

## Nelson Mandela

By Mathew Malefane

Mathew Malefane was born in Soweto; he was one of the privileged children and went to a school in Cape Town to study filmmaking. He now makes documentaries in Johannesburg. He taught himself to paint, and this painting Of Nelson Mandela made a very deep impression on all black Africans.

Mathew Malefane chose to paint Nelson Mandela for a number of reasons. One could be as a role model to all black Africans as he fought for their rights and freedom. It could be symbolising slavery, or the Apartheid. A painting is a very good way to show emotion and feeling, and he could of painted Nelson Mandela, as he was delighted and pleased that he was set free.

Nelson Mandela stood up for his rights and for the rights of all black people. He believes that they should be equal and respected as human beings. As he stood up and believes this he was put in prison for 20 years. As he was imprisoned there was many protests and riots, and when he was released he was voted for the government. He then won the election, and gave moving, emotive, and touching speeches, which won over all the Africans and he finally became the leader of the African National congress.

In the painting, the uses of certain colours are very symbolic. The background is painted in blocks of yellow, green, and black. These are all the colours of his flag. The yellow is surrounding his head, and this symbolises him coming into the light and out of the dark prision he was in. The yellow gradually becomes lighter as it gets closer to his head, this may symbolise a new and hope and beginning. Nelson Mandela looks like he is reaching up to the heavens, and the use of the yellow really adds to this effect. The use off yellow could symbolise the sun beaming downing on the people to give them rays of hope.

Nelson Mandela is painted as looking very sad to show the pain and suffering he had endured during the time that he stood up for what he believed in. He went through torturing, pain, and imprisonment because he was seen as different because the colour of his skin.

As Nelson Mandela was locked up for 20 years he had aged, and the artist really captured this, this may also show that as time goes on that things changed, the rights of his people and also himself.

The way that Nelson Mandela's hand is placed is very important as it can show two things. It may look like that he is reaching out to god and asking him for hope and help. The other thing it may symbolise is Nelson making a speech by the position of his hand. He is talking to the people, showing them the way and hope for the future. The other hand is near the bottom of the picture, where he is holding a spear. This could show that there used to be violence and aggression as they used to fight for their rights but now he expresses his beliefs through his words and his speeches.

The painting shows Nelson Mandela standing in a box. This is a very important as it can represent stages in his life. As he was standing in a box in court and was found guilty, and when he was trapped in a box when he was locked in his cell. It could also represent the pulpit he stands in when he is preaching when he is set free. The box is only covering half of his body this shows how he was trapped.

Nelson Mandela is painted behind bars, which symbolises that he still feels trapped and that black people still are not completely free. But the bars are all twisted and bent which signify his willpower, strength and determination he went through trying to break free.

By showing the bars like this signifies that he had to work and fight for what he believes in, and that it was not easy to try and break these bars. I believe that the bars symbolise all white peoples beliefs and racism against the blacks and that

Nelson Mandela symbolises the black community. By showing the bars bent like this is their struggle and fight for freedom and equality.

In the painting Nelson Mandela's top has a swimmer with sharks on it. Also in the distance is an island where prisoners were sent. The man that is swimming could be represented, as Nelson Mandela and the sharks around him are the white people. I believe the island represents all the black people, and the belief that they are not part of a community and not equal. I believe an island is used because it is on its own and not in contact with any thing else like the Black community were seen as. I believe the swimmer is Nelson Mandela and he is trying to break free and show the slaves that this is not right and there is a way out. Or as his head is down it may show he is drowned and as he spoke out, he was taken away trapped, and isolated. This painting symbolises a lot of things and really had a big impact on Africans.

By Sarah Dawson 10V4