

JAG gets much-needed donation from the BASA Awards Creative Blocks initiative

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The Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) is to receive a much-needed cash donation from the hugely successful Creative Block initiative tied to the recent 13th Annual Business Day Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) Awards, supported by Anglo American.



Just under half a million rand, will be shared between the Friends of the JAG, and over 67 artists. "In addition to the restoration and maintenance of the JAG, the money will be used to redesign the Jackson Hlungwane room which is a permanent display in honour of the artist. Selected pieces from the Dutch collection will also be restored for an exhibition of such pieces in 2011. JAG is dependent on ongoing support such as this for the preservation of our cultural heritage and we are most grateful for the support received through the Creative Block initiative," says Antoinette Murdoch, Chief Curator of the JAG.

The money resulted from The Creative Blocks' partnership with Business and Arts South Africa, which saw over 400 artworks purchased by individuals who took up the challenge to be part of an individual giving drive.

"We are thrilled that so many people bought their own Creative Block artworks, and I hope the initiative drives the idea that individuals can also play a role in creating a sustainable arts environment in South Africa," says Michelle Constant, CEO of Business and Arts South Africa.

Constant had made the call for individuals to "pay it forward" at the 13th Annual Business Day BASA Awards, supported by Anglo American which took place at Hollard's Villa Arcadia on August 30th. The Creative Block Project, driven by BASA member - Jeanetta Blignaut Art Consultancy, is a project that invites emerging and established artists to transform standard wooden blocks (18 cm x 18 cm x 2.2 cm).

The success of this project was also enabled through substantial support and championing by BASA members - Hollard and Artinsure. Hollard's Group Exco member, Sheila Surgery said the money raised for JAG was beyond what had been expected when the idea of giving individuals the chance to contribute to the gallery was first raised. "What a pleasure it has been for Hollard to work with JAG, Business and Arts South Africa, Artinsure and Creative Block," says Surgery. "It is exciting to see what we can achieve when we combine our efforts for a common goal and I'm happy to say that the result has exceeded all our expectations!"

The Creative Blocks exhibit ran at Villa Arcadia until October 14, alongside the National Treasures exhibition, which drew over 1200 visitors.

The latter was a celebration of the 100-year old collection of the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) and featured 57 artists including Moses Kottler, Gerard Sekoto, Irma Stern, Alexis Preller, Cecil Skotnes, Walter Battiss, Penny Siopis, Willem Boshoff, Jackson Hlungwani, William Kentridge, Conrad Botes, Hasan and Husain Essop and Mary Sibande.

Completed in 1910 and now part of the Hollard campus in Parktown, Johannesburg, Villa Arcadia was the Sir Herbert Baker designed residence of Randlord Lionel Phillips and his wife Florence. A leader herself in Johannesburg society, Florrie Phillips, together with Hugh Lane, was responsible for establishing the Johannesburg Art Gallery - providing a fitting

link between the location of the National Treasures exhibition and the JAG.

The Creative Block is an ongoing project that gives individuals an affordable and accessible way to buy art. Go to www.creativeblock.co.za for more.

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