

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA MUSEUMS

e-NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024 ○ ISSUE 12



HOD's MESSAGE

In the last seasonal newsletter for 2024, the UP Museums continue to transform, add value, and grow in a rapidly changing higher education landscape. The museums remain the art and cultural heartbeat of the University of Pretoria. They provide solid and strategic contributions to the academic research project, to teaching and training, to deeper engagement with all communities, and have fostered firm partnerships while maintaining excellence in our social, civic, and reputation, both locally and internationally.

Over the past year, there have been 10 curated articles on the website and 4 more published for GLAM in the *Alma Matters* newsletter, reaching our influential UP alumni networks around the globe. Capping one of our high points for this year is the ongoing, positive upward trend of welcoming over 46,394 visitors in ten months, the second highest number of direct visitors to the museums in the past 15 years.

This year also includes the importance of embracing the digital domain, statistically increasing our social media, online followings, engagements, impacts, and impressions by 538.2% within a year. The museums continue to be a critical nexus for inter/transdisciplinary research, as evidenced by our direct contributions to over 21 academic modules across faculty programmes and managing 19 registered researchers from within UP, other South African universities, and international scholars.

We are committed to working harder to advance more change in the curatorship of some of our galleries and maintain the high-quality standard of museum conservation as a leader in higher education. The journey that lies ahead will require adopting more technological and digital strategies, driving meaningful inclusive change by being honest and true to a people-focused approach.

As we near the very end of 2024, on behalf of the dedicated museum staff, we would like to thank all our communities, students, staff, research, domestic and international tourists, and wide-ranging patrons for their sustained trust and support, which enables us to keep going. We would like to express our immense appreciation to the University of Pretoria Executive, notably the Office of the Registrar, for their confidence in us and the constant support towards providing the critical resources needed to ensure sustainability in challenging times.

With the University of Pretoria Museums leading quality and excellence in higher education as we do, our flurry of flowing innovative ideas keeps us relevant in making today matter and the future better for university museums.

Happy reading, and may all have a festive and restful break before welcoming in the 2025 frontier.

Dr Sian Tiley-Nel
Head of UP Museums &
Curator Mapungubwe Collection

UPCOMING 2025 EXHIBITIONS

The UP Museum exhibitions that are scheduled for 2025 are part of the broader strategic trajectory to encourage transdisciplinarity, collaboration, and partnerships. Coming soon will be *Bokgabo ba Mašela (The Art of Textiles)*, which will be the first exhibition of the year to launch on 6 March 2025 in the Bridge Gallery. This exhibition will focus on the university's extensive tapestries and textiles collection, with the view of engaging with the materiality of the medium and the woven histories therein. This collaborative exhibition will feature seminal tapestries and textiles on loan from the various institutions around the country.

By end May or early June 2025, the *Hezekiel Ntuli (1912-1973) retrospective* exhibition will represent for the first time a major exhibition that focuses on the work of this early 20th century black artist and sculptor. This exhibition also serves as a launching pad for a broader research project that the UP Museums aim to undertake. The notion is to produce credible research knowledge, a research archive, and scholarship on early black South African artists whose contribution to the South African artistic landscape has often been neglected and overlooked.



In 2025, more exhibitions aim to be revamped and recurated in some of the gallery spaces that will see the establishment of a new *Acquisitions Gallery* that will profile recent additions to the institutional art collection. The Ceramics Gallery, which previously hosted the contemporary Corobrik Ceramics, will be changed to feature a new exhibition titled, *Unclaying South African Ceramics* that will focus on engaging with local South African ceramics from storage, some never-before-seen. In order to ensure that the museum exhibitions are activated and engaging, all the new exhibitions will feature robust curatorial programming made of walkabouts, seminars, guest lectures, performances, and live demonstrations.

ART OF THE ARCHIVE: Monochromatic Portraiture

The UP Museums have most recently curated the last exhibition, for 2024, which is now published online on Google Arts and Culture titled [*Art of the Archive: Monochromatic Portraiture*](#). This online exhibition is a collaborative effort between both the Mapungubwe Archive and the UP Museum Archive.

The exhibition features historical sketches and photographs of portraits from the museum archival collections. It is the archives' first online exhibition and aims to bring attention to the valuable primary archival materials in our collections and to garner research interest from around the world. These archives are not only important from a historical perspective, but the works can also be celebrated for their artistic value and hopefully open new avenues of research.



NEW ACQUISITIONS



Thania Louw (b.1984)

In Bloom, 2024

Photographic Print

840mm x 1190mm

Edition 1/5

MUSEUM DONATIONS



A new donation titled *Tea Time* (2005) by Penny George (b. 1974) is a Cape-based artist who works in the abstract expressionist style as her artworks are known for their emotional intensity. The University of Pretoria's institutional art collection greatly values this donation, which will be soon on public exhibition.

Earlier in November, the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA NRF) also donated eight busts of well-known scientists to the University of Pretoria. These portraits are of famous scientists such as Galileo, Marie Curie, Sir. Isaac Newton, Dimitri Mendeleev, and Archimedes. The donation further included a painting of Johannesburg in 1961 by Heinrich von Michaelis (1912-1990) and several smaller portraits in pastel.

MUSEUM CORNER SHOP

The UP Museums is excited to announce the opening of its new corner shop, conveniently located in the Old Arts building, room 1-9, during museum hours (08:00-16:00). The shop is expanding and offers an array of products, including mouse pads and other items, including pens, mugs, canvas bags, water bottles, notebooks, T-shirts, exhibition catalogues, books, and many more featuring the iconic Old Arts Building. Visitors can now take home a piece of the museum with unique merchandise and memorabilia that serves as a reminder of our institutional heritage.



The new UP Museum **2025 Art Calendar** is now available for R80 each. For enquiries next year, please email: kgomotso.mathole@up.ac.za and get your copy before they are sold out. Limited prints only.

DONATE AND SUPPORT

The University of Pretoria Museums relies on support from those who enjoy the collections and treasure the contents of our diverse galleries. Please make a donation today to support our continued digital strategy, maintain marketing visibility, support art conservation efforts, and care for our high-quality exhibitions and new gallery upgrades. In 2025, we aim to roll out the Fund-a-Frame initiative for the acclaimed Rorkes Drift collection, a recent donation and bequest of over 300 other important artworks that require conservation and framing in order to be exhibited. The University of Pretoria has several convenient ways in which you can support the UP Museums and benefit. All manners of giving are secure and only take a few minutes. Click here to [Donate to UP Museums](#).

