



# Visual Identities in Youth Culture: An Ethnographic Exploration of South Africa's Visual Arts Landscape

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## Abstract

Visual arts play a significant role in South Africa's cultural landscape, influencing identity formation among youth. An ethnographic study was conducted involving participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and artifact analysis in urban South Africa's arts districts. A notable theme emerged regarding the youth's preference for street art over traditional mediums like painting and sculpture, indicating a shift towards more contemporary forms of expression. Youth prioritise visual aesthetics that reflect their lived experiences, often incorporating local slang and symbols in their work. Art institutions should foster dialogue with young artists to better understand and support the evolving aesthetic preferences within South African youth culture.

**Keywords:** *African, Ethnography, Identity Formation, Visual Culture, Youth, Anthropology, Cultural Studies*

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