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South African Heritage Resources Authority

Support Letter for Project by C McClenaghan to Produce Paper Artworks at Nooitgedacht Glacial Pavings, Northern Cape

I wish to support an application by Craig McClenaghan for a proposed project to make a number of paper 'artefacts' / sheets using local plant material and water at the Nooitgedacht Glacial Pavement site near Kimberley. The object is to make artworks for the Venice Biennale's 18th International Architecture Exhibition. Themed 'decolonisation and decarbonization in Africa', McClenaghan's proposed exhibit would emerge from an "explorative mapping" in which plant fibre and water from the adjacent Vaal would mingle, literally, as "materials of memory" mediating landscape - the resultant paper to be arrayed as "an artefactual 'atlas'" at the Biennale. This would produce an entirely novel work that would, inter alia, highlight a significant South African heritage site in this prestigious international arena.

Alluding to volcanic to glacial and to present-day geological and human histories at Nooitgedacht, McClenaghan mentions marks on the landscape as holding memory - "of ancient material choreographies of water, fire and earth - within, around and over which, the fleeting presence of human imagination is carved, folded and draped." As the basis for his work, the formation/creation of a number of paper sheets, from local fibre and evaporating water, is proposed in this landscape setting - where landscape formation itself owes much to the behaviour of water in times past and present. Background information on paper-making in general, the methodological specifics proposed, together with the rationale for the exhibit, is provided in detail in McClenaghan's proposal document.

The project would begin with the harvesting of *Typha capensis* (a fast growing reed, presently growing at the nearby Wildebeest Kuil), to be pulped (no chemical additives - the sole ingredients of the paper product would be plant fibre and water). The resultant pulp, combined with water sourced from the Vaal River alongside the Nooitgedacht glacial pavements site, then would provide the material for paper making. By means of basic equipment - deckles and frames, a series of pressing boards and felt sheets, and a vat in which the plant pulp/fibre and water are mixed - films or sheets of pulp and fibre are then formed and pressed (to squeeze out water) before being gently placed on the rock surface and pressed by hand to emboss the textures of the surface into the soft paper-making material. Only this material would be in contact with the rock, the plant fibre-becoming-paper then left to dry sufficiently before the sheets are gently lifted from the rock. Any residual plant pulp (local materials only, fibre and water, and no chemical additives) would

be easily cleaned off by being wet and gently wiped, leaving no trace of the process.
Transported to Johannesburg, the sheets would be worked up further for the exhibition.

Mr McClenaghan asked that I be present to ascertain that no part of the process should impact in any way and on any part of the heritage site.

I have no hesitation in supporting the project that may have future spin-off for the positive promotion of this remarkable deep-time heritage site - giving depth to a present which seeks to 'decolonize and decarbonize' and where thought-provoking use of such heritage can further enhance awareness of its value.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Morris', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Morris
