

Artist Profile: Grandsan

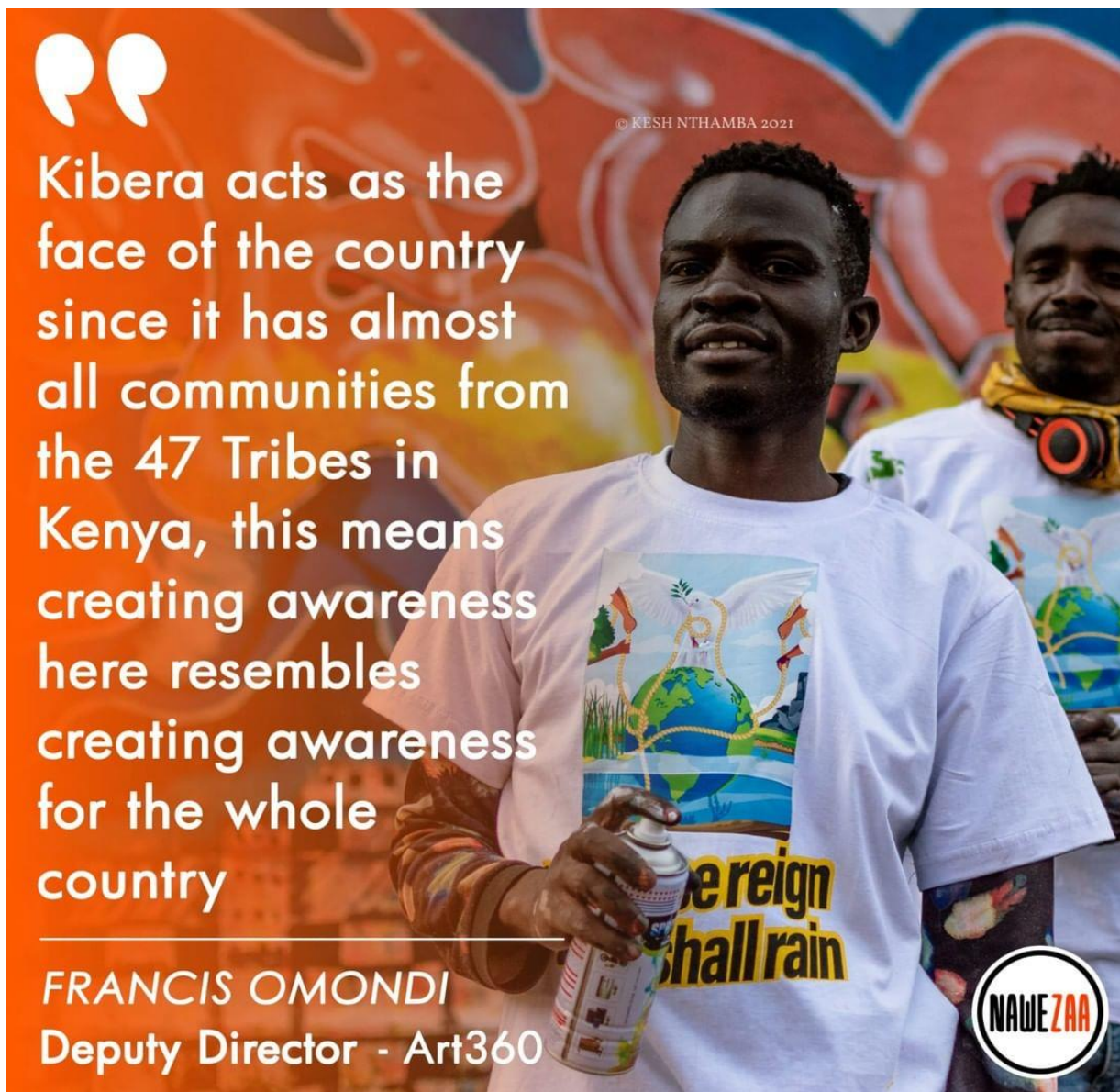
Artist Profile: Francis Omondi "Grandsan"

Date of Birth: 1993

Home: Kibera Slums, Nairobi – Kenya

Background:

Francis Omondi, widely known as "Grandsan," is an extraordinary artist whose life journey from the challenging Kibera Slums of Nairobi to the world of art is an inspiring tale of talent, determination, and unwavering passion. Born and raised in a tumultuous environment, Grandsan's artistic talents were recognized at a tender age, setting the stage for his remarkable artistic odyssey.



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The Early Years:

From his earliest days, Grandsan exhibited an exceptional aptitude for sketching and drawing, a gift that drew the admiration of his parents and the local community. Encouraged by their support and buoyed by the positive feedback of his peers, Grandsan began his artistic journey in earnest, venturing into mural and canvas painting at just eight years old. His determination to evolve as an artist was evident from these early years.

The Artistic Evolution:

Today, Grandsan has grown into a versatile artist, proficient in a wide array of styles and mediums. His art seamlessly blends elements of realism and surrealism, resulting in thought-provoking pieces that resonate with audiences from all walks of life. His work serves as a reflection of his deep connection to the world around him, inviting viewers to explore its beauty and complexity through his unique perspective.



Through his unique perspective, he captures the essence of his subjects, infusing them with a sense of life and energy that is both captivating and mesmerizing. His ability to evoke emotions and prompt contemplation through his art is a testament to his growth as an artist. Today, he stands as a testament to the power of artistic evolution, willingness to push boundaries, experiment with new techniques, and explore diverse themes has allowed him to blossom into an artist who resonates with the hearts and minds of many, inviting them to join him on a journey of artistic discovery and enlightenment.

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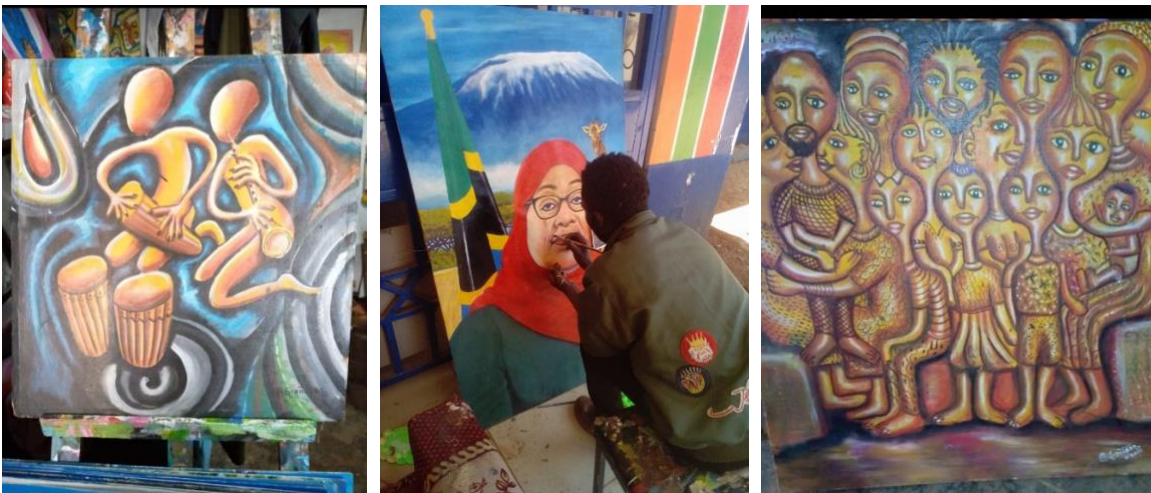
Inspiration and Resilience:

Grandsan's journey serves as a wellspring of inspiration for budding artists and individuals worldwide. It's a testament to the fact that talent and passion, when nurtured and relentlessly pursued, can overcome even the most daunting of circumstances. His art not only conveys his personal story but also encapsulates the essence of human resilience, creativity, and the universal language of artistic expression. With each brushstroke and sculpted figure, Grandsan leaves an indelible mark on the world of art, transcending boundaries and inspiring all who encounter his work.



The Genesis of Creativity:

Grandsan's artistic journey traces its roots back to his childhood fascination with crafting model vehicles from a diverse range of materials. He ingeniously transformed wires, iron sheets, plastics, and even clay soil into intricate miniature vehicles, finding pure joy in the process.



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A Twist of Fate:

Tragedy struck at a young age when Grandsan lost his parents, thrusting him and his siblings into a challenging new life under the care of various relatives. Despite these hardships, destiny had more in store for him.



The Turning Point:

Grandsan's life took a significant turn when he enrolled at St. Aloysius Gonzaga High School, where he met Faith Atieno, the future founder of Art 360 Kibera. Together, they established a skills club that provided a platform for young artists to nurture their talents, introducing Grandsan to painting - a pivotal moment that would shape his artistic journey.

A Journey of Self-Discovery:

Although formal training was lacking, the school supplied them with essential art materials, enabling their journey of self-discovery. The club expanded its horizons, crafting handmade occasion cards, banana fiber montages, and paintings for sale, even establishing a market abroad. Their daily artistic endeavors not only allowed for self-expression but also became a source of income.

Persistence Pays Off

Following high school, financial constraints forced Grandsan to drop out of a diploma course in graphic design and fine art. However, his artistic spirit remained unbroken. He explored various opportunities, from signwriting to street art, until he found his niche as a cartoon illustrator for SHOFKO. Four years of

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experience there paved the way for his venture into graffiti and murals, providing new avenues for his creative expression.

A Reunion and Artistic Flourish

In 2019, Art 360 Kibera was established, reuniting Grandsan with his former schoolmate and its founder, Faith Atieno. His artistic repertoire expanded to include mosaic, montage, papier-mâché, sculptures, calligraphy, multimedia crafts, and more. His distinctive painting style, folk abstract, emerged as a hallmark of his artistic identity. Grandsan had in 2022 collaborated with Nafsi Africa (Kenya) in the Wild walls Project together with Spor Media (Denmark) where he led a group of children from Kibera together with other artists to create a mural painting in the slums communicating the importance and methods of enhancing biodiversity in both Denmark and Kenya.



Vision for the Future:

As Grandsan continues to teach art to aspiring artists and collaborate with various institutions, his vision for the future is clear. He aims to pass down his skills, foster a thriving artistic community and develop his own brand in the ever-evolving world of art. His journey, from crafting model vehicles to pursuing a grand vision, is a testament to the enduring power of creativity and determination. Grandsan's story reminds us that with passion and resilience, one can transcend adversity and create art that inspires and uplifts others.