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ANNUAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE

## 2022 ARTS RESEARCH KALEIDOSCOPE

**THEME:**

**ROMANCING THE STONE:**


Contemplating Evolving Trends & Impermeable Places in Arts & Design




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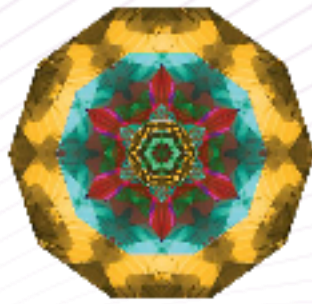
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**ABSTRACTS**

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## The Keynote Speakers



## Prof Chika Anyanwu

*University of Sydney, Australia*

Prof Chika Anyanwu sees himself as a global cultural fruit-salad, grown in Africa, mixed in Europe and America, shared in the Asia-Pacific, and planting new shoots in Africa. His qualifications include media, film, performing arts, business, and online education, with research specialisations in creative industries, digital media, African political economy, diaspora, and migration.

Chika has been leading complex higher education and corporate sectors for many years, including Head of the School of Communication and Creative Industries at Charles Sturt University, Head of the Bathurst Campus of Charles Sturt University, Director of Partnerships for Southern Cross University, Founding Head of Media at the University of Adelaide etc.

He has won numerous awards, including the Leslie Humanities Cyberdisciplinarity Fellow, Dartmouth in the USA, Visiting Professor Annenberg School of Interactive Media, USC California, the US House of Representatives Special Congressional Recognition for Extraordinary Leadership, California State Assembly Certificates in Recognition of contributions towards Silicon Valley African Film Festival.

Chika is at the University of Sydney in Australia. He is busy as a Chief Investigator in a multistakeholder Australian Research Council Discovery project investigating the Political and Economic Agency of Africans in Australia. He is also the Managing Director of C3N2 Educational Empowerment, a social enterprise he established to give career agency to young people, and educational institutions, especially those from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities.

## Dr Thembi Mtshali-jones

*South Africa*

Thembi Mtshali-Jones is one of South Africa's most talented and celebrated artists as a singer, actress, producer and playwright. Her acting talent was discovered by Welcome Msomi where Thembi performed in his original Umabatha. She then joined the 'Musical Ipi Tombi', and became the lead female as 'Mama Tembu'. She made several international tours including the West End and Broadway. Whilst in the Us she met with the accomplished South African artists, Hugh Masekela and Miriam Makeba. She worked with both of them and together these three artists toured Europe and Africa. Coming back home, she joined the Market Theatre and worked with names such as Dr Gcina Mhlophe and Maralin Vanrenen in the production called 'Have You Seen Zandile?' In 1988, Mtshali-Jones took on her first major television role as Thoko in 'Sgudi Snaysi', which became an instant hit and catapulted her acting career on television.

In 1998, she was made an honorary citizen by the Mayor of Louisville. The Governor of Louisville gave Thembi the highest honour Kentucky can bestow on a civilian by

making her Honorary Kentucky Colonel. In 2006, Mtshali-Jones joined the international production Truth In Translation directed by American director Michael Lessac. The play was opened in Rwanda and was later performed in the US, Europe and Africa as well as at Baxter Theatre Centre in 2007. In 2009, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the City of Durban and the KwaZulu-Natal Province. She then received a Lifetime award from Arts and Culture Trust in 2015. In November 2019, Thembi was honoured with The Living Legend Award at National Black Theatre Festival in North Carolina, USA to distinguish her service to South African cinema.

In addition to acting, she wears many other caps in the entertainment industry. She is a co-founder of Spirit Sister Productions which has produced television productions like 'Power Within', an acclaimed women's television magazine programme. Mtshali-Jones has held seats in different theatre boards including the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town and The Playhouse Company in Durban. In May 2022, Durban University of Technology conferred on her an Honorary Doctorate Degree In Visual and Performing Arts.

## **Dr Nomalanga Mkhize**

*Nelson Mandela University, South Africa*

Nomalanga Mkhize is a historian based at Nelson Mandela University. She is currently the acting Director for the School of Governmental and Social Sciences and was previously the Head of Department for History and Political Studies. Mkhize's research interests is in the broad African language archive and historiographies including oral histories, oral traditions and vernacular historical literatures. She also has an interest in children's literatures and literacy.

## **Prof Abiodun Salawu**

*North-West University, South Africa*

Abiodun Salawu is a Professor of Journalism, Communication and Media Studies and Director of the research entity, Indigenous Language Media in Africa (ILMA) at the North-West University, South Africa. He has taught and researched journalism, media and communication for close to three decades in Nigeria and South Africa. Prior to his academic career, he practised journalism in a number of print media organisations in Nigeria. He has to his credit, well over a gross of scholarly publications in academic journals and books. He has also edited/co-edited ten books and authored one. He is a regular presenter of papers at local and international conferences. He is a co-vice chair of the journalism section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) and a member of the editorial/advisory boards of a number of journals. He was involved in the founding of the International Association for Minority Language Media Research. He is rated by the NRF as an established researcher at the level of C1 (with international recognition) and he is a member of the Codesria's College of Senior Academic Mentors.

## Session 1: The Somatic Stone - Peaks and Ravines of Gender & Sexuality

## **Tshegofatso Seoka**

*University of South Africa*

### ***Intersecting varied materiality of masculinity through the work of South African artists; Bongani Njalo and Nicholas Hlobo***

Gender and gender performance is administrated through the collective social conventions of gendered identities. Multifaceted and plethoric, gender almost always finds itself under the scrutiny of hierarchical patriarchy. Masculinity in this sense will be intersected and dissected from varied subjectivities which differ from the normal, constructed, and mediated identity.

Hegemonic masculinity takes form as the most 'honourable' way of being a man (a desire to be recognised by others as a 'man') this form of hegemonic identity is often mediated by the community one finds themselves inhabiting. In this ideal society with ideal performances of gender, one needs to participate in the corresponding identity through pre-mediated actions to generate and maintain the ideal identity.

Should the performance be accepted, one has succeeded in aligning their micro identity (personal) to the macro identity (community). Upon this success, a sense of belonging and legitimacy is afforded to the performer and as such assimilated and accepted within the collective community.

The study aims to investigate and discuss hyper- masculinity created as a collective frame of meaning, investigating both possibilities and restraints in concrete structures of what constitutes to be a real man by analysing the work of Bongani Njalo and Nicholas Hlobo. Njalo in his body of work "Abafana abafani" stages an intervention in South Africa, in Port Elizabeth. The intervention emanated from the protests that arose in PE after the publication of the short film "Inxeba".

Hlobo highlights the dichotomy governing art production and materiality, with materials as constitutions of feminine and masculine identities. Through this juxtaposition, he creates artistic interventions relative to the conversation of gender performance, hyper- masculinity and varied expressions of gender identity, and sexuality.

As lexes of varied/diverse expressions of gender, both artists explore masculinity and its different forms of expression with nuances of sexuality, femininity, frivolity and tenderness, concepts not often afforded to "masculinity" as a performance of gender, while exploring their cultural conventions as Xhosa men within a global and democratic South Africa. Through the employment of qualitative analysis methods, focusing on post- colonial literature on othering, and identity with a specific interest in the psychology of gender performances from a Butlerian perspective, collected from both primary and secondary sources in the form of books, article journals, dissertations, and theses as well as source relevant articles from the internet.

## **Theo Sonnekus**

*University of Johannesburg*



## ***Looking hard: Table Mountain and the homoerotic imaginary in late apartheid South Africa***

This paper explores the negotiation of Table Mountain in Cape Town as a national symbol via historical photographs of the male nude that appeared in a selection of coffee-table books issued by Alternative Books, a South African publisher active in the late apartheid period (1981-1991). Alternative Books catered predominantly to white South African gay men, who found themselves in an untenable situation, indeed, 'between a rock and a hard place', for most of the 20th century. In other words, they were simultaneously the beneficiaries of white rule and positioned by the state as the scapegoats for moral and social degradation. Table Mountain, a monolith in a literal and figurative sense, continues to occupy a central place in the South African national imaginary as a celebrated marker of place and home. However, ownership of this site has shifted significantly across time to serve the polity and exclusive notions of national belonging. During apartheid, for example, the mountain figured as the southernmost marker of terrain governed by the National Party. Before the establishment of the Cape Town's so-called 'gay village' and status as a gay tourist destination in post-apartheid South Africa, the city (parallel to other 'white' urban areas) was constantly surveyed by state forces to regulate and expel people of colour, as well as 'sexual deviants', which, at this particular historical juncture, plainly alluded to white gay men. By situating their erotic tableaux against national landmarks, including Table Mountain, this paper makes a case for radical narratives of the nation written into existence by Alternative Books for their readership at the end of the 20th century. While their titles did not produce any notable material shifts under apartheid, regarding, for example, the legal status of homosexuality, they potentially destabilised heteronormative associations with 'the land' or 'home' to reconcile same-sex desire with national identity at a symbolic or vicarious level.

**Micaela Scholtz**

*Nelson Mandela University*

## ***A stone in my belly: visually unearthing endometriosis, the invisible illness***

Endometriosis is an invisible condition which goes unnoticed by others as the pain and symptoms experienced are assumed to be a normal part of womanhood. Endometriosis is a difficult disease to diagnose and communicate as symptoms can be overwhelming, vague, embarrassing and difficult to express. The misrepresentation of women with illnesses holds both personal and social implications, and as a result, vast contradictions exist between the societal expectations of women, their bodies and their lived realities.

Utilising an autoethnographic research method, and the exploration of embodiment as a tool for critical self-reflection, provides this study with the necessary understanding to construct visual narratives expressing the lived realities of women with endometriosis. Embodiment acknowledges the interaction between our minds and bodies making sense of a complex set of experiences and feelings through what has

been personally encountered in the world. The meanings developed from a conscious embodiment, regard the body as a lived experience and physical object, symbolically represented in the creative practice. This method of enquiry and creation results in "unearthing" of the unconscious and aids in a better understanding of the self.

These embodied, positive and empowering visual representations realign the misperception surrounding Endometriosis and provide women an opportunity to assert themselves, as well as speak openly about topics often regarded as taboo. Visually portraying the emotional and physical feelings experienced by women enables them to learn about themselves as well as to inform others about the condition and how it is managed. Existing conventions are challenged, relationships between the self and the other, the visible and the invisible, and the physical inside and outside experience of the body is exposed.

This visual creative practice portrays women in a positive light, encouraging personal acceptance, and provided me, as well as other women, with the opportunity to come to terms with the invisible illness we have to live with whilst allowing the viewer the opportunity to engage with and form their own understanding of "invisible illness".

## **Andile Nsele**

*Durban University of Technology*

### **Maye Maye**

The African continent is a difficult place for homosexual people to live, with Zambia imprisoning two men for 15 years for having gay sex and Uganda detaining LGBTQ+ activists while driving homosexuals to run away from their families just to be safe and run away from corrective rape, stoning, hurt speech and 'tire neckless' (being burnt alive). They end up in unliveable, unhygienic and inhuman places. Why in modern society do homosexuals still suffer when homophobia is not African?

Homosexuality existed in Africa long before the continent was colonized. Extensive evidence collected by anthropologists and other scholars shows that same-sex practices and diverse sexualities can be found all over the continent and predate colonization. They are even ancient San rock paintings near Guruve in Zimbabwe dating back 2,000 years show explicit scenes between copulating males. African equals ubuntu so homophobia should not exist in Africa.

My concept for the film titled 'Maye Maye' speaks on such themes of homophobia being non-African. It speaks about the pain and sorrow homosexuals are endowed with, as they end up with no families and live in dire environments just to find some sense of home. Maye Maye is an IsiZulu saying which means 'crying out with no hope in your eyes.' My concept is a cry to sonini nanini to open their eyes to peace, love and ubuntu. I will be using garments and environmental issues as visual metaphors to drive and help support the concept.

The muted monochromatic and small pops of colours will set the mood for the film. I will be combining spoken word, wordplay, spiritually focused music, still images and slow and fast motion to achieve the view where I take their pain and suffering and curate it in an artistic form, in order to aid the healing processes and show their inner



strength when we look at their stories. In this approach, I am hoping to engage with the issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community in a respectful, humble and beautiful manner.

## Hayley Hayes-Roberts

*University of Cape Town*

### ***Stoneground temporalities: gendering rocks in South African post-transition memorial culture***

Global and universally accepted forms of commemoration appear to be the accepted norm in South Africa therefore continuing the legacy of figurative bronze statuary forms made popular prior to democracy. This notably forefronts men's active and resistance roles in establishing the new South African nation. Women's contributions are largely remembered in terms of sacrifice – a traditional female role as seen in The Women's Monument in Pretoria commemorating the 20,000.00 strong women's protest march on 9th August 1956, which metaphorically relies on the slogan Strike the Woman Strike the Rock - Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' Imbokodo, which is problematic on various levels. Symbolically it relates to women's work and consists of a large grinding stone or imbokodo framed by a geometric metal border positioned at ground level at the very centre of the Union Buildings, Pretoria, inaccessible due to security. As an anti-elitist symbol, recognisable to most citizens it fails to capture the dynamism, dangers and political power of the event and relegates it to "a female symbol, a receptacle - it is as vaginal as the obelisk is phallic," as seen in the Nasionale Vrouemonument, (National Womens Monument), Bloemfontein that features a tall obelisk "Being small and placed on the ground, it appears submissive, unobtrusive, and unpretentious, just as the obelisk is ostentatious, domineering, commanding attention, implying power. Large Rocks and stones mark indigenous Khoisan woman Sarah Baartman's (1789–1816) memorial and gravesite in Hankey and Xhosa prophetess Xhosa Nongqawuse (1841-1898) gravesite in Alexandria, both situated in the rural Eastern Cape. Despite Baartman's remains being repatriated from France and the human rights and national heritage importance of her reburial, her defaced and vandalised memorial and gravesite appears very similar to that of Nongqawuse's in that they both feature a bronze plaque with text mounted on a large rock.

## Leana Van der Merwe

*University of South Africa*

## ***Race and gender in South African colonial gardens***

Colonies and nations are made through control, through planting, and through establishing an aesthetic that communicates ownership and respectability, as well as the appearance of agreement. Jill Casid (2005: xvi) argues that 'to plant [a garden] was both to produce colonies and to generate imperial subjects to sustain them'. The colony is thus also a kind of garden, one in which the settler can take root, creating contained spaces for the emergence and exploration of identity and affects such as loss and the desire for belonging (Cane 2019:5, 39). The making and tending of the garden might be understood as powerful metaphor that produces subjectivities and make up culture in the colonies—and the postcolony. I argue that the garden as a space, and a metaphor, is ineluctably connected to race and gender in South Africa.

With the establishment of the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens in Cape Town in 1913, Harold Pearson (1870-1916) —a Kew-trained botanist and founding partner of Kirstenbosch — argued that the establishment of such a garden would foster 'civilization and patriotism' (Boehi 2018: 6) in the newly found Union of South Africa. The display and celebration of the unique indigenous flora of the region was envisioned as central to this project, and it was suggested that a love cultivated for nature, could substitute the lack of historical European monuments that promoted national pride and reminded white settlers of their cultural heritage.

In this paper I employ an intersectional approach that takes into consideration how race, gender and environmental issues intersect, to reveal how identities and power relationships are constructed through scientific knowledge and conservation efforts, solidified through spaces such as botanical gardens, public parks, and nature reserves. This identification with 'the land' and with nature through botany and conservation is explored by several visual artists, and discussed in my paper as examples. In this paper I will show how artists engage with nature, specifically spaces such as botanical gardens and nature reserves in ways that either betray their allegiances, or alternatively resist cultural hegemony and narrow identity politics.

### **Roxy Do Rego**

*Independent Researcher, South Africa*

### ***Monuments, masquerade, and medusa: Frances Goodman's "Monuments to Waste" (2021) and "Medusa" (2013-2014) sculptures***

In this paper I consider Frances Goodman's recent free-standing sculptural works from her "Monuments to Waste" series, entitled "Crowning Glory" (2021) and "Size Queen" (2021). Both are over two-metre-tall jewelled false nails which the artist moulded in clay, fired, and finally glazed in garish colours and gold tints. I argue the works as monuments or monoliths to the monstrosity that is gender performance, facilitated in part by the beauty industry and its insidious role in oppressive societal norms concerning femininity. The nature of the structures furthermore conflates 'masculine' and 'feminine' constructs; what is both decorative and phallic appears to simultaneously assert itself here. I furthermore engage with Goodman's work

"Medusa" (2013-2014), a sculpture comprising writhing 'tentacles' reminiscent of Medusa's viperous hair, this time constructed using hundreds of actual acrylic nails, and playing on the paradox of seduction and repulsion which the mythological character so epitomises. Indeed, masquerades of all sorts are at play in this selection of works, which I link to the mutability of stone and its historical part in establishing classicism as a whole, and prevailing notions of idealised womanhood.

## Leandra Koenig-Visagie

North-West University

### ***'Negotiating' and 'Transforming': Major obstacles and strategies for change in the contemporary South African art world***

Where questions of race/gender difference (Flax 2010) are concerned in South African art, research often focuses on how matters of race/gender figure in art practice. Very little research is dedicated to how people in the art world experience race/gender difference. In response to this, my aim was to conduct a study that would flesh out our understanding of what it is like to live, function and survive in the contemporary South African art world. Working with the Constructivist Grounded Theory Method (Charmaz 2006; Charmaz & Bryant 2007), I conducted iterative interviews with 15 participants who are artists, gallerists and other agents in the South African art world. Through the recording and transcribing of co-emerging, repeated conversations, I created an oral archive through which I explore the lived experiences and self-understanding of participants. Through a process of rigorous, distillation Grounded Theory coding of this archive, my research revealed two major axes around which people's experiences in the South African art world revolve, namely 'Negotiating' and 'Transforming'. In this paper, I consider what the major obstacles are that people face and how they negotiate those obstacles, such as expectations, exclusionary practices, being used and tokenised, lack of formal support, lack of time and money and being disrespected in general. Despite the obstacles that people encounter, they are also acting intentionally to bring about change. I consider the strategies by which people are working to transform the South African art world, such as strategic refusal, strategic inclusion, the role of informal support, making space, setting their own terms, and a whole set of inner drives that compel people to make art regardless of the massive challenges they face. My work foregrounds participants' agency in the art world as well as the co-construction of knowledge. My research reveals the complex entanglement (Nuttall 2009) of race/gender in participants' experience and their strategies of resistance, negotiation and transformation in the ongoing struggle for equality in South Africa.

## Estelle McDowall

University of South Africa



## ***Hard places: the home, violence, and representation***

Place is central to everyday life. We refer to places daily without considering what the term entails. Place is simple and wrapped in common sense and conversely complicated. Place suggests a connection between a person and a particular location. Place denotes a position in a social hierarchy. At the same time, it suggests a notion of privacy and belonging, as well as ownership. Furthermore, places evoke feelings, for instance describing a place as nice refer both to the way it looks, but also what it feels like to be there.

Place is everywhere, intricately interwoven with the banality of everyday life, and have many manifestations. Accordingly, hard places have the same characteristics. Hard places are ubiquitous and varied and often violent. Hard places are informed by a myriad of factors, specifically oppression, privilege, and societal norms and values. Photographers who enter these violent spaces, find themselves in difficult situations, in terms of physical danger, as well as deciding to take the picture or to intervene in the situation. Subsequently, images that emanate from hard places are situated in the hard places of visual culture.

In this paper, I discuss one of the few images in circulation that shows an instance of domestic violence. Donna Ferrato's photograph, titled Grant and Lisa, depicts the exact moment when the man strikes the woman. I argue that in this image, hard places are represented by the home, the notion of privacy of the home as related to domestic violence, the way that the home as site of abuse becomes a place, as well as the idea of women's place in the home.

Moreover, the photographer's presence brings another dimension to the place. I contend that the home, in its various iterations of place, as represented by the photograph enters the realm of the visual and becomes part of the broader dialogue of domestic abuse and questioning the act of representation.

## Session 2: Fracking 'Plato's Cave' - Engraved and Etched Practices

### Pfunzo Sidogi

Tshwane University of Technology

#### ***From lithograph to Manyabanyaba: Setumane Mokoena's repertoire and localised printmaking discourses***

In this paper I examine a selection of Setumane (Justice) Mokoena's lithographic-inspired prints. Mokoena's almost three-decade long print archive, much of it stimulated by the lithographic process, is centred around the artist's personal and family history. Mokoena's signature use of found objects alongside established etching practices result in a visual compression of different print styles into unique images that cannot be easily classified as classical printmaking. In this reading of Mokoena's lithographic-like fossilisations of his subjectivity, I theorise his eclectic compositions through the artist's Bolobedu heritage. In his artist's statements and synopses, Mokoena evokes the term Manyabanyaba to reimagine the various print processes he has been working with since his first introduction to printmaking during the mid-1990s. In the Khelobedu tongue, Manyabanyaba denotes a residue, imprint or impression. Manyabanyaba are the tattoo embellishments found on human skin or the skid marks on tar left by a car's tyres. In this paper, I advance Mokoena's position that Manyabanyaba is an African-specific concept that enables us to rethink the printmaking tradition in ways that advance and simultaneously expand print creative practices beyond techniques such as lithography and the like. Furthermore, and perhaps most significantly, Manyabanyaba is a fresh infusion of an alternate and localised definition, classification and discourse of printmaking.

### Alexander Opper

University of Johannesburg

#### ***Photo/graphing Stone: The lasting concretisation of politics and the politicisation of concrete in David Southwood's photographs of Johannesburg water towers***

Approaching any of Johannesburg's concrete water towers one can easily be lured into a simplistic 'romancing of stone', in this case, concrete-as-stone. Prompted by a series of David Southwood's recent photographs I argue for the urgent critical reading of the infrastructure under consideration precisely because of its potent visual presence. This potency distracts us from a critical appraisal of what these stony towers represent. They are, namely, not merely innocent expressions of infrastructure.

Engaging Southwood's drone-shot aerial photographs of Johannesburg's concrete water towers, I find it hard to avoid an extra-terrestrial association.

I suggest beginning our interrogation phenomenologically to understand how man, being man, has successfully made a stony composite, more stone than stone, to construct the world. As wilful and enduring as this drive continues to be, it is in the very imperviousness of concrete that we also find a deeply poetic and anomalous material relationship. The chemistry, as it were, between two constituent materials, water and cement, results in what we recognise as concrete. To expand on this, the towers designed to hold water are made, not to an insignificant extent, of water. To make one cubic metre of concrete requires around 150l of water, mixed with a strict ratio of sand, cement and aggregate. The soft, fluid role of water in this mix is the crucial component that enables the solid, hard infrastructural ‘sculptures’ to emerge from the formwork into which wet concrete – sometimes referred to as liquid stone – is poured. The poetry stops here.

The hardened concrete shells serve to receive and distribute water. In Johannesburg, the rhythmic presence of the towers makes legible the ridges and the privileged suburbs that occupy them. The planning and accessibility of this water infrastructure largely ignored, and in many ways continues to overlook marginalised black communities.

A revisionist view of this concrete infrastructure could be described as a concretisation of politics. Or is it the politicisation of concrete? These at first glance benign grey monoliths belong to an architecture of exclusion. The case of Johannesburg’s water towers demonstrates clearly how concrete is central to the planned violence of settler colonialism and the persistence of post-apartheid inequality. Using Southwood’s photographs, I argue that in undoing the apartheid city, planners and policymakers must find more inclusive ways of reinscribing the symbolic and practical value of all infrastructure underpinned by concrete, or man-made stone.

## Jessica Staple & Micaela Human

*Nelson Mandela University*

### ***The ghost in the stone: the romance and practicality of lithography in a Southern African context***

When addressing the subject of ‘stone’ as a printmaker, lithography leaps to mind. Often regarded as ‘the’ printmaking medium, there is a vast library of texts available on its history and practice, with new additions being published with a fair degree of regularity. Some printmakers dedicate their lives to refining just this one technique in the vast family tree that is printmaking and print. In our paper, we shall look at lithography’s romantic history and contemporary adaptability. We will also argue lithography’s historic adaptability and romantic contemporaneity.

The paper comprises three sections. Section one addresses the origins, development and practice of stone lithography. Special attention will be given to the material itself - the 150 to 190 million year-old limestone - and how it was received by artists of early 19th century. In part two, we discuss its evolution in the fine arts and other commercial



spheres. We consider how this 'old world' technique has maintained its place in the arts but also how it has shifted away from it. We also examine its place in the decolonial project. In the third part, Jessica will present her current practice-based research project on a planographic process that stems from stone lithography. She aims to further develop an existing planographic process and make it fit for the South African art school context - one that is accessible, affordable and centres on drawing. All expensive and specialist printmaking equipment is removed from the process but still nods back to the stone lithographic tradition from which it was inspired. Jessica will also present some of the work she has created during the course of her experimentation with this process. This material will form part of a solo exhibition that will be hosted at the Bird Street Gallery in Gqeberha early next year.

## Session 3: Geomorphologies – Decolonising Monumentality

## Landi Raubenheimer

University of Johannesburg

### ***Reluctant landmarks: Ponte City and the Hillbrow Tower in post-apartheid popular media***

Johannesburg, like many other cities in South Africa, is known for its fraught history. From its days as a mining camp, through its early economic boom and segregated geography, to its rise from apartheid's ashes, it has been seen in many different guises. Often called by names that evoke its unresolved character; as edgy, ugly, as a township metropolis, and as Egoli, I would suggest that it may be known by another designation: as 'nostalgic dystopia'. Considering Johannesburg as a contradictory 'difficult' landscape, or indeed as a 'hard place', I would like to focus in this paper on two of the inner city's most notorious concrete landmarks: Ponte City, and the Hillbrow Tower, and on how they were portrayed in the post-apartheid years in popular media, film and photography. Both of these monoliths were erected during grand apartheid and evoke its ideologies as progressive architectural statements that sought to position the city as internationally relevant and nationally grounded. In the years after apartheid ended, these two buildings have however become more dubious in their iconic status, and are emblematically contradictory, pointing to the inherent ambiguities in the contemporary city: its once (and newly) envisioned future and its dark past. Ponte City, which fell into decay and became known as a slum from the 1990s onwards, has seen many renovation and rejuvenation projects, and the Hillbrow Tower is now the beacon of one of the most notorious and densely populated neighbourhoods in Johannesburg. In this paper I would like to investigate how their qualities of urban ruination may be understood in relation to Johannesburg's portrayal in popular media as nostalgic dystopia, allowing for a deeper discussion around their relation to the contradictory visual identity of Johannesburg. I focus on the film District 9, and photographs by Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse, Sabelo Mlangeni and Andrew Tshabangu, as well as Instagram photography by collectives such as Iseedifferentyou.

## Amohelang Mohajane

North-West University

### ***Curatorial practice, telling the untold stories of the NWU UNIBO artwork archive.***

For many years in my curatorial projects, I have become concerned with the role that the curator plays in relation to bureaucracy, contextualizing objects, and memory institutions (hard places). This concern was to ideally find a social context of archives that I have encountered and align them with the broader social context. As noted by

(Hamilton & Skotnes, 2014:2) a curator, takes on responsibilities that add layers to those already entailed in production and consumption. This giving of close attention to the responsibilities involved in these acts and other research and presentation practices, including but not limited to the questions of power that they involve, offers itself as a response to the need for recuperative care, notably in the face of the implication of inherited archives in the ideologies and practices of colonialism and apartheid.

In this post-apartheid situation, the UNIBO Archive finds itself in a predicament as it laid dormant in a storeroom in a building on the NWU Mahikeng campus that was neither a proper facility to care for the archive. The curatorial intervention for the NWU UNIBO Archive spoke to the relationship between power, representation, and cultural identity.

It was through intellectual inquiry that the act of curation became an exploration of the curriculum, personal stories, and themes. In thinking of these explorative gestures, an evocation of the drama of labour in South Africa under the apartheid system of the 20th century is depicted in an (Untitled Work) in the collection. This painting stuck me; it has no signature (Provenance), but the subject matter is quite striking and evocative. It depicts a factory like setting, where one can clearly discern that the figures in the painting are woman. They are wearing what seems to be uniform as the head gear and aprons are similar. This factory labour setting is indicative of struggle, and contested spaces. In a recent exhibition titled *Unsettling a Single Society, 2022* there are challenges to the myth of settler colonialism and the attendant idea of separate societies ended in 1994. The work is placed under a theme of Migrant Labour. The scene is evident of an industrial site, the woman who are regarded the lowest level in society. The facelessness of the woman clearly shows them disempowered of an identity. The gaining of power is then symbolized by are monumental magnification of the figures in the foreground of the painting.

## **Tshegofatso Mabaso**

*Iziko South African National Gallery*

### ***In the cracks: questioning constructions of cultural heritage***

If we can agree that the cultural heritage sector has largely been designed through the western colonial museum model and relies heavily on the existence of binary categorisations, heteronormative assumption, nationalistic ideals and narrow perceptions of audiences, as the basis for how research is synthesised, processed and archived, then what would the preservation of the heritage or histories of peoples who subvert, transgress and challenge these ideas look like? The museum space remains largely untransformed globally and continues to make it difficult for people from various marginalised groups and communities to gain entry to the spaces and discourses. The ongoing call for new tools and methodologies are stifled by a commitment to outdated museological authority and the colonial history of museums, which continue to facilitate the erasure and negation of black, indigenous and queer subjectivities. This paper will engage the history of queer, transgressive practices in the field of contemporary visual arts, thinking through what approaches and strategies queerness as a methodology and framework proposes.



Radical queer discourse insists on the prioritisation of all intersecting struggles and subjectivities. As queerness offers ideas of an inclusive and simultaneously transgressive present and future, I seek to also think through the impact of these propositions in the museum and cultural heritage space.

## Jonathan van der Walt

Nelson Mandela University

### ***Interrupting the monologue of a monument: de-constructing and re-constructing The Horse Memorial***

This paper contextually analyses the colonial-era public sculpture, The Horse Memorial, unveiled in Port Elizabeth (now Gqeberha) in 1905, from a post-colonial perspective in order to investigate how the reading of it has changed over time. This will include an examination of the monument's role in recent acts of vandalism as well as a visual analysis of this researcher's sculptural artwork entitled Contempt & Contemplation: The Horse Memorial (06/04/2015-06/05/2016).

Many colonial-era sculptures have come under scrutiny in recent history, inciting calls for their removal, both locally and globally. For example, the #RhodesMustFall movement which successfully led to the removal of the colonial-era Cecil John Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town in 2015. One of the issues with public sculpture is that it does not allow for conversation or constructive dialogue, as its message is fixed in time. Although they commemorate historical events or figures, they also often project ideologies rooted in the past, although pre-eminent in their historical presents.

In April 2015, fueled by the #RhodesMustFall movement, a group vandalised The Horse Memorial by removing the colonial soldier kneeling in front of the horse, an interesting irony as the piece recognised the role that horses played in the South African War of 1899-1902, and was not intended to lionize the participation of British troops. The artwork produced by the researcher in not a response to the vandalism, but rather, it addresses the immensity of the period afterwards. For thirteen months, while the soldier was being repaired, The Horse Memorial had a new composition for the first time in over one hundred years. This 'new' sculpture consequently encouraged fresh debate around colonial sculptural representations in the public sphere.

Furthermore, the artwork, which involved 3D modeling and 3D printing, emphasises the conceptual significance of the materiality of 3D technology in visual art situating the creation of the art piece in a specific time period, conceptually reinforcing the researcher's stance in 'revisiting' the past from a contemporary perspective.

Once the soldier was finally repaired, the monument was restored to its original composition. Was the sculpture now imbued with a revised interpretation, having participated in a decolonising 'dialogue' or had it reverted to its original uncontested symbol? And if so, does the artist's interrogation and re-representation of the monument, during this period of transition, change or contribute to the monument's narrative?

## Session 4: Singing Stones & Performance Amphitheatres

## **Sam Usadolo & Alero Uwawah - Ogbeide**

*Durban University of Technology*

### ***Our universe, our common: preserving “us” through the theatre***

The theatre remains a potent development tool. It also thrives as agency and setting of agenda where necessary. The magnitude of its essence finds relevance when it is especially applied in community development. In this instance, the theatre is democratised in such a manner as to require the input of everyone involved in the process. This suggests that the theatre aggregates collective responsibility. We contend in this paper that where collective responsibility is adequately encouraged and manifested, theatre reflects sustainable development. However, we argue that the test in this process is invested in the facilitator who must inspire better participation and practice. In this regard, we look at two projects which at first instance offer platforms for communal preservation but also reflect narratives for climate change education. Two projects exemplify this paper. One is in Ulemon and the other is Evbotubu. The former is thematically around Lassa fever and the latter involves the malaria fever. Lassa fever is carried by the bush rat and malaria by mosquitoes. What is critical here is that the rats find their way into homes as a result of bush burning, and with malaria it is the dumping of refuse indiscriminately. Bush burning creates an ecological problem such as indiscriminate waste disposal which causes drainage blockages resulting in gully erosion. To put in contest, the facilitator finds a need spiraling into other needs: public health challenges would aggregate as environmental problems. These matters underscore to a large extent communal preservation concerns. Since participatory theatre is local, and reinforces the idioms and nuances of particular communities, these projects articulate notions of environmental development and ecosystem protection as succeeding moments of cultural preservation and communal sustenance. These moments reflect the very essence of existence, our common heritage. We interrogate the projects with the eye of facilitator underlining the thoughts of Paulo Freire. We situate the projects through a broader lens and question the process of how theatre might endanger/engender preservation when the facilitator positions herself in a ‘self-preservation’ role. We submit that in any Theatre for Development endeavour, the facilitator must underline their role as part of the communal preservation by opening the arena to as many views as this is a potent way to underscore sustainable development which actually presents as the only ‘real’ preservation.

## **Jonathan Okewu**

*Durban University of Technology*

### ***An ugly head***



The challenges posed by COVID-19 brought about the need to cross-examine the scourge in whatever way possible, which also include using the arts media. Medically spoken, Corona Virus is a disease that affects the respiratory network of the human body. But artistically, Covid-19 morphology possesses a dramatic form that begs for artistic exploration. The aim of the output is to create ceramic art project that interrogates COVID-19 infodemic through the use of ceramics to represent a story about the effect of the virus to the society. How is this possible with ceramics medium? What ceramics production method can be fluid enough for artistic expression in this regard? What format should such ceramics art work be executed in? What contextual analyses that speaks to COVID-19 can come out of it? The output formalistically and stylistically presents the basic shape of a typical corona virus as it appears under a microscope with projections of glycoprotein. This is made possible through the exploration of terracotta pieces on canvas. The output is an impression of a big one eyed ugly head as metaphoric description of corona virus and it's disheartening effect on everything man has ever worked for. The impact of the virus on societies have been metaphorically portrayed through the art work to mean an ugly head. Whatever is bad, restricts normal life, causes death, and takes away livelihood is ugly. The use of an unusual kind of hand building technique termed clay palm press negates accustomed production methods in ceramics.

## **Tanya van der Walt**

Durban University of Technology

&

## **Tamar Meskin**

University of KwaZulu-Natal

### ***The artist's tightrope: researching our creative selves through self-study of creative practice***

As theatre-makers and creative practitioners, we have used Self-Study, a methodology rooted in Teacher Education, to research our own artist/educator selves, and our practice. This has led us to the development of what we have come to call Self-Study of Creative Practice, an approach that adapts the tenets of Self-Study to the particular needs of the creative and artistic practitioner who wants to research their own practice. Using our own doctoral self-study work as exemplars, the paper will explore the methods and approaches that fall within the realm of self-study specifically to navigate creative practice. These include such arts-based methods as poetic inquiry, collage, visual mapping, ethno-drama, object inquiry, and others. We hope to be able to empower practising artists and creatives who wish to engage in practice-led and practice-based research to use this approach, which has been so useful and useable in our own work. This paper will allow us to demonstrate our use of Self-Study of Creative Practice, and elucidate a clear methodological approach that can be used by any artist/ teacher/ researcher to engage in practice-based and practice-led research that is rooted in their own creative impulses and outputs.

## Session 5: Between a rock & a hard place – Education & Innovation

**Dianna Moodley**  
*Durban University of Technology*

## ***Stone-cold pedagogy – the new (ab)normal in post-pandemic higher education in South Africa***

The pandemic has catapulted South African Higher Education (HE) into abrupt 'pivot to online', Emergency Remote Learning (ERL), deepening the current crisis of a severely fractured education system still recovering from 'huge hangovers of their colonial and apartheid pasts' (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). While universities have fervently enabled appropriate infrastructure, pedagogy should be acclimatising, enabling the development of adaptive graduates now more than ever, within this unpredictable, volatile environment. However, a perturbing finding is that ERL is exacerbating students' existing academic challenges. Highly subjective, sense-based data was retrieved from focus groups, revealing compelling, emotionally charged interpretations of students' lived realities. Findings exposed that students were alienated and decontextualized from the learning process. An unproductive teaching practice prevailed, palpably desensitized to the psycho-social and mental impact of the pandemic on students. This presentation is a digital, interdisciplinary, contemporary dance piece highlighting the psycho-social impact of Covid-19 on students' remote online learning. It invites the viewer into experiencing students' difficulties in adapting to ERL and calls for academics to consider how its current practice marginalises students through inconsiderate ways of learning that play ignorant to students' lived experiences. The performance is infused with imagery and metaphors, highlighting how students get forced to adapt (or die) in their studies. It is a cry, provoking academics into a brutal, self-conscious introspect and a humanistic response, a radical paradigm shift towards social justice for a post-conflict South African student-body. This is a call for an emancipatory approach to Teaching and Learning - Critical Humanising Pedagogy.

### **Alhamdu Moda**

*Federal University of Nigeria*

## ***Creative innovation as a catalyst for developing countries***

The corona virus which had the entire world shut down for almost a year, saw product designers all over the world come up with creative innovations aimed at easing the hardship that came with the lockdown. Some of these simple but creative methods and approaches ensured that the hardship of confinement behind closed doors was reduced to the barest especially on schools as most students continued learning even while in lockdown. This paper focuses on the fundamental roles an industrial designer can play by deploying simple but creative methods of mitigating some of the basic challenges facing education which include but not limited to environment, instructional material, teaching and learning aids. Edupak- a school bag incorporated with a table and solar powered LED lights was designed and developed by this writer, as a mobile study kit that avails students the opportunity of studying both in school and at home. This product was designed for under-served children who lack the opportunities of a decent basic education, thereby forced to miss out on the experience of learning in school. Most of these children are found in developing countries, with the Sub Saharan Africa having the greater numbers. Edupak aim is to serve both as a furniture and



instructional material and it is intended to distributed free of charge to these set of pupils whose parents live under \$2 and have a purchasing power parity of less than \$5 per day. Edupak will guarantee each child with writing and reading materials, a comfortable and adjustable platform for reading and light to illuminate at night. This paper intends to look at the potential impact especially as it affects learning and how it can be further developed. Keywords: Edupak, Under-served, Development, Sub-Saharan, impact

## **Merie Sutherland & Petro Naudé**

*Stadio School of Fashion*

### ***Metagogy 2025: higher education as a kaleidoscope of places and spaces***

Looking into the multiverse of education and challenging impermeable educational standards.

“Everything can change, even stone” – Claude Monet

Parents of the younger Gen Z consumer believes that there is no educational future locally and that the future of their children lies abroad. 'Children are like buds in a garden and should be carefully and lovingly nurtured, as they are the future of the nation and the citizens of tomorrow,' said Jawaharlal Nehru (1960). If the citizen of the future immigrates overseas, there is no opportunity for development within the country and therefore the educational system. The post-pandemic world can change this perspective with the incorporation of 5th industrial revolution technology and the Metaverse.

The set expectations of parents and educational institutions stand in the way of further innovation due to challenges such as poverty, inequality, and unemployment within South Africa. The identity of the educational system is therefore questioned. This reflects a scenario posed by author Robert Thorson (2004). He proposes that a rock is raw material that is stagnant as opposed to stone, which is a rock that was altered by a human for a new purpose. This poses a further opportunity for analysis on whether education is a rock, stagnant, in place, or is it something that can be adapted and improved by human influence.

Upon this background of stagnation vs. innovation we hypothesise that the future of education is a kaleidoscope of places and spaces. Future education is not a singular stable space, but rather an amalgamation of spaces and places also contextualized as the multiverse. However, how do we ensure real human social interaction in multiple spaces at once? To address this question the study will build on a scenario matrix that was developed by the authors in which four scenarios of future education were proposed. One scenario with a specific focus on metaverse education.

The outcomes of this study will challenge current educational systems to adapt to a teaching model that is both aligned to the multiverse and the needs of a social being. A new and evolving standard in higher education. During semi-structured interviews

with South African parents of younger Gen Z students (in Gr 11 or Gr 12) we will aim to understand whether the metagogy will be the new way of learning within the next three years and how standardized educational norms can align to the multiverse whilst keeping the social needs of students and the country's economic development in mind.

## **Olorunfunmi Shobowale**

*Tai Solarin University of Education, Nigeria*

### ***Art and design in the 21st century workplace***

The digital technologies driving the transformation in work design (Manca, Grijalvo, Palacios, & Kaulio, 2018) have radically altered the methods and content of industrial work (Johansson, Abrahamsson, Kåreborn, Fältholm, Grane, & Wykowska, 2017). For many employees, the COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated a move from centralized workplaces to full-time teleworking from home. As a catalyst for the virtualization of the working world, the pandemic has accelerated company transformation to digitalization and New Work. In a post-COVID-19 world, companies will face the challenge of combining virtual and physical working while offering employees an appropriate working infrastructure. However, the infusion of art digital tools can enhance communication and access to information through new tools and networks such as intranet, internal and external platforms at the workplace. The infusion of the tools refer to the inclusion of modern technologies, contemporary softwares which can be found online - usable at home and at work to make tasks easier. It can positively affect knowledge sharing which contribute to improving workers' skills and human relations within teams and help reduce social isolation that can enhance job satisfaction and job productivity can help lessen the old age stone called technological challenges.

## **Session 6: Anthropocene Enclosures – Digital & Media Causeways**

### **Elisa Bellerio**

*Independent Researcher, Italy*

### ***Classic culture in the digital era***

Classical culture in Italy is losing importance, fewer and fewer students are choosing classical studies. The new digital era, with its speed and immediate communication,

seems to contrast with the classical culture often mistakenly seen as obsolete. The modernity of the classics should, on the other hand, be re-evaluated as an invaluable heritage in order to be still current and inspiring on many issues. Storytelling, for example, originates in ancient Greece, when the bards/poets told their stories accompanied by music. The presentation aims to investigate the need to re-propose the beauty of classical culture, enhancing its modernity through the "homerodigital" project. A blog in which themes of classical culture will be reinterpreted in a modern key and where storytelling services will be offered.

## **James Ohambele**

*Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria*

### ***Art conservation and nanotechnology in Nigerian art institutions: removing the stone***

Art transcends geographical, chronological and technological boundaries. Societies, countries and civilizations cannot exist without art. Artists down the centuries have been instrumental to developments in their times. In recent times, though in a more advanced pace, there has been a symbiotic relationship between art and science (technology). Artists using the tools made available by technology are already speculating about future worlds. Nanotechnology and Artificial Intelligence seem to be the new 'avante-garde' in art at the moment. However, many artists and art institutions in Nigeria are yet to utilize these tools to conserve their artworks done over the years. Many artworks executed by artists over the years have not been devoid of environmental hazards and deterioration and many of such artworks had no action taken on them to mitigate deterioration. It is hoped that Nigerian artists and art institutions will consciously and deliberately begin to use these tools especially nanotechnology in order to conserve artworks that were executed many years back which are affected by environmental changes thereby preventing loss of works worth millions in monetary value to individual artists, art institutions and the nation. This action will remove barriers (stones) that have impeded the conservation of artworks especially in Nigerian art institutions.

## **Peter Anto**

*Independent Researcher, Nigeria*

### ***Sustainable and affordable housing through 3D printing technology***

In recent years, the construction industry has faced unprecedented challenges. A lack of skilled workers is driving up the costs of labour. There is a global housing shortage, and the effects of climate change around the world are clearer than ever. Therefore, questioning traditional construction methods and pushing the limits of innovation has become a top priority, forcing the industry to implement new technologies as they get on board the digital transformation era. 3D construction printing will potentially allow addressing global housing challenges. It is estimated that 900 million people among the global population are living in slums, while 330 million urban households can't access affordable, adequate and secure accommodation. As prices continue to rise,



this number is only expected to increase. Therefore, 3D construction printing – with its ability to create high-quality, cost-effective and eco-friendlier buildings in unprecedented rates – has the potential to address the current housing emergency in a more sustainable way. Because many homes can repeatedly come to life with the same software, model and material. It could also be a viable solution for emergency shelters. And, evidently, the efficiency of the process doesn't necessarily imply that architects have to compromise creativity and aesthetics. Since 3D printing allows for a high design flexibility, it is easy to achieve a balance between beauty, form and function.

## **Mohammed Aliyu & Mamani Joseph**

*Independent Researchers, Nigeria*

### ***Art and industrial design in skills development, invention and innovation***

Historically every generation of mankind continues to search for socioeconomic development and self-actualization for human survival. The quest for self-actualization became a panacea for skill development, acquisition, invention and innovation which in a real sense can best be achieved through the fundamentals of Art and Industrial Design. The modern transformation of visual arts which encompass technological and scientific approach to the Industrial revolution can be achieved through Graphics, Ceramics, Textiles, Glass Technology, Clothing Technology, Photography and Leather technology. Therefore these Industrial Design courses prompt and gives room for basic skills acquisition and development which enhance innovation and invention through critical thinking and application using different media for self-expression. Consequently, this paper highlights the importance of art and industrial design in developing different skills as well as innovations and inventions for self-actualization in art, science and technology trends.

## Session 7: Singing Stones & Performance Amphitheatres

**Gregory Lasserre & Anais met den Ancxt**  
*Scenocosme, France*

***Sonolithique***

Interactive artwork with stone. This visual, sonorous and interactive artwork is inspired by the lithophone: one of the oldest musical instruments of the humanity. The spectators can scratch slowly each of the stones to explore their resonance. The different vibrations are augmented by a visual and sonorous relationship. The cymatic visuals come from wave shapes made visible in liquids. Sonolithique offers a sensory and symbolic connection with mineral matter.

## David Quang Pham

*Playwright, United States of America*

### ***ELLIPSES: An earthly musical***

Romance in Stone: When a collaboration is created for the intention of creating a new musical, the playwright/composer determines whether the script is set in stone or whether the stone weathers the director's and performers' ideas and experimentations. David Quang Pham lets his stone ELLIPSES go through a natural erosion this past year. Now, this stone gets a chance to be artificially layered this July. Evolving Trends in Drama: David Quang Pham's upbringing started in the virtual medium while many playwrights in the past started their career on a physical stage. He is a part of the new generation of musical writers who started off in the virtual medium before evolving into the physical stage. As he moves into New York City, he emerges into the artist development of a traditional musical writer. That has been a trend in the performing arts. He now plans to throw his stone into a new environment (Colorado) to see how the stage director and performers carve his stone or how he lets himself erode. Description of the artwork: ELLIPSES stars the Galaxy family and their dog Gravity as they sing and dance their way through the Big Bang. The online collaboration between Atlanta, Georgia and Wyoming, Michigan exhibited at DigiFest'21. Between August 2020 and July 2021, ELLIPSES was developed in David Quang Pham's Working Title Playwrights New Play and Dramaturgy Apprenticeship.

## Session 8: Rock of Ages – Traversing *Hard* Places

### Justine Wintjes

*Wits University*

### Nothando Shabalala

*KwaZulu-Natal Museum*

### Bawinile Mtolo



## ***A dwelling perspective on ukubethela crosses (iziphambano) in rock shelters of the AmaNgwane and AmaZizi mountain wards, KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg***

The Maloti-Drakensberg mountains are well-known as a rich repository of rock paintings produced by San (Bushman, abaThwa, hunter-gatherer) artists. This elaborate figurative practice goes back at least 3000 years and by the early twentieth century ceased to be a living tradition as hunter-gatherers became increasingly marginalised, ultimately either killed or absorbed into sedentary communities, and disappearing almost entirely as a discrete identity. Alongside these painted works are numerous other kinds of markings on rock surfaces that have not received as much attention by researchers. Farming communities settled since at least 1700 in the AmaNgwane and AmaZizi traditional authority areas of the northern KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg, have shaped a continuously lived-in landscape different from the more 'pristine', formally protected areas that make up the Maloti-Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site. Access to electricity and other amenities has encouraged people to settle at lower altitudes, but the higher land continues to be used for a variety of reasons. In rock shelters used as seasonal camps and animal kraals can be observed dark finger-smear crosses, sometimes apparently placed in a meaningful relationship to the older San imagery. These crosses (iziphambano) are an expression of ukubethela, or practices of homestead fortification, through the application of a custom-made botanical substance by a healer onto the wall surface of a house typically near to doors or windows with a view to protect the occupants from evil forces. A homestead is conceptualised as a living being, and the same kinds of substances are used to mark or scarify a person's body for protective and strengthening reasons. We investigate the possible links between iziphambano and San rock painting through a visual and spatial analysis of specific rock shelters. We also consult makers and users of iziphambano in these spaces. A rock shelter marked in this way may be conceptualised as a significant place of dwelling, and even a 'home', where a painted figure functions as a kind of spiritual threshold. This idea resonates with some of the conceptual aspects of San painting, where the rock surface is a permeable interface between the world where people live and the world of the spirits. Our investigation of the dialogue between different layers of markings on the walls of rock shelters enables a dwelling perspective on the changing uses of rock shelters in the mountains in historical times.

### **Rabia Abba Omar**

*Stellenbosch University*

## ***Concretions: ghostly echoes of the slave ship São José***

On 27 December 1794, the São José Paquete d'Africa wrecked just off the shores of Cape Town. Battling the rough winds, high swells and stuck between two reefs, the crew set about to rescue their most precious cargo - the 512 enslaved people held in the ship's hold. Despite the efforts of the crew and the people on the shore, 212

enslaved people succumbed as the ship broke into pieces. For over two centuries the story of the São José was no more than a footnote, as the ship and the objects on it began to erode on the seafloor. A discovery by researchers from the Slave Wrecks Project has shed light on this story and a part of South Africa's history that is not often discussed.

Found amongst the kelp and rough waters were concretions, artifactual and eco-factual objects formed and reformed over centuries. Some of these concretions were once shackles and are now amalgamations of sand, other sediment, and underwater organisms, which developed around the metal of the shackles while the metal eroded on the sea floor. It is only upon x-raying the concreted form that the shape of the shackle is made visible. Often mistaken for geological forms, such as rocks, these ghostly echoes represent the violence and horrors of the slave trade, yet the actual objects used to enforce and enslave have naturally eroded into the sea. The objects of slavery, in this case the shackle, have intermingled with the sea becoming a tangible representation of the forgotten, the preserved, and of new life created by the reef.

This paper looks at the ghostly echoes of the concreted objects found on the São José wreck site – a hard place in two senses – a place where hundreds of enslaved people died and a rough and tumultuous underwater environment. It uses the stone-like concretions of the shackles to explore how we can begin to consider human and more than human assemblages of history that lie below the waterline and how we can use these to reconcile their hard and violent histories and the legacies, and objects, that remain with us.

## **Ayanda Mncwabe-Mama**

*University of South Africa*

### ***When the stone preserves moments in history: the case of St. Mark's rock art shelter***

The rock art paintings and engravings have managed to help archaeologists piece together our history. Their presence gives us a glimpse into the artists' lives, activities, cultural beliefs or even thought progressions within the various eras. My recent research was based at St Marks village which is close to the town of Cofimvaba in the Eastern Cape. The rock art shelter within the village has evidence of marks left behind by AbaThwa, onoQhakancu, BaNtu and Europeans. Sociologist, Manuel Castells, would regard St Marks' rock site as a "space of flow", a melting pot in a multicultural landscape . The stone is used as a canvas for lament, entertainment, demonstration of patriotism and as reverence of faith. The paintings and engravings by indigenous

people consist of the finger and fine line paintings whereas the colonial era engravings are made up of initials, ships, animals, a cross, an anchor and decorative motifs. These were all created at different time periods and the paintings were first recorded in 1860 by George Stow who was a geologist. Thus far, there are no records on the colonial era engravings embedded on the St Marks' rock site. My research was an attempt to identify the colonial era engravers and analyse the markings. As an Anglican Mission, founded in 1855, St Marks' had settlers, frontier police who were stationed to manage stock theft and stonemasons who were responsible for the construction of the churches and bridges in and around the vicinity of the village. The stone preserves evidence of emotional and historical background of individuals that visited the site. The villagers current use of the shelter as a spiritual sanctuary could be different to what the shelter meant in the colonial era especially since the Africans were restricted from visiting the site. Today most of them have no knowledge and understanding of the engravings in the midst of their location. The relationship that Europeans had with the stone can be further explored to fill the gaps of our South African history.

## Session 9: Digging Deep: Interstitial Practices

### Esther Dokyoung

Modibbo Adama University, Nigeria

#### ***Ceramics in the continuing care of inpatients with mood disorders: cultural awareness and social learning of Nok terracotta bas relief***

Wonder how hospital studio practice can rekindle cultural awareness of a dying cultural heritage? Nok Terracotta production process by 40 patients with mood disorders based on learning-centred ceramics pedagogy, creative exploration using emergent methods for firing and production shows that social learning, art pedagogy and ceramics practice can serve as boosters for self-efficacy, positive mood and



extending Nok history and the reproduction of an ancient indigenous ceramics. The adaptation of Nok images through relief modelling practice at three mental health facilities births 'Nok capacity based resources' i.e. the Ceramics Continuing Care Module (CCCM) and a multimedia version 'CCCV' from in-patients' studio experiences. The study presents valuable cultural knowledge and awareness, amid the dwindling state of Nok cultural information and traditional Nigerian ceramics. The study rejuvenated creative imagination, physical activity, and enhanced continuing care for mood disorder recovery using mixed methods for its data collection and analysis. Nok souvenirs with aesthetic purposes, everyday functional items created by the researcher and inpatients with exact replicas of the Nok figures will be exhibited.

## **Shirley du Plooy**

*University of the Free State*

### ***Ritualisation and sacralisation of contemporary rock art***

The Mohokare (Caledon) River Valley is an area with ritual topography. It is an area and landscape peppered with features which appeal to the cultural/ritual sensibilities of its inhabitants; features such as the mountains, caves and proximity of water, to name but a few. The mountains' golden-coloured sandstone weathers in a particular way, giving rise to overhanging cliffs and caves particularly evocative in such ritual topographies. People have long sought refuge in the valleys and sandstone shelters from the weather, from foe or for spiritual purposes. Motouleng, Mautse and Mantsopa are three such places. Their names alone, evoke connotations of sacrality and fertility rituals. Locals of the Mohokare and adjacent areas of the eastern Free State and Lesotho approach these sites with trepidation and awe. These are places of power and the journeys undertaken to these sites, are sacred.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork, this paper explores the contemporary rock inscriptions and dwellings, as acts and expressions of devotion and living heritage. The spiritual appropriators and symbolic owners of these places use packed river rock or sheer slabs/wedges of sandstone to build walls for domestic quarters and spiritual purposes to demarcate the parameters of important localities. With respect to the latter, pilgrims further ritualise paths and stations by visual inscriptions on nearby rock surfaces. These psychic and spiritual coordinates ultimately lead to their sacralisation, and in turn, the creative enactments.

## **Catharina de Klerk**

*Independent Researcher, South Africa*

### ***Navigating more-than-human relationships through the lithic in Sarel Petrus's an Ode to Rock***

The exceptional power of stone transformed through human intervention is described in ancient Greek technical writing, with the relationship between human beings and

stone as a medium, metaphor and artefact significant since prehistory. In the contemporary South African artist Sarel Petrus's *An ode to rock* (2016), the artist, an avid rock climber, carried a rock directly cast in bronze back to the place where he collected the rock and replaced it in a mountain stream under a waterfall as a monument to rocks. The performance was documented in *Sarel Petrus: An ode to rock* filmed, edited and directed by Ruan Kotze. Later Petrus decided to remove the bronze rock for re-use. Sarel Petrus is known for his evocative artwork incorporating overlooked everyday objects directly cast in bronze, often exploring the complex relationship between human existence and the natural environment. In this paper, I consider *An ode to rock* as a creative, but problematic intervention in the landscape, reconsidering the human relationship with nature. Through the use of the historically loaded medium of bronze, associated with monumentality, preciousness and permanence, to represent a stone, the artwork speaks to changing social and environmental narratives about the relationship between human beings and stone. These ecological considerations take on an added significance in light of the growing consensus that the Earth has entered a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene, with human activities increasingly contributing to environmental change. I argue that the heightened awareness of transience recalled by Petrus's *An ode to rock*, emphasises the destructive effect of human actions on the environment, connecting various more-than-human forms of existence through this inherent vulnerability, including the fragility of apparently solid, impermeable and immovable stone. This paper contributes to the discussion of the lithic metaphor as a productive framework for exploring controversial or hard places in South African visual culture with specific reference to selected work by Sarel Petrus.

## **Ann-Marie Tully**

*Durban University of Technology*

### ***Indigo & plant pigment processing—A Deleuzian recipe***

Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don't sow, grow offshoots! Don't be one or multiple, be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point! ... Don't bring out the General in you! ... As they say about old man river:

'He don't plant 'tatos

Don't plant cotton

Them that plants them is soon forgotten

But old man river he just keeps rollin' along'

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2005: 25).

This dialectic between old man river and the General (25) is played out in each life. The General marches through each firing synapse with the will to complete, to progress, to fulfil the teleology of western humanist and enlightenment thinking. The fetid work of late Marxism to uncloak the tyranny of this unitary dialectic [order|chaos; progress|despair, completed|failed] has done little to break this strata of thought that lies now embedded [crumbling] in the minutiae of every mind. The practice and life of this visual-maker-writer is a case in point—where there should be an infinite line.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's ontological manifesto, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987), chips away at the General's high ground: of

being-in-completeness, discrete from Others [the Cartesian singularity] by recognising the assembled, connected, causal multiplicities that transpire in the phenomenologies of every life—because old man river...

Despite the daily hardships—the hard work of time-poverty; desiring and Dasein, the multiplicity of dieings that dye the self [a swarm]; becoming[s] mad in tune to the schizophrenic polyrhythms of the world; the acts of haste and waste—the General-within (25) rails against 4 years becoming-soil-plant-chemistry-dye-inks-emulsions-aesthetic, groping at a means-to-a-means, not alchemy, that means-to-an-end. While old man river (25) retorts, that ‘rollin’ along’ is the work—doubt in progressivist discourse aside, we must still allow that work is the product of desire.

This paper-presentation-performance will annotate the multiple assemblages of old man river (25) in application to this author’s botanical pigment practice. Suggesting ways in which Deleuzian (1987) anti-metaphysics can be engaged.

## Session 10: ‘Breaking Rock’: Transforming Visual Culture Practise

**Alicia Naidoo**

*Durban University of Technology*

### ***Untold and unacknowledged views of colourism among South African Indians in South Africa***

Colourism has continued to define the sociopolitical order in South African society in terms of how people identify themselves to fight a common social malaise. In the South African context, it is a stark reminder of how people were deprived of the essence of



their humanity during apartheid. However, even though apartheid is no more, colourism has continued to define the way South African Indians relate to themselves. The qualitative research carried out using semi-structured interviews to examine the effect of colourism among South African Indians, revealed a high degree of classicism as revealed by the participants, who were all Instagrammers. A finding that was common across all themes in the study is that while the apartheid skin colour problem was interracial, it is intra-racial in the Indian community in South Africa, as the findings of the study revealed. The findings also reveal how Millennial and Gen Z are fighting to end the toxic cycle of colourism in South Africa by using digital space. These findings and many others will be discussed in this study. The study ends with recommendations on how the deleterious effects of colourism can be addressed among the South African Indian community in South Africa.

## **Khanyile Nonkanyiso & Sam Usadolo**

*Durban University of Technology*

### ***Exploration of the relevance of communication practices learned in the classroom in the workplace communication context***

Workplace communication contexts are changing rapidly because of the emergence of digital communication technologies, recognition of the importance of cultural diversity in organisations, and recently the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. To respond to these workplace communication contexts, universities must constantly amend their curricula to prepare their graduates for the world of work.

The findings reported in this study explore whether communication learned in the classroom applies to workplace communication activities in terms of how university graduates are adequately prepared to deal with organisational and workplace relationships that require the ability to communicate interpersonally and within departments in the organisation. A qualitative research design combined with the activity theory as an analytic lens used in this study enabled us to seek the views of the recently graduated Durban University of Technology's students. Specifically, in this study, the focus will be on understanding how Language Practice graduates can apply what they have learned in the classroom in their workplace contexts.

Our study is built on different scholars' observations that as much as there is enough research on the use of language in the workplace, the line between research and pedagogy with respect to familiarising students with workplace communication practices is still weak. Based on the findings, recommendations were given to improve how communication theory learned in the classroom can be of relevance to actual communication practices in the workplace.

## **Karli Brittz**

*University of Pretoria*

## ***Playing in the Anthropocene: exploring social media installation spaces***

Literature concerning cyberspace has predominantly explored how humans engage with digital worlds and how virtual realms represent (or distort) reality, especially with focus on the virtual space of social media. Such virtual spaces are never concrete – or then set in stone – they are constantly changing, evolving and, accordingly, hard to place. Recently, a new phenomenon in the study of space and place has emerged: so-called social media installations. These places are specific, physical locations created with the primary purpose of generating visual content for the virtual realm of social media. For example, the Museum of Ice Cream and Colour Factory, have become popular culture sensations, where visitors are invited into a place that is a physical extension of the virtual. These aesthetically concentrated experiences embody filters, lighting, colour and backgrounds that signify the fun, frivolous, playful and hyperreal world of social media. In other words, the realm of cyberspace is no longer just the human extending into the digital, but the digital is now also extending into our physical world, becoming increasingly tangible and solidified. In spite of the physical location of such social media installations, they are still, complex, confusing and also hard to place in literature, receiving little scholarly attention to date. In the popular press they have been labelled as anything from art, wonderlands, immersive and sensory experiences (McGowan 2022), to narcissistic and existentially void sites (Hess 2018). No matter what they are referred to (or perhaps romanticised as), they are increasingly important places that require further analysis. In this paper, I critically explore such social media installations through the lens of Miguel Sicart's (2014) notion of play and Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia (1986). The paper focuses specifically on two South African social media spaces, DreamBox and InstaNation, considering the capabilities and potential shortcomings of such spaces in creating new ways of seeing the (digital) world. Moreover, I aim to throw my stone towards making sense of these increasingly significant spaces in contemporary society.

**Tarryn Frankish, Andile Dube, Genevieve Govender,  
Sindi Mbili, & Aadryan Ogle**

*Durban University of Technology*

### ***Qualitative methods at the margins***

Social research in the local context often necessitates addressing unique social issues and the liminalities of working beyond theoretical and operational hegemonies of western praxis through the development of decolonial approaches. These liminalities put research at the interface of established methods and new challenges and demand a re-engagement with the form and content of research praxis. Such a re-imagining of theory and praxis in developing contexts involves establishing and navigating ethical and practical dimensions related to working with marginalised or maligned communities and concepts. Qualitative research holds the key for in-depth, sensitive and exploratory research that is respectful of developing ideas and those who participate in studies. In this paper authors will discuss the various methods they have employed in their research to speak to and about issues pertaining to race, class, gender and sexuality at the margins of social life, social discourse and representation in South Africa. These authors share a focus on methods that allow an interrogation

of social and media forces in the South African context and offer insights for critical research practitioners in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Tarryn Frankish will present on Research Methods in the social sciences. Andile Samuel Dube will present on Representations of gay black characters in the media. Genevieve Govender will present on Women and radio. Sindi Mbili will present on Parenting, poverty and the Media in Inanda. Adryan Ogle will present on Health, youth and the media.

## Session 11: Rock of Ages – Mnemonic Stones

**Talya Lubinsky**

University of the Western Cape

### ***Marble dust***

I will present my research-based practice and theory around the exhibition titled Marble Dust, first shown at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin in 2020. The work contemplates the material relationship between permanence and disintegration embodied in memorial sites and the landscapes of cemeteries. It is at these places in



which the ostensibly permanent comes into contact with the ephemerality of the disintegrating body. From this inherent tension, the artist poses questions on loss and return, absence and presence.

Research on cemeteries in South Africa led me to a cemetery in the Mamelodi township, North of Pretoria. In the still-functioning cemetery offices, pages of old ledger books containing grave numbers, names and dates of burials are strewn across the floor and piled in boxes. The paper is disintegrating and torn. For this exhibition at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, I traced the contours of these decomposing pages and carved them out of marble slabs that she arranges in the exhibition space.

The fragility of the paper archives is inverted when it is rendered in marble, a stone that is commonly used for headstones. Marble is also a substance made from the calcium of bones and shells of sea creatures, compacted by heat and geological time. Here, taking seriously the inherent material qualities of commemorative forms becomes a productive tool for contemplating their meaning.

The Mamelodi Cemetery is the place of burial of black political prisoners hanged by the Apartheid state in the 1960's. They were buried as paupers, with no gravestones. From 2016 – 2019 the human remains of the murdered activists have been exhumed and returned to the families of the deceased. Almost 60 years after their burial, the bones are disintegrated to the point that they have become dust, indistinguishable particles dispersed within the earth. In some cases, it is piles of earth, dug up from the gravesites that is placed in coffins and returned to the families.

This process of digging up, and returning something that is almost fully disintegrated, is a powerful symbol for that which has been lost. The impossibilities of reconstitution and restitution on the one hand, and the profundity of the gesture of return as recognition of injustice on the other.

## Neil Badenhorst

*Independent Researcher, South Africa*

### ***Between worlds***

This presentation focuses on the practical component of my Masters in Illustration. My study is concerned with rites of passage and ritual space within illustrated narratives, and considers the illustrated narrative as a potential facilitator for rites of passage. Within this presentation, I speak to my research-led practice and focus specifically on notions such as intuitive artmaking, artmaking as a ritual process and play; and how these have become the pillars of my creative process.

## Clare Patrick & Stephani Müller

University of Cape Town

### *When meeting the (st)one*

We propose interrogating the theme “Romancing the Stone,” through the lens of lithography, by analysing a series of artworks by Banele Khoza produced at The Artists’ Press.

Lithography is a planographic printmaking process; meaning images are not determined by the physical properties of the matrix — like relief or intaglio where ink is deposited on raised or incised surfaces — but instead the flat plane of the stone is chemically altered. It is based on the principle that oil and water are immiscible and therefore don’t mix.

To be suitable for lithography, a stone must be sufficiently flat, level, and defect-free — a fine-grained, clean slate ready to be inscribed upon. Lithographic stone is sensitive, absorbent, generative, and receptive; while at the same time the material is hard, heavy, impermeable, and opaque. These material paradoxes offer a rich metaphoric backdrop to draw inferences on, as they embody images of contact and separation; intimacy and incompatibility. Further, given that in the South African context lithography is an imported product and process, it engenders a host of complex historical and conceptual implications linked to heritage, decolonisation, and practice-based research.

Banele Khoza, a multidisciplinary artist whose practice centres love both in subject matter and as praxis, engaged with lithography during a residency in 2020. At a time when the world faced the complexities of separation and yearned for contact, Khoza’s exploration offers a soft and contemplative set of prints that engage the emotional potentials of the medium by speaking to themes of intimacy and connection. The titles convey the language of love through whimsy (“Dont forget the tomatoes”), longing (“Widower”), and hesitancy (“Me? Out of everyone”), juxtaposed by confidence and assertion (“When meeting the one”). The works are sensitive and carefully drawn, continuing the deft quality of the artist’s distinct painterly style. Colour is added in separate layers and luscious touché washes are gently applied, embracing the medium’s capacity for incongruous pairings; a meeting of hard resistance and delicate flurries of ink. Through the depiction of faces and romantic written musings, embodiment and contact emerge as central concerns.

Against the backdrop of lithographic history, its complexities and possibilities, we propose to investigate Khoza’s work as a mode of romancing stone. Through an analysis of key works from the series, we will elaborate on the ways that Khoza critically inscribes the medium of lithography as an offering of love, aligned with his artistic practice.

## Eva Kekou

University of Peloponnese, Greece

## ***Stone culture in the Greek art scene and art history***

This paper is going to showcase examples of art from stone time focusing on various examples of contemporary art in Greece. It will show how stone is being used as a metaphor and/or medium of expression in culture and specifically in modern art.

Furthermore, it will showcase examples of marble art and tradition in Greece and reflect on different aspects culturally, socially, artistically by creating an indicative list of artists, artworks and artifacts.

The marble culture in the greek archipelago, the example of the marble art school on the island of tinos will be discussed exemplary cobined with several examples of art in the Stone Age up to date by showing examples of art/monumental art in public space and stone used in modern and contemporary art. It will indicate the different aspects and functions of stone in art and culture and map its artistic activities.

## **Session 12: 'Breaking Rock': Transforming Visual Culture Discourse**

### **Nadir Abdulhadi Nasidi**

*Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria*

### ***The representation of apartheid in the paintings of Fikile Magadlela***

The occurrence of the Apartheid system of institutionalized racial segregation in the history of South Africa began gradually with the settlement of the Dutch East India Company in 1652 and the subsequent invasion of Great Britain. Following independence from Britain in 1948, the descendants of the hitherto Dutch settlers



regained political power under the Afrikaner-dominated National Party (NP), which governed South Africa and officially promoted the Apartheid system until 1994. In all these years, the 'black' South Africans have suffered greatly from an intense racism under the Apartheid regimes. Despite this sad historical experience, however, many intellectuals among whom are visual artists; use their artistic creativity to promote peace and stability between the indigenous South Africans and their Afrikaan brothers. Using a purely art-historical analysis and qualitative research methodology, this paper examines the visual representation of Apartheid in the paintings of Fikile Magadla, a 'black' South African artist. The paper finds out that Magadla's works, though mostly abstracted based on Freudian psychoanalysis, expose the horrors of the Apartheid system in South Africa and advocate for forgiveness and unity between 'black' and 'white' South Africans.

## **Marnell Kirsten & Jo Glanville-Shein S**

*Red & Yellow Creative School of Business*

### ***Ten years later, beyond a rock and hard place: discussing representations of Marikana in mainstream South African art and media***

The 10th anniversary of what has become known as the 'Marikana massacre' at Lonmin platinum mines in Marikana, North West Province, provides a moment to reflect on the representations of these events in mainstream South African art and media. The past decade saw the creation of a variety of visual artworks, including documentary films and music videos, that attempt to find meaning and give voice to a community that subsequently came to be defined through violence and hardship. Some of the visual cultural examples this discussion may focus on are *Mama Marikana* (2012) directed by Aliko Saragas, *Miners Shot Down* (2014) directed by Rehad Desai, *Murder at Small Koppie* (2016) by Greg Marinovich, *Senzenina* (2018) by Haroon Gunn-Salie, and *Msaki's Blood, Guns and Revolutions* (2020). Throughout, these examples will be supplemented with visuals from South African news media coverage on the events at Marikana.

This discussion will draw on the writing of Fanon (1961; 1967), Spivak (1993), Foucault (1980), Derrida (1967) and Mbembe (2003) to consider the possible implications of these visual works. These implications will be both the ways that these works might perpetuate an 'immovable' narrative of suffering about Marikana and the ways in which these visual expressions might challenge such a 'concrete' narrative of hardship, highlighting agency, multivalence and fluidity.

Key points of the discussion will explore the creator themselves and their positionality, the medium of the work, and the visual relationship to broader discursive formations. 'Beyond a rock and a hard place' hopes to amplify the ways in which visual expression might move beyond the narratives of violence and hardship around Marikana that have seemingly been 'set in stone'.

This discussion does not form part of a larger and clearly defined academic research project that seeks to provide definitive conclusions, so the focus, rather, will be exploratory and will provide a basis on which further research and writing can be done.

## **Andrea Abbatangelo**

*UAL Scholarship, Central St Martins, London*

### ***Saknussemm - Journey to the centre of the earth***

This research is focused on colonialism and when it shifted from “extensive” to “intensive”, with a particular focus on stone. This material has walked by the side of humanity through our history and is thus an ancient and wise witness of our presence on Earth.

Western pioneers and eccentric explorers have, since the XVIII century, been greedy to find an “exotic unknown” in remote regions of the world. In so doing, they have paved the way for a frequently brutal and uncontrolled extractivist colonialism. Geologists and archaeologists, along with photographers, botanics and anthropologists, have been an active part of that process.

The title of this research is an homage to the fictional Saknussemm expedition from Jules Verne’s “Voyage au centre de la Terre (Journey to the Center of the Earth)”. This novel captured the unethical behaviours of some of these pioneers: careerism, racism and cultural appropriation.

Furthermore, between the XVIII and XIX centuries, the West accelerated the exploitation of natural resources which is confirmed by the intensive extraction of stones. Modern science and industrial revolution suggested a separation between human beings and nature and especially from soil and sacred stones. Those were now seen as inert and academics and scientists were able to separate the “good stones” (ancient artifacts, fossils, minerals and precious metals) from all the rest which was seen simply as “waste” without relevant connection with nature or Mother Earth. My research will explore how ancestral skills, developed since the beginning of humanity, have become threatened by (post)modernity.

## **Jenni Lauwrens**

*University of Pretoria*

### ***Touching on tactility in Willem Boshoff’s Blind Alphabet (1900 - ongoing)***

Created for people with visual limitations, Willem Boshoff’s Blind Alphabet (1990 – ongoing) has already received extensive critical attention (see Jones 2016, Swanepoel 2014, Van Eeden 1997). Surprisingly, however, this literature has overlooked how those for whom the installation was created, experience and appreciate it.

In this presentation, I begin by briefly setting out Boshoff’s aims and intentions with this work. Thereafter, I discuss the changing status of touch in museums by pointing

out how touch has been discriminated against by the institutional framework of the modern art museum. The modern art museum might therefore be defined as a ‘hard place’ where those you may and may not see and touch are monitored and their movements strictly regulated. Thereafter, I describe a research project that took place at the Javett Art Centre at the University of Pretoria, South Africa (Javett-UP) in 2021 that sought to overturn these regulations. In this paper I report on the findings gathered from a series of interviews conducted with people who were allowed to touch selected sculptures in Blind Alphabet.

The participants in the study were invited to explore and then describe their experience of selected sculptures in the letter L series, which is the latest addition to Blind Alphabet. The interviewees included blind people, people with low vision, and sighted people who were blindfolded. I dig deeper into the data collected by focusing on three themes that emerged during the analysis: a) tactile intelligence: ‘living with your hands’; b) whole-body tactility; and c) the activation of memory and affect through hapticity. By focusing on these themes, I am able, finally, to draw some conclusions about touch as an aesthetic experience. The research demonstrated that the different sculptures solicit different tactual exploration by the participants thereby revealing insights about them that are unavailable to sight. Blind Alphabet foregrounds the body as the locus of perception, thought and consciousness and demonstrates the role of the senses other than sight in shaping the experience, understanding, and meaning of artworks. In making these arguments, I draw on anecdotal evidence from blind authors (Keller 2009, Kleege 2018, Magee & Miligan 1995), research conducted by artists whose art invites tactile engagement (Driscoll 2020; Kleege 2018), and philosophical accounts of the varieties of touch (Patterson 2007).

## Deborah Jonathan

Federal University of Lafia, Nigeria

### ***Studio textiles designing techniques as panacea for cultural and indigenous attire promotion***

Africans are known to be lovers of culture and tradition, one of the popular ways of promoting culture in Africa is through the use of indigenous woven fabrics. This woven traditional fabrics are of utmost value to many cultural groups and are used by celebrants during special events such as traditional weddings, chieftaincy/traditional title coronation or worn to social gatherings and festivals as a means of tribal identification, also for fostering unity among indigenes of the same clan. However, this traditional fabrics meant for cultural attires are not commonly found in every day market hence their “sacredness” and expensiveness. This is attributed to the rigorous manual technicalities involved as well as time consumption. To reduce the effect of



expensive and not easy to reach traditional handmade fabrics and also for effective promotion of culture, this study suggests that traditional textiles designing methods (tie and dye, batik and printed fabrics) can subsist to help for entrepreneurial skills development towards indigenizing our cultural attires for conscious awareness creation. These traditional techniques are taught both at formal institutions of learning and vocational centers which can be practice by the young and old. Survey and studio practice method of enquiry have been used to find answers to this study. The use traditional textiles design methods as canvased will stimulate availability and accessibility of tribal attires to promote sustainability and awareness of African cultures.

## **Louise McWade**

*Stadio School of Fashion*

### ***Alternate expressions of masculinity in the work of Athi-Patra Ruga***

The central theme in this paper is transformation, which is activated through an analysis of Athi–Patra Ruga’s artwork. The artist describes his current work as “interrogating issues of sexuality, gender politics and the complexities of first and third world influences in contemporary South Africa”. The analysis is underpinned by Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories of carnivalesque and grotesque. Both the grotesque and the carnivalesque are inherently open, fluid, playful and characterised by potential and growth. These characteristics, therefore, stand as ideal counterpoints to rigid, stonelike prescriptions of masculinity that demand conformity as well as ingrained racially-based discrimination and gender bias. Ruga employs the carnivalesque spirit in its challenge to historical hierarchies of high and low subjectivities across lines of race and sexual orientation. As such, Ruga uses his art in reflection of the carnival as a reversal ritual of inclusions/exclusions, inside/outside, visibilities/invisibilities, the acceptable/the unacceptable, the invited/the uninvited, the recorded/the erased as these have been dictated by history in conversation with the body and race and class. In his stained glass collection Interior/Exterior/Dramatis Personae, A sight/site for contemplation, Ruga illuminates the life of Senegalese dancer ‘Feral’ Benga, who performed alongside Josephine Baker in the 1920s and whose masculinity was atypical and whose presence was historically disallowed in the heralded space that Ruga situates them in in his art. I discuss Ruga’s use of historical revisionism and reimagining that this work is typical of, with the carnival as affecting liberation through open-endedness and valuing equality through the deconstruction of hierarchies.

## **Nazmira Fredericks**

*Independent Researcher, South Africa*

### ***Exploring fashion identity and identity communication through the perspective of fashion design students***

Within cultural studies and sociology, the term identity can be used to describe a set of traits, “characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is” (Leary, & Tangney, 2012; Erickson, 1979 & Dowling, 2011:4). Secondary to this is the influence of cultural imperialism, which, according to Schiller (1976 cited in Russell, 2005:267), can be defined as the imposition of dominant imperial power over those of a less powerful population. Considering both these definitions in the context of fashion identity, one should examine the way that societal power relations, when linked to identity, are believed to often be ingrained in cultural discourses (Kaiser, 2012: 21). The system’s dynamic results in individuals being influenced by a particular cultural discourse and in turn, the construction of their individual identities (Kaiser, 2012: 21). This study highlights the identities of South African fashion students in terms of their fashion identity and the communication and construction thereof. Furthermore, the concept of cultural imperialism is introduced through the trickle-down theory – an approach which suggests that affluent individuals’ fashion choices trickle in a downward flow to influence those in lower classes and consequently, impacting the less affluent individuals in projecting a firm admiration towards the latter (Simmel 1858-1918, cited in Kawamura, 2015: 2). This study follows a constructivist philosophical paradigm by which a qualitative research approach is employed. The research design is phenomenologically based and follows a purposive sampling method. The process of data collection is conducted via a focus group and the analysis utilises a qualitative content analysis approach. The research study found that South African fashion students tend to choose the extent of fashion identity projection according to their interpretation of the context and the environment in which they find themselves. In summary, South African fashion students' identities are not prominently communicated.

## **Mike Hatton and Nireesh Singh**

*Durban University of Technology*

### ***The Ghost in the Studio - A demonstration of "Pepper's Ghost"***

Commonly referred to as a hologram, "Pepper's ghost" is actually a Victorian-era stage illusion using projection and reflective surfaces to create 3-dimensional transparent illusions. It was used more recently to bring back Tupac Shakur from "the dead" at the 2014 Coachella music festival. In 2020 it was used to create an Abba concert and has been on the most fascinating attractions at Disney's Magic Kingdom over the past few decades. The illusion will be recreated in Studio 2 of the Video Technology Department.

## Year 2 Students

Department of Visual Communication and Design, Durban University of Technology

### **Light and Stone**

Light and Stone is a project that was undertaken by second-year Interior Design students. An important learning outcome of this project was to encourage students to consider the environmental, financial and social sustainability of products and materials. Therefore, in groups, students were tasked with designing and building a working light fixture using recyclable or "up-cyclable" materials. Their alignment with the DigiFest theme "Romancing the Stone" was open to interpretation so each group designed a light fixture with a particular narrative in mind. They further documented their design and construction process through a short video clip, or "reel", as well as a rationale.

## Years 1, 2, and 3 Students

Photography Department, Durban University of Technology

### **WATER IS.....? (photographic exhibition)**

In recent months KwaZulu-Natal has experienced the impact of global warming with the 2022 floods, which has generated a time of crisis with livelihoods and infrastructures facing intense difficulty or danger. We as the Photography programme need to respond meaningfully and responsibly to this collective crisis, to show vision and foresight, by bringing in conversations about this situation. We all have personal stories to tell. The power in storytelling is that everyone's story is important and needs to be heard. Our programme has many visual story tellers with different viewpoints. Photographers have the tools and practice of gathering visual stories, creating archives, which can contribute to an unfolding greater story, as it emerges as a historic marker on our 21st Century time-line.

## Andile Nsele

Durban University of Technology

### **LaShina Ilanga**

The concept for my design started with me hearing about Katrina Esau, also known as Ouma which means grandmother in Afrikaans. Esau is an 88-year-old who is doing all she can to preserve her childhood language. Esau is the last known fluent speaker of N|uu, known as South Africa's original language and the one native to the country's San community. Simon Sauls, Esau's younger brother, passed away last month, making her the last remaining speaker of the language. With no other fluent speaker in the world outside of Esau, the language has been labeled "critically endangered" by



the United Nations. Hearing this I wanted to share this story in a figurative manner through the fashion lens and use the story as inspiration for the technics, design and fabric that will be used for this draping project. I want to re-imagine Katrina Esau's story as a young homeless boy who is the last member of his tribe, forced to leave his homeland. He ends up on the street of Cape Town all curled up waiting for this eternal rest. The Fabrication, silhouette and color used are visual metaphors for what he is going through: pain, hopelessness, depression and the loss of his motherland, mother's touch and his tribe (family). The title of my Concept is called Lashona Ilange (sunset) because I wanted to show the idea of ending/extinction which refer to the critically endangered language and the idea of waiting for death to come. This is also re-enforced by my moodboard when we look at the two images. Images 1 speaks to the idea of suffocating, endangered, waiting for death and then end of a tribe. In this image you can see a person draining in coal with hand opened like the person is releasing. In image 2 the blood crying eye talks to the homeless boy seeing his future, the future of this tribe the idea of losing hope and the end of his tribe.

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