

ARTROUTE WELCOMES SPRING 2026

ART, CULTURE & WELLBEING

With spring arriving in Cape Town, it feels like the perfect time to get outside, explore something new and make a little more space for inspiration. This month, we're looking at the ways art and culture can invite us to slow down, reconnect and experience our surroundings differently.

From the galleries of Zeitz MOCAA to the material worlds of Matereality V2 and the art-and-nature landscape of Norval Foundation, Cape Town offers plenty of opportunities to step away from the everyday and engage with creativity at a different pace.

Whether it's discovering a new exhibition, wandering through a sculpture garden or simply spending time with a work that makes you see something familiar in a new way, we believe experiencing art can be a meaningful part of wellbeing.

Here are a few places and exhibitions to add to your Cape Town itinerary this spring.



21 years
wellness
expertise



since 2011
art tourism
pioneer



private
accompanied
tours

A NEW CHAPTER AT ZEITZ MOCAA

Zeitz MOCAA has announced Elvira Dyangani Ose as its new Artistic Director, beginning 1 October 2026. Her appointment comes at an important moment for the museum as it approaches its tenth anniversary and looks towards its next decade, building on the legacy of the late Koyo Kouoh.

Dyangani Ose brings an impressive international career spanning Africa, Europe and the United States. She was previously Director of MACBA in Barcelona and The Showroom London, and has held curatorial positions at Tate Modern and Creative Time in New York. She is currently Artistic Director of the Public Art Abu Dhabi Biennial (2026–2027). Known for her pan-African outlook and commitment to artists from Africa and its diaspora, Dyangani Ose will oversee Zeitz MOCAA’s artistic and curatorial direction, including its exhibitions, research, collection and public programmes.

As the museum enters a new chapter, her appointment brings fresh international experience to one of Africa’s most significant contemporary art institutions. We look forward to seeing how her vision unfolds in Cape Town.

ARTROUTE offers private guided tours of Zeitz MOCAA, providing an in-depth introduction to its collection, exhibitions and the artists shaping contemporary art in Africa.



ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: SONGEZO ZANTSI

Ahead of his debut solo presentation with Vela Projects at FNB Art Joburg, we visited Songezo Zantsi in his Cape Town studio for an intimate conversation about his practice and his intuitive approach to image-making.

At the heart of our conversation was a Xhosa proverb passed down to Songezo by his grandfather: “Iya embovaneni vila ndini” - “Take heed, you lazy fool, and witness the labour of the ants.” The proverb has become a guiding presence in his recent work, informing his shift towards what he describes as “spacious image making.”

Moving away from strict photographic references, Songezo’s new body of work centres on the recurring motif of the anthill, approached almost as Monet approached his haystacks: as a familiar subject through which to explore shifting light, atmosphere, and perception.

Working with fluid oil washes, charcoal, and smudged pastels, Songezo moves away from the clarity of photographic representation, instead evoking the softened and atmospheric quality of memory. Seen through an imagined ant’s perspective, the works become meditations on labour, memory, and collective histories.

The resulting body of work was presented by Vela Projects at FNB Art Joburg from 4–6 September 2026, marking an important moment in Songezo’s developing practice.



EXHIBITION SPOTLIGHT: MATEREALITY V2 AT THE IZIKO SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL GALLERY

In conversation with Curator Andrea Lewis

What can a material remember? What histories can be held in a piece of cloth, a lump of earth, a discarded object or a sheet of metal?

Now on view at the Iziko South African National Gallery, Matereality V2 brings together more than 100 works by over 70 artists and makers from across the African continent. Curated by Andrea Lewis, the exhibition explores how materials — from soil, wood and cloth to metal, concrete, sugar and found objects — can carry histories of labour, memory, land, identity and belonging.

Six years after the first Matereality, the exhibition expands this exploration, considering materials as more than just simply artistic mediums, but as carriers of knowledge and history.

We spoke to Andrea Lewis about the exhibition, her evolving thinking around materiality, and the many histories embedded in the ways artists make and work.

The first Matereality began with the question of what materials can tell us. Six years later, what has that question come to mean to you, and how has your thinking around it evolved through the development of V2?

The first Matereality really began with my interest in Jean Baudrillard and his writing around objects: the idea that objects carry meanings far beyond their practical use. But over the last six years, I kept noticing artists having incredibly specific relationships with their materials and objects. Looking into that led me to Jane Bennett and her ideas around vibrant matter and the agency of things, which suddenly made a lot of sense in relation to what I was seeing artists do.

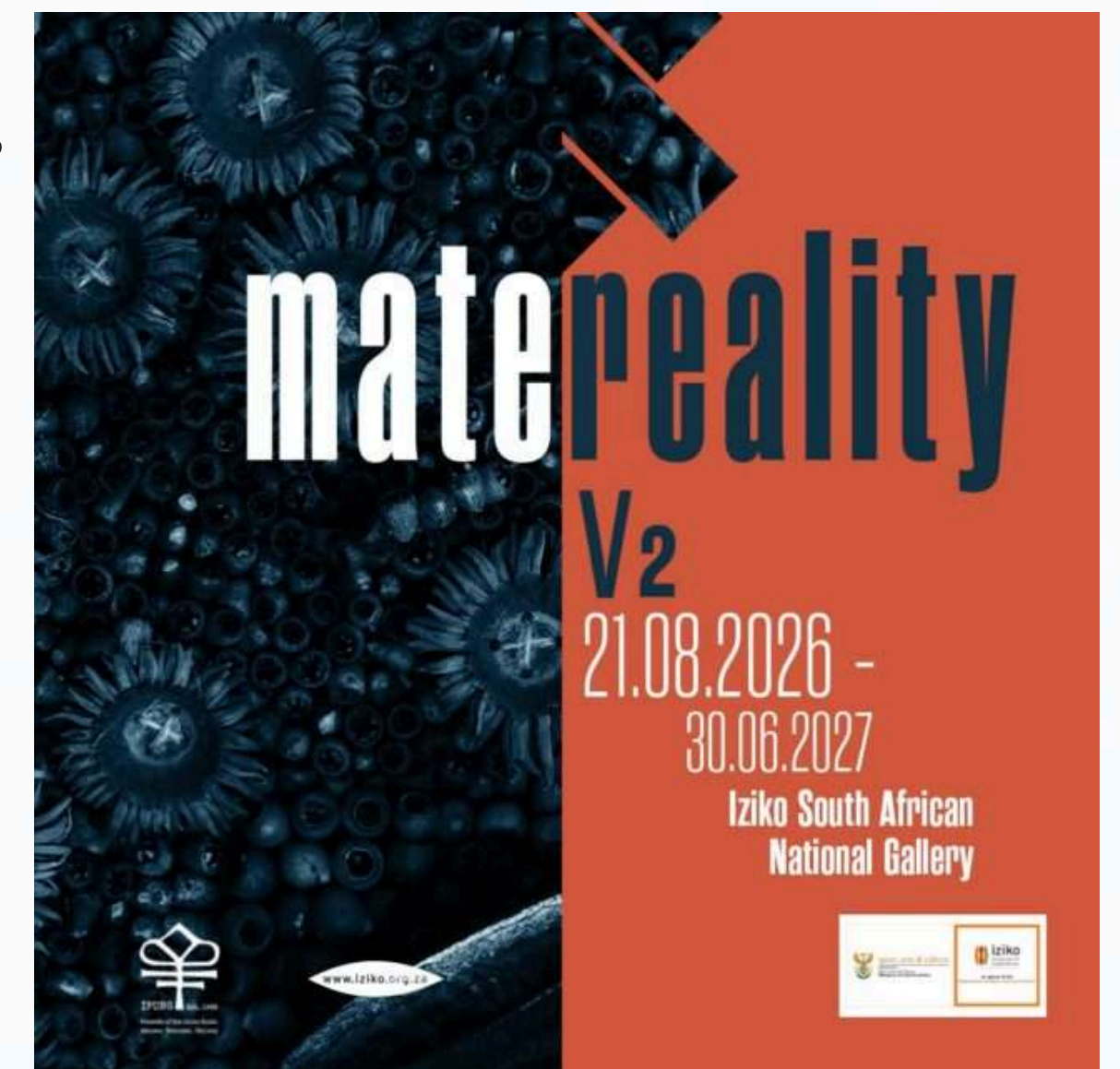
At the same time, Indigenous knowledge systems and Afro-centric ways of understanding material, land, ancestry and interconnectedness have taken a much stronger place in my thinking - and, importantly, on the broader cultural stage. And then there is AI. Its acceleration over just the last few years has made the handmade feel more critical to me than ever. The time it takes to weave, stitch, bead, carve, paint or simply work patiently with a material feels almost radical now. So the question has expanded enormously: it is no longer only about what materials can tell us, but about what kinds of knowledge, relationships and ways of being they can hold.

A material can carry histories that precede the artist who uses it, histories of labour, consumption, place, culture or even exploitation. How do you approach these existing histories when deciding which works belong within Matereality V2?

What usually catches my eye first is an artist doing something unexpected with a material - using something unusual, transforming something familiar, or pushing a material in a way I hadn't seen before. From there, I tend to follow the artist and their practice rather than beginning with a specific material or theme in mind.

Over the years, I kept a growing list of artists beside me - people whose practices caught my attention for one reason or another - and then I would dive into the work and see what might belong in Matereality. It is often only through that process that the histories or knowledge embedded in the materials really begin to reveal themselves.

What I found fascinating was how often common threads started to emerge almost organically: labour, trade, domesticity, colonial histories, memory, land, care and displacement. I wasn't setting out to illustrate those themes, but they kept appearing across very different practices. That was when the exhibition really started to build its own internal logic.



Princia Matulungu - How Kengi Lost a Child series

The exhibition brings together materials and processes that can sit outside traditional definitions of fine art, including materials associated with craft, domestic life and everyday consumption. How do you navigate the distinction between “craft” and “art” within the exhibition, particularly in relation to the historical hierarchies attached to those categories?

I don't really start from the distinction between “craft” and “art”. I start with the work and with what the artist is trying to do. If stitching, weaving, beading, carving or another process is central to the thinking of the work, then that is what matters to me.

Of course, those categories come with very loaded histories. So much that has been associated with women, domestic spaces, Indigenous knowledge or communal making has historically been pushed into the category of “craft” and treated as somehow lesser. Matereality V2 is not trying to resolve that history, but it does refuse to reinforce it. These practices simply sit in the exhibition as part of contemporary art practice, because that is exactly what they are.

Matereality V2 speaks about dismantling historic artistic hierarchies and decolonising museum spaces. What does it mean to bring these materials, histories and artistic practices into a national institution such as the Iziko South African National Gallery, and can the material itself challenge the way the museum traditionally categorises art?

For me, there is something quite powerful about bringing these materials into a national gallery precisely because of the history of the institution itself. Museums have traditionally been very invested in categories: painting, sculpture, decorative art, craft. But artists have never really behaved that neatly.

So when you bring in blankets, cow dung, beeswax, hoses, newspapers, plastic, beads, clothing, found objects or materials tied to domestic and Indigenous knowledge systems, those categories immediately start to feel less stable. The material itself can create a kind of friction with the museum. I like that tension. It asks what we have historically considered worthy of preservation, display and attention, and who got to decide that in the first place.

After working with Matereality across such a long period, is there a particular material or artwork in V2 that has changed the way you look at the material world around you?

That answer changes almost every day. I'm constantly seeing something new in the works or suddenly making a connection I hadn't noticed before. Sometimes it is a material detail, sometimes the relationship between two works, and sometimes it is what is happening in the world around us that changes how I see something.

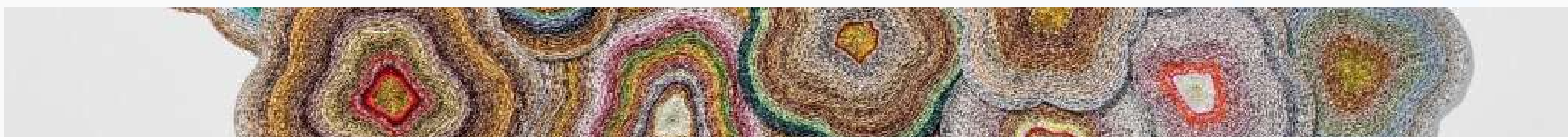
Recently, with yet another wave of devastating news around women being violated and killed, Lungiswa Qwanta's work struck me anew very strongly. From a distance it almost looks like a Garden of Eden - soft floral fabric, leaves, and silver forms that can look like butterflies. But when you get closer, you realise they are sharp razor blades. For me, it became such a powerful image of the paradox of South Africa: extraordinary beauty, but also violence and pain sitting incredibly close to the surface. I also think artists have a kind of superpower in the way they look at materials. They are able to see alternative functions and possibilities in things that the rest of us might overlook completely. A blanket, a teabag, a piece of plastic, a newspaper or a razor blade can suddenly become something else entirely.

That is one of the things I love about living with an exhibition over time - the works don't stay still. My understanding of them keeps changing too.

Matereality V2 invites us to look again at the materials that surround us. To consider the histories, relationships and possibilities they might contain. The exhibition is on view at the Iziko South African National Gallery, where its many materials and making processes come together in conversation.

We highly recommend experiencing the exhibition in person. If you'd like to explore Matereality V2 with one of our art specialists, Artroute can also arrange a guided tour of the exhibition.

To enquire about a tour, contact us at bookings@artroute.co.za



STEP OUTSIDE AT NORVAL FOUNDATION SCULPTURE GARDEN

For an art experience that invites you to slow down and reconnect with your surroundings, look beyond the gallery walls. At Norval Foundation, art and nature come together in the Sculpture Garden, where monumental works by artists from South Africa and across the continent are woven into a living landscape.

Set within a rehabilitated Cape Lowland Freshwater Wetland, the garden is home to indigenous flora and provides habitat for birds, insects and other wildlife, including the endangered Western Leopard Toad. The artworks are thoughtfully positioned throughout the landscape, following the natural contours of the garden to create moments of surprise, discovery and connection with the environment.

The garden features works by artists including Edoardo Villa, Nandipha Mntambo, Norman Catherine and William Kentridge, to name a few, offering visitors the opportunity to encounter a diverse range of sculptural practices within the landscape.

The result is an experience that feels less like moving from artwork to artwork and more like taking a walk through an evolving landscape - where sculpture, biodiversity and the natural beauty of the Western Cape exist side by side.

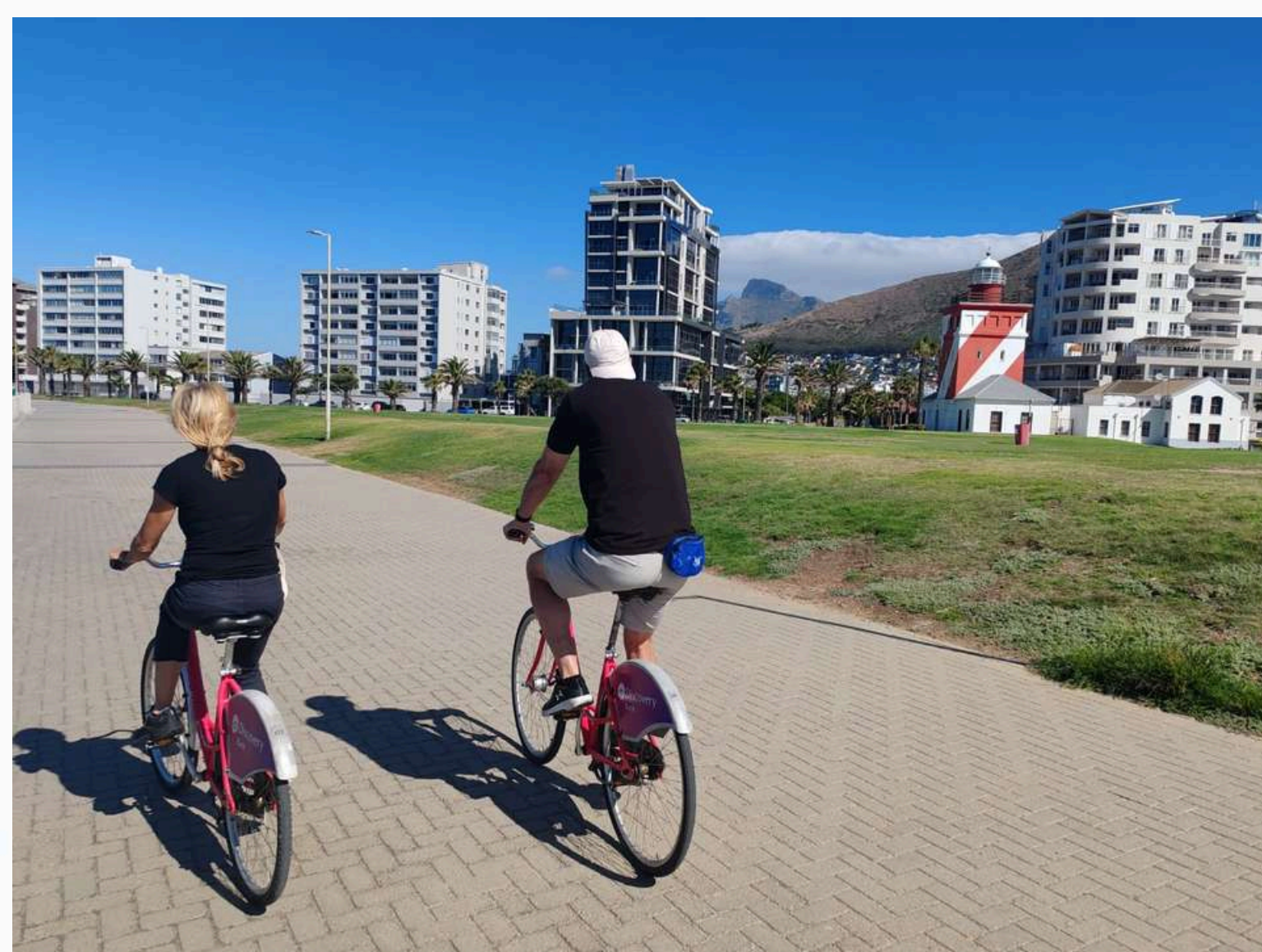
For those looking to combine art, nature and a little time to slow down, ARTROUTE offers guided tours of Norval Foundation and its Sculpture Garden. Contact us at bookings@artroute.co.za to book a private museum and garden tour.



FOR YOUR ITINERARY

Want to explore one of the museums above with a deeper understanding of the works and their contexts? Contact us at bookings@artroute.co.za to book a guided museum tour.

EXPLORE CAPE TOWN'S ATLANTIC ESPLANADE ON TWO WHEELS!



For the adventurous at heart, our new Three-Points: The Atlantic Esplanade & Waterfront by Bicycle experience offers a refreshing and active way to take in Cape Town's iconic coastline.

Feel the rush of the sea air as you cycle along the car-free Seapoint, Mouille Point, and Green Point promenade on a comfortable classic bike or e-bike. Along the way, take in breathtaking views of Table Mountain and Lion's Head, while uncovering the rich culture and history of this storied seafront.

But this ride is more than just a scenic adventure—Artroute will guide you to hidden public art gems tucked along the route, setting the stage for an art-filled exploration of the V&A Waterfront. We'll refresh at the Watershed market before diving into the contemporary art spaces of the Silo District and the treasures of Zeitz MOCAA.

Leading the way is Richard, a passionate cyclist with 13 Cape Cycle Tours under his belt, who knows the city's streets like no other.

Join us for an unforgettable blend of movement, scenery, and art!

-  **Duration:** 2 – 4 hours
-  **Route:** Sea Point – Green Point – V&A Waterfront
-  **Bikes Available:** E-bikes & Classic Comfort Bikes

Book your ride today!



ART & WELLNESS

Last month, we introduced Artroute’s five new Peninsula Art & Wellness experiences, each designed to bring together art, nature and a sense of discovery. This month, as spring arrives in Cape Town, we’re looking at the broader idea behind them: how experiencing a place can become a form of wellbeing in itself.

Wellness doesn’t always have to mean retreating from the world. Sometimes, it can mean stepping outside, slowing your pace, trying something unfamiliar or seeing your surroundings with fresh eyes. Art offers a particularly powerful way to do this — encouraging curiosity, attention and connection.

Peer-reviewed studies have linked engagement with art to lower anxiety, greater empathy and experiences of “flow” — a state of deep absorption and focused attention. The relationship between art and wellbeing has also gained wider recognition, with the Global Wellness Summit naming art as one of its key global wellness trends for 2024.

This thinking sits at the heart of our new Peninsula experiences. Whether it’s getting into the ocean, walking through fynbos, meeting a working artist or making something with your own hands, each experience offers a different way to connect with Cape Town more mindfully.

With spring bringing longer days and warmer weather, it’s an ideal time to explore the Peninsula from a different perspective.

Discover our five Art & Wellness experiences from the previous newsletter, or contact Artroute to create a private experience tailored to you or your clients.



TALITA SWARTS
FOUNDER & CEO
talita@artroute.co.za

BRIGITTA GAYLARD
ART & WELLNESS ADVISOR
brigitta@artroute.co.za

To book one of these experiences or need more information contact Ellen: bookings@artroute.co.za



www.artroute.co.za