

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 participated in A Grammar of Belonging at THK Gallery, Cape Town, followed by a presentation with the gallery at Cape Town Art Fair. In June 2026, Nixon presented the duo exhibition I Find You All Around Me with THK Gallery. She has since presented with THK Gallery at Art Cologne: Palma Mallorca and Enter 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

Enter Art Fair, THK Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Art Cologne: Palma Mallorca, THK Gallery, Palma, Mallorca
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, Franschhoek, 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