About Natnael Ashebir

Natnael Ashebir (b. 1995, Ethiopia) is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Ashebir's practice spans painting, drawing, and photography, critically engaging with themes of history, identity, memory, and belonging. He examines how individual and collective experiences shape the construction of self and place, crafting compelling visual narratives that merge personal reflection with broader sociocultural enquiry.

Ashebir's work offers a space for feeling, experiencing, and contemplating urbanisation—its significance in our time and its impact on life's many layers. He searches for beauty in imperfection, impermanence, and the incompleteness of a chaotic world. He balances spontaneity with deliberate compositions, assembling and juxtaposing elements that reflect the complexities of urban life.

His ongoing series, 'Layers of Life', which he describes as his "unorthodox archive," weaves together archival images and present-day experiences. Through his work, he captures the rhythm of time and space, layering form, colour, and texture to create intricate visual meditations.

Ashebir holds a BFA from the Alle School of Fine Art and Design (2021), a diploma from Entoto Polytechnic College (2016), and a certificate from Abyssinia Fine Art School (2013). In 2022, he was awarded second prize at the Emerging Painting Invitational (EPI) Prize. He has completed residencies at 32° East Ugandan Arts Trust, Kampala, Uganda (2023), and the AU20 Residency Program, Dakar, Senegal (2022).

"I attempt to explore the various layers embedded in our urban experience—shaped by hegemony, social structures, culture, historical moments, and more. These forces hold the power to isolate us from certain aspects of existence while, at times, also bringing us together, dissolving boundaries, and reconnecting us to integral elements of our urban reality." — Natnael Ashebir

Looking ahead, he will be participating in a group exhibition titled 'LIGHT + SPACE III' at the THK Gallery in Cape Town, taking place from 10 December 2026 until 4 February 2027.





Natnael Ashebir. Vessel of Becoming 05, 2024

CV

Solo Exhibitions

2021
'Layers of life', Guramayne art Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Group exhibitions

2026
LIGHT + SPACE III, THK Gallery, Cape Town
(Upcoming) Space Encounters, Gihanga Institute of Contemporary Art, Kigali, Rwanda
Roots and Wings, Drewes Galerie, Hamburg, Germany

2024
'Light + Space II', THK Gallery, Cape Town
'The Center of Fantasy', O'da Art Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria
'Common Space', Artawi Gallery, Adiss Ababa, Ethiopia

2023
African Photo Fair, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
'Antifragile,' Circle art gallery, Nairobi Kenya
Contemporary Ethiopia, Quoz Arts Fest, AKKA Project Dubai, UAE

2022
Ethiopian Highlight, Artsy Show, Circle Art Gallery Nairobi, Kenya
'Young vigor', ETmetro Gallery, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
'Ties that bind us', The cowrie culture, Accra, Ghana

2021
ART X Lagos, The Dada Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria

2018
'Memorial No 7', Italian Cultural Institution, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
'Reflection 3', Fendika Cultural Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2017
'Three generation', Fendika Cultural Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
'Reflection 2', Denq Art Gallery, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2015
'Reflection 1', Taza Art Gallery, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2013
National Theatre Art Gallery, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Prizes and Awards

2022
Second prize winner, Emerging Painting Invitational, EPI

Residencies

2023
32 Degree East Ugandan arts trust, Kampala, Uganda

2022
AU20 Residency program, Dakar, Senegal