

Press Release
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It's My City - Art bringing communities together

Over the coming days, three giant sculptures will emerge in different parts of Bloemfontein/Mangaung. These extraordinary creations are the result of *It's My City*, a large-scale artwork conceived by British artist, Alex Rinsler, working with local artists to express their relationship to the city, and to bring their voices to life in a spectacular way. It is the signature 2016 project of the Programme for Innovation in Artform Development (PIAD), a partnership between the University of the Free State (UFS) and the Vrystaat Arts Festival, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the municipality of Mangaung.

Baby Giraffe will rise to 8m in Hoffman Square, and will be created by Marius Jansen van Vuuren and his team at Motheo TVET College. At Mapikela Square in Batho location, the T'shiamo Arts and Crafts Collective (Tshegofatso Marogoa, Loki Maselwane, and Itumeleng Moamogwa) will present *Mother Tree*, a place to gather to remembers the blue-gum trees that used to stand there. And on the Red Square on UFS main campus, Fine Arts Master's student, Minè Kleynhans, will display *Toy Windmill*, which transforms a university turnstile into a creature of 10,000 small windmills.

The works contain messages of hope. From 8-15 July, the public are invited to visit the sculptures to complete the works, and contribute personal thoughts and dreams for what this city can become; what future people want for themselves or those whom they love. "With *It's My City*, I hope to celebrate the differences and commonalities that unite us as individuals living as neighbours" says Rinsler. "When we write down our dreams, we are one step closer to achieving them. When we share them, get to know each other."

On Saturday 16 July at 12pm, the sculptures will come to life. They will journey through the city to meet each other: three processions convening at the Macufe village (corner of Elizabeth and Markgraaff streets). The sculptures see one another for the first time, recognise one another, then at 17:30, there will be a short, free ceremony, when the works will be dismantled in spectacular fashion, with graceful fire and pyrotechnics, and so joining together many people's wishes as one.

Hundreds of volunteers and professionals from many disciplines have collaborated on *It's My City*, inspired by the local artists' creative vision and the project's

ambitious scale. With widespread participation, the event promises to be unforgettable.

The sculptures are open to the public from 7am – 5pm, from Friday 8th July 2016 to Friday 15th July 2016. For more information on how to become involved in the project, visit www.itsmycity.co.za or write to hello@itsmycity.co.za. You can also find us on Facebook - facebook.com/itsmycity.

Notes to editors:

- Please direct any enquiries to Corneli van den Berg, Producer, 072 802 0220, corneli.vdberg@gmail.com
- The Vrystaat Festival runs from 11-16 July 2016. For more information, please visit <http://www.vrystaatkunstefees.co.za/>