



**Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University**

for tomorrow



OUR PUBLIC ART LEGACY LAUNCH

Introducing:

The Beyers Naudé Garden of Contemplation, The Madiba Shirt
and celebrating our partnership with the Kagiso Trust.



“Public art plays an important role in the academic community, fostering critical thinking, inspiring creativity, and pushing viewers to move past the tangible knowledge into that which can only be conceived through a process of deeper engagement and thought,”

- NMMU Arts and Culture director Michael Barry.

NMMU's public art vision

Throughout history, in any of its many interpretations, built forms and public spaces were called upon to be the scene of the meeting between art and people. Art, if closely tied to people's everyday lives, is a form of communication through which people learn about one another's similarities and differences, break through some of the barriers to understanding and awareness, and develop some of the commonalities that define community.

“Public art plays an important role in the academic community, fostering critical thinking, inspiring creativity, and pushing viewers to move past the tangible knowledge into that which can only be conceived through a process of deeper engagement and thought,” says NMMU Arts and Culture director Michael Barry.

The Madiba Shirt sculpture, the first phase of the 10-Year NMMU legacy public art project on South Campus is linked to the Beyers Naudé Garden of Contemplation.

Both the sculpture and the garden celebrate the concepts of multiple struggle leadership, struggle icons, and a shared value system between Naudé and Mandela. This links up with NMMU's values.

NMMU has identified strategic priorities that need to be addressed in a holistic manner to achieve Vision 2020 - its strategic plan for the University it strives to be.



Elements of the public arts

NMMU's Urban Design Framework (UDF) identified spaces for public art commissions. It is important that these art works be contextualised and linked to each other by a broad theme that emphasises the university's values. As Nelson Mandela's life work embodies much of our values it is proposed that relevant experiences from his life cycle be identified for our public art programme and these in turn be linked to NMMU's values. These are taking responsibility, respect for the natural environment, diversity, ubuntu, excellence and integrity.

Our values



Arts, culture and heritage are integral to the social life of society and has inherent developmental and social transformative value. NMMU prides itself for its diversity, not only staff and student diversity but also the diverse academic offerings that speak to humanising pedagogy and sustainability. NMMU is committed to using indigenous and institutional cultural and academic knowledge to contribute to local, regional and African development. As a higher education institution, NMMU supports and promotes academia and research that nurture innovation, foster creativity, embrace technology and develop people to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

The Beyers Naudé Garden of Contemplation is intended to create a space of contemplation and reflection in the memory of Dr Beyers Naudé. This unique space links to the "Madiba" Shirt sculpture, the first public sculpture, as part of the 10-year NMMU Legacy Programme: an initiation of a public arts programme on campus expressing the 10-year journey of NMMU.



“His life is a shining beacon to all South Africans – both Black and White. It demonstrates what it means to rise above race, to be a true South African.”

- Nelson Mandela (on the occasion of Dr Beyers Naudé's 80th birthday in 1998).

The making of the garden

The Beyers Naudé Garden of Contemplation, jointly funded by the Kagiso Trust and NMMU, is intended to create a space of contemplation and reflection in memory of Dr Beyers Naudé.

Dr Beyers Naudé was a dominee who became part of a small group of ministers in the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) who hoped to lead their church away from apartheid. They set up bible study groups to consider apartheid together with other moderate voices in the Afrikaans churches.

In October 1977, the Christian Institute – and Naudé – were banned. In banning him, the government had hoped to destroy his influence but instead, 62-year-old Naudé entered a new, significant phase.

Though excluded from direct participation, Naudé was still caught up in political and church developments, as scores of people – of all races, professions and ranks – flocked to his home each day after his banning. His understanding of the problems facing South Africa deepened.

This garden is part of the NMMU Legacy Programme: the initiation of a public arts programme on campus expressing the 10-year journey of NMMU.



“The garden is not just a memorial garden, not just an object of beauty, but a space that inspires contemplation about our turbulent South African past and our promising South African future, looking to past men of strength like Dr Naudé, while planting the seed for exceptional future leaders, our students of today.”

– Garden designer, NMMU Horticulturist Elana Storm.

The design philosophy

The philosophy behind the design incorporates three major themes: rock, circular footpaths and a blend of indigenous and exotic plant material. These design materials illustrate the strength of character and contrasting moral issues faced by Dr Beyers Naudé (armour rock), the diversity of South Africans as well as those moral issues that still face South Africans today (blend of exotic and indigenous flora).

Circular pathways and overhanging trees create niches for seating, with stone walls along the perimeter to create a quiet space conducive to contemplation. The circular pathways create the sense of a “progressive journey of transformation and change”. The North/South access through the campus aptly links the garden to the “Madiba” Shirt sculpture.

In keeping with the NMMU’s value of respect for the natural environment, irrigation is via a non-potable water source to conserve South Africa’s scarce water resource. The plants used have also been selected for their low water requirements. The garden is set in a shaded glen amid a busy student hub that links three major lecture venues. Previously planted as a windbreak with coastal silver oaks and *Ficus natalensis*, the trees have been retained and trimmed to create an inviting rest area.

Quartzite armour rock mined at the local Coega quarry weighing between 400kg and 40 000kg are dotted around the landscape for aesthetic impact. Brass signage prompts are embedded in the armour rock illustrating the personal journey of Dr Naudé, the man who sacrificed much and faithfully followed his heart to create equality for all South Africans. Depicting the parallels between the strength and solidity of rock, and the strength of conviction of Beyers Naudé. Open lawn spaces for gathering in two secluded areas are connected by hand-crafted benches constructed from natural materials creating areas for quiet reflection.

“The garden is not just a memorial garden, not just an object of beauty, but a space that inspires contemplation about our turbulent South African past and our promising South African future, looking to past men of strength like Dr Naudé, while planting the seed for exceptional future leaders, our students of today.” - Garden designer, NMMU Horticulturist Elana Storm.



The Madiba Shirt sculpture

The “Madiba” shirt was popularised by former president Nelson Mandela, who received a batik silk-printed shirt by designer Desré Buirski. The shirt was first worn by the then newly elected president at the dress rehearsal of the 1994 Opening of Parliament. Mandela wore this style of printed shirt many times and it fondly became known as the Madiba shirt.



“ Thank you for everything you have done and the sacrifices you have made for our beloved country ”

- Designer Desré Buirski’s note (accompanying the shirt given to Nelson Mandela in 1994)

The concept

The Madiba shirt sculpture is a tribute to Nelson Mandela, whose name the university proudly bears. The design was the brain-child of Mary Duker, the Director of the School of Music, Art and Design. It was further developed by Mary and NMMU Studio Arts lecturer Bianca Whitehead with the intention of applying a community of practice approach to the process of making it. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students were involved.

The shirt was conceptualised to be:

- The centre-piece in a student gathering place, and a constant and inspirational reminder of the values embodied by the African leader.
- A beautifully crafted form, made up of a welded armature supporting wire work, and a skin of richly coloured tiles, which spell out NMMU’s values.
- A celebration of being African
- A memory of the softly sloping shoulders of a leader
- A visual representation of the NMMU values.

The form

In its final form the shirt stands 2.8 metres high, on a concrete plinth. The basic structure is made out of C3R12, a hardy specialist metal. Hundreds of glazed ceramic tiles, suspended in a patterned wirework of squares make-up the “fabric” of the shirt. The blue and white tiles spell out NMMU’s value words in a series of horizontal and vertical bands. The sculpture, which took many months to complete, is located on a large open grass area opposite the east entrance to the main building on South Campus.

The creative team was made up of Mary Duker, Bianca Whitehead, Roland Luders and NMMU arts students Jonathan van der Walt, Mellaney Ruiters, Michelle Luyt, Sarel Venter, Amos Ragophala, Michelle D’Urbano, Issa Jafta, Nadia van der Merwe and Jessica Hanson.





Kagiso partnering with NMMU

The Beyers Naudé Memorial Lectures – a Kagiso Trust initiative – are held over a three-year cycle at the various tertiary institutions in South Africa. 2015 marks the third and final year of the series in partnership with NMMU’s Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (CANRAD).

The purpose of the lecture series – which began in 2004, the year the Afrikaans anti-apartheid cleric died – is to keep his legacy alive, and to remember the values that are integral to making South Africa a country its citizens are proud to call home.

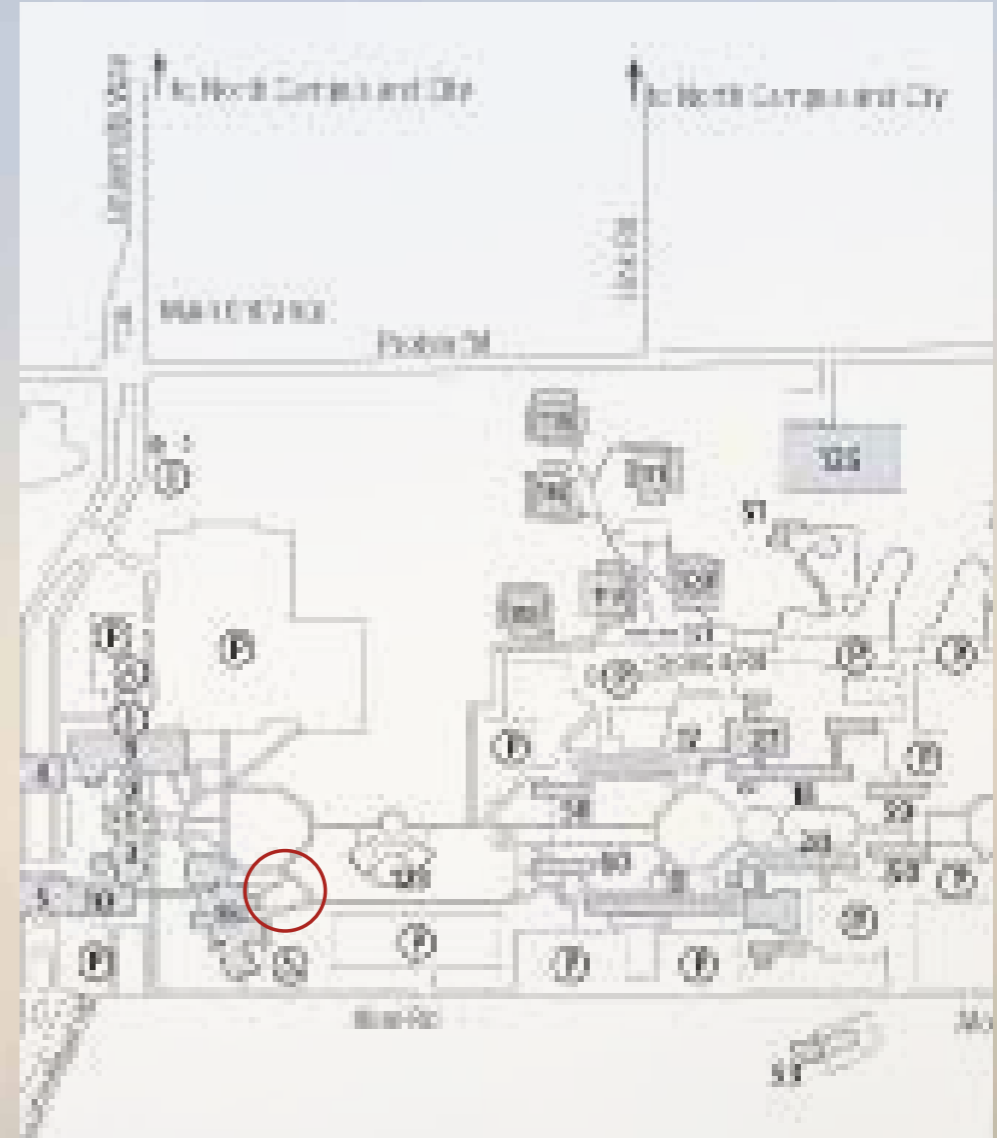
“The series is an effort by the Trust to engage South Africans into dialogue over issues affecting our nation,” said Kagiso Trust Director Dean Zwo Nevhutalo.

Naudé was a founding trustee of the Kagiso Trust, alongside Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Dr Max Coleman, Reverend Frank Chikane and Prof Jakes Gerwel, among others.

The Kagiso Trust was formed in 1985 during a period of intense struggle and resistance. It became a catalyst for new development institutions and initiatives, with support spread across a range of sectors: rural and urban struggles, advice centres, welfare and health, and education.

Additionally, 2015 marks the celebration of several milestones — what would have been Dr Beyers Naudé’s 100th birthday coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the Kagiso Trust and the 10th anniversary of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

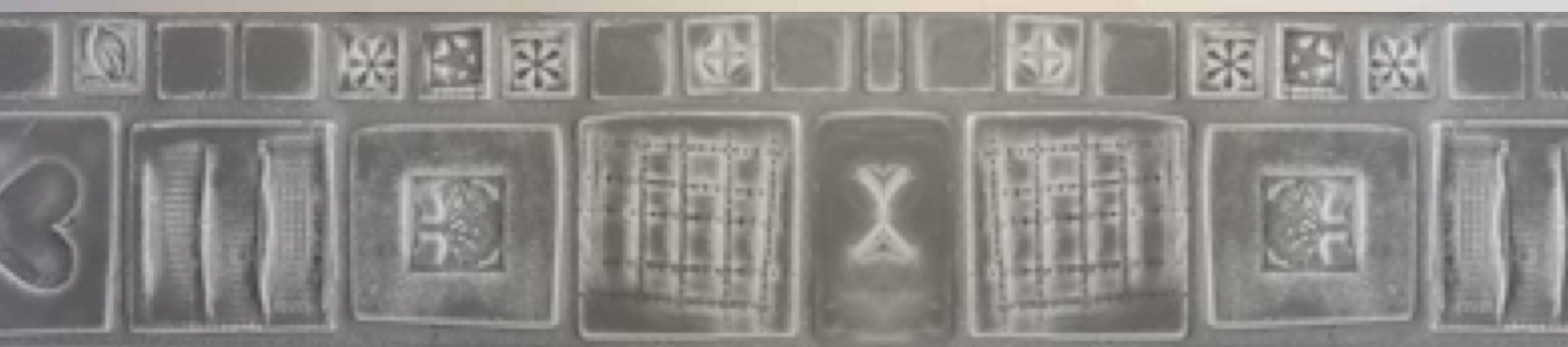
Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu once remarked, “Beyers became a leper in the Afrikaner community.” Even though South Africa, post-democracy, is a changed country, there is still plenty to fight for today – voices that still need to be heard, solutions that still need to be found, change that still needs to come.



○ The Beyers Naudé Garden of Contemplation and The Madiba Shirt sculpture.

“Gee, at last! What I had dreamt, hoped and worked for is becoming a reality.”

– Dr Beyers Naudé (after hearing FW de Klerk’s speech in 1994, declaring a new South Africa)



- Port Elizabeth Campuses: +27(0) 41 504 1111
- George Campus: +27(0) 44 801 5111
- PO Box 77000 • Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
- Port Elizabeth • 6031 • E-mail: info@nmmu.ac.za
- Website: www.nmmu.ac.za

Connect with us:

