



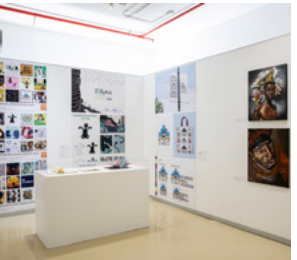
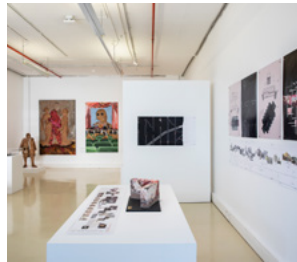
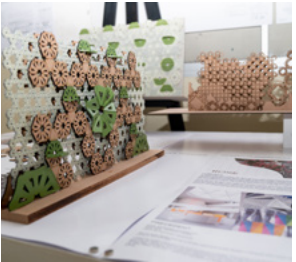
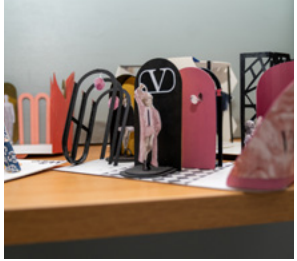
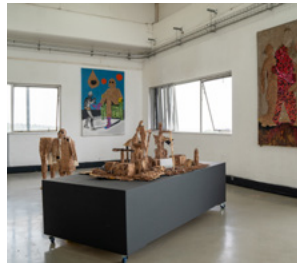
20 YEARS
— 2005-2025 —

Our Future. Reimagined.



annual report

2024 Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture



Introduction from the Executive Dean

annual 2024 report

Faculty of Art, Design
and Architecture

"At FADA, creativity is not only nurtured—it is shared, challenged, and celebrated, making the Faculty a vital force in shaping South Africa's cultural landscape and driving innovation in the creative industries."



Dear Stakeholders,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2024 Annual Report of the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA) at the University of Johannesburg.

With a vibrant presence across three campuses – APB, APK and JBS – FADA continues to build on its proud legacy of excellence in teaching, research and creative practice. Our Faculty is home to nine academic departments offering a range of innovative degree and diploma programmes: Architecture, the Graduate School of Architecture (GSA), Fashion Design, Graphic Design, Industrial Design, Interior Design, Jewellery Design and Manufacture, Multimedia, and Visual Art. These departments are supported by state-of-the-art facilities, including customised studios, computer laboratories, workshops, a fabrication laboratory (Fab Lab), and centrally located shared spaces such as the FADA Gallery, library, auditorium, and Design Café on the APB campus.

In addition to our academic offerings, FADA houses UJ Arts and Culture – encompassing the UJ Arts Centre and the UJ Art Gallery – as well as two important research centres: the Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD) Research Centre, led by Professor Leora Farber, and the NRF SARCHI Chair in South African Art History and Visual Culture, directed by Professor Brenda Schmahmann.

In 2024, the Faculty consolidated and expanded on strategic initiatives introduced in recent years. Guided by the vision of UJ's Strategy 2035 and shaped by our three core strategies to enhance research productivity, strengthen teaching and learning and deepen community engagement, FADA not only achieved its performance targets but also remained agile in responding to the evolving needs of the University and the creative industries.

As Executive Dean, I am proud of the resilience, innovation and commitment demonstrated by our staff and students throughout the year. This report reflects the collective achievements of a dynamic Faculty committed to shaping the future of art, design and architecture in South Africa and beyond.

Professor Federico Freschi

Executive Dean: Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture

Introduction from the Vice-Dean Teaching & Learning

“At FADA, student-centred teaching isn’t just a philosophy – it’s the heart of how we teach, learn, and grow together.”

The year 2024 marked a pivotal moment for the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA) in re-establishing a clear, shared vision for teaching and learning. Since the lapse of our previous Teaching and Learning Strategy in 2019, the Faculty has undergone substantial transformation – most notably in response to the shifts brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. These changes required us to adapt rapidly, experimenting with diverse teaching modes and rethinking our pedagogical approaches.

Emerging from this period, it became evident that we needed to capture the lessons learned and embed them into a forward-looking, student-centred strategy. One that not only acknowledges the evolving needs of our students but also considers the broader ecosystem of people and processes that support their success.

Student success is a complex and systemic issue – one that requires a holistic approach. In 2024, FADA initiated the development of a new Teaching and Learning Strategy, grounded in an in-depth review of both institutional processes and individual programme and module design. This strategy seeks to ensure that interventions are targeted, contextually relevant, and sustainable across the Faculty.

The new strategy is underpinned by the ‘Five P’s’ framework: People, Place, Policies, Programme Structure and Process. It considers both the institutional perspective (UJ – FADA – academic staff) and the student journey (input – support – outcome), focusing primarily on undergraduate qualifications, while also accounting for postgraduate teaching where relevant. The foundation of this strategy lies in transformative teaching practices that are inclusive, decolonial, and Afrocentric – practices that reflect our commitment to nurturing the kinds of graduates who will shape the future of South Africa’s creative and cultural industries.

A key moment in the development of the strategy was the Faculty Conversation held in December 2023. Staff from across departments engaged in meaningful dialogue around five central themes: Collaboration, conversation and shared practice; humanising our teaching environment; learning with and from one another; reconnecting with students and cultivating a positive student culture; creating spaces where students can truly flourish

Teaching and learning is the core of our academic identity at FADA, and this strategy is a Faculty-led effort to reinforce our values, improve our practices, and strengthen our community of teaching and learning. Our shared goal is clear: to ensure that every student’s journey is one of belonging, purpose and growth—and that we as educators remain responsive, reflective and committed to leading beyond expertise.



A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Professor Desiree Smal
Vice-Dean Teaching and Learning

Introduction from the Vice-Dean Research & Internationalisation

“At FADA, research is a collaborative endeavour – locally grounded and globally connected – driving meaningful, sustainable creativity that shapes our communities and the world beyond.”

The year 2024 marked a significant milestone for the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA) with the appointment of its first full-time Vice-Dean: Research and Internationalisation. This strategic role has enabled the Faculty to drive a more focused, coordinated approach to enhancing research productivity, deepening international engagement, and supporting postgraduate success.

At the heart of this renewed focus is the Faculty’s Research Strategy, which seeks to cultivate a sustainable and meaningful research culture grounded in the values of critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Central to this strategy is the ‘3Ps’ framework for research productivity:

- One project in the pipeline,
- One in preparation, and
- One in production.

This dynamic model applies to both scholarly and creative research outputs and encourages a continuous cycle of activity, growth, and momentum across the Faculty. The 3Ps framework has been supported by a range of initiatives, including mentorship, writing retreats, targeted seminars, funding opportunities, and designated research champions to support academics at every stage of their research journey.

FADA also made substantial strides in internationalisation in 2024. The Vice-Dean participated in the Vice-Chancellor’s delegation to the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and later visited the National Institute of Design in India, strengthening Global South partnerships. Faculty members engaged with a range of international institutions through research collaborations, teaching exchanges, and virtual and physical mobility. Notably, 28 students and three staff members travelled to Zimbabwe through the Africa by Bus initiative, and the Faculty hosted inaugural lectures and talks by several distinguished international scholars and visiting professors.

Postgraduate development remained a key priority. The Faculty implemented intentional measures to improve postgraduate progression and throughput. These efforts contributed to FADA exceeding its 2024 graduate output targets, despite ongoing sector-wide challenges. Continued efforts are underway to strengthen supervisory support, streamline administrative processes, and enhance the overall postgraduate experience.

As we reflect on 2024, it is clear that this year laid strong foundations for the next phase of FADA’s research and international journey—one that is inclusive, collaborative, and future-facing.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neshane Harvey'.

Professor Neshane Harvey
Vice-Dean Research &
Internationalisation



"Driven by deep commitment and inspired by boundless creativity, FADA staff continue to lead with purpose – collaborating across disciplines, uplifting communities, and shaping the future of the creative and cultural industries both in South Africa and across the globe."

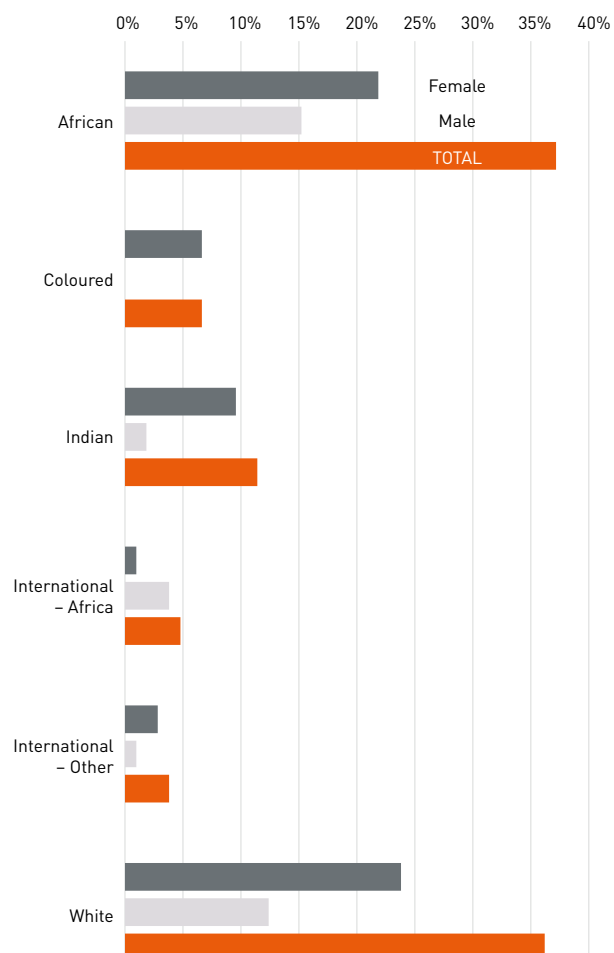
In 2024 FADA had a total of 105 permanent and full-time contract members of staff. This includes 65 academic staff, 39 administrative and support staff, and one executive. In total, 55,24% of Faculty staff were from designated groups and 8,57% were international.

Faculty Management Committee is comprised of 27.8% designated staff and 70.2% non-designated members, a demographic which needs attention in 2025. 50% are female of which 2 (11.1%) are International, and 7 (38.9%) are Black. In 2024 32% of permanent and full-time contract academic staff held doctoral degrees. One staff member declared a partial disability.

Staff Development

Many academic and support staff in FADA are engaged in ongoing training or study. Those who completed their doctoral studies include Ms Afua Wilcox (Senior Lecturer, Department of Architecture) who submitted her PhD in November 2024, Dr Reshma Maharajh (Senior Lecturer, Graphic Design), Dr Constance Kasiyamhuru (Assistant Lecturer, Design

FADA Staff Demographics
by Race & Gender 2024



Studies) and Dr Terence Fenn, Head of the Multimedia Department. Mr Katlego Madumo (Assistant Lecturer, Industrial Design) submitted his Master's project in 2024 and will graduate Cum Laude in April 2025. Ms Nthabiseng Mabale (Lecturer, Multimedia) was awarded Thutuka Funding for her PhD studies and Ms Zanné de Meillon (Lecturer, Fashion Design) received the UCDG to support the completion of her PhD degree.

Dr Irene Bronner (SARChI Research Centre in South African Art and Visual Culture) and Dr Ruth Sacks (Department of Visual Art) were promoted to Associate Professor.

In 2024, the AAMP programme welcomed eight new staff members, bringing FADA's total enrolment to 31 participants. Among them, 21 are currently at Level 1, while six have progressed to Level 2. Additionally, four staff members have reached Level 3.

NRF-rated researchers

In 2024 FADA had 11 NRF-rated researchers (16% of academic staff). Professor Brenda Schmähmann was successfully re-rated at B1 (from B2), while two staff members applied in 2024 and are currently awaiting their outcome.

Current NRF rated researchers are:

Prof Brenda Schmähmann, SARChI B1

Prof Irene Bronner, SARChI Y1

Prof David Paton, Visual Art C1

Prof Leora Farber, VIAD C1

Dr Sinead Barnabas, SARChI, Y2

Prof Kim Berman, Visual Art C2

Dr Philippa Hobbs, SARChI C2

Prof Alison Kearney, Visual Art C2

Alex Oppen, Architecture C2

Prof Deirdre Pretorius, Graphic Design C2

Prof Karen von Veh, Visual Art C2

Recognition and awards

Academic staff at FADA continued to be esteemed by their peers and industry as leaders in their respective fields, demonstrating professional competence, engagement, and impact beyond their roles of teaching and research. They actively contribute to the academic community, professional organizations, and the advancement of standards and practices within their professional fields.

The faculty appointed two high-profile international scholars as Distinguished Visiting Professors in 2024: Professor Anthony Bogues, Director of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University, and Professor Annie van den Oever, Professor of Film and Head of the Film Archive & Media Archaeology Lab at the University of Groningen.



Prof Anthony Bogues



Prof Annie van den Oever

Associate Professor Neshane Harvey, former Head of Fashion Design, was appointed Vice-Dean: Research and Internationalisation.

In December 2024 Professor Emerita Karen von Veh was elected as a Vice President of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA).

Professor Kim Berman (Department of Visual Art) was awarded the prestigious NRF Public Engagement with Research Award, as well as third place for the 2024 Community Engagement Service Excellence Award for FADA African Reclaimers Project.

Professor Brenda Schmähmann (SARChI Chair) received renewed NRF rating of B1. She also received a certificate from the University Research Office recognising her outstanding contribution to the University's DHET-accredited outputs and graduation of postgraduate students. In addition, Professor Schmähmann became co-editor of the Taylor & Francis publication *Public Art Dialogue*. Dr Melissa Gerber, a postdoctoral fellow in the SARChI Centre won the faculty's postdoctoral excellence award and the Westrup Prize for 2024.

Dr Landi Raubenheimer (Senior Lecturer in Design Studies) received an award from the Global Excellence and Stature 4.0 for Societal Impact (GES 4.0 SI) Catalytic Initiative: Impacting Society Positively, as well as being awarded a visiting scholar grant at the University of Cincinnati in 2024. Along with Mr Bongani Khoza from Multimedia, Dr Raubenheimer also received R135 000 from the URC and UJ Teaching Innovation Fund.

Mr Mahoati Lehloenya (Lecturer in Architecture) was awarded a grant to be part of two-year programme hosted by the British Academy of International Writing in Kenya and Zambia.

Industrial Design Lecturer Ms Pia Findlay's consultancy, Tandem Design House, was selected to participate in the *Always Welcome Hut Competition*, designing and making furniture from reclaimed wood. Additionally, Ms Findlay's designs were shortlisted in the top ten entries for the Nando's Hot Young Designers competition.

Mr Thato Radebe (HOD Jewellery Design), was selected as a judge for both the 2024 Rand Refinery Silver mentorship programme and the 2024 Anglo American Anglo Plat Jewellery competition. The Jewellery department was also awarded R80 000 at the De Beers Shining Light Awards to recognise the significant role staff have played in nurturing student talent.

Prof Khaya Mchunu (HOD Fashion Design) held an exhibition in Maseru, Lesotho entitled 'The Martin Molefe Memory Project.' This exhibition formed part of the bicentennial celebration of Lesotho's founding.

Several Interior Design staff hold leadership roles in professional organizations. Head of Department Ms. Ilse Prinsloo is a Board Member and Chair of the Educational Committee at IID. Assistant Lecturer Mr. Trevor Sibanda chairs Student Affairs, while Lecturer Ms. Emmerencia Deminey leads the Sustainability Forum. Senior Lecturer Ms. Amanda Breytenbach convenes the Heritage Committee at the Gauteng Institute for Architecture (GIFA).

Prof Deirdre Pretorius, Department of Graphic Design, was invited to become a member of the *African Journal of Creative Economy's* editorial board. She also collaborated on a funding bid for the Trans-Atlantic Platform (T-AP) Social Sciences and Humanities call on Democracy, Governance, and Trust (DGT). In July 2024, the project received the requested funding of R900,000 from the NRF. This project examines the graphic objects of street protests within global movements, critically exploring histories of creative dissent since the 1950s in Brazil, South Africa, and the UK. By analysing protests across the political spectrum, it investigates how visual communication shapes and reflects struggles for democracy. The project is rolling out in 2025.



Mr Bongani Senne (Gallery Assistant, Arts & Culture) was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Award for Outstanding Service beyond the Normal Call of Duty. UJ Gallery Curator Dr Dineke Orton received a joint KANNA award for an exhibition at the KKNK in Oudtshoorn as well as a KykNet Fiesta nomination. Art Collection Manager, Ms Rika Nortjé, received a joint Vryskut award for the Best Visual Art Exhibition at the Vrystaat Kunstfees. UJ Art Gallery received a South African Museum Association (SAMA) Publication Design Award for the 're/connect/ing' Educational Supplement. Arts & Culture's production *Echoes of Heritage* received four Fiestas nominations and two awards. Additionally, the productions *1001 Nights* and *Macabre* each received two Naledi Theatre nominations. The production *With-out Limits* received the Best Artistic Design Award at the Free State Arts Festival.

Teaching and Learning

"At FADA, we are committed to creating an inclusive, dynamic and student-centred learning environment, driven by cutting-edge facilities and industry-aligned programmes that empower students to thrive both academically and creatively, preparing them to meet the challenges of the future."

Enrolment and Student Profiles

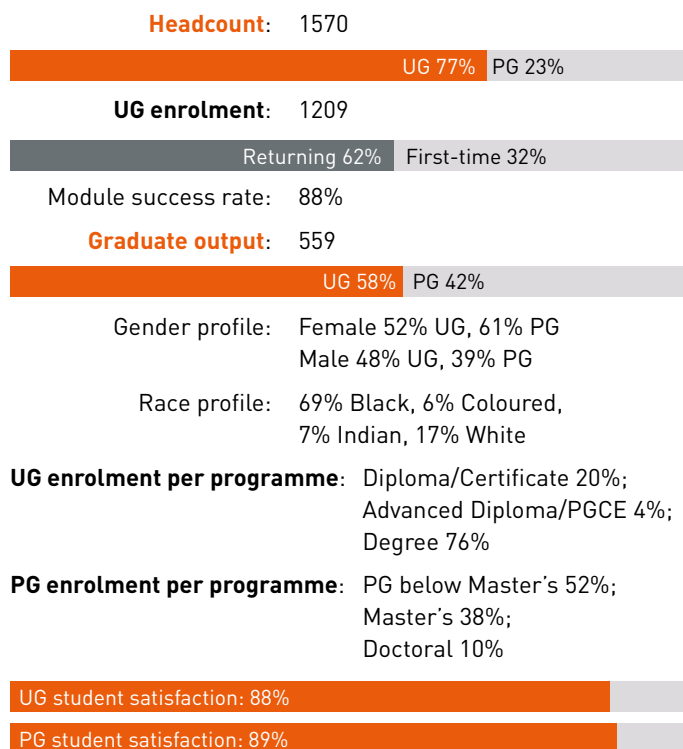
In 2024 FADA had a headcount enrolment of 1,570 students, of which 1,209 (77%) were undergraduate and 361 (23%) were postgraduate. Most students were Black African (69,4%), with 17.4% White, 7.5 % Indian and 5.7% Coloured. Female students were in the majority at 54% overall.

Most students (71%) were enrolled in undergraduate degree programmes, with 15% in undergraduate diplomas and certificates and 3% in advanced diplomas. Thirty-eight per cent of postgraduate students were enrolled for master's qualifications, with 52% in postgraduate below master's and 10% for doctorates.

UG and PG graduates

Graduate numbers have improved by over 10% since 2023, with a total of 559 graduates, 58% of which were undergraduate and 42% postgraduate.

Key Indicators | Teaching and Learning



Student access, student success and support for students

The faculty's average success rate improved to 88.4% in 2024, with the overall drop-out rate dropping to 11.3% from 2023's rate of 14.2%. At 26.6% the total graduation rate for undergraduate programmes was over 1% higher than the 25.3% recorded in 2023.

UJenius

Although the number of FADA students with a high APS score (over 35) decreased by 8.2% from 2023, FADA maintained the level of 152 students from quintile 5 schools in 2024. In addition, 39 students were part of the UJenius club in 2024 (44 in total with the Orange Carpet students).

Programmes

FADA remains committed to advancing innovations in teaching and learning, ensuring the continual relevance, sustainability, and alignment of its programmes with industry expectations. All departments within FADA are purposefully driving a transformative, curriculum aligned with the University strategic goals and that embraces industry partnerships to provide real world work experience.

A new focus area for the Department of Multimedia includes a three-year strategic plan for the redesign of the teaching curriculum in response to the implications of 5IR and to remain

relevant in educational content and skills. The curriculum now includes the fields of gaming, extended reality, and omni-channel content design to respond to emerging technologies such as AI and smart technologies as well as to systemic frameworks such as the UN SDGs. These skills are expected to become fundamental aspects of design curricula in the next decade and are especially critical for deploying emerging technologies sustainably.

Interior Design's commitment to collaborative learning strategies and partnerships, was demonstrated in a collaboration between Interior Design, Fashion Design and Fordsburg Primary School to redesign the library, fostering inclusivity and celebrating diversity. A second initiative between Interior Design and local industry contributes to the fulfilment of SDG targets related to sustainable cities and communities by developing solutions to revitalise public and retail spaces in the Braamfontein community.

The graduate fashion show organised in partnership with UJ Arts and Culture took place at the Bunting Theatre. It was accompanied by a documentary film, funded by UJ's Teaching Innovation Fund as a teaching and learning project. Drawing from the theory of authentic learning to create a contemporary fashion video, the project challenged students to apply digital fashion communication tools in representing the final fashion design collections of the third-year students.



Each year, over 300 second-year students from FADA participate in the FADA Interdisciplinary Theatre Programme, providing opportunities for cross-disciplinary development, creative and critical thinking. In 2024, worked on a production of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde adapted by Neil Bartlett. Supported by visiting guest lecturer Prof Vanessa Byrnes, Head of the School of Creative Industries at Unitec in Auckland, this immersive experience allows students to contribute to a theatrical production while gaining valuable insights and skills extending beyond their disciplines.

In 2024, the Graphic Design department successfully completed its programme review for the period 2020 to 2023.

With current awareness of the dangers of students relying on ChatGPT and other generative AI tools, the Design Studies (theory) team has developed an innovative 'applied theory methodology' in their teaching, as well

as alternative assessment methods to mitigate this impact, with excellent results. The aim is to teach students how they can use generative AI to assist in the critical thinking and planning of their work, while making them aware of the limits and dangers of AI in research.

Industry-linked Teaching and Learning

The Department of Industrial Design continued its industry-linked projects, providing students with valuable experience and recognition in the competitive design field. Among these initiatives was AXOR, a prestigious international tap brand that hosts a competition for first-year students. Honours students participated in the international competitions Cumulus Green 2024 – Design Healthy Futures and Design Climate Change – BE Open. Second-year students engaged in the ARMSA industry-linked competition, run in collaboration with TUT and Open Window. These and other design-for-manufacture initiatives not only strengthen industry connections but also generate third-stream income, creating further opportunities for students.

The Department of Multimedia promoted real world experience, sustainable development goals and fostered transformation



through industry and collaboration in several projects. For example, their second-year students collaborated with public figures Berita Soul (Gugulethu Khumalo) and Nkayise Nqola, both of whom lead NGOs. This initiative enabled students to apply design thinking to real-world social challenges, enhancing their learning experience and industry connections.

During the June recess, third-year Jewellery Design students participated in a work-integrated learning (WIL) project in collaboration with De Beers. The project focused on diamond familiarisation, cutting and polishing, and jewellery retail. As part of the experience, students were placed with various companies affiliated with De Beers, where they completed tasks related to these specialised areas.

Teaching and Learning with 4IR

FADA is committed to integrating Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies into Teaching and Learning. Noteworthy initiatives in 2024 included the following:

In the Department of Multimedia, a focus on emerging digital communication technologies (XR) includes augmented and virtual reality, blended space design, transmedia, and smart environments. This strategic emphasis aims to position the department as a leader in digital design education in South Africa.

In the Graphic Design Department several postgraduate students engaged in research related to 4IR. Notable projects included exploring digital multimodal design for fraud prevention, UX/UI design for emotional flourishing in virtual reality and improving the user experience of personal weight management. Six students in the Honours programme focused on 4IR design solutions for their final projects, creating a range of innovative solutions including female health apps, reading for meaning applications for pre-and primary school children, a teaching app to combat cultural stereotyping and an app for GenZ users on unbiased news coverage and community building.

Honours students from Multimedia embarked on a seven-week project in which they applied a projective research method to develop a series of design fiction scenarios suggesting how smart urban technologies associated with the 4IR could meet the needs of community of Westbury.

Industrial Design year groups incorporated 4IR themes into various modules, covering topics like 3D Printing, 3D Scanning, Digital Manufacture, Projection Mapping, VR Sketching, and Sustainable Materials.





Student support

In 2024 FADA implemented a range of student support initiatives, encompassing a comprehensive tutor network, regular student and Lecturer/HOD consultation sessions, and dedicated Departmental mentorship programmes including the FADA First-Year Success (FYS) Programme and the FADA Mentorship Programme. Each department has extensive methods of identifying At-Risk students and ensuring supportive interventions are put in place.

The mentorship programme, under the guidance of Tamara Francis, FADA Marketer, was aligned in 2024 with the broader UJ Mentorship Programme, offering structured peer support throughout the academic year. As part of this programme several community engagement projects were introduced, including:

- Sanitary Pad and Food Drive – Providing essential support to students facing hardship.
- Games Day and Mentor Mixer – Encouraging social interaction and stress relief.
- Motivational Board Initiative – A platform for students to share encouragement and inspiration, fostering resilience and positivity within the Faculty.
- FADA Keep Your Campus Clean initiative – As part of FADA's commitment to sustainability and campus pride, which not only contributed to maintaining a cleaner campus but also fostered a sense of community and shared responsibility among students.

A significant milestone in student engagement was the re-establishment of the FADA Student Forum. This initiative provided students with a structured platform to voice concerns, share ideas, and collaborate with faculty leadership on academic and social matters, strengthening student advocacy within FADA.

The Faculty celebrated its top-performing students through events like the UJenius and Orange Carpet mixer, where students connected with peers, senior students, and FADA management in an informal setting. They also engaged with mentors, gaining valuable academic and career insights. Additionally, Ms. Francis organized the Dean's Merit List event, recognizing the top student in each department. These initiatives reinforced FADA's commitment to nurturing and rewarding student excellence and engagement.



Student achievements

FADA students achieved notable successes across various departments in 2024. Third-year diploma and degree students in the Landscape Elective in the Architecture Department won the Students Reinventing Cities Competition, beating 20 other participating local and international schools of planning and architecture.

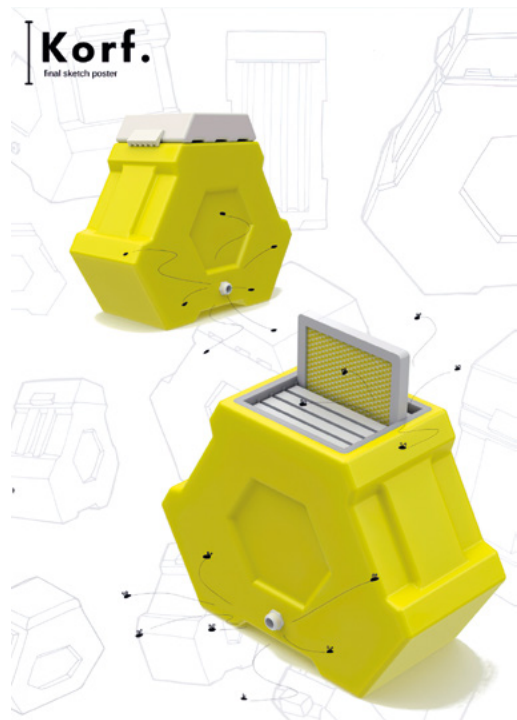
In Fashion, third-year students entered the SA Fashion Week competition. Ten UJ students made the top 20, the highest number of shortlisted students from all the national fashion schools that entered. Master's student, Kgotsfalo Given Monyamate completed his participation in the AFI Fastrack Designer Development Programme that culminated in his winning the Creative Award for his new collection under his fashion brand Articles From Mars titled 'Is'khothane Somhlaba.'

Dr Landi Raubenheimer's third year Multimedia students excelled in their presentations in the COIL University of Cincinnati-run international seminar Art as a Catalyst for Global Understanding.

Graphic Design had six finalists and five winners in the Pendoring and Loerie Awards. Notably, MA student Aaminah Darsot won the Silver Pendoring and Craft Gold awards, Honours student Philasande Masoga was a Silver Pendoring winner and Masters Alumna Wilna Combrink was a Gold Pendoring winner.



Industrial Design students also received an impressive list of prizes. Top achievers included Morgan Potgieter, awarded first place in the ARMSA competition, while Tsebo Mokwena, Tshepiso Motau and Bongani Buthelezi (all honours students) won a trip to Baku to attend COP29 at the International BeOpen Design Climate Action Competition. All three top places in the Vermont Tool Competition went to FADA students, with Evan Smith taking first, Sabrina Jansen second, and Oarabile Mogotsi third prize. Similarly, Lethabo Maganye, Nico van Blerk, and Luc Salzwedel took first, second and third places respectively at the SAPRO Awards in the category 'Creative and Artisanal Solutions.'



Interior Design student Husnaa Kathrada was selected as a finalist in the prestigious PG Bison 1.618 student competition. Jewellery Design Second year student Mr Siyabonga Mkhonza was a finalist in the Digital Jewellery Week student competition and BA honours student, Mr David Ditlhako, had work featured in an article by the Art Jewellery Forum titled 'Redefining culture and Identity.'

Five Visual Arts students were included in the top 100 of the SASOL New Signatures Competition.





Student Report 2024

“UJ Arts & Culture is a vital engine of interdisciplinary learning and creative growth in FADA and the broader university – fostering collaboration, enhancing employability and enriching student life through meaningful engagement with the arts.”

UJ Arts & Culture’s extracurricular programme, offered to students from across the institution at no cost, includes UJ Choir, drama classes, a photography club, ballet, afro fusion and contemporary dance classes, poetry classes, workshops, and slam competitions. Arts Academy activities culminated in a week-long year-end showcase attended by family, friends, and the public. The Division offered 15 masterclasses and workshops, presented a student poetry production, arranged student performances for ten UJ events and undertook two student excursions. In addition to 18 performances at graduation ceremonies, UJ Choir presented 17 concerts attended by approximately 6 000 audience members and released three albums that were streamed 510 512 times during the year.

UJ Arts Academy

For the Arts Academy, 743 students submitted 1 407 sign-ups indicating an interest to participate in one or more of the Arts Academy opportunities and UJ Choir. Of the 1704 students who signed up, 608 students were invited to audition; 365 were selected and participated in activities and programmes. Of this number, 255 students qualified for cultural bursaries at the end of the year which is dependent on strict attendance and participation criteria.

There was a slight decline in student participation around mid-year due to number of factors. These ranged from students leaving the institution, transport challenges, clashes in timetables and personal reasons that in some instances prevented students from continuing with the opportunities they had started.

Following the registration and onboarding process in February and March, Arts Academy classes commenced in April and ran during the academic term until October. Arts Academy classes are presented by professionals who are highly skilled facilitators in their field.





Drama classes facilitated by Jacquelyne Titus: In 2024, first-year students attended mid-week classes, while second- and third-year students participated in alternating weekend sessions. The primary focus for drama students was to develop their own production, guiding them through every stage—from initial concept to final performance. These efforts culminated in the presentation of their work at the annual showcase.



Poetry classes facilitated by Richard “Quaz” Roodt: Weekly classes were held for both new and returning students, incorporating monthly slam competitions starting in the second semester. This journey culminated in a grand slam during the annual year-end showcase. The poetry curriculum emphasized contemporary South African themes, explored various forms and structures, and integrated performance techniques to enhance students’ creative expression.



Contemporary Dance Classes facilitated by Fana Tshabalala: The dance course was offered in collaboration with the renowned Broken Borders Art Project, an internationally recognized organization founded and led by award-winning choreographers Fana Tshabalala and Thulani Chauke. The curriculum encompassed contemporary, African, and freestyle dance styles, with emphasis on cultivating a diverse movement vocabulary that draws from different eras and cultural influences.

Adult Ballet facilitated by Ipeleng Merafe, Professor Catherine Botha, and Dr. Bailey Devon: Adult Ballet 1 and 2 were offered in partnership with Vole Ballet School, with a focus on choreography for the year-end showcase. Meanwhile, Professor Botha and Dr. Devon dedicated their efforts to refining technique and enhancing the dancers’ skills.



Photography Club coordinated by Mbali Mchunu: The Photography Club aims to teach students fundamental photography skills, including the principles of photography, how to capture professional-quality images using a smartphone, and how to explore various themes through their creative vision. Sessions began in the second semester with a masterclass designed to equip students with essential photography techniques, culminating in a competition-exhibition where 12 images were selected from 145 submissions. Attendees of the poetry slam/photography exhibition had the chance to vote for their favourite image, and the photographer with the most votes received a Takealot Gift Voucher as a prize.

Student Production

‘(R)evolution of Words’ is a dynamic and immersive poetry show designed to introduce students to the richness and diversity of poetry. This initiative celebrates the South African poetry canon while integrating contemporary voices that reflect and challenge the modern zeitgeist. The production bridges traditional and modern perspectives, offering a holistic exploration of poetic expression relevant to Grade 11 and 12 curricula while resonating with broader audiences.



The production set out to inspire an appreciation for poetry among students and school learners, highlighting the relevance of poetry in contemporary discourse and provide an engaging educational experience by integrating performance with curricular content. The show’s visual components included shadow play using bodies, books as props, and musical instruments, analogue projection and instruments as furniture.



'[R]evolution of Words' was performed by UJ Art Academy students Ally Roux, Nick Moyo, Ntakisi Shilubane, Hillary Nyikayaramba, Khanyisile Sibiya, Leah Mollink, Xolani Mbhele, and Tintswalo Masondo, with additional accompaniment by theatre and television professional Tina Redman. The production was performed at the Poetry Africa International Festival in Johannesburg and Durban, at the Albert Luthuli Art Centre in Durban, and during the UJ Arts Academy Showcase.

Arts Academy Annual Showcase

The Annual Arts Academy Showcase opened on the 15th of October at the Bunting Theatre on the Bunting Campus. The showcase was presented over four days, included four shows, two slam competitions, a semi-final and grand slam, and a photography exhibition. The Showcase opened with a sold-out dance production followed by two nights of drama, concluding with the poetry production and announcement of winners of the poetry slam and photography competitions:

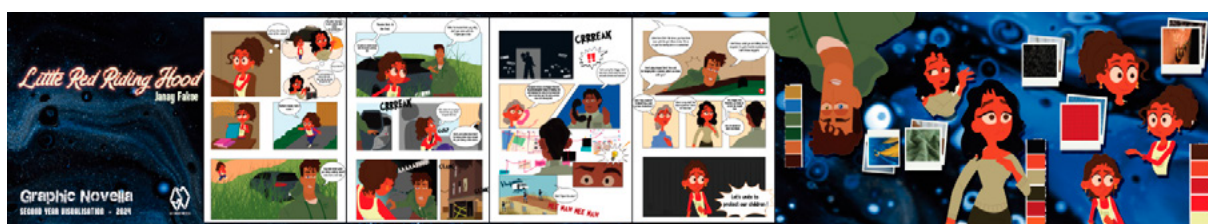
Adult Ballet Showcase: An appreciation for classical ballet in the landscape of a beautiful and diverse country, 'Motherland Waltz' explored the beauty of classical ballet while highlighting the percussive colour that Africanism has brought to ballet.

Drama Showcase: The thematic approach for the first-year group was 'This is Me', and the title of the second-year production was 'See the world through our eyes'. The third-year students presented 'Whispers of Hope', with the students exploring the many forms "hope" takes on.

Dance Showcase: 'Where we Belong' celebrated the evolution of African indigenous movement and rhythm, and investigated how it had changed with time, and how modern society interprets it.

Poetry Showcase: Written and performed by poets enrolled in the UJAC Poetry Programme, 'Blackened-out' sought to uncover hidden truths, through the artful act of redaction.

Photography Club: 'Remnants of Everyday Things' took the audience on a journey into a world where the ordinary became extraordinary. This thematic approach challenged students to capture the subtle beauty, fleeting moments and overlooked details that surround us in our daily lives.



Once-off open workshops and masterclasses

The Division also offered an open series of once-off workshops for students who have an affinity for the arts but who are not currently in the Academy. These workshops were presented by creatives from various fields and institutions including seasoned researchers, artists, and professionals from South Africa and abroad. Workshops were attended by 474 students throughout the year.

The 2024 Arts Appreciation Programme offered exclusive, no-cost access for UJ students, in addition to those in the Arts Academy, to a wide range of cultural events, including dance performances, theatre productions, and visual art exhibitions. A call for participants at the start of the year drew significant interest, with 499 dedicated students signing up and taking up 4 506 tickets to attend events. Collectively, attendance and participation in the Arts Academy, Arts Appreciation Programme and workshops for 2024 totals 1 338 students.



UJ Choir

The first call for auditions attracted expression of interest from 301 students; 198 of these were invited to the next phase of in-person auditions; of this number 139 students completed the second phase, resulting in the selection of 62 new prospective choristers. Of the choristers from 2023, 54 remained in the Choir, bringing the preliminary Choir to 116 choristers. After two development camps that form part of the final audition process, the final number in UJ Choir 2024 was 82.

In addition to performances at 18 graduation ceremonies, UJ Choir presented a robust concert programme in 2024 attended by approximately 6 000 audience members and marking the Choir's 50th anniversary.

Additionally, UJ Choir hosted Barnsley Youth Choir from England on 28 October at Bunting Theatre for a joint rehearsal and networking engagement.

In 2024, UJ Choir also undertook four music recording sessions (three at the Fontainebleau Community Church, and one at UJ Arts Centre) and released three albums in 2024, Echoes of Heritage, The New Covenant, and The Bridge Builder.

Student Excursions

The (R)evolution of Words student cast of eight and one professional actor travelled to Durban for Poetry Africa, presented by UKZN on the 10th of October 2024. They performed twice on the 11th of October. The first performance was a community outreach initiative at Luthuli House for high school students, and the second performance was at Seabrooks Theatre for the general Poetry Africa International Festival audience. The production was well received with positive feedback for both performances. During the outreach project students interacted with high school learners from various schools in rural KZN; following their show they had a question-and-answer session with the learners and stayed to watch the shows presented by the learners at Luthuli House. In addition to the performances, the UJ students' itinerary included watching various shows at the Festival, participating in slams with other poets, attending several facilitated discussions, and networking at the Festival.

Conclusion

Beyond contributing to student life in a myriad ways, the Division of UJ Arts & Culture makes further contributions. The annual FADA Interdisciplinary Theatre Programme challenges second-year students from across the Faculty of Art Design, and Architecture (FADA) to design and build models for elements of a play that the Division produces with a professional cast. The 2024 programme involved 325 students who were divided into 21 groups comprising students from different departments, facilitating the transfer of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. The Division also contributes to the employability of current students and alumni, and in 2024 a total of 37 interns were hosted by 14 external professional arts and culture organisations as well as by other departments and divisions of UJ. The Art Centre's Front of House team also contributes to employability, with 42 UJ students working as cashiers and ushers at the Centre during events.

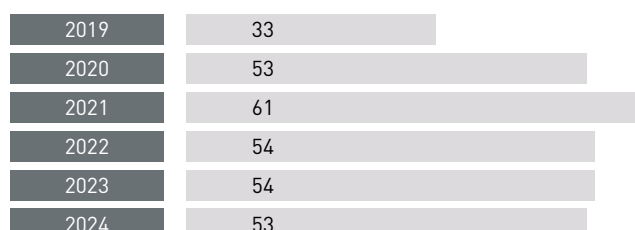
Research & Innovation

Footprint and Impact

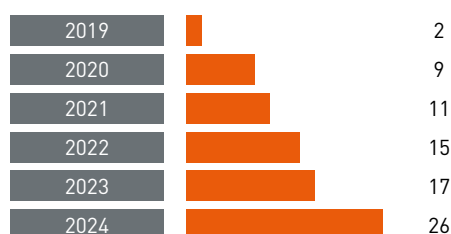
Output

For the 2024 reporting year, the DHET approved 53 publication units from the faculty's 2022 submission. In addition, 26 creative research projects were submitted for accreditation. Textual outputs have remained relatively stable, with 54 units approved in 2023 and 53 in 2024. In contrast, creative research project submissions have shown consistent growth, rising from just two in 2019 to a remarkable 26 (unaudited) in 2024. This upward trend reflects sustained and expanding engagement in creative research over the years.

FADA Textual Output Units 2019-24



FADA Creative Output Research Output Submission 2019-24



Postdoctoral Research Fellows

Over the past three years, FADA has steadily expanded and stabilised its intake of Postdoctoral Research Fellows (PDRFs). In 2021, the faculty hosted just two PDRFs, both located within research centres. This number doubled in 2022, with four fellows based in research centres. By 2023, the total rose to eight, reflecting growth not only in the research centres, which hosted six fellows, but also in departments, which welcomed their first two PDRFs. This pattern was maintained in 2024, with six fellows in research centres and two in departments, signalling a consistent and balanced approach to supporting early-career researchers across the faculty.

FADA Research Centres

FADA has two research centres, Visual Identities in Art & Design (VIAD), headed by Prof Leora Farber, and the SARCHI Chair in South African Art and Visual Culture, headed by Prof Brenda Schmahmann.



VIAD Visual Identities in Art & Design

In 2024, the Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD) Research Centre underwent a dynamic transformation, marking a significant moment in its evolution. Responding to shifts in global and local research landscapes, VIAD revised its strategic direction, restructuring its programmes and expanding its conceptual scope. This process resulted in the emergence of two parallel research streams: RADICAL | OTHERS (RIO) and Bioart + Design Africa (BA+DA). While distinct in theme and focus, both strands are unified by a commitment to decolonial politics and practice. RIO builds on VIAD's previous focus on African and African-Diasporic art and theory, while BA+DA

breaks new ground as the first structured African-based research strand combining bioart and design through a decolonial lens.

2024 focused heavily on consolidating and growing BA+DA, which quickly gained traction through strategic partnerships, public programmes, and research outputs. These developments were supported by a rebranding of the two strands, and the redesign of VIAD's website, set to launch in March 2025. Considerable effort went into establishing BA+DA's identity, positioning it as a global leader in the field, with its Africanised and decolonial approach distinguishing it from dominant Euro-American models. Exhibitions such as *Imminent and Eminent Ecologies* became key public engagement tools, supported by artist talks, panel discussions, publications, and a growing media presence.

VIAD's research output was substantial, comprising books, journal articles, book chapters, conference presentations, and an estimated eighteen creative works. This productivity was supported by a strong academic community that included staff, associates, visiting professors, and artists-in-residence. One PhD student graduated, and three others continued their studies. Across both research strands, VIAD remained anchored in transformative practice, challenging systems of othering and environmental injustice through creative and scholarly work.

A major focus of the year was the cultivation of new partnerships. Internally, BA+DA collaborated with several UJ departments and centres, including the Water and Health Research Centre,



the Centre for Environmental Intelligence, and Industrial Design. Externally, VIAD worked with a broad network of local and international institutions, including the Centre for the Study of Slavery and Justice (Brown University), the Africa Institute (UAE), Stellenbosch University, Wits, the DESIS network, and Zone2Source (Netherlands). Projects such as **Fluid Boundaries** brought together scientists, artists, and Indigenous knowledge practitioners from Switzerland, Brazil, and South Africa, forming a transdisciplinary alliance that exemplifies VIAD's collaborative ethos.

Community engagement also flourished. Initiatives like Thank You Hillbrow, Floating Bodies, and Come Dine with Us integrated Indigenous knowledge, biotechnology, and sustainability into everyday urban practices. These projects not only addressed local challenges around food security, health, and water sanitation but also served as models for globally relevant, community-rooted design thinking. VIAD's commitment to transformation was evident throughout—whether in the conceptual framing of exhibitions or in the make-up of its research teams, which reflected a diverse and inclusive demographic.

VIAD's work aligned closely with South Africa's national priorities and several UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those focused on health, education, water and sanitation, innovation, and sustainable production. BA+DA's work on ecological materials, biomedical ecologies, and food systems responded to these frameworks with specificity and nuance, offering African-centred alternatives to dominant global narratives.

The centre's impact extended into the academic, cultural, and public domains. BA+DA continued to develop its academic programme, engaged alumni, and drew increasing interest from funders. While some external funding proposals were unsuccessful, VIAD secured significant support, including a R2.7 million grant from Pro Helvetia and further contributions from the Netherlands Creative Industries Fund and various internal UJ sources. These funds supported exhibitions, collaborative projects, and the engagement of distinguished visiting scholars.

Looking ahead, VIAD has laid out a clear vision for growth over the next five years. The plan includes expanding its team, increasing postgraduate supervision, hosting international residencies, producing high-level creative and scholarly outputs, and developing a national consortium of art-science practitioners. With its integrated research, cultural programming, and community-based practices, VIAD continues to model how interdisciplinary and decolonial creative practice can foster meaningful social, environmental, and epistemic transformation.

In sum, 2024 was a year of strategic expansion, intellectual renewal, and creative innovation. VIAD's repositioning through the RIO and BA+DA strands has allowed it to reassert its relevance and leadership as a research centre that is deeply rooted in African contexts while actively shaping global conversations at the intersections of art, design, science, and social justice.

SARChI Chair in South African Art and Visual Culture

In 2024, the SARChI Chair in South African Art and Visual Culture continued to consolidate its position as a hub for research and postgraduate supervision in the visual arts. Under the leadership of Professor Brenda Schmähmann, the Chair maintained a dynamic programme of scholarly work, capacity development, and public engagement. The team supporting this work included Associate Professor Irene Bronner and administrator Neelofir Nagdee, alongside a cohort of postdoctoral research fellows: Dr Melissa Gerber, Dr Everjoy Magwegwe, Dr Theo Sonnkeus (until April), Dr Elain Sullivan (until July), and Dr Hazel Cuthbertson, who joined in November.

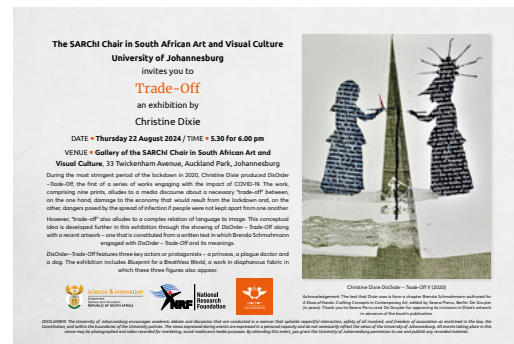
The year was marked by numerous accolades. Irene Bronner was promoted to Associate Professor, while Brenda Schmähmann received an NRF B1 rating and a certificate recognising her outstanding contribution to UJ's accredited research outputs and postgraduate graduations for the 2021 and 2022 academic years. Melissa Gerber won the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture's Postdoctoral Excellence Award and the prestigious Westrup Prize for an article published in 2023. Professor Schmähmann also began a three-year term as co-editor of **Public Art Dialogue**, a journal published by Taylor & Francis.

The Chair's teaching and supervision portfolio was strong, with Dr Hazel Cuthbertson graduating with a PhD early in the year and doctoral candidates Ayobola Kekere-Ekun and Sinthemba Twalo submitting their theses in October. Three master's students – Lira van Staden, Tlotlo Sereisho, and Lerato Maisela – completed their studies.

A key highlight was the international conference "Creating a Disturbance: Interventions to Historical Monuments and Statues," hosted by the Chair in November. With 26 presentations, the event will yield two special journal issues in 2025 – *one in Public Art Dialogue* and the other in *De Arte*. The previous year's conference on public art also led to a book, accepted for publication by Routledge and scheduled to appear by the end of 2024.

The year also featured important collaborative initiatives. Professor Schmähmann worked with Visiting Associate Professor Staffan Löfving on a workshop and discussion event for the South Africa–Sweden University Forum (SASUF) in May, and with Emeritus Professor Karen von Veh to co-host a research panel on gender and human-centredness at the ACASA Triennial in Chicago in August. In addition, work continued on a special issue of *Critical Arts* focusing on indigeneity and visual sovereignty, emerging from a 2023 conference co-organised by Löfving and research associate Paul Weinberg. Co-edited by Löfving, Shanade Barnabas, and Schmähmann, most articles were published online in late 2024, with the print edition set for 2025.

Community engagement remained central to the Chair's activities. In May, the team hosted an exhibition and seminar on the work of South African artist Gerard T. Benghu, curated by Juliette Leeb-du Toit and enabled by Irene Bronner. In August, an exhibition of work by Christine Dixie was held, followed by a seminar, after which Dixie generously donated two series from the exhibition to the University.





The Chair's research continued to align closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Much of the work engaged with questions of gender equity, poverty alleviation, sustainable cities and communities, and quality education. Projects such as the Mapula Embroidery initiative demonstrated how visual representation intersects with lived experience and socio-economic conditions. The Chair also supports the goals of South Africa's National Development Plan by contributing to the training of postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers.

Alumni engagement was another important aspect of 2024's work. Public events provided platforms for alumni to participate in exhibitions and seminars. In one example, senior research associate Philippa Hobbs collaborated with former master's graduate Vanessa Tembane on a co-authored book chapter, featured in a publication co-edited by Professor Schmahmann and colleagues.

The Chair benefited from core funding provided by the National Research Foundation (R2.95 million), as well as additional financial support through awards and partnerships. Melissa Gerber's Westrup Prize carried a monetary value of £750, while Everjoy Magwegwe received a \$1,000 travel grant to attend the ACASA Triennial, although visa issues meant she only accessed part of the funding. Professor Schmahmann's trip to Sweden for SASUF 2024 was fully covered by Karlstad University, including travel and accommodation costs.

Looking ahead, the Chair is preparing for a major international conference on vernacular photography in November 2025, with an associated publication to follow. Other projects in development include 'Needlework in Africa: Weaving Histories from Below,' an edited volume co-curated with scholars from Wits and the University of Toulouse, and 'Contemporary Approaches to Commemorative Public Art: Monumental Developments,' which is also set for publication in 2025. Both Professor Schmahmann and Professor Bronner have submitted abstracts for upcoming conferences, and new special issues of *De Arte* and *Public Art Dialogue* will feature contributions from SARChI Chair staff and fellows throughout the year. The Chair continues to cultivate a research environment that is not only academically rigorous but also socially responsive, collaborative, and deeply engaged with the cultural and historical questions shaping South African visual culture today.



Partnerships, Stakeholders and Community Engagement

"At FADA, community and stakeholder engagement isn't an add-on - it's embedded in everything we do, from global partnerships and interdisciplinary research to community projects and industry collaboration. Our commitment to art, design and architecture for social justice is driven by the belief that creativity must be in dialogue with the world around it."

The faculty maintains membership in key professional organizations such as the Cumulus Association, Design Education Forum of Southern Africa (DEFSA), South African Council of Architecture Profession (SACAP), and The African Institute of Interior Design Profession (IID). Through these and other affiliations, FADA stays aligned with design industries, keeping its professional programmes relevant.

All departments within FADA actively engage with principles of active citizenship, both in theory and through various community outreach projects. This commitment underscores FADA's dedication to nurturing socially responsible practitioners who contribute positively to their communities and broader society.

In 2024, the GSA expanded its global presence through international partnerships, exchanges, and events. Led by Professor Mark Raymond, staff contributed to lectures and collaborations at Kingston University in February. In April and May, Units 7 and 24 undertook study trips to Luanda, Angola, in partnership with Universidade Lusíada.



Dr Finzi Saidi (HOD Department of Architecture) supported by GES funds, presented Unit 15X's work at the Commonwealth Association of Architects Conference in Kigali, Rwanda. Prof Raymond spoke at Art Base in June, presented to Herzog & de Meuron as part of the Keleketla! Project and visited the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for a screening of analogue video work from the 2023 Venice Biennale.

Strengthening academic ties, the GSA hosted international guests during Architecture Week in August, including Prof. Andre Clancy (Kingston University), Khensani de Klerk (ETH Zurich), Margarida Waco (Royal College of Art, London), and Olayinka Odeskun Ageyi (Lagos). The school also presented 15 public lectures and events featuring local and international practitioners and welcomed over 350 visitors to its annual Summer Show.

Further demonstrating its commitment to architectural excellence, the GSA participated in the national Corobrik Architecture Student Awards, reinforcing its role in global architectural education.

UJ Arts and Culture entered 14 industry partnerships and collaborated on events and projects with four internal stakeholders. They also hosted three distinguished international academics who contributed to various programmes and projects, Professor Vanessa Byrnes from Unitec in Auckland, Professor Rickerby Hinds from the University of California, and Jordan Stewart, a PhD candidate in Educational Theatre and Drama Therapy from New York University. The UJ Art Gallery entered into partnerships and exchange agreements with four international institutions and associations.

Executive Dean Prof Freschi and the Design Studies department hosted Distinguished Visiting Professor Annie van den Oever's Inaugural Lecture titled 'How Media Technologies Turn Our World Upside Down.' Another notable milestone for Design Studies was Dr Landi Raubenheimer's Visiting Scholar award at the University of Cincinnati in August 2024, working on a project titled 'Art as a Catalyst for Global Understanding.'

The Department of Multimedia partnered with the Civic Tech Innovation Network (CTIN) and the Wits School of Governance (WSG) on a project for their annual conference on civic-orientated technology.

The Department of Industrial Design launched several strategic initiatives, including the FADA-FEBE Automotive Collaboration and a partnership for the Gwankwani Social Impact Project.

An Erasmus+ agreement was signed between the Fashion Department and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Entitled *Social justice through the lens of fashion knowledge and artistic-/fashion-based practice*, the project aims to use scholarly visits, exchanges, and collaboration with the benefit of sharing decolonial knowledge and practices. Also funded by Erasmus+, Prof Federico Freschi and Mr Martin Bolton were invited to the Vilnius Academy of Art and Design in June.

The Department of Architecture's second year programme conducted a collaboration with the University of Botswana (UB) and Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), aimed at creating connections and new approaches to thinking, learning, and teaching architecture between institutions across Southern Africa.

The Visual Art Department has two International MOUs, one with the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in Budapest and another with the University of Cologne. The latter enabled ten students from University of Cologne to attend a week-long workshop in the Department in 2024. In addition, three visiting academics from the Royal Academie in Antwerp presented a seminar on the Northern Lights Festival and attended the ARO Recycling Parade organised by master's student Wilma Mutize.

VIAD has many ongoing partnerships related to specific projects, including the Centre for the Study of Slavery and Justice (CSSJ), Zone2Source Testing Ground for Art & Ecology, The International Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability Network (DESIS) and a number of local and international Universities (among others).

Amanda Breytenbach and Emmarencia Deminey delivered a guest lecture on the State of BIM in SA through a webinar facilitated by the IID. The two-hour public presentation to industry saw over 200 attendees from Architecture, Interior Design and related professions.

In Jewellery Design, third-year students were involved in a WIL project in collaboration with De Beers. The project focused on diamond familiarisation, diamond cutting and polishing and jewellery retail. The students were allocated to various companies associated with De Beers and given tasks based on the abovementioned areas as part of the WIL project.

Dr Reshma Maharajh from Graphic Design collaborated with the University of Cologne on the 'Cultural Interventions' project. Additionally, third year and BA Honours students in Graphic Design took part in an initiative led by the Retail and Service Design special interest group of the Design Research Society (DRS). As part of this initiative, students attended public lectures by leading designers before participating in a workshop where they collaborated with peers from the USA, UK, Belgium, Italy, South Africa, and Sweden to design a retail space.

Community Engagement Projects

The GSA advanced its commitment to community engagement and socially responsive design through key collaborations. Unit 17 partnered with Growthpoint to integrate social impact into commercial architecture, while Units 21 and 28 developed site-specific interventions in Johannesburg. In collaboration with Keleketla! Library, the GSA supported the proposed Keleketla! Lab, set to launch in 2025. The school also hosted actor and advocate Malik Yoba, who spoke on community engagement in New York, highlighting design's role in social justice.

The GSA played a key role in conceptualising and planning the ArchitectureZA (AZA) Conference with SAIA and GfA, which will take place in 2025. The event will explore architecture's role in tackling social and environmental challenges. The school also led efforts to create a Nexus—linking academia and industry—to advance research and knowledge-sharing on AI and other emerging technologies shaping architectural practice.

Since 2013, the Graphic Design Honours Participation Design unit, led by Ms. Christa van Zyl, has driven community engagement, delivering 10–20 projects annually. In 2024, collaborations included the African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO), Girls and Boys Town South



Africa, UJ's Centre of Ecological Intelligence, Johannesburg Zoo Education Centre, and others. Notably, the unit helped secure funding for ARO, while Girls and Boys Town integrated project research into their 2024 online campaigns.

The Department of Industrial Design continues to engage with industry through project briefs and competitions that provide students with real-world exposure and opportunities for product manufacturing and distribution. Additionally, the department partnered with Dr Ruth Lipschitz from Design Studies and Marianne Lomberg from Nestlé Purina to design and construct shelters for the FADA Cat Commune.

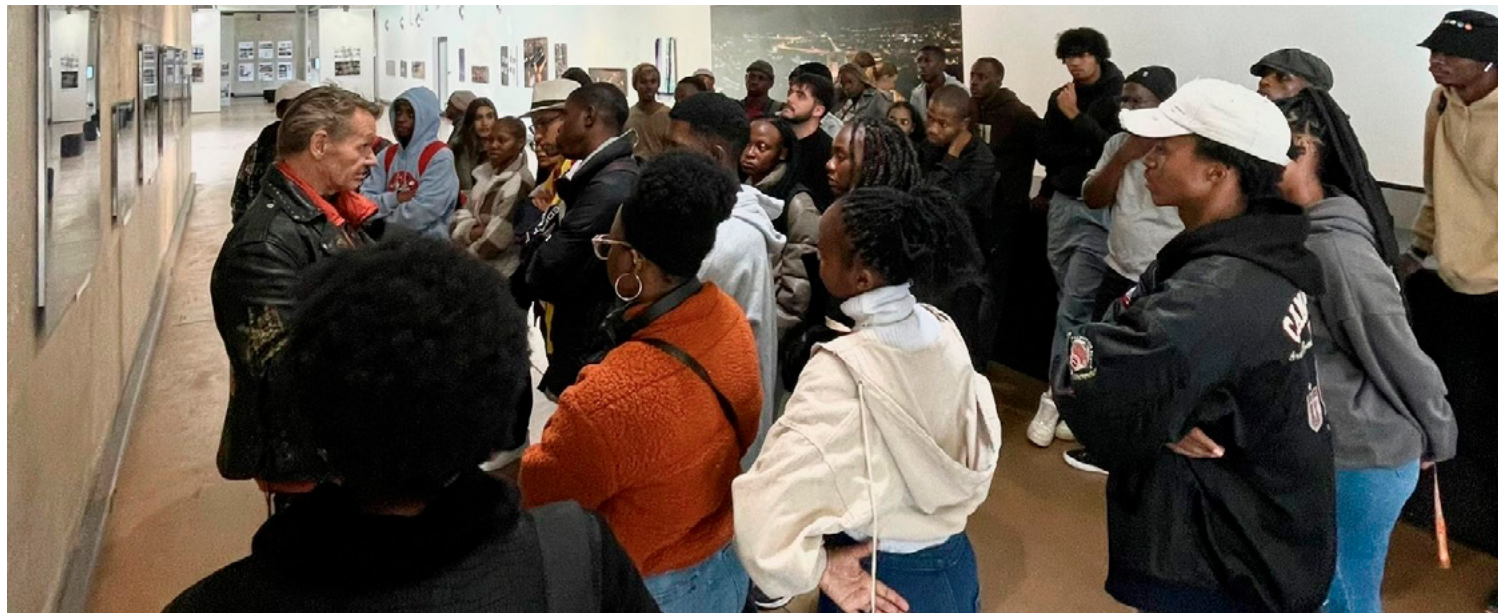
Alumni and Stakeholder Engagements

Arts & Culture received R2 755 200 from The Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) for their internship programme. An overwhelming 1,354 applications were received for the 37 internships offered in 2024 of which 17 of the successful candidates were UJ alumni. Including UJ Arts & Culture, interns were hosted by 14 professional arts and culture organisations as well as other departments and divisions of UJ.

The University of Johannesburg Choir's 50th Celebration Concert presented an opportunity to engage alumni to participate in the celebration that led to 77 previous choristers attend a reunion at the Arts Centre and joined the 2024 UJ Choir on stage to perform together at the end of the celebration concert.

The Visual Art Department was also awarded R800 000 from CATHSSETA for 10 student bursaries at R80 000 each. This supported and empowered second year students who were heavily indebted and without funding to continue their degrees.

The UJ Art Gallery secured R500 000 from MTN SA Foundation for the MTN | UJ New Contemporary Awards Programme and R5 000 from Sanlam for an event at the UJ Arts Gallery attended by UJenius students.



Transformation

FADA actively embraces transformation as a core value, influencing teaching, learning, and research across the faculty. Exploration of race, gender and culture is integral to our work, and is embedded in our fundamental belief in the notion of art, design, and architecture for social justice.

2024 initiatives include Interior Design Lecturer Ms Sadiyah Geyer's 'Women in the Built Environment' initiative. This initiative, featuring female professionals from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds, critically examined colonial legacies in design education and practice. Interactive sessions and panel discussions fostered dialogue on local knowledge, indigenous practices, and gender inclusivity; aiming to explore how the built environment, design practices, and education can break away from colonial frameworks.

Through their Wom+n In Tech initiative, the Industrial Design Department continues to narrow the gender gap in design industries by cultivating confidence in women embarking on design technology careers. The Department undertook various workshops throughout 2024, engaging with students and staff from FADA, as well as with high-school learners as a departmental outreach programme.

The Art therapy division appointed two permanent staff members and is now headed by Dr Sinethembe Makanya. Dr Makanya's initiatives include Africanising aspects of the Art Therapy curriculum to make it more relevant to our students and the demographics of the country.

While FADA has made progress in increasing Black student enrolment, achieving greater racial diversity among academic staff remains a

challenge due to historical demographics and structural inequities. However, significant strides were made in 2024 through targeted recruitment, expanding candidate pools via programmes such as nGAP, appointing Assistant Lecturers, and strengthening mentorship through the AAMP. Despite these efforts, further work is needed to improve representivity at departmental and faculty management levels. FADA will continue its commitment to staff diversity through a structured programme focused on cultural awareness, mentorship and capacity development for designated groups.

Faculty Governance and Risk Management

FADA maintains effective management through a structured committee system that promotes clear communication and alignment with the University's strategy.

The Faculty Management Committee provides strategic oversight and ensures operational efficiency. It comprises the Executive Dean, Vice-Deans Profs Desiree Smaland Neshane Harvey, Ms Neeradevi Chinnah, Head of Faculty Administration, and Ms Amanda Breytenbach, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator. Meeting weekly, the committee monitors operational matters, tracks strategic initiatives, and ensures alignment with the faculty's annual performance plan.

The Dean's Committee, consisting of the heads of all academic departments and administrative divisions, plays a vital role in shaping the Faculty's strategic direction. It serves as a forum for high-level planning, decision-making and the dissemination of institutional information. Through regular engagement, the committee ensures alignment between departmental goals and the Faculty's broader objectives.



The Faculty Board, comprising all academic staff members, is the Faculty's primary governance body. It is responsible for ensuring compliance with University and Faculty policies and procedures, promoting accountability, and endorsing key decisions related to academic programmes, quality assurance and institutional mandates. The Board plays a crucial role in upholding effective, participatory governance across the Faculty.

The Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee (FTLC) is responsible for overseeing all matters related to teaching and learning within the Faculty. This includes the approval of new programmes and revisions, the review of academic rules and policies and the approval of external examiners. The FTLC ensures that teaching practices and academic standards align with institutional priorities and national requirements. It is supported by subcommittees that manage Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) applications and address cases of plagiarism at the undergraduate level. The Faculty Readmissions and F7 Committee, which falls under the FTLC's purview, considers student readmission applications and ensures fair, consistent academic decision-making.

The Faculty Higher Degrees Committee (FHDC) is responsible for overseeing the quality, integrity and progress of postgraduate studies within the Faculty. Its key functions include the review and approval of research proposals, the appointment of supervisors and examiners and the monitoring of postgraduate throughput and completion rates. The FHDC also has oversight of research ethics for postgraduate projects, ensuring that all research is conducted responsibly and in accordance with ethical standards. Through its work, the committee supports academic excellence, promotes research integrity and ensures alignment with the Faculty's strategic objectives.

The Faculty Research Committee (FRC) is responsible for guiding and overseeing all matters related to research within the Faculty. This includes evaluating and recommending applications for research funding, monitoring research outputs and ensuring alignment with institutional goals. The FRC also plays a central role in implementing and reviewing the Faculty Research Strategy, promoting research productivity, supporting scholarly and creative work, and fostering a sustainable culture of academic inquiry.

Student and academic data are efficiently managed by the Faculty's Academic Administration team, led by the Head of Faculty Administration, Ms Neeradevi Chinnah. Several operational committees support the smooth functioning of the Faculty, including the Library Committee, which ensures the relevance and accessibility of academic resources; the Health and Safety Committee, which monitors compliance with safety regulations and promotes a secure working environment; and the Marketing Committee, which guides the Faculty's communication strategies and public profile. These committees meet quarterly, with additional meetings convened as needed. Their deliberations and decisions are submitted to the Faculty Board for discussion and approval, ensuring transparency and integrated governance.

Resource Management

FADA prioritises resource enhancement and preservation for optimal student learning and faculty research. Facilities like studios, workshops, and computer labs are carefully maintained to support academic programmes.

The FADA FabLab introduces undergraduates to digital design thinking and aids postgraduates in refining digital design methods. Equipped with modern technology, the FabLab fosters a dynamic learning environment for innovation, high-impact research, and transdisciplinary collaboration among faculty.

The valuable UJ Art Collection is meticulously managed, ensuring upkeep, regular documentation, research, and inventory assessments. Challenges such as inadequate storage facilities and ongoing leaks in the gallery roof pose risks, requiring urgent attention to prevent irreversible damage, especially to older pieces.

Arts and Culture manages various UJ campus facilities, including the UJ Arts Centre, UJ Art Gallery, Experimental Theatre, and Bunting Theatre. The division's priorities remain resolving the leaks at UJ Art Gallery and the UJ Art Centre that poses great risk to the art collection and sprung floors in the dance studios. The studios at the Bunting Building also require waterproofing. Additionally, the division has been saving up for a collaboration with Central Technical Services to explore the possibility of refurbishing the Bunting Theatre.

Societal Impact

& Sustainability

"FADA's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals is not just symbolic – it's actioned daily through our teaching, research and community projects. From circular fashion and climate-resilient cities to digital storytelling and waste reclamation, we embed sustainability and social justice into every facet of our creative practice, advancing the university's strategic vision for sustainable societal impact."



The awareness of, and active participation in, issues of social responsibility and environmental sustainability is central to FADA's ethos. This influences not only our teaching and public image, but also how we conduct our daily operations. The faculty holds paperless meetings whenever possible and has recycling stations for paper, glass, and tin placed throughout the building. Staff is reminded on a regular basis to reduce electricity consumption by turning off lights and using space heaters as little as possible.

FADA also places a significant emphasis on addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), integrating this commitment into both teaching and learning initiatives and our community engagement programmes as follows:

- Fashion Design contributed to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) through sustainability-focused community projects. The 'Sustain Her' initiative, in partnership with NGO Love Our City, repurposes fabric and clothing into reusable menstrual pads, addressing period poverty. The Advanced Diploma program collaborates with Fashion+ on 'ClothesToGood,' a non-profit that recycles, downcycles, and upcycles old clothing, supporting employment for people with disabilities and producing materials for early childhood development.
- Multimedia students engaged in transformative community partnerships that integrate digital innovation. The 'Green Documentary Project' in Eldorado Park, led by Dr. Lee-Ann Modley from the Department of Geography, Environmental Management, and Energy Studies, aligns with multiple SDGs by incorporating digital storytelling into sustainability education.
- Architecture students contribute to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through a community pilot project at Marlboro Station, Gauteng. Their work explores inclusive urban models to enhance climate resilience, reduce river pollution, mitigate urban heat, and improve housing accessibility. Six UJ teams submitted projects to the C40 Competition, with one team winning and their proposal now under consideration for implementation by the City of Johannesburg.
- Visual Art Honours students collaborated with Bekezele Creche and the African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO) in Johannesburg, contributing to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Master's student Wilma Mutize researched recycling and waste reclamation for community



upliftment, strengthening ARO's sustainability efforts. Her work led to the ARO Street Parade in Brixton, attended by over 500 people. She placed third in UJ's Community Engagement Service Excellence Awards, and her project is now part of a funded three-year UJ-ARO partnership.

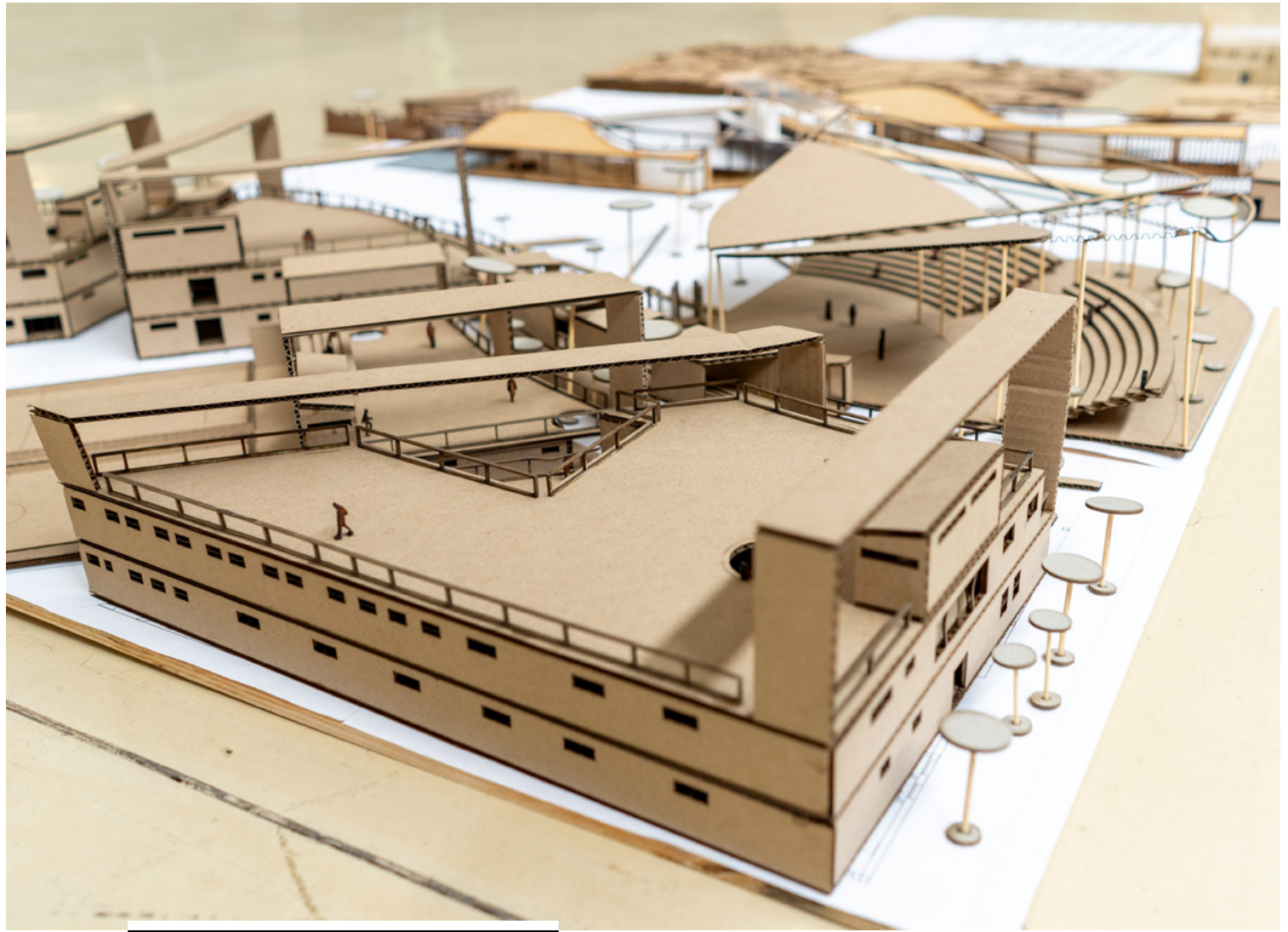
Demonstrating a commitment to social responsibility, Fashion Design partnered with the Gauteng Department of Education DCES FET of Design and Visual Arts to organize a Teacher Training Workshop as part of the 30 Years of Democracy celebrations. Academic staff and students facilitated workshops on fashion skills, design, and upcycling, supporting SDG 4 (Quality Education). Teachers gained practical skills to pass on to learners, equipping them with marketable knowledge to alleviate poverty.



Financial Management

An Abridged Income and Expenditure Statement of the **Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture for 2024**

DESCRIPTION	BUDGET 2024	AMOUNT SPENT 2024
PERSONNEL REMUNERATION		
Salaries Cost To Company	88 758 621.72	78 803 719.26
Temporary Salaries	7 549 234.65	7 974 622.36
Examiners & Moderators Salaries	770 574.52	360 120.30
Tutorial Salary Expenses	832 246.52	730 853.05
Overtime Salaries	41 825.50	40 106.05
Ad-hoc Salary Payments	–	19 575.77
Subtotal	97 952 502.91	87 928 996.79
RESTRICTED BUDGET	1 246 715.80	884 138.83
OPERATING EXPENSES	8 123 343.45	7 416 529.55
TOTAL	R 107 322 562.16	R 96 229 665.17



The faculty's total budget for 2024 was R107 322 562.16. The actual expenditure was R96 229 665.17. The significant savings of R11 092 897.00 were driven primarily by lower-than-expected personnel costs, savings in the restricted budget and operational expense reductions. These figures demonstrate the Faculty's effective management of its financial resources, with substantial savings across various categories. The insights gained from this year's financial activities will inform future budgeting and financial planning to support the Faculty's ongoing success and development.

Fundraising Initiatives

In 2024, the faculty secured a total of R7 390 126.30 in funding. Of this, R4 058 391.30 was allocated to research, with the majority (R3 6 million) sourced nationally from NRF, DHET, and others. An additional R392 224.00 came from international sources, including in-kind support from international partners for travel and other initiatives. Arts & Culture secured R3 260 200.00, including R2 755 200.00 from the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport SETA for internship support and student bursaries. The Dean's Concert raised R71 535.00 to provide ad hoc financial support to students in good academic standing who are in financial need.



The Way Ahead

"In 2025 FADA will remain steadfast in its commitment to creativity with purpose – driving academic excellence, student success and societal impact through collaborative research, innovative teaching and meaningful community engagement."



As FADA looks to 2025, it does so with renewed focus and determination to enhance its stature, deepen its impact and continue to align meaningfully with the University of Johannesburg's Strategy 2035. Under the continued leadership of Executive Dean Professor Federico Freschi, the faculty will prioritise inclusive and participatory approaches that cultivate a strong sense of shared purpose across all departments and staff members. By fostering open communication, building collegial networks, and creating mechanisms for professional development, we aim to sustain a dynamic, supportive environment where academic excellence and institutional pride can thrive.

A key area of focus will be the full implementation and acceleration of the Faculty Research Strategy, introduced last year to revitalise a culture of scholarly and creative productivity. Built on the '3P' principle – ensuring that every academic has one project in the pipeline, one in production, and one in press – the strategy is supported by the expertise of Faculty Research Champions and designed to meet the diverse needs of staff across career stages. The goal is not only to increase outputs but to foster a sustained culture of inquiry, innovation and publication that positions FADA as a leader in research and creative practice on the continent.

In parallel, the Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategy will continue to drive improvements in student success, throughput, and on-time graduation. With a focus on accountability, responsiveness, and support, this strategy – led by the Executive Dean, Vice-Dean for Teaching and Learning and Heads of Department – will use predictive data tools to identify academic risks and intervene proactively. Through targeted mentorship, curriculum refinement and shared responsibility for student progress, we aim to ensure that all learners are equipped to succeed.

Externally, the faculty will strengthen its visibility and relevance through targeted engagement and promotion. The 20th anniversary of the University of Johannesburg presents a key moment to showcase FADA's achievements, while high-profile events such as the annual Dean's Concert and the faculty's public exhibitions and lectures will serve as platforms to engage stakeholders, alumni and the broader public. In addition, a new suite of short learning programmes will be launched, aimed at extending the faculty's reach, attracting new audiences, and generating third-stream income – ultimately supporting long-term sustainability and academic innovation.

Ultimately, 2025 will be a year of consolidation and ambition, in which FADA reaffirms its role as a faculty grounded in creativity, transformation and societal relevance. By aligning its strategic objectives with institutional priorities and the broader needs of South Africa and the continent, FADA will continue to champion the power of art, design, and architecture as vital agents for change.

