

Press release

A person wearing an orange jacket and black pants is holding a black camera with a lens. The person is standing in front of a brick wall and a green metal fence. The background is slightly blurred, showing a wooden table and some greenery. The overall scene is outdoors and brightly lit.

Of Soul And Joy Project

SOCIAL ART IN SOUTH AFRICA
Empowering Youth through Photography



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Empowering Youth through Photography



With
Buhlebuzile Secondary School
Thokoza - Gauteng



A Social & Cultural Project
Undertaken by
Rubis Mécénat Cultural Fund and Easigas



Sponsored by
Nikon Africa Trust



With Photographers
Bieke Depoorter, Cyprien Clément-Delmas, Tjorven Bruyneel and Kutlwano Moagi

Rubis Mécénat Cultural Fund

"Individuals are at the heart of organisations which bring about change."

Taking action and responsibility: it is around these two values that the Rubis Group grounds its corporate culture and is characterised in the eyes of its partners. Having invested in its international dimension over the last two years, the Group created the endowment fund Rubis Mécénat, a charitable organisation, in May 2011, to reinforce links between its subsidiaries, to contribute to the Group's integration in its socio-cultural environment and to embody its corporate culture. Finding a place as an industrial actor, a social actor and a cultural actor in countries in which the Group operates lends weight to Rubis' actions in each area and gives them the opportunity to invest themselves by setting up charitable projects. Rubis Mécénat has chosen Art as a universal language.

If industry builds the world of today and of tomorrow, Art plunges us into a perpetually shifting universe that is increasingly difficult to seize, acting as a barometer of change in our societies. Art provides us with a new perspective, a retreat, a truth and sometimes a space for contemplation: thus Rubis Mécénat wishes to create links between its humanitarian and environmental actions and the artists expressing a fresh perspective.

- Supporting a new generation of committed artists through organising exhibitions, commissions, and acquiring works of art, in France and abroad,
- Supporting and investing in humanitarian and environmental causes,
- Developing cultural and social projects, nurturing them, bringing them into being, helping them to take shape:

The aim is to lend support to general interest projects in order to bring about change and fresh perspectives, fostering understanding and hope.

"Art should be universal, humble and accessible to all in order to serve and contribute to social cohesion."

John Ruskin,
Theory of the Arts & Crafts movement



Easigas

A specialized LPG supply company in South Africa, Rubis Energy subsidiary in South Africa, "It's gaurenteed." Easigas (Pty) Ltd is a 100% owned subsidiary of Rubis Energie (France) and has been a leading supplier & distributor of Liquefied Petroleum Gas to the Southern African market for the last 30 years. Easigas' vision is to be the leader in the LPG business by moving to attractive market offers, by adjusting to the customer demand and by being profitable in the countries where we choose to operate. Its mission is to consolidate its Number 1 position on the LPG market whilst sustaining profitable growth in line with customers' expectations. We wish to optimise our current business in order to keep this profitable growth whilst improving continuously our LPG offers & competitiveness on the market. The South African government through the Department of Energy has committed to the promotion of LPGas use, which is cleaner and safer as an efficient burning energy source. Among the obstacles encountered by the government was the high price of LPGas, the government has therefore also committed to making LPGas more affordable for cooking and heating in the household segment. Easigas (Pty) Ltd as a responsible corporate citizen of South African society in the energy sector, has taken the challenge of affordable LPGas use by being involved in a Social Economic Development Programs to benefit the local communities where we operate; one of the programs Easigas has undertaken is to subsidize the supply of 3kg LPG cylinders with a Cooker top (known as Easicooka units) to the previously disadvantaged members of our communities at an affordable price. To this end Easigas distributes Easicooka units via its Distributors to different local municipalities. Easigas' contribution to local Social Economic Development was recognized by a government agency with the awarding of maximum points on the BBBEE* scorecard for SED (Social Economic Development). Easigas is also supporting the SIFE Program with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University by financially helping the participants to empower disadvantaged students through business trainings. "By contributing their talents to projects that improve the lives of people worldwide, SIFE participants are demonstrating that individuals with a knowledge and passion for business can be a powerful force for change."

www.sife.org



Nikon Africa Trust

Nikon in South Africa started a project two years ago where they identified a handful of young people from disadvantaged communities who showed promise in photography. By simply equipping them with life skills, basic business skills and photography techniques, and providing them with start-up camera equipment, Nikon assisted them in running successful photographic businesses. Now, two years on, this already-proven initiative is being fast tracked through several projects, country-wide. Stefan van der Walt, Chief Executive Officer for Nikon in South Africa, commented: "In time we anticipate that many of our students will not only earn a sustainable living through their photography, but will also receive recognition as skilled photographers and photojournalists as they capture and showcase the beauty and diversity of our continent and its people." To support this initiative, Nikon in South Africa has designed a handmade bracelet that is manufactured in Africa by the Relate Trust which specialises in raising funds for causes through the enabling and maintaining of employment opportunities for unskilled labour forces. Nikon in South Africa supplied all of the DSLRs for the Of Soul & Joy photography project, and have been involved in the training sessions.



Buhlebuzile Secondary School

“The Lord is light”

Press release Of Soul And Joy Project



Buhlebuzile Secondary School is a secondary school in Thokoza with 1700 students enrolled. Along with its traditional program, the school has opened an art department for its students in order to offer them wide perspectives and to give them new ways of expression. The energy and enthusiasm of the teachers convinced us to bring them our support. Buhlebuzile is a school opened to everyone, as the art centre opens its artistic classes to other children from other schools in order to pass down the same artistic knowledge to all. We have decided to bring them photographic skills with professional photographers and donate them digital Nikon cameras, a necessity to learn the Art of Photography. We are extremely happy and proud to contribute to the art centre's growth and to bring to Thokoza students a new way of looking, seeing and showing their lives in the township. Therefore they participate to make things change through taking fresh looks at the lives of Thokoza's communities and showing us their perceptions on the evolution South Africa is experiencing. Buhlebuzile is also part of the « Ischoolafrica,

giving young South Africans a voice», a programme that brings the best available education technology and practices to schools in South Africa.



Thokoza*, a Zulu word for “Rejoice”, is a township located in the southeast of Johannesburg. It was created in the 50’s and has become the second biggest black township after Soweto. Today, we hope that the “forgotten” township of Thokoza will follow the step of Soweto, a well-known Johannesburg township which has become a meeting point, a place of culture and energy. Soweto is a township that’s beating to the rhythm of a farseeing country and it is proving us the will of a whole generation to contribute to the country’s permanent construction and to forge a future for a more egalitarian free society.

“To go forward”, is also Buhlebusile’s motto, a secondary school in Thokoza, that has opened an art department for its students in order to offer them wide perspectives and to provide them with new ways of expression.

Of Soul & Joy Project has brought Photography at the heart of Thokoza to Buhlebusile students in order to give them a voice in their community and about their community, and to set them up for further tertiary education and job opportunities. Starting with a first intensive Photo Workshop for 40 students in August and September 2012 with Belgium

photographer, Bieke Depoorter and French photographer Cyprien Clément-Delmas, the project has established itself as a true promise for a rising future. Under the supervision of Belgium photographer, Tjorven Bruyneel and South African photographer Kutlwano Moagi in October, the students showed talent and motivation. The awards ceremony held in October was a blessing for some. Six were elected as best students, winning a camera and the opportunity to continue studying Photography at the Market Photo Workshop.

A second workshop for 20 selected students in February and March 2013 with Tjorven Bruyneel and Kutlwano Moagi confirmed the settling down of the project in Thokoza. The School has officially announced their wish to open a photographic programme, with art teachers Fanuel Malema and Lawrence Ditire, that will be part of the curriculum within the art department of Buhlebusile.

Direct links have been set up with the Market Photo workshop to ensure the future of the best photo students of Buhlebusile. Every year, Easigas and Rubis Mécénat cultural fund sponsor the Photography studies of 3 new talented photo students.

2012 was the first stage in a long collaboration with the school which will consist in providing the opportunity to acquire photographic skills in a highly underprivileged community so as to transmit new means of expression and, we hope, the chance to find a job, a calling... Or a voice.

“If industry builds the world of today and of tomorrow, art ... acts as a barometer of change in our societies. Art provides us with a new perspective, a retreat, a truth and a space for contemplation.”

Lorraine Gobin

Rubis Mécénat Cultural Fund Director

*Thokoza created in 1955 is a township that witnessed the riots between IFP** and ANC*** in 1994.

** I'IFP - The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) is a dominated Zulu South African political party founded in 1975. During the 80's, it became the ANC opponent, advocating for a territorial separatism.

*** ANC - The African National Congress is a political party in South Africa. In 1994, the first multiracial elections took place allowing Nelson Mandela to be President of South Africa. Since then, it has been the main political party in South Africa.

Photo Workshop N°1



With Photographers
Bieke Depoorter
and Cyprien Clément-Delmas
August - September 2012

Supervision by Tjorven Bruyneel
and Kutlwano Moagi
September - October 2012

In August and September, photographers Bieke Depoorter and Cyprien Clément-Delmas taught Photography to 34 high school students from Thokoza, acting as mentors for these kids who have never touched a camera before. The program consisted in transmitting their experiences and knowledge as professional photographers. The classes focused on the history of photography, technical skills and search of their own subject and style at school and in Thokoza itself. Several speakers took part in this workshop; photographers Thabiso Sekgala, Lerato Maduna, Robin Malherbe and Julio Moreira from the Nikon Africa Trust, Siphon Mthembu, from Easigas, the coordinator of the project in South Africa who gave life skills lessons. Outings have been set up at the Market Photo Workshop and at Bag Factory. The School has officially announced their wish



to open a photographic programme within the art department of Buhlebuzile in 2013-2014. Other workshops with professional photographers will be organised along with the new photographic programme that will open in Buhlebuzile headed by art teachers Fanuel Malema and Lawrence Ditire.



Awards ceremony



October 26th, 2012

The awards ceremony for the 34 photo students took place on October 26, 2012 in Thokoza. Six students were elected best photographers winning a camera and a photo book. Two of the students entered Market Photo Workshop this year to pursue their studies in Photography, sponsored by Easigas and Rubis Mécénat Cultural Fund.





With Photographers
Tjorven Bruyneel and Kutlwano Moagi
February - March 2013

The Photo Workshop n°2 is taking place on February and March 2013, with photographers Tjorven Bruyneel and Kutlwano Moagi, at Buhlebuzile, focusing on twenty selected students from the previous workshop. External professional photographers take actively part in it, such as French freelance photographer based in Johannesburg, Bénédicte Kurzen and English photographer Jason Larkin. This workshop focuses mainly on developing their personal photographic skills by doing outdoor trainings and some research on photography, learning how to look and select photographs and how to edit their own works through photoshop.

At the end of this workshop, a photo festival is being organised in Thokoza as well as an exhibition showing the students' works in a gallery in Johannesburg.



Photo Festival IN THOKOZA

March 23, 2013

Of Soul & Joy Project

Empowering Youth through Photography
With Buhlebuzile Secondary School

How to get there >

Phola Park Community Hall
Yende Street
From 2 to 8 pm

Projection of Buhlebuzile student's photos
Projection and talks of professionals photographers

Videos / Art workshops / Drink and Food Stalls

www.rubismecenat.fr
ofsoulandjoyproject.tumblr.com

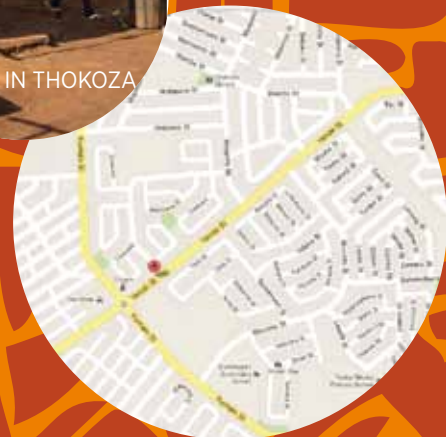
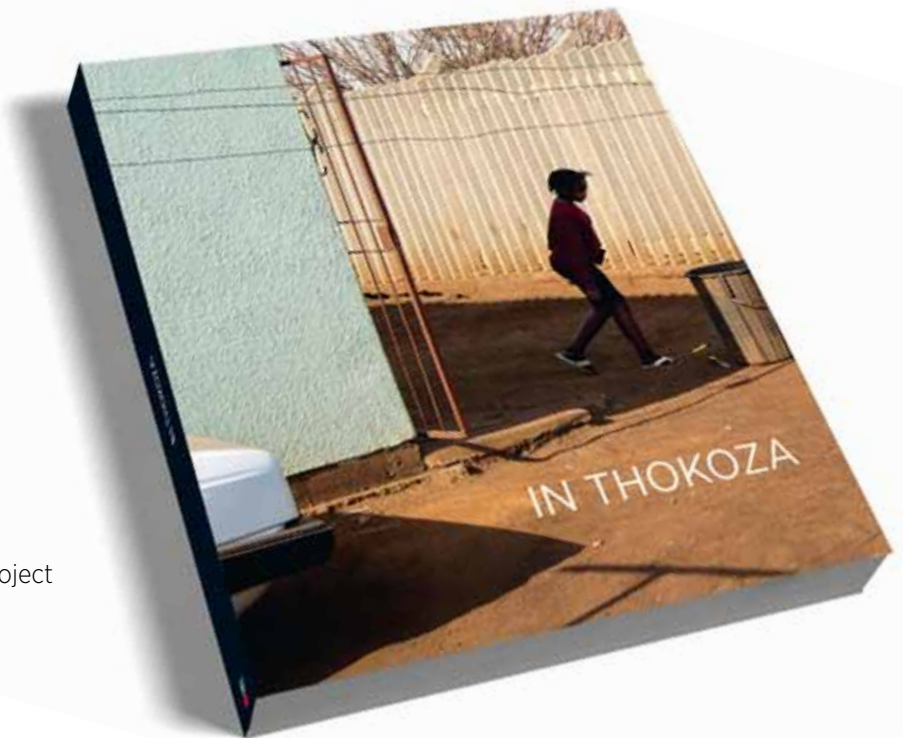


Photo exhibition *In Thokoza*

At Ithuba Arts Gallery
100 juta street, Braamfontein
Johannesburg
From March 27 to April 7, 2013
Opening on March 28 from 5 to 9 pm
Show of Buhlebuzile students' photographs

Photo Essays by
Bieke Depoorter,
Tjorven Bruyneel,
Cyprien Clément-Delmas
and Kutlwano Moagi

Exhibition Catalogue on sale,
collected funds will be donated
to the school to sustain our photographic project



LUNGILE ZUMA Zulu hostels



LINDOKUHLE SOBHEKWA Poor living conditions



ERNEST DLAMINI Bodybuilders



TEBOHO VANESSA RABEDE 4 township lifestyles



MAMOSA MANTHATA My sister is my inspiration



TSHEPISO MAZIBUKO A life with a homeless man

Photo Essays by professional Photographers

Press release Of Soul And Joy Project

Photo Workshop teachers / Rubis Mécénat Cultural Fund has commissioned the four photographers to realise a Photo Essay on their experience in Thokoza.



BIEKE DEPOORTER



CYPRIEN CLÉMENT-DELMAS



TJORVEN BRUYNEEL



KUTLWANO MOAGI



Some students' testimonials

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"They are many things we should do and it's a big world out there. We should experience a lot and explore. Photography is the key to see those things and capture them."

Teboho Vanessa Rabede
Grade 11 – 4 township lifestyles

"Photography leads your imagination to a different time zone."

Mamosa Manthata
Grade 11 – My sister is my inspiration

"My experience at the workshop had a very positive impact in my life, it made me view life at a very perspective point."

Tshepiso Mazibuko
Grade 11 – A life with a homeless man

"Photography opens people dreams / careers. So my motor is camera is my name light and photo is my game."

Sibongile Ndlovu
Grade 11 – Process of design

"I have learned that no matter how hard it is out, there is a way that god does not close a door without opening a window. Of soul & Joy photography project has made me believe and to have a future but not just a future, a better one."

Monaheng Lesapo / Mr Bone
Grade 11 – Poverty

"Photography kept me away from negative things that are affecting the youth of today."

Themba Sensani
Grade 10 – Shops / business

"I have never thought that in my life I will be a photographer and I will take photos to show how my community in Thokoza lives."

Thulane Buthelezi
Grade 10 – Swimming in Thokoza

"I think this is the opportunity of a life time I will grab it with my two hands and never let it go."

Themba Sensani
Grade 10 – Shops / business

Sustainability of the project in Thokoza

“With this photography project, our aim is to offer to disadvantaged high school students an open window to a possible future in Photography. The most gifted photo students of Buhlebuzile will have the chance to pursue tertiary education in this particular field in order to make a career out of it. Next year, Buhlebuzile will open the photography program within its art department, which will be included in the curriculum of the students.

A new photography school has seen the light of day in Thokoza.

Photo workshops, photo professional talks, life skills program will still be part of the program. The professional network is expanded. Two of our students entered Market Photo Workshop this year; a new future is in front of them. Every year, three new photo students will be sponsored to pursue their studies in Photography.”

Contact

Press release Of Soul And Joy Project

blog : <http://ofsoulandjoyproject.tumblr.com/>

Facebook : <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Of-Soul-Joy-Project/150677718402152>

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