

MEDIA RELEASE

UNLIMITED GLOBAL ALCHEMY

23 June – 9 September, Cambridge, Liverpool and London

Artist Rachel Gadsden (UK) and the Bambanani artist-activist Group (South Africa) explore the psychology and politics of HIV/AIDS and of life-giving medical regimes as part of the London 2012 Festival.

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, MAA

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 the 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 tremendous opportunity of exploring a shared humanity and artistic interest with Hlwele and five members of the Bambanani artist-activist Group in South Africa.

So the collaboration, **Unlimited Global Alchemy**, began life in Khayelitsha Township; and over six exciting weeks in October and November 2011 a large number of drawings, sketchbooks and paintings were created, and a series of portraits directed by Gadsden were made with filmmakers Deborah May and Cliff Bestall.

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 Group now come to the UK, to be shown at the recently reopened and transformed museum in Cambridge from **23 June – 18 August**, together with a further series of Gadsden’s artworks and a specially commissioned catalogue.

A performance created in response to the Cape Town residency, co-directed by Gadsden and choreographer Athina Vahla, and featuring performers Freddie

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**ARTS
ADMIN**

Opoku-Addaie and Sarah Chin and Gadsden creating visual art live on stage, premieres at the Southbank on **5 September 2012**. They are joined by Michael Mannion (lighting); Chas De Swiet and Paul Gundry (sound); Mamoru Iriguchi (design).

The catalogue, edited by Andrew Mitchelson and designed by David Caines, carries images of artworks, a DVD and texts including a foreword by South African author Jonny Steinberg. This will also be launched at MAA in Cambridge, on 22 June.

The Bambanani Group, led by Nondumiso Hlwele, are Noloyiso Balintulo, Bongive Mba, Thozama Ndevu, Thobani Ncapai and Zodwa Somlayi.

Produced by Artsadmin, Unlimited Global Alchemy has been commissioned by the Unlimited programme, part of the London 2012 Festival; presented here in association with the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology and culminating at Southbank Centre during the Paralympic Games in September.

#UGAlchemy unlimitedglobalalchemy.com



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PRESS ENQUIRIES

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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

LISTINGS INFORMATION

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

22 June, 5-7.30pm

Exhibition, films and catalogue launch – private view

Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (MAA), Cambridge maa.cam.ac.uk

23 June – 18 August (Tue-Sat)

Exhibition

Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (MAA), Cambridge
(*screening and talk on 23 June, 2.30pm*)

30 August, 2.30pm

Screening and talk

Bluecoat, Liverpool, Niet Normaal Festival www.thebluecoat.org.uk

1-9 September, daily

Exhibition

Royal Festival Hall, London : Unlimited Festival www.southbankcentre.co.uk

3 September, 11.30am-1.30pm

Workshop

Royal Festival Hall, London : : Unlimited Festival

5 September, 7.30pm

Performance premiere

Southbank Centre, London : Unlimited Festival