

Anatomica Botanica Architecta

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The NWU Botanical Gardens Gallery is proud to present a group exhibition Anatomica Botanica Architecta, at the North-West University Botanical Gardens Gallery (Potchefstroom Campus) from 27 October 2023.



The NWU Botanical Gardens Gallery is proud to present Anatomica Botanica Architecta, a group exhibition by five North-West artists all based in Potchefstroom: Amogelang Ngake, Elna Venter, Mpho Gorewang, Pieter Jooste, and Sandro Trapani.

This exhibition will look at interpretations of arrangements of anatomical revisions, architectural inquiries, and the incorporation of indigenous or non indigenous botanicals.

"Non indigenous species are those that are not native to a particular area or are found living outside of their historic range. Also known as non-native, exotic, or alien species, these species do not necessarily cause harm to the environment in which they are found. However, when these species establish themselves and threaten the diversity or stability of a native species or environment, they are then considered invasive." – www.usgs.gov

The USGS, an American government site for scientific research, describes nonindigenous species as those that are not

native to a specific area or are found living outside their historic range. These species are also known as non-native, exotic, or alien species. While they may not necessarily harm the environment where they are found, they can become invasive when they establish themselves and pose a threat to the diversity or stability of native species or environments.

In the South African context, it is important to consider the sensitivity of certain terms used in the USGS quote, such as exotic, alien, and diversity. These terms carry different connotations and are nuanced in our socio-political climate. If this paragraph were written for a South African audience, it would likely use more carefully chosen words in the botanical context.

The exhibition will focus on arranging anatomical revisions, architectural inquiries, and the incorporation of indigenous or non indigenous botanicals. Artists were given the exhibition brief and were free to address and interpret these themes as they pleased. An example of this theme can be seen in the mixed-media sculpture of Sandro Trapani, which explores aesthetic dominance in portraiture and includes architectural and botanical elements.

Throughout history, botanicals have served various purposes such as food, medicine, and fabrics, and have been incorporated into architecture. They have been used to strengthen structures or for decorative purposes, cladding, and textiles, as seen in the Art Nouveau movement. Architecture exists to accommodate the human body and create environments and spaces we inhabit.

The human form, architecture, and botanicals have long-standing relationships in art and design, playing significant roles in shaping culture and identity. These elements have evolved and adapted alongside our existence throughout history. In contemporary South Africa, architecture, botany, and anatomy still hold relevance, acting as metaphors or symbols that contribute to the narratives we construct within our diverse cultural context. While these narratives may be contentiously changing, the values evoked by these elements become woven into the fabric of life.

The show includes five artists: Sandro Trapani (mentioned above), Mpho Gorewang, a stalwart ceramicist explores the dynamics of earthenware, raku firing and traditional designs sourced from nature, while Amogelang Ngake engages with her processes focusing her thoughts on sustainability and ecological concerns. Veteran artist Elna Venter utilises relevant imagery and objects in her mesmerising collages and sculptures, and Pieter Jooste explores abstracted visions of the world around him through the mediums of photography, sculpture, oil and acrylic paint.

The exhibition is curated by Sandro Trapani.

Venue: NWU Botanical Gardens Gallery (North-West University, Building H5, Hoffman Street, Potchefstroom. 2530)

Exhibition title: Anotomica Botanica Architecta

Opening date: 27 October 2023

Closing date: 31 January 2024

For more information, please contact:

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