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**Kutlwano
Monyai**



Here to be Seen

Where art meets identity and possibility.

An artist and cultural ambassador using creativity to challenge perspectives and elevate African voices on the global stage.

Art has the remarkable ability to preserve memory, challenge convention and imagine new possibilities. For Kutlwano Monyai, it is all three. Through her work as a visual artist and the 2024 Absa L'Atelier Art Ambassador, she is helping shape a new narrative for contemporary African art, one that celebrates identity, sparks dialogue and invites audiences to see the world through a different lens.

Monyai's artistic practice is deeply rooted in storytelling. Her work explores themes of identity, belonging, memory and the lived experiences of young Africans navigating a rapidly changing world. Using visual expression as both a mirror and a conversation, she creates pieces that encourage viewers to pause, reflect and engage with the

complexities of society. Rather than offering simple answers, her art asks meaningful questions, making space for conversations that often extend beyond the gallery walls.

Her appointment as the 2024 Absa L'Atelier Art Ambassador marked an important milestone in an already promising career. As one of South Africa's most respected visual arts platforms, the Absa L'Atelier programme has long championed emerging artists who demonstrate exceptional creativity and the potential to influence the cultural landscape.

Through the ambassadorship, Monyai has become an advocate for the next generation of artists, highlighting the importance of mentorship, visibility and investment in creative talent. Beyond exhibitions and accolades, Monyai represents a growing movement of African creatives who are reclaiming the continent's narratives through their own voices. She understands that art is not merely decorative, it is an archive of lived experience, a tool for social reflection and a powerful vehicle for cultural preservation. Every canvas, installation and public engagement contributes to a broader conversation about who gets to tell African stories and how those stories are remembered.

As a young woman navigating the art world, she also challenges long-standing perceptions about whose work is celebrated and whose perspectives are centred. Her success serves as an inspiration to aspiring women artists, demonstrating that creativity can become both a profession and a platform for influence. Through workshops, public engagements and her growing visibility, she continues to encourage emerging creatives to

trust their voices and embrace the uniqueness of their artistic journeys.

Kutlwano reminds us that culture is one of a nation's greatest assets. By transforming personal experiences into universal stories, she is not only creating art, she is expanding representation, preserving heritage and ensuring that African women continue to leave their mark on the world's cultural canvas.