

Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative - a weekend of inspiration

 By [Ann Nurock](#)

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This past weekend was one of sheer inspiration. Not just watching two of the greatest tennis players the world has ever known, but also witnessing the unique and lasting contribution Rolex is making to culture and the arts by promoting the transmission of knowledge across generations. The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative was held at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town, the first time this event has ever been hosted in Africa.



What to expect from the 2020 Rolex Arts Weekend

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The initiative began in 2002, searching for gifted young artists in a variety of disciplines from around the world and pairs them with globally-renowned artistic masters for a period of creative collaboration in a one-to-one mentoring relationship. It provides these emerging talents time to learn, create and grow in the disciplines of dance, film, literature, music, theatre, visual arts and architecture. Many of the protégés have gone on to significant careers, and have become mentors themselves. Since 2002 more than 1,100 people in 105 countries have been nominated for the programme. Advisors include 123 major artists and creative leaders, while 253 influential figures in the arts have nominated young artists and selected finalists. More than 50 of the world's greatest artists have served as mentors.



Spike Lee, Phyllida Lloyd, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Carrie Mae Weems named mentors in Rolex Arts Initiative

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Three South Africans have been selected and contributed to this illustrious initiative: William Kentridge (mentor); Lara Foot (protégée); Nicholas Hlobo (protégé); and, most recently in 2016/17, Londiwe Khoza who was mentored by Ohad Naharin, the Israeli choreographer and artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company.

I had the pleasure of meeting Khoza on Saturday night as Rolex had flown her and more than 150 former mentors, protégés and other members of this initiative to Cape Town for the gala event. A graduate of the Cape Academy of Performing Arts, she performed with the neoclassical Cape Dance Company and Joburg Ballet before making the leap from her South Africa to Israel in August 2016. I asked Khoza what being nominated as a protégée meant for her: "It was an opportunity that comes around once in a lifetime. I don't think I really appreciated how life-altering it was until my mentorship year ended. It was as though all the seeds that were planted during that year, started blooming."



Londiwe Khoza

Khoza was contracted by Batsheva Dance Company in their ensemble and has continued to dance for them till today. Born in Johannesburg and raised in Cape Town, Khoza speaks glowingly of her mentor Ohad Naharin: “Everything he said changed my approach to work and how I looked at it. He taught me to listen to my body and how to fully express myself.”

Khoza is just one of the many protégés who Rolex identified and selected for its Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative proving that its philosophy of “perpetual” is based on a fundamental belief in unlimited human potential, in continuous improvement, always pushing the boundaries and taking the long-term view.

ABOUT ANN NUROCK

Ann is a Partner at Relationship Audits and Management, a global consultancy that measures and optimizes client /agency relationships. Her proprietary Radar tool is used by 30 corporates globally and as a result she interacts with over 80 agencies of all disciplines. Ann spent 25 years plus in the advertising industry as CEO of Grey Advertising South Africa, and head of the Africa region followed by President and CEO of Grey Canada. Contact details: ann.nurock@relationshipaudits.com | Twitter @Annnurock

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