

89^{of} 100Zimi
Mphefu

Here to be Expressive

Zimi Mphefu: Finding her voice on stage and screen.

From an unexpected start in professional acting to playing a fearless young woman navigating love, family and money, Zimi Mphefu is building a career grounded in creativity, community and the courage to pursue what she wants.

Zimi never planned on becoming a professional actress. Growing up in Tshwane, performing was always part of her life, but she imagined it would remain a passion rather than become her profession. Then, as she puts it, acting “magically” manifested itself into her reality. Today, she cannot imagine her life without the performing arts.

Her professional debut came in *Sophiatown*, where she played Lulu during its 2023 and

2024 productions. The role earned her two Naledi Theatre Award nominations in 2024, for Best Breakthrough Performance and Best Supporting Actress in a musical theatre production. Still relatively new to the professional industry, Zimi describes herself as an interdisciplinary theatre-maker and performer working across acting, directing, playwriting, dance and music.

Away from the stage and screen, she also volunteers and works part-time as a caregiver and fundraiser at Angels Baby Sanctuary.

Her latest role sees her step into the shoes of Lindiwe Nkosi in Absa’s first ever micro-drama series, *For Better Or For Whatever*. Lindiwe is confident, driven, fearless and independent, someone who listens to those around her, but ultimately makes her own decisions. Zimi admits she has spotted more than a few similarities between herself and her character.

The series explores the way money intersects with relationships, family expectations and major life moments. For Zimi, those themes are personal. Like many young South Africans, she is navigating the pressure to generate an income, use her financial resources wisely and meet responsibilities towards her family while still protecting her own wellbeing. “I am still searching for striking the good balance between those elements and myself,” she says.

It is part of what makes Lindiwe’s story meaningful to her. Zimi hopes young women

watching will recognise that they do not have to suppress their ambitions or allow other people’s expectations to determine what they pursue.

“My hope is for young South African women to see that it indeed is possible for us to have what we want,” she says. For her, Lindiwe represents a woman willing to keep fighting for the life she wants, regardless of the obstacles placed in front of her.

As Zimi looks towards the next chapter of a career that is only beginning, she wants to stretch herself creatively, particularly through action and thriller roles and characters far removed from how people may initially perceive her. Yet, the purpose behind her work reaches beyond performance. “I am here to be a beacon of hope,” she says, a statement that captures both the artist she is becoming and the contribution she hopes to make beyond the screen.

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