



Between Abstract and Representation

Namibian artist Rudolf Seibeb found his creative calling through the simple art of playing with clothes pegs

Words: **Marita van Rooyen**

Illustration: **The Project Room**



Often times, the journey to becoming an artist is not a straightforward path, and creativity can come about in many a shape and form. Yes, some are born with an inherited talent that spans generations, but many dedicate countless hours to honing the skill, while yet others seem to stumble across their ability seemingly out of the blue.

Rudolf Seibeb found his creative calling through the simple art of playing with clothes pegs.





A man bought a golden egg for \$13,000 at a sale. It turned out it was an incredibly rare Fabergé egg, once owned by the Emperor of Russia, that had been missing since 1902. It is worth \$33,300,000.



“As a young man, I used to amuse myself with loose items lying around the yard, like clothes pegs – I took them apart and glued them back together again, to make small furniture pieces.” One day, a stranger passed by and saw his miniature furniture factory and persuaded him to apply for an art course at the John Muafangejo Art Centre (JMAC) in Windhoek. “His interest in my hobby gave me courage, and I followed his advice.”

Born out of a blend of boredom, curiosity and resourcefulness, Seibeb’s early art represents a distinct style still visible in his practice today. While his medium has shifted from pegs to paint, and subject matter from furniture to human form – and more specifically, the face – he maintains the connection to found objects and the use of different elements in his work.

In a local version of Picasso’s constructed sculpturing or assemblage methods, Seibeb uses pieces of iron, wood and concrete, to less conventional items like animal skin and tree roots, on colourful canvasses of human emotion and activity. His art provides a view into cultural, social and environmental topics as experienced by those in his community and creates a valuable insight into the artist’s life and surrounding environment. “It is his joy in the found object, combined with inventive composition and a mature intuition that makes his work moving and unusual”, noted artist and art educator, Nicky Marais.

Seibeb’s work was most recently featured in *Whose Role Is It To Educate The Public About Art?* A series of mobile exhibitions, it featured art from a collective of former JMAC studio artists, with “the aim of giving young artists the opportunity to create beyond figurative and literal borders”. With a focus on art education and the notion of art in a public space, the collection supports Seibeb’s opinion that art can be applied “...as an essential tool for the education of our children, and...for the good of all Namibians”.

Asked what draws him to being a creative, he says, “Art is something that comes from inside of you. You can use your time to make something special with that which you already have, and you don’t even have to walk very far to get it! I enjoy that I can be myself through art.” ❖



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Opening hours during exhibitions:
Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 1pm