

Spotlight on SADC's emerging artists

By [Michael Appel](#)

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The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) on Thursday evening launched the Soul of Africa Art Exhibition, thus creating a platform for artists to exhibit their works.

The initiative, which featured art works from African countries such as Madagascar and Angola, also gave local artists from Gauteng and the Western Cape the chance to put their work on display.

The exhibition is aimed at creating opportunities for young and talented artists from previously disadvantaged groups, and is also showcasing works by already established artists.

Speaking at the opening of the exhibition, Chief Executive of the DBSA Paul Baloyi – himself an avid art collector – said: “Let’s take this opportunity to acknowledge the beauty of the art works here today.

“This exhibition is about the fourth time the DBSA has been involved in providing support and opportunities to those artists that don’t have the opportunity to display their work.”

The Chief Executive highlighted that all the art work was for sale and that the DBSA had already purchased a number of works for its collection.

Baloyi added that art in any community is linked closely to the soul and heartbeat of the people and that art reflects the spirit of time and reveals the inner currents of culture, tradition and consciousness.

Dr Fikile Dilika, a chief director at the Department of Arts and Culture, highlighted that initiatives such as these were critical in showcasing the economic value of the arts to young people.

Dr Dilika said all art work not sold would be put on display at the International Jazz Festival taking place in Cape Town in March 2008.

Patrons of the arts and guests at the launch of the exhibition were privileged to hear internationally acclaimed poet, writer, sculptor and academic Professor Pitika Ntuli deliver his address.

Prof Ntuli highlighted the value of a bank investing in the future of arts and culture, comparing it to centuries ago when wealthy patrons of the arts invested in the great Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael.

He said the economic value of the arts was clearly evident as the Sistine Chapel and many other art works were still being visited hundreds of years after being completed.

“Who is to say we don't have a future Leonardo da Vinci or a Michelangelo amongst the artists here tonight?” Prof Ntuli said.

Art is an expression of a person's consciousness and perspective, he explained, adding, that just as ugliness could be found in the most beautiful art work, absolute beauty could be perceived in ugliness.

The Professor delivered two of his most famed poems, alternating amongst a variety of languages with the ease and passion of a literary genius.

The exhibition will be open until Tuesday, but viewing of the art pieces by members of the public is by appointment only.

Should you wish to view art works by some of Africa's next Da Vincis, please contact DBSA Project Manager Manda Bester on (011) 313-3320 or e-mail:

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