

LEARNING UNIT

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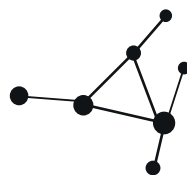
# HOW TO WORK WITH ARCHIVES THAT ARE “NOT THERE”? ENGAGING MEDU ART ENSEMBLE IN THE NOW

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Working Group: Johannesburg  
Authors: Puleng Plessie, Rangoato Hlasane

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# SELF-ORGANISED LEARNING  
# ARCHIVE  
# MEDU ART ENSEMBLE  
# LEGACY  
# SHARING KNOWLEDGE  
# POPULAR EDUCATION  
# APARTHEID  
# ACTIVISM



**intertwining hi/stories**

## THE JOHANNESBURG WORKING GROUP

The JWG is a partnership between Wits School of Arts, Keleketla! Library, Keep the Dream Arts, as well as individuals living and working in Johannesburg. The active members are Puleg Plessie, David Andrew, Rangoato Hlasane, Tumi Mogorosi, Tracy Murinik and Tammy Stewart.

Collaborators have included: #longStorySHORT, Prof Keorapetse Kgositsile, Khulu Skenjana, Masello Motana and students of the Wits School Of Art Fine Art Drawing & Contemporary Practice III course (2015-present) as well students of the Wits School of Education PGCE course (2017 to present), Drawing & Contemporary Practice III of 2016, 2017 and 2018, Maseru Working Group (Lineo Segoete), Another Roadmap Africa Cluster, learners of Metropolitan College and New Model High School, Lephephe Print Gatherings 2 and more.

## ADRESSEES

Students / learners, educators / pedagogues, archivists / curators / museologists, organisers

## ABSTRACT

This Learning Unit is concerned with the politics of archival access or how to work with archives that are 'not there'.

The central story of the Johannesburg Working Group (JWG) is the Medu Art Ensemble (Medu), a collective of informal members; most of them exiled artists from South Africa, working in Botswana circa 1979-1985. Due to the precarity and risk attached to their political work, much of the Medu archive is scattered. Crucially, Medu archive has not been easy to institutionalize. As a result, much of Medu work is unknown and untaught in formal institutions.

The JWG attempts to use the Medu story as a point of departure in decolonizing problematic epistemologies, language, terminologies and pedagogies in modest ways within formal education spaces in South Africa (largely Johannesburg). The JWG has considered notions of collectivity, a being togetherness as a powerful strategy for meaning-making and knowledge-making and knowledge-sharing.

The following document should be seen as a constellation of experiences, processes and activities of the Another Roadmap School Johannesburg Working Group in conversation with the Another Roadmap Africa Cluster, Intertwining hi/stories, students, learners, artists, collectives, Medu Art Ensemble and more. It has been showcased as a zine at the Another Roadmap Exhibition in Huye, Rwanda. Members and visitors had the chance to comment the print outs. These comments can be seen in the attached version and ask for an engagement into this work in progress.

## **SOME QUESTIONS THAT GUIDE THE WORK**

- ▶ What are the legacies of artist-led spaces you may be familiar with?
- ▶ How do artist-led spaces impact society in ways the state platforms do not and is such a distinction warranted?
- ▶ What is common about the impulses that have pushed artists to organize beyond their 'studio' practices into the space of civic action?
- ▶ What is common when it comes to the question of access to tools / platforms for cultural work?
- ▶ How are educators, artists, activists and intellectuals participating in the quest for solutions to a more equitable cultural production today?
- ▶ Why is the field of cultural work still considered elite?
- ▶ What are the limitations and pitfalls of language in art/s education and cultural work?

## REFERENCE TEXTS

A guide to embarking on an arts career in South Africa by Thuli Gamedze

<https://mg.co.za/article/2017-11-22-00-a-guide-to-embarking-on-an-arts-career-in-south-africa>

Beauty in struggle, by Gwen Ansell (tribute to late Prof Keorapetse Kgositsile)

<https://mg.co.za/article/2018-01-12-00-beauty-in-struggle>

Culture & Resistance Conference (1982)

<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/culture-resistance-conference-1982>

Keller, Clive and Gonzalez, Sergio-Albio, ed. Thami Mnyele and Medu Art Ensemble Retrospective Jacana Media: 2009

Kross, Cynthia. "Culture and Resistance" Staffrider, vol 5.2, 1989.

[https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/culture\\_and\\_resistance.pdf](https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/culture_and_resistance.pdf)

Medu Art Ensemble

<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/medu-art-ensemble>

## LINKS TO PROJECTS

Khulu Skenjana reads Prof Keorapetse Kgositsile's 1983 'Culture and Resistance in South Africa'. 9 October 2016. Respondents: Prof Keorapetse Kgositsile, Masello Motana, Khulu Skenjana and Dr. Lindelwa Dalamba.

This #longstorySHORT special edition, made possible as a partnership between Keleketla! Library and Wits School of Arts as part of the Another Roadmap School project.

<https://soundcloud.com/keleketla-library/ntatemogolo-speaks-prof-kgositsile-revists-medu-art-ensemble>

*except when  
it doesn't?*

In other words, literature is a site of struggle; it must serve the interests of the people in their fight against a culture which insists that they should be robbed.

Prof. Keorapetse Kgositile

**Culture and Resistance in South Africa**  
Medu Art Ensemble Newsletter Vol. 5. No. 1. 1983



EDITORIAL

This is the first MEDU Newsletter of 1983. We see this year as an opportunity of consolidating and broadening the multiple skills and techniques needed for cultural and artistic production. Training programs have been developed in each of our units - Film, Graphics, Photography, Publications and Research, Theatre and Music - and we hope to see fruits from these efforts in the times to come.

// work

We hope thus, that our Newsletter will reflect the work done by cultural workers locally. In this edition we feature an interview with musician John Selolwane, as well as a debut short story by new Botswana writer Neo Silwane.

As this is also our first Newsletter since the Gaborone "Culture and Resistance" symposium, in which MEDU played a part, we focus also on this highly significant event. As well as the keynote address by Keorapetse Kgositsile we feature reviews of the photographic and art exhibitions.

Our editorial board awaits contributions submitted for publication as well as comments and criticisms. Please address all correspondence to:-

MEDU Editorial Board,  
P.O. Box 1356,  
Gaborone,  
Botswana.



**ANOTHER  
ROADMAP  
(for arts education)  
AFRICA  
CLUSTER  
presents**

**people who think together, dance together #2: jozi**

**SELECTIONS BY:**

- Mz Understood (Johannesburg)
- DJ Pearl Fischer (Harare/London)
- Joyce Jenje Makwenda (Harare)
- Twist & Turn (Nyanza/New York) and Patrick Mudekereza (Lubumbashi)
- Motoho Curdz (Maseru/Washington DC)
- More!

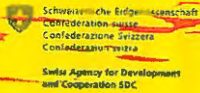
7pm till late

**FRIDAY 7 APRIL 2017**

**Keleketla! Library @ KingKong**

**6 Verwey Street, Troyeville**

**Free entrance, cash bar**



**ANOTHER  
ROADMAP  
SCHOOL**



**keleketla!library**

Share your memories, playlists, dance moves, debate topics here...

My imagined memory of this night is that my heels hurt when it was over, from dancing so much. I remember hopping, stepping, curving, and rolling... but I mostly remember that I imagined this.

imagined this

imagined...

imagine this

**Drawing And Contemporary Practice IIIA (and IIIB) 2018  
(FINA 3011/3012)**

Level: 300  
Semester: One and two  
Prerequisites: Drawing And Contemporary Practice IIB  
Coordinator: Rangoato Hlasane  
Contact details: [rangoato.hlasane@wits.ac.za](mailto:rangoato.hlasane@wits.ac.za)  
011 717 4659  
Room 319, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, WSOA Building.

Contact Periods: 10 hours contact time per week. You will also need to work independently outside of these class times

**Course Description, requirements, outcomes and statement on assessment, please consult WSOA BAFA student handbook (2018)**

**SILKSCREEN WORKSHOP IN A SUITCASE  
AND OTHER VISUAL STORIES**

It has been close to 33 years since the South African Defence (sic) Force (SADF) raided the house of the Medu Art Ensemble in Botswana, reportedly ending the lives of twelve artists/activists affiliated to Medu. At the time Medu had just finished a prototype of a 'Silkscreen Workshop in a Suitcase' (lets call it SWS). It was tested, but never rolled-out as planned. According to South African History Online:

Finally, Medu searched for methods of producing graphics that used materials and skills that could be made available in community organisations and townships. Silkscreening could be developed as a relatively low-cost and available technology. Medu explored ways to adopt newer silkscreen (such as photo stencil) technologies to township conditions, where people might not have running water or electricity. By 1984 the graphics unit proposed producing and distributing the "silkscreen workshop in a suitcase". This would be a portable box (50 cm x 75cm x 15cm) with an silkscreen press that could print A2 posters, ink, squeegee, and stencil material. This would enable township organisations to make posters even under ill-equipped or illegal conditions. With the assistance of Dutch donors, a few pilot suitcases were built; but following Medu's destruction in 1985, they were not put into use. (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/medu-art-ensemble>)

I/we have not yet seen any visual documentation of this 'Silkscreen Workshop in a Suitcase'. Was the documentation also destroyed during the raid or kept *somewhere*? D&CP III 2018 invites you, in 3 - 5 groups consisting of 4-8 members to apply imagination into this 'Silkscreen Workshop in a Suitcase'.

South Africa



Puerto Rico

press  
press  
press,

↳ tracing the role of  
silk screen in popular  
protest - my mom taught  
me to silk screen in the  
context of Puerto Rican  
independence struggle.  
what is it about  
silk screening?

The D & CP III course is informed by the Another Roadmap Africa Cluster work\*.

**What would the 'Silkscreen Workshop in a Suitcase' look like?**

*Back pack*

**Which essentials would it carry within it?**

*acetate  
squeegee  
paint  
knife  
wooden boxes*

**What minimum size would it print?**

**How will you decide on sites and communities it would travel to?**

**What kind of 'archival' legacy would it leave behind?**

*None.  
Dirty t-shirts*

### Say something

Drawing & Contemporary Practice III is a space for you to 'say something'. It is a space to apply one or a combination of the techniques and theories you have gained through the two years of your BA(FA). It is still a structured environment for the last bit of input and direction through technical and intellectual parameters to ground your practice. In 2018, you will gain further skills input in silkscreen monotypes and RISograph printing as well as de/hi/story into artistic collectivity with a focus on Southern African art practices in relation to the world, using Medu Art Ensemble as a point of departure. This will take place in the first block.



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Which essentials would it carry within it?

What minimum size would it print?

How will you decide on sites and communities it would travel to?

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2

) This is a group + important - a call out? - Taster workshops that can lead to long term use? - rotating community lead each group donates / passes on to another? (of their choice) + share their art, print with that group also

**Another Road Map Africa Cluster  
Johannesburg Research Group  
Unchronological Timeline iteration six  
AMIC Deck, Wits University, Johannesburg  
19 September 2017  
12:00-16:00**

*Notes by David Andrew*

The AMIC Deck is a very physical conjoining of the East and West campuses of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It is a space of crossing - it allows students, staff and visitors to move from one campus to the other by way of a vast deck that traverses a busy highway leading vehicles into and away from the central and northern parts of the city. It is a transitory space - one that does not invite pause, but rather determined passage on any given day of the academic year.



On the day of iteration six, the introduction of the unchronological timeline and Abdullah Ibrahim's seminal piece of jazz music, *Mannenberg*, alters this determined space allowing it to become a more physically and conceptually malleable experience - the orientation shifts. Placing the timeline with the flow of bodies while surrounded by the beautifully insistent sound of *Mannenberg* invites pause, contemplation and conversation... A colleague who acts as a paralegal for the academic staff union stops to ask why we haven't invited jazz musicians to participate in the event and further invite the hosts of the national *Morning Live* TV show. Learners working with Puleng Plessie perform poetry readings and introduce their own work into the timeline.

A Mechanical Engineering student who completed his schooling in Durban stops and recalls how piano playing and dance were integral to his early schooling. A student called Neo addresses the "artists" who have installed the timeline and sound piece, interrogating their decisions and intentions. A student in his second year of a Bachelor of Education degree stops to enquire where he might find further information on jazz music. A professional external to Wits on campus for a meeting stops and reads the handwritten entry on Dikobe Ben Martins, an artist and activist in the 1980s and now a member of parliament. She explains that she knows him and promptly sends him a Whatsapp message to tell him of his presence in the timeline. He responds saying that he is in a meeting but responds again a little later to invite the Johannesburg Working Group to engage with his archive of material that might be pertinent to the research project. Martins' invitation offers an opportunity for a further layering and deepening of the Medu Art Ensemble story that is the focus of the Johannesburg Working group. He wrote the following for a paper *The necessity of Art for National Liberation*, delivered at the Culture and Resistance Festival, that took place in Gaborone in 1982:

*"As politics must teach people the ways and give them the means to take control over their own lives, art must teach people, in the most vivid and imaginative ways possible, to take control over their own experience and observations, how to link these with the struggle for liberation and a just society free of race, class and exploitation."*

The South African History Online entry on Dikobe Ben Martins reads as follows:

Martins was born in Alexandra Township in Johannesburg. He attended school at St Joseph's School in Aliwal North, Bechet College in Durban and Coronationville High School in Johannesburg. He was a member of the Black Consciousness Movement in 1970's.

He attended art classes at Bill Ainsley's Studio and at the Federated Union of Black Artists (FUBA) with Johnny Rieberio, Fikile Magadlela and Thami Mnyele. As a graphic artist Martins produced 'protest art' T-shirts and posters in the 1970's. In 1978 he was charged and acquitted for producing banned Steve Biko T-shirts. He also produced the poster distributed at Steve Biko's funeral.

In the 1980's he produced numerous T-shirts and posters for the United Democratic Front. Between 1979 and 1983 he went to Botswana and Lesotho numerous times, where he remained in contact

with Wally Serote, Thami Mnyele and Tim Williams who were living in exile, and who were members of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) the liberation army of the African National Congress (ANC) and leading figures of the Medu Art Ensemble.



In 1979 he was recruited as a member of the ANC and later as a member of MK. He was made the chief coordinator of the visual art committee in South Africa for assisting artists to attend the Culture and Resistance Conference and Festival in Gabarone.

From 1977 up to the time of his arrest in 1983 under the Terrorism Act

he worked at the Community Care Centre and Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre in Pietermaritzburg and ran art workshops and set up one of the earliest silk screen and poster making collectives at the Old Mill building in Printing Office street, in Pietermaritzburg. He was arrested in November 1983 and kept for seven months in solitary confinement and tortured by the security police during this period.

In 1984 while he was in detention and on trial, his book of poetry titled *'Baptism of Fire'* was published by Ad Donker publishers. Before his arrest he had also contributed poetry, graphics and essays on art and culture to the Staffrider publication. Staffrider was one of the most important literary progressive presences of the 1970's and 1980's. It aimed at a popular grassroots readership rather than an elite readership and was consciously non-racial, in the segregated apartheid era. Staffrider had two main objectives: to provide publishing opportunities for community – based organizations and young writers, graphic artists and photographers; and to oppose officially sanctioned and establishment culture.

Martins is presently a Member of Parliament and the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs.

Martins has been a Member of Parliament since the First Democratic Elections held in South Africa in 1994. Prior to becoming a Member of Parliament, he was employed by the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist (SACP) after his release from Robben – Island and Johannesburg Prisons where he served eight years as a political prisoner (1983-1991).

Further notes:

"Curating the space" - Thuli Gamedze

Wind

Stones for weighing down – stones for protests

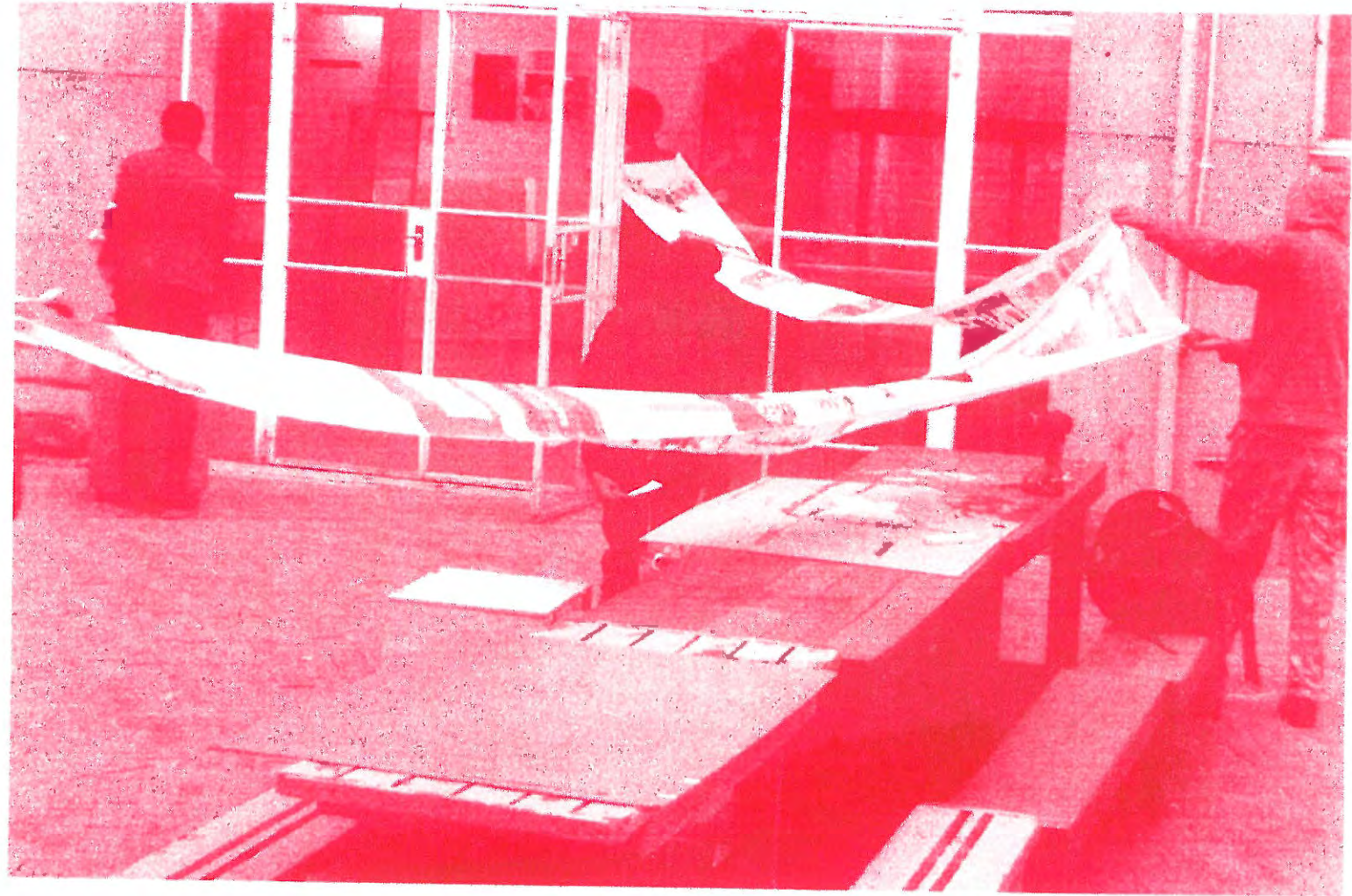
Timeline and protests

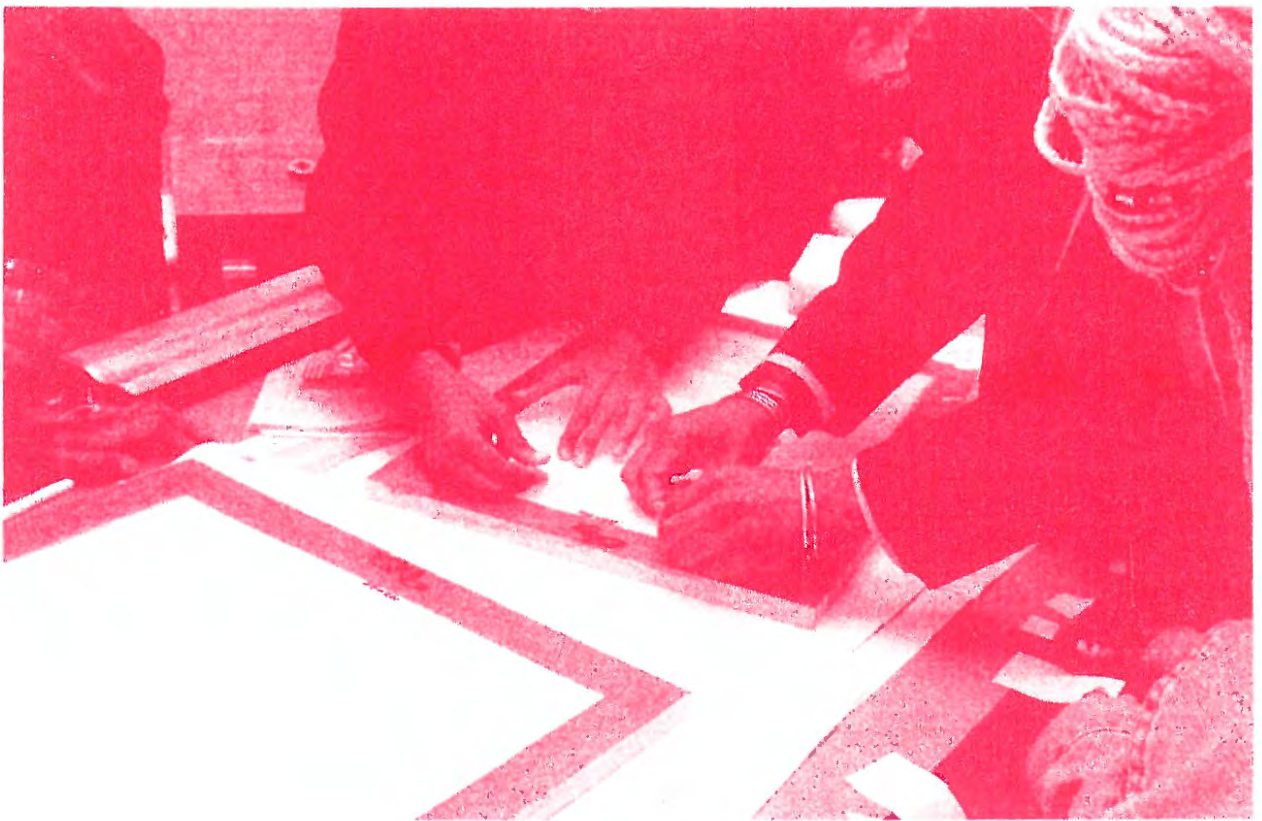
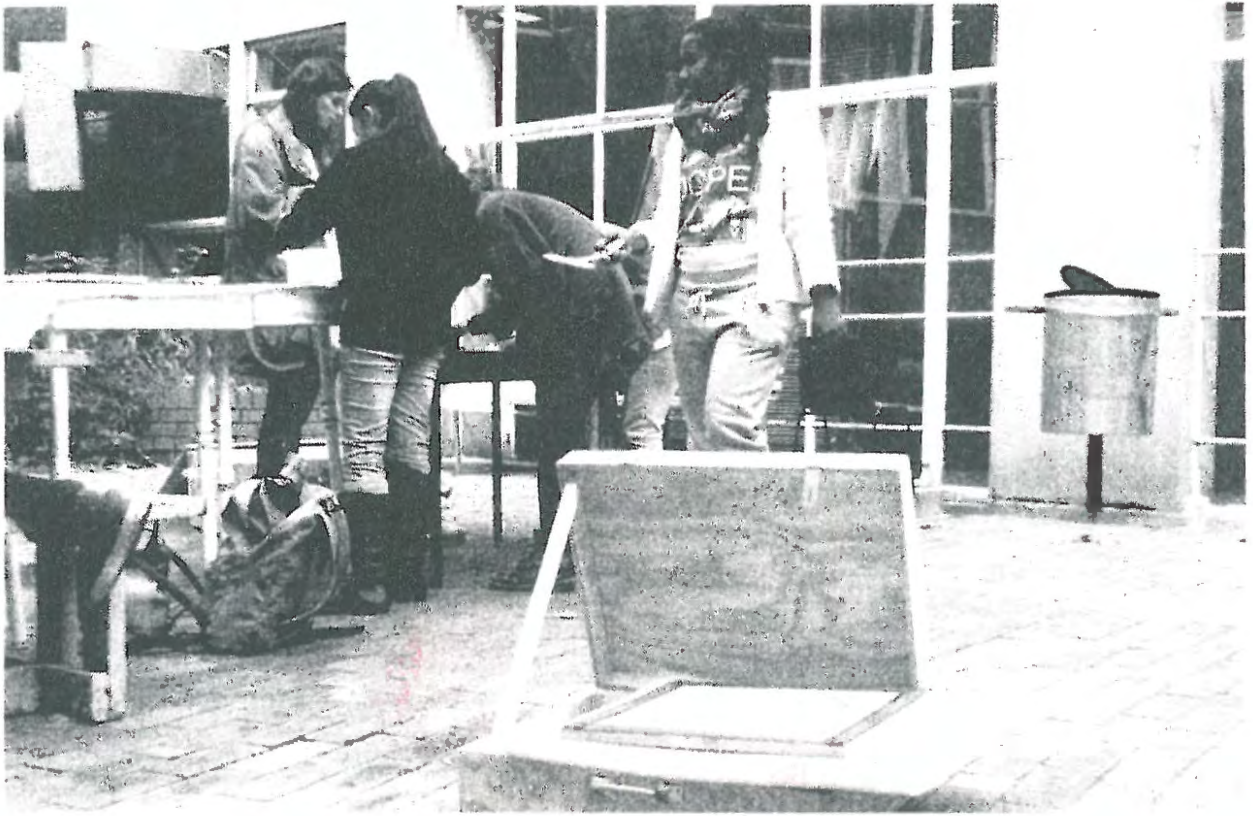
Vinyl collection

Disappointment at discovering we were closing for the day/ Again? Last week of October?

The university as artwork

Photography by David Andrew





PEOPLE WHO  
THINK  
TOGETHER  
DANCE  
TOGETHER

*My heels do all my thinking*



PEOPLE WHO

THINK

TOGETHER

DANCE

TOGETHER

1  
ps can we screen here for next  
meet up on ~~t-shirts~~ (banners) (cloth  
t-shirts etc

TIME  
CAN  
STOP  
TIME"

Marechera's Footsteps

Founded in 2015, Black Chalk is a collective of writers, artists, curators, educators that initiates research based projects that result in publications, alternative archives and events about Zimbabwe and the African diaspora. This has led to a run of synchronized events, screenings, and public talks. The founding collaborators, Tinashe Mushakavanhu and Nontsikelelo Mutiti, operate between Harare and New York.

Collaborators:  
Nontsikelelo Mutiti (artist, educator)  
Tinashe Mushakavanhu (writer, editor)  
Simba Mafundikwa (architect, graphic designer)

[www.readingzimbabwe.com](http://www.readingzimbabwe.com)

## **Drawing and Contemporary Practice IIIA (FINA3011/1)**

3<sup>rd</sup> quarter:

**10 August 2016**

### **Reflective essay (written by working units/collaborations)**

*an honest, critical review of your project thus far, its past and its desired future/s*

Using your responses to the self-assessment of 27-29 July 2016 as a base, examine the status of your project through a **reflective essay**. Use questions from the self-assessment brief as a basis, which were:

- What was your [original] intention for the 'invitation to play'?
- What actually took place?
- Did the form of your presentation reflect your experience and skill-sets?
- Did you find your form of invitation/presentation/installation relevant?
- To what extent did you have to relinquish what is conceived as 'art' in discipline and techniques?
- What are the needs of your project going forward?

You have started responding to these questions in the previous written assignment and through oral reflections in lectures. Following this, now consider the following questions developed in Quarter 1 in relation to Medu Art Ensemble:

- **What is the cause that drives your project? The question, the story, the investigation, the problem, the issue...**
- What methods are you employing to fulfill this cause? What informs these methods politically and philosophically?
- Why are the methods appropriate for the project, at Freedom College, in 2016?
- Who are your collaborators at Freedom College?
- How do you define the terms of engagement with your collaborators?
- Who will 'own' the work? Who is the authors/artists/producers?
- What are/were the limits to your methods so far? And how do you deal with these limits?
- How does your unit contribute to Chalkboard Exchange collective (curatorial) statement?
- How do you evaluate your project's ethical and aesthetic lifespan?
- How do you imagine the 'outcome' of your process?
- How do you see your project 'living' beyond the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> term?

Respond to these questions by way of extending what you have already written. Deepen your text by using examples from:

- Your project itself
- Medu Art Ensemble literature,
- Other 'texts': ideas, positions, philosophies theories and artistic practices (including connections to your Fine Art practice)

The text must be a minimum of 1000 words, a maximum of 1500 words in 12 point typewritten document, posted on the platform: <http://chalkboardexchange16.tumblr.com>



## **Drawing and Contemporary Practice IIIA**

Use an edition of silkscreen or RISO posters to celebrate and announce your forthcoming publications. The size of your poster must be at the minimum A3 unless you are using the RISO

**USE YOUR EDITORIAL  
QUESTIONS AS THE BASIS  
FOR YOUR POSTER  
COMPOSITIONS**

You should include in your posters:

Name of your publication

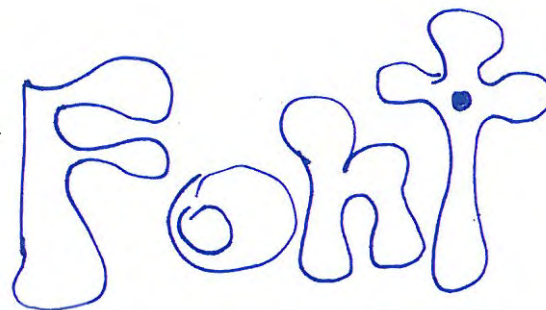
Date of launch of your publication

Font matters: e.g., this **Font/FONT** was copied from the MEDU Newsletters logo, and created with online font-making software. Just Google 'fontmaking' and see how you can easily make your own font!

Remember, poster making is not a design-software's work. The posters you see studied, of the *Chronic*, were made with Microsoft Word text, printed, cut-n-pasted onto A1 sheets, photographed and only finally edited in Photoshop. Also refer to the 58 Years publication for exemplars of effective image/text posters. More exemplars will be placed in your dropbox.

Also, paper matters; do you want glossy or matt? Newsprint or cartridge? New or recycled? White or coloured?

These posters are made for public display, not for framing; do you want to use tape or nail? Wheatpaste or prestick? The kind of paper used would also determine how you want to attach the posters onto surfaces.



Font

## Getting Started Writing

Keep the Dream Arts (Puleng Plessie) in collaboration with Ba re e ne re (Lineo Segoete) were facilitating Writing workshops at Metropolitan College with grade 10 learners. The aim of this workshop was to introduce learners to various writing techniques and further allow them to express their social/ political or imaginary lifestyles.

### Key points:

*Write in the language that you feel confident in. You can even mix languages if you want.*

*Characters may sometimes speak in their own way. What's important is voice and consistency.*

*Be wary of using hackneyed (over-used) terms or phrases, clichés and the types of phrases that are too familiar.*

*Find friends or fellow writers who will give valuable critical feedback (editing).*

### Day 1:

#### Introduction/Welcome



Facilitators introduce themselves and Lineo teaches about the different types of Story Telling including: Song; Drama/theatre; Art; Folktale; Fiction; Film; Oral Stories.

Participants then introduce themselves and talk about what inspires them and their favorite form of storytelling.

#### What is fiction?

We started the session by defining fiction vs. nonfiction fiction and characters. Making them aware that they can make the best of everything you already have and know –unique 'material' and 'equipment' for creating characters:

- experiences (including your reading experiences)
- memories and personal history
- feelings and desires
- language, imagination, observations and ideas.
- preferred medium; comic books, tv, books, film etc

## Day 2: Starting the Writing Process



Learners

begin the session with a political conversation as Former President Jacob Zuma had resigned as president of South Africa on this day. However it was further announced that the newly selected acting president will be announced the following day at 14:00. It was decided that we will write about Zuma, since as it was a trending topic. Learners had four options to begin their writing with

Option 1. Lineo said that

Option 2. I remember...

## Day 3: Visual and Sonic Inspiration



Learners think of ways to describe their text: hacks, reference everyday items, songs, expressions to create new meaning

- physical description of person and place
- inner thoughts of character
- character personality
- actions of the character
- activities of the setting

Learners are further inspired to chose one of the following options to add on to their text

Option 1. Sonic inspiration (Use sound to activate our imaginations)

Option 2. Visual inspiration (Use a photograph to describe a character)



#### Day 4: The writer's notebook- Walk about

The writer's notebook is a section which is used to take learners around the area to recording ideas. On this particular day, it was raining so we had to stay in the class and use other resources such as: phone, computer, voice recorder.

We had decided to use this day to flip learners stories into the opposite. This meant that if learners were for the former president they will then have to write the same text as if they were against him. The catch in this instance was that they should bring the colonial theme to their text. This information, together with tier already existing text and sonic/visual inspirations, assisted in the consolidating of finalizing of the writing.

#### Day 5: Edit and Presentation



Learners went through their first draft and consider how to edit it to make it stronger. They also add new sentences, but only to strengthen what they have and make small changes to improve the story. Each participant is further encouraged to present their work in preparation for the *Lephephe Print Gathering Showcase*.

We close off the session with Feedbacks and Lesson learned.

## Day 6: Showcase – Lephephe Print Gatherings



Eight learners' volunteered to present their work to the public. To start of the process, the whole class rendered an item, a song which they had rehearsed even before the workshops had started. The audience mainly consisted of Fine Art students from the Wits (WSOA) who would further reinterpret their performance through silkscreen monoprints.



## Zuma's fall

- Zuma's <sup>reign</sup> ~~empire~~ has ended
- But ANC still stands as the leading party.
- Msholozhi was a great president but his fans or supporters started to decrease.



- But still he never let them influence him to step down

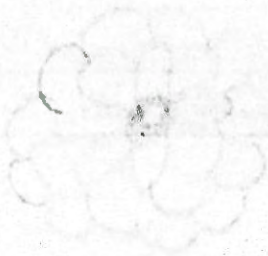


- Jacob Zuma was accused of rape and was found not guilty.



He is finally out

I remember ~~one morning~~  
watching the news  
the kid said finally  
yes out maybe things  
are going to get better



To me politics  
is like a dramatic  
movie the part  
I started to like  
watching politics

I was coaxed  
into that world  
to me it was like  
a soapie some  
days they fight  
argue or even  
get along

Culture its an old  
thing they say  
the conjunctio of  
the new lifestyle  
and culture it is  
one's moral conviction

but really has  
out

in that chair  
was getting  
but still he  
and changes  
the confidence  
the wife of us  
to side and  
dare pulled side  
in that golden

We have been  
established our  
african land has  
been switched  
let us look  
at our land  
is no longer  
the same

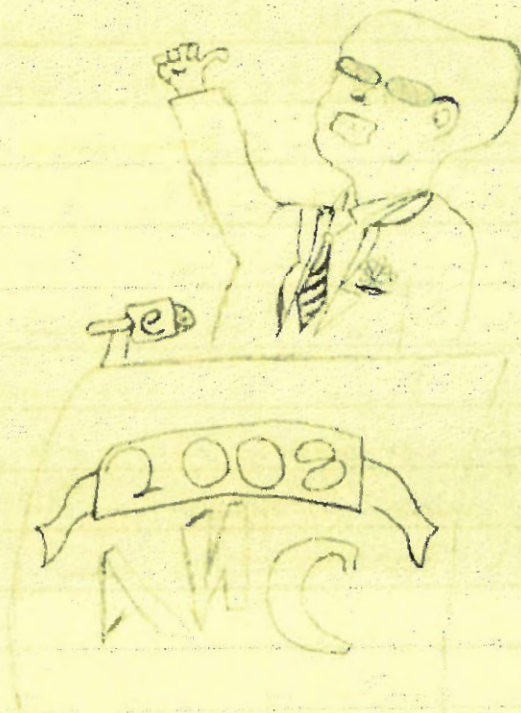
~~we were although~~  
~~there are~~

the **balden** times  
but our elders  
are crying  
the bottom of their  
heart

Anderson's  
JZ some  
names some  
man with many  
Jacob during the

My title is about Zuma's

I remember



when Zuma was elected leader of the ANC in 2008. Throughout he promised to pay fees for the disabled, change the economy and stuff like that.

Years later he had scandals of

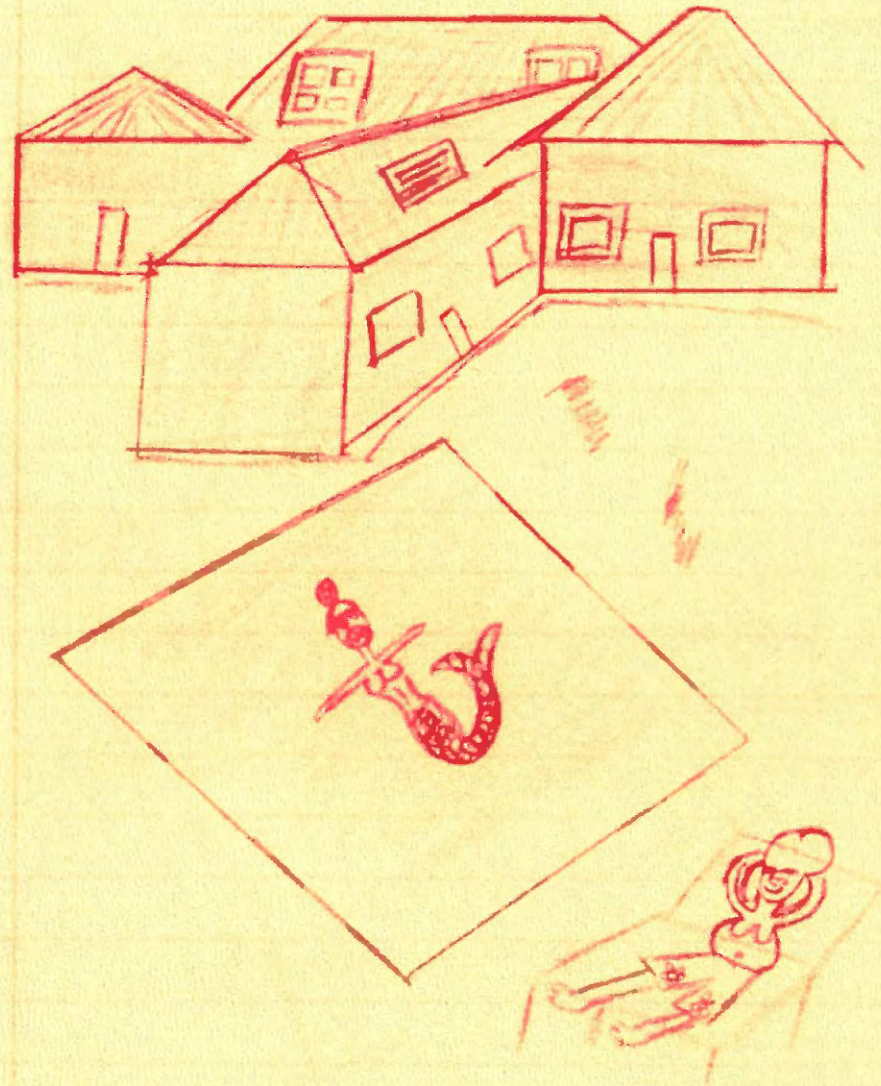


Zuma said 'As of today I will no longer be the president of RSA. 14/02/2018

Why I hate Zuma



- He is a liar
- He doesnot keep his promises
- It is said that Zuma had a mermaid in his pool
- He robbed the economy of SouthAfrica by putting his focus on building iNkandla



By  
55  
15/02/18

Possible Zulu words to be investigated

*Umlando* - History

*Umhlangano*: Gathering, meeting or assembly

*Ukuhlanganyela* – a word used to describe coming together, participation and collaboration.

*Ukuhlanganisa* – Putting things together; assemble; combine; group; unite; bring together connect mix; put together; join and link. These are the same qualities found in a facilitator and curator.

*Mistress* – Colonial word for a female teacher, now referred to as *Uthisha Wesifazane*

*Isikhundla* – Where one is positioned physically and mentally in a space.

*Umcabango/ Umfanekiso* – Thought process and reflection

*Ubuciko* - Art and artistic skills

*Isikole* - School

*Umbhalo* - text; writing; inscription; entry; note and document

*Umfundi* – learner



let us look at  
our land we  
do not speak  
our traditional  
languages

Our leaders are  
working together  
no more indeed  
they are in battle  
& and <sup>our</sup> leaders  
are now chosen <sup>"corrupt"</sup>  
and not passed  
~~through~~ family  
"greedy"

# Pop Up Zine Jam

an interactive creation of zines  
(small circulation, self published work of original  
or appropriated text and images, reproduced via photocopier).

in response to the following questions:

wtf are you doing ka zaka?

are you on  
the right side of history,  
in the now?

~~gender(?)~~

Date: 23 March 2017

Time: 18:00-21:00

Venue: The Point of Order (cnr Bertha and Steimens)

# PXSSY ON A PLINTH

PXSSY ON A PLINTH (aka POP) IS A COLLECTIVE OF 11 WOMXN ARTISTS BASED IN JOHANNESBURG WHO INTERROGATE IDEAS AROUND PERSONAL POLITICS AND LIVED EXPERIENCE.

POP MANIFESTS ITSELF AS AN AMALGAMATION OF THEMES DEALING WITH 'POST'-COLONIAL OR GENDERED CULTURE, HUMAN CONSUMPTION REFLECTIONS ON BLACKWOMXNHOOD REIMAGINING MISINTEPRETATIONS OF MARGINALISED MAJORITES RESPECTABILITY POLITICS AND RAPE CULTURE MENTAL HEALTH PERSONAL POWER AND PASSION POLITICS AND ANATOMY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GAZE.





IT is probably a long time since Botswana's dusty capital has known such a sense of exhilaration. Over 600 people – most of them South Africans – descended on the university for the five day Culture and Resistance Festival.

People who had not seen each other for years embraced fiercely. Over and over again you could hear the poignant phrase that crops up in the conversation of all exiles, sooner or later, as they ask about things 'at home'. It gives you a start to realize that even after two decades of exile South Africa has not stopped being home.

The festival was arranged to examine and propose suggestions for the role of artists in the creation of a democratic South Africa.

This was done through various seminars on particular aspects of the Arts, including dance, fine art, photography, poetry, novels and drama, in conjunction with exhibitions, film shows and dramatic presentations. Each seminar was led by a panel of artists who have achieved recognition in their own field: Robin Orlin, Malcolm Purkey, James Matthews, Chris van Wyk, Nadine Gordimer, Charles Mungoshi and so on.

The special status that is accorded to the artist in western society was severely criticised. The term 'cultural worker' was offered as an alternative to the more prestigious 'artist'.

Many of the cultural workers themselves were eager to shed the mystical cloak of artistry. James Matthews denies emphatically that he writes poetry, insisting that he merely 'expresses feelings'. If you tempt him to 'express his feelings' on those who do call themselves poets, you will be treated to the unique Matthews brand of abuse.

Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand) corrects anyone who calls him a musician or a pianist. He defines himself as 'the messenger boy' and recalls a saying of his that has become famous: 'I regard myself as a worker . . . my function is no less or more important than a street sweeper's or a doctor's.'

At the end of his concerts he solemnly joins the audience in their applause to show that all praise is due to Allah alone.

The seminars gave rise to some stimulating debates which were not always followed through. For example, the seminar on theatre suffered from people's unwillingness to analyse the alternative theatre that has been produced in South Africa since the 1950's. Important issues such as whether or not artists should be supported by their communities were raised but then fell flat.

Similarly in the poetry seminar when someone asked why there were so few women involved in poetry, the chairperson thought that this question should be reserved for a separate session at some later date.

The novel seminar was, in some ways, the most challenging. The novel was attacked and defended with equal vigour. Some of the questions raised were: Do workers have the necessary educational background and do they have the time to plough through 300 pages or so? The novel is historically a product of the middle class, can it be made to serve the workers and, – most insistent of all – does the novel tell the truth?

It was unfortunate that not many people, besides Ms Gordimer, appeared to know much about the post '76 renaissance which has given birth to novels like Miriam Tlali's *Amandla* and Mongane Serote's *To Every Birth Its Blood*.

It was easier to resolve the position and function of poetry, despite some of the audience's unhappy school recollections. Poetry is more easily composed on the evening train than some other forms of literature. It is read at meetings and at the gravesides of martyrs.

The dominance that European poetry has enjoyed for so long in our schools and in the minds of our poets, was angrily denounced. People had it in for daffodils especially, probably justly so. What could be more foreign to African experience than a wild host of them waiting to inspire the solitary poet?

There was some sense of loss though. It was reminiscent of a poem by James Matthews in which he recalls his original poetic intentions to describe natural wonders. But after having seen the dark images of oppression he writes:

'i will never be able to write

a poem about dawn, a bird or a bee.'

One of the exiles spoke about the feelings awoken in him by the glorious sunset he had witnessed on his landing in Botswana – the closest he had come to his home for twenty years. The point that emerged from this was that subjects of natural beauty should not be denied to poets. They will inevitably be imbued with a certain consciousness whether it is Wordsworthian wonder or the longing, bitterness and hope of the exile.

When Abdullah Ibrahim found himself trapped in a press conference he refused to clarify the political 'message' of his music. The spectacle of the journalists, each jostling in his or her own 'groove', as he put it, amused him. He would not be drawn into any of the 'grooves'.

'The human spirit recognises the quality that is injected through the music,' he said. He suggested that this contributes to the *jidha* (holy war) that is waged with the self. It is necessary for each individual to re-orientate himself before society as a whole can be transformed. 'After all', he maintained, 'it's no good shooting if you shoot in the wrong direction.'

It seems he does not have to be consciously aware of his duty to the people. 'I am the people,' he asserted.

The journalists continued to refer to the theme of the festival. Ibrahim said: 'After all the killings and everything . . . It's 1982 and we still have to tell the culture to resist!' Nevertheless, he added that he thought the Festival was a 'useful exercise'.

He seemed to be suggesting that the conscientised cultural worker may be sensitive to the troubles and hopes of the people without having to analyse them scientifically in the way that a sociologist might. If the cultural worker presents his or her perceptions effectively the individuals in the audience instinctively recognise and respond to them on different levels.

Certainly this was what happened in most of the practical demonstrations. There were some outstanding posters on display, as well as a collection of photographs (particularly those of Goldblatt) which captured some of the funny-cruel ironies of South Africa superbly.

The Fulani poets gave a passionate dramatic rendering of Don Mattera's *Azanian Love Song* - a powerful expression of despair and re-affirmation. Several dramas were produced by the Cape Community Arts Project, of which the most remarkable was a compelling mime which demonstrated the perversions of unlimited power.

The Junction Avenue Theatre Company staged their version of Modikwe Dikobe's *Marabi Dance*, a highly enter-

prising, but probing portrayal of Doornfontein slum life in the 1940's.

And there were the concerts of course.

Barry Gilder's rich satire, the Mpondo's burning rhythms; Abdullah Ibrahim's anguished relationship with his piano from which he draws such sweet, raw beauty; Hugh Masekela's jubilant trumpeting which made way, now and then, for the rest of the band, including old King Force Silgee's saxophone which won as much applause then as it did fifty years ago.

As we were leaving the concert hall I heard one of the audience, overcome by the experience, exclaim: 'Now, that was art!' ●

## Glossary

### Zulu words in this research

***Inkulumo-Mpendulwano*** - *Inkulumo-Mpendulwano* is an IsiZulu hyphenated word that comes closest to the dialogical pedagogies in arts education. Broken down *Inkulumo* means to talk or to have a conversation and *Mpendulwano* means to respond. This call-and-response method of *Inkulumo-Mpendulwano* not only emphasises facilitations that can be adapted in the classroom as well as curated spaces, but also the relevance of language and terminologies used to localise content.

***Ukufundisa*** - *Ukufundisa* is a IsiZulu word which means "to teach". I have been using this word to describe the classroom facilitation process through-out my years as a child and artist-educator. The Zulu dictionary defines the teaching aspect, however, further elaborates and defines *Ukufundisa* as "to instruct" and "to school" which has didactic associations.

***Inganekwane*** - *Inganekwane* is an indigenous folk tale which not only tells a story but is in itself a learning tool, re-enactment and *Inkulumo-Mpendulwano* encounter, probing questions and allowing for interaction and engagement.

***Kwasuka Sukela ... Cosi*** - *Kwasuka Sukela* means 'once upon a time' and *Cosi* is a response for the story teller, teacher or facilitator to continue with the story.

***Isithunzi*** - Aura is defined as the distinctive quality that can be generated, projected and surround a person. There are no Zulu dictionary words for aura, however, *Isithunzi* describes a particular kind of character and personality which the facilitator or teacher should possess. This *Isithunzi* can also be defined as a shadow depending on how this word is used.

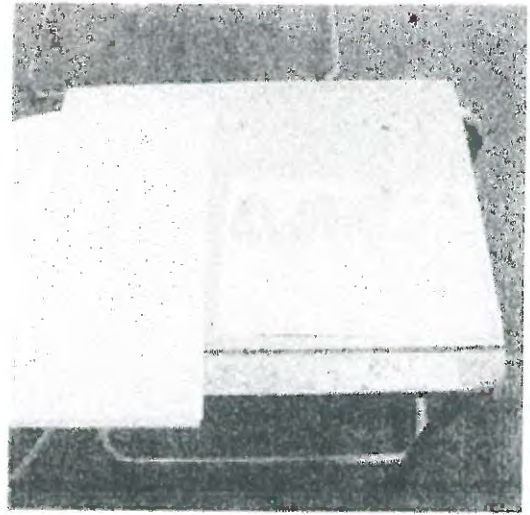
***Izithunzi*** - Plural for aura but I also describe *Izithunzi* learners as shadows who are seen but not heard in the thesis.

***Abalingiswa*** - Canvases used to describe the characters in the *Inkulumo-Mpendulwano* exhibition space in school premises.

***Izimpekupheku / umoya*** - Energies which begin to transform the space.

***Umphakathi*** – Community

***EISH!*** - A proudly South African word that expresses various moods, has no boundaries, no limits and can be expressed anywhere at any time.



A 3-day workshop using the Medu Arts Ensemble Traveling Suitcase of the Another Roadmap School as a starting point to facilitate protest t-shirts as means of expression and protest.

### **Day 1: Historical Content and Brainstorming.**

Introduction to The Traveling Suitcase History and discussions about issues around Abuse. Participants are to create one sentence using a maximum of 4 words, in a preferred local language, which speak to issues around abuse. Note to facilitator: This theme can be spread across all social issues/commentary. Participants then present to the class their choice of words.

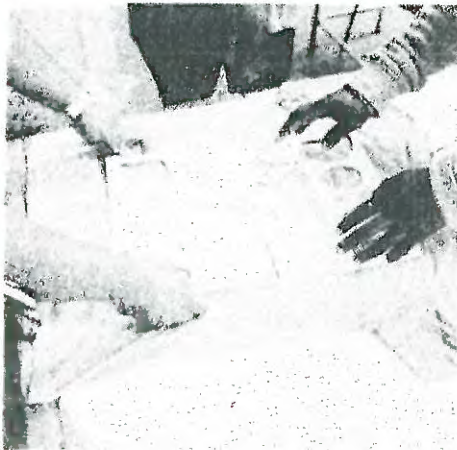
### **Day 2: Sketching and Stenciling.**

Discussions and concepts from day 1 will be used to write about these 4-word sentences to sketch and do stencils in preparation for the t-shirts. Note to facilitators: Must make a demonstration of the positive and negative spaces, as well as sizes for each word to be visible.

### **Day 3: Printing on T-shirts**

Facilitator is to demonstrate the silk-screening process on a t-shirt. Students are encouraged to produce their own from the stencils they have produced.

Researched, prepared and facilitated by Puleng Plessie.





Photography by Buhlebezwe Manzi



This article was the keynote address from the "Culture and Resistance" Symposium, given by Keorapetse Kgositse, exiled South African poet and Professor of English Literature presently living in Kenya.

CULTURE AND RESISTANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

A few years ago a fellow South African writer asked me to explain to him how people like Le Qume and I could be in the Movement but still manage to write novels and poems. And I replied, with a bit of acid on my tongue, that I had always wondered how a South African writer could be outside the Movement but hope to write anything of value or significance. It seemed to me that, perhaps, my friend believed that in the Liberation Movement there was no room for the literary artist to create; that possibly some frustrated thing with itchy fingers, and too cowardly to confront the boor fascists, spends his time dictating lines of whatever non-literary garbage to the supposed poet at gunpoint like some foul-mouthed Hollywood movie gangster. It is that preposterous and ignorant presumption that put acid on my tongue. But Arthur Nortje had already written:

and let no 'amnesia  
attack at fire hour:  
for some of us must storm the castles  
some define the happening.

I hope that in discussing "Culture and Resistance in South Africa", I will make a contribution towards clarifying a few things about what time this is in our lives; what tasks are facing us; what writers and other artists worth their salt are doing in living up to their responsibilities.

On January 8th this year the African National Congress turned seventy: seventy years of organised resistance against national oppression and economic exploitation; seventy years of rich experience in fighting many freedom battles, including civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts, marches, passive resistance and many more. But the

"my question is basic... And I quote:  
"I have always wondered how a South African writer/artist could be outside of the movement but hope to write anything of value."  
Does it stand to say if you are not in the movement as an artist, your work ain't worth shit or...?"  
Letifi Tladi to Prof Keorapetse Kgositse \*  
thoughts?

Can Puffin's parts add to the Zine.  
So it is always growing or land shifting  
is there instructions for them to do so?

\* This anecdote is transcribed from the recording "Another Road Map School Presents: 'Ntatemogolo Speaks! Prof Kgositse revisits Medu Art Ensemble'" on the occasion of a collaboration between #longstorySHORT, Another Roadmap School, Keleketla! Library, Wits School of Arts on 9 October 2016, Keleketla! Library, Johannesburg, South Africa. The full recording is here:  
<https://soundcloud.com/keleketla-library/ntatemogolo-speaks-prof-kgositse-revisits-medu-art-ensemble>

This document should be seen as a constellation of experiences, processes and activities of the Another Roadmap School Johannesburg Working Group in conversation with: ARAC, Another Roadmap Intertwining Hi/Stories, students, learners, artists, collectives, Medu Art Ensemble...

Another ROAD MAP AFRICA CLUSTER

It is imagined as a primer for a Medu Art Ensemble Reader.  
and remixed

Compiled by the Johannesburg Working Group  
Printed and bound by Puleng Plessie and Rangoato Hlasane on the RISO known as Beyonce or Bhuti RISO

On the occasion of the Another Roadmap School meeting in Rwanda, HUYE.

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ANOTHER  
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SCHOOL



keleketla/library

+ Keep The Dream  
ARTS

is there responsibility for them to go to ?  
if it is already showing a long standing  
can't be a job of the state  
? or job of next generations?