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Sophie Lalonde Art Gallery opened a new exhibition at iTower on February 14, which featured portraits by local artist Nicola Holgate.

The exhibition portrayed Batswana individuals who made the country what it is today, ranging from close family and friends, to a taxi driver, anonymous woman at the hairdresser. The exhibition captured the relentless familiarity Botswana offered its people.

The collection of 35 pieces consisted of two different mediums; acrylic on canvas as well as water colours on drafting film. Speaking at the event, a friend and Art Educator and Administrator Sharon Dutton explained that she firstly met Holgate or Nici, as he is affectionately known by her friends, in 2006 after arriving in Botswana.

Dutton said the concept of 'I know you, you know him, he knows her who I know too', was then established adding that what struck then about Nici, was how engaged she was and how truly interested she was in people, in what they think, what they said and how they lived their lives, amongst others.

She explained that Nici, as an artists and designer, willingly donates an enormous amount of time and effort towards a wide variety of causes, being the journey of hope, capital players, and poster for tomorrow, amongst others.

She brings to these diverse organisations the same degree of enthusiasm and professionalism that she invests in her craft. But Nici's true talent is the ability to look into the eyes, capture a mood, a moment, a part of personality and lay it bare on canvas, up on a wall.

Dutton further explained that portraiture is a form of creativity because it has so many elements, none of which can be separated from the other. For her part, Holgate herself explained that she focused on the creation and implementation of many community projects involving human rights and health issues, via the media of graphic design, allowing integration with people beyond the boundaries of traditional expatriate life, allowing personal creative growth and progress by sharing skills.

Some of the incredible portraits that were on display include unconventional rapper Juju Boy, with his black leather pants and a jacket to match, sitting absentminded on a brick, a young lady at the Gaborone Bus rank putting the final touches to a brand new hair style, readying herself for a valentine's date, and a blonde Swedish lady, Ulrica, lazily resting her knee on a wooden stool. Nicola Holgate is a South African, resident of Botswana.

She has lived and worked in Gaborone since 2000. She is a figurative and realist painter and graphic designer inspired by the community and environment and draw on the use of photography for her paintings.

Producing commercial paintings only by commission in the past, she had worked toward changing her primary focus from design to painting over the last year. Ends

Source : BOPA

Author : Thamani Shabani

Location : GABORONE

Event : Art exhibition

Date : Feb 16 Sun, 2014

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