



## Kaafiri Kariuki Kenya

Nicholas Kariuki, a father of three, was born on 4th February 1973 in the slums of Nyahururu, Maina village in the Rift Valley to a Christian and Muslim father. He grew up with many unanswered questions as to which of them was in the "right religion". He still bears the burden of religion with his pseudonym name 'Kaafiri', which loosely interpreted in English, means pagan.

His drawing started as an escape from his environment whilst in primary school and he did cartoons and played music in high school to entertain. Finding it hard to make ends meet after high school, he joined a band as a composer and guitarist. It was at this time that he moved to Nairobi where unfortunately his life underwent drastic changes - drugs, rehab, and studying literature and philosophy. He gradually took painting more seriously while doing touristic art. It was at this time he met a German tourist named Barstch who bought his work 'Farms not arms' and introduced him to the Banana Hill artists' group in Nairobi.

After joining the Banana Hill artists' group, he coincidentally met his father again after nearly 17 years who was living at Mukuru Slums, Nairobi. At this time, Kariuki was painting batiks. He initiated the Mukuru Arts & Crafts, a children's self-help group, with the help of Sister Mary Kileen of the DKA support office. It was while he was with the group that he and others toured France, Germany and Ireland for three months to paint and exhibit in 2003.

He has become widely favoured in Kenya and beyond for his social commentary artworks, which often have an affirmative action message and a keen scrutiny of the ills facing his society today. The 'Dancing Pen' is a self-styled way of drawing using ink on acid free paper and has carved a unique niche for his works among international critics, curators and collectors.



1. Affirmative action.

Ink on acid free paper - 30.5x44 cm

48.



2. Stop child labour.  
Ink on acid free paper - 46.5x61.5 cm



3. Peace drum.  
Ink on acid free paper - 30.5x44 cm



4. Art captives.  
Ink on acid free paper - 20.5x29 cm



5. Second fall.  
Ink on acid free paper - 20.5x29 cm

49.