

# AFTERMATH

VIOLENCE AND WELLBEING IN THE  
CONTEXT OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

# Exhibition themes



# Trigger Warning



- **Some images, captions, and videos in this presentation and related conversations can be provocative and include references to violence.**
  - **Persons sensitive to depictions of violence should please heed trigger warnings and turn their monitors off when prompted now.**

# PROTEST AND VIOLENCE

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# Protest and Violence

## RESPONSE

ASANDISWA BOMVANA  
UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

"This picture was taken at UWC in 2015 during the #FeesWillFall campaign. Songezo is holding up the cardboard with Bongo next to him. For me, the cardboard [sign] shows the true narrative [of] how it was... We were responding to the violence; we were retaliating, not the other way around."

Image: Wandile Kasibe  
Supplied by Asandiswa Bomvana

# Protest and Violence



MANDLA TIBANE  
BOB SANDILE MASANGO  
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

"This is a photo of a late close friend and comrade of mine who was brutally attacked by police. After the brutalising treatment, he was badly injured. The police still detained him for no reason. He was about to register for a PhD but, because universities are anti-black, his life was shortened and he died having a pending case. I remember how we struggled to raise money to pay lawyers after the charges were fabricated against us."

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# Protest and Violence

**OUT OF POWER, BUT NOT OUT OF RESPONSIBILITY**  
SIPHEPHELO (SHANGE) MTHEMBU  
DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

“This picture represents victimisation - such as financial and academic exclusion - that comes with being a student activist in an institution of higher learning. It also carries with it a lot of emotion because directing students and trying to assist them in a brutalising system - when I have also been a victim of the system - was not easy. Despite my own challenges, I could not run away from my leadership responsibilities and I had to help lead students in the right direction.”

Trigger  
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# Protest and Violence

THE STATE OF IZWELETHU  
SIYASANGA NDWAYI  
UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

“In the picture, I am in a police truck. I am shouting through the window. We were arrested in Parliament for protesting [along] with pensioners who wanted money from the government [which they had been waiting for since the 1980s]. In the truck, I was with three elders and my close comrade, Zwai Zazi. I’ve titled [this image] The State of Izwelethu due to the fact that it depicts how we are treated in our land and the amount of violence we as young black people [and] our grandparents - are subjected to.”

Image: Wandile Kasibe  
Supplied by Siyasanga Ndwai



# Exhibition themes





**TRAUMA**



# Trauma

A VIOLENT RECORD  
BOKANG FAKO  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

"Here lies the remains of what could have been a brilliant future. The impact of systematic violence is psychological and long-term. We are suffering from collective trauma as black students in this institution. We are sharing space with the same people that violated us at Shimla Park and people who continue to violate us. We have to walk through the same corridors [in which] we were manhandled by the police. We are finding it very difficult to breathe because, at any given time, we might get financially [or] academically excluded, expelled or suspended."

Module	Final Mark	Credits	Result
LPHS1514	76	32	Pass with Distinction
LPHS1514	89	16	Pass with Distinction
LPHS1524	98	16	Pass with Distinction
LPHS1524	92	16	Pass with Distinction
LPHS1514	94	16	Pass with Distinction
LPHS1514	91	16	Pass with Distinction
LPHS1524	78	16	Pass with Distinction
LPHS1512	78	8	Pass with Distinction
LPHS1522	100	8	Pass with Distinction
LPHS1514	87	16	Pass with Distinction
LPHS1524	98	16	Pass with Distinction
UFS 101	65	16	Pass
CRIM2614	45	0	Fail
CRIM2724	0	0	Discontinued
LCON2614	89	16	Pass with Distinction
LCPR2624	79	16	Pass with Distinction
LCRM2614	89	16	Pass with Distinction
LEVD2624	0	0	Incomplete
LLAB2614	73	16	Pass
LLAB2624	70	16	Pass
LPLU2624	82	16	Pass with Distinction
LPRC2514	60	16	Pass
LSAE2624	82	16	Pass with Distinction
LSIN2614	73	16	Pass
CRIM2614	0	0	Incomplete
CRIM2724	0	0	Incomplete
LBEN3714	77	16	Pass with Distinction
LBEN3724	0	0	Incomplete
LCIL3714	0	0	Incomplete

# Trauma

CLASHING CONVERSATIONS  
MADODA LUDIDI  
UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

“After #FeesMustFall, at the end of 2015, I was invited to a roundtable discussion in Johannesburg as a Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Fellow. Here I realised just how much the overall #FMF narrative was divorced from the realities on the ground at Fort Hare. I was an empty shell on that day, because I recognised that nothing I would do there, in that context, would make a difference to what we were experiencing at Fort Hare.”



# Trauma

## FINDING PEACE WITHIN

SIPHEPHELO (SHANGE) MTHEMBU  
DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

"This picture was taken after my suspension. It represents me being alone... My family members would leave in the morning and I would be alone most of the time. I was isolated and trying to avoid depression. Being at home helped as I had the love and support of my family."



# Trauma



**EVEN A TIGHT HUG WILL NEVER SUPPRESS  
OR TAKE MY PAIN AWAY**  
TSHEPANG MAHLATSI  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

“In this picture, on face value, we note a white lady trying to console a young black student, the leader of a black residence that was raided by the police. The picture also suggests that she is trying to understand the frustration and the anger on his face. What is not seen is the fact that this was the Acting Dean of Students Affairs, who knew that the police were [going] to go raid house Tswelopele. And who was aware that the instruction was given for the police to go [from] room to room and look for ‘perpetrators’ - the forces behind the movement. The frustration, pain and anger on his face says, ‘You can hug me, but you will never take away the feeling of betrayal and pain inflicted on me, my people, my privacy. You knew it, [so] don't tell me how I should react and express my pain.’ He was never the same after this day. He was diagnosed with PTSD, [showed] signs of extreme anxiety [and] was on antidepressants. He had to put his [studies] on hold and pay back his bursary. He should have graduated by now, but he is still here. All this will take more than a hug to heal.”

Image: Lihlumelo Toyana  
Supplied by Tshepang Mahlatsi

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**ESCAPE**

# Escape



TRAUMAREI  
BOKANG FAKO  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

"As black people, we are not accustomed to the innately capitalistic and Eurocentric nature of coping mechanisms, such as therapy. We are... incline[d] towards what is easily accessible and affordable - which tends to be alcohol and drugs. Black students found solace and relatability with each other through their pain, struggles and collective trauma. We forgot what it means to be alive. We are constantly surviving."

# Escape

## NON-COPING MECHANISMS

THABO MPHO MIYA

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

“Cigarette-smoking, for me, represents more than just indulgence. It represents the intersection of anxiety, escapism and functionality. Of course it is an unhealthy and self-destructive habit which I voluntarily participate in, but the question of the ways in which the environment fuels the anxiety which drives me to this habit also needs to be [asked]. For me, my addiction to cigarette-smoking parallels my loss of an innocent and naïve worldview. Inasmuch as the child who used to be centred [on] books and learning did that for the purpose of being able to provide for his family, the man who rejects the current arrangements of power and injustice in society along racial and economic lines is still doing this out of a sense of trying to create a better society for his family too.”



# Escape

## THE SAFE PASS ANYWAY MIKIONI UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

“The safe pass [was] a source that the students used to run away from the police [when] there [was] extreme heat on the battlefield. This does not mean that the comrades [were] running away from the struggle. No. It [was] a passage they use[d] to run away from the... extreme heat and regroup... This safe pass connects to the stadium that connects to another exit... down to the student residences and... bushes. Students [would] open these passages... the night before a strike to be able to run to safety, far away from police brutality.”

# Escape

## SHORT-LEFT (A SHORT RUN TO FREEDOM)

TSHEPO RASEALA  
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

“This is the quickest off-ramp from the main road, which connects the Univen campus to the city and is typically blockaded during student protests. It is the first turn to the left and a safe passage from the conflict. This is safer because it is hard for the police truck to access the road. The fact that this road leads to the river and the bushes makes it pointless for the police to follow students [along this] route. The passage is therefore a ‘short-left’ that provides an opportunity to make a short run [to] freedom since students who get caught by the police risk being arrested.”



# Exhibition themes





**FEAR**

# Fear

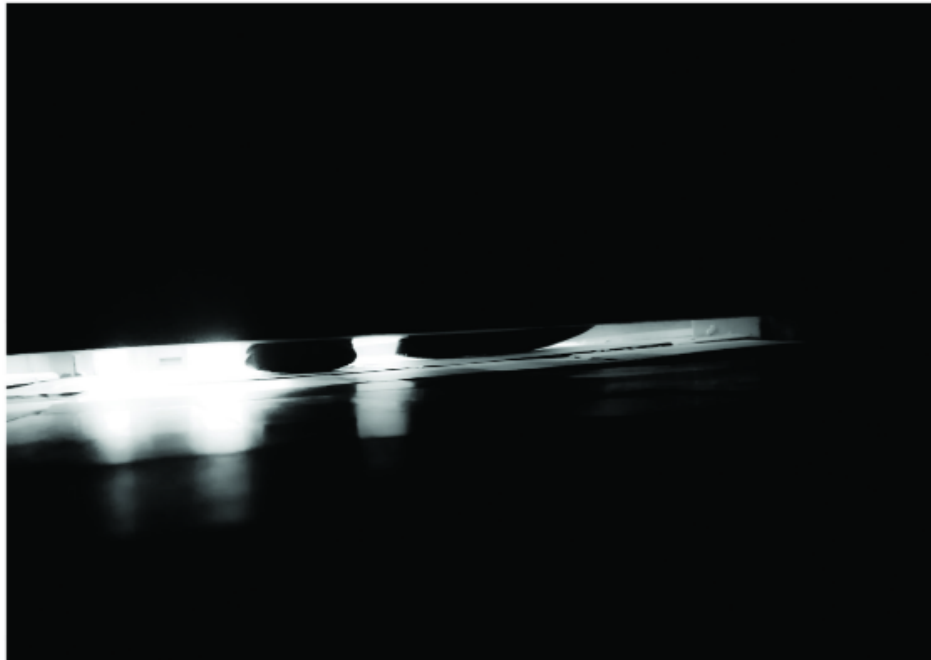


**FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN**  
FRANS SELLO MOKWELE  
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

“This picture is blurry because I was running from the [South African Police Service] chopper that was hovering above campus. I was honestly distracted by the sound of this chopper intimidating us, while we were protesting during #FeesMustFall... in 2015. I honestly did not know what exactly I was scared of, but one thing [was] for sure: with the teargas smoke... and rubber bullets, I feared that the chopper up there had something stronger and more painful than the rubber bullets and teargas. The fear and intimidation kept me running back and forth.”



# Fear



**DISAPPEARING ACT**  
THABO MPHO MIYA  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

“As journalists, we are meant to occupy a privileged role of not being harmed by either side... During the protests, we were [however]... a target for both sides... We were often caught in the middle, isolated and with no allies on either side - except for when people desperately saw in us an opportunity to dominate the narrative about the protest. As isolated as we were, we still witnessed many traumatizing scenes of unbridled violence unleashed on non-white bodies. Even [if] you could hide behind a locked door, the edge of a wall, underneath staircases or in trees, seeing, hearing and smelling rendered your body as present in moments of violence as all other actors.”

# Fear

## STICKS AND STONES NEARLY CRUSHED MY WORDS

THABO MPHO MIYA

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

“As journalists of Irawa (the official student newspaper of UFS) we had to be prepared to constantly document... the protests. We were never neutral because there were too many injustices committed by the university to allow [for] that... Personally, my allegiance was towards the mass of students whose bodies and future livelihoods were being used as proxies in a war. Distorted information meant to generate fear to drive these people in one direction or another was the norm on both ends (student leaders who assured these students that nothing would happen to them and the rectorate who frequently exaggerated what might happen to students). In the midst of this role I had carved out for myself, I found myself exposed to being threatened, shoved and kicked by private security officers and police - [both] on- and off-campus - who seemed to crave the ability to exercise violence over others. It was like we were their punching bags. Amid all this, [I had the] ability to write my truth...”



**OPPRESSIVE  
SPACES**

## **A black body- A price for the realisation of Social Justice "here" do we even deserve justice? or Maybe Just Ice!**

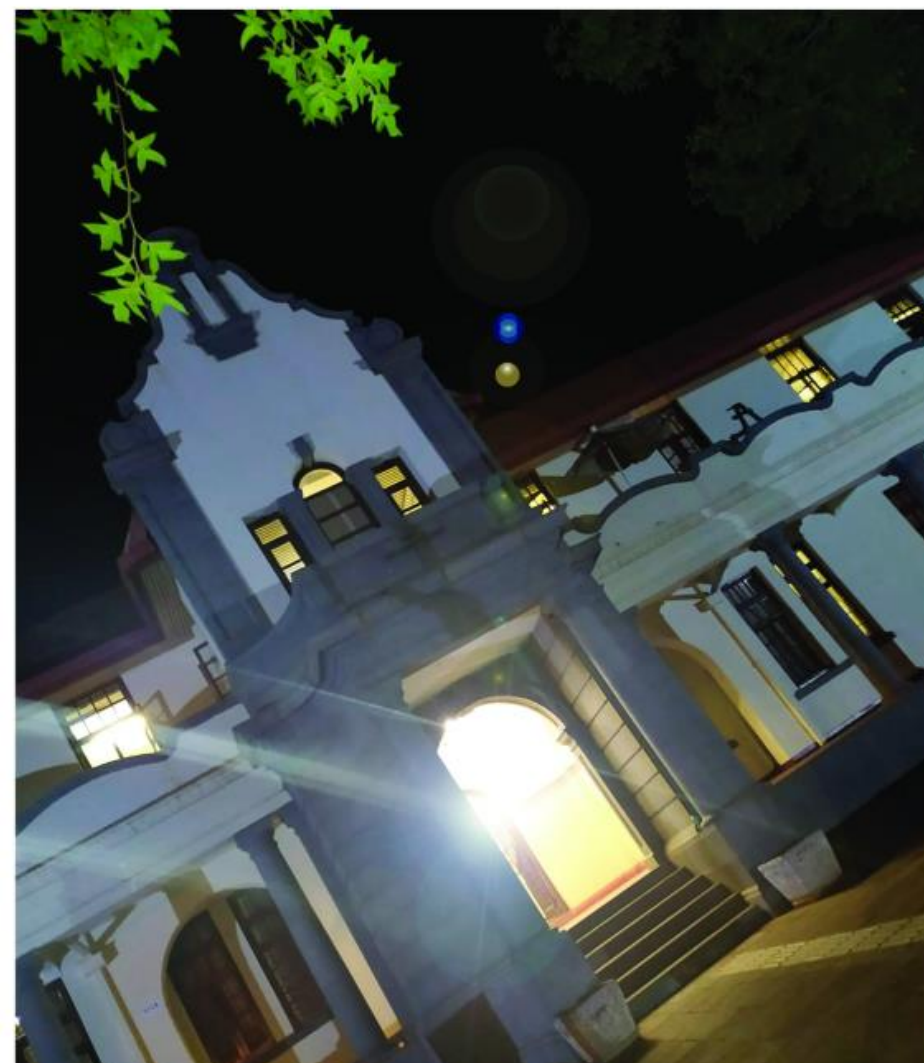
What is seen here is a sign of an institute of what was then the Institute for reconciliation and social justice during 2015/16 now called Unit for institutional change and social justice? Every day on my way to campus I always pass this sign and every day I am reminded how violent this space is and how every time a black body at this institution needs to be put on the line before a step is taken to address the subtle structural inequalities. Rietz Incident, Shimla park incident, Tswelopele Incident, and other racial incidents reported and others not reported serves a reminder that black bodies here will always pay a price for social justice. We all play the victims of the violence of 2015/2016 but a black body felt it physically and emotionally and will never recover!



# Oppressive Spaces

THE LIGHTHOUSE  
BOKANG FAKO  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

"The structure of a historically white, private male residence - known as 'Vishuis' - is very colonial in its design and is an exact replica of the main building. This subconsciously affirms the already existing superiority [complex] within the white males in that residence and presupposes that they are entitled to space and power. The light [emanating] from the building is... an embodiment of the Messiah complex deeply rooted in their righteousness and entitlement. More often than not, white men think of themselves as God."



# Oppressive Spaces



**WHITE STAND: VIOLENT SYMBOLISM**  
KAMOHELO MAPHIKE  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

"This picture is a symbolic sight of uninterrupted white hegemony, racism and an extreme attitude of symbolic anti-blackness... The statute of [Marthinus Theunis] Steyn is a reminder that racist Afrikaner nationalism reigns supreme in this university. Moreover, it articulates... that this space was not meant for people of colour. A violent articulation."

# Oppressive Spaces

## THE DEMARCATION BRIDGE TSHEPO RASEALA UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

“As much as bridges are known for bridging gaps between two areas that may have previously been inaccessible to each other, what is fascinating is that this bridge is, in times of conflicts arising from student protests, used to demarcate the territory between the police officers and students. One side of the bridge is the town side of Thohoyandou [and] on the other side of the bridge is the university campus. The bridge [was] then blocked with metal and wooden objects to [stop] police from advancing... in pursuit of student protestors.”

# Oppressive Spaces

## THE INVISIBLE GATES TSHEPO RASEALA UNIVERSITY OF VENDA



"The [saying] 'fences are meant to either keep people in or out' reflects our views of the university's concrete palisade fence in times of protest actions. In fear of being kept out by the fence, the first thing that students [did] when protest action commenced, [was] to open impromptu 'gates' by breaking down the palisades from the fence. This allowed students to find easier access to the Riverside residence on campus, as [opposed] to having to run to the main gate which would increase chances of the police catching up with [them]. [I chose this title] because, as much as the 'gates' are there during the protests, they are invisible (not there or not accessible) during peaceful or regular times."



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**(DEFYING)**



**PATRIARCHY**



# (Defying) Patriarchy

DEAR WHITE PEOPLE...  
BOKANG FAKO  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

“... particularly cishet, white, conservative men. This is a love letter from a mourning and [protesting] black, queer woman. We belong here. F\*ck You!”



# (Defying) Patriarchy

THE WARRING PHALLUS  
ANONYMOUS  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

"This image affirms to me that modes of dissent adopt the mechanisms used in the act of oppression and this then results in social justice movements that are androcentric, patriarchal, exclusionary, violent, marginalizing, misogynistic, guided by the ego and riddled with self-serving interests. Post-apartheid protests are no different to the ones before it; dissent is still synonymous with an attempt to assert manhood. Dominance by one over the other is still the guiding force - and the phallus is unfortunately still the weapon of choice. The battle for freedom is the limited and exclusionary battle for masculinity."



# (Defying) Patriarchy

**THERE IS NO REVOLUTION WITHOUT WOMEN**  
**MABORE MACHETE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF VENDA**

“The struggle for women is real and it continues to be the pillar of a revolution. Our contribution towards the struggle is of vital importance as we continue to instil motivation and peace amongst activists. Our women continue to fight against any injustices that face the black masses as they have carried our nation in their womb.”



# (Defying) Patriarchy



## THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF THE WOMXN'S VOICE SIYASANGA NDWAYI UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

"[This picture was taken] after a plenary in 2016 in the UWC Student Centre. We took the picture after a long discussion with the masses. My late friend and comrade, Mlunguza Luxolo, who usually took pictures of us, wanted to join us... in the picture. It's one of the few pictures we took with him... I'm in the picture wearing a black cap. The picture also represents how male-dominated our space was, with few women figures."

# Exhibition themes







**SAFE  
SPACES**

# Safe Spaces

**MASS RESCUER**  
ANYWAY MIKIONI  
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

“The name of the photo is inspired by the experiences of students during a strike. This huge garbage bin is used by students as a place to hide during a strike. The resourcefulness of the comrades during a strike - and the means they use just to hide from the police - is amazing. This garbage bin houses the comrades and they do not retire from the strike despite the smells and the [discomfort]... encountered in this big bin. Resilience is depicted in this photo as, [come] what may, the students do not back down until their voices are heard.”

# Safe Spaces

JOYFUL REBELLION

AZANIA SIMTHANDILE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

"This picture was taken at Kilombo, a black space created for runaway slaves. We were slaves and imprisoned at the university. This space was our space of serenity and a space of love. This picture symbolises the role of revolutionary song in movements - and [its] impacts. It is a reminder that the fight for free education was not new nor peculiar to South Africa. The picture [was taken] in Youth Month, [during which] we held deliberations around [Steve] Biko, Black Consciousness and what it really means to be black and youth."

Image: Wandile Kasibe  
Supplied by Azania Simthandile



# Safe Spaces



**COUNSELLING WITH THE HOPE TO LOCATE AND  
"CANCEL" PAIN; MAKE US FEEL AGAIN!**  
TSHEPANG MAHLATSI  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

"To many people, this is a board that shows the location of the student counselling and development center at UFS. But what is not seen here is that this is an emotional archive area (museum) where all the unfiltered, raw emotions of the UFS community are kept and stored. Many ran to this place to make sense of their frustrations, pain and anger. This place has become a home and an antidote for many [who have] hopes [of] canceling the pain of the violence of 2015/16. This place [has] helped people like me to be integrated back into society. After 2015/2016, I was never the same person. And every day we fight not to relapse."

# Safe Spaces



## THE 'LOST CITY' BOLT-HOLE (A HIDDEN HAVEN) TSHEPO RASEALA UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

"The picture depicts bushes found behind the 'Lost City' residences. [This was] where we [disappeared] into as students in times of conflict between students and the police. The bushes [were] used as a hiding place when the police advanced beyond the university gate. It is chosen because of its [accessibility] only to people on foot... making it impossible for the police truck to [enter]. The density of the bushes makes it [easy] for students to... find refuge [there]."

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- **expose the unacceptable, high levels of violence** on university campuses and the impact this has on student well-being.
- create awareness in the public, in government and among higher education policy makers and university leaders to ensure **that student grievances are taken seriously** without the need for protesting.
- **ban riot police** and security services from university campuses.
- **de-stigmatise student mental health** issues at universities.
- **expand student counselling services** to better support students who struggle with mental health issues.

*Please do your part now.*

Thierry M. Luescher (HSRC, UFS), Keamogetse G. Morwe (Univen), Angelina Wilson Fadiji (UP) and the participants of the #FeesMustFall photovoice workshops (2022)



UNITY

# Unity

## STUDENT AND WORKER RELATIONS AT UWC AZANIA SIMTHANDILE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

“This picture was taken in 2016. We had an exhibition with the workers. The banner says: ‘Black pain. Free our parents. End outsourcing’. This summarizes the experience of our parents at the university. It is a representation of the #EndOutsourcing that led to firing 143 security workers. It further invokes anxiety and anger [within those of] us [who] understand the plight of the workers.”





# Unity

## WORKERS AND STUDENTS UNITE KAMOHELO MAPHIKE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

“This picture speaks of a time when black people in this university saw the need to unite and collectively fight a system that oppresses them. [It] was taken during the early formation of the outsourcing program, which would later lead to the [events at] Shimla Park. This picture speaks of hope that a united student and workers front is always important to conceptualize, maintain and invest in. After all, student struggles are workers’ struggles. Workers’ struggles are student struggles.”

Image: Lihlumelo Hlumie  
Supplied by Kamohelo Maphike

# Unity

ALTERNATIVE DISSENT  
ANONYMOUS

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

"This image affirms to me that expressing dissent and injustice can take various modes of expression. The bureaucracy of the institution forces legitimacy onto only formalized modes of engagement, such as dialogues, negotiations, mediation and protests they have given permission for. These modes are ineffective and are often swallowed up and erased by the bureaucracy. New forms of expression and dissent need to be explored and utilised. This image also reminds me, through the presence of my friend's arm in the corner of the frame, of the personal sacrifice others made to assist me in putting the pictures up. [It reminds me that] people can... come together to rectify injustice and that, when they do, personal sacrifice becomes less important than collective gain."



# Exhibition themes





**WELLBEING**

# Wellbeing

## THE BLACK WHO? BOOKS OF CONSCIOUSNESS KAMOHELO MAPHIKE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

“These books played a very pivotal role in the counter-attack to white epistemic racist ideology. While each book has its own narrative, collectively these books intended to reinforce the pride and dignity of black students, which was constantly denied by police violence and structural violence enforced by university management. These books gave light to the understanding that blacks have always been at the receiving [end] of violence - be [it] physical or structural. These books are [the] true meaning of black resistance to a world that ceases to see our humanity.”

# Wellbeing

**UBUHLE BENDODA (THE BEAUTY OF A MAN)**  
SIPHEPHELO (SHANGE) MTHEMBU  
DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

“As the first son in my family, I have to make sure that the cows are well taken care of because they are passed from generation to generation. After I was suspended, I would take the cattle to the field to make sure they were well fed. It became a coping mechanism [because] I would not overthink about what had transpired at school and my suspension. It is something I had not done since I was young, so it was very refreshing to do. It was also a very useful [distraction].



# Wellbeing

**STRUCTURED VIOLENCE – A SAFE SPACE**  
MADODA LUDIDI  
UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

“Rugby is a game of structured violence. It is my safe space from the context of structural and institutional violence. In rugby, there are rules of engagement. On the field, there are rules that clearly structure the exertion of violence... Here, as a rugby coach, I am in control of the violence on the field. After encountering protest violence, the rugby field becomes a therapeutic space for me.”



# Wellbeing

DIVINE COMMUNION  
ANONYMOUS

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

"This image is one of my personal space, with my books positioned above me. This reminds me that I need to constantly reach above me in order to make sense of the injustice I see and experience. I need to educate myself, surround myself with the work of scholars and thinkers and empaths so that I can process my experiences, gain healing from this act of processing and obtain fuel and insight to continue the fight."





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