



#### IFA LETHU “COMING HOME” EXHIBITION TRAVELS TO FRANCE AS AN EVENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICA AND FRENCH SEASONS

Pretoria 16 May, 2013: The exhibition of apartheid era artwork repatriated by the Ifa Lethu Foundation is on the road again. After its successful showing last year as part of the South African cultural programme of the Olympics, it is now travelling to Nantes in France as part of the SA Season in France. The SA/France Seasons project is the result of a bilateral agreement which was signed by Presidents Zuma and Sarkozy in order to cement relationships between the two countries. This year marks the presence of South African art and culture in France..

The Ifa Lethu Collection contains artworks made during the apartheid era when art by black artists was not considered important or worthy of collecting by South African institutions. It was left to foreigners residing in the country to see its value and, as a gesture of goodwill and solidarity, many of these people have donated their works back to South Africa where they can take their rightful place as artistic heritage.

Appropriately, the remarkable journey of the artworks continues as they spread awareness of human rights far and wide.

The exhibition will be shown in two venues at Nantes, France. Nantes is the 6th largest city in France - historically significant as over 40 percent of the French slave trade was carried out via the city, with around 450 000 men, women and children abducted from Africa to America. A recent memorial to this dark side of history has been built and it is appropriate that while we remember apartheid through the artworks in the exhibition we, like Nantes, celebrate our progress to freedom.

The timing of the exhibition has also been planned to coincide with the 5th World Forum on Human Rights in Nantes, entitled “Sustainable Development-Human Rights: A Common Struggle”. The headquarters of the Forum are in Nantes.

“Given the Human rights theme of the exhibition, it was considered appropriate by the organisers to invite our exhibition to be viewed by the delegates. As such, Ifa Lethu is very pleased to be playing a role in these critical debates on Human rights,” says Ifa Lethu CEO Dr Narissa Ramdhani.

Nantes is also the Green City of Europe for 2013 and the venue of the National School of Architecture, where the exhibition will be shown, is a world renowned example of green architecture.

The exhibition is also being shown at La Maison de l’Avocat - another new building which houses legal professionals who render service to the community, and which has its own art gallery.

In addition Nantes and Durban are sister cities and the exhibition has received financial support from the eThekweni and Nantes Municipalities in addition to that given by the French Seasons Project.

The exhibition will be opened on Africa Day – 25th May and will continue until 17th June.

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 (Acting) by Dr Anna Mokgokong.

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