

**Interim Narrative Report to Department of Arts and Culture  
on Mzansi Golden Economy Funding 2015**



**13 March 2015**

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# AFRIKABURN

178 Lower Main Rd  
Observatory, Cape Town

## Introduction

Africa Burns Creative Projects (commonly known as AfrikaBurn) received the first tranche of funding of R900,000.00 on 09 March 2015 for four key public art projects, which are in preparation for AfrikaBurn 2015 (27April-3 May) in Tankwa, Northern Cape. AfrikaBurn is founded on 11 principles:

- Communal effort
- Participation
- Civic responsibility
- Immediacy
- Decommodification
- Gifting
- Leaving no trace
- Radical inclusion
- Radical self-reliance
- Radical self-expression
- Each one teach one

And each of the four projects speaks in different volumes to all of the principles. With six weeks to go, preparation has begun in earnest in all four projects with the majority of activities taking place in the final six weeks before the event.

Thus far, meetings have taken place with all projects teams – Metamorphosis; San Clan 2015; Flaming Amazing Show and Mantis Project with a site visit conducted in Johannesburg (Gauteng) for Metamorphosis and subsequent site visits scheduled in March in Sutherland (Northern Cape); Elandsvlei (Northern Cape) and Ocean View and Hanover Park (Western Cape). All projects have a core of training and skills development as well as legacy component and of great value to the training is the caliber of the professional artists that are involved in training and up-skilling of beneficiaries, through the creation of the public artworks. This process is providing access to the creative industries and empowering unskilled and semi skilled young people and adults with the opportunity to create quality, participatory public art that spans the genres of architecture, sculpture, performance art and visual art installations.

Monitoring and evaluation tools are currently being developed along the lines of the Most Significant Change technique. It is different from common monitoring practice in that it focuses on the unexpected, the information gathered is done so using text rather than numbers, analysis of the information is through explicit value judgments and aggregation of information and analysis takes place through a structured social process. Importantly it emphasizes the beneficiaries and the learning and it is well suited to capturing the intangible outcomes associated with the arts. Supporting this approach will be case studies and quantitative data collection to provide balance and understanding of the impact of the projects.



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## Project Update: Metamorphosis /Johannesburg

While we don't naturally 'metamorph' as humans, we do, however, have the ability to choose the process. To create our lives. Our vision is to offer a workshop that will transmit not only skills development in learning to work with carpentry tools and metal, but also the tools to create their dreams. The vision is to empower underprivileged people, uplifting their self-esteem, their connection to life and their belief that they are important enough to dream big. Sometimes, all that is required is to give someone permission. This is the magic and power of AfrikaBurn- a blank canvas where people are given permission to create, without boundary.

Under the guidance of main designer Verity Maud and co-designers Marcelo Toro, Stef Pioreschi and Daniel Popper, four adults of differing skill levels (from no experience to emerging professional visual artist) from the township of Alexandra have been selected and are receiving hard skills training in art construction, specifically working with wood and metal, and wiring and rigging. Training sessions are running over three full weekends in March with practical evening construction sessions taking place alongside volunteers on Mondays and Wednesday. Training has already incorporated: operating a jigsaw and circular saw; using an industrial staple gun; screwing with drills and assembling benches. Beneficiary Mmabadimo Mothapo (pictured right, in light blue) said:

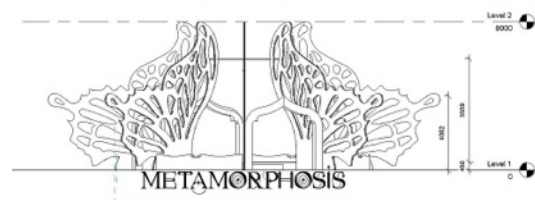
"We are learning a lot. I am learning to work with wood, this is new to me."



To date, the team of trainees and volunteers have: cut and assembled all benches; cut 320 pieces that make up the wings; cut part of the arches and assembled three of the 40 wing pieces. Other construction skills still to be transferred include: welding and cutting steel; wiring of lighting and rigging at height. The four beneficiaries are also being coached through life skills process as part of their training. Verity (pictured right) said



"The motivation for the process is to teach not only skills, but empower them to start creating their own art by instilling a belief in their own potential. We are working on self-esteem and the power of setting intentions. After the burn, they, led by Tsholo (pictured left) who is a visual artist, will be designing a relief mural using the amazing offcuts we have."





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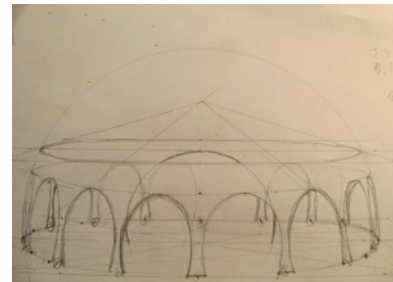
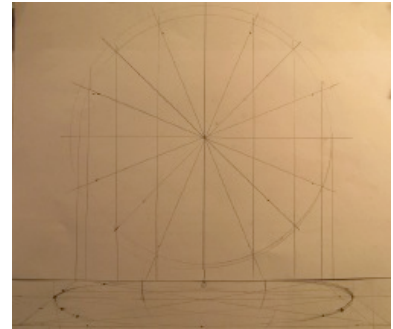
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## Project Update: San Project Update: San Clan 2015 / Sutherland

San Clan lead Nathan Honey began a recruitment process in Sutherland in early March. He enlisted four local people to assist with preparing the workshop space whilst he contacted the municipality to identify individuals on their centralized list of unemployed adults. Following a lack of forthcoming information, Nathan proceeded to advertise an open call through local networks. Six people attended a slide show of the AfrikaBurn project and signed up to attend the skills training, bringing the total to 10. An additional 14 people came forward with interest to participate. Subsequently Nathan and his team, including volunteers, decided to look at ways to incorporate some of the additional people in the process.

Nathan said:

“All preparatory work will be done in Sutherland. Construction will be done in a way that will transfer skills to presently unemployed people of the local community. This will be done by having skilled people work alongside members from the community and instructing them on the use of both power and hand tools. The majority of skills would be carpentry related. An attempt would however also be made to engage and interest people in certain aspects of design as well as administration. The space used for the project is quite central in town. It is hoped that the visibility of the project will contribute to a feeling of community, also from people not directly involved with the project.”



Timber and tools were purchased and taken up to Sutherland for the first session of measuring, marking and cutting formers for the central ball on 13 March. Construction is planned to begin transferring to Tankwa Town on 10 April and run concurrently in Sutherland and on site until 24 April.



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## Project Update: Mantis Project / Tankwa

Through its Outreach programme, AfrikaBurn has developed a relationship with the people of Elandsvlei - the closest community to the annual AfrikaBurn event in Tankwa. Working through the local school, the Mantis Project, led by AfrikaBurn director Robert Weinek with Annie Le Roux and Daya Heller, will create an opportunity for 29 children and young people ages 5-17 and approximately 15 adults (parents) along with teachers and school staff to create and perform public art. The project is linking with Kaospilot, a Danish hybrid business and design school, whose students participate in projects worldwide to facilitate innovation and change.



School learners have already begun the design process with their ideas and drawings of the mantis !Kaggen, taken forward into design sketches. A site visit to Elandsvlei has been scheduled for mid March, where after project activities will begin. The project, based mainly at Elandsvlei is providing artistic skills transfer through the building of a large mantis puppet made of cane and tissue paper and a performance piece portraying the traditional story 'The Mantis and Moon.'



## Project Update: Flaming Amazing Show / Cape Town

Visual and performance artists in communities of Ocean View, Masiphumelele and Hanover Park are developing an intercultural and interdisciplinary public artwork called the Flaming Amazing Show. Using a combination of puppetry, pyrotechnics and circus, the project is training and up-skilling youth, unemployed adults and lone parents in the creation of cutting edge art. In Hanover Park, on the Cape Flats, seven young people age 14-30 have been selected for an intensive performance based training programme. The group is creating a first performance piece for a fundraiser event on 21 March. Critical to this process is teambuilding, lead trainer Hanne Le Cour said:

The aim has been creating and seeing individuals in a group, how are we working alone and together. How do we plan and work in group, in front of each other and the public."



In the neighbouring yet very different peri-urban communities of Ocean View and Masiphumelele on the South Peninsula, project coordinator Yandiswa Mazwana (pictured left) has been recruiting a team of semi skilled crafters and emerging professional visual artists to construct a performance stage and puppets for the collaborative pyrotechnic piece. Still in latter stages of design, the



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proposed work will comprise a 5-metre fire breathing dragon puppet, a flaming puppet, puppet heads and a mobile performance stage. The team will be gathering mid March to finalise choice for the artworks and materials and feed into the final design process.

## **Conclusion**

With six weeks to go, all four projects are beginning to take shape with training and construction already begun or commencing within the next week. Africa Burns Creative Projects thanks the Department of Arts and Culture's Mzansi Golden Economy initiative for creating opportunities that provide access for marginalized children, youth, adults and emerging artists to have meaningful participation in the design, creation and installation of public art and access to resources.