
LIBERATING BLACK ARTISTS

(A Voice to revive, appreciate and protect the status of African Creative Workers)

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INTRODUCTION

One can wonder why there is too much (Performers and fewer Artists in the black Market circles, the demise of a word African or Township Arts in the Democratic Transition saw a culture of number of things fading or being Lynched, we would understand the introduction of Arts and Culture ministry in 1994 became a lousy concept, yet something fresh look alike. The previous government was marketing Blacks as happy people from a perspective of Apartheid Pain or to window dress against black Intellectuals opposite what Protest Theatre was doing.

- Funding Syndrome
- Arts Space Effects
- Talk Shops
- Leadership in Arts
- Unity and African Image , Black consciousness Radar on Arts

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Funding Syndrome

The introduction of words like “**Community Theatre**” came buzzing for illiterate Theatre Arts Practitioners , where white monopolistic individuals visits small groups of artists in the Township, who lack understanding in Administration, Intellectual property and what their vision is as Artists, then the whites would stage themselves as helpers dodging Democratic policies that disallow them to the pocket of the ANC government, these small groups become a weapon to soften Funders to “GIVE” them on behalf of the so called “Previous disadvantaged areas” , with mindset of these “SMALL GROUPS” chanting slogans that possess “Inferiority and praising white supremacy” – “

Umlungu unamatafula, abalengu bantswempu” wait a minute who is writing Plays? Who is choreographing? Who came with the Concept? Who is developing Actors and Students for Institutions and Conventional Spaces? These are questions left unanswered while “The Goat” gets all the green grass and the Shepherd left thirsty, these Whites they get Awards which are programs of maintaining their supreme in expense of our People, should I say disunity of us as People of the Soil. Few Blacks who are staged successful remain puppets and Charlatans of these elementary Goats that are eating Grass in our Greenfields.

Arts Space Effect

When I was growing Up in Johannesburg, there were numerous spaces of Professional performances in the Townships, Eyethu centre in Diepkloof – Soweto comes to mind, Ipelegeng Arts Centre in White City –Soweto comes to mind, D.O.C.C and Uncle's Tom Hall both in Orlando East and Orlando West respectively comes to mind, in the East Rand there was D.H Williams in Katilehong, Nguni Hall in Vosloorus, Theatre in Daveyton, Rabasotho Hall in Tembisa and many more , these places hosted artists such as Brenda Fassie, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Lucky Dube, Soul Brothers and Gibson Kente's Plays to quote, I witnessed these shows and became part of these exciting Artists who were real deal to black market, great Image of what a Black Space should be and how it should excite its people and ethos.

These Spaces were Hip and Sharpening the moral regeneration of what Black people and their spaces are about and though they were not conventional spaces but because of unity and vision of Black business people in the entertainment and Arts Industry, Unity was projected on outcomes.

Reawakening holistically, including its audience has lost hope of seeing relevant work that addressees their issues around their environment since the times of Black theatre SPACES.

Talk Shops

Black Artists of nowadays want to be connected with Whites who are presenting themselves as Community Theatre Practitioners, they dis Black Value of Arts Leaders, even in their profiles they write UCT, MAGNET and JAZZART without acknowledging their real background where they cut their tooth. There are no more gatherings to feed the mind of New Comers to maintain consistent Resistance of Imaging Black Arts as Industry and Supremacy in its own right, like the era Of Theatre Of Liberation in the 1980's – Bhuti Percy Mtw'a's **Bopha** and Dr Mbongeni Ngema's **Asinamali** those Plays were created in Black Arts defense and exhibition of its supremacy, I am talking a continuation from Conscious and Protest Theater in the 70's where Maishe Maponya brought "**Hungry Earth**" and Rev Maqina with "**Dried Those Tears**" these were serious Black Arts Productions and audience highly involved , the BCM students to be precise SASO, SASM and AZASCO played a pivotal role in forcing Gibson Kente to assist in issue based theatre about BLACK PAIN and in 1974 (HOW LONG) the masterpiece of all times was born, the Play that shook the country and influenced Soweto/Kagiso Uprising in 1976 and same year Gibson Kente was arrested, these are black voices of vigor. I insist were plays created from people's voicing's and crying's in talk shops and gatherings, creativity in discussions and sessions, stories from the tears and togetherness.

Leadership in Arts

Growing Up in Johannesburg, I was a regular visitor at Bra Lloyd Lelosa's house – Arranger, Composer and Piano player of famous band called “**STIMELA**” there was always something fresh from the Man, today I call those visits “Leadership Training in Arts by Black Artist for black Arts in black spaces by themselves” He opened his house for us today we serve from his teachings. Leadership Arts should respect cultural ethos, understand the environmental dynamics and heartaches of the systems within and among itself. Those leaders should be aware of the previous struggles of the black Arts, its original vision and context, aesthetical correct to its constituency and its future.

Unity and African Image, Black consciousness Radar on Arts

There has been several wounds across the country, I once said talking in a conference in Botswana , I said all projects in the Townships are “SHAME bantu type of project” , “ Siyaninceda kind of thing” these are displays and mentality these picturesque are handled by the outsiders , when the Goat is having all the grass in the belly.

- Backstabbing – Something we have adopted to keep the doors closed for others, to open legs and soul for us to feed the empty stomach.
- Gossiping – The Inferiority and Procrastinating tools to disjoint kill Unity among Artists, especially the ones that are Visionary and Trying the Flag to be Up at all times.
- Cronyism – The standard of Black Arts has gone to the dangers, the finder – finder practitioners are getting all the open gaps from the real roads, they make sure that they give all to their friends who can lick their dirty foreheads, the Souls admitted the thirst enough, the gate keepers.
- Nepotism – this starts from funders, auditions, opportunities and systems also a game to fight the strong ones.
- The Risorgimento of Africa lies in Arts, who creates Arts? Who stops real Arts? Why spaces are limited in black areas? Why no syllabus talking African great Artists and stories? Who funding foreign arts in Africa than its own arts? These are deliberate Acts to weakened the Impact ARTS is doing in Mapping African Renaissance through Arts, this is also by reasons of maintaining white supremacy , therefore in due time , we will be completely swimming and sinking in mediocrity , also consuming in spaces that are not our hope , life and future (actual this is already happening)
- There has been a lack of Conferencing (Ubuhlanti okanye Imbizo) to cement a foundation of appreciating ourselves as African people , our own half of beings , delves in foreign thoughts, education, qualification and conceptualizations but we continue calling ourselves Black Artists in the context of African Ethos and its Artistic supremacy. Are we real Artists? Are we real Black? Are we that to our work? Are we Creative Workers by Funding? Or Are we Creative Workers within regardless of Funding”
- These are Windows of questions alarming at our situation, a rare thing to destroy because of infection we have of Inferiority and defined by Awards, Certificates and Accolades by Whites.
- The Time has come and is long overdue to Relook without hesitation and plant a tree to our soil to bear fruits of hope; otherwise other revivals have proven to be Gimmick.