

# UP MUSEUMS e-NEWSLETTER

December 2022 ○ ISSUE 8 OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA MUSEUMS



## Message

The year is drawing to a close and as we look back, 2022 was a landmark year for the University of Pretoria (UP) Museums in many ways, driving growth and continuing to be a leader of university museums in South Africa. The museums have to an extent, overcome the challenges of the pandemic in recent years, and are in good recovery mode. The Museum Lekgotla confirmed that the set goals have been successfully achieved under good governance parameters amid a compliance culture. The Museum's robust strategic plan and business plan (2020-2025) continue to provide clarity of the path to greater engagement and impact, both locally and globally. Flexibility, among other forecasting exercises, such as think tank sessions, and thought leadership in the context of modern university museums, has enabled innovative content, available for free or at very low cost, that provides insightful perspectives of university museums operating in a constrained economy within the higher education sector.

This year nonetheless has been successful as results have improved some revenue streams, broader collaborations, and closer curatorial connections between people and museum collections. Engagement has increased 122% in the last two years, since the peak of Covid-19 in 2020. Social media has also increased 56%, with more than 32,133 digital users across all online platforms and more than 17,586 visitors welcomed through our doors this year. The Museums have made a significant impact on the university landscape, reaffirming the relevant, research and value-added role we play through our specialised curatorial, conservation, archival and research services. Some highlights of the year, were undoubtedly the official launch of the Mapungubwe Archive in partnership with the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation with the US Embassy in Pretoria. This was followed by the much anticipated permanent installation of, *The discovery of the sea route circumnavigating Africa* (1959-1962) by Alexis Preller in partnership with Craig McCleneghan Architecture and with due acknowledgement to the Gauteng Department of Infrastructure and Development. Another high point, was the final location of the much-talked-about female figure of *Rain Goddess* by Willem de Sanderes Hendrikz, with thanks to our partner, Nedbank. Included is the highlight of hosting of the DIA launch of the first UP Giving Campaign which proved an immense success.

Other initiatives such as mapping the museum research landscape demonstrate the active contributions of the museum and archive collections, as both fertile research grounds and under-utilised research resources. Presently, the museums contribute directly to 17 academic, transdisciplinary modules, reaching over 509 students as we develop and conceptualise the Museum Research Initiative (MRI). Museum art conservation efforts have been greatly enhanced with the conservation of over 60 artworks. This strategic project prepares us for the major museum exhibition and book launch, titled, *Artology* coming in 2023 in association with Javett-UP.

Looking ahead to 2023, the UP museums will invest more in digital transformation and the use of digital technologies. Optimising communications and rethinking finances, resources, and other investment opportunities will be among the top priorities. Going into next year will not be easy. We must prepare for another year of financial constraint, but remain optimistic about investing in our priorities that strengthen our capabilities, leverage true partnerships, and cultivate our networks. We remain grateful for our anchor of the support from the University of Pretoria, which drives and empowers a passionate and professional team to continue to ensure that all great universities have great museums.



Dr Sian Tiley-Nel Head of UP Museums

## UP MUSEUM CENTENARY ACQUISITION (1922-2022)



*Pangolin and Crocodile Circular Sculpture, 2022*  
Thulani Mntungwa (b.1987) and Jabu Nene (b.1976)  
Ardmore Glazed and Painted Earthenware  
450mm x 160mm

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### SAVE THE DATE

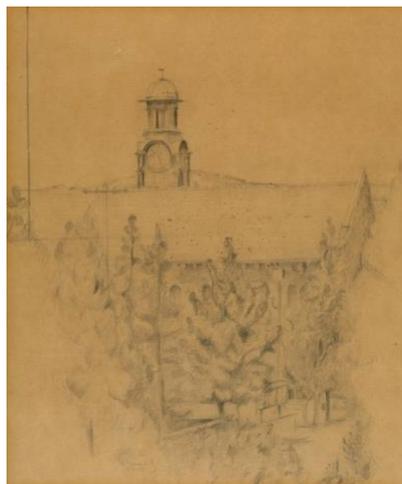
***Artology* Exhibition in association with Javett-UP**  
**20 April 2023 to 31 July 2023**

*Artology* is an exhibition in collaboration with Javett-UP. ‘Artology’ as a term is innovatively conceptualised by the UP Museums and is defined as, ‘The study of art or an object as art. A branch of knowledge or learning strategy applied to curatorship in a university museum context, including practical and theoretical perspectives. A variety of responses and methods to art-making, physical or visceral experiences.’ The UP Museums have an extensive and iconic collection of 20th and 21st-century South African artworks collected by the University of Pretoria over 100 years. The exhibition reflects on the institution’s 100-year-long history of collecting, which first began in 1922. The works in *Artology* showcase art by South African artists working in the past century, and further explore complex histories depicting both past and present narratives that have been developing over time and space. *Artology* highlights processes of university-based museum curation, collecting, research, archiving and conservation. *Artology* is suggestive of overlooked gaps in these processes as a commentary on prolonged collecting and institutional legacies, and questions the universities’ past and present histories. By exhibiting iconic works from the Museums, *Artology* explores the University of Pretoria’s permanent collections, and how this history of collecting speaks to the present.

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## RECENT DONATION

The University of Pretoria Art Collection recently received a bequest from the family of the Pretoria artist John FC Clarke (1946-2021) of two artworks depicting the Old Arts Building. The works are a pastel sketch dated to 1935 by Prof Alfred Reuben Pullen who was an agronomist at the University of Pretoria from 1927 to 1939, and the second artwork is a pencil sketch by the illustrator Brenda Clarke (1917-2012), mother of the artist John Clarke. On behalf of the University of Pretoria, we wish to thank the Clarke family for their in-kind donation.



## RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP

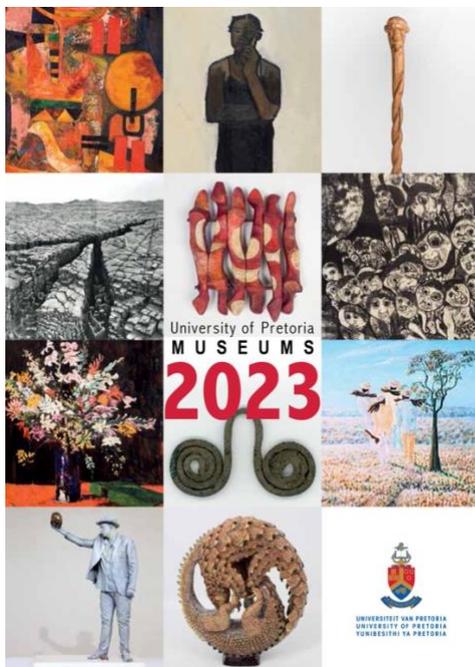
The University of Pretoria Museums in partnership with the Department of Facilities Management have embarked on a campus restoration project of all the large steelworks by the Italian-born South African artist Edoardo Villa. The total number of works earmarked for restoration are sixteen large sculptures that are treated by the company, Thermal Rust for rust removal, reapplying colour and most importantly for preservation purposes.

This restoration project will continue into 2023. The delicate procedure of using a crane, lifting the works from the plinths onto the back of a truck and then returning the works to their installation on campus is a huge feat, particularly when some of the steel works such as *Reclining Figure* (1978) weigh over 2.6 tons.

## UP's FIRST AUGMENTED REALITY ARTWORK



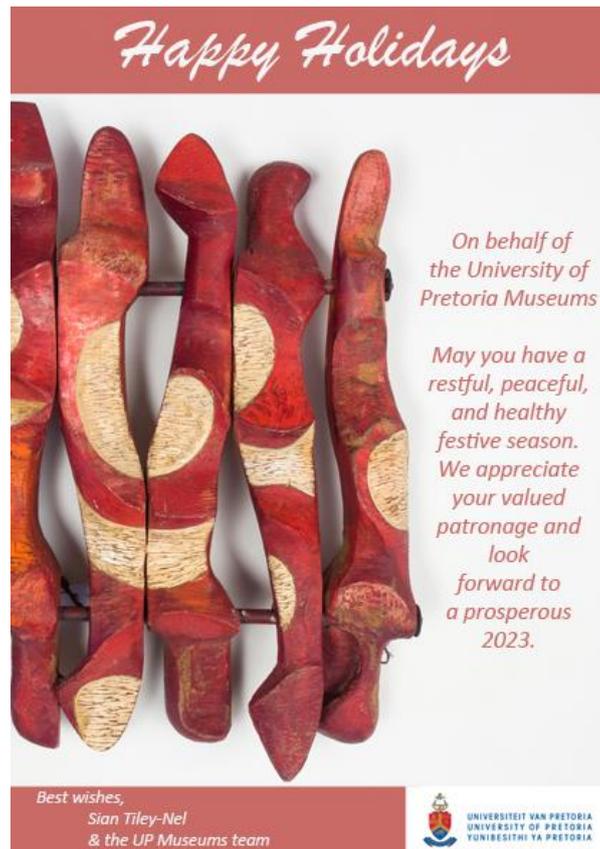
*Animanto Religiosa*, 2022  
Andrea du Plessis (b.1980)  
Oil on canvas with augmented reality  
1160mm x 900mm



## 2023 UP MUSEUM CALENDAR

Order your UP Museum Art Calendar for  
2023 NOW for only R100.

Email: [museums@up.ac.za](mailto:museums@up.ac.za)



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## DONATE TO THE UP MUSEUMS

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 strategy, maintain visibility, and care for the high-quality exhibitions and new gallery upgrades. 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](#)

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