

IMPERMANENCE OF BEING

MBONGENI FAKUDZE

BY SEAN STREAK

“The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.”

Alan W. Watts

Mbongeni Fakudze, an artist whose work breaks the barrier between solidity and fluid motion, was born in Swaziland. He gained a fundamental knowledge of the arts through his inspiring art teacher in his adolescent years, before going on to study Fine Arts through the University of South Africa in Pretoria.

As his artistic talent developed, he found a calm connection to that of the Surrealist movement, his work swaying ever closer to the genre in the back of his mind, his subconscious moulding his creations to depict that of his passion, his inner Surrealist emerging and igniting an ever-present yet dormant flame. Fakudze started out by working digitally with a strong commentary focus. From this beginning, he gradually completed the crossover to acrylic paintings and portraiture. His fascination with portraits captivated his creativity, controlling the movements of his hands and rearing his artistic flare towards the easel and palette.

The imagery in his work stems from using the body, face and essence of women to create something unique, something African at heart – a rhythm entwined with unending passion which illuminates the human form. Emotions flow through his portraits, finding cracks and crevices in the human mind to fill the viewer with a sense of sensitivity and understanding.

His choice of acrylic has always been about the pace, the speed and ability to work with such a tangible material, the flexibility enabling him to shape it into whichever direction he desires. The swift drying time is also what lured him to acrylics as opposed to other materials such as oil-based paints. The energetic style of both the artist and the acrylic has melded to bring artwork to life.

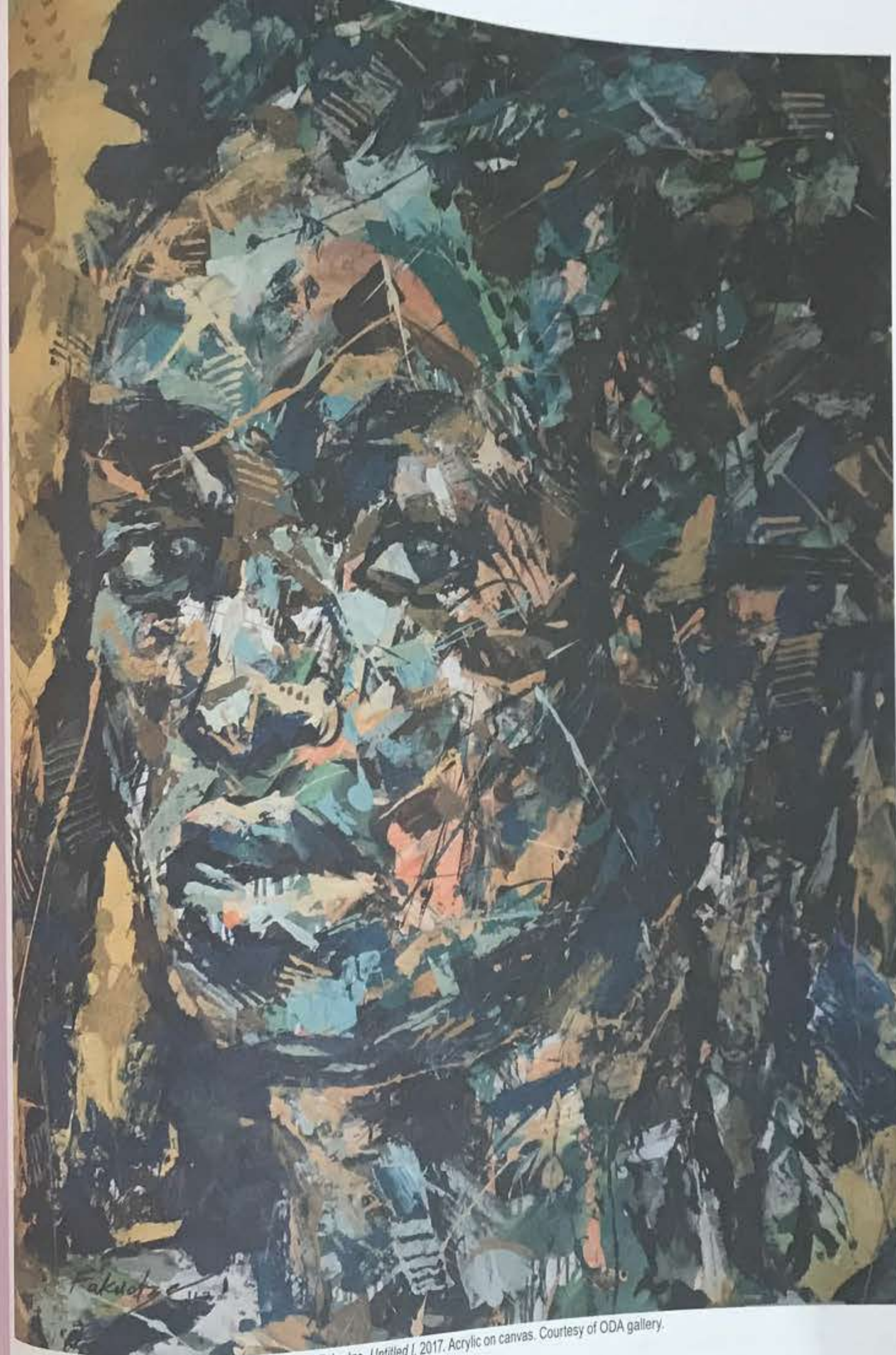
With this artistic addiction to acrylic, Fakudze found great inspiration in VOKA, the Austrian-born artist who coined the term ‘spontaneous realism’; he felt a great connection to this style and its effects have seeped into his work, some more so than others, but the inspiration is always there, and is used to enhance and bring his works to life in new ways. Bringing inspiration into a more local context, Benon Lutaaya is a mentor and has helped Fakudze to create ideas around his work.

This is art brought to life, culturally rich, with a true African flare, which instils a sense of connectivity to the present – a contemporary blend of continental art aimed at unpacking the images of humankind. His shapes and lines, coupled with vibrant colour, assures the viewer that his work is to not be taken lightly. The depth and variations impart a certain atmosphere, an environment that is as inviting as it is niche.

Mbongeni Fakudze's second solo exhibition titled 'Impermanence of Being' will run at the ODA gallery in Franschoek from the 22 December to 25 January 2018.

'Impermanence of Being' continues his exploration of the female body and face, with the characters revealing particular qualities associated with the faces in these portraits. Overall the show will exude an expressive spontaneity, akin to the fluid movements of his brush – Mbongeni keeps his process flowing, completing a cycle of inspiration that harkens back to his adolescence.

Sean Streak is a writer on *ART AFRICA's* editorial team.



Mbongeni Fakudze, *Untitled I*, 2017. Acrylic on canvas. Courtesy of ODA gallery.