



In an inspiring display of global collaboration, the Department of Visual Art within the Faculty of Art, Design, and Architecture at the University of Johannesburg has been instrumental in fostering international partnerships between Belgium and South Africa. This initiative, bridging the Global North and Global South, includes student exchange programmes that encourage informative and transformative exchanges.

A highlight of these collaborations is the "Upcycling with Reclaimers" project, facilitated by the VLIRUOS Foundation in Belgium. This initiative has brought significant attention to the role of recycling and the work of informal reclaimers in South Africa, culminating in the recent "Materials Managed Parade" held in Johannesburg.

Inspired by the Northern Lights Festival in Antwerp, Belgium, which served as a platform for community engagement and cultural exchange, the "Materials Managed Parade" was a vibrant celebration of recycling. The parade was a dynamic response to the growing need for environmental sustainability, aiming to elevate awareness about recycling and showcase the transformative power of reclaimed materials. The parade took place in Johannesburg's lively neighbourhoods of Brixton and Auckland Park, bringing together the community to celebrate the achievements of recycling. It highlighted the critical role played by the African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO) and the artistry of informal reclaimers who convert discarded materials into valuable resources.

The event featured captivating performances, engaging displays, and eco-friendly trolleys, all designed to promote the impact of recycling and the essential work of reclaimers in our communities.

The event's success is attributed to the meticulous planning and organisation by Wilma Mutize, who orchestrated the parade with remarkable dedication. According to Gordon Froud, Head of the Department of Visual Art at the University of Johannesburg, "Wilma really outdid herself in organising the ARO Reclaimers' Parade in Brixton on Sat 24 August 2024. Her efforts in coordinating with various stakeholders and ensuring the smooth execution of the event were exceptional. The parade was a joyous occasion that united the Brixton community with a common purpose and strengthened our relationship with the University of Johannesburg."

The positive impact of the parade was echoed by participants and attendees alike. Hannah Saunders, a 3rd-year Visual Art student, remarked, "The Brixton ARO Parade was a beautiful success for the people in and surrounding Brixton. It celebrated and highlighted the often-overlooked contributions of waste pickers, benefiting both the reclaimers and the community."

Ms. Shonisani Netshia, a Painting Lecturer at the University of Johannesburg, added, "The parade had a great impact on the African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO). It acknowledged their hard work and provided a platform for their voices to be heard and appreciated. It was a celebration of dignity and honour for the reclaimers."

Phumelele Zulu from UJ FM also praised the event, describing it as "a vibrant celebration of recycling through arts." The "Materials Managed Parade" not only served as a powerful statement on recycling but also fostered a spirit of community and environmental awareness. It stands as a testament to the positive outcomes of global partnerships and the transformative power of art in addressing pressing social and environmental issues.

CELEBRATING RECYCLING AND COMMUNITY: THE IMPACT OF THE "MATERIALS MANAGED PARADE" IN JOHANNESBURG

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/Pn8VsjadUDVChofd/?mibextid=oFDknk>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/reel/C_F0eXUNrmk/?igsh=MXFleDF3amZnY3lsdw==

[@brixton.aro.parade](https://www.instagram.com/brixton.aro.parade)

