

# What is shaping culture? Art

By  Brett Rogers

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How does one value the importance of art?

Academics talk about how art is good for the soul as well as its nation and about how being around art makes places more attractive to live in.

Activists will tell how art provides them with the freedom of speech that is so often lacking in many places around the world.

Art provides healing for the creator as well as the viewer, providing a free space to engage with what is being said but from the perspective that they – you – choose to see it from.

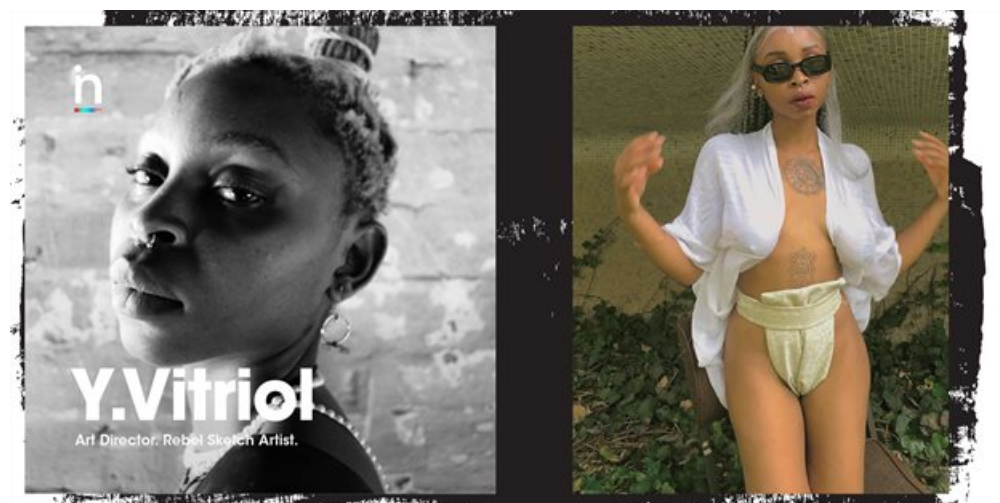
The arts sector in South Africa outperforms the country's economy with a growth rate of 4.8% per year between 2011 and 2016, compared to 1.6% for the rest of the economy. This despite the fact that many/most artists live without being able to live off of their art: it's one of those unquantifiable relative industries, with no guarantee that hard work will pay off.



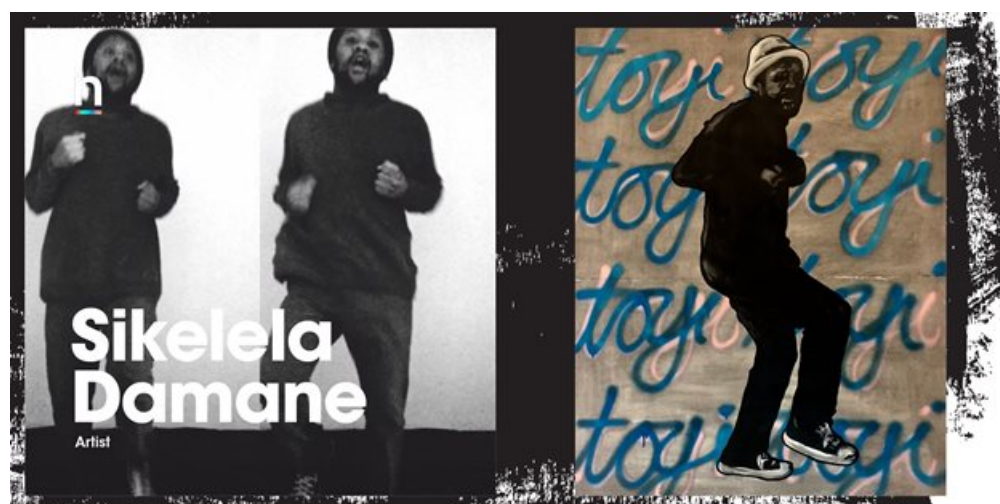
In this article we'll be exploring some of South Africa's talented young visual artists. The country is spoilt for choice when it comes to this remarkable talent and these young expressers are the future of the visual medium in our country.

Y.Vitriol is a most modern of artists. Among other mediums she has combined the self-portrait and selfie to enhance her vision, one of a disturber of conformity. She has taken something that has been derided and mocked, the selfie, and turned

it in on itself making it more important and communicative than ever before.



Sikelela Damane's work is provocative for a reason – he pokes politics, and social discourse with his paintbrush evoking strong reaction from anyone who sees his work. He reflects the times back at us, like the show “black mirror” brought to life.



Lwando Dlamini initially started out doing autobiographical work focussing on his own difficult personal experiences. This work brought him peace of mind guiding him to try and express hope to others experiencing suffering.

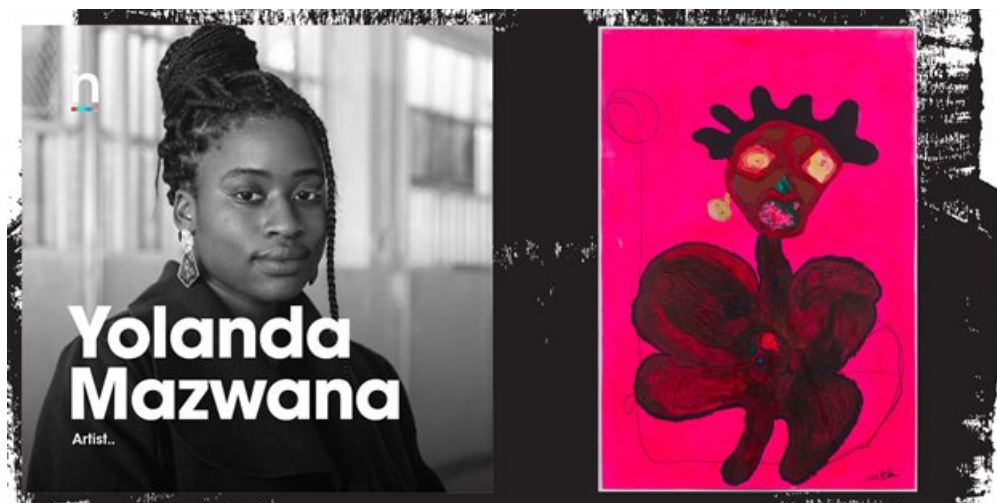


Ravéle Pillay is a thoughtful young artist whose personal and empathetic work expresses deep emotion, offering the viewer a glimpse into her mind. She uses family photos and archives as a starting point to investigate themes of colonialism,

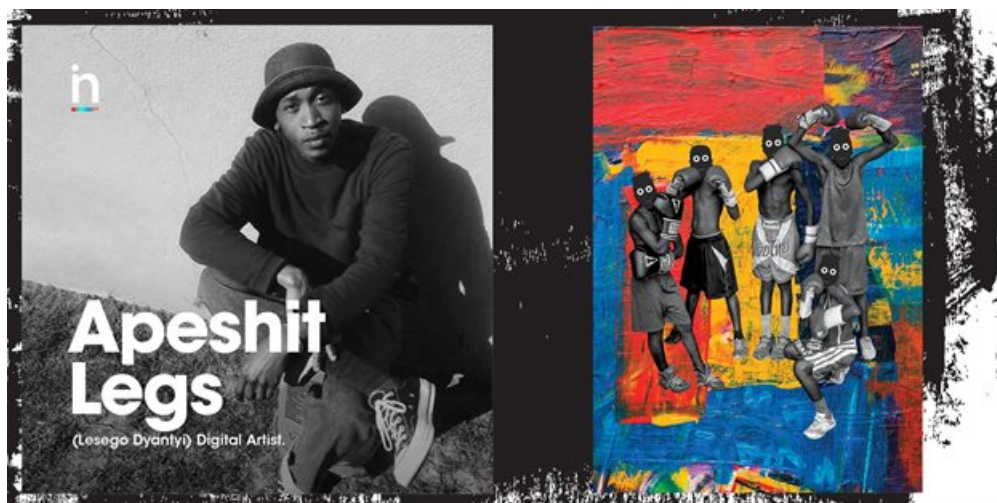
private and collective memory, trauma and ideas of aspirational identity.



Johannesburg-based and Eastern Cape born, Yolanda Mazwana works primarily in paint. Her work focuses on mental illness, popular culture, phobias, relationships and storytelling, and the prime narrative of her latest show Symptoms of Nothing centres on hypochondria.



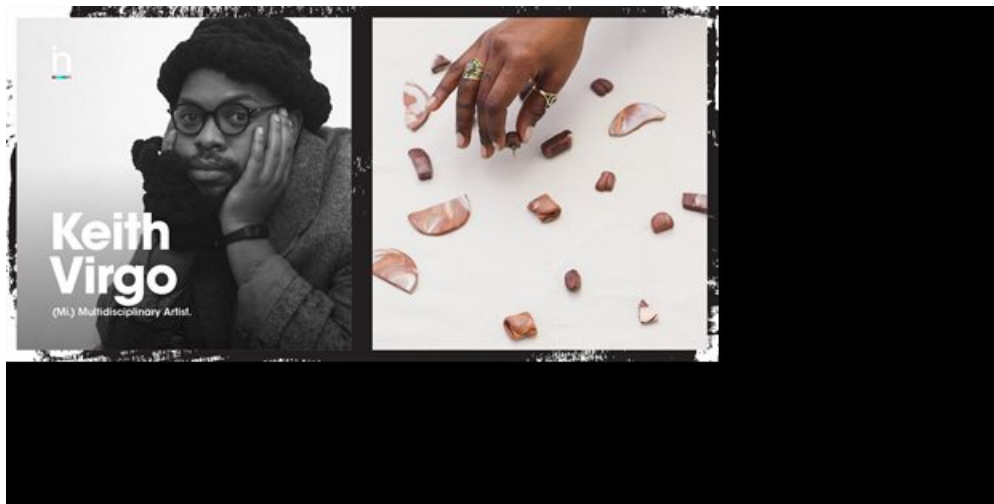
The inspiration behind Apeshit Legs' art and his character, Dolphin, tell a common tale of a young man with big dreams and big aspirations. Dolphin gives voice to those who can see the towers of the Silver Castles but cannot get in, either through a twist of fate or extremely challenging circumstances.



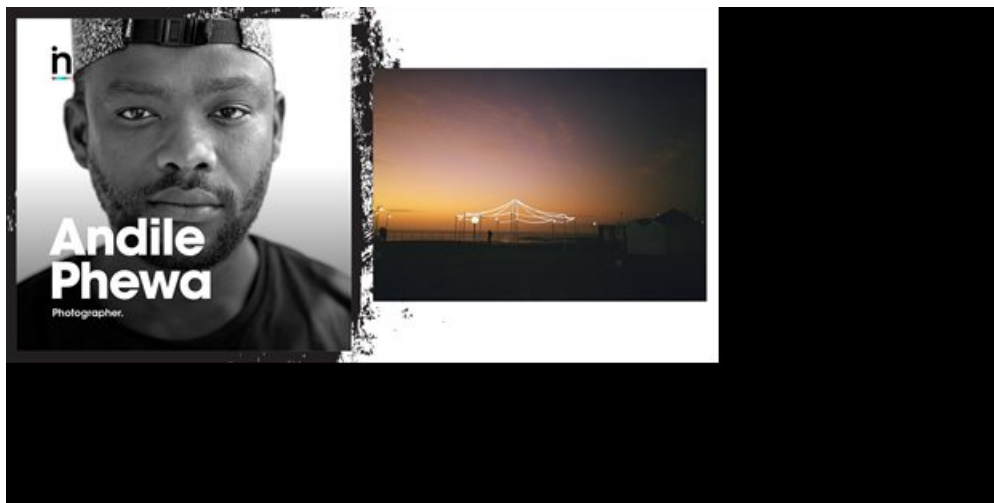
Keith Virgo experiments in multiple mediums of creation, taking his skills out of the world of traditional art and into fashion,



creating works of art that are wearable and evocative.



Andile Phewa is a photographer who has used his creative skills as a therapeutic outlet. While helping him deal with personal issues it has also provided a platform for him to build his skills and forge a career as a director.



These artists are all young, ambitious and talented individuals. But talent, hard work and desire are far from reliable elevators in the subjective world of art, so please go follow them and support their work.

Someone who supports and drives art is MJ Turpin, the co-director of Kalashnikov Gallery in Johannesburg. When he started Kalashnikov, his goals were to address some of the lack of support for artists that results in them being traded and treated like commodities. He wanted an alternative to the “traditionalist white cube gallery spaces.”

Turpin says that the challenges that young artists face is to not be “swayed by the generic and easy cookie cutter ‘sellable’ aesthetics and to create challenging, thought-provoking work.”

When asked what we can do to support the arts in our country, Turpin's answer is simple.



## ABOUT BRETT ROGERS

Brett Rogers, culture lead at Cape Town advertising agency HaveYouHeard and content curator for In\_, a channel of content, which showcases cultural forces that are changing the world. It aims to inform, inspire and entertain the viewer and does so with multimedia posts, including podcasts, videos, google trends, mini Q+A's and more. In\_ talks to those interested in in-depth cultural exploration and those curious about the world we live in.

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