

# UCT two curate body of works

Over the past few weeks Michaelis School of Fine Art lecturers Fritha Langerman and Andrew Lamprecht have curated two curious exhibitions, the one involving artistic commentary on the human genome, the other the sale and eventual branding of a Cape Town barkeep.

Langerman's show, *Lexicons & Labyrinths: iconography of the genome*, is currently on at the South African Museum, and springs directly from the African Human Genome Conference - attracting many scientists forming part of the Human Genome Project - held in Stellenbosch last month. It comprises the works of eight local artists - including Langerman - who use medical equipment (vials, needle covers, aspirins, clamps), medical imaging techniques and more traditional material in their models, printwork and beadwork.

Langerman describes the show as partly an attempt to deal with the "analogy of the text" and the "semiotic relationship between the genetic code and its expression as image - how the body is signed by its text". "In the interests of extending this analogy, I have made a comparison to the lexicon - a system of reference, or a dictionary containing encyclopaedic information that can be applied consistently," she noted.

"The exhibition is about looking at the iconography of the genome and what that means, and what it might mean in the future. We don't know as yet what the implications of the Human Genome Project

will be, so its iconography has not yet been claimed."

In turn, Lamprecht's exhibit comes in the shape of Bruce Gordon, a popular Cape Town art personality and owner of Jo'burg Bar on Long Street. Lamprecht is quick to point out, however, that although Gordon the person was the one on exhibit (albeit for a short while), it is the concept of the person and not the actual person that is the artwork.

"Bruce Gordon the artwork is not the person Bruce Gordon, but rather the idea of him," he explained of the work by Michaelis Masters student Ed Young. The concept, on one hand, challenges conventional forms within the history of art production but, on the other, is also very much in keeping with the century-old tradition of taking objects out of their original contexts and exhibiting them, completely unchanged in some cases.

Auctioned at Michaelis last year, the work was donated to the South African National Gallery's permanent collection by buyer Suzy Bell.

In keeping with the Gallery's policy of marking each of its works with an indelible



**Art for the new age: Michaelis lecturers Fritha Langerman (left) and Andrew Lamprecht, fresh from the curatorships of two innovative new exhibitions.**

accession number - regardless of whether it's mounted on a wall or goes about its daily routines - Gordon (again the person) had his assigned digits tattooed on his arm at the opening of the exhibition in March. In an act of solidarity, Young and Lamprecht were also tattooed, with Lamprecht opting to have the word *felicitas* (Latin for 'lucky') inscribed in the Gutenberg Bible typeface on the sensitive inner of his upper left arm.

All part of the curating process, he insisted. ■

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