CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF NELSON MANDELA
The Mandela Poster Project makes its U.S. appearance. BY NANCY DEPALMA

Clockwise from top: Ithateng Mokgoro, member of the Mandela Poster Project Collective, presents at the event; Todd Nelson Sr., Natasha Lucke, Ithateng Mokgoro and Travis Nelson. Brooklyn Museum was the chosen venue for the U.S. debut of the Mandela Poster Project.
The Mandela Poster Project was the brainchild of a group of South African designers in May 2013. The idea was to celebrate Mandela’s life by collecting 95 posters from around the world. It took just one month before the group found itself with more than 700 posters from 70 countries, all depicting Mandela’s influence and values. The collection has traveled the world but until June 2016, had never been shared with U.S. audiences.

The collection’s first-ever stop in the United States was made possible by Todd Nelson, founder and owner of Kalahari Resorts and Conventions, who celebrated the collection’s arrival with a one-night opening at the Brooklyn Museum on June 21. Nelson hosted the event with Ithateng Mokgoro, member of the Mandela Poster Project Collective, for a crowd of 100 attendees. Following the opening, the project toured the United States this summer through displays at the various Kalahari Resorts properties in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, Sandusky, Ohio, and the Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania. “It’s amazing to be able to partner with the Mandela Poster Project Collective to spread the spirit of Mandela through this one-of-a-kind collection,” says Nelson. “Mandela has an unmatchable impact on the world, and this collection captures his significance beautifully. We look forward to touring the project throughout the country and continuing work with the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund in the future.”

The Mandela Poster Project is endorsed by the International Council of Design (ico-D) and is an officially recognized World Design Capital Cape Town 2014 project. After Mandela’s death, the collection was sold to the Design Institute, raising $100,000 U.S. dollars. That much-needed financial boost goes a long way toward realizing Mandela’s hope for a much-needed health facility for Southern African children. Nelson Mandela Children’s Hospital is set to open before the end of 2016. “For us, this proves that creativity, and design especially, can play an important role in easing solutions to many of the challenges that elude us,” says Mokgoro.

As anyone who has visited the Kalahari Pocono Mountains resort can attest, the connection to Africa is more than just a decorating theme. Photographs of the Nelson family on African adventures line the walls and there is a real commitment to the people they met along the way, as seen in the plentiful furnishings and decorative items purchased directly from individual artisans. The Nelsons plan a return trip to Africa they affectionately named “Kalahari One World Tour,” a 24,000-mile journey planned for this October. One stop they won’t miss? Mandela’s cell on Robben Island. 😎

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mandelaposterproject.co.za

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THINK BACK TO YOUR DORM ROOM, and chances are you adorned your walls with posters. The poster brings art to the masses, and while they typically feature rock stars, movie stars or athletes, a recent poster project featured a star of a different kind: Nelson Mandela.