



UMPTEN IMPOSSIBLE THINGS BEFORE BREAKFAST

RECENT WORKS BY STAFF IN THE FACULTY OF ART, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE AT UJ

Neil Badenhorst, Karin Basel, Kim Berman, Bevan de Wet, Bronwen Findlay
Gordon Froud, Cameron Harris, Alison Kearney, Paigen Kotze,
Mariapaola McGurk, Sachin Narain, Shonisani Netshia, Alexa Pienaar,
David Paton, Deirdre Pretorius, Landi Raubenheimer,
Ruth Sacks, Minnette Vári, Diane Victor, Colleen Winter.

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RECENT WORKS BY STAFF IN THE FACULTY OF ART, DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE AT UJ

This exhibition of recent works by staff from the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (and some collaborators from other universities), in response to the quote from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, (1865) in which the Queen exclaims,

"Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

In the book, Alice follows her curiosity, and finds herself in several unexpected situations. Her determination and willingness to follow the process without knowing the end point, is a characteristic that artist-scholars share with Alice. The artworks on this exhibition highlight the belief in the impossible that attends the creative process, which is essentially about making the impossible tangible. Working across a range of media and topics, the artworks foreground the absurd, the improbable, playfulness, making as thinking, and art as a means to respond to the world around us. The works therefore embody the spirit of curiosity and uncertainty of *Alice in Wonderland*, without directly referring to the text. Underlying all of this, is also a tongue-in-cheek celebration of how the participating artist-scholars have managed the impossible: to make artworks, despite our truly impossible teaching commitments. The exhibition is testament to our commitment to artmaking, even if it means making art before breakfast (as many of us do).



NEIL BADENHORST

Neil Badenhorst (b. 1995) is an award-winning illustrator and multidisciplinary artist based in Johannesburg, South Africa. Badenhorst is currently studying towards his PhD in Art and Design, focusing on collaborative worldbuilding in illustration as a rite of passage for queer experience.

Badenhorst's practice extends into illustration, painting, collage, digital media and more recently installation art. Badenhorst's practice is largely concerned with themes such as liminality, queer experience, imaginary space and narrative. Badenhorst's creative process relies heavily on intuition, and his work attempts to map out the eternally expanding internal landscape and visions of the fantastic, in order to better comprehend 'real' experiences and surroundings. Badenhorst works full-time as a lecturer at the University of Johannesburg, in the Graphic Design department, and practices as an illustrator and artist.





Neil Badenhorst, *Everything That Rises*, Acrylic, marker and pen on Fabriano paper, 21 x 30cm, 2023, Framed



Neil Badenhorst, *Theres A Small Hotel*, Acrylic and pen on Fabriano paper, 17.5 x 17.5cm, 2023, Framed

Both of these artworks explore “agential identity” (Dembroff & Saint-Croix 2019) in relation to queer experience. Agential identity refers to the relationship between the various layers of queer identity that an individual might possess: how they self-identify, and what parts of their queer identity they might choose to share with others, and how these intersect, and how self-identity changes once parts of one’s identity have been shared with others from various walks of life. These pieces are process-based, meaning that the subject matter being grappled with is being continuously reflected on during the process of creating the artworks, a process that relies heavily on intuition.



Neil Badenhorst, *symphonia IX (my wait is u)*, Digital media, acrylic, tape, and pencil on archival paper, 52 x 60cm, Framed

symphonia IX (my wait is u) grapples with experience of 'dating' as a queer person. Coming out as queer often results in people engaging with others romantically or sexually at a later stage than their cis-gender or heterosexual peers. The piece reflects on the development and disruption of agential identity throughout this process. The second piece, *Everything That Rises*, is an expression of queer grief at the lack of a visual vocabulary that queer people have (or do not have) when it comes to traditional, community-driven rites of passage which tend to be constructed with the cis-gendered, heterosexual individual in mind.

KARIN BASEL

Karin Basel works with a variety of materials, such as thread, wire, paper, and found objects to create artist books or book-like objects. Through cutting, sewing, binding, and overlaying paper, she explores the material and experiential relationship between 'things', both physical and psychological. The visual field that results produces an intricate web of relationships between shape and space, surface and depth, texture, form, and shadow, that both invites and frustrates our ability to 'know' what we see. That is, to secure our knowledge through sight. The complex interlacing of experiences and perceptions both abstracts and metaphorises that nothing and no-thing exists in isolation. Instead, every element is in relation, or rather, in multiple temporal, spatial, tactile, and material relations of complexity intricately connected and entwined. Although at first glance the scopic landscape appears stable as if caught in repeated patterns of cut-outs, the repetitions differentiate so that they are at once dynamic, disordering and displacing, and as such, performatively diffract the layers of experiences and histories through which we construct and reconstruct our sense of reality. We perceive the world through the layers of our past experiences, which are then entangled with the intricate interplay of all the events which currently surround us to shapes an interconnected reality.

The objects she makes serve as portals into this interconnectedness, offering glimpses into the layers and webs of reality. The books she makes unfold a narrative that can be traversed from front to back and back to front, blurring the boundaries between beginning and end.





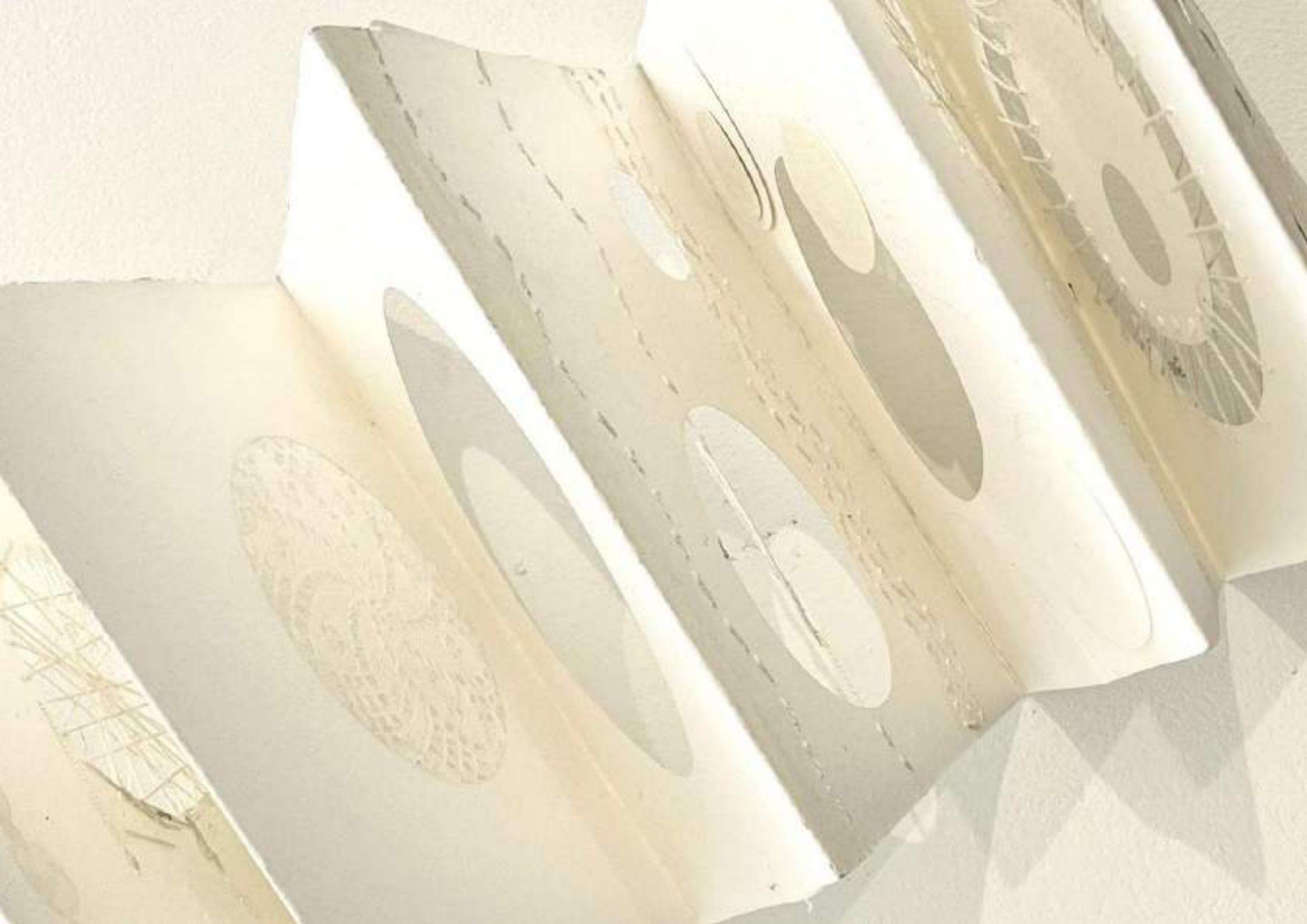
Karin Basel, *Diffraction I*, Paper, thread, glass and wood, 25 x 25cm, 2024

(The above images show the view of both sides, as the work is between two sheets of glass.)

According to classical physics, diffraction is a physical phenomenon that comes into being when a multitude of waves encounter an obstacle upon their path, and/or when these waves themselves overlap. Waves in fact always already overlap and extend into one another, so even in the classical rendering, when pushed to an extreme, “we can understand diffraction patterns – as patterns of difference that make a difference – to be the fundamental constituents that make up the world” (Barad, 2007, p.72). Seen through the perspective of quantum physics, however, we are invited to think about the inherent diffractivity of sets of waves, of single waves, and of single particles, under the right (experimental) conditions (Diffraction & Reading Diffractively Evelien Geerts & Iris van der Tuin, 27 JULY 2016)



Karin Basel, *Diffraction II*, Paper and thread, Constantina, 14.5 x 125cm, 2024



KIM BERMAN

Kim Berman is Professor in Visual Art at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and the co-founder and Executive Director of Artist Proof Studio. She has lectured and exhibited widely and is an NRF rated researcher. She is committed to engaging arts for social change through her activism and teaching. Her book, *Finding Voice: A visual approach to engaging change* values the notion of voice as key to agency and the responsibility to act. She believes that the arts are a powerful medium to challenge injustice. Her role as an educator embeds the active promotion of creativity, reflexivity, engagement and imagination.

Statement

Clearing out my garage, I found my rusted 2m plates from the 2006 Sasol Wax awards series *Mourning our Future* (2006) that formed part of an exhibition on *Reclaiming Lives* at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In thinking about what impossible things I could do before breakfast to make a work for the Staff exhibition, I borrowed the concept of *Democracy at the Threshold* for a portfolio I was co-organising with a USA printmaking partner to commemorate this threshold voting year for the USA and SA.

Rusted plates of dying sunflowers in dialogue with the disappearing beauty of a smoky grass fire from my hike along the Wild coast, seem like an apt merging of impossible paradoxes. We live daily with impossible scenarios of destruction, despair and the hope and agency of repair.





Kim Berman, *Rusted Ghosts: Democracy at the Threshold 1*, Recycled rusted steel etching, dry point, monoprint with white ink overlay, 38 x 50cm, 2024, Framed



Kim Berman, *Rusted Ghosts: Democracy at the Threshold 2*, Recycled rusted steel etching, dry point, monoprint with white ink overlay, 38 x 50cm, 2024, Framed



Kim Berman, *Rusted Ghosts: Democracy at the Threshold 3*, Recycled rusted steel etching, dry point, monoprint with white ink overlay, 38 x 50cm, 2024, Framed



BEVAN DE WET

Bevan de Wet (b.1985) is an artist and printmaker based in Johannesburg. He graduated with a BFA with distinction from Rhodes University in 2008. From 2011-2016, de Wet worked at the Artist Proof Studio in Johannesburg as a professional print technician, collaborator, and academic facilitator. In 2016 he founded his own print studio called Eleven Editions, where he also collaborates with other artists and publishes various projects. De Wet regularly works with Phumani Archive Mill, a paper-making research unit at the University of Johannesburg, where he produces his handmade paper work. De Wet works primarily with paper: with a focus on etching, relief printing, papermaking, drawing and installation.

De Wet has exhibited extensively, both locally and internationally, held 6 solo exhibitions and has exhibited numerous times on the Turbine Art Fair, FNB Joburg Art Fair, and the CT Art Fair. The artist's work is held in a number of private and public collections including The Wits Art Museum, Nirox Foundation, Amazon, the South African Embassy in Washington DC, Art Bank Collection South Africa, MOAD Museum of African Design, Exxaro, and the Ahmanson Foundation in Los Angeles.

De Wet's awards include: the Ampersand Foundation Fellowship (New York residency 2013); the Thami Mnyele Art on Paper award 2013; the ABSA L'Atelier Merit Award 2014 (Sylt Foundation residency, Germany); the ImpAct Award for Visual Art from the Arts and Culture Trust 2014; and the Cill Rialaig Artists Residency in Ireland 2017.





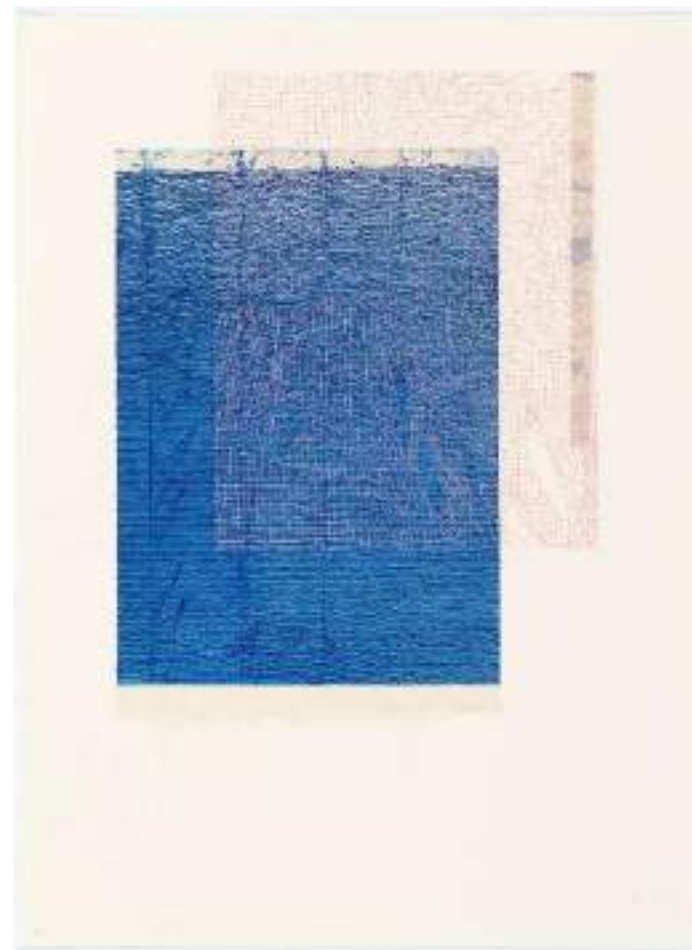
Bevan de Wet, *Terra (Neon Ruin I)*, etching, watercolour, embossing and chine-collé, 35 x 48cm, 2024, Framed



Bevan de Wet, *Terra (Neon Ruin II)*, etching, watercolour, embossing and chine-collé, 35 x 48cm, 2024, Framed



Bevan de Wet, *Terra (Neon Ruin III)*, etching, watercolour, embossing and chine-collé, 35 x 48cm, 2024, Framed



Bevan de Wet, *Terra (Neon Ruin IV)*, etching with chine-collé, 35 x 48cm, 2024, Framed

BRONWEN FINDLAY

My first solo exhibition was in 1977 and the last in 2020. During the years in between and after I have used my time to teach, paint, make prints, work on mosaic commissions, also to go on adventures and to be at home – all the time collecting source material for my work.

I am inspired by the things I see and do.





Bronwen Findlay, *Gannet*, Oil on canvas, 20.5 x 20.5cm, 2024

Bronwen Findlay, *Eye of Gannet I*, Oil on canvas, 10 x 10cm, 2024

Bronwen Findlay, *Eye of Gannet II*, Oil on canvas, 10 x 10cm, 2024



Bronwen Findlay, *Gaggle of Birds and Flowers 1- 9*, Oil on canvas, 25.5 x 20.5cm each, 20.5 x 20.5cm, 2024

GORDON FROUD

Gordon Froud has been actively involved in the South African and international art world as artist, educator, curator and gallerist for more than 30 years. He has shown on hundreds of solo and group shows. Froud graduated with a BA (FA) Hons from the University of Witwatersrand, and a master's degree from the University of Johannesburg, where he heads the department as a senior lecturer. He has curated numerous group exhibitions that have travelled the country. He regularly shows on more than 20 exhibitions a year including showing in recent years in Washington, Holland and Paris. He was selected as the first 'Site – Specific' artist in Residence at Plettenberg Bay for 2012 and again for 2013 as a participating artist in the 'Site – Specific' land art Biennale. Three sculptures were selected for an exhibition of South African Sculpture in the Hague in May 2012, one of which was acquired by the SA Embassy there. He showed at Nirox Sculpture Park and at Stellenbosch Botanical Gardens as part of the 'Heavy Metal' outdoor Sculpture exhibition in 2013 and 2014. He is represented in many public and private collections. Froud curated 2 shows of SA contemporary Art to Appalachian State University, North Carolina and the Beijing Biennale 2015 which were also shown at Pretoria Art Museum and University of Johannesburg Art gallery. His two- year cycle of work, a solo show of more than 150 new works, was showcased at the Standard Bank gallery from April to June 2018 as Harmonia: Sacred Geometry, pattern of existence. This show travelled to various major South African galleries and museums in 2018 and 2019. Froud regularly shows on more than 25 shows a year. He launched his 'Stokvel' Gallery as an artist run space in February 2021.





Gordon Froud, *Balancing, teetering or dancing...After Hieronymus Bosch*, Found objects reworks (brass), 89 x 58 x 58cm, 2024

As head of department, I often feel like I am balancing on top of a spinning world. Objects, ideas, and issues gravitating toward me at high speed. This can be exhilarating or terrifying depending on the moment. I regularly must answer umpteen emails, stamp and sign umpteen forms, read umpteen documents and policies before I even get to having a cup of tea in the morning, let alone before breakfast. This assemblage work is loosely based on an image by Hieronymus Bosch found in *The temptation of St Anthony*. In the same way as Bosch cobbled together images human, animal and other, my assemblage process makes something new from found objects.

Gallery 2





CAMERON HARRIS

Dr Cameron Harris

Senior Lecturer, Wits School of Arts Music Department

Cameron Harris studied composition at the Universities of Edinburgh, Manchester and Pennsylvania with Nigel Osborne, John Casken, Edward Harper, James Primosch and Jay Reise. He was a Thouron fellow at the University of Pennsylvania and later the recipient of a Benjamin Franklin scholarship. He won the Network for New Music composition competition in Philadelphia and the David Halstead Music Prize for composition at the University of Pennsylvania.

Originally from the UK, Cameron has been based in South Africa since 2006. His main interests are interactive electronic music composition and the history of electronic music. In 2023 he co-initiated an interdisciplinary creative collaboration with Alison Kearney called Sound Art Journeys.



ALISON KEARNEY

Associate Professor, Department of Visual Art

Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg.

Alison Kearney is a South African National Research Foundation (NRF) Rated, Johannesburg based artist, researcher and arts educator with a multi-disciplinary research praxis focused on exploring epistemologies of art. Her praxis includes making artworks that critically engage with the discourses and institutions of art as well as theorising modernist and contemporary African artworks that challenge inherited, western discourses of art. These interests are brought into her teaching through what and how she teaches university students, as well as the educational work that Alison does with diverse audiences in art museums.

In 2023 she co-initiated an interdisciplinary creative collaboration with Cameron Harris called Sound Art Journeys.



Handle with care,

Alison Kearney and Cameron Harris

40cm x 60cm x 10cm, Mixed media, 4min Audio track, MP3 player, headphones, paper, water colour, pencil, found objects, book, suitcase, velvet, and sticky tape, 2024.

This collaborative, sound-artwork makes use of sonic and visual metaphors to tell the story of a road trip that ended with a crash in the Karoo desert. The passengers took turns reading from *Alice in Wonderland* to keep each other alert on the road. Somewhere between Colesburg and Noupoot, the car hit a pothole. The unexperienced driver panicked and just let go of everything. If it wasn't for the doctors from Kroonstad who saw us go off the road, we would have died there. On the edge of the desert. Limbs burning. Blood flowing out. The paramedics who came to the rescue carefully picked up the passengers' *Alice in Wonderland* and set of water colour paints that flew out of the windscreen on impact. Broken all over, but not dead; we were lucky.

The drawings were made with those damaged paints, looking at the landscape outside of the hospital window while broken bones healed. The damaged book, now synecdoche for the broken body. Just as Alice's tacit knowledge was of no use in navigating the bizarre *Wonderland* she found herself in, none of their previous experiences prepared the passengers for the life changing crash. The sticky-tape used to repair the book and suitcase reminds viewers of the impossibility of repair, of life ever being the same after such trauma. The audio recording is a retelling of the story, with short fragments occurring out of place and added brittle resonances, emulating the experience of a traumatic memory and the unreal feeling of such a sudden and extreme event.

Gallery 2





PAIGEN KOTZE

Paigen Kotze is a multidisciplinary artist based in Johannesburg, with a particular passion for videography, printmaking, and sculpture. She obtained her BA Visual Art (2022) and Honours in Visual Art (2023), both with distinction, from the University of Johannesburg and is currently working towards her Masters degree at the same institution. Drawing inspiration from observing and responding to the world around her, she is currently interrogating how materiality within printmaking processes operates in the relationship between artist and artwork.

Her work has been exhibited in numerous group exhibitions in Johannesburg as well as in Cape Town. She has also had work exhibited in the Pretoria Art Museum as a finalist of the Sasol New Signatures competition for three consecutive years (2021 – 2023).

Statement

An ink tube so old and dry that it snapped when I tried to open it and a can with an ink skin so thick and rubbery that it barred access to the ink below. Having lived lives of their own, the physical existence of these desiccated inks contribute their own sense of visual and tactile knowledge which acts collaboratively in the creation of this print. The depictions of the ink skin navigate through the narrative of observation and marks made by the artist's hand, to collaborative use of ink as a blackout during the etching process where ink transfer from the folds dictated the initial marks to be etched on the plate, and lastly a monotype of the ink skin texture untainted by intervention. The pictorial ink tube further brings life back to the dead ink as a recognisable object of observation and acts as a conclusion of sorts – whereby placing ink as the subject, object and medium simultaneously this mode of interrogation allows me to enter a space to contemplate the agentic nature of the ink and its ability to contribute knowledge and act as co-creator.





Paigen Kotze, *New conversations with old inks*, Etching and monotype with chine-collé, 61 x 35cm, Ed of 5, 2024, Framed

MARIAPAOLA MCGURK

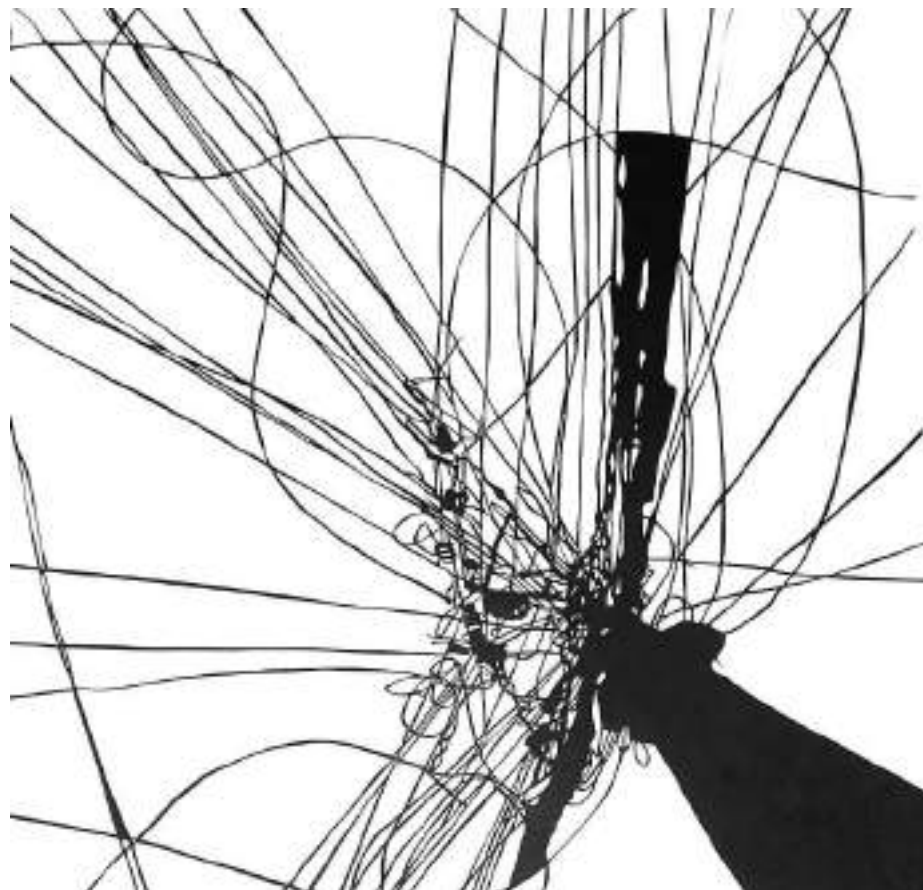
Mariapaola McGurk (fondly known as MP) has over twenty years' experience within the creative economy of South Africa. She is a practitioner, researcher, lecturer, and consultant who strives to contribute positively to the growth and development of this diverse and exciting sector while pursuing her visual arts practise.

Mariapaola Won the Thami Mnyele Awards – Art on Paper section in 2022 for her diptych – 'From Control to Chaos' which is a hand cut paper artwork. She holds Honours in Visual Arts (Cum Laude) from the University of Johannesburg and an Executive MBA (with merit) from Henley Business School. She is currently a PHD candidate at The Johannesburg Business School in a Dphil in Digital Transformations.

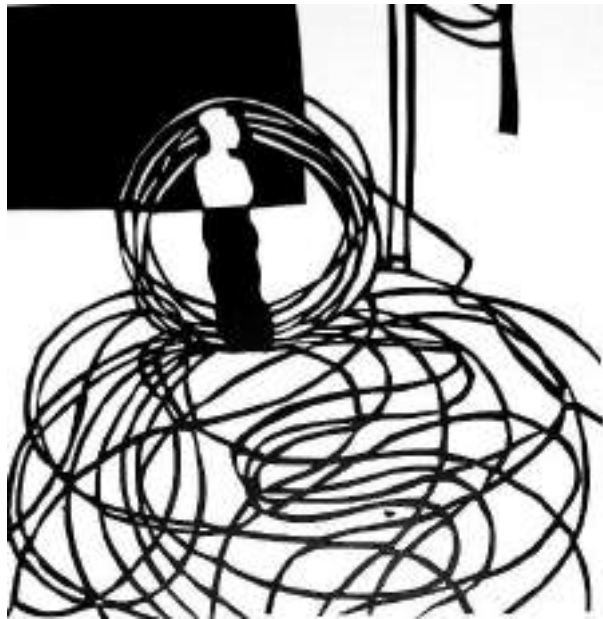
Statement

The Decorations series embodies a poignant reflection on the prevailing circumstances in South Africa. Our nation grapples not only with the tangible effects of load shedding but also with a dearth of effective leadership, coherent vision, and viable strategies for progress. Just as electric cables fail to deliver power, so too do our leaders falter in providing direction. Many occupying governmental positions seem ineffectual, serving merely as symbolic adornments. Navigating through Johannesburg's streets, avoiding potholes while witnessing illicit connections to impoverished areas, listening to the State of the Nation Address amidst a political spectacle tainted by corruption, a sense of despair pervades. Hope and optimism wane, leaving only the option of transforming chaos into decorative expressions. Such was the backdrop of our 2023.





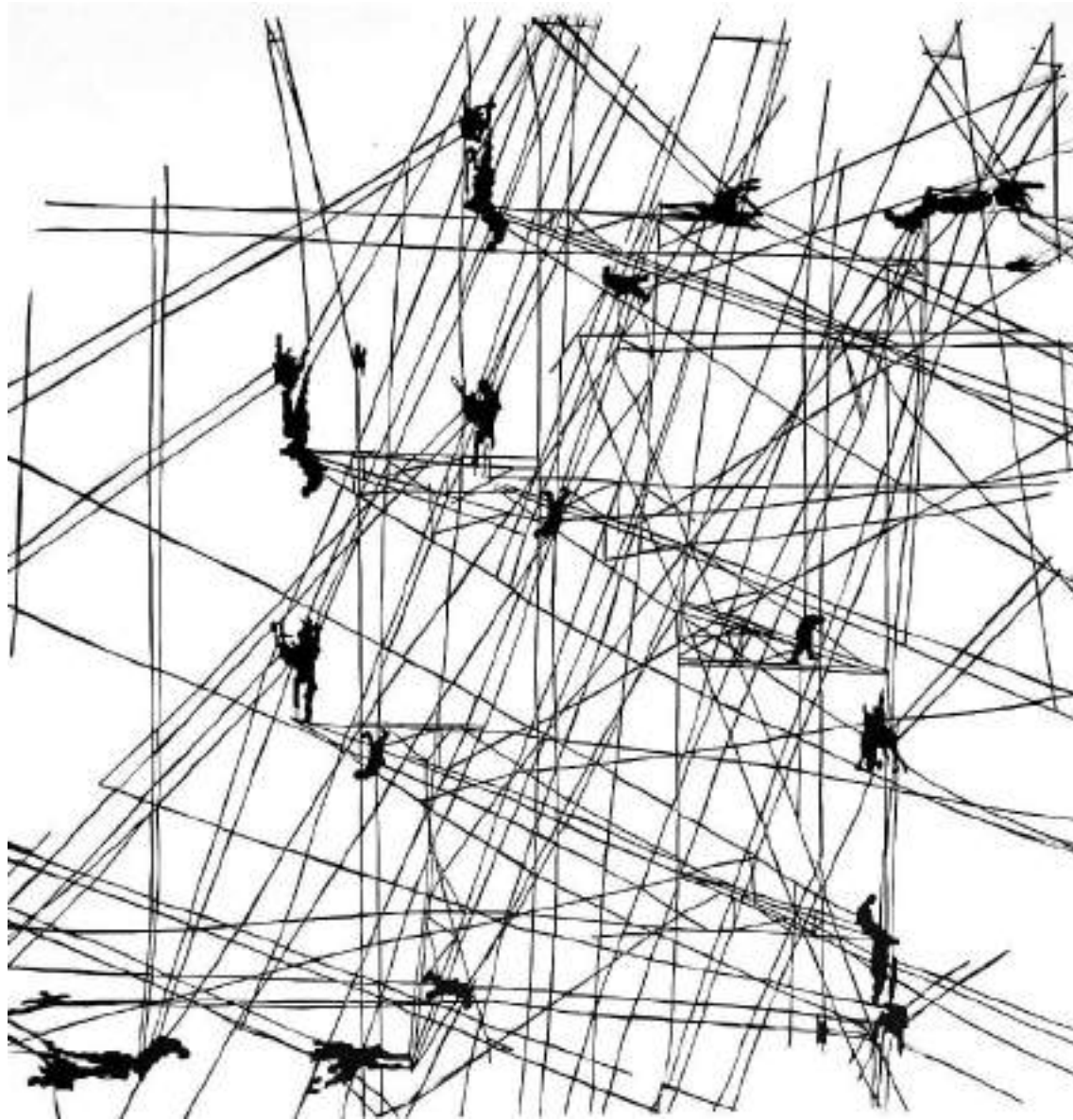
Mariapaola McGurk, *Decorations #4*, 90gsm hand cut archival paper deep black, 40 x 40cm, Framed



Mariapaola McGurk, Decorations #7, 90gsm hand cut archival paper
deep black, 10 x 10cm, Framed



Mariapaola McGurk, Decorations #8, 90gsm hand cut archival paper
deep black, 10 x 10cm, Framed



Mariapaola McGurk, *Decorations #9*, 90gsm hand cut archival paper deep black, 60 x 60cm, Framed



Mariapaola McGurk, *Decorations #10*, 90gsm hand cut archival paper deep black, 40 x 40cm, Framed

SACHIN NARAIN

Sachin Narain, (born April 12, 1995), is a South African filmmaker and university lecturer. He often deals with social commentary in his work and films. Commenting on political issues that affect South Africans and reflects on the socio-economic situation in the country.

From his time as a visual artist using video as a medium, his work explored socio-economic inequalities through his city, Johannesburg South. An extension of which is explored through his films which explore themes of community, politics, and social justice issues.

Statement

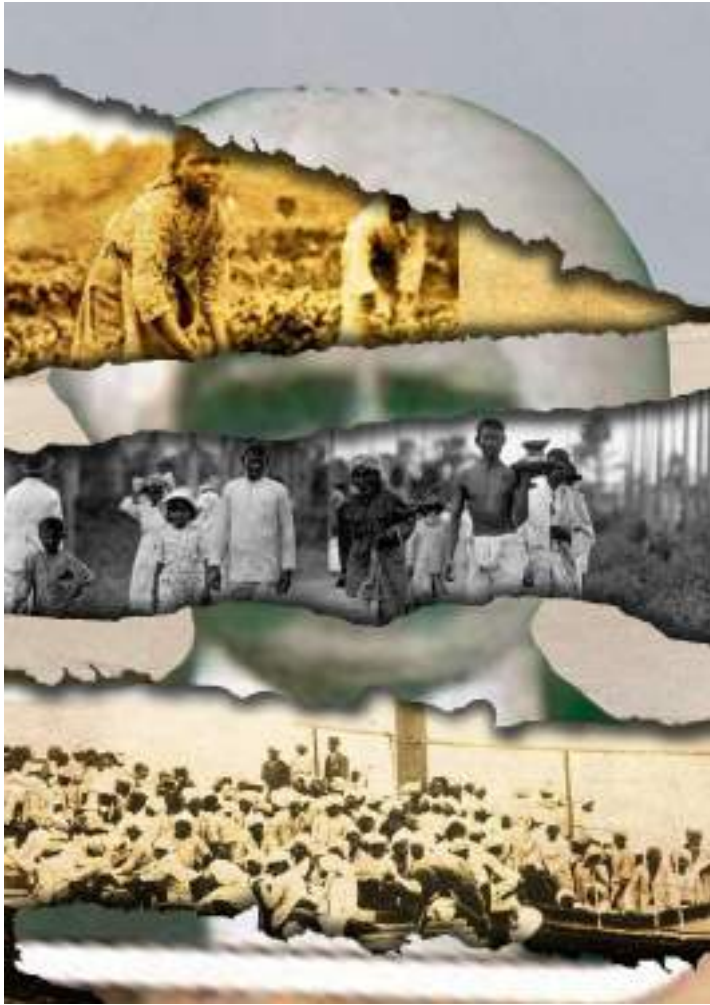
The following two prints serve as points of reference for a larger body of work. These prints look at the representation of South African Indians, specifically men in media focusing on the years of Indentureship 1860-1911 and the gangsters of Casbah in the 1950s.

My reason for looking at these two areas is to unpack what influences the Indian male psyche was in these eras and understand how they began to overlap from generation to generation. I am fifth generation South African. The print which focuses on Indentureship has my great-great grandfather, Kashi Gajadur composited into the paper overlay. The overlay is of paper made from sugarcane. At 19 years of age, he left Calcutta, India on the 22 February 1892 with his registration number '48402'. During the time of Indentureship,

Indians were abused, mistreated, killed, beaten and marginalised amongst many other evils on the plantation. How they managed to adapt and carve out a path that allowed their descendants to walk is testimony to their resilience and belief.

The second print focuses on Grey Street and the rich history of Indians in this space during Apartheid. This whole space is known as the Casbah. Indians were often left with two time passing activities, either go to the beach, which did not amount to much as they were prohibited to swim or go to the bioscope (cinema). As a result of the influence of cinema, theatres would be packed to the rafters daily. This era was also influential in the rise of Indian gangsters, primarily the Salot gang and Crimson League at the time, often fighting each other for turf and power. These men were men of honour, integrity and authority while firmly being family orientated and heads of their respective tables while their methods of operation were questionable, they moved with intention in all their endeavours. The larger body of work is intentions of a short film that explores the Indian masculinity in contemporary South Africa. This work is still in process with the short film early in preproduction and writing stage.





Sachin Narain, *Indenture*, Photographic Digital Print, 58.5 x 41 cm, 2024



Sachin Narain, *Casbah*, Photographic Digital Print, 58.5 x 41 cm, 2024

SHONISANI NETISHA

Shonisani Netshia lectures painting in the Department of Visual Art at the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg. In most of her works she uses SeShweshwe fabric, and crocheted doilies as a visual references in the production of large to small scale paintings. In these, she explores how, through painterly alteration and transformation, shifts can occur in the meanings of patterns derived from these culturally-loaded sources. In her recent works she negotiates her role as a homemaker, nurturer, working mom, and wife by drawing from a selection of 'culturally-loaded' objects from her mother's home. These objects symbolise and carry with them a sense of nostalgia from a specific era in her mother's life, and hers. In her work she explores how, through painterly alteration and transformation, shifts can occur in the meanings of patterns derived from these culturally-loaded sources. In her recent works she negotiates her role as a homemaker, nurturer, working mom, and wife by drawing from a selection of 'culturally-loaded' objects from her mother's home. These objects symbolize and carry with them a sense of nostalgia from a specific era in her mother's life, and hers. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Johannesburg. Her PhD research explores the visual manifestation of black respectability within the home as a domestic environment through the use of objects such as ornaments, tea sets, and crocheted doilies in particular.



Statement

Umbono Ohlukile (a different perspective) 2023 is based on my recollection of how was never allowed to touch crocheted doilies and the objects placed on them while growing up. The crocheted doily is captured from a low vantage point and enlarged making it large and 'overwhelming' in contrast to being viewed as a small and overlooked object of forgotten utility. Obmono Ohlukile- Un/resolved Issue? is my response to this exhibition theme. I decided to confront or to deal with my dissatisfaction with the quality of the digital photographic print. As a way of resolving the print, I have attempted to enhance the print of the doily by painting over it with the hope of making it visually engaging up close as it's illusion from afar. Painting over the print as a means to resolve it has allowed me to think through making and to consider how the doily as an everyday, mundane, docile object can demand attention via and alternative lens and viewpoint. I consider artistic labor – the duration of time, energy and skill it takes for me to complete this painting over the print – as similar to the labor of crocheting a doily. I approached the notion of duration or time as a conceptual/metaphoric device and "as a process to reconcile things different in kind, ideas, feelings, disparate visual languages, techniques and practices" (Thomas 2012:137).

Reference: Thomas. D. 2012 In Supervising Practices for Postgraduate Research in Art, Architecture and Design: How to Work Better. Educational Futures, Vol 57:pp.131-145.
<https://brill.com/view/serial/EDFU>.



Shonisani Netshia, *Umbono Ohlukile - Unresolved Issues*, Acrylic on Digital photograph, 120 x 67cm Framed size

DAVID PATON

David Paton is an Associate Professor in the Department of Visual Art, University of Johannesburg, where he teaches Drawing and Studio Practice at undergraduate and Honours levels, and supervises Masters and Doctoral students, six of whom have received the prestigious Chancellor's Medal for Meritorious Postgraduate Study. He is also a Senior Researcher at the Jack Ginsberg Centre for Book Arts (JGCBA), Wits Art Museum (WAM), University of the Witwatersrand. He was awarded the University of Johannesburg Vice Chancellor's Distinguished Award for Teaching Excellence in 2022 and is a National Research Foundation (NRF) C1-Rated Scholar.

Statement

In 1986 I spent time in the Drakensberg mountains with members of the Wits Rock Art Research Unit under the guidance of Prof. David Lewis-Williams and Dr. Thomas Dowson. Our job was to record sections of San paintings found at Fulton's Rock and Rainbow Gorge by carefully tracing their often fugitive details onto drafting film. This intimate and painstaking process offered me an opportunity to engage with the visual forms, materials and cosmology of San shaman/artists that most people would never experience.

The complex palimpsests - painted into, over and alongside, by successive artists over hundreds of years - responded to existing imagery and their numerous powers, using visual metaphors that represent the therianthropic experiences of shaman/artists in states of trance and out-of-body travel. These paintings record cosmological potency gathered in the service of community care, social cohesion and wellness. This utterly egalitarian way of life was doomed to be crushed and supplanted by later peoples (both African and European) whose societies were based upon claims to the land and material ownership. These cultural collisions are explored in this drawing as a call to honour and learn from ancient wisdom, layering this knowledge upon contemporary life in an attempt to delay its inevitable loss.

In this drawing I explore a palimpsest of visual forms derived from different periods of time and contexts. I investigate the relationship between similar modes of mark-making but where the originals are altered through the intervention of digital technologies and then drawn over. The dialogical relationships forged between different mark thickness, intensity, phrasing, and ink quality, allow for consideration of not only acts of drawing but the visual life of marks when layered, altered, and intervened with.





David Paton, *Working Drawings with Speculative Therianthropic and Entoptic Interventions Version 41c*, Digital print & ballpoint pen on archival paper, 2024

ALEXA PIENAAR

Alexa is a young upcoming artist currently completing her MFA at the University of Johannesburg. She was born in Pretoria, grew up on a small farm in the Western Cape and now finds herself back in the bustling streets of Johannesburg. She has showcased her work at various group exhibitions including the annual group exhibition at the Pretoria Arts Association, the Sasol New Signatures Awards, the Turbine Art Fair, the Thami Mnye Fine Arts Awards and was announced the Thami Mnye Sculpture Merit Award winner of 2018.

Alexa is fascinated with the physical land and her relationship to it which forms a large part of her psychological development within the South African landscape. She interrogates her white, Afrikaans-speaking female identity and the psychological development of it in a contemporary South African society. She uses predominantly leather, a medium with which she is familiar, based on an upbringing in which her father is a skilled leather craftsman. She draws on contemporary South African landscape elements as visual metaphors of her lived experiences as they have forged her identity while trying to determine her sense of 'being'/'belonging' in it.

Statement

Being inherently part of and witness to South Africa's socio-economic plight, I confront the harsh realities borne of a collapsed economic, political, and often (even) social landscape. I share the harsh realities of a people bearing the unbearable weight of crumbling infrastructure as we move through the rubble of our once-prosperous spaces. Foundations Fractured: A Nation's Burden, made of cement, coal and bent and cut steel, represents a "slice" or piece of how I imagine a metaphorical "underworld" of South Africa would look today:

Cement, the embodiment of stability, crumbles under the weight of broken promises and shattered dreams, its once-solid façade, is now a mere metaphor for the precariousness of our economic foundations. Coal, once a fiery beacon of industry, now lies cold and inert, abandoned, its decline a stark reminder of the folly of dependence and the price paid for neglect.

Steel, forged in the crucible of adversity, bears the scars of resilience and defiance, a testament to the indomitable spirit of a people weighed down by the burdens of economic collapse. Each cut, each bend, is a testament to the struggle we endure to keep our cities afloat amidst the tumultuous seas of socio-economic and socio-political turmoil.





Alexa Pienaar, *Foundations Fractured: A Nation's Burden*, Cement, steel and coal, 54 x 32 x 32cm, 2024



DEIRDRE PRETORIUS

Deirdre Pretorius is an Associate Professor at the University of Johannesburg in the Faculty of Art Design and Architecture (FADA) in the Graphic Design Department. She currently lectures Design Studies on undergraduate level and supervises postgraduate students in the Honours Design, MA Design and PhD (Art and Design) programmes. As a design historian her research focus is on contemporary and historical graphic design and visual culture in South(ern) Africa. She is an advisory board member Journal of Design History and a member AICA (International Association of Art Critics) and SAVAH (South African Visual Arts Historians).

Her most recent exhibited works include three artists' books and a variable edition of 14 etchings exhibited at David Krut Projects in Johannesburg, and participation in the exhibition "Decolonising the Book" at the NWU Gallery in collaboration with Visual Narratives and Creative Outputs (ViNCO), all under the auspices of the Artists' Book Club, of which she is a founder member, during September and October of 2022. She participated in the FADA staff exhibitions "Situated Making" (2022) and "Interventions in Practice" (2021) which aimed at exploring creative output as research.



Statement

“Cabinets of Curiosities for the Postcolony III: Pretty Useless Things” is a collection of sculptural objects, some of which appear to be jewellery pieces, that I created by combining pieces of wood, found on walks in my neighbourhood, with wire, string and hardware. The objects are displayed in two entomology cases as if they are collections of pinned insects, but also evoke jewellery sold in matching sets. I used basic jewellery making and woodworking techniques to create these objects and the actions of shaping wood by filing, carving, sawing and sanding, and shaping wire into different forms satisfied my need to work with physical materials to create things. The resulting things are “pretty” but “useless” because the objects are not functional to wear, as some are too fragile, or cannot be attached to the body or may even cause injury when worn.

This project is the third iteration of a series of cabinets of curiosities which I started creating in 2021. The first one, “Dead Living Things: A Cabinet of Curiosities in the Postcolony”, consisted of a curated collection of found objects, accompanied by an artists’ book, which aimed to explore how a cabinet of curiosities can be used to tell stories informed by postcolonial theory that confront colonial narratives in the contemporary South African context.

This was followed by “Cabinets of Curiosities for the Postcolony II: Tokens, Collections I-V (Tokens)”, a work for which I manipulated found objects, and created new objects displayed in five entomology cases, accompanied by an artists’ book and a collection of 51 non-fungible tokens (NFTs) offered for sale on Opensea, an NFT marketplace. With “Tokens” I was interested in exploring what is considered the construction of new and unique knowledge, how objects can help us understand this question and how we assign value to such new knowledge.





Deirdre Pretorius, *Cabinets of Curiosities for the Postcolony III: Pretty Useless Things*, A collection of constructed objects, 27.5 x 39 cm each, 2024

LANDI RAUBENHEIMER

Landi Raubenheimer is an artist and academic working and living in Johannesburg. Originally trained as a painter, she has experimented with resin casting and with papermaking. The latter process has taken place over a period of many years, since a collaboration with the Phumani Paper Mill in Johannesburg in 2011. She has exhibited widely in South Africa, and has taken part in exhibitions curated by Reneilwe Mathibe, Sandile Radebe, Leora Farber, Kim Berman, Ann-Marie Tulley, Jessica Webster, Gordon Froud, Stephan Erasmus, Paul Bayliss and others. She held a solo exhibition at the Oliewenhuis National Art Museum in 2015, entitled *After landscape*, and completed her PhD in Film Studies and Art History at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands and the University of Johannesburg in 2021. She is interested in landscapes and cities, and how the two intersect.

Statement

In this series I investigate the visible signs of the high water table in the area in Johannesburg where I reside. On daily walks I noticed that near the Braamfontein Spruit, in Parkhurst, water is everywhere. It flows out of outlet pipes that run under sidewalks and driveways, and it pools in places where the roads crumble. Some of these pools are deep and constant enough to support micro-ecosystems where mosses and other strange flora flourish. Captured with my portable Konstruktor Lomography camera, these snapshots represent some of the landscapes I have found in this suburban enclave. The distorted views rendered by the plastic camera lens on my 'toy camera' seem to emphasise the otherworldly character of these miniature landscapes. As microcosms (or perhaps even paracosms), they remind me that Johannesburg has buried its rivers, but they will not stay buried forever. The looming water crisis in Johannesburg's collapsing infrastructure is furthermore ironic in the face of so much water, which though ubiquitous, seems out of reach if it does not come out of a tap.





Landi Raubenheimer, *Delta Sirens I - VI*, Inkjet on archival paper, 19 x 27cm each, 2023, Framed individually.

RUTH SACKS

Dr Ruth Sacks is an academic and visual artist whose practice is based in the medium of artist books. Her first academic book, *Congo Style: From Belgian Art Nouveau to African Independence* will be published by Michigan University Press later this year. Research interests include Africa in the Anthropocene and the post-independence aesthetics of the African City. She is currently one of the co-directors of the large-scale group project *Response-Ability*, taking place at the Joubert Park Greenhouse Project. Sacks has exhibited widely locally and internationally, including at: M KHA Museum of Contemporary Art (Antwerp), ZKM | Centre for Arts and Media (Karlsruhe), Performa09 (New York), the African Pavilion at the 2007 Venice Biennale, the National Museums of Kenya (Nairobi), the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Kunstverein (Amsterdam) and Extraspaio (Rome).

Recent publications (books): Sacks, R. 2021 (forthcoming). 'Congo Style: From Art Nouveau to African Independence'. Michigan University Press and Wits University Press

Statement

This photograph captures reflections on the glass surface of an empty aquarium inside Lagos Airport. It forms part of a larger body of work that deals with how images of watery nature appear in the African city to raise questions about larger biopolitical issues.





Ruth Sacks, *Airport Aquarium*, Digital print on cotton paper, 42.7 x 60.1cm, Ed of 3, Framed

MINNETTE VÁRI

Minnette Vári was born in 1968 in Pretoria, South Africa. She lives in Johannesburg. As Kendell Geers observes in a catalogue essay published in 2004 by Kunstmuseum Lucerne, “Minnette Vári has in her lifetime witnessed the fall of apartheid and all its structures, followed by the new democracy.” In response to this history, Vári has written a history of herself in relation to this trajectory, one that attempts to recover what is lost, to give shape and voice to forgotten or erased memories. Her work conflates self and history, examining how identity arises out of the traumatic past. In her videos and drawings, Vári frequently depicts her own body enduring a disfiguring metamorphosis – she merges with and emerges from nature as well as from the concrete architecture of modern cities. The female “protagonist” of her video works is sometimes archetypal and sometimes spectral, a persona who ingests and is ingested by time.

Vári has exhibited her work since the early nineties, participating in such group exhibitions as *Banquet*, ZKM Karlsruhe; *Personal Affects: Power and Poetics in Contemporary South African Art*, Museum for African Art, New York; *the Venice Biennale* (2001 and 2007); the *10th Havana Biennale* and *The Divine Comedy: Heaven, Hell and Purgatory Revisited* by Contemporary African Artists, MKK Frankfurt. Her solo exhibitions include *Chimera* at Art Unlimited, Basel; *Vigil* at Elga Wimmer Gallery with Serge Ziegler, New York; *Songs of Excavation* and *The Eleventh Hour*, both at the Goodman Gallery South Africa, and *Of Darkness and of Light*, a mid-career survey at the Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg.





Minnette Vári, *Figment*, Mixed media on Fabriano Paper, 56 x 37.5 x 37.5cm, 2024



DIANE VICTOR

Diane Victor (b. 1964 in Witbank, South Africa) has established herself as a major figure in the South African and International art communities and is renowned for her expert printmaking and draughtsmanship. Victor positions herself within the South African art scene through her bold confrontations with difficult and at times taboo subject matter. Her large scale drawings and etchings demonstrate a command of mark-making, which she uses to render her subjects in affecting detail. At times, her work seems to pose challenges to social and political life in contemporary South Africa, considering issues of corruption, violence and an unequal power distribution.

Having received her BA Fine Arts Degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, with a major in Printmaking, and graduating with distinction – Victor has gone on to win various prestige awards including the Sasol New Signatures Award in 1987. In 1988, Victor became the youngest recipient of the prestigious Volkskas Atelier Award which granted her a ten-month stay at the Cité Internationale des Artes in Paris, France. Over this period, Victor was able to work collaboratively with other experienced printmakers and to observe and reflect on a society very different from her own.

Victor has exhibited at numerous venues around South Africa and internationally, some of which include the UNISA Gallery, Fried Contemporary, MoMA New York, Falconer Gallery, The Highpoint Center for printmaking, The Gus Fisher Gallery, National Museum of Contemporary Art Oslo, Yale University Art Gallery, The Contemporary Museum Honolulu, and Australia and Adelaide Central Gallery. Victor's work is part of a number of important collections, including Sasol, Pretoria Art Museum, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Durban Art Museum and Santam.

Since 1990, Victor has been a lecturer, teaching Fine Art, at various South African institutions including the University of Pretoria, Tshwane University of Technology, Open Window Academy, the University of the Witwatersrand, Rhodes University and the University of Johannesburg. Victor lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa.





Diane Victor, *Impossible things people believe before and after breakfast*, charcoal on paper, 74 x 90cm, 2023, Framed

COLLEEN WINTER

Colleen Winter (b. 1956) resides in Johannesburg and has a MTech from the University of Johannesburg. She is a practicing artist working with found materials which she incorporates into drawings, sculptures and collages. She explores the notions of transience, alchemy, materiality, self-reflection, process, and the cycles of life.

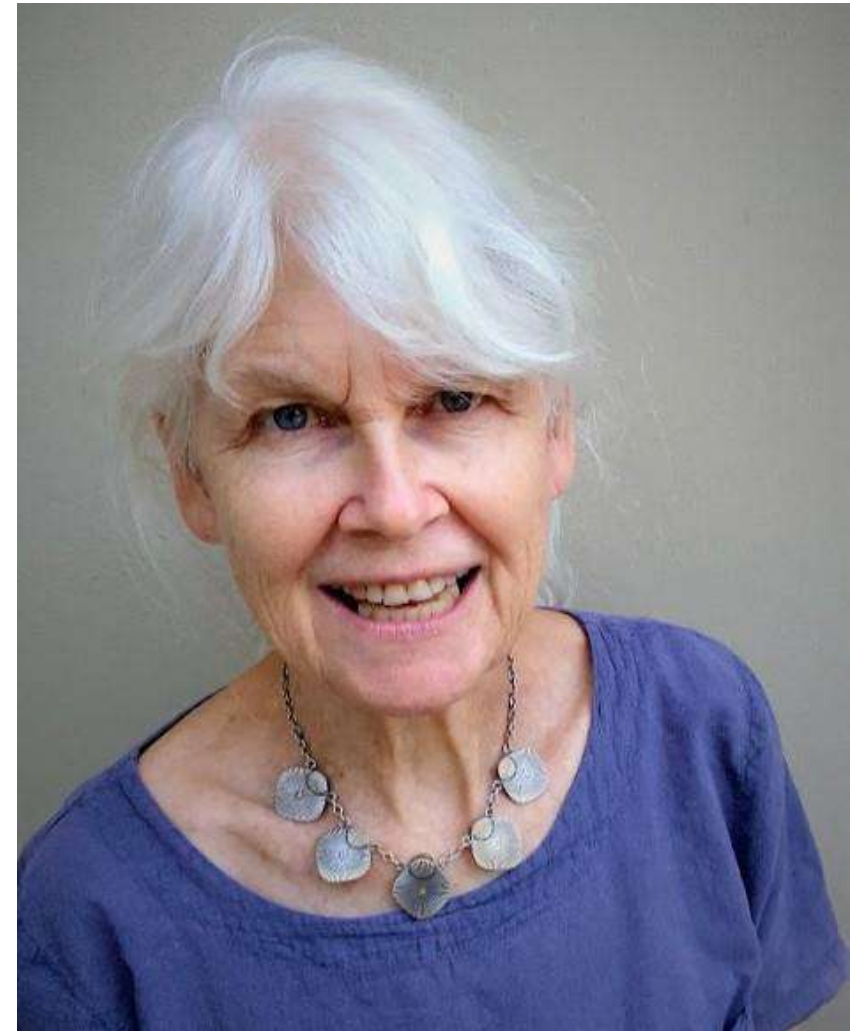
Statement

The act of making, whatever form it has taken, has always given me a sense of self and identity: when asked what I do, my response has consistently been, "I am a maker, I make things". It has been a thread that has run throughout my life and it is through my making that I discover who and what and why I am in this world: it is a means to *nosce te ipsum*, a means to 'know thyself'.

My artwork is process driven: it is the 'making' that most times is more important than the finished work. For me, making is an end in itself: I like getting my hands dirty.

The process of creating, and the interaction with materials, tools, and different techniques and applications are all integral to, and equally important components of my work.

Within my artwork I focus on mixed-media techniques which offer me an opportunity to experiment with diverse materials, objects, patterns, textures and layering. I like to explore the interplay between organic shapes and components, creating a dialogue between all the different elements.





Colleen Winter, *Crow's First Book of Beetles*, Mixed media book, 11.5 x 11.5cm, 2024 - SOLD



UMPTEN IMPOSSIBLE THINGS BEFORE BREAKFAST

RECENT WORKS BY STAFF IN THE FACULTY OF ART, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE AT UJ

Neil Badenhorst, Karin Basel, Kim Berman, Bevan de Wet, Bronwen Findlay
Gordon Froud, Cameron Harris, Alison Kearney, Paigen Kotze,
Mariapaola McGurk, Sachin Narain, Shonisani Netshia, Alexa Pienaar,
David Paton, Deirdre Pretorius, Landi Raubenheimer,
Ruth Sacks, Minnette Vári, Diane Victor, Colleen Winter.



GALLERY 2

Gallery hours: Tuesday - Friday 10h00 to 17h00. Saturday 10h00 to 14h00
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