

Ubuntuland: Africa's first metaverse marketplace launch

Africa's first metaverse marketplace, Ubuntuland, launched on Monday, 28 February 2022, at an event in Sandton. MTN and M&C Saatchi Abel as well as superstar Boitumelo Thulo (popularly known as Boity) have all bought into it.

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#) 1 Mar 2022



Supplied: Boity's Queen Boity avatar reveals her first virtual reality music video

Created by Mann Made, Ubuntuland houses Africa's first digital domain Africarare, a 3D virtual reality immersive hub.

Described as a place of creativity, exponential technology and innovation, through which Africa's true potential can be unlocked by connecting the continent to the heart of the digital economy, Ubuntuland will showcase some of the best of African art, fashion, entertainment, sport, tech and creativity and will provide a platform for artists from across the continent to showcase their work.

MTN and M&C Saatchi buy first land

The first virtual land in Ubuntuland will be available to be open to public land sales from the second, maybe as early as April or the third quarter of 2022.

MTN has already secured a 12x12 village (144 plots of real estate) in Ubuntuland and says that it intends to increase its customer attractiveness through a series of experiences merged with consumer passion points like gaming and music in Ubuntuland.

Another company that has purchased land in this virtual world is the South African advertising agency, M&C Saatchi Abel.

Speaking from Ubuntuland, Mike Abel, M&C Saatchi Group South Africa, founding partner and CEO, says that the pandemic has seen how easy it is to live in a mixed reality world.



“We believe in the combination of the real and virtual world and the metaverse is opening up new ways for people to interact.”

He adds that Ubutuland establishes local representation in a growing global digital universe. “It will open the continent up to significant digital and economic growth opportunities for both talent, clients and industry colleagues to come together to solve business and even societal challenges with creativity.”

What is Ubutuland?

Inspired by the often-used circular enclosures to houses communities of traditional Africa's architecture, Ubutuland comprises 204,642 plots of land made up of different village sizes in various community hubs. The land is positioned and priced according to a tiered value system.

Landholders will be able to customise their 3D land spaces, such as hosting shops, producing resources, renting virtual services and developing games or other applications.

There will be designated spaces for the community to work, play and wellness. State of the art meeting rooms, online therapy rooms (with optional anonymity), concert stages, film festival spaces, meditation lounges and other dynamic interactive environments will take place here.

More is also planned, such as staking, DAO (decentralised autonomous organisation) and blockchain play-to-earn gaming.

Be whoever you want to be and buy

The avatars in Ubutuland will be available for purchase shortly. The earliest settlers of Ubutuland are the Normunda tribe, who are artists.

Developed by South African artist, Norman Catherine, this tribe is based on the artist's signature lexicon, which has fetched record prices in galleries around the world.



At the launch, Boity's first virtual reality music video was revealed. The star then appeared live in her Queen Boity avatar outfit. The Boity tribe comprises 10,000 avatars and a Boity village currently being developed. Fans will be able to purchase Boity avatars soon and there are plans for virtual concerts.

Ubuntuland currency

In the Africarare marketplace, creators and developers can trade in in-world assets such as land, avatars, avatar additions and other goods and services that are and will be available in Ubuntuland.

The marketplace focuses on four main areas: Art, Ubuntuland, Avatars & Skins and Digital Services. Users will also be able to trade on secondary platforms such as Opensea and others.

The Ubuntuland currency will be the \$UBUNTU token, which is built on the Ethereum blockchain and available later this year.

Everything in Africarare can be bought, sold or traded using \$UBUNTU tokens, including buying, developing, selling or renting plots or villages in Ubuntuland, and the in-world purchases of digital goods and services. The valuation of the token will be calculated according to what users invest/build / play/trade inside the metaverse.

Showcasing Africa's creativity

The virtual world will be significant in showcasing Africa's creative to the world.

There will be two art galleries. Already open is the Mila gallery (Swahili for 'tradition'), which will host curated collections by some of Africa's foremost artists, while the Inuka gallery (Swahili for 'rise') will feature works by emerging African artists from later in 2022.

Both galleries will stage various exhibitions on an ongoing basis with art pieces sold as Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT).



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Speaking at the event, Mic Mann, co-founder and CEO of Africarare, says that Covid-19 has propelled us into the online world. “Our mission in Africa is the application of technology to educate, inspire and empower.”

Mann says they have been experimenting with VR for six years and now they are ready for the metaverse. “Now is the time to create an African metaverse. We cannot get left behind.”

He adds that not only is Africa growing exponentially, with has one of the highest crypto adoptions in the world.

Shayne Mann, co-founder of Africarare says Ubuntuland is the latest moment in internet history. “The mark is prime for operating in the metaverse.”

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

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