

GALA TIMES

The GALA Queer Archive's Newsletter

October - December
3/3 2022

TIME TO REST



Back to front, left to right: Nobantu Nqolobe, Linda Chernis, Kgomotso Kgasi, Karin Tan, Keval Harie, Bonke Sonjani and Obvious Nomaele. To close off this year, the GALA team went on a game drive together. Nov 2022

What a year!

2022 has been another productive and successful year for GALA. In October, in partnership with Exeter University and Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WiSER), we hosted the *Sex and Publics Conference* the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre. GALA also launched two publications in 2022 namely, *Lesser Violence, Volume 1* and *Courage to Share, Queer Activism in Africa, Volume 2*.

We also bid farewell to Programmes Coordinator Genevieve Louw in 2022. Genevieve's contribution to GALA during their tenure as Programme's Coordinator has left an indelible mark on GALA's youth programme. In October, we welcomed, with great enthusiasm and excitement,

GALA's new Programmes Coordinator Kgomotso Kgasi.

The GALA Youth Forum continues to flourish under the capable and inspiring leadership of Obvious Nomaele and GALA's intern Bonke Sonjani has brought warmth and zest to the queer archive.

In June 2022, Senior Information Officer Karin Tan and I were also invited to Oslo and Bergen in Norway by our partners SAIH - Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpesfond to celebrate 50 years of decriminalisation of the sodomy laws in Norway.

In August, Archives Coordinator Linda Chernis presented at a conference hosted by Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Denmark. She presented on her paper titled *Preservation, Privacy and Access: Diving into Digital* which looks at GALA's digitisation journey with GALE and beyond: the experience of a relatively small, queer archive undergoing a large-scale digitisation project for the first time, the challenges, benefits and impacts.

It's also exciting to announce that GALA's trusted office administrator Nobantu Nqolobe has been promoted to Senior Administration Officer.

I'm deeply grateful to the GALA team for the dedication, eagerness, kindness and care shown over this year. I would also like to thank all those that have contributed, collaborated and participated in our work in 2022. As our team is small, it is because of a collective dedication to LGBTQIA+ culture and history in South Africa and beyond, that we are able to see GALA's work continue to thrive.

Now, it is time for rest. It's time for all of us to unwind, recharge and reflect on

the challenges and triumphs of this year. It's time for us to heal ourselves through the love and care of our fellow fam and, in turn, to show love and care to others around us.

Wishing you all the best over the festive period fam and stay safe.

Keval Harie
(Director)



GALA will be closed to the public from the 19th of December 2022 and will reopen on the 16th of January 2023.

+27117174239
www.gala.co.za
PO Box 31719, Braamfontein, 2017

 **GALA**

7th Floor University Corner
corner Jorissen Street and Bertha Street
Braamfontein, Johannesburg

Archive Spotlight:

“IT’S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR”

In the late '80s and early '90s, Christmas parties for senior citizens were hosted at the infamous gay club, The Dungeon, in Johannesburg.



Attendees at a senior citizens Christmas party at the Dungeon enjoying the show. c.1990

In this edition’s Archive Spotlight, we go back to the late 1980s/early 1990s - a turbulent time in South Africa’s history as the National Party battled to cling on to power in the dying years of apartheid. But behind the scenes of major political turmoil, life continued and archival records give us a glimpse into some of the weird and wonderful events that took place. This brings us to the collection of the famous Dungeon Club. The Dungeon was one of Joburg’s longest running gay clubs, located in the Three Castles Building on the corner of Marshall and Goud Streets in the CBD (207 Marshall Street). The now-derelict building was once home to Johannesburg’s first cigarette factory, officially opened by Paul Kruger in 1899. The Dungeon (or Big D), owned by Ronnie Oelofson, opened in 1969 and ran until about 1995.

In the early days, its decor befitted its name, and chains and skeletons adorned the walls. Over the years, however, owner Ronnie Oelofson has filled it with an eclectic range of posters and artefacts: shirtless torsos riding into the sunset, AIDS education posters, religious iconography (including a very prominent Star of David) and even a blown-up autographed photo of Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha wishing the ‘Big D’ the best of luck!

– Mark Gevisser, *Defiant Desire* (1994), p.39

The Dungeon clientele was largely white and Afrikaans, with a large lesbian/female presence making it different to other clubs at the time. The club hosted a variety of annual pageants, including Mr Gay Legs,

Miss Gay Sluts and Mr Gay South Africa. The Dungeon operated without a liquor license and patrons would bring their own alcohol and keep it behind the bar. By not selling alcohol the club was able to avoid raids by police enforcing liquor laws, including those that stipulated that licensed venues had to be racially segregated. From the start, the Dungeon had a smattering of clientele of colour, though this should not be exaggerated - gay culture was as racially divided as the rest of the country at the time.

A portrait of Paul Kruger glowers across a statue of David (with strategically placed fig leaf), an autographed poster of Pik Botha rubs shoulders with pictures of various winners of the Miss Gay Universe competition.

- Julia Befon, *The Weekly Mail*, 30 November 1990.

Ronnie Oelofson, like his Club, embodied a host of contradictions. Ronnie was part of the small Afrikaans-speaking Jewish community - a large Star of David featured prominently on a wall of the Dungeon and the club always closed for major Jewish holidays. Ronnie was also close friends with members of the National Party, had ties to the South African Police (SAP) and was friendly with local authorities - whether this was strategic or not is unclear. The archive record shows that in 1989 he attended the SAP Police Ball as well as Pik Botha’s birthday party. The record also shows that Ronnie was an avid philanthropist, giving generously to an extremely wide range of charities. These included: Hospice, the SPCA, Johannesburg Child Welfare (regularly), Council for the Deaf, as well as supporting queer organisations - such as GLOW (Gays and Lesbians of the Witwatersrand), TOGS (Transvaal Organisation of Gay Sport) and GAB (Gay Advice Bureau - counselling service) - through donations and letting them host events and fundraisers at the club. One of the more surprising charities supported by Ronnie is evident in one of the many ‘thank-you’ letters in the collection. A letter from 1990 from Underground Evangelism thanks Ronnie for his donation which “...will enable eight Bibles to be printed and delivered into the hands of believers behind the Iron Curtain”.

Besides supporting the gay community by making the venue available for a variety of functions, each year Oelofson hosts a Christmas party for

Johannesburg’s senior citizens at the club: “Too many club owners are just in the business to make a quick buck. It costs money to make money – and you’ve got to give something back.”

- Julia Befon, *The Weekly Mail*, 30 November 1990.

Again, whether this was done to butter up the authorities, or out of Ronnie’s giving spirit is uncertain. Mark Gevisser seemed to believe the former: “...the blue-rinse set took their tea under the posters of bulging crotches, and the Dungeon was left in peace.” - Mark Gevisser, *Defiant Desire*, p.40

Whatever the motivation, the event appeared to have happened for a few years



Attendees at a senior citizens Christmas party at the Dungeon. c.1990/1991

CASA MIA HOME FOR THE AGED SERVICES FUND

Under Aegis of the Housing Department City of Johannesburg

FUND RAISING NUMBER 011004530008

OUR REF: Mrs N Friend
 YOUR REF:
 DATE: 27 November 1991

37 SOPER ROAD
 BEREA
 2198
 TELEPHONE 642-4379
 642-4370

Mr R Oelofson
 P O Box 260322
 EXCOM
 2023

Dear Mr Oelofson

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your generosity in contributing towards the Christmas party for Senior Citizens at the Dungeon.

We all arrived home in a very joyful mood.

On behalf of our residents I wish to extend our best wishes for the festive season.

Yours sincerely
Nora Friend

NORA FRIEND
 CHAIRLADY : ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE

NF/zv

A thank-you letter to Ronnie Oelofson from Casa Mia Home for the Aged. 1991

running towards the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. There are numerous undated photographs in the Dungeon Collection, as well as a ‘thank-you letter’ from Casa Mia Home for the Aged from 1991, and an undated newspaper article. The article mentions that several VIP guests attended the lunch, including Johannesburg Mayor WGL Janse van Rensburg (Mayor 1990-1991).

Despite a few attempts to locate Ronnie Oelofson, the last word (from GALA’s founder Graeme Reid) was that he might be in Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth). If anyone has any update on what happened to Ronnie, please get in touch!

Linda Chernis
 (Archives Coordinator)



Seniors Christmas Lunch, Dungeon Club, c.1990

A GRATEFUL MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF GALA

GALA's Programmes Manager, Kgomotso Kgasi, shares her daily routine of gratitude

It is well known, and extensive research has been conducted to support this, that people are finding it more and more difficult to focus on tasks that demand concentration, to manage stress and to deal with other irritations in our fast-paced world. This is mainly because of distractions such as social media, the need to hustle, limited opportunity for rest and so forth. In my own life, I have found that deliberately expressing gratitude has been incredibly transformative. It has taught me to be appreciative of who and what I have, to be aware of the various roles that people play in my life and to meditate on my relationships with others, to have fun, and to allow for life to happen on life's terms. Through the exercise of expressing gratitude, I have discovered hidden treasures, joys and blessings that I would have otherwise overlooked while being preoccupied with the daily grind of living...of getting by.

As a daily ritual, I make a list of ten things for which I am grateful every day and I share it with at least one other person. I do this to reflect, re-center and to take stock of the positive things that occur amidst the chaos of life.

This practice has completely changed my life because it has taught me to be appreciative of even the smallest victories, such as arriving home safely after traveling in a death-trap of a Johannesburg taxi or exiting an elevator just

before loadshedding or striking up a beautiful conversation with a complete stranger, which leaves me buoyant. Each of these seemingly insignificant things all add up to create a web of enjoyment that gradually improves one's capacity to perceive the good. That even when our work entails constant struggle, shared suffering, traumas and unheard voices of people, this practice allows us to discover pockets of joy and to be fully present for all of it.

Joy is an
act of
resistance

- Toi Derricotte

There is a lot that I am grateful for at GALA and here are the 10 things that I can immediately identify:

I am grateful:

1. For the permanently valuable records of people's experiences and movements at particular points in time that allow us to learn from the past while strengthening our organising for a just society.
2. To the people and organisations that have made their personal

experiences available to us to learn from and to share with others.

3. For an amazing and compassionate team of individuals who are kind and committed to the work of social justice.
4. For back-up generators!
5. For the students, the researchers, the artists and all those who access the GALA archive and produce knowledge and materials that breathe life into and uncover the hidden, neglected and erased stories of others.
6. For lovely music that we can hear from our offices.
7. For the prospect of a new and greater year.
8. For the lives we are yet to touch and minds we are yet to change.
9. For the energy and the power to fight and insist on writing ourselves back into the pages of history.
10. For the year ending with an attitude of gratitude.

Kgomotso Kgasi
(Programmes Manager)

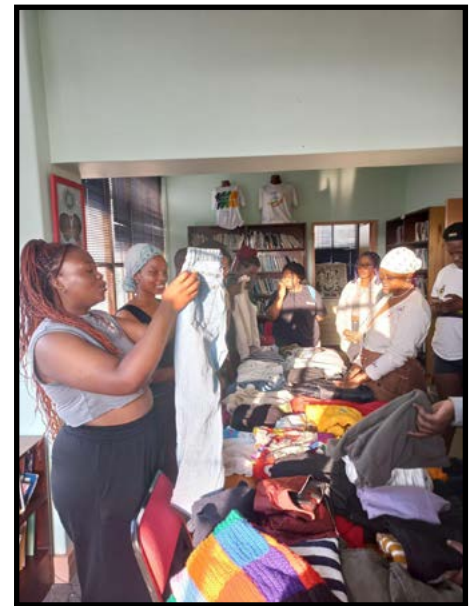
A FULFILLING YEAR WITH THE GALA YOUTH FORUM

2022 was an exciting year for the GALA Youth Forum (GYF). After two years of uncertainty due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdowns, the Forum struggled to find different ways to come together. This year, under the enthusiastic leadership of our Forum Coordinator, Obvious Nomaele, we have witnessed the Forum flourish!

People change spaces and spaces change people. At the beginning of the year, I wouldn't have believed it if someone had told me that we would have so many fun and interesting experiences considering where the world was for the past two years, most importantly the GALA Youth Forum. The yearly program really embodied the endeavor of prioritising oneself. Throughout the year Forum members have come to understand the necessity of giving yourself the attention, compassion, time, and energy that you deserve. They have also dedicated the same spirit as they walk through the library doors to study, attend forums, or just be.

The program had been set up as a guide for engagements throughout the year and what it eventually became was the result of allowing GYF members the agency to determine what it ultimately achieves. As we reflect on the year I would like to remind you of the Wits' International Pride parade held in collaboration with Wits Activate, SRC, the Department of Development, JPMD, the City of Johannesburg, and the University of

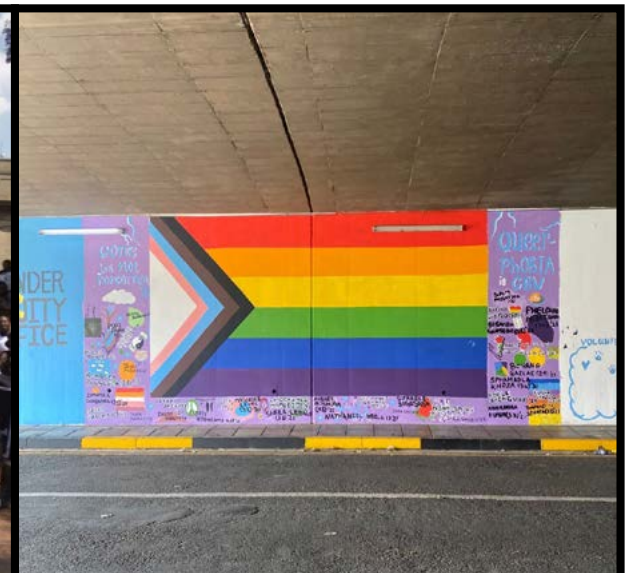
Witwatersrand management. As one of the biggest events that encompassed the ethos of the GYF's existence, it set the tone going forward. We then had to attend to the need of initiating a sense of community and visibility in the small town of Heilbron in the Free State. This engagement truly reminded me of my little self and how such initiatives could've made my queer journey less lonely and also reminded me of the privilege I have of affording other queer youth what I yearned for. We worked closely with the mayor, MECs, and different departments such as health and protection services to address and develop solutions that would ensure that what we had started would be well-maintained. It is exciting to share that the rollout of the program developed there has seen the queer netball team host a tournament that garnered them a spot at the provincial netball tournament held by the Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture in the Freestate. The community recently held its annual pride walk on the 26th of November as well as a pageant for Mr and Miss LGBTQIA+ on the 3rd of December. The Forum hopes to continue to foster the relationship it has established



Clothing swap in the GALA Library

with the queer community in Heilbron and extend that to other communities and provinces in the following year.

Conversations such as Community in the Digital Age, Visibility as Activism vs Safety, Accessibility and Disability did more than just make Forum members aware



Left: WITS Pride 2022, with representatives from various universities from across the country.

Right: The Pride mural on West Campus of WITS prepared for WITS Pride 2022

of the politics of being but informed the impact and involvement most of them set out to achieve. Apart from GYF events, members went on to take up leadership positions within the University with the aim of changing the systems from within. This involves Forum members being volunteers at the Gender Equity Office, Unicef, Transformation office, and SOP that resulted in relationship-building throughout our programs for collaboration on events and other proceedings. These collaborations saw the success of the holiday program: Self-representation, with digital security and protest training, development of the strategic impact approach to queer activism and youth impact, as well as personal development and an opportunity for the GYF to ask those burning questions and share their art and creative works. Placard-making sessions allowed us to have team-building sessions, get to know more of our members better, and contribute towards the archive. We then had our traditional clothing swap that was thoroughly enjoyed so we had to host a second one. This was the first time some Forum members saw the GALA library and have since been coming in to take out books and study.

The Forum also led proceedings in organising the annual Wits pride celebrations. The opportunity also allowed us to involve a number of Forum members and prepare some for taking over the leadership responsibilities at Activate (the Wits queer student society) next year. The highlight of Wits Pride was having other universities in attendance



Participants at the GYF's Rainbow Sports Day, hosted in partnership with Azania Games

namely: NWU, NMU, TUT, UP, UFS VUT, as well as Rainbow Alliance. The idea from this is to create a university network that would eventually allow us to hold a Lekgotla next year as well as extend the endeavors of GYF through a program that I am developing, namely the GYF Champion Program: A program designed to equip activists within institutions of higher learning with the tools, information, and support that is required to further continue their work in transformation and community development at the highest degree possible.

The GYF held a very successful Rainbow Sports Day full of active competitiveness and physical activities open to people within the LGBTQIA+ community (inclusive of the differently abled) and allies. This was in collaboration with Azania Games, a company formed by Wits mechanical engineering students who are developing and researching the modernisation of indigenous games. Everyone in attendance was awarded a medal for their participation and the best teams won a cash prize. This also served as our holiday program given the University's calendar revisions which affected the overall program.

I was excited to have Programs Manager Kgomoiso Kgasi join the GALA team. With her vibrant energy and charisma I quickly decided that it would be better to host the GALA Ball out of the University premises considering how during the Pride proceedings University management would cancel a few events on the day they were supposed to happen. Her involvement, Bonke's, and that of the GYF members led the Ball to its success. Given the endeavor of the GYF and our funder's ethos, we had to develop a Ball that would be accessible to youth. We developed incentives like sponsoring a student with a ticket, asking working people to pay more, and also giving out free tickets. Funds that were raised went towards covering the shortfall of the budget. *Be Who You Are For Your Pride* was the theme for the ball that we believed would allow people to come as they are and not hold them to any cultural ways of being that similar events do. Everyone showed up and showed off. Together with everyone involved in the planning we created a choreography for Alien Superstar as a dedication to Genevieve Louw. We had the privilege of having Anzio Jacobs come and celebrate with us. People who walked the ball categories won House of GALA T-shirts. We also opened up the Ball to

function as an experiential space by calling for artists within the community to exhibit their works of art. It was indeed a time for all of us and our partners to reflect on the work we have achieved throughout the year. Those who missed the event were asking if it's happening again next year and I also hope it does if I do say so myself. See highlights of the GALA Ball [here](#).

To close off the year, GYF members were each gifted with a study care package and a GYF personalised notebook, one of the most exciting things that I hope we commission again next year. Since everything has been said and done, what's left for us to do is to now share our milestones on the Twitter page and continue to foster the digital community further as the festive season approaches. Going forward with the GYF program will use the data gathered this year to develop a comprehensive program that sets to benefit more than the Wits queer community. I would like to thank the GALA staff for their unwavering support throughout the year and thank the Board for believing in me and my fellow colleagues to carry out the selfless responsibility of documenting queer experiences and championing queer rights and agency. The gratitude is also extended to Wits Activate and most importantly the Student Development Office.

Let me get the bill?
Purrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr!

Obvious Nomaele
(GALA YOUTH Forum Coordinator)



Care packs prepared for YOUTH Forum members to get them through exam time. Each pack included a notebook, snacks and some books.



Joburg Pride 1990 t-shirt displayed at the *Weaving Histories* conference (2022)

The French Institute in South Africa (IFAS) recently hosted the *Weaving Histories from Below in the Global South: Needlework, Gender and Empowerment* conference in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. The conference unpacked needlework in the making, the politics of needlework, the making of women's public sphere and the fabric of identities. Amongst the panelists, I was intrigued by Puleng Segalo's presentation *Embroidered Voices: Exposing Hidden Trauma Stories of Apartheid* in which she explores how Black South African women living in townships during the apartheid regime turned to visual narratives such as embroidery to express their traumas. Her presentation highlighted how embroidery can be used to connect both the personal and collective stories of Black women in South Africa and how unspeakable lived experiences of trauma can be expressed. Finally, the presentation explored the possibilities of visual artwork offering a space for expressing stories, healing and futures.

It was an absolute honour to present an unpublished paper titled: *Wearing Pride: Queer Activist T-shirts from the late 1980s* to present with Jonathan Botes (University of the Witwatersrand) and Dr Annie Devenish (Wits History Workshop) which explores the broad range of queer protest t-shirts from the GALA Queer Archive. GALA has a wonderful t-shirt collection, some personal and some from organisations collected by GALA staff and donated to the archive. The queer

WEARING PRIDE

We are very proud of our intern, Bonke Sonjani, for presenting his paper, 'Wearing Pride: Queer Activist T-shirts From the Late 1980s to Present' with Jonathan Botes and Dr Annie Devenish at the *Weaving Histories from Below in the Global South: Needlework, Gender and Empowerment* conference

activist t-shirts that Bote, Devenish and I explore were worn from the late 1980s into the 2000s in the streets of Johannesburg to show the politics and concerns of our community. According to the GALA Archives Coordinator:

T-shirts were particularly prevalent in the hey-day of LGBTI activism of the 1990s, and reflect milestones in LGBTI history in South Africa, such as the fight for the retention of the Equality Clause in South Africa's Constitution in the mid-1990s, the marriage campaign of the mid-2000s, and the fight against HIV/AIDS. They also remind us of the early Pride marches and early gay and lesbian organisations such as OLGA, LAGO, GLOW and ABIGALE.

- Linda Chernis 2016

Many individuals in what became historic events were sported wearing a new kind of t-shirt which heralded queer identities and solidarity with the broader LGBTIQ+ community, proclaiming the introduction of a unique set of protest t-shirts onto the political scene. When treated in correspondence to their historical, cultural, social and political contexts, these t-shirts prove to be instruments for claiming identity, rights, visibility and solidarity— giving agency and voice to the marginalised queer community in South Africa. Bettina Cornwell in her work, *T-Shirts as Wearable Diary: An examination of artefact consumption and garnering related to life events* alludes to the functioning of clothing within society and how it establishes the individual's social status, age, sex and identity. According to her, clothing also articulates personality and locates the individual within everyday activities (Cornwell 1990). As Cornwell suggests the relationship between clothing and individuals, our presentation

sought to establish not only the social conditions in which the protest t-shirts were created but the individual's personalities and aspirations. For instance, the official t-shirts printed and worn at the first three Joburg Prides can tell us much about where the gay rights movement had come from and where it sought to position itself at that particular moment in South Africa's own political transition (Devenish, Botes & Sonjani 2022). They can also tell us much about how queer people expressed and defined themselves at that time.

While an analysis of t-shirts can provide an entry point into the tensions and fissures within the queer rights movement in South Africa, it also delves into the developments and fractures within the community. By threading the messages of queer activist t-shirts, one is able to track the changes over time through the language and symbols used. For instance, the language on the t-shirts worn at various Pride events developed from 'Pride parades' to 'Pride marches' which signalled the transition of Pride from a political to an apolitical sphere from its inception till the present. Furthermore, on language, the t-shirts also reveal the development of queer communities and the inclusion of 'othered' identities, for example, the messaging materialised from 'gay and lesbian Pride' to 'LGBTQ Pride'. The intersectionality between identity, fashion and politics are quite fascinating to me. It reproduces part of my scholarship interests in how art and performance can constitute a form of knowledge production and how art (therefore) t-shirts can act as a canvas for the expression of identity, configuration and experiences.

Bonke Sonjani
(GALA Intern)

Featured Fam:



THENJIWE MWSANE

The following are edited extracts from an oral history interview with Thenjiwe Mswane. The interview was conducted in Johannesburg on the 6th of December 2022 at GALA the office in Braamfontein. Thenjiwe was interviewed by Kgomotso Kgasi (GALA). The full transcript of the interview will be available on request.

Thenjiwe is an educator based in Johannesburg. She was born in Imbali, Pietermaritzburg. Thenjiwe is an author of [All Gommorahs are the Same](#) (2021) and is a PhD fellow at the [Society, Work & Politics Institute \(SWOP\)](#) at the University of Witwatersrand (WITS).

Kgomotso Kgasi (KK): What are your pronouns?

Thenjiwe Mswane (TM): All of them. All pronouns, I will respond to.

KK: All of them. He, she, (TM speaks simultaneously:) they, them-

TM: Whichever ones will come in the future as well.

KK: As a child, what did you want be when you grew up?

TM: A lawyer. And then a zoologist. And then a marine biologist, and then back to a lawyer.

KK: And look where you are now.

TM: Except I keep thinking about going back to law, so I don't know if that one ever dies.

KK: In 2022, what are you most grateful for?

TM: Oh, I am grateful everyday. It's a practice that I am getting myself into. And it is a thing that I say everyday, "ngibonga okuncane, ngibonga okukhulu, ngibonga okukhona, ngibonga okuzayo" [I am grateful for the small, I am grateful for the big, I am grateful for what is currently here, I am grateful for what is coming]. I am really grateful, it is a conscious thing, and it's for everything. For literally whatever I'm going through, and whatever will come. Because something else will come. That is my everyday ritual, to be grateful.

KK: Are you religious?

TM: No. But [recently] I like listening to gospel. On a Sunday. Especially when I am tipsy, so that I can cry.

KK: So it helps you cry? It helps you access your other emotions?

TM: Yah. I don't even know who did these things, and this heaven, and [what] these people are going to miss

out on! But there is a way that when they sing about not wanting to go. Then I cry (KK laughs). Jazz is something else, like, jazz isn't sad. Jazz makes me feel like I must think about my sadness. I must sit in it. Sometimes you will know what the song is called but there is no lyrics. And so jazz does something weird. So no, I am not religious, but I listen to religious music to cry. It's very healthy.

KK: Okay. I do listen to jazz a lot, so I identify with that, it's almost a spiritual transcendence. Particularly when it doesn't have words. Because then you can sort of make up the mood and the intension.

TM: It is internal work. Jazz ikuthinta [touches you], especially when it doesn't have lyrics to it.

KK: So your religion is jazz? (laughs)

TM: Yah, that is my prayer. [In fact it is] my prayer when I get home. I roll a joint, I light incense, I listen to jazz. I am currently listening to Ezra Ngcukana. Then I can figure out the day.

KK: What book were you reading, when you wrote *All Gommorahs Are the Same*?

TM: Too many. Because it took me a long time to write. Some I was reading more than once. So I read Nakhane Toure, I read Panashe Chigumadzi, I read Malebo Sephodi, Chwayita Ngamlana, hm, I think those are the Blackbird [Books] ones that I've- Oh, no, I read another one. Ace [Moloi]'s book.

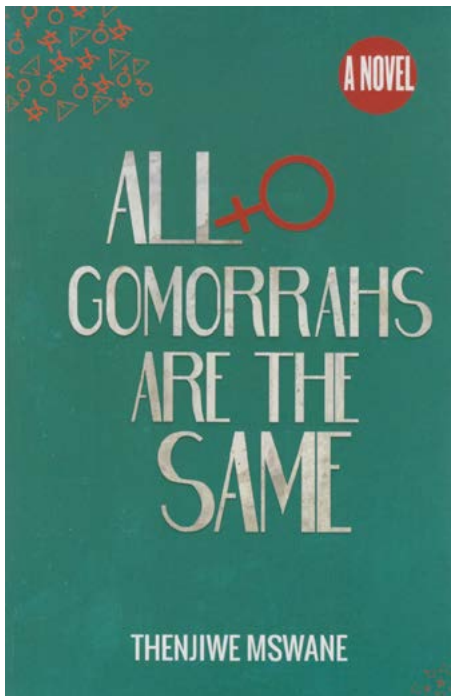
“ ngibonga
okuncane,
ngibonga
okukhulu,
ngibonga
okukhona,
ngibonga
okuzayo ”

Featured Fam

(extended):

THENJIWE MWSANE

One of the first editions from Blackbird. I read *The Yearning* [by Mohale Mashigo], I think it came out some-time while I was writing. I remember *The Yearning* had an impact. And then I read all of the Sello Duiker- *Quiet Violence of Dreams*, *Thirteen Cents*. I read *Collective Amnesia* [by Koleka Putuma] that came out at that time when I was writing. Those are the ones that come to mind. Like, the ones that had some input. I was reading a lot.



KK: What work do you do?

TM: I work at the University of the Witwatersrand, at their [Gender Equity Office](#). I am the Education Campaign's Officer, which really means advocacy.

KK: Is there a thing [in the work] that you find joy in?

TM: Students. Students. I love students. Student events, I like. Training students. And what I- also one of my favourite things about it is that in the academy and that type of teaching, where you are probably teaching the same group of students who likely thinks in similar ways for four years, right? And you watch them and you are like, "oh my god, you've grown!" They have had a space of four years. I'm teaching like, random groups of

students. And I don't have the same interactions with them all the time. But then people will return to you after months and will be like, "No I remember you from this thing and you said angazi, I reflected and..." versus tracking the student from day to day. So I really enjoy that. I really enjoy teaching and I really enjoy that it is not the same type of student over and over again.

KK: Now the work that you do, and the people that you work with, like, what would you like them to take away from the work that you guys are doing?

TM: That the work is bigger than them. The work is older than them. That for the most part, the work that they are able to do and feed their families with is possible through the blood and sweat and tears and deaths of black lesbian women. And I don't think that is the thing that clocks. I believe the work will probably get pushed by black lesbian women.

KK: It has always been us.

KK: Where do you replenish?

TM: I don't. One of my most toxic traits is that I don't replenish. I was thinking about it in fact before coming here. I have a lot of guilt. I think it's an age old thing that I've had from being a child who went to boarding school when the rest of my siblings were going to *schools*. So I was the only one until my sister, who I then worked for. So had it not been for me coming back and going at 21, then I would be the only person in my family who has experienced that type of a school. She is at WITS, but I am still the only one in my family who has graduated in record time. So I think there is like a, there is a guilt that doesn't allow me to replenish. I believe inhlanhla, I believe in luck, and like, me, I've been lucky. And I believe in luck because my family and my siblings have the same ancestors. But their lives are not aligned in the same way. Uhm, so I think for the most

part what I have done is go, "Eish, this is the burden we bare for being lucky" because I feel this guilt and take on everyone's problems because you are lucky. So I didn't replenish for the longest time. [But] today I realised I am at a point where I am like, "Fuck it, heal this shit." I remember [saying that] I don't believe in deserving things, because if I am deserving, what do I mean about other people? Like, everybody is deserving. And today I was like, no, everybody *does* deserve amazing things. And those who don't get them, it is not my fault. It is not me who is saying that they don't deserve. So yah, it is like a very recent thing, and definitely I'm telling you I am working on that.

KK: How do you want your son to move through the world?

TM: I want him to move through the world without guilt, for one. So, for example, I had gone through this age or era when I didn't understand the purpose of the surname. Like, I understand it but I'd come back from ukuth-wasa [*Spiritual initiation*] and just felt that surnames were burdensome and I was like, no, you would never thwasa if you did not have a surname. So I think that is when my Twitter handle also became @uThenjiwe_igama because these people find me because I belong to them with this surname. So that was frustrating me for a bit. But for him, I want Asanda to move around with my surname. I want him to namedrop. I want him to say, "I know who Kgomotso Kgasi is, I know Wairimu". I want him to have pictures chilling with iPhupho lika Biko or The Brother Moves On or Urban Village. I want him to move around the world going, "I am deserving of things, and I have been exposed to really great people, and I am not going to not use that." I really would like him to move like he has known great people and he has access to a lot of things.

KK: No, you have really created a really kickass circle for your son.

To Keval – GALA Director

Your leadership was truly inspiring. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We never have a dull moment when you're around. You make things easier for all of us. Thank you for your guidance and encouragement.

Working with you has been a joy, and I look forward to all the opportunities and experiences the new year has to offer.

To my colleagues

As one year ends and another begins, I wish you happiness and lightness of heart. May the coming year be filled with joy, love, and success.

It was a pleasure to have you as my colleagues every day. We truly are a family here, and I am so grateful for that at this time of year. I'm just going to come right out and say it- we're a superb team.

Christmas is an occasion to look back on the past year and recognise its achievements. At the same time, Christmas is an opportunity to set new goals for the coming year. In this sense, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

To the Board Members

As we celebrate Christmas, I pray for beautiful moments of happiness and joy for you and your family members blessed with love. Let the spirit of the holiday season fill your hearts and home. Let God bless all of you with love and forgiveness.

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! Thank you for taking care of us.

To my GALA Family

I wish you all the success in life. Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year. Never look back to 2022, and 2023 will be a beautiful year ahead.

May all your wishes be fulfilled in the coming year.

Nobantu Nqolobe
(Senior Administration Officer)

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Please contact our Archive Coordinator, Linda Chernis: linda.chernis@wits.ac.za

Donations of books with queer content are welcome additions to the Cooper-Sparks Library that is housed at the GALA offices.

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