

# Quarterly Newsletter

ARTROUTE

July 2026 edition



ART

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## Dear readers

As winter settles over Cape Town, we're delighted to share another edition of the Art Route newsletter, celebrating the people, places, and partnerships that continue to shape the city's vibrant creative landscape.

In this issue, we reflect on recent collaborations, revisit highlights from RMB Latitudes and Decorex Cape Town 2026. Whether you're a seasoned collector, an avid design enthusiast, or simply curious to explore the local art scene through a creative lens, we hope these stories inspire your next cultural adventure.

From the Artroute Team

**DECOREX<sup>®</sup>**  
AFRICA



## **Inspired by Decorex Cape Town 2026**

This past weekend, the CTICC played host to Decorex Cape Town 2026, Africa's leading décor and design showcase. Bringing together more than 230 exhibitors, the event celebrated the very best in contemporary design, craftsmanship, innovation, and interior trends from across the continent with “Soft Life” as its theme.

From bold material explorations and immersive installations to thoughtfully curated spaces, Decorex once again demonstrated the power of great design to transform the way we experience our environments. It served as a reminder that art and design are deeply connected—both enriching the spaces we inhabit and the stories they tell.

As we continue to engage with artists, collectors, and designers, events like Decorex inspire new conversations around creativity, collaboration, and the role of contemporary art within beautifully considered interiors. Decorex is also heading to the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg from July 30 to August 2, 2026

## **Decorex 2026: An Expert's Perspective – In Conversation with Nonhlanhla Mditshwa a.k.a TigerLilly**

Decorex Cape Town is where the worlds of art, design, and innovation converge. Fresh from this year's exhibition, we caught up with one of Artroute's Art & Design Specialists, Nonhlanhla Mditshwa, to discuss the standout moments, emerging trends, and creative ideas that are shaping the future of contemporary design.

### **What made Decorex 2026 stand out from previous years?**

What really stood out for me was how they utilised the space this year, it felt massive compared to previous years. The larger footprint made navigating the exhibition so much more interesting, and it was incredible to see so many more brands on board.

### **What were the biggest trends you noticed this year?**

Texture is definitely having a major moment in the design scene right now. I noticed a massive shift toward bold colours, rich textures, and a really strong emphasis on sensory experiences.

### **Was there a particular installation, designer, or space that really captured your attention?**

I always love the NOSSO stand, and they rightfully won Best Stand this year! They're a Brazilian brand based right here in Cape Town, and they offer the most amazing variety of quirky, one-of-a-kind homeware. Woolworths also consistently delivers incredible stand design, but this year they really elevated things by focusing on natural materials like clay and creating a fully immersive sensory experience. It was an absolute treat.

**How do you think contemporary art is influencing interior design today?**

It's bringing a massive wave of bold color and raw texture into the mix. I think people are finally willing to take risks and are happily shying away from the boring, safe choices of the past.

**How do you think Decorex reflects the current state of South African design?**

While our design industry still has room to grow, Decorex is doing phenomenal work pioneering a space for emerging designers. By giving them a platform where consumers can physically interact with their products, it's becoming an invaluable part of the local creative ecosystem.

**What's one idea from Decorex that readers could bring into their own homes?**

Don't be afraid to be bold! Embrace the unusual, take a few design risks, and step outside of your comfort zone.

**What are you most excited to see in South African design over the next few years?**

I'm really excited to see how technological innovation and creativity will continue to merge, becoming seamlessly integrated into people's everyday lives.

*If Decorex has sparked your imagination, why not continue the journey? Join us for one of our curated art and design tours, where you'll discover exceptional contemporary art, gain insight into South Africa's vibrant creative landscape, and explore how thoughtfully selected artworks can elevate both residential and commercial spaces. Whether you're an avid collector, a design enthusiast, or simply looking for inspiration, we'd love to welcome you. Get in touch to book your next art and design experience.*





## **RMB Latitudes**

Every year, artists, exhibitors, galleries, curators, and art lovers from across Africa gather at the iconic Shepstone Gardens in Johannesburg for the RMB Latitudes Art Fair. One of Africa's largest art marketplaces, the Fair provides a platform to discover, promote, and celebrate contemporary African art by connecting artists, galleries, and collectors in support of the creative economy. Read below as Talita Swarts, founder of Artroute, shares her highlights from this year's RMB Latitudes Art Fair and reflects on what made the event memorable.

## **Reflections on Latitudes 2026:**

**By Talita Swarts, owner of Artroute**

Walking into Latitudes this year, I was met with a bold banner draped down the facade of Shepstone Gardens: "People are more important than things." It's part of Exhibition Match, an initiative by Alexander Richards and Phokeng Setai that uses football and art to build community beyond the white cube, bringing people who might never set foot in a gallery into direct contact with art instead. It set an intriguing tone for a fair that started life on the fringes, built on the idea of drawing new audiences, especially a younger generation, into the world of collecting.

It's a sentiment I couldn't shake all evening, standing right in front of a trophy, at a fair whose real purpose, at the end of the day, is to sell art, which no matter how we dress it up, is still an object someone will own. And this year, Latitudes delivered on that purpose well: smaller works, a wonderful turnout, real energy from local visitors, and strong mobilisation of corporate and private investment. Most galleries left happy with sales in a tough market. That is no small thing, and it deserves recognition.

I was proud to see this play out at BNAP's booth, where I was directly involved through JSE's sponsorship. The idea behind our support has always been to help BNAP build a more sustainable organisation and to create a real platform for emerging artists to access the art market, not just visibility, but actual sales and professional footing.



Still, that trophy kept nagging at me. What trophies do I keep on my own mantelpiece, and what does it say about what a whole society chooses to display and celebrate. We polish our wins and put them on a shelf, but a shelf only tells you what someone decided was worth keeping. I would love to see fairs like this lean further into work that risks something, art that grapples with our politics, our environmental future, our social fractures. Difficult, uncomfortable work sells too, and it can do more than sell. It can change how we see things

One booth that stayed with me was presented by Untitled, showing Nazeer Jappie's solo exhibition *I need to talk about living room*. The work is quiet on the surface, tidy rooms, a sofa, a folded cloth, a clock stuck at the same hour, but it holds real unease underneath. Jappie builds his roomscapes around absence rather than spectacle, letting small traces stand in for what has happened and gone unspoken, work that speaks, without flinching, to the aftermath of violence in the home. In a country where domestic violence remains a serious and urgent problem, having an artist willing to sit with that discomfort, and having a full booth of collectors respond to it, felt significant. The booth sold out.



*Untitled | Featuring I Need to Talk About Living Room, by Nazeer Jappie. Photography by Anthea Pokroy.*

This is exactly the kind of bold, uncomfortable, necessary work I want to see more of next year. Artists, gallery owners, and curators are people too, trying to make a living in a struggling economy, and that is real and it matters. But we cannot lose perspective and become purely commercially driven. It is not only about what sells. It is also about what we say through the work we choose to show, and Jappie's artworks and Untitled willing to take the risk proved those two things are not at odds.

Come on, art world, let's risk more. Let's decide, together, what's actually worth putting on the mantelpiece.





*Untitled | Featuring I Need to Talk About Living Room, by Nazeer Jappie. Photography by Anthea Pokroy.*



## Until Next Time

Thank you for being part of the Artroute community. We look forward to sharing more stories, exhibitions, and creative experiences with you in the months ahead.

*If any of this month's features have sparked your interest, we'd love to welcome you on one of our guided art and design tours or help you curate a bespoke cultural experience tailored to your interests.*

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