



ART FOR CHANGE

The Afrigami Project

The Afrigami Project, forms part of the non-profit organisation, LivingIt, which promotes collaboration and peaceful, mindful engagement with the self, society and the environment.

Introduction

The project is run on holistic principals and is inspired by origami, African biodiversity and individual life stories. It provides creative skills development and job creation opportunities for communities living under challenging circumstances, where poverty, social dysfunction and health issues, including Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) are prevalent.

Origami, sometimes dismissed as mere paper folding, has regained international respect. It has been adapted for modern surgery and space technology, is showcased as a worthy art form in homes, public spaces, museums and art galleries. There is also growing awareness of how beneficial the geometric balance of this ancient art is to the human system and mind.

The Afrigami Project is a coming together of social artists, creative thinkers, social innovators, designers, passionate individuals, communities, various organisations and developers, peace advocates, institutes and responsible local businesses. Designed to be both versatile and experiential, the work it produces is intended to be viewed, experienced and explored.

Project Overview

The project is housed at the Oude Libertas Centre in Stellenbosch, South Africa and consists of the following four elements:

- 1.** The Afrigami Bird Sanctuary
- 2.** The Earth Spirit Labyrinth
- 3.** The Peace Key Rings
- 4.** The Ubuntu Short Films & Animation Project

Each element is a social art collaboration aimed at promoting mindfulness and a deeper understanding of the value of living in harmony with the self, others and our planet. It also raises awareness of the need to address alcohol abuse, FASD and making responsible choices in life.

1. The Afrigami Bird Sanctuary

The **Afrigami Bird Sanctuary** is a permanent interactive art installation and is the brainchild of passionate origami lover and social artist Ronèl Geldenhuys. She has created new interest in the art of origami by creating this beautiful artwork called “Reflections”. She teaches the art of paper folding to people wherever she goes and especially presents workshops in the greater Stellenbosch area which includes various markets and community projects, run at primary schools, more particularly in Jamestown and Lynedoch.

Ronèl went about designing and creating the bird sanctuary by collaborating with passionate individuals and volunteers.

The **Afrigami Bird Sanctuary** was inspired by the Japanese tradition of seeking to make a wish come true by folding a 1 000 paper cranes. Every one of the 1 000 paper cranes in the Afrigami installation was folded, strengthened and strung by volunteers from many diverse communities, coming together for this purpose over a period of months.

With every crane, a wish was made for the peaceful partnering and wellbeing within our South African society and for the conservation of our planet’s diverse range of fauna and flora.

Recently, contemporary artist and Swiss origamist Siphon Mabona, originally from South Africa, visited the Afrigami project and folded the last of the 1 000 cranes.

2. The Earth Spirit Labyrinth

After making a wish in the Afrigami Bird Sanctuary, visitors can take a symbolic pilgrimage through **The Earth Spirit Labyrinth** in the gardens at Oude Libertas.

As part of the Afrigami Bird Sanctuary, a labyrinth was built to inspire and support visitors to focus on breathing deeper, thus experiencing a sense of serenity and to spend time alone for introspection.

Labyrinths provide a safe and sacred space in which people can reconnect with themselves, nature and the world. It is one of the oldest contemplative tools known to humankind and it can be walked any time by seekers of inner reconciliation.

The five-circuit labyrinth was designed and built by Terry de Vries who first discovered labyrinths in 1997 in the US while studying there.

To date she has built more than 50 labyrinths both locally and abroad and she facilitates labyrinth walks, transformation retreats, team building workshops and

nature walks. Some of these will be introduced at Oude Libertas to add value to community outreach projects which Distell Foundation supports of which the Afrigami Project is one.

3. The Peace Key Rings

The **Peace Key Rings** were cast and finished by Stellenbosch Crafts Alive and will be available for purchase at **Oude Libertas Centre** and participating retailers. The key rings are fashioned on the origami crane design and are an extension of the **Afrigami Bird Sanctuary**.

Stellenbosch Crafts Alive is a non-profit organisation focusing on creating income opportunities and entrepreneurial growth through craft manufacturing and retail. Its efforts in building self-sustainable social enterprises are concentrated on the villages around Stellenbosch.

The Peace Key Rings are assembled and packaged by groups of unemployed individuals in Jamestown.

Many communities in South Africa are affected by **FASD** (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) in some way or the other and with the sale of every key ring a donation will be made to FASD awareness and education.

This precious gift can be taken home as a constant reminder of the peace and unity experienced while visiting **The Afrigami Project**, or given to a loved one as a symbol of good fortune and unity.

4. The Ubuntu Short Films & Animation Project

Short films and animations are screened as part of the **Afrigami Project**. These short films are based on stories written and produced by youth in South Africa. They are created to promote collaboration, peacefulness and mindful living.

The short animation film called *Die Woud en die Blom*, can be viewed as part of the Afrigami Bird Sanctuary and is written by learners from Lynedoch Primary School project, which forms part of the Afrigami life skills development project.

Wessie van der Westhuizen, head of Multimedia Design Studies at the Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography, worked with the learners to create the animation. Ronèl Geldenhuys taught them the art of origami and how its practice can promote positive change, and guided the learners to create their scripts.

Don't miss this heart-warming animation presented in the **Oude Libertas Gallery**, adjacent to the **Afrigami Bird Sanctuary**.

Sponsors and co-creators

The Afrigami Project was initiated and designed by Ronel Geldenhuys from Afrigami, and is generously sponsored and supported with great care and open-heartedness by the following co-creators:

Distell Foundation

Distell Foundation is an umbrella body for Distell's corporate citizenship activities. Its social responsibility strategy aims to improve the welfare of communities and especially focuses on youth and life skills development and the responsible use of alcohol.

Irma Albers, the head of Arts and Culture Projects for the CSI (Corporate Social Investment) division of Distell, has been instrumental in creating the overall **Afrigami Project**.

Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography

The Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography was established in 2003 and is located in Technopark, the innovation hub of Stellenbosch.

The Academy is focused on applying creative thinking to new problems and finding new solutions in a fast-paced media landscape. Its infectious passion and creativity in adapting to new tools, media and audiences filters through to its students. Cashandra Willemse, head of Graphic Design, coordinated, designed and creatively directed the **Afrigami Project**.

Wessie van der Westhuizen, head of Multimedia Design Studies at the Stellenbosch Academy of Design and Photography worked with the learners of Lynedoch Primary School to create the short animation movie plus he was responsible for setting up the Afrigami website.

Oude Libertas Centre

Situated on the slopes of the Papegaaiberg, surrounded by vineyards and oak trees, the Oude Libertas Centre is host to the **Afrigami Project**. Oude Libertas offers a collection of artistic, theatrical and lifestyle experiences as well as insight into community and environmental development initiatives.

Oude Libertas Gallery

Situated at the Oude Libertas Centre, the Gallery promotes both the work of well-established and lesser-known artists. The gallery is run under the patronage of Distell Foundation with Roena Giesel at the helm as curator supported by Lucelle van Wyk, the gallery manager. The **Afrigami Bird Sanctuary** is on permanent exhibition at the gallery.

Other contributors

- P.G. Glass for the supply of mirrors
- Artist Strijdom van der Merwe for his concept of using mirrors
- Origami for Africa
- Kobus Geldenhuys for editing
- Lucelle Van Wyk as individual sponsor
- Many individuals and volunteers
- P³ Industries Procurement Specialists

To visit the Afrigami Project:

Gallery times:

Mon: Closed

Tues – Fri from 10:00-16:00

Sat from 9:00 -14:00

Contact Details

Tel: 021 809 7463

Email: oudelibertasgallery1@gmail.com

Visitor's information

Navigating the Afrigami Project

The objective of the collaborative **Afrigami Project** is to promote social cohesion, mindfulness and responsibility in seeking to heal communities and the environment.

Start your visit by entering the **Afrigami Bird Sanctuary** in the Oude Libertas Gallery. Please remove your shoes and make sure to have enough time to linger and enjoy the sanctuary experience.

After experiencing the one thousand cranes in the sanctuary, make a *wish* and write it down and place it in the *wish box* next to the sanctuary.

The next step of the journey is to visit the **labyrinth** in the garden, next to the bell tower, near the Oude Libertas auditorium. There you can reflect on the meaning of your experience.

The precious reminders of the harmony you experience during your journey can be fully savoured and completed with a cup of tea in the Oude Libertas Gallery before you leave the centre.

We invite you to purchase a **Peace Key Ring** to contribute to our cause and to help spread awareness of FASD in South Africa.

We encourage you to tell others. Feel free to like our Facebook page to keep up with news and please share your photos of your experience with us.

<https://www.facebook.com/afrigami1/timeline>

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