

Mark Modimola, South African artist



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Mark Modimola is a South African artist based in Johannesburg working in digital art, illustration and painting

Based in Johannesburg, South Africa, Mark Modimola is an African artist drawn to nature, urged and inspired by the rich tapestry of culture that makes up Africa and its diaspora. A seer and communicator of the ties between people and nature through his creations, which challenge how we see the mind and spirit of Africans.



Mark Modimola. Image supplied

“ I am about Africa - Mark Modimola ”

■ Tells us what it is to be an African visual artist?

It is to be African in one's philosophy, practice and outlook. One's perspectives take into account the nature of being for Africans. An African visual artist creates with an attitude that reflects the physical and spiritual landscapes of Africa, a dynamic, versatile output, everchanging.

■ Growing up, what did you want to be?

Many things, I wanted to feel accepted, I wanted to be capable and I wanted to help people. To contribute positively to society. I know I didn't want to be useless to society. I know I didn't want to be a burden but a beacon.

■ How did you end up in the industry?

I woke up and I left society to find myself, went into nature and found a precious message from the source. When I spoke this message, it manifested as art.

■ **Where do you find inspiration?**

In music, the sun, the sky, and water. Scents carried by the wind. Colour. The songs of various birds, the crunching of the earth while I walk across a trail and the variety of flora. Changing seasons. People. language and history.



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■ **Describe your career so far.**

Exponential

■ **What has been the highlight of your career?**

Working as part of the team that created the award-winning novel *All Rise: Resistance and Rebellion in South Africa*. Being one of the winners at the Amex ZA Graphic Arts Challenge competition and my winning work of art being featured on a mural at the Keyes Art on Mile gallery. Attending my art residency with Wa Na Wari house, a stalwart of Black creativity in one of the most prominent cities in the world, Seattle, USA.

■ **What are you currently streaming/reading/listening to?**

Iphupho L'ka Biko - *Uthixo Ukhona*
The brother moves on - *Umthandazo Wamagenge*
Kokoroko - *Age of Ascent*
Uncle Waffles - *Yahyuppiyah*
DJ Maphorisa x Kabza De Small - *Koko*
Merriam Makeba - *Kilimamjaro*
Hugh Masekela – *Gold*



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■ ***When you're not busy creating a piece of artwork, what do you do?***

I go into nature to birdwatch with my new binoculars. I also download bird guides in every city I visit (I'm annoyingly obsessed with birds). I am also the proud owner of a flute which I suck at playing.

■ ***What's next on your journey?***

More public artworks - I aim to work with organisations and institutions to create works that engage the public both locally and internationally. Working in collaboration with brands and governments to speak to our culture with nature.

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