

# John Yusi Mfupi



*'It is my duty as an artist to get people involved in art, especially the young ones.'*

**John Yusi Mfupi  
(1980 - )**



Mfupi majored in painting and after graduating discovered an artist's need space, not only work space, but also for storage. His solution was to replace paint with magazines. He comments on his solution, *"Canvases are bulky, paper collages can be packed flat and easily stored. With collages, I'd make 20 or more artworks and stash them under my bed. I was only a couple of years out of the college, and it was tough getting going. I had no space and had to buy art materials; I started using magazines because the only thing I needed was colour."*

Mfupi has offered his services to 25 schools around Gauteng teaching art and painting murals with the learners.

Mfupi enjoys sharing creative experiences and skills with youth. Whilst painting murals with school children, issues such as; language, teenage pregnancy, drugs, alcohol and HIV/AIDS are dealt with. In dealing with such issues Mfupi believes one does not have to utilise traditional Fine Art media. His use of recycled materials plays a strong roll in his concepts. Found materials such as burnt newspaper, found objects and pigments are combined to form an emotive reaction to his daily context.

Mfupi's art is an authentic visual language that supports the notion of wall mounted art as well as raises our responsiveness of intrinsic aesthetic qualities of ordinary materials.

Mfupi's work portrays celebration of youth and mobility; dealing with human life matters that affect people globally. Mfupi's style has developed into his well known up cycled collage technique, not only is this technique an efficient means of production as an artist living in a small space, the materials also play vital a role in portraying his concepts.

**Mfupi has s strong passion for encouraging young people to be artistic as according to him, art is not only about traditional materials it is also about making use of raw easily accessible materials.**

<http://www.candicebermangallery.com/artists/john-yusi-mfupi>



# Mfupi uses collage to tell our own stories.

John Vusi Mfupi ('The paper boy') is a local collage artist, from Soweto, who works within the recycling process to reinterpret discarded objects in order to give them a new life and meaning.

Vusi is an artist with a seriousness that does not escape the eye. The minute, painstaking sticking of collages, minute-piece by minute-piece boggle the mind to think the concentration that went into it.



More to the point, Vusi is a story teller who uses his collages to depict the daily lives of ordinary people. 'In my work I look at social aspects of life most of which are very simple,' he says. 'I am a very simple person and I want people to relate with my work without any complication.'

His adeptness at making connections, choosing the right shades to fit in (he needs an awful lot of paper) is what surely makes the magic. Again it's the minuteness of it all. All of these, the line of buildings, people, their shadows, how he catches the time of day, all using paper still does not jar the eye. A calm, naturalness, springs out of this all. It is after considering these that the true beauty of his work emerges and from there that the fulfilment from watching him starts.

**Recycling as an art medium, like the African ancient oral history, expresses the collective soul, the way of thinking, the traditions and values of a people through the eyes and philosophies of the artist.**

Throughout history, art has remained a powerful platform for social expression and provided society with a window through which to view and assess communities. The role of art to communicate the realities of life must not be understated by simply boxing artists into the terms that suit the speaker.

<http://www.zoominfo.com/p/Vusi-Mfupi/1367520366>

<http://www.artsouthafrica.com/component/content/article/220-news-articles-2013/2477-the-so-called-emerging-black-artist-review-by-khehla-chepape-makgato.html>