The elephant, both powerful and vulnerable, is a poignant metaphor for all nature. Its remarkable collective memory reminds us of how much we have forgotten and have disconnected ourselves from our origins. The Human Elephant Foundation invites us to reconnect with the natural world through the power of imagination and the harnessing of creativity. It provides us with the opportunity to use our intelligence and skills to regenerate a more symbiotic relationship with the Earth.

Andries Botha, sculptor and founder of The Human Elephant Foundation
I created these life-size elephants out of recycled materials. They represent the world of nature from which we have removed ourselves and for which we increasingly yearn.

Andries Botha

The elephant is the largest land mammal and as such the most portentous symbol of the threat that our expanding industrial development represents to all forms of life. The elephant is enormously strong and powerful yet also vulnerable. It offers a poignant and timely metaphor to contemplate issues of coexistence and how we now need to live.

Elephants and human beings share many well documented characteristics and traits. They have a highly developed sensibility, a deep-rooted sense of family and similar emotional responses. They need to migrate, based on seasonal and environmental change, and the necessity of finding food and water. Humans migrate in response to changing sociological and political forces.

As the world becomes increasingly populated and territorial, threats to both elephants and humans increase. Elephants’ ability to use both current experience and memory increase the chances for survival of the herd. Humans have lost touch with a collective consciousness and way of life.

To develop new ways of thinking, we have to re-engage our rational thought processes with our forgotten intuitive sensibilities.
The elephant is a metaphor that awakens the yearning for forgotten conversations between humans, the Earth and all living things.

As part of nature, we coexist with the elephant, other creatures, the land, the sea and the sky. What happens to one, affects the other.

A technologically driven consumerist world has served to disconnect us from our underlying relationship with the natural world. Selfish interests have destroyed the very nature on which our lives depend.

To remember these vital connections requires collaborative conversations that are needed to bring about a more supportive relationship with a planet in crisis.
Ancient elephant paths have provided the map for later human migration, both literally and figuratively, as humans have migrated to new lands for survival or for what they see as a better life.

Dr. Ian Player

At 83 years of age, Dr. Ian Player, internationally respected conservationist and wilderness activist, is increasingly aware of his own mortality. After seeing Andries Botha’s sculpted elephants, he said, “I turned from my inward journey and am turning outward again. My last journey is to walk and talk with this elephant.”

The elephant he speaks of is Nomkhubulwane, Andries Botha’s latest creation. Dr. Player named the elephant in acknowledgement of Andries Botha’s creative achievement and to honour the important role elephants play in the environment and in the archetypal consciousness of human beings.

Dr. Player believes that humans feel a compelling attraction for elephants. He sees Africa as the memory of the human archetype, if we are to accept the scientific declaration that all humanity evolved in and migrated from Africa into the world as we know it. He therefore believes elephants to be embedded into the archetypal consciousness of humankind.

Lux Themba
Location: KZNSA Gallery, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
Photographer: Garth Walker
Made from: Galvanised mild steel, hard indigenous recycled wood 2008/9

The Human Elephant Foundation
A new beginning

Dr Ian Player

and friend
Mdudeni Gumedi
Photographer: Andrea Schellner
What will we do to change how we live? What will accelerate our commitment to create a more sustainable world? How can an elephant catalyse this conversation and expanded commitment? I am hoping Nomkhubulwane will inspire many more people to ask and address these questions.

Andries Botha

Internationally renowned sculptor, Andries Botha, has created a number of life-size elephants that have been placed in various locations in the world where they generate great interest and admiration. To date, there are 12 such works: a full herd of 9 in Belgium made from recycled wood from KwaZulu-Natal; a fallen elephant made from recycled cider casks in France; an elephant in Holland made from recycled leadwood; and the most recent, Nomkhubulwane, the great matriarchal elephant created from recycled truck tyres.

A number of additional elephants have been commissioned and will be placed in appropriate spaces in the near future.

Nomkhubulwane will move around the world, bringing attention to the role of The Human Elephant Foundation (HEF) and its partner, the Magqubu Ntombele Foundation (MNF) founded by Dr Ian Player in memory of his Zulu friend and mentor. Nomkhubulwane will draw attention to issues of sustainability and wilderness that threaten the survival of elephants as well as all living beings.

The activities of the Foundation are supported and endorsed by a growing number of prominent individuals and organisations.
**The Human Elephant Foundation** will work in partnership to catalyse a new creative language that expands environmental awareness and commitment.

It invites inclusive conversations that bridge otherwise limiting boundaries of professional and technical expertise.

The presence of the faithful artisan, persistently weaving the symbolic narrative throughout the work, registers the first devotion to be fully present in this urgent creative conversation. Now new partners must emerge who will place this creative persistence into the world as a language that invites a deep conversation with other material and industrial processes.
Born in Africa, Nomkhubulwane’s first international destination is Mexico where she will grace the World Wilderness Congress. From there, she will tour as a global ambassador of creative possibilities within the physical world. Her station in life is nomadic.

True to all elephants, she will move around the world, opening up ancient forgotten paths that link the past to the present. She joins 11 other Human Elephant Foundation elephants who are serving as advocates of a shared visionary movement. At some point in the near future, we hope the whole herd may gather.

Nomkhubulwane has a particular mandate around issues of the ecology and conservation but she is not restricted to this. She will work to remind us that such an idea can never be achieved without acknowledging the importance of inviting each and every human being into this conversation.

Would you like to be one of Nomkhubulwane’s hosts?

Nomkhubulwane is especially well suited to catalyse conversation about conservation, recycling, sustainability, migration and the protection of wild places.

As a local host, you are encouraged to use Nomkhubulwane’s visit to create momentum and interest and expand education about issues of ecology and sustainability.

The only limit is your imagination!

Some useful information:

Nomkhubulwane’s dimensions:
- Weight: 1.3 tons
- Height: 3.07 m
- Length: 5.57 m
- Width: 1.9 m

Materials used:
- Recycled rubber tyre strips woven onto a steel armature. She can be safely placed in an outdoor or indoor space.

Installation and transport:
- Local host sites must unload and install the elephant once she arrives at their location. She can be moved by being strapped and lifted with her pallet by crane onto an open flatbed truck or by forklift with a 1.5 ton capacity.

Insurance and a rental fee:
- Each local site will be responsible for local transport and installation, insurance and a rental fee of $1000/week to help cover tour administration costs.
- If you are interested in being a host, please contact Janine Zagel of The Human Elephant Foundation as soon as possible since the tour route is currently being planned!

janinezagel7@gmail.com
www.humanelephant.org
The Human Elephant Foundation is a visionary and collaborative organisation that initiates, coordinates and facilitates discussion and innovative problem solving to create a better, respectful and sustainable world.

It is a tax-efficient vehicle to facilitate and support the development and implementation of innovative projects that address the social and ecological imbalances and vulnerabilities resulting from the human footprint.

The Foundation creates the opportunity for thinkers, individual and corporate, to join together, stimulate their imagination, collaborate and harness their creativity for the overall health of the planet.

It invites partnerships between schools, universities, local businesses, cultural and creative communities and individual citizens. The presence of an elephant made out of recycled material in different regions of the world will help mobilise community involvement in broader human and ecological issues.

The current problems of the world cannot be addressed in a predictable, formulised way. Such solutions require the ability and desire to break new ground and generate fresh ideas.
We appeal to individuals and collectives to join us as we engage in creative idea-generating activities.

Become a partner

The Human Elephant Foundation is a South African idea, officially launched in Cape Town on the 12th of March 2009. We envisage that the Foundation will have offices in Europe, America and Asia.

Ways to get involved

If you would like to contribute or develop educational or graphic materials to accompany a Human Elephant Foundation initiative, we would love to work with you!

Contact Details:
The Human Elephant Foundation
Audited Tax Exempt Trust
Partners:
Andries Botha
John Charter
Postal address:
HEF, Postnet Suite 345, Private Bag X10, Musgrave, 4062, South Africa
Website: www.humanelephant.org
Email: info@humanelephant.org

Wounded Elephant
Location:
Station Vaste Monde, Saint-Brieuc, France
Photographer:
Jimmy James
Made from:
Mild steel, recycled oak cider barrels, wax, sound and light components

The Wounded Elephant invites an arena of contemplation. The awkwardness and pathos of the fallen elephant creates the context where vulnerability, coexistence and our fragile humanity are juxtaposed.