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HALLELUJAH

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THE WALTHER COLLECTION





Mbabazeni Hallelujah Madlala has lived and worked at Ponte for more than thirty years.

Madlala was born at Tugela Ferry in KwaZulu-Natal in 1965. After the death of his father in 1982, he came to Johannesburg to find work and provide for his family. He lived in Braamfontein for three months before moving to Ponte.

His first job in the building was to clean the swimming pool. Initially he was filling in for an uncle, but the job became a permanent one. In those early years, he told journalist Judith Reker, when the women sunbathing at the pool were all white, he had to be careful to keep his eyes firmly on the ground. In time, he worked his way up to become general handyman and caretaker, and occasional security officer. In 2007, he survived being shot by a thief while on patrol in the corridors.

Madlala was one of the first people Subotzky and Waterhouse met when they started working at Ponte. Whenever they passed him in the building, he would give them a warm and friendly greeting of 'Hallelujah!' to which he expected a response of 'Amen! Amen!' He says the building has made him what he is today and he would not choose to live anywhere else. Recently the pool was repaired and nothing gives him more pleasure than to see tenants swimming there again.

Note: This text draws on Judith Reker, 'Im Todesturm von Johannesburg,' *Playboy* (Germany), October 2008, pp. 46–50.









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