

# Wycliffe Mundopa for the 2021 FNB Art prize win

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FNB Art Joburg is proud to announce the winner of this year's FNB Art Prize – Wycliffe Mundopa. Mundopa was born in Rusape, Zimbabwe and now lives and works in Harare. This is after he decided to devote his life to painting at the age of 15. He attended the National Gallery Zimbabwe Visual Arts Studios from 2005- 2007. As the winner of this year's prize, Mundopa will open his solo exhibition on the 31st of October at Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG).

"I'm very honoured to win the prize this year especially because I have exhibited in South Africa for a number of years now, this really solidifies my ties with the country and the many people who support my work here," says Mundopa. "It's also important to me to show in museums and galleries in Africa because most of our work is exhibited abroad. As an artist who's living and working on the continent, I think it's important to have such platforms," he says.



Congratulations Wycliffe Mundopa on being the 2021 FNB Art Prize winner. Above is his oil on canvas painting titled **The Wisdom of Elders Part 1, 2021**.

## Unapologetically Wycliffe Mundopa

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Committed to bearing witness to the lives of the most vulnerable in his community, his works consistently speak to social and political upheavals of life in urban Zimbabwe. In this context, the lives of women in particular frame his practice and social commentary. “I paint women mainly, not in the literal sense, but as a metaphor reflecting what happens in my society,” he explains. Mundopa’s imagery is audacious and unapologetic, bridging vernacular visual metaphor or Harare street slang with classical genre painting compositions of Dutch masters and post-impressionistic verve in line and colour. “Wycliffe Mundopa is a vivacious, upbeat, whacky colourist. His vision of Africa is life-affirming. This is evident in his convivial pleasure-loving vision, which twists provocatively into the macabre,” says FNB Art Prize judge Ashraf Jamal – a research associate in the Art and Design Research Centre at the University of Johannesburg. This year’s winner was

selected by a committee consisting of Jamal as well Nicole Siegenthaler (fair manager at FNB Art Joburg) and Musha Neluheni (curator of contemporary collections at Johannesburg Art Gallery).

The FNB Art Prize has become one of the most coveted visual art prizes on the African continent ensuring home-based recognition for artists on the continent. “With FNB Art Joburg being the first art fair in Africa, it has always been our agenda for the FNB Art Prize to be reflective of the entire scope of the best of the best of art that comes from the continent,” says Mandla Sibeko, Director of FNB Art Joburg. “It’s exciting to see the evolution of the prize as it celebrates various genres and this year we’re celebrating a painter and even more exciting is the fact that he’s from Zimbabwe. A lot of focus has been placed on the political unrest with very little being said about the creativity of the Zimbabweans so for us it’s important that we keep highlighting the excellence that comes from that region,” he adds.

## **Mundopa presents *Zva\_nyadza***

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As the 11th FNB Art Prize recipient, Mundopa joins a prestigious list of previous winners since the launch of the prize in 2011. He receives a cash prize as well as a solo exhibition, which opens to the public at the Johannesburg Art Gallery on 31 October 2021.

Bonga Sebesho, Head of Sponsorships at FNB adds, “We remain committed to supporting and growing the arts and creative economy in South Africa and the rest of Africa. FNB’s 14-year involvement as a sponsor of this prestigious platform demonstrates our commitment to be a trusted partner that empowers artists to be change agents through their artwork and the communities that they live in. At FNB we pride ourselves to be the bank of #TheChangeables and believe that art plays a crucial role in how we can contribute to society. We would like to congratulate Wycliffe Mundopa for winning the 2021 FNB Art Prize.”

For his first solo exhibition with JAG, Wycliffe Mundopa will present *Zva\_nyadza* – a brand new body of work. He dedicates it to the memory of his mother. It’s a suite of more than fifteen monumental new canvases elevating and celebrating the drama and exaltation of the lives of Zimbabwe’s extraordinary, ordinary women, who are the beating heart of the country. Unapologetically, women have been the relentless and overwhelming inspiration for Mundopa’s practice. In *Zva\_nyadza* he is honouring his mother’s fate as the first woman whose life he bore witness to. He also reflects the fate of all women of Zimbabwe who thrive in the unlivable, who are fierce, beautiful, resilient and courageous enough to claim joy and happiness despite what life and the world serves them.

With photography and photo manipulation overwhelming the field of figuration the value of the painter speaking to a direct lived experience has been deprioritised. Mundopa’s lifeblood, his works, are invested in speaking otherwise.





Oil and spray paint by Wycliffe Mundopa | A Rose by Every Other Name Part 1, 2021

## Wycliffe Mundopa's solo exhibition at Johannesburg Art Gallery

The opening of Wycliffe Mundopa's solo exhibition at JAG (31 October) will serve as the closing event of FNB Art Joburg's gallery weekend titled Open City. The exhibition opening is free and open to the public from 2 pm – 5 pm. Anyone that wishes to attend can RSVP to [banelez@joburg.org.za](mailto:banelez@joburg.org.za)

Mundopa's work is represented in private collections in the U.S.A, Hong Kong, Kenya, Australia, France, the UK, Germany, Japan, Kenya, the Netherlands, Zimbabwe and Cameroon.

### His recent exhibitions include:

- 2020-2021 Level Mosi-oa-Tunya, First Floor Gallery, Victoria Falls
- 2020 1001 Afternoons, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London, UK (in Prizm and FNB Art Joburg)
- 2019 Kubatana, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Norway
- 2018 Defying the Narrative, Ever Gold Projects(San Francisco, USA)
- 2018 Tomorrows/Today solo: Cape Town Art Fair with First Floor Gallery Harare (Cape Town, South Africa)
- 2017 Right at the Equator (Depart Foundation, Los Angeles, USA)
- 2017 Another Antipodes /urban axis (PS1 Art Space, Freemantle, Australia)
- 2017 Collaging the City at First Floor Gallery Harare (Harare, Zimbabwe,)
- 2016 VOLTA with First Floor Gallery Harare (New York)
- 2016 Flaunt, Africa New Wave Now at Ethan Cohen Fine Arts (New York)