

The beautiful yin-yang chaos of collaboration in creativity

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

2 Oct 2018

Artist, maker and activator Chris Auret led attendees of the September Creative Mornings Cape Town session through "collaborative art experiment", effectively an interactive process of seeing the effects of working together to make order of chaos in creativity.



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"TAKE nothing but CARE" (2018) _____ My first mural of the year and my second largest piece to date (although it's the longest I've painted on one work; 5 days). I was asked by Sasol in Vaalpark (an area just south of Joburg) to brighten up their space with some wall art. The brief? Nothing really, other than that! I can't explain how nice it is as an artist to receive that kind of free reign. My concept came in the form of a message to those coming and going. With this branch specifically prizing themselves on trying to be sustainable, with the use of solar power and green energy, etc, the line "Take Care" came to mind and organically transformed itself with the added "nothing but"... becoming a simple wish for the world, blown out into the universe, inspired by nature. Thank you to @shanjude for getting me onto this wall and for all your work behind the scenes :) Thank you to Jordaan from Sasol for believing in the disruption of a space for benefits beyond advertising and for the full creative freedom. It's so appreciated! #AuReT #streetart #joburg #publicart #nature #sasol #chrisauret

A post shared by [Chris Auret \(@chris_auret\)](#) on Feb 6, 2018 at 1:41am PST

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On Friday, 28 September 2018, Friends of Design hosted the latest monthly Creative Mornings Cape Town session.

Told to bring our favourite 'mark-making device' along with us, whether it was a pen, crayon or even ink, we were intrigued to find blank paper plates on the seats in Friends of Design's talk space. These weren't for the vegan doughnuts provided by [That Doughnut Guy](#) – though we did hear that the Creative Mornings Cape Town meetings will soon include a doughnut wall.

Rather, we were meant to mark our paper plates according to how we'd ticked our icebreaker name tags, indicating that we either bring order to the chaos or chaos to the order.

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Viva Madiba Viva! This was 5 years ago - one of my first, if not my actual first, solo murals - painted on the morning of Nelsons Mandela's official passing. This man has been an inspiration that keeps coming back to me. Today, I remember and celebrate you, Madiba. All my love x #madibaday #AuReT #nelsonmandela #mural #vivamadiba #67minutes #chrisauret #publicart #searlestreet

A post shared by [Chris Auret](#) (@chris_auret) on Jul 18, 2018 at 11:57am PDT

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A show of hands had this at a fairly even 50/50 split. Before the morning's speaker began, the session started with a quick morning stretch and reveal that 180 cities had attended the Creative Mornings global summit, which takes place every two years, in New York.

Described as a 'Creative Mornings session on steroids', it featured everything from marching bands to balloons, and will result in exciting changes to the usual running of Creative Mornings' sessions going forward.

Fighting order, turning to chaos

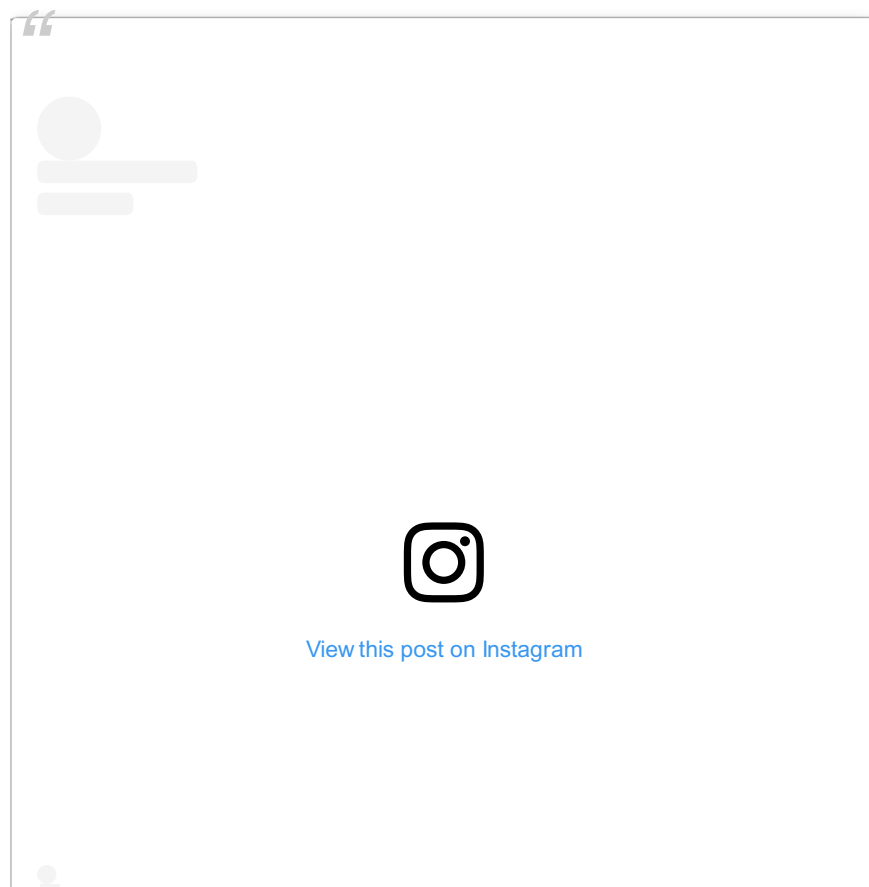
Elaborating on the theme of chaos in creativity, Aurret stretched and did a few turns at the front of the room before introducing himself and sharing a bit of his life story, as he calls himself: “A walking example of chaos and collaboration.”

Aurret shared that when he was first approached to present a talk on the topic at the Creative Mornings' session, he was excited, then he thought he should turn it down as he was too busy, and then he thought he simply had to it.

“ Aurret says too much stress is placed on creating order by society, whereas we need a bit of chaos, too. It's almost a yin-yang relationship. ”

Then, getting our creative juices flowing, Aurret asked us all to close our eyes and connect through the unconscious web. We did some deep breathing, then expressed our feelings with our selected mark-making tools on our plates.

Over the course of the talk, we passed along our plates to the person on our right and effectively created order from the chaos, through collaboration.





I'm working on a Western Cape bird series to sell mostly as limited edition prints. These are the first 4 of at least 12 paintings. DM me if you're interested in finding out more or purchasing a print or one of the originals! Here we have the Cape Robin, Southern Boubou, Malachite Kingfisher and Knysna Loerie... More to come ☺ #AuReT #paintings #wildlife #birds #birdsofsouthafrica #forsale #prints #colour #paint

A post shared by [Chris Aurret \(@chris_aurret\)](#) on Sep 13, 2017 at 1:12am PDT

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Aurret gave a disclaimer that he's by no means a professional, and that his learnings are from his own experience, not from studying in the field. He said we are all artists in our own lives, and describes himself as childlike in his approach.

Much of his own process came from unlearning the structures put in place while he was at school, and rewiring those rules based on various choices. He left the 'six days a week' rigmarole of rugby to rather focus on art and design.

Then after leaving school, he faced another big choice – **fine art school or the more structured, collaborative world of advertising?**

He went for the latter as it seemed to offer a more secure future, despite really wanting to follow his passion for art. In doing collaborative art work on the side, Aurret saw the magic of bouncing different perspectives off of your own.

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The collaboration of myself and the legend that is [@marti_lund \(@maakboards\)](#) for the [@wavescapesa](#) Artboard Charity Auction is on tonight!. Big thank you to [@wavescapesa](#) for having us on board :) Also to [@shanijudes](#) for setting things

into motion and @york.surf for the glassy finish! The Auction is at @jackblackbeer at 8pm Proceeds go towards NSRI, @wavesforchange @sharkspotters @thebeachco_op, @adaptivesuringsouthafrica Big respect to the other artists involved in this one! Be sure to look out for the work by these amazing peoples: @jakeaikman @beezybailey @a_urbanski @kirsten.sims @lizagrobler @brettmurrayza @lionelsmit @alexisaronson , Jenna Barbe, @colin_raymond_fitch and the @wsl tour team #wavescape #wavescapesa #Solly #painting #surfboard #surfboardart #maakboards #boardporn

A post shared by Chris Aurret (@chris_aurret) on Nov 28, 2017 at 2:07am PST

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But Aurret soon realised he was spending lots of time behind his desk, selling products he didn't really believe in, and working with people he didn't really resonate with – all the more sad as he was just 22-years-old at the time.

Then the travel bug bit, and Aurret calls the result a “beautiful level of chaos”. He started blogging while on his three-month solo travels in London as a way of sharing his experiences.

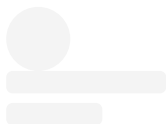
On his return to SA, he soon found a job through LinkedIn – a solid ‘9 to 5’ – while also expressing himself creatively after-hours at an art studio.

Follow your passion

Aurret's next big turning point came from spending time in hospital after a stomach operation – this led to lots of introspection, and he finally left the world of advertising to focus on becoming an artist.

Since then, he's branched out into large-scale, collaborative art and murals in the public space. Know that 'cool giraffe' mural in Muizenberg? That's Aurret's.

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It may be rainy in the Cape at the moment, but here's a latergram of the cool #giraffe and surfer gull #graffiti in #Muizenberg last weekend to brighten your spirits. #surf #surflife #beachday #capetown #southafrica #art

A post shared by [Leigh Andrews \(@ramblinglitchi123\)](#) on Dec 23, 2016 at 5:42am PST

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Auret describes his painting style as “chaos”, as his process is to add colour and texture and form as he goes along. He works with different mediums and sometimes peels paint off the palette, as a way of consciously letting his subconscious take over.

“Despite his successes, Auret says chaos and collaboration can be uncomfortable and even frustrating, especially at first. But the end result is so much more when you collaborate.”

Illustrating this, by swapping the paper plates we were working on every few minutes, we were effectively using our personal skills to enhance what someone else had created. That’s collaborative chaos at its best – making something new and harmonious.

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Chaos is normal and order comes and goes in stages, stars and emotional performances #philosophy of an #EvolvingHuman in an #EvolvingCity @chris_auret @mailchimp @creativemorning #coffeeloveandotheraddictions

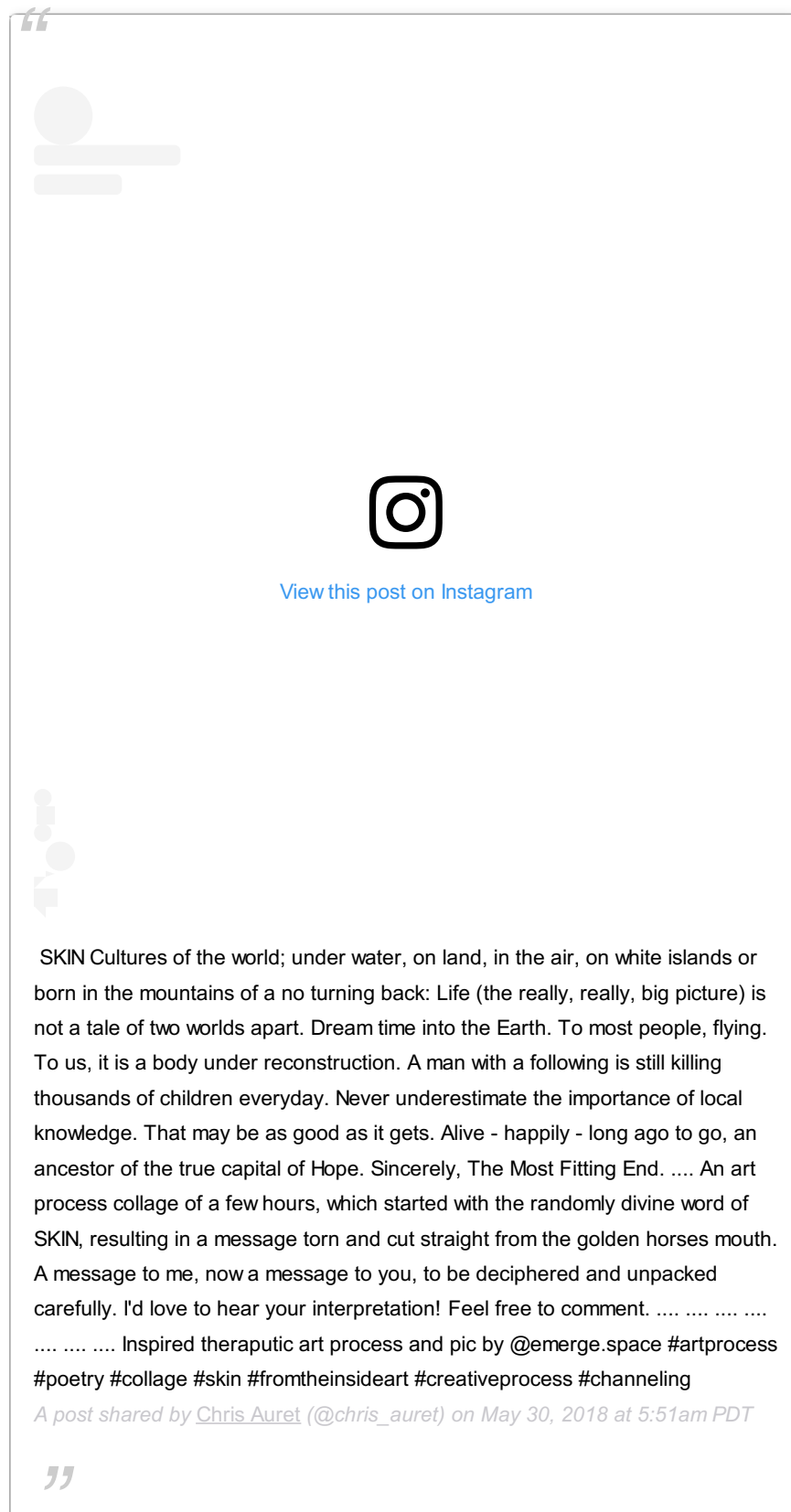
A post shared by [Craig Lee Adams \(@coffeeloveaddiction\)](#) on Sep 29, 2018 at 1:59am PDT

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Stop, collaborate and listen

Auret also spoke of a few of his most recent projects, like #1000printsnofootprints, the Valhalla Afrikaburn long-house concept, and his current To We, From Me work.

It's about creating collaboration and integrity between the 'we' and 'me' through poetry, movement, and more from his residency at Muizenberg's Imaginarium space.



Fear, judgement and ego are the biggest challenges to effective collaboration, and Auret added that communication and listening are key to effective collaboration, as is an element of compromise.

But as soon as you're just listening, you're no longer doing, so you need to get the balance right – there's that yin-yang analogy again.

Follow Auret on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for more on his collaborative work, and keep an eye on the [Creative Mornings Cape Town](#) feed for their latest updates.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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