



# *Profile*

**MUSA.E ZULU**

**(Creative Director: Valhalla Arts)**

# Musa E. Zulu

*“When the burning flame of spirit is ignited, it will transform any soul - no matter what the circumstances.”*



**MUSA E. ZULU** is a published author, an award-winning entrepreneur, international artist, celebrated motivational speaker and prominent disability activist in South Africa. After achieving an Honors degree in Sociology at UKZN (1993), he lectured in the Faculty of Humanities before moving to the corporate world as Human Resources Manager. He was fast climbing the career ladder when his life took a dramatic and unexpected turn. This was “*On the 20<sup>th</sup> of April*” in 1995 when he was 23 years old.

**CHANGE:** Paralyzed and left in a wheelchair after a car accident, Zulu found himself faced with one of the hardest challenges life can bring - disability. Applying his personal philosophy of embracing change, he found not only a way to cope with his new life, but to inspire others as well.

In 2017, MUSA E. ZULU was invited by Activate, a non-profit organization targeting youth empowerment, to receive a *Traditional Blanket* from the community of Hluhluwe, northern KwaZulu-Natal, for his contribution to the promotion of disability arts and culture in rural communities of the province.

Over the past 29 years (since the 1995 road accident) he has delivered motivational talks to various institutions throughout South Africa. These invitations have included being requested to deliver strategic solutions aimed at helping Clients achieve optimal marketing and communications targets.

## **WORK EXPERIENCE & ACHIEVEMENTS**



### **(1992 - 1994) TEACH-TEST-TEACH PROJECT JUNIOR LECTURER**

In 1989 the then University of Natal, now renamed the University of KwaZulu-Natal, started the Teach-Test-Teach (TTT) project to improve access to Black post-matric students to study in liberal institutions of higher learning that still catered predominantly for White student populations. Specific focus and target were African students from disadvantaged education systems who had passed their Grade 12 studies with poor results and insufficient points to qualify automatically for entry into university. TTT was thus a structured university entry-and-preparation program where Zulu's primary duties as TTT Junior Lecture were to:

- Lead a community program which helped identify, profiled and selected suitable candidates to take through the first phase TTT process of registration and preparation for an entrance examination.
- Lecture in the Knowledge Development Program designed for those first-year entrants to ensure that they completed their degrees on time.



### **(1994 - 1995) TONGAAT MUSHROOMS FARM (SHONGWENI, KZN) SENIOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER**

ZULU joined The Tongaat Group Limited's Denny Mushrooms farm as Senior Human Resources Manager in September 1994. The Tongaat Group Limited is an agri-processing business, which includes integrated components of land management, property development and agriculture. During his brief stay he initiated many changes that uplifted working conditions at the farm. As Senior Human Resources Manager, Zulu was responsible for the following duties: Recruitment and Hiring, Training and Development, Job Design, management of Employee Benefits and handling Disciplinary Actions.

Zulu was paralyzed on the 20th of April 1995 shortly after completing Job Descriptions of all employees. This exercise saw many receiving improved salaries because of a well-defined job grading system. This resulted in stabilized internal employer-employee relations which reinforced company culture that created a safe and productive work environment for all.



**(1998 - 2002) KZN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
DIRECTOR OF ASIPHEPHE ROAD SAFETY PROJECT**

The KwaZulu-Natal ASIPHEPHE Road Safety Project was designed to follow "world's best practice" of the state of Victoria in Australia. ASIPHEPHE managed to reduce road crash statistics by an unprecedented 35 percent between 1996 and 2002. The "Arrive Alive" campaign was launched following the effectiveness' of this KZN road safety strategy under Zulu's impactful command where his primary duty was to coordinate the local implementation of the strategy which was four-fold:

- **Enforcement**
  - Heavy and visible enforcement, particularly in the main areas of offence – speed, alcohol abuse and seat belt-wearing.
  - Improvements in vehicle and driver licensing in areas of policing and systems.
- **Education**
  - Public awareness projects and community programs backed to support enforcement messages with emphasis on compliance and the consequences of unsafe behavior of drivers, passengers and pedestrians, including capacity building and improvement especially of previously disadvantaged communities' road infrastructures.
- **Engineering**
  - Low-cost engineering programs at hazardous locations including the erection of traffic lights, and speed reduction measures by speed tables, rumble strips or building of pavements and barriers.
  - Improvement of vehicle design and maintenance, including vehicle roadworthiness and testing.
- **Evaluation**
  - Evaluation of all projects to ensure responsible use of money, effectiveness of the measures and production of accurate, scientifically based and up to date-data-driven strategies on which to base evaluation and planning.



*'Zulu, ME, (1999), Project ASIPHEPHE - Implementation [Paper 9], South African Transport Conference, 19-22 July 1999, CSIR Conference Centre, South Africa, Session 2B: Traffic Management and Safety'.*



**CHANGE AGENT & MENTOR:** MUSA E. ZULU has established himself as a Change Agent. Reflecting on his personal experiences and inner qualities, applying his flexible change management skills, and unleashing his entrepreneurial attitude, Zulu focuses his 'change agent' interventions primarily towards the development and deployment of self-motivation.

His services have also helped organizations transform themselves by focusing on such matters as staff motivation, coaching and mentorship; organizational growth based on effectiveness, efficiency, and communications improvement, together with how to develop a framework for managing the people side of change.

In 2019 he was presented with the *NHBRC Iqhawe Mentorship Award* at the annual Black Business Quarterly (BBQ) Awards, in recognition of his exceptional ability and commitment to guiding and mentoring emerging entrepreneurs.

**MOTIVATIONAL MODULES:** MUSA E. ZULU is well-renowned for conceptualizing and authoring his motivational modules. These deliveries, supported by creative audio-visual presentations, are always tailored to meet the Client's brief. Some of his module titles include:

- **'Rainbow Colours on Black & White: Utilizing Art to Achieve Team-Building' (Valhalla Arts; 2006).**
- **'THISABILITY: A Graduation from Acceptance to Embracing' (Valhalla Arts; 2008).**
- **'How Effective Managers & Executives L.E.A.D' (Valhalla Arts; 2013).**
- **'6 Essentials for Mastering the Art of Self-Motivation' (Valhalla Arts; 2017).**

His past Corporate Clients portfolio includes Sanlam, Old Mutual, Standard Bank, KPMG, Pearson SA, LFP, ADAPT IT, IDC, SABSWA, Stella Lumen, Ernest & Young, South African Principals Association, SANASE, LFP, Ibhongo Consulting, Bonakude Consulting, Sizwe Medical Aid, Arivia.Com, Multichoice and the SABC, SOUTH32 Hillside Aluminium, Ithemba Property Management Company, TBFS, Newcastle Municipality, UMgungundlovu TVET College, and Rand Water. He has also been invited to lead creative sessions for project kick-offs at various government and community organization forums.

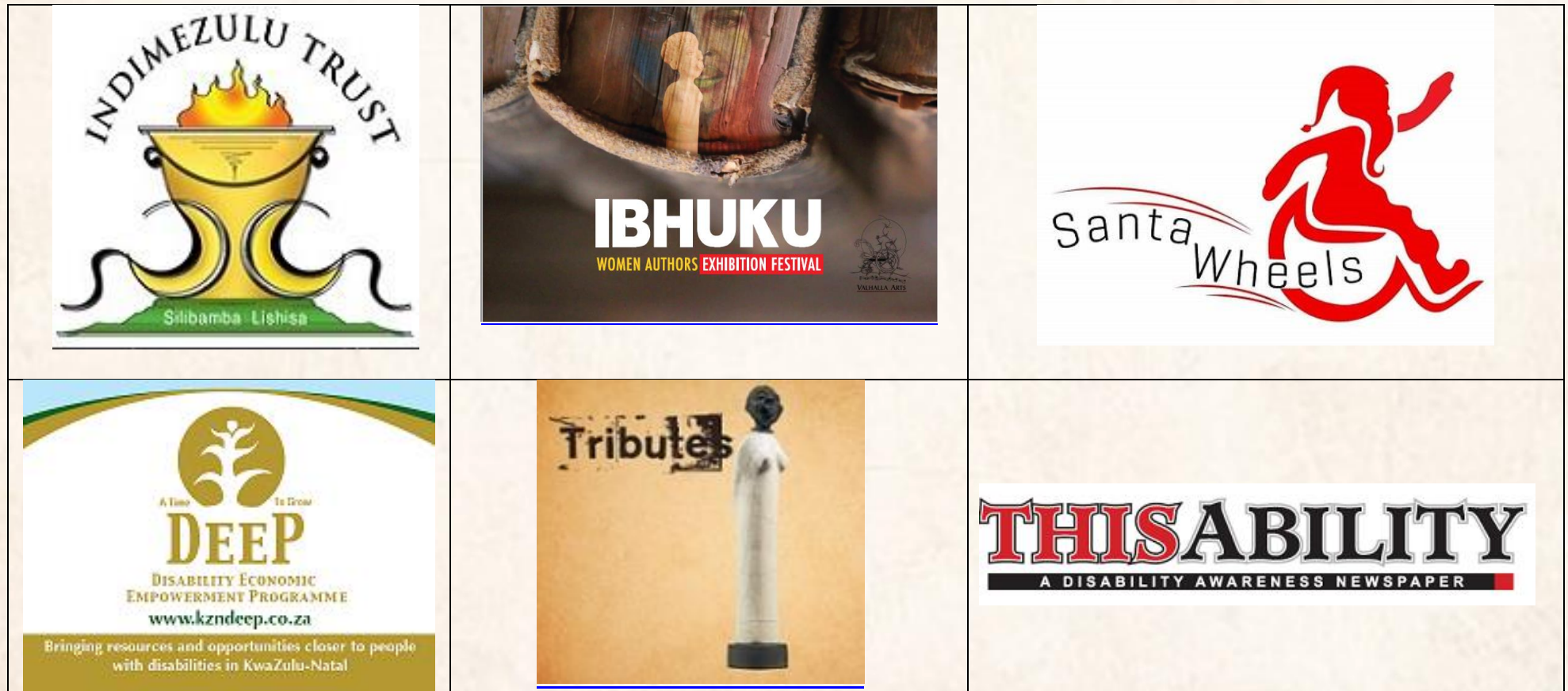
**(2005 - Present)**

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR: VALHALLA ARTS**

MUSA E. ZULU is an established entrepreneur and is Creative Director of his company, Valhalla Arts, which handles his creative works including his published books, artwork, and disability economic empowerment programs. The company administers the drawing of contracts, sponsorships, collection of royalties, exhibitions, sales, and Intellectual Property Copyright. Valhalla Arts was registered in 2005 under CK 2005/161496/23 and its Income Tax Reference number is 9039057188. The company is a 100% Black and disability-owned private enterprise. It is classified as a Level 1 Contributor with a BBBEE Procurement Recognition at 135% under BBBEE Certificate Number 20130170054.

**VALHALLA ARTS ACHIEVEMENTS:** *(click on the images below for more information)*

Through Valhalla Arts, MUSA E. ZULU has founded, coordinated, and implemented the following social development initiatives:



**MILESTONES:** (click on the images below for more information)



- From 1998 - 2002, MUSA E. ZULU was the first Director of the ASIPHEPHE Road Safety Campaign in KwaZulu-Natal. At age 26 this appointment made him the youngest Director ever in the entire history of the South African public sector.
  - He was named '*Man of the Moment*' by True Love Magazine in the October 2002 Issue.
  - In November 2002, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture used his life story (sampled from an article featured in Bona Magazine earlier that year) for Paper 1, Higher Grade Zulu Second Language Senior Certificate Examination.
  - In 2004 he was invited by Gecko Productions to be one of the Judges in the Multichoice Vuka Awards that honour exceptional creatives in the South African film industry.
  - In 2005 he registered Valhalla Arts, a company to manage his work including the implementation of his community outreach initiatives aimed primarily at the empowerment of persons with disabilities.
  - He was named '*One of 10 South African Men we just Love*' by Oprah Magazine (SA) in the July 2006 Issue.
- In the year 2007 he won both the '*Best Entrepreneur of the Year Award*' together with the coveted '*Platinum Award*', the showstopper moment where all category winners are pitted against each other, at the annual Black Business Quarterly (BBQ) Awards.
  - In 2012, and in partnership with Killa Joe Records, Valhalla Arts embarked on the '*Ego Sum Quod Sum – I Am What I Am!*' Disability Arts Tour, to showcase the role of music, crafts, literature, and poetry in enabling disability identity, expression, and empowerment.
  - In 2013 he was invited by the American Embassy in South Africa, Durban, to participate in the State Department sponsored International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) which builds mutual understanding between the United States and other nations through carefully designed professional visits to the US for current and emerging leaders.

- He is the recipient of both the eThekweni Municipality '*Mayors' Achiever Award*' (2013) and '*The Phoenix Light Group Distinguished Service Award*' (2013) for the role he has played in pioneering new models for disability integration and economic empowerment in South Africa.
- In 2013 the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education presented Valhalla Arts with an '*Award in Inclusive Education*' at an occasion held in celebration of the 3rd of December, which is International Day for Persons with Disabilities.
- In the year 2014 '*The Language of Me*' was one of the books analyzed and critiqued by Dr Ken Junior Lipenga for his PHD thesis titled "*Narrative Enablement: Constructions of Disability in Contemporary African Imaginaries*" submitted to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University, South Africa.
- In 2014 UKZN Press partnered with Valhalla Arts to release a special edition of his 2004 autobiography as '*The 10th Anniversary of Language of Me*'. This commemorative issue came out with a new cover sleeve and was packaged with a DVD featuring recordings of his motivational talks, televised art exhibitions and community work.

"I discovered early after the 1995 car crash that to recognize myself first as but fully complete, despite all worldly misconceptions and stereotypes against my disability, I had to find a voice of my own to use when challenging or complementing issues affecting my space. In the process of finding 'my voice' to recognize and articulate my own position on disability identity and opportunity, I have written books, delivered motivational talks, and created artworks. Today I believe I have developed a voice of my own with which to state my defined stand." **(MUSA E. ZULU; 2015)**

- In the year 2016 he received an Award at the 2nd Annual '*We Can ARTS FESTIVAL*', held in KwaZulu-Natal and coordinated by OUTRAGE CONCEPTS in partnership with the Department of Arts & Culture, for his contributions to the development of disability literature and arts in South Africa.
- Later in 2016 he was invited to come and receive an award, presented by Mind Set 101, for '*21 Years of Mental Strength and Tenacity*'.
- September 2019, he had the honour to receive an award from Arise & Shine, a community arts organization based in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, for his contribution to the promotion of traditions and culture in township communities of the province.



In April 2020, shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown announcement, he launched a virtual art exhibition on social media titled *'The 25 Gifts of Gratitude'*. The collection featured 25 special artworks drawn to pass gratitude to the people of South Africa for embracing his life, work and talents over the 25 years in his wheelchair. This special art exhibition was beamed to millions of continental television viewers, on SABC2's Morning Live news program, in commemoration of his *'Silver Jubilee'* in his wheelchair on the morning of the 20th of April 2020.

- In April 2021 he self-published his fourth book titled *'I AM ART: The 40th Anniversary Essay,'* which reflects on the four decades (1979 - 2019) of doing art together with the past 25 years of his disability. He launched the book with a daring skydive over the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands to also highlight the 100 years anniversary celebration of the Open Air Special School for Learners with Disabilities, located in Durban, South Africa.

- In June 2021 he was identified as the artist to draw artworks for all the winners in the prestigious KZN Standard Bank Top Business Awards.

- In October 2021 he was invited by Ethekwini Municipality and the United Nations (South Africa), to give an address at the Disability Management Summit,

held at the Durban International Convention Centre, on *'Removing Barriers to an Inclusive Society'*.

- In early November 2021 he was invited by the MANGOSUTHU University of Technology in Durban, South Africa, to conduct a 1-day *'Identity & Self-esteem Workshop'* for students with disabilities on campus.

**BOOKS:** (click on the images below for more information)

MUSA E. ZULU has authored five books; *"The Language of Me"* (UKZN Press; 2004), *"Wheels on the Soul of my Shoes"* (NUTREND Publishers; 2008), *"TRIBUTES: The Story"* (Valhalla Arts; 2012), *"MASTERING THE ART OF SELF-MOTIVATION: Tapping the Inner You!"* (Valhalla Arts; 2017), and *"I AM ART: The 40th Anniversary Essay"* (Valhalla Arts; 2021). *'The Language of Me'* has since been prescribed as reading material for students taking the 'Disability as Diversity' academic module as a Postgraduate Diploma in Disability Studies within the Division of Disability Studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. In late 2006 Valhalla Arts released *'Rainbow Colours on Black & White'*, a short video which later spawned a collaborative arts motivational module that MUSA E. ZULU has implemented successfully when conducting corporate and organizational *'Team Building'* sessions towards realigning company labour relations and promoting collective effort.



**ARTWORK ACHIEVEMENTS:** (click on the image below for more information)



MUSA E. ZULU is an established artist with over 40 years of experience, and has been widely commissioned by individuals, organizations, and corporate institutions to create artworks which depict their personal lives and business profiles. He has staged a few solo art exhibitions over the years and pioneered creative initiatives that promote disability literature and arts. His artworks have been auctioned to raise funds for bursaries to be allocated, through his INDIMEZULU Trust, to students with disabilities to go to college or university.

- In June 2001 he presented an artwork titled *'I Am an African'* to His Majesty, the late King Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu, as a Birthday gift.

- In December 2001 he unveiled his first solo art exhibition

titled *'The Sexuality of Body, Art & Soul'* which was held at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Student Unions Building, at Howard College in Durban.

- In 2002 he was commissioned by management of the Molweni Restaurant, located along the Durban Beachfront, to draw the logo of the business together with a few other artworks for hanging on the premise's interior walls. This logo, accompanied by a poem titled *'Molweni'*, also appeared on the restaurant's menus and employee uniforms, making this his first *'mobile'* art and poetry presentation.
- In July 2002 he was invited by celebrity sports broadcaster, Robert Marawa, to appear as Special Guest Artist on his popular MTN Soccer Zone television show where 6 of his 'soccer themed' artworks were exhibited and beamed to millions of viewers on the silver screen.
- In 2003 he released his self-portrait titled *'THISABILITY'*, and he was commissioned by the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) to draw artwork for presentation as Presidential Awards of Excellence to business achievers by then South African President, Thabo Mbeki, in 2005/6.
- In 2006 the Life Entabeni Rehabilitation Centre in Durban, South Africa, commissioned him to draw 'healing' artworks for this newly launched wing of the hospital. This was the same hospital where he had been admitted, and cared for, after his disabling car accident 11 years before.

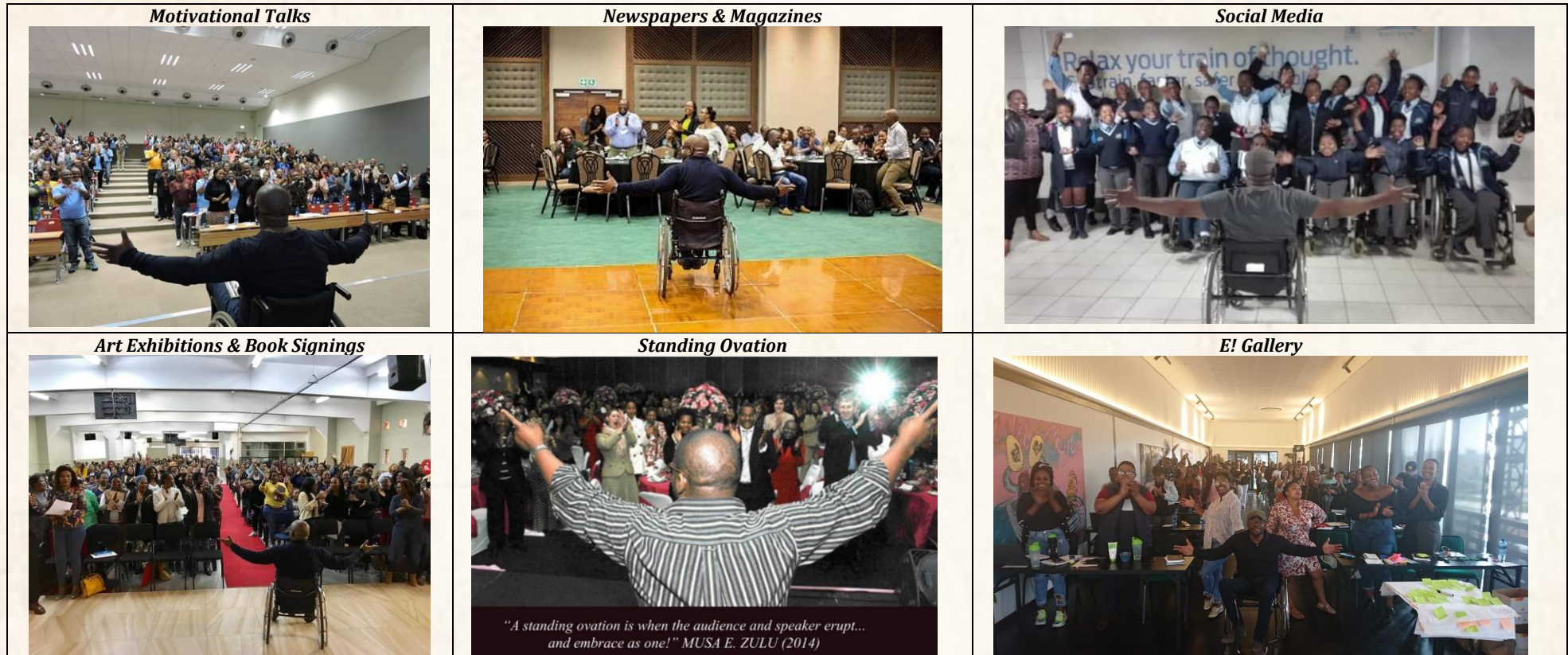
- In 2006 Valhalla Arts partnered with the KwaZulu-Natal Office of The Premier to release a once-off '*Integrated National Disability Strategy Calendar*'. 12 policy themes were identified in this document and allocated appropriately to each of the 12 Departments in the South African public sector. 12 artworks were to give face to these themes and support the policy statements that highlight each Department's role and responsibilities in creating an equal society for all as defined in the document. All the 12 artworks chosen for this project were transplanted straight from '*The Language of Me*', published two years earlier, and yet each one of them sat squarely and appropriately, as true reflections of each policy theme and Department they were representing in the calendar.
- A few of his artwork pieces hang proudly on the corridors of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's College of Humanities, where he is an alumnus, after the College commissioned him to create a collection in early 2007.
- In mid-2007 he staged his third solo art exhibition titled '*THISABILITY*,' which was held at the Centre for Visual Arts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg.
- In late 2007 the Auditor General's Office commissioned him to draw 15 artworks for their headquarters in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal.
- In 2009 he was invited by Rhino Cash & Carry to draw, exhibit and auction six (6) artworks during their annual stakeholder Golf Day, to raise funds for INDIMEZULU Trust to allocate bursaries to students with disabilities.
- In 2010 the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture commissioned Valhalla Arts to produce executive calendars depicting their policies, strategies, and programmes for rural community development, and to allocate these to the 12 months of the year. For this project, Valhalla Arts executed its traditional approach to calendar creation where text is supported by artworks that speak to each month's theme specifications.
- In 2011 the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts & Culture commissioned Valhalla Arts to produce their own executive calendars, in line with the approach deployed in laying-out and designing the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture's product the year before. All artworks developed for this project were later framed and hung permanently at the Department's headquarters in Cedara, KwaZulu-Natal Midlands.
- In 2011 Ms Mpho Letlape, an avid African art collector, academic and businesswoman, commissioned him to draw a collection of artwork depicting all stadiums where the 2010 FIFA World Cup were staged in South Africa.
- In 2019 he unveiled the '*Valhalla Arts Red Label*' signature approach to art presentation that, for the first time, introduced the colour red in his traditional black-and-white creative expression.

**ARTWORK:** (click on the images below for more information)



In December 2021, at the age of 50 and 26 years after sitting in his wheelchair, MUSA E. ZULU was presented ***'The Lifetime Achievement Award'*** by the eThekweni Municipality, which is a UNESCO City of Literature, for his exceptional contribution in the conceptualization, development and distribution of South African literature and arts.

**LIFETIME ARCHIVES:** (Click on the images for more information)



- In 2019 MUSA E. ZULU was invited by SOUTH32 Hillside Aluminium in Richards Bay, north of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, to assist with a human resources turn-around strategy following a heavy drop in productivity which resulted in a R1 Billion loss in revenue after 500 employees had been retrenched earlier that year. Speaking on behalf of Management and staff at SOUTH32, and addressing MUSA E. ZULU directly at the 2021 Employee Engagement Strategy Sessions two years later, **Vice President of Operations, Mr Calvin Mkhabela**, still hailed; 'The unforgettable impact of the four motivational intervention sessions you conducted, which we can all testify became the catalyst that has inspired this company to bounce back to its productive levels, with a profit of R885 million the second year, and a determined projection of R7 Billion in the twelve month period ending on 30 June 2022, which is in line with this organization's FY22 Targets'.

## AUDIENCE TESTIMONIALS:



"When Musa first came on stage, I was impressed by the way he made his opening statement. My colleague sitting next to me had heard his presentation at the Conference the week before and had told me this guy is very good. The bar was already set high at this point and by the time his talk was over, Musa had exceeded all my expectations. What I enjoyed the most was the way he moved around on stage. Although in a wheelchair, he engaged with his audience just as an able-bodied person would do. He shows that when an obstacle is in your way, you must find ways to work around it. He has accomplished many things in life and it makes you wonder why we are so stagnant in achieving our goals. After listening to him and the brief history of his life, I really want to read his books and get a more in-depth perspective of who he is, and the

adversities he had to overcome to get where he is right now. He is an inspiration to us all." - ***Krishnan Ramanjulu, Production Execution***

"MUSA E. ZULU represents someone who is unwilling to let circumstances define his potential. He has harnessed the power of his inner man to overcome the outer appearance. Being confined in a wheelchair early in his life drove him to unlock the desire and determination within him to succeed. The most remarkable thing is his ability to communicate his challenges in life in a humorous and inspiring way. His life experiences now serve as life lessons for the many that get to hear him speak. He motivates through the heart and touches you at an emotional level, connecting with the inner passion and potential that all of us possess. He is living testimony of how we all can dream more, learn more, do more and become more. - ***Selvan Govender, Maintenance Execution Superintendent.***

"Musa is a very inspirational and powerful person. I was able to gauge and ask myself if I am really going in the right direction. His talk covered six points, which were 'Discipline, Self-leadership, Productivity, Efficiency & Effectiveness'. What stood out for me was the last point of 'Making A Difference'. If I can inculcate all these points, then I can make a big difference everywhere I go, whether it's at work, home, or in the community. He encouraged me to work harder than I think I'm currently doing. I really appreciated the talk and well done to Musa. He was spot-on!" - ***Cebi Ngobese, Specialist PC&I***

"Listening to MUSA E. ZULU's story of how he sees the positive in everything that happens to him, even when he was paralyzed after a car accident at the age of 23, I was motivated. His outlook on life is that of always seeing the positive in every situation and always being happy when meeting people, no matter the issues at hand. It was a real eye-opener for me. I left that Conference feeling excited for the challenges ahead, and I for one am now trying to see the positive in every situation." – **Bruno Zanette, Supervisor Mechanical Workshop.**

"You have these moments in life that don't happen often, when someone tells you a story that makes you realize just how powerful your human spirit really is. This is often conveniently forgotten as we occupy ourselves with trivialities and complaints of the daily grind. Nothing ever changes and each day is the same, with the centerpiece being excuses. When I heard Musa for the very first time, all I could feel was a deep sense of embarrassment, too afraid to pick up my head. The more I listened, the more I was inspired so much that I promised myself that words like 'impossible' and other excuses will never again come out of my mouth – to stop complaining and make a difference!" – **Sunny Sujun, Superintendent.**

"In a world so swept up with all things fast and superficial, it was most refreshing to meet a gentleman named MUSA E. ZULU. If ever authenticity and humility was a person, then MUSA would be it. His frank and real presentation, coupled with the right number of anecdotes and humour, leaves one feeling overwhelmed, grateful, determined, and all-round upbeat. Just 10 minutes into MUSA's talk and I, for one, was looking at life from a completely different perspective. It is safe to say that at all four of our Team Leadership Conferences, MUSA had the audience eating out of the palm of his hand ... and hanging onto his every word. Whether it is one, one hundred, one thousand or a stadium packed with people, one thing is certain, that MUSA will make an indelible mark on every person in his audience, and that his story and journey will resonate with everybody in one way or another. On behalf of the Hillside Aluminium family, we would like to take this opportunity to thank MUSA for taking the time to speak to our Teams. He infused and reignited the dormant passion and energy within our Teams that is needed now more than ever!" - **Gaynor Kast (Corporate Affairs – SOUTH32 Hillside Aluminium)**

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