

ALMINE RECH

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Iconic Ndebele artist Esther Mahlangu to 'go solo' in Paris

By Naledi de Wee
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'One can immediately recognise the South African painter's geometric style and dynamic colour intricacies': Dr Esther Mahlangu is set to have a solo exhibition at the Almine Rech Gallery in Paris.



Dr Esther Mahlangu portrait. © Clint Strydom

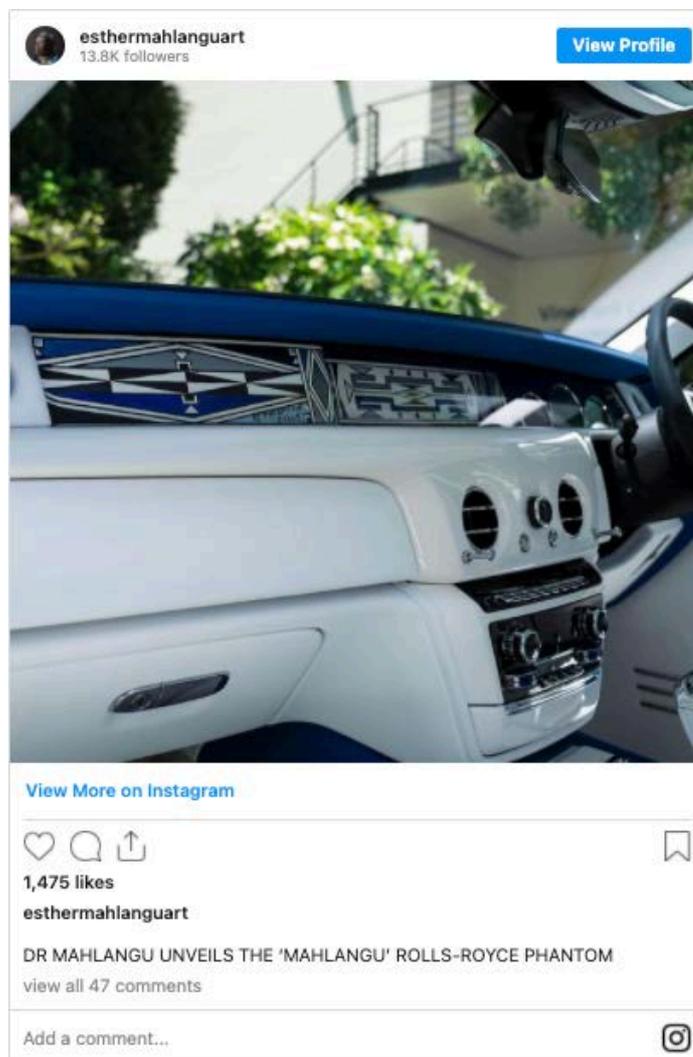
Dr Esther Mahlangu is one of the world's most respected artists best known for her large artworks that reference her lively Ndebele heritage. Mahlangu has a long list of achievements and she is adding another one to her list. She will be presenting a solo exhibition in Paris, France, at the Almine Rech Gallery.

DR ESTHER MAHLANGU'S ART JOURNEY

Born in 1935, Dr Esther Mahlangu learnt traditional Ndebele wall painting and beadwork as a child. When she was a teenager, she perfected her skills and began using a range of colours to create her bold art.

The 85-year-old's art has appeared in around the world, including the Musée d'Angoulême, in France. She has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees by the University of Johannesburg and the Durban University of Technology. Mahlangu also holds the French Order of Arts and Letters. She also received the Order of Ikhamanga in 2006.

In 1991, she became the 12th artist and the first woman to take part in the BMW Car Project. She added her signature touch to a BMW 525i. In 2020, she became the first South African artist to display her Ndebele-inspired artwork on the interior of a luxury Rolls Royce Phantom.



SOLO EXHIBITION ALMINE RECH

Dr Esther Mahlangu will have a solo exhibition at Almine Rech, Paris, where she will present a series of paintings created in the last three years.

“At Almine Rech, Dr Esther Mahlangu presents a series of paintings created between 2019 and 2021. She was first introduced in France and Europe during the exhibition Les Magiciens de la Terre, which then-director Jean-Hubert Martin organized at the Centre Pompidou in 1989.”

“One can immediately recognise the South African painter’s geometric style and dynamic colour intricacies and this new solo show in Paris seemed like a great opportunity for a conversation with the art historian as he shares his first impressions when he discovered her artwork,” writes art critic Marie Maertens.

The solo exhibition will take place between Saturday 20 November and Saturday 11 December.



Dr Esther Mahlangu portrait. © Clint Strydom

DR ESTHER MAHLANGU INSPIRES MANY

Dr Esther Mahlangu has inspired many with her artworks. According to Bella Naija, the prominent artist has also inspired Sophie Nonsinki Mahlangu who has dedicated her life to the development of traditional painting. “Our art has evolved from generation to generation. I learnt this beading and painting from my mother- and seeing Esther’s work – and since then I have not looked back,” said Nonsinki.

Dr Esther Mahlangu has founded a school where she teaches young girls and women in her local community in Mpumalanga how to paint.

“I am teaching them and I love doing that. This is my way of passing the knowledge to next generations to come.”