

## Portraits of a City (2025)

This project is a revealing documentary about expression, fear, and the unseen forces shaping Kenya's civic voice. Director Joshua Wera returns to Nairobi, one year after the #RejectFinanceBill 2024 protests to uncover why public outrage has fallen silent. Teaming up with muralist Victor Mwangi to spark dialogue through street art, he instead confronts public hesitation, and a political mood defined largely by caution.





## Context:

In the summer of 2025, I traveled to Nairobi, Kenya, where I met Victor Mwangi. We first explored the idea of creating a political mural on a wall at the heart of the city. But when that plan ran into obstacles, we shifted to producing the artwork on three large canvases instead.

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To begin, Victor and his close workmate built the canvases and coated them with a layer of white primer to prepare them for painting.





Then with the help from a small team of volunteers, he worked for hours to create the mural that I would later exhibit around the streets of Nairobi.

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Will this painting compel the public to speak up?

By moving from one street to another,  
I tried to engage the public on many current political  
and social issues in Kenya.



And while many people **DECLINED** to be  
interviewed...



There were also others who didn't hold back  
and freely shared their thoughts.



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*“Through this project I hoped to spark public truth telling following widespread protests that took place in Kenya in 2024, but instead what I discovered is that the silence I meant to break is far more complex than I ever imagined.”*

Ochieng Joshua Wera

Director, Portraits of a City (2025)

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MA Documentary Film, UAL

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