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**Between botanical gardens and contemporary art: colonial histories of naming**

This paper takes its starting point from research garnered through the Response-ability contemporary art and gardening project, taking place in and in collaboration with the Joubert Park Greenhouse Project (2020 and 2021). Aspects of this multidisciplinary project address the colonial history of the former Victorian hothouse (opened in 1906), which today functions as a communal vegetable garden. I will focus on Northern botanical systems of categorization and labelling that are still used globally. My aim is to connect botanical histories to colonial categorization of African peoples, which linger today in African art museums. With these foundations in mind, I will describe some of the ways of processing these histories emerging through the Response-Ability project.

Once an exotic spectacle in the colonial municipality's first leisure gardens, the former hothouse can serve as an example of colonial use of nature as a form of cultural dominance. Imperial exploitation of natural resources included a system of classification that imposed Euro-centric systems of organizing the urban environment. While gardens for settler-colonists that degraded the existing ecosystem were established, many indigenous plants cultivated and harvested by locals for their medicinal and/or nourishing qualities were banished as weeds. I argue that the current situation and use of the site muddies the clear separation of science from culture that the initial institution represented.

