

Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.

MALCOM X
American minister



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SCHOOLING YOUNG RAPPERS FOLLOWING HIS TWAR
Rapper Cassper Nyovest has decided to share some pearls of wisdom after his Twitter exchange with fellow rappers, Nasty C and Emtee. The hitmaker went on to advise young rappers not to burn their bridges for likes and retweets. | IOL



■ EDUCATION

It's story time with Ma Gcina

Legendary storyteller partners with Mancosa to keep educating SA youth online

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DESPITE the lockdown, learning never stops and some opportunities are too good to miss.

Private higher education provider Mancosa's School of Education has partnered with the Gcinamasiko Arts and Heritage Trust to bring South African storytelling legend Gcina Mhlophe online to regale children with her iconic tales.

Professor Zaheer Hamid, academic director at Cape-based distance education institution Mancosa and head of the School of Education, said audio recordings of Mhlophe's storytelling series will be available for free on the website, www.mancosa.co.za, from tomorrow until May 1.

Mhlophe's inspirational stories of hope in South Africa and from across the continent will also be available on Mancosa's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn profiles.

"Lockdown must not only be about school work for children. They also need time to set their minds free to imagine, dream and indulge in creativity.

"In Ghana, there is a new TV station entirely devoted to learning with a daily schedule, the World Bank has several initiatives, while Google has a virtual office to help one make the switch to distance learning.

"Our children have been in isolation for the past three weeks. The first couple of days were spent delighting in their newly found freedom out of school. But then what? As part of giving back to communities during the pandemic, we decided to focus on children by keeping them entertained with stories, even if only for a few minutes each day for 10 days," Hamid said.

Mancosa was fortunate to secure Mhlophe's services, he added, and the award-winning storyteller has chosen stories with an African theme to expose children to a broader vocabulary as well as provide verbal and mental stimuli.

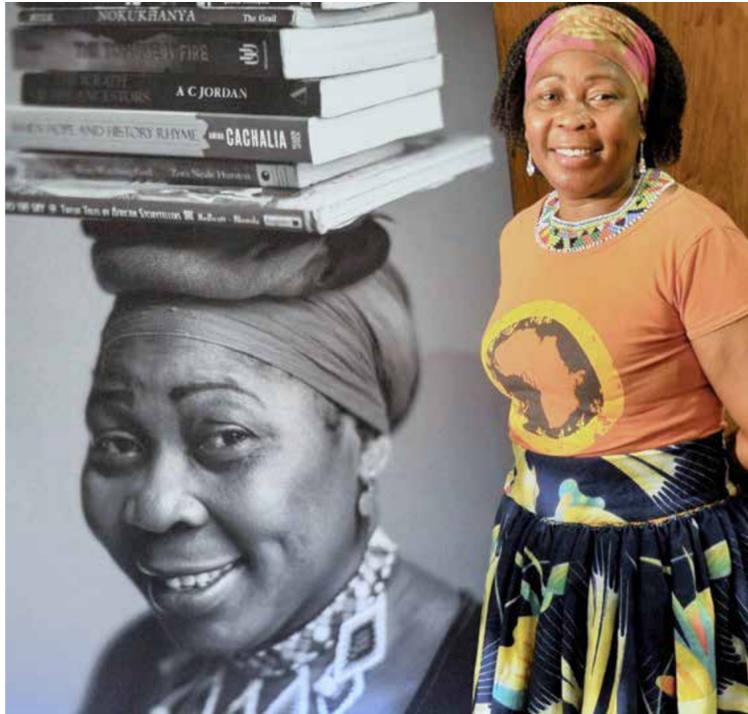
"I have specifically chosen stories that will take children's minds somewhere else during these dark and gloomy days," said Mhlophe.

She has forged a career over several decades, having first been influenced by her grandmother's tales as a child.

Mhlophe has also run NOZINC-WADI Mother of Books Literacy Campaign since 2001, in an effort to make South Africa a "reading nation".

Her latest endeavour with Mancosa also connects with its founder Professor Yusuf Karodia's belief that reading is an essential ingredient for children to improve their literacy, further their education, and brighten their future.

Lockdown now provides the evergreen Mhlophe and Mancosa with a captive audience – the learners of tomorrow.



LEGENDARY African storyteller Gcina Mhlophe will keep children entertained for 10 days during the lockdown with a daily five-minute online story, courtesy of distance learning institution Mancosa.

■ EDUCATION

School time calendar may be revised

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THE INDEPENDENT Examinations Board (IEB) is still weighing options on whether it will revise its academic calendar amid the prolonged Covid-19 lockdown.

Most private schools which subscribe to the IEB reopened for the second term this week.

Anne Oberholzer, the board's chief executive, said the IEB was closely monitoring the implications of the unfolding situation on Grade 12 pupils and the impact that the current closure will have, depending on the date on which schooling will return to normal.

Some of extracurricular activities would be scrapped to make up for the lost time.

"The key for us in education will be for schools to focus purely on teaching and learning when the lockdown is over."

Oberholzer said the IEB was dependent on the pronouncements of Angie Motshekga, the Minister of Basic Education.

Motshekga is yet to submit a proposal before the Cabinet on how schools will move forward from the coronavirus lockdown.

She said by the end of the month, they had calculated that about 30 school days would have been lost as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Oberholzer said the IEB sent a notice to schools about resources that were available free online to assist pupils and parents.

STREETWISE ARTS FESTIVAL GOING PLACES

After prestigious award at home, French Season Africa 2020 beckons

Don Makatile

THE Institute for Creative Arts (ICA), whose flagship Live Art Festival walked away with a gong at the Humanities and Social Sciences Award 2020, is collectively over the moon about the award.

Curator of the 2018 Festival, Jay Pather, ably assisted by co-curators Nomusa Makhubu, Nkule Mabaso and James Macdonald expressed gratitude for the award, concurring that the HSS nod was an affirmation that the ICA was doing great things with the Festival.

Pather, a professor at the University of Cape Town (UCT) says: "The award is significant in so many respects. First of all, to honour research in the Humanities is an outstanding initiative. However, the recognition of performance and the arts as research is unprecedented. For many years, arts academics have argued towards this end. That while there is the kind of art that seeks only to entertain in a superficial, sensory way, as well as art that seeks to be commercial, there are artists who spend much of their time thinking through form, disruption of the predictable, numbing old habits and innovation and risk in the creation of art work that contributes to the world's knowledge.

It is also finally extremely significant that the Award is made to a Live Art Festival, which is the most experimental of art forms where art, inter-disciplines, a range of cultural heritages, idiosyncratic points of view, social justice and innovative form come together. So this has been a major contribution. And while it is unlikely that the ICA will ever rest on its laurels, it's wonderful to get a nod that we are in a direction that is seen to be of national importance and benefit."

Since its iteration in 2012, the Festival runs over several days in September in the city of Cape Town, and in public spaces.

It is their 2018 Festival that has had reviewers raving over its workmanship and overall artistry. But why is it not venue-based and held in public, when the average festival of its pedigree is usually aimed to attract the established art lover with access to galleries? Is it perhaps a means to draw new crowds?

"This is not the main intention of this Festival, though all productions are completely free of charge and so there is easy access. The ICA's other festival, *Infecting the City Public Art Festival* does seek to make art accessible in a range of different public places. That Festival is designed for the kind of access you are talking about as it involves researchers and artists in the creation of works that could happen on a pavement, a shop window, in a public square or the taxi rank."

That it is open to the public, does not detract from the quality of the talent on display, Professor Pather assures: "The ICA Live Art Festival attracts researchers and artists who seek interdisciplinary collaboration or are in search of new forms to contain the complexities of our contemporary world. These kinds of artists take enormous risks and are supported to some extent financially and with technical production so that they may not have to simply make a work commercially successful.

The Institute invites work that will break new ground - so the kinds of researchers and artists are engaged with new forms, new ways of engaging with audiences, who are working with technology and are also collaborating across disciplines from the creative arts to such disciplines as social sciences, politics, economics and the pure sciences."But public still infers free. If you showcase the performances in public spaces, like the Cape Town train station, you're bound to attract audiences unwilling or unable to pay. Is this model proving successful, is it based on any example from anywhere in the world?

"Public encounters with art are always extremely rich, as it combines an audience who knows it is happening with another audience passing by and that is always highly productive and is a litmus test for the artist."

In typical artist indifference, the ICA Director does not seem to mind 'free'. "Again you may be referring to the *Infecting the City Public Art Festival* as well. During the ICA Live Art Festival, we have done such works as Chuma Sopotela and Buhlebezwe Siwani's *Those Ghels in Long Street*. Public encounters with art are always extremely rich, as it combines an audience who knows it is happening with another audience passing by and that is always highly productive and is a litmus test for the artist.

Yes, public art or site specific performances occur throughout the world. And no less than on the African continent. Our rituals and ceremonies are indeed public by nature and this transparent exchange of metaphors and collective consciousness is by no means new and certainly not to us and our communities. And so it is an effective way to disseminate art and research that may otherwise be kept inside galleries, libraries and theatres."



Humanities Awards 2020 Collective Creations chair judge Dr Andile Khumalo and Best Public Performance Winner Jay Pather

Though the Festival was inaugurated in 2012, the year 2018 was no doubt its signature year since inception. "The Festival, as does the Institute, keeps growing in stature and in terms of its impact. The year 2018 did see an upswing in international collaboration (especially with artists from the African continent and diaspora). In this year we also developed partnerships and collaborations with institutions such as the Zeitz MOCAA, Spielart Festival in Munich and IZIKO National Galleries as presenting partners.

We saw a dramatic increase in audiences and the discourse of Live Art became more pronounced with the production of a book of essays (*Acts of Transgressions, Live Art in South Africa*). The establishment of the Live Art Network Africa (LANA); funding for the ICA Live Art Workshop programme which made available Live Art composition skills to a cross section of students and artists. It was also a big step that international media such as CNN conducted interviews with artists and researchers taking the subject of Live Art on the African continent onto broader platforms, Professor Pather says."

He says the words 'average' and 'connoisseur' in the question asking if the Festival is not aimed at the high-end art enthusiast "are pretty loaded and I would prefer not to use them."

"The ICA Live Art Festival is a platform for unique work and complex relationships with a range of publics. The *Infecting the City Public Art Festival* does generate interest from new audiences, yes."

Where to from here after the validation that comes with winning the Humanities Award? "The next ICA Live Art Festival was meant to happen in August 2020. COVID-19 has of course presented us, the University as well as the ICA, with extraordinary challenges. We don't believe that taking such a complex Festival online is a good option at this stage consider-

ing how much of Live Art has to do with strategies for audience engagement and it is not easily translatable from one medium to another. So as with all our projects which involve so much interaction, we are needing to think hard. The pandemic has also foregrounded the continual blindspots in our desperately unequal society and the ICA is developing methodologies in line with our policy of open access. Validation that the ICA is, as you put it 'onto a good thing' beyond this wonderful award has come by way of the coming Festival being selected to feature as part of the French Season Africa 2020. So we're hoping that we can have clarity in the next months as to how the ICA's work can continue to flourish but more importantly, connect with the fallout, the challenges and opportunity that this difficult moment affords us."



Institute for Creative Arts (ICA) during the 2018 Live Art Festival with Jay Pather