

Nando's unveils art, bringing beauty from ashes

In September 2021, Nando's Pinecrest in KwaZulu-Natal unveiled a poignant art piece - a charcoal drawing by artist Nkoali Nawa that commemorates the African spirit in the face of adversity. The unrest in July 2021, which saw shops looted, buildings burnt, and people and communities affected by outbreaks of violence, was followed by recovery, rebuilding and restoration.



Image supplied

Nawa, who is part of the Nando's Art Initiative in partnership with Spier Arts Trust, was commissioned to create artwork using a charcoal medium for six Nando's restaurants that were affected by the unrest. The idea behind choosing charcoal artwork is to show that beauty can rise from ashes.

The first artwork was placed at the Pinecrest restaurant after it reopened, and the remaining five pieces were unveiled last week and have found a home at the Berea Centre, Umlazi, Empangeni, Umgeni and Church Street restaurants. Each artwork carries a message of empathy and hope. It is a gentle reminder of what the country has experienced and highlights the resilience of South Africans.

Nando's relationship with Nawa is long-standing and in 2018, he was part of the Nando's Creative Exchange programme which saw him exhibit his work at AVA Gallery in Cape Town and at the Basha Uhuru Festival in Johannesburg. The Nando's Art Initiative was established to shine a spotlight on emerging artists and the brand remains one of the greatest contemporary art collectors with well over 21 000 pieces hanging in their stores around the world.

“In addition to the artworks reminding us of the difficulties faced, they also show the versatility and resilience we have as a country. In times like this we need to collectively look at the high rate of unemployment and poverty, and ask ourselves, what can we do to help,” says Peet Opperman, KZN General Manager.

Nando's GM Marketing: Brand Strategy and Communications, Justine Cullinan says Nkoali was commissioned to create the pieces specifically because of his unique ability to bring through the human spirit in his work. “His comprehensive body of work is enlightening. The symbolism tells a story through its beautiful simplicity with charcoal and evokes a range of emotions. We hope these art pieces will be a reminder of what we can achieve through sheer determination.”

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