



**Xhosa Woman, Intombi I**

**R 79,380.00**



Unframed 146 x 97 x 0.1 cm

Framed 150 x 100 x 5 cm

Not signed by artist.

In the words of the renowned African American author, poet and social critic, James Baldwin, 'not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced'. Like Baldwin, Tony Gum believes that only when we examine such pervasive constructs like identity, race, gender and so on, can we create opportunity for better understanding and growth. She fundamentally believes in the importance of approaching life from a position of knowledge, facing the 'truths' of who, what and why we are, and this ultimately means that we are also free ourselves to evolve as beings. We become more liberated, whole and balanced individuals in the world. It is precisely this perspective that has informed the freedom and growth we continue to experience in Tony's art. This new series sees her returning 'home' to unearth what it really means to be a Xhosa girl and woman. To do this, she immerses herself in core 'rites of passage', she sits with elders who welcome Tony with open arms, celebrating her genuine interest as young daughter, granddaughter, sister, and female representative of Xhosa culture and people.

The pieces entitled 'Intombi I and 'Intombi II' depict 'Intonjane', the process of transitioning from a girl to a woman. Certain physiological practices like, exposure of the breasts among 'girls' – 'Amatombazana' a symbolic point of differentiation from 'abafazi' or 'woman', 'umfazi' who will generally wear Xhosa attire from the bosom down. Perhaps the more intimate and personal of her works to date, here Tony recognizes, accepts and celebrates the contrasting dimensions and narratives of life. In this series, Gum portrays the extent to which culture ultimately evolves over time. Integrating the range of human norms, practices and experiences; culture is essentially a fluid and non-static evolutionary process; the idea that we can take these contemporary and very commercial elements and fuse them with what is traditional so that it is relatable to all people. Also, trying to see the everyday young girl, how would she be in this context of the 21st century, we are always on our phones, self indulged and also self-aware. This is also meant to be fun and playful. Whilst she is busy with her self-phone, she is still busy with her chores. She has now come from the river (bucket on head), she is working but is also now busy with the phone.

But I like how although she is busy with her phone, she catches someone looking at her at the same time, that awkward moment when you are doing something on your phone and you catch someone looking at you....I displayed the Apple symbol openly, to make a statement about about gentrification and the impact of contemporary lifestyle, Apple being such a major corporate brand, based on personal

experience, I realise how, like my cultural norms and

traditions, the Apple brand also has its traditions, norms and practices, despite adapting different functionalities here and there'.

Edition Size	10
Medium	Photography, Premium Satin Giclee Dibond mounted
Height	150.00 cm
Width	100.00 cm
Artist	Tony Gum
Year	2019

