

Andries Fourie Statement

For my LARC project I propose to conduct research and produce a body of mixed-media sculptures and paintings that explore the biodiversity of the Cacadu district of South Africa's Eastern Cape province. I am particularly interested in making artworks that map the web of interdependencies between species. I intend to do so through an interdisciplinary collaboration with Dr. David Craig of the Willamette Biology Department, and Dr. Richard Cowling of the Botany Department at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Dr. Cowling has already signaled his willingness to collaborate. Professor Mary Duker, Director of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's School of Music, Art & Design, has also expressed an interest in taking part in the project. I plan to make works that map species interaction as well as human-species interaction in the district's rich variety of biomes (forest, thicket, fynbos, grassland, savanna, and Nama-Karoo). My research will be centered on the Addo National Park, which stretches from the coast to the arid, inland Karoo.

This represents an initial foray into a new area for me. While I have individually done work before that looks at species interaction and human species interaction in Namibia, and collaboratively done similar work (with Dr Craig) that focuses on Zena Forest, I've never done such work collaboratively that focuses on the landscape where I grew up (the Eastern Cape).

I will be working on this project during the Sumer of 2013 and the Fall of 2013, when I will be on sabbatical. The LARC grant will be my only funding for the project.

There will be a fair amount of overlap between my own project and those of my two mentees. We will all be focusing on flora and fauna in the same region, although they will both be looking specifically at elephants, while my own focus is broader. We will be collecting similar material (in terms of information and images), will benefit similarly from our collaboration with the biologists in our community, and on our return from South Africa, we will be working in the same studio together to make our sculptures and paintings. We will also exhibit the work together at the end of the summer.

I am certain that my project will inform those of my mentees in the same way that the ideas and strategies they develop will influence and inform mine. The subjects we study and our means of expression are close enough that cross-pollination is an inevitable and valued part of the process.

Finally, the sculptures and paintings that my mentees and I make as part of this proposed project will be exhibited as part of the Salem Art Association's Project Space Initiative in late Sumer of 2013. I will subsequently continue working on the project during my Fall sabbatical, which means that I should have enough new work completed for a one-person exhibition by the end of Fall. The new work will be exhibited as part of my exhibition schedule.