



# A future framed

Batswana lensman sees commercial and artistic value in his work

*For more information about Letso Leipego and his work, please visit [www.gunsandrain.com](http://www.gunsandrain.com)*

**What sort of training have you received and how important do you think it is to seek training (in terms of learning first principles and refining technique)?**

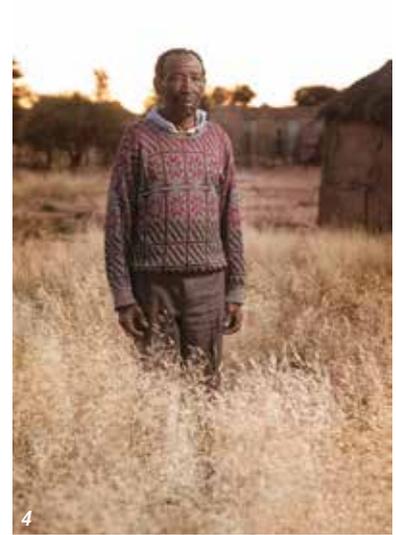
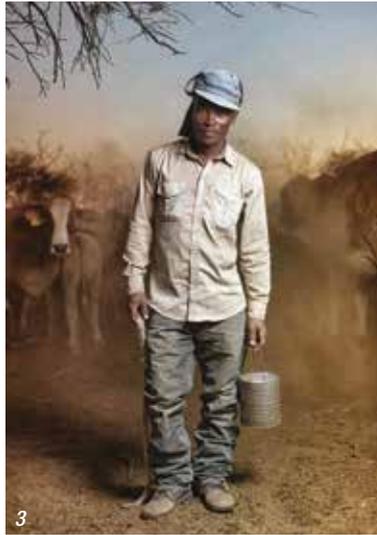
I started drawing at the age of nine. I was doing grade three at school and I felt like that was my calling. Over the years, my drawing became better. I then enrolled in Limkokwing University of Creativity and Technology to study an advertising degree. It was at university where I was introduced to photography as a module, and I soon became addicted to my new passion.

That enthusiasm made me want to learn more about photography. I started researching online about how to take pictures, who was taking the pictures, what cameras were used, and how to perfect lighting.

**What is your principal medium, and why did you choose it?**

I use a still image camera and the output is printed on either high-quality photographic paper or canvas. I chose it because it works best for my concepts and because the results are instant. Use of a camera also favours my passion, as there is a gap in the market in terms of the Botswana photography industry. Photography services are a regular need for an average Motswana.





**Describe the techniques you use most. How complicated are your methods, and why is each step necessary?**

The impetus for making photographs is capturing and distilling a moment of revelation. I seek out 'hidden qualities' in my subjects' characters, and attempt to reveal them through stylised manipulation of camera techniques, lighting, shadows, composition, and then in post-production. I prefer to photograph people in their own environments, and try to skirt a fine line between ethnographic documentation and stylised portraiture.

**What technological tools do you use in your work?**

I use a Nikon DSLR camera and lighting (a speed light with soft boxes) as my main tools for all compositions.

**Who is the single other artist whose style you most admire, and why?**

I look up to Joey Lawrence. He's a New York-based photographer. To this day, I am still learning a lot from his unique style.

**Galleries and other traditional means are only one way of marketing art. What do you believe are the most important other routes, and what is the most important insight you have gained in that area in your career?**

I mostly use social media such as Facebook and Instagram. This works for me because 99% of our customers use these platforms to reach us. It's efficient and the reach is absolutely amazing. When there are competitions, I also join in, in order to give my work exposure. And when I get the opportunity, I participate in exhibitions.

**Why do you create? What are your stated goals in producing art?**

I believe I was born with the passion to express my art and talent. It started off as a hobby, and now it's a lifestyle. My aim in life is to continue creating art with ordinary people and to inspire young Batswana to reach for their photographic dreams. I am just getting started ...

*1) In the old days it was an uncle's responsibility to teach his nephew how to look after livestock*

*2) It's a good feeling when rain clouds gather in rural Botswana, where hardworking men farm from dawn to dusk to feed their families*

*3) The badisa (shepherds) are artists in their own fields, communicating with their livestock, milking, skinning, and making biltong and accessories from the animal hides*

*4) This man is the best-known man in his village (Hukuntsi in Botswana), and participates in every event that takes place there*