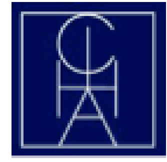

SAVAH
South African Visual Arts Historians

Other views: Art History in (South) Africa and the Global South

Colloquium Proceedings

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Responses from several Panel 'Chairs' are included in this document.

A version of the Colloquium Proceedings which includes images will be available on the
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Table of Contents

PANEL CHAIR RESPONSES

Carman, Jillian
Changing Museums, Changing Art Histories. 6

Murray, Kevin
Where to put Baskets in an Art Gallery? The Place of Traditional Cultures in Art History. 9

Nettleton, Anitra
Modernist Primitivism and Indigenous Modernisms: Transnational Discourse and Local Art. . . . 11

Pissarra, Mario
Art and Decolonisation: Small Steps Towards a Global Art History. 15

PAPERS

Allara, Pamela
Diane Victor, "Transcend" 19

Barnett, Cassandra
What You see You Don't See: Lisa Reihana's Digital Marae. 25

Bernal, Maria Clara
From South to South 31

Brenner, Joni with Alexander Horsler; Molemo Moiloa; Paula Munsie; Stacey Vorster; and Tim Zeelie
Gestures of Defamiliarization. 37

Bristow, Tegan
Rephrasing Protocol: Internet Art in the Global South 44

Chávez Mac Gregor, Helena
"Latin America": Time and Subjectivity 48

Conduru, Roberto
Rubem Valentim's mixture – African (and others) dimensions of 'Latin American art'. 53

De Greef, Erica
Rundle and Return: The Hybrid Tiger of SA Fashion 57

Dorfling, Aletta
The Pensive Image: Beyond Photography's Representational Function 64

Douglas, Susan
Returning Photographs. 70

Dreyer, Elfriede
Functionality and Social Modernism in the Work of Untrained South African Artists 77

Dufrêne, Thierry
The Presence of South in Art History as a Matter of Fact. 86

Freschi, Federico
From Volksargitektuur *to Pretoria Regionalism: Afrikaner Nationalism, Architecture, and the Imaginary of High Culture, 1948–76* 90

Godby, Michael
'Now you've gone and killed me': The Life and Afterlife of Billy Monk, 1937-1982 97

Golomski, Casey
Piecing Together Another World: Mourning and the Ritual Use of Clothing 100

Grebe, Anja
Displaying Africa in Nuremberg: The Behaim Globe from Pre- to Post-Colonialism 118

Grossmann, G Ulrich
CIHA and the Globalization of Art History from a German Perspective 124

Gutiérrez Castañeda, David
The Present is Now/The World in a Few Things: Actuality and Internationalism as Work Hypothesis on Private Collecting of Contemporary Art in Latin America 128

Harlech-Jones, Elwyn
An Holistic Approach to Conservation of the Architectural Heritage and Bio Diversity of the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve and Urban Area 133

Helg, Ursula
South African Beadwork: Craft, Art, Recycling, Bricolage? Learning from the South 141

Hill, Shannen
"Regardless, the Struggle Continues": Black Consciousness is a Culture of Resistance 146

Hucke, Claudia
Murals and National Identity: Issues in Postcolonial Jamaican Art 154

Labi, Kwame A
Decolonizing Art Studies in Ghana and Kenya 159

Leeb-du Toit, Juliette
The Diaspora and Transnationalism in our Midst: Contextualising the Work of Recent Migrant Artists in South Africa 169

Levi Terna, Ape
How Authentic are Stools Produced at Prescraft? Authenticity of Arts and Crafts of the North West Region, Republic of Cameroon 179

Llano Loyola, José
The Interpreter's Notation: Building a Cultural Landscape as a Biopolitical Trace on Valparaíso (English) 183

La Notacion del Intérprete: La Construcción de un Paisaje Cultural a Modo de Huell a Biopolitica sobre Valparaíso (Espagñol) 188

Maltz-Leca, Leora
Lyric Documentary: On Documentary's Spectral Remains 195

McGee, Julie L
Blackness as a Model: Towards a New Art History 200

Miller, Gwen
TRANSCODE: *Dialogues around Intermedia Practice* 205

Mumbi, Mwape J
Visual arts as Creative Expression and Heritage in Zambia 212

Nzewi, Ugochukwu-Smooth
Modernist Primitivism in Senegal 225

Powers, Holiday
Modernization and Traditionalization: Art and Decolonization in Morocco 233

Rankin, Elizabeth
Workshopping Modernism: Case Studies in South African Art 238

Schmahmann, Brenda
Gender Politics in the Keiskamma Tapestry. 244

Sekokotoana, Matsooana
Cultural Production: Where to put Baskets in an Art Gallery? – The Place of Traditional Cultures in Art History. 250

Siegert, Nadine
A New Generation of Utopia: Young Artists' Careers in the Context of the Trienal de Luanda. . 254

Sloggett, Robyn
Changing the Rules of Engagement; Art, Politics and the Role of Bark Paintings in Building Australian Identity. 262

Souindoula, Simão
Millennium Base and New Ways of Expressing in the Modern Bantu Art. 271

Steele, John
Getting to Know You and Your Artworks Better: Some Reflections on Ceramics Practices and Collections of Works Created by Alice Gqa Nongebeza of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. 277

Van Haute, Bernadette
Post-Africanism and Contemporary Art in South African Townships 285

Van Robbroeck, Lize
White South African Discourse and the Invention of the Modern Primitive 290

Varas Alarcon, Paulina
Intertwinings and Refuges: How to Update our Desire of Translation? 295

Von Veh, Karen
The Relevance of Feminism in Post-apartheid South Africa. 299

Way-Jones, Fleur
Fact and Fantasy: Women's Occupational Dress and the Influence on Identity. 306

Weinberg, Paul
Then and Now – A Dialogue with the Archive. 315

Wienand, Annabelle
Tracing the History of 'Documentary' Photography in South Africa 322

Winters, Yvonne and Mchunu, Mxolisi
The Art of Trevor Makhoba: A Cultural and Historical Review of KwaZulu-Natal's Urban African Artists' Response to Decolonization 329

Zeplin, Pamela
Heading South: A Meditation on the 'Ruins' of The South Project 339

Changing Museums, Changing Art Histories

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An overview of Session 13, with papers presented by Susan Douglas, Anja Grebe, Mwape Mumbi (all included in these proceedings), Peju Layiwola[1] and Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer.[2]

We were asked by Mwape Mumbi to bow our heads and observe a minute's silence. I was tasked with keeping the time, which I did with a fair amount of amusement: was this a surprise performance piece? Mumbi's explanation afterwards shattered my complacency. We had been honouring the memory of Saartje Baartman and all those Africans who were considered objects of curiosity by the colonial West; the objectified people and their artefacts who had been removed as war loot, souvenirs, fairground attractions, or items of ethnographic and scientific research. Mumbi's intervention was deeply affecting. He drew attention to a principal feature concerning museums in the West and Africa, and marginalised communities world-wide: the responsibility of Western museums to repatriate to countries of origin the objects that were illicitly removed by former colonial visitors, settlers, rulers and victors. Repatriation is a resolution adopted by the Unesco-affiliated International Council of Museums (ICOM). It cannot be ignored.

Papers in this session addressed repatriation, colonial views of Africa, and changing practices in museums. The historical framework was set by the first speaker, Anja Grebe, who addressed the view of Africa from Europe on the eve of the Modern era in her paper *Displaying Africa in Nuremberg – The Behaim Globe from Pre- to Post-Colonialism*. She analysed and contextualised the oldest preserved globe in the world, created by the Nuremberg patrician, Martin Behaim, in the early 1490s, about the time Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope (1488) and Portuguese seafarers started trading with the Benin Kingdom.[3] The globe shows the state of pre-colonial European knowledge about this continent of myths, riches and dangers, with promises of access to hitherto unexploited land, new resources and markets. An extraordinary feature of the globe is that it does not include America: it was made before Behaim had knowledge of Christopher Columbus's voyages across the Atlantic. What if America had remained unknown to Europe, if Benin had continued to be an equal trading partner with the first world, if slavery had never occurred, if history had taken a different course? One can only postulate, as José Saramago[4] and Philip Roth[5] do with their re-written histories, about a world that might have been.

The fate of Benin in the late nineteenth century was taken up by Peju Layiwola in her paper, *Contesting Imperial Narratives and Display of African Art: A Counter History from Nigeria.* Layiwola

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[1] Peju Layiwola, Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, Nigeria: *Contesting Imperial Narratives and Display of African Art: A Counter History from Nigeria.*

[2] Carolyn Hamilton, Research Initiative in Archive and Public Culture, University of Cape Town; Nessa Leibhammer, Johannesburg Art Gallery and Research Initiative in Archive and Public Culture, University of Cape Town: *Ethnologised Pasts and Their Archival Futures: Convening the Archive of Pre- and Early Colonial Southern Kwazulu-Natal.*

[3] Sola Olorunyomi, 'Hmmm… 1897?! or An Introduction,' in Peju Layiwola and Sola Olorunyomi (eds), *Benin 1897.com: Art and the Restitution Question.* Ibadan: Wy Art Editions, 2010, p xxi.

[4] In Saramago's novel, *The History of the Siege of Lisbon* (1989), a twentieth-century proof-reader inserts a negative into an historical text and thus alters the outcome of the 1147 Siege of Lisbon and the subsequent history of Europe.

[5] In his chilling novel, *The Plot against America* (2004), Roth imagines an America where anti-Semitism burgeons after the pro-Hitler Charles Lindbergh defeats Franklin Roosevelt in the 1940 presidential election.

discussed her exhibition, *Benin1897.com,* a collection of her creative work reflecting on the full horror of what happened in Benin when Britain launched a punitive attack – a massacre – in 1897 and pillaged thousands of precious objects. The majority of these are today housed in the British Museum.[6]

Battles over the repatriation of these objects to Benin continue to be waged. And the scars of the massacre endure. Layiwola's re-imagining of Benin's traumas and treasures can be viewed as a response to *Benin Kings and Rituals: Court Art from Nigeria,* an exhibition of "stolen Benin artefacts" which was displayed during 2007 and 2008 at the Museum für Völkerkunde Vienna, the Musée du Quai Branly Paris, the Berlin Ethnologisches Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago; but not in Africa.[7] In her paper Layiwola recounts imperial conquests in Africa and Benin at the close of the nineteenth century, and the devastating effects that continue to this day.[8] She foregrounds a number of issues regarding the context of documentation, dissemination and assimilation of imperial histories about past colonies, and presents an "alternative" voice and "counter" history to what had been accepted as "authentic" history documented by the British.[9] Contrary to British accounts of responding to local aggression, the British expedition of 1897 to Benin, as with its previous expeditions into Africa, was spurred primarily by economic interests, that is, the desire to strip Africa of its resources. The avarice underlying the expedition is revealed in the exhibition's title, *Benin1897.com,* a satirical reference to the internet domain name ".com" (".commercial"). Layiwola presents history as a mirror which reflects but may also refract, depending on which angle the mirror is turned. In this case, the 1897 account depends on who is telling the story and the socio-political climate of the time. Her paper used her recent body of work, comprising installations and prints, to interrogate the changing histories of art and also to elucidate issues of repatriation of cultural artefacts to countries from which they originate. "It is an attempt to use contemporary art as a means of reclaiming the old classical Benin artifacts caught up in the maze of theories emanating from the west regarding the ownership, copyright, and retention of artifacts in foreign museums." [10]

Susan Douglas began her presentation, *The Repatriation Impulse: Extinction or Evolution and Photography,* with an amusing slide announcing that we hate photographs. Why? Photographs, she declared, have been overlooked in the repatriation process. "What makes these artifacts questionable as ethnographic? Why doesn't photography count? Does the answer have to do with its reproducibility?"[11] She brought a fresh approach, arguing that there are two difficulties with cultural property debates: first, they are bogged down dealing with familiar problems that include a reinforcement of existing social and cultural inequities (West versus Africa and the international colonised/displaced); and secondly, what exactly constitutes "cultural property" rarely seems to be at issue. Her discussion is grounded in the interesting case of the Swiss expatriate photographer Jean

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[6] The Berlin Ethnologisches Museum and Chicago's Field Museum also have large collections of Benin loot. Kwame Opoku gives a list of 13 museums in Europe and the USA with looted items and an approximation of their holdings (3006 items), but comments that museums are notoriously resistant to revealing the number of artefacts they possess. 'One Counter-Agenda from Africa: Would Western Museums Return Looted Objects if Nigeria and Other African States Were Ruled by Angels?' in Layiwola and Olorunyomi *Benin 1897.com,*, p 105 note 2.

[7] Akin Onipede comments "[It] was not deemed fit to be shown in any African country", 'Of Desecrated History, Memory and Values in Peju Layiwola's Recent Works,' in Layiwola and Olorunyomi *Benin 1897.com,* p 60.

[8] Sylvester Ogbechie, for example, writes about the continuing trauma: "[T]he British colonial incursion ruined many things for my family, my clan and our kingdoms..", 'The Sword of Oba Ovonramwen: 1897 and Narratives of Domination and Resistance,' in Layiwola and Olorunyomi *Benin 1897.com,* p 77. He describes his encounter with the sword in the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris.

[9] My text largely paraphrases the résumé supplied by Layiwola.

[10] Layiwola's résumé. The context of Layiwola's exhibition within Benin's history is analysed in the accompanying book, Layiwola and Olorunyomi *Benin 1897.com.*

[11] From Douglas's abstract for her paper.

Pi, whose images of Argentina tell us of the photographer's perception of this colonial country through inclusion, exclusion and hierarchy. How do we ascribe value to Pi's collection of photographs? she asks. Should Pi's work be salvaged and returned to Switzerland? "Photography sheds new light on the ways in which ideology contributes to shaping and informing perceptions in the repatriation process."[12]

Repatriation of a different kind – a restoration of identity – was discussed in Nessa Leibhammer's presentation, *Ethnologised Pasts and their Archival Futures: Convening the Archive of Pre- and Early Colonial Southern KwaZulu-Natal.* The paper describes the research Leibhammer and Carolyn Hamilton have been doing into artefacts from a region of KwaZulu-Natal between the Thukela and Mzimkhulu Rivers which was traditionally regarded as not having a distinctive material culture. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the region was marginalised and exploited in its position on the southern periphery of the powerful Zulu empire, a kind of "south" within the larger conceptual framework of the "global South", a double-south history that has compounded the theoretical complexity of the project.

The project convenes, from scattered sources, material culture that is pertinent to the pre-colonial and early colonial history of an area that saw close early European and British involvement in local African politics, social life and thought. In their résumé of the paper, Hamilton and Leibhammer describe how traders, travellers, missionaries, colonial officials, military personnel, settlers and scholars all collected the material culture, or images of it, of the people they encountered south of the Thukela. The majority of the artefacts found their way into collections and museums (like the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford), often with scant records of where the items came from, when they were collected and, in many cases, without records of how they were collected. The aim of the project is to resituate and interpret the collected material culture of this area as archive, rather than ethnological museum material, and thereby to enhance significantly its capacity to tell us about the past. In a way, this is a repatriation of the intangible heritage of history.

Mwape Mumbi brought us back to the tangible, the everyday, with his paper *Visual arts as creative expression and heritage in Zambia*. Art should be a defining factor for diversity and identity, he stated, but it can be rendered ineffectual through conservative museum practices, from collecting to display. There is no such thing as an impartial art history. Because art is intended to disseminate knowledge within a diverse society, Mumbi proposed a discussion of the relevance of visual arts – "what art, for whom, by who, how and why" – and a comparative look at the museum as an art institution (the academic) and as an institution of art (the creative). Visual arts have the ability to promote society's cultural environment and cultural work, ensuring that society develops its own pictures that carry and create meaning, that communicate means of expression and narrative strategies. Art, in relation to its creators and collaborators, and in the context of prevailing local political, social, economic and cultural influences, is a part of the broader struggle for self-assertiveness of the post-independence African state. Ayi Kwei Armah stated that the visual arts are an indictment of how Africa is represented. By turning an art institution into a creative institution of art, an African society can take charge of its identity and means of presentation.

Western art history and museums show exciting possibilities in the reinterpretation of objects and displays. But they also have a lot to answer for. This session focused on some uncomfortable topics that must be addressed, and it stirred up necessary debates. Some of us may have been dumped out of our comfort zones along the way, but it was an exhilarating ride.

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[12] From Douglas's abstract for her paper.

Where to put Baskets in an Art Gallery? The Place of Traditional Cultures in Art History

Kevin Murray

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Museums and art galleries in the Global South are challenged by the existence of active traditional craft collectives.

Conventional Western approaches to art history focus on individual creativity. The individual artist is seen as the ultimate site for development of new art forms. While inspiration might be drawn from collective traditions, such as Picasso's experience of African masks, the ultimate end of analysis is the product realised by an individual. This can be seen as part of a cultural economy that deals in a currency of genius, intellectual property and originality. The colonial process entails the extension of this economy into alternative systems where culture is more a matter of collective meaning and ancestral authority.

Such methodologies have a home in the trans-Atlantic North, where traditional cultures are rarely found outside of the modernist lens. In the Global South, however, there is sometimes a bifocal arrangement where modernity co-exists with collective systems.

Compared to visual arts, craft practice depends more on the reproduction of traditional skills than individual originality. In the North, much contemporary craft has been assimilated into modernity through the introduction of studio practice. In the South, craft is still practiced in communities where it is grounded in collective identities, such as village, tribe, caste or guild.

If art history in the Global South is to reflect the nature of its democracies, then methodologies need to be adopted that account for art that has been forged through collective agencies, where it would be inappropriate to single out an individual as the sole representative. This could be seen to apply to forms such as telephone wire-weaving in South Africa, 'tjanpi' sculptures in the Western Desert of Australia, tapa cloths from the Pacific, Pattamadai mat weavers in India, Relmu Witral weavers in Chile. How can these collective art forms be incorporated into a history of art in the Global South?

Some of the issues this raises include:

- How can innovation be accounted for within a collective practice?
- To what extent can Western institutions such as art galleries accommodate collective art forms such as village crafts?
- Are there productive ways in which individual artists can collaborate with traditional communities?
- How can what might be considered a traditional art form be given a diachronic reading through art history?
- How might individuals that emerge from collective settings to be granted status as 'living treasures', 'masters of their craft', or 'artists in their own right'?
- How to traditional Indigenous crafts compared to hobby circles in the Global North?

This discussion is relevant to those working across the broader South, including African tribal arts, Asian programs for upliftment of traditional crafts, Oceanic models for dealing with traditional knowledge and Latin American forms of engagement with the so called 'pre-Colombian' cultures. This also extends to the representation of these in institutions situated in the Global North.

Issues at play here connect closely with existing forums such as Journal of Modern Craft, Craft & Design Enquiry and Southern Perspectives.

Kevin Murray (kevin(at)craftunbound.net)
http://www.craftunbound.net/notices/where-to-put-baskets-in-an-art-gallery

Modernist Primitivism and Indigenous Modernisms: Transnational Discourse and Local Art Histories: A Response to the Panel

Anitra Nettleton

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In this response I want to try to bring together some of the themes raised by the three panels of clearly related, yet quite diverse papers. I want to do this from the idea that they are representative of views that fall outside of the usual totalizing history, but also acknowledge that they reflect their genesis in that history.

Two important issues that, I think, need to be laid out first, arise from a reading of, on one hand, Frederic Jameson's[1] critique of the contrasts that have been drawn between the supposed temporality of modernism and the spatiality of postmodernism, and on the other hand of Terry Smith's[2] exegesis on the question of the contemporaneity of 'contemporary' art, which resonates with the questions of the modernity of modernism.

Jameson points to the unevenness of the processes of modernization in Europe at the height of the modernist experiments in art, a process which he sees as being completed only after 1945, and the expansion of these uneven levels of modernization through the colonial expansion of Western powers into other, apparently non-modern communities. Jameson is, of course talking of modernization in its technological and economic guises, as a set of social processes often centred on urbanisation, which were accompanied by modernism, the aesthetic dimension of modernity. From a European perspective, modernism defined modernity in art, and it was this view that held sway in their dealings with and dealing in the arts of other peoples. As these other peoples were the inhabitants of colonized territories, their encounters with modernism have generally been reported in western terms, although they may well have been conceptualized in different ones. The persistence of modernist modes of art making in many post-colonial contexts, suggests that modernism was 'turned' because postcolonial artists are still re-defining what it means to be modern at the same time as they are defining their contemporary relevance. This relevance, furthermore could be validated, because, as Caroline Jones has argued in a dense analysis of the modernist "paradigm," in the 1960s to choose the modernist paradigm was "to choose art itself, as opposed to that which might never prove to be Art."

The contemporaneity of the many contemporary non-Western artists who work in modernist modes has been questioned by Western critics because, as Terry Smith noted in a recent article, the modern is now regarded as an historical category. He argues that because the distinctions which Modernism drew between modern and pre-modern peoples have been superseded by multiple temporalities and diverse spatial localities, the contemporary has other dimensions of peculiarity and specificity which are unavailable to the totalizing tendencies of modernism. Where modernist artists from the supposed periphery engaged, first with naturalism or realism, which for them was possibly the most prominent form of visual modernity, or later with Impressionism, abstraction or Surrealism, their art was inevitably labelled as derivative or secondary. I say inevitably, because one of the prime criteria of Western Modernism for validation of artworks was the proof of originality and not necessarily, as van Robbroeck points out in her paper, of mastery. Ironically where "other" artists began to work in abstract or apparently Surrealist styles, but arrived at these forms directly from their own traditions, they were seen as, or at least marketed as, genuinely 'primitive' and not really modern. In this

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[1] "The End of Temporality" *Critical Inquiry* 29 (Summer 2003)

[2] "Contemporary Art and Contemporaneity" *Critical Inquiry* 32 (Summer 2006)

context it is also useful to remember, as Caroline Jones[3] argued, that for at least three of the master voices of High Modernism Cavell, Fried and Greenberg **the** question was "whether artists operating outside modernism (If we could agree on who those artists might be) could possibly be making *Art* …."

Rankin and Nzewi both broached the issue of training of indigenous artists, by Western Modernists, often following an art school or workshop model. In these instances students were given formal training in various art media, often with an emphasis on saleable objects. Nzewi's analysis of Senghor's Negritudinist approach to art making and training reveals within it an assumption of an essential nature to African aesthetics that was shared by the liberal westerners who taught in workshop schools across colonial and post-colonial Africa. Both Rankin and Nzewi trace the ways in which particular black African artists responded to these assumptions and the routes through which they found an Africanised modernism. Interesting in this respect that in neither the Senegalese nor the South African contexts were there recognized traditions of 'classic' African sculpture on which to base a local African identity and so "Africa" and Africanity were derived from central and West African traditions at some degree of remove from the artists' own heritages. This remove is of course much more obvious, and clearly estranged, among the white artists from Europe such as Vestman and Klopcanocs, whose Africanity is dissected by Gers. The Afro-Caribbean artists that Dacres and Bernal analyse in relation to both a European and an African heritage, are argued to be connected by forms of cultural memory. In all these instances modernity is an outcome of a subscription to a modernist paradigm of primitivism in the making of the works.

Almost opposed to this, the process through which indigenous artists arrived at modernism via a reinvention of their own traditions in new forms seems to deny western training interventions, but in fact was subject to other kinds of intervention. These processes are raised in a number of papers. Wheoki's is perhaps the most successful decentring such western interventions and to establish a reverse order when he asks not whether Picasso inspired modern Maori art, but whether he, and other non-Maori artists, can be counted among its ancestors in a kind of Foucauldian genealogy. However, the modernist Maori artists with whom Wheoki deals were trained in University contexts in New Zealand and their marriage of Maori and Western traditions may have been far more attuned to western theories of "art" than the artists dealt with by Sloggett and, again differently, Devine.

Daphne Odjig had no formal western art school training and so Devine is reluctant to call her 'self-taught' because Odjig was steeped in an art world inherited from her father and acquired by copying artists in Canadian Museums. Yet the primary motivation for her work appears to have been an indigenous form of imaging, rock painting. Sloggett deals with Aboriginal painters whose work, however, is deeply embedded in indigenous iconography and in the materials used in local traditions, with links to Aboriginal rock art. These papers both raise the question of whether the official sanctioning of indigenous paintings as art in colonial contexts allowed for the makers to be acknowledged as modern artists and for their art works to enter the art world both aesthetically and commercially. This is significant because one of the things that these 'other' modernists had to deal with, and which all artists still have to consider, is that the art world and especially the art market had and largely still has its centre in the west, and sets the standards of 'authenticity'.

It was in this centre that rock art traditions from all over the world were recognized as the 'first' human tradition, and this seems to have always put them, in the minds of the colonists, in a time before the colonized land was inhabited by the indigenes with whom the colonists interacted. The use of so-called Bushman motifs traced by Gers in Vestman and Klopanocs' work stands in a line of such usage among South African art, as does the use of Aboriginal and Maori motifs in the art of white settlers in Australasia according to Nicholas Thomas.

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[3] "The Modernist Paradigm: The Artworld and Thomas Kuhn" *Critical Inquiry 26 (*Spring 2000)

Bark painting , seen as a cultural and historical tradition, brings up the question of what Appadurai calls the “enclaving” of objects within particular hierarchical categories – Sloggett, Gers, Norstrand, and Dreyer all deal with object genres or types which have been denied ‘art’ status, generally being relegated to the craft category. It is interesting that in the case of ceramics discussed by both Gers and Nordstrand, the question of the forms of the vessels or other objects is not considered as something which could be discussed in relation to modernism. Gers dwells almost entirely on the styles and iconography of the decoration on the pots, and Nordstrand, concerned with the central indicator of modernism, innovation, concentrates on black on black glazed imagery used by the Martinez family. The question that needs perhaps to be asked here is whether the shapes of the vessels themselves have any bearing of questions of modernity or whether they respond in any ways to modernist imperatives, recognizing of course that modernist imperatives in ceramics tended either to an absolute functionalist aesthetic or to a romantic, nostalgic or orientalist primitivism, of the kind that Gers criticizes in Bernard Leach, or that is present in common perceptions of the kinds of pueblo pottery that Nordstrand deals with. Yet Nordstrand’s understanding of the Martinez’s alteration of their tradition with innovations as an auto-ethnographic gesture implies a outside audience for its consumption, as all ethnography is created for the other – otherwise it is sociology. As Nordstand points out, the response of the artists here is thus to some extent conditioned by market expectations within a modern cash economy, but it is also an index of their situating themselves as active subjects within that context.

It is perhaps the development of a modernist, proactive subjectivity among artists who became modernists in so many colonial and post-colonial art contexts that forms the common thread across all these papers. Yet in almost every case proffered for examination here the Primitivist process lurks waiting for its inevitable rebuttal. Van Robbroeck’s paper in particular calls into question the colonial response to natives’ making of art, as she traces the ways in which South African **black** artists working in a modernist mode were seen to still be ‘primitive’ rather than ‘primitivist”. The difference is crucial, and has particular relevance for Wheoki’s implied rejection of essentialist nativism, because the ‘primitive’ artist is always portrayed as one who does things according to tradition, by instinct and emotion, rather than as an individual who establishes a particular subjectivity, style and oeuvre. Dacres, Bernal, Gers, Rankin and Nzewi in that they deal with individual artists and their particular ways of engaging modernity and modernist forms, counter the ‘primitive’ stereotype. But all run up against the same problem of the ‘primitivist’ implications of a search for ‘roots’, in ways that the communal nature of the aboriginal art movement discussed by Sloggett do not. The problem here is that not only is modernism based on positivist scientific views of time and technology, and is often linked to nationalist culture building agendas, in some of its manifestations it also rejects the alienation attendant on techno-scientific, so-called advances, in favour of the emotional valence of the primitive and pre-rational. To the latter valence many modernist artists ascribed a kind of universal validity and in its name they went in search of roots, co-opting anything they saw as original or primal along the way. So for modernist artists in colonial countries such as Dacres’s Jamaican monument-maker Gonzales, to turn from overtly modernist abstract architectural modernist forms, to African, so-called “tribal” roots was dangerous for the reasons that their turn could be seen from the outside as a return that was retrogressive. This was particularly the case, as I have pointed out above, where Afro-Caribbean artists’ connections to African historical art forms was tenuous in so far as it was informed by memory and living oral traditions which were pan-African in the sense of not being locally centred. One cannot identify in these works the specifics of an historical African source, but only an African of the imagination.

These questions are all raised in Bernal’s paper which considers two artists Hippolyte and the well-known Wifredo Lam. Bernal places the question of identity as it is reflected in the writing of Ortiz and in the work of these two artists. The question of identity here seems to be more intense and

contested, perhaps because diasporic communities have to create their own rootedness. Lam's use of African forms has therefore to be differentiated from Picasso's, and from Sidney Kumalo's, because Lam's identity was invented out of a set of colonial encounters in which centre and periphery were clearly marked and the interstices more ambiguously inhabited. Bernal's paper follows the routes through which Lam's identity as a modern artist is framed. That Lam's forms were indebted to Africa, and his surrealism to Cuban spiritual traditions demonstrates the ways that modernism is altered and other views are projected, and from that we can perhaps conclude that modernism was always turned, wherever it landed, from the essentialist universalizing abstractions of Europe, to the, often figurative, subjectivities offered by artists in the rest of the world.

There is, finally, an irony in the adoption of modernism by artist subjects of the larger world in colonial and immediate post-colonial contexts. Colonialism had tainted the indigenous traditions, not only through western modernist artists drawing on them for inspiration, but also by their categorizing these traditions as primitive and unsophisticated, and often as craft not art. When the descendants of the creators of those historical forms turned to modernism, they were thus faced with a double damnation. This is a recurrent theme in all the papers presented on this triple panel. It raises the further question of why contemporary post-colonial artists cannot now re-visit those historical traditions, even though they were certainly not exhausted by western modernism. In some cases there has been a turn to indigenous traditions that were not invalidated by interpellation into the coloniser's art vocabulary, but these turns have often involved other forms of appropriation, which have either enforced or broken down gendered barriers. They point to a persistence or return of the modernist project in the production of the universal aesthetic object, or to a particularly identity-ed product whose relevance is not just commercial but also a political statement in the world of globalised inequality. As Caroline Jones points out:

> The modern worldview (which constructs itself as "competing" with unmodern Others) carries with it Enlightenment convictions of advancement, subtended by evolutionary metaphors of ascendancy and fitness.

It is surely our mission as art historians speaking from other spaces to take a resolutely Other turn in viewing these histories, to subvert the Enlightenment values but without dismissing the rigours of research that subtend the discipline.

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Art and Decolonisation: Small Steps Towards a Global Art History

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Introduction

On 14 January 2011 I convened two sessions of a panel on "art as an act of decolonisation" for an international colloquium convened by the South African Visual Arts Historians (SAVAH).[1] The panel comprised ten papers selected from 25 abstracts submitted in response to my call.[2]

This report provides an overview of the papers on decolonisation, without engaging in detailed summaries or critique of individual papers.[3] It does not address the conference as a whole, although

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[1] Held under the aegis of the Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art (CIHA), the colloquium theme was "Other Views: Art History in (South) Africa and the Global South". It was held at the University of Witwatersrand, 12-15 January 2011. Thanks to the Getty Foundation for awarding me a grant to attend the conference.

[2] The full title was "Art as an act of decolonisation: perspectives from and on the global south". The call for papers read: "The struggle for decolonisation is one of the critical themes of the 20th century. Across the globe visual arts practitioners (artists, educators, historians, curators, publishers, administrators, etc) have contributed to and been impacted on by struggles for self-determination. The struggle for decolonisation does not end with national liberation in the political sense but persists in the economic and cultural spheres. Whether visual arts practitioners have been active, passive or even resistant subjects in these struggles, the art, exhibitions, and publications produced in these contexts will inevitably reference issues that can be read as part of the broader struggle for cultural identity.

Decolonisation is both an ongoing historical process and a discourse. The discourse typically invokes contested notions such as cultural imperialism, authenticity, indigeneity, traditionalism, ethnocentrism, nationalism, modernity, assimilation, synthesis, hybridity, and globalisation.

While decolonisation does manifest literally in artists choice of themes, images and symbols, it also manifests in quests to generate new visual languages. This includes questions of style, form and materials. Critical assessments of the purposes of art and its public are also important to consider, as is the transformation of existing art institutions, or the establishment of new ones. The relationship to the new nation-state of practitioners who see their work, as Wilfredo Lam put it, as "an act of decolonisation" is also a critical question, particularly when the new state assumes a neo-colonial character. The relationships that are privileged and cultivated with the artists and art events of other nation states are also important, since this calls into question the extent to which the struggle for dignity that led to national liberation is accompanied by a struggle to transform the eurocentrism of the international art world.

This panel discussion aims to explore how decolonisation impacts on the visual arts and how visual arts practitioners contribute as subjects to the ongoing process of decolonisation. Case studies, singular and comparative, from across the world are particularly welcomed. The emphasis will be on periods before and after political independence, as well as those dealing with the incomplete project of decolonisation in more recent times. While most case studies will come from the South, latitude will be extended to case studies from the North where equivalent struggles for self-determination occur. Critical approaches to the value and limits of applying decolonisation as a discursive frame are also welcome."

[3] Topics and speakers were:

- Modernization and traditionalization: art and decolonization in Morocco – Holiday Powers (Cornell University, New York).
- The disconnect between contemporary art practice and theory in Ghana and Kenya – Kwame Amoah Labi (Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana).
- Ousmane Sembene censored by Leopold Sedar Senghor (Ceddo, 1976): a political and aesthetical debate in postcolonial Senegal – Pascale Nirina Ratovonony (École Normale Supérieure de la rue d'Ulm/Université de Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne).
- 'Regardless, the struggle continues': black consciousness is a culture of resistance – Shannen Hill (University of Maryland-College Park, USA).

some reference is made to presentations on other panels, where these have a bearing on the decolonisation theme. It concludes with a brief reflection on the potential impact of trans-national themes on the development of a global art history.

Overview
Most papers focussed on art produced after political independence, when art was entangled within the context of newly emerging nation states. This included South Africa, where 'national liberation' led not to 'independence' but to a new democratic order typically referred to as post-apartheid. Cassandra Barnett's discussion of the artist Lisa Reihana introduced a different angle to the concept of decolonisation, since contemporary Maori art and identity falls short of most people's notions of self-determination or liberation, perhaps explaining why the notion of indigeneity featured so strongly in her presentation (as it did in the presentation by the other Maori scholar present, Jonathan Mane Wheoki).

Shannen Hill's paper also differed from most, since it was the only one to address work from a period of anti-colonial (more precisely anti-apartheid) resistance, although it too was framed by the post-colonial (post-apartheid) context, where hegemonic narratives erase counter narratives (in this case the legacy of black consciousness). Tegan Bristow's presentation of internet art also stood apart. While it was situated within the post-colonial/apartheid context Bristow's was the only paper to go beyond the framework of the nation-state, highlighting the possibilities of new global communities that are made possible through the internet.

With most papers focused on art practice, little was said of the institutional infrastructure for art. A notable exception was Kwame Labi's comparative study of art education in Kenya and Ghana. Labi addressed the consequences of colonial-era education for contemporary art. More specifically, he highlighted how colonial views on the intellectual capacity of Africans had limited the development of art history and theory.

Several papers dealt with the recovery or affirmation of indigenous or pre-colonial identities. This included works that addressed or referenced historical figures and events, as well as others that incorporated oral traditions. It also included examples where artists referenced pre-colonial or popular artistic traditions, and melded these with dominant 'western' forms.

While several of the papers dealt with the recovery of the past, these invariably reflected an engagement with the present. This was visible in the appropriation of western forms, as well as the critical engagement with stereotypes. Generally, two tendencies were apparent. The first concerned the use of western forms that were subsequently invested with new or 'local' content. The second highlighted the development of new forms, such as the fusion of easel painting and traditional crafts

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- The art of Trevor Makhoba: a cultural and historical review of KwaZulu-Natal's urban African artists' response to decolonisation – Yvonne Winters (Campbell Collections, University of KwaZulu-Natal) and Mxolisi Mchunu (Voortrekker/Msunduzi Museum, Pietermaritizburg, RSA).

Second panel:

- Murals and national identity: issues in postcolonial Jamaican art – Claudia Hucke (Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts, Kingston, Jamaica).
- Renegotiating race and nationality: commercial and press-photography in post-independent Mozambique, 1975-1986 – Drew A. Thompson (Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique/Centro de Documentação e Formação de Fotografia, Maputo, Moçambique).
- Post-Africanism and contemporary art in South African townships – Bernadette Van Haute (University of South Africa, Pretoria).
- Rephrasing protocol: internet art in the global south – Tegan Bristow (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg).
- 'What You See You Don't See': Lisa Reihana's Digital Marae – Cassandra Barnett (Unitec, New Zealand).

in the work of Farid Belkahia in Morocco, and the use of new technologies, including digital installations and the internet.

New technology aside, the most dramatic departure from the emphasis on the past was provided by Bernadette van Haute. Following Dennis Ekpo, van Haute called for 'post-Africanism' arguing for the necessity to unburden the weight of the past. In contrast to Ekpo/van Haute's critique that post-colonial African countries advocated 'too much Africanism', Drew Thompson's discussion on post-colonial Moçambique highlighted a counter example where nationality was privileged over race and ethnicity.

Several papers introduced questions of censorship and historical revisionism on the part of the state, within the context of emerging nation-states where counter-narratives were seen to undermine the national 'consensus' being established by the ruling party. This was most apparent in Pascal Ratovonony's account of Ousmane Sembene's cinematic response to Senghor's historical revisionism, and Senghor's subsequent banning of Sembene's Ceddo, but was also a feature of Hill's reclamation of the influence of black consciousness on the posters of the 1980s. Thompson, like Ratovonony, also referenced the state's control of language, where naming was sometimes subjected to state sanction, even decree.

The post-colonial state as gatekeeper was also raised in Holiday Powers' accounts of the official contexts for the display of art in Morocco, and how artists tried to expand the audience for art through exhibiting in public spaces. This theme, of engaging with a popular audience, was also apparent in other papers. These included the narration of popular history in public museums, as in Claudia Hucke's account of post-independence mural painting in Jamaica, reference to the use of popular art forms such as glass painting in Senegal, and the mining of oral histories and local genres, as evident in Yvonne Winters and Mxolisi Mchunu's account of a painting by Trevor Makhoba, and potentially participatory interactions provided for by new technology, as discussed by Bristow and Barnett.

Overlap with other panels and presentations

What was striking was the overlap between the issues discussed on the decolonisation panel with other panels. This was particularly so with the "indigenous modernisms" panel,[4] where several of the case studies showed artists mediating the particular and the universal, the indigenous and the western. A similar example appeared on the Latin American panel,[5] in the presentation by Roberto Conduru on the Brazilian artist Rubem Valentim. Also from this panel, Helena Chávez Mac Gregor referred to the pervasive influence of Catholicism on Latin America, which served as a reminder that none of the papers on the decolonisation panel addressed the cultural dimensions of colonisation, and how these are mediated in the contexts of 'liberation' or 'self-determination'. The presentation by Peju Layiwola, on the "Changing museums, changing art histories" panel,[6] where she discussed her artistic response to the looting of the Benin bronzes and the refusal of the British to return the spoils of their plunder, would also not have been out of place on the decolonisation panel.

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[4] Convened by Ruth Phillips, the full title of the panel was "Modernist Primitivism and indigenous modernisms: Transnational discourse and local art histories".

[5] Convened by Maria Iñigo Clavo and Jaime Vindel, the panel was titled "About the epistemological and political consequences of the 'Latin American' label". Conduru's paper was titled "African dimensions of Latin American art".

[6] Convened by Jillian Carman. Layiwola's paper was titled "Contesting imperial narratives and display of African art: A counter history from Nigeria".

Conclusion
The overlap with other panels highlighted that, with the majority of the world experiencing some form of colonisation, occupation, and exploitation, artists the world-over have had to rise to the challenge of making art that is relevant for their contexts. Frequently this has taken the form of developing a new form of art, one that in part draws upon their unique heritage and on the other reflects their engagement with the culture of the colonising force.

In considering how to develop a global art history it becomes apparent that the exploration of trans-national themes presents opportunities to introduce often disparate and neglected artists and movements into new discursive frameworks. While this often entails a fair amount of de-coding, translating and learning to read new visual dialects and languages, the introduction of relevant, comparative examples will inevitably lead to the emergence of new discourses. This will provide a viable alternative to the 'peripheral artist as a shadow of a western colossus' orthodoxy that has been responsible for the misrepresentation and exclusion of far too many artists for far too long.

Available from http://www.asai.co.za/forum.php?id=1086

Diane Victor, "Transcend"

Pamela Allara

Visiting Researcher, Boston University, USA

The session at the SAVAH/CIHA colloquium, "Unsettling Hierarchies," was convened to move beyond South African art history's reliance on the methods of Western scholarship in general, and western feminist theory specifically. In discussing gender in the art of the global South, the convener, Professor Brenda Schmahmann, cautioned art historians that "…it is important to recognize crucial differences and how these are bound up with the divergent experiences of their makers as well as the distinctive political contexts in which they were produced." Although the word feminist was omitted from the panel's description, both panel members Brenda Schmahmann and Karen von Veh have laid the methodological groundwork for the analysis of a feminist South African art in their scholarly writings to date; my aim in this paper is to extend the discussion of a broadly feminist analysis of South African women artists with reference to recent work by Diane Victor, specifically her *Transcend* series of six drawings in ash from 2010. (fig. 1). Victor's experiments with non-traditional media began in 2005, with her gripping drawings in candle smoke of the faces of AIDS victims, *The Recently Dead.* The recent series of life-sized drawings are naked portraits of frail care residents, both male and female, whose images may seem indelible, but whose bodies are constructed from a medium as vulnerable as the subjects themselves.

In order to begin to think about this work as evidence of a South African feminist art, one must begin with the 'distinctive political contexts' of post-1994 South Africa. At the most basic level, a specifically South African feminism would simply imply an insistence on the implementation of the equal rights for women guaranteed by its Constitution.[1] Needless to say, issues involving women's rights in South Africa are inevitably complicated by race. Artists such as Diane Victor make whiteness visible, so that its continued areas of dominance and its relationship to aspects of female identity can be interrogated. Even though both race and gender are considered to be fluid categories today, they are by law politically contained within rigid boxes, to be checked off to confirm one's eligibility for various benefits of citizenship; as such they are inseparable from any discussion of gender relations in South Africa.

It is in this context of the politics of whiteness that I will try to identify aspects of Victor's work that might be deemed feminist. I confess upfront that she vigorously rejects this category: "I think it an almost impossible question to try [to] define the South African female without the risk of employing gross generalizations and un-grounded assumptions and again I cannot stress more that I can only speak from my own point of reference and possibly that 'point' is in itself not a very typical example of femaleness in S.A." (e-mail: 2010). Point taken, although the fact that Victor's work explodes conventional clichés about women could be considered 'feminist'; in addition, her art is often explicitly political, and her (quite literal) exposure of corruption of necessity involves a critique of Patriarchy. As Tavish McIntosh has observed: "Her works are dense essays in the repressed links between national fantasies and the very real damage inflicted by the abuse of power." (McIntosh, 2008). Because Victor's work addresses the complex power relationships operating in South African

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[1] According to Supreme Court Justice, Antonin Scalia, the U.S. Constitution does not guarantee women equal protection or rights, despite the 14th Amendment, which asserts that "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States." He believes that the 'original intent' of the framers of the 1868 amendment was to apply the statute to men only. "Legally Speaking: The Originalist." Interview with Professor Calvin Massey, September, 2010; published in *California Lawyer*, January, 2011. http://www.callawyer.com/story.cfm?eid=912238&eivd=1. Accessed 6/13/11

society, I will forge ahead with my generalizations about the intersections-- or to borrow Sarah Nuttall's more evocative term, entanglement, of race and gender in Victor's *Transcend* series.

In his 2009 article "Sexuality as Constitutive of Whiteness in South Africa" activist-scholar Kopano Ratele helpfully placed this entanglement in historical context. As his essay reveals, apartheid's political armature was erected around a legal definition of a white person that was ludicrously subjective and vague. According to the Population Registration Act of 1950, a white is "a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a White person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a White person, is generally accepted as a Coloured person." (Ratele: 2009: 166). To build a system on this absurdity, he argues, apartheid had to be supported by laws that prevented "…any European male from having carnal intercourse with a Native female." And Ratele concludes that according to this reading, the laws against inter-racial coupling were part of the "politico-legal manufacture of whiteness as morally and sexually, not only racially, distinct from those regarded as belonging to other groups." (Ratele: 2009: 170). Given the shaky racist scaffolding of South African society under apartheid, it is small wonder that received hierarchies of race and gender are 'unsettled' at present.

In the light of this baffling and perverted definition of sexually-determined whiteness, I want to briefly draw a parallel between Victor's depictions of the female body and those of Marlene Dumas. In Victor's *Give a Dog a Bad Name and Hang It,* (fig. 2), a charcoal and pastel from 1994, the body is displayed as sexual, rather than erotic, something raw and instinctual that must be contained, by violence if necessary. Similarly, Dumas' *Liberty,* from 1993, (fig. 2a), is a pubescent Lolita whose freedom resides in her unbridled sexuality. For both artists, the white female is construed as something filthy; no longer associated metaphorically with light or with purity, it is associated instead with corruption and perversity. Stripped to the naked core of its colonialist history, whiteness is revealed as a marker of debasement, something, as Marina Warner has observed in her essay on Dumas, that 'traduces and corrupts."(Warner: 2001). The logical result of the entanglement of whiteness with female sexuality is, as Leora Maltz-Leca has observed, that Whiteness becomes synonymous with pornography (Maltz-Leca, 2010: 238-41).

In Victor's work, perverse sexuality may serve either as a metaphor for the amorality of the colonial venture in South Africa, in which case it pertains primarily to whites, or for contemporary political corruption, in which case black leaders enter the scene. In her moral revulsion at "news of acts of violence, stupidity and brutality"(email: 2010), one might argue that in a broad sense her work continues the Calvinist tradition in white South African culture. More to the point, however, the hard labor required to produce her print editions continues the correlation of unrelenting work with virtue that J.M. Coetzee has identified as a central moral value to the colonial settlers.(Coetzee, 1988: Ch. 1). By extension her obsessive process serves to position her as a contemporary white artist, just as her use of the iconography of western art history situates her as within a tradition that she both references and pointedly disrupts.

For example, in *Fall From Grace*, an etching and lithograph from in 1994, (fig. 3) created at the moment of the first democratic elections, Victor imaged the fall out of the dream of the Rainbow Nation. Because much of her work, no matter how layered with allegory, also operates on an almost literal level, I want to argue that this work witnesses the changing status of white women in that decisive moment in South African history. Falling through a trap door in the heavenly realm in which she has resided, and still robed in colonial garments, the white woman appears oblivious to the certainty of her crash landing into an alien landscape that she once no doubt assumed she controlled; central to white privilege, after all, has been its identification of the land with privately-held property. The very opposite of the euphoric mood of that seminal year, the figure's pose is in fact an <u>inverted</u> rainbow, a black-clad raven-oracle of the potentially disastrous consequences of a

refusal on the part of whites to face the implications of the change. Even though many whites do, in fact, retain their social status and economic privilege, nonetheless, the image suggests some of the narratives of loss that according to Melissa Steyn, whites have told themselves subsequent to 1994: loss of home, loss of autonomy and control, loss of a sense of relevance, loss of guaranteed legitimacy, and loss of face (Steyn, 2001, 155-160).

One last work early work, *White Woman*, a pastel from 1999, will help ‘flesh out’ of my argument about a feminist art practice in South Africa. In what is perhaps a response to the TRC hearings, a naked white woman, Diane at the bath, appears to be scrubbing herself clean of guilt. However, the work demands to be read on another level as well. According to the artist, the blue veins beneath the abraded flesh are in fact racist slurs against people with white skin, an unfashionable but timely acknowledgement that racism runs both ways, (email, 2010). However, because of the contentious nature of art world discourse in 1999, I will read the work in a manner that relates only tangentially to the manifest content of the drawing. Looking back at South African art at that time, *White Woman* recalls the dispute surrounding the publication of Okwui Enwezor’s 1997 shot across the bow, “Reframing the Black Subject: Ideology and Fantasy in Contemporary South African Representation.” (Oguibe and Enwezor, 1999: 376-399). As with his imposition of his version of international contemporary art on the second Johannesburg Biennial that year, “Reframing the Black Subject” had the pointed political purpose of asserting patriarchal control over the discourse of contemporary South African art by pummelling the work of feminist artists such as Candice Brietz and Minette Vari. And Enwezor’s critical agenda may have succeeded in part; today, “feminist” artists such as Penny Siopis and Leora Farber do not have the international visibility that their work surely merits. Like the bizarre concepts of race from the apartheid era, this essay continues to shadow South African art history, placing the work of black and white women artists in boxes as separate as those on the census.

However, at the grassroots level, beyond the spotlight of the global art world, there has been significant ongoing cross-racial, cross-cultural, cross-class dialogue among South African women, frequently occurring in empowerment projects that are rooted in the visual arts. In my opinion, the difficult and conflicted sharing of various kinds of knowing among the diverse members of these groups, which results in not only new knowledge and understanding, but artworks such as the magnificent Keiskamma Altarpiece, are evidence of a specifically South African feminism. (Schmahmann, 2010: 34-51). It is here that hierarchies are truly unsettled.

To turn at last to the topic at hand, the five nearly life-sized portraits of the frail care residents that constitute the *Transcend* series constitute a marked departure from Victor’s concerns of a decade ago. By hook or by crook, Victor was able to convince these aged beings to take off their clothes and let her photograph them to use as studies for her drawings. She has described the resulting series as follows: “The ash drawings were made of old age pensioners and frail care inhabitants, predominantly white, and male, burned out, expired and **redundant** both as physical bodies and also of the information that are receptacles of - ashes to ashes. I am interested in the loss of accumulated information, wisdom and narrative that occurs when someone dies- to mis-quote – “it’s like an entire library burning down” and it was that idea that initiated the idea of doing the drawings in the ash of the burned books. Books suggested by the person I was drawing, that if I could access, afford or find were burned then ground up and became the raw material of the work” (email: 2010).

Victor’s images are frequently shocking, but here both the image represented and the medium are upsetting. The very idea of burning books summons up the spectre of the worst excesses of totalitarianism. However, Victor uses the intense emotion generated by the idea of book burning to force the viewer to experience viscerally the loss involved with the deaths of members of a generation of whites many might prefer to see exit without acknowledgement. For example,

Transcend II (Gerry) (fig. 4) exemplifies the one-on-one confrontation these works require: this battered, defeated body is disturbing, but is everyone's inevitable end point nonetheless. The title, "Transcend" is an imperative; we are not witnessing a transcendent state, but rather a suspended one. Is the title a command to transcend the apartheid-era philosophy the subject may still embody? Although still standing, this ashen, spectral figure has been cut off at the knees, and like the Nazi criminals or former National Party leaders, he is both an object of pity and of scorn.

Undressed, he lacks the bit of dignity that clothes would have provided. Moreover, naked rather than nude, he lacks all evidence of sexuality. When an individual has become extraneous, so is its gender. The characteristics that differentiate male from female bodies are in evidence but irrelevant. Just as the exposed genitals are no more than an amorphous mound of sagging flesh in *Transcend II*, the woman's single breast in *Transcend V (Elisabeth),* (fig. 4a) is anything but nurturing or erotic.

In order to grant equal opportunity opprobrium to both male and female colonials, androgyny has been a constant is Victor's art, occasionally even pushed to the edge of the grotesque. In the *Transcend* series, by contrast, identity is not fixed, but liminal: the figures are neither male nor female, neither alive nor dead. Too feeble to be pornographic or corrupt, their bodies are above all fragile and perishable, even pitiable. The anger and harsh satire that have characterized her work, and continue to be found in her recent *Disasters of Peace* or *Birth of a Nation* series are absent here. Both elderly creatures are naked, in other words, of the references to Western economic and religious imperialism that Victor has critiqued and situated herself within. Facing us directly while facing death metaphorically, they are simply the Naked Truth of what remains of a given personality when home, occupation and status are gone. What, quite literally, do they stand for?

The material from which these immaterial figures are constructed matters. I have been arguing that Victor positions herself as white and female in her work, but these 'obviously white' figures are made of grey ash and black charcoal, not only undermining any black-white racial opposition but demonstrating that significant points of physical contact between races have always existed and continue to do so. Furthermore, the 'old' books that her sitters cited as meaningful to them were the venerable classics of Western literature, including *Ulysses, War and Peace*, and *Great Expectations.* In fact, the sixth in the *Transcend* series is a charcoal self-portrait in the reclining pose of a medieval tomb sculpture of the artist surrounded by all the books she had planned to read. Closed and lacking titles, the books are slipping out of the picture. I do not think I am over-arguing the issue to insist that the traditional standard of literacy, based on the knowledge acquired through the Great Books of Western Civilization, is slowly fading out with the generation depicted in *Transcend*. If few people read these classic books any more, does it matter that they are immolated, any more than that the bodies of elderly, fragile beings before us are likely shortly to be cremated or interred? Both the objects and the humans contain histories, but in what ways are they still relevant, significant? Because these spectres are present to us, and thus not yet past history, they confront us with the question: "What will we, the residents of a global, electronic culture, rebuild from the husks of the anachronistic ideas in which our own bodies and minds are contained? Electronic culture is reconfiguring the textual and the oral, the word and the image. We cannot simply dismiss our new acquaintances; like it or not, our lives are entangled with theirs.

Am I justified in arguing that the ash drawings are feminist even though at the end of life gender no longer matters? Maybe not, but in the context of post-colonial approaches to South African history, feminism is not irrelevant either. These people are South Africans, who to a greater or lesser extent were complicit in the system that privileged their skin color. We cannot know their "divergent experiences," but we can explicate "the distinctive political contexts in which [their views] were produced." These spectres are at once the benefactors and the victims of the apartheid system, but the entanglement of race and sexuality that characterized that system no longer pertains to them.

Their new category is not white or black, male or female, but redundant, irrelevant. Women know what it is like to be invisible and powerless. In an interview in *Esprit* magazine last May, Achille Mbembe argued that "…postcolonial thinking stresses humanity-in-the-making, the humanity that will emerge once the colonial figures of the inhuman and of racial difference have been swept away…To my mind it's the era both of the end and of reinvention, starting with the reinvention of what has suffered the most damage, the body. But it's also a time of fresh struggles. In the context of extreme poverty, of extreme racialization and of the omnipresence of death, the body is the first to be affected, the first to be hurt." (Mbembe, 2010). In explaining her ongoing use of the naked human body in her work, Victor makes a similar point: "I am very interested in the surface of the skin acting as some record, some history of the life lived by that body."(email, 2010). Ashes to ashes; dust to dust. It is true of every human as well as great swaths of human history. As Wally Serote and others have remarked, the task for the present generation is a recuperation and reconstruction of South African history, one that can knit together varied and conflicting narratives that may exist only in parallel at present; that task, as I argued earlier, is occurring in feminist projects operating at the grassroots level.

In conclusion, Victor, provides us with images we cannot ignore. Gender and race are now suspended sufficiently for outmoded ideas to be discarded while lessons from history are revised. The era represented by the whites in frail care is passing; there is work to be done to transform what remains of worth in their histories so that it is of use in constructing a non-racial, non-patriarchal society. Victor's tendency to moralize here becomes a truly ethical project; these figures are individual humans, not abstractions, and ask us to consider carefully how we will relate to them. The *Transcend* series points the way by indicating the need for an ethics based in empathetic human interaction. As the series demonstrates, an engaged art by contemporary South African (feminist) artists can continue to make significant contributions to the ongoing construction of the body politic.

Figures

1. Diane Victor, *Transcend,* installation at Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, 2010.
2. Diane Victor*, Give a Dog a Bad Name and Hang It*, 1994. Charcoal and pastel on paper, 150 x 80 cm.
2a. Marlene Dumas, *Liberty*, 1993. o/c, 21 3/8" x 15 ¼".
3. Victor, *Fall from Grace*, 1994. Etching and lithograph, 50 x 30 cm. Caversham Press
4. Victor, *Transcend* II, 2010, ash and charcoal on paper,151 x 100 cm.
4a. Victor, *Transcend V,* 2010, ash and dust on paper, 200 x 140 cm.

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What You see You Don't See: Lisa Reihana's *Digital Marae*

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This paper will perform a close reading of the art installation *Digital Marae* by New Zealand Māori artist Lisa Reihana. In Māori culture, the marae is a sacred, communal area within a sub-tribe's homelands, serving as the locus for significant social and ceremonial occasions from the welcoming of visitors to meetings and debates to the farewelling of the dead. Several key features of the marae's wharenui or meeting house are referenced in Reihana's work, most notably the poupou or wooden support posts carved with important gods, ancestors and chiefs, and the woven tukutuku panels between the pou.

I will be framing my reading in terms given by Brian Massumi in his essay 'The Thinking-Feeling of What Happens' (2008). In this essay, Massumi analyses the processes of aesthetic perception against a philosophical backdrop of Deleuze, Simondon, Whitehead, James and Langer. Massumi describes the lived perceptual processes by which we encounter the world – art included – taking care to emphasise what it feels like to perceive. No fixed world is assumed by Massumi – instead he tells us how the forms of our world come to appear fixed to us, in part through the intervention of feeling. And he describes how these perceptual processes get snared in larger processes, formations and flows, giving perception and art a political dimension. Aside from his focus on the processual, what attracts me to Massumi's approach is his commitment to the feeling side of perception. I will introduce the theory first, then move onto my reading of the work.

In 'The Thinking-Feeling of What Happens', Brian Massumi (drawing on the aesthetic philosophy of Susanne Langer) argues that when looking at the world we 'see' things we don't actually see. Specifically we 'see' movement, or more accurately, we feel movement – the potential movement of our bodies in relation to the object before us. And this felt potential to move and relate informs what we end up seeing. If we didn't, for instance, see not only a chair's visible appearance but also see our potential to walk around it or sit upon it we wouldn't be properly seeing it as an object at all. In Massumi's words,

> The form of the object is the way a whole set of active, embodied potentials appear in present experience […]. What we abstractly see when we directly and immediately see an object is lived relation – a life dynamic. […] we're seeing the actual form 'with and through' that set of abstract potentials. (Massumi, 2008: 4)

This abstractly seen 'life dynamic' is virtual and multiple – there are many potentials for action. It is also perfectly real. We really do experience it, and without it object perception would not take place. Thus when it comes to perceiving art Massumi distinguishes between the actual form and its double, the abstract life dynamic of virtual movements we feel when we encounter the work: the spiraling of a spiral; our propensity to reach out and touch the leaves on a branch when looking at a two-dimensional motif of them. And he explains that, since actual movement is suspended when viewing such forms, art emphasises the fluid side of perception, the life dynamic,

Massumi borrows Langer's term 'semblance' for this quality of relational aliveness that a work of art can highlight within perception. Semblances make us aware of the past and the future in the present. We see the object's 'likeness' to, its 'semblance' of, other objects that have come before it or will come after it. We feel more intensely in this moment what we might do with what we are seeing and what we have done with such objects before. We see ourselves thinking past and future relations

while feeling the insistence of the present form. With semblances, we 'think-feel' perception as it is happening:

> It feels different to see a semblance. […] It's a kind of perception of the event of perception in the perception. […] a thinking of perception in perception, in the immediacy of its occurrence, as it is felt – a thinking-feeling, in visual form (Massumi, 2008: 6).

As Massumi elaborates further on, the form of this thinking-feeling needn't be visual; all the senses are included in his account. But whatever form it takes, the thinking-feeling of perception will be imbued with the qualities of the semblance at hand. When we 'think-feel' ourselves perceiving a chair, we see that our perceiving has qualities of chairness; it is accompanied by an inclination to sit. Massumi also suggests we might call such inclinations 'postures', 'if you can call a disposition to moving in a certain style a posture' (Massumi, 2008: 11).

Now, when looking at art, we can ask ourselves what kind of semblance or life dynamic the work's actual forms are coupled with, and what qualities our 'thinking-feeling' possesses. So in what follows, I will identify some of the semblances, postures and life dynamics accompanying the various forms of Lisa Reihana's *Digital Marae* . I will then go on to analyse the qualities of the overall 'thinking-feeling' that the exhibition produces. It is my hope that my case study will reveal how this way of thinking about art can offer fresh insights into art's micro-political powers.

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The *Digital Marae* installation occupied two rooms of the Auckland City Art Gallery during 2008's Walters Prize exhibition (though the work has been exhibited differently in other galleries). The viewer's first impressions upon entering this installation consist of the large portrait *Mahuika* presiding over the room from her position on the far wall; Mahuika's two weaving, flickering, digitally animated sentries; a suspenseful ambient soundtrack wafting in from the film in the next room; and, peripherally, more grand figures watching from the side walls. (Without getting sidetracked by the stories, which are endlessly rich, I'll just mention that most of these portraits, or poupou, depict traditional Māori ancestors and gods, while a few are of new characters invented by Reihana to update the genealogy.)

Using Massumi's terminology, when we see these things we encounter semblances, likenesses, and are flooded with life dynamics – with our own potentials to move, with virtual postures trained by past experiences in spaces somehow like this one. Those feelings and leanings are a part of what we 'see'. And what kinds of life dynamics or postures do we feel? (Here I will be describing those that I myself experience, but I hope you'll forgive my continued use of the pronoun 'we'.) Upon entering we might encountering the likeness of this interior space graced with imposing, iconic figures to churches, temples, museums, stately homes or other wharenui (Māori meeting houses) we have seen. Feeling slightly awe-struck and humbled, we might incline towards postures of reverence. Or, feeling the likeness of the animations, with their effortless space-invaders funkiness, to late 80s/early 90s music videos, techno club chill-out rooms or visions induced by psychotropic drugs, we might feel the shiver of an immersive, out-of-time state of being, and lean towards postures of gaping or giggling in wonderment. Cross-fusing these likenesses, we may feel further tropisms of our bodies: barely registered inclinations to meditate, to pray, to worship, to commune with the living and the dead, to sing, to dance, or to 'behave' ourselves. To loosely summarise, the first impressions of *Digital Marae* conjure semblances and life dynamics associated with being in a sacred space.

When we turn our attention to the individual portraits lining the walls, those first-felt virtual postures of quietude, awe or transport are repaid with interest . The photographs borrow tropes from European portrait-painting traditions: large-format, full-figure compositions; formal or heroic poses; lavish props, costumes and makeup; subjects glowing with health, beauty, strength, gravitas. Via their iconic likenesses, every character issues a challenge, whether we feel pulled upwards, our bodies rising to meet them, or downwards in genuflection. One intimidates. One beguiles. One inspires awe, another fear, another delight. The individual portraits might be summarised as offering a semblance of the presence of sovereignty. Though since their subjects are Māori it is clearly no state sovereignty, but something closer to a personal or spiritual sovereignty. We could liken it philosophically to George Bataille's transgressive, out-of-time, personal concept of sovereignty. But really it is a semblance of the personal spiritual power that in Māori is called mana.

Now, if we've just glimpsed the likeness of the *Digital Marae* images to European portraiture, we can also hone in on their likeness to some other, mainly photographic, modes of image-making. Like much contemporary commercial photography, Reihana's images feature models, elaborate staging, advanced photographic technology, digital manipulation, large format printing on glossy high quality media. Also like many commercial photographers, Reihana uses these devices to produce images replete with desire-inducing signs of physical prowess, power, prestige, status and beauty. Her actual visual forms are like the actual visual forms most frequently produced in advertising, marketing and PR; in popular culture; and in the fantastical and escapist excesses of the entertainment industry. That is, in all the imagetic arms of the capitalist machine.

Add to this the fact that Reihana's portraits feature not Caucasian but Māori models, and we discover more likenesses, for example, to touristic brochures and postcards, and to their predecessors in the imperialist European traditions of orientalism and primitivism. With their hyperreal Māori presence within a strongly European format, the portraits are like an existing plethora of Māori portraits, including many misrepresentations and stereotypes. Some likenesses include the so-called 'dying race' paintings of early NZ settler artists Goldie and Lindauer, the photographs of the Burton Brothers, early touristic postcards, the cartoonish illustrations in mid-century anthologies of Māori 'myths and legends', and the typecasting of Māori as exotic villains in Hollywood today.

As we feel these likenesses to commercial and touristic and exoticising images, we are afforded a whole repertoire of desiring, consuming, possessing and 'knowing' postures. At the same time, seeing the characters and identities of ancestral and mythical figures so precisely rendered and converted into spectacle, we might also experience anger, sadness, entrapment; we might find postures of struggle and resistance further puncturing the sacredness and sovereignty of the initial *Digital Marae* experience. Or we may simply assume a posture of boredom and start inclining towards the door, having seen images like these too many times before.

By now we've seen how *Digital Marae*'s semblances pull us, virtually, in several directions, from sacredness and sovereignty to consumption, resistance and boredom… Using the layering possibilities afforded by digital technology, Reihana's portraits borrow an array of tropes from the past, producing conflicting postures in this viewer. On the one hand, this time it is Māori who are rendered sovereign – yet on the other hand, the mode of the rendering is in danger of reinscribing the countless past entrapments and straight-jacketings of Māori by such Western modes of visibility. The question that arises is, can Reihana's installation – with its Western trappings – engage us with these Maori ancestors in a way that does not reinforce the stereotypes most commonly accompanying such forms? Might the subjects of Reihana's portraits somehow escape being pinned down by their representations?

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To answer this question we must recall that the exhibition consists not only of the visible portraits, but of films: the animation *Tukutuku Terrain* and the film *Let There Be Light* (which we discover in the second room), plus its soundtrack. These pieces are semi-figurative, two-dimensional, wall-mounted (or at least wall-projected) works just as the portraits are. But both also throw physical, material emanations – light and sound – into and around the gallery space. And these atmospheric light and sound effects bring new likenesses and postures. They both approximate, make a semblance of, an immersive space. Rather than highlighting the gallery's three-dimensional geometry (or the perspectivism of the portraits, or the 2D geometries of the animation), they 'transductively' collapse such geometries. Instead of distances, they create a space of immediacy and closeness, finding a kind of simultaneity or resonance between, for instance, a viewer's body, a wall and *Diva*'s face, by subjecting all to the same flash and dance of coloured light, the same sonic caress. (The recurrence of characters like *Hinewai* and *Marakihau* in both the portraits and the video further enhances this resonance.) Here, the likenesses are to the all-encompassing sensations of nightclub dancefloors, alarms or sirens, floatation tanks, baths, amniotic fluid, the ocean (refracted light and all)… The virtual postures triggered now are of swimming, of being inside of something bigger than us, of connecting, participating, joining in, submitting to, inhabiting a greater flow.

And what happens is that these postures cross-fertilize with those triggered by the visual images. Points of resonance between our various postures are amplified, while their points of difference recede. In particular, the physically galvanising effects of the sound and light call out to the most relational postures triggered by the portraits. Now, what resonates most with our attentive bodies is not the images' stylings but each figures' gaze – especially the gaze of those looking directly out at us. Encountering Reihana's poupou, we react viscerally, empathetically, relationally to the life that is the still point amidst so many layers of signification. We orient ourselves into a human relationship with these powerful, nuanced personalities, and find our most communal urges – to sing, to dance, to engage – amplified.

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We've already seen how a semblance's power is expressed and perceived through its resonances with things like it (resonances which Massumi also calls 'captures'). But what we discover now is that, 'there is always a residue of semblant potential left after any and all of its captures' (Massumi, 2008: 17). This residue is revealed as the semblance continuously enters into new resonances with different formations and forces. Through the life dynamics we experience before the semblance, we can be opened up to countless different worlds, depending on the artist's powers of composition. If a semblance can pull us into a resonant life dynamic with a colonial, touristic or commercial formation, it can equally pull us into other sensible, aesthetic, personal or cultural formations. The multi-sensory minglings of Reihana's installation demonstrate her grasp of these processes. She takes back the charge of her photograph's semblances by designing and activating a larger milieu for them, an alternative space that resonates in new ways with, and thus alerts us to, the residue of forces yet untapped in these portraits. She creates a counter-institutional framing that 'captures' her images' semblances in the way she wants them to be captured, that is, at their most connective, immersive and relational.

Why would Reihana want to plumb the limits of the photographic semblance in this way? Why would she present images whose semblances flirt with stereotypes, are seemingly designed for baiting institutional captures? Why would she provoke us into postures of knowing, exoticising, consuming or romanticising these great figures from Māori history, when that's clearly not really where she wants us? In part because she's in a bind: traditional Māori modes of representation (such as carving) are now equally tarnished with imperialist history, and bait all sorts of colonising postures just as the

European imagery does. But there is something else to be gained from mimicking the prodigious ways in which the life of her and my culture has been rendered into the realm of the visible. What Reihana gains is a redoubled appreciation of the excessive, indomitable force of the semblance in these photographic portraits. She makes us see – or think-feel – the power of the semblance – the way perception is so full of potential to keep shifting – until we 'fix' what we have seen. And when we're thinking-feeling the unsubdued, irrepressible energy of the semblance in the forms of *Digital Marae*, we can't help but feel it as an excessive, uncapturable, uncolonisable, imperceptible residue in all the lives here represented. We feel it as a Māori cultural force that also escapes all capture and all rendering. If we give ourselves fully to the carefully composed sensations on offer here, the portraits are reignited and we experience the deep and boundless vitality of these ancestors who can keep on giving. Massumi's description of the semblance's resistance to capture seems worth quoting in full here:

> Every art object works by tapping into a certain aspect of 'natural' perception in order to re-abstract it, so that some actual potentials that were there are suspended while others that tended not to appear before […] are brought out. The new potentials can be captured and reframed, and even be given functions […]. They can also escape capture – in fact there is always a residue that does – in which case they appear as political, social, personal, or economic resistance to whatever external finalities and functional reframings hold sway (even death) (Massumi, 2008: 18).

And if Reihana's spatial dynamics reinvigorate the resistant, autonomous power of the semblance in the portraits, the awakened portraits with their live gazes likewise alter the semblance of the space. The feedback, the resonance, goes both ways. Reihana adds human interaction and ancestral relations into the immersive, connective space; and she puts inhabited space into resonance with a visible storied community. The lived quality this two-way resonance produces tells us something about belonging in a space of cultural, ancestral, communal, human connectedness. It tells its viewers, affectively, perceptually, semblantly, posturally, what it's like to be alive on marae space: a space whose purpose is to gather past, present and future lives together, and keep family and connectedness alive.

With the looming portraits Reihana references the carved poupou supporting the walls of a wharenui. The two geometric animations are her version of the traditional woven tukutuku panels lining the walls between poupou. The ambient sound takes the place of the voices, music and other sounds heard upon a marae. The film opens to the world of light 'outside' like a wharenui's single window. But it's the felt resonance between all these parts – or more precisely, between the virtual postures they evoke in the viewer – that tells us the most about marae experience. It tells us that the ancestors or poupou need a marae to release their power, and vice versa. (The implications of this should be clear, not least as it pertains to the countless Māori carvings stolen from their homes and stored, contextless, seemingly lifeless, in foreign museums.) It tells you that the marae and its poupou need inhabitants, living relatives, viewers, thinkers, feelers interacting with them, to keep them alive. It doesn't tell you the stories of Mahuika or Maui or Hinewai, it doesn't offer any further objectifiable 'facts' of Māori culture; instead, it invites you to surrender to the thinking-feeling of your own stories unfolding on this marae.

Glossary

Aotearoa – New Zealand
Māori – indigenous person of Aotearoa
Marae – ancestral gathering place of Māori tribe or sub-tribe

Wharenui – the meeting house on the marae
Poupou – carved posts (typically depicting ancestors) supporting the wharenui
Tukutuku – woven panels between the poupou on the wharenui's interior
Mana – prestige, status, spiritual power, charisma (a supernatural force given by a god and inherited at birth; humans are the agents but not the source of mana)

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From South to South

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In the past few years there has been much talk about the so-called *African Diaspora* in contemporary art. The use of this term as broad as it seems is however quite localized. It generally addresses the movement of African people to Europe or North America during the 20th century. This means that the question of the movement of people from Africa to South America or from south to south if you like has been scarcely looked at. In this paper I propose to explore the developments of Modern Art in the islands of Haiti and Cuba that derive from the all important and usually suppressed African cultural elements in these islands. I would particularly like to explore the work of two artists Wifredo Lam and Hector Hyppolite as two very different ways to confront the predominant Westernized art practice and their work as subversive "interruptions" to the categories established by the institution of Art History.

Introduction

Amongst many other circumstances repression and the diversity within the population brought over from Africa to the Caribbean as slaves made it impossible for a regrouping of an African culture as such. However, despite the loss of their communities African cultures not only managed to survive in Latin America, but also Africans and their descendants were an active part of the struggles for the construction of national identities in the Caribbean where most of the slave population was allocated in the plantations.

It is perhaps in the spiritual practices where there is a true survival of the African essences in Latin America, is where elements from the African heritage were kept alive and did not disappear into the *mestizo* culture. They were used as foundation for practices, beliefs, customs and perceptions of reality. As Cuban art critic Gerardo Mosquera puts it: "While these religions experienced creolization, changes, and borrowings from each other and from popular Catholicism and Spiritualism, their essence, philosophy, structure, and liturgy remained very close to certain of their African roots. More than a case of syncretism […] they constituted a paradigm for a dynamic adaptation to a different historical, cultural, and social context, achieved under strict conditions of domination."[1] This aspect is without doubt the one that most permeates the visual arts practice in the Caribbean as an embodiment of resistance. This was certainly the perception under which at the beginning of the 20th century both Cuban Wiferdo Lam and Haitian Hector Hyppolite worked, each taking his own approach given their different backgrounds and conceptions of art.

In 1941 Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz published his book *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Using tobacco and sugar, as allegorical characters Ortiz tackled the problematic issue of cultural contact - especially between black and white - in Cuban society and culture. Tobacco and Sugar were represented as possessing contrasting attributes. While tobacco is represented as black, poisonous, masculine and the gift of the devils; sugar on the other hand is represented as white, food, feminine and the gift of the gods. Ortiz also elaborates on their impact in Cuban society through their harvesting, processing and human connotations. Tobacco requires delicate care, continual attention, intensive harvesting, the arrival of white people and belongs to the city; sugar on the other hand can look after itself, it implies seasonal work, extensive cultivation, slave trade and it belongs to the country.[2]

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[1] Gerardo Mosquera, Africa in the Art of Latin America, Art Journal Vol51, N4, (winter 1992)
[2] ibid., p. 6-7

Ortiz describes these two opposite elements that in a broad sense are perceived as the native versus the foreigner, as being in constant dialogue. Thus in the second section of his book he introduces the concepts of *Counterpoint* and *Transculturation*, two terms that have become a cornerstone not only in the history of Cuba and the Caribbean, but of Latin America in general.

In his book, Ortiz examined how cultures shape each other contrapuntually[3] i.e. by constant exchange. He persistently displaces and re-places home and exile, the national and the international, centres and peripheries, and shows how they are formed historically through constant interplay. According to him, in the friction created by contrapuntal movement, a space is opened up: neither indigenous nor European but a third element that was the perfect backdrop for the advent of the "new reality of civilization".

Nevertheless Ortiz's most important contribution was the coinage of the term transculturation. The neologism proposed by Ortiz challenged the North American term *acculturation* used until then to describe the colonial relations between Europe and Latin America. Instead, he proposed to describe, in a more appropriate way, the process of cultural contact. Acculturation for him implied the acquisition of a culture in a unidirectional process. Transculturation instead was proposed as a way to describe the process in which both parts of the equation in cultural contact were modified. Thus the emergence of the word transculturation made concrete the process of adjustment from a sense of loss and need of retrieval of the roots implied by the word acculturation, to an overcoming of the loss by giving new shape to the life and culture of Latin America, after the experiences of conquest, colonization and modernization.

Ortiz did not root identity in the past; instead he argued for a constant construction of identity infused with the dynamic of the counterpoint. He did not believe in boundaries - especially between the west and its others or high and low culture. Ortiz's idea of transculturation offered a way of recognizing and incorporating difference as an important component of cultural identity. It provided a theoretical frame to show that identity does not mean local, but rather the exact opposite; that it is not self-contained, static or tied to a specific geographical territory. Identity for Ortiz has necessarily to be formed by dialogue between 'here' and 'there'. Among other implications Ortiz's ideas provided a theoretical platform on which to bring together artists against the hegemonic cultures that sought to impose uniformity and standardisation upon their work.

With this as a backdrop I propose to examine the work of two artists that have reflected on the dialogue between the black culture of Africa and the European inheritance. In both their works Africa is present more than as a stylistic element as a disruption that embodies different worldviews.

Hector Hyppolite (1894 – 1948)

The inner presence of African consciousness determines content, language, and direction in Hector Hyppolite's work. A natural inclination towards the creation of myths defines the approach he had to making art. Hector Hyppolite created a myth surrounding his life and the art he produced was part of this mythic persona. A third-generation *houngan* (*vodou* priest) and a self-taught artist, Hyppolite painted with brushes made of chicken feathers using furniture enamel and based his work on the Afro-Caribbean popular culture.

Hyppolite was born in San Marc near Port-au-Prince in Haiti, in his youth he went to work as a cane cutter in Cuba where he was in contact with *Santería* practices. He claimed to have been in New York, Dakar and Ethiopia where he says he found inspiration in the sculptures of the temples. However, this seems to be untrue. His art not only dealt with voodoo, dreams and legends, it was

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[3] The term counterpoint comes from the Latin contrapunctus, properly punctus contra punctum, ie. note against note.

also fundamentally linked to voodoo by his claims that his status as an artist was ordained by the Loas and that he painted in a state of possession on the instruction of John the Baptist.

There was no real distinction between his life and his art, perhaps this was one of the things that attracted so much Surrealist poet André Breton who wrote about Hyppolite's work: "Hyppolites paintings were totally authentic, they were the proof that he who painted them had an important message to transmit, that he was in possession of a secret."[4]

His work shows a syncretism between the African mystères and the Catholic Saints. It was important because he was one of the first Haitian artists to give manlike appearance to the *loas* that had never been thought in terms of iconic images before, i.e. they only existed in terms of powers and attributes represented in Vévé pictographs.[5] In a way he translated the Afro Caribbean religious practice into a westernized language of devotion to images. This is the case of *The Great Master* (1946 – 1948), the man with two noses, which is the representation of the chief god of the Voodoo pantheon, an image without precedent in Haitian art. Breton recognised this as one of Hyppolite's major inputs. "Hector Hyppolite's painting gives us I think, the first representations that have been provided of divinities and voodoo scenes. For this reason alone, as early religious painting, it presents itself already of considerable interest."[6]

In the last year of the artist's life, he was no longer actively practicing as a *houngan*, although his home was filled with animistic altars and magical paraphernalia. He claimed: "I asked the spirits' permission to suspend my work . . . because of my painting. . . . I've always been a priest, just like my father and grandfather, but now I'm more an artist than a priest."

Beyond his condition as a priest and an artist Hyppolite was an inspiring figure for the generation to come in the arts of the Caribbean in so far as he represented what was considered and authentic Afro-American identity. He was considered an important cornerstone by the Indigenist movement (1927 – 1944) in Haiti a nationalist affirmation in reaction to the American occupation. It is difficult to sustain that Hyppolite's art was influenced by the revaluation of Voodoo and African derived cultural practices in general, however it is important to point out that it coincided with publications like Ainsi parla l'oncle (1928) by Jean Price-Mars similar in the effect it had on the "academic" public raising awareness of the richness of African culture in Latin America. With Hyppolite Afro-Haitian culture was a wealth and not something to hide, black man was no longer viewed in relation to the Caucasian but as a being carrying a wealth inside himself.

Wifredo Lam (1902 – 1982)

Wifredo Oscar de la Concepción Lam y Castillo was born in Cuba in 1902. His father was a Chinese salesman who lived in Cuba and his mother was *mulata*.[7] Thus he inherited a mixture of Negro,

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[4] André Breton in *Haiti: Art Naif, Art Vaudou,* Galleries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, 1988, p.120 "Les toiles d'Hyppolite étaient marquées du cachet de l'authenticité totale; elles étaient les seules de nature à convaincre que celui que les avait réalisée avait un message d'importance à faire parvenir, qu'il était en possession d'un secret. »

[5] Since spirits manifest themselves through people, no statues or pictures are needed. Use is made during ceremonies of symbolic drawings, called Vevé. Depending on the spirit, these designs are drawn on the ground with wheat, maize flour, crushed birch, coffee grounds or ash. Originally it was thought that the Vevé came from the Tainos but it has now been established that it is manifestation from the culture of the Congo in Africa. It is on these drawings that offerings and the bodies of sacrificed animals are placed. They also possess the magic power of attracting the spirits.

[6] ibid. "La peinture d'Hector Hyppolite apporte, je pense, les premières représentations qui aient été fournies de divinités et de scènes vaudou. A ce titre seul, en tant que peinture religieuse primitive, elle présenterait déjà un intérêt considérable. »

[7] A mix between African black and Spanish.

Chinese and Spanish culture, a situation that he managed to transform into a source of inspiration. In 1923 Lam travelled to Europe where he remained, living between Madrid and Paris for fourteen years.

On his return to Cuba, between 1942 and 1947, at a time called by Lam "the jungle period"[8], Lam created an 'untranslatable language'. It could not be understood solely under the European parameters of Surrealism or Cubism; neither could it be reduced to the Afro-Cuban identity discourse that had taken shape in the visual arts as a sort of 'doudouism'; that is 'colourful art' made to meet the expectations of the tourists. In that sense, it was a language of rebellion that he kept on developing throughout his life, struggling not to be caught in the stereotype.

Lam did not lament the loss of a pristine past and neither did he want to be European. He wanted to achieve a language to describe the mixture of cultures that led Cuba to where it was in the 1940's. For Lam the greatest mistake of Western civilisation, was to have separated, in accordance with exaggerated and arbitrary notions of quality, the so-called primitive arts from those of supposedly mature civilisations.

In his work he showed interest in the subject of cultural contact in paintings like *Présence éternelle* (1945). In it he portrays on the left a mulatto woman with two mouths, symbol of the colonial *métissage* of the tropics and the West; and on the right a character representing Africa. Both of these characters are brought together in what seems to be a ceremonial space.

Wifredo Lam and "La cosa negra"

Lam called it "La cosa negra" (the black thing). It was a term representing one of his main sources of interest that would reach its highest expression in the creation of his painting *The Jungle*. With it, Lam starts a period of fusion of two important sources in his creative life. First his interest in black sculpture awakened by his acquaintances in the European Avant-garde and second an exploration of his Afro-Cuban origin.

In 1938 Lam met Pablo Picasso, an artist who was to have great influence over his work and whose ideas were revolutionary for the young Cuban. According to Lam what attracted him in Picasso's painting was: "the presence of African art and the African spirit that I discovered in it. When I was a little boy, I had seen African figures in Mantonica Wilson's (his godmother) house. And in Pablo's work I seemed to find a sort of *continuity.*"[9] What Lam admired in Picasso was the irruption of African art into the European avant-garde. With him traditional norms of perception, as well as the representation of reality and the interrelation between objects and man, had been questioned. Lam found in Picasso's Cubism "a sense of the metamorphoses of form which was nothing if not liberating."[10]

It has been argued that Lam, belonging to a Black culture, would necessarily create from within it.[11] If it is true that Lam's positioning as 'insider' in Afro-Cuba culture represented for him an advantage, allowing him to appropriate the black beyond its surface, Lam was not a nationalist but a humanist "La cosa negra" was most certainly not restricted to the black culture of Cuba for Lam. One example is the long limbs and the shape of hands and feet of the characters in *The Jungle.* He also incorporated elements from masks from the Ivory Coast. See, for example, the incorporation of the Baule mask in *Les Yeux de la grille*. Lam acknowledged the nature of his debt to primitive art, when

[8] That is how Lam refers to this period in the letters to the Bergman family, collectors of his work
[9] Lam quoted in Fouchet, (1986) p.23
[10] Fouchet, (1986) p.26
[11] See for instance Mosquera (1992) or Carpentier (1944)

referring to the Baule mask in his collection, he exclaimed, "You see –I have spontaneously recovered the forms! They have revived in me like an ancestral reminiscence!"[12]

Lam's 'ancestral reminiscence', his Afro-Cuban roots, were first embodied in his godmother Mantonica Wilson, a priestess in the Santería tradition. Although this background was a source of inspiration, providing him with hallucinatory images of divinities and fantastical beings, it was never his aim to depict it as a static phenomenon but rather to show its metamorphic and dynamic nature. Santería, for Lam, did not represent an exotic source of fantastic figures, the influence of it in his work consisted in his being conscious of 'other realities' or other levels of reality that were not evident to everyone. His childhood memories about his reflection in the mirror being two headed act as a metaphor of his preoccupation for this other existing within himself.

It is clear that Wifredo Lam's godmother had a strong influence on him – especially in the fact that being a priestess would allow her, according to Santería belief, to unveil certain parallel realities to her godson. This would make of the spiritual something natural. It is also highly possible that she would have initiated Lam in to the 'magic' hidden in plants, an aspect that was to take great dimensions in his work.

Lam was not alone in his quest to revalue African culture in Cuba a group of intellectuals was actively exploring Afro-Cuban[13] history, Folklore, literature, music and dance. Apart from the influence of Fernando Ortiz's anthropological research, Lam found on his return the effects of the Afro-Cuban literary movement (1928-1938) still strong. He became connected with this circle of Cuban intellectuals through folklorist Lydia Cabrera and writer Alejo Carpentier; the three of them had spent time in Europe and were influenced by the interest in African art. [14]

When Lam met Cabrera in 1941 she was researching the myths, religious beliefs and practices, and folkways of Afro-Cubans of diverse origin. Her research recording oral traditions of Cuba must have had an impact on Lam. She gave titles to most of Lam's paintings produced during that period of time based on her research, for instance *Le Sombre de Malembo* (1943). Cabrera was also one of the first critics to write about Lam's work and her first aim was to state its seriousness and distinguish it from the "commercial art" made simply to satisfy the interest in, and demand for, African art. "His work was not 'exotic' or 'vulgar' in the commonly understood meaning of the words - for Lam was a trained artist whose work was not to be confused with commercial art."[15] In a second article Cabrera elaborated more on the Afro-Cuban iconology. "The ancient ancestral black deities […] appeared tangible to him in Cuba where they are expressed in each corner of the landscape, in each tree-divinity, in each fabulous leaf of his garden in Buen Retiro."[16]

From their own perspectives both Hyppolite's and Lam's work revindicated the ancestral African spiritual practices and claimed them for the development of the Visual Arts in the Caribbean. Hyppolite achieved this unknowingly insofar as the practice of his vocation as priest translated into his artistic practice and as he played the role of an emblematic figure for the generations to come. On the other hand, Lam, conscious of the intention of his struggle, made use of his spiritual initiation to highlight the importance of the African cultural inheritance.

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[12] Lam quoted in William Rubin ed., *Primitivism in 20th Century Art* (New York: the Museum of Modern Art 1985), p.580

[13] This term was introduced in the 1910 decade by Fernando Ortiz

[14] Lam met Carpentier in Madrid in the early 1930s

[15] Lydia Cabrera, "Wifredo Lam", *Diario de la Marina*, May 17, 1943

[16] Lydia Cabrera, "Wifredo Lam", *Diario de la Marina*, June 30, 1944

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Gestures of Defamiliarization

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This visual essay presents and reflects on a corpus of photographs produced by third-year History of Art students at Wits University in Johannesburg, during 2008. Steeped in a course on early colonial photographs of Africans, African uses of photography in traditional rituals and ceremonies and contemporary African studio photography practices, students were challenged to work in groups and to produce a series of photographic images showing how they see themselves as Africans and to reflect on some of the issues raised in so doing.

Situated within the rich scholarship of archivists, art historians and anthropologists, such as Elizabeth Edwards (1992, 2001), Christraud Geary (1991) and Virginia-Lee Webb (1992), who examine the distance and stereotyping at the heart of early imaging of Africans, this project – rooted as it is in multimodal teaching practice – enabled a deep engagement with, and critique of, processes of representation and the historical archive.

Students confronted the racial, socio-cultural and historical complexities of living in Johannesburg. They explored visual strategies that exposed and questioned embedded power structures and received stereotypes; they pushed at the edges of representation; they looked again at surface meanings; they pictured realities into which they did and did not fit, and they came to reflect on the limitations of irony as a singular mode of visual response. The students produced fascinating photographs that they had made as a means of understanding-through-doing, grappling as they did with issues of representation and African identity. The images selected can each be seen as 'gestures of defamiliarization' (Mbembe and Nuttall, 2008: 26), whose analysis presents a complex and nuanced engagement with identity and the layered realities that comprise the contemporary South African context.

The project's images address defamiliarization in two ways: firstly, they reframe stereotypical representations of Africa and Africans by portraying dynamic, complex and layered social identities and urban landscapes. Secondly, they demonstrate how these very same complex identities and landscapes inevitably become familiar and mundane – and are therefore often overlooked as sites for potential critical enquiry. In exploring these sites, the common becomes unique, the disregarded becomes relevant, and the familiar again becomes defamiliarized.

In defamiliarizing the urban landscape, Ivan Vladislavic's *Portrait with Keys* (2006) constructs a Johannesburg which is simultaneously banal and profound, burdened and privileged:

> Any iron cover you passed in the street might conceal someone's personal effects. There was a maze of mysterious spaces underfoot, known only to those who could see it. And this special knowledge turned them into the privileged ones, made them party to something in which we, who lived in houses with wardrobes and chests of drawers, and ate three square meals a day, could not participate. Blind and numb, we passed over these secret places, did not even sense them beneath the soles of our shoes. How much more might we be missing? (p. 50)

Replete with these 'mysterious spaces', Johannesburg is a heteroglossia, a place of multiple tongues and realities, layered by both legitimated and subjugated histories.

Zulu Girls Gossiping, *2008* (Figure 1) was a surreptitiously taken photograph of the students' lecturer eating lunch with her friend on the Wits campus. Whilst the friends may be gossiping, they are certainly not Zulu. This is an ironic take on the historical tendency to racially and ethnically classify others. By appropriating the caption from an early colonial image of Africans, we draw attention to the arbitrary nature of the captions given to colonial images. But we also draw attention to the power embedded in this practice, and noted by Berger (2002) that 'as soon as photographs are used with words, they produce together an effect of certainty, even dogmatic assertion' (p. 50); that is to say that, despite what this may look like, they are Zulu girls and they are gossiping. This is the authority of the text.

The caption in the Wallace-Bradley photograph (Figure 2) indicates the colonial attempt to describe the Zulu girls in idiomatic terms – yet the image does not indicate a light-hearted sense of gossip. Instead it points to the attempted subjugation of bodies and selves within a colonial imaginary (Mustafa, 2002: 173). African reality is invented and altered, revealing the constructed nature of early missionary photography, and the Africa it constructed. This invented reality is, to use Sydney Kasfir's (1999) term, an 'Africa of the mind' (p. 94).

To snap someone is to take something away, to appropriate, to leave the subject disempowered, without agency (Sontag, 1973: 4), and this is clear in the Wallace-Bradley photograph, in the subjects' expressions and uneasy rigid postures. Yet Mirzoeff (1999) suggests that withholding consent and refusing to strike a pose, or smile, is also a deeply agentive act of resistance (p. 141).

The missionary project of delivering education – secular and religious – recalls Walter Benjamin's famous comment that 'every act of civilisation is also an act of barbarism' (Benjamin, 1968[1936]: 256). Our own ironic photograph, Zulu girls gossiping, 2008, must in turn be assessed in terms of Benjamin's notion that every record or archive is both valuable and problematic. Whilst our strategy in this photograph might be valuable in highlighting the dubious colonial practice and its impulse to classify man into types (Said, 1978: 123), it also foregrounds our own complicity to some extent in this photographic practice of appropriation, unavoidably participating in the very activity that is being denounced, *precisely in order to denounce it* (Owens, 1980: 79).

The voyeuristic, secret image *Zulu girls gossiping, Johannesburg, 2008* (Figure 1) includes in the foreground part of a large public sculpture by the Italian South African, Edoardo Villa. Both his hybrid nationality and his name serve as an amusing pun on the next image (Figure 3), 'Toulouse', the name given to an urban complex of 'villas' designed in an imagined style of European architecture, no doubt also colluding with the values and aspirations of their owners. This architectural style for gated communities – many of them quickly erected on a massive scale, and strikingly unindividuated – is prevalent in Johannesburg and, for the most part, its irony goes unnoticed. In the same way that colonial missionary photographs can have almost arbitrary image–text connections, here, names and places suffer the same rupture.

South Africa's architectural heritage has largely been informed by its European, or Western, connections, rather than African ones and, as Nuttall and Mbembe (2008) note: 'Until very recently, Johannesburg described itself as the largest and most modern European city in Africa' (p. 18).

In many instances, as in 'Toulouse' (Figure 3), a surface veneer perpetuates this sense of a constructed European identity, which is in fact all surface, yet reveals a deeper aspiration to identify

with what is seen as the pinnacle of culture. This is for some perhaps superficially reassuring. As Mbembe (2008) suggests: 'it is an architecture that aims to return to the "archaic" as a way of freezing rapid changes in the temporal and political structures of the surrounding world' (p. 62).

The archetypal European villa connotes an indistinct history of imperial grandeur. Villas were built for the ruling class in the countryside, but with relatively close proximity to major urban centres. In present-day South Africa, the individual module of the townhouse complex pretends to be a villa with its associations of wealth, power, spaciousness, leisure and, tellingly, a pastoral connection with the earth. What we see in the photograph is not, in fact, a villa but a cramped suburban townhouse complex, with a pastoral fantasy implied by the titling of such compounds with names that conjure rolling vineyards and hilltop vistas.

The aesthetics of the built environment obfuscate the politics. In the spirit of the 'New South Africa' and a move toward cultural plasticity, Toulouse, a city in the south of France, is conflated with supposedly Tuscan architecture in the heart of a modern African metropole. These residences are, like their early predecessors, walled, guarded and protected by constant surveillance, from a more contemporary, urban, crime-ridden reality.

'Johannesburg', writes Vladislavic (2006), 'is a frontier city, a place of contested boundaries. Territory must be secured and defended or it will be lost' (p. 185). And in an earlier novel, *The Exploded View* (Vladislavic, 2004), the central protagonist, Budlender, arrives at one of these urban townhouse complexes and muses on its fortress-like security:

> Repelled at the ramparts. 'Villa Toscana' was printed on a salmoncoloured wall to the left. Below each wrought iron letter was a streak of rust like dried blood, as if a host of housebreakers had impaled themselves on the name. Would the defenders of this city-state pour down boiling oil if he ventured too close? (p. 9)

Budlender also considers the prevalence of veneer and the complex surfaces of Johannesburg:

> The tones and textures were passable … But the scales were all wrong. Things were either too big or too small. In the door of the guardhouse was a keyhole so enormous he could have put his fist through it, and just below it the brass disc of a conventional and presumably functional Yale lock. (pp. 9–10)

Much of the suburban architecture of Johannesburg attests to a 'dramatic geographical and temporal arbitrariness' (Mbembe, 2008: 60), producing 'an experience of fragmentation and of permutations that may never achieve coherence' (p. 63).

Dinnertime at a kraal, 2008 (Figure 4) presents a self-conscious statement of modernity, civility and cosmopolitanism. Its subject – cell phones and pre-packed take-away lunch – does not easily cohere with its title.

The original image, to which this photograph refers, is of a Zulu family around a pot preparing to eat (Figure 5). It is clearly a staged image, a photoshoot, with the subjects arranged around the central pot of food, posing, and with a title steeped in ethnographic practices. It is a static image reminiscent of dioramas in natural history museums. The original image is a tableau presenting a particular view of Africa and Africans. The 2008 image (Figure 4) deliberately unsettles this stereotypical view so repeatedly presented to the world. It also presents a staged tableau. This time, however, it is focused on affluence and consumerism as an indication of an African culture that is global, and hybrid – does East meet West (in Africa) in tikka chicken pasta salad? – with the same complex incoherence of

'Toulouse'. Both images assert a contemporary and perhaps more accurate view of Johannesburg as fractured, layered, perplexed and a terrifying mix of fantasies, desires and realities.

Though the tikka chicken pasta salad may be hermetically sealed, packaging a branded and standardized meal, the photograph offers a view of Africa that is anything but. It is a counter-act, or remedy even, to previously conceived views of Africa.

Announce the good news, *2008*, is the title given to Figure 6, cropped to focus on the sun's rays shining behind the last syllable of the word 'Lotto' – the South African National Lottery. The title is cynically borrowed from an early missionary photograph taken in the Belgian Congo in 1920, *CONGO – Announce the good news* (Figure 9), an image of progress towards Christianity, the spreading of God's word, and the values of decency and civilization.

The Lotto photograph was inspired by Patrick Brantlinger's (1985) poignant comment: 'Africa grew "dark" as Victorian explorers, missionaries and scientists flooded it with light' (p. 166), a statement implying that 'showing the light' required a darkening, or primitivizing, of their new African subjects – a civilizing act that was, in the Benjaminian sense, dangerous indeed. What is good news to some may not be good news to others – in similar ways to colonial times, the good news is constructed and served up to a disenfranchised group, whether economically or politically.

In both of the historic images *Congo – Announce the Good News* (Figure 9) and *Nouvelle Anvers – La Mission. La Classe* (Figure 7), the pedagogic role of the church is emphasized and, by extension, aligned to colonial ideology.

In Figure 7, the classroom depicted resembles a cruciform church. The central walkway becomes its nave, the teacher's desk an altar. The crucifix in the window on the right side of the photograph echoes the crucifix hung from the wall in the centre of the classroom. A sense of symmetry, rigidity, ideology and control emanate from the picture. This order, control, indoctrination and domination evident in the Congo classroom played itself out again, and differently, in South Africa when apartheid education replaced the missionary education. Both systems largely disregarded the linguistic, cultural and religious differences among pupils, denying their cultures, their values and hence holding their minds captive (Ngugı wa Thiong'o, 1993: 31).

The top-down delivery of knowledge, the kind of education embodied by the Nouvelle Anvers mission school classroom is precisely the 'dangerous civilizing act' that Benjamin spoke of. It is a mode of teaching that removes individual or cultural agency, removes imagination which is, in Appadurai's (1996) words, 'a social practice central to all forms of agency ... [a] key component of the new global order' (p. 31).

In South Africa in the mid 1970s, the white government decided that half of all high school subjects in black schools must be taught in Afrikaans, the language of oppression, and a language in which many black teachers and learners were not proficient. Its dire consequences for the quality of education that most students then received resulted in a massive student-led protest on 16 June 1976. Police opened fire on the marching students, and photographer Sam Nzima captured the pietà-like image of Hector Petersen's body, one of the first victims of this educational struggle (Figure 10). The images in Figures 9 and 10, religious in different ways, illustrate the dangerous power of political, pedagogical and linguistic domination, and the complexities embedded in transformation.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the political and social potentialities of language are no different. Towards the middle of 2008, all the roads and pavements in the Johannesburg suburb of Melville were repainted by the city municipality. Interestingly, however, only English names and references

were touched up. The Afrikaans language was left to quietly dissolve as an act of erasure from public memory; a deliberate monument to neglect.

School/Stadig/Skool (Figure 8) subtly raises questions about the pace of social transformation – signalled by the fading word 'STADIG' (SLOW). It is crucial to note that the word 'SCHOOL' which has been selectively re-written and re-emphasized is in English – ironically, the archetypal colonial language. Being both post-colonial and post-apartheid, Johannesburg is a complex, layered, inconsistent city. These often satirical, paradoxical, violent and playful intersections are replete, above and below the surface of common discourse and interaction. They are written into the streets, and into the recesses of every neighbourhood. They are at once available and hidden, on and absorbed into, the surface.

Intersections and interactions between people in this bristling postcolonial, post-apartheid city are captured in the strange intimacy, or intimate strangeness of Stacey Vorster's photograph, *This is Peacock: father, husband, friend* (Figure 11).

The same scrutiny employed in the colonial project of documenting and categorizing race and otherness is here used to indicate intimacy. This is an image made using the tools and strategies of another, distancing, register, not in order to stereotype (as in Herbert Lang's line up of pygmies in Figure 12) but to construct an image that is more intimate, more about knowing than about remoteness.

This portrait is of a named and known individual, it is Peacock, and he is a father, husband and friend. There is an implied loving relationship between this white photographer and her black model yet the image is disconcerting; it registers an uncompromising scrutiny that is mutual – he looks back at her with the same intent with which she attempts to capture him, and its strength lies in Vorster's attempt to inhabit a fractured reality. The image simultaneously sits uncomfortably between intimacy and something else, something unsettling. Its harsh light and blunt shadows, the head-on direct gaze, intense eyes and furrowed brow create an unease, perhaps because its scrutiny and close-up also recall early colonial pseudoscientific documentation of the Other.

The 'scientific' othering of Africans based on physical appearance and difference was a major cog in the colonial metaphor-machine. It has had a long lasting effect on relations between black and white people in South Africa. Nuttall probes this in her recent book, *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-Apartheid* (2009) when she asks:

> Can one write oneself in to Johannesburg, a city one feels to be receding from one's grasp, unless one inhabits at least the beginnings of a cross-racial world, a world of peers and associates and friends to whom one actually speaks?' (p. 93)

Whilst it may be a reflex of current critical practice to produce images that are cynical, satirical and ironical, images in these ironic modes potentially fall prey to the same destructive impact of the practices which they pick apart. What this type of practice overlooks is space for a constructive re-imagining of a shifting landscape of relations and interactions, for a sincere and unarmoured rethinking, of which *Peacock*, is a moving example.

The contemporary images pictured in this visual essay were produced by students living in a city marked explicitly and implicitly by its brutal past. Simultaneously immersed in the study of African photography and its legacies, their images engage with the constructedness and highly charged nature of identity and of looking and being looked at. As such, they place themselves deeply within this murky field of representation and encounter first hand – as opposed to at arm's length – the

difficulties, the challenges and the pleasures of seeing themselves connected into a broader social reality with a self-reflexivity and a criticality captured in their images and in the combination of images presented in this visual essay.

Figures

Figure 1: *Zulu girls gossiping, 2008*. © Photograph by Molemo Moiloa, Johannesburg, 2008.

Figure 2: *Zulu girls gossiping* (J. Wallace-Bradley, Durban, c. 1890). © Photograph: Toned albumen print. The Photograph Study Collection, Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (PSC 1988.59).

Figure 3: *Toulouse/Johannesburg*. © Photograph by Alex Horsler, Johannesburg, 2008.

Figure 4: *Dinnertime at a kraal, men first, women after, 2008*. © Photograph by Kate Roper, Johannesburg, 2008.

Figure 5: *Dinnertime at a kraal, men first, women after* (George T. Ferneyhough, 1880s). Toned albumen print, The Photograph Study Collection, Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (PSC 1988.54.43).

Figure 6: *Announce the good news, 2008*. © Photography Melissa Nom Chong, Johannesburg, 2008.

Figure 7: *Nouvelle Anvers – La Mission. La Classe.* [Class at a mission school in Nouvelle Anvers on the Congo River, halfway between Coquilhatville and Lisala, Belgian Congo]. Photographer unknown, c. 1910, postcard, collotype. Sponsored by the Scheutist Missionaries. Publisher unknown, c. 1912. EEPA Postcard Collection, CG 40-28. Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute.

Figure 8: *School/Stadig/Skool*. © Photograph by Tim Zeelie, Johannesburg, 2008.

Figure 9: *Congo - Annoncez la Bonne Nouvelle*. c. 1920, postcard, collotype. Published by Les Franciscaines Missionnaires De Marie En Mission, Belgian Congo. EEPA Postcard Collection CG 39-5. Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 10: *Hector Petersen* © Photograph Sam Nzima, 1976. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 11: *This is Peacock: father, husband, friend*. © Photograph by Stacey Vorster, Johannesburg, 2008.

Figure 12: *Four portraits of Pygmies*. © Herbert Lang. Produced between 1909 and 1915 – part of Lang's attempt to create 'what he perceived as a scientifically valid series of anthropological portraits' (Schildkrout, 1991: 70). Image #: 226063, 226117, 226018, and 226070, American Museum of Natural History Library.

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Rephrasing Protocol: Internet Art in the Global South

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New media and technology arts in the Global South, in this particular case the use of the Internet as a creative medium, are deeply ingrained in the problems associated with broader reaching issues of marginalisation and first world advances. Yet as a consequence of it's medium this form of art making is attributed to globalisation, which is additionally considered a threat because of its forms of gentrification and homogenising effect on culture. The Global South is placed in an interesting and particular position: freshly into a post-colonial period and directly facing the onslaught of Globalisation. Global South Internet Art artists are blatantly aware, particularly when working in this globally connected form, of this position.

Internet art is historically known for its political criticism, activism and hacktivism. These subjects in Internet Art practice began in the mid 1990's in Eastern Europe and continue through various method orientated trends into contemporary practice (Greene:2004). Global South Internet art tends to extend the practice of criticism and activism, but in particular relation to the politics of marginalisation and globalisation. While many of the works are derivative of a broader "global" practice, there are particular methods and distinct themes that are convergent with issues of the Global South, it is these that I will expand on. I have identified three themes: 1. The exploration of 'voice'. 2. Terrorism and destabilisation. 3. Ownership and remapping.

European and North American Internet Art practice has only very recently been documented and theorised in an academic manner. Practice in the Global South has no official documentation and has very rarely been written about. As in early western practice, there are individuals who have identified and listed artists working in the field as an attempt at defining the boundaries of Internet Art practice in the Global South. One of these is Uruguayan artist Brain McKren; his *Netart Latino "database"* (http://nertart.org.uy, last accessed 2011) is a list of hyperlinks to artworks and their artists from across South America. Though it has a curatorial text, MacKern describes it as "personal and arbitrary", perhaps as means to avoid any form of overt definition (Mackern, B, 2010: 434). The 2007/2008 *Net Art in Colombia: It's Ugly and Doesn't like the Cursor* curated by Juan Devis is anouther such instance. Described by artist and critic Eduardo Navas as "…a carefully selected survey that reflects on the politics of Colombian culture" (Navas. 2008: web). The project carries the following themes *Free Software art, Open Source and Copy Left*, *Mapping, Crawling and Remixing*; *Networks and Cities*; *Transmissions*; *Uploading Death* and *Play With Me*. Other contributing individuals are Jo-Anne Green an ex South African who commissions and documents Global South digital arts practice through the Boston based Turbulence Organisation (http://www.turbulence.org); and Luis da Silva a Lisbon based curator for Rhizome, which is a New York based organisation that documents and writes on digital and Internet art. In 2009, as a Special Project for the Johannesburg Art Fair, I initiated a research project and asked the Upgrade International Network - a global digital arts network, of whom Jo-Ann Green and Luis da Silva are a part - to contribute Internet artworks they have encountered from the Global South. The result was a co-curated collection, which included new South African work hosted at http://jafnetart.digitalarts.wits.ac.za , this collection includes work from across South America, India, Korea and South Africa. Beyond this there is no outstanding writing or collections of Internet art in and of the Global South.

I have chosen for the purposes of this paper, to act as case studies works from Argentina, Brazil and South Africa. I will be describing only a small handful of projects, mostly from the *Internet Art in the Global South* - Joburg Art Fair Special Project. The particular works I have identified have a strong thematic core. The themes are reflected in many works from the Global South, but it would be too

much to mention all works with these thematic tendencies. Though developed independently the works show a particular direction in subjects and methods.

Medium and content are integral to each other in these technological orientated works. It is significant to remember that these artists are working in an entirely contemporary medium, an entirely new language of code and communication practice, this of course contributes greatly to how the works are made and their particular subject matter. Creating anything for the Internet is reliant on a global protocol. The works I address are extraordinarily aware of this protocol and follow it well, but use it to challenge its subjective influences.

I begin with the exploration of 'voice'; the politics of 'voice' I believe you will recognise in a great deal of post-colonial art, yet here it also speaks to a process of globalisation. I will begin with the oldest work in the collection, dating from 2000, *Netizens, Net-fringers and Outsiders* (http://www.neteveryone.org) by Rejane Spitz who is based in Sao-Paulo, Brazil. It is an online archive and framing of navigable and interactive interviews of Brazilians and how they understand the Internet and what impact it has on their lives. Through this work Spitz makes a direct connection between Internet browsers; online content and its particular hierarchical structures and the early conquistadores and their attitudes and treatment of indigenous peoples. She indicates the outsiders and the insiders of this "new" form of power and easily shows how it has excluded indigenous and Latin forms. I quote Spitz from her essay expanding on the work:

> According to the 1999 United Nations Human Development Report, "writing computer programmes and revealing genetic codes have replaced the search for gold, the conquest of land and the command of machinery as the path to economic power." (Spitz. R, 2000)

Spitz goes on to speak of the effect of the proposed "global conversation" and highlights that the flow of information has a tendency to be one directional. She asks the question "who informs who?" and shows how the majority of information on the Internet comes from America and then Europe. The piece is a direct criticism of the hierarchy apparent in the power of information and information technologies.

The next piece in the exploration of 'voice' is that of Brazilian artist, also from Sao Paulo, named Martha Gabriel (Cruz). I have chosen this piece as it is less critically focused and is perhaps a more innocent and playful exploration of the same subject. *Voice Mosaic* (http://www.voicemosaic.com.br) developed in 2004 allows anyone across the globe to add a virtual 'tile' to an online 'mosaic' of voice recordings. When adding a tile the visitor records a voice message that is stored on the website permanently and can be accessed at anytime and place from this website. *Voice Mosaic* is one among many of Gabriel's works that shows a need for a better represented form of identity and identification on the internet, (I also refer to *Digital Oracle* 2003 and *Skindoscope* 2007), following again the theme of a marginalised indigenous and also Latin 'voice' and the need to contribute to the authority of global information.

The next piece on the exploration of 'voice' is South African; a commission from 2005 by Turbulence.org to Marcus Nuestetter and Nathaniel Stern called the *Getaway Experiment* (http://turbulence.org/Works/getawayexperiment). It is a small project in which the artists have 'remade' popular Internet sites. In the act of remaking the artists have literally replaced images and text on the sites with hand drawn images. This work shows an attempt at personalisation of a broader global dominance. It is an act that questions the use of information technologies and its consequences in a non first-world context.

Getaway Experiment is an interesting piece as it could also be categorised under "ownership and remapping" or as a minor form of "destabilisation". It is important for me to note here that the three thematic categories I have identified, though distinct and strong, are not entirely separate; they bleed into each other and are often not distinguishable from each other as they are all part of a broader and more singular dialogue.

A more contemporary piece, not an online work but an installation, is *Mobile Crash* (http://bambozzi.wordpress.com/projetosprojects/mobile-crash) from 2009 by Lucas Bambozzi of Brazil. It is significant piece that speaks of the meta-cultural impact of communication technologies. In this installation the viewer/participant enters a room of four still screens. By physically pointing at any one of the screens they activate a video of cell phones and other obsolete technologies being physically broken and smashed. This is an outcry on the implications and empty dependency to first world consumer technologies and the vast implications of all that comes with it. This piece speaks strongly to a form of artistic pseudo terrorism and destabilisation, a threatening yet somehow pleasing acting-out of anger.

Brazilian new media artist and critic Giselle Bieguelman states the following on *Mobile Crash* in her essay 'Emergent Technophagy in Media Art Brazil':

> …the project promotes its uprooting from the marketing culture to which it originally belongs, and from the process of brandification of the everyday on which it depends today more than ever. In this context, the project repositions the question of consumption, disarticulating it from mere consumerism. This way, it politicizes its debate by dislocating it from the sphere of mechanism to that of machinism…(Biegulmann.G, 2010: web)

What Biegulmann is making explicit here is the dependency relationship to advances of the first world and the expanded notion of citizenship, which has come to include consumption in its practice. (Bambozzi. L, 2010: 437)

Following the same line of pseudo terrorism and destabilisation is the work of Argentinean Gustavo Romano, perhaps one of the best-known South American net artists. The piece *CyberZoo* (http://www.cyberzoo.org) from 2003 is a virtual viewing deck and a location to potentially let loose some of the most dangerous viruses known to computers. Romano presents the computer viruses as an exotic and dangerous animal kept in a zoo, easy to let loose at the flip of a switch. Romano tells a tale of otherness and threat, like Spitz he subtly refers to much older themes of exoticisation, and like Bambozzi the work threatens an inherent dependency.

A second work by Romano will take us to the third theme, one that is unsurprisingly dominated by South African artists, ownership and re-mapping. These works predominantly use satellite mapping as a secondary and critical medium. Romano's *The World 1:1* (http://1x1.findelmundo.com.ar) is not dissimilar to *CyberZoo,* it points to a potential destabilisation of protocol and norms, but is more tongue in cheek. In *The World 1:1* the visitor is invited to choose a city and view its map in "actual size". What one gets however is the highly stylised large-scale pixilation of the map image where colour is the only recognisable feature. Romano is making fun of the satellite and a particular obsession with land and surveillance.

South African artist Mitch Said's *Tree ID* (http://jafnetart.digitalarts.wits.ac.za) of 2006 (no longer live) is a similar tongue in cheek exploration of satellites and mobile technology. *Tree ID* is concerned with the "invasion" of mobile communication towers and speaks very subtly of the threat of surveillance. *Tree ID* asked anyone to identify and upload pictures and simultaneously the GPS

information from their mobile phones - of the disguised "tree-towers" found all around South Africa. This is a subtle play on environmental concerns of invasive trees as well as the concerns of a different form of environmental invasion.

Jaco Spies a South African artist based in Bloemfontein uses the Internet as a form of surrender through the potential for a form of democratisation in the digital. Spies interrogates with the medium and methods of the digital a very specific landscape in the works *Palimpsest Koppie* (http://www.jacospies.co.za/pal.htm) from 2005 and *Dissemination* (http://www.jacospies.co.za/dis.htm) from 2009. The subject of both works is particular koppie (farm) once owned by his family and a number of other families and clans in the past. In *Palimpsest Koppie* the digitised drawing of the hill is continuously and randomly redrawn whenever opened in a browser, allowing the digital to decide how it should be draw on each occasion. In *Dissemination* Spies hands over the drawing of the koppie to the world, allowing the user to draw and change the landscape as they please. The most important aspect being that the next user's drawing begins to programmatically erase the lines of a previous user. In both these works Spies attempts to almost break the landscape the its cultural implications by surrendering it to participatory democratised digital form.

All Internet art is participatory on some level, the engagement solidifies its meaning. The works discussed all have distinct subject matters that identify them under the concerns of the Global South. Engagement with these works is disruptive, not only for the individual browser but of a global protocol and preferred understanding of the role and hierarchies of the power of information and new consumer communication technologies. They bring out in them politics of marginalisation and control. These politics reflect in mirror form issues encountered in colonisation. These artworks are actions: identifying the marginalised voice; forms of pseudo terrorisms and destabilisation of an embedded consumer culture; and the critical inversion of ownership by surveillance and a presumed democratisation. These actions are concurrent with actions that would be taken by a freedom-fighting nation against an oppressor. Yet they are more than that, the works are an act of appropriation and a rephrasing of an imposed global protocol.

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“Latin America”: Time and Subjectivity

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Introduction
“Latin America” is a notion that has been elevated to the status of a category in order to define something like an entity that confuses and mixes the singular determinations of a region that runs from the Río Bravo to Tierra del Fuego. In an attempt to escape the most classical definitions of the region as either "Hispanic America" — which inscribes a history of crusades and conquests that could not be separated from a series of expulsions and political, linguistic, religious, intellectual and ethnic exclusions — or "Ibero-America" — which declares a certain imperial melancholy, much too limited to the colonial period — the category of "Latin America" moves within the ambivalence of a notion that gathers into a geographical region a series of violences and emancipatory aspirations that, in one way or another, respond to the creation of a territory and a population.

It is important to bring into surface the historical implication of the “latiness” roots in order to think in the violent structure that lay beneath the construction of “Latin America”. It is not our intention to justify whether we need to think “Latin America” or not in a postcolonial system but to re-think how this category is entangled to an epistemological and theological logic that produce a specific form of time and subjectivity.

In his text *Seven Theses Against Hispanism*, the Spanish philosopher Eduardo Subirats describes and analyzes point by point the creation and successive significations that have defined the region, shaping its forms of identity production. Subirats asserts that if Latinness seems to be linked somehow to the liberating heroism of postcolonial independence, the two roots of the Latinness of Ibero-America, from an etymological and historical perspective, overcome two political and religious traditions that do not themselves escape objection. First, Subirats demonstrates how, since the twelfth century, the names of *gens latina* and *tota latinas* designated the congregants of the Holy Roman Church —that is, Latin Christianity, according to a perspective that was both ethnic and religious. This Roman Catholic Christianity has been one of the principles that, on one hand, organized the colonizing process, and on the other, defined the theological and political character of the independence processes. The second root that Subirats marks is of a secular order, and has to do with the military expansion of the *orbis Romanus*, inscribing Latinness in a universal history of civilization from out of a literary territory.

In this sense, a brief genealogy of "Latin Americanness" shows how this category encloses the condition of violence, both linguistic and religious, of a civilizing process that, since 1492, has subsumed a territory under a conceptualization of time and space determined by Western epistemology itself.

These populations had not only to enter a homogeneous process of time and space under the mission of a universal Christian project, but also, and very important, existed in a structure of double violence, in the one hand, the violence that the Other inflicts, the violence of being reduced to nothing, and in the other hand, the violence that one inflicts in Oneself, the violence of assume and recognize oneself in this nothingness.

The long process of creating independent-nation-states maintained many of the colonial structures, both in terms of sovereignty and representation. Although the region gained independence, the logic of modernity was well established on the subjects. The epistemic and theological formation of the west was the structure in which several countries developed their own notion of independent-

nation-state. In this sense, the arrival of developmentalist and modernizing projects, so characteristic of the twentieth century, insisted on the region's accession to international synchrony and maintained the violence in which the “Latin” project was born. This project based in the so called “progress” obscured and reproduce the complex systems of identification whose bases were the epistemological processes of modernity, which proposed to include (abstractly) those subjects that were concretely excluded from participating in it.

Modernity and Subjectivity

If we think about the effect that political systems have on the production of subjectivity it's clear that there is a psychic production that attempts to submit affection and sensibility to the dominant fields of representation based on the structure of a universal subject from which a social configuration structured on mimesis and rehearsal emerges.

The imposition and production of imitation and repetition produce a dominant, hegemonic structure based on the repression of Otherness. Images of the Other are not produced and disseminated because these are real, but because they reflect the preoccupations of the producers of such images, and of those who consume them: they don't tell us about the Other as they do about ourselves and about how, through those images, we are drawing a self-portrait in negative, upon which our fantasies, our fears and our obsessions are projected.

Thus, societies are composed of neurotic, hysterical and delirious individuals that attempt to constrain their sensations within fields of representation that deny access to our very own experiences. The nature of this delirium is political as it is psychical. In both forms, it has paranoid and schizophrenic dimensions in equal measure. This dual structure often causes delirium to be manifested in the production and overcoding of phobias and fantasies that then become recorded in social structures.

The psychic formation of delirium — to adopt the language of psychoanalysis to speak about the political forms of subjectivity — is a buried structure that rises to the surface as a symptom. It is enough to live in a city with a postcolonial history to discover that systems of colonization and exploitation are perpetuated through the distribution of identities across an urban order of spaces and functions. These structures are within us, in our subjectivities and subjectivations, and we repeat them in our social relations and in the elaborations of our individuality; a copying and a repetition of atrophied senses that make us fragile and vulnerable, and in the same gesture submit us to inoperative structures of identification.

Mimesis and rehearsal, as forms of political configuration, operate in the imposition of pre-established forms and structures of repetition that enable a hegemonic, civilizing configuration. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that these structures are always forms of iterability[1]; that is, repetition always involves a difference out of which specificity itself is born — and with it, the possibilities of rebellion. The copy is not simply a reproduction, but something that also happens as

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[1] Derrida implemented the concept of iterability to describe the paradoxical quality of writing: within its own structure of repetition there is a rupture with the notion of origin, since this condition simultaneously impedes its recognition as identical to itself, reconciled with some source of originary sense capable of reducing it to a unitary sense. Since iterability always implies repetition in difference, pure singularity suffers erasure through its dissemination. Derrida asserts: "given that structure of iteration, the intention animating the utterance will never be through and through present to itself and to its content. The iteration structuring it a priori introduces into it a dehiscence and a cleft [*brisure*] which are essential." Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc*, Northwestern University Press, Chicago, 1988 [1972], p. 19. [T.N. Cf. p. 59] Beyond the fact that the notion of iterability allows for the dismantling of metaphysical structures within language, which in turn allows for the disassembly of the figure of the speaking subject, this concept allows us to understand the detour that occurs within repetition.

itself, and out of which gestures and forces of creation emerge. At the center of mimesis and rehearsal there exists a latent force of explosion, available for a rebellion against its own referent.

The question is, then, how to activate both a formal critique and a sensorial capacity that would allow the annulled presence of alterity to emerge from within this structure of the copy and repetition.

Art: Time and Otherness
If the notion of "Latin America" encloses the condition of violence, how can we trace the history of this violence and, more important how we can elaborate a critique of this specific form of temporality and subjectivity?

The complex binomial of modernity — as an epistemic and theological system —, and modernization — as an historical economic project based on the clash between developed and non developed countries — found in "Latin America" a space of articulation: art.

On one hand, following an internationalization of artistic styles, it acceded, with rehearsals that were carried out from this region, to a history of international modernity —imagined as a universal structure of time, space, history, subjects, emancipations and autonomies. And on the other, art, as an apparatus of official representation, attempted to accelerate the process of modernization of the countries of the Third World. We entered in a universal narrative, but complex processes of simplification of cultures were carried out, involving an isolation of elements that were susceptible to being industrialized in audiovisual forms only to be inserted in commercial, spectacular contexts.

If we look closely, "Latin American Art" means nothing more than the attempt to homogenize creative practices under a very ambiguous entity that mixes a colonial history with the emancipatory aspirations and, most of the times subsume an entire region on representation of the Other based on folclorization and exoticism. A category that has imply the accession to a global narrative that — tending to promote the reification of "other" identities based either on their internationalism or on folklore, which means normalizing heterogeneous elements in spectacular, digestible figurations such as popular identifications or kitsch.

Nevertheless, this ambiguity also allows other games to be staged. We cannot ignore the fact that the very accession to this global narrative and the visibility that accompanies international circuits has allowed the possibility of cheating pre-established expectations of the other and put into circulation forms of critique.

If contemporary art has become a political place, it is not because of its ontological character, but rather because its ambivalence and complexity clears a space for different cognitive and poetic structures. It is true that more often than not, art serve to satisfy a share of controlled and predictable alterity from peripheral spaces, but some times, and the importance is in this possibility, this visibility and conditions of production, operate as a place of experimentation and critique.

Art, perhaps as never before, has acquired a social, cultural and political importance as a space for experimentation and for the creation of communities, since, by maintaining certain structures of "autonomy," it affords moments of exception, which, though they are configured within regimes of power and knowledge, allow for liberties, cross-fertilizations, experimentations and creations that have been annulled and repressed in other fields of thought.

Politics of Deception
Politics of Rehearsal (2008) of Francis Alÿs it is a work that presents modernity as a form of repetition that never reaches any final end. Modernity is a form of rehearsal as a structure of temporality. In the video a striper is taking her clothes off in a mise-en-scène. The repetition is the condition of the disappointment and this is not a form of representation but rather a form of being in time.

While the striper is dancing in front of the camera that is in frame curator Cuauhtémoc Medina, who is out of camera, asserts:

> I was rethinking the implication of the rehearsal as a comment on modernity, and what becomes immediately obvious is the notion that modernity is pornographic. I mean, there's this sort of representation of something that looks incredibly appealing, incredibly exciting, but even as it displays itself, it's impossible to appropriate it, it's like an exercise in mere arousal, not of meeting or coupling, and in a certain way, the fact that the piece is a constant postponement, what it does is to show that what the spectator wants is precisely to maintain this arousal, not really to arrive anywhere but to keep oneself aroused, which is in some way what the stripper seeks to do, and more so in this case, where time has kind of been…
> Diluted and extended. (Alÿs, 2005).

The *mise-en-scène* that is executed in *Politics of Rehearsal* does not only elaborate an argument, by Mexican curator and art historian Cuauhtémoc Medina on modernization as a form of time and subjectivity, but also rehearses with the repetitions of identity that project the fantasy, sometimes in the form of desire —the "exoticism" of the stripper—, and others as an allergy —the opera song as an exclusion of a partition of the sensible, where the "dancer" is always mute.

Politics of Rehearsal stands both as a critique, in the sense of an exploration to the conditions of possibility of modernization, and as a poetical devise that allows us to enter in a world of delirium. The repetition of rehearsals of a striper, which stands to the other as its fantasy, assumes here the condition of production. The fiction then it is not the copy of the real but the way reality is constructed. Politics of rehearsal is then a form of temporality that based in the promise of the future as progress creates time as a repetition. With this work Francis Alÿs elaborate a history of deception where disappointment is not a form of consolation but rather a political device to deactivate time as arousal.

The work of art is slippery and its body is propagated in space, affording, at least for an instant, the possibility that its intensity might run across our skin. In addition to its signifying representation —a field of radical importance, since that is the site from which the poetics of signification are constituted— the work of art can be a device that activates a territory of paradoxes. And these can operate visibly and invisibly, acting upon the skin, drawing on sensation to mobilize atrophied senses, and thus opening new relationships with the world.

Politics of Rehearsal may be a point of departure not to think in the "Latin American Art" identity or essence but rather to re-think the formation of "Latin America" as a temporality of deception. If we consider Latin America in this frame what could it mean to use the notion of Latin America?

Conclusion
The category of "Latin Americanness," as I have tried to show, presents serious problems, since it is inscribed in an epistemic system of violence that is at once theological and productive of subjects based on an allergy toward the Other, and the case of its use as a designation for artistic practices is no less serious. Nevertheless, more than appealing to its elimination under the aspiration of a

language foreign to the civilizing violence, this category can operate on the one hand as a construction that does not attempt to hide its violent, imposed condition and, on the other, as a space of utilization that enters the international scene to boycott and cheat representations of the Other that are based on the projection of fear while simultaneously clearing a space for a poetics that allows delirium to work, not from within rationality, but from affectivity.

More than just appealing to a "true" tradition or identity of “Latin Americanness”, what I am proposing here is a search, in both criticism and poetics, as forms of dismantling epistemological formations that maintain a politics of domination. To search for practices that occurs, on the one hand, within the universal narrative of art — from within its language, institutions and formalization — and use them, and I underline the word “use”, to problematize temporalization, homogenization and representation as universal categories. An in the other hand, insist on looking along borders and within practices that are not situated in that narrative, and that experience new poetic forms far removed from the languages of the avant-gardes. If “Latin American” art can be a political tool, it will do so by allowing us to cheat expectations and generate new poetics out of which identities can collapse, making way for the entrance of new accounts that allow for the mobilization of the excluded, the canceled and the forgotten.

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Rubem Valentim's mixture – African (and others) dimensions of 'Latin American Art'[1]

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It is rather obvious to begin a paper in a panel 'About the epistemological and political consequences of some uses of the 'Latin American Art' label' with Latin America's 'inverted' map, made by Joaquin Torres Garcia in 1943. However, in this case it is almost unavoidable not to do so. First, because it is necessary to alter established positions in order to see some African dimensions in the art produced in that continent. Secondly, because the work of Torres Garcia is one of the references of the artist Rubem Valentim, whose work we shall be focusing here.

Like many other artists working in Brazil during the forties, fifties and sixties of the 20th Century, Valentim dialogued with the *Universalismo Constructivo* (Constructive Universalism) proposed by Torres Garcia and, specially, with its particular way of articulating plastic constructive principles to cultural signs with local and global meanings. Nevertheless, Torres Garcia's work was not the only reference of Valentim's work: he followed closely, although with purposes of his own, the researches of the painters Alfredo Volpi and Milton Dacosta. While these painters counterpointed, in a lyrical tone, the principles of the pictorial plan to the picturesque of landscapes and still lifes, Valentim articulated, with the drama inherent to the sacred, the rationality of the constructive plastic structure with the hieraticity of mythological signs of Afro-Brazilian religions.

In his 'Manifesto ainda que tardio' (Manifesto even though late), of 1976, he expresses his option: 'Intuiting my way in between the popular and the erudite, the source and the refinement […] I started seeing in the symbolic devices, in the tools of the *candomblé*, in the *abebes*, in the *paxorôs*, in the *oxês*, a type of "speech", a Brazilian visual poetics capable of configuring and synthesizing adequately the nucleus of my interest as an artist. What I wanted and continue to want is to establish a *design* (a Brazilian scratched character), a structure apt to reveal our reality – mine, at least – in terms of a sensitive order. This turned itself clear around 1955-56, when I painted the first works of the sequence which up to this day, with all its new segments, continues to unfold' (Valentim, 2001 [1976]: 29).

By re-elaborating the material culture of Afro-Brazilian religions, Valentim drew himself apart from Dacosta, with his actualizations of the European painting genres, and nearer to Volpi, who merged the plastic constructive ordination with elements of Brazilian popular ambience, such as flags and masts of *festas juninas*.[2] In this way, Valentim engaged himself in the project of revaluing popular culture in Brazil, which was so dear to Modernism in the country. In that process, he established a fundamental difference by the way in which he articulated Afro-Brazilian culture.

In the Diaspora of men and women from Africa to Brazil, under the slave-condition they and their descendents were subjected to between the 16th and the 19th Century, African artistic values, ideas, practices and objects were preserved in the different cultural institutions created by them, especially in the context of the Afro-Brazilian religions (Candomblé, Recife's Xangô, Tambor de Mina, Batuque, Umbanda). Outside the *terreiro*, they started to be valuated only after the end of slavery, in 1888.

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[1] The author thanks The Getty Foundation's support that made possible his participation in the colloquium and the Brazilian agencies (CNPq, and Faperj) for the support of his research projects.

[2] Translator's note: popular feast usually held during the month of June in Brazil; related to the pagan feast of the summer solstice, it also celebrates harvests; christened in the Middle Ages as a feast related to St. John the Baptist.

Usually conceived as artifacts, since then onwards the material culture belonging to these religious communities and to African societies was collected and preserved in police and ethnographic museums, figured by artists, studied by physicians and anthropologists. Seldom did those few associations lack prejudice; more often than not they were made with more or less social discrimination of their authors and users. Only later on did they deserve other regards from artists, critics, art historians and curators, whose exceptional efforts and enterprises conceived and presented these objects and its correlate rites as art works and practices.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, African-Brazilian cultural practices started to be figured by artists for some time. In the works of Modesto Brocos, Cecília Meireles, Oswaldo Goeldi, Antonio Gomide and others, we can observe the importance of modernism since the end of the 19th century in the process of incorporating African and Afro-Brazilian religions in the Latin American culture and social practice. It was when its material culture started to be seen as art and deserved positive regards from artists, critics, art historians and curators in Brazil. However, the greater part of the works of those Modernists was iconic and somewhat documental, and the western plastic structure, more or less modernist, was used to represent those cultural practices as exotic ones.

Outstanding amongst artists, Rubem Valentim was the first to perceive analogies between the rationality of constructive art and the mythical geometry of Afro-Brazilian religions. His idea was to configure an Afro-Brazilian art affiliated to the ideal of Brazilian Modernism: to create an art able to manifest local values and, in this way, to participate in the building of the Brazilian nation. From the mid-1950s onwards he built new signs from Euclidian geometric figures and Yoruba emblems found in the *terreiros*. He created a new plastic lexicon merging and re-elaborating ideas, principles and forms from these religions and from constructivism, connecting these cultural systems, which lay quite apart from each other in the Brazilian culture.

Valentim's compositions use mostly the *osé-Sàngó*, the double-edged hatchet that represents the lord of thunder and justice in Candomblé; his work is another example of *osé-Sàngó*'s recurrence 'in contemporary African and African Diáspora art, conveying different messages' (Lawal, 2010: 187). He also uses the trident, a plurivocal European sign incorporated as an insignia of *Èsù-Elégba*, the lord of crossroads and thresholds in Brazilian Umbanda, are recurrent. By articulating the *osé* with the trident, connecting the *orixás* (deities) *Sàngó* and *Èsú*, Valentim does not only invoke the protection, the force and the power of those divinities, whose references were essential for the Africans and Afro-descendants in getting through the terrible slave-regime, and continue to be important to face the social marginalization they have suffered since then. Counterpoising his rigid compositions with a chromatic variation rare in Brazil, due to his palette clearly marked by the use of color in certain African cultures, he makes reference to a dynamic sense of justice of Nagô origin, positing another ethics (Herkenhoff, 2006: 184).

It is neither an unthought-of realization, nor merely an ambiguous and conciliatory superposition of Afro-Brazilian and African forms on Euclidian geometry. All along his career Valentim re-elaborated his plastic references. First, he promoted mixtures with less or more impure symbolic elements, and with dense significance. Secondly, he also merged plastic and symbolic structures by articulating the *pejis* (altars) of Afro-Brazilian religious communities to the current tridimensional researches in western art since the 1950s and 1960s, overcoming the traditional paradigms in western painting and sculpture. His work is the result of a consciously elaborated artistic project, beginning with his transit between the artistic and the religious, from his habit of attending religious communities, which was assimilated in the family's daily life and socially shared during his childhood, to his passage through the *Escola de Belas Artes* of the city of Salvador, where he was born and lived during the first part of his life, and later in his professional life in artistic circles of cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Rome, São Paulo and Brasilia.

The confrontation between Constructivism and Afro-Brazilian religious mythology is a way of playing down the ideologies of those two cultural systems, that is, a way of corroding not only the condition of absoluteness each of these systems have in their own cultural context, but the western system's condition in the world's context as well. One criticizes the other: reason mingles with myth as basis of an open, cosmological symbology. In ‘transmuting fetishes in images and liturgical signs in plastic abstract signs’, in the words of Mario Pedrosa (Pedrosa, 2001 [1967]: 39), Valentim was betting on their actuality, on their contemporary potential, as well as giving them a public presence in opposition to the usual marginalization in Brazilian society. By contaminating the rational plastic with mythological elements of cultures classified as primitive by western rationalism, Valentim played a part in the process of criticizing rationalism and the alleged superiority position of western culture. However, it needs to be added that Valentim wanted to go beyond the fusion of European and African plastic structures, inasmuch as he intended to incorporate references of the native nations. He begins his manifesto saying: ‘My plastic-visual-signographic language is linked to the profound mythic values of an Afro-Brazilian culture (mestiza-animist-fetishist)’ (Valentim, 2001 [1976]: 28). This is confirmed when he introduces one of the key-elements of his work, Bahia, ‘city product of a great collective synthesis expressed in the fusion of ethnic and cultural elements of European, African and Amerindian origin’ (Valentim, 2001 [1976]: 28).

And he went further beyond, since the Constructivist, Afro-Brazilian and Native cultures references were for Valentim a mere basis for a new cosmological plastic, which ended up incorporating signs of mystery and religiousness of other cultural systems: Christianity, Taoism, Tarot, I Ching, Bhagavad-Gita.

Besides being original, Valentim’s artistic project has great relevancy and actuality. His attempt to reconcile critically the universal and the regional, the erudite and the popular, art and religion, has been continued until today by some artists such as Emanoel Araújo, Ronaldo Rego, and Jorge dos Anjos.

Valentim’s work also helps us see how the African dimensions of Latin American art are seldom viewed and thought about. Politically, this oblivion is a way of silencing the African contributions and presence in Latin America. An epistemological consequence of this omission is not to see the anti-essentialist character, multiplicity and particularities of the artistic production which is labeled as ‘Latin American’ art.

His work makes us think of the contacts and exchanges between Africa and Latin America, between the southern regions of the planet. Not as a means of substituting reflections centered in Europe and focused on North-South relations for studies that consider Latin America as a center and focus solely on South-South exchanges. The challenge seems to be the constitution of a field of multifocal decentralized reflection and action, oriented by the specificities of each work, author and theme in analysis.

Omissions, silence and challenges that have to be faced by art history’s different fronts of action. This implies the constitution of another history of art. Can museums and art collections produced in Latin America continue being formed merely in correlation with art produced in Europe and the United States? And concerning theoretical references, should only the Avant-garde and other European and North-American artistic and philosophic movements be taken into consideration? When shall the contributions of native systems of thought, and of other regions that cross transversely artistic practices in their global multiplicity, be seen and thought of? What challenges does that other history of art lay to the writing of art history and expography? Can university courses and art history books still keep leaning upon notions of linear time and homogenous space anchored in European

centrality? Wouldn't it be the chance of constituting a decentralized, heterogeneous, in continuous process of elaboration, history of art?

Just before finishing, I cannot resist bringing forward another work in dialogue with the cartography problem. In *Am.Lat.* (short for America Latina, i.e. Latin America), Anna Bella Geiger overlaps three figures to a map of the Latin-American continent: an *amuleto* (a *figa*, an amulet in the shape of a closed hand, with the thumb in between index and middle finger), a *mulata* (feminine of mulatto) and a *muleta* (a crutch, a support for a lame person), criticizing the vision of Latin America as a subservient storehouse of sexuality and mysticism. Within this image lies a critique to the consensus that art produced in Latin America is a mere sub-product of hegemonic artistic forces. As a sign of artistic emancipation and challenge to art history, I offer the mixture elaborated by Rubem Valentim.

Translation
Elena O'Neill

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Rundle and Return – The Hybrid Tiger of SA Fashion

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South African Fashioned Identities

South Africa has witnessed a kind of fashion revolution during the last 15 years seeing a rise of individual signature designers; some of whom have negotiated a shift between formally Eurocentric and Afrocentric leanings, others have engaged with a new cultural hybridity[1] and yet others still, have worked with a multiplicity of histories and traumas of our recent past. The apartheid era left behind many scars; including rampant poverty, anger and inequality, divided histories and crime[2]. Shortly after the first democratic elections in 1994, South Africans witnessed the public hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission[3] (TRC) held in an attempt to uncover 'truth' in terms of apartheid-era human rights violations. This attempt to 'heal the past', exposed events and experiences of both pain and shame across a broad spectrum of the South African society[4]. The active reflection upon the past, raised questions with regards to collective and national histories, the construction of new narratives, and the development of new national identities.

These public re-presentations, through the TRC, exposed the complexity and multiplicity of both collective and personal memory[5] within South Africa; much of which was deeply traumatic. The challenge for many South Africans to re-negotiate these concepts of the past, and in some instances, completely rewrite these histories, presented a quest for memory, as the search for one's identity investigated the origins and meanings of a collective history[6]. Pierre Nora (1989: 7) argued that through "the perception that anything and everything may disappear", an obsession with memory is created which takes root in the concrete; often in spaces, gestures, images and objects as *lieux de mémoire*[7]. This consciousness of a break with the past reflects what has occurred in the past 15 years in South Africa, where so many environments of memory have been challenged, questioned, lost and re-negotiated, and where this has necessitated the emergence of new sites of memory.

As South Africans dealt with the country's democratic transformation, the problematic of history and memory in terms of concepts of nationhood, identity and wounding became the focus of much visual

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[1] I use the term hybridity here with reference to Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1985) whereby individuation within cultures reverses the effects of colonialism, and other "denied" knowledges and identities enter the dominant discourse.

[2] The apartheid government represented a minority rule of discriminatory prejudices and rights accorded by race.

[3] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was a court-like body at which individuals who felt they had been victims of violence could come forward and perpetrators of violence could request amnesty upon giving testimony. Annie E. Coombes explores the impact and complexity of this in *History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa*, 2003: pp 243-278. Coombes includes Desmond Tutu's opening address 15 April 1996, where the commission's brief was to "unearth the truth about our dark past, to lay the ghosts of the past so that they will not return to haunt us and that we will thereby contribute to the healing of a traumatised and wounded people, for all of us in South Africa are wounded people, and in this manner to promote national unity and reconciliation".

[4] (ibid.)

[5] Coombes (2003: 8) accounts for the individual subjective experience and shared social processes that influence the representation of remembrances and of the past. In addition, research on witnessing and testimony collected in the aftermath of genocide, war, or systematic political repression (such as in South Africa) has pointed to the impact of trauma on collective memory.

[6] Pierre Nora, 'Between History and Memory'. In *Representations*, Spring 1989, pp 7-24. Nora describes the dialectics of history and memory in a modern world where these terms have fundamentally become opposite.

[7] (ibid.) *Lieux de memoire* are described as sites of memory that are simultaneously material and symbolic.

and cultural production, including fashion[8]. Evidence of memory and its traces, as well as new historical imaginings, have impacted on the diversity of South African fashion in the years following 1994. It is through this renegotiation of the past that we begin to find the representations of memory that evoke both the country's past and its attempted reconciliation[9].

Walter Benjamin called these traces of the past the 'tiger's leap' or 'tigersprung'[10] of fashion. These traces are tools that map the modern or present, rather than chart the past, and offer a means to manage the changes in the structure of experience in modern life: one that is characterised by violent jolts, alienation and dislocation[11]. Caroline Evans [in writing about fashion at the end of the 20th C] (2003: 22) analyses Benjamin's metaphor of fashion as a historical labyrinth, which allows for the juxtaposition of historical images with contemporary ones in a form that doubles back on itself. Evans (2003: 25) argues that this labyrinthian attempt to position what is most modern (fashion) in a relationship with the past, reflects historical fragments of a trauma, instability or transience from other eras, and that these often come back under the weight of a cultural trauma as a layering of memory traces, *Trauma theory* suggests that events which pose crises continue to reverberate in the present and to shape the future. In this sense the contemporary preoccupation with trauma, understood as an important articulation of the past, will surface in creative and cultural practices.

I have chosen to focus on a recent Clive Rundle collection, Summer 2009, for this paper. Rundle (b. 1962) consistently explores the potential of making social commentary through his work. This collection offers an opportunity to investigate how fashion can communicate issues relevant to the politics of the past in relation to the politics of the present. Rundle's use of fashion as a metaphor of history and time, treats fashion in such a way that it acts as a *palimpsest*[12]: a concept which has been used to explain the psychologies of trauma (Freud) and also the layering visible in architecture and in studies of the urban environment. Applying the notion of the palimpsest to fashion is less common[13], as fashion is generally perceived as a representation of the new; fashioning new products or objects from new materials, with little value placed upon physical or material pasts, histories, narratives or patinas.

The ambiguity and chaos seen in this collection (but also found in much of Rundle's other work) acts a reflection of the larger South African context. Rundle's work engages with notions of trauma, history and memory, in much the same way that other South Africa visual artists and cultural producers explore the anxieties and notions of alienation and dislocation in the context of contemporary social, economic, cultural and technological transformation.

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[8] Sarah Nuttall in *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-Apartheid* (2009:117) explores the re-appropriation and transformation of cultural codes of the past, in terms of 'self-styling' with reference to fashion and identity constructions in a post-apartheid generation.

[9] In 'The Weave of Memory: *Screen* in post-apartheid South Africa', Art Journal, Spring 2002, Andrés Mario Zervigón offers an analysis that investigates the role of memory in the construction of contemporary South African art and re-definitions of the past and present.

[10] Walter Benjamin, trans. Zohn H (1973 [1939]), *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, London: Fontana/Collins.

[11] Ibid.

[12] *Palimpsest* as a term, denotes a manuscript written over a partly erased older manuscript in such a way that the old words can be read beneath the new. The concept of the palimpsest is also used to understand the developing complexity of cultures, as previous 'inscriptions' are erased and overwritten, yet remain as traces within present consciousness, especially in the post-colonial experience (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffen, *Key Concepts*: 176).

[13] Palimpsest differs from *Historicism* which also features in contemporary fashion, and which generally refers to a fashion cycle or form of nostalgia that highlights or references styles of the past with specific attention given to the aesthetic, nostalgic qualities of the historical period being referenced.

Rundle and Return
Rundle presented a photographic, video, sketch and text journal (of the 40 days that culminated in this Summer 2009 collection) to offer insight into the work, the process and the evolution of the collection: from initial concept to final actualisation; a process which in Rundle's words continues to "find the chaos and embrace the impossible"[14]. This Summer 2009 collection showed at South African Fashion Week at the Turbine Hall in Johannesburg (04/04/2009).

Like black and white photographs, this collection presented a blurring of the past with the present. Rundle used specific items that reference the past. Stockings (in black or white), suspender elastics (in nude) and slip dresses specifically referenced turn of the century, historical styles. Ulrich Lehmann (2000: 47) identifies references to a historical feminine ideal in poetry, art and contemporary fashion; of women who lift their skirts to reveal their stockings and lace-up boots. These stockings and boots have become markers of time as representations of sartorial positions within a timeline. Lehmann argues that fashion is infinitely self-referential, with each detail quoting or referring back to the past (2000: 106). It is this 'tiger's leap' into the past that Benjamin used to describe fashion as having a *"sense of the modern wherever it stirs in the thicket of what has been"*[15] (1939). Nora describes this identification of a past in the present as a site of memory, where memory becomes the bond linking the memory and past, to an eternal present (1989: 19).

Rundle's use of both styles and accessories that carry historical associations and meanings presents a recycling of the symbolic narratives or codes rather than offer a material recycling, as he did in previous collections. Rundle's approach reconfigures the inherent narratives. By re-positioning the references of these items, in juxtaposition with the present, and in layers that blur the edges between their pasts, Rundle fuses time in layers. His use of layering, at times through sheerness, openings of the outer layers or suggestion, exposes the physical process of constructing surfaces that bear witness to the previous layers. In this sense Rundle approaches the fashioned ensemble or outfit as a palimpsest, where evidence of time is inscribed in both the details and in the layering.

A number of contemporary international designers have explored this witnessing of time; most notably, fashion designers Hussein Chalayan (Evans 2003: 240) and Martin Margiela[16]. Their work explores the affects and effects of time through the use of materials, shapes or details that critique similar fragmentations and dislocations of contemporary environments. Ideas of re-using cloth, history, concept or image, are key to how memory is embedded in fashion. Rundle's use of techniques include ageing processes, tailoring techniques that reference past skills and crafts, and the use of patterns that contain structural memories, in the development of his collections[17]. Evans (2003: 278) describes Benjamin's '*tigersprung*' as fleeting glimpses of the past as they flicker on the surface of what is presented as the modern. Rundle's use of transparency, cut-outs, and asymmetry, allow for these glimpses of history in this complex layering of meaning. Susan Buck-Morss in *The Dialectics of Seeing* (1991: 250) argues, how, in the juxtaposition of images of the past and the present, new meanings are often created, by tracing previously concealed connections[18].

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[14] Notes taken at a discussion presentation held 09 June 2009, Johannesburg.
[15] Walter Benjamin's work has been addressed in depth by a number of fashion academics recently, including Ulrich Lehmann, Carolyn Evans, Christopher Breward, etc.
[16] Kaat Debo ed. *Maison Martin Margiela, '20' The Exhibition*. The Fashion Museum of the Province of Antwerp, MoMu, 2008. Margiela 'couture' records the number of hours invested in the production of the garment (measures of time), uses materials that carry along the traces of a garment's previous life (passages of time), and experiments with momentary materials or decaying characteristics in materials (power of time).
[17] From notes taken at a discussion presentation 09 June 2009, Johannesburg, where Rundle described his use of certain processes and techniques that were integral to the development of the individual textiles used in the collection.
[18] See Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project,* MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, 1991.

Speaking at the Annual South African Fashion Week Seminar (24/04/2009), Rundle presented a discussion that outlined his use of fashion as a metaphor for a *second skin*; one that can be worn, layered, and shed in a symbolically, metamorphic process. This notion of fashion as skin highlights a past problematic of race and identity in South Africa. As apartheid's measure of hierarchy and opportunity focussed on the tones and textures of one's skin, the rhetoric of race remains in post-apartheid dialogue in terms of acknowledging and addressing these past (mis)understandings of race and separatism. Rundle often selects models for his collections that highlight the multiplicity of race in South Africa. The use of black stockings on white models and light stockings on black models further exposes a politics of their skin. In Rundle's presentations, choice and change are reflected as these fashion models engage in a political and personal interface of a nation in transformation. Using Benjamin's notion of the explosive that is fashion, Lehmann argues that fashion reflects both a political and material concept of history (2000; 235).

The monochromatic tones of this collection further positions Rundle's intention to comment on notions of blackness and whiteness: a concept explored by other contemporary South African creative practitioners and artists[19]. As evidenced in Rundle's previous displays of 'black and white', this colour dialectic challenges the notion of neutrality, and raises questions of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' that are closely linked to surface, to flesh, to skin, and to identity. It is the idea of blackness and whiteness now sharing the same bodies in Rundle's work, which blurs these notions of representation and identity. Rundle's irreverent references to political slogans (completed in silver sequins in this collection) further deal with political statements[20].

The use of volume, wrapping and mis-happen shapes that billow, protect, suspend and cling in this collection further interrogate and imitate the urban landscape surrounding his studio where makeshift structures convey homelessness, poverty, vulnerability and survival[21]. Rundle's use of these 'found materials' reflects the politics of this urban context, as he assembles his collections as a *bricolage*[22], making creative and resourceful use of materials that are at hand, including netting, tape, packaging and padding.

Healing in Transition

South Africa's transition that witnessed both confessional and contentious voices in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) exposed artists to the multiple traumatic experiences and inequalities, and elicited numerous forms of rupture with history and identity. The diversity of responses that surrounded the TRC often heightened, rather than resolved, these differences[23].

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[19] Sarah Nuttall, Antjie Krog, Nandipha Mntambo, Lolo Veleko, Nicholas Hlobo, Pieter Dirk Uys, Craig Native, Stoned Cherrie, are a few literary, visual and fashion practitioners who position and question these false identity constructs around race and identity.

[20] The Dalia Lama was refused an entry visa to South Africa to participate in a peace conference in Cape Town, days before the SSAFW shows, with the then finance minister (Trevor Manuel) questioning the public outcry.

[21] In this sense Rundle's work reflects recent investigations into the built environment and the dressed body. See *Fashion and Modernity*, eds. C. Breward & C. Evans, Berg, Oxford, 2005 and Lucy Orta's *Refuge Wear & Body Architecture* projects.

[22] *Bricolage,* is a term used in several disciplines, among them visual arts and literature to refer to the construction or creation of a work from a diverse range of things which happen to be available, or a work created by such a process. In a paper "Dividuality in Fashion Design: An Ethnography of the Dress" to be presented at the 4th International Conference on Design Principles and Practices in Chicago, February 2010, Caroline Taylor of Wits Anthropology Dept, Johannesburg expands upon how "through the imagination of the designer as bricoleur, the partible nature of the design team - artist, pattern cutter, machinist, model, photographer and client is distilled and illuminated. The anthropological lens refracts positionality, centrifugal and centripetal forces, and energies, voice(s), mood(s) and the logistics of a constructivist design field."

[23] Ibid.

Because the past meant such vastly different things to different people, its terms were often difficult to process collectively. A number of visual artists in South Africa[24] work with various notions of trauma, memory and history, for example; William Kentridge (erasure, power and identity) and Penny Siopis (trauma and history), Siemon Allen (memory and archive), Senzeni Marasela (Memory and identity), Berni Searle (gender and history), and Steven Cohen (trauma and sexuality)[25]. Questions are raised whether this exploration of memory initiates a discourse on South Africa's recent history, or whether it constitutes nostalgia for the country's first phase of transition[26].

Nora (1989: 11) argues that a quest for memory is the search for one's history, and with the acceleration of history, this responsibility of memory has become simultaneously individualised and multiplied, fragile and diversified[27]. Many South Africans experiencing a sudden rupture with history have attached memory to 'sites' in an attempt to either restore a historical continuity or to renegotiate their pasts. The debates about history and memory in a post-apartheid era have created a preoccupation with multiple traumas. The need for sites of memory that are self-referential, personal and experiential constitutes the major difference between memory and history according to Nora (1989: 15-16), where history remains external and impersonal, as a representation of the past and a reconstruction, which is always problematic and incomplete. Is it the need to go in search of a new histories and identities that has created an obsession with memory or is it the notion of oppressed historical trauma that is resurfacing in an attempt to heal the wounds of the past?

Evans in *Fashion at the Edge* (2003: 296) draws on works of Foucalt, Freud, and Buck-Morss to investigate these traces of the past that, as they surface in the present, carry elements of the 'stressed' or 'repressed'. Evans (2003: 199) argues that fashion designers often locate memory traces in the context of historical rather than personal trauma and shock, and thereby relate their work to larger questions of history. Adopting this position of Evans within a local, South African context, allows me to identify the role of fashion as a metaphor for healing and transformation in South Africa, with the ability of fashion designers to act out or portray the current instability and transience[28].

Objects, images and items can remain haunted by previous meanings and associations. The semiotics encoded in fashion as a means of communicating transformation could begin to negotiate consensus on historical discourses and identity constructs in South Africa, despite its citizens' diverse experience of the past. The danger posed by this idea is that images or objects circulating in a contemporary South African landscape may not be able to question the meanings or memories without at times, also spectacularising them. Rundle's use of masks as accessories in this collection, reference this

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[24] Annie E. Coombes explores the impact of this event in a number of group exhibitions and artists' work in *History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa*. Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2003: pp 243-278.

[25] Trade Routes: History+Geography, Johannesburg Biennale 1998, and Africa Remix, Johannesburg 2008 were two large scale exhibitions that highlighted some of the issues explored by South African artists.

[26] Andrés Mario Zervigón. 'The Weave of Memory: *Screen* in post-apartheid South Africa'. *Art Journal*, Spring 2002.

[27] Pierre Nora, 'Between History and Memory'. *Representations*, Spring 1989, pp 7-24. Nora describes this break with the past as crucial to the value of memory in a modern society.

[28] Caroline Evans, *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity & Deathliness*. Yale University Press, New Haven and New York, 2003. Evans describes these traces of the past that surface in the present like the return of the repressed. Fashion designers call up these ghosts of modernity and offer a paradigm that is different from the historian's paradigm, remixing fragments of the past into something new. Because traumatic memories are experienced with a sense of great vividness and immediacy they seem to retain an indelible imprint of the past and thereby an incontestable link with history in an era of simulation. Traumatic experience disengages the subject from the historical agency at the same time as it registers historical change.

dialectic; of notions of the crafted and the modern, of an African and Eurocentric interface, and of negotiating both authenticity and fashionability.

This fusion of associations echoes Sarah Nuttall's "entangled histories" that enable codes and meanings to be re-appropriated and transformed when used in the work of fashion designers as they are brought to life anew, remixed in a cross-pollinated and ambiguous present (2009: 108)[29]. These forms of hybridity or hybrid presentations can be read as instances of hybridity in reference to Bhabha's argument of colonial hybridity, which, as a cultural form, produces ambivalence[30]. Post-apartheid South Africa presents a similar identity construct to the postcolonial elsewhere, which Bhabha (1994) argued as becoming sites that embody hybridity, often in association with negotiations around authority and power. The postcolonial subject negotiates the present as a palimpsest surface, often questioning the patterns of past writings and erasures on land and bodies, reading the politics of the traces of the past, in the layers of the present. Fashion similarly acts as a palimpsest. Lehmann (2000: 210) claims that fashion is an indispensible catalyst for remembrance, and often acts out new political concepts of history.

In conclusion, Clive Rundle's work has often been compared to that of Rei Kawakubo of Commes de Garcons, Maison Martin Margiela, and Hussein Chalayan. Understanding the technical skills that underpin the composition and complexity of these international designers and their work is critical to the comparison to Rundle's work. Much has been written about the use of the term '*deconstruction*' in relation to their approach to fashion, which entails the demonstration of constructed-ness.[31] Using this concept of deconstruction as a demonstration of constructedness, Rundle's work can be seen in terms of these tailoring techniques, the treatment of details and the shapes, but also importantly the way in which the work questions craft, value and function. This notion also applies to Rundle's investigations into the constructions of self through fashion. Much of Rundle's work therefore acts as political metaphors of the transformation and chaos in South Africa as a deconstruction of the ideologies and identities in a post-apartheid context.

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[30] Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) analyses the liminality of hybridity as a paradigm of colonial anxiety.

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The Pensive Image: Beyond Photography's Representational Function

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It is in no uncertain terms that French critic and writer, Roland Barthes recognizes the photographic image as a complex agent within 20th century visual culture. Observing that, "society is concerned to tame the photograph, to temper the madness which keeps threatening to explode in the face of whoever looks at it" (Barthes 1981:117), the slight esoteric nature of his prophecy serves as a disquieting foreboding regarding the representational function conventionally attached to the photograph. Three decades later, and Barthes' description of the latent disaster is still valid within an almost-fully digitized visual environment. The implied mimeticism and discursive revolt underlying his statement serves as a suitable point of departure for a re-evaluation of the medium's representational function within contemporary art practice.

Drawing on discourses surrounding the concept of the everyday and the infidelity of visual truth, I aim to probe the photograph's ability to surpass (or rather, surprise) its documentary function through the medium's paradoxical nature. The obvious discrepancy between the photograph as a mimetic, fragment of reality as well as its idealized pictorialist heritage, serves as a platform from which to investigate the medium's ability to coax, influence and inspire. Lien Botha's series, *Parrot Jungle* (2009) serves as photographic reference, illustrating a process whereby documentary photography is re-established as an eccentric version of factual observation. Unbound by conventional modes of composition, or note-worthy imagery, her images elicit an alternative response to the photograph's representational function. It is perhaps her approach that visualizes the conviction of my argument most effectively, namely that the photograph should become the site of a more "sensate wisdom".

When the first photographic images (daguerreotype) were described as "paintings of light", and "not copies of nature, but portions of nature herself" (Morris in Sekula 1982:86) it became obvious that the mimetic relationship between the photograph and its referent was bound to be mainly validated through the camera's technical attributes.

The underlying Cartesian ideology that framing the photograph as trustworthy recording tool, has a tempering influence on a view of so-called reality. This myth of photographic truth, influenced by the photograph's mimetic nature, is touched upon by Susan Sontag in her article, *Against Interpretation* (1990). She argues that Plato's formulation of the concept mimesis created a dichotomy in the appreciation of the art object. Not only has a dialectical tradition of discursive analysis been born, but the consequent division between form and content served as the impetus that lead to the art object being judged according to its meaning, with the result that the sensate and immediate appreciation of the object is left outside consideration.

Sontag's view of interpretation, as a process that only presents a tame version of the art object, is similarly found in Kevin Robins discussion of the photograph. He declares that interpretation always harbours the seed of its own destruction, namely that the discursive rests ("that which remains outside") is always present as counter-productive other of complete understanding. It is therefore obvious that the photograph will always be liable to a "notorious, epistemological slipperiness" (Mellville 2005:104) – I would like to argue that it is perhaps the ideal place where a constructive investigation of photography's representational function could be started. Stephen Mellville declares: "This tearing of photography between oppositional extremes is precisely what we need to begin to map an expanded field for its practice" (2005:104). Barthes' aforementioned division between the tame and mad approach to the photograph is according to Patrick Brantlinger

(2001:255) dependent on the choices that the photographer and theorists make in terms of their discursive points of departure.

It is in this regard that Lien Botha's work presents itself as an ideal visual reference in an investigation which depends on a multidisciplinary view to inspect, if not to diagnose the madness which threatens the gaze of the unsuspecting viewer.

Botha's attitude towards her preferred medium is aptly described in her own words, when she says: "I am an artist specializing in lens-based work" (Botha in O'Toole, 2006). She places the focus first on her subjective input in the creative process, and then names the photograph as the realization of her creative impulses. When considering her evocative series, called *Amendments* (2006) the nagging suspicion that her photographs downplay their function as "merely", truthful copies of reality, is ever present. The fourteen "visual statements" that consists of three photographs each, express an outlandish and somewhat esoteric viewpoint of objects and scenes – undeniably linked to reality, yet destabilizing the existence of its very appearance. The carefully thought-out phrases that accompany each set of images serves as further proof that *Amendments* does not peddle with answers as is conventionally expected of subtitles. Mary Corrigall's (2009) description of this work emphasizes this point when she states: "Botha clearly wishes to create transcendental statements that operate above the level of empirical knowledge […] it is also a way of denying the documentary function of photography" (Corrigall, 2009).

When these aspects of the work are considered, it becomes obvious that the viewer has entered a territory where only intuition can serve as a tentative guide through the limited clues left by Lien Botha. It is however, within this seemingly dissatisfying position that the viewer is about to find a more rewarding experience. The backdoor towards "a meaning" of Botha's work might be found hovering above the beaten track of a critiqued Cartesianism and an anthropological side-route concerning the link between photography and the everyday.

It is in this regard that I wish to refer to a photographic series exhibited by Botha at the Erdmann Gallery in 2009, called *Parrot Jungle*. The series visualizes an alternative view of the photograph's mimetic function on three counts. Namely in its use of titles, its subtle critique of vision, and its eccentric reassessment of the photograph as "mere" documentation.

Looking at the series of 45 images the viewer is confronted with a collection of seemingly unrelated scenery, individuals and objects. In her article, *The unhistorical history of Lien Botha's Parrot Jungle,* Bronwyn Law-Viljoen (2009) explains that the viewer is presented with the almost impossible task of carefully examining an empty plastic container, parking-space and shadow against a wall with undivided attention. "These are simple, even beautiful things", she explains, "but of what interest are they to us beyond this mundane objectness? Of what do they speak if not themselves?" (Law-Viljoen, 2009). Apart from being silent sentinels of Botha's daily routine, marking the seemingly unimportant moments, scenes and objects that accompany her on her way to other projects or places, these images also demand an altered sense of looking.

Conventionally observation is perceived as a self-explanatory given, presenting the world in a non-intruding way. The scene/"seen" is seemingly guided by the rational will of the viewer guaranteeing the objectivity of an "all-perceiving eye" (Elkins 1996:11) This belief is however far removed from the silent motives of the observation process and the viewer's own fragmented desires (Elkins 1996:11). As James Elkins comprehensively explains: "[Seeing] is entangled in the passions […] and it is soaked in affect – in pleasure and displeasure, and in pain. Ultimately, seeing alters the thing that is being seen and transforms the seer. Seeing is metamorphosis, not mechanism (Elkins 1996:11,12).

If the straightforward character of observation is unmasked as an inconsistent process, then the conventions traditionally determining the roles and functions of the viewer and image have also been unsettled. One of the first aspects that need to be re-established is the binary category dividing the viewer and image within an active/passive binary opposition. It naturally implies the presence of Jacques Lacan's concept of the gaze which implicates the inanimate object as the forming aspect of the viewer's sense of self. Within the context of Botha's *Parrot Jungle*, however, the viewer's disillusionment with the photograph's purely mimetic function could also be found in the deceivingly simple relationship between image and title. A photographic work by Jeff Wall, discussed in an article by Shep Steiner (2007) illustrates this exact point and shares a surprisingly close resemblance to Botha's approach in *Parrot Jungle* by uncovering the silent revolt headed by the photograph's title.

Clipped Branches (2001) depicts a single tree, pruned to the bone, with a group of freshly cut branches nervously grouped near the stem. The complete ensemble forms an uncomfortable composition (quite a-typical to Wall's expected style) and is emphasized by the banal coarseness of the surrounding sidewalk. The viewer almost immediately feels the urge to consult the only meaningful clue for this mute image, namely the title. According to Steiner the viewer should however not be deceived to believe that the title would present some sense of meaning or enlightenment. The moment where the viewer turns from a difficult photograph to an empty title merely describing the work, is the moment in which the photograph shows her active capacity to overwhelm the viewer interpretive frameworks. As Steiner explains: "Clipped Branches does not gesture to its title as a simple depository of meaning, but rather more as a site of a possible gap or insufficiency in knowledge" (Steiner, 2007).

It is through this gap in meaning that the photograph sidesteps it's function as dissectible text and forces the viewer into different modes of interaction. Similarly in *Parrot Jungle* the viewer is confronted with an uncertain message through visual codes that are not explained by titles like, *Staff parking*, *Company Gardens, Cape Town* or *Cymbiflora sign, R44, Firlands*. The latter image is a good example of the way in which the overwhelming muteness of the weather-beaten nursery sign is hardly enlightened by the accompanying title. The tropical bird is depicted with downplayed humour as exotic immigrant in Firlands, but a clearer message is always beyond the viewer's comprehension. The seeming emptiness of the images is probably the main reason why each photo has the ability to serve as a code or mnemonic of a greater reference framework. Botha's images seem to emphasize her concern with the transience and impossible ownership of scenes that are depicted in *Parrot Jungle* rather than being a document.

In this regard the unique contribution of the concept of the "everyday" serves as an interesting side-route in the investigation of an alternative representational function of the photographic image. The everyday presents an approach that broadens our systematic view of our environment to include an inclination for that which is ever incomprehensible. Henri Lefebvre whose research is based on a critical view of the everyday as easily dissected life-routine declares: "Everyday life is defined by what is left over after all distinct, superior, specialized; structured activities have been singled out by analysis […] the everyday is precisely what lies outside the disciplines of knowledge" (Lefebvre in Highmore 2002:3). This by-route of the everyday clearly emphasizes "experience" as important factor and brings us ideally in front of Botha's *Parrot Jungle*. As the American philosopher, John Dewey argues it is experience that bridges the divide between the isolated art object and the outside world. It is from this position/context that the subject lives through his/her sensations, eventually crystallized through the observed image (in Cooper & Lamarque 1997:209). Botha's work aptly engages with this complex relationship between the artwork and the everyday. Not only does her unique application of the photographic medium question the relationship between the image and referent, but her unsettling use of "everyday" objects, scenes and places actually disarms our vague indifference to mere routine. When observed from this point of view *Parrot Jungle*'s mildly bland

images of curtains without a view and cement-grey parking area serves as a visual confirmation of the way in which the everyday surpasses the routine and exposes experiences beyond the visual.

Vincent Crapanzano and Ellen Corin, both American anthropologists, refer to a similar frame of mind which they respectively call “the scene” and “the shadowside of fieldwork”. Both concepts refer to a discursive approach sensitive to the fragmented narratives harboured within their experiential research field. Corin believes that the ethnographer’s interaction with his/her environment often surpasses collected material data (whether image or text) as trustworthy, objective evidence. There is always an unnamable surplus in the moments of experience that negates any hope of a transparent or objective interpretation thereof.

Similarly Botha uses photography (conventionally praised for the transparent objectivity to create an “unsettled, unresolved and compelling event” (Jamal 2002:5). Ashraf Jamal emphasizes that the key to an understanding to Botha’s work is precisely the conflicting collaboration between a medium that is traditionally seen as the carrier of objective reality statements en her subjects that works against a belief in such an approach. In his own words: “Botha synthesizes the elements on a plane unsuitable to them” (Jamal 2002:3) and uses the photographic medium to expose the “mystery of what it does not reveal” (2002:3). It is perhaps this uncomfortable relationship between the photograph (that presents a trust in vision as the carrier of verifiable knowledge) and Botha’s focus on “charged silences” (Jamal 2002:3) that lead to descriptions of her work as imbued with a “supressed restlessness” and “psychic discomfort” - a sure sign that the effects of the everyday is involved.

Like Jamal explains: “Botha evokes suspension and uncertainty. She compels the viewer to linger and wait. For her knowledge is not given; knowledge dawns” (2002:2). Botha thus uses the concept of the everyday to leave her viewers with a split response that is marked by both recognition and estrangement.

Literary theorist, Hans Gumbrecht’s arguments regarding the concept of “presence effects” forms an ideal link to Botha’s focus on an “silent recessiveness” (Loock in Fried 2008:21) within photographic discourse. An emphasis on the meaning of images and objects overrules (according to Gumbrecht) any attention to their material existence and therefore ignores an unexcavated area of experiential encounters (in Kramer 2009:86).

This approach deeply reminds of a Romanticist viewpoint that desires to escape from “the humdrum knowledge of modern scholarship” (in Kramer 2009:86). However, the emphasis on a more sensate variation of observable meaning/knowledge is not, I would like to argue, an essential project towards fundamentalist understanding, but it shows a gap in comprehension. Roland Barthes’ ontological re-evaluation regarding the nature of photography links to this thought when he asks: “[W]hat does my body know of Photography” (Barthes in Robins 1995:39).

This statement moves beyond a mere “muscular mimicry” to unite the photograph as encrypted message and the seemingly unrelated dregs of the image and the viewer’s experiential world. This inclusion of the senses as cardinal supporting actor in photographic discourses, links an experience of the photograph with a epistemological understanding thereof. This approach reframes photographic discourses “not as a question, but as a wound” (Robins 1995:39). Barthes’ re-evaluation of the discursive framework and representational function conventionally linked to the photograph, illustrates (almost as Cartesian Parody) the undeniable connection between two unlikely allies. Emotive sensations guiding the viewer in terms of his/her surroundings, are combined with well-thought-out interpretations of the photograph in a single statement by Barthes: “I see, I feel, hence I notice, I observe and I think” (Barthes in Robins 1995:39). An understanding of the representational

function of the photo can therefore not be considered in isolation of accompanying sensations (1995:39).

Lien Botha's discursive approach towards the photograph as patina of a lived experience, emphasizes this trust in a more sensate reading thereof. As Charlene Truter explains with regards to Botha's work: "[G]esprekke en wandelinge [word] met [Botha] onvermydelik 'n studie in die uitruil van sintuie – proe met jou vel, hoor met jou oë, voel met jou ore die verwagting in die stilte op 'n eiland soos die"[1] (Truter 2010:8). The misleading muteness expressed by mere appearances in Botha's photographs, however hides the sensate investments that form a consciously interwoven and subliminally present subtext in the photographs. John Berger describes it as an oracular experience that side-steps obvious photographic codes. He also recognizes the viewer as the catalyst in an understanding of the image within the context of his/her immediate environment: "Like oracles [photographs] go beyond, they insinuate further than the discrete phenomena they present, and yet their insinuations are rarely sufficient to make any more comprehensive reading indisputable. The precise meaning of an oracular statement depends on the quest or need of the one who listens to it (Berger in Robins 1995:40).

This comparison with the esoteric message of an oracle, gives a suitable description of the multifaceted nature that accompanies a sensate version of the photograph. It implies what Walter Benjamin calls "visual knowing" (in Robins1995:40), which in terms of the photo, exposes its ability to function as an unconventional carrier of discursive rests. As David MacDougall states with regards to photographic meaning: "Unlike knowledge communicated in words, what we show in [photographs] has no transparency or volition – it is a different kind of knowledge, stubborn and opaque, but with a capacity for the finest detail" (MacDougall 2006:5,6). It is at this stage that a circular route has been completed since Barthes introductory quote regarding the photograph's split function as tempered image in spite of a suppresed madness lurking beneath its discursive surface. This restrained interpretation of the photograph as carrier of an inherent meaning, relates to a Cartesian-idealism denying, but in no sense removing the influence of the subject's subconscious desires and the complex relationship between inner and outer realities.

I would like to conclude that it is Botha's distrustful use of an unlikely medium to visualize what Corin calls "the unspeakable and its significance to being human" (Corin 2007:258) that presents the photograph as a depository for difficult meanings. A constructive alternative to the photograph's documentary function might therefore just be found within the marred representational barriers of Botha's *Parrot Jungle* through the merciless format of an off-centered parking bay.

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[1] For Botha walks and conversations holds the key to a study into the reflexive nature of the senses – taste with your skin, hear with your eyes and feel with your ears the anticipation on a silent island like this [Sylt]. (Freely translated).

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Returning Photographs

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What is the fate of photography in the context of complicating the history of art and other cultural areas? Drawing from recent studies of visual culture, this paper examines why older photographs have been overlooked or neglected as cultural artefacts in scholarship and in discussions of collection and the return of cultural heritage.[1]

Figure 1: *Jean Pi's studio in Mendoza, Argentina, c. 1905. © MHNSR. Reproduced with permission of the Museo de Historia Natural de San Rafael, Argentina.*

Practising in Mendoza, Argentina, photographer Jean Pi (1875–1942) made still images of a singular aesthetic nature. In the image is Pi's first photographic studio circa 1905, a place where contemporary sitters could pose for formal portraits (note the painted images on the walls, part of accepted custom) and a representation of what becomes of photographs as objects when they encounter the extremes of a desert environment. More than a picture of photography as an institution in post-colonial Argentina, the illustration shows how photographic material becomes degraded as the result of improper handling and unchecked humidity as well as local communities' general lack of socio-political consciousness regarding the value that photographic history represents. Hundreds of glass plate negatives made by Pi at the dawn of the twentieth century are in this precarious physical state. Thus, as material that has been excluded and marginalized in the wake of endeavours to foster the preservation of culture, they demand our attention.

We need to ask serious questions as academics and professionals. Can the past be 'retrofitted' to diverse contemporary contexts? How have the discourses of traditional art and culture affected the way we see photography? Has the history of photography been misunderstood so that it now exists primarily as information? How do we respond to different modes of photography? Do we treat glass negatives as experimental objects, technology, or ephemera? What are the limits between original work and reproduction? Should the physical form of work be protected and preserved in order to represent an artist's achievement, or should collections be inexpensively archived and/or digitized? What are the possible contexts for these discussions?

This paper addresses our colloquium's concerns about the uneven distribution of resources around the world. I hope to encourage reflection on how we position image production in rhetorically prescribed discussions on heritage development in order to reduce photography to the mechanical. At the same time, my aim is to complicate the history of art by arguing against a cohesive national photographic aesthetic. But this is a much larger project. Here I want to very briefly introduce Jean Pi's early work and his emblematic pictures of rural life, images directly connected to a broad national context. Following that I will present what I have discovered about photographs and cultural heritage. Pi aimed to represent modernity critically while still making it appeal to his contemporaries.

The Life of Pi

I see the work of Jean Pi as a journey for both maker and viewer. Pi was born in Geneva, Switzerland, but was sent to Argentina as a youth by his father, Baldomero, to close a business deal. The deal fell

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[1] Wojciech Kowalski explains the difference in both legal doctrine and legal practice between the terms 'restitution,' 'repatriation', and 'return' in 'Types of Claims for Recovery of Lost Cultural Property,' Museum International, 57: 85–102. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0033.2005.00543.x. Web.

through, but, excited by the prospect of new discoveries and with materials purchased in Buenos Aires, Pi stayed and took up photography as a career. His timing coincided with the end of the first great wave of European migration, a time when life in Argentina promised both fluidity and sustainability. At first Pi was an itinerant photographer working in western Argentina, because immigrants could not afford the expense of professionally produced photographs and because they settled across a vast region. Pi travelled to carefully chosen locations where he sold images. He made photographs of railway yards and trains along the way because they influenced the way Argentina defined itself and this fascinated him.

During his time as president, Julio Roca (1880–1886, 1898–1904) nationalized educational institutions, encouraged large-scale European immigration, and simultaneously constructed a rail network across Argentina. Major development of the railway opened up previously inaccessible regions of the country between 1870 and 1914 (CNRT). The Malargüe area in Mendoza was particularly attractive to entrepreneurs like Pi. The rugged terrain prompted visions of discovering gold and other minerals that Pi looked out for while photographing landscape views. He developed an aesthetic based on European influences. Like many settlers, he associated modernity with abstract concepts such as heroism, private enterprise, and a sincere outlook, notions linked to advancing technological and scientific innovation.

Pi's images are therefore a valuable source of information for historians concerning patterns of activity and events in small cities and villages. One of Pi's first pictures shows a popular celebration commemorating the arrival of the railroad in San Rafael. We see the community gathered in a remote and isolated place electrified by the prospect of modernization. Some people perch on fences and others on a rooftop to get a better view of a steam train just visible on the horizon but transformed by vapor and dust. Other images by Pi similarly link the railroad to status, wealth, and identity, all qualities inextricably linked to Argentina's modernization.

These photos have a strategic agenda. Always alert to opportunity, Pi pursued the possibility of becoming an official government photographer by taking pictures of important social, cultural and political events. This accounts for his many photographs of post-colonial life including those of borderlands inspected by railway engineers. In addition, Pi took pictures of San Rafael's district schools, of irrigation canals under construction and, from atop a high building, views of the city which demonstrate Argentina's advancement and the idea of economic success. These scenes acknowledge the purchase modernity had on immigration movements at the time, but beyond their functionality they narrate the diverse histories and shared experiences of settler societies. Eventually, having decided to buy a ranch on the outskirts of San Rafael de Mendoza, Pi built the studio featured in the image. During the summer months he photographed landscape views. The rest of the year he made portrait likenesses and produced advertising to promote local goods and services. He also sold tourist postcards with images of distant geographic spaces and in reference to Argentina's emerging national identity. Picture postcards, which were generally circulated abroad, exported a way of life. In short, to put it very simply, Jean Pi helped to construct modernity. His images articulate a familiar link between heterogeneous cultural and social realities and an ongoing process of systematic cultural and political homogenization. Historical photographs are not cultural goods for passive audiences to consume but central to the production of culture.

There's a strong argument to support the idea that, as an element of culture, early photography propelled the practice of colonization (Williams). There is indisputable evidence that images are not simply consumed but produce (and reproduce) a world-view. According to Rosalind Krauss, early photographs promoted a 'special modality of viewing.' This she characterizes as a 'temporal dilation of attention.' It is a state induced through protracted engagement with the 'wealth of detail' that photographic images provide (134). Modernity plays a pivotal role in Krauss's account of

photography. In another paper, I will discuss how Pi subtly used the land as a symbol of modernity's discursive spaces. Here my focus is on the tension between image-making as a discourse (a development of modernity) and marginalized photographic practices requiring special care. My study of a less-eminent photographer is not an attempt to elevate him to the canon. Yet thinking about photographs as cultural artefacts in danger of destruction reveals the tendency in some circles to reaffirm hierarchies of value, something that should not be ignored.

Abandoned Property

Understanding the development of photographic processes and photography as a field allows for more nuanced perceptions to emerge. Preconceptions about what photography is abound and influence research, collection, and policy (aspects that I will come to). The collodion process in photography, which refers to fixing an image onto glass, was developed during the 1850s and soon became widespread. The process mingles art and science, as securing each image requires an understanding of not only optical phenomena but also chemistry. The photo-chemically induced collodion image can be presented in three ways: a glass "negative" can make a direct positive print; a paper print positive can be made after the negative; and a paper print positive can be reproduced by means of the positive paper print.

As stated earlier, Jean Pi's work illustrates how the collodion process could be productively employed in the framework of travel and post-colonial cultural production in particular. His camera was used over a broad geographic area. Consequently, he conditioned himself to work in hazardous situations, often hauling his supplies across rocky terrain. Using the collodion process required transporting the camera, tripod, heavy glass plates, darkroom tent, and all the bottles and chemicals needed to process one's photographs—a perilous enterprise. Making pictures was so difficult that Timothy O'Sullivan, one of various North American photographers working at around the same time as Pi, produced only 100 glass plates on his famous journey across the American west (Warner 134). Yet the Museo de Historia Natural de San Rafael (MHNSR) has approximately 1,600 original glass plates by Jean Pi. I argue that this difference speaks volumes about the cultural significance of photography. Photographs are dynamic and vital vehicles for expressing notions of identity and ethnicity. The question is, Can this corpus be saved for national and international audiences?

There is no doubt of the collection's importance for the historian Luis Priamo, whose central preoccupation is photography in Argentina. In the 1990s, with support from the now defunct Fundación Antorchas in Buenos Aires, he and MHNSR director Luis Lagiglia spearheaded a project of defining photographic experience. By 1994, the MHNSR had digitized the entire Pi collection for research purposes. But the museum moved the physical photographs to an unknown location, and Lagiglia died without disclosing where the material was stored. Paradoxically, these objects—again physical material associated with modern national style and providing valuable insights into photography as an important cultural practice—were originally discovered abandoned in a flood-damaged cellar. Some of the plates were broken. Others presented extensive flaking around the exterior edges and cracking overall where the emulsion had become brittle due to exposure. Objects of this nature should be 'housed individually in loose-fitting, buffered paper sleeves with side seams' and 'stored vertically, on the long edge, in document boxes' (National Archives). Sadly, we don't know where or how the archives are being kept. Hopefully, they have not been put on the market or, like Iran's ancient heritage, destroyed by bandits.

The Jean Pi case is compelling in my view. My hope in writing this paper is to provoke discussion as to what we as a community would consider doing to preserve the collection. But whatever solution we theoretically come to, there are two salient things to keep in mind. First, we all benefit from advocating for the protection of all photographic material, particularly since photography is has a long-standing relationship with cultural heritage. Second, a fundamental part of this is focusing on

collections of objects rather than historical witnessing, now that digital images are filling in for physical items of heritage.

Rhetoric and the Value of Photography

There is emerging proof that one of the issues in scholarship is the impulse to ignore the potentially problematic image-repertoire of photography. Photography is valued in connection with cultural heritage. Yet it is regarded as adjunct research material, for ostensibly ethical reasons. A quick look at some examples proves instructive. The United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) references 'inventories and photograph indexes' and 'photographic reconstitutions of dismembered works' (Langui 5), thus indicating that photography is a supplement. This is one example. Such language confirms the public's general perception that historically regulated photographic meanings take precedence over works or processes. Along the same lines, J.E. Stanton makes the argument that photographs illuminate the past. They 'provide an extraordinarily important *resource for the appreciation* of Australian cultures in all their diversity. Indeed, among this multiplicity of experiences, photographic and sound collections retain a cultural significance beyond their unique immediacy' (Stanton136, italics mine). Yet another example is from Jeannette Greenfield, who in her book *The Return of Cultural Treasures*, states that 'from 1946 a notice of stolen objects has been available to national authorities and organizations such as ICOM [International Council of Museums]. This includes the date and place of theft, description of the work, a photograph, and details of the authorities to alert in case of discovery or information' (252). These very brief, varied examples make it clear that photographic images are for the delivery of essential information about other—presumably more important—investigations. There is a general assumption that photographs are valued for identifying, describing and illustrating, proving the provenance of objects, discovering new bodies of knowledge, and yet the practice of photography itself is not valorized as a specific form of culture in its own right. This attitude presupposes that photographic images have no identity of their own, that they function as tools to human culture. In reality they are appropriated works.

The commonly accepted view is that the materiality of photographs is secondary to the ideas that images might spark. Some would have us believe that the history of photography is in no way as significant as what can be plotted and mapped, recorded and produced, by using photographs, as if they were transparent instruments. I suggest that any application to secure Pi's archive will be seriously undermined if it depends on classifying his repertoire as a supplement. Yet this idea prevails. For example, the UNESCO Convention states that photographs are 'objects needed for the revival of intangible heritage' (Prott 151). For those of you not familiar with the convention, the category of 'intangible' cultural heritage, manifested in the domain of 'social practices, rituals, and festive events', includes performing arts, oral traditions, and traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO). Photography makes culture come alive, yet it is not included in this category.

The convention also states that cultural objects in both the human and natural environment constitute 'tangible' cultural heritage that may be safeguarded under certain circumstances (loss through vandalism, for example) and in given situations (such as war). Photographs are not in this group, which includes architecture, urban and industrial design, street furniture, and other media. However, the convention allows for the protection of 'artistic and literary forms of expression,' which is suggestive. For while photographs lose their supporting role in the creative sphere here—if they are creative acts and are indeed accepted as art—they become associated with modernism. All this tells us that even within the larger context of modernist movements that might give still photography a self-conscious, theoretical edge, early photographic production is vulnerable as a medium. After all, there is no broad agreement as to what the concept of art defines or means.

The modern uses of photography began in the early 1850s, when industrial capitalism and accelerated urban growth enabled individuals such as scientists to use photography in their work. Eventually, this phenomenon would become a normal occurrence, with the form employed for both medicinal and anthropological purposes. William Henry Fox Talbot produced the world's first photograph of a magnified small object. Hippolyte Bayard explored the unsettling and misleading elements in photographic representation. Anna Atkins created cyanotype pictures of botanical specimens. For the thinkers of the late nineteenth century, vision took place in the immortal and was indivisible from the soul hosted by the body (Warner). Photography could rationalize the connection between internal states and external appearances. Its significance as an index of reality, though, has always been a hotly debated topic.

Another point of contention was whether photography was a fine art practice. As belief in the objectivity of photography took hold, the medium received new criticism from influential writers such as John Ruskin, Eugene Delacroix, and Gustave Le Gray. These critics argued that photography could not facilitate the 'soul-to-soul' dialogue that was considered a central activity of art (Warner 77). It did, however, provide a sense of being connected to events or experiences—records of scientific, societal, and personal data were increasingly understood as visual data. No other medium served memory faithfully prior to the invention of photography.

The notion of high-art photography originated from Cornelius Jabez Hughes's outline of its aim to 'instruct, purify and ennoble' (Warner 90). High-art photography scenes such as those of Don Quixote and The School of Athens would be staged and photographed. The tableau vivant was a popular subject matter, with the staged setting lending itself to historically accurate representations. There is no marker, however, that signals the altered experience of modern life brought on by the invention of photography.

The modern uses of photography coincide with the medium's commercialization, which was intertwined with the interaction of social needs and technical inventions. The advancements in the process of developing photographs also enabled the availability of low-priced prints. By the 1920s mass media had grown at an accelerated pace and artists such as Alexander Rodchenko would embrace the significance of mass media (Warner 241- 242). In his opinion, new concepts should not be used alongside old media, but one should explore the innate and unique qualities of the medium. Artists also began to use mass media techniques in their art—processes such as photomontage and collages were expected to be understood by the illiterate and the educated. In particular, Russian artists would advocate photomontage as a representation of progressive social change. Yet as a flexible and experimental medium, photography was considered neither art nor science.

This rejection has to do with photography's dual nature, part man and part machine. According to Milton Brown:

> Photography is a modern art in the sense that its entire history belongs within the industrial age, and that it seems to encompass both art and science, or at least to use science for artistic ends. This latter is not really as much of an innovation as it may seem at first, since art has always been willing to use available science for its own ends, but in this case, the image of the machine creating art has had an indelible effect on our attitude toward the camera and its products. Many of photography's aesthetic problems go back to the contradictions inherent in its dual nature. What part is man and what machine? (31)

A common thread between fundamental contributors to the debate of photography lies in the fact that they did not consider photography to be a medium that operates through the human intellect.

They instead believed that photography belonged to nature and that it was the medium of a spontaneous purpose. It was felt that, as objective, empirical tools, cameras replicated the human vision. Issues of 'neutral' vision in photography combined with uncomplicated visual narratives that connote truthfulness and sincerity persist in scholarship and in discussions of collection, heritage, restitution and return. Photographs are made to signify for a purpose, as part of a larger system of organization within a given institution (Krauss 289). All historical constructions can be made to function in this manner, so as to generate discursive spaces. But, as John Tagg persuasively said in one of his most important works, 'Photographs are never "evidence" of history; they are themselves historical' (65).

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Functionality and Social Modernism in the Work of Untrained South African Artists

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In one of the most shocking examples of radical Othering, Jean-Loup Amselle[1] (2008:11) launches a consummate review of perceived predominant Western perceptions of Africa, describing these derogatorily with " intellectually degenerate"; being so Other as to constitute a "sublime" in the Kantian and Burkean sense; "underdeveloped"; "synonymous with poverty"; "cursed", Africans as the "descendants of the Old Testament Ham" and his "cursed and blood-infected progeny"; the vicious circle of "poverty-corruption-disease-tribal wars"; "emaciated bodies"; "genocide"; and "racism". In short, Africa is described as "a continent of utter horror, a theatre of primitive cruelty" (Amselle 2008:12-13), the very reason why "we" (the West?) think of Africa in a "libidinous and viral" way, generating a line of thought so deep and wide that it "permeates the economic, social, cultural and religious domains" (Amselle 2008:14).[2]

Such genderisation and polarisation of the relationship between the West and Africa - deeply ambivalent and postulated as the attraction of opposites and "sexual intercourse" (Amselle 2008:11) - position Amselle slap-bang in the middle of Othered hate speech towards Africa. Whilst posturing to redeem the primitiveness of Africa (Amselle 2008:15), as "no longer to be traced in ancient local artefacts alone; it is increasingly becoming a master of reviving techniques or outdated European items whose regeneration is possible through their passage through the prism of African newness," his statements provide an example of the deep and wide divide between the West and Africa, which still undercuts Africa as a secondary role player and displays a modernist binary views of history.

This example reflects but one view in the continuing exploration of the relationship between the West and Africa in terms of the modalities of modernity. Theoretically, African art production has been explored in terms of many different constructs mainly related to Western postulated ideas of modernism, such as postcolonialism, Post-Africanism and neo-modernism. Such modernist and subsequent postmodern constructs have been theorised within the context of the mainstream 'high' art domain; the term 'neo-modernism', for instance, has been generally applied to indicate a revisitation of Western formalist modernism in art and design and its application by Sylvester Ogbechie[3] (2009:5) refers to the political implications of a modernist "sublime" (again) in relation to African modernity discourses in art, which is equally doppelganger in orientation.

Considering the statements of Amselle in the context of art production in previously marginalised sectors of South Africa where artists have been mainly untrained, several matters are of interest: African social conditions; perceptions of Africa; the character of African modernism; the relationship between the West and Africa; and especially appropriation, postulated not as an attraction of oppositional entities but as intersubjectivity. Subsequently I contend that a large portion of contemporary art produced in South Africa - especially in the rural areas - still is driven by neo-pragmatic African notions of the functionality of the art object.

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[1] Of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris.

[2] It is a view that reflects the stereotypical view of the West as the Apollonian rational intellect and Africa as its Dionysian inferior and irrational body-counterpart.

[3] In the editor's foreword, Interrogating African Modernity: Art, cultural politics and global identities in *Critical art interventions* 3/4, Spring, 2009:5, Ogbechie states that the term "neo-modernism" is generally described as a return to formalist modernism in art and design, but that his own use of the term refers to the political implications of the modernist sublime in relation to African discourses of modernity in art. The term is generally used by contemporary African scholars. Ogbechie (2009:5); identifies an early use of the word that appears in Grauer, V.A. 1981-1982. Modernism/ Postmodernism/Neomodernism. *The Downtown Review*, 3:1-2.

Appropriation and intersubjectivity

Over the past decade-and-a-half, globalising processes and its ever-increasing expansion of the media in social, televisual and telecommunication networks have resulted in more and better knowledges, as well as new opportunities and an induced pace of transformation in many cultures. Immanuel Wallerstein (1999) maintains for instance that:

> The deruralization of the world is on a fast upward curve. It has grown continuously over 500 years, but most dramatically since 1945. It is quite possible to foresee that it will have largely disappeared in another 25 years. Once the whole world-system is deruralized, the only option for capitalists is to pursue the class struggles where they are presently located. … Even with the increased polarization of real income not only in the world-system as a whole but within the wealthiest countries, the political and market sophistication of the lower strata continues to grow.

Francis Fukuyama's notion of contemporary capitalism as a "system perpetually founded on a present maintained through promises of a better future" (Florence & Foster 2000:103) is nowhere more apparent than in the rural post-apartheid art industry. The global ubiquity of capitalism's teleological pledge to prosperity and wealth has found a superior abode in a context where even clean drinking water and a virus-free society have become perceived as cloud-cuckoo-land. It is purely human to aspire to better circumstances, sustained by Rik Pinxten's (2006:81) argument that cultures are forever voluntarily hybridising and continually adapting a part of their ownness to new circumstances and new offerings, which do come with losses. With reference to views on conditions in the globalising world such as Fukuyama's and Wallerstein's postulations on the leveling effect of capitalism, Pinxten (2006:79) argues that a Macdonaldising of the world provides a too superficial and simplistic answer to growing cultural uniformity. Of seminal importance to him (Pinxten 2006:82) is that the claiming of an identity should go hand-in-hand with the understanding that identity is synonymous with habitual change.

In her account of the matrixial borderspace, Bracha Lichtenstein Ettinger's (Florence & Foster 2000:176) idea of metramorphosis describes the transmutative process of interacting worlds impacting on identity as "both action, perception, inscription, and memory of borderlinking and of distance-in-joining." This matrixial sphere allows for "partial-subjects" and "partial-objects" as well as their linkage (Florence & Foster 2000:176). Similarly, subjectivity in the African modernist context is neither stable nor fixed and the corporeality of the artist-as body and the artwork-as-process in this specific world context henceforth produce liminalities where matter and process become utopianistically premised. In many parts of Africa, there has been a modernist cultural 'makeover', and artists have been facilitated in their processes of letting the world know who and where they are and what they are doing.

Although modernism has been deconstructionist in many respects, binary and stereotypical views such as that of Amselle are still encountered and there somehow remains a hierarchical separation of 'high' and 'low' art that defies a position of 'metramorphosis'. The work of untrained artists, not reflecting the same orientations and awarenesses as the international arena, are easily ignored or dismissed as 'low' art. Contrary to Amselle, Nicholas Bourriaud deflates hierarchical positioning and argues pragmatically:

> What's an artwork? Any artwork materializes a relation to the world; if you see a Vermeer or a Mondrian, it's concretized, materialized, visible in relation to the world that they had. You can decode and interpret for yourself and use it for your own life. Or for your work if you're an artist. It's a chain of relations. History of art is about

> that — a chain of relations to the world. So, any artwork is a relation to the world made visible (Bourriaud & Moss 2002).

Over the past few decades, the social institutions of modernity as well as institutions' schooling ideas of modernity reflected a wide range of structural and ideological differentiations. In the Western context, cultural cross-fertilisation and influencing by institutions have been commonplace. Reverting to a century earlier, the development of stylisation and flatness in Picasso's 'high' art -, that was instrumental in influencing a large portion of other modernists - has been ascribed to the formal and stylistic appropriation of 'low' Oceanic and African art, exhibited at the Trocadero Museum of Ethnology in Paris since 1878 for more than thirty years. Yet, considering Picasso's conversation with André Malraux on his views of African art (Philips 1995:28-29), Moyo Okediji (2009:51-52) argues that Picasso appropriated "weapons of mass protection from the body of African images, to fight his own personal demons, and to confront the diabolical forces hovering over the West. … Picasso began to explore African art for spiritual fortitude. … it was thought that Western art was entering into an intense phase of 'art for art's sake.' Nothing was further from the truth. … Picasso's anamnesis is recovered mainly in the women he painted. These may be regarded as his Mamiwata figures, his 'spirits, the unconscious,' his weapons … [used] to exorcize himself and interact with his culture … ." It would thus seem that Picasso appropriated a cultural stylism for the purposes of his *own* artistic development and psychological catharsis.

Echoing these sentiments at the time of the exhibition *Picasso and Africa* (2006), jointly curated by the Musée Picasso in Paris and the Iziko South African National Gallery, curator Marilyn Martin (Meldrum 2007) argued that although Picasso's love for African art never left him, he never *copied* African art; this was the reason why the show did not match a specific African work with a Picasso. The appropriation of pictorial and stylistic features - such as mask-like figuration, a 'designed' look and detail such as eyes and genitals placed strategically for impact and effect without real concern for naturalistic representation, observed clearly in Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* of 1907 - can never reflect anything of the thinking and cultural philosophies behind the origin of the simulation. Similarly, the neo-modernist African influence on the Western modernists should be viewed as nothing more than a cross-cultural influence induced by nineteenth-century industrialisation, fourth-dimension physics and emerging cosmopolitanism experienced by turn-of-the-century Paris, a view more adamantly argued by Rosalind Krauss who accuses Picasso of pastiche in *The Picasso Papers* (1999).

As long as the Other remains exotic and desirable - even when it is steeped in ethnocentrism, intersubjectivity as an everyday occurrence will synchronously flow into various forms of social agency as an after-effect (Bhabha 1994:269, 275), leading to new and hybrid agencies and articulations: "… the racial, gendered minority positions stage the symbolic form of self-identification represented through fragmentation and occlusion of the sovereignty of the self" (Bhabha 1994:329). Yet, Homi Bhabha (1994:329) cautions that it is too easy to consider the discourses on minorities as symptoms of the postmodern condition, since the narratives of minority communities – also smaller rural communities - "substantializes cultural difference, and constitutes a 'split-and-double' form of group identification … [illustrated] through a specifically 'anti-colonialist' contradiction of the public sphere." Being 'minor', also in the globalised space, often elicits exploitation and domination, yet also disappearance and a need for refuge. This sense of being minority can be applied to the situation of the untrained rural artist within the context of globalisation and it is these narratives of difference that cannot be ignored in a consideration of African modernism. Not when the 'split-and-double' concept manifests clearly in rural areas where artists are untrained in an institutional sense, but self-taught in many others respects, especially in terms of the use of technology, including new media.

Local examples
Irrespective of the impact the West had on South African modernists who had contact with Western-oriented institutions such as the Polly Street artists, Kumalo, Sihlali, Koloane, or Sekoto, key features of Western modernism (the avant-garde, the break with naturalism and traditional formalism, and the role of the institution) become mostly irrelevant when considering modernism in the context of Africa. Rather, John Peffer (2009:x) remarks, the modernist reception of indigenous approaches to art should be considered within the context of the local and, in South Africa, in terms of "the struggle for a nonracial aesthetic practice in South Africa, the draconian racial policy of the apartheid state, a culture of militancy and street violence, and the bipolar polemical discourse of the cold war." Art practice in the pre-1994[4] period pushed in a direction that most politicians only caught up with later (Peffer 2009:xi), since in general the black art scene was a multiracial juncture where different economies and identities mixed and formed small power platforms to resist, challenge and create new socio-political paradigms.

The situation of the Northern artists, that is of Gauteng and Limpopo provinces, is significant in the study of African modernism, since they were in close proximity to Pretoria and its politics and arguably more prone to indoctrination and subjugation by institutional dogma. Pre-1994, when Pretoria as the administrative capital was the gathering place of a large group of white Nationalist supporters, there were no resistance groups of mention that formed in this area.[5] The investigation of the 'non-contaminated' position of untrained rural black artists in South Africa provides a more authentic tracing of African modernism, since they have been virtually untainted by any institutional influence and can therefore be considered within their own social and aesthetic contexts (Pfeffer 2009; Bauman 2007). In the 1980s, self-taught artists were most strongly represented by the new kind of sculpture that was produced, such as by Jackson Hlungwane of Mbhokota, who exhibited at the Africus '95, the first Johannesburg Biennale. What struck me when I visited Hlungwane as a final-year Fine Arts student in 1987 at his village (called 'New Jerusalem') was the lack of his own distinction between his functional objects and his larger pieces, or 'artworks'. He presented me with a bowl and spoon as a gift from his one-room studio at the foot of the hill and led me up the hill to his other studio where large works such a ladder for God and the Archangel were still present before being moved to the Johannesburg Art Gallery, amongst other venues. Within this artistic perspective, the *function* of the object accorded its value, meaning and significance: a bowl and spoon (Figure 1) was considered equally as valuable as conceptual work such as the tall apocalyptic Flag, which Hlungwane (in his words) created for God to descend with when He returns to earth at the end of time. Such a notion of functionality has always been central to the material culture produced in ancient, modernist and postmodern African art.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the processes of globalisation and internationalisation, laced with postcolonial vigour forcibly induced nationalistic ideologies and visions of power that left Africans grasping at new technologies and the lure of Western fashions and lifestyles. As a rule, many of the Northern artists are uneducated in terms of Western art histories, but make use of social media and technologies. Globalisation processes have seeped into most rural

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[4] 27 April 1994 is a significant date in the modern history of South Africa, since that was when the African National Congress (ANC) was democratically elected into power and Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (as the leader of the ANC) elected as President.

[5] In *The Neglected Tradition*, Steven Sack (1988:17) lists the art centres created during the resistance period with the purpose of supporting and promoting black artists as: 1972, Johannesburg Art Foundation, Johannesburg; 1977, Katlehong Art Centre, Katlehong; 1977, Community Arts Project (CAP), Cape Town; 1978, Fuba Academy, Johannesburg; 1979, Nyanga Arts Centre, Nyanga; 1970s, Mofolo Art Centre, Soweto; 1983, African Institute of Art (AIA), Funda Centre, Soweto; 1983, Community Arts Workshop (CAW), Durban; and 1986, Alexandra Arts Centre, Alexandra. This list shows clearly that in the greater Pretoria area and Limpopo a milder form of social commentary developed.

areas in Africa; many Internet cafés are found, most artists have television and many make use of computer technology. When experiencing the onslaught of new technologies and the antagonism of urban territories, untrained artists from rural African communities could experience intimidation and coercion, but as history has shown, many of these artists choose to embrace Otherness and the advantages of the capitalist globalising world. In the global market, art production is a matter of transcultural co-dependency where appropriation features prominently. In the Altermodern Manifesto, Nicolas Bourriaud (2009) extrapolates this relationship as follows:

> More generally, our globalised perception calls for new types of representation: our daily lives … depend now on trans-national entities, short or long-distance journeys in a chaotic and teeming universe. … Artists translate and transcode information from one format to another, and wander in geography as well as in history.

The problem arises when, as Zigmunt Bauman (2007:82) argues, "The real powers that shape the conditions under which we all act these days flow in *global* space, while our institutions of political action remain by and large tied to the ground; they are, as before, *local*." The harsh realities of dystopian everyday life in South Africa are evident in conditions of people-on-the-move, homelessness, violence and xenophobia. Such conditions are depicted in the work of untrained artists that originate from remote areas and RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme)[6] towns outside cities and, as a rule, are unaware of Western art trends. Most of these rural untrained artists utilise art to try to find ways out of the politically and culturally imposed restrictions and most of these works utilise a naturalistic form of representation.

Also working in the woodcarving tradition is thirty-seven-year old self-taught Lucas Thobejane who lives in Ga-Nkoana Village, a small town in the Limpopo Province, not far from where Hlungwani lived. Thobejane's work speaks about contemporary conditions of living in small towns and villages, specifically his own Ga-Nkoana Village, Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province. Thobejane's form of representation and practice has been developed in relation to what Winegar and Pieprzak (2009:5) describe as a response to "(local) political histories, structures, and struggles." An untrained sculptor, Thobejane creates anthropomorphosised animal and technology hybrids in exquisite detail, but consistently conjures imagery that presents the third-world plight of clean water and education. His half-man, half-animal creatures are wretched, creolised players in the survival game where third-world necessities such as clean water and work intermingle with the imposing presence of global technologies and ideologies.

Thobejane endeavours to include as much naturalistic detail in his work as possible, achieved through the utilisation of a primitive chopper, an electric cutter and finer electrical carving tools. Essentially his work is driven by a sense of functionality of the art object in order to unequivocally express and communicate urgency with regard to the plight of the redress and alleviation of socio-political conditions. As Bauman (2007:82) argues in *Liquid times,* "One of the most bewildering paradoxes revealed in our time is that on the fast *globalizing* planet politics tends to be passionately and self-consciously *local.* … [L]ocal issues seem to be the only ones we can 'do something about'." In his artist's statement for an exhibition entitled *Games People Play* (Figures 2 and 3) at Fried Contemporary Gallery in Pretoria, Thobejane speaks of hope for peace and a better future:

> In the spirit of the 2010 FIFA World Cup the ball (sphere) in *Soccer Player* symbolizes the earth and as such life. The soccer ball becomes a substitute for the globe, all of whom are coming together as one on African soil to compete in this landmark event through which Africa enters the world stage. In celebration we share our diverse

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[6] RDP is a South African socio-economic policy framework, implemented by the African National Congress (ANC) government of Nelson Mandela in 1994.

> heritage and multifaceted culture with the rest of the world. My work is about preserving heritage and identity (Games People Play 2010).

Although Thobejane is untrained, he has been subsumed by the gallery system and has succeeded in presenting work at large institutions and exhibition such as ABSA Art Gallery, Johannesburg; Sasol Gallery, Stellenbosch; Sasol New Signatures Competition; Absa L'Atelier Art Award; and Spier Contemporary in 2007/08 and 2009/10. Such inclusion labels his work as noteworthy and contemporary, and embraces institutional practice, but within the conditions of its own social and aesthetic contexts. Thobejane uses these institutions functionally for promotional purposes.

Forms of representation and of the categorising and circulating ideas, objects and images cannot be fully understood without examining the multiple ways that artists engage with marketing agendas, consumer desires and commodity circuits (Winegar & Pieprzak 2009:9), which in Africa do not seem that different from any other aspiring artist in the world. In conversation with the internationally established (untrained) artist Titus Matiyane of Attridgeville, a township west of Pretoria and established in 1939 for black people by the Nationalist government, he expresses over and again that he depicts panoramas of major cities of the world because the art collectors of the depicted countries or the embassies, 'they', will 'like it'. By mostly depicting cities that he has never been to, Matiyane expresses a desire and a longing for the exotic Other; he becomes a nomad, displaced and diasporic in his pursuit of fame, wealth and global stardom through the fusion with 'famous' and 'successful' cities in his depictions, seemingly in search of a utopian 'good place'.

Yet Matiyane also depicts peripheral places of identity such as townships like Soweto and Attridgeville, which entails a kind of tourist's gaze consisting of surface impressions of the Outsider. In a work such as Johannesburg, City of Gauteng, Figure 4, Matiyane includes images of Mandela, the FIFA World Cup trophy, Oliver Tambo International Airport and an inscription reading "The Fifa executive members who hold our future in their hands" as a stratagem of power mediation to expose the country's instruments of advantage within the global sphere of competition. By including South African cities and townships in his canon of famous cities, the artist suggests a strategy of intervention which deconstructs the paradigmatic representation of an African city such as Johannesburg as 'Third World' and marginalised.

Matiyane's gaze at the city is obsessive, yet somehow detached. In neurotic way he copies the detail of the city and its surrounding landscape from commercial maps. In every panorama, the contemporary city's ontology of mobility and transitivity is traced in images of airplanes, trains and boats. The colonial gaze at the black body, much argued and written about in postcolonial texts, become inverted in Matiyane's artmaking process through the artist as 'black body' returning of the gaze and directing it at the world. The artist fetishistically creates his opulent landscapes of cities in a way reminding one of Amin and Thrift's (2002:111) view of the city as "both a focus and a producer of bodily experiences and desires which can touch on each of the senses and combinations thereof in all kinds of unexpected ways … . In many urban utopias sensual impulse is reined in – except for the obsessive visual gaze."

In a project I managed for the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the Prosperity Community Mural Project (Figure 5) with untrained peri-urban artists, naturalism and functionality prevailed. The mural team consisted of graduate students of the University of Pretoria and self-taught artists of Attridgeville as project assistants, as well as 15 untrained black artists-to-be of different ethnic groups and locations. From the beginning I was acutely aware of the challenge of assuming the dual role of referee and player, and of how to authentically cross racial and cultural divides. Yet, it immediately became apparent that this role was not principally to validate differing artists' aesthetic ways and forms of expression, but to set up an environment of reconciliation and mediation and to

act predominantly as an arbitrator for the conflict and the fractured sense of nationhood within the confines of the small project team. Xenophobia, not racial divide, created adversity and it became clear that 'unbiased' information - such as the basics of composition and a subjectively premised understanding of colour to the project participants - was loaded with cultural determination and not a neutral territory for authentication and interaction. The visual vocabulary that emerged reflected differing levels of modernisation, including positions of decolonialisation, a return to ancestral authority as well as 'cool' urban chic.

Such divergent dimensions in modernism are reflected in the view of seventeen-year old Tsebo Knowledge Ngema of Sebokeng on 'traditional African' versus 'Western' ways, one amongst many other interviews included in a study on post-1994 oral histories from three poor communities in South Africa conducted by Dale McKinley and Ahmed Veriava (2008):

> Personally I am not into tradition and stuff because I don't even believe in this ancestral stuff and everything else. But what I believe is that of you believe in something and you have 100% faith in it, it will work for you. So I believe that everyone should concentrate on what they think is best for them. If you believe that tradition is the way to go, then go with your whole mindset to it; if you believe that the western way is the way to go, go with your whole mindset. But, I pretty much prefer the western way even though I do practice some traditional rituals at home because I come from, not really a traditional family, but we do have rituals like the slaughterings and stuff … (McKinley & Veriava 2008:sp).

Although each artist in the Prosperity mural project was provided the opportunity to individually design a section of the mural, once again naturalism was the preferred mode of representation in all the artists' designs. The ethno-political issues that divided the group and threatened to ruin the entire project became resolved in the shared need to express utopian dreams of prosperity in themes of education, agriculture, tourism and technology. It is precisely such idiosyncratic local forms of modernism created in the face of socio-political adversity that have established the African continent's identity and have shaped its cultural economy.

Conclusion

Amselle (2008:17) fails in his contention that "African art, however modern, is nothing but what it has always been, i.e., an annex, a tropical dependency on Western art." The processes of globalisation and internationalisation forcibly induced orders of social modernism that left Africans grasping at new technologies and the lure of Western fashions and lifestyles; yet not in the sense of Amselle's notion of a dependency on the West, but rather as a cultural-consumerist attitude to selfhood. Similarly, Amselle's deconstructive attempt to instate African primitiveness as no longer peripheral and marginalised is not tenable; within the perspective of a continent creating its own cultural economy and histories, the very notion of primitiveness can be contested, as well as it not being the principal characteristic of African art, especially not in the work of trained artists. Simulation and appropriation could never reflect anything of the thinking and cultural philosophies behind the *origin* of the reproduction. Picasso was not appropriating primitiveness but cultural stylism for the purposes of his own artistic development and psychological catharsis.

Untrained South African artists pragmatically employ naturalistic modes of expression to make their voices heard, to grant immediacy and directness to their communication of problematic social conditions; to express own identities, needs and cultural economies; and as an attempt to enter into the global art world and to forge a 'better' life for themselves. Such artworks are therefore resourceful platforms in the examination of modernity, since they reveal a functional form of modernism by becoming instrumental in achieving socio-political, artistic and commercial goals. By

following a neo-pragmatist approach in the investigation of (co)dependencies and power paradigms in the relationship between the West and Africa, cultural and stylistic appropriation can be viewed as a functional device in artmaking that provides a range of conceptual, formal and commercial benefits and is indicative of various stages in globalisation.

Amselle's Outsiderist view conjures stereotype and, in essence, reveals once again the power of the televisual media and other communication technologies belonging to the globalised world in creating sensational 'other' worlds premised in the spectacle of the simulated other. Similar to many other countries such as the US, Russia, China, Afghanistan, and others, the realities of the affluent inner circles of African cultures do not always converge with the social conditions encountered in boundary and rural territories. Nonetheless, as demonstrated by the selection of South African work hunted down in 2007 by curator Milan Knížák for inclusion in the 2008 International Triennial of Contemporary Arts at the National Gallery in Prague, Czech Republic, which all four came from the Pretoria in the North – politically the most stigmatised city in the country – modernity and vanguardism have many faces.

It can be contended that untrained artists such as Thobejane, Matiyane and the Kwazulu Natal mural artists are driven by the power of the functionality of art object expounded by naturalism in order to unequivocally express and communicate urgency with regard to the plight of the redress and alleviation of socio-political conditions. This hypothesis does not corroborate a return to the totalising idea of an 'undifferentiated' Africa investing objects with functionality (and anonymity) through ritualistic meaning, but mobilise the works as resourceful platforms for examining notions of modernity, difference and transculturality. It would then seem more useful to consider modernism in terms of what Ted Benton (Browning et al 2000:98) calls, "reflexive modernisation", describing modernity "as a list of characteristic institutional forms or 'dimensions'", none of which, he argues, should be "assigned causal priority." In the end Africa has always been concerned with its own Afrocentric history.

Figures

Figure 1: Jackson Hlungwane (b. 1923), *Bowl and Spoon*, 1987. Leadwood, 300 x 400 mm. (Photo credit: Elfriede Dreyer).

Figure 2: Lucas Thobejane (b. 1973), *Outside Bathroom,* 2010. Stinkwood, 57cm x 27cm x 13.5cm. (Photo credit: Elfriede Dreyer).

Figure 3: Lucas Thobejane (b. 1973), *Gone World Cup*, 2010. Ironwood, 69cm x 18.5cm x 17cm. (Photo credit: Elfriede Dreyer).

Figure 4: Titus Matiyane (b.1964), *Johannesburg, City of Gauteng*, 2007. Mixed media on paper. (Photo credit: Elfriede Dreyer).

Figure 5: Muralists completing the Prosperity Mural, Ethekwini Municipal Library, Durban. (Photo credit: Elfriede Dreyer).

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The Presence of South in Art History as a Matter of Fact

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In this paper I would like to underline the importance of so called Global South in Art History and its progressive taking in account, notably by CIHA.

"In my early days at school," wrote Alberto Giacometti in the text "Hier Sables mouvants"[1],"the first country that I thought must be marvellous was Siberia." Recalling his childhood memories, Giacometti defined two meanings of geography: the actual location and the dream that is derived from it. Modern art dreamed of the South and borrowed its masks, its music and its dances – but rarely was modern art made from the South the way it was in the works of Joaquin Torres Garcia (1874–1949).

Born in Uruguay, Torres Garcia was trained in Europe, where he was close to the abstract avant-garde; these influences show in his 1930 *Estructura en blanco*[2]. He returned to his native country in 1934. Torres-Garcia was one of the first figures in modern art to turn the planisphere upside down and orient it towards the South[3]. In February 1935, shortly after his return to Uruguay, he wrote in the review *Universalismo Constructivo*: "I said the school of the South: because in reality our North is the South. The only North there should be for us is in opposition to our South. And for that reason we turn the map upside down, and then we have an accurate idea of our position, and not the way it is imposed on us in the rest of the world. From now on, by extending itself, the tip of America signals the South with force, our North. Our compass does the same thing: it points irremediably southward, toward our pole."[4] This is already clear to us in his 1932 work *Construction avec Boussole* (*Construction with Compass*). Torres Garcia imagined the universal, using the South as his starting point, reconnecting with pre-Columbian American culture with his public sculpture *Cosmic Monument*, which was installed in Montevideo's Parque Rodo in 1938.

When the Surrealists arrived in the West Indies, fleeing the Nazi regime, they found the poet Aimé Césaire, who was already speaking to them of decolonization, cultural hybridization and creoleness. Césaire argued that Western culture was only one component of a world culture that took the real and imagined geographical form of the archipelago. The "Surrealist Map of the World" had anticipated him[5]. In 1943 Wilfredo Lam, the Cuban painter admired by André Breton, set his *Jungle* against a Europe and an America that had become spaces criss-crossed by grid patterns like a Metropolis. Pierre Mabille wrote this about *The Jungle* in the review *Tropiques* in 1945: "I see an absolute opposition between this jungle, where life explodes everywhere, free, dangerous, gushing forth from lush greenery, ready for any mixtures, transmutations and possibilities, and that other sinister jungle where a Führer is perched on top of a pedestal along the Neo-Greek colonnades of Berlin, watching out for the departure of the mechanized cohorts."[6]

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[1] Alberto Giacometti, « Hier sables mouvants », *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution*, n°5, Paris, mai 1933, p.15.

[2] J.Torres-Garcia, *Estructura en blanco*, 1930, painted wood, 52,5 x 36,2 x 4 cm, collection Museum of Grenoble. See T.Dufrene, « Le petit pan de bois jaune de Torres-Garcia », *in* exhibition catalogue *Joaquin Torrres-Garcia. Un monde construit,* Musées de Strasbourg, Hazan, 2002, pp.143-171.

[3] In *Circulo y Cuadrado,* Montevideo, May, 1936.

[4] Joaquin Torres-Garcia, « La Escuela del Sur », *in Universalismo Constructivo,* February, 1935. My translation from *Universalismo Constructivo,* t.1, Madrid, Alianza Forma, 1984, p.193.

[5] « Le monde au temps des surréalistes », *in Variétés*, 1929 (21).

[6] Pierre Mabille, "La Jungle," *in Tropiques*, no. 12, January 1945, p. 183. My translation.

The geographical reference that is intended to clarify a metaphoric image is not neutral. It is helpful to artists, for example, in referring to the difficulties of creation: Giacometti said that there was a whole "Sahara" between one side of the nose and the other[7]. It is also useful for critics: Sartre wrote in the review *Les Temps modernes* in 1954 that the head of a Giacometti sculpture was "no more than a periscope of the belly in the sense that we speak of Europe as a peninsula of Asia"[8]. Sartre, who was very close to Communism at the time, meant this as an implicit political statement. In the well-known catalogue of the 1984 exhibition *Primitivism in Twentieth Century Art*, William Rubin admitted that he had only belatedly seen the influence of African sculpture on Giacometti's art. But Giacometti never went to Africa, no more than he ever set foot in Siberia. It is books, photos and museums that prompt artists and critics to turn their eyes southward, and the South can be compared to Atlas holding up the cultivated gaze of the North.

But soon the heavy, predatory way the North looked at the South aroused criticism. Detractors could be found not only among artists and intellectuals native to the South but also among those who had come down from the North and reversed their perspective, as suggested by the reorientation of Torres Garcia's map. In the opening sentence of his 1955 book *Tristes tropiques* (*A World on the Wane*), Claude Lévi-Strauss declares, "I hate travels and explorers" – out of hatred for the gaze of travellers and explorers who have not made the conversion, reoriented their perspective, and changed their pole. His 1962 work *The Savage Mind*, like the Torres-Garcia drawing you are looking at, argues that reason characterizes the North, whereas life is in the South.

In a famous article that was first published in 1979 in *Storia dell'arte italiano* and appeared in Pierre Bourdieu's review *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* number 40 in 1981, Ginzburg and Castelnuovo spoke of "Centro e Periferia", centre and periphery. The authors created a model that transposed the question of influences in art history onto a dynamic, geographical level and, most importantly, they asserted that the periphery could in turn create counter-models and invent an alternative art. The notion of "double periphery" accounted for areas where various influences were blended into a new art that was rendered original by the new configuration given to the existing ones.

This historiographical model came into being just when contemporary art had entered the phase of postmodernity or transmodernism: real and imaginary peripheries like Mario Merz's *Giap Igloo* (1968) and *Das Rudel* ("The Pack", 1969) by Beuys were housed in the "white cube" style of stark, neutral display space. On the icy horizon of these glacial scenes probably still loomed the balance of terror between East and West and the issue of totalitarianisms. When Luciano Fabro turned the map of Italy upside down, reproducing the gesture of Joaquin Torres-Garcia, he posed the question of Southern Italy, the Mezzogiorno, and left it physically suspended in mid-air[9]. In *I like America and America Likes Me* (1974), Beuys stretched his hand out to cultural minorities in an act where art was deeply allied with anthropology and even, soon after, with archaeology. From this point in the 1970s on, the "centre" of contemporary art – Europe and North America – attracted the peripheries like a magnet attracts metal, driving the compass wild.

Today, 40 years later, some say that all artistic life has come to the centre, in the Europe–United States duopoly where the market attracts artists and works. Others, to the contrary, claim that exchanges are now so easy and biennial exhibitions so widely developed all over the globe that creation is more evenly distributed. Harald Szeemann said in 1999 that for an exhibition,

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[7] « La distance entre une aile du nez et l'autre est comme le Sahara, pas de limite, rien à fixer, tout échappe », *in* « Lettre à Pierre Matisse », exhibition catalogue *Alberto Giacometti*, Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York, 1948.

[8] *In Derrière le miroir,* n°65, Paris, Maeght, May, 1954.

[9] Luciano Fabro *L'Italia d'oro*, 1971. Bronze doré 92 x 45 cm. Collection ARTIS.

globalization spelled the end of the predominance of Europe and America. At documenta 11 in 2002, Okwui Enwezor expressed the view that the Venice Biennale was henceforth efficiently bolstered by other events aptly called "peripheral" biennials.

But I also see other thinkers proposing a geography of art where the very idea of exchanges and conflicts has been supplanted by a distribution into zones. In an exhibition currently running at the Quai Branly Musem in Paris, *La fabrique des Images* (The Making of Images)[10], Philippe Descola relates the creation of images to four major ontologies spanning the planet. The four models are naturalism, animism, totemism and analogism. The naturalist world view characterizes the North, that is, Western art. According to this model only human beings are endowed with an inner life. But their physical bodies and the world in which they move, along with everything else that exists, belong to the visible world as a whole, which the artist strives to depict with precision. Animism and totemism are characteristic of the South. The animist model affirms that all living beings are dissimilar but have one feature in common – they all have an inner life, which the artist reveals, for example, in transformation masks. Totemism assumes that beings belonging to the same totem share qualities and a history, which the artist expresses in the sensitive cartographies of face paintings or dream paintings. The analogical model is present in Asia and in ancient civilizations, as well as among the Huichol Indians of Mexico and in pre-Renaissance Europe. It implies that everything that exists is different, and the artist establishes networks of correspondences between microcosm and macrocosm, between the human and the non-human, to impart meaning.

Let's admit it – contemporary artists, from Beuys to the Beninese artist Romuald Hazoumé, who are no longer satisfied with Svetlana Alpers' favourite notion of "describing the world" and who use both the analogical and the animistic models, are already beyond such a system. Is this because they belong to a finished world where everything is known and where they can draw on all the ontologies?

In 1989, Jean-Hubert Martin curated the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre* (Magicians of the Earth), which featured artists representing Western art and artists from the rest of the world in equal numbers. In 1992, Thomas McEvilley wrote that this exhibition ushered us into the global village of the 1990s. But he also worried that in its search for new goods, the Western art market had moved a hitherto peripheral group into the centre, and that if it did not work out financially, the market would eject the group back out to the periphery – this had already happened with Mexican mural artists in the 1930s. McEvilley concluded by saying that time would tell if low and high art would be reversed[11].

We know now that the multiculturalism dear to Charles Taylor's heart might have been a trap in which the peripheral artist was asked, as Nicolas Bourriaud wrote in *Playlist* (2004), to present an image based on his supposed difference and the history of his country, and if possible based on Western codes and standards, for example, video, which represents today the perfect "green card" for the Western market.

What can turn the world upside down so that low becomes high, to use McEvilley's rich metaphor, which refers to Torres-Garcia's image? It should be historical knowledge.

The need to place or locate a viewpoint does not stem solely, or even fundamentally, from geography. Clearly, sunshine and art lovers wearing shorts are more in abundance at the

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[10] Philippe Descola (ed.), *La Fabrique des Images*, Quai Branly Museum, Paris, 2007.

[11] See Thomas McEvilley's article on the issue of exhibiting non-Western art in a Western art context, *in* Jean-Hubert Martin (ed.) *Magiciens de la Terre,* exhibition catalogue, MNAM, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, May-August 1989 ; and also *Art and Otherness: Crisis in Cultural Identity*, Documentext, Mc Pherson, 1992.

Johannesburg Biennale than in Paris, where there are more of both than in Giacometti's imaginary Siberia! But this need to situate our analysis of a work of art takes on a dimension of interpretation.

Artist James Webb of Cape Town, my friend, presented a sound work at the 2007 Lyon Biennial. Standing in a pitch-dark room, the viewer could hear sounds recorded by the artist: the metallic, jolting noises of a lift carrying workers down into the deepest gold mine in the world. Two years ago, James took me out on a road in South Africa for an experiment: we measured the distance from the surface down to the bottom of the mine on the car's mileage odometer and timed how long it took to drive that far. Since then I've read up on these mines and the collective memory of miners, and if I wanted to sell the only piece of gold jewellery I own, I know it would fetch a high price in these times of crisis when the dollar is weak. I also commissioned a work from James for an exhibition of which I was one of the curators. For this work, which was designed to evoke former East Germany, he recorded the country's former national anthem sung *a cappella* by a singer born in 1949, the year East Germany was established. The recording was made in an old, empty building in Berlin.

I don't mean to say that the artist must produce work from real places or that the art historian must physically see the places where the artwork is produced. I simply mean that by increasing their points of view on artworks, that is, by disorienting and then reorienting their perspective, art historians have some chance of achieving that "spirit of expatriation" that is their main quality, as Duchamp said in an interview with Georges Charbonnier in 1961, because it has allowed them to break out of their strictly French mould[12].

Van Gogh was very sensitive to differences of time and place, to the willows of Holland and the cypresses of the south. He wrote, "You can't be at the pole and the equator at the same time."[13]

At a conference entitled "Mythic, aesthetic and theoretical space"[14], Ernst Cassirer called "aesthetic space" the space between the artist's mythical space and the scholar's theoretical space. This aesthetic space has mobility limits. Its mobility is related to the artist's movements from place to place – Van Gogh's journeys between Holland and Provence for example – and to the period in history that brings so many artists together in a given city, as highlighted in the Tate's 2001 exhibition "Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis". Its mobility also stems from the way art historians try to avoid the fragmentation of events and experiences in favour of a more unified vision and more stable conceptual unit.

This is an ambition that imbued those who founded and supported CIHA, as these documents taken from the archives show. That ambition continues to drive us and it is what makes us so pleased that this colloquium is taking place and so attentive to what will be said here.

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[12] *Entretiens avec Marcel Duchamp* (André Dimanche : Marseille 1994) + 2 sound discs. Written and recorded text of interviews conducted December 6, 21, 27, 1960, and January 2, 1961, and broadcast by Radiodiffusion Télévision française.

[13] Letter by Vincent van Gogh to Theo van Gogh. Date: Arles, Monday, 9 April 1888, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, inv. nos. b514 a-b V/1962. Entire quotation : « You can't be at the pole and the equator at the same time. You must choose your own line, as I hope to do, and it will probably be color ».

[14] Ernst Cassirer, "Mythic, Aesthetic, and Theoretical Space," trans. Donald Phillip Verene and Lerke Holzwarth Foster, *Man and World* 2.1 (1969): 3-17.

From *Volksargitektuur* to Pretoria Regionalism: Afrikaner Nationalism, Architecture, and the Imaginary of High Culture, 1948–76

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By the time the National Party came to power in South Africa in 1948, the architectural language associated with Afrikaner nationalism had been clearly articulated: borrowing from both the 'modernistic' stripped classicism of the 1930s and from certain vernacular African traditions, it aimed to construct a *volksargitektuur*; a 'people's architecture' for the maturing Boer nation. As a concrete manifestation of political aspirations at a time when Afrikaner nationalism was asserting its political and cultural dominance, *volksargitektuur* thus made a claim for the authenticity of the modern Afrikaners' uniquely 'African' origins and their consequent right to sovereign nationhood. The decorative programmes commissioned for these buildings in turn reinforced the clumsy tropes of political authenticity and belonging implicit in the architectural vocabulary. The quintessential example of this style, Gerhard Moerdijk's Voortrekker Monument, was inaugurated in 1949. Following so close on the heels of the National Party victory, it gave literal expression to the abstractions of politics and nation building, and appeared to set the tone for the future architectural projects of the Afrikaner state.

By the time of the Soweto Uprisings in 1976, however, this language had shifted considerably. On the back of an ever-strengthening economy and burgeoning industrialisation, state-sponsored building projects had proliferated in the urban centres, but now invariably designed in a style that embraced the concrete-and-glass modernity of the post-Second World War International Style with a fervour that bordered on the messianic. The decorative programmes commissioned for these buildings were also increasingly and insistently abstract. From monolithic civic centres and provincial administration buildings to theatre complexes, airports and Dutch Reformed churches, the overwhelming – if often inappropriate – architectural message of the 1960s was of a government that had 'arrived,' and whose claims to progress and modernity were unassailable.

I suggest in this paper that this self-conscious embrace of modernity is more than merely a response to the Nationalist government's programme of modernisation and urbanisation: it is also linked implicitly to the construction of a particular imaginary of white Afrikaner nationhood. I argue that this has as much to do with the expansion and consolidation of the Afrikaner middle class, as it does with a shift in rhetoric from having to mobilise a sense of the right to govern, to complacency about that right. Pointing to what Lawrence J Vale (1999: 396) calls "noteworthy modernity" as a way of expressing national identity in architectural terms, such urban projects and buildings fed into the imaginary of modernity and success, while the self-consciously abstract art that populated these buildings and spaces further reinforced the Afrikaner nation's sophisticated, 'European' values. This, I argue, has profound implications for notions of what constituted Afrikaner high culture and the way in which it was officially mediated in architectural terms at the height of apartheid.

As Afrikaner Nationalism matured as a social and political force in the 1930s the social imaginary of the Afrikaner *volk* was increasingly associated with what Dunbar Moodie (1975) identifies as the 'civil religion' of the Afrikaner, whose articles of faith were a strict Calvinism, single-medium mother tongue education, racial segregation, the upliftment of poor Afrikaners, and ultimately the establishment of a republic. In cultural terms, 'civil religion' was expressed primarily in two ways: first, in the valorization – in art, literature and the popular press – of the majestic beauty of the virgin landscape, or 'promised land', which had been paid for in blood and sweat by the righteousness and heroism of the Voortrekkers. Second, in the imaginative (re)construction of the history of the Voortrekkers, whose selflessness and brave sacrifices led the Afrikaners through wilderness to this

Promised Land. In retrospect, we can see that this interest in the empty landscape and the (not unrelated) embrace of Voortrekker history as part of a wider discourse of Afrikaner nation building in the 1930s and 40s that promoted popular identification with the Voortrekkers in order to reinforce at every level notions of the legitimacy of the Afrikaner *volk*. The inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument in 1949 was thus the realization of a long-cherished desire to have a permanent and highly visible shrine to the Voortrekkers, and was therefore an event of considerable cultural and political significance.

The Voortrekker Monument is also the crowning achievement, formally and ideologically, of the notion of *volksargitektuur*, whose most vociferous champion was the Pretoria-based architect Gerhard Moerdijk (1890-1958). The first fully articulated exemplar of his ideas, and in many ways the prototype of the Voortrekker Monument, is his Merensky Library (1935) on the University of Pretoria Campus. The university had become an Afrikaans-language institution in 1930 – an important milestone on the path to Afrikaner political and cultural sovereignty – and Moerdijk was the Chairperson of the university council at the time of the library's commission. The project thus afforded Moerdijk a prestigious platform from which to promote what for him were the inherent principles of *volksargitektuur*, namely an 'authentic' Afrikaner identity rooted in Africa. In effect, this meant a complete rejection of the classicism associated with Baker and the British Imperialist tradition that dominated South African official architecture at the time in favour of a style that borrowed from both the 'modernistic' stripped classicism of the 1930s and from certain vernacular African traditions – in this case, Great Zimbabwe.

The library's battered granite walls rising from their rusticated base create an impression of venerable monumentality, while the zig-zag stone course at the top of the building (which he would later repeat on the Voortrekker Monument) is a direct reference to the outer walls of Great Zimbabwe. The zig-zag – a ubiquitous and enduring signifier of 'Africa' – is repeated on the spandrel panels and window panes. Roger Fisher (2000: 222) suggests that the zig-zag is not only "an archetypal symbol of water and fertility found in indigenous African culture", but that in this context it has an additional symbolic import, namely its association "with the Voortrekkers as a chosen people" whom God had succoured in the wilderness. Other direct quotations from Great Zimbabwe include low reliefs of the Zimbabwe bird on the entrance architrave, and a troupe of baboons above the entrance (a motif taken from a carved soapstone dish found in the ruins). This highly selective reading of an African vernacular is subsumed within the streamlined modernity of the overall design, quietly promoting the notion of the authenticity of the modern Afrikaner's claim to 'African' origins and the consequent right to its bounty. In the context of an Afrikaans-language institution known for its nationalist sympathies this was provocative stuff indeed, and would be amply vindicated by the Nationalist Party's victory in 1948.

By the time of the Soweto Uprisings in 1976, however, *volksargitektuur* had assumed a very different guise. Although rhetorical statements drawing on the established tropes of the civil religion never entirely disappeared, after the establishment of the Republic in 1961 a strident and self-conscious modernity was unequivocally associated with the appearance of the various apparatuses of the state. Thus, between the birth of the Afrikaner nationalist state in 1948 and the political watershed of 1976 that would ultimately destabilise it, a significant shift occurred in the canon of 'high culture' from a backward looking, blood-and-soil regionalism to a sophisticated, internationalist rhetoric that was more in tune with the aspirations of a modern nation state.

Theories of nationalism are instructive here: as Anderson (1983), Gellner (1983) and others have shown, something of a paradox is discernible in the construction of new nationalisms. While nations are by definition relatively recent constructs, this objective modernity is underscored by a subjective sense of antiquity. Homi Bhabha (1990: 294) refers to this phenomenon as "a double time of the

nation", in which the nation simultaneously posits ancient origins as well as progressive futurity – the imagined past gives it legitimacy, while a forward-looking modernity enables it to take its rightful place as a viable entity within a community of nations. Lawrence J Vale (1999: 396) shows how similar impulses may be discerned in architectural terms: first, in the need of the sponsoring regime to reassert a sub-national identity by equating its ethnic heritage with 'the national'; second, its need to extend this identity into the international realm by means of some kind of "noteworthy modernity"; and third the need to develop the personal identity of the client or designer.

Certainly, all three of these elements are abundantly present in Moerdijk's *volksargitektuur*. Not only do they conflate the Afrikaner sub-national identity with a broader 'African' identity by means of the use of regional materials and iconographic references, but do so within a self-consciously 'modernist' style. These combined forces in turn establish Moerdijk as the quintessential *volksargitek*, whose engagement on any subsequent projects would carry the tone of highest moral credibility. Nonetheless, Moerdijk's emphasis on autochthony and heroic history is fundamentally backward-looking, its nationalist rhetoric relying heavily on notions of subjective antiquity. Within a decade, the Afrikaner nationalist government now firmly in power, the emphasis could shift to a celebration of the Afrikaner nation's objective modernity.

Examples abound, particularly in the proliferation during the 1950s and 60s of state-sponsored public buildings in Pretoria – the centre of the Nationalist government's civil service – all of which reject the rhetorical tropes of *volksargitektuur* in favour of an assertively self-conscious modernity. Two aspects of the historical record are pertinent to understanding the background to this: first, the establishment of a School of Architecture at the University of Pretoria in 1943, whose first graduates had qualified by 1948, and second the staging of the 'Brazil Builds' exhibition in New York, also in 1943. For the emerging generation of Afrikaner architects, 'Brazil Builds' provided a compelling reference point for "an expression of newly independent statehood" (Fisher, 2000: 229) in the mode of Brasília and Chandigarh. Indeed, so immediate and pervasive was the Brazilian influence in South African architecture of the early 1950s, that Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, after touring the country in 1953, would famously refer to "the unknown existence of a little Brazil in the Commonwealth" (Gerneke, 1998: 218).

The first of the Brazil-inspired buildings – the Meat Board Building (1950) in Pretoria – is a case in point. Commissioned by the Public Works Department and designed by the German-born architect Hellmut Stauch (who had come to South Africa in 1935 after studying at the Ittenschule in Berlin, and joined the staff of the Pretoria School of Architecture in 1943), this building is a faithful transcription, if on a greatly diminished scale, of Oscar Niemeyer and Le Corbusier's Ministry of Education and Health in Rio de Janeiro (1938-43). Raised on pilotis, with fins on a vertical grid to accommodate flexible interior partitioning; an articulated roofscape and an adjustable *brise-soleil*, the Meat Board in effect issued a clarion call to the Public Works Department, young architects and nationalist ideologues alike to imagine a new kind of *volksargitektuur* for the capital; one whose confident embrace of a progressive future would allow the ever-strengthening Afrikaner nation to assert itself on an international stage.

The Pretoria School of Architecture was quick to heed this call in the design of new buildings on the university's campus. Throughout the 1950s the dominant idiom on the campus was Brazilian, resulting in a number of elaborately sculptural buildings in *béton brut*, raised on slender pilotis and sporting free-standing ribbon stairs, with *brise-soleils* and glazed tiles and mosaics replacing applied ornament. Designed exclusively by Afrikaner architects (Fisher, 2000: 224), the buildings on the campus became an important testing ground for architectural ideas that would soon become synonymous with the capital; the so-called 'Pretoria Regionalism' that spread rapidly from the campus to the burgeoning city and its suburbs. In effect, 'Pretoria Regionalism', as the style of choice

for the Public Works Department, became, *de facto*, a new *volksargitektuur*, finding expression in most major state-sponsored projects of the time. (Not least amongst these are a number of Brazil-inspired buildings on the campus of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education in the town of Potchefstroom, the first capital of the Boer republic and the heartland of the Afrikaner civil religion.)

The building that irrevocably put the stamp of official sanction on Pretoria Regionalism was the Transvaal Provincial Administration Building (1962), which, comprising an entire city block, was the largest official public commission of the decade. Completed in the year after the establishment of the Republic it certainly set a new standard in civic architecture, one that would be widely emulated in South Africa's rapidly-expanding cities and towns. Like the Meat Board Building, the Transvaal Provincial Administration Building reiterates the lessons of Rio de Janeiro, but here exercised on a monumental scale, balanced in its details by restraint and rationality. Designed by a team lead by A L Meiring (Professor of Architecture at the University of Pretoria) it dominated the city centre, the implacable rhythm of its façade forming a dramatic backdrop for the city's historical buildings – not least the Raadsaal, the seat of the old Boer Republic's government. With hindsight it is impossible not to interpret this juxtaposition of the old and the new administrative centres of the 'old' and 'new' Boer Republics as a grand triumphal gesture in the mode of Bhabha's 'double time'; the Nationalist government in effect claiming legitimacy through the imagined inevitability of history.

The building's symbolic importance was further consolidated by the inclusion of an extensive decorative programme, with celebrated artists being commissioned to produce work in a decidedly modernist idiom. These include Alexis Preller's *Discovery*, which evokes the triumph of European civilisation for the newly-established Republic in a style that is at once 'modern' and forward-looking and yet figurative and accessible. Similar impulses underscore other works in the building, like Bettie Cilliers-Barnard's tapestry design, *Die Vrou* (rejected initially as too abstract) and Cecily Sash's mosaic *Seekoeivlei*, which show a similar balance between figuration and abstraction.

By the latter half of the 1960s public architecture shows a dramatic shift towards the New Brutalism, with increasing attention being paid to "solving the technical problems of racial separation" (Silverman, 2000: 140). More and more these monumental structures betokened the arrogant triumphalism of the apartheid state, with clearly demarcated entrances and public areas for whites and non-whites; the former inevitably on a more considered and lavish scale than the latter. The decorative programmes associated with these buildings also became increasingly abstract and sophisticated, stridently proclaiming the flawed ideal of "an up-to-date white nation in Africa" (Chipkin, 2008: 169). Significant examples include the H F Verwoerd Building (1966-9), the home of the Provincial Administration of the Orange Free State in Bloemfontein, which features a 12-storey high stained glass façade by the abstract landscape painter Eben van der Merwe and a large mural by Bettie Cilliers-Barnard entitled *The Development of the Orange Free State*. The overriding concern with a kind of decorative abstraction that characterizes both the building and its decorative programme became the necessary condition of other public commissions at the time, notably the monumentally sculptural *brise-soleil* and various murals and other decorative elements for the international terminal of Jan Smuts airport in Johannesburg (1972).

The self-conscious celebration of modernity that informs the H F Verwoerd building and its decorative programme is interesting in terms of the social imaginary that it constructs, particularly in view of the fact that it was completed at a time when the National Party was enjoying its strongest support. The March 1966 election, in which the National Party won an overwhelming majority of 126 seats, effectively rendered South Africa "a single party state" (Welsh, 2000: 464), and the Prime Minister H F Verwoerd's political and economic agenda had been largely fulfilled by the time he was assassinated in September 1966. In a building named for the infamous 'architect of apartheid', this

building clearly asserts that while the Prime Minister may be dead, his vision of economic prosperity under the guidance of white supremacist culture continues to flourish.

It is important to note that, unlike Moerdijk, the architects producing this officially sanctioned modern architecture in the 1960s and 70s were not all Afrikaners, nor were they necessarily Afrikaner nationalists. Indeed, so abstract and internationalist are their designs that it seems in retrospect that they were wholly unmoved by – or wilfully oblivious of – the political turbulence of their age. While the fact that they achieved official recognition in the form of highly visible public commissions does not necessarily make them complicit with the nationalist project – as Gus Gerneke (1998: 215) notes in his discussion of the young Pretoria architects, "[i]t is perhaps too easy to read political overtones in design" – it nonetheless points to a paradigmatic shift on the part of the Afrikaner cultural élite: sophistication was increasingly being valued above sentiment; an optimistic future over a troubled past.

This has to be understood in relation to changing ideological values in the two decades after 1948. The period immediately following the 1948 victory was dominated by the consolidation of the Nationalist Party's ideological principles. By the 1960s, however, this had largely been achieved. Afrikaners were now firmly in control of all the organs of state, and the generation that had come to political maturity were sufficiently empowered to embrace new constructs of what it meant to be an Afrikaner. Indeed, throughout the 1960s, the notion of the modern nation was aggressively promoted. Against a backdrop of increasing isolationism, the draconian policies of the state were justified in terms of notions of white (Afrikaner) racial and cultural supremacy. At the same time the notions of *volkekunde* first espoused at Afrikaner universities in the 1920s had been formalised into full-blown apartheid. Simultaneously, there is a pronounced shift in the demographics of class associated with broad-based Afrikaner nationalism. From a predominantly rural base, the Afrikaner middle class grew exponentially in the first decades of National Party rule; as much a function of urbanisation as of job reservation and cultural and educational policies that privileged whites in general and Afrikaners in particular.

The generation of (particularly urban) Afrikaners that came to maturity in the 1960s and 70s thus had a profoundly different awareness of itself and its place in the world than that which had informed its parents and grandparents. The bitter history of the concentration camps and the ravages of the Anglo-Boer War that had fuelled the rise of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1920s were no longer an immediate imperative, and were certainly no longer part of the living memory of the economically active population. Indeed, young, middle-class Afrikaners in the 1960s and early 70s – riding the crest of an economic boom and living in a state that aggressively and jealously promoted their wellbeing – could enjoy a prosperity and concomitant sense of confidence and cultural superiority that would have been unimaginable for their parents' generation.

An important aspect of the debate that cannot be overlooked here is the ideological schism between the *verligte* (enlightened) and *verkrampte* (reactionary) Afrikaners that occurred within the ranks of the Afrikaner élite during the 1960s. Interestingly, the catalyst for this rupture was cultural rather than political: in May 1964 the respected Afrikaner writer Etienne Leroux was awarded the South African Academy of Arts and Sciences' highest award for literature, the Hertzog Prize for Prose, for his controversial novel *Sewe Dae by die Silbersteins* ('Seven Days with the Silbersteins'). At once a parody of the Creation and a parable of the failure of the nationalist project (O'Meara, 1996: 124), the controversy that it provoked raised profound questions about what constituted the acceptable limits of Afrikaner culture.

Although a staunch Nationalist, Leroux was a member of the literary group the *Sestigers*, who took it upon themselves to revitalise the staid, hidebound conventions of Afrikaans literature. This was

achieved both in their engagement with themes – like anomie and sexuality – that were anathema to the existing canon, as well as in their experiments with form. While there is no direct equivalent to the *Sestigers* in terms of the South African visual arts or architecture of the period, the group nonetheless paved the way for new forms of cultural expression. The rise of abstraction as the dominant language both of 'high art' and official architecture at this time is part of the same cultural imaginary. It must largely be ascribed to the coming of age of a younger generation of *verligte* Afrikaners for whom the long shadows cast by the concentration camps and the indignities of the poor white problem of the 1920s were an inconvenient memory. Their identity was emphatically urban rather than rural, and their middle-class aspirations and values were well served by the abstractions of High Modernism.

In the final analysis, it is interesting how the relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and the canon of 'high culture' changed in the three decades after 1945. Indeed, the shift from the backward-looking and sentimental figurative tradition to an assertive and self-conscious modernity in less than two decades is an astonishing turnaround, and speaks volumes about the changing notions of the Afrikaner nation and its aspirations. I think it is fair to say that this new, abstract language had, by the 1970s, become entrenched as part of the high culture sanctioned by the Nationalist government, and in that way, 'canonical'. This in turn raises interesting questions about the relationship between the 'canon' and power, and about what gets valued in particular social and political contexts and why.

In the post-1994 context, it also raises questions about the ways in which the nation is imagined and constructed in visual terms, and how this in turn is sanctioned by the state. The return to literalism and a figurative tradition – often predicated on notions of heroism and triumph over suffering – which we have seen in recent public buildings should give us pause for thought. Given the recent and odious example of Afrikaner nationalism, with all its smug assumptions of moral and cultural superiority, this begs the question: what is the emerging canon, and whose interests do its embedded values serve? As Michael Billig (1995: 171) notes, "if the future remains uncertain, we know the past history of nationalism. And that should be sufficient to encourage a habit of watchful suspicion".

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‘Now You’ve Gone and Killed Me’: The Life and Afterlife of Billy Monk, 1937–1982[1]

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Billy Monk enjoys an almost legendary status in the annals of South African photography but his image has been made to a large extent by others, rather than himself, and many questions remain about the true nature of his work.

The facts behind the Billy Monk archive are few. In 1979, the Cape Town photographer Jac de Villiers moved into a studio on the corner of Hope and Wesley Streets that had been occupied ten years earlier by Monk and found three Lever-Arch files of images, annotated with dates and a numbering system. De Villiers was so impressed by the work that, having located Monk, who at the time was diving for diamonds off Port Nolluth, and getting his permission, he had a selection of 41 negatives printed by Andrew Meintjies which, with the assistance of David Goldblatt, he arranged to be exhibited at the Market Theatre Photography Gallery in Johannesburg in July 1982. Monk returned to Cape Town to find a lift to Johannesburg to see the show but was shot to death in a street fight before he could leave. The exhibition was very well received in the press and the Market Gallery bought a couple of prints, the Johannesburg Art Gallery bought four, and the South African National Gallery bought the entire set.

The photographs in the three files had been taken between 1967 and 1969 in the then ‘red light’ district of Cape Town around the bottom end of Bree Street, close to the harbour, mainly at the clubs *Les Catacombs* on Mechau Street and *The Spur*. After an early jail sentence for burglary, a stint smuggling *dagga* from the Eastern Cape, and a short time poaching crayfish, Monk became a bouncer at the *Catacombs* where he worked for several years, keeping the flow of liquor going and maintaining a rough peace to prevent unwelcome visits from the police. The photographs in the files date between July 1967 and December 1969 but it is not known quite when Monk started photographing the activities in the club. De Villiers recalls that Monk told him that there had been as many as eight files some of which, presumably, would date back some considerable time before July 1967. All indications are that Monk made the photographs to sell to clients as mementoes of their night on the town: the dates in the file indicate that Monk photographed mainly at weekends. There are several hundred photographs in the three surviving files and presumably many more have been lost. Monk told de Villiers that he abandoned this work at the end of 1969 because of the introduction of Polaroid but it cannot be coincidental that he appears to have left the clubs at this time. There is an unconfirmed report of Monk working as a fashion photographer in the early 70s but he seems to have soon moved on to a sandal-making venture in premises, The Mad Monk, at the top end of Long Street, before turning to fishing and diamond diving.

De Villiers records that Monk used a Pentax camera with 35mm lens, a small flash, and Ilford FP4 film: it is known that luxury goods were traded in the clubs by Japanese sailors and it is likely that Monk acquired the camera in this way. Surviving prints in private collections measure 11 x 15cm which would seem to indicate that Monk thought of his work as snapshots. Obviously, the image of Monk’s work is affected by the scale of the prints made from his negatives: de Villiers’ exhibition prints measure 17 x 25cm, and the quality of reproduction is considerably enhanced by Meintjies’ production over the journeyman quality of Monk’ original prints. Moreover, and most significantly, the selection from the archive determines the character of Monk’s image. De Villiers acknowledges

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his role in this, selecting photographs on aesthetic grounds and overlooking others he considers boring. Moreover, De Villiers has introduced Monk's work to the gallery world for which, of course, it was never intended. Evidently, the archive as a whole would lend itself to a social documentation of Cape Town's club culture in the 'sixties'. But all indications are that Monk himself thought of it as a barely profitable sideline to his work in the clubs.

Musicians and others at the *Catacombs* remembered Monk at a bouncer, rather than as a photographer, and those who did recall him taking photographs insisted that he was simply providing souvenirs for clients. This practice is confirmed in the survival of works in private collections, by Monk's particular filling system, and in the fact that, until the Market exhibition of 1982, not a single photograph of his was published. Of the forty-one works that were printed for the Market Theatre exhibition, most show clients at the club, from Royal Navy sailors on shore leave, to East Asian mariners and businessmen, to upmarket Capetonians taking a walk on the wild side at weekends. Many of these photographs are formal, negotiated portraits, with or without the clubs' hostesses, but some, evidently as the effects of the liquor and sexual excitement took hold, appear more spontaneous and consent to have the photograph taken cannot have been more than implicit. Other photographs in the collection record the Philip Weinstein, the owner of the *Catacombs*, musicians and other staff at the clubs either in the performance of their duties or, frequently, performing for the camera. And another group of works depict the hostesses at different points in their long evening's work: sitting in groups before the clients arrive, entertaining the clients and, occasionally, overcome by fatigue and alcohol. From this catalogue of subject-matter, and the simple fact that he did not publish a single image in his lifetime, it is clear that Monks' primary purpose was to document the merry-making of his paying clients but, since he had a loaded camera to hand, he would also photograph acquaintances amongst the staff and hostesses, and, as the mood took him, scenes of general revelry at the clubs. The subjects engaged with the camera in different ways according to the situation, but the peculiar strength of the collection lies in the fact that Monk was an insider and so able not only to share but actually encourage the sense of transgression prevailing at the clubs that he gleefully imported into his images.

As far as the context of photographic history is concerned, Monk's images put one in mind of Brassai's work on the nightlife of Paris in the 'thirties or, more recently, Yoshiyuki's essay on peepers in Tokyo parks, but both of these projects are documentary, purposefully exposing private practices to public notice. Similarly, Diane Arbus, whose images of twins are recalled in Monk's several photographs of women dressed identically, but Arbus also was an outsider to her 'freak' subjects and, in any event, she habitually isolated her figures from any sense of action whereas Monk evidently saw his subjects as part of the flow of life in the clubs. A more useful comparison, perhaps, is E.J. Bellocq's collection of *Storyville Portraits* of New Orleans prostitutes, which was also not made for public consumption but was discovered in his desk after his death. But the relationship between photographer and subject in each case is obviously different: Bellocq recorded only prostitutes, seemingly to ponder his relationship with women, whereas Monk celebrated, albeit privately, the transgressive nature of the clubs' activities as a form of inarticulate social protest. Other comparisons may be made within the genre of portraiture both because the nature of each image revolves around the extent, and the way, it has been negotiated; and because some meaning has attached to the image because it has been taken out of private into public circulation in the work of art: consider the example of Seydou Keita whose wonderful portraits now carry levels of meaning beyond the conscious intention of both photographer and subject. However, although portraiture was Monk's apparent purpose, both he and his clients clearly recognized the significance of the venue at which the photographs were taken. Perhaps the most useful comparison for an understanding of the meaning of Billy Monk's photographs in today's world is with a crime photographer such as Weegee.

Like Monk's photographs, Weegee's project has been taken out of its original, forensic, context and considered in aesthetic terms. And as with Monk, this removal has made the images transcend the individual identities of their subjects and stand for the subculture of an era. Moreover, this placing of the archive in the supposedly neutral public domain of art has allowed the portrait subjects to be viewed - and assessed – by outsiders in a way that is obviously contrary to their makers' original projects. In a way Monk's complaint to the street thug who shot him, 'Now you've gone and killed me', could be applied to the wholesale removal of his archive from one arena of circulation to another because it constitutes a form of death and resurrection. Of course, one should not be too precious about this because, without the intervention of art, the archive would not be known beyond its original subjects. But in enjoying the view into Monk's world through the gilded frame of art – a frame that has effectively redefined the very quality of the images – one should remain conscious that it is us who are the voyeurs, and not the photographer.

Piecing Together Another World: Mourning and the Ritual Use of Clothing[1]

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Introduction

On New Year's Eve 2009, a blistering hot summer day in Swaziland, I drove with my good friend and informant Martha to visit former high school home-economics teacher Nomonde Mabuza. Martha made sure that we stopped at the Manzini Pick and Pay grocery store to buy several plastic bags of food: cooking oil, brown bread, a bag of frozen chicken portions, a jar of prepared garlic, and other sundries. While bringing food when visiting her mother at her natal countryside homestead and on other visits to kin is a near obligation, this visit was paid to a less well-known acquaintance. Yet, the food here was a definite obligation. It had been a little more than one month since Nomonde was told that her son Kabelo Zwane, the "whiz-kid" as named by the Swazi newspapers[2], had suddenly and tragically passed away under mysterious circumstances while studying in the United States, and our small provisions, *imiphako*, were tangible and customary offerings of comfort for the bereaved.

After being warmly welcomed and the food gifts set aside, Nomonde narrated in loving praises her son's school successes and travel to the US, and explained the series of events occurring over the past two months involving his passing and the aftershocks. Martha and I sat eating fresh litchis on the couch, listening encouragingly. Before she began, Nomonde went to another room and came back with Kabelo's photographs and ID cards. "Even here is his t-shirt," she said holding the ends of the black t-shirt she wore, stretching out the front before her. Kabelo, her first born, was talented and intelligent young man who attended the prestigious Waterford KaMhlaba United World College in Swaziland for his international baccalaureate. After graduation, he worked for the school's office administration for a year before making the move to the US in 2007. Kabelo was the first Swazi national to be accepted to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge and began a degree program in mechanical engineering that fall. At MIT, Kabelo was a member of the Campus Crusade for Christ, African Students Association, and the Experimental Study Group. His peers and advisors described him as modest, inquisitive, kind, dedicated, and warm.[3] Kabelo went missing from campus on October 25, 2009, and on November 7 was found by a hiker in a wooded area of Bedford, MA. Kabelo was holding his cellphone, a plastic bag full of helium over his head. Police were able to identify him by tracing the registration details of the phone and notified. It is unknown as to why he was in Bedford, nearly an hour away from the city. The MIT news office first reported the incident on November 12,[4] Nomonde and the rest of the family being told the day before. Kabelo was repatriated on November 16, and following a memorial service at Waterford KaMhlaba that week, Nomonde was flown to the US for several days to meet MIT administration.

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[1] Ethnographic and archival research in 2009-2011 was made possible by a Fulbright IIE grant with the U.S. State Department, a Fulbright-Hays grant with the U.S. Department of Education, and through Brandeis University's Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Grants from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and Research and Travels Funds from the Department of Anthropology. Ellen Schattschneider and Fred Klaits proffered encouragement and inspiration.

[2] Nxumalo, Manqoba. Swazi whiz-kid might have killed himself (2009) Times of Swaziland, November 17; Masuku, Lunga (2009) Swazi whizz-kid died holding his cellphone. Swazi Times, November 28.

[3] McGraw-Herdeg, Michael (2009) Sophomore died in Bedford on Saturday. The Tech 129(53), November 13; Bushak, Nick (2009) News Briefs: Zwane Death Deemed a Suicide. The Tech 129(56), November 24; no author (2009) Obituary: Kabelo Zwane '12. The Tech 129(58), December 3.

[4] No author (2009) Kabelo Zwane, sophomore in mechanical engineering, dies at age 21. MIT News, November, 12.

Almost a year later to the date I visited Nomonde again at her flat, and again, she wore one of Kabelo's t-shirts, a white cotton T with a print logo for Young Heroes, a Swazi organization supporting HIV-AIDS orphans that he volunteered with at school. "What happened to his things," I asked her. "He took most of his things with him when he left," she told me. "There were four pairs of jeans, and some other small things. At MIT, there was nothing left. There were no clothes left in his flat when they went to check on it. They only sent me his laptop. He must have given his clothes away to the others before he did the suicide. That is how they knew it was a suicide." While the observed and reported use Kabelo's clothing was a remarkable element in his mother's narrative, another issue engrossing her was a desire to relocate to the US. "I have to leave Swaziland," she repeatedly told us, "it will be better if I get to leave here and go away to stay in the States." While Nomonde holds some residual blame against MIT, in her view fostering an environment with an unhealthy work drive and without adequate student counseling, she strongly wishes to follow her son's international journey. For Nomonde, returning and settling in the US would be reprieve from Swazis who continue to launch unbecoming questions about Kabelo's death and are unsympathetic to her own post-traumatic care. Visits by many of her son's international friends from Waterford KaMhlaba and MIT fueled her wish for an exodus. "They say that I will fit in well in a Western environment and I really think I do," she told me. Nomonde received a ten-year visa from the US government to assist her, but she faces the greatest difficulty in securing financial sponsorship.

This tragic event presents a host of issues at play in the current personal and public right ritual practice surrounding death in Swaziland, which are increasingly complicated in the wake of the deleterious HIV-AIDS crisis and changing zones of global commercial, religious, and legal influence. Since the early 2000s, HIV-AIDS has been a primary factor in increasing the traffic of discourses, money, institutions and persons between Swaziland and the cosmopoles of Western Europe and the United States.[5] The legal-and human-rights discourses shaping aspects of these campaigns and influencing national Swazi constitutional reforms include direct assaults on ritual practices, notably the custom of the patriline compelling a widow to wear mourning gowns. Nearly coterminous with the increase traffic of internationally-influenced HIV-AIDS campaigns is the emergence and rise of transnational Pentecostal-charismatic churches (PCC), espousing ideologies of spiritual and economic salvation in being born-again and the rejection of tradition,[6] especially the materiality of mortuary ritual.[7] Finally, with the accelerated mortality of HIV-AIDS, Swazis are now confronted with an emergent market of funeral-insurance and -products like cremation and tombstones from which to choose to complete right ritual passage. While informant exegeses on contemporary social change constitutes a wealth of data, one must also recall that contest and struggle to reconcile conventional practices amongst these changes often both reflects and plays out in very the stuff of everyday life,[8] like coffins, candles, tombstones, and other seemingly "banal accoutrements of death."[9]

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[5] The more prolific discourses and projects in Swaziland are multi-million dollar public health campaigns rolled out for HIV prevention and treatment, to the saturation point where several people have told me, "we have been educated to death!"

[6] Meyer, Birgit (2004) Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches. Annual Review of Anthropology 33: 447-474.

[7] Sukati, Zwelihle (2009). Pastors slammed on funeral traditions. Swazi Times, July 15.

[8] Ferme, Mariane (2001) The Underneath of Things: Violence and the Everyday in Sierra Leone. Berkeley CA: University of California Press; Miller, Daniel, ed. (2005) Materiality. Durham: Duke University Press; Comaroff Jean and John L. Comaroff (1997) Of Revelation and Revolution: Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier, Vol. 2. Chicago: Chicago University Press. See also Victor Turner's classic account on elucidating different levels of symbolism in African religion and ritual: (1967) The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, especially chapter 2: Ritual Symbolism, Morality and Social Structure among the Ndembu.

[9] Comaroff, Jean (2007) Beyond Bare Life: AIDS, (Bio)Politics and the Neoliberal Order. Public Culture 19(1):197-219, 203

In my research, clothing came up as the quintessential everyday stuff that is good to think with when understanding contest and process in the Swazi social field of death and memory. In this article, I argue that clothing as object and clothing or cloth-ing as an action are key analytic tools in illustrating the emotional, social, and embodied dimensions of religious orientation and ritual practice. Clothing is notably used as a principal object in privatized and subjective ritualization to manage loss and traverse an inexplicable lifeworld in the wake of separation over time by death. Clothing serves as an object to reattach oneself to a lost other, by providing tangible residuals of bodily and sensorial presence, and becomes a powerful form of embodied materiality. Considering that Swazi theories of personhood and Christian religious ontologies are grounded in cultural concepts of the body and its ephemera, clothing becomes a uniquely symbolic vehicle to figure and control memories of the dead and others in the past. The circulation and manipulation of clothing objects–both the remaining pieces worn by the deceased and the pieces worn by the bereaved during and after ritual events–illustrate their social significance in making and unmaking relations with others to create temporary spaces of death.

While clothing is a significant object in the transition and manipulation of one's subjective self as it figures a principal lost other to whom the self feels beholden and attached, the act of clothing oneself and others situates a person amongst myriad others in a globalized society. However, the ways of properly situating the bereaved person in the present Swazi historical and socio-religious context is contested, and often centers on clothing actions themselves. With the late twentieth and early twenty-first century proliferation of evangelical and Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, Swazis are engaging in powerful interlocution with discourse and aesthetics with origins in the North that is radically transformative of moral and social subjectivities and conventional practices.[10] As such, clothing becomes a window into the ambivalent relationship between North and South worlds over religious ritual and aesthetics, raising the stakes in polarizations between West and Africa, cosmopolitanism and (neo-) traditionalism, aid and complication, morality and sin.

As Cole suggests for an African context, "memory provides an important tool through which people think about and act in terms of the moral and material dilemmas that structure their lives."[11] In the Swazi case presented here, the moral and material are ineluctably bound up with one another. Nomonde's own personal desires for migration to the US represent a reversal of powerful transnational flow. While a wave of Northern institutions come to Africa and other sites of the global South to present how to rightly care for bodies and selves, her desired migration asks us to question and understand how the North could not rightly care for someone like Kabelo in its own spaces and terms. The suicide's apparently constitutive immateriality of missing clothes opens a space to see the importance of materiality, namely clothing, for mourning and custom, despite the broader contest of these ritual repertoire by Swazi and other African PCC. Overall, I consider how such dilemmas of loss and affliction are controlled through strategic acts of memory and forgetting using symbolic media to negotiate subjective experience and relationships with the dead, and the implications for forming broader collective memories in this historical moment. How are these media related to the wider contemporary and historical repertoire of memorializing signs and practices, and how might individual aesthetic motivations potentially bridge the levels of "collective representation and

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[10] Meyer, Birgit (1999) Translating the Devil. Trenton: Africa World Press; (2010) Aesthetics of Persuasion: Global Christianity and Pentecostalism's Sensationlist Forms. South Atlantic Quarterly109(4):741-763; Robbins, Joel (2004a) The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charistmatic Christianity. Annual Review of Anthropology 33:117-143; (2004b) Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society. Berkeley: University of California Press.

[11] Cole, Jennifer (2005) Foreword: Collective Memory and the Politics of Reproduction in Africa. Africa 75(1):1-9, 7

personal fantasy?"[12] Swazis piece together another world for themselves and others in the ritualized use of clothing, working through their bereavement and the passage of time and over space.

Methods and interpretation

I came to investigate the significance of clothing in earlier exploratory phases of a larger research project on the work of ritual in Swaziland's age of HIV-AIDS. Originally, I was confronted with a series of social enigmas surrounding death and dying while reading Swazi newspapers online. In Swaziland's era of aggravated HIV-AIDS and constitutional reforms, newspapers produce sensationalist stories about stolen mourning gowns, murders at funerals, and other terrifying events involving mortuary ritual, morgues, and widows that led me to recall de Boeck's idea of the "apocalyptic interlude" that characterizes a disrupted postcolonial African world and marks acts of mourning and remembrance as null.[13] Indeed for the Swazi case, the dramatic demographic transformations wrought by HIV-AIDS have been labeled a "humanitarian emergency" and if orphaning trends continue the nation may find itself with a "dysfunctional generation of Swazi citizens."[14] These facts highlight the severity of the situation, but may belie the potential of local cultural implements to accommodate this dysfunction and create new social and symbolic orders, identities, and relations. Ritual and ritualization has been shown by anthropologists to be a practical and symbolic means to overcome uncertainty,[15] and yet little has been done in the Swazi context to look ritual forms outside of nation-state ceremonies' symbolism or as projects of historical trajectories of independence and cultural nationalism.[16] This project differs in its scope, illustrating the practice and meaning of ritual and ritualization at the domestic, local, and personal level, rather than that of the nation-state for Swaziland.

Initially, I wanted to find out how ritual and memory was linked to personal implements of material culture[17], and found the siSwati word *sikhumbuto*, meaning "reminder" as a closest approximation

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[12] Kracke, Waud and Gilbert Herdt (1987) Introduction: Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Anthropology. Ethos 15(1):3-7, 4

[13] de Boeck, Filip (2005) The Apocalyptic Interlude: Revealing Death in Kinshasa. African Studies Review 48:11–31. See also: de Boeck (1998) Beyond the Grave: History, Memory and Death in Postcolonial Congo/Zaire. Memory and the Postcolony. Richard Werbner, ed. London: Zed Books; Mbembe, Achille (2003) Necropolitics. Public Culture 15(1):11-40; Comaroff (2007).

[14] Whiteside, Alan, Amy Whalley, preps. and Scott Naysmith, ed. (2007) Reviewing "Emergencies" for Swaziland: Shifting the Paradigm in a New Era. Mbabane: NERCHA, UNAIDS and Global HIV/AIDS Program.

[15] Lienhardt, Godfrey (1961) Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Jackson, Michael (1989) Paths Towards A Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry. Bloomington: Indiana University Pres; (2005) Existential Anthropology. London: Berghahn Books; Jenkins, Richard, Hanne Jessen and Vibeke Steffen, eds. (2005) Managing Uncertainty: Ethnographic Studies of Illness, Risk and the Struggle for Control. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press.

[16] Here, I am making reference to the *oeuvre* on the Swazi iNcwala: Kuper, Hilda (1944) A Ritual of Kingship Among the Swazi. Africa 14(15)230-255; (1947[1980]) An African Aristocracy. Oxford: Oxford University Press; (1968) Incwala in Swaziland: Celebration of Growth and Kingship. African Arts 1(3):54-59, 90; (1972) A Royal Ritual in a Changing Political Context. Cahiers d'etudes Africanes 12(48):593-614; (1973a) Costume and Identity. Comparative Studies in Society and History 15(3):348-367; (1973b) Costume and Cosmology: The Animal Symbolism of the Ncwala. Man 8(4):613-630; Cook, P.A.W. (1930) The Inqwala Ceremony of the Swazis. Bantu Studies 4:205-210; Gluckman, Max (1965) Custom and Conflict in Africa. Oxford: Blackwell; Beidelman, T.O. (1966) Swazi Royal Ritual. Africa 36(4): 373-405; Apter, Andrew (1983) In Dispraise of the King: Rituals 'Against' Rebellion in South-east Africa. Man 18:521-534; de Heusch, Luc (1985) Sacrifice in Africa: A Structuralist Approach. Linda O'Brien and Alice Morton, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Lincoln, Bruce (1987) Ritual, Rebellion, Resistance: Once More the Swazi Ncwala. Man 22(1):132-156; Matsebula, J.S. (1988) A History of Swaziland, 3rd ed. Cape Town: Longman; Astuti, Rita (1988) Ritual, History and the Swazi Ncwala. Africa 43:603-619.

[17] Cf. Battaglia, Debbora (1990) On the Bones of the Serpent: Personhood, Memory and Mortality on a Sabarl Island Society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Mines, Diane P. and Bradd Weiss, eds. (1997) Materializations of Memory: The Substance of Memory and Forgetting. Theme issue: Anthropological Quarterly

for the English “memorabilia.”[18] When I asked people about the nature and types of *tikhumbuto* (pl.) while free-listing, clothes were mentioned in four separate instances out of approximately ten. I was surprised to hear that people mentioned clothing, as I had not read about its importance in mortuary ritual in previous ethnographies on Swazi ritual and religion that discuss clothing.[19] I decided to follow this lead, which brought me to see that clothing tends to operate as an important memorializing and ritual device in Swazi mortuary and memory work.

One has to cultivate information on the ritual surrounding and experience of death and dying in the most sensitive way possible, namely through ethnography. Ethnography is born from cultivating trusting friendships with others, moving along personalized pathway from stranger to friend, sharing intimate details and stories with each other about each other’s pasts, presents, future prospects, and own experiences of loss. Sharing a dwelling-space, working together on daily household chores, cooking and eating together, and having conversations, both light and serious, bear the fruit of a textual and visual representation of one’s worldview and lifeworld of which both ethnographer and informant are co-authors. Over the course of the project, some of my closest friends and interlocutors lost a friend, family member or coworker, or passed on themselves, which was both terribly painful and revelatory for all of us. By empathizing and revealing to others one’s own afflictions of loss, one is able to more sensitively engage and exchange to produce a meaningful narrative of the account.

For this project, data was collected between 2008 and 2011 in 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork (July-August 2008, December 2009-January 2010, August 2010-June 2011) with Swazi families and households in three different communities. I made note of items around the household that were kept unused or displayed as things with special meaning. Informants were aware of my interest in *tikhumbuto*, and over time, they revealed the meaning around the items for them and what and who they reminded them of. Aside from this domain of knowledge and participant-observation activities with each household and surrounding neighborhood, I did 20 households surveys in five different communities to investigate ritual and religious participation and household demographics and socioeconomic conditions. I also attended weekly church services at evangelical, PCC, Zionist and mainstream Christian churches at varying times. At each church, I conducted semi-structured interviews with pastors and church members and attended bible and religious studies sessions, many of which explicitly focused on eschatological issues. It was in these study sessions that I was exposed to the debate over right mortuary ritual practice in mainstream evangelical and PCC churches. I followed up on what I recorded in the study sessions with key informant interviews. Finally, I

70(4); Hoskins, Janet (1998) Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives. New York: Routledge; Schattschneider, Ellen (2005) The Bloodstained Doll: Violence and the Gift in Wartime Japan. Journal of Japanese Religious Studies 31(2):329-356.

[18] *Sikhumbuzo*, the isiZulu equivalent is a popular name for boys for both Swazi and Zulu. Naming is an important cultural practice revealing Nguni family structure and contemporaneous parental emotional valences about the particular child and birth circumstances. Sikhumbuzo as a name often hearkens to the child being a reminder of another family member from an ascendant generation, or as an incarnate human gift from the ancestors. Mhlongo, Bonakele (2009) Izibongo zamaZulu. Invited lecture, Fulbright-Hays Zulu Group Project Abroad, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, June 25. See also its poetic use as a pseudonym in a discussion of ancestral remembrance and ritual in Zuluand: White, Hylton (2001) Tempora et Mores: Family Values and the Possessions of a Post-Apartheid Countryside. Journal of Religion in Africa 31(4):457-479.

[19] Gluckmann, Max (1937) Mortuary Customs and the Belief in Survival after Death among the South-Eastern Bantu. Bantu Studies 11:117-136; Kuper, Hilda (1947[1980]) An African Aristocracy: Rank Among the Swazi. Oxford: Oxford University Press; (1973a), (1973b); Fogelqvist, Anders (1987) The Red-Dressed Zionists: Symbols of Power in a Swazi Independent Church. Uppsala Research Reports in Cultural Anthropology, 5. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis; Kiernan, JP (1991) Wear 'n' Tear and Repair: The Colour Coding of Mystical Mending in Zulu Zionist Churches. Africa 61(1):26-39; Kasenene, Peter (1993) Swazi Traditional Religion and Society. Mbabane: Webster’s.

attended meetings for workplace and church burial cooperatives, visited commercial mortuaries, and followed commercial funeral-insurance brokers as they made product presentations to prospective policy-holders. Critical conversations about the meaning and changes of mortuary ritual came up in these settings as well.

I interpret the ritual usage of clothing to through a psychoanalytic and phenomenological frame as such an approach illustrates the unique pragmatic cultural evocations undertaken in universal human grieving processes. Importantly, the approach takes the body as foundational to experience. Following Bowlby, feelings and emotions, are self-intuitive appraisals of bodily organismic states. They are urges to act, but also appraisal of success for manipulating external and environmental situations.[20] Thereafter, emotional responses to situations are then conventionalized over time per language and the socio-cultural setting,[21] so while experiences of mourning and loss are universal, the repertoire of affective states and behavior patterns is subject to social control and manipulation and varies by society.[22] However, by taking the body as primary, we retain the centrality of mourning's universal human condition. In addition, for the Swazi cultural milieu theories of personhood are importantly figured by the body and its diffuse ephemera, and thus elevate local epistemologies in the analysis. As such, in order to understand clothing in this context, one has to first understand the local logics of bodily practice and meta-commentary on the body. Indeed, when considering the Swazi context, one has to recall Kuper's provocative statement that Swazis "view their clothing almost as an extension of themselves. In sum, it now becomes intelligible why a person's relationship to his clothing is at once different from and more intimate than his relationship to all other material objects."[23]

Finally, In accounting for validity in my interpretations I follow what archaeologist and material culture theorist Ian Hodder calls the link between correspondence and coherence: "The notion of correspondence between theory and data does not imply absolute objectivity and dependence, bur rather embeds the fit of data and theory within coherence."[24] The observational data from ethnography can also show how individual object use may elide or diverge from broader symbolic repertoires, even if symbolic objects "work through the evocation of sets of practices within individual experience" and "specific memory traces associated with any particular object… will vary from individual to individual."[25]

In what follows, I first describe Swazi collective mortuary ritual forms with special emphasis on clothing. I consider both clothing that was possessed and worn by the deceased, as well as the clothing worn by the bereaved during and after mortuary ritual events, namely attire worn for mourning as by social prescription and according to gender. I then present a number of cases were individuals personally ritualize clothing of the deceased as a means to elide the self with a lost other. I conclude by presenting the current ambiguous state of mourning when it comes to clothing, a critique of right emotional and ritual practices as leveled by certain PCC and evangelical churches and some of the responses and justifications given by church members. I wish to illustrate that social and personal uses of clothing in mortuary ritual is a means for the living to tangibly piece together a

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[20] Bowlby, John (1969) Attachment and Loss, volume 1, Attachment. New York: Basic Books.

[21] Rosaldo, Michelle (1984) Towards an Anthropology of Self and Feeling. *In* Culture Theory. Richard Shweder and Robert Levine, eds. Pp.137-157. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Catherine Lutz (1988) Unnatural Emotions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[22] Jackson, Michael (1989) Paths Towards a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Enquiry. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 85.

[23] Kuper (1973a), 366

[24] Hodder, Ian (1998) The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture. *In* Handbook of Qualitative Research. N.K Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, eds. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 128.

[25] Hodder (1998), 116

seemingly shattered lifeworld disturbed by death for themselves and the deceased, despite the difficulties leveled by powerful political and religious discourses.

"Masingcwabisane: let us bury one another": the collective work of ritual

Masingcwabisane, a powerful phrase in its own right, is also adopted as a siSwati gerund to denote cooperative burial organizations, grass-roots groups often made up mostly of females who operate on a rotating savings-and-credit model of monthly payments to pay for and assist in the funeral of organization members and their dependents. While the main activities involve paying out when a member makes a claim of death, there may be other comforting acts like bringing food and blankets, visiting the bereaved, and assisting at the funeral. An event of competing claims of comfort, care, longing, and remembrance, dimensions of the funeral's social complex are well illustrated in clothing and cloth-ing actions. In a detailed account of Swazi collective mortuary practices, I emphasize participants' dress and the ritualized usage of clothing and other cloth-ing accoutrements to show clothing's vehicular qualities as an object that indexes and transforms relations amongst and with mourners and the deceased. The ritual use of clothing upon the corpse is explained as a means to succor the lost in the final moments of its visible presence amongst the living. Amongst mourners, especially at the funeral, members of church communities and coworkers wear items to show to themselves and others their organizational associations with the deceased. The mourning gowns of principal female mourners transforms their personhood and transitions them to the classic symbolic-structural state of liminality, which today takes on striking sociopolitical and emotional ramifications as the mourning-gown has become one of the core controversies in global human rights debates and 2000s constitutional reform within the Kingdom of Swaziland. The adornment and removal of mourning gowns, and the bestowal of cloth-ing gifts of blankets at subsequent purification ceremonies hearken to former modes of clothing and reveal dimensions of intercorporeal exchange between and amongst generations of Swazis. While ritual events like funerals and purifications are definitively social, they may also elide with, complement, and detract from individualized and subjective mourning practices involving clothing.

Burial

Reading the daily newspaper, the *Times of Swaziland*, involves for most a skimming of the often two full pages of obituaries in the classifieds section to find friends, coworkers, acquaintances and unfortunately, sometimes family members who have passed on.[26] SMSes of condolences, questions, and requests for money fly throughout the remainder of the week up until the very event of burial itself. There is definite anxiety over the increasing regularity of funerals, as one *Times of Swaziland* editorial decried, "weekend funerals must not be made a tradition."[27] Emotional stress of loss and grief, the reunion of kin who may not be on good terms or must now conduct inheritance negotiations, the burden of gendered ritual obligations for women, and uncertainty of right conduct because of religious pluralism all engender potentially bristling situations.

When preparing to attend a friend's sister-in-law's funeral in December 2009, I asked with some concern about the dress code. I was met with a blank stare. "There's nothing special about a funeral, you wear whatever," I was told. Aside from wearing thicker and multiple layers of clothing for the chilly night weather, there was no special consideration for clothing, at least for men. Women bear the burden of symbolic attire for mortuary events in Swaziland, like in most societies around the world.[28] Skirts should be worn by all women at the event and married women are generally expected

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[26] Whiteside, Alan, Chris Desmond, John King, Jane Tomlinson, and Conway Sithungo (2002) Evidence of AIDS Mortality from an Alternative Source: A Swaziland Case. African Journal of AIDS Research 1:35-38.

[27] [no author] (2006) Redemption can be found at funerals. Times of Swaziland, July 4.

[28] Metcalf, Peter and Richard Huntington (1979[1991]) Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Bloch, Maurice and Jonathan Parry, eds. (1982)

to wear the ubiquitous housewife dress made of *sidvwashi* fabric, a dark blue, brown or red hued fine white German print, although I have seen some women wearing a front cover smock apron of the fabric at the event. Head coverings are also expected for women, especially in front of their mothers-in-law, and headscarves are often of the same *sidvwashi* fabric as the skirt. My friend Martha rarely wears such a print, but ritual convention and the already vacuous relations with her estranged husband's family compelled her to adorn the fabric as *makoti*, wife or bride, when I went with her to her sister-in-law's funeral in December of last year. Even despite these conventions for the relatives, others have no obligations to dress in a certain way.

The weekend burial event conventionally takes place at the deceased's countryside homestead or if a woman, martial homestead. Pre-event work usually on the afternoon or early evening before the event involves cooking, cleaning the homestead or venue, receiving and erecting a rented tent, setting up chairs, musical and sound equipment, placing roadside signs or balloons to give attendees directions, and deciding the procedure for the evening. Most burials are preceded by a night vigil, an all-night session of prayer, announcements, preaching, testimonies, singing, and dancing.[29] Around 4am, the night vigil is generally concluded, and over the space of about an hour, preparations are initiated for the burial service to begin shortly before sunrise. Tea and scones or jam sandwiches are often served to the attendees by the young female relatives and *bomakoti* of the bereaved family. It is around this time, that the family members and anyone else are invited to view the deceased in the coffin one last time before it is closed for good for burial. The body lies inside a room usually adjacent to the tent and is accompanied by older female relatives. During the night-vigil, when the musicians or attendees strike up a particularly rousing song—often to rouse others from slumber—a dance line is made to the mourning room and attendees dance to enliven the mourners and see the deceased. The final viewing is very emotional, with many briefly speaking to the deceased to pay their last respects.

The principal female mourners accompanying the body drape themselves in blankets and shawls, concealing their bodies and personal identities underneath layers of fabric. The cloth-ing act is eminently social, indexing their gendered and kin relationships with the deceased and the deceased's family. Oftentimes, if a woman had a child with a deceased man, but was not married, she is made to reside in a different room than the body during the funeral event, but may join the principal mourners in the graveside tent during burial. The power of the man's natal family is evident and the spatial situation of female mourners during the burial operates as ritual "strategies of incorporation and exclusion" in revealing to others an idealized social network of the deceased.[30]

Death and the Regeneration of Life. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Seremetakis, C. Nadia (1991) The Last Word: Women, Death and Divination in Inner Mani. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[29] A space replete with voices, there tends to be a dissolution of the social hierarchies pervasive in other Swazi public and performative speech contexts.[29] In academic conferences and weddings I've attended, there is a definitive rubric of introduction and presentation of important person, namely: high-profile celebrities and business executives, pastors, and royalty. In attempts to shorten the often lengthy introduction of all these social types, speakers will say "all protocol observed," to condense introductions and move onto the next phase of the event procedure. There are however, competing ideologies of what should and can be said about the death and relationships with the deceased. The many actors involved have varying subjectivities, intentions, expectations, and obligations that potentially conflict with each other when working to accomplish the ritual event. At an Anglican civil servant's funeral I attended, a young woman church-volunteer initiated a group song thereby cutting short an older woman testifying in shrieks that, "Satan sent poison!" The woman testifying about the satanic scourge resoundingly denounced this silencing act of song, chastising the volunteer for disregarding her testimony and elder status. On the discursive negotiation of civility, mutuality and competing claims of relatedness in funerals, see Durham, Deborah and Frederick Klaits (2002) Funerals and the Public Space of Sentiment. Journal of Southern African Studies 28(4):777-795.

[30] Ferme (2001)

Another notable social feature of clothing is work and church uniforms. As the deceased played multiple social roles, the different groups of consociates who attend the funeral do so by indexing their connections to the deceased through their clothes. The deceased's religious community is the most obvious in these events. Zionist church uniforms are visually ubiquitous markers of community, and the congregation rents a *kombi* to shuttle uniformed members to and from the funeral events. Many of the mainstream churches feature women's leagues, who mark their solidarity in uniforms distinguishing themselves from other women's leagues in other churches. Uniforms often consist to skirts, blouses, capes and caps. The women's leagues are often also instrumental in providing goods and emotional comfort to the bereaved.[31]

The burial service, beginning at sunrise, is led by an emcee who gives introduces representatives of the paternal and maternal families and local chiefs or governing bodies to make remarks before departure to the burial site. At the site, a small tent is erected for principal female mourners. The closest women are called to the grave and many collapse in anguish and are rolled back to the tent space, patted and comforted by other women.[32] A request is made for attendees to approach and pour soil on the grave, held out in a shovel to take a small handful and toss it into the hole. The casket or coffin is wrapped in a grass mat, emulating the burial device used prior to the boxes' introduction. A second grass mat is placed into the grave, first being cut width-wise with a shovel. Large synthetic fleece blankets are also placed on top of the coffin. Most notably, an article of deceased's clothing is also placed into the grave, or member of the family may approach the gravesite with a bag of the deceased's clothing and "shown" to the deceased before retreating. These same attendees many times have felt obligations to contribute money and food to both the funeral and follow-up events. Indeed, usually following the burial, plates will be passed around amongst mourners at the gravesite for a monetary collection, and at one burial we were jokingly warned by the emcee to only place coins in the circulating plastic blue plates and avoid anyone offering his or her hat as a vessel for contributions.

Placing clothing and bodily objects in the grave and dressing the body are meant to succor or aid the deceased. These acts were described to as a custom, *lisiko*. The body itself is usually washed and dressed by older female relatives. In one church burial cooperative, older female members can be hired to do this work usually reserved for a relative for E250. The family of the deceased is expected to provide the clothing. "You would never put them in the box naked," one cooperative member told me. Men are usually dressed in a suit with a tie, and women in a dress. Putting clothing in the grave is meant to keep the deceased warm and one Christian explanation was that they will use it when they rise again for the Judgment. Finally, clothing is explained to protect the box and its occupant from the dirt leveled on during burial. The deceased's clothing shown at the grave is kept in the mourning room where the body was kept and the principal female mourners will stay secluded for the next few months or years, remaining and tangible residuals of the deceased's bodily presence. At municipal cemeteries, sites are decorated with, amongst other things, bottles and cans of deodorant and perfume, sensorial residuals of the deceased meant for their use in their life beyond this world as ancestors or potential resurrection as Christian souls.

Mourning and mourning attire

During the mourning period, *kuzila*, the widow and or the deceased's closest female relatives of daughters, sisters and aunts are positioned in a room or house on the homestead, usually a bedroom where one or more of them have stayed during the mourning period in seclusion. After the death and during the mourning period, the patriline can request the widow to adorn, to varying degrees,

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[31] Ngwenya, Barbara Ntombi (2002) Gender, Dress, and Self-Empowerment: Women and Burial Societies in Botswana. African Sociological Review 62(2)

[32] The collective practices of physical comforting also take place at Herero funerals. Durham, Deborah (2002) Love and Jealousy in the Space of Death. Ethnos 6(2):155-180

the ubiquitous black mourning gowns marking her state of bereavement.[33] A full ensemble consists of a black dress, black apron, black blouse and shawl and a headscarf. A black knitted cap may also be worn. The attire should not be worn until after the burial. Braided fabric bands, sashes or ropes may also be worn around women's necks or shoulders, called *tincotfo*, meaning "things of dignity." Families hire others to sew the garments to distance the stigma of death, but oftentimes the mourning women must buy the fabric themselves. The blackness of the mourning gowns permeates beyond the widow's garments and body herself to affect other Africans immediately around her. "You may greet a widow," a senior women's studies researcher told me, "the *sinyama* (blackness, bad luck) won't touch you, only those other Swazis." I was reminded of Harriet Ngubane's cosmological account of Zulu disease and pollution that while permeating amongst all bodies, interpretation of the affliction and cure is in the hands of Africans.[34] Cultivated African knowledge and experience of the condition links other African bodies in mutual understanding, healing and responsibility for identification and response.[35]

Generally, women are to remain secluded during the mourning period. While in the mourning house, they are clothed in heavy blankets, but also engage in other symbolic practices to indicate their bereaved state. Oftentimes, skirts and shirts are turned inside-out, an act that I was told also prevents them from leaving the house because of the ridiculous looks one would get for wearing inside-out clothes. Customarily, women would shave their heads and wearing caps, shawls, and skirts made out of knotted dried grass ringlets. I have only seen one woman in the entirety of the research who wore two or three knotted grass ringlets, and today, the artisanship is relegated to heritage and museum collections for the most part.[36]

In interviews with the Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) Research Trust in Swaziland, the plight of widows came out as a key facet of a global human rights discourse, something echoed in the 2005 Constitution and the Domestic and Sexual Violence Bill currently being debated in Parliament:

> No person must, without consent, be subjected to any of the following cultural practices – kungenwa (wife inheritance); kwendziswa (forced marriage); kutekwa (marriage without consent); kuzila (wearing of mourning gowns); kuhlanta (younger sister of wife brought in to have children on behalf of of [sic] barren sister); kulamuta (husband sleeping with younger siters [sic] of wife); virginity testing; or female genital mutilation. Any person who subjects another person to the above cultural practices without consent is guilty of an offence.[37]

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[33] Certain Apostolic churches prescribe blue mourning gowns, symbolically cooler and less stigmatizing than black garments. Klaits, Frederick (2005) The Widow in Blue: Blood and the Morality of Remembering in Botswana's Time of AIDS. Africa 75(1):46-52

[34] Ngubane, Harriet (1977) Body and Mind in Zulu Medicine. New York: Academic Press, 24.

[35] Response, however, is often a stigmatization of females, although there is certain agency within the symbolic system. When riding in public transportation on minibuses or *kombis*, there is a general folkloric belief that widows should be placed in the very back of the vehicle and not allowed to ride in the front. The logic is that other potential passengers will see the widow and refrain from boarding. However, seating a widow at the back of the vehicle affects more passengers as one has tightly squeeze past three rows of seats to sit amongst three others at the backseat, rather than alone at the front. If you are a widow and go to the back, at least they may all run away and you will get the whole back seat to yourself, one woman laughingly told me.

[36] Kuper (1947)

[37] Mngadi, Sibusiso, et. al. **(**2009) Swaziland: HIV Prevention Response and Modes of Transmission Analysis. Mbabane: National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS, 110.

Female genital mutilation and overt ritual virginity testing were not practiced in Swaziland, but have been yoked to the bill as important issues at stake in other parts of the continent.[38] WLSA regularly advises women on their rights as widows, as women are often unduly pressured into taking the clothes, for if they refuse, they can be extracted from inheritance distribution or evicted from their marital homesteads. While widows may indeed want to adorn the gowns, a senior WLSA researcher generally believed that women are coerced into doing so or feel entitled and overly eager to receive a portion of the estate and will even come back in separated or estranged relationships.

Men, if they are compelled or wish to wear mourning attire for their late wives, may wear a small black band on their upper right bicep. The expectation for men is to wear the band for at least a month. Although the social prescriptions for mourning and attire are drastically different for men, this does mean that men do not feel significant pangs of loss and sentiment for their late wives. While Kuper conceptualized a "gradation of mortuary ritual,"[39] which neatly slotted persons into a scale of prescribed rites based on rank, age, and gender, and emphasized that death has a "social meaning,"[40] the meaning generated by individuals can transcend social convention, as in the case she describes of a man who confessed to mourn his junior wife more than his main ritual wife.[41]

Secondary phase mortuary rites

Secondary phase rites are ceremonial events held at a time after the burial, which generally mark closure of the mourning period for the bereaved and ritually completing a psychosocial and symbolic transition from a period of "darkness."[42] Psychologists have considered that Swazi mortuary rituals, especially those that end the mourning period, have the effect of diminishing guilt and socially reintegrating the bereaved after a death. Lovell, Hemmings and Hill argued that, "such rituals provide a standardized mode of behaviour, and are considered to help remove some of the uncertainty produced by the death, and to restore a sense of order and continuity,"[43] and "had done all that was expected of them."[44] While individual psychological states are ameliorated with the work of this ritual, the social dimensions are profound in bringing back the bereaved from liminal status and uniquely enacted through de-/clothing acts.

The main rite is *umchinso* or *kugeza emanti*, the latter literally meaning "to wash water," is a purification ceremony for the bereaved family and close persons to the deceased.[45] Timing varies on when the rite should be held. I have been told it can be held at one month, three months, one year, three years, or customarily, three full winters after the death. The ceremony is of course subject to negotiation within and between households, involving a discussion of usually senior male members, *lusendvo*, as to when and how long the mourning period should last. Many times, performing *kugeza*

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[38] Leclerc-Madlala, Suzanne (2001) Virginity Testing: Managing Sexuality in a Maturing HIV/AIDS Epidemic. Medical Anthropology Quarterly 15(4):533-552; Gruenbaum, Ellen (2001) The Female Circumcision Controversy: An Anthropological Perspective. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

[39] Kuper (1947), 178-180

[40] ibid, 183

[41] ibid, 180

[42] Many Swazis characterize death as *lifu lelinyama*, "a dark cloud."

[43] Lovell, Deborah, Graham Hemmings, and Andrew Hill (1993) Bereavement Reactions of Female Scots and Swazis: A Preliminary Comparison. British Journal of Medical Psychology 66:259-274, 263

[44] Lovell, Hemmings, Hill (1993), 269

[45] A similar rite *kubuyisa*, meaning "to cause to bring back," involves sacrificial slaughter of a cow, the brewing and consumption of home-made beer, *umcombotsi*, and verbal rites calling the deceased to return home and reside amongst his or her kinsmen, the spatial orientation for the deceased's new locale centering on the grandmother's house, *kagogo* or *indlunkulu* or the cattle pen, *sibaya*. In Swaziland, this rite is more associated with Zulu custom and if still practiced, is found more in the southern and western parts of the country bordering South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province. In continuous review of newspaper obituaries and memorial service announcements from 2008 to the present, I only found one mentioning *kubuyisa*.

emanti is contingent on funds available to host the ceremony which will draw extended family members, friends and coworkers of the deceased who were at the funeral.

Like the funeral, *umchinso* or *kugeza emanti* involves a nighttime vigil of speeches, biblical readings, songs, and other speech events. The widow and other female mourners are brought forth and are ceremoniously removed of the mourning gowns and *tincotfo*. Per some clan and church customs, there is a literal washing of the widow, bereaved females, and the clothing of the deceased in variously mixed symbolic media of blessed water, ash, salt or cow's blood. In some cases, the widow is also presented with gifts during the ceremony. At a cleansing ceremony for a Zionist pastor's widow, each congregation approached the widow, seated on a grass mat, and piled stacks of synthetic fleece blanks. After an hour of the ceremonious presentation, the widow was literally cloth-ed under a pile of blankets. Blankets are socially significant, being contemporary mass-produced equivalents to their historical precursors of cattle-hides, the beast slaughtered for ancestral invocation and meat at functions of social importance and hides exchanged between families and generations. Gifts of blankets and acts of cloth-ing in blankets also take place as *umhlambiso* ceremonies, the dowry transaction during Swazi weddings where women and men of the husband's family receive, amongst other goods, blankets from the wife's family. By removing mourning gowns and re-cloth-ing in gifts of blankets, familial moral obligations are fulfilled and embodied social continuity rendered in the receding wake of death.[46]

Ritualization and the efficacy of clothing

The collectivized and conventionalized ritual events that Swazis undertake pass on the deceased and restore wellbeing for the living. While these events are eminently social in their form and function, they may belie, diverge and reposition analytic attention away from individual practices of memory-making and ritualization. I first detail the logic of individuated ritualization as a mode of mimetic representation to deal with the affect of loss. The body is central for such an analysis, and I note its salience for investigating ritual practice involving clothing because of the body's foundation in Swazi theories of intercorporeal personhood and religious ontology. I then illustrate several cases of bereaved Swazis using clothing in personal ritual practices as a means of eliding themselves with a lost other, and re-establishing phenomenological balance in a thrown lifeworld.

Early on and like much of his psychoanalytic tradition, Freud sought to define mourning and its pathological extension of melancholia using a model of enduring self-other transactions which progressively enable the afflicted to fully realize transition after loss. For Freud, mourning is a conscious awareness of a lost love object, which involves undoing libidinal energies invested towards that object over time. For Freud, the condition of mourning is that the world is consciously deprived for the mourner of the object, it is poorer and emptier, whereas a melancholic describes a diminishment of the self in the ego. A person perceives the loss of an other as a loss of the self and iterates that the self is thereby incapacitated.[47] Freud sees this projection as a fundamental contradiction, a position belies the degree to which individuals are beholden to one another in interpersonal relationships as shaped by sociocentric culture. The feelings of loss associated with death and the progressive transactional work between self and projections onto the other is a pragmatic process, ritually manifested. Winnicott follows the Freudian tradition in that infants who are withheld from the mother's breast in turn funnel anxiety and contradiction into the action of play

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[46] West African high profile luxury funerals, involving fabulous textile donations, advance the deceased to the ancestral world and advance the social status of the living in their gross visibilities of consumption. de Witte, Marleen (2001) Long Live the Dead! Changing Funeral Celebrations in Asante, Ghana. Amsterdam: Aksant Academic; Gott, Suzanne (2007) 'Onetouch' Quality and 'Marriage Silver Cup': Performative Display, Cosmopolitanism, and Marital *Poatwa* in Kumasi Funerals. Africa Today 54(2):79-106

[47] Freud, Sigmund (1961) Mourning and Melancholia. *In* The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 14. J. Strachey, ed. Pp. 239-258. London, Hogarth Press.

and ritualistic behavior. Thumb-sucking and material objects like toys and blankets are increasingly utilized and coveted, becoming principal “transitional objects” by which to overcome distressing circumstances.[48] Jackson follows Winnicott’s tradition, defining ritualization is an ontogenetic process that allows humans to transform unwieldy experiences of the world into something manageable.[49] In the effort to overcome adversity and trying circumstances, like grievous loss from death, humans engage in mimetic action and thought which operates and develops according to a practical logic involving the use of bodies, language and material elements. Bourdieu notes that, "extreme distress, like the death of a loved one… lead one to invent, which, though they have no other purpose to say or do something rather than nothing, inevitably borrow the logic of a language and a body, which, even (and especially) when they change nothing, make common sense."[50] This gives justification and explanation to personal ritual forms and processes of mourning as well. "Practical mediation" occurs, and a "relationship is established between the economic bases and ritual actions or representations” of social life in order to effect change.[51] Jackson additionally argues that, "our subjectivity, will, consciousness and purpose become invested in all 'objects', to varying degrees, so making them, as it were, metonyms of ourselves."[52]

Historically for Swazi, this significant association between bodily persons and objects seems to already pertain. Kuper writes, “the power of ritual lies in the owner as well as the objects he uses” and “the more serious the situation, the more obvious this becomes.” Her informant explained, “everything… goes by connection with people. If a potteress fires a pot during menstruation it will crack. A human body is more than flesh and bone and blood. It has the spirit that joins with things the body touches… [Things] must unite with the power of the person who applies them.”[53] The relation between bodily persons and objects as permeable is already congruent with Swazi and Nguni ethno-theories of sociality and personhood. Classically, the Cartesian mind-body dualism obtains in Western intellectual and scientific thought, giving privilege to the mind as organic yet transcendental center of rationality and reason, trumping the visceral desires to indulge the flesh. This ideology is still perpetuated to an extent in Swazi Christian biblical ideologies of a tripartite person (body *umtimba,* soul *umphefumulo*, and spirit *umoya*). While Christians may ideally separate self and other into these categories, anthropologists suggest Nguni bodily beliefs and practices center on the diffusion of polluting and healing elements.[54] Indeed, the sociocentric and intercorporeal nature of personhood is even revealed in the simplest greeting: *sawubona*, literally “we see you,” the plural referring to one’s consociates and ancestors.[55]

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[48] Winnicott, D.W. (1979[1981]) Playing and Reality. London: Tavistock.
[49] Jackson (1989); (2005) Existential Anthropology. London: Berghahn.
[50] Bourdieu, Pierre (1990) The Logic of Practice. Richard Nice, trans. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 95.
[51] ibid, 97
[52] Jackson (2005), 104
[53] Kuper (1947), 161-162
[54] Indeed, when living with families in both KwaZulu-Natal and Swaziland, I was struck by the individuated practice of careful daily washing of undergarments and washcloths, selectively removed from the general wash load. One time the woman hired to clean threw aside a pair of my boxer shorts and irritatingly asked my hosting household-head why I wouldn’t wash them myself! See: Ngubane (1977); Niehaus, Isak (2002) Bodies, Heat, and Taboos: Conceptualizing Modern Personhood in the South African Lowveld. Ethnology 41(3):189-207; Root, Robin (2009) Situating Experiences of HIV-stigma in Swaziland. Global Public Health, 1-16; Golomski, Casey (2009) Power in Potentia: Swazi Zion Ritual. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, December 1. For comparative examples see: Lambek, Michael and Andrew Strathern, eds. (1998) Bodies and Persons: Comparative Perspectives from Africa and Melanesia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[55] See also van Wolputte, Steven (2004) Hang On To Your Self: Of Bodies, Embodiment and Selves. Annual Review of Anthropology 33:251-269.

Reconsidering then Kuper's statement that "a person's relationship to his clothing is at once different from and more intimate than his relationship to all other material objects,"[56] one can see that clothing operates as a significant object that recalls intercorporeal relations and religious subjectivity. In one life history interview I conducted, LaManana, an 86 year-old woman, recounted how she was afflicted by a perduring illness, which was interpreted as ancestral calling by a neighboring diviner. Her family slaughtered goats as per custom for such a calling, and she was made to wear the skins day in and day out. She struggled to come to terms with this diagnosis and felt both the pull of the ancestors via her garments and the pull of Jesus Christ to remove them. She would run away to church on Sundays, but unable to remove the skins from her body because of the social and familial prescriptions of their adornment, she hid them underneath other clothes. Miraculously, for her, a fire broke out one evening in her hut and destroyed the skins and all other implements she had accumulated in the divinatory training process thus far, a veritable sign for her diviner instructor that the ancestors no longer wanted her and that she should go to God.

While LaManana was subject to social prescriptions of clothing, she agentively managed to negotiate her own religious subjectivity and experience by concealing them. I now illustrate a number of cases where subjective manipulation of clothing pieces has the propensity for being heightened and used creatively to evoke and control memories of the deceased. As in the case of Nomonde, I suggest that the social discontinuity wrought by Kabelo's egress, suicide and missing clothing, adorning the few remaining pieces of clothing permits her to retain bodily co-presence with her first-born and only son. Bodily co-presence—feeling or having an other in accessible corporeal proximity to the self—was a main reason for coveting and using the deceased's clothing. Another friend of mine, a young woman named Msizi, lost an ex-boyfriend named Sugar and also regularly wears one of his t-shirts as an embodied reminder. His clothing was also manipulated to ensure co-presence in the unconscious world of dreams. "Did you keep any of his goods/clothing (*timphahla*)," I asked her a month after the funeral took place. "Here," she cried out, tugging down an extra-large t-shirt from beneath her fleece jacket. The shirt was noticeably baggier than the outer layers, easily fitting someone larger than her. "I wear it when I go to bed at night, so maybe I will dream about him," she added. To dream of the deceased is an indication that they are visiting the living, a psychological and supernatural link maintained between the self and lost other that has the potential to continually resurface, for better or worse. Another reason Msizi wears the tshirt at night was a reminder of their sexual relationship. Sleeping with the shirt was like sleeping with him, something they enjoyed doing. She asked Sugar's family for the t-shirt, and after the funeral, she was also given a fine aviator jacket.

It is not always the case where clothing is coveted. Clothing may also evoke trauma of the death and the destruction, rather than preservation, of clothing can be read as an equally powerful means to control memories of a lost other. On a drive through Manzini, my friend Schenel and I randomly came across her distant relative Sonny. Normally he would be at his job, but had been dismissed recently because of his boss' inability to return to work, leaving Sonny without orders. His boss' son had been playing with his father's neckties and was accidentally strangled the week before. The father subsequently burned all the neckties he owned, and all visitors to the house were asked not to wear them in the wake of the tragedy.

The lost other need not be deceased for clothing to effect memory and longing. One chilly evening while sitting in her living room, Martha sprang up and returned from her bedroom with three sweaters. Glowingly and quietly, she narrated to me how during her days as a struggling, abused, and young housewife, she used to knit and sew to pass time and lovingly clothe her children. While she carefully showed me the patterning and fabric of these sweaters, she put more time into narrating the clothing she sewed for her young children, all now in their 20s. She recalled the ornamental details on these pieces, the rips and tears they went through from outdoor playtime. Using the

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[56] Kuper (1973a), 366

medium of clothing, this narrative event allowed Martha to access her children in their youth, and champion pragmatic and creative activity of knitting as a means to bear the long days of teaching and domestic work as essentially a single mother.

In another case, Mphile, a young gay man, and I were sharing stories of our past lovers after dinner one evening when the conversation turned to some of the piles of boxes and clothes scattered around his flat. His last relationship was a two-year long passionate romance with a Zimbabwean "blue collar" worker, as he called him. The breakup had been difficult, and gifts and articles they had exchanged, especially clothing, remain emotion-laden objects that Mphile nonetheless keeps despite their uncanny qualities:

> He would come from work and be so dirty and have nothing to wear. I would offer him a t-shirt to take to work in the morning and then he would have it. So he has a lot of my clothes. He would also give me some nice clothes. I would call and say, "hey baby, I am looking so good right now in your shirt, or I am wearing your shoes now." I can't wear those things anymore. I would only wear them if I had to, like if I had no other clean clothes. If I put it on, I would smell it, and the smell would make me think of all these other things that I don't want to think about.

Finally, a religious studies lecturer narrated to me her assigned roles of dealing with her mother's clothing when her mother passed on and her subsequent manipulation of the pieces as a means of remembrance:

> They called me to come after some time from the funeral, and I was to take the clothes and go through them all and give them to friends and others I thought should have them. By giving the clothes to those people, when I see them I will remember [the deceased]. It was something that meant something to me. You know, from my mother I took two or three skirts. I keep them and when I wear them I can remember her. You know, she was a big woman, but I even took the skirts to get, to the tailor who made them for me. Now you know I might wear them and think of her. It is not this ancestor worship thing, no. You are remembering them.

For the lecturer, memories of her mother become tangibly deployed and distributed amongst the mother's social network, allowing her trace presence to manifest when her friends wear the clothes. The mother is also refigured through the skirts. The careful manipulation of the garments does not invalidate or make inauthentic the mother, but instead serves as a powerful *sikhumbuto* in potentia for the daughter to engage at her discretion.

Globalized religious tensions and the quest for right ritual passage

The lecturer's statement about ancestor worship initially struck me as profound. In the following weeks, I was invited to attend a bible study sessions at the lecturer's evangelical church, which encapsulated the broader religious contest over ritual practice and tradition in evangelical and Pentecostal-charismatic circles. Swaziland is witness to a proliferation of evangelical and Pentecostal-charismatic Christian churches and prophets springing in the late 1990s and early 2000s, which pastors and laypersons attribute to an influx of visiting pastors from America and South Africa, along with a media saturation of televangelism with the introduction of free DSTV "bouquets" which include 24-hour broadcasting American and Nigerian Christian channels. These channels present a transnational discourse of images and religious rhetoric that celebrate a diversity of believers the world-over under the power of God and the Holy Spirit. It's a global community of Christians who have been delivered, born-again, saved or undergone a transformative experience incorporating them into the community and dedication of themselves to a life with Christ and the church. There

are definite aesthetic forms and practices in PCC churches as Meyer has argued,[57] even if their theological ideals are grounded in a mission of anti-idolatry and eschewal of tradition, including clothes and adornment.

Under the ideology of these evangelical and PCC churches, along with the constitutional reforms ensconced in Northern cosmopolitan rights discourses,[58] Christians struggle to come to terms with right mortuary ritual practice, especially mourning. An evangelical pastor Grace Masilela staked the question for the biweekly newspaper the Swazi Gospel Sun: "are mourning gowns for Christians?" The answer: women, especially Christians, are not bound to do so if they are compelled by their in-laws following husbands' deaths.[59] Another evangelical Christian told me, "we are now Christians and we mourn with our hearts," ridding themselves of the materiality of sacrifice and *kuzila*. Correct mourning and remembrance is marked by interiorized, immaterial, and undistinguished practice. Objects and the deceased body itself become dangerous potential vehicles for the entrance of demons and dark powers to overtake the bereaved, who are already considered to be "sick" in their emotional state.

The Swazi evangelical Christian theology of the body, as aforementioned, is based on the tripartite model of body, soul, and spirit. The body is the least valuable of the three, and its very vulnerability to injury and decay are juxtaposed to the eternality of the soul and spirit. Because God is a spiritual entity, the facets of soul and spirit are congruous in matter and form and elevated in value. One should concentrate on preservation and continuation of the spirit, and forget about the condition and remains of the body, which will rot away and cause pain and terror to everyone around it. The deceased body experiences nothing, and showing sympathy for the person's physical and emotional state is fool-hearty. The body and the natural and man-made implements used in mortuary ritual are highly potent vectors for demonic transference. Leaving goods at the grave for the deceased to use become rife with spiritual evil, and persons returning to the grave may themselves become possessed through the tracks they will leave behind.[60] Immaterial practices then protect the living from spiritual affliction, but also serve another purpose: thrift.

The rationale for discontinuing burying the deceased's clothes along with the body is purely economic. "Let us not waste ama-resources," explained the pastor to the bible study session. "When a person dies, they take his or her clothes, the mothers' panties and underwears and you put the whole overflowing load of the clothes on [the body]/ They will be carrying all those things until they actually get to the grave. So even when they are lowering down the casket into the ground, they are throwing all the clothes and panties into the grave too! The dead person is going to have all his or her panties when s/he gets to the other side! These ones who are said to be children of God." The pastor made dramatic squeals, imitating mourning women collapsing in anguish at the grave at the final sight of the deceased. The session attendees laughed at his performative antics, but it was obvious that some felt discomfort with his critique. When relaying the story to another friend, she agreed

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[57] Meyer, Birgit (2009) From Imagined Communities to Aesthetic Formations: Religious Mediations, Sensational Forms, and Styles of Binding. *In* Aesthetic Formations: Religion, Media and the Senses. Birgit Meyer, ed. Pp. 1-28. London: Palgrave; Meyer (2010)

[58] When talking about cosmopolitanism, I recognize its fluidity, range and the processes of localization that transform and situate global discourse: Clifford, James (1997) At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Piot, Charles (1999) Remotely Global. Durham: Duke University Press; Pollock, Sheldon, Homi Bhabha, Carol A. Breckenridge, Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) Cosmopolitanisms. Public Culture 12(3)577-589; Gable, Eric (2006) The Funeral and Modernity in Manjaco. Cultural Anthropology 21(3):385-415.

[59] Mngomezulu, Mxolisi (2010) Reverend Grace Masilela says… are mourning gowns for Christians. Swazi Gospel Sun, December 2-17, p. 2; Sukati (2009)

[60] For Zulu, tracks, *imikhondo*, are highly permeable disease conduits: Ngubane (1977), 25.

with the material waste of goods being buried in the earth, but chastised the pastor on the grounds that such critiques are leveled without scriptural reference:

> Who are these men who are playing God now. Where in the bible does it say that we should [not pour dirt on the grave]… I agree with that pastor that we shouldn't put the nicest clothes in the grave. That is a waste! I remember when one of my cousins died I took all the nicest clothes and blankets and brought them in the house. I remember taking those things and giving them to everyone, deciding where they will go. When they had the burial, one of them asked me to go and get a blanket to put in there. I went and I took that one that was the least nice. When I brought it they said, "Hawu, what are you doing bringing this old one. Where is a nice newer one?" I said, "What do you think will happen to this thing in there? What good will it do when it is in there? You will be the ones who decided to put that in there then, not me." [The deceased] doesn't know. She doesn't know how she looks or what we put her in. You can dress them nice, but they don't know what they are wearing and they don't hear anything anyway… I agree the soul has just gone. You aren't there anymore.

In the bible study sessions, others acknowledged the absence of a response after the person had died. They knew they wouldn't receive answers to the tearful questions leveled at the gravesite. Nevertheless, they felt it was extremely important to still have interaction with the body and idea of the dead person during the ceremony. Interaction with the deceased was understood as socially customary, performatively dramatic, and psychologically necessary. Withholding ritual process was seen as short-circuiting the bereavement process. In one bible study session, the pastor proposed that the final viewing of the corpse is problematic, akin to speaking to ancestors. The pastor's wife made the following remarks:

> When the deceased is gone, *it is now you alone with your thoughts*. So having seen the body, it helps you with those thoughts. I want to tell you all an example, when I lost a child, my mother and I, we saw him, *my mother forced me*, to go and see him. I didn't believe it happened, I was just scared, just scared to see him, but my mother showed him at the box. And after that, seeing that he was dead, because she forced me to see, those thoughts I had somehow left. I said, "nkosi yami, how, how, how did it happen," but it was because I saw him. It helped me during that process to know what position he was in when he was buried. So, *it is part of the healing process*. [italicized words in English]

Conclusion

As anthropologists and others concerned with cultural phenomena, we need to take seriously local metaphors and idioms that describe a person's relationship to the wider world as a symbolic and pragmatic condition of their existence in it. Although a Zulu woman herself, Harriet Ngubane had to struggle to learn the nuances of language and custom, having been raised and schooled in an urban colonialist environment. In her ethnographic account of illness in Zulu cosmology, she describes how encounters with dangerous objects and others are understood and managed. She employs a Zulu term, *ukuzilungisa* (literally, "that which causes itself to be arranged"), which she translates as "balance" as a heuristic:

> I am using the English word "balance" to mean "moral order" in the symmetrical sense in relation to the position of people vis-a-vis other people, the environment, ancestors and other mystical forces that produce pollution. "Balance" in this sense should be understood to mean "symmetry" or "order" rather than, as usual, the central pivot in a

> counterpoise position… it is the pivotal ideology around which revolve practically all the notions that constitute what is known as "African disease" *ukufa kwabantu*.[61]

Encounters with strange persons and objects are potentially harmful, as one may "feel or suffer the weight of someone's overpowering influence, or shadow," *ukweleka ngesithunzi*.[62] This permeable darkness, a nearly universal cultural metaphor for death, has to be managed for light to appear.[63] Ultimately, moral and phenomenological balance is restored through medicinal and ritualized strengthening, although this involves an often difficult and intensive coordination and communion of humans and non-human phenomena; life is engendered from death and chaos.[64]

Nguni ritual strengthening of persons is effected by other persons through collective action and manipulation of material objects, both natural and man-made. The efficacy of objects' ritual manipulation is heightened when using objects that operate as physical and sensorial figures other persons. Pieces of clothing, and real and mimetic acts of clothing have the ritual function of re-engaging and re-attaching afflicted persons with significant others who have been lost to death, egress and spatio-temporal distance. By providing tangible residuals of bodily presence, the bereaved can effect continued exchange with a deceased or lost other by ritually using clothing, moving along a continuum of psychosocial transition. Personal manipulation of clothing beyond socially prescribed ceremonial events give the bereaved agency to consciously make memories or be subject to the unconscious resurgence of memory and bodily co-presence with the deceased in dreams.

Situating these findings amongst Hilda Kuper's Swaziana *oeuvre* is both an honor and a challenge. Kuper's own work under Malinowski was guided by contemporaneous currents of functionalism, which can be seen in her first monograph with its focus on Swazi rank and social stratification.[65] Her later works, several of which importantly focus on clothing, continue this theoretical paradigm, but also situate the findings in structural-symbolic arguments popular in anthropology the 1970s. Insofar as the social classification of persons is indexed in traditional clothing, *invunulo*, she states, "the social importance of clothing as a means of relating individuals to one another… Clothing is one means of notifying individuals in the social system of their respective roles and positions within that system."[66] Within the system, however, are intimate spaces for personal creative and ritual exploration and imagination. Tracing the ritual use of clothing shows its vital symbolic and practical value for the bereaved, especially in an era wrought by extreme loss from migratory labor and death from HIV-AIDS. The pieces of clothing that bind people together in the Swazi social world operate not only as a logic of classification, but also as deeply embodied material residuals wielded to enact presence, absence and transition between self and other.

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[61] Ngubane (1977), 27
[62] Ngubane (1977), 26
[63] Jackson (1989); Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson (1980) Metaphors We Live By. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Mosetig-Pauleschitz, Gabriele (2003) The Becoming of a Sangoma: The Darkness Should Give Way to the Light. PhD dissertation, University of Vienna.
[64] Jacobson-Widding, Anita and Walter van Beek, eds. (1990) The Creative Communion: African Folk Models of Fertility and the Regeneration of Life. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.
[65] Kuper (1947)
[66] Kuper (1973a)

Displaying Africa in Nuremberg – The Behaim Globe from Pre- to Post-Colonialism

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In 1491 the Nuremberg patrician Martin Behaim embarked on his ambitious project of depicting the world in the shape of a globe. The Behaim Globe is the oldest preserved example of its kind in the whole world. Apart from short interruptions, the Globe has been on display at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg since 1906, and has recently been elected the "key object" of the museum.[1]

The Behaim Globe consists of a wooden sphere with a diameter of ca. 51 cm covered by several glued layers of paper and parchment. These are painted in body colours highlighted with gold. Including its wooden stand, the Globe has a height of 133 cm. It was executed by several skilled artists, among them the illuminator Georg Glockendon who was responsible for the painting, under the supervision of Martin Behaim. Glockendon was paid 14 guilders for his work, which took him 15 weeks to finish. Altogether, the Globe cost around 24 guilders, approximately 25.000 USD today.[2]

The Globe was displayed in the assembly room of the Nuremberg city council until around 1600, when it was replaced by a new globe. Luckily, it was not thrown away, but given back to the Behaim family in whose possession it remained until the beginning of the 20th century. The Behaims obviously had little interest in the object which was already in a bad overall condition, and in 1906, the globe was given on permanent loan to the Germanisches Nationalmuseum. Two decades later, however, the family reclaimed the object in order to sell it on the art market. It was Adolf Hitler, in power since 1933, who recognized the opportunity of using the globe as a focus of nationalistic pride, and who supplied the money to purchase it for the Museum in 1937.[3] Thus, the earliest extant three-dimensional representation of the Earth may truly be said to be wrapped in world history in more than one way.

Martin Behaim

Martin Behaim, the inventor of the Globe, was born in 1459 as the son of a Nuremberg merchant and patrician.[4] He spent most of his adventurous life abroad, working as a trader first in Holland and from 1484 on in Portugal. In February 1485, he was knighted by the Portuguese King João II. Shortly afterwards, he married the daughter of the Dutch governor of the Azores islands Fayal und Pico. In 1490, Martin returned to Nuremberg to claim his part in the estate of his late father. It was during this period that he actually produced the globe. He eventually returned to Portugal in 1493 and died in Lisbon on July 29, 1507, apparently "in great poverty".[5]

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[1] Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Inv. No. WI 1826.

[2] See Johannes Karl Wilhelm Willers et al. (ed.): Focus Behaim-Globus. Exhibition Catalogue. Nuremberg 1992, vol. 2, pp. 744-745, Cat. 3.30.

[3] On the history of the globe see Johannes Willers: Die Geschichte des Behaim-Globus. In: Johannes Karl Wilhelm Willers et al. (ed.): Focus Behaim-Globus. Exhibition Catalogue. Nuremberg 1992, vol. 1, pp. 209-216.

[4] Ernst Georg Ravenstein: Martin Behaim. His Life and His Globe. London 1908. – Peter Bräunlein: Martin Behaim. Legende und Wirklichkeit eines berühmten Nürnbergers. Bamberg 1992. – Rainhard Jakob: Die Ehrenrettung des deutschen Seefahrers Martin Behaim. Die Kolonialhistorikerin und Frauenpolitikerin Hedwig Fitzler und ihr sensationeller Quellenfund. In: Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg 94 (2007), pp. 227-244. – The first biography of Martin Behaim was written by Christoph Gottlieb von Murr: Diplomatische Geschichte des portugesischen berühmten Ritters Martin Behaims aus Originalurkunden. Nuremberg 1778.

[5] See Willers 1992, pp. 180.

Many details of Martin Behaim's biography are still hotly debated among historians.[6] Of special importance for the topic discussed here is the question whether the "German Columbus" had actually ever taken part in a Portuguese expedition along the African west coast and beyond the equator, as an inscription on the globe implies:

> "[...] and the Serene King John of Portugal has caused to be visited in his vessels that part to the south not yet known to Ptolemy in the year 1485, where I, according to whose indications this Apple [= the globe] has been made, was present."[7]

The year mentioned in the inscription, however, does not match the established dates of the Portuguese voyages of exploration, above all the famous voyages of Diogo Cão (died 1486?), who in 1482, became the first European to reach the mouth of the river Congo – designated as "Rio poderoso" on the Globe –, and who in 1486 reached Cape Cross, where he erected a stele (Padrão) to mark the Portuguese seizure of the land.[8] Though Behaim shows the Cape Cross stele, represented by a Portuguese standard, on his globe, the entire coastline from the Equator down to South Africa is not very accurately rendered. The errors do not speak in favour of a detailed topographical knowledge which one would have expected from Behaim if he had really seen the land with his own eyes and could therefore provide first-hand information on the African continent.

The Behaim Globe

From the point of view of modern cartography, the Behaim Globe is a failure. It is neither an exact representation of the world – at least not compared to modern standards – nor it is a representation of contemporary knowledge of the world, or, more exactly: the European knowledge of the world, which was actually much more accurate. Like other world maps of the time, the layout of the globe is largely based on medieval and ancient sources, both written and pictorial. The most authoritative source was the "Geography" or "Cosmography" of the ancient astronomer Claudius Ptolemy (c. 90-168 AD). The Ptolemean world maps, which were widely diffused through printing, depict the whole of Europe and large parts of Asia, but only half of Africa.[9]

The Behaim Globe surpasses the Ptolemean maps in that it incorporates new material brought back from the latest voyages of discovery. In this way, it testifies to the growing scientific interest in nature and geography during the Renaissance period. In this dynamic Age of exploration, such a procedure naturally posed quite a risk. It is one of the ironies of history that at the exact time when Georg Glockendon was adding the final touches to the surface of the Globe, Christopher Columbus took his first steps on American soil. With its pre-Columbian depiction of the world, the first three-dimensional representation of the Earth was outdated from the beginning.

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[6] See Bräunlein 1992. – Johannes Willers: Leben und Werk des Martin Behaim. In: In: Johannes Karl Wilhelm Willers et al. (ed.): Focus Behaim-Globus. Exhibition Catalogue. Nuremberg 1992, vol. 1, pp. 173-188.

[7] Quoted from the translation by Ravenstein 1908, p. 71. Transcription of the German inscription: "Aber der durchleugtig könig don Johan von Portugal hat das übrig thail, daß ptolomaeo noch nit kundig gewessen ist, gegen mittag lassen mit seinen schiffen besuchen anno dni. 1485. dareby Ich der diesen apffel angegeben hat gewesen bin".

[8] See Wilhelm Kalthammer: Die Portugiesenkreuze in Afrika und Indien. Eine umfassende Darstellung aller von den portugiesischen Entdeckern Diogo Cão, Bartolomeo Dias und Vasco da Gama errichteten Steinkreuze (Padrões), deren Geschichte und deren Nachbildungen. Basel 1984. – Viriato Campos: Viagens de Diogo Cão e de Bartolomeu Dias. Lisbon 1966. – Carmen M. Radulet: As Viagens de Diogo Cão. Um problema ainda em aberto. In: Revista da Universidade de Coimbra 34 (1988), pp. 105-119.

[9] It was reedited in so-called "rectified versions" well into the 16th and 17th centuries, as for instance, by the German astronomer Gerhard Mercator in 1578. [Gerhard Mercator:] Tabulae Geographicae Cl. Ptolemaei ad mentem autoris restituae & emendatae Per Gerardum Mercatorem. Köln: Gerhard Mercator 1578. – See Ruth Löffler et al.: Gerhard Mercator. Europa und die Welt. Duisburg 1994, pp. 104-105.

As the many Portuguese place names along the African coast suggest, the makers of the globe very probably drew on so-called portolan charts, which Behaim had brought with him from Portugal.[10] These maps depict coastlines and harbours, and they were important navigational aids in the early Age of Discovery. Martin Behaim must have gotten hold of copies of the latest portolan charts of the African coast, which were usually kept as secret documents by the Portuguese Crown or the trading companies who financed the expeditions.[11]

Africa on the Globe

As a realistic depiction of the world, the Behaim Globe is a failure. As a source for the early modern European perception of the world, the Globe proves to be a treasure trove. It is not only a representation of the geographical features of the known world, but in a similar way as the medieval "Mappae mundi" and their slightly modernised versions,[12] for instance Fra Mauro's "World map" made in Venice in 1459,[13] its surface is sprinkled with numerous inscriptions, small figures and symbols which contain detailed information on the inhabitants, political systems, the fauna and flora, goods, resources and curiosities of almost every part of the world.[14]

The inscriptions in Latin, Portuguese, Italian and German which cover large parts of its surface virtually turn the Globe into an encyclopaedia of the Early Modern world. With regard to Africa, the inscriptions and figures document the state of geographical and cultural knowledge before the era of colonisation.

As the general outline and the Latin place names suggest, the depiction of the northern part of the continent is likely based on Ptolemy's description of Africa. In contrast, nearly all the information on political, economical, religious, geological and meteorological matters is given in German. Behaim and later scribes tried to include as much information as possible, but quite often they were not very critical with regard to the reliability of their sources. The extent to which fact and fiction are inextricably intermingled is quite astonishing to the modern observer. Whereas the African topography, especially the outlines of the coast, is more or less realistically rendered, the interior parts are filled with details mostly derived from legends and late medieval travel reports, such as the "Travels" of John de Mandeville[15] or Marco Polo's account of his voyage to China, entitled "Book of Wonders" for good reason.[16]

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[10] See Ursula Timann: Der Illuminist Georg Glockendon, Bemaler des Behaim-Globus. In: Johannes Karl Wilhelm Willers et al. (ed.): Focus Behaim-Globus. Exhibition Catalogue. Nuremberg 1992, vol. 1, pp. 273-278.

[11] See Hanno Beck: Kenntnisse des 15. Jahrhunderts von der Umschiffbarkeit Afrikas. Die Weltkarte des „geographus incomparabilis" Fra Mauro als Beispiel (1459). In: Charles Verlinden/Eberhard Schmitt (ed.): Die mittelalterlichen Ursprünge der europäischen Expansion (Dokumente zur Geschichte der europäischen Expansion, vol. 1). Munich 1986, pp. 66-70.

[12] For instance Abraham Cresques' "Catalan Atlas" made in Mallorca in c. 1375. Illuminated manuscript on parchment, mounted on wood, each panel ca. 25 x 65 cm; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. espagnol 30.

[13] The map was made in Murano as an illuminated manuscript on parchment (196 x 193 cm). Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. Piero Falchetta: Fra Mauro's World Map. With a Commentary and Translations of the Inscriptions. Brepols 2006.

[14] A similar mixture of "Mappa mundi" and portolan charts is the so-called "Map of Christopher Columbus" preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (CPL GE AA 562 RES), which represents a sort of two-dimensional equivalent of the Behaim globe.

[15] John Mandeville: Travels. Ed. by Charles W. Moseley. Harmondsworth 1983.

[16] Marco Polo: The Travels of Marco Polo, the Venetian. Ed. by Peter Harris. New York et al. 2008. – John Larner: Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World. New Haven et. al. 1999.

With regard to Africa Behaim's main literary sources were the "Letters" of Prester (Presbyter) John.[17] This mystic Christian king was believed to be a descendant of the Three Magi who ruled over a large Christian kingdom located somewhere in the Orient or North Africa and which contained, besides other marvels and fabulous riches, the earthly paradise. Some medieval authors identified Prester John with the Christian ruler of Abyssinia or located his realm in the legendary kingdom of Saba, as does Behaim who places the "kingdom of one of the three magi from Saba" where now we have Eritrea. The first Portuguese voyages of exploration had the explicit order to search for the mythical land of the "African archpriest" in what is now Ethiopia.[18]

Modern viewers might also wonder about the „sandy desert where mummy is found",[19] probably referring to the Erg Iguidi desert located on the frontier between present-day Algeria and Mauritania. The term "mummy" is misleading: it does not refer to the preserved corpses of ancient Egypt, but to the aromatic pitch or resin used for embalmment, which was also valued for its fragrance and medicinal qualities.

Whereas the "mummy"-inscription combines geographical and botanical with economical information, other captions, often in conjunction with little images, belong to the political domain, presenting information about kingdoms and rulers. Here, the information given by Behaim is fairly correct, as in the case of the "king of tripoli burbaria" referring to the ruler of Tripoli on the Barbary Coast, now the capital of Libya. The same is true for the "Sultan, a king of the Holy Land and lord over many kingdoms, Arabia, Egypt and Damascus", represented in a royal tent and referring to the Mameluke sultans who had ruled Egypt since 1250.

Rather more cryptic is the inscription "King Furfur's land, where grows the pepper discovered by the King of Portugal in 1485".[20] The caption refers to the kingdom of Benin, but there never was a king called Furfur, the Arab word for pepper, among the Benin rulers nor elsewhere in Africa. At the time when the Behaim Globe was made, the pepper trade was indeed already flourishing, as indeed was the slave trade, which is not mentioned in any inscription.[21] Besides pepper and slaves, ivory and gold were the main economic interests of the Europeans. Gold was above all associated with the west African region called Guinea, much larger than the modern Republic of Guinea, as the inscription: "King Mormelli, where is found the gold which the King of Portugal is having fetched"[22] actually refers to the empire of Mali. Information on resources and politics are thus intermingled, and the inscriptions hint at the economical interests associated with the globe.

For Southern Africa, Behaim had to draw on contemporary reports, which, however, were frequently as imaginary as their precursors. All too often, the ancient legends were replaced by the cock-and-bull stories of the early explorers. Among others, we find two curious creatures looking like mermaids in the region of nowadays North-West Province of South Africa, who can be identified with

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[17] Vsevolod Slessarev: Prester John. The Letter and the Legend. Minneapolis 1959.

[18] See Gisela Schmitt: Die Gebrüder Vivaldi suchen Indien auf dem Weg um Afrika herum zu erreichen (1291). In: Charles Verlinden/Eberhard Schmitt (ed.): Die mittelalterlichen Ursprünge der europäischen Expansion (Dokumente zur Geschichte der europäischen Expansion, vol. 1). Munich 1986, pp. 40-47.

[19] Quoted from Ravenstein 1908, p. 97. Transcription of the German inscription: "hie ist die santig wüstung do man mumie findt".

[20] Quoted from Ravenstein 1908, p. 100. Transcription of the German inscription: "konik furfursland do der pfeffer wechst den der konik in porto gefunden hat anno 1485".

[21] On the economic motives of the early voyages of exploration see Anthony R. Disney: A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire. From the Beginnings to 1807. Vol. 2: The Portuguese Empire. Cambridge et al. 2009. – Malyn Newitt: A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion, 1400-1668. London et al. 2005. – Malyn Newitt (ed.): The Portuguese in West Africa. A Documentary History. 1415-1670. Cambridge et al. 2010.

[22] Quoted from Ravenstein 1908, p. 101. Transcription of the German inscription: "konik Mormelli bei desse konik wechst das golt das der konik von portugal last holen".

the legendary monopods or sciapods, mythical creatures with one big leg and a single, large foot which was believed to serve as a kind of umbrella during sleep. The other information given on South Africa or "Abasia Ethiopia" is on climates and seasons, always in relation to Europe. For example, the scribe remarks: "In this country it is summer when it is winter in Europe, and when it is winter with us they have summer."[23] He also records the hostile climatic conditions in the South African hinterland: "Here is a sandy, burnt-up country called the torrid zone, thinly peopled, and this only on its borders where water can be had."[24]

Conclusion: Displaying Africa in Nuremberg

With the Behaim Globe, the city of Nuremberg probably possessed the most comprehensive depiction of Africa existing at the close of the 15th century. The modern viewer is confronted with a very composite and ambivalent state of knowledge about Africa. Whereas the geography of the coastline is more or less based on up-to-date data gathered by the explorers, most of the hinterland literally remains in the dark. It would probably have been almost impossible for a contemporary viewer to tell the different levels of truth and myth apart. Framed in a realistic, science-based topography, even the legendary elements seemed to become trustworthy.

The globe summarises the knowledge of Africa at the dawn of European colonisation. It testifies to different scientific, political, economic, but also military and religious interest. The main goal, however, was to discover new resources and markets. Maps thus became important keys which allowed access to hitherto unexploited lands and goods.

Economy was also one of the main concerns of Martin Behaim's Nuremberg, one of the most important merchant cities in Europe at this time.[25] The aldermen, who were all members of the economic elite, must have been attracted by the project of the globe which promised them access to the legendary riches of Africa and other faraway places. The globe, which was basically a scientific instrument, thus became an instrument of economic and political power.

The completion and display of the globe likely had an immediate impact: In 1494, a small delegation consisting of the physician and humanist Hieronymus Münzer and three merchants was sent to the Portuguese king João II to propose a cooperation in future expeditions to and trading activities in Africa.[26] Münzer was well informed about the fabulous gains the Portuguese crown derived from the African trade, and in his negotiations with João II he drew attention to the fact that merchandise from Nuremberg was prominent among the products exchanged by the Portuguese for gold, pepper, ivory and slaves. More accessible than India and America, Africa was the new Promised Land for many European merchants.

The different colours and styles of lettering reveal that the Globe was constantly updated during the 16th century. After its removal from the town hall in the 17th century, it turned into an object of family memory before becoming a symbol of municipal and national pride in the 18th and 19th centuries. The emblematical character of the globe was enhanced by its public display in 1906, in a period of fervid colonial rivalry. The patriotic camp proclaimed Martin Behaim the "German Columbus" and enthroned him as the primary discoverer of Africa. This jingoistic claim also

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[23] Quoted from Ravenstein 1908, p. 104. Transcription of the German inscription: "jn disem land ist somer als wir in europa winter haben und so wir winter haben so haben si somer".

[24] Quoted from Ravenstein 1908, p. 104. Transcription of the German inscription: "hie ist ein santig verprent land torride zone genant übel bewont dan allein an den enden do man wasser gehaben mag".

[25] See Hektor Ammann: Die wirtschaftliche Stellung der Reichsstadt Nürnberg im Spätmittelalter. Nürnberg 1970.

[26] See Jürgen Pohle: Deutschland und die überseeische Expansion Portugals im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert. Münster 2000.

dominated the discussion during the Third Reich, and was crowned by Hitler's donation of the globe to the German National Museum. In post-war Germany, the globe finally became an object solely of historical and scientific interest. It is now valued as an incunable of modern cartography.[27]

Up until now, research on the Behaim Globe has mainly focused on the depiction of Europe and Asia. I wanted to strengthen the issue of Africa which I believe to be of fundamental importance for the understanding of the whole object and its role in history. The Behaim Globe clearly underlines the key position of Africa in an Early Modern European perspective. Africa is perceived as a continent full of myth, fabulous riches, but also dangers, promises, and ultimately, the location of earthly paradise. Although the globe did not really play an active part in the history of colonisation and its many negative effects, it does mirror certain early stages of its development. And as an object of public display it has influenced the perception of Africa for more than 500 years.

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[27] See Focus Behaim Globus 1992. – Thomas Eser/Anja Grebe: Heilige und Hasen. Nürnberger Bücherschätze der Dürerzeit. Exhibition Catalogue. Nuremberg 2008, pp. 122-123, Cat. 39. Thomas Eser: Weltbild in Bewegung. Zwei Globen und ein Silberschiff. In: Daniel Hess/Dagmar Hirschfelder (ed.): Renaissance, Barock, Aufklärung. Kunst und Kultur vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert. Nürnberg 2010, pp. 33-45.

CIHA and the Globalization of Art History from a German Perspective

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CIHA and the Internationalization of Art History
The first international assembly of art historians took place in Vienna in 1873. The opportunity was provided by the Vienna World Fair. At that time, the main topic was to establish history of art as a subject; **Rudolf Eitelberger** criticized the failure to establish the history of art beyond the technical universities. Since then, there have been a total of 32 international congresses, whose areas of inclusion and topics have increasingly expanded. However, it took 20 years until an international assembly of art historians was invited to convene, this time in Nuremberg in 1893. Lectures focused upon European art history, from Antiquity to Norwegian art of the Middle Ages. Since then, there have been regular meetings, initially only in German-speaking countries. Only in 1912 did the congress depart from the German-speaking region and convene in Rome.

After the First World War, the scene had fundamentally changed. Without exception, the congresses now took place outside of Germany and Austria-Hungary. At the 12th Congress in Brussels in 1930, the term "CIHA" was introduced, an abbreviation for the French term, "Congrès international d'histoire d'art". After the Second World War, the New York Congress in 1961 signaled the departure from Europe, although it was almost exclusively dedicated to European themes, the topic of the congress being "Studies in Western Art". Only in the section related to the Baroque was Latin America also included.

Mexico City became the venue for a congress in 1980, and in 1986, the second congress outside the European realm took place in Washington. After Bonn in 1964 ("Style and Tradition in Occidental Art"), Berlin became the second post-war congress venue in Germany. In the aftermath of the fall of the "Iron Curtain", particular emphasis was placed upon the participation of art historians from Eastern Europe.

Since 2004 (Montreal), other continents have been equitable candidates for the implementation of world congresses. This became especially clear with the thematic orientation in Melbourne in 2008, dedicated to global exchange and comparison under the slogan, "Crossing Cultures". We would very much like to build upon this in Nuremberg in 2012.

Thematically-speaking, art history across the globe had its focus within Europe. Themes were primarily the art of the Renaissance in Italy, the Gothic cathedrals in France, the Baroque castle architecture in France and Austria. The standard for the evaluation of art was mostly modern paintings on canvas, that is, painting of the 17th to the 19th centuries. Major painters from France, Italy, England, and Spain, and by way of exception, Germany as well, constituted its preferred themes. Art history conceived itself above all as a university discipline, developing methods such as iconography and semiotics, structuralism, and the history of style. This was especially true of the research by art historians from Europe itself and from North America. Themes from which it is possible to derive strong global conclusions remain the exception. At the least, scores of handbooks on the history of art often contain a few volumes about art in East Asia, Central America, or Africa.

Only in a few subject areas has it already been possible to establish a globalized art history, especially in contemporary art and architecture. However, only artists whose work is understood as a component of international art occupy center stage here. Regional traditions in contemporary fine art are only marginally considered by art criticism. As a rule, contemporary art and architecture worldwide are harmonized. Works by Nam Paik, Andy Warhol or Gerhard Richter are displayed

worldwide and treated in books – here in San Francisco; works by Colin Djapanagha Dixon are only known in Australia, even when this painting is on display in Leipzig.

Examples for Globalization: LACMA in Los Angeles

The Los Angeles County Museum of Arts (LACMA) is equipped with several independent wings that are connected by an inner courtyard and bridges that display art works from individual continents and epochs. Granted, objects of Asian origin are not displayed directly next to European ones, but with a few steps it is possible to compare corresponding works within individual departments. Moreover, it would not make any sense whatsoever to see, for example, Indian and European sculptures next to one another in a permanent exhibition, however, the short distances are very important for comparison. (fig. 1-3)

The State of Research in Germany

In Germany, the work of museums, university professorships, and art historians in professional organizations is strictly divided according to continents. (fig. 5) Asian sculpture is found in museums for non-European art, the experts in question are generally not in the Association of German Art Historians, but their own professional association for ethnology. There would be no objections to an exchange between the two associations, but this is generally absent.

Sculptures from Benin (fig. 6) are displayed in ethnological museums, not in museums of art history. Ethnology is still considered to be a field which only makes queries about traditions, cults, and rituals. This suggests that something so foreign is also something primitive. What is more, ethnology is not integrated into art history in the museum sector; there is hardly any contact or exchange. (fig. 4) The parallel field to (non-European) ethnology is "European ethnology", which for its part, barely has a connection to art history, a certain dovetailing actually exists only in the Germanischen Nationalmuseum and recently in Cologne, where the Ethnology Museum has just been given a new location next to the Museum for Medieval Art. Both are accessed by a common entrance. Whether this was intended to be innovative is questionable. For some, the art of Asia, Africa, and pre-Columbian America, as well as medieval art, seems equally primitive and exotic today.

Those of you who are familiar with the situation in other European countries know that it does not appear all too different there. Even in most other European countries, there is a struggle with globalization. Major European museums, as in Germany, are arranged according to continents; at most, the Mediterranean realm is included within Ancient Egyptian art – not with Christian, Islamic, or even modern! – in the presentation of European art.

What is a Global History of Art?

What can or must a globalization of the history of art accomplish?

First of all, it must, above all from a European perspective, evaluate the level of the actual art with a global standard. The separation into a dual-class history of art – here, the world-standard European art, there the non-European art of the allegedly primitive peoples – is not acceptable.

Both presume fundamental knowledge of non-European art. Museums that provide the material for this are everywhere.

In terms of a global observation of art, works from the most diverse continents are included. In particular, this exists for art epochs prior to the modern era. Connections between art across continents should occupy a greater focal point than before.

A better knowledge of research approaches, queries, and methods is recommended, exchange and discussion are necessary and helpful.

The goal is not to unify the observation, evaluation, and research of art, but to be able to recognize and employ other methods, modes of practice, and primary works. (fig. 4/5)

Summary: The Aims of the CIHA Congress in 2012 (fig. 7)
The themes of international art history congresses and those of art historical research as a whole have experienced a development towards an increasingly global inquiry in the last 130 years. This process shall continue and lead towards an art history in Europe that also takes up global themes.

The question of the innovation and uniqueness of artworks is to be answered against a global backdrop in a completely different way than before, when one did without the perspectives of other continents.

The focal point of the CIHA Congress 2012 is the object. On the one hand, we shall investigate material objects and on the other hand, the topic in its broader sense. The object is the point of departure and the subject of art historical research. The treatment of the material object, be it a building, painting, sculpture, whether a cult object, a collected piece, or an item of daily use, is a touchstone for art historical research. On the one hand, it should occupy the focal point of the congress in terms of its specific materiality and its history, yet on the other hand, diverse scholarly perspectives should also be investigated.

The analysis of objects can ensue from many viewpoints and requires the cooperation of the most diverse fields of study. The congress offers the opportunity for a dialogue about various perspectives and methods. The question of the material object provides the possibility to adopt a view that is not European-oriented at the outset.

The question of the “original” gains particular significance in a digitalized and globalized world. How does our perception and treatment of the “original” change? How does one handle ephemeral forms of art, whether only modern or historical? Is it even possible to make the object tangible in contemporary art, such as with video and Internet art or performance?

The themes wish to stimulate reflection upon the standard categories and limits of traditional art history. The sections do not delineate categorical boundaries; rather, they should link contributions from diverse cultural spheres and fields. The congress wishes to provide an opportunity for broad discussion and controversial debate. Art history is faced with the task of globalization, particularly in Europe. The “classic” history of art must develop a broad willingness to work with those art historians who are engaged with Islamic, Far Eastern, or Central American art.

Presentations within the individual sections should contain basic approaches to the theoretical handling of the “object”, methods of the field, as well as inquiries of global comparison. In doing so, one should not primarily address the individual object, but to a greater extent, draw conclusions from its treatment towards the theory of the object as a whole. Traditional areas of the fine arts and architecture should come up for discussion, as well as areas which would newly open up a globally-oriented art history.

Figures

1. Los Angeles, LACMA, inner courtyard of the museum with wings for European, American and Asian Art.

2. Los Angeles, LACMA, wing of European Art.

3. Los Angeles, LACMA, wing of Art of the Ancient Americas.

4. Paris, Quai Branly, Museum of Ethnology.

5. Paris, Louvre (Department of Ancient Art). Eastern European and European Art are strictly divided in the museums of Paris.

6. Berlin, Dahlem sculpture from Benin.

7. CIHA Conference 2012 in Nuremberg. 1 000 visitors from 47 countries flock into the Congress Hall.

The Present is Now/The World in a Few Things: Actuality and Internationalism as Work Hypothesis on Private Collecting of Contemporary Art in Latin America

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With this text I would like to understand a transformation of the way art is acquired, incite coordinates for its comprehension as a process and to mobilize questions for the elaboration of a critique towards the circumstances in which this process unfolds. First 3 images. In the book Hablando en Plata (2001) from the Mexican publishing house Landucci, with a suggestive image the programmatic text of Osvaldo Sánchez, ... Mejor Comprate otro Avión is illustrated on the articulation between the visibility of contemporary art and art collecting. Works of the artists settled in Mexico: Eduardo Abraroa, Thomas Glassford, Gonzalo Lebrija, and Tomás Calderón are presented as part of the private collection curated under the name *Alma Colectiva*; owned by the López Martínez family and located in the intimacy of their home. Parallel to this, in the year 2001 the second public presentation of the Jumex collection takes place, this time in a space constructed *ex profeso* for this purpose in the northern part of Mexico City. Works of international artists, Latin American, North American and English were presented as part of the curatorial concept of Opening. In the year 2009, the curator Julieta González produces a revision on the relation between museums and cultural artifacts in contemporary art for Espacio 1414 of the private collection Berezdivin in Puerto Rico, as of today viewable online. In this curating the revision of artists like the Brazilian Rosangela Rennó, the Colombian Mateo López, are presented paired with that of the North American Mark Dion or the German Lothar Baumgarten.

In these images there is an opening of the public treating, therefore political, of the appreciation and construction of discourses on contemporary art. A transit from the private ambit of a home to the cultural institutions. In the categories of images one talks of curating, private property, from just having a collection to the readings that allow the problematization of what is understood as art, and most of all to the arrival of mechanisms for the acquisition of art in a national context becoming one of a transnational character. Understanding these images allows the understanding of the cultural mechanisms of contemporary art.

To this day, there aren't any solid research attempts to thoroughly describe the general dynamics or art collecting, its history, actors and relation with the State and market in Latin America. There are some important works on the collecting done by public institutions, but the trajectory of collectors or their private assets handed to public institutions don't shape an academic or methodological corpus in the sense that they aren't contrasted between them and they don't produce guidelines for coordinates for an up to date discussion on what is understood by art collecting. On the other hand, since the late nineties, private contemporary art collecting has been heavily dynamized. Parallel to the consolidation of industrial capitals of certain Latin American businessmen in parity with first world countries, codes for the understanding of the creation of art assets and qualities of artistic works were reconfigured: their mechanisms for divulgation and promotion of their discourses, the relations between the public and the private in the sense of patrondom, the donations to museum like institutions directly affecting the consolidation of the present artistic environment. It is then that an important cultural practice appears, one that conceives its coordinates in the transits between local management and the striving for visibility an international level. One would want to be located in a Latin American city and at the same time be influential far away, in those cities where the events of the international art system take place. Cultural practices characteristic of the introduction of neoliberal market criteria to the artistic field, which has been named cognitive capitalism. This is the

reason why it is impossible to understand art collecting today without knowledge of the market, culture without the economy.

New collectors
Today I would like to present the profile of new art collecting in Latin America. This activity that breaks the appointment of the Latin American oriented to the acquisition of works and artists to an international and current art. Collections primarily interested in contemporary art and its installment in the local artistic scenes in articulation with the international one. Collections with personal points of view but funded with corporate investments, without a direct link to an entity of social class but with one to all current economic actors (M.Pacheco, 2001). Collections that are used in personal and private ambits and also in public cultural products directed to horizontal population segments of transnational consumption. Art series are eclectic, according to curatorial projects and acquisition guidelines they must work on various areas simultaneously. A parallelism between old and new, national and international acquisitions is produced; so as to configure readings that allow the production of curatorial projects where internationalism prevails. Curating is the primordial exercise in the construction of series and categories. Collections with constant movement and mechanisms of national and international visibility seek to be collections that are noticed in the construction of the field of art itself. Because of this they are immersed in institutions and they build professionalism around them. This is a deterritorialized art collecting because it intentionally extends regulatory and legitimation framing to diverse global spaces that communicate between them through horizontal consumption networks.

The coordinates of this collecting can not be understood in the sense of only the artistic asset the collections include, one must have in mind that they directly imply the conformation of the field of contemporary art and the stride for the permanence of its discourses. A very different articulation and control from that which happens in the function of distinction under coordinates of social character, just as it was studied by P.Bourdieu (1995 y 1999), but keeping visibility as its objective. As long as there are no longer attempts to assimilate or install criteria of good taste which is already conformed as *habitus* in the national scenario, other symbolic goods and discourses are invented that constitute attention centers for transnational and neoliberal social groups. What makes these collectors particular is the way in which they understand an explicit practice in social legitimization operations in the sense of articulation, financial and symbolic investment and personal control in the public ambit. Its operations are:

1. An appropriation of that which is novel in current international art;
2. The strategies of cultural management and acquisition are configured between local and global levels;
3. Generation of advertising mechanisms and media showing;
4. A strong attempt to professionalize the infrastructure that constructs, divulges and manages the collection and therefore builds its own genealogies on art from diverse discursive and curatorial strategies;
5. A relation between the personal and the corporate but mediated by the mentioned professionalizing activity.

More than disposing objects in a certain way, this type of art collecting configures cultural institutions in which their processes are articulated with the proposals of the cultural policies of states and at the same time with the stride towards recognition in the artistic environment. They are agents that seek to centralize under their management discussions on what is contemporary art. From here, that this profile no only allows us to theorize but also to understand a fundamental *ethos* for contemporary art culture. The subjectiveness of an agent that orients and fits its behavior towards other agents like curators and collectors so as to dispose institutional, political and symbolic resources to make itself visible in the dynamics of contemporary art and to achieve stature in the

international system. It's ethos is sustained on the ideas of what is current and international. It is not gratuitous that the works by artists of diverse regions have parallel interpretations.

To try to position contemporary art as a signifier in Latin American societiesfar away from the centers of control and definitions of globalized symbolic goods, means to collectors the creation of the social environment. At the same time that the collection and its cultural mediations are created, so are the possibility conditions in which the cultural environment might recognize it and therefore penetrate into the international art scene. Their public is constructed as well as their critics, and at the same time its cultural divergence mechanisms and insides economically and symbolically in the projects of analogous institutions. The power of the collector creates the conditions for its own establishment (A.Garduño, 2010).

The creation of the environment is due to the contraposition of contemporary art to the question of its significance in the future or cultural value. Contemporary art is considered too volatile due to the fact that the substratum of its legitimacy is strongly displaced in respect to the discursive constructions of the nation, the style or identity that conform what is called cultural patrimony....

Cultural policies during neoliberalism?

Cultural policies have been understood as the interference of the Latin American Nation State, in terms of public policies, in the construction of the guidelines that build an identity. Néstor García Canclini (2007) proposed that this notion must be expanded so to include an understanding of not only the state's cultural responsibility but also how it articulates with the interference of the cultural practices of transnational private entities. This could be analyzed through the private collecting of contemporary art as it is not founded in the notion of mobilizing a national identity. As seen earlier becoming a collector doesn't only consist in systematically acquiring art that builds up to a meaningful series, this cultural practice has to be in tune with the construction of the cultural field for the reception and elaboration of the social meaning of the objects. Oeuvres are not, necessarily, judged by their capability to make allusion to the national repertoire. They are also judged by their place in the international art discourse. Hence to acquiring and integrating a series demands curatorial research and the hosting of local exhibitions that will appeal to an international audience. This is why there is institutionalization, professionalization, creation of exhibition programs and the development of close relations between public culture offices and private art institutions for international matters. It is necessary to emphasize that most of the commercial operations in private art collecting take place outside of Latin America in fairs and auction houses.

Considering the hypothetical profile of collectors and their place in the market one can intuit that the neoconceptual and performative boom of the nineties happened (and continues to happen) as exportation. The construction of symbolic and economic value takes place in international art centers so Latin American collectors that buy art are a kind of cultural importers, this being the key for their neoliberal and transnational condition.

In the present collecting process what we call *lo latinoamericano* is a category that classifies the making of a piece, the artist's trajectory and the problems that interest him emphasizing the work place and the semiotic references. It does not mean a genetic and differentiate relation between identity and creation. Artists, oeuvre and cultural products are understood as art and a creation process, the usage of qualifying adjectives that function as cultural meanings are bartered by the transnational collectors. It is the momentary speech made of a series of pieces by a collector that classifies and judges the Latin American condition of certain work of art.

This is how contemporary art appears as a gust of fresh air that mobilizes, expands, includes, and stirs up the ankylosed world of the nineteenth cultural prestige and its master pieces. This is how a

new world of prestige is created, one fit for new international investors that has opened possibilities for the establishment of new discourses and with it of cultural significance. The main thing one has to note is that the gust becomes a whirl, and in only a few years it changes the framework for appreciation, signification, calcification and enjoyment of a kind of art that was once warm and now has become hazy and nostalgic. The gust, in philosophical terms, has broken the connection of collecting art with the time past and the nation, and turned it in to a matter of the present, vertiginous and worldwide. The prestige is built today with today's artists and at the same time a cultural world is being built that makes it all meaningful today.

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An Holistic Approach to Conservation of the Architectural Heritage and Bio Diversity of the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve and Urban Area

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1. The Study Areas

The Study Area includes the Planning region of the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve which is an area consisting of 10000km². The Area is shown in the accompanying map which defines the extent; the area is bordered by the Eastern Cape Coastline to the South and Little Karoo in the North – an important tourist linkage occurs between the coast and the interior which highlights the strategic asset to the larger South Africa of the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve.

The town of Steytlerville is situated en-route and at the eastern entrance to the Mega Reserve. The methodology relating to the linking of the Mega Reserve in this thesis will become apparent as the various key pointers are discussed in the Paper.

2. Conservation and Cultural Heritage

Conservation and the protection of Cultural Heritage cannot be seen in isolation. The conservation of vernacular Architecture is a finite and a measurable phenomenon; that of protecting the natural biodiversity of a region is far more complex and far reaching. However it may be said that the conservation and protection of the Cultural Heritage of a country, region or town is interlinked and inseparable and cannot be viewed in isolation.

3. The Baviaans Mega Reserve

The Baviaans Mega Reserve (Valley of Baboons) is a 75km long valley that lies between the parallel east – west running Baviaanskloof and Kouga mountain ranges in the western region of South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. The eastern most point of the valley is some 95km north west of the coastal city Port Elizabeth. The Baviaans area includes a cluster of formal protected areas managed by the Eastern Cape Parks Board of which the most well known is the 184385ha Baviaanskloof Nature Reserve.

The Baviaanskloof area is one of outstanding natural beauty – owing to its spectacular land forms, clad in a diverse array of plants and inhabited by a large variety of animals. The rich biodiversity has been internationally reorganized by the awarding of a prestigious World Heritage Site Status in 2004.

The Area contains a remarkable variety of pre-historical and historical sites and artifacts. It also fulfills a critically important role as water catchment for the agricultural sector and the nearby urban growth to the East and South East.

A progressive Planning and Implementation Policy has been developed. A Strategy which is based on a set of principles and underpinned by a vision and specific set of objectives forms the basis for the ownership and the land usage policies of the biodiversity conservation process.

Figure 1: 'Welcome to Baviaans', Cacadu Tourism signage.
Figure 2: Scenic view.
Figure 3: Map.

4. The Town of Steytlerville

The other part of the picture is the small town of Steytlerville situated 180km from Port Elizabeth and the Eastern Getaway to the Baviaanskloof. The reason why this place was identified as the other part in our Study Area is that it is a good example of a whole life urban sustainable village. By its very nature, this man made urban environment serves as a balance to the biodiversity of the Baviaanskloof Mega reserve as regards economic, environmental and social assessments related to the conservation of our Cultural Heritage.

The Steytlerville community traces its beginnings back to the year 1875 when a local Church was established to serve the largely farming community and its surrounds. The area is well known for its Angora goats and mohair farms. The town was named after the first Dutch Reformed minister. A Municipality was established in 1902 to govern the civic affairs of the settlement. Steytlerville has only recently been provided with electricity (1986) and a proper water supply (2002) which to a certain extent retarded the growth of the town. It may be said that perhaps for this reason that the uniqueness of the town has remained intact; the consumer and 'throw away' age has virtually bypassed Steytlerville resulting in many fine old buildings and whole streets remaining intact. The town boasts a wide Main Road which was designed to allow ox-wagons to turn as well as historic stone houses in the nearby township which dates back to circa. 1900.

There has been little or no attempt to consciously provide any local conservation mechanism to protect the vernacular architecture to date; the fact that there still remains the cultural and architectural heritage is not by anything else short of a miracle. For a long period in the history of the Town, the modern world bypassed Steytlerville; however times are a changing and this aspect will be discussed later on in the paper .

The uniqueness, simplicity and charm of the town are illustrated by the following illustrations which are water colour paintings by the Author.

Figures 4-7: *The town of Steytlerville*, watercolour, Elwyn Harlech-Jones.

The photograph shows the Main Street with family crests which record the contribution of the families to the growth of the Town.

Figure 8: MainStreet, Steytlerville.

5. Governance and Local Planning Sustainability

Mention has been made of the urgency and importance to measure conservation in the context of whole life and holistic assessments; we shall look at the current methods, processes, applications and devices which are being utilized on a National, Regional and Local scale to ensure the safeguarding of our resources and conservation of the Cultural Heritages. Legislature empowerments, economic viability versus sustainability, the opportunities and challenges, shareholders participation are some of the facts which will be analyzed and discussed
The two areas under the spotlight; the biodiversity of the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve and the town of Steytlerville are used as measurable quantities to obviate the dangers of applying assessment theories which have not been tested as to their applicability. Theory will be balanced with actualities and measured against its applicability of real life example of sustainable conservation.

6. Legislation, Governance and Resource Management

6.1 Local Authority Structures

The political map of South Africa was redrawn in 1994. The first democratic election was held in the history of the country. A fully representative government was elected with leader Nelson Mandela as the first President.

6.2 Processes

The country is divided into eight Provinces with an elected Provincial Parliament for each sector. The largest metropolis has their own Metropolitan Councils; the rural areas are administered by District Municipalities with Local Municipalities representing these areas.

In this instance the District Municipality is the Cacadu Municipality Authority which is the local Authority controlling the area which the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve and Steytlerville are situated to Cacadu; Baviaans Municipality is the local Municipality which controls the specific Area; this phenomenon is known politically as 'devolution of power' (sic).

The Local and District Municipalities are governed by the Municipality Ordinance Act which regulates the performance of these Authorities.

We will only consider the relevant Legislation, Planning Strategies and Structures as they relate to the governance of Conservation in this Paper, which affect the protection and sustainability of the Cultural Heritage.

The consideration of Conservation Legislation on a National level is important to the arguments and discussion of the relative topics covered in this Paper; the success or failure of such legislation is dependent on to what extent and how this is managed and applied on the ground. This statement is particularly relevant when local conditions, influences and other factors affecting conservation of the area is taken into account. We have learnt from experience that the proper management of existing resources is the most important factor in successful conservation. In other words it is not 'what' is applied but 'how' the initiatives are applied 'on the ground'.

6.3 Whole Life Assessments

In this instance we realize that whole life assessment and thinking are ingredients which will determine the success (or failure) of any conservation policies. Stakeholders' participation and the constant re-evaluation of standards on sustainability are other parts of this recipe to enable conservation to be successfully practiced and applied. The process of conservation is ongoing and should evolve with time and should also be sensitive and flexible as new approaches and challenges present themselves.

6.4 The Theoretical Thesis

This Theoretical Thesis is an important consideration as it has a bearing on the practical discussion of applicability and the consideration of economic viability versus sustainability argument. These theories are not unique to the Cacadu region, but do provide an introduction to the next chapter, which is a consideration of the National, Regional and Local legislation which have a direct impact on conservation policies applied to the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve and to Steytlerville in particular.

6.5 National Legislation

The National Legislative Regulatory device which is cardinal to conservation and the protection of the Cultural Heritage is the National Heritage Resources Act 1999 (No. 25 of 1999) which was promulgated on the 28th April 1999.

This Act governs the management of resources on a National, Regional and Local level. The failure of a Municipality to implement the relevant regulations contained in the Act will entitle that body to be criminally indicted by the State.

The relevant Governing body for the Baviaans region is the Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (ECPHRA).[1] This body is empowered through the legislation contained in the Act 25 of 1999. Legislation in this Act empowers the ECPHRA to act as a custodian to declare heritage resources protected and to follow legal recourse when the Act has been transgressed. The other Heritage related Body is the National Heritage Commission which acts on a National level. The commission co-operates with the ECPHRA in all its activities.

The National Department of Arts and Culture is the 'governing body' in Government which controls the activities of all the Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities in all the Provinces of South Africa.

Figure 9: Government Gazette.
Figure 10: Cacadu District Municipality Integrated Development Plan 2007-2012.

7. National Heritage Resources Act 1999 (No. 25 of 1999)

7.1 The Section directly applicable to the built environment, Professionals and particularly Architects is Section 27; formal protection of National Heritage Sites and Provincial Heritage Sites. This section includes for an application to be made to the South African Heritage Resource Authority by means of a permit application[22] for a place to be declared a National Heritage Site or a Provincial Heritage Site. Once a Site has been declared a Heritage Site, the relevant National and/or Provincial authorities are responsible for their protection.

7.2 Section34; this section of the Act protects structures which are older than 60 years. The requirement is for a permit to be issued by the relevant Heritage Resources Authority to allow alterations or demolition to take place.

7.3 Section 38; this Section requires notification to the Authorities in the event of certain categories of development being undertaken where the Development or activity will impact on Heritage resources. The compilation of an Assessment or Environmental Impact Report is required to be submitted and approved. The qualifications being the changing of the character (use) of the site or rezoning and the extent of the site are all factors taken into consideration. The Section also specifically sets out the procedure and information required in the Assessment or Environmental Impact Report to be submitted to the responsible Heritage Authority for approval purposes.

7.4 Generally the other Sections of the Act include provisions for the functions, powers and duties of the Heritage Authorities, protection and management of Heritage Resources, Archaeology, Paleontology, Meteorites, Public Monuments, Graves, Burial Grounds, the Restitution of Heritage Objects, Appointment of Heritage Inspectors, Offences and Penalties.

7.5 Permit Applications*:* An application for a permit is required in order to alter, destroy, damage, excavate or remove from its original position a structure or property protected in terms of the

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[1] ECPHRA webpage: www.ecphra.org.za/legisphp
[2] See permit application 7.5.

National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999). The ECPHRA has published specific Guidelines for the preparation of a Permit Application to the PHRA permit sub-committee which has the authority to approve or decline an Application. Applications are submitted on a stage by stage basis to allow input from the regulating authorities. The Cacadu region assists the ECPHRA in these matters. An obligation also rests with the regulating body to consider all applications 'timeously' and to provide reasons for refusal.

8. Regional Legislation

8.1 The Cacadu Municipal Authority has prepared a comprehensive Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2007 – 2010 which involved the publication of a Strategic Development Plan Framework (SDPF). This framework serves as a structural implementation plan for Local Municipalities i.e. Baviaans Municipality.

8.2 One of the basic principles which is applicable to the discussion in this Paper is that a balance is struck between the fulfillment of basic needs the maintenance of existing assets and the potential for future growth and development. Market forces play an enormous role in the shaping of development patterns. Non market factors such as the intervention of Strategic Government Agreements also play a substantial role in reaching specific public policy goals, thereby influencing the development patterns of a particular Region.

9. Local Municipality Implementation

The success of a Strategic Development Plan lies in its implementation; this statement made by the Head of Department of the Cacadu District Municipality is perhaps one of the most important tenets of the conservation of our Cultural Heritage. The problem with the Baviaans Municipality is its lack of resources (human and financial) to implement the Planning Strategies. Asset Management is a common problem for the smaller rural Municipalities. This statement brings the Baviaankloof Mega Reserve and Steytlerville into the spotlight.

10. Heritage Route Guide; Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve

Figure 11: *Akkerdal – historic farm house*, pen and ink, Elwyn Harlech-Jones.

The conservation and protection of the Heritage of the Biodiversity of the Baviaans Mega Reserve and the Architecture of Steytlerville are interlinked. These relate to the holistic integrated Planning Strategies (SDP) which have been put into place by the Cacadu Municipality Authority.

10.1 Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve: The wilderness area has been inhabited by hunter gatherers (San-Bushman) from the late Stone Age 20000 years ago. Evidence of these peoples lives still exist in the form of rock art, food storage pits and other archeological treasures. UNESCO is considering a future World Heritage status as a consideration for the areas Cultural value. The evolution of habitation is marked some 2000 years ago with the changes in the socio-economic landscape with the settlement of Khoi pastoralists. Not long after this the first European colonists settled in the area; a factor which changed the prehistoric socio-economic landscape until today.

10.2 A Tourist Heritage Route has been mapped out which has its western getaway on the coast near Port Elizabeth and ends at Steytlerville in the East. The route can only at this stage be traversed by high 4x2 wheel drive vehicles and includes villages, an historic narrow gauge train line, historic graves, burial grounds and monuments. The Wilderness Baviaanskloof Nature Reserve with its

spectacular flora and fauna complements the numerous man made structures and artifacts which exist in the area.

10.3 The opportunities and challenges that have been created by the establishment of this eco-tourism route has created inherent institutional issues which are limiting factors as far as the conservation economic benefits are concerned;

1. A general lack of awareness of the value of biodiversity and services it provides.
2. Lack of synergy and approaches of the different stakeholders and interest groups in tourism and conservation field; this amounts to causing delays in the attainment of common goals.
3. Low capacity of the Regional Government Department and the Local Authorities to effectively plan and manage the formal protected areas.
4. Limitation of the National Government Department to plan and manage the off - reserve conservation institutions.
5. Private landowners being convinced of the economic viability to change from stock farming to wildlife based local economy.
6. Ongoing determination of the infrastructure, architectural and cultural artifacts. This is also tied in with rehabilitation which is dependent on institutional human and monetary resources
7. Limited availability of Professional, human and financial resources by the local Municipalities to implement the strategic Planning initiative of the Central Municipality Authority.

10.4 A Tourism and Development Plan is in the process of being implemented, this has within a few years brought a noticeable and measurable result in the creation of employment opportunities and the conservation and rehabilitation of the infrastructure. This Plan is based on the broad based conservation strategy mentioned earlier in this paper. Small to medium home industries have been established along the Tourist Route (includes the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve and Steytlerville Areas).

10.5 Employment Opportunities: The creation of employment opportunities especially amongst the Previously Disadvantaged Individuals (PDI) has been a factor in helping to alleviate poverty and creating a sense of well-being and upliftment in the Area. The creation of self employment is one of the most investment intensive methods of creating a stable, sustainable economy. This in turn creates wealth which is re invested by the Private Sector and complements the contribution of Government Institutions to the development of the Area.

Figure 12: Employment opportunities.

11. Steytlerville Eco Tourism

The Town of Steytlerville has experienced a remarkable economic growth over the last few years; this phenomenon is attributed to the town being part of the Cacadu Region Integrated Strategic Development Plan mentioned earlier in the Paper. A cornerstone of this initiative is the conservation of the Natural and the Built environment.

11.1 The Eco-Tourism industry has also created employment opportunities for the Town, this has in turn provided the spin-off as previously mentioned in this Paper. The town has miraculously remained largely intact due to its isolation from the main stream of development in the former years. There is however a strong base already established which to a certain extent has regulated conservation and the rehabilitation of the Architectural Heritage. The local University School of Architecture in nearby Port Elizabeth in conjunction with the Regional Institute of Architecture published a book entitled 'Die Argitektuur van Steytlerville' – met riglyne vir bewaring en ontwikkeling (The Architecture of Steytlerville – with measures for protection and development).

11.2 Architecture in Steytlerville Conservation Manual:

Figure 13: *Conservation Manual.*
Figure 14*: Plan of Town.*

The Publication contains a record of hand drawn measured drawings of selected historical buildings in the town. The measures (riglyne) include diagrams of various Architectural stylistic references to building treatments, gables, verandah coverings, garden walls, wood (timber) elements, external plaster mouldings, roofs, gutters, chimney flues, the positioning of sidewalk trees and the type of advertising signs allowed in the town. An important issue covered in the publication is that of sight lines related to concurrent heights of structures. These lines relate to the height of the spire of the local Nederduits Gereformede Kerk which is the single most documented Architectural building (landmark) in the town.

11.3 Governance structures and control measures do exist for the Municipality and residents of the Town to be in a position to conserve their Architectural Heritage by means of:

1. The National Heritage Resources Act.
2. The Regional Conservation Initiatives and Strategic Development Plan developed by the Cacadu District Authority.
3. The 'Die Argitektuur van Steytlerville' Publication - Architectural Manual.
4. A plethora of records of Architectural designs exist such as Victorian, Georgian, Karoo, German, Gothic, Flemish and Edwardian (to mention but a few).

11.4 Baviaans Municipality: Although these opportunities and the infrastructure are available so to speak to enable a comprehensive sustainable Conservation Plan to be implemented the local Baviaans Municipality has been slow to react to these initiatives which have been provided by the Private and Government sector. The Municipality is in the process as a result of political and professional pressures of including a Heritage Committee in its bye-laws.

11.5 Heritage Committee: Guidelines are at the moment being formalized for the structure of a Heritage Committee which will include members from civil society, Professionals and Local Authority officials to implement conservation measures. The Area to be governed by this Committee includes the town of Steytlerville and the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve both of which are under the control of the Baviaans Local Municipality.

The Municipality has its disposal the necessary legislation to ensure the success of such a Committee. It is hoped that this regulating Authority will ensure that the Heritage Body applies the conservation policies 'on the ground'. The success of the conservation policies and implementation will depend on the support of the people and stakeholders of the Area.

12. Quo Vadis

The Author believes that there is no reason not to be optimistic regarding the process of conserving the vernacular Architecture in the Area.

The protection and conservation of the Cultural History in the Baviaans Region will ensure the growth of eco-tourism. This will undoubtedly mean the creation of wealth for the inhabitants for the foreseeable future. Simultaneously the treasure which is our Cultural Heritage will be safeguarded for future generations. The picture has been painted and our canvas is complete.

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South African Beadwork – Craft, Art, Recycling, Bricolage? Learning from the South

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The problem of the art-historical identification of the manifestations of traditional, non-Western visual cultures is not new.[1] The issue of whether it is art or craft may seem outdated in the wake of the postmodernist extension of the concept of art, yet debate over the issue continues to this day. As art history has become increasingly global in outlook, the debate, on the contrary, has even intensified.[2]

As a matter of principle, art history that is global in outlook is faced with the question of whether and how it is possible to deal with the visual culture of non-Western societies without alienating it. In doing so, it is important to be aware of the Western art system's mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion and to examine the appropriateness of the canonical terms and categories when dealing with non-western art – whether contemporary or traditional.

Rather than just western, we should start from a plurality of art worlds in time and space that in terms of what art is and what artists are, modes of production and reception of art, as well as aesthetics, might differ one from the other. These worlds should not be assumed to be self-contained and static; rather they should be assumed to be open, dynamic systems that interact through exchange, in which media, motifs, forms, materials and subjects acquire a new function, value and meaning.

In the following, I would like to show this, using the example of South African beadwork.[3]

Glass beadwork – mirror of cultural interconnection

South African beadwork emerged in its classic form through adaptation and a highly original and creative interpretation of a European medium, and it represents an interesting case of artistic transformation and global interconnection.

In contrast to African sculpture and rock art, which since the advent of modernism have been looked at as art, beadwork still struggles to assert its position in the Western world of art, and continues to be widely classed as a craft. Produced by women using rather cheap material from the western point of view, it scarcely attracted the attention of art historians. Instead it was anthropologists who adopted its cause, and this is still partly the case today.

In South Africa beadwork is in a different position after South African art historians set off in a new direction in the 1990s.Upgrading indigenous and popular visual culture and including it in their discourse.[4] They have anticipated some of what I am advocating here.

Gary van Wyk, a South African art historian living in New York rightly points out that the colourful designs of much South African beadwork have a pictorial quality and can open our eyes to a new

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[1] Claire Polakoff: Crafts and the Concept of Art in Africa. In: African Arts, Autumn 1978, S. 22.

[2] James Elkins, ed.: Is Art History global? New York, Routledge, 2006.

[3] What follows I partly discussed in may essays Perlenkunst – modern und anders modern. In: Miklós Szalay, ed., Iintsimbi. Perlenarbeiten aus Südafrika, Zürich 2004, pp. 127-137 and Ästhetik. In: Miklós Szalay, ed., Iintsimbi. Perlenarbeiten aus Südafrika, Zürich 2004 pp. 13-18.

[4] Pamela Allara: Contemporary Cultural Production in South Africa: Jostling for Position. In: Coexistence. Contemporary Cultural Production in South Africa, Pamela Allara u.a. ed., Massachusetts, Brandeis University Office of Publications, 2003 S. 6-13; see also Sandra Klopper in: James Elkins, ed., Is Art History global?, New York, Routledge, 2006, S. 114.

understanding of abstraction that is not so much based on the modernistic concept of reduction and emptiness as on ambiguitiy and abundance.[5] He reminds us that the rhythm of their ornamentation, based upon repetition and variation, has been degraded by the Western artistic tradition to the level of empty decoration. As we will see, beadwork patterns are laden with religious, social or communicative significance.

A formal analysis would provide ample justification for putting South African beadwork on a par with Western art genres, such as abstract painting or op art, body art, kinetic art, conceptual art, recycling art or bricolage.

Such comparisons are tempting and undoubtedly counteract the tendency to downgrade bead art to the level of decorative craftwork. Yet they easily lead to a situation where the aesthetic concept that underlies traditional South African beadwork is in the end overlooked. That is, however, exactly what needs to be avoided if we want an art history that respects the peculiarity of every art tradition.

Let me now briefly outline how glass beads from Europe reached South Africa along trade routes and how they were assimilated into an existing art tradition. This tradition was characterized by constant change, whose purpose, however, was not to create something new, but rather to keep existing tradition alive by continuously adapting it to the present.[6]

Glass beads from Europe – a cheap medium of exchange in overseas trade
From the start of overseas trade, glass beads from Europe (made above all in Italy and Bohemia) played an important role as medium of exchange in large parts of the world, including South Africa.[7]

From the beginning of the 16th century glass beads were imported by the Portuguese on the east coast of southern Africa in exchange for gold and ivory, and from the middle of the 17th century by the Dutch and later by the English in the southern Cape and on the coast of what is now KwaZulu Natal. It was not long before these glass beads found their way into other regions of the country, with trade increasing markedly from the late 18th and early 19th centuries on.

Glass beads in Africa – a medium charged with power
In contrast to Europe where, since the Middle Ages, glass beads were used as a cheap substitute for gold and gems,[8] in South Africa glass beads represented a very high material value. With the Bantu-speaking peoples in the north and the east, they were the most important visual medium. Glistening glass beads were believed to be charged with power, and even unprocessed they played an important role in rituals.[9] Thanks to their sparkle, glass beads, along with mother-of-pearl and brass buttons, were equated with the divine, and were used as protection against evil. Contact with the world of the ancestors was established with the help of beads.[10] White beads were particularly important in religious matters. White stood for light, purity, enlightenment and spirituality. Long before the advent of glass beads, white beads were made from organic materials such as seashells, eggshells, bones, teeth and plant seeds.

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[5] Gary van Wyk: Illuminated Signs. Style and Meaning in the Beadwork of the Xhosa- and Zulu-Speaking Peoples. In: African Arts, 236, 2003, n. 3, p. 12- 33, 93-94.
[6] Ursula Helg: Perlenkunst – modern und anders modern. In: Miklós Szalay, ed., Iintsimbi. Perlenarbeiten aus Südafrika, Zürich 2004, pp. 136.
[7] Sharma Saitowitz: Towards a History of Beads. In: Emma Bedford, ed., Ezakwantu. Beadwork from the Eastern Cape, Cape Town 1993, pp. 35-45; Carol Kaufmann: The Bead Rush. Development of the Nineteenth-century Bead Trade from Cape Town. In: Emma Bedford, ed., Ezakwantu. Beadwork from the Eastern Cape, Cape Town 1993, pp. 47-54.
[8] Sabina B. Schürenberg: Glasperlenarbeiten. Taschen und Beutel. Von der Vorlage zum Produkt, München 1998.
[9] Lindsay Hooper: The Social Life of Beads. Expressive Uses of Beadwork in the Eastern Cape. In: Emma Bedford, ed., Ezakwantu. Beadwork from the Eastern Cape, Cape Town 1993 pp. 79-83.
[10] Hooper 1993, p. 81.

From the start, makers readily included bartered European glass beads in their beadwork, and even preferred them to native beads because of their sheen.[11]

Presumably in imitation of the aesthetic of the predecessor tradition with its limited range of colours, early glass beadwork was almost entirely plain. The colourful splendour and abstract geometrical designs, which characterised South African beadwork in later years, were not developed until the 1830s.[12]

In response to the increasingly important role played by beads in social, cultural and political life, a sophisticated aesthetic emerged. The plain monochrome effect of early beadwork gave way to more elaborate, polychromatic designs.

At different times and in different regions, different styles of beadwork developed. Adornment and dress often conveyed important information in their blend of colour and design. Forms and colours, which usually carried a variety of symbolic messages, and which also left room for different interpretations, were simultaneously decoded and transformed into complex messages.[13]

Research into such meanings and messages was long neglected not least because beadwork was reduced to the status of craftwork. In the absence of detailed information, the meaning once assigned to colours and design can be established retrospectively only in a very rudimentary manner.

Beadwork transformed the bodies of men and women into compact, informative displays. The colourful designs in South African beadwork thus stand for far more than décor or embellishment, or – as modernist Europe saw it – the expression of a "primitive desire for adornment".

Beadwork lent significance and meaning; it was not static as Western modernism implied, but instead was highly dynamic.

The aesthetic of transformation: creativity keeping tradition alive

Despite its dynamics, however, bead art remained steeped in tradition. Adaptations, it seems, were often made for the sole purpose of keeping time-honoured tradition alive within the changing context of present-day life.

The Ndebele dancing-sticks, for example, modelled on telephone posts, show *how* the traditional can be adapted to suit the modern and, conversely, *how* the modern can be integrated into the traditional. The connection with the ancestors, established by the dancing-sticks, is preserved by adapting it to contemporary forms.

This principle of transformation also explains *why*, during the 1940s, new materials such as different types of plastic beads, screw tops, and plastic thimbles *increasingly* found their way into South African beadwork. More and more frequently they have been used in combination with other shiny items like mirrors, red bicycle reflectors, bits of aluminium foil, lurex threads and chrome safety pins. They gave a new appearance to beadwork.[14]

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[11] Ursula Helg: Ästhetik. In: Miklós Szalay, ed., Iintsimbi. Perlenarbeiten aus Südafrika*,* Zürich 2004, p. 14

[12] Helg 2004 (note 11), p. 15.

[13] Helg 2004 (note 11), p. 16.

[14] See Anitra Nettleton/Julia Charlton/Fiona Rankin-Smith: Engaging Modernities. Transformations of the Commonplace, Durban, 2003.

It would be mistaken to describe this substitution of glass beads as a waning of tradition, as the West is inclined to do. And it is just as questionable to describe work made from such materials as recycling art or bricolage although from a western perspective that comparison does, suggest itself.[15]

In the West the techniques of recycling and bricolage are based on the programmatic use of materials that are removed from their original context and are expressions of an anti-aesthetic. In the case of South African beadwork, the use of such materials has nothing to do with an anti-aesthetic. It is to be attributed to the transformative aesthetic, which underlies beadwork and must be seen as part of a long-established artistic strategy based on appropriation and integration or a creative adaptation that ensures its own artistic traditions remain vibrant.

Two necklaces: Two takes on Modernity

By juxtaposing a European and an African bead necklace – the one made by the Swiss artist Sophie Taeuber-Arp, the other by an unknown Xhosa woman – I would now like to illustrate, how different the aesthetic concept of each one is.

By that I hope to further clarify what has already been said and to demonstrate, how necessary it is, to consider and assess each form of visual tradition according to its own merits.

Both artists were attempting to produce a modern object in keeping with their times, yet what each of them thought of as "modern" could not be more different.

Taeuber's necklace made in 1918 was much influenced by primitivism, the aesthetic that determined European modernism. With its simple geometric pattern, it refers to the alleged origins of design. It springs from the longing – closely associated with western modernism – for a pristine, intact world that has been spared civilisation.

Produced around 1940 and worn by mothers to protect themselves and their babies, the artist of the Xhosa necklace appears to have met modernism in a very different way. By using screw tops from tubes of ointment in place of the animal teeth that were once used, she has carried something old, tried and tested into the changed circumstances of the present. Ancient bone material, charged with power, is here replaced by synthetic screw tops associated with modern medicine. The connection with the spiritual guardians in the changed circumstances of the present is thus creatively expressed anew and is maintained in contemporary form.

While European modernism flees from rapid change by seeking out enduring forms of expression, as Taeuber-Arp's work shows, its African counterpart attempts to keep up with change. Artistic work is geared towards re-inventing tradition and, conversely, at enabling what is new to become tradition. Here, the path to the modern leads through the past. Art functions as an ongoing recreation of memory.[16]

Conclusion

As a collective form of expression, founded on craft, that concentrates on preserving the tried and tested rather than inventing the new, and whose development cannot be linked to known and outstanding individuals, traditional South African glass beadwork contrasts sharply with the definition of art, that is common in the West. Even from a western perspective, it must nevertheless be regarded as art because of its formal nature and the creative force to which it testifies, but above all, because it creates meaning. With its function, creating meaning, and not merely being an article

[15] Lisa M. Binder: El Anatsui. Transformations. In: african arts, summer 2008, p. 36.

[16] See Simon Njami: Afrikanische Moderne. In: Alfons Hug, ed., Die anderen Modernen. Zeitgenössische Kunst aus Afrika und Lateinamerika, Berlin 1997, S. 19.

of daily use, it fulfils the criterion of art as understood by different contemporary authors such as Arthur Danto.[17]

Beadwork occupied a position in the cultures of the Bantu-speaking peoples of South Africa similar to that of the figurative carvings in traditional cultures elsewhere in Africa, that no-one today calls into question as art.

In the hierarchy of the world of things, works of art come at the very top, and those who create them have high social status. It would therefore not only be illogical, but unfair – and this I direct to the address of western art historians – to deny traditional South African beadwork and its makers the status due to them, and not to look on their work as art and them as artists – as the global South already does it by developing its other views.

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[17] Arthur C. Danto: Art-Artifact. In: The Nation, 246, 1988, n. 9; see also Miklós Szalay: Objektwelt und Gesellschaft. Der Kunstbegriff im Kulturvergleich. In: Sociologia Internationalis, 37, 1999, p.115-129.

“Regardless, the Struggle Continues”: Black Consciousness is a Culture of Resistance

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Figure 1: *Regardless, the Struggle Continues*, 1977

The Road to Democracy, an important two-volume compendium, published this poster in 2004. Its maker and printer remain unknown; nonetheless, the authors selected UCT’s Student Representative Council as its probable source. I question this attribution. Certainly its date — about 1977 — suggests that it was made in response to the state’s massive suppression of Black Consciousness organizations and adherents in 1976 and 1977.

Figure 2: Peter Magubane, *Black Power! Amandla*, 1976 and
AZAPO / AZASM / AZAYO, *Black Solidarity Day*, c. 1985

Until recently, scholars described Black Consciousness, or BC, as a non-effective ideology, one that enjoyed a time and place long since passed. I want to correct this assumption, and I will here rely on poster graphics from the 1980s to argue that BC both achieved its aim in the 1970s, and continued to register — quite effectively so, I must emphasize — throughout the decade that followed.

Figure 3: Repeat: *Regardless, the Struggle Continues*, 1977

Thus I begin with this image from about 1977: “Regardless” of BC’s suppression, it says “the struggle continues.” The image, a raised fist clenched so tightly around barbed wire that blood is drawn, aligns its maker with BC since other expressions of political affiliation at this time had other modes of address. For instance, before BC came along members of the Pan African Congress and the African National Congress showed their allegiance with, respectively, the open palmed salute and the raised fist with thumb extended.

Figure 4: ANC, PAC, BCM photographs

By 1969, Black Consciousness adherents had chosen the closed fist salute to indicate their support of an ideology that had no party affiliation, but expressed a unified vision nonetheless.

Figure 5: Varied salutes, UDF and SAAWU

In photographs of apartheid resisters from the decade that followed suppression of BC bodies, dozens of images record people who stand united but adopt varied salutes. I have chosen just two examples among many. Here we see supporters of the United Democratic Front and those of the South African Allied Workers Union with raised fists, some closed, others with thumb extended. Of course there is a vast increase of raised clenched fists in this period, often to indicate support for non-racialism, an ideology that allows race no place in its conception, nor in practice. I wonder about non-racialist adoption of BC’s central motif, the raised clenched fist that the South African Students Organization adopted in 1969. Non-racialists also adapted, in graphics, the logo chosen by the Black Peoples’ Convention in 1971: two raised fists actively breaking the chains of oppression.

Figure 6: SASO and BPC logos

Indeed, this motif — which conveys a profound act of agency — is so vital to what Black Consciousness advocates called "modern black culture" that a carved wooden version was affixed to Steve Biko's coffin in an arrangement that mimics the better known poster Dikobe Martins made for his funeral.

Figure 7: Coffin

With this paper, I trace these gestures within posters made to support non-racialist ideals in the 1980s. I aim to make two points: One, Black Consciousness, which refused ethnic divisions, was cast as racially exclusive by the dominant resistance party, the African National Congress, which by 1989 had fully adopted BC's identifying gesture.

Figure 8: ANC Poster 1989

Vitally, until 1971, the ANC called itself "Charterist" in orientation, after which it promoted "non-racialism" as its defining ideology. The new descriptor subtly challenged Black Consciousness by typecasting it as fundamentally racial in orientation when in fact it was about the power of voice, not race. In this way, BC was cast as an outdated outlook, ineffectual for the struggle ahead. I propose that we look at BC anew. What if we regarded Black Consciousness as the essential ingredient to the non-racial stew, the one that gave it substance, made it hearty?

Figure 9: Peffer, Seidman, Wylie Covers

The second point I aim to make regards the historical record of South African poster production. It has likewise stressed the prevalence of non-racialism in creating the "culture of resistance" that dominated this period. In writing about the Medu Art Ensemble, which was founded by BC adherents in 1977, Diana Wylie believes that BC was "abandoned" in favor of non-racialist ideals when the group aligned with the ANC in 1980. John Peffer describes this decision as "a shift away from the racial divisions previously entrenched" within BC. Judy Seidman's study is more nuanced in this regard, but maintains a strong non-racialist bent throughout. I aim to correct this record, or at least enhance our understanding of how political expression is itself so varied that it cannot follow one neat stream. I ask: Must the BC-inclined have given up anything at all? Rather, might it be that white apartheid resisters finally learned to hear and respect black voices, values and visions? Might not these whites have shifted their viewpoint rather than the reverse?

After all, Steve Biko once described this as inevitable. At the SASO-BPC Trial in May 1976, his description of Black Consciousness underscored its tri-continental reach, one that included oppressed peoples globally, the weight of which "inevitably… drives toward what we believe history also drives to: an attainment of a situation where Whites first have to listen. I don't believe that Whites will be deaf all of the time."

Figure 10: Biko quote on listening

The man and his contemporaries also had a lot to say about culture and resistance working in tandem. Indeed, as a movement that operated above ground, without arms, BC emphasized the importance of African history and cultural traditions. In a 1971 paper, Biko described modern black culture as "a culture of defiance, self-assertion and group pride, and solidarity. This is a culture that emanates from a situation of the common experience of oppression." And a 1979 poem called *Time is Running Out* by Mongane Serote tells us that "people (know) that the chain must be broken." To this, "Soweto will answer…. we can now say, while we claim our land and die in the process: our history is a culture of resistance."

Figure 11: Biko and Serote quotes on culture and resistance

Serote was a well-known BC adherent; this facet of his being that did not change when he joined the ANC in 1980.

Figure 12: Mandla Langa, Pethu Serote, Mongane Serote

In 1977, he moved to Gaborone, Botswana and founded the Medu Art Ensemble together with Mandla Langa, Pethu Serote and Tim Williams. Committed to the enterprising agency of Black Consciousness, all of these people had taken part in art organizations in the Johannesburg / Pretoria region in the early to mid 1970s. Medu, like its South African predecessors, was anti-ethnic in approach, community-oriented, and adopted Brazilian Paulo Freier's concept of "each one teach one" wherein black artists lent time and skill as they encouraged new generations to find their own voices and visions. Although Medu accepted white members by 1979, this need not be seen as a renunciation of Black Consciousness. BC was there at the beginning and held sway on Medu artists throughout regardless of their skin color. An awareness of the need for tri-continental liberation is what mattered. In other words, BC was only race-based to those who did not listen; it was meaningful to all who heard its message. Indeed, one of BC's great legacies was the very notion that culture could and should be used to resist domineering positions.

Figure 13: Mnyele

Like Serote, Thami Mnyele was well known for advocating Black Consciousness. He joined Medu in 1978 and quickly became the voice of its Graphic Media Program through interviews published in its quarterly newsletter. His opening remarks at the historic Culture and Resistance Festival celebrated BC's achievements, for he rejoiced that through Medu's projects, "we… have been able to make our voice heard."

Figure 14: Montage of Medu founders and early members

Medu's founders and early members all held Black Consciousness close; indeed, it was the very catalyst for Medu. Although the literature to date stresses Medu's alignment with the ANC, it took the BC-minded to convince ANC leaders that culture could be used to mobilize support for its cause; it could be a weapon of struggle. As a direct result of Black Consciousness, the ANC established a Department of Arts and Culture and, as Elizabeth Gron wrote, "began to fund the arts for the first time in its long history."

Figure 15: Two images from Culture and Resistance Festival

Historians have thus far paid little attention to Medu's origins and tend to "begin" in July 1982, when it hosted the Culture and Resistance Festival for guests committed to tri-continental liberation. The program included numerous cultural events, a symposium and workshops wherein, among other things, many South Africans who attended formulated plans to create silkscreening centers for communities within their own country. Although BC-inflected arguments for cultural activism are present in the documents from this festival, yet non-racialist ideology is still credited with creating a "culture of resistance." Medu, it is said, helped create a "conscientised cultural worker." Variations on "consciousness" are frequent in Medu's newsletters and, indeed, in a great variety of publications about South Africa since the BC movement began. "Conscientization," as Biko put it, "implies a desire to engage people in an emancipatory process." Members of the Medu Art Ensemble, whatever their skin color, committed themselves to this task precisely.

I turn now to a study of BC graphics in posters of the 1980s that are celebrated for promoting non-racialism.

Figure 16: Judy Seidman for Medu, *You Have Struck a Rock*, 1982

Judy Seidman adopted the broken chain motif in 1982 when she made *You Have Struck a Rock* in celebration of Women's Day. The woman figured here knows the strength of her own agency. She has freed herself from bondage and strides forward ready to crush any attempt to dislodge the substantive might of sisterhood. Her thumb extends outward from her fist to signify her allegiance to the ANC. Through such pictorial subtleties we find two principle actors — the ANC and BC — unified in vision and newly invigorated in their common objective: ending apartheid.

The ANC came to dominate resistance discourse and Seidman's poster reflects this edge. The colors she used, which shift gradually from black to yellow to green, are those of the ANC. The phrase she chose comes from an important event organized by the Federation of South African Women, which was linked to the ANC in important ways, but included women who affiliated otherwise, too. The words that span the torso are those sung by women who joined together on August 9, 1956 to protest a change in law that required black women to carry a passbook. Twenty-six thousand in number, the women of this federation presented the prime minister with a petition signed by tens of thousands of people. Ever since, the well-known phrase "You have struck a rock" has symbolized the strength of women in concert.

Figure 17: STP for UDF poster, *Resist Bantustan Violence*, c. 1984

Johannesburg's Screen Training Project printed this poster for the United Democratic Front, which was founded in 1983 to bring together some six hundred organizations varied in approach but commonly committed to apartheid's end. The image used in *Resist Bantustan Violence* recalls the logo of the banned Black Peoples' Convention, but the hands break a rifle rather than a chain. Its BC undercurrent would have also resonated with members of the South African Allied Workers Union who created it at the Screen Training Project. After all, their union was established March 1979 in East London following the split of another BC-inspired body, the Black Allied Workers Union.

The poster was made in support of union members, then twenty thousand strong, who refused to work with the state's puppet leaders in the "Border Region" of Ciskei, the so-called "homeland" created in 1981. The government of Lennox Sebe, self-proclaimed Life President of Ciskei, had little patience for unions since, as he put it, "Ciskei itself is a trade union looking after workers' interests." He thus authorized the use of force to crush the Allied Workers' Union, which, in true BC-style, actively opposed the creation of Bantustans let alone their administration. *Resist Bantustan Violence* urges us to support union members in their peaceful approach to combating the forces that conspired to limit their livelihoods, rights and dignity: South Africa, big business and Sebe.

Figure 18: STP for UDF, *Ten Fighting Years: 1976 – 1986*, 1986

Black Consciousness is recalled again in a 1986 UDF poster that revises history in order to take credit for the student uprisings of 1976, a pivotal historical moment that was driven by Black Consciousness. *Ten Fighting Years: 1976–1986* extends the life of the UDF by seven years; in reality, it had only been "fighting" since 1983. That rhetorical gesture — reaching back into history and sweeping it up alongside the present — suggests that non-racialism fueled the uprisings of June 1976. The BC that energized the students is muted here. From design to print, the poster was fully created by the Screen Training Project, which chose to bathe the decade in UDF colors of red, yellow

and black. Those gathered to honor the heroes of '76 are not students; they lack uniforms and almost invariably appear beyond their teenage years. Indeed, the generation shown here became politically aware in the 1970s when Black Consciousness was at its height. The UDF appealed to this generation by representing it in assembled photographs and by prominently placing an icon of their times — the death of Hector Pieterson — upon the blazing yellow shirt of the poster's dominant figure. The trio casts a shadow, but it is covered, or absorbed by, the UDF logo. In ways both subtle and not, this poster evidences ways in which the UDF used imagery (and explicitly re-wrote its own history) to align its mission with that of Black Consciousness, and overshadowed its legacy in the process.

Figure 19: Pages from Julie Frederikse, *South Africa: A Different Kind of War*, 1986

These pages from Julie Frederikse's book *South Africa: A Different Kind of War* provide another case in which a dominant vision engulfs the less easily seen. This montage illustrates resistance to the state's proposed Tricameral Parliament, which in 1984 would allow populations classified as "Coloured" and "Indian" to elect representatives to office. My interest in this montage begins with the photograph that fills most of the lower right quarter of the spread. Graffiti scrawled upon a wall instructs in large, loud script: "DON'T VOTE! REJECT ARMY! NO TO ETHNICITY!" A young man watches the photographer from the right. Surrounding and overlapping the photograph are images issued by notable non-racialist groups. The UDF is prominent here. Although the person who wrote the graffiti was certainly affiliated with the Azanian Peoples' Organization, in Frederikse's rendition this BC voice is surrounded, and effectively silenced, by the UDF's assertive non-racialism. The words "no to ethnicity," a fundamental BC concept, were repeated in AZAPO's 1984 graffiti campaign that encouraged voters to reject the state's latest attempt to divide its members by race.

Figure 20: AZAPO poster & Graffiti: *Don't Vote, Reject Army, Socialist Azania*, c. 1984

Founded in 1978, the Azanian Peoples' Organization quickly became the best-known supporter of Black Consciousness because it publically claimed this mantel after the state banned nineteen different BC organizations in October 1977. Indeed, today AZAPO still garners the attention of reporters when they seek an "authentic" BC voice. AZAPO readily adopted the hands-breaking-chains motif that the Black Peoples' Convention had first used in 1971; it is readily found on AZAPO posters, newsletters and t-shirts. But the organization issued fewer posters in the 1980s than did the better-funded United Democratic Front and it often used graffiti to convey its message. Images like that at right are comparatively rare, but by noting their common goals — in this case, "Reject Army" was also a directive of the graffiti in Fredriske's photomontage — and the frequent use of "Azania" as substitute for "South Africa," one may identify the writer's hand as that of an AZAPO affiliate.

Figure 21: MDM, *The People Shall Govern*, c. 1988

The United Democratic Front was effectively banned in February 1988. In its place the Mass Democratic Movement took shape with Murphy Morobe, a BC advocate who was also a UDF leader, among its leaders. A poster supporting the MDM explicitly uses BC's best-known motif in service of a Charterist clause from 1955 that effectively "belonged" to the African National Congress by the mid-1980s: "The people shall govern. South Africa belongs to all who live in it." The ANC's traditional salute, curled fingers with projected thumb, centers the organizations listed on the periphery, former UDF affiliates that now embrace the MDM's message. Whether brazen or unwittingly, here the Mass Democractic Movement recorded the transmission of BC ideology through its ranks. Beneath the organization's weighty black acronym, hands white and black work together to break an oppressor's chain. This poster is more than a record of BC iconography adopted by a non-racialist organization in

the late 1980s. It effectively records the degree to which Black Consciousness influenced non-racial alignment in the period and it directly communicates that bond.

Figure 22: State issued propaganda, *What is Our Destiny? With all this confusion!*

Such is the confusion about BC's trajectory in the 1980s that a poster, a state-issued example of "black propaganda," surrounds a portrait drawing of Steve Biko amid layers of logos adopted by varied organizations. Propaganda of this kind is fundamentally false: It misidentifies and misrepresents. The state's central question here— *What is Our Destiny? With All This Confusion!* — amplifies the bewildering space in between. Densely concentrated graphics oppress the eye; their contradictions confuse and tire. The poster aimed to convince viewers that campaigns against apartheid in the 1980s were fractious, ill-suited to govern, and that its participants and parts were fundamentally the same. Their likeness was Biko's own, anchored in an activism construed here as centered on race, thus in all cases destructive to national interest.

Although the aim of this poster differs from my own, I agree with its maker in one sense: Black Consciousness, embodied in the iconic image of its best known proponent, continued to register throughout the 1980s within members of all these organizations. It did not cede ground to non-racialist ideology; rather, BC enabled the very conditions in which people of all color *could* come together to fight the confusing and troublesome ground of race itself.

Figure 23: *Regardless, the Struggle Continues* & Backdrop for C&R festival

As we write the history of struggle against apartheid, I ask that we not turn a deaf ear, nor a blind eye, toward the profound ways in which Black Consciousness continued to register within the lives of thousands well beyond the 1970s. BC did not die in late 1977 when the state suppressed its central organs of operation. BC adherents who embraced non-racialism did not abandon their cause; rather, they found a context on the ground, apart from the rhetoric, in which their voices and visions could be heard.

Notes

1970s BC orgs: Dashiki Poets, Mdali, Mpumalanga Arts Ensemble (image 1979), Malopoets, Bayajula Arts Group, Madi, Allah Poets, and the Creative Youth Association.

Elizabeth Gron, *Exchange and Impact of South African Exiles in Botswana Through the Medu Art Ensemble from 1976 to 1985*, 75. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Botswana. Gron cites an interview with Tim Williams here. Gron's unpublished (and undated) Master's Thesis is exhaustively researched and cites valuable primary and rare secondary sources. In a July 1998 interview, Judy Seidman told me that Medu saw "itself as the ANC cultural wing, prior to the existence of an ANC cultural wing."

In 1979, Nadine Gordimer, gave the keynote address at UCT's "State of the Art" conference. Nearly two thirds of her text credited Black Consciousness with recognizing culture as a site of resistance.

The Screen Training Project had been banned in 1986 and Morice Smithers was detained for several months yet again. But he and others continued to produce protest graphics upon release by working in whatever space was available. Steven Sack recalls posters being made in the hallways of row houses that were occupied by like-minded activists, musicians, artists and lawyers who lived in cooperatives. (Interview with author, August 1998.) Seekings similarly reports, "Political education

and media were nationally based activities.… (T)hese activities had gone semi-underground during the State of Emergency, and stayed there after the Emergency was lifted." (*The UDF*, 189.)

The UDF has been explicitly tied to the Culture and Resistance Festival. Peffer, *Art at the End of Apartheid*, 88-92; Judy Seidman, interview with author, July 1998. Seidman traveled under cover from Gaborone to Cape Town to attend the UDF's launch. She then reported on it through the *Medu Art Ensemble Newsletter* under the name "Linda" (vol. 5, no. 2, 1983).

In his authoritative history of the United Democratic Front (UDF), Jeremy Seekings notes that Steve Biko "proposed some kind of a united front" well before the UDF was launched in 1983. (Jeremy Seekings, *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983–1991*, 30.) He also calls the period between 1977 and 1979 one of "strategic ferment" for the exiled African National Congress (ANC), which "began to reassess their assumption that armed incursions alone would ignite a mass revolutionary movement" (33). In other words, the ANC was learning from Black Consciousness. BC bodies of the 1970s had successfully organized aid for and protest marches by township residents. It had also emphasized culture as an important vehicle for protest politics. These successes are seldom noted in narratives that herald the ANC, its promotion of the Freedom Charter, and its abiding belief in a newly named philosophy, non-racialism, as victors in South Africa's civil war. The historical record, visual and otherwise, suggests that the dominant narrative needs to be revised.

Seekings revealed that the ANC encouraged members in South Africa to seek leadership roles in organizations that were formally aligned with Black Consciousness, but to do so without revealing their Charterist inclinations. In this way, the exiled ANC could both build broad support within South Africa, and bring "a third force" (BC) into line. Thus men like Popo Molefe and Curtis Nkondo, "clandestine" Charterists, became officers in the Azanian Peoples' Organization (AZAPO) and the Azanian Students' Organization (AZASO) in 1978 and 1979. Others also "sought to strengthen anti-apartheid forces whilst building the Charterists presence within them." By 1979, covert operatives followed recommendations of the ANC's newly appointed Politico-Military Strategy Commission. In the commission's words, its agents were to not "shun any organisation" that worked against apartheid, even if "it did not embrace [the ANC's] long-term revolutionary aims or criticized part of [the ANC's] strategy" and despite the likely eventual "parting of ways." Nonetheless, and despite Nkondo's expulsion from AZASO in 1980, Charterists had so thoroughly infiltrated the group that they "gained control" of it one year later and derided BC at AZASO's national conference and other events that it sponsored. By the end of 1981, "Charterists had planted their flag at the head of resistance politics." To see this metaphoric flag through poster graphics is to wonder anew over what became of Black Consciousness in the 1980s.

To be sure, UDF graphics are as varied in character as were the organizations that joined forces behind it. As a front for bodies working to end apartheid, the UDF coordinated the efforts of affiliates more than it dictated direction, so it is not unusual that it organizations with different strategies made use of its services. Although the UDF promoted Charterist aims and was non-racial in character, this could not be said of all UDF affiliates.

The ANC only accepted white members beginning in 1968, by which time Black Consciousness and Black Theology were starting to take root. (Paul Landau, private communication with author of June 2010 wherein he cites an unpublished paper by Clive Glaser). I surmise that at this same time, the ANC replaced "Charterist" (referencing the Freedom Charter of 1955) with "non-racial" to describe its philosophical stance and membership orientation. The term non-racial gained widespread currency in the 1980s. Thus far, I have consulted the following texts in my search for the ANC's first use of the term: Julie Frederikse, *The Unbreakable Thread: Non-Racialism in South Africa* (1990);

Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964, vol. 3: Challenge and Violence, 1953-1964* (1977); Francis Meli, *A History of the ANC: South Africa Belongs to Us* (1988); Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge, A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964, vol. 2: Hope and Challenge, 1935-1952* (1973); South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, vol. 1 (1960-1970)* (2004) and *vol. 2 (1970-1980)* (2004); Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (1983).

Seidman gives 1979 as the year in which Medu opened itself to white members (*Red on Black*, 91). Gron (21) and Wylie (*Art + Revolution*, 123) both identify Medu's "first white members" as Albio Gonzalez (born in Cuba to Catalonians) and Theresa Devant (born in Spain), but given Medu's investment in tricontinental liberation, which included comparative reference to Cuba's own in a 1979 newsletter (Mandla Langa, "Cultural Invasion," vol. 1, no. 4, (1979), 24), one wonders whether the descriptor "white" does justice. After all, at this time Catalonians were on the verge of winning independence from Spain. I suggest that racial descriptors of this kind are too limiting since they fail to capture the more nuanced, common objectives of tricontinental awareness. Gonzalez worked at a Swedish aid mission in Gaborone and Devant, his wife, trained in progressive theater in Barcelona and Sweden. See Wylie, *Art + Revolution*, 120-123.

In a valued biography that emphasizes the politics of non-racialism, Wylie writes that Mnyele's choice reflected a concomitant reversal of BC ideals since its movement was one that Medu members "knew barely anything about" (*Art + Revolution*, 124).

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Murals and National Identity: Issues in Postcolonial Jamaican Art

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Jamaica, first conquered by the Spanish, and then by the British, was controlled by colonial rule for centuries – until independence was granted in 1962. This paper examines Jamaican murals during the first decade after independence. In these murals, various ideas of nationalism, cultural identity, and a rewriting of Jamaican history entered a dialogue with new formal languages that resulted from an increasingly international exposure of the island's artists.

While there are a few remnants of Taìno (the indigenous Jamaican people) wall paintings and carvings, Jamaica's mural tradition is fairly short. Around the time of independence, however, when political leaders understood the significance of art as a tool for nation building, artists were commissioned to create murals on ministry and other public buildings that featured aspects of Jamaican culture and history. At the same time, artists also created murals on their own initiative and without public funding. This paper examines select examples of publically as well as privately commissioned murals.

In order to illustrate the latter, I will look at Kingston's Olympia International Art Centre. In 1974, the patron A.D. Scott invited leading Jamaican artists to paint the exterior and interior walls of what he envisioned to be turned into a home and studio space for artists. Radiating from the large central gallery were twelve self-contained sub-galleries that are now used as apartments.[1]

Most of the artists, who created the murals were members of or associated with the Contemporary Jamaican Artists' Association (CJAA), the first artist group in postcolonial Jamaica that attempted to bring all local artists together. Its three founders, Barrington Watson, Eugene Hyde and Karl Parboosingh had all studied abroad and returned to Jamaica around Independence. There they contributed substantially to a syncretic and transnational modernism. Their Gallery soon became Kingston's leading exhibition space. Shortly after the CJAA's end, their biggest patron A.D. Scott opened the Olympia Art Centre, thereby keeping some of the group's ideas alive.

Scott, who was really an engineer by profession, also had some artistic ambitions. Entering the Olympia premises, one passes by his sculpture *Man Has Many Dimensions*. To the left, on a big lawn, stands his emancipation statue. Before discussing some of the outdoor murals, let's now focus our attention on Barrington Watson's *Our Heritage*. Stretching around the entire top floor of the Centre's octagonal interior, the massive six-paneled mural is a visual account of aspects of Jamaican history, illustrating significant moments in the island's move towards independence. The artist begins his narrative around the doorways with Africanesque masks and grotesque warrior figures. The African presence is strong in Jamaica as approximately 97% of today's population is of partial or total African origin, the descendants of former slaves to the Spanish and the British colonisers. Watson's imagery derives from fantasies about Africa, but also from a research trip he took to Nigeria, Ghana and the Senegal in 1973.

While African traditions were systematically suppressed during slavery, some African elements have been preserved in Jamaican culture. In the next panel, Watson captures, for example, African influences in Revivalism, an Afro-Jamaican religion that includes drumming, singing, dancing and possessions. A white dressed male Revivalism leader holding a staff is in a trance-like state; the larger-than-life faces of two female worshippers with closed eyes are seen in the background. Below,

[1] See Garrick, Neville. "$750,000 art complex to be [?]." *Jamaica Daily News* 15 May 1974.

a semi-nude man is crouching; he could either be another worshipper or representing a former slave. Religion and the belief in supernatural forces, Watson seems to suggest, helped Jamaicans overcome the horrors of slavery. The next area shows three nude women dancing around a fire-like red grimacing figure, probably embodying a Revivalism leader. Here, Watson interjects the ritual scene with his own iconographic interests, namely celebrating the female forms. In the next section, he adds a scene that is not directly related to the historical narrative that this mural provides. In the tradition of a conversation piece, especially popular in 18th century Britain, he includes the image of two market women interacting. Market women have been popular iconographic features of Jamaican genre paintings and Watson utilised a similar motif in his 1980 work *Conversation*.

Drawn to art from an early age, Watson (born 1931) moved to London in 1952 as there was no opportunity for a tertiary level art education in Jamaica at that time. At the Royal College of Art he reportedly studied the techniques of John Constable and portrait painters such as William Hogarth and Sir Joshua Reynolds. After completing the programme, Watson enrolled at the Rijks Academy in Amsterdam and studied Dutch masters. This experience and an extended trip to other European countries were profoundly influential on his understanding of himself as a cosmopolitan artist whose stylistic roots are grounded in his studies of the Old European Masters. Back in Jamaica, he not only became known as a painter of stylistically well executed portraits, but also as a "gentleman artist" who was often seen wearing well-cut suits and smoking a pipe.

Against the background of the nationalist sentiments that dominated Jamaica around independence, Watson expanded the scope of his portrait or genre paintings to that of history painting, regarded as the highest in the hierarchy of genres and especially popular with 18th century academy painters that Watson had studied while in Europe. Watson's canvas paintings capture moments that were essential in Jamaica's move towards independence that Watson believes, was an event that "made a big and dramatic change" in Jamaica's cultural history.[2]

Independence is also the theme of the large central section of his Olympia mural. Immediately across the doorways, Watson placed a large section dedicated to Jamaica's national motto 'Out of Many One People.' Devised after independence, it suggests the unity of the Jamaican people that are comprised of many different ethnic groups. Watson paints - on two panels - a group of men, an Asian, a black, a white and an Indian. These panels embrace another one that depicts a group of women of equally diverse races. All three panels are connected by thick locks of hair. While from the midst of each outer panel a full-figured Adam-esque man emerges from a bright sunlit circle, the four sparsely clad young women with their youthful bodies visible through the sheer can be interpreted as Eve-like mothers of the nation.

More than ten years before the Olympia mural, Watson began his series of history paintings with *Out of Many One People* (c. 1962). The original painting is lost and no reproductions of good quality exist. Some of his preparatory drawings, however, offer clues about the painting's composition. Watson said that "it shows people at a bus stop, waiting to take the bus into the future. There are many people, young and old, middle class and working class."[3] Around 1970 Watson painted a second *Out of Many One People* for the American president Lyndon B. Johnson. This time, Watson located the scene at a school yard, where boys are engaged in a game of marbles. Both paintings speak to the idea of people of different ethnic backgrounds sharing a space.

In the next panel, we see a group of black men storming a building. One is swinging a sword whereby he cuts through the wide opened mouth of a white man's face behind him who is screaming in horror. Below the white face a crown-like semicircle runs parallel the sword; the blood is spilling out

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[2] Watson, Barrington. Interview with the author. 6 April 2005, Orange Park.

[3] Watson, Barrington. Interview with the author. 22 January 2009, Gallery Barrington, Kingston.

of his mouth into the space between the sword and the crown. The next man, painted in red, does not carry a weapon, but is ready to fight with his bare fists. The third has tumbled over. The building's signature staircase is recognisable as the Morant Bay courthouse and the image illustrates the Morant Bay Rebellion.

Today the 1865 rebellion is perceived as one of the most eminent events in Jamaica's history. 27 years after the abolition of slavery, many of the former slaves, now mostly peasants, were still living under very poor circumstances. Enraged by the unfair trial of a black man, the black deacon Paul Bogle led several hundred men and women into the town of Morant Bay. During the riot the courthouse was burnt down, several hundred people were killed, and several hundred arrested and executed – as seen in the next panel that shows a hung man and one in shackles. While the shackles signify the imprisonment of the rebels, they also evoke images of slavery.[4] Those of you who listened to Petrina Dacres' presentation on Kingston's National Heroes Park yesterday, will be familiar with the monument that was erected to honour the rebellion's two leaders, Paul Bogle and George William Gordon.

Ten years before the Olympia mural, Watson had done a canvas painting on *The Morant Bay Rebellion* (1964). In this work, Watson portrays from a bird's-eye view how the rebels storm the courthouse.[5] In his mural, the Morant Bay Rebellion is referenced as a sort of Haitian Revolution, implying that independence was a direct result of the black resistance that was also evident in religion – as illustrated in other panels. Other events that are usually included in Jamaica's nationalist narrative, as laid out primarily in the naming of national heroes, and also as documented by Watson himself in his history series, are omitted. These include the contributions of Sam Sharpe, the leader of Jamaica's biggest slave rebellion, Nanny of the Maroons, as well as Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante, leaders of the peaceful 1930s nationalist movement.

Watson ends the Olympia mural with more panels depicting Africanesque masks and warrior figures, thereby closing the circle of an iconography that suggests the writing of a Jamaican history as a black history, more specifically a black struggle from slavery to independence that was trying to define black heroes and leaders. Evident are formal influences from European history painting and the grand narratives of the Mexican Muralists.

A publically commissioned mural on Kingston's King Street, *The Good Shepherd* (1968) by American artist Seymour Leichman revolves around similar themes: the martyrdom of individuals that leads to a revival of the nation, black leaders, and the importance of Afro-Jamaican religion.

Karl Parboosingh painted a very different mural on the outside wall of an adjacent building to the main Art Centre. The title Our Flag, or Red, Green, Yellow and Black (1974) reveals the original colour scheme that is no longer visible. Due to recent "restoration" efforts, the green has been replaced by blue and the yellow by orange thereby depriving the work of its colour symbolism that reflects Parboosingh's dedication to a Rastafarian theme (red, green and yellow are the colours of the Rasta

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[4] For further discussion of the Morant Bay Rebellion refer, for example, to Brown, Aggrey. *Color, Class, and Politics in Jamaica*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1979; Heuman, Gad. *"The Killing Time": The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica.* London: Macmillan, 1994; Lumsden, Joy. "'A Brave and Loyal People': The Role of the Maroons in the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865." *Working Slavery, Pricing Freedom: Perspectives from the Caribbean, Africa and the African Diaspora*. Ed. Verene A. Shepherd. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

[5] George William Gordon along with Marcus Garvey and Paul Bogle were declared National Heroes in 1964 as part of Seaga's cultural development programme. In 1965 Gordon was celebrated as National Hero through Danny Repole's Monument *To the Right Excellent George William Gordon and the Right Excellent Marcus Garvey* at what is today National Heroes Park and other visual forms such as exhibitions and plays. In October 1965 Edna Manley's monument of Paul Bogle was unveiled in front of the Morant Bay Courthouse.

flag; black is part of the Jamaican flag and therein symbolises the hardship of the black population). While Parboosingh never was a Rasta himself, he explored this religious group in several paintings and identified with their strong revolutionary spirit and their ideas of black consciousness.

This mural as well as sketches and finished canvas paintings reveal the artist's fascination with open forms as well as with grotesque and stylised figures. This rearranging and combination of different parts to depict different creatures and patterns is related to aspects of Amerindian art and so are the emblematic forms. The grimacing faces could be imitations of the fierce expressions of some stylised anthropomorphic Taìno faces (e.g. the duho from the Dominican Republic depicting an exaggerated, grimacing face).[6] The patterns, at the same time, could also be influenced by those on some Taino zemis.

In 1952, after studies in New York and Paris, Parboosingh embarked on a trip to Mexico to study mural technique under José Gutiérrez, where he also met the great muralists Diego Rivera (1886-1957) and David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974).[7] One senses his admiration for these masters, not only for their art, but also for their political involvement and social standing when he said: "Man, those muralists were treated like movie stars. When they walked out in the streets, people would greet them as Maestro! You see, apart from the fact that they were involved in all aspects of art, they had all fought in that b[lood]y revolution."[8]

Interestingly, despite his studies in Mexico and its rich pre-Columbian history, Parboosingh only began to appropriate some formal vocabulary of America's indigenous peoples after developing a friendship with Aubrey Williams, a painter from Guyana based in London. As opposed to many other Caribbean artists who focused on their African roots as inspiration for their work, Williams' search centred on the original inhabitants of the Caribbean and Central America. Having lived for two years with Carib Indians in the interior of Guyana, they inspired in him an abstract or semi-abstract visual language that he also utilised in his outdoor mural at Olympia.

At a time when nationalist principles dominated the art of the island, and cultural policies celebrated self-taught artists as prototypes of a truly indigenous and Afrocentric Jamaican culture, abstraction, considered an international movement, faced opposition due to concerns about its inability to fulfil the "role of art" as an instrument of social change. In this challenging context, Parboosingh who had been influenced by Fauvists like Matisse when studying in Paris experimented with abstract works from as early as 1964. The friendship with Williams, however, multiplied his interest and generated a shift in his formal language. Before, his abstracts were evocative of stained glass windows that he had studied in Paris. After, the lines became more linear and the colour fields cleaner, as seen, for example, in *House of Dread* (1975).

Parboosingh's Wilton Gardens mural (1970), a commission from the Ministry of Housing as part of a rehabilitation project of the low-income community in West Kingston,[9] is maybe the closest iconographically to the Mexican Muralists. Done in acrylic on three large panels of pre-stressed

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[6] Duhos are low ceremonial seats used by caciques (chiefs) and shamans. For a detailed discussion of Taìno art, refer to Alegria, Ricardo and Jose Arrom. *Taìno: Pre-Columbian Art and Culture from the Caribbean.* New York: Monacelli, 1998.
[7] "Parboosingh talks with Christine Craig. Mexico [illegible]." Unknown publication, not dated (clipping in Parboosingh's scrap book, Paris Parboosingh collection).
[8] Ibid.
[9] For reviews of the Wilton Gardens mural see, for example, "Parboosingh's first big outdoor work. Concrete Mural for Wilton Gardens. 'Lovely, very all right…' say admiring workmen." Unknown publication, 27 September 1970. Clipping in Parboosingh's scrap book, Paris Parboosingh collection. See also "Creative Adornment to Public Areas…" by the Features Editor. *Sunday Gleaner* 29 November 1970: 8.

concrete, Parboosingh's first large outdoor mural was painted in a warehouse and then mounted in the Wilton Gardens community park.[10] Two years after Parboosingh completed the mural the community "became a political flashpoint"[11] and the ensuing violence in this urban setting stands in sharp contrast to the nostalgic mural that describes life in a stereotypical Jamaican village.

The Wilton Garden mural's atmosphere is tranquil, picturesque and content, like a rural paradise. References to the Mexican Muralists in terms of the socialist glorification of the workers and farmers can be noted. In this mural, Jamaica is not a modernising country. Rather, it is a place that thrives on the traditional and natural environment, one that is self-reliant and where the people are contented with the abundance of fruits and vegetables, a place where citizens go about their daily business without worry and strife. The pastoral backdrop of this mural represents the non-urban character of Jamaica. Its nationalism is represented in the rural life of the folk who are depicted as the real or authentic Jamaicans.

To conclude, this paper engaged murals as an attempt by Jamaican artists to publically negotiate the postcolonial political and social context. In the nation building process, the search for common roots in a population of very diverse backgrounds, is reflected in a variety of different styles ranging from figurative and narrative to abstract. These include a focus on the African or Black as part of a rewriting of Jamaican history, but also the rural and the Amerindian. However, most murals discussed in this paper also express the tension between the demands of a heightened nationalism after independence and the artists' increasing international exposure that offered new formal opportunities.

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[10] A sketch of the painting is in the Paris Parboosingh collection.

[11] For a discussion of the political landscape of Kingston's inner city communities, see Gray, Obika. *Demeaned but empowered: The Social Power of the Urban Poor in Jamaica*. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2004. 178f.

Decolonizing Art Studies in Ghana and Kenya

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Introduction

This is a comparative study on the teaching of studio art, and the study of art history in Ghana, West Africa, and Kenya, East Africa. The choice of these two countries is coincidental, as in 2006 I started to embark on frequent travels to Nairobi, Kenya, for family reasons. During these trips, I visited museums, art galleries and shops, crafts markets, bookstores and libraries just as I do in Accra. Accra has two major crafts markets, one around the Tetteh Quarshie interchange and the other at the Centre for National Culture. In these two markets traders sell a variety of crafts on small tabletop stands. There is usually a range of subjects and themes that dominate their works. For example, common among the crafts are akuaba dolls, elephants, *oware* game boards, antelopes, men in smock carrying containers of water on a bar across their shoulders, ivory bangles, cast brass works, abstract figures depicting proverbial sayings, earrings, kente cloths, clothing, bracelets and rings with *adinkra* symbols among several others. Among the merchandise is a mixture of works from other African countries. Other places for the sale of art are galleries, which sell paintings, sculpture, metal works and mixed media works.

The crafts markets in Nairobi are organized on specific days of the week in different locations. Some are the car parks of shopping malls such as the Village Market, Yaya Centre, Westgate and downtown Nairobi. The items that may be found include wild life carved in wood and Kisi soapstone, wooden sculptures of the Maasai, masks, assortment of basketry, mats, paintings, kikoi fabrics, clothes, beads and a variety of decorative items of adornment.

I made attempts to buy art books on Kenyan art to improve my acquisitions on African art in my library, particularly from the country I was beginning to visit so often. Unfortunately, I hardly found art books on Kenya in the bookstores. This is the same problem I encounter in Ghana. To obtain any significant book on art, one has to go to Amazon, bookstores and libraries in Europe and the USA, databases hosted outside Africa or online publications for African art books and articles. Particularly worrying is the rarity of intellectual contributions by indigenous trained scholars resident in these places despite this rich art heritage in these two countries. With this difficulty in purchasing art books on Ghana in Accra and on Kenya in Nairobi, I decided to study why Ghanaians are not writing about art and compare it to my observations in Nairobi.

Ghana and Kenya are geographically and culturally different countries, but linked through similar political histories of British colonization and education. However, there were major differences in how schools were established and how art was perceived and taught. This paper therefore investigates the historical antecedents that led to the different strategies for teaching Western art (drawing and painting) in Ghana and Kenya from the colonial period to the present. It further examines some common problems with the discipline of art studies and makes suggestions for the future.

The questions that need answering are: how was the subject of art taught, and what was its relationship with traditional art in the school curriculum? Was art studies part of the course content? Were studio art and art history perceived as interrelated components of a discipline or as separate subjects? Were there any efforts to integrate the study of traditional art and crafts and African art in the art schools or establish separate schools and departments to study this, or were they integrated as one discipline? This paper is about the teaching of western studio art, and its relationship with the study of the art of the two countries under investigation. I preface the paper with the different

approaches to art education, and proceed to discuss the common problems of art scholarship. Additionally, was traditional art understood as interrelated with a people's history and culture, or as separate components? Furthermore, how did the colonial educationists and pioneering art instructors perceive the place of art in education in these countries? Lastly, did the meanings and histories of Ghanaian and Kenyan art; their roles in the socio-politico-religious lives, and accompanying narratives have any place in educating students? If yes, what were the methods used in teaching this? If no what is the way forward for art studies in these countries?

This paper is the result of the challenges posed by teaching art studies and studio art as a single discipline in institutions of learning with art studies or history as an appendage to studio art. The result of this is twofold; students specialise in only studio art as their major degree, and students and faculty are unable to thoroughly investigate and understand what the art of their people are, and what they mean in order to appreciate the full contexts of these works. As a result many academics in these countries often work with foreign models, concepts and theories because of their own inadequacies in the subject, and are quick to quote foreign sources as authentic on their own art and culture. This is because of the neglect of a methodic study of the discipline by indigenous scholars. This unfortunate situation has created a restricted discourse on the subject, and limited circulation of knowledge on African art on the continent.

Art In the Gold Coast (Ghana) Educational Curriculum

The precursor to art teaching in the Gold Coast were the technical courses started in 1842 to teach woodwork, bookbinding, handicraft, and printing.[1] However, it was not until the introduction of the Education Ordinance in 1882 that formal art training, called 'Hand and Eye', started.[2] In 1901, there was a specialist 'Hand and Eye' course at the Government Training Institute in Accra to provide schoolteachers for the subject. Subsequently 'Hand and Eye' became a subject in the school curriculum.[3] By 1918 many of the missionary and government-assisted schools and training colleges including Abetifi Basel Mission Seminary, Cape Coast Government School, Anyako Breman Mission School, and Kumasi Church of England Mission School were teaching and examining students in 'Hand and Eye' and awarding certificates. The Accra Training College and Akropong Scottish Missionary Seminary were also awarding certificates in 'Hand and Eye' by 1918.[4]

When Achimota School was established in 1924, it was based upon a philosophy to combine both western and African knowledge, and blend these values and traditions within an African context with the hope 'To create a Western type of intellectual who would have respect for science, and an aptitude towards systematic thought, and yet remain African. A student who would consciously preserve and develop creatively what was worth in 'tribal life,' custom, rule, and law'.[5] Based on this philosophy, Mr. Stevens was appointed art instructor in 1926. His objective was to completely wean students copying from photographs.[6] Stevens encouraged imaginative composition and creativity and taught few definitive rules about drawing. He encouraged his pupils to use their eyes carefully in observing things around them and translate them onto paper. This approach was based on his deep

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[1] Kwaku Sekoame Kotoku, 1981, Art Education in Ghana Before and After the Coming of the Missionaries, unpublished post-Graduate Diploma in Art Education thesis, Art Education Department, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, 7–8.

[2] Ebenezer Essuman Donkor, 1989, The Development of Easel Painting in Ghana (Pre-Independence to date), unpublished BA (Art) thesis, College of Art, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, 2.

[3] Kotoku, 1981, Art Education in Ghana Before and After the Coming of the Missionaries, 8.

[4] C.S.O.18/1/351, Report on the Education Department for the Year 1918. Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD), Accra. See also C.S.O. 18/1/350, Report on the Education for the year 1917, Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD), Accra.

[5] Kingsley C. Williams, 1962, *Achimota: The Early Years 1924–1948*, Accra, Ikeja: Longmans, 88–89.

[6] *Achimota Review 1927–1937*, 1937, Accra: Achimota Press, 38.

admiration of African art. Stephens also incorporated art history lessons into his teaching and held a series of lectures and seminars on the history of art [7] so the students might broaden their knowledge and situate African art within a global tradition.

As part of this African philosophy, Achimota art instructors advocated that students learn from African art, to enable their eyes to see and their hands express African beauty. Meyerowitz, a trained art teacher and an artist with previous African experience, who started teaching in Achimota in 1937, considered it regrettable if all their efforts were to yield in students appreciating only European art[8] and if the students failed to see the beauty in their own local art. It was believed that through this their expression would be more natural and become more valuable to the student and the country, if they followed the lines of African tradition. The art school organized special courses in traditional genres such as woodcarving in 1937 under the instruction of the chief woodcarver of *Asantehene*, the king of the Asante ethnic group.[9] An Asante master weaver was also invited to teach. As a result of a request to the Oba in Nigeria through the Benin Native Administration, the chief of the brass casters guild was sent to Achimota to teach and demonstrate casting. These traditional masters were expected to give students a firm grounding in traditional art as a basis of learning and it was hoped that the students would then apply Western techniques to develop new styles. At Achimota, art was seen as part of indigenous education. By 1938, Cambridge University authorities were convinced of the quality of Achimota art instruction and accepted it as an examinable subject for the school certificate examination.[10]

In 1952 the Achimota Art Department was transferred to Kumasi to form the nucleus of the Kumasi College of Technology, and became the pioneer in training artists. The art school was divided into five departments: Industrial Art (ceramics, textiles, and metals sections), Design and General Art Studies, Art Education, Painting and Sculpture, and Rural Art and Industry. The Kumasi College of Technology became a university in 1961 and the art school became the College of Art in 1964. The main objective of the College is to provide practical, theoretical, and historical education in art and craft at both degree and diploma levels. The scope of work in the departments cover traditional as well as modern conventional techniques and idioms. While this was going on, some teacher training institutions such as the Presbyterian Training College at Akropong and the Teacher Training College at Winneba (now the University College of Education), taught art to prospective teachers to teach the subject in schools, and for professional practice. Regrettably, art history remained part of the studio courses, as was taught in Achimota, and never expanded or separated into a department or school. It is taught in the Department of Design and General Art Studies at the College of Art as part of the subjects required to pass a studio art course. Art continued to be offered as an examinable subject at the General Certificate of Education Ordinary and Advanced levels until the Government of Ghana reformed basic and secondary education in 1987. It was maintained in the new curriculum for primary and secondary Schools, but art history was placed within a broad discipline called visual arts.

Handwork and Art Instruction in Kenyan Educational Institutions

While the British teachers in Ghana were encouraging Achimota students to learn from Ghanaian traditional art, and invited Ghanaian and Nigerian craftsmen to teach the students crafts, unfortunately a different situation occurred in Kenya. European prejudices towards Kenyans became a powerful tool, which the British scrupulously used in restricting the quality of education they received. Regrettably, their views of Africans as an inferior race were so rife in Kenya, that despite scientific caution to the contrary, they maintained the apparent belief in the substandard intellect of

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[7] *Achimota Review*, 38.

[8] *Achimota Review,* 39.

[9] R. J. Mettle-Nunoo, 1978, Achimota School—Its Contribution to the Arts in Ghana, unpublished BA (Art) thesis, College of Art, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, 65.

[10] Mettle-Nunoo, 1978, Achimota School, 74, 78.

Africans as compared to Europeans. Annie E. Coombes in her book *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Popular Culture and Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*[11], clearly demonstrates British representation of the 'Other' in certain British press before and during colonization. Among some of the prevailing views was the perception of Africans as 'degraded savages'. A review of the autobiography of Charles Muhoro Kareri, originally published as *Christianity in Colonial Kenya: The Life of Charles Muhoro Kareri*, 2003, by W. O. Maloba in the *Journal of African History*,[12] Maloba discusses Kareri's accounts of the period in which he grew up as one of 'Colonial imposition, missionary confrontation with African converts over cultural matters…'[13] Interestingly the works seized from the British punitive expedition to Benin City in February 1897, and distributed among certain prominent British museums including the British Museum, London, and the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, started an intellectual debate in the UK among ethnographers and anthropologists if these could be considered art or not, thus contributing to the debate and development of African art studies. In fact one of the publications Coombes[14] discusses is Read and Dalton's work in 1898, who by then went as far as to compare the mastery and technical sophistication of Benin bronze technique of *cire perdue* to some of the best works of the Italian Renaissance. While some of these European comments referred directly to the people of Benin City, other groups of people such as the Asante of Ghana also have some of the greatest artistic traditions comparable to any in the world. However, the British in Kenya thought otherwise about Kenyan traditional art.

Lamentably, British scientists carried out supposedly racially based scientific experiments, and published articles including Richard Oliver's 'The Comparison of the Abilities of Races with Special Reference to East Africa' and Dr. Vint's post-mortem examinations of African brains in Nairobi, published as 'A Comparison of the Abilities of Races,' all in the *East African Medical Journal*, 1932.[15] Both suggested the lower educable capacity of the African and the superiority of the European brain, although Vint's final note admits that 'A certain percentage of East African natives equal or excel the average European in cerebral and mental development'.

Based on such warped views, a segregated educational system was established. [16] Despite protests from some European Education Officers, the colonial government insisted on teaching Kenyan pupils craft because art was of no value to them. In 1934, the principal of the Methodist Missionary Society in Meru criticized the 'Revision of Syllabus for African Primary Schools', saying, 'He fails to see why drawing should not be introduced into the school syllabus'. He suggests strongly a link between rock

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[11] Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Popular Culture and Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994, 11.
[12] W. O. Maloba, review of 'Christianity in Colonial Kenya: The Life of Charles Muhoro Kareri' by Charles Muhoro Kareri, Derek R. Peterson, Joseph Karuki Muriihti, *The Journal of African History*, 45: 2, 2004.
[13] W. O. Maloba, review of 'Christianity in Colonial Kenya: The Life of Charles Muhoro Kareri by Charles Muhoro Kareri, *The Journal of African History*.
[14] Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 1994: 47.
[15] Quoted in Rosalind W. Mutua, *Development of Education in Kenya: Some Administrative Aspects 1846–1963*, Kampala: East African Literature Bureau, 1975, 4.
[16] Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service, Nairobi. Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1932. An Ordinance to Make Provision for Education throughout the Colony and Protectorate, 11th February 1931. Ordinance enacted during the year 1931, vol. X (new Series), Nairobi: Government Printer, 37–55. Some of these early segregated schools and their dates of establishment are: School at Rabai near Mombassa, 1846; Friends School, Kaimosi, now Kaimosi Friends Primary School, 1903; Maseno School, 1906; Government Indian School or The Duke of Gloucester School, now Jamhuri High School, 1906; Tumutumu Mission School, now Tumutumu Girls' High School, 1908; European Girls' School, now Kenya High School, 1908; Prince of Wales School, now Nairobi School, 1910; Thogoto School, now Thogoto Teachers' Training College, 1910; Kaimosi Girls High School, 1920; Kaimosi Boys High School, 1921; Mang'u High School, 1925; Alliance School, now Alliance High School, 1926; St. Mary's School, Yala, 1927; and Highlands High School, now Moi Girls' High School – Eldoret, 1928.

paintings and decoration, saying drawing is as old as history. He suggested that, 'By the same argument it would be necessary to confine oneself to native tunes in the development of singing'. The argument here was that if traditional music, singing, and dancing were discouraged, then it was only logical to also discourage traditional art forms in schools. [17]

The aim of the Art and Handwork syllabus was to provide opportunities for self-expression through creativity, develop manipulative skills and constructive ability, and an appreciation of art and craft. It was also to train Kenyans in visual and muscular control and coordination, which formed part of the English-medium techniques. Crafts were seen as necessary for providing a form of muscular preparation, which was not easily acquired later if neglected during childhood. This training in the long run was to produce skills suitable for employment in the colonial service. Despite this British strategy of not teaching art, some Kenyans were able to receive further education in art in Uganda, where the British officials had allowed its teaching. Contrary to the situation in Kenya the British teachers in Uganda were not restricted in teaching art. Mary Fisher was one of the pioneering teachers who started teaching art at Gayaza Girls High School in 1935. Even before then some art classes were already being conducted in missionary schools around 1914 in the Ugandan Bush Schools.[18] However, it was in Kampala that Margaret Trowell, a British teacher and painter, was allowed to set up the Makerere College of Arts in 1936 (now Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts). This was the first of four important art schools that were later established in English speaking East and Central Africa.

Some of the Kenyans, trained at the Fine Art School at Makerere University, returned to Kenya to teach. They include Gregory Maloba (b. 1922 – d. 2007), trained at the Makerere University, who returned to head the Department of Design at the University of Nairobi, from 1966–1975, now The School of the Arts and Design (StAD). Maloba's instincts were to build upon artisanal practices that existed, and introduce new techniques to develop art. By 1967 a three-year Bachelor of Arts in Design was being offered. Others such as Louis Mwaniki (1934–2010), Elimo Njau (b. 1932), and Francis Msangi (1937–2003), all returned to contribute towards the development of art.

In 1967 a Department of Fine Art was established at the Kenyatta College, now Kenyatta University. From 1967 to 1975 admission of students into the three-year Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art and Bachelor of Arts in Design was by portfolio because there were no Kenyan schools offering art at the time. During 1973–1974, the Fine Art Section was moved to Kenyatta University, while the design degree course at University of Nairobi concentrated on preparing students for professional careers in design, graphics, textiles, and exhibition design. The Fine Art Department offers degree courses in fine art from Diploma to Doctor of Philosophy. The courses include drawing, art and design appreciation, painting, fabric design, printmaking, graphic design, weaving, sculpture, ceramics, and multimedia crafts. These were attempts to define the emerging role of the artist but with no specific historical or theoretical content.

The place of art in the Kenyan educational curriculum has changed from one era to the other. During the colonial period and until after independence, crafts was offered in primary schools. Towards the end of colonial rule, elite Kenyan children admitted into European schools were introduced to art. Later, in the Cambridge General Certificate of Education Ordinary and Advanced Level curriculum, art

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[17] AV/1/118, Sheet number 217, Revision of Syllabuses, African Schools 1933-34, Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service, Nairobi.

[18] A. Kakande, Contemporary Art in Uganda: A Nexus between Art and Politics, unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2008, 49.

was taught until the 8-4-4[19] educational reforms were introduced in 1985, when art was discontinued in primary schools but maintained in the secondary school curriculum.

Whereas the new education syllabus for Ghanaian secondary schools has aspects of art history in the visual art course, the Kenyans stopped it in the 8-4-4 curriculum. Art history as a discipline is least developed in the secondary and tertiary institutions in these two countries, despite its initial introduction as part of art instruction in Achimota and to students trained at Makerere University. The subject continues to be subsumed into general knowledge of art as taught in the 1920s in Achimota and 1930s in Makerere. In both countries no art history departments have been set up that allow students to interrogate the art of their people.

The Disconnect Between Studio Art and Art Studies

There are two different colonial attitudes and approaches to art that emerged. The British teachers in Achimota deliberately guided students to incorporate African art forms and ideas into their works. This interest led to specialists in woodcarving and brass casting to be invited to demonstrate and teach the students. Eventually Achimota set up a crafts department alongside art[20]. Various activities to increase students' interest in art were organized including exhibitions; the establishment of a museum and visits to the museum.

In Kenya, on the other hand, pupils were not taught art except in the European schools. It is rather in Uganda that the early Kenyan artists were trained. However, a common problem emerges from both educational systems. It is the combination of studio art and art historical studies. Art studies has regrettably been taught in the same manner as Stephens incorporated Assyrian, Egyptian, and Greek sculptures, early European, renaissance, modern, and oriental painting into his art lessons.[21] African art was not part of the topics for discussion in the 1920s. When Margaret Trowell retired from the Fine Art School at Makerere University, Cecil Todd took over. He did not believe indigenous culture had an important role to play in the development of a modern African art school. Todd placed emphasis rather on a detailed consideration of technique and art history as an academic discipline. Since he did not believe Ugandan traditional culture had any important role to play, it is doubtful if he taught African art which in itself was not developed as a discipline at the time. The discipline was about emerging in Europe and America in the mid-twentieth century and had yet to develop its content, scope and methods. Therefore, many of the artists were painters, sculptors and designers who continued to replicate the course structure and methods of their training as they set up art schools.

Those who teach art history are sculptors, graphic designers, textile designers, painters and other artists. This raises important questions of scholarship and the methodological approach to the discipline. Often these lecturers have relied on their readings from books published by foreign scholars. These sources are sometimes quoted extensively including the Eurocentric perspectives thus ignoring the views of indigenous artists and specialists, and without any input from the lecturers' fieldwork or publications. This is because the primary focus of their work has been on their own original field of discipline rather than on art history. Very few indigenous scholars from these countries have written about their art, and therefore such sources are difficult to come by. Foreign scholars have dominated the field with books, articles in journals; organizing major, well-researched exhibitions and international conferences and symposia. Thus, the discourse is foreign led. Governments have given priority to what they consider urgent national requirement, and offered few scholarships to art historians to be trained. The lack of a critical mass of students, unavailability

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[19] The educational system was restructured to eight years of primary education, four years of secondary school education and four years university education

[20] *Achimota Review 1927–1937* 1937: 65–67.

[21] *Achimota Review 1927–1937* 1937: 38.

of art history on the menu of courses, difficulties in accessing travel grants, and challenges in subscription to current literature are some of the problems. These difficulties do not attract interested scholars to pursue the discipline nor conduct research and publish.

The structure of studio art and art studies in both educational systems are intertwined, and not separated into different disciplines. The assumption here has been the misleading perception that only studio art students can study art history. University administrators are yet to consider that other disciplines and interests can study art history by bringing different perspectives on African art to enrich the discipline and generate a multi-disciplinary discourse.

In spite of inroads some artists from Ghana and Kenya have made on the international art scene, there is an unfortunate dearth of critical studies, philosophical texts, discourses, and publications on Ghanaian and Kenyan art history, aesthetics, and criticism by resident scholars. Thus, art scholarship remains minimal. Several academics from Kenya's universities are of the view that art in Kenya is more commercial with little academic theoretical input. A similar situation prevails in Ghana, where apart from a few Ghanaian scholars, including A. A. Y. Kyerematen[22], Fosu Kojo[23], Nii Quarcoopome[24], Anthony Kwame Appiah[25], Labi[26] and Atta Kwami[27], the field is dominated by European and American authors such as Robert S. Rattray[28], Timothy Garrard[29], Herbert M. Cole and Doran H. Ross[30], Ray

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[22] A. A. Y. Kyerematen, 1964, *Panoply of Ghana: Ornamental Art in Ghanaian Tradition and Culture.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger.

[23] Kojo Fosu, 1986, *20th Century Art of Africa*, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation.

________ , (2004). Contemporary Art in Ghana. In *Transition: Samtidskunst Fra Ghana*, ed. Ulandssekretaritaat LO/Ft Council. Copenhagen, Denmark: Ulandssekretariatet, 83–97.

_________, 2009, *Pioneers of Contemporary Ghanaian Art*. Exhibition catalogue, Accra: Type Company.

_________,2009, *Homecoming, Ghanaian Expatriate Artists Exhibition*, November 5, 2009, Accra: Artists Alliance Gallery.

[24] Nii O. Quarcoopome, 1993, Agbada: Dangme Art and the Politics of Secrecy. *Secrecy African Art that Conceals and Reveals*, New York: The Museum of African Art, 113 -120.

_________, 2009, Through African Eyes: The European in African Art, 1500 to Present, Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, Dertroit Institute of Arts, Detroit

[25] Anthony Kwame Appiah, 1993, Art and Secrecy, *Secrecy African art that Conceals and Reveals*, The Museum of African Art: New York, 14 – 16.

________ ,1996, Why Africa? Why Art? *Africa: In The Art of the Continent*, Royal Academy of Arts, London: Prestel Verlag, Munich.

[26] K. A Labi, Alex B. Asiedu, and B. Osei-Tutu, An Asanteman–World Bank Heritage Development Initiative in Promoting Partnership with Ghanaian Traditional Leaders, *Africa Today* 55, 4, 3-26.

_________ , 'Reading the Intangible Heritage in Tangible Akan art'. Vol.04 2009 *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*. Pp. 42-57.

________ ,'The "Commercial" and "Museum" Life of Some Akan Brass Works'. *Ghana Studies* v.11 (2008): Pp. 175–216.

__________, 'Towards a Museum Culture in Ghana: Processes and Challenges' *In* Museum Anthropology. Vol. 31 No. 2, Fall 2008. Pp. 105 – 121.

Labi, K. A. with Boachie-Ansah, J. 2008 *KUDUO*: The Akan Art of Brass Casting. Institute of African Studies: Legon.

[27] Atta Kwami, "Writings Between a Patch of England, the Sahel and Forests of West Africa," in *Metronome*, 1, 1996, London, 38-39.

_________, "Ghanaian Art in a Time of Change," L'art du Ghana à l'epoque des Mauvances Contemporaines, in *Ghana hier et aujourd'hui* (Ghana Yesterday and Today), 2003, Musee Dapper, Paris, 285-319.

[28] Robert S. Rattray, 1927, *Religion and Art in Ashanti,* London: Oxford University Press.

[29] Timothy F. Garrard, 1972a, Studies in Akan Goldweights: (I) The Origin of the Gold Weight System, *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 13, 1, 1-20.

______ , 1972b, Studies in Akan Goldweights: (II) The Weight Standards. *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 13, 2, 149-162.

Silverman[31], Malcolm McLeod[32] and Tom Phillips[33], just to mention these few. Only a few art historians live and practice in their country. In the case of Kenya, I am yet to identify any active art historian making any significant contribution locally or internationally. Euro-American scholars have dominated Kenyan art studies including the works of Gerhard Lindblom[34], Sydney Littlefield Kasfir[35], Stafford Kay[36] Jean Lucas Brown,[37] Labelle Prussin,[38] Alan Donavan,[39] Usam Ghaidan[40], Irene Blanc-Shapira[41], Dora Lambrecht[42] and Prita Meier[43].

Judy Ogana, director of the Kuona Trust, an institution that supports and promotes art and artists in Nairobi, in 2003 published an exhibition catalogue in response to this lack of East Africans writing on art. The catalogue, *Thelathini: 30 Faces of Contemporary Art in Kenya,*[44] discusses the invisibility of texts by Kenyans on the bookshelves. Ogana's view of no significant documentation of the country's vibrant art scene, and no publications to project the voices of artists is shared by Lydia Muthuma,[45] who argues that there is inadequate literature on the history of contemporary art in Kenya. Muthuma in her thesis suggests that contemporary art in Kenya is a commercial activity without public intellectual input. Nine years after Ogana's publication, she admits some progress has been made though little. She recalls names such as Peterson Kamwathi, Kimani Hjogu, Alvin Wahora and the ceramic artist Magdalene Odundo as some of the emerging scholars. I must, however, commend the weekly articles of Frank Whalley, a Kenyan art columnist in the *East African*, a weekly newspaper published in Nairobi, who discuss topical art concerns in the city and the country. It appears from the discussions that the meanings and histories of Ghanaian and Kenyan art, their roles in the socio-politico-religious lives, contexts and accompanying narratives do not seem at the moment to have any place in educating students.

There have been suggestions from some African politicians and scholars, such as Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Senghor and Rowland Abiodun, to improve the study of African art, its methodologies and terminologies to include the voices and narratives of knowledgeable Africans, as well as advocacy for more African involvement, and probably lead in the research on African art, and project the views

______ , 1973a, Studies in Akan Goldweights: (III) The Weight Names. *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 14, no.1: 1-16.

______, 1973b, Studies in Akan Goldweights: (IV) The Dating of Akan Goldweights. *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 14, 2, 149-168.

______ , 1980a, *Akan Weights and the Gold Trade*. London and New York: Longman.

30 Herbert M. Cole, and Doran H. Ross, 1977, The Arts of Ghana, Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles.

31 R. A. Silverman, 1983, Akan Kuduo: Form and Function, *Akan Transformations: Problems in Ghanaian Art History*, ed. Ross, D. H. and Garrard, T.F., 10-29. Los Angeles: UCLA.

32 Malcolm D. McLeod, 1971, Goldweights of Asante, *African Arts* 5, 1: 8-15.

33 Tom Phillips, 2010, *African Goldweights: Miniature Sculptures from Ghana 1400-1900*, London: Edition Hansjörg Mayer.

34 Gerhard Lindblom, *The Akamba in British East Africa*, Upsala: Appelbergs Boktryckeri Akteibolog, 1920.

35 Sydney Littlefield Kasfir, *African Art and the Colonial Encounter: Inventing a Global Commodity (African Expressive Cultures*), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.

36 Stafford Kay, 'Peter Nzuki: Calabash Carver of Kenya', *African Arts*, 12: 1, 1978, 40-41.

37 Jean Lucas Brown, 'Miji Kenda Grave and Memorial Sculptures', *African Arts*, 13: 4, 1980, 36-39.

38 Labelle Prussin, 'Gabra Containers', *African Arts*, 20: 2, 1987, 36-45.

39 Alan Donavan, 'Turkana Functional Art', *African Arts*, 21, 3, 1988, 44-46.

40 Usam Ghaidan, 'Swahili Plasterwork', *African Arts*, 6, 2, 1973, 46 – 49.

41 Irene Blanc-Shapira, 'Kenyan Children's Art Contest', *African Arts*, 7, 1, 1973, 70.

42 Dora Lambrecht, 'New Basketry in Kenya', *African Arts*, 15, 1, 1981, 63-66.

43 Prita Meier, 'Objects on the Edge: Swahili Coast Objects of Display', *African Arts*, 42, 4, 2009, 24-37.

44 Judy Ogana, 2003, *Thelathini: 30 Faces of Contemporary Art in Kenya*. Nairobi: The Kuona Trust.

45 Lydia W. Muthuma, 2001, The Paintings of Kenyatta University 1972–1999. Unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of Fine Arts, Kenyatta University, 44.

and values of the African people in an Afrocentric approach. A number of other views have also been expressed for the direction in which the discipline should proceed — all advocating changes in method.

In a speech read by Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, at the opening of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, in 1963, titled 'African Genius',[46] he expressed his opinion on how to conduct research into Africa's past in order to develop models for scholars to pursue a new and aggressive Afrocentric approach to artistic inquiry.[47] He said:

> … one essential function of this Institute must surely be to study the history, culture and institutions, languages and arts of Ghana and of Africa in new African centred ways – in entire freedom from the propositions and pre-suppositions of the colonial epoch, and from the distortions of those Professors and Lecturers who continue to make European studies of Africa the basis of this new assessment … the second guiding principle … is the urgent need to search for, edit, publish, and make available sources of all kinds.[48]

According to Nkrumah, the arts, including art scholarship, reflect changes in social attitude, and artists should be able to reinterpret Africa's history and culture to reflect these developments. He advocated for the projection of African values and restoration of Ghanaian self-confidence in order for Ghanaians to develop their own personalities and become pioneers in creativity in their development. By doing this, scholars would be resurrecting, restoring, and reinstituting African perspectives, giving new interpretations, reviving Africa's past genius and cultural values, and presenting art in a new African-centered scholarship. In pursuing this vision of Nkrumah, the Institute of African Studies introduced African art to its graduate students for the first time in the country's educational curricula not related to or tied to studio art and embarked on a collection of Ghanaian and African art works, and established a teaching museum. African art has since been a course at the Institute, and now being taught as an elective course to second year undergraduate students of the University of Ghana.

There have been other suggestions to address the problem of teaching African art and the dissemination of information on it. One of such suggestions was by the Acting Head of the English Department, University of Nairobi, titled 'On the Abolition of the English Department'; a paper presented to the Arts Faculty, of the University at the 42nd meeting of the Arts Faculty Board on the 20th of September, 1968 published in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 2010.[49] In this paper the Acting Head recommends 'An introductory course on African art—sculpture, painting—could be offered in co-operation with the Department of Design and Architecture'.[50]

While there are new developments beginning to taking place in Ghana, Nigeria, La Cote d'Ivoire and in other places, Kenyan art studies is yet to adapt or develop the study of art. The study of art in Kenya ignores the role and voices of traditional critics, users and custodians, traditional and

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[46] Kwame Nkrumah, 1979, Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, October 25, 1963. Accra: Afram Publications.

[47] Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, 2005, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought and Policies: An African-Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution*. New York: Routledge, 65.

[48] Kwame Nkrumah, 1979, Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, October 25, 1963. Accra: Afram Publications.

[49] Henry Owuor-Anyumba, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Taban Lo Liyong, 'On the Abolition of the English Department', *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism,* Vincent B. Leitch, general Editor, New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010, 1995 – 2000.

[50] Owuor-Anyumba, Ngugi, Liyong, *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism,* 1999.

contemporary urban artists and craftsmen and craftswomen, who have the capacity to explain their works of art. Abiodun's two essays 'The Future of African Art Studies: An African Perspective', 1990[51] and 'African aesthetics', 2001[52], are illuminating on the importance of African scholars leading the way including new methods of connecting African art through 'sight' and 'sound' and also to include the element of the 'soul'. Credibility will have to be given to oral sources, and language will become critical in art studies in breaking new grounds in methodology, artistic terminology and theoretical framework.[53] In order to do this in Kenya and Ghana, studio art has to be decoupled from art history to give students and scholars the focus on research and teaching the subject.

Conclusion

British colonial intervention marked a threshold in the development of the teaching of modern western studio art and art history. The common feature in both educational systems is that they focused on practical art with some aspects of history. Today the universities do not have art history departments or teach art history, thus creating a vacuum between studio art and its theoretical study. Art history has thus remained part of studio art as it was introduced during the colonial period. Hence there is an imbalance between artistic production and publication. Unfortunately as a result of this, non-Ghanaians, or Kenyans resident outside these places dominate important researches done in these countries and the findings published outside the continent. Publishing houses with interest in art are yet to emerge because there is inadequate local critical mass to encourage this.

There are rarely symposia, conferences, and workshops dedicated to intellectual discussion on the discipline. However, there are some developments beginning to occur such as the colloquium on art, which I was grateful to participate in. There is no association to foster intellectual exchanges and encourage the study of art history. Interests have rather been on the display of African art through several major international exhibitions on the continent and abroad.

After half a century of postcolonial art education, the discipline still awaits the separation of art studies, establishment of departments, training of professionals and establishment of appropriate professional institutions and bodies to initiate relevant discussions that characterize global trends. This will greatly improve and expand the current state of art discourse in Ghana and Kenya. The lack of such professional organization places the discipline at a crippling disadvantage. It is hoped that with the introduction of art history courses into the curriculum of the University of Ghana an Art History Department will eventually be established. It is also hoped that Kenya's policy makers Ghanaian university administrators will find the need to decouple and expand the study of art beyond the scope that was handed over to them by their former colonial masters.

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[51] Roland Abiodun, 'The Future of African Art Studies: An African Perspective', *African Art Studies: The State of The Discipline*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990.
[52] Abiodun, 'African Aesthetics', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 35, No. 4, Winter, 2001.
[53] Abiodun, 'The Future of African Art Studies: An African Perspective', 1990, 64, See also Rowland Abiodun, 'African Aesthetics', Journal of Aesthetic Education, vol. 35, No. 4, Winter, 2001, 15-23.

The Diaspora and Transnationalism in our Midst: Contextualising the Work of Recent Migrant Artists in South Africa

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Most South African art retains a diasporic aspect, the product of various migrations in the form of pre- and post-colonial settlement, internal displacement and more recently post-democracy immigration.[1] Each community brought with it specific creative traditions and world views born of its cultural origins, later to be adapted and applied to local contexts and experience. The impact of diasporic groups on the receiving countries is being given increasing attention in relation to South African art and design and the traditions inculcated here. More recently particular attention is being focused on the impact of a 20th century pre- and post-war diaspora of immigrants that imported and engendered an indigenous modernity reflected in a range of creative expressions. Many questions surround their rapid embrace as South African artists, designers and entrepreneurs and the ways in which their European worldview, interpretations of Modernism and mediation of Africa is reflected in their work.

On the one hand this research was prompted by my own questions regarding the positioning of Azaria Mbatha, a South African artist trained in part at Rorke's Drift and in Sweden, who left his home in Zululand in the late 1960s for self-imposed exile in Sweden where he has lived for over forty years. His work has a select following in South Africa and Europe (mostly in Germany and the Nordic countries). In Sweden he is perceived to be a foreign artist or at best a 'new Swede', while in South Africa he is still regarded as a local artist. Recently criticised in some quarters for perpetuating images located predominantly in his home country, his nostalgic recollections of South Africa largely supplant reference to his life and experience in Sweden. As an African diasporic artist in Sweden, his content is in part expected to reference Africa and difference, while his stylistic and thematic emphasis has also resulted in his being regarded as an outsider in relation to mainstream Swedish art. Few have identified[2] that his referencing of South Africa is however part of a far more profound discourse that is attached to diaspora and Zulu traditionalism in which home functions as a pivotal frame of reference associated with his self-definition. Regardless of his years of physical absence, South Africa, and Zululand in particular, remain the realms of his metaphysical and ancestral home, both indelibly marking his worldview and his psychic and spiritual being.

Other than that reflected in statistical and sociological data gathered in the recipient communities, the expression and impact of recent diasporic[3] communities in South Africa is almost imperceptible

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[1] In almost every region of South Africa the presence of creative migrants have been identified: the Malawian tailors of the mid 20th century; the largely tourist craft producers such as the Congolese 'katanga' painters in the 1960s, the Zimbabwean wire and stone artists that gravitated to South Africa since the late 1970s; the Malawian, Kenyan, Nigerian, Congolese and Tanzanian based carvers and weavers who continue to flood the South African market with their wares. More recently several 'fine artists' have variously been absorbed into the art market, having variously mediated their presence in number of ways.

[2] A forthcoming text by Allan Botha, the editor of Mbatha's autobiography ' In Loving Memory of the Century', engages, among others, with the persistence of Mbatha's referencing of Africa and the extent to which his initial home remains central to his self-identity, Zuluness and ancestral belonging.

[3] The departure from the culturally specific definition of diaspora as 'the dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel or Jews living outside Israel' has since been applied to many forms of human migration across the globe, in turn engendering a number of critical methodologies located primarily in the social sciences and history. Diasporic theory currently examines the motivations for and effects of migration to other geographic and culturally

and remains largely undocumented. Diasporic studies in the West have for some time largely been applied by art historians to the migration of artists and intellectuals from elsewhere to the West, examining the nature of their relocation and the impact this has had on their work, persons and the intercultural mediation that has ensued. But what of the position of diasporic artists who have elected to migrate *to* South Africa? In what follows I examine how their work is affected by migration and displacement, how their distinctiveness is expressed, if at all, and how their work has been received and mediated. A significant testimony of this diaspora is located in the work of artists who gravitated to South Africa, especially since the mid 1990s, this text centring on a select body of work considered from various theoretical positions.[4] All of the artists focused on have for at least some time resided and worked in Pietermaritzburg where they have been variously attached to the Centre for Visual Arts of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Petros Gehebriwot is Eritrean, Salim Hussein is Sudanese, Vulindlela Nyoni is Zimbabwean, while Kristin Hua Yang is from Hunan province in mainland China.

Essentially the migrant/diasporic artist can be regarded as transnational,[5] part of a social movement that arises from the dissolution of geographical and national boundaries resulting in a greater awareness and connection (even if superficial) between peoples of other cultures and places.[6] In part this can be further qualified by the varying reasons for diasporic relocation: some are displaced by conflict and ideological estrangement (Salim and Gehebriwot), others are attracted by the desire for further education (Nyoni and Hua Yang), and most are desirous of what they perceive as a better life and well being. Artists are also attracted by the prospect of new 'freedoms' such as access to critical discourse, freedom of expression and freedom to experiment, in the process becoming more aware of how art functions and is received in other countries. Many remain migrants, regarding themselves as mere sojourners, temporary residents, acquiring a visual language that is partly accessible, at times intentionally hermetic, to a diverse national and international audience while in transit in South Africa.[7]

In the last two decades most 'foreign' artists working and exhibiting in South Africa have been embraced as part of 'contemporary' art in the region, a collective appellation that benefits them in terms of exhibitions and public exposure. However this inclusion largely ignores or suppresses any distinctive features in their work that might allude to their diasporic origins and practice, and can be said to in effect largely de-historicize their work.[8] Their accessibility to a South African audience has in part resulted from their embrace of representational narrative and local thematic preferences, especially when they were trained here or exposed to current practice and conventions. But there is also the perception that their work is intrinsically different, even if imperceptibly so, accessible yet inaccessible, especially when their imagery and metaphoric use is derived from their country of origin. In a South African context they however remain largely marginalised, minority voices not collected by art galleries or museums and having attracted only a select audience and collectors. Yet

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distinctive areas, ensuing acculturation or resistance to it and other adaptations that have ensued in the migrant communities.

[4] Of the four artists I consider that are still currently working in South Africa, two arrived here as established artists (Hua Yang and Hussein) while the other two were mainly trained at the Centre for Visual Arts (Nyoni and Gehebriwot).

[5] Further diasporic artists often have multiple interconnections across national and international borders, as a result of which their identities are shaped in relationship to more than one recipient nation/state.

[6] Globalisation is increasingly regarded as both fictional (an ideological construct) and flawed.

[7] One of the artists, Petros Gehebriwot, has since left the country and has settled in America. He continues to return to South Africa from time to time, however, having married and fathered a child while in South Africa.

[8] Artists from elsewhere in Africa have been welcomed in South Africa, especially after the two Johannesburg based art biennales in the late 20th century, their reception further supported by the presence of academics such as Achille Mbembe and others who address issues of the construction of post democratic urban experience and society (Mercer, 2008:7).

they have begun to exert considerable influence on their peers (in this instance in KwaZulu-Natal), and while they may be mere sojourners in some instances, their passage through the region warrants documentation and consideration if we are to complete the archive of diasporic creative encounter in South Africa.

In examining the motivations for and effects of migration by peoples to other geographic and/or culturally distinctive areas, diasporic theory examines ensuing acculturation or resistance to it, the ways in which peoples conceal and reveal their ideological or cultural affinity and their engagement with the power and centrality of the recipient nation. One of the results of diasporic migration is that individuals engage in a process of reflexivity that both engages with yet distances them from both the recipient and original culture of belonging. Kobena Mercer (2008) notes that this is typically diasporic, as objects, identity and ideas are thrown into flux, to be referenced and to re-emerge when relevant.[9] As a result diasporic encounter can be expressed in a form of self realisation and subjectivity that represents the emergence of a possible a-cultural, or more problematically, a perceived and constructed 'global' individuation that defies classification and determinism.

A defining feature of late 19th century modernity and Modernism, cross-cultural encounter represented just one of the many sources for cultural and social destabilisation, resulting in a reconfiguring of the artist's relationship to the world and more specifically her/his own culture and origins. Comparing the ensuing rupture to that of Gauguin whose gaze at the Other marked an entanglement that decentred and enriched his subjectivity, Mercer notes that significantly the 'critical and creative role of estrangement and displacement' in Modernism resulted in heightened observational and self-reflexive dimensions. [10]At the same time diaspora attaches to post-modernity 'with its decentered and deterritorialized subject'.[11] To Said this attachment, allied to post colonialism and a context of *anomie* and alienation (yet with the entire world as a site of habitation and creativity), affirms that this condition makes possible a heightened 'originality of vision'.[12] The resulting 'contrapuntal transient anonymity' enables particular forms of creativity (ibid) and subjectivity 'hitherto suppressed by the monologic tendencies of cultural nationalism'.[13]

Given these contentions the relationship between the artist, culture, nation and home is often complex, as the myth of homeland (and possible return to origins) is modified by the experience of migration, relocation and travel.[14] Thus while most diasporic artists find it significant to accept their otherness as vital to their self-understanding, the diasporic condition is marked by hybridity and contingent diversity, generating multiple perspectives and a double or multiple consciousness. This consciousness reveals a collision of culture and history resulting in a diasporic dialogism which occurs when incongruous voices and styles come together, conflated into creolised forms, referred to by Bakhtin as a heteroglossia and dialogic imagination.

Merleau-Ponty reminds that a change of place and association marks one of the first ruptures in the cohesive functioning of a person or institution. This is corroborated by psychoanalytic theory's claims that any form of physical displacement, especially that resulting from trauma, violence or the threat

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Mercer, 2008:7.
[11] Mercer, 2008:8.
[12] Said in Mercer, 2008:9.
[13] Hall quoted in Mercer, 2008:9.
[14] Thus while most diasporic artists find it significant to accept their otherness as vital to their self-understanding, the diasporic condition is marked by hybridity and contingent diversity, generating multiple perspectives and a double or multiple consciousness. This consciousness reveals a collision of culture and history resulting in a diasporic dialogism which occurs when incongruous voices and styles come together (conflate) fusing into creolised forms, what Bakhtin refers to as a heteroglossia and dialogic imagination.

of physical or intellectual harm, results in a heightened desire for self-affirmation. Further, nostalgia is often linked to the experience of trauma in what Lacan describes as a 'romantic traumatic dialectic' associated with the intersection between the economic, political, mythical, cultural and psychological processes associated with diaspora. [15]

The content of diasporic work

The features of diasporic art have been variously identified, Hall noting that despite being exposed to current trends such as conceptualism, digital arts and other modern creative facets 'the concepts which the diaspora arts deploy are actually about something – they have a content – and are not floating about in a passionless, self-referential void, entertaining only themselves'.[16] On the one hand this is sourced in the fact that their work functions as a personal narrative of encounter that collapses present experience with memory, acting as a dialogue between the home context and current foreign environment.[17] In part this reflects the trauma of diaspora, where references to home that add to the myth of homeland or a longing for it, results in the construction of an identity and heterogeneous reality that may or may not reflect the authentic recollection experienced by the diasporic migrant.

In a history of incidental and selective encounter, diasporic artists cautiously document and negotiate their experience of diaspora. The foregrounding of self-narrative, difference and home is prompted both by the compulsion and self-interrogation of the artist and by the expectations of a recipient nation and audience. Rarely shifting their gaze to the more contentious polemics of the recipient nation, the diasporic artist mostly opts for avoidance of what may appear to be a critical or intrusive interpretation that could be misconstrued. With reference to the other and the recipient locale oblique or seemingly disengaged, a reflection of the artists' status as objective observers, such objectivity further distinguishes the diasporic artist's or individual's difference.[18] In part this approach can be located in desirable invisibility, especially in view of the recent waves of xenophobia in South Africa emerging in 2009, with several subsequent incidents affecting most African diasporic communities who live in close physical proximity to the majority of Black South Africans.

However, a gradual and selective gaze at the recipient nation and culture has emerged among some diasporic artists, often associated with reference to both difference and similarity with their home contexts. In part the artists' focus on another culture and its objects contributes to a subtle reinforcement of the mythology of culture and place, in this instance that which they perceive to be distinctively South African, for example the landscape, the road trip, signage, food preferences and the diverse peoples that inhabit South Africa. But this recognition of difference also functions as a subtle marker of the authority of the artist and her/his cultural distinctiveness, reinforcing and upholding their difference as they gaze dispassionately at their Other. In the process of developing an awareness of their relationship to other cultures, diasporic artists can come to understand and gradually define what they perceive themselves to be rather than only addressing the differences they perceive in the recipient countries in which they now live and work.

As artist-voyeur, Hua-Yang initially engaged the viewer in relooking at and sharing her outsider gaze, incorporating images of mostly western derived food traditions in her work. The food she depicted is

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[15] Lacan quoted in Mercer, 2008:138.

[16] Hall, 2006:14.

[17] To Mercer this content is linked to three aspects: a diasporic consciousness, diasporic space and diaspoetics, the latter the result of a semiotic change, reflecting rupture and displacement. In part this reflects the trauma of diaspora, where references to home (adding to the myth of homeland) or a longing for it, results in the construction of an identity and heterogeneous reality in some way or another.

[18] The retention of the artist's invisibility and objectivity is an important factor in self preservation.

typically that consumed by some middle class South Africans, such as a breakfast of eggs and toast. The food epitomised difference and place that reflects encounter and observation, marked further by associated smells, tastes and textures. Other early images by Hua-Yang continued the objective gaze or her other work and centred on portraits of black South Africans, mostly in a representational idiom. In what may initially seem to be further objectification she also depicted her sitters from the rear, instead rendering an intimate physiognomic identification of the subject in terms of their racial difference. This focus was later extended to the depiction of white South African subjects, identifiable as individuals as well as classified racially. Marking her unobtrusive gaze, they simultaneously reinforce both her and their difference, the prevalence of racial and ethnic discourse but ultimately their humanity. Her portraits are in effect portraits of difference and her sensitivity to this, always conscious of her difference and marginalization as a Chinese citizen in a South African context. More recently she has responded to her alienation by asserting her difference in a series of large, imposing self-portraits that reinforce her presence and distinctiveness.

In another series of works she terms her 'Cell' images she depicts amoebic diaphanous shapes/cells that function metaphorically to convey both her difference and isolation in a foreign realm.[19] The cells function as imaginary protective spaces surrounded by an unknown, dispersed mass. The diasporic individual/artist has recourse to the cells as in them they feel comforted, able to recognise what language to use in a realm where they can escape from the 'immediate experience and life unaffected by migration and fear'.[20] Yet at the same time the cells allude to the malignant cancer cells that reproduce and threaten the life of a cell member, in this instance Hua-Yang's recently deceased husband Siu-ah.

The above examples support Mercer's contention that in diasporic art the same image can elicit a multitude of meanings attached to personal biography as well as a past or current cultural context[21]. This associative multiplicity is typified in Hua- Yang's imagery of fish, painted in 2005,[22] which refers to a specific visit to the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast region near Margate. On the one hand her fish and sea imagery remind of her own dislocation and questions as to her origins: where she is headed and where she hails from. The fish simultaneously represent both the pleasure of the momentary and the trepidation associated with the unknown. In view of her partner Siu-ah's terminal illness, he died in January 2011, the fish also function as *mementi mori*, reminding of his immanent passing. But in addition the fish have a positive cultural association, as every New Year it is customary among Chinese nationals to prepare fish, associated with the concept *yu,* meaning enough or having plenty and being satisfied, essentially therefore invoking wellbeing for the rest of the year.[23] In a conflation of positive and negative associations sourced in personal and cultural association, these images epitomise the inflections of diasporic narrative, decipherable only when mediated and contextulaised.

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[19] Hua-Yang, interview with J C Leeb-duToit, December 2010. In reference to a comparable situation in Australia, Hua-Yang identifies two types of Chinese citizens, those who have immigrated and those who are temporarily in the country. In both instances they function as encapsulated, isolated entities who migrate or remain isolated in their new recipient countries.

[20] Hua-Yang, interview with J C Leeb-duToit, December 2010.

[21] Mercer, 2008:195.

[22] Hua Yang regards the South African context as exotic and remote, her position one of perplexity and estrangement. Her work is not fashioned for only one viewing environment only but assumes new meanings in the site in which it occurs. While Hua-Yang refers to the pleasant visit to the coast, shared with her husband Siu-ah and his friend Stefano. The visit also coincided with the start of Siu-ah's radiation, which although invasive had yet to affect him as acutely as he was to experience some time later.

[23] Hua-Yang, interview with J C Leeb-duToit, December 2010.

Hua Yang has also come to explore her Taoist and Confucian heritage, of which she knew very little previously, prompted to read such writings for the first time while in South Africa when questioning her difference and otherness. She has subsequently come to understand that the use of space in her work is Laotse inspired: space is described by her as being 'like a space of thinking',[24] like the her fish are displaced in. This space 'where nothingness is actually fullness'[25] represents a contemplative realm in which she can reclaim her selfhood, and reflect on and address her current situation. Further the floating fish, their mobility the result of their own volition coupled with tidal movement, are associated with the idea that to achieve something one must persevere, but if faced with adversity one must 'not fight, you just hope and situation will change'.[26] In this she adheres to principles of Confucianism in which the full realization of the self can be realised through harmony, recognising however that all is subject to the interaction of the negative cosmic force, *yin* and the positive cosmic force *yang*. To Hua –Yang one should therefore not resist the inevitable and avoid assertiveness: resistance counters the cosmic forces while acquiescence allows nature to takes its course and.[27] She regards her work as increasingly meditative, directionless but calming, again something she had not previously considered important or practical. This enigmatic realm acts as a counter to what she perceives to be Western/South African urgency and materialism, where people 'want to know what things are'.[28] Instead she centres on feelings that she cannot explain, imagery that has multiple meanings originating 'from within'[29] Her work is both culturally and personally sourced, emerging more distinctly as she encounters difference and absence in the recipient country, South Africa.

The personal as the political

For other diasporic artists in South Africa, an inevitable fusion of the political and personal are more central to their work, prompted by ongoing conflict from which they escaped. Salim Hussein, a professional artist with an enviable international reputation, came to South Africa in c2001.[30] He originally hails from the Sudan (Darfur)[1] and trained at the Khartoum School of Art where he assimilated the complex responses to Islamic creative traditions coupled with western modernity and Modernism that marked art education there. Art from the Khartoum School of Art is identifiable by an intentional conflation of Islamic iconoclasm and Western-influenced conceptual abstraction, marked further by national-cultural references that still occur in some contemporary Sudanese art.[31] The conflict in Sudan exacerbated his position there when, as a student, he became involved in political dissidence, was arrested and subject to frequent interrogation. He left in self-imposed exile for Norway, later Wales and eventually South Africa which he initially regarded as a stepping stone prior to entering the United States.[32]

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[24] Hua-Yang, interview with J C Leeb-duToit, December 2010.
[25] Hua-Yang, interview with J C Leeb-duToit, December 2010.
[26] Hua-Yang, interview with J C Leeb-duToit, December 2010.
[27] To her Confucianism is associated with being a guide for daily life, reminding of what one should and should not do. She particularly referred to his idea that if you 'want to do something…you need to do (it) …you don't fight you just hope and situation will change' (Hua-Yang, interview with J C Leeb-duToit, December 2010).
[28] Hua-Yang, interview with J C Leeb-duToit, December 2010.
[29] Hua-Yang, interview with J C Leeb-duToit, December 2010.
[30] On arriving in South Africa, he completed a postgraduate diploma in Fine Art at the Centre for Visual Art at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and later registered for a Masters degree at the same institution.
[31] Hussein's work is influenced too by a number of North African sources such as the work of Osman Waquialla, Ibrahim El Anatsui and Wosene. Initially on arriving in South Africa his work had a distinctive conceptual abstraction largely the result of the methods he used: collage, glue and pigments mastic use to texture his surfaces and a precognitive process-based non-figurative imagery.
[32] When the xenophobia erupted in SA he tried to get into the USA but was reminded that as both he and his son's names were Hussein he had little chance of being given a visa.

Typical of the diasporic art, contextual self-referencing remains central to his work, as in his depiction of rows of arched apertures, alluding to an iconic signifier of Islam. Yet each arch contains fragments of local South African magazine images, rendered illegible and subject to the contours of the arches, the prevailing authority of Islam dominating any narrative or representational idiom from which the fragments emerged. He has intentionally submerged any western or African association.

His work is largely derived from process-driven creativity,[33] such skills developed further when working in Europe, Wales and Norway. On arriving in South Africa his work was largely conceptual and abstract, reinforced by the methods he used: collage and a mixture of glue and pigments into which he scratches, resulting in desirable textured forms and surfaces. In this distinctive matrix he places an idiosyncratic calligraphy in which images are vaguely discernible, claiming that images and motifs emerge as he works, becoming submerged again in the precognitive process-based surface that is central to his work. Essentially the ensuing abstract texture, mark-making and calligraphy affirms the presence of the artist, associated further with a specific time and place (in the recipient country) but which retains the central dimensions of his cultural origins. He may include the human form when essential to his narrative, as in his frequent reference to the genocide in Darfur, but this too is subject to a rudimentary conceptualism. Hussein seldom references South Africa, except for a rare conglomerate landscape, overworked with Sudanese references or Arabic text, his work remaining essentially a narrative of his thoughts, engagement with process and reference to his Sudanese roots.[34]

Similarly the work of Eritrean Petros Gehebriwot[35] functions as a constant, but slightly hermetic reference to his origins. The main focus of his early work was on ruins, both those from the Eritrean past as well as well as those related to the more recent and ongoing conflict with Ethiopia. In this they reflect a dual nostalgia, both for the former glory of Eritrea and also, as sites destroyed by conflict, implicitly as a plea for peace. The artist is particularly conscious of the fact that allusions to the past, a utopian era marked by peace and prosperity, would be regarded as highly contentious in his home country where any direct or indirect criticism of the current conflict is regarded as tantamount to treason. On the one hand the ruins function as sublime embodiments of time, nostalgia and history, accessible to most audiences both locally and in Eritrea. But they also reference the trauma of the artist's own experiences in the Eritrean military, memorials to friends lost in the conflict and to family and home. In his Masters' exhibition, Gehebriwot became more explicit in his reference to the ongoing Ethiopian-Eritrean border war, persuaded perhaps too by the fact that he intended to seek asylum in South Africa rather than return home as his initial study visa had stipulated. In a work entitled '*Bringing home the blue*', a contentious meaning was intended, one accessible only to fellow Eritreans. The blue in question is associated with the liberation and nationalist movement and functions as a plea to fellow Eritreans to resist war and negotiate peace.

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[33] Areas of the canvas or paper are prepared with precognitive mark-making and textured with glue and paint or collage. Only then does he gradually evoke symbols and images that include Islamic text, architectural references, abstract forms and shapes.

[34] While Hussein has had a significant impact on fellow artists in the region, he has yet to be acknowledged in the official sphere, despite having a wide international following in Europe and to a lesser extent in Sudan.

[35] Petros Gehebriwot, an Eritrean chemical engineer by profession came to study Fine Art at the CVA largely prompted by his desire to produce art and in effect change profession. When expected to return he sought asylum in South Africa, married here, fathered a child and remained. A recent internee at the Bag Factory he has developed a unique style sourced largely in terms of training at the CVA. His early imagery was little more than tourist or airport art. The early work I saw consisted of large-eyed waifs in a quasi desert setting and a few village scenes. In terms of discussion with his lecturer Terry King he was increasingly persuaded to source his imagery in his Eritrean experience. This persuasion also reflects the position of the teaching staff who were loathe to subject their charges to rudimentary training and rather sought to work with preferences they noted in the student's work, namely in this instance, some degree of understanding of painting but a weaker visual vocabulary.

Such was the impact of the work among his countrymen studying in South Africa that it even estranged some, as such overt reference to resistance to the war would never have been feasible in Eritrea.

More recently (c 2005) when working in Johannesburg at the Bag Factory arts collective, he focused on contemporary sights in Johannesburg, of crowds walking, patrons at exhibition openings and anonymous genderless figures in crowded spaces. A claustrophobic element prevails in these, the figures largely faceless and rendered in a similar tone, their identity almost indistinguishable from the heavy impasto that surrounds them. Gehebriwot is the observer, disengaged and isolated, the context a-cultural and unrecognised.

Like that of his peers, Zimbabwean artist Vulindlela Nyoni's work is marked by self-narrative but from more complex perspectives as he negotiates his otherness, nationality and gender preferences.[36] Nyoni completed his Fine Arts training in South Africa at the Centre for Visual Art (CVA) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg. Here he was exposed to a distinctive modernist representational idiom originating in British Modernism that had marked the CVA for at least the last fifty years. It is here too that he has taught printmaking and drawing for the last eight years. In part artists such as Nyoni have inevitably embraced some features of local art conventions when trained here[37] in addition other current creative practice and conventions. His work consequently echoes his formal training in the monumental classicism of his figure studies and the brevity of their contextualisation. Increasingly his work reflects a distinctive narrative born of biographical, cultural and national origins in a diarization of his life and encounters.

His earliest work was engaged in challenging stereotypical images of Black males by pioneer artists such as Gerard Bhengu and local contemporary artist Trevor Makhoba. Both presented the male figure as either tribalised or dissipated and patriarchal. His undergraduate exposure to critical theory and the writings of Franz Fanon provided him with a basis for challenging such mediated and stereotypical images of Black males as debauched and profligate.

A representational bent was retained in figure studies of Black male nudes, gradually modified by inclusions of masks and masquerades, others wrapped and concealed. These images were soon identifiable as self-portraits, male nudes freeing themselves from wrappings or being constrained by them. In 'putting the self in the frame' a central aspect of his dissertation engaged in relocating the stereotyped, abject, black body of racialized discourse, Nyoni upheld Hall's contention that the Black self-portrait 'broke its links with the western humanist celebration of self and became positional – the staking of a claim, a wager.'[38] The black self-image was in a double sense, an exposure, a 'coming out. The new selves tat emerge are contextlaualized but 'on the inside' their past histories and suppression 'are allowed to invade the mythical inner wholeness of the self-image'[39] functioning more as a counter narrative to the 'essential black subject'. Yet Hall also suggests that in asserting aggressive black masculinity 'some black men continue to live out and reproduce, in inverted form, their own historic subordination and infantilization'.[40]

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[36] Nyoni came to South Africa on 17 February 1995, the year after independence, to study Fine Art after receiving a state scholarship from the Zimbabawe Government, with additional financial support from his parents.
[37] At the CVA. Nyoni was also influenced by a number of fellow students such as David Fiennes, the massive prints of machines by John Morley, the work of Jeannie Agranat, Nina Clarke-Smith. He was taught by Ginny Heath, Janet Purcell and Michelle Coetzee, while Terry King taught him drawing.
[38] Hall 2006:13.
[39] Hall, 2006:11-12.
[40] Hall 2006:13.

Nyoni's constant moving across the South African–Zimbabwe border reminded him of his years of impermanence in South Africa, associated with baggage and flight, referenced in his frequent inclusion of polypropylene plaid 'Zim Bags' in his work. This impermanence persists in much of his work to this day, associated both with his presence in the recipient country and in relation to his country of origin. As a gay black male, his association with home is fraught with anxiety, as although home elicits nostalgia and many positive associations, it currently represents a place of constraint where he is unable to express his gender preferences and sexuality. Zimbabwe remains associated with homophobic authoritarianism, where Nyoni feels ill at ease, unable to engage in his creativity, his South African context in contrast enabling greater self-realisation.[41] Ultimately though neither space enables him to function either culturally or nationally, his creativity creating a form of a-cultural interstice that represents an interim and shifting identity that has yet to be redefined or stabilised. This overt and covert discourse is reflected in his use of masks 'where the viewer never gets to see what is to be seen…', the mask a reference to the 'ritual one goes through periodically…. through which one can present oneself to another person',[42] a protective guise donned both at home and in South Africa.

While earlier avoiding all reference to the political or cultural origins associated with being a Zimbabwean Ndebele, references to his cultural and national origins has only recently been addressed in images of Robert Mugabe, references to dictatorship, the worthless Zimbabawean currency and political intransigence. By 2001 he began increasingly to reference his surname 'Nyoni' (meaning bird), which attaches to obvious associations of flight and migration but also to the significance and heritage of a family he has left behind and to whose predilections and expectations he cannot be subject to or fulfil. In a series of Icarus images reference not only aspirations to flight and attainment but also to the non-realisation of desire are implied. But it also attaches to a father son relationship, an aspirational link and continuity that has been ruptured by Nyoni's sexual preferences.

Most transnational artists resist assimilation and are never in effect uprooted from their origins, selectively retaining links with their home countries and the aesthetic, creative and religio-philosophical traditions located there.[43] Ironically, as seen in the work shown, the encounter with other cultures and peoples often functions as a reinforcement of aspects of one's own culture, in a challenge to or repudiation of a recipient nation culture. In addition, as with Ha-Yang it may even lead to a rediscovery of aspects of one's cultural values or could lead to a reinvention of imagined aspects of one's identity and origins. The attachment to and referencing of a distinctive cultural origin partly provides the artist with what Hall describes as 'stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning – beneath the shifting divergent vicissitudes of (their) actual history'.[44] Hall reminds that an assumed attachment to a distinctive shared culture is enacted in the

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[41] Nyoni notes: 'I don't act on my making I don't take sketch books and only rarely draw or make there or do things aesthetically…I don't engage with that space…I cant access that dynamic there....it is difficult I think it is rooted in my own personal identification. I am a gay black man, while all in Zimbabwe is subject to an authority that negates me. There is a lot of, from my experience, dictatorial investment in religion and state and one does not have the necessary freedom to be what you are, different. The need to be different, it made me different. I was not a South African, and will never be, but I fully invested myself in being other here (South Africa) (Nyoni, Interview with J C Leeb-du Toit).

[42] Nyoni, Interview with J C Leeb-du Toit.

[43]However, to assume that any country is unaffected by others, rests on the flawed assumption that creativity and culture in the' homeland' is untainted and unique. Hence the assumption that their shared common historical and cultural experience suggests that their work would inevitably reflect this in some way. However, given the reasons for their migration and the degree of visibility or invisibility they wish to uphold, this is not always the case. Mercer notes too that exile can result in both scepticism as to one's origins or a yearning for the homeland (Mercer,2008:9).

[44] Hall, 2006:234.

reflection of a collective 'one true self' which resides within what he terms the 'superficial or artificially imposed 'selves' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common'.[45] The reference to culture and place (nation) is consequently a tentative form of rehabilitation, an imaginary or fictional cohesiveness which provides the sense of order that one lacks.[46] This is not a mere rediscovery of an ideal but the production of cultural identity or 'plenitude' set against 'the broken rubric' of their past.[47]

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Fanon quoted in Hall, 2006:235.

[47] An example of this can be found in recent art historical research in South Africa on artists such as Azaria Mbatha and even Sekoto have been criticised for retaining a romantic or abject vision of Africa sustained as a static, even flawed reference to self as African. Having failed to recognise the shifting parameters of such definition, such critiques fail to recognise that the collective memory of self in situ is often the strongest memory when displaced from one's site of origin. Thus while it may be flawed it typifies the selectivity of nostalgia. To be regarded as a person of a given nationality no longer means that this is fixed but rather that this can be displaced and expressed variously in different sites, with shifting emphases and aspects, or not at all. 'Identity is a fluid concept that changes depending on where the artist lives, where they are producing artwork, and where the work is being displayed.' Increasingly they are aware that their cultural identity in one of becoming not of one that is in a belonging to the future and to the past, consequently their identity is not fixed or essentialized but is a reflection of a play of history and culture (Hall, 2006).

How Authentic are Stools Produced at Prescraft? Authenticity of Arts and Crafts of the North West Region, Republic of Cameroon

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Introduction:
Prescraft (Presbyterian Handicraft Centre) is an institution owned by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (P.C.C.). It was started on the initiative of a Swiss missionary, the Rev. Dr. Hans Knopfli, who was sent to Cameroon in 1956 as a pastor by the then Basel Mission in Switzerland (Mission 21). He worked as a pastor as well as a schools manager. Knopfli discovered that a lot of parents in the North West Province (today Region) could not afford to pay for their children's school fees, their medical bills as well as their church contributions in their local congregations.

By 1960, he started gathering crafts brought by school children as hand work. He took these crafts to Switzerland and Germany and some were sold during bazaars and some were taken by well-wishers in exchange for donations to help the parents and the school children back home (in the North West). This was done gradually and after 10 years of feasibility studies the church (the P.C.C.) accepted it as a project, hence the name Prescraft was adopted. The centre now produces a variety of crafts ranging from wooden carved stools of various designs and types as well as other craft items such as:

- Wood carving
- Basket weaving
- Brass casting
- Pottery production
- Knitting and making traditional clothing, etc.

Prescraft, which was started in the early sixties, now sells arts and crafts items which are authentic to customers at home (in Cameroon) as well as to foreign buyers in Europe, America, Canada and the far East, such as Australia and New Zealand.

Before coming up with this idea, the North West was already highly gifted in the production of crafts. These arts and crafts could be found in palaces and museums across the Region. The Region has its capital which is Bamenda. The people of this Region have a rich background in culture, much of which is exhibited in arts and crafts.

The crafts produced by the people of the North West Region are authentic, because such crafts come from the culture and tradition of the people. The people have not copied it or learned the act of producing arts and crafts by way of training from art school. Arts and crafts production as a cultural heritage is being passed on from generation to generation. A lot of arts and crafts produced in this Region, have history behind them.

The history depicts the tradition and culture of the people, thus making it authentic. Although the North West Region is inhabited by many tribes in the Region that speak different languages and dialects, there are common bonds that unite them, for example kingship, which is found on both, centralized and decentralized hegemonies.

The people of this Region have common cultural activities as can be seen in their cultural arts and crafts such as traditional wood carving, stools, traditional gowns and dresses. The crafts produced by the people of this Region have different designs, motifs and types of carvings. The arts and crafts

produced by the people of this Region are all authentic, because these started from the time of immemorial, before the coming of the Missionaries and the Colonial Masters.

Research information gathered shows that even though Prescraft produces a lot of handicraft articles, my paper is mostly on how stools are produced at Prescraft and whether the stools are authentic or not, and the meaning of some symbols and designs on stools.

Symbols, traditional wisdom and the carvings on stools:
The most characteristic and widespread products of wood carving in the Grassfields of the Republic of Cameroon is the wooden stool, decorated with symbols, figures and designs. Any visitor wanting to feel at home in the Grassfields of Cameroon must learn to read the language of the culture of the people which most of the time is being expressed in the stools, their symbolism and their use. It is true that sculptural images vary slightly from one artisan to another.

Anyone with curiosity about the parts of course, does not only want to learn what these symbols mean for expert in tradition now. The person would like to sense what the symbols mean when they were first developed in the Grassfields before the coming of the colonial officials and the missionaries some decades ago.

The symbols and the designs on stools reflect the importance of the particular leadership as a basic stabilizing force in the society or village or community.

The sculpture depictions on a royal stool are nothing less than a potent figurative transference to the local authority or society. This essential characteristic of the symbols and designs carved on stools signifies the power, might, dignity, wisdom and authority. The stools carved with various designs and symbols, some stools for the village authority (the Fon and other notables in that village). One may argue that the traditional carved stool is used for nothing but a chair to sit on. This is partially true, but different types of stools with different symbols have different meanings.

The stools also reflect an understanding of the environment, especially the nature of the wild animals used as designs and decorations.

Some royal animals used as designs for stools are: Buffalo-head design, leopard design, lion design, lizard design, human figure design, double gong design, etc.

Stools with buffalo-head design
Among the land animals buffalo is the most dangerous animal. It is very wild and fast in thinking. It is believed that our traditional rulers at times behave very wild and fast like buffalo. When you approach a Traditional Ruler in Cameroon, you must be prepared to stand up for yourself. That is to say, you must be prepared to behave well and know how to answer his numerous questions as fast as possible.

Figure 1: Buffalo-head stool.

Stools with leopard design
In Cameroon, leopard is also called panther or in the Pidgin English it is called tiger. It is a large powerful, fast-running and flesh-eating animal. It is very active, particularly at night and very unpredictable. It catches and eats other animals such as antelopes, goats, pigs, etc. In the Western Grassland of Cameroon, a hunter who kills a leopard, is decorated and crowned with a traditional title (Red Feather). Our traditional rulers are unpredictable as the Leopard.

Figure 2: Leopard stool.

Stools with lion design
The lion is a very nice looking animal. In Cameroon and in the Grassland, the lion is often called king of the animals. It is also unpredictable just like the leopard.

Figure 3: Lion stool.

Stools with lizard design
Different kinds of lizards are common in the Western Grasslands of Cameroon, ranging from the small insectivorous and peaceful gecko or house lizard, to the giant lizard living in the bush. The stylized representation of the lizard is one of the most common designs in wood sculpture. It appears on stools, thrones, masks, houseposts, doorframes, drums, clay posts, reliefs, title cups, castings and on embroidered robes and caps. Local people described various characteristics of lizards. All types of lizards have long bodies and long tails, some of them have extremely long tails; their skin is covered with scales almost like fish. The lizard is the fastest climber not only on trees but even on smooth surfaces, as if it had sticky fingers and toes. The lizard can be seen constantly lowering and raising its head. The largest lizard resembles the alligator or crocodile. The lizard catches insects, especially mosquitoes.

I was also told that lizards are treated with respect. Beliefs about lizards include the idea that twins, chiefs and ancestors can transform themselves into lizards, and that lizards drive away withes. It is believe that a lizard congratulates itself since there is usually no one to congratulate it, when it falls down, it nods its head, thus congratulating itself for a job done.

Figure 4: Lizard stool.

Stools are also produced with inanimate symbols that do not pertain to animals, such as double iron gong, bangle, hunting net, etc.

Stool with double gong design
Double gong is a musical instrument made up of wrought iron and can occasionally be seen as a motif on a stool. Double gong design is one of the few inanimate objects, as opposed to animals, or human beings symbols, whose use and meaning is so significant that it has found acceptance in the range of approved and meaningful motifs in woodcarving. The gong as a musical instrument is used in churches today as well as in traditional occasions in palaces and communities.

Some of the uses of iron gongs and the traditional limitations can be described as:

- The Fon was the authorized person to beat the gong in olden days during such occasions as during tribal wars.
- The Fon would beat the gong to call the people to the palace, or when sending his men out to war, and when his war men returned victorious from the battle field.

Nowadays, the Fon beats the gongs during annual festival which is held in most villages or communities once a year, in commemoration of past events and past tribal wars. He beats it when he wants to draw the population's attention to important events, of symbolic significance, in the course of the festival.

Besides being used by the Fon himself, the double gong is the sacred instrument of the *kwifon,* which is the traditional government that is the highest authority in a given community. The gong is beaten by members of the *kwifon:*

- On important occasions, such as the making of sacrificial offerings to royal ancestors.
- To announce the death of one of their members or some high ranking dignitary, such as a kingmaker, knight, Sub-Chief or Quarter-Head.
- During the burial of such personalities. The beating of the double gong by a member of the kwifon is absolutely necessary to draw the attention of the ancestors to certain important stages in the burial. If there is an omission or a fault, the burial is not regarded as valid by the ancestors and the deceased will not be accepted as an equal in their world beyond.
- For a deceased man who was properly buried by the kwifon when his death is celebrate later.
- When “the fire has gone out”, in other words when the Fon has died. No one would say “The Fon has died”, (or lost)” or “There is cold in the Palace”. If the Fon is indisposed, it is said, “The Fon has fallen into a trap”.
- On the occasion of a serious judgment. For instance, the kwifon has the power to impeach the Fon and to appoint one of its members to sit on the throne until a successor is found.
- The double gong is beaten by the kwifon when sacrifices are made to the late Fon.

Figure 5: Double gong stool.

Other stools are produced with human figure designs, cowries and snail-shells.
Figure 6: Human figure stool.
Figure 7: Shell stool.

Figure 8: A view of Arts and Crafts at PRESCRAFT SHOP in Bamenda, Cameroon.

Technology of carving a stool:
A traditional stool is carved out of a seasoned, dry, solid, cylindrical wooden log. The carver sits on a log using his legs as a vice to hold the log he is working on.

A traditional carver uses some of the following tools to work with when carving a stool.

- The felling axe: This is an axe used to fell a tree and the tree is cut into logs of various sizes. This can also be used by the aid of an engine saw. They use the axe to cut out motifs
- A one hand cross-cut saw
- A cutlass
- A carving hoe
- Flat chisels of various sizes
- Various gouges
- Line chisel
- Spoke have
- Sand paper of various sizes.

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The Interpreter's Notation: Building a Cultural Landscape as a Biopolitical Trace on Valparaíso

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These hills are separated, split by deep ravines and cracks, everywhere you see the sea as in a frenzy. The colors, stones, vegetation, land, everything is violent insinuate the idea of a cataclysmic volcanic. What do panorama of the world is like this?

Joaquín Edward Bello. *Valparaiso Yesterday and Today*

Representational spaces, on the other hand, need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements, they have their source in history — in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people.

Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*

After all, people don't fight a revolution for abstract principles, but for the best every day of their lives

Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*

Place

The ways of attribute ourselves a city belong to the **insitu** condition of our experience about it. History, the social and its spatial structures built, from this knowledge, a number of morphological and typological models displayed as traces of our *doing* and *being* together.

Thus, the processes of a city delimit themselves from our production and from our perspective, which at the same time built an intimate geography of our territory. Our tracks cross and are available from everyday emergences, as a tactic of social organizations or from different kinds of typology and urban morphology, from the individual to the group, as a kind of grammar that recognizes a territorial production as process and not as product.

In this way, the subject begins to form, to select and interpret a series of readings, texts, tools, and methodologies about his productions and the *corpus* of his own tracks. Thereby emerges a body language and its appropriation as a kind of representation of the conditions of doing and dwelling its context. Thus an inner landscape is constructed as his socio-cultural reference in its territorial dimension. These traces and productions emerge from everyday life as a type of register that incorporates culture as a mode of making, going from generational and social stories about the glances of the port until the registers of representation like comics, paintings, poems, and sketches as a way to specify on the city that we determine as a practice or ritual on the city.

The procedure the subject would have to build and to appropriate this form of *dwelling* goes through the image of its representations and the relations of geography – in its appropriation dimension. In relation to the above, this kind of paradigm or field of action arising from the inhabitant of Valparaiso as a performer, and his territorial context, allows building his own local landscape, which he relates as interwoven perceptual qualities, tectonic notations which are impossible to avoid from the geographical and cultural dimension of the territory. Thus emerges the vision of the interpreter on the context and on its own landscape that allows reading the nature of the space of Valparaiso.

It is made from here, a ***first observation*** on the interpreter's notation: to claim a landscape, we must interpret it and all cultural production uses a reference that is finally a re-territorialization of the dimensions of identity and location. This is an exercise of direct participation on significance

community fields, finally proposes a kind of landscape that is defined by an interior of exposed social about our city-types and morphologies that reside in Valparaiso .

The ***second observation*** about the interpreter's notation: physical and materially follows to the first, I refer to the spatial practice, which is a kind of material language – and I mean the tectonic value has the social landscape of a specific space – that the subject's modus operandi and programmatic strategy revolves around the culture of the project. That is, spatial practices are recognized as they are the traces of social spaces and social networks structures linked together, it is a spatial cultural in movement that involves, like Bourdieu points, an *habitus*, an in-corporated culture.

This landscape is built from the spatial practices as well as from cultural representation, could allow understanding the landscape like an invention of our cultural construct? The answer is yes. The city is a dynamic fact incorporating different modes of production which in turn contain cultural processes. This intertwining of contents builds a kind of notation that provides a reference point of the local, and therefore a subject's experience on the territory.

Now, there are two areas of work which we have allowed to determine some scenarios and margins of discussion. With these fields we can determinate the following: the landscape is the result of a culture that constructs meanings like nature, and it is understood as an idea of landscape a sort of conceptual device which in turn can be represented physically and mentally. On this context, Valparaíso is seen like a field where there are multiple cultural landscape archipelagos. Material conditions which the subject, and his way to interpret Valparaíso, symbolic and materially self-constructs, allowing sediment in its tectonics, cultural signs, and entropy of the matter of its hills, a particular look between reality and representation at Valparaíso.

Then, we must understand, as a conclusion of this first part, that there must be a language that reflects the socio-spatial dialectic from the practice space as a structure of order and how to make the subject like interpreter and builder of the landscape through their representation material which in turn refers to the desire, the imaginary territory. Then we must think and to operate to the space like a social product and as an epistemic culture.

The interpreter's notation as the subject's material trace

The ***ethos*** of Valparaiso and its geography follows an exudation that unfolds against the habitability of a remote and blurry context. Its orographic condition, as a principle of order, qualifies the imaginary of a remote and close space simultaneously. Through the course of the everyday relieves elevators I configure the morphological context and social spatiality. This determines some characteristics about the occupation and the displacement of the socialization process of the city and its materialization in its way of dwelling.

This temporality described on physical and verbal encounters that accommodate dock structures themselves – among the hill-plan – develop not only tectonic features in its conformation like a trace, but also a number of groupings around the infrastructural geography such as the relationship of the elevators with the neighborhood places. These routines of the social are the oral history of the port. These qualities – that at the beginning could not discard the usual formation of a city in process – gave body and stone on how to localize and characterize of a relationship between hill-plan. However, the intimate geography of Valparaiso and its amazing figures and residential choreographies ... *built and build a sort of archipelago cities where there are many worlds and you can go from one to another world in fifty paces... there those are with a door, which never opens, using the window to enter or exit*. A French engineer visiting the port, after ecstasy in its miracles, commented*: I have studied forty years of strength of materials. After knowing the construction in the foothills of Valparaiso, my studies and experiences do not fit at all.*

The slopes, dimensions, the versatility of the building blocks cemented a grouping principle, of self-recognition, and formal differentiation and habitability, which set up the image of local and urban space of Valparaiso. That way of looking itself, would not build a mirror, but develop a relationship between closeness and distance. This condition allowed to develop a thought of coexistence about the port logos and how they live their time. This state of consciousness, and of dwelling, and through contemplation on the assembly of its geography and silhouette contours, reported in the local scene a setting as a place of the story and placing their representations as writing, their paintings, their own popular facilities emerge as a subject and its network of relationships from the experience of place, transforming him into an actor and interpreter of its place.

This type of process that is installed through appropriations, re-significations and a series of readings and traces on the construction of the subject on the inside landscape, is a trigger for a reading instrument on the representation of man in the public and private spatiality of Valparaiso. But at the same time is the individual representation of the events of this city in their everyday spaces. That is, the view that the inhabitant displays is a material trace on the heterogeneity of the relation between subject and space, through the act of doing-being a mark, a trace, a performance of a set of traces.

In this manner I propose, by way of toolbox, three logics that allow us to approach the reading and representation on the writing of tactics of living in Valparaiso:

Heterotopic

The ***heterotopic*** logic is presented as a series of marks displayed on Valparaiso. These are located and extend into the value of a reproduction of the meaning of dwell. It is as well as it deploys its transmission as a material reality. In this way we can think of when considering a tactic of subject and its production of inner landscape, houses, plans, and their practices come from the interior of Valparaiso's deep plan building the ***versatile horizontality*** – quality that we will explain later, that has to do with the conformation of a tectonic multiplicity. As we have already risen, Valparaiso contains a number of in-appropriate or im-provised traces that reveal not only a lack of regulation or study of urban growth, but also a sincere representation of the inhabitants' freedom to read about their condition of dwelling. This local plurality deepens the notions of re-signification and re-building a thinking about the city, which from the soil, and from the most intimate layers, form a subject-object relationship power in action.

These conditions have – like an order exercise – a type of deep plan that are displayed in their homes where the versatile horizontality of the urban reality is deployed as the nature of architectural language. The houses of Valparaiso host and propose a kind of elemental everyday and which is externalized through socio-cultural relations.

The heterotopic logic develops a system of spatial conception which is inseparable from the construction of the object from the disintegration of the limit as a concept and project – the case housing or public-private spatialization as well as physical closure of buildings. The layers are not models of structures and resistant partitions, but the experiences and the embodiment of the interior turns to the outside and generates a faciality. That is a mediation between the modes of production of the subject and the infiltrations of their meanings and their uses on the dimension of everyday life which articulates and interprets the notion of faciality, as a way of crossing such an elaboration of a trace that the manifestation of the other leaves on *subjectivity*. This ***heterotopic*** reading would propose a multi-program proposal from about the basis of the same city generating not only a heterogeneity in the uses and functions but also an ability to re-program the tectonic conditions that are supported by the practices of the urban.

This heterotopic logic allow us to understand that overlapping orders, that does not correspond to a primary standard, but a flat layer of recent history, you can construct a depth that would have expression in the trace of the concrete, and also in the capacity to accommodate the dissolution of form, as a matter entropy. Thus, the concept of entropy set from the processes transfiguration of the architectural elements a type of heterotopia as logical and physical tool also constructed as a kind of horizontal versatile operation on various situations where the subject makes its mark as experience, appropriations, reoccupation, ruins realizing that the transient nature of matter are time-space conditions of a tectonic process finished. Although it is clear that these principles could be framed in aesthetic reading confusing perhaps the appeal by the intentionality refered to the urban action, despite the above redefinitions of cultural context in Valparaiso propose to revisit these daily readings modes research framed as potential new socio-cultural research.

Chronotope

The second logic that appears as a tool for reading, is the notion of chronotope that is clear from the representations and configurations of place as a narrative. The chronotope is a narrative concept that denotes the correlation of spatial-temporal relations as a kind of lived space, experienced and experienced by way of a story through words, images, non-verbal sounds. The concept of chronotope is a type of relationship outside – inside, that exposes through landscape of social representations as a kind of local knowledge that can construct instances of assembly and disengage on urban practices (appropriations, resignifications). Respect to constructs these types appeals to our experience (social experience) and a type of language or narrative that makes a visible mark on space, a space that allows evidence of the story, inflections, accents and ideas of representation and narrative forms of Valparaiso landscape and interpret the notation.

Dialogic

The third logic concerns the concept of the dialogic that installs the subject interacts with particular identity processes defined by geography, social space and its perception of space, lived, conceived and performed at the same time. The communication between the traces of space and forms of collective organization and individual managed to articulate spaces on dialogical coexistence such as it was mentioned before building territories where the boundaries between reality and imagination is just one aspect of the differential sense shaping an itinerary and an account of their lives.

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Thus, the notation of the interpreter and the spatiality everyday are intertwined such as the sociologist, Lefebvre, reminds us and as we place in our field. The notation of the interpreter is an interweaving of different levels of reality and deeper readings on the trace of the other, where stories, biographies, the entropy of the cultural conditions become social sediment, and transform and mutate based on extensions of the everyday, making room for yet another fabric of reality. The notation of the interpreter is a kind of open and extensive codex on our own imaginative rethinking the notion of identity that conditions placed on the hills and urban speculation. The notation of the interpreter acts as a meeting under the discourse of experience, extrapolate condition that later as we will see before the existence of the multicultural, however since the beginning of the century near Valparaiso was a repository of clear identity were that integrating geographical framework of references which in instead became diluted within the meeting space and exposing the experience as a carrier of the evidence, I refer to stories and reading the passage of an event of a Valparaiso happened.

A question decode much more than a map or a type of narrative description to a city-si, a deep Valparaiso is both minimal and universal, smooth and striated, dark and exposed, perhaps the experience is constructed as a trace and -exposed to a circular time.

These conditions of porteño places that have been formed and connoting, indicate that this is not a usual context but responds and encourages use our readings and experience. This socio-spatial condition opens a position on the integration of coexistence, and recognizes the association of the intercultural, symbols, socio-morphological constitutors and everyday as a toolbox. We recall here the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral said Valparaiso is a city that did not stay in a fixed location. The wild geography of Valparaiso and the ethos of his poetic inspiration represent build a dream of utopia. The inhabitant of the transparent house inhabited by the imagination, as the poetic imagination of the port are examples of these experiences coexistence of different realities, they represent and re-elaborate the imagination of this city. In the words of José Lezama Lima Chilean historian on Valparaiso said: *imagination was a principle of grouping, recognition and self-differentiation, the image of the area became a state of consciousness, exclusion, inequality and discrimination. The stage of Valparaiso is the place of narrative and representations from where the subject and its network of relationships, transforming an actor*. Communication achieves joint spaces, and the interaction dialogue and the operation of the constructed chronotope territories where the boundaries between reality and imagination is just one aspect of the senses differential shape our life course and their life stories.

These qualities and conditions routed me to think that Valparaiso is built from a materic condition where the subject with their trace on tectonics space, operates the extension and set associativity that moves and relationship matters and city. Recall that for Aristotle, the condition of the field had a receptive quality in form, ie that matter can be anything capable of receiving a form, and together with the above matters further is the power of being something, being something you determined by the shape. However, in our everyday landscape in Valparaiso when we faced on all the appropriations and reinterpretations of the subject on its public space and private space, in what the power vested in Valparaiso matter?

I have the impression that Valparaiso is always something else, but a group of streets or set of individuals, or set of traditions, customs and culture. There is a condition which is transmitted beyond and that is reflected in the identity and is deposited not just in their everyday tectonics, but the precariousness of events, in the ineffable gaze something happen and just waiting to see and admire this something, we would suggest that a process or a signal in a short time and will happen at once. This landscape of events that has the ability to build a representation through a paradox of the presence of the absence of order, which does not indicate a dis-order but a question on *What is it?* doubles the absence and the efficiency of the thing itself. Valparaiso that is represented in a complex city and an entropic nature, which transforms and transmutes its signs on a spatial grammar of sedimentary tectonics, we expect over the course of its history that we talk about the ways of living and building a poetry exposed. This dialectical relationship between the edge of the area and landscape area and interpret, experience and be exposed to as pure exteriority deployed Valparaiso, Valparaiso is a threshold of language, where the writing of his fingerprints on the geography and altitude, demarcates a space memory where there are no fears, because there is no memory alike, is the memory of what the word is still always say is rumor of limits.

La Notacion del Intérprete[1]: La Construcción de un Paisaje Cultural a Modo de Huella Biopolitica Sobre Valparaíso

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Esos cerros están separados, partidos por profundos barrancos y quebraduras; por todas partes se ve el mar como en un vértigo. Los colores, las piedras, la vegetación, la tierra, todo es violento insinúa la idea de un cataclismo volcánico ¿que panorama del mundo es parecido a este?

Joaquín Edward Bello. *Valparaíso ayer y hoy*

Los espacios de representación no necesitan obedecer a reglas de consistencia o cohesión. Llenos de elementos imaginarios y simbólicos, tienen su origen en la historia; en la historia del pueblo y en la historia de cada individuo que pertenece a este pueblo

Henri Lefevbre, *La producción del espacio*

Las personas, después de todo, no pelean una revolución por principios abstractos, sino por el mejor día a día de sus vidas

Henri Lefevbre, *Crítica a la vida cotidiana*

Lugar

Las formas de atribuirse una ciudad pasan por la condición INSITU de nuestra experiencia sobre ella. La historia, lo social y sus espacializaciones van construyendo desde este conocimiento una serie de modelos morfológicos y tipológicos que aparecen a modo de rastro sobre nuestro *hacer* y *ser* a la vez.

Es así como, los procesos de una ciudad se delimitan a partir de nuestra producción y desde nuestra mirada, que a su vez construyen una geografía intima sobre nuestro territorio. Nuestras huellas atraviesan y se disponen desde las emergencias de lo cotidiano como una táctica de organizaciones sociales o desde las diferentes tipos de tipología y morfología urbana, desde lo individual a lo grupal,

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[1] La notación del intérprete pertenece a una reflexión sobre las diversas formas de construir paisaje cultural, a través del reconocimiento del valor de la re-presentación y su valor simbólico de ciertos instrumentos desde mapas, cartografías, calcos, e instrumentos de registro permiten reflexionar sobre la experiencia urbana y su huella material. Este tipo de notaciones y prácticas permiten reflexionar sobre notas de arquitectura, sociología, antropología, y etnografía urbana junto con un tipo de cultura emergente que claramente contextualizada ubica a lo cotidiano como fuente de re-lecturas biográficas de los modelos, tipologías, y estructuras socio-políticas ejemplicándose en tomas de partidos socio-espaciales y modelos de producción. Esta relación entre la ciudad y este entre-tejido inmaterial se conforma por una inscripción del sujeto sobre el espacio público a través de las resignificaciones sociales y espaciales que sus propios habitantes realizan a través de viviendas de autoconstrucción y extensiones de lo social que actúan en la tectónica cotidiana. José Llano Arquitecto Independiente e Investigador Urbano. Docente de las Escuelas de Arquitectura de la Universidad Andrés Bello y del Magíster de Paisaje e Infraestructura Contemporánea (FAAD) Universidad Diego Portales. Coautor del libro La Enseñanza del Proyecto editado por la Universidad Central; Co-autor del libro Santiago. Memorias, Imaginarios y Cotidianos editado por la Universidad Central; Co-autor del Libro Propagaciones editado por la Facultad de Arquitectura y el colectivo Criptonita de la Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María. En la actualidad, trabaja de Arquitecto, Docente, editor general del colectivo Apariencia Pública (www.aparienciapublica.org), magazine internacional ACT plataforma colaborativa (http://www.aparienciapublica.org/act.html).y escribe en la revista DOMUS.

a modo de un tipo de gramática que reconoce una producción sobre el territorio como un proceso y no a modo de producto. (Figura n°1)

De esta manera, el sujeto comienza a formar, a seleccionar y a interpretar una serie de lecturas, textos, instrumentos y metodologías sobre sus producciones y sobre el *corpus* de sus propias huellas. De esta manera surge un lenguaje del cuerpo y su apropiacion como una forma de representación de las condiciones del hacer y de habitar la contextualizad. Es así como se construyen un *paisaje interior* como su referencia socio-cultural en su dimensión territorial. Esas huellas y producciones se desprenden desde lo cotidiano como un tipo de registro que incorpora lo cultural como un modo de hacer, recorriendo desde los relatos generacionales e historias sociales sobre las miradas del puerto hasta los registros de representación como comics, pinturas, poemas, y croquis como una manera de precisar sobre la ciudad eso que determinamos como practica o rito sobre la ciudad. (Figura n°2)

Es así como, el procedimiento que tendría el sujeto de construir y de apropiarse de esta forma *de habitar*[2] pasa por la imagen de sus representaciones como por las relaciones de la geografía – en su dimensión de apropiación -. En relación a lo anterior, esta especie de paradigma o campo de acción que surge desde el habitante de Valparaíso como interprete y su contexto territorial permite construir un paisaje local, su paisaje, que relaciona a modo de entretejido de cualidades preceptúales, notaciones tectónicas que son imposibles de evitar desde el espacio geográfico y la dimensión cultural del territorio. Así surge la visión del intérprete sobre el contexto y sobre su propio paisaje que permite leer la naturaleza del espacio de Valparaíso. (Figura n°3)

Se elabora desde aquí, una *primera observación* sobre la notación del intérprete: para adjudicarse un paisaje hay que interpretarlo y toda producción cultural se vale de un referente que finalmente representa una re-territorializacion de las dimensiones de identidad y localidad. Este es un ejercicio de participación directa sobre los campos de significación comunitaria, finalmente propone un tipo de paisaje que se define desde una interioridad de lo social expuesta sobre nuestra ciudad – tipologías y morfologías diferentes que residen en Valparaíso -. (Figura n°4)

La *segunda observación* sobre la notación del interprete: se desprende física y materialmente de la primera, me refiero a la *practica espacial*, que consiste en un tipo de lenguaje material – y me refiero al valor tectónico que posee el paisaje social de un espacio determinado -, que la forma de actuar y la estrategia programática del sujeto desarrolla en torno a la cultura del proyecto. Es decir, se reconocen las prácticas espaciales pues son el rastro de los espacios sociales que las estructuras o redes sociales vinculan, es una cultura espacial en movimiento que implica, como lo comenta Pierre Bourdieu un *habitus,*[3] una cultura in-corporada.

Este paisaje que se construye desde las prácticas espaciales como también desde la representación referida cultural, *¿podría permitir entender el paisaje como una invención de nuestro constructo cultural?*, la respuesta es si. La ciudad es un hecho dinámico y de transformaciones que recogen

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[2] Enaudeau, Corinne. La paradoja de la representación. Ed. Paidos. Argentina 1998. p.29. El termino eidos, sobredeterminado, designa tanto su contorno externo (figura visible), como su estructura interna... forma en latín. La palabra eidos significa imagen y es usada en términos filosóficos para indicar idea o forma, dentro de la filosofía griega.

[3] Refiero, el habitus es un sistema de disposiciones duraderas, que funcionan como esquemas de clasificación para orientar las valoraciones, percepciones y acciones de los sujetos. Constituye también un conjunto de estructuras tanto estructuradas como estructurantes: lo primero, porque implica el proceso mediante el cual los sujetos interiorizan lo social; lo segundo, porque funciona como principio generador y estructurador de prácticas culturales y representaciones.

diferentes modos de producción que a su vez contiene procesos culturales.[4] Este entrelazamiento de contenidos construye un tipo de notación que establece un referente propio de lo local,[5] y por ende una experiencia del sujeto sobre el territorio.[6]

Ya tenemos dos campos de trabajo que nos han permitido determinar ciertos escenarios y márgenes de discusión. Estos dos campos podemos determinar lo siguiente: el paisaje es resultado de una cultura que construye significaciones como naturaleza, y se entiende como una idea de paisaje un tipo de disposición conceptual que a su vez podemos representar física y mentalmente. Sobre ese contexto Valparaíso se vislumbra como un campo donde co-existen múltiples archipiélagos de paisaje cultural, condiciones materiales en proceso que el propio sujeto y la manera de interpretar Valparaíso auto-construye simbólicamente y matéricamente, permitiendo sedimentar en sus tectónicas, signos culturales, y la propia entropía de la materia de sus cerros, una mirada particular entre la realidad y la representación de Valparaíso. (figura n°5)

Debemos entender entonces como conclusión de esta primera parte, que debe existir un lenguaje que plasme esta relación dialéctica socio-espacial desde la práctica espacial como una estructura de orden y la forma de hacer del sujeto como interprete y constructor del paisaje a través de su representación material que a su vez se refiere al deseo, al imaginario del territorio. Debemos entonces pensar y accionar al espacio como un producto social y como un episteme de la cultura.

Notacion del intérprete como huella material del sujeto

El *ethos* de Valparaíso y su geografía desprende una exudación que se despliega frente a la habitabilidad de un contexto remoto y borroso. Su condición orográfica, como principio de orden cualifica el imaginario de un espacio alejado y cercano simultáneamente. A través del recorrido sobre los relieves cotidianos de sus ascensores que configuro el contexto morfológico y su espacialidad social. Esto determino ciertos caracteres sobre la ocupación y el desplazamiento del proceso de sociabilización de la ciudad y su materialización en su forma de habitar.

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Esta temporalidad descrita sobre encuentros físicos y orales que dan cabida a las propias construcciones porteñas entre el cerro-plan desarrollan no solo características tectónicas en su conformación como huella sino una serie de agrupaciones entorno a la geografía infraestructural como la relación de los ascensores junto a los puestos de barrio, esa cotidianidad de lo social en la historia oral del puerto. Estas cualidades que en un principio no pudieran desprenderse de la conformación habitual de una ciudad en proceso, dio cuerpo y piedra sobre la manera de localizarse y de caracterizarse de una relación entre cerro-plan propio de una ciudad puerto, sin embargo la geografía intima de Valparaíso y sus sorprendentes figuras y coreografías residenciales… *construyeron y construyen una suerte de ciudades archipiélagos donde hay muchos mundos y se pueden ir de u mundo a otro en cincuenta pasos… las hay con puerta, que no se abre nunca,*

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[4] Reseña de Carmen Gavira sobre el breve tratado del paisaje de Alain Roge. VV.AA. ecología del ambiente artificial. Revista Astrágalo. Cultura de la arquitectura y la ciudad. n16, España, Madrid. Diciembre 2000, p.141.

[5] Neologismo propuesto por Alain Roger (1997), que significa la transformación, por medio de la referencia artística (pictórica), de un país vivido o visto en un paisaje contemplado y percibido.

[6] El paisaje es un tema que ya forma parte de la reflexión sobre el urbanismo y la ordenación del territorio. La originalidad de esta obra de Alain Roger reside en que destaca los vínculos íntimos que se han establecido entre el paisaje y el arte. Retomando la noción tan del gusto de Montaigne de "artealización", ve en el paisaje una construcción estética (del jardín al land art) o una invención imaginaria (un cuadro) cuyo objeto es transformar las relaciones del arte y la cultura, lo que lo lleva a seguir las metamorfosis del paisaje sin temor del culturalismo y sin preocuparse por transformaciones "hipermodernas" de un paisaje que no está condenado a morir.

utilizando la ventana para entrar o salir.[7] Un ingeniero francés de visita por el puerto, después de extasiarse en estos milagros, comento...: *he estudiado cuarenta años de resistencia de materiales. Después de conocer las construcciones en los faldeos de Valparaíso, se que mis estudios y experiencias no me sirven de nada.*[8] (figura n°11)

Las pendientes, las cotas, la versatilidad de los elementos constructivos cimentaron un *principio de agrupamiento, de reconocimiento y de legítima diferenciación* formal y de habitabilidad, que configuro la imagen del espacio local y urbano de Valparaíso. Esa manera de mirarse ella misma, no construiría un espejo, sino que desarrollaría una relación entre una cercanía y su distancia, que permitió desenvolver un pensamiento de coexistencia sobre el logos porteño y la forma de habitar su tiempo. Este estado de conciencia, y de coexistencia de ese habitar y a través de su contemplación sobre el ensamble de su geografía y su silueta de contornos, dio cuenta dentro de la escena local un configurar a modo de lugar del relato y ubicando a sus representaciones como la escritura, sus pinturas sus propias instalaciones populares como un emerger del sujeto y su red de relaciones a partir de la experiencia sobre el lugar, transformándolo en actor e interprete de su lugaridad. (figura n°12)

Este tipo de proceso que se instala mediante apropiaciones, re-significaciones y una serie de lecturas y huellas sobre la construcción del sujeto sobre el pasaje interior, es un detonante de un instrumento de lectura sobre la representación del hombre en la espacialidad privada y pública de Valparaíso, pero a su vez es la representación individual del acontecer de esta ciudad en sus espacios cotidianos. Es decir, la mirada que despliega el habitante es una huella material sobre la heterogeneidad de la relación sujeto y espacio, mediante el acto[9] e hacer-ser una marca, una huella, un ejercicio de un juego de marcas.

De esta forma propongo a modo de caja de herramientas tres lógicas que nos permitan aproximarnos a la lectura y representación sobre la escritura de la táctica de habitar en Valparaíso:

Heterotopica
La lógica heterotópica se plantea como una serie de marcas expuestas sobre Valparaíso que se ubican y se extienden dentro del valor de una reproducción del significado del habitar, despliega su transmisión como una realidad material. De esta manera podemos pensar que al plantearse una táctica del sujeto y su producción de paisaje interior, las casas, los planos, y sus practicas salen desde el interior de esa profunda planta de Valparaíso tematizando la *horizontalidad versátil* cualidad que explicaremos mas adelante que se expresa con las conformación de una multiplicidad tectónica a su haber. Como lo hemos planteado ya Valparaíso contiene una serie de huellas in-apropiadas o im-provisadas que develan no solo una falta de regulación o de estudio de crecimiento urbano, sino una franca representación de la libertad de lectura del habitante sobre su condición de habitar, una pluralidad local que profundiza las nociones de re-significación y re-construcción de un pensar sobre la ciudad que desde los suelos, y desde sus estratos mas íntimos, configuran una relación sujeto – objeto en acto de potencia.

Estas condiciones tiene como ejercicio de orden un tipo de planta profunda – que se muestran en su casas – donde la horizontalidad versátil de la realidad urbana es desplegada como una naturaleza

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[7] Cita de Renzo Pecchenino en dentro del libro Calderón, Alfonso. El memorial de Valparaíso. Ed. Rhil, Santiago de Chile 2001. p.472.
[8] Cita extraída del texto de Guillermo Quiñónez, Valparaíso… cerros, barrancos, abismo y pueblos de la revista En Viaje año 1957, dentro del libro Calderón, Alfonso. El memorial de Valparaíso. Ed. Rhil, Santiago de Chile 2001. p.446.
[9] ....¿Que podemos esperar del hombre? Una sola cosa: actos. **Pierre Joseph Proudhon**.

propia del lenguaje arquitectónico. Las casas de Valparaíso albergan y proponen un tipo de elementalidad cotidiana y que se exterioriza por medio de las relaciones socio-culturales.

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La logica heterotópica desarrolla un sistema de concepción espacial que se resuelve desde la indisoluble construcción del objeto a partir de la desintegración del límite como noción y proyecto, en el caso de las viviendas o de la espacialización publico-privado como también del cierre físico de la misma construcción. Los estratos ya no son modelos dispuestos sobre estructuras y particiones resistentes, sino que las experiencias y la materialización del interior se vuelca sobre el exterior y genera un campo de rostricidad. Es decir una mediación entre los modos de *producción*[10] del sujeto y las infiltraciones de sus re-significados y sus usos sobre su dimensión de lo cotidiano, que articula e interpreta a la noción de rostricidad, como un tipo cruce a modo de una elaboración de una huella que la manifestación de lo otro deja en la *subjetividad*.[11] Esta lectura *heterotópica* propondría una propuesta de multiprograma sobre la base de la misma ciudad generando no solo una heterogeneidad en los usos y funciones sino una capacidad de re-programar las condiciones tectónicas que se sustentas por las practicas de lo urbano.

Esta lógica heterotópica nos permite entender que la superposición de órdenes, que no corresponde a un alzado primario, sino que a un alzado de capas de historia reciente, construiría una profundidad, que tendría expresión en la huella de su materialización, y además en la capacidad de albergar la disolución de la forma, a modo de una entropía matérica. El concepto de entropía de esta manera tramaría desde los procesos de transfiguración de los elementos arquitectónicos que la heterotopía como lógica y la horizontalidad versátil como operación sobre las diversas situaciones donde el sujeto elabora su huella como experiencia, apropiaciones, reocupaciones, ruinas dando cuenta que la naturaleza transitoria de la materia (en este caso las formas de relacionar los elementos entre si) y las condiciones espacio-temporales, son un proceso mas que un termino tectónico acabado. Aunque también, es claro que estos principios se podrían enmarcar en una lectura esteticista confundiendo a lo mejor el recurso por la intencionalidad referida a la acción urbana, a pesar de lo anterior las redefiniciones del marco cultural en Valparaíso proponen revisitar estas lecturas cotidianas a modos de investigación encuadrándolas como nuevas posibles investigaciones socio-culturales.

Cronotopia

La segunda logica que aparece como herramienta de lectura, es la noción de *cronotopía* que se desprende de las representaciones y las configuraciones del lugar como relato abrieron la noción de *cronotopía*,[12] concepto narrativo que denota la correlación de las relaciones espacio-temporales

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[10] … los "modos de producción" son bases de una red compleja y contradictoria de articulaciones y desarticulaciones sociales, culturales, ideologías, políticas; y especialmente, se define también como un modo de producción de subjetividades colectivas tanto como individuales.
Gruner, Eduardo. **El fin de las pequeñas historias**. De los estudios culturales al retorno (imposible) de lo trágico. Capitulo, una cuestión de límites. Edición Paidos (espacios del saber) pp 79-80.

[11] Alan Read. Architecturally Speaking. Practices of Art, Architecture and the Everyday. Editorial: Routledge 2000.

[12] Según Mijail M. Bajtín, es la correlación esencial que se da entre las relaciones espaciales y temporales en la obra literaria en general y la narrativa en particular… Con Bajtin sabemos perfectamente que espacio y tiempo no existen separadamente; que no hay espacio sin tiempo, ni tiempo sin espacio, por más que nuestras operaciones separadoras (conocer: cog-noscere es separar, dividir) insistan en ello. La noción de cronotopo es mucho más que un término feliz: es un concepto que se resiste a ser pensado, y que insiste en ser vivido, vivenciado, experimentado… Por ello, como reproducción del macrocosmos al que pertenece, todo relato (microcosmos) tiene su big-bang (y su big-crunch): un principio y un fin en el tiempo, pero también una apertura y un cierre de la espacialidad instaurada a través de las palabras, de las imágenes visuales, de los sonidos no verbales, etc., desde el desembrague... (¿Será preciso recordar las implicaciones espaciales de

como un tipo de espacio vivido, vivenciado y experimentado a modo de un relato, a través de palabras, imágenes, sonidos no verbales. El concepto de cronotopia es un tipo de relación exterior – interior, que pone en evidencia a través de las representaciones sociales del paisaje un tipo de conocimiento local que permite construir instancias de ensamblaje y desencaje sobre las practicas urbanas (apropiaciones, resignificaciones). Este tipo de constructos apelan a nuestra experiencia (experiencia social) y a un tipo de lenguaje o narración que elabora una huella visible sobre el espacio, un espacio del relato que permite evidencias, las inflexiones, acentos e ideas de las representaciones y formas narrativas de un paisaje como Valparaíso desde la *notación del interprete*.

Dialogica

La tercera logica se refiere al concepto de lo dialogico[13] que instala al sujeto interactúa de forma particular con sus procesos de identidad definidos por la geografía, el espacio social y su percepción del espacio, vivido, concebido y representado al mismo tiempo. La comunicación entre las huellas del espacio y las formas de organización colectiva e individual lograron articular espacios sobre una convivencia *dialógica* como lo mencionamos anteriormente, construyendo territorios donde las fronteras entre lo real y lo imaginario apenas constituye un aspecto diferencial de los sentidos dando forma a un itinerario y a un relato de sus vidas. (figura n°13)

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Es así como las notaciones del interprete y la espacialidad cotidiana, se entrecruzan como nos recuerda Lefevbre y como lo enmarcamos en nuestro campo de batalla, en un entretejido de niveles de diferentes realidades y de profundas lecturas sobre la huella de lo otro, donde las historias, biografías, la condiciones *entrópicas de lo cultural* se convierten en sedimento social, y se transforman y mutan sobre las base de las extensiones de lo cotidiano, dando cabida aun otro tejido de realidades. *La notación del intérprete* de esta manera, sobre las representaciones es una especie de códice abierto y extenso sobre nuestros propios imaginarios replanteando la noción de identidad que depositada sobre las condiciones de sus cerros y sus especulación urbanas, y entretejida por las realidades, actúa como espacio de encuentro bajo el discurso de la experiencia, condición que se extrapolaría mas adelante como lo veremos antes la existencia de lo multicultural, sin embargo ya cerca de principios de siglo Valparaíso era un deposito de identidades nítidas que se fueron integrando al marco de referencias geográfica que a su vez se fueron diluyendo dentro del espacio de encuentro y exponiendo a la experiencia como una portadora de la evidencia, me refiero a las historias y lecturas al paso de un evento de un Valparaíso acontecido. (figura n°14)

Una pregunta descifra mucha más que un mapa o una tipo de narración descriptiva a una ciudad en-si, un Valparaíso profundo que es al mismo tiempo mínimo y universal, liso y estriado, oscuro y expuesto, quizá es la experiencia construida como huella y sobre-expuesta a un tiempo circular.

Estas condiciones de lugaridad porteña que hemos ido configurando y connotando, nos indican que no es un contexto habitual sino que responde y anima nuestras lecturas de uso y de experiencia sobre lo habitual, abriendo una posición sobre la integración de éstas coexistencias, y reconociendo al estar con-sentido a través de la asociatividad de lo intercultural, de sus símbolos, elementos

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refero y relatus?). Entrar en la reflexión del espacio como un simple "decorado" (aunque sea -y ya es mucho- un "decorado mítico") es una torpeza. El espacio es un constituyente de la ex-sistencia para los seres materiales. Ex-sistimos en el espacio. El ex- marca el punto cero, la in-ex-sistencia. Toda sistencia (toda consistencia, asistencia, resistencia, persistencia, insistencia, desistimiento) se da en el espacio.O el espacio es, básicamente, un en. Y nosotros -que no paramos de discurrir- somos, fundamentalmente discursos en tránsito (¿de dónde venimos? ¿a dónde vamos?)."

[13] Es decir, por una mirada combinada por la actuación de un sujeto en su medio social y físico, que responde por medio de una transformación de la realidad o un adaptarse a ella, como una especie de equilibrio que construye la “cultura” de cada sujeto en medio de la red de relaciones sociales espacio-temporales.

configuradores socio-morfológicos y cotidianidades. Recordemos, Gabriela Mistral decía que Valparaíso es una ciudad que no permanecía en un lugar fijo, La loca geografía de Valparaíso y el *ethos* de su inspiración poética construyen un representar el sueño de la utopía. El habitante de la casa transparente donde habita la imaginación, según el imaginario poético del puerto son ejemplo de estas coexistencias de una experiencias de diferentes realidades, que representan y re-elaboran el imaginario de esta ciudad. En palabras de José Lezama Lima: la imaginación fue un *principio de agrupamiento, de reconocimiento y de legítima diferenciación*, la imagen del espacio se convirtió en estado de conciencia, de la exclusión, la desigualdad y la discriminación. La escena de Valparaíso es el lugar del relato y las representaciones donde emerge el sujeto y su red de relaciones, transformándolo en actor. La comunicación logra articular espacios, y en la convivencia dialógica y la operatividad de la cronotopía construyen territorios donde las fronteras entre lo real y lo imaginario apenas constituye un aspecto diferencial de los sentidos que dan forma a nuestro itinerario vital y a sus relatos de vida. (figura n°15)

Estas cualidades y condiciones me encaminan a pensar que Valparaíso esta construida a partir de una condición matérica donde el sujeto con su huella sobre el espacio, a través de una tectónica, opera a través de la extensión y asociatividad que conmueve y configura una relación de materia y ciudad. Recordemos que para Aristóteles, la condición de materia poseía una cualidad receptiva en su forma, es decir que la materia puede ser todo aquello capaza de recibir una forma, y junto con lo anterior materia además, es potencia de ser algo, siendo el algo lo determinado por la forma. Sin embargo en nuestro paisaje cotidiano en Valparaíso cuando nos vemos enfrentado sobre todo a las apropiaciones y resignificaciones del sujeto sobre su espacio publico, o su espacio privado, en *¿que residirá la potencia de la materia en valparaiso?*[14] (figura n°16)

Tengo la impresión que Valparaíso es siempre algo más, mas que un conjunto de calles o un conjunto de individuos, o un conjunto de tradiciones, de costumbres o cultura. Hay una condición que se transmite mas allá y que se plasma en la identidad y se sedimenta no solo en su tectónica cotidiana, sino en lo precario del acontecer, en la inefable mirada de que algo sucederá y que solo la espera de ver y contemplar ese algo, nos llevaría a pensar que un proceso o una señal en muy corto tiempo sucederá y aparecerá a la vez. Este paisaje de acontecimientos, que tiene la capacidad de construir una representación a través de una paradoja de la presencia sobre la ausencia de orden, que no indica un des-orden sino una pregunta sobre ¿Qué es? duplica la ausencia y la eficacia de la cosa misma. Ese Valparaíso que se representa bajo una ciudad compleja y de una naturaleza entrópica, que transforma y transmuta sus signos sobre una gramática de sedimentada tectónica espacial, nos espera sobre el transcurso de su historia que nos hablara sobre los modos de habitar y su construcción de una poética expuesta. Esta relación dialéctica sobre la materia entre borde y paisaje, materia e interprete, experiencia y ser expone a Valparaíso como pura exterioridad desplegada, Valparaíso es un umbral del lenguaje, donde la escritura de sus huellas sobre la geografía y su cota, demarca un espacio de la memoria donde no hay olvido, por que no hay recuerdo igual a otro, es la memoria de lo que la palabra esta aun siempre por decir, es rumor de limites.[15] (figura n°17)

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[14] En Eupalinos ou l'architècte, Paul Valéry se imagina un diálogo entre Sócrates y Fedro. Sócrates habla de una "cosa tirada por el mar", encontrada en la frontera entre el agua y la tierra, deshecho enigmático, una de esas "cosas que la fortuna devuelve a los furores litorales y al litigio sin salida de la ola con la orilla". Fedro pregunta cuál es la materia de la cosa; y Sócrates responde que es "de la misma materia que su forma: *materia de dudas*".

[15] Cuesta, José M. la escritura del instante. Una poética de la temporalidad. Ed. Akal, Madrid 2001. pp. 7.

Lyric Documentary: On Documentary's Spectral Remains

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In a rare lecture at Yale on March 11, 1964, Walker Evans presented what he called his "aesthetic autobiography," parsing his life's work and the genre of documentary photography he had been so instrumental in shaping.[1] What he had to say about the latter was, however, far from complimentary. A brief but unsparing exordium to the Yale faculty launched Evan's presentation: "the term 'documentary,'" he declared, "is inexact, vague, even grammatically weak."[2] To sharpen this hazy designation, Evans proposed supplementing it with the attribute "lyric." Reading off the first index card of his talk, Evans conceded to his audience that: "I owe you some discussion of my title 'Lyric Documentary' – Came to me out of dissatisfaction with 'documentary' – my personal style – vague inexact adjective etc – even grammatically weak." The photographer's second card delivered the punch: "When I added 'lyric' I had the quality I was after."[3]

According to John Hill, who attended Evans' Yale lecture in 1964, both the monikers "lyric" and "documentary" had been in circulation for some time. Hill explains that: "Twenty-six years earlier, in March 1938 (shortly after Evans shot his canonical *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*,) Thomas Mabry, director of MOMA, had written to Lincoln Kirstein – apropos of Kirstein's forthcoming exhibition essay - cautioning the critic to clearly distinguish Evans' work from that of all other photographers, both 'documentary' and 'lyric.'"[4] Whether Mabry himself devised these twin terms, or was merely borrowing Evans' phrasing, it is clear that from the moment of documentary's genesis in the 1930s, artists and critics alike were already wrestling with the constraints implied by the word, and seeking to embed photographs such as Evans' either *between* the two beacons of "lyric" and "documentary," or as Evans would ultimately do: to lodge his practice *in* the contradictory amalgamation of the phrase "lyric documentary."

So what was "lyric documentary?" For Evans, the concept was apparently best concretized in hand-colored postcards from the opening decades of the twentieth century. It was two dozen of these cards, culled from his collection of several thousand, which comprised the latter half of Evans' Yale presentation. Loosely documentary in their recording of small town scenes, these postcards had yellowed into nostalgia by the 1960s, investing them with a lyrical edge.[5] The initial part of Evans's lecture, by contrast, posited a fascinatingly discrepant, non-photographic lineage for lyric documentary, appointing Leonardo da Vinci the "father" of the newly-minted genre, and citing his mechanical and embryological drawings as documentary in their "cleanliness" and "detachment," lyric in their line.[6] Andreas Vesalius 's anatomical drawings served as Evan's next example. Giovanni Battista followed, then Jan van Calcar. Palladio's eighteenth-century engravings joined the trajectory, which continued through William Blake and Charles Audubon. A digression into painting turned up Constable, Goya, Degas, "very much Guys," Daumier, "very, very much Lautrec," Hopper and Alvin

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[1] Walker Evans quoted in John T. Hill, *Walker Evans: Lyric Documentary* (Göttingen and London: Steidl; London: 2006), 12.

[2] Walker Evans, "Lyric Documentary" lecture transcript in Jeff Rosenheim, *Walker Evans and the Picture Postcard* (Göttingen: Steidl; London: Thames & Hudson, 2009), 103.

[3] Evans, handwritten notes on index cards reproduced in Rosenheim, *Walker Evans and the Picture Postcard*, 30.

[4] John T. Hill, *Walker Evans: Lyric Documentary*, 12.

[5] Evans' extensive collection of vintage postcards was highlighted in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2009 exhibition, *Walker Evans and the Picture Postcard*.

[6] Evans, transcript of "Lyric Documentary" reprinted in Rosenheim, 103.

Coburn.[7] Evans' friend Ben Shahn was credited as "practically reinventing [lyric documentary] in his early work."[8]

Evans claimed James Joyce and Vladimir Nabokov as literary purveyors of lyric documentary, reading aloud to his Yale audience a lengthy passage from Nabokov's *The Gift,* which detailed precisely the kind of street scene Evans himself was so fond of. It described the end of a street "crossed by the wide ravine of the railroad…" enveloped in "a cloud of locomotive steam [which] disintegrated against its iron ribs."[9] And it is with this *steamy* quality, and with the photographs of Alvin Langdon Coburn, that I want to pause to consider the aesthetics of vapor that Evans was so beguiled by. Singling out Coburn's work as exemplary of lyric documentary, Evans applauded his image of Portland Place (fig. 1) as "a marvelous example of the sort of thing I'm talking about."[10] Veering dangerously close to Stieglitz's misty pictorialism, or what Evans disparagingly labeled "decadent lyric," it is nonetheless this picture's distinctive blurring of the landscape – its shroud of obscuring mist – that functioned for Evans as the visual hallmark of lyric documentary.[11]

Figure 1: Alvin Langdon Coburn, *Portland Place, London, 1906.*

The vaporous mists of the lyric

Here we come upon a certain bristling, it would seem, between Evans' derogatory verbal description of documentary as "*inexact* and *vague,"* and the fact that it is precisely these same qualities of imprecision and fogginess that he wants to salvage as its trademark features. And this is perhaps the point: that the semantic looseness of the term documentary that Evans found "dissatisfying" might well be exactly what constitutes the genre's potential strengths. So what initially appeared as Evans' rationalist rejection of the word documentary for its so-called "grammatical weakness," may in fact be a backhanded embrace of precisely that amorphousness.

Evans' need to invent the category of "lyric documentary" reveals not only his recognition of documentary's pseudo-objective pretensions, but also the failures that subtend it: the potential collapse of vision itself – its obscuring, its smudging – that point in the horizon where vision founders and disintegrates into the fog of blindness (fig. 2). And as Evans intuited that documentary's defects are fettered to vision's own shortcomings, Santu Mofokeng's critique of documentary plies that same border between the visible and the invisible. Indeed, if there is any photographer who could today claim the legacy of Evans' lyric documentary, it is Mofokeng.

Master of the misty landscape, Mofokeng's stock and trade are the lyrical forms of shadows and nebulae, apparitions and spirits (figs 6, 9). His *Chasing Shadows* is perhaps his supreme work of lyricism, identified as such by several critics, but we can surely extend that description to much of Mofokeng's oeuvre. Even when the spectral is no longer the manifest subject, Mofokeng's photographs are haunted by signs of the ghostly. His tremulous forms betray the precariousness of that which seems given, disclosing the wobbly illusion by which we tame the flux of the world into polite solids.

Figure 2: Santu Mofokeng, *Near Maponya's Discount Store, Soweto, 1987.*

Mofokeng's counter-documentary

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[7] Evans in Rosenheim, 106.
[8] Evans in Rosenheim, 106.
[9] Vladimir Nabokov quoted by Evans in Rosenheim, 106.
[10] Evans in Rosenheim*,* 109. Coburn's photograph, *Portland Place, London, 1906*, was commissioned by Henry James for his *Collected Works*.
[11] Evans quoted in John T. Hill, *Walker Evans: Lyric Documentary*, 13.

Just as Evans was drawn to the contradictory union between the documentary and the lyrical, invoking it against simplistic defenses of photography's transparency, or its use as a record of veracity, so too Mofokeng has seized on the lyrical as the means to combat the limitations of the genre, tactically reconfiguring it for a post-colonial, post-apartheid context. In so doing, Mofokeng claims the unfulfilled futures which Evans presciently articulated when he affirmed in his Yale lecture: "What I believe is really good in the so-called documentary approach in photography is the addition of lyricism."[12] Mofokeng hereby inserts his work into an Evansian tradition, critiquing it, to be sure, but salvaging its central tenets. Despite his quarrel with documentary, Mofokeng has not abandoned the fraught genre, but rather burst it open, employing the lyrical as a means to expand and complexify what he saw as the South African tradition's narrow and repetitive range of images.

Mofokeng's embrace of the mists of the lyrical forms part of his larger dissent from documentary's strictures. To this end, he replaces documentary's strivings towards objectivity – evident in David Goldblatt's work for instance – with a radical subjectivity, injecting his photographic "research" with spectral self-portraits, snatches of his own shadowy presence and records of his journeying body (fig. 3).[13] These penumbra of self testify to the photographer's presence at the scene, underscoring the constructedness of the image. By describing *Chasing Shadows* as a "metaphorical biography," moreover, Mofokeng collapses the boundaries between photographer and subject, spurning documentary's traditionally external narrative voice by folding in his own subjectivity, just as he does in his writings.[14] In thus pressing the "vagueness" that has long haunted documentary, Mofokeng so inflates the genre that his lyrical photographs may present us with documentary's spectral remains.

Figure 3: Santu Mofokeng, *Self-Portrait, KZ1-Auschwitz,* 1997, silverprint.

Yet to spectralize documentary is merely to excavate documentary's histories. For Jacques Derrida, every work has its ghosts, so at one level, Mofokeng's chasing of shadows insinuates an exorcism of Evans, the figure most identified with documentary's American genesis.[15] At a broader level, though, history itself has long been figured as ghostly, or spectral. Take Hegel's concept of geist – his notion of each historical period as haunted by a zeitgeist – which is nothing if not a statement on the ghostly caste of historical discourse. But if history in general is spectral, so much more is the genre of documentary, imbricated not only in colonial histories, but also in the haunted South African landscape itself.[16] With his photographs a stomping ground for ghosts and skeletons, death and dying are themes that Mofokeng has explored allegorically, in *memento mori* images, and in the most personal of ways, in portraits of his dying brother Ishmael (fig. 11). Nonetheless both avenues point to the imbrication of photography in death, evoking the mortification which Barthes has famously described, along with the medium's role in preserving phantom memories.[17] In this way, Mofokeng's spectral content is tied to his spectralization of medium; and his ghosts flit freely between the two registers.

Mofokeng's embrace of the otherworldly and apocalyptic, informal religion and syncretic spiritualities functions as another means by which he disputes documentary's claims to veracity, and

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[12] Evans in Rosenheim, 105.

[13] Santu Mofokeng in Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Hans Ulrich Obrist: Interviews* (Volume 1). T. Boutoux, ed. (Milan, Italy: Edizione Charta/Fondazione Pitti, 2003) p. 621.

[14] Mofokeng quoted in Obrist, 619.

[15] Jacques Derrida*, Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Peggy Kamuf, trans. (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[16] South Africa is hardly the only terrain of the ghostly, as Mofokeng's haunting image of the pond of ashes at Auschwitz attests to.

[17] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Richard Howard, trans. (New York: Hill & Wang, 1981).

the rationalist tradition that subtends the genre, particularly in its ethnographic forms. Calling to ghosts is always a form of destabilising rationalism; crucially, it does so precisely by interfering with perception, with the empiricist trust in the visible as evidentiary. Post-enlightenment, the borders of vision have traditionally been aligned with the borders of belief. Mofokeng's photographs skirt these limits, flirting with the woolly fringes of what is visible and what is not, often through smoky obfuscations and distortive blurrings (figs 2, 4 and 5). Speed renders that which is usually observable, indiscernible (fig. 4). Darkness, similarly, blankets the perceptible world (fig. 2). Indeed, the authority of documentary hinges on its evidentiary claims, on producing an image in service of disclosing a certain truth, usually of social ills of one sort or another. (Documentary says: let me show you, so you can believe.) Mofokeng disrupts such confidence in the regime of the optical by troubling vision, or agitating our trust in it, so that the entire notion of visual documentation is cast as suspect. This is Mofokeng's scathing critique of documentary, one which builds on Evans' own: an exorcism of documentary's ghosts executed not only by taking on the genre itself, but also by impugning our trust in the stability of the visual that subtends it.

Figure 4: Santu Mofokeng, *Dove Lady #2, Diepkloof Zone 3, Soweto*, 2002, silverprint.

The ghost at vision's edge

Because ghosts hover at the margins of vision, the ghostly is the sign of vision's edge. They become ciphers for the frontiers of seeing, or the limits of the camera. This is surely why the new medium of photography was ushered into Euro-American culture by the figure of the ghost, developing in tandem with the feverish obsession with spiritualism and spirit photography which swept America in the late 1850 and 60s, and then Europe from the 1870s. Indeed, photography has long nurtured an unholy alliance with the spectral. Spirit doubles and counterfeit figures crowded into early photographic prints, as mystics and seers swore that the camera would reveal that which the naked eye could not (figs. 5, 7). For many, the new medium proffered itself literally as a medium – an instrumental surface of contact between worlds – mediating between what could be seen and what could not. Then too, its purpose was documentary, loosely speaking: to record that which was invisible.

Yet in spirit photography, it was precisely the photographic appearance of the apparition that testified to its existence; with Mofokeng, by contrast, vision itself is destabilized so that no appearance is to be trusted. In this epistemological uncertainty, Mofokeng's work departs strikingly from Goldblatt's: while Goldblatt's lifelong reckoning has been with an unwavering aesthetics of presence, or what he calls the "is-ness" of objects, Mofokeng chases what he identifies as the "isn't-ness of things."[18] Thus abandoning any form of objectivism, Mofokeng reveals the ghostly lineage of his work by gesturing to photography's own apparitional histories: its spectral doublings', misty emanations and auratic glows (fig. 5-8). Mofokeng's blurred, otherworldly gleams equally illuminate the strange light of documentary's rationalist pretensions, alluding to the repressed histories of superstition and fantasy that lie at the heart of the Western visual tradition. This cross-cultural genealogy links Sotho and other local strains of belief implicating photography in shades, *isithunzi* and the taking of spirit, with parallel Euro-American associations between the spirit and the photographic image. It is in this spectral half-light that we remember that one of the earliest mass advertising slogans for photography in 1860s America was "Secure the Shadow, Ere the Substance Fade," or Soujourner Truth's famous line: "I sell the shadow to support the substance."

Figure 5: William Hope c. 1930.
Figure 6: Santu Mofokeng, *Moth'osele Maine, Bloemhof*, 1994, silverprint.

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[18] Goldblatt as quoted in the wall text for his retrospective at the Jewish Museum, New York, 2010. Interview with Santu Mofokeng, Johannesburg, January 16, 2011.

Figure 7: William Hope, *"Faceless" woman with spirit of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, c. 1931.
Figure 8: Santu Mofokeng, *Ludmilla Woloschima Makarowa of Russia at the 55th anniversary celebrations in Ravensbruck, Germany,* 2000, silverprint.

The melancholy cast of the lyric
Examining Mofokeng's archive of images, it is clear that the effects of the lyrical – doubling and obscuring, mistiness, sfumato blurring – frequently function also as the signs of the ghostly, the handprints of death. This is hardly surprising considering that the lyric has long been locked in an embrace with the tragic. For Walter Benjamin, of course, the nineteenth century was the last great age of lyric poetry, with Baudelaire, "his lyric poet" of the metropolis, its exemplar.[19] But in Benjamin's view, Baudelaire's lyric poetry verged on *trauerspiel* or tragedy, so that as one critic put it: "Baudelaire's lyric is best understood as a form of mourning play, driven by a lyrical mood of despair before transience."[20] Here transience – signaled by the same haunting effects of fleeting shadows and ephemeral smoke – functions as the mark of melancholy, provoking a despair brought on by the impermanence of life itself. Death once more rings in the lyrical, whether in the guise of the ghostly or the transient.

In this way, the visual forms of the spectral and the lyrical are often nearly identical. Ghosts are commonly linked with fog and swirling air, visual denotations of the breath that is associated with the curling shape of *geist* or spirit (fig. 9). Ghosts, similarly, appear in hovering mists; or manifest in an otherworldly spark of electricity – as when Ishmael's jacket reflects light in the form of a cross (fig. 11). The longtime conjunction of the electric spark and the ghostly provides another way to read Mofokeng's auratic streaks (fig. 4). Indeed, when Mofokeng's lexicon of spectral visuality morphs into blurring and streaking, it comes to insinuate not only the slipperiness of truths – photographic or otherwise – but that the eye is being outwitted by the speed of the otherworldly; that vision is too plodding to keep pace with the lightning tempo of the moving body – hence the constant galloping after shadows.

Figure 9: Santu Mofokeng, *A "Wake" in Lesotho,* 2008, silverprint.

Figure 10: Albert van Schrenk-Notzing, *Portrait of Eva with electricity spirit manifestation, May 1912.*
Figure 11: *Ishmael Inside Motouleng Cave, Clarens*, 2004, silverprint.

Santu Mofokeng's relationship to Walker Evans, and his fulfillment of Evans' prescient vision of lyrical documentary, is hardly coincidental. For if we triangulate David Goldblatt into this photographic dialogue, Mofokeng's brand of lyrical documentary emerges not merely as a long-distance relationship patterned on dynamics of identification and difference, but as a remarkably proximate association grounded in a material lineage that runs via Goldblatt, for whom Evans is a touchstone figure. Goldblatt's aesthetics of formal austerity and lean objectivism revealed Evans' vision of documentary to a generation of South African photographers. For Mofokeng, who worked with Goldblatt in the 1980s, the foundational force of the American's work would have been delivered to Johannesburg in a fairly immediate fashion. Building on this local tradition of Evansian documentary, Mofokeng has pushed the genre into the full richness of its lyrical potentialities, actualizing those chimerical futures that Evans himself once envisioned.

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[19] Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*. Harry Zohn, trans. (London: Verso, 1997).
[20] Howard Caygill, *Walter Benjamin: The Colour of Experience* (New York: Routledge, 1998): 138.

Blackness as a Model: Towards a New Art History

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"Art forms are part of our cultural, social, and personal histories. We ought to be seriously concerned about their preservation and availability to the public…."[1] *Who is entitled to tell the black artist's story in South Africa?* Brought forward at this conference, this question acknowledges that art history matters, while simultaneously directing our attention to systemic inequities within its praxis. Only hubris would point to a singular response. My contribution to this panel may seem evasive, if not indirect, in its reply: namely, providing a brief background on the discursive practices that frame black artists and their work in Unites States of America with the hope that it may prise today's discussions out beyond national borders. What agency does "Black artist" as global nomenclature give us and where may if fail? I am also motivated by Eddie Chambers's (a black artist and art historian) observation that African American art history's "ethnic" considerations have lead to its isolation from relevant and pertinent contexts. To cite Chambers:

> "The tendency to disconnect African-American studies from African Diaspora studies has troubling consequences and implications and reflects a pronounced US hegemony and insularity, a mindset that sees itself as having no great need to engage with the world and history beyond the borders of the continental US. This hegemony and insularity also reflect a particular tendency within academic studies to treat disciplines in mutually exclusive and self-referencing terms."[2]

Like Chambers, I am troubled by scholarship that uses African American exceptionalism for all black practices and wary of its export as a canonical black aesthetic. Hence, I am not drawing parallels between black America/n and black South Africa/n artists' lives, practice or positionality but rather seeking conjunctures in the practice of art history therein and therewith. The concern we share is for black artistic representation and representivity in our visual culture and historical record and the potential [or lack thereof] for academic scholarship to mediate these well.

When it comes to documenting, contextualizing, and analyzing marginalized practices and histories, the problem is epistemological and methodological: it depends on how we do it *and don't do it*, not just the fact that it is done or by whom.[3] Getting "the black artist's story"–the issue here—is always already a critically contested endeavor.

African American art history:

Mainstream American art history long privileged white male artistic production. Seen as peripheral to whitestream [mainstream] art history, African American artistic production was discussed sparingly in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; not surprisingly, these limited

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[1] James Smalls, "A Ghost of a Chance: Invisibility and Elision in African American Art Historical Practice," *Art Documentation* 13.1(Spring 1994), p. 8. This essay was written for oral presentation at the 2011 SAVAH/CIHIA conference at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. It was not intended (or edited) for publication and dissemination, but rather to inspire, provoke and contribute to conference dialogue and session participants.

[2] Eddie Chambers, "African-American Art: Redefining the Canon," *Critical Interventions* 6 (Spring, 2010), p. 19.

[3] Paraphrasing and borrowing from James Smalls: "The problem of African American art history then, is methodological; it depends on how we do it and how we don't do it, not just on the fact that we do it. A more critical method ultimately affects the viability, spread and influence of African American art and the future state and integrity of its research and scholarship." James Smalls, "A Ghost of a Chance: Invisibility and Elision in African American Art Historical Practice," *Art Documentation* 13.1(Spring 1994), p. 7.

discussions of black American art frequently projected white American anxiety and "raced" expectations for the black art. Historically marginalized or otherwise ignored, black artistic practice in the US was first seriously documented by cultural insiders: black artists and black scholars. Two black scholars affiliated with Howard University, a historically black institution based in Washington, DC Howard University, penned foundational texts in the field in the early twentieth century. In his 1925 essay "The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts," philosopher Alain Locke promoted racially conscious art, while artist and art historian James Porter's 1943 text, *Modern Negro Art* set out to place African American art squarely within mainstream of American art. Both relied on the preexisting conventions [and discursive traditions] of the field as both sought to bring necessary *visibility and legitimacy* to African American art and artists.

Given the lack of competing voices, contending documents and serviceable texts, a canon of representative artists developed from these early texts and became the basis for a series of exhibitions, future texts and ideological frameworks [mainstream and/or blackstream]. Notwithstanding its critical necessity, African American art history developed along conventional paradigms and rather conservatively: namely through exhibitions and publications emphasizing the reclamation of artists' biographies and framed along traditional chronologies and formal stylistic categories of mainstream art history. As with "white" art history, race became an organizing principle but without adequate attention to its attendant issues and contexts. But it should not surprise us; contextualizing race in addition to doing art history's spadework is an exhaustive and exhausting undertaking, and one without good methodological precedent. Mainstream art history has yet to fully recognize or contextualize its own whiteness, preferring instead to re-center itself in relation to the margins.

Taking charge of the history and authorship of black art history, these historians confronted an entrenched exclusionary art history through what might be seen as separate development: a black art history that ran parallel to mainstream art history. These fully functional and viable histories and texts remained relatively invisible to the extended American public until mainstream institutions began to exhibit African American art with serious intents, at which time black scholarship became indispensible, and among the only significant, serious resources available. Among the most influential was *Two Centuries of African American Art*, curated by David C. Driskell, opened in 1976 in Los Angeles and traveled across the USA. It helped to shape future collecting habits of individuals and mainstream institutions, and Driskell's catalogue essays introduced a broader [that is white] American public to the foundational texts of African American scholars, such as James Porter, Alain Locke and others.

Threaded throughout the discourse were varying positions vis-à-vis the "mainstream" nature of black art and/or or its "difference." With varying degrees of influence and intersection the field of African American art has two strong currents: firstly, an exceptionalism with roots in Africa, the black diaspora and American slavery; and secondly, its inherent American-ness. The first stream expands the definition of black American and African diasporic art while the second services and thereby broadens the definition of American art. Art historians who follow this second current are characteristically scholars of American art history, while those who research arts of the black diaspora are by and large transnational in their practice or critical race historians.

The field has witnessed many organizational and structural mileposts: including specialized conferences, lively debates over what constitutes a black aesthetic and consideration of a national agenda for scholarly research in African American art history, criticism, and cultural activism; the establishment of black cultural institutions, curricula, and even doctoral programs in African art history and theory. Decidedly post-adolescent, its somewhat deep-rooted place within early Eurocentric foundational texts has continued to incentivize scholars seeking alternative critical

assessments and newly defined activist discourses. As we've learned, difference alone may not shift paradigms; we must seek to understand what has made difference discrepant.

The discourse has expanded beyond the individual narrative of practicing artists to the critical interrogation of the very concept of mainstream and blackstream, their vocabularies, institutions and meanings. When and how does/can writing from outside the "mainstream" attend to the systemic discursive problems and exclusionary practices? What is valued and maintained and what is jettisoned? Writing on the cusp of the new millennium, noted African American scholar and artist David C. Driskell wrote, "There remains a problem with using race to define a field, yet we must be realistic in noting that Americans are a racially conscious people." Or as British cultural theorist Stuart Hall suggests, "What we can say is that 'black' by itself…will no longer do. [And yet] difference refuses to disappear."[4]

Assessing the field in 2003, James Smalls wrote:

> "Although historians of African American art continue to court legitimacy in the field, it is clear that traditional art historical strategies are impediments to a vital study of African American art. Theoretical and critical approaches to African American art and other modes of cultural production often present fundamental philosophical problems, such as the nature of black identity, subjectivity, and the nature and viability of 'race and/as representation' itself. The answers to these problems are not always immediately comprehensible, but the thoughtful application of critical theories will open up meaningful possibilities rather than limit them or close them down."[5]

What can comparative histories of black artistic practices and its written histories offer us as strategies above and beyond overarching claims of blackness? Surely it is that we share seminal problems: To name just a few: inadequate resources, visual, historical, and contextual—we must not evade the role of class—the propensity to replace black invisibility with a controlled, regulated visibility—that it the policing of black artistic practice from within and without; market demands for certain visible black aesthetic, civic and social expectations for black artists in terms of subject matter or political agenda; and concern for authenticity by cultural insiders and outsiders. Ambivalence remains between the need to retrieve, document, and archive histories that grow increasingly distant from us, and the pressing need to change [decolonize] the field [its discursive practices], scrutinize how histories are collected, written and archived. Limited resources may compete with political agendas that have very little to do with art. Beyond shared problems, however, I am interested in sharing strategies of resistance and reformation; methods for centering black voices within art history, within white artistic praxes, and an intercultural dialogue—framed eloquently at this conference by Professor Galla—that genuinely allows for equal powers of engagement.

Where do I fit as a white practitioner in a black field? I am thinking here of the very real problem of cultural ignorance, the idea put forward by David Koloane that it is "often unimaginable that a writer who virtually lives in a radically different divide can honestly and objectively bridge the divide." Writing in 1978 Keith Morrison, a Jamaican-born artist practicing in the USA wrote:

> "The question remains as to whether the spirit of a Pan-African culture can be caught sufficiently by Whites for them to write criticism about Blacks that is meaningful to Blacks and my answer, resoundingly, is yes. Yes, *if* they are capable or willing to look

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[4] Stuart Hall, "Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three 'Moments' in Post-war History," *History Workshop Journal*, 61 (2006), p. 22.
[5] James Smalls, "Voicing New Critical Perspectives," *American Art* 17.1 (Spring, 2003), p. 14.

> beyond their own cultural biases to realize that simply because they have controlled the forces of international criticism does not mean that their criticism is just in relation to other peoples. Whites will have to stop excusing themselves for ignorance of Black culture…. Until Whites recognize their deficiencies toward Black culture to be that of true ignorance they will not be in a position to assess its merits meaningfully."

When it comes to black artistic practice, white scholars may stumble around in the darkness until they find or are provided with a more effective way—for me, at least, this more effective way is often bestowed by black artists. For obvious reasons, white scholars rarely criticize the field of African American art on record; but white scholars, like myself, positioned to learn from and use the eloquent arguments of their black colleagues do contribute to the field. This points to certain mutability and instability of what one might believe to be the "race factor" embedded within the art historical analysis. I may and do borrow black strategies to critique the entrenchments within art history related to things that may appear to stand outside race: I have used Thembinkosi Goniwe's installation *Black Print* to critique the disciplinary definitions of printmaking and Frank Bowling and David Kolane's comments on black abstraction to suggest that black/modernism/abstract are not universalist or white concepts but always already "black entities" born of colonial encounter. Ernest Mancoba was, I believe, intimating this when he critiqued as a modernist ploy the supposed distinctiveness between figuration and abstraction. For Mancoba this was brought by/through the colonial encounter and hinged on the division in conception between the spirit and material inaugurated by the West. To cite Mancoba: "Because our eye has been miseducated, so to speak, by the superficiality of academism, which can only estimate the worth of any representation of man, according to its fidelity to the purely aesthetic rules it has established…."[6]

While the canonical art historical categories have often masqueraded as apolitical they never were; cultural chauvinism runs rampant therein. We merely need to look to black art, artists and its history to know this. As Keith Morrison notes, art history and criticism "is a culturally biased construct designed to elucidate points of view that are of central interest to the cultural values of its origin…. that which is called universal is most often a cultural dominance, rather than a synthesis of two or more cultures."[7] David Koloane suggests that we must reconstitute what is meaningful and valued regarding the creative process: "the validation of the expression and effort of the subject." Without question this is difficult terrain; we are in need of black art history driven neither by identity or ethnography nor framed by delimiting conceptions of blackness.

"Specialists in the history of African American art will continue to document the work of black artists, especially since we are not certain that others always will," notes Jacqueline Francis. "But this raises questions: Are we privileging, fetishizing, and even trying to concretize the margins? Will we always look for "race" in the same place? Another way to continue our project of subverting racism and exclusionism might be to develop a more critical study of race and representation… one which includes whiteness – a construction dependent upon blackness and otherness…."[8] For Francis, James Smalls, Camara Holloway and other historians of African American art, solutions are to be found within "critical race art history" which offers "contextualized examination of appearances, a careful study of style as image-making strategy **and** a study of power differentials mediated across specific, constructed communities of artists and patrons."[9] Critical race art history foregrounds the mediatory role of cultural dominance in the history of art, past and present, as it examines closely artistic

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[6] Hans Ulrich Obrist, "An Interview with Ernest Mancoba," *Third Text*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 2010, p. 382.
[7] Keith A. Morrison, "Art Criticism: A Pan-African Point of View," *New Art Examiner* (February 1979), p. 4.
[8] Jacqueline Francis, "Writing African American Art History," *American Art* 17 (Spring, 2003), p. 9 with paraphrasing and additions by Julie McGee.
[9] Jacqueline Francis, "Writing African American Art History," *American Art* 17 (Spring, 2003), p. 9.

production. As Francis has suggested, "As the categories of race and racism change, so must our perspectives on them."[10]

Cultural domination has consequences; power is embodied in culture; cultures are political. We have not yet arrived at a period when we can retire the idea that black art history is a revolutionary strategy. It still is and may always be. To borrow from Dr. Galla's keynote address, we continue to need an "activist cultural approach." As a field, art history should embrace the notion that resistance and contention are necessary attributes—especially if we want the discipline to grow, to change and be genuinely more reflective of the objects and histories it covets.

So: who is entitled to tell the black artist's story in South Africa? I for one prefer to err on the side of freedom, democracy and pluralism. So everyone, then, is entitled. Much more important to me are these questions: who is prepared to take on the responsibilities such telling requires and what tools are necessary prerequisites for doing it well. Following Keith Morrison:

> "In order for African American art to progress, we need all sorts of people with all sorts of interests to engage it and transform it from a moribund field of special interest and fixed concepts into a vital terrain of lively and contested ideas. We need archivists, die-hard formalists, critics, and catalogue essayists as well as the more experimental critical theorists and inter- and multi-disciplinarians engaged in feminist, film, literary, and other studies and theories. We need both the free flow and contestation of discourses that range from the empirical to those that tap into the unconscious and conceptual."[11]

In closing I would like to pose a question that is often lost in our debates about art history, canon formation and the "artist's story" and it necessarily folds back to the fine arts curriculum. What are the objectives of our fine art curricula and what role do they play in the certain entrenchments within art history? Perhaps the institutional and thereby legitimized formalist practices also need to reflect what we want a more diverse and critical art history to be. What is the potential for productive shifts and fissures brought about by BFA and MFA programs that actively engage with and teach a range of aesthetic practices based more widely on the diversity of aesthetic practices that global cultures provide us?

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[10] Jacqueline Francis, "Writing African American Art History," *American Art* 17 (Spring, 2003), p. 8.
[11] James Smalls, "Voicing New Critical Perspectives," *American Art* 17.1 (Spring, 2003), p. 15.

TRANSCODE: Dialogues Around Intermedia Practice

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Last year I was privileged to curate the exhibition *TRANSCODE: Dialogues around intermedia practice*, held at the UNISA Art Gallery. This featured the work of 12 artists who regularly negotiate the interchanges inherent in working with traditional and new media, within a particular South African context.

1. Introduction:

The intention behind *TRANSCODE* was to frame the theoretical gap between digital and analogue art media practice by articulating the differences between supposedly conflicting positions, materials and traditions. I view the curatorial process to be an extension of the making strategies of an artist, and the group interaction as an extended system of thinking. This exhibition is also positioned as a core component in my practice-led DLitt et Phil.

The invited artists worked both in physical and software-driven art, but their creative processes are increasingly influenced by digital technology. Within these processes the artists explore plausible differences within unfolding dialogues while reconstructing 'grey areas', places where slippage and intervention avoid rigid classification.

My engagement with the selected artists took into consideration Gadamer's "plurality of conversations". This influenced my assumption that the productive arena between the physicality of traditional art forms and the cyber world of the digital terrain has the potential to produce new forms of knowledge in general and in relation to artwork.

2. Definitions:

Three significant key words in the title serve to contextualise the concept behind the curatorial framework:

2.1 *TRANSCODE:*

In software jargon, the term transcode refers to a process that enables the conversion of data from one encoding system to another, permitting the export and interchange of dissimilar formats. A well-known example of transcoding is changing a Photoshop image-file to jpg. Within this process the character of the file changes irreversibly. Similarly, within the context of this exhibition, transcoding enabled metaphoric transformation. It points to the significant, yet often inconspicuous manner in which we adjust our lives in a world of ubiquitous technologies.

2.2 Dialogue:

Gadamer approaches language as conversation, and I align myself with his perspective that dialogue is an action "to speak with the other" (Gallagher 2002: 55)[1], implying the possibility for different approaches to co-exist without one dominant voice. Although the participating artists' works at times opposed one another, yet visualisations also correlated on numerous levels, providing a multi-layered dialogue.

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[1] Gallagher, S. 2002. *Conversations in Postmodern Hermeneutics,* in Silverman, HJ (ed). *Lyotard: philosophy, politics, and the sublime.* New York: Routledge. In Gallagher's (2002:55) discussion Gadamer is contrasted to Derrida, where meaning becomes endlessly deferred.

2.3. Intermedia practice:
Intermedia practice aims to bridge existing modes of making and thinking. It refers to interdisciplinary activities between different genres such as painting and theatre and leads to a fusion of art forms not previously linked. The process of **intermedia practice** considers the collective composition of different media with inherently opposing intertextual references. It refers to the purposeful engagement and interaction of the conceptually overlapping formal strategies of these media, which has the effect of reconfiguring their socio-political and cultural associations.

3. General context and methodology:

Existing theories around intermedia practice hypothesize that, through layered conversations, systems and concrete forms can be remediated[2]. Contemporary art reflects a desire to expand media while concealing the processes of mediation. In response to this, the production of TRANSCODE intended to reveal dialogical processes by expanding conceptual and aesthetic relationships.

Practice-led methodology
The principle that material processes reflect thinking, knowledge and research is supported in current writing within practice-led research, the methodology. This type of research **methodology** emphasizes evidence and strategies of conceptualisation via *art making*. TRANSCODE focused on capturing in image and word the conversations between thinking, constructive processes and theoretical investigation. The significance of this dialogue is reflected through my own artistic processes and explorations, and the evidence of my engagement with artists through interviews and documentation of their processes, gradually verified and compared strata of thought.

4. Artists and gallery plan: *a community of artists*

The exhibition brought together artists who do not necessarily work with shared themes, so the selection process for participating artists became an inter-relational reflection on three layers. Firstly, I considered my affinity with the artists' approach to making; secondly, their influences were considered; and the third group comprised of artists that I mentored in my capacity as a lecturer, whose works had contributed a layer of insight to this vein of thinking.

My position became that of an artist in the community of fellow artists, a deliberate construction of a neighbourhood of processes within which to contextualise my own production.

Fig 1: Gwen Miller, *Layout plan for TRANSCODE in UNISA Art Gallery* (2011).

Formally the exhibiting space was sectioned into installation 'rooms'. Where the works mediated the abstract ideas of narration, time, embodiment, and systems of order.

- **The first room** contained works by Lawrence Lemaoana alongside those of the collaborative of Celia de Villiers and the Intuthuko Embroiderers, which combined digital and fabric media.
- **Room 2** presented painterly works from Frikkie Eksteen and Carolyn Parton, and Marcus Neustetter's digital works.

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[2] I was influenced by Bolter and Grusin's formulation of remediation, a term coined by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin in 1996. For further reading see Bolter, JD & Grusin, R. 1999 and 2000 (paperback edition). *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MIT Press.

- **Room 3** included an installation of physical computing along with stop-frame animations and etchings by Colleen Alborough. Churchill Madikida's video projections were placed in proximity to Nathaniel Stern's digital prints and interactive installation.
- **Room 4** showed the video and related ink drawings of Minnette Vari, Interactive Flash work by Sello Mahlangu, paint and digital video projections by Fabian Wargau and my own multimedia work.

Fig 2: Pamphlet image layout by Adelle van Zyl and Gwen Miller for *TRANSCODE* in UNISA Art Gallery (2011).

Gathered in a virtual community within the conceptual site of transcoding, then encouraged to branch out in multi-layered "lines of flight", to borrow Deleuze and Guattari's (1987: 9) terminology. Each mapped their own responses to the exhibition concept, and to our on-going email communications. Artists encoded their own detachable production as heterogeneous realities, referencing Deleuze and Guattari's (1987:8) "throng of dialects", creating connections without a dominant "mother tongue".

5. Representation of space

Traditional art has long been associated with both geographic and abstract space. Current discourse centring on the Internet often uses the metaphor of space – beginning with the term "cyberspace" (Corcoran 1992:375) and Cyber art's history of dematerialization (Graham and Cook 2010:51). I will discuss the exhibiting "room" of Frikkie Eksteen, and compare him with Marcus Neustetter and Carolyn Parton, pointing out the links and differences that provided spaces between assumed differences.

Although the processes and non-materiality of digitisation reflect placeless-ness, with an emphasis on fluid process and distributed networked data rather than the fixed object, these three artists still deliberately manipulate an inherently bodily experience necessary for the viewer to interact with their works.

5.1. Frikkie Eksteen

Eksteen refers to his complex multi-disciplinary permutation of traditional and non-traditional practices as "the computer thinking about the handmade"; in other words, the planning of the abstract mental space interacted by a physical engagement with the bodily processes of painting.

On a technical level, Eksteen's work evolves from handmade painting manipulated with *Winmorph* software stretched over three-dimensionally created cyber figures created with *Faceshop*. These are adapted as scaffolding for morphed images, further articulated with *Photoshop* and *3DMax*, then printed in *Ultrachrome inks* on canvas. Finally the work is over-painted with oil paints. (The process is not necessary linear.)

The shifting between the geographies of digital and physical spaces should not be analysed as formal devices, but rather as the **role** of space overcoming the constructed barriers of mechanical mapping versus organic order; detached calculation versus emotional chemistry.

Fig 3: Frikkie Eksteen, *The Ambassadors* and detail from Eksteen's web page showing details of the viewing angles (2009).

This is evident in *The Ambassadors*[3] as Eksteen composes his morphed paintings so as to control the physical movement of the viewer and manipulate the way the viewer engages with the work. **The viewer can only see the portraits in perspective from particular vantage points.** The fluctuation between Eksteen's selection of software media and his recoding of painterly processes provides an abstract space for social critique on the relationships of institutional power. His conceptual strategy is to find metaphors for questioning hegemony, and in the Ambassadors the distorted university principals were repainted in ways that mimic the morphed forms.

Fig 4: Frikkie Eksteen, selected images from the *Stock character series* (2009).

In Eksteen's series *Stock characters*[4], further developed specifically for *TRANSCODE*, the idea of dissimilarity is driven. Here the character associations are those of weakness, such as complaisance, faultfinding, flattering, and antisocial behavior. In *Stock characters*, the transparency of his medium aligns conceptually with revealing weakness. This represents a shift from the technical direction of *the Ambassadors*, as here the paint becomes a code for chaos – spilling, staining and clotting.

The strata of expressions in Eksteen's works converge in *Cephalophore* (2011)[5]. Here the dominant powers of the corporate space submit to an entire colonizing generation of Eksteen's cyborg offspring, decapitating the saint of domination. Not that this spells out death – rather this head continues to speak from a liminal place between life and death, like an old mindset refusing to become quiet.

Fig 5: Frikkie Eksteen, *Cephalophore* and details (2011).

It is through the intervention of software processes that Eksteen's painterly language becomes remediated, not as expected by displaying tight control, but by bringing heterogeneity though relaxing control and traversing the boundaries. Significantly, the digital print does not evoke a prescriptive response from painting, but invokes an unpredictable painterly response. In this way, the conceptual space aligns with the formal and material conversations. These works present an open-ended conversation about the physical matter of painting, the thinking-faulting[6] body and the analytical cyber space of the computer.

5.2. Marcus Neustetter

Neustetter's works represent his fascination with the space in between, that unknown territory where uncertainty finds itself as a buffer between fixed points. His subjects explore the tension of movement and expansion, whilst using the 'tools' of everyday mobilising technology, such as Google Earth[7] and a motor vehicle. Neustetter reflects on the finiteness of humankind in relation to the technologies of progress, namely our observation systems and the industry that threatens the environment.

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[3] Frikkie Eksteen, *The Ambassadors* (2009). Oil, enamel and spray-paint on canvas, 200 x 200 cm. ABSA Permanent Collection. Photograph: Frikkie Eksteen.

[4] Stock Character series consisted of the following: *The Coward, The Flatterer*, *The Unsociable Man, The Complaisant Man* and *The Faultfinder*. All created in 2011. Oil and inkjet print on canvas, 94.2 x 36.2 cm. Photographs: Frikkie Eksteen.

[5] Frikkie Eksteen, *Cephalophore* (2011). Oil and inkjet print on canvas, 123 x 295 cm. UNISA Permanent Collection. Photographs: Izelle Jacobs.

[6] Eksteen speaks of a digital sterility, a mental plotting that is as part of the work as the tactile physical labor that painting demands (informal conversation 20 June 2012).

[7] Marcus Neustetter, *Johannesburg to Johannesburg North South* (2010). Google Earth video, 10min 23sec. Photograph: Izelle Jacobs.

Fig 6: Marcus Neustetter, *Johannesburg to Johannesburg North South* (2010).

Where Eksteen's work challenges traditional authority within a painting discipline, Neustetter finds reflection of our fragile nature in the vastness of satellite observation. Neustetter's *TRANSCODE* installation *Cradle Observation 1*[8] utilised the gallery space as a metaphoric observation site Perspex mounted plinths encased prints that mapped a site in the Cradle of Humankind that is threatened by the acid drain water as a result in mining.

Fig 7: Marcus Neustetter, *Cradle Observation 1,* detail and installation angles (2011).

A significant perspective of the installation could be seen only when the viewer climbed a high gallery ladder to look down.

The act of ascending the ladder forced a shift in perspective, reminding the viewer of the metaphorical implication of distance. This points toward a meditation on our role and place in the destruction of environmental sites. The physicality of the climb was unsettling, placing the viewer is a position of uncertainty, and tied in with one of Neustetter's core concepts: **our frailty**.

Mapping devices secure our directions; create comfort with sureness of destination. Google Earth identifies the fixity of site. But, when Neustetter brings the body as an added measuring instrument into the parameters of detached digital data, it highlights the sensitivity of our physical limitations when travelling beyond known spaces into unknown territory. Neustetter's relationship with mobilised technology is a dialogue of tension and contradiction, just as the creative processes suggest the fluid spaces of our bodily presence.

5.3. Carolyn Parton

In contrast with Eksteen and Neustetter, Parton's work seemed visceral and expressive of 3D residue. Yet Parton's research and use of paint has also been influenced by her work with digital technologies as well as her research in ecological impact assessment. Through these, she explored the traversable boundaries between the virtual and the real in manifesting physical space. Her fascination with the fragment – the piece of paint dust, the discarded paint tube, the digital byte – lies in its collective, accumulative power. Parton has gathered fragments of paint from all kinds of painters ranging from artists to commercial house painters, setting up lines of communication within a broader community.

Fig 8: Carolyn Parton, *Jump* (2004 – 2011).

Parton (Exhibition pamphlet 2011) wrote that "Initially, the ocean with its contradictory dynamism – the germinative and the destructive – was a symbolic basis" for her developing visual language.[9] She saw correlations with the global collective consciousness embodied in the digital ocean. These fragmented pieces of evidence were presented in installations that reflect processes of excess and becoming. Therefore the metaphor that Parton calls up is the relationship of digital waste and geographical waste, each expressing the re-territorialization of the other, immersing the viewer in strata of clutter.

Fig 9: Carolyn Parton, *24.925kg landscape* and detail from a slight angle (2009).
Fig 10: Carolyn Parton, *Time will tell* (2011).

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[8] Marcus Neustetter, *Cradle Observation 1* (2011). Google Earth tracing on plinths with Perspex covers and a Gallery ladder. Image: Marcus Neustetter, photographs: Gwen Miller.

[9] As can be seen in her work: Carolyn Parton, *Jump* (2004 – 2011). Archival print on cotton paper, paint residue ink, 116 x 85cm.

This suggested space of geological stratification is seen in her weighted work *24.925kg landscape*[10] and installation, *Time will tell*.[11] Yet the installations speak also of placelessness – a floating residue – as unconnected as the abstract layers in Photoshop. In Parton's work the floating digital particles led to independent layers of paint existing without any support or backing.

Scientist Robert Disalle (2008:1-2)[12] wrote that our knowledge and understanding of matter influence our ideas of space and time. The physical properties of paint, its toxic production cycles and the waste left by painters led Parton to rethink the excess of waste by stacking paint skins and scabs into frames to recall pictorial landscapes.

Fig 11: Carolyn Parton, one of several work books (2004-2011) and leftover 'debris' from artists (2011).

The excess of waste and its re-use is documented as Parton's thinking and making processes in the numerous work book details.

Similar to the way Eksteen releases painting, Parton's installation painting becomes almost performative. It does not give the impression of a space interpreted "correctly", or as "correlating" to existing space, it rather behaves as a participatory system of artists depositing 'its' residue in collaboration with Parton.

6. Conclusion

In describing contemporary aspects of new media, Graham and Cook (2010: 5) refer to the increasing role of processes[13] operating behind the actual media visible at any one moment in an artwork. This is evident in the works produced for *TRANSCODE* by these three artists, as they kept the boundaries of art production in flux to create conversations between the geographies of new and traditional media.

Neustetter's work **invited contemplation** around actual mobilisation and the spaces between, as well as the exhibited evidence of the concept. Similarly Eksteen's plotting and strategic development of characters in cyberspace was as much part of his conceptual drive as were the resulting canvasses. Parton's engagement with a community of artists took the form of email communication, letters and studio visits, so to enable her to collect their discarded paint tubes as well as spills of house painters. These communications became the work as much as the stacked evidence of the artists' '*left-overs*' in her gallery exhibit.

From Eksteen's cyberspace recoding painting, to the way Neustetter's Google Earth encodes our perspective within space, and Parton's remediation of digital and physical waste, each of these lines of thought search for multiple reversible spaces of abstract and geographical dimensions. In the exhibition *TRANSCODE*, the cross-contamination of conceptual and aesthetic relationships was revealed when artistic mediation processes engaged in dialogue with metaphoric spaces. In this way, *TRANSCODE* reflected on a complex creative detour, suggesting an alternative way of imagining the presumed dualism between traditional and digital art.

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[10] Carolyn Parton, *24.925kg landscape* (2009). Reconstituted paint residue, canvas, 62.5 x 100 cm. Photograph: Carolyn Parton.

[11] Carolyn Parton, *Time will tell* (2011). Installation: acrylic, enamel and reconstituted paints, Dimensions variable. Photograph: Izelle Jacobs.

[12] Diselle, R. 2008. *Understanding time-space: Physics from Newton to Einstein*. Cambridge: Routledge.

[13] Graham and Cook (2010: 5) used the term *postmedia* to refer to the processes behind media.

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Visual arts as creative expression and heritage in Zambia: The post-independence situation for contemporary art, heritage and art education, new communication developments in the arts market, the emergence of new audiences and museums as art institutions and agencies for cultural and national arts policy.

Mwape J Mumbi

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Introduction

My growing curious fascination particularly with film, and the media in general, as to our use of this tool of communication within and between societies South of the Globe, led me in 2005 while visiting in Harare, to sign up for a film producer's master-class at that year's Zimbabwe International Film Festival. Karl Francis, a passionate well travelled, and experienced film director and writer of Welsh working class roots, in addition to his other professional and academic credits, conducted the session. If there is anything invaluable that I came away with from Karl's session, it is his dictum in concluding, that: "*Film is 80% picture[s], and 20% sound[s]".*

Within a year of this, Africa's own literary giant of a son, Ghana's **Ayi Kwei Armah**, brought it all home to me in as eloquent a manner only as he Armah, can deliver. Writing in his ***The Eloquence of the Scribes***, Armah reflects: *The quality of an artistic creator isn't just a matter of technical skills… the uses to which we put our skills are also matters of artistic judgment… it would be foolish to argue that such judgment is of no moral consequence... it is supposedly at it's centre… only, such judgment, need, essentially, not be puny*… this as he dismissed **Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*** as fundamentally, deliberately misguided in its social analyses of the state and nature of relations, the iniquitous co-existence of its multi-racial members of the local community, around which and from amongst whom she based the story's narrative and drew her main characters.

In a documentary of his life's work and activism titled '***You Can't Be Neutral A Moving Train***', **Howard Zinn's** counsel is that: "… *Anyone reading history should understand from the start that there is no such thing as impartial history. The chief problem in historical honesty is not outright lying. It is omission or de-emphasis of important data. The definition of important, of course, depends on one's values*." And I will venture to hasten to agree, that this is true for social histories as it is for visual and other art histories.

In one of my handful of pre conference discussions to confer and share notes with colleagues of varying specializations in the fine and visual arts fraternity, I sat down with - to chat and literally pick his mind - **William B. Miko**, one of Zambia's foremost contemporary fine and visual artists, who also juggles responsibilities of arts administration and arts education. In that one Saturday afternoon of listening and learning, on my part, it is his maxim that just about summed up the underlying principle as to the reason for our gathering here, the more than probable fact of our continuing these discussions, long after we've bade Jo'burg our goodbyes.

He's is that: "*It is after the process of production, marketing, and selling of a piece of creative work [or that which could pass for art] that* the art *begins*…"

The long and short of this paper, is the argument that a dubious social and cultural history of the Global South in general and Africa in particular, by predominantly Western scholarship and research, has given rise to a dubious visual and art history, through and by which past and prevailing realities may be gleaned. It therefore remains to Africa, as an integral part of the Global South artistic and cultural landscape, to offer alternative depictions and re-interpretation through a mind and eyes all

its own. And the central role for a contemporary social institution such as a museum in this process of [self] knowledge production that is the basis for creative societal regeneration cannot be over-emphasised. What parallels might this have with regards to Zambia's visual arts scenario, both the historical and the contemporary expressions? How does a collection of this pass for our national visual heritage? For one, sociology today forms a crucial part of economic thinking or material considerations. To find therefore such a section in a contemporary Global South museum tagged "ethnography", rather than the creative and material culture it is, is quite the throwback to early and past century thinking, that which is more conceited than forward looking. At this point, it may be inductive to start with a few quiet personal defining moments. Dare I add that the particular instances will equally apply for situations on the ground, in most of the Global South.

Within formal America, I earlier had had this for a varsity-class encounter: "So, *Mwape*, what can you tell us about *Africa* …?"

This was immediately following my statement, when my turn had come, as hailing from and being a Zambian national … "*a southern African country*", and all the other little bits of geographical itsy-bitsy I reckoned my mustering so far as my memory could jog, would help my new *non-African* course-mates exactly, vividly even, pin-point thine roots! Such was the near-commotion that broke the near-silence in-between the instance of my self-introduction and my lecturer's request of my take on "Africa": the guffawing, the cynicism and cat-calls from right around the room with ready suggestions of "*war", "AIDS", "hunger", "lions*" and such, but not necessarily in that order! I began to wonder why it is that images and depictions of the majority of places South of the Equator and we the people were and are always in a negative light, because the 'in-your-face' examples of open and everyday America were far from the idealized and idolized. In the Spring of 2003 still in the US, leafing through a copy of **The Washington Post** I came across an article lamenting the wasted substantial financial resources by the US Treasury – up until that point – of the war in Iraq. The thread of the article's argument was that an even lesser percentage of the war-related costs if channeled through either the IMF or World Bank to such a developing country as Zambia, would instead help bring about more desirable positive social improvements. The clincher, however, was a picture representative of Zambia, fronting this story. It could have been any rural outpost anywhere on the face of this earth. I awe-was struck by its insinuating visual implicitness.

Visual art education and as language (for communication)
One such earliest encounter for me as etched in my childhood memories, is the occasion I would either walk by or stand in front of our boys' room chest-of-drawers. For strategically placed in the top-right-hand corner of its mirror was a disc-shaped decorative sticker, I suppose, on which was imprinted along the lower curve of its circumference, in bold, the words: ***Talk to God – He Answers***. Right above this appeal was a graphic of the now much maligned and very old-style telephone handset, in completion of the illustration I have to imagine. And not a thing more. Therein, lay my dilemma.

Figure 1: Emmanuel Muntanga, "Fallen Heroes", Wooden Sculpture, 1993, a Lusaka National Museum collection.

Then, as now, one had to have a number to dial, as happened with an identical actual phone in our family living room. Thankfully, I already had the understanding then that that was how one properly used a phone. Then a ten-year old or so, I struggled to reconcile the thought as to how in this world therefore, the designers of this sticker could possibly expect anyone to "call God", when they had not cared to include His phone number on this sticker petitioning all and sundry, to just call and talk [to Him], for "He Answers"!

Many years on, just some four years ago in-fact, I could not help noticing, only this time subliminally, how implicitly still, using visual art complimented with sound, light and movement – the increasingly digital and less celluloid-based audio-visual art-form that is now film – a CNN social documentary titled "Eye On Brazil" peppered it seemed to be to me with negative connotations, was portraying the otherwise fabulous Samba-talents, and others… as grateful escapees of poverty and sure violent… perhaps early teenage death via each their sterling football/soccer careers, in stark contrast to the exemplary, responsible, and conscious choice of careers out of sheer passion and a love for the game, by say, Beckham and Rooney.; as if somehow to suggest that had the latter two gentlemen not taken to football, each, well, could have just as easily cut out a pretty neat career, of a rocket scientist even! Or better yet, that certain North American and Western European sections of society were and could never be similarly socially challenged at all.

In his **Development as Freedom**, India's *Nobel Laureate for Economics* **Armatya Sen** makes an inductive observation, quoting Emperor Ashoka, a 3rd Century B.C. Indian King:

> *"The inscriptions give a special importance to tolerance of diversity. For example, the edict (numbered XII) at Erragudi puts the issue thus:*
>
> '…a man must not do reverence to his own sect or disparage that of another man without reason. Depreciation should be for specific reason only, because the sects of other people all deserve reverence for one reason or another.
>
> By thus acting, a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people. By acting contrariwise, a man hurts his own sect, and does disservice to the sects of other people. For he who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the splendor of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect.
>
> *"The recognition of diversity within different cultures is extremely important in the contemporary world. Our understanding of the presence of diversity tends to be somewhat undermined by constant bombardment with over-simple generalizations about 'Western civilizations,' 'Asian values,' 'African cultures' and so on. Many of these readings of history and civilization are not only intellectually shallow, they also add to the divisiveness of the world in which we live.*

Such, indeed, has been my concerned reading of some of the everyday uses of visual arts, and its' many sided effects, if undefined by and insensitive to the conditions of the individual subject or a locale: between and within cultures, between and within ideologies, and so between and within competing political and economic interests.

Figure 2: Lawrence Yombwe, "Gule wa Mkulu", O/C , 1994, 428/146, a Lusaka National Museum collection.

Primarily, the history of the production of visual arts or elements of it, particularly in the area that is Zambia, was predominantly of sculptured work. Save especially for those of depiction of form or realism, by paint or impressionist illustration in other mixed or singular media, the resulting piece has always had a social use, or its role is communally prescribed as such. So for instance, while a *Gule wa M'kulu* or *Makishi* mask and body costume completes full regalia for the ceremonial or ritual dance in an act of performance/ performing art, each could also be hung up in a gallery as an indigenous/ ethnographic art exhibit/object, or used as inside décor in private premises. The same is true of other social tools: hunting/cutting axes, cooking sticks, serving spoons, reed mats, woven carrying baskets, and an entire array of the other dining and kitchen utensils. Visual artistry or such other creativity is

significant to a community looking to build its own internal body of thought, logic, or knowledge. As such, it greatly informs and affects contemporary sociological appraisal and/or conceptions.

I find, in looking at the brief post-independence history of visual arts in Zambia – of 46 years of Black majority rule – rather than the availing of creative spaces and allowing for artistic imagination to flourish; rather than the research and documentation on and of the artistic tendencies of pre-colonial indigenous communities, emphasis by the couple of academic institutions mandated to train artists and/or groom artistically inclined persons/citizens has been on *teaching* of the *teaching of art*, [the Evelyn Hone and Malcolm Moffat colleges] so much so the only evidence available of pre-history/pre-colonial visual artistry as recorded by contemporary African arts scholars are the engravings and paintings on rocks and on walls in caves, [the] location-areas henceforth gazetted as national historical sites by government.

With the coming onto the specialist tertiary academic scene of the Open University of Zambia however, things certainly are looking to change. Theirs include a degree offered by the new School of Media, Performing and Fine Arts. The intervening years, hopefully, will also see the coming of a curriculum making art examinable as a subject from primary to secondary stages.

Visual art as language (for production)

Ayi Kwei Armah's reflective observation above touches on a most basic yet crucially fundamental premise upon which rests the essence and role or everyday use of visual arts – wittingly or not – in all human societies, and particularly so the African segment of the Global South. Visual arts is at once an affirmation and an indictment, of who and what I am or might be, or of who or what others might be, or indeed be one's take on prevailing conditions of a locale – close at hand or as far flung as either reality or imagination might reach or carry one.

Figure 3: Part of an Independent collection and exhibition hosted by Lusaka National Museum, 2009.

Writing for the **New African** magazine (**NA**), **Rotimi Sankore** (**RS**) – whom I quote at length took on the challenge to question and offer pointers as to the way forward, as to how particularly Africa and its people, are by and large visually (mis)represented, and the inherent subliminal messaging. In an article titled **'Not enough flies to create the right effect'**, *on Aids, Africa, the Western media and "development pornography"*. **RS** observed that "for decades, development and aid charities in the West have believed the best way to raise funds for their work is to shock people with astonishing pictures of poverty and disease from the "developing" world. But what are the unintended consequences?" He generously unpacks it thus:

> *"… An iconic poster example of these pictures is one of a skeletal-looking two or three-year-old brown-skinned girl in a dirty torn dress, too weak to chase off dozens of flies settling on her wasted and diseased body and her big round eyes pleading for help…*
>
> *… "A pound means a lot to her"; "a dollar can mean the difference between life and death"; "give something today" are generic riders. Some media consultants for these NGOs on photo-shoots have even been known to demand to be taken to locations where there are "enough flies to create the right effect" for the posters.*

RS thus concludes, "in this case, the subliminal message – unintended or not – is that people in the developing world require indefinite and increasing amounts of help and that without aid charities and donor support, these poor incapable people in Africa or Asia will soon be extinct through disease and starvation. Such simplistic messages foster racist stereotypes, strip entire peoples of their dignity and encourage prejudice … What 'development pornography' shows is the result, not the cause of

five centuries of aggressive exploitation of a continent. The relatively smoother development in parts of Asia exists because no industrial-scale slavery and destruction of society was imposed there for four centuries. Unlike in Africa, the foundation of most Asian civilization and culture remained largely intact. Colonialism suspended the natural trajectory of development in Asia that then continued once its yoke was lifted."

Figure 4: William B. Miko, "Food for Work", a Lusaka National Museum collection.

Unrelenting in their efforts to help in rebuilding Africa and its peoples, also writing for **New African** [and **New African Woman**], **Regina Jere-Malanda** [**RJM**] – whom I also quote at length – asked some very telling questions in her article '**Is poverty African?'** In it she wonders: "Why do we think being poor is an African phenomenon? … the overly hyped Live8 concert, the G8 summit in Gleneagles and a euphoric Western media dramatized Africa as the 'face of poverty'. Everyone went home with a sense of magnanimity and selflessness. But did they get the full picture?"

In looking at what are described as the "*philanthropic stunts of 2005*", **RJM** scrutinizes the pauperization of Africa. She gives a literal description, as below, of the extent of some of the disturbing visual illustrations in question, with this caveat for an opener. "… The website Lastminute.com is famous for its cheap deals on anything from air travel to playing bingo. But now its bargain tentacles have stretched to join the Western mantra of helping 'poor Africans'. You may need to read this sitting down":

> *"… with Lastminute.com and Farm Friends you have the chance to do something amazing, just by buying a gift for a friend (or even for yourself). You can choose a sheep, a goat or a brood of chickens. Of course, they won't be delivered to you or the person you're buying the gift for. Instead, they'll get a really cute model of the chosen animal, while Farm Africa will give the real animal to a poor African farmer, who is struggling to feed his family. Just a few pounds [sterling] buy the greatest gift of all – a happier, healthier future. A goat, for example, provides milk to fight off malnutrition and any excess can be sold to pay for medicine or schoolbooks… Bred to be good milk producers, a dairy crossbreed will provide the vital nutrition that children need to grow up healthy and strong. Any excess can be sold for profit, helping a family build a future free of poverty. A brood of chickens gives a poor farmer the chance to transform his family's life. The birds are bred to be tough, disease-resistant and lay more eggs. These can be eaten to provide protein for the whole family while the surplus can be hatched to increase the family's brood or sold on for a profit. The family soon has income they need to buy life-saving medicine and school materials for their children…"*

Figure 5: Eddie Mumba, "From the Fields", a Lusaka National Museum collection.

"For emphasis," the **NA** article continues, "this advert is fronted by a picture of a little African girl clasping a chicken so eagerly as if she had never seen one before. In a stomach-churning nutshell, this is one of the most debasing, ignorant and simplistic thinking of how the Western world sees and offers solutions to the misconceived poverty of Africa … This pretence of compassion and dim response to the complex issue of African poverty is not only naïve but confirms how jarringly little or nothing most Westerners know about the underlying problems behind post-independent Africa's predicament …

"New African will not sugar-coat or make light of the suffering of many Africans, both on the continent and the Diaspora … But we are questioning why from all corners of the world, 'Africanising' poverty is becoming the defining image of what being poor is. In the meantime, deeper and more

serious causes of poverty, and systems that ensure its existence, are hardly discussed … For those thriving on packaging Africa as a misery, New African would like to draw their 'benevolent' hearts to the Danish-based website, Afridad, which has posted the very images of their campaigns (emaciated children) but to tell a different – a real story. One has a caption which reads":

> *"I have with this picture, created so many jobs and have made huge profits for Western and European aid organizations. These very organizations deny that I died of hunger because my parents were forced to grow coffee for export. The West denies the problem would mean putting an end to their aid circus. And while these rich people continue to enrich themselves from my picture, my blood cries out from the grave."*

The thinking and actions of individual governments' right around the Global South are not without guidance and at the instigation of the institutional political-economy influence-brokers.

Figure 6: Henry Tayali, "Beer Hall", O/B, 88.5/65, 1970s, a Lusaka National Museum collection.

RJM probed some more: "In tandem with privatization, the debt crisis, IMF structural adjustment programmes, etc, focus is also put on one other main goal: increasing exports. While this, on the surface, may sound good, for Africa it is a pricy undertaking that has meant governments being encouraged (if not forced) by the IMF to keep wages at poverty levels (poverty as defined by the World Bank) in order to attract foreign investment. While this benefits multinational corporations, ordinary Africans get the crumbs."

Pressing on to ask further: *Is poverty peculiarly African, and what lies beneath it? What does it really mean? Living on a dollar a day? Really?* Both **RJM** and **RS** really are arguing about the far reaching socio-psycho perhaps even insidious ramifications of visual messaging, the heat-beat of which is visual artistry:

> *"… Since 1990, the World Bank's US$1-a-day international poverty benchmark has been the standard measure of poverty worldwide. The fact that the Bank should be the only institution in the world that claims to know how many people suffer from poverty is mind-boggling. But no African government seems to be bothered to examine how the Bank arrives at this 'authoritative' yardstick quoted everywhere, and what it does to Africa's collective psyche, how we see ourselves, and how the world sees and treats us. A poor man does not sit at the high table; he sits at the back or outside. He is given little (if not no) respect. However wise he is, his contributions are at best accepted reluctantly and at worst treated with outright contempt. Knowing his own status and the psychological baggage this comes with, the poor man feels inferior in the midst of the rich, and this inferiority complex prevents him from participating as a full-fledged member of the community – be it local, national or global. As such, being poor or being pronounced poor becomes a debilitating check or controlling mechanism on a person's humanity. It affects how he is perceived and treated by others…"*

Consider for a moment, in stark contrast with the foregoing socio-economic analysis as facilitated by a certain strand of dubious visual art, or least its end utilization, the vivacity and life imbued in and by the sculpture of the local African girl with her signature plaited hair, as in figure 13. Could it be that visual artists and other visual art sales and communication professionals, I posit here, under pressure to sell such of their works of visual art and meet their other occupational mandates in a global market ridden with financial crises, break-even as commercial concerns and so truly remain going-

concerns, are consigning to the back seat the ethical, moral and/or socio-cultural imperatives of visual art, all in exchange for a bottom-line marked in black?

Figure 7: P.D.M Lombe, "Shanty Compound", 1994, 71/60, a Lusaka National Museum collection.

Ideologues, (visual) art and society
Writing in the **UNESCO** and **ECONOMICA** publication *Arts and Artists from an Economic Perspective*, **Xavier Greffe** notes:

> *"Apart from its economic aspect, the development value of art also has a social aspect, which fluctuates constantly between the desire to let individuals decide their own future and the desire to bring them together through the values they share in common. However, this reasoning is not without its ambiguities and it is possible to confront it with another interpretation of the social aspect of art. Art can give rise to manipulation, and its aim to serve as a social bonding factor does not always lead to democratic assimilation. Benjamin has shown very effectively how fascist regimes used art to create the illusion of unity among the people without changing the land ownership pattern which divided this society, declaring in the end that 'the logical consequence of fascism is a more aesthetic political life'. [**Benjamin W. (2000), L'oeuvre d'art, p. 314.**] Recently, during the debate on the value of contemporary art, some like Clair declared without any hesitation that this art had been used to manipulate the masses. [**Clair R. (2000), La fin de l'art contemporain, Paris: Gallimard.**] Similarly, manifestations of a positive effect are found in artistic productions that are often original and marginal as compared to established practices."*

Figure 8: A scene depicting "Cha Cha Cha", the struggle for self rule from British colonialism, a Lusaka National Museum collection.

The majority of Zambian visual artists in the post-independence era have embraced and at the same time been critical of the social-political and economic changes: from multi-party, to one-party state, and again to multi-party politics; from a cross between mixed economic to state-controlled modeling, to that teetering on a free-market capitalist style; from a secular society to a Humanist one, to now a so-called Christian-nation. The Zambian visual artist through the generations has explored and engaged with the themes and burning issues of the day, and have thus been informed by the realities within the locale. Perhaps this is a narrative – informed experientially – that a museum, being that integral a social institution, in Zambia as in the Global South should tap more into, to create a more objective local art history and foster a development theorem informed from within? In grappling with the question of the interrelation of ***Justice and Power***, squaring off with the ***French intellectual Michel Foucault*** on "constraints imposed on human creativity, within a system of rules, as may exist outside the human mind and human nature," in looking at relations of forms of production, class struggle, and related societal contradictions, **Noam Chomsky** has taken the position that:

> *"If it is correct, as I believe it is, that the fundamental element of human nature is the need for creative work, for creative inquiry, for free creation, without the arbiter limiting effects of a coercive institution, then of course it will follow that a decent society should maximize the possibilities for this fundamental human characteristic to be realized. Now, a federated, decentralized system of free associations, incorporating economic as well as social institutions would be – what I refer to as anarcho-syndicalism and it seems to me that it is the appropriate form of social*

organization for an advanced technological society – one in which human beings do not have to be forced into positions of cogs of tools in a machine…"

With borrowed economic concepts prioritizing an import substitution industry and/or cash crop export oriented agriculture has come massive urbanization and rural displacement right around the Global South, straining or altogether choking social services and amenities, and remains unmitigated by contemporary urban planning. It is a question the visual artist glaringly asks of the authorities in charge, at once reminding and demanding our approach, a paradigm shift, in the thinking and the speed with which we respond to these societal emergencies.

Is it so bad to have to set ourselves new standards, new and better aspirations given the communal and colonial legacies even, as in figures 6 and 7 in Zambia, a sight only too familiar in the Global South, a hallmark of our places of habitation and recreation. What have we to show for our time in the driving seat, ever since the famous 'wind-of-change' era?

Conclusion and final remarks

In his *Decolonising the Mind*, **Ngugi wa Thong'o** has guided, that:

> *"…The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a peoples belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples' languages rather than their own. It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces which would stop their own springs of life. It even plants serious doubts about the moral rightness of struggle. Possibilities of triumph or victory are seen as remote, ridiculous dreams. The intended results are despair, despondency and a collective death-wish…"*

At the summer *CIMAM conference of 2007* in Vienna, which deliberations centred on the museum as an institutional producer in late capitalism, I reached the conclusion that a museum is a social laboratory, and I henceforth committed to the idea of working to preserve Africa's art and art history. This was because of the conviction that:

– Given the legacy of colonisation, the museum in Africa has been utilised as a place only for exhibition of works of "curious art". "Curious" in the sense of the most befuddling, the mystic, the unexplainable of findings amongst the indigenes that make up the bulk of collated exhibits, rather than the awe-inspiring, stimulating, innovative and inventive. Result? A society basically devoid of its most realistic, complete, complex fundamental character, in the social context.

– This has tended to give rise to a lopsidedness in the type of collections the dominant theme of which is "crafts of art", symbolic of the "dark forces" of Africa and so the emergence and proliferation of "curio shops". As one can so easily imagine therefore, the last place, certainly, of and for "enlightenment". To this day and age, ironically, our public policy in Zambia, and this may be true across Africa, is such that the museum institution is placed under the charge of a tourism ministry – in essence, culture [only] for tourism. *So, very much our call to make this! Without a doubt...*

– Such is the stultifying of self-questioning that can only come about if **Research, Education, Production and Dissemination of Knowledge** is stimulated and prompted by a need for self-discovery and societal progress, un-oblivious of the past, and an eye on tomorrow with a view to self-shaping that future, firmly holding on to today.

– To work at and encourage the preservation of Zambia and Africa's art history; Being most impressed by the lasting inspiration of technological/scientific research, by art or artistic illustrations/creations/conceptions, denoting a symbiotic relationship between mathematical-logic and the aesthetics [so will work to encourage their increased collaboration].

Figure 9: Author's personal collection of photos of a 1-day Lusaka Province Culture & Traditional Foods Festival, as hosted by the Lusaka National Museum, June 2009.

With direct reference to the theme of my panel, "**The Politics of Display and Collection: Changing Museums, Changing Art Histories**", [here] at the **SAVAH-CIHA 2011**, the national philosophies informing the museum project pre-independence were couched in domineering colonialist tendencies. Thus was derived from old Greek, perhaps Latin, and perhaps French, the name *Musee*, the contemporary English equivalent being *Amusement*, and so *Museum*, it emerged in conferring with our Lusaka National Museum research and education staff. That the problematic background to this integral social institution as inherited by most of the Global South reaches back to the time of the initial forays by early Greek and French and Latin travelers and adventurers alike, is no consolation.

And so for Africa, as for the Global South, a change in art histories and so a change in museums will necessarily entail a ceasing of the mentality whereupon Africans as a people and each their unique artistic creativity where looked at with contemptuous curiosity, at best, and with outright ridicule at worst; a change whereupon Africans themselves – dead or alive – are no longer objects of curious observation and subjects for scrutiny to the authentic more bona fide primordial link.

With a special thought to the Spirit and memory of **Saartje Baartman** and others like her, it will have to be a humanizing process. As in figure 9 and 10, this will entail interactions between a museum and its predominantly indigenous art and cultural practitioners – the young and old alike – to facilitate creative collaboration and exhibition, and give rise to the emergence of new knowledge, or the re-articulation of local knowledge long since discarded in the social posturing of dominant ideologues. Thus, I do hereby thee beseech: Let Africa rise and re-claim it's place among nations of the world, and there can be no better place to start than in the minds of men, women and the children of the world! Let Africa, in doing this, through its cinema, television, radio, novel, poetry, song, dance, theatre and stage-drama, sculpture, paintings and all other fine and performing arts, re-tell the tales about its glorious achievements in pre-colonial Kingdoms of ancient-Egypt, Great Zimbabwe, Ashanti/Ghana, Songhay/Mali, Ethiopia and Zululand, to name only a few: their trade, their commerce, their economies; their social-philosophers, their State-builders, their visionary leadership. Let its present policy conception of a cohesive and dynamic social community be informed first and foremost by our bygone achievements and from within as such, to be relevant.

Let Africa re-claim its lost knowledge of the cosmos and astrology and how this served as the basis for some of the practices of modern religions and faith inclinations, mathematics, meteorology/climatology, space science and agriculture, it's understanding and application of the medicinal and herbal values of its bio-diversity and how this still sustains modern practices of medicine.

Figure 10: Author's personal collection of photos of a 1-day Lusaka Province Culture & Traditional Foods Festival, as hosted by the Lusaka National Museum, June 2009.

In my travels back within the sub-region I ironically have repeatedly found myself having to re-paint the picture about Africa and my home country Zambia, as viewed by others around and take my word for it, fellow Zambians, even those who should have known better: *poor, backward, dirty, ignorant, diseased*!

Africa has long had a tradition of gallantly incorporating song, dance, art, poetry and drama, and open air performances, for social interaction and societal bonding, for rites and rituals, for celebratory and healing purposes, for communication with the supernatural.

The various human body marks, dress styles or decorative hut/dwelling variations have always been to communicate a particular message: single, married, widowed, widower, engaged or as belonging to a given clan or tribe, or as trained/skilled in a craft or other. Let Africa re-discover it's *Amharic, Bamum, Vai, Bantu, Egyptian, Gicaandi, Mende, Khoi-San* and *Lemba* alphabets and numerals, among others.

Figure 11: Used with permission from Inter-Faith Minister Anita Mackenzie, UK.

Let the name Africa, and rightly so, be placed at par with the civilizations of the west and east of the globe, and let it be known Africa inspired and taught at Alexandria in ancient Egypt, the seven earliest leading lights of Greek civilization – the Plutarch – *Solon, Thales, Plato, Lycurgus, Pythagoras, Archimedes*, the basis for Europe's awakening and later all of the West. Let it be known that Africa too inspired one of the most influential teachers of old – ***Jesus Christ*** – at Alexandria, in ancient Egypt! In doing this, we would have began to trudge along the path as envisaged in the key assumption that while it be kosher to carry into the future some aspects of our past, it ideally ought to be the best about that past, that we need tap into.

That we have left it to the world to tell and re-tell Africa's stories and image creation, it is hardly surprising every screen, every page and every speaker keeps churning out material that has placed us in a position so at odds with the self! It is when we find it in ourselves to begin to apply the principle of ***appreciative inquiry***, to taking the responsibility to talk and celebrate Africa's past and present successes, which remain ours to re-claim and ours to showcase, because they are ultimately about us, and internalize with mind and heart the many inputs as contributing to the attainment of these feats, only then can Africa's new dawn surely come!

That new dawn, as signified in Zambia by the Freedom Statue at Kamwala, in Lusaka, and the [*him of the message-manism fame*] Aquila Simpasa works of art in collection as part of the national visual art heritage by the Lechwe Trust and the Lusaka National Gallery, it should have to engender a new type of understanding in Zambia, as right around the Global South. Of new knowledge, because that is all that freedom entails, of liberating one's mind and having to think for the self; it can only stimulate the psyches of the people in the Global South to seek to create beyond imitation and so find and value authentication from within, unlike in figure 12 but more like figure 13 and figure 14.

Figure 12: Used with permission from local business centre outlet, Kabwe, Zambia, 2011.

Too often the images of Africa are devoid of the positive human element, as unlike in 13, and even the fanciful ideal in 14. The creative technologically savvy mind behind the invitation card in 12 concluded that the superimposed image/icon of the Caucasian couple on, racially, a black couple's wedding invitation card, who actually were getting married, would make the card all so much nicer!

In the meantime, consistent and more objective art criticism by veteran author Roy Kausa with 'Top Art' in the weekend Daily Mail and Andrew Mulenga, with the Friday column, 'The Hole in the Wall' in The Post newspaper continues to keep abuzz with creative imagination, Zambia's visual arts fraternity. As do production, exhibitions and collections of individual talent at Twaya-Art & Galleries, the Lechwe Trust, the Lusaka National Museum, the Garden House Group of hotels, the Chaminuka Lodge & Nature Reserve, Namwandwe and Madison Insurance, the Rockston Studios and the Henry Tayali Galleries, Woodlands New Gallery and Wayi Wayi in Livingstone, the open galleries at Kabwata Cultural Village and Arcades Sunday Market in Lusaka and a fascinating new regular hip magazine publication, NKHANI KULTURE.

Figure 13: Part of an Independent collection and exhibition hosted by Lusaka National Museum, 2009.

Figure 14: Rabson Phiri, "Pretty Girl", Metal Sculpture, 2004, a Lusaka National Museum collection.

If only for philosophical guidance from the African Diaspora, I shall recall something of a conversation that that grand old man of theater and television, Sidney Poitier, cannot quiet bring himself to forgetting, as it happened with an acting class colleague of his, Louise, whom he describes thus:

> *"… My teachers came in a wide variety of forms, and in a great variety of locales… Louise, for instance, lived in Brooklyn. And the trip from the American-Negro Theatre in 127th Street in Harlem, to her doorstep, was a long ride. I offered to see her home one night after a late rehearsal at the theatre, and I would wind up making that trip, time after time. Saintly, volatile, edgy, raucous, bitchy, introspective … sensuous … a talented and daring taker of risks … that was Louise. In acting classes she was a riveting, hypnotic presence. As a 19 year-old Black girl she was often mistaken for Arabic, or Asian or Native American. She was in-fact a mixed race person of African-American and White descent, but she claimed only her African-American heritage. Talking with her was a pleasure, mainly because I wasn't so much interested in getting into her pants as I was getting into her mind. She seemed to know a little about everything, and I knew she could help me fill in the blanks in my own general knowledge. Her words touched familiar cords I had often heard inside myself … her voice lodging complaints we both held against the state. Her language too inspired me … We got locked into a conversation once I remember about 'who she was and who I was, as individuals, in America'… More than a few times, I asked myself if she was just regurgitating stuff she had heard at home, from a father who was up on such things, or a mother who was book smart, or some school she had attended, but then I would feel the passion behind her words, and know that she spoke from conviction…*

He [Poitier] recalls her [Louise] as stoically putting it to him, that:

> *"…How we see ourselves, how we see each other… should be determined by us, and not by people who generally don't like us… People who pass laws certifying us as less than human… Too many of us see each other as they see us… Time for that… to stop… Were going to have to decide for ourselves what we are, and what we are not; create our own image of ourselves; and nurture it, and feed it, till it can stand, on its own… If I have anything to say about it by the time my grandchildren get here, this hypocrisy-democracy, is gonna do some changing… Things that get sandwiched in-between differing opinions, opposite positions, opposing views, these are issues… All things social, political, religious, financial, personal or impersonal, objective or subjective,*

over which debates are held, fights are triggered and wars are fought, these are issues…"

In the case of Zambia, even without a Ministry of Arts and Culture fully mandated to attend to this otherwise crucially integral creative sector of any modern/contemporary society, or at least one aspiring to attain this tag, and served only by a quasi-governmental regulatory authority that is the National Arts Council, itself caught-up and choking as simply a department in the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, it is a far cry from the days once upon a time in "Northern Rhodesia", when a visual arts course was offered students who were taught only how to illustrate certain portions of the Bible, in order for Africans who could not read better understand the word of [the Christian] God!

In a final closing thought, **Ngugi wa Thiong'o** has again counseled, in *Decolonising the Mind* and *Murogi wa Kagogo/Wizard of the Crow* respectively:

"…The philosophic and the class bases of relevance are even more crucial when it comes to the area of critical approaches and interpretations. For the critic, whether teacher, lecturer, interpreter or analyst, is a product of a class society. Each child by birth, family or parent's occupation is brought up in a given class. By education children are brought up in a culture, values and world outlook of the dominant class which may or may not be the same as the class of their birth and family. By choice they may opt for one or the other side in the class struggles of their day. Therefore their interpretation of literature and culture and history will be influenced by their philosophical standpoint, or intellectual base, and their conscious or unconscious class sympathies.

First the philosophical base. Is a person's standpoint that of idealist or materialist? Is their mode of thinking and reasoning dialectical or metaphysical? Does the critic see values, ideas and the spiritual as superior to material reality? Does the critic see reality as static for all time or reality as changing all the time? Does the critic see things, processes, phenomena as linked or as separate mutually exclusive entities? Since literature, like religion and other areas of culture, is a reflection of the world of nature and human community, the outlook of a critic in real life will profoundly affect their interpretation of the reflected reality.

This is even more true of class sympathies and identification.

… The quest for relevance calls for more than choice of material. The attitude to the material is also important. Of course, over this, there can never be any legislation. But it is crucial to be alert to the class ideological assumptions behind choices, utterances and evaluations. The choice of what is relevant and the evaluation of a quality is conditioned by the national, class and philosophical base …

… But the search for new directions in language, literature, theatre, poetry, fiction and scholarly studies in Africa is part and parcel of the overall struggles of African people against imperialism in its neo-colonial stage. Is it part of that struggle for that world in which my health is not dependent on another's leprosy; my cleanliness not on another's maggot-ridden body; and my humanity not on the buried humanity of others …

*… That struggle begins where ever we are; in whatever we do: then we become part of those millions whom **Martin Carter** once saw 'sleeping not to dream but dreaming to change the world'."*

Ngugi, as guided above, has further offered this most pertinent proposition too, that:

"… maybe knowledge was nothing more than the art of looking at what we already know with different eyes, and asking different questions. Knowledge is the discovery of the magic of the ordinary. Like words put into song."

May going forward indeed, visual arts, art histories and museums be each an aid in that quest for relevance, whereby employed is the art of looking at what we already know with different eyes, and asking different questions, to discover the magic of the ordinary, or at the very least, to keep sleeping not to dream, but to dream about how to thus change our world!

Figure 15: "Freedon Statue", Independence Avenue, Kamwala, Lusaka, 2010. From a collection of Regina Jere-Malanda's personal photos.

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Modernist Primitivism in Senegal

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In April 1972, the exhibition *Pablo Picasso* opened at the Musée Dynamique in Dakar, Senegal. The exhibition was staged as part of the "Great Masters of Contemporary World Art," an exhibition series which introduced the works of the leading lights of international modernist movement to Senegal's art community (Mamadou Seyni M'Bengue 1973: 44). Organized by President Léopold Sédar Senghor, the exhibition was conceived as a dialogue between Picasso's modernism and the emerging Senegalese modernism. Senghor's penchant for providing examples linking aspects of the Négritude philosophy to modern art was at the heart of the exhibition. Senghor believed that Picasso's modernism reflected his concepts of *enracinement* (rootedness) and *overture* (opening), as encapsulations of Négritude. Picasso's modernism reproduced his Iberian heritage, the avant-gardism of Parisian modernism and the universalizing aesthetic of primitive art (Léopold Sédar Senghor 1995: 228-230). The qualities possessed by Picasso, according to Senghor, were important markers of modernist primitivism and should be emulated by post-independence artists in Senegal.

Given the importance of international relations and cultural exchange to Senghor's cultural policy, the exhibition provided Senghor with a premise to consolidate his version of modernist primitivism using Picasso as a vehicle. By exhibiting Picasso, Senghor enhanced his credibility as a culture patron connected to the leading figures of the international art world, while positioning Dakar as an emergent cultural hub. In briefly touching on the Picasso exhibition, this paper considers its historical significance in providing a direct didactic opportunity for Senghor, the principal interlocutor of early independence Senegalese art, to explain the merits of modernist primitivism embedded in the cultural logic of Négritude, an ideology of self-definition and self-presentation that embraces African/Black cultural attributes. Although Western art history sees modernist primitivism as an important aspect of twentieth century Western art, it is important to underline that it was also an avantgardist preoccupation of African artists particularly in mid-century.

If modernist primitivism is a radical reformation of the self relying on the incorporation of the other, as Hall Foster argues, then Senghor's presentation of Picasso to a Senegalese audience was an act of cooptation of the Western other as a necessary requirement to complete his philosophical reclamation of the primitivist ideal (Hall Foster 1985:196-208).[1] The question that this paper then concerns itself with is: how did primitivism unfold as a modernist discourse in early postcolonial Senegal? This question is by no means original as scholars of modern art in Senegal, including Elizabeth Harney, Joanna Grabski, and Tracy Snipe, have all grappled with similar questions in discussing the nature of Senegalese artistic modernism.[2] Senghor's framing of modernist primitivism provides a unique insight on Senghor's engagement with the enlightenment dialectical construction and reconstruction of the primitive via the so-called tribal art (although not indigenous to Senegal), in articulating the foundation of modern art in Senegal. First, I examine the conceptualization, interpretation, and consolidation of Senghor's modernist primitivism in the École de Dakar (Dakar school). Second, I focus on two Senegalese artists of different generations, Mor Faye and Soly Cissé, to extrapolate on the evolving nature of modernist primitivism in Senegal.

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[1] For an extended discussion of the primitive ideal, see James F. Knapp, "Primitivism and the Modern," *Boundary* 2, Vol. 15, No. 1/2 (Autumn, 1986 - Winter, 1987).

[2] See Elizabeth Harney, *In Senghor's shadow: art, politics, and the avant-garde in Senegal, 1960-1995* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Joanna Grabski, *The historical invention and contemporary practice of modern Senegalese art: three generations of artists in Dakar* (PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 2001); Tracy Snipe, *Art and politics in Senegal, 1960-1996* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1998).

Senghor's modernist primitivism: the politics of *enracinement* and *ouverture*

Can Senghor's modernist primitivism be discussed without necessarily relying on such neologisms as "indigenous modernism" and "alternative modernism"? Although these recent frameworks lend themselves to a counter-narration that produces an African agency by contesting Western hegemonic narratives, as Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie (2009:1) cautions, "too often discourses of alternative modernities actually continue to mediate the reception of non-Western contexts as secondary locations for the unfolding of the European ethos." I argue however that Senghor's articulation of modernist primitivism reflected an ideological bricolage, a form of reflexive and critical recombination of two streams of the primitivist ideal.[3] While one stream of the primitivist ideal is the Western romantic construction and reconstruction of the noble savage, the other is a nostalgic interpretation of an African past. Senghor's attempt to reclaim the primitivist ideal was on the basis of Négritude, that is to say, the idea that primitivism was coterminous with African art. Yet Senghor was also seeking the enlightenment logic of a spiritual regeneration for African art under a universal sign.

Senghor's political antecedent as a pacifist meant that he did not exactly contest Western grand narratives. As a pragmatist he sought to chart an African-centered modernism that could be easily inserted into the Western grand narratives which he held in high esteem. For the reawakening and recreation of a new African culture in the spirit of Négritude, as Irving Leonard Markovitz (1969:115) suggests, Senghor "believed in the necessity of tutelage by the métropole so that the African could assimilate – always being careful not to be assimilated – and to adopt the best aspects of Western rationality on his way to a higher synthesis." This quote at best explains the pragmatic nature of Senghor's modernist project. At worst, it shows the contradictions, and at times prevarications, that dogged Senghor's intellectualism. However, what is important to stress here is that Senghor was interested in locating a space within Western narratives for Négritude as a humanist philosophy. According to Senghor:

> Since the beginning of the [twentieth] century, the gap between peoples and nations has been narrowed progressively as a result of three factors: the extension of European colonization, the intensification of inter-continental relationships, and the independence of former colonies. The cumulative action of these three factors has thrown the races closer together, showing them their brothers in a new light, and the complementary values of their different civilization. It is in this context that we must study Négritude … Henceforth, the militants of Négritude, as I have often said, must assimilate and not be assimilated by benefitting from European values in order to reveal the dormant values of Negritude and bring them as contribution to the civilization of the universal. (1961 and 1963, cited in Markovitz 1969: 69-70)

It can be argued that Senghor's modernist primitivism was hinged on the idea of a symbiotic synthesis of cultures on the basis of equality and mutual respect. He believed in the positive interactions and appropriations between world cultures for the greater good of human civilization. As such Senghor understood that modern Senegalese artists would benefit from aspects of European values without losing their African artistic identity. Senghor's modernist primitivism first emerged in his early articulation of Négritude philosophy together with Aimé Césaire and other black students in

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[3] Mary Gluck writes that the aestheticized primitive was part of the enlightenment discourse of distilling "empirical realities and cultural fantasies through which Europeans attempted to create alternate identities that lay outside the frame of Western modernity. Mary Gluck, "Interpreting Primitivism, Mass Culture and Modernism: The Making of Wilhelm Worringer's Abstraction and Empathy," *New German Critique*, No. 80, Special Issue on the Holocaust (Spring - Summer, 2000), 149-169. See also Maria Torgovnick, "Defining the Primitive/Reimagining Modernity," *Gone Primitive* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990) 3-41.

Paris in the early 1930s. Initially, Négritude was based on the need to reinvent and rehabilitate the "Negro" image and identity that was shackled and under the yoke of racism and colonialism. At that point, Négritude was a literary and aesthetic philosophy, serving a more psychological and intellectual needs of the emerging black elites in Paris in their quest to define their identity as modern and cosmopolitan citizens.

When Senghor became the President of Senegal in 1960, Négritude was transformed and institutionalized, becoming a functional state ideology, and covering aesthetics, cultural, political and economic development programs of the newly independent state of Senegal. In re-evaluating Négritude to serve a more expanded purpose, Senghor drew from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's humanistic idea of "foyers of human development" (Senghor 1949:1025; Walter Skurnik 1972: 190). In theorizing his concept of foyers of human development, de Chardin suggested that true development and civilization is achievable through the meeting of cultures. Teilhard de Chardin's cultural synthesis approach was one that reinforced Senghor's ideas of the convergence of cultures and civilizations, with Négritude being the Black world's contribution to universal civilization. Senghor's subsequent reassessment of Négritude to encompass cross-cultural appropriations and reinventions was effectively promoted as the cultural policy of *enrancinement* (rootedness) and *ouverture* (opening) of postcolonial Senegal (Tracy Snipes 1998: 44, 55-56, 59).

On the one hand, *enracinement* encapsulated the idea of drawing from values, epistemologies, and social frameworks of traditional African society. Its construction was elastic, extending beyond the territorial boundaries of modern Senegal, to encompass a pan-African cultural heritage. In calling for the aesthetic incorporation and reformulation of recognizable African cultural motifs and iconographies such as masks and carved status as the foundation of *enracinement*, Senghor was stressing the ideological, philosophical, political and cultural imperative of pan-Africanism and Négritude. He argued for a common African heritage and civilization accessible to all Black people, which he compared to the classical Greek civilization as a common patrimony of all White people. Senghor exhorted Senegalese modernists to readily incorporate aspects of traditional African art from any part of the continent and the Black world (Senghor 1971: 7-8, 83–88). It can be argued that to further explore *enracinement* (rootedness), Senghor organized the *Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres* (the First World Festival of Negro Arts) in Dakar in 1966. The major aim of the festival was to demonstrate the cultural ties between all Black people and the significance of Black culture. In other words, the festival was to push further the notion of a Black/pan-African cultural heritage and artistic renaissance (Senghor 1995: 224-226).

On the other hand, *ouverture* was promoted as Senghor's international cultural policy of Francophonie cooperation and global cultural exchange. For Senegalese artists, *ouverture* allowed them to transpose and assimilate cultural referents of non-African/ Black cultures. Senghor's policy of Francophonie cooperation was a platform that encouraged cultural, economic and political relationships between Senegal and other French-speaking nation-states along the lines of the British Commonwealth. The wider cultural exchange aspect of Senghor's international cultural policy was premised on the idea of promoting Dakar as an international cultural hub, bringing international cultural figures to Senegal, and promoting Senegal's modern art on the global stage. As such the Picasso exhibition in 1972, and the subsequent international traveling exhibition in 1974, *Art Senegalais d'aujourd'hui* (Senegalese Art of Today), were organized to advance the tenets of *ouverture*.[4] In Senghor's universe of cultural synthesis, the combination of *enracinement* and *ouverture* as the frames of reference for the revamped Négritude, was the path through which modern Senegalese artist can oscillate between rootedness and internationalism.

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[4] Beginning in 1974, *Art Senegalais d'aujourd'hui,* traveled to major international venues in Europe, Asia, South America and the United States, for a period of ten years. It included 140 works by thirty-three artists.

The aesthetic dimensions of *enracinement* and *ouverture* were delineated in the academic programming of *École National des Beaux Arts de Dakar*, the premier Senegalese art school, when it was founded in 1960. As an academic experiment, *enracinement* and *ouverture* were articulated under two separate sections headed by two pioneer Senegalese modernists, Papa Ibra Tall and Iba N'Diaye, both who trained in France. Tall who was in charge of the Section de Recherches en Arts Plastiques Négres (Section for Research in Black Plastic Arts), encouraged his students to create a postcolonial modernist vocabulary by looking inwards to African cultural roots. For example, in *The Stride of Champions,* the unmistakable rhetoric of postcolonial aspirations is visibly expressed in Tall's signature style of highly decorative, geometric and flowing profuse lines, cut into and across the lone imposing figure of a traditional African dancer in the center of the picture surface. The lone figure with an indistinct face is propped as a symbol of a collective African dignity and pride, to reflect the new reality of political and cultural independence and also the deconstruction of colonial orthodoxy.

The Stride of Champions also shows the visible signs of appropriation of formal techniques of what appears to be analytic cubism. This is apparent in the artist's reduction of the human form to stylized geometric components, and use of broken planes that converge and diverge on the picture surface. The broken planes are painted in warm and cool colors in Tall's style. The vibrancy of the colors mirrors the colorful West African masquerade costumes. However it is arguable that the artist's organization of the broken color planes in the background appears to draw from Western styles such as Liubov Popova's cubist reconstructions. Although Tall had criticized what he considered to be the West's control of aesthetic taste and value, he accepted hybridity as a condition of postcolonial modernity, albeit grudgingly. Tall advised his students to reference the hybrid reality of the African postcolonial experience but to strive to reflect a recuperated African usable past in their work. In *Recontre des Masques* (1976, oil on canvas) by Boubacar Coulibaly, a former student of Tall, the iconography of three-dimensional pan-African masks is reformulated formally on a flat surface using conventional techniques of the Western academy.

In contrast to Tall, N'Diaye who directed the Section des Arts Plastiques (Fine Arts Department) focused on the importance of *ouverture*. His teaching model drew significantly from the *École de Paris*, where he had trained. Relying on the normative practices of the Western school, N'Diaye from the onset believed that the recognition of the hybridized postcolonial reality was critical to the evolution of modern Senegalese art. Rather than the search for authenticity, refracted through biased images of a nostalgic past, N'Diaye advised his students to take cognizance of the fact that they were hybrid products of the modern cultural era. As he argued eloquently, "we are both the sons and creators of this (new) culture, which so disturbs those nostalgic for the Africa of the "noble savage."[5] Rather than reformulating iconic African imageries, N'Diaye interrogated tradition by exploring its relevance in modern and contemporary Senegalese society. His *Tabaski* series (1970; fig 7) capture the experiences of contemporary Ramadan (the Muslim festival) in Senegal, represented in pictorial realism. The painting series document the rituals and ceremonies of Tabaski, highlighting the continued significance of the festivity to contemporary religious life of the predominantly Muslim population of Senegal.

Like Picasso, Tall and N'Diaye were vehicles through which Senghor sought to legitimate, institutionalize and make legible his modernist primitivism. By installing Tall and N'Diaye as symbolic archetypes of *enracinement* and *ouverture,* Senghor was able to secure his version of modernist primitivism as the ideological foundation of *École de Dakar*.[6]

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[5] Iba Ndiaye, "À propos des arts plastiques." Cited in Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow*, p.63.

[6] Scholars have variously described *École de Dakar* as the aesthetics associated with the first generation of modern Senegalese artists. However, I argue that it has come to represent the distinct signature of Senegalese modernism.

Postcolonial modernist primitivists: The art of Mor Faye and Soly Cissé

Mor Faye and Soly Cissé belong to different generations of Senegalese modernists, second and fourth generations, respectively. Faye who had a brief career (1966-1984) was a very prolific artist. At the time of his tragic death from cerebral malaria in 1984 at the age of 37, Faye had produced nearly six hundred works. Faye was a modernist primitivist whose work explored aspects of *enracinement* and *ouverture*. A poster child of Senegalese modern art in the 1960s, Faye gradually moved away from the rhetoric of Négritude and institutional patronage provided by Senghor, and began challenging the dominance of Senghorian modernist primitivism from the middle period of his career in the late 1970s. Yet his entire oeuvre, produced at the different stages of his career, reflects in no small measure the Senghorian twin-concepts of *enracinement* and *ouverture*.

Formally Faye's work is diverse, espousing various ramifications of the primitivist vocabulary, such as, romantic landscape in *Untitled* (gouache on black paper, 1969), mask-forms in *Mame Couba Lambaye* (gouache on yellow paper, 1984), pure abstraction in *Vendredi 1er* (oil on orange paper, 1979) and schematic drawings in *Venus et le coquillage* (ink, gouache and pastel on paper, 1976. He was very proficient in many media including, oil, gouache, ink, and collage and used them to achieve various painting and drawing styles demonstrated in the works already mentioned and in other works. They include *Exposition Mor Faye 83-84* (gouache and ink on paper board, 1984) and the mixed media piece *L'OUA sauvée* [OAU salvaged] (collage on paper, 1984). *Exposition Mor Faye 83-84* and *L'OUA sauvée* [OAU salvaged] reveal Faye's signature child-like scribbles and lyrical inscriptions, and collage experiments, respectively. Faye's body of work is a testimony to his genius, showcasing his eclecticism, mastery of forms and a cool pictorial sophistication. Yet they also show a struggle with colors and techniques.

However, it is in his themes and subject matter that we begin to get a better sense of his complex understanding of *ouverture*. Faye's aesthetic is distinguishable on the strength of his politically and ideologically charged messages. His work directly addressed issues with local or regional purchase. But his work also focused on burning issues that affected the wider continent and the global world. A work like *L'OUA sauvée* [OAU salvaged], addresses the importance of a reformed Organization of African Unity (OAU) that is alive to his responsibility in charting a pan-African political and cultural framework to engage the evils of neocolonialism, and promoting continental integration and prosperity.

Like Faye, Soly Cissé's works address a range of local and universal issues simultaneously. In spite of the generational difference between Faye and Cissé, it is possible to draw a parallel in terms of their individual ability to work with multiple media, investment in primitivist vocabularies, and the combination of *enracinement* and *ouverture* in their practices. Cissé who was born in 1969, graduated from the Ecole National des Beaux-Arts in 1996. He belongs to the younger generation of Senegalese artists who came of age in the nineties. Soly Cissé's practice, to paraphrase Olu Oguibe (2002: 275), is facilitated by a "combination of location, positioning, aspirations, intense professionalism, mobility, and versatility." The artist locates himself specifically as an artist living and working in Africa but with a global frame of reference. Cissé references Dakar as the center of his universe, but also as a cosmopolis with realities similar to other world's cities. While not eliminating certain features particular to Dakar, such as the qualities and rhythms of the everyday, he engages Dakar as a basis of his dealing with universal quotidian experience.

Unlike Faye, however, Cissé's work moves beyond the two-dimensional flat surface to include three-dimensional media and new media technology, in keeping with current avant-gardism in contemporary art. In *Après la pluie* (After the Rain, 2010), Cissé engages the existential experience of *Dakarois* who populate the ghettos of Dakar. The experience of inundation, which is a feature of the rainy season, brings to mind the precarious nature of existence in Senegal, and on the continent. On

a formal level, the animated video piece shows the aftermath of a heavy downpour. Domestic and personal items including a table, bottle, shoes, box, etc., float atop the rushing flood in the video. On a very basic level, the video contextualizes the absence of drainage facilities or channels that would help empty the heavy downpour. Although the video is focused on Dakar, the artist also conveys the impression that the flood could have been anywhere, from the Mathare slum in Nairobi to the inner city of Ajegunle in Lagos.

He takes an ideological position by weighing-in on the social and economic disparity between the haves and have-nots, those who live in the ghettoes where the inundations mostly occur and the upper crust who hardly experience flooding in their highbrow areas. Cissé's penchant for multiple layering of messages means that the video opens itself to extended reading beyond the semiotics of inundation, and in fact beyond Dakar. While it is a stretch to state that the artist applies the concept of ghetto as a metaphor for postcolonial Africa, given the pathologies that are readily associated with Africa in the global media, and what Comaroff and Comaroff refer to as postcolonies (Africa in this case) existing in states of endemic disorder, one comes to such unfortunate conclusions.[7] More so, the video piece also serves as a platform for Cissé to criticize the lip service paid to sociological, environmental and ecological issues on the global stage.

Thematically, 'Man' is the bastion of Cissé's creative interrogations, from which his intellectual and creative foci extend to encapsulate the material and metaphysical aspects of the world. Man is made up of two selves: the interior and the exterior self(s).[8] The interior, according to Cissé, is the substance of man. It is the human interior that forms the basis of rootedness, that from which normativity, tradition, heritage and identity spring from. However, as Cissé acknowledges, the interior does not exist in isolation of the exterior. While he admits that the internal self defines the substance of his creativity, yet his creativity manifests in consonance with the external self. It is in this dialogic imagining that Cissé conceptualizes man, making him to be more felt than seen when encountered in Cissé's oeuvre. This possibility for plurality of significations, which he basically reduces to a dialogic framework in a Bakhtinan sense, is visually realized by the artist, especially in his drawing and paintings. In his immense juxtaposition of forms and ideas, Cissé re-jigs the physical and conceptual understandings of man, his relation to the universe, beginning from the known and extending to the unknown.

In his paintings and drawings, his modernist primitivism is realized through a complex process of superimpositions and dense manipulation of multiple media, immense juxtaposition and reiteration of forms, ideas and meanings. For example, Cissé's *Serie Colorée,* a three in one painting, is composed of well-defined and distorted forms, mostly of humans (nude and clothed) and animals, morphing into one another. These forms are realized in a combination of warm and cool colors, and the fusing of graphical, geometric and organic shapes, set against a shallow picture plane. The effect of the color scheme on the two-dimensional surface, combined with the grotesque nature of the imageries, is haunting and phantasmagorical. In the triptych, there are also the legible numberings that have come to symbolize contemporary consumer culture in Cissé's work, which he refers to as urban signs. "Dakar – Senegal" is clearly imprinted on the first panel in the triptych to reinforce the sociological and physical spaces that Cissé investigates. As Cissé explains, the immaterial world is realized in his work as the quality of the surreal, and should be understood in the context of the animist-indigenous and Islamic traditions of Senegal.[9] The implication is that Cissé's aesthetic is rooted in the cultural systems of Senegal even as he attempts to represent or consider a wider universal context.

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[7] See Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (eds.), *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[8] Interview with Soly Cissé, Dakar, May 15 and 20, 2010.

[9] Interview with Soly Cissé, Dakar, Senegal, May 15, 2010.

Conclusion

Senghor's modernist primitivism however has been criticized in scholarship and also by Senegalese modernists for its many contradictions. For instance, while Senghor sought to base his cultural policy on *enracinement* and *ouverture*, his interpretation of the two concepts drew significantly from the epistemological structures of Western modernism. I have argued that this was because Senghor was a pragmatist who tried to make the best of the continued European presence in many facets of postcolonial life, such as educational policies, among others. Senghor believed that his new cultural regime had to be affirmed by Western cultural standards; hence his modernist primitivism was not entirely weaned off Western orthodoxy.

Yet the paradox is that Senghor's cultural project was intended as an intrinsic component of his decolonization and modernization agendas. Despite this failing, there are significant merits of Senghor's modernist primitivism in that it largely defined the works of older generation of Senegalese artists such as Mor Faye, and continues to shape the practice of contemporary Senegalese artists, including Soly Cissé. The enduring legacy of Senghor's modernist primitivism, understood through the frameworks of *enracinement* and *ouverture*, continues to shape both contemporary artistic practice and cultural policy in Senegal.

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Modernization and Traditionalization: Art and Decolonization in Morocco

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In the years following Morocco's 1956 independence, the concepts of tradition and modernity were heavily circulated within political discourse. The first leader, King Mohamed V, attempted to modernize Morocco based on, according to Zakya Daoud, a Third World-ist and pro-African orientation.[1] Upon his death in 1961, his son, King Hassan II, ascended to the throne. Abdallah Laroui in his 1974 text *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism?* argues that under Hassan II, after an interlude marked by alternative discourse, the concept of "tradition" was revived as a binary opposite to the discourse of modernism. He differentiates between lived tradition and the formulation of values as traditional. This "traditionalization" by the *makhzen*, the Moroccan politico-military elite, is a consciously constructed process to secure the power of the extant elite in the face of threats by the political debates of modernity and nationalism. Here, tradition is actively created as a way to insure that people are focused on the unifying aspects of the past, rather than imagining alternative futures.

Artistic debates were equally marked by the question of the relationship between modernity and tradition in the process of decolonization, though in different ways. Artists looked to the cultural heritage of Morocco to foster a modernism based on referents outside of Europe. Modernity, for these artists, was characterized not by a rupture with tradition but by locating a dynamic and changing nation-based identity within that history. The art objects themselves were in dialogue with the contemporaneous political culture, if not in direct response to national politics, and were exhibited publicly as an attempt to move art outside of the realm of the elite. The art was intended for use in the process of decolonization by both reflecting and actively shaping this post-colonial identity, as can be seen in both the artworks themselves and in exhibition practices that placed art within the public sphere.

Early abstract painters including Ahmed Cherkaoui, born in 1934, and Jilali Gharbaoui, born in 1930, were forced to confront the relationship between formal European modernism and traditional Moroccan visual culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Both were trained in Paris. In 1963, critic Gaston Diehl wrote of Gharbaoui, whose untitled work from 1960 is shown here, that his use of explosive colors, striking dissonances, and violent graphics made him "one of the first, in his generation and in his country, to rejoin the sources of Islamic art and totally renovate them."[2] Yet for Gharbaoui himself, who died in 1971, this relationship was much less direct. In 1967, he wrote that while one can never escape his environment, he saw his work as a continual attempting to by-pass traditional aesthetics. He did, however, still explicitly situate his work as in between that of an artisan and a modern artist.[3] The importance here is that there is a danger within this topic of forcing traditional referents on these artists, reifying a construction in which the artist is made to represent his culture and bring binary opposites together. I am not invested here in making an argument about the origins of modern art in Morocco. I am instead, following Frederic Jameson, interested in modernity as a narrative category that during this time period was used in the cultural processes of decolonization.

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[1] Zakya Daoud. *Les années lamalif*: *1958-1988 trente ans de journalisme au Maroc*. Rabat: Tarif Editions, 2007. 78

[2] Gaston Diehl. "Abstraction, lyrisme, éternelle férie de la lumière marocaine." Reprinted in *Jilali Gharbaoui: voyage au bout du rêve*. Azzouz Tnifass. Rabat: Marsam, 2006.

[3] Jilali Gharbaoui. "Fiches et questionnaire." *Souffles*. N 7-8, troisième & quatrième trimestres 1967. 53-55.

Cherkaoui, who died in 1967, more specifically explored the relationship between modernism and traditional visual culture within his work, as in this painting titled "The Blue Mosque" from the year of his death. The 1976 monograph on his work, edited by artist Mohamed Melehi, brings together a series of essays on the ideological response that Cherkaoui's work provides to colonial cultural domination. As Edmond Amran El Maleh writes, Cherkaoui's work opens up alternatives beyond "the poles of tradition and modernity."[4] Calligraphy, as well as signs from tattooing, weaving patterns, and architecture, become deconstructed and integrated into the gestural abstract canvases. Abdelkébir Khatibi reads in the canvases the enormity at stake in these multiple referents, seeing an attempt to make Cherkaoui's roots visible.[5] Through the creation of a new and hybrid visual language in a context dominated by figurative and so-called "naive" art,[6] the abstract paintings of Gharbaoui and Cherkaoui re-imaged an aesthetic relationship to traditional and vernacular visual culture.

Aesthetic experiments in the 1960s were placed within a framework of both national identity and national culture. In 1967, the journal *Souffles*, founded one year earlier by Abdellatif Laâbi, devoted an issue to Moroccan visual arts. As well as a paper on the state of art in Morocco by Toni Maraini and debates on the situation of naive arts and the national association of fine arts,[7] the issue included a questionnaire with responses from eight artists. Maraini also wrote about the recently deceased Cherkaoui's paintings in light of the questionnaire. Questions included how the artists situated themselves in relation to the "Moroccan plastic tradition" and how they felt they contributed to the elaboration of a national culture. Many of the responses return to the problems with contemporaneous artistic structures, particularly the problems of artistic education. Mohamed Chebâa, born in 1935, explains the exploration of tradition as a necessary reaction to the rupture with tradition forced by colonialism and the estrangement of the people from their cultural heritage. Seen here is his "Composition" from 1974. For Chebâa, "The status of traditional art in Morocco is futurist. Its adaptation allows us straightaway to situate ourselves in the most revolutionary artistic movements in the world."[8] He goes on to write that national culture, rather than a fanatic slogan, is meant to be a means of taking back one's own personality, of knowing the identity of the country to allow international conversations, but also as a functional aspect of the daily life of the larger society.

Farid Belkahia, born in 1934, was the director of the Casablanca School of Fine Arts from 1962 to 1974. Belkahia hired faculty such as Mohammed Melehi, Mohammed Chebaa, Mohammed Hamidi, Mustapha Hafid, and Toni Maraini, around whom the School of Casablanca was focused. Starting particularly in the late 1960s, the pedagogy of the school, which had been founded as a Protectorate institution, changed to incorporate vernacular visual culture. For Belkahia, "Modernity is only perceptible from an assimilation of ancient values."[9] Within his own practice, after Belkahia stopped working with painting on canvases in 1966, he began working with copper, as in this untitled work from 1967, and then primarily with leather and henna starting in the 1970s, as in this untitled work from 1983. He treats and stretches the leather following traditional artisinal techniques, then uses henna and natural dyes to tint the leather. The works often incorporate both the Tifinagh letters used in Amazigh languages and designs based on Saharan and, more broadly, North African, arts and visual culture, particularly tattooing.[10]

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[4] Edmond Amran El Maleh. "Ahmed Cherkaoui." Trans. Firmin O'Sullivan. *La peinture de Ahmed Cherkaoui*. Ed. Mohammed Melehi. Casablanca: SHOOF Publications, 1976. 99.
[5] Abdelkébir Khatibi. "Rising from the Roots." Trans. Firmin O'Sullivan. *La peinture de Ahmed Cherkaoui*. Ed. Mohammed Melehi. Casablanca: SHOOF Publications, 1976. 105.
[6] Azzouz Tnifass. *Jilali Gharbaoui: voyage au bout du rêve*. Rabat: Marsam, 2006. 15.
[7] A.N.B.A., Association Nationale des Beaux Arts.
[8] Mohamed Chebaâ. "Fiches et questionnaire." *Souffles*. N 7-8, troisième & quatrième trimestres 1967. 35-43.
[9] Rajae Benchemsi. "Repères biographiques." *Farid Belkahia*. Ed. Rajae Benchemsi and Farid Belkahia. Casablanca: Galerie Venise Cadre, 2010. 247.
[10] Toni Maraini. *Ecrits sur l'Art: Choix de Textes Maroc 1967-1989*. (Mohammédia: Al Kazam, 1990), 177-180.

In the writing by these artists, there is a frequent critique that, without the artistic structures of education, galleries, museums, and critics, the audience was unable to understand what they were trying to do. At the same time, there was an idea that art could be useful, particularly within the framework of the nation. These simultaneous and, to some degree, contradictory notions are both important in understanding the attempt to engage the public. Many artists were inspired by Bauhaus functionalism. This theory of integrating art into life, of making functional objects that were still aesthetic and socially relevant was important to individual artists' practice[11] and to arts education with the Casablanca school of fine arts.[12] This relevance took the form of rooting modernism within local visual and material culture for the benefit of creating a national culture. As in this untitled 1969 acrylic on wood painting by Melehi, which draws upon vernacular visual culture, the works themselves do not by any means attempt to resolve questions or provide answers about how individuals could function within the post-colonial nation. Rather, through formal means the pieces suggest a field of enquiry around what it might mean to be modern and Moroccan, what that engagement within the frame of the nation could look like.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, artists, particularly those of the Casablanca School, took on an increasingly public role with this work. As Maraini explains in the catalogue of the First Panafrican Cultural Festival in Algiers in 1969, the artists were combating the remnants of the colonial, reactionary national arts policy and its ramifications within the stereotyped principles of academic artistic culture, the paternalistic activities of the foreign cultural missions, and the problems with communication and arts pedagogy.[13] Starting that same year, artists sought to make art accessible within the larger society by physically placing art within public spaces, creating opportunities for conversation and exchange with the public. This must be read in dialogue with the realities of the challenges of extant artistic structures within Morocco, which Katarzyna Pieprzak cogently outlines in her recent book *Imagined Museums: Art and Modernity in Postcolonial Morocco*. These practices must be read in part as a productive response to the lack of sufficient exhibition spaces, arts education, and interlocutors. I am more interested here in the ideological aspects of this practice, which can also be read in dialogue with international currents as an attempt to reflect and shape a new nation-based identity.

The iconic image of art in public spaces in Morocco is the 1969 "exposition-manifeste" in Djemaa al-Fna in Marrakech: the exhibition as manifest or obvious, as manifesto, as protest. In response to an exhibition by the minister of culture held within the municipality building in Marrakech, six artists decided to exhibit their work on the walls of the public square Djemaa al-Fna. This exhibition was officially sanctioned, despite its nature as a protest to an official exhibition, and it has been critiqued on these grounds.[14] The quasi-official nature of this exhibition in my opinion must however take into account the practical nature of hanging art on public walls over a sustained period of ten days.

The artists, Mohammed Ataalah, Belkahia, Chebaâ, Hafid, Hamidi, and Melehi, sought direct exchange with the larger public, rather than an experience of art within an official space with an elite audience. As Belkahia recently explained, to see the official exhibition, one would have to have papers to be able to pass the guards, creating both an elite audience and an environment of fear.[15] In opposition to this atmosphere, Djemaa al-Fna is historically a meeting place that includes people

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[11] For example, Mohamed Chebaâ. "Fiches et questionnaire." 35-43.

[12] Interview with Abdallah Hariri, 22 July 2010, Rabat, Morocco.

[13] Toni Maraini. "Art in Morocco Today." *First Panafrican Cultural Festival*. Alger: 1969. n.p.

[14] Khalil M'Rabet. *Peinture et Identité: L'expérience marocaine* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987) 132 and Katarzyna Pieprzak *Imagined Museums: Art and Modernity in Postcolonial Morocco* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 136.

[15] Interview with Farid Belkahia, 30 July 2010, Marrakech, Morocco.

from all classes and backgrounds and appealed to the artists based on what they called its "collective atmosphere." In the statement released in *Souffles*, the artists explained that they wanted to "awaken the interest of this man (of the street), his curiosity, his critical spirit, stimulate it, done so that he integrates new plastic expressions within his rhythm of life, within his daily space."[16] The artists stayed with the exhibition to engage by-passers in conversation about the work. I do not wish to imply that the rhetoric and reception of this intervention was seamless. However, rather than exploring the way that it was received, here I will focus on the important ideological framework the artists were using.

In light of Michael Warner's work on publics and counter-publics,[17] it is important to unpack the notion of the intended audience of this work, who this "man of the street" is. The actual public of this exhibition was contained to inhabitants of the city and those that happened to be in Djemaa al-Fna, the physically present bounded audience. The rhetorical audience of this action, though, is *the* public, that is to say, the non-elite of the nation. The "collective atmosphere" of the space is significant because it suggests that this prototypical man within the statement could be anyone, could come from any walk of life. Beyond co-presence within the space, the projected, inclusive public of this project is rooted in a participative ideology.

This action must be understood in light of the contemporaneous interest in progressive, participatory politics and in connection to an atmosphere of growing Marxism, as in Abdallah Laroui's intellectual call for Marxist historicism as a response to the traditionalization by the *makhzen*. By the end of 1969, following a special issue on Palestine, *Souffles* added rubrics based on struggle, such as the "workers' struggles," with themes of class struggle, the integration of intellectual work into the struggle of the working class, and national independence in the face of neo-colonialism.[18] The increasingly explicit political agenda rooted in socialism led in 1972 to the ban of the journal and Laâbi's arrest. I mention this because the growing interest in participatory politics at the time must be read with a contrapuntal awareness of the simultaneous increase in political surveillance and arrests.[19]

It seems meaningful that the artists involved in the "exposition-manifeste" chose *Souffles* as the space to release a statement about the exhibition, which was printed in the issue of directly preceding that on Palestine. Rather than suggesting a direct continuity between the political actions of the artists and the journal, I am instead suggesting that the journal provides an important context for the action in Djema al-Fna, and that the consonance can enrich our understanding of the exhibition. Most of the artists had been individually involved in the project of *Souffles* before—Melehi designed of the iconic cover; five of the six painters in the exhibition were participants in the 1967 questionnaire on the state of modern art in Morocco.[20] Not all of the artists directly voiced their political positions, and most did not explicitly link their work to political activism. It seems false, though, to divorce this attempt to move culture out of the hands of the elite, placing it in the street for the benefit of a larger public, from the political atmosphere, particularly given the ideological similarities that existed.

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[16] Mohammed Ataalah, Farid Belkahia, Mohammed Chebaa, Mustapha Hafid, Mohammed Hamidi, and Mohammed Melehi. "action plastique: exposition jamaâ lfna. marrakech." *Souffles*. N. 13-14, 1er/2e trimestre 1969. 45-46.
[17] Michael Warner. "Publics and Counterpublics." *Public Culture* 14 (1): 49-90. 2002.
[18] Abraham Serfaty. "Luttes Ouvrières." *Souffles*. N. 16-17, 4e trimestre 1969/janvier-février 1970. 6.
[19] This has been extensively documented by Susan Slyomovics. *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.
[20] Mustapha Hafid was not included. See "Fiches et questionnaire." *Souffles*. N. 7-8, 3e/4e trimestre 1967. 20-70.

Khalil M'Rabet writes about the artistic practice of this generation in terms of a "culturalist engagement," in which both form and content provided bases for a new national culture and a space to interrogate a modern form of being; the artists concentrated on "a cultural combat rather than a political one."[21] Understood within a contemporaneous political culture, within the space of participatory politics, I would argue instead that the line between political and cultural engagement is more ambiguous. I do not wish to romanticize the role that this art held. Recognizing that it was not always understood or well-received, the choice to exhibit this art within the street for a larger public coincides with the formal goals of rooting international modernism in local visual culture.

The "exposition-manifeste" at Djemaa al-Fna was not an isolated incident. For example, artists from this group and generation exhibited within the Place du 16 Novembre, a traffic circle in Casablanca, an experience Belkahia recently described as a meeting between the art and modernity.[22] Rather than situating the art within the traditional cosmopolitanism of Djema al-Fna, engaging passers-by about artistic practice, this exhibition was best seen from the cars as they drove past. The art becomes situated within quotidian experience, framed by the urban, industrial space. The artists also showed work and talked to students in high schools in Casablanca, with the goal of engaging a public with a fresh gaze and demystifying art.[23] There was a public exhibition with the Galerie L'Atelier on the walls of the Kasbah des Oudayas in Rabat,[24] and the artists also explored the role of art therapy by exhibiting in a mental hospital in Berrechid. I would be remiss to not point to the annual cultural Moussem in Assilah, which began in 1978, founded by Mohammed Melehi and Mohamed Benaïssa, as a continuation of this ideology, though the rhetoric of the festival increasingly engaged transnational partnerships. Melehi and Benaïssa rooted the first festival in questions of explicitly Third World political, cultural, and economic identity and a movement away from elite cultural practice. They sought a "permanent practice of popular culture" that could blend culture and development.[25] This festival, known particularly for its murals, continues today, though its present form is arguably quite distinct from its original goals.

These experiences are held together with the ideology of orienting artwork towards a broader public, attempting to move culture outside the realm of the elite. This public role expanded upon aesthetic experiments to re-imagine a relationship between tradition and modernity, to understand what it might mean to be modern within the framework of the independent nation. This question of public art has become important again in the last ten years in Morocco, but it is important to consider the specific role that this public orientation took in response to colonialism. Within the process of cultural de-colonization, the artistic and exhibition practices worked together to orient art towards a larger public.

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[21] M'Rabet 139-143. My own translation.
[22] Interview with Farid Belkahia, 30 July 2010, Marrakech, Morocco.
[23] "Présence Plastique Dans les Lycées." *L'Opinion*. 10 mai 1971. (n.a., n.p.).
[24] In Rabat, this exhibition was of Najib Belkhodja in 1973.
[25] Mohamed Benaïssa and Mohammed Melehi. "À l'arrière plan du Moussem." *Asilah: Premier Moussem Culturel Juillet/Août 1978*. Casablanca: Shoof Publications, 1978. 8-10. My own translation.

Workshopping Modernism: Case Studies in South African Art

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To tease out our theme of indigenous modernism, my paper will consider two case studies: the Polly Street Centre which operated from the late 1940s to around 1970 and the annual Thupelo workshops which were initiated in 1985; reference will also be made to Rorke's Drift where the art school ran from 1968 to 1982. I must acknowledge many other initiatives which I am unable to address, but my choices will be no surprise to South African delegates. I crave their indulgence for revisiting well-known examples, and look forward to their input, as well as responses from those who bring fresh eyes to unfamiliar territory. While the significance of interactive workshops will be a thread throughout the paper, my main focus will be on two themes – modernist primitivism at Polly Street and abstraction as the premier modernist style at Thupelo.

As colonisers, the West pre-packaged modernism with its notions of progress and universal validity to offer the promise of a 'more advanced' level of civilisation for the global south in all facets of life, including art. As John Peffer notes, 'there were responses to modernity and modernism everywhere European colonialism impressed it mark' (Peffer, 2009: 6). Yet there has been a paradoxical tendency to disparage its adoption by African artists as derivative.[1] This irrational position both contradicted claims of modernism's universality and failed to recognise the agency of the artists. As Susan Vogel remarks, 'African artists select foreign ingredients carefully from the array of choices, and insert them into a preexisting matrix in meaningful ways … not as a sign of their domination by the West, or of their repudiation of their African heritage, but in terms of their own culture' (Vogel, 1991: 28). It is also important to recognise another characteristic of the West's purportedly progressive modernist package – the intertwined values of culture and capital in the art market which infused practice in art studios and workshops.

When the Polly Street Centre opened in Johannesburg in 1949 with the philanthropic intention of providing after-hours recreation for black city dwellers, it was not envisaged as a crucible for artistic careers.[2] In this, the appointment of artist Cecil Skotnes as Cultural Recreation Officer in 1952 was seminal, not only because of his interest in visual art, but because he understood the interdependence of culture and capital, which he expressed in straightforward terms: students rated a source of income more highly than any therapeutic values that art might offer. Self expression was not abandoned, but turned into a viable way of making a living, as Skotnes sought commissions and exhibitions for his students, and fostered art forms that would develop new markets. As well as finding donors for art materials, and helping students develop skills to use them, he brought art books and magazines to enrich their visual knowledge, and recalled that he had the use of an epidiascope to project images, so there were informal presentations as well as the individual browsing of images (Rankin, 1996: 70). For most emerging artists at the Centre, something akin to a School of Paris style was adapted to record the urban slums of apartheid. The fluid brushwork of painters like Ephraim Ngatane transformed squalor into pictorially pleasing works, palatable to white patrons, who seem largely to have overlooked the fact that Utrillo-like cityscapes had been co-opted for social comment.[3]

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[1] Rasheed Areen (2002, 366) comments on the 'common Western view about "other": they cannot produce anything original but only follow and imitate the West'.

[2] For further detail on Polly Street, see Koloane 1989; Miles 2004; Rankin 1996.

[3] '… so-called township art was a form of collective memory that constituted a body of evidence about the working and living conditions of urban black Africans in South Africa' (Peffer, 2009: 34). Sidney Kasfir (1999: 93-101) has interesting comments on township art in her section on 'South Africa's inside brokerage', pointing out that 'the typical advice to a new artist or writer – begin with what you know most intimately – is normally

While painterly naturalism was the preferred style for Polly Street painters, Skotnes himself was drawn to the graphic forms of Expressionism, and his landscapes were quite different from theirs. It was an interest that developed alongside his encouragement of schoolboy Sydney Kumalo (1935-88), who preferred figurative forms to landscapes, and sculpture to painting.[4] Skotnes and Kumalo both owed much to the same sources that had inspired Expressionists – African art – which they were able to view in the collection of gallery owner Egon Guenther. Guenther promoted five artists whose work he believed captured a distinctively African essence as the Amadlozi group – a Zulu word meaning spirit of our ancestors – with Kumalo the sole black participant.[5] Kumalo's work certainly showed an affinity with historical pieces he saw at Guenther's, an influence Skotnes encouraged as it could be reconciled with his desire not to interfere with what he perceived as innate African talent.[6] But Kumalo worked with clay not wood, using supplies donated by local brickyards, and broke with the frontality and symmetry of African works, responding to his additive medium and experimenting with styles seen in Skotnes' art books. Kumalo was also 'apprenticed' to sculptor Edoardo Villa in the late 1950s, assisting him with plaster pieces, and his works adapted their less angular surfaces as well as their asymmetry. The European heritage of Kumalo's mentors – Guenther German, Villa Italian and Skotnes of Norwegian stock – brought him into contact with diverse models, but influences were by no means all one way. Villa had begun to work in metal, with qualities of angularity and symmetry that suggest that he too engaged with Guenther's African collection, perhaps prompted by the work of his apprentice. And would I be stretching a point to see reminiscences of Kumalo not only in early mask-like heads but also the short-legged personages of Villa's later *Conversation* groups? Such forms were certainly present in the work of another immigrant sculptor, Ernest Ullman, when he employed Kumalo as assistant on the Civic Theatre commission: Skotnes was also at least nominally employed in the task of enlarging Ullmann's maquette, but it is Kumalo's style that is visible (Rankin, 1994: 131). What I am proposing here is not a tit-for-tat game of attributing counter influences to contradict the usual one-way model of Western impact on Africa, but suggesting that fluid interchanges took place, in which black artists were by no means passive recipients.

Skotnes suggested sources to Kumalo in the eclectic spirit of modernist primitivism, which borrowed non-European forms freely, often from incongruous sources. When the two artists worked at St Peter Claver in 1957, motifs were drawn from African pot decorations, Ndeble murals and Ashanti gold weights, even Australian aboriginal 'X-ray' images – all supplying a 'primitivising' style. Their resulting ceiling paintings were indistinguishable, and my reliance is on Elza Miles documenting that Skotnes painted the panel at the altar end, leaving Kumalo to paint the rest (Miles, 2004: 51-4). Encouraged by this eclecticism, Kumalo was active in seeking out new visual possibilities. When he worked at St Martin des Porres, the style of his holy figures related to Cubist images; there is some irony in an African artist drawing his forms from European artists who had been inspired to use angular faceting

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viewed as benign, but in this racially charged context can also be read as a way of setting limits for black artists alone' (97).

[4] Kumalo first attended the once-a-week Polly Street art class while still at school, but was forced to stop his schooling to support his family when his father died. The timeous commission for St Peter Claver meant that Skotnes could offer him an income from his art, and from 1958 he was a salaried Art Organiser assisting Skotnes. I have elected to focus on Kumalo because his work raises many pertinent issues. Another interesting example would be Louis Maqhubela, a Polly Street artist who broke with the tradition of 'township art' early in his career when he travelled to Europe where he worked with expatriate South African artist Douglas Portway, after winning the Artists of Fame and Promise award in 1966.

[5] In addition to Kumalo, the group comprised his mentors, Cecil Skotnes and Edoardo Villa, and also Cecily Sash and Giuseppe Cattaneo. Ezrom Legae (1937-1999) was later to participate in the group, as was Ben Arnold (b. 1942).

[6] While undoubtedly well-intentioned, this could of course be understood in a negative way: Koloane (1995: 262) states: 'If a black artist was referred to as primitive, that meant he was going in the right direction … artists were not encouraged to develop'.

by African art. Kumalo's experimentation went beyond what he saw in art books, however. The elongated figure of a commission in 1960, *Praying Woman,* was triggered by a horn egret, popular in African tourist art.[7] But modelling this attenuated form was only possible because Kumalo had learnt to work with armatures at Villa's studio. A spindly legged horse that also relied on these skills was inspired by Marino Marini; but when it looked too much like Marini's work, Kumalo inverted it to evoke bloated dead animals in township gutters (Rankin, 1994: 132-3). The resulting work, *Killed Horse,* was transformed into the high art medium of bronze by Guenther for his first solo exhibition. When the gallery walls looked empty, Guenther asked Kumalo to produce some drawings,[8] so his sketch was made *from* the sculpture not as a study *for* it. This was only one of a host of inventive animal sculptures, which invoke African mythologies, and Kumalo's drawings also generated a rich array of images. It seems curious that his drawings have had less recognition than his three-dimensional works, perhaps reflecting a long-standing Western prejudice that focused on African sculpture at the expense of other creative forms. This may also explain why Kumalo's sculpture had a more positive reception in art circles than the so-called township painters, because his work was thought of in terms of a neo-African revival rather than an unoriginal by-product of modernism.

Kumalo's drawings are at least as original as his three-dimensional work: if his disquieting *Seated Figure* is reminiscent of Francis Bacon, it is improbable that he had heard of an artist barely known in South Africa at the time.[9] It is possible to see connections with the slightly later expressive work of Dumile.[10] And it might also be asked whether, just as Kumalo had seen the potential of expressive line in Skotnes' works, he in turn contributed to the vigour of Skotnes' later line engravings. Should one also consider a wider progeny of menacing creatures in South African art as related to Kumalo's, edging out the charming 'bokkies' that were ubiquitous in public art? His distinctive treatment of animals demonstrated their expressive potential and contributed to this new genre, particularly amongst members of the community of black artists initiated at Polly Street, encouraged by Kumalo's success: his images were progenitors of sculptured beasts by such artists as Nkosi, Sithole and Konqobe. As many have confirmed, the centre was vitally important not only because it offered resources but because it was a meeting place for artists, a view recounted by many artists, even those like Durant Sihlali who had a negative response to the Polly Street venture, and David Koloane (1995: 261). Especially after Kumalo was appointed assistant, and the move to the more convenient Jubilee Centre, it acted as a workshop for the exchange of ideas, and Skotnes recalled the ferment of creativity as past students continued to come to work there. For example, dynamic interchanges are apparent in the relationship between the work of Kumalo and his immediate successor at the centre, Ezrom Legae. Significantly, neither remained within the confines of a primitivising style of Western modernism.

Despite having no formal curriculum, Polly Street achieved successful pathways to art careers through its workshop system and was the catalyst for a self-generating community of black artists. When it was closed under apartheid group areas legislation in 1970, work continued at Mofolo Centre in Soweto, the first of many such initiatives.[11] Importantly, most subsequent teachers in such

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[7] This was recounted to me by Skotnes, who thought it had inspired Sithole's customary style of extremely attenuated figures (Rankin, 1994: 131), although Miles suggests that Lucas Sithole had already explored this prior to 1960 (Miles, 2004: 70).

[8] Guenther recounted that he told Kumalo how great sculptors were also great draftsmen, and that he supplied large sheets of paper to encourage him to work on larger scale (Rankin, 1994: 133).

[9] The first monographs published on Bacon (by Russell and Rothenstein) date to 1964.

[10] Although Dumile Feni (1939-91) is customarily thought of as a completely independent artist, he did attend the Jubilee Centre intermittently (Miles, 2004: 97).

[11] The work was transferred to Mofolo under Bill Hart, who continued to run the centre until 1976 when events made it seem to him too dangerous for a white man to work in Soweto. By the 1980s there was an efflorescence of similar initiatives, the best known possibly FUBA and Funda, but a host of others initiated by black artists and teachers.

centres were African, demonstrating an increasing independence from European influence. This development was facilitated by the art programme at the Swedish Lutheran Mission at Rorke's Drift in KwaZulu-Natal, started in 1968, just as the Johannesburg centre was closing. While the rural location meant that not all would-be artists could attend, and classes remained small (the combined first and second year never reached twenty students), fees were low and bursaries available. Weaving, fabric design and ceramics preceded the art school, which inherited a similar workshop approach, with a high level of personal exchange in its small classes. Living and working together enhanced a sense of close-knit interaction amongst students who came from all over South Africa, and the full-time curriculum meant they received systematic training. I will not rehearse again the well-known work of Rorke's Drift, but I want to stress its importance in the fabric of South African modernism. Its highly competent artists made an enormous contribution as teachers in urban workshops.[12] In addition to being socially aware and ready to take on community roles, artists trained at Rorke's Drift were well prepared for the challenges of contemporary art. This duality of social responsibility and artistic innovation marks South African modernism in a distinctive way.

Thami Mnyele (1948-85) was a remarkable example. Although his stay at Rorke's Drift was short, he went on to develop an affective style of subtle draughtsmanship. But he largely sacrificed his independent practice as an artist-activist in exile at the Medu workshop in Botswana, producing political posters and hosting the 1982 Gaborone Festival of Culture and Resistance.[13]

For others, shifts into political art and contemporary practice happened concurrently. The colour planes of screenprints at Rorke's Drift prefigured Sam Nhlengethwa's (b. 1955) translation of sketches into abstracted collages, which became his signature style, as in images celebrating the creativity of township jazz for the Standard Bank Young Artist award in 1994. Such techniques also lent themselves to more sombre commentary, bled of colour, exposing the aberrations of apartheid, previously depicted in naturalistic prints, whether of migrant labour, or deaths in detention and on the streets. Tony Nkotsi (b. 1955), well known at Rorke's Drift for his portraits, whether sketches of classmates reproduced in the Rorke's Drift *Jabula Journal* in the early 1980s, or his iconic linocut of Steve Biko, later adopted a more abstract approach. He participated in print workshops in Aberdeen and Edinburgh in 1988, which might be seen as spurring this development. But there was an earlier initiative in South Africa that prompted these changes, which included Nkotsi, Nhlengethwa and others from Rorke's Drift – the Thupelo workshops.

The idea was conceived by David Koloane together with Bill Ainslie after they had participated in the Triangle Workshop in New York. In 1985 they organised a workshop retreat at Hunters Rest, north of Johannesburg, where black artists would have time and resources to explore contemporary forms with a visiting artist, American Peter Bradley, sponsored by the United States-South African Leadership Programme.[14] A fortnight of uninterrupted art-making was an unprecedented luxury for

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[12] The list is too long to detail, but examples are Dan Rakgoathe at Mofolo; Eric Mbatha and Ramphomane at YWCA, Dube; Charles Nkosi at Funda; Nsusha at FUBA; Bongi Dhlomo at Alexandra; Baloyi, Ndlovu and Nkotsi at the Open School; Davis, Gocini and Shange at CAP; Soha at Mowbray; Mnyele at Medu in Botswana. Many of these artist-teachers also worked at more than one centre. The advanced level of Rorke's Drift printmaking meant that the graduates had skills to impart to white colleagues also, as when Judus Mahlangu ran workshops at the Technikon Natal, and Eric Mbatha and Henry Nolutshungu demonstrated etching techniques to John Clarke in return for the use of his studio. (See Hobbs & Rankin 2006).

[13] Mnyele's career, and the Medu art initiative, came to a tragic end when he and other members of the group were killed in an SADF border raid. (See Wylie 2008).

[14] First known as the FUBA-USSALEP workshop, the name Thupelo (Sotho for 'to teach by example') was introduced at the second workshop in 1986. USSALEP funding was only available in 1985 and 1986 with partial funding in 1987 (Rankin, 1994: 40). One of the fullest accounts of Thupelo is found in Peffer (2009: Chapter 5, 'Abstraction and Community', 129-71), who also discusses the important role of Bill Ainslie's non-racial Art Foundation in Johannesburg.

most participants, as was the space and resources to make large works, and they responded with gusto, producing welded steel constructions and enormous abstract canvases quite unlike anything they had attempted before. Instead of being greeted with enthusiasm, however, these works were condemned in art circles for being derivative copies of Western modernism, and by others for lacking political commitment. It seems ironic that a style hailed as representing US freedom and democracy in the context of the cold war was not considered an appropriate expression of liberal ideas in South Africa, and that even the freedom to experiment was deemed inappropriate for black artists. The same criticisms were not levelled at Bill Ainslie on the grounds that as a white artist he had been working in this style for some time. More to the point, critics did not perceive Thupelo as a process leading on to other developments, both individual and communal, such as the Bag Factory studios in Johannesburg, which opened in 1991, facilitated by Robert Loader, where Koloane, Mautloa and many others continued to foster interchange in an ongoing workshop situation. David Koloane (b. 1938) had previously created abstract paintings using collage.[15] At Thupelo he trialled the use of the gestural mark of Abstract Expressionism, which he later applied to further socially committed works, using pastel or graphite as though a web of paint. His ravaging dogs and township scenes enmeshed in line speak of urban decay and social disintegration in a very personal way. Similarly, after working at Thupelo, Pat Mautloa (b. 1952), who began his career at Jubilee Centre and Rorke's Drift, developed abstractions with a strong political content. He created pictorial constructions of found metal, which originated in studies of township braziers, and connote not only the poverty of informal settlements and their makeshift tin shanties, but also the scattered piercings of bullets, evoking the constant threat of violence.

Even those who only attended once were positively affected by Thupelo, although it did not seem that way at first to artist Peter Clarke (b. 1929) when he arrived in 1985.[16] Best known for small highly skilled prints of community life, he recalls that he felt confused, almost paralysed, by the freedom on offer, and he did not keep any of the canvases that he made. He had been producing paintings addressing the constraints of apartheid, symbolised by high walls, which dominated the works as a surface for increasing quantities of graffiti and collage, spelling out messages of resistance. Returning again to the confined spaces of his home in the Western Cape after attending the first Thupelo workshop, Clarke began experimenting with diptych and triptych works which enabled him to make larger pieces, now entirely given over to flat walls, where a new painterliness, partnered with the collaged textual elements he had been exploring previously, energised his work in a series entitled *Ghetto Fence*.

To conclude. The dynamic interaction of South African artists is suggested by the range celebrated in Nhlengethwa's witty *Tributes*, acknowledging a network of exchanges that was not limited to black artists.[17] The art initiated in the workshops of Polly Street, Rorke's Drift and Thupelo demonstrate that African art is not, as Koloane once put it, 'a foster child' of European modernism – it may share

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[15] Koloane began his career as a painter with guidance from Maqhebela, then worked with Bill Ainslie, and studied in England from 1983, also attending Triangle Workshops in New York in 1983 and 1984, which gave him the idea of the Thupelo workshops; similar workshops have subsequently been held in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique and Namibia. Sadly, Bill Ainslie died in a car accident while returning from the Pachipamwe workshop in Zimbabwe in 1989.

[16] Clarke had a long-established career as a full-time artist and writer, but no formal training, other than brief periods in the early 1960s at Michaelis School of Art at UCT and the Rijks Akademie, Amsterdam (see Hobbs & Rankin 2011).

[17] Many writers, such as John Peffer, point out that there were fewer barriers between black and white in the art community of South Africa than elsewhere in South African society: as put by Louis Maqhubela, a Polly Street artist who has lived and worked in England since the 1970s, '… of all the issues in the world, race conflict is one issue that was the least prominent amongst artists. I used to mix with … even way back in the sixties, artists were the only community that could be on first name terms across the colour line' (personal letter 22 September 1994).

genes with Western forebears, but like all children grew up to be an independent adult. Black artists have learnt from others, as do artists everywhere, but they have used those lessons to articulate their own experiences. As John Picton points out, 'African modernities were invariably framed within the resistance movements that had their origins at the very same time as the imposition of colonial rule. Within the conditions and institutions of local modernity, therefore, modernism in visual practice and resistance as political practice have a common history' (Picton, 2005: 49).[18] But while other African artists may embrace their historical heritage as a way of creating assertive forms of modernism, 'in South Africa local tradition was hijacked by apartheid and this fact alone renders that tradition unavailable to artists in the culture of resistance' (Picton, 1999: 124). The modernism of black artists in South Africa is aesthetically innovative, seeking alternatives to naturalistic representation as does modernism internationally, but is set apart above all by its social critique, which locates it in a distinctive South African discourse.

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[18] Will Rea (2008: 136) also comments on the complexities of modernism in the African context: 'the relationship between modernism and modernity becomes complicated by the fact that the two, supposedly arriving simultaneously, became central to African reflections on identity in the era of decolonizing struggle.'

Gender Politics in the *Keiskamma Tapestry*

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Made by isiXhosa-speaking women belonging to the Keiskamma Art Project in the village of Hamburg, the *Keiskamma Tapestry* – the work I focus on in this paper – was completed midway through 2004. Purchased by Standard Bank, it has been on display in Parliament in Cape Town since 2006. The first of a series of large-scale works by the Keiskamma Art Project, the *Keiskamma Tapestry* takes as its subject matter the history of the Eastern Cape Province where Hamburg is located. Inspired by what is undoubtedly the most famous embroidery in the West, the *Bayeux Tapestry*, the *Keiskamma Tapestry* is comprised of 73 panels that are 70 cm in height but of variant length. The work's total measurement is just over 120 meters – about fifty meters longer than the medieval embroidery which motivated it.

In this paper, I explore aspects of the *Keiskamma Tapestry* in light of its relationship to the *Bayeux Tapestry*, suggesting that likenesses between the two works serve in fact to emphasize their differences. I focus specifically on issues of gender and suggest that, while the *Bayeux Tapestry* could be interpreted as representing women as lacking in individual agency, the *Keiskamma Tapestry* resists such a construction. In contrast to the *Bayeux Tapestry*, the *Keiskamma Tapestry* invokes the idea of females as playing an active and positive role in determining their own futures. To support this argument, I first look briefly at some meanings conveyed through the choice and treatment of materials. I then explore the choice and treatment of subject matter, focusing on the significance of cattle – a motif that predominates in the work – as well as the representation of the story of Nongqawuse.

The Keiskamma Art Project was initiated by artist and medical doctor, Carol Hofmeyr, who had settled in Hamburg in 2000. Struck by the acute poverty of isiXhosa speakers living in the village as well as in surrounding settlements, Hofmeyr was motivated by an impetus to provide destitute people with employment. In 2002 the Keiskamma Art Project produced a series of embroidered cloths and cushion covers – most of which featured cattle – which it exhibited at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. The *Keiskamma Tapestry* would first be shown at the National Arts Festival two years later.

The narrative in the *Bayeux Tapestry* commences with Harold Godwinesson's diplomatic mission to Normandy, believed to have taken place in about 1064 and, apart from a lost section at the end of the work, closes with the events of 14 October 1066 when William and his Norman army defeated Harold at the Battle of Hastings. The narrative in the *Keiskamma Tapestry* stretches over a considerably longer period and, while it articulates an account of conquest and the consequent loss of rights and ownership, it speaks also of their eventual recovery. Although panels with narrative specificity are sometimes bracketed by others with generic content and chronology is not observed consistently, one can define four broad timeframes which are explored. The work commences with pre-colonial histories (Panels 1 to 12). While making reference to Khoi and San groups, the emphasis here is on the project members' own probable ancestors – people who spoke isiXhosa. Thereafter the *Keiskamma Tapestry* traces contact between colonists and isiXhosa speakers (Panels 13 to 64). Particular focus is placed on the Frontier Wars – conflicts which affected South Africa as fundamentally as the Norman invasion affected England. The work does not explore Eastern Cape histories during the last two decades of the nineteenth century or the early twentieth century. Instead, it moves directly from the Frontier Wars to the apartheid era. Examining this period only

very briefly (Panels 65 to 68), it ends with the representation of the First Democratic Election (Panels 69 to 73), thus speaking of the restoration of rights that had been eroded through colonialism and apartheid.

While the *Bayeux Tapestry* is embroidered in wool on linen, the *Keiskamma Tapestry* is embroidered in wool on Hessian. The Hessian used for most of the *Keiskamma Tapestry* is in a hue that creates a reference to garments that earlier generations had dyed with red ochre available in the region – a material associated, as Gary van Wyk (2003: 16) puts it, with 'religious and cultural continuity'. But, from being available in a red-ochre colour, Hessian was chosen for the work, project leader Noseti Makubalo told me,[1] because it was reminiscent of the sacks that were used a couple of decades ago to package maize-meal – the kind that some women in the former 'homeland' of Gazankulu transformed into embroidered garments prior to sacks becoming available only in plastic. Indeed if linen, the foundation for the *Bayeux Tapestry*, had high status in the Middle Ages (see Hicks 2007: 40), Hessian – associated with packaging for a staple food - is in some sense its total inverse.

But the relation between materials in the *Bayeux Tapestry* and *Keiskamma Tapestry* does not involve only a straightforward opposition between the exclusive and the humble. While the angled bars constituting the borders of the *Keiskamma Tapestry* invoke generic reference to those of the *Bayeux Tapestry*, their incorporation of strings of blue and white beads as well as translucent buttons approximate those on blankets and skirts that were worn by isiXhosa speakers in the nineteenth century. Glass beads and mother-of-pearl buttons, embellishments which historically had connotations of exclusivity (see Van Wyk 2003: 19), in some sense parallel the associations attached to items made from linen in medieval Europe, whereas Hessian invokes a sense of the immediate economic circumstances of the makers of the *Keiskamma Tapestry*.

While the reference to historical beadwork might be significant in various respects, on one level it can be interpreted as suggesting continuity between the creative capacities of members of the project and their ancestors. A further way in which the *Keiskamma Tapestry* pays tribute to its makers is through the inclusion of their embroidered signatures on a black binding on the outside of its borders. The source for this was not the *Bayeux Tapestry* itself but rather a full-scale copy of the medieval work that was made in 1885-6 in the town of Leek under the leadership of Elizabeth Wardle. Wardle and her colleagues embroidered their names beneath the individual sections that they had completed.

The *Bayeux Tapestry* is usually thought to have been embroidered by a group of females but to have been designed by a male. The *Keiskamma Tapestry* received male input in the sense that books by Noël Mostert (1992) and Jeff Peires (2003a and 2003b) were used as sources, while some suggestions about subject matter were given by local historian Des Kopke and a paleontologist with an interest in history Rob Gess. But the tapestry did not involve an implicitly hierarchical arrangement in which design became the province of men and the realization of that design the province of women. Subject matter for the work was developed through a series of workshops held in early 2004. During these, incidents from the past were first discussed and then project members were invited to illustrate them. Following the workshops, women in management or leadership positions in the Keiskamma Art Project chose what they perceived to be the best drawings and, having combined elements of different ones into collages, used them as the basis for the final work. Thus if explorations of history were sometimes facilitated by male visitors or authors, the drawings that were actually produced in the workshops and the construction of the final designs from those drawings were both in the hands of women.

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[1] Interview with Noseti Makubalo in Hamburg, Eastern Cape, 19 January 2010.

While it is usually assumed to have been embroidered by females, the *Bayeux Tapestry* represents only three females in its main narrative – an unidentified woman fleeing her burning home with a child; a figure assumed to be Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor, at the foot of the bed in the scene representing his death; and a mysterious woman whose face is touched by a cleric. Another three females appear in its borders – nudes who are each half of a couple in a sexualized interaction. Catherine E Karkov (2005: 146) suggests that the role of females may have been to emphasize key moments in the narrative. Also, she implies, women could serve as signifiers of vulnerability and loss precisely because they were devoid of agency.

There are various small panels in the *Keiskamma Tapestry* between the wider panels, many of which feature figures of historical importance. But only three include females. Of these, one is a generic type (a Khoi woman in Panel 4), a second is recalled only in terms of her relationship to her father (the daughter of Nqeno in Panel 9) and only the third is immensely powerful (Queen Victoria in Panel 60). Yet, unlike the *Bayeux Tapestry*, it would be wrong to see the work as grounded in a construction of men as subjects and women as objects as it does, in fact, include components which complicate such arrangements. Representations of homestead life, such as in Panel 16, involve a redirection of focus away from the forum of war – which featured men - towards a space where women predominated. Most crucial in the work's resistance, however, is its use of cattle – a motif that predominates in many of the work's main sections, borders, or both.

When Europeans made contact with isiXhosa speakers, they found communities in which cattle were valued commodities. Providing their owners with milk and meat, they were not only sacrificed in key rituals but were also valuable assets and necessary as bride-price. Although women in a contemporary context often keep cattle, these animals were historically looked after by men. Indeed Peires, writing in 1981, suggested that:

> A woman could not slaughter or milk cattle, or even wash the milkpails. She could not even walk through a herd of cattle in the company of other women. More important, she had no formal voice in the disposition of cattle as inheritance or bridewealth, or in the political and legal arenas where the role of cattle was crucial (Peires 2003a: 47).

Peires may have defined these prohibitions in terms that were too narrow and absolute: he himself observed in 2003 that two of the three cattle that a newly married woman brought with her to her husband's homestead would in fact remain her own property (Peires 2003b: 371). It is nevertheless very clear that cattle were broadly associated with a masculine arena whereas crop cultivation was more commonly the province of women, and, more crucially, that this division of labor was a hierarchical one. Switzer (1993: 38) explains this succinctly: 'Possession of cattle … offered a household head far more status than a well-cultivated field.' This is significant in terms of the imagery featuring in works by the Keiskamma Art Project. In using cattle as a central motif of their art in general and in the *Keiskamma Tapestry* specifically, members of the project were appropriating an historical signifier of male economic power, status and labor, and were placing it into a context where it would instead suggest women's endeavors to achieve economic upliftment. One might in fact argue that they were appropriating an historical signifier of bride price and were refashioning it into an articulation of female agency.

This critical engagement with cattle and its historical associations acquires additional complexity in Panel 57 of the *Keiskamma Tapestry* where the story of Nongqawuse is represented. In April 1856, the teenage Nongqawuse and her young female relative, Nombanda, were tending the fields at the homestead where they lived on the banks of a river, when the former was summoned by two 'strangers' who gave her a message for her community: they should kill their cattle and refrain from

cultivating crops in preparation for a recreation of the world. This vision became increasingly influential. Believers were persuaded that ongoing delays in the emergence of the promised new epoch were due to their own failure to adhere to the instructions of the two strangers who had appeared to Nongqawuse as rigorously as they ought to have done. Hence those who had killed only some of their cattle were persuaded to sacrifice all of them, and by the end of 1857, about 400 000 cattle had been slaughtered. The so-called cattle killings, which also in fact involved avoidance of crop cultivation, ultimately led to the deaths of at least 35 000 isiXhosa speakers. No longer possessing the capacity to resist the colonial government, chiefs lost their land and numerous people were drawn into migrant labor to fend off starvation. Peires (2003b) observes that the 'impact on the Xhosa themselves is difficult to express in words. Their national, cultural and economic integrity, long penetrated and undermined by colonial pressure, finally collapsed.'

A parallel could be drawn between the appearance of two strangers to Nongqawuse and the scene in the *Bayeux Tapestry* in which Harold's coronation is juxtaposed with the appearance of Halley's Comet. The message by the strangers, while seeming to offer great promise, turned out to be an ill omen with tragic consequences for isiXhosa speakers. Halley's Comet, which appeared in Spring 1066, was also perceived as portentous - albeit that it was viewed with terror rather than optimism. But the *Bayeux Tapestry*, which views the Norman conquest of England from the perspective of the victors, constructs Harold as a usurper to the throne who had perjured himself by swearing fealty to William on the relics and the appearance of Halley's Comet as a sign of God's displeasure at his actions (see Higham 2005: 19). In contrast the *Keiskamma Tapestry*, which considers history from the perspective of those who were subjugated, does not represent Nongqawuse as blameworthy in any clear sense.

Of all the events represented in the *Keiskamma Tapestry* dealing with the colonial period, the story of Nongqawuse is the one that project members have most often encountered at home. While the story is cited by many as moving them profoundly, attitudes towards Nongqawuse herself are ambivalent. Helen Bradford (2004: 47) observes that Nongqawuse was in fact one of many prophets with millenarian visions and she 'prophesied virtually nothing that had not been prefigured by [the influential prophet] Mlanjeni' some eight years earlier. Nevertheless members of the Keiskamma Art Project have frequently been exposed to accounts in which she alone is blamed for the terrible consequences of the cattle killings and destructions. Nomfusi Nkani from the project explained this as follows: 'If Nongqawuse hadn't heard that prophesy and hadn't come back and told the community that they must kill their animals and burn their crops and those kinds of things, people think they would now be rich. So they are angry.'[2] But women in the project also cite a variation in the story in which Nongqawuse was the innocent victim of deception by colonists. As Nombeko Ganto observes: 'When Nongqawuse went to the river, people were up on the tree. Nongqawuse didn't know about mirrors and that when you see a man on the water this is a reflection but the man is actually in the tree. So Nongqawuse thought it was the ancestors who were talking.'[3]

This conception of Nongqawuse as victim to colonial trickery was represented by women in embroideries they made for their first exhibition in 2002. In the *Keiskamma Tapestry*, however, it is avoided. Panel 57 shows on the right dead cattle and other livestock. On the left Nongqawuse and Nombanda are depicted carrying containers of water on their heads, and the former smiles radiantly – presumably because she has seen a promising vision for the future. While shadows of two figures appear in the pool, in the manner of a reflection, there are no colonists in a nearby tree who are in the act of deceiving Nongqawuse. Yet, by showing images of figures which she indicated had appeared to her, Nongqawuse is revealed to have been genuine in her belief that she had received a

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[2] Interview with Nomfusi Nkani in Hamburg on 19 January 2010.
[3] Interview with Nombeko Ganto in Hamburg on 19 January 2010.

significant prophesy from the ancestors. Thus while not vulnerable to manipulation, she is also not a manipulator of others.

While one might perhaps assume that the decision to depart from the interpretation followed in 2002 was because an emphasis on white deception may have offended some potential buyers, another incident involving colonial deviousness and immorality is in fact shown in the *Keiskamma Tapestry*. Panel 27 represents at its centre the notorious incident from the First Frontier War (1781) in which the Boer leader Adrian van Jaarsveld and his men shot a group of isiXhosa speakers when the latter had bent down to gather tobacco that the Boers had strewn on the ground and indicated was a gift for them. The shift in approach since the 2002 representations of the 1856-7 events would in fact seem, as project member Nkosazana Betani suggests, to have been motivated by an inclination to 'show that it was people's *own* decision to go ahead and kill their cattle'[4] – in other words, to emphasize the agency of isiXhosa speakers, even if their actions were ultimately self-destructive. The *Keiskamma Tapestry* is thus not only resisting a construction of Nongqawuse as, on the one hand, susceptible to manipulation and, on the other, deceitful: it is also advocating that people actively assume responsibility for their own futures.

In conclusion: I have used this paper to suggest some of the ways in which the Keiskamma Art Project has deployed a female perspective – and perhaps even a feminist perspective - on Eastern Cape histories. In terms of its materials and form, the *Keiskamma Tapestry* not only constitutes a counterpart to the *Bayeux Tapestry* but, I have proposed, it also simultaneously pays tribute to the creative capacities of isiXhosa-speaking women of the past and present. And as the depiction of Nongqawuse and the motif of cattle indicate, subject matter is deployed in such a way that women are implied to have integrity as well as considerably greater agency than in the medieval work.

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[4] Interview with Nkosazana Betani in Hamburg on 19 January 2010.

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Cultural Production: Where to put Baskets in an Art Gallery?
The Place of Traditional Cultures in Art History.

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Introduction

The issue of displaying a cultural object has been debated for some time now. In conventional Western art history, the meaning of what art is has been the dividing factor even though it's been changing.

The very meaning of what art is has evolved so much over time that it can be said with confidence that "there is no universally accepted definition of art". As E. Dissanayaki said *"…arts are a cultural phenomenon and art might profitably be viewed as a prior, biological one. The manifestation of art therefore may vary from culture to culture".* To her art constitute part of human and cultural behaviour. This is true of our African Basketry which is the main focus of this paper (but it could equally be…….to pottery (ceramics), wood and other forms of carvings, beadwork and so forth). In actual fact, the same applies to art in general. Art reflects and belongs to the period and culture from which it is created. "*It is bound to be limited to our era and culture" (Visual-arts Web).*

Basketry in Southern Africa

Craft–Art form

On the same issue Anthony Cunningham and Elizabeth Terry said "… *although basket form is shaped by function, with baskets woven as serviceable household items with few unnecessary 'frills' there was still some opportunity for individual expression through subtle decoration….baskets mean different things to different people…''* depending on the perspective one is looking at it, it could be something. For the reason already given as to why basketry deserves to be treated as an art form, this appears to imply that we have an obligation as Museums, Galleries and art historians of the Global South to recognize, appreciate and accept it as such on its own merit and thus incorporate it into our art history. Then the rest will just have to follow by looking Basketry as thus.

With this new understanding, Basketry therefore deserves to be given a place in the galleries and museums of art. This is already been done is some of local galleries and museums such as Durban Art Museum, The Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg, Iziko National Museum in Cape Town and the others. Working at the museum this was not so much of a challenge as we do exhibit them as part of our traditional and cultural history in Lesotho as well as those from other cultural backgrounds like those from Zambia. The challenge has come when exclusively exhibiting art works during the Morija Arts and Cultural Festival. This explains why I have never exhibited Basketry or any weavings at these festivals, but I have done so with other art forms like ceramics and printing. Writing this paper has thus been a challenge for me as I now understand and look at the art of Basketry (or any weaving for that matter) differently. I now look at a basket beyond just being a basket, a utilitarian object; I look at it and realise, skill, creativity and the artisan who produced it. It can, indeed feature in both historical and artistic displays.

The form of art

Where the does art come from and where it is today?

Basketry is a form of art that is very much practised and has been for decades in Africa. Initially the utilitarian aspect of the basket has however been an obstacle to fully accommodating it as 'Art'. But as Rodah Levinsohn noted, *"Form in traditional basketry is related to function, but utility does not preclude artistry*". This observation means that being utilitarian does not have to cancel out the

possibility of an object as art. Just as it is the case in other art forms, in basketry there is thought, creativity and skill involved in the making of the object. Other factors which inspire the great appreciation of this art form are the very basic aspects such as form/shape, the designs/patterns, colour and other forms of decoration. It is very important though to point out that besides the original utility of the object, emerges a variety of shapes. Modifications and the repetition of the fundamental aspects variety therefore originality occurs.

> *In Africa, where baskets are in everyday use, function influences basket form right down to the minimalist essential, adding a timeless quality. Perhaps more than any other African craft, basketry represents the finest blend of African culture, technology and environment yet this link is poorly understood. (Cunningham & Terry, p. 16)*

Furthermore, basketry has served to show the connections people have with their environment revealing an understanding and appreciation of this connection. This is particularly evident from the material used in the making of baskets and the designs used in decorating, both of which activities are very much connected with the natural environment. Some of the communities even go to an extent of planting the required material, especially those which used to grow freely. As Cunningham and Terry note …*people's relationship with their environment is a major feature of culture and tradition…people often have detailed and unique knowledge of their environment that is contained in the experience, oral history and material culture, including basketry.*

The very way that baskets are made, being culturally and traditionally inclined as it is, provides a collective identity of a community or a particular cultural group. That is why we are able to differentiate the baskets made by the Basotho from those made by the Zulus. In as much as they are all baskets, there will however be differences which are brought about by the influence of place and time. Cunningham and Terry put it this way:

> *Southern African basketry has been influenced by both lifestyle and landscape over many millennia and continues to change today. (African Basketry, p. 22)*

This explains the reason why we get to enjoy such a wide variety of basketry designs.

Challenges facing the product

Like any other cultural art, basketry has undergone many changes as has been mentioned above. There are a number of reasons for these changes; first of all, with time the purpose for basket making shifted a little. Originally baskets were made mainly for utilitarian purposes and this influenced the shape/form of the basket and the material used. For instance a beer strainer *(Motlhotlo, in Sesotho)* was made to strain traditional beer, so the way it was made was such that it would serve the intended purpose – straining beer. (Cunningham and Terry) it has been observed that *many traditional forms have been adjusted to fit the needs and interior decorating ideals of western homes' (p.175).* This will then lead to the development of a beer strainer woven with coloured grass and even decorated further with decorative ornaments such as beads and the like. As Levinsohn pointed out, this change then stimulated creativity. She said, *the contact between Westerners and (Zulu) artists has stimulated creativity and productivity to the extent that today Southern African basket is a living, changing art not merely a historic tradition. (Art and Craft of Southern Africa).*

The high demand for basket by the tourist market resulted in mass production which sometimes compromised quality. Nevertheless, some artists were still able to maintain their high standards and thus satisfy the requirements of the international market.

The growing external interest, specifically from the western tourist market brought about some changes in design. Most of our Southern African baskets had minimal decoration, but this has changed due to the external influence. The important thing to note here, however, is that the original techniques and design were preserved. Another challenge here is that of the continuity of the culture and tradition of basketry that is, preserving the original designs and techniques. There can be continuity when these are passed on to younger generations willing to carry on the tradition and thereby allow it to live on.

> *Although it cannot be denied that there has been a Western influence on basket making, the art-form itself has not changed because traditional techniques continue to be used. The fact that the artisan can differentiate between and satisfy varied consumer needs does not detract from the craft; rather it reflects a new level of sophistication and expertise in a contemporary world. Yet the risks attending these developments persist. (Art and Craft of Southern Africa).*

'Colourful and bright' is the new dimension brought about by the introduction of conventional colours. The traditional way of colouring the grass with plant dyes had a limited range of mostly neutral and earthy colours. The most recent change in this art form is the one brought about by time and place, which is the material used in the making of the product. Recently we see a lot of woven baskets made with the incorporation of colourful copper covered telephone wire; especially with the Zulu basketry. We have even got to a point where we have mixed media objects, in which both grass and the colourful phone line wires or beads are used.

In spite of the many changes that have occurred in the making of this art the most important indication is that of continuity which shows that the art lives on; even though it is facing the threat of discontinuity. Circumstances in the rural areas have forced people to flood to the cities to study and work; so those with the knowledge and skills of this art are getting fewer and fewer.

> *..as people are drawn to the cities from rural areas, the pool of available talent to whom the skill must be taught for the tradition to continue, may diminish and ultimately disappear altogether. (R. Levinsohn, Art and craft of Southern Africa, Delta Books, 1984, pg 68).*

There's got to be a way to perpetuate the skills transfer and retain both a traditional and contemporary interest in the making and development of this art form. If the artist could find a way to collaborate with the traditional artist from the collective agencies, either as a group or individuals; the underlying concept is that, even if this art form is of a collective agency, it is still possible to create a highly individualised object/item. We then appreciate the artist in question as an individual as well as recognize the artwork produced. In collective agencies, it is true that the skills and techniques are shared and passed on, but what will ultimately stand out will be the artistic creativity of individuals in using the shared knowledge, tradition, culture and skills.

Artist as a 'living treasure'
As mentioned earlier, we at risk of losing this art form if there's no continuity. The idea of celebrating the artist as a 'living treasure' will encourage the artists and therefore encourage continuity and ensure sustainability. It is the duty of artists and art historians to recognise the collective artist as a 'living treasure'.

MTN Art Talk celebrated some of these artists in 2009 during heritage month, *"…paying tribute to some of our 'living treasures', Artists who help revitalise cultural traditions, affirm the cultural expression of communities and provide inspiration to us all" (MTN Art Talk 2009 pg.2).*This initiative

shows that there is a considerable understanding of the significance of various art forms and artists as well as a deserved appreciation for them. And this is why they celebrated these artists; *'They are unique and irreplaceable, because they are important to our individual, community or national identity.'* They've also managed to carry on this very unique and special combination of knowledge, and the necessary skills and techniques.

This art form, that is basketry originates from the day to day life style, it has been part of a living culture – a reason enough therefore to regard its practitioner as a 'living treasure'. Giving these artists this recognition will ultimately pave the way for the individual artists to collaborate with traditional communities as well.

Conclusion

Basketry is an art form which Southern Africans should be proud of as it has special aesthetic and functional meaning to us. We have learned that as the Global South, we should develop art forms such as this one, promote them and provide opportunities and encouragement to the artists in order that they may have continuity and ensure that the art lives on. Let us exhibit it in our Art galleries and Museums as an art, and then the West will 'read' it as it deserves to be read.

The many changes are confronting our society and environment, among them is global warming, which poses a real challenge on the continued sustainability of this art form. Artists, therefore have to devise strategies for meeting this challenge and thereby ensure the continued survival of their craft and art.

Over and above this it is the duty of organisations such as Museums and other institutions of educations to identify, collect, document, preserve and educate the public about these "Special collective arts" like basketry. This can be done even in a form of documentaries, where the artist could be documented making a product from the beginning. This way we are sure to have "preserved' the 'origins' of this evolving art form, therefore ensuring continuity. '*…much as many heritage institutions should be well attuned to the records, artefacts and understanding of the past, they need to be constantly in touch with current concerns and developments in order to allow various traditions to inform our present and future perspectives.'(Morija Museum & Archives Strategic Plan 2010-2015, The Focus of Heritage Institutions, Pg. 4).*

In as much as it may seems like there is little being done to develop the state of the African Art; I am greatly encouraged because there's actually a lot happening around us. The development of 'African Art-forms' is a concern, I realise that the work we've been doing in Lesotho, as minimal as it may seem, it is also adding to this effort of developing African Arts, as well as what is happening here and else where in the Global South.

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A New Generation of Utopia: Young Artists' Careers in the Context of the *Trienal de Luanda*

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In January 2006 the South-African artist Ruth Sacks visited the first Luanda Triennial. The report of her visit testifies to her surprise at the city's lively art scene and good cultural infrastructure: Sacks pools her experiences in the concept of "tropical high tech."[1] The first Angolan Triennial, however, was not supposed to be merely a successful art event, but something much more significant and profound: a project for reconstructing the cultural identity of the country after three decades of civil war.

The press release described the project as follows: "Our proposition is the exercise of art and culture as an essential vector for the humanisation of contemporary society. […] To reflect on the current moment and the social facts that contextualise us, there is an urge to diagnose the image- and thought-base of Angolan as located in the global era. […] Our aim is to spread aspects of the Angolan culture with aesthetic and philosophical value, encouraging the fixing and recreation of the imagebase of the country translated into a contemporary language and attaining a universal memory of African contemporary aesthetics."[2]

In the following article, I shall present the concept behind this first great event of the Angolan art scene and how it was realized.[3] The discussion will include both an analysis at the institutional level, as well as perceptions and insights about the positioning of contemporary art production in Angola and local and international networks of the art scene in general. In this regard, the first Luanda Triennial in 2006/2007 played an important role. I therefore look at this large exhibition in the context of a complex repositioning of Angola and its capital city Luanda in the African continent and beyond. The organizers of the Triennial set themselves the goal of enabling the entrance of local artists into the international art world. Moreover, the Triennial is about establishing a new "territory of art" on the African continent. By actively shifting the former centers, it intends to challenge the hegemonies of the art world.

In addition to analyzing the positioning of the Triennial in the global art world, it is of interest to investigate how the Triennial is situated locally and the acceptance with which it meets. The post-war conditions in the country give the Angolan art world a special dynamic. However, the Triennial was by no means realized on some kind of "ground zero," even if the organizers like to compare it to the constitution of the art scene in post-war Germany and the role played by the Documenta. The Angolan art world was not a no man's land during the civil war. The civil war began after Angola gained its independence from the colonial power Portugal in 1975, and was at the same time a proxy war between the superpowers of the Cold War; the warring liberation movements of the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) and the UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola) were strongly supported by the Soviet Union and the United States, respectively.

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[1] Cf. Ruth Sacks, "Tropical High Tech: Recent Activities of the Trienal de Luanda," in: artthrob, 101, January 2006, available online at: www.artthrob.co.za/06jan/news/luanda.html, accessed 04/11/2011.

[2] www.trienal-de-luanda.net (now offline) and in: "Triennale d'art contemporain de Luanda," available online at: www.sudplanete.net/?menu=evtrec&no=1090, accessed 04/11/2011.

[3] The findings summarized in this article are part of my PhD project "(Re)mapping Luanda. Nostalgia and Utopia in the Angolan Art-World" at the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS). The project is interdisciplinary and comprises ethnology and art history. In addition to theoretical-hermeneutic methods applied to selected works, the project includes an ethnographic, multi-local, and diachronic investigation with fieldwork in Luanda, Lisbon, and Venice.

The war only ended in 2002, and today Angola is experiencing its "economic miracle," mainly owing to rich oil and diamond resources. But unlike post-war Germany, much of the population has not participated in this economic upturn, and national politics is in the hands of a neo-patrimonial or kleptocratic elite.[4] Although cultural life during the war became increasingly impoverished and, like many other areas of national life, the cultural infrastructure suffered under the concentration of government spending on the war, art production in the Angolan capital never came to a complete stop. This probably has to do with the fact that the war was largely conducted in the provinces and only a few direct acts of hostility took place in Luanda itself.

Another reason why it is important to analyze the first Luanda Triennial in this historical and social context is to grasp its ambivalent position within the Luandan art world. Such categorization can be very helpful in exploring new art institutions in the former peripheries. Their development and their success or possible failure is codetermined by local factors. Thus, for example, it has been assumed that one of the reasons for the failure of the Johannesburg Biennale in 1997 was lack of local acceptance.[5] While most studies of global art take a bird's eye view in order to consider as many areas of the globalizing art world as possible, here I shall deliberately focus on a smaller segment.[6] This should contribute particularly to a better understanding of the local dimensions of projects which, although international in scope, are shaped by the specific characteristics of their localities.

Shifting centers: Displacements in the global art world

The international art world today is characterized by decentralization and pluralism amidst which hegemonies seem to be disappearing.[7] In the last twenty years, former peripheries of the global art world have moved towards the center. Moreover, there has been an increasing participation of non-Western artists and curators in this world, including in its major events such as, for instance, the Venice Biennale. The first peak of this development was marked by the appointment of Okwui Enwezor as head of Documenta11 in 2002. It was against this backdrop that he introduced the term "strategic globality," a call for the self-evident participation of actors from the former peripheries of the art world in global modernity and for local self-empowerment for Africa as well.[8]

However, all global art world events, even the grandest, have a local dimension. Thus, we need to describe these overlapping territories in their entire complexity if we are to grasp the different dynamics and transformations of this world. The internationalization of the art world should not become a one-way street. If it only results in increased presence of African actors at events of the Western art world, then it remains an unfinished process. Charlotte Bydler has shown that the globalization of the art world does not automatically mean an increase in social relationships, interactions, and mobility for all concerned. She warns that predicting the end of inequality is premature. Restrictions on travel because of visa and residence permit requirements effectively prevent artists and curators from the African continent taking part on equal footing with their

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[4] Cf. Patrick Chabal and Nuno Vidal, Angola: The Weight of History, Columbia University Press, New York, 2008.
[5] Cf. Thomas McEvilley, "Report from Dakar—Toward a Creative Reversal," in: Arts in America, January 2001, pp. 41–45.
[6] On the globalizing of the art-world, cf. among others: Bernd Wagner (ed.), Kulturelle Globalisierung. Zwischen Weltkultur und kultureller Fragmentierung, Klartext, Essen, 2001; Charlotte Bydler, The Global Artworld Inc.: On the Globalization of Contemporary Art, Uppsala Universitet, Uppsala, 2004; Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), The Global Art World: Audiences, Markets, and Museums, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2009; Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), Contemporary Art and the Museum: A Global Perspective, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2007; James Elkins, Is Art History Global?, The Art Seminar, vol. 3, Routledge, New York, London, 2007.
[7] Cf. Bydler 2004, p. 150.
[8] Cf. Okwui Enwezor, Großausstellungen und die Antinomien einer transnationalen globalen Form, Fink, Munich, 2002, p. 30.

Western colleagues in events of the international art world. Much wishful utopian thinking about an egalitarian participation of the former peripheries has remained unfulfilled; we only have to think here of the scanty attention that the global North accords contemporary African art. Even when artists from non-Western countries are invited to international events, it remains difficult to build an artistic career when based in an African country. Thus especially in recent years, calls for a shift of the centers of power in the art world towards the inclusion of the African continent have got louder.[9]

The slight and slow pace of change of the art markets has been criticized by Ulf Wuggenig as the "ultra-stability of the center."[10] Rasheed Araeen is probably one of the sharpest critics of the status quo. He argues for a structural change of the art system and criticizes Okwui Enwezor's position of "strategic globality" as an adaptation to the Western art world that has not brought about actual change.[11] As early as 1987 Araeen spoke of the need to shift the center of the art world towards the peripheries.[12] Whereas at that time the idea was still couched in the categories of a tripolar world, today the call is for an art world "beyond Euroamerica"[13] and the strengthening of the "global South." Thanks to the incentive of Documenta11, among other events, the "global" is now firmly established at least as a dimension of discourse in the contemporary art world. To address the issue of the success of a future connection of the African art scene to the international art world, it is worthwhile to take a look at African biennials and similar institutions.

Biennials: Hubs of new networks
Despite all attempts at linking up with the global art world, local African art scenes are far more likely to be perceived as isolated phenomena that function independently of international dynamics. It is not only in Africa that the establishment of a biennial is considered an appropriate means of achieving visibility on the international stage. Especially in post-war societies and post-conflict situations, art scenes have attempted to establish biennials as part of the process of social change (we can take as an example the Johannesburg Biennale as "post-apartheid biennial").

Biennials are today seen by actors in the art world as perhaps that world's most important global institutions.[14] Since the 1980s, there has been a boom in founding biennials in the former peripheries. This has also stimulated debates about the globalization of art, which has sometimes supplied the ideas behind the exhibitions. Postcolonial approaches that proclaim the plurality of modernity, the complexity of the globalizing process, and the independence of the non-European world often dominate. In 1933 Thomas McEvilley already questioned whether the biennials of the Western art world had lost their raison d'être.[15] Since then, especially the biennials of the Asian continent have risen to become serious competitors that can keep up with the West both in terms of content and of funding.

Enwezor views the founding of biennials in Africa positively and sees them as a deliberate appropriation of a Western cultural form.[16] Even if these new major exhibitions have as their goal a (re)mapping of Africa's place in the global art world, they still differ from Western biennials in their

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[9] Cf. Bydler 2004.

[10] Cf. Ulf Wuggenig, "Fictions, Myths, Realities. Centres, Peripheries and Art," in: Fernando Alvim, Heike Munder, and Ulf Wuggenig (eds.), Next Flag: The African Sniper Reader, migros museum für gegenwartskunst, jrp|ringier, Zurich, 2005, p. 41.

[11] Cf. ibid, p. 56.

[12] Cf. Rasheed Araeen, "From Primitivism to Ethnic Arts," in: Third Text, vol. 1, issue 1, Autumn 1987, pp. 6–25.

[13] Cf. John Clark, "Beyond Euroamerica," in: Weibel/Buddensieg 2007, pp. 66–78. fn 6.

[14] Cf. René Block et al. (eds.), Das Lied von der Erde, exhib. cat., Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, 2000, p. 4.

[15] Cf. Thomas McEvilley, "Arrivederci Venice: The Third World Biennials," in: Artforum International, November 1993, pp. 114–116.

[16] Cf. Enwezor 2002.

conceptual orientation. This also has historical reasons. In the second half of the twentieth century, the positioning of contemporary African art was at first a part of the emancipation of African countries after the end of colonialism. There was a rejection of Western categories and a turn toward own traditions. Examples are the cultural-political ideologies of negritude[17] and bantuism[18]. In the 1980s, the concept of hybridity and the participation of the peripheries in globalization took center stage in postcolonial debates. They were no longer about the return to an authentic culture, unaffected by Western discourses, but about combining African traditions with global trends. Art was now conceived of as polysemous and open to diverse interpretations. One reason for this new openness was the growing significance of artists of the African diaspora.[19] In the 1990s, the self-positioning of Africa dominated the debates about contemporary African art. The founding of art biennials such as those of Cairo (1984) and Dakar (1992), the photography biennial Bamako Encounters (1994), and the Johannesburg Biennale (1995 and 1997) was part of this process. The only serious regular exhibition venue that has since been established on the African continent and is of comparable dimensions, is the Luanda Triennial (2006/2007).

The Luanda Triennial and its positioning in the global art world

The ambitious goal of the Triennial organizers goes far beyond publicizing and strengthening the local art scene in post-war Angolan society. It is rather about clearly positioning this scene within the global art world and the building of an institution with Angolan money and Angolan staff that is on a par with established institutions. The Triennial is expressly seen as a political event and conceived of as a response to the international art world that is still structured on hegemonial lines. The idea is that Angola should create an "epicenter" for contemporary African art.[20]

The organizers' starting point is the gap that has opened up because of the lack of art centers on the African continent. The appearance of Angola on the map of the international art world following the end of decades of civil war is a further step towards establishing art centers in Africa. Like the first Johannesburg Biennale, the Triennial, too, is redrawing that map.[21] This strategy of (re)mapping pursued by the organizers operates at both the local and the international level.[22] In particular, the

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[17] Negritude was a literary-philosophical movement that advocated the cultural self-determination of Africans and people of African background. It was particularly widespread in francophone Africa and among its chief spokesmen were Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire. Senghor and Césaire assume that Africans are fundamentally different culturally and historically from their colonizers. An important text of the movement is Senghor's collection of poems "Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française" (1948), for which Jean-Paul Sartre provided a preface entitled "Orphée Noir." For a survey of the significance of negritude for the Senegalese art scene and contemporary African art in general, cf. Elizabeth Harney, In Senghor's Shadow: Art, Politics, and the Avant-garde in Senegal, 1960–1995, Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2004.

[18] The doctrine of bantuism was formulated by, among others, the Angolan artist Viteix. Cf. Vítor Manuel Teixeira, Pratique et théorie des arts plastiques angolais, PhD thesis, Université Paris 8 Vincennes—Saint-Denis, 1983.

[19] Cf. Gerardo Mosquera, "The Marco Polo Syndrome: Some Problems around Art and Eurocentrism," in: Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (eds.), Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985, Blackwell, Malden, MA, et al., 2005, pp. 218–225.

[20] Cf., among others, Pedro Cardoso, "Luanda quer ser um centro da arte contemporânea africana," in: PUBLICO, 03/29/2007, pp. 12f.

[21] Cf. Arthur C. Danto, "Mapping the Art World," in Africus: Johannesburg Biennale, Transitional Metropolitan Council, Johannesburg, 1995, pp. 24–27.

[22] (Re)mapping is understood here in terms of a postcolonial concept of space. The social production of space is seen as part of a social practice and a critical remapping of center and periphery. Concepts of space thus become ideological landscapes traversed by relations of power. Cf. Edward W. Soja, Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-imagined Places, Blackwell, Cambridge, MA, 1996.

repositioning seeks to remap the city of Luanda. Premises not usually used as art venues, such as the Hotel Globo in the center of the city, are transformed into new art galleries, and already existing venues are utilized in new ways.

The first Luanda Triennial was marked by affirmative rhetoric, persuasive concepts, and an attractive and appropriate design that certainly met Western standards. A concrete, local project, which takes place in three editions every three years in Luanda, the Triennial is at the same time a future-oriented vision that manifests itself in various sequel and framework projects. The chief financial sponsor is the Sindika Dokolo Foundation. In addition to organizing exhibitions, the goal of the foundation is the development of cultural-political instruments and mechanisms for the support of contemporary art in Africa. This includes in the long term the creation of amuseum for contemporary art in Angola. The head of the foundation is the Congolese businessman and art collector Sindika Dokolo, husband of the daughter of Angola's president, and the Angolan artist, curator, producer, and art gallery owner Fernando Alvim. The curator and artcritic Simon Njami is also involved. He has taken on the role of communicator at the international level, and brings together in his writings visions and ideas of an artistic territory that is not limited to Angola.

Fernando Alvim left Angola in the 1990s and with his Camouflage gallery in Brussels created a point of reference for contemporary African art. During this period Alvim also advised the German art collector Hans Bogatzke, who built up one of the largest collections of contemporary African art. In 2002 Sindika Dokolo bought Bogatzke's collection, a transaction that could well be seen as a "strategic retrieval operation" bringing back African art to the African continent. Since then the Sindika Dokolo collection has been expanded by acquiring works of young African artists, with a focus on Angolan art. After the civil war, Alvim returned to Luanda in order to set up the first Triennial together with Dokolo and Njami, at which many of the works in the Sindika Dokolo collection were shown. In the local art scene Alvim, who had been known there as an artist himself, was not a new face, but he now made his mark in a new role. An aspect of this was his strategic relocation from Europe back to Africa.

The program of the foundation includes the launch of "satellites" at various places in the art world. Part of these exhibitions and events is the emphasis on the innovative and avant-garde character of the Sindika Dokolo collection. Alvim's and Njami's joint curatorship of the African Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale can be seen as the start of this. At the latest through the debates about the Pavilion, the Sindika Dokolo Foundation gained a distinct profile. At the same time, this triggered new confrontations in the turf wars that mark contemporary African art. An issue was also the origin of the Sindika Dokolo Foundation's money, and some artists withdrew their collaboration with the foundation because of rumors of dubious sources.[23]

There has been an increasingly strong focus on projects from the "global South." Examples are the founding of an art gallery for contemporary African art in 2008 in São Paulo and the exhibition at the Joburg Art Fair in the same year, under the curatorship of Njami. In 2010 Alvim was invited to be guest curator of the São Paulo Biennial.

In 2010 the second Luanda Triennial took place. The historical and social context was even more strongly emphasized in the program. A continuation and expansion of the concept of the previous

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[23] On this discussion, cf. Ben Davis, "Art and Corruption in Venice," in: Artnet News, 02/23/2007, available online at: www.artnet.com/magazineus/news/artnetnews/artnetnews223-07.asp, accessed 04/11/2011; Walter Robinson, "Update on Dokolo in Venice," in: Artnet News, 05/18/2007, available online at: www.artnet.com/magazineus/news/artnetnews/artnetnews5-18-07.asp, accessed 04/11/2011; Kim Gurney, "A Stink Overwhelms Venice," in: Art South Africa, 05/22/2007, available online at: http://artsouthafrica.com/?news=43, accessed 04/11/2011.

Triennial, this aspect was announced under the slogan of "emotional geography." Angola was conceived of as an imagined territory, and the Triennial was to contribute to the construction of a future-oriented transnational society. This idea corresponds to the thoughts and wishes of many Angolans today who would like to make Luanda the pearl of Africa again, as it was once held to be in the days before the colonial and civil wars. Even more emphatically than the first Triennial, the second festival was conceived of as a laboratory of the future, whose focus ranged far beyond the field of art.[24]

In this way the Sindika Dokolo Foundation works on realizing the vision of a cultural capital on African soil. In doing this it integrates the visions of the first "utopian generation." This generation struggled for Angola's independence also at the cultural level. For example, writers such as Agostinho Neto, Pepetela, and Luandino Vieira, who fought in the liberation movements, assumed political offices after 1975. Art and politics were seen as two interdependent social spheres. Today, too, aesthetic action in Angola is conceived of as expressly political.[25] The Triennial is based on the idea of its being an intervention in a war-torn country. The ideas and visions of the people in Angola constitute the "fuel" of the Triennial, which aims at building a "visionary nation" and rests equally on a national and a cosmopolitan identity. In the course of establishing a new territory in the art world, therefore, the Triennial reflects on and even uses underlying historical and social conditions to formulate fruitful visions for the future.

The local positioning of the Luanda Triennial

Seen against the background of the social and economic reality of Angola, the question arises of how utopian the Triennial is. Although the country is currently developing into one of the strongest economies in Africa and Luanda is supposed to become the Dubai of the continent, much of the population still suffers from the aftermath of the civil war. Seen from the point of view of society as a whole, the building of a cultural infrastructure is therefore not a major priority. In Angola there is no advanced training in art beyond teaching as a special subject in secondary schools. Most contemporary Angolan artists are self-taught or have studied abroad.

In the following section, I attempt to answer the question of what role these conditions played in the establishment of the Triennial. The first Triennial took place before the founding of a national museum or an art school providing sound artistic training. The importance of the institution of the Triennial for the Angolan art scene should not be underestimated, even if its significance is also ambivalent. As a metaphor for the Triennial, one could take the image of a UFO hovering over the local art scene which, without completely blending into its surroundings, affords certain actors (temporary) access to it. At the same time it promises access to the international art world. Thus the Luanda Triennial has assumed a role that is otherwise performed in Africa by foreign cultural and educational institutions such as the Goethe-Institut and the Alliance Française.

The careers of young artists

From an international perspective, the Sindika Dokolo Foundation has become the most attractive and powerful driving force of the Angolan art scene. One of its main objectives is to promote the young local art scene. And in fact it is above all artists of the younger generation who know how to

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[24] Cf. also Christian Hanussek, "Memórias Íntimas Marcas. Interview mit dem Künstler Fernando Alvim über den Aufbau eines afrikanischen Kunstnetzwerkes," in: springerin. Hefte für Gegenwartskunst, 2/2004, pp. 50–53; Sue Williamson, "The Trienal de Luanda Is Coming: A New Vision for Art Events in Africa," based on an interview with Fernando Alvim, September 2005, in: artthrob, 95, September 2005, available online at: www.artthrob.co.za/ 05sept/news/luanda.html, accessed 04/11/2011; Alvim/Munder/ Wuggenig 2005.

[25] On this discussion, cf. Sue Williamson, "Should I Stay or Should I Go: The Dilemma of the Artists of 'Island' Africa," in: Lorenzo Fusi (ed.), .ZA: Giovane arte dal Sudafrica, exhib. cat., Silvana Editoriale, Cinisello Balsamo, 2008, pp. 152–163.

use the structures and services of the foundation for their benefit. Looking at their careers, we can read off the extent to which the ambitions of the foundation have actually been realized. A glance at the collaboration during and after the first Triennial will enable us to draw a few conclusions.

At the time of the first Triennial, the foundation had signed exclusive contracts with a small group of artists, which provided them with working spaces and materials free of charge, and guaranteed the purchase of their works. The artists were thus employed and salaried to a certain extent, enjoying for a longer period of time a very good income. The foundation supported them not only financially, but also by providing workshops and artist residences, which enabled some artists to visit various Angolan provinces for the first time. And not least, the temporary individual supervision by Fernando Alvim and Simon Njami ensured the continuity of the artistic dialog.

The period of the first Triennial thus constituted a kind of framework for artistic training. This contributed to the strong sense of solidarity felt by this small group of artists. During the presentation of the African Pavilion in Venice in 2007, there was even talk of the formation of an artistic movement called “Luanda Pop.” This initiative, however, was not heard of again after Venice. The artists went their own ways and emancipated themselves to a certain extent from the influence of the foundation.

Artists such as Yonamine, Kiluanji Kia Henda, Ihosvanny, and Nástio Mosquito are notable today for their combination of a cosmopolitan way of life with being anchored in the local art scene of Luanda. They have in common that they have lived most of their lives outside Angola. Before the first Triennial they had already lived and worked in Portugal, England, Cuba, or South Africa. With the end of the civil war, they returned to Luanda and met each other during the preparatory stage of the first Triennial. For the artists, this also meant the opportunity to produce in a very short time a great number of high-quality works. Today these sell well including in the local Luanda art market. Yonamine, for example, is represented by one of the most prestigious Lisbon art galleries, Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art. Like the works of other young artists from the inner circle of the first Triennial, since 2007 his works have been shown at international exhibitions and biennials in São Tomé (2007), Sharjah (2008), Havana (2009), and São Paulo (2010).

After the Venice Biennale the young artists repositioned themselves at least temporarily in Europe, where they worked on their own projects and built up networks. This leads to the question of whether change of residence is still a necessity for African artists if they desire international success.[26] Or is this rather a matter of the nomadic life style characteristic of all contemporary artists in the global art world? In the case of the young generation of Angolan artists, we can take stock—for the time being. For example, Kiluanji Kia Henda and Nástio Mosquito have again shifted the focus of life and work to Luanda. At the same time, they have taken part in international exhibitions and often been invited to Portugal, Italy, China, and South Africa as guest artists. Thus the careers of both artists show that immigration to Europe is not necessary in order to enjoy international success.

The expectations of an entrée to the international art world were in fact fulfilled for a small group of artists. In a very short space of time, participation in national and international exhibitions put their names on the list of the most sought-after newcomers of the contemporary African art scene. Their artistic careers are examples of the development for which the Triennial was decisive.

Here the Sindika Dokolo Foundation provided an important impetus, yet promoted only a very small number of young talents. Understandably, other actors in the Luanda art world therefore look upon both the Foundation and the Triennial with different eyes. But none of the “rejected” artists has given up; the recognition they have received at the local level is too great, the international art world

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[26] Cf. Fabrice Lextrait and Frédéric Kahn, Nouveaux territoires de l’art, Sujet-Objet, Paris, 2005, pp. 244f.

too distant, and opportunities in the local and, to a limited degree, translocal art market are more than sufficient. Outside the orbit of the Sindika Dokolo Foundation, there is an independent local art scene in Angola. In this scene, too, artists have succeeded in finding entry into the international art world. Their channels of communication and aims, however, sometimes differ considerably from those of the foundation. Here the biennial of the Centre International des Civilisations Bantu (CICIBA) and the art award of the insurance company ENSA play an important role. Some local artists have also developed their own initiatives, which may be seen as alternatives to the Triennial. The presence of the Triennial challenged local artists to express themselves in new ways and raise their own profile, also in contrast to the Triennial. They redefined positions and concepts of art, sometimes founded their own initiatives such as art galleries and symposia, or expanded existing institutions.[27]

Conclusion

Any final assessment of the impact of establishing a new, internationally significant center for art in the Luanda art scene would be premature. What is certain is that the Sindika Dokolo Foundation and the Triennial have become important actors in the local art scene and have also achieved a degree of recognition in the global art world. The work of young Angolan artists has today gained attention in circles interested in progressive positions in the contemporary art of the former peripheries of the art world. Artists such as Yonamine, Kiluanji Kia Henda, and Nástio Mosquito are increasingly in demand for international exhibitions. Thus the Triennial and its associated projects are by no means merely an expression of a utopian design for a new center of the art world in Africa, but have had quite concrete results, especially in launching the careers of several young artists. The coming years will show whether the vision of building a dynamic art scene can be continued with success. Many actors in the art world have emphasized the importance of expanding training opportunities for artists. The initial foundations for this have already been laid in Luanda where a state art academy is in its start-up phase. The Sindika Dokolo Foundation, on the other hand, is focusing on the plan to set up a museum for contemporary art in Luanda and extending its projects to the provinces.

In conclusion, it may be said that the result of the debates about art and art production in Angola, which have been stimulated by the Triennial, has been to engage critically with the local art world and its history—a debate that is by no means over yet. If the works produced by some artists for the Triennial have been criticized as mere adaptation to an international standard, they are at the same time a kind of self-reassurement and a reformulation of the local canon.[28] In this field of tension, new syntheses may emerge that will enable the younger generation to unite previously irreconcilable areas of perceived aesthetic practice.

Translated from the German by Jonathan Uhlaner.

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[27] These include the Celamar art gallery of the artist Marcela Costa and the initiatives of the artist António Tomas Ana (Etona). The national artists' association (UNAP) has also increasingly sharpened its profile.
[28] Cf., among others, Adriano Mixinge, Made in Angola: Arte contemporânea, artistas e debates, Harmattan, Paris, 2009, p. 285.

Changing the Rules of Engagement: Art, Politics and the Role of Bark Paintings in Building Australian Identity

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Introduction

SLIDE: PAPUNYA TULA IMAGE WITH MAP

In 1972 in Australia's Western Desert, the Papunya Aboriginal community established Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd to support the development and sale of community produced artwork. Papanya Tula is often referred to as 'the catalyst' for, and the 'beginning of' the Australian Indigenous art movement.[1] Employing Western artists' materials (compressed wood pulp board, canvas, and acrylic paint) to produce customary designs for sale in the Western art market, the Western Desert art looked different to the 'traditional' bark paintings that had been sold from northern Australian Aboriginal communities during the preceding century. This existing market, however, established the possibility of an Australian Indigenous art *movement*. Indeed, the existence of an established market in Indigenous art, coupled with an understanding within Indigenous communities that art had a particular role in cultural efficacy, were perquisites for such a movement.

SLIDE: YIRRKALA BARK PETITIONS WITH MAP

In 1963, in response to a threat to excise 390 square kilometers of clan land for bauxite mining, senior Yolngu leaders, from clans across north-east Arnhem Land, presented two bark paintings to the Australian Federal Parliament. Petitions, signed by seventeen Yolngu clan leaders, were adhered to the paintings. These objects, referred to as the Yirrkala Bark Petitions, are generally assessed in political and legal terms (for example they are enshrined in Australia's Memory of the World listing as part of the listing for Landmark Constitutional Documents of the Commonwealth of Australia). It is worth, however, considering why it was that Yolngu leaders thought painting to be the most effective form of political communication. Yolgnu perceptions regarding the reception of bark paintings in arenas of influence, and the suitability of paintings as repositories for representation of lore and law, are relevant to an understanding of agency in the market.

The Western Desert Art Movement and the northern Australian bark painting movement were both the result of Indigenous and white Australian agency; of a desire for community independence, social coherence and financial stability. Many of the actors in this story have been rendered invisible as politics, heroics and institutional history claim the narrative.

The emergence of a market for Indigenous art is a long, complex and embrasive story of Indigenous agency, intermediaries and advocates, new intellectual frameworks, and the education of a local and international buying public. The complexity of production and reception; the perceptions inherent in trade, exchange and advocacy; and the people who engineered such perceptions, form the basis of this paper.

Collecting ethnography

SLIDE: DJA DJA WARRUNG BARKS WITH MAP

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[1] Caruana 1993, Perkins and Fink 2000, Kleinert and Neale 2000, Myer 2002, Shaw 2003.

Images executed by Aborigines on bark have been collected for at least 150 years. The earliest known examples, comprising etchings of daily life, were part of a collection of Dja Dja Warrung cultural material that the squatter Edward Kerr had put together for the Sandhurst exhibition held in Bendigo in 1854. This collection was subsequently exhibited at the Melbourne Exhibition in that year, and then sent to the Exposition Universalles de Paris in 1855.

Elizabeth Willis argues that these barks were probably made on request for Kerr, within an established cycle of reciprocal trade that characterized Kerr's dealings with Dja Dja Warrung people over several decades.[2] This cycle of trade was repeated across Australia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and has been a feature of Aboriginal and European relations.

SLIDE: ESSINGTON BARKS

The earliest extant bark paintings, held in the Macleay Museum, University of Sydney, are executed in natural earth pigments. These were collected in 1878 from Port Essington and according to Taçon and Davies indicate the first recorded European interest in the Northern Territory in collecting bark paintings.[3]

Across the twentieth century anthropologists visited the Northern Territory collecting bark paintings as part of the ethnographic study collections they were building for the institutions that sponsored their work (Baldwin Spencer, Norman Tindale, Catherine and Ronald Berndt, Donald Thomson and Charles Mountford). These objects were either held in the institutions as anthropological specimens or in the anthropologists' private collections.

A commercial market

A different type of production of bark paintings, those made specifically for sale by agents in the south began in the late 1920s when Rev. Wilbur Chaseling at Yirrkala commissioned objects for the Methodist Overseas Mission's outlets in Sydney and Melbourne. At Milingimbi T T Webb encouraged art and craft production from his arrival in 1926. Webb and Chaseling had both studied anthropology, as had Edgar and Ann Wells who supported art and craft sales from Yirrkala in the 1960s. The aim of the missionaries, to support community sustainability and social cohesion, was emphasized by other powerful lobby groups at the time, groups consisting of educated, wealthy women with a strong social conscience and links to Britain. The activities of these women is now being assessed through feminist historical studies[4] but they remain more or less invisible in the story of the development of the Indigenous art market. Women such as Mary Bennett, Constance Cook and Helen Baillie worked for Aboriginal rights with Aboriginal communities (in Western Australia, South Australia, and Victoria and New South Wales respectively).

SLIDE: MARY BENNETT

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[2] See Willis 'Histories, strong stories and new traditions' 2007. This hypothesis is also subscribed to by other researchers examining only other bark with images from this period is housed in Museum Victoria. It measures 86 x 56 cm. and shows 'many human figures, emus, trees, weapons, an European-style house, and two kangaroos' (Servaes and Prendergast 2002 p.7). Various researchers have identified these images as 'recorded images of everyday life' (Servaes and Prendergast 2002 p.8 citing Horton 1994, Groger-Wurm 1973 and Massola 1958). Within this context it is worth considering the image of William Barak with works for sale at Coranderrk (Massola 1975), of Aborigines on the banks of the Yarra with artifacts for sale (Wienke 1984) and the works on paper by both Barak and Tommy McCrae a generation later than these barks that also depict daily life, and were created for the market (Massola 1958 and 1975, Sayers 1985 and 1996).

[3] Taçon and Davies 2004: 83.

[4] Paisley, 2000.

These practical, wealthy, well-connected women advocated community empowerment through craft and handiwork sales. For example, Mary Bennett sent examples of Aboriginal craft to the UK where Edith Jones used them in talks at the British Commonwealth League.[5]

An Australian Indigenous art movement was a different proposition, however, and Aboriginal art needed to be discussed within the context of other international art movements.

SLIDE: DR LEONHARD ADAM

The development of this discussion was predominantly the work of one man, Dr Leonhard Adam, a German lawyer, collector and ethnographer, who fled Nazi Germany to England in 1938, and found himself, not by choice, interned in Australia in 1940. Adam was released to work as a researcher in 1942 and built a career in the Department of History at the University of Melbourne. There he developed a major ethnographic collection, now known as the Leonhard Adam Collection of International Indigenous Culture. He died in Bonn, Germany, in 1960.

A scholarly context

Adam left Germany within the highly politicized environment of pre-war Nazi Germany, his arrival in Australia as an 'enemy alien' was similarly politicized, as was his scholarly engagement with Indigenous art in Australia. In an essay written in 1944 Adam posed the question 'Has Aboriginal Art a Future?'

SLIDE: HAS ABORIGINAL ART A FUTURE?

Here he tackles two issues relevant to societal and cultural sustainability; first, he examines the proposition that Aboriginal culture was dying out, and second, he explores the idea that culture can provide an economic base for Indigenous communities. He concluded that there was a strong argument for securing a cultural future for Indigenous Australia by art production located within a structured economy in a Western economic framework. Addressing the concept of a 'dying race', in the 1954 edition of his book *Primitive Art,* Adam wrote:

> But the populations survive and with them their innate artistic capacity. So long as primitive men passed as savages, and their works as mere curios, no one took these native talents seriously, but the discovery of the aesthetic value of primitive art, as well as its psychological and social functions, could not fail to attract the attention of educationists, missionaries, and colonial administrators.[6]

This statement identifies the importance of the conflation of identity and empowerment, a critical aspect of a market economy. Anonymity was part of the institutional response to the discourse, and indeed the social and political activities, that supported the paradigm of the 'dying primitive races.' The study of objects without authors and body parts without names (described as 'types'), when legitimised as scientific enquiry, could operate at a remove from the community of origin. This dissociation of ethnographic material from its source of production was questioned by Adam's contemporaries, Frans Olbrechts in Belgium and William Fagg in the United Kingdom, whose writings identified individual African artists. In the 1940s Adam was actively seeking and publishing information about individual Yolngu artists.[7]

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[5] Paisley 2000 p. 13.

[6] Adam 1954:210. *Primitive Art* was first published in 1940, and subsequently reprinted in 1942, 1949, 1954 and 1963.

[7] See for example Adam to Gray 17 March 1948.

SLIDE: COVER PRIMITIVE ART

Adam also observed in *Primitive Art* that Indigenous communities in Nigeria (Benin), California (Navajo) and Mexico (Pueblo) were using culture as a tool in community empowerment and cultural replenishment. Like the missionaries and women activists with whom he had close links, and who were supporting community empowerment through art and craft production, Adam was convinced that there was a direct and perceptible relationship between cultural practice and health. He translated their political and social advocacy into academic discourse, and identifying successful overseas examples, argued passionately that:

> The complete abolition of tribal organizations, traditions, ceremonies and the like has long been recognized by colonial administrators, practical anthropologists and enlightened missionaries as being not only a wrong native policy, but also a great danger to the mental balance of primitive peoples … My opinion is that, as has been the case in British West Africa for a good many years, one of the principal subjects of aboriginal education should be the preservation and gradual development of native art.[8]

SLIDE: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF VICTORIA

Adam also argued for a recasting of Australian museums, maintaining that studying Australian Indigenous cultural material within Natural History museums meant this material would remain framed within the paradigms of evolutionary and salvage anthropology.[9]

In *Has Aboriginal Art a Future?* Adam progresses the thesis that economic benefit can accrue through cultural practice arguing that authenticity it is not related to the material used (he advocated teaching pottery and carpet-making in Indigenous communities) but the strength of cultural practice, and the social environment in which the art is produced.

> Some people think that European art materials should be avoided, and that any modern influence must result in the deterioration and degeneration of primitive art. They forget, however that art is not a static, but a dynamic phenomenon, and that it is perpetually changing, and that mutual influences from tribe to tribe, and probably from altogether different peoples also, have been at work for centuries. European influence on primitive art, therefore, is only the latest development in a very long chain of historical events.[10]

For those who viewed Indigenous Australian culture as a living exemplar of stone-age culture, the thought of Aborigines painting canvas or weaving rugs was anachronistic and, was by definition, not authentic cultural activity.

In Australia in the mid-twentieth century where fieldwork-based anthropological study was the informing paradigm, Adam's scholarship was considered ungrounded and anachronistic. In Germany, those anthropologists who could conceptualise historically positioned and artist-centred Indigenous art production no longer held positions of authority, and 'primitive art' was politically recast as

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[8] Adam 1944 p.49.

[9] Adam in a letter to Clive Turnbull 2 May 1947, 27 June 1949. Adam to McCulloch 5 July 1951, 9 April 1955.

[10] Adam 1944 p. 49.

‘degenerative’.[11] In the UK and the USA there was sympathy for Adam’s position, but there was limited knowledge of the social aspects of Aboriginal Australia amongst those who were interested in Indigenous (‘primitive’) art, and there was little understanding of the real value and import of his position.[12]

His conjoining of art, Indigenous health, community empowerment, and economic independence was a good fit with public positions of the ‘amateur’ missionaries and women activists, who were themselves often discredited.[13] Although it is unclear whether he was aware of it, his position also posed a challenge to a range of government departments and instrumentalities. The idea of an economically independent Aboriginal Australia was not a straightforward proposition in the frontier. Art, as Adam pointed out, enabled economic support for Indigenous artists who were documenting law, and he noted a

> … relation between primitive art and primitive law … This feeling is strongest where works of art are distinguished by marked individual features … this is especially strong when the works concerned are of a religious nature … when such belief is sanctioned by custom it has already been incorporated into the sphere of law.[14]

SLIDE: REWARD AND PUNISHMENT IN ARNHEM LAND 1962-1963

It was missionary Edgar Wells, and not the anthropologists who had collected Yolngu art, who articulated the relationship between lore and the market. He wrote:

> Men must have a will to something, and the defence of the realm as the Aborigines of Arnhem Land came to see it was the preservation of the traditional inheritance. This defensive attitude was greatly strengthened by the economic results flowing from the increased art sales, which, in turn, idealised the ancient tradition. The intellectual powers of the leading elders increased as anxiety retreated, remarkably so in the case of some five or six men who became the type of artist most in demand.[15]

Indigenous agency

SLIDE: PAPUNYA TULA ARTISTS

The idea that being part of a functional art market would support community cohesion and empowerment was a key part of the Papunya Tula narrative, and incorporates all the elements discussed above: education, community coherence, maintenance of culture and tradition, all delivered through a sustainable model that would equip traditional societies with economic choice.

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[11] The generation of scholars that preceded Adam’s generation, such as Kohler, Bastian and Luschan had been discredited by the Nazi-sponsored anthropologists, and the *Degenerative Art* exhibition of 1937 in Munich specifically targeted artists who referenced works by Indigenous artists.

[12] The Royal Anthropological Institute’s Symposium in 16th and 17th October, 1957, and to which Adam contributed involved a discussion of ‘primitive’ and folk art (see Smith 1961) as important aspects of ‘high’ art. Charles Mountford gave the keynote address. Davenport’s review of the Symposium found Mountford’s contribution uninspiring. (Davenport 1963).

[13] The anthropologist Olive Pink was accused of being unstable and having sexual relations with Aboriginal men and the missionary Annie Lock suffered similar accusations when she spoke publicly about the Coniston Creek Massacre (Paisley pp. 12 and 32 and Marcus pp. 117-118).

[14] Adam 1963 pp. 69-70.

[15] Wells 1982 *Reward and Punishment in Arnhem Land 1962-1963* p. 18.

But how does this idea stand up to scrutiny? More importantly, how did it manifest within Indigenous communities prior to the incorporation of Papunya Tula Artists.

PAINTING: GROOTE ISLANDS ARTISTS

The production of bark paintings incorporates cultural practice maintained over tens of thousands of years, as evidenced in the rock art sites across the Northern Territory. In 1942 anthropologist Frederick Rose discusses the pigments used on Groote Eylandt including ochres for red, deep purple, and yellow, limestone for white, and charcoal for black. Rose noted that 'the Aborigines can identify the various ochres etc., and can say from what locality they come … there can thus be many names for the same colour. Some of the reds are indistinguishable to a white man but are easily identifiable to the Aborigine'.[16] Fred Gray provided the Aboriginal names of some of these pigments to Leonhard Adam in 1949, identifying them specifically as 'Art materials used by Aboriginals. Caledon Bay district of Arnhemland.'[17]

Apart from the stories produced in the paintings, the production of bark paintings for sale continued much older traditions relating to materials and techniques and the ceremony and lore associated with these.

SLIDE: JOHNNY MAWURNDJUL

Contemporary Aboriginal artist, Johnny Mawurndjul, discussed the continued relevance of these cultural practices, when he recounted the meaning of the white pigment used in his work

> White clay [is] the spirit [essence] of the Mardayin ceremony. I worried about the Mardayin ceremony, crosshatching and how the old people used to cry about it. Sometimes I think about the crosshatching. It is djang and it makes me cry … I dream and I understand.[18]

Discussing Mawurndjul's art Taylor writes that the Mawurndjul family mine at Kudjarnngal contains the brilliant white pigment called 'delek', and that 'delek' is

> [U]sed to paint the background figures in all their work. The delek is understood to be the faces of the serpent and therefore the transformed bodies of these other ancestral beings that she [Ngalyod] swallowed … The light that shines from these painting is another essence of Ngalyod's power.'[19]

SLIDE: PIGMENTS

The choice of pigment with associated trade relationships and rights to pigment sites, has a meaning which is embedded in issues of clan, country and ancestors, and which links aesthetic choices including choices of image and of pigment to cultural rights and obligations.

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[16] Rose 1942 p. 170.

[17] It is worth noting that, while mentioning bark paintings in his paper 'Paintings of the Groote Eylandt Aborigines' (1942), Rose does not include bark painting as one of the main uses of pigment or main types of painting, and limits his list to painting on weapons, body painting (for i. mourning ii. funeral ceremony iii. circumcision, iv. warriors) and rock painting (p. 170).

[18] Mawurndjul 2004 p. 138.

[19] Taylor 2004 p.125.

Edgar Wells' book 'Reward and Punishment in Arnhem Land 1962-1963' describes a similar response at Yirrkala fifty years earlier. He wrote:

> It became rather obvious in the mid 1950s that movements in the earth of Arnhem Land when totemic areas were under siege created waves in the mental processes of the Aboriginal artistic fraternity, and these disturbances were transferred to the majority of the group concerned. The artists were nearly always in the leadership level class and were among the first to exhibit signs of unrest when threatened with changing social patterns.[20]

And that:

> Discussions in the artistic groups developed positive suggestions concerning the stimulation of traditional ideas among the people working at any form of handicraft. This led to an extension of landscape emphasis on the bark painting to include traditional recognizable totemic forms on as many artifacts as possible, thus emphasizing the mythological association of landmarks on as much handwork as possible.[21]

Conclusion

When Adam's paper 'The Bark Paintings of Groote Eylandt' was published in 1951, he sent copies to an influential network of academics and professionals around the world.[22]

In the decade following Adam's death the awareness of, and market for bark paintings progressed quickly. Some key figures included Melbourne dealer Jim Davidson, who arrived at Yirrkala in July 1962 and commenced his long commitment to the sale of Yolngu art and artefacts; Czech artist Karel Kupka who visited Arhem Land from the mid-1950s through the following decade, putting together a large collection of bark paintings which he donated to the Musee National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Oceanie (MNAAO) in 1964;[23] and Sydney collector Dr Scougall, with Art Gallery of New Wales curator Tony Tuckson, who made a number of visits commencing in 1959.[24]

SLIDE: EXHIBITION

By 2006 Australian Indigenous art and craft sector produced around $200-$500 million for the Australian economy.[25] Today it is a major contributor to community independence, social coherence and financial stability of the kind advocated by Dr. Leonhard Adam and the missionaries and women activists with whom he associated over half a century earlier.

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[20] Wells 1982 p. 10.

[21] Wells 1982 pps.18-19.

[22] These included University College London, Courtauld, British Museum, Pitt Rivers Museum, London School of Economics, Horniman Museum, Cranmore Museum, Bishop Museum, US National Art Gallery, University of Cape Town, Museum of New Mexico, National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, American Museum of Natural History, Peabody Museum, Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, and the Gothenburg Ethnographical Museum (from various correspondences in the Leonhard Adam Archives held at the University of Melbourne Archives, and the University of Melbourne Ian Potter Museum of Art).

[23] A number of which now form part of the Muse de Qui Branly collection.

[24] Wells 1982 pp. 19-20 and Perkins 2009.

[25] According to submissions received from Desart, ANKAAA and Michael Reid cited p. 10 Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra 2007.

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Millennium Base and New Ways of Expressing in the Modern Bantu Art

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Introduction

In the middle of the 1980s, the International Bantu Civilizations Centre launched the two-yearly modern Bantu plastic art exhibition, one of the most famous events in the field in Africa, the Biennial of Contemporary Bantu Art; and become a focus for study of the growth of art forms in Central, East and Southern Africa.

One of the major purposes of this project was to display all the analogy which exists in modern plastic creativity among Bantu people; after the historical, linguistic and anthropological harmony clearly highlighted since the end of the nineteenth century in this cultural part of Africa.

We could in this way notice, after having organized six of these contest and plastic art exhibition that most of the painters, engravers, sculptors, ceramists, copper beaters and many of their equivalents mainly drew **their inspiration from old Bantu and even from old proto-bantu traditions.**

Concept of Bantu

The expression "bantu", previously the save of academics, entered well-liked vocabulary in early eighties, approaching into frequent use in 1982, when the preparation to open the "Bantu House" was realized.

Ten states (Angola, the CAR, Comoros, two Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zambia) which signed the Convention setting up the institution of Agondje in January 1983 confirmed the continuation of the concept of Bantu civilizations and entrusted the fresh body with the significant charge of highlighting their characteristics – stating the evident, of course, but release the Bantu thought from its archaeological, historical, philosophical, anthropological, and anthropological, considerations to take in other disciplines such as traditional medicine, ethnomusicology and arts as well.

Objectives

Although the central aim of the Biennial is to underline convergences and differences in the various forms of expressions and plastic techniques, it has not only to emulate, but also to:

- Present works showing the plastic creativity of present-day Bantu artists; the CICIBA has arranged a free and open framework embracing all forms of plastic art, without any constraint as to subject matter;
- Encourage contacts, discussions and exchanges by artist s (painters, sculptors, ceramic artistic and engravers) by running workshops with the framework of the Bantu Association of Plastic Artists;
- And keep the best in the Contemporary Art Collection of the future CICIBA Museum, thereby making them available to the public.

CICIBA's Biennial have all featured authentic bantu works, the profound meaning of which will be lost on no art critic, as the creative skills of the artists of the region have burst out in all their diversity and dynamism on these occasions.

SCHOOLS, TRENDS AND STYLES

Painting and engraving

Naturist way

The personal touches of the Bantu artists bring out their love of nature, one of the dominant themes of their works, with great emotional force. In this school, we discover the adulthood and refinement of some of the naturist painters, such as those of Angola, the CAR, two Congo, side with the hasty, lovely works of arquelago Sao Tome and Principe and Rwanda.

Exciting greens, reds and yellows and delicate shading make these canvasses unforgettably bright. "*No blue. Above all, no blue*" (for Africa), Gustave Hervigo used to say, but he is proved wrong by the enchanting figurative naturist and realist brush of Van (*"As aves")* from Angola, Protasio Pina (with "*Pico Papagaio*") , Cupertinho and Cesaltinho of Sao Tome and Principe, whose island views, fishing studies and even portraits are all against an azure background.

Other well-known naturists are Iloki ("*Les oiseaux"*), Hengo (*"L'antilope"*), from Congo Brazzaville, Tibund Makouna ("*Sous-bois*)", from CAR and Manzambi (*"Paysanne dans le bois*"), from DR Congo.

In Lubumbashi, works of art have been produced by the skill and passion of Mwenze, famous for his streaks, and Pili-Pili, whose similar, but smaller polychrome streaks have made him an international name.

And, many of these painters are familiar with the techniques of impressionism and will no doubt be giving us new means of expression.

Realist way

Realism in the Biennial is represented by the works of Tomas Vista (*"A quitanda"*), Augusto Ferreira ("*Danca de circuncricao cokwe*"), Kapela (*"O Mercado dos Congoleses"*), Marcos Ntangu ("*Fome*"), and Afonso Matondo ("*Jovem mumuila*") from Angola, Fylla ("*Mere, fils et flamme*"), Ngavouka ("*Guerriere"*) , Eugene Malonga ("*Le musicien paralytique*") , Annie Mounzota Ndieye ("*Allaitement"*) and Boboma Mionzo ("*La marchande*"), from Congo Brazzaville, and Cicero ("*O curandeiro*") from São Tome and Principe.

There are many outstanding works of this sort. There is "*Luanda*", by Vaz De Carvalho (Angola), for example, a suburban view of the Angolan capital made attractive by the control and balance of colour.

And, there is the village homestead by Ouabanga, the painter originate from CAR and his engraver compatriot, who specializes in rural scenes of life both of them artists of the naïve school using polished techniques to portray humble scenes.

And, there is the Congolese accomplishment of the almost expressionist work of Lema, ("*Propulsion"*), Tshiboko ("*Bonheur*"), Mpane Enkobo ("*Coiffeuses"*), painters who, in their stylized manner, bring to life everyday evens or ceremonies, portraits, market and hunting scenes.

A great draw in the CICIBA Biennial is the realist sensitivity of the popular urban painters of Kinshasa, the successfully school of artists which includes Cheri Samba, Sim Simaro, Moke, Tuyindula, Bodo Bodo and Vuza Toko, who have a critical approach and whose meaning lies in the imperturbable, caricature-like representation of frenzied life of the capital. These Congolese popular artists, much admired by art-lovers, internationally, have been labeled amateur and their pictures quite wrongly called naïve.

Although the school is not in the mainstream of conventional academic painting, its works are not without quality and its representation of society is intelligent. Moke and his fellow countrymen portray everyday life in Kinshasa with a sharp wit and an unrestrained eye and, as far as they are concerned, their audience can take it or leave it. They depict the mami-wata (African's white-skinned siren), mythical subjects (chimpanzees on motors-bikes and animals of the forest playing in a band), religion revived by the country's severe economic crisis (the red valley of purgatory and other apocalyptic visions) and sex (denunciation of the end of sexual taboos in out-of-control Kinshasa).

Symbolic way

The power of Bantu creation which the Biennial reveals in symbolist painting is both varied and complex and not confined to a particular genre or theme.

The works encourage meditation, suggest the decoding of legends and generate optimism and they recreate subtle messages, communicating the artist's symbolism in pictorial form, an echo of the souls of Bantu peoples.

The long civil war in Angola encourages the emergences of symbols, as is apparent, for example, in the strong tapestries of Marcela Costa ("*Sobresaltos*"), or in the powerful handling of the old carnival figure at Luanda's annual festival by Luzolano. And, traditional cokwe picture making is both inspiration and fascination to Jorge Gumbe ("*Uma recepcao*).

The fragile Augustine Missie of Cameroon opt for to paint on velvet, a successful technique in Africa with "*Vicissitudes de la vie*", resume of anguished social life.

The well-known Poto-Poto school is a systematic coming together of the popular plastic expression and that of the art school, and it is one of the major symbolist trends to be represented at the Biennial.

The Poto-Poto painters – first-generation Ondongo, Zigoma, Iloki, Ngavouka and Ouassa and the up-and-coming Dimi, Bokotaka also Mbaki – are all there, faithfully to their particular styles in their masks and symmetrical patterns. But this school has seen its major developments.

A peak has been reached and fresh impetus is called for, maybe from an independent artist such as Gotene ("*Mythe,*", "*Guerre et Paix*"), trained at one of France's best art academies.

The works of those great hopes of African painting, the Gabonese artist Onewin, actually Deputy Minister of Culture, Ekore, Minkoe Minze, Pambou Boulaz, Mendome, are impressive indeed with their ritual marks and their representation of the ambiguity of continent; the cultural drama of traditional with modern, and their deliberate limiting of the of use of colour creates a sobriety symbolic of a Gabon as difficult to understand as it is deep in anthropological meaning.

Equatorial Guinea is represented by "*Los Afligados*", a fine canvas from the brush of artist Menan, a Spanish speaker, who is greatly attracted by the work of Picasso.

But, the bantu influence comes out more strongly in the work of Esteban Bualo, whose initiation rites are painted against a background reminiscent of Equatorial Guinea' s forests.

The Congolese symbolists show great mastery and clearly technical maturity.

The distinctive "sand artists", such Mukalenge and Tuzolano, stand out, with their "little bit of sand, little bit of glue, little bit paints and a lot of talent" and the originality of their attractive technique ,

“*Sandism*”, a new approach to picture making which is already a success in Central Africa is bound to grow.

DR Congo, a country of constant artistic creativity, is source of another original technique, too, that of paint scraping, the great exponent of which is Kamba Luesa, a master of astonishing effects reminiscent of cave painting.

SCULPTURE, CERAMICS AND MODELING COPPER
Realist and figurative
Wood and stone and the more modern bronze, brass and aluminum all have their place in the collection of the realist and abstract sculptures, inspired by traditional Bantu and contemporary occidental art in which the Biennial highlights the dynamic approach of the bantu sculptures of today.

The time-honored art of wood carving has been carried on here by Mouanga Nkodia (“*Le martyre*”) , Mounkala (“*Le lien unificateur*”), Douniama (“*Le cri”),* Mbia (“*Masque de joie*”) from Brazzaville, Babicka, from Libreville, Hakizimfura (“*Bas relief* “) from Kigali, Massongui (“*Jogo de mascaras*”) from Luanda, Demba (“*Paysanne ngbaka*”), Djatao (“*Statuette bicephale*”) and Mbotowo (“*Factice kaloboungba*”) from Bangui, Nguema (“*Efectos de Guerra*”), from Malabo, Armindo Lopes (“*Forca de mulher*”), from Sao Tome, Ndong Menzamet “*Presentation”*from Gabon and Congo Kinshasa’s Mpane (with wonderful sculpted ebony) BeyaTshidi “*Protection*”and Lubanza – who took the main prize at the second edition of Biennial with his “*La Pens*ee”, symbolizing the coherence, the balance and the anthropological dimension of bantu philosophy.

Stone sculpture is a rarity at the Biennial, the only exhibitor being Aubin, the ancient head of ENAM, Gabon’s School of Art and Manufacture. Gabon (using stone from the Mbigou area) and Zambia (with the artist Simpungwe Chisha Passion) indeed seem to be the only Bantu countries which encourage this technique.

Liyolo, from DR Congo makesa great impact with the slender brass shapes of his “*Mirage du fleuve*” and he Tembo and Wuma have now broken through on the international scene.

Geometric stylization and abstraction typify the work of the Angolan Tela Mateta, and Fataki and Makala Mbuta, from right side of River Congo, and impressive symbolism that of the outstanding Nginamau - three artist who are experienced in large-scale sculpture (decorating Congo’s main public buildings) , but who produce a range of smaller works too.

Artists in the copper country have goes in for modeling in copper, of course. Lubumbashi is the domain of Kalumba and Chenge Baruti and the technique has been taken up in Kinshasa too, by Pemba(“La maitrise”) and Safi Mwanza Bifulusi and in Brazzaville, by Kitshiba.

NEW AESTHETIC VALUES
The fascination which female magnificence holds for ceramic artists, painters and sculptors alike is apparent in the female masks and heads exhibited at the Biennial.

Woman as the positive symbol of life and the incarnation of attractiveness is very much linked to ceramic art and Matondo (“Jovem mumuila”); from Angola , Edou Source , from Gabon, and Mbaku Miamambi (“Tete egyptienne”) from Congo Kinshasa bring out the nobility of their clay in perfect aesthetic portrayals of women who are extraordinary “alive”.

The centuries-old strain of artistic endeavour which has taken bantu art to the peaks of achievement has not waned over the 20 th century. The only change is in the motives behind it. Modern art has moved from religious to profane, to art for art's sake, as it has all over the world, and the Biennial illustrates this admirably.

The panorama it presents does not yet cover the whole of the bantu world, but given depth by the wood carvings of the *makonde*, the *bieri fang*, the *reliquaries kota*, the sculptures *kebe kebe* of northern Congo, the *nkisi konde* from kongo area, the Tanzanian inheritors of *Tingatinga* and the Zambians inheritors of Tayaly, and the rounded people of Malangatana Ngwenha.

The Biennial has highlighted the various trends which have taken shape – the Barracao in Luanda, the Poto-Poto School of Brazzaville, the ENAM college of Gabon, the Kinshasa movement, a natural development of art progress which surpasses itself with the "avant-gardists" , the great work shop which produced the sand artists , the highly modern New Generation and, of course the school of Lubumbashi in south-western DR Congo, all of them living side-by-side with a host of naïve and popular artists.

And, although these schools contain a wide variety of talents, their figurative tendencies and their figurative tendencies and their immense feeling for colour and decoration constitute common ground , the result of culling their inspiration from virtually identically traditional social set-ups and – most all – very similar training.

Some Angolan artists trained at the Academia des Beaux-Arts of Kinshasa and use the same expressive methods as the Congoleses – Luzolano with his vibrant scraping of colours, Kabisi with his sand picture and Tela Mateta with his slender brass forms.

The Gabonese artists at ENAM have considerable affinities with their training school in Kinshasa too Ekore, Aubin and Arenaut being outstandingly talented.

Artists do not stick to their schools come what may and exhibition after exhibition brings changes in style, with Viteix, for example, moving from oils to engraving, Kabisi displaying as much skill with oils as with sand painting, Ekore increasingly keen on realism rather than the symbolism of masks (even if his fans are unenthusiastic about it) and Menan veering in much he same way.

What Bantu works now have in common is that they derive their inspiration from purely African sources - proof that they are culturally tied to their roots, in spite of using the western techniques which have enabled contemporary Bantu artists to create new aesthetic values.

These artists very likely devoted themselves in carrying on authentic ideals of their civilization through their way of working out, setting or shaping using endogenous techniques and deriving Greco-Latin methods or deepening modern methods.

Thus we could observe within this regional exhibition hundreds of works such those coming from kongo local painting techniques called takula or ntoto mbwaki, the utilization – as rest of the mpekwa, the mongo raffia, the ngomba, the Swahili banana leaves; the ibu, the teke tree barks; the making of frame with the andala, the palm from Sao tome; the incorporation of the ndjabi tattoo called yimango or the kimbundu cowry shell called muzudi.

We also valued the revival of the setting of ancient umbundu ceramics called kacimbeya; the making of rundi calabash called urubakuzo or urwaato [rundi] and Xhosa woven object called luka.

Such devotion to the native expressing methods forms part of a strong movement of opening and also of a conceptual and technical adaptation to the modern aesthetics.

The Biennial of Contemporary Bantu Art is now established as a living picture of artistic endeavour unfolding before our very eyes.

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Getting to Know You and Your Artworks Better: Some Reflections on Ceramics Practices and Collections of Works Created by Alice Gqa Nongebeza of the Eastern Cape, South Africa

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Different theoretical positions and vested as well other interests abound, so I think it appropriate to immediately specify respect for and enjoyment of such variety, and to express clearly at the outset that my own answer to the question "Where to put baskets [and some pots] in an art gallery" is that such artworks can belong wherever they are put, including in the very centre of a gallery, as a hub around which other works of whatever nature and medium may radiate. This position, without denying rights of artists, societies, and commercial sectors to make up their own minds on aesthetic and financial issues, can at least partly facilitate implementation of, for example, Rasheed Araeen's Documenta 2008 –with thanks to Kevin Murray for drawing my attention to this author – call to find "a genuine future for modern art in Africa [and the Global South?] which is not only integrated into the social needs of its diverse societies and cultures, but also offers a vision that is unique and is its own".

To this end my focus will be mainly on ceramics praxis of Eastern Cape potter Alice Gqa Nongebeza who, along with Debra Nomathamsanqa Ntloya and Mathabo Sekhobo, is one of very few remaining potters in the region practicing zero electricity usage ceramics technology. Nongebeza works from her rural homestead located at Nkonxeni village at Tombo, in the sub-tropical Port St Johns region.

Many people in South Africa, despite living in the midst of a relatively stable economy[1] and being well into a second decade of democracy, are still beset by numerous social ills[2] and, on average, this is coupled with a strongly patrilineal social environment[3] that often puts rural women at a disadvantage. It is also important to recognise that many other factors also contribute to "the structure of the [South African visual arts] economy that [serves to] systematically reproduce exclusion for so many people" (Makgetla 2009: 2). I think that at least part of such inbuilt exclusionism seems to be reflected in types of consciousness revealed by terminology used, thereby

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[1] An example of this matter being reflected upon can be found in the article entitled "An embarrassment of riches" by Brendan Boyle (Sunday Times Business Times February 18, 2007: 1) wherein he writes that South African "Finance Minister Trevor Manuel will present the country's first balanced budget in modern times on Wednesday … (and) … another huge revenue overrun … will leave Manuel with an embarrassment of riches in the current and coming years".

[2] See, for example, Mail and Guardian Feb 2007, 9-15: 1, 8 & 9 which dealt with social factors and perceptions of crime rates resulting in a near-launch of the FNB Anti-Crime Campaign, and social pressures that then resulted in this campaign being withdrawn at the last minute.

[3] See, for example, Peires 2003: 8, 23 and Kuckertz 1990: 161 whose research indicates that primary attention is expected to fall on males and their needs. Such attitudes have ramifications throughout society and permeate daily life, putting women at a disadvantage. Nongebeza, for instance, has stated that her late husband did not care about providing for their children, and that he would come and ask for money for beer whenever he saw that she had made a sale, and even on occasions stole money by force. Ntloya has also confirmed that she faced similar problems, and has said that she used to tell untruths about how much money had been earned through sales of pots because her late husband would demand all of it and there would be none left for looking after the children.

contributing to both a neglected status of both rural women as artists and specific visual arts media such as fabrics, beadworks, reeds and grasses, as well as clay[4].

For example, categorisation and ranges of thought revealed in such binaries as art / craft, art / artefact, art / curio, art [sometimes high price] / the rest [usually a lower price], as noted by Prudence Rice (1991: 436), have contributed to partial marginalisation of clay as visual arts medium5 and ceramics as collectibles, as well as reflected "pejorative attitudes … [based at least partly on] a set of simplistic, stereotyped beliefs about domestic / household origins of ceramics practices and usage".

Appropriateness of such dichotomous rating systems has been found to be questionable[6] from many points of view, not least of which is, as noted by Sidney Littlefield Kasfir (1992: 47, citing also Maquet 1979: 32 and Clifford 1988: 22), that from some African perspectives there are no objects that "are 'art' in the current Western sense". This observation has also been largely confirmed by Silvia Forni (2001: 23) who found, in her study of pottery and traditions in the Ndop Plain in Cameroon, that any distinction made between art / craft "seems rather fluid, since the value of objects and actions is understood in the context of their production and use rather than in respect to a preconceived set of labelling categories".

In this regard Nongebeza has maintained that in local Mpondo thinking an art / craft dichotomy is not present, and that in talking about visual art at home the concept used is known as "ubugcisa" which does not distinguish between types of visual art, but rather emphasises the fact that a work is "thought of and made by a person or people, it is made by hands" (Interview, 2001) [7]. This way of

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[4] Prudence Rice (1991: 436) has, in this regard, noted that women potters face a double-marginalization in that "Pottery making is typically seen as women's work, and the roles of women's work and domestic activities have long been ignored or undervalued".

[5] This is a very generalized observation that nonetheless, from my point of view, largely holds true despite many exceptions in southern Africa that include wide recognition being accorded to works created in studio environments such as at Ardmore (Mentis 1998; Scott 1998) and at Rorke's Drift (Le Roux 1987, 1998), as well as to families and individuals such as, for example, Wilma Cruise (Arnold 1996; Schmahmann 2002, 2004, 2007); Nala family of potters (Garrett 1998, Perrill 2008); Magwaza family of potters (Armstrong 1998, Cruise 2006, Perrill 2008); Bonnie Ntshalintshali (Arnold 1996, Lee 2008, Le Roux 1998, Schmahmann 2004, Scott 1998); Clive Sithole (Perrill 2008, van Wyk 2007); and Clementina van der Walt (Cruise 2007).

[6] At the heart of this matter lies what has become known as the art / craft debate wherein positions have been taken up and argued regarding tendencies, for example, to relegate earthenware ceramic artworks created by means of zero electricity usage technology, often by potters based in rural areas, to zones of lesser visibility by using the appellations of, for instance, 'craft' and 'crafter'. This matter is by no means settled. Ongoing debate is extensive. Authors who, like Prudence Rice 1991, have grappled specifically with this issue include Arnoldi 1987; Arnoldi *et al* 2001; Aronson 1980; Barber 1987 a & b; Ben-Amos 1976, 1989; Berns 1989; Bickford 1996; Blier 1992; Boram-Hays 2005; Carman 2006; Coetsee 2002; Cohen 1988, 1990, 1993a & b; Cole 2003; Cooper 1987; Costello 1990; Cruickshank 1992; Forni 2001, 2007; Frank 1999; Fry 1990; Gaylard 2004; Geismar 2001; Glass 2004; Graburn 1984, 1992, 1999, 2004; Grundy 1996; Hirsch 1993; Horner 1993; Jules-Rosette 1984, 1986, 1987; Labi 2006; LaGamma 1998; Lauwrens 2006; Lijnes 1999; McNaughton 1991; Mudimbe 1986; Nettleton 2006; Nettleton & Hammond-Tooke 1989; Peterson 1995; Phillips & Steiner 1999; Polakoff 1978; Povey & Cosentino 1990; Shiner 1994; Spring *et al* 1996; Stevenson & Graham-Stewart 2000; Van der Watt 1995, amongst others.
Forni (2001: 26) for example, also refers to this "recurrent and at times heated debate" citing additionally Drewal, Mudimbe *et al* 1992; Errington 1998; Silver 1979; and Steiner 1990, 1994, 1995.

[7] In discussion with Xhosa first language speakers Siziwe Sotewu and Gcinikhaya Dase (2001) it has emerged that they are also familiar with use of the word "ubugcisa" as a collective art/craft word indicating "made by people's hands in a creative way" which entirely circumvents valorization of value of one such product over another on the basis of medium or aesthetic appeal.

describing is more holistic and allows for “aesthetic evaluations and choice … criteria [to be] part of larger systems of preferences and processes (Forni 2001: 22, referring also to Hardin 1995).

Nonetheless, art/craft dichotomies continue to play a big role in many of our visual arts sectors in the Eastern Cape, as can be seen for example, wherein ceramic works created in urban studio environments such as those by Ncoyini and Nqeketo can be contrasted with vessels, for example, created by Nongebeza and Sekhobo. The former easily find their way into public exhibition spaces such as the Ann Bryant Gallery in East London, and command relatively high prices, while the latter are usually informally traded and can only be seen very rarely, if at all, in urban style Art Gallery types of setting despite that all ceramic works depicted here reflect superb clayworking skills as well as intimate knowledge of medium and firing techniques.

Similar disparities were evident, for example, at a recent South African National Arts Festival, situated at the Eastern Cape city of Grahamstown, where it was seen that the Provincial Department of Arts and Culture sponsored sumptuous Gallery space for so-called artworks and at the same time relegated baskets, fabrics, beadwork, grassware and ceramics, created by the likes of Nongebeza and Sekhobo, to cramped tents and stands downtown towards the railway line, exposed to inclement weather.

I cannot feel comfortable with such patent discrimination, and thus feel that abandoning art/craft dichotomous consciousness seems to be an important step towards enriching our local visual arts landscape, thereby contributing to redressing aspects of neglected status and concomitant difficulties experienced in generating viable incomes from artistic production.

A further aspect of a drive towards redressing neglected status of rural visual artists in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, and elsewhere, is to unhinge anonymity that so often accompanies artistic production in such circumstances. Thus, with specifically such an intention in mind, the balance of this paper will focus on aspects of the life, works, procedures and technology utilised by Nongebeza.

She was born in 1928 and is a Xhosa speaker of Mpondo background. She relates that she started creating ceramics in 1950 at age 22 years after a series of dreams which occurred while she was miserable with grief shortly after the death of two sons in quick succession. She was literally “told to make pots” (Gerardy 2000: 5) as well as where to find clay in these dreams, so she went to two neighbours who were potters and asked them to show her how to proceed. She started off making utilityware for household use from the Mbutho area clay shown to her in a dream, this source being located in the next valley towards the sea, about 40 metres down a steep incline reached by purpose made pathway in dense subtropical bush, approximately two hours from the homestead by foot, or 20 minutes by strong vehicle with high clearance.

Back at the homestead the clay can be stored indefinitely, but is usually used soon after being dug. The coarse and finer clays from the two different layers are mixed, and these components are worked into a composite clay by pounding it on flat stones using heavy hammers and other tools. At this point large impurities such as stones and roots are removed by hand and water can be added for workability if necessary.

Thereafter fat sausages of clay are pressed out using both hands, and then divided up into stubby segments which are rolled out on tightly woven grass mats into coils of even thickness and regular length, ready for use once vessel building has begun. At about this time a ball of clay will have been patted flat on a piece of heavy plastic, usually using a stone.

This flattened piece of clay will become the vessel base from which it is constructed upwards. This base varies in diameter according to whether it will become part of a large or small vessel. The edges of this thickish base get turned up to receive the first few rather fat coils. Once these have been joined and the lower part of the vessel has been established then several thinner coils of regular thickness are placed above each other in approximately the shape desired, then worked together and joined well to form the wall of the vessel, which grows very rapidly.

As soon as a basic shape has been accomplished the nearly completed vessel is dampened with a sponge and the shape is refined, and joins are checked for strength. Once that process has been attended to then the vessel rim is levelled with a knife, whereafter engraved designs may be applied freehand with a pointed tool. It is also at this stage that, if desired, watered down differently coloured clay slips are applied with a sponge. For coloured clay slip Nongebeza favours use of an iron bearing earth, known as *embola*, which is dug locally from next to a spring on a hillside quite near to their homestead and is applied after having been crushed and mixed with water.

The raw clay vessel responds very strongly to extra water received from sponging and applying slips and is not at all inclined to slump and collapse. This quality of damp strength means that even large vessels of up to a metre tall can be completed in one sitting, although it is also quite acceptable for a vessel to be left partway completed so long as it is covered in plastic during the interim so as to avoid excessively quick drying. The pace of drying must be carefully regulated because the receiving clay surface should always still be damp when further coils are added the following day otherwise the join may be unsuccessful. During the drying process medium and larger sized vessels are turned upside down so that their bases can be tidied up, and at this point they are usually signed. Particularly large works are dried under cloths or blankets to slow down the process and thus avoid cracks that could be caused by uneven drying that may result from draughts.

Once the works are completely dry they are burnished by systematically applying a heavy pressure across the clay surface using various quite worn out kitchen utensils. Apart from creating a lovely relatively smooth surface, this burnishing phase is critical for strength in firing because if either joining during the making process or burnishing at this stage are inadequately done the clay surface tends to spall and crack with the sudden thermal shock that the works experience when being fired.

After about a week of drying in a draught-free environment the works are ready to be fired. This must occur on a relatively windless day, and takes place in an open field which is also used by the family for cultivation of crops. Prior to firing the arduous task of wood collection must be undertaken, and the firing site be prepared. Also, unfired pots are brought out at this stage, and these already dry works are placed on a blanket in the sun so they do not absorb any moisture at all from the earth.

Once the site has been cleared a basic rectangular structure with hollow interior is built using quite large and longish logs. The area this structure covers is determined by the number and size of works to be fired. This hollow framework effectively becomes a wall which serves to contain the fire within a specific space, but being built of wood these walls are combustible and contribute to a high firing temperature once ignited. Once the log framework has been established it is filled with brushwood that will burn more quickly and intensely than the surrounding log structure.

Dried grass and other easily combustible materials are placed on top of the pile, as well as old bits of plastic. The moment for ignition eventually arrives, and once started the fire usually spreads rapidly, quickly creating a lively bonfire. This fire is then given a few moments to distribute thoroughly.

Thereafter works will be rapidly, yet carefully, placed directly into the blaze, quite close together and even sometimes on top of each other, these being contained within the log framework, all of which soon also begins to burn fiercely. Once most of the items have been placed in the fire more wood is added to the top, then the firing is allowed to take its course with regular additions of more works and fuel. Peak heat is rapidly reached, and soon thereafter begins to subside, and then as newly fired vessels become evident and accessible they are removed using long sticks well before the fire has died down completely. Alice Gqa Nongebeza is the only potter practicing zero electricity usage technology that I know of who fires by placing works directly onto an already blazing fire. Despite extreme thermal shock resulting from this firing method the success rate is very high, with less than 15% of works spalling badly or cracking, and cracks are usually easily fixed by filling with adhesive putty.

On the following day works were cleaned then waxed using a clear polish usually utilized on wooden floors, put out in the sun to soften and melt the wax, and then brushed again so as to achieve a gentle glow. Then the various vessels and other items were gathered together, ready to be marketed. It is from this stage onwards, in the opinion of the potters, where most problems mitigating against sustainability of a relatively good income seem to arise.

Nongebeza has no established collections, regular collectors, access to galleries, nor any other reliable outlets, and it is too dangerous to sell works from the roadside because of high crime rates in the area. These difficulties could, however, be mitigated by emergence of substantial changes in ways of promoting and thinking about such local artworks, thereby bringing previously marginalized visual arts to the attention of a wider audience, and thus facilitating more widespread marketing opportunities.

The artists themselves, in partnerships with local communities, collectors, art historians, development agencies as well as relevant governmental departments, and events such as this colloquim, all have diverse roles to play in bringing about gradual changes in perceptions about visual arts with an eye towards invigorating that sector. Perhaps one of the more important lessons that can be learnt is to listen carefully to the voices of the artists. Nongebeza and Ntloya, for example, have found that past emphasis in the Eastern Cape province on forming co-operatives of visual artists has not always been successful, and have suggested that perhaps now the time has arrived for strengthening of families and individuals who show themselves to be adept and committed?

What remains a given, no matter what, is that income has to be generated. It seems that rootedness in local tradition while also being open to some types of change such as has been evidenced by new shapes and firing techniques, coupled with innovation in marketing strategies, may actually be amongst key ingredients that could stimulate ongoing and increased interest from writers such as John Costello, and from collectors both within local communities, and further abroad. If that can be successfully consolidated then youngsters, such as Nongebeza's grandson Ringo and others, would feel encouraged to transform skills acquired while largely at play and just participating in household activities into financially viable small business ventures which could include opening of new art galleries and associated marketing opportunities, especially if, in the context of Port St Johns, such problems as prevalence of crime and extreme distance from regular markets could be addressed.

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Note

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Post-Africanism and Contemporary Art in South African Townships

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Introduction

What is the role of art in Post-Apartheid South Africa? What, in turn, will contribute to the success of artists of the South African townships? I have tried to find answers to these questions relying on postcolonialism as a theoretical framework (Van Haute 2008). But this venture remained a fruitless dabbling in postcolonial theory because ultimately it failed to provide the means to arrive at – for me – satisfactory results or answers. Hence I found comfort in the fact that Rasheed Araeen harboured similar reservations expressed in his preface to the *Third Text* special issue on the subject of "Beyond Negritude". Correcting the identification of postcoloniality as neo-colonial conditions (Araeen 2010:168), Araeen accuses postcolonial theory of shallow posturing, scoffing at its "textual coquetries" and "the sophistries of Theory's merely chic cosmopolitanism" (2010:171). He argues that postcolonial theory has been "reduced to a paradigm of rhetorical devices that seeks accommodation within what is confronted and denounced", resulting in its fossilisation. Hence it prevents an understanding of the neo-colonial condition and the possibility of a dialogue needed for liberation (Araeen 2010:172).

In his introduction as guest editor of the special issue of *Third Text*, Denis Ekpo who teaches at the University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria, launches a similar attack on postcolonialism. He accuses postcolonialism of being responsible for "delaying the intellectual maturation of the ex-colonies" by prioritising "the ability to confront imperialism and decolonise the mind" of what he calls "the wretched of the third earth". He describes this aim of postcolonialism as a "wasteful and depressive deployment of intellectual resources on settling futile scores with imperialism" (Ekpo 2010:182). Instead of continuing to blame the imperial West or seek its pity, Ekpo calls for a "total affirmation of all that colonial history has brought down" upon Africa. He proposes an entirely new perspective which he has coined Post-Africanism.

> [Post-Africanism] is a post-ideological umbrella for a diversity of intellectual strategies seeking to inscribe newer, more creative moves … Post-Africanism was proposed [Ekpo 1995] as an attempt first to deconstruct the disasterprone emotionalism, hubris and paranoias indwelling to most ideologies of Africanism … and, second, to seek newer, fresher conditions for a more performative African intellectual engagement with Africa, modernity and the West (Ekpo 2010:181-182).

Deconstruct Africanism

Let me first unpack the notion of Africanism as defined by Ekpo and then consider the reasons why it failed. With the end of colonisation African nation-states resorted to Africanism in a bid to foster national unity. In its most extreme form, namely as cultural nationalism, Africanism advocated unconditional race pride, African emotivity and an African participatory cosmology. Fuelled by anti-European resentment it resorted to an anti-modern escape into the native past (Ekpo 2010:178). This radical form of Africanism died, according to Ekpo (2010:178), "partly through the sheer inanity of its postulations on race, Africanity and emotivity; partly as a result of the grave errors of a purely cultural-nationalistic self-understanding and apprehension of modernity". If Africa wanted to enter and become part of the world of modernity,

> it had to become not what it had been but what it had never been. … the ancestral past, though beautiful in itself and worthy of respect, was not a directly relevant

> heritage or resource for the kind of unprecedented apprenticeship involved in transiting to the modern order (Ekpo 2010:179).

Where the ancestral past could, however, play a vital role was in the arts, poetry and music. These art forms were used to salvage and transfigure the past which performed a therapeutic role in reassuring Africans of "the inherent validity and honour of their own civilisation" (Ekpo 2010:179).

On the other hand, Ekpo points out that the "so-called African culture or Africanity did not refer to an empirical reality". It was not recovered from a common ancestral past because "in pre-colonial Africa there was no one shared, homogenising culture into which modernity could be fitted with necessary adjustments". In other words, "the traditional tribal cultures were not a modernity-compliant heritage, but rather a counter-heritage. Thus the notion of a collective African culture serving as a common national or continental vehicle for an African path to modernisation was a massive self-delusion." (p. 180) These are the reasons why Ekpo (2010:181) considers it expedient "to try to redeem Africa from too much Africanism".

The case of South Africa

Turning to the case of South Africa, the picture looks quite different due to its unique history of Apartheid. Nevertheless, Peffer (2009:xvi) maintains that "many of the signature aspects of art that anticipates the postcolonial were the same in South Africa and elsewhere on the continent: the backward glance to invented traditions, the flattening of traditional ritual arts into design elements, and the euphoria of reconstruction". Because the ideas about Africanity also informed South African art, it may be useful to consider the implications of Ekpo's criticism of "too much Africanism".

Long before the end of Apartheid South African artists shared a concern "to imagine a uniquely South African national culture for a postapartheid future" (Peffer 2009:158). One way of addressing this concern was to Africanise contemporary art. The search for traditional roots was and still is seen and used as a means to forge an African identity and to foster national unity. Fuelled by anti-Apartheid resentment this process involved, among other things, a reappraisal of African traditions and customs. According to the artist Sipho Mokwena (1960, Mamelodi), the African past is crucial to cultural renewal. He states the following about his work:

> The inspiration for these works reaches back to the initial development of humankind, along with totemic symbols of survival and the taming of life – such as the *bakwena* (crocodile) and the *ishoba* (an African fan). I am trying to connect the present generation with culturally generated icons of our past. We cannot reject where we came from. If we are to stimulate cultural renewal and development, it has to be anchored in the past as well. We are to look at them afresh (*Resurrection* 2010:23).

The difficulty, however, with this African past is that it is not based on an empirical reality. South Africa's black population comprises various ethnic groups (Zulu, Venda, Suthu, Xhosa, etc). Each of these groups has its own traditions and Indigenous Knowledge Systems hence the notion of a common ancestral past or heritage is a fallacy. It would thus be misguided to try to build a South African cultural identity on an imagined common past. In a multi-tribal state, ethnic identity stands in the way of national identity (Ekpo 1999:12).

On the other hand, as Ekpo asserts, the past can play a vital role of therapeutic reassurance for the black South Africans. In art, poetry and music the references to a specific tribal past have a reassuring effect on those members of the audience who form part of that same ethnic group and can relate to and appreciate the validity and dignity of their particular culture. But if the references to the past are

watered down to eliminate cultural specificity and address an essential Africanness, they are dismissed as inauthentic and bear no relevance to anyone. Today's public – the younger generation in particular – shows little interest in Mokwena's "culturally generated icons" of the past. As icons of an essential Africanness they are obsolete and irrelevant in a wider world where "increased emphasis on self-criticality is coupled with a growing fluency with international art concepts" (Peffer 2009:xxii).

Resurrection

To illustrate my argument I would like to refer here to a number of artworks that formed part of an exhibition held in the Unisa Art Gallery, entitled *Resurrection – An exhibition featuring artists from the greater Tshwane region* (15 May – 4 June 2010). The accompanying catalogue included an entry on each participating artist, providing biographical details about training, exhibitions, awards, collections, commissions and a statement about his work. The following images and information were drawn from that catalogue. The participating artists were selected from the greater Tshwane area and include both the older and younger generations. Apart from Gert Potgieter they are all black artists living in the townships and most of them are untrained. The intention of the curators was to investigate whether democracy has brought about change in the role of and opportunities for artists living in the townships. The artists' own comments on these issues are also included at the end of the catalogue.

What struck me most about the imagery is the acute absence of a critical engagement with current issues. In a review of the exhibition written for the *Pretoria News* (June 2 2010:8, Giving a voice to marginalised township artists), Miranthe Staden-Garbett also commented on the fact that:

> in place of protest or political rhetoric, we find in this collection of artworks a pervasive spirituality and optimism, a celebration of African culture, tradition and community life, and artists who describe the purpose of their work in terms of healing, humbleness, togetherness, joy, peace and wholesomeness.

On the question regarding the impact of democracy on their role as artists, the participants mainly commented on the challenges facing black artists. They "cite the lack of resources and education as hindrances to their progress" (Staden-Garbett 2010:8). With the end of the liberation struggle, they find themselves with no political agendas (*Resurrection* 2010:31). They find little appreciation or recognition for their work in the black communities (p.32); there is no cohesive vision (p.33). "Many describe their work in apolitical terms, as personal, individual, universal or Communal" (Staden-Garbett 2010:8).

Countering the criticism levelled against the government, Sandile Memela, a senior manager in the Department of Arts and Culture, wrote an article in the *Pretoria News* (May 21 2010:14) under the heading, Unity and determination will see art flourish. He accused the "so-called township artists" of "wallow[ing] in self-pity and called them "a disorganised lot who have allowed the culture of entitlement to creep into their consciousness". In Memela's view the artists should be "focused, hard-working and disciplined"; they should unite and form "a powerful bloc that influences trends and developments in their sector".

Needless to say, this letter elicited a heated debate in the media – but this is not the place to elaborate on it. What is relevant to my argument is that, following Ekpo's vision, what these artists should avoid is too much Africanism. If, as Jacob Lebeko remarked, the younger artists' "major frustration is in selling the work and also getting accepted into the stables of commercial galleries", it would perhaps be beneficial to free themselves from the influence of the older generation and from the African traditions. As a second step towards Ekpo's Post-Africanism, they need "to seek newer,

fresher conditions for a more performative African intellectual engagement with Africa, modernity and the West" (Ekpo 2010:181-182).

Newer conditions

Ekpo believes that Africa's recovery to cultural health requires newer, fresher conditions. One of the conditions is that

> 1. Africa needs to clear its mind and vision from a "chronic cultural overload". These historical burdens consist of not only the ethnic past but also "anti-European paranoia and vengeful, impotent anti-imperialism". Ekpo (2010:183) calls this a "massive disburdening of mind and vision".
>
> 2. Once this "massive disburdening" has been accomplished, Post-Africanism calls for a "pragmatic confidence" in "manipulating modernity's tools to transform Africa". Then, unencumbered and armed with knowledge ["all knowledge is power game" (Ekpo 1995:134)], "Africa can embark again on its journey to modernisation" (Ekpo 2010:183).

Post-Africanism replaces negative, pointless complaining and blaming with a positive energy and a pragmatic flexibility that drives Africa on a path of transformation. Ekpo claims that "[t]he audacity of Post-Africanism is not to invent new theories or radicalise existing ones but to propose a more modest … rescue of the postcolonial subject from the bewitchments of either paranoid Africanism or mesmerised worship of Western idols" (Ekpo 2010:183-184).

Applying the Post-Africanist approach to the field of the arts, Ekpo maintains that Post-Africanist art must serve to stimulate the new future and hopes of Africa and to promote Africa's new cultural health:

> A Post-Africanist art is summoned by positive force to the role of an avant-garde to imagine and play midwife to a redeemed future. In other words, art in the Post-Africanist sense is the requisite pregnancy that can deliver a *counterfuture* to the current postcolonial stillbirth of modernity (Ekpo 2010:186).

The problem with current postcolonial art in Africa is that many artists "are still busy mining or recycling, from the many real troubles of the postcolonies, faked tribal authenticities or old nativist identities and selling these to the West as postcolonial art". Ekpo (2010:186) rightly regards such art as an opportunistic appeasing of "the exotic itches of blasé Westerners with simulated ethnicities". As a cure to the anachronistic nativism of postcolonial art, Post-Africanism proposes to suspend "the past and ethnicities in a purely aesthetico-cultural museum so that truly modern African art can be birthed and deployed in the service of Africa's modernisation". The "new artist must necessarily desist from all defensive cultural protectionism and no longer adopt the victim's mien" (Ekpo 2010:186): the Post-Africanist artist must mobilise "all of modernity's cultural resources to put modernity properly to work in an Africa of the future" (Ekpo 2010:187).

The South African art scene

The lesson to be learnt from this African history is that Africanisation in South Africa should not be understood as an anti-modern escape into the past nor should it be motivated purely by anti-Apartheid resentment. One of the conditions for South Africa's cultural health is that artists need to clear their mind and vision from that "chronic cultural overload". They should discard the historical burdens of both the traditional and the Apartheid past. This is not to say that the far and nearer past should be forgotten: they constitute the nation's heritage and as such belong in a museum where

they can be preserved, honoured and treasured. Once the artist's mind has been unburdened and freed from the "artificial Afrocentric trap" (Ekpo 1995:134), he/she can develop the pragmatic confidence in gaining cognitive control over and "manipulating modernity's tools to transform" South Africa. The challenge for the post-Africanist artist is to promote South Africa's cultural health by repossessing all of modernity's cultural resources and using them as a power tool. Then their art will have the potential to be 'an act of decolonisation'.

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■

White South African Discourse and the Invention of the Modern Primitive

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SLIDE 1: Title

Olu Oguibe notes a double standard pertaining to Western versus African cultural assimilation:

> The assimilation of Outsider culture into European art is considered the most significant revolution of its time while the same is bemoaned in Africa as a sign of the disintegration and corrosion of the native by civilization (1999: 326).

In this paper, I explore the ambiguities that arise from this double standard in the writings of a number of white South African art writers of the apartheid era. In particular, I explore how the imperative to objectify the black artist as quintessentially African (and thus a collective Other) conflicts with the sophistication and modernity of the artists intentions. I demonstrate how the colonial binary construction of an irrational and instinctive African creativity versus the rational and deliberate creation of European culture are deployed to reclaim cultural Modernism as a singularly 'white' activity. I argue that ambiguities and contradictions in Western constructions of modern African art can be seen as inevitable offshoots of a colonial tendency to regard the terms 'modern' and 'African' as mutually exclusive.

SLIDE 2

In an article published in 1975 in the newspaper *The Star*, art reporter Richard Cheales described the South African sculptor Sydney Kumalo's art as "an eerie one of naiveté, forthright modelling and a strong dash of the primitive". At this time, Kumalo was one of South Africa's most celebrated black artists. Initially a protégé and later a colleague of Cecil Skotnes at the Polly Street Art Centre, Kumalo was a prominent member of the first group of black artists to pursue a Modernist language in the visual arts. Despite being denied access to whites-only galleries and museums, these artists were well acquainted with both European Modernism and African visual traditions via books and journals, and were deeply immersed in the highly political polemics around modernity and tradition that engaged most African intellectuals of this generation. Significantly titled *"Going Back to the Primitive"*, Cheales' review of Kumalo's sculpture is a telling example of apartheid-era white reluctance to acknowledge the coevalness of contemporary black artists. Kumalo's complex primitivism, informed not only by his knowledge of contemporary Western modernism but also politically resonant with a Pan-Africanist retrieval of heritage and pride, is reduced to yet another instance of innate primitiveness. For Cheales, not only has Kumalo's art not attained modern status, but it actually constitutes a *regression* to the primitive.

Throughout most of the twentieth century, Art History shared with Anthropology the evolutionist assumption that cultural Modernism was the inevitable outflow of a universal progressive trajectory of development. In accordance with the teleology of Social Darwinism, Modernist theorists such as Roger Fry regarded European Modernist primitivism as the complex end-result of centuries of evolutionary development. The European Modernists' pursuit of 'the Primitive' was seen as the culmination of modernity's artifice. Motivated by a dystopian disillusionment with the trappings of civilisation, the quest for 'the Primitive' was the ultimate in the sophisticated search for lost origins and authenticity – of a fundamentally different order, therefore, to the artistic products of the 'true primitive'. As 'a true primitive', the African represents the origin that the primitivist is attempting to retrieve. In the mutually exclusive binaries characteristic of modernist discourse, the innately

primitive nature of the black artist precluded the attainment of cultural modernity. The cultural phenomenon of primitivism, which is so deeply immersed in the logic of social Darwinism, can only comprehend the modern African artist's singular primitivist nostalgia as a the utterings of a true primitive.

For Cheales, therefore, Kumalo's modernity is easily dismissed as skin-deep: "You feel the 40-year old sculptor ... being drawn backwards into the mists of superstition and tribal memories"; there is in his work an "undercurrent of savage simplicity" and although he "strains for more sophistication, such work would be highly impressive if you did not see the pieces of more emotional intensity". This '*emotional intensity'* exposes the artist's work as 'authentically primitive' rather than primitivist. Attempts to master contemporary modernism -note that the artist *'strains for more sophistication'* – are dismissed as insincere: "Fortunately, Kumalo … only fleetingly lingers on the use of contemporary ideas in his sculpture. But, always, it is the more primitive mood that shows him at his greatest" (Cheales 1975).

'*Primitive'*; '*raw'*; *strong'*; '*brutally'*; '*intensity'*; '*drawn backwards'*; *'mists of superstition'*; '*tribal memories'*; *'undercurrent of savage simplicity'* are all terms that reproduce a colonial stereotype of African identity that utterly precludes a modern subjectivity. While few writings so openly reproduce this colonial stereotype, the relentless emphasis on emotional signifiers in descriptions of modern urban art underscores this classic depiction of the African as irrational rather than an autonomous subject in command of reason. In one relatively short text on the artist Dumile Feni, the list of expressions and adjectives used by De Jager indicates this hyperbolic overdetermination of the emotional, the irrational and the unconscious.

SLIDE 3

As Cheales' review of Kumalo demonstrates, interpretations of modern black art often suggested a continuity between 'traditional' and modern African art practices. This 'continuity' is seldom proved (as an unbroken line of cultural transmission), but is rather assumed to rest on an innate quality of 'Africanness' that manifests as shared stylistic and iconographic traits between 'traditional' and modern cultural practices. This interpretation of modern black art results in a pervasive ambiguity – since 'tradition' and 'modernity' are regarded as mutually exclusive, the modern black artwork (which is represented as containing elements of both), emerges as an anachronism.

The 'transition' from tradition to modernity is believed to take place via 'acculturation'. 'Acculturation' implies a process whereby the individual is torn from the safe confines of his traditional background and thus suggests a loss of cultural wholeness. The modern black artist is represented as occupying an 'in-between' state; a no-man's land in which cultural loss and attainment occur in dialectical relation to one another. The primitivist language of the modern black artist is thus not regarded as a complex and whole artistic phenomenon which responds to very particular economic, political, philosophical and social exigencies, but as the anachronistic (and it is often implied, unsuccessful) synthesis of bits and pieces of the 'old' and the 'new'.

In an article on 'Township art' published in 1989, Frances Verstraete compares Dumile Feni with the French primitivist artist Gauguin, and proposes that the two artists' positions are 'reversed': whereas Gauguin fled the city to find the 'primitive', Dumile was forcibly wrenched from 'the primitive' only to find himself lost in the modern city:

> It is significant that Dumile, in a reverse situation, finding himself alienated, confused and anxious in an urban society which was totally foreign to him, asked the same questions in a text that reads like a cry of anguish: Who am I? Where do I come

> from? What am I doing in this world? His art is an attempt to find an answer: it is a quest for identity as man and artist and articulates the voices of all his people (1989: 159).

While Gauguin's journey was a quintessentially Modernist quest 'back in time' from his sophisticated urban present to the originary 'primitive' origins of mankind, Dumile's artistic quest constitutes the obverse – a journey forward from his primitive origins into the teleological inevitability of modernity. But Verstraete's text leaves us in no doubt that the African is lost and bewildered in the modern world. Regardless of being born in a semi-urban environment, artists such as Dumile are innately unsuited to modernity. In my doctoral thesis on white South African art writing, I coined the term 'Two-Worlds-Paradigm' to describe the characterisation of the modern black artist as lost between two worlds, and I go so far as to suggest that it is the dominant hermeneutic device in apartheid-era white writing on black modern culture.

"Europe and Africa – the twin poles of the African artist's imagination", the critic Joyce Ozynski wrote in 1977. These 'twin poles' are represented as fundamentally irreconcilable, if not downright antagonistic, a view that rests on a typological conception of time, in which absolute distinctions are made between preliterate and literate societies. A regular art writer for the Department of Native Affairs' cultural mouthpiece, *Bantu*, Jenny Basson typically writes about "the confrontation in Africa between Man living in a semi primitive state and man, highly skilled in science and technology, living in highly civilized modern cities" (1973). The modern black artist (in this case Leonard Matsoso) embodies the trauma of this highly unequal '*confrontation*': "His bold yet sensitive drawings reflect the African mind steeped in legend, myth and folklore, but at the same time a mind confronted by the sophistication of modern urban life and battling to come to terms with it" (Basson 1973). The Kantian distinction between pre-modern *doxa* (indicated by the words '*legend', 'myth'* and '*folklore'*) and Western logos *('the sophistication of modern urban life'*) means that the modern black artist, with his distinctly '*African mind'*, '*battles to come to terms'* with these fundamentally conflicting mental states. Since the African traditional mind and Western modern sophistication must be regarded as mutually exclusive, the black artist finds the confrontation between these dialectical opposites '*a battle'* – he does not command or master a mind of his own, but again metonymically stands for the traumatic dislocation that all Africans have to undergo in order to attain modern identities. It is thus assumed that the identity of the urbanised black man is forged by displacement and loss. The 'modern black man' is the confused, childlike and bewildered victim of the modern world, not the 'master of his fate' in the tradition of heroic, enlightenment subjectivity: "He has not only lost his tribal identity, but has had to come to terms with an urban society which is not of his making and in which he has little self-determination" (Verstraete 1989: 153).

An early anonymous article on Ernest Mancoba, published in 1936, exemplifies the rich opportunities for paradox and confusion afforded by a black artist who practised a Modernist primitivist style:

> There is a Bantu sculptor on the Reef who has ceased to imitate the European style of sculpture. He has discovered the Negro art of Africa, and is already applying it to some of his own work with enthusiasm ('Primitive Art of Africa: Bantu Sculptor's Studies', 1936).

The notion that the 'Bantu sculptor' *ceased* to imitate the European style (upon his discovery of the 'Negro art of Africa') implies, of course, that his art, prior to this (re)discovery of his African roots, constituted mere *imitation* of European culture – not mastery, but mimicry. A black artist who works in a 'European' style and method can be regarded as neither original nor authentic, hence the 'Bantu sculptor' reverts to an African idiom 'with enthusiasm'. The significant phrase *'ceased to imitate'* intimates that Mancoba's adoption of traditional African practices is not a Modernist search for

origins, but simply a reversion to type. There is an irony to this. Given the constraints upon the black artist in the 1930s, when Mancoba started experimenting with a primitivist style and methods, it is very unlikely that the artist 'discovered' African art by frequenting ethnology museums or visiting the handful of private galleries and outlets that sold such art – much less that he 'discovered' this art by exploring his own particular cultural heritage. Rather it is likely that the well-read Mancoba, who was a missionary-trained teacher and a member of the small but elite black petit bourgeoisie, would have informed himself about the latest art trends in Europe and would thus have become acquainted with 'Negro art' via the avant-garde primitivism of the Cubists and the Expressionists. Given the progressivist aspirations of the 'new African' of the early 20th century, this roundabout route to a discovery of 'traditional' African art seems very likely. The modern African artist's primitivism is thus one step further removed from 'source' than the European Modernist's primitivism, yet is predictably interpreted as an 'authentic primitiveness'.

Snyman refers to Maquet's theory that the African has a propensity for action rather than contemplation (1978: 56). This emphasis on the physical, the involuntary and the unconscious precludes an interpretation of contemporary black artists as 20th-century Modernists, fully and consciously in command of a sophisticated and deliberate artistic vocabulary. The evocation of an involuntary and unconscious African creative urge echoes Fry's assertion that European Modernism was the result of a long and complex evolutionary development, whereas African formal abstraction was, conversely, innate and primitive. For Cheales (1970a), the contemporary black artist's efforts are thus of a particularly atavistic order: "In contrast with the very modern atmosphere of Kevin Atkinson's paintings and Richard Wake's metal sculpture, Dumile's sharp, spiky pen and ink drawings could be of beings from a totally different planet." In a rather extraordinary statement by Battiss, the author's expectations regarding 'appropriate' subject matter for the black artist are revealed:

> It is not that the new African artists lack imagination or fantasy: on the contrary, many of them are highly imaginative. But they seem to be sure that whatever they wish to express – *the subconscious, the erotic, surrealist dreams, myths and memories of their racial past* – must be said fairly directly (1967: 21).

The desire simultaneously to acknowledge the modern black artist as a unique individual (which is an art historical imperative) and as quintessentially African (and thus a collective Other), emerges as a particularly virulent ambiguity. The colonial binaries of an irrational and instinctive African creativity versus the rational and deliberate creation of European culture are redeployed to reclaim cultural Modernism as a singularly 'white' activity; while the modern black artist's artistic efforts harken back to age-old African cultural rituals:

> Sithole's subjects, man and wild creatures, are rendered in a semi-abstract style. These sculptures are strongly indigenous in form and concept, embracing both traditional and acculturated Africa. There is a 'spiritual sensualism' in his pieces, which has always been an essential part of African ceremony, and collectively these figurative sculptures constitute a visual vocabulary of qualities and modes inherent in indigenous ritual (De Jager1977/78).

An anonymous newspaper review on Dumile (significantly titled 'Untutored, this African depicts the elemental' (1966)) is particularly revealing of the sexual nature of 'the modern primitive': "The fecundity of the female, the accents on buttocks, breasts and thighs, are all part of his awakening to the animal nature of things." Thus the sensual, physical and sexual awareness of the artist points at a spontaneous (African) sympathy with (and sexual appreciation of) 'the animal nature' of the black woman.

The emotional content of the art of particularly expressive artists such as Dumile Feni and Cyprian Shilakoe is variously ascribed to an innate African emotionalism; to the loss and alienation wrought by acculturation; or as a propensity towards bathetic exaggeration and artistic pretension. Cheales (1970b), for instance, dismisses the stark despair of Shilakoe's work as the over-dramatisation of a 'fashionable' existential unhappiness that contradicts the 'truth' that all blacks are fundamentally happy and simple souls. The implication is that this expressiveness is a mere pretence at artistic depth and seriousness:

> These beings are horrifying prisoners in Shilakoe's own mind, causing one to give them instantaneously greater consideration and sympathy than is perhaps warranted if one thinks of a vast continent of people who certainly are not enslaved and kept in spiritual limbo … The artist is interpreting his times with such emotional intensity that he makes it seem that all his people, in his age, live in a state of stark, eternal doom … Unfortunately, however difficult the times, these damned beings seem too much like wraiths of Hades to knit in with the truth of people who are, in the main, often happier in their simplicity that (sic) the world actually allows.

Oguibe proposes that the ambiguous reception of African Modernism flows from a reluctance to relinquish the trope of an exotic Africa: "To reject the exoticism of Africa is to destroy an entire world-view, carefully and painstakingly fabricated over several centuries (1999: 326).

Given the myriad colonialist assumptions that framed the reception of modern black art, it is perhaps not surprising that African primitivism was instantly interpreted as sign of an ineluctably primitive nature. The need exists, therefore, for a more nuanced investigation of Modernist Primitivism in South Africa. It stands to reason that primitivism must resonate in subtly different ways for modern African artists – as such it is, potentially, a very rich topic to investigate. Primitivism comes pre-encoded with dense layers of signs – many of them conflicting. Primitivism represents, above all, the artist's Romantic search for pre-modern wholeness. Urban black artists' primitivism could thus, on one level, quite simply be interpreted as the result of a typical 20th-century disenchantment with modernity and urban existence. However, the disillusionment and sense of displacement that characterises the primitivist quest is, in the case of the modern black artist, doubly amplified since it also articulates the forcible and continuing destruction of his African heritage and political autonomy. Primitivism, for the African artist, thus presents opportunities for the airing of a counter-colonial African voice. In this sense, it could be interpreted as an African nationalist construction of an independent and characteristically African modernity. In addition, it must be kept in mind that, in the first half of the 20th century, primitivism signified the vanguard of European cultural sophistication. For a black artist keen on using his art to demonstrate his contemporaneity and modernity, primitivism signified precisely such a sophisticated attainment.

■

Intertwinings and Refuges: How to Update our Desire of Translation?

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The rhythm "South" should fill the cultural texts
of the Latin American periphery of asperities
and dissonance....
Nelly Richard

Translating us ... is the operation that could detect as possible for an instance of dialogue. In the above quote Nelly Richard – franco-chilean critic – problematizes this issue, remembering then to James Clifford and his idea of "imperfect translations" to avoid the homogenization or neutralization of the emancipatory potential of the place "imperfect" where the experience of difference refuge to shelter. Therefore, this cadence or rhythm should be called "South" seems turn into local dimension and context to announce his experience as untranslatable.

The proposal of my text, is tackle questions from the conditions of production located from some Chilean cultural and artistic practices dislocated into the definition of the location, as set out in the south. It is some specific moments that some forms of production announced today can be upgraded in the form of self-managed networks and decentralized. There are a serial episodes that are installed in our contemporary history, which make it possible to identify a genealogy consisting of different layers that come together and we try to understand and explain. The idea is to restore some questions that have already been announced and continue to update our preoccupations about the exchange of creative imagination in contemporary culture.

1972
On what model of production and development, can we position ourselves as starting point?

We have a period of twenty years to make tremendous advances in history.
Adults will live with a gun to their heads
and children will grow up in ignorance; that's how it works.
The time will come in which we will once again fit
into the rest of the planet's calendar.
So we will have triumphed. Another history will be written.
No one will remember this tumor on one side of reality.
No one will write anything, because it will be erased immediately.
No one will say anything because it will die and be replaced right away.
Jorge Baradit

During the Chilean government of the president Salvador Allende between 1970 and 1973 it was written a series of frames that knotted complex and diverse ways of understanding the concepts of development from the South. It was a choreographic composition often need autonomous interpreters to move forward collectively articulated by the "Chilean way to socialism", because the lines of development involved many ways of transforming the social scene that existed in early 70s. It was a political program that would involve all aspects of life, and in the case of culture, there was not a consensus as "inside left coalition positions and practices coexisted heterogeneous and even contradictory", they do not formally expressed only in artistic practices, but it also pushed a series of creative projects which modified some legitimate ways of understanding cultural processes. Certainly the culture of the Chilean revolution as a way of development in the early seventies, had in its inaugural condition, a small internal revolution that erupted in various forms to understand the

culture at the societal level. For example, reforms in the way of understanding education, the publications, the political implication of the artistic world and the developments of technology from everyday functions to use state levels.

For the Third United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD III), which was held in Santiago, Chile, from April 13, 1972 to June of the same month, and included the presence of the 141 member countries. The first UNCTAD Conference was held in Geneva in 1964, and the second in New Delhi in 1968. In the inaugural speech of the UNCTAD III in Santiago, President Salvador Allende indicated that, "the task assigned to the Third UNCTAD is to design new economic and commercial structures precisely because those established in the post-war, which are greatly harmful for developing countries, are falling apart and will soon disappear.

Probably the debate on memory and forgetting is in our society one of the most intense problems and perhaps the most complex to resolve, due to its constant silencing and ethical judgments. Moreover, in countries that have suffered the terrorism of the State and that are slowly recovering their voice and body to be able to tell their stories. This entire process has been pierced by a large amount of literature in the area of academic knowledge, which is now faced with the official decisions and also the position of the victims and their families.

The paragraph cited above comes from a novel, and attempts to envision history and fiction backwards. And as it is far from solving any type of collective trauma, or idealizing complex social processes, it repaves the road in order to return to those moments that have been forgotten but insist on reappearing. It is not about a ghost, but rather an hallucination, since it seems to always be there in the present, while at the same time is not real.

So we ask ourselves about what we should reactivate, but avoid neutralizing with the present actions. And the question that we declare collectively has been from the beginning: How do we formulate the problem of the community that we belong to? Where do we find those genealogical knots in order to present today what influences and affects us? But which also impacted other years ago, in the same place, and remains as a collective hallucination.

Various stories of the protagonists and some Chilean intellectuals have demonstrated that the only way that this building has been constructed in such a short time (275 two hundred seventy-five days) and had been such technological efficacy that was applied in the project Would not have been possible without the collective spirit and solidarity of the architects, engineers, artists, workers and volunteers, who gave birth to the building to the Conference which had as main theme "Trade and development in the Third World" , the idea was "to discuss the problems of the underdeveloped and poor nations, as well as forms of commercial exchange between them could be made more equitably with the developed world". The material history of a building is built by a split from reality. That is by a conscience of breaks that our political, economic and symbolic events constructed and relocate on the real.

Understand how historical events are singular, can break and redefine our present, a way to install a type dimension as a platform genealogical search of our traces. The articulation of the architectural project with the proposals made by visual artists who were invited to make an artistic intervention for the building, is a landmark for the understanding of the processuality: When artists and architects said their practice under the name of "art integrated architecture" were not only pointing to a formal practice in dialogue between material and artistic production and the tectonic setting of the building that was constructed, if they were signaling a temporality ideological, where the process of materialization of the concept "development front to poverty" is exemplified in every day as they worked collectively on this site. Artists who developed a figurative work, exercised another way to do in front a project that was defined as public and common. Juan Bernal Ponce, artist and architect

who regularly painted murals figurative, made an artwork that became a large stained glass illuminating the main entrance. The other hand, the sculptor Ricardo Mesa was dedicated to handles some doors where he put two hands with the raised fist, symbolizing the triumph of the people; at the entrance to the restaurant, the painter and printmaker Nemesio Antúnez design a geometric composition that he welcomed the place most paradigmatic of the building because there was meeting a number of people to share in this place every day. In the case of Felix Maruenda sculptor, he designed a sculpture that will be well remembered for its size "I proposed to design a fireplace that, without hide its function, transform the traditional tube that serves as the gas output in a structure located in that space, harmonize with the building and the environment around it, in a solution with pleasing forms".

The presence of Eduardo Martínez Bonati, an artist hired to carry out the “art incorporated” process for the building, was a great determinant. And for this reason, thanks to his generosity, we were able to carry out a series of conversations with him that allowed us to go about putting together and different and imaginary route for each of the nooks and crannies of a place that no longer exists physically. One of the issues that we insisted upon was regarding his own experience and definition of what he called “art incorporated” and which he wrote in a text for the magazine “quinta rueda” in 1972, in opposition to the art that was at the time “enclosed” within museums and art galleries, and which now involved “a museum throughout the city, in the entire atmosphere”:

> *Art Incorporated is a different type. It tends to create a museum throughout the city, in the entire atmosphere. It is not confined to a specialized area, but it becomes part of common and daily life, it enriches and embellishes the existence of all those that come into contact with it. It does not belong to any individual in particular, but rather it is the property of a collective social medium.*
>
> *Art incorporated is committed to all levels of creation: Tiles, a park bench, a door, a wall, a water fountain, a flower pot, a kindergarten, handmade bridges over the Mapocho River, educational establishments, hospitals, housing projects, hills, parks, playgrounds, bridges and underpasses. What we call the atmosphere.*
>
> *Art is incorporated as one more element of a reality whose nature is not merely art itself, but a reality that is defined by the participation of various forms of human expression of culture.*
>
> *For example, a building is the formal expression of a function, of a social human concept of this function. This function requires a program, a calculation, a constructive process, solutions of materials, costs, chromatic features, acoustics, electrical installations, etc. Art is incorporated as an additional element. It is the work of a specialist as the others, who takes part in the formal definition of this collective work.*
>
> *It is addressed to the entire collective medium. Indistinctly. At any time. To stay. This art is incorporated not only into the physical nature of the atmosphere, but also into the cultural life of a country. For this reason we say that Art Incorporated is not a proposal in the field of aesthetics, since in it we can fit all formal conceptions that exist in the historical present. Rather, we say that Art Incorporated is a proposal in the social field.*

The building operates as a Cultural Center a few months after the Conference of UNCTAD III because the military coup of September 11, 1973 not only transformed the country's social life in all its

aspects, also appropriated the building that had recently been the symbol of development, the collective spirit and creativity, making it the headquarters of the Pinochet dictatorship. At the same time, some artworks were stolen or maybe destroyed. Of these artwork to the present do not know their location.

When we activate and name the experience of residence and transit on the Programmatic memory of the building project for UNCTAD III we propose an expression of resistance to forget, the objective is the construction of a new event in the present, a form of founding their residence than always out of objectified language.

That's why, interrogate these singularities and raise the question of ownership on a "ourselves" refers to our present, that is "make the problem of community which we are a part", we allow us to understand and regain a typology of critical discourse spaces than differentiate and introduce an "ourselves actual ".

2012 How do ourselves define and translate us today from the collective artistic practices?
About the necessity of activating and problematize the debate in relation to production models in the context of contemporary art, it seems interesting to me to mention the transits and exchanges than take place today in some areas of South America, that found their statement from the notion of "independent practice ".

Today, is there a geography of the collective in the map of Latin American artistic practices? If they have insisted that global discourses give way to a number of minorities without representation or central legitimation, although resistance evokes dissimilar options, Are there alternatives that continue critical thinking from the South stating what 30 or 40 decades ago was seen as possible? Where is the refuge where we can save our desires from places untranslatable, for confirm that the desire for collective articulation is possible?

And finally, where do we translate collectively? We could build a moment and a narrative where the definitions totalitarian dissidents and the common performances were reverberations from time to time what is reactivated. Probably in the different joints, intertwinings and conformation of cooperative networks, decentralized and autonomous, where today we find the desire for self translated as a new emancipatory power and energy on our genealogy and memory knots untied.

■

The Relevance of Feminism in Post-apartheid South Africa

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The complexities of South African society under apartheid tended to marginalise Feminist content in art, partly because it was identified with white, middle class, western ideals, and labelled elitist. In a country where the majority of the population were dispossessed and oppressed both socially and politically, cultural activies were often biased towards activism, especially in the late 1970s. Marion Arnold (2005: 18,19) explains that gender issues were notably absent from current political and social debates and it was not until the late 1980s that gender began to emerge as a significant subject for cutural production. Nelson Mandela's release from jail on 11 February 1990, signalling the end of apartheid, was the catalyst for a shift of emphasis in the oeuvre of many South African artists from liberation politics to the constraints that society imposes on individuals, so issues such as gender, sexual orientation and the construction of identity were embraced as legitimate subjects for interrogation in the move towards a post-apartheid era. Ironically this change coincided with what has been labelled globally as a post-feminist era, but in South Africa there are ongoing injustices and inequalities and, despite the constitutional guarantee of freedoms, both women (particularly rural women) and the gay community face continuing violence, intolerance and the threat of political and social suppression due largely to patriarchal traditionalism and prejudice. I would argue that in South Africa today feminist strategies exposing patriarchal controls are still a necessary response to local conditions rather than a belated mimicking of Western art forms. To illustrate this I have selected works by Diane Victor and Tracey Rose who both employ religious iconography and feminist strategies to engage with gender and power in post-apartheid South Africa.

Victor's three large etchings (200x100cm) *Minder, Mater,* and *Martyr* (2004) were made for the Personal Affects exhibition held in New York in 2004. These parody the grand Christian narratives embodied in St. John the Baptist, St. Sebastian and Christ enthroned.[1] They also reference the Holy Trinity but the three male figures are transposed into female alter-egos, occupying a triptych format within embossed Gothic arches that together resemble a historic Christian altarpiece. The Gothic framework is also a visual link to another work by Victor entitled the *Eight Marys* (2004), which was part of the same exhibition but was displayed within Gothic stone framework in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.[2] Ironically, as Rankin (2008:35) notes, the decorative embossing making up these three arches is created from ephemeral kitsch and found items,[3] which detract from the gravity of religious connotations. They are also visually ethereal and delicate due to the embossing technique and thus form a feminine counterfoil to the massive rigidity of the stone architecture to which they refer.

The central figure, *Mater*, is seated befitting the status of a queen or ruler. Her severely coiffed hair and pursed lips suggest both control and disapproval. There is an element of Disney hyperbole here, pointed out by Rankin (2008:38) evoking wicked queens and stepmothers in the fairy tale tradition, which subvert the notion of a majestic and all- powerful deity. *Mater* is actively pulling back her chest cavity as if to reveal the redemptive flaming heart that is displayed by Christ in Catholic traditional iconography but merely revealing muscle and flesh. The flames above Christ's heart have now

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[1] These etchings were exhibited at the Museum for African Art in Queens, New York in 2004 as part of the Personal Affects exhibition.

[2] *The Eight Marys* are a contemporary reinvention of the Virgin Mary.

[3] Rankin (2008:35) explains that Marley tiles were cut to create the decorative edge to the arches on each panel, to give consistency throughout. For the decorative infill, however, Victor used lacy plastic tablemats found in a department store for *Minder* and *Martyr*, and for *Mater* she used "components of tazzo spinner novelties from Simba crisps packets."

become tears in the skin of her upper chest graphically indicating suffering and abjection but without any imagery associated with redemption.

Africa is referenced in the multiple rings around her neck, worn by women in some traditional societies, and a garment that looks like an African Kente cloth where it is wrapped around her torso. The Kente pattern, however, devolves into heavy black material studded with fish-hooks. This could refer to Christ's injunction to his followers to become "fishers of men" (John 21:17) but *Mater* is grasping a writhing, snarling shark in her right hand instead, to parody the traditional symbol of a fish associated with Christ. Sharks are a recurring motif in Victor's oeuvre as she finds the shape formally and aesthetically beautiful and wholly functional for the "ultimate predator". It also represents a very personal aversion to the "hard core conversion attacks" that she has received from the more militantly Christian students she has taught (Victor 2006a).[4] The shark is thus a metaphor for the predatory nature of radical fundamental Christianity, clutched ironically in the controlling hands of a matriarchal alternative to God.

Victor has described this figure as invoking a "fish toting Mami-Wata figure from West Africa" (quoted in Rankin 2008:38) thus denoting a complex and powerful female African deity who was imported from European traders[5] and assimilated as "an exotic 'other'" (Drewal 2002:193) into African religion and culture. In Mami Wata figures the deity is sometimes half fish and half human, or at least has an ambiguous and obscured lower half (hence the heavy black drapery on Victor's *Mater*). Many images show her holding and controlling snakes, which in African arts are associated with water spirits.[6] Her interventions described by Henry Drewal (2008:25) are myriad, ranging from good fortune in wealth, status, and procreation, to spiritual and social advantages such as the possibility for women to become powerful priestesses and healers and to "assert female agency in generally male-dominated societies." There is a dangerous side to her, however, as she may demand a substantial sacrifice in return, "such as the life of a family member or celibacy in the realm of mortals" (Drewal 2008:25). The complexities inherent in a Mami Wata figure include a conflation of religious and mythical personae from other cultures with all their associations. In Drewal's (2008:25) words:

> She is a complex multivocal, multifocal symbol with so many resonances that she feeds the imagination, generating, rather than limiting, meanings and significances: nurturing mother; sexy mama; provider of riches; healer of physical and spiritual ills; embodiment of dangers and desires, risks and challenges, dreams and aspirations, fears and forebodings.

As a dynamic Pan-African female deity with multicultural associations Mami Wata's resonance is clearly not out of place as an aspect of Victor's post-modern African alternative to the enthroned Christ.

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[4] Victor lectures part time at Pretoria University which has a majority of students who have been raised in Afrikaans homes with a strong Calvinist Christian tradition. She has stated that many of these students find her subversive approach to Christian iconography blasphemous. Works like these are made deliberately in the Pretoria University studio in an effort, on Victor's part, to raise dialogue between opposing viewpoints and to break down rigidly held doctrinal boundaries (Victor 2006).

[5] Henry Drewal (2002:193) notes that Mami Wata figures were added to African pantheons of water spirits in the 15th Century shortly after the first encounters with European visitors. Their complex iconography was developed over the years by "taking exotic (and indigenous) images and objects, interpreting them, investing them with new meanings, and then re-presenting them in inventive ways to serve their aesthetic, devotional and social needs."

[6] Drewal (2002:199) explains that the snake represents both water and rainbow deities in many parts of Africa thus linking the waters of the sky with the waters of the earth. Mami Wata similarly links and dominates both the waters of the sea and all fresh water.

Placed to the left of *Mater* is *Minder,* a parody of St John the Baptist with his rough camel skin cloak. Details that identify this connection include the neck brace referring to John's decapitation, and the platter on which Salome presented his severed head to Herod which now serves as the podium on which *Minder* stands. The Baptist's rough cloak consists of hair growing from *Minder's* head that appears to take on a life of its own in the extended prehensile locks covering her lower limbs. The outer limit of her hair forms a mandorla shape, otherwise known as a *vesica piscis* meaning 'vessel of the fish' in Latin[7]. (Fig) This shape is often found surrounding images of Christ or the Virgin Mary in religious iconography, but Jean Shinoda Bolen (1994:115-118) explains that this was an ancient symbol for the Great Goddess (with the almond shape representing her vulva) before it became a Christian symbol. Victor's use of this shape, therefore suggests the continuum of iconic women from the Great Goddess to Eve to the Virgin Mary, united in a symbol of their sexuality which ironically is manifest here to indicate her elevated religious status as part of an alternative Trinity. Sexual inferences can be found in the sheer lush extravagance of her hair with its embedded cowrie shells, the traditional commerce of Africa, that look like small vaginas, thus evoking both colonial trade and women as marketable commodities.

In front of *Minder* is an African aloe plant that appears to grow out of the hair/cloak so that she is surrounded by pelt and foliage in a way that suggests she is emerging or growing from them – a product of nature and at one with nature. In fact she could be identified as a polarised version of woman who demonstrates the Platonic nature versus culture or emotion versus reason dichotomy, which in this case is also relevant to the intuitive, emotional aspects associated with John the Baptist. The suckling lamb in her arms parodies popular images of Christ cradling the lost lamb and apparently indicates her nurturing nature. There is a more sinister side to this, however, as a knife held in her right hand appears ready to slaughter the lamb. This, along with her stern expression, is an indication not to take this woman and her nurturing, 'natural' role at face value. If one takes the lamb as a metaphor for Christ the 'Lamb of God' then this *Minder* is also the instrument of death, the 'killer of Christ' – a role that could also be implied by Victor's substitution of three women in place of the Christian Trinity.

In *Martyr*, the third panel of Victor's triptych, sexuality is foregrounded through *Martyr's* 'S&M' inspired un-dress, with tightly corseted waist, garters and uncomfortably bound arms. Sexuality is also inferred in the multiple penetrations by nails that crowd her body. Her lower legs are pierced by arrows, visually linking her to St. Sebastian with his homoerotic allusions. Sebastian, however, is usually represented (in Renaissance paintings) as a beautiful young man gazing up towards heaven, posing languidly with a mere handful of arrows representing his penetration (see Botticelli's or Perugino's St. Sebastian for example). This female inversion of Sebastian emphasises difference through the excessive abundance of her penetrations with the sexual innuendo clarified by swarms of embossed sperm surrounding her in the background. She is neither serene nor classically beautiful, with her angry expression and awkwardly twisted, restrained body. She appears to be protected from the background sperm by a shroud-like backdrop, which could refer to a condom or a crumpled bed sheet or to the shroud of Christ, thus tarnishing the reverence that is assigned to relics like the Turin shroud. According to Rankin (2008:35) this connection with relics "…seems to connote illusions and simulacra, perhaps questioning the validity of relics, perhaps reminding us that Martyr is itself a representation." In foregrounding this image and her two companions, as part of a larger text of religious representations, Victor alerts us to the differences, raising questions about the validity of

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[7] J.C. Cooper (1978:103-104) describes this form as "…the 'mystical almond' which depicts divinity; holiness; the sacred; virginity; the vulva. It also denotes an opening or gateway and the two sides represent the opposite poles and all duality."

the originals and, by inference, the validity of the (patriarchal) dogma that such originals are there to promote.

Like *Mater*, *Martyr* also connotes the traditional belief systems of Africa as her nail-encrusted body clearly alludes to the *nkisi* power figures from the Congo which, when studded with nails are known as *nkondi*. Despite the overtones of martyrdom, as an *nkondi* she wields the powers conferred by witchcraft and sorcery that were outlawed by the church. She thus undermines the very core of ecclesiastical and western structures of control. She is also flaunting her sexuality through the metaphor of penetration and the sperm surrounding her. There is no vestige of spiritual purity in the Christian sense or passive submissiveness of any sort. She is the antithesis of pure, beautiful images of virginal saints or the Virgin Mary, favoured by the church as ideal role models for women. This woman overturns tradition and embodies the complexities of contemporary culture, and gender expectations.

The use of feminist methodologies such as abjection, the hostility towards 'grand narratives' and the exploration of socially constructed identities in these works is interesting in the light of this so called 'post-feminist' era. Diane Victor has stated that she does not consider herself a feminist, yet her works display many of the strategies and concerns central to feminist art making. In terms of global theoretical discourses the 'post-feminist' era can be identified as an era in which the rights fought for by the first and second generation feminists are now supposedly in place. For example many young female students have opportunities not offered to their parents and take these rights for granted. They do not want to be identified as feminists as they see no need for militant action. South Africa's constitution is one of the most progressive in the world in terms of gender equality. We have legislation banning all forms of discrimination, including gender-based discrimination and, as Jennifer Wilkinson (2002:345), points out "on paper at least, women have achieved the equality for which they worked so hard." But can we really describe our situation in South Africa as 'post-feminism'? Despite the advances made politically in favour of women we still have one of the world's worst records of violence against women and children,[8] with the highest number of rapes reported for any country not at war. Due to economic imbalances there is a huge proportion of our population for whom nothing has changed. There is also a more subtle danger to the emancipation of women in the call by some leaders to embrace African traditional cultural values. Wilkinson (2002:358,359) cautions against a conservative interpretation of this call, where women are "persuaded to assume traditional roles of subservience" in the demonstration of these values. These traditions include practices that encourage outdated conceptions of women's identity, such as paying *lobola* for a bride, the acceptance of patriarchal polygamy, or believing that the primary role of a woman is to bear children. As recently as July 2010 Pearlie Joubert (2010:8) reported in the Mail and Guardian that a deputation of rural women pleaded in Parliament for the removal of powers granted by the state to traditional leaders (*amakhosi* chiefs). They cited, among other problems,[9] the abduction of

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[8] Isak Niehaus (2005:65) notes that despite rape being one of the most under-reported crimes in South Africa, 49 280 cases of rape and attempted rape were reported to the South African police in 1998. Niehaus further states that 41 percent of these victims were younger than seventeen and explains that according to the Human Rights Watch (1995) this figure is among the highest reported for any country not at war. Rape has been identified in existing studies (such as those by Vogelman (1990) Russel (1991,1997) Varga (1997) and Jewkes & Abrahams (2002)) as an act of power and an assertion of male dominance over women and is particularly prevalent in South African society because substantial gender inequalities persist despite constitutional decrees. These studies also point to certain masculine constructs in South African societies, which demonstrate an entrenched sense of sexual entitlement and control over women, resulting in various forms of domestic violence which is often exacerbated by the abuse of alcohol.

[9] The other problems related to the blanket powers enjoyed by the *amakhosi*, which allowed for corruption and abuse of power in matters that would disadvantage the communities they were supposed to serve. An example cited was the desecration of sacred sites – turning them into tourist destinations for the profit of the Chief. (Joubert 2010:8).

pre-pubescent girls for forced marriages, which is a tribal custom known as *ukuthwalwa*, the denial of land ownership for women, and the fact that women have to be represented by a man in the local courts and may not speak for themselves.[10] This state supported[11] disempowerment of women shows that women in South Africa cannot afford to become complacent.

Victor's reinvention of Christian religious icons to deconstruct stereotypes is also a tactic pursued by Tracey Rose, who subverts Christian dogma by entirely reinventing the biblical story of creation and redemption in a series of photographic art works entitled *Lucie's Fur Version 1:1:1.* The title refers to Lucifer and to Lucie – the first hominid and therefore an alter-ego of Eve, as well as to her pubic hair (fur) which indicates her role as the mother of all humankind. In Rose's story it is Lucie, rather than Adam, who is seen as the progenitor of the human race. To reinforce this pre-eminence of the first woman, Rose's retelling of Biblical mythology begins with a homosexual couple who therefore cannot be responsible for the genesis of the human race. Adam and Yves in the Garden of Eden, (*Adam and Yves, BC*, 2003), are apparently hiding from God after eating the forbidden fruit, as they are already adorned with fig leaves, although ironically 'god' is a small Hindu inspired statue placed innocuously under a bush as if he is hiding from them. In this image the role of woman as temptress and harbinger of original sin is humorously negated by Rose's ironic gender inversion, but her protagonists carry more serious implications. Rose's stated reason for her illustrative reinvention of Christianity was to "subvert racism, homophobia and exclusion" (Rose 2009). Adam and his partner are thus both black and gay. The racial identification of these figures refers to the exclusionary nature of the pictorial tradition of Western Christianity and the hegemony of whiteness. Their sexual orientation, however, is tied up with not only Christian religious taboos but also the attitude of many traditional African cultures towards homosexuality.

It may seem surprising that Rose considers the need to present black homosexuality as a topic for subversion, particularly in view of the equality clause, expressly prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, which is written into the Bill of Rights (1996) in our South African Constitution.[12] Benjamin Roberts and Vasu Reddy conducted a survey on social attitudes towards homosexuality in 2008, however, and their findings indicate that it is not possible to change entrenched attitudes merely by passing a law. As they note: "Gay and lesbian identities continue to be characterised as 'un-African'…[which] conceals a moral and cultural view that African societies are somehow unique and therefore immune to what is perceived to be a Western and European import." (Roberts and Reddy 2008). This lack of tolerance has been publicised over the years in pronouncements made by several African leaders, for example in 2010 Uganda proposed a bill in

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[10] A disturbing counteraction to the pleas of the local people (mostly women) for the removal of this legislation is noted in the postscript to Joubert's article which states: "Today the National House of Traditional Leaders is making presentations to the Constitutional Review Committee asking that the Constitution be changed to do away with the elected local government and give the *amakhosi* the power to govern" (Joubert 2010:8).

[11] Joubert (2010:8) notes that the traditional authorities were initially created by the South African government in 1951 through the Black Authorities Act. It was seen as a method of controlling the black rural population and has been identified as the last remaining apartheid legislation. Under Thabo Mbeki's government the *amakhosi* Chiefs were granted even more powers. As Joubert (2010:8) notes "In 2003 the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act was promulgated, effectively entrenching the traditional jurisdictions created during the formation of the homelands, which many rural people do not recognise." Traditionalism is thus insidiously responsible for removing the freedoms that democracy should uphold.

[12] Benjamin Roberts and Vasu Reddy expand on South African's constitutional advantages in the introduction to their social attitudes survey carried out in 2008, entitled *Pride and Prejudice: Public attitudes toward homosexuality*: "Progressive decriminalization through law reform since the mid 1990s enabled lesbians and gay men to claim their citizenship as equal South Africans. Far-reaching judgements in respect of medical aid parity, sodomy, custody of children, adoption, insurance, immigration and inheritance have benefited lesbians and gays. A decade later, the signing of the Civil Union Act in November 2006 brought legal recognition of gay marriages, positioning the country as the first to do so in Africa and the fifth to do so internationally."

parliament to impose the death penalty for homosexual acts. Instead of condemning this suggestion our President, Jacob Zuma, is sending an "acknowledged homophobe" (Jones 2010), Jon Qwelane, to Uganda as South Africa's ambassador. His decision suggests to onlookers "a tacit endorsement of the repressive stance Uganda is taking on homosexuality." (Jones 2010). Jacob Zuma has also reportedly promoted an anti-homosexual stance by stating that same sex marriages were "a disgrace to the nation and to God" (IRIN 2006) at a Heritage Day public meeting in KwaZulu-Natal in 2006. At the same meeting he stated "When I was growing up unqingili [homosexuals in the Zulu language] could not stand in front of me." (IRIN 2006).

Adam and Yves thus respond not only to Biblical interpretations of original sin and the culpability of woman as perpetrator, but to the ongoing persecution of homosexuality in South African society that has led, in some instances, to violent hate crimes, such as the rape and murder of black lesbians that were reported in Cape Town and Johannesburg from 2007 to 2009.[13] The notion of sexuality as sinful is also manifest in organised religion's suppression, disapproval and even condemnation of homosexual lifestyles particularly since the AIDS epidemic. In March 2010, at a UNAIDS conference in the Netherlands, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa publicly admitted the church's culpability in fuelling the stigmatisation of AIDS (Afrol News 2010). He was speaking about the disapproving attitude in his own as well as other Christian churches, where both homosexuality and sex outside of marriage was considered a sin. He also noted that there was a vocal minority who believed that AIDS was a judgement from God (Afrol News 2010). Rose's parody of Adam and Eve exposes the attitudes of both church and politics in South Africa. Through her humorous approach and by taking us back to the mythical origins of humankind, Rose is able to raise a sensitive issue in such a way that the viewer is encouraged to question the validity of these social taboos.

According to Foucault social control can be identified as one of the core strategies in the history of Christianity, which can be read as a history of power and regulation of the masses. In addition it appears that there are certain politicians and community leaders in South Africa who find it expedient to promote a narrow interpretation of local traditional values and beliefs that could be manipulated to restrict the rights and freedoms that both women and men have fought so hard for. Feminism originated as a response to inequalities and oppression based on gendered power structures. Despite Victor's denial of a feminist stance, therefore, the combination of parodic Christian iconography and feminist strategies that expose social injustice could legitimise a reading of both her work, and Tracey Rose's, within a traditionally feminist paradigm that appears to be as relevant today as it was in the 1960s, given South Africa's political history and present social climate.

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[13] The International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission website (IGLHRC 2009) has a report on the trial of three men who gang raped and stabbed a South African lesbian Eudy Simelane in April of 2008. Only one of the three was convicted of the murder and the report states that he showed no remorse. Moreover Monica Mbaru, IGLHRC's African Program Coordinator, notes that she was appalled at the level of homophobia in the courtroom when she attended a hearing on the matter in July, to the extent that the Judge, Ratha Mokgoathleng, objected to the use of the word 'lesbian' in court. The report goes on to explain that Eudy Simelane is one of several examples of lesbian victims who were murdered execution style or by stoning, in both Johannesburg and Cape Town between 2007 and 2009, indicating a deep rooted intolerance for homosexuality despite South Africa's Constitutionally entrenched freedoms and rights. (IGLHRC 2009)

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Fact and Fantasy: Women's Occupational Dress and the Influence on Identity

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This paper looks at imposed dress, more especially the Western dress or 'church' dress imposed on domestic workers, nannies and converted Christian women of the Eastern Cape. The paper draws information from 16 photographs in family albums in Albany Museum Photographic Collection; eight images of Mary Sibande's exhibition entitled "Long live the Dead Queen" and two contemporary photographs as well as the opinions of various authors on dress.

Dress has been described by various writers and likened to an art form or music but all these definitions have reservations. One suggestion was that dress was "a symbolic metaphor of the relationship of the individual to the cultural system." (Hamilton VA & VW. 1989:16) However, a definition of dress proves as illusive as a definition of other cultural systems or practices. Connerton sees clothing" as the materialisation of the main coordinates of person and occasion" which "…becomes a complex system of cultural categories and the relations between them." (Connerton. 1989: 33) Certain clothes, like the nanny's apron, suggested or certain occupations, or "'indexed' situations and activities, and classes of status to which all persons are ascribed." (Connerton. 1989: 33) The "'indexed situation" was the home or institution and the "indexed activity" may involve laundry, cooking or cleaning; thus concluding that this maid or nanny "ascribed" to the servant class.

For the purpose of this discussion, clothing was confined to "dress" worn by women and more especially, women in domestic service.

The time frame for the photographic examples was the 19th Century when Victorian dress, so called because of the dominance of Queen Victoria over fashion in Britain and the Empire "conveyed *decodable* messages…helped *mould* female behaviour. (ibid: 33). It was this moulding of behaviour that takes place within certain religions and in some occupations. To sum up, dress for the purpose of this paper, was the outward manifestation of these codes of behaviour and the intersection of person, occasion and culture.

The time frame for the contemporary exhibition which inspired this paper, "Long live the Dead Queen" was 2010; the link between the photographic section and the contemporary exhibition being the theme of Victorian dress.

Some definitions

Victorians used the terms "maid", "maid servant" or "lady's maid." (Todd Jakins and Japson photographs) In trying to isolate and date these terms, the SA Dictionary Unit at Rhodes University traced only four instances of "domestic servant" in literature between 1828 and 1875.[1] Mr Richard Bowker of the Unit provided the following statistics of the use of the two terms in English literature:

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[1] Examples of the earliest and later use of "domestic servant" in the 19th Century in the Cape:
1828 *Monthly Review*, p. 515: 'By another proclamation by the Cape Government, in 1812, a colonist can claim any child of a Hottentot who has been born upon his premises, and who has arrived at the age of eight years, as an 'apprentice,' (that was to say, a **domestic servant** or slave), for ten years longer.'
1875 *The Cape Monthly Magazine*, vo. 9-10, p. 5: '… what among the Boers was styled, 'parmantig,' or 'brutal'. They flog women there, and hold that to be the 'right' treatment to make good servants of them. Whether a woman was likely to be a better **domestic servant** for being locked up in gaol at night …' (Google Books).

	Domestic servant	Domestic worker
1900-1910	23	0
1911-1920	7	1
1921-1930	11	0
1931-1940	23	0
1941-1950	19	1
1951-1960	20	2
1961-1970	64	7
1971-1980	92	25

The term "domestic servant" emerged in the 20th century with a few instances of the term "domestic worker" in the early 1900s; the increase in the use of "domestic worker" seems to be a late 20th century phenomena in South Africa, from the 1960s.[2] Racial segregation was legalised from the 1950s in various laws and reached its height in the 1980s, the height of the apartheid years.

The term "nanny" was used throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries. In the *Cape Times* of 1953 in the "Situations Vacant" section, positions for "a housemaid or nanny", "domestic help" and "young maid" are advertised.

The influence of Christian missionaries on African dress

With Christianity as with many religions, came an acceptable mode of dress, especially for women. The first part of the presentation looks at the dress insisted upon by the church, institutions and households. Conversion, and subsequent baptism into the Christian faith, was marked by rituals of dress.

Typically, in the household of Methodist missionary Rev James Lennard (1859-1931) of Clarkbury Mission Station established in 1830 by Rev Haddy near Idutywa in the Eastern Cape, a host of servants supported the household which would have been headed by the missionary's wife, Mrs Lennard. The Lennard album was dated the 1880s. In a photograph in the Lennard album (SM 5476 Lennard Album; dated 1880s; page 53c) dated around 1880) Rev Lennard was photographed walking with four black women in "mission" dress. The young women accompanying the minister show their conversion to Christianity by wearing white dresses signifying purity of spirit, or cotton prints and aprons indicating service to the mission. All four women wore long dresses and head coverings but two women wore long aprons signifying some sort of domestic work and one, a broad brimmed sun hat.

A more specific situation was shown in the family photograph album (SM 3050 Miles and Cairncross album Vol 3 page 4) where the black nanny is photographed with two children. She wore a long sleeved white dress. The one child stood on a chair while the nanny in a white dress held the baby close to her.

The other specific situation was that of the converted slave. In 1896 a group of young people known as the Oromo slaves were brought to and educated at Lovedale Mission, a Presbyterian mission station near Fort Beaufort in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The young woman in the photograph identified as Berille Grant (Cory Library collection: PIC/A 1319, photo no. 71**)** was an ex-slave. All female Oromo slaves were converted to Christianity, worked in homes near Lovedale Institution,

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[2] "The uptick in instances from 1961-1980 may have had some traction with the apartheid system (though a fair number of the results were from an anti-apartheid point of view); on the other hand, it may just be an artifact of a greater number of publications during this period; or even of a greater number of publications from this period being in the GB archive" (email: R Bowker, Dictionary Unit, 28 November 2011).

wore the white mission dress. In both cases, women's dresses have high necks, long sleeves and are ankle length. When Dr Stewart of Lovedale Mission addressed the Glasgow Ladies Society on the Female Portion of the Institution of Lovedale he showed some "good, sensible plain garments in the shape of print frocks, petticoats and jackets… for the more advanced community of Lovedale" (Christian Express 1 September 1978 p 7) Nontsizi Mgqwatho in her poetry book *Nation's Bounty,* wrote about amaXhosa who "dropped" their clothes and "dressed like Whites."

Not only the Protestant faiths attached importance to dress, the head of the Catholic Church Pope Pius introduced 12 rules of dress which included modesty: "Girls and women who wear immodest dress shall be denied Holy Communion and shall not be admitted as sponsors at Baptism or Confirmation" (Joselit. 2001: 69).

Not only did Missionaries encourage certain dress, they controlled the access to cloth (Ross. 2008:90) by being traders and in so doing, limited choice for dress. This newspaper predicts the rise in the cloth trade,

> "With a proper house, then comes a table, a clean table cloth, paper of whitewash for the walls, (and) wife and daughters dress in clean calico prints…The church-going Kaffirs purchase three times as much clothing and groceries as the red (traditional) Kaffirs, but with a change in their habitations the existing native trade would soon be doubled." ("Kaffir Express", Missionary newspaper, 1875.) One missionary exchanged much food for calico "Having calico with us we purchased a good deal of food" ("Journal of Mr Gunn" in Christian Express 1 April 1878 p 10 col 2).

However, some missionaries noted that tight European dress did not benefit 'natives' – "If someone could invent suitable clothing … which is quite as becoming as our cold-climate wear, and far healthier for labourers." (Christian Express, 1 June 1878 Vol VII p 1 col 2).

Occupational dress and the apron.
English farm, home life and social scenes in images dating as far back as Chaucerian Britain, show the apron as a significant part of the maid's costume. Servants wore sacking aprons or "harden" aprons to protect their clothing. Women's aprons started as tucked cloth around the waist; a turn-down bib, oversleeves, a bib ties and pockets were added. (Cunnington & Lucas. 1967:354). The long bibless apron in Chaucer's time was called a "Barmcloth", "a barmcloth as white as morning milk" (Wilkerson. 1970:21). The popularity of the apron increased in the 18th and 19th Centuries, especially as part of occupational dress for domestic servants (Cunnington & Lucas. 1967:336-7). "A well washed apron was the sign of the hardworking woman" (de Marly. 1986:170).

The material used for aprons varied but when British Mill Muslin rather than the more expensive East India Muslins appeared, the price was more affordable. With the Boulton and Watt steam engine, spinning and weaving was revolutionised and the price of cloth fell. Robert Owen, a draper's assistant, wrote, "Mr Oldknow began to manufacture a fabric which he called British Mill Muslin… which Mr McGuffry resold to his customers at half a guinea per yard. It was eagerly sought …." (Wilkerson. 1970:33).

The middle-aged nanny (SM 5476 Rev Lennard's Clarkbury Album: page 25b) who wore a long dress with a full length apron was photographed in the garden, holding a child's doll. This might indicate that she was a nanny to the missionary's children. The unidentified nanny was part of the missionary household of Rev James Lennard of Clarkbury Mission.

The apron not only acted as an indicator of lowly class and position in the household in terms of black or coloured servants- upon the emancipation of middle-class women in the late 20th century and their entry into the professional workforce meant that middle-class households were deprived of an important source of paid and unpaid domestic labour. The photograph of the Red Cross nurses on parade in Grahamstown in the 1930s (private collection: Margot Crozier (nèe Gane) shows volunteer nurses (probably WAAFS) also wearing long aprons with bibs. The pride of the Red Cross nurses contrasted with the serious demeanour of the middle-aged nanny at Clarkbury Mission.

The nanny

A Cape law of 1886 fined all African people who appeared in the street "indecently dressed"– so traditional African dress was adapted to include European cloth. The next two photographs from the Albany Museum collection link dress and the identity of the wearer. In the South African household of the 19th Century, the mode of dress was European rather than traditional. The first contrast in these two photographs was the relationship of the nanny and the child: both photographs (Lloyd family and Hill album: SM PIC 5465b page 39) hold the child close to them but in the one photograph (private collection: Miss M Lloyd. Photographer: Cronin and Dugmore of Queenstown. Date: 1880) the nanny affectionately holds the child's hand. Neither nannies nor the children are identified. Both children are elaborately dress; the baby (Hill album SM PIC 5465b p 39) has a cape trimmed with fur, in contrast with the plainness of the maid's outfit.

One might expect maids and nannies in South Africa to be similarly dressed. However, the dress of a servant often matched the status or class of the employer. A nanny in the 1900s wore a white blouse and grey skirt in the morning and a dark grey dress in the afternoon. She looked after the children's clothes just as the lady's maid looked after the mistress' clothes (de Marley: 1986:170). A maid wore print dresses in the morning and black dresses in the afternoon. That was as far as the uniformity went. As maids received the second hand clothes of their mistresses, they could be quite fashionable in the fashions of last season. So what dress can we expect from the Victorian photographs we studied?

The young nanny in Victorian dress was an exception – possibly a hand-me-down from her employed as the period would have dictated for lady's maids. The photograph (Private collection: Miss M Lloyd. Photographer: Cronin and Dugmore, Queenstown; Date 1860s) was taken at the height of the bustle period. The composition of the photograph[3] suggested some affection on the part of the nanny towards the baby.

The most important feature in the photograph of the seated nanny with two children (SM PIC 5434 Shepstone Album. King William's Town. Date: 1860s) was the braid along the hem of the skirt. The number of rows of trim on a skirt increased with fashion. The nanny's skirt has two rows of braid. Monica Hunter noted the fashion for "Flared cotton skirts trimmed with as many as 36 rows" (Wilson/Hunter. 1960:101-2). Hunter added a social comment that men with orders for their wives would go thirty miles to fetch the "Paris" model for their wives from the nearest shop.

The barefoot Shepstone nanny contrasted with her well-shod charge, a little boy in boots. The hem length was "at a respectable length" (Joselit. 2001: 60) for a working women. Being appropriately dressed for the job was as important as the job itself. The older nanny has a head scarf. According to Joselit, the right clothes conferred acceptance; the wrong clothes disdain (Joselit. 2001: 36). The Shepstone photograph was a solemn studio portrait for the family archive.

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[3] To gauge emotion in Victorian photographs was difficult as the technical process of photography encouraged a solemn look. As a lengthy exposure was required, subjects seldom smiled. Hence the solemn look on these Victorian nannies.

The rural nanny
There were many farm workers in the Eastern Cape. In the group photograph (Webster album page 31b. Kenton-on-Sea ca 1900s), the maid wore a belted print dress with a head scarf and stood with the other workers and the family group, her employers. The Gush farm "Schietkop" on the Bushman's River near Grahamstown had a number of workers. The second photograph (SM PIC 3788b Schietkop album page 27b) showed a mother in her traditional environment, with her family next to her home. Yet even in this situation the unidentified mother still wore dress with European influence -a print blouse with leg-of-mutton sleeves (in Edwardian fashion influence). By 1912 (the date of the album) cotton print was available in trader's shops. The well-known anthropologist, the late Prof Monica Hunter (Wilson) recounted a practice in the Eastern Cape where "The trader's wife made the cotton skirts which Pondo women wear; customers arrive in the morning, order a skirt and wait until it was finished" (Wilson/Hunter: 1960:10).

Studio portraits of nannies
The photograph of a mother, nanny and child (Wild/Hawkins family album; SM PIC 5468iii p 12. King William's Town area) showed the mother who was seated holding the baby and wore a dark top and print skirt (with three rows of braid); in contrast, the young nanny who was seated on the floor, wore a light one.

The photograph of the nanny holding a small baby was taken by W Waller (1862-1878) in Grahamstown (SM PIC 5463iii Walker Album p 18). The nanny wore a dark high-necked, long sleeved dress and head scarf. The dark colour conformed to the Victorian idea of a maid's dress suitable for the afternoon.

Maids and identity
In most instances the maids or nannies in the family albums are not named; others are given a first name, for example "Regina" or an English name, The photographs in the albums dated from 1860 to 1920 (*Africana Notes and News vol XV*: . However, the Jakins maid, "Meaky Solomon" was identified fully in a studio photograph by CJ Aldham (1862-1878) **(**SM PIC 5464 Jakins album. Photographer: CJ Aldham, Grahamstown; p 41). Meaky Solomon was John Todd Jakins' maid but in the portrait she wore Victorian dress with a lace collar, a shawl and dark bonnet and held a book. Joselit in *A Perfect Fit,* described conformity in Afro-American communities, "a show of fidelity to the strictures of respectability would confer equality or at the very least, some degree of parity." (Joselit. 2001:82) Meaky Solomon, the Jakins' maid, dressed like her mistress. Further research revealed little about Meaky Solomon who was probably 40 years by 1880. She was from Grahamstown but what became of her or where she was died was unknown. The Solomons of Grahamstown may have been related but her historical identity is that of the Jakins' maid.

The Dersley & Morley studio photograph of Effie and the baby was taken in King William's Town (1878) (SM PIC 5434 Shepstone album p 22). Effie in her striped skirt and dark fitted blouse with a flared sleeve is seated elegantly holding her mistress' baby on her lap. Effie's full name was likely to have been "Euphenia". Effie was a fine young married woman (ring on left hand). "Old Kate and Mabs" (SM PIC 3183a Gaumie Album p 12a) was identified as the nanny, Kate and the baby**,** Mabel Price (née) Bond. "Old Kate" was dressed in print material and wore a scarf and headscarf. Ironically, "Old Kate" seemed young in the photograph (possibly identified later). The nanny's expressions differed: Effie seemed puzzled by the photographic process; Old Kate frowned at the camera.

Informal photographs
The informal photograph of Regina, maid to Judge Percival and Mrs Gladys Gane of 18 Park Road, Grahamstown (private collection: photographer: M Gane; date 1932), was taken in the garden.

Regina wore a head scarf and a long spotted apron over her dress. There was no indication of her particular duties, or if she was the ironing maid, the cook or the nanny.

Another outdoor photograph (SM PIC 3057b: Haw Album: date: 1928) which was entitled "Judith Zoe Lyn Tapson and maid" showed a baby and a young maid who was identified by her occupation. The photograph captured an informal happy moment between smiling maid and the baby Japson as the young nanny lifted up the smiling baby. A young maid wore a short skirt but this was not appropriate for an older woman. The young nanny was bareheaded.

Advertisements for nannies and maids
Nannies were often "White", single ladies who needed an income as can be seen by these types of advertisements, where an "honest girl" (*Grahamstown Journal* December 1892*)* or a "Mother's help" (*Grahamstown Journal* February 11 1904) are required. By the mid-20th Century, the name for this occupational class was called "the domestic servant". Apartheid entrenched Victorian class distinctions and added racial separation.

The first mention of race in the newspapers available, was in an advertisement for a 'Coloured maid" for the Grand Hotel (*Grahamstown Journal February 11 1904)*. In the *Pretoria News* under the heading of "Indawo Zo Msebenza" the advertisement read:

> "Nanny/Housemaid. Must cook a little. Reliable and honest. Good with children. Recent refs. English-speaking age 25 – 36. Apply Edges, 39 Aries St, Waterkloof Ridge. 78-7527" *(Pretoria News* February 27 1965 p 8 col 7*).*

More skilled jobs were advertised in the *Pretoria News* under the heading "Situations Vacant". In one newspaper advertisement the word "general servant" was used to advertise the services of a maid. (*Grocott's Mail* March 12 1971 p 4) The use of the words, "maid", "nanny" predominant in advertisements; the introduction of the words "domestic servants" may have come with the apartheid period but the labour divisions used the term "domestic servants/workers" to include male employees as well. (Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995; Domestic Workers Act 2008).

Occupational dress and Mary Sibande's exhibition
More, the author of *Utopia,* identified only two functions of dress: protection and attraction. Occupational dress offered both protection and occupational identity. Mary Sibande's exhibition in 2010 "Long live the Dead Queen" used occupational dress, or rather extravagant versions of maid's or nanny's dress for silent communication. The exhibition "Long live the Dead Queen" was part of the 2010 National Arts Festival in Grahamstown and was exhibited in the Standard Bank Gallery, Albany History Museum. Mary Sibande's exhibition also reinforced the idea of dress as communication of an identity.

The layout consisted of four black figures with large costumes based on a maid's uniform and seven digital images mounted in pairs on three walls. But these are not the "starchy maid's outfits" (Joselit: 2001: 114), these outfits are fantastical. Sophie Ntombikayise rose out of metres of blue chiffon (the overskirt) and cerise cotton crinoline (the uniform) overskirt; a starched white apron and cap completed the figure's outfit. With her arms outstretched, Sophie appeared to have a life beyond the fact of her occupation. Sophie was hardly a conventional maid but a Victorian lady bound by a crinoline, "an apparatus of ponderous magnitude and burdensome privilege" (Blau.1999:19) .

The two digital images "Her Majesty Queen Sophie" and "I have not, I have." continued the idea of poverty and privilege. The last statement shows the irony of her situation as a domestic servant; yet the first image projects a queen in her own right but burdened by ordinary situations like waiting at

the bus stop. Yet she was privileged again in the digital image called “I am a Lady” - the “halo” and the parasol representing privilege. The theatrical costumes plus the movements and gestures of Sophie the Queen suggested a life beyond the fact of being a domestic servant. The blue dress, white apron and headscarf (“doek”) are repeated but this time Sophie was struggling in a spider’s web in the image entitled “Caught in the rapture”.

In the last two prints Sophie waited at the bus stop with a chandelier above her head and in the last one, she twirled her parasol in her dreamlike state. The gestures were referential (Connerton. 1989: 81) He further states, “the movements of hand, arm and head may refer by means of a sign to a visually present object (the staff, the ball of wool) by actually pointing to it; the movement may depict the form of a visual object; a spatial relationship, or a bodily action (a blessing with the staff, knitting); or again the movement may represent either a visual or a logical object by means of a pictorial or non-pictorial form which has no morphological relationship to the thing represented.” The other type was notational, “a gestural portrayal” of ideas, often with hand movements. So the silent Sophie speaks. The “visually present objects” of the staff, the knitting needles and wool, even the bus sign suggested church service, home craft and transport to work.

The next figure called “Elsie” reminded one of the photographs of nannies like “Effie” and “Old Kate” – easier English names for a domestic servant. Both the dresses of “Elsie” and “Sophie Merica” have has flounced panniers over her underskirts which float out and away from her. From a starched white apron was decorated with enormous bows and long ties. Sophie’s hands reached out. Sophie Merica was a shortened version of “America” – Sophie was a traveller, going places with her chiffon underskirt that floats out from the sky blue maid’s uniform. The red decorative pieces on the shoulders of “Elsie” linked with the red of the wool in the final figure.

The first digital print, “They don’t make it like they used to”, showed Sophie knitting an extraordinary “Superman” object; the next one, “I put a spell on me” showed Sophie who was dressed in a turquoise bustle dress with ruche sides, leaning forward holding a cross. In the third digital image, “Caught in the rapture”, Sophie stood with her back arched and arms outstretched to escape the “web”, a backdrop of a spider web. The title indicated a play on the word “rapture” meaning both pain and extreme happiness.

The final figure “Sophie – wish you were here” showed a figure in comparison with the large blue skirt gathered in the middle and spreading out in a large circle of “Blueness’ linked with a thread to her family, the heraldic status of the clan and the intricate letter “S” (Sibande) positioned on the wall and giving the suggestion of a Victorian coat-of-arms of her family.

Conclusion

Women’s occupational dress was advised to be “unburdensome and unshackling; dirt-escapable and pocket-accessible” (Joselit. 2001:51) or “honest, efficient clothes free from frills and furbelows"(Joselit. 2001:23). After all dress, according to Blau, was “only clothes.” (1999:245) The photographs taken in 19th Century and early 20th Century depicted maids and nannies in white or print dress, head scarves, long aprons but also in Victorian fashion. Sophie, however, as created by Mary Sibande, showed a black woman with burdensome, extravagant dresses, reminiscent of the occupational dress of a domestic servant but quite unsuited to her occupation of cleaning and caring. Sophie was, in reality, a domestic servant - as were all the maids and nannies in the photographs. Their occupation was not their identity, a fantasy:’ all the images are not reality - “what I am not”. Sandra Bartkey stated that “all the projections … have this in common: they are images of *what I am not”* (Blau. 1999:241).

On the whole, occupational dress tended to negate rather than affirm the identity of the woman. It was likely that the 19th century maid enjoyed looking like her mistress: her changed appearance indicated a brief sojourn in a world of fantasy. The maid of the 19th Century images like Meaky Solomon and the unidentified Lloyd nanny, might enjoy looking like her mistress. The change in appearance was itself a fantasy. However, the slight anxiety of the subjects showed that the subjects, the nannies were concerned about being trapped in the wrong fantasy: The photographs of "Effie" and "old Kate" which showed concern, suggested another life -"*This I am not*" . With the "right" fantasy, i.e. the dress subverted their occupation as their fantasy identity became a form of empowerment. Sophie assumed each new identity in the extravagant variations of her working clothes. The photograph or sculpture or image preserves the fantasy; "what was not possible for the woman's body materialises in the certainty of the dress" (Blau.1999:245).

Mary Brooks Picten, in referring to integration into American Society of immigrants, especially Eastern European immigrants, made this enlightening comment: "The question of clothes was a vital element in the growth of the kind of democracy we need in America" (Joselit. 2001: 2) In looking at South Africa and specifically the Eastern Cape, one can single out the nursing profession as being an area where clothing practices diverted from accepted maid/nanny norms: it had a recognisable uniform. When the nurses of the Eastern Cape voted for their change of colour in their uniform – from the traditional regulation navy skirt or slacks and white blouse to grey skirt or slacks and pink blouse – the change was the result of a democratic vote! However, it is clear from Dr Zuma's state visit to the Eastern Cape in 2012, where he insisted that nurses return to the traditional white and navy uniforms, that clothing had now entered the political arena.

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Then and Now – A Dialogue with the Archive

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"Apartheid sharpened my wish and need to probe with a camera. But when apartheid ended, I wasn't suddenly at sea; I didn't need an enemy to be a photographer in this country. During the apartheid years my primary concern was with values: what our values were, how we had arrived at them, and particularly how we expressed them. And once you start with that line of thinking, there is no break, there is a continuation. I am still concerned with what our values are, and how we are expressing them."

David Goldblatt (interview *Then and Now)*[1]

"I also like to think of documentary photography as a kind of nation's family album and every family has a photo album in which its memories are embedded."

Cedric Nunn (interview *Then and Now)*[2]

These two quotes from David Goldblatt and Cedric Nunn, participants in the *Then and Now* project speak to the two complementary issues that South African photographers have grappled with for many decades – documentary practice and permanent repository for their images (the archive). These related concepts concerned and deeply preoccupied the photographers in this project as much 'then' as they do 'now'.

In a 'post' moment one can reflect with some degree of distance and calmness on a period that was turbulent and traumatic. The discourse of 'then' and 'now' occupies much debate and research as attempts are made to piece the parts (real, absent and missing) together of our history and memory. There have been a few exhibitions that have breached these distinct periods in attempts to understand them and the changing imagery of photographers in particular. Notably *After Apartheid : 10 South African Documentary Photographers* (curated by Michael Godby) ; *Democracy's Images (Pierre and Lundstrom*, 1998, Ulmea, Sweden). Added to this have been a plethora of individual and group exhibitions that have showcased South African photography in the last decade, establishing very firmly the emergence of South African photographers in a global context.

Documentary photography is at the centre of these discussions and curations. These debates follow a global trend to interrogate the medium to a point as Darren Newbury, author of *Defiant Images*, suggests, of "paralysis"[3]. *Then and Now* and I as its curator wade into these troubled waters with a degree of trepidation. I enter foremost as a documentary practitioner, teacher, and most recently archivist.

The *'Then'* period is often associated with the problematic term, 'struggle photography' of 1980s. Caught in sweep of events in a time when we were consumed by the apartheid system in all its manifestations, photographers, artists, writers, musicians and those engaged generally in the arts were exhorted to become 'cultural workers' during the historic Culture and Resistance Festival in Gaborone in 1982, surrendering our individual artistic aspirations for the struggle and revolution. It set the tone for a decade in which 'art for art's sake' was questioned and the cultural boycott

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[1] Interview *The Road to Then and Now* (film 2007).
[2] Interview *The Road to Then and Now* (film 2007).
[3] Newbury, D. *Defiant Images, Photography and Apartheid* (Unisa Press 2009) p 2.

determined cultural practice. “We were unashamedly partisan” recalls Cedric Nunn[4]. We called ourselves the *Taking Sides* generation and I wrote in a *Staffrider* magazine devoted solely to photography that, “Social Documentary is not in our view neutral. In South Africa the neutral option doesn’t exist – you stand with the oppressors or with them. The question we pose is how do photographers hit back with our cameras?” [5]

A more accurate description of that time would be the “collective movement” where we worked together and in a climate that Guy Tillim has described as, “uncompetitive”.[6] Most of us were members of or associated with Afrapix which operated as an agency and a conduit for projects, exhibitions and publications at the time. We worked for news agencies, local, international magazines and newspapers and our images were used as extensively in the anti apartheid alternate press in the country and worldwide. Our gravitation to the frontline that demanded our attention, did not mean that our broader photographic visions or aesthetic sensibilities had been discarded. In many cases they came with. It needs to be pointed out that David Goldblatt while he distanced himself from the ‘cultural worker’ position, was an active participant in the collective projects and exhibitions throughout the 1980’s and went on later to found the Market Theatre Photography Workshop.

Understandably, the *‘Then’* period is subject to a range of historiographies, interpretations and misinterpretations. Svea Josephy reflecting on this time in history asserts that “in the apartheid era the documentary image was typically overcoded, reinforcing a didactic public message.” [7] International curator Okui Enwezor, who has done strident work to promote African Photography, posits that documentary photography from South Africa has shown a range of styles and tapestries[8] at the same time reduces documentary photography of the 1980’s to a “service of news reportage and its ideological struggle against the apartheid state and its opponents.” [9] This in Newbury’s view minimises the documentary photography to footnotes in history. A more damming point of view is by renowned photographer Zwelethu Mthethwa who claimed that township subjects, were twice victimized, “once by the political and social oppression and again by their one dimensional representation in the media.”[10] Michael Godby by comparison understood this approach, “to be urgent declamatory, dictating specific readings of the image.”[11]

Sean O’ Toole posed a challenge to the genre shortly after the new millennium that was indeed ahead of its times when he wrote:

> For many the documentary tradition stands at the apex of the achievements of South African photography: it is somber without being dull, objective yet informed by a sense of moral purpose, black and white….the impetus of this statement has led to some overarching presuppositions about South African photography, some of them constituting invisible biases hindering the reception of photographic practice.[12]

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[4] Interview *The Road to Then and Now* (film 2007).
[5] Weinberg, P. in Campschreur W and Divendal, J *Culture in Another South Africa* (Zed Books 1989) p 64.
[6] Interview *The Road to Then and Now* (film 2007).
[7] Josephy, S. in Grundlingh, G *The Cape Town Month of Photography 2005* p 7.
[8] O’Toole, S. in Grundlingh, G *The Cape Town Month of Photography 2005* p 4.
[9] Newbury, D. *Defiant Images, Photography and Apartheid* (Unisa Press 2009) p 2.
[10] Godby, M. *African Arts Winter* (2004) p 38.
[11] Godby, M. *African Arts Winter* (2004) p 37.
[12] Josephy, S. in Grundlingh, G, *The Cape Town Month of Photography 2005* p 6.

A different reading of documentary photography is put forward by Joyce Ozynski in the ten year celebration edition of *Staffrider* magazine (1988), one of the few cultural oppositional publications of the period. She contextualises the development of the movement in the following way:

> in the seventies the practice of documentary photography was precarious and fragmentary. Documentary photography was struggling to establish itself in a culture that gave no encouragement to the making of such images.[13]

She writes further that "*Staffrider* legitimized photography as an art form and recognized it as being equal in expressive significance to prose, poetry and art." Ozynski also posits that taking photographs in this climate was an act of defiance in itself: "To see what had not been hitherto been seen; to make visible what had been invisible; to find ways of articulating, through the medium of photography, a reality obscured by government propaganda and the mass media – this was the challenge to photographers…..Each image that appeared in *Staffrider* was a victory over these obstacles."[14]

Newbury feeling that the South African documentary tradition post the Drum period has been misrepresented has argued:

> Departing from recent writing about photography on the continent of Africa, I want to reconsider the documentary tradition in South Africa, not as an authentically African tradition, whatever that may mean but rather a complex set of photographic ideas and practices that were self-consciously both modern and international, and yet at the same time thoroughly South African.[15]

The oversimplification and limited readings of the documentary movement of the 1980s is unfortunate, inaccurate and a misrepresentation of the legacies of the *Then and Now* contributors, their aspirations and intentions. Newbury suggests more sympathetically that, "The photographers somehow had to position themselves in relation to the central fact of apartheid."[16] While certainly events drew us to the frontline so to speak, many continued to work on longer term projects in ways that were far more open ended than Josephy suggests.

Our work was at times contradictory and complex, ebbing and flowing from the news images of the day to more in depth work of life around us and ongoing projects, commonly understood as straight documentary. A combination of political currency and vested international media interests gave large space to a very narrow view of South Africa at war but at the same time very little room to express a more nuanced complex reading of our country at the time. In a book called *Travelling Light*, which showed many previously unpublished images, I reflected on the complexity of image making at that time:

> These photographs capture glimpses of life between the cracks before, after and while the political wheel was turning. They are about how I as a photographer have interacted with these situations, the unconscious choices that I made in particular moments and the resulting stories that emerged through my camera lens...where ordinary people with extraordinary tenacity, live out lives of pain, joy and unsung heroism on the social margins.[17]

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[13] Ozynski, J. *Ten Years of Staffrider 1978-1988*, vol. 7 no. 3 and 4 p 163.
[14] Ozynski, J. *Ten Years of Staffrider 1978-1988*, vol. 7 no. 3 and 4 p 163.
[15] Newbury, D. *Defiant Images, Photography and Apartheid* (Unisa Press 2009) p 3.
[16] Newbury, D. *Defiant Images, Photography and Apartheid* (Unisa Press 2009) p 5.
[17] Weinberg, P. *Travelling Light (UKZN Press 2004)* p X,XI.

I recall David Goldblatt confiding to me in the mid 1980s that he felt he could no longer make a contribution to society through his work. He felt helpless as he watched the flames raging, and the death toll rising. Some of Goldblatt's images of the time while he felt were not making a difference, have indeed become iconic in a similar way to the work and legacy of August Stander as he photographed people in Germany between the wars. One such example is of a young boy with broken hands chosen for the *Then and Now* project.

Reflecting back there were very few outlets for softer images, nuanced or complex imagery. In an attempt to rectify this situation the Afrapix collective created its own magazine, Full Frame. In its first editorial, editors, Guy Tillim, Paul Grendon and Chris Ledachowski wrote:

> paging through the magazines on a newsagent's rack leads rapidly to the conclusion that the genre of documentary photography does not enjoy the same exposure as its commercial counterparts. One established photographer recently lamented that as much as 90% of his work has never been seen…..To fulfill this gap Full Frame aims to provide photographers with both an exhibition space and meeting point.

The magazine highlighted cover images in its three editions of John Liebenberg's Namibian work (now recently published), Jenny Gordon's photographs on Johannesburg and Billy Monk's bar series. The latter two photographers were not members of Afrapix.[18]

To suggest that we were only adding to the oppressive conditions of apartheid as has been put forward by Mthethwa is dangerously misleading. Not only were the photographers closely aligned and worked with the anti apartheid movements within and without the country, these images were widely used by the very agents of the struggle against oppression and their media outlets. Furthermore we were not simply photographers – we were all involved in teaching and sharing skills with communities, workers, enabling photographers to speak with their own voices in troubled times.

Contrary to Mthethwa's position, Albie Sachs in the Introduction to *Defiant Images* further asserts, "The struggle photographs gave presence and dignity to leaders who were being projected by the regime as faceless terrorists…..The mere publication of pictures proclaimed the energy of the disenfranchised claiming their rights."[19]

A more positive reading of this role is described by Andries Walter Olifant in *South African Photography 1950-2010.* He writes:

> To make sense, let alone fully grasp the aesthetic and social dimensions of South African photography, I think, requires attentiveness to the political and historical context to which images belong as well to how they communicate over time.[20]

Then and Now is in essence a dialogue with photographers who have photographed and continue to photograph in two distinct periods in our history. The concept of this collection was simple – photographers were asked to select ten images of each period that resonated with them and represented their work. With minimal curatorial intervention the narratives of the book and exhibition are a product of that process. While it sets out to be an anthology, and a celebration, it also will begin to redress some of the misrepresentations of our intentions and practice.

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[18] *Full Frame* vol 1, no. 1 June, 1990 editorial.

[19] Newbury, D. *Defiant Images, Photography and Apartheid* (Unisa Press 2009) p vii.

[20] Olifant A.W. *South African Photography 1950-2010* (Hatje Cantz 2010) p 79.

In the *'Then'* selections photographers offer a variety of imagery from photojournalism to nuanced documentary. In the case of George Hallett and David Goldblatt there are no photojournalist images at all. The photographs are of people and place – from District Six to Soweto. In others frontline images are followed by visual renditions of rural villages and cultural life as in the case of Guy Tillim. Cedric Nunn, Gislele Wulfsohn and my work have similar cadences. Nunn's essay ends surprisingly with young black boys surfing in Arneston. Graeme William's hard core frontline imagery similarly concludes in a soft way, with a photograph of friends in a bath, a project he did as an anti dote to the violence he witnessing at the time. Only Eric Miller's images have a constant theme of apartheid-related imagery.

From interviews I conducted with photographers in the *'Now'* period, the overwhelming emotion expressed by photographers was of relief and a further opportunity to work in less defined ways. Guy Tillim and Eric Miller took the trajectory into Africa. Tillim's seminal work on Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo has been the subject of a number of outstanding exhibitions and books. *Departures*, *Leopold and Mobutu series*, and more recently *Avenue Patrice Lumumba* are some examples. Working in a less defined way his narratives were more open ended. Colour and digital photography defined this period and he has moved from being a photojournalist perpetually in search of the "story" into an icon of the art world. Photography for him is a kind of companionship, "an interesting way of being in a place, of finding my place whichever form that takes, whatever story that suggests photographing, I don't know what it's going to be."[21]

For Miller his sojourns into Africa have been closer to the classical photojournalist model, "(my work) remains really about connecting with people who are at the core of whatever is happening whichever community it happens to be. I want to be able to be telling the story of this individual or this community and the struggles they face and it is not necessarily an overt struggle that is visible – there are a lot of stories there that have very few outlets."[22]

Graeme Williams who like Miller has spent much of life at the frontline. The transition has opened a surge of creativity and new ways of seeing. He enjoys a newfound looser more personal approach. "The just social documentary stories per say are not what I want to get involved in. I'm far more interested in how I photograph them and how people react to that way of photographing."[23] His recent images from *The Edge of Town* are off beat colour interactions with the margins of society.

For Cedric Nunn, and I, we have looked at more personal connections to the world around us. Nunn has returned to a project he has been engaged with ever since he picked up a camera called Blood Relatives which examines his hybrid past, his family and his community. He is a direct descendent of the famous mid 19th century frontiersman, John Dunn, a white Zulu chief who married fifty seven wives. For myself my gaze turned to a journey with spirituality and my family story. Gisele Wulfsohn, although she was never on the frontline is still engaged with the social coalface, humanising the HIV/Aids pandemic through a range of projects.

For George Hallett and David Goldblatt there is a sense of continuity. George Hallett has always looked at the communities he has engaged with – be they District Six, Exile and the Bo-Kaap community in a post-1994 moment, with an empathetic lens.

David Goldblatt who recently described himself as a monoculture and a straight linear graph, continues to look closely and intensely at society through the projects he engages in (Crime being the

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[21] Interview *The Road to Then and Now* (film 2007).
[22] Interview *The Road to Then and Now* (film 2007).
[23] Interview *The Road to Then and Now* (film 2007).

most recent). While apartheid provided a prod for his enquiry, it wasn't the sole motivation for his work. He was in search of values 'then' and as he is 'now'.

> And once you start with that line of thinking, there is no break, there is a continuation. I am still concerned with what our values are, and how we are expressing them.[24]

Since its inception documentary photography has been drawn simultaneously to the wounds of society and its celebration. *Then and Now* reflects this duality. It intersects at a time when documentary photography is seemingly under review. Frits Gierstberg, Head of exhibitions at the Foto Museum in Holland, has suggested that documentary has lost its traditional outlets (the magazine, the book) and sought to find new ones, namely the Art Gallery and innovative strategies. With the blurring of lines between documentary, conceptual photography and art forms, he believes documentary photography still has its place. He argues in a world of virtualisation, documentary practice remains "indispensable in this age of an image culture intent on ephemeral and shortlived effects."[25]

In my view South Africa with its deep scars, yet unresolved issues and untold stories, the core practice of documentary, albeit in changing circumstances, is alive and well. As observed by Wiebe Ratzeburg in *South African Photography 1950-2010*, many contemporary photographers "place their fingers in these wounds, convinced that the perception and disclosure of the status quo is the first step to improve it." [26]

More importantly, *Then and Now* connects to the archive in a time when memory work is key to our understanding of past and present. In so doing it coalesces with a range of debate and discussion. Verne Harris, Programme Manager for the Nelson Mandela Centre and of Memory and Dialogue has suggested that the post-1994 period is engaged with "Archives for Justice" which is about "countering the dominant voice of the regime and building new ones". It offers as Eric Miller says not just a personal memoir but a contribution to the national family album as Cedric Nunn has put it, where unlike Nazi Germany people can't say, "we didn't know apartheid was doing this and that ….the pictures are a testimony to things that happened." [27]

But beyond that I believe *Then and Now* offers an important contribution to our visual history from the photographers themselves, both in their images and words, of their personal and collective journeys which one hopes will provide a more nuanced and in depth view beyond the limited historiographies of the 'struggle period'. Furthermore it works a bridge between two distinct periods in our history and offers insights into how photographers have assimilated them. As noted by Michael Godby:

> all the photographers on this exhibition have rejected the declamatory mode in favour of complexity of subject and openness of interpretation….the moment of *Now* would seem to rejoice in the fuller humanity that can thrive with that victory, not least the creative expression of the photographers themselves.[28]

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[24] Interview *The Road to Then and Now* (film 2007).
[25] Gierstberg, F. *From Reality to Realism, Documentary Photography in the Age of Post Media in Documentary Now reflect #4* (NAi publishers 2004) p 141.
[26] Ratzeburg, W. *South African Photography 1950-2010* (Hatje Cantz 2010) p 127.
[27] Interview *The Road to Then and Now* (film 2007).
[28] Godby, M. *Then and Now Eight South African Photographers* (Highveld Press 2007) p 14.

In this sense what *Then and Now* offers will hopefully stimulate and at the same time reinforce what lies at the core of the documentary process and ongoing archival work:

> the human impulse to make sense of the world has remained a constant. Whether acting as instrument of social change, capturing a disappearing way of life, or preserving a moment in time, the work of documentary photographers provides a compelling social commentary on where we have come from – as a society, a culture, a community - and signals where we hope to go in the future.[29]

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[29] *Beyond Beauty, The Archive of Documentary Arts at Duke University* (Duke University Libraries 2009) p 91.

Tracing the History of 'Documentary' Photography in South Africa

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Most histories of South African photography provide a pre- and post-apartheid comparison (Godby, 2008; Godby, 2004; Josephy, 2002; Wiesner, 2007). I am more interested in engaging with the idea of a South African documentary tradition and the debates that surround the term 'documentary' both locally and abroad. In the South African context the term is foremostly associated with what is known as 'Struggle' photography from the height of the anti-apartheid Struggle in the 1980s.

It is commonly accepted that Struggle photography not only brought the world's attention to politics within the country, but also raised the profile of South African photography and in many ways has come to define it (Enwezor, 2006). Of course there have always been other forms of photography, such as portraiture, documentation of private and family life, art photography, advertising and photojournalism. Not only has the history of South African photography been dominated by a focus on documentary, but it has also framed this approach in very specific ways and has almost always tied it to social and political reform (Newbury, 2009; Godby, 1998; Godby, 2004).

While it is true that documentary photography was concerned with anti-apartheid reporting in the 1980s, there is a tendency to collapse documentary photography with photojournalism, especially documentary from the 80s (Enwezor, 2006; Enwezor, 2010; Josephy, 2002). This often positions documentary photography as a didactic and limited form devoid of creative expression. In this paper I aim to broaden our understanding of the South African documentary tradition by revealing other, depoliticised approaches to image making that took place alongside Struggle photography and were more concerned with beauty, humanism and a curiosity in the world.

Despite his hesitancy to use the term 'documentary' in the title of his book *Defiant Images: Photography and Apartheid South Africa,* Newbury (2010) essentially provides an account of the documentary tradition in the country and reinforces the way South African documentary practice is tied to the desire to initiate political and social change. Newbury evokes a familiar canon which includes Constance Stuart Larrabee, Leon Levson, Eli Weinberg, Ernest Cole, *Drum* magazine and 1980s Struggle photography. Despite the enormous contributions of these photographers, I am more interested in investigating how and why their work has come to be associated with documentary practice.

Documentary photography in British and American art history

The term 'documentary photography' has been contested and questioned from the start. As Solomon-Godeau (1991:169) famously argued the term 'documentary' only came into regular use from the 1920s onwards and that prior to that point all photographs were automatically seen to be documentary. This immediately alerts us to the fact that the term documentary is an historical concept. Documentary photography has been variously defined using the following criteria: subject matter, intended use, the context where the image is displayed and also a style (Wells, 1997).

No writing on documentary photography can overlook its relationship to ideas of reality and truth. In many ways documentary photography is seen to have a special hold on the truth (Solomon-Godeau, 1991). But as has been summed up by a number of theorists, the way in which documentary is historically associated with accuracy and truth is not because of an essential quality, but rather because of the uses that it was historically put to (Bourdieu, 1996; Wells, 1997). For example, Tagg alerts us to ways early photography was linked to the new sciences, such as criminology, psychiatry, sociology and ethnography (Tagg, 1988). On the other hand, with specific reference to the use of

photography in Africa, Olu Oguibe reveals the absurdity of claiming that the photograph is objective (Oguibe, 2004). Oguibe shows that the idea of photographic objectivity originated from the European concept of 'automatism' that defined photography as a mechanical process, while in Africa, photography was seen in the same way to any other image making medium, such as sculpture or painting.

Tagg's reading of the early uses of photography provides a fascinating insight into the history of photography (Tagg, 1988). But to suggest that these uses provide the basis for all documentary practice is problematic. Anthropological images, together with photographs of the insane and the criminal should rather be viewed as an equivalent of today's criminal or medical records. While early social reformers, such as Jacob Riis, believed that their images provided visual evidence which would generate concern and bring about social change, this cannot be said to be true of all documentary.

Linking documentary photography with projects that aimed to bring about social change is in keeping with a larger tradition in both the US and Britain where documentary realism in film, literature and photography was closely tied to the development of cultural politics and social investigation (Wells, 1997). This mould of documentary is defined as *social documentary* and is mostly preoccupied with subjects like poverty, social and political injustice, war, crime, deprivation, disaster and human suffering (Clarke, 1997). Social documentary is perhaps the most common understanding of what documentary is.

However, the notion of images being able to bring about social and/or political change has been seriously eroded since the 1930s. Solomon-Godeau argues that an inherent contradiction within documentary practice is that although it appears critical of the status quo, it operates in systems that neutralises the reformist intentions of the photographs (1991:171). She also alerts us to what she describes as 'the immobilising effect produced by presenting the visual 'fact' of individual victimization or subjugation as a metonym for the (invisible) conditions that produced it."(1991:178). Rosler has similar concerns about the limitations of documentary photography to bring about social change (Rosler, 1992).

In this way we can see that the idea of photography being able to bring about social or political change came under heavy fire in the 1970s and 1980s in the US and UK. It is it important to note that these debates were written mostly by Leftist critics who limited the understanding of documentary by focusing their critique on social documentary. What is interesting is that at this point, documentary photography was being embraced in South Africa as a legitimate form (Hayes, 2007:161).

The way in which South African documentary photography has been analysed has been influenced by the ideas put forward by Solomon-Godeau (1991), Rosler (1992), Burgin (2001) and Clarke (1997). While these scholars have made an enormous contribution to photographic theory, their theories are not always applicable to the South African context.

The 'problem' with documentary

Documentary practice has preoccupied writing on post-apartheid South African photography. In much of the writing, a clear distinction is made between pre- and post- 1990 (Josephy, 2002; Wiesner, 2007). While many of the arguments for a pre and post-apartheid analysis provide interesting insights, they tend to over simplify.

Documentary practice is often presented only as Struggle photography and is seen as limiting creativity and freedom of expression. A number of photographers provide accounts of how they felt obliged to document certain events and were under pressure to generate images that presented

obvious depictions of apartheid brutality that could easily be understood by the international media (Hayes, 2007). This has resulted in the idea that post 1990 documentary practice became more conceptual and analytical. This overlooks the fact that a number of photographers were already working in more lyrical and analytical way during the 1980s and before. Apart from David Goldblatt, who is always seen as an exception to the rule, there were also Struggle photographers who explored personal, creative documentary projects. For example, Nunn, Mofokeng, Tillim and Weinberg photographed subjects such as family, spiritual experiences and the everyday. This suggests that they wanted to explore other, less dominant and prescribed stories that were not tied to political ends. Of course it is true that it is more common in a post-apartheid context for photographers to explore non-political topics, but this is not to say no one did this prior to 1990.

Josephy groups documentary practice together with colonialist and modernist photography and frames it as being based on the idea that the camera records the truth (Josephy, 2001). While it is true that much documentary practice during the 1980s was tied to the idea of bearing witness, there has been a great deal of self-criticism within the circle of Struggle photographers who became aware that their images were only partial 'truths' that failed to capture the full context of the complex situations that they photographed (Hayes, 2007). Mofokeng's reservations about the way in which Struggle photography represented black South Africans has often been quoted and is said to have fuelled his desire to document everyday township life that emphasised the normal and non-militant (Hayes, 2009; Campbell, 2009; Godby, 2008). This is just one example of how even at the time, photographers were aware of the limitations of their practice.

Furthermore, the argument that Struggle photography perpetuated a colonialist ethnographic practice (Josephy, 2001:60) is simply not true. As Godby (2008:10) argues '…it is this recognition of power in the subject which makes nonsense of the idea that Struggle photography is a version of the Modernist project that inevitably objectifies its subject'. This way of viewing documentary practice as a colonial gaze comes from Tagg's reading of the way photography was aligned with the early sciences, such as ethnography (Tagg, 1988). Rosen also perpetuate the idea that documentary photography is tied to colonial ways of viewing the African subject (1992).

Some critics have noted the social gap between the Struggle photographers and the people they photographed (Hayes 2007; Josephy, 2001). These critics have adopted an analysis of documentary practice based on the work of Rosler (1992) and Solomon-Godeau (1991) that argues that documentary is usually aimed at middle-class reformers and therefore there is a class gap between the people represented, the photographer and the intended audience. And yet, many South African photographers have argued that in the 1980s because they were aligned to anti-apartheid organisations they were seen to be fighting on the same side, regardless of class and race (Hayes 2007:154). Furthermore, this criticism fails to acknowledge the contribution of a number of black South African photographers who also documented the anti-apartheid Struggle, including Peter Magubane, Ernest Cole, Bob Gosani and later, Santu Mofokeng and Cedric Nunn to name a few. So while a number of Struggle photographers were white, middle-class men, there were other factors unique to the context of 1980s South Africa that make it difficult to apply a class-based criticism of documentary photography.

Other criticism of Struggle photography is that it is said to depict black South Africans as victims (Enwezor, 2010; Josephy, 2001). This may have been true of press images that focused on violence, but I am not sure how the images that appear in *Beyond the Barricades* (Tillman & Harris, 1989) can be equated with perpetuating victimhood. These images capture popular resistance and the unity and strength of the people in the face of state brutality. If anything, these images represent people as fearless and clearly align them with a just cause – it is easy to see who is wrong and who is right.

A further critique of Struggle photography is the use of black and white film which is said to be dehumanising. Enwezor (2010:102) argues that Mthethwa's use of colour is in response to what he frames as '…documentary photography's presumptions of truth-seeking detachment and objectivity…'. In this way Enwezor conflates documentary photography with reportage and frames it in terms that are simply not true of Struggle photography in particular, but documentary more generally. In no way did Struggle photographers see themselves as objective – after all they were the 'taking sides' generation (Tillman & Harris, 1989). The choice of black and white film by Struggle photographers was based on practicality since it was affordable, easy to self-process and reproduce in the press and other publications.

At this point, it is useful to address the relationships between documentary, photojournalism and art in more detail. Even though the images taken by the Struggle photographers appeared in both the alternative and international media, their approach is seen as being different from the press. Their investment in the anti-apartheid movement meant that Struggle photographers were known to the communities where they worked (Josephy, 2001). Their ideological alignment with the oppressed can be seen in how their images are framed because they are physically on the side of the people and receiving end of police violence.

Godby distinguishes between news and documentary in the following way "Where the former is concerned simply with recording an event, the latter may be understood to document the experience of the people involved in the event" (Godby, 2003:18). While press photographers focus on events, and in particular violence, documentary photographers focus on the greater context. Within the Struggle context this included documenting trade union meetings and other community events that were not newsworthy. The distinction between documentary and photojournalism is also defined by the context where the images are published. News photographers were under the instruction of editors and had deadlines to meet, while documentary photographers tended to initiate their own projects and created photo essays that were better suited to books, pamphlets, exhibitions and overseas magazines.

With regard to photography's presence in the art gallery, Duganne argues that since the still image no longer reports breaking news and has been replaced by video to fulfil this function, photographs mostly report the aftermath of the event (Duganne, 2007). Duganne directly links this to the move into the gallery where photographs are more contemplative and demand more time to be read. She also notes that photographers use large and medium format cameras to distinguish their art practice from work that appears in the media. Godby (2004) similarly comments on the way the gallery has shaped contemporary practice when he writes:

> The demand that the viewer should work to make sense of an image and accept complexity and contradiction as part of its meaning refers the experience of looking at photographs to the conditions of contemplating works of art in a gallery. It is precisely this reason that photographers who, until recently, would have preferred to publish their work in magazines, newspapers, and even posters, have aspired to have their work exhibited in art galleries (Godby, 2004:37).

The relationship between documentary photography and art may be fairly recent in South Africa's history of photography, but it has a much longer history in the US and elsewhere in Europe and Britain. The entry of photography into the art gallery can be defined by Walker Evans' show at MOMA. It is interesting to note that Evans promoted the term 'documentary style' as opposed to documentary photography. His reason for this was to differentiate between a document, which is tied to a specific use, and art which in Evans' mind did not have a use (Phillips, 2009). David Phillips is more to the point when he argues that the term is an indication of how galleries and museums seek

to 'secure an artistic pedigree for particular photographers.' (2009:61). This is certainly true of the South African context. Sekula argues "Documentary is thought to be art when it transcends its reference to the world, when the work can be regarded, first and foremost, as an act of self-expression on the part of the artist."(Sekula, 1982:236). This can clearly be seen in the work of someone like Guy Tillim or Santu Mofokeng whose images are ambiguous and poetic.

'Postdocumentary' and other myths
In part two of the *Snap Judgements* catalogue, Enwezor (Enwezor, 2006) makes the following statement when comparing his show to previous exhibitions of African photography:

> But the significant shift highlighted in *Snap Judgements* is the privileging of the investigative, conceptual, and archival potential of the photographic medium. Here photography has been adapted as a probing tool; it is as much as medium of witnessing as it is an analytical one. Consequently, over the last ten years, an analytical, postdocumentary photographic work orientated around the artists' heightened sense of observation has emerged more strongly" (2006:25).

I find this claim fascinating on two accounts. Firstly, what exactly does Enwezor mean by the term 'post documentary'? And secondly, Enwezor uses the word 'artist' thus clearly positioning the kind of photography he supports as art. This alerts us to a major defining force in contemporary SA documentary practice.

The term 'post documentary' is clearly intended to separate contemporary photographic practice from documentary concerns. And yet I would argue that this term does not describe a new form of photography, but is in fact a continuation of the documentary tradition. Because some contemporary writing on South African documentary has collapsed documentary with reportage (Enwezor, 2010; Josephy, 2002), photography that appears in galleries is seen as a new kind of photography, when in actual fact it is documentary. How else can we define the work of Tillim, Subotzky and Mthethwa?

Rather than rejecting documentary, I believe South African photographers have engaged with the limitations of politically aligned social documentary practice and that this has shaped their current approach. Documentary has always taken different forms and importantly has been defined in different ways by critics, such as Enwezor, in order to promote specific photographers. We just have to think of the relationship between Walker Evans and James Agee. I certainly do support Enwezor's claim that documentary is an 'analytical' and 'probing tool', but is this not what documentary has always been concerned with?

Instead of looking to the social documentary tradition, let's turn to the Magnum collective and see how they defined documentary. In Henri Cartier-Bresson words "Magnum is a community of thought, a shared human quality, a curiosity about what is going on in the world, a respect for what is going on and a desire to transcribe it visually" (Cartier-Bresson, 2011). If we use this as a measure for documentary practice, I think we are closer to finding a way of framing documentary photography and how it can be differentiated from other forms. In particular, I would like to highlight Bresson's words 'curiosity' and 'respect.'

Conclusion
As I argued earlier, South African documentary practice has been narrowly defined with an emphasis on subject matter and an especially sharp focus on photographs that attempted to bring about social and political change prior to 1990. While more recently, the personal work of Struggle photographers, such as Cedric Nunn's *Bloodlines*, Paul Weinberg's *Travelling Light*, Tillim's Transkei images and Mofokeng's *Church Train* have been given attention, these more poetic and

contemplative approaches to documentary are still largely framed as a post-1990 phenomenon and in Enwezor's eyes 'post documentary'.

Graham Clarke argues that documentary is bound to the idea of strangeness and the sense of exposing something unknown to an audience (Clarke, 1997:147). While early on in the history of documentary that exposure of something considered to be strange took the form of colonial photographs, or images of the poor, it more recent times it has been a far more personal project that individual photographers have embarked on in order to make sense of the world they live in. This returns me to Bresson's ideas of 'curiosity' and 'respect' as a means of defining documentary practice. Mikhael Subotzky sums it up by saying "For me, photography has become a way of attempting to make sense of the very strange world that I see around me. I don't ever expect to achieve that understanding, but the fact that I am trying comforts me" (Subotzky, 2011).

Patricia Hayes argues "People, even those who claim to have departed from it, cannot quite leave what is called 'documentary' behind. Powerful traces of political awareness, economic dynamics, socially affected landscapes and above all, empathy with – or at the very least, dignified reference to – human subjects, inflect post-apartheid sensibilities on one level or another" (2007:159).

So in conclusion I would like to suggest that rather than define documentary practice solely according to the social documentary tradition, or limit it to the Struggle context, perhaps the history of South African documentary can be expanded to include images that are personal, creative expressions. Documentary photography is most certainly an analytical tool, or in the words of Dubow, a 'thinking eye' (Dubow, 1998). But rather than being a slave to social and political commentary, documentary should also be imbued with curiosity and respect for the world around us.

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The Art of Trevor Makhoba: A Cultural and Historical Review of KwaZulu-Natal's Urban African Artists' Response to Decolonization

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This paper references an artwork by the late Trevor Phila Makhoba, and will show how the content of not only expresses the colonial history of KwaZulu-Natal but more importantly the African psychological response thereto. A response ensuring that, while the body may have been subjugated, the Spirit survived through rebellious resilience, one that has ensured decolonization. The painting is controversial and could incite racial antagonism but this can only to be grasped upon deeper analysis, for on the surface it appears to be no more than as titled by the artist, "*Zombies – Shinga shenga khanyane shilambile*." The title is lisped as the Zombies have had their tongues cut-out, and therefore if more correctly rendered in isiZulu they are saying, "*Shinga sebenza kanjani silambile.* [How can we work when we are so hungry?]" Zombies (or some Zulu insist *otokoloshe*) are arguably the only indigenous southern African version of slaves – as in those who work for their masters for food but no pay – and the wording is recognized from Zulu folklore, including the opposite response, for it is said if they are feed, they will then equally complain that they cannot now work as they are too full! (personal communication S.P. Mkhize, Durban, August 2010). The painting is paradoxical, for on the surface its title proclaims it to be an illustration of an African myth, a modernized folktale in this case, but nevertheless a fabrication not at all times to be considered seriously.

Figure 1: Trevor Makhoba "*Zombies – Shinga shenga khanyane shilambile*." Oil on hardboard c.2002 (photograph courtesy of Bruce Campbell-Smith).

On another level this painting's content reflects the core of colonial capitalism that molded race-relations in South Africa; namely a dominant minority white population exploiting a disempowered, majority African population – the latter caught as cheap migrant-labour within the white man's 'self-enriching' economy. It speaks to the how of surviving such subjugation; through repression of body into 'Zombie-hood', while yet allowing dissident associations in the mind of the African which are simultaneously and in part refused that of the white viewer. Thus the depicted contents act as a form of rebellious subversion and the topic depicted is taboo; for in effect it is a veiled expression of racism, or 'reverse-racism' if the latter be defined as in the Nationalist era, as white minority prejudice against the black majority. The taboo is still operative post 1994, and one consequence of banning race hate-speech in the interest of reconciliation is that the 'Voice' of the formerly oppressed, while continuing to flourish underground, has been silenced in the publically sanctioned arena. Could one even suggest a 'Conspiracy of silence'?, one that is questionably to the advantage of the former minority, so much so that most viewers as well as the art-buying public (both of which are invariably still white) have failed to read the deeper implications in this particular Makhoba painting, and as a result the work has remained unfinished and is still in the possession of his children. [1]

By broaching this painting's contents, we as the authors are attempting to 'get our heads around' a number of characteristics of Makhoba's visual style and what this says of African art, to quote the

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[1] While Campbell Collections wished to acquire this work, the children asked Welcome Danca if they could not put it and others for sale at the Tradeport duly the soccer word cup. No one bought it. (personal communication Danca, December, 2010)

session title "…(as) an act of decolonization: (and as a) perspective(s) from the global south." Makhoba's patron, Bruce Campbell-Smith pointed out that this particular painting had not been finished, that the cityscape and sky was incomplete and he explained that the artist would receive a commission and then work on a painting, adding and transforming the content over a period of time so that often a patron would refuse the final because it was so altered (personal communication Campbell-Smith, August 2010). Evidently Makhoba also only signed once he completed a work to his satisfaction, as the particular painting is unsigned. As an unfinished artwork by Makhoba, who died in February 2003, this painting conforms to the criteria of this conference's theme in that it was arguably still in process. A process that enabled the artist's personal liberation from colonialism and moreover, a simultaneous freeing of his African-fellows: This latter is a liberation not so much from political but psychological oppression and it is accomplished through the artist's seditious breach of those taboos that kept and arguably continues to keep this colonial-apartheid and neo-apartheid system in place.

Campbell-Smith, who has perhaps the largest private collection of Makhoba's art works, also claimed no interest in acquiring the painting itself. Further he generously shared the title and the image with us, pointing out that our interpretation (which we give shortly), taken from Makhoba's student, Welcome Danca, was incorrect, because Makhoba was not depicting racism but rather, as he had claimed, "Zombies (at work)." After looking at the painting in more detail one surmises that the unfinished buildings are those on which the Zombies were detailed to slave labour and for which they have downed-tools, depicted in the fore-ground, as a form of hunger-strike. A scenario that ironically continues for one cannot help think of the present ANC Government's problems with corruption and the 'Black Diamonds' conforming to values formerly seen as white-men's capitalistic greed. So saying, it is our understanding that Makhoba's paintings' content, were his mode of working through issues of a South African reality, a continuing one that admittedly has been hard on the ordinary black-man/woman; thus a dynamic integration of liberation from oppression, retention of cultural perspective, response to both pre and post 1994 happenings, all of which act as a commentary thereon. And in the full reading of this particular work on the "Zombies", it will be shown that Makhoba is more especially making a comment on race-relations – even if it only be that the former white 'Baases' attitude toward their black-workers made of them Zombies fit for nothing more than slaving to build their cities. Thus yet one more of many ironies that the work alludes to is that of the re-naming of the streets under ANC City-councils, from colonialist potentates to struggle-heroes, and this could be described as a coup for the liberated black man who now comes into possession of that which he (and his) built as 'slave'.

Juliette Leeb du Toit in her essay 'Phila Trevor Makhoba's Narratives and Mores: Dialectics of Artistic and Intellectual Leadership' in *Trevor Makhoba Memorial Exhibition* catalogue, Durban Art Gallery, 2005, was perhaps one of the first to describe a 'visual oral genre' in terms of specifically Makhoba's work, as a development of an urban hybrid style, more readily expressed in such musical forms as *maskanda, isicathimiya* and *mbaqanga,* whose musicians like Vusi Ximba and Mfisihle Ngubane and playwrights like Mbongeni Ngema, are, to quote her, "Notorious for their directness in their attempts to chide and rebuke, they have become almost untouchable (despite frequent censorship) under the guise of entertainment and music, yet pursue their notorious irreverence and social criticism unremittingly."(Leeb du Toit 2005:39) One must understand that the audience for these were an exclusively black one while the visual proponents of this art-form, like Trevor Makhoba and his kind, (and here one must include his artist-assistants, Welcome Danca and Sibusiso Duma as well as others like Bheki Khambule and Themba Siwela) still depend upon a largely white art-market. Apart from various workshops conducted by the Durban University of Technology's Art Department and the African Art Centre, Durban, most of these persons remain self-taught and they have been practicing since the 1980-1990s. All these 'Masters of the genre', like the literary greats of the ilk of the Dhlomo brothers, R.R.R. and H.I.E., dating from the 1930s-50s, had their roots in early Zulu praise-poetry, and

the idiom draws upon the oral style and cultural call to debate. In the urban environment this centers on the challenges of, to quote Leeb du Toit, "current affairs, identity and contemporary histories, personal and collective, trivial and profound" and she says of Makhoba, "(He) is clearly reclaiming art within an African context of relevance and, at the same time, implicitly challenging an erstwhile predominant reception in an exclusively white audience. It is not merely art for visual pleasure or vicarious empathy, but art which serves a social purpose" (Leeb-du Toit 2005:37.) Perhaps this is the place to note that Makhoba's students commented that at a 2007 exhibition at the African Art Centre, they sold no works and were advised by a fellow black artist to rather exclude any obviously Zulu ethnic references in their paintings and concentrate upon "memories and landscapes" as these sell to wealthy patrons in Johannesburg and Cape Town. The negative response of especially white South African audiences to the works of Makhoba and those working in the oral genre have been noted by us, as in our co-authored essay, 'Great Temptation in the Garden: Trevor Makhoba as taboo-breaker' in *Trevor Makhoba Memorial Exhibition* (Durban Art Gallery, 2005).

Our other attempt is to understand exactly what constitutes Makhoba's oral style, taking the specific painting as example. Noeleen Turner in 'Contemporary Zulu *izihasho*: a satirical attempt at social control' in Sienaert, E; N. Bell, and Lewis, M. (Eds.) *Oral Tradition and innovation: new wine in old bottles?* (University of Natal Oral Documentation and Research Centre, Durban, 1991) reflects on the categories of Zulu oral genre:

> If one looks at the Zulu equivalent of the term 'satire', it is the word *umbhinqo*. The same term is given as an alternative to *umbhuqo* as the Zulu equivalent for the English word 'sarcasm', or a 'sarcastic phrase'. 'Irony' has a slight variation on this form, and the Zulu equivalent is *isibhinqo*. The term 'lampoon' is translated into Zulu as *umbhalo obhinqayo*. 'Wit' is translated into Zulu as *uteku*, and 'raillery' has the equivalent translation of 'wit' (Turner 1991:203-204).

When Mchunu SMSed Winters to say he was to speak to an elderly *InKosi* (chief) esteemed for his Indigenous Knowledge, concerning the content of this painting, Winters requested him to ask, "What do Zulu call the rhetorical style used in such a Makhoba work?" Mchunu reported that the *InKosi* firstly wished us as co-authors courage in daring to speak of such a tabooed subject, saying that our understanding (to be discussed fully below) of the painting's racial stereotyping was indeed known from colonial times, confirmed in the apartheid years and still known in the new dispensation. Further, in answer to the question of rhetorical-style the *Inkosi* firmly categorized it as "social commentary!" And finally that the *InKosi* preferred to remain unnamed. This last, indicates to what extent the topic is indeed taboo. As we see it, the painting conforms to dramatic irony (a double vision of what is happening in a situation), structural irony (in which the observations of a (supposedly) naïve narrator point to deeper implications of a situation) as well as the three basic features of irony, viz.; a contrast of appearance and reality; a confident unawareness (pretended by the ironist, but real in the victim) that the appearance is only an appearance, and; the comic effect of this unawareness of a contrasting appearance and reality) (at http: //grammar.about.com). We will deal with these more fully as we unpack a reading of the picture. In terms of this irony we note the plethora of rhetorical devices used by any artist working within the oral genre. Taking from an on-line 'Tool-kit for rhetorical analysis' (at http: //grammar.about.com) it is not easy defining Makhoba's usage of such in this painting, for his work contains all of: Metaphor (as an implied comparison between unalike things that actually have something important in common); Allegory (extending a metaphor, so that objects, persons, and actions are equated to meanings contained in a situation); Allusion (as the presence of two or more possible meanings in any image); Amplification and hyperbole (an extravagant, exaggerated statement for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect to build a scenario); Analogy (or the reasoning or arguing from parallel cases); and arguably the lesser known; Bdelygmia (a litany of abuse – which comprises a series of critical epithet, descriptions or

attributes); Chiasmus (as in the title and its implications, with a verbal pattern in which the second half of an expression is balanced against the first but the parts reversed); Concession (as an argumentative strategy by which a speaker or writer concedes a disputed point or leaves a disputed point to the audience to decide); Identification and demonstrative rhetoric (persuasion whereby the artist establishes a shared sense of values, attitudes and interests with his viewers (or a part thereof); and both Dysphemism (substitution of a more offensive or disparaging word or phrase for one considered less offensive) and even its opposite Euphemism (substitution of an inoffensive term for one considered offensively explicit). Indeed, the painting is so multi-layered in its use of rhetorical formulae as to keep the viewer in a state of alternating humour, perplexity, outrage or shame, all depending upon his/her stand-point.

This painting was first seen by Winters in the possession of Makhoba's adult children at the artist's home in early 2010. Winters had visited Mpume and Vusi Makhoba in company of Welcome Danca and a promising young female artist, Nozipho Mbhele, who had grown up at Umlazi but not been aware of Makhoba "just around the corner" as she put it. As this group sat looking at the works, Winters asked, "If you could buy one of Trevor's paintings, which would it be?" Danca responded, "the one of the monkeys" to which Winters rejoined "monkeys!…which is that?" and Danca indicated the painting in question. This was a work that Winters had, as an older white South African, initially only glanced at, and dismissed as "Oh toght-workers[2]… Ah yes, so typical of the old South Africa!" Upon Danca's pointing to the work she took a closer look – seeing for the first-time on the back of the yellow truck – the rows of tightly packed little black men, or so she thought, with hands on their stomachs and long beards clothing them – she took it that Danca, as Makhoba's artist-apprentice, knew that the artist intended these to be 'monkeys' and like most South African whites she knew that her politically incorrect fellows still talked of Africans as 'monkeys'. This painting was to echo in her mind and when Makhoba's daughter phoned asking if Winters was still interested in purchasing a painting, she indicated this one. In describing the painting to black colleagues, Winters found she was calling it a "Painting of Pigs and Monkeys!" Interestingly none queried either of these appellations, for these colleagues assumed that she knew that whites were termed 'pigs'[3] by blacks and that blacks knew that whites called them 'monkeys'.[4] Winters was embarrassed by the contents of the painting, as it clearly depicted a white overseer and his girlfriend loading up or unloading a number of building toght-workers, which Danca had termed 'monkeys'. Did the depicted overseer know he carried 'monkeys'? Very likely he did as he is clearly meant to be a stereotypical white racist. However, did he know that he himself was a 'pig' or was he inured by his own insensitivity (a trait so integral to the African definition of such)?

Winters has a personal reason for being distressed by the painting as depicting "Pigs and Monkeys" for she was partly reared by an African toght-worker as a child and has ambivalent feelings about her

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[2] "toght …of or pertaining to casual or day-labour….fr. Du. Toght march.. From Jean Branford with William Branford *A Dictionary of South African English* Oxford University Press,1993 (edition) Pg. 336.

[3] Winters knew about 'pigs' from a work-mate but the description was so much based upon the physicality of a pig, its colouring as well as a notion that it would explode in the sun that to her it was as confounding as it was distressing. It must be said that the individual sharing the description had inherited it from his fellows growing-up on the South Coast yet his own early experience, as with that of his family was not with whites but with Indians. This would lead one to wonder if there is a correlation between experience of a certain race-interaction and the 'refinement' of the myth.

[4] It has been for so very long that most South Africans, both black and white know this that it is difficult to recall when first heard, but one recent derivation heard by Winters is from a contractor who was once a prison warden who affectionately called his workers "Come, come my *Tsotsies* (Little Gangsters)". Of course there are all the implications to calling a black worker a 'monkey' deriving from evolutionist theory, that man derives from the primates, hence the epithet is in effect saying 'more primitive'. This gets one to the underlying 'backgrounding' discussed later in the text.

own race in any interactions with Africans.[5] And as synchronicity is wont to happen, whenever she was at odds with her fellow-whites she found herself returning to work on a Monday morning, stuck behind an animal-carrier making its way down a KwaZulu-Natal midlands mountain pass. It was always the same farmer from Petros Stroom/Howick transporting his "Large-white"[6] pigs to the Cato Ridge abattoirs. The sight would make her laugh and cry simultaneously as these poor creatures 'bonked'[7] their way to their end – laugh at how alike to her fellow whites they could be in their unawareness of their environment, yet cry for the poor beasts themselves. In recent years she would take the same route but at a later hour, as having been promoted to a senior position she was permitted to arrive at work at a more reasonable hour, and again she found herself on the mountain pass and not being able to overtake an animal-carrier, and in the winter gloom when looking up she would realize that many pairs of eyes were watching her, for these were not animals but African toght-workers. Again she would laugh and cry, as some waved and smiled while others shivered in the cold, quite resigned to their allotment. The irony being that the white farmers, in fear of the post 1994 possibility of land-claims, had dismissed their workers off the farms and these people were living in a motley array of shacks and RDP[8] houses at Lidgeton, yet were still reliant upon toght or piece-work on the same whites farms. The further irony is that Petros Stroom/Howick, from where the pig-farmer hailed, on the upper reaches of Mid-Mar Dam is contested in land-claims by the Ndlovu family (personal communication S.M. Mkhize, Durban, October 2010). The farmers however have a secure case as their tenure dates from the 1850 Byrne settlers. Mchunu, in his research into the midland's "7 Days' War" of 1990, found that the same Ndlovu family had a trade-unionist working with the ANC to help train youth for *Mkonto weSizw* [9] in exile. This man is said to have rebelled against enforced tenant-labour on white farms in the Howick area and is said to have lead the farmer's cattle over the railway-line in front of an on-coming train, thus killing them. Is this an un-recorded oral history of rebellion or is it a fantasized act of subversion only? Do these farmers have any idea of the hatred they engender in their workers or were they always protected by the 'Conspiracy of Silence' around such workers' expressing these feelings to their former 'Masters'? Of course one needs to point out that not all toght-workers have negative feelings toward their work, some like those who go on "Die Oes [The Harvest]" of maize in the Free State enjoy the camaraderie (personal communication Maggie Singer, Kimberley, 1966). As such it is probable that attitudes informed by earlier African gender labour-divisions continues; for traditionally females did field-work and one must remember that Makhoba is depicting male manual labourers. Here one needs to reference concepts of African masculinity and note that historically the upsurge of migrant-labour in KwaZulu-Natal dates from the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906. Consequent upon an African refusal to pay head-tax on males over 18 years of age, the ferocity at which the Natal colonial government forces applied the 'slash and burn policy' to Zulu homesteads is said to have caused the

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[5] The following story in the text was inserted after some deliberation on Winters' part as to if it was applicable, but it was decided that it conformed to story-telling, and how these very myths are shared. She knew this because she had shared it with the same work-mate who had originally told her of whites being 'pigs' and he had in turn told his cousin, a Durban sweat-shop worker in a Muslim-owned factory maimed at his place of work but receiving no legitimate workman's compensation. The cousin was so taken with Winters' tale that he asked for his appreciation to be forwarded to her, this presumably because of the surprise that there could be any hint of humanity, self-reflection or shame on the part of one classified as a 'pig'.

[6] A "Large white" is a species of pig-type, as for instance a "Landrace" or other, and not part of any obvious insult, although it is something of a pun, this is by default.

[7] A euphemism for copulate.

[8] RDP is a short form for *Reconstruction and Development Plan* of the 1st ANC Government post-1994. Municipalities are now 'back-to-back' and include former peri-urban and farmlands. The one centered in Howick is the Umgeni Municipality and there is a subsidized home building program for formerly disenfranchised in all such Local authorities throughout South Africa.

[9] The armed wing of the ANC when it was banned under the Nationalist Government pre-1994 1st democratic elections.

impoverishment of the black population which forced migrant-labour (See Jeff Guy *Reluctant Rebellion, Pmb.,* UKZN Press, 2006).

This above aside is meant to indicate the realities of that which Makhoba depicts in his painting. When first telling Mchunu of the painting, he confirmed the African naming of the "Pigs and Monkeys" and Danca later conferred with this interpretation, saying that this was how Makhoba had in fact viewed it too (personal communication with Danca, December 2010). Mchunu 's confirmation was followed by an explanation of how he had first heard the labeling from his favorite primary school teacher, Miss Mahlangu at KwaShange (not too far from Petros Stroom/Howick) in the 1980s. This teacher would be paid her monthly salary by the school principal in the presence of the pupils in the classroom and thereafter dance about waving her cheque "I have been paid children!". She would then go into the disparities of white teachers getting the highest pay, then Indian and then black teachers like herself, this all without apparent rancor. She would follow-up her comment with a tale of the "Pigs and the Monkeys". While apparently talking of animals and making no clear correlation to the respective South African races, she told of how a pig always thinks itself a very clever creature while really quite stupid. In African folklore Miss Mahlangu told, a pig asked a farmyard duck to give it her wings, which the pig duly glued to its heavy sides. Taking flight the pig was not so clever after all, as it crashed upon its face, forever turning its nose into a flattened snout! The teacher would then go into the social imitativeness of monkeys and if any child played-up she called him/her 'a monkey!' Clearly Ms Mahlangu borrows from European folktales on the nature of pigs, for as further synchronicity would have it, after Winters shared this tale with the black lawyer representing the Ndlovu, she returned to the midlands only to be caught behind a refrigeration-truck with "Dargle Valley Pork Produce… Yes our pigs can fly!" inscribed on the back. Dargle Valley is a part of the mountain pass in question and evidently synchronicity is integral to both folklore and the 'oral style' for these tales are retold and reworked accordingly (something that is happening in this paper). They occasion great humour and this 'in-your-face' communication is characteristic of how Africans are socialized in Mchunu's experience: His grandmother would shout at him to return from play and "wash off some of that blackness", that is his complexion, so the neighbours did not think it pure dirt, while conversely she accused his light-complexioned sister of looking like a 'winter pumpkin'. To the Mchunu family this was strengthening and enabled the growing child to face insults from the outside world. Mchunu qualified his statement by saying that "no matter how ugly or criticized one is as a black, the family will stand-by one… That is the function of a family". Alternatively, there is no surety of an unambiguous experience for a young white child, one woman said that her mother would say they were exquisite, when clearly such a description was excessive (even despite their evident little girl prettiness to western eyes), while in Winters's own childhood experience, her extended family laughed at her for having red hair. Perhaps the difference was that the one woman came from homogeneous British stock, while Winters is a mix of ostensibly white races, not all of which valued her Scottish inheritance. Like Winters and her hair-colour most white South Africans are shamed by being called 'pigs' while Africans generally take the label of 'monkey' as a joking insult requiring one more crushing rejoinder. Not all regions have the same connotations however, in asking another black colleague from north of Durban, Winters was told that he knew that "Whites, Indians and Coloureds call blacks monkeys" when wishing to insult them for tardiness or other perceived 'misdeeds' in work, but black to black he would call another African a "baboon, rather than a monkey". This last of course has connotations of witchcraft among Africans, as a tame baboon is the familiar to the witch and such persons are feared. Whereas he would however call a white-man a 'pig' especially when such a person 'put it over him', he would then keep his own council, consoling himself "you think you are so smart, but who are you after all?... you are just a brother to a pig!" (personal communication S.P. Mkhize, Durban, October 2010). Here clearly the 'pig' has connotations to cleverness that is falsely claimed, insensitivity to fellow-feeling as well as the obvious surface similarity of like colouring. Once again one can refer to western common parlance of a 'male chauvinist pig' as an epithet given to any man who is insensitive in any way toward females.

Insensitivity carries connotations of gluttony and greed and these interpretations are never far from any such name-calling, hence to call anyone a 'pig' is an obvious insult, without the joking raillery of the 'monkey' epithet. There is also a whole African debate on the use of pig-fat and white-person's fat in *muthi* to protect and make impervious, such as against bullets as Mchunu's research on the '7 Days' War' indicates. Generally very few whites are aware that they can be called 'pigs', and fortunately this only when they are guilty of some behavior that is less than sensitive or altruistic. More importantly, there was no doubt in any blacks' mind that the supervisor in Makhoba's painting was rightly classified as a 'pig'.

So how did the correct title, as given by Bruce Campbell-Smith, alter this interpretation of the "Painting of the Pigs and Monkeys"? Not much one must admit, for Mchunu still held the little men depicted were 'monkeys' despite the title, saying that the essential interpretation did not change because the 'pigs' had enslaved Africans, making them toght-labour working for little more than their food. A Zionist pastor, who also requested to be unnamed, insisted that these were neither Zombies nor 'monkeys' but '*Othokoloshe*' as he had seen them in dreams, and they were, "small men turned into slaves who work for food and who have an insatiable sexual appetite". Hence Danca's understanding, when asked why he called the Zombies 'monkeys', he answered, "because the white man thinks he can pay them by showing them the prostitute!" However, the pastor who said they were *Othokoloshe* said that that would not be the payment, rather the white-man as "overseer pig is known to fantasize over pornography while the blacks are working". There are other equally legitimate interpretations and a white woman, again someone who preferred to remain anonymous, said that immediately she saw the painting, she read the white couple as running a home construction business that had a problem with the 'go-slow' of the Zombies – for not getting their food maybe?

It is quite possible to go round in circles over the painting's interpretation and this is typical of those works by Trevor Makhoba that draw upon the oral genre. Most often his paintings are so disquieting that the first thing that any new staff member at Campbell Collections, UKZN, will do, especially if they are white, is to ask for his work to be removed to store. However If it is a black appointee then the painting is invariably debated endlessly. What this debate indicates is how far folklore and the oral genre are still operative in ordinary African society, even to the point that persons can say they can identify a *Thokoloshe* because they have dreamt of one. In the latter case there is no questioning that the little being is a figment of imagination, for in this case the dreamer, being a Zionist prophet told his client what he had seen it in her troubled home, to be told that "yes indeed our grandfather was an Nyanga and he created such *Othokoloshe".* The mode of creating one is similar to creating a Zombie and such beings become their creator's slaves (personal communication S. M. Mkhize, October, 2010). Those viewers with an ironic turn of mind, would then say that the white-man has created his own Zombies to do his work for him. The fact of these creatures being fictitious or mythic beings to the western mind and an apparent 'reality' of the white-man's use of blacks in near slave-labour, is to the African mind, further born out in an experience of Winters and a former colleague Dingani Mthethwa when both were detailed to find traditional Zulu hut-makers for an ex-Zimbabwean white businessman. This man kept insisting that Mthethwa mention that the payment (while including wages), also included rations, "especially beans". Mthethwa consistently refused to translate the promise of beans, only admitting to Winters afterwards that it was too reminiscent of the mine-recruitment officers who conscripted his uncles in Mputuland. At the time he said "we are not Zombies!" a statement lost on Winters until considering this Makhoba painting. Payment with food, especially beans was considered an insult to a human-being, it is only with a painting such as this one that one can see the deeper analogies of paying for toght or casual-work in rations.

Val Plumwood in 'Feminism and the mastery of nature' In *Series Feminism for Today* (London, Routledge, 1995) takes from colonialist psychological defense-mechanisms used to unpack the

nature of racism and she parallels them to female subjugation in patriarchal societies. She discusses the concept of 'backgrounding' that leads to exclusion, objectification and stereotyping. It is our contention that these concepts enable an interpretation of why Makhoba's painting theme is depicted in the way it has been. Of backgrounding, we quote:

> Backgrounding is a complex feature which results from the irresoluble conflicts the relationship of domination creates for the master, for he attempts both to make use of the other, organizing, relying on and benefiting from the other's services, and to deny the dependency which this creates. Denial can take many forms. Common ways to deny dependency are through making the other inessential, denying the importance of the other's contribution or even his or her reality, and through mechanisms of focus and attention. One way to do this is to insist on a strong hierarchy of activities, so that the denied areas are simply not 'worth' noticing. A related way to solve this problem is through treating the other as the background to the masters foreground (Plumwood,1995:48).

One of 'backgrounding's modes is 'radical exclusion' also termed 'hyperseparation', a word that conjures both Nationalist Apartheid Policy and its historical predecessor, the "Location Policy" of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the Natal Colonial Native Commissioner during the 19th century. Of 'radical exclusion' Plumwood says:

> The relation of radical exclusion has special characteristics. For distinctness, for non-identity or otherness, there need only be a single characteristic which is different, possessed by one and not the other, in order to guarantee distinctness according to the usual treatment of identity. Where items are constructed or construed according to a dualistic relationship, however, the master tries to magnify, to emphasize and to maximize the number and importance of differences and to eliminate or treat as inessential shared qualities, and hence to achieve maximum separation (Plumwood 1995:49).

She continues:

> Thus the master claims for himself reason, contemplation and higher pursuits, and disdains the slave merely manual occupations, while the slave is forced to exclude from his or her makeup the characteristics of the master, to eschew intellect and become submissive and lacking in initiative. These very qualities then confirm the slave's different nature and fate, for she or he is a 'slave by nature' (Plumwood 1995:50).

The irony of the oral genre of which Makhoba was clearly a master in manipulation, is that here in this painting, the Zombies, *Othokoloshe* or monkeys have clearly 'cocked a snoot' at the white master-race and because of the denial of 'backgrounding' and its dependant 'radical exclusion' the white-man fails to 'read' the implications of the work. After all, it is but the work of a 'monkey'! Makhoba's mastery is to be seen in that he neither titles the little slave-men *Othokoloshe* (a singularly African folklore creature) nor 'monkeys' (as readily recognizable by the white master and causing a conscience in the more liberal of his race), but "Zombies", a western borrowing from west African tradition, already connoted with all that is negative about Africa in the white racial psyche (as in the connotations of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, printed in 1902). The subtlety is that apart from the title, the viewer only sees a number of little bearded black men, looking somewhat hungry – but soon they will be receiving their rations and be fine for work – and a shirt-less white overseer with his wife, girlfriend or prostitute on the side. If Makhoba had titled the work "Toght-workers and

overseer…" would it have found a buyer? Was his title meant to include his own people but confuse his white audience? Campbell-Smith implied that this work was commissioned by a black gallery owner but that Makhoba was always shy of declaring his work ready for purchase, and perhaps its being unfinished meant that he was indeed not ready to part with it. However, knowing the gallery in question one wonders if the owner, despite being black may have decided against the work as he realized its obtuse content mitigated against a sale to both white and black elitist clients (the latter forswearing their township roots).

Clearly too, these processes that Makhoba, whether consciously or intuitively worked through, are not those within the realm of "Art as art" but fall within the realm of social-commentary, as the *Inkosi* had indicated. Further, who is 'backgrounding' and indeed homogenizing or stereotyping the other in this painting? Obviously it is the African artist who is manipulating this process; the white-man he declares tacitly a 'pig', this to be seen as such by other blacks, yet to the white-man himself he plays the role of subservient artist of 'quaint and obtuse' works. Naive maybe, for no white sees him/herself as such a ghastly shade of pink – "Perhaps" he no doubt thinks, "...pigs are that colour but not people!" There is strong evidence that whites are not meant to know that blacks call them 'pigs'; for Winters was 'shushed' by black colleagues when sharing the painting's content with fellow-whites. The standard reason given as to why then she should be allowed to be 'in the know' is "because you are a black in a white body, we are always telling you this!" This being so means that both Winters and Mchunu have breached a taboo by discussing the content of the work. While once again an outsider to folklore would think the artist naïve in his depiction of stereotyped toght-workers, if they were explained the title, then the "Zombies", (*Othokoloshe* or monkeys) are perceived as distressing, but still the white-overseer's stereotyping may go unnoticed. An African however would understand the connotations of the painting, even without the title, in the way that Welcome Danca had done, because he/she is party to both folklore and just such a satirical view of the oral genre upon South African race-relations.

Of stereotyping or homogenization Plumwood has to say:

> More than polarization is needed if a relationship is to be an appropriate one of domination. The dominated class must appear suitably homogeneous if it is to be able to conform to and confirm its 'nature' in homogenization, differences among the interiorized group are disregarded. (Plumwood 1995:53)

It is an intriguing aspect of Makhoba and his ilk's irony that the dominant white-man is as equally stereotyped by the black man as he as white has done to the black man himself. Clearly neither group is as stereotypical in reality, for black men are neither 'Zombies, *Othokoloshe* nor 'monkeys' and white men are not 'pigs'. Perhaps though, in the races' dealings with each other they have become 'Zombie-like, *Othokoloshe*-like or monkey-like' and 'pig-like' to the each other. It is also interesting that in order to share these stereotypes Winters had to be made honoury black, maybe even honoury monkey! – again she is not this in truth, just as she is not easily classified as a 'pig' – and all persons, as individuals, whether black or white are potentially similarly hard to classify.

This brings us to the comments in our initial abstract. Some personalities like Julius Malema of the ANC Youth League are forever 'putting their foot in it' with their utterances from their political platforms. His repeat of the "Kill the Boer, Kill the farmer" struggle slogan so upset the right-wing as to make them take the matter to court as banned race hate-speech. The ANC case was that it is part of their struggle history. It seems obvious that Malema, like the musicians Mfesihle Ngubane, Vuzi Ximba and playwright Mgongeni Ngema – with their often banned songs are performers if one will, like Trevor Makhoba too, ones who express that which they see in the inherited format of the oral genre. The question then shifts from, "is it 'hate-speech'?" or whatever causes outrage, or is it

“freedom of expression” within a certain indigenous artistic style? As such perhaps there is a need for a platform for it, open to those who share in it and closed to those who do not, much like comedy, arguably so necessary to the history of race-relations in South Africa, which has its select clientele. And finally one can query, is this expression of the oral genre not in itself indigenous comedy?

Note

The authors co-authored an essay on apartheid-era ‘master/servant’ relations in the light of Makhoba’s painting, titled *“‘Great temptation in the garden*’: Trevor Makhoba as taboo-breaker” in *Trevor Mpila Makhoba Memorial Exhibition Catalogue* (Durban Art Gallery, 2005) and worked together on the *Impi Yamakhanda* (Bhambatha Rebellion, 1906) project of 2006 and published essays on this in T. Magwaza, Seleti Y., and Sithole,M.P.(Eds) *Freedom sown in blood: memories of the Impi Yamaknada, an Indigenous Knowledge Perspective* (Thoyandou, Ditlou Publishers, 2006).

Heading South: A Meditation on the 'Ruins' of The South Project

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Where to put baskets in an art gallery?

Before I ruminate on the ruins – or otherwise – of *The South Project,* let's begin with baskets since my paper has migrated to this panel, Where to put baskets in an art gallery?' from the now abandoned panel 'Interrogating the Global South '. During this process, the following discussion become a more personalised and 'basketised' narrative – that has loosened a few strands during the process.

Pacific Storms was a ground breaking 2009 exhibition in Australia of work by artists from the Pacific-Oceania neighbourhood and those of Pacific heritage resident in the world's largest continental island, Australia. Baskets and numerous other weavings festooned Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery in northern Queensland alongside contemporary art; photographs, videos, paintings, and poetry texts. Although no longer fresh and lush, these fibre textiles remained for the duration of the exhibition as more than dehydrated relics of performative opening ceremonies; they represent lingering testimony to creative expression that can be participatory, cross-disciplinary and multi-dimensional in nature – including, notably, children's furniture and programs actively inviting art and play.

So, you might wonder, what is so groundbreaking among the textiles here? Firstly, *Pacific Storms* represented a rare exhibition of contemporary Oceanic – and predominantly 'Melanesian' – art in this country, even though 400,000 of its population (or 2%) are of Pacific Islander heritage. Secondly, this landmark exhibition took place not in a major institution, like Queensland Art Gallery, renowned for the *Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art***,** but in a regional gallery in rural northern Queensland. Thirdly, baskets are not generally encountered in Australia's sharp and shiny art world unless they form part of an Indigenous – generally Australian Indigenous – exhibition. So there's something significant happening here – something about generosity, conviviality, hospitality, inclusiveness. Perhaps, even relational aesthetics, although this recently discovered art vogue features less as a rationale for curator of *Pacific Storms,* Papua New Guinean-Australian**,** Joycelin Leahy, than 'the Pacific way' things are done in this part of the global south. Ironically, few Australians (who pride themselves on being 'laid-back'), including art *cognoscenti*, have had access to these indigenous and 'southern' ways of knowing – and presenting – given our continued reverence for northerly trans-Atlantic models of knowledge production.

In fact, the Pacific region has long been considered Australia's 'backyard' and in political, economic and cultural terms, a place of tacky tourism – and/or tornadoes and trouble. And, until 2007 with the Rudd Labor Government's revised regional foreign policy, the Oceanic/Pacific region was collectively regarded by post-1975 Australian governments as a 'basket case'.

CIHA 32nd Congress 2008

This near invisibility of Pacific and southern hemisphere art and culture still characterises major art events, including the prestigious 'parent' body of this Colloquium, *CIHA International Committee of the History of Art*, although yesterday's comments by CIHA committee members addressing this SAVAH colloquium gave us cause for hope. CIHA's so-*called* 'ground-breaking' 2008 32nd Congress in Melbourne*, Crossing Cultures: Congress, Conflict, Migration and Convergence* aimed 'to make people of different nationalities engage in debate' and was declared by convenor (and now CIHA President),

Professor Jaynie Anderson as the 'first meeting of an international congress of the history of art in the southern hemisphere [to] epitomiz[e] the expansion of the field throughout the globe'[1].

Whether or not this claim can be validated, this 'Art History Olympics' certainly made an impact on Australian and other art historians, attracting almost 700 registrations from 50 countries[2]. With one exception[3], however, among 226 presentations, including 42% of papers from Australia and 10% (22) from 'other' southern hemisphere countries[4], the only 'Pacific' featured was in two presentations of New Zealand's – not Australia's – urban 'Pasifika'. Moreover, only four Australian Indigenous speakers presented amongst 74 Australian papers, although many of these were concerned issues of indigeneity. There were two speakers from 'Africa' (South Africa and Cameroon). However, the former country was not considered an appropriate location for the next full CIHA Congress which is to be held in Nuremburg in 2012. This decision catalysed the staging of the Johannesburg colloquium[5], which was endorsed by CIHA following the Melbourne event, but not financially assisted by this international parent body[6].

Astonishingly, the Melbourne-based *South Project*'s intensive four year dialogue across the southern hemisphere did not appear on the Melbourne Congress' agenda[7], where neither baskets nor wider

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[1] 'The history of the International Committee of the History of Art suggests what many people throughout the world have recognized: art and the discourses around it are increasingly global. Art and its history are not only created, but discussed in one form or another on all the inhabited continents of the earth. Globalism has thus also assumed an art historical aspect: indeed it has been described as art history's most pressing issue. But how can global issues in art history take form in theory or practice? What are the possibilities for a world art history?' CIHA International Committee of the History of Art 32nd Congress: *Crossing Cultures: Congress, Conflict: Migration: Convergence, The University of* Melbourne, January 13-18 2008. Online: Accessed 6 January 2011. http://www.cihamelbourne2008.com.au/

[2] 'Melbourne's passion fills the house at 'Art History Olympics', The University of Melbourne Voice, Vol 2, No 1, February 2008. http://uninews.unimelb.edu.au/news/4892/

[3] Childs, Elizabeth, 'Exchange: Gifting, identity and writing history in fin-de-siecle Tahiti', paper presented at *CIHA 32nd Congress of the International Committee of the History of Art*, The University of Melbourne, 13-18 January 2008.

[4] Of the papers by Australian-based presenters, 33% were from The University of Melbourne, CIHA's host institution.

[5] 'First call for papers: *Other Views: Art History in (South) Africa and the Global South*', *Southern Perspectives (SAVAH)*, Online: Accessed December 15 2010. http://www.southernperspectives.net/conference/other-views-art-history-in-south-africa-and-the-global-south-call-for-papers 'CIHA has recently been addressing concerns about the unequal distribution of resources around the globe and challenges from post-colonial societies to the older methods and concepts of western art history. At the CIHA congress in Melbourne in January 2008, one of the key issues for discussion was the extent to which we need to re-think the discipline of the history of art "in order to establish cross-cultural dimensions as fundamental to its scope, method and vision". SAVAH proposes continuing these discussions in the colloquium 'Other Views: Art History in (South) Africa and the Global South' to be held at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg in January, 2011. A principal focus of the discussions, with particular reference to South Africa, will be how the study of art from the African continent is often impeded by a totalising notion of an undifferentiated 'Africa'. This belies the histories, political trajectories and regional differences of its many communities, nations and states… We do not envision covering all aspects and areas of Africa and the Global South, but we shall use the Global South construct as a framework to focus on Africa and in particular South Africa. The aim is to complicate the history of art and the relationship between histories in the Global South and the 'north' or 'west''.

[6] Conversations with SAVAH president Dr Federico Freschi and Professor Anitra Nettleton, Johannesburg, January 14 2011. In obtaining CIHA affiliation, the small SAVAH organisation funded and/or facilitated accommodation and business class airfares for a number of visits to Johannesburg by members of the CIHA Committee executive, including attendance by these speakers at the SAVAH event in January 2011.

[7] At the CIHA Congress *The South Project* elicited only passing criticism, as 'diminish[ing] the artistic culture of Asia'. See Marravillas, Francis, 'Art Histories at the crossroads: "Asian" art in "Australia"', presentation at *CIHA*

craft discourses were apparent. For all CIHA's cross-cultural claims, at $AUD660 (R4454) many attendees expressed disappointment at the congress' elitist and inhospitable environment[8]. Eurocentrism dies hard, it seems, even in the highest echelons of well-intentioned white art history.

The South Project and 'The Basket'

The South Project, on the other hand, by 2008 had demonstrated over five years that art gatherings – even conferences – can be about more than a schedule of topics. Although *Pacific Storms* was not part of *The South Project***,** it might well have been; its spirit embodied much of what this enduring Melbourne-based endeavour successfully achieved. And baskets and weavings provide appropriate metaphors for both *Pacific Storms* and *The South Project*; traditionally crafted within social and performative story-telling situations, baskets are containers with capacity for plenitude, exchange and countless uses. Woven from diverse materials and designs, baskets are strong, porous and receptive and nothing if not portable. Importantly, like *The South Project*, they are not intended to last forever.

A combination of Indigenous and non-Indigenous 'basket cultures' as well as contemporary art informed by cross-cultural social and political engagement, provided the architectural structure of *The South Project*. This was envisioned in and for the most culturally conscious of Australian cities – Melbourne. By 2003 this city was, ironically, 'sliding off the international art map'[9] without an ongoing biennale or triennial event. *The South Project* intended to fill this void but in a radically lateral rather than vertical direction so as to explore the possibilities offered by south-south transactions. In an Australian contemporary art climate unsympathetic to localism or craft, this project challenged and enlarged understandings of what south could signify within and beyond its Eurocentric contexts. 'South' was thus situated by this new organisation as much as 'a question as a location', where attitude mattered as much as latitude[10].

A unique, highly ambitious, and visionary program, *The South Project* was inaugurated in 2004 by Kevin Murray with manager, Magdalena Moreno under the auspices of the Craft Victoria organisation. It was carefully developed through personal professional networks cultivated over time[11]. This enterprise encompassed a vast practitioner-based program comprising Indigenous and

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32nd Congress of the International Committee of the History of Art, University of Melbourne, 13-18 January 2008.

[8] While (optional) receptions at Government House and the National Gallery of Victoria were lavish, the CIHA congress $AUD660 conference fee included no lunch or refreshments, except for inadequate tea/coffee facilities for long lines of patient delegates.

'Delegate Welcome Packs' supplied an impressive if cumbersome 269 page volume of presenters' abstracts and biographies but no schedule summary with which to navigate up to ten parallel sessions per day. Information about (many) changes to the schedule were unavailable, except online, and there was much discussion about lack of courtesy and hospitality by the professional conference organisers.

[9] 'With Australia's second city "sliding off the international art map", [Peter Hil] proposed that it was time to invent an event where "so-called rival cities in the region" could "work together inclusively rather than facing off at each other as if at a sporting match". This would, he suggested, "fully integrate the region within the global art world"'. Fuller, Peter, in Hill, Peter.(2006), cited in Zeplin, Pamela, 'Horizontal Relations: The South Project goes to Santiago', 'Publications', *The South Project.* Online: Accessed 2 January 2011. http://www.southproject.net/south/Pam_Zeplin_Horizontal_Relations.html

[10] Rankin, E, 'South 1: Common Ground', *The South Project*, Online, Accessed 11 May 2006. http://www.southproject.org/texts/rankin.htm

[11] For more details about the 2007 South Project's aims and objectives, see *The South Project*. Online: http://www.southproject.net/south/Johannesburg2007_files/Johannesburg%20Program_1.pdf Accessed 2 January 2011. 'The South Project is the major international arts project that brings together the distinct voices of the southern hemisphere through south-south dialogue and cross-cultural exchange. Making its platform in the south, it supports contemporary dynamic cultural practice and promotes the experience and understanding of visual culture for global audiences. We are by nature a lateral organisation in our structure

non-Indigenous craftspersons, artists, writers, curators, scholars, and social activists, thickly intertwining a continuous web of exchanges, exhibitions, residencies, symposia, workshops and publications across different places and times in – and beyond – the Antipodes. Significantly, until 2009 a highly developed children's program, Southkids provided an essential and ongoing component of *The South Project*'s broader endeavour, enabling children across the southern hemisphere to work with professional visual arts and craftspersons[12]. With the exception of a few Australian state art galleries (namely Queensland Art Gallery), the acknowledgement of children as an integral part of the project was remarkable at this time.

South 1 Gathering

Launched in Melbourne in 2004 with miniscule staff resources and a proposed five year lifespan, *The South Project* stimulated conversations between artists and communities of the south whether defined by hemisphere or by concept. These dialogues might be visual, verbal, tactile or textual, embracing different shapes, textures and tones. The inaugural gathering with hundreds of delegates was astounding. In a conventional auditorium with workshop spaces, a dazzling diversity of Indigenous and non-Indigenous southerners from fourteen countries came together to re-imagine possibilities for weaving previously un-dreamed of connections. 'South 1', in Susan Cochrane's words, 'encouraged all kinds of responses: philosophical and whimsical, creative and conceptual, contesting and renewing ideas, in the first gathering of its kind'[13]. Presentations ranged from Aboriginal Australian weavers and writers and Rapa Nui (Easter Island) artists lamenting their lost language, to Argentinian activists witnessing for the politically 'disappeared', community architects from South Africa and Antarctic voyagers. Taking its cue from Mbulelo Mzamane's inspiring keynote address[14], an extraordinary spirit of '*ubuntu'* suffused the event. This atmosphere transformed a conference into an intensely moving and uplifting experience where delegates (even art historians!) openly wept and embraced during the closing ceremony; for those attending it felt like re-uniting with family.

Southern journeys

While *The South Project* continued to catalyse numerous strands of diverse and intersecting activity, by 2005 its annual gatherings began literally weaving their way across southern latitudes[15].

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and philosophy: consultation is essential. We are dedicated to ongoing rigorous investigation of contemporary cultural life that challenges & inspires audiences & the art community....'

[12] South Kids, '...students had worked with nine international artists who had originated from countries from Chile, Brazil, South Africa, India, Korea, Indonesia, Mauritius, Maldives,Fiji, New Zealand and of course Australia. Some of the workshops over the three years included learning skills in the areas of puppetry and mask making, jewellery design, stencil printing, weaving, carving, sculptural construction, performance and curatorship, painting and drawing. South Kids have been very fortunate to have the opportunity of working with such a diverse group of people and to be able to experience the one on one contact with each artist'. *The South Project*. Online: Accessed 11 May 2006. http://www.southproject.net/south/

[13] Cochrane, Susan, 'Towards Ubuntu: The Way of the South', *Artlink*, Vol 24, no 4, 2004.

[14] '*...abantu* (Bantu languages) we call *ubuntu* – the sum total of humanising values as the First Nations People of the South understand them...It rejects the regressive and takes due cognizance of progressive strains in all cultures that it harnesses, and teaches...[*Ubuntu*] eschews chauvinism and cultural imperialism – the insistence by a group that their ways of doing things are superior beyond compare – as well as narcissism and ethnocentrism – the incapacity to look beyond Self. *Ubuntu* humbles and teaches...a fitting and uplifting philosophy on which to predicate a movement of re-humanisation.' Mzamane, Mbulelo Vizikhungo, 'Of Minks and Men', 'Beyond Mythification: Constituting a Southern Identity', Conference Paper from *South 1: The Gathering*, The University of Melbourne, 1-4 July 2004, p. 7. *The South Project*. Online: Accessed 11 May 2006. http://w.w.w.southproject.org/texts/mbulelo.htm

[15] *South 1 Melbourne: The Gathering – A New Conversation*, July 2004; *Wellington Gathering: Between Earth and Sky – Ways of Making a Place in a Placeless World*, Wellington, 20-12 October 2005; *Crossing Horizons: Context and Community in the South*, Santiago (and Valpariso), September 2006; *South-South Imbizo*, Johannesburg and Soweto, October 2007.

Wellington (New Zealand) hosted the first gathering outside Australia (administered by the Melbourne *South Project* team collaborating with local hosts). From this South Western Pacific location, the next *South Project* travelled to the South Eastern Pacific, to Santiago (Chile) in 2006, and in 2007 to Soweto/Johannesburg, this last event organised locally by Clifford Charles and team, with support from Melbourne staff.

For me, the highlight of this event was the Southkids workshop at Belle Primary School in Orlando West, Soweto, particularly the way these kids came back for more, 'crashing' *The South Project's* adult craft workshops at Uncle Tom's Community Centre the next day. Such an intrusion by children would be unthinkable in my country. At the kids' workshop I met Muelo Lebenya, an artist volunteer working at the school who constructed 'baskets' from recycled vinyl LP records crocheted together. I returned to the school four days before this Colloquium to find it dramatically expanded and now renamed Mbuyisa Makhubu Primary School, after the young man who was photographed holding Hector Pieterson, the twelve year old school child martyred during the 1976 Soweto Uprising[16].

Following this *South Project imbizo*, the Melbourne-based organisation was re-structured under Interim Director, Magdalena Moreno and a new board assembled since Murray's resignation as Director of Craft Victoria in early 2008. Murray continued involvement with *South Project* activities, including the 2008 Johannesburg/Soweto *Imbizo*. Nevertheless, the organisation separated from its former craft base at Craft Victoria via an 'exit strategy' as part of a new corporate makeover. Up to this point, a new prospectus recorded that between 2006 and 2007 alone, 84 events had attracted audiences of 33,000 in addition to 227,000 website visits[17].

Space does not permit a detailed analytical or theoretical account of *The South Project*'s major gatherings, its related programs, myriad partner organisations and participants – let alone its lively internal politics. Suffice to say this organisation's multiple parameters and ever-expanding connections had become a complex weave of intersecting and pulsating nodes between people, ideas and objects around the globe, and from many reports, anecdotes and statistics, a generative and useful platform for practitioner exchange.

Instead of *The South Project'*s grand finale originally planned for 2008 in Melbourne, a focus group style of symposium in the same city[18] was assembled where a Yogyakarta Gathering was proposed for 2009, 'the intention of [which was] above all COLLABORATIVE, RECIPROCAL AND OF ACTIVATION [sic]'[19]. This was to be followed by a grand triennial *South Festival* for 2010, 'focus[ing] on Melbourne as a cultural hub', after which would be a Pacific gathering in francophone New Caledonia in 2011 and from thence to Rio de Janeiro in 2012. This ambitiously expanded schedule was, however, not to be, despite being set out in a glossy prospectus polished with corporate language describing KPI

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[16] For further details, see 'Hector Pieterson', Accessed December 13 2010. http://www.soweto.co.za/html/p_hector.htm

[17] Moreno, M, 'History of the South Project', *The South Project: A new international arts voice* (prospectus), The South Project, Melbourne, 2007 (n.d.), pp. 15,17.

[18] *Why Gather?*, Elisabeth Murdoch Theatre, The University of Melbourne, 19—20 July , 2008.

[19] '... Delivered through a series of exhibitions, actions, performances, workshops and collaborations, most of which will take in the public domain, the Yogyakarta Gathering in 2009 will be the first time that *The* South Project has travelled to Asia. Although a select group of Indonesian artists has already participated in South Project activities (such as Heri Dono, Titarubi, Jumaadi, Wulan Dirgantoro, and Dian Fatwa) *The South Project* has a growing network of potential support, such as the Indonesian Contemporary Art Network amongst others. *The South Project* also welcomes collaborations from other regions in the South to participate in Yogyakarta 2009. The intention of the Yogyakarta Gathering is above all COLLABORATIVE, RECIPROCAL AND OF ACTIVATION...'.
2009 South Project Yogyakarta Expression of Interest *The South Project*, 2008. Online: Accessed December 13 2010. www.southproject.net/south/Yogyakarta2009.../Yogyakarta_October_Brief_ 2008.pdf

deliverables, 'cultural capital brand[ing]' and an impressive 'investment logic map'[20]. Significantly, the word craft seldom appeared in the document and, apart from two images of weavers, baskets were not to be seen. Metaphorically speaking, *The South Project* 'basket' of multiple dimensions had been stitched up and hermetically sealed – in an economic, political and cultural sense.

Notwithstanding *The South Project's* elaborate new strategic plan, the organisation was, surprisingly, soon de-funded by major institutional sponsors and the 2009 gathering in Yogyakarta (Indonesia) proceeded with almost no financial support[21]. What went wrong? The World Financial Crisis? Too many Festivals? Too much Melbourne focus? Not enough Pacific focus? More likely, the following factors played a role in the project's demise: a lack of critical review coverage by external arts writers and an efficient but extraordinarily demanding administrative structure that was constantly required to be on the move between Melbourne and 'field' locations across the south. A call for donations went out across the networks in 2009. But not all was lost; such was the loyalty engendered by *The South Project* that most Yogyakarta-bound artists self-funded their participation, unlike other waged participants/curators long associated with *The South Project* who withdrew. Yogyakarta artists were, however, funded. As Zara Stanhope has noted: I think people are hungry to get out and experience those other cultures…And artists do it so well. They go off and live on the smell of an oily rag to have those experiences".[22] Despite – or because of – a severe paucity of resources, a down-to-earth exchange took place in Yogyakarta. Here, local Indonesian artists politely but firmly challenged the privileged cultural naïveté of a number of [inappropriately selected] emerging artists, predominantly from Melbourne, whose steep learning curves offered valuable opportunities to learn about 'real' relational aesthetics away from the theorised and insulated precincts of familiar urban art spaces at home. The event became a grass roots encounter on concrete floors, grass and cyberspace in a teeming city where craft plays a significant role in contemporary art and life. Ironically, baskets as well as designer T-shirts were for sale in the main exhibiting venue, Kedai Kebun contemporary art space, which epitomises Indonesian artists' necessary capacity for resourcefulness. Yogyakarta exchanges continued via a small post-event exhibition and residencies in Melbourne[23], while a few independent collaborative projects initiated in Yogya have maintained momentum, even without external funding. In Australia, this continuity is unusual in assisted cross-cultural projects.

Re-considering ruins
'*On ruins one can begin to build. Anyhow, looking out from ruins one clearly sees; there are no obstructing walls*'. (Dame Rose Macaulay)[24]

In terms of its ambitious range and scale of activities, *The South Project* may now appear as 'ruins' but it continues to facilitate small south-south and multicultural projects, all be they in reduced capacity through online networks linked with, for a time, a small alternative gallery in a Melbourne shopping mall[25]. In this way, contemporary visual artists rather than craft practitioners have

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[20] Moreno, M, p. 12.
[21] *Perjumpaan Selatan-Selatan*, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 21 to 25 October 2009
[22] Stanhope, Z, in Andrew Stephens, A, 'A new world order', *The Age Entertainment*, July 5 2008, p. 2.
[23] 'Tuesday, December 15, 2009 until Sunday, December 20, 2009…Melbourne Reflection Post Yogyakarta South Gathering 2009 The South Project presents in Melbourne a reflection on the 5th International South Gathering in Yogyakarta Indonesia in October 2009 – a collaborative model of engagement bringing together arts projects from Melbourne, Perth, Santiago and Yogyakarta. Opening includes artist talks'. 'South Project', *Bus Projects,* 2009. Online: Accessed December 13 2010. http://www.busprojects.com.au/2009/12/09/south-project/
[24] 'Dame Rose Macaulay' [n.d.]. *Wise Wisdom on Demand*. Online: Accessed December 15 2010. http://www.iwise.com/m2ORX
[25] 2010 *South Project Inc., Melbourne 2010: How Can a Network....?*, Exhibition, 22 November 2010 – 5 December 2010. 'Each concept is an imaginative response to the question of ways of activating people and places by means of a network. Some were planned as hypotheses only, others evolved to works in process, and

continued to characterise the program's curatorial focus, which, it may be argued, has contributed to the organisations' diminished social texture and following. There are now many similar competing eventsin that city's project spaces.

I had intended to lament the unfortunate demise of this remarkable phenomenon known as *The South Project*. It has been an important part of my life since 2004 but after six years I realise I probably need to get over it and continue researching in and of the south – including the Australian Pacific – in different ways. In any case, strong links have been established through various *South Project* activities between many people and these continue to be maintained – as the Yogyakarta experience demonstrated, outside the structures of a facilitating organisation. It is remarkable, nevertheless, that such a nimble and dynamic venture could continue to be relevant and exciting over such a long period of time. At this event in Johannesburg and elsewhere I am reminded, in meeting up again with previous *South Project* participants, of how those initial professional and personal connections can and do remain engaged through *The South Projec*t 'Diaspora' – with or without a funded capital G Gathering.

Thus it's appropriate to conclude with this 2008 image of *Taman Sari* (Water Palace) ruins in Yogyakarta following one of a number of recent major earthquakes. A year after this photograph was taken Yogyakarta was the site of *The South Project*'s final gathering abroad. Here and in previous gatherings this organisation provided remarkable models for consideration of what *South Project* participant Domenico de Clario refers to as 'southness': 'It follows', he suggests, 'that we must turn our attention to the quality of what constitutes our immediate reality, and love it more and better.'[26] Significantly, the photographer of this image has angled the shot skywards, looking upwards and beyond the ruins.

If we consider statistics alone, it's possible that hundreds of thousands of people have been made aware of their 'immediate reality', directly or virtually, through *The South Project*[27]. Finally, and of more consequence than these impressive statistics is the fact that legions of Southkids across the southern hemisphere can now look up into southern skies and, hopefully, more confidently identify their own place in the global south – where ideas, things and events (including conferences) can be done differently – and sometimes better than those imposed from above.

"The vital point for identity…is that the antipodes is not
a place so much as it is a <u>*relation*</u>*, one not of our own choosing but one which also enables us*."
(Peter Beilharz, 1997)

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a number fully intended to be realised by the artist either for this exhibition of ideas or at a future time. All were originated by artists in diverse locations to be seen in Melbourne for this South Project event'.

[26] De Clario, Domenico, 'South remarks, Sunday 20 October 2007', Unpublished essay, email correspondence, 2007.

[27] Moreno, M., p. 12.