

# Chapter Six

## Students' Theses Titles and Abstracts

Salomé le Roux

### Graduates of 2020

Salomé le Roux

**Title:** A technical survey of Lucky Madlo Sibiyá's (1942–1999) materials and techniques employed in his carved and painted wood panel artworks

**Abstract:** The study aims to achieve an understanding of the artist's materials and techniques used by Lucky Madlo Sibiyá when he created his carved and painted wood panel artworks. A survey of the artist's materials and techniques is of great importance because he is represented in multiple institutional, corporate and private collections—including the University of Pretoria. His carved and painted wood panel artworks are also reaching an age (at least 20 years old, as 2019 is the twentieth anniversary of his death) when they would soon require conservation and restoration if not stored and displayed according to sound conservation conditions and standards. For best-practice conservation and restoration, in-depth knowledge of the materiality of an artwork is needed. In order to reach an in-depth knowledge of the materiality of Sibiyá's carved and painted wood panel artworks, the survey intends to examine and document through the combination of various historical, visual and analytical techniques artworks with unrefuted provenance. The analytical techniques used are popular in heritage conservation because they are non-invasive and non-destructive. They include provenance studies, visual examination, technical photography, X-ray fluorescence and Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy. In combination, the techniques should reveal the materials and techniques Sibiyá employed. This knowledge will be used to safeguard and preserve this part of South African art heritage.

**Link:** <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/78370>

## Emilia Zambri

**Title:** Heritage and reconciliation within a post-colonial society, Cockatoo Island a case study

**Abstract:** Heritage conservation and management has its own challenges and opportunities. If done correctly, it has the potential to re-establish the thread of continuity with a previous time. Most prominently, heritage conservation and management has the ability to facilitate legislative change and promote reconciliation and social reconstruction in a sustainable manner. It is this research paper's intention to re-imagine the conservation and management process at a post-colonial heritage site with a shared history and meaning. Keeping this objective in mind, Cockatoo Island is discussed as a suitable heritage site and case study for the paper. The investigation into the case study will be undertaken by taking inspiration from Roha W. Khalaf's article, 'Cultural heritage reconstruction after armed conflict: Continuity, change, and sustainability'. The study will reframe Khalaf's concepts of cultural continuity, change and sustainability by investigating its application to the discussed heritage site's conservation and management processes. The synergies between Khalaf's conceptual ideas could strengthen the connections between indigenous communities and their heritage sites. Further, these synergies could also facilitate the social reconciliation of post-colonial communities, especially in the context of shared history and meaning.

112

**Link:** <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/78339>

## Mabafokeng Hoeane

**Title:** The spiritual significance and conservation of Dinkho tsa Badimo at the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History

**Abstract:** There is a lot of published literature in the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology on ceramics that, among other things, focuses on their typologies, dating sequences, manufacture and trade with reference to groups of people that inhabit the southern African region. Additionally, several studies have focused on the use of ceramic objects, including figurines, in the ritual practices of these societies. However, the emphasis has been differential and skewed as it has largely been focused on certain cultures such as that of the Zulu group or linked to archaeological sites to the exclusion of other groups. For example, there is scant literature that focuses on the description or discussion of

ceramic vessels by the Basotho-Batswana people of southern Africa, who, like the Zulu, have an active ceramic tradition including the manufacture and reverence of spiritual ceramic vessels. The thrust of this dissertation is therefore to widen our understanding and knowledge of the spiritual significance of African ceramic vessels by focusing particular attention on how these Sotho-Tswana groups practice this tradition with the ultimate objective of encouraging the appropriate recognition and preservation of traditional African ceramic vessels.

**Link:** <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/78164>

## Graduates of 2021

### Daniéle Knoetze

**Title:** The art of 'looking': A technical analysis of Alexis Preller's *Man in the sun*

**Abstract:** The study aims to achieve a deeper understanding of the materials and techniques used by Alexis Preller in his early work, *Man in the sun* (1936). A survey of the artist's materials and techniques is of great importance as this information can guide conservators so that appropriate conservation actions can be applied in the future. Furthermore, by investigating Alexis Preller's *Man in the sun*, a greater appreciation and understanding of the painting's anatomy will be achieved. This work intends to examine and document the materiality and techniques used by Preller through the combination of various historical, visual, and analytical techniques. The analytical techniques used are a preferred response when dealing with the conservation of oil paintings on canvas because of their non-invasive and non-destructive nature. These techniques include provenance studies, visual examination, technical photography, and X-ray fluorescence. In combination, the techniques should reveal the materials and techniques Preller used in *Man in the sun*.

113

### Laura Esser

**Title:** The (im)permanence of fading smoke: A conservation case study of Diane Victor's soot drawings

**Abstract:** The South African artist Diane Victor explores soot as a medium, using candles to create magnificent artworks on paper and, more recently, on stone and glass. The artist interview with Diane Victor, which forms the main

part of this talk, explores the artist's intent regarding the stability and longevity of her soot drawings, as well as Diane Victor's technique, packaging, transport, and exhibition preferences. Documenting artist intent through interviews with living artists has gained increasing attention and importance in the field of contemporary art conservation. Artist interviews can help conservators better understand the artist's techniques and the processes involved in creating a particular artwork: what the artist intends for the work of art as it ages, what is important to the artist with regard to a particular work of art, as well as how the artist would view interventive treatment to conserve or restore a particular work they created, among other things.

## **Mampopi Namane**

**Title:** Assessment of preservation of paper records at the Lesotho National Archives

**Abstract:** This paper aims to assess the state of preservation of paper records at the Lesotho National Archives (LNA). The LNA was established in 1958 when Lesotho was a protectorate of Britain. Museums, libraries and archives are all collecting institutions, and although their collections may be of different material types, their collections are all associated with historical, social, artistic, scientific and research 'value', to name a few. Archival institutions around the world are mandated with housing some of the oldest records and are working tirelessly to retain the information contained within these records. This mandate comes with many challenges, and although these may seem independent of one another, there is some common ground, particularly in African countries where these challenges commonly stem from the financial hardship some countries are facing in addition to a lack of awareness of the importance of cultural heritage.

The challenges of archival preservation in the LNA mostly stem from a lack of financial backing and a non-existent archival policy. The LNA is committed to preserving its records for future use, but the preservation is not addressed in a uniform manner. Currently, the Lesotho State Library, which houses the LNA, operates with no allocated budget, and this makes it difficult for the archives to source outside means for funding independently because the government has been unable to pay subscription fees to associations such as the International Council on Archives (ICA). The storage facilities in the LNA are built in such a

manner that mediocre preventive conservation is achieved; there is a broken HVAC system, no compliance to a preventive conservation framework and a lack of skills, devaluing what protection was partially offered by the building. If the prevailing situation continues, the deterioration currently observed will worsen, and there is a strong risk of both information and material loss.

## Mabokang Mokotjo

**Title:** Investigation of artisanal tanning in Lesotho communities using a Setlokoa cowhide dress as a case study

**Abstract:** Cowhide dress (*mose oa khomo*) used to symbolise Basotho women's traditional attire, but recently it has only been associated with a small group of women who participate in initiation ceremonies. *Seshoeshoe*, a modern cloth and European print developed over time with different styles, is now generally considered 'traditional'. As a result, the intangible cultural heritage of crafting *mose oa khomo* and other Sesotho material cultures is disappearing. Basotho used to produce leather and cowhide products in large numbers and had their methods of leather preparation, tanning and conservation. However, with the introduction of Christianity, industrialisation and urbanisation, traditional customs, including attire, have increasingly waned. And the decline in the traditional use of cowhide and leather products has resulted in an alarming abandonment of the associated skills. It has resulted in the gradual extinction of indigenous knowledge as part of intangible heritage.

115

The research uses a Setlokoa cowhide dress as a case study to understand the skills behind the crafting of *mose oa khomo*. It further investigates the traditional conservation methods and the significance of *mose oa khomo* in Sesotho tradition, including the symbolic meaning of the patterns of beads and copper rings used to adorn the dress. Interviews, observation and literary sources revealed that leather preparation and tanning is no longer gender-based among the Basotho. It is no longer only done at *khotla* but has become primarily a communal activity done jointly by men and women. In addition, *mafura a lefehlo* (fat prepared with sour milk) and red ochre are used for tanning, softening and conserving leather products and have not been documented to date.

Furthermore, this research's case study was my paternal grandmother's initiation graduation and wedding dress, which she later used during crucial initiation ceremonies. Since there is no doubt that hide preparation and

tanning is rapidly disappearing because it is currently rarely done, this study has documented the current methods used in leather manufacturing and conservation. A condition assessment was done on the case study with signs of deterioration identified and possible treatment options suggested based on current conservation methods used to preserve and restore leather, glass and copper objects since the case study contains these three materials. This research forms the basis for conserving Sesotho material culture as it is the first study to document cultural objects traditionally produced in the country and aims to investigate Lesotho's intangible and tangible cultural heritage for conservation.

## **Henry Nakale**

**Title:** Oranjemund shipwreck: A composition analysis of the pewter kitchenware and their conservation aspects

**Abstract:** This dissertation deals with the condition and possible conservation treatment of the pewter objects at the Oranjemund Shipwreck Collection. The Oranjemund shipwreck is one of the oldest and most intact wrecks ever to be discovered in sub-Saharan Africa. This study is largely informed by archival research, interviews and X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy. This study is situated within the framework of safeguarding and preserving underwater cultural heritage and is guided by the UNESCO 2001 Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage. It was established that the collection of pewter objects in the Oranjemund Shipwreck Collection is in a fair condition and presents a very simple class with no pieces of status or any decorations. Unfortunately, the National Museum of Namibia has no qualified conservators, and because of this, its conservation department is not functional. Therefore, most of the objects in the Oranjemund Shipwreck Collection are not optimally cared for. The researcher thus recommends staff training on conservation and acquisition of proper storage facilities for the Oranjemund Shipwreck Collection.

## Graduates of 2022 Proposed Titles

### **Nancy Collett**

Home sweet museum: Investigating the crossover between museum and residence at the Lindfield Victorian House Museum

### **Hannes Elsenbroek**

An examination and discussion of the conservation decision-making process using Anton van Wouw's *Cattle grazing near Pretoria Zoo* as a case study

### **Carmen Joubert**

Temporality in South African modern art and the role of conservation in its experience

### **Nkami Manyike**

Should we burn or conserve? A case study of the *Moxwera wa Babaso* newspapers

### **Marinda van der Nest**

An analysis of paper made from the dung of elephants, rhinoceros and other wild herbivores to develop conservation guidelines

### **Loreal Vos**

Challenges in contemporary mixed media collections: Storage and preventative conservation of South African artists' books at the Jack Ginsberg Centre for Book Arts

### **San-Mari van der Merwe**

I want to tell you my name: Augmented reality as a conservation method for *Between words and images* by Ernestine White-Mifetu and Tony Giselle Stuart

### **Jabu Ntuli**

Identifying challenges in the conservation of South African photography based on three case studies: Looking at why these challenges exist and how they can be remedied

### **Yanga Dlaba**

A technical analysis to determine polychrome surfaces on selected tenth-century Schroda figurines

