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Holgate exhibits at Sophie Lalonde Art

To a passerby, Nicola Holgate's artworks on display at Sophie Lalonde Art Gallery might look like just an exhibition of portraits. Given a closer look, the exhibition gives insight into the diversity of the people of Botswana.

Lifestyle



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: Holgate exhibits at Sophie Lalonde Art

Holgate's exhibition titled '*My Botswana*' captures the different stories of people with diverse backgrounds, from street vendors to successful individuals with interesting stories to tell.

Interestingly the exhibition is themed 'I Know You, You Know Him, He Knows Her, Who I Know Too', and as you go through the portraits on display you can actually see the connection and how the exhibition tells a story about Botswana and the lives of Batswana.

Gaborone sees a number of exhibitions most of which feature artworks. The artworks are not of real people or real life characters. Holgate's artworks on the contrary are portraits of real everyday people that you meet on the streets.

Visiting the art gallery hosting her artworks at the I-Towers, one is bound to recognise one or more of the subjects featured in her artworks. At the I-Towers entrance a large portrait of local musician Juju Boy real name Kgotla Ntsima meets one.

Her portraits are so on point that anyone who knows the musician will recognise him immediately after setting eyes his on the portrait.

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FOREIGN / PULA		PULA / FOREIGN	
1 USD = Pula	9.8814	1 Pula = USD	0.1012
1 GBP = Pula	14.6628	1 Pula = GBP	0.0682
1 EUR = Pula	10.7411	1 Pula = EUR	0.0931
1 YEN = Pula	0.0829	1 Pula = YEN	12.06
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CRESTA	94	RDCP	213
ENGEN	934	SECHABA	2870
ENRR	275	SEFALANA	1100

"Have you seen the young and hip set of upcoming Motswana artists? These are youngsters who see beyond the borders and have a vision of just how trendsetting and vibrant their own brand could be. These embodied Kgotla or Juju Boy a local rapper and music producer, Ngosi a poet, writer and single mother and Aobakwe a fashion designer, seen here wearing his own creation. Alongside this sector, providing creative opportunities are people like Aldo Brincat hugely talented in his own right but always teaching and uplifting others," Holgate says.

Holgate's 'My Botswana' is inspired by people she meets everyday.

"My experience has been that the tone of 'My Botswana', landscape shifts and changes according to the people who move through daily life like all deserts you have to zoom into the detail of that tiny unexpected flower growing in the stony ground. People here are like that, you could look right past fascinating and interesting individuals when you are focused too generally," Holgate explains.

While all people featured in the portraits are interesting and have their own stories to tell, some of the portraits, makes one wonder why this person? Holgate is quick to explain that while some of the subjects on her portraits are people she knows on a personal level, others are just people she just met by chance. There are separate portraits of father and daughter and as Holgate relates, the pair happened to be attending a Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign in Mahalapye. She was amazed that a father would take his 11-year-old daughter to the campaign. This is how their portraits came to be part of her exhibition. The exhibition features four children from Gantsi, Serowe, Rakops, and Gaborone that to some level give representation of the country's tribes, and depending on what one is looking for in the art. To someone else the interest might be to compare and contrast whether there are striking differences between Botswana's different tribes, while others might look for differences in terms of geographical influence.

Many people have at some point in time interacted with taxi drivers. The artworks currently hanging at Sophie Lalonde Art gallery include a portrait titled Taxi Man, which Holgate quickly explains is not a taxi driver nor a conductor, but a line marshal (*Rra Buka*) who calls out to customers to board combis and also keep a register of combis to ensure that rules of the taxi rank are followed.

The gallery also has portraits of women having their hair plaited in open spaces at the station, and street trader, including two sausage vendors and one airtime hawker.

"My Botswana is made up of parts, groups of people who are connected in both obvious and indirect ways. My neighbours and friends, my children's school teachers and friends, their parents, the doctor, the property developer of the new mall, the bank manager, my maid, the taxi driver who brings her to work, his sister who sells sausages at the station, their mother who lives in a far off village. The more you zoom in the wider the landscape expands and defines itself," the exhibitor says.

One of the interesting portraits is that of the late Jackie Morris. Holgate decided to do two portraits of Jackie, which tell an amazing story about the deceased. The portraits show Jackie the *Sangoma*, clad in her *Sangoma* attire.

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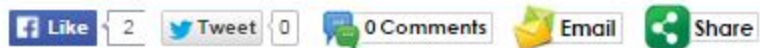
Other people featured in the exhibition include Thabi Letsunyane, Pieter Brown, Dr Peter Eaten, a gynaecologist at Gaborone Private Hospital, and many others.


Holgate, a resident of Botswana, has lived and worked in Botswana since 2000.

Holgate describes herself as a realistic figurative painter and also a graphic designer.

"I am inspired by my community and environment and draw on the use of photography in my work. I have focused on the creation and implementation of community projects centred on design over the past few years, but have been working toward changing my primary focus from design to painting," she says.

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