

Viwe Mfaku on using art to see a new future

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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Viwe Mfaku is a South African commercial and graphic design artist. On 6 May, Mfaku hosted an exhibition, Isintu: Afro SciFi, which was a collection of humanoid illustrations with an aim to reimagine a lost future.



Image supplied: Viwe Mfaku

Part of what Mfaku sought to do with this project is place the collective intelligence and creative potential of Black African people on full display.

““The Future is already here, it's just not evenly distributed” - William Gibson. This is the one thing we should accept. That the things we know are old and we need to distribute information to people and break the insulated conversations we are having,” Mfaku said.

We spoke to him more about his art, the project and what Africanism means to him...

Tell us a bit about yourself - who is the person behind the art?

I am a commercial and visual artist working as a creative director out of Cape Town, South Africa. With over 10 years of experience in the advertising industry - in some of the top agencies in South and East Africa - I have gained invaluable experience and understanding of the building brand and growing global businesses through sharp a visual language.

How did you find yourself in the art world?

I have always been an artist. It came naturally to me, and because I enjoy creating art I would always draw on any little space I could find to interpret what I was thinking, reading or learning.



Image supplied: 'Queen of the block' by Viwe Mfaku

■ ***Tell us about what inspired the creation of Isintu?***

Isintu is an art exhibition to re-orientate what it means to create something from Africa. I want people to start believing that quality and sophistication can come from the continent.

Isintu AfroSciFi is African Science Fiction informing Science Reality. We have to imagine before we can innovate.

■ ***What kind of impact are you hoping this project will have?***

I am hoping that Isintu AfroSciFi moves us beyond other industries like engineering, medicine, aviation, technology, retail and ourselves - how do we fare in the global conversation on who is the leader of the industry we play in globally?

There is a market for mediocrity and we can no longer be satisfied with just participating, we have to compete as leaders of our industries globally and show up as ourselves and not mimics.

■ ***What does 'Africanism' mean to you?***

It means showing up on the global platform authentically, unapologetically and excellently.



Image supplied: 'Afrobot shock' by Viwe Mfaku

■ ***What value lies in bringing an African way of life to the forefront of art and storytelling?***

It is a way to unlock the potential we know exists. We are not capitalising on the talent that is in the continent enough.

■ ***What future do you hope for in the African art industry?***

I am hoping for a future that can go beyond surface documentation of what Africans are. There's meaning behind why we do things.

But more than anything, I am hoping more artists come out of hiding and create we need to embrace art because that will call more artists to show up in ways that I don't think people are even ready for.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

Freelancer specialising in games and entertainment | My first loves are writing, music and video games

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