

## The Artists who made The Truth Tree and The Freedom Quilt in 2006/7

Sandra Sweers  
Yvonne Jonkers

Millie Reed; Rose Jacobs; Maria Tamana; Margaret Swiers; Maggie Jacobs; Matilda Dikeni; Christelene Jacobs; Julia Malgas; Delia Swartz; Sophie Femela; Sophie Steenberg; Sanna Minnaar; Shirlene Davids  
Volunteers: Tarot Couzyn, Orla O'Flanagan

Artistic Director, Jeni Couzyn

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The Artists who restored The Truth Tree and The Freedom Quilt in 2023

Sandra Sweers, lead artist  
Yvonne (Jonkers) Merrington, senior textile artists  
Felicity Tromp, senior textile artist  
Gerald Mei, senior print maker  
Naasley Swiers, senior print maker  
Supporters: Martin Lackay, Cherlyn van Grense, Jonathan Witbooi

Artistic Director, Jeni Couzyn

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The words written on the leaves are cries of injustice and threat: "Help help" "I'll break your neck" "Mama I'm hungry" "Call the police" "Tavern" "Wine" "Beer". There are women subjected to violence on a daily basis. There is a mother abandoning her baby, with the inscription "never to return"; a schoolroom with the teacher sitting drinking on the roof, men lying comatose in the yard, surrounded by bottles with terrified children, a teenage girl abandoned with a baby by her boyfriend.....

Sandra Sweers and Yvonne Jonkers Merrington were part of the original making of the tapestries and their restoration twenty years later.

Sandra Sweers with her leaf in 2007. Sandra was one of the "young ones" in 2007, when the Truth Tree was made. She is now the lead artists at the Bushman Heritage Museum.



In 2007 Sandra said: *"So this is all about my Mum's house and me. Me and my Dad are working. I am going home with my salary. My Dad is going to the tavern with his salary. So I came home and my Mum is crying because my dad is drinking all his money at the tavern, so I give her some money. Here is my dad sitting with his friends at the tavern, buying beers and things for them, and here he is coming home with a beer in his hand, drunk, and shouting till 2 o'clock in the morning every night. I feel that it's unfair because one time he was working, and I asked him to buy a tin of milk for my baby and he said I didn't make that baby."*

*Now I am working, and I never said to him that I didn't make his children. I have to work for them, keep them at school, and see that they eat. I feel it is very unfair.*

*I think the quilt is the best opportunity that we ever had at the Centre. I think it is good that our work is going to be in a place where everyone can see, and also to see how creative and artistic we are, and also what we are doing at the Arts Centre, and what it is there for. I also feel proud to be on that high level we are now, and also hope that justice is going to happen in my house. I also want to thank you for getting volunteers at the Arts Centre so that we can grow and become professionals.*

*It's hard sometimes at home but my baby is putting on weight now. So further on I am very happy, and I cope with my Dad. He leaves every job he had to sell stupid owls at the owl house. He lies to my mum. Those men who sell owls at the owl house – when one of them sells an owl, they all drink together.”*

Yvonne Jonkers (now Merrington) was one of the group who made the tapestry in 2007. She is now a senior textile artist at the Bushman Heritage Museum, and part of the restoration.

In 2007 Yvonne said *“This is me Yvonne in a green shirt, and I am by the house here. This is Venesree my baby. And this is Venesree's father, coming out of the job, and he shows me the money, and he is going to his friends. And he tells me there is no money for me and my child. These are his friends sitting at the tavern. I feel very bad about this. He should give this money for my child, because she needs an education. It's unfair what he is doing. It is not right. It would be a better world if he gave some money to me, and sit and talk with me for a little while, and then he can go to his friends later. This would be a better life. My life is not good now. I am struggling with this baby because I have to support her alone.*







Maggie Jacobs with her leaf, 2006



Millie Reed with her leaf, 2006



Christelene Jacobs with her leaf, 2006



Sophie Steenberg with her leaf, 2006





Rose Jacobs with her leaf, 2006



Maria Tamana with her leaf, 2006





Delia Swartz with her leaf, 2006



Julia Malgas with her leaf, 2006



Shirlene Davids with her leaf, 2006

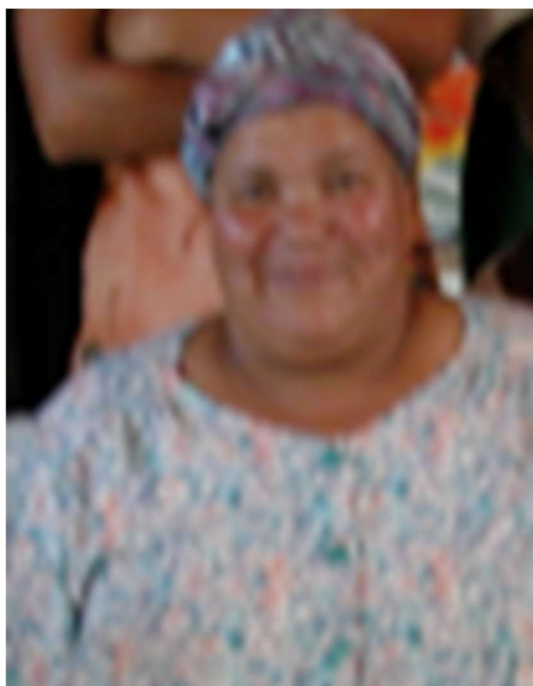


Sophie Femela with her leaf, 2006





Sanna Minnaar with her leaf, 2006



Matilda Dikeni, 2006





Jeni Couzyn, artistic director, with the group creating the Freedom Quilt in December 2006



Jeni Couzyn, artistic director, with the group at the Grahamstown Festival in 2007