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## **Smithsonian National Museum of African Art Takes Its NMAFA+ Series to South Africa**

### ***10-Day Art Experience Will Be Focused on Race in the Creative Community***

Lovers of African art have a new event to look forward to in Johannesburg. Beginning Aug. 25, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art will host NMAFA+ Joburg, a 10-day series of art experiences at Constitution Hill.

Titled "The Demonstration," and curated by Johannesburg-based artist Siwa Mgoboza, the experiences will focus on the theme of Our Shared Future: Reckoning with Our Racial Past, which aligns with the Smithsonian-wide initiative to address systemic racism and racial inequity in the U.S. and globally. The experiences include:

- An "AtWork" workshop for young people on creative leadership and personal development, in partnership with Moleskine Foundation and led by renowned curator Simon Njami
- Johannesburg Through the Eyes of Artists—City Tours in partnership with Johannesburg Art Fair's Open City
- African Artists Host Public Conversations on Race and Migration, Incarceration, Representation, Migration and Resistance
- Curator-led student tours

"The Demonstration" is anchored by a participatory exhibition designed to support and amplify South African artists whose work pushes boundaries and provokes important conversations. Featured artists include Nobukho Nqaba, Sihile Masongo, Patrick Bongoy, Nelisiwe Xaba and Ayana V. Jackson.

“We believe in art as an important catalyst for conversation and to reimagine change,” said Ngairé Blankenberg, director of the National Museum of African Art and herself a South African. “Siwa Mgoboza has brought together some remarkable artists to challenge us to confront issues of racism that are so persistent and pervasive in both American and South African societies. At NMAfA, we are reimagining the museum to help create sustainable, regenerative art ecosystems throughout global Africa, and NMAfA+ experiences are just the first step in this experimentation.”

Moleskine Foundation’s intensive, hands-on, five-day workshop will engage youth in sessions of critical thinking, debate and creative doing to build skills for personal and social transformation.

“Our mission is to unlock the creative potential of young people all over the world to transform themselves and the communities around them,” said Adama Sanneh, CEO and co-founder of Moleskine Foundation. “We are excited to work with NMAfA and Constitution Hill, with whom we share the same vision of creativity for social change. Our signature educational format AtWork, hosted for the first time in Johannesburg, will help spark new critical debates and conversation with this vibrant, young creative scene.”

Students from selected schools will tour the exhibition with the curator and participate in programs designed by Constitution Hill’s education team. It is especially poignant that the experience will take place at Constitution Hill, an iconic site of heritage, creativity and justice.

“Constitution Hill is built on the key pillars of art and justice,” said Constitution Hill CEO Dawn Robertson. “This Smithsonian initiative for social change aligns completely with our efforts at Constitution Hill to inspire positive social change and build a more equitable future for all. It provides an opportunity for us to facilitate discussions around the complexities of racial and social justice while elevating and empowering the voices of young people through the public programs we will facilitate aligned to the exhibitions and workshops.”

### **About the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art**

The Smithsonian is a diverse museum and research complex in Washington, D.C., dedicated to the increase and diffusion of knowledge. As the world’s only public museum devoted exclusively to Africa’s arts from antiquity to today, the National Museum of African Art highlights, through its collection and exhibitions, the visual arts of global Africa. Begun in the 1960s, the accessioned collection—which spans diverse geographies, time periods and media—drives many of the museum’s programs and is a primary vehicle through which the museum carries out its mission to serve communities globally. As part of an ongoing and radical revisioning, the museum now also provides

dynamic and collaborative art experiences in locations across the continent and throughout global African spaces to nurture regenerative art ecosystems.

### **About NMAFA+**

NMAFA+ is a series of experimental art experiences throughout the African diaspora produced by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art. These “pop-up” art events enable African audiences to “visit the Smithsonian” while fostering cross-cultural engagement, creativity, coalition building and scholarship.

### **Constitution Hill**

Constitution Hill is a living museum and heritage site that tells the story of South Africa’s journey to democracy. The site is a former prison and military fort that bears testament to South Africa’s turbulent past and, today, is home to the country’s Constitutional Court, which endorses the rights of all citizens and hosts a permanent curated art collection of more than 400 pieces that reflect on themes of justice, human rights and reconciliation. Showcasing four museums, pop-up exhibitions, public events and rapid-response programs, the museum is also home to the Creative Uprising Hub and South Africa’s only Human Rights Festival.

### **The Moleskine Foundation**

The Moleskine Foundation is a nonprofit organization that aims to inspire a new generation of creative thinkers and doers able to affect change in their communities and beyond. Some of the key strengths of the foundation include its original approach, the lean organizational structure, the established brand and its mission of Creativity for Social Change. The foundation has implemented 20 chapters of its AtWork program, starting in Dakar, and including in Abidjan, Kampala, Cairo, Addis Ababa, New York, London and Maputo.

### **FNB Art Joburg and Open City**

Johannesburg is the cultural and economic capital of Africa, and FNB Art Joburg is its leading art fair. Art Joburg believes there is no better place than Johannesburg to show all of its best artists under one roof. Because artists are best served by strong galleries—with long-term representation, physical exhibition spaces and free entry for the public—Art Joburg is run for galleries with galleries and is committed to further building the region’s gallery infrastructure. As Africa’s longest running contemporary art fair held in the culture capital of the continent, FNB Art Joburg has mandated itself to sustainably support and grow the continent’s cultural offering in ways that go beyond the traditional art fair. When the world was struck with a pandemic and FNB Art Joburg could not host a physical fair, it found a way to serve the arts by activating the city and its creative economy through the

inaugural Open City held in October 2021. In its quest for economic stimulation and inclusivity in the creative arts, Open City looks to give independent and emergent cultural practitioners working in art, music, performance, film, food and fashion an opportunity to reach a wider audience of culture consumers.

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