

Imbali student newsletter

YEAR-END 2023



Imbali 2023 in pictures



In May Imbali partnered with the Latitudes Art Fair to run the RMB Children's Creativity Area. Latitudes was held for the first time at Shepstone Gardens. This wonderful venue and the enthusiasm of the Imbali students and graduates who facilitated the programme, made this a noteworthy event on the Joburg art calendar. Imbali is proud to be associated with Latitudes and looks forward to many more years of this wonderful event.



In early September, 9 participants graduated from the Imbali facilitator training course. This intense and rigorous 4 week course took participants through the basics of facilitating creative art workshops for children, youth, the elderly and people with disabilities.

'This course was not only a great and challenging moment I needed, but it was also healing for me. Thank you and keep up the wonderful work.'

'It was a really mind blowing experience. I've learnt a lot in this course and it also boosted my confidence in so many ways. I really appreciate and am honored to have been part of it.'

'I loved how the classes were conducted, the freedom to be yourself and express your views while being mindful of other people.'

I really thank Imbali for creating the course for us. I've been longing to do this for a long time. Most of these courses are so expensive I could never afford them.'

Front cover: Nompumelelo Dubazana creating her bespoke outfit.

2023 has been a year of forging new partnerships and strengthening existing ones. In early January Imbali began selecting participants for the 6-month Constitution Hill Museum Merchandise Product Development Programme (MMPD), a programme that was delivered in collaboration with Art Aid and Con Hill. This initiative connected Imbali with talented crafters, the Ditsong Museums, the Con Hill team, and expanded our network to include a range of new craft buyers. The programme culminated in July with a crafts product showcase at the Women's Jail at Con Hill where crafters exhibited their new products and received orders.



Malik Nkosi, an Imbali 3rd year student, exhibiting their handmade books at Con Hill.



Kanyiso Ndinisa, Tshelang Ramoji, Sinakhokonke Mbatha and Lerato George Thulo with their products developed while in the MMPD

Early February saw the start of our crafts training programme with 16 new and enthusiastic participants, marking the first intake of the newly restructured 2-year training programme.

The group quickly evolved into a cohesive unit, and 14 students are advancing to the 2nd year. In the pages that follow, you can see some of the work that these talented individuals have made over the course of the year. Additionally, we have 4 graduates of the 3 year programme - this was the 'covid group' who started in 2021.

In April, Portia and Justine went to Denmark for their much-anticipated weaving residency. The 2 weeks they spent there were filled with exciting workshops, a visit to a crafts school and many wonderful meetings with weavers, all masters of their craft. Both Portia and Justine learnt many new skills including photo transfer, random weave, frame basket and binding basket to mention a few. They returned to Imbali in May refreshed, rested and very inspired! The relationships forged and connections made will be long lasting.

Then in October Danish weavers Ane Lyngsgaard and Eva Seidenfaden came to work with Imbali for 3 weeks. The first week was spent at Leshiba wilderness on the creative skills exchange between Imbali graduates and Limpopo crafters. This was a wonderfully enriching programme for all involved and will hopefully be the start of a new partnership between Imbali and Leshiba Wilderness and the craft artists of Limpopo.

The final two weeks of Ane and Eva's visit were spent at Imbali teaching Burkina weave and various binding techniques. Students learnt so much and will be continuing with these skills into next year.

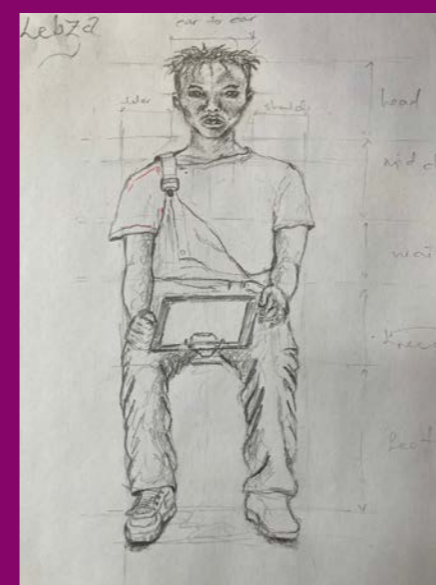
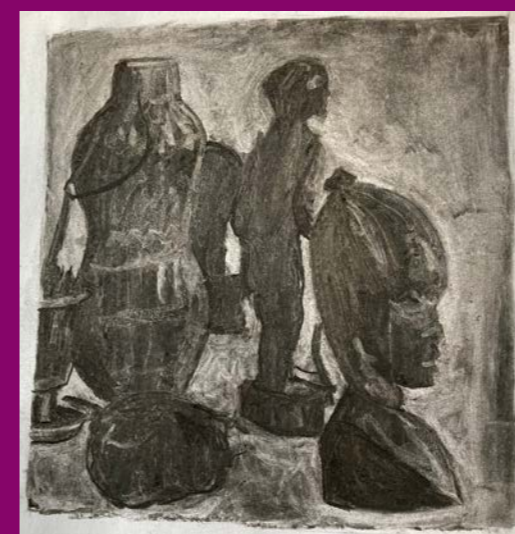
Then we had a surprise visit from Estifanos Menchegiro, fashion designer extraordinaire from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He taught pattern making and with these skills students have all created their own outfits which they will present in a fashion show at the year-end exhibition and graduation.

Despite the ongoing challenges of running an NGO in a difficult economic environment, we have continued in 2023 to celebrate numerous successes. Imbali remains an organization of integrity, maintaining high standards of training and professionalism. Supported by a dedicated core team of staff, wonderful students and an extensive network of skilled specialists, and efficient systems, Imbali provides students, customers, and partners with quality training, materials, expertise, and products. Celebrating its 35th year, and having navigated the difficulties of the COVID-19 era, Imbali looks forward with confidence to continued growth, development, and success in 2024 and beyond.



Lebogang Eunica Visagie learning screen printing from Yda Walt during the MMPD programme.

First year students create self-portrait collages for their file covers. This was the first project of the programme



Foundation Course: Introduction to the elements of art and design and a range of different media

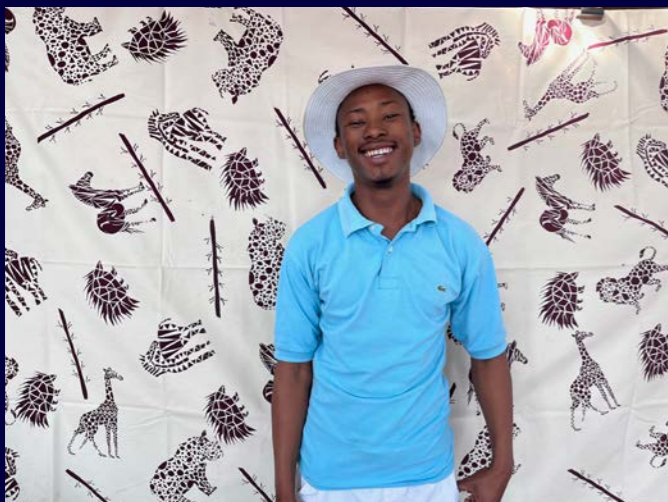
Various drawing and painting exercises from the Foundation Course



Hand-dyed and potato-printed beach bags



Animal designs: Screen-printed table cloths



Painting ceramic vases with botanical motifs

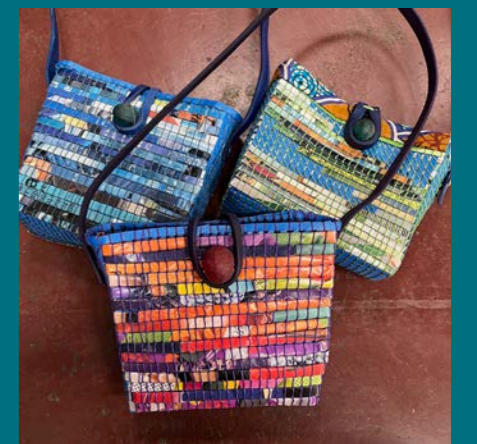


Hand-built vases decorated with botanical designs



Appliqué and embroidered panels inspired by Irma Stern flower still life paintings

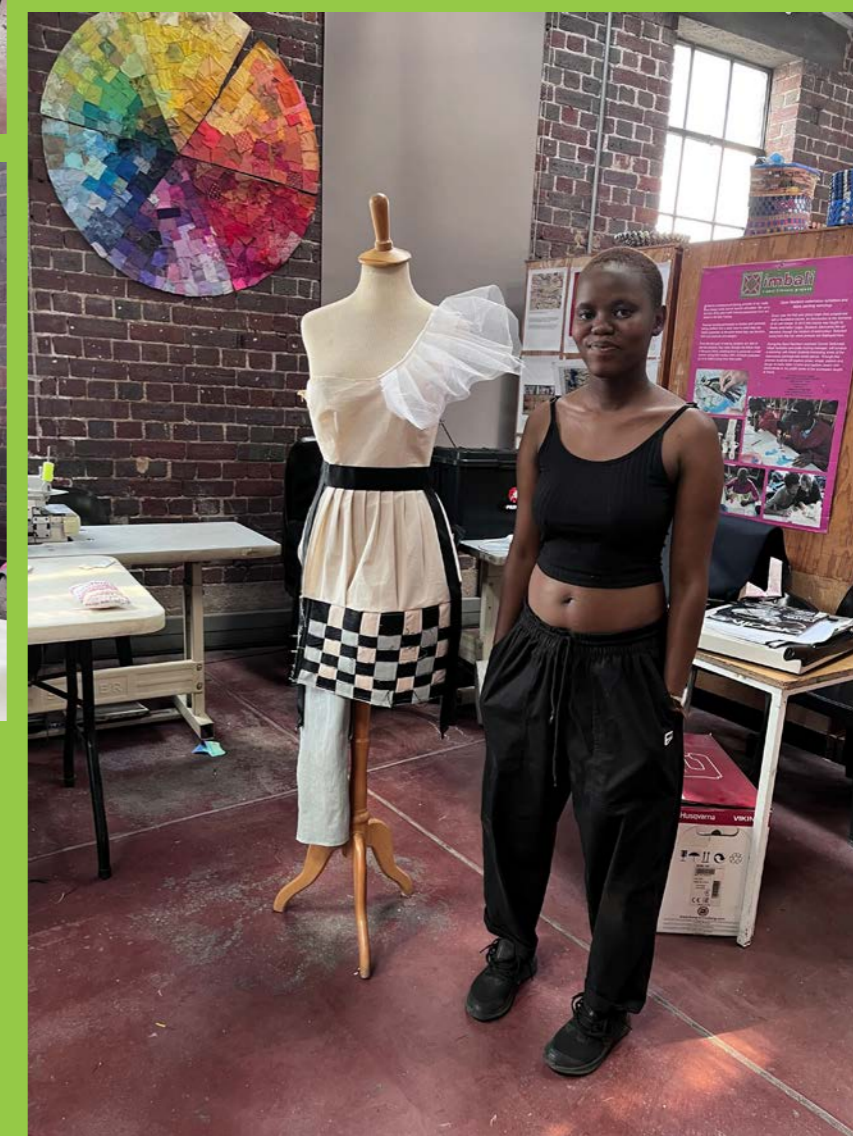




Weaving with Ane and Eva



Fashion design with Estifanos



'I MAKE THE MAGIC HAPPEN' by Nompumelelo Dubazana

I make the magic happen while learning to create a minicollection of skills, techniques and most of all memories.

Art, craft and textile design has been a devoting task for some, for others it's a fun puzzle but every student has given it their all.

Participating in workshops has been a great method for me as a crafter to hone my skills, network with other creatives, and pick up new tricks.

But most of all being part of the Imbali students has been the greatest journey, therapeutic and a tremendous experience. Being part of a team that is always ready to learn and give their all and working hand-in-hand with facilitators that are passionate about their jobs has been a great opportunity.

The creative and cultural skills exchange between Imbali graduates and Limpopo crafters held at Leshiba Wilderness in October



Imbali visits 'Encounters with the (im)material' at Wits Art Museum and 'The Sculptures of Sydney Kumalo and Ezrom Legae' at Strauss & Co.





Portia and Justine's two week residency in Denmark enabled them to learn many new weaving techniques and explore the country and all it had to offer. This trip was made possible by Ane Lyngsgaard and Eva Seidenfaden and Baskets4Life.



After the 2 weeks in Denmark Portia and Justine visited Amsterdam where they connected with friends Karen Santen and Louis Nienhuis.



This picture was taken inside an artwork by Ólafur Elíasson (an Icelandic-Danish artist). It is a circular skywalk called 'Your rainbow panorama' at the very top of the ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, the main art museum in Aarhus, Denmark. Constructed of large panels of coloured glass arranged in the colours of the rainbow, this amazing work allows one to be 'inside colour'. One can experience the qualities of the different hues as one walks around the circular sky walk and takes in the views of Aarhus below.



These printed t-shirts for kids and all the other products that you see in our newsletter are available from the Imbali Shop, inside Museum Africa.

Special thanks to our funders and partners without whom none of this would be possible:

- Africa Craft Trust • Art Aid • Artist Proof Studio • BASA • Baskets4life • Caths SETA
- The Davies Foundation Trust • Department of Arts and Culture • Moving into Dance • MTN Foundation
- Museum Africa • National Arts Council • One Step • R.B. Hagart Trust • The House of Embroidery
- Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation • The Imbali Board • Friends of Imbali and all the people who generously contributed in so many ways to the project this year.

Imbali is located @ The Bus Factory, 3 Helen Joseph Steet, Newtown, Johannesburg.

Tel: +27 11 492 3333 Email: imbalivisualliteracyproject@gmail.com

Web site: imbali.za.org Facebook & Instagram: Imbali Visual Literacy Project



The Imbali Crafts Training Programme is generously supported by the National Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Sport, Arts & Culture

