

PROJECT REPORT

Compiled by:

Mark Irving, Executive Curator, with input from Dr
Nobulali Dangazele, Mariapaola McGurk and Sufina
Ahmad MBE.

CONTENTS

Foreword by Sufina Ahmad MBE, Director of John Ellerman Foundation

Section A - Design

Introduction:

- Project Background
- Context
- Team Leadership
- Curatorial Framework
- Budget Allocation

Selection Process:

- Initial Scoping
- Application Process
- Assessment Criteria
- Selection of Candidates
- Revised Budget Allocation
- Protea Curators Gallery

Section B - Delivery

Exchanges:

- Preparatory Research Reports
- Areas of Research
- Cohort Dinners
- Survey

Section C - Conclusion

Insights:

- Reflections and thanks from Mark Irving, Executive Curator
- Reflections and thanks from the selected Protea curators

Section D - Appendices

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Project Description
- Appendix B: Curator Preparatory Reports
- Appendix C: Timetable
- Appendix D: Budget
- Appendix E: Survey
- Appendix F: Narrative Reports

Foreword by Sufina Ahmad MBE, Director of John Ellerman Foundation

2021 marked John Ellerman Foundation's 50th anniversary, having been set up by our founder Sir John Ellerman II in 1971. Celebrating significant milestones in an organisation's existence can become an exercise in self-indulgent and self-aggrandising behaviour. At their best though, they are an opportunity for thoughtful experimentation that allow organisations to build on and improve their work and to become a better version of themselves.

In March 2021, we agreed on our plans for our anniversary celebrations, with an additional £1 million of funding released to deliver our five anniversary-related celebrations. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and its many implications on the ever-reducing bandwidth of the sector and civil society as a whole, our anniversary offered us an opportunity for reflection on the throughline and legacy of our organisation, and how our past and present can be used to inform and improve our future.

Our 50th-anniversary activities consisted of five key projects, of which Protea – an international curatorial exchange between the UK and South Africa aimed at curators with at least five years of professional experience was one. As a long-standing supporter of museums and galleries in the UK through our Museums and Galleries Fund, it felt right to use the opportunity presented by our 50th anniversary to try something new and ambitious in the form of an international exchange.

However, Protea was also a leap of faith as to whether we would be able to make this idea bloom into something transformative and generative for the arts, culture and heritage sectors in the UK and South Africa during a period of immense uncertainty and difficulties. Having worked closely with the Protea project team, led by Mark Irving as Executive Curator, I have seen just how much has been achieved through our investment of around £85,000 over several months to support eight curators based in the UK and South Africa. This report attempts to capture the breadth and depth of all that we learned.

Some of my key reflections on this international curatorial exchange are that it has created an important space for learning between the curators, which has included being able to interrogate and grapple with the issues and opportunities they have in common, as well as those that are unique to their individual operating contexts. It is a reminder too that curators are part of a rich and diverse global community and tradition that is expansive and ambitious in its manifestation and implementation. Throughout this project, all involved showed time and again the importance of curating as a way of connecting with and understanding artefacts and sites of cultural value, and the ways in which these can be worked with in order to help individuals, communities and wider society to connect and engage with each other.

After such prolonged uncertainty and difficulty during the pandemic, it has been a joy to see the way in which curators transform and enhance the way we think and engage with the past, present and future, and the many paradoxes that entails. It was a resounding endorsement too of the need to invest meaningfully in curatorial practice. It is our sincere hope that by sharing our learning others who are thinking about supporting curatorial practice internationally will be inspired to take the leap too!

Sufina Ahmad MBE
Director, John Ellerman Foundation

Section A – DESIGN

Introduction:

Project Background

The project's purpose was to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of John Ellerman Foundation (the Foundation) in 1971. Its inspiration came from Tufyal Choudhury, one of the Foundation's Trustees. The anniversary heralded a new international curatorial exchange programme, in which selected curators from the United Kingdom (UK) and South Africa were invited to undertake field research in the form of 10-day bilateral visits taking place between May and July 2022.

This anniversary presented a special opportunity to build on the Foundation's existing work in supporting curatorial development, and to do so in a way that extends its understanding of what curating is, the forms it can take and where and how it can have impact.

The project name Protea references the national flower of South Africa and, in its allusion to the legend of Proteus, acknowledges the transformative outcomes that can be activated through imaginative and resourceful curatorship.

The programme initially set out to fund six residential Curatorial Exchanges. This was subsequently extended to fund eight opportunities. These curatorial exchanges involved selected institutions in the UK and South Africa, or paired freelance curators originating in each country, or a mix of these. The programme was aimed at curators who demonstrated at least five years of professional curatorial experience. The successful candidates provided significant evidence of an existing commitment to curatorial practice, as well as an ability to self-manage the Exchange's preparatory research and in-the-field residency phases.

Context

The project had two points of origin: a focus on curatorial development, which underscores the Foundation's existing commitment to supporting curatorial excellence through its Museums and Galleries Fund; and the longstanding connections between the Foundation's founder, Sir John Ellerman II, and the two countries in which he spent most of his life – the UK and South Africa.

The overarching strategic aim of the project – one that informs all the Foundation's activities – was to advance wellbeing for people, society and the natural world – delivered primarily through the Foundations' grantmaking in the Arts, Social Action and the Environment. The project's bilateral canvas reflected the wider emphasis placed by the UK Government on 'Global Britain', characterised by an accelerated interest in optimising existing ties between the UK and the rest of the world, including nations within the Commonwealth. The project's focus was on curators and the enhancement and sustainability of curatorial development at a time when the impact of COVID-19 was being felt across the cultural sector, with museums, collections and sites of cultural heritage being particularly affected by income depletion, loss of staff and concomitant expertise, and resulting lack of audience engagement and participation.

The project intended to support curators with research that has an organisational impact while also creating a legacy beyond the organisation. Core objectives underpinning the Foundation's Museum and Galleries Fund also informed the theoretical approach of the Protea project, including:

- An emphasis on the value of curatorial skills

- A commitment to excellence and innovation
- Strong leadership.

The role of the curator is something that can be undervalued within organisations and society more generally. Curators are responsible for a variety of components both within institutions and working independently. Their role traditionally includes maintaining collections by evaluating and analysing their cultural, educational and societal value, conditions of preservation and authenticity, interpretation of art works as well as developing on-going research into both their field of interest and curatorial practice.

Curators are also the connector between audience, community and institution – they develop the educational and interactive engagements that support visitors to be enthused and educated on different topics, enabling them to find themselves reflected in the stories and modes of representation that shape cultural visitation experiences. Increasingly, curators are seen as agents of change – delivered through forms of creative and curatorial practice that combine the production of new experiential projects, such as on social and climate crisis activism, and deeply interrogative investigations into provenance, institutional critique and reparative justice.

Team Leadership

Sufina Ahmad, Director of the Foundation initiated and has supported the Protea Project. As a new initiative that offered bilateral opportunities to curators from South Africa and the UK, there were three managers recruited to manage this project for its duration.

The overall project Executive Curator was Mark Irving, reporting to Sufina. Mark identified the necessity for two Project Managers in South Africa and UK to manage the on-the-ground running of the project. The Foundation usually focuses on the UK for funding opportunities and therefore this project required managers who have a network and understanding of the South African context. For this reason, both the UK and South Africa based curators chosen were of South African nationality. The recruitment process included publicising the position on the Foundation's social sites, using a Job Description produced by Mark. Word of mouth and LinkedIn proved useful, too.



Mark Irving

Dr Nobulali Dangazele

Mariapaola McGurk

Project Team Biographies

Mark has worked across the creative industries for more than 20 years in capacities as diverse as arts journalist, arts educator (Central St Martins), and museums consultant. His experience has involved working in Russia, China, UAE, EU and the UK, in senior management roles in the design and delivery of major cultural infrastructure projects. These have included the award-winning design of the First World War Galleries at Imperial War Museum London, the Nelson Gallery at National Maritime Museum, Household Cavalry Museum, Biotopia – the Bavarian

Museum of Natural History & Life Science in Munich, Eden Qingdao, the Museum of the Order of St John, London. He has since worked in immersive technology, leading a team at Pixel Artworks to win the Drum Award for Event Technology 2019 for Poland: First to Fight, a multi-disciplinary performance run staged at Muzeum 1939, Gdansk. He is a co-founder of PlusZero, the UK's leading green hydrogen company.

Nobulali is an expert in strategic management, impact creation, and improvisation, and a lecturer at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). Before joining GIBS, she was a producer while pursuing a Masters in Dramatic Arts, for which she was awarded the Mandela Rhodes scholarship. She then started ShakeXperience®, an Applied Theatre company, best known for the award-winning African adaptation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as well as its teaching and learning methods. She later pursued a doctorate at Warwick Business School where she also co-founded Nudgeathon®. Nobulali uses the arts to inform her research, teaching, and facilitation, and plans to use the arts as a non-medical response and solution to mental health, specifically using social prescribing.

Mariapaola is a visual artist, researcher, lecturer and consultant. Her area of speciality lies in the creative economy and creative entrepreneurship. She is specifically passionate about creative entrepreneurship and its potential positive impact on youth unemployment in South Africa. She opened The Coloured Cube, her own creative company in 2014 in Johannesburg, which won the Business and Arts South Africa Awards three times over its 6 years of operation for its approach to partnerships and offering professional services that also have social impact. She holds honours in visual arts and an Executive MBA from Henley Business School.

Curatorial Framework

At the start of the project, Executive Curator Mark Irving devised a Curatorial Framework to structure the project programme and its decision-making processes.

While working as a complement to the Foundation's Museums and Galleries Fund, Protea also intended to offer flexibility and innovation in how and what the curators would choose to research, as well as how they would implement and share their research. This has allowed the Foundation to live up to its key approaches of being a responsive funder, offering flexibility and allowing a personal touch or auto-ethnographic approach within the project.

This Framework injected curating with a thread of creative practice so that the situational context of the Exchange was a medium through which curatorship is enacted, developed, and adapted as an active and inherently dynamic learning process. The importance of situational context and its reciprocal relationship with the curatorial 'agent' underscores the auto-ethnographic principle at the heart of *Protea's* approach. Auto-ethnography is a form of research that involves self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic fieldwork and writing and has an extensive background literature. It combines situational analysis with subjective experiential record. The professional self is acknowledged in the research. The framework also recognised that there are many forms of curatorship and approaches to curating.

The Framework was shaped around three Thematic Areas – **Arts, Social Action, Environment** – relevant to the wider work of the Foundation.

Curatorial candidates were asked to respond to one of these Thematic Areas. It was recognised that there could be some overlap between these – e.g., a curator could investigate how cultural artefacts or cultural production can explore environmental issues – but the research question driving their Exchange had to be clearly centred within one Area.

Candidates were invited to frame their research enquiry either as a relatively 'deep dive' in one phase of the Framework – Inform, Interpret, or Implement – or as a linear route through the three phases. The Executive Curator worked with the curators to establish the best approach that suits them, the context and research area.

| <i>Phase</i> | Environment | Social Action | Visual Arts |
|------------------|--|--|---|
| <i>Inform</i> | Caring for and securing knowledge about collections (e.g., natural history). | Researching a cause, measure, or objective to influence policy. | Caring for and securing knowledge about collections (e.g., arts & culture). |
| <i>Interpret</i> | Representing collections, stories, people that speak about the state of the land and its biodiversity and our place in it. | Identifying/selecting specific contextual opportunities for scope and agency via social change events/processes. | Representing collections, stories, people and their connection to society, culture, and the natural world. |
| <i>Implement</i> | Devise and activate a strategic plan to enhance, correct, or contest existing knowledge or models of behaviour. | Devise and activate social change events or processes through consensual or contest-based approach. | Devise and activate a strategic plan to enhance, correct, or contest existing knowledge or models of behaviour. |

Budget Allocation

The Foundation's allocated budget for the Protea Project was strictly £100,000, to cover all costs in devising, managing and completing the project. Mark devised the following initial expenditure plan to enable the project to be delivered within the allocated budget.

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | | | |
|---------------------|--|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Management costs | Executive Curator | £350 p/d | 56 days | £19,600 |
| | Project Management UK | Est £200 p/d | 50 days | £10,000 |
| | Project Management Expenses UK | | allow up to | £4,000 |
| | Project Management South Africa | Est £200 p/d | 50 days | £10,000 |
| | Project Management Expenses South Africa | | allow up to | £4,000 |
| Exchange costs | Return flights | £1500 each | 6 curators | £9,000 |
| | Accommodation & subsistence | £200 p/n | 6 X 10 nights | £12,000 |
| | Curator R&D budget | £2500 | 6 curators | £15,000 |
| | Hosting events/dinners | £2500 | UK & SA | £5,000 |
| | | | | £88,600 |
| Contingency | 7% | | | £6,202 |
| Total Budget | | | | £94,802 |

Selection Process:

Initial Scoping

The questions asked at the outset were: What should Protea's application process look like, and where would we find our candidates? How would the impact of COVID-19 influence our programme design and delivery? To scope out the options in this challenging context, Mark spoke informally with curators, arts journalists, educators and others in his network to test thoughts about bilateral curatorial exchanges (this was a new angle on curatorship for several of those contacted) and investigate relevant recruitment methodologies.

To gain a sector-wide perspective on the current state of curatorship, Mark spoke with Dr Virginia Tandy OBE, the Foundation's independent adviser on its Museums & Galleries Fund, who confirmed the multiple pressures curators find themselves working under, and the significant opportunity that Protea could offer to individuals wanting to develop areas of research and their own professional practice. Mark also spoke with Ashraf Johaardien, CEO Business & Arts South Africa (BASA), to get a South African angle on the needs and aspirations of curators in the region. The issues were stark: sheer survival in the context of the impact of COVID-19, particularly the lockdowns that typified the government response to the pandemic. Bilateralism was seen as particularly critical in aligning support, building alliances leading to knowledge transfer partnerships, initiating lines of research independent of 'everyday work', and connecting professionals.

Application Process

An invitation to apply for the Protea programme was posted on the Foundation's website, with Mark using his network to conduct an impromptu telephone 'marketing campaign' involving calls to national and regional museums, the Museums Association, university collections departments, and other organisations both in the UK and South Africa to drum up interest in the Exchange programme.

The Protea team recognised that we had to recruit our South African cohort well in advance of the UK cohort due to the sometimes lengthy time involved in obtaining visas to enter the UK. Mariapaola used her extensive network of contacts to accelerate timely introductions to numerous individuals in South Africa to advance the recruitment process there, with Nobulali providing critical insight into some of the nuances that helped to promote the appeal of professional development aspects of the Exchange. In total, around 35 people applied.

The application process consisted of two-stages. Curatorial candidates were invited to submit:

*Expressions of Interest (EOI): Extended Deadline 15th February 2022**

Candidates were asked to provide full contact details and a CV and/or statement setting out their curatorial background, achievements, and research areas. They were asked to state which one of the three Thematic Areas they were interested in, and, if possible, identify in principle a relevant potential institution or individual curator in the other country to serve as their curatorial partner.

They were also asked to indicate their availability to participate in the Exchange over a 2–3-week period between April – June 2022, setting out their preferred residency dates.

*This was extended to provide additional time for South African curatorial candidates to respond to the invitation to submit, due to sector-wide capacity constraints identified by the project team and lack of access to museum buildings and computers due to many of these remaining closed

following the impact of COVID-19. Constraints also affected the capacity of some individuals in the UK to respond in a timely fashion, but these were less marked.

Issue of Request for Proposals (RFP): 22nd February 2022

Deadline for submission of RFPs: 31st March 2022

Selected candidates were invited to submit a Proposal detailing the subject of their research, a research question that participation in the Exchange would enable them to explore and their reasons for this. If candidates wished to frame their research question in the context of an existing relationship with a university/research centre in their country, this was encouraged.

The Proposal could already include a curatorial pairing in the partner country, or we offered to propose a curatorial 'match'. Contact details of two professional referees supporting their proposal were required for each curator. Candidates had to confirm which dates within the Exchange period they were able to commit to the project (they could propose more than one set of dates, as flexibility was appreciated when planning the cohort grouping).

We stated that candidates at this stage might in addition be asked to attend a short online video call hosted by the Executive Curator to provide more detail about their proposal, and to address queries.

Assessment Criteria

Establishing appropriate assessment criteria was a necessary step to ensure the application and selection process was as transparent and fair as possible. To ensure suitability for the programme, it was decided between Sufina and Mark that curatorial candidates had to have at least five years' existing curatorial experience. This criterion was put in place because we felt that the responsibilities inherent to taking up a place on the bilateral Exchange programme demanded a level of pre-existing professional understanding and the ability to work and operate somewhat independently across different parts of the museums sector.

Other criteria included:

Q. Research Enquiry:
3 grades: Focus, Relevance, Impact

Q. Use of Research Period
2 grades: Intention, Plan of Action & Exchange:

Q. Exchange Location:
Assessed by relevance to Research Enquiry

Q. Exchange Period:
Assessed if within stated programme period

Selection of Candidates

44 Expressions of Interest were received in total, which we considered was a good number considering the constraints on response capacity. 11 were from the UK and 33 from South Africa. The weighting towards South African candidates was not unexpected given that this bilateral Exchange had not been attempted before within the country. While the lesser number of UK applications perhaps reflected the as yet undeveloped focus on what we now recognise as the considerable potential for engagement with Southern African content and issues within British collections and curatorial research centres.

From these, Sufina and Mark sifted out 15 candidates we wished to invite to submit a Request for Proposal (RFP), using the Assessment Criteria set out above. When the RFPs were received, the project team (Sufina, Mark, Mariapaola, Nobulali) read through the proposals and shared thoughts on these via our internal assessment meetings. Generally, the quality of proposals was very high, showing the unique appeal of the Protea programme and the readiness of individuals and their organisations to take up the Exchange programme at a time of crisis when sector retrenchment was sadly notable. The 15 candidates selected to submit an RFP included a good mix of individuals from both countries, with many holding roles within national or regional museums or other state institutions, as well as independent researchers.

The final group selected comprised five women and three men of differing ethnicities and educational backgrounds.

Group A (selected for the Exchange)
From South Africa:

- Annelize Kotze, working with Chief Curator of Art & Social History, Iziko Museums of South Africa, Cape Town
- Dr Melissa Boonzaaier-Davids, Assistant Curator (Marine Invertebrates), Iziko South African Museum, Cape Town
- Francois Lion-Cachet, Curator, Public Engagement, Constitutional Court Art Collection, Constitutional Court Trust
- Dr Motsane Getrude Seabela, Curator of the Anthropology Collection, Ditsong Museums of South Africa's Cultural History Museum
- Dr Erica de Greef, Co-Director African Research Institute AFRI, Curator at Large in Fashion at Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCAA), Cape Town.

From the UK:

- Dr Andrew Mills, Curator for Archaeology & World Cultures, The Hunterian, University of Glasgow
- Dr Njabulo Chipangura, Curator of Living Cultures, The University of Manchester, Manchester Museum
- Alison Moloney, PhD candidate on the Advanced Practices Programme within the Visual Cultures department at Goldsmiths, University of London and Associate Member of the Centre for Fashion Curation, UAL.

Mark wrote individual decline letters to those applicants who were unsuccessful at either expression of interest or request for proposals stage, setting out selection evaluation and constructive feedback. Several applicants wrote back to express their appreciation of this bespoke feedback.

Revised Budget Allocation

While our budget had originally allowed us to support 6 curators, it was felt that such was the quality of applicants we had an opportunity to extend the provision to two extra curators: these were Alison Moloney and Erica de Greef, whose joint submission was particularly deserving of inclusion beyond the initial 6 applications accepted. An advantage of their pairing was that Erica was already based in South Africa, reducing the need for one leg of the bilateral exchange travel costs, as their project was solely focused on South African collections. This extension of capacity necessitated a revision of budget allocation as follows:

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | Initial Budget | Revised Budget |
|---------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Management costs | Executive Curator | £ 19,600.00 | £ 19,600.00 |
| | Project Management UK | £ 10,000.00 | £ 10,000.00 |
| | Project Management Expenses UK | £ 4,000.00 | £ 1,749.24 |
| | Project Management South Africa | £ 10,000.00 | £ 10,000.00 |
| | Project Management Expenses South Africa | £ 4,000.00 | £ 1,390.20 |
| Exchange costs | Return flights | £ 9,000.00 | £ 5,910.55 |
| | Accommodation & subsistence | £ 12,000.00 | £ 16,000.00 |
| | Curator R&D budget | £ 15,000.00 | £ 20,000.00 |
| | Hosting events/dinners | £ 5,000.00 | - |
| Contingency | 7% | £ 6,202.00 | - |
| Total Budget | | £ 94,802.00 | £ 84,649.99 |

Protea Curators Gallery



Annelize Kotze



Melissa
Boonzaaier-
Davids



Motsane
Getrude
Seabela



Erica de Greef



Francios Lion-
Cachet



Njabulo Chipangura



Alison Moloney



Andrew Mills

Section B – DELIVERY

Exchanges:

Preparatory Reports

Each Protea Curator was paid £2500 or SAR equivalent as a Research Stipend in addition to their travel and accommodation costs being covered by the Foundation. In order to keep track of the preparatory research work undertaken by the curators prior to them embarking on the Exchange, we asked them to produce interim reports on the status of their research.

This gave the curators the opportunity to focus their research narrative and build out their original proposal to fit the emerging background research they were uncovering. It gave us as the Protea team an inside glimpse into their intellectual direction of travel and enabled us to offer a steer, where the occasion suggested, about contacts they might find useful and guidance on methods etc. These interim reports were in general impressive, showing well targeted research objectives and a wealth of secondary material being uncovered, with all the preparatory reports meeting our expectations.

Areas of Research

- **Annelize Kotze:** Understanding the shared histories of ancestral human remains collections and developing curatorial strategy supporting repatriation efforts, working with The Hunterian, University of Glasgow.
- **Dr Melissa Boonzaaier-Davids:** An evaluation and complete inventory of the selected South African material stored within the natural history collections in both the UK and South African institutions, focusing on extant and fossil bryozoan collections.
- **Francois Lion-Cachet:** A comparative study determining how the law is visualised through art, architecture and judicial symbols at the Supreme Court of the UK (UKSC), in comparison to the Constitutional Court of South Africa (CCSA), examining the significance of such portrayals for our understanding of the law.
- **Dr Motsane Getrude Seabela & Dr Njabulo Chipangura:** Interpreting social biographies of cultural objects at Manchester Museum, UK and Ditsong Museum, South Africa.
- **Dr Erica de Greef & Alison Moloney:** Addressing the ongoing absences of Black South African fashion histories in the Bernberg Costumes & Textiles Collection held at Museum Africa.
- **Dr Andrew Mills:** An exploration of the shared histories of collections development and management between the Archaeology and Ethnography sections of The Hunterian and Iziko Museums.

Full RFPs have been retained and Preparatory Reports are included in Appendix B.

Cohort Dinners

A core aspect of the Exchange programme is the sense of fellowship we sought to achieve with those coming from South Africa to the UK and from the UK to South Africa. While each curator was focused on individual research outcomes, many of them were working in pairs, keen to

open up bilateral perspectives on shared research enquiries and to create a chapter of work where complementary skills and expertise could be brought into play. Curatorship thrives on interrogative engagement with peers, so the Protea programme, by creating new networks of curator professionals, will achieve lasting impact on individuals and the organisations they represent and the communities of practice they work within.

Our budget allocation allowed for two dinners – one generously hosted by Investec at their offices in London on Friday 27th May 2022, at which Sufina, Mark, and Nobulali were present, and another gracefully hosted by Mariapaola at Emzini Restaurant (“It’s All About Love”), Johannesburg on Saturday 25th June 2022.



27th May 2022, Investec, London



25th June 2022, Emzini, Johannesburg

Survey

Capturing the value of the Exchange was important – this was a first for the Foundation and while we could plan as much as we could to ensure the curators' experiences were positive and valuable, we wanted to understand how significant this unique opportunity was to them on actual delivery of the programme. Mariapaola and Nobulali devised an online survey to send to all 8 Protea curators. This asked them individually and anonymously the following questions:

- *Did you find the Protea project beneficial to your current curatorial work?*
- *What insights did you gain during the project?*
- *On a scale of 1-5 how did you find the quality of engagement with your bilateral host organisation?*
- *Are there elements of this project that will be beneficial to your own organisation?*
- *Would you recommend exchanges of this kind to fellow colleagues in your sector?*

The Survey findings are included in Appendix E, with some quotes included in the following section (Section C – Conclusion).

Section C – CONCLUSION

Reflections and thanks from Mark Irving, Executive Curator

There were many reasons not to do this project: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on lives, sectors, even the notion of international engagement, let alone on the ground research. Luckily, the voices at the end of the telephone when I rang various museums in South Africa and in the UK, and eventually got through to this curator or that head of department, told me otherwise. Incredulity mixed with fast-growing excitement was the usual response, not without a degree of scepticism that we could actually pull this off. But it's that pungent combination of intellectual curiosity and nagging wish to plug the research gaps or pull out that bottom-drawer project-in-the-making, which got the applicants to submit their EOIs and then their RFPs.

I'm very pleased with how the two-part application process worked – itself, a model drawn from commercial tenders that I have been familiar with in my former role as business lead for various design businesses. It enabled us to both extend our hand generously to a wide range of applicants and deploy fair assessment criteria to ensure we were always working for the right ends and offering support to all involved.

The realities of the Exchange didn't prove overwhelming. Hiring project managers who knew the field and could usually handle the occasional upset was a critical move. Being flexible on budgetary allocation and stretching that budget when the moment was right in order to achieve more outcomes – including more curators on the programme, more insights, more research produced and networks made – was important and, surely, in the spirit of the Foundation's own aim to advance wellbeing for people, society and the natural world.

The travails of curatorship are much the same everywhere. What our South African curators taught us, among many other things, was the significance of communities in understanding, revering, and honouring collections and of objects in making those communities, living and dead, somehow incarnate in the way that only artefacts with deep shadows and mesmerising penumbra can. I hope that curators in the UK and South Africa will continue to work together to create even greater value through collaboration and discovery.

I would like to thank Sufina for entrusting me with the devising and management of this exciting project, itself a part of the Foundation's laudable 50th Anniversary celebrations. Her determination to dig back into the Foundation's past and revive the Ellerman connection between the UK and South Africa has given these celebrations the due respect and authentic sense of 'place' that it merited.

It has been a delight and a privilege to learn about the incredible richness of the collections and their living and historic communities in South Africa, and to do that with the insight provided by both my Project Managers.

Mariapaola McGurk's indefatigable support and understanding of the arts and cultural sector in South Africa was invaluable, as has been her great networking and sheer pragmatism as befits a leading and highly original artist of her generation.

Dr Nobulali Dangazele's championing of creative enterprise and diplomatic explanation of the nuances of identity as vectored through diverse creative mediums has been inspirational, shaped by her own wide-ranging experience as an arts practitioner and business professional.

I would also like to thank Investec for their generously sponsored hosting of our London Dinner, which was greatly enjoyed by all those attending.

Most of all, I would like to thank our 8 Protea curators – Annelize, Melissa, Motsane, Francois, Alison, Erica, Andrew, Njabulo – for their energy, vision, and desire to reach out to each other through the fog of the COVID era, to illuminate new perspectives, open up new research avenues, and forge new networks. Without curators like these, collections lose their stories, and we would be all the poorer.

Reflections and thanks from the selected Protea curators

Below are a series of quotes and key findings from each of the Protea curators reflecting on their experiences. These are all taken from the survey that the curators were asked to complete, and the results of this survey are included in full in Appendix E.

In response to the question: *Did you find the Protea project beneficial to your current curatorial work?*, 100% of curators agreed that it had been beneficial and shared that it had allowed them to work more collaboratively and innovatively, including being able to learn more about best practice methodologies across institutions and countries, as well as helping them to take their abstract ideas and make them more concrete and tangible.

In response to the question: *What insights did you gain during the project?*, curators reflected on the way in which this exchange had enabled uncomfortable but ultimately beneficial discussions between institutions and had made the bureaucracy within sectors and countries more navigable. The exchange also offered more clarity on topics such as repatriation and the living context of some of their collections and how to anchor them in their past and the present.

In response to the question: *On a scale of 1-5 how did you find the quality of engagement with your bilateral host organisation?*, 86% rated it as a five (with this being the highest score possible) and curators shared how host organisations had been open and supportive and that there had been greater improvements in how organisations could share knowledge and key documentation, as well as how to link with indigenous cultural advocacy groups and similar more meaningfully.

In response to the question: *Are there elements of this project that will be beneficial to your own organisation?*, 75% of curators answered 'Yes' and curators offered a range of reflections including that the exchanges will directly influence and inform procedures and exhibitions in their own organisations, as well as the exchanges being good learning on how to collaborate and/or co-produce work more effectively.

In response to the question: *Would you recommend exchanges of this kind to fellow colleagues in your sector?*, 100% of curators answered yes, with curators talking about the exchanges being empowering, transformative, a unique opportunity to meet with fellow curators from different countries, and many also spoke about how it had been a profound experience in which they learned more about themselves, their potential and curatorial practice more widely. Many spoke about finding the experience enriching and something that they hope will be of value in their current and future work.

Section D- APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Project Description
- Appendix B: Curator Preparatory Reports
- Appendix C: Timetable
- Appendix D: Budget
- Appendix E: Survey
- Appendix F: Narrative Reports

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

This project's purpose is to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of John Ellerman Foundation in 1971.

This anniversary presents a special opportunity to build on the Foundation's existing work in supporting curatorial development, and to do so in a way that extends its understanding of what curating is, the forms it can take and where and how it can have impact. The project name *Protea* references the national flower of South Africa and, in its allusion to the legend of Proteus, acknowledges the transformative outcomes that can be activated through imaginative and resourceful curatorship. It heralds a new international curatorial exchange programme, in which selected curators from the UK and South Africa are invited to undertake field research in the form of 10-day bilateral visits taking place between April and early June 2022.

The project has two points of origin: a focus on curatorial development, which underscores the Foundation's existing commitment to supporting curatorial excellence through its Museums and Galleries Fund; and the longstanding connections between the Foundation's founder, Sir John Ellerman II, and the two countries in which he spent most of his life – the UK and South Africa.

The overarching strategic aim of the project – one that informs all the Foundation's activities – is to advance wellbeing for people, society and the natural world – delivered primarily through the Foundations' grant-making in the **Arts, Social Action** and the **Environment**.

The project's bilateral canvas reflects the wider emphasis placed by the UK Government on 'Global Britain', characterised by an accelerated interest in optimising existing ties between the UK and the rest of the world, including nations within the Commonwealth.

The Opportunity

The programme centres on six funded residential Curatorial Exchanges. These will consist of paired curatorial exchanges involving selected institutions in the UK and South Africa or paired freelance curators originating in each country, or a mix of these. The programme is aimed at curators who can demonstrate at least five years of professional curatorial experience. We are looking for significant evidence of an existing commitment to curatorial practice, as well as an ability to self-manage the Exchange's preparatory research and in-the-field residency phases.

Selected candidates are expected to work within the Curatorial Framework (see below) managed by Executive Curator Mark Irving.

The Curatorial Framework

The Framework strikes a balance between being directional and flexible in guiding and supporting selected curators on their chosen research area for the Exchange. It seeks to be inclusive and equitable in recognising that there are many forms of curatorship and approaches to curating – be these researching and interpreting collections and/or assets, preserving and deepening knowledge, forming connections between artefacts, places and identities, convening makers and audiences, interrogating the power relations between people and institutions, creating space for change.

This Framework injects curating with a thread of creative practice so that the situational context of the exchange becomes a medium through which curatorship is enacted, developed, and adapted through an active learning process that is inherently dynamic.

The importance of situational context and its reciprocal relationship with the curatorial 'agent' underscores the auto-ethnographic principle at the heart of this project's approach. Auto-ethnography is a form of research that involves self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic fieldwork and writing and has an extensive background literature. It combines situational analysis with subjective experiential record. The professional self is acknowledged in the research.

The Framework is shaped around three Thematic Areas – **Arts, Social Action, Environment** – relevant to the wider work of John Ellerman Foundation.

Curators are asked to respond to one of these Thematic Areas. It is recognised that there may be some overlap between these – e.g., a curator may investigate how cultural artefacts or cultural production can explore environmental issues – but the research question driving their Exchange should be clearly centred within one Area.

Curators will be invited to frame their research enquiry either as a relatively ‘deep dive’ in one phase of the Framework– Inform, Interpret, or Implement – or as a linear route through the three phases. The Executive Curator will work with the curators to establish the best approach that suits them, the context and research area.

| Phase | Environment | Social Action | Visual Arts |
|------------------|--|---|--|
| Inform | Caring for and securing knowledge about collections (e.g., natural history) | Researching a cause, measure, or objective to influence policy | Caring for and securing knowledge about collections (e.g., art & culture) |
| Interpret | Representing collections, stories, people that speak of the state of the land and its biodiversity and our place in it | Identifying/selecting specific contextual opportunities for scope and agency via social change events/processes | Representing collections, stories, people, and their connection to society, culture, and the natural world |
| Implement | Devise and activate a strategic plan to enhance, correct, or contest existing knowledge or models of behaviour | Devise and activate social change events or processes through consensual or contest-based approach | Devise and activate a strategic plan to enhance, correct, or contest existing knowledge or models of behaviour |

The Exchange

This consists of 3 parts: i) preparatory research, ii) the residential exchange*, iii) documentation.

Preparatory research: this should take place in the weeks/months leading up to the Exchange. This allows curators whose applications are successful to develop the research question set out in their proposal, locate where it sits within the Curatorial Framework, and define the tools they will use to manage their fieldwork. It is also a vital opportunity to establish and extend contact with the partner institution in the other country so that their experience on the Exchange is as optimal as possible.

To support this, each curator is provided with a sum equivalent to a maximum of £2500 to cover their time and expenses incurred at this stage.

Residential Exchange: We will pay for outward and return flights, visas, and provide a fixed budget for 10 nights hotel or equivalent accommodation in or near the site of research. We also provide a subsistence allowance for this period. Reasonable travel expenses within the host country are also covered, although it is expected that the fieldwork site is located close to the accommodation to minimise such expenditure.

There will be opportunity to get together with the other Exchange curators in-country as we hope the cohort will want to share their experiences and insights within the group both in person and/or through a relevant online forum. A Project Manager will be assigned to each group in each country to manage logistical issues and facilitate the Exchange experience.

*If COVID-19 restrictions prevent in-country residency, we have contingency plans to convert some or all of the residency into an online exchange, with re-allocation of the foreign travel budget to support in-country travel and support in terms of videography/documentation.

Documentation: We are not prescriptive about the nature of the outputs generated from the Exchange. These may take one or more formats, including essay, blog, video, report, lecture. These outputs should reflect the curator's experience on the Exchange, describing their research question and findings, bearing in mind the project's underlying auto-ethnographic approach.

These outputs will be made available for *Protea* and John Ellerman Foundation to disseminate through its platforms for an unlimited period as appropriate, although copyright of course remains with the curator. Any costs incurred by documentation are to be covered by the curator, although we are also seeking additional support towards these in the form of partner sponsorship.

The Benefits of the Exchange

This Exchange provides a valuable opportunity for individual curators to undertake field research that supports their personal and professional development. This could be through exploring new areas within their existing practice, thus deepening their expertise. Or it could be a planned encounter with contexts, questions, and subjects

outside their existing practice. It enables them to test their resilience and the applicability of their skills as well as giving them the opportunity to acquire new knowledge, international contacts and wider networks that will be of value to them and their institutions.

By connecting curators in the UK and South Africa, the project seeks to demonstrate what curators have in common but also to reveal what they have to offer each other and the contexts in which their fieldwork takes place. By participating in *Protea*, the successful candidates will be both ambassadors for their practice and their institutions as well as part of a new international enterprise that may serve as a model for others.

For the institutional partners involved – be these national or regional museums, archives, research centres, heritage asset owners, universities, local authorities – the Exchange provides, we hope, a valuable opportunity to build new contacts, to import and share expertise, to identify strategic openings, and to plan and advocate for action/change.

For curating as a practice and discourse, we hope this Exchange brings insights that illuminate the value of curating as a means for unlocking creativity, building alliances, fuelling support, influencing power, and driving change.

The Application Process

Curator candidates are selected through a two-stage process outlined below.

1) Expressions of Interest (EOI): **Extended Deadline 15th February 2022**

Candidates should provide full contact details and a CV and/or statement setting out their curatorial background, achievements, and research areas. They should state which one of the three Thematic Areas they are interested in, and, if possible, identify in principle a relevant potential institution or individual curator in the other country to serve as their curatorial partner. They should also indicate their availability to participate in the Exchange over a 2–3-week period between April – June 2022, setting out their preferred residency period(s).

2) Issue of Request for Proposals (RFP): 22nd February 2022
Deadline for submission of RFPs: March 2022 (date tbc)

Selected candidates will be invited to submit a Proposal detailing their proposed subject of research, a research question that participation in the Exchange will enable them to explore/answer, and reasons for this. If candidates wish to frame their research question in the context of an existing relationship with a university or research centre in their country, this is encouraged.

The Proposal can already include a curatorial pairing in the partner country, or we may suggest a curatorial 'match'. Contact details of two professional referees supporting their proposal are required for each curator. They must confirm which dates within the Exchange period they are able to commit to the project (they can propose more than one set of dates, as flexibility is appreciated as we plan the cohort grouping).

Candidates at this stage may in addition be asked to attend a short online video call hosted by the Executive Curator to provide more detail about their proposal, and to address queries.

All enquiries should be directed to Mark Irving, Executive Curator:

mark@ellerman.org.uk



Protea
International Curatorial Exchange



Understanding the shared histories of ancestral human remains collections and developing curatorial strategy supporting repatriation efforts

For the preparatory research period, Dr Wendy Black (Chief Curator: Arts and Social History), Ms Annelize Kotze (Curator: Social History) and fellow staff of the Archaeology Unit of Iziko Museums of South Africa have conducted research into Iziko Museums' archives to identify all historical participants in the trafficking and/or illicit collection of ancestral remains and associated sacred objects. This information has been compared to the information provided by the partner museum in Glasgow to develop a more accurate picture of the questionable activities of the museums relating to the above mentioned, to attempt to rectify past practices.

This action will allow for the creation of comparative resources that can be used at other museums locally and abroad, and will encourage other institutions to add to this data. This part of the project has key deliverables which are well underway, including:

1. Archival information is being gathered locally and abroad to start to develop joint curatorial processes with our UK partner institutions, the Hunterian and the Glasgow Museum, who want to repatriate ancestral remains to South Africa.
Archival research at both institutions has commenced, and policies and practices have been compared briefly. Meetings have been held with all partners to commence the development of specified curatorial practices.
2. Through systematic archival research, a searchable database is being populated, with the future goal of creating a digital map of known unethically collected ancestral remains and sacred objects.
The databases of the partner institutions have been compared with relevant information and guidance exchanged.
3. Professional services will be drawn on to ensure database compatibility with a future online platform which will be used for claim purposes (funding for this is currently being sourced from elsewhere). It is hoped that this will be similar to the data logging platform developed by the Field Museum in Chicago, USA (<https://repatriation.fieldmuseum.org/map>) with provision for [later expansions](#).

Iziko is very aware of the colonial legacies of museums which perpetuate in society. For dignity to be restored to communities from which remains and sacred objects were looted, it is important to shift the narrative and allow communities to have their voices heard and their stories told in museum spaces. Museums cannot be inclusive without community engagement. It is for this reason that research has been initiated. Often, there are descendant communities who show interest in, or have contacted the museum with regards to, the repatriation of their ancestors. To expand on the museum's community consultations, and to expose our project partners to consultation processes, we are busy planning a large two-day workshop with invited

members from affected communities (participants to be chosen by the communities themselves). Here we hoping to have practical dialogue regarding the history, care, research, and repatriation of human remains and associated objects, and prompt a solution-driven conversation on the decolonisation of anthropological and archaeological collections. Discussions have already commenced with government departments and key role players like the San Council, as well as with source communities from which the communities were selected from the current Iziko and Hunterian Museums catalogues of Human Remains accessions registers.

This community engagement is planned to take place on 27 and 28 June which will include government officials, the San Council, indigenous lawyers, community members and leaders that have been involved in international and local repatriations, museum professionals, and academics involved with the repatriation and policy planning of Human Remains. This workshop, for which the funding provided by the Ellerman Foundation, will be used, will allow community members the otherwise unafforded opportunity to not only question government and the museum regarding repatriation policies and procedures, but also provide the museum with the platform to show community members what practically happens behind the scenes of museum work. Notably, this engagement will provide essential experience to our Hunterian Museum partner, Dr Andrew Mills, and provide an opportunity for international exchange between South African community members and an institution holding unethically collected human remains abroad. Most importantly, there will be valuable exchange regarding the care and conservation provided to the human remains.

The partner curator from Glasgow will be involved in delivering this workshop and will be expected to moderate at least one session in order to have practical experience regarding the sensitivities and difficulties of community engagement regarding sensitive matters/"objects".

| Iziko Human Remains Community engagement workshop 20 June 2022 Cape Town South Africa | |
|--|--|
| 22 participants from communities and 20 participants from museums and government | |
| Areas (2 community elected participants per area) | Namibia, Botswana and Kwazulu Natal Kalahari, Upington, Keimoes, Brandvllei, Calvinia, Vredendal, Klawer, Colseburg |
| Accommodation | R15 000 |
| Catering | R10 000 |
| Flights | R30 000 |
| Stationary | R1000 |
| | R56 000 |

John Ellerman
Foundation



Revealing novel taxa in historic museum collections and the potential of fostering connections with institutions abroad

For the preparatory research period, Dr Melissa Boonzaaier-Davids (Assistant Curator: Marine Invertebrates) at the Iziko South African Museum (ISAM) and staff of the Natural History Museum of London (NHMUK) and Grant Museum of Zoology (GMZ) have conducted preliminary research into Museums' archives to identify targeted fossil and extant bryozoan (Phylum: Bryozoa) material from South Africa.

Poor access to collection holdings of South African specimens are housed in European natural science collections that have been collected through colonial practices. Russian-born British zoologist, George Busk, and English zoologist, Charles O'Donoghue, both worked on South African bryozoan material in the 19th and early 20th century, respectively. Both these collections are stored in the Natural History Museum of London (NHMUK) and each of them holds approximately 70 and 120 extant South African specimens, respectively. Approximately half of these are type specimens (i.e. the specimen, or each of a set of specimens, on which the description and name of a new species is based), however, as with many taxa, despite efforts to describe the South African bryozoan fauna, several taxonomic problems arose. These include cryptic speciation and Eurocentric tendencies, while existing historic collections within museums remain unvalidated due to the scarcity of specialist taxonomists and sparse availability of modern technology in South Africa. There is a critical need to revisit and investigate these collections, including some smaller and 'neglected' collections held at NHMUK from, for example, Arthur William Waters who published on South African bryozoans in the early 20th century.

A further complication is scientists working in European collections that hold South African specimens often do not possess the understanding of African regional faunas to accurately identify their own holdings and thereby make accessible critical data needed by South African scientists and decision makers. Beyond the critical need to train the next cohort of scientists (taxonomists) that will drive the generation and mobilization of foundational biodiversity information, South Africa has critical capacity gaps to perform taxonomy of many organisms that are indicators of climate change.

Bryozoans are amongst the three dominant groups of Paleozoic fossils while the oldest known species with mineralised skeletons occurred in the Early Ordovician, about 485-470 million years ago. For this reason, bryozoans are also considered as bio-indicators (i.e an organism used as an indicator of the quality of an ecosystem, especially in terms of pollution) and very useful in global change studies. However, to date, few studies have been conducted on fossil Bryozoa in South Africa, which is unfortunate considering southern Africa's rich fossil record.

In order to develop a more accurate estimate of species richness and diversity of bryozoans in South Africa, the targeted material need to be examined because these contribute to our baseline knowledge. Using state-

of-the-art Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) technology is critical and NHMUK is well-known for their high-tech SEM- and imaging facilities.

In addition to the intended research visit to NHMUK, I plan to visit buildings and places of historic, (some) scientific and cultural importance. Since my curatorial career started at ISAM, I became passionate and interested about arts, cultural and natural heritage conservation, and how to foster connections between museums locally and abroad. As a Board member of the Zoological Society of Southern Africa (ZSSA), I would also like to meet with members of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) to further establish meaningful connections.

The draft itinerary has been discussed between the relevant parties, and includes the following:

| Contact person | Affiliation | Proposed activities |
|---|--|--|
| Ms Mary Spencer-Jones | Senior Curator, Bryozoa (Natural History Museum of London) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examine the Busk, O'Donoghue and Waters collections, and any other relevant South African material; - SEM imaging for some of the targeted material; and - Draft a research plan that would contribute to a grant funding proposal. |
| Dr Paul Taylor | Scientific Associate (Emeritus Individual Merit Researcher) (Natural History Museum of London) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss practical/analytical methodology for fossil Bryozoa; - Examine the small collection of Need's Camp Bryozoa fossils; - SEM imaging for some of the targeted material; and - Draft a research plan that would contribute to a small grant funding proposal. |
| Dr Andrea Waeschenbach | Senior Researcher (Natural History Museum of London) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss practical/analytical methodology for molecular approaches used for extant Bryozoa. |
| Dr Olivia Fryman | Curator (English Heritage) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit two house museums of scientific and historic importance, namely Charles Darwin's Down House and Ranger's House. |
| Guy Cowlshaw / Sarah Durant / Andrew Cunningham | Board members (ZSL) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit London Zoo. |

FROM FRANCOIS LION-CACHET TO MARK IRVING –

Responding to your request for a research update.

As you know my PhD research entails the subject matter of my Ellerman proposal. I continue to work through the literature I have identified regarding the visuality of law in preparation for writing a research proposal. This has been incredibly helpful in order to formulate my research question for this exchange, and to give me a theoretical underpinning.

In the past couple of weeks I have prioritised research that incorporates the visuality of the UK Supreme Court. I am currently working through Leslie J Moran's book *Law, judges and visual culture* (published 2021). Moran is an emeritus professor in the School of Law, Birkbeck, University of London. The book specifically sets out the visuality of the UK legal system, with particular reference to the UK Supreme Court and the Royal Courts of Justice. This is giving me good preparatory insight into the architecture, regalia of judges, symbols and artworks found in the courts of England.

I have also taken note of all the newly commissioned works of art at the Supreme Court, as I would like to particularly focus on these as contemporary (re-)considerations of the depiction of justice.

Moran's article *Researching the visual culture of law and legal institutions: some reflections on methodology* has also been helpful in giving guidelines on how to use photography as a research method, focussed on the act of seeing and framing. I included reference to this in my proposal, but am engaging with the article still.

The book *Visualizing Law and Authority: Essays on Legal Aesthetics* edited by Leif Dahlberg has also been very insightful.

I have also been in contact with the UK Supreme Court again with regard to meeting with their Education and Visitor Services Manager and am waiting to hear back on requested access to some normally private areas of the court, including the library. Natasha Bennett has indicated that there are indefinite plans to revamp the UK Supreme Art Collection at some point, so I am interested to hear more about this. My visit to the public areas (outside, foyer, courtrooms, exhibition room) have been confirmed – these will be the primary focus of my inquiry. I have a booked slot for a guided tour of the court on Friday 27 May. I hope to attend a hearing/judgment while in London if there is one scheduled during the time I am there – I am keeping an eye on the court's schedule.

I have not been able to source the book *The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom: History, Art, Architecture* edited by Chris Miele, but have confirmed that it is available for purchase at the UK Supreme Court and will acquire it there.

I have also been arranging to be taken on a tour of the Royal Courts of Justice in Strand on the 26th of May as an additional site of consideration.

Thank you very much
Francois

PREPARATORY RESEARCH REPORT

Protea International Curatorial Exchange

Motsane Getrude Seabela

During the preparatory period we conducted desktop surveys that involved looking at the living cultures collection database at Manchester Museum to identify objects that were collected or appropriated from South Africa. This was done collaboratively between the two curators - Njabulo Chipangura being the curator of living cultures provided Motsane Seabela with the information which enabled her to do comparative analogy with the anthropological collection that she manages at Ditsong Museums of South Africa. Through database perusal of the two collections, it became apparent that these collections house a variety of material and ultimately we chose to focus our research on beadwork from the Zulu people. Comparative research of the two collections revealed that all the beadwork is from the Zulu people. By scrutinising additional museum documentation such as archival records and accession registers at the Ditsong collection it came to the fore that the beadwork was collected from KwaNongoma KwaZulu Natal. To this effect, our research has been narrowed down to only beadwork from KwaNongoma as a way to align with the allocated in situ period. The decision to focus on just one topic was informed by the large number of beadwork objects found in both the Ditsong and Manchester collections. Additionally, both myself and Dr Njabulo Chipangura took photographs of the beadwork from our respective collections so as to expand on the analogy.



Figure 1 Manchester



Figure 2 Ditsong



Although we had envisioned that Ms Seabela will undertake a pre-visit trip to KwaZulu Natal before coming to Manchester, logistics of accessing KwaNongoma have taken longer than anticipated. That said, individuals who are going to be assisting with our visit to the area have been identified and contacted. These individuals will assist with us observing the right protocols, interpretation duties and identification of the appropriate participants for the project. Even though Ms Seabela could not visit KwaNongoma, the documentation at Ditsong provides information that will fill some gaps with regards to background of the beadwork.

In addition part of our preparatory work involved the discussions and planning with Njabulo to include some of the Zulu beads from our provenance research in display cases on the top floor of the Egypt and Sudan Gallery at Manchester museum. The Manchester Museum is currently closed to the public is at undergoes a major capital project called Hello Future which will make the museum more caring, imaginative and inclusive upon its opening in February 2023. Major transformations within this period will see exhibitions that encompasses co-produced narratives through active collaborations with indigenous communities – this will be reflected in the new Belonging Gallery, Chinese Gallery and the South Asia Gallery. The Egypt and Sudan Gallery is also going to be revamped during this process and Njabulo has proposed that we include co-produced narratives on the significance and uses of beads within communities who we are going to speak to in KwaZulu Natal on his curatorial visit to South Africa in June. This is a fundamental biographical inclusion to the collection of beads at Manchester museum which has been absent as we have realised and discussed with Njabulo during our preparatory meetings. During my visit – Njabulo also proposed that I join a one day EMu Collections Management Database training that he will be undertaking together with Georgina Young who is the Head of Collections and Exhibition at Manchester Museum. This I see as a hugely important exercise for this exchange as this will enable us to get a much more clearer understanding of the collection that we will be working on and how its silent social biographies can be digitised for future accessibility. This digitisation will encompass living stories of objects which will be come out of the planned field work in Durban, KwaZulu Natal.

John Ellerman Foundation: Protea International Curatorial Exchange Preparatory Report

Njabulo Chipangura

Curator of Living Cultures

Manchester Museum

The University of Manchester

This short report detail the preparatory work that I have undertaken together with Motsane for the curatorial exchange programme that we were awarded by the John Ellerman Foundation. Between ourselves we have conducted different stints of desktop surveys in April and May 2022 at our respective museums. The focus has primarily been on a collection of Zulu beads at both Manchester and Ditsong Museums. This is a collection of beads which seemingly was appropriated from source communities in KwaZulu Natal by different collectors in the 1930's and were deposited in these two museums devoid of context and meaningful biographies. Henceforth, we agreed that we will conduct a comprehensive provenance research on the beads by first analysing them in a museum context and then extend to engage communities in KwaZulu Natal who are still using the same beads and have knowledge of their ritual and spiritual significance. At Manchester museum – we hold a collection of over one hundred different types of Zulu beads and through engaging with Motsane it came out that these beads have missing contextual information and have unknown provenances. There are similar beads at Ditsong museum as what Motsane observed when she was going through the collection during the desktop research. Broadly we plan to document these similarities through a comprehensive visual representation of the beads. High resolution images will be taken of the beads as we will be carrying out the provenance research at both museums. During this process Manchester museum is going to hire a professional photographer – Michael Pollard who is going to assist us in taking good detailed pictures of the beads. My follow up exchange trip to Pretoria will also include a visit to KwaZulu Natal where we envisage that we will be able to carry out ethnographic engagements with communities which will help us to give this collection a social life. Social biographies of the beads will be documented during these engagements through high resolution photography and video recording. Permissions will be sought first from our collaborators prior to the digital documentation exercise.

I have also discussed with Motsane a possibility of including Zulu beads in our display case at Manchester museum on the top floor of the Egypt and Sudan Gallery. Our museum is currently closed to the public as we undertake a major capital project called Hello Future which will make the museum more caring, imaginative and inclusive upon its opening in February 2023. Major transformations within this period will see exhibitions that encompasses co-produced narratives through active collaborations with indigenous communities – this will be reflected in the new Belonging Gallery, Chinese Gallery and the South Asia Gallery. The

Egypt and Sudan Gallery is also going to be revamped during this process and I proposed that we include co-produced narratives on the significance and uses of beads within communities who we are going to speak to in KwaZulu Natal on my curatorial visit to South Africa in June. This is a fundamental biographical inclusion to the collection of beads at Manchester museum which has been absent as we have realised and discussed with Motsane during our preparatory meetings. During Motsane's upcoming visit she will join a one day EMu Collections Management Database training that I will be undertaking together with Georgina Young our Head of Collections and Exhibition at Manchester Museum. This is an important exercise for this exchange as this will enable us to get a much more clearer understanding of the collection that we will be working on and how its silent social biographies can be digitised for future accessibility. This digitisation will encompass living stories of objects which will be come out of the planned field work in Durban, KwaZulu Natal. Below are some of the pictures of the bead collection at Manchester Museum that we will be analysing with together Motsane:









John Ellerman Foundation Protea International Curatorial Exchange

20-29 June 2022

Preparatory Research Report

by Alison Moloney (London) and Dr Erica de Greef (Cape Town)

1. Travel Preparations: (1 day each proposed – 1 day in total)

*Research into flights from London to Johannesburg by AM and Cape Town to JHB by EdG.
Insurance purchase + Airbnb accommodation research.*

2. Museum Africa Logistics for Research: (4 days proposed – 5 days in total)

Implement logistics for working in Museum Africa, securing additional support with lighting, conservation, photography equipment.

There has been on-going email communication with Pholoso More (Bernberg Costume & Textiles Curator, Museum Africa) regarding the permissions required to access the museum store. We were asked to write an MOU which outlined the purpose of our visit, our research methodology and responsibilities and deliverables. We drafted an outline agreement which has been with Museum Africa since 21st April. In a zoom meeting with Pholoso More, Lesego Mlambo (Collections Manager, Museum Africa) Wanda Lepphoto, Dr Erica de Greef and Alison Moloney on 24th May we were asked to sign the MOU and that Pholoso and Lesego would ensure that it was signed on their side also.

Prior to this online meeting we had asked Pholoso to identify the objects in his collection which were a) the oldest by date made and b) oldest by date accessioned into the collection. In the zoom meeting Pholoso confirmed that the electronic cataloguing system had highlighted the oldest items as parasols from the 1800s. The online cataloguing system was not sufficiently detailed enough to reveal the first items that had been collected or to specifically identify items from 1993 as we had also asked. There was a further discussion regarding the development of the museum's collection with regards to the Bernberg sisters' collection and the Roodepoort Museum collection, and the various accessioning challenges relating to these collections.

We have been invited to make an exhibition during our research time at the museum. We have proposed that instead we would be able to test a small display in one of the cabinets where we will possibly invite feedback from the audience to the objects. We have a second meeting scheduled with Pholoso, Lesego, Wanda, EdG and AM. We will confirm if they have selected a cabinet, and if so the scale. This will determine if we can include a mannequin, for example. In addition, we will confirm a dedicated work-station for the duration of our research.

In the meantime, EdG, AM and Wanda Lepphoto have met on zoom on the following dates:

Thursday 14th April: 2 hours to discuss next steps in navigating the 16,000 objects in the Bernberg Costume and Textiles store. Wanda enquired about access to the ethnographic collection which was facilitated via Pholoso More.

Wednesday 27th April: zoom call with Wanda, EdG and AM. We discussed working into key dates as a methodology for curatorial enquiry as well as mirroring the dates that were revealed in the ethnographic collection. Desk research into key dates in South African history has been undertaken which represents markers of oppression, resistance and liberation. Further desk research into the objects to be photographed and curatorial strategies to be applied has been undertaken and lectures attended and key texts read as part of this ongoing negotiation of the collection.

Wednesday 11th May: zoom call with Wanda, EdG and AM. We discussed the outcomes of Wanda's visit to the ethnographic and photographic collections, key objects and photographs which he found and how these might represent a starting point to navigate the Bernberg Costume & Textiles collection.

Tuesday 17th May: we met again in zoom to discuss our research and findings and to make preparations for the phone call with Pholoso More and Lesego Mlambo.

3. Workshop/Lecture at Wits: (1 day proposed - this will be delivered at a later date online)

In our application for the award, we proposed a workshop/lecture development on Contemporary Curatorial Practice Programme with the Course Leader, Nontobeko Ntombela at the University of Witwatersrand. However, as the dates for our visit have changed since applying for the grant and at the request of the John Ellerman Foundation, the dates for our visit now fall in university holiday times so this will not be possible. We are in talks with Nontobeko Ntombela about delivering this lecture online at a later date.

4. Public Talk (2 days proposed - these arrangements are on-going and 2 days will be met for the work involved securing a venue and delivering this talk)

Preparation for public talk/workshop at MOMO Gallery Johannesburg: liaison between speakers, designing and distributing invites, social media promotion, press release distribution. Theme Social Action: to discuss Colonialism/Fashion, Curatorial Practices, Opportunities/Challenges. On panel: Alison Moloney, Erica de Greef, Wanda Lepphoto, Nontobeko Ntombela. Venue: Gallery MOMO <https://www.gallerymomo.com/>

We have written a one-page proposal on the public talk which outlines the theme of the event, and the possible speakers as well as the logistical implications of hosting such a talk. We sent this document to Gallery MOMO and the Bubblegum Club.

Friday 22nd April: we had a zoom call with Wanda, EdG and AM and Odysseus Shirindza, Manager at Gallery MOMO to discuss the Social Action panel discussion. Although this venue has been offered to us to host a roundtable panel discussion, this would only be possible for a recorded discussion. It would not be possible to invite an audience in. We have since been in discussion with the Bubblegum Club and we are waiting for confirmation. In the meantime, we have started to explore other venues.

5. Further Visits to Possible Collaborators and Venues: (1 day Proposed - 1 day undertaken)

Organising visit to Javett Art Centre, University of Pretoria, Goethe, British Council and desk research into other possible partners. Engaging with African fashion researchers/writers eg. Felipe Mazibuko, Maria Mccloy, Bongani Madondo. Gabi Ngcobo, Curatorial Director of the Javett Art Centre. <https://javettup.art/>

As we have been invited to curate a small display at Museum Africa, it might not be possible to make a visit to Pretoria as we had hoped. We are still working with Museum Africa to establish the scale of ambition for the display.

In the meantime, EdG has met with Grace Meadows, British Council Southern Africa Arts Manager to discuss the project. Grace has ring fenced some funds for the public talk. AM met with Joao Guarantani, Deputy Director Architecture, Design, Fashion for the British Council in London, who has asked to be updated with our plans for the future of this project.

AM contacted Cara Snyman, Arts Manager, for the Goethe based in Johannesburg. We have undertaken research into their museums programmes which includes Museum Conversations and MuseumFutures Africa project and we hope that there might be opportunities to link our project to these programmes in some way. Cara has responded positively to the invitation, and has made dates available for a meeting (at Museum Africa, if this is possible).

EdG contacted Molemo Moiloa of Andani Africa (key lead in the MuseumFutures Africa project) with an invitation to contribute to the panel discussion. However, Molemo is based in Berlin, and suggested we meet on Zoom, and has invited us to include her research assistant Phumzile Twala in our discussions.

Given the importance of the indigenous dress objects held in the Ethnographic Collection we have reached out to Dr Njabulo Chipangura, Curator of Living Cultures, The University of Manchester, Manchester Museum and Ms Motsane Getrude Seabela, Curator of the Anthropology Collection, Ditsong Museums of South Africa's Cultural History Museum to arrange a meeting when we are in South Africa.

6. Round Table Discussion on return from research visit (1 day proposed)

Initial organisation of round table discussion with curators and academics post-visit and hosted on zoom. Including amongst others: Profs Irit Rogoff (Goldsmiths) Carol Tulloch (Chelsea College of Art) Judith Clark (London College of Fashion); Dr George Mahashe (University of Cape Town), Dr Christine Checinska (V&A) Pholoso More (Museum Africa).

The fore-mentioned names have all been updated on the project and the John Ellerman Foundation Award. Preparations for a round-table discussion are on-going and we are exploring other possible invitees could include Molemo Moiloa and Phumzile Twala with whom we have scheduled a zoom call.

Interim Research Report – Dr Andy Mills, The Hunterian, University of Glasgow

13th June 2022

My principal research activities in recent weeks have focused on trying to uncover additional biographical information about the donors of South African archaeological and ethnographic material to the Hunterian's collection. As mentioned in my presentations to the Ellerman Foundation's staff and curatorial exchange colleagues, this is not a straightforward undertaking: Our Ethnography Register was compiled in the period 1943-1945; it is therefore separated from dates of accession by some decades in most cases. Those listed include:

| Recorded Donor | Year | Details |
|---|---------------|---|
| Dr Johann Balthazar Knobel M.B.ChB. | (1877) | Transvaal material: Afrikaner stone pipes, Zulu spears, woven armlets and necklets, BaVenda spoons; the skeletal remains of one person. |
| Dr Dalziel | 1883 | Powder horn, knife, musket ball, |
| Unknown | 1883 | Bead armlets |
| Transferred from Andersonian Museum | 1889 | Leather figures, girdle-pendants, bags, KhoiSan. |
| Miss Fullarton | Dec 1893 | Zulu head ornament, brooch, and three fibre armlets. Natal. |
| Miss Ramsay | 1897 | Bead girdle, |
| Dr G. Douglas Ross | 1899 | Bead necklaces |
| Unknown | Pre-1901 | Xhosa apron |
| Dr Allen Thomson, Professor of Anatomy | 1904 | Arrows, knife; the skeletal remains of one person. |
| Dr Percy Ward Laidler FSA (Scot) | 1921, 1925 | Collection of 400 archaeological items from NW South Africa, plus ethnographic items from SA, Namibia and Botswana; the skeletal remains of 4 people. |
| Unknown Student, Queen Margaret College, Glasgow | 1935 | Zulu nguni shield. |
| Dr George Burnside Buchanan, MB.Ch.M; d.22 Feb 1943. George Burnside Buchanan was the son of Prof George Buchanan; both taught surgery at the University for many years. G.B. Buchanan served as a Civil Surgeon in the <i>South African Field Force</i> during the South Africa War (1899-1902). | 1936 | Fly-whisk. |
| Mr & Mrs D.C. Andrew | 1939 | Zulu spears, clubs, walking stick, hat, ornamental shield. |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| Donated by Dr W.B. Stevenson, Professor of Hebrew & Semitic Languages | 1946 | Selection of drawings of San petroglyphs. |
| Transferred from Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum, Glasgow. Formerly in the private collection of Robert Lockhart Bryden, FSA (Scot); 26th May 1866-1943 | 1983 (pre- 1943) | Beaded purse, armlets, necklaces. |
| Scottish Development Board | 1978 | Bead necklaces, walking stick, bow, incised bottle gourd. |

As should be clear from the above table, the data available about donors ranges from excellent to essentially nothing – and that listed above contains several significant advances made in recent weeks. Most recently, to identify further biographical details about these donors, I have undertaken preliminary surveys of the University of Glasgow’s general histories and matriculation records, as well as UK family history and national biography resources, and visiting the collections of the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, and the Wellcome Collection Library and the British Library in London. This has enabled me to add biographical details, and some cases, positively identify individuals for the first time.

It is hoped that follow-up research in the collections of Iziko Museums, and South African archives, will enable us to further identify the members of this list of donors, and to improve the attribution of originating ethnic group for the ethnographic objects in this collection. Those highlighted are known to also have donations to Iziko Museums Cape Town, and are our two principal donors of South African material.

[illegible]

| ACTUAL vs ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR THE PROTEA PROJECT | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | ESTIMATED BUDGET | ACTUAL BUDGET | | |
| Management costs | Executive Curator* | £ 19,600.00 | £ 19,600.00 | | |
| | Project Management UK | £ 10,000.00 | £ 10,000.00 | | |
| | PM Expenses UK | £ 4,000.00 | £ 1,749.24 | | |
| | Project Management SA | £ 10,000.00 | £ 10,000.00 | | |
| | PM Expenses SA | £ 4,000.00 | £ 1,390.20 | | |
| Exchange costs | Return flights | £ 9,000.00 | £ 5,910.55 | *Njabulo return baggage costs to be added | |
| | Accom & subsistence | £ 12,000.00 | £ 16,000.00 | *2 extra curators took part in the exchange | |
| | Curator R&D budget | £ 15,000.00 | £ 20,000.00 | *2 extra curators took part in the exchange | |
| | Hosting events/dinners | £ 5,000.00 | - | *Included in the PM SA fee, UK dinner sponsored | |
| Contingency | 7% | £ 6,202.00 | - | | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | | £ 94,802.00 | £ 84,649.99 | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

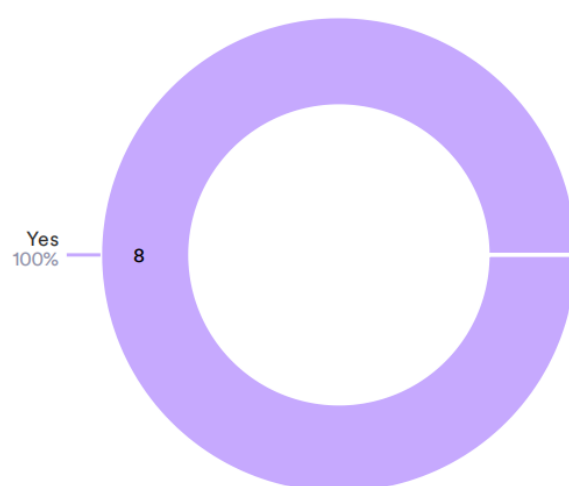
THE PROTEA PROJECT SURVEY FEEDBACK REPORT

The Protea Project survey has been completed by the 8 participating curators with the intention being for John Ellerman to get a sense of the project and its impact on the curators and their respective institutions. Below are highlights from the survey with the full survey available in a separate document.

1.

Did you find the Protea Project beneficial to your current curatorial work?

8 Responses



KEY FEEDBACK:

- It has enabled huge advances in developing the procedures and identifying key parties for repatriation (1)
- Allowed collective work on shared collections, collaborations, and professional networks – including with other curators on the project (8)
- Enabled best practice methodologies to be established between museums (2)
- Allowed in person dialogue to take place with tangible opportunity to view collections (2)
- Broken down ideas from abstract idea to a concrete proposal (2)
- Opportunity to engage with an audience on the research (2)
- Institutional learning and growth (1)
- Further development on research and curatorial comparisons (2)
- Innovation: The nature of the project allows freedom for creative and explorative research (1)

2. Insights gained during the project:

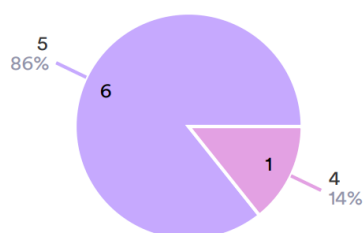
KEY FEEDBACK:

- Significantly developed familiarity with South African management of archaeological collections
- Clarity on requirements for UK institution for the imminent repatriation of indigenous groups.
- Through partnership it was possible to get through the heaviness of the museum landscape
- Beneficial and uncomfortable discussions regarding decolonisation of museum spaces, the importance of community engagement and the future of museums.
- Getting to understand the social biographies from an auto=ethnographic perspective
- Getting a better understanding of the living culture where the collection is from, as well as a sense of context and meaning
- Visiting major museums on this exchange enables one to expand their worldview, as well as a frame of reference.
- The incorporation of an executive curator was very beneficial as it encouraged accountability.

3.

On a scale of 1 to 5 how did you find the quality of engagement with your bilateral host organisation

7 Responses- 1 Empty



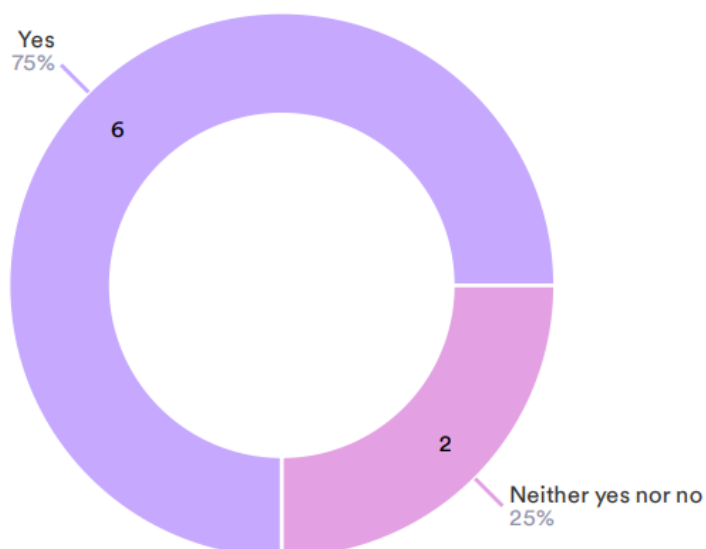
KEY FINDINGS:

- It is absolutely vital for engagement with national museums, the DAC, and indigenous cultural advocacy groups in order to realise repatriation. Indigenous cultural advocacy groups need to play a lead role. (2)
- The museum was very open and supportive with potential for further engagement. (4)
- There is interest from funding organisations such as Goethe, British Council and the French institute to further support these types of initiatives. (2)
- Curatorial practices are changing museum spaces
- Great learnings through the analysis in terms of gender dimensions, spiritual and ritual significances of different collections.
- Key documentation and knowledge-sharing of the collection

4.

Are there elements of this project that will be beneficial to your own organisation?

8 Responses



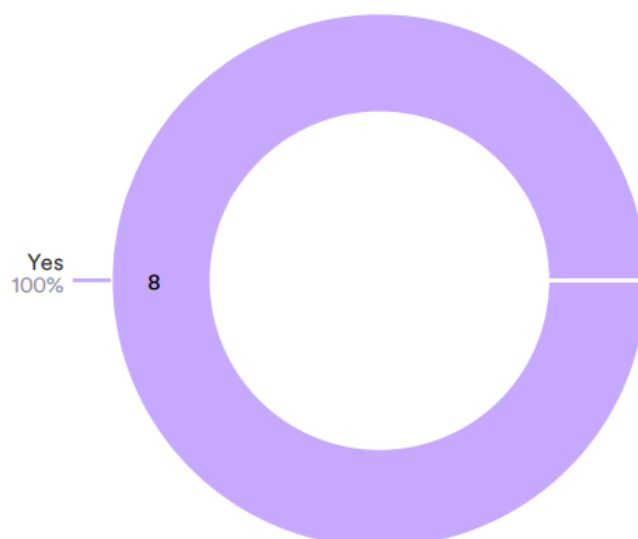
KEY FINDINGS:

- All the project activities have been central to the benefit of the museum
- The findings will directly inform procedures, and therefore future repatriations to other nations, as well as the basis of our interpretation and collections management
- Establishing meaningful and long-term relationships between museums
- Collaborations can benefit best museum practice and learnings about what went right and wrong
- The importance of owning up to the colonial history of museums and making an effort to change this
- The biographical information from the fieldwork will be embedded in a new exhibition at the museum
- Co-produced narratives through active collaborations with indigenous communities
- Accessibility of the research through publicising on the website
- Enhancing the provenance of the collection, as well as correcting the representation.

5.

Would you recommend exchanges of this kind to fellow colleagues within your sector?

8 Responses



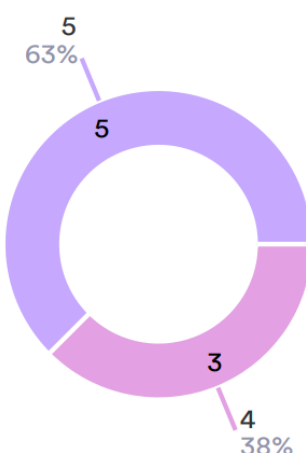
KEY FINDINGS:

- The experience has been empowering and transformative
- I would not have had the opportunity to meet curators from the other country without this exchange
- This project is important as the only way to decolonise and unlearn is to listen differently and to experience first-hand the contexts in which each other is working (2)
- The experience, expertise and knowledge gained from fellow curators is invaluable for personal growth, professional growth, and institutional knowledge
- An opportunity to learn about different curatorial practices as well as how to collaborate within a shared knowledge production approach.
- It enables connection to be made that enriches the understanding and curating of important collections.
- It is an act of bilateral exchange between SA and UK, strengthening cultural and professional ties between the two countries
- The programme is like none other I have been a part of as there is no space for sub-standard work. It makes you realise your potential – it encourages you to break boundaries of conventional curation.

6.

How would you rate the overall project management of this exchange?

8 Responses



KEY FINDINGS:

- Seamless, professional, and personally delightful experience of support
- The dinners were a great opportunity to meet with other curators and foster a deeper understanding of diverse practices and efforts that are transforming the field.
- The project logistics team were amazing
- This is a brilliant and well thought out exchange which was long overdue and has come at the right time when museums in UK are being challenged to account and show empathy towards collections that were appropriated from Africa.
- The curatorial exchange is a step in the right direction as SA is not the exception to this conversation.
- All JEF team members were responsive and on hand with any issues
- While one project manager is organised, present and was always on top of things and following up on activities, with the other I often felt neglected and even abandoned at times.

7. If you were to advise a second cohort, what would you advise them to do in preparation for the project?

KEY FINDINGS:

- A longer time prep for the application process, as well as more time after the notification of success would enable successful applicants to better establish the timetable of activities.
- Have a defined research question. (2)
- Establish networks and concrete plans before the visit as these can enrich the exchange (3)
- Think critically about collection practices in museums in the UK and SA and what should be done to decolonise these spaces from a praxis perspective.
- It is up to the prospective curators to motivate for their respective projects. The framework of the project worked well.
- Choose a partner curator and submit a joint application as this makes the process easier.
- They should be ready to move away from the usual programmes of too many restrictions and explore their creativity.
- Time management is important in delivering on your commitments.
- Make the most of the exchange period for future projects.

NARRATIVE REPORTS

Produced by Dr Nobulali Dangazele

Annelize Kotze & Dr Andrew Mills

The practice of systematically procuring indigenous human remains for a scientific enquiry conducted within the race paradigm, and for substantiating prevalent evolutionary theories, was quite common in the colonial era. It was thus within the standard practice when Dr Louis Péringuey (Director of the South African Museum 1906 – 1924), invested an amount of £25 in the archaeological expedition to the Richtersveld by Dr PW Laidler (writer, editor and socio-cultural historian) in 1923, with an expectation of receiving 12 complete human skeletons in return. Dr Laidler delivered six sets of excavated human remains to him.

Indigenous burials and other sacred sites have been excavated by archaeologists, scientists, anthropologists and museums without permission or consultation. Human remains were collected, studied and displayed without any thought to the wishes and beliefs of the dead or their present-day descendants. Conflicting views on the interpretation of what is ethical and respectful in treating human remains have led to over three decades of ethical and moral debate. A debate put to rest, at least a portion thereof, by the collaborative work of The John Ellerman Foundation Protea Curatorial Exchange recipients Ms Annelize Kotze and Dr Wendy Black, Iziko Museums of South Africa, Cape Town & Dr Andrew Mills, The Hunterian, University of Glasgow.

Titled "Understanding the shared histories of ancestral human remains and associated object collections, and developing curatorial strategy supporting repatriation efforts", the project fundamentally aims to "develop and crystallise the definitions of a working national, and international repatriation process for South African human remains, and to make identifications of the institutions and cultural groups that should be involved."

This project not only interrogates the museological treatment of human remains from their excavation, storage, study, retention and display to their repatriation but also provides a practical guide through its process of the repatriation of remains of Kehoe, San, Griekwa from the Hunterian Museum. The process involved the questioning of repatriation policy, the identification of descendant communities and their involvement throughout, collections management and the ethics of appropriate treatment, and the development of a working process model for the delivery of national and international repatriations of South African human remains.

In a month-long work program, Annelize Kotze was placed in Glasgow, where she visited the Kelvingrove Museum, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow Museum Resource Centre, The Burrell Collection, Glasgow Life Open Museum and the Hunterian Museum. Furthermore, Andy Mills was placed at Iziko Museums, Cape Town, where she visited the Iziko's

Archaeology unit, Physical Anthropology collections, Iziko's Social History Resources Centre, Upington Museum, the National San Council in the Kalahari, and the lands of the ‡Khomani San.

This exchange resulted in the exploration of how the museums engage the public through access, displays and exhibitions, labelling of objects, guided tours, and contextualising objects through telling their history and backstories. Most importantly is how to source communities involved in the advising, curating and decision-making in the retention of authenticity and relevance.

An essential conversation regarding sensitivities in what is displayed and how (and for what purpose to which target audience) took place in the Hunterian Museum after viewing human casts (of women who died during childbirth). Discussions were had regarding the identification and classification of objects and community engagements Iziko has had over the years with various communities regarding the categorisation of not only the use of objects but also the derogatory 'classification' of certain tribes and how they would like to be referred to in the present day. All these aspects were an imperative component in the bigger mission of the repatriation of the remains unethically taken from African soil. This tied the complete project together from the position of the UK, moving towards hands-on repatriation and community engagement practices.

The future success of the joint Iziko-Hunterian plan to repatriate six individual San remains from Glasgow to South Africa depended on Annelize and Andy (representing the Glasgow and Iziko museums) to establish a rapport and build relationships with the parties mentioned above. Following a deep educational immersion in the history of the Kehoe and San peoples (slavery, apartheid, and the post-apartheid era) during Andy's South African visit, clarity was established on the importance of community consultation in collections management of highly sacred material and the ritual necessity of the repatriation process. The ecosystem of this community relied on interworking the repatriation policies of both the National San Council and the South African national policy on the repatriation of human remains with the ritualistic guidance of the ‡Khomani.

Hammil and Cruz (1994: 195-96) acutely articulate the vein of this work in the words, "Any disruption, delay or halt in that journey (the afterlife) is a violation of personal religious beliefs to that individual, to his descendants who incorporate and are responsible for his spirit in their daily lives, religious ceremonies, and to those of the present and the future who will embark on that journey. Therefore when we find our ancestors' bodies and graves desecrated by the hundreds of thousands, we consider this an intolerable violation of religious freedom which must be addressed and resolved."

Dr Melissa Kay Boonzaier-Davids

Marine invertebrates (i.e. animals without a spine) have crucial ecological functions in the world's oceans, including serving as the foundation of various food chains. Crabs, corals

and jellyfish are among the most well-known because of their commercial and ecological importance. Less is known about other ecologically essential taxa such as bryozoans (Phylum Bryozoa), also referred to as "moss animals" or "sea mats". Bryozoans are aquatic, colonial animals that typically attach themselves to various substrates such as rocks, shells and seaweed.

Both extant and fossil bryozoans are increasingly being recognised as the dominant components of many benthic communities and useful in biodiversity conservation, climate change and paleoenvironmental studies. Most bryozoans have 'skeletons' made of calcium carbonate and, for that reason, are amongst the most abundant fossils in the world. However, in South Africa, studies on fossil bryozoans have been neglected and are still largely unexplored and unknown, which is unfortunate considering southern Africa's rich fossil record.

Despite efforts to describe the South African bryozoan fauna, several taxonomic problems arose, such as cryptic speciation and Eurocentric tendencies. At the same time, existing historical collections within museums remain unvalidated due to the scarcity of specialist taxonomists and the sparse availability of modern technology in South Africa. To address some of the research questions, I recently returned from a research visit abroad after applying for a grant from the John Ellerman Foundation (JEF) for the Protea International Curatorial Exchange programme to visit mainly the Natural History Museum in London, United Kingdom (UK).

As an assistant curator, specialist taxonomist, bryozoologist and science communicator, the 10-day exchange programme from 16th-27th July 2022 allowed me to meet with established researchers in my field, learn more about the research area and methodology of interest, and expand my network of contacts. One of the researchers, Dr Andrea Waeschenbach, a senior researcher at NHM London, works in molecular phylogenetics and systematics of bryozoans and tapeworms. Using molecular techniques has become integral to systematics in many taxa, particularly cryptic species or problematic genera. Through our discussions, I learnt more about these molecular techniques and how to use the different molecular approaches to resolve complex bryozoan genera.

Dr Giles Miller, Curator of Micropalaeontology, graciously gave me access to essential fossil bryozoans from Needs Camp in South Africa lodged at NHM London and prepared by Dr Paul Taylor, a senior researcher at NHM London. The latter specialises in bryozoans and invertebrate palaeontology. The upper and lower Needs Camp quarries in the Igoda Formation, situated about 20 km northwest of East London, are of great scientific importance and include corals, foraminifera, bivalves etc. dating to the Late Cretaceous (100.5 - 66 Ma) era. Since fossil bryozoans are understudied in South Africa, examining the material identified by Dr Taylor has given me profound insights into the methods used to prepare and identify fossil bryozoans.

Historic collection holdings of South African models are housed in European natural science collections collected through colonial practices. Not only are we developing capacity and training in invertebrate taxonomy, but poor access to many types of specimens

hampers the process of validating and describing species. Russian-born British zoologist George Busk and English zoologist Charles O'Donoghue worked on South African bryozoan material in the 19th and early 20th centuries, respectively. Mary Spencer-Jones, a Senior Curator for Bryozoa, gave me access to these critical collections lodged at NHM London.

Further highlights of this exchange programme included research discussions about the extinct Quagga and Charles Darwin's scientific collections at the Zoological Society of London's (ZSL) Library, the home of Charles Darwin (Down House) and NHM Tring. Part of these discussions also centred around science communication strategies, which I am passionate about. Science communication, in the form of public engagement and outreach, is an integral part of being a researcher and museum curator. For me, continuing to build an extended multidisciplinary network has been valuable for new ideas and insights into different science communication approaches.

Networking is highly relevant to an early career researcher, and, as a Council Member of the Zoological Society of Southern Africa (ZSSA), I was honoured to have had the opportunity and the privilege to get to know some of the team members at ZSL and hopefully establish a meaningful relationship between the two societies.

For some insights, I met with Linda DaVolls from the ZSL, the Head of Scientific Publications and Meetings. Here, I could share my research and science communication activities with others which led me to receive information about useful potential funding sources and current research projects.

The grant covered my expenses such as food, accommodation, travel and research expenses. This was very useful because costs tend to accumulate quickly, especially in more expensive countries. Thank you to all involved, particularly the curator Mary Spencer-Jones, Dr Giles Miller, Andreia Salvador and Jon Ablett from NHM London, and Dr Olivia Fryman from English Heritage, for their effort and assistance. Overall, the foundation's team and programme coordinators were unique and always made me feel at ease, no matter the situation. A special thanks to Dr Andrea Waeschenbach and Hester van Schalkwyk from NHM London, Linda DaVolls from ZSL and Imogen Weitman for the extra time they have contributed.

Dr Njabulo Chipangura & Dr Motsane Getrude Seabela

In an era where there's a loud call for all that is looted or stolen African heritage to be returned to Africa, the work of Njabulo Chipangura and Motsane Seabela on beads is an exciting proposition, one that says whether gifted or plundered, objects are an embodiment of the history as well and the heritage of the subjects or the people that developed them.

Chipangura, Curator of Living Cultures – Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, and Seabela, Curator of Anthropology – Ditsong Museums of South Africa, Pretoria, have been paired by the John Ellerman Foundation through their shared interest in restoring

proper context along with ritual and spiritual significance in the salient collection of Zulu traditional beadworks .

It is in this spirit that Chipangura holds a common thread on one end with Seabela on the other. These Protea International Curatorial Exchange recipients, together through their work, weave colours of history and narrative back into a collection of Zulu beads at Manchester and Ditsong Museums. A project whose time has come, or perhaps was long overdue?

The project has a historical tie to a string of events. The 2017 French presidency of Emmanuel Macron brought with it his visit to the [University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso](#), West Africa, and subsequently his speech on the return of many of Africa's treasures. Macron proclaimed in this landmark promise that "African heritage cannot solely exist in private collections and European museums... Within five years, I want the conditions to exist for temporary or permanent returns of African heritage to Africa."

Whether it be tied to this speech or simply the swift-moving needle of time, within five years (2021), Jesus College, Cambridge, returned a bronze sculpture of a cockerel to Nigeria, becoming the first U.K. institution to return one of the famed Benin Bronzes. The next day, the University of Aberdeen in Scotland handed over a bronze of the head of an Oba; Quai Branly Museum soon followed this in Paris, handing over 26 artefacts to Benin.

Beyond the financial value of these artefacts is their cultural significance that takes the fore. The repatriation carries with it not only a binding of culture and heritage to a people of its provenance but also a sense of great pride and dignity – a remembrance of the sheer brilliance in their ancestry.

Henceforth, in a Curotopia, a concept that looks at an emerging active reciprocal relationship between indigenous people and museums, the curators have taken the beads as objects and enabled them to embody not just the physical form but also the narrative as well as the representation of what the things meant to the community that made them at the time at which they were crafted as artefacts, and what it means to the community that lives with them and reflects on them.

Through their preparatory period, the pair conducted desktop surveys at their respective museums in April and May 2022. Their comparative research led to the identification of objects collected or appropriated from communities in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, by different collectors in the 1930s and deposited in these two museums devoid of context and meaningful biographies.

Comprehensive provenance research through the analyses of these beads in a museum context proved inadequate, as the source communities are still quite prevalent in KwaZulu Natal. The curators did not want to impose their identification of the objects. Instead, they opted for Co-curatorship, thus prioritizing social history and collecting contemporary

cultures in dialogue with source communities. They collaborated with those who know the bead's ritual and spiritual significance – lending meaning from the root and exploring the ethos of "Curotopia", as it were.

Alison Moloney & Dr Erica de Greef

Fashion has been interwoven in the fabric of one's identity of choice for centuries. History speaks of how in the late 1700s, the then Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, relied on the meticulous designs of her dressmaker Rose Bertin (widely credited with bringing fashion to the forefront of popular culture) to help her "combat her enemies with style". More than a weapon and a shield, her fashion sense was also somewhat of a peering window into her soul. The Queen created a persona that allowed the citizens of France to see her, thus connecting with her and her lifestyle. Therefore, it is within reach to assert that understanding the type and timing of the fashion of a particular people forms part of the unveiling of identity and an unravelling of history. It is this unravelling that the project "Confronting the Collection" is concerned with – using fashion objects as a catalyst for evoking repressed stories of histories.

Confronting the Collection: unpacking the complex histories held within the fashion collection at Museum Africa, Johannesburg, is a project tailored with the support of the John Ellerman Foundation. This is a collaborative endeavour by Alison Moloney (British researcher and curator), and Dr Erica de Greef (South African curator) along with Wanda Lephoto (South African visual artist).

Museum Africa is Johannesburg's social and cultural history museum. Yet, its fashion collection holds a predominately single-sided story, thus calling for Social Action – precisely what these Protea International Curatorial Exchange recipients view this work as. The collaborators have begun collectively enquiring whether researchers and audiences can revisit their (object) histories by introducing new bodies, voices, and artistic responses into the archive's narrative. This project addresses the ongoing absences of black South African fashion histories that these objects reveal; it works as an agent for the undoing of erasure, subsequently developing healing dialogues through a decentred and decolonial approach.

While in the preparatory stage, it was through constant communication with Pholoso More (Bernberg Costume & Textiles Curator, Museum Africa) that the collaborators reviewed the cataloguing procedures and taxonomies to ask who these categories and practices continue to serve. What are they doing? In what way do they perpetuate oppression? Is a re-categorisation of the museum necessary? What might a re-cataloguing process look like?

Following the vast collection of materials that included the Bensusan photographic archives, cataloguing books and library cards, the ethnographic collection, and the Bernberg Fashion & Textile collection; a selection criterion was decided upon according to

a range of signifiers (from the visual, the historical, the museal, to the material). The work happened over ten days (20-29 June 2022).

The work of Dr. de Greef, Moloney, and Lephoto serves as a collaborative enquiry that navigates toward rereading the fashion archive and reimagining histories with a vision for creative repair, social action, and collaborative learning enabling another side to the fashion story and identity through the black gaze.

"These responses will be brought together for a proposal for an exhibition which confronts this collection and a proposal which I believe is ever more urgent since our visit. Over the years, I have felt an ambivalence to this collection – questioning if and why black South Africans should pay for its keep. This collection has, since our visit, emerged as significant. It is significant because of the questions and emotions it continues to raise and stir, and which remain unanswered and unaddressed." Alison Moloney

Francois Lion-Cachet

When the first eleven Justices were appointed to the Constitutional Court in 1994, Justice Albie Sachs and Justice Yvonne Mokgoro were given the decor portfolio. They were tasked with decorating the temporary courtroom with “the dignity befitting the people that would move through it”. Art became the focus of their assignment's execution, with the entire budget going to commissioning a single artwork – Humanity, by Joseph Ndlovu. This was the birth of The Constitutional Court Art Collection (CCAC) – marrying of Art and justice as it were.

Is the visual interface between art and justice a phenomenon unique to South Africa? How, if any, do Art and architecture inform the law and its history as we know it? These, along with many essential others, are the questions that the work of the Protea International Curatorial Exchange recipient Francois Lion-Cachet interrogates.

Supported by the John Ellerman Foundation, Lion-Cachet, a Public Curator at the Constitutional Court Art Collection (CCAC), seeks to explore the Supreme Court of the UK (UKSC)'s public education through Art, architecture and its visitors centre exhibition as ways to speak to law and justice. By visiting and exploring UKSC through a photographic lens, Lion-Cachet hopes to strengthen his understanding of the CCAC's role in stimulating and enriching education, critical debate and research on the transformative role of the Constitution of South Africa.

Considering the historical British influence on the depiction of law in South Africa, this research trip aims to be a comparative study of how the law is visualized through Art, architecture and judicial symbols at the UKSC, in correlation to the Constitutional Court of South Africa (CCSA). The intended consideration of nature/natural images used as symbolism in Art and architecture overlaps this Visual Art project into critical areas of

Environment and Social Action. Capturing the information through photography, Lion-Cachet aims to frame a distinctive visual element that would not otherwise be available.

Justice Albie Sachs argues: "Art and justice are usually represented as dwelling in different domains: Art is said to relate to the human heart, justice to human intelligence. Rationality is sometimes seen as damaging to Art, and passion is hostile to justice. Our building shows how Art and human rights overlap and reinforce each other. Respect for human dignity is at the core of the Bill of Rights and of the artistic endeavour represented in the Court. It is this that unites Art and justice."

This ethos is the mortar in the construction of Lion-Cachet's work. Through his investigation of the Art, architecture and judicial symbols at both the CCSA and the UKSC, Lion-Cache unpacks how these have been the building blocks to the restructuring of not just the view of the law but also its effect.

"I am keenly interested in the law as an imaged and performance text that is played out on a constructed, transitional 'stage' for court audiences and in the role of the curator in making sense of such visualities and communicating the significance of it." - Francois Lion-Cachet.