

# Quarterly Newsletter

ARTROUTE

February 2026  
CTIAF edition



# ART ROUTE

## Dear readers

February once again brought an unmistakable energy to Cape Town's art scene. We had the pleasure of attending this year's Cape Town International Art Fair last weekend, where galleries, artists, and audiences converged for one of the most anticipated moments on the cultural calendar.

As always, the fair offered a rich snapshot of contemporary practice — from established names to compelling new voices — alongside the conversations and encounters that make this season so dynamic.

Read on as we reflect on some of the highlights, notable presentations, and works that captured our attention.

From the Artroute Team.



The Investec Cape Town Art Fair returns for its 13th edition from 20 – 22 February 2026 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, marking its most ambitious iteration to date. As the largest international art fair on the African continent, it continues to convene leading galleries, artists, collectors, and curators from across the globe.

Guided by this year's curatorial concept, *Listen*, the fair foregrounds attention, presence, and exchange. The 2026 edition features 126 exhibitors from 34 global cities, presenting the work of over 490 artists, alongside a strong presence of first-time participants.

The programme once again brings together the curated sections *Tomorrows/Today*, *SOLO*, *Generations*, and *Cabinet/Record*, alongside the core sections *Main*, *Lookout*, and *Editions*, with the addition of the special project *Performance*. Together, these platforms offer a dynamic cross-section of contemporary practice.

Produced by Fiera Milano Exhibitions Africa, the fair remains a key fixture of Cape Town's cultural calendar, fostering dialogue and global connection.

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## INVESTEC EMERGING ARTIST AWARD 2026 | Warren Maroon



One of the standout moments of this year's fair was the recognition of Cape Town-based sculptor Warren Maroon, awarded the Investec Emerging Artist Award 2026. Maroon's practice centres on the poetic transformation of found and discarded materials, using everyday objects to construct works that speak to memory, survival, and lived experience, particularly in the context of his upbringing in the Cape Flats.

Particularly striking was *Rising Sun*, a work composed of matchsticks and broken glass. The piece encapsulates a tension that runs throughout Maroon's work — fragility and resilience, danger and beauty — while subtly reflecting the social landscapes that inform his practice.

Working with a visual language shaped by materiality and resourcefulness, Maroon's sculptures invite close looking. Ordinary objects become charged with new meaning, encouraging viewers to reconsider value, visibility, and the narratives embedded in material culture.

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## PRIZE WINNER | TOMORROWS/TODAY PRIZE 2026



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 Nigerian-British artist Chidirim Nwaubani! This curated section of the fair offers a glimpse into the future of contemporary art, spotlighting innovative voices shaping the global scene.

Nwaubani, founder of *Looty*, creates immersive works that blend art, technology, and cultural reclamation. Using digital practices to reimagine the past as a living, generative force, his projects challenge conventional art paradigms and conjure worlds where history informs the present and empowers storytelling.

His work has been presented at the Venice Biennale and London Design Biennale, and featured in the *BBC*, *Reuters*, and *Frieze*. Within this year's Tomorrows/Today section, titled *If you listen carefully, the air is full of laughter*, Nwaubani's exhibition reflected the fair's curatorial concept, Listen, engaging viewers in narratives of memory, culture, and innovation.

The prize, supported by Fiera Milano Exhibitions Africa, was selected by an international jury led by curator Dr Mariella Franzoni, alongside Liese van der Watt, Ugoma Ebilah, and Sean O'Toole.

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## AMY RUSCH | MATERIALITY PRIZE

Congratulations to Amy Rusch, the inaugural winner of the Materiality Prize, presented with Homo Faber. The award recognises artists whose practice demonstrates innovative materiality, reimagined techniques, and contemporary artisanship.

Rusch will join the Homo Faber Fellowship Masterclass in Venice, Italy — a fully sponsored programme pairing emerging talents with master artisans. Francesco Ozzola, Gallery Director at Suburbia Contemporary, notes: “We are very glad that she won the prize, because she's working in critical environment discourse.”



## SIBUSISO BHEKA | ORMS INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE



Congratulations to Sibusiso Bheka, the first recipient of the ORMS International Photography Prize, celebrating photographers who treat the medium as a critical, conceptual tool. Bheka says: “The win for me represents hope and also patience.”

The prize includes a cash award and a Canon imagePROGRAF PRO-1100 printer for gallery-quality archival prints. Selected by a jury including Roger Ballen, Gabriella Kannemeyer, and Mike Ormrod, the award highlights photography’s evolving role in contemporary art.

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# BNAP FOUNDATION | INTRODUCING THE 2026 BLESSING NGOBENI ART PRIZE FINALISTS

The Blessing Ngobeni Art Prize, presented by the BNAP Foundation, supports emerging South African artists under 35, offering studio residencies, mentorship, workshops, a materials budget, a stipend, a solo exhibition at Everard Read Gallery Johannesburg, and potential acquisition for the JSE Art Collection. Now in its ninth year, the prize continues to champion new talent and foster professional development.

The 2026 BNAP Finalists:

Andries M. Moroaswe | Drashti Naik | Jakinda Boya | James Ndlovu | Kamogelo Mosehla | Kgothatso Mokale | Khakhalethu Gxiya | Sagwadi Mohlabi | Silindokuhle Shandu | Siyambonga Mangwentsu



These artists were selected for their exceptional creativity and commitment, and will participate in the residency program to develop their practice and careers. Thank you to Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Everard Read Johannesburg, and Art Angels for supporting this flagship initiative and helping emerging South African artists thrive.

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## Thank you for reading!

February set the stage for an exciting year in art — stay tuned for more highlights and reach out for curated tours and insights.

ARTROUTE	CALL: +27 (0)82 091 0859
WWW.ARTROUTE.CO.ZA	EMAIL: BOOKINGS@ARTROUTE.CAPETOWN

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