



UP MUSEUMS e-NEWSLETTER

March 2020 ISSUE 4

As our first newsletter for 2021, optimistically in every crisis there is an opportunity. The University of Pretoria (UP) Museums opened their doors to the public on 1 February 2021, after 10 months of closure, having been in lockdown for over 300 days. All staff have been working hard with UP's campus support partners to prepare for the reopening in terms of compliance and Covid readiness. We are confident that the UP Museums remain a firm campus favourite and a domestic choice tourist destination. We were right, as our first visitors were students keen to get out and come experience our galleries.

Understandably, and in response to the economic situation, the UP Museums have had to implement as of 2021, nominal admission fees for external visitors for the first time, and opening hours have been reduced while lockdown continues. The UP Museums have been fortunate to receive both internal and external visitors. Weekly bookings for physical tours and online tours are increasing - this is a good sign. There has been a tremendous interest in the Mapungubwe tour package, notably from schools. The UP Museums would like to kindly thank St Mary's DSG for their generous financial donation and ongoing support.

While reminded that the pandemic remains ongoing and in adjusting to the new usual, Covid-19 has presented a multitude of opportunities for university museums. There is a deeper appreciation of art and its place (and space) in the community and a gained understanding of why university museums are curators of memory and are important within society. Globally, there has been great empathy expressed towards the continued struggle of museums and the wider heritage sector, which has been severely impacted by the pandemic. Yet, museums are resilient institutions and as long as they have a social responsibility and purpose for civic society, they will rise above the many challenges and have the potential for a reimagined future post-Covid.

In propelling our social responsibility, the UP Museums look forward to implementing some key strategic initiatives this year, as we continually evolve a mission that is accelerated by the pandemic. A priority was opening the museums to our community, re-establishing a physical presence and expanding our online engagement and digital curation. Our social media is expanding exponentially with 249 Instagram followers; over a 1000 Facebook followers and LinkedIn connections continue growing. In addition the UP Museums would like to thank our 575 e-newsletter subscribers who take interest in reading and receiving updates. This time last year, the UP Museums had no social media nor digital content.

Our new five-year partnership with the City of Tshwane's Pretoria Art Museum and Ceramics Southern Africa brings to the University a beautiful new temporary exhibition of ceramic art, courtesy of the iconic Corobrik Collection. This exhibition will be launched in the coming months. Several new acquisitions zoosh up our SA Ceramics gallery, proudly presenting more female artists and filling gaps with works from more black artists on the second level of the Old Arts Building. There is also the [GLAM initiative](#) together with Alumni Relations and many internal partners that rolls-out in 2021. This has exciting prospects to raise the level of awareness of the contributions of galleries/gardens, libraries, archives and museums to the urban campus landscape. Last, the fruition of phase one of the refurbishment of the

Sculpture Gallery in the Old Merensky Building is now open to the public in a much fresher and contemporised space to appreciate.

With appreciation, our museum team would like to thank Mr Katlego Moatshe, the Senior Museum Administrator for his dedicated services and wish him well with his new position as the Project Administrator for FABI. During the course of the year we will also be hosting art conservation internships for the School of Arts. This past month the UP Museums have also provided facilitator training to Javet-UP staff as well as the post-graduate EFK honors UP Campus Tours students of 2021.

We all look forward to launching the UP Museums on Google Arts & Culture, featuring now over 650 digitised collections' content and five new online exhibitions. The University of Pretoria will then join the global art community and over 2000 leading museums and archives, who have partnered with the Google Cultural Institute. There is more to come and we thank all our supporters, followers and the University of Pretoria for their continued appreciation to ensure that all great universities, have great museums.

Dr Sian Tiley-Nel HEAD OF UP MUSEUMS

TOP NEWS STORIES

All universities have great museums: UP Museums reopened 1 February 2021

A promotional banner for the University of Pretoria Museums. The left side features a photograph of the museum's entrance, showing a stone building with a large archway and a sculpture of a deer in the foreground. The right side has a blue background with white text. At the top right is the University of Pretoria crest. The text reads: 'University of Pretoria Museums NOW OPEN', 'Mondays to Fridays 8:00- 13:00', 'By appointment museums@up.ac.za', and 'Come visit to see change in progress Exciting new acquisitions and new South African ceramics exhibition coming soon'.

The UP Museums is excited to announce that our doors have reopened to visitors following a ten-month closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic. On Monday, 1 February 2021, the UP Museums opened to the public, including the university community, in accordance with the latest safety guidelines and compliance, designed to ensure that all visitors, staff and students are in a safe environment. Our first student visitor, Ms Tebogo Nkosi was thrilled at receiving her complimentary Mapungubwe books and the UP Museums wanted to make our first visitor feel welcome and special, read more [here](#).

The UP Museums also introduce new exciting tour package options such as a specialised Mapungubwe Collection tour. The sculpture route is recommended for outdoor enthusiasts and there are also other museum trails to bring a wider offering of heritage to all visitors. Please see our website for new rates, more details and to book your slot for tours [here](#).

NEW TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

Iconic Corobrik Collection to be exhibited at UP in association with City of Tshwane's Pretoria Art Museum and Ceramics Southern Africa

A new exciting curated temporary exhibition will be launched soon in 2021 in the UP Museum's World of Ceramics Gallery in the Old Arts Building. The UP Museums, in partnership with Ceramics Southern Africa and the City of Tshwane's Pretoria Art Museum, have signed a six-year loan agreement to bring the iconic Corobrik Collection, a South African contemporary ceramic collection, from storage onto public display. These signature art ceramics will

compliment the already expansive ceramic collections curated by the University of Pretoria Museums, who have an entrenched tradition of cultural, archaeological and art ceramic collections. We are very pleased to showcase a vast contemporary ceramic art collection comprising over 150 items.

Both Corobrik and Ceramics Southern Africa play a critical social role in promoting the African tradition of ceramic making. The University of Pretoria has also partnered with Ceramics SA over past decades, hosting several provincial exhibitions. According to John Shirley, the National Chairman of Ceramics Southern Africa, “the move to the University would ensure that the collection be shown for a full year, as unfortunately the full collection is seldom seen. Since the Corobrik Collection is a major ceramic collection it deserves to be seen and this move and subsequent showing at the University of Pretoria would truly give this collection the attention it deserves.”

The new exhibition will explore how South African ceramic art is pushing the boundaries as a medium, but more importantly the social meaning and social commentary intended by the ceramicists. Ceramics are not necessarily functional, but rather well-designed, three dimensional art forms and therefore have the ability to stir discussion and debate around ceramic art and its role in society. In the upcoming exhibition of the Corobrik ceramics collection, the tactility, beauty and subjectivity of these works are explored. Greater emphasis is placed on the ceramicist, as the social artist and their contribution to South African ceramic art.



GALLERY NEWS

UP's Sculpture Gallery's first phase of upgrade is complete

The UP Museums are pleased to announce that the first phase of the new Sculpture Gallery, formerly the Edoardo Villa Museum is complete thanks to the generous support of the Edoardo Villa Trust, who funded R400 000 for phase one of the project. The initial proposal commenced in 2019 and over the 2020 pandemic, the upgrades took about a year to complete. Lelani Nicolaisen, Curator of Art Exhibitions & Galleries, managed the upgrade. This change is a means to curate the rather outdated space into a more thought-provoking contemporary space with a wider diverse collection of South African sculpture.

The gallery space in the past was reserved for the works primarily by Anton Van Wouw and Edoardo Villa, but in changing narratives and addressing decoloniality it was important to transform the space into a contemporary sculpture gallery with more representative works. A new portraiture wall is featured on a large space in the museum. The portraiture wall is not only designed to be aesthetically interesting, but also to create discussions between the different sculptures on display. Iconic portraits by Anton van Wouw, Edoardo Villa, Nell Kaye, Hezekiel Ntule, Willem de Sanderes Hendrikz and Laurika Postma, amongst others are conversing a timeline of portraiture over a century. A multitude of upgrades and improvements include: 35 new redesigned plinths, 80 floating shelves for works to be displayed on walls, window blinds were removed to let in the natural flow of light, bespoke seating was designed not only to give the visitor a space to rest, but also a space to contemplate the sculptures and creativity around them.

The Art Committee of the University of Pretoria has been immensely supportive with six new acquisitions of works by Michael Teffo, Bonnie Ntshalintshali, Philiswa Lila and Johannes Maswanganyi. These new acquisitions on display in the sculpture gallery aims to challenge new conversations of South African sculpture as a medium, as well as the newly curated spaces to enhance the visibility of the redefined narratives of sculpture. In addition, the UP Museums are also glad to welcome the return of *Sun Man* by the South African artist, Lucky Sibiya after having been on temporary loan to the Javett-UP Art Centre. The UP Museums will ensure the newly curated sculpture gallery will create some new conversations that matter, inspire new research frontiers and will be home to more significant South African sculptural works in the future.

PARTNER NEWS

Mapungubwe Archive hosts the US Embassy Minister Counselor for Public Affairs

On Thursday 11 February 2021, the Head of the UP Museums, Dr Sian Tiley-Nel received Mr Frank Whitaker, the Minister Counselor for Public Affairs from the US Embassy and his representatives, Sheila Goodgall, the Cultural Affairs Specialist, and Kiera Emmons, the Cultural Affairs Officer for Programs to the Mapungubwe Archive. Prof Nicholson, the Registrar of the University of Pretoria, extended special thanks to the US Embassy for their invaluable contribution and generous sponsorship from the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation, particularly since this was the second award to the UP Museums. The archivists were keen to show the immense progress made on the preservation of the Mapungubwe Archive, a project which began in September 2018 and is due for completion in 2021. The Museums remain grateful to the US Embassy in Pretoria for their ongoing partnership and support towards the University of Pretoria Museum's conservation efforts. As a result of their generous contribution of \$57 735, the UP Museums could establish the first-ever Mapungubwe Archive, a national achievement to be proud of in order to drive more primary research on this unique heritage archive in South Africa.



MUSEUM COLLECTIONS NEWS

Latest acquisitions



Gwen & Matisse, 2020
Phillip Badenhorst
Oil on Canvas
900mm x 900mm



Pensive Rabbit, 2020
Michael Teffo
Eucalyptus wood
1080mm x 700mm x 500mm

DIGITAL CURATION PARTNERSHIP

Mapungubwe: An ancient civilisation *1937 full report available now online*

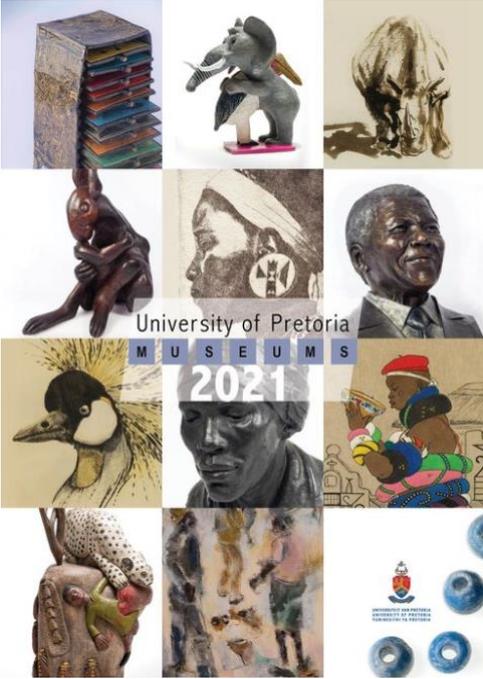
The Mapungubwe Archive in collaboration with the Department of Library's Special Collections and Digital Scholarship Services are proud to announce the first comprehensive report on the excavations by the University of Pretoria is now available online. The fully digitised book, published by Cambridge Press in 1937, "*Mapungubwe: ancient Bantu civilization on the Limpopo; reports on excavations at Mapungubwe (Northern Transvaal) from February 1933 to June 1935*" (Fouche 1937) is considered a seminal study on the subject. As a secondary source, this critical research is frequently and actively used by undergraduate and postgraduate students from multiple disciplines as an introduction to Mapungubwe.

The Mapungubwe Archive is often inundated by requests for access to this publication, which is rare, as only 300 copies were printed at the time. Over the decades, Fouche's publication has become a highly collectible part of Africana and rarely appears on private auction lots at high value. As a result, finding a copy of this much-wanted publication to access is not easy and not permissible even via interlibrary loan. The Mapungubwe Archive initiated the digitisation of the publication in an effort to support an external PhD researcher from the University of Queensland in Australia, who required urgent access to the publication during Covid-19 and was unable to visit the Archive. The University of Pretoria's Special Collections and Digital Scholarship Services came to the rescue and kindly prioritised the digitisation of this valuable research resource, which is available here on [UP Space](#).

SUPPORT THE UP MUSEUMS' EFFORTS

The UP Museums rely 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 engagement, and to maintain our high-quality exhibitions, and efficient services. The University collections and archives are also critical sources of research, teaching education and training and provide learning resources and direct support to many transdisciplinary academic programmes.

The UP Museums also have several colourful art catalogues for sale and recently produced a beautifully illustrated art calendar for 2021. 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. Please support the UP Museum's efforts by visiting the [UP fundraising page](#).



University of Pretoria

MUSEUMS

2021

