

## **Thami Jali CV**

Thami Jali was born Lamontville, Durban in 1955. Thami Jali matriculated at Dlangezwa in Zululand and started to study for a Law degree at the University of Zululand when he met students from Rorke's Drift . This meeting was a pivotal moment for him as he decided to drop out of law to study at the Rorke's Drift Art Centre from 1981 to 1982.

Thami Jali went on to study ceramics at the Natal Technikon from 1983 to 1984. He is a founder of Art Communications, 1983-84. He moved to Johannesburg where he taught pottery and sculpture at Mofolo Art Centre in Soweto and also worked at the Kim Sacks Studio.

He has participated in several group exhibitions locally in South Africa and internationally. In 1982 he was awarded First Prize in Sculpture at the Festival of African Arts, University of Zululand, for his wood sculpture, Mama (Birth). In 1990 he went to the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, to take part in the Zabalaza Festival. Jali participated in the 1993 Art/OMI International Artists' Workshop and exhibited work on the National Arts Trust Exhibition at The BAT Centre, Durban. In 1995 his work was included in the Africus Johannesburg Biennale '95. In 1996 a print of his was included in the Images of Human Rights Portfolio.

Thami Jali is said by Lionel Davis to have felt that many of his peers at the Rorke's Drift Art Centre were not sufficiently politicised, but Jali has since commented that it was not only his peers that he tried to alert to the demands of the Struggle, but also the wider community. This was made possible for him through the medium of prints, the democratic multiple.

Jali's work continued to deal with social and political issues and he was part of a formally constituted group or organisations focussing on mural art which emerged in each of the country's three major cities shortly after 1990. In Durban, Community Mural Projects was formally constituted by Terry-Anne Stevenson and Thami Jali (later joined by Ilse Mikula) in 1991. One of their first murals dealt with AIDS awareness. Whilst in Durban he co-ordinated The BAT Visual Arts Studio which provided a space and facilities for artists who would otherwise not have been able to produce work.

In the mid 1990's he moved to Nelspruit in Mpumalanga to be with his partner, artist Fikile Skosana who also studied at Rorkes Drift. At The Matsulu Centre Jali was involved in training youth in ceramics with the support of the Department of Arts and Culture. It was here that he became aware of the work of outsider artist Nukain Mabusa.

In 2004 he returned to Rorkes Drift, without Skosana, to assist in re-establishing the ceramics studio there with the support of Khumbulani Afrika.

He is a painter, print maker and sculptor, currently working mainly in clay.

His work is represented in the collections of the Durban Art Gallery, Tatham Art Gallery, The Constitutional Court and the University of Zululand as well as in numerous private collections.

