

The United Democratic Front (UDF) Memorial

The UDF was launched at the Rocklands Civic Centre, Mitchells Plain, on 21 August 1983 to oppose the apartheid government's rule.

Filling the gap created by the banning of the liberation movement and the imprisonment and exiling of a number of cadres, the UDF together with other organisations became a key vehicle in the struggle for democracy.

Within a few years the UDF built a national following of over 3,000,000 people, representing hundreds of affiliates, including religious groups, student and youth organisations, trade unions, civic organisations, women's organisations and many other bodies opposed to apartheid.

Several themes emerge in the Memorial. The stainless steel logos capture the mass-based support, transformative nature and contribution of the UDF to the struggle for the liberation of South Africa.

The Memorial's cracked and broken apartheid laws speak to the historical context in which the UDF was founded, and the fighting spirit of its members in their quest for a liberated South Africa. Here, on this side of the Memorial, the fragments of colonialism and apartheid contrasts visibly with the smoother and more accessible human rights sides.

Symbolising access to a better world, a portal doorway framed by student artworks connect two sides of the Memorial. Their message is of people's hopes and aspirations and the fact that the nation is still under construction. This notion of nation-building is reinforced by the incomplete concrete work and steel beams above the student artworks.

Access to the Memorial's structure is emphasised by the pathways leading to it, and represent the movement of people from across the nation, who from various walks of life, converged here, in Rocklands, under the banner of the UDF.

Standing in relative contrast to the concrete of the Memorial and the surrounding landscape, an urban environment produced by apartheid, is the indigenous landscaped garden of the Memorial. This feature, with its indigenous plants and rockery, endeavours to beautify the area and offset the structural legacy of the past. It signals that the Memorial is a living entity, breaking through the cemented foundations of apartheid, and in so doing reclaiming, as nature often does, the land and its history.

Acknowledgements

Design

Die Tchisa Collective

With commissioned Artworks by

Cedar High Art & Design students and

Isilemela High Art & Design students

Art Workshop Facilitation

Frank Joubert Art Centre and Hands-On Collective

Project Facilitation

LDM Quantity Surveyors

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Patrick Johannes, Donald Parenzee (Architect) and

George Hermanus (Structural Engineer)

Mouldmaking

Robin Ward

Stainless Steel Works

Adlow Engineering

Building Works

Peter Harley Construction

Concrete Cladding

Kroonstad Terrazzo Works

Stonemasonry

N. Zolin Cape C.C.

Granite Cladding

MIG Tiling

Finish Plastering Work

Luciano Morfat

Landscaping

Kenneth Stevens and Masautso Chinkango

Documentation

David Forgas

Donations

Morgenster Depot (City Council), Edith Stephens and

Kirstenbosch Gardens (SANBI Greening Programme)