

THE DAMAGE STILL REMAINS

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 and co-curated by Nkululeko Khumalo.
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The first drops, archival paper, black and white print

The NWU Gallery presents a year of Legacy artists, starting with the exhibition **"The Damage Still Remains"** by Len Khumalo.

The Damage Still Remains reflects on some of the scenes seen in the lifetime work of Len Khumalo, a photographer and photojournalist who practiced through the early 1970's - 2000's. He has provided us with a rich archive, depicting and preserving scenes from South African history.

His work brings our attention to how the past influences the present and the future. The images serve as a reminder that we are still dealing with the ripple effects of our past.

This exhibition is a revolutionary opportunity to reconsider our understanding of South African history.

"SA's water crisis | Nelson Mandela Bay metro faces severe restrictions" - News24

"Zuma vs Ramaphosa | The tug of war continues" - News24

"The New Miss Universe Is An Unapologetically Natural Black Beauty" - Essence Magazine

"South Africans protest pending release of Hani's killer" - AP News

These are but a few of the headlines we see plastered across our screens and newspapers in contemporary 'Post-Apartheid' South Africa. For many South Africans, particularly the black people; the end of Apartheid did not usher in rapid and radical changes within their social, political and economic lives. In fact, 29 years after the first democratic election, our country seems to be coming further apart at the seams.

It has been roughly 26 years since our constitution took effect, and yet there are still ridiculous amounts of communities who go weeks, even months without access to clean water. Other parts of the country that have been privileged enough to have easy access to water and irrigation, find themselves experiencing constant water cuts; haunted by the fear of an impending water crisis. We are riddled with scenes of protests and looting; usually fired up by demands of basic human rights and living conditions. South Africans are also still no strangers to images of poverty and lack, which is threatening to rise with the wake of COVID. We find ourselves fighting to free ourselves from a government that once again puts its own personal interests before the urgent attention that black bodies so desperately need.

Apart from being free to walk around as one pleases, it feels as though not very much has changed. A feeling which has

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Golden Miles Bhudu with his Prison Inmates, Archival Paper, Black and White Print, 60cm x 40cm

been confirmed by the reflective archive of images by photographer and photojournalist, Len Khumalo. Through his lens, Khumalo captured much of the essence of South Africa, capturing, not only the political climate, but also personal and spiritual histories. A select few of the images housed in his archive have been collated to form an exhibition titled: THE DAMAGE STILL REMAINS.

This exhibition of images taken almost 20 years ago; echoes a large portion of the narratives we are confronted with in contemporary South Africa. One can look forward to seeing images of Golden Miles Bhudu, the president of South African Prisoners Organization for Human Rights, addressing the rights of prisoners and political prisoners. There are scenes from Chris Hani's funeral, illustrating the support the community showed to his memory, allowing the audience to reflect on the recent news of the release of his killer. On a lighter, but equally

charged note, The audience will also witness the excitement of seeing one, Miss Evelyn Williams, who was Miss Africa South in 1974. She is seen with her Caucasian counterpart, Anneline Kriel, as black women were not permitted to own the title of Miss South Africa in their own country. An event which has also shaped the often-invalidating experiences of black women in the pageant spaces. This exhibition will give us a glimpse into the past, and how it has influenced our experiences today. It exposes the stagnant nature of our transformation. It is a revolutionary invite to reflect and reimagine the kind of future we envision for our nation.

The exhibition opens at the NWU Botanical Gardens Gallery on 10 February 2023 and has a series of associated public events, ranging from artist Q&A walkabout.