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Artist Fritha Langerman of UCT's Michaelis School of Fine Art is the creator and

curator of Subtle Thresholds, a new exhibition that explores infectious diseases and

the complex inter-relationship between the zoological, human and microbial worlds.

Langerman spent over two years developing the exhibition, combining thousands of elements to examine the historic and current visual representation of disease.

Displays include historical medical equipment, a 68-metre infectious disease timeline,

light boxes with viral images, sign plates with GPS co-ordinates of outbreaks, images

inspired by electron microscope of animal droppings, steel silhouettes of bacteria,

taxidermy specimens of animals, and 512 cut-out hands from historical images of

The exhibition is disconcerting for visitors expecting a more traditional, scientific

for some. The intention in this case, however, appears to be less to inform than to

encourage viewers to re-examine their thoughts, fears and beliefs about disease. It also challenges the idea that this subject matter is purely the preserve of medical

Subtle Thresholds is on at the Iziko South African Museum in Cape Town from 25 July

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museum display, and the obscure way the information is presented may be frustrating

"Infectious diseases are caused by organisms which are as deserving of visual attention as any other species," she says. "The exhibition suggests that within an

extremely complex biological system, humans represent a very small unit."

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