

Albany Bakeries marks Heritage Month with Esther Mahlangu-inspired art

To mark Heritage Month, Albany Bakeries will print the packaging of its Albany Superior White and Albany Superior Brown bread with a young person's reimagining of Ndebele artist Esther Mahlangu's work.



2019 Albany Packaging Award winner Jiyaad Greeff with Dr Esther Mahlangu.

The winning design by Jiyaad Greeff, a Grade 10 pupil at the National School of the Arts (NSA), was chosen from 28 entries for the 2019 Albany Packaging Award.

Young artists were briefed to create a design based on the theme “New Generation Traditional Design” inspired by the work of Mahlangu.

The power of heritage

Albany Bakeries partnered with the NSA and Mahlangu to hold a masterclass for NSA students last year.

Inspired by Mahlangu and drawing on their knowledge of their cultural heritage, participating artists were encouraged to find new generation contemporary expression in traditional design – specifically with the use of symmetrical shapes and range of colours.

“All South Africans are born of diversity with a proud claim on their own and other heritage roots,” says the managing director of Albany Bakeries, Matshela Seshibe.

“The brief encouraged artists to explore the wealth that lies in the pool of traditional inspiration. We were looking for impact, colour, beauty and work that depicts the power of heritage in a contemporary world.”

The winning design incorporates inspiration from Mahlangu’s world-famous, contemporary painting technique and showcases South Africa’s diverse heritage, alongside its promising future.

The design features figures in traditional dress and playing the vuvuzela, set against a brightly coloured background. A range of bold, bright colours is used to represent South Africa’s multicultural heritage.



“With this design, I wanted to truly represent South African interests and identity,” says Greeff.

Uniquely diverse nation

“We are thrilled with the designs that these talented, young students produced this year after spending time learning from one of South Africa’s icons, Dr Mahlangu,” says Seshibe.

“We are proud to have been involved in bringing together artists from different cultures and across generations. The winning design, in particular, combines young and old, the past and future in a beautiful, hopeful design which tells a unique story through art and food.”



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This is the third year that Albany has celebrated Heritage Day by printing original artwork on its packaging.

Says Seshibe: “We want to encourage everyone to explore the story of their beginnings and celebrate not only their heritage but also the heritage of others that makes up our uniquely diverse nation.”



Still painting at the age of 83, Mahlangu says it is uplifting to pass on her skill by working with young artists: “Just as I

followed traditions passed down from my mother and grandmother, I am passionate about transferring this skill to the generations after me. I want young people to learn about and be proud of their heritage and in turn to teach others.”

As part of his prize, Greeff also got to spend time with Mahlangu at her school in Mthambothini in Mpumalanga where she teaches the technique of painting her iconic geometric designs. Pupils learn how to mix pigments from natural substances and create new designs using their fingers and chicken feathers.

“It was awesome to understand how this art originated, it opens your mind to see first-hand how South Africa’s different cultures add to our diversity,” says Greeff.

The Albany campaign runs from 9 September to 30 September 2019.

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