

## **South Africa: Connecting Art & Science in Cacadu LARC Proposal**

### Community Groups:

- a) Associate Professor Andries Fourie (Art) with student members Monique Rodriguez and Jake Waldner
- b) Associate Professor David Craig (Biology) with student member Erynn Rebol

Art Associate Professor Andries Fourie and Biology Associate Professor David Craig have previously collaborated on interpreting landscapes through joint projects in art, and a deep understanding of natural history. Their collaborative sculpture “Zena Web,” was part of an exhibition at the Salem Art Association’s Bush Barn Center in 2011 and had ecological web information embedded in a network of sculptural forms that identified key species that represented important ecological roles and demonstrated the connections between these species. The work in effect demonstrated a map species interaction as well as ideas about human relationships with the landscape and animals at Zena over the last 250 years.

In 2013 we are interested in continuing this interdisciplinary exploration of a specific landscape and ecosystem, but want to expand the project to include student participation, and shift the focus to the landscape of the Eastern Cape region of South Africa (where Professor Fourie grew up). An additional element of the proposed project would be a collaboration with the departments of Biology and Visual Art at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. We especially look forward to collaborating with Dr. Richard Cowling of NMMU’s Biology Department, whose expertise on the region’s distinctive ecology is particularly valuable. Dr. Cowling and NMMU have already indicated their interest in the proposed collaboration.

There are several key points of thematic, theoretical and methodological intersection for the proposed community. The first is that the community will focus on the same landscape and ecosystems: the Addo Elephant National Park and the surrounding areas, which stretch from the coastline into the arid interior. Theoretically both groups will have the same departure point: the idea that data about species in a specific ecosystem, paired with information that charts species interaction in the same system provides crucial insight into the nature of that system and landscape. There are also methodological intersections: both groups will be collecting data and information about specific species or larger patterns in an ecosystem. The Art group would even be able to use information collected by the biology group in conceiving and designing their sculptures.

The community will engage in several kinds of collective work. The project will begin with joint readings and discussions to prepare for the research. They will focus on ways of “reading” or investigating a landscape or ecosystem, and the means by which the data or information gleaned from such an investigation may be visually represented. Both sub-groups of the community will then be collecting biological and ecological data and information in the same area. In some cases the two groups will assist each other in this process. Joint meetings and information sessions with local biologists, academics and conservations staff will be held.

Fourie, Rodriguez and Waldner, will collect visual reference material and information to make sculptures and paintings that represent the relationships within species, between various species, or between humans and animals in the general area of the Addo Elephant National Park. Monique Rodriguez will focus on social behavior in elephants, Jake Waldner on the relationship between elephants and various tree species, and Andries Fourie on the connections between a variety of plant and animal species and humans in the region.

Craig and Rebol will collect data on the habitats and behavior of Caspian Terns as part of an ongoing research program on this cosmopolitan species. In a 2011 LARC group Craig and Rebol collaborated to use Caspian Terns to figuratively interpret the Columbia River estuary. They will collect preliminary data for future scientific grant proposals.

After returning to Willamette, joint meetings will be held to plan and design the works of art made by members of the community, and discuss the implications of the results of the biological research. The project will culminate in a joint art exhibition as part of the Salem Art Association's Project Space program in late summer 2013. The exhibition will combine work by the faculty and students of both groups. The exhibition will combine sculptures and paintings by the artists with artifacts, field notes and contextual information by the biologists.

#### **LARC PROPOSAL BUDGET**

##### **South Africa: Connecting Art & Science in Cacadu**

###### **Professor Andries Fourie:**

\$1800 for air travel to and from South Africa (Delta/KLM).

\$1100 for accommodation in South Africa.

\$800 for vehicle rental and fuel for travel in South Africa.

\$300 for meals in South Africa

**Total: \$4000**

###### **Professor David Craig:**

\$1800 for air travel to and from South Africa (Delta/KLM).

\$1100 for accommodation in South Africa.

\$800 for vehicle rental and fuel for travel in South Africa.

\$300 for meals in South Africa

**Total: \$4000**

###### **Erynn Rebol:**

\$1800 for air travel to and from South Africa (Delta/KLM).

\$800 for accommodation in South Africa.

\$400 for meals in South Africa

**Total: \$3000**

###### **Monique Rodriguez:**

1800 for air travel to and from South Africa(Delta/KLM).

\$800 for accommodation in South Africa.

\$400 for meals in South Africa

**Total: \$3000**

###### **Jake Waldner:**

1800 for air travel to and from South Africa (Delta/KLM).

\$800 for accommodation in South Africa.

\$400 for meals in South Africa

**Total: \$3000**

**Additional Request**

We are requesting an additional \$3000 for the following expenses:

\$450 for sculpture materials and supplies (steel, wood, aluminum etc)

\$1330 Addo Elephant Park Access fees for 5 adults

\$1000 for air travel from Johannesburg to Port Elizabeth and back (Kulula Airlines)

\$220 for meals in South Africa.

**Total: \$3000**