

MEDIA RELEASE

UNLIMITED GLOBAL ALCHEMY

30 August: DaDafest at The Bluecoat, Liverpool : screening / talk

31 August – 9 September: Southbank Centre, London : exhibition / performance / screening /talk / workshop

After a successful opening exhibition at the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology in Cambridge, *Unlimited Global Alchemy* transfers to the Southbank Centre this September during the Paralympic Games as part of the London 2012 Festival with an exhibition, a performance premiere and programme of workshops and talks.

Unlimited Global Alchemy is celebratory and upbeat yet tackles big issues head-on: the politics of HIV/AIDS, living with chronic health conditions, and surviving against the odds. It is timely; and perhaps could only have succeeded in the atmosphere of a post-apartheid South Africa. It is about access to art in the broadest sense: about participation and about how art can bridge cultural, educational and geographical divides.

“Heartfelt, irreverent and provocative..[Unlimited Global Alchemy]..vividly conveys the resilience of the human spirit and strength of social action in the face of adversity.”
Anita Herle, Senior Curator Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (MAA), Cambridge

This project had its beginnings in a chance encounter in June 2010 between UK artist Rachel Gadsden and a body-map painting made by South African artist and activist Nondumiso Hlwele at MAA Cambridge. Gadsden identified directly with the fragility and hope depicted in the painting – the experience of being kept alive by medical intervention – a shared experience – and was inspired to set about finding this artist. After a long search, and on receiving an **Unlimited** award, Gadsden had the opportunity to explore a shared sensibility with Hlwele and five members of the Bambanani artist-activist Group in South Africa.

The collaborative project **Unlimited Global Alchemy** began life in Khayelitsha Township over six exciting weeks in autumn 2011 during which a large number of drawings, sketchbooks and paintings were created and a series of portraits made with award-winning filmmakers Deborah May and Cliff Bestall. Since then, a further series of artworks, a performance and a catalogue have been created in the UK. Fuelled by the politics and myths surrounding chronic health issues – in particular HIV/AIDS – this startling body of work offers visceral and often poetic perspectives on what it means to experience disabling conditions and to fight openly for life in the face of social taboos. At the heart of this life-affirming and timely collaboration is a celebration of survival against the odds.

The results of Gadsden’s unique association with the Bambanani are presented as part of London 2012 this summer.

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**ARTS
ADMIN**

A performance created in response to the Cape Town residency, co-directed by Gadsden and choreographer Athina Vahla, featuring performers Freddie Opoku-Addaie and Sarah Chin and Gadsden creating visual art live on stage, premieres in the Purcell Room at the Southbank on **5 September**.

An exhibition of 40 artworks and the set of seven portrait films featuring Gadsden and the Bambanani artist-activists, will be in the foyer of the Festival Hall from **31 August – 9 September**.

Gadsden and the visiting South African artists will be giving two talks at the Southbank; one chaired by Ruby Wax, on **2 September**. The other is hosted by the British Council, on **6 September**.

The catalogue, edited by Andrew Mitchelson and designed by David Caines, carries 70 images of artworks, a DVD of seven films and texts including a foreword by South African author Jonny Steinberg. This is available through Artsadmin and at Foyles, Southbank branch.

Produced by Artsadmin, Unlimited Global Alchemy has been commissioned by the Unlimited programme, part of the London 2012 Festival; presented at the Southbank Centre during the Paralympic Games.

#UGAlchemy unlimitedglobalalchemy.com



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PRESS ENQUIRIES

For further information, images and interviews please contact
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EVENTS

30 August, 2.30pm

Bluecoat, Liverpool, DaDa Fest

Screening and talk by Rachel Gadsden and the Bambanani Group, chaired by Gill Lloyd (Artsadmin)

31 August -9 September, daily

Level 2 Foyer Blueside, Festival Hall, Southbank Centre

Exhibition : artworks and films

2 September, 11am – 12noon

Level 5 Function Room, Southbank Centre

Talk : 'Hidden or Hiding'

Rachel Gadsden discusses invisible disability with fellow Unlimited Festival artists Bobby Baker and Sinéad O'Donnell, chaired by Ruby Wax

3 September, 11.30am-1.30pm

Clore Ballroom, Festival Hall, Southbank Centre

Body Mapping Workshop with Rachel Gadsden and the Bambanani Group

5 September, 7.30pm

Purcell Room, Southbank Centre

Performance premiere, film screening and discussion with Rachel Gadsden and the Bambanani Group, chaired by Tony Heaton (Shape Disability Arts)

6 September, 9.30am – 12.30pm

Talk : Unlimited Goes Global

Rachel Gadsden and the Bambanani Group discuss their experience of collaborating on Unlimited Global Alchemy, chaired by Jo Verrent

LISTINGS INFORMATION

See www.artsadmin.co.uk/projects/unlimited-global-alchemy for full listings and booking information.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Unlimited programme encourages collaborations and partnerships between disability arts organisations, disabled and deaf artists, producers, and mainstream organisations to celebrate the inspiration of the Olympic and Paralympic Games and to create original and exciting works. Twenty-nine Unlimited Commissions have been awarded.

Unlimited is principally funded by the National Lottery through the Olympic Lottery Distributor and is delivered in partnership between London 2012, Arts Council

England, Creative Scotland, Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the British Council.

Artsadmin is based at Toynbee Studios and is a unique producing and presenting organisation for contemporary artists working in theatre, dance, live art, visual arts and mixed media, also offering various support services for artists, including a free advisory service, mentoring and development programmes and a number of bursary schemes. Toynbee Studios is Artsadmin's unique centre for the development and presentation of new work. artsadmin.co.uk