

Unam Visual Arts Graduates Exhibition Closing at NAGN

• Martha Mukaiwa

FOR the University of Namibia's visual arts students, the graduate exhibition marks their official induction into the professional art world.

On display at the National Art Gallery of Namibia and the Franco-Namibian Cultural Centre since last November, the annual exhibition features the work from both the degree and diploma programmes' 21 graduates majoring in arts for advertising, creative expression, ceramics studies, textiles, fashion and visual culture.

Presenting Wil-Merie Greyling's arresting 'Covenant of Salt' looming large in digital prints reflecting her site specific fidelity bodies in brown water, artfully connoting durability, purity, purification and regeneration through the material and metaphor of salt, the exhibition impressed in installations as personal as Greyling's and as edifying as Risto Iita's.

Creating a modest forest of indigenous textile trees, Iita's celebration of Namibia's natural heritage is juxtaposed with Tuavisuua Katuoo's 'Who Am I' featuring a tangle of "handmade African dolls" creatively displayed and intent on celebrating human commonalities and diversity.

Similarly offering odes to Namibian people, artists Iita and Muningando Hoveka use wire and pencil and paper to consider the country's various tribes and Otjiherero proverbs.

A lopsided offering in which installation reigned relatively supreme over conceptually underwhelming

photographic, mixed media and ceramic displays, this year's Unam Graduates exhibition lacked the kind of contemporary social and political relevance, poetry, fire, introspection, emotion and inquiry that makes for an exciting and ultimately evocative new school.

The Unam Visual Arts Graduates exhibition will be on display at the NAGN until tomorrow, Saturday, 19 January, from 09h00 to 14h00.

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Photos: Martha Mukaiwa

