

Zeitz Mocaa Gala 2024: A spectacular celebration of art excellence

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Zeitz Mocaa was the centre of the art world this past weekend as artists, collectors, philanthropists and celebrities from around the world convened in Cape Town for the museum's annual fundraising gala. The event was a spectacular celebration of art excellence kicking off Cape Town Art Week. The event mood and decor was designed by acclaimed artist Athi-Patra Ruga. The gala featured an exclusive auction, showcasing works from revered artists all aimed at raising funds to support the museum's curatorial and education programming.



Athi-Patra Ruga and Unathi Mkonto at the Zeitz Mocaa Gala (Credit: Ramie G)

Speaking on the occasion, Koyo Kouoh, the museum's executive director and chief curator, expressed gratitude to all attendees: "I am honoured to have the continued support of the individuals and organisations who participated in this year's gala. It is vital in furthering our mission of promoting excellence in contemporary art."

The gala was a visual explosion of light, colour and glamour taking inspiration from the rich artistic vision of world renowned South African artist Athi-Patra Ruga who conceptualised this year's gala scenography. The museum's iconic silo interior was transformed into a spectacular canvas of art with his uniquely camp and polychromatic style, immersing guests in a world of creativity and innovation.

The signature Heatherwick cushion-windows of the museum have been altered to resemble Ruga's innovative works in stained glass that glamorise and deify figures typically marginalised on the basis of their Blackness, queerness, and/or femmeness. Broken up into irregular sections of opalescent colours, the windows cast rainbows into Zeitz Mocaa and onto guests, transporting them to a utopian fantasy space that is overflowing with ornate flower arrangements and populated with luminous African wildlife that gallops across the silos on the sixth-floor terrace where Ruga's video piece Public Service Announcement (2014) was projected.



Zeitz MCAA's signature Heatherwick cushion-windows of the museum have been altered to resemble Ruga's innovative works in stained glass (Credit: Zeitz MCAA)

Professionals from the realms of media, art, and entertainment graced the event, including media personality and businesswoman Bonang Matheba, contemporary multimedia visual artist Trevor Stuurman, musician Boity Thulo, and performer and curator Manthe Ribane amongst others. Renowned South African model and businesswoman, Jo-Ann Strauss, served as the host for the evening, while guests were treated to soulful performances by South African singer-songwriter Simphiwe Dana, and Capetonian artist Nobuhle Ashanti.



Musician Boity Thulo stuns in Gucci (Credit: Ramie G), multimedia visual artist and Beyonce collaborator Trevor Stuurman alongside curator Manthe Ribane arrive in style (Credit: Zeitz MCAA)



South African singer songwriter delivers a rousing performance at the Zeitz Mocaa Gala (Credit: Zeitz Mocaa)

Highlighting the evening were the presentations of the prestigious Honorary Award for Artistic Excellence and the Honorary Award for Philanthropic Achievement. This year, these honours were bestowed upon artist Wangechi Mutu and collector Louis Norval, respectively whose contributions have significantly shaped the landscape of contemporary art in Africa.

A key feature of the gala was an exclusive live virtual art auction facilitated by Strauss & Co, featuring works generously donated by internationally recognised artists William Kentridge, Senzeni Marasela, Mary Evans, Zandile Tshabalala, Unathi Mkonto, Kemang Wa Lehulere, Abdoulaye Konaté, and Alfredo Jaar. All artworks were sold and the auction exceeded expectations, raising a phenomenal R2,120,000. All proceeds from the gala and exclusive auction benefit Zeitz Mocaa's curatorial and education programmes.

The Zeitz Mocaa Gala 2024 not only celebrated the richness and diversity of contemporary art but also served as a testament to the enduring spirit of creativity and philanthropy. The Zeitz Mocaa Gala 2024 is proudly supported by Gucci, BMW, Strauss & Co, Ruinart, Viviers Studio, Hatem Imam at Studio Safar, Tandym Print PTY (Ltd) with print facilitation by Philip Kannemeyer, Condé Nast South Africa, Hazendal Wines, and Young Presidents' Organisation (YPO).

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