

*colour in the lines*

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# Colour in the lines

01

An Honours in Curatorship Project

June 2019

Michaelis School of Fine Art  
Centre for Curating the Archive  
University of Cape Town  
in association with UCT Collections

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**Norms are concepts that are constantly used to evaluate and control us: they exclude those who cannot conform to ‘normal’ categories. As such, they are an unavoidable but somehow harmful feature of modern society.**

”

#### REFERENCES

(Foucault in Sheridan et al, 1975: 3) See page 56

## Introduction

This exhibition brings together objects collected from a wide range of epistemic fields; from the natural, medical and cultural, to the personal, political and educational. The curatorial locus is formed around a diversity of themes centred on the institutional apparatus as used in social discipline and control. These themes are problematized in the Foucauldian response to the ideas of *Discipline and Punish*:

*“Discipline worked by coercing and arranging the individual’s movements and his experience of space and time. This is achieved by devices such as timetables and military drills, and the process of exercise. Through discipline, individuals are created out of a mass ... observation and gaze are key instruments of power.”*  
(Foucault in Sheridan et al, 1975: 1).

The individual in contemporary society must constantly negotiate issues of coercion and arrangement. The learning institution, in particular, seeks to enforce its gaze and observation of the perceived discourse in universal normativity. Here the minds of the taught are under the authority of educators who pursue a concerted effort at moulding a ‘model student’. By extension, the doctor, the lawyer, the social worker and the parent, are all actors in this performance of a repertory of activities all designed to set the standard for the learning of morals, ethics, traits and skills deemed to be acceptable in society. Foucault again asserts that,

*“...norms are concepts that are constantly used to evaluate and control us: they exclude those who cannot conform to ‘normal’ categories. As such, they are an unavoidable but somehow harmful feature of modern society.”* (Foucault in Sheridan et al, 1975: 3).

In this exhibition the preoccupation rests on exposing and exploring the many hidden connotations which speak to the state of childhood and lived experiences in the context of the urban social strata. These stories are told through objects.

The purity of the milk is a vivid reminder of the promise and hope that often surrounds

the birth of a new life, while at the same time it’s symbolic of the influence of motherhood in the shaping of childhoods. The gloves, again, represent another trope for the handling and regulation of education.

An object which could be a symbol for the lighter side of childhood is the watercolour set. This object, with its array of colours, immitates the creative possibilities that abound in childhood. But even this, creative and childlike allowance, is subject to the social construct of the times. The brain will develop into the institutionally desired standard, and if these standards are the object of political bureaucracy and its sinister projects, then all the good possibilities of childhood are distorted to suit the institution. The *phytobezoar*, the *heart*, the *playdough*, and the *oologist’s journal* all hint at an overarching theme of anxiety and the state of mental well-being. These objects raise deeper questions about the extent of trauma resulting from forms of political and social unrest.

There are suggestions of femininity, religion and the intimate. The *jabot* and the *Hijab* are imbued with personal and cultural symbolism, yet even these are, somehow, navigated through the frameworks of larger institutions such as organised religion. Undertones of violence are another current in the exhibition, seen through the *tear-gas* and the *bullet pouch*. Both these objects may be viewed as relics from a past of systemic violence aimed at the control of the majority population by a minority government.

These narratives and other arising subjects inform the curatorial aspirations pursued in the gathering of the objects into one space. The aesthetic becomes one assembled from a network of complexities that would have otherwise been antagonistic to each other in grappling with questions of what shapes the contemporary child.

In the end, it may be appropriate to recall the apt assertion by Jess Lair, “Children are not things to be moulded, but are people to be unfolded” (Nicol, 2007: 1).

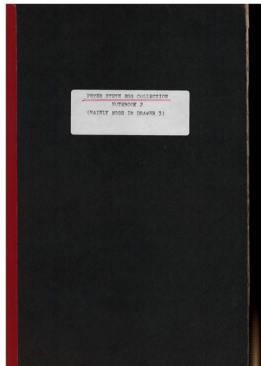
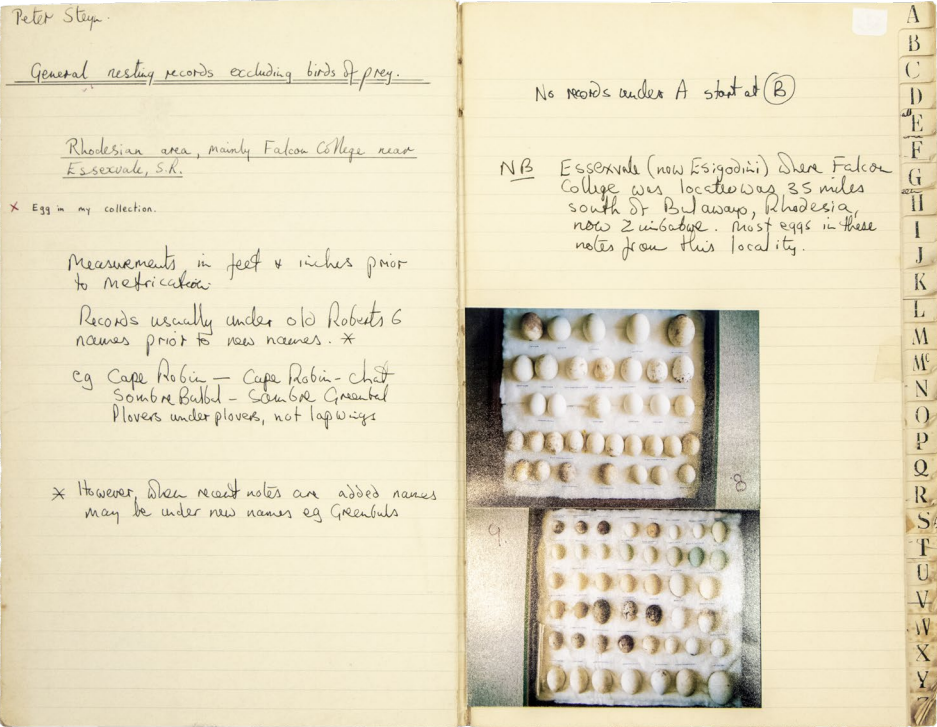
**Phoka Nyokong**

Centre for Curating the Archive

Student Writer

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# Oologist's Field Journal



**Oologist's Field Journal**  
Curated by Nathalie Viruly  
Notebook #2 – Nest Records (Mainly eggs in Drawer 3)  
The field journal is an alphabetical record for the eggs housed in the collection. Beyond this, it tells a tale of sentient grief and loss. Paper, printing ink, bleach, cotton binding, PVA glue  
31 X 21 X 0.9 cm

## OBJECT BIO

Created between 1961-1977  
by Mr Peter Steyn,  
a self-taught oologist  
Held in the University of Cape  
Town (UCT) Percy Fitzpatrick  
Institute of African Ornithology  
Collection, Niven Library

## An oologist's note on grief

One egg infertile and removed  
Nest later deserted  
One day old chick & 1 infertile egg  
Two infertile clutches  
1 cuckoo which failed to hatch  
Young killed by grassfire  
Eggs noticed to be very small  
One egg (collected) lying on ground  
No living  
Eggs deserted  
Later deserted  
Embryo still alive  
Young disappeared from nest a few days later - cause not known  
1 young cuckoo + 1 bulbul egg which was cracked  
Parasite  
Eggs cold  
Nest empty. Predation?  
Other egg laying broken beneath nest  
1 infertile egg  
1 warm egg in nest, birds frantic  
The parent having been caught in a trap set on the nest.  
Died the next day.  
Egg cold with well-developed embryo  
Eggs gone, cause not known  
2 eggs one crushed  
Chirping hard inside eggs  
1 infertile egg  
Nest ripped down  
1 naked chick + 1 infertile  
2 eggs failed to hatch  
2 infertile  
3rd egg infertile  
Young taken by predator  
Nest robbed  
One infertile and collected  
3 infertile, two collected  
Infertile (cracked) egg  
Nest fell down  
Nest empty  
1 egg slight crack. Nest destroyed.

Nathalie Viruly



1 young dead  
 Nest deserted  
 5 infertile eggs  
 One infertile  
 Later deserted  
 Later deserted  
 1 egg disappeared  
 Chick disappeared without a trace  
 1 young accidentally killed  
 Left nest before it could fly properly  
 One infertile later collected  
 Inadvertently flushed out fresh eggs during day time  
 Eggs disappeared  
 Literally cooked by the [corrugated] roof  
 Nest empty - egg collectors?  
 Bird caught on nest  
 One dead juvenile swallow  
 infertile/deserted eggs  
 Cause of predation not known.

These 58 lines are excerpts from an Oologist's Field Journal – the careful study of breeding patterns whereby singular eggs, clutches or whole nests are taken for taxonomic and ecological reasons (Waters, 2018: 7-8). Peter Steyn, a self-taught oologist, wrote the notebook between 1961 and 1977 while collecting eggs in Zimbabwe (Steyn, 2007: 1). The journal is a scientific work, recording with objective rigour, but also an archive of lost avian children and mothers. It documents forced separation, infertility and pinhole abortions in the name of masculine possession and humanist science. It suggests moments of individual tragedy and questions if grief is trans-species.

The notion of separation and loss are not exceptionally human, but sentient and embodied. Death, illness, migration, and abandonment impact biological lives at all levels (Waters, 2018: 17). Thus, this object, along with the maternal Back Brace, speak to disrupted nurturing bonds. The brace was once worn by the curator's mother while in the hospital with a back injury and a rare blood disease. While she healed, her children were raised by internal and external kin. Family structures were restructured, as they must, but psychological consequences endured. This is not to say that maternal bonds are the foundation of normalcy, but rather to note the effects of separation on individual relationships. Thus, these objects collectively highlight distressed relationships – children who are alone, circumstantial adults or those never allowed to grow. They represent complex childhoods that do not fit the normative progression of innocence. They are colours beyond the lines.

#### REFERENCES

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#### Mother's Back Brace

Curated by Nathalie Viruly

The straps are connected to weights which align a back injury of a bedridden patient.  
 Velcro, elastic cotton/nylon material, steel buckles  
 21.6 x 97.5 cm (Brace)  
 167 x 2.6 cm (Straps)

#### OBJECT BIO

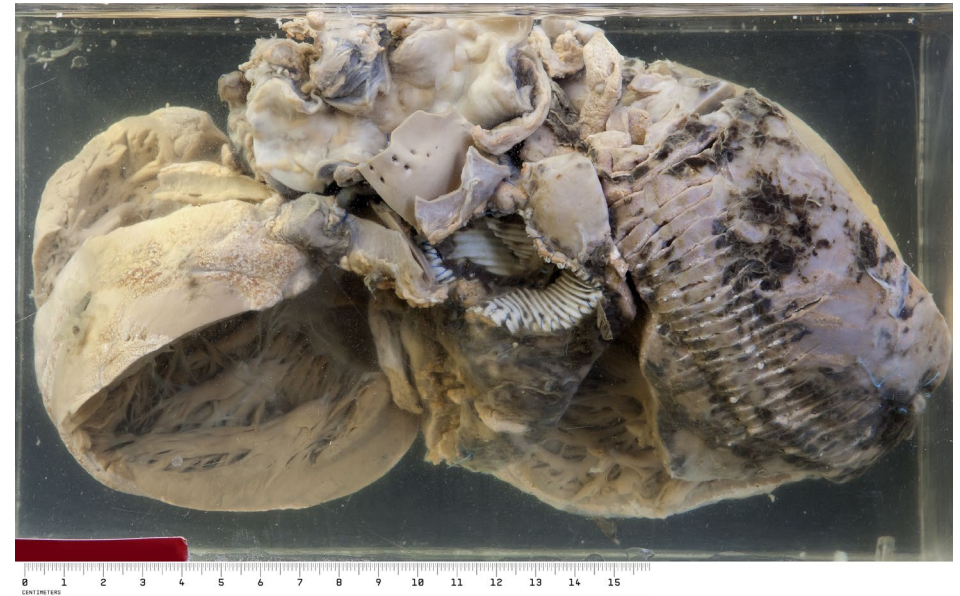
Acquired in 1998 at Rosebank Clinic, Johannesburg, Gauteng

Made by OrthoShield



# Heterotopic Heart Transplant

Created in 1977. Held at the UCT Pathology Learning Centre.



## Heterotopic Heart Transplant

Curated by Lethabo Gumede

Catalogue No: C1 - t15 - 3188

Perspex, a human heart, baboon chacma heart and formaldehyde (naturally occurring organic compound).

20 x 8 x 13 cm



## For children who cannot be children, know that childhood lives in the heart space

The theme of this exhibition, although sad, is one that we hope evokes a sense of love and appreciation for the little things in everyday life. This object, which happens to be the first captured representation of a Heterotopic Heart Transplant, also tells a melancholic story. A mere three months after an aortic valve replacement, a 25-year-old woman who suffered from abnormally high levels of cholesterol, came into Dr Christian Barnard's theatre for a second heart operation. The surgery was performed to temporarily assist her heart which was struggling to perform its circulatory functions. To Dr Barnard, this fragile and recovering heart needed a supplementary source of support. This is how the heart of a chacma baboon became an assistant pump, thus making the object: C1-t15-3188.

Using the heart as the centre of interpretation, the heart space can be understood as a playground for emotions to develop. This makes it a soft and carefree place for the growth of a child maturing into adulthood. While there is no perfect method to raising a child, the temporary state of childhood requires the heart space to be familiar with the idea of support, in all its forms. In this regard, the heart, human or animal, is seen as a fragile member of an interconnected system. Furthermore, the heart space is also an invitation towards acceptance - accepting the idea of an imperfect system that lives within all of us. This means relying on collaboration as a source of support.

For children who cannot be children, this may mean knowing that support does not present itself in a uniform way. It also means accepting that the imperfection of a system, bodily or otherwise, does not always mean the end of all hope. Thus, noting that sometimes an unconventional method of support requires someone other than ourselves. To show this unconventional support, Ms Silvia Bauce Viruly's Back Brace is used to carry the significance of supplementary support in the exhibition. The Back Brace helped her and her daughters while recovering from a back injury. Having paired the Heterotopic Heart Transplant with the back brace, the interconnectedness of the theme – separation and support – highlights the hopeful journey that childhood ought to be. For all the children who cannot be children, know that help is not always biological.

## Unbiological Support

Curated by Lethabo Gumedede

Used to nurse patients back to life in their personal environments.  
Assists in back related injuries while also extending support as part of a broader support system.

Velcro, elastic cotton/nylon material, steel buckles  
21.6 x 97.5 cm (Brace)  
167 x 2.6 cm (Straps)



## OBJECT BIO

Acquired in 2019, on loan from  
Nathalie Viruly, but belongs to  
Silvia Bauce Viruly

# Baby Face Wax Moulage

Created in 1900 by Somso Modelle. Held at the UCT Pathology Learning Centre.



## Baby Face Wax Moulage

Curated by Aaliyah Ahmed

Catalogue No: 826 in the *Skin and Bones Collection* for "decorative purposes".

Bees wax, oil paint, acrylic plastic, cotton bandage

24 x 19 x 4 cm

# Baby Face Wax Moulage

The Baby Face Wax Moulage depicts a child with *Ekzema Impetignosum*, commonly known as Impetigo. Impetigo is a disease of the skin, which is considered to be highly contagious. Children with the disease, like that depicted in the moulage, would often be isolated from other children as a precautionary measure. Thus, this object, speaks of children who are isolated and alienated from, and by, society for their ailments.

When a child is put in a naughty corner, one wonders if this is done for the good of the child or society? If the alienated child, such as an immigrant, differently-abled or one who is sick, is isolated from the rest of the society, what are the physical and mental health effects on the child? Children are often taken out of their natural atmosphere such as their homes, communities, families or cultural landscapes and placed in schools in order to be moulded into the 'perfect' or most productive individual. A child's performance is based according to one standard and therefore, the child might distance him/herself if she/he feels unworthy or does not fit the specific mould.

In this light, children are not the only ones who are taken out of their 'natural habitat' for the 'good of society'. Chickens, bred for commercial use are also taken out of their 'natural habitat'. Instead of roaming free, they are forced into small cages, and the natural process of development is sped up. What they do and eat is controlled until they are slaughtered and packaged for human consumption. This echoes the current Western schooling system whereby learning processes are accelerated and impersonal. Children with physical, mental or emotional disabilities are traditionally not nurtured and are instead ignored because they slow down the 'process of production' for their class, their society.

In the end, the child and the chicken are stripped of their natural surroundings in order to become something they might not have been created to be. The Raw Packaged Chicken in the supermarket and the child moulage speak to mass consumption, mass production, standardization and homogeneity.



## Packaged Chicken

Curated by Aaliyah Ahmed

Barcode number: 2900490 433150  
Raw Chicken, plastic, paper stickers  
18 x 23 x 4 cm

## OBJECT BIO

Created in 2019 by Rainbow Farms  
Purchased from Spar



# Phytobezoar

Created in 1970 by an eleven-year-old boy, a patient at a mental institution.  
Held at the UCT Pathology Learning Centre.



## Phytobezoar

Curated by Geena Wilkinson

Catalogue number: D5-m30-3335

Classified as *Mechanical*

Undigested grass, thread, leaves, various other plant matter,  
stomach acids, fats & enzymes.

18 x 19 x 8 cm in box / dimensions variable out of box  
847 grams

## CAN A SYMPTOM BE A CURE?

Nearly fifty years ago, this Phytobezoar specimen was formed in the stomach of an eleven-year-old boy, an “inmate” of a mental institution. Essentially, it is a grass ball: *phyto* meaning plant and *bezoar* referring to a composite clump of indigestible matter left behind in the stomach to form an obtrusive mass (Lee et al., 2009: 2265). This specimen was surgically removed at Victoria Hospital, accompanied by clinical data, explaining that the child “was known to be fond of eating grass” (UCT Digital Pathology Catalogue, n.d.). This statement begs the question, why would somebody eat something that isn’t edible and enjoy it? According to the record, “His convalescence was uneventful, but significantly about the 8th to 10th day he was noted to be attempting to eat his bandages.” (UCT Digital Pathology Catalogue, n.d.). It is evident that he had not been cured when the bezoar was removed. Furthermore, it is suggestive of an underlying condition that could be related to a case of comorbid Impulse Control Disorder (ICD), the failure to resist an impulse, or related to Obsessive Compulsive Spectrum Disorder (Prochwicz & Starowicz, 2012: 197).

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is divided into two elements: the obsession and the compulsion. The obsession is the recurrent fear or anxiety that plagues the mind, and the compulsion is the repetitive actions or ritualised behaviours that are performed to distract from the obsession (Grohol, 2018). Trichobezoars (hairballs) are commonly a symptom of Trichophagia (hair eating) and Trichotillomania (hair pulling). They are formed in the same way as Phytobezoars with a high rate of comorbid anxiety or depression,

The obsessive picking, pulling and eating of hair is a coping mechanism in the absence of proper medical treatment. It is a desperate attempt to cure what cannot be seen, by performing a meditation on the body that can be felt. This Phytobezoar could have been prevented by rechannelling the energy spent on the obsession. If there had been a creative and constructive outlet for the boy’s obsessive behaviour he could have excelled in a field like ceramics which requires creatively engaging the brain and involving hands-on, repetitive action.



### Playdough

Curated by Geena Wilkinson

Could be classified as *Mechanical*  
 Labelled as “*Ideal for kids*”  
 Contains wheat flour, 100% natural  
 bright pink soft modelling dough  
 Dimensions variable (out of box)  
 100 grams

### OBJECT BIO

Purchased in 2019 from Polly  
 Potter’s Toy Store, Gardens Centre  
 Created by GIOTTO be-bè in Italy

While clay could equally have been artistically-prescribed as a preventative cure to the bezoar, Playdough has been selected instead. It is constantly malleable, does not dry out and does not leave a mark, making it applicable to the everyday. The therapeutic soothing qualities of playdough are downplayed in its classification as a children’s toy, making its use by anyone older appear frivolous. It too has been overlooked, despite its possible use for channelling repetitive compulsive behaviour. As such, it is not a permanent cure in the medical sense, but rather a suggestion that perhaps when illness is

behavioural it can only be cured with a new behaviour. Thus, the playdough ties back into the title of the exhibition, *Colour in the lines*, speaking to how if the child had been allowed to play, it could have been possible for this boy to function in society, without being isolated from it. *Colour in the lines* comes as a reminder of the rigidity of the normalcy and the boundaries that create otherness. It reinforces the curbing of creativity echoed by the words of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “You can have ambition, but not too much” (Adichie, 2012).

### REFERENCES

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# Sheep Jaw

Object originated in 990 - 880 BP (960 - 1070 AD) but found in 1982 by Professor Andrew B. Smith. Held in the UCT Archaeology Collection.



**Sheep Jaw**  
Curated by Beata America  
Shelf Number: KBA06\_D  
Collection Name: KBA  
Enamel  
3 x 14 cm

The object chosen is a Sheep Jaw and Teeth from the Archaeology Collection at the University of Cape Town. The interest in the jaw started when thinking about the way in which we interact with sheep in society. The respect and value placed on species is contrasted by the faceless nature with which we consume the animal in our everyday lives. Perhaps the personification and humanistic nature with being confronted with remains evokes an empathy and sympathy – a commonality that might not have been there before. Specifically, the act of consuming with which the jaw is commonly associated is an intriguing concept. One could flesh this idea out and explore the many ways with which we, as people, consume different types of content, in both the literal aspect of eating as well as the social aspect of our day to day interactions. And from this, one can interrogate the ways that they influence us.

On a personal level, as the curator of this object, the sheep jaw subtly represents growing levels of anxiety and a misdiagnosis of epilepsy in adulthood. The onset of which started with a constantly locked jaw accompanied by various hospital visits to relieve the pressure. While the Jaw and Teeth may seem unrelated to mental health, their exhibition alongside a Pill Bottle creates an interesting conversation – one of consumption for relief and survival.

The contents of this specific pill bottle, however, is not medication but rather candy which not only speaks to the overarching childlike theme of the exhibit but also the suppressive nature of these medications on the body and self. The candy also represents the commonality and accessibility of these medications and the large range with which people consume them due to mental health struggles. Despite this large rate of medical consumption, there is still a stigmatisation and misdiagnosis of children with mental health issues, which is a diminishing and belittling of value as it is not held to the same regard as that of adults.



#### Pill Bottle

Curated by Beata America

Plastic, sweets, paper  
8.5 x 4 x 14.5 cm

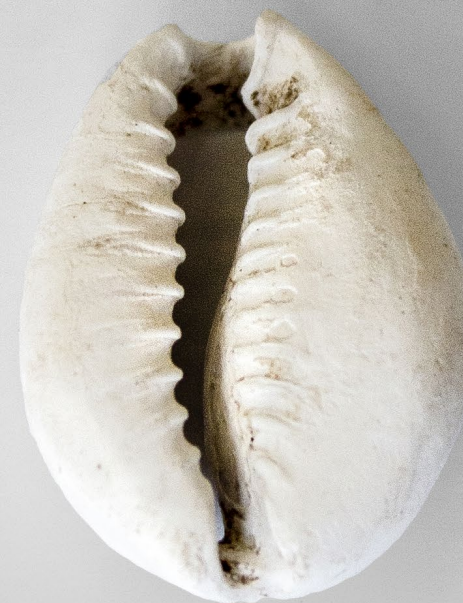
#### OBJECT BIO

Manufactured by Adcock Ingram

Dispensed in 2018 from  
Arun Place Pharmacy

# Cowrie Shell

Collected in July 2012. Held in the UCT Archaeology Collection, Conchology Section.



## Cowrie Shell

Curated by Jessica Doran

SHA N1\_L2

Extra pallial fluid

1 x 2.5 x 1.25 cm



As one of the natural wonders of the ocean, Cowrie shells are produced by the bodies of sea slugs in a manner which we are yet to fully comprehend. It is thought that these creatures use extra pallial fluid (made internally from carbon extracted from the surrounding water) to create their shells (Prendergast, n.d.). Ironically, carbon dioxide pollution is one of the many environmental harms caused by human activity. The mysterious origin of the cowrie through this carbon extraction illustrates the complex balance of the ocean necessary for its survival.

Despite the widespread harmful effects caused by excess carbon dioxide emissions, this is not the only detrimental form of pollution caused by human beings. Similar to excess carbon dioxide emissions, excess plastic fills our oceans and plastic lollipop sticks are one of the most common forms. At first glance, the lollipop stick appears to be a symbol of joyous youth, representing wealth and the privilege of being spoilt by one's parents. It seems to represent a celebration of innocence, rather than the destruction of it. Despite this, the joy lollipops provide is only temporary in exchange for the irreversible, long-term destruction of the environment. Many discarded lollipop sticks are consumed by sea creatures, big and small alike, damaging their bodies and even causing death. The lollipop sticks that remain untouched by sea creatures, impact the quality of the water – its ability to oxygenate, cool and sustain life. This destruction of ecology can be linked to a loss of childhood whereby future generations will no longer be able to experience nature the way we have.

### Lollipop Stick

Curated by Jessica Doran

Small incision towards the top of the stick which holds candy in place.

White plastic  
7.5 cm

### OBJECT BIO

Manufactured in 2019 by  
Broadway Sweets, Cape Town

The Lollipop Stick and the Cowrie Shell represent opposite ends of the same cycle – discarded plastic in the ocean, and environmental adaptation of ocean-life. Both the Lollipop Stick and Cowrie Shell allude to natural displacement and degradation at the hand of human beings. Unlike the indefinite plastic waste, the juxtaposition of these two objects suggests that the bounty of the ocean such as fish, abalone and ambergris are limited. Taking into consideration time and greed, our actions have endangered numerous species.

The quality of the air, water and earth decreases with every day that

passes, and can certainly be attributed to human influence. Plastic is immune to biodegradation and will remain on the planet forever, leaving an uncertain future for the youth. As Greta Thunberg (2019) states in her emotive speech at the U.N. Climate Summit, “You are not mature enough to tell it like it is. Even that burden you leave to us, children”. She continues, “you say you love your children above all else, and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes”. Alongside one another, the Cowrie Shell and the Lollipop Stick speak to a system of destruction in which freedoms are forfeited for economic gains.

### REFERENCES

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# Eastern Frieze Replica

Created in 1907 by D. Brucciani & Co.  
Held in the UCT Works of Art Collection, Hiddingh Hall Library.



## Eastern Frieze Replica

Curated by Malikah Meyer

Catalogue number: 462

Part of the Beit Bequest/ Collection of antique statuary

Used for art education in the imperial educational system of the 1900s in South Africa.

Plaster of Paris

104 x 134 cm



# Eastern Frieze Replica

The primacy of a white, European system of value, Eurocentrism, can be reduced to a single problem: “the belief in a single canon, a single timeline, or a single hegemonic centre” (Sherrard 2017: 1). The primary object in this object study is a cast of the seated deities Poseidon, Apollo and Artemis from Block VI of the Eastern Frieze of the Parthenon. The cast is 104cm x 134cm in size, made of plaster, and has never been painted or decorated.

For centuries, especially between the fifteenth and early twentieth, the importance and beauty of Greco-Roman statuary was widespread. This artform was seen to be the “natural and obvious good” (Tietze 2018: 315), worth replicating and collecting by famous museums, influential families and European institutions alike. The value of antique statuary casts gained monetary and imperial value as an artform, through colonialism after the sixteenth century. Western/European dominance was justified by placing an imperialist claim on Greco-Roman statuary, using the whitened marble as a representation of ‘white purity’ and superiority. A European sense of importance spread and soon international art schools and academies started purchasing these casts.

This was especially done in the mid-seventeenth century, for statuary studies. Art students were given a wide selection of ‘noble’ poses and gestures to reproduce in their own art, internalizing the techniques of ancient Greco-Roman sculptures (Tietze 2018: 316-318). The cast of the Eastern Frieze Block of the Parthenon is a product of European narcissism. Art students merely learned how to copy, rather than expand and create their own unique style and ideas. This method of controlling the artistic freedom of students can be compared to the early practice of school where children are told to ‘colour in the lines’, taught what shapes to draw, and which colours and artistic methods are acceptable together. The sun can only be round and yellow. Blades of grass must be green. At a young age, art is dictated in a controlled environment.



## GHD

Curated by Malikah Meyer

Barcode number: 6 006323 483821

Could be classified as *Beautification*

Tourmaline, flat iron plates, tinned copper, plastic

2.5 x 24.5 cm (without cord)

## OBJECT BIO

Created in 2014 by Clicks

Purchased at Clicks

The second object is a hair straightener/GHD, which is used to create thin and straight hair. This man-made appliance can be seen as a product of Eurocentrism bleeding into society as young girls and women are taught to obediently replicate the rules their mothers were taught about beauty. They are instructed to follow the practice of having ‘white’ hair otherwise they risk being shunned and shamed by society for looking ‘untidy’ and ‘unprofessional’.

As mentioned above, creative freedom is lost, and therefore women, especially women of colour, cannot follow their own individualistic expressions of beauty. Instead, women are encouraged

to become models of unreachable, Westernized beauty standards that few can wholly achieve. Fitting neatly into a single definition of Eurocentric beauty (thin, flowy hair, light skin, and a thin body) is a practice that begins at school, where young girls can only attend school with their hair in tight, flat buns or school-approved plaited hair and uniforms. Physical Education classes became a space to maintain skinny, ‘healthy’ bodies.

Both these objects are tools in shaping the mind and bodies of young people, regarding how to perceive art and beauty, through an oppressive, Eurocentric gaze.

## REFERENCES

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# Sammy Marks' Leather Cartridge Case

## OBJECT BIO

Previously held in Sammy Marks' House, Zwartkoppies, Pretoria

Held in the Sammy Marks Collection, UCT Special Collections Library

Sammy Marks' Leather Cartridge Case and the conservation gloves do not appear to have much in common in terms of material appearance, but as discovered in this object study, the two share an intrinsic place in the institutional practice of conservation of object collections.

The cartridge case sits in the Special Collections of UCT, where it enjoys a place among what may be understood as privileged objects as suggested by the designation 'special'. Furthermore, this object is held in a strong room vault which entrenches its importance. The specific gloves in this exhibition were acquired from the UCT Special Collections Library and the Iziko Social History Centre, where the transparent plastic gloves were used to handle the cartridge case in the former and the blue latex gloves were used to handle several objects in the latter. The gloves were taken from the numerous pairs that people are handed when coming to see the objects in the collections.

Each pair is indistinguishable from the next, from a long line of mass-produced articles which can be largely seen as ephemera, particularly in how they are used at the sites of object preservation. The practice is that after using the gloves to handle the object, one may discard the gloves as they please. There is no effort to recycle the gloves for re-use. This implies the sort of inconsequential and trivial status afforded these objects in the ecology of collections. Yet the irony of this practice lies in the perceived important role that the gloves have in the handling of museum objects, and therefore by extension, of history and culture. They become a kind of conduit to the engagement with the important objects.



## Sammy Marks' Leather Cartridge Case

Curated by Phoka Nyokong

Catalogue number: BC770\_H4

Nubuck leather, tin, copper

5 x 14 x 14 cm



This incongruous relationship between these objects represents an extended metaphor for the complexity in the treatment of and value attached to world objects when it comes to the composition of object collections. Furthermore, it functions in this exhibition as a reference to the idea of the construct of 'handling and moulding of children'. The suggestion in society is that there is a system of handling people in order to make them fit into frames of conduct. These systems of moulding are both political and cultural, and suggest an institutional effort at sanitizing history to be seen from a constructed vantage point.

#### Conservation Gloves

Curated by Phoka Nyokong

Could be classified as *Ephemera*

Used in museum conservation processes, sometimes in surgical and in beauty care procedures

Latex / nitrile

Dimensions variable



#### OBJECT BIO

Held in the Iziko Social History Centre and the UCT Special Collections

Library



## Ghost Shell: Tear-Gas Canister

Found on Middle Campus, UCT in 1989. Held in the UCT Special Collections Library.  
Curated by Larissa Mwanyama. Metal, CS gas & rubber. 10 x 3 cm diameter.



Usually finding itself between two opposing sides, the tear-gas canister often exists in the context of war and protests. Its official appearance is unknown. However, its birth is closely tied to World War One and the battles between France and Germany. This history defines the canister through a context of violence and death.

With time, tear-gas resurfaced into society, rebranded as a more humane and non-lethal way to disperse or control crowds – an ally to police officers. However, tear-gas is anything but humane and non-lethal. It was formulated to cause immense pain and create a sense of confusion. Tear-gas is made up of CS gas and a capsaicin compound, the same compound in chilli peppers. Once ignited, these components cause smoke and a burning sensation in the body. The thick white cloud finds its way into the lungs, and suffocates the target. Despite this danger, they have been continuously used over the years, specifically in student protests.

This particular Tear-Gas Canister, was found on the grass of Middle Campus at UCT, in 1989. The Tear-Gas Canister is no longer whole, with only the metal shell remaining. The gas components were triggered and used on the protesting students of UCT. After being privately kept for thirty years, the canister shell was returned to UCT, but this time to the UCT Special Collections. It has kept its shape and blackened burn marks on its exterior. While the canister is physically small, its impact is large. Thirty years later, tear-gas is still being used in student protests on UCT grounds, namely, against the Fees Must Fall movement in 2016. Thus, this object speaks to the children who become university students and are homogenised as a violent unit. It suggests a social repulsion to those who fight for their beliefs within rigid structures.



#### Milk

Curated by Larissa Mwanyama

Clover milk, plastic bottle  
500ml Valpre bottle, blue PET plastic

#### OBJECT BIO

Repurposed Valpre plastic  
water bottle, collected in 2019

Available at most retail stores

Despite students being under attack from the university and its smoky tear-gas decorations, students soon learnt of milk's soothing capacity for the burning pain. Students would come with milk-filled plastic bottles. Some would come with bottles made of harder plastics, whilst most would come with whatever bottle they could find. Just as tear-gas was essential to the police in their strategy, so was milk for students. Milk acted as a tool for armed defense that shifted into a soothing solution for the burning moment.

Milk, generally associated with mothering and womanhood, finds itself representing the women in student protests. As most wars go, men are considered to be the ones in battle, whilst women stay and care at home. Similarly, the dynamic remains in protests, where men lead and women are made to be the singers, the screamers and the nurturers. They are not seen as equals. Like milk, women are both the defence and the soothing solution. The Milk and canister share common ground in this context; they always find themselves between two opposing sides.





## Edith Bruch's Jabot

Created circa 1920-1929. Held in the Edith Bruch Collection, UCT Special Collections Library. Curated by Afrah Mayet. Lace and velvet ribbon. 95 x 15 cm.

# Edith Bruch's Jabot

This Jabot is one made of pleated lace, accented with velvet. It is sheer and elegant with a black velvet ribbon that is used to tie around the neck.

While looking at Edith's life through her surviving belongings, her jabots and immigrant status, there is a constant reminder of the contemporary immigration crisis that pervades our global community. A racist, anti-immigration rhetoric that continuously sparks hatred and fear, makes it incredibly difficult for immigrants, especially those of a darker hue and of a lower class, to restart their lives, hold onto their belongings, family and identities in the same way that Edith Bruch was able to in 1936.

A Hijab is used as the corresponding object in this exhibition, to represent the Othering that has worsened the crisis and amplified discriminatory narratives around the globe. Islamophobia and racism cannot be separated from the refugee crisis, thus this pairing attempts to demonstrate the global inequalities that have been magnified as the crisis continues.

The refugee crisis has affected millions of people around the world and children are not exempt from the external and internal displacement that is felt as a result of immigration. It is clear that in our formative years, stability and security are essential aspects that contribute to our quality of life, the way we perceive the world and ourselves as well as our ability to thrive, both physically and emotionally. The refugee crisis has forced families to give up the lives that they knew and it has seen families torn apart. According to a study on The Educational and Mental Health Needs of Syrian Refugee Children (2015), barriers and disruptions to education are significant. "Before resettlement, most refugees will stay in a camp for at least a year [and] between the suffering and trauma experienced before fleeing and the scarce resources and services within refugee camps, Syrian refugees are at very high risk of mental illness and poor access to education" (Sirin & Roger-Sirin, 2015).



## Hijab

Curated by Afrah Mayet

Cotton and cashmere  
176 x 76 cm

## OBJECT BIO

Held in Aaliyah Ahmed's Hijab collection  
Received as a gift from her mother, circa 2015

This exhibition explores the loss of childhood and how this inevitably shapes our futures. The refugee crisis rids children of their rights as stated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959). These rights are said to be universal, yet there

are millions of children who are excluded and ignored. There is a need to discuss the gross violation of human rights that rests at the heart of the refugee crisis, undisturbed. The rights of children should be considered alongside this exhibition.

## REFERENCES

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## Steiff Bear

Created in 1902 by Margarete Steiff GmbH Factory.  
Held in the Willy Rosenstien Collection, UCT Special Collections Library.  
Property of The South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation.

These items of play - a Steiff Bear and a Viewmaster - have survived generations moving across countries, in suitcases and boxes. As objects of sentimentality that have been preserved during and after the lives of their owners, these toys – though old, dusty and aged – remind us of youth, childhood and act as vehicles of escapism.

The Steiff Bear, created in Germany in 1902, belonged to a decorated World War One pilot. The bear sat in the cockpit of its owner's aircraft, surviving and existing in airspace across France, Belgium and Germany and eventually emigrating to South Africa in the 1930s. Upon outliving its owner, the bear was adopted by neighbours of the family and was then donated to the South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation in 2016. The bear now resides in the University of Cape Town's Special Collections library, living its new life as archival material.

Similar to the bear, the Viewmaster is an item that reminds adults of play in their childhood. It was a discovery recently made, found in a dusty and forgotten suitcase at a family home in India. This item belonged to older generations of the family with a collection of three-dimensional reels that include film stills from Gulliver's Travels, Babes in Toyland and Peter Pan as well as sites and photographs from all over the world - Mecca, India, Germany and the Netherlands. This toy was a tool in which to travel the world and see films without actually moving, allowing the child to escape from reality. The Steiff Bear, however, was able to physically travel the world, moving alongside its owner from childhood till even after his death.

Both these items are personal belongings that hold sentimental value; holding memories and acting as reminders of wonder often only found in youth. These objects that we consider as ephemera are often so well preserved that they outlive their owners. Perhaps the reason why we hold on to them is because they become physical capsules of our memories, objects from our past that connect us back to our youth and innocence.

**ABOVE****Viewmaster**

Curated by Sana Ginwalla

Could be categorised as *Ephemera*

Brown Bakelite, Viewmaster reel, tungsten bulb

10.5 x 12.5 x 9.5 cm

Model D

**OBJECT BIO**

Created Circa 1950 - 1970

Made by Sawyer's

**PREVIOUS PAGE****Steiff Bear**

Curated by Sana Ginwalla

Shelf number ZA UCT BC1556

Categorised as *Ephemera*

Angora goat, tree, sand, mohair, wood, glass

Height: 26 cm, Chest: 20 cm, Shoulder: 9 cm

Hip: 18 cm, Leg: 12 cm, Arm: 15 cm, Neck: 6 cm



# Vygie

*Carpobrotus acinaciformis* (L.) L.Bolus

Created in September 1924 by Mary M. Page.  
Held in the UCT Bolus Herbarium Collection.



## Vygie

*Carpobrotus acinaciformis* (L.) L. Bolus  
Curated by Jonathan Goschen

L.Bolus 17704, Sheet 2 / BOL 129895  
Pressed specimen, watercolour, pencil, paper  
25 x 42 cm



# Vygie

*Carpobrotus acinaciformis* (L.) L.Bolus

Art practice is almost universally encouraged in children. As one grows older, one is steadily directed away from art, and towards other pursuits. This begs the question what kind of outcomes are expected from art? Is art encouraged in order to keep children busy and behaved, or is it with consideration for their development?

Mary M. Page was responsible for pressing and illustrating the *Carpobrotus acinaciformis*, a species of vygie which grows in sandy regions all over the Cape. According to botanical custom, the naming describes characteristics of the plant. *Carpobrotus* comes from the Latin *karpōs* meaning 'fruit', and *brotus* meaning 'edible'. Similarly *acinaces* describes a scimitar (curved sword) and *formis* describes the shape.

Herbaria serve as the physical repositories for biological taxa, the standard hierarchical grouping of plants. Illustrations in herbaria accompany pressed specimens, as a way of presenting the natural shape and colour of the plant – characteristics which are lost in the pressing process. An eminent artist in the field, Page's illustrations are among the most striking in the Bolus Herbarium, and this particular illustration is one of her finest.

The watercolour set, cheaply produced as a children's plaything, illustrates the tools which are in the hands of children. It represents the vast stretches of the imagination, an enacting of the endless possibilities that the child is told is available to them. But cheap paints fade quickly, and the world closes up.

One questions what kinds of artistic careers were available for women in the 1920s, or even generally today. What determines the distinctions between art and illustration, who is allowed to be an artist and who an illustrator? One has to ask who the art is created for, in what various ways has art been co-opted to give validity to different pursuits. The scientific endeavour to separate and classify has used these illustrations to construct a more convincing argument for its own relevancy.

Undoubtedly this is a beautiful, and powerful illustration of the *Carpobrotus acinaciformis* – a plant which everyone living along the Coastal Cape will be familiar with. It evinces an attentive, considerate eye, the kind of eye we ought to be cultivating in our classrooms.



## Children's Watercolour Set

Curated by Jonathan Goschen

Plastic, paint brush, 12 watercolour pigments  
10 x 22 cm

## OBJECT BIO

Manufactured by Staedtler  
Noris Club Children's Stationery

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