

NOKOKO

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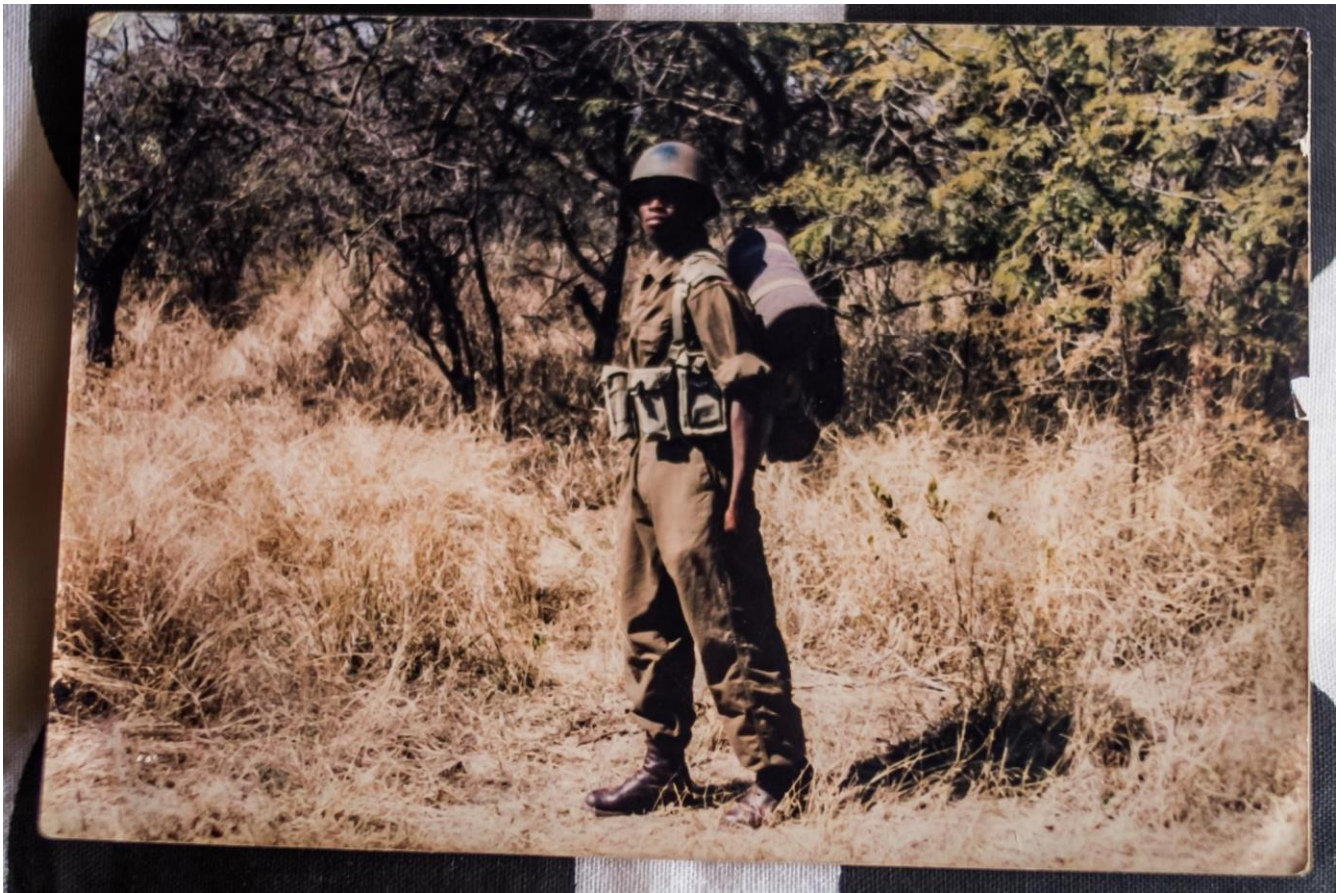


Ukugrumba

Tshepiso Mabula



The grave of my late uncle P. Mabula, a teenager who became a freedomfighter, then a wounded civilian, and finally an ancestor.



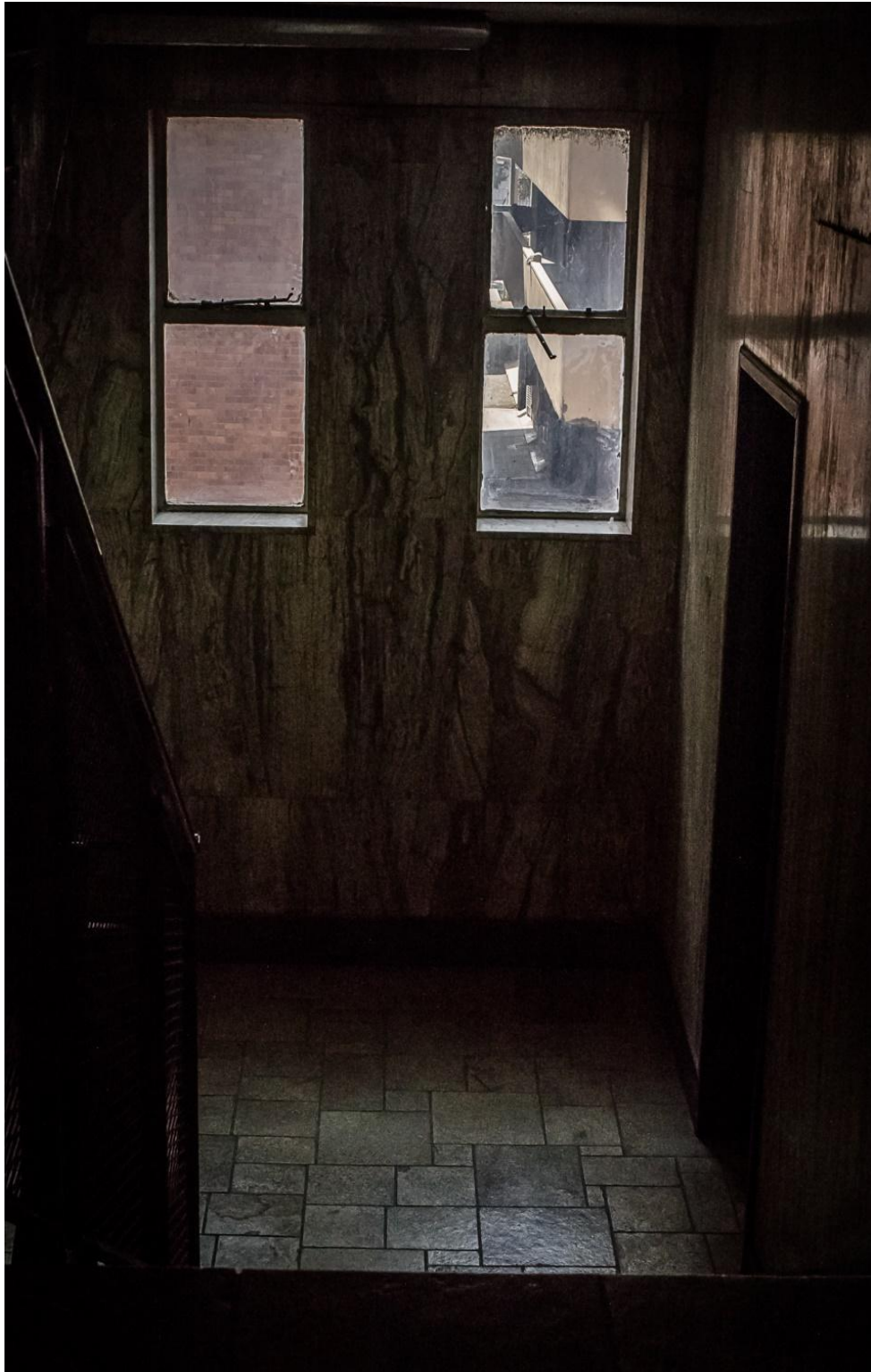
Simon Mabula, South African National Defence Force (SANDF) soldier and son of a former freedom fighter.

Ukugrumba

U*kugrumba*, meaning to “dig up” in isiXhosa, is a body of work motivated by my family’s trauma as a result of activism in South Africa’s struggle against apartheid, towards liberation, and amid present-day reconciliation. I seek to exhume the experiences of foot soldiers that sacrificed their youth by fleeing into exile, to enter the trenches of armed struggle for national liberation. This also includes those who stayed in the country to continue the fight against the brutal regime. More often than not, those who are hailed as heroes of the struggle are well-known political figures. *Ukugrumba* is a visual representation and narrative of the forgotten people who were affected both mentally and physically by the armed struggle against apartheid.

Ukugrumba also examines haunted places that bear memories of a violent past. The work interrogates conversations of the struggle and details testimonies of untold stories of former liberation soldiers and their families. I revisit the past to shed light on the reality of the trauma that apartheid caused. This trauma continues to plague both old and young South Africans. The individual stories in *Ukugrumba* are part of a greater narrative of South Africa’s past in relation to the new South Africa of reconciliation.





Window – Johannesburg Central Police Station



The grave where former Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) operative, Petrus Ntshole, was buried is left open after his remains were exhumed at the Mamelodi cemetery. It is said that more than 50 APLA, and its predecessor, POQO, members were secretly executed in the 1960s while approximately 24 Umkhonto we Sizwe members were executed in the same period.



From the mouths of storytellers. MyAunt, Martha Mabula, who lost her brother twice.



Lulama Kabane, combat name, GeorgeNaledi.



Samora Machel, former President of Mozambique, died in a plane crash on 19 October 1986. Machel and thirty-three other passengers died after the plane crashed into the Lebombo Mountains in Mbuzini, South Africa after a false beacon.













Nokuthula Orela Simelane was 27 years old when security police abducted her inside the parking lot of Johannesburg's Carlton Centre shopping mall. A courier server and freedom fighter, Simelane was sent on assignment. She had graduated from the University Of Swaziland with a Bachelor in Administration (B.Admin) degree in Social Sciences. The police who abducted Nokuthula stated that she was alive when they last saw her and that the unit had turned her into a spy and redeployed her back to Swaziland.



The Johannesburg Central police station was previously known as John Vorster Square. Located in the heart of Johannesburg, this police station is where many political prisoners, like Ahmed Timol, were arrested, tortured and killed by apartheid security police. It is alleged that between 1963 and 1990, at least 73 political prisoners died at the police station and that their deaths were all recorded as suicides.





Busisiwe Tedile, combat name, Sibongile. She was a courier of arms and political literature who travelled between Swaziland and South Africa. She was arrested multiple times for her political activities, and served 18 months in solitary confinement.







Nonhlanhla Lucky Mazibuko, combat name, Hazel.



The last known image of Thomas Molatlhegi, his mugshot, held by his family during the exhumation of his remains in Mamelodi.





David Webster was an anthropologist and anti-apartheid activist murdered by security police outside his home on 1 May 1989. His murder was planned and plotted by police inside the Oribi Hotel in Kensington, Johannesburg which is located on the same street as Webster's home.



Z. Mtwazi, combat name, Tiger.



Velaphi Lot "Mavela" Mabuza. Combatname, Dick Boyce.





