



TABULA RASA

In a north-south collaboration, two artists from Denmark and Guatemala transformed a Swazi shack into a 'white cube gallery'

As part of Swaziland's acclaimed international music and arts festival – MTN Bushfire – two international artists created an 'intervention' art piece just behind the festival's venue in the heart of the Ezulwini valley.

Luis Paredes, an El Salvador-born, Denmark-based photographer, and Guatemalan artist Pablo Swezey used the word 'intervention' as opposed to 'installation' to describe their work.

The artists intervened in the living space of Ruth Fakudze, who courageously – and perhaps curiously – allowed them to enter her single room and paint the entire space in acrylic white paint. Entirely. Roof, floor, walls, cupboard, bed, table, cereal boxes, hammer, shoes, umbrella, couch, pots and bowls were all whitewashed.

The only item of colour is an A1 photograph of the room taken minutes before the painting began. 'The room before didn't draw too much attention but take a picture of it and it becomes mysterious,' said Luis.

It's as if the space is a 'white cube' gallery, with the photo of its former state the only exhibit within.

The work is called 'Tabula Rasa', which means an opportunity for a fresh start, or 'clean slate'.

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