

Behind the art of inaugural Anna Award winner, Lerato Nkosi

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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Earlier this month, Latitudes Online and Anna Pure Organic announced the winner of the inaugural Anna Awards - Lerato Nkosi.



Image supplied: Anna Award winner Lerato Nkosi

The Anna Awards were established with an aim to discover, recognise and nurture a new generation of female artists in South Africa.

Mpumalanga-born, Nkosi draws from her experience as a young girl to create art inspired by the experience of existing in the world as a woman.

We spoke with her to find out more about the inspiration behind her work and what advice she has for aspiring artists...

🎨 ***Congratulations on being the first Anna Award winner! How are you feeling about it?***

Thank you! I am very honoured for winning this special award. I feel overwhelmed and emotional, and I am at loss for words. This is a special moment in my life. I am truly grateful to Anna and the Latitudes Online team for creating such an amazing initiative.

🎨 ***Did you always know you wanted to be an artist?***

As a child, I always doodled on the ground when we sat around the fire, at that moment I didn't know it could even be a career path. I had an inkling to choose creative subjects in high school, but that was a foreign choice to my family.

I eventually managed to convince them that was what I had a drive for, they later agreed and allowed me to change my subjects, to their surprise I passed my art class with a distinction.



■ **Could you tell us a bit more about your winning work - what was the inspiration behind it?**

A year ago I was introduced to the writing of Bell Hooks by my partner. I was curious to learn about how she combines personal anecdotes as well as psychological and philosophical ideas to develop and strengthen arguments in her work.

Through reading the book, I delved deeper into the notion of how certain aspects of your surroundings can bring you into the individual you are in the present day. I noted words and phrases that stood out for me during the moments of reading the book pen and paper in hand. I incorporated those words and phrases into stamps that I used in the works I submitted for the Anna Award.



Image supplied: Lerato Nkosi's work

■ ***Could you tell us more about your medium - stamp and ink - and why you chose to work with it?***

For me ink and stamps are mediums that stain and certify with their contact on any surface, these materials have the ability to change the original state of an object or a surface with contact.

The stamp and ink are always used to verify and ordain documents of importance which grants the holder automatic approval to the decision of others, this process is always handled by an individual of authority.

■ ***How does your experience as a woman affect your work?***

My work takes its shape from the impactful role women play in building societies as a whole. With the biological make of strengths and abilities, women always thrive in roles that are more tender and love composed. Taking responsibility for shaping and moulding generations of world changers, having an ability to create or destroy.



Image supplied: Lerato Nkosi's work

■ ***Art is a notoriously difficult thing to become successful in - what advice do you have for aspiring artists?***

For art to work for me as a full-time practice, I have always had a freelancing practice on the side to fund my works and live off.

The reality is that works can go for exhibitions and fairs, but that does not guarantee any sales. It's time to rise, our voices are being listened to now more than they have been before. The world is finally realising that we have something important to say.

Don't follow trends, stay true to yourself.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

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