

eclectica
contemporary

After the First Look



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CAPE TOWN
8001

After the First Look

The first encounter is rarely the most honest one.

We like to believe that recognition is immediate, that we understand an image the moment it reveals itself to us. Portraiture, in particular, invites this confidence. A face appears, and with it, a sense of access: identity, emotion, narrative. We look, and we decide.

But looking is not the same as seeing.

After the First Look returns to a selection of portraits that have already entered the world, works that have been exhibited, circulated, and, in some cases, quickly absorbed into the rhythms of the market. Their initial moment has passed. The urgency of first contact has settled. What remains is something quieter, and often more revealing.

Removed from their original context, these works resist the conclusions once placed upon them. The conditions of their first appearance, whether within the speed of an art fair, the framing of a thematic exhibition, or the expectations of a commercial environment, inevitably shaped how they were received. In that first instance, the viewer's gaze is rarely neutral. It is informed by trend, by desire, by assumption.

To encounter these portraits again is to confront the instability of that gaze.

Time alters perception. What once felt immediate may now feel constructed. What seemed decorative may reveal tension. What was overlooked may begin to insist on itself. In this return, the portrait shifts, from image to presence, from surface to something more resistant and unresolved.

There is also a quieter tension at play: the afterlife of the artwork itself. Some of these works were quickly claimed, affirmed by the market as desirable and complete. Others remained, suspended in a different kind of visibility, seen, but not secured. This exhibition does not attempt to resolve that divide. Instead, it places these works back into view under the same conditions, asking whether value, like perception, is ever fixed.

After the First Look is not concerned with repetition for its own sake. It is an insistence on looking again, more slowly, more critically, and perhaps more honestly. If the first encounter is shaped by instinct, this second asks for something else: attention, doubt, and a willingness to let the image exceed what was first understood.

Because what we see the second time is never the same.
And neither are we.

NEDIA WERE

Nedia Were (b. 1989, Kenya) is a self-taught contemporary visual artist who lives and works in Nairobi. Drawing from childhood influences rooted in comic books, newspapers and sign painting, Were developed a distinctive figurative language centered on Black identity, representation and Afro-optimism. His practice interrogates historical Western ideals of beauty while reimagining Black subjects within lush, dreamlike environments that speak to dignity, spirituality, rebirth and self-possession.

Known for his rich use of black pigment and psychologically charged portraiture, Were creates paintings that position African figures within moments of tenderness, contemplation and quiet power. Nature functions as a recurring symbolic element in his work, reflecting transformation, fluidity and interconnectedness between the self and the environment. Influenced in part by Kerry James Marshall, Were's paintings challenge traditional art historical exclusions while contributing to broader conversations around African and Afro-diasporic visibility in contemporary art.

Were has exhibited extensively across Africa, Europe and the United States, participating in fairs and exhibitions including Florence Biennale, AKA A Paris, FNB Art Joburg, and Investec Cape Town Art Fair. In 2024, his work was included in an exhibition at the Stefan Gierowski Foundation in Poland. His work has also been featured in Vogue Magazine in relation to the "Black Excellence/Black Elegance" exhibition presented during Miami Art Week and Art Basel Miami Beach.

His works are held in notable private and corporate collections, including the RMB Collection, as well as international collections such as the New Museum collection in Berlin





Nedie Were
Mshikamano, 2025
Acrylic on Canvas
153 X 123cm
USD 8 500 excl. VAT

BOB-NOSA UWAGBOE

Bob-Nosa Uwagboe is a Lagos-based artist known for his bold, provocative paintings that expose the dark side of humanity. His works, often layered with fabric, acrylic, charcoal, and spray paint, vividly depict troubled souls and societal injustices.

Growing up in a politically unstable Nigeria, Bob-Nosa witnessed civil unrest and police oppression, which deeply influenced his art. His early craftwork evolved into powerful protest art, reflecting his desire to challenge corruption, oppression, and societal evils.

Establishing Protest Art Studio in Lagos, he quickly gained recognition for his rebellious style, defying critics who dismissed his work as unsellable. Bob-Nosa's art often portrays corrupt officials and victims of police brutality, capturing both the pain and resilience of his subjects. His work has been exhibited internationally, including two solo shows at OOA GALLERY in Barcelona and a solo show "Transit" in the National Modern & Contemporary Museum Gdansk, Poland .





Bob-nosa Uwagboe
I Am Peaceful, 2023
Acrylic & Spray Paint on Canvas
90.5 X 86cm
USD 7 400 excl. VAT



Bob-nosa Uwagboe
Power To The People, 2022
Acrylic & Spray Paint on Canvas
153 X 123cm
USD 10 800 excl. VAT



Bob-nosa Uwagboe
PEACE, 2022
Acrylic & Spray Paint on Canvas
91.4 X 86.4cm
USD 7 400 excl. VAT

LOYISO MKIZE

Loyiso Mkize is one of South Africa's most well known graphic novel and comic book illustrators, being one of the foremost contributors to the Sunday Times supplement SupaStrikers but turns to painting for creative expression and as an avenue for his personal political and social commentary. The paintings often depict expressive faces, focusing his work in portraiture because of his fascination with skin, texture and the emotion that is conveyed through facial features – notions of the soul, the spirit and ultimately to illustrate his understandings of the true African experience in the contemporary art world. Mkize's use of highly stylized and technically brilliant brushwork creates realistic imagery that leans toward the surreal with his decorative framing and imaginative illustration, adding multiple layers to each portrait with character references and the impression of self-awareness in each of his works.





Loyiso Mkize
Ubabalo (Grace, Divine Favour), 2025
Oil on Canvas
120 X 100cm
ZAR 75 000 excl. VAT

OLAMIDE OGUNADE

Born in 1996, Olamide Ogunade is a graduate of Fine Art at the Yaba College of Technology. Drawing inspiration from personal experiences, and happenings in his society, Olamide creates works that promote the understanding of black identity. His oeuvre cuts across various mediums including ballpoint pen, acrylic and oil paint, charcoal, and pencil.

Olamide creates figurative expression using charcoal with colors making it contemporary, its talks about situations in African society. The skin is an essential thing he loves to create which requires focusing on details, also it's accompanied by vibrant colors, then he sums it Up with Bubbles (this captures the moment of pressure also, the situation we find ourselves in is temporal). His art tends to dialogue with its viewers, calling their attention to catharsis and making them wonder how on earth it was made with hands. He makes use of Acrylic, Graphite, and charcoal carbon on either Strathmore, alabaster paper, or canvas.





Olamide Ogunade
Floating Thoughts, 2025
Charcoal & Acrylic on Canvas
76.2 X 76.2cm
USD 6 500 excl. VAT



Olamide Ogunade
The Silent Screen, 2025
Charcoal & Acrylic on Canvas
76.2 X 76.2cm
USD 6 500 excl. VAT

EBENEZER SAMUEL AKINOLA

Born in 1968 in Ibadan, Nigeria, Ebenezer Samuel Akinola is a leading voice in contemporary African art. He graduated at the top of his class with a Bachelor's degree in painting from the University of Benin in 1989.

Akinola's work challenges stereotypical narratives about Africa and Black culture, using his art to engage with and critique notions of race, gender, beauty, spirituality, identity, and the political landscape of modern Africa. A central theme in his work is the deliberate darkening of his subjects' faces, symbolizing strength, grandeur, sophistication, and inherent dignity.

Akinola masterfully weaves realistic and abstract elements, creating pieces rich in detail and depth. His subjects, often portrayed in portraits and figure compositions, come alive with intricate layers that draw attention to key aspects of his message.

Widely recognized and celebrated, Akinola has received prestigious commissions, including portraits of former Nigerian leaders Nnamdi Azikiwe, Abdulsalami Abubakar, and Olusegun Obasanjo, which are displayed in the National Gallery of Art in Nigeria. His impact extends beyond national borders, with exhibitions in renowned venues across the United States, Belgium, Italy, Morocco, and Spain.





Ebenezer Samuel Akinola
The Pilgrims Road, 2026
Oil on Linen
122 x 81 cm
USD 7 500 excl. VAT

DAMILOLA ONOSOWOBO MARCUS

Damilola Onosowobo's work uncovers questions bordering on perceptions of reality and live experiences. Through the subtle use of tropes, composition, colours, light, and subject, she pulls together her artistic configurations and reconceptualises them within a modern cultural setting.

She received a BA in Architecture from the University of Lagos and has an MSc in Environmental Design. She is the Managing Partner and Executive Art Director at Dá Design Studio. Works from her design studio have been exhibited at Venice Design in 2019 and featured in publications.

Damilola is inspired by great artists such as Njideka Akunyili Crosby and Anders Zorn, she doesn't view realism as an opportunity to imitate reality; hence she is unafraid of careless brush strokes or any potential raw unfinishedness to her work. Her paintings are a deliberate rebellion from the structures and calculations from her background in design and see her oeuvre as ultimately a way to relax, observe and be present in the present.





Damilola Onosowobo Marcus
That Settee, That Aunty, 2022
Oil on Canvas
122 X 91.4cm
USD 3 500 excl. VAT

AYOGU KINGSLEY

Ayogu Kingsley (b. 1994, Enugu, Nigeria) is a contemporary artist who lives and works in Marrakesh, Morocco. His practice explores questions of Black consciousness, cultural memory, and identity through a visual language that moves fluidly between figuration, abstraction, and expressive colour.

While earlier phases of his work focused on portraiture, Ayogu's practice has evolved into layered compositions in which bodies, symbols, and gestural forms emerge within atmospheric fields of colour and texture. His paintings often evoke psychological and emotional landscapes, where figures appear fragmented, suspended, or partially concealed within dynamic pictorial spaces.

Throughout his artistic journey, Ayogu has experimented with a range of materials and techniques—including a period in which he incorporated fishing nets into his paintings—reflecting his ongoing interest in expanding the language of contemporary painting. His current work continues to explore the relationship between memory, identity, and lived experience through richly layered compositions that balance immediacy with conceptual depth.





Ayogu Kingsley
Frantz Fanon (Triptych), 2023
Oil on Canvas
121 X 143cm
GBP 10 500 excl. VAT

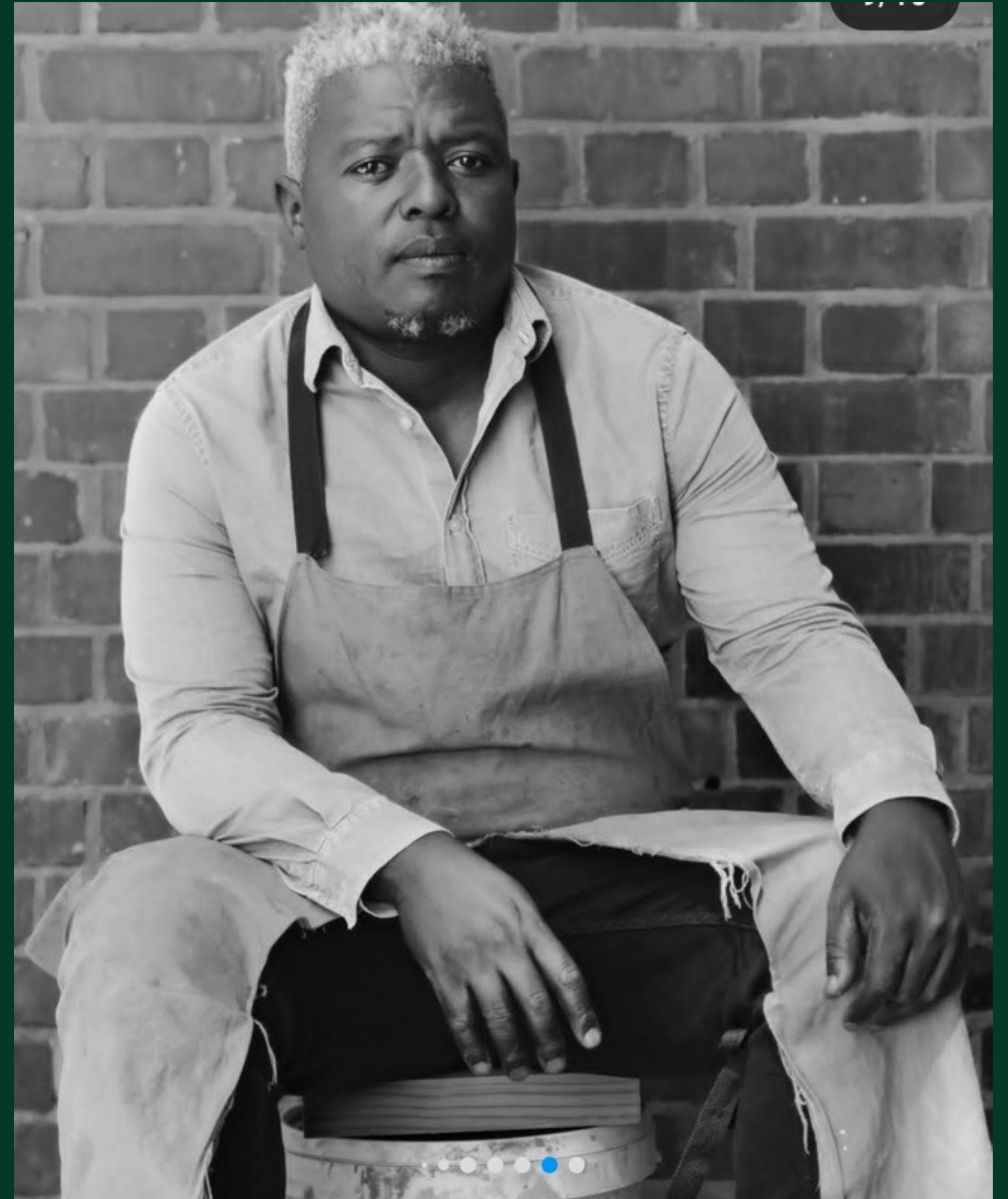
SIYABONGA FANI

Siyabonga Fani works in Woodstock, Cape Town. He has been working with clay since the late 1990s while a student at the College of Cape Town and founded his studio, Siyabonga Ceramics, in 2013.

He works with terracotta forms, using traditional techniques of burnishing and smoke-firing. Fani's work is, in part, a requiem for his father, the self-taught artist. Since his father's death, Fani's clay is heavier; it bears the smell of smoke, pit-fired in the alleyway outside the studio. Fani hand-coils his pieces, working intuitively, drawing forms from the bodies of trees, the rivers and the human beings who make lives from the earth.

His work is animated by the joy and estrangement of the township imaginary. In it, there is the yearning for the pastoral mirage of the rural homeland and the desire to hold the land tenderly. And, with the same impulse, there is the nostalgia for the bustle and hum and dialects of the township.

In 2024, Fani exhibited with Art Formes at Investec Cape Town Art Fair, Latitudes Art Fair in Johannesburg and the prestigious Homo Faber Fair in Venice. Fani's works can be found in public collections such as South Africa's National Iziko Museums, and several private collections around the world namely in France, Switzerland, Germany and the United States.





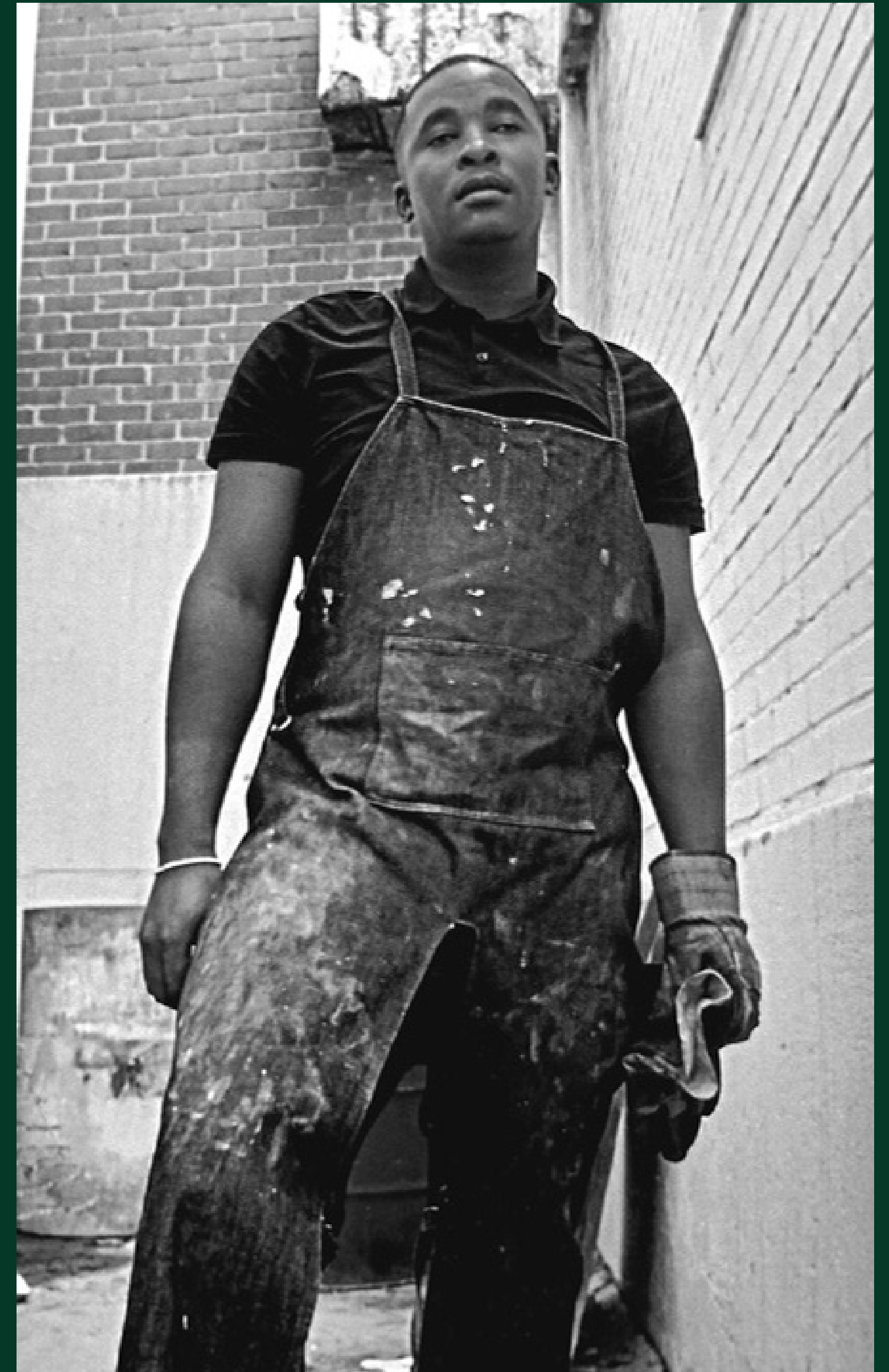
Siyabonga Fani
Unopoty, 2026
Smoke-fired Terracotta Clay
55 X 35 cm
ZAR 42 000 excl. VAT



Siyabonga Fani
Umbambo Lam, 2026
Smoke-fired Terracotta Clay
66 X 38 cm
ZAR 55 000 excl. VAT

SIYANDA SIPOLO

Siyanda Sipolo is a ceramic artist based in Gugulethu, Cape Town, whose practice celebrates storytelling through clay. Working primarily with terracotta, Sipolo employs hand-building, burnishing, and smoke-firing techniques to create organic forms inspired by nature and the textures of the mountains. Each piece carries a narrative rooted in culture, spirituality, and everyday life, reflecting the artist's deep connection to the land and its histories. He won "New Signature" at Regional Exhibition in 2024.





Siyanda Sipolo
Amawa, 2026
Smoke-fired Terracotta Clay
78 X 38 cm
ZAR 22 000 excl. VAT

Eclectica Contemporary is a Cape Town–based gallery dedicated to contemporary artistic practices from Africa and its diaspora. The gallery presents a dynamic program of emerging and established artists and has participated in leading international art fairs. Artists represented by the gallery have participated in major international biennials and their works are held in significant institutional collections including the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, the Rupert Museum, and the Iziko South African National Gallery, as well as major international foundations and private collections. Through exhibitions, international presentations, and collaborations with curators and institutions, Eclectica Contemporary contributes to the global discourse surrounding contemporary African art.

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