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PRESS RELEASE

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LOUIS BOTHA AVENUE S-BEND MURAL

The S-Bend Mural is the largest in Johannesburg and runs along Louis Botha Avenue, cutting through the suburbs of Yeoville, Houghton, and Orange Grove. It is a project instituted by City of Johannesburg: Department of City Transport, and the Johannesburg Development Agency; who appointed The Trinity Session as curator/coordinator for the procurement and implementation of the mural. The S-Bend Mural falls under the umbrella of the #ArtMyJozi place-making through art program for the Transit Oriented Corridors and associated upgrade nodes.

The mural was implemented by a collective of 14 artists (referred to as the S-Bend Artist's Collective) of different backgrounds and disciplines, comprising of Anser NineOne, Mars, Dreda, Mr Ekse, Jestr, Maja Maljevic, Mein, Page 33, Plank, Sandile Radebe, Vivien Kohler, Zesta, and assisted by Breeze Yoko and FIYAONE. During implementation, the collective was assisted by #ArtMyOrangeGrove artists, responsible for the Short Road Park Mural, completed in 2018. The artists are schooled in different disciplines, from fine arts to graffiti and street art; this combination of styles and backgrounds allowed for a special skills exchange and the variety of compositions and stylistic techniques employed in the mural are reflective of the diverse and layered character of Johannesburg and its inhabitants.

The mural measures over 2800 square meters and has integrated well with the daily commute along the corridor. It is important to note that the project is the result of a special collaboration between local artists, city agencies and the community of Region E. The S-Bend Artist's Collective worked closely together through a series of workshops and consultations with the public and heritage specialists. These interventions have influenced revisions of the design from initial sketch phases, to design layouts, to exercises in collaborative large-scale painting.

A public exhibition was held at the Orchards Project / Spark Gallery, where the community was invited to view the process, and add their comments and creative contributions. A series of workshops were also held with local children and community residents to develop an intergenerational narrative. All contributions from this workshop phase were considered and integrated where relevant in the final artwork. These communal inputs ensured that the mural speaks to a broader audience from the surrounding areas, while touching on key

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historical events that have shaped Louis Botha Avenue as we know it today; such as Ndebele cattle traders from Zimbabwe who travelled along the road in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Alexandra bus boycotts of 1957, and key heritage architecture sites such as The Dolls House and the old Fire Station.

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Figure 1: Community workshop with local children at Orchards Project / Spark Gallery



Figure 2: Phase 1 of painting the S Bend Mural



Figure 3: Detailed painting



Figure 4: Ndebele Cattle Trader, alongside 'characters' created in the community workshops



Figure 5: This section pays homage to the Alexandra Bus Boycotts



Figure 6: Reference to the orange farm and horse drawn carts of early Johannesburg

END.