



PRESS RELEASE

District Six commemoration, Free at Last Film Festival and launch of the Fugard Theatre

11 February 2010 marks 44 years since the declaration of District Six as a White Group Area. For many people it signalled the beginning of the destruction of their homes, their communities and in some instances even their lives.

This day also commemorates 20 years since the release of Nelson Mandela, having spent an unimaginable 27 years imprisoned on Robben Island. 11 February thus also marks a beginning of a more positive kind.

Another historic moment has added to the commemorative activities scheduled for this week: the Fugard Theatre, located in the Museum's Sacks Futeran Complex, will have its grand opening on Friday 12 February. Through the generosity of the Isango Portobello Company who have been responsible both for the physical development of the theatre and the staging of the production, District Six ex-residents will be treated to a preview of *The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo* on the day which holds so much significance for the community: 11 February.

As has become a tradition, ex-residents will gather at the Museum in the morning, bringing stones from the areas to which they were displaced. They will walk in procession to the last remnant portion of Hanover Street where a cairn of stones has evolved from this practice over the years. They will be led by ex-resident artist Rod Sauls in a creative activity which will add another layer to the cairn. This is always an inspiring and moving occasion, when even the most elderly insist on doing the walk which has come to be imbued with much significance over the years. The public are invited to join in this walk of remembrance which will start at the Museum at 11h00. Ex-resident members of the *Seven Steps Club* will then enjoy a preview of the Fugard's first theatre production.

Leading up to this occasion, ex-residents will take part in a seminar on Saturday 6 February to reflect on the future of memorialisation and to share with each other what value they derive from such acts of memorialisation. They will engage with the Museum on how the institution might keep memorialisation alive and participatory.

Another linked activity is the partnership with the *Free at Last* Film Festival. This will include a screening of four short films in the Museum's Memorial Hall on Saturday 13 February. *King of Hearts* and *Royal Revolutionary* will be screened during the first slot which starts at 15h00, while *White Lies* and *Welcome Nelson* will be shown during the 17h00 slot. These films form part of a larger Film Festival which includes screenings held at different venues from 11 to 13 February. Other venues include the Labio, IZIKO National Gallery, and Alliance Francaise.

Visit the Museum's website www.districtsix.co.za for more information or telephone Estelle at 021-466 7200 for further information.