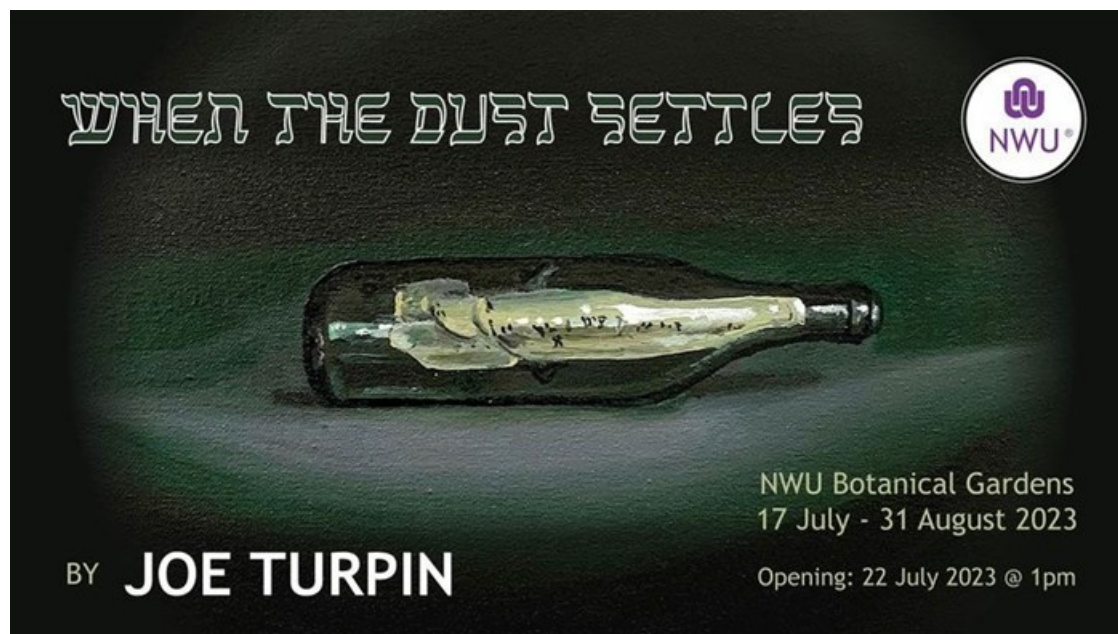


# NWU Botanical Gardens Gallery presents 'When the Dust Settles' - a solo exhibition by Joe Turpin

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At NWU Botanical Gardens Gallery, Turpin explores memories of his North-West heritage through the history of a bottle in his solo exhibition, "When the Dust Settles".



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

**Exhibition title:** When the Dust Settles

**Time:** 13h00

**Running from:** 17 July 2023

**Opening and walkabout:** 22 July 2023

**Closing date:** 31 August 2023

The NWU Botanical Gardens Gallery at the North-West University's Potchefstroom Campus proudly presents the upcoming solo exhibition "When the Dust Settles", running from 17 July with an opening reception and walkabout on 22 July 2023 at 13h00.

In February 2022, the foundation stone of the Rustenburg Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in South Africa's North West province, was removed, as the building was finally being sold - there has not been an active worshipping congregation or Jewish Community in over 20 years. After removing the stone, a time capsule was found. Dated 1924, the bottle contained documents serving to preserve the history of the community, and the opening of the synagogue. The synagogue and congregation was founded and built by Turpin's great-grandfather, Philip Wulfsohn, and his brothers, after they arrived in South Africa as refugees fleeing the antisemitic pogroms of Eastern Europe in the late 20th century. They were originally from Zhager, in what is today Lithuania. It was not uncommon for Yiddish-speaking Lithuanian Jews to then leave time capsules. At that time, their community was precarious, and they did not know what would happen to them or their temple in the future. The capsule was evidence of existence. The discovery of the bottle is the point of departure of this work, which addresses memory about the bottle; these places; its history. Turpin deals with identity and history, but also a strong theme of mourning.

"My memories of visiting Rustenburg as a child were not to anybody's home, or even the temple, but to the Jewish

cemetery. One of two that exist. My grandfather who is buried there, passed on before I was born. After losing my own mother as a teenager, I have a desire to connect with and explore her side of my family and its history. Even the sense of community abandonment, white flight, urban migration and now finally the sale of the temple's building, add to the sense of loss.

"These themes and works are contextualised in relation to whiteness, colonialism, post-colonialism, antisemitism, and a contemporary African position. I am interested in the narratives of all these isms throughout the past 100 years. They include stories of murder, gangs, and politics but also of memory and culture."

Research and artwork production has happened at the following institutions: Bag Factory Artist Studios (Johannesburg), Pratt Institute MFA Studios (New York) and The South African Jewish Board of Deputies Archive at Beyachad (Johannesburg), as well as YiVO and the Centre for Jewish History (New York). "I am grateful also to the work of Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, who accompanied me to Rustenburg in June 2022, who is keeping the bottle and its content until they can be archived, and whose work and research, especially with site visits, is invaluable.

"Theoretically, in addition to being concerned with Jewish history myself, I feel that showing a significant body of artworks pertaining to Jewish identity and history, some of site specific, in a location like Potchefstroom, during a climate of growing global antisemitism, has the potential to make people aware of antisemitism's danger. This is critical in a diasporic Jewish community who exist in small and dwindling numbers, such as the current reality in South Africa.

"The title, 'When the Dust Settles', is all-encompassing for me when I think about this history – a population that is no more, but with the relics left behind."

Joe Turpin (born 1995 in Johannesburg) is a South African visual artist whose research practice focuses on historically charged narratives and semiotics as expansions of painting. Joe makes mixed-media installations grounded in painting that create temporal conversations about identity, memory, and history. His Jewish heritage becomes principal and consequential in exploring stories of migration and persecution. These cultural paradigms inform his archival research and artistic production.

Turpin graduated from the Pratt Institute in New York in 2023 with an MFA in Painting & Drawing, and from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg in 2018 with a BA in Fine Art.

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