

# Heritage Project for Mother City

The Sunday Times has launched the Cape Town leg of its unique national heritage project to erect a number of site-specific, permanent and public memorials that record and recognize some of the century's most remarkable newsmakers and events.

Guests and members of the media gathered at one of the new Cape Town memorials - two benches by local artist Roderick Sauls outside what used to be the old Race Classification Appeal Board building in Queen Victoria Street. Though now an annex to the High Court, this building marks the spot where for more than 30 years countless men, women and children were given or denied basic rights under one of apartheid's most notorious practices of 'classifying' South Africans by race, real or perceived.

The benches are part of a group of memorials commissioned by the Sunday Times as part of its centenary in 2006. To acknowledge this major milestone, Mondli Makhanya, the editor of the newspaper, launched the Sunday Times Heritage Project as a way to "give back" to the South African public who has helped to make the Sunday Times the country's 'paper for the people'.

The Heritage Project, in partnership with communities, families and authorities in four provinces and several cities, began in Johannesburg in March 2006 with the unveiling of a playful statue to Brenda Fassie. This now stands in Newtown Precinct as a permanent memorial to MaBrrr's status as a stellar newsmaker and South Africa's top selling artist at the time of her death in May 2004.

The project will continue through 2007 as memorials are installed on the streets where history happened, in the Eastern Cape and KZN.

As importantly, the project is based on a retelling of key stories that shaped the news using local artists to interpret these historical moments. Each will stand as a small stitch on the street where news became history, and will tell a particular story about the people who shaped the events, culture, and history within a community.

Charlotte Bauer, the Director of the Heritage Project expounded on the significance of the project for the Sunday Times and the country as whole saying:

"By no means was all of the news history we wished to mark shocking and painful. Our researchers set out to identify and develop a number of stories, characters and sites across the news board - Eureka moments in science, the arts, sport, politics, and society. A range of memories, often proud, even playful.

"Above all, this is to show people that history is driven by actions and actions are driven by fascinating humans. We're not asking the public to remember history only because it is important, but because no-one can resist a good story."

The two benches created by Roderick Sauls for this project are marked 'Non Whites Only' and 'Whites Only'. Sauls says his brief from the Sunday Times inspired him "to remind people of the humiliation of the Apartheid Race Classification System."

"In the old days, people were divided between non-whites and white and would walk past a bench [from which they were excluded] and never sit on it even if nobody was around. People were just scared."

These benches - with wording taken directly from the old Population Registration Act - may cause us to remember the pain of the past, but they will also remind us to enjoy the freedoms of the present, according to the statement from Sunday Times.

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