



CONNECT FOR  
CULTURE AFRICA

# CfCA Cartoonist Residency Program Visual Storytelling for Cultural Advocacy in Africa

December 9–19, 2024 | Addis Ababa & Bishoftu, Ethiopia





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# Introduction

## About CfCA

The Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative is more than a project—it is a pan-African movement to reimagine the cultural and creative future of the continent. Launched by Selam in partnership with the African Union's Division of Culture and Sports and supported by the Swedish Government, CfCA responds to a critical need: to elevate the role of arts, culture, and heritage in Africa's development agenda.

At its core, CfCA is a call to action. It urges African governments to allocate at least 1% of their national budgets to the cultural sector by 2030, recognizing that culture is not a luxury but a necessity. Through regional programs, collaborative networks, and advocacy campaigns, CfCA amplifies the voices of cultural actors, influences public policy, and unlocks sustainable investment in the creative industries.



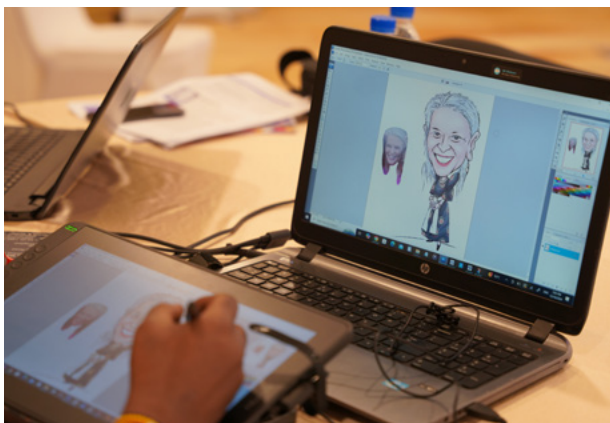
## About the Cartoonist Residency

In December 2024, CfCA took a bold step in its advocacy journey by launching the Cartoonist Residency Program—an initiative designed to harness the power of visual storytelling to influence hearts, minds, and policies.

Hosted in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu, this hybrid residency brought together 15 cartoonists from Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The artists participated in virtual workshops before convening in person for an intensive 10-day residency, where they created over 40 original works and a collaborative collage, each addressing Africa's social, political, and economic landscape.

Guided by renowned mentors, participants explored cartooning as a form of activism. They received training in visual storytelling, intellectual property, and cultural fusion, and participated in site visits and academic exchanges. The residency culminated in a public exhibition that drew policymakers, cultural leaders, and media—amplifying the call for investment in Africa's cultural industries.





## Residency Objectives

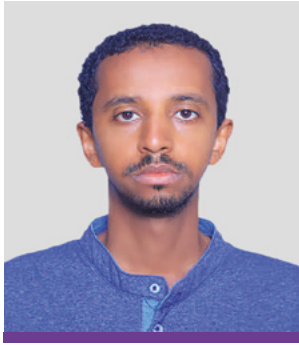
The CfCA Cartoonist Residency Program was designed not just to train artists—but to transform them into cultural advocates. The goal was to create a platform where creativity meets purpose and art becomes a voice for the voiceless.

By combining mentorship, storytelling, skill-building, and collaboration, the program nurtured a new generation of artists who use their talents to inspire change. Their works now serve as visual manifestos—each one advocating for inclusion, democracy, sustainability, and the importance of public funding for culture in Africa.



The background features large, faint, stylized letters 'GFA' in a light purple color. The letters are composed of rounded shapes and horizontal bars, giving them a modern, graphic appearance. They are centered horizontally and vertically on the page.

# Meet the Artists

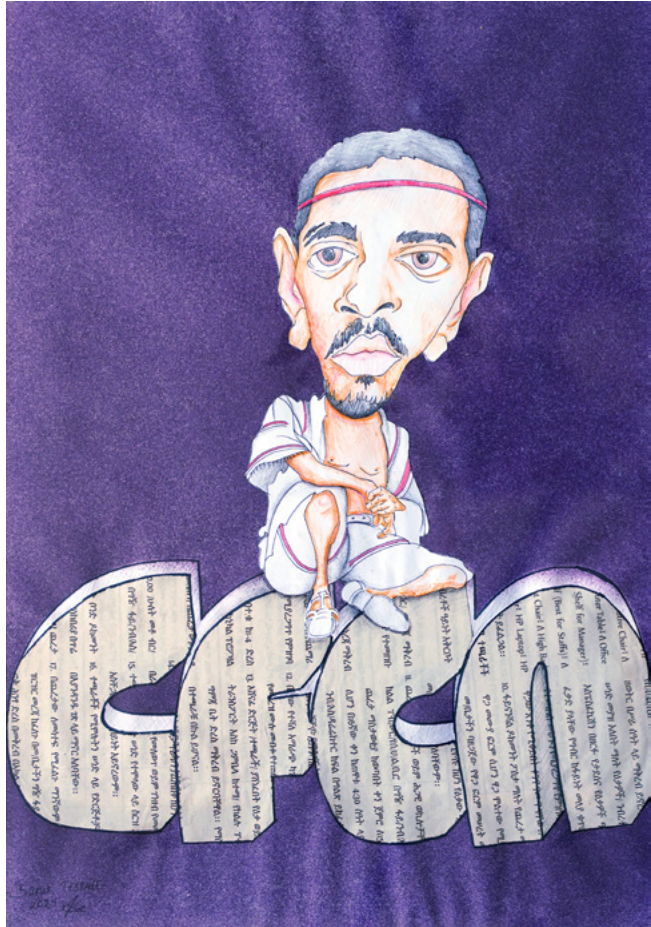


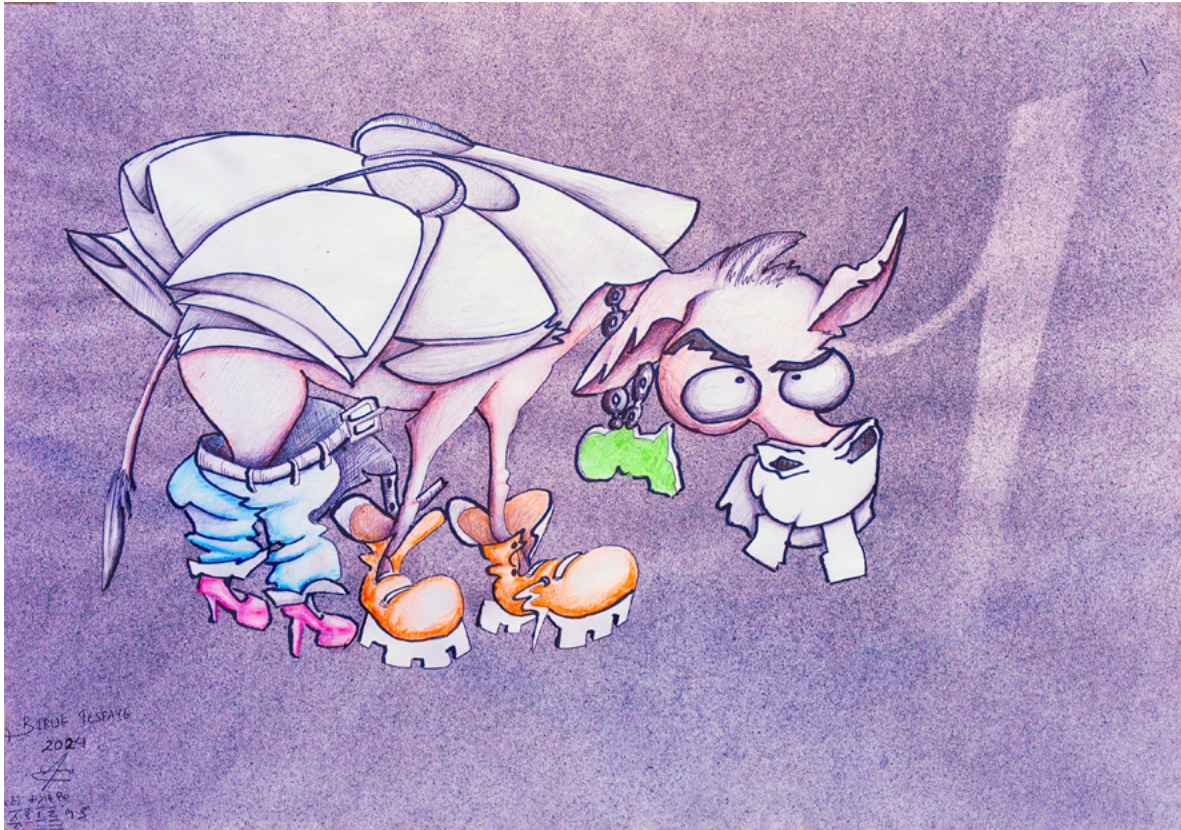
**CfCA.** This artwork shows a portrait of the artist wearing traditional clothing of the Borena tribe in Ethiopia.

## Biruk Tesfaye (ETH) Cartoonist

Biruk tesfaye is a visual artist known for his experiments with various materials, such as wood and paper, to express his ideas with a focus on Ethiopian and African traditional designs and symbols. His artistic journey began at Abyssinia Fine Arts College, where he honed his skills in drawing, watercolor, and painting. He then advanced his studies at Entoto Polytechnic College, delving into painting, sculpture, and graphic art, ultimately specializing in woodcut printmaking.

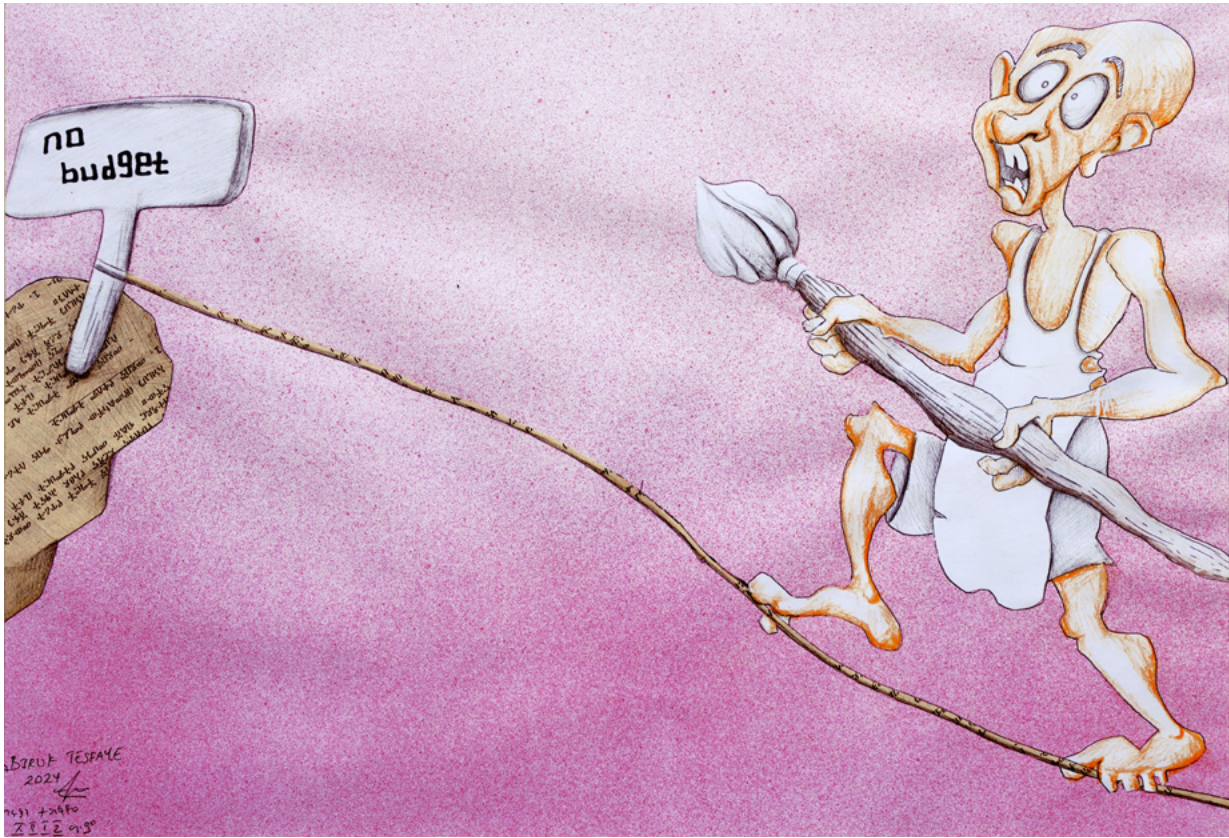
His work has been featured in group exhibitions at Hager Fikir Theatre, Abyssinia Fine Arts College and Goethe-Institut Äthiopien.





**A tied donkey.** In this artwork, I aim to illustrate how we Africans value our culture while also being influenced by other cultures. We often overlook our indigenous knowledge and cultural morals. Although we may embrace our African identity on the surface, many of us feel a deep disconnect from Africa in our hearts. Our minds have been colonized, and

we find ourselves tied to Western ideals. The donkey, for instance, is an animal that carries many types of burdens. In this analogy, we Africans resemble this animal, as we often bear the weight of various ideas and ideologies imposed upon us by others.



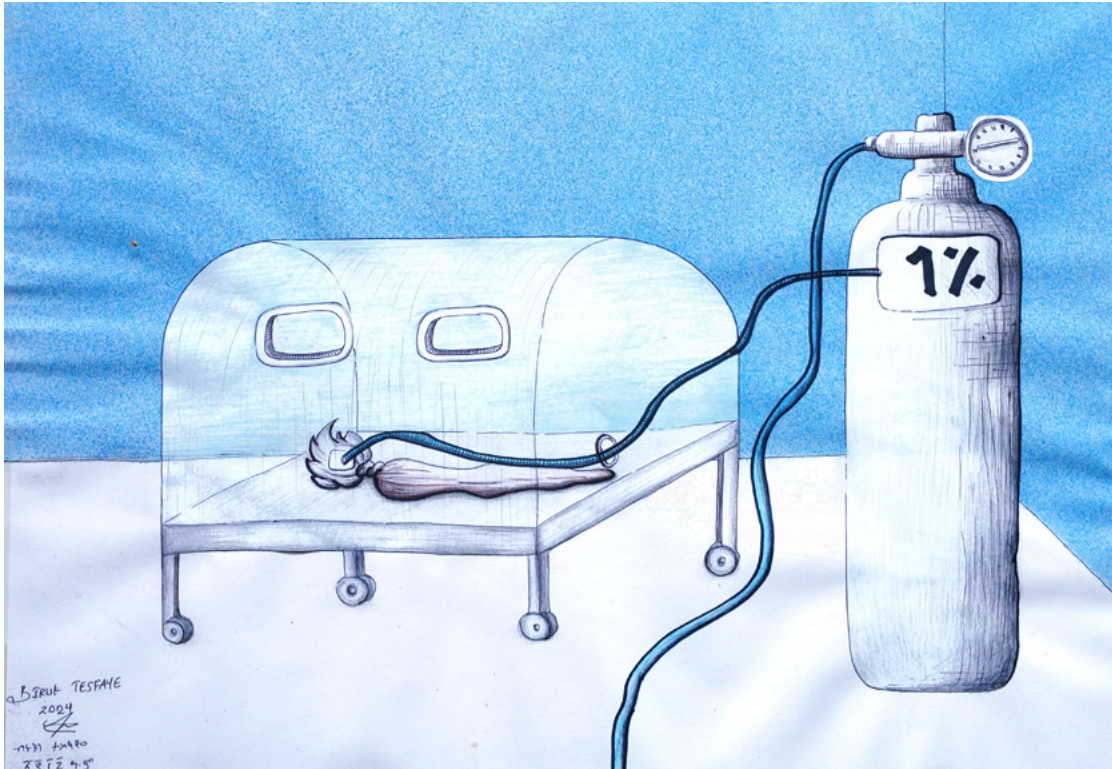
**The Artist Rope.** This artwork aims to illustrate the challenges faced by African artists as they strive to achieve their goals without adequate support. We can liken their experience to that of a circus performer walking on a tightrope, using a stick to maintain balance. Just as the performer is at risk of falling without assistance, many

African artists encounter setbacks in their careers with little to no support to help them recover. This comparison emphasizes the difficulties that numerous African artists endure in their pursuit of success.

**One Percent Oxygen.** This initiative by CFCFA countries supports the allocation of 1% for culture and art. We aim to help this sector reach its goals by providing essential assistance. Without support for culture and art, we lose a vital part of our identity. Those who do not understand their origins will find it difficult to navigate their future. Furthermore, when individuals

lack connections to their heritage, they are unable to pass that legacy on to the next generation.

Without oxygen, a human cannot survive; similarly, without government support, art and culture cannot thrive.





## Bethlehem Samson (ETH)

### Digital Illustrator

Bethlehem Samson is a 28-year-old creative professional currently serving as the Team Leader of the Creative Department for Social Media at the Ethiopia Broadcasting Corporation (EBC). Passionate about using art to create cultural, social, and political impact across Africa, Bethlehem aspires to become one of the continent's leading cartoonists, leveraging her craft to drive important conversations and influence positive change.

Bethlehem's journey as an artist began at the age of 12 when she started sketching and creating pencil art. She later pursued studies at the School of Architecture, where she further developed her artistic abilities and broadened her creative vision. Her dedication to her craft and her ambition to make a lasting impact through art continue to guide her career.



**Tsenatsel.** A traditional musical instrument of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.



**Africart.** We have the text AFRICA and a man with CFCA tshirt bringing the letter T to create AFRICA ART.



**Mirror.** A Cultural reflection - this piece shows a man representing the government having the government's budget on one hand and inserting a coin on the other side to see his cultural reflection in the mirror found in front of him.

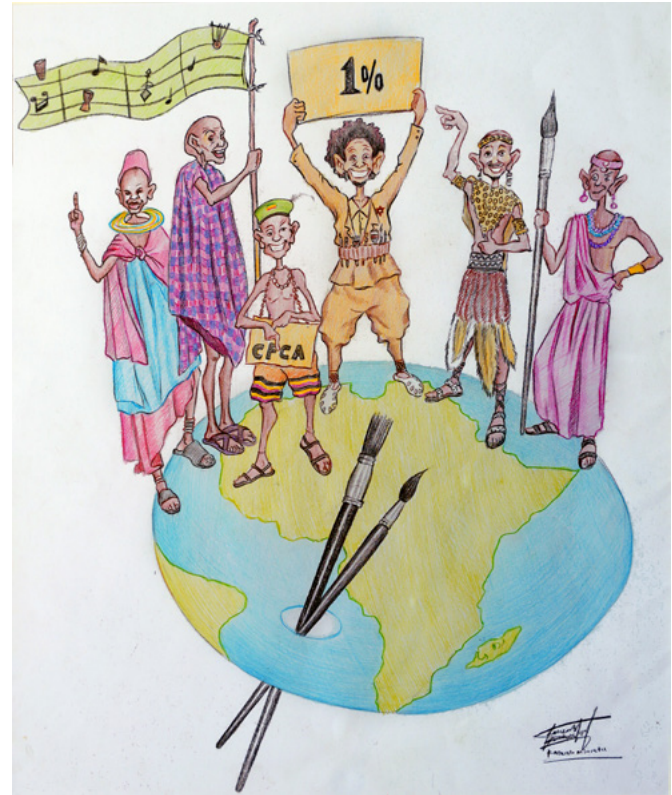


**The Shield.** There is a mother bird protecting her eggs with her wings forming an umbrella-like structure...the eggs representing the main components of art which are theatre, music and visual art.



## Kaleab Mihretu (ETH) Cartoonist

Kaleab Mihretu is a studio artist based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. His body of works encompasses oil and acrylic painting, water colors, sculpture, woodcuts, crafts, designs, alongside multimedia experiments involving photography and video art. Kaleab's art explores themes of identity and intricacy found between individuals and their environments, addressing pressing social local and global political issues such as war, urbanization, life philosophy, technology and self-destruction. Recognized with various awards, he has exhibited at several venues like Fendika Cultural Center. Kaleab is a painter, designer, illustrator, cartoonist, comic book artist and so on; in general he is a multimedia artist. Kaleab holds a bachelor's degree in painting from Addis Ababa university (2022) and a diploma in fine art from Teferi Mekonnen (Entoto Polytechnic College) in 2017.



Art by Kaleab Mihretu.



Art by Kaleab Mihretu.



Art by Kaleab Mihretu.



## Hana Fikadu Guta (ETH)

Cartoonist / Illustrator

Hana Fekadu is a multidisciplinary artist and student of Fine Arts at Teferi Mekonen Art School and Computer Science at Addis Ababa University. Specializing in cartoon art and digital illustration, her work explores themes like identity, mental health, and sustainability.

Combining creativity with technology, Hana uses tools like Adobe Illustrator to craft engaging stories and interactive media. As an art teacher and advocate, she inspires others through education and storytelling, aiming to foster dialogue and promote social justice through her innovative approach.

**A Tale of unexpected fate.** Abduction marriage, still practiced in some rural parts of Ethiopia and other regions in Africa and Asia, involves a man forcibly taking a young girl—often without her consent—and later attempting to legitimize the act by sending elders to negotiate with her family through compensation such as money or livestock. In some cases, the abduction occurs with the implicit agreement of the girl's family. Once the girl is abducted and often raped, families may feel pressured to accept the union, believing separation would bring more harm. Tragically, many of these abducted girls are too young to consent, leading to disrupted education, early pregnancies, health risks, and lives lived against their will.



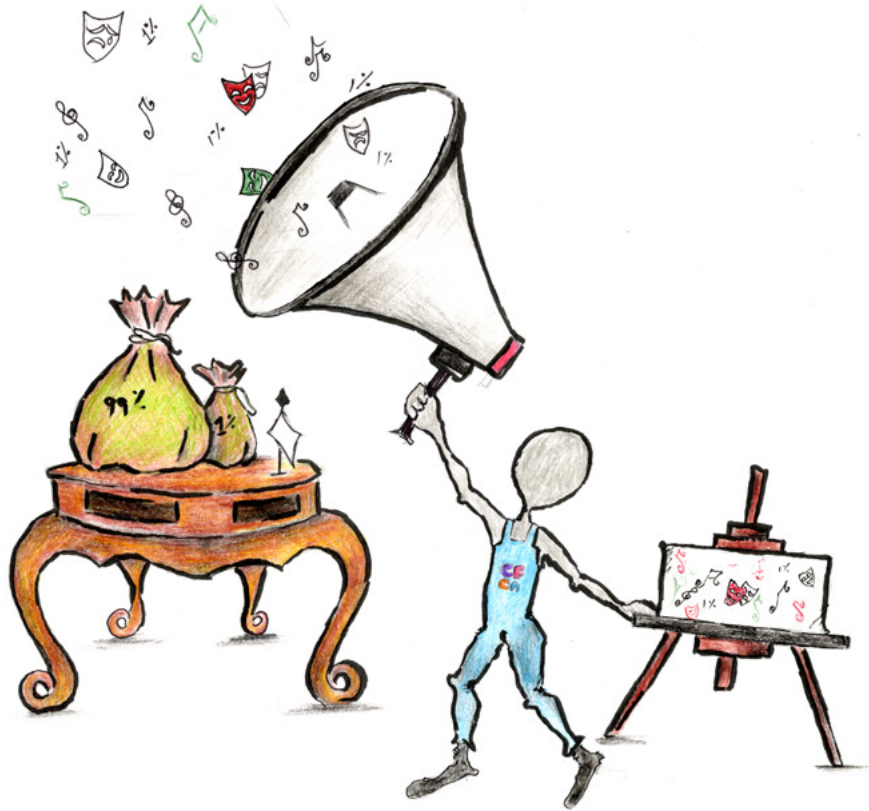


**Rite of Passage.** The bull-jumping ceremony is a traditional rite of passage for young Hamar men in Ethiopia's Lower Omo Valley, marking their transition into adulthood. Before the ceremony, female relatives of the initiate are ritually whipped by the Maza—men who have previously completed the ritual—as a show of loyalty and to forge protective bonds. The day

of the event is filled with music, dance, and celebration, with up to 300 people attending. The initiate undergoes purification rituals and must run across the backs of 7 to 10 dung-smeared castrated bulls four times without falling. Success earns him the status of manhood, entry into the Maza, and the opportunity to meet a future wife during the following days of festivities.



AF Hana Fikadu



**The art of progress - a call for 1 percent.** Investing 1% of government funds in the arts can significantly enhance cultural development and national identity. This artwork emphasizes the importance of government funding for the arts like music, theater

showcasing how such investment can enhance cultural expression and community engagement. It also highlights the various ways art and culture enrich our lives, promoting social cohesion and economic growth.



## Kaleab Birhanu (ETH)

### Digital Illustrator

Kaleab Birhanu is a talented digital artist based in Ethiopia, specializing in illustration and comic book art. Over the past four years, he has developed a diverse portfolio that includes digital paintings, stylized illustrations, character designs, storybook art, and storyboards. Kaleab's work is deeply influenced by the vibrant culture of Ethiopia and his love for animation, allowing him to create visually compelling stories that blend tradition with contemporary art. With a relentless passion for growth and creativity, he strives to reach new heights and establish himself as one of the leading artists in his field.

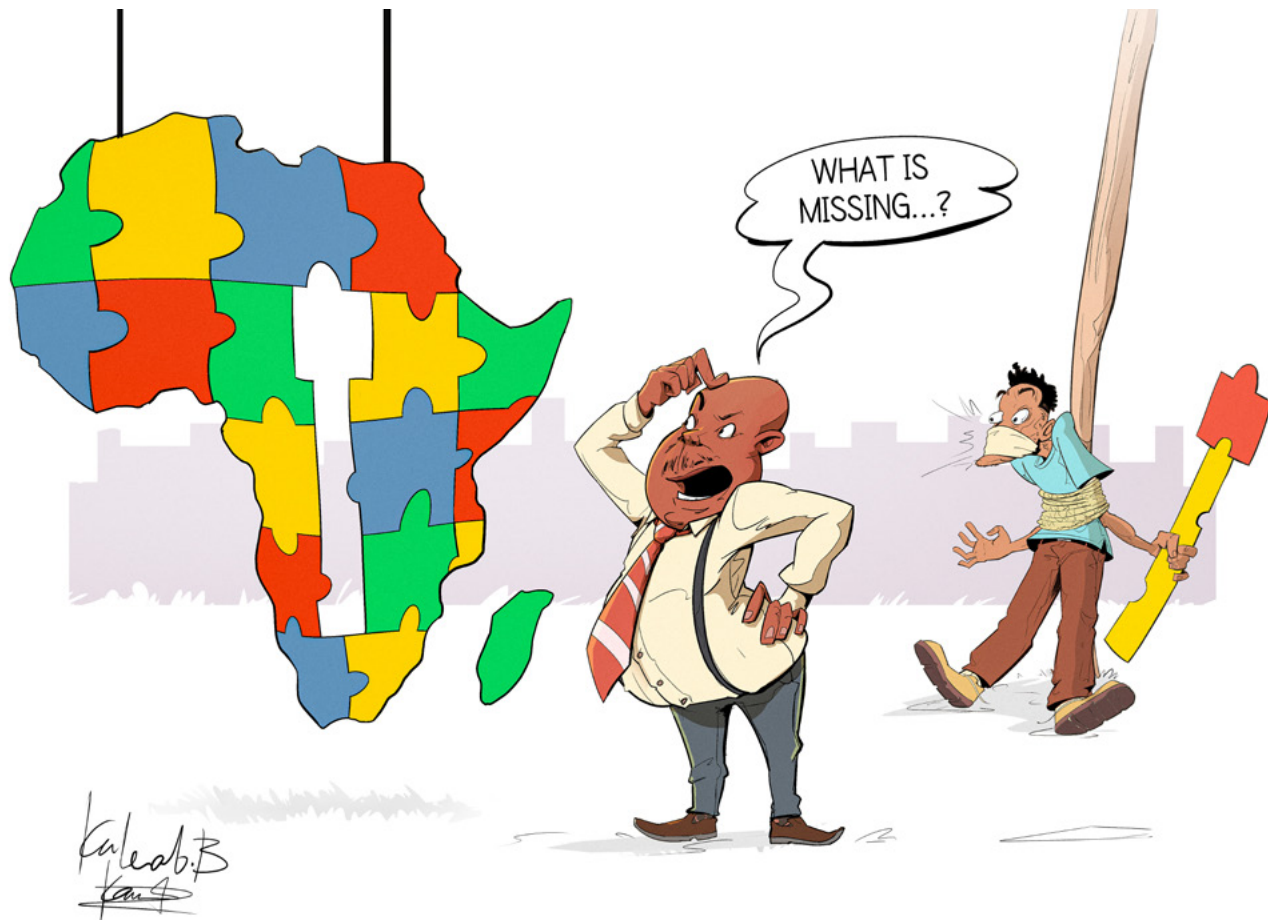
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**Bale Qine.** A man plays the traditional Bale Qine with a sad face, suggesting the relegation of art and culture.





**Something for the Road.** A positive response by authority willing to take aboard the creative industry.



**I Am Missing.** Africa cannot be complete without the inclusion of art and culture, depicted in the artwork as a part of the jigsaw being ignored.



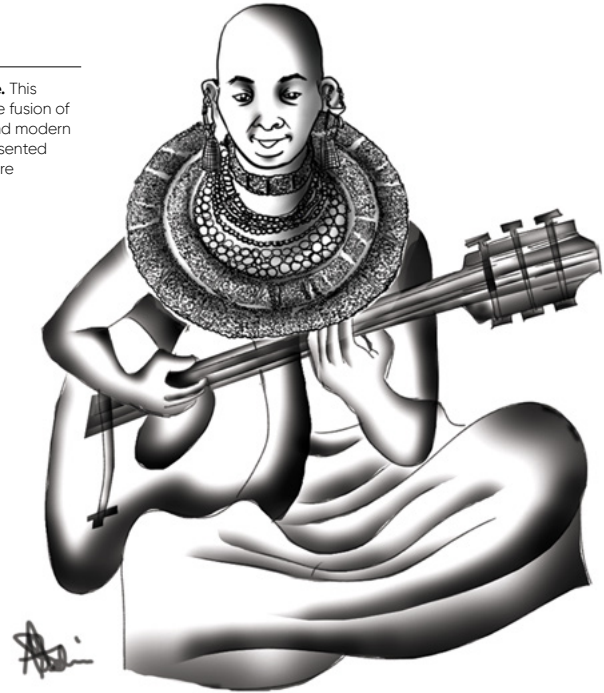
## Adelaide Jachi (TZA)

### Illustrator and Animator

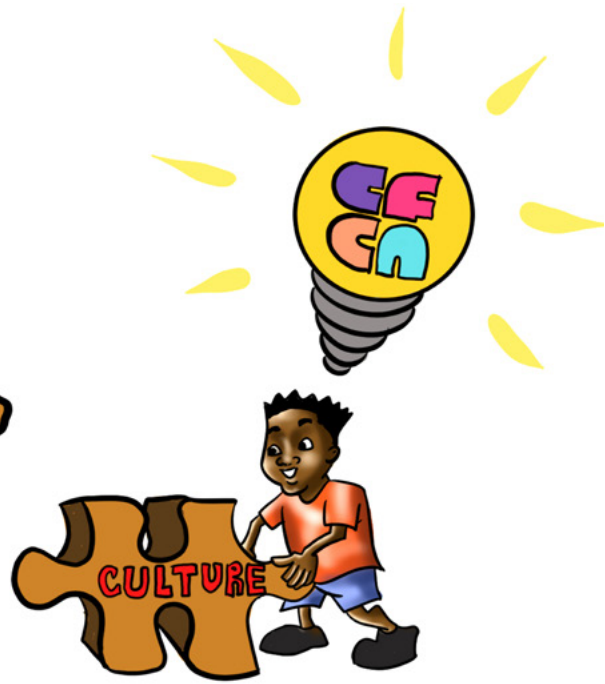
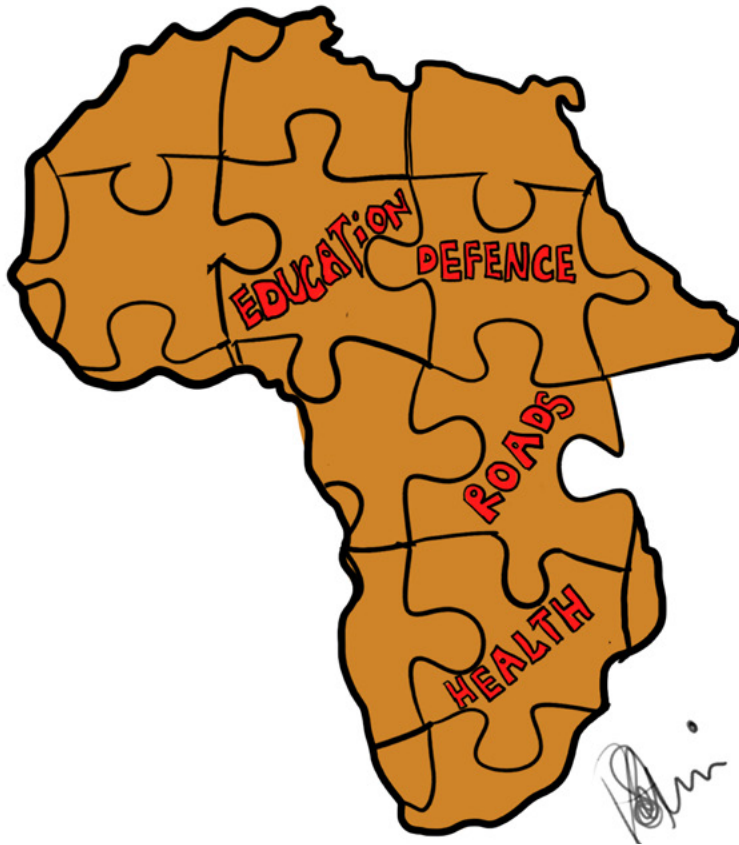
Adelaide Jachi is a dynamic and award-winning creative animator and illustrator, specializing in 2D animation to create powerful visual narratives addressing social change. With over six years of experience, Adelaide blends her passion for storytelling with expert animation skills to craft tailored visuals for organizations amplifying their key messages through impactful animations. Her clientele includes Policy Forum, Forum CC, TASAF, World Bank, TARURA, International Labor Organization, AMREF, PACT, and Plan International. Fueled with project management expertise, Adelaide led impactful projects including Utanzania ni nini, the 50 Years of Femina Clubs anniversary, and the Media Innovation Evening. Her contributions to social advocacy have earned her prestigious awards, including

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**Strings of Heritage.** This artwork reflects the fusion of cultural identity and modern creativity, as represented by the Maasai figure playing the guitar.



the Ladima Women in Animation Award 2023, and a fellowship from DW Akademie. Recognized as a ONE Africa Champion and certified United People Global leader, Adelaide is devoted to inspiring and empowering communities through her artistry, leaving a meaningful impact on society.



**The Missing Puzzle.** This artwork portrays Africa as a puzzle with pieces representing Health, Education ,Defense, and "Culture." A child adds the "Culture" piece, symbolizing the role of

youth and culture in shaping Africa's future. The glowing light bulb signifies hope, creativity, and collective progress.



**Greener on the Other Side.** This artwork depicts the intersection of creativity and sustainability. At the center is a lush green hill filled with thriving creatives—musicians, performers, and artisans—symbolizing culture flourishing in harmony with nature. At the summit, an arrow points to the cracked upper part of dry land, symbolizing

a meager one percent budget input. This transitions to the greener side below, representing the potential for transformation and growth when investments are directed toward supporting creativity and sustainability. The piece highlights the vital role of funding in nurturing culture and progress.



## Dickson Godwin Kirenga (TZA) Digital Illustrator

Dickson Kirenga (24) is a Tanzanian illustrator, storyboard artist, and animator driven by an enduring passion for visual storytelling. From a young age, Dickson was captivated by the art of storytelling, whether it was through watching animated shows, narrating them to his peers, or crafting his own comics. These early experiences laid the groundwork for his creative journey and solidified his ambition to bring narratives to life through illustration and animation.

As he progresses in his career, Dickson is dedicated to using his art to celebrate the rich culture, history, and pride of Africa. His work is a heartfelt tribute to his home country, showcasing its vibrant heritage while fostering a connection with global audiences. With a focus on authentic storytelling, Dickson aims to highlight the beauty and resilience of African narratives, inspiring and engaging people worldwide.



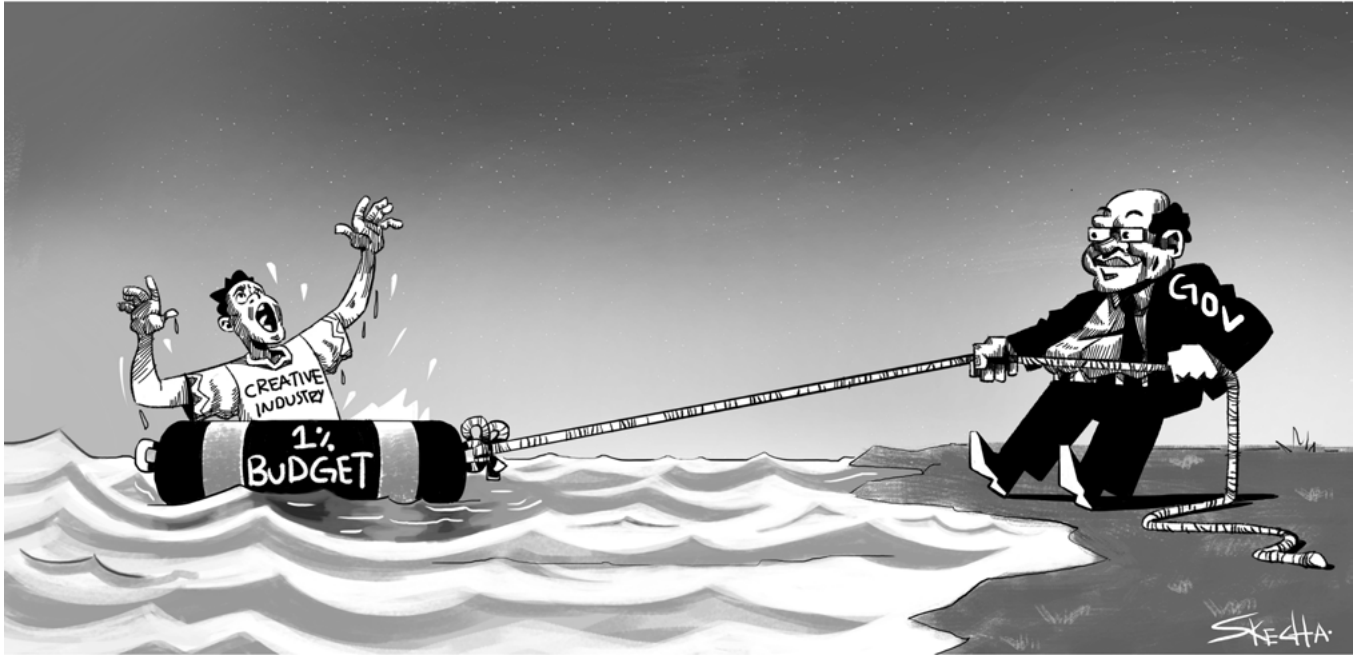
**Bound by Culture.** This artwork is a tribute to the Connect for Culture Africa (CFCA), the organizers and facilitators of the 1% for Culture program hosted in Ethiopia. It celebrates the unity and collaboration fostered by the initiative, bringing together artists from across Africa to advocate for greater investment in arts and culture. The interlocked hands symbolize solidarity, strength, and the shared vision of cultural growth among the participating countries. The vibrant patterns in the background represent the nations involved: Kenya (top left), Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Uganda, with Ethiopia taking center stage. Through this piece, I express my gratitude to CFCA for creating an opportunity for artists to connect, learn, and inspire one another in a project that promises to leave a lasting impact on the African art landscape.



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**The Old and The New.** This piece is inspired by my visit to Ethiopia, where I witnessed a beautiful harmony between tradition and modernity. The illustration portrays a young woman skateboarding while dressed in traditional Ethiopian attire, symbolizing the fusion of cultural heritage and contemporary lifestyle.

The vibrant patterns on her dress and flowing fabric of her clothing celebrate Ethiopia's rich culture, while her dynamic pose and the skateboard represent youthful energy and modern pursuits, showcasing how tradition can thrive in modern contexts without losing its essence.



**Life Buoy.** This illustration symbolizes the government's role in supporting the creative industry by allocating 1% of the national budget to arts and culture. The life buoy labeled "1% Budget" represents a much-needed lifeline for the struggling creative industry, depicted as an artist in distress, struggling to stay afloat amidst turbulent waters. On the shore, the

government figure is seen holding onto a rope in an effort to help out the drowning man, emphasizing their control and responsibility in providing the support needed to uplift the sector. This illustration highlights the urgency of this lifeline and the impact it could have on saving and revitalizing the creative industry.



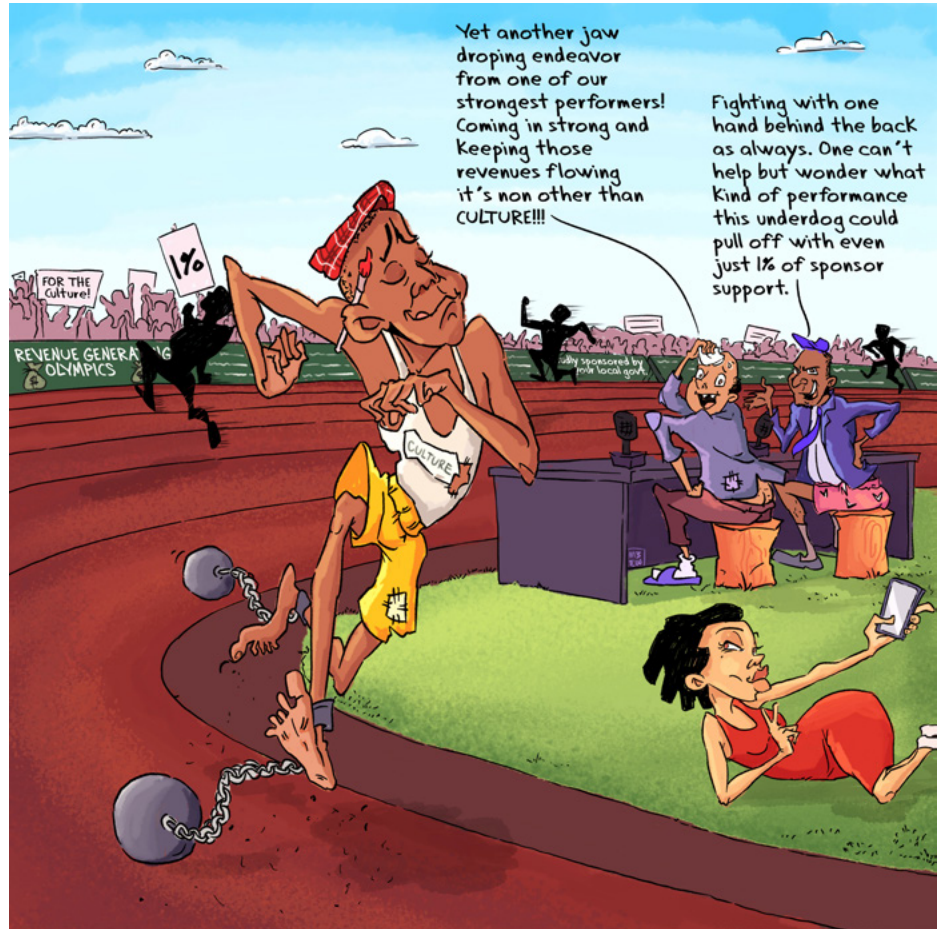
## Maria Tumwebaze Byoma (UGA) Cartoonist

Maria Byoma is a Ugandan born digital artist by profession with close to 10 years of experience illustrating and designing digital artworks. Her passion for art and keen interest in creative visual works has been nurtured through the ever present influences of strong artistic personalities from her childhood. To further develop her skills, pursued first a Diploma and then a Bachelors Degree in Multimedia and Animation. She now specializes in creating digital artworks for illustrations, graphic design and animation. Over the years, Maria has worked with both individuals and organizations to produce professional artworks for various social campaigns, commercials, brand development and communication materials. She also regularly shares some of her artistic impressions via an online Instagram art profile under the moniker @the\_Only.



◀ **The Last Defense.** “The Last Defense” is an exploration of the women in our traditional communities as guardians of culture and tradition and their significant role as the final barrier against its erosion. Through distinct yet interconnected roles— they play enforcers of discipline, keepers of history, navigators of family ties, and cultural anchors—all representing the diverse ways women uphold and transfer heritage and precious cultural knowledge. They are a testament to the resilience, authority, and adaptability required to sustain communal identity across generations.

**The Competition.** “The Competition” is a satirical comic that reflects on the challenges faced by many of our local cultural arts sectors. Set at a fictional Uganda Cultural Arts Centre in a state of disrepair, it shows an indifferent watchman looking on as robbers break in—only to find nothing worth stealing. The building itself, depicted as being on loan from an undisclosed government, highlights the sector’s struggles with limited resources, neglect, and an often overwhelming reliance on external support to stay afloat.



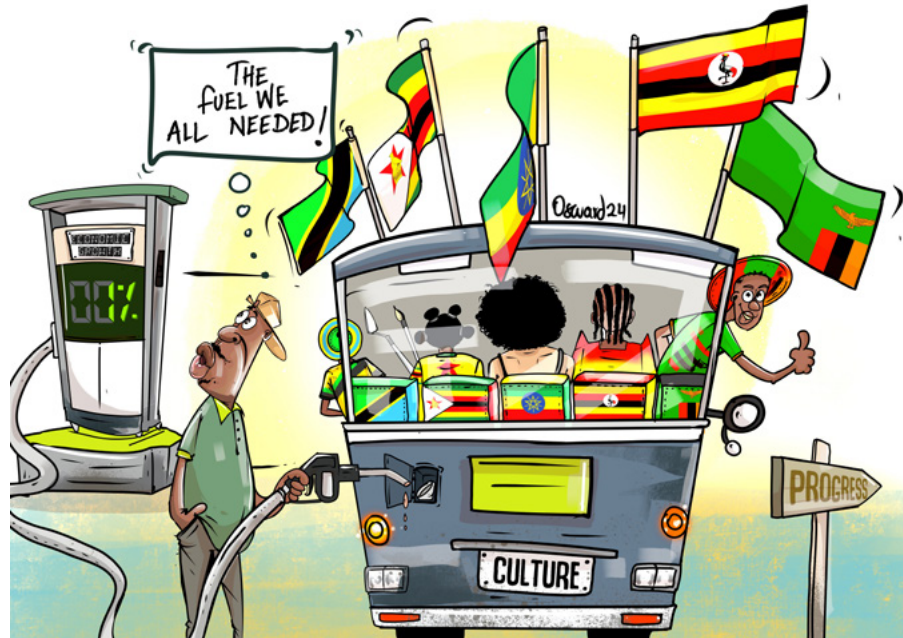




## Tayebwa Oswald (UGA)

Cartoonist / Illustrator

Tayebwa Oswald is a passionate illustrator, cartoonist, and art teacher with an urge to transform ideas into powerful visuals. With a strong background in graphic design and 3D sculpture, he brings creativity and precision to his craft in various forms such as satire, narratives editorials etc. As a secondary school art teacher, Tayebwa inspires the next generation of artists while freelancing as a skilled creator of captivating cartoons, engaging illustrations, and thought-provoking satire (political, economy, sports etc). Driven by a vision to make a global impact through his artistry, Tayebwa combines his teaching and design expertise to tell compelling stories and leave a lasting impression in the art world.



**Cultural Fuel.** This work shows how every one of the 5 nations need to empower the cultural sector with 1% funding to have progress in economic growth. The work shows how the 5 member countries and their flags waving high.



**The Dance Mechanics.** This work shows the various dances and costumes or traditional wear in the 5 countries (Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Uganda) it shows how different dance strokes and drumming is conducted.



**National Budget.** This work shows how various sectors in the government are underfunded especially the cultural sector, the satire in the cartoon shows how the government has achieved national growth but the cultural sector is still starving.



**Injera.** Here I created the cartoon to show the injera preparation process from teff growing, harvesting, cleaning, grinding, kneading, adding yeast, preservation and the cooking process. This was created in a traditional way to show the modern world how INJERA was originally made.



## Adero Remmy (UGA)

### Digital Illustrator

Adero Remmy is a 24-year-old Kenyan artist and designer currently based in Kampala, Uganda. He is driven by a deep passion for creating visually compelling art and designs across diverse media. His expertise spans illustration, typography, logo design, fine art, and animation, with much of his knowledge and skills self-taught. Adero is presently collaborating with a group of friends on an impactful short 2D animation project aimed at raising awareness about mental health. Despite holding a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Makerere University, Adero has consistently pursued his artistic passions, honing his craft and embracing new creative challenges. Beyond his artistic endeavors, he is known for his curiosity and friendly demeanor, always eager to learn and expand his horizons.



In his leisure time, Adero enjoys playing football, reading novels, and engaging in indoor games, which reflect his vibrant and well-rounded personality. His work exemplifies a fusion of technical precision and creative expression, making him a unique talent in the art and design world.

◀ **National Budget 2030.** This artwork draws inspiration from Uganda's National Budget presentation by the Minister of Finance each April. It showcases a raised briefcase symbolizing the prioritized sectors. Art and culture are prominently featured in the top left corner, reflecting the African Union's goal of allocating 1% of the economy's budget to these areas by 2030. The piece envisions a future where this objective is realized, with the elevated briefcase signifying its secure establishment. Initially, I envisioned a man holding a briefcase that represented the elements shown above. However, my mentor Ogon suggested that raising the briefcase would add more significance to the piece. Recognizing that the power of illustration lies in effective communication, this artwork was created. I am grateful to Ogon for his guidance.

**The Tribute.** This artwork is a tribute to Connect for Culture Africa, African Union, Sweden Sverige and Selam who were the organizers and facilitators of the Cartoonist Residency Program. A huge thank you to them and the people who were involved. The art style employed in this piece is one I experimented with a few years back, and I found it to be well-suited for conveying expressive emotions. The colors are primarily inspired by the CfCA logo, with the green symbolizing sustainability. Additionally, each character reflects a country involved in this program through their attire.





**Culture Junction.** Inspired by Addis Ababa's impressive road network, particularly its roundabouts, this artwork depicts a junction where five countries, symbolized by the colors of their national flags, converge to advocate for integrating art and culture into their economic budgets.

The art and culture sector is represented by a small, brownish quadrant (desert), while adjacent sectors are depicted in green, indicating better funding. A hint of gold in the art sector signifies its economic potential, while zebra crossings illustrate the interdependence of all sectors for a sustainable economy.

The pie chart emphasizes the goal of allocating 1% of the economy's budget to art and culture by 2030 for sustainable growth.



## Mudiwa Kimberly Marasa (ZWE)

### Digital Illustrator

Mudiwa Kimberly Marasa is a multidimensional artist with extensive experience in digital illustrations and digital art. Her vibrant and expressive style focuses on themes surrounding Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and mental health, particularly in women.

In addition to her local initiatives, Mudiwa has contributed to international animation projects and comics, demonstrating her versatility across various mediums such as digital art, animation, painting, clay, and photography. Known for her thought-provoking work, Mudiwa continues to use her art to amplify important stories and drive conversations around social issues.



**First Idea.** As I reflect on my artwork, I am drawn to the poignant scene I've created. The cartoon illustration depicts a young artist sitting at a table, overcome with emotion as he clutches a knife and fork in his hands, symbolizing the struggle to nourish both body and soul. Tears stream down his face, conveying the distress and desperation that many artists face when forced to choose between buying art supplies and putting food on the table. The plate before him holds a paintbrush and a jar of poster paint, representing the creative endeavors that bring him joy, yet are often sacrificed due to financial constraints. The juxtaposition of the utensils and art supplies serves as a powerful commentary on the harsh realities faced by artists who struggle to make ends meet.



**Piggy Bank.** This artwork is a playful but powerful take on what it feels like when creativity starts to pay off—literally and figuratively. The main character, bald and radiant, sits comfortably in their element, holding a paintbrush that's dripping with vibrant color, mid-idea. They're looking up with a dreamy, satisfied gaze as coins float out from their open mind—because yes, imagination has value. At the top of their head, a tiny figure is hard at work, feeding those shiny thoughts into their brain like fuel. It's a fun exaggeration of the process: you think, you create, and that expression becomes currency.

The bright yellow background isn't just decoration—it's energy. It's confidence. It's the unapologetic joy of knowing that your stories, your ideas, your art, are worth something. This piece celebrates the artist's mind as a source of both power and profit, reminding us that our creativity is not just a gift—it's a tool for liberation, for healing, and yes, for building a living too.



**Finances.** This artwork speaks to a truth many of us know too well—the way arts and culture are consistently underfunded, undervalued, and pushed to the bottom of the priority list. We see three full tins labeled Education, Transport, and Sports—overflowing with coins, notes, and investment. Then, off to the side, sits a tiny cracked bowl labeled Arts & Culture, holding nothing but the hope of a single coin and the slow, uncertain hand deciding whether it deserves anything at all.

The imbalance is loud. It reflects how budgets are allocated in many systems—where creative work is seen as extra, a luxury, instead of the essential force it truly is. The bowl is chipped, yet still present, symbolic of resilience in spite of being overlooked. And the hand

holding that one coin? It captures that tension—the hesitation, the performative gesture, the idea that arts deserve only what's left over. The patterned purple background, rooted in African textile inspiration, reminds us that arts and culture are the foundation of identity, history, and resistance. They're not separate from development—they're woven into how we learn, move, play, protest, and dream. So why are they funded like they're disposable?

This piece isn't just a critique—it's a challenge. To reimagine value. To put our money where our culture is. To remember that without the storytellers, the painters, the dancers, the drummers—there is no soul to preserve.



**Begging Artists.** This piece is raw and unfiltered. It captures the painful irony of being an artist in a world that loves art but doesn't love artists back. The scene is set in a gallery—white walls, curated lighting, and a painting boldly declaring "Will Work 4 Food." Right beneath it sits the artist—not basking in praise or opportunity—but holding out a begging bowl. The message is clear: exposure doesn't pay the bills.

It's a direct critique of how often artists are expected to create for free, to "build a name," to accept passion as payment while struggling behind the scenes to survive. The gallery space—typically a symbol of prestige—is flipped into a stage for

desperation. Not because the artist lacks talent, but because the system doesn't value the labor behind the beauty.

That bowl isn't just asking for coins—it's asking for respect, for equity, for a world where creative work is treated as work. Where the hands that feed culture aren't left hungry.

This artwork is for every painter, poet, filmmaker, and dancer who's been told they're "lucky to be here" while being paid in crumbs. It's a protest piece. A truth piece. A reminder that artists deserve more than applause—they deserve sustainability.



## Alfred Denroy Masunda (ZWE)

### Digital Illustrator

Alfred Masunda is a former graduate of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe School of Visual Arts and Design. He is a freelance digital artist and graphic designer. Alfred's area of specialization are digital illustrations and digital Portraits. He has participated in workshops, collaborations and exhibitions in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Zambia with some of his artworks spread across the globe.

One of the exhibitions to note is a collaborative exhibition between Zimbabwe and Zambia titled ZimZam - Breaking Borders planned by the artists themselves, sponsored by Hivos and in which he played a key role in the planning process. Alfred's focus and interests lie in personal digital projects and collaborations locally and internationally. The idea is to keep making art that inspires, art that invokes change, art that speaks. With digital art on the rise it is our duty to make sure Africa is not left out on the digital art scene.



**A Helping Hand.** Created under the theme 1% for creative arts and culture this artwork sheds light on the fact that in the same way African governments allocate a certain share of funds to other sectors like health, agriculture, education, transport etc they should also allocate at least 1% to the creative arts and culture. This helps to promote art and culture projects since they also play a part in the country through job creation and telling and preserving the culture of that certain country.



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**The price for creativity.** The price for creativity is an artwork that speaks to the issue of mental health especially for artists. Behind every beautiful and amazing piece of artwork is a story of an artist who put a piece of himself or herself into the artwork. Artists create constantly despite going through life's troubles, they take all of that in, and present it in an art form. In this way different art resonates with different people telling stories of abuse, discrimination, love, the highs and lows of life. No matter how much the artists give the world keeps on taking, sometimes even failing to appreciate the artists themselves. This is the price they pay as they go through all of this in their art studios, just so they beautify the world and tell the untold stories of humanity to audiences across the world.



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**Who am I?** As time goes we need not forget our identities, our culture, our values, where we come from our roots. It is with much gratitude we thank the artists who recorded bits and pieces of our history, culture and ways of life in the expressive rock paintings found all over Africa. It is through this we get to look back and decipher stories that built us and brought us together, the different ceremonies that took place so much more!

Generations from now and in the future can always look back once they find themselves faced with the question who am I? To find out about our people we must look back to our history. That is what this artwork expresses as a reflection young modern child trying to find out more about his own people, culture, values and ways of life.



## Heather Sibanda (ZWE) Illustrator

Heather is a fine artist based in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, known for her distinctive style that combines delicate brushstrokes with playful, whimsical elements. Drawing inspiration from the uninhibited spirit of her inner child, Heather creates art that is both textured and expressive, often blending mediums like paint, crayons, and other materials to add depth and complexity. Her work engages with themes from pop culture, frequently infused with satire and vulnerability, inviting thought-provoking conversations. Each piece serves as a personal expression, often embodying an extension of her alter ego.

Artistic Journey: Heather's love for art began in childhood, with an early passion for drawing that grew into a lifelong creative pursuit. Formal art classes in high school

**Nobuhle ("Mother of Beauty").**  
This piece symbolizes the unity and richness of Africa, celebrating the collaboration of five countries—Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda and Ethiopia.



deepened her skills and appreciation for painting and drawing, setting a strong foundation for her artistic journey. Despite pursuing a different academic path at university, her commitment to art remained unwavering. In 2020, Heather decided to turn her passion into a profession, sharing her creations with the world and establishing herself as a unique voice in contemporary art.



**Afro-futuristic.** This piece explores the boundless potential of Africa's creative and cultural industries—visual arts, fashion, film, and music—and their capacity to drive development and achieve extraordinary global recognition. It highlights how these industries can thrive with proper investment and support, advocating for increased funding to unlock their full

potential. The work emphasizes the transformative role of art in fostering innovation, cultural pride, and sustainable growth. Through its vibrant and futuristic imagery, it envisions a future where African creativity takes center stage on a global platform.



## Abraham Changwe (ZMB) Single frame grayscale painting

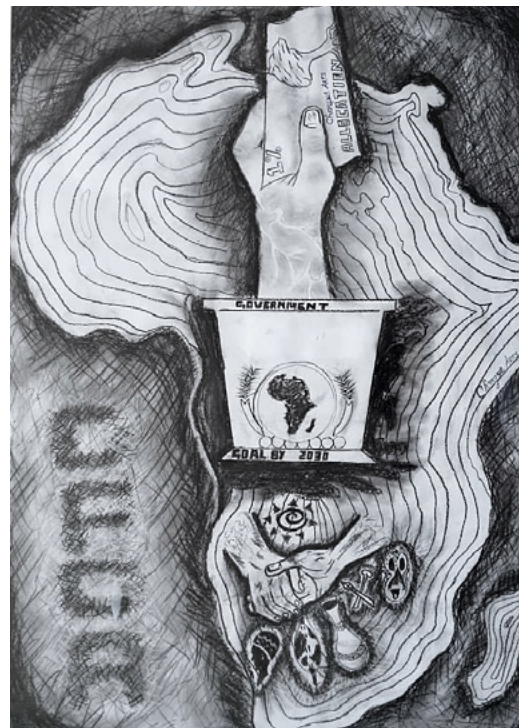
Abraham Changwe is a vibrant and passionate artist based in Lusaka, Zambia. Specializing in drawing and sculpture, he is a dedicated member of the Zambia Visual Arts Council, actively contributing to the country's artistic community.

Despite not having formal training in art, Abraham has honed his craft through consistent practice, interactions with fellow artists, and a relentless passion for creative expression. His journey reflects a commitment to informal learning and a determination to elevate his art to a professional level.

Abraham is deeply open to exploring new ideas and innovative approaches to artistic creation. He believes in

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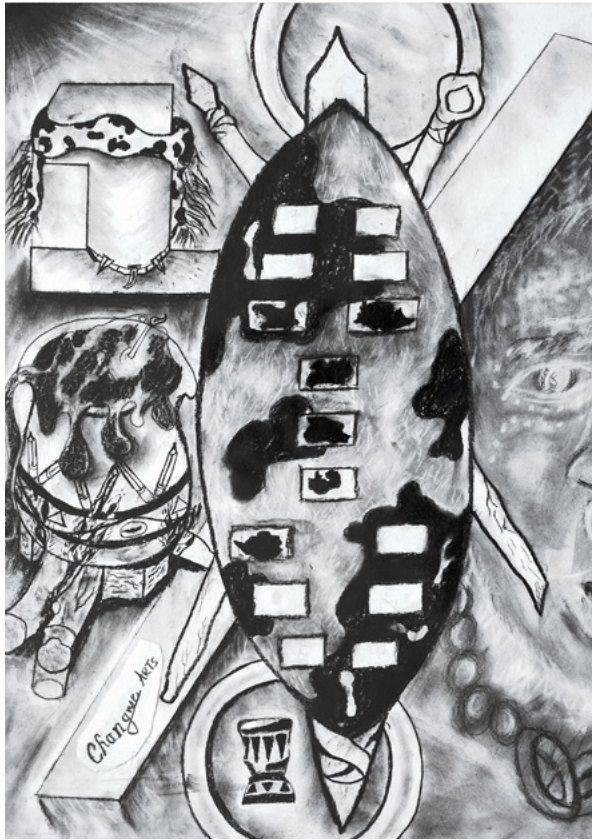
**The Commitment.** A desired strong hand of commitment from governments to engage the creatives and invest in the undermined art and cultural sector.



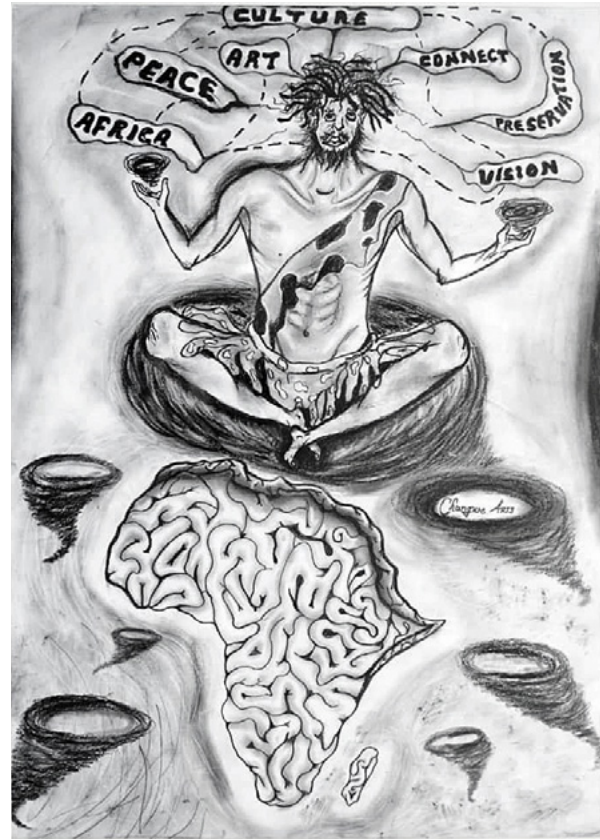
the power of collaboration among artists to communicate, educate, and inspire. Through his work, he seeks to use art as a medium for meaningful dialogue and to convey messages that inform and impact society.



Yes we can. There's extraordinary power in joining hands together for a common goal.



**Embrace, Invest.** It is important to embrace culture and its work of art as it is the unique way of life. To invest in a culture is or would be more beneficial in all aspects of life.



**Thoughts on African Culture.** There's a need to meditate on our cultures and preserve its heritage to attain peace, economic development and maintain a sense of belonging among generations to come. Additionally, to strengthen community bonds.



## Tabitha 'TABS' Mwale (ZMB) Animator

Tabitha Mwale, known as Tabs, is a Zambian-born, South African-raised filmmaker and 2D animator. As CEO of Tabproduction Studios Limited, she pioneered Zambia's first anime, "The Super," and directed and produced the award-winning, Hivos-funded animated film "Twaano."

Her background includes art department work on Zambezi Magic's "Mungoma" and "Twuvange," and continuity on "My Family Wahala," as well as serving as key animator and compositor on a Mozilla Foundation-funded animated film. Tabs has received nominations from CANEX, Fakugesi, and the Zambian International Film Festival, and was awarded by the Zambia Short Film Festival (ZSFF). A sought-after speaker, she's shared insights at the Chocolate Tribe x Netflix event, AVIJOZI, and Comic Con

**Artless Ambition** follows a man who once dreamed of being an artist but was discouraged by his father. Now, as the minister overseeing arts funding, he struggles between supporting artists and serving his own interests—until a heartfelt email from a young artist forces him to confront his past and reconsider his choices.



under AfroGeek. Her pioneering story has been featured on multiple platforms like Aljazeera and CGTN.



## **Chrisogon Atukwasize (UGA)**

### **Residency Mentor**

Chrisogon Atukwasize a.k.a Ogon. is a full-time editorial cartoonist, published in several newspapers since 2013. Now working with the Daily Monitor newspaper, a subsidiary of Monitor Publications Ltd which is owned by Nation Media Group.

A graduate of the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts, Makerere University where he attained a Bachelor's degree in Industrial and Fine Arts in 2012 as an Illustration major. Ogon mixes history, current events

and humor while sketching cartoons and caricatures in editorial newspapers. He won the Editorial cartooning category at the Uganda National Journalism Awards 2015, 2016 and 2017 editions organized by The African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME).

He is currently the local judge for Uganda for the International Loving-Peace Art competition by the International Women's Peace Group (IWPG)



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**Cornerstone.** Culture is very vital in nation-building because it shapes and creates national identity, fosters social cohesion, and promotes values that unify a diverse population.

Thus, a strong cultural foundation bridges differences among various ethnic and social groups, facilitating dialogue and mutual understanding.

This is in addition to driving economic development through initiatives like tourism, creative industries, and education which enhance a strong nation's global standing.



## **Paul Kelemba aka Maddo (KEN)**

### **Residency Mentor**

Paul Kelemba (*Maddo*) is a Kenyan cartoonist and illustrator, best known for his 35-year-old satirical cartoon feature *It's a Madd, Madd World*, published in *The Saturday Standard* of Nairobi. Born in 1962, he has worked for various publications, including *The Daily Nation*, and creates materials for UN agencies and civil society organizations. In the 1990s, he created the comic strip *Miguel Sede* for *The Sunday Standard*. He is also a founding member of *Ketebul Music* and sits on the board of *Buni Media Limited*.

Kelemba has received several awards, including the *Kenya@50 Heroes Award* (2013) and the *Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* (2022). He is a *Bellagio Center Residency* alumnus. Kelemba is a widower with three children: two daughters (an illustrator and a lawyer) and a son (an IT specialist). He is dedicated to preserving humanity's cultural connection.



**1 Percent.** Artwork depicts government officials welcoming a cultural practitioner to join other professionals; engineers, medics, academics, etc, in their stride towards national development.

# Testimonials



**HEATHER SIBANDA**  
(ZWE)

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"My time during the Cartoonist Residency in Ethiopia was nothing short of transformative. Being surrounded by passionate creatives from across the continent sparked deep reflection and reignited my commitment to using art as a tool for advocacy and storytelling. I grew not only in perspective, but also in skill—thanks to the digital art tips and guidance generously shared by my fellow artists. Their openness helped me deepen my understanding and confidence in digital illustration.

What stood out the most, though, was the kindness and warmth of the entire team. The supportive environment they created made me feel safe, comfortable, and seen. It was a space where creativity flourished, and for that, I'm truly grateful. I appreciate each and every one of them.

I fully support the 1% for Culture campaign, not just as an artist, but as someone who believes in the power of art to shape a better, more connected Africa. Let's keep telling our stories, boldly and unapologetically."

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**ALFRED DENROY  
MASUNDA (ZWE)**

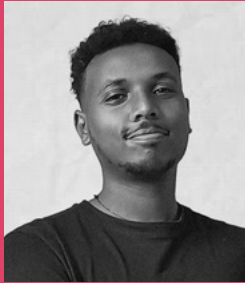
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"As the pilot suddenly announced our descent into Addis, looking out the window I was overcome with a sense of excitement as a voice suddenly spoke in my head, 'this is it, Alfred, we're here! Although anxious about the weeks ahead, I felt this was going to be the best way to end 2025, amongst other creatives.

The CFCA Cartoonists Residency 2025 put together a group of 16 Artists from Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda and we saw ourselves becoming one family with a certain goal. In Africa there is little or no budget for the culture and creative industry, our goal as the avengers of digital art was to raise awareness. With the help of two veteran cartoon artists Ogon and Mr Maddo and an army of other professionals from the creative industry, we had an intensive two weeks of discussions, workshops, brainstorming, collaborating and putting our ideas onto paper.

After a couple of days at the Best Western Premier Hotel and TK resort in Bishoftu, enduring sleepless nights working towards the final exhibition, it was nothing short of world-class. The amazing Selam Ethiopia team with the help of the Swedish Embassy put together an exhibition that drew a crowd of excited people young and old. It is one event to look back on and see the artworks for yourself as they represent not only 15 artists from Africa but their passion and resilience as they navigate the creative world and it is true to say they deserve more support and funding towards these projects as they record our history through art."

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**KALEAB BIRHANU**  
(ETH)

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"The 1% for Culture cartoonist residency was such a great space to grow. Learning from the other artists—through conversations, critiques, and just seeing how everyone worked—really helped shape the direction of my own pieces. I found myself picking up ideas and advice from our interactions and weaving them into my work.

One of the highlights for me was getting to showcase my country's culture—it felt powerful, and honestly, kind of epic. I also walked away with a reminder that even if an idea has been explored before, that doesn't make my take on it any less relevant. If anything, adding my voice helps solidify the message even more.

Let's keep on engaging, sharing, and creating. This kind of energy is what keeps the culture alive."

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**BETTY SAM** (ETH)

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"Participating in the Cartoon Art Residency was a transformative experience for me. The supportive environment, creative freedom, and access to professional mentorship helped me grow both as an artist and storyteller. It was more than just a residency, it was a vibrant collection of a community from east african countries, where my ideas were heard, nurtured, and brought to life. Afterwards I felt inspired, confident, and more connected to the power of cartoon art."

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**MARIA TUMWEBAZE  
BYOMA (UGA)**

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"In December of 2024, I had the transformative opportunity of attending a 2-week cartoonist residency in Ethiopia gathered in the implementation of a 1% for Culture initiative that sought to put our policy makers to task on improving their investment in the arts and cultural sector.

We got to experience the warmth and hospitality of Ethiopian culture. The Residency wasn't just a space to draw; it was a space to listen, to laugh, to debate over breakfast, and to reflect on our roles as artists on this continent. I left with so much—exposure, new friends, new mentors, and new clarity about the role we play in pushing for visibility and value for African creatives. My approach to how I work was also greatly evolved by the experience and I am optimistic that our works and voices—keep echoing long after the ink dries."

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**ADELAIDE JACHI (TZ)**

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"The Cartoon Residency in Addis Ababa was nothing short of magical. To be in a space buzzing with unapologetically bold, brilliant creatives—each sketching, scripting, and speaking truth to power—was deeply energizing. It reminded me that art isn't just decoration; it's declaration. Our time together wasn't just about cartooning—it was a celebration of resistance, of reclaiming narratives, and of reimagining Africa through ink, color, and courage.

Since returning, that fire hasn't dimmed. In fact, the recent grant I received from the Green Media Accelerator feels like a continuation of the spark that was lit during our residency. I stand firmly with the 1% for Culture campaign. Our pens matter. Our stories matter. And investing in culture is investing in the soul of a continent."

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**ABRAHAM  
CHANGWE (ZMB)**

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"Writing as the youngest connect for culture Africa participant, With an amplified voice and passion for the creative industry, I strongly stand to advocate and recommend governments to reconsider and consider committing and allocating at least 1% of their national budgets. As studies conducted in the connect for culture Africa initiative clearly reveal how inadequate funding undermines the potential of each country's cultural assets.

Furthermore, having had looked at the history of cartoons and creative industries throughout different ages during the residency, vivid lines can see how the creatives have greatly paved better ways of living, and that is culture in its diversity.

The residency was one impactful and life changing non-mere event. Arts, culture and the creative industry at large Will always continue to produce positive impact from our small communities to the nation and eventually Africa. I urge all young creatives to take a strong stand and advocate for the allocating of at least 1%. To the arts and cultural sector."

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**PAUL KELEMB  
AKA MADDO (KEN)**

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"This has been one of my most exciting yet challenging assignments in recent years because of its expected outcomes.

I came on board The CfCA Cartoonists' Residency 2024 as a mentor to 15 young artists after previous brief engagements with Selam Ethiopia in its drive to transform Africa's cultural industries. Accompanied by my fellow mentor, Chris Ogon, we quickly led the breaking of ice and making a personal connection with the participants from five countries – Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Despite the backdrop of diverse cultural backgrounds, everyone bonded remarkably well and with a sense of collective professionalism. My initial concern over my age faded away, perhaps because I decided to cast no barriers around me with an "I've been there, done that"

attitude, maintaining calculated authority for the program's success. I soon became "legend" and the artists were at ease with referring to me by my penname "Maddo".

Selam facilitator Samuel Mulugeta, Ugandan political cartoonist Chris and I had laid out a comprehensive work timetable for the artists – cartoonists, illustrators, painters and a film maker – which the group followed conclusively. We had to slightly adjust some modules along the way to accommodate emerging ideas since we reviewed progress each day.

Discussion panel experts imparted great wealth of knowledge which was grasped by the artists who engaged them with appropriate queries. Away from the work schedule, the group promptly became a big, happy family. Friendly banter and conversations over dinner of possible future collaborations reigned. There were only a few downsides in the entire program. One was the creatives' general poor adherence to time keeping. Some programs started late as a result. Another was the unfortunate and rather embarrassing incident in Bishoftu which delayed our departure back to the capital.

The program culminated in each individual producing at least three original artworks for the exhibition at the end of the program. Exhibiting the same message, the styles are exciting and varied – from simple single frame cartoons, traditional illustrations, charcoal paintings, digitally generated images to a short movie clip. I am positive that these will capture audiences and relay our urgent memorandum to nationals and their leadership.

Convincing African governments to pay more active attention to the creative sector and allocate a very small amount of their national budgets as part of economic growth is not simple and shall require continuous efforts. I repeatedly reminded the artists of this and the vital need to keep the message flourishing – even post-residency – using their kaleidoscopic talents and assorted platforms.

My key take-away from this residency program is the powerful cog in a large gear it has provided. At a personal level, despite my long decades of practice, I did gather some insights as well, alongside my mentees, that I shall be happy to highlight in my illustrated weekly newspaper column to ensure an enduring impetus."

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# The Power of Art

At Selam, we have always believed in the transformative power of art to tell stories, challenge perspectives, and inspire change. The Cartoonist Residency Program is a powerful testament to this belief—an initiative that brought together fifteen brilliant visual storytellers from across Africa to use their craft for dialogue, reflection, and advocacy.

Cartoons have a unique ability to transcend language, geography, and politics—blending humor, wit, and critical commentary to spark conversations that matter. Through this residency, we set out to provide cartoonists not only with the space and mentorship to refine their skills, but also with a shared platform to voice the realities, hopes, and demands of African communities.

Over the course of the residency, these artists created more than 40 original pieces that speak boldly on issues of governance, equality, and cultural investment. They collaborated across borders, exchanged with academics and industry mentors, to produce a vibrant body of work that now stands as a call to action—not

just to audiences, but to governments and institutions across Africa.

We are proud to support this program as part of our ongoing commitment to artistic freedom, cultural exchange, and the elevation of the creative sector as a key pillar of democratic and economic development. By empowering these talented storytellers, we not only amplify their voices—we contribute to shaping a more inclusive, vibrant, and resilient cultural landscape across the continent.

We look forward to the journeys these artists will continue to walk and to the transformative impact their work will have—both within their communities and far beyond.



**Teshome Wondimu**  
Executive Director, Selam

# Reflections from Selam Ethiopia

On behalf of Selam Ethiopia, I am proud to reflect on the incredible journey we shared through the CfCA Cartoonist Residency Program. This initiative marked a meaningful chapter in our ongoing commitment to empowering young African artists and strengthening the role of culture in Africa's development.

What began as a bold vision—to provide a space for learning, advocacy, and creativity—became a lived reality thanks to the extraordinary energy, talent, and dedication of the 15 artists who participated in this residency. Through this residency, participants became more than artists—they became advocates. They joined a growing movement to amplify the voice of the creative sector and call for increased public investment in culture. The artworks they produced stand as lasting testaments to this mission: bold, thought-provoking, and unapologetically African.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the mentors who guided this journey with generosity and insight. Your role in shaping the next generation of cultural leaders cannot

be overstated. To our partners, both local and international, your trust and collaboration were the backbone of this residency.

To all the artists, thank you for your vision, your courage, and your voices. The legacy of this residency is not only in the drawings you left behind, but in the future you've helped us imagine—one where culture is recognized, resourced, and celebrated as the force for transformation that it truly is.



**Samuel Mulugeta**  
Country Director, Selam Ethiopia

# Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who brought the 2024 CfCA Cartoonist Residency to life. This program was made possible through the collaborative efforts of Selam, the African Union's Division of Culture and Sports, and the generous support of the Swedish Government—thank you for believing in the power of art to shape Africa's cultural future. A warm thank you to our incredible mentors, facilitators, and guest speakers who inspired and guided our resident cartoonists throughout their journey. To the 15 talented artists from Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—your creativity, courage, and commitment turned ideas into powerful visual narratives that challenge, provoke, and uplift. We're also grateful to the local communities, institutions, and partners in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu who welcomed us so warmly and made the residency experience truly meaningful. Last but not least, a big thank you to everyone who attended the final exhibition and continues to engage with our call for 1% public investment in culture—your support keeps this movement going.

**Web:** [cfafrica.org](http://cfafrica.org)

**Facebook:** CfCA - Connect For Culture Africa

**Instagram:** @cfafrica

**Linkedin:** Connect For Culture Africa

**Twitter/X:** @cfcafrica

CfCA is being implemented by Selam in collaboration with the African Union, supported by the Swedish Government.

