

Absa L'Atelier 2025 Winners Announced: A Story of Art Unfolds Across Africa

Gauteng, South Africa – 13 October 2025. Absa, in partnership with the South African National Association for the Visual Arts (SANAVA), is proud to announce the winners of the prestigious 2025 Absa L'Atelier 2025. The announcement was made at the serene Nirox Sculpture Park in Gauteng on Saturday, 11 October 2025, marking yet another chapter in a legacy that continues to empower and elevate African artistic voices.

This year's theme, **"Celebrating Expression,"** pays tribute to the personal and collective narratives that define the continent's creative landscape. For nearly four decades, Absa L'Atelier has celebrated young emerging artistic voices who transform ideas into works that speak of resilience, hope, and the future of Africa.

"We are particularly proud of our 39-year partnership with Absa in the Absa L'Atelier, a true testament to the power of partnerships. This initiative stands as a beacon of hope and agency for the visual arts, showcasing the courage, vision, and commitment needed to build sustainable and inclusive societies," said Dr. Samuel Isaacs, President of SANAVA, during the announcement.

The Absa L'Atelier remains a leading Pan-African art competition, attracting young artists from across the continent. Each year, four outstanding artists are honoured; three Absa L'Atelier Ambassadors are selected from across Africa, and one as the recipient of the Gerard Sekoto Award, which in 2025 proudly marked its 21st anniversary.

This year's competition drew twelve exceptional finalists from across the continent, each representing a distinct voice within Africa's creative landscape. Their work explored themes ranging from memory and mythology to sustainability, womanhood and identity, reflecting the diverse perspectives shaping contemporary African art.

"For two decades, the Embassy of France in South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi, and the French Institute of South Africa have had the privilege of supporting the Absa L'Atelier Gerard Sekoto Award," said His Excellency David Martinon, Ambassador of France to South Africa, Malawi and Lesotho.

"In the cultural field, it is the longest-running partnership between the French Embassy and the private sector in South Africa. We know that an artist's journey is challenging, demanding skill, deep commitment, perseverance, and confidence. That's why the Gerard Sekoto Award is essential: to support artists as they push creative boundaries and grow their practice."

South African painter and **sculptor Ndlovukazi Ngilande has been named the winner of the 2025 Gerard Sekoto Award**, which recognises outstanding artists between the ages of 25 and 35 who demonstrate integrity and excellence in their work. Ndlovukazi's art celebrates the beauty, power, and spirituality of African women. Her bold, figurative pieces centre women as divine and resilient beings, using expressive colour and sculptural form to explore identity, faith and feminine strength. Rooted in a deep connection to heritage and womanhood, her practice blends traditional influences with a contemporary lens, challenging perceptions of beauty and agency. As the 2025 Gerard Sekoto Award recipient, Ndlovukazi continues to champion narratives that honour African femininity and creative integrity.

The **2025 Absa L'Atelier Ambassadors** are:

- **Yolo Mantiyane** (from South Africa): Yolo paints with cow dung to reflect Nguni traditions, labour, and gender. Her work is both a tribute and a critique, honouring ancestral practices while interrogating modern gender roles and societal expectations.
- **Nana Sarpong Prempeh-Fordjour** (from Ghana): Nana's bold drawings and performance pieces explore youth, trauma, and personal healing. His practice is raw and deeply introspective, using the body as both subject and medium to challenge social constructs and express emotional resilience.
- **Trevor Aloka** (from Uganda): A multidisciplinary artist whose installations explore time, memory, and togetherness, Trevor's work is rooted in material experimentation and collective storytelling. His immersive creations invite audiences to reflect on communal histories and shared futures

Each Ambassador receives a transformative prize package, including a prestigious international residency, masterclasses, mentorship opportunities, and the chance to showcase their work on the global stage.

"Through the Absa L'Atelier, we celebrate not only the extraordinary talent of these artists but also the deeply personal narratives they bring to life through their work," said Dr. Paul Bayliss, Art and Museum Curator at Absa.

"At Absa, we are passionate about empowering Africa's tomorrow, one story at a time. This year's winners remind us that every brushstroke, every sculpture, and every idea carries a story that deserves to be seen, heard, and celebrated."

By supporting emerging talent, Absa continues to amplify the voices of artists who tell uniquely African stories, embodying the bank's drive to be an active force for good and a catalyst for change through creativity.

For more information on the Absa L'Atelier, please visit the Absa L'Atelier website or follow the conversation on social media using **#AbsaLAtelier** and **#AStoryOfArt**.

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About Absa L'Atelier: Absa L'Atelier is a pan-African art competition that affords winning artists with the relevant skills, sets the opportunity to develop and thrive in their chosen practice. It is hosted by Absa in partnership with the South African National Association for the Visual Arts (SANAVA). Every year emerging visual artists from across Africa are given the opportunity to showcase their talents through Absa L'Atelier. The competition offers them a platform to explore personal narratives, themes and contemporary issues, while setting the stage to bring their ideas to life. Previous Absa L'Atelier Ambassadors have unfailingly been able to develop their careers and, ultimately, to present their work on the global stage.

About Absa Group Limited: Absa Group Limited ("Absa Group") is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and is one of Africa's largest diversified financial services groups.

Absa Group offers an integrated set of products and services across personal and business banking, corporate and investment banking, wealth and investment management and insurance.

Absa Group owns majority stakes in banks in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania (Absa Bank Tanzania and National Bank of Commerce), Uganda and Zambia and has insurance operations in Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia. Absa also has representative offices in China, Namibia, Nigeria and the United States, as well as securities entities in the United Kingdom and the United States, along with technology support colleagues in the Czech Republic.

About SANAVA: The South African National Association for the Visual Arts (SANAVA) is the primary umbrella body representing visual artists in South Africa. SANAVA plays an essential role in advocating for artists' rights and providing a platform for the promotion of visual arts across the country.

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