

Alicia Vermaak

*Point of View (Portrait of Jakes Gerwel) (2023)*

Plexiglas, steel table, led lights.

*Point of View* is a multi-layered sculpture that serves as a tribute to Professor G.J. Gerwel, often recognised as Jakes Gerwel. The sculpture honours his remarkable achievements and unwavering determination to succeed in education, especially amidst the discriminatory policies of apartheid.

Gerwel was a prominent South African academic, teacher, lecturer, and professor, who played a significant role in the transformation of South Africa and the higher education sector. He was a political and human rights activist who assisted in the transition from apartheid to a constitutional democracy and was respected in government circles. He served as Director General of former president Nelson Mandela's office

and secretary of the cabinet after 1994. Gerwel held various academic positions, including chancellor of Rhodes University, honorary professor of humanities at the University of Pretoria, and distinguished professor at UWC, as dean of the Faculty of Arts.

*Point of View* aligns with UNISA's institutional vision promoting transformation and the desire of the institution to connect with society through art. It also addresses the concept of perspective and space in the arts.

The sculpture employs a precise viewing angle to generate a portrait, creating the perceptual illusion of a cohesive entity. The layers are arranged in a sequential manner, resulting in the portrait, contingent upon the observer's perspective. *Point of View* aims to positively impact Unisa students and the community by encouraging viewers to reflect on a remarkable South African educational leader and pioneer in transformation, by highlighting the valuable contributions that educators make in higher education and the community.