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MAGAZINE

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Qene Games

Ethiopia's first game studio

|

Queen of Sheba

The coming new tv series

ISSUE 10 January 2023

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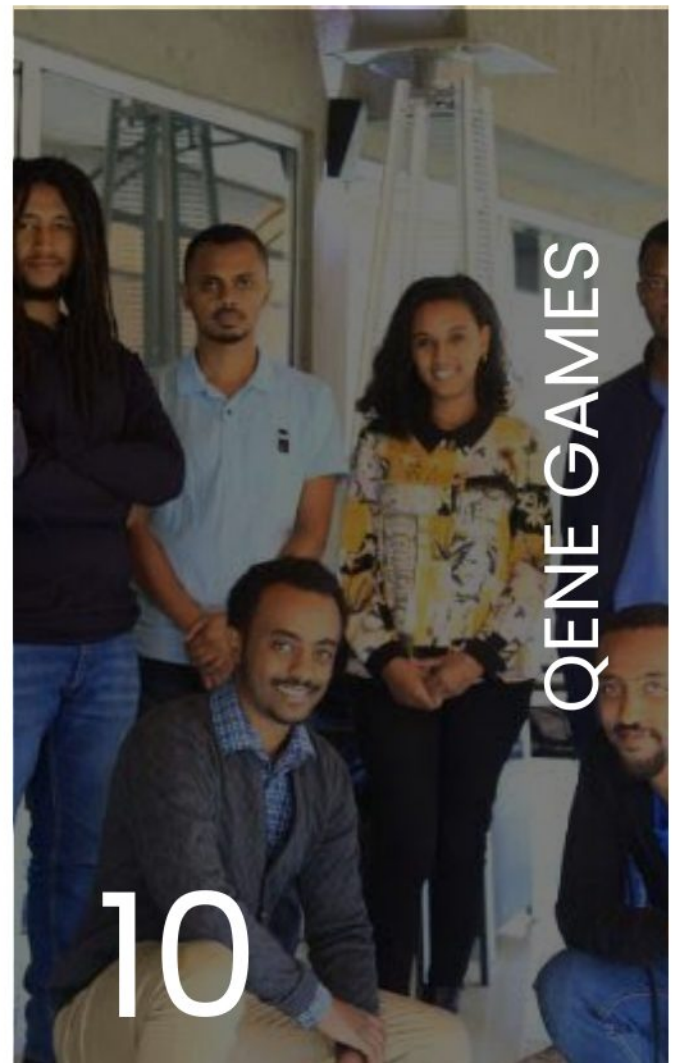
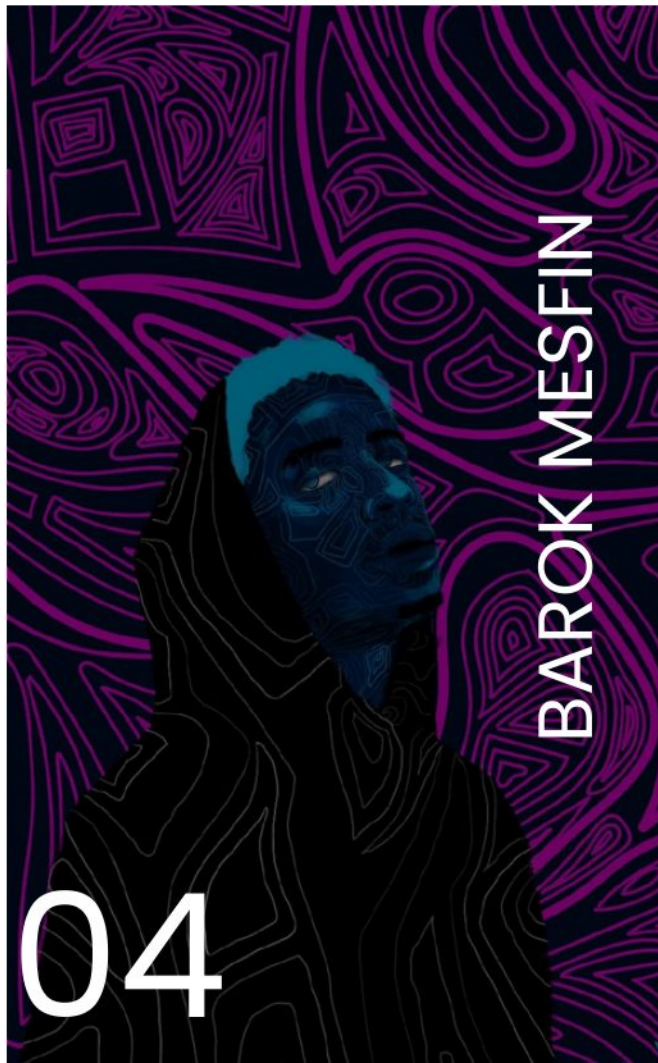
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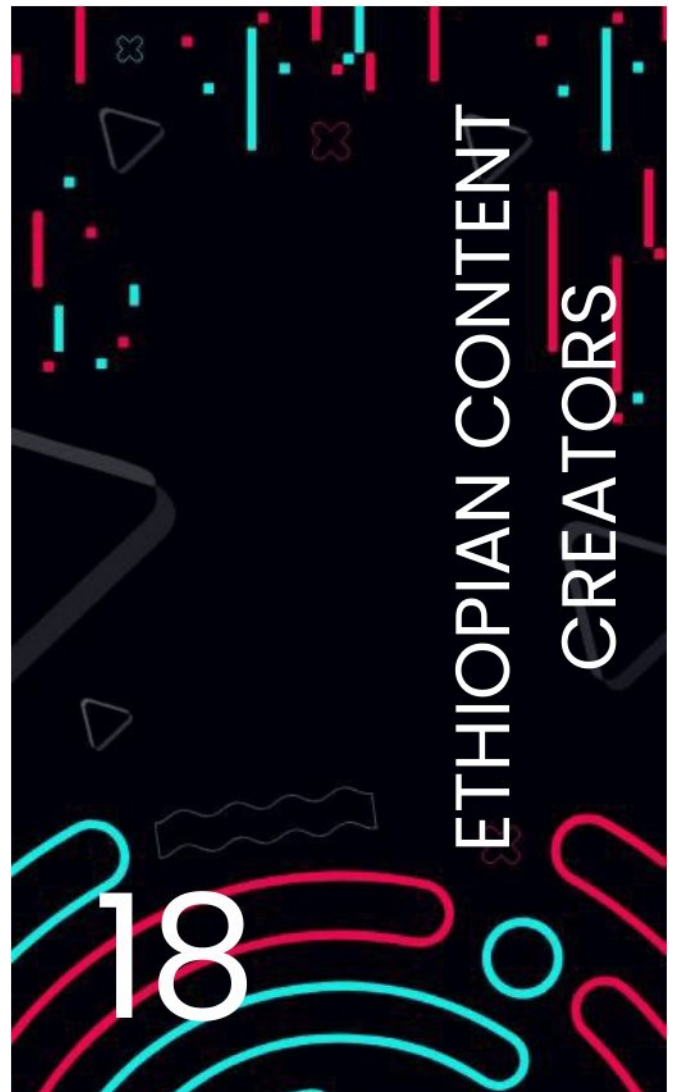
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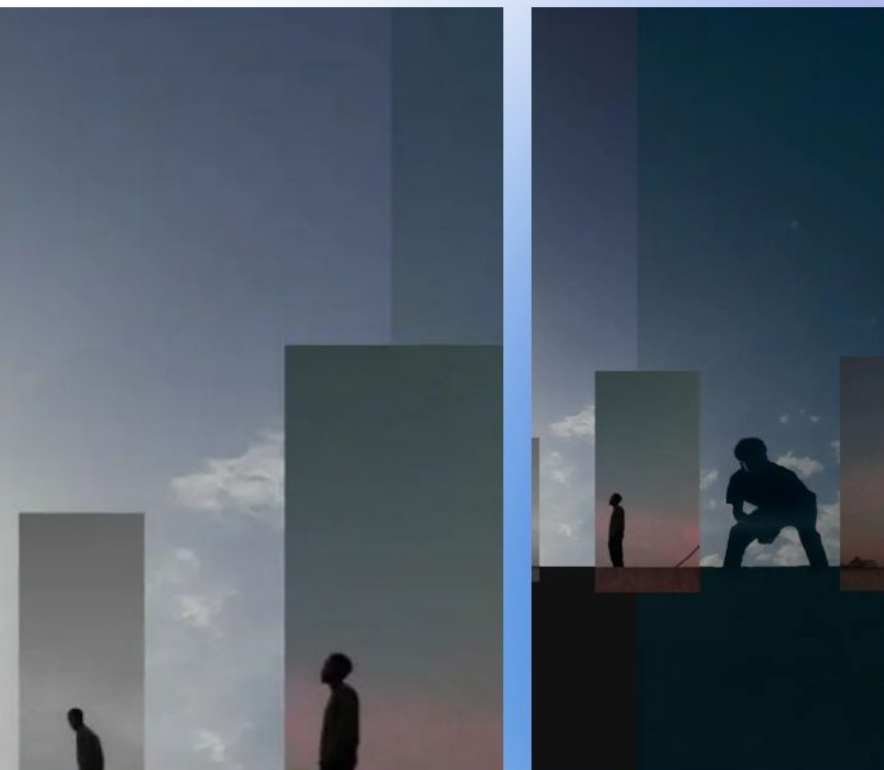
First let's get to know you, Who is Barok?

My name is Barok Mesfin, a digital artist, photographer and graphics designer based in Addis. Also Urban and Regional Planning Graduate student at Hawassa University. I've been creating contents on social media through different pages constantly just for the passion. And I love donuts!

we've seen you're talented in photography, photoshop, illustration. Can you tell us how the journey was in mastering them and how you've developed your career so far?

My passion to create manifested back in high school when I used to sketch on A3 papers and didn't even know what the point was. I had a random collection of sketches stockpiled in my room. My first contact with photoshop and illustrator happened a year after I joined University. I had to force myself to learn their basics for site analysis and design purposes. Then came lockdown and gave me some advantage to start creating again. I began to dig more into softwares, the walls of my room were covered with sketches and even tried sculpting and oil on canvas paintings.

Right when lockdown was about to end, I participated in a comic book contest featuring African young artists and made it to third place with my piece named "Adwa". I bought a graphics tablet right away and geared up towards creating digital contents. I got obsessed with the concept of digital arts while I taught myself how to make one. Created Instagram accounts to reach and connect with people. Furthermore, my interest grew towards photography as I was taking pictures on my phone and editing them when I get bored. I progressed towards telling stories through contents I post on my socials. I mastered softwares like photoshop, illustrator, clip studio paint and lightroom. Currently, I work on my art and photography projects, freelancing as graphics designer and helping startups build brand identity with my partners in "Addis branding" and Managing my studies and classes as well.



We see a unique editing on the pictures you share on your socials. What are they really? what do they mean to you?

To be fair, I still haven't figured out in what genre I should label them. I enjoy taking pictures of liminal spaces and moments that feel unreal and seized. And I also have a practice of taking pictures of people I hang out with whenever i find a well suited location and moment. Those final pictures on my socials came after merging some selected pictures and finding a trait that connects them all, then building a story that breathes life into them. Every piece seen is a picture I took at different times, in different places, with different subjects merged into one. And for me, this pictures are ways of communicating my views in life to the world.

what do you say about your illustrations ?

The illustrations were born not so long ago when when I was experimenting on mixing different art styles. I had to study art personalities and their works to come up with a new content of mine. Expressing fauvism in Afro futuristic colors, tilted face figures, contours and surrealism are packed inside the this illustrations. All in all, It's aimed to fuse the best of past and present art trends.



What are your biggest artistic influences?

I don't have many names to mention maybe because I want my works to be from my own experience. But I do admire the journey of Virgil Abloh alot.

I usually restrain myself not to be carried away by bold artists and their works because I believe it limits creativity.

But on the other hand, I really enjoy exploring the of journey local artists I connect to on instagram.

What inspired most of your works and what does these works aim to say?

My works are inspired by movie scenes, stories, poems, environments and Music.

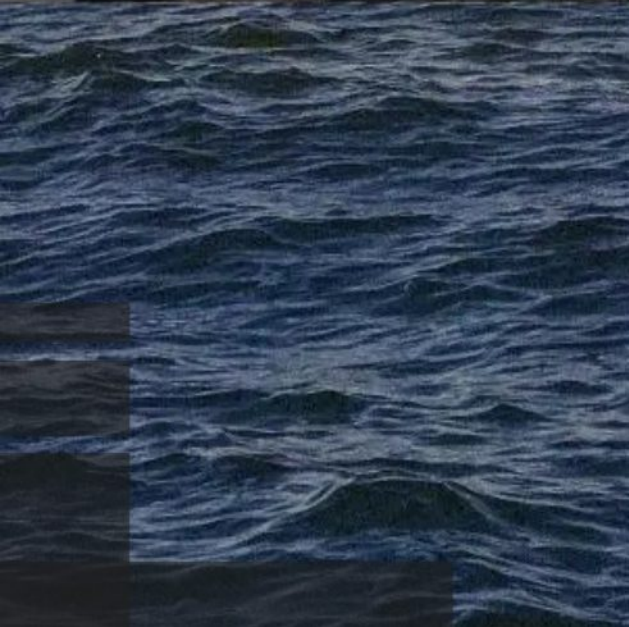
And most of the times, I find myself wondering about concepts like the universe, time, life, existence and nature and then work on a piece that I think would best fit to interpret them.

What should we expect next from Barok?

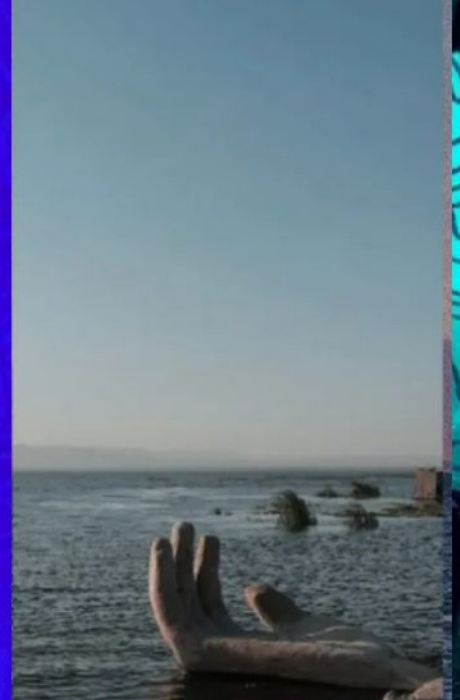
I have a lot in mind including projects that are fashion related. The goal is to grow with an authentic manner, give the absolute best and leave marks on everything encountered. Looking forward to the days I influence the mass and inspire influencers.

Can you describe some of the best piece of work you've created?

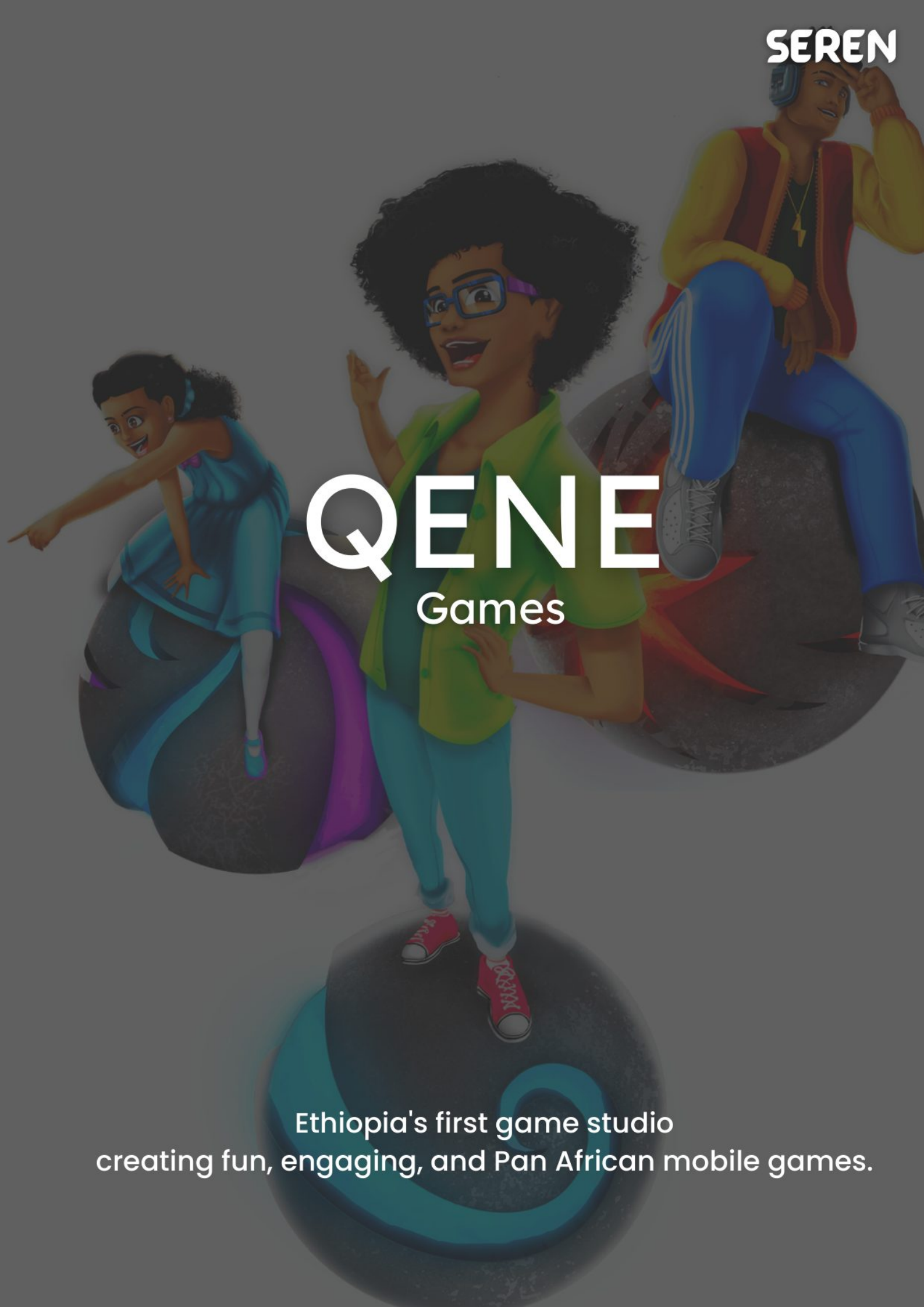
One of my favorite pictures is "the present now?". Both of the hands are from pictures taken 3 years apart. The one on the right taken in the morning and the one on the left taken at night. And both hands are connected and mirrored with the hand sculpture taken from different angles and with a subject in on a shore. Which is basically about how contrasting moments are all connected to the present now.



Second one shall be "blaze almighty" because It just makes you feel the heat. Also took me a ridiculous amount of time to get it done. And the last one is "notes for colors" in which I tried to interpret Yanni's performance on his instrumental "butterfly dance" into my art language. It's still not finished though.



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An illustration featuring three young people of African descent. In the center, a girl with a large black afro, blue-rimmed glasses, a green short-sleeved shirt, and teal pants stands on a large grey sphere with a teal spiral pattern. To her left, a girl in a teal dress is crouched on a similar sphere, pointing forward. To the right, a boy in a yellow and red jacket, blue pants, and headphones sits on a sphere with a red star pattern. The background is a solid grey.

QENE

Games

Ethiopia's first game studio
creating fun, engaging, and Pan African mobile games.



To start our questions please say a few things about Qene games in your own words. tell us a bit about your team and what you do

We are Ethiopia's first game studio and we create fun, engaging, and Pan African mobile games.

Who created Qene Games?

Dawit Abraham and Samuel Sisay

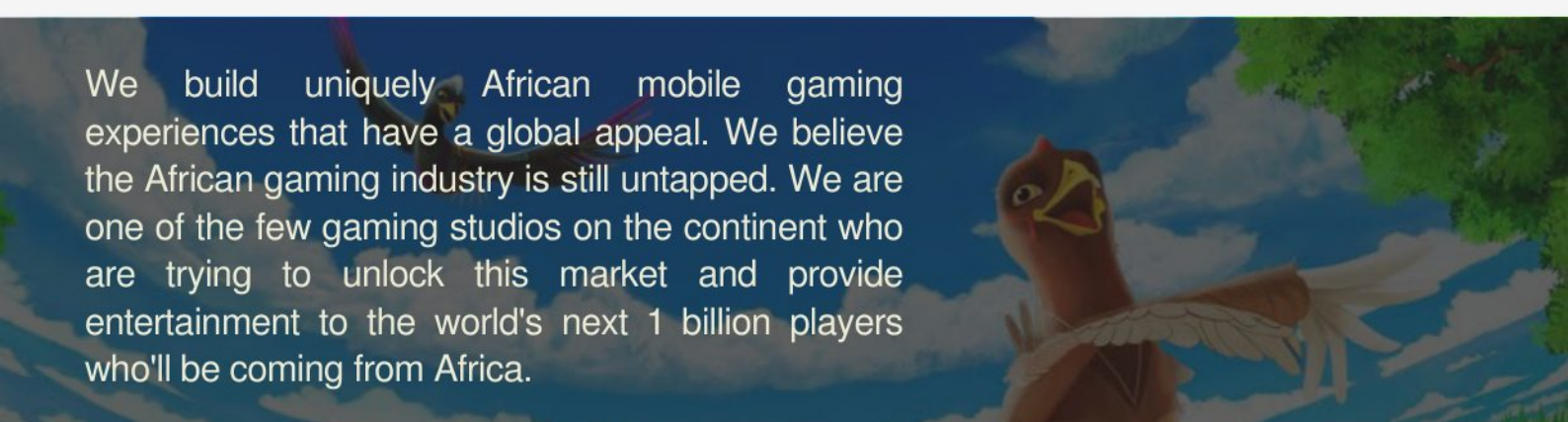
How did you name your label Qene?

Ethiopia has quite a lot of unique artistic and intellectual heritages. Qene is one of them. We highly value artistry and intellect in our company which is why I thought Qene Games would be a fitting name





WHAT MAKES AFRICANE GAMES DIFFERENT?



We build uniquely African mobile gaming experiences that have a global appeal. We believe the African gaming industry is still untapped. We are one of the few gaming studios on the continent who are trying to unlock this market and provide entertainment to the world's next 1 billion players who'll be coming from Africa.

Tell us about your games and what were the toughest aspects of making these games ? Gebeta (An award winning game at the 2020 AppsAfrica Award) and Kukulu.

Our games were made with what Africans want coupled with global mobile gaming standards in mind. We wanted to make fun, engaging mobile experiences that had cultural relevance and relatability for African players, while introducing the quality that is typically seen in foreign games. The biggest challenge we encountered in this endeavor was finding skilled developers in a country where the industry doesn't exist, but it is one that we've tackled through cultivating talent, working with established studios and finding our own process.



What are the most common problems of the Game industry in Ethiopia and Africa?

Lack of game development professionals (due to the nascency of the industry), Lack of convenient fintech solutions to sell digital products, Lack of funding,

What is the team's favorite part of the game developing?

What makes developing games great after the code is complete and the art in place, When you see everything working fully and interacting with it is exciting. It is as if your work has come alive. Also, there are certain times the game surprises you when testing it because of emergent gameplay systems with a new combination of moves.

What should we expect from Qene games in the future?

We hope to make a lot more of beautiful pan-African games. We aspire to make video game export one of the largest economic pillars of the country

Anyone you would like to thank?

There are so many we'd all love to thank. Thanks to God, our families, mentors, investors, friends, colleagues, and players for helping us get here! And thank you for putting a highlight on our story, it really helps



What do you want to say to the youth who want to be part of the game industry?

You have all the resources you need to build great games, all you need is to start. Learn to work in teams. Game development is a collaborative experience bringing together artists, coders, musicians, storytellers, markets, and a lot of other professions. Come and work with us





More from

Q E N E S T O R E



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DRIPPING WITH

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE

by

Beamlak Fekadu



DRIPPING WITH THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE

Life is up and down for all of us as always.
Life can be as the wise men once said...
an education, but life can't be read
life can not be taught.
Life sometimes can be draught
Mind that, living can be a murderer
for some people, living is like killing their children
tearful eyes tear them,
their hands that are empty are hurting them
for those, their children's stomachs are haunting
their kids yet illiterate minds are like a pain dripped arrow
their brooding's uncovered bodies are taunting.
Their nightmare is tomorrow...
who knows what tomorrow might bring?
Their days are harsh, their houses crash
their need is forgotten, their want is ignored
and what's wanted is their labour...
But then who can bring change to this?
What can be done to be better together?
So come let's fight for this to cease,
For we know we can bring the needed changes.

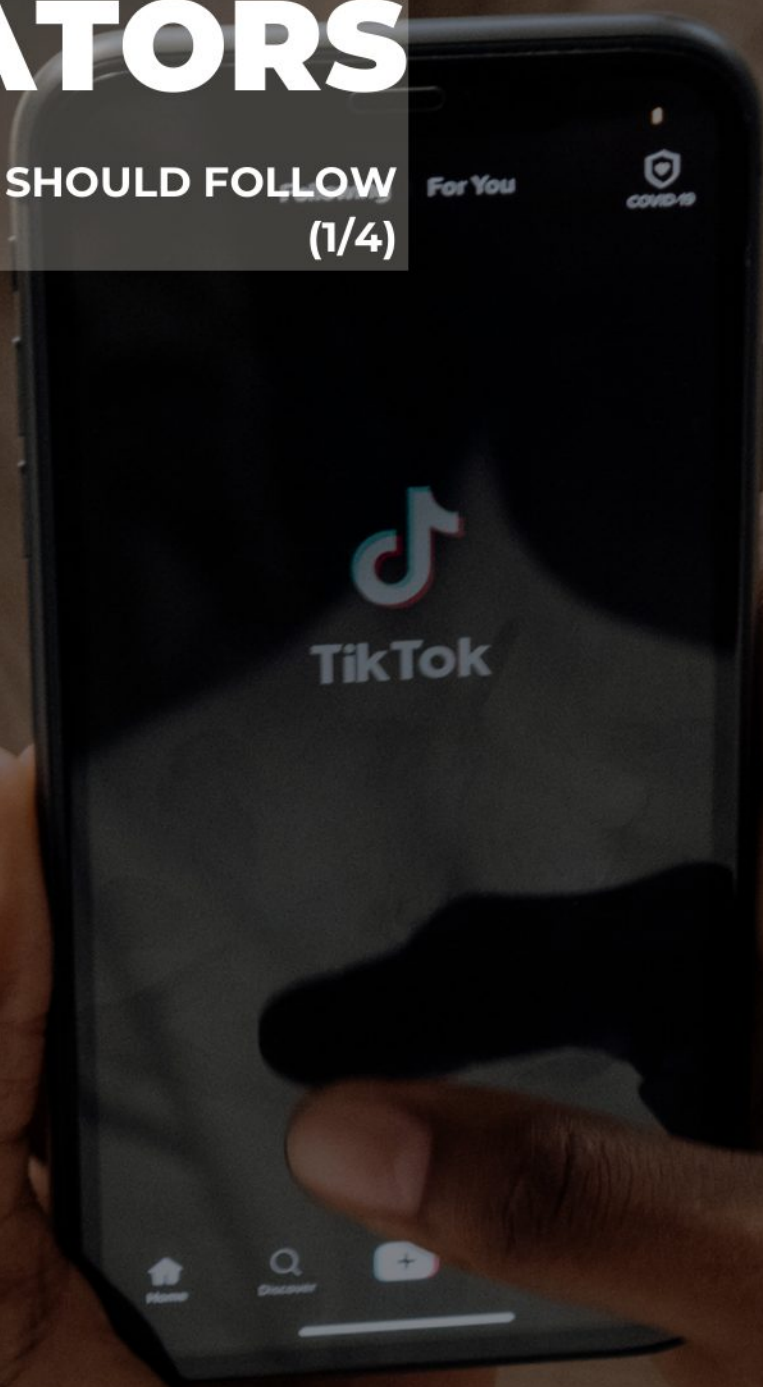


ETHIOPIAN CONTENT CREATORS

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BY REDIET BELAY





YONATHAN DESTA

CAR REVIEW



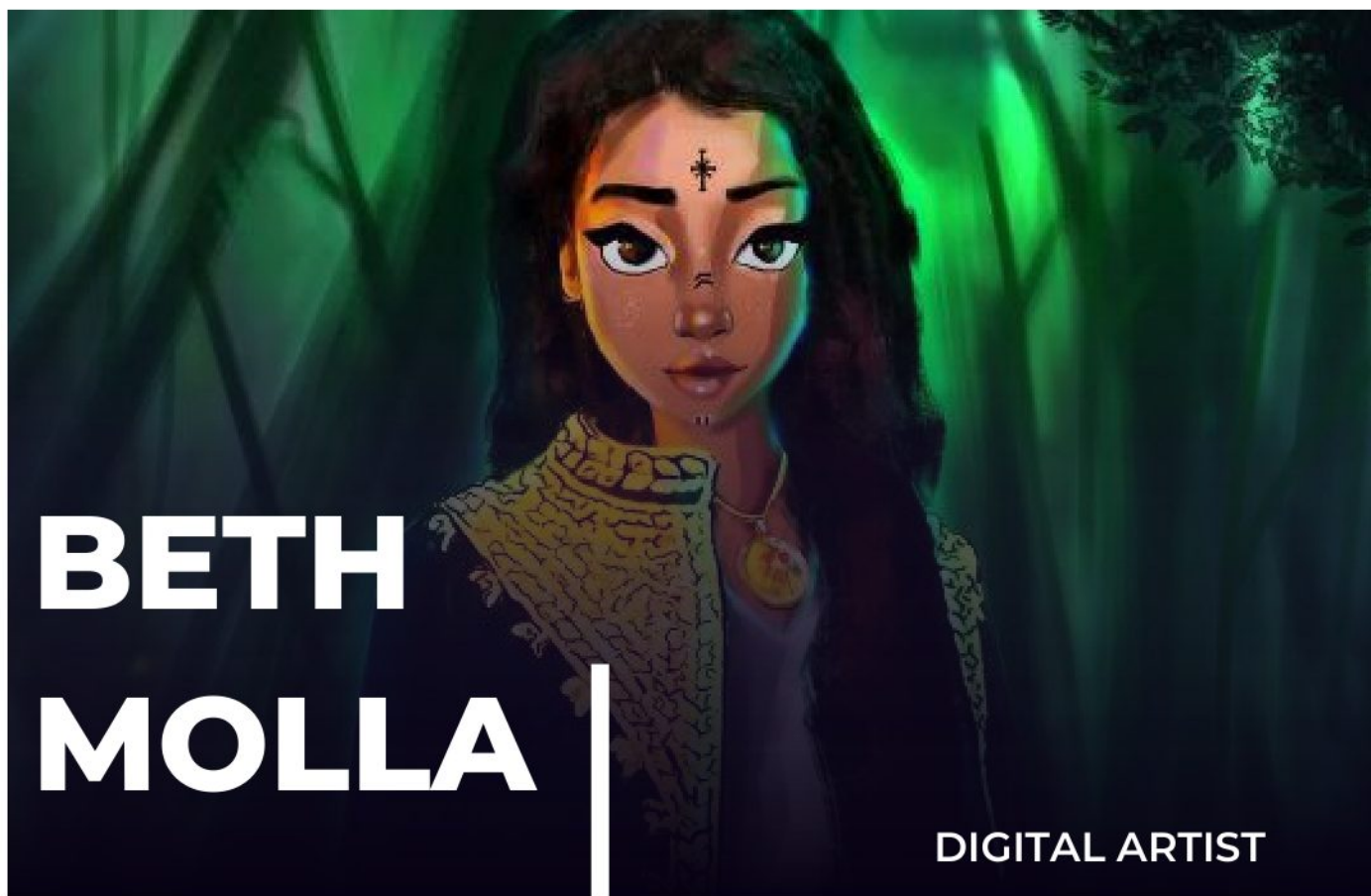
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JOEL TALARGIE

TECH REVIEW



BETH MOLLA

DIGITAL ARTIST

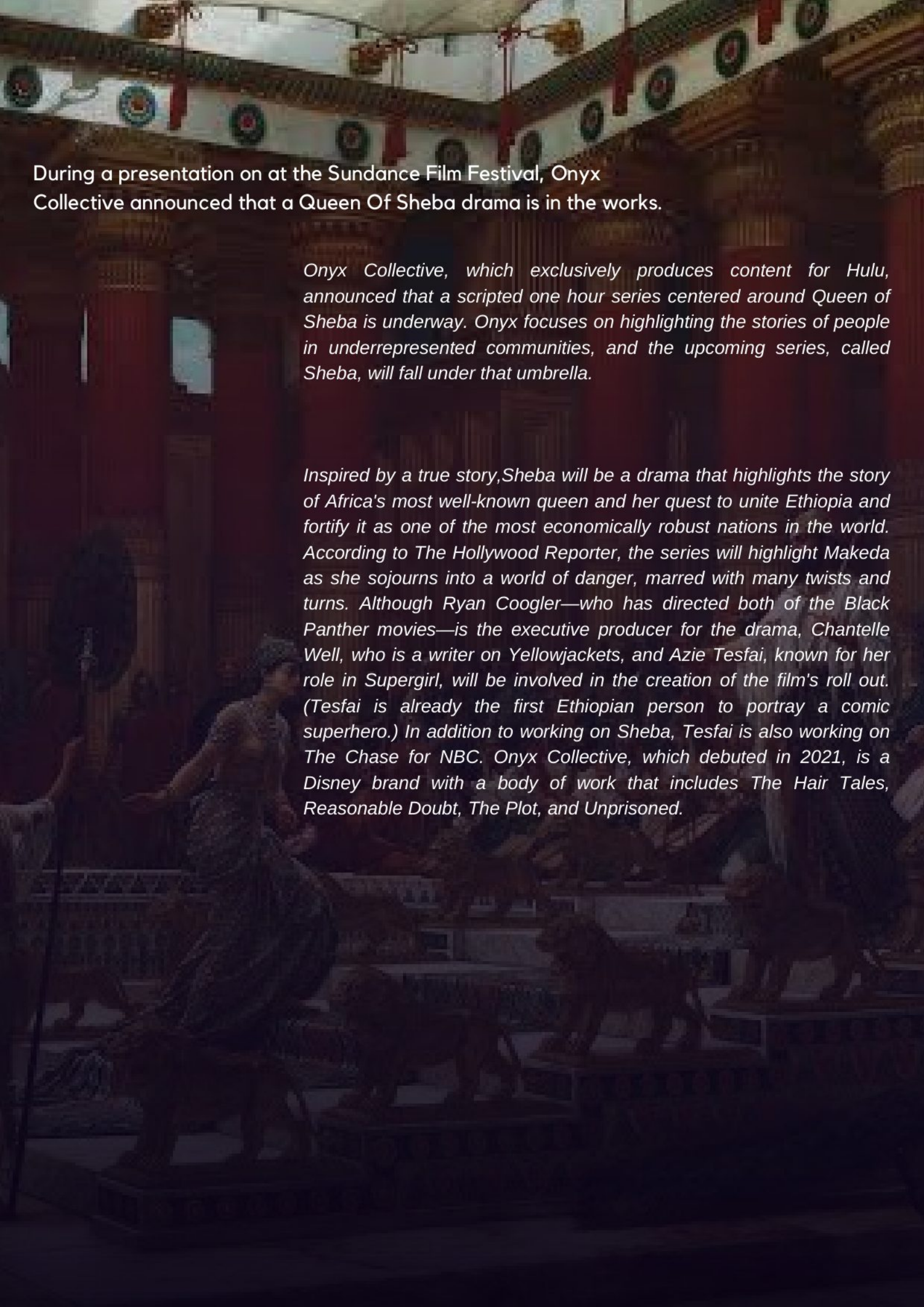
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QUEEN OF SHEBA

From the hollywood reporter



**A TV SHOW ABOUT
ETHIOPIA'S QUEEN
SHEBA IS IN THE WORKS**



During a presentation on at the Sundance Film Festival, Onyx Collective announced that a Queen Of Sheba drama is in the works.

Onyx Collective, which exclusively produces content for Hulu, announced that a scripted one hour series centered around Queen of Sheba is underway. Onyx focuses on highlighting the stories of people in underrepresented communities, and the upcoming series, called Sheba, will fall under that umbrella.

Inspired by a true story, Sheba will be a drama that highlights the story of Africa's most well-known queen and her quest to unite Ethiopia and fortify it as one of the most economically robust nations in the world. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the series will highlight Makeda as she sojourns into a world of danger, marred with many twists and turns. Although Ryan Coogler—who has directed both of the Black Panther movies—is the executive producer for the drama, Chantelle Well, who is a writer on Yellowjackets, and Azie Tesfai, known for her role in Supergirl, will be involved in the creation of the film's roll out. (Tefai is already the first Ethiopian person to portray a comic superhero.) In addition to working on Sheba, Tesfai is also working on The Chase for NBC. Onyx Collective, which debuted in 2021, is a Disney brand with a body of work that includes The Hair Tales, Reasonable Doubt, The Plot, and Unprisoned.

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