

Art like a child

The Absa Gallery stand at the 2012 [Design Indaba Expo](#) takes its cue from the theme of this year's Absa L'Atelier Art Competition - "creating art is like giving birth" - and showcases 24 artists' creative interpretations of their "art child." The public can view these artworks, as well as buy them on site. [multimedia]



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"We understand that an artist's artwork is part of them, like giving birth to their own children. So building on the Absa L'Atelier campaign, we invited 24 previous entrants of the Absa L'Atelier art competition - including a former Absa L'Atelier winner and Absa L'Atelier Gerard Sekoto winner - to create their own art child from generic moulded dolls," explains Dr Paul Bayliss, Absa Art and Museum curator.

"These unique and artistically designed dolls provide great insight into how these artists perceive their creative journeys and make for wonderful pieces for local art enthusiasts.

Visitors can wander through the display of 48 dolls which in itself makes for a compelling installation."

Ad campaign builds on theme

Running simultaneously with the Design Indaba Expo is this year's advertising campaign promoting the 2012 Absa L'Atelier Art Competition. Comprising viral, radio and print executions, the campaign is hinged around the idea that to an artist, his art is like his child. It features the works and insights of previous Absa L'Atelier winner, Stephen Rosin, and Absa L'Atelier Gerard Sekoto winners, Retha Ferguson and Billie Zangewa.

"Taking cues from the previous winners' works of art and using prosthetics, paint, make-up and fabric, we turned normal children into something extraordinary - 'art children'. These being a metaphor for what a piece of art represents to the artist and what he/she went through during the creation process," explains Bayliss.

"Art children"

These "art children" were then photographed and exposed to the world in print ads and videos for the viral campaign, along with the individual artists' stories. The radio campaign takes the same idea and plays on the mind of the listener using duality and intrigue.



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The annual Absa L'Atelier Art Competition celebrates its 27th anniversary this year. Rated as one of the longest-running art contests on the continent, it offers talented local artists the chance to win a six-month residency at the world-renowned Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, an award that will help launch a promising artist's career. Consequently, the competition attracts hundreds of entries from across South Africa every year. Only one winner will walk away with the prize.

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