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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Malukah Meyer

Venue: William Humphreys Art Gallery (WHAG), Kimberley

Double Bill Exhibition Celebrating Africa Month:

Usen Obot's *Spirits & Souls* and Bongi Bengu's *My Cup Runneth Over*

Curated by Chepape Makgato

In commemoration of Africa Month, the William Humphreys Art Gallery (WHAG) is pleased to present a special Double Bill shows featuring new works by Usen Obot and Bongi Bengu. The exhibitions, titled *Spirits & Souls* and *My Cup Runneth Over*, are curated WHAG's Chief Curator Chepape Makgato. The curatorial vision of this year's double-bill emphasises spiritual depth, cultural memory, and artistic persistence across generations and geographies.

WILLIAM HUMPHREYS ART GALLERY CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO THE OPENING RECEPTION
OF DOUBLE BILL EXHIBITIONS:

SPIRITS & SOULS

SOLO EXHIBITION BY
USEN OBOT

CURATED BY: CHEPAPE MAKGATO



17:30 FOR 18:00 - 22 MAY 2025
1 CULLINAN CRESCENT - CIVIC CENTRE - KIMBERLEY
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED
PLEASE NOTE THAT SECURITY GUARDS WILL BE ON DUTY OUTSIDE.



RSVP: zaakirah@whag.co.za
053 831 1724



MY CUP RUNNETH OVER

SOLO EXHIBITION BY
BONGI BENGU

CURATED BY: CHEPAPE MAKGATO

17:30 FOR 18:00 - 22 MAY 2025
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These two exhibitions shown simultaneously in different wings, are more than just artistic presentations; they are intensely personal expressions of identity, cultural heritage, and inherited wisdom. Together, they provide visitors with a fascinating meditation on African spirituality, femininity, masculinity, family, and personal transformation, evoking the spirit of unity and rebirth celebrated during Africa Month.

Usen Obot: *Spirits & Souls*

In *Spirits & Souls*, Nigerian-born, South African-based artist Usen Obot delves into the spiritual depth of his Ibibio heritage through bold sculptural works created from wood and metal. These pieces were developed during residencies in Eastern Cape and Gauteng, and are inspired by the Ekpo society, a precolonial institution that fused governance, religion, and communal order through ancestral guardianship.

Obot explains, *"In my work I seek to facilitate and bring into contemporary discourse and spaces the re-interpretation and presentation of an African narrative from the history of African culture and governance systems that fused religion, spirituality and administration."*

By interrogating these African ancient concepts, Obot reclaims ancestral systems that for centuries enabled African communities to manage, defend, and sustain themselves with integrity—long before the disruptions of European colonisation. He also explores their communication system, the Nsibidi script, a visual symbolic writing system that predates many global alphabets and is alluded to as one of the oldest forms of writing in human history. Nsibidi scribes are classified as pictograms, however some have been suggested to be logograms or syllabograms.

The exhibition foregrounds themes of custodianship, cohesion, and ancestral wisdom, while simultaneously interrogating contemporary fractures in governance and social unity. Through his choice of diverse materials and metaphoric construction, Obot underscores the interconnectedness, mutual respect, and inclusivity that once defined the socio-political strata of African communities.

Bongi Bengu: *My Cup Runneth Over*

For artist Bongi Bengu, *My Cup Runneth Over* marks a milestone in her artistic journey—a celebration of over thirty years of creativity, transformation and becoming. "This exhibition is a celebration of a journey—over thirty years of creation, exploration, and becoming," Bengu writes. "From the quiet beginnings of my artistic voice to travelling across continents, embracing different mediums, and collecting stories and techniques along the way. *My Cup Runneth Over* is both a reflection and a declaration."

Each artwork functions as a vessel of memory, holding space for emotion, transformation, and the enduring strength of African womanhood. Whether expressed through layered textures or subtle figurative gestures, her work honours the emotional and spiritual labour carried by women—while also offering moments of gratitude, joy and renewal.

"This is not just a look back," she continues. "It's a pouring forth. My cup, indeed, runneth over." In this sense, the exhibition is as much about creative abundance as it is about the journey of healing, introspection and growth.

Curatorial Vision: Weaving Spirit, Memory and Art

Double Bill presents a symphony of spirit and self, connecting two artists whose practices embody ancestral continuity, personal reflection, and cultural inquiry. In Obot's masculine ancestral energy and Bengu's graceful feminine strength, we witness a powerful interweaving of sacred opposites that honour Africa's spiritual imagination.

"These exhibitions resonate with the call of Africa Month: to return, to reflect, to reconnect," says Makgato. "They remind us that art is not separate from life—it is a portal to the past, a witness to the present, and a dream for the future."

As a celebration of heritage, identity and creativity, *Spirits & Souls* and *My Cup Runneth Over* reinforce WHAG's commitment to curating transformative exhibitions that speak to the complexity and richness of African artistic expression.

Exhibition Details

Exhibition Dates:

22 May – 30 June 2025

Venue: William Humphreys Art Gallery, Cullinan Crescent, Kimberley

Opening Event: 22 May 2025 at 17h30 for 18h00

Curator: Chepape Makgato

Admission: Free

For interviews, images, or programming details, please contact:

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