

How Iziko Museums and Orms are promoting women in the arts

The Iziko Museums of South Africa and printing and framing company Orms launched its collaborative effort, the *People's Project*, on 9 August 2018. The project aims to promote the art of women artists, while making art more accessible to the public.

Orms will showcase the work of South African women artists from the permanent collections of Iziko South African National Gallery. Every three months, the selected artworks will be displayed on the street-facing shop front of the Orms Print Room on the corner of Roeland Street in Cape Town.



Thania Petersen

The launching artwork

The initiative commenced with the showcase of a photographic piece by multi-disciplinary artist Thania Petersen, titled *Location 4: District Six*. *Location 4: District Six* is from the series “I am Royal,” which addresses particular historical and cultural issues around Cape Town. Through the selected image, the artist draws attention to one of the sites of forced removals in the 1950s. The now haunted empty space she stands in, once a thriving diverse neighbourhood, points to the enduring effects of apartheid and spatial segregation and the slow pace of redress and restitution.

Petersen says: “I think it is of utmost importance that the people of South Africa know that this collection belongs to them. It is theirs to enjoy and engage with. Most commuters don’t have the time nor space in their lives to see their very own art collection, which the curators at Iziko National Gallery work so hard to collect and preserve for them. It is wonderful that the work can now spill out onto the streets and into the public for all to see at any given time of day or night.”

South African women and art

Women in the development of art receive little recognition or access. In recent years, there have been smatterings of evolution yet the patriarchal rule still applies. This is doubly true for female artists of colour. Socio-economic factors may appear to have been solved with access to fellowships and scholarships being granted to many more artists of colour. Yet the brokerage of daily survival issues still remains arduous for too many. These factors, coupled with the fact that South African society does not regard the role of artists and the arts as vital to the development and transformation of a society and life.

“We are honoured to collaborate with Iziko to create greater access to art and promote the talent that exists in our country,” says Mike Ormrod, owner of Orms.

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