

# Belgium unveils 'Embracing Openness' mural in Cape Town to celebrate diversity

Belgium has proudly unveiled a landmark street mural in Cape Town - an inspiring artwork to celebrate openness and diversity in the lead-up to the world-famous Cape Town Pride, and as part of Belgium's call to the world to embrace openness to diversity.

Located in the city centre, Embracing Openness is the work of South African artist Elléna Lourens, renowned for her vibrant wall murals and distinct artistic style.



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Embracing Openness has been commissioned by the FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Belgium, in collaboration with the Consulate General of Belgium in Cape Town, against the backdrop of this year's International Public Art Festival (IPAF). The work is part of Belgium's ongoing campaign to invite societies to embrace openness so all can benefit from the virtues of an open, tolerant, and inclusive society, which can ensure progress and prosperity for all; values shared by both Belgium and South Africa.

"We are extremely proud to have unveiled this incredibly creative work. The choice of a wall mural was a logical one for us because street art is a highly engaging form of art in public spaces and so it's the ideal platform for this important message," explained Mathias Bogaert, Consulate General of Belgium in Cape Town, "From the moment of conceptualisation, Elléna knew exactly the openness message we wanted to convey. Embracing Openness echoes the spirit of Belgium as home to diverse communities and cultures for whom this value is key to progress."



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Lourens' unique image embodies themes of love, unity, understanding, and acceptance. The artist's use of her signature vibrant palette and subtle interplay of shapes are conceived to offer passersby a warm embrace and to provide them with an opportunity to celebrate diversity and reflect on the struggles for openness.

"For me, this commission connected strongly with my approach to art, I wanted to create something impactful yet warm so it's striking but not intimidating, to communicate what it feels like to embrace openness. The location means it will be visible to all celebrating pride", commented Lourens.

*“ Embracing Openness is very much about all the vibrancy of our cultures, by representing the diversity in two ways, in terms of love and also by offering a diversity of perspectives. ”*

Together, Belgium and South Africa are diversity pioneers. Last year, Belgium celebrated the 20th anniversary of the legalisation of same-sex marriage, Belgium being the second country in the world to take this step. In the same pioneering spirit, South Africa was the first country on the continent to do the same.



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The Embracing Openness mural is located at Alfred street, back of BP station, Greenpoint, Cape Town, 8001.

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