



GUNS & RAIN

Investec Cape Town Art Fair 2020

14th - 16th of February 2020

Tuli Mekondjo (Namibia)

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About Tuli Mekondjo

Self-taught artist Tuli Mekondjo (b.1982, Angola) works with mixed media (embroidery, collage, paint, resin and mahangu grain – a Namibian food staple) and extends these textured media into performance. Drawing on photographic archives and histories of the loss of Namibian cultural practices, she explores history and identity politics through the lens of those who grew up in exile during Namibia's independence war.

In her *Ohani/New Moon* series, and in the wake of losing a cousin, Mekondjo asks questions about origin tales, the erosion of Aawambo oral histories and rituals, and the eternal cycles of life represented by the moon.

When the sickle of the new moon appeared for the first time, figures emerged from the muddy waters of the lakes. They walked in uniform and their eyes were fixated on the full moon. Its glow embraced them, glistening on the surface of their drenched dark skins. A single ululation gave way to a joyous celebration, and they threw mopane leaves to the moon as an offering, symbolising as it does death and rebirth. They too had been "dead", but they came alive with the new moon. Mothers holding their babies up high towards the face of the moon, saying "See! Look at the fire made by the omakishi (Spirits)!" They uttered prayers to the moon:

"Ovakhwamhungu vokohani, nai mone sha mohani ei"

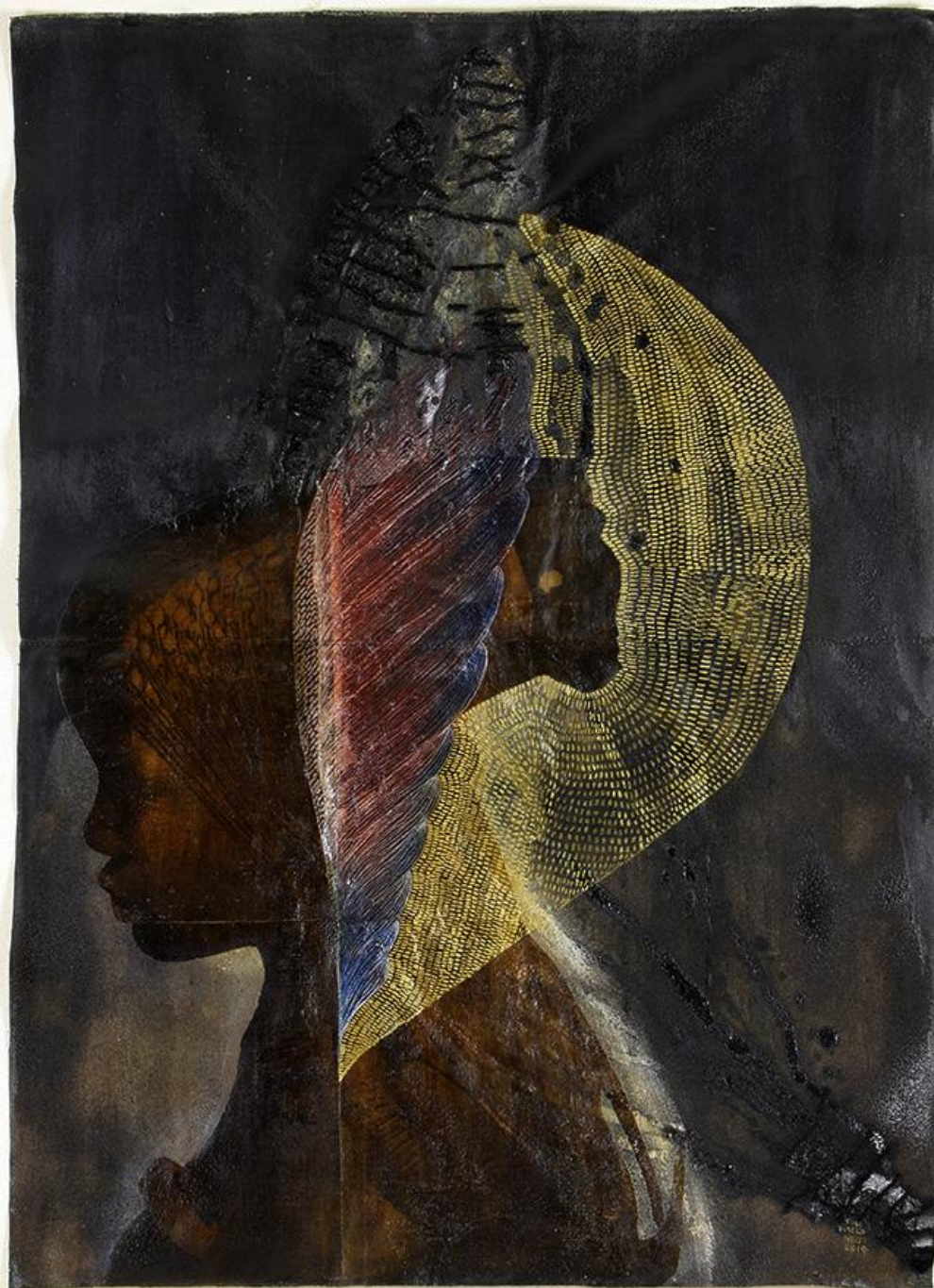
"Spirits of moon, may I have blessings of moon now"

In uncovering rich Aawambo folklore and ritual in later life, she was both surprised and grieving: "It breaks my heart when I discovered the worshipping of the moon tale *in a book*. It was never told to me around the fire when I was growing up in the '90s. I'm so sad that the moon rituals have been abandoned. I keep asking myself: What happened?"

"I'm amazed at the influence that the moon had on this group of people, and their understanding of nature, and its cycles of death and rebirth, which also influenced farming practices. We are not separate from nature, and we need to reconnect with it. I have had many cycles of death, loss and abandonment and yet the illuminating glow of the moon keeps the promise of console and of life."

(continued...)

Mekondjo has been a participant in the Future Africa Visions in Time exhibition, a collaboration between the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies, Iwalewaha Haus Bayreuth and the Goethe-Institut Namibia. She exhibited with the NJE Collective at the Investec Cape Town Art Fair 2019, the FNB Joburg Art Fair 2018, and Art Market Budapest 2016. She is now represented by Guns & Rain gallery, and exhibited in the women-only show 'Suffrage' in July 2019. Her work was also presented at 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair London 2019. She will have a two-woman show in Johannesburg in April 2020, and be part of a group show at MECA Bordeaux in September 2020.



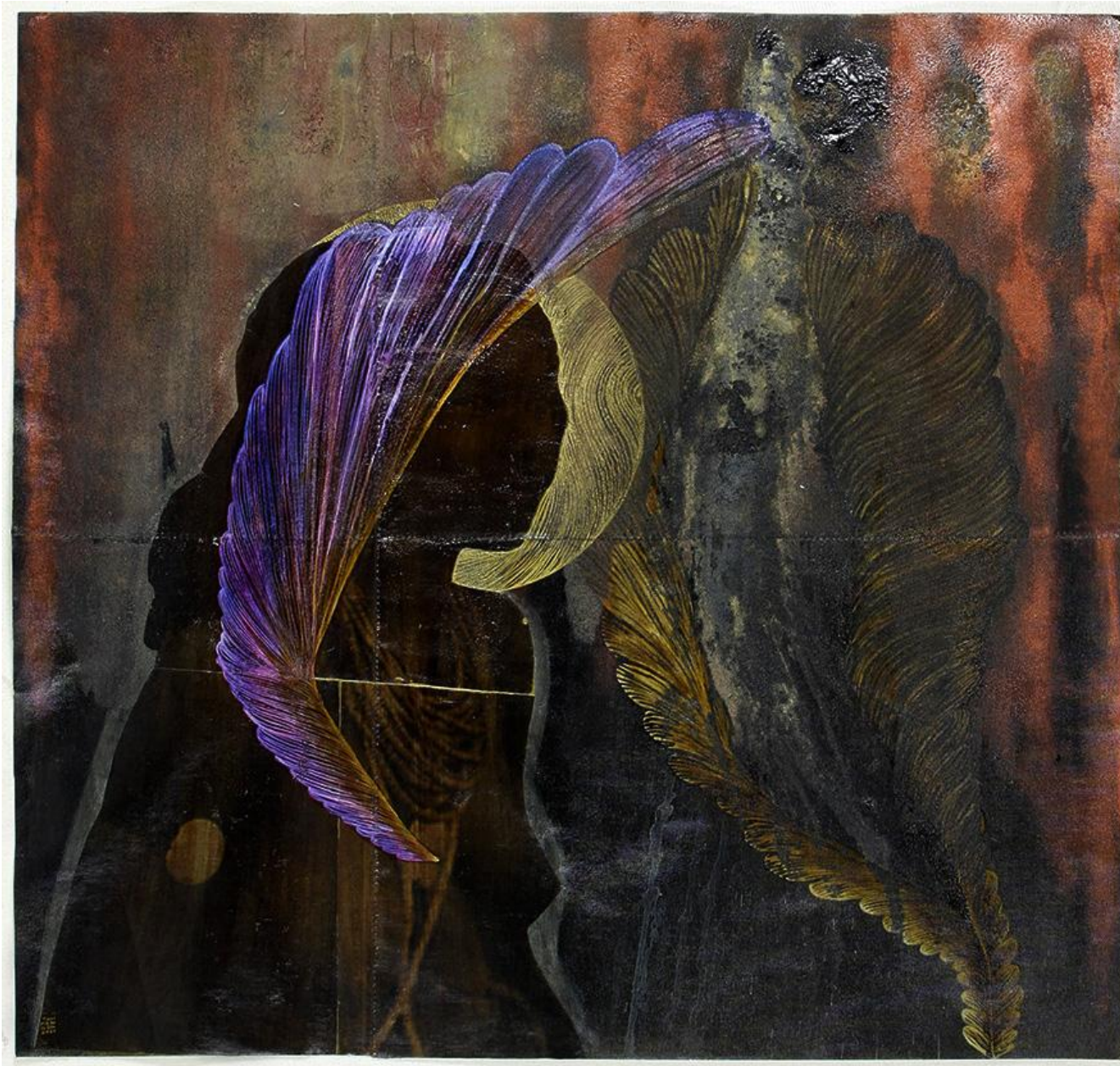
***Ina yovanhu oKalunga/
The mother of people is Kalunga***

2019

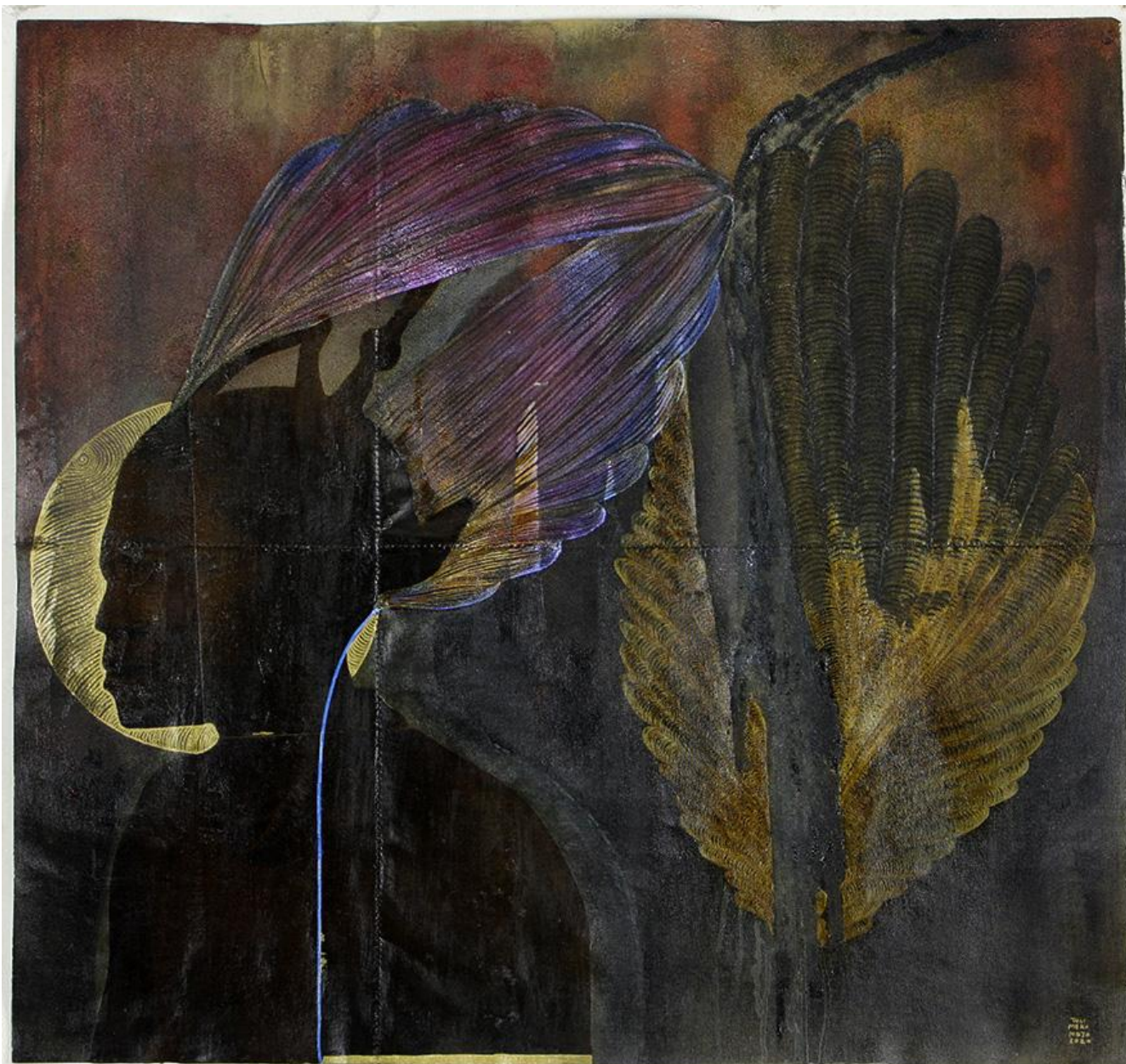
Mixed Media on Canvas

106 x 76.5 cm

- RESERVED



***Okahani kovalodi II/
Little moon of witches II***
2020
Mixed Media on Canvas
81 x 87cm



***Okahani kovalodi I/
Little moon of witches I***
2020
Mixed Media on Canvas
82 x 86 cm
SOLD





***Ohani oya ninga eti lambali /
The moon has become the eyes of the deer***

2020

Mixed Media on Canvas

137 x 75cm

SOLD



Omdilo wo makishi/ The fire of the spirits

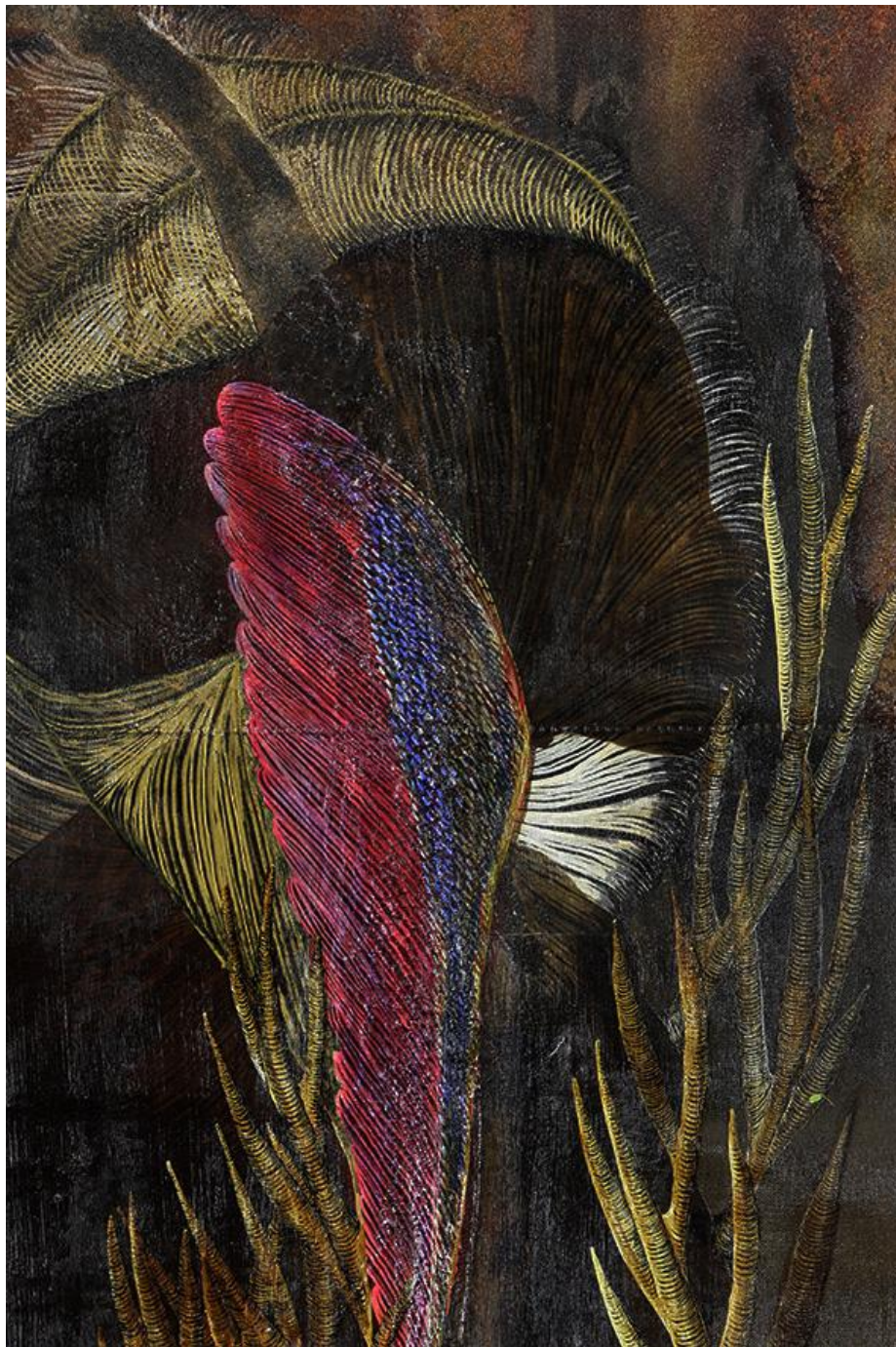
2020

Mixed Media on Canvas

143 x 75cm

- RESERVED





***Ina yoitoo ondjibololo/
The mother of clay pots is a hole in
the ground***

2019

Mixed Media on Canvas

82 x 58,9cm

- RESERVED



Omukongo nokandiba / The hunter and the hare

2019

Mixed Media on Canvas

82 x 45cm

SOLD



Ovakhwamhungu vokomlonga / Spirits of the lakes

2020

Mixed Media on Canvas

210 x 100cm





***Efundula lovakwalukuwo vo konlonga/
The wedding of the fish eagle clan of the lakes***

2020

Mixed Media on Canvas

220 x 100cm

SOLD



