



Western Cape



Factory women prepare to shine

One night each November, belles from Cape Town factories unleash their inner divas

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For one night each year, women factory workers across Cape Town shrug off their overalls and don tailored evening gowns for a glittering beauty pageant.

This is the Spring Queen pageant – a chance for women who spend their days at sewing machines and cutting tables to strut their stuff on stage.

The pageant is held in November each year and is one of the oldest fashion pageants in history.

It's also the subject of a new exhibition documenting the story of the Spring Queen, called *The Staging of the Glittering Proletariat*.

The exhibition's curator, Siona O'Connell, explored the history of the Spring Queen while putting together a series of photographs and texts.

"The pageant began in the late 70s and remains a highlight on the Cape Town social calendar," O'Connell says in her exhibition statement.

"There are up to 10 000 excited and jubilant supporters attending the final event, which is hosted by the Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union at the Good Hope Centre in Cape Town in November," she says.

O'Connell interviewed former pageant winners for her exhibition, and was moved by their stories.

"Spring Queen was an event that was on the periphery of my upbringing as I did not have parents who worked in factories," she explains. "We knew about 'factory workers' and the fact that, as a coloured woman, this could well have been my story."

The pageant gives a variety of women a chance to take centre stage. "Spring Queen has participants who



Jade Losper celebrates her Spring Queen 2011 win with her princesses. The pageant is held each November in Cape Town || PHOTO: FROM THE EXHIBITION THE STAGING OF THE GLITTERING PROLETARIAT

are married, who are older, who have children, and whose body types do not echo the Barbie doll.

"This is less about a chance to validate themselves in terms of beauty, rather, it is a chance to validate their lives and their presence."

Bianca Adams was 20 when she was crowned Spring Queen in 2007. She had no plans to work in a factory, but ended up as a machinist.

She says: "I didn't want to work in

a factory. I thought it was a place for desperate people.

"I was one of those desperate people and I just wanted to work. I didn't study after matric. A friend told me about a factory job and I tried it," says Adams.

"Getting a job at a factory is normally where Cape Flats people go and work when they are not able to get careers and get a job. It is part of the heritage of the people of Cape

Town. A lot of people work in factories. That's where they spend most of their time."

Spending all those hours in a factory has its downsides.

"The only thing about being a factory worker is that you work the whole year and just wear overalls," Adams says.

"You can only look nice on weekends. Spring Queen is a chance to show our feminine side. It's when

we can dress nicely, wear heels and feel confident."

The Staging of the Glittering Proletariat runs at the Centre for African Studies Gallery at the University of Cape Town until September 25. It then moves to the District Six Museum in Cape Town, the McGregor Museum in Kimberley and the Albany Museum in Grahamstown. The exhibition engaged with various collections of the Spring Queen pageant, from the private to the public, and aims to imagine a possible future archive

Fracking fight hots up

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A battle royal is looming between environmentalists and energy companies after Cabinet lifted the ban on fracking in South Africa on Friday.

Cabinet made the decision after studying a report on shale gas exploration prepared by a technical task team appointed by Mineral Resources Minister Susan Shabangu last year. The report said it was safe to begin exploring for shale gas.

At a press briefing on Friday, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Minister Collins Chabane said that because South Africa was an energy scarce country, shale gas, if it existed, would help a lot.

Earlier this year, business consultancy Econometrix released a report saying hundreds of thousands of jobs could be created by the shale-gas industry in the Karoo.

But it could also pollute scarce water resources in the Karoo.

Last month, environmental groups formed an opposition lobby group called SAFE (Sustainable Alternatives to Fracking and Exploration), that they said would fight fracking on all fronts.

Chabane said strict South African environmental-impact assessment standards would be adhered to when reviewing applications from companies applying to explore for gas. The mineral resources department would also now "steer" a public consultation process.

The Karoo Action Group's Jonathan Deal called Cabinet's decision "hasty" and "ill-informed".

"The task team was only issued with its mandate at the end of August 2011. A similar investigation is taking place in the US, and the organisations involved have specified they will need four years just to investigate and deliver their preliminary report," Deal said.

Even with the ban lifted, exploration for gas could take up to nine years, before applicants such as Shell could start fracking.



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2012 TOURISM MONTH PROGRAMME		
DATE	EVENT	PLACE/VENUE
30 Aug - 2 Sept	Boertjekontreifees	Bultfontein (Lejweleputswa DM)
31 Aug	Launch of Tourism Month (Kasie and Stokvel Tourism)	Meloding, Virginia (Lejweleputswa DM)
31 Aug - 2 Sept	Phakisa Motor Extravaganza	Phakisa, Welkom (Lejweleputswa DM)
8 - 9 Sept	Dihlabeng Familiarisation Tour	Dihlabeng LM (Thabo Mofutsanyana DM)
17 Sept	Xhariep Familiarisation Tour	Xhariep DM
21 - 23 Sept	Promoting Cross-border tourism packages	Maseru Lesotho
24 Sept	Heritage Day Celebrations	Ficksburg (Lejweleputswa DM)
25 - 28 Sept	World Tourism Day Celebrations	East London
29 Sept	Official Opening of Koppies Dam Chalets	Koppies (Fezile Dabi)

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SA science leaps forward

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After years of decline, South Africa's scientific research output is up – and that has a lot to do with the policies of Science and Technology Minister Naledi Pandor, according to Professor Anastassios Pouris.

In his report – titled *Science in South Africa: The Dawn of a Renaissance?* – the head of the University of Pretoria's Institute for Technological Innovation says our global share of science publications "is on the verge of reaching the highest contribution ever".

Our scientists published 7 468 research papers between 2000 and 2010 – almost doubling the previous decade's output and placing us 33rd in the world, ahead of countries such as New Zealand, Argentina and Ireland.

South Africa is also leading the race in Africa, producing almost half the continent's research papers.

Pouris told City Press that "for the first time in recorded history we were able to improve our position".

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In most developing countries, as the research community grows we see the results in economic growth

– ANASTASSIOS POURIS

higher education have also helped. With developments like the Square Kilometre Array, South Africa is showing particular strength in the field of space science and is also a leader in immunology, plant and animal sciences, and social sciences.

But, Pouris reveals in his report, we are falling behind in computer science, materials science, molecular biology and engineering. He cautions that these are crucial for industrial growth. More facilities and more lecturers need to be developed at universities to increase the intake of students, he said.

A separate study of patents shows South Africa is responsible for 98% of Africa's registered inventions.

The large mining industry means South Africa is third in the world in the science of extracting oil from coal and 12th in metallurgical processes, as well as in hydrocarbon-compound chemistry.

"Scientific innovation is really important. In most developing countries, as the research community grows we see the results in economic growth. We can prove that 70% to 80% of all economic growth depends on innovation," said Pouris.





Invitation to Public Hearing for National Health Amendment Bill

THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH INVITES FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE PUBLIC HEARING ON NATIONAL HEALTH AMENDMENT BILL - B24B-2011.

The Gauteng Provincial Legislature through the Portfolio Committee for Health, led by the Honourable Molebatsi Bopape, as part of its lawmaking and public participation mandate will be conducting a public hearing on the National Health Amendment Bill - B24B-2011. The hearing is aimed to ensure full participation from the citizens of Gauteng Province on health legislative issues that affects them.

The hearing will be held as follows:
 Date: Thursday, 20 September 2012
 Venue: Mogale City Local Municipality Hall, West Rand Region

The Portfolio Committee is striving to ensure excellent services in the Health Institutions in the Province.

The Chairperson invites all interested groups, communities and individuals to email their submissions to Mr Sydney Ndlovu, email: SNdlovu@gpl.gov.za or Ms Vivian Moloi, email: VMoloi@gpl.gov.za alternatively, you can call Mr Sydney Ndlovu: 011 498 5540/071 603 1659 or Ms Vivian Moloi: 011 498 5581/079 522 8704.

Copies of the National Health Amendment Bill - B24B-2011 can be obtained as follows: Mogale City Local Municipality main entrance, Gauteng Legislature Helpdesk or can be downloaded on the GPL website url: www.gpl.gov.za.

Submissions should reach the offices no later than 20 September 2012.