

Absa L'Atelier reveals category winners

Absa has announced the four category winners of the pan-African Absa L'Atelier initiative



Image supplied: Malebogo Naticia Molokoane's artwork

Chelsea Selvan (South Africa), Gandor Collins (Ghana), Taofeek Badru (Nigeria) and Malebogo Naticia Molokoane (South Africa) were the top winners of the pan-African-led art competition in each of their categories.

The Absa L'Atelier has a legacy of affording dynamic, inspiring and young visual artists from across Africa an opportunity to use their art to explore themes and contemporary issues.

After receiving a record number of registrations, hundreds of eligible entries were judged by an independent panel of adjudicators. An ambassador was then chosen from each of the three groups that were set up as follows:

- In Group A (Nigeria, Zambia, Botswana, Uganda), the winner is Taofeek Badru from Nigeria.
- In Group B (Tanzania, Namibia, Kenya, Ghana), the winner is Gandor Collins from Ghana.
- In Group C (South Africa, Seychelles, Mozambique, Mauritius), the winner is Chelsea Selvin from South Africa.

The Absa L'Atelier Gerard Sekoto award

The 2022 Absa L'Atelier Gerard Sekoto winner is Malebogo Naticia Molokoane from Rustenburg, in the North West.

Established 18 years ago, the Gerard Sekoto award goes to a South African artist who has continued to demonstrate integrity in the quality of their artwork. The award is made possible by the Embassy of France in South Africa, the French Institute of South Africa (IFAS).



Image supplied: Taofeek Badru's artwork

Malebogo Naticia Molokoane's work draws inspiration from the concept of concealed faces, exploring the personal emotions hidden behind facial expressions.

"We often question whether the face we see in the mirror is ours and from where our thoughts come. My body of work reveals the traits of emotional gestures and facial expressions. I attribute these traits depicted in my art to creating memories," she says.

Molokoane received a three months residence in the Cité Internationale des Arts, from April to June 2023, and a travelling exhibition throughout South Africa that will first open in the Absa Gallery in 2024.



Image supplied: Gandor Collins' artwork

Selvin, Collins and Badru will enjoy 10 intensive masterclasses with leading experts around the world to learn relevant skills that guide them in building their careers and networks while collaborating in their art practice.

To do this, they are equipped with resources such as a laptop, software, and data. They are also paired with a leading local authority in visual arts in their respective countries to be mentored over a period of three months.

The competition prize additionally includes a group exhibition of their winning artworks in the Absa Gallery, a collaborative exhibition in the Absa Gallery in 2023, which will thereafter travel to their respective countries and a solo exhibition in the Absa Gallery and which thereafter also travel to their respective countries – to be taken up within five years of winning the prize.



Image supplied: Chelsea Selvan's artwork

“The Absa L’Atelier has showcased and continues to invest, in some of Africa’s finest young artists. Since its inception, the competition focuses on how best to support the artist in growing their brand and provide a unique platform that will best position them within the visual arts. The prize is focused on providing the artist with the relevant skillset to develop and flourish in their field while navigating a world that is constantly evolving,” says Paul Bayliss, senior specialist art curator at Absa.

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