

THE ART OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Welcome Issue



**SYLVESTER FALATA
'MATHABANG MONETHI
TUMI MANNE-UNDER THE AEGIS
CITY THOBANE-ARTIST CONNECT**



LAPENG COLLECTIVE



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EDITOR'S NOTE

HLALEFANG MAKOETLANE



WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF LAPENG COLLECTIVE MAGAZINE!

We are excited to launch this publication, **The Art of Contemporary Art**, evolving from our blog series to spotlight the vibrant conversations shaping our artistic community.

In this issue, we feature the incredible talents of 'Mathabang Matty Monethi, Sylvester Falata, and Itumeleng Tumi Manne, along with City Thobane from Artist Connect. Their stories intertwine personal journeys with contemporary art.

- 'Mathabang Monethi explores memory and identity through her paintings, influenced by her experiences in Lesotho.
- Sylvester Falata merges art and fashion, creating narratives of love and optimism.
- Tumi Manne highlights authenticity in curating, inviting dialogue and connection through art.

We also invite you to savor our selection of 11 exquisite wines, curated to enhance your artistic experience—each sip a celebration of creativity.

We hope this issue inspires reflection on art's transformative power and its role in connecting our communities. Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey!

Cheers to creativity and connection!





CREATOR'S CORNER WITH MATTY MONETHI



A Hlalefang Makoetlane
X
Matty Monethi Conversation



*B*orn in 1996, Maseru, Lesotho, 'Mathabang' Matty Monethi is a trailblazing artist, and artpreneur. She joins Hlalefang Makoetlane of Lapeng Collective to reflect on her artistic journey.

HM: We are in the 2nd quarter of the year, how are you?

MM: In my personal life I'm doing really well, I'm good. In my professional life I'm a bit stressed and overwhelmed.

HM: Briefly tell us about yourself.

MM: I am an artist and business owner based in Maseru. I studied Fine Arts at art school and at university. My practice is an exploration of the interrelation between memory, migration, passage of time and personal archives.

HM: Your love for art, where did it all begin?

MM: I've always made things with my hands as a kid, whether it be drawing, making stick people, wire cars and sculpting with clay. My siblings draw too so that's just how I grew up. I also really enjoyed art as a subject throughout my whole life. A conscious love and appreciation for art (as I know it now) came in my late teens, my dad took me to art exhibitions in Addis Ababa.

HM: What kind of art do you do, and what inspires it?

MM: Primarily I am a painter. I make oil, watercolour, and gouache paintings. My work is retrospective and narrative in nature, I'm interested in the passage of time and how we recall past events as time progresses. I'm also inspired by the sentimentality that comes with looking at photographs, thinking about personal histories and trying to recreate those moments through paint.

A lot of meaning is made through remembering; the people involved, the spaces inhabited, and the self are part of that meaning making.

HM: Each artist does art for a reason. Be it to convey a message about weaving history into the modern day and age, or to simply express themselves amongst others. What's your why?

MM: It's what feels natural to me, it's how my brain works. It feels right for me to process life through making art, and keep record of it through writing and painting.

HM: You have several accolades to your name, from art residencies to exhibitions. The latest exhibition being the Schütz Art Society residency. How did the residency transform your artistic trajectory?

MM: The residency inspired an appreciation for my life in Lesotho right now and a desire to explore that through my art, and paint more landscapes. Lesotho is featuring a lot more in my work nowadays.

HM: Having been in the industry professionally for almost a decade, what lessons have you learnt (Reflections)?

MM:

1. Every artist should be a studio/artist assistant at least once during their career. I learned so much about art, business and community during my time as an assistant.
2. Making art is only fun half of the time, the rest of the time it is stressful.
3. The network and communities you become part of during art school or university are invaluable.
4. There are months of no motivation and inspiration.
5. Living in countries that value and support the arts is to be cherished.
6. Critique is good.
7. Self doubt doesn't go away.

HM: Thoughts on the creators' economy in Lesotho, and of course, South Africa as an artist?

MM: The creator's economy in South Africa is more established than in Lesotho. As a creator in SA you can see what you are or what you dream of reflected back at you. That's important to see and to experience as someone in the arts. We don't have that access and luxury here in Lesotho. Too few spaces to having a thriving creator's economy.

HM: You recently made a call to fine art practitioners to critique one another's work at their studios. What brought about the idea?

MM: Studio visits are something that I've had in the back of my mind for a long time. Having lived and studied in South Africa for years I'm used to studio visits and having that culture of critique. Coming back to Lesotho, that culture is lacking and I feel that gap everyday, it feels like I'm creating in a vacuum here. The call I made was triggered by a Facebook post by a fellow artist Alvin Lesoli, he said we need an art critic in this country. I felt we needed to draw it closer to home and work on a peer level first.





Jan 1981
Oil on canvas
70x51cm
2023

HM: A word to young, hungry and talented upcoming artists?

MM:

1. Technical skill is great, but it can only take you so far if you're not saying anything. Find a voice, have something to say. Photorealism isn't the pinnacle of art, don't get trapped, try other things.
2. Keep a visual diary and write down everything. Not all ideas are meant to be explored. Months or even years from now may be the time for them. New and better work can spark from old ideas.
3. Go to art school if you are able to.
4. Be open to critique, you'll be a better artist and person for it.
5. Apply for opportunities: competitions, grants and residencies. The application process gets you into the habit of thinking and writing about your work and practice, which in turn will help you speak about it. It's a great space for reflection.
6. Invest in your art. Buy better quality materials, prioritise presentation, and learn techniques and mediums outside your comfort zone.
7. Read.

HM: Where can people get hold of you, either for collaborations or art collection?

MM: Email is the best way to reach me, Instagram works too but I've been feeling apathetic towards social media for a while now so I'm not that active. My email address is on my IG page @matty_monethi.

Matty Monethi Gallery



Father Coffee
Watercolour monotype with
Kitakata collage
43x34cm
2022
Courtesy the artist and David
Krut Projects



Daniel
Oil on canvas
100x120cm
2023



A Joburg Still Life
Oil on canvas
60x50cm
2023



Lorentzville
Gouache and watercolour on paper
41.8x29.8cm
2022

Artworks by 'Mathabang Matty
Monethi





SYLVESTER FALATA

“...I come as one, But I stand as ten thousand...”



THE ART OF VERSATILITY

IN THE VIBRANT WORLD OF ART AND FASHION, SYLVESTER STANDS OUT AS A MULTIFACETED CREATIVE FORCE. AS A MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST, FASHION DESIGNER, AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR, HIS WORK IS A TESTAMENT TO THE BOUNDLESS INSPIRATION LIFE HAS TO OFFER- A REFLECTION OF HIS DEEP CONNECTION TO LIFE AND ITS COUNTLESS INSPIRATIONS.

Finding Inspiration in the Everyday

He finds inspiration from all of life. He always makes it an intention to navigate life with an open heart, mind, and eyes wide open to the mystery of it. There's a constant dialogue that is happening. And it's grounded in all of his work. He thinks of his work as a love letter to life, a love letter to love itself. He is deliberate in his work being optimistic, that is the intention that he devoted himself to. That is his divine assignment.



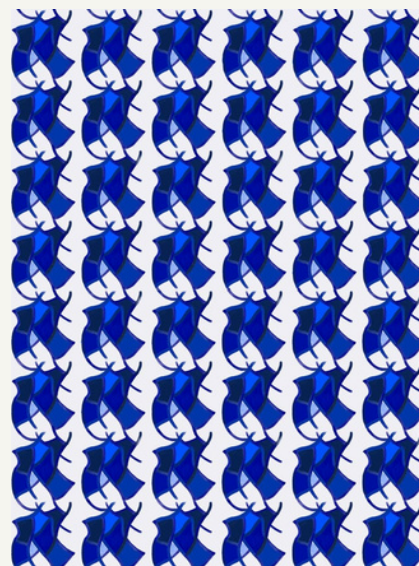
Image: Sylvester Falata (Supplied)



**“MAYA ANGELOU’S <I
COME AS ONE BUT I
STAND AS 10 000>
FROM ‘POEMS TO
OUR
GRANDMOTHERS’ IS A
CENTRAL THEME IN
ALL MY WORK. I LOVE
EXPERIMENTING THE
THEME ON DIFFERENT
MEDIUMS.”- FALATA**

A Poem That Changed Everything

In early 2020, Sylvester rediscovered Maya Angelou’s ‘Poem to our Grandmothers’ and there is a stanza that says “...I come as one, But I stand as ten thousand...” It was such a powerful moment he could viscerally feel those words anchor in his being, and they have become an entering theme to all his work. The knowing that we have so much support that is constantly available to us, we can dare to do great things, to be great. Because we don’t show up only as ourselves. So the intention behind his work is to anchor that knowing and for his work to be a reminder for anyone who interacts with it.



From paint to fabric-Sylvester Falata Maison x Standard Bank

**“Painting
is my
first
love,”**

-Sylvester Falata

When Art Meets Fashion

So, how does this all come together? For Sylvester, it's about letting his art guide him, no matter the medium. “Painting is my first love,” he admits.

Because the message is the same in all of his practices, it's a matter of just interpreting it across different mediums. However, it is the art that he ends up applying to fashion and ceramics, since painting is his primary focus. This allows him to apply the artwork to fabrics, for example, or to draw and paint on ceramics. He had an opportunity to do this on a project for one of his corporate clients, consulting on a corporate range for a blue-chip client. Part of the project involved developing a signature print that began as an artwork on canvas and ultimately ended up on garments. It was great to see the work take on a different life.



ABILITY TO BE VERSATILE

With his creativity having grown and expanded over the years, Sylvester embodies versatility as a multidisciplinary artist by seamlessly integrating fashion design, painting, and pottery into a cohesive artistic vision. His work consistently conveys themes of optimism and connection, allowing him to reinterpret his messages across various mediums. By drawing inspiration from life and influential figures like Maya Angelou, he infuses depth into his creations. This fluidity enables him to adapt his artistry to different contexts, such as developing signature prints for corporate clients, while maintaining his core identity. "There's a more profound, almost spiritual, intention behind the artwork I create—whether it's in my paintings or ceramics—and while fashion shares a similar sponsorship and purpose, the depth varies," said Sylvester for The System. Ultimately, Sylvester's ability to blend inspiration, message, and medium defines his creative versatility.

A LEGACY OF LOVE AND LIGHT

At the heart of it all, Sylvester's work is a love letter to life. It's about reminding us of our own strength, our own light. "I want my art to be a reminder," he says, "that we're capable of so much more than we realize. We just need to believe in ourselves." In Sylvester's hands, art isn't just something you see—it's something you feel. And that's what makes his work so unforgettable.



FALATA GALLERY









The background of the image features a collection of white plaster art sculptures. In the upper right, there is a sculpture of a human torso, showing the chest and abdomen. To its left, a large, textured wooden panel is visible. In the lower left, there is a sculpture of a human head, focusing on the eyes and nose. In the lower right, there is a small sculpture of a hand. A smooth, white sphere is also visible in the middle right. The background consists of various wooden and red panels, creating a studio-like atmosphere.

THE ART OF
CURATING
IDENTITY: A
JOURNEY
THROUGH TUMI
MANNE'S LENS

*I*n a world where art often speaks louder than words, **Itumeleng 'Tumi' Manne** of **Under The Aegis** stands as a beacon of innovation and reflection.

Tumi's journey began in a bustling family of six, where her father's unwavering support became the bedrock of her passion for art. "He pushed my three siblings and me to chase what we love," she shared, highlighting how this nurturing environment paved her path toward becoming a curator.

It's remarkable how familial encouragement can shape destinies, and for Tumi, it ignited a love affair with art that has only grown deeper over the years.



Image Supplied: Tumi Manne (Assistant Curator at Under The Aegis)

Reflecting on her early days in high school, Tumi recalled a time when her focus was primarily on honing her skills as an artist. "I started to fall in love with art, but it was the theory that truly captivated me," she explained. This shift in perspective allowed her to appreciate the rich history that permeates various art movements. Each brushstroke and sculpture is not merely an aesthetic choice but a dialogue with the past, a testament to the eras that shaped its creation.



Curating exhibitions is not just a job for Tumi; it's a philosophy grounded in authenticity. As she prepared for her recent exhibition, she continually asked herself a critical question: Do the artworks and artists resonate with the ideas in her curatorial text? This introspection ensures that her connection to the pieces is both visual and contextual, fostering a deeper engagement with her audience.

“I WANT MY AUDIENCE TO FEEL SEEN AND VALUED.” – TUMI MANNE

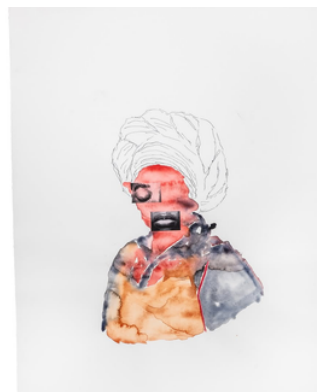
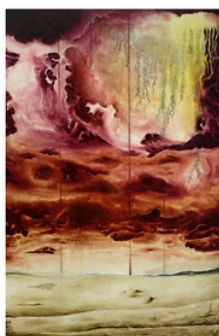
But what does she hope her audience takes away from these experiences? “I want them to feel seen and valued,” she said, emphasizing the importance of connection in art. In a world often marked by division, Tumi strives to create spaces where viewers can reflect on their own experiences through the lens of art.

Her first exhibition was a labor of love and research, stemming from her Honours thesis that explored the violent history of language in the representation of African art. This foundational work propelled her to investigate the broader systems of power and representation that continue to distort narratives around African cultural objects. “This exhibition became a platform to challenge those structures,” she noted, aiming to reframe African art through voices that resist colonial legacies.

Tumi was thrilled to unveil her exhibition, *Layers of Being: Art as a Portal to Identity*. The showcase brought together emerging artists, each presenting unique interpretations and styles. “I’m excited to convey how diverse our artistic expressions can be,” she expressed, her passion palpable. The exhibition was not just about art; it’s about the stories behind it and the myriad ways creativity can be expressed.

As we concluded our conversation, it was clear that Tumi Manne is more than a curator. She is a storyteller, a researcher, and a champion for voices that have long been marginalized. Through her work, she invites us all to engage with art not just as spectators but as participants in a larger dialogue about history and the transformative power of creativity.

In a world in need of connection and understanding, Tumi’s vision shines brightly, reminding us that art can indeed be a portal to deeper self-awareness and cultural appreciation.



Explore the Exhibition

These are the artworks which were featured in the Layers of Being: Art as a Portal to Identity exhibition at **Under The Aegis**. Each piece is a unique exploration of artistic expression, showcasing the rich tapestry of perspectives that define our shared cultural landscape.

Artworks by Brook-lynn Norkie, Edinah Chagwedera, Katleho Mosia, Liam Van Der Heever, Jason Langa, Lungile Ngcobo, Mhlonishwa Zulu, Mhlali Jiya, Samkelo Mchunu, Tuveso Landu, and Zenaéca Singh.

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Layers of Being: Art as a Portal to Identity



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Gomolen

THE BUSINESS OF ART

Creativity knows no bounds, yet artists often encounter obstacles that can stifle their potential. Enter **Artist Connect**, led by visionary director **City Thobane**, a transformative initiative that empowers artists with the support and resources they need to thrive. As Thobane eloquently states,

“Art is not just about creation; it’s about connection and visibility.”

Through collaboration and community, Artist Connect is redefining what it means to be an artist in today’s landscape. Join us as we explore the journey of Artist Connect and celebrate the remarkable talents it nurtures.

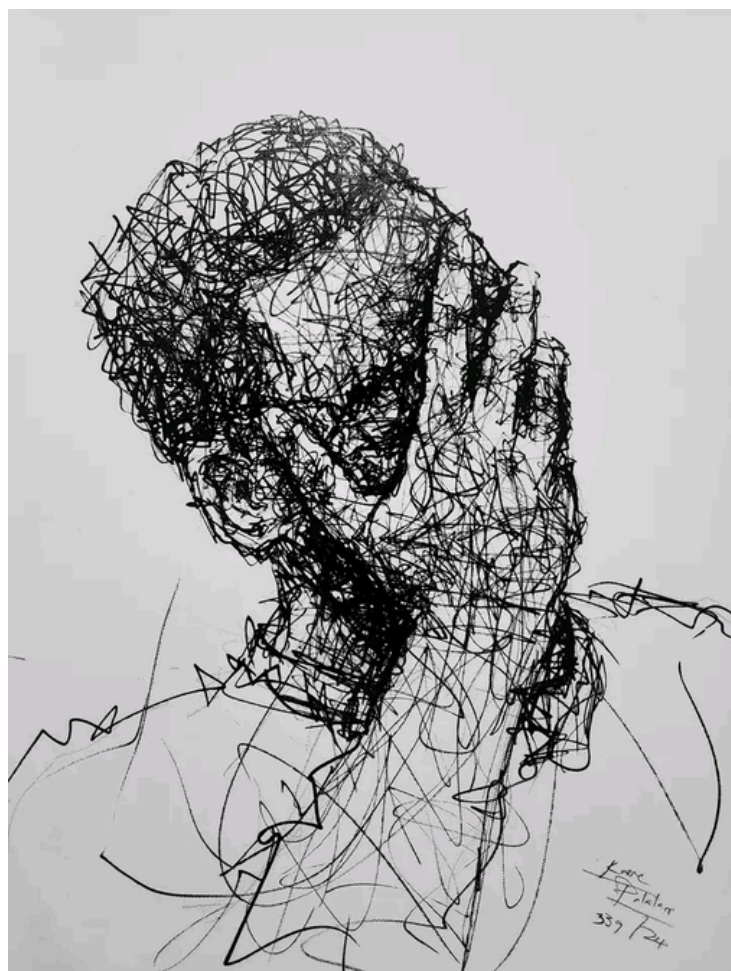




Image Supplied: City Thobane (Artist Connect Director)

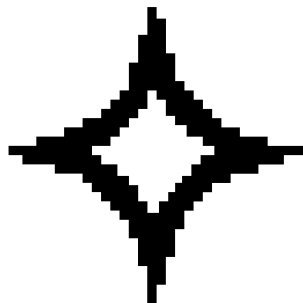
The Birth of Artist Connect

Artist Connect was born out of a deep understanding of the struggles faced by artists. “After years of working closely with artists, especially musicians, I saw how difficult it was for creatives to find structured support, opportunities, and proper documentation of their work for future generations,” the director explains. With the intention to build something that truly serves artists, Artist Connect was established under the company Sonic Sounds. The initiative not only organizes exhibitions like the Women’s Voices in Mental Health Art Exhibition and Kaene Palalani’s Chaos and Creation: The Art of Becoming, but also acts as an art collector, purchasing nearly 100 artworks from local creatives. “We actively support artists by buying their work, selling it, and renting pieces out to offices, homes, and collectors through exhibitions.”



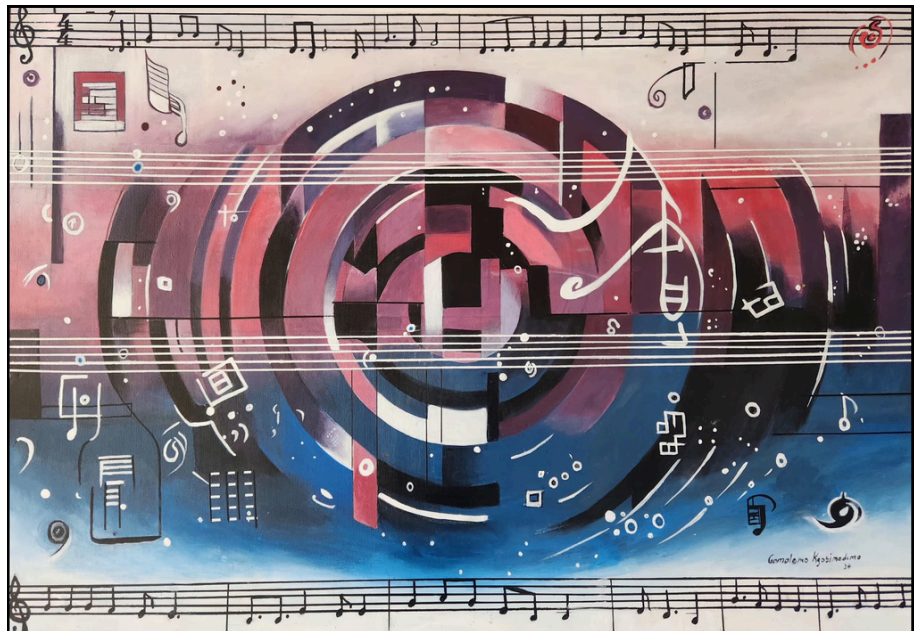
COLLABORATION ACROSS DISCIPLINES

At Artist Connect, collaboration is key. The organization supports a diverse range of artists—painters, sculptors, poets, dancers, and musicians. “We create opportunities for collaboration, whether through exhibitions, music events, or networking sessions,” the founder notes. Events like Kaene Palalani’s solo exhibition allow artists to share their journeys, while the Women’s Voices exhibition brings together creatives to express the complexities of mental health through art. Notable musicians like Banjo Mosele, Genius Senyatso, I_TERG SMK, Ndingo Johwa and Chedza Pansiri have benefited from Artist Connect’s management, event planning, and rehearsal coordination.



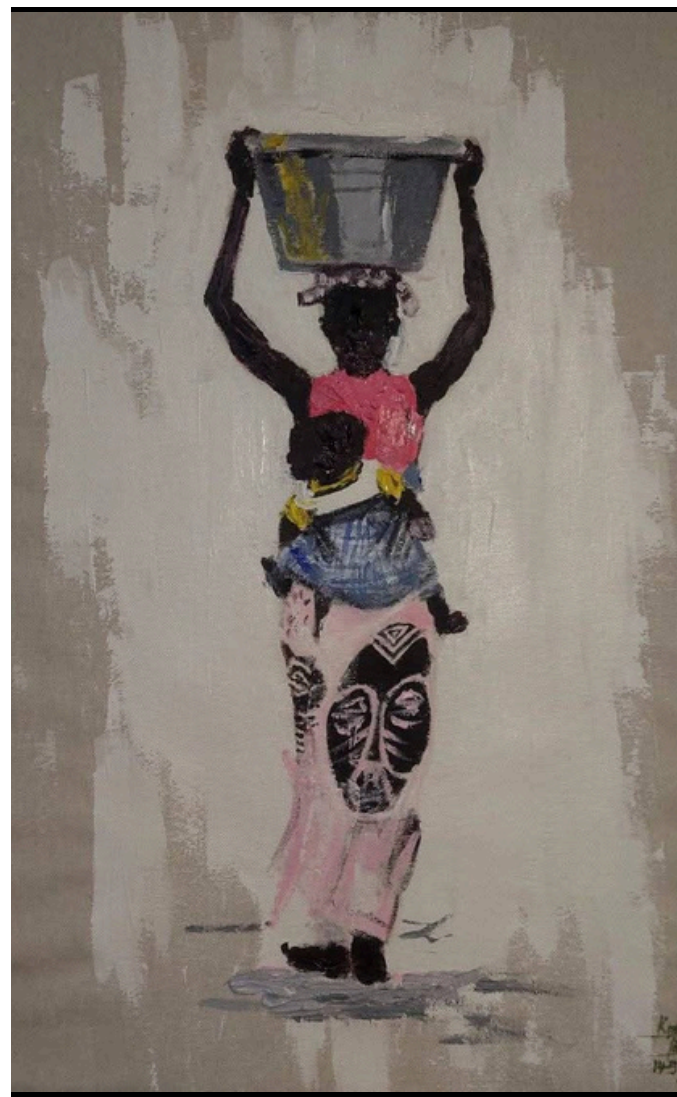
GROWTH IN BOTSWANA

In Botswana, Artist Connect is dedicated to fostering connections that can propel artists’ careers. “We connect artists with collectors, businesses, and event organizers through exhibitions, showcases, and professional networking,” the director states. Membership in the Botswana Entertainment Promoters Association enhances opportunities for exposure, while the online store enables artists to sell their work beyond local markets. Furthermore, Artist Connect Online Radio provides musicians with valuable airplay to reach a larger audience.



The Importance of Visibility

Visibility is a key component of success in the art world. “Visibility is key for an artist’s success. Having a strong online presence, being active on social media, and regularly profiling artists ensures they reach wider audiences,” Thobane emphasizes. Through the online store and radio station, Artist Connect increases artist exposure, which leads to opportunities like commissions, performances, and collaborations. The organization also offers consultancy services, helping artists apply for funding and grants to grow their careers.



Commitment & Support to Local Art Scene

Artist Connect is deeply committed to nurturing the Botswana art scene, ensuring that local artists continue to thrive. “We are committed to supporting artists across all disciplines: from painters to poets, sculptors to musicians,” Thobane affirms. Artist Connect recognizes that artists come from varied backgrounds and need guidance on the business side of art. “Artists are not just creators; they need to understand branding, pricing, and how to run a sustainable business,” the director explains. The initiative provides marketing strategies, sales guidance, and professional networking opportunities, ensuring artists have the tools to build lasting careers. Through Artist Connect’s COSBOTS registration as a webmaster, they make sure artists stay connected with key players in the industry.





Artist Connect
WHERE CREATIVITY MEETS OPPORTUNITY

THAT'S A BIZ

Advice for Emerging Artists

For new artists, the key is to seize every opportunity for growth. “Artists should use every opportunity to showcase their work, connect with audiences, and refine their craft,” Thobane advises. Engaging in exhibitions and selling through the online store can accelerate growth. Professionalism and networking are vital for sustainable careers, and Artist Connect provides the platforms necessary to achieve this.

Artist Connect stands at the forefront of empowering artists in Botswana, transforming challenges into opportunities through collaboration, visibility, and support. Under the leadership of City Thobane, this initiative not only nurtures individual talent but also fosters a vibrant artistic community that thrives on connection and shared experiences.







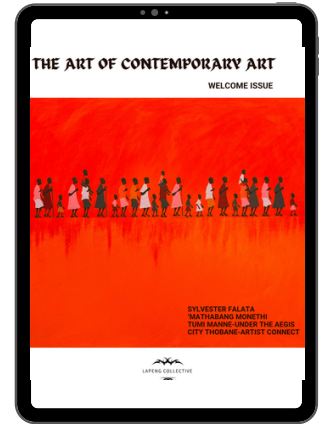
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