

THE EMPATHY & HOPE PROJECT



The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as *'a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.'*

1 in 4 people in the world will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives. Around 450 million people currently suffer from such conditions, placing mental disorders among the leading causes of ill-health and disability worldwide. Treatments are available, but nearly two-thirds of people with a known mental disorder never sought help from a health professional.

A lack of mental health knowledge or literacy is still the leading cause of stigma. Stigma, discrimination and neglect prevent care and treatment from reaching people with mental disorders. Eliminating stigma promotes help-seeking behaviours and allows people to reach out and support each other.

With this in *mind*, the exhibition aims to explore the harmful factors that impacts to our health and our minds, and to create an awareness of mental health. With a local regional focus, the exhibition will highlight the impact of the social determinants on the health of our minds.

Opening up this visual discussion, in a public space, informed by local voices, will allow people to relate to shared experiences with mental illness and mental health. With success, this exhibition will travel to other cities that will incorporate local artists and local content that speaks to relevant communities.

EVENTS

The opening of the exhibition on Thursday, 5 September 2019 will include a keynote address, drama performances and slam poetry and is available to everyone.

We are expecting attendees from all spheres of our local community as well as international support. We will be joined by local community members, patrons of the art industry, students, mental health professionals, non-profit organizations, university faculty, advocacy organizations, social worker organizations and more.

Mental Health related talks and additional theme-focused events are planned during the course of the exhibition.

#empathyhopeproject

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THABISO SEKGALA

Thabiso Sekgala (1981 - 2014) lived in Johannesburg, South Africa. He was a photographer whose work explores themes of abandonment, memory, spatial politics and concept of home. Main inspiration for this exhibition is the work of Thabiso. We will showcase some of his work that explores how he saw life before his passing. His work is currently represented by Goodman Gallery and I have their full commitment and support to show his work for this project.

LINDOKUHLE SOBEKWA

Lindokuhle Sobekwa was born in 1995 in Katlehong, Johannesburg, South Africa. His work documents social issues that affect the communities of the townships in Johannesburg. Lindokuhle is an amazing young photographic artist with international acclaim. We will show case his work that he did on Nyope (a very addictive drug), showing the impact of ones environment ie substance abuse and poverty, on ones mental health. He is represented by Magnum Photos Agency.

PHOTOVOICE

This is a facilitated photo workshop that will be hosted prior to the opening. It is facilitated by a mental health professional with 10-15 young people in Durban. They are briefed on a mental health project that includes taking photographs of elements in their community. These photos are used as discussion points around mental health and will exhibited and exhibited as key messages collected from the community.

WITNESS CHANGE

A Tribute to Victims & Survivors of Life Esidimeni tragedy: This is related to the devastating loss of 150 people that was removed from government psychiatric hospitals due to neglect and disregard for human life. We can't address our right to mental health without acknowledging gross human rights violations towards people suffering from mental illness. This part of the exhibition will be focused on the stories of victims families and survivors in an audio installation.