

All about Africa's first queer Virtual Reality music video

Future Kwaai Records, an avant-garde label founded by South African artist Umlilo, has unveiled Africa's first queer Virtual Reality (VR) 360 music video.



Image supplied: Umlilo has unveiled her new music endeavours with Virtual Reality

Bhuti is directed and edited by Umlilo herself and celebrates the power of the divine feminine.

“We are in a crisis in South Africa and the world where femme bodies have been heavily policed, violated, erased, and sexualized. This music video is a celebration of femme power and freedom for all femmes, trans and non-binary people. As a trans woman, I feel that my freedom is your freedom, no matter how you identify because we all want autonomy over our bodies and the choice of how we express our gender,” says Umlilo.



RIP legendary Kwaito musician Tokollo 'Magesh' Tshabalala

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Never shying away from topics of gender, sexuality, violence, and politics, Umlilo's new song is a fresh and unique take on an old traditional song. She has challenged herself to learn animation and VR production in order to give the music an accompanying immersive experience. She created a 3D version of herself named Umlilo X, who is at the centre of the visuals for her upcoming album *Mpumi*.

“During the lockdown, there was a moment where I wasn’t inspired musically and I turned to animation, 3D design, and VR for some new inspiration. I was fascinated with the idea of creating an animated 3D version of myself that could defy any boundaries I felt within my own body as I transition. The beauty of animation is that your character can be limitless and exist beyond gender and our current world. It has been a huge learning curve as an independent artist but the latest technology helped me overcome many obstacles both in my physical body and art expression,” says Umlilo.



Image supplied: Umlilo X

Viewers are able to watch the music video on VR headsets and be completely immersed in a post-apocalyptic world created by the Kwaai Diva.

The music for *Bhuti* is produced by the legendary Jumping Backslash. Umlilo wrote the re-imagined traditional Xhosa song with swooping melodies, choral harmonies, and soprano lead vocals. Jumping Backslash added his electronic spin to the song with the captivating bassline and futuristic atmospheric sounds layered over a rhythmic drum beat.

“Many of the songs we sang in my childhood have inspired me and this one was very dear to me because it reminds me of my late sister Lulama. She used to sing it in boarding school in the Eastern Cape and come home and teach me the songs and dances. I used to hear it at weddings and other events. The song already had the potential to have a feminist twist and I wanted to re-create it in a modern way exploring the toxic and unequal power dynamic between femme bodies and masculinity in our country. It’s a feminist departure that gives the power back to womxn and non-binary people,” says Umlilo.

You can watch the video [here](#).

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