

Zeitz MOCAA opens at V&A

The [Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa](#) (Zeitz MOCAA) was officially unveiled to the public at the V&A Waterfront's Silo District on Friday, 22 September. The R500m project is a joint not-for-profit partnership between the V&A Waterfront and German business entrepreneur [Jochen Zeitz](#).



Conceptualised by the V&A Waterfront in consultation with [Heatherwick Studio](#), the museum is housed in a building that had humble beginnings as part of an industrial shipping facility in the Cape Town Harbour. The almost 100-year-old grain silo today has an entirely new purpose as custodian of some of the most important contemporary artwork on the African continent.

“The idea of turning a giant disused concrete grain silo made from 116 vertical tubes into a new kind of public space was weird and compelling from the beginning. We were excited by the opportunity to unlock this formerly dead structure and transform it into somewhere for people to see and enjoy the most incredible artworks from the continent of Africa. We are all looking forward to witnessing the impact of the museum’s ambitious artistic programme and the museum taking its pivotal place in the middle of Africa’s cultural infrastructure,” said [Thomas Heatherwick](#), founder of Heatherwick Studio.

“ [@ZeitzMOCAA](#) - stunningly beautiful [#Africa](#) modern art gallery open to public in [#CapeTown](#) [@CityofCT](#) [@PatriciaDeLille](#) [#ZeitzMOCAAGrandOpening](#) [pic.twitter.com/U44GrhTO7](#)— Africa Insights ([@Africalnsights](#)) [September 22, 2017](#) ”

The grain silo's architectural redevelopment from disused industrial building into a contemporary art museum was undertaken by London-based Heatherwick Studio in conjunction with local South African architects. The galleries and the cathedral-like atrium space at the centre of the museum have been literally carved from the silos' dense cellular structure of forty-two tubes that pack the building. The development includes 6,000m² of exhibition space in 100 galleries, a rooftop sculpture garden, art storage and conservation areas, a bookshop, a restaurant and bar, and various reading rooms.

Zeitz MOCAA acknowledges new mediums through the establishment of different centres and institutes within the overall museum: Centres for a Costume Institute, Photography, Curatorial Excellence, the Moving Image, Performative Practice and Art Education.

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Access for All programme

Zeitz MOCAA has sought to create a contemporary art museum that is easily accessible to South Africans and continental visitors. The Museum's Access for All programme will ensure that no one is ever turned away from the museum due to the inability to afford admission. The programme will see visitors under the age of 18 allowed free entrance to the museum all year around, free admission every Wednesday morning for all South Africans and other visitors from the African continent, and half price admission for all on 'Late Night Fridays'.

“ A proud moment for [@CapeTown](#) - [#ArchbishopTutu](#), [@PatriciaDeLille](#) & [@helenzille](#) [#ZMRibbonCuttingCeremony](#) [@ZeitzMOCAA](#) [#ZeitzMOCAAGrandOpening](#) [pic.twitter.com/k1SZcmMyKo](#)— TutuLegacy (@TutuLegacy) [September 22, 2017](#) ”

“This museum is a symbol, an icon, of the confidence we feel about being African, the confidence that we feel about our place in the world. And that's what makes this so extraordinary. We have been given an opportunity to create a museum for all, and we must guarantee access for all. The right to cultural participation, and access to the artefacts that represent our diverse cultures, is deeply rooted in human rights. This is a principle that Zeitz MOCAA will uphold, defend and keep as a central mission of its reason for being,” said executive director and chief curator of the museum, Mark Coetzee.

[View gallery](#)