LAKRITZ

THE MAGAZINE

Issue #15 2026

Art by Claudine Hauke



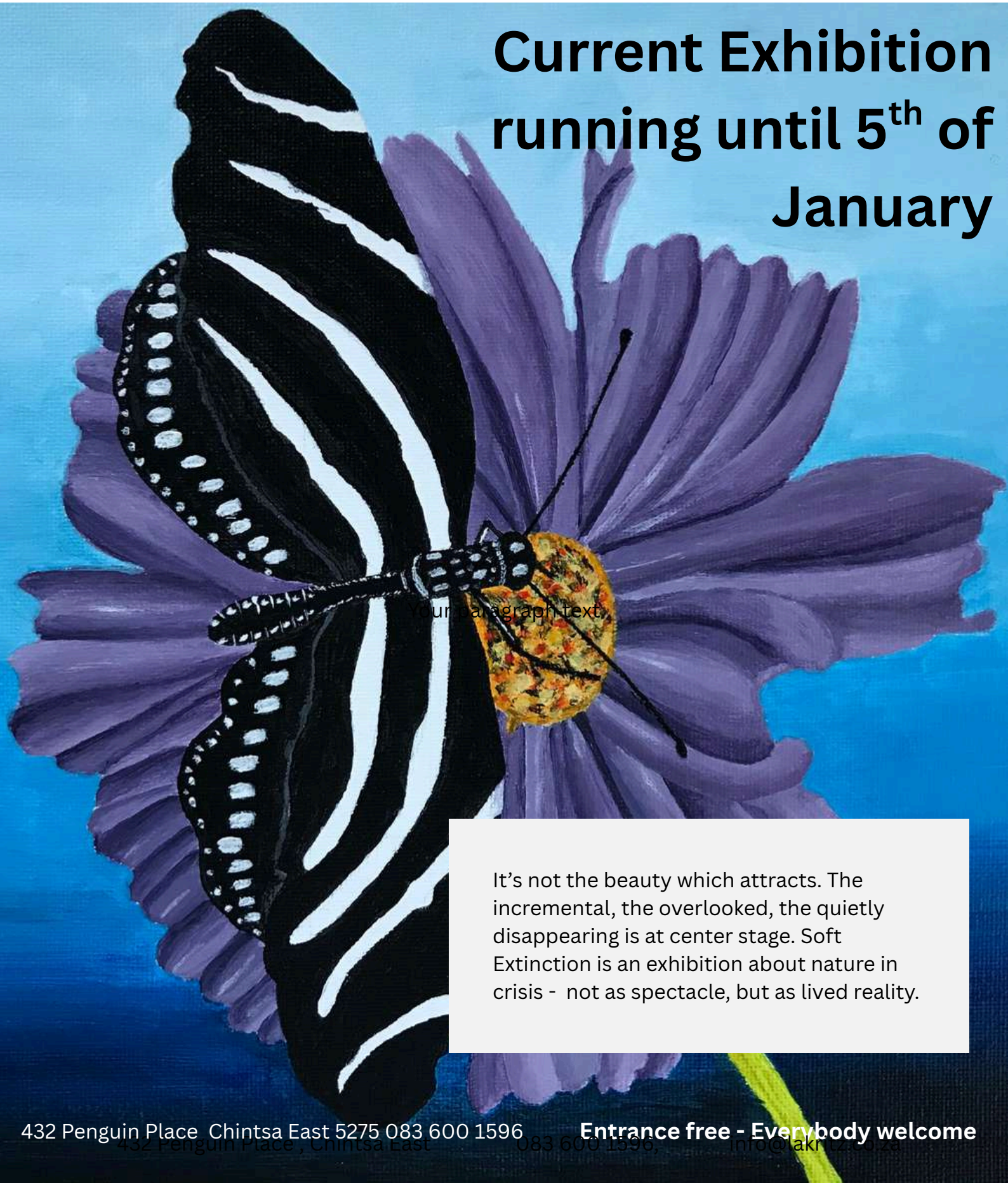
Soft Extinction
@ Lakritz
A PLACE OF SEEING
A Group Exhibition running until January 5th 2027
We have grown accustomed to the slow disappearance. Nature it not fragile. It is broken. There is a difference!

A Dialogue in ART

Bringing Global Voices to local ground and local stories to the world

Soft Extinction

@ Lakritz A Place of Seeing



Current Exhibition running until 5th of January

Your paragraph text

It’s not the beauty which attracts. The incremental, the overlooked, the quietly disappearing is at center stage. Soft Extinction is an exhibition about nature in crisis - not as spectacle, but as lived reality.

432 Penguin Place Chintsa East 5275 083 600 1596

Entrance free - Everybody welcome

From the
Editor's Desk:

WE'RE NOT only A GALLERY ANYMORE.
December. School holidays. Christmas. New Year. Six months of Lakritz ahead.
And somewhere along the way, Lakritz changed.
I started the gallery because I thought it would be lovely to have a contemporary art space in Chintsa East — something for visitors to discover, something a little unexpected in a small coastal village. Well. That plan didn't quite survive.
Lakritz has grown into something much bigger.
We are moving away from the traditional gallery model — the white walls, the opening, the exhibition, the closing, goodbye. Instead, we are building a Place of Seeing. A place of experiencing. A place where things happen.
Art, yes. But also nature. Conversation. Writing. Music. Learning. Food. Ideas. Restoration. Experimentation.
In the last months of 2026, we also welcomed a few artists into partnership with Lakritz. That is an exciting new chapter for us — building relationships that go beyond simply showing work on a wall.
And then there is 2027.
We have put together a programme that is deliberately different: exhibitions, long-table conversations, walks, the Lakritz Forum, children's programmes, experimental projects, our Material Lab, Forest of Return and plenty of reasons to come back.
We are looking for our people.
Artists. Writers. Nature lovers. Curious minds. Thinkers. People who believe that art education matters. People who understand that restoring nature is not a nice extra, but something we urgently need to do. Perhaps that sounds ambitious. Good.

I think it is time to be ambitious.
Lakritz was never meant to become another gallery competing for attention in a crowded art world. It is becoming a small, slightly wild, very independent place where art and action can meet.
And perhaps that is what I was looking for all along.
So, as the year comes to an end, I invite you to step inside — not just to look at what is hanging on the walls, but to see what is happening around them.
Welcome to the next chapter of Lakritz.
See you in 2027.



Claudine Hauke
Editor,/ Founder,

January 2027

@ Lakritz



16 JANUARY · 10:00 AM

WHO BELONGS?

Group Exhibition Opening

Who belongs — to a place, a community, a landscape, a history?

The first exhibition of 2027 opens with a short reading exploring the theme of belonging and the questions raised by the participating artists.

432 Penguin Place Chintsa East 5275 083 600 1596

Program 2027

Get involved in our future - Great for the whole Family

@ Lakritz

16 JANUARY · 10:00 AM

WHO BELONGS?
Group Exhibition Opening
Who belongs — to a place, a community, a landscape, a history?
Lakritz opens its 2027 programme with Who Belongs?, a group exhibition exploring belonging, displacement, identity and our relationship with the places we call home.
The opening includes a short reading by Silke Heiss, drawing on her family's immigration from Germany to apartheid South Africa — a personal history that opens into wider questions of belonging, movement and shifting identities.
A story rooted in the past, yet resonating with the migration and movement of our contemporary world.

6 FEBRUARY · 11:30 AM

LONGTABLE LUNCH
Conversation: The Courage to Change
An informal Longtable gathering bringing food, art and conversation together around a question that concerns us all.
R150 per person
Drinks may be brought along.

20 March · 10.00 AM

GROUNDED SENSING
Professor Zethu Matebeni
Reading & Conversation
Belonging is more than having a place.
Perhaps it is something we learn to sense.
Zethu Matebeni's Grounded Sensing invites us to listen to place through the body, memory, history and relationship — and to consider what the ground beneath us might hold.
Booking Essential Ticket R 150

9–11 APRIL

LAKRITZ FORUM
ART · NATURE · HUMAN CONNECTION
A three-day gathering of conversations, walks, artistic encounters and shared experiences exploring the relationship between people, place and the natural world.
For the full program of our first forum please contact us. info@lakritz.co.za

8 MAY

Poetry morning with Silke Heiss
Poems from cycle from Rochelle Nembhardt's performance.
Work with clay as sensual practice or dance and music, or .....

19 JUNE · 10:00 AM

THE WEIGHT OF NOW
Group Exhibition Opening
Living in uncertain times.
An exhibition looking at the experience of living in a world marked by uncertainty, change and accelerated transformation.
Entrance free · Everybody welcome

JULY · CHINTSA FESTIVAL 2027 2–11 JULY

LAKRITZ — ART, NATURE & CONVERSATION
Lakritz Gallery & Material Lab
Open daily · 2–11 July
10:00–12:00 & 14:00–16:00

PROGRAM

2 JULY · Story Reading for Children with Silke Heiss
3 JULY · Hiku Hike with Silke Heiss · Yekelela
4 JULY · Botanical Walk/Talk & Tree Planting with Martin Kunhardt · Yekelela
5 JULY · Creative Writing Workshop with Silke Heiss · Lakritz
6–9 JULY · Gallery & Material Lab Open
10 JULY · Ceramic in Harmony with Nature with Sonwabiso Ngcai · Lakritz Material Lab
11 JULY · Gallery & Material Lab Open
For times, prices and the full programme, please contact Lakritz: 083 600 1596

L a k r i t z

THE MAGAZINE

CALLING THE UNUSUAL.

Artists. Writers. Poets. Musicians. Performers. Storytellers. Trouble-makers. Thinkers.

We're building something at Lakritz.
Not another gallery.
Not another magazine.
Not another place where work sits quietly on a wall.
We want voices. Ideas. Experiments. Stories.
Things that make people stop.
Send us your art. Your words. Your music.
Your performance. Your strange idea. Your extraordinary story.
Maybe it belongs in the next issue.
Maybe it leads somewhere else.
We're looking all year round. No deadline. No formula.
Just send us a little bit of who you are and what you do.
PORTFOLIO • STORY • PROPOSAL
📩 info@lakritz.co.za
We'll be in touch.
Come be part of what's happening at Lakritz.
LAKRITZ THE MAGAZINE
Art. Nature. Culture. Ideas.

Lend me a Hand, I'm Planting a Tree

A Heartfelt Thank You to Angie de Wet

The Lakritz Art Gallery exhibition titled, ‘Soft Extinction’ calls into discourse a planet in dire need of attention and relationship. Claudine Hauke has curated this exhibition with the intention of giving voice to the natural world, which speaks in a symphony of languages aside from ‘human’. It would appear that because mankind doesn't have a translator for the ocean or the rivers or the birds or the little insects or the trees, people assume that these living bodies have nothing to say about the devastation that humans have wielded upon practically every other species and their habitats. Even if we did have a translator for the great cosmic force embodying life in its bountiful myriads of spectacular forms, we quite probably wouldn't listen - unless the content of the material could somehow be monetized, of course. Because for some unfathomable reason, the human race, generally speaking, simply doesn't seem to have the capacity to value anything without a price tag.



Where we become Forest

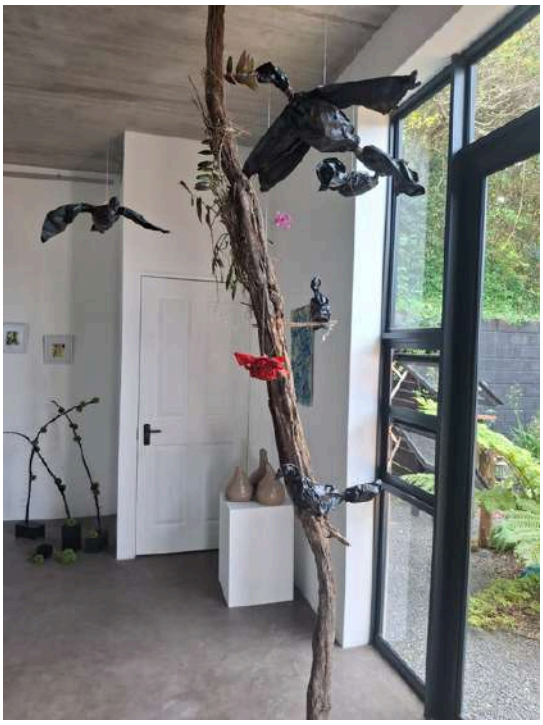
‘How much does it cost?’ appears to be the beginning and the end of the measurement of a thing’s worth. So while entire species are eradicated daily for the sake of human comfort, us humans just keep checking our bank balances so as to make sure that we’re still on the safe side of lucky. A number of the works in ‘Soft Extinction’ have attempted to visually vocalise the artists’ perceptions of nature’s perspective of the precarious times that we are living in. The art becomes brave articulations of the unspeakable. And so it was that the exhibition opening commenced with a story read by Claudine Hauke from the corner of the Lakritz Gallery living room and alongside the unused fireplace, called, ‘If Trees could Talk'.

‘THERE IS NO PLANET B’ screams from a signboard in the image on the television screen where Deon Robbertze’s video artwork entitled, ‘The Change Manifesto’ is displayed. The manifesto reads, ‘For the first time in the history of mankind we have a common cause to fight for - a cause that we can all believe in. A cause that supersedes race, colour, creed, religion, nation, status, political beliefs or ego. A cause to fight for our collective survival on the only planet we call home. Our collective goal is to ensure a world that can deliver ENOUGH. FOR ALL. FOREVER.’ By ‘all’ I trust in good faith that the artist is not referring only to us humans. A worthy manifesto indeed. But it includes that very challenging word, ‘Change’. What could that imply? Is it even possible?

Perhaps ‘Change’ can start with choices and initiatives that are considerate of our home-planet at large, and the interdependence of the various life forms inhabiting Earth, all of which are deserving of preservation. ‘The Forest of Return’ project is one such initiative whereby with the sale of each work in the series, Claudine Hauke contributes the planting of two trees to a reforestation project facilitated by her life partner, horticulturist, eco-system cultivator and nature guru, Martin Kunhardt. ‘The Forest of Return’ series is comprised of ten visually dynamic pieces that are reconstructions (collage style) of several Hauke’s bright and strong abstract paintings. Neatly arranged in white frames, Hauke asks little for these attractive small-scale pieces, especially considering the skillful interplay of the art elements that give life to these aesthetically exciting works, and not to mention the priceless intrinsic value of the donations to the reforestation cause.



By Deon Robberze

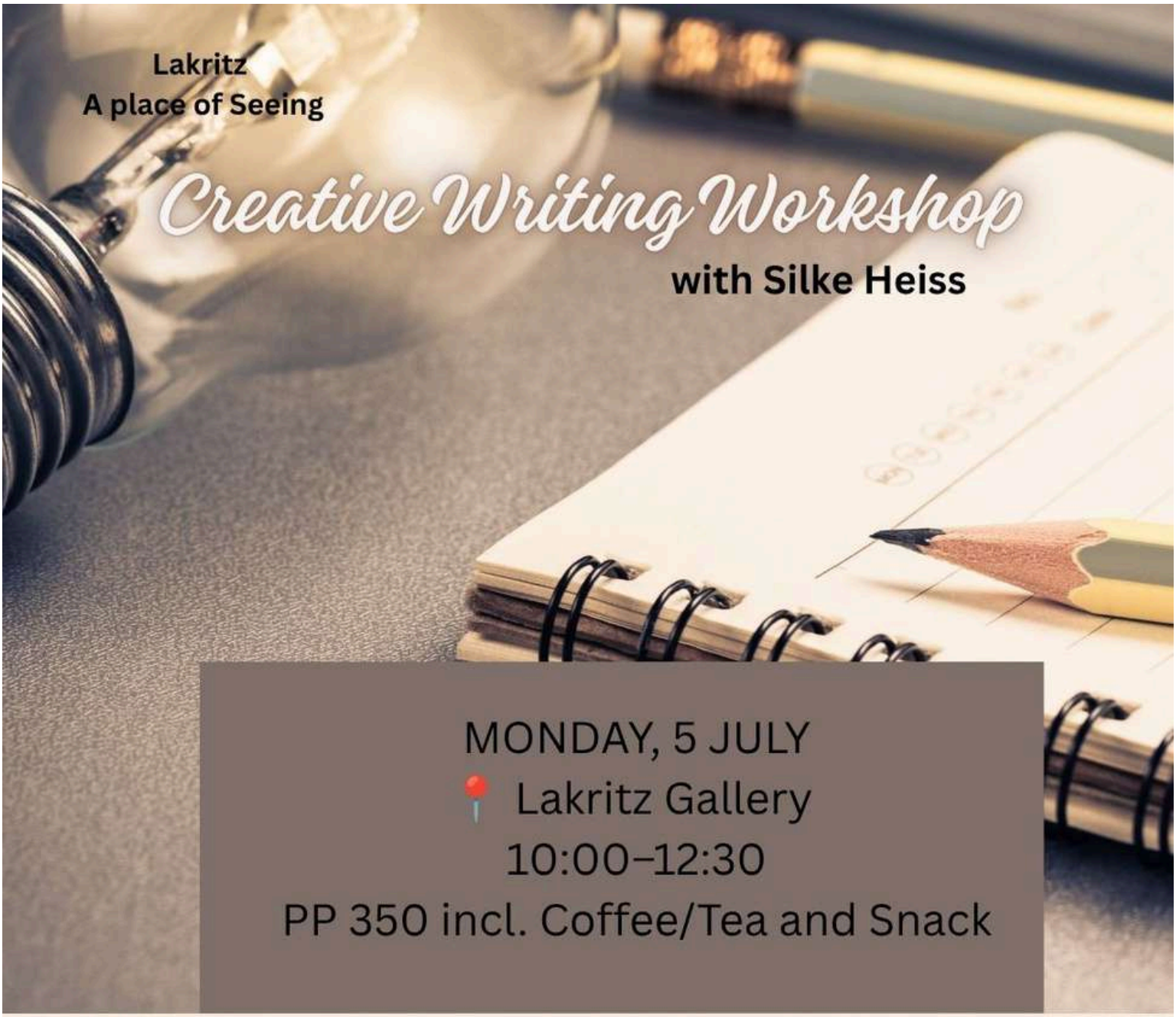



by Fran Stassen


Claudine Hauke

My personal favourite work of this exhibition is displayed alongside the ‘The Forest of Return’ series, and is entitled, ‘Where We Become Forest’ (120 by 140cm, oil on canvas). It is a large-scale predominantly green abstract painting with palpable palette knife markings that captivate the eye. I really love this work. It is intended to echo the interconnectedness of all life. If the forest ends, where do we begin? The glimmering golden-yellow hues peeping through the canvas reminds one of the enchantments of being enveloped in a forest landscape, immersed in the sunlit beauty of trees and the delightful sound of bird-song. Oh how it must be our solemn duty as humans to protect these natural sanctuaries. With ongoing brutal deforestation all over the planet, we must ask ourselves what can be done to issue some ‘change’. To lean towards preservation and renewal. Is it possible? Claudine Hauke believes “there is still time”. I am more sceptical. Let us hope that it can start with something as simple as paying respect to the natural world with the sacred act of planting a tree. And let us duly consider how else we can appreciate, commune with, and support this most precious planet on which we live and have our being.


By Elgin Rust



A creative writing session exploring observation, place, memory and imagination. Participants are invited to use the surrounding landscape and exhibition and their own experiences as starting points for writing.

432 Penguin Place, Chintsa East, 083 600 1596



Linde Kriel



Lebo Thoka



Deon Robberze



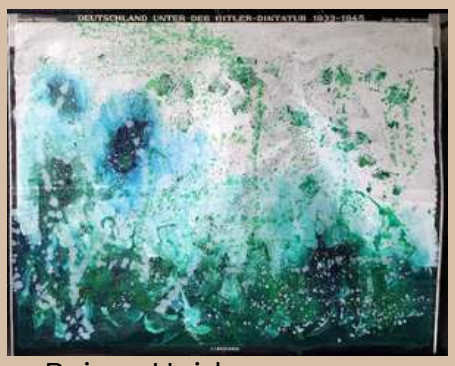
NIGEL KANYUNGWE



Henry Kiyingi



ROSE AKECH AGWA-EJON



Reiner Heidorn



Sabrina Coppola



Chris Thomas



Charmaine Haines

George Mahenga

Harare, Zimbabwe

Turning the discarded into memory

There is something quietly powerful about the materials George Mahenga chooses to work with.

Old Zimbabwean banknotes. Recharge cards. Matchboxes. Packaging. Cardboard. Bottle tops. Gourds. Everyday things that have served their purpose and would normally disappear into the bin.

George, a mixed-media artist from Harare, sees something else in them. He sees history.

His work begins with the question of what happens when something we consider worthless is given another life. Through cutting, layering, assembling and reconstructing, George transforms discarded objects into contemporary artworks that carry traces of where they have been and what they have witnessed.

Perhaps nowhere is this more powerful than in his use of decommissioned Zimbabwean currency. A banknote is more than a piece of paper. It has passed through thousands of hands. It belongs to a particular moment in a country's history. In Zimbabwe, the notes also carry the memory of one of the most extraordinary periods of economic change and hyperinflation.



Billions to Beauty: From Worthless to Witness
Year: 2025
Medium: Decommissioned Zimbabwean dollars (2007–2009), cardboard, mixed media
Size: 142 × 111 cm



The Price of the Harvest
Year: 2018
Medium: Decommissioned Zimbabwean dollars, cardboard, mixed media
Size: 65 × 80 cm

Once stripped of their monetary value, these notes become something different in George's hands: fragments of collective memory.
The same is true of the packaging, recharge cards and other objects he collects. They speak of consumption, communication, technology, trade and everyday life. They tell stories about how people live, what they buy, how they connect and how cultures meet.
For George, upcycling is therefore much more than a technique. It is an act of recovery. He recovers materials, but also the stories attached to them. He reminds us that value is not fixed. Something can lose its economic value and, at the same time, gain cultural, historical or emotional significance.
This is what makes his work so compelling. The materials are familiar, but once reconstructed, we are forced to look at them differently.
George does not simply collect discarded objects.

He collects stories—and gives them somewhere new to live.



Human Zoo: Generations in Cages Year: 2026 Medium: Discarded matchboxes, used recharge cards, cardboard, mixed media Size: 130 × 89 cm

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

George Mahenga is a Zimbabwean mixed-media artist, educator and upcycling practitioner based in Harare. His practice transforms discarded and obsolete materials into contemporary artworks exploring history, identity, economic memory, environmental consciousness, cultural exchange and African social experience.

Mahenga works with decommissioned Zimbabwean currency, corporate packaging, recharge cards, matchboxes, cardboard, bottle caps, gourds and other found objects. Through cutting, layering and reconstruction, he gives materials that have lost their original purpose a new visual and cultural significance.

A central element of his practice is his use of decommissioned Zimbabwean banknotes from the country's hyperinflationary period. He uses them to explore the relationship between money, memory and value, transforming currency from an instrument of exchange into a carrier of history.

His wider upcycling practice reflects on consumer culture, sustainability and everyday Zimbabwean life, while drawing on storytelling rooted in African experience. Alongside his studio practice, Mahenga works as an Art and Design educator, encouraging experimentation, resourcefulness and creative problem-solving.

Based in Harare, Mahenga continues to develop a distinctive practice in which waste becomes material, material becomes memory, and memory becomes art.



A Friendship Reimagined
Year: 2024
Medium: Discarded Korean food packaging, cardboard, mixed media
Size: 100 × 100 cm

Deon Robbertze South Africa

THE CHANGE AGENT

For more than 30 years, Deon Robbertze has observed, absorbed and questioned the world around him. His starting point has always been creativity, but over time his understanding of what creativity can do has changed profoundly.

A photographer, creative director, commercials director, strategist, communicator, publisher, sustainability advocate, earthkeeper, regenerative entrepreneur and change agent, Deon has spent his career exploring the powerful relationship between ideas, people and behaviour.

His early career was rooted in advertising, where he worked with agencies including Saatchi Africa, Zoom Advertising and Ogilvy Earth, and with brands such as Swatch, Guinness and Michael Power. It was there that he learned the enormous influence of storytelling and imagery—and how creativity can shape culture and human behaviour.

But eventually, he began asking a different question:

What if creativity could be used not to make us consume more, but to help us live differently?

That question became a turning point.

Deon moved increasingly into sustainability, climate action and regenerative thinking. Through The Change Agent Collective, he worked at the intersection of business, communication and environmental responsibility, helping organisations reconsider their impact and their potential to create positive change.

Today, this thinking finds a tangible expression in his work with CRDC South Africa and its RESIN8™ technology, which transforms difficult-to-recycle plastic into a valuable material for construction. What was once considered waste becomes infrastructure. An environmental problem becomes a resource. A linear system begins to look circular.

For Deon, however, the circular economy is only part of the story. Regeneration asks a bigger question:

How do we create systems that restore rather than simply reduce harm?

It is a question that connects business with communities, industry with ecosystems and economic opportunity with environmental responsibility.

His belief is that Africa has no obligation to simply repeat yesterday's economic model. Instead, it has the opportunity to help imagine what comes next.

At the heart of Deon's thinking is a simple but powerful idea: we are not separate from nature. We are part of it.

This perspective has shaped not only his environmental work, but also the way he sees and photographs the world. Observation becomes a form of responsibility. Looking becomes a way of understanding. And creativity becomes a tool for change.

His journey has taken him from advertising to climate action, from sustainability to circularity, and increasingly towards regeneration.

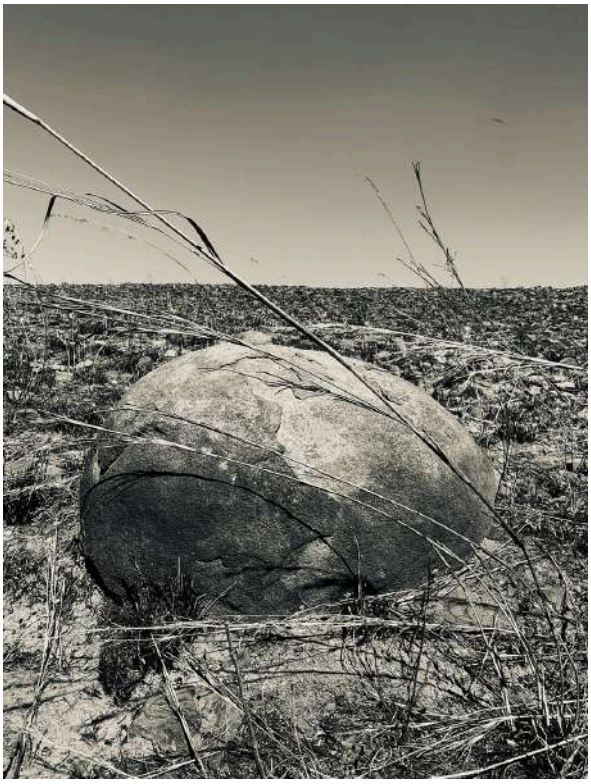
From selling products to changing systems.

And perhaps that is what being a change agent really means—not having all the answers, but being willing to ask better questions.

LAKRITZ & DEON ROBBERTZE

PARTNER ARTIST
We are very pleased to welcome Deon Robbertze as a permanent Partner Artist of Lakritz Gallery.
A highly regarded photographer, creative thinker and environmental advocate, Deon brings a perspective to Lakritz that reaches far beyond the gallery walls. His work asks us to look more carefully at the world we inhabit—and at our place within it.
For this issue, we are showing work from his current installation at Lakritz, where photography becomes part of a larger conversation about nature, responsibility and change.
Deon's relationship with Lakritz is also about action. As a supporter of Forest of Return, he is joining a growing community of artists, thinkers and changemakers who believe that creativity can contribute to a more regenerative future.
We see the partnership as a natural meeting point: art, observation, nature and action.
Welcome to Lakritz, Deon.





THE CHANGE MANIFESTO
For the first time in the history of mankind, we have a common cause to fight for.
A cause that transcends race, colour, creed, religion, nation, status, political belief or ego.
A cause that asks us to look beyond ourselves and recognise our shared responsibility for the only planet we all call home.
The challenge is no longer simply to reduce the damage we cause.
It is to rethink how we live, how we consume, how we build, how we work—and how we create.
To move from extraction towards regeneration.
From waste towards resource.
From consumption towards responsibility.
From sustainability towards restoration.
Our collective goal is simple:
ENOUGH.
FOR ALL.
FOREVER.

To see the trailer



Linde Kriel

South Africa

WHAT REMAINS AFTER THE FIRE

There is something powerful about an apple after it has passed through fire.
Once associated with temptation, desire and the forbidden, the apple becomes something entirely different in the hands of South African artist Linde Kriel. Through pyrolysis, burning and transformation, it is reduced to charcoal and elemental matter—but it does not disappear.
And that idea sits at the heart of Kriel's work.



Unspoken Sacrifice, pyrolised apples and cloth 550 x 1450 x 450 mm

His practice explores the intersection of identity, desire and religious expectation, particularly the sacrifices demanded of queer people by institutions and belief systems that ask them to suppress parts of themselves in the name of purity.
The materials he chooses are never simply materials. Organic matter, apple charcoal, handmade paper, scrolls, drawings, sculptures and photographs become part of a visual language that recalls sacred objects, ancient texts, altars and reliquaries.



Sinful Sketch I apple charcoal on paper



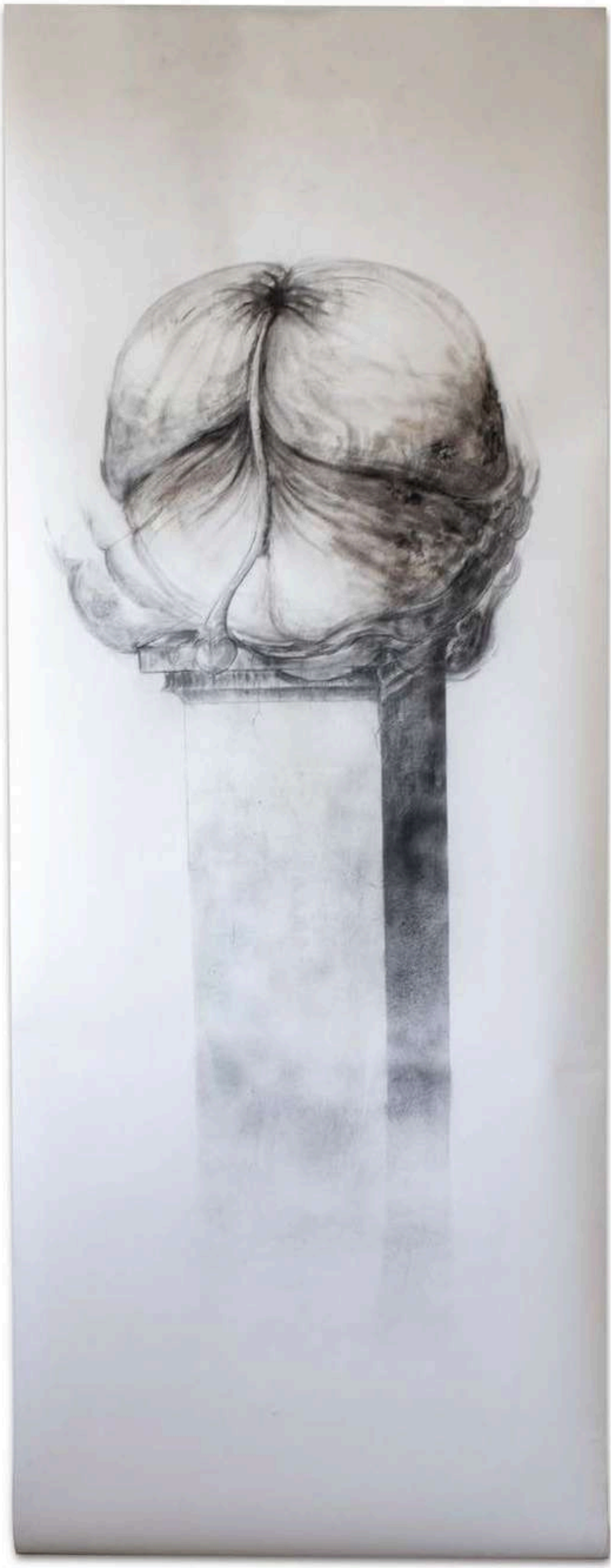
The Cost of Purification, apple charcoal, pyrolised apples and tins on paper

But Kriel rewrites that language.

Rather than using ritual to condemn desire, he uses it to question the systems that have historically attempted to control it. Fire becomes both destruction and transformation. The charred apple becomes a record of what has been subjected to pressure—and what has survived.
Something remains.
This is what makes the work so compelling. Kriel is not interested in destruction as an ending. He is interested in what survives it: traces, fragments, memory and identity.
His process is deeply physical. Materials are burned, pressed, made, drawn, assembled and transformed. The making itself becomes almost ritualistic, mirroring the questions within the work: What are we asked to sacrifice? What are we expected to remove from ourselves? And what happens when we refuse?
Kriel's broader practice moves between drawing, installation, sculpture, papermaking and photography. His current research also considers water, grief and the ritual dimensions of making, extending his interest in how materials can carry emotional and cultural meaning.
Based in Bloemfontein, Kriel is currently completing a Master of Fine Arts at the University of the Free State, following a BA Fine Arts completed with distinction. His work has been exhibited at institutions and platforms including the Pretoria Art Museum, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Turbine Art Fair and Google Offices Johannesburg. He has been a multiple Sasol New Signatures finalist and a Phatsoane Henney New Breed award winner, and has presented his research internationally.
Beyond his own practice, Kriel is also committed to creating opportunities for others. As co-founder of Makwande Art Prints, he supports emerging student artists, while his curatorial work—including Embodied Reflections—extends his engagement with the wider artistic community.
But perhaps the most important thing to understand about Kriel's work is this:
The fire does not have the final word.
What appears destroyed can become material. What is reduced can become something new. What is asked to disappear can leave a trace.
And sometimes, that trace is enough to say:
I was here. I remain.



Sinful Sketch III apple charcoal on paper and used objects



Sinful Sketch II apple charcoal on paper

Henry Kiyingi Uganda

THE STORIES WE CARRY

Some artists begin with a blank canvas.
Henry Kiyingi often begins somewhere else—with an object that has already lived a life.
A jerrycan. A piece of bark cloth. A discarded sheet of plastic. Jute. Metal. Materials that belong to the everyday landscape of Uganda and are so familiar that we can easily stop seeing them.
Kiyingi makes us look again.
Born in 1996 and based in Kampala, the multidisciplinary artist works across painting, textiles, sculpture and recycled materials. His practice is rooted in the places, people and experiences around him, exploring identity, memory, culture and time through objects that already carry their own histories.
Perhaps the most recognisable of these is the jerrycan.
For Kiyingi, it is not simply a container. It becomes an archive.



Olubereberye
Medium: Bark cloth, sisal, jute and found Pastic , Size: 128 cm by 108cm , Year:2025



Mukimugunyu
Medium: Bark cloth, sisal and jute , Size: 170 cm by 200cm , Year:2026

It speaks of water, work, movement, necessity and survival. It belongs to the hands of people who carry, collect, transport and provide. It is an object connected to labour and everyday life, but also to generations of shared experience.
In Kiyingi's hands, the ordinary becomes monumental.
This is one of the things that makes his work so captivating. Nothing feels detached from life. His materials belong to the world we know, yet through colour, texture, layering and composition they are transformed into something unexpected.
Bark cloth brings another layer to the work. A material deeply connected to Ugandan cultural heritage, it becomes more than a surface. Kiyingi treats it as a carrier of knowledge and memory, placing an ancient material tradition into conversation with contemporary painting and sculpture.
Then there is the discarded.
Recycled plastics and metals enter the work not simply as a statement about waste, but as evidence of the world we have created. They carry the marks of consumption and modern life while offering, through art, the possibility of transformation.
Nothing is quite what it first appears to be.
Even language becomes part of this transformation.
Kiyingi's use of Luganda titles anchors his works firmly within his cultural context. The language carries memory, humour, wisdom and identity, giving each work another doorway into its story. Yet the



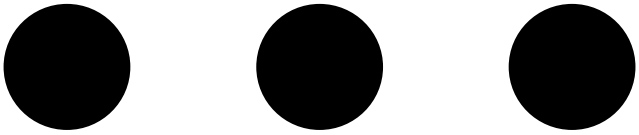
Ebuziba Medium: Bark cloth, sisal, jute and found Pastic , Size: 107cm by 221cm , Year:2025





Omwami N’Omukyala
Medium: Bark cloth, sisal, jute and found Pastic , Size: 44 cm by 170cm , Year:2025

experiences behind those titles—belonging, family, love, justice, power, responsibility and human connection—travel far beyond Uganda.
There is something generous in this.
Kiyingi does not ask us to understand Uganda from the outside. Instead, he invites us into a world through the things that people live with, carry, remember and pass on.
His recent solo exhibition, Engendo (Journeys), brought this material language into sharp focus, with works built around bark cloth, sisal and recycled plastics and the jerrycan elevated from everyday object to archival symbol. His participation in exhibitions including Surfaces 3 at Afriart Gallery and the international Art Session in Russia has also placed his work within a wider contemporary art conversation.
Alongside his studio practice, Kiyingi is committed to art education and environmental awareness, using community workshops to encourage creative recycling and social dialogue.
And perhaps this is where his work connects so naturally with Lakritz.
We are surrounded by objects that we have stopped noticing. We throw things away. We move on. We forget.
Kiyingi asks us to pause.
To look at the object.
To consider the hands that have held it, the journeys it has made, the stories it might contain.



And then he gives it another life.
A jerrycan becomes memory.
Waste becomes material.
Material becomes art.
And suddenly, the ordinary has something to say.

The Material Bark Cloth

Bark cloth, known as Olubugo in Uganda, is one of Uganda's oldest and most significantcultural textiles.



Before it becomes art, it is a tree.
Deep in the cultural history of Uganda is a material made not by weaving, spinning or industrial production, but by transforming the living bark of a tree.
Known as bark cloth, or olubugo, the material is traditionally made from the inner bark of the Mutuba tree (Ficus natalensis). The process is labour-intensive and deeply connected to the knowledge of the communities who have practised it for generations.
The bark is carefully harvested from the tree and then repeatedly beaten with wooden mallets. удар after удар, the fibres soften, spread and expand until the rough inner bark becomes a broad, flexible sheet.
Tree becomes cloth.

It is a remarkable transformation.
The material carries the marks of its making—its irregular surface, earthy colour and organic texture reminding us that it has not been manufactured into existence. It has been coaxed into another form.
Bark cloth has long held cultural significance in Uganda, where it has been used for clothing, ceremonial purposes and other forms of cultural expression. The traditional practice of barkcloth making was inscribed by UNESCO on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008.
Today, artists such as Henry Kiyingi bring this traditional material into contemporary practice.
And perhaps that is where bark cloth becomes particularly interesting to us at Lakritz.



- **A tree becomes cloth.**
- **Cloth becomes material.**
- **Material becomes memory.**
- **And memory becomes art.**

It sits somewhere between nature and culture.
It begins as part of a living ecosystem, yet becomes something shaped by human hands. It carries knowledge from one generation to another, while remaining open to new interpretations.
In Kiyingi's work, bark cloth becomes a surface for stories about identity, memory, heritage and belonging. Combined with recycled plastics, metals, jute and other everyday materials, it creates a conversation between the old and the new, the natural and the discarded.
There is something quietly radical about this.
In a world increasingly dominated by synthetic materials and disposable objects, bark cloth reminds us that we can make differently.
That materials have histories.
That making can be slow.
That an object can carry the memory of where it came from.
Perhaps this is what makes bark cloth more than a material.
It is a connection between tree and human hand.
Between tradition and contemporary expression.
Between the landscape and the stories we tell about ourselves.
And when it enters an artwork, the tree is still there—in the fibres, in the texture, in the memory of its transformation.



Arinitwe Peter Uganda

Liberating What Is Trapped

“I see my role as liberating the forms that are trapped in the fabric, the memories and the ancestries.”
For Ugandan visual artist and “artivist” Arinitwe Peter, art is a way of remembering, restoring and reconnecting. His work grows from a complex relationship with ancestry, borrowed culture, displacement and the natural world. Descended from forefathers who escaped genocide in Rwanda and found refuge among the Abakiga of Uganda, Peter was raised within a culture that was not originally his own, but which became deeply woven into his identity.
He describes this as being raised within a beautiful, borrowed Abakiga culture — and with that inheritance comes a sense of responsibility. His work seeks to bring cultures that are slowly eroding into public consciousness, keeping stories, practices and ancestral knowledge alive. At the heart of this is a belief that cultural memory can offer younger generations not only a connection to where they come from, but also a source of healing and hope.





For the Bakiga as a nation, design is a mirror. Their hand-woven baskets aren't just objects; they are ecological reflections’
As the weaver bird weaves his nest and so we do weave our baskets with reciprocated nature technics,materials with tradition at heart.



The Abakiga Dance — owekweceera

Peter's childhood and youth were shaped by the contrast between vibrant cultural traditions and life in the slums of Kampala. His work therefore does not romanticise heritage. It speaks about resilience, inequality, environmental destruction and the pressures facing young people today. Culture and nature are inseparable within this practice: both are living systems that can be damaged, forgotten and displaced, but also restored.

He primarily works with barkcloth harvested from the indigenous Mutuba tree and sisal reeds, combining these traditional materials with reclaimed objects and imported materials. The juxtaposition is deliberate. Indigenous craftsmanship meets the traces of globalisation, consumption and environmental change. Fabric becomes more than a surface: it becomes a record of what has been lost, carried forward and transformed.

His process itself is understood as a cycle of restoration: Tuula & Sala, sitting with community to identify and cut away what no longer serves; Ntuga, stitching together stories of loss and reclamation; and Cusa, embellishing the work with reclaimed and foreign materials to give them new life and meaning.



GDP
We've been blinded by an education system that trains us to look away from our own soil. For decades, we've worn the virtual reality headset of academic theory, studying how to import finished goods while exporting our raw wealth, from coffee to gold. It's time
to go back to our own gardens, and stop sending our raw potential abroad, only to buy offcuts back in a j



Stitching becomes both a physical and philosophical act. It repairs while leaving the evidence of rupture visible. It connects fragments without pretending that the original state can simply be recovered. Through this process, Peter reimagines identity and ancestry as something living — something that can be carried forward, questioned and renewed.

This relationship between culture, identity and contemporary life is particularly visible in his installation Free Fall, presented at Alliance Française in Kampala in January 2024. Falling mannequins move through the exhibition space, their beige bodies dressed in barkcloth rather than imported fabric. For Peter, the falling bodies represent borrowed cultures and the possibility of reclaiming roots and identity.

Imported beads, woven into colourful rings, reference materials that have entered local fashion and contributed to changing ideas about appearance, self-image and identity. Patches of fabric mark transitions — the meeting, collision and coexistence of different societies over time.



Installation Free Fall, presented at Alliance Française in Kampala in January 2024.





Just like the flimsy body of a matchstick,and so is the body of the defender.







one trees makes millions of matchsticks , but it takes only one lite matchstick to burn a forest.











The earth carries the names of those who stood as roots against the axe. their voices,through the wind,the rivers and the wounded soil.

ROSE AKECH AGWA-EJON

South Africa

BETWEEN ROOTS AND HARBINGERS

Somewhere between where we come from and where we are going lies the question of belonging. For South African artist Rose Akech Agwa-Ejon, that space in between has become fertile ground for making.

Her work explores identity, memory and place—not as fixed ideas, but as things continually shaped by experience, movement, family history and the environments we inhabit. Working across sculpture, photography, printmaking and handmade paper, Rose brings together natural and found materials to create works that feel simultaneously fragile and resilient.

In her hands, grass, maize husks, wood shavings, paper, maps and pigments become carriers of memory.

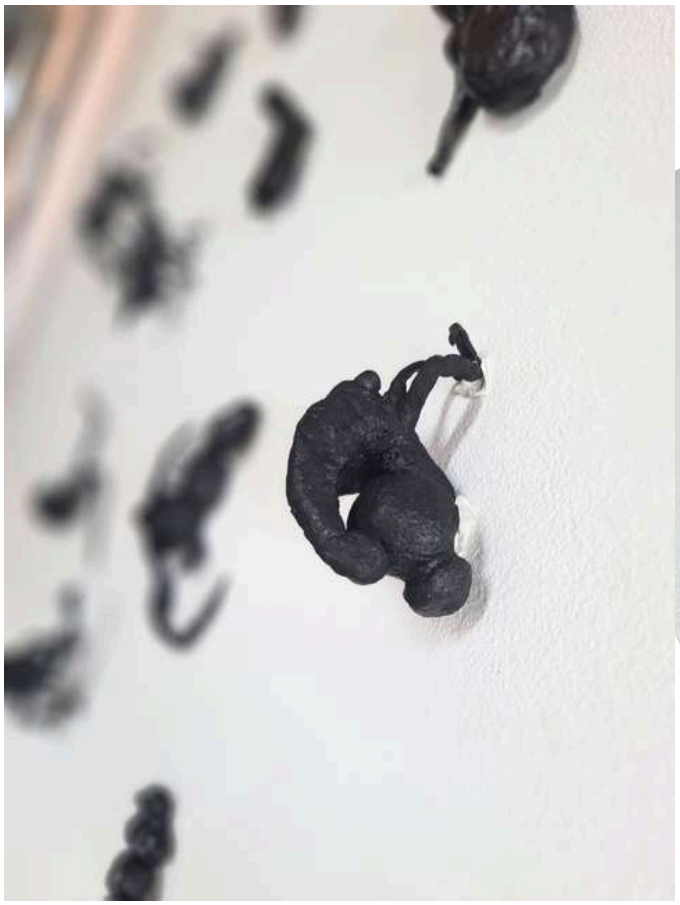
Her work Harbingers, currently part of the Lakritz exhibition Soft Extinction, introduces sixty small, dream-like creatures. They are strange, almost otherworldly forms—neither entirely familiar nor entirely unknown. Rose describes them as harbingers of unforeseen events, belonging equally to memories of the past and possibilities of the future.

There is something unsettling about them, but also something deeply alive.

They seem to be waiting.

Watching.

Perhaps warning us.





The creatures connect to a broader interest in Rose's practice: the way we respond to uncertainty, pressure and transformation. In Resilience Born from Struggle, sculptural insects move towards a central human figure, embodying the layered challenges of growth and transformation. In Grassbound: Stories of Survival, figures constructed from grass tape speak of adaptation and resilience under external pressure.

But alongside these questions of survival sits another, quieter concern:

Where do we belong?

Rose was born and raised in South Africa to parents from different countries. Her experience of growing up between cultures informs much of her thinking about identity—not as something that requires a single answer, but as something that can exist in the space between different histories and places.

In Rooted Here, handmade paper embedded with maize husks and wood shavings becomes a landscape where memory, land and cultural heritage intersect. Rather than choosing between inherited identities, Rose embraces the complexity of belonging to more than one story.

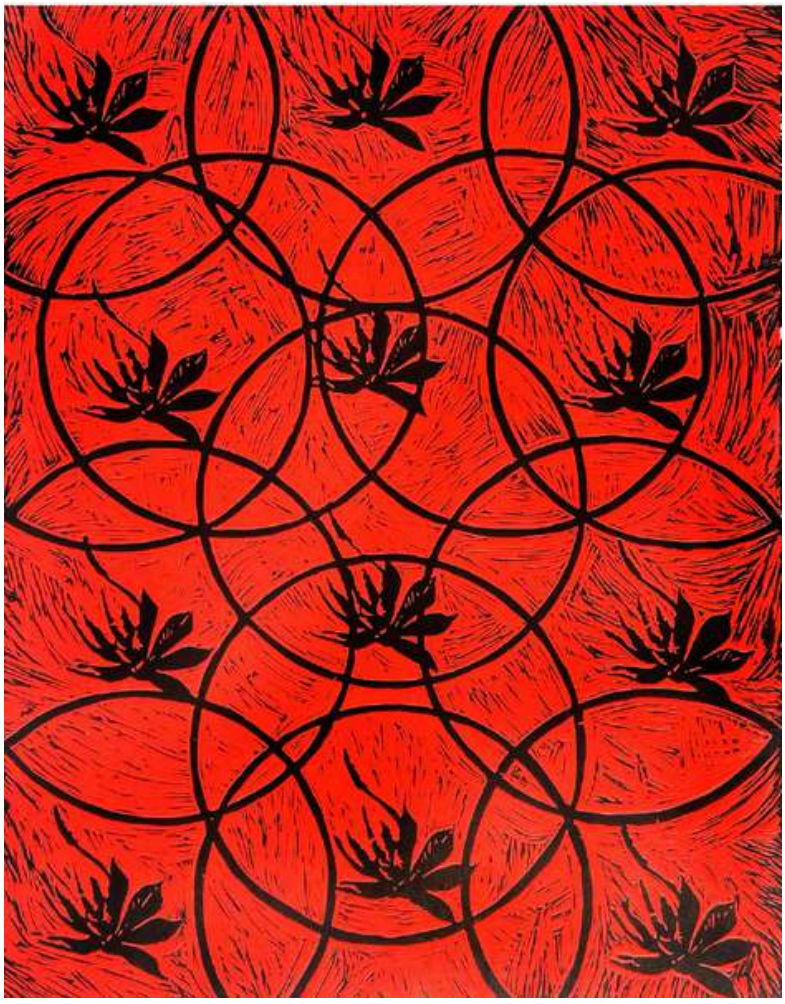
It is this relationship between material and meaning that makes her work so compelling. The materials are never merely decorative. They carry associations of home, land, growth, fragility and change. Even her use of fragmented maps becomes a way of reconstructing memory rather than



GRASS BOUND: STORIES OF SURVIVAL
2024
SCULPTURE TAPE AND NATURAL GRASS
DIMENSIONS VARY

geography—suggesting that identity is shaped by movement and lived experience rather than by the borders drawn on a map.
And perhaps this is why Rose's work sits so naturally within Soft Extinction.
Her creatures seem to arrive from an uncertain future, while her rooted works ask us to consider what holds us in place. Between the two lies a world in transition—a world where survival requires adaptation, where identities continue to evolve, and where the natural materials around us can become witnesses to our stories.
Rose is currently extending this exploration through natural pigments and handmade paper, including paper made from rooibos and maize husks—materials strongly associated with ideas of home and comfort in South Africa.
There is something wonderfully circular about this.

She takes from the landscape.
She transforms it.
And then she gives it back to us as an image, an object, a memory.
Perhaps being rooted does not mean standing still.
Perhaps roots can travel.
Perhaps belonging can have more than one place.
And perhaps the harbingers are not only warning us about what is coming—they are asking us to pay attention to what is already here.



Fourth pattern
This linocut brings together plant forms associated with different regions of the world, using botanical imagery as a metaphor for cultural exchange and belonging.
The work embraces cultural hybridity, acknowledging that identity does not have to exist within rigid boundaries

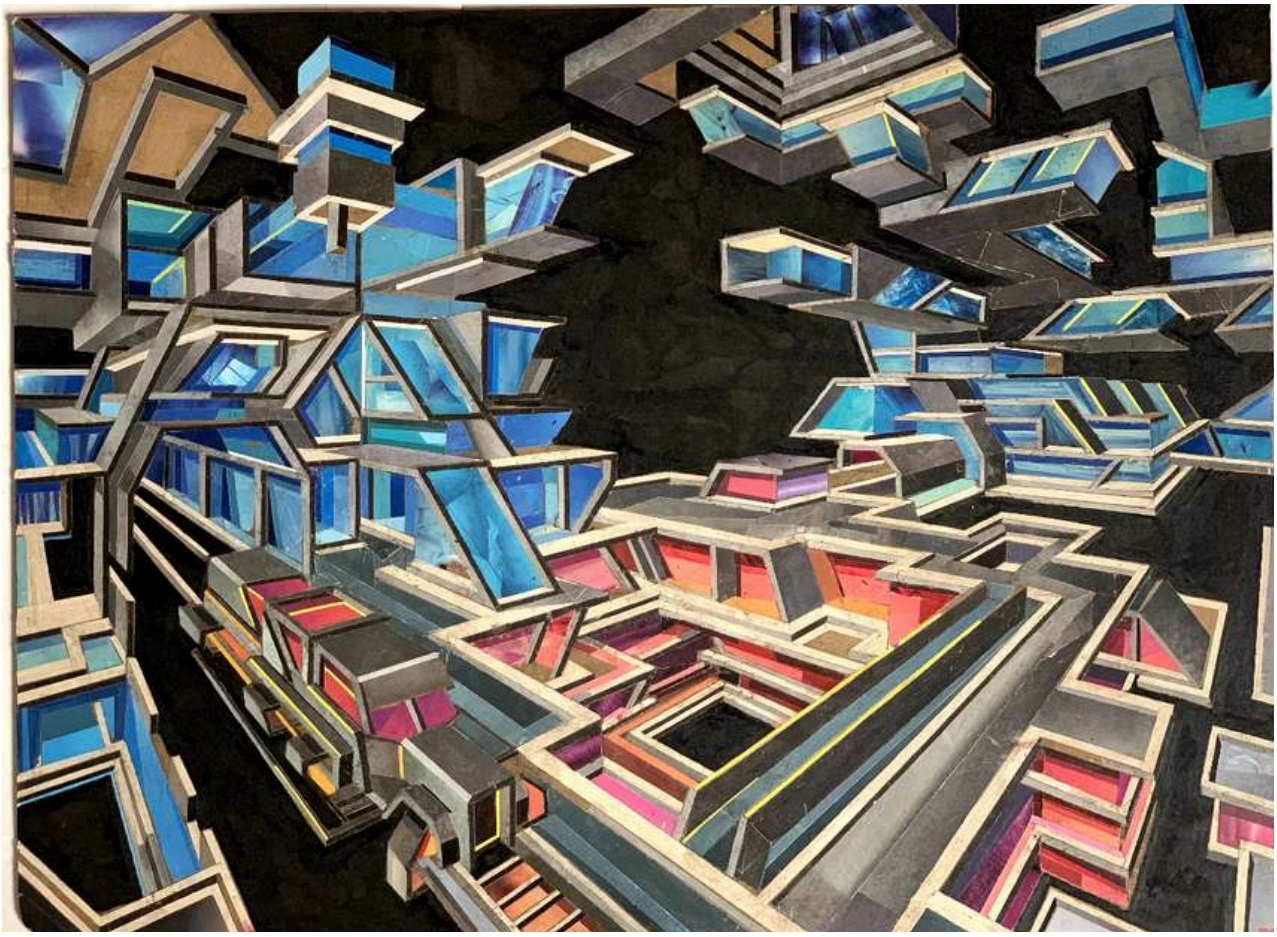
Rooted Here
This work explores identity as something rooted in both place and lived experience.
Handmade paper embedded with maize husks and wood shavings, layered with blue iron oxide, becomes a surface where memory, land, and cultural inheritance
intersect.

Rooted Here



NIGEL KANYUNGWE

Zimbabwe



ARCHITECTURES OF TOMORROW

What happens when a city becomes a memory?

When the walls begin to bend, buildings lose their logic and the spaces around us become impossible to navigate?

For Zimbabwean artist Nigel Kanyungwe, this is where the journey begins.

Born in 1999 in Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe, Kanyungwe has been making art since primary school. After high school, he went on to study Fine Art at Chinhoyi University of Technology. But his real subject is not simply architecture. It is the world around him—and the strange, accelerating way that world is changing.

Technology. Urban life. Chaos. Desire. Memory. The uncertainty of what comes next.



Kanyungwe brings these fragments together in what he calls futuristic collage architecture: surreal spaces that appear constructed, but could never actually exist. His buildings twist into themselves. Corridors lead nowhere. Perspective collapses. Geometric forms stack and overlap until the familiar becomes disorienting.

And yet, somehow, we recognise these places.

Perhaps because they feel like the inside of a mind trying to make sense of too much at once.

His process begins with something surprisingly ordinary: old and new magazines. He removes the imagery, strips away the text and cuts the fragments into pieces. Glued onto woodboard, they become building blocks for elaborate three-dimensional compositions.

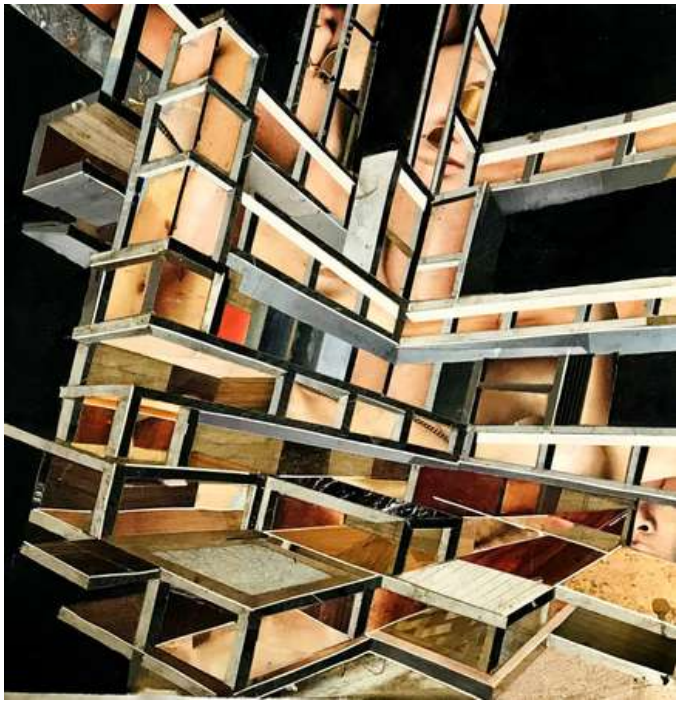
Nothing is quite what it first appears to be.

A fragment of an advertisement becomes a wall. A photograph becomes a window. A printed colour becomes an architectural surface. Separate pieces of the contemporary world are dismantled and rebuilt into something entirely new.



There is a sense of graffiti in the work, too—an instinct to disrupt, layer and reclaim. Abstract painting meets collage. Architecture meets imagination. The result is a visual language that feels both controlled and deliberately unruly.Kanyungwe describes his spaces as 3D labyrinths, born from the collision of lifestyle, chaos and desire.
They are beautiful, but they are not necessarily comfortable.
The longer we look, the more unstable they become.





That is perhaps what makes them compelling. These are not futuristic cities promising a perfect tomorrow. They are uncertain places. They carry the unease of the present and the anxiety of an unpredictable future.
Memory is there, too.
Because collage is always about fragments. Something existed somewhere else before it was cut apart and given a new position. Kanyungwe takes fragments from the visual world we already know and rearranges them into places we have never seen.
The past becomes material for imagining the future.
Standing in front of one of his works can feel like looking into a strange architectural mirror. We enter the image searching for a way through, only to realise there may be no way out.
And perhaps that is the point.
Kanyungwe invites us to navigate these dreamlike spaces without giving us a map. To confront the confusion, possibility and instability they contain. To recognise something of ourselves in the labyrinth.
His architecture does not tell us what tomorrow will look like.
It asks us to imagine it.
In Kanyungwe's world, the future is not a destination. It is a maze—and we are already inside it.

Reiner Heidorn **Germany**

OVERPAINTING HISTORY

What happens when we paint over the past?

What happens when we paint over the past?
Does it disappear?
Or does the act of covering it up simply make us look harder for what remains?
German artist Reiner Heidorn has turned this question into a body of work using an unlikely material: old school maps.
Maps are never neutral.
They tell us where borders are drawn, which places have which names, what belongs to whom. They teach us how to see a country, a continent, a world. And school maps carry another layer of meaning. They are objects through which generations learned geography—and, sometimes, the narratives of the time in which they lived.
Heidorn collects these maps and radically paints over them.
Some date from the Nazi era.
The original geography disappears beneath layers of paint. Borders are erased. Place names are transformed. The political image is dismantled.
But Heidorn does not attempt to make history disappear.





Quite the opposite.
The titles remain.
Small fragments of information left behind like a whisper.
A reminder that something was here before.
This is where Overpainting History becomes more than an exercise in abstraction. It becomes an act of remembering.
Heidorn grew up in Germany surrounded by a history that cannot simply be put behind us. His work is shaped by memory, guilt and responsibility, and by a question that remains painfully relevant: how are national stories taught, remembered—and forgotten?
His response is not to reproduce the past.
He obscures it.
Then he paints something living over it.
Botanical forms move across the maps. Water-like surfaces, plants, chlorophyll and organic structures replace the rigid language of political geography. The former map becomes something almost lagoon-like—a fluid pictorial space where colours meet, dissolve and refract.
Nature does not respect the borders humans draw.
It grows across them.

And so the botanical imagery becomes more than decoration. It creates a tension between history and renewal.
Something has been covered, but not forgotten.
Something new is growing, but it does not erase what came before.
This relationship between nature and memory runs through Heidorn's wider practice. His paintings are influenced by freshwater microorganisms, plants and chlorophyll. He translates the microscopic worlds revealed through scientific imagery into abstract expressionist paintings, while also working directly with leaves, twigs and blossoms as printing templates.
The natural world becomes both subject and collaborator.
In the school maps, this becomes particularly powerful.
A political landscape is transformed into an organic one.
The fixed becomes fluid.
The border becomes a trace.
The map becomes a memory.
There is something deeply unsettling—and strangely hopeful—in this transformation.
Because history cannot simply be painted away.
It can be covered. Reframed. Questioned. Reinterpreted.
But traces remain.



For Heidorn, those traces are important. The work stands against forgetting, trivialisation and denial. It asks us to recognise that the past does not remain neatly contained in museums or history books. It continues to shape the images we inherit, the language we use and the way we understand belonging.
Perhaps this is why the work feels so relevant at Lakritz.
We are surrounded by landscapes. We look at trees, water, gardens and the sea and often imagine nature as something outside human history.
But landscapes carry memory too.
They carry what happened there.
What was removed. What was planted. What was built. What was destroyed. What survived.
Heidorn's maps remind us that we cannot simply paint over difficult histories and call them gone.
But perhaps we can do something else.

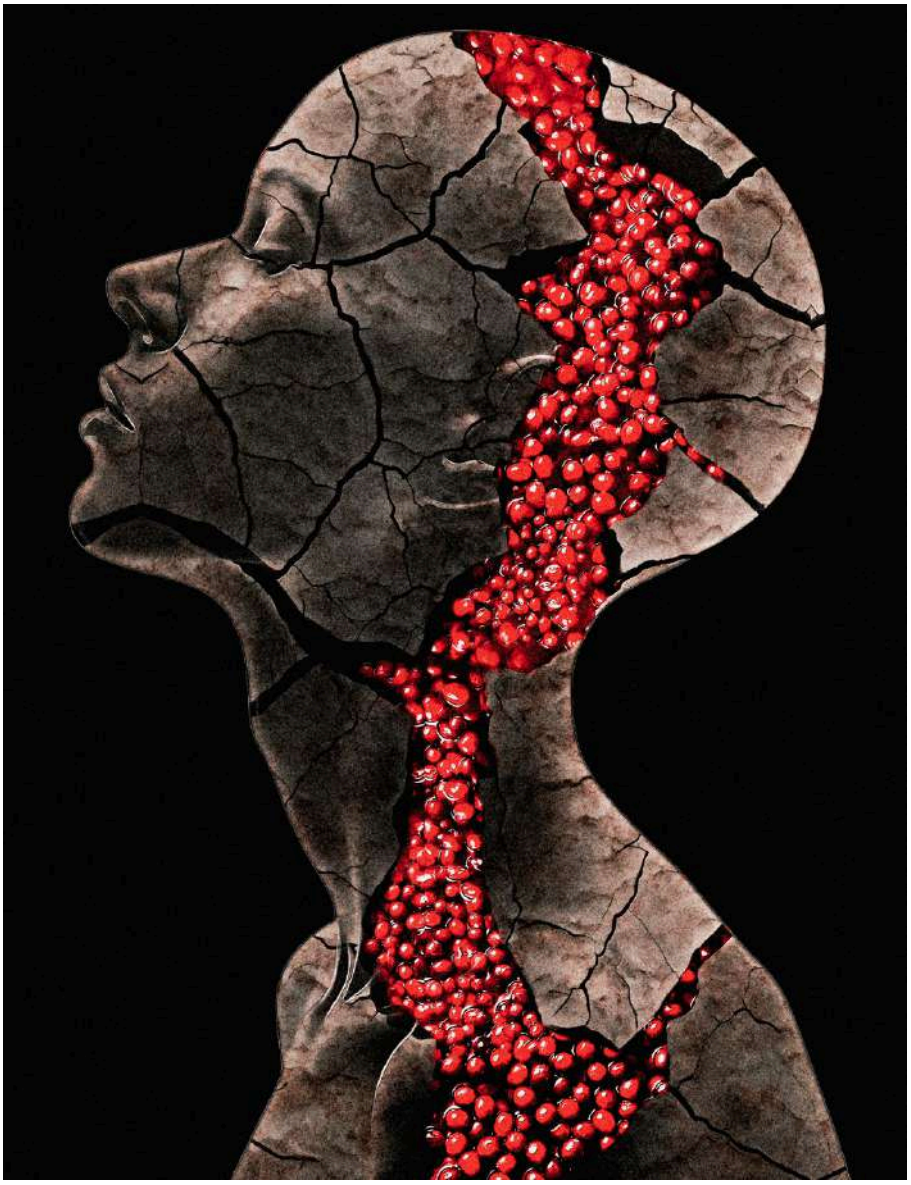
- We can look again.
- We can question the image we were given.
- We can allow something living to grow across it.
- The past remains beneath the surface.
- And perhaps responsibility begins when we refuse to stop looking.



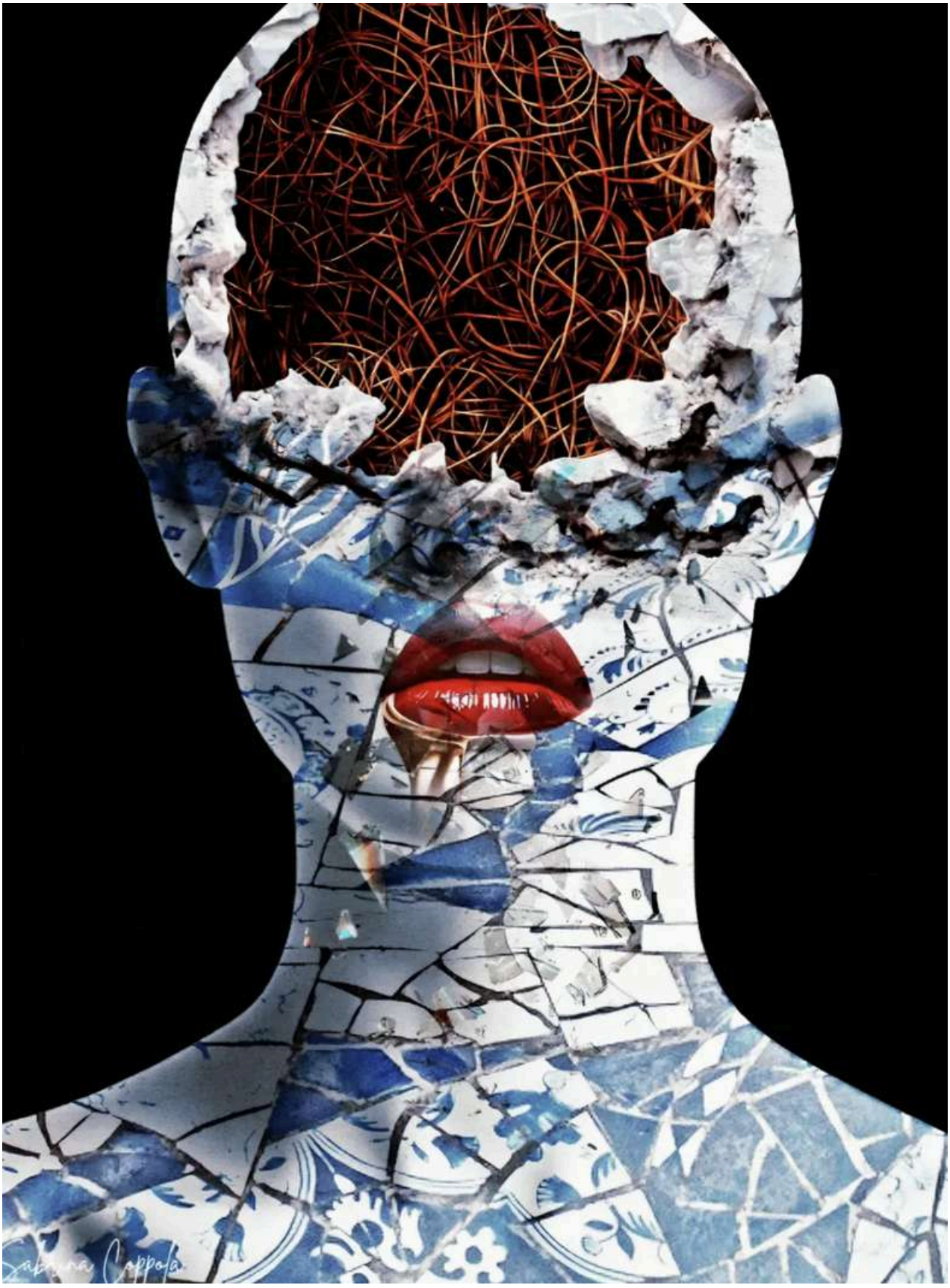
Sabrina Coppola South Africa

WHAT LIVES BENEATH THE SURFACE

What if the body could speak without words?
What if emotion could crack the surface and reveal everything we usually keep hidden?



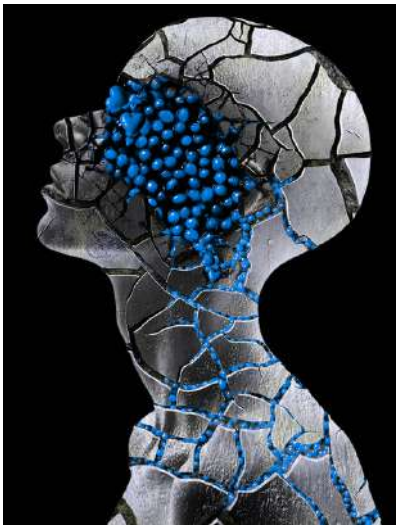
For South African artist and graphic designer Sabrina Coppola, art begins somewhere between what we see and what we feel. Her work moves through identity, memory, emotion and the complexity of being human—often creating images that feel less like representations and more like fragments of an inner world.
Her visual language is built on contrasts.
Order and chaos.
Beauty and fracture.
The visible and the concealed.
In her digital works and abstract paintings, the human figure becomes a place to explore these tensions. Surfaces break apart. Forms are interrupted. Colour moves through the cracks. What initially appears whole reveals itself to be layered and vulnerable.



There is something particularly striking about the way Coppola uses fragmentation.
A fractured surface can suggest damage, but it can also suggest movement. A crack can be an ending—or an opening.
Her work asks us to look beyond the obvious image and consider what might be happening underneath.
This interest in visual storytelling comes naturally from her background in graphic design. Composition, colour and communication form part of her foundation, but fine art gives her something different: space to leave questions unanswered.

Coppola works across traditional and digital mediums, allowing each to become a different language. Digital art gives her the freedom to construct and manipulate imagery, while acrylic painting brings another kind of physicality and unpredictability to the process.
Across both, the intention remains the same: to reveal layers.
Her own experience has also shaped the way she understands creativity. Living with rheumatoid arthritis has taught her patience, resilience and adaptation. There are days when physical limitations make the act of creating difficult, but art has remained a constant space for expression.
Importantly, the condition does not define her work.
Rather, it has become part of the wider understanding from which she creates—the knowledge that the human experience is not always predictable, that limitations can change the way we move through the world, and that creating sometimes means working with what is possible in the moment.
This gives her practice a quiet strength.
Not the kind that announces itself.
The kind that continues.
Coppola is interested in psychology, human emotion and storytelling, but she does not dictate a single interpretation. Her images leave room for the viewer to bring their own memories and experiences into the work.
Perhaps that is why a fractured face can become so much more than a face.
It can become identity.
It can become memory.
It can become pain, desire, resilience, fear—or transformation.
The vivid forms moving through the figure in her work seem almost alive: something breaking through the surface, something impossible to contain. The body becomes landscape. The landscape becomes emotion.
And suddenly we are no longer looking at a portrait.
We are looking inward.
Based in Roodepoort, Johannesburg, Coppola continues to develop her practice, exhibiting and building a body of work that moves between graphic design, digital art and painting.
Her journey is still unfolding.
And perhaps that is the most interesting part.
Because Coppola's work does not suggest that we are ever finished versions of ourselves. We are constantly being shaped by what happens to us, what we remember, what we lose, what we carry—and what we choose to reveal.







The surface is never the whole story. There is always something living beneath it.

Charmaine Haines

South Africa

Where Clay Remembers

There is something wonderfully human about Charmaine Haines's ceramics. Look at one of her vessels and you may first notice the face, the fish, the bird, the colour, the carved line or the wonderfully worked surface. Look a little longer, however, and something else begins to happen. The vessel starts to feel less like an object and more like a character — something that has a history, a personality and perhaps a story it is not quite finished telling.

That may be because Haines has never really treated clay as simply a material to be shaped. For her, it is a surface on which memories, symbols, histories and fragments of the world can meet.







Born in 1963, Haines is one of South Africa's established contemporary ceramic artists. She trained in Ceramic Design and later spent many years teaching the discipline at Nelson Mandela University, where she was a lecturer and Section Head from 1987 to 2002. In 2010 she was made a Fellow of Ceramics Southern Africa in recognition of her contribution to ceramics in South Africa, and in 2025 she was nominated as a member of the International Academy of Ceramics. Her work is held in collections including the Musée de Vallauris in France, the National Art Gallery in Durban, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum and the Corobrik National Collection.
But perhaps the most interesting way to understand Charmaine is not through the list of institutions, exhibitions and collections. It is through the places she has lived and the things that have stayed with her.

For more than two decades, the Karoo was an important part of that story. Haines has spoken about its remoteness, its extremes and its ancient geological history. Living there brought her into close contact with a landscape in which the enormous and the tiny coexist: vast open spaces, harsh weather, fossils and the evidence of an ancient sea. She has described the environment as a sympathetic one — a place that allowed her to become more directly connected to her materials and to her expressive self.
It is perhaps no coincidence that fish have remained such a persistent presence in her work.
The fish and birds that appear across her vessels are not merely decorative motifs. Haines describes them, together with her portraits, as autobiographical design elements. They return from one work to another, carrying narrative and mythical associations with them.
And then there are the faces. They seem to emerge from the vessels rather than simply sit upon them. Sometimes recognisable, sometimes abstracted, they transform the traditional idea of the pot into something bodily. The vessel becomes a figure; the figure becomes a vessel. It is a relationship that runs deep through Haines's practice: the container as a metaphor for the body, holding memory, experience and identity.



Her fascination with ancient cultures, African artefacts and medieval iconic art also gives the work a sense of having travelled through time. Yet these references are never simply reconstructed. Haines brings them into the present through a distinctly contemporary language of colour, abstraction, texture and gesture.
This is where her surfaces become particularly important.
Haines works into the clay through carving, texture and pattern. Coloured stains and natural oxide washes bring out the physical qualities of the surface, while slips, glazes, resist and print techniques are layered and combined. The process is partly controlled and partly surrendered.
She deliberately allows the unexpected to enter.
There is a lovely contradiction here. Haines is an experienced ceramicist with decades of knowledge behind her, yet she is not trying to control every outcome. Instead, she creates the conditions for surprise — allowing imperfections, accidents and discoveries to become part of the work.
The clay, in other words, gets a voice.



This makes her recent work particularly interesting. Familiar forms remain, but they are approached with a renewed freedom. Rather than beginning with a completely predetermined image of what the finished piece should become, Haines allows intuition to guide the process. Surface, colour, mark and material begin to converse with one another.
It is a way of working that feels very close to the natural world.
Nothing in nature is perfectly controlled. A surface changes through weather. A line cracks. A colour fades. A shell carries the marks of the sea. A bird, fish or human face can be reduced to a few essential gestures and still remain recognisable.
Perhaps this is why Haines's ceramics can feel both ancient and contemporary at the same time.
There is something archaeological about them — as though they might have been discovered rather than made. At the same time, their bold colours, graphic marks and fragmented forms belong unmistakably to the present.
Her journey has also taken her far beyond South Africa. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including in France and Spain, and she has represented South African ceramics in international contexts. Yet the work repeatedly returns to the places and images that have become part of her own visual vocabulary.
Today, living and working in St Francis Bay on the Eastern Cape coast, another landscape surrounds her.
The Karoo and the coast could hardly be more different, yet perhaps they share something important: both ask us to pay attention. To weather. To time. To small things. To traces left behind.
And perhaps this is what makes Charmaine Haines's work so engaging.





Her ceramics do not demand that we understand every reference. They invite us to look.

A face appears. A bird watches. Fish move across a surface. A carved line interrupts the clay. Colour gathers and recedes. A familiar vessel becomes unfamiliar.

We begin to wonder who is looking at whom.

For an artist who has spent decades working with one of humanity's oldest materials, there is still a sense of curiosity in the work. That may be the most important thing of all.

Clay remembers.

It remembers the pressure of the hand, the movement of the tool, the trace of the brush and the heat of the kiln. It records decisions and accidents alike.

And in the hands of Charmaine Haines, it also remembers fragments of history, landscape, mythology and the artist herself.

Perhaps that is why her vessels feel less like containers and more like companions.

They hold things.

And they continue to reveal them.

Two pieces are currently on show @ lakritz



Lebo Thoka

Reimagining Black Womanhood

South Africa

Lebo Thoka is a Johannesburg-based South African visual artist whose practice explores the intersections of feminist politics, African spirituality, identity and the human experience. She graduated cum laude from the Open Window Institute in 2018 with a BA in Visual Communication, majoring in photography.
Working primarily with photography and textiles, Thoka examines the complexities of navigating the world as a Black woman in contemporary South Africa. Her work addresses femicide and gender-based violence, while exploring the relationships between womanhood, religion, culture, history and personal agency.
Through carefully constructed photographic imagery, Thoka challenges conventional representations of Black women, creating space for identities that are multifaceted, powerful and self-determined. Religious iconography and spiritual symbolism recur throughout her practice, allowing her to question established narratives of faith, femininity and belonging while reclaiming space for Black female experiences that have historically been marginalised or misrepresented.



Her work extends beyond individual experience to consider the broader social structures that shape how women are perceived and valued. By bringing personal narratives into conversation with collective histories, Thoka invites viewers to reflect on the tensions between vulnerability and strength, oppression and liberation, and inherited traditions and contemporary realities.

Her photographic series include It Is Well: An Ode to Karabo (2016), a response to femicidal violence in South Africa, Seeds of the Dirt (2020), and Eden (2020), which reimagines Black womanhood beyond restrictive social and cultural narratives.

Thoka has exhibited internationally, including at Addis Foto Fest in Ethiopia, and her work was presented in I Exist!, a collaborative exhibition with Kenyan artist Margaret Ngigi at AKKA Project in Venice in 2021.

Through her multidisciplinary practice, Lebo Thoka creates images that are at once deeply personal and politically resonant. Her work asks us to reconsider whose stories are told, whose bodies are represented, and how art can become a space for reclaiming identity, dignity and the freedom to exist beyond imposed definitions.





Title: Mmankgwedi
hold me as I sleep
Year: 2025
Dimensions: 90cm x 60cm
(unframed)
Medium: Wool on Hessian



The seams
Year: 2025
Dimensions: 2,4m x 1,2m
Medium: Wool on Hessian

Christian Burchard

Books Written by Trees

USA



There is something wonderfully contradictory about Christian Burchard's sculptures.
He makes books — but they cannot be opened. They have pages, spines, weight and presence, yet there are no words inside them. Their stories are held somewhere else: in the grain of the wood, in its curves and cracks, in the marks of the tools and in the history of the tree from which they came.
And perhaps this is where Christian Burchard's work meets something very close to the heart of Lakritz.
Because what if a tree is already a book? Before we cut a tree, before we shape its wood, before we turn it into furniture or sculpture, it has been writing its own story for years. Growth rings record seasons. Branches remember weather. Scars mark disturbance. The shape of a trunk is a response to everything the tree has encountered.
A tree carries time inside it.

Burchard's book sculptures make that invisible story visible.
Born in Hamburg in 1955, Burchard has lived in the United States since 1978. His route towards sculpture began with furniture making. He apprenticed as a furniture maker in Germany in the mid-1970s, travelled extensively in his early twenties and eventually chose a different path from the one expected of him.
He studied sculpture and drawing at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and later at Emily Carr College of Art and Design in Vancouver. In 1982 he established Cold Mountain Studio in Southern Oregon.

His preferred material is Pacific Madrone, often worked while it is still green and unseasoned. That detail is important. It still contains moisture. It continues to move. As it dries, it can change, crack and respond to the conditions around it.
In other words, the material is still participating. Burchard's book sculptures seem to understand this. They are not simply representations of books. They are objects caught somewhere between tree, book and sculpture. The familiar form of a book is there, but the language has disappeared. Instead, the grain becomes writing.
The cracks become punctuation. The marks of the tools become traces of a hand.
And the imperfections become part of the story.
Perhaps this is why the sculptures invite us to look rather than simply understand.
We are accustomed to thinking of books as containers of knowledge. We open them to find somebody else's words, somebody else's history, somebody else's imagination. Burchard turns that relationship around. His books contain no written language, yet they seem to ask us to read them. And when we do, we find ourselves reading the material itself. A line in the wood becomes a sentence. A knot becomes a memory. A split becomes an interruption. The surface becomes an archive.
This feels particularly relevant at Lakritz, where the relationship between art and nature is not simply something to be looked at but something we are trying to act upon.



Our Forest of Return begins from a simple idea: that restoration is not only about planting trees. It is about restoring relationships — between people and place, between memory and landscape, and between what has been lost and what might still return.
Christian's sculptures offer another way of thinking about that relationship.
His books come from trees that have already lived.
Our reforestation project is concerned with trees that are only beginning their stories.
The connection is beautifully circular.
A tree becomes a book.
A book reminds us of the life of a tree.
And planting a tree creates a book that has not yet been written.
Perhaps this is the most beautiful thing about the Forest of Return: we are not only planting trees for shade, habitat or restoration. We are planting future archives.





The trees we plant today will experience seasons we will never see. Their branches will shelter birds and insects. Their roots will enter the soil. Their trunks will record drought, rain, fire, wind and growth. They will become part of the landscape and, eventually, part of somebody else's memory.
They will write without words.
Christian Burchard understands this kind of language. His life as a maker extends far beyond sculpture. He has worked with furniture and timber, taught generations of students and artists, and continues to make string instruments. He is also a small-scale goat farmer and cheese maker.
There is something wonderfully grounded about this. Making is not separated from living. Wood, clay, animals, food, music and landscape belong to the same world of attention. Perhaps that is also why his sculptures feel so warm despite their stillness. A book normally asks us to enter another world. Burchard's books ask us to return to this one. To wood.

To time.
To the physical evidence of growth.
To the things that cannot be rushed.
And maybe, standing among trees at Lakritz, we can look at these sculptures differently.
Not as books made from trees.
But as trees that have become books.
And then we might look back at the young trees planted through the Forest of Return and imagine the opposite journey.
These trees are still blank pages.
Their stories have not yet been written.
They are waiting for rain, wind, birds, insects, people and time.
Waiting to become part of the landscape.
Waiting to become memory.
Waiting, perhaps, to write books of their own.



A story-filled session for children, connecting imagination, storytelling and the natural world.

There is something we want to tell...



Story Reading for Children with Silke Heiss

📍 Lakritz Gallery or Art Garden

14.30 for 30 min.

Adult R50

Children age 13 - 18 R20

Children 5 - 12 free

Zisha Teapot Famous Zisha Teapot Online Exhibition Hall:

Yixing Zisha Gallery The Inheritance and Times Mark of Zisha Art by Three Zisha Masters



Yixing Zisha Gallery is a platform focused on promoting and preserving Yixing Zisha craftsmanship, integrating the representative works, creative concepts and process analysis of contemporary Zisha pot masters. We provide exclusive interviews with famous experts, appreciation of pot art, collection and maintenance guides, and establish communication resources, hoping to make the craftsmanship value and tea cultural significance of purple clay teapots known and valued by more people.

Yixing purple clay teapot has a long history of hundreds of years, and its unique clay materials and handcraftsmanship have made countless pot art giants. In contemporary purple clay art, the industry recognizes the three masters Xu Hantang, Li Changhong and Zhou Guizhen (and their husband Gao Haigeng) as the main inheritors of Gu Jingzhou's artistic spirit and are known as the "Three Masters of Purple Clay".

These three masters not only have their own styles in terms of shape, craftsmanship and aesthetics, but also embody the core values of Gupai pot art of "precision, strictness, solidity and authenticity". Through the inheritance of skills and continuous innovation, they have jointly built the peak of contemporary purple clay teapots.
Yixing Zisha Teapot – Wikipedia

Xu Hantang: A comprehensive successor from technology to aesthetics



Xu Hantang (1932–2021) was a master of Chinese arts and crafts and a direct disciple of Gu Jingzhou. He was famous for his handmade pot craftsmanship. He insisted on “fine workmanship and strict laws” and had a profound influence on contemporary purple clay production standards and aesthetic norms.

- Represents Gupai’s rigorous pot-making spirit
- Pays attention to basic skills training and has many students
- Promote structural aesthetics and institutionalized technology inheritance

His works emphasize the precision of proportional structure, possess a high degree of technological rationality and artistry, and lay the foundation for the institutional construction of purple clay craftsmanship.

Li Changhong and Shen Junhua: the combination of pot art and poetry

Li Changhong (1943-) is also an important successor of Gu Jingzhou. He is famous for his classic pot shapes, calligraphy, painting and seal carving combined with pot art. His works have a strong literati temperament and demonstrate the artistic height of integrating poetry, calligraphy and printing.

Ms. Shen Junhua creates purple sand pots from a delicate and gentle female perspective. Her pot art is gentle and beautiful, which complements Li Changhong’s style.

- **Li Changhong is good at literati style and traditional utensils**



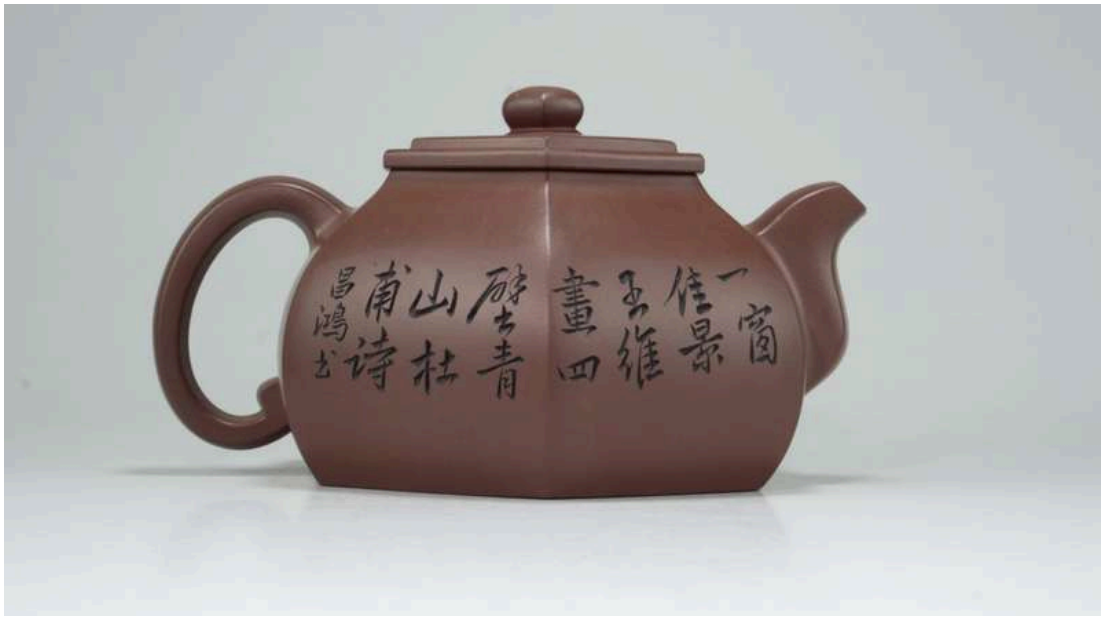
Li Changhong Four Heavenly Kings Lao Zini

- Shen Junhua’s works are characterized by feminine softness and delicate beauty



Shen Junhua – Liufang Tea Rhyme – Qing Di Cao Qing

● Work together to build a purple sand aesthetic that is both poetic and ingenious



Shen Junhua – Liufang Tea Rhyme – Qing Di Cao Qing

They are the important promoters who pushed the purple clay teapot into the level of literati art.

Zhou Guizhen and Gao Haigeng: Rich charm in Plainness

Zhou Guizhen (1937-) and her husband Gao Haigeng were both early Yixing purple clay artists, and they are representatives of the “practical spirit” of the Gu School of craftsmanship. The two people have a simple and elegant style, focusing on the accuracy and stability of traditional craftsmanship.

● Zhou Guizhen is good at the classic pot style, with dignified and elegant lines

● Gao Haigeng carefully studies the structure and pot-making skills, and attaches great importance to the cultivation of underachievers

● The style of the work is restrained and not exaggerated, highlighting the simple essence of purple sand

Their creations reflect the value of purple clay teapots of “seeking art through use and seeing the truth through art”, and are examples of equal emphasis on practicality and art.

The continuation and sublimation of the purple sand spirit

The value of the purple clay teapot is not only reflected in the beauty of the art of the utensil, but also in the inheritance and innovation of the craftsmanship spirit by generations of craftsmen. Xu Hantang, Li Changhong and Shen Junhua, Zhou Guizhen and Gao Haigeng are known as the most undoubted successors of the spirit of Master Gu Jingzhou in the industry and are also the pillars of the development of contemporary purple sand.

What they represent is not only genre style, but also cultural identity and artistic persistence.

TeapotArt / Yixing Zisha Gallery



About the Author
TeapotArt / Yixing Zisha Gallery is an online platform exploring the world of Yixing Zisha—its artists, craftsmanship, history and cultural meaning. Through stories, exhibitions and conversations, it brings this remarkable Chinese ceramic tradition to a wider international audience, inviting us to look beyond the object and discover the culture, skill and stories held within it.

The Compost corner

Indigenous Plants Garden Care Bee/Snake Removal

Tree Felling Manure Botanical Guided Walks

Walk&Talk



This Holiday Season- Something different to do

If you would rather go into the bush or along our lovely coast and explore the history of the shipwrecks - Drop Martin a WhatsApp. He will take you on an interesting WALK&TALK.

WhatsApp 082 924 1348



Lakritz MaterialLab

From Ugly Duckling to Beautiful Swan: The Lakritz MaterialLab Takes Shape



From Ugly Duckling to Beautiful Swan: The Lakritz Material Lab Takes Shape
A little house, a new beginning, and a space where creativity, learning and nature meet.*
Over the past month, a little house on Yekelela Farm has undergone a remarkable transformation. What was once something of an ugly duckling is gradually emerging as a beautiful swan — a space with renewed purpose, fresh possibilities and a future that reaches far beyond its walls.
While renovations were in full swing, the vision for the building began to take shape. More than simply creating a new studio, the idea was to develop a place where people could discover materials, experiment with ideas, learn new skills and experience the joy of making something with their own hands. This is how the Lakritz Material Lab was born.
The Material Lab will become part of the newly developed Lakritz Field Campus, an initiative that brings art, education, literature, practical skills and environmental awareness together in one inspiring setting. From 2027, the campus will offer a programme of learning experiences, with a particular focus on children and young adults.
The MaterialLab will provide small-group creative workshops in which participants can explore drawing, painting, sculpture, clay, wood, textiles, collage, mixed media and recycling art. The emphasis is not on producing perfect results, but on the process itself: experimenting, asking questions, solving problems and discovering new ways of thinking. Mistakes are welcome, too, because they are often where the most interesting discoveries begin.
Alongside the practical workshops, the wider Field Campus will connect visitors with the Lakritz Gallery and Art Garden, where artworks encourage observation, interpretation and conversation, and with the Forest of Return, where the natural environment becomes a living classroom. Literature, reading, writing and discussion will also form part of the programme, creating opportunities for young people to develop their language skills, confidence and ability to express their own ideas.
The intention is to build a flexible learning environment that grows with the needs of its participants and the surrounding community. By bringing creative practice and practical learning together, the Lakritz Field Campus hopes to open doors to new skills, new perspectives and a greater sense of possibility.



The Material Lab will also become my own studio, giving me a dedicated space to develop my artistic practice while remaining connected to the people and activities around it. I am particularly excited about the possibility of sharing this space with others — not only through structured workshops, but also through visiting artists, creative encounters and opportunities to explore unfamiliar materials and techniques.

And the doors will not be open to learners alone. Throughout the year, the Lakritz Field Campus will host events and activities for the wider public, including a programme during the 2027 Sardine Festival. Whether you come to make something, learn something new, meet other people or simply explore, the invitation is to participate, discover and experience.

The location itself is an important part of this vision. Situated on Yekelela Farm, the campus is part of a landscape where learning, creativity and environmental restoration can reinforce one another. The farm offers a playground for children, making it a welcoming destination for families, while its growing partnership with NatureNurture NPC places indigenous trees, biodiversity and reforestation at the heart of the wider initiative.

Yekelela Farm is also home to a tree nursery and a growing selection of indigenous plants and herbs. These are not simply additions to the landscape; they are part of an ongoing effort to reconnect people with the natural world and encourage practical participation in its restoration. Through botanical activities, tree-planting days and other community events, visitors will have opportunities to move from awareness to action.

A small shop offering art and ceramics will further connect visitors with creative work, providing a place to discover handmade objects and artworks while supporting the spirit of independent artistic practice.

What makes the transformation of this little house meaningful is not only what it will become physically. It is the opportunity to give an existing space a new life and to make it part of something larger: a meeting point for art, education, community and nature.

The beautiful swan is still unfolding. The Lakritz Field Campus will develop step by step, shaped by the people who come through its doors, the ideas they bring and the experiences they share

.

From 2027, the Lakritz Material Lab and Field Campus will invite people of all ages to come and see what can happen when curiosity meets creativity — and when learning becomes an experience rather than simply a lesson.

Join us during the 2026 holiday season 18th December to discover what's happening at the Material Lab! Feel free to reach out to us at 083 600 1596.







Lakritz

MATERIALLAB



Be Curious and celebrate a new Lakritz Chapter
Find out what you all can expect at the MaterialLab

Experiment - Research - Education

18th December

10.00-12.00am
Yekelela Farm
East Coast Road

For more Info whatsapp 083 600 1596 or Info@lakritz.co.za



ARDÚ SOCIAL UPLIFTMENT FOUNDATION



Building Dignity, Creating Opportunity, Transforming Communities

In South Africa, where extraordinary natural beauty often exists alongside profound economic inequality, the Ardú Social Upliftment Foundation is advancing an approach to community development that moves beyond traditional charity to build the foundations of lasting independence.

A Vision Beyond Charity

The most meaningful change does not begin with what we give to a community, but with what we enable a community to achieve.

This philosophy lies at the heart of the Ardú Social Upliftment Foundation, a South African organisation committed to restoring dignity, unlocking human potential and creating sustainable economic opportunity in communities where access to essential services, education and employment remains limited.

Ardú's approach is both compassionate and commercially considered. Rather than relying exclusively on short-term charitable interventions, the Foundation seeks to establish a sustainable framework in which social support, practical skills development and community enterprise reinforce one another.

The ambition is simple, yet profound: to help communities move from dependency towards self-determination.

Purpose Rooted in Human Dignity

Ardú believes that sustainable social development requires more than financial assistance. It requires an environment in which people have access to the basic necessities of life, the confidence to develop their abilities and the opportunity to participate meaningfully in their local economy.

The Foundation's mission is to improve quality of life in disadvantaged communities by addressing immediate social needs while creating pathways towards education, skills development, employment and economic independence.

Its work is guided by enduring values: dignity, compassion, integrity, accountability, inclusion, empowerment and sustainability. These values shape how projects are selected, how resources are invested and how communities are encouraged to take ownership of their futures.

For Ardú, success is not measured solely by the money invested or the number of people assisted. It is measured by opportunities created, livelihoods strengthened and a community's capacity to sustain progress.



Chintsa: A Community with Extraordinary Potential

Along the spectacular Wild Coast of South Africa's Eastern Cape lies Chintsa, a destination celebrated for its sweeping beaches, rolling green hills and unspoilt natural beauty.

Yet beyond the idyllic coastal setting is a community facing challenges familiar to many rural regions: high unemployment, limited economic opportunity, inadequate access to certain essential services and the difficulties associated with geographic isolation.

It is here that Ardú is developing one of its most ambitious initiatives: an integrated community development programme designed to bring social services, education, skills training and enterprise development together.

A young person cannot easily pursue education without access to learning facilities. A parent may struggle to secure employment without reliable community support. An aspiring entrepreneur cannot establish a viable business without equipment, mentorship and access to markets. Ardú's Chintsa initiative is designed to address these barriers collectively.



Reimagining the Community Hub

At the centre of the Chintsa development strategy is the transformation of an existing community craft centre into a multifunctional social services hub.

The proposed facility is intended to bring essential services closer to residents, creating a welcoming and accessible space for community support. Plans include facilities for social work services, healthcare-related consultations and a satellite police presence, subject to the necessary partnerships and operational arrangements.

For families who face practical and financial obstacles when seeking assistance, a centrally located hub could offer a more accessible point of contact with services contributing to safety, wellbeing and social stability. Before expecting communities to build sustainable economic futures, the foundations of personal and social wellbeing must be strengthened.



The Chintsa Community Bread Company: More Than a Bakery

Perhaps the most tangible expression of Ardú's enterprise-driven philosophy is the Chintsa Community Bread Company.

At first glance, the initiative is a commercial bakery established to supply fresh, affordable bread to the surrounding community. Its greater purpose, however, reaches far beyond bread production.

The bakery is designed as a practical training environment, an employment generator and a model for how locally based businesses can contribute to long-term community development. Under Ardú's oversight, the enterprise is being structured to combine commercial discipline with social purpose.

A local bakery manager will oversee operations, supported by young interns receiving hands-on experience in bread production, food preparation, hygiene, quality control and the daily responsibilities of a commercial enterprise. The internship model is intended to provide practical, transferable skills that improve employment prospects and future entrepreneurial opportunities.





The business is planned to begin with manageable production volumes and progressively expand through local households, retailers and hospitality establishments. Its long-term objective is to develop into a commercially sustainable enterprise whose success supports employment, training and broader community benefit.
Every loaf sold represents more than a transaction. It contributes to a vision in which enterprise becomes a vehicle for social progress.





Education: Investing in the Next Generation

Ardú recognises education as one of the most powerful instruments of social mobility. Plans for a dedicated education and homework centre in Chintsa are intended to provide young people with a supportive environment in which to learn, study and develop essential skills.

The proposed centre will offer access to computers, educational resources and digital literacy opportunities, addressing barriers that can prevent learners from participating fully in an increasingly technology-driven world.

The educational vision extends beyond academic achievement to practical learning, personal development, confidence and an understanding of opportunities available through further education, employment and entrepreneurship.

Youth Development and Local Entrepreneurship

Communities possess enormous reserves of talent, initiative and entrepreneurial ambition. What is often missing is access to resources required to turn ideas into viable businesses.

Through youth development and enterprise support initiatives, Ardú aims to identify promising individuals and assist them with practical business development, equipment, skills training and mentorship. Potential enterprises span personal care services, food production and small-scale mobile businesses.

The objective is not simply to provide financial assistance, but to help establish businesses with realistic prospects of survival, growth and eventual independence. The broader Chintsa programme also envisages opportunities in sport, creative arts, practical skills and personal development.

A Model for Sustainable Community Ownership

What distinguishes the Chintsa initiative is not any single project, but the relationship between them. The community hub addresses essential social needs. The education centre develops human potential. The bakery provides practical training and employment. Entrepreneurship support creates opportunities for local economic participation.
Together, these initiatives form the beginnings of a community development ecosystem. Ardú's longer-term vision is to establish enterprises that become progressively more self-sustaining, with economic value generated locally and benefits directed towards continued community upliftment.
This demands responsible financial management, sound governance, transparent oversight and careful measurement of outcomes. The ultimate aspiration is a community increasingly equipped to sustain its own progress.



Beyond Chintsa: Restoring Dignity in Urban Communities

While Chintsa represents Ardú's integrated rural development vision, the Foundation is also addressing vulnerability in urban communities.
In Pretoria, Ardú works alongside iThemba Triumph Trolleys, an initiative supporting informal waste reclaimers who perform an essential yet frequently overlooked role in the recycling economy.
Ardú has supported approximately 140 collection trolleys, protective clothing, food assistance and access to basic care. Its involvement has also contributed to a recycling depot, employment opportunities and practical skills training. The initiative has reported reaching more than 200 people and creating 16 permanent employment opportunities.
Beyond immediate support, Ardú is exploring ways to strengthen reclaimers' economic participation through improved recycling infrastructure, community partnerships and longer-term social development initiatives. The principle remains consistent: people who are often marginalised should be recognised as valuable contributors and offered opportunities to build more secure futures.

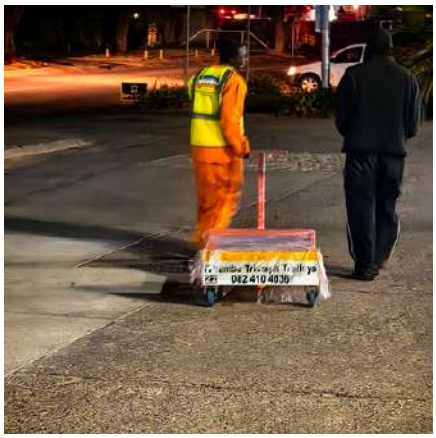






Growing Champions: Nurturing Tomorrow’s Leaders

Ardú's commitment extends to young people determined to improve not only their own circumstances but those of others.
Through its Growing Champions programme, the Foundation supports emerging talent across education, sport, entrepreneurship, creative industries and community leadership. Its support aims to help promising individuals access opportunities, develop practical skills and advance initiatives with meaningful social impact.
The broader vision is a generation of capable, socially conscious leaders who understand that personal success and community progress need not be separate ambitions.


The Power of Responsible Partnerships

Transformational development cannot be achieved by a single organisation acting in isolation. Ardú recognises that sustainable progress depends on collaboration between communities, private enterprise, social development organisations, local authorities and individuals willing to invest in a shared vision.
The Foundation's strategy directs resources towards initiatives with clearly defined social objectives and potential for financial and operational sustainability. Its role extends beyond funding to planning, implementation, financial oversight, skills development and governance structures that support long-term accountability.
Redefining the Meaning of Impact
Across the world, philanthropy is increasingly challenged to demonstrate not only generosity but lasting effectiveness. Ardú's philosophy speaks directly to this challenge. A renovated building is meaningful when it becomes a place where people access essential services. A bakery becomes transformative when it creates employment, transfers skills and builds a sustainable local enterprise. An education centre fulfils its purpose when young people gain confidence and capabilities to pursue new opportunities.
Social investment achieves its greatest value when those who initially receive assistance are eventually empowered to contribute to the wellbeing of others.

A Legacy of Opportunity

On the shores of Chintsa, where the Indian Ocean meets the rolling landscapes of the Eastern Cape, Ardú is helping to shape a different narrative about community development.
It is a narrative that acknowledges hardship without allowing hardship to define the people who experience it. It recognises that talent exists everywhere, even where opportunity does not. And it rests on the conviction that lasting progress emerges when compassion is matched with practical investment, responsible leadership and a genuine belief in human potential.
Ardú does not seek simply to change the circumstances of communities today. It seeks to help create the conditions in which future generations can determine their own tomorrow. Because the greatest measure of social upliftment is not how many people remain dependent on assistance, but how many are empowered to rise beyond the need for it.

Environment



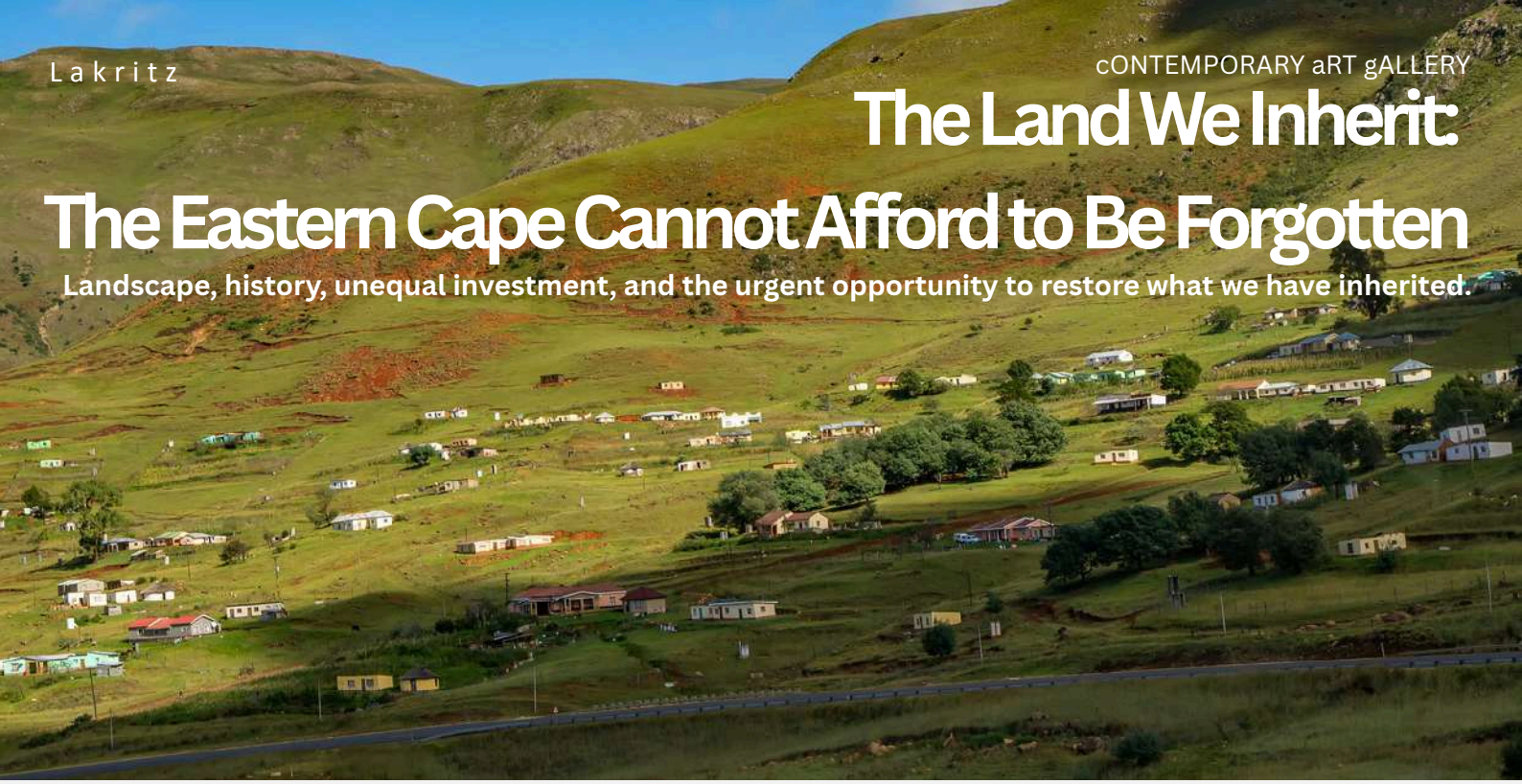
New
INITIATIVE

Forest of Return

Lakritz Reforestation Collaboration

Lakritz – Where Art transforms awareness into Action





The Land We Inherit:
The Eastern Cape Cannot Afford to Be Forgotten

Landscape, history, unequal investment, and the urgent opportunity to restore what we have inherited.

There is a particular beauty to the Eastern Cape that does not always announce itself. It lies in rolling hills, open grasslands, rugged coastlines, indigenous forests, ancient thicket, wetlands, and landscapes that seem to stretch beyond the reach of attention. It is a province of extraordinary ecological diversity and cultural depth, yet much of its potential remains overshadowed by a history of dispossession, economic inequality, inadequate infrastructure, and limited visibility beyond its borders.

To live and work here is to recognize a contradiction. The Eastern Cape possesses natural and cultural assets of considerable importance, yet the people and initiatives working to protect them often face the challenge of making their needs visible in a country whose public imagination is dominated by better-known destinations and economic centers.

This is not simply a question of tourism marketing. It is a question of whose landscapes attract attention, whose environmental challenges become national priorities, and whose restoration efforts receive the support required to endure.

Can we afford to continue overlooking a province whose ecological future is inseparable from South Africa's own?

A landscape shaped by history

The Eastern Cape cannot be understood without understanding its land.

Long before colonial settlement, communities developed relationships with these landscapes through grazing, cultivation, gathering, indigenous plant knowledge, and other forms of land use. Land provided food and livelihoods, but it also carried cultural meaning, belonging, and knowledge passed between generations.

Colonial expansion and apartheid profoundly altered these relationships. Dispossession, the creation of the former Transkei and Ciskei homelands, unequal access to land and resources, and the concentration of public investment in selected areas created patterns of development whose consequences remain visible today.

The legacy is not only social. It is geographical. It can be seen in the uneven distribution of infrastructure, in the challenges facing rural communities, and in the difficulty of building economic opportunities in areas that have historically been marginalized.

The relationship between land and inequality is therefore central to any serious conversation about ecological restoration. Environmental damage cannot always be separated from the economic pressures under which people live, the resources available to landowners and communities, or the capacity of institutions to maintain and restore ecosystems.

A landscape carries the consequences of decisions made over generations. Repairing it requires more than planting trees. It requires a willingness to confront the conditions that make long-term stewardship difficult.

The Western Cape: When nature becomes a public priority

Consider the Western Cape.

Its landscapes are internationally recognizable: Table Mountain, the Cape Peninsula, the winelands, the dramatic coastline, and the extraordinary plant diversity of the Cape Floristic Region. These places have become powerful parts of the province's identity. They attract visitors, support tourism businesses, and provide a visible framework through which conservation, economic development, and regional pride are communicated.

The important difference is not that the Western Cape has environmental challenges and the Eastern Cape does not. Both provinces face habitat loss, invasive alien species, fires, water pressures, and the effects of a changing climate.

The difference worth examining is how environmental protection is embedded in public planning and investment.

In February 2025, the Western Cape Government announced the use of its Biodiversity Spatial Plan and Protected Areas Expansion Strategy to identify priority conservation areas, guide land-use planning, strengthen ecological resilience, and inform sustainable development. Its biodiversity management structures also support partnerships, community-based enterprises, biodiversity-linked businesses, and investment in ecological infrastructure.

This is an important model because it connects nature to decisions about development, economic opportunity, and public infrastructure. It gives conservation a place within the machinery of planning rather than leaving it solely to the enthusiasm of individual landowners or small nonprofit initiatives.

The Eastern Cape has its own conservation institutions, committed practitioners, protected areas, research programs, and restoration initiatives. It would be wrong to suggest that nothing is happening here. Indeed, the province's 2025/26 budget plans for the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency include biodiversity conservation, wetland rehabilitation, the restoration of eroded land, and the development of ecotourism.

Yet the existence of programs does not automatically mean that their potential is fully realized. The question is whether their reach, resources, infrastructure, and partnerships are sufficient for the scale of the challenges and opportunities before them. This is where the comparison becomes uncomfortable.

The Western Cape has developed a highly visible public narrative in which nature is a recognizable asset for tourism, planning, and economic development. The Eastern Cape must work harder to make a comparable case for its own landscapes, while many of its rural communities and smaller initiatives operate within a more difficult development context.

The issue is not that one province deserves less. It is that the other deserves to be seen more clearly.

Sources: South African Government — Western Cape biodiversity strategies, February 2025; Eastern Cape Provincial Treasury — Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure 2025/26.

What do the budgets tell us?

Public budgets do not tell the whole story, but they can reveal how governments organize their priorities and how much capacity they have to put plans into practice. For 2025/26, the Western Cape's environmental planning and biodiversity framework includes a dedicated provincial department, CapeNature, formal biodiversity strategies, and a structured approach to conservation partnerships. The province has also established a planning framework that connects biodiversity to ecological infrastructure and economic development.

The Eastern Cape's 2025/26 provincial estimates, meanwhile, describe allocations and initiatives intended to strengthen tourism, biodiversity, conservation, and access to tourism sites. The estimates identify additional funding attracted from other public institutions for conservation and tourism-related work, including R50.9 million for 2025/26 and R154.56 million over the medium-term expenditure framework.

These figures demonstrate that public support for environmental work exists in the Eastern Cape. They also show why it is important to look beyond a single budget line: provincial allocations, national transfers, protected-area funding, tourism investment, private contributions, and nonprofit restoration funding are not interchangeable.

We should therefore resist a simplistic claim that one province spends more on conservation than the other without comparing equivalent budgets, responsibilities, and funding streams.

But a more fundamental question remains: how much sustained support reaches the landscapes and communities where restoration is urgently needed, and how effectively can local initiatives access it?

The answer matters enormously for smaller projects. A nursery cannot be maintained on recognition alone. Degraded land cannot be restored by publicity. Trails, environmental education, indigenous plant propagation, and ongoing ecological management all require people, materials, transport, equipment, and reliable funding.

When those resources are uncertain, initiatives struggle to move from a promising beginning to long-term impact.

The cost of being overlooked

Being overlooked is not always the result of one decision or one institution. It can emerge from a pattern.

A region becomes less visible in national conversations. Its environmental problems compete with urgent social and economic needs. Local organizations have limited capacity to communicate their work or prepare proposals for major funders. Infrastructure challenges make some projects more expensive to establish and maintain. Potential supporters may know little about the landscape or the people working to protect it.

Each obstacle reinforces the next.

The Eastern Cape's development difficulties are documented. The Presidency has identified the province's infrastructure backlog, while Statistics South Africa has consistently recorded high levels of poverty in the province. These conditions are part of the context in which environmental organizations and community initiatives must operate.

For rural restoration projects, this can mean that the work begins with fewer resources, less public visibility, and a greater need to explain why it matters.

The consequences extend beyond individual projects. When restoration initiatives cannot secure continuity, opportunities for ecological recovery, environmental education, local skills development, and nature-based livelihoods may also be lost.

This is why visibility matters. Not as a substitute for practical work, but as one of the conditions that makes practical work possible.

A credible restoration initiative needs more than a good idea. It needs to be understood, trusted, supported, and connected to people who can help it grow.

A different understanding of restoration

The Eastern Cape's natural heritage cannot be reduced to a tree-planting campaign. Its landscapes encompass grasslands, savanna, Albany thicket, indigenous forests, wetlands, estuaries, and coastal ecosystems. Each requires a different approach. Planting trees in naturally open grassland can damage an ecosystem rather than restore it.

The objective must be to recover ecological function and protect biodiversity. Depending on the site, this may involve establishing indigenous trees where appropriate, restoring degraded thicket, protecting existing forest, removing invasive alien plants, rehabilitating wetlands, stabilizing erosion, or improving land management. It also means protecting ecosystems that remain healthy. Prevention is often less costly than attempting to recover a landscape after substantial damage has occurred.

Restoration takes time. Seedlings require maintenance. Invasive plants may return. Soil and water systems recover at different rates. Ecological outcomes need to be monitored rather than assumed.

The real measure of success is not how many trees are planted at a public event. It is whether the ecosystem is recovering, whether the work can be sustained, and whether the people involved have the knowledge and resources to continue.

This is a long-term undertaking, and it requires a funding culture that understands long-term commitments.

What if the Eastern Cape became known for restoration?

The Western Cape offers a useful lesson in how natural heritage can become part of a region's public identity. The Eastern Cape does not need to copy its neighbor or compete with its established destinations. It needs to tell its own story with greater clarity and ambition.

Imagine a province recognized not only for its coastline, wildlife, and open landscapes, but also for the people restoring indigenous vegetation, rehabilitating degraded land, protecting water systems, developing environmental education, and creating meaningful ways for communities to participate.

Such a story would not hide the province's difficulties. It would demonstrate how people are responding to them.

It would also create opportunities to connect restoration with responsible tourism, education, research, local enterprise, and cultural activity. Visitors could contribute to credible projects rather than simply passing through. Businesses could support specific restoration outcomes. Schools could develop long-term relationships with local environmental initiatives. Funders could invest in clearly defined activities with transparent reporting and measurable progress.

These possibilities require careful planning. Ecological restoration must not become a marketing label attached to activities that produce little lasting benefit. Projects need sound ecological guidance, realistic goals, financial transparency, and meaningful local participation.

But when those foundations are in place, restoration can become an opportunity to build both ecological resilience and community capacity.

From awareness to action: the Forest of Return

At Lakritz and through the NurtureNature initiative, this relationship between landscape, community, and environmental responsibility is already taking practical form.

The Forest of Return is being developed as an initiative connecting indigenous restoration, environmental education, trails, and community participation. At Yekelela Farm, the work includes plans for an indigenous tree nursery, the preparation of degraded land for restoration, and the development of trails that invite people to experience the landscape more closely.

These are modest beginnings in the context of the province's wider environmental needs. Their significance lies in the possibility of building something that continues: a place where indigenous plants can be propagated, practical restoration skills can be developed, people can learn about their surroundings, and the landscape can become a living classroom.

Such work cannot depend indefinitely on personal commitment and whatever resources happen to be available. It needs partners.

Businesses can support specific activities. Individuals can contribute toward seedlings, tools, infrastructure, or maintenance. Schools and educational organizations can help develop learning opportunities. Researchers can contribute expertise. Visitors can support responsible local initiatives as part of their experience of the region.

Larger funders can help establish the infrastructure and continuity that smaller contributions alone cannot provide.

The important point is that participation should be tangible. Supporters should understand what their contribution enables, how the work is progressing, and what further steps are needed.

Restoration becomes stronger when people can see how their contribution fits into a longer process. Investment in a living inheritance

We readily recognize investment when it produces something immediate and visible. A building rises. A business opens. A road is completed.

Ecological restoration works on a different timescale. Its returns may emerge over years or decades: healthier soil, more resilient vegetation, improved habitat, stronger ecological connections, practical skills, and a greater capacity to respond to environmental pressures.

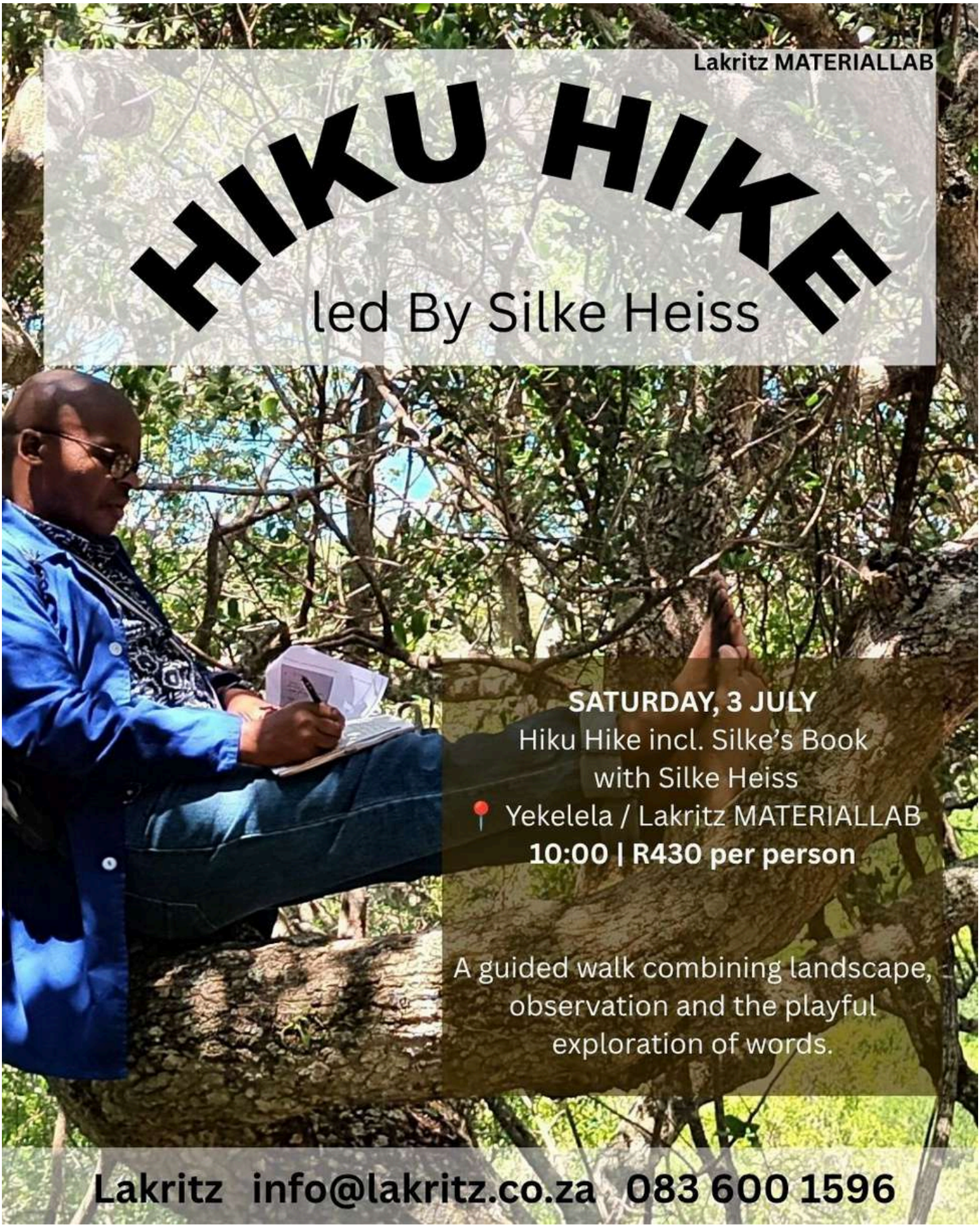
Not every benefit can be expressed in monetary terms. Yet restoration can support economic opportunities through nursery work, land rehabilitation, trail maintenance, environmental education, and responsible nature-based tourism.

These outcomes are not automatic. They depend on credible projects, sustained investment, fair participation, and continued management. But they demonstrate why restoration should be understood as more than an optional charitable activity.
It is an investment in the conditions that allow landscapes and communities to remain viable.
For the Eastern Cape, this investment must come from more than one source. Government has a role in planning, infrastructure, and conservation. Businesses can support practical projects. Philanthropic funders can help build capacity. Research institutions can contribute knowledge. Individuals can help create the public attention and financial support that local initiatives need.
No single group can carry the entire responsibility.

What will we leave behind?

The Eastern Cape's landscape carries the marks of its history. Some are visible in the land itself; others remain in the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and public attention.
Restoration cannot erase that history. It can, however, become part of a more considered relationship with the land and the people who depend on it.
The Western Cape does not need to become less celebrated for the Eastern Cape to become more valued. The challenge is to recognize that South Africa's natural wealth extends far beyond its most familiar destinations, and that the places receiving less attention may need more deliberate support, not less.
We should not have to choose between addressing social needs and restoring the natural systems on which people depend. Nor should communities be expected to carry the responsibility for environmental recovery without the resources and partnerships required to make it possible.
The Eastern Cape deserves more than occasional recognition of its beauty. It deserves sustained attention to its environmental future, serious engagement with its development challenges, and investment in the people already working to restore its landscapes.
The opportunity is here. The knowledge exists. The work can begin, and in many places it already has.
What remains is to build the partnerships, funding, and public commitment that allow these efforts to continue.

The Eastern Cape is not an empty space on the map, nor a forgotten corner of South Africa's natural heritage. It is a living landscape whose future matters. The question is whether we are prepared to recognize its value before more of what makes it extraordinary is lost.


Lakritz MATERIALLAB
HIKU HIKE
led By Silke Heiss
SATURDAY, 3 JULY
Hiku Hike incl. Silke's Book
with Silke Heiss
Yekelela / Lakritz MATERIALLAB
10:00 | R430 per person
A guided walk combining landscape, observation and the playful exploration of words.
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Restoration Is MoreThan Planting Trees

Ecology, community, and the responsibility to make good intentions count.

There is something deeply appealing about planting a tree. We put our hands into the soil, place a young plant into the ground, cover its roots, and imagine the future it might inhabit. It is an act of hope, a gesture toward generations we may never meet, and a tangible way of expressing concern for the natural world.

Tree-planting days bring people together. They create photographs, stories, and a sense of shared purpose. Businesses can demonstrate environmental commitment, schools can introduce children to nature, and communities can participate in something larger than themselves. But there is a question we need to ask before we congratulate ourselves: what happens after the photograph has been taken?

A tree planted in the wrong place, a species unsuited to the ecosystem, or a restoration site abandoned after the initial enthusiasm has faded may contribute little to ecological recovery. Good intentions do not guarantee good outcomes. And a green appearance is not the same as a healthy ecosystem. Restoration is not about how many trees we put into the ground. It is about whether we help the land recover.

That distinction matters, particularly in a province such as the Eastern Cape, where ecological restoration has the potential to strengthen biodiversity, protect landscapes, support local livelihoods, and reconnect people with the places they inhabit.

The first mistake: assuming every landscape needs trees

We have become accustomed to treating trees as a universal symbol of environmental improvement. More trees must mean more nature, mustn't they?

Not necessarily.

The Eastern Cape contains a remarkable variety of ecosystems, including indigenous forests, Albany thicket, grasslands, savannas, wetlands, estuaries, and coastal vegetation. These ecosystems evolved under different conditions and function in different ways. Their natural diversity is part of what makes the region ecologically important.

Some landscapes are supposed to be open. Naturally occurring grasslands, for example, support their own complex communities of plants, insects, birds, and other animals. Planting trees where they do not naturally belong can alter those systems, compete with native vegetation, and undermine the very biodiversity a project intends to protect.

The same principle applies to species selection. A tree being indigenous to South Africa does not automatically make it appropriate for every location in the country. Local climate, soil, water availability, ecosystem type, and the origin of planting material all matter.
Restoration must begin with a different question: what belongs here?
That question requires ecological knowledge, an understanding of the site's history, and, wherever possible, evidence from nearby healthy ecosystems that can guide recovery. It may lead to tree planting. It may instead lead to protecting natural regeneration, removing invasive alien plants, restoring wetlands, stabilizing erosion, managing grazing, or allowing a damaged area to recover with minimal intervention.
Sometimes the most responsible thing we can do for a landscape is to stop interfering with it.
A planting day is a beginning, not an achievement
There is nothing wrong with a tree-planting day. It can be an excellent starting point for environmental education, community participation, and long-term commitment.
The problem begins when the event becomes the entire project.
A photograph of hundreds of people planting seedlings can suggest impressive progress. But how many seedlings survive the first dry season? Were they planted in appropriate locations? Were the plants healthy and suitable for the site? Is there a plan for watering where necessary, protecting them from damage, managing competing vegetation, and monitoring their development?
If nobody returns, the initial number planted tells us very little about the eventual outcome.
Ecological restoration is not a one-day activity. It is a process of assessment, planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation. The international standards published by the Society for Ecological Restoration emphasize clear objectives, suitable reference ecosystems, ongoing management, and measurable indicators of recovery.
These principles are not bureaucratic obstacles designed to make environmental work more complicated. They are safeguards against wasting time, money, and effort.
A restoration project should be able to explain what it intends to achieve, why its chosen methods are appropriate, and how it will determine whether the work is succeeding.
If a project cannot answer those questions, its claims of success should be treated cautiously.
The invisible work that makes restoration possible
The public often sees the most visible part of environmental work: planting, clearing, or walking through a newly established trail. Far less visible is the infrastructure that makes these activities possible. Indigenous plant nurseries require suitable growing conditions, propagation knowledge, water, containers, tools, and ongoing care. Restoration sites need preparation and protection. Invasive alien plants may require repeated management rather than a single clearing operation. Trails need maintenance. People need training. And somebody must keep records, coordinate activities, communicate with partners, and ensure that commitments are carried through.
None of this is particularly glamorous. Much of it happens when nobody is watching.
Yet this is where the difference between an attractive environmental gesture and a functioning restoration initiative often lies.

A nursery is not simply a collection of seedlings. It can become a source of locally appropriate planting material, practical skills, environmental education, and continuity. A well-planned trail is not merely a path through the landscape. It can support environmental learning and responsible access while helping people develop a closer understanding of the place they inhabit.

These outcomes do not happen automatically. They require people who know what they are doing, resources to support their work, and enough continuity to learn from experience.

If we want restoration to succeed, we must learn to value the work that happens between the public events.

Local knowledge is not an optional extra

Ecological restoration cannot be delivered entirely from a desk, nor can it be imposed successfully without considering the people who live with the land.

Scientific knowledge is essential. So is practical experience, traditional knowledge, and an understanding of how local communities use and relate to their surroundings.

People who have lived in a landscape for generations may understand seasonal changes, useful indigenous plants, local water patterns, grazing practices, and the ways in which particular places have changed over time. That knowledge deserves to be taken seriously and brought into dialogue with ecological research.

This does not mean every traditional practice is automatically sustainable or every scientific recommendation is beyond question. It means restoration is stronger when different forms of knowledge are considered carefully, tested against evidence, and used in ways that respect the people concerned.

It also means that communities should not simply be invited to provide unpaid labor while decisions and funding remain elsewhere.

Meaningful participation includes opportunities to develop skills, contribute knowledge, influence decisions, and benefit from the work. Where restoration is supported by public or philanthropic funding, the role of local participants should be clear, fair, and properly acknowledged.

A restored landscape is valuable. A restoration process that also strengthens local knowledge and capacity can create benefits that extend far beyond the site itself.

Restoration costs money. Neglect costs us too.

One of the uncomfortable realities of environmental work is that it requires funding long before its benefits become visible.

Seedlings must be propagated. Tools and materials must be purchased. Workers must be paid. Sites must be prepared and maintained. Education requires planning and resources. Progress must be documented, and projects must remain accountable to those supporting them.

A volunteer day can contribute enormous value, but volunteer enthusiasm cannot replace every paid role or cover every recurring expense.

When small environmental initiatives are expected to deliver lasting results without reliable funding, they are often forced into a cycle of starting, stopping, and starting again. Each interruption risks losing momentum, practical knowledge, and the progress already achieved.

This is especially difficult for community-based initiatives in regions where infrastructure and economic opportunities are unevenly distributed. The need for restoration may be clear, yet the capacity to sustain it can remain limited.

Funders, businesses, and individuals therefore need to reconsider what they are supporting.

Instead of asking only how many trees a donation will purchase, ask what it will enable over time. Will it help establish and maintain a nursery? Support a trained worker? Prepare a restoration site properly? Fund environmental learning for young people? Provide the equipment needed to maintain trails or manage invasive vegetation?

The strongest contribution may not be the most photogenic one. It may be the one that keeps the work going when public attention has moved elsewhere.

Restoration funding should support the whole process, not merely the moment that makes a good story.

What does success actually look like?

A successful restoration project does not necessarily resemble a forest, and it does not necessarily become visually impressive within a year.

Its success depends on the ecosystem and the goals established for the site.

In one place, success may mean indigenous trees becoming established and regenerating naturally. In another, it may mean the return of native groundcover, improved wetland function, reduced erosion, the recovery of thicket vegetation, or a reduction in invasive alien plants.

It may also involve social outcomes: people gaining practical skills, children developing ecological awareness, community members taking part in decisions, or local workers finding sustained opportunities through environmental management.

These outcomes should be defined before work begins and monitored as the project develops. Not every change can be measured with equal precision, but every serious project should have a credible way of assessing progress and adapting when something is not working.

This is particularly important because restoration is rarely a straight line. Drought, fire, grazing pressure, invasive species, and changing climatic conditions can affect results. A responsible project acknowledges these risks and adjusts its methods rather than presenting every intervention as an unquestionable success.

There is no shame in learning that an approach has failed. There is a problem when nobody checks.

From environmental enthusiasm to environmental responsibility

At Lakritz and through NurtureNature, the Forest of Return is being developed around a more sustained understanding of what environmental responsibility requires.

The work at Yekelela Farm includes plans for an indigenous tree nursery, the preparation of degraded land for restoration, trail development, and environmental education. These activities are connected. The nursery can support appropriate planting where needed; restoration work can provide practical learning; trails can bring people into closer contact with the landscape; and education can help build a deeper understanding of why the work matters.

The objective is not to promise that every problem can be solved by one initiative. It is to build something useful, locally grounded, and capable of developing over time.

That requires collaboration, ecological guidance, funding, and people willing to undertake the less visible work. It also requires transparency about what has been achieved, what remains unfinished, and what resources are needed next.

For those who want to contribute, there are several meaningful entry points. Supporters can help fund nursery infrastructure, indigenous plants, restoration tools, site preparation, trail maintenance, or environmental education. Businesses can consider longer-term partnerships rather than one-off gestures. Schools can build learning relationships with local initiatives. Visitors can support projects that are connected to the places they come to experience.

The important thing is to move beyond the idea that participation is complete once a contribution has been made.

The real question is what that contribution makes possible.

We need fewer promises and more follow-through

Environmental language has become familiar. We hear about sustainability, green initiatives, biodiversity, climate responsibility, and planting trees for the future. These words can be meaningful, but they can also become convenient ways to demonstrate concern without accepting the work that genuine change demands.

We should be willing to ask difficult questions of ourselves, our organizations, our funders, and our institutions.

Are we restoring the right ecosystem? Are we using appropriate species? Are local people meaningfully involved? Is the work properly funded? Do we know whether the intervention is succeeding? Who will maintain the site next year, and the year after that?

These are not questions intended to discourage participation. They are questions that take participation seriously.

We do not need fewer people caring about nature. We need that concern to be matched by knowledge, responsibility, and the willingness to stay involved after the initial enthusiasm has faded.

A tree can be planted in a moment. An ecosystem recovers through countless interactions over time. The work of restoration is to help those processes become possible again, and to create the conditions in which they can continue.

That is a much larger commitment than a planting day. It is also a far more worthwhile one.

If we want to leave future generations a living landscape, we must stop measuring environmental responsibility by what we plant in public and start measuring it by what we are willing to protect, maintain, learn, and restore over time.

The Forest of Return, an initiative connected to Lakritz and NurtureNature, seeks to bring indigenous restoration, environmental education, and community participation together in the Eastern Cape. To learn more or explore opportunities to contribute, contact Lakritz or NurtureNature.

Further reading

- Society for Ecological Restoration — International Principles and Standards, Third Edition (2026)
- United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration — Restoration standards and guidance



The Value of Giving Something Back

Responsible travel, local participation, and the question of what we leave behind.

We travel to experience places that are different from our everyday lives. We seek landscapes that surprise us, coastlines that make us pause, forests that offer quiet, and encounters that change the way we see the world.

We visit galleries, walk trails, discover unfamiliar communities, and take photographs of places we want to remember. We spend money on accommodation, food, activities, and experiences. For a few days, a place becomes part of our lives.

Then we leave.

But what remains of our presence after we have gone?

It is a question worth asking, particularly in places such as the Eastern Cape, where extraordinary landscapes coexist with economic inequality, environmental pressures, and communities that do not always receive the benefits that visitors and tourism bring.

Travel does not automatically benefit the places we visit simply because we admire them. Money spent at a destination does not necessarily reach local people. Appreciation does not automatically translate into protection. And a beautiful landscape cannot sustain itself on our admiration alone.

Perhaps it is time to ask not only what a place can give us, but what we are prepared to give back.

The landscape is not a backdrop

Nature has become an important part of how we travel. We seek places that promise authenticity, tranquillity, wilderness, and escape from the demands of everyday life.

Yet there is a contradiction in the way we sometimes approach these places. We want them to remain untouched, while expecting them to provide comfortable accommodation, accessible roads, well-maintained trails, reliable services, and memorable experiences.

We want to encounter nature, but we do not always consider the work required to protect it.

Landscapes are living systems, not scenery arranged for our enjoyment. They have histories, ecological processes, and human communities connected to them. Their condition is shaped by decisions about land use, water, agriculture, development, conservation, and access to resources.

A forest is not simply a place to walk. It is an ecosystem that needs to be understood and protected. A trail is not simply a line through the landscape. It requires planning, maintenance, and consideration of the effects of human activity. An indigenous garden is not merely an attractive addition to a property. It can provide habitat, support biodiversity, and help people understand the plants that belong to their surroundings.

When we recognize these relationships, our experience of a place changes. We become less concerned with what we can consume from it and more attentive to what allows it to exist.

That is where responsible travel begins: not with a label or a marketing promise, but with an understanding that the places we enjoy require care.

Tourism is an opportunity, not a guarantee

Tourism can support local economies. It can create employment, sustain small businesses, encourage cultural exchange, and provide income for conservation and environmental education.

But these benefits are not automatic.

A destination can attract visitors while local communities remain economically excluded. Businesses can use images of nature in their marketing without contributing meaningfully to its protection. A region can become popular for its beauty while the work required to maintain that beauty remains underfunded.

The question is not whether tourism is good or bad. It is how its benefits are distributed, what pressures it places on the environment, and whether it helps strengthen the places on which it depends.

Responsible tourism asks us to look beyond visitor numbers and occupancy rates. It considers local employment, procurement, water use, waste, biodiversity, cultural respect, and the long-term effects of development.

It also recognizes that small, locally rooted initiatives may need support that conventional tourism does not provide.

A community environmental project, an indigenous plant nursery, a local artist, a guided nature walk, or an educational program may not be the most obvious attraction on a travel itinerary. Yet these activities can create meaningful connections between visitors and the place they have come to experience.

Supporting them can be one way of making travel more reciprocal.

This does not mean every visitor must become a conservation donor, nor that every business must solve the environmental challenges of its region. It means that we should be more deliberate about the relationships our spending and participation create.

Where does our money go? Whose knowledge do we value? What local initiatives can we support? And what happens to the place after the visitor season ends?

These are reasonable questions, not unreasonable demands.

Giving back does not always mean giving money

Financial contributions matter. Environmental work requires resources, and donations can help sustain activities that would otherwise struggle to continue.

But giving back takes many forms.

A visitor might choose a locally owned business, book a guided walk with a knowledgeable local guide, purchase work directly from an artist, or support an environmental initiative during a stay.

A business might contribute materials, equipment, professional expertise, or a portion of its resources to a clearly defined local project. A school might establish an ongoing relationship with a restoration initiative. An artist might share knowledge, participate in a community project, or create work that opens up a different understanding of the landscape.

Residents, too, can contribute through practical skills, local knowledge, volunteering, and participation in decisions that affect their surroundings.

The important distinction is between an isolated gesture and a relationship that continues.

A once-off donation can be valuable. A sustained partnership can create greater continuity. A volunteer day can bring people together. Regular involvement can build skills and allow people to see how their efforts develop over time.

Giving back should not be reduced to a transaction in which we pay for a clear conscience. It is about recognizing that we are participants in a larger system of relationships, and that our choices have consequences beyond our immediate experience.

The value of doing something together

Environmental restoration offers a particularly direct way to connect people with a place. Unlike an abstract appeal to save nature, restoration asks us to engage with specific ground, plants, water systems, and ecological conditions. It makes the work visible, but also reveals how much remains unseen.

At first, a restoration site may look unimpressive. The soil may be exposed, invasive plants may dominate, and young indigenous plants may appear insignificant against the scale of the landscape.

Progress is often slow. Some interventions require repeated work. Plants may fail to establish. Methods need to be adapted. The people involved must learn to distinguish between what looks good immediately and what contributes to ecological recovery over time.

This is not a disadvantage. It is an opportunity to develop a more realistic relationship with nature.

Restoration teaches patience, cooperation, and responsibility. It reminds us that not every worthwhile action produces an immediate reward and that long-term outcomes depend on many small decisions made consistently.

It can also create opportunities for practical learning. Young people can discover indigenous plants, understand local ecosystems, develop useful skills, and see how environmental knowledge can be applied. Adults can contribute experience and expertise. Businesses and visitors can support activities that connect their presence to tangible local outcomes.

When people participate in meaningful work together, the landscape becomes more than a place they have visited. It becomes a place in which they have invested something of themselves.

The Forest of Return: an invitation to participate

At Lakritz and through NurtureNature, the Forest of Return is being developed around this connection between landscape, learning, and community.

At Yekelela Farm, the initiative includes plans for an indigenous tree nursery, the restoration of degraded land, the development of trails, and environmental education. The ambition is to build a practical relationship between ecological restoration and the people who live in, work in, and visit the Eastern Cape.

The nursery is not an end in itself. It is part of the infrastructure needed to support appropriate indigenous planting where restoration requires it. The trails are not simply recreational facilities. They can help people encounter the landscape more closely and develop an understanding of its ecological character. Environmental education is not an optional extra. It helps create the knowledge and commitment on which future restoration depends.

This work requires resources, time, skills, and partnerships. It cannot be sustained through enthusiasm alone.

There are opportunities for individuals to contribute toward plants, tools, site preparation, or maintenance. Businesses can explore longer-term partnerships. Schools and educators can connect learning to practical environmental work. Visitors can support local initiatives as part of their experience of the region.

For those who want to do more, participation can extend beyond a single visit or event. It can mean returning, following the project's progress, sharing its work with others, or helping establish relationships with people and organizations able to contribute expertise and funding.

The aim is not to make every visitor responsible for everything. It is to make meaningful participation possible.

And it is to recognize that environmental work has value even when it is not packaged as a tourist attraction.

Artists, too, have a relationship with place

For artists, the question of giving back carries another dimension.

Landscapes have always been sources of artistic inspiration. Artists respond to the colors, textures, histories, materials, and human experiences of the places in which they work. Art can draw attention to environmental change, question the way we use land, and give form to experiences that statistics alone cannot communicate.

But there is a difference between using a place as inspiration and engaging with it.

An artist can ask what a landscape reveals about history, belonging, ecological loss, and the relationship between human activity and the natural world. They can work with local stories, collaborate with communities, or create opportunities for people to encounter environmental questions through art.

Such engagement does not require every artwork to carry an environmental message. Art must retain its freedom to question, contradict, disturb, and explore. Its contribution may be to make us see something differently rather than to prescribe what we should do.

At Lakritz, the meeting of art and nature is not intended to turn the landscape into decoration for cultural activity. It is an invitation to consider how artistic practice, ecological awareness, and human experience can inform one another.

The same principle applies to cultural events and gatherings. Their value need not end when the final discussion is over. They can create relationships, encourage new thinking, and inspire practical commitments that continue beyond the event itself.

A different kind of hospitality

Hospitality is often understood as making people feel welcome. But a deeper form of hospitality considers the relationship between the guest and the place that receives them. What does it mean to welcome someone into a landscape? What responsibilities accompany that welcome? How can visitors experience a place without treating it as a resource that exists solely for their pleasure?

These questions matter to small, independent spaces as much as to larger tourism businesses.

At Lakritz, the relationship between art, nature, and conversation is central to the way we think about place. The gallery, the Art Garden, the Forest of Return, and the gatherings hosted here are connected by the belief that experiences can do more than entertain us. They can encourage attention, exchange, and a more considered relationship with the world around us.

This does not mean every visit must become a lesson or every encounter must lead to an action plan. There is value in simply being present, looking carefully, listening, and allowing a place to affect us.

But if an experience changes how we see a landscape, it can also change how we treat it. Perhaps we become more attentive to indigenous vegetation. Perhaps we begin to ask questions about land use or water. Perhaps we decide to support a local initiative or return to participate in its work.

The effect may be modest. It may take time to emerge. But it begins with a shift from passive consumption toward active awareness.

What do we leave behind?

We often speak of the places we visit in terms of what they give us: rest, beauty, inspiration, knowledge, adventure, or a temporary escape from ordinary life.

These are real benefits. There is nothing wrong with enjoying a landscape or seeking the pleasure of being somewhere new.

The difficulty begins when the relationship ends there.

A place that gives us something deserves more than our appreciation. It deserves our attention to the conditions that allow it to remain what it is, and our willingness to support the people and initiatives working to protect its future.

Giving back does not have to be grand. It does not have to be visible. It does not have to begin with a large donation or a public declaration.
It can begin with a question, a decision, a conversation, a purchase, a few hours of practical work, or a commitment to return.
What matters is that we move beyond the assumption that the value of a place lies only in what we can experience there.
The Eastern Cape does not need visitors who simply admire its landscapes and then forget them. It needs relationships that recognize the value of those landscapes and contribute, in practical and appropriate ways, to their future.
The same is true of the communities, artists, and independent initiatives that give a place its character.
We cannot expect a landscape to keep giving while we remain unwilling to give anything back.
Perhaps the measure of a meaningful visit is not only what we take home with us, but what remains because we were there.

Join the conversation: Lakritz Forum 2027
From April 9–11, 2027, Lakritz will host its first Forum, Art on the Edge, bringing together art, nature, and conversation in the Eastern Cape. The Forum invites participants to consider our relationship with the natural world, the landscapes we inhabit, and the responsibilities that come with living alongside them.
It is an opportunity to step away from familiar routines, encounter new perspectives, and explore what it means to pay attention to the world around us.
Discover the program and booking information: lakritz.co.za/art-on-the-edge-2027
To learn more about the Forest of Return and opportunities to support restoration and environmental education, contact Lakritz or NurtureNature.



Three days of art, nature and human connection in Chintsa East
What connects us to a place, to one another, and to the natural world? How do we navigate the tension between isolation and belonging in a time of profound environmental and social change? And what can art, poetry and nature teach us about the ways we live together?
These are some of the questions at the heart of The Art of the Edge, the first Lakritz Forum, taking place from 9–11 April 2027 in Chintsa East, Eastern Cape.
Created by Lakritz, an independent contemporary art space built around the idea of A Place of Seeing, the Forum brings together art, nature and conversation in a three-day programme of talks, walks, artistic encounters and shared experiences. Rather than a conventional conference, it is conceived as a gathering that encourages participants to step outside their everyday routines, encounter new perspectives and engage in meaningful conversations.The setting is an essential part of the experience. Situated in the coastal landscape of Chintsa East, Lakritz connects contemporary art with the surrounding environment, while its wider initiatives explore ecological restoration, indigenous forests and the relationship between people and place. The Forum invites participants to experience these connections directly — through walking, listening, reflecting and exchanging ideas.

Exploring the Edges

The program begins on Friday, 9 April, with arrival and a welcome gathering. The afternoon introduces the theme through "NO ONE — The Art of the Edge," exploring how creative expression is influenced by extreme geographic solitude. Poetry by Silke Heiss and reflections on solitude and artistic practice by Claudine Hauke will open a conversation about making art at the edges — physically, psychologically and creatively. The day concludes with a wine tasting, a light dinner and informal gallery discussion.

Saturday, 10 April, begins outdoors with a beach walk and a Mini Hiku Hike, a guided writing experience led by Silke Heiss. Participants will walk in silence, observe their surroundings and make notes on paper, discovering how attention to landscape can become a form of creative expression. No previous writing experience is required.

The morning continues with breakfast at Chintsa Dunes, followed by a Conversation Table, connecting the experiences of the morning with questions of human connection, isolation and belonging.

In the afternoon, the program moves to Emerald Vale for a walk and a talk by Professor Susi Vetter of Rhodes University, titled "What Mycorrhizal Fungi Teach Us About Human Loneliness." Inspired by the hidden networks that connect life beneath the soil, the discussion explores what these natural systems might teach us about our own need for connection.

The day concludes at Emerald Vale with an early dinner and informal conversation around the table — an opportunity to continue exchanging ideas, reflect on the day's experiences and enjoy the connections that emerge when people come together.

Sunday, 11 April, turns towards ecological resilience and the possibilities of practical action. At the Forest of Return on Yekelela Farm, the morning begins with an embodiment and breathing practice led by Cher Goslett, followed by breakfast and a visit to the reforestation project.

Horticulturist Martin Kunhardt will introduce participants to the work of restoring indigenous forest through his talk, "Botanical Resilience in a Changing Climate." The session explores adaptation, resilience and what plants can teach us about responding to environmental change, concluding with a tree-planting activity.

The program continues with a screening of Deon Robbertze's video The Change Manifesto and a talk by Scott Worley of Land of the Living on environmental pollution and recycling. A farewell braai and open discussion will bring the three days to a close.

From reflection to connection

The Lakritz Forum is an invitation to think across disciplines and to recognize that questions about art, ecology and human relationships are not separate from one another. The natural world offers complex examples of interdependence, adaptation and resilience. Art allows us to approach these questions through imagination, emotion and alternative ways of seeing. Conversation creates the space in which individual experiences can become shared understanding.

By bringing together artists, academics, environmental practitioners and curious members of the public, Lakritz hopes to create an environment in which ideas can move freely between disciplines and lived experiences.

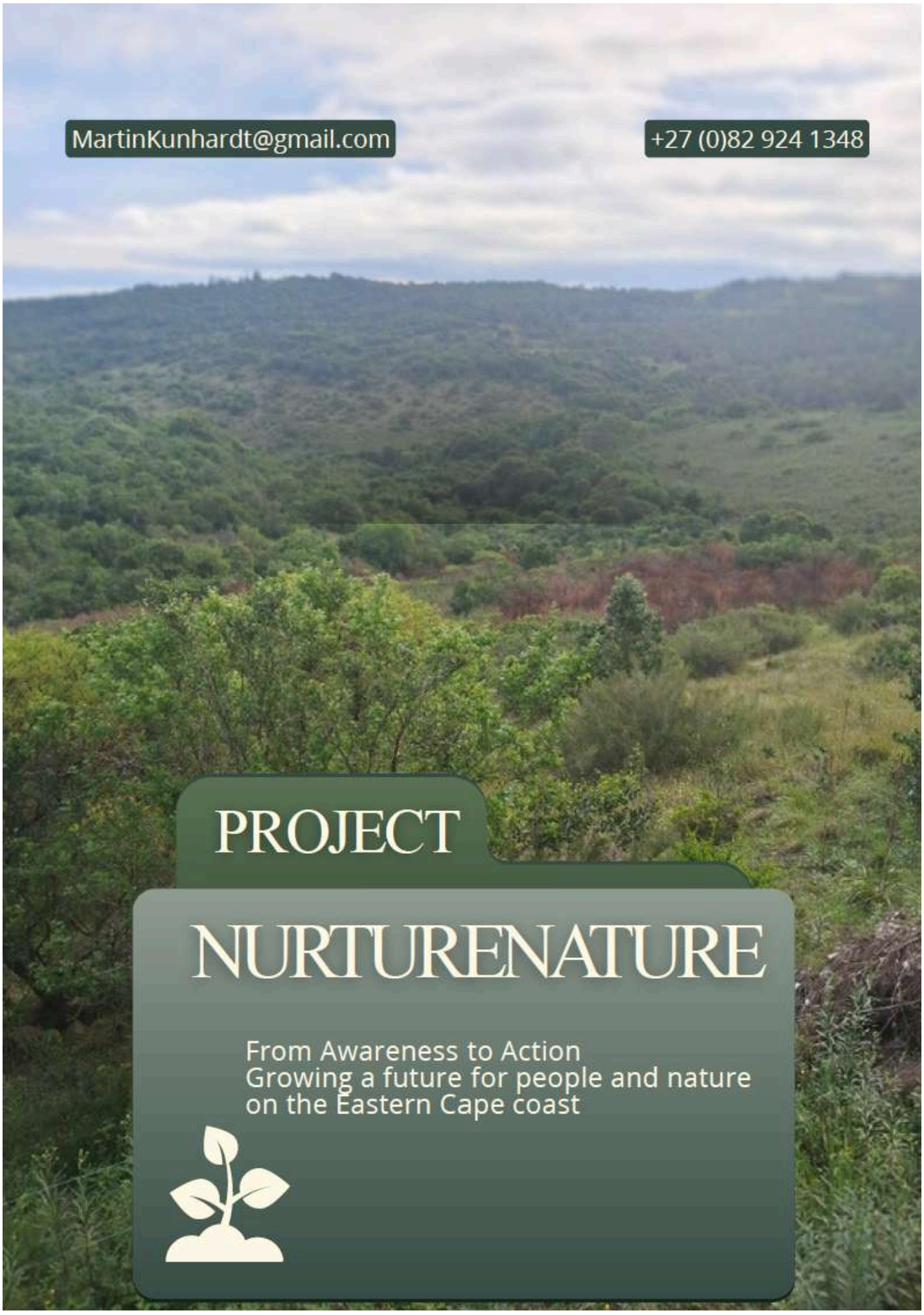
The Forum also reflects Lakritz's wider commitment to connecting awareness with action. Through its Gallery, Art Garden, Forest of Return and developing Field Campus, Lakritz seeks to create opportunities for people to engage with contemporary art while becoming more attentive to the environments and communities in which they live.

The Art of the Edge is therefore not simply a program of presentations. It is an opportunity to pause, observe, question and reconnect — with ourselves, with other people and with the living world around us.

Join us in Chintsa East

The first Lakritz Forum takes place from Friday, 9 April, to Sunday, 11 April 2027, in Chintsa East, Eastern Cape.

Ticket price: R3,800 per person for the full three-day program. Accommodation is not included. Lakritz will gladly assist participants with booking suitable accommodation if required.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PROJECT
NURTURENATURE
From Awareness to Action
Growing a future for people and nature
on the Eastern Cape coast

THE PLACE & THE VISION

NurtureNature

A place where nature can recover — and people can reconnect.

On the Eastern Cape coast of South Africa, at Yekelela Farm near Chintsa, NurtureNature is working to restore and protect the natural landscape.

The Forest of Return is our long-term vision: a living landscape where indigenous trees and shrubs, grassland, wildlife and people can once again exist in a healthier relationship.

This is not about turning grassland into forest. It is about restoring the natural character of the landscape — allowing grassland to remain grassland, while re-establishing the indigenous trees and shrubs that belong here.



Why this work matters

Parts of the landscape have been affected by disturbance, burning, grazing pressure and the spread of an indigenous plant, Seriphium plumosum, which can become dominant and choke out other vegetation in disturbed areas.

Our approach is to understand the land, protect what is already growing, and encourage the return of a more diverse and resilient indigenous ecosystem.

We believe restoration is more than planting trees. It is a long-term commitment to the land, to biodiversity and to the people who live alongside it.







THE WORK & HOW TO BE PART OF IT

What we are building

An indigenous nursery
We are developing a nursery to propagate locally appropriate indigenous trees and shrubs. The aim is to grow plants that reflect the natural vegetation of this landscape and support its gradual recovery.
Restoring the landscape
Work includes preparing areas for planting, establishing indigenous vegetation, supporting pollinators and creating trails that allow people to experience and learn about the natural environment.
Grassland will remain grassland. Small groups of indigenous trees and shrubs will be reintroduced where they naturally belong, with ongoing monitoring and care.

Learning through nature

We want the NurtureNature project to become a place of learning and exchange. Through environmental education, practical activities and collaboration with local partners, people of different ages can develop a deeper understanding of the natural world.
Skills and opportunity
The nursery and restoration work also create opportunities for local people to gain practical experience and develop skills in plant propagation, environmental care and land restoration.

A place for people, too

Our longer-term vision is for the Forest of Return to become a welcoming destination for people who want to spend time in nature, learn, contribute and reconnect.

In collaboration with Lakritz and its developing Field Campus and Material Lab, we hope to create opportunities for learning, creative exploration and environmental awareness.
In time, we also envision opportunities for nature-based retreats and quiet experiences that bring people closer to the landscape.
Be part of the return
Restoration takes time — and it takes people.

Together, we can help nature return — and create a place where future generations can learn, grow and belong.



You can support NurtureNature by:

- Contributing towards indigenous trees, seedlings and nursery development.
- Supporting restoration and environmental education activities.
- Volunteering your time or practical skills.
- Connecting us with potential partners and supporters.
- Taking part in planting days and other activities.

Every contribution helps build something that will continue to grow beyond us.

NurtureNature
From Awareness to Action
Martin Kunhardt +27 (0)82 924 1348 Martinkunhardt@gmail.com

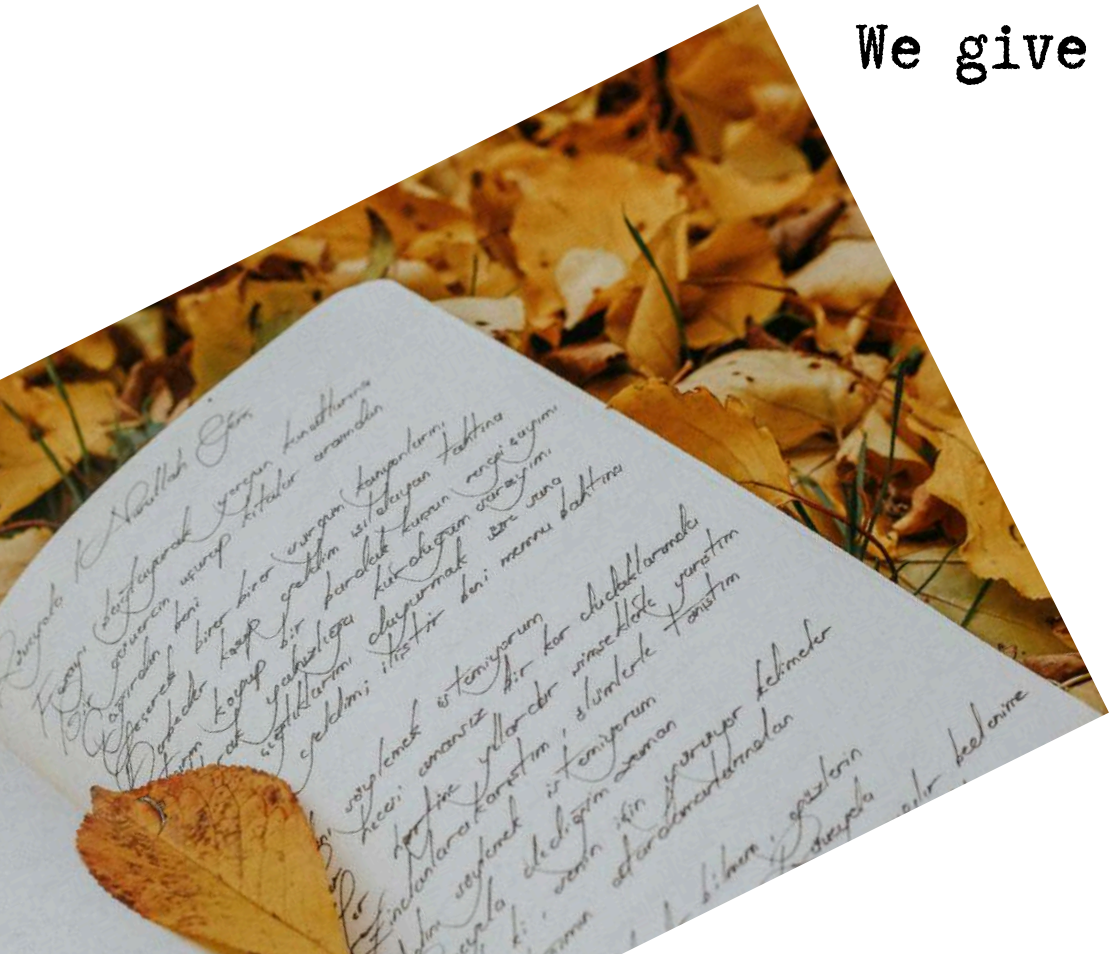


NEW

Poet - Writer - Creator

You have something to say ....

We give you a Voice!



SILKE HEISS

Where Words Meet the Living World



Some people write about the world. Others listen to it.
Silke Heiss belongs to the second kind.
For Silke, poetry has never been simply an arrangement of words on a page. It is a way of paying attention – to a tree, a landscape, a memory, a body, a loss, a love, a moment of uncertainty. It is a way of standing still long enough for something usually overlooked to become visible.
She has been writing poetry since the age of nine. Born in Berlin in I965, she spent her early childhood in Heidelberg before growing up and being schooled in Pretoria. She went on to study Comparative Literature at Wits and Creative Writing at the University of Cape Town, where her novel The Drop Out received second prize in the Ernst van Heerden Creative Writing Competition in 2002. Her writing has since moved freely between poetry, prose, short stories, reviews, verse novel and creative nonfiction.



Her work has appeared in South African journals, anthologies and online poetry platforms, and she has received recognition for both poetry and prose. Among these are third prize in the Dalro Poetry Award for her poem Butterfly Prints and shared first prize in the Chinese Short Story Project for Pule Stays Put. She was also supported by the National Arts Council, which enabled her to develop a collection of short stories and a second novel. Her illustrated verse novel The Griffin Elegy was serialised in New Contrast between 2007 and 2009.

But perhaps a list of achievements tells only a small part of the story.

Because Silke's work has always been about connection.

In 20I2 she became a member of the Ecca Poets, the long-standing Eastern Cape poetry collective, and has remained an active contributor ever since. She has also created cover art for many of the group's publications, bringing together two languages that run through much of her life: the written word and the visual image. Her own practice moves between writing and art, including sculptural, ceramics and other forms of making.

Over the years, she has collaborated on numerous publications, including a series of books with the late poet Norman Morrissey. Their shared relationship with poetry, wilderness and wildlife and the natural world found its way into works such as Love Letters to the Earth. Following Morrissey's death, Silke's Greater Matter: A Journey of Poems to Death and Beyond traced love, grief and continuing connection through poetry. The book became a deeply personal journey across the boundary between presence and absence.

Her later work continues to turn towards nature.

Through her Hiku Hikes, Silke takes people into wilderness spaces and uses walking, observation and writing as ways of reconnecting with themselves and the world around them. In 2024 she presented the practice at the Literature Heritage Ecology Conference hosted by Amazwi Museum of Literature. In 2025 she launched Hiku Hike Harvest, a collection bringing together poems and creative pieces produced by participants on these walks – including people who had never considered themselves writers before.

This idea feels particularly close to the heart of Lakritz.

Because Lakritz is also interested in what happens when the boundaries between art, nature and conversation become porous.

A poem can be a landscape.

A walk can become a form of writing.

A conversation can become an artwork.

And a place can become a space for seeing.

Silke has spent much of her life creating exactly these kinds of spaces. Through her writing mentorship, editing, workshops, Hiku Hikes,and more recently, her online Mental Wellness Challenges with their listening to poetry and story core, as well as Turquoise Voice open-mic events, she has continued to create opportunities for words to be shared rather than simply stored away on pages. Her work has consistently carried an invitation: look closer, listen differently, find your own -inner-voice to speak out with



That invitation is one of the reasons we are particularly happy to welcome Silke into the growing Lakritz circle.

Her first connection with Lakritz will be through the Who Belongs? program in 2027, where she will bring poems written by fellow Ecca and herself about migration, territory and belonging into a reading that opens the year's program. But we hope this will be only the beginning.

We imagine future readings, conversations, poetry gatherings and perhaps walks that move beyond the gallery walls – into the garden, the forest, the landscape and the spaces between people.

Not everything needs to happen inside a gallery.

Some things are better discovered under a tree.

Some words need a landscape around them.

And some conversations need time.

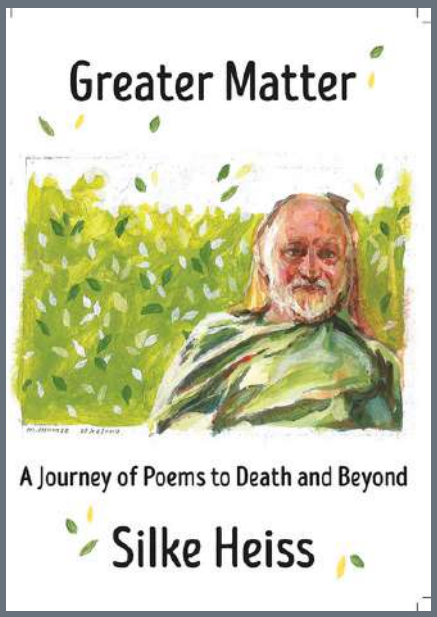
Silke Heiss brings all three.

For Lakritz, welcoming her is therefore not simply about adding a poet to a program. It is about opening a door to a longer conversation – one in which literature, art, nature and human experience can meet without needing to explain where one ends and the other begins.

Welcome, Silke.

We are looking forward to seeing where the words take us.









The tree

You are the tree
at the centre of me,
whose roots fold my ground,
sinking hollows for people
to think in and dream.

Bearded by webs,
you are wrinkled with steps,
for my spiders to slink
up and down.

Wave upon wave
of your breath
holds me high:
there's a bird in your leaves
who'll never die.

– previously published in Greater Matter A Journey of Poems to Death and Beyond,
in association with Poetree Publications, Johannesburg, 2019

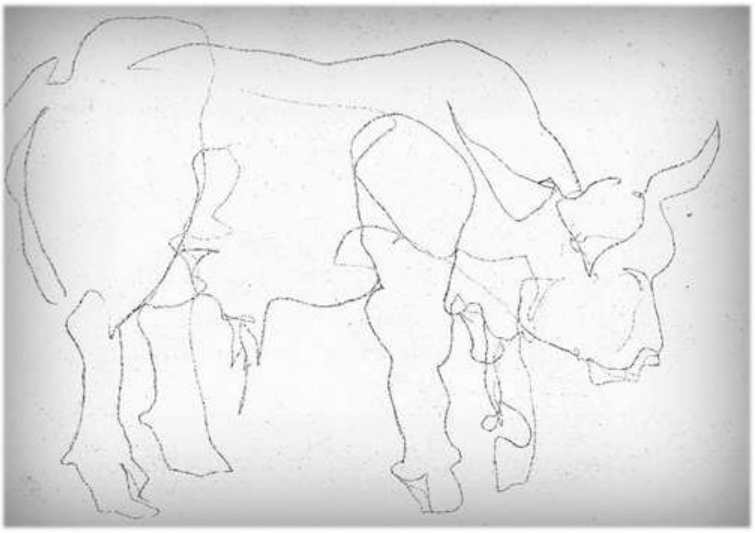


Ceramic, plaque from The Snake's Song 4th edition

Bull

The cattle move slowly,
as if they were walking under water –
the bull is a ballet dancer
to an adagio in his soul –
his huge neck
(with the dewlap,
that lush, loose petal)
nods while tilting, he's eyeing you
shyly
with a grace that only giants know;
you see
the warm flow
of hair,
haunted by an undertow
of tiger;
as his delicate ankles
and small, split toes
step forth the ton
of his muscled patterning –

the breath
of his ivory-grey hide
is the breath you hold
as he passes by.

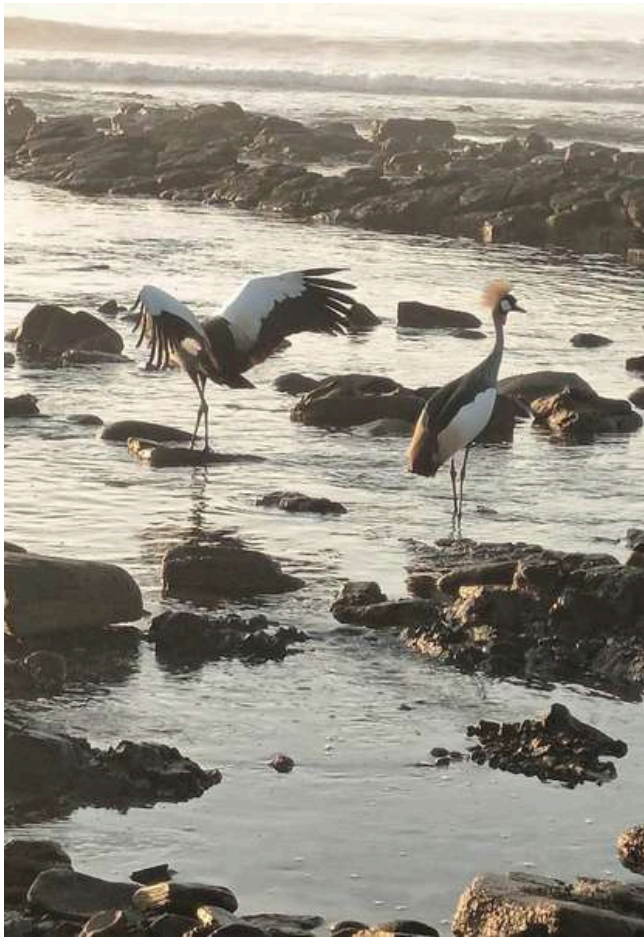


–

previously published in Alles Is Anders, Ecca Poets, Knysna, 2021

T**wo crowned cranes**

Two crowned cranes in morning light
On rocks, slithering, opening wings,
Keeping their balance,
Long, unwebbed toes, stepping on slippery green
Folding their wings, bending napes
With scarlet wattles vibrating
Crowns blinking gold and eyes looking at me
At my wonder
Keeping their balance
Two crowned cranes on rocks
Opening wings, hopping along,
Hopping with caution,
Opening and closing, opening
And re-composing
Wings
Hopping with caution and alighting
Unhurried grace
Opening wings and lifting
Flying away
Two black nostrils up in the air
Taking my breath along with them
Into the summer dune bush
Two crowned cranes on rocks
Keeping their balance
In morning light.



– previously published and sung
spontaneously to an improvised melody on
Substack

Art and photo accompanying the poems on these pages by the author. Silke Heiss

* *

Moon tracks

Partially-eclipsed, clementine-
coloured, she drops
behind the hill. I hasten
up the ridge, along the road
as not to lose her –
there now! almost completely in
earth's shadow
–a silver nail-paring, lit
by sun busy rising into a tangerine
sky.
A white-haired woman,
likewise breathless, approaches,
hoodie up against the ice wind
on our backs.
She tells me she's moonstruck
and together we witness
the blot
with its eyebrow of brightness
sink into the pink, then turquoise
swathe
that's laid on the horizon
vanish.
We step back downhill
side by side talking much
as women do
and she tells me her yen
for desert, how she really needs
to go back there: to the Karoo.
I say how my body ached
in tissues and bone before I left
my late husband's mountain home,
returning to the liminal zone
where sea and land greet
and where the pain subsided,
including the numbness in my feet.

“My late husband named it
‘a geographical piety’,” I confide,
“this need to move from north to
south,
to east, then west again
as if I’d magnetite in my brain!”
“I’ve ascribed my body’s gripes
to age,” she confesses, shaking her
shoulders,
registering the nudge to her spirit
that she budge
for the vistas of dry ground she longs
for.
Such is the blood-flower lunar power
–
two women meet by chance
at a magical hour
sharing awareness
how our circulating blood and flesh
and bone
are tracked by earth and by the moon
in heaven!
All the way down to her house our
words roam,
then my own door’s unlocked
and they percolate naturally
into this poem.


Giant kingfishers and moon, ink, pencil crayon and lipstick doodle

GROUNDED SENSING

Listening to place, memory and the body

Meet Prof. Zethu Matebeni

What does it mean to belong to a place?
Is belonging something we can claim, inherit or define? Or is it something we come to know through the body — through memory, relationships, histories and the ground beneath our feet?
For Who Belongs?, the 2027 exhibition at Lakritz, we are inviting artists, writers and thinkers to approach this question from very different directions. One of the voices we are particularly looking forward to welcoming is Professor Zethu Matebeni.
Zethu Matebeni is a sociologist, writer, documentary filmmaker, curator and scholar whose work has, for many years, explored questions of identity, sexuality, gender, race, place and belonging. Her work has contributed significantly to conversations around Black queer life and knowledge production in South Africa and beyond. She is currently a Visiting Professor at Nelson Mandela University's Centre for Women and Gender Studies and is the founder of MATI Archives.
But for Lakritz, it is her more recent work that makes her contribution to Who Belongs? particularly compelling.



Returning to the ground

In her recent work, Matebeni has turned her attention towards place in a deeply embodied way. Her return to Peddie in the Eastern Cape, where her ancestors settled in 1835, became an important turning point. Rather than looking elsewhere for the knowledge and direction she was seeking, she began to listen to the place from which she came — to its histories, its memories and what the ground itself might hold.
From this return emerged the practice she calls Grounded Sensing.
Grounded sensing is an invitation to slow down and listen differently. It asks us to pay attention not only to what can be seen or documented, but also to what is carried by land, memory, bodies and relationships. It is a practice of becoming attentive to where we are and to what a place might be telling us.

In describing this work, Matebeni connects the ground with memory and the body. Belonging therefore becomes more than a political or social category. It becomes something that can be sensed — something relational, something that develops through attention and listening.
This way of thinking resonates deeply with the question at the heart of Who Belongs?
At Lakritz, we often ask what it means to live somewhere without simply owning it. What does it mean to become part of a landscape? What memories remain in a place when people leave? What histories are visible, and which ones have been overlooked? And how might we develop a different relationship with the land around us?
Matebeni's work does not offer simple answers. Instead, it asks us to become more attentive.
Perhaps belonging begins with listening.

From scholarship to community

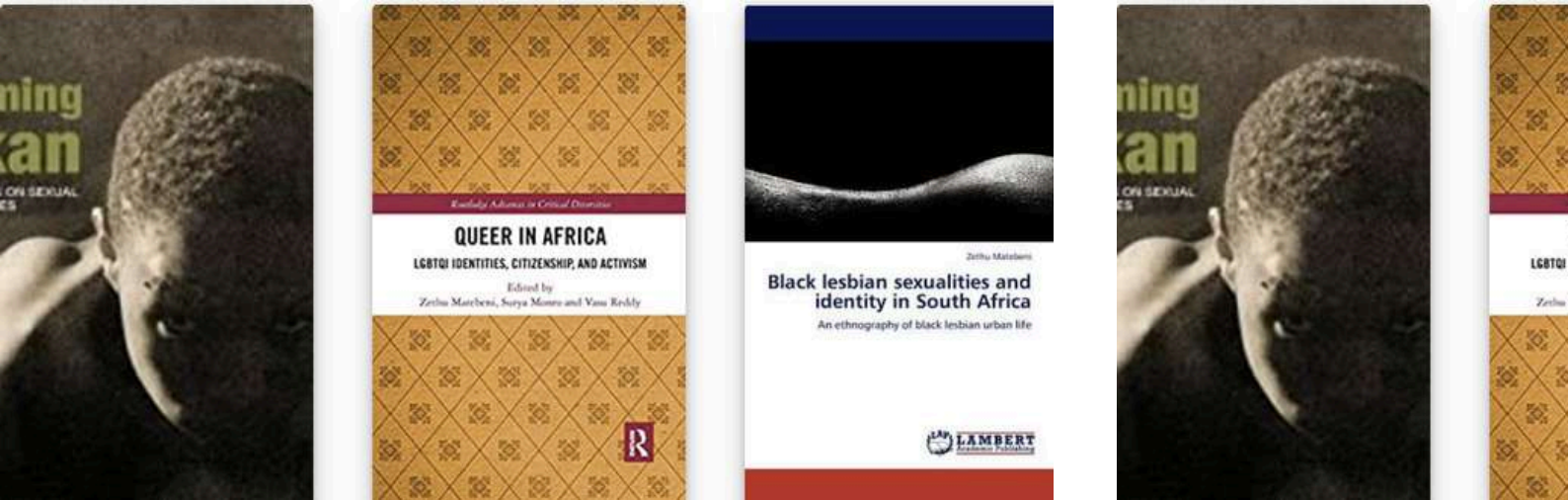
This thinking also led to the creation of **MATI Archives,** a research, residency and community initiative based in Peddie. **MATI** brings together scholarship, artistic practice, community knowledge, memory and place. Its work is grounded in the idea that knowledge does not exist only within institutions or books. It can also be held within communities, landscapes, lived experience and inherited histories.
For Lakritz, this is an important distinction.
We are interested in art not only as something to be looked at, but as a way of thinking, questioning and connecting. We are interested in the space between art, nature and conversation — and in what happens when those things are allowed to meet.
Zethu Matebeni's Grounded Sensing opens precisely such a space. It asks us to consider whether we might understand belonging not as a fixed state, but as an ongoing relationship: with the land beneath us, with those who came before us, with those around us, and with the places we choose to care for.

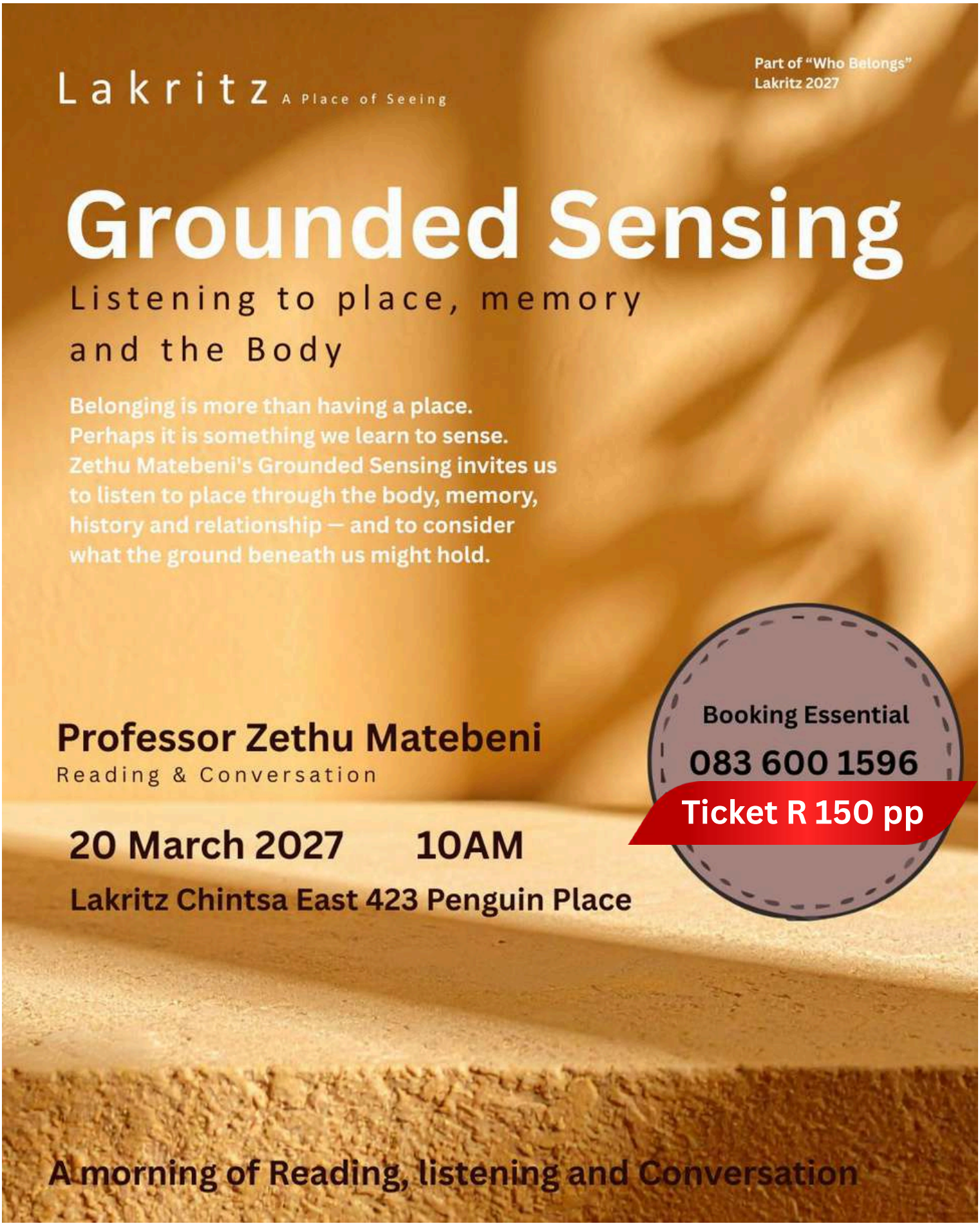


Prof.Zethu Matebeni at Lakritz

As part of Who Belongs?, Zethu Matebeni will join us at Lakritz for a reading and conversation exploring Grounded Sensing and its relationship to place, memory, body and belonging.
20 March 2027 · 10:00 AM
LAKRITZ, Chintsa East
We invite you to come not simply to listen, but to think with us.
To consider what it means to be grounded.
To ask what a place remembers.
And perhaps, for a moment, to listen to what the ground might have to say.
Explore MATI Archives
To learn more about Zethu Matebeni, her work and the ideas behind MATI Archives, visit:

MATI Archives




Lakritz A Place of Seeing
Part of "Who Belongs"
Lakritz 2027
Grounded Sensing
Listening to place, memory and the Body
Belonging is more than having a place.
Perhaps it is something we learn to sense.
Zethu Matebeni's Grounded Sensing invites us
to listen to place through the body, memory,
history and relationship — and to consider
what the ground beneath us might hold.
Booking Essential
083 600 1596
Ticket R 150 pp
Professor Zethu Matebeni
Reading & Conversation
20 March 2027 10AM
Lakritz Chintsa East 423 Penguin Place
A morning of Reading, listening and Conversation

Lakritz

Accommodation

Booking under 083 600 1596 or info@lakritz.co.za



The Brave Dassie of Nahoon: A Little Adventure Close to Home



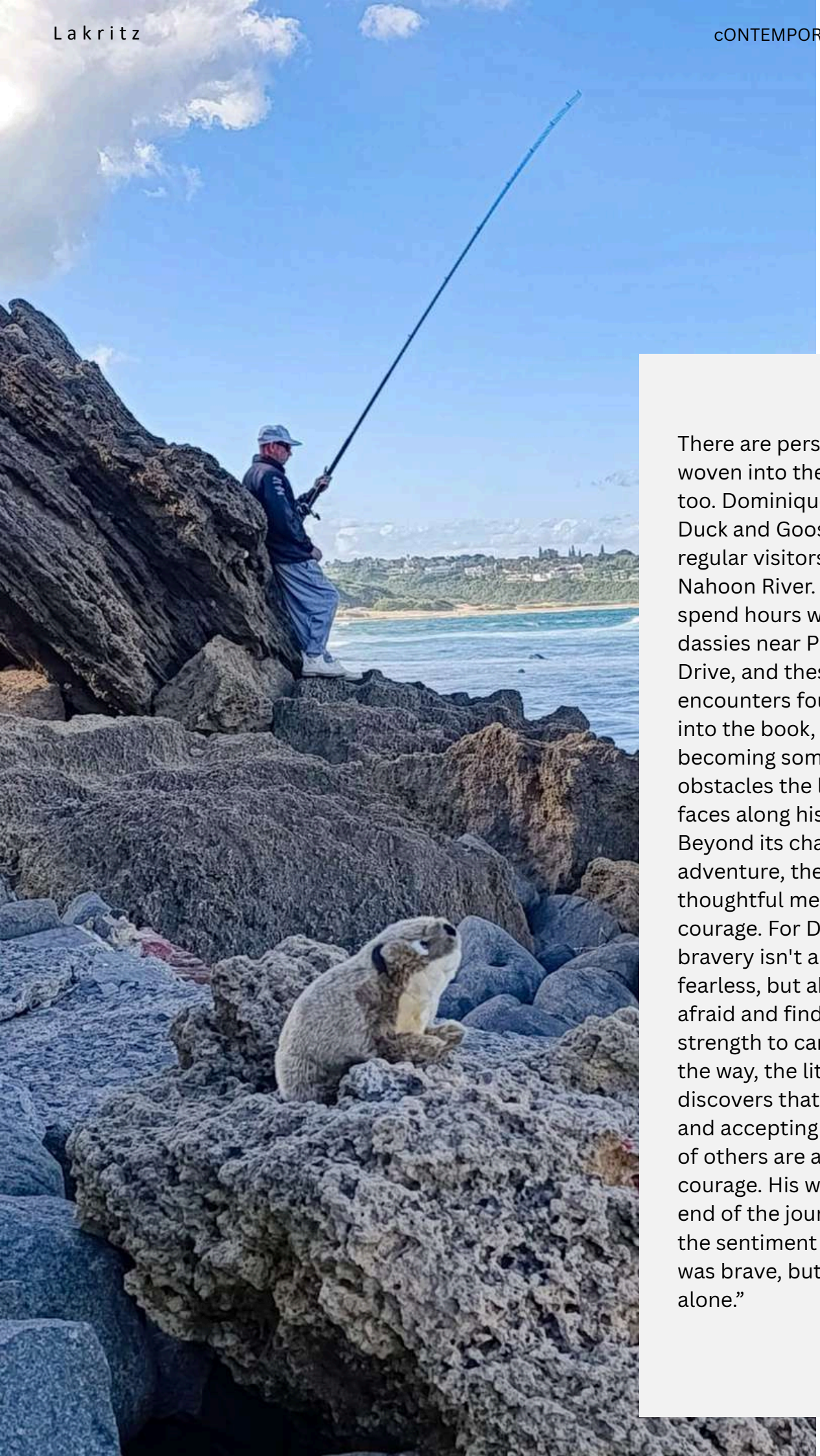


Sometimes the most wonderful stories begin with an unexpected encounter. For author Dominique Shuttleworth, the inspiration for The Brave Dassie of Nahoon came after a violent storm washed several young dassies down the Nahoon River, leaving them stranded on the beach. The image stayed with her sparking the idea of a little dassie separated from his family and faced with the daunting task of finding his way home.
Having spent more than a decade exploring Nahoon Beach and the river estuary, Dominique had developed a deep appreciation for the area's remarkable natural world. It was the perfect setting for his story, bringing together familiar landscapes, local wildlife and a little imagination.
As the young dassie makes his journey home, he encounters an extraordinary cast of creatures that inhabit the Nahoon River and its surroundings, from kelp gulls and Knysna turacos to bushbuck, eagles and hermit crabs. The story introduces young readers to the biodiversity on their doorstep, encouraging them to look a little closer at the natural world around them.









There are personal memories woven into the adventure, too. Dominique's late dogs, Duck and Goose, were regular visitors to the Nahoon River. Goose would spend hours watching the dassies near Princess Alice Drive, and these familiar encounters found their way into the book, with dogs becoming some of the obstacles the little hero faces along his journey. Beyond its charming adventure, the book carries a thoughtful message about courage. For Dominique, bravery isn't about being fearless, but about feeling afraid and finding the strength to carry on. Along the way, the little dassie discovers that asking for help and accepting the kindness of others are also acts of courage. His words at the end of the journey capture the sentiment perfectly: “I was brave, but I didn't do it alone.”



At its heart, The Brave Dassie of Nahoon is an invitation to rediscover the wonder of the familiar. Dominique hopes the story will inspire children to recognise the wildlife around them, learn its names and develop a connection with the creatures that share their environment. After all, adventure doesn't always require travelling somewhere far away. Sometimes it begins right here, along the banks of the Nahoon River. The book available in English Afrikaans and Xhosa, the stickers and Plush toy can be purchased hrough the following online platforms:

1. Website: https://www.pristineconservation.co.za/category/all-products
2. Instagram page: https://www.instagram.com/bravedassiebook/
3. Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/bravedassiebook/

We are doing a giveaway and the author will sent a book, plush toy and stickers to a lucky reader. Simply email your answer, Name, Surname, phone number and address to info@pristineconservation.co.za. The question is "what is the other name for a dassie?"

One night, dark clouds rolled in.
Thunder crashed. Lightning flashed.



Rain poured and poured and poured.

The Compost Corner





Sempirium Plumosum

Plant Profile: Slangbos / Bankrupt Bush
Scientific name: Seriphium plumosum (name used in much of the existing literature; taxonomic revision is ongoing)
Other names: Slangbos, Vaalbossie, Bankrupt bush, Silver stoebe
Family: Asteraceae (daisy family)
Origin: Indigenous to southern Africa
Growth form: Small, woody, densely branched shrub
Habitat: Grasslands, savanna, fynbos and other open vegetation types
Ecological status: A native plant that can become an aggressive encroacher in disturbed and overgrazed grassland.
Identification and ecology
Slangbos is a grey-green to silvery, intricately branched shrub with small, woolly leaves and clustered flower heads. It is adapted to dry conditions and is often avoided by grazing livestock because of its aromatic compounds and low palatability.
The plant is not inherently invasive in its native habitat. However, where grass cover has declined, particularly under heavy grazing or other disturbance, it can become dominant. Dense growth reduces the space available for indigenous grasses and other herbaceous plants, diminishing biodiversity and the productivity of grassland.
South African research identifies grazing pressure, fire and site conditions as important factors influencing its spread. The effects vary between locations, making local assessment essential
Restoration: Regaining control of encroached land
The goal is not simply to remove Slangbos, but to restore a diverse, stable plant community and prevent renewed dominance.

1. Assess the site

Map the extent of encroachment, identify remaining indigenous vegetation, and assess soil condition, erosion, slope, water flow and the land's previous use. Distinguish between areas with recoverable grass cover and severely degraded ground.

2. Reduce shrub dominance

Careful mechanical removal may be suitable for small or moderately encroached areas. More extensive infestations require site-specific planning. Chemical control should only be considered following a professional ecological assessment, as treatments can also affect desirable plants.

3. Restore indigenous vegetation

Protect surviving grasses and encourage natural regeneration. Where recovery is insufficient, consider locally sourced indigenous grass seed appropriate to the original vegetation type. Minimize bare soil and erosion during recovery.

4. Correct the underlying disturbance

Where relevant, manage grazing pressure and allow vegetation to recover. Fire management must reflect the local ecosystem; burning alone is not a reliable control method and can favor seedling establishment under some conditions.

5. Monitor and adapt

Use fixed-point photographs and small monitoring plots to track shrub regrowth, indigenous plant cover, species diversity and soil stability. Repeated monitoring is essential because renewed encroachment can occur after initial treatment.

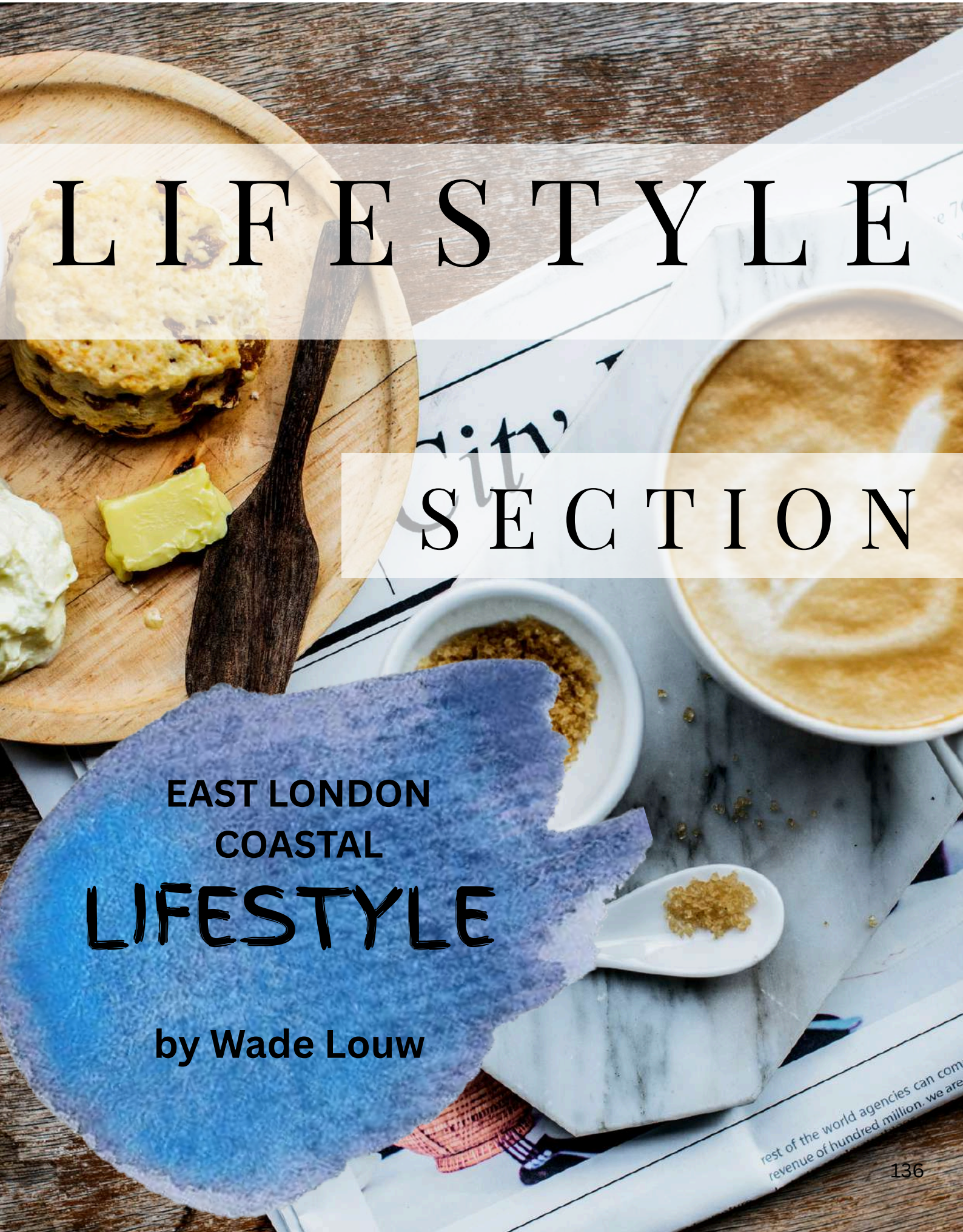
Before reforestation: restore the right ecosystem

An important distinction must be made between restoring grassland and establishing indigenous forest. Not every degraded open landscape should be planted with trees. Natural grasslands are valuable ecosystems in their own right, and planting trees in the wrong location can damage native biodiversity and alter water use.

Before planning reforestation, determine the original vegetation type and whether the site naturally supports forest, thicket, woodland or grassland.

Where indigenous forest or thicket is ecologically appropriate, shrub control should be followed by a restoration plan using locally appropriate indigenous species, suitable planting locations and protection against erosion and renewed disturbance. Where the original ecosystem is grassland, the priority should instead be grassland restoration.

The principle: identify the original ecosystem first, manage the encroachment carefully, restore the appropriate indigenous vegetation, and monitor recovery over time.



LIFESTYLE SECTION

EAST LONDON COASTAL LIFESTYLE

by Wade Louw

A Christmas Table with a Story to Tell

by Wade Louw



The idea for this year's Christmas table was to go treasure hunting through East London's antique and vintage stores to create a table using pre-loved finds, pieces with a little history and the sort of charm that simply cannot be bought new.
The first stop was Morway's Antique Store in Vincent, where a set of Rosenthal Maria White porcelain plates caught my eye. Their distinctive octagonal shape and timeless simplicity made the perfect starting point for the table.
A little more rummaging revealed a wonderful assortment of silverware. Among the finds was an Art Deco silver and blue salt and pepper set, the sort of pieces that seem to carry memories of countless dinner parties. There were also beautiful bone china pieces and silverware decorated with delicate grape motifs, adding just the right amount of old-world character.









At Pickers Paradise in Cambridge, another favourite hunting ground, a pair of Bohemian crystal candlestick holders completed the collection. Their cut-glass detail catches the light beautifully, and they are exactly the sort of vintage treasures that deserve another turn at the dinner table.
The rest came together quite naturally. Fresh white peonies brought softness to the setting, while candlelight added a gentle warmth. A palette of muted tones kept everything understated, with simple Christmas baubles personalised with individual name tags providing the final festive touch.
The result is a table that feels elegant without being formal, Christmassy without being predictable, and, most importantly, full of personality. Perhaps that is the beauty of decorating with vintage finds. There is no need for everything to match, or for every piece to come from the same era. A little silver, some beautiful porcelain, crystal catching the candlelight and flowers in season can be all it takes.
Sometimes the most memorable Christmas tables aren't the ones where everything is brand new, but those where old treasures find a new purpose, and a new story begins around the table.
Morways antique store, 34 Vincent Rd, Vincent East London, contact number: 0824329581
Pickers Paradise,80 Queen Street, Cambridge 079 899 2082



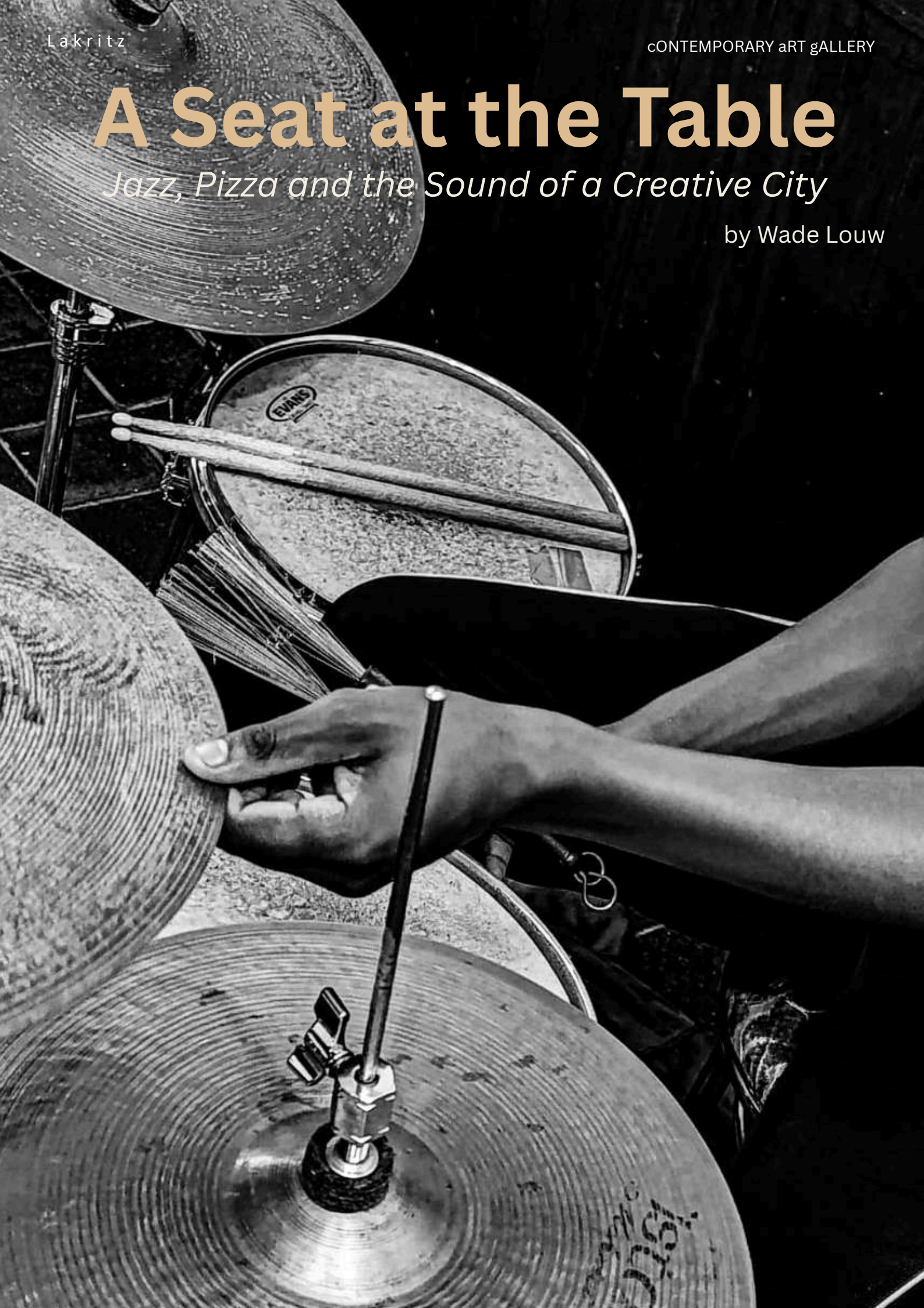
Lakritz

cONTEMPORARY aRT gALLERY

A Seat at the Table

Jazz, Pizza and the Sound of a Creative City

by Wade Louw





There is something rather wonderful about a city that makes room for jazz. Not simply as entertainment, but as a living, breathing part of its cultural identity.
At the East London Museum Café, Thursday evenings have found a new rhythm with Jazz & Pizza Thursdays, a gathering that brings local musicians, visiting artists and jazz enthusiasts together in an intimate setting where good music and good company take centre stage.
Every Thursday, from 7pm to 10pm, the café becomes a meeting place for the city's jazz community, with live performances celebrating both established traditions and the musicians shaping the sound of jazz today. Add freshly made pizza, a glass of wine and an unhurried evening, and the ingredients for a rather appealing night out are all there.



The inspiration draws on the enduring legacy of John Coltrane's A Love Supreme, a landmark of spiritual jazz whose themes of love, unity and devotion extend well beyond music. It is an ethos that gives these evenings their purpose: creating a space where people can gather, listen and find common ground.

And perhaps that is what makes jazz so relevant. At its heart is the art of listening responding to one another, embracing improvisation and finding harmony in unexpected places. It is a conversation between musicians, a willingness to adapt and an understanding that something beautiful can emerge when individual voices come together.

There is also a bigger idea at work here. Jazz & Pizza Thursdays is part of a growing effort to nurture East London's creative community, providing local musicians with a platform, welcoming visiting talent and helping to build a sustainable cultural environment for future generations.

For a city with such a rich musical heritage and creative potential, spaces like these matter. They give artists somewhere to perform, audiences somewhere to discover new sounds, and the rest of us an opportunity to participate in the cultural life of our city.





So, consider making Thursday your jazz night. Pull up a chair at the East London Museum Café, order a pizza, pour yourself a glass of wine and allow the music to do what it has always done best: bring people together.

Jazz & Pizza Thursdays East London Museum Café

Every Thursday | 19:00–22:00Entry: R150Pizza, wine, soft drinks and coffee available.

Organiser: 0680700945 Zuko

Because sometimes the best way to experience a city is to listen to it.



Batter & Dough: The City's Macaron Whisperer



Delicate, colourful and notoriously temperamental, the French macaron is hardly the easiest confection to master. But for Tayla de Coning, the young baker behind Batter & Dough, the challenge is precisely what makes them so appealing.

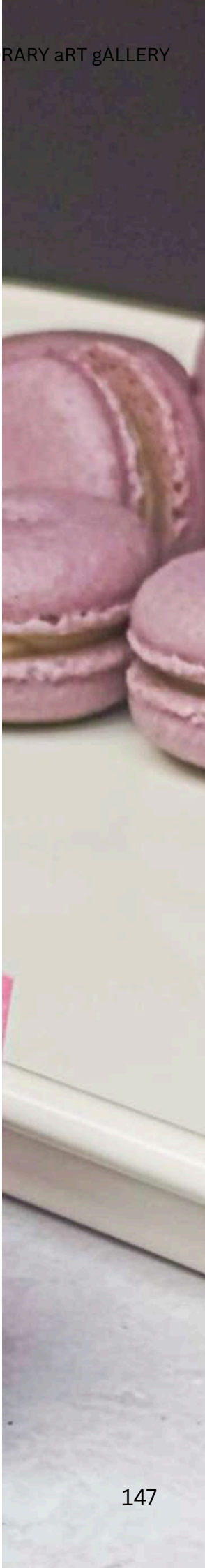
Her fascination began before she had even tasted one. Drawn to their elegant appearance and intricate preparation, she set out to master these little French delicacies, bringing something a little different to East London's baking scene.

It is a craft that demands patience and precision. From achieving the perfectly smooth shell and delicate centre to that characteristic ruffled foot, even the smallest variables matter. Humidity and rain can wreak havoc with a batch, making the weather forecast an unlikely but essential part of her baking routine.

Tayla journey into pastry began during the Covid lockdown, when a birthday cake for her mother sparked an unexpected passion for baking. This eventually led her to Blue Ribbon Culinary Academy, where she developed the skills and confidence to turn that early curiosity into a business.








2.5 kg

Today, creativity is at the heart of Batter & Dough. Whether experimenting with flavours, adapting recipes or bringing customers' cake ideas to life, Talia enjoys creating something with its own personality.
With ambitions to one day open a shop of her own, she is steadily building a following, one carefully crafted confection at a time. In a city where the macaron is still something of a rarity, perhaps East London has found its very own macaron whisperer.
Tayla@batteranddough.co.za , address 26 Beach Road East London. Contact number 073 383 2082 https://batteranddough.co.za/









Friday Evenings, Market Finds & A Little Something Different



The People’s Place Market, held on the first Friday of every month, is fast becoming one of those places that gives the city a new energy. As the afternoon gives way to evening and the sun begins to set, the market takes on a wonderfully relaxed atmosphere. Friends gather over a glass of wine, cold beers are poured on tap, and the unmistakable aroma of freshly made pizza drifts from the rustic outdoor kitchen, where pizzas are prepared and baked to order.

But there's more to this market than a good Friday evening.

At its heart is a celebration of handmade, locally created and pre-loved treasures. Think artisan sourdough breads, beautiful ceramics by local makers, vintage jewellery, and a little record shop filled with musical nostalgia. There's even a dedicated thrifting space for those who enjoy the thrill of finding something special among the vintage clothing rails.



It's this combination of good food, interesting finds, local creativity and easy-going atmosphere that makes The People's Place Market worth discovering. Less about the hurried business of shopping and more about browsing, chatting, discovering and enjoying the simple pleasure of being out and about.

For a R20 entrance fee, it's a rather appealing way to ease into the weekend.

Sometimes, all a Friday evening needs is good company, a glass of wine and a little treasure hunting.

Address: 26 Beach Rd, Bonnie Doon, east London






Marlene's
VEGAN
HEALTHY COOKING
Fermented
Pickled Lemons
HOMEMADE WITH
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Spitlike
SPICY BEETROOT
RELISH
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Soaps
Waterlilly
TALLOW SOAP
HANDMADE
130g
INGREDIENTS:
COCONUT OIL,
CASTOR OIL, TALLOW,
WATERLILLY ESSENTIAL OILS
ORGANIC



The Fragrance of Vanilla

An appreciation of one of the world's most enchanting ingredients, with Melanie Berrington of Vanilla Factory.



There are few aromas quite as evocative as vanilla. Warm, floral and faintly intoxicating, it has a way of transforming the ordinary into something rather wonderful. A freshly split pod, its tiny black seeds scraped into cream or folded through cake batter, carries a fragrance that is as comforting as it is luxurious.
For Melanie Berrington, owner of Vanilla Factory, this fascination began almost two decades ago in Graaff-Reinet, quite by chance. A discovery of dried vanilla bean husks sparked a curiosity that soon grew into a passion for experimenting with extracts, infused sugars and the many possibilities of this extraordinary spice.



Today, her journey has taken her to Madagascar, where Vanilla Factory sources its prized planifolia beans from the Sava region. Sweet, floral and beautifully aromatic, Madagascan vanilla has a character quite distinct from the deeper, chocolate notes of Ugandan beans she has also worked with.
But behind that familiar fragrance lies a remarkable amount of human endeavour. Each vanilla flower must be hand-pollinated, and the beans can take up to nine months to cure. It is a slow, painstaking craft, and one that makes the finished product all the more precious.





Melanie's enthusiasm extends beyond the traditional world of baking. She loves experimenting with unexpected pairings, from honey and butter to pumpkin, butternut and sweet potato, and encourages making use of every part of the precious bean. Perhaps that is the real pleasure of vanilla: its ability to bring a little magic to the everyday. And Melanie's approach to using it is wonderfully uncomplicated don't be afraid to be generous. Measure with your heart.

You can order via their website https://www.vanillafactory-sa.co.za/ or call 0730649184




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A Different Kind of Glazed Carrot

Forget the familiar sweetness of the traditional South African honey or sugar-glazed carrot. Thiscrimson tomatoes glazed carrots are something altogether more interesting: a glossy, buttery glaze, the gentle acidity of tomato, the fragrance of orange zest, and the warm, almost exotic notes of cardamom, clove and thyme.





Peel a pack of carrots. Melt a generous knob of butter in a pan and add the carrots, the zest and juice of one orange, three to four finely grated garlic cloves, salt, pepper and sugar to taste.
Add a generous spoonful of tomato paste, 2 cups of water, a few lightly crushed green cardamom pods, no more than four crushed cloves, a few sprigs of thyme and a couple of bay leaves.
Allow everything to cook gently under a cartouche until the carrots are tender and beautifully coated in the developing glaze. Finish with another little knob of butter, if needed, and adjust the seasoning to taste. You want a sauce that's glossy, rich and just sweet enough, with the tomato providing a lovely savoury counterpoint.

The result is beautifully balanced. The tomato paste brings a subtle savouriness and natural acidity, while the butter lends the sauce that lovely rich, unctuous quality. Orange lifts everything, garlic adds depth, and the spices leave behind the most wonderful aromatic finish.
Best of all, they're remarkably simple to make, yet wouldn't look out of place on a restaurant plate. I think they'd be particularly lovely alongside a Christmas roast, adding a little colour and brightness to the traditional festive spread.





Sometimes the nicest things on a Christmas table aren't necessarily the complicated ones.

They're the familiar ingredients approached from a slightly different direction.

And these carrots might just become a new festive favourite.



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