



# AFRIKABURN

178 Lower Main Rd  
Observatory, Cape Town

## Project Update: *Metamorphosis* /Johannesburg

After an intense period of packing and preparing, *Metamorphosis* began transferring to site on 18 April, arriving 10 days ahead of the event opening. An on site team of 40, included the four adult trainee beneficiaries: Nompumelelo Magqazana, Tebogo Mohlomi, Mmabadimo Mothapo and Tsholo Kgwanype, project leader Verity Maud and an army of 35 volunteers, some of whom joined the project on site. One such volunteer, Donald Capper documented his personal perspective of the process:

*The concept 'metamorphosis' held little meaning [for me]; it was in thought an extended time to run from the humdrum of everyday life into a space none of the standards the world measures us by mattered, and an opportunity to make something beautiful for those whom attended the Burn to enjoy. I have never considered myself a team player and have always adopted a singular effort to most things. It was then just a build and an escape, self-serving from the day-to-day reality. The calls to embrace its meaningfulness leading up to departure carried little weight, it felt too serious and it was put away in the far reaches of my mind as whimsical. After all, it's just a fun thing to do. Metamorphosis, just a word, a title for a structure of wood and steel for people to find on the map dotted with many other pieces.*

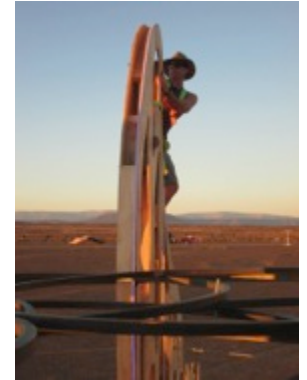
*In a short time this ignorant attitude changed. With open arms of love and acceptance these strangers turned to friends. With a common purpose, drawing closer with every single screw drilled and every meal shared. So subtle was the galvanizing I wasn't aware what was developing. I was impressed with how every single person showed up over and over again, without being asked. There was never a question, nor permission asked. The initiative was astounding. The crew owned every ounce of the effort with drive and determination, nothing was too much. As I lay in my bed after a hard day's work with blistered hands I realized, here is power. With every sunrise and every sunset came a newer understanding of attitude, how a driven one can make one really feel alive. Something inside me was waking up.*





# AFRIKABURN

178 Lower Main Rd  
Observatory, Cape Town



For visual artist and project beneficiary Tsholo Kgwanyape, originally from the North West Province, the whole process was an opportunity to further his own creative work, which he supports through a range of ad hoc jobs.

*I moved to Johannesburg for business, arts expansion, and ended up in Alexandra. I formed a small arts company, a co-operative with five artists. It is hard work growing artists, everything I do is self-taught in production and I need proper administration and marketing, skills in managing things.*

*I don't have a specific medium; it depends on what concepts arrive in the brain. I spend eight to nine months doing one thing with fine and dedicated passion. I want to see my art works in galleries, public spaces and festivals. I've never seen artwork on such a scale; it is a different experience. It has sparked my mind here, I've expanded myself and I want to do one work myself here. I want to expand social connections as it is a different world to ours.*

The butterfly temple was built in the centre of the Binnekring, ostensibly the quietest site for the silent burn on the Saturday night. Standing at eight metres high and 20 metres diameter, as the 'The Gift' unfolded, the temple soon became the heart of the event through an array of activations including Wednesday's dawn and dusk ceremonies and other workshops. It was a place of reflection where many wrote passages of gratitude, love, hope and connection.





# AFRIKABURN

178 Lower Main Rd  
Observatory, Cape Town

Skills development beneficiary Mmabadimo Mothapo, 50 (pictured below right), had the opportunity to see the sculpture from the air before it burnt, he said:

*I flew around [the site] in the aircraft to see this place when up high, before it burns. I was in a six seater, in front, like with the driver. We went two times around the circle it was amazing to see the butterfly temple. I thought I would fly but not from somewhere like this, for the first time in my life.*



A member of the Zionist Christian Church, Mmabadimo found the community spirit of AfrikaBurn familiar:

*For me this place is like Moria, sharing one love, respect, giving food, prayers, clothes. God is moving around with us, people are respectful and peaceful. I went out to the mountains at sunrise and sunset to pray and ask for sun and thanks for a healthy life and good sleep, [to] live like this for the rest of our lives.*

He embraced the 11 principles of AfrikaBurn whole heartedly, volunteering in many different capacities, he said:

*I was by the main gate, given a chance to welcome people from all over the world. I'm shaking hands with people from UK, USA, Russia, Sweden, with hundreds of people coming for one thing. Greeting, holding the bell, when people hit the bell, I was the main man to control the bell. I was a ranger; I was in the Sanctuary helping people.*

*Metamorphosis*, burnt silently on schedule at 21:00 on Saturday, with all theme camps and rigs turned off and 8000 people not uttering a word as they watched in awe. Mmabadimo admitted it was a challenge for him when it came to the silent burn on the Saturday night.

*It was like everyone sitting in a church waiting for a priest to come. I tried to be courageous but coming to burn it, I was crying, the fear of losing it was very difficult, I didn't take part in burning it, not on my hands. I sat with two ladies from the UK, it was highly emotional.*





# AFRIKABURN

178 Lower Main Rd  
Observatory, Cape Town



## Culmination and legacy

The legacy of *Metamorphosis* project centres on the use of skills and tools initially with two local projects. The first was a refurbishment of Home of Hope in Berea, for exploited and abused girls in Berea and Hillbrow, over four days during National Child Protection Week at the start of June.

The second is an art project, creating a wall relief in Alexandra using the wood off cuts from the wings and arches of the butterfly temple, the process will be led by Tsholo Kgwanype. The tools procured during the construction of *Metamorphosis* will be made available to the beneficiaries to use on subsequent projects.

