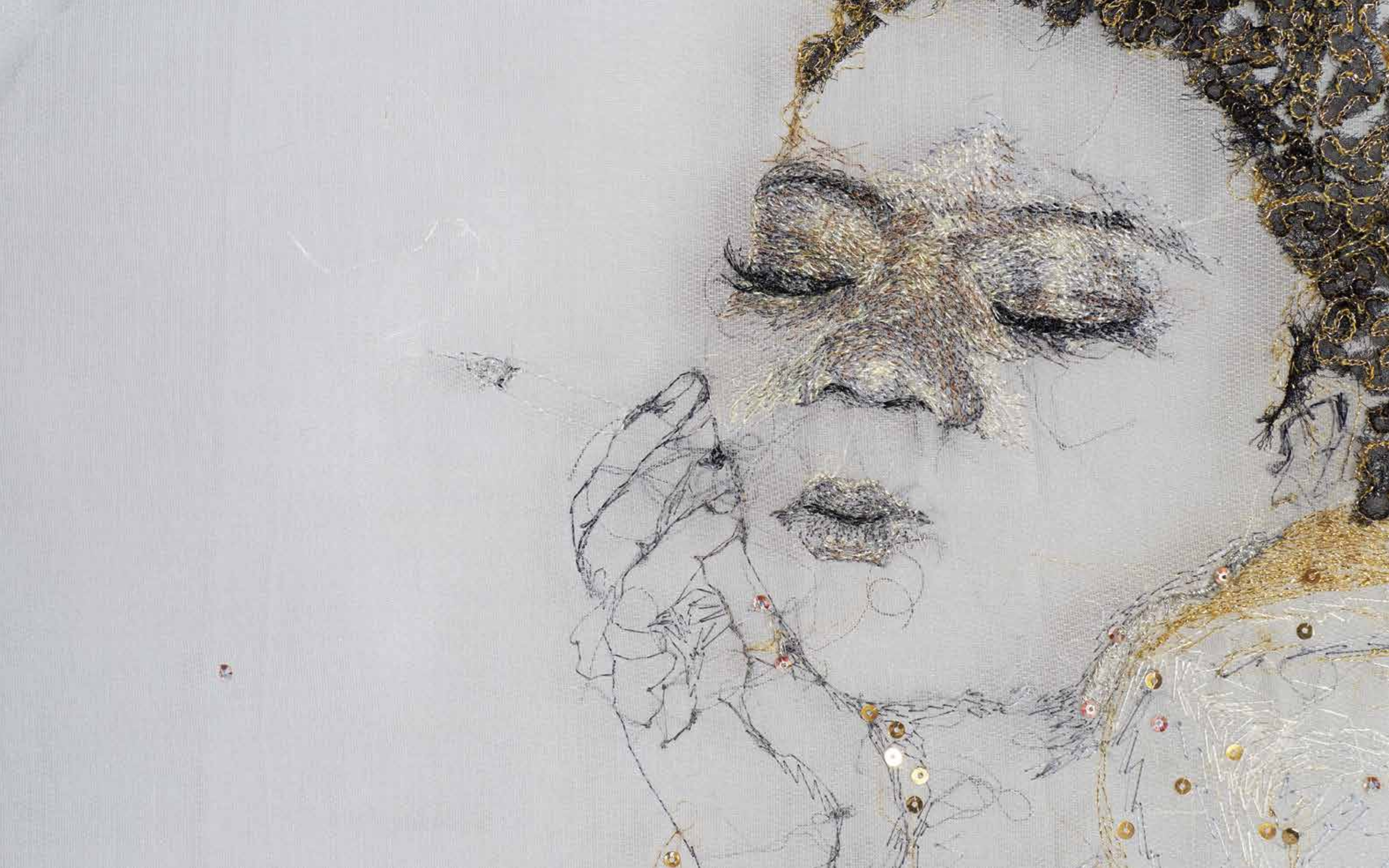
*Hmm maa [x3]
Madiba
Hmm maa [x3]
Madiba
Ahh, nyu ye uyee huu*

*I will die for my president
I will sing for my president*

*I will stand and say
Viva, Viva, Viva, Viva, Viva, Viva my president*



From <http://artists.letssingit.com/brenda-fassie-lyrics-black-president-85td399#ixzz2rTx6pvDO>





INVENTORY OF WORKS ON EXHIBITION

Iphindlela (After Gopal Naransamy)

2011
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134 x 194.3 x 9.5 cm (recto and verso)

Loose Ends: A Story About My Mother

2009
Embroidery with silk and viscose thread on dupion silk with brocade, beads and Swarovski crystals
106.5 x 88 x 3.5 cm (recto and verso)

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2013
Embroidery with silk thread on dupion silk and vintage sari, silk cord, sequins and Swarovski crystals
140.5 x 208.5 x 9.5 cm

Phatha Phatha: For Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuku

2014
Embroidery with silk and metallic thread on silk organza with Swarovski crystals, sequins and vintage saris
156 x 123 x 24 cm (recto and verso)

Self Portrait

2012
Embroidery with silk thread on tulle, vintage sari and sequins
153.2 x 99.3 x 3 cm (recto and verso)

Self Portrait: African Renaissance

2013
Embroidery with silk thread on silk organza, tulle, vintage sari and sequins
146 x 89.5 x 2.9 cm (recto and verso)

Ubuyile

2011
Embroidery with silk and metallic thread and wire on dupion silk, sequins and vinyl record
53 x 53 cm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Constitution Hill for extending the invitation to exhibit this series at the heart of South Africa's democracy, and for their generous support. A special thanks goes to Gaisang Sathekge, Exhibitions and Archives Coordinator, for responding so quickly and positively to my proposal for the exhibition, and to Ann van Wyk for her role in making all the necessary arrangements at Constitution Hill.

I extend my sincere appreciation to David Lancaster, Senior Partner at Webber Wentzel, for his encouragement, kindness, and generous sponsorship of the exhibition. Ignaz Fuesgen and Kim Jansen at Webber Wentzel were central to the realisation of the exhibition.

I also extend my deep gratitude to Brenton Maart for his encouragement and support for my artistic endeavours over many years, and for conceptualising this catalogue and curating the exhibition itself with unsurpassed passion, finesse, and savvy. I am eternally grateful to Brenton for hosting my very first solo exhibition at the KZNSA Gallery and for nurturing my love to embroider.

Thank you also to:

Usha Seejarim from The Art of Access for the initiative linking art writers with artists.

Kevin Shenton from Triple M Design for his professionalism, keen eye, sensibility and elegant design sense.

James Fox for the beautiful and sensitive manner in which he captured my embroideries with his photographic lens.

Mark Sinoff for the perfect installation of my artworks.

The Miriam Makeba Trust for the loan of the film and compiling the playlist for the exhibition.

Bongani Mkhonza, the Curator of the UNISA Gallery, for his support and encouragement over the years and for his contributions to the catalogue.

Reedwaan Vally, Director of STE Publishers, and publisher of the biography *The Miriam Makeba Story: Miriam Makeba in conversation with Nomsa Mwamuka* for his kind permission.

Jurgen and Claudia Schadeberg for their kind permission to use of the silhouette of Jurgen Schadeberg's photograph of Miriam Makeba, 1955.

The late Gopal Naransamy and his children, Raj and Sylvie Naransamy for the kind permission to draw on the silhouette of Miriam Makeba with the Manhattan Brothers, 1956.

Sally Shorkend for her kind permission to use her photograph of Brenda Fassie (1994) for *My Black President: After Sally Shorkend* (2014).

The Miriam Makeba Collection that inspired the artwork *Phatha Phatha: For Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuku* (2014).

The photograph of Miriam Makeba (copyright) and the late Gibson Kente's lyrics in *Miriam's Goodbye to Africa* that inspired the artwork *Ubuyile* (2011).

Colin Finck and Wanda House from Ultra Litho for their generosity and the printing of the catalogue.

Rob and Marina Appelbaum for their beautiful friendship.

Johan Conradie for encouraging me to take up embroidery.



AMITA MAKAN: BIOGRAPHY

Amita Makan holds an M.A. degree from Rhodes University (1993). Her work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions locally and abroad, and is held in the collections of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, UNISA, University of Pretoria, Edoardo Villa Museum, South African Reserve Bank, and the Chowmahallah Palace art collection in India. She lives and works in Pretoria, South Africa. Forthcoming projects include group exhibitions at the Nirox Projects, Johannesburg, and at the Luciano Benetton Foundation for the Biennale di Venezia, 2015.

Amita Makan

Nomalungelo: Threads to Freedom

Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, 13 March to 4 April 2014

Exhibition

Funder: Webber Wentzel

Curator: Brenton Maart

Co-ordinators: Gaisang Sathekge and Ann van Wyk

Installation: Mark Sinoff

Catalogue

Funder: Webber Wentzel

Editor: Brenton Maart

Photographer: James Fox

Designer: Kevin Shenton

Printed by Ultra Litho (Pty) Ltd, Johannesburg

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FRONT COVER

My Black President (recto)

2014 Embroidery on silk organza and tulle with silk and metallic threads, vintage saris, sequins and Swarovski crystals 89 x 69,1 x 2 cm

BACK COVER

My Black President (verso detail)

2014 Embroidery on silk organza and tulle with silk and metallic threads, vintage saris, sequins and Swarovski crystals 89 x 69,1 x 2 cm

INSIDE FRONT COVER

Loose Ends: A Story About My Mother (recto detail)

2009 Embroidery with silk and viscose thread on dupion silk with brocade, beads and Swarovski crystals 106,5 x 88 x 3,5 cm

INSIDE BACK COVER

Nomalungelo (After Jurgen Schadeberg and Gustav Klimt) (recto detail)

2013 Embroidery with silk thread on dupion silk and vintage sari, silk cord, sequins and Swarovski crystals 140,5 x 208,5 x 9,5 cm



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