



ASANDA KUPA (1981 -)

Born in the Eastern Cape, Kupa completed a Diploma in Visual Arts at the Walter Sisulu University, 2005 and is currently living and working in Johannesburg. He is one of South Africa's promising emerging artists, using oil paint and found objects as his primary media.

Since the infamous Marikana massacre of 2012, Kupa's work has centred on the subject of mass protest and social movements in South Africa – a microcosm of the experiences of those on the margins. Highly emotive, his crowd scenes are moody and murky, bristling with energy and urgency, set against a deep and enduring longing for the land. They convey the rage of injustice but also the spirit of self-determination, the act of frustration but also of hope.

As Kupa explains, he “...seeks to revive or vitalise the spirit of independent motion and energy within these subjects”. His expressive abstraction of the human form intensifies this energy and highlights questions around crowd psychology – of anonymity, unity and the tension between group and individual identity. Through his artwork Kupa expresses his concern for the negative and broken conditions of his community, using a vibrant palette to voice the everyday struggle of Black South Africans.

Since being named the Ann Bryant Gallery Emerging Young Artist of 2010, Kupa has participated in numerous exhibitions across South Africa and in shows and residencies in France, USA and Iran. In 2013 he received the Reinhold Cassirer Award for his Marikana series and in 2018 he took part in the Nando's 'Feast Your Eyes' pop up and in 2023 at the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, in the UK.

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