

ARTIST STATEMENT

“This artistic enquiry seeks to investigate the efficacy of art in reclaiming inner peace amidst global and inner turmoil and personal climate change. It takes a very tough mind to suppress emotions to give way to reasoning. Through a critical examination of the intersection of personal and collective trauma, my work suggests or proposes an alternative reality, *‘Bilanyoni’*, as a paradigm for a peace-driven state of mind, a pursuit of enlightenment, a nirvana of some sort. This thesis articulates the theoretical framework and artistic methodology underpinning my practice.

The zeitgeist of contemporary society is characterized by pervasive conflict, social unrest, and economic instability. This tumultuous landscape precipitates a crisis of self, wherein individuals struggle to maintain urgency and inner peace. In response, my artistic research endeavours to recenter peace as a guiding force in human consciousness.

Through an iterative process of art-making, reflection, and critique, I have developed a distinctive visual language. This language, characterised by vibrant colours and abstract forms, motifs, guiding texts and symbols that aim to capture the viewer’s attention and facilitate introspection. *‘Bilanyoni’*, as an alternative reality, emerges through this artistic catalogue of portals that ushers you into my virtual dreamland of perfect peace. These Neo-expressive pieces serve as case studies, illustrating the transformative potential of peace-driven creativity. By abstracting personal experiences of loss and trauma, I subverts dominant narratives of conflict, to instead propose a counter-narrative of resilience and hope.

‘Bilanyoni’, as an alternative reality, also offers a paradigm for creative resistance and peace-driven transformation. Through this research, he contributes to the burgeoning field of peace studies and art therapy, underscoring the imperative of art in cultivating inner peace above everything else.

BIOGRAPHY

Layziehound Coka was born in Bilanyoni situated in Northern KwaZulu Natal in 1982. Coka predominantly works with acrylic and charcoal on paper or canvas. Coka's earlier artistic practice was influenced by apartheid, an oppressive South African regime of racial segregation that engendered inequities in housing, education and employment opportunities.

EDUCATION

Layziehound Coka attended a local primary school at Bilanyoni, before moving to Inkamana, a Catholic High School in Vryheid in 1995. Coka matriculated at Sinethemba Agricultural and Technical Boys School. Coka then moved to Gauteng in 2001 and started studying engineering in 2003 at Pretoria Technikon, however Coka gave up engineering for fine art in 2005 and later began studying print making at Newtown's Artist Proof Studio (APS). He has been working as a professional artist since graduating from APS in 2007.

EXHIBITION HISTORY

2006 - Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria, South Africa

2007 - Belldewarhall Exhibition, Houghton, South Africa

2007 - Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria, South Africa

2007 - @Spaza Art Gallery, Troyville, South Africa

2007 - Final Year End Show, Artist Proof Studio, Newtown, South Africa

2007 - *'Identity'*, Gallery on the Square, Sandton, South Africa

2008 - ABSA Competition, ABSA Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2008 - Afrika Day, Soweto, South Africa

2008 - Tracker, Randburg, South Africa

2008 - Ekurhuleni Art Award, Scholtz Coen Recreation Centre, Birchleigh North, South Africa

2008 - *'Art'*, Belldewarhall, Houghton, South Africa

2008 - *'Unity'*, Unity Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2009 - *'Lyrical Sense and Sounds of Philosophy'*, solo exhibition, The Peech Hotel, Melrose, South Africa

2009 - Thami Mnyele Award Exhibition, Scholtz Coen Recreation Centre, Birchleigh North, South Africa

2009 - Sasol Signature Award Exhibition, Pretoria Museum, Pretoria, South Africa

2009 - APS, Belldewarhall, Houghton, South Africa

2009 - *'Love Matters: Concerto no. 26'*, solo exhibition, Unity Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2010 - *'Collaborate'*, Unity Art Gallery, Newtown, South Africa

2010 - *'Wasted'*, Unity Art Gallery, Newtown, South Africa

2010 - *'Do What You Love and Love What You Do'*, solo exhibition, The Chemistry, Parktown North, South Africa

2011 - *'Collaborate'*, Unity Art Gallery, Newtown, South Africa

2012 - World Summit, IDC, Sandton, South Africa

2014 - *'Art'*, Gavin's Projects, Sandton, South Africa

2015 - *'Eye Art'* @ Gavin's Projects, Rosebank, South Africa

2015 - Turbine Art Fair, Bayliss Gallery, Newtown, South Africa

2015 - Joburg Art Week, August House Gallery, Doornfontein, SA

2016 - *'Considering Genius'*, Res Gallery, Rosebank, South Africa

2016 - August House @Hazard Gallery, Maboneng, South Africa

2016 - *'What Change There Is?'*, Duo Exhibition, Gavin's Projects Gallery, Maboneng, South Africa

2016 - *'Reconnection'*, Alliance Francaise, Rosebank, South Africa

2016 - Africa Art, NY Affordable Art Fair, New York, USA

2016 - *'Unfettered Egos and the Absence of Substance'*, Solo Exhibition, MAP Contemporary, Melville, South Africa

2016 - *'Grey Areas'*, Trent Gallery, Pretoria, South Africa

2017 - *'Not a Judge, Not a Saint'*, Solo Exhibition, Eclectica Contemporary, Cape Town, South Africa

2017 - *'Solstice'*, Group Exhibition, ODA | Fine Art, Franschoek, South Africa

2017 - *'Guns are Drawn'*, Solo Exhibition, Julie Miller Investment Art, Johannesburg, South Africa

2017 - *'Pan Africa'*, Group Exhibition, ODA | Fine Art, Franschoek, South Africa

2017 - *'Hazardous Diction'*, Group Exhibition, 13th Floor Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2017 - *'Dream Chasers'*, Solo Exhibition, ODA Gallery, Franschhoek, South Africa

2018 - *'Talking to Deaf Ears'*, Group Exhibition, ABSA Bank, Johannesburg, South Africa

2018 - *'Aftermath'*, Group Exhibition, Rand Merchant Bank, Johannesburg, South Africa

2018 - *'18Nova Exclubition'*, August House Studios, Johannesburg, South Africa

2019 - ODA, Group Exhibition, Franschhoek, South Africa

2019 - AGOG Gallery, Group Exhibition, Johannesburg, South Africa

2019 - ART Madrid, Art Fair, Spain

2019 - START Art Fair, London

2020 - *'Return to Surreal'*, LITTY Contemporary, Cape Town, South Africa

2021 - *'Finding My Nirvana'*, Solo Exhibition, @Youngblood Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2022 - *'Diaries of Injustice'*, Duo Exhibition, Studio Nxumalo Gallery, Keyes Art Mile, Rosebank, South Africa

2023 - *'Field of Dreams'*, Solo Exhibition, Turbine Art Fair, IBI Gallery, Hyde Park, Johannesburg, South Africa

2025 - *'Kindreds in Abstraction'*, Group Exhibition, Artyli Gallery, Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa