

FRIENDS OF THE ART MUSEUM

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PRESS RELEASE

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MUSEUM GALA BY MANTIS 2019: A FUND RAISER FOR THE "FRIENDS OF THE ART MUSEUM"

PARTNERED WITH: MANTIS COLLECTION

ELLE AND ELLE DECORATION

MAGNETIC STORM

Today the Friends of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum supported by Adrian Gardiner and the Mantis Group celebrate with the launch of the 2019 Museum Gala by Mantis. The theme for this year's Gala event is, *The Golden thread*.

Thursday, 22 August 2019 sees the Art Museum put on its best to play host and hostess to an audience of fashionably-attired Guests, offering a sit down dinner, a runway show and an opportunity to support the continuation of the Arts, in our Metro!

Former PE girl... and now established Fashion Designer, on both the local and global stage: Jenni Button has once again added her support to the event. She will be showcasing a collection and supported by local up and coming designers Amanda Knott, Cleo Allison and Gugu Peteni.

The theme, *The Golden thread*, pays tribute to the important art of fabric making, as author Kassia St Clair puts it in her book of the same name, "We have been spinning fibres into threads for well over thirty thousand years and then weaving, knitting and knotting those threads into all manner of marvellous objects" (2018).

Beverly Gordon, in her book, *Textiles The Whole Story* (2014), comments on how much of our language is imbued with metaphors related to fabric, 'thread of life', things or situations are interwoven or entwined, our social fabric, we even describe

DNA as a strand with a twist. Fabric production has also historically been in the realm of women's labour. The theme therefore brings together fabric, design, and women.

Over the past year, the Friends of the Art Museum have spearheaded an initiative to sponsor research on the Art Museum's collection and the current focus is the Chinese collection. This research has brought attention to some beautiful pieces including an intricate wall hanging of black silk with embroidery made from threads of gold.

"Our collection pays homage to Eastern Cape art, within this collection, we also reflect the many diverse cultures that make up the communities in Nelson Mandela Bay. ", Art Museum Director, Emma O'Brien. Alongside the Art Museum's substantial collection of traditional Xhosa attire (which was celebrated at last year's Museum Gala), the Art Museum has a small Chinese collection. Textiles form an important section of both the Xhosa and Chinese collections.

"The metaphors offered by fabric production also describe what we do at the Art Museum. A collection is a tapestry of the past and present. As curators, we find different threads to weave new stories about art and design that connect with people." Emma O'Brien.

In 2018 the Museum Gala by Mantis raised R 60 000 towards the purchase of new local artworks for the collection. The process of constituting a selection committee takes time to be correctly implemented and the Art Museum staff are still in the process of appointing a new committee.

This committee will be responsible for selection new work for the collection.

"Purchasing art for a Museum collection is not done lightly. We are making decisions not only for this lifetime but also for all the lifetimes that come ahead of us." Says Emma O'Brien

The funding raised by the 2018 and 2019 Museum Gala is earmarked to buy local art. "Thanks to the generosity of the civil society of Nelson Mandela Bay we will be adding new threads to weave into the fabric of our existing collection" says Emma O'Brien.

The Friends of the Art Museum, constituted specifically to ensure that this local collection of art continued to expand, are once again supporting the growth of a dynamic local and representative collection for the Art Museum.

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