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# Newsletter CTIAF Edition

ARTROUTE

February 2025



# ART ROUTE

Dear Art Enthusiasts,

We had the pleasure of attending the 12th edition of the Cape Town International Art Fair, held from 21 to 23 February 2025. Bringing together artists, curators, and collectors from around the world, this year's fair embraced the theme of PLAY, which proved to be a resounding success. With 124 galleries from 58 countries, over 500 artists showcased their work to an audience of 30,000 visitors, making it a truly vibrant and dynamic event.

Read on as we highlight some of the standout moments, thought-provoking exhibitions, and emerging talents that made this year's fair unforgettable.

From the ArtRoute Team

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## TOMORROWS/TODAY WINNER OF 2025: AGNES ESSONTI

The Tomorrows/Today prize at the Investec Cape Town Art Fair, which celebrates groundbreaking emerging and underrepresented artists from around the world, has been awarded to Spanish-Cameroonian artist **Agnes Essonti**! This curated section of the fair offers a glimpse into the future of contemporary art, spotlighting innovative voices shaping the global art scene.

Essonti's exhibition featured stills from projects such as her *Chop Chop* film, which captures the full cycle of food preparation - from cooking and eating to the washing up process. Through this work, she explores the deep connections between food, memory, community, and language. She states that, rather than centering narratives of oppression, Essonti intentionally shifts the focus to joy, celebrating the everyday moments that unite and uplift minority communities.

In pieces like the fabric work titled *Monki no fayn but mama layk am* (2023) and the neon sculpture *Bush butter i swit fo mboa* (2022) she celebrates Pidgin, a mother tongue in her family history. The project also features pantry shelves displaying recipes, kitchen tools, and real food alongside a series of photographs exploring the intersection of food and queer identity: together, all these elements transform the exhibition into a subversive and anti-colonial cabinet, where viewers are invited to taste and share.

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## SPECIAL MENTION: MANKEBE SEAKGOE (BKHZ GALLERY)

Mankebe Seakgoe's practice centers around a distinctive text she developed during a period of self-discovery. Her works challenge conventional ideas of understanding, communication, and expression. The words she inscribes are not intended to be read; rather, they exist in an ambiguous space, a draft that remains intentionally obscure in order to be fully clear only to its author.

For *Tomorrows / Today*, Seakgoe presented a collection of works on canvas, board, and in sculptural form. The reflective ground is designed to resemble water, an element central to Seakgoe's journey of self-discovery, which is reflected in the flowing quality of her work. She visualizes herself within this experience through the image of a chandelier in *The Invisible Man* (2024–2025). This sculpture, composed of wire, glass beads, oil paint, crystal beads, and found materials, evokes the elegance and solitude of a suspended chandelier, embodying both presence and absence.

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## SOME MORE LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS



### THANDO PHENYANE

In *Part Black, Part Anomaly*, Phenyane's portrayal of the Black figure within a seemingly tranquil yet subtly unsettling theatrical setting introduces a dimension of play as enactment, where literature serves as a key reference point. His work engages with Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, a text that powerfully examines the psychological and existential violence of internalized racism - the self-assimilation of Black individuals into whiteness as a means of achieving social acceptance.



### WARREN MAROON

*820,000kms*: A Nissan Champ's windscreen features a skull etched into black paint, with shattered shards of toughened glass layered over the surface. White spray-painted text from Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* overlays the composition, reinforcing its themes of control and spatial restriction - and, by extension, the control of people. The title references the bakkie's extraordinary mileage within a single city, a distance equivalent to circling the globe 21 times.

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As this year's Investec Cape Town Art Fair comes to a close, we eagerly anticipate the 13th edition, set to take place from 20–22 February 2026, with an exclusive preview on 19 February 2026.

Mark your calendars for another dynamic showcase of contemporary art from around the world!

In the meantime, there's plenty more to explore in the art world. Join us at Artroute as we offer exclusive tours of Cape Town's galleries, with exclusive access to artist studios.

We can't wait to bring you highlights from upcoming exhibitions, events, and emerging talent in our next edition - stay tuned!

Thank you for reading!

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