



**Cheese I**

**R 79,380.00**



Unframed 146 x 97 x 0.1 cm

Framed 146 x 100 x 5 cm

Not signed by artist.

**MILKED IN AFRICA | 'MILK BAGS I' & 'CHEESE I' – TONY GUM | THE EVOLUTION AND CULTURAL COMMODIFICATION OF CULTURE:** In Tony Gum's ground-breaking 'Milked In Africa' series in 2016, she received widespread recognition and praise from institutions and collectors. Her work was hailed as pioneering at a time when African artists were just starting to emerge on the international stage. The series delved into the concept of Africa's abundance, symbolised by milk, and featured her iconic green figure representing the exploitation of African resources throughout history through slavery, colonialism, and Apartheid.

In 2023, she unveiled two new creations that served as a prelude to the expansion of the 'Milked In Africa' series, reflecting her journey into motherhood and the passage of time. 'Cheese I' and 'Milk Bags I' capture the evolution of her persona and the shifting dynamics of the world she inhabits.

African culture has garnered global acclaim for its art, fashion, music, and spirituality, which are now celebrated on the international stage. Gum playfully highlights the way big brands have adopted aspects of African culture and integrated them into their products and marketing strategies. Through her series, she vividly portrays the transformation of milk, symbolising abundance, into a commodified product like cheese and the subsequent conversion of milk into money bags. This depiction exposes the exploitation of cultural heritage and its dilution within Western hip-hop culture, often lacking proper respect or understanding of its origins.

Gum questions the importance of African heritage, where big brands may simplify or distort their meanings, stripping them of their historical, social, and spiritual significance. She advocates collaborations and partnerships that foster mutual respect and genuine collaboration that can be seen as positive examples of cultural exchange and appreciation.

Gum has consistently demonstrated her visionary mindset. As an artist, she possesses a remarkable talent for recognising the societal implications of an ever-evolving world, particularly in the context of social media. Through her artwork, she consistently sheds light on the timeless principles that underpin various value systems, transcending cultural boundaries. Even traditions and value systems that may appear outdated to some have gained renewed significance in our contemporary era.

With her 'Milked In Africa' series, Gum challenges viewers to reconsider the commodification of African culture and to recognise the depth and richness that it holds. Her thought-provoking artworks serve as a reminder of the importance of preserving and respecting cultural heritage, while also encouraging dialogue and understanding between different cultures. By exploring the evolution of African culture and its interaction with the global market, Gum invites us to reflect upon the complexities of cultural commodification and to strive for meaningful and equitable cultural exchange.

Edition Size	10
Medium	Photography, Premium Satin Giclee Dibond mounted
Location	Christopher Moller Gallery
Height	146.00 cm
Width	100.00 cm
Artist	Tony Gum
Year	2023

