



Thebe Phetogo

7 Propositions for the Origin of a blackbody

March 16-April 17, 2023

kó presents *7 Propositions for the Origin of a blackbody*, a solo exhibition of paintings by Thebe Phetogo. Thebe Phetogo is a painter from Botswana whose practice is rooted in his identity as a Motswana artist working from a place of continuous discovery, exploring issues of personal identity, mythology, and place.

In this exhibition, Phetogo proposes speculative origin stories for the blackbody, a term borrowed from physics that defines “an idealized, hypothetical perfect physical body that absorbs and radiates all electromagnetic energy with no reflecting power.” While blackbodies do not actually exist in physics, Phetogo adopts this scientific hypothesis to ground his approach. The paintings are formed in monochrome, borrowing from the aesthetic properties of green screens on film sets.

The exhibition is comprised of seven "suites" of paintings, each presenting a different imagined origin story. His previous solo exhibition at kó, *blackbody Composites*, explored one such proposition. In this new body of work, Phetogo expands on other possible theories including the process of a figure’s self-making, the body as a prop on a film set, the environmental effects of industry, and the scientific definition of the blackbody in physics. He incorporates diverse references such as a South African zombie television show from the 1980s and mythological origin stories of man from folklore in Botswana.

Phetogo holds an MFA from Michaelis School of Art, University of Cape Town. In 2022, he participated in *When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting* at Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, and has presented his work at various international art festivals and fairs. He completed residencies at The Bag Factory (Johannesburg) and Arthouse Foundation (Lagos). Phetogo was a finalist in the pan-African Emerging Painting Invitational (2020) and is a founding member of the artistic collective The Botswana Pavilion. He is based in Gaborone, Botswana.

kó is an art gallery based in Lagos, Nigeria, that is dedicated to promoting modern and contemporary art. kó has a dual focus in championing Nigeria’s leading artists from the modern period and celebrating emerging and established contemporary artists across Africa and the Diaspora.

The Opening Reception will take place March 16, 6-9 PM, and is supported by:

