

FNB Art Prize winner announced

Zimbabwean artist, Kudzanai Chiurai has been announced as the winner of the second annual FNB Art Prize.

Born in Zimbabwe, Chiurai an internationally acclaimed young artist based in South Africa was awarded a R100 000 cash prize as well as a booth in which to showcase his work at the FNB Joburg Art Fair taking place from 7-9 September 2012 the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa.

His boldly stenciled figures and anonymous text provide running commentary, leads viewers on a journey through his intricately painted turn-of-the century buildings, bustling streets and congested transit systems. This is what captured the attention of Fiona Rankin-Smith and Julia Charlton of the Wits Art Museum, Paula Aisemberg of la Maison Rouge and Ross Douglas and Cobi Labuscagne from Artlogic - the judges of this year's FNB Art Prize.

Chiurai, who was awarded with a cheque for R100 000, has participated in a number of local and international group exhibitions, including the Dakar Biennale, Senegal; Africa Now, a travelling exhibition in Scandinavia; as well as New Painting, a local travelling exhibition in 2006.

The Goodman Gallery has exhibited his work at Paris Photo 2009, the 2010 Armory fair in New York, and Art Basel Miami Beach 2009 and 2010. His work featured on two major international exhibitions in 2011: Figures & Fictions: Contemporary South African Photography at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and Impressions from South Africa, 1965 to Now the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which has recently acquired Chiurai's work for their collection.

The FNB Joburg Art Fair has been running annually since 2008 and is transformed to display the largest selection of African contemporary art to buy and view under one roof. All galleries that take part in the Fair were given the opportunity to submit one of their artists for consideration.

For a man of few words, Kudzanai Chiurai is not afraid to speak his mind - which he does, loudly and brilliantly, through his art. His brutal honesty and fearless commentary on the status quo had him exiled from his homeland, Zimbabwe, and helped accelerate his rise as an internationally acclaimed artist by the age of 30.

Despite sell-out shows, exhibitions abroad and his art hanging on the walls of New York's Museum of Modern Art and in Elton John and Richard Branson's homes, Chiurai remains unaffected: a cut-off observer, clearly speaking his truth. His only future agenda is to return home to Zimbabwe to teach kids about art.

For more on the FNB Art Fair, go to www.fnbjoburgartfair.co.za.