

IfaLethu Foundation Announces its 20 year Programme for 2014



- Heritage month announcement highlights the largest repatriation of 'lost' artworks and entrepreneurial development effort for the creative sector
- 20 year programme to run National School Competition
- International tour to include South Africa heritage works and emerging artists
- Lord Mayor of London to host Gala Dinner in June

Pretoria, 16 September, 2013: Ifa Lethu Foundation, the country's largest heritage art repatriation and creative entrepreneurial development organization, has announced its 2014 20 Year Celebration Programme.

"2014 is a significant year in South Africa's road to freedom," says Ifa Lethu CEO Dr Narissa Ramdhani. "Since 2005 Ifa Lethu has been advocating both the heritage of oppressed art during the apartheid years by repatriating lost township artworks from that era, then taking our collection across the globe. Our exhibitions – held in many countries including Australia, UK, France – have travelled both the country and the globe. In recent years we have been invited to take our collections to London for the Olympics, to leading global auction house Bonhams, and most recently to Nantes for the French/South African Season."

Ramdhani says September is the best month to announce Ifa Lethu's 2014 programme; "During apartheid, local black artists could not exhibit their works as they were seen as 'protest art' during the period 1960 to the 1980s. Some were lucky enough to go into exile and many became famous artists in their own right, with their work demanding very high prices on the global art scene. The majority of painters, sculptors, musicians and poets could not escape and they struggled to not only practice their craft but to make even a meager living. They were banned from exhibiting, their work was perceived to be of no value, but they produced an important record of the struggle of the time and the conditions in the townships. It is thanks to foreigners who visited our shores during these years that their works were purchased and taken out of the country to tell their stories. To date, and thanks to generous donors, over 400 of their arts have been repatriated by Ifa Lethu and feature in our Collections."

In recent years, Ifa Lethu's focus has broadened to include the development element aligned to the National Development Plan and Mzansi's Golden Economy. This has resulted in the development of creative entrepreneurs and successful employment creation for South Africa's creative practitioners. "Recently we have taken our enterprise development programme to rural communities via our mobile 'Creative Hands' workshops, set up permanent business incubators, and focused on the crafters in small villages and put them through the same training as our young artists," says Ramdhani. "Their works may be purchased from us or at various airport shops."

Additionally, and with the help of the Wits Origins Centre, the Foundation started a unique fossil casting training programme which has been running for the past three years. "There is a world-wide shortage of

fossil casters, and our graduates have gone on to be employed at institutions such as Wits, the Ditsong Museums, the Cradle of Human Kind, or to set up their own businesses such as *'Fossils for Africa'*, doing work that produces casts to be sold at places of hominoid interest," she says.

The plans for the 20 Years of Freedom campaign include:

- Exhibition: Looking Both Ways, A Clearer Vision

This will include a comparative vision of the repatriated artworks and those of emerging artists. Selected works from the Ifa Lethu Collection will be used as a springboard for contemporary artists to present their views of what it is like to live in South Africa twenty years after the onset of democracy. It will be held nationally and will then travel to London, Chile and the USA.

- National School Competition

A National Art competition will be held for schools in South Africa to allow young learners to produce high end artwork on the required theme. The winner will be taken to London and will be allowed a guest exhibition at Bonhams.

- The Ifa Lethu/UK Invest in South Africa Dinner

Hosted by the Lord Mayor of London and held at her home in May 2014, this Gala event is aimed at bringing the business communities from South Africa and the UK together to generate more discussion on investment as a means for providing more youth employment and economic development in the rural areas of SA. It will also form part of the planned 20 Year Programme.

- Production of 20 Year Signature Craft Product - A national competition for design students to design such a product. The actual product will then be crafted by our rural crafters for distribution.

"Plans are well in place and we'll be announcing more details as we progress, as well on our Facebook page and website," concludes Ramdhani.

Ends

About Ifa Lethu Foundation: Empowering the Nation's Soul

Ifa Lethu, a nonprofit Foundation based in Tshwane, South Africa is devoted to the development and economic growth of the creative sectors in the country.

Ifa Lethu today manages the largest heritage repatriation effort in South Africa with collections having been repatriated from countries such as the United States of America, Canada, France, Australia, Spain, Holland, the United Kingdom and Germany. Further collections have been identified across the globe and every endeavour is made by Ifa Lethu to facilitate their repatriation to their home country.

Recent activities marked a rapid growth and an extension of our mandate, which has resulted in the Foundation focusing on the provision of skills for creative practitioners so they may become successful entrepreneurs. This extension has allowed the Foundation to align its work with the national priorities and Millennium Goals of poverty alleviation and community upliftment.

Creative Entrepreneurship training initiatives are ongoing in the visual arts, fashion design and small business skills.

In addition Ifa Lethu is committed to its education of the public and specific local and international communities through their extensive programme of exhibitions, workshops and conferences.

Ifa Lethu is headed by CEO Dr Narissa Ramdhani and Chaired by Dr Anna Mokgokong.

Contacts:

Dr Narissa Ramdhani
CEO, Ifa Lethu Foundation
+27 12 346 2965

Issued by:

Bette Kun
+27 82 576 9739
bette@bettekun.co.za