

Emerging Painting Invitational (EPI) Prize Winners for 2022 Announced

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA (February 17, 2022)

The Emerging Painting Invitational (EPI) is the African continent's largest invite-only art event dedicated to painters and painting. The winners of the 2022 edition of the competition, the third since the prize's inauguration, were revealed at an evening event hosted by art auction house Strauss & Co on 16 February.

"Supporting the EPI prize is an important part of our ongoing commitment to young artists on the continent," said Susie Goodman, Executive Director of Strauss & Co. "We were particularly encouraged this year to see outstanding work by artists from eight different African countries – Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, and Tunisia – with really strong woman artists making their voices heard."

A Grand Prize of \$3,000, sponsored by Strauss & Co, was awarded to Ravelle Pillay (South Africa)

The winning artist's oil on canvas works titled 'The Birthday Party I & II' and 'Cake' are available to purchase on Strauss & Co's EPI February Online-only auction.

A Second Prize of \$2000, sponsored by Emerging Painting Invitational, was awarded to Natnael Ashebir (Ethiopia) for his acrylic on canvas works titled Layers of Life I, II, III.

A Third Prize of \$1000, sponsored by the African Art Galleries Association, was presented in absentia to Malebona Maphutse (South Africa). This award includes a residency at 'This is not a White Cube Gallery' (Lisbon and Luanda).

An Encouragement Award of \$500, sponsored by First Floor Gallery, Harare, was awarded to painter Abubakar Moaz (Sudan) for materials, while Honorable Mentions went to Solomon Kifle (Ethiopia), Boeme Diale (South Africa) and Christian King Dusabe (Rwanda) whose work will be exhibited by Graham Contemporary in a group show in Johannesburg.

In addition to the juried awards of cash prizes to the total value of \$6500, all finalists receive media visibility, art world introductions, representation by galleries, and inclusion in shows and publications.

The all-artist line up of jurors included Jonathan Freemantle, Lavar Munroe and Nicky Marais. Winners were selected based on mastery, originality and promise, with an appreciation of diversity in technique and subject matter, intensity of artistic voice and understanding of the language of painting.

Three works by each of the artists – prizewinners and finalists – are being offered for sale on Strauss & Co's EPI February online-only auction, which is currently open for bidding. The sale closes on Monday 21 February 2022 at 6.00pm.

Artist's bios:

Ravelle Pillay is a Johannesburg-based artist working primarily with painting and drawing. She holds a degree in Fine Art from the University of the Witwatersrand.

Pillay's work is informed by ideas of family, migration and nostalgia, as well as personal and collective memory. Her practice has evolved from a process of archiving. She often draws from personal, family, found, and borrowed photographs. Her work featured in the group exhibition *Silence Calling from One Continent to Another* at the Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, was shown at the 2021 FNB Art Joburg week and will be on the 2022 Investec Cape Town Art Fair.

Natnael Ashebir received a BFA in painting from the Alle School of Fine Art and Design in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He works across a variety of media, including painting, drawing, digital art, and photography. The core of his exploration is the layers created by politicians, social structures, and the process of urbanisation.

Ashebir's work has been exhibited in Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria. He currently lives and works in Ethiopia.

Malebona Maphutse is a Johannesburg-based visual artist with a BA (Fine Arts) from the University of Witwatersrand. She works in heterogeneous media, particularly painting, sculptural installation, linocut printing, digital prints and video art. The artist challenges historical narratives in her practice and investigates how bodies transcend mere existence, not only encountering space but also understanding the politics of space.

Maphutse's work has been exhibited at major international exhibitions including the Bergen Triennial 2019 (The Dead are not Dead) and the Stellenbosch Triennial 2020 (Tomorrow there will be more of us).

To register for the auction and browse the lots:

<https://www.straussart.co.za/auctions/details/21-feb-2022-epi>

For more information on the Emerging Painting Invitational Prize:

www.emergingpaintingininvitational.com