

## **Artist Statement**

“I love the idea of creating something from Earth. Clay, with its malleable quality, can be formed into an expression of a thought, a feeling, or a sentiment. The angle and intensity of a gaze; the tension in the musculature; and the contours and form of the sculpture work to communicate powerful emotion. Often, as I sculpt, the material guides me towards outcomes that were initially not conceived, lending to an almost intuitive process. For me, the beauty of the creative process is that it can both capture my pain and deliver me from it at the same time. My work is centred around what I know best - the lived experience of women of colour in a world dominated by patriarchal, heteropatriarchal norms.

Art has the power to spotlight the, otherwise overlooked, struggles that women endure. The oppression faced by women is far more nuanced than overt discrimination. Women in galleries and museums are primarily presented as subjects for viewing; most often portrayed through the lens of the male gaze. This objectified view reduces women to one dimensional beings, devoid of agency. Through my work, I intentionally step away from the stereotypical over-sexualised depiction of the female form, to a more honest, personal, and layered understanding. The women I portray are multifaceted, resilient and dignified. I invite the viewer to step outside their bias and to engage with all of these aspects. In doing, so I challenge the misogynistic power dynamic that is currently the norm, by shifting their perception of the female form.”

## **Biography**

Fathema Bemath, born in 1971, spent the early years of her childhood around Diagonal Street, Johannesburg. The cosmopolitan landscape of Johannesburg

town in the early 1970s piqued the curiosity of individuals with a deep appreciation for art. Fathema and her family relocated to Lenasia, a more insular society that considered art to be an indulgence, potentially subversive and anti-religious. Since 1997 Bemath has owned and managed a successful dental laboratory. Through the years, Fathema's love and appreciation for art was honoured by dabbling in pottery, interior design and drawing but never with the conviction it deserved. Rather it was a creative collaboration with the late Benon Lutaaya that sparked her career in sculpting.

## Education

Fathema enrolled at Wits Technikon on her parents' instruction to either study dental technology or get married. She graduated in 1993, as the only woman and person of colour in her class.

## Exhibition History

**2021** - Women in Art Catalogue, MStudio Community (one of seven women chosen to showcase contemporary work celebrating women in art. Artists included Sue Martin, Lyndi Sales and Usha Seejarim)

**2021** - Turbine Art Fair

**2021** - Star Gazer Gallery, group exhibition

**2022** - RMB Salom Collectibles with Teresa Lizamore

**2022** - 'Finding Form', group exhibition with Meta Foundation

**2022** - Clarins Art Festival

**2022** - 'Wasomi Experience', Nirox Sculpture Park

**2022** - 'The Body In The World', Origin Art, Keyes Art Mile

**2022** - Cacophony, group exhibition, Lizamore

**2023** - 'Reflecting Forward', group exhibition, Artyli Gallery

**2023** - Origin Art, group exhibition, RMB Latitudes

## **Awards**

Fathema Bemath was placed in the Top 20 for the Thami Mnyele art competition in 2021.