



UMCEBO

About Umcebo:

Umcebo is an isiZulu word meaning “treasure”

The Umcebo Trust is a public benefit non-profit organization, which was registered on 22nd May 2003. Umcebo Trust was established by Robin Opperman, and was born out of his work as a Special Needs art teacher.

The Trust has a primary goal of empowering young crafters, people with special needs and other community members to use and develop their artistic talents as a means of personal and creative development, as well as to generate income. Umcebo believes that personal empowerment and improved self-awareness is brought about through art, craft, creativity, exposure to business, learning and teaching.

Umcebo takes this work further, and offers it more broadly, through our dynamic workspace and retail outlet at uShaka Marine World (Durban). Here, individuals and organisations throughout Durban collaborate in the development of unique arts, crafts and other projects. Through this process, crafters, learners and members of surrounding communities are able to educate, empower and inform themselves about the potential and possibilities for arts and crafts.

We believe that helping people develop, create and earn money inevitably benefits us all by building a society based on mutual respect and positive activity, and not poverty and despair.

Our Vision:

There are four aspects to the vision of Umcebo Trust:

1. To assist our crafters, predominantly from impoverished and disadvantaged communities, in generating a reliable income. The emphasis is on unique work that is marketable, highly creative and challenges public perceptions. There is a focus on one-off commissions and short runs of high end décor products.
2. To offer training for educators & exposure for students who have limited access to resources, thereby assisting them in being more effective in facilitating and growing community and school arts and crafts projects.
3. To place a major emphasis on recycling materials in creative and unique ways. These “scrap” materials are combined in unique and artistic interpretations into artworks and craft; the end result being a complete transformation of potentially environmentally destructive and unwanted materials, into works that can be sold.
4. To work with a broad cross section of the population in an inclusive manner, and to look at encouraging a climate of optimism, self-respect and industrious creativity.

Our Ethos:

Umcebo’s work is guided by a number of fundamental principles:

- Community participation;
- Enhancing project members’ self-esteem, sense of self-worth and social standing;
- Providing a secure and safe working environment;
- Promoting an attitude shift in the community’s views on marginalised people;
- Creating and maintaining a dynamic, interesting & successful retail space;
- Maintaining the highest standards of customer service, innovation and quality.

Our Projects:

- Creating unique art works and functional craft items using a combination of recycled waste and other materials;
- Training in craft production & related skills;

- Retailing our works and those of other talented crafters through our outlet at Ushaka;
- Participation in various publicity and awareness-generating events around craft and the creative sector;
- Partnering with organisations that share a similar vision;
- Offering an integrated shopping/ workshop environment, where the public can purchase locally made crafts and interact with the crafters who produce the work.

Our Products:

Our products create the working platform for achieving the aims of Umcebo, by generating income and teaching our crafters valuable business and retail skills. Our product offerings can be divided into the following main areas:

- **Commissioned art pieces:**
Unique and individual banners / tapestries, sculptures, garments, jewellery, accessories, lighting, décor, or specially commissioned projects.
- **Banners / Tapestries:**
Large and smaller scale cloth wall hangings. Jewelled and embellished with wirework, intricately applied beadwork combining found and recycled objects, sewing, embroidery and other painting and cladding techniques. Imagery and patterning is individual to each banner. The final effect is one of a colourful, embroidered and sculptural mosaic-like wall hanging.
- **Sculptures:**
Large, freestanding pieces of sculpture, involving structural wirework, sewing techniques and other sculptural and painting techniques. The patterned cladding is achieved through using many of the above-mentioned banner techniques. Subject matter, imagery and patterning will also be unique to each sculpture and can be tailored according to client specifications.
- **Decor Items and Commissions:**
Functional and one-of-a-kind home-décor items and accessory pieces. The line consists of beaded and wirework pieces (standing lamps, sculptures, chandeliers) and bags, mats, baskets and vessels woven and crocheted from reclaimed plastics. This line is constantly developing, and we welcome design collaborations.
- **Mosaics:**
In collaboration with partners and other community artists, crafters produce a number of high quality and uniquely designed mosaic panels which speak of their lives and experiences.
- **Chandeliers:**
We produce a popular and evolving range of chandeliers made from recycled and donated materials, wire, beads and other materials. These items have proven amongst our most sought-after pieces, especially amongst the interior decor market.

For more information on our product ranges, see www.umcebotrust.co.za

Skills Training and Workshops:

Umcebo has formed partnerships with the Department of Arts and Culture and other service providers, and developed and facilitated several Craft-Production and Arts Administration skills training courses and learnerships. We also host students and collaborate actively with tertiary institutions on internships and related programmes.

uShaka Integrated Shop/Workshop Environment:

We launched our Umcebo Trust retail space at shop B8 and B9 in the uShaka Village Walk in 2007. Here the public can shop from our exclusive range of work, commission pieces and interact with the crafters making the work. Crafters obtain valuable retail experience, and we also encourage other projects to develop new and fresh products, which we then select to market and sell at our shop.

Highlights and Milestones:

2003

- The Hamlet Foundation Presidential Award
- The exhibition of the Umcebo Banner Collection held at the Alliance Française Durban, which subsequently travelled nationally and to Europe

2004

- Collaborative painting project - 'Music Through The Eyes of Children', with Italian artist Severa Rech Cassarino, hosted by the Italian Consulate
- Banner commissions for the South African Constitutional Court

2005

- Sale of 'Music Through The Eyes of Children' collection to KZN Premier's Office.
- Art for Humanity collaboration and banner exhibited and sold at their Durban Art Gallery 'Women

for Children' launch.

- End of year exhibition at Durban Art Gallery.

2006/7

- Production of garment collection for SA Fashion Week (Sandton - Gauteng).
- Collaborative workshops with University of Indiana South Bend
- Move to fully integrated retail and workshop experience at uShaka Village Walk.
- Production of a chandelier 'The Star of Ulundi' as a gift to King Goodwill Zwelithini.
- Production of beaded lighting range for the Azura Hotel (Mozambique), voted one of the top hundred hotels in the world, by Tattler Magazine.

2008

- Participation in 2008 Design Indaba
- Sale of work to Bead Merchants of Africa and Bead Boys (Cape Town)
- New collection of décor and lighting range for Tucker Robbins New York.
- Participated in Gold Medal winning, 'Local Rocks Hall' at House and Garden Show.
- Umcebo made an Old Mutual Project for three years, and also included in the Old Mutual Legends Programme, to assist with growth towards self sustainability.

2009

- Participation in 2009 Design Indaba
- Order of Scrap Plastic Baskets for Anthropology stores in America
- Beadwork marine life order for uShaka Marine World.
- Conducted craft stakeholder workshop for ABSA.

Important information:

Trust registration no. 025-892-NPO/PBO no 930011193

Audited: 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 audits completed.

Postal: P.O. Box 10073, Marine Parade, 4056, Durban ,RSA

Physical Address: Shop B 8 and 9, Ushaka Village Walk
(Ushaka Marine World- Durban Point)

Directors contact Cell: 0837933408

Fax: 0866937831

E-mail: robin@umcebotrust.co.za

Alternative email: umcebo@vodamail.co.za

Web: www.umcebotrust.co.za

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