

OF SOUL AND JOY PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT IN THOKOZA

Southeast of Johannesburg, Gauteng

SOUTH AFRICA



© Sibusiso Bheka

A Rubis Mécénat cultural fund Initiative

In collaboration with Easigas and Buhlebuzile Secondary School in Thokoza

SINCE 2012

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INTRODUCTION

Of Soul and Joy project

A social art engagement that aims to empower South African youth through photography.

Of Soul and Joy project is a long-term social art initiative undertaken in 2012 by Rubis Mécénat cultural fund in Thokoza, located in the southeast of Johannesburg in South Africa, to pass on artistic skills in Photography to a fragilised youth growing up in the township. The project aims to expose the students of Buhlebuzile Secondary School to Photography as a new way of expression, as a vocational skill and as a means of engagement for future opportunities. A visual platform and a skills development programme, it gathers workshops led by renowned photographers.

Furthermore, this opportunity gives a platform to connect with people in the art world and art market and to participate in artistic events nationally and internationally.

Every year, the project awards scholarships to the three most promising learners to study photography at a university of their choice in South Africa , including the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg.

Project initiated in 2012 at Buhlebuzile Secondary School in Thokoza, Gauteng, South Africa, in collaboration with Easigas and in partnership with Nikon South Africa.

BACKGROUND OF THOKOZA AND OF THE PROJECT

By Sophie Bouillon

“ Thokoza. A district of just nine square kilometres, is home to several hundreds of thousands of people. The township was created from scratch by the Apartheid government in the 1950s. It was built exactly according to the theories of the racist “separate development” policy introduced a few years before: with a buffer industrial zone between it and the “white” town of Alberton (...). Today’s “theorised and considered” urban development has not changed one iota. Only the informal slum area has changed since 1994: it has doubled - probably even tripled - in size, in an attempt to accommodate the thousands of migrants who flock in from the country to try their luck in the “city of gold”.

Development organisations, journalists and even the South African government usually concentrate their activity and/or research in Soweto, Alexandra and Diepsloot, Johannesburg’s main townships - no doubt more symbolic, but also closer to the mega-city. But it was in the “forgotten” township of Thokoza that Rubis Mécénat and Easigas decided to establish the *Of Soul and Joy* Project.

Choosing Thokoza was a gamble. But it was also a necessity.

A Pulitzer Prize-winner, member of the Bang Bang Club photography group, Greg Marinovich also began his career in Thokoza. (...)

His pictures, which have been all around the world, were taken in another era, at the beginning of the 1990s when Thokoza was being torn apart by militants from Inkatha (a political party that is mostly Zulu) and Nelson Mandela’s ANC. Desmond Tutu, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and a famous anti-Apartheid figure, thanked the photographers of the Bang Bang Club for having brought to the world the message of this “secret” war: “The world needed to be told this story ... brilliant photographers. They helped to tell the story,” he wrote.
(...)

Students from the *Of Soul and Joy* project photograph their realities. The story of a present day Thokoza needs to be told and captured by its young and democratically free generation. The students of the *Of Soul and Joy* Project were born in 1994, at the same time as democracy. They are part of the “Born Free” generation, as they are called here. They were born free. ”

Extract from Sophie Bouillon’s essay on the *Of Soul and Joy* project for the book *In Thokoza*, 2013

Sophie Bouillon is a French freelance reporter, former correspondent for *Courrier International*, *Libération* and *RTS* in Johannesburg. Winner of the 2009 Albert Londres Prize.

URBAN TISSUE OF THOKOZA



© wikipedia

FOCUS PROJECT

The *Of Soul and Joy* project aims at developing young adults' understanding and exposure to Photography as a new way of expression, as a vocational skill and as a means of engagement for future opportunities.



Workshop with Tjorven Bruyneel and Bieke Depoorter for the group show "Free from my Happiness" Johannesburg, March 2015 © Bieke Depoorter / Magnum Photos

The programme targets twenty Grade 10 – 12 learners at Buhlebusile Secondary School in Thokoza with the drive to develop their creativity and artistic knowledge. A rotating system is implemented to enable new talents to join in, while continuing to mentor the former students.

The project provides the students with photography workshops run weekly by the photographer Jabulani Dhlamini and invited photographers. In addition, it provides with a mentoring programme offering intensive workshops led by renowned photographers coming from South Africa and all over the world held through the year enabling closely monitored relationships with selected trainees.

Furthermore, this opportunity gives the budding photographers a platform to connect with people in the art market and artistic events.

The project provides an unlimited access to Internet, to photography material in a dedicated space. Each year, Rubis Mécénat and Easigas award scholarships to the most promising grade 12 learners to further their post graduated studies at a university of their choice, including the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg. It offers courses in photography and training, as well as multi-layered projects and interactions that respond to the complex backgrounds of education, culture, and identity, within a contemporary understanding of photography and the social conditions of South Africa.

With this intensive photography programme, the aim of the *Of Soul and Joy* project is to offer new perspectives and to improve the environment and the lives of selected young South Africans from Thokoza through the discipline of Photography. Our wish is to offer an alternative

to the existing academic programme and to guide young budding photographers through their artistic journey.

Since 2012, almost 100 adolescents have been taught documentary photography and have been documenting their familiar and immediate surroundings in Thokoza. These archives are rare resources on life in a South African township and probably consist in one of the most important photography testimonial on the realities of a township present-day through the eyes of the Born Free generation.



Visit to the Wits museum
South Africa
2014
© Tjorven Bruyneel

Photographers - Mentors

- Tjorven Bruyneel, Belgium photographer
- Cyprien Clément-Delmas, French photographer and film maker
- Bieke Depoorter, Belgium photographer
- Jabulani Dhlamini, South African photographer
- Thandile Zwelibanzi, South African photographer

Previous mentors and guest speakers

- Ian Berry, British photographer - Magnum Photos
- Thomas Dworzak, German photographer - Magnum Photos
- Stuart Franklin, British photographer - Magnum Photos
- Jason Larkin, British photographer
- Sabelo Mlangeni, South African photographer
- Kutlwano Moagi, South African photographer
- Zanele Muholi, South African photographer
- Neo Ntsoma, South African photographer
- Thabiso Sekgala (in memory), South African photographer
- Andrew Tshabangu, South African photographer
- And more

Project team

- Jabulani Dhlamini, Project Manager and mentor
- Katiso Mabuza, Post Production trainer
- Maselotsha Mphahlele, Life skills trainer and Communications Officer
- Lindokuhle Sobekwa, Assistant Project Manager

Easigas volunteers

- Erika Da Cruz, Easigas Human Resources Manager
- Roxanne Marinis, Logistics Project Coordinator, Easigas Recruitment and Training Officer
- Fred Royer, Easigas Managing Director
- Petrus Shivambu, Project Representative, Easigas Marketing and CSC Manager
- Ophelia Smith, Logistics Project Coordinator, Easigas Marketing team



Pasting posters in the streets
of Thokoza on Mandela Day,
from *The Sowetan studio* series
(Dec 2013)
by Cyprien Clément-Delmas
July 2015
© Courtesy the artist

Since **2012**

100 students involved

18 scholarships awarded

5 active mentors

1 free wifi space with access to photo material,
Nikon Cameras, computers, a library...

FOCUS STUDENTS

Selection of five young photographers of the *Of Soul and Joy* project

Sibusiso Bheka

Sibusiso Bheka was born in 1997 in Thokoza, South Africa. In 2012, he was introduced to photography in high school through the *Of Soul and Joy* project. He then joined Live magazine as a part time photographer. In 2013, Bheka's work was exhibited in the group show "In Thokoza" organised by Rubis Mécénat cultural fund at the Ithuba Arts Gallery in Johannesburg. In 2014, he was invited by Addis Foto Fest in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in the group show "Visions of Africa". Bheka's work was exhibited, in 2015, in "Free from my Happiness", an exhibition organised by Rubis Mécénat and curated by Tjorven Bruyneel and Bieke Depoorter at the International Photo Festival of Ghent in Belgium.

In 2015, he joined Vaal University in the Photography section thanks to a government scholarship and a grant given by Rubis Mécénat and Easigas. In 2016, his work is shown in the travelling exhibition "Free from my Happiness", in Perignem in Beernem, Belgium and at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in South Africa. The same year, he is part of the group show "Fresh Produce" curated by Assemblages and VANSA at the Turbine Art Fair in Johannesburg. The work of Sibusiso Bheka documents his environment by night giving us to see his reality of Thokoza, his playful moments almost surreal just before light disappears.

Sibusiso Bheka

2015

***At night, they
walk with me***

Thokoza, South Africa
© Sibusiso Bheka



Philani Mazibuko

Philani Mazibuko was born in 1996 in Katlehong, Johannesburg, South Africa. In 2012, he was introduced to photography in high school through the *Of Soul and Joy* project, which, in 2015, awarded him a scholarship to pursue his photography studies at the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg. In 2013, his work was exhibited in the group show "In Thokoza" organised by Rubis Mécénat at the Ithuba Arts Gallery in Johannesburg. In 2014, his work was exhibited at Addis Foto Fest in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in the group show "Visions of Africa". In 2015, Mazibuko was invited in the exhibition "Fresh Produce" curated by Assemblages at the Turbine Art Fair in Johannesburg. The same year, he joined the *Photojournalism and documentary photography* section at the Market Photo Workshop thanks to a grant given by Rubis Mécénat and Easigas. In 2016, he is the Tierney Fellowship recipient at the Photo Market Workshop. Philani Mazibuko's work documents the intimate life of the adolescents living in Thokoza. He features the rooms of boys living in shack settlements.

Philani Mazibuko
2014
Boy's room
Thokoza, South Africa
© Philani Mazibuko



Tshepiso Mazibuko

Tshepiso Mazibuko was born in 1995 in Thokoza, South Africa. In 2012, she was introduced to photography in high school through the *Of Soul and Joy* project, which, in 2014, awarded her a scholarship to pursue her photography studies at the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg. Mazibuko's work was exhibited in 2013 in the group show "In Thokoza" organised by Rubis Mécénat at the Ithuba Arts Gallery in Johannesburg and in 2015 in "Free from my Happiness" an exhibition curated by Tjorven Bruyneel and Bieke Depoorter and organised by Rubis Mécénat at the International Photo Festival of Ghent in Belgium. The same year, she joined the Advanced Programme at the Market Photo Workshop thanks to a grant given by Rubis Mécénat and Easigas. In 2016, her work is shown in the travelling exhibition "Free from my Happiness", in Perignem in Beernem, Belgium and at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in South Africa. She also takes part in the group show "Fresh Produce" organised by Assemblages and VANSAs at the Turbine Art Fair in Johannesburg. Tshepiso Mazibuko is inspired by her immediate surroundings. She documents Thokoza by telling stories of people who live close to her, photographing their intimate space.

Tshepiso Mazibuko
2015
Encounters
Thokoza, South Africa
© Tshepiso Mazibuko



Lindokuhle Sobekwa

Lindokuhle Sobekwa was born in 1995 in Katlehong, Johannesburg, South Africa. In 2012, he was introduced to photography in high school through the *Of Soul and Joy* project. He then joined Live magazine as a part time photographer. His work has been exhibited, among others, at the Kalashnikovv gallery in South Africa and at the No Man’s Art Gallery in the Netherlands, in South Africa and in Norway. In 2013, Sobekwa was part of the group show “In Thokoza” organised by Rubis Mécénat at the Ithuba Arts Gallery in Johannesburg. His essay *Nyaope* was published in 2014 in South African newspaper the *Mail & Guardian*. In 2015, Sobekwa received a scholarship to study at the Market Photo Workshop; his series *Nyaope* was exhibited in the group show “Free from my Happiness” curated by Tjorven Bruyneel and Bieke Depoorter and organised by Rubis Mécénat at the International Photo Festival of Ghent in Belgium. In 2016, he exhibits at the No Man’s Art Gallery in Tehran (Iran) where he works on a new photography project. The same year, his work is displayed in the travelling exhibition “Free from my Happiness”, in Perignem in Beernem, Belgium and at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in South Africa. He also takes part in the group show “Fresh Produce” organised by Assemblages and VANSa at the Turbine Art Fair in Johannesburg. Lindokuhle Sobekwa is the Assistant of the *Of Soul and Joy* Project Manager, Jabulani Dhlamini. The work of Lindokuhle Sobekwa documents social issues that affect the communities of the townships.



Lindokuhle Sobekwa
2015
Nyaope, everything you give me my Boss, will do
Thokoza, South Africa
© Lindokuhle Sobekwa

Lungile Zuma

Lungile Zuma was born in 1993 in Katlehong, Johannesburg, South Africa. In 2012, he was introduced to photography in high school through the *Of Soul and Joy* project, which, in 2014, awarded him a scholarship to pursue his photography studies at the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg. In 2013, his work was exhibited in the group show “In Thokoza” organised by Rubis Mécénat at the Ithuba Arts Gallery in Johannesburg. In 2014, he was part of the group show “Fresh Produce” curated by Assemblages at the Turbine Art Fair in Johannesburg. The same year, his work was exhibited at Addis Foto Fest in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in the group show “Visions of Africa”. Lungile Zuma captures the essence of previously ‘no-go’ areas and the changes they have faced since 1994 through the everyday lives of the inhabitants.



Lungile Zuma
2013
Zulu hostels
Thokoza, South Africa
© Lungile Zuma

FOCUS PHOTOGRAPHERS AND MENTORS



Tjorven Bruyneel

Tjorven Bruyneel (born in 1983) is a Belgian photographer. She received a Master's degree in Photography from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent (KASK) in 2007. She has worked for a few years at Mikael Subotsky Studio in Johannesburg as a Photo Editor. Her work reflects the desire to analyse her surroundings, to dissect a feeling that she is not able to put into words. It allows her to construct piece by piece as a puzzle her story. Her observations display society and invisible shifts in time, which question our identity. Bruyneel has been an active photographer of the *Of Soul and Joy* project since 2012 leading several workshops in Thokoza as a mentor for the learners. Bruyneel's photo essay, *Untitled Happiness*, was commissioned by Rubis Mécénat in 2012.



Cyprien Clément-Delmas

Cyprien Clément-Delmas (born in 1986) is a French photographer and a film maker. He studied at the prestigious film school ESCAC in Barcelona.

His photographs have been exhibited at the Kowasa Gallery (Spain), at the Nikki Diana-Marquardt Gallery (Paris) curated and organised by Rubis Mécénat and have been sold at Christie's Paris.

Alongside, he has directed several short films and documentaries.

Luciano, a 35mm short film, co-directed with Dani de la Orden, won several awards in Europe. He is also involved in social projects. He led documentary workshops for *Audiovisuales sin Fronteras* for prisoners in jail.

He is currently a member of the Caviar Content production company in Paris.

Clément-Delmas is an active photographer and advisor of the *Of Soul and Joy* project. Rubis Mécénat and Clément-Delmas have worked closely for various commissions since the creation of the fund in 2011.



Bieke Depoorter

Bieke Depoorter (born in 1986) is a Belgian photographer. She received a Master's degree in Photography at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent (KASK) in 2009. Her colour photography work is the result of a unique approach: she captures the privacy of people whom she meets by chance and gets invited into their homes. She captures indescribable, fragile and intense moments, always with kindness. Her *Ou Menya* series for which she spent three months in Russia was published in a book in 2011. Two years later, her second book *I am about to call it a day*, with photographs taken in America was printed and her third and most recent book *Sête#15*, a result of a residency for Images Singulières in France, was published in 2015. She is currently working on the series *In Between* in Cairo where she went for the first time during the protests in Tahrir Square. Depoorter won several awards, including the Magnum Expression Award in 2009. She joined the Tendance Floue collective in 2011. She then joined the Magnum agency, of which she became an associate member in 2014. Depoorter has been an active photographer of the *Of Soul and Joy* project since 2012 leading several workshops in Thokoza as a mentor for the learners. Depoorter's essay, *Thokoza*, was commissioned by Rubis Mécénat in 2012.



Jabulani Dhlamini

Jabulani Dhlamini (born in 1983) is a South African photographer. He lives and works in Johannesburg. Dhlamini majored in documentary photography at the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg and was the recipient of the Edward Ruiz Mentorship 2011/12. His *Umama* series was exhibited as part of his Edward Ruiz award at the Market Photo Workshop in 2012, and at the Goodman Gallery in Cape Town in 2013. In *Umama*, Dhlamini pays homage to single mothers and explores the challenges faced by women raising children on their own in South African townships. Dhlamini's work focuses on his upbringing, as well as the way he views contemporary South Africa. Since 2014, he has been an active mentor and is currently the *Of Soul and Joy* Project Manager.



Thandile Zwelibanzi

Thandile Zwelibanzi (born in 1987) is a South African photographer. He studied at Market Photo Workshop (2008-2011) and is the sixth recipient of Edward Ruiz Mentorship. His body of work, *Still Existence*, was part of the 9th Rencontres de Bamako, the African Biennial in Mali in 2011. Zwelibanzi's solo exhibition has been shown at Market Photo Workshop Gallery and at Bailey Seippel Gallery in Johannesburg. He has participated in a number of group exhibitions in his home country and abroad. His work has been focusing on issues and concepts around power, empowerment and transformation, their impact in relation to the contemporary world we live in and how photography can be used in developing public, private and civil societies. He has been an active mentor of the project since 2014.

RUBIS MÉCÉNAT CULTURAL FUND

The Rubis Group created the endowment fund, Rubis Mécénat, in May 2011 in response to the significant broadening of the Group's international operations. The Fund's premise was to assist in the consolidation of the company's relationship with its subsidiaries through an ongoing socio-cultural engagement which would in turn become a unique aspect of the Group's culture. The Fund enables the Group's involvement in each of its territories to extend beyond an industry player and to facilitate artistic and philanthropic dialogue within the communities of the countries in which it operates.

Its primary focus is intervention in developing countries where the Group has operations. In partnership with international artists, Rubis Mécénat cultural fund works with the Group's local subsidiaries to develop humanitarian and cultural projects in inner local communities by developing young adults' understanding and exposure to art with a view to offering new perspectives, improving the environment and the lives of the selected youngsters through the discipline of visual arts. These projects receive long-term investment, which provides sustainable support and enables activities to be monitored locally.

In parallel, Rubis Mécénat cultural fund supports new artistic talents by setting up projects with emerging artists in France and internationally, by organizing exhibitions as well as commissioning and acquiring works of art.

Lorraine Gobin is the managing director and art director of Rubis Mécénat cultural fund.

www.rubismecenat.fr

EASIGAS

Easigas (Pty) Ltd is a 60% owned subsidiary of Rubis Energy (France) and a 40% owned subsidiary of Reatile Gaz (South Africa) and has been a leading supplier and distributor of Liquefied Petroleum Gas to the Southern African market for the last 30 years.

Easigas (Pty) Ltd as a responsible and a corporate citizen of South African society in the energy sector, has taken the challenge of affordable LPGas use by getting involved in Social Economic Development Programs to benefit the local communities where the company operates.

In 2012, within the scope of the fund's socio-cultural strategy, Rubis Mécénat and Easigas partnered to implement and develop the *Of Soul and Joy* project in Thokoza, nearby the city of Alberton (where the head offices of Easigas are located) in the Gauteng, South Africa, to involve actively the company and its employees into social initiatives. The aim to this collaboration is for Easigas to act as a social and cultural player in South Africa alongside its business engagement. It raises awareness of both the environment people work in and the people they work with. This collaboration brings together volunteers who give generously of their time, delivering professional and personal skills to the project on a regular basis.

www.easigas.com

EVENTS

2016

**Magnum Photos workshops with photographers Stuart Franklin / Thomas Dworzak / Ian Berry
As part of the Magnum Photos educational programme into Africa**

February - April - July 2016

Thokoza, South Africa

www.magnumphotos.com/Education



Workshop led
by Stuart Franklin
Thokoza, February 2016
© Jabulani Dhlamini

“Free from my Happiness”

Group show by South African photographers

Sibusiso Bheka / Tshepiso Mazibuko / Lindokuhle Sobekwa

At Perignem

15 - 17 April

Beernem, Belgium

www.perignem.com

At the Johannesburg Art Gallery

15 May - 15 August

South Africa

www.friendsofjag.org



Exhibition
Free from my Happiness,
International Photo Festival
of Ghent
Belgium, 2015
© Tjorven Bruyneel

Participation in **“Fresh Produce”**

A group exhibition showcasing the South African young artistic generation
African young artistic generation
At the Johannesburg Turbine Art Fair
South Africa
14 - 17 July 2016
Curated by Assemblages and VANSA
www.turbineartfair.co.za

“In Thokoza” Photo Festival - 2nd edition

8 October
Community event
Thokoza, South Africa
www.rubismecenat.fr



Photo Festival In Thokoza 2013
1st edition
© Bieke Depoorter / Magnum Photos

EVENTS

2015

“Free from my Happiness”

Group show

By South African photographers

Sibusiso Bheka / Tshepiso Mazibuko / Lindokuhle Sobekwa

At The International Photo Festival Ghent 2015

Sint-Pietersabdij (Saint Peter’s Abbey), Ghent, Belgium

Curated by Bieke Depoorter and Tjorven Bruyneel

2014

“Visions of Africa”

Group show

With the work of Lungile Zuma / Philani Mazibuko / Sibusiso Bheka / Teboho Busa

At Addis Foto Fest 2014

The Oromo Cultural Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Curated by Aida Muluneh

www.addisfotofest.com

2013

“In Thokoza // In Paris”

Round table

With journalist Sophie Bouillon and photographers Bieke Depoorter,

Cyprien Clément-Delmas, Thabiso Segkala

Discussion led by Antoine Kowalski

At Le BAL, Paris, France

“In Thokoza”

Group show

With the work of the *Of Soul and Joy* students and the mentors Tjorven Bruyneel /

Bieke Depoorter / Cyprien Clément-Delmas / Kutlwano Moagi

Lecture by Lolo Veleko

At the Ithuba Arts Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

“In Thokoza”

Photo Festival - 1st edition

Community event

Lectures by Sabelo Mlangeni and Jérôme Delay and mentors Tjorven Bruyneel,

Bieke Depoorter, Cyprien Clément-Delmas and Kutlwano Moagi

At Phola Park, Thokoza, South Africa

BOOKS AND DOCUMENTARY

BOOKS

In Thokoza - 2013

with an essay by Sophie Bouillon



Free from my Happiness - 2015

Sibusiso Bheka: At night, they walk with me

Tshepiso Mazibuko: Encounters

Lindokuhle Sobekwa: Nyaope. Everything you give me my Boss, will do

With essays by Sean O'Toole



DOCUMENTARY

In Thokoza by Lungelo Mntambo - DeLiTe Visual Archives - 2013



More videos to see:
www.rubismecenat.fr/videos

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Visit to the
Johannesburg Art Gallery
South Africa, 2012
© Bieke Depoorter / Magnum Photos

Follow the project :

