

# Punching Barriers Together...

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
3<sup>RD</sup> AFRICAN SOCIAL  
MOVEMENTS BARAZA,  
HOSTED BY TRUST AFRICA.

*Punching Barriers Together...* invites you into the private lives, personal spaces, and inner thoughts of Afrikans confronting the legacies of colonialism, social unrest, and inequality. Though separated by geography and circumstance, these individuals share a common thread—the relentless struggle for justice, accountability, and transformation. This exhibition is not merely a presentation of narratives; it is an act of activism, a call to mobilize communities toward meaningful change.



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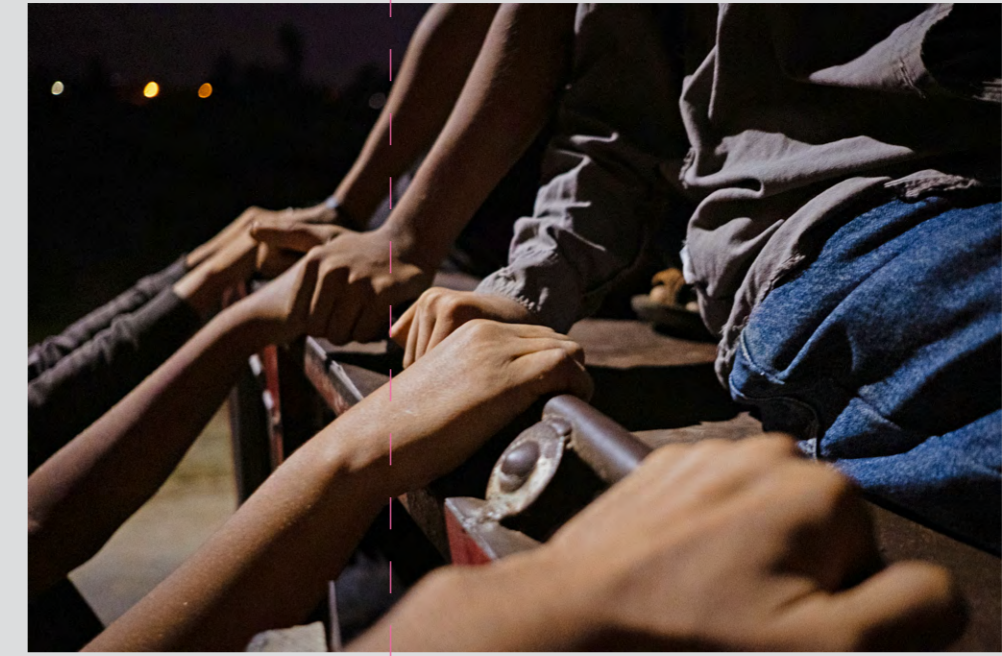
Across the continent, the weight of systemic neglect is evident. In informal settlements, migrant communities live in perpetual fear, their homes reduced to ashes by relentless fires, met with indifference from authorities who trivialize the spirit of Ubuntu. What happens next? What becomes of Sudanese women who fled to Egypt in search of safety, only to grapple with displacement, uncertainty, and the ache

of a homeland still in turmoil? What of the migrant communities in Booyens and other informal settlements in South Africa who face xenophobia daily and live in conditions unfit for human settlement? *Punching Barriers Together...* exposes these lived realities—stories of ordinary Afrikans navigating political hegemony, economic mismanagement, and systemic inequality.



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The exhibition also highlights the harrowing experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals, many of whom are forced out of their homes, facing violence, homelessness, and societal rejection. Simultaneously, it shines a light on resilience—such as that of Ethiopian female bodybuilders who challenge deeply ingrained gender norms, or Millicent Doddo, a 14-year-old aspiring boxer defying societal constraints that attempt to box young girls into traditional roles. Yet, even as Millicent fights for her place in the ring, children in Harid toil away in cotton and wormwood fields, their dreams fading under the weight of child labour and exploitation.



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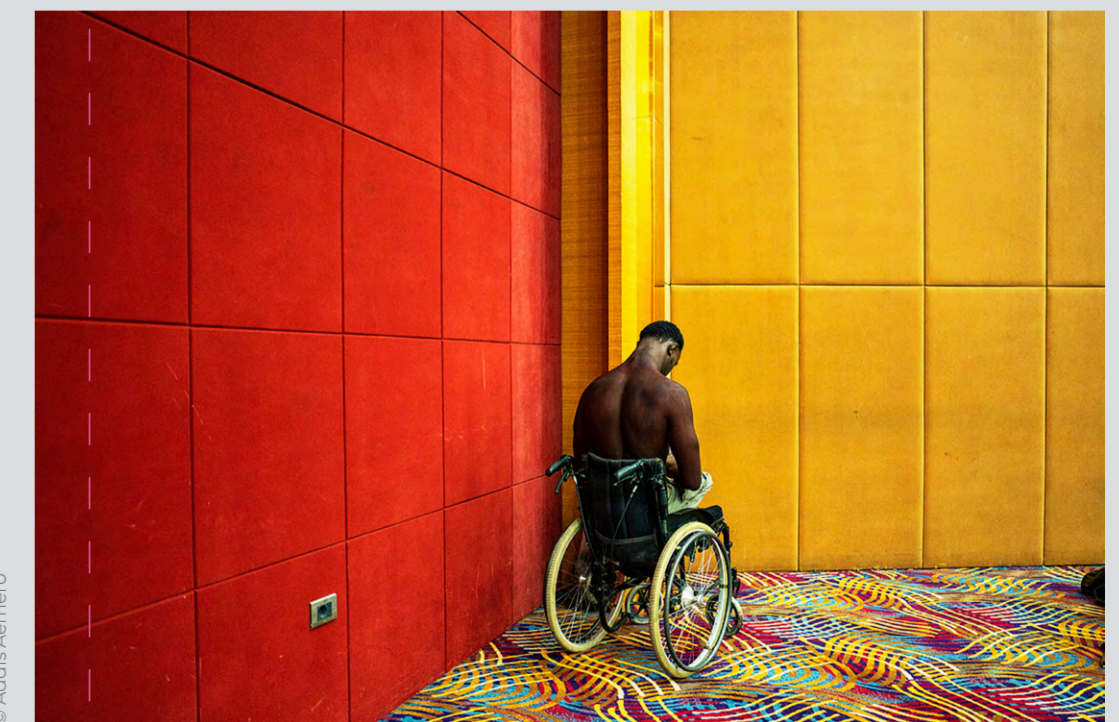
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Environmental struggles also take centre stage. In an era of climate crisis, plastic pollution, and unsustainable resource extraction, the survival of many depends on invisible labour—waste collectors who, despite their stigmatization, dedicate their lives to salvaging the planet. Their untold stories, captured in this exhibition, challenge perceptions and inspire action. Likewise, Ghana's artisanal fishing communities face threats not only from economic instability but also from unsafe fishing practices and environmental degradation.

Meanwhile, in Northern Kenya, pastoralist communities engage in violent conflicts over dwindling grazing land and water resources. Climate change and human-induced calamities exacerbate these tensions, making initiatives like the Annual Camel Caravan Walk a crucial plea for peace and ecological restoration. In South Africa, the looming spectre of "Day Zero" in Aliwal North is a stark warning of Afrika's water crisis, urging collective action to avert a catastrophic future.



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At its core, *Punching Barriers Together...* is an exhibition by and for human rights defenders, a testimony of communities fighting for justice. But it is not just a chronicle of hardship; it is a mirror reflecting our present reality and

a call to action. As we stand in this moment of history, we must ask ourselves—how will we respond? Will we merely observe, or will we play our part in shaping the Afrika we want?

