

Artists have the power and the responsibility to serve as agents of change in society, and as disrupters' of complacency.

The Creative City

Nelson Mandela Bay Metro



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Today is the launch of Nelson Mandela Bay's newest art gallery in Bird Street, Central

“The current generation of students and recent graduates – socially aware, articulate, conceptually and technically attuned – are stepping up to contribute their creativity to society.”

David Jones, Head of the Department of Studio Arts at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's School of Music, Art and Design

CREATIVE PIONEERS

Visual arts graduates like fashion designer Laduma Ngxokolo, cinematographers Carlos Carvalhos and Vicci Turpin, animated film producer Stuart Forrest and others are grabbing the international limelight in their fields, while many more have gone on to achieve creative success nationally. Their work tells a uniquely South African story, giving a voice to people, different cultures and communities in the process.

Here in the Bay, students, graduates and staff of the respective Visual Arts departments at the School of Music, Art and Design (SoMAD) at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, are actively involved in a range of creative and public art projects, pouring their talent into the city.

“We are very conscious of the positive contribution that our students and graduates make to the artistic life of the city,” said SoMAD Director Mary Duker.

Over the years, the school has built up strong partnerships within the metro – with the Mandela Bay Development Agency, privately-run and municipal galleries, and with professional and community artists who live and work here.

“As a school we subscribe to the view that the creative arts are both humanising and transformative, and that artists have the power (and the responsibility) to serve as agents of change in society, and as ‘disrupters’ of complacency.

“But we are also highly realistic, and we understand that ... artists must be able to earn a living from their creative outputs. So we have seized every opportunity to promote art entrepreneurial opportunities for our students in the metro and beyond.

“From the School’s perspective we are keen to contribute to the building of a creative arts economy in Nelson Mandela Bay – we aim to facilitate as many entrepreneurial opportunities as possible for our students as, without these, it is inevitable that they leave the city when they graduate, and head off to the ‘bright lights’ of Cape Town and Johannesburg in search of creative opportunities.”

SoMAD students have fared consistently well in national competitions, including the ABSA (now Barclays) Atelier, the PPC Cement Young Concrete Sculptor Awards, and the Sasol New Signatures competition.

& PUBLIC ART & OTHER PROJECTS

“GOOD public art creates several positive outcomes – a sense of place, and identity for an area and a local audience. It also creates thoughts, discussion, both positive and negative, in areas of cities where often things can seem impersonal and distant.”

Andrew Shoben, Professor of Public Art at Goldsmiths College, University of London, said these words at Cape Town’s Design Indaba a year or two ago – but his statement aptly applies to Port Elizabeth today, where public art is being used as one of the tools to rejuvenate the inner city.

“Good public art”, as per Shoben’s description, is exactly what students and visual arts graduates from NMMU are striving to create.

It’s worth remembering their names: Monde Goniwe, Christo Booth, Mellaney Ruiters, Pola Maneli, Ilse Volmer, Nishil Vagmaria, Lungiswa Gqunta and Mkhonto Gwazela. They are just some of the artists who are changing the face of the city.

Goniwe and Booth are founder members of the Four Blind Mice, a Port Elizabeth-based visual arts collective, which has exhibited and presented illustration and urban art workshops in Johannesburg and elsewhere in the country.

In addition, NMMU-raised artists like Siphon Mzizi, Mzolisi Daba and Luxolo Bukani are working on sculptural commissions that memorialize struggle icons from the metro, including Vuyisile Mini and Zola Nqini, while Owen Tarr is sharing his knowledge of arts and crafts through training initiatives.

Invigorate the local exhibition scene – and encouraging nationally-profiled artists to exhibit in the Bay – are former students like Cedric Vanderlinden of Underculture Gallery in Park Drive, and Wayne Mathews who runs the ArtEC Community Art Centre in Bird Street.



“All films in some way or another depict our culture ... South Africa is a beautiful tapestry of cultures and the more we know about each other, the stronger and more resilient the fabric will become.”

INTERNATIONAL KUDOS ... South African cinematographer Carlos Carvalho (left) last year travelled to New York to receive the Haskell Wexler Award for Best Cinematography for the film *The Forgotten Kingdom*.

SHOWCASING CREATIVE HISTORY ... NMMU ceramic design MTech graduate Mkhonto Gwazela (below right), pictured here with fellow graduate Bantu Mtshiselwa (with whom he taught art to township and northern area children), has been working on a public art project, celebrating the contribution of home-born creative practitioners to the cultural richness of the metro. His low-relief frieze on a berm wall near the Campanile monument depicts artists like George Pemba, John Kani, Enoch Sontonga, Danny Williams, Helen Martins, Dennis Brutus and Athol Fugard.

THE WOW FACTOR ... The Xhosa knit-wear designs of Laduma Ngxokolo (bottom left - centre), a BTech Textile Design graduate from NMMU, have been shared on catwalks around the world (London, Milan, Paris and South Africa) to huge acclaim.



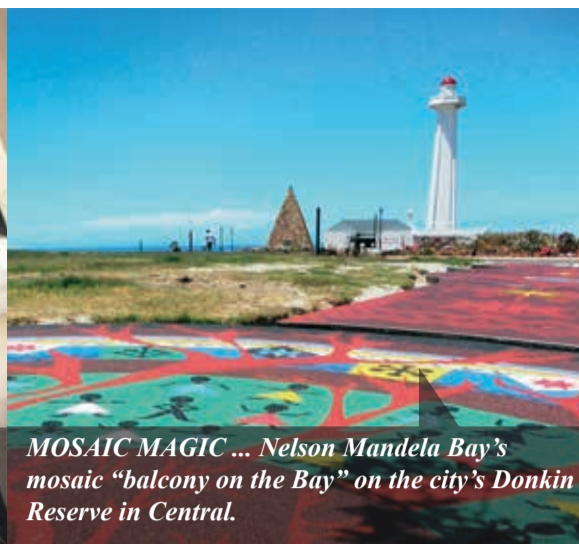
“I design according to how I see amaXhosa in the modern era. People say it’s authentic and a celebration of the Xhosa heritage and traditions.”



“A lot of children grow up being told they are ‘good for nothing’. Art shows them they can create and achieve positive results.”



MEETING THE QUEEN ... NMMU art students have created life-sized sculptures of struggle icons to be placed around the Queen Victoria statue outside PE's main library. *Queen*. Picture: Eugene Coetzee



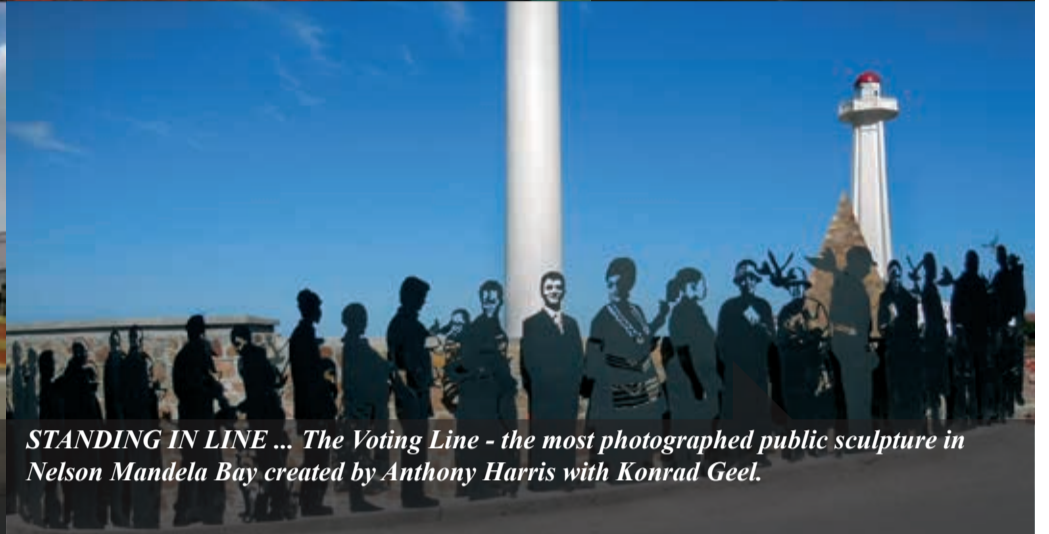
MOSAIC MAGIC ... Nelson Mandela Bay's mosaic "balcony on the Bay" on the city's Donkin Reserve in Central.



SIT, PLEASE ... Tourists can sit in the welcoming chair in Anton Momborg's sculpture on the Donkin.



TOWNSHIP BEAT ... Singhapi Street, the gateway to the iconic Red Location Museum, is going to be a continuation of Central's Route 67 art walk.



STANDING IN LINE ... The Voting Line - the most photographed public sculpture in Nelson Mandela Bay created by Anthony Harris with Konrad Geel.



"The fundamental layer of people using the space in a way that revived its function as the heart and soul of a city, was missing."

Dorelle Sapere
Mandela Bay Development Agency

ART TRANSFORMS PUBLIC SPACES

An inner city that had become nothing more than a neglected halfway house for transient purposes, absent landlords, drug lords, prostitution, failing infrastructure and derelict buildings. A picture of decay and abandon.

That was the challenge facing the Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA), as it took its first tentative steps into rejuvenating this neglected part of Port Elizabeth.

Working on behalf of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, MBDA was established to be an economic, regenerative driver for the inner city. The first few years focussed on infrastructural investment, but this did not guarantee urban renewal.

Fuelled by a belief that the people who live, work or play in a neighbourhood are the people who can transform it, the MBDA began working on sourcing funding and initiating processes that would bring people back into the inner city. At the same time, the 2010 Soccer World Cup sparked an idea to develop a space to welcome the thousands of tourists who would visit the city.

Funding sourced from the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF), on top of funding from the Municipality, provided an opportunity to look at urban renewal in a more creative way.

MBDA brought together organisations and institutions with an interest in arts, culture and heritage – and Route 67 was born, bringing to life a project that would honour the city's namesake and boost the creative economy of the Bay, through a programme of public art, education, job creation, activating markets and events.

Established artists, students, unemployed youth, school children and amateur artists were mobilised to create Route 67. An initial investment

of R17 million has had a multiplier effect. Artists and creatives have received national and international recognition, and the publicity generated has brought in more and more tourists each year.

Route 67's steering committee was made up of representatives of the Municipality, MBDA, NMMU and Trinity Session, working closely with the broader Creative Collective, made up of art organisations and individual visionary artists. Further partnerships have since been established with the National Arts Festival, The Arts Journey, and the National Department of Arts and Culture.

NMMU has been a key partner in breathing life into the Route 67 vision. The investment that has enabled the transformation of the Bird Street Campus into a vibrant hub of creativity, sends strong messages to other sectors, about the importance of the inner city, of its blossoming renewal and the opportunity for economic growth. Hopefully this will beckon more investors.

Property owners are upgrading their buildings, new art galleries have opened, local soccer teams practise on the Donkin Reserve, and jazz concerts fill the air in Trinder Square, where cheerful mosaic seats provide a place to linger and chat.

The effect of Route 67 has rippled through other MBDA projects. Singhapi Street, the gateway to the iconic Red Location Museum, will be a continuation of Route 67. The potential exists to link all the cultural precincts of Nelson Mandela Bay in the same way.

Ultimately Route 67 can unite Nelson Mandela Bay under the great flag that reminds us all of what we strive to be – a city united in our diversity, economically prosperous and individually enriched by the art, culture and heritage of all its people.



ARTISTIC RENOVATION ... Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University has turned its Bird Street Campus into an arts and music hub – with a brand new institutional art gallery. The building was formerly occupied by NMMU’s Business School and has undergone extensive renovations.

BAY WELCOMES NEW BIRD STREET ART GALLERY

By Mary Duker

NMMU’s School of Music Art and Design (SoMAD) had its origins in Central – and today celebrates its return to this area, with the official launch of its brand new NMMU Art Gallery.

The launch is also an opportunity for the university to showcase its new-look Bird Street Campus, a thriving arts and music hub.

SoMAD’s roots can be traced back to the Port Elizabeth Art School, which first opened its doors in 1852 – making SoMAD the oldest surviving school of arts in the country.

The original PE Art School was housed in the historical Athenaeum Building in Belmont Terrace. Many decades later in the 1950s, when the University of Port Elizabeth (now NMMU) was established, it was housed in Bird Street.

For the past decade or so, the campus was occupied by NMMU’s Business School (which has since moved to a new, custom-designed,

award-winning “green” building in Summerstrand).

And, today, a new chapter in the history of the Bird Street Campus begins.

Builders and renovators have been working under the guidance of prominent Cape Town based Heritage Architect, Peter Buttgens, to repurpose the ground floor of the campus’s historic Fleming House (later renamed Eendrag building) into the stylish and contemporary NMMU-IAG, which is being launched today at the Vice Chancellor’s prestigious Cultural Evening, with an exhibition featuring works by visual arts students from SoMAD.

Tonight the re-purposed campus will host the annual Vice-Chancellor’s Cultural Evening.

Sketches (below): Peter Buttgens.



Restored to its former glory

NMMU MUSIC CONSERVATOIRE

Bird Street Campus fast facts

- SoMAD's postgraduate programmes have moved from NMMU's North Campus in Summerstrand to Bird Street.
- In the Kohler Building (the second historic mansion making up Bird Street Campus, which was later renamed Wegspring), NMMU's Department of Music has opened the doors of its Jazz Unit, and re-established its Music Conservatoire (Conservatory) for school learners and members of the public who wish to learn an instrument (pre-tertiary classical or jazz studies). Tuition in woodwind, brass, drum kit, jazz piano, guitar and bass are offered alongside an existing strings programme. The auditorium in the Conservatoire Building has been enlarged and refurbished, and a programme of public concerts, talks and lectures, easily accessible to the residents of the metro, has already begun.
- NMMU's Music Department has close links with the Eastern Cape Philharmonic Orchestra (ECPO), which provides a performance platform for staff and students. The ECPO manages a youth development project that provides instrumental and choral tuition to 700 township children. As part of this, the Bird Street Conservatoire provides a home for an instrumental repair unit. (The ECPO is undergoing a cash crisis due to the cessation of lottery funding, however smaller music performance and teaching projects are still going ahead.)
- On the ground floor of the refurbished Music Conservatoire, a unique culturally-focused "American Corner" will open shortly, to promote cultural engagement between local and American practitioners.
- The final piece in Bird Street's creative puzzle will be the SoMAD Propella – the visual arts incubator which launched the creative career of isiXhosa knitwear design star, Laduma Ngxokolo. The incubator, part of the larger NMMU Propella project, provides technical and business support to selected "incubates" as they start up their own creative businesses.



Music at NMMU also returns full circle. The former University of Port Elizabeth Music Department started in Pembroke House in Bird Street in 1966. The Department later moved to the new Summerstrand Campus in 1977.

In 1979 the Kodupe Music Centre was created to promote instrumental music teaching in the city, targeting learners. The Centre was housed in the Old Museum Building in Bird Street. Kodupe was then situated at the current Settler's Park Primary School in Fordyce Road, and later at the old Cunningham School in South End. In 1999, the centre was moved back to the Summerstrand Campus.

The introduction of the NMMU Conservatoire in Bird Street allows the Music department to return to its earliest "home".

Diary: CREATIVITY IN THE CITY

Wednesday, 1-7 October:

African Voice Exhibition, NMMU Gallery, Bird Street

Thursday, 15 October:

Marcus Neustetter, NMMU Gallery, Bird Street

Thursday, 15 - 22 October:

The Collective Graduate Exhibition

Fashion- Textile- Interior- Graphic Design and Photography
K-block, Summerstrand, North Campus, 9am - 4pm Weekdays

Friday, 30 October:

The Collective Graduate Fashion Show

Goldfieds Auditorium, Summerstrand, North Campus, 7pm

Tickets: Computicket and at the door

* Diary is not exhaustive and lists only some events taking place in the Metro.

Friday, 30 October:

Jennifer Rush, Feather Market Centre

Wednesday, 11 November:

Feather Market Lunch-time Organ Concert

Thursday, 12 - 19 November:

The Collective Studio Arts Exhibition

K-block, Summerstrand, North Campus, 9am - 4pm Weekdays

Thursday, 26 November:

Drakensberg Boys' Choir Noël Tour, Feather Market Centre



ART STUDENTS GAGA OVER NEW DEGREE

By Bruce Cadle

This year, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University ushered in the country's first Bachelor of Visual Arts (BVA) degree – and the first intake of first-year students can't stop talking about it.

The first year of the BVA degree gives students a taste of various art disciplines, including fine art, graphic design, photography, and fashion and textiles. They choose to specialise in one of these areas from second year onwards.

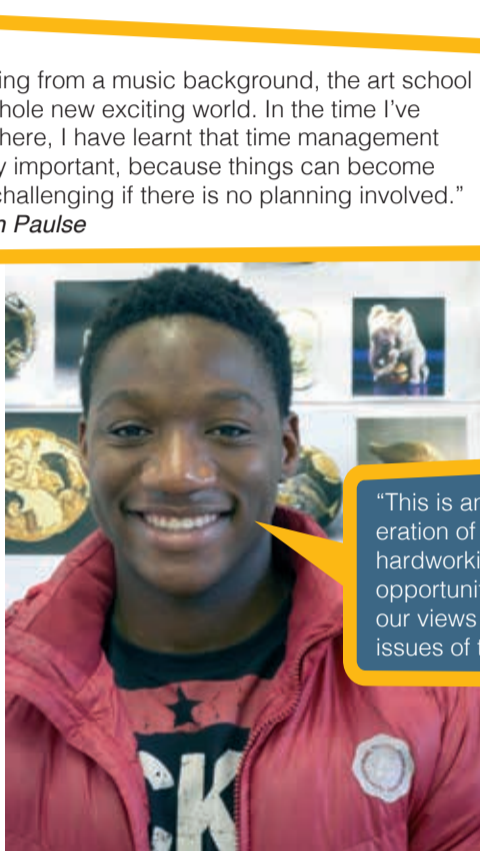
"The generic foundation year is the keystone that supports creative, intellectual and skill development while exposing students to a broad

range of learning opportunities, sampled from the four discipline streams," said NMMU's Director of the School of Music, Art and Design Mary Duker.

"The shift into the appropriate discipline stream [in second year] is therefore an informed decision, carefully considered and based on individual aptitude."

The curriculum of the BVA was created specifically to provide students with sound academic development, the building of vocational and crafting skills, and to allow for exposure to entrepreneurial practice.

"Coming from a music background, the art school is a whole new exciting world. In the time I've been here, I have learnt that time management is very important, because things can become very challenging if there is no planning involved."
- Faith Paulse



"This is an opportunity to be part of a new generation of visual artists who are socially aware, hardworking and innovative. What we have is an opportunity to change the world by communicating our views and commenting visually on the endless issues of the world."
- Takudzwa Gwindingwi



"Artists simply are not allowed to die; their opinions are too important."
- Adam Lombard (who is recovering from a serious motorbike accident)



"The talent of the staff and youngsters here astounds me every day and I appreciate the opportunity of being able to learn something about the art world."
- Tod Burns (a former long haul international pilot who has made a mid-life career shift and intends majoring in photography)



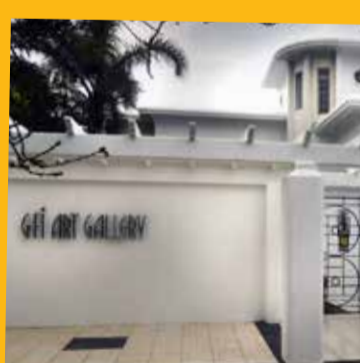
"This year has been both amazing and challenging. The best part, I think, is when I do something I never thought I could."
- Michele D'Urbano



Route 67: Mandela Bay Development Agency's "art walk" includes 67 public art works symbolising the 67 years Nelson Mandela dedicated to this country's freedom.
www.mbda.co.za



ARTEC: A community art gallery and support centre for the Eastern Province Society for Art and Craft (EPSAC).
Address: 36 Bird Street.
Phone: 041 585 3641.
www.artecpe.co.za



GFI Art Gallery: A commercial gallery with a philanthropic heart.
Address: 30 Park Drive.
Phone: 041 586 3973.
www.gfiartgallery.com



Underculture Contemporary – Fine Arts Gallery: Promotes quality contemporary fine arts from selected emergent artists.
Address: 98A Park Drive.
Phone: 041 373 0074.
www.underculturecontemporary.co.za



ART Gallery: A contemporary fine art gallery showcasing the studio pop-up exhibitions of SA's leading artists.
Address: 51B Cuyler St.
Phone: 072 379 5933.
www.artsjourney-nelsonmandelabay.co.za

Artists are the window of the world to their people and a nation.



WHY INVEST IN THE ARTS?

Monde Ngonyama
General Manager,
Port Elizabeth Opera House

The history of the arts in South Africa, whether told in shebeens or documentaries, is not complete without mention of the name: Port Elizabeth. From this city came Welcome Duru, Richard Cock, Nomhle Nkonyeni, Marlene Pieterse, George Pemba and Mervyn Williams. The city even produced the first Tony Award Winners from the continent of Africa: In 1975, John Kani, Winston Ntshona and Athol Fugard became such groundbreakers.

There was a time when the prestigious South African Music Awards were a contestation between Port Elizabeth-born jazz artists Feya Faku and Zim Ngqawana.

Somehow all that glory has gone. Like a beautiful dream in the midst of a cold night, when it goes, it leaves the realities of a chilling night. Is the question: What went wrong? NO! We know what went wrong. We never invested in structured development, nor did we promulgate a clear strategy with predicted milestones and resources to deliver those milestones. The real question is: What do we do from here?

In about 18 months (February 2017) the world will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the sinking of SS Mendi, and the deaths of about 616 South Africans (607 of them black troops) and 30 crew. This tragedy saw Isaac Dyobha ordering his men not to regret nor fear death. Dyobha was from Uitenhage. He was an ardent composer. Among his writings was an ode to [the Christian Xhosa prophet] Ntsikana, titled Imbumba Yamanyama – Unity of the Rainbow.

He is not the only artist hero to come from Uitenhage: Enoch Sontonga gave Africa an anthem - a lullaby, to ease the yoke of repression - Nkosi Sikelela iAfrika. His region, Nelson Mandela Bay, has not only contributed to history through arts, it has made history through arts and great artists.

Which brings us back to the question: What do we do from here?

The need for social cohesion

Among the fundamentals for social cohesion is the principle of "creolisation", defined as "the process of assimilation in which neighbouring cultures share certain features to form a new distinct culture". There have to be spaces and platforms where people are made to realise that they are not inherently different. This can be achieved through singing, dancing, acting, painting and craft.

The many tangible values of arts

An international study on the value of arts and culture, produced by the Arts Council of England in March 2014, confirmed the following tangible spinoffs from the support of arts and culture:

a) Health and well-being

Engagement in structured arts and culture was found to improve the cognitive abilities of children and young people. What's more, a number of studies reported findings that applied arts and cultural interventions had a positive impact on specific health conditions. Dance is proven to reduce loneliness and alleviate depression and anxiety among people.

b) Society

The study found that high school students who engage in the arts at school are twice as likely to volunteer than those who don't engage in the arts and 20% more likely to vote as young adults. The employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment. Those who volunteer in the cultural or sports arena are more likely to be involved and influential in their local communities.

c) Education

Taking part in drama and library activities improves literacy. Taking part in structured music activities improves maths ability, early language acquisition and early literacy. Students from low income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree than children from low income families who do not engage in arts activities at school.

From the abyss to the high plinth

We need to send our artists to the nations rather than lose them to other nations through a lack of appreciation and support. Once we do that they will automatically become our ambassadors, and be encouraged to plough back [into their] home. Our city needs to invest in its people. Its artists. A lack of investment means a lack of belief. Our young democracy cannot afford veering into the future without arts and artists.

In conclusion, there is overwhelming evidence that "art is a cultural leisure market". In countries where the arts are supported by public revenue, like in England, it is fourth among the top invisible export earners.



"[I'm] excited to be here among all these talented people."
- Hayley Barker



"The BVA is exciting and interesting - there are new sets of skills you learn every day. The art school is one big family and you never feel alone as your peers and lecturers are always there to guide you if you feel like you're losing your way." - Siya Ndlebe (left - commenting on the work he has been doing as part of a public art project collective).

"When I started working on this project I found it a little difficult because working with wire to make something artistic was foreign to me - but I'm an 'end result' type of guy and I'm eager to achieve that 'end result'. It's been more than a privilege to be part of this and well, in simple words, it's going to be AWESOME to see - #watchthisspace!" - Isso Jafta (right)



Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum: Includes several permanent collections (SA art, British art, international print-making and Oriental art) and many temporary exhibitions. Address: 1 Park Drive. Phone: 041 506 2000. www.artmuseum.co.za



The Athenaeum: The city's renewed creative hub for showcasing the city's and the Eastern Cape's art, culture, creativity and heritage offering. Address: 7 Belmont Terrace. Phone: 041 585 1041. www.theathenaeum.co.za



Galerie Noko: An accessible art gallery for visual arts, exhibitions and interpretations of art - and development of public understanding/appreciation of art. Address: 109 to 111 Russell Road. Phone: 041 582 2090. www.galerienoko.com



The Art Gallery on Stanley: An evolving space that combines fine art with decor and showcases Eastern Cape talent. Address: Stanley Street. Phone: 082 933 3158.



Art on Target: Art gallery and art school. Address: 2 Target Kloof. Phone: 041 373 3334. www.artsjourney-nelsonmandelabay.co.za/

ART COMMEMORATES THE UPRISING

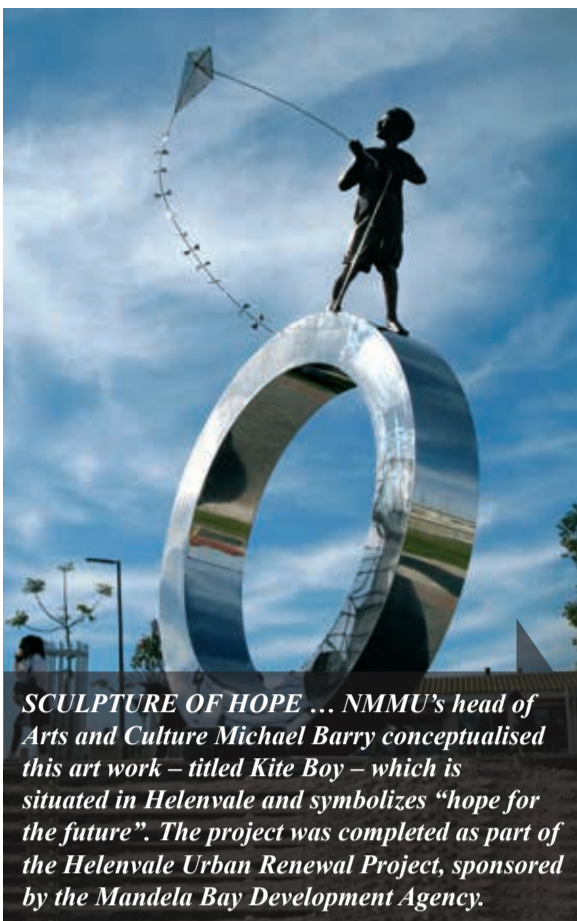
“SIX days in August” is the title of the documentary made to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Northern Areas uprisings last month (August). A book authored by Colin Abrahams was also launched, along with a photographic exhibition, curated by Christopher du Preez, which took place at the South End Museum.

Art was used to help people remember and commemorate that fateful week, which saw about 50 people dying and dozens more injured, and which until now has not been thoroughly documented. Families of the victims paid homage to their loved ones by attending the launch events.

The project was made possible through the collective effort of the Northern Areas History and Heritage Project (NAHHP), its partner the Southern Africa Development, Research and Training Institute (SADRAT Institute) in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) Museums and Heritage Section, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) and the Northern Areas Uprising Committee (NAUC), as well as several other stakeholders and interested parties.

A statement released by the project team explains how this historical event traumatised the Northern Areas community and led to mistrust of the State. “Through research, the project continues to uncover truths that hopefully can contribute to the healing of this traumatised community. It is envisaged that the project, when completed, will contribute extensively to the strengthening of democracy and cohesion in the Metro,” says the statement.

“It aims to bridge the divisive barriers of apartheid and colonialism that endure post 1994 both in the physical landscape and psyche of the people of the Northern Areas and surrounding townships.”



SCULPTURE OF HOPE ... NMMU's head of Arts and Culture Michael Barry conceptualised this art work – titled Kite Boy – which is situated in Helenvale and symbolizes “hope for the future”. The project was completed as part of the Helenvale Urban Renewal Project, sponsored by the Mandela Bay Development Agency.

RETURN TO THE ARTS FOR ST THOMAS



VISUAL arts and drama were this year reintroduced to St Thomas High School in the Northern Areas.

Grade 8 learners benefited from the new classes, aligned to the CAPS creative art curriculum, which will next year be offered up to Grade 9 level, and then Grade 10 the following year, and so on until they become matric subjects.

Four external facilitators were brought in to teach the two art disciplines in this project, which has been funded by the OTP, the Northern Areas People Development Initiative (NAPDI) and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. But it is hoped that, based on the success of the project, the school's Governing Body will be encouraged to approach the Department of Education to employ full-time drama and art teachers at the school.

For this year, the Grade 8 classes were split in two, with half the learners doing drama for the first half of the year and visual arts for the second half, and vice versa.

“We are looking to expand the St. Thomas programme by beginning an after-school visual arts class that would meet on Fridays,” said Programme Leader Michael Barry, who heads up NMMU's Arts and Culture unit.

Visual art facilitator Buziwe Ngcayisa said: “The learners always come to class with such an enthusiasm and eagerness to achieve ... I do believe that, with most of the learners, these art classes have broadened their knowledge and in turn instilled a sense of self confidence from seeing what they can accomplish.”

Drama facilitator Tiffany Oosthuizen said: “The students have really opened up their minds to the concept of acting. Many of them have stepped out of their comfort zones and really pushed themselves with the tasks given to them ... The students are very excited for the work that lies ahead and hope to develop their own little production too.”



BUDDING ACTORS ... Drama facilitator Tiffany Oosthuizen (front, middle) has been teaching drama to this group of Grade 8 learners at St Thomas High.



A-PLUS FOR PORTRAIT ... St Thomas' Levi Camphor with the self-portrait he completed in Grade 8. He is now in Grade 9.