

**Lalela x A4**  
**Customs**

<b>Educators' workshop and introduction</b>	<b>Thursday 21 July</b>
<b>Masiphumelele learners</b>	<b>Saturday 27 August</b>
<b>Hout Bay and Silikamva High learners</b>	<b>Saturday 3 September</b>
<b>Zeitz learners</b>	<b>Friday 9 September</b>
<b>Phillipi learners</b>	<b>Saturday 10 September</b>
<b>Alumni group</b>	<b>Saturday 17 September</b>

Over a series of workshops with youth and facilitators from Lalela's programmes in Hout Bay, Masiphumelele, Phillipi, and at Zeitz, learners engaged with **Customs**, an exhibition curated by Sumayya Vally and Josh Ginsburg at A4 Arts Foundation, creating wish pieces and instructional works reflecting on rituals.

With thanks to the Lalela facilitators: Rowan Roman and Terri Dennis (Hout Bay), Chuma Nozewu (Phillipi), Nwabisa Ndogeni (Masiphumelele), Amy Cornfield and Siyolisi Bani (Zeitz Inner-City School Programme), and Firdous Hendricks (Director).

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**Lalela** provides educational arts for at-risk youth to spark creative thinking and awaken the entrepreneurial spirit. Through Lalela's arts curriculum and critical messaging component, the project ignites imaginations and teaches children how to map and manifest their dreams and goals, launching the possibility of a different future for themselves and their communities.

**A4 Arts Foundation** is a free to public, not-for-profit laboratory for the arts. Inviting practitioners to innovate and iterate, the foundation offers the support of its curatorial studio. A4 contributes toward building a confident and resilient arts public through sharing the tools and technologies found in artistic practice. With an open attitude to what constitutes artistic and curatorial work, the foundation is invested in making processes visible.

# Dear Learners

Dear Lalela students and alumni,

The exhibition titled Customs took its cue from a series of photographs taken by co-curator Sumayya Vally in Saudi Arabia in 2021.

In preparation for the exhibition Sumayya said:

“Following the interest I had taken in the roadside mosques after a road trip with the artist Moath Alofi in Saudi Arabia in 2021, we were curious about the ways ideas traverse time in objects and practices, and in the tools (conceptual, ritualistic or other) that help us to use those ideas. I was intrigued by the varying architectural forms — the simplest of space-making structures, where clear demarcations of boundaries and thresholds invite specific use by an itinerant community of practitioners. In being used, they are maintained. This collective maintenance-through-use is a beautiful example of the word ‘maintenance’ in action.”

When you visited A4 to explore the exhibition, we began by asking you to share some of the games from your childhood. We explored how games feel ‘known’, rather than ‘learned’ and how we play by practicing the movements and words of one another; a form of ‘copying’ or ‘mimicking’ that is essential to building a community through play. A sense of community keeps us safe and makes us feel like we belong and have a place because we all know the same rules of play and connect with one another.

After our games, we went into the exhibition. There, we asked: “What practices and traditions from our own personal histories do we want to carry forwards with us, through time? Are there any that we would rather leave behind?”

Using the paper shredder and an ice bucket, we created an artwork from those ‘shredded’ practices. This was in recognition that some of the traditions and practices that we maintain over time are beautiful, helpful, and sacred. But others may be carried unconsciously, perhaps through trauma or indoctrination, or simply because we didn’t know that there was another way. Some things should not be, or need not be, maintained. We then played with creating our own ‘instructional artworks’, sharing them among the group. We carried each other’s physical movements, and acted out one another’s ideas.

Thanks to each one of you for your participation, courage, and willingness to play and teach others the ‘rules’ of engagement. At A4, we’re so grateful that you were willing to share your personal traditions and rituals inside of Customs.

Warmly,

Sara  
Editor, A4 Arts Foundation



# Wishes, rituals, instructions, and snapshots







- Kneel on your knees
- Put your hands together
  - Close your eyes
  - Start a prayer

*Art must be shared and taught to everyone.*

*Do not quickly assimilate your decision  
but sleep on it, then – early in the morning –  
throw away the unnecessary.*

*Things to carry on:*

- Positivity
- Financial literacy
- Curiosity to learn
- Perseverance mindset
- Religion and relationship with God
  - Kindness
- Success mindset

*Personality, family, respect, friends.*

*My voice.  
Respecting all cultures.*







*I want to carry on studying books and doing art so that I can have a brighter future.  
I will work hard to be the person that I want to be tomorrow. I want to live a soft life.*

*Let us support those who care to share and want to learn.  
Let's be equal in all activities, males and females.  
I love to teach, and I crave to learn.*







*Lend an ear because in every good or bad story, there is a listener.*

*Find a small living thing. Look at and notice the small living thing.*

*Don't stand in front of the door because you are blocking blessings.*





- marriage
- faith/religion
- value/worth
- freedom of speech
- confidence
- explore and experience

- Things I want to keep:*
- The respect I have for other people
  - The respect I have for myself
  - The new things I want to learn
  - To get to know new cultures

Love  
Creativity  
Respect  
Talent  
Heritage  
Bible  
Humble  
Joy  
Commitment





*Carry on:  
Diversity*

*LOVE  
KINDNESS  
ENCOURAGEMENT*

*Responsibility  
Focus  
Humour*

*Keep:*  
• *Personality*  
• *Family*  
• *Friends*  
• *Talent*

*Stay behind: Family love*









*How willing my dad is.  
 How much I listen to my inner child.  
 Becoming more patient with myself and with others.  
 HOME  
 How gentle my grandad is and his patience as well.*

*When there's a problem, you must observe first and  
 not panic.  
 Relax and do what you have to do.*

*Art must be shared and taught to everyone.*





*My mother reminded me to look at the clouds every day. She told me that they had been swept that way by the woman in the basket.*

*Music is my escape. It motivates me so much. Before I sleep, I listen to music because it calms me down.*

*It is important to never kill a bee in my family because it represents that one of your family ancestors is visiting you to see the living circumstances.*







*When I grow up, I want to live my life.*

*I want to make my family proud of me by studying hard and going to school. I want to work hard for my family and be able to provide everything for them.*

*Obeying and respecting elders.*





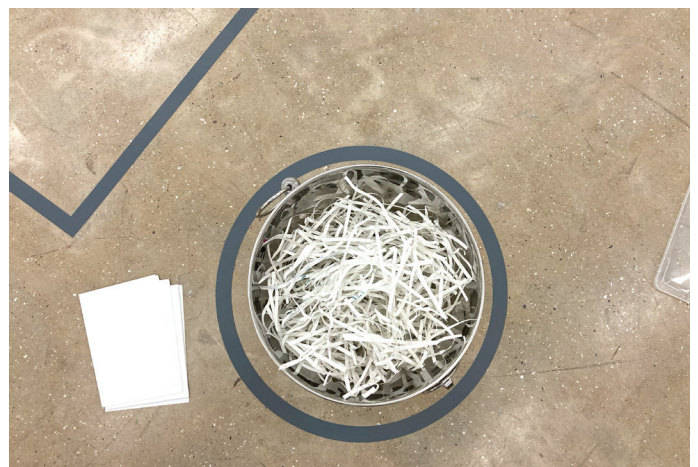


*Things I want to keep:*  
*To respect myself and everyone.*  
*To know my worth and have dignity.*  
*To be willing to learn and do new things.*  
*To get to know someone's culture*  
*or religion.*  
*To have ambition towards life.*  
*To know that anyone can do anything.*  
*To be proud of my culture.*

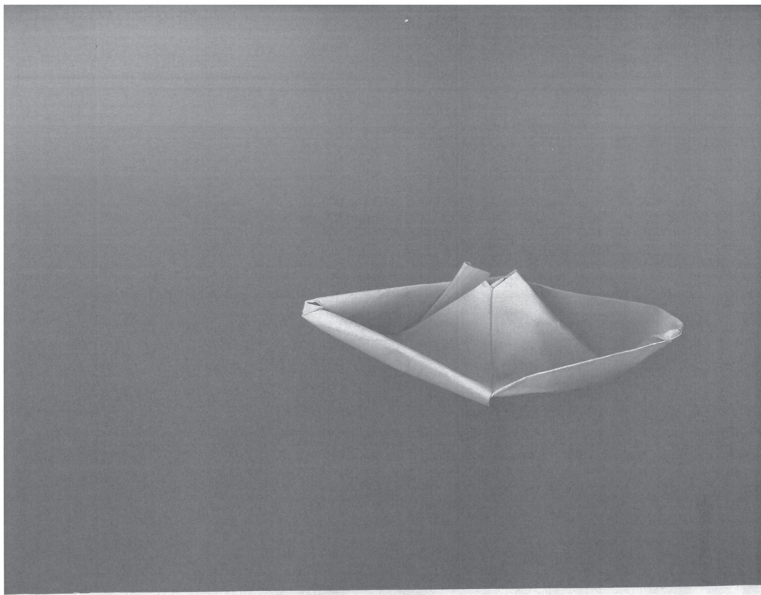
- Storytelling
- Bravery
- Courage
- Flexibility
- Drive
- Acceptance

- Keep it, hold it, pass it on*
- Loving, fun family
  - Unity and having each others' backs
  - Cooking together
  - Music
  - Teaching each other
  - Dancing in the mirror
  - Boundaries

- Instructions for umbane (lightning)*
1. Switch off all electrical appliances
  2. Get a cloth
  3. Cover all reflective things, e.g. pots and mirrors
  4. Don't eat
  5. Open all the windows
  6. Sit up straight, don't lie in bed

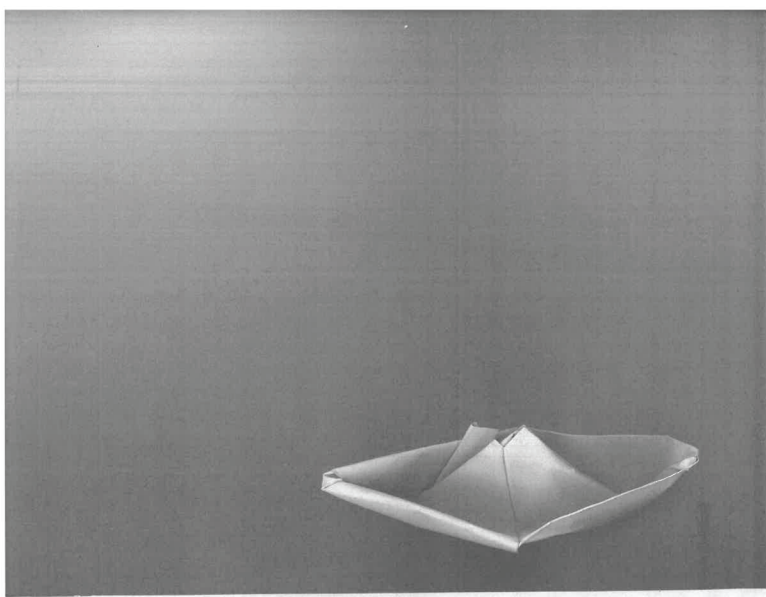
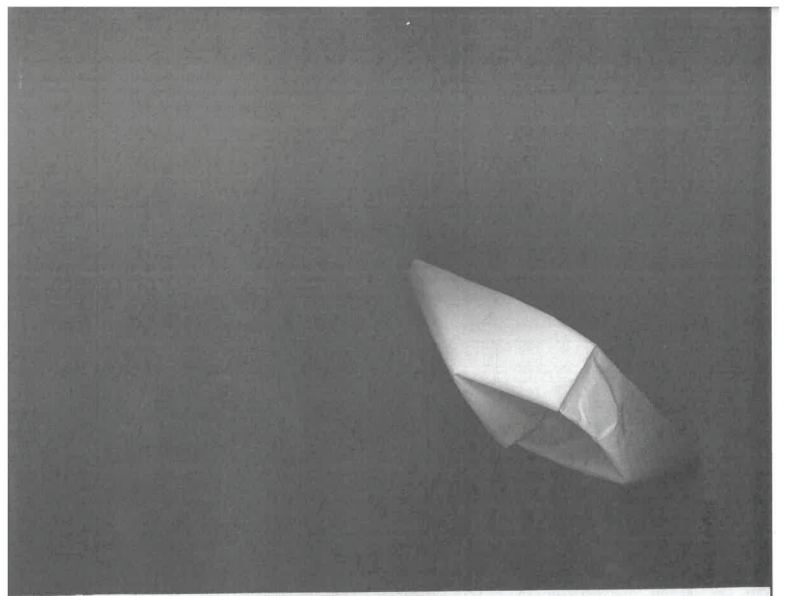






*Cope in class.  
Focus in class.  
Love home.  
Trust home.  
Listen at home and in class.*

- (1) Do one good deed a day.*
- (2) Greet grown-ups when you see them.*
- (3) Serve the grown-ups when they visit.*



- *Crack 'em up*
- *Exceed expectations*
- *Make you proud*
- *Do the dishes*
- *Live, love, linger*



*I want to focus on my studies and my career. I want to make my family proud one day. Nothing is impossible. We just have to believe. I want to take my parents out of the townships.*











- *Children can choose what they want to do, what activities they like*
- *Let my children learn how to be creative.*

*Want to keep:*

- *Learning new things*
- *Truth*
- *Opening up to parents*

*I want to have my own dream house and make my family proud.*

*I would love to take more art lessons, travel more.*





- Prepare to welcome new opportunities
- Enter or do enter the house (stay inside or outside)
- Choose wisely!

*Don't stand in front of the door with your back to it.  
By doing that, you are saying that you don't want or need  
opportunities in your life.*









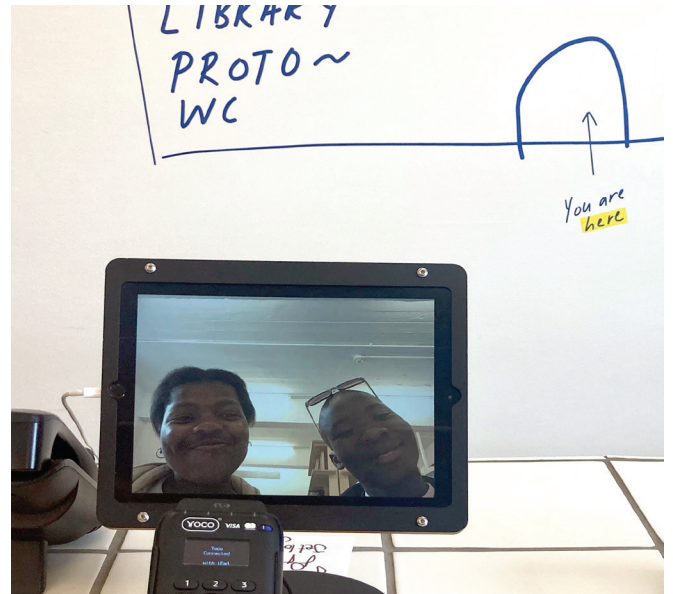


- A family hug:*
- (1) One or more family members stand with their arms open.*
  - (2) Then all family members come in and have a family hug full of love and care.*





*I grew up cooking – my mom taught me –  
and now I'm able to cook for myself  
even in her absence.*



*I want to build my family a house.  
Work hard on my feelings.  
Be the breadwinner of the house.  
Follow the right, straight way  
that my family gives me.*







Lalela x A4 — Customs Workbook (2022)

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Editor — Sara de Beer

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*This workbook was made on the occasion of Customs, an exhibition curated by Sumayya Vally and Josh Ginsburg, July 2–September 24, 2022.*