



Frans: The arist from Oshikuku

Art brought Frans home to himself.

March, 21 1990 saw the birth of a nation and its sibling, a boy named Frans Uunona. Frans would go on to live in many towns and learn many Namibian languages. He would often face hunger and cold when it really wasn't necessary. Neglect and injustices were familiar foes as he grew up. Violent surroundings and aggressive people competed with the ghosts of firewood snakes to make Frans a fearful boy. Because he outgrew his clothes or someone else in the hostel needed them more than he did he admired those children with jerseys who were dropped off in cars at the school gate and had lunch boxes in their school bags next to books covered with plastic. When he lived with his aunt he played all the way along the way home to get there at dark, because home was stuffed to the brim with neither food nor TV.

In Grade 10 Frans discovered he had a father. He moved to Windhoek to live with him and was enrolled at Windhoek High School. The school offered Art, but Frans was discouraged from taking it up as there was no future in it. He ended up taking Technical Drawing, but due to the Math requirement, did not perform too well in this subject. And yet his schoolbooks were forever covered in drawings of all sorts of things. Grade 10 was not a big success, neither socially nor academically. He felt so out and overwhelmed by things. After repeating the year, again without success, NAMCOL became an option. But this was not meant to be. It took a father bragging of his son's paintings to his friend and this friend speaking with authority and influence for Frans's father to agree to the idea of Frans enrolling for a course in art.

And the rest is history. Frans entered the world of the Katutura Community Arts Centre where he met birds of his kind in teachers and fellow students. "I was very eager to finally do something I knew I could excel at. For the first time in my life I started feeling good about myself. I felt at home in my own life. I felt valued", are Frans's words to describe his new life.



Comparing the effort he had to put in at school to pass subjects he struggled with, Frans found he worked much harder at his art, despite naturally being good at it. He also learned to take more ownership of his life as an artist by going beyond only doing work in response to class assignments or commissions. Whereas new challenges used to bring fear, Frans now has the confidence that he is capable of learning anything new. It is this new belief in himself that saw him work with fashion designers and jewellery designers, despite not being specifically trained in those areas. Frans has since decided to hone in on his painting and not only learn when taught, but to go out and seek ways to improve his skill, for otherwise he feels he is wasting his talent. In response to this epiphany, Frans is currently working on his first-ever self-initiated solo exhibition, "The power in your hands".

Don't let your self-image and your intelligence go to waste. Do you.

As told by Vida de Voss