

the human elephant foundation

South Africa

The elephant, both powerful and vulnerable, is a poignant metaphor for all nature. Its remarkable collective memory reminds us of how much we have forgotten and have disconnected ourselves from our origins. The Human Elephant Foundation invites us to reconnect with the natural world through the power of imagination and the harnessing of creativity. It provides us with the opportunity to use our intelligence and skills to regenerate a more symbiotic relationship with the Earth.

Andries Botha, sculptor and founder of The Human Elephant Foundation

I created these life-size elephants out of recycled materials. They represent the world of nature from which we have removed ourselves and for which we increasingly yearn.

Andries Botha

The elephant is the largest land mammal and as such the most portentous symbol of the threat that our expanding industrial development represents to all forms of life. The elephant is enormously strong and powerful yet also vulnerable. It offers a poignant and timely metaphor to contemplate issues of co-existence and how we now need to live.

Elephants and human beings share many well documented characteristics and traits. They have a highly developed sensibility, a deep-rooted sense of family and similar emotional responses.

They need to migrate, based on seasonal and environmental change, and the necessity of finding food and water. Humans migrate in response to changing sociological and political forces.

As the world becomes increasingly populated and territorial, threats to both elephants and humans increase. Elephants' ability to use both current experience and memory increase the chances for survival of the herd. Humans have lost touch with a collective consciousness and way of life.

To develop new ways of thinking, we have to move, to re-engage our rational thought processes with our forgotten intuitive sensibilities.



Location:

De Panne Beach, Belgium,
Summer 2006

Photographer:

Dirk Vermeirre

Made from:

Mild steel, galvanising paint,
14 varieties of indigenous wood
from recycled trees

The elephant is a metaphor that awakens the yearning for forgotten conversations between humans, the Earth and all living things.

As part of nature, we co-exist with the elephant, other creatures, the land, the sea and the sky. What happens to one, affects the other.

A technologically driven consumerist world has served to disconnect us from our underlying relationship with the natural world. Selfish interests have destroyed the very nature on which our lives depend.

To remember these vital connections requires collaborative conversations that are needed to bring about a more supportive relationship with a planet in crisis.

Location:
Royal Museum for Central Africa,
Tervuren, Belgium, 2007 -2009

Photographer:
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Made from:
Mild steel, galvanising paint,
14 varieties of indigenous wood
from recycled trees





Ancient elephant paths have provided the map for later human migration, both literally and figuratively, as humans have migrated to new lands for survival or for what they see as a better life.

Dr. Ian Player

At 83 years of age, Dr Ian Player, internationally respected conservationist and wilderness activist, is increasingly aware of his own mortality. After seeing Andries Botha's sculpted elephants, he said, "I turned from my inward journey and am turning outward again. My last journey is to walk and talk with this elephant."

The elephant he speaks of is Nomkhubulwane, Andries Botha's latest creation. Dr Player named the elephant in acknowledgement of Andries Botha's creative achievement and to honour the important role elephants play in the environment and in the archetypal consciousness of human beings.

Dr Player believes that humans feel a compelling attraction for elephants. He sees Africa as the memory of the human archetype, if we are to accept the scientific declaration that all humanity evolved in and migrated from Africa into the world as we know it. He therefore believes elephants to be embedded into the archetypal consciousness of humankind.

Lux Themba

Location:
KZNSA Gallery, Durban,
South Africa

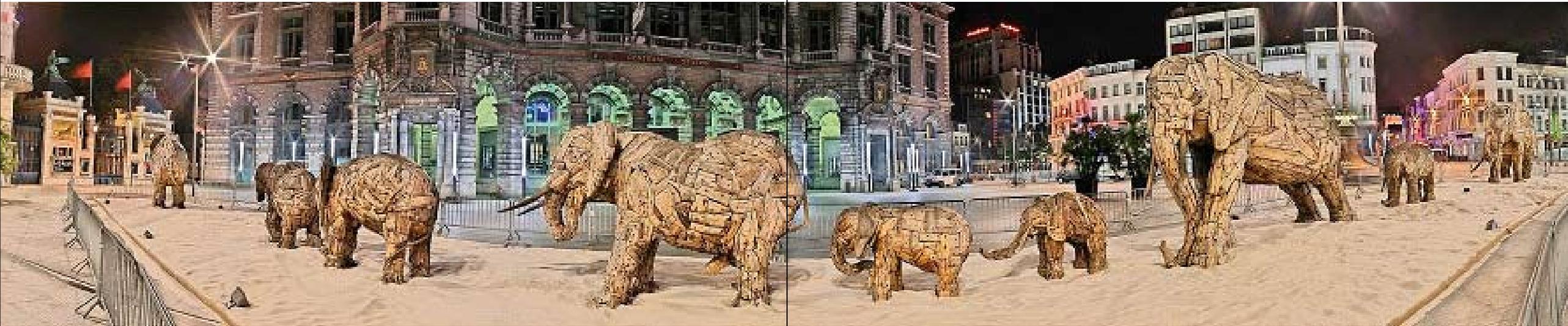
Photographer:
Garth Walker

Made from:
Galvanised mild steel, hard
indigenous recycled wood 2008/9



Dr Ian Player and friend
Mdiceni Gumedi

Photographer:
Andrea Schellner



What will we do to change how we live? What will accelerate our commitment to create a more sustainable world? How can an elephant catalyse this conversation and expanded commitment? I am hoping Nomkhubulwane will inspire many more people to ask and address these questions.

Andries Botha

Internationally renowned sculptor, Andries Botha, has created a number of life-size elephants that have been placed in various locations in the world where they generate great interest and admiration. To date, there are 12 such works: a full herd of 9 in Belgium made from recycled wood from KwaZulu-Natal; a fallen elephant made from recycled cider casks in France; an elephant in Holland made from recycled leadwood; and the most recent, Nomkhubulwane, the great matriarchal elephant created from recycled truck tyres.

A number of additional elephants have been commissioned and will be placed in appropriate spaces in the near future.

Nomkhubulwane will move around the world, bringing attention to the role of The Human Elephant Foundation (HEF) and its partner, the Magqubu Ntombela Foundation (MNF) founded by Dr Ian Player in memory of his Zulu friend and mentor. Nomkhubulwane will draw attention to issues of sustainability and wilderness that threaten the survival of elephants as well as all living beings.

The activities of the Foundation are supported and endorsed by a growing number of prominent organisations.

Nomkhubulwane
The name Nomkhubulwane refers to a mythical guardian of the earth who can morph into many different animal forms. She is the matriachal figure that brings light and life. Matriarchs embody organising principles around memory, social and cultural structure.



The Human Elephant Foundation will work in partnership to catalyse a new creative language that expands environmental awareness and commitment.

It invites inclusive conversations that bridge otherwise limiting boundaries of professional and technical expertise.

The presence of the faithful artisan, persistently weaving the symbolic narrative throughout the work, registers the first devotion to be fully present in this urgent creative conversation. Now new partners must emerge who will place this creative persistence into the world as a language that invites a deep conversation with other material and industrial processes.

The creation of Nomkhubulwane

This elephant has been made from recycled truck tyres, materials with obvious references to core challenges around sustainability.

Using materials regarded as redundant or burdensome to the planet imbues this particular creative work with all sorts of interesting primary and secondary metaphors.

This elephant has been built in partnership with Premat which recycles truck tyres into a number of commercially viable products, providing job opportunities.

It is a great example of industrial commitment to conservation and human innovation.

The elephant was built in Premat's factory and Premat contributed all the offcut rubber with which the elephant was made. This is the kind of visionary partnership that stretches what is possible.

The Creators:
Andries Botha
Joshua Ogle
Ntokozi Hadebe
Janine Zagele

Location
Premat factory,
Durban, KwaZulu-Natal



The Human Elephant Foundation

Nomkhubulwane's journey (Nom-koo-bull-wah'-nee)

Born in Africa, Nomkhubulwane's first international destination is Mexico where she will grace the World Wilderness Congress. From there, she will tour as a global ambassador of creative possibilities within the physical world. Her station in life is nomadic.

True to all elephants, she will move around the world opening up ancient forgotten paths that link the past to the present. She joins 11 other Human Elephant Foundation elephants who are serving as advocates of a shared visionary movement. At some point in the near future, we hope the whole herd may gather.

Nomkhubulwane has a particular mandate around issues of the ecology and conservation but she is not restricted to this. She will work to remind us that such an idea can never be achieved without acknowledging the importance of inviting each and every human being into this conversation.

Would you like to be one of Nomkhubulwane's hosts?

Nomkhubulwane is especially well suited to catalyse conversation about conservation, recycling, sustainability, migration and the protection of wild places.

As a local host, you are encouraged to use Nomkhubulwane's visit to create momentum and interest and expand education about issues of ecology and sustainability.

The only limit is your imagination!

Some useful information:

Nomkhubulwane's dimensions:

Weight: 1.3 tons Height: 3.07 m
Length: 5.57 m Width: 1.9 m

Materials used:

Recycled rubber tyre strips woven onto a steel armature. She can be safely placed in an outdoor or indoor space.

Installation and transport:

Local host sites must unload and install the elephant once she arrives at their location. She can be moved by being strapped and lifted with her pallet by crane onto an open flatbed truck or by forklift with a 1.5 ton capacity.

Insurance and a rental fee:

Each local site will be responsible for local transport and installation, insurance and a rental fee of \$1000/week to help cover tour administration costs.

If you are interested in being a host, please contact Janine Zagel of The Human Elephant Foundation as soon as possible since the tour route is currently being planned!

janinezagel7@gmail.com
www.humanelephant.org

Location:
KZNSA Gallery
South Africa

Photographer:
Garth Walker

Made from:
Recycled truck tyres and galvanised
mild steel 2009





The Human Elephant Foundation is a visionary and collaborative organisation that initiates, co-ordinates and facilitates discussion and innovative problem solving to create a better, respectful and sustainable world.

It is a tax-efficient vehicle to facilitate and support the development and implementation of innovative projects that address the social and ecological imbalances and vulnerabilities resulting from the human footprint.

The Foundation creates the opportunity for thinkers, individual and corporate, to join together, stimulate their imagination, collaborate and harness their creativity for the overall health of the planet.

It invites partnerships between schools, universities, local businesses, cultural and creative communities and individual citizens. The presence of an elephant made out of recycled material in different regions of the world will help mobilise community involvement in broader human and ecological issues.

The current problems of the world can not be addressed in a predictable, formularised way. Such solutions require the ability and desire to break new ground and generate fresh ideas.

Location:
De Panne Beach, Belgium,
Summer 2006

Photographer:
Marc Lembrechts

Made from:
Mild steel, galvanising paint,
14 varieties of indigenous wood
from recycled trees

We appeal to individuals and collectives to join us as we engage in creative idea-generating activities.

Become a partner

The Human Elephant Foundation is a South African idea, officially launched in Cape Town on the 12th of March 2009. We envisage that the Foundation will have offices in Europe, America and Asia.

Ways to get involved

If you would like to contribute or develop educational or graphic materials to accompany a Human Elephant Foundation initiative, we would love to work with you!



Wounded Elephant

Location:
Station Vaste Monde,
Saint-Brieuc, France

Photographer:
Jimmy James

Made from:
Mild steel, recycled oak cider
barrels, wax, sound and light
components

The Wounded Elephant invites an arena of contemplation. The awkwardness and pathos of the fallen elephant creates the context where vulnerability, co-existence and our fragile humanity are juxtaposed.

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Audited Tax Exempt Trust

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