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PRESS RELEASE

THROUGH OUR EYES: JOURNEY TO SOUTH AFRICA / JOURNEY TO AMERICA (INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP EXHIBITION)

On 23 October 2021, an exhibition of South African Art works will open at the Ritz Theatre and Museum based in Jacksonville, Florida, USA. The exhibition titled *THROUGH OUR EYES: JOURNEY TO AMERICA* is due to open at 18:00 USA time and a live stream will be available in South Africa to view at 12:00pm South African time.

Through Our Eyes is an annual exhibition coordinated by the RITZ THEATRE AND MUSEUM in Jacksonville, Florida. In 2018, this annual exhibition turned 25 and local Jacksonville artists were invited to make works in response to the theme “Journey to South Africa: Struggle & Resistance” as part of the International Partnership between the cities of Nelson Mandela Bay and Jacksonville. Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality paid for the American exhibition to be exhibited here in Nelson Mandela Bay. Through the facilitation of the Red Location Art Gallery and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Local Eastern Cape Artists were invited to make new works in response to the theme “Through our eyes: Journey to America”. Both exhibitions opened in Nelson Mandela Bay in 2019 and were exhibited separately at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum. Due to delays caused by the COVID pandemic, the American exhibition did not return and the South African exhibition was unable to travel to Jacksonville. The exhibition was rehung in 2020 as one show. The rehanging allowed for a dialogue between the South African and American artworks and created a dynamic new form for this exhibition exchange. You can view a virtual tour of this exhibition at https://www.nmbm.co.za/virtual_tours/virtual-tours/through-our-eyes/index.html

The Jacksonville Sister City Partnership and Ritz Theatre and Museum sponsored the travel of the South African exhibition, *THROUGH OUR EYES: JOURNEY TO AMERICA* to the USA with

assistance from the Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC). The exhibition will be on display at the Ritz Theatre and Museum from 24 October 2021 until April 2022. Online discussions and events will be planned and coordinated for the duration that the exhibition is on show in the USA.

BACKGROUND ON THE PARTNERSHIP

Jacksonville, Florida, USA and Nelson Mandela Bay are currently part of an international partnership. The partnership was facilitated through the Sisters Cities International diplomacy network which is a non-profit organization that creates and strengthens partnerships between communities in the United States and those in other countries. In planning and discussion meetings which have taken place over skype between the Jacksonville and Nelson Mandela Bay Arts and Culture practitioners, both parties identified areas of collaboration, skills transfer and partnership that would be implemented in the next five years.

LIST OF 31 SOUTH AFRICAN ARTISTS Participating ON THE EXHIBITION:

Alan Bazil Grobler, Ant Keogh, Ayanda Ngalo, Bethwell Madoda Honi, Cedric Vanderlinden, Dorothy Joan Barnes, Graham Jones, Gregory Kerr, Gugulethu Mpuba, Hennie Odendaal , Jonathan Van Der Walt, Kader Abdulla, Khaya Ngcangca, Lookout Sibanda, Lwando Lunika, Makhosandile Molose, Marc Benjamin Pradervand, Megan Poisat, Michael Barry, Michiel Cruywagen, Minka Gabrielle Schoonwinkel, Muzi Sobuza, Mxolisi Dolla Sapeta, Nicholas Hauser, Pumelela Zonke, Sakumzi Nyendwana, Shirley Yates, Simon Venter, Siphon Foley, Siyavuya Ralo and Ursula Browne.

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