



BONOLO KAVULA

sewedi sewedi

06 . 03 . 21

17 . 04 . 21

smac

sewedi sewedi (2021)

Text by Jabulile Dlamini-Qwesha

Bonolo Kavula shows you what you're prepared to see.

For her first solo exhibition, titled *sewedi sewedi*, Kavula explores the practice of print-making beyond its traditional confines. Combining print with design, painting and sculpture, she creates compositions using punched shweshwe fabric pieces and meticulously measured strands of thread. Continuing her unconstrained exploration of abstraction, Kavula works with dynamism and intention, qualities self-evident in each completed work.

"I allow the materials I use to resonate with whoever sees that work in a way that is unique to them. I don't want to limit what the viewer may think or feel when they see the work, I don't want to prescribe meaning," she says about her process. Kavula's work leans into this ability to shift our interpretation, to feel free to *feel*.

The concept of freedom holds a precarious position in our consciousness. Both 'liberation' and 'taking liberty' are fragile ideas that mean different things to each of us, depending on personal experiences. The one universal truth of freedom is that we strive to obtain and maintain our versions of it, even as they may evolve over time. Because that expansion shapes perspective, it can be invigorating to be able to meet oneself on different planes through the same visual inspiration. It also subverts the hierarchies

of the gaze; the idea that each frame of reference breathes new life into Kavula's artworks intuitively declutters its narrative so the viewer can neatly immerse themselves.

At the same time, unpacking the complexity of freedom leads one to the contentious concept of 'home'. Where do you go to feel replenished and find kindness?

"This period has compelled me to create a home for myself; a wholesome household. I'd prioritised working over the past two to three years, at the expense of my well-being. My living space was just where I slept and ate; I'd come home late, eat and sleep and then leave the following day. It's become my safe place in the past few months: a place of recovery, mourning, rest and solitude," says Kavula.

She adds that after having been hospitalised for medical reasons, she wanted to add deeper and personal meaning to her art. And that is how her new work for this solo exhibition came to be made from shweshwe fabric. "I sat in the hospital for ten days contemplating how my life – including my art – could improve when I get out. I wanted to have a meaningful attachment to my work and I needed my choice of art material to give me that," she explains.

sewedi sewedi (2021)

Text by Jabulile Dlamini-Qwesha

This connection to family and home is reflected in Kavula's choice of material for the majority of works on this exhibition, *shweshwe*, a traditional printed textile with a rich history rooted in Southern Africa. For her, the material is reminiscent of a red *shweshwe* dress that was an heirloom.

"It's one of my late mother's few remaining personal items that I have. My great grandmother insisted that I keep it and it has always felt like a double gift from her and my mother who passed away when I had just turned 5," she adds.

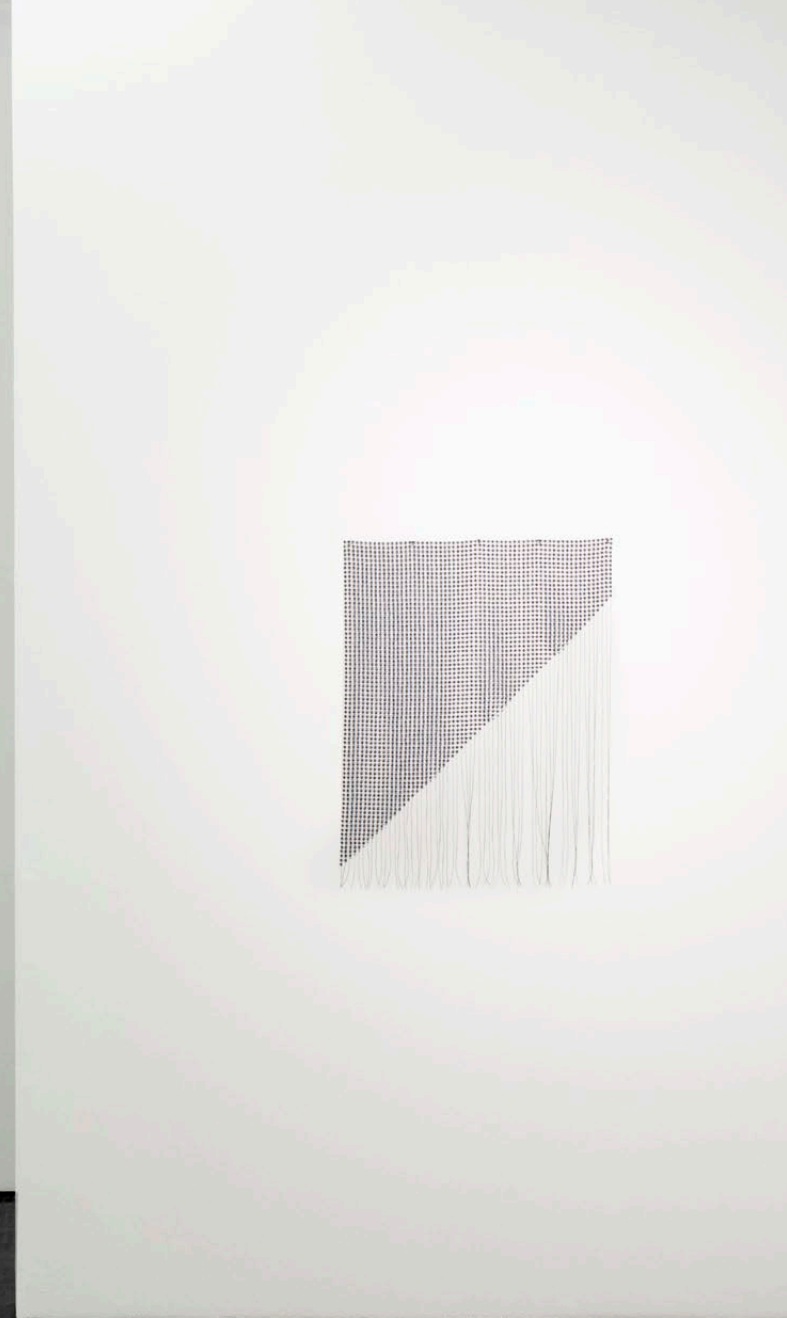
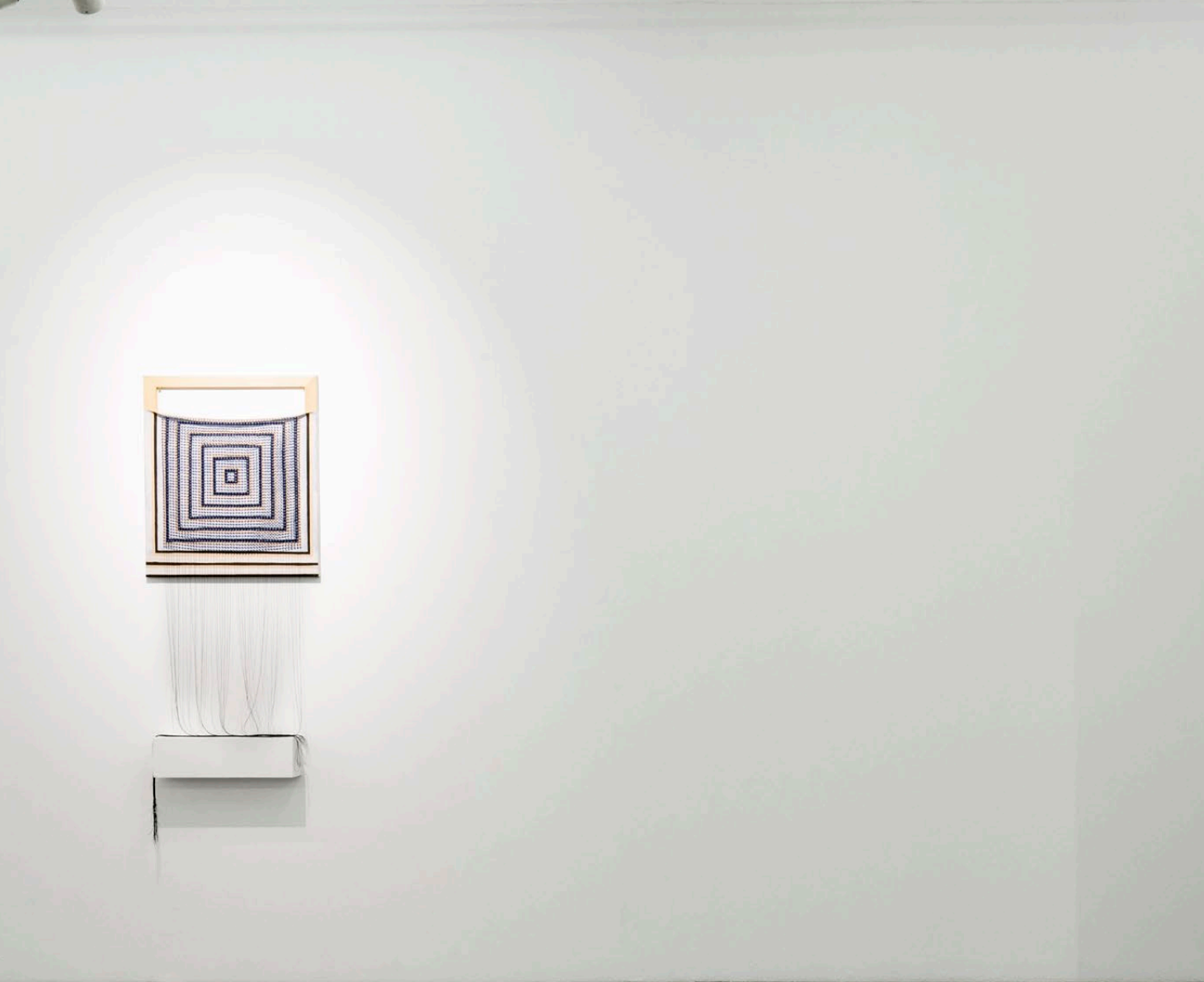
Exploring repetitive visual patterns and concepts such as the mundane, the artist uses an office paper punch to create small discs of the fabric, which in turn is transformed into delicate grid-like tapestries.

Kavula tells me that she sees art in some of the most unlikely places, and perhaps that's what keeps her point of view rooted in rudiment. "I've seen art just sitting in a taxi and looking out of the window. There are so many canvas-worthy moments out there. I have an urge to take up photography because I've started appreciating life and nature, I'm probably seeing a lot more art outside because we've been stuck in our homes for so long," she says.

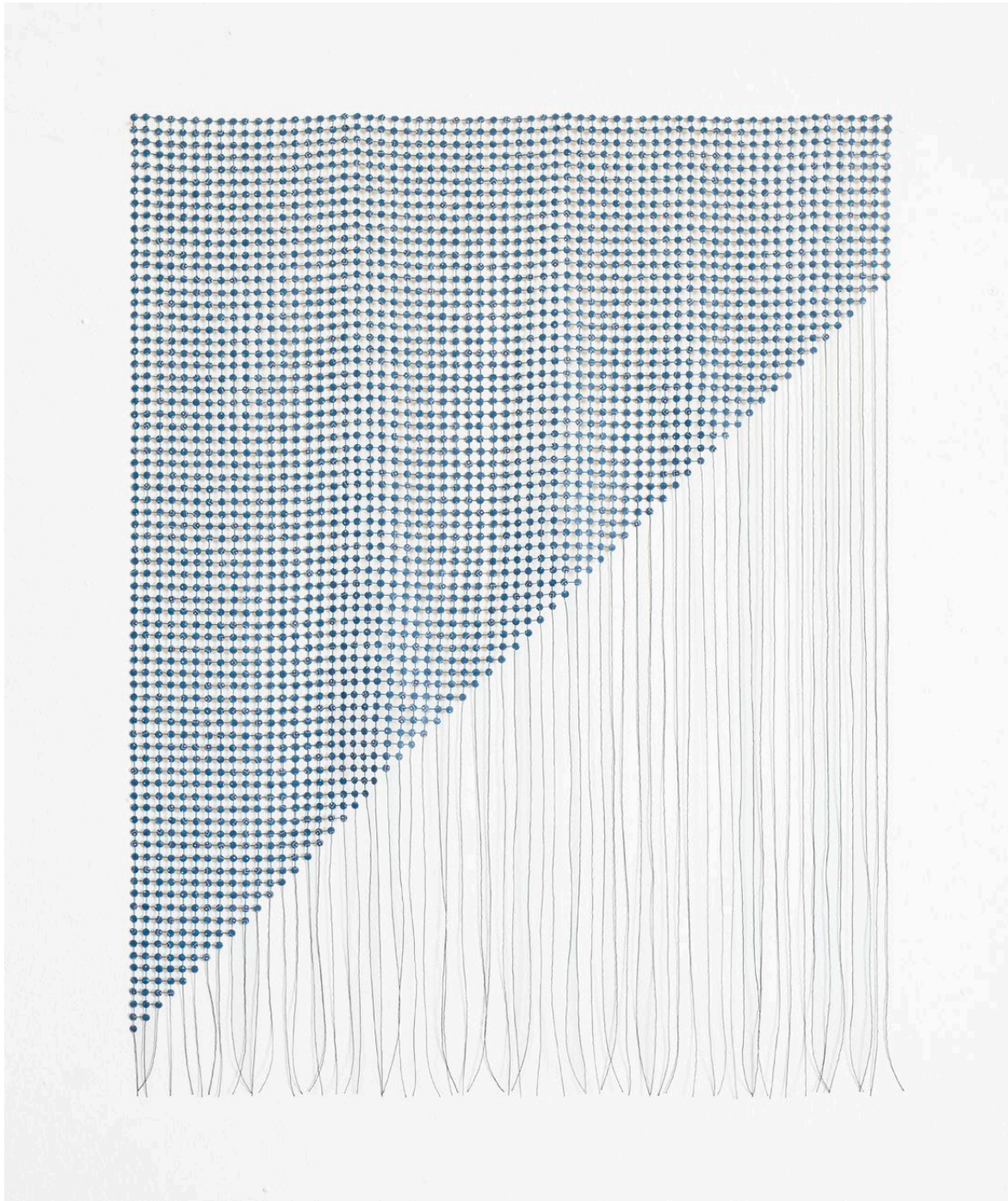
The liberties that Kavula takes elevate her explorations, and stand in stark contrast to her memory of her grandfather, to whom her exhibition pays homage.

"Sewedi is my grandfather's surname. He passed on suddenly while I was working towards this show and his passing was something that made me think a lot about his life. He was a miner at De Beers mines in Kimberley and worked very hard all his life. I know that he was depressed after he lost my grandmother years ago and then his daughter – my mother, soon after. In retrospect, I feel a sense of great sadness for him because I recognise that he was really sad and died sad. So, I want to honour him and show him he is loved, and this is the best way I can," says Kavula.

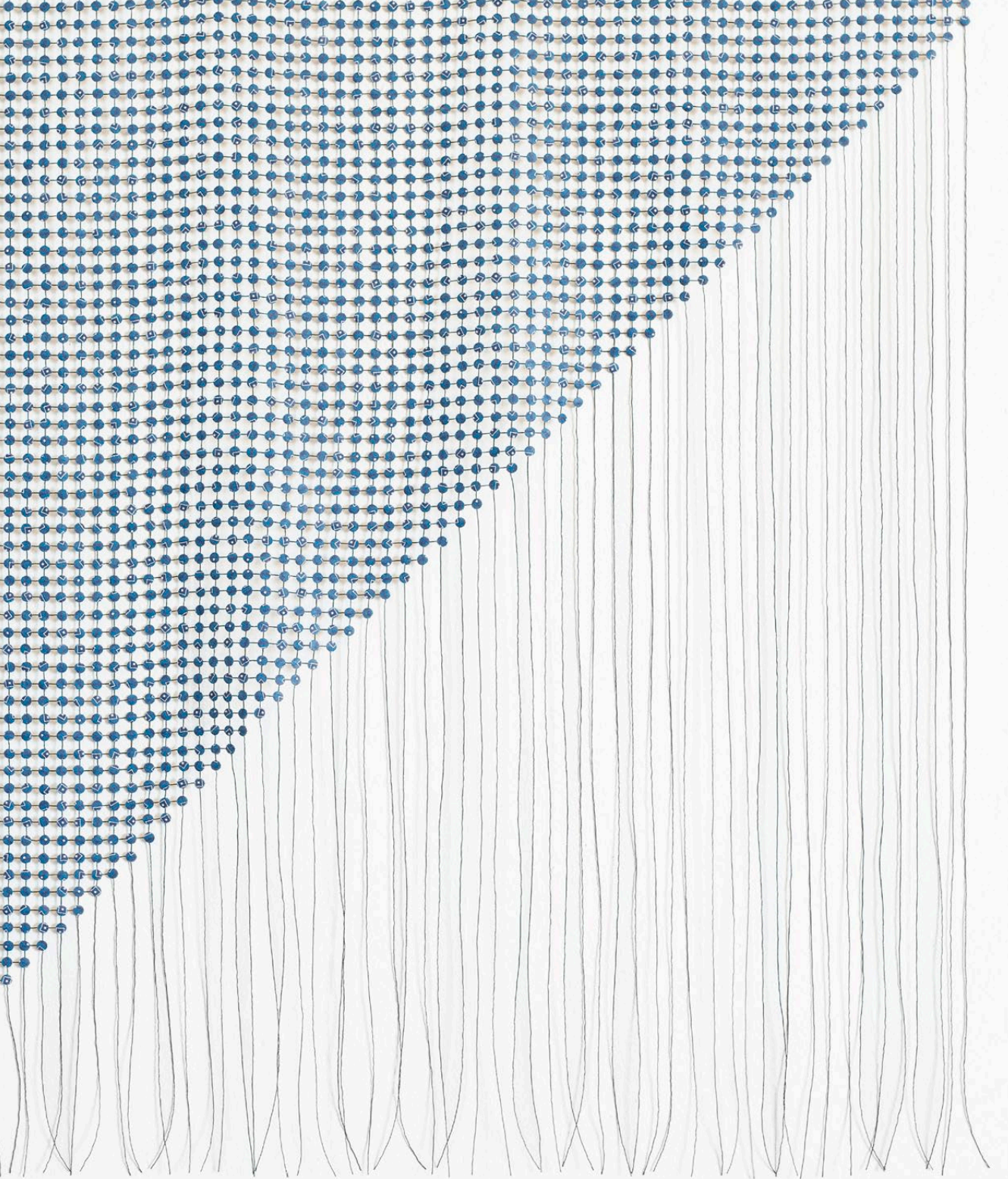
While many give meaning to their time on earth by seeking freedom in labour and love, others can end up being confined by those things. "I recognise that I labour just as my grandfather did, but the kind of work I do liberates me; I find joy in it and express myself freely. And that is different from his experience."



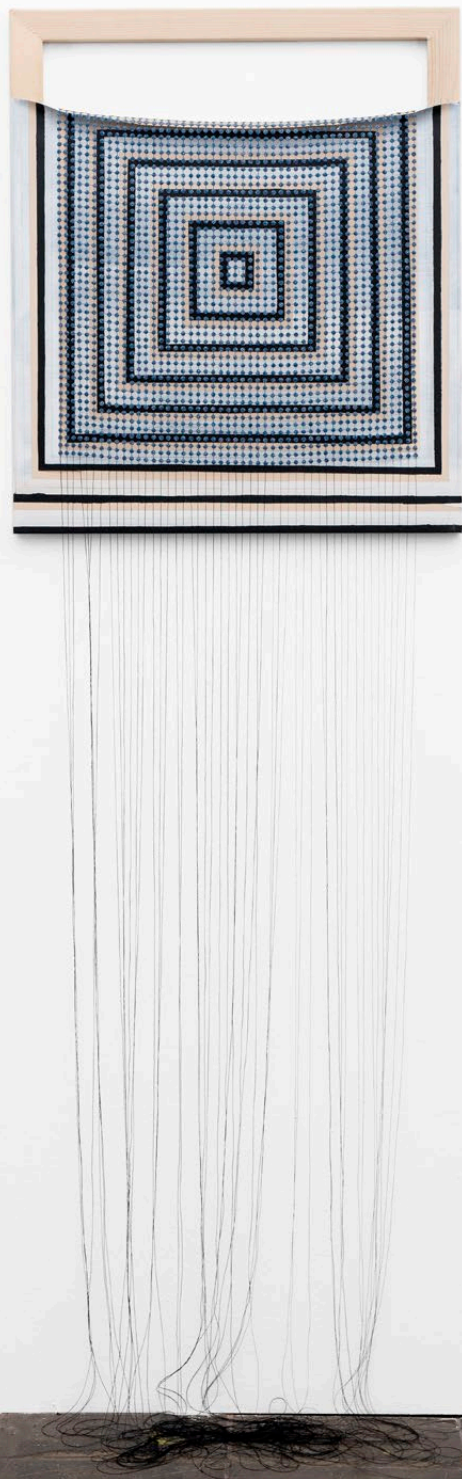
Bonolo Kavula | *sewedi sewedi* | 2021 | Installation View



Bonolo Kavula
"I want to fall into the sky"
2020
Punched Shweshwe, Thread
80 x 60.5 cm



Bonolo Kavula
"I want to fall into the sky" (Detail)
2020
Punched Shweshwe, Thread
80 x 60.5 cm



Bonolo Kavula

"Rebaone"

2020

Punched Shweshwe, Acrylic on Canvas, Thread

235 x 70 cm



Bonolo Kavula

"Tuelo"

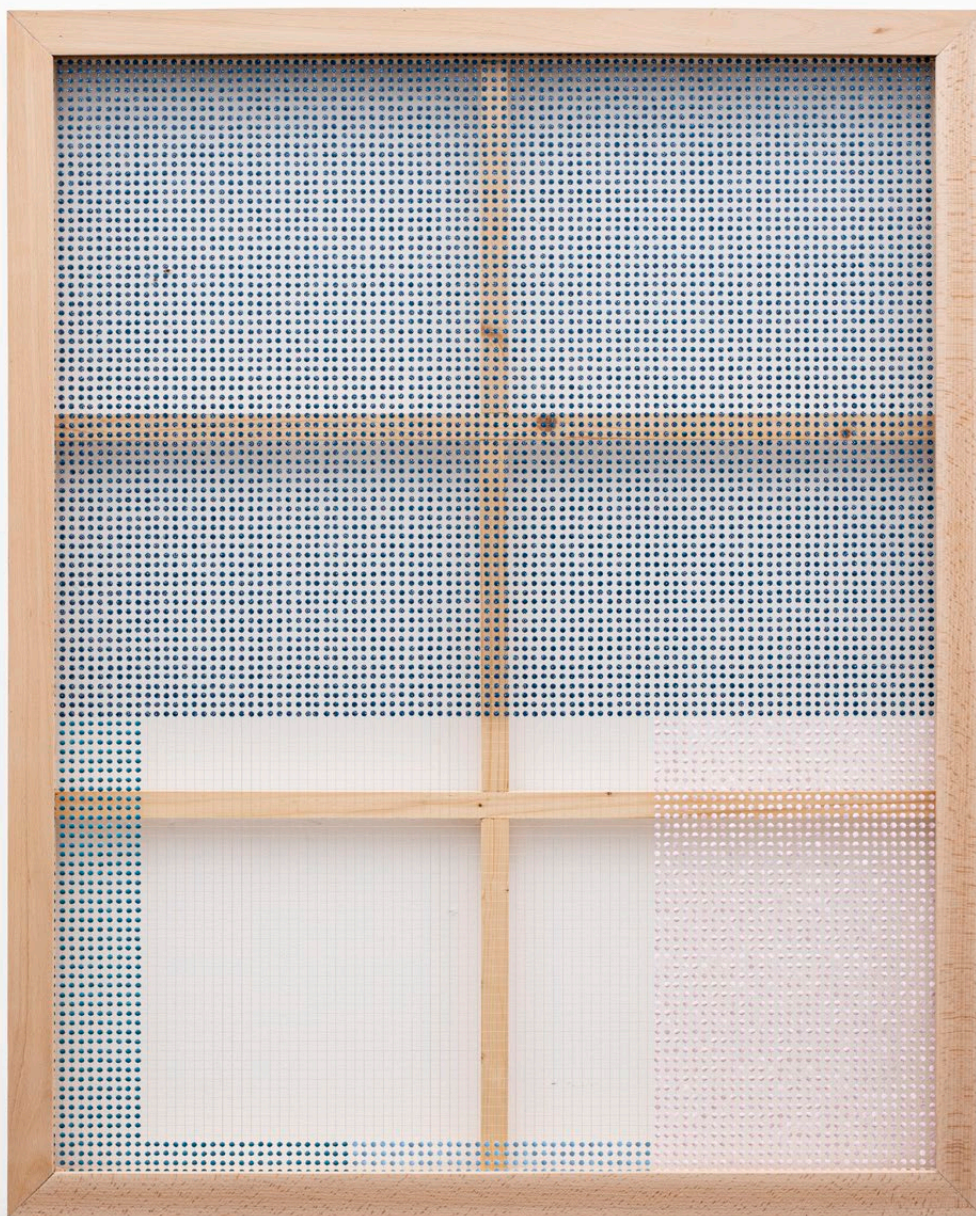
2020

Punched Canvas, Acrylic, Thread

252 x 140 cm



Bonolo Kavula | *sewedi sewedi* | 2021 | Installation View



Bonolo Kavula

"Lebitso lebe seromo"

2020

Punched Shweshwe, Acrylic, Thread

129 x 103 cm



Bonolo Kavula

"Tell me about the other side"

2021

Acrylic, Punched Coiled Canvas and Shweshwe on Wood

38 x 39.5 cm

Bonolo Kavula

"Tell me about the other side" (Detail)

2021

Acrylic, Punched Coiled Canvas and Shweshwe on Wood

38 x 39.5 cm





Bonolo Kavula
"Realeboga"
2021

Acrylic, Punched Coiled Canvas, Wood
40.5 x 30.5 cm



Bonolo Kavula
"Realeboga" (Detail)
2021

Acrylic, Punched Coiled Canvas, Wood
40.5 x 30.5 cm



Bonolo Kavula
"If only for a moment"
2020

Acrylic, Punched Coiled Canvas, Cardboard Shoe Box
29.5 x 18.5 x 10 cm



Bonolo Kavula

"If only for a moment" (Detail)

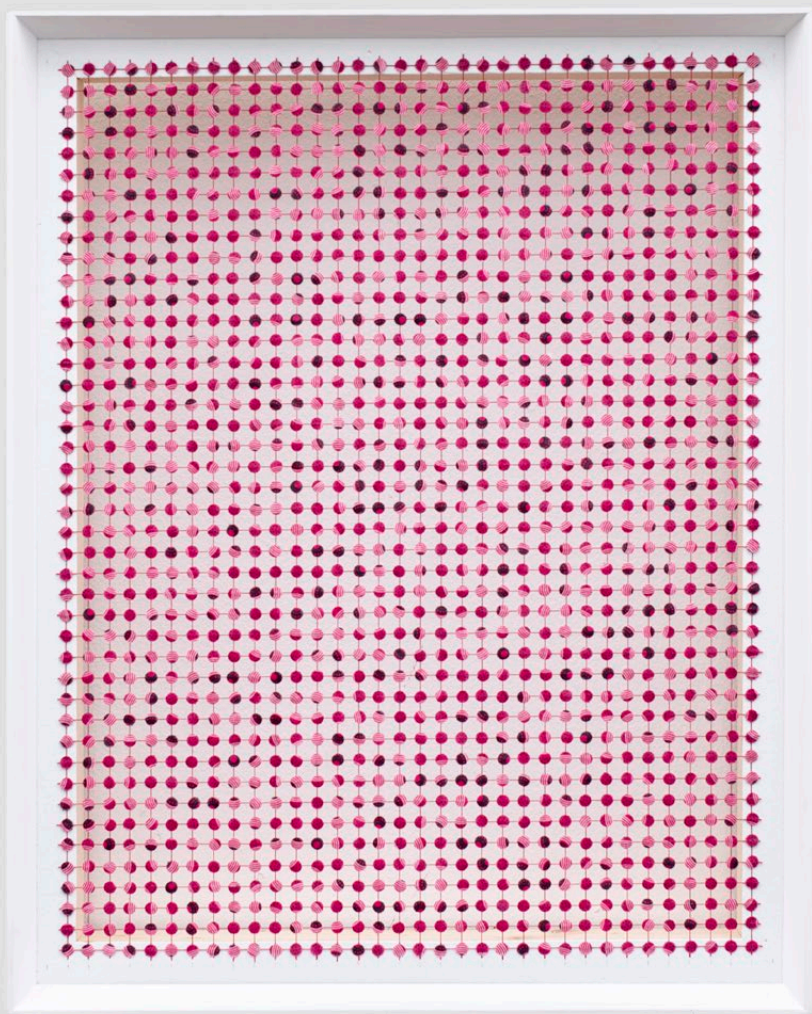
2020

Acrylic, Punched Coiled Canvas, Cardboard Shoe Box

29.5 x 18.5 x 10 cm



Bonolo Kavula | *sewedi sewedi* | 2021 | Installation View



Bonolo Kavula

"Mpho"

2021

Punched Shweshwe, Thread, Wood

48 x 35 cm



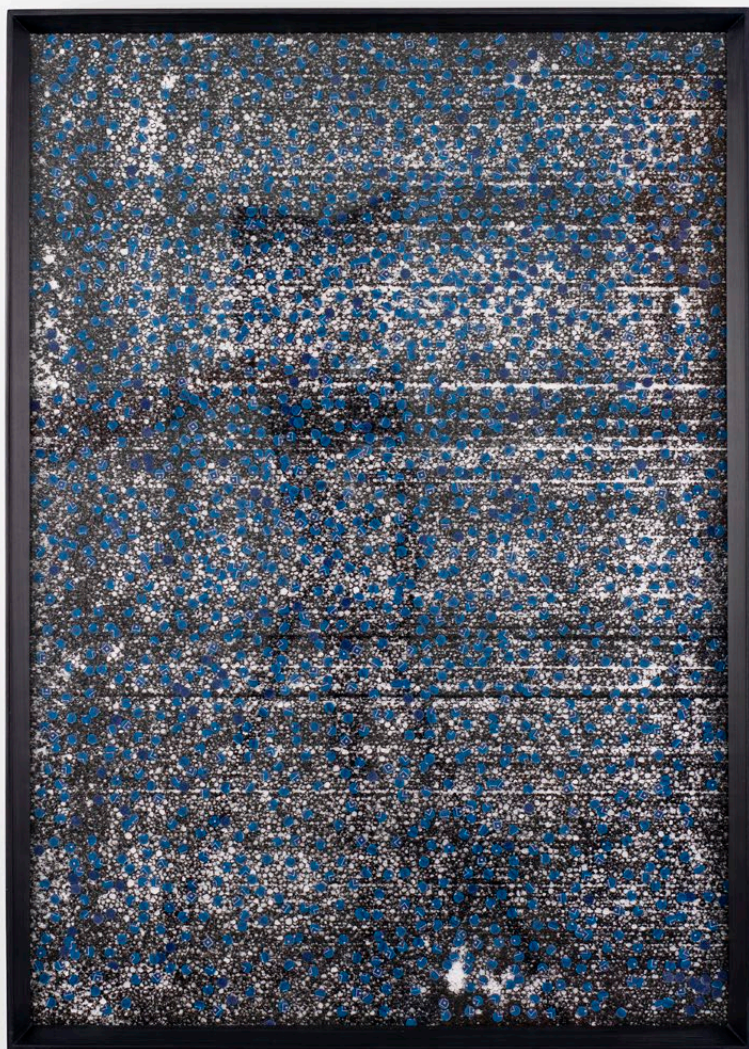
Bonolo Kavula

"I remember you"

2020

Punched Shweshwe, Thread, Wood

48 x 35 cm



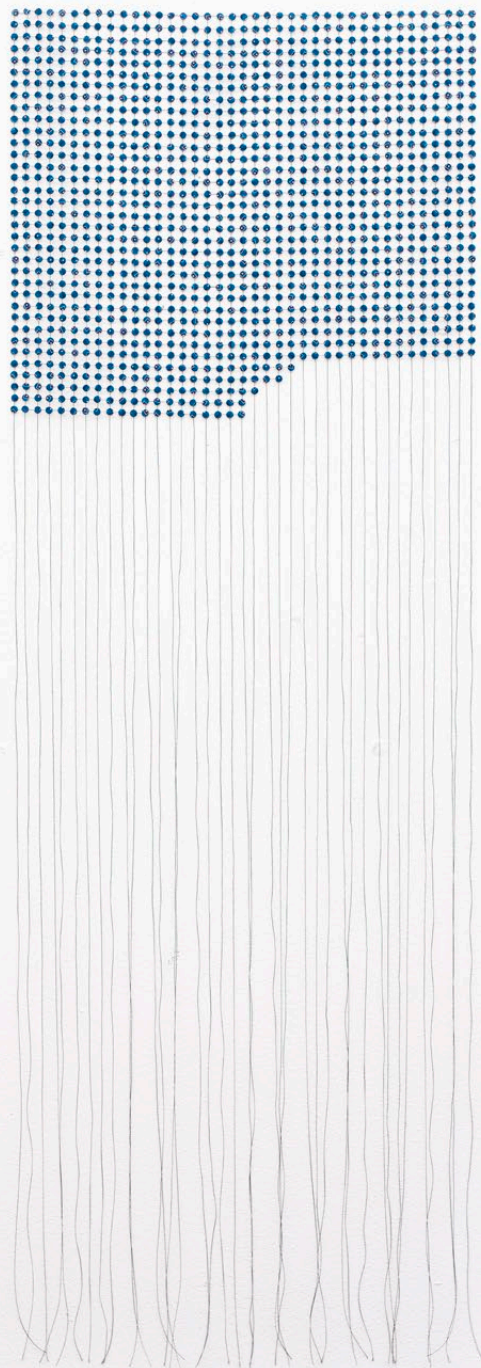
Bonolo Kavula

"Masego"

2021

Acrylic, Ink & Punched Canvas on Styrofoam

60 x 40 cm



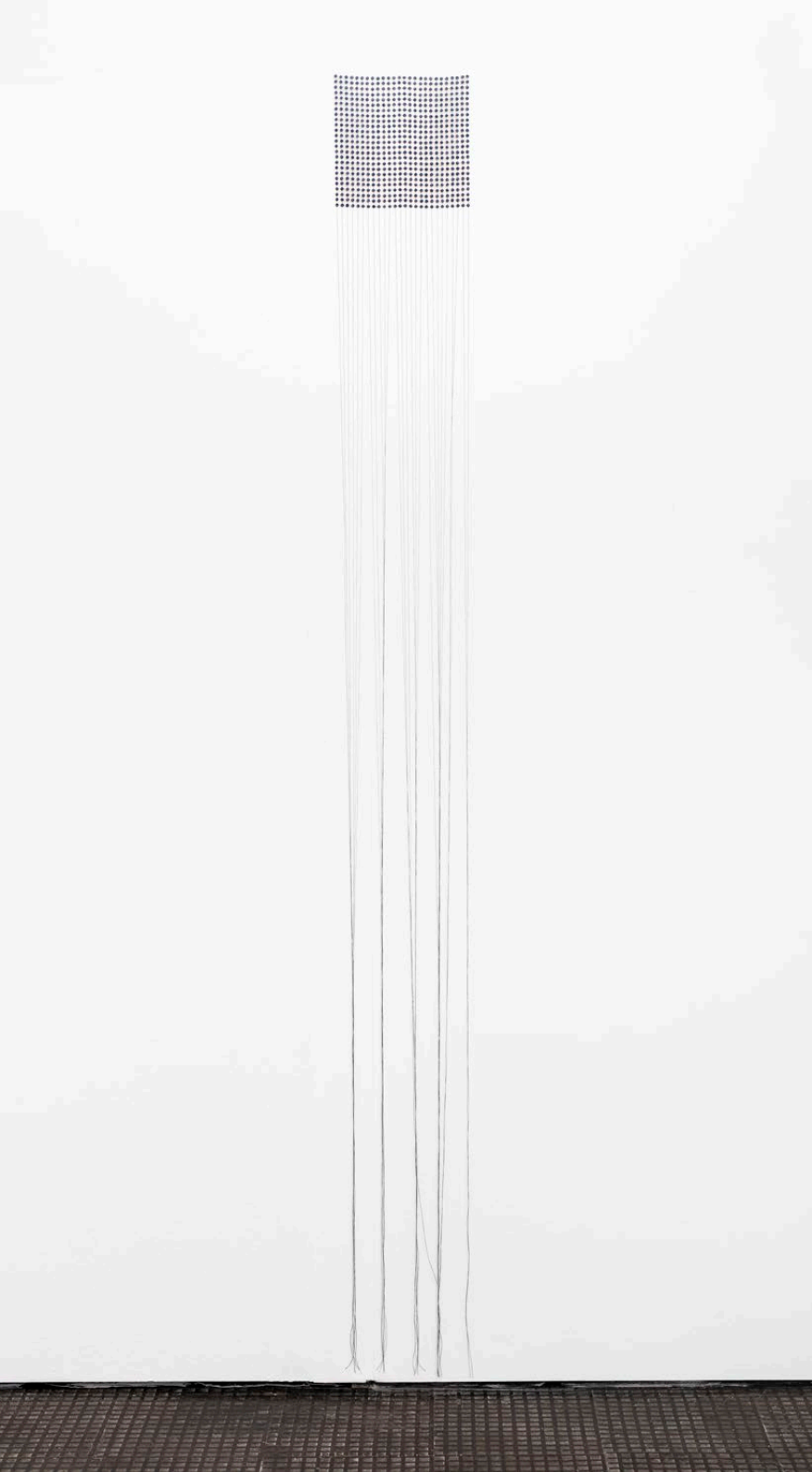
Bonolo Kavula
"Have you ever loved someone?"
2021
Punched Shweshwe, Thread
117 x 39 cm



Bonolo Kavula
"You and I will always be"
2021
Punched Shweshwe, Thread
58 x 24.5 cm



Bonolo Kavula | *sewedi sewedi* | 2021 | Installation View



Bonolo Kavula

"Soldier on"

2021

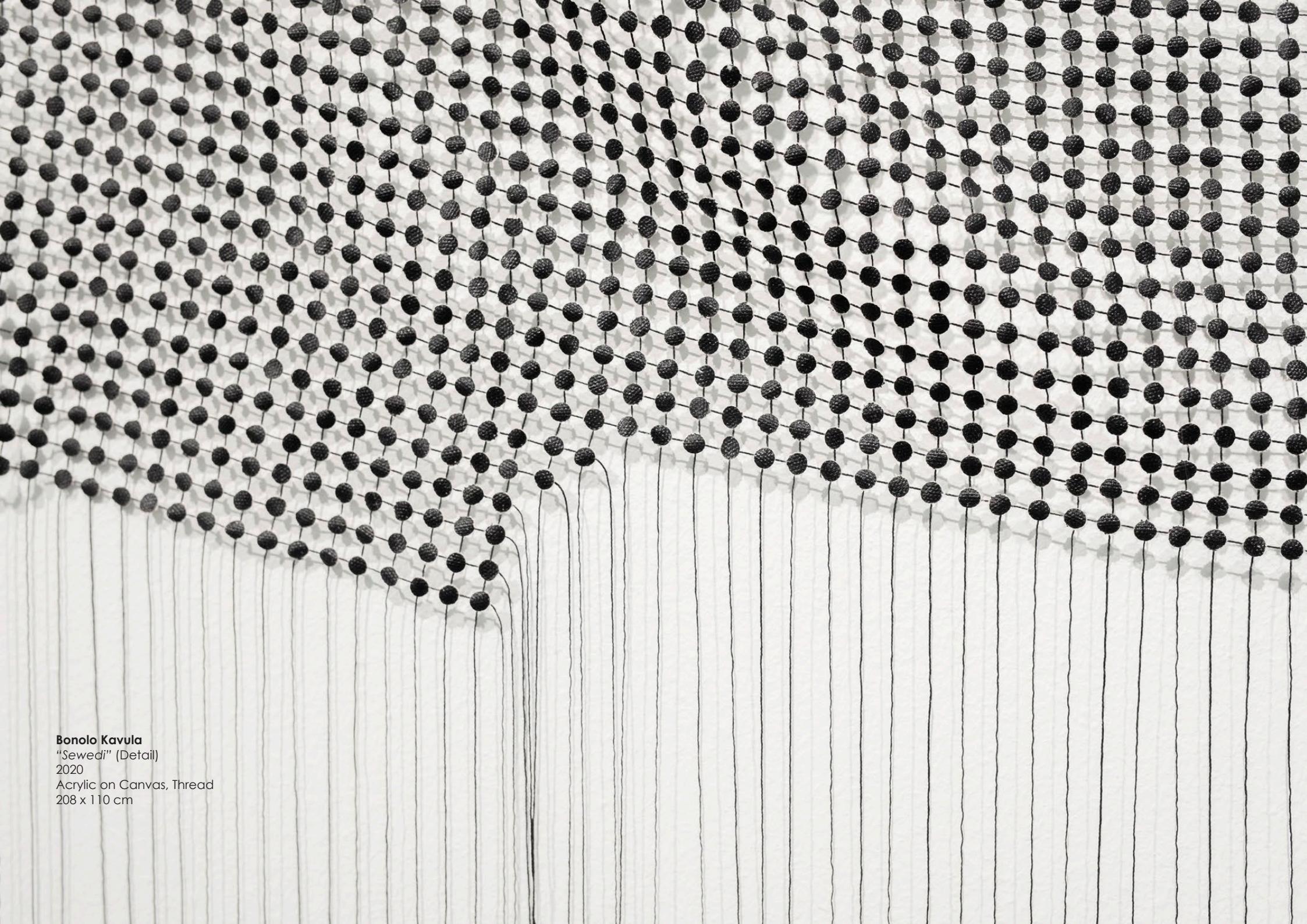
Punched Shweshwe, Thread

249 x 25 cm

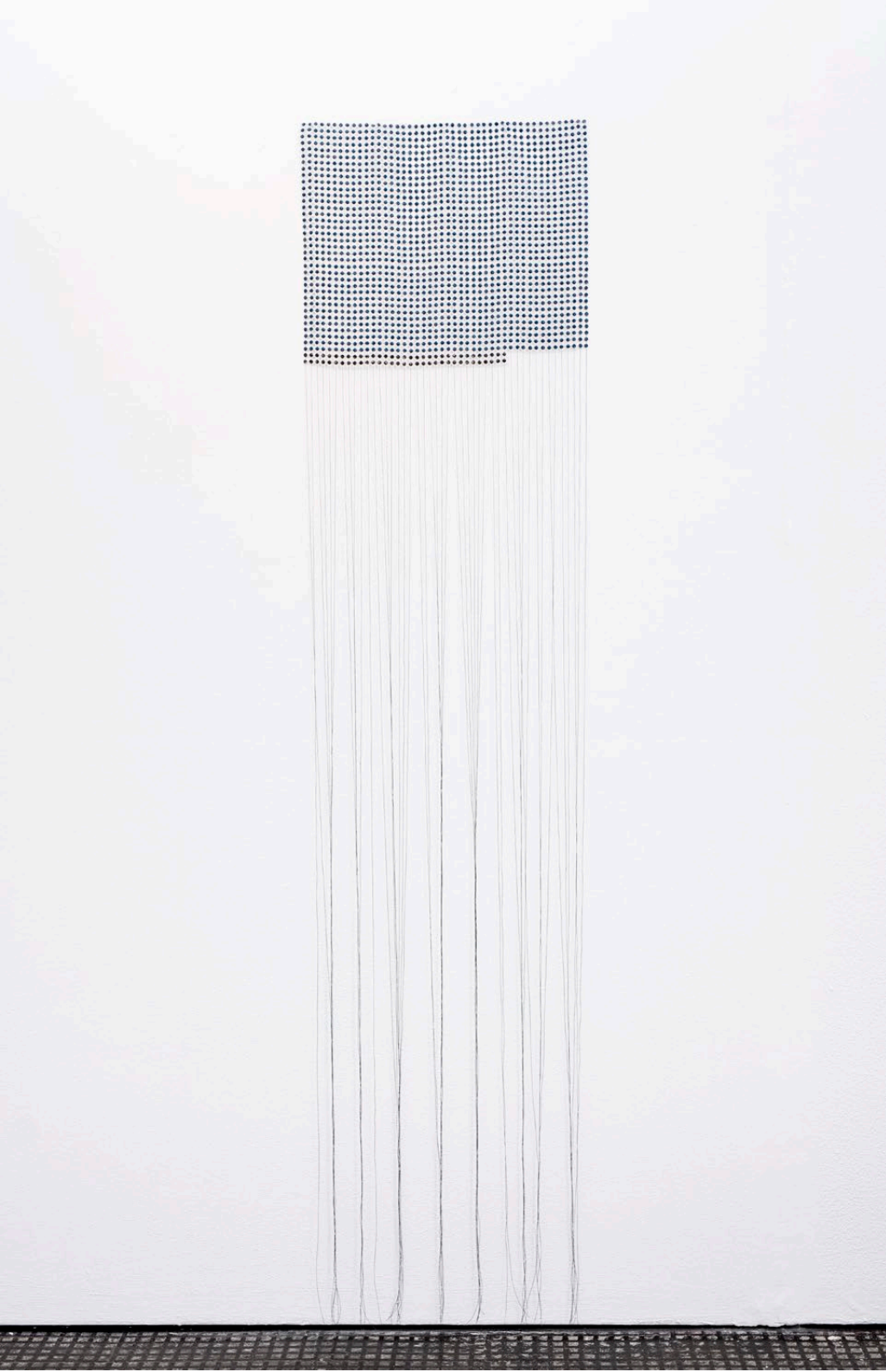


Bonolo Kavula
"Sewedi"
2020

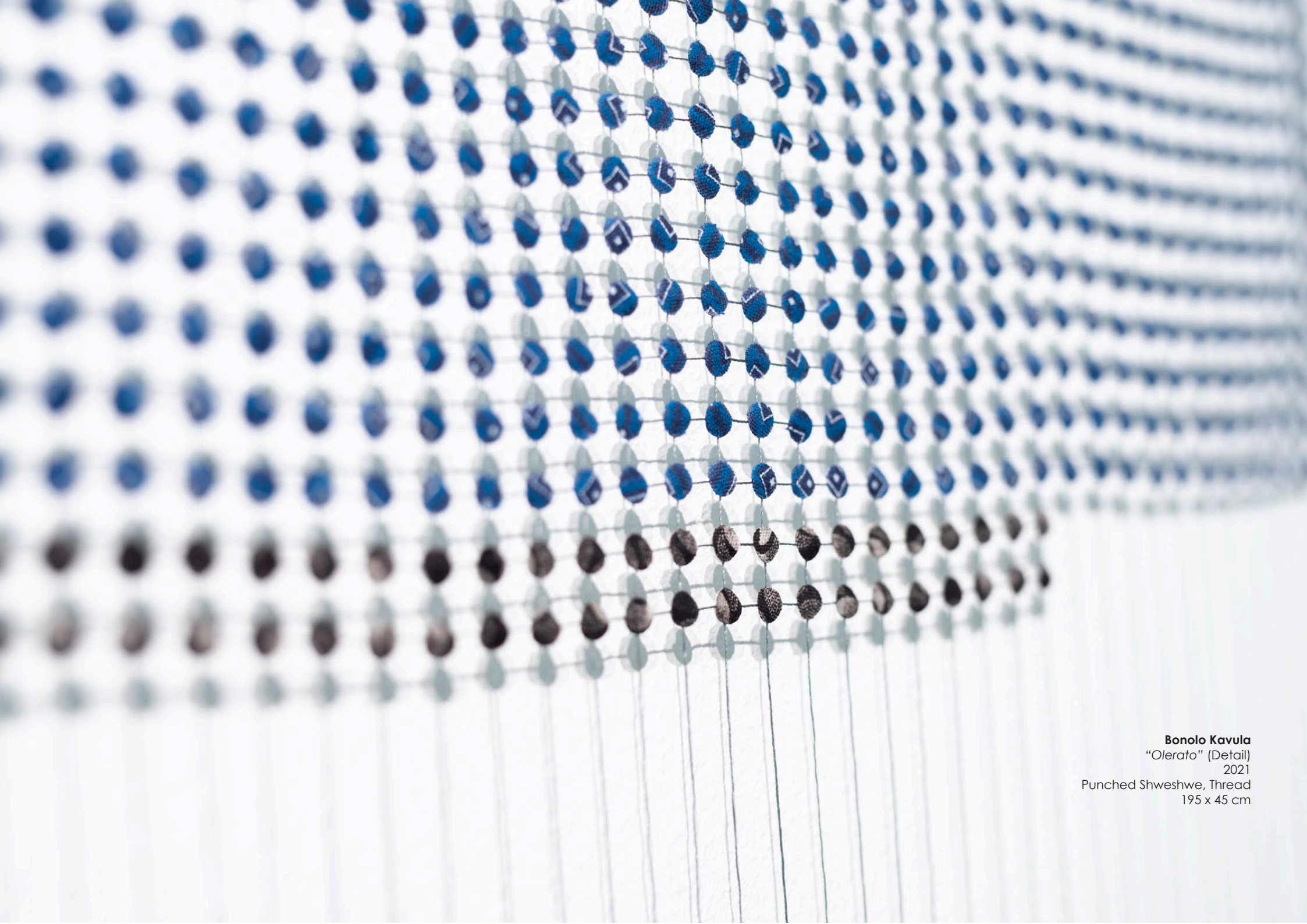
Acrylic, Punched Canvas, Thread
208 x 110 cm



Bonolo Kavula
"Sewedi" (Detail)
2020
Acrylic on Canvas, Thread
208 x 110 cm



Bonolo Kavula
"Olerato"
2021
Punched Shweshwe, Thread
195 x 45 cm



Bonolo Kavula
"Olerato" (Detail)
2021
Punched Shweshwe, Thread
195 x 45 cm



Bonolo Kavula
"Will you wait for me"
2021

Acrylic, Punched Coiled Canvas & Shweshwe on Wood
47.5 x 20 cm



Bonolo Kavula
"Someday one day"
2021

Acrylic, Ink, Punched Canvas on Styrofoam
45 x 31 cm



Bonolo Kavula | *sewedi sewedi* | 2021 | Installation View



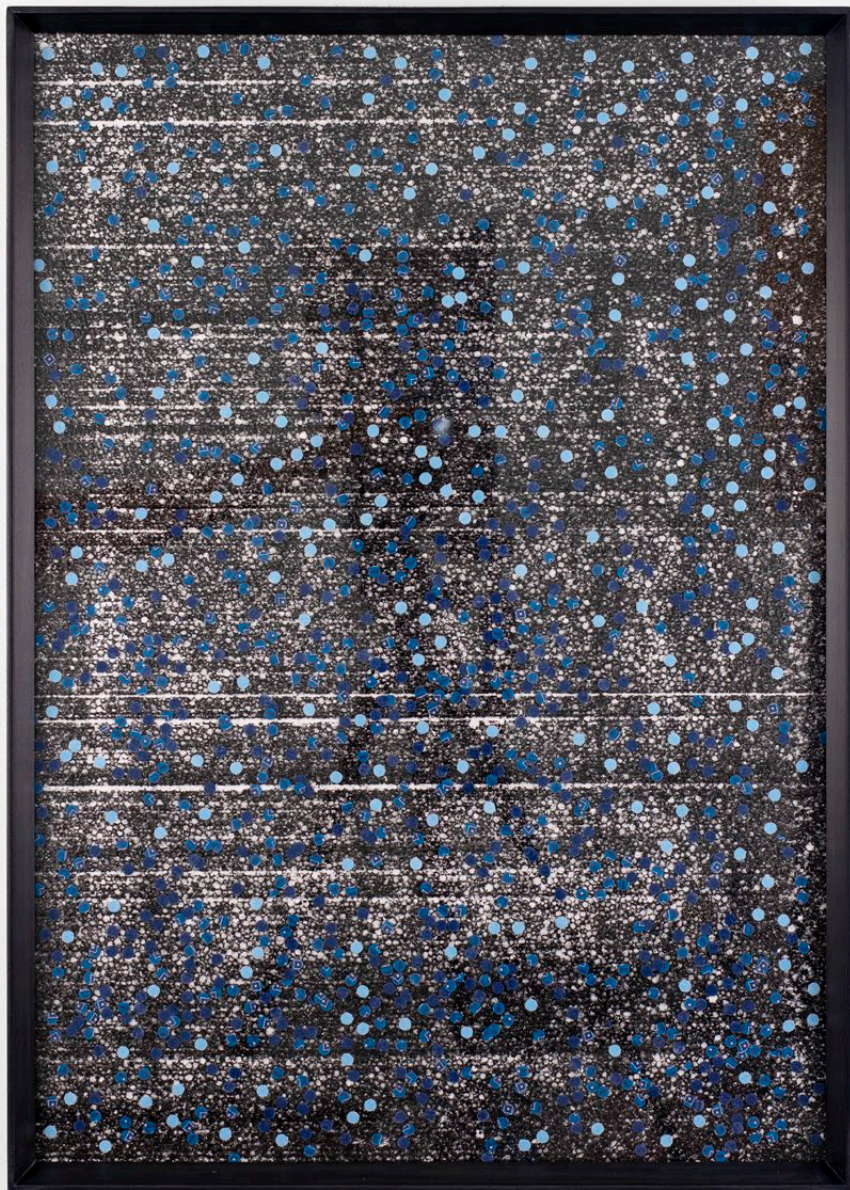
Bonolo Kavula

"I want to be there"

2021

Acrylic, Ink, Punched Canvas on Styrofoam

45 x 31 cm



Bonolo Kavula
"Matlhogonolo"
2021

Acrylic, Ink, Punched Canvas on Styrofoam
60 x 40 cm

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

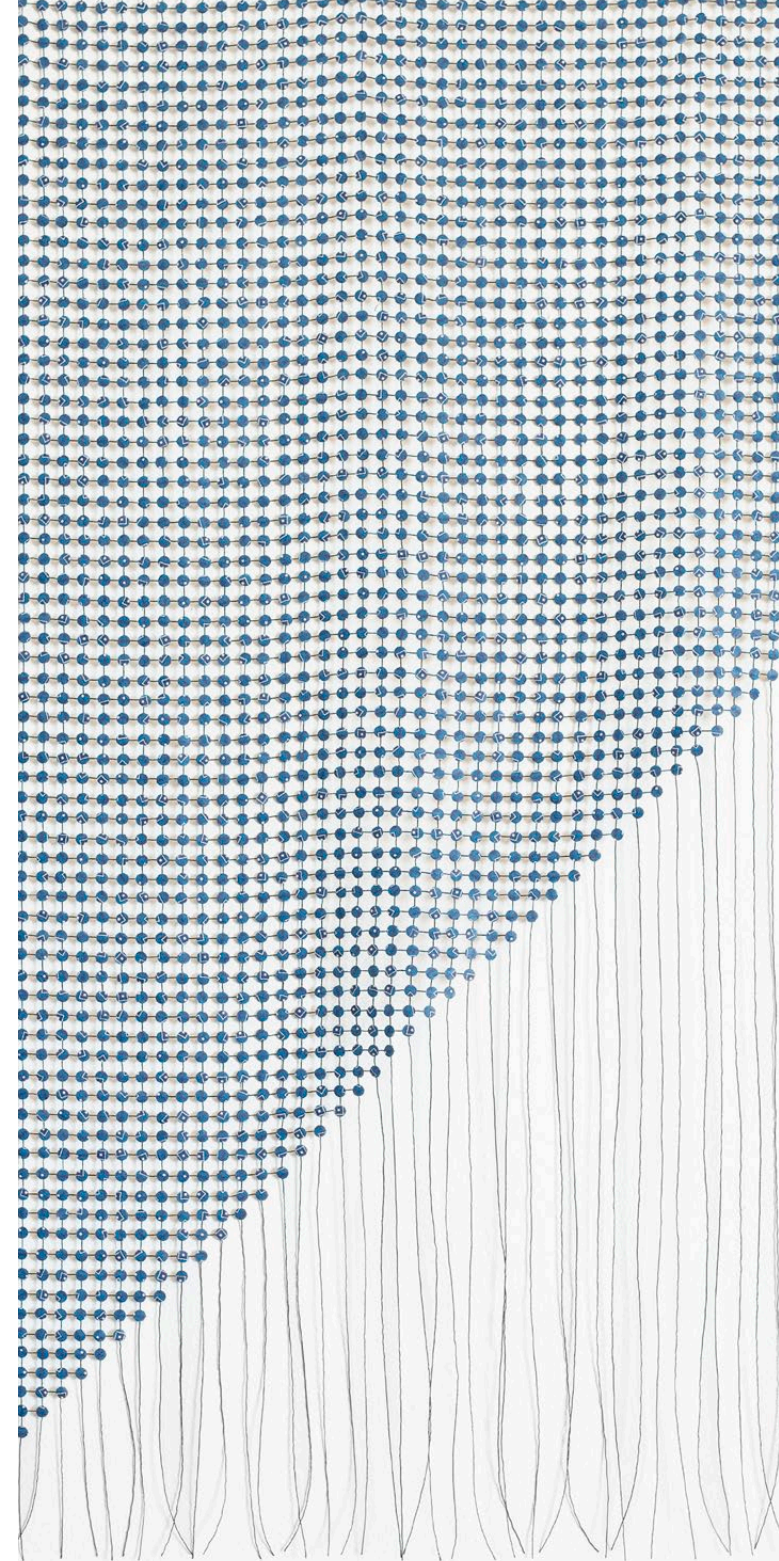
Bonolo Kavula was born in 1992 in Kimberley, South Africa, and currently lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa. She obtained a BA(FA) from the Michaelis School of Fine Art (University of Cape Town) in 2014, majoring in Printmaking. Kavula received the 2014 Katrine Harries Print Cabinet Award at the University of Cape Town.

Kavula works in print media, video work, comic art and performance art. Recent projects include a solo booth at the 2020 Investec Cape Town Art Fair, as part of the curated section, TOMORROWS/TODAY, in Cape Town; *Art Times*, a performance at A4 Arts Foundation in Cape Town, in 2019; and *Twenty Sexy*, a performance at blank projects gallery in Cape Town.

Selected group exhibitions include: *Speculative Enquiry #1: On Abstraction* at the Michaelis

Galleries in Cape Town in 2019; *The Main Complaint*, curated by Michaela Limberis, at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) and *Shady Tactics*, curated by Thuli Gamedze at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town, both in 2018; *Atomic Peace* at Bag Factory in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2017; *iQhiya Group Exhibition* at the Association for Visual Arts (AVA) Gallery in Cape Town and *New Monuments* at Commune1 in Cape Town, both in 2016.

Kavula will present her first solo exhibition, *sewedi sewedi*, at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town. Her works are included in collections such as the Works of Art Committee collection (UCT) as well as the Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town.



BONOLO KAVULA

CURRICULUM VITAE

smac

BIOGRAPHY

Born 1992, Kimberley, South Africa.

Lives and Works in Cape Town, South Africa.

EDUCATION

2014 Bachelor in Fine Art, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.

AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

2014 Sasol New Signatures Finalist, South Africa.

Katherine Harries Print Cabinet Award, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

2021 *sewedi sewedi*, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2020 TOMORROWS/TODAY, Investec Cape Town Art Fair, Cape Town, South Africa.

2018 *There's an Exhibition in my Kitchen*, Breaking Bread_za, Cape Town, South Africa.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

2019 *Speculative Enquiry #1: On Abstraction*, Michaelis School of Fine Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

Satellite: Group Exhibition, Satellite Mason Press, Cape Town, South Africa.

2018 *The Main Complaint*, Zeitz Mocca, Cape Town, South Africa.

Shady Tactics, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2017 *SS 17*, Gallery MOMO, Cape Town, South Africa.

Atomic Peace, Bag Factory Art, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Calibrating Wonder, Smith Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

Young and Now, Hazard Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2016 *Burr: Print and Purpose* (Print Portfolio), AVA Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

iQhiya Group Exhibition, AVA Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

New Monuments, Commune 1, Cape Town, South Africa.

A Lot, Public Art Event with Alma Martha, Cape Town, South Africa.

3881 days, blank lab, blank projects gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2015 *furniture*, blank projects gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

But He doesn't have anything on!, Commune 1, Cape Town, South Africa.

FNB Joburg Art Fair with AVA Gallery, Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

On Site, Art Meets Camera, Cape Town, South Africa.

Load Shedding, Commune 1, Cape Town, South Africa.

Cape Town Art Fair, AVA Gallery, Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa.

Proposal, Jnr, Cape Town, South Africa.

Greatest Hits 2014: The Domestic Odyssey, AVA Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2014 Michaelis School of Fine Art Graduate Exhibition, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.

Sasol New Signatures, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa.

2011 Sasol New Signatures, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa.

SOLO PERFORMANCES

2019 *Art Times*, live stand-up comedy art performance, A4 Arts Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa.

2018 *Twenty Sexy*, live stand-up comedy performance, blank projects gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

COLLECTIONS

Works of Art Committee Collection, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.

Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact SMAC Gallery for more information or any other queries.

STELLENBOSCH

1st Floor, De Wet Centre
Church Street
Stellenbosch, 7600
T +27 (0)21 887 3607

CAPE TOWN

1st Floor, The Palms
145 Sir Lowry Road
Woodstock
T +27 (0)21 461 1029

smac

info@smacgallery.com
www.smacgallery.com