

KZN MUSEUM NEWS



Quarterly update on everything that happens in the KZN Museum!



Storytelling Festival

The KZN Museum ran a Storytelling Festival over September and October 2021. The education department participated by taking the festival out to primary schools, with the first visit to Braemar Primary School located in Umzinto on the KZN South Coast, later this month.

The Museum's Storytelling Festival was first launched in 2020 with the purpose of preserving oral history and to celebrate the art of storytelling as the oldest form of teaching and learning.

The festival featured a singer and guitarist, Bambanani Bhengu and the aim was to highlight that stories can be told in so many different ways. Visual art, poetry, music, and acting are all essential in storytelling.

Our resident storyteller is Siboniso Isazi Gcumisa, (Heritage, Symbols & Cultural History Intern).



KWAZULU-NATAL
MUSEUM
**STORYTELLING
FESTIVAL**
PRESERVING ORAL HISTORY



Education

International Day for persons with disabilities

In a first for the KwaZulu-Natal Museum, the museum's Education Department staged an event celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities under the theme "Not All Disabilities Are Visible".

An audience of 40 clients from the Association For The Physically Challenged and the PMB Mental Health Society attended the event. Clients were entertained by a performance from Chislehurst School, highlighting the scourge of Gender-Based Violence while each client received a white ribbon symbolising our celebration of peace as we commemorated the 16 Days of Activism.

Guest speaker, Sherika Maharaj from the Blind and Deaf Society motivated the clients with a wonderful talk leaving behind the sentiment of the importance of associating oneself with positive people.



Not all disabilities are visible.

Cell C Take a Girl Child to work Day

Cell C Take a Girl Child to Work Day was commemorated at the KZN Museum towards the end of 2021 and ran in three parts. The guest speaker at one of the events was Ntokozo Tono, a Masters student in Sociology from UKZN and he addressed learners on career choices, how to compile a cv etc. Thembukosi Sithole, an Information Officer from the KZN Museum also gave the learners some insight into the work he does.

The learners all received Museum branded water bottles. The last part of the programme was held in November 2021, with a workshop hosted at the KZN Museum. Learners had the opportunity to get some on-the-ground experience in the working environment.



Rescue excavation of an Early Iron Age site near Umkomaas

In July 2021, residents at the Widenham Retirement Village in Umkomaas alerted archaeologists at the KwaZulu-Natal Museum to pottery and stone artefacts exposed during construction work in the village. An assessment showed that an Iron Age shell midden had been exposed. Pottery finds showed that the site dated to around AD 400–600. The contractor temporarily halted work so that archaeological excavations could take place. Gavin Whitelaw and Ghilraen Laue from the museum's Human Sciences Department, along with Kefilwe Rammutoa, a visiting researcher from Yale University, spent 10 days at the site extracting as much information as possible before it was destroyed. Many of the Widenham residents were excited by the find and helped by sorting the finds and providing logistical support.



Species collected after 50 years

A field trip to Umtamvuna Nature Reserve on the south coast in October 2021 yielded an interesting find. A horse fly specimen was collected that was last collected in 1971! The species, *Tabanus albilinea*, was last collected from Port St John's in 1971. The length of time between collecting this specimen and the previous ones is most likely due to a lack of collecting, rather than that the fly was absent during this time. It is a strikingly large black fly with a white stripe down the centre of its abdomen. This trip was part of an ongoing study of horse flies between the Durban Natural Science Museum and the KwaZulu-Natal Museum. Horse flies have not been the focus of collecting by the KwaZulu-Natal Museum staff for a number of years. The only specimens that have been collected have been as by-catch in other studies. Targeted collecting has produced some unusual and interesting finds including this *Tabanus albilinea* specimen. Hopefully further collecting will provide valuable information about the seasonal variations in several species of horse fly that are important vectors of disease.



Fly Identification Training

Dr John Midgley, Assistant Director of Natural Science, has recently participated in teaching the Third Training Course in Taxonomy and Systematics of African Pollinating Flies at the Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania. Participants from Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Burundi attended the course and learned how to identify flies to further their research goals.

Many people focus on the problems caused by flies, but they are also valuable pollinators, and the course aimed to help people work with beneficial flies across the continent. The skills learned during the course allow participants to study beneficial flies in their own countries and, hopefully, result in better conservation of these important parts of ecosystems.

In the first week, the course focussed on general identification of flies, while in the second week the focus was on identifying pollinating flies. Participants were taught the best ways to collect flies, how to preserve them for study and how to identify them.



The course was a partnership between the Africa Museum in Belgium, the KwaZulu-Natal Museum in South Africa, the Natural History Museum in the UK and the Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania, and is funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation.



Two new interns thanks to the DSI and HSRC!

The KwaZulu-Natal Museum now has on its staff two interns funded for a period of two years by the DSI-HSRC Internship Programme. Muhammad Ally has joined the Natural Sciences Department and Nothando Shabalala has joined the Human Sciences Department. We applaud the opportunities for unemployed graduates made possible through the programme. Another call for graduates should be announced again in 2022, for eligible candidates to gain experience in a range of host institutions and different research fields. Watch the HSRC website for the call!

First mollusc type specimen recorded at the Kzn Museum.

As we were checking the condition of some of the very old material in our collection we came across the first type specimen recorded in the Museum, *Ocenebra natalensis* (Smith, 1906) which is now accepted as *Favartia natalensis* (E. A. Smith, 1906).

Originally it was described as a “cotype” and later designated as a lectotype (a specimen designated as the type of a species or subspecies when no holotype was designated by the original author of the name) by Fair, R. in 1976. It has NMSA catalogue number 36 and the type number T479. The reason why it doesn't have type number “one” is because the concept of designating type numbers was introduced later than regular catalogue numbers, so it ended up as T479 not T1.

Smith described the species in the *Annals of the Natal Museum* 1 (38): 1-7, and donated the type series to the museum through his friend an amateur collector of molluscs and books, Henry Burnup who was the first mollusc collector of the KwaZulu-Natal Museum in 1879.



Monitoring and maintenance of specimens in galleries

Throughout 2021, the technical staff of the natural science department conducted regular surveys to assess the existing situation of the specimens in the galleries before implementing a pest management regime. Once the assessment was completed, pest management activities were designed and implemented in order to minimize the risks posed to specimens and cabinet structures by pests. The most notorious pest in our galleries is mould. Mould can never be completely eliminated or ‘destroyed’. Generally, it is managed through climate control, spore reduction, careful monitoring, and ongoing maintenance.

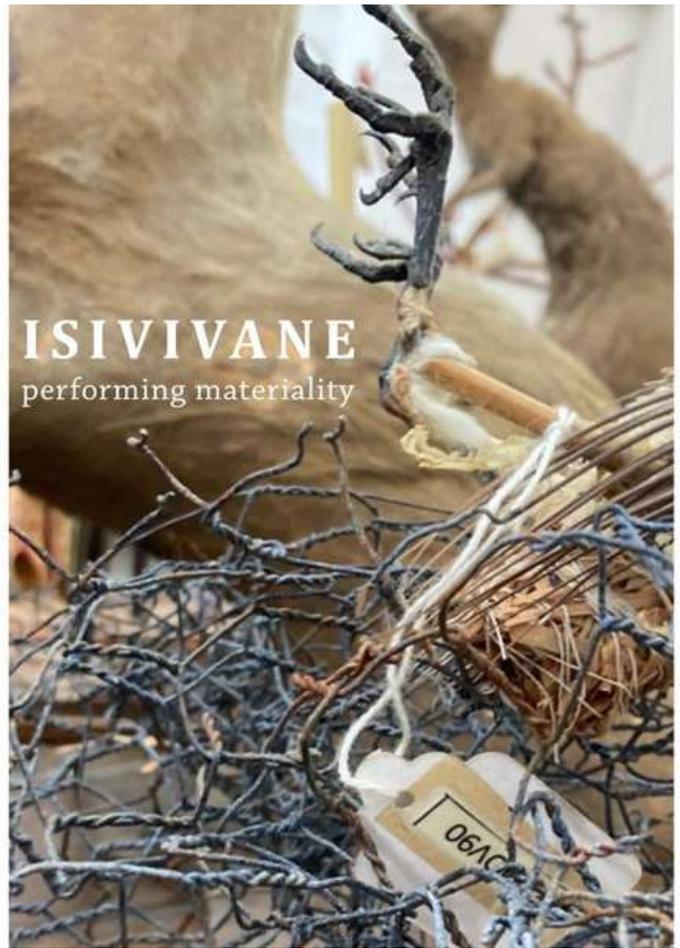
Currently, the department is undergoing its annual galleries maintenance towards cleaning mould spores on specimens and cabinet structures. This approach to pest control, often called “integrated pest management” involves preventive measures; monitoring of galleries areas; treatment of specimens; treatment of infestations; and review and assessment of procedures.



Art Installation

Isivivane, an art installation, was hosted at the Museum for two weeks in November 2021. This event was a creative experiment between the Centre for Visual Arts and the KwaZulu-Natal Museum seeking to explore the use of art as a mode of enquiry to generate new meanings within inherited spaces.

The intervention was inspired by the motif of Isivivane, a word in isiZulu that refers to a pile of stones or cairn, as well as a coming together or collection more generally. Common in many communities globally, cairns serve a commemorative purpose, marking places of spiritual or historical meaning. They can also act as geographic markers, with travellers and passers-by adding stones to bring them good fortune. “Ukuphosa itshe esivivaneni” is a Zulu proverb referring to the individual’s contribution to a greater, collective good – literally to throw one’s stone on the pile.



Reconciliation Day

Educating the youth about the history of our country is another way we can shape them for the future. In December 2021 the KwaZulu-Natal Museum visited Ekujabuleni Children’s Home to commemorate the Day of Reconciliation. Children were taught about the significance of the day and how the holiday came to be known as “Day of Reconciliation” following South Africa becoming a democratic country.

Celebrations included a performance by the Education Departments Outreach team, titled Colourless Tears, a play that portrayed the negative effects of war and how there are no winners in war, as both parties suffer casualties. The day’s activities came to an end with a reciting of a poem that highlighted the scourge of the GBV pandemic in South Africa and reiterated the need to act against GBV as the country strives to move from awareness to accountability.

Long Service Awards

The KwaZulu-Natal Museum would like to extend a token of gratitude to three members of staff, who have served the museum diligently over the years and have reached a milestone few ever reach. Congratulations to Nonkululeko Gumede, Mongezi Zulu and Ntobeko Gumede on your respective long service achievements, we applaud your dedication and efforts shown during your time working at the KZN Museum.

Nonkululeko Gumede - 15yrs (right), Mongezi Zulu 15yrs
Ntobeko Gumede 10yrs



Best Novice Speaker

Siyabonga Zamisa (Research Technician: Database) won best Novice Speaker at the 85th South African Museums Association National Conference for his presentation on the Workbench: A tool in Specify to import Data.

the 2021 SAMA National Conference took place virtually on the 7th and 8th of September 2021 with a central theme focusing on “The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine”. The theme called for museums, their professionals and communities to create, imagine and share new practices of (co-)creation of value, new business models for cultural institutions and innovative solutions for social, economic and environmental challenges of the present.

Mr Zamisa’s presentation centred on how researchers can use the Workbench as a tool to import data onto the Specify platform in order to facilitate free and open access to biodiversity data worldwide to underpin sustainable development.





KZN Museum

237 Jabu Ndlovu Street
Pietermaritzburg
3201
Tel: 033- 3451404
www.nmsa.org.za

OPENING TIMES
Monday to Friday - 9:00 to 15:30
Saturdays - 9:00 to 15:00
Sundays - 10:00 to 15:00

ENTRANCE CHARGES
Adults : R 15.00 (Over 17 years)
Children : R 5.00
Scholars : R 2.50 (On tour) per child
Pensioners & Toddlers : FREE

