



Fulbright Scholar Prof. Rozina Vavetsi Joins UJ for Collaborative Design Exploration

The Faculty of Art, Design, and Architecture (FADA) at the University of Johannesburg is proud to welcome Associate Professor Rozina Vavetsi, M.Sc., from New York Tech, who will be spending six months at UJ as part of her Fulbright Fellowship. Prof. Vavetsi, a distinguished scholar and practitioner in Digital Art and Design, will collaborate closely with the Graphic (Communication) Design department, engaging in a series of academic and creative initiatives.

Her work at UJ will focus on human-centered design and contribute to the decolonization of the curriculum, with a strong emphasis on supporting disadvantaged communities. In addition, she will explore South Africa's unique design vernacular, studying artifacts, lettering, patterns, textiles, ceramics, and imagery influenced by the country's diverse cultural heritage. Through this research, she aims to develop a "visual anthology," a hybrid compendium of narratives and imagery that reflects the country's rich design landscape.

With over two decades of experience in higher education, Prof. Vavetsi teaches a wide range of design courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She also maintains an active freelance career and regularly participates in international conferences, ensuring she remains at the forefront of design discourse. Her work has been featured in prestigious publications and exhibited worldwide.

During her time at UJ, Prof. Vavetsi will be actively involved in the **Honours Communication Design programme**. She will co-teach:

- **Publication Design** alongside Prof. Deirdre Pretorius
- **Design Thinking** alongside Dr. Reshma Maharajh and HOD Ms. Christa van Zyl
- **Participation Design** alongside Ms. Christa van Zyl



The Participation Design unit is a particularly ambitious initiative in the BA Honours programme, where students work directly with external clients over five weeks to solve complex real-world design briefs. Prof. Vavetsi and Ms. van Zyl will guide students in their design executions, attending client meetings to ensure effective communication and that final outcomes align with client needs.

In the Publication Design unit, students will engage in an exciting project that connects culture, storytelling, and design by creating a collaborative cookbook. This initiative fosters intercultural dialogue by encouraging students to explore their heritage through food narratives, interviews, and design. The process will not only refine their design skills but also promote inclusivity, representation, and the preservation of cultural identity through visual storytelling. Reflecting on this collaboration, HOD Ms. Christa van Zyl expressed enthusiasm, stating: "We strongly look forward to the experience of working with you, Professor Vavetsi, and hope you will be awarded the opportunity to join our team for the first semester of 2025."

FADA is excited about the valuable insights and creative expertise that Prof. Vavetsi brings, and we look forward to the impact she will have on our students, faculty, and the broader design community.

