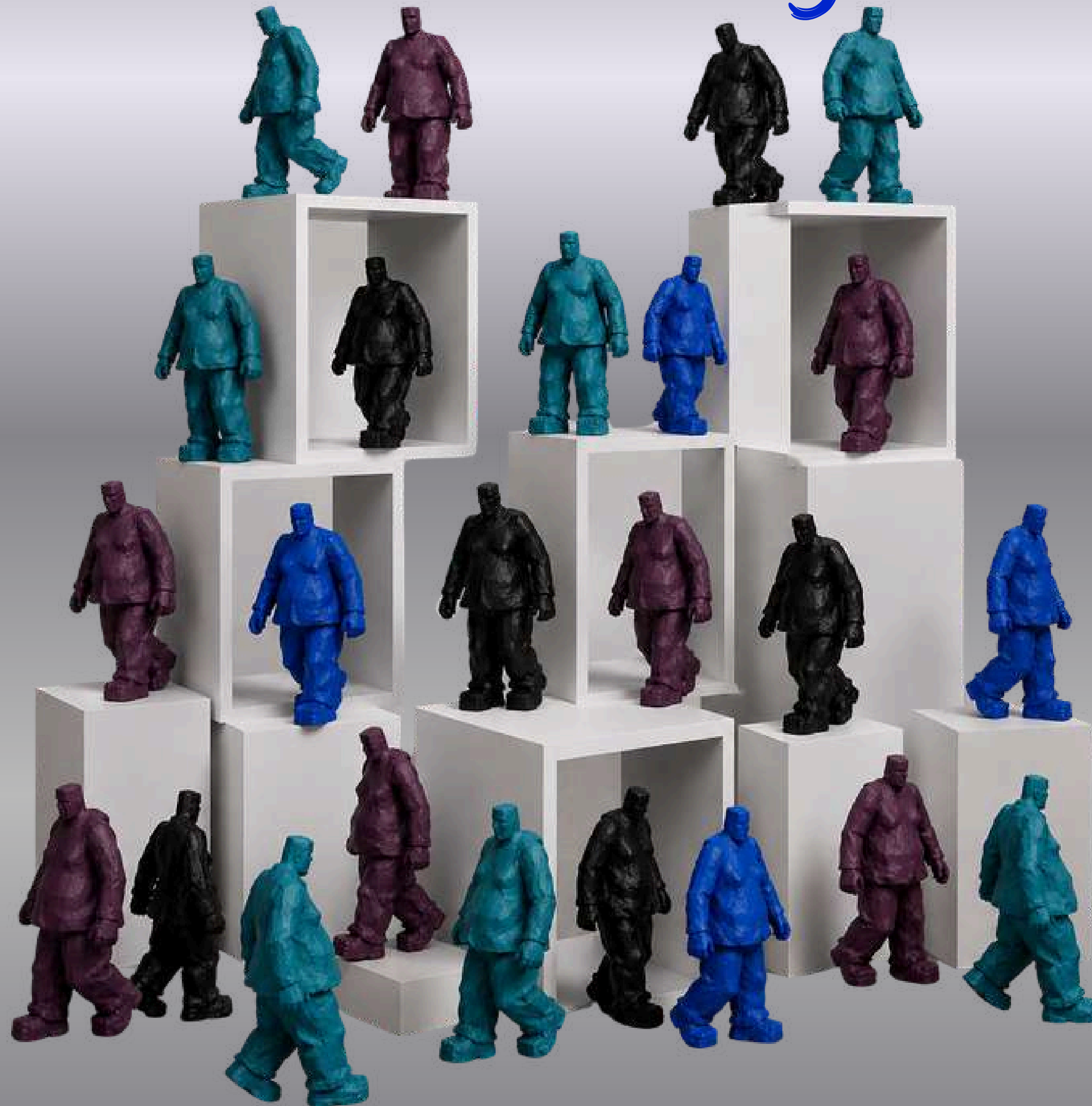


eclectica
contemporary

How Did We Become Strangers?



FNB Art Joburg
04—06.09.26
Sandton Convention
Centre, Johannesburg,
South Africa

How Did We Become Strangers?

“There was never any more inception than there is now.”

— Walt Whitman, Song of Myself

A stranger is not born. A stranger is made.

Not only through geography or language, but through the slow accumulation of borders, political, historical, cultural, and imagined. Long before they appear on maps, borders inhabit the mind, shaping who belongs, who arrives, who is remembered, and who is forgotten.

Yet the world has never ceased folding into itself. Every migration leaves its trace. Every exchange transforms both host and guest. Histories intertwine, cultures overlap, and identities remain perpetually unfinished. Difference has never existed apart from relation.

How Did We Become Strangers? begins from this paradox. Bringing together artists from across the African continent and its diaspora, the exhibition proposes neither a unified narrative nor a singular identity. Instead, it embraces plurality as a condition of seeing. Each artist speaks through a distinct material language, shaped by particular histories, memories, and encounters with place.

Like stars within a constellation, the works remain independent, yet acquire meaning through proximity. The constellation is not found but imagined, it exists because we choose to perceive relationships across distance. So too with community. It is not the erasure of difference that binds us, but the willingness to recognise ourselves within it.

In an age defined by unprecedented connection and increasing division, where images cross borders more easily than people and belonging is continually contested, these artists remind us that art has always resisted fixed boundaries. It carries memory where history falters, creates dialogue where politics cannot, and imagines forms of relation beyond inherited lines of separation.

Perhaps the question is not what makes us different.

It is how, despite our shared entanglements, we came to imagine one another as strangers and whether the act of looking, with care and attention, might become the beginning of recognition once again.

Artists

Johannes Phokela

Thando Phenyane

Ibrahim Khatab

Pierre Louis Geldenhuys

Ayanda Mabulu

Ebenezer Samuel Akinola

Kamal El Feky

Chrisél Attewell

Sikho Mququ

Lars Fischedick

Hussein Salim

Johannes Phokela

Johannes Phokela is a South African artist born in Soweto in 1966. He began his formal art career in 1984 at the Federated Union of Black Artists (FUBA) Academy in Johannesburg, where he obtained a three-year diploma.

In 1987, he moved to London, where he completed a year-long foundation course at Central St. Martins: University of the Arts London before acquiring a bachelor's degree at Camberwell College of Art: University of the Arts London (1988). He then completed a master's degree at the Royal College of Art (1993) and returned permanently to South Africa in 2006.

Phokela has established a distinguished career both locally and internationally. He played an advisory role in establishing The Bag Factory, Johannesburg (1990) and was awarded the prestigious year-long residency at Delfina Studio Trust, London (1993). He was also one of the founding members of the Gasworks Studios, London (1994 – 2005), producing studio work as well as participating in the International Residency Programme. He did volunteer work for The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1995 and led to his participation in a residency programme in Senegal through the British Council (1997). He is a recipient of the Decibel Award from the Arts Council of England (2004).

Phokela has exhibited extensively worldwide, including exhibiting 8 works at the Venice Biennale.





Johannes Phokela

Fat and Lean Kitchens (Rage of a Landlord and a Solemn Tune of a Minstrel), 2026

Oil on Canvas

150 x 150 cm each (Diptych)

ZAR 300,000 each excl. VAT



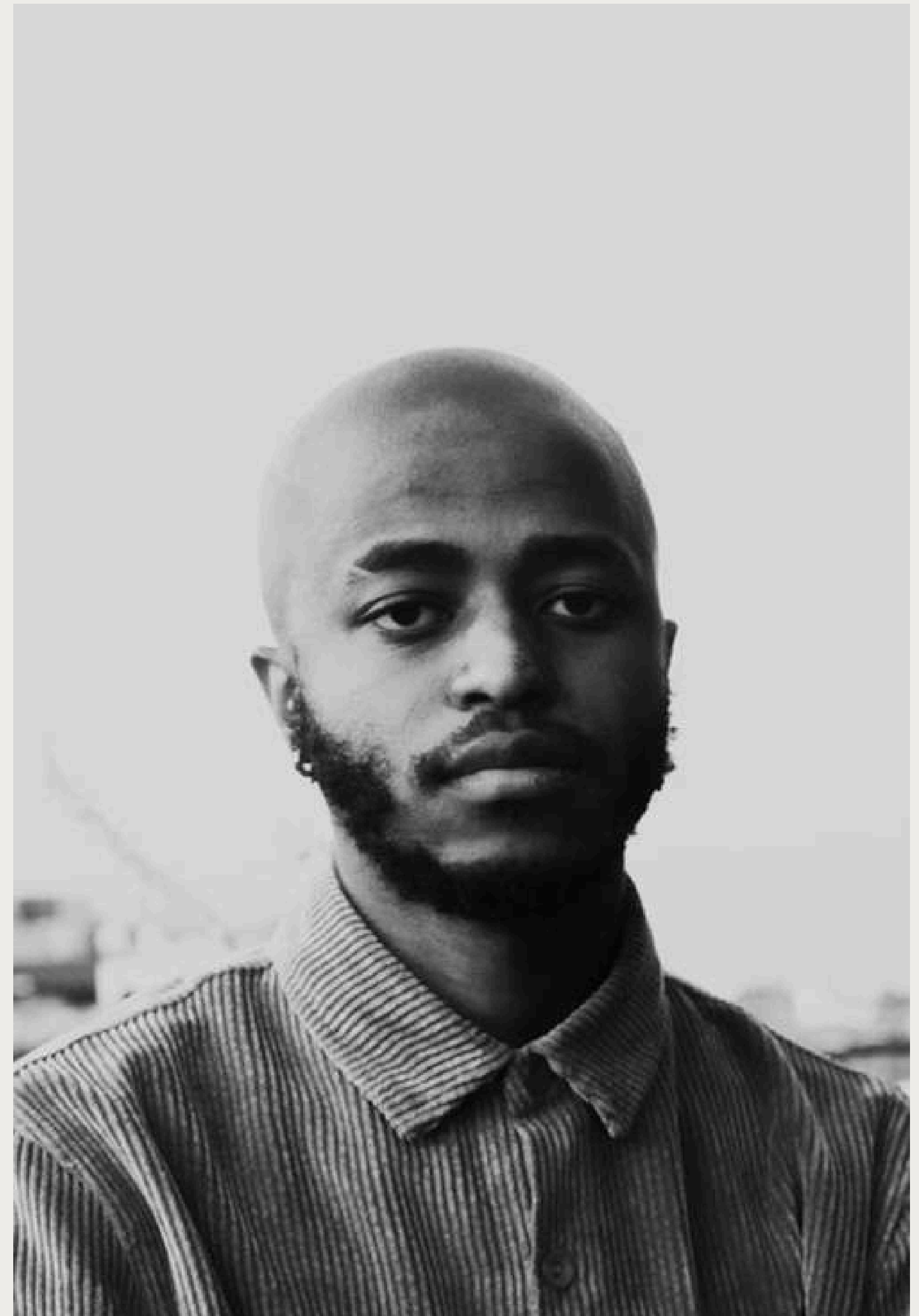
Johannes Phokela
Pan [Fried] III, 2026
Oil on Canvas
165 x 130 cm
ZAR 360,000 excl. VAT

Thando Phenyane

Thando Phenyane (b. 1997, Johannesburg) is a figurative painter with a wide pool of influences. Trained as an architect, his process draws heavily on art history and pop culture, employing a unique painterly language that presents Black figures as dark, whimsical characters, at once comical and menacing. He took part in the 2021 Design Indaba Emerging Creatives programme and the 2021 V&A Waterfront Artist Alliance Programme.

Phenyane's work disrupts Eurocentric standards, but it does so with a sense of playful defiance. His art dismantles binaries of beauty and worth, weaving together the serious and the whimsical, the historical and the fantastical.

Phenyane reclaims visual space for Black bodies and narratives, not only as acts of defiance but as moments of joy, spontaneity, and possibility. Through vibrant aesthetics and playful forms, Phenyane challenges the colonial gaze, turning it into a mirror for new visions of Blackness sovereign, fluid, and full of life. Phenyane's paintings invite us into a future where Blackness is no longer constrained by the weight of colonial history but liberated through the act of play, a future where empowerment is found in the freedom to create, disrupt, and dream.





Thando Phenyane

Thank You, Mister

Wonderful, 2026

Acrylic on Canvas

270 x 90 cm

ZAR 98,000 excl. VAT

Ibrahim Khatab

Ibrahim Khatab was born in Cairo in 1984 and works as a lecturer at Cairo University. His practice spans across the mediums of painting, video art and installation. Khatab has been practicing since he was 12 years old when he created billboards on cloths and walls that were put up in the streets of Cairo. This early experience continues to influence his work and also ignited his passion for Arabic calligraphy which can consistently be seen as a significant element across his body of work.

Since 2007 Khatab's work has frequently been presented in group shows and solo exhibitions. He has garnered notable recognition locally and regularly exhibits across various art centres and galleries in Cairo. Additionally, Khatab has seen impressive exposure abroad, having exhibited widely – from Sweden to Cape Town to Oman. He has regularly participated in the annual Youth Salon, Cairo and has also led many workshops in Visual Arts Centre, Oman; Fine Arts Association, Doha; and Sharjah Children Biennial (2013). He has been awarded various prizes for his work and in 2018 obtained his PhD from Cairo University.

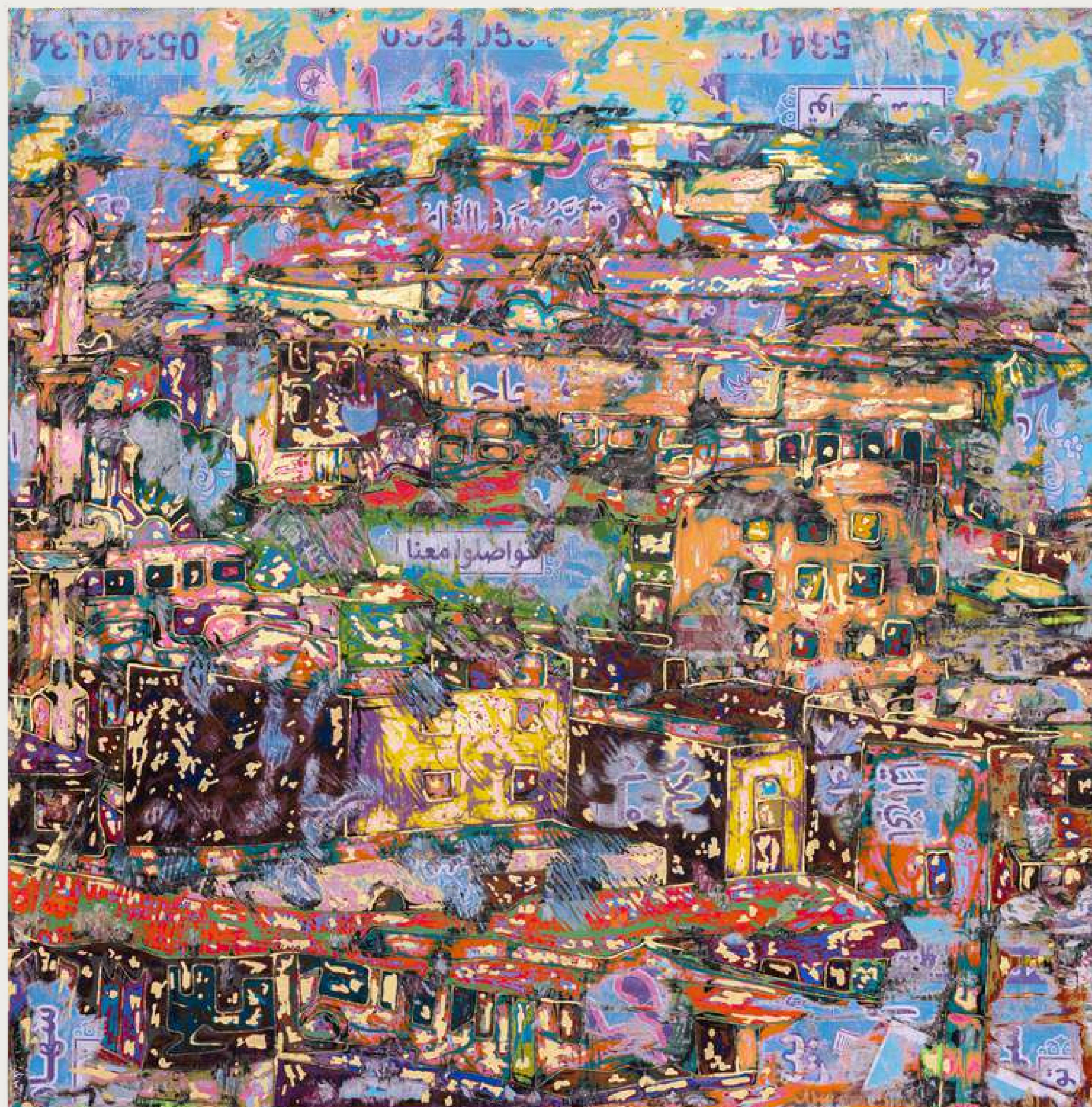
Ibrahim's artwork is found in numerous private and institutional collections.

His recent solo exhibition at IZIKO South African National Gallery, Cape Town, further affirms his continued relevance and reach.





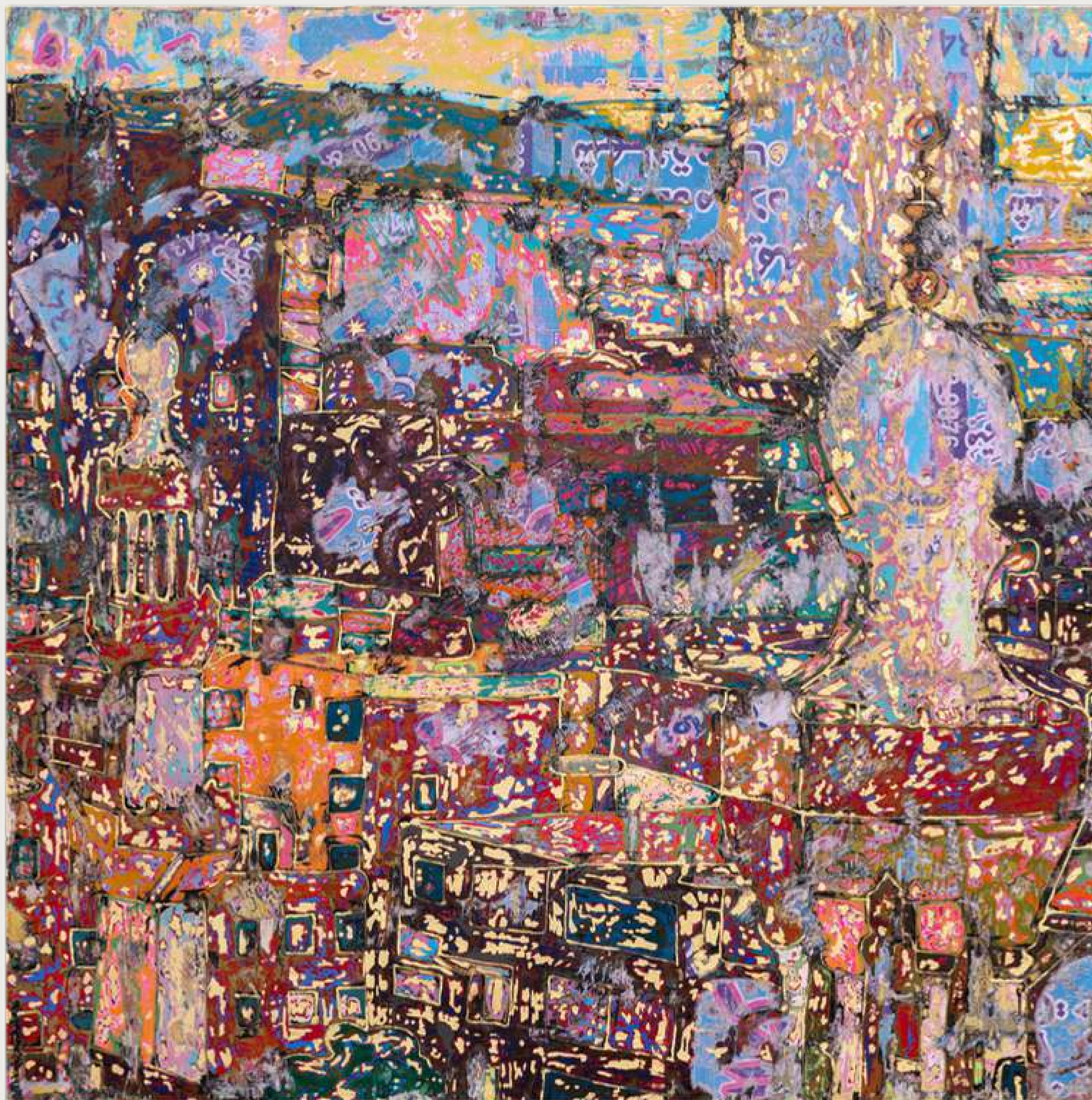
Ibrahim Khatab
Built to Distract, 2026



Ibrahim Khatab
Built to Distract 3, 2026
Mixed Media on Wood
120 x 120 cm
USD 5500 excl. VAT



Ibrahim Khatab
Built to Distract 6, 2026
Mixed Media on Wood
120 x 120 cm
USD 5500 excl. VAT



Ibrahim Khatab
Built to Distract 2, 2026
Mixed Media on Wood
120 x 120 cm
USD 5500 excl. VAT



Ibrahim Khatab
Built to Distract 1, 2026
Mixed Media on Wood
120 x 120 cm
USD 5500 excl. VAT



Ibrahim Khatab

Built to Distract 4, 2026

Mixed Media on Wood

120 x 120 cm

USD 5500 excl. VAT



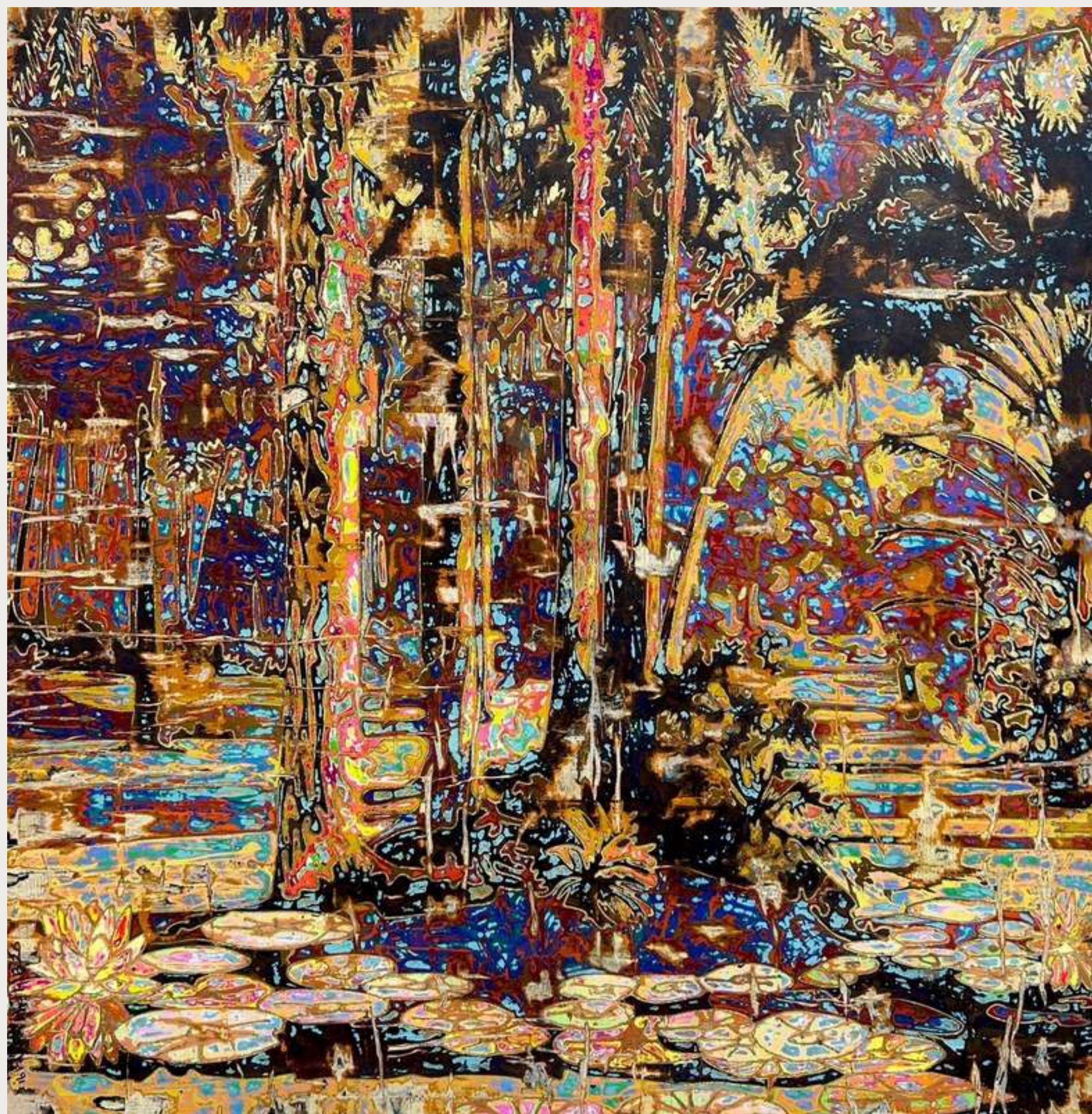
Ibrahim Khatab

Built to Distract 5, 2026

Mixed Media on Wood

120 x 120 cm

USD 5500 excl. VAT



Ibrahim Khatab

This Made Me Think of You, 2026

Mixed Media on Wood

120 x 120 cm

USD 6500 excl. VAT

Pierre Louis Geldenhuys

South African-born multidisciplinary artist Pierre Louis Geldenhuys (b. 1971) introduces work that marries geometry, textile abstraction, and ecological reflection within a singular, quietly powerful visual language. Geldenhuys' practice has evolved over two decades across theatre, fashion, and material experimentation. Central to this evolution is his sustained engagement with Arab architecture and the mathematical and spiritual logic of Islamic tessellation. Geometry, in his work, is not merely decorative or formal; it functions as both structure and metaphor. What began as an investigation into symmetry and beauty has developed into a conceptual tool for examining humanity's increasingly strained relationship with the natural world.

Each work originates from a single piece of raw silk uncut, unsewn, and manipulated solely through folding. From this constraint, complex tessellated structures emerge, unfolding into three-dimensional compositions that suggest endless expansion. Encased in light boxes, the works acquire an x-ray luminosity, revealing layers of depth, shadow, and suspended movement. His works represent elements of the planet that are threatened or at risk of extinction through human intervention, invasion, and expansion, extending this language into an ecological meditation inspired by the miraculous life cycle of the vine as metaphor.

Across the folded silk surfaces, hundreds of metres of thread trace formations that echo roots, rivers, fault lines, and topographies, forming textile landscapes that feel simultaneously fragile and resilient. Geldenhuys is an artist whose material intelligence and conceptual clarity converge in a practice of rare quiet force. He does not issue a warning. He extends an invitation: to slow down, to observe, and to consider that regeneration begins with attention.





Pierre Louis Geldenhuys

Sunrise in Springerbaai, 2025

Installation

115 x 115 x 26 cm

ZAR 230,000 excl. VAT



Pierre Louis Geldenhuys

Square Staircase Towards a Fragile

Future , 2025

Installation

75 x 65 x 26 cm

ZAR 116,000 excl. VAT

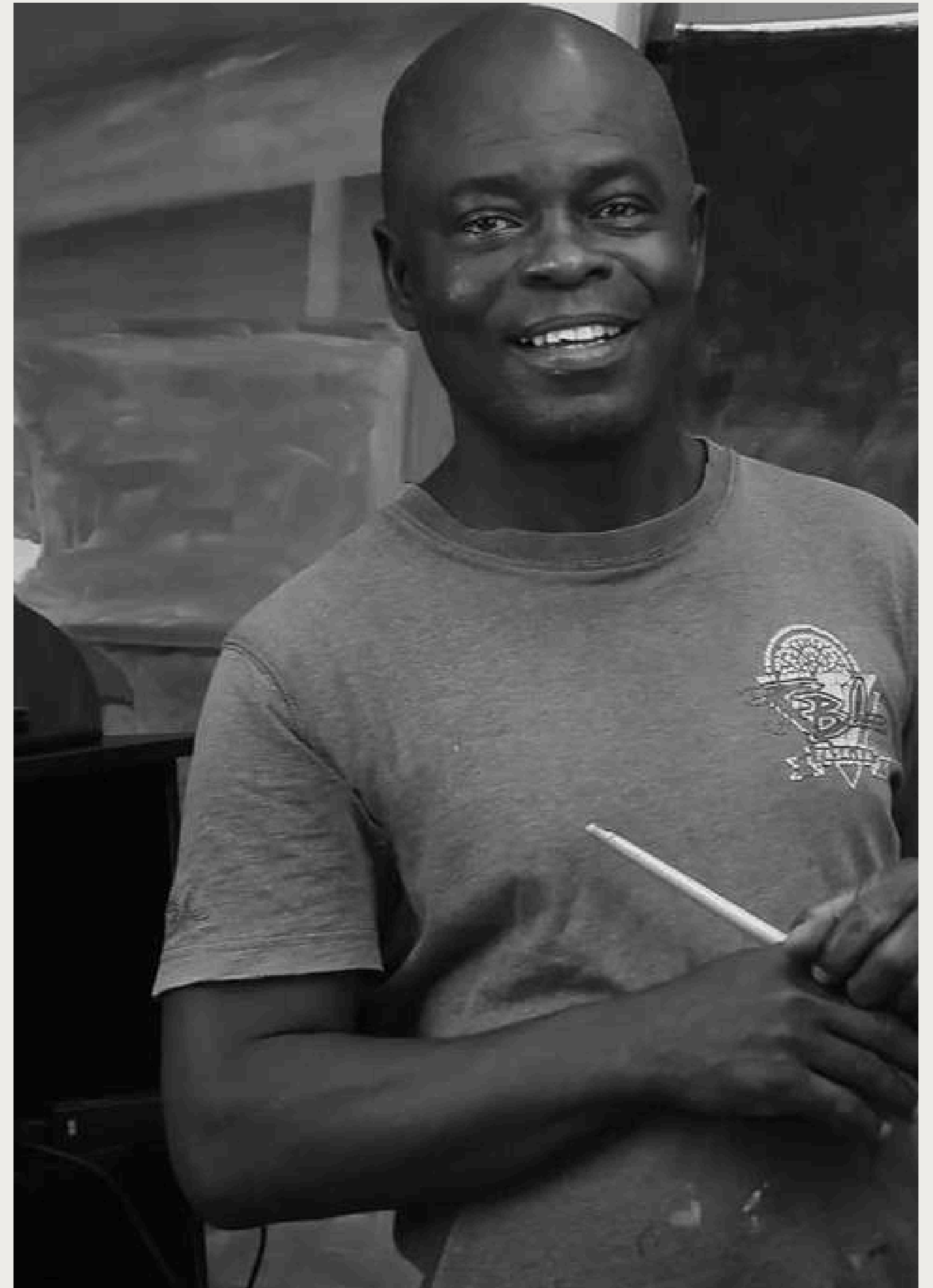
Ebenezer Samuel Akinola

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

Thou Who Follow, Follow, 2026

Oil on Linen

70 x 101 cm

USD 6500 excl. VAT

Kamal El Feky

Born in 1984, artist Kamal El Feky has earned a Bachelor's Honours Degree in Fine Arts (with a focus on sculpture) from Helwan University. He has been an active member of the Syndicate of Fine Artists in Cairo, as well as the Academia d'Egitto in Rome, and has participated in many exhibitions and international cultural fairs in Egypt and abroad.

El Feky's sculptures attempt to capture the familiar yet foreign concept of waiting. The artist evokes the viewer to become content with the uncomfortable pause that his weighted figures narrate in their ageless suspension. The sculptures presents the futile, yet adventurous journey of becoming and the perpetuating cycles of human desire that accompany that role.

El Feky's sculptures illustrate human life cycles as a plexus of events and desires. They draw us into a state of stillness, anticipation and entraps the viewer in a dormant state of reflection.

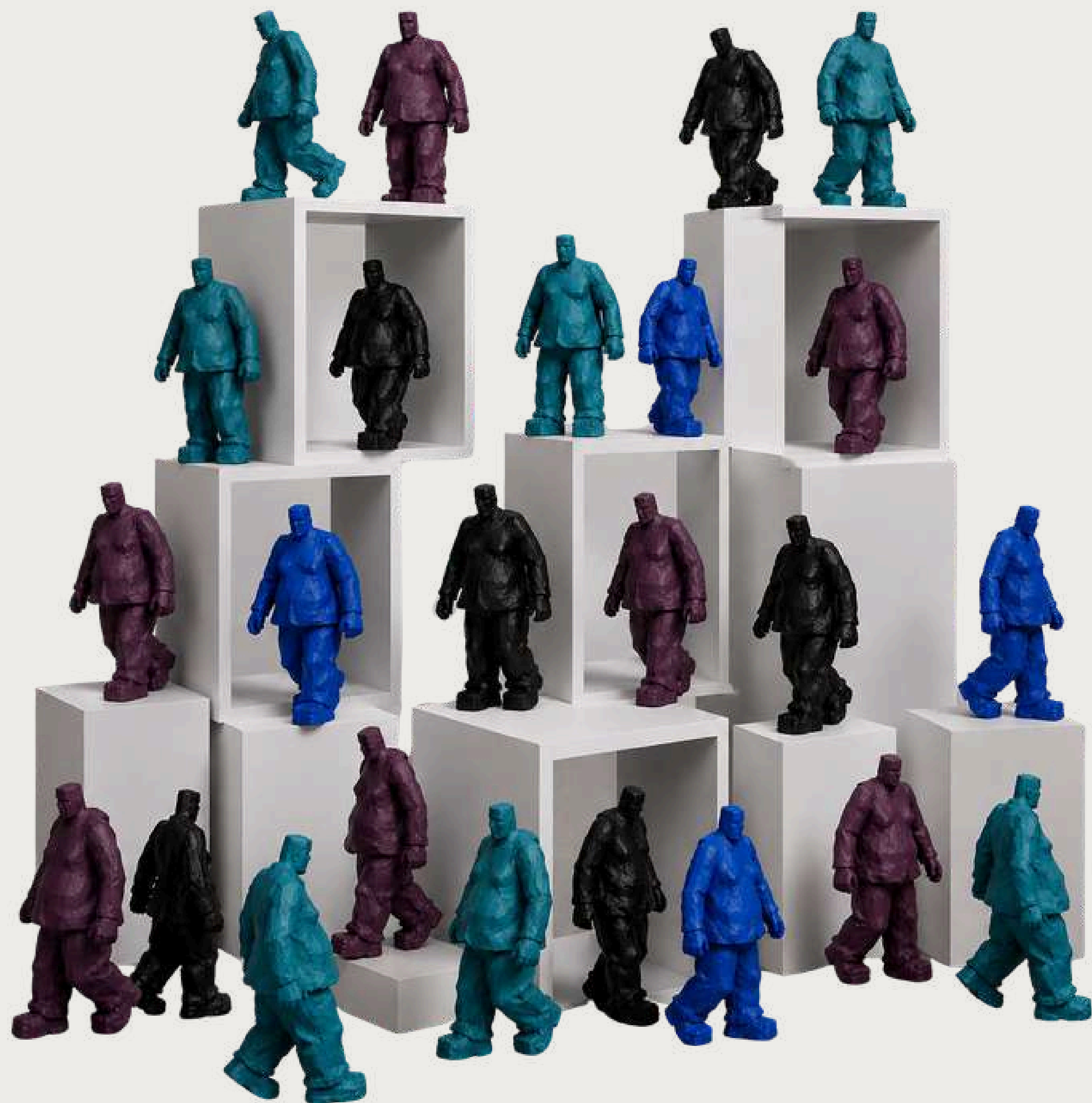


In Search of Meaning

In Schopenhauer's Box, Kamal El Feky uses bronze sculpture to explore the relationship between desire, purpose, and the human condition. The recurring motif of the box becomes a metaphor for the burdens, ambitions, and questions that shape our lives, while the human figure embodies the tension between individual will and collective existence.

Inspired by Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will, El Feky presents the body not as a fixed form but as a vessel in pursuit of meaning. Bronze, with its permanence and weight, reinforces the enduring nature of this inner struggle, inviting viewers to reflect on their own desires, responsibilities, and sense of purpose.

Minimal in form yet philosophically rich, the sculptures become sites of contemplation rather than explanation. They ask viewers to look beyond the object itself and consider a fundamental question: What does it mean to be a person with a purpose?



Kamal El Feky
In Search of Meaning (I-XX)



Kamal El Feky

In Search of Meaning (I-XX)

Bronze Sculptures

30 x 17.5 x 14.5 cm each

USD 500 excl. VAT each

Chrisél Attewell

Chrisél Attewell (b. 1994, South Africa) works across painting, lens-based media, installation, and poetry. Her practice grows from a tension between love and anger. Love, in her work, includes curiosity, tenderness, and attentiveness toward people, the earth, and what still feels alive. Anger is closely bound to grief: a response to damage, greed, violence, and the loss of what should be protected. She lives in that contradiction, wanting to hold on to the world while also wanting to escape its weight.

Her work begins outside, in the landscapes she moves through and the people she engages with. She wanders, listens, and gathers. Stones, pigments, photographs, and videos become records of encounter. Together, they form a living archive and a way of staying present to the world.

In the studio, these encounters are brought inward and transformed. Photographs, sketches, pigments, and collected materials keep the paintings rooted in physical places, while the materials themselves become collaborators, carrying their own histories into the work. Through mixing, layering, erasure, and mark-making, the process moves between surrender and control. Play, imagination, and emotion draw the work toward abstraction, making it more personal while softening the edges of what it depicts. The paintings often take on the quality of topographic maps, becoming portals between outer experience and the inner world.

Each piece is an act of attentiveness and a resistance to indifference. It is a way to keep caring and to keep looking, even when it hurts to see.

Attewell holds an MAVA from the University of Johannesburg (2023) and a BFA from the University of Pretoria (2016). Her work has been exhibited at Art Cologne, 1-54 London, Contemporary Istanbul, and the Investec Cape Town Art Fair. In 2024, she participated in the Kommagene Biennale in Türkiye, creating a collaborative land installation titled Hands of Many on Mount Nemrut. Recent solo exhibitions include Rain Shadows (UJ FADA Gallery, 2023), Heat Waves (Berman Contemporary, 2024), and Earth is “a” Story We Inherit (OiR Art Hub, Mongolia, 2025).





Chrisél Attewell

Refractions: Clay and Water, 2023

Oil and Clay on Canvas, Stitched
with Bamboo Thread

165,5 x 115,5 x 6.5 cm (Framed)

ZAR 177,000 excl. VAT



Chrisél Attewell

Refractions: Cederberg Waters, 2026

Oil and Clay on Canvas, Woven with Bamboo Thread
and Archival Inkjet on Paper

96 x 34 cm

ZAR 84,000 excl. VAT



Chrisél Attewell

Refractions: Meghalaya Forests, 2026

Oil and Clay on Canvas, Woven with Bamboo Thread
and Archival Inkjet on Paper

96 x 34 cm

ZAR 84,000 excl. VAT

Sikho Mququ

Born in Mthatha in South Africa's Eastern Cape, Sikho Mququ is a contemporary ceramic artist whose practice explores African identity, memory, architecture, and the relationships that shape home and community. Working from his studio, Ckho Ceramique, in Paarden Eiland, Cape Town, he creates wheel-thrown and sculptural stoneware vessels that bridge functional ceramics with contemporary African art.

Mququ's relationship with clay began in his childhood in the rural village of Qelane, where he spent countless hours shaping clay collected from nearby river streams. This early connection to the land laid the foundation for a lifelong artistic practice rooted in material, place, and cultural memory. He later studied Fine Art at Walter Sisulu University in East London, where he developed a deeper understanding of ceramics as both an artistic language and a vehicle for storytelling.

Today, Mququ balances his studio practice with education and collaboration. Alongside producing his own collections, he works as a freelance production thrower for leading ceramic studios, facilitates pottery workshops, teaches beginner courses, and mentors emerging makers through his practice. His commitment to sharing knowledge reflects the African philosophy of *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* "You are, because we are", which continues to shape both his artistic practice and his approach to community.

His work is distinguished by bold calabash-inspired forms, rhythmic carved surfaces that speak to interconnectedness, and sculptural finials inspired by African cattle and traditional homesteads. Each vessel embodies the belief that a pot is more than a functional object; it is a keeper of memory. Drawing from African philosophies of belonging and collective identity, his ceramics honour the resilience of African womanhood, the guidance of fatherhood, the curiosity of childhood, and the enduring strength of community.

For Mququ, the vessel becomes a metaphor for home—a place of protection, nourishment, and shared history. Through clay, he transforms everyday objects into contemporary cultural artefacts that honour ancestral knowledge while contributing to an evolving African design language. His work invites viewers to reflect on how objects preserve stories across generations, carrying both personal and collective memory.

In recognition of his contribution to the field, Mququ received the Eastern Cape Three-Dimensional Craft Award in 2016. In 2026, his work was selected for 100 Beautiful Objects as part of the Ten X Ten exhibition at Decorex Cape Town, recognising his practice among a curated selection of outstanding contemporary South African design and craft. His work is held in private collections and continues to be exhibited through galleries, commissions, and contemporary craft platforms, contributing to the growing international dialogue on contemporary African ceramics.





Sikho Mququ

Mamlambo, 2026

Wheel-thrown Stoneware Ceramic Sculpture

64 x 36 x 36 cm

ZAR 65,000 excl. VAT



Sikho Mququ

Stand Tall, 2026

Wheel-thrown Stoneware Ceramic Sculpture

30 x 17 x 17 cm

ZAR 24,000 excl. VAT

Lars Fischedick

Lars has spent the last 25 years in the examination of 3 dimensional spaces: This has been achieved through architecture, model building, sculpture and installations.

Lars was born in Germany and worked in Contemporary Architecture and collaborated in various Exhibitions including Christo and Jean-Claude's Wrapped Reichstag Project for Berlin; one of contemporary arts most innovative projects in the mid 90's.

The artist moved to Cape Town in 2002 and since 2010 Lars has moved away from the architectural. By combining his knowledge of materials such as wood and resin with perceptual shifts from aerials to perspectives he has formed a new artistic narrative. A major influence in Lars's current work is his studies in mathematics and projective geometry, particularly explorations from the personal inner perspective to the geometrical infinite. Through his work, Lars gives his audience an experience of space, challenges their perceptual boundaries, and makes invisible aspects of this experience, visible. In his own words;

It is both logical and playful, mathematical and infinite.

Lars draws upon inspiration from the artists Kandinsky, Mondrian, Le Corbusier, Dali, Rietveld and the architectural experimentalists like the Russian Deconstructivists. The Haus-Rucker-Co and current architects like Liebeskind and Gehry are considered by the artist to be his artistic ancestors and companions. Tengely, Beuys, Serra and Christo were concerned with 'bending' the space in and around us and have provided Lars with contemporary references. Comparisons can be made with South African greats; Cecil Skotnes, Lucky Sibaya, Albert Newell – all experimentalists in the use of 3 dimensional space.





Lars Fishedick

Controlled Rupture 2, 2026

Mixed Media on Wood

56 X 42 cm

ZAR 38,000 excl. VAT



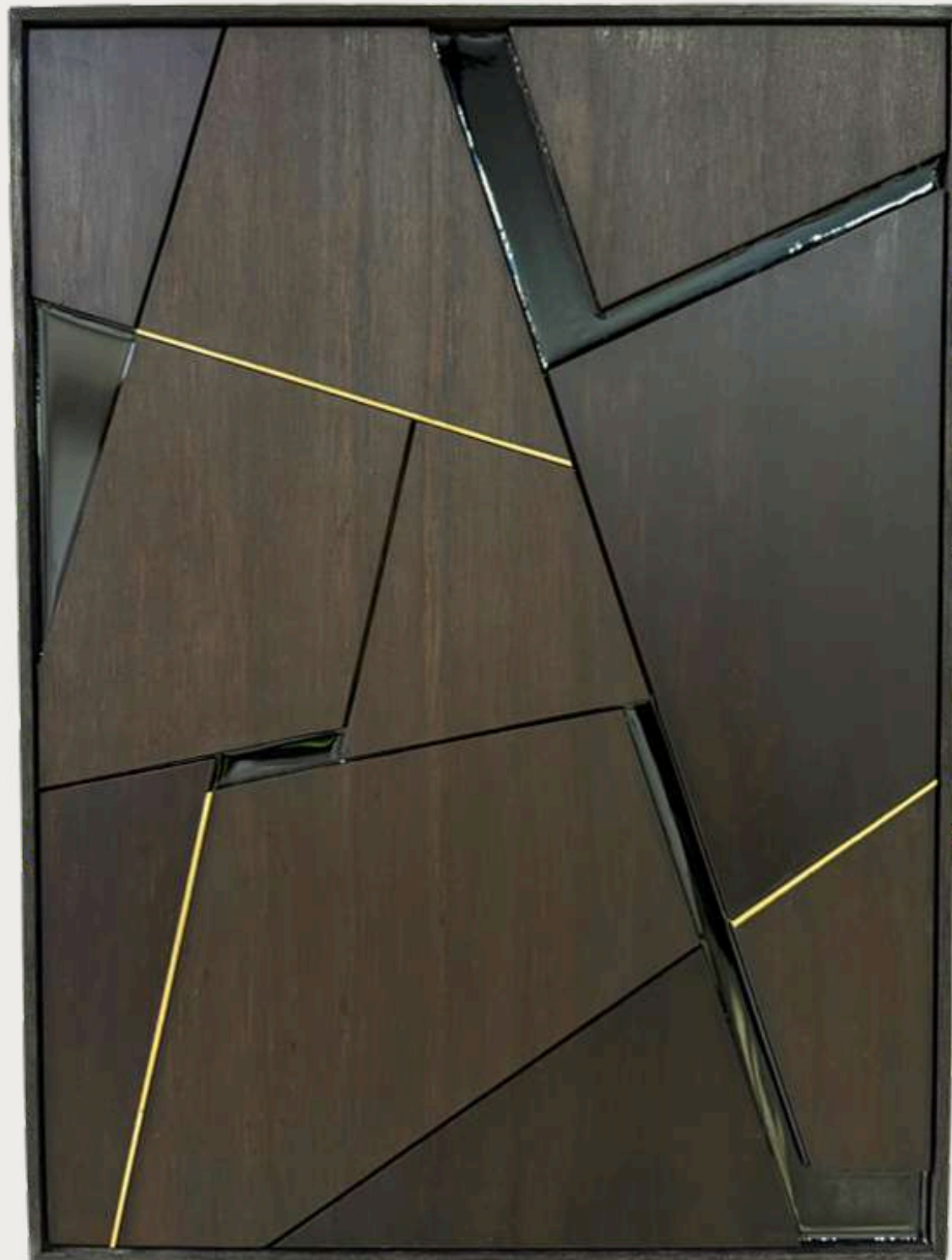
Lars Fishedick

Controlled Rupture 4, 2026

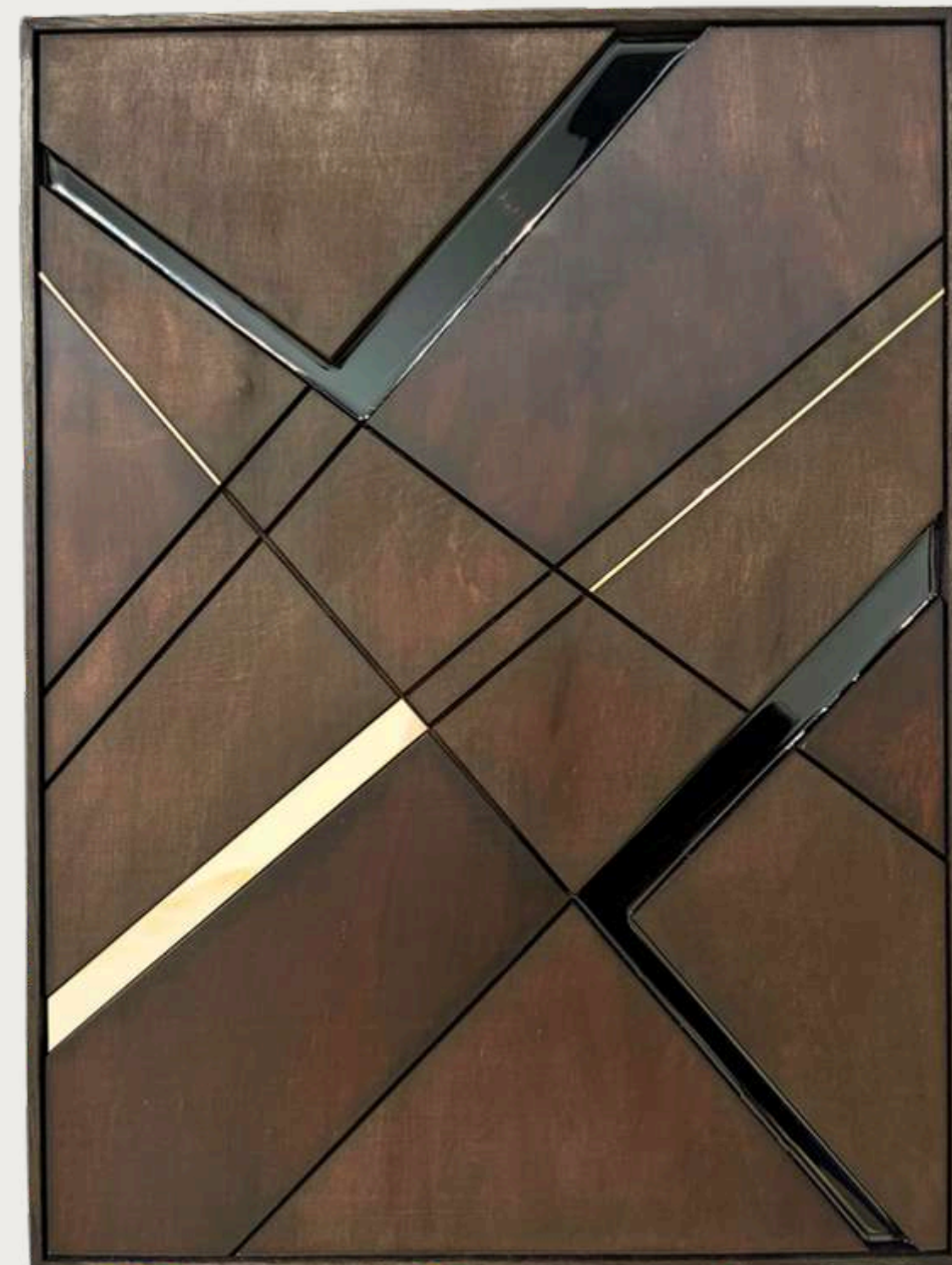
Mixed Media on Wood

56 X 42 cm

ZAR 38,000 excl. VAT



Lars Fishedick
Controlled Rupture 8, 2026
Mixed Media on Wood
56 X 42 cm
ZAR 38,000 excl. VAT



Lars Fishedick
Controlled Rupture 1, 2026
Mixed Media on Wood
56 X 42 cm
ZAR 38,000 excl. VAT

Hussein Salim

As a result of a tumultuous political and economical period in Sudan, which too brought about disputes of its historical context, Hussein Salim was displaced from Sudan and spent a number of years in various countries such as England, France, Germany, Norway and South Africa.

Despite his artistic training in University of Sudan for Science and Technology, he attained his High degree in art at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg. He has exhibited extensively overseas along with acclaimed local galleries, such as Bonisa Private Gallery, Elizabeth Gordon Gallery, Johans Borman and Eclectica Contemporary among others. Inspired by Sudan and Africa at large, the diversity and diasporic multicultural communal structure. His body of work aims to celebrate this through extensive layering of motifs masked by rich colours.

Following the example of graciousness, humility and resilience of the Sudanese, Hussein Salim has worked closely with NGOs such as African Angels and Buccaneers Outreach programs, who focus on the sustenance and uplifting of children and schools in marginalized communities with proceeds of his artwork sales being donated to various outreach schemes.





Hussein Salim

Desert Aesthetic 3, 2025
Mixed Media on Canvas
120 X 120 cm
ZAR 48,000 excl. VAT



Hussein Salim

Desert Aesthetic 4, 2025
Mixed Media on Canvas
120 X 120 cm
ZAR 48,000 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.