



## UP MUSEUMS e-NEWSLETTER

### September 2020 ISSUE 2

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF UP MUSEUMS

Welcome from going out of Women's Month coming into Heritage Month. We enter almost our sixth month of lockdown, as the effects of the global pandemic is rippling across society. In some cases, as tourism cripples the art and heritage sector. The University of Pretoria (UP) Museums remain closed, yet fortunate that our collections and archives remain, in good condition. The UP Museums, together with our local and global partners, continue to find innovative ways to educate, exchange and experience the 'new normal'. Striking a balance is an enormous opportunity, as Covid-19 has brought about our greatest professional challenge in recent memory.

As university museums, we have had to reframe our purpose in a time of monumental global change. We continue our efforts to provide inspiring and enriching online visitor experiences of our collections, and as far as our resources will allow. One does more with less in some instances. However, this has been an ideal period for reflection, looking inward, rethinking our levels of engagement, as we have never been more connected than ever before. Not planning on what we do, but how we do it and why, is our current and future focus.

The UP Museums have redoubled our core focus to the Art collection and the Mapungubwe collection as a point of elevating these collections more effectively. Boldly, proposing two new permanent galleries, as the [UP Museums sets sights on dedicating a gallery to its art collection](#), as well as a new gallery for the trade glass beads and indigenous beads of the Mapungubwe assemblage. These grand endeavours cannot come at a more difficult time within the current crisis of economic constraints. Nonetheless, they are essential capital as well as creative developments (and investments) as a vision for the future. Full funding still has to be found for this.

Our new strategic plan makes for a creative case with a focus on diversity, equality, and inclusion. We have pivoted to digital curation, different modes of service and operations, delivery with a blended multi-purpose approach to reach more people by doing things differently. As our context has changed, so has our aims been reframed, but we have not lost sight of our objectives, impacts and ambitions. Due to a significantly reduced capacity to physically engage, the pandemic has heightened issues of more accessibility, online content and digital access. Like many museums, we rebuild our finances, to pilot new ways of working, to create time, spaces, redirect resources, trial, fail, learn and improve. It remains critical to support museum staff and our

partners in every effort to succeed and sustain in this ever-changing environment- a chameleon effect of adaptability.

Looking ahead, we have exciting prospects with the Google Cultural Institute bringing our collections, archives and virtual exhibitions onto Google Arts & Culture. Our upgrades to a more modern sculpture gallery phase 1 is near completion. We have also just signed off the museum marketing strategy (2020-2025) and, an exciting partnership with UP Alumni will also be launched soon. Our strategic plan is detailed and courageous. It reflects and reframes our mission and vision to be more socially responsive university museums.

Proactively, we have finished a re-opening Covid-19 strategy for when the UP Museums' doors will re-open to our community and the public. Yet, this will most probably be in January 2021. We are also working closely with our art partner Javett-UP. This initiative is a joint tiered membership offer that will provide for deeper engagement and enjoyment of the collections of the University of Pretoria. Empower- Motivate- Pause- Think- Create and remember all great universities have great museums. Stay safe, savour spring and enjoy Heritage Month. Do continue reading further down for more.

Dr Sian Tiley-Nel

HEAD OF UP MUSEUMS

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#### TOP STORIES

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#### NEWS

##### UP MUSEUMS HOST FIRST UMAC MEETING ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

UMAC is the international committee for university museums and collections of the International Council of Museums (ICOM). On 23 June, the University of Pretoria Museums hosted Dr Marta Lourenço from the University of Lisbon in Portugal, President of UMAC to address the online cohort of museum professionals and practitioners from eight universities in South Africa.



This first meeting supported by ICOM-SA ([ICOM South Africa](#)) was attended by 33 representatives from the University of Pretoria, University of the Witwatersrand, North West University, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, Rhodes University and the University of South Africa. This first forum founded by the UP Museums hopes to share university museums and collections, as a means of holding, curating and conserving collections, stimulating exchanges and providing a collective South Africa university resource for professionals and practitioners. Read more at [UP Museums host the first UMAC-SA meeting on the continent](#).

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## STUDENT NEWS

### STUDENTS WIN UP MUSEUM'S BOOK AWARD FOR BEST IN HERITAGE & CULTURAL TOURISM

Annually, over the past decade the University of Pretoria Museums has support the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at its annual Awards ceremony. The prizes are presented each year, for honours students in Heritage and Cultural Tourism, as part of an ongoing partnership between the UP Museums and the Department in supporting the Honours programme for UP Campus Tours (UPCT).



This year has been particularly challenging, as the UP Museums were closed and no tours were offered as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and tourism has had a devastating effect on the tourism industry. Proactively, UP Campus Tours moved their tours onto a digital online offering UP Virtual Campus Tours – UPVCT. The customised tours use an online platform to take interested guests on an interactive tour of the University. These tours are directly linked to their academic programme forming an integral part of their curricula for their Honours year in Heritage and Cultural Tourism. This year, the Department is having its first virtual Awards ceremony. The UP Museums sponsor book prizes to each of the winning recipients. This is in the form of museum publications and exhibition catalogues to the value of R800.

The award for 2020 went to Danolien van den Berg for best Honours research project and best Campus Tours tourist guide, and Steven Moteno for the Honours merit award. The UP Museums support the efforts of all the UP Campus Tours group for 2020 and by providing this museum book reward is a small contribution acknowledging their commitment, hard work and success.

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## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH NEWS

### MUSEUM'S HOST INTERNSHIP FOR ART COLLECTION AND RESEARCH IN ART CONSERVATION

The University of Pretoria Museums highlight one of the contributions they make to the academic programme. In this case, to art conservation and the internship that the UP Museum's annually take on board to provide postgraduate students experiential research using artworks and items selected from the museum collections and archives.



Salomé le Roux is a master's student in MSoc Sci Tangible Heritage Conservation, a program in the School of Arts in the Faculty of Humanities. Her proposed study is titled, "*A technical survey of Lucky Madlo Sibiya's (1942-1999) materials and techniques employed in his carved and painted wood panel artworks.*" Early into her study, it became evident that there are no studies on the techniques and materials used by modern black South African artists. Accounts of what techniques and choices of materials they used are based on perception and 'guess work', and not on scientific investigation.

For her study, Salomé chose the South African artist and sculptor, Lucky Madlo Sibiya (1942-1999). The University of Pretoria has four works by this artist, many of which due to their age, will require intervention and conservation at some point in their lifetime. The four works are: *A Family Group* – diptych (1987); *Doorknob* (1987); *Sun Man* (1995); and *Traditional Musicians* (1996) (on permanent loan from Sanlam).

To understand the technicality of Sibiya's artworks and to identify the materials used by the artist, the study required an art conservation and technical art history perspective. Supporting her research on the four artworks, complimented by primary records in the Art Archive, is a short internship with the Art Conservator, Sandra Markgraaf. The internship in art conservation aims for the student to gain broader knowledge of art materials, and to better understand and identify materials and techniques used in art conservation. Covered during the internship is the investigation of polychrome techniques and materials – thus, supports, binding mediums, pigments, and varnishes. Other aspects such as, drying and curing of oils and grounds, cellulose structures, mechanical properties, ageing, damage, and deterioration is included.

The active use of the museum art collection by postgraduate students is encouraged and the opportunity to host a variety of internships within the institution, particularly within the niche of art conservation which is considered a scarce skill, is fostered. Salomé le Roux will complete her short internship with the UP Museums before the end of her academic year in October and next year continues her main internship at Yale University, New Haven, with Dr Aniko Bezur at the Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage. The museum art conservator, Sandra Markgraaf also lectures the introduction on the conservation of polychrome surfaces module in the Master's program for Tangible Heritage Conservation.



## LEARNER ENGAGEMENT NEWS

### VIRTUAL MAPUNGUBWE TALK FOR CAPE TOWN SCHOOL

Despite the challenges of lockdown learning and the extraordinary lengths that teachers have gone to continue the learning curriculum, one Cape Town school is commended for going the extra mile. Teacher Mr Donovan Henry from the Herzlia Weizmann Primary School in Cape Town contacted the UP Museums for an online lesson. Our Interpretive Officer, Nicole Hoffmann, offered a lesson tailored to the Mapungubwe Grade 6 school curriculum. In addition, she answered questions that the learners had regarding the archaeology and history of the Mapungubwe collection.

The online lesson was very well-received, so much so that the UP Museum's received 36 individual emails from learners expressing their gratitude, interest in the subject and detailing facts they found fascinating. The teacher, Mr Donovan Henry, is commended for his innovative approach to make his online classes worthwhile for the learners and we are fortunate that they are "virtual" repeat visitors. The comment below from one of the learners expresses their gratitude: "Thank you for teaching us about Mapungubwe. I found your talk very interesting and I learnt a lot from it. Here are a few things I particularly enjoyed: I found it very interesting that they traded with other countries so far away from them without any technology. I also found it amazing that they crafted golden animals for the graves. I also think the way they ruled their kingdom was a very modern way at that time and that Mapungubwe was the first kingdom in southern Africa."

More schools are welcome to contact the UP Museums ([museums@up.ac.za](mailto:museums@up.ac.za)) to make use of this unique online learning an interesting educational offer, to engage their Grade 6 pupils in a uniquely South African heritage experience.

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## STAFF FEATURE

### MEET THE MUSEUM'S NEW SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR

Katlego Thoriso Moatshe serves as the new Senior Administrative Officer for the University of Pretoria Museums and PA to the Head of the UP Museums. He is a proud UP Graduate with a BCom Business Management Degree and was a Top-Five Finisher for Strategic Management. His studies introduced him to marketing management, financial management, business law, business ethics and financial accounting.



Katlego joined the UP Museums in 2019, but prior to that, was contracted to the former Department of UP Arts in July 2018. Katlego is also the Meetings Officer for the Museum Management Committee, Museum Committee, Art Committee and Heritage Committee. To find out more about his professional aspirations and experiences working with the UP Museums and his daily engagement with the institution's heritage and art collections, Nicole Hoffmann in charge of Museum Interpretation challenged him to a one-on-one colleague interview.

**Tell us more about your background and upbringing:** I was born in Mafikeng but grew up and went to school in Johannesburg, had a nice childhood. Lots of fun and mischief like any young boy and I am the oldest of two boys.

**Where and what did you study and why did you choose that field?** I studied at the University of Pretoria and did a BCom Business Management. I chose UP because it was the top Commerce University at the time and I loved analysing the different functions that go into a business from marketing, human resources to finance and how they all play a critical role in a business selling a product or service to society.

**What do you enjoy most about your work at the UP Museums?** I enjoy the different levers that go into running a Museum environment which is different to any other environment I have worked in. Museums are fast-paced, customer-facing, community-focused institutions that cultivate valuable skills for almost any industry. Also Museums and galleries aren't just laid back, care-free organisations, they are businesses and need to be managed and run effectively. Consequently, museum institutions rely on the hard work of administrators, gallery managers, museum exhibition officers, exhibition designers and curators which means that people that work in a museum environment end up juggling lots of responsibilities and sometimes even multiple roles which is fun.

**What do you find challenging within the museum, art and heritage world within UP?** As a person working in a museum environment, we often work within tight budgets. This poses a number of challenges as there is so much to do with very little available. The silver lining to this challenge is that it boosts skills in resourcefulness and maximizing value for money.

**What has your experience been like during the Lockdown period?** It has been interesting and also frustrating. It has been a huge adjustment being away from Campus, as a large part of me enjoying my job is actually being on campus, mingling with the rest of the team etc. It's interesting, because I have had to look at myself working from home and maintain the discipline of waking up on time and keeping up with my work, a test of my self-discipline.

**What do you do in your free time or what do you enjoy beyond the work environment?** Reading, studying, starting to exercise and watching documentaries.

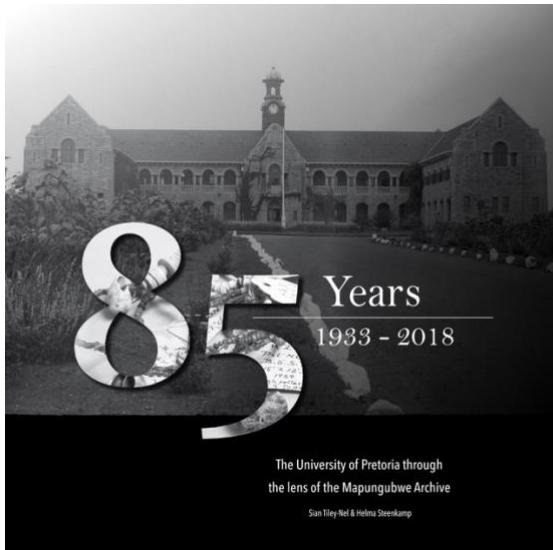
**Tell us something that few know about you.** I love reading books on Geopolitics, particularly the post-World War 2 era.

**Who has inspired you and driven you to excel?** My parents, they always believed in me, so you always want to reward the faith shown by the people who believe in your abilities.

**What has been your overall experience working at UP?** Great, I come from a corporate environment and this is a welcome change. It is much less stressful, but also still pursues excellence as recently shown by the University being number 1 in SA and the Continent.

**What are your future aspirations?** To be the best person I can be in every area of my life, be a blessing to humanity and leave a legacy for future generations to go further than me.

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## MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS

### BOOK NOOK

For Heritage Month, we feature an apt commemorative publication on the Mapungubwe Archive, titled *Eighty-Five Years*, authored by Sian Tiley-Nel and Helma Steenkamp. The foreword is eloquently written by Prof Karen Harris, Head of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies and the Director of the University of Pretoria Archives. This unique photographic memoir presents 103 images only in monochrome and reflects upon the extraordinary journey from when the University of Pretoria first acquired the Mapungubwe Collection in 1933.

The Mapungubwe archive is a rich resource for research and provides a tangible space that can be remembered, recreated, reimagined and reforged as part of the institutional memory bank and heritage of the University of Pretoria. Quoting, South Africa's most famous archival activist, Verne Harris, "The archival record is a fragile thing, an enchanted thing... like repositories of memory, it is an extraordinary creation of remembering, forgetting and imagining".

Recent titles cover the spectrum of coffee-table quality exhibition catalogues and detail some of the most significant works in the museum collections that have been [published](#) over the past decade. For the month of September the UP Museums are offering subscribers 20% off all Mapungubwe Collection publications. E-mail us for further information and to place your order.

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## UP MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

### TWO NEW ACQUISITIONS

The University of Pretoria is in an auspicious position to have an active annual acquisition art programme. The UP Art Committee purchases works from both established and upcoming South African artists. This month, we share two of our latest acquisitions by the UP Art committee, which are artworks by Philiswa Lila and Johannes Maswanganyi. The new acquisitions will eventually be publicly exhibited within the museum galleries. These works are permanently accessioned into the University of Pretoria's art collection.

#### ***Simangele*, 2019**

Philiswa Lila (b 1988)  
Bead, string and wood  
1600mm x 670mm

The first artwork, *Simangele* (2019) by Philiswa Lila, is a work made entirely out of beads. The artwork is meant to be displayed hanging down from the ceiling almost reaching the floor. The UP Museums curator Lelani Nicolaisen asked Lila a few questions about her work being acquired by the University of Pretoria, as well as of her experience of the lockdown situation.



According to Lila, the artwork *Simangele* (2019) is included in a body of work influenced by women who have influenced and played a critical role in her life. For Lila, these are "woman who have raised me, women who showed they are independent at the expense of being ridiculed for their choices and women who understood that their gendered role is not less than that of a man." Lila continues that "Simangele is the name of my late aunt. This artwork is a dedication to her life. It is, therefore important for Lila that the women in her family, culture and community receive the special attention they deserve and are represented within her work."

Lila is excited about her work being included in the University's collection. She told Nicolaisen that "It feels really amazing to have my work in the UP new acquisitions. I appreciate the support of collectors, and for a university to see the importance of my practice is a vision I've always had in terms of seeing my work in an academic setting and a space where students have the opportunity to interact with art." The UP Museums are also excited to have Lila's work exhibited and for the public to view *Simangele* in the Edoardo Villa Museum and Sculpture Gallery early next year.

Many artists have been affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions of the national lockdown. We accordingly asked Lila how she was impacted by the national lockdown due to COVID-19. According to Lila, the lockdown did not have an impact on her practice in terms of making art. Most of the artist's time was spent in her "... studio producing artworks, experimenting, thinking and writing. The first three months of lockdown felt like an artist residency, only without a new city or the experience of another place, culture, people and spaces [laugh]. Not having access to travelling, galleries, museums, meeting friends and all of that is starting

to feel like a need at this point in time but I have to think about my health first, and the safety of my family and friends too."

In her work, Lila explores the physical, mental and spiritual spaces of her own experiences by exploring methods of remembering these as stories. Lila is particularly interested in memory histories and personal identities. The artist is also influenced by the nuances of language as she explores individual experiences within the framework of culture, mainly in isiXhosa, while also keeping in mind that there is an interconnectedness within the different cultures of South Africa. The notion of language in her work is explored within the meaning and experiences of individualism, especially concerning the physical and emotional senses that are related to humans and animals.

Philiswa Lila is a multimedia artist and scholar based in Pretoria, South Africa. She has a B-Tech degree in Fine and Applied Art (Tshwane University of Technology), an Honours degree in Curatorship (University of Cape Town) and a Masters in Art History (Rhodes University). Lila works across disciplines like painting, drawing, bead sculpture, performance and writing. In her practice she explores different mediums to create artworks that reflect elements of animal skin (sheep, goat and cow), beading, wood, paper and video. In 2019, Philiswa completed a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, France after winning the prestigious Absa L'Atelier Gerard Sekoto Award in 2018. In 2020, the Absa Gallery hosted her well received debut solo exhibition Skin, Bone, Fire: The First Album, which then toured to various venues in South Africa in association with Alliance Francaise. Dr Esther Mahlangu selected Philiswa as her 'artist to watch' for the 2019 SEED auction. Philiswa Lila is represented by the Melrose gallery. Recent projects include: RMB Turbine art Fair special projects Tactile Visions – Woven.

Read more about the artwork *Simangele* in our [Artwork 4 the week](#) blog.



**Leopard attacking a man**, ca. 1990

Johannes Maswanganyi (b 1949)

Carved and painted wood

1500mm x 850mm x 600mm

Johannes Maswanganyi was born in 1949 in Msengi, near Giyani in the Limpopo Province. He does not have any formal institutional art training and learnt the method of carving by observing his father creating functional and everyday wooden utensils. His first exhibition was in 1985, where he adapted storage containers and other day to day objects into artworks. From the late 1980s and early 1990s, Maswanganyi began to create more complex compositions, using various pieces of wood to incorporate multiple figures and to include the subject of the landscape. As an artist, he employs a bold use of colour to wood and his works are easily recognisable as portrait depictions of local and political leaders. In 1995, he participated in the Tributaries exhibition held in Munich, Germany.

Maswanganyi's artworks are located in major collections such as the Iziko SA National Gallery, Cape Town; Durban Art Gallery; University of the Witwatersrand; Johannesburg Art Gallery; Sanlam Art Collection, Bellville, Cape and now the University of Pretoria Art Collection. *Leopard attacking a man* (ca. 1990) was purchased by

the University of Pretoria Art committee in 2020 from Strauss & Co Auctioneers as a contemporary addition to the museum sculpture collection.

Read more about the artwork *Leopard attacking a man* in our [Artwork 4 the week](#) blog.

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Please visit our UP Museums [webpage](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages to explore more news and activities.