

## About Karla Nixon

Karla Nixon (b. 1990) is a visual artist based in Durban, South Africa, whose practice draws primary impetus from direct material exploration, with paper at its core. She constructs images and objects responding to her surrounding environments—urban, domestic, and natural—by hand-cutting, tearing, sculpting, and reassembling. Her work is grounded in an ongoing investigation of how colour, texture, and fragmentation operate as a language of presence shaping sensorial and emotional encounters.

Nixon's work embraces tension, transience, and perception: tending to decomposition and reconstruction as critical means through which we operate in the spaces we make and the traces we leave within. Texture becomes a site of intimacy; colour, a catalyst for emotional resonance; and fragments, ways of holding multiplicity without seeking resolution. According to Nixon, "Paper holds a duality that fascinates me—it is fragile and strong, disposable yet archival—and through it I explore how we move through space and what remains after us."

Though paper is central to her practice, Nixon works across painting, sculpture, mixed media, collage, installation, video, and light. These approaches deepen both the conceptual and sensory dimensions of her practice, creating deliberately ambiguous spaces of encounter that invite viewers to dwell in the in-between.

Nixon obtained her Master's degree in Fine Art (Cum Laude) from the Durban University of Technology in 2017, for which her thesis focused on transience in paper art. She later did an artist residency in Bremen, Germany, from 2017 to 2018. She has been widely recognized and selected for the Shanghai Paper Art Biennale in 2023, among others, and is represented both nationally and internationally in notable presentations, such as the Rupert Museum in Stellenbosch (2024) and the Spier Light Art Festival (2025).

Her artworks are held in private collections in South Africa, Lebanon, Australia, Spain, and Holland, as well as public collections, including the Durban Art Gallery, the National Art Bank, and the Leridon Collection. Nixon has also been a finalist in both the Sasol and ABSA art awards.

In February 2026, Karla Nixon will participate in *A Grammar of Belonging* at THK Gallery, Cape Town followed by the Cape Town Art Fair.



Karla Nixon, Red, 2022

## CV

### Education

2017  
Masters in Fine Art (cum laude), Durban University of Technology

2013  
Bachelor of Technology in Fine Art (cum laude), Durban University of Technology

### Public Collections

Durban Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa  
National Art Bank of South Africa, Bloemfontein, South Africa  
Leridon Collection, Paris, France

### Residencies

2017 - 2018  
Bremer Kunststipendium Residency, Germany

### Awards & Achievements

2019  
Finalist: Mbombela Civic Centre, Mpumalanga, National Innibos Craft Award

2015  
Awarded Best Presentation in Faculty, DUT Research Day

2013  
ArtSpace Durban, Absa L'atelier Art Competition  
ABSA Gallery, Johannesburg, Absa L'atelier Art Competition top 100

2012  
Deans Merit Award (DUT)  
NRF Scholarship  
Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, Sasol Signatures (Finalist)

2011  
Sam Newton Award (DUT)

### Solo Exhibitions

2024  
*One Sunday Afternoon*, Tamasa Gallery, Durban, South Africa

2022  
*Underfoot*, Lizamore Fairland Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2021  
*Crease*, State of the Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2019  
*Just Listed*, KZNSA Gallery, Durban, South Africa

2018  
Solo exhibition at Bremischen Bürgerschaft, Bremen, Germany

2016  
*Once More*, ArtSpace Durban, Durban, South Africa

Group Exhibitions

2026

*A Grammar of Belonging*, THK Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Investec Cape Town Art Fair*, THK Gallery, South Africa

2025

*Solstice I + II*, THK Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Aerial Seams*, THK Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Collected Memory*, THK Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*When Surfaces Speak*, La Motte, Franschoek, South Africa  
*Affairs of the Art*, State of the Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Spier Light Art Exhibition*, Spier Wine Farm, Stellenbosch, South Africa

2024

*Light + Space II*, THK Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Paper Tale*, State of the Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Paperland*, A Pick Gallery, Torino, Italy  
*AbstRact: the hidden synchrony*, Rupert Museum, Stellenbosch, Cape Town

2023

Shanghai International Paper Art Biennale, Shanghai, China  
*Art Collaboration Kyoto*, A Pick Gallery, Japan  
*Estampa Contemporary Art Fair*, A Pick Gallery, Madrid, Spain  
*Borrel*, Lizamore Gallery, Woordfees, Stellenbosch, South Africa  
*RMB Latitudes Art Fair*, Lizamore Gallery, Johannesburg,  
*(Un)expected Art Fair*, A Pick Gallery, Milan, Italy  
*Spier Wine Farm*, Stellenbosch, Spier Light Art Exhibition  
*Time and Tides: Awaits no man*, State of the Art Gallery, Cape Town

2022

*Landscapes of Hidden Words*, A Pick Gallery, Torino, Italy  
*Loud Speak*, Origin Art, Johannesburg, South Africa  
*Transience*, KZNSA Gallery, Durban, South Africa  
*State of the Art*, Winter Salon, State of the Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Abstract\*d*, State of the Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Flights of Fancy*, THK Gallery, Manor House Boshendal in collaboration with Norval Foundation, South Africa

2021

*Commune*, KZNSA Gallery, Durban, South Africa

2020

*Commune*, Turbine Art Fair (online), KZNSA Gallery, South Africa  
*The limitless Mind*, Turbine Art Fair (online), Mstudio Community

2019

*Know this place*, KZNSA Gallery, Durban, South Africa  
*Creative Block Project Exhibition*, KZNSA Gallery, Durban, South Africa  
*Be Inspired by Phansi*, Phansi Museum, Durban, South Africa  
*The Durban July we make*, State of the Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Birds*, RUST-EN-VREDE Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Land*, KZNSA Gallery, Umhlaba, South Africa

2018

*#Paper*, Art.b Gallery, Bellville, Cape Town, South Africa  
SA Gallery, Johannesburg, ABSA l'atelier exhibition top 100  
ABSA Gallery, Johannesburg, ABSA l'atelier exhibition top 100  
*The marks we make*, State of the Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
Daville Baillie Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa  
KZNSA Park Gallery, Durban, South Africa

2017

*Together apart*, ArtSpace Durban, Durban, South Africa  
ABSA Gallery, Johannesburg, ABSA l'atelier exhibition top 100  
Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, Sasol Signatures, Finalist  
*Enchant. Celebrate. Create. Disrupt*, ICC, Durban, Essence Festival

2016

*Artemisia*, DF Contemporary, Cape Town, South Africa  
*Own a Space-July*, Loading Bay Gallery, Durban, South Africa  
*Own a Space-August*, Loading Bay Gallery, Durban, South Africa  
*Transition*, Breathing Space, Durban, South Africa

2015

*Tracksides*, Open Plan Studio, Durban, South Africa  
*Curate. a. space*, curated by Carol Brown, Fringe Art Fair, Arts on Main, Johannesburg, South Africa  
*Eye Candy*, curated by Carol Brown, Hilton Arts Festival, Hilton, South Africa  
DUT Staff Exhibition, DUT Gallery, South Africa  
*Anthropology III*, curated by Grace Kotze, Breathing Space, South Africa

2014

*Looking Forward: Our lives in 2034*, Durban Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa

2012

*Three Boys and a Girl*, The Collective, Durban, South Africa  
*Black and Blue*, The Collective, Durban, South Africa  
*Science Art/ Art Science*, ArtSpace Durban, Durban, South Africa  
ArtSpace Durban, d' Art Exchange and Artists, Durban, South Africa  
ArtSpace Durban, Absa L'atelier Art Competition, Durban, South Africa

2011

*Reuse*, Durban University of Technology Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa

2010

*Amazing Starts*, Durban University of Technology Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa