

| Ben Ngobeni

Ben was born in Madadeni Village in Mpumalanga. A visual artist and printmaker, Ben currently resides in Katlehong Township and has a personal studio in Johannesburg. He obtained his Printmaking Certificate at Artist Proof Studio, where he now works as an Assistant Project Coordinator.

Before making art his full-time career, he worked as a goldminer in Gauteng. Of this time, he remembers sitting alone, drawing on cartridge papers by mining lamp. Ben's ambition is to return to his village and to develop the visual arts and show that it is a viable future for the village's youth.

He enjoyed stepping out of his comfort zone, following Hollard's brief to celebrate forty years with us. Working with the rest of the artists to share ideas about interpreting our anniversary and getting to know Hollard more and more made the experience that much better. In fact, Ben says he feels much like a Hollardite himself!

His artwork, titled *Lean on me*, centres on a bull and a Kingfisher bird. In it, the bull is a metaphor for power, strength, support and provision and represents Hollard, and our four decades of caring for our clients and ensuring their happiness. The Kingfisher bird, or Hollard's clients, is confidently projecting towards a better future, looking back at how far it has come – thanks to the bull's help.

Hollard's support of the arts as a feasible career excited Ben even more, given the opportunity to be a part of our celebration through his work.

Ben says that Artist Proof Studio gave him a platform to have a voice and made him see art as a career to make a living from, something he didn't believe coming from a disadvantaged village. He has also gained valuable work experience, in his role as Assistant Project Coordinator in the Special Projects team.



Ben Ngobeni
Lean on me (2019)
Linocut 42 x 29.5cm



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