



INDRA WUSSOW

Sylvt Foundation

Director/Curator

076 501 42 91

indra@jozi-artlab.co.za

www.krsq.de /www.jozi-artlab.co.za

Q: Please provide a brief history of yourself, as well as your current position or involvement in the arts.

As a specialist in literary studies, translator and curator, I have been part of the literary world for some time now and felt that one should use one's professional skills and dedication to help art to flourish and offer talented artists the opportunities to work, think and reflect. This is why I founded a residency and art centre on the island of Sylt, where professional artists in all fields are given the chance to reflect, develop ideas and write. As global exchange of ideas and the dichotomy of the urban and the rural provide contrasts and insights that can result in unique projects and art works, we extended the programme and founded a subsidiary in Johannesburg in 2008.

Q: We are constantly striving to encourage the Arts in South Africa. How are you and your organisation contributing to this?

I think that the Sylt Foundation residency programme is a unique opportunity for South African artists and writers to focus on their work, to meet and share their experiences with colleagues from all over the planet, and to connect with audiences, journalists, literary criticism, etc.

Q: What would you like to see achieved in the Arts through your work?

It would be such an improvement if state institutions and the private sector would collaborate to link projects. This would be beneficial for all involved: the artists, the curators and the organisers.

Q: What are some of your most notable achievements to date?

I am very proud that we have been able to use our knowledge and enthusiasm to build strong international networks and also that we have introduced an important series of contemporary African Literature, AfrikAWunderhorn, with renowned writers such as Imraan Coovadia, Helon Habila, Scholastique Mukasonga and Lebo Mashile to name a few. In times when book sales are down severely, this is a great achievement. Besides this, I am very grateful that we have been able to develop a grassroots project and invite international artists and writers to empower young people in Kliptown/Soweto to learn, through workshops and art projects, how valuable the Arts are for the society they live in and for their own personal development.

Q: What positive impacts have you seen as a result of your support?

Most of the artists, writers and composers who have taken part in our programme have profited enormously from the quality time they spent on the island or in Johannesburg. It is also important that, through my work as a radio journalist, I have been able to offer insights into different African cultural projects that otherwise would have never been heard of in Europe.

Q: Which upcoming arts or culture projects have you played a role in establishing?

With colleagues we established an annual travelling poetry festival called "What is Poetry?" which so far has been held in Indonesia and South Africa and will travel to China in 2014. It is a wonderful new chance for poets from all over Africa to travel, see other countries, and exchange their ideas with colleagues from all over the world.

Q: What are your organisation's long-term goals regarding the arts and community development?

One goal would definitely be a closer collaboration with state-run institutions to optimise the support of the arts. Another is to make reading literature more popular again, and to help to make books and texts accessible to everyone. Another project of mine is to foster the dialogue between the Arts and Science, and I would also like to establish a "Cultural Salon" in Johannesburg.