

NEWS RELEASE

Javett-UP's Expansive Exhibition Connects 88 Artists in Visual Dialogue



The Altar is part of the "One and the Many" exhibition and contains art about religion, spirituality and secular icons – Photo credit: Anthea Pokroy

PRETORIA - The latest exhibition at the [Javett Art Centre](#) at the University of Pretoria (UP), is different to most other art shows.

Six artists were invited to take part. Their artworks range from a large red sail, weighted at the bottom with salt packs, that extends across all three floors of the building; to opulent paintings of the late business mogul, Richard Maponya and his wife; and a bulbous, inflatable, gold-coloured sculpture filled with air.

But the exhibition, titled [One and the Many](#), is not just about the work of these invited artists. Their art comments on the work of 82 other artists on show, selected from three collections housed at Javett-UP, and the effect is an extraordinary conversation.

The invited artists are Stephané E Conradie, Goldendean, Ledelle Moe, Abdus Salaam, Inga Somdyala and Katlego Tlabela. The three collections they have been invited to comment on with their art are from the South32 (formerly

Gencor), Javett Family and the Bongi Dhlomo collections, which include works by the likes of Dumile Feni, Marlene Dumas, Gerard Sekoto, William Kentridge, and Jane Alexander.

Although visitors will have the chance to attend walkabouts where they can find out more, even if you don't know which works are by the invited artists and which are from the collections, it does not detract from the experience.

One and the Many is intense and exhilarating. Whether it is the section called The Altar, which places art about religion, spirituality and secular icons on a low stage; the part titled The Garden, which features art exploring the outdoors; or Embrace, which looks at warm, unwanted and absent embraces, the conversation relies entirely on the visual display, and viewers' experiences of it.

The focus is on the art, not wordy explanations. Ultimately the exhibition is a story, with the art forming the characters, the setting, the plot and the themes. And the writer of this story is its curator, [Storm Janse van Rensburg](#).

"Sometimes we have very narrow ways, restricted ways, of telling these stories. How can we group things, maybe slightly differently than they might have been done before, and I'm not talking about breaking new ground, but can we look maybe at more emotive connections between things for stories to emerge?" he said.

The exhibition's title One and the Many refers to the individual in relation to others, what Janse van Rensburg said can be seen "from an African humanist perspective, of I am because of you".

He refers to the exhibition as "weaving narratives". These narratives, or stories, are divided into three main ideas, or what the exhibition names as chapters, two of which are further split into three sections, and the effect is almost like seven exhibitions packed into one. Some of the artworks from the collections have not been seen in public for years, and some of the perhaps more familiar works are given a fresh perspective through the way Janse van Rensburg has juxtaposed them.

At One and the Many's official opening in July, Acting CEO, Jackie Rens, announced Janse van Rensburg as Javett-UP's new interim curatorial director. The University of Pretoria's registrar and Javett-UP board member, Professor Caroline Nicholson, introduced him as "the man of the moment". This is an apt badge of honour. Janse van Rensburg, whose national and international experience includes being senior curator at Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art in Cape Town, is the visionary behind One and the Many.

Without his playful articulation in selecting and placing works from the Javett-UP collections, and his knowledge and insight into contemporary South African art to invite such a diverse and cutting-edge group of artists to comment on the artworks, One and the Many would not have the same impact. "He brings exactly the kind of energy and vision that the Javett-UP is looking for as we enter this new chapter," said Rens.

Janse van Rensburg extended an invitation to guests. "I invite you to look at these objects and these artworks and listen to what they're telling you. I invite you to make your own connections. Question carefully, listen and look, and be open to what the images and artworks here are telling us," he said.

The different sections of One and the Many are on view for varying durations.

Chapter 3, called Colossal Time, which includes the works of two of the invited artists – two large concrete sculptures by Moe and a video by Salaam with its haunting soundscape – closes in early 2026.

Chapter 2, which looks into the politics of image-making, histories and forms of embrace through sections titled Image Worlds/World Images, Tswelopele, and Embrace, and features the work of invited artists Tlabela, Conradie and Goldendean, is on until next year.

Chapter 1 on the ground floor of the building, which includes the sections, the Altar, Fractured Forms - about how fragments can lead to new forms - and The Garden, and features the site-specific work of invited artist, Somdyala,

is on show for two years. The Australian High Commission has provided funding for educational resources to accompany this Living School part of the exhibition.

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa. Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the [Gordon Institute of Business Science](#) (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a [Faculty of Veterinary Science](#), which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The [2025 Times Higher Education \(THE\) Impact Rankings](#) placed UP 7th globally for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17: Partnerships for the Goals, recognising the University's leadership in building impactful global collaborations. UP also ranked 41st in the world and 1st in Africa and South Africa for SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and maintained its position as the second-highest ranked university overall in both Africa and South Africa.

The 2025 Times Higher Education subject rankings placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of [Accounting](#) and [Finance](#); [Architecture](#); [Electrical and Electronic Engineering](#); Law; Sport Science; and Veterinary Science. UP's Faculty of Law has been ranked as the top law school in Africa for a remarkable eighth consecutive year.

In the [2025 QS World University Subject Rankings](#), UP is ranked in the top 100 in the world in Mineral & Mining Engineering (41), Veterinary Science (51–60), and Development Studies (51–100). Six UP subjects are ranked No. 1 in South Africa: Mechanical Engineering, Veterinary Science, Mathematics, Accounting & Finance, Business & Management Studies, and Economics & Econometrics.

For more information, please go to www.up.ac.za

ABOUT JAVETT-UP

The Javett-UP is a partnership between the University of Pretoria and the Javett Foundation. Both share a firm belief in the emancipatory potential of the arts in society through multidisciplinary curatorial and pedagogic initiatives. With one foot firmly rooted in academia, and the other imbedded in the public, Javett-UP critically responds to histories of Africa's creative outputs and future aspirations of the continent and the diaspora.

Central to Javett-UP is our commitment to continue de-colonial dialogues that respond to the present whilst considering the historical and the future implications of our political and social actions. Javett-UP is committed to

sustained critical enquiries where activities of writers, researchers, advocacy groups, historians, political scientists, musicians, etc. can intersect.

For more information, please go to javettup.com