



THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO

# African Art Award

**PRESS KIT** - MAY 2026

# ***THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award***

## **Art, culture and Africa's radiance in the world**

Africa is today one of the most dynamic cultural spaces on the planet.

Across the Continent, artists are shaping powerful and singular practices that engage with the present while contributing to global artistic conversations. Their work carries voices, stories, and visions that transcend national borders

For Toyota Tsusho Corporation and CFAO, art and culture are not peripheral to Africa's future: they are extraordinary vectors of the Continent's radiance in the world. Supporting them is therefore a meaningful extension of our long-term commitment on the Continent.

For over 170 years, we have built long-term partnerships with countries across the Continent, while fostering deep and trusted relationships with local communities, guided by our *WITH AFRICA FOR AFRICA* purpose.

Active across four business pillars—Mobility, Green Infra, Healthcare, and Consumer— we are now taking the next step by expanding into the cultural sphere, working alongside artists, curators, and institutions.

*THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award* is conceived as a long-term platform dedicated to emerging artists based on the Continent. It is built in dialogue with local ecosystems and in partnership with institutions in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Through exhibitions and sustained collaboration, it seeks to strengthen the artistic presence of contemporary African practices internationally, while respecting the diversity and specificity of their contexts.

Our objective is simple and humble at the same time. We want to participate in showcasing Africa through its art. We want to give greater visibility and recognition to artists whose work deserves to be seen far beyond their home countries. We intend to achieve this in a way that respects existing ecosystems and is anchored in long-term relationships.

We believe that the stories told by these artists, and the works they create, will help to build bridges between Africa and the world and also between Africa, Asia, and Europe, the three regions that this Award is specifically designed to connect.



**Richard Bielle,  
Chairman and Chief  
Executive Officer,  
CFAO**



**Ichiro Kashitani,  
Vice Chairman of the  
Board - Toyota Tsusho  
Corporation and  
Member of the CFAO  
Board of Directors**

# **THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award, a platform for emerging artists**

*THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award (AAA)* is a new international distinction dedicated to supporting emerging contemporary artists from the African continent. Created by Toyota Tsusho Corporation (TTC) and CFAO, the Award embodies a shared commitment to creativity, cultural dialogue, and long-term engagement with African artistic ecosystems.

With its strong roots in local communities, CFAO has a natural legitimacy to enter this field: the Group's networks, knowledge of local contexts, and long-term partnerships are now being used to support the continent's cultural future as well as its economic development.

Conceived as a platform rather than a one-off prize, the Award brings together artists, curators, experts, and institutions around three core objectives:

## **Support emerging artists in Africa**

Provide artists based on the Continent with visibility, institutional recognition, and concrete opportunities to develop their careers.

## **Contribute to Africa's cultural radiance**

Art and culture are powerful vectors of Africa's presence in the world. By contributing to the visibility of African art—and, more broadly, to the continent's cultural radiance—the Award gives a cultural embodiment to TTC and CFAO's purpose, "With Africa For Africa."

## **Create bridges between Africa, Asia, and Europe**

Through exhibitions in Togo, Japan, and France, the Award offers artists the opportunity to present their work in very different contexts, encouraging cross-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding.

## **5 prizes**

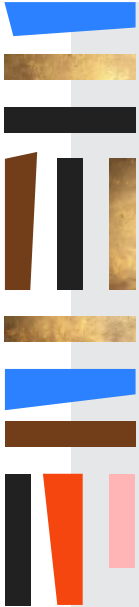
- 1 Grand Prize
- 2 Distinguished Awards
- 2 Sponsor Awards (Toyota Tsusho Award & CFAO Award)

## **Award package**

### **International visibility through:**

- an award and dedicated communication
- financial support
- exhibitions in Togo, Japan and France
- a catalogue





# Palais de Lomé, partner institution and anchor on the Continent

The inaugural edition of *THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award* is organized in partnership with the Palais de Lomé, a major cultural institution in West Africa and a key anchor for contemporary art on the Continent.

Housed in a former governor's palace overlooking the ocean and surrounded by a large public park, the Palais de Lomé has become a multidisciplinary arts center dedicated to contemporary African creativity. Its program combines visual arts, performing arts, fostering public engagement, and showcasing the continent's vibrant artistic landscape.

The Palais de Lomé will host the first major exhibition of the *THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award* before the project travels to Japan and France. As such, it is not only a venue but also a structuring partner:

- offering curatorial and institutional support;
- connecting the Award with existing artistic networks on the continent;
- and ensuring that the project remains firmly rooted in African realities and audiences.



“ *The Palais de Lomé is delighted with the launch of THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award, an initiative that perfectly reflects the pan-African spirit and ambition for excellence that drives our institution. We applaud the commitment of Toyota Tsusho and CFAO, whose support has helped create a real springboard for talent on the Continent. By partnering with this project, the Palais de Lomé reaffirms its mission as a hub of excellence dedicated to celebrating contemporary African creativity.*”



**Sonia Lawson,  
Founding Director,  
Palais de Lomé**

# An international, independent, and prestigious jury

THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award is based on a rigorous, independent selection process designed to reflect both the diversity of the continent's artistic scenes and the highest standards of contemporary art. The process unfolds in three main steps.

## Nominations by 35 experts

For this inaugural edition, 35 nominators—curators, art critics, journalists, and patrons—were invited to propose artists significant to their local scenes. Together, they initially identified around 100 artists from across the Continent.

## Selection process

Following this initial nomination phase, the curatorial team appointed by TTC and CFAO deliberated to narrow the selection down. Through this process, they established a shortlist of 12 artists whose practices stood out for their originality, coherence, and relevance.

## Five finalists

An international jury then reviewed the work of these 12 shortlisted artists. From this group, they selected the five finalists who will be highlighted in this press kit and the first exhibition cycle.

## The jury members

The jury brings together members based in Africa, Asia and Europe, reflecting the international dimension of the Award:

- **Richard BIELLE** Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, CFAO
- **Ichiro KASHITANI** Vice Chairman of the Board - Toyota Tsusho Corporation and Member of the CFAO Board of Directors
- **Chris DERCON** Curator and Museum Director, Managing Director of the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain - Paris (France)
- **Guillaume DÉSANGES** Curator and Art critic, Président, Palais de Tokyo - Paris (France)
- **Ekow ESHUN** Writer, Broadcaster and Curator
- **N'Goné FALL** Curator, Editor, General commissioner of the Africa2020 Season
- **Yuko HASEGAWA** Curator, Art historian, Former Director of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art - Kanazawa (Japan)
- **Alicia KNOCK** Head curator for contemporary art & research, Centre Pompidou - Paris (France)
- **Hiroki KUROSAWA** Curator, Former Chief curator of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art - Kanazawa (Japan)
- **Sonia LAWSON** Founding Director, Palais de Lomé (Togo)



“ It was an honor to serve on the jury for the inaugural edition of THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award. Evaluating a group of artists already operating at a high international level was both a privilege and a considerable challenge. Among these strong practices, I was particularly drawn to proposals that demonstrated a keen sensitivity to the spirit of the present moment, coupled with a rigorous critical awareness, and to works that could articulate the artists' intentions with clarity and conviction, without reliance on excessive explanation.”



**Hiromi KUROSAWA,**  
Curator, Former Chief  
curator of 21st Century  
Museum of Contemporary  
Art - Kanazawa (Japan)

“ Contemporary art and artists from Africa have been exemplary for many decades, even if they have regrettably been completely overlooked in many instances. This has now become common knowledge, and the time of corrections and rediscoveries has come. But that is not enough; one has to look forward and create futures. That is what I hope and think THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award will bring.”



**Chris DERCON,**  
Curator and Museum  
Director, Managing Director  
of the Fondation Cartier  
pour l'art contemporain  
- Paris (France)



“ THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award aims to build a lasting platform for cultural exchange. I salute the visibility and opportunities it will give emerging African visual artists.”



**N'Goné FALL,**  
Curator, Editor, General  
commissioner of the  
Africa2020 Season

# Key Milestones



## From August to December 2025

### Nominations and jury deliberation

35 nominators—curators, journalists, and patrons—identify around 100 artists from across the Continent. 12 artists were selected and presented to the jury in December. The jury then selected 5 recipients.



## February 2026

### Announcement of the five finalists

Public announcement of the five recipients of the Award and first communication about their practices and key works on digital platforms and through media outreach.



## March 2026

### Award recipients announced

Official announcement of the recipient selected from among the finalists, marking the launch of the first exhibition cycle of THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award.



## From June 2026

### First exhibition at Palais de Lomé (Togo)

Opening of the inaugural *THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award* exhibition at Palais de Lomé, presenting works by the selected artists. Public programs and media events are organized in Lomé.



## From October 2026

### Second exhibition at space Un and GINZA TSUTAYA BOOKS (Japan)

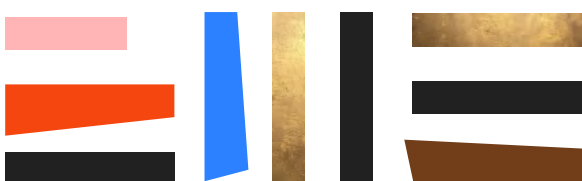

Presentation of the Award in Japan, offering Japanese audiences an opportunity to discover contemporary African practices and strengthening cultural ties between Africa and Japan.



## From April 2027

### Third exhibition at Palais de Tokyo (France)

French chapter of the exhibition cycle, bringing the artists to European audiences, galleries, and institutions, and closing the first sequence of *THE TOYOTA TSUSHO CFAO African Art Award*.



## GRAND PRIZE

## Transforming discarded materials into powerful reflections on circulation and consumption

Moffat Takadiwa's practice unfolds through the transformation of discarded materials into dense, intricately composed sculptural works. Drawing from objects collected in urban environments (computer keys, bottle tops, toothbrushes...) he constructs tactile surfaces that operate both as aesthetic compositions and as critical reflections on systems of production and exchange. These materials, often imported and later discarded, become traces of global circulation, embedding within them the histories of trade, consumption and technological dependency.

Rooted in the context of Harare, his work reflects the complex entanglement of local economies with global supply chains. Through repetition, accumulation and reassembly, Takadiwa creates a visual language that speaks to resilience, adaptation and reinvention. His practice does not simply recycle matter; it reactivates it, turning waste into a site of memory and possibility.

“*I celebrate the unseen, the forgotten, and the hope of renewal through thoughtful, sustainable futures.*”

### Upcoming activities

Following the Award, Takadiwa's work will be presented in the three-part exhibition cycle across Lomé, Tokyo and Paris, offering new visibility to his practice and reinforcing his position within the international contemporary art scene.

Semiose Gallery - Paris

 [semiose.com](https://semiose.com)

Nicodim Gallery - Los Angeles, New York, Bucharest

 [nicodimgallery.com](https://nicodimgallery.com)

 [@moffattakadiwa](https://www.instagram.com/moffattakadiwa)



**Moffat Takadiwa**

**Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwean artist based in Harare, founder of Mbare Art Space, exhibited internationally including at the Venice Biennale.



## DISTINGUISHED AWARD

## Exploring memory and history through staged photography

Gosette Lubondo's photographic work engages deeply with the notion of memory as both presence and absence. By staging figures within abandoned or historically charged sites (railway stations, schools, public buildings...) she reanimates spaces marked by silence and disuse. These interventions create layered images in which past and present coexist, blurring the boundaries between documentation and fiction.


Her work can be understood as a form of visual archaeology, uncovering the latent narratives embedded in architecture and landscape. Rather than reconstructing history, Lubondo opens a space for its reimagination, allowing forgotten or marginalised stories to surface. Through this process, she addresses the ongoing impact of colonial and postcolonial histories, while proposing new ways of inhabiting and interpreting collective memory.

“ I explore how places remember and how history continues to shape the present.”

### Upcoming activities

Her participation in the 61<sup>st</sup> international Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia and the Award's exhibition cycle will further position her work within international conversations on memory, history and contemporary photography.

Angalia (DR Congo)

 [galerie-angalia.com](https://galerie-angalia.com)

 [@gosettelubondo](https://www.instagram.com/gosettelubondo)



**Gosette Lubondo**

**le nom est Democratic Republic of Congo**

Congolese photographer based in Kinshasa, exhibited internationally.



## DISTINGUISHED AWARD

## Exploring the relationship between space, form and lived experience

Unathi Mkonto's work operates at the intersection of sculpture, architecture and spatial research. Trained as an architect, he approaches form not as a static structure but as a dynamic system shaped by movement, perception and lived experience. His sculptural constructions, often described as "anti-architectures challenge conventional boundaries between disciplines, transforming drawing into volume and still life into inhabitable space.

Emerging from the South African context, his work carries an implicit engagement with the legacy of spatial inequality and segregation. Yet rather than addressing it directly, Mkonto proposes alternative spatial imaginaries, where fragmentation becomes a generative principle. His installations invite viewers to reconsider how space is constructed, not only physically but socially and emotionally, opening new possibilities for inhabiting and understanding the built environment.

“*To complicate an ordinary life, develop languages around forms.*”

### Upcoming activities

Mkonto's work will be included in the international exhibition cycle of the Award, creating opportunities for dialogue with audiences in Africa, Japan and Europe, and expanding the visibility of his spatial practice.



### Unathi Mkonto

#### South Africa

South African artist based in Cape Town, working across sculpture, architecture and performance.



📷 @unathimkonto

## SPONSOR AWARD

## A contemporary figurative approach to identity and everyday life

Katlego C. L. Twala's paintings are rooted in a quiet, introspective exploration of the human figure. Her work resists narrative excess, instead focusing on suspended moments, subtle gestures and the emotional density of presence. Through carefully composed scenes, she constructs intimate spaces where identity unfolds gradually, shaped by posture, gaze and atmosphere.

Her practice reflects a broader shift within contemporary African painting, where figuration becomes less a tool of representation than a means of inquiry. Twala's work does not seek to define identity, but to hold it in tension, between visibility and withdrawal, individuality and shared experience. In doing so, she offers a nuanced perspective on contemporary subjectivities, grounded in both personal narrative and collective resonance.

“*My work reflects moments of quiet presence and human connection.*”

### Upcoming activities

Participation in the Award's exhibition programme will mark an important step in Twala's emerging career, providing international exposure and opportunities for engagement with new audiences and institutions.

 [kcltwala.com](https://kcltwala.com)

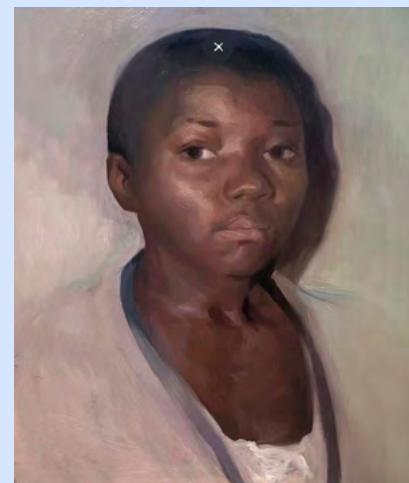
 [@kcltwala](https://www.instagram.com/kcltwala)



**Katlego C. L. Twala**

**Botswana**

Botswana-based painter, part of a new generation of emerging contemporary African artists.



## SPONSOR AWARD

## Painting as a space for empathy, relationality and emotional resonance

Tizta Berhanu's paintings unfold as intimate visual narratives centred on human connection. Her compositions, often populated by intertwined figures, explore themes of love, care and emotional interdependence. Drawing on the concept of *agape*, she investigates forms of attachment that extend beyond the individual, shaping collective experience.

Her painterly approach, characterised by fluid lines, layered textures and subtle chromatic transitions, creates immersive environments in which bodies and spaces merge. In this dissolution of boundaries, Berhanu proposes a vision of relational identity, where the self is defined through connection to others. Her work positions emotion not as a private domain, but as a shared and structuring force within contemporary life.

“*My work explores love as a force of connection, resilience and shared humanity.*”

### Upcoming activities

Through the Award's exhibitions in Lomé, Tokyo and Paris, and his upcoming participation in the 61st Venice Biennale in 2026, Berhanu's work will reach new international audiences, contributing to the growing recognition of contemporary Ethiopian painting.

Addis Fine Art (Ethiopia)

 [addisfineart.com](https://addisfineart.com)

 [@tiztaberhanu](https://www.instagram.com/tiztaberhanu)



**Tizta Berhanu**

**Ethiopia**

Ethiopian painter based in Addis Ababa, exhibited internationally.



# About the partners



## CFAO

A leading player in Africa, the CFAO Group's mission is to offer affordable, high-quality products and services to as many people as possible in the sectors of mobility, infrastructure and renewable energy, healthcare, and consumer goods.

Involved at every stage of the value chain - import, production, and distribution - we comply with the highest international standards to guarantee the reliability of our offering.

Thanks to our in-depth knowledge of local markets, the diversity of our business expertise, and our extensive pan-African distribution network, we are a strategic partner for leading global brands expanding across the continent.

Our purpose, With Africa For Africa, unites every employee around a common goal: building a sustainable future in Africa.



## Toyota Tsusho Corporation (TTC)

Founded in 1948 and headquartered in Nagoya (Japan), Toyota Tsusho Corporation is the trading company of the Toyota Group. Present in over 130 countries, it operates across multiple sectors—mobility, energy, infrastructure, healthcare, and consumer goods—with a vision centered on innovation and sustainable development.



## Palais de Lomé

The Palais de Lomé is a major cultural institution in West Africa, based in Togo's capital city. Located in a restored historical palace overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, within a lush 11-hectare park, it has been transformed into a multidisciplinary arts and culture center dedicated to contemporary African creativity and to the promotion of Togo's architectural, cultural and natural heritage, as well as the richness of artistic expression across the Continent.

## CONTACT

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