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# UP MUSEUMS e-NEWSLETTER

**August 2021** ○ **ISSUE 5** OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
**MUSEUMS**



## MESSAGE

The month of August provides a six-month glimpse at just some of what the University of Pretoria (UP) Museums have been up to, with a decided focus on partnerships. The ongoing pandemic has firmly given the UP Museums more voice and visibility than ever before, by embracing the pivot to blended online engagement. This would simply not be possible without the unstinting support, impact of and by our parent institution, patrons, partners, and global partnerships - the people that makeup society and value the university museums.

Moreover, the small group of nine staff that complement the UP Museums, despite trying times, continue to give their best, even remotely. As specialists and as a team, they are driving institutional change. This is the result of best-practice principles that underlie our purpose that aims to be innovative and inspirational university museum leaders. It is not the size of the team that matters, but the quality of content, level of impact and consistent governance.

Remaining appreciative daily of each staff member's contribution towards a clear purpose, vision and, why we do what we do, not what we do, nor how we do it.

Initially, the formidable challenge was reopening the museums in February 2021, then closing again, and now reopening again on 1 September 2021. This pendulum-like anticipation is determined by whether patrons will still come through the museum doors or not, after months of ongoing lockdowns amid a pandemic? Nevertheless, interest and demand are there and audiences are coming for the experience. Unpacking major strategic goals has become the daily norm, where engagement is an experience, inclusivity, and the impact of attracting diverse and new audiences is measurable by the successes so far.

The request for Mapungubwe online tours is increasing, so pivoting to a blended 'museumscape' online experience is part of this natural change. Even with reduced opening hours, and staff still working remotely, plus the introduction of new admission fees, the UP Museums purpose to serve continues. Since reopening in February until June 2021, the UP Museums have engaged over 8188 audiences, both physically and virtually, with many of this year's pivotal changes incomparable to last year.

Social media is leveraged with over 590 subscribers to this e-newsletter, 724 digitised works on Google Arts & Culture and 5 online stories or exhibitions were launched in August. Social media continues to increase with daily Facebook posts, 1589 Facebook active followers, 367 Instagram followers and LinkedIn reactions are ever-increasing. On an operational level, 10 paintings have been conserved and 276 ceramics installed for the new upcoming *Unspoken* iconic Corobrik Collection exhibition.

The UP Museums wish to thank several institutions and schools for their financial donations and contributions, such as St Stithians College, St. Mary's Diocesan School for Girls, Bradley University in the US and the Mzansi Mapungubwe Ballet Production, including the continued support from the US Embassy Grant to the Mapungubwe Archive. Concretising existing partners and forming new partnerships are our continued pursuits. The UP Museums persistently strive to influence, empower others, grow continuously, and serve society with humility.

***Sian Tiley-Nel* Head of UP Museums**

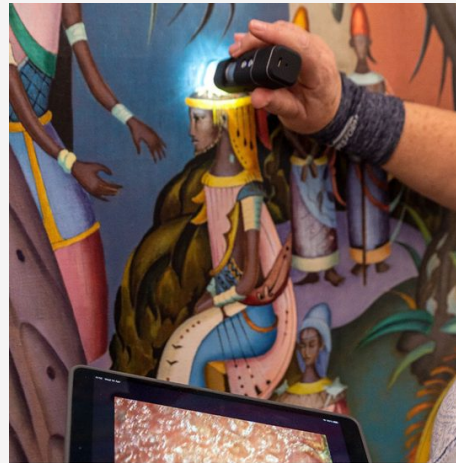
## TOP STORIES

### NEWS

#### **MOVING THE MIGHTY PRELLER AND MONITORING ART CONSERVATION**

*The Discovery of the Sea Route Round Africa*, an arresting 13m oil painting by the Pretoria-born artist Alexis Preller (1911–1975), was safely moved and relocated in April from the foyer of the Javett-UP to the Old Arts Building on Hatfield Campus, under the curatorial care by the University of Pretoria Museums. Like with all artworks that are ageing and deteriorating, the massive Preller is subject to structural instability, deformations such as planar distortion, tears, holes, paint loss, flaking, interlayer sliding, and historical poor handling. Monitoring and intervention by means of art conservation of the Preller has become a key strategic priority, while the UP continues negotiation for the permanent loan for this artwork.

[Read the full story](#)



Art conservation of examination of Alexis Preller's *The Discovery of the Sea Route Round Africa* (1958-1962) prior to its relocation to the UP Museums

## EMBRACING MUSEUM PARTNERS & PARTNERSHIPS

### ***Unspoken - Temporary exhibition coming Soon!***

With partners such as Corobrik, Ceramics SA and the City of Tshwane's Pretoria Art Museum, the UP Museums are bringing a major collective of South African ceramics onto temporary exhibition. The exhibition brings a majority of the iconic Corobrik ceramic collection on display into a single gallery, the largest of its kind held under a single roof. Over 250 ceramics will be on public display and the online launch is the planning process. This rotational exhibition will run for an extended loan period until December 2025.

[Read more](#)

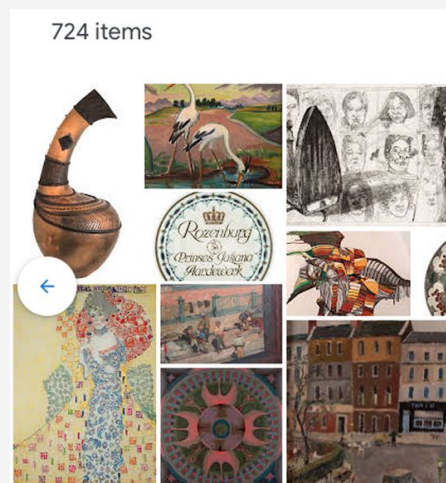
[Read about Corobrik and Ceramics Southern Africa](#)



The UP Museums' partners for the Unspoken Corobrik exhibition: Corobrik, Ceramics Southern Africa and the City of Tshwane's Pretoria Art Museum

### **A future digital and online partnership with the Global Google Institute**

The UP Museum platform on Google Arts & Culture was launched on the 11th of August 2021. A global partnership, which has been a year in the making, was an agreement signed in June 2020 with the UP Museums and the Google Cultural Institute. Google developed free technology to bring collections, exhibitions and archival content from every continent online, from anywhere in the world. This educational, research and fun platform will ensure wider global and



A snapshot view of the UP Museums collection on the Google Arts & Culture platform

online access to the University of Pretoria's prestigious museum collections and archives over the next five years. This exciting Google Arts & Culture platform will increase visibility to art in Africa, provide better visitor experiences, complemented by physical university museum visits and will trigger new visitors and wider and more inclusive access. This online platform is an opportunity that will change how society interacts with university museums.

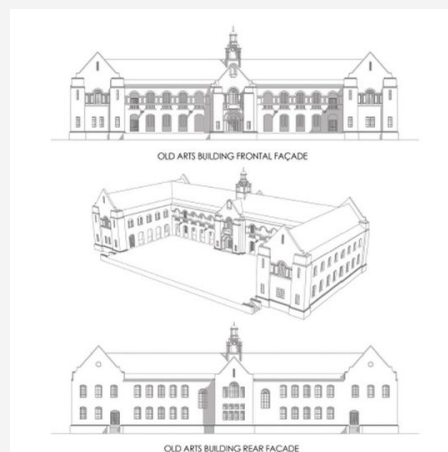
[Read more](#)

[Explore UP Museums on Google Arts & Culture](#)

### **Internal glamorous UP GLAM partners**

GLAM is a UP Museum initiative, which rolls out over 2021, in partnership with Alumni Relations to promote the Gardens, Galleries, Archives and Museums of the University of Pretoria. Partners include inter alia the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Botanical Gardens, the UP Archives, UP Campus Tours, the Department of Library Services and their Special Collections, the Department of Facilities Management and the Department of Architecture.

The GLAM research component with honors students from the Department of Architecture conducted a series of



An architectural design of the Old Arts Building that houses a selection of the UP Museums art and cultural collections

heritage mapping studio projects during the first academic quarter of 2021, which focused on the Hatfield Campus. The Heritage Studio Project is linked to the UP GLAM project by evolving Tukkie Lane as an art axis in partnership with many internal campus stakeholders. The Hatfield campus, besides being an architectural heritage wonder, is an evolving layered heritage and historical landscape that both academia, creative, museum and archival projects will play a critical role in sustaining for the future the cultural and natural landscape of the University of Pretoria.

### Supporting student development in Archaeology

The UP Museums supported the South African Archaeological Student Council (SAASC) and were requested to participate in the June 2021 Online Student Development Conference (SDC). The digital presentation was pre-recorded in May and then released online on 3 June 2021. Titled, “*Public Archaeology: The case of the Mapungubwe collection at the University of Pretoria Museums*”, our speaker Nicole Hoffmann, the UP Museum Interpretation Officer presented an informative lecture and offered museum book prizes to students. The SAASC offered prizes for three categories: the Best Student Poster Presentation, the Best Student Performance for participating in



Nicole Hoffmann, the UP Museums Interpretation Officer representing the UP Museums at the South African Archeological Student Council (SAASC)

conference activities and the Most Engaging Student, who interacted with fellow students and shared information about the conference on social media. All conference proceedings were posted online on the SAASC's YouTube Channel, called *Unlocking Archaeology*: to view the channel please consult the following link:

[Watch the SAASC Student Development Conference on Youtube](#)

## STAFF NEWS

### **Art curator honoured by BMW Collectors Co.**

The UP Museum Art Exhibitions and Galleries Curator, Lelani Nicolaisen, also a Fine Arts Graduate and a young Fine Artist, has been invited to be a part of BMW Group Young Collectors Co., which aims to develop a new generation of art collectors by granting exclusive access to the inner workings of the contemporary market.

Nicolaisen said she is looking forward to being a part of the collective: "I am very excited to take part in such an exceptional collective with over 300 other art enthusiasts. I am also looking forward to the opportunity to learn from South Africa's best art patrons, gallerists and collectors through the BMW Young



Lelani Nicolaisen, curator of exhibitions and galleries at the UP Museums, a participant in the BMW Young Collectors Co.

Collectors' Co. as they aim to strengthen the African art market."

[Read more about the BMW Young Collectors Co.](#)

### **Evidence unmasked: the Fake Rembrandt**

For nearly five decades the University of Pretoria was thought to be the potential custodian of a small oil painting privately donated in 1976 by Jacob van Tilburg. As owner he believed he owned an artwork by the Dutch Master Artist, Rembrandt Van Rijn (1606-1669). The works of Rembrandt dominate global international museums and galleries, as the artist is famous for his uncompromising and realistic portraits during the Renaissance period.

Research led by the UP Museum Collections Curator, Gerard de Kamper took several intensive years and investigative "sherlockism". Provenance and attribution, details of tracking primary historical documents from several global museums, including the Netherlands and the Hague Archives, in combination with the latest scientific techniques with several other partners, have confirmed the work to be a fake, albeit a very good one. The artwork remains unattributed.



A painting (ca.1899) in the UP Museums collection believed to be painted by the Old Master Rembrandt van Rijn, proven to be a fake



[Read more in the published article in The Conversation News](#)

[Access the full academic paper](#)

### **POPI ACT NOTICE**

The long-awaited South African Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act) came into effect on 1 July 2021. Compliance with the POPI Act requires the UP Museums to ensure that those we communicate with are content to continue receiving this electronic newsletter as a subscriber. By staying opted in as a subscriber to news and updates, you will continue to receive information from the University of Pretoria Museums. If you no longer wish to receive information from us, please indicate as such by choosing the unsubscribe option below. If you are content to be kept on the UP Museum mailing list, no action is required.

### **MAKE A CONTRIBUTION**

The University of Pretoria 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 digital engagement, and to maintain our high-quality exhibitions, gallery upgrades and efficient services. 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 following this link:

[Make a contribution to UP Museums](#)

### **Connect with us**

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