

# THE ART IS ON THE WALL

## *Celebrating South African Women Muralists*

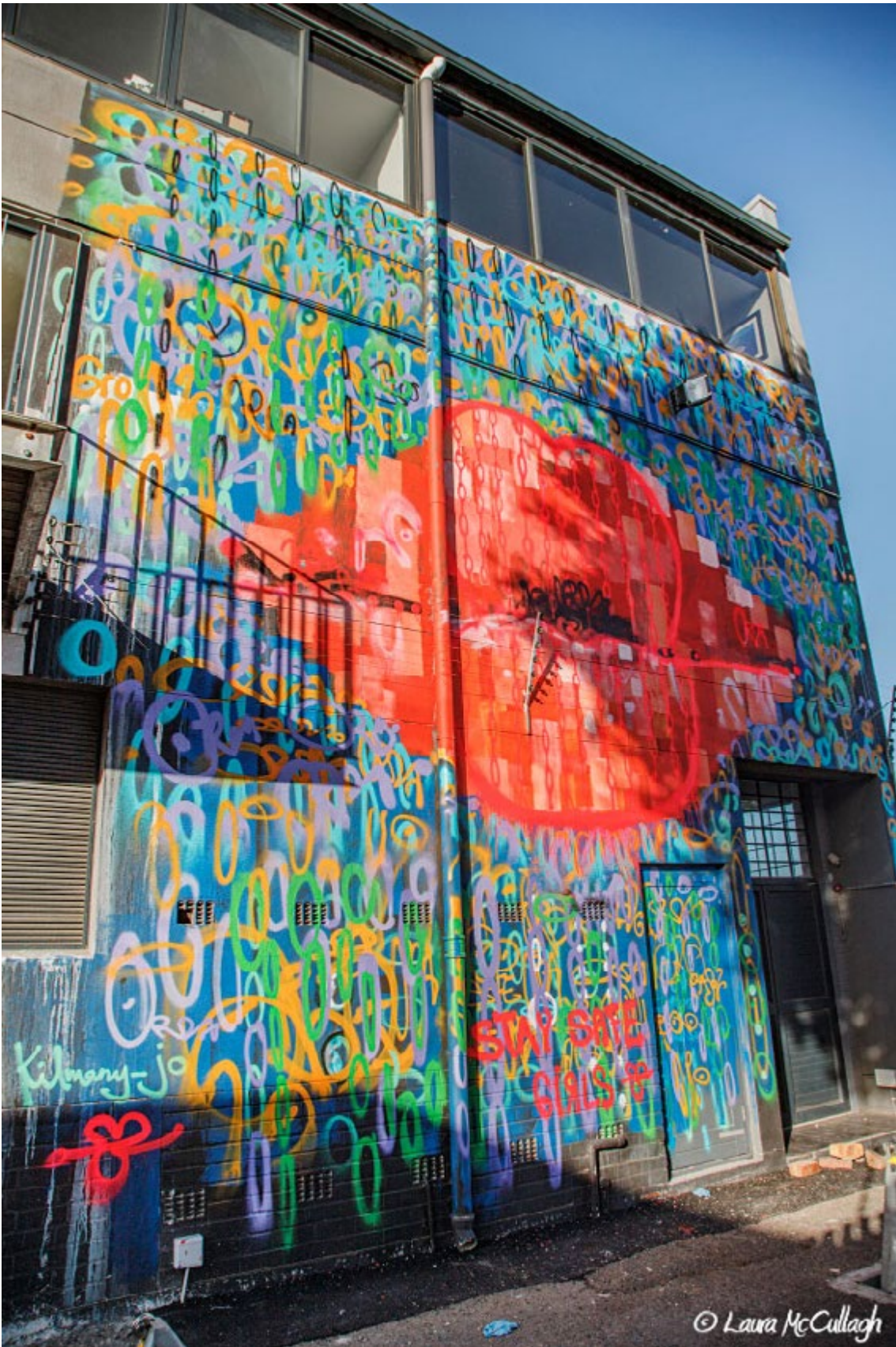
Historically, the realm of murals and street art has been predominantly male dominated, with women often facing significant barriers to entry. Despite these challenges, female artists have made their mark, using their art to convey powerful messages and transform public spaces.

According to the National Museum of Women in the Arts, ArtReview's 2018 Power 100 list of the "most influential people in the contemporary art world"

featured 40% women - though this is an improvement from 2017 and 2016, the art industry still has a far way to go to uplift more women in art, especially in contemporary art."



Faith47: Untitled



*Kilmany-jo Linersage: "Kiss the World and the World Will Kiss You Back"*



For Women’s Month, Baz-Art is shining a spotlight on the remarkable contributions of South African women muralists. These artists have not only beautified public spaces, but they also convey powerful messages of unity, resilience, and empowerment through their work.

Melissa Cucci, co-founder of Baz-Art, an NPO dedicated to using public art to uplift communities, emphasizes the importance of female representation in this field, “I encourage more women to step into their power, embrace their talents, and use murals as a canvas to share their unique stories. Your voice and creativity are essential to shaping our communities and inspiring future generations.”

**FAITH47: UNTITLED**

Faith47, also known as Liberty, began her journey as a graffiti writer in South Africa in 1997. Her multidisciplinary artistic practice includes murals, sculptures, video installations, tapestries, and drawings. Faith47’s work deconstructs notions of value and place, investigating forms of domination and exploring the human condition. Her murals express a longing for a deeper connection to the wisdom of the natural world.

**MOTELSEVEN: “A CREAM PUFF GONE ROTTEN”**

Motelseven, created the mural “A Cream Puff Gone Rotten” as part of a three-year partnership with Flanders. This work combines humour and darkness in a bright-coloured tribute to Belgian painter James Ensor. The piece, showcased at The Crystal Ship in Ostend, Belgium, captures





*Motelseven: "A Cream Puff Gone Rotten"*

the playful, dark, and tongue-in-cheek nature of Ensor's work while incorporating Motelseven's passion for pastry.

**ELLÉNA LOURENS: "EMBRACING OPENNESS"**

Elléna Lourens' mural, "Embracing Openness," is a radiant celebration of radical love, unity, equality, and acceptance. Lourens used warm, decadent hues to create a piece that feels like a warm embrace. This mural brings multiple perspectives and lived experiences together, radiating a message of mutual respect and celebration throughout Cape Town's city centre.

**VANESSA TEODORO: "THE COMMUNITY PROJECT"**

Vanessa Teodoro's mural, "The Community Project," is an abstract piece based on the feeling of belonging. Through engaging with the local Portuguese community in South Africa, Teodoro's freestyle abstract work reflects the individual and unique journeys of each person. Her mural connects these experiences, celebrating the sense of belonging and togetherness that defines community.

**KILMANY-JO LIVERSAGE: "KISS THE WORLD AND THE WORLD WILL KISS YOU BACK"**

Kilmany-Jo crafts portraits that

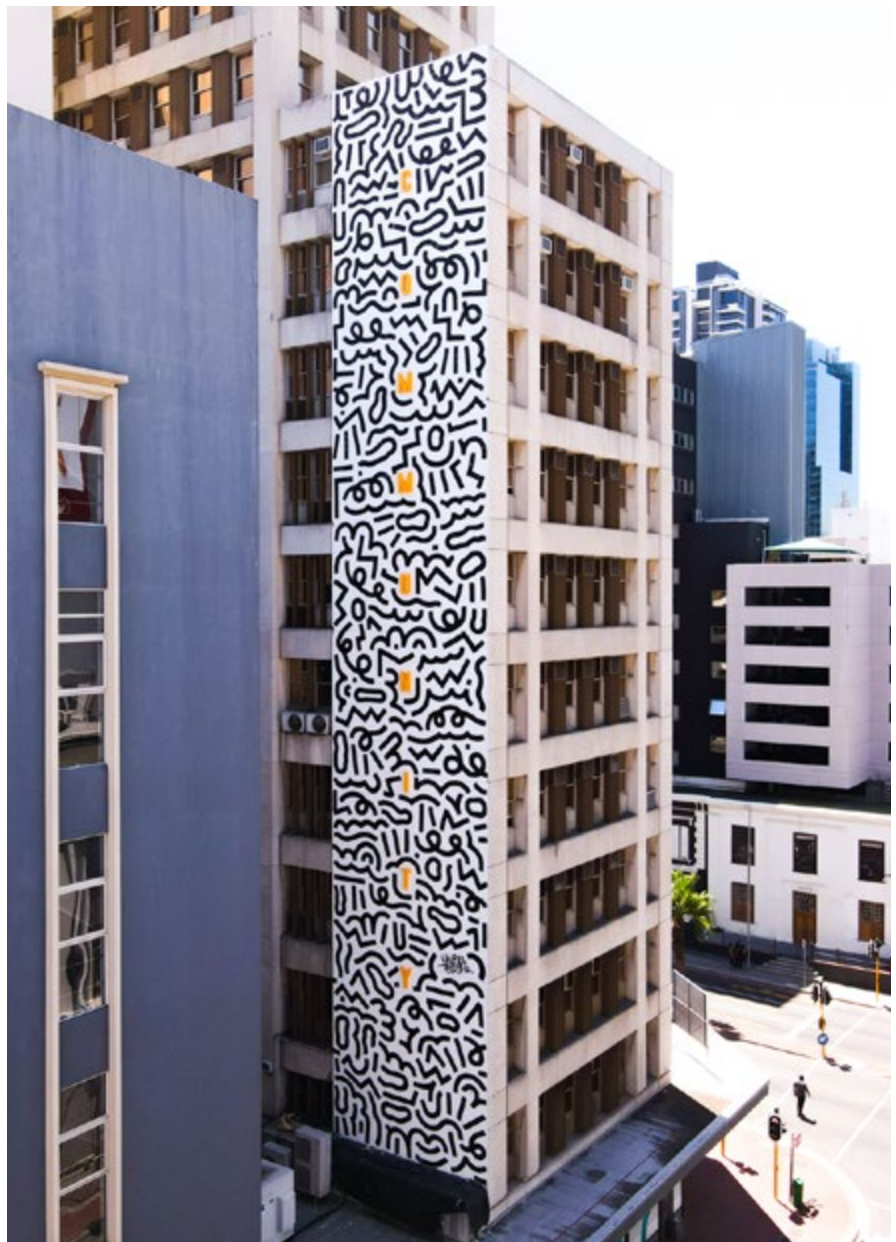


blur the lines between fine art and graffiti. Her use of urban art language refreshes and challenges traditional painting conventions. Inspired by renaissance-era portraiture, her work also nods to digitized mass production and a futuristic world of perfect female cyborgs. The result is a vibrant series of large-scale paintings that blend street art, historical influences, and futuristic visions. Her piece “Kiss the World and the World Will Kiss You Back,” created for IPAF2020, exemplifies

her disruptive approach. Embracing spontaneity and chaos, Kilmany-Jo reveals the perils of conforming to patriarchal norms. Each painting serves as an act of rebellion, merging classical portrait elements with a hip-hop aesthetic to make a powerful statement about the need for change.

#### **LELO: A NAME TO REMEMBER**

Rooted in African history, Lelo is an emerging muralist to keep an eye on. Her work critically examines cultural and



*Vanessa Teodoro: "The Community Project"*



*Elléna Lourens: "Embracing Openness"*

social themes through a fine arts lens, offering a profound exploration of the intricate relationship between history and popular culture. Using materials like spray paint, acrylics, charcoal, and watercolours, Lelo's murals breathe life into the visual and auditory essence of African arts and crafts. Her vibrant and striking murals have already garnered attention, and her collaborations with internationally known South African muralists for public works in Newtown, Johannesburg, demonstrate her exceptional talent and vision.

#### **NEARLY A DECADE OF PLACEMAKING**

As Baz-Art nears its ten-year milestone anniversary, the organization is excited to expand its impact beyond South Africa. With plans to initiate placemaking projects around the African continent, Baz-Art aims to cultivate a continent-wide movement

of creativity and community-building through public art. Cucci expressed her enthusiasm for the future, saying, "Our journey over the past eight years has been transformative, not just for the spaces we've touched, but for the artists and communities we've engaged with. As we approach our ten-year milestone, we are eager to take our vision of placemaking and public art creation to new heights across Africa."

*For more info, visit [baz-art.co.za](http://baz-art.co.za).*

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by **baz-art**