



Ms Rooksana Omar, Chief Executive Officer, Iziko Museums

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Message from the CEO

It is a great pleasure and a wonderful challenge for me to lead a team of colleagues that is highly motivated, result oriented and dedicated to being the producers of knowledge and the dispersers of information. This southern flagship institution has striven to make new meanings of knowledge by interpreting collections, bringing in new exhibitions, collecting and researching to make sense of the natural, cultural and artistic world. The task afforded to museums is challenging because it is incumbent upon us to make new meaning of those highly complex subjects.

I would like to motivate the team at Iziko to:

- Introduce new strategies to enliven our museums
- Build teams and spaces where everyone has a voice
- Use your skills, knowledge and experience to create wonderful exhibitions and programmes
- Create a service oriented culture at all our museums
- Ensure that we bring back the wonder and desire for all our visitors to come back again and again to interact with our interpretations of collections and exhibitions
- Continue to research, collect and make new meanings using all of our resources at Iziko

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Editorial

Ms Rooksana Omar welcomed staff for the first time in her capacity as CEO of Iziko Museums, after the retirement of Prof HC (Jatti) Bredekamp at the end of October. She speaks about her observations, addresses her colleagues at the staff meeting, and we get a taste of what the new Iziko Council has in mind for the organisation.

Our scientists have been busy, and while Simon van Noort's been in pursuit of fig wasps, Roger Smith's been dreaming of a white Christmas - in Antarctica! The Gallery is a hive of activity and Andrea Lewis says farewell to *US*, and introduces *In Context*. The Social History Collections department just can't seem to stop moving - Esther Esmiol shares the latest in the Social History Centre relocation. Zyaan Davids puts 2010 to rest with a recap of the highlights of the year.

As there is no December edition of *e-news*, we take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a blessed and safe festive season and prosperous 2011.

We look forward to hearing from you (in your own language!) in the New Year.

The *e-news* editorial team

Message from the CEO

(continued from page 1)

As the team at Iziko, you have to use words, space, artefacts and innovative effects to communicate complicated information to all of the audiences that visit our spaces. It is in the making and interpreting of this knowledge that the complexity of conveying this information becomes a real challenge. Enlivening the natural, scientific, historical, social and artistic through the use of artefacts presents to those who work with these artefacts an opportunity to work with real things and give them real meaning in our galleries.

How we market these meanings is extremely important in engaging an audience who will develop an appetite for more information and further visits. Therefore, creating a service-oriented culture in our workplace is critical to the operations

and survival of Iziko. Balancing an inviting, welcoming atmosphere with great exhibitions, innovative educational activities and a willing staff will make our galleries places that people want to visit.

Regarding our visitors, it is worth noting that they too are no longer passive consumers of knowledge. Visitors come in with their own expectations, knowledge, attitudes, ideas and experiences to make and take meaning from what we have produced. If all of these factors are carefully balanced our galleries have the potential to fully realise our real mandate of being a flagship museum in South Africa.

Rooksana Omar, Chief Executive Officer, Iziko Museums

Iziko staff meeting

On Thursday, 18 November, Ms Rooksana Omar welcomed staff for the first time in her capacity as CEO of Iziko Museums. The meeting was used as a platform to discuss her observations of the organisational culture at Iziko and to convey her expectations of staff.

After six months as CEO (Designate), Rooksana has gained fair insight into the workings of the organisation, and is in an informed position to set the course for Iziko. To this end, she has expressed the need to evaluate existing practises and policies at Iziko. She promised, "I will interfere in your business". The CEO went to great lengths to recognise the expertise and positive outputs accomplished by the staff at Iziko. She hopes that staff will keep up the standard of performance that has established Iziko as the benchmark in the heritage sector.

The CEO listed external challenges to the heritage industry and Iziko as including economic challenges, reduced funding from government, environmental factors like the competition for audience's leisure time with other Cape Town attractions, poor image among would-be visitors, and general poverty. She also made her concerns about Iziko's internal environment clear when she commented on staff negativity, a strangling grapevine of gossip, abusive relationships within the organisation, and staff viewing the organisation as a 'cash cow'. Staff were given a breakdown of the organisation's income and expenditure, in a bid

to increase awareness around the situation the organisation faces in light of these external challenges, and if internal challenges are allowed to affect the organisation's productivity.

In terms of governance, monthly and quarterly reports will be expected from staff. The draft strategic plan has been submitted to the newly appointed, 4th Iziko Council. The Council is in the process of evaluating it, but has already indicated that improvements are required in the educational drive of the organisation, and interaction with the public. Entrance fees are also being reviewed in consultation with Directors and Senior Managers. The Council stated that they want to develop an institution that is intuitive, efficient and responds to change positively and effectively.

Staff were informed of a questionnaire the CEO has devised in order to gauge staff perceptions. The questionnaire, which was formalised and circulated to staff, requires staff to identify themselves, and answer three questions:

1. List five factors preventing you from doing your work properly at Iziko.
2. How do you see your role in the organisation?
3. What were your best moments as an Iziko employee?

With these, Rooksana will be able to get to know how every member of Iziko Museums experiences the organisation, and plan a way forward for addressing common and individual challenges, and hopefully improving on the positive experiences in future.

Marcia Marais, IA



Ms Rooksana Omar addresses an attentive audience at the first staff meeting convened in her capacity as Chief Executive Officer of Iziko Museums. Photographs by Leon Jamarie.

Adept, Adaptable, Adorable

Adorable Lackay retires from Iziko Museums on 30 November. She started working as a junior clerk at the South African National Gallery on 18 August 1988, under the directorship of Marilyn Martin.

Adorable remembers the Gallery, with its small staff compliment, as being like a family – in work, happiness and sometimes in grief. Being a hands-on person, she took an avid interest in the work her co-workers were doing, developing a host of skills. Her experience stood her in good stead, and she took the position of Human Resources Administrative Assistant on 1 February 2002 after the amalgamation of the organisation. She says, “One has to adapt or else you will not be happy in your work.” In September 2009, Adorable again showed her adaptability when she took on the role of Employment Coordinator.

Adorable says that her colleagues and good friends at Iziko will be missed when she retires to her beautiful Boland hometown of Pniel. She plans on enjoying a restful December, but has no intention of growing old on the stoep! In April next year she plans to take on Europe with her sister, before tackling a renovation project at her home.

We wish you much love, good health, prosperity and a long and happy retirement.

Marcia Marais, IA



Adorable Lackay

Staff News

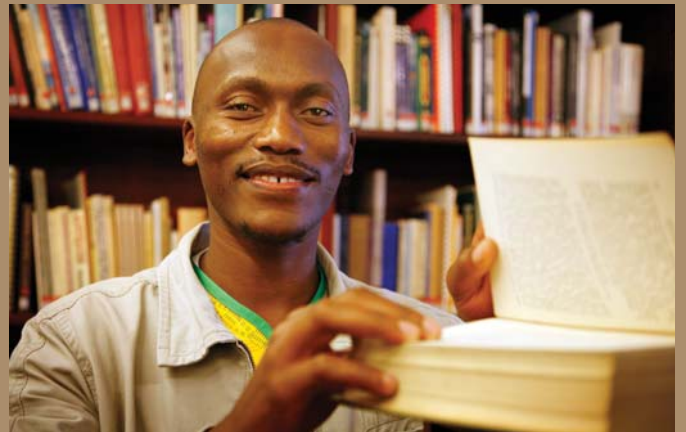
Retirement

Adorable Lackay – Employment Coordinator (Human Resources) 30 November 2010

Resignation

Bandile Mbobo – Assistant Librarian (Social History Collections) 30 November 2010

Bandile Mbobo joined Iziko as an intern in November 2007. In August the following year he was appointed as the Assistant Librarian for Social History Collections. Bandile is ready and excited for the challenges that await him in his new position as Librarian at the Bonteheuwel Public Library.



Bandile Mbobo

We also bade farewell to Public Relations intern, Khanya Sigcau (currently enrolled for a BTech in PR at CPUT) who joined the department of Institutional Advancement in June 2009. The skills she has learned at Iziko has enabled her to take up a permanent position at Prestige Nursing Agency.



Khanya Sigcau

Iziko Star

I wish to nominate Museum Attendant, Lizel Groenewald, who currently manages the switchboard at the Iziko South African Museum, for star of the month. “Certainly” is her hallmark, and with her wonderful courtesy and helpful approach, she makes my day! Rarely have I experienced such a professional and efficiently charming telephonist. She is the welcoming voice of Iziko.

Carol Kaufmann, Curator of African Art



Iziko Star, Lizel Groenewald.

Hot & Happening

- It's that time of the year again at ISAM! The **Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2010** exhibition will showcase the very best photography featuring natural subjects. Opens on 9 December. Direct enquiries to Olga Jeffries.
- There are many causes for celebration at Iziko this summer. **Bertram House re-opens** on 9 December, coinciding with an exhibition of the newly launched **South African Post Office's 8th Definitive Series of stamps on beadwork**. Direct enquiries to Wieke van Delen.
- The Planetarium's the place to be these school holidays! **Silly Solly and the Shooting Stars** is welcomed back on 11 December.

For teens and adults, **Living Inside the Cosmic Egg** starts 11 December and **A Basic Guide to Stargazing** opens on 13 December.

- Join Friends of the Iziko South African National Gallery for a visit to **The Edge Glass Gallery & Studio**. Details in the *Iziko What's On*.

Fun in the sun in and around the Mother City

While Iziko has a wide selection of exhibitions and events to keep your family and friends entertained this summer, the rest of Cape Town is also abuzz with festivity.

- The Old Mutual Summer Sunset Concerts kick off at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden (Rhodes Avenue, Newlands) every Sunday, starting 21 November, from 17:30 to 19:00. Performers include TKZee, Mango Groove, Freshlyground and Carols by Candlelight. For further information go to www.sanbi.org.
- Table Mountain offers a ride-and-dine sunset special this summer. Visit www.tablemountain.net for more information.

The great fig wasp hunt

A combined Iziko Museums and University of Stellenbosch field trip was conducted in October 2010 to sample fig wasps for cuticular hydrocarbons. Participants included Dr Michael McLeish and MSc student Frances van der Merwe from University of Stellenbosch and Iziko's Dr Simon van Noort.

Fig species have a tropical distribution and the highest concentration and diversity of South African fig species occurs in Kwazulu-Natal. This region was thus targeted to maximize return on sampling effort. We covered over 6000 km on the trip, often on hectic off-road 4x4 tracks, in order to access isolated areas harbouring fig trees. All of this was done in a quest to sample their associated fig wasp faunal assemblages. A portable field laboratory was set up at each overnight location. These varied from rustic research accommodation at Ithala Game Reserve, to an open campsite at Mabibi, to an outside courtyard en route home. The need to process samples as the fig wasps emerged from their host figs meant that there was no respite for almost a month.

Tens of thousands of specimens were collected on this field trip, greatly enhancing and enriching the scientific holdings of Iziko's Entomology collection. Many of these are undescribed species, and this material will feed into future systematic revisions describing new species. The scientifically important Holotype specimens will be held by Iziko, promoting the institution as a centre of international excellence for Afrotropical hymenopteran research. Specimens will be used for both morphological and molecular phylogenetic assessments and understanding the role of chemical mediation as part of the process of unravelling the evolutionary intricacies of plant-insect interactions, as well as facilitating the interpretation and analyses of the effects of climate change on biodiversity and habitat integrity. Inter-institutional collaboration has significant impact in terms of Iziko's recognition and standing in the national research community. This fundamental scientific research will contribute essential content to Iziko's educational and exhibition programmes.

Simon van Noort, Natural History Division

This research was funded by a NRF grant awarded to Simon van Noort, a CIB grant awarded to Theresa Wossler and Frances van der Merwe and a Claude Leone Foundation post-doctoral fellowship to Michael McLeish. Many thanks to Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife for granting collecting permits and to Taryn Bigwood, research officer at Ithala, for her kind hospitality and generous provision of her time.



L to R: Dr Michael McLeish, Frances van der Merwe and Dr Simon van Noort in front of a South African near endemic fig species, *Ficus burtt-davyi* at the Ithala Game Reserve.



The portable field laboratory set up as an open campsite at Mabibi. The scientists endured almost a month of working 24/7, through weekends and into the night.



The Iziko vehicle bears the scars - having covered more than 6000 km, often on hazardous off-road 4x4 tracks - of accessing fig trees in isolated areas. Photographs by Simon van Noort.

Roger heads back to the ice

Roger Smith is heading back to Antarctica. He will be spending this Christmas in a remote field camp close to the South Pole looking for fossil bones of Early Triassic reptiles similar to those found in the Karoo. This will be his second expedition to the Trans-Antarctic Mountains. In 2003, he spent five weeks camped in a two-man tent on Beardmore Glacier and brought back the small mammal-like reptile fossil called *Thrinaxodon*, which is on display in the *Stone Bones* exhibition. This specimen is identical to those he has found near Bethulie in the southern Free State. This time Roger will join ten palaeontologists from across the United States. They plan to spend another six weeks in "deep deployment", supported by two US military helicopters that will be airlifting them to and from the mountaintops.

Despite the perpetual sunshine, the average daily temperatures fluctuate from -24 to -5 degrees Celsius, and therefore, when doing fieldwork, sunburn, frostbite, dehydration and getting lost are constant concerns. Finding and excavating fossils at altitude and under low oxygen conditions is also physically very challenging. The upside is that every fossil recovered adds a little more evidence of what was living in southern Gondwana 250 million years ago, which is of course what makes it all worthwhile.

Dr Roger Smith, Curator of Karoo Palaeontology



Roger Smith points out the Permo-Triassic boundary on Graphite Peak, Antarctica.



A helicopter comes in to land at the remote camp on Beardmore Glacier.



Skull of the curled-up *Thrinaxodon* skeleton Roger Smith brought back from Antarctica in 2003. Photographs by Roger Smith.

In Context

In Context is the last of five new exhibitions to be installed at the Iziko South African National Gallery after the *From 1910-2010: Pierneef to Gugulective* show. This exhibition showcases an exciting and diverse group of contemporary international and South African artists who explore the complex concept of 'home' as it relates to identity and belonging. Curated by Liza Essers, *In Context* features artists such as Robin Rhode, Candice Breitz, Mikhael Subotzky, Kader Attia, Ghada Amer, mounir fatmi, Yinka Shonibare, Jenny Holzer and Kara Walker. Many of these artists have not been shown at the Gallery before, so it is a great opportunity to see them! The show is open to the public from 27 November to 13 March 2011.

Andrea Lewis, Assistant Curator: Modern Painting & Sculpture

US: Closing event

An event, which included performances and a discussion, was organised to mark the closing of the exhibition, *US*, at the Iziko South Africa National Gallery on 6 November.

People arrived in their numbers to listen to the discussion, 'Performative Gestures in Diverse Practices', between the curators, Simon Njami (curator of Africa Remix and founding editor of *Revue Noire*), Bettina Malcomess, and Jay Pather (UCT School of Drama). The talk, chaired by Andrew Lamprecht, examined how the different roles played by these practitioners 'gesture' at many publics.

Performative actions were presented by artists Gimberg Nerf, Gerald Machona, Justin Brett and, remotely, by Bridget Baker. Donna Kukama delivered the opening of the closing address, as part of her series, '1000 Ways of Being: I am absolutely ending this!'

Andrea Lewis, Assistant Curator: Modern Painting & Sculpture



The curators of *US*, Bettina Malcomess and Simon Njami.



Listening to the opening address by Donna Kukama. A diverse audience attended the event. Photographs by Pam Warne.

Council Meeting

A Council meeting was held on 10 and 11 November at Iziko Rust en Vreugd.

Council invited Senior Managers to give presentations on their departments on the first day. Senior Managers spoke about their departmental structure and their teams, and showed photographs of their teams. They also discussed their areas of responsibility and the relationship between these. The session ended with Senior Managers discussing the three most important strategic objectives of their department. The Chair of Council thanked participants for their professional presentations, which gave our new Council an insight into the core and support functions of Iziko.

On the second day Council engaged with Senior Managers regarding the draft 2011-14 Strategic Plan. Council indicated that it was a sound document and advised what it considered to be focus areas. Some of the focus areas include the management of human remains, education programmes, and website development. It was a very valuable discussion that will inform the revision of the Strategic Plan.

The fact that we have a new Council and CEO creates the opportunity for them to take a fresh look at our strategic objectives for the next three years.

Denise Crous, Executive Director, Operations

Wear a white ribbon and stand up to abuse

2010 marks the eleventh annual '16 Days of Activism Campaign for No Violence Against Women and Children' in South Africa. This international initiative, endorsed by the United Nations, runs from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day).

In South Africa, the campaign has served as the main social mobilization tool against the prevalence of acts of abuse against women and children. Every year, the public, government, civil-society organisations and the business sector work together to increase awareness about the negative impact of violence on women and children, and focus on support for victims. By supporting this campaign, and speaking out against abuse, we can curb the scourge of gender-based violence and help stop the cycle of abuse.

Marcia Marais, IA



Social History Moving... Again

From delicate artworks to one-ton cannons - ask Social History to organise the relocation, and it will be done! Outside service providers do the actual carrying, so we can't take all the credit ourselves, but we play an integral role in a collections move for one good reason - the collections are our responsibility. We care for them and understand the consequences and impact if something goes wrong during a move. So, we throw ourselves wholeheartedly into the process, from careful packing, sourcing quotations, working out logistics and overseeing the move, controlling the movement of each and every parcel and box, placing the artefacts in their new storage spaces, and so forth.

The move of historical and valuable collections is always stressful and tiring, but the satisfaction when a job has been well done picks up the spirits again. Without the incredibly hard work of the Social History conservation and collections teams, the success of the most recent move operations would not have been possible. We thank them for their commitment and efforts in getting the job completed. We also acknowledge the supporting role that other Iziko departments, such as Finance and CSM, play to assist us in achieving our goals during operations such as these.

Esther Esmyo, Curator, Social History Collections



Jaco Boshoff assisting with the move of the Oosterland cannons from the Castle of Good Hope.



Ntombovuyo Tywakadi preparing for the packing of art collections. Photographs by Esther Esmyo.

A headline-making year in review, etched in Iziko history

After one of the most coveted countdowns in our country's history - the world waiting with baited breath for the kick-off which would mark a new chapter in South Africa's history - 2010 has come, and nearly gone. Yet the success and invaluable memories of this year will resonate in Africa, South Africa and at Iziko Museums for many years to come.

While Iziko has celebrated many groundbreaking, headline-making exhibitions and events, it is not possible to mention all of these noteworthy exhibitions we've worked so hard at to make the successes they've been.

I joined this prestigious organisation in January, as the Media Officer, working within the department of Institutional Advancement. I had barely acquainted myself with the ghosts that roam Rust en Vreugd (where IA is based), before I was swept up in the preparations and publicity for Iziko's Education and Public Programmes annual Summer School, held in February.

Since this was the year that the lens zoomed in on South Africa, many media houses had come to plant their flags on our pitch. The first major internationally newsworthy event was the 20th anniversary of the release from prison of the father of our nation, Nelson Mandela. On 6 February, Ahmed Kathrada, Adv George Bizos and Dr Mamphela Ramphele - visionaries whose work I had studied at university - visited the museums I now worked at, in commemoration and contribution of this significant celebration.

Al Jazeera, ETV, BBC, CNN, Reuters, French TV, and some 20 other media houses documented the discussion and returned to Iziko a few days later for the opening of *Mandela: Leader, Comrade, Negotiator, Prisoner, Statesman*, on 10 February. Here, Cyril Ramaphosa, Prof Jakes Gerwel and Ahmed Kathrada addressed a transfixed audience who were hungry for untold stories about Madiba. Before his interview with CNN, Jonathan Shapiro graciously managed to squeeze in a tour of his exhibition entitled *Drawing on Madiba*, which also opened that evening.

While Bafana, Malema, crime and South Africa's accommodation crisis dominated headlines, Iziko closed the National Gallery for a re-hang of this iconic space. When *1910-2010: From Pierneef to Gugulective* opened in April, controversy followed. Lloyd Pollack vehemently reported in the *Art Times*, "SA National Gallery's reputation trashed for 2010 show". Not long after its closing, curator of the exhibition and Director of Art Collections, Riason Naidoo, was invited to present the exhibition at the Tate Modern - making me wonder whether the Tate's reputation is now also trashed.

Also during April, Wits University Professor, Lee Berger announced the discovery of the *Australopithecus Sediba* fossils, which went on display at the Iziko South African Museum. Visitors were welcomed to see this groundbreaking fossil collection for free. Many were left with more questions than they had arrived with. That was the day my brother, who is currently writing his matric finals, decided he would be a palaeontologist.

As if welcoming the world and its fossilised ancestors were not enough, the South African Museum also made room for *African Dinosaurs* in May. The museum came alive with heavy footsteps and roars of laughter - whether it was those of the many excited children, or the dinosaurs, I'm still not quite sure!

Then, just before kick-off and in true Iziko style, Cape Town celebrated New Year Carnival in the middle of June, when *Ghoema & Glitter: New Year Carnival in Cape Town* opened at the Iziko Good Hope Gallery, at the Castle of Good Hope.

Bafana drew, then lost, got our hopes up for a few brief adrenaline-filled moments, then fell out of the running for the most coveted cup in sport. South Africa, however, remained the ultimate 2010 winner, as we gathered, felt, shared, and Iziko hosted its very own inter-departmental tournament on 8 July.

Heritage Week ran from 20 to 26 September. Visitors were welcomed to our museums for free, and were invited to participate in a jam-packed programme of activities for the whole family. There truly was no better place to celebrate than at the hearth of our heritage.

In October we bade a fond farewell to Prof Bredekamp who had so devotedly served Iziko for eight years, welcomed our new CEO, Ms Rooksana Omar earlier this month, and now look forward to this new energy that will steer our organisation.

I am moving to Johannesburg in the New Year, and cannot think of anywhere I would rather have spent my last year in Cape Town. It has been a privilege and unmatched education serving this organisation, and I look forward to what the next decade holds for Iziko Museums.

Zyaan Davids, Media Officer, IA



Iziko in the news in 2010.