

MORASO

Mogale, Randfontein and Soweto Imbali Craft Student Newsletter

Year-end 2014



The Imbali Crafts Training Programme is proudly supported by the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund



MORASO is the result of a true team effort. The newsletter generates a lot of excitement and energy and provides students with useful life skills, for example understanding committees, target audiences, editing, interviewing, research, working to deadlines and working as a team.

Who is Imbali?

Imbali is a professional training provider of art, crafts and design skills and arts and culture teacher education. With 25 years of experience, Imbali is a leader in its field. As a non-profit organisation (NPO), Imbali focusses on the disadvantaged in society.

Vision

To change people's lives through arts education and training.

Mission

Imbali is committed to achieving and maintaining a leadership role in the arts, crafts and design education and training sector through upholding high standards of training and professional teacher development, emphasising creativity and innovation in everything we do.

Imbali is characterised by the following key attributes:

- Helping individuals reach their full potential as artists, crafters and teachers
- Contributing to the development of a vibrant artistic and cultural economy in South Africa
- Excellence, innovation and mastery in the arts and crafts sectors
- Upliftment, sharing and co-operation between arts, crafts, design and other disciplines

With this set of values Imbali will continue to grow and set new standards in the fields of craft production and design and arts teacher training in South Africa.

Imbali is a non-profit organisation that relies on funding to run all its activities.

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Credits

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Front cover: Londikile Dhlamini making a potato printed tabel runner

Letter from the editor

This is the 7th edition of the Moraso newsletter, produced by Imbali students to keep readers in touch with the Imbali crafts programme. Once again, a group of students committed themselves to carrying on this tradition. We discussed the newsletter at the beginning of the year and the students could observe, research and record information to put this issue together. We hope every reader is inspired and learns something positive concerning the arts.

-Lungani Mogale



Arts Alive 2014 – 20 years of democracy “Metaphors of Freedom in 3D”

By Sbongile Ngubeni

The Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival Schools Art project for this year was about sculpture, movement, freedom,



The Imbali group mobile of freedom



Nkosingiphile Twala, Lungani Mogale and Sbongile Ngobeni

metaphor, imagination, creativity and a celebration of 20 years of democracy in South Africa.

It was another challenging and exciting project for the 22 Gauteng schools that participated. Learners were required to really think about what freedom means to them as individuals and discuss it with their classmates. Then they had to design a mobile that would be a metaphor for their ideas.

Hildur and Justine from Imbali co-ordinated the project with the schools. Each school was given a briefing and resource pack containing tools and materials to get them started. A group of Imbali students also made a mobile of their own.

The mobiles were exhibited at the Joburg Theatre where all the schools came together to talk about their designs and receive certificates of participation. It was wonderful to see the various messages and views about freedom that were clearly demonstrated in each beautiful and creative piece.

“There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountain top of our desires”

– Nelson Mandela

A visit to SARCD A

By Valeria Matshidiso

SARCD A is a trade exhibition of gifts, toys and décor products, showing the latest trends in South Africa.

The Imbali 2nd and 3rd year students attended the exhibition as part of their business skills course. It was a practical lesson for them to be able to identify and contextualise stakeholders and associates and to understand their role in the craft industry.

The students had the opportunity to compare products and prices in the craft world to help them to understand this side of the business. They had to complete various exercises and ask the exhibitors relevant questions in order to improve their knowledge.

The business course with Robyn and Kagiso

By Rudaiba Lee

This year the business class was more exciting and practical, although more theory was involved as well which was a lot of work. Exercises and homework were given every now and then which kept the students engaged, not only on Thursday afternoons when the classes were on but to keep them in mind even when making products.

This class had students theoretically and practically involved all the way, as they were given assignments such as the shop exercise where a student had to create a window display at the Imbali shop, take a picture of the display and complete an exercise about it.

Robyn and Kagiso also took the students to the SARCD trade exhibition, not only to see all the beautiful products but also as an exercise to compare products and their prices.

An important aspect of running a good business is to have an accurate filing system. All the students were given a file where they had to keep a record of all the work from the exercises on the course.

Many artists struggle with costing and pricing their products, which makes this business class so important for Imbali craft students, and any other artists for that matter.

The ceramics programme

By Lungani Mogale

The second and third years closed their programme by polishing their skills in ceramics with the help of a former Imbali student and great ceramicist, Lolo Mohohlo.



Valeria Matshidiso

Lolo started working with ceramics before he came to Imbali. After leaving school he met an organisation in White City, Soweto in 2003.

He studied with them for a year, learning throwing, hand-building, glazing and mould-making. Fine art was also part of the curriculum.

After the course he stayed on as an incubator for a



Thulani Ndlovu

further year as part of an internship with the CATHSSETA. He then became a student at Imbali.

This year Lolo helped the second year Imbali students with the coiling technique, while the third years learnt how to use the wheel. The vases they have made speak for themselves. They are light in weight, simply shaped and well balanced with perfect finishes. Some of the vases have been decorated with engraving.



Amos Mocumi



Tumelo Tshagemeno

Potato printing with the first year students

By Theo Ntsoane

Potato printing is a technique which is taught every year at Imbali, mostly to first year students and they always manage to create beautiful fabrics, but



Portia Mmbidi



Ithumeleng Kgweidi



Thandiwe Dlamini

this year's designs were really amazing and had a twist to them that had all the senior students talking about how different and exciting they were. They really took this technique to another level.

The designs were what stood out because they were African-inspired and also used some geometric and organic shapes. When it comes to colour, you can kill your whole product if you use the wrong colour, even if the design is good. This particular group used their colours so well that the designs really stood out, thanks to the excellent lessons they had from Connie.

The students made bags, bucket hats and table runners which are selling well in the Imbali shop, according to Prudence, our sales assistant.

As a third year student I find it interesting and a good lesson to see how the same technique can be taken to a new level as long as students push themselves in all elements of it. These first year students took this opportunity with open minds and put in the effort and love for their work, which one can see in the results. When I see such work as an artist I see the world in a different way and have hope and feel alive.

The beauty of handmade products is incomparable and unique. No matter whether two artists are using the same technique or the same materials, the products are never the same. It's like an individual's signature or seeing the world through the artist's eye into what they are thinking.



Yoliswa Mbobisa



Young craft entrepreneurs

By Londekile Dhlamini

As an artist who has been in business with my own artworks for some time, it is amazing to see how many of us at Imbali are making such a beautiful variety of products and surviving on our everyday sales. Since I attend classes five days a week I find it hard to manage my business and don't produce as many products as I used to. This made me decide to ask how other people are coping and I interviewed some of my classmates who are also in business for themselves.



Muzi Mabena

Muzi Mabena is a first year student who runs a small business doing screen printing and clothing design.



Londekile Dhlamini

Q. When did you discover arts/crafts and how did you decide to go into business?

A. I started with an IT design program and then met Itumeleng, who is now a business partner and friend. He introduced me to screen printing and shared the ins and outs of the business. When I was ready to start my own venture I started printing t-shirts, jackets and promotional products. I came to Imbali to learn more skills and keep growing.

Q. What made you realise that you could actually make a business out of the skills you have?

A. Everything I learnt from my experience in art allowed me to grow my craft skills and maintain my creativity. The love of fashion also played a big role in my life because I realised the importance of balancing my creativity and nurturing the talent from where I started to where I am now.

Q. How do you balance running a business and attending school?

A. I have set up a schedule so that after school I have a few hours for printing and sewing products for the business. On weekends I showcase my products at t-shirt expos, fashion shows and arts and crafts markets such as the Art of Soweto Market and the Soweto Arts and Crafts Fair.

Q. How do you market your business?

A. I use social networks, showcase my products at markets, hand out business cards and interact with my clients. Much of my work comes through word of mouth.

Q. What are the vision and mission of your business?

A. To embrace my work through the way we live as Africans. I see myself operating both a studio and a store where people can come and buy my products and where I can have a relationship with them.

ILLICIT is a partnership business made up of Ofentse Mathibe, Mxolisi Mkhonto and Paris Mona. They make hats, printed t-shirts and shoes.

Q. When did you discover arts/crafts and when did you decide to go into business?

A. We started going into business in 2014 after meeting at Imbali. We were chilling in the park one lunchtime and talking and discovered that Paris could sew, Ofentse had a space where we could work and Mxo is good at designing and with his hands. We started collecting materials and repaired an old sewing machine one of us had at home and we started from there.



Paris Mona and Ofentse Mathibe



Mxolisi Mkhonto

Q. What made you realise that you could make a business out of your skills?

A. When we came to Imbali we realised how much could be made out of scrap fabric and we thought of starting to produce for ourselves and seeing how the business could grow with the knowledge that we would gain at the school.

Q. How do you balance running a business and attending school?

A. It is a bit difficult because we have to be at school, manage the business and make products so we have to meet on weekends. We make our production process easy by dividing ourselves according to our work abilities, so Ofentse and Mzo will cut patterns while Paris does the sewing. We are busy making hats at the moment.



Some hats made by Illicit

Q. How do you market your business?

A. By word of mouth at the moment. We also use Facebook and wear our own products, which results in orders or sales as people are interested in our style. It helps that we live in different areas so our marketing spreads fast.

Q. What is your vision and mission?

A. Our vision is to be one of South Africa's best designers. Our mission is to own a manufacturing company and create employment.

Bongiwe Kheswa does beadwork. She makes necklaces, brooches and elastic bracelets.

Q. When did you start making your own products?

A. I started in 2013 in my first year at Imbali where the course enhanced my ideas and my products improved. This has kept me going.

Q. How do you manage to attend school and run your business?

A. I give myself time when I get home to work on my products and I work hard on weekends.

Q. How do you market yourself and how do you price your products?



Bongiwe Kheswa

A. Marketing happens by word of mouth and social networking. I price according to the cost of materials and the time I spend on a product.

Q. What is your vision and mission?

A. My vision is to see people buying handmade products and supporting more young artists like myself. My mission to supply as many shops as possible and exhibit at shows like SARCD.A.



Yoliswa Mbobisa



Yoliswa Mbobisa works with recycled plastic and crochets wonderful bracelets, necklaces, hats, bags, mats and belts.

Q. When did you start making your own products?

A. I have been playing with plastic in a creative way since the age of 17, so it's been over ten years now.

An inspiring artist – an interview with Vika Mjoka

By Sbongile Ngobeni

Who is Vika?

Vika is a passionate and enthusiastic artist from Alexandra. Together with others, they formed GOM Art in the township, where he works as an arts administrator.

GOM has been working with other organisations to establish a brand for Alexandra township, a ten year old project. We hope to change the image of Alexandra by developing other young people to become professional artists and earn a living from their art. As Vika cannot do this forever, it is all the more important to develop young artists.



Vika Mjoka

Q. How did you start and how did you become an artist?

A. To be honest, I was born an artist but I didn't know I was one. I just knew that I was really good with my hands. My grandmother was a bead maker in Pretoria and I used to steal some of her beads and make something beautiful out of them. At school I was the only boy in a class full of girls. When the girls went to sewing class, we boys had to attend agriculture classes, but I stayed in the classroom alone and started drawing. Sometimes at night I would steal my sister's knitting and carry on with it without her knowing. But my first love was drawing. I would hang my drawings on the washing line for people to see and comment on, especially my dad. If he didn't say anything I would get really sad. But then I grew up and now here I am as one of the founders of GOM Art and finding other young and ambitious artists like I was.

Another visit to Amsterdam

By Lungani Mogale

In 2011 Imbali participated in an ICAF festival in Rotterdam where Connie and Lungani facilitated a silk-screening and batik project under the banner of Craft and Fashion. Local women who took part in this project and produced a beautiful range of dresses.

This year Imbali participated in another project, this time in Utrecht on a cultural exchange with an organisation called Kopa. Connie and Lungani spent a month there in June/July and shared their skills in silk screening, block printing and batik. The next phase of the exchange will see Linda Rosink from Kopa being hosted by Imbali. She worked closely with Imbali in planning and organising this exchange programme and also with Connie and Lungani in running the workshops.

The Utrecht programme involved Connie working with her group from Monday to Wednesday, doing starch batik. Everyone was amazed at how beautifully their two metre cloths turned out. On Thursdays and Fridays Lungani's group did silkscreen printing and their fabrics were also exquisite. Both these techniques turned out to be quite addictive as the participants continued to learn and started turning out their own designs. There were also afternoon workshops in tie dyeing, and afternoon workshops with children from Fort Luna doing block printing.

The programme ended with an exhibition day where all the groups displayed their work in the grounds of Fort Luna. It was a joyful celebration as people brought their families and friends and other artists involved in the organisation brought along their own work to exhibit and sell.

Connie and Lungani finally made their way home after a rewarding and eventful month.





Have your say

By Boipelo Madumo

As an aspiring artist, I have realised that most artists are entrepreneurs or work as assistants to successful artists. I wondered why we don't have many opportunities in the arts and whether the arts industry will ever be a prominent contributor to the economy. I asked some working artists what they thought about this.



Boipelo Madumo



Precious Mohapa



Maomi Zwane



Lolo Mohohlo

Q. In terms of job opportunities, why is the arts industry different to other industries which create thousands of jobs?

Precious Mohapa, APS

The fear of change mostly, and the stereotype that art is a solo campaign and differs from the corporate scene.

Naomi Zwane, APS

Art is about individuals and their pieces. There are few employment opportunities in the arts generally.

Lolo Mohohlo, Ceramicist

When we look at current conditions in the arts industry there are many positive and negative factors that affect it. For some, art is just a hobby to relieve boredom. For others it can be a rehabilitation tool for mental challenges that can leave art with a stigma. For those with talent their fate is uncertain but it could and should be a means to make a living. Perception plays a key role in the current condition of the arts industry.

Thabani Dip

Artists are reluctant to share their intellectual property.

I also think that art is a solo campaign and artists often have an emotional attachment to the pieces they create. Starting your own business is never easy. The fear, challenges and unknown cause us to be reluctant to venture into it. The arts industry has been around for centuries but has not developed like other industries, even if you do become successful. Income is not steady and so the industry cannot employ a large number of people. I feel that as artists we need to package ourselves better and start selling the brand rather than the art piece.

Imbali Courses accredited with CATHSSETA (Sector Education and Training Authority for Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport)

By Hildur Amato



Charles Thabiso Kholobeng Imbali moderator

In the last month Imbali students and staff have been busy with assessing all the work done during the year, for submitting to the CATHSSETA so that students can get accreditation for Skills Programmes at NQF 2 and NQF 4 levels. The First Year students have done Craft Production (CPR/CraProd 48806/03) and the Second and Third Year students have done Craft Enterprise (CRE/CRAFENTER/48806/05).

It has been a lot of work to align our courses with the CATHSSETA programmes and to finish all the assessments. But we think it has been worth it. The students will get nationally recognised certificates for the Unit Standards of the Skills Programmes they have completed.

Congratulations to the students who have worked hard and consistently throughout the year to achieve these certificates!



Hildur Amato

A food garden at the Bus Factory

By Justine Watterson

With the price of good healthy food on the rise it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a healthy and nutritious diet. Goodman Mkhize and David Sandani have the answer!

In June last year they identified an unused piece of land at the back of the Bus Factory, behind the JDA offices, and decided to plant a food garden. Today, a year and a half later, it is a thriving patch of land yielding spinach and carrots, with some cabbages on the way. Mkhize explained how the leafy vegetables do better as the ground is quite hard and stony, making it difficult for the root vegetables to thrive.

Mkhize and Sandani tend the garden but they say the vegetables are for anyone who wants to keep healthy and supplement their mielie meal.

Imagine if every unused patch of land in the city was planted with vegetables?

I think it is an attainable dream and one we can all take part in achieving.



Goodman Mkhize

Poetry and cartoon page

The African Pot

It is round and fat and squat
It has no handle and the rim has
no spout
At first it seems as if the colours
have no coordination and no
rhythm
The yellow and brown stripes
circle the pot in quick diagonals

I puzzle over the absence of the
handle
And then suddenly I think of a
young woman
Wearing beads, walking to a river
With the pot gracefully balanced
on her head

And then the colours begin to
rhyme
Yellow zigzagging around the top
Makes me think of harvest time,
of golden corn
Of dancers around an autumn
fire, of ripe fruit
And of men drinking home-
brewed beer

And as I stroke the brown
I can almost feel the full earth
between my fingers
Earth that echoes the thunderous
stamp of warriors going to war
Earth that offers base
accompaniment to dancing feet
I can almost see an ox pulling a
plough
Steered by a man of infinite
patience
Making ordered rows of upturned
loam

The maker made this pot with a
song in his heart
And a vision in his eyes
Lifting it up I can almost hear him
say
I am man
Life is but clay in my hands
Creation is at my fingertips

By Fhazel Johennesse, from the
book *The Oak and the Beach*
(1956)

Conceptualising Over Concern

Hey!!! Come, we draw pictures here
Knock our heads with a sum of sense and fuse ideas
But for now I need you to draw pictures here
Can we be of a singular form, liquid like and flow
For we are a unit
But right now I really think we should draw pictures here

Hello!!! I am speaking to every part of us
Not as an artist or painter, creative experienced and wise
Nor otherwise
We need to draw focus here as earthlings
With a big concern ahead of it all
By drawing pictures on this canvas of unity
And reason with one another
So we need to lend a hand and participate
With all our different colours, languages and imaginations of
being
Can we draw pictures here and be part and parcel of one
masterpiece?

Anonymous



The Imbali Shop

By Margaret Fish

The Imbali shop in Museum Africa is run by Prudence Muthumuni, a former student of the Imbali crafts training course. This year has seen some lovely products on sale made by the present Imbali students, such as table runners, baby shoes and quilts and tablecloths and napkins inspired by the Nelson Mandela bridge. As a result of the Rise and Fall of Apartheid photographic exhibition which has been on at the museum since February, the shop is selling the fascinating exhibition catalogue as well as a selection of other South African non-fiction books published by Jacana, which have boosted our sales this year. There are also some really beautiful cooking and décor books published by Quivertree that have just arrived.

Imbali students visited a number of exhibitions this year. These field trips form an important part of the programme as they expose students to a broader context, and can be a powerful inspiration for their work.



Exact Imagination: 300 Years of Botanically Inspired Art in South Africa, Standard Bank Gallery



The Michaelis Art Library



From Sitting to Selfie: 300 Years of South African Portraits, Standard Bank Gallery



Doing Hair: Art and Hair in Africa, Wits Art Museum

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