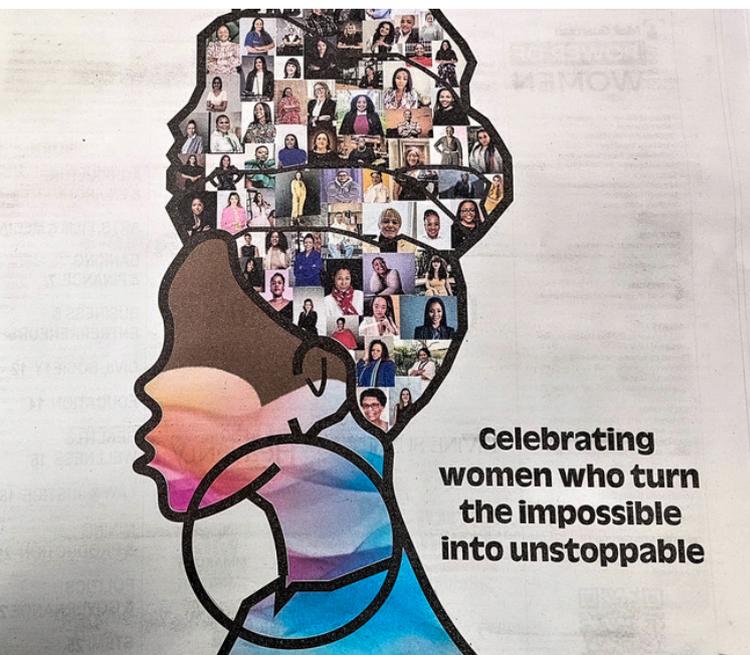




UJ Academic Honoured Among South Africa's Most Influential Women



The University of Johannesburg proudly celebrates a remarkable achievement as one of its own has been recognised on a national stage. The Mail & Guardian Power of Women Awards is a prestigious platform that honours 100 exceptional South African women leaders who are driving transformation in their fields and communities. For nearly two decades, this initiative has spotlighted trailblazers whose work shapes society and inspires future generations.

This year, the spotlight fell on Dr Khanya Mthethwa, Lecturer in the Department of Jewellery Design and Manufacture at UJ. Nominated by Prof Khaya Mchunu from the Fashion Department, Dr Mthethwa was acknowledged for her groundbreaking contributions to decolonial art, indigenous knowledge systems, and jewellery design. Her work interrogates colonial legacies, reimagines cultural narratives, and celebrates ubuntu through contemporary jewellery and multidisciplinary art. The selection process for the Power of Women Awards is highly competitive, with over 1 200 nominations received annually. Finalists are chosen for their leadership, innovation, social impact, mentorship, and commitment to transformation. Dr Mthethwa's recognition affirms her role as a thought leader whose creative practice extends beyond academia to influence national discourse.

The award ceremony took place on 9 October 2025 at the Divine Sunset venue in Midrand, where Dr Mthethwa received an official certificate and was featured in the national Mail & Guardian Power of Women publication. This honour validates her vision of centring African knowledge and creative excellence as pillars of cultural progress.

Reflecting on the achievement, Dr Mthethwa shared:

"This recognition is significant because it affirms that African knowledge systems and decolonial practices matter at a national level. It also highlights UJ as a space that nurtures leaders who shape culture and society."

Her journey exemplifies resilience and innovation. From training in diamond evaluation to earning a PhD in Art History, Dr Mthethwa has combined scholarship with artistry, leaving a legacy that resonates far beyond the studio. Through her mentorship and creative leadership, she continues to inspire a new generation of designers and thinkers.

Congratulations to Dr Khanya Mthethwa for this outstanding achievement, which reflects the University of Johannesburg's commitment to excellence, transformation, and cultural leadership.