

About Sahlah Davids

Sahlah Davids (b. 1998) is a Cape Town-based visual artist whose practice centers on textiles and beadwork.

In her studio practice, Sahlah Davids uses a material language of textiles, upholstery, and needleworking to explore the oral histories of her heritage and strong affiliation to the realm of religiopolitics. Cape Town born and raised, Davids has described her methods of creation as the product of the blended learning and trades of the Cape Muslim community, specifically the elders within her family. It is within the domestic, traditional, and religious spaces that Sahlah draws on the skills of her lineage, the history of their struggles, and, ultimately, the embodiment of their spirituality.

Davids looks to the prevalence of seamstressing as a profession, unpicking the layered and complex social narratives that led to its adoption by so many in her family and community. For the artist, it represents a memory that many can relate to - the “coloured” as the artisan, the tailor, the carpenter, and the seamstress. A shared profession of plight and adversity, but also a position of power and strength that many women of colour have stepped into throughout their lives. The bead, the pin, and the ruching of the fabric become an assemblage of these memories. Through a sense of materiality each object holds meaning. The pin that hurts but binds, the upholstery foam and material as a physical reminder of place called home, and the scarf serving as a symbol encompassing all her culture and the essence of her identity. The distortion, abstraction, allowing the materials to be almost engulfed by the pinned beads, representing a growing realisation of what it means to exist generationally within the aftermath of apartheid.

Sahlah Davids holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Michaelis School of Fine Arts, University of Cape Town, and recently completed her Master’s degree in Urban Design. She hopes to combine her streams of research and artistic practice to create community orientated city spaces with human and ecological learning and trades of the Cape Muslim community, needs at the forefront.



Sahlah Davids, Aunty Shariefa, 2024

CV

Solo Exhibitions

2024

'Amatie', WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

2022

'Gathered. Remembered. Forgotten. Made.' WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

'Salon Afrique', District Six Homecoming Centre, Cape Town

'Falling Awake', The Fourth and Reservoir Projects, Cape Town

Group exhibitions

2024

'Against the Bias: Unravelling Material Codes', Reservoir Projects, Mount Nelson, Cape Town

2022

Investec Cape Town Artfair, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town

2021

'Toll gate', Cape Town

'40 Under 40', What If The World Gallery, Tulbagh

'Mashurah', Greatmore Studios, Cape Town

'Tell me 3 Things', Jaffer Modern Gallery, Cape Town