

Addis Fine Art Presents Best Ethiopian Art Works In Johannesburg

[September 5, 2018 newbusiness](#)

This year the annual, premium visual art event on the African continent marks the 11th edition of the FNB Joburg Art Fair. 2018

The Painters

After his sell out show at AFA's Addis Ababa Gallery this summer, **Tadesse Mesfin** (b.1953) has created four new works from his Pillars of Life Series especially for this fair.

Winner of the 1998 prestigious Mid-American Arts Alliance (MAAA) fellowship, Tadesse Mesfin was born in Weldia, Ethiopia in 1953. He attended the Addis Ababa University School of Fine Arts and Design where he was taught by Gebre Kristos Desta, receiving a Diploma with a distinction.

He then attended the Repin Academy of Painting, Architecture & Sculpture in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1984, where he graduated with Honours in a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Painting.

Tadesse Mesfin has spent the last thirty-three years teaching at the Alle School of Fine Art, where he has influenced a generation of painters including, Addis Gezehagn, Dawit Abebe, and Merikokeb Berhanu.

Addis Gezehagn (b.1978), a long-time artistic presence in Addis Ababa, is known for portraying the multifaceted characteristics of the city's residents by detailing the external facades of their homes.

His signature piece for the fair “Joburg Floating Tower, 2017” from his series Floating Cities, features the deconstructed anatomy of the Vodafone building in Johannesburg offering a cross-section of residents’ lives fraught with narcotics and homicide.

By examining the personal and public spaces Gezehagn’s works archive walls and towers destined to crumble, tracing a pattern of classism and social injustice.

He urges to think beyond homes as functional entities and offer commentary on the socio-economic context of urban life. Gezehagn is a 2011 graduate of Addis Ababa University’s Alle School of Fine Art.

Merikokeb Berhanu (b.1977) born in Addis Ababa, she attended the Addis Ababa University Fine Arts and Design School (2002). Merikokeb creates an aloof, almost subterranean atmosphere in her paintings.

An array of life bearing forms, such as orange seed pods, embryos, fallopian tubes, and pulsing cells, appear set against a network of gaunt, drooping female figures, and surreal yet earthly structures.

Both growth and decay appear in equal measure. Her work at once appears to be a celebration of these life-bearing forms, as well as something more decidedly complex – in her words, “the light, line, complexity, and density of the wide, thick fog and smoke; the happiness and hopefulness, misery and bliss of this life we are passing through.”

Eyerusalem Jirenga (b.1993) is an exciting emerging artist from Addis Ababa. Informed by her experience in design, she now uses photography to document and display living history.

She specialises in evocatively bright and discerning portraits, enlivening them with distinctive and striking colour detail. Her use of rich textures and colours plays against the crisp focus of her photographs, enhancing their warm, visually stimulating effect.

Eyerusalem has received considerable acclaim for her work both within

Ethiopia and internationally. She has exhibited in the New York photography festival Photoville 2016 and participated in the New York Times Portfolio Review 2016.

Her photographs have been featured on the Everyday Horn of Africa, and will feature in Mfon: Women Photographers of the African Diaspora.

Addis Fine Art: Founded by Rakeb Sile and Mesai Haileleul, Addis Fine Art is the very first local space and international platform based in Ethiopia. The gallery focuses on highlighting fine art from the Horn of Africa region and its diaspora.

In January 2016, Addis Fine Art opened its main gallery space in the heart of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia launching an innovative programme of exhibitions, talks and events, showing a diverse set of modern and contemporary artists from Ethiopia and the diaspora.

In October 2016, the AFA Project Space was opened in London, to provide an additional international platform to the gallery's programme. Addis Fine Art is quickly becoming the leading gallery in the region, and continues to strengthen its cross-continental presence at prominent art-fairs, supporting its artists in exhibitions around the globe.