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VIADUCT 2015

ARCHIVAL ADDRESSES:

PHOTOGRAPHIES, PRACTICES, POSITIONALITIES

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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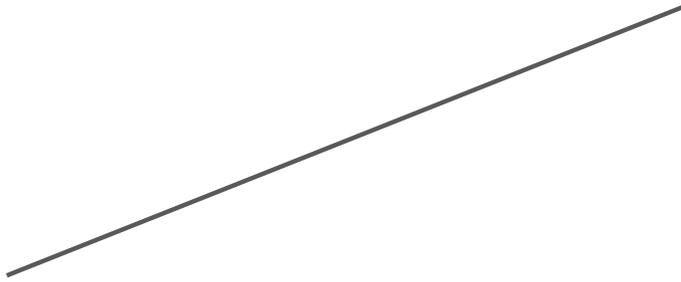
CONVENED BY //

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Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture
University of Johannesburg

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DATES //

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FRAMING STATEMENT //

Titled **Archival addresses: photographies, practices, positionalities**,
VIADUCT 2015 offers a platform for a series of papers, panel discussions,
artists' presentations, film screenings and an exhibition engaging with the
complexities of contemporary archival practices, and how these play out
using lens-based and new media technologies (hereafter loosely termed
'photographies'). In VIADUCT 2015, participants consider contemporary
possibilities for, and practices of, addressing archives; how these possibilities
might impact on how archives are collated, disseminated, accessed and
received; and what implications they may have for understanding the
functions, meanings and significance of archives in diverse contexts.
Although it is widely scoped, covering a broad range of contemporary
addresses and multiple archival forms, VIADUCT 2015 is not intended to
provide a 'snapshot' of either. Rather, in selecting a particular group of
participants and highlighting the diversity of their practices, we focus
on bringing into view a (thin) sliver of archival addresses currently being
undertaken.

The platform thematic suggests a range of possible archival addresses
that participants 'work through' in discussions, conversations, and
engagements. Platform participants – who include archivists, academics,
artists, filmmakers and curators – address archives either through their
own research practice or with reference to the work of other archival

practitioners. In speaking about, writing on, engaging with, or referring to, archival materials, participants may be considered as archival 'practitioners' in as much as the archival practitioners whose work they address.

Charles Merewether (2006:10) notes that as "the means by which historical knowledge and forms of remembrance are accumulated, stored, and recovered", the archive[1] may be one of the defining characteristics of the modern era. While VIADUCT 2015's thematic is grounded in, and its conceptual framing draws on, the vast context of scholarly work done on the archive,[2] the archive is not considered as a discursive form in and of itself, but rather as a dialogical site of address through which identities and subjectivities are activated, constructed and contested. In VIADUCT 2015, use of the term 'addresses' is intended to connote dialogic processes of exchange, specifically:

i.   dialogic acts of speaking of, to and 'with' the archive (dealing with, at-tending to, focusing upon, taking up);
ii.   dialogic and/or practical engagements with archival materials (drawing on, working with, reading into, intervening with, reacting to, interpreting and reinterpreting, reframing, reconfiguring, reactivating, reanimating, re-appropriating and unsettling);
iii. referential acts (references to, pointing or gesturing towards the ar-chive).

Furthering VIAD's broader research thematic for 2015-2017, 'Performing the everyday: visualities, identities, subjectivities, positionalities', our contribution to this well-established discourse is through emphasis on the role of what Stuart Hall (1996) terms 'positionality'. Positionality is examined in relation to the construction of identities and subjectivities of practitioners, those

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1   In most of the literature referenced in this document, the term 'the archive' is used to describe the 'concept' of an archive; the archive as a (contested) subject and medium in itself. In certain instances, when speaking about the archive-as-concept we refer to 'the archive' in the singular. This is with acknowledgement that we understand 'the archive' as a term used to describe multiple forms of knowledge -production, -formations and -systems; each of which comprise a range of multifaceted, nuanced, differentiated, potentially interconnected definitions, conceptual-isations and meanings (the archive-as-process). Where it is more specifically applicable, we refer directly to the archive-in-process through use of the term 'archives'.

2   See for instance, Foucault 2006 [1969]; Agamben 2006 [1989]; Merewether 2006. Aca-demics, archivists, and curators such Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor (2002); Keith Dietrich and Andrew Bank (2008); Michael Godby (2013a & 2013b); artists Pippa Skotnes and Penny Siopis, and cultural practitioners such as Brett Bailey, to name but a few, have made significant contributions to furthering archival discourses in a South African context.

subjectivities present within the archive itself, and ways in which all of these subject positions are activated. As Hall (1996:210, 211) states,

> [t]he practices of representation always implicate the positions from which we speak or write – the positions of enunciation ... though we speak ... 'in our own name', of ourselves and from our own experience, nevertheless who speaks, and the subject who is spoken of, are never exactly in the same place. ... What we say is always 'in context,' *positioned.*

The location of addressor and addressee – where their subjectivities are positioned literally and figuratively – the address of the address (home, site, space and/or place; relationships between particular historical, political, geographic, social and cultural circumstances and contexts) – informs the dialogic processes of exchange. The platform's format is designed to encourage interaction and exchange between a small, select group of practitioners. The focused nature of the group allows for a dynamic interplay between:

i.   the multiple subjectivities of the practitioners;
ii.   the individual and collective subjectivities of those represented;
iii. the subjectivities of the photographer or archivist;
iv.   a plurality of addresses – acknowledging that addresses are dependent on multiple, shifting subject positions within one or more speakers, and the interchanges between them;
v.   ways in which subjectivities embodied in the archive 'speak to' each of the above.

In VIADUCT 2015, practitioners' multivalent positionalities are foregrounded through:

i.   interaction and exchange by participants working in multiple global contexts;
ii.   addresses that span a cross-section of archival practices taking, or having taken, place in multiple historical, temporal, spatial, cultural and geographic contexts (South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire; Birmingham, England; the American Jim Crow South);
iii. considerations of archives located in conditions of political and social

turmoil or set against, and within, the fraught legacies of colonialism and apartheid;

iv.   practitioners' often deeply rooted sense of personal investment in the archival material they work with, stemming perhaps from a sense of identification with, and/or personal experience of, the archive's contents and the memories or associations it may carry;

v.   addresses encompassing Western and African archival paradigms.

Ariella Azoulay's (2008) civil contract of photography holds currency in considering these multidirectional interactions, and the power relations each implicates. Azoulay (2008) argues for a shifting of the focus away from ethics of seeing or viewing, towards an ethics "that begins to sketch the contours of the spectator's responsibility towards what is visible" (Kennedy & Patrick 2014:89). Positionality is a key factor in this mode of inquiry wherein "self-criticism plays a vital role, and … the nature of our own looking is also part of the history told" (Peffer 2015:[sp]).

THE ARCHIVE-IN-PROCESS

In VIADUCT 2015, the archive is not considered as an inert repository for historical information (Stoler 2002:86) – a neutral, benign, transparent record, whose meaning is stable, definitive and static – but as aligned with dynamic, fluid processes of knowledge production, -systems and -formations. These processes may be described as rhizomatic as they are not organised around a singular, arborescent thread. Following the rhizome's heterogeneous system of growth and propagation, the archive can be said to encompass multiple "directions in motion" (Deleuze & Guattari 1988:21). The term 'archive' comprises a range of multi-faceted, subtly nuanced, often disputed, differentiated yet potentially interconnected definitions, conceptualisations and meanings, within each of which alliances and connectivities may be discerned. Each point of identification connects to a range of other points and their offshoots that, like the rhizome's bulb and tuber, coalesce at nodes. At these intersections, further connections emerge to establish a decentred, non-hierarchical, complex matrix composed of "found yet constructed … public yet private" (Foster 2006:145) traces and fragments of memory, fiction and fact – at once painfully visible and intimate, or as invisible, perhaps unspoken, testimonies caught in a moment of emergence.

This matrixial formation is cogently expressed in Michel Foucault's (2006 [1969]:28) use of the term 'archive' to refer to those "systems underlying that volume called knowledge, determining 'heterogeneous regions' of statements, concepts, events and memory defined by rules made possible through the nature of discursive practice and spaces themselves." Thus, for Foucault (2006:19), the archive is not a "sum of all texts that a culture has kept … as documents attesting to its own past, or as evidence of a continuing identity", but an "underlying structure governing thought systems and values of any given society, in relation to its own people and others." These systems govern what is said and unsaid, recorded or unrecorded, pointing to the integral relationship between discourse and power realised through the archive.

In his reading of Foucault's (2006:26-30) essay 'The historical *a priori* and the archive', Merewether (2006:11) notes that it is the classification of the archive itself which defines who determines the contents of an archive, and what conditions enable a history to be written. Accordingly, different cultural groups create archives that concur with, and adhere to, localised knowledge systems and mythologies. Observing that the archive is "[c]reated as much by state organisations and institutions as by individuals and groups", Merewether (2006:10) identifies the archive as "constitut[ing] a repository or ordered system of documents and records both verbal and visual that is the foundation from which history is written". By extension, the term 'archive' may refer to:

i.   a set of material documents housed in physical structures or on digital platforms;
ii. the architectural structure within which these material documents are housed (Mbembe 2002) – both of which implicate issues of accessibility, power and control;
iii. the archive as a contested subject and medium in itself. Carolyn Hamilton (2010) speaks of the archive as a "repository of information … a site where the politics of knowledge emerge", noting that "[r]elics become an archive when identified as having importance – the archive is formed as a consequence of recognition and acknowledgement."
iv. the 'figurative Archive' which, according to Ann Laura Stoler (2002:87), "may serve as a strong metaphor for any corpus of selective forgettings and collections – and … for the seductions and longings that such quests, accumulations and passions for the primary, originary and untouched entail."

According to Jacques Derrida (1994 [1993]), readings of the archive are not subject to a stagnant time and space but affected by different forms of power, knowledge -production and -control through new technologies and epistemologies. This applies not only to the influence of new technologies on the field of photography in a colonial era, and their impact on racial and cultural representation and policies, but also to the reading of digital archives.[3] In addressing archives created through new media technologies (satellite, the internet, digital image reproduction), VIADUCT practitioners' positionalities speak strongly to Derrida's (1994) concept of the "future-to-come". Unlike a future that is expected and foreseeable, the 'future-to-come' (*l'avenir*) refers to the coming of that which is uncertain, unpredictable and unanticipated. The future-to-come is rapidly unfolding in the digital realm – in which the possibilities for where and how images are created, exist, owned and engaged with are constantly transforming – enabling potentially limitless personal and public archives created by individuals and collectives to be accessible to global audiences. Furthermore, digital caches and databases may be considered as ultimate, yet often seemingly random, archival forms. Brett Kashmere (2010) describes the digital cache as "a secret place where a store of things is kept hidden. Whether its contents are valuable or readily disposable, intentionally concealed or merely forgotten about, this 'store of things' is the world we made, and the world we make from."

As archives become increasingly public through digital access, their role as institutions limited to specialised academic research is diminishing. Contemporary transformations in media economies and ownership not only provide this greater accessibility, but also have far-reaching and potentially contentious, implications for practitioners working with issues of identity and subjectivity. A notable development in how visual representations of identities and subjectivities are shifting, as a result of collective channels of access and dissemination, is manifest in the current upsurge towards the exploration of private or personal histories in the public realm (Tebo 2010). This is particularly evident in the ever-emerging profusion of social media images that online platforms afford through seemingly infinite opportunities for self-representations such as 'selfies' and avatars; consequently blurring the lines between the intimate and the public through ongoing performances of subjectivities, within, and in response to, a constantly shifting digital realm.

3   The term 'archive' is not commonly used in relation to the digital realm, as it is considered to be associated with historical and early photographic concerns (Bristow 2015). In digital fields, the terms 'data' and 'data-mining' are preferred.

While encapsulating some of the positional and relational complexities that the production, reading and display of photographic images entail – and the power relations associated with these processes – digital archives present further tensions.

–   Digital image accumulation has profound possibilities for the construction of public visual images, as visual identities and subjectivities may be infinitely altered, sampled, pirated in mash-ups and reprocessed into different contexts. While more democratic processes of information sharing and options for self-representation allow for a perceived control over the representation of identities, factors such as accessibility renders these images also susceptible to exploitation.

–   In online archival representations, positionality remains a powerful cultural force, as self-representations issue from individual's engagement with society at particular moments in history, from particular cultural and social contexts. Despite their increased accessibility and global reach, images circulating digitally on platforms such as Facebook still contain markers of social differences, cultural practices and concepts of value and commodification that speak to the positionalities of users and viewers.

–   Digital platforms allow for a sense of equal participation in the constitution and interpretation of personal archives, critically counteracting the anonymous "invisible hand of authority" that has historically declared and assumed the veracity of archives. This apparent position of power is shifted to one promoting and celebrating widespread content-sharing through 'democratic' applications such as YouTube, Wikipedia and Creative Commons (Kashmere 2010). However, the perceived sense of control over the visual representation of identities – evident in the apparent autonomy of the selfie – is countered by the increasing privatisation of digital archives by multinational corporations such as Apple and Facebook, whose limitations effectively exert control of digital information for commercial gain (Kashmere 2010). Loss of personal autonomy poses questions around the relationship between ownership of data and power, such as: how much of our data is owned by multinationals? What do border controls and state owned agencies do with our freely given biometric data? Are selfies located in databases other than those of our choosing? What is the role of digital dissonance and movements

such as cyber-feminism in countering the neo-liberal ideologies of globalisation? (Bristow 2015).

- – Digital archives also prompt ethical questions regarding download-ing, and how people unknown to the person who posted the material may glean personal visual material off the Internet via caches and databases.

These factors, amongst others, add further layers of complexity to the digital archival matrix.

COUNTER ADDRESSES

The potential for creative, potentially subversive, intervention is intrinsic to understandings and constructions of the institutional archive. As Ulrich Baer and Shelley Rice (2011) note, while the archive is traditionally considered as a solid foundation for scholarly work, embedded within its structure is the potential for 'countering' the underpinning ideologies or subjective positions that it represents. Merewether (2006:16) raises the term 'counter-archive' (or "counter-monument"), in relation to an interview between Okwui Enwezor and Thomas Hirschhorn, noting that the counter-archive refers to "a form of re-collection of that which has been silenced and buried." Kashmere (2010) presents the concept of the 'counter-archive' as it is located within the digital realm. For the practitioner, he identifies the counter-archive as "an incomplete and unstable repository, an entity to be contested and expanded through clandestine acts, a space of impermanence and play." In practice, the counter-archive "entails mischief and imagination, challenging the record of official history" (Kashmere 2010). When employed as an artistic strategy, according to Kashmere (2010), counter-archiving,

> pushes our archival impulse into new territories, encouraging critique and material alteration/fabrication, and emboldening anarchism. To counter-archive is to counter-act, to rewrite, to animate over. Consider it a take-and-give thing ... a negotiation. Against the un-Commons.

Use of the term 'countering', however, implies that there is a definable institutive or authoritative archive that can be 'countered' and is based on the premise that the archive is a static repository, subject to being acted

upon (subverted, deconstructed, challenged or overthrown) – neither of which are consistently the case. Countering the archive could be a dialogic process, as the practitioner may develop an understanding of, or sensitivity towards, the presence of positionalities and subjectivities embedded within it, and actively address these while being open to their reciprocal address. Therefore, in VIADUCT 2015, the concept of countering an archive is framed in more nuanced terms such as "refiguring" (Hamilton, Harris, Taylor, Pickover, Reid & Saleh 2002; Garb 2013); "reinventing" (Merewether 2006:10); "reshaping" (Garb 2013); "revisioning" and "repurposing" (Kashmere 2010). Considering this proliferation of terminology referring to dialogical and/ or practical engagements with the archive, it becomes evident that within the complexities of archival addresses and the interplay of identities, subjectivities and positionalities that they implicate, the act of countering cannot be read solely as standing against, or in opposition to, an archive. Instead, it also includes processes of making, unmaking and remaking, as effected through reciprocal dialogue between the subjectivities of the practitioner and those subjectivities embedded in an archive. As Tamar Garb (2013:29) concludes,

> as a disputed and shifting field of objects, ideas and propositions, the archive is constantly being remade and rethought, not only by the discovery of history-laden images and materials, but also by the development of alternative forms of interpretation that reshape the old and find new meanings where outmoded or exhausted models once stood.

CRITICAL ADDRESSES

In VIADUCT 2015, many practitioners critically reflect on historical archives, addressing these by using its fragments or traces in ways that open up new forms of engagement with the past – often by locating and activating memories – and considering how these addresses may allow for processes of anamnesis: 'working through' the past from within the present (Verne Harris; Daniela Goeller; Mary Corrigall; Annemi Conradie). Presentations in the panel titled **The (Im) Materiality of the Archive** include those that address the materiality of the archive by examining analogue processes of physically acquiring archival material and issues surrounding the storage, presentation and preservation thereof, and those that uncover its immaterial aspects.

Historical archives such as those from colonial or apartheid eras in Southern African territories were constructed as a means by which oppressive systems were sanctioned and implemented. Presentations on this panel raise inadvertent questions around South Africa's troubled histories, navigating the intricacies of revisiting these histories through archival practice from different subject positions and personal investments, while being cognisant of how the particular archives under discussion were used to uphold, entrench and enact the power of the state (Warren Siebrits; Say Burgin; Uriel Orlow). Some addresses draw on the language of the archive, its fragmentary nature and the lack of resolution in the renditions of histories it offers in ways that challenge singular 'truths', positional view and hegemonic perspectives (Say Burgin). Such engagements question authorities and objectivities historically attributed to the 'official' archive by exposing the political and/or ideological underpinnings and power relations embedded in it. The archive is also addressed as a site of epistemic violence and resistance. As such, Say Burgin (page 024) suggests, the archive poses and presents epistemic challenges – "not just to racism, but to the ways in which we theorise knowledge."

Considerations of the archive's immaterial aspects hold particular currency in a South African context, as they open possibilities for alternative archival approaches by addressing "that which cannot be accounted for though reason alone" (Kros 2014; see Laubscher 2014).[4] Verne Harris (2014:[sp]) addresses what he terms the archive's "spectral content", noting that "[t]he archive is all about the livingdead. It is infused by the presence of what is absent, and the absence of what is present". For Harris (2014:[sp]), the spectral lies in the archive's absences, exclusions, and silences: those unspoken testimonies, dislocated voices and lost narratives that he suggests, are 'persistently present':

> what has been excluded, together with what has been lost, will whisper around the fragments. Ghostly voices. ... Always will be heard the whispers of contexts undocumented, unknown or yet to be generated. ... Where is the place, and it could be a virtual place, where the record, the fragment, the archive was born and lived outside of archival purview? For the fragments under our purview comprise matter out of place. And the whispers of dislocation can be heard. Ghostly voices of other places, of lineages, of origins.

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4   This includes ancestor worship and belief in traditional African religions, as well as oral traditions as a source for African histories.

It is through the interstitial figure of the ghost – which is neither present nor absent, neither living nor dead – that the archive articulates its haunting address, 'spoken' through the silent whispers of the spectres it embodies. The sense of disquiet the archive's ghostly voices may evoke brings to mind the sense of 'out-of-jointness' that Derrida (1994:xvii) relates to an 'hauntology'[5] – an ontology haunted by disjunct, invisible-yet-present traces of a traumatic or troubled past, and the unsettling presence of the unspoken (Harris 2014:[sp]). As Kros (2015:1) observes, in as much as we might attempt to 'unsettle' the archive, "it is in the sense of 'out-of-jointness' that the spectral might evoke that the archive unsettles us"; " [t]he archive acts upon us as much as we act upon it".

Drawing on Derridian (1994) hauntology in relation to the apartheid archive, Harris (page 024) calls for what he calls "memory banditry – a strategy, if not a praxis, to create space for ghosts in oppressive societal contexts." Being open to archival addresses in which we hear "the testimony of the ghosts who demand a response from us" is essential to advancing processes of social transformation in postapartheid South Africa (Kros 2015:3; Harris 2014:[sp]); see Laubscher 2014). In transformational contexts, processes of reinvention or refiguring of the personal (or the collective) 'self' entail 'working through' recalcitrant memories of the past, so as to allow for new epistemologies and ontologies to emerge.

Archival addresses grouped under the panel titled **Public Intimacies, Personal Exposures**, speak to what Kerry Bystrom (2013:334) terms "intimate exposures" – a term she and Sarah Nuttall (2013:310) use to describe "a set of diverse acts that involve revealing inner aspects and places of the self and self-making". These may be acts of self-exposure, or acts placing the private lives of others in the public realm. Personal histories are portrayed through use of private archives, such as family photographs and portraits, and travel or vernacular photography. Where individual histories, identities and subjectivities often reflect broader collectives, in these, the personal may advertently or inadvertently reflect the political. Personal narratives may prompt understandings of racism as being perpetuated as much in private as in institutional domains – understandings that may, in turn, contribute

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5   In Derrida's (1994:xvii) concept of hauntology, a haunted ontology – an ontology uprooted from its own origins through the notion of being and presence – expresses the effects of the spectre – as a figure belonging outside to the order of knowledge, on distinctions between life and death, presence and absence (Buys & Farber 2011:88).

to social transformation (see Stevens, Duncan & Hook 2013). Addresses in this panel grapple with the meaning of, and possibilities opened by making private histories public; seeking methods to address critical issues related to privacy, secrecy, patrimony arising in studies of vernacular images, and the ethical and legal implications of addressing private archival materials for research purposes (Heidi Grunebaum; John Peffer).

Personal and collective processes of refiguring the 'self' may be linked to Hal Foster's (2006 [2004]) concept of the "archival impulse" – the idea that by confronting the archive, new systems of knowledge can be created. This idea is picked up on by museum and exhibition curators in the panel titled **Curating the Archive**, who point to the importance of, and issues surrounding, addressing the apartheid archive in the production and presentation of "different kinds of knowledge[s]" (O'Connell page 029). In addressing the apartheid archive, curators reflect back on the past, whilst looking towards the future-to-come. In confronting South Africa's fraught historical legacies of injustice, they simultaneously enable possibilities for social transformation by opening up space for those excluded from, or marginalised in, colonial and apartheid archives to 'reclaim the past' through active documentation of their voices and experiences. As a curatorial strategy, 'looking back/looking forward' not only addresses the apartheid archive's omissions – revisiting, retelling and augmenting South African histories and addressing broader questions of representation, memory and freedom in a postapartheid context (Siona O'Connell; Sipho Mdanda; Paul Weinberg) – but also opens up possibilities for understanding the continued impact of the past on the construction of present social and cultural subjectivities.

In the **Photographies, Complicities and Possibilities** panel, practitioners engage with the archive, not as a material repository or 'source' of a singular 'history' recounted from a position of 'neutrality', but as a contested subject and medium in itself. In so doing, they critically deconstruct the practice of archiving, exposing its internal constructions (Erin Haney; Shashi Cullinan Cook; George Mahashe; Sipho Mdanda; Amy Watson). Addresses in this panel also foreground photographies' role in constructing identities and subjectivities in colonial and contemporary contexts, highlighting how the presence of the camera lens and screen (analogue, digital, film, video) impacts on ways in which those imaged are represented and positioned (Annemi Conradie; Shashi Cullinan Cook; Amy Watson; Sipho Mdanda; Daniela Goeller; George Mahashe; Pervaiz Khan; Tabita Rezaire; Alex Opper). As Stoler (2002:90) notes, while "[c]olonial archives were both sites of

the imaginary and institutions that fashioned histories as they concealed, revealed and reproduced the power of the state", archives were not only "products of state machines", but also "technologies that bolstered the production of those states themselves". In as much as colonial archives may be considered as 'technologies' or mechanisms of power, visual (primarily ethnographic/colonial) archives relied heavily on photographic technology. Generally considered to be a reliable means of capturing 'truthful' representations, photography was deployed in ethnographic recordings and the classification of human beings, defined according to prevailing hierarchical positions of race and culture (Garb 2013:26). Photography was therefore a critical tool, used not only to render pseudo-scientific imagery, but in the reproduction of state-sanctioned racial and cultural representation and policies, while simultaneously serving as a mechanism through which these forms of representation and policies were upheld.

Yet as Garb (2013:26) points out, despite the prevalence of photographs that objectify, exoticise and instrumentalise the bodies of colonial subjects, "the Manichean oppositions of 'white versus black', 'active versus passive', 'powerful versus powerless', and 'colonizer versus colonized' occlude the complexity of knowledge and image production that was possible, even under colonial rule." Such complexities are evident, she continues, in moments of the archive that reveal "signs of fracture, anxiety, and unease, instances when a more respectful or reciprocal encounter may be staged or the edifice of colonial confidence seems to falter" (Garb 2013:26). Colonial and apartheid archives can reveal not only information that is not shown, but also the fragility and subtle complexity of how the state views itself, and the means by which attempts are made to maintain an external façade to mask what lies beneath the surface, or skin.

The use of photography thus raises issues as to how process-based archives can be influenced by the language and conventions of lens-based media in recording and archiving information, as well as questions around how the photograph may be read from within, and outside of, an archival context. It may be argued that once housed in an archive, the photograph's contents are rendered "invisible" and possibilities for open-ended readings of its meanings are thwarted (Pinney, Wright & Poingant cited in Hayes, Silvester & Hartmann 2006:105). In their examination on how readings of the photograph change when taken out of an archival context and "recirculated to enter (and to make) different spaces at different colonial and postcolonial moments". Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester and Wolfram Hartmann (2006:104) propose

that "[w]hen the photograph moves out of its stored archive space, it is as if its energy is released." Refuting the argument that a photograph's meaning 'fades over time', they point to its potential to "reconstitute the complex spaces which make up and are made by history" (Edwards cited in Hayes, Silvester & Hartmann 2006:105) when brought into new human proximities, and how photographic imagery becomes "resocialised" in relation to different contexts and times. Processes of 'resocialisation' occur through dialogues set up between the photograph and its audiences, all of whose readings are informed by their positionalities at a particular moment in time.

Presentations shift beyond the theoretical into an analysis of, and reference to, examples of how artists, filmmakers and other visual practitioners address lens-based and digital archives (Minnette Vári; Rael Salley; Shashi Cullinan Cook; Raimi Gbadamosi) in **The Archive in Practice** panel. These examples offer insights into how visual practitioners may:

- interrogate the politics of selection and classification of knowledge informing and underpinning 'traditional' archives;
- reinterpret, reframe, and reconfigure the implicit codes and meanings that construct dominant or normative readings of 'official' archives, thereby exposing hidden agendas and assumptions;
- question the veracity of personal and historical archival material;
- employ archival material to construct both fictional and faithful recountings of histories and/or narratives;
- 'repurpose' found materials from their own and others' archives, and 'revision' them in light of their personal histories;
- negotiate the fragile and tenuous materiality of analogue film and photography (archival material susceptible to decay, disintegration and disappearance); and conversely, exploit the ubiquity and proliferation of digital media, thereby pointing to the impossibility of recording and capturing the present (Watson page 031);
- point to how, in their materialities, "film, photography and digital media are complicit in the construction as well as disintegration of the archive" (Watson page 031);
- draw on performative elements such as use of personae, staging, lighting, poses and dress to reference the stylistic conventions of colonial/ethnographic images;
- deploy formal strategies such as appropriation, alteration, pastiche and parody in ways offering fresh perspectives from which to re-look at histories;

- re-examine histories in ways opening up new possibilities for the construction of identities, subjectivities and agencies;
- scramble received identities in ways that introduce models of subjectivities destabilising fixed positionings within racial and gendered dichotomies;
- produce new archival forms;
- engage the archive as a site for creative intervention and play.

Addresses in the final, but not conclusive, panel of the platform point to the fluid unpredictability of the future-to-come, as they move into what we have called '**New Photographic Spaces**'. Here, practitioners explore the contemporary expansion of archival parameters into numerous non-traditional – predominantly digital – dimensions. Amongst other practical and theoretical considerations, practitioners presenting in this panel deal with how an ongoing expansion and diversification of the archival form creatively unravels its modalities and unsettles its norms, thereby impacting on issues of access, ownership, audience and ethics (Jennifer Bajorek; Marc Edwards; Tabita Rezaire; Minnette Vári).

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08h30-09h00	TEA

09h00-09h15	Welcome: Prof Federico Freschi Introduction: Prof Leora Farber

VIADUCT 2015

09h15-10h15	OPENING PRESENTATION Lines of sight: archives, counter-archives, and the revisioning work of cross-medium archival engagements (Carolyn Hamilton) Presentation: 40 mins Discussion: 20 mins

PANEL 1: THE (IM) MATERIALITY OF THE ARCHIVE

10h15-11h15	OPENING PRESENTATION Archivy, hauntology and banditry (Verne Harris) Presentation: 40 mins Discussion: 20 mins

11h15-11h35	TEA

PANEL 1: THE (IM) MATERIALITY OF THE ARCHIVE

11h35-12h55	Chair: Verne Harris Presentations: 20 mins each Discussion: 20 mins Epistemic resistance: the oppositional archives of Vanley Burke and Vron Ware (Say Burgin) The analogue archive (Warren Siebrits) Off the record: latent archives (Uriel Orlow)

13h00-14h00	LUNCH

14h00-15h00	FILM: **The Village Under the Forest** (Grunebaum, H and Kaplan, M 2013)

PANEL 2: PRIVATE INTIMACIES, PUBLIC EXPOSURES

15h00-16h00	OPENING PRESENTATION Unseaming images: the limits and possibilities for reconfiguring albums of complicity (Heidi Grunebaum) Presentation: 40 mins Discussion: 20 mins

PROGRAMME

#019

16h00-16h20	TEA

PANEL 2: PRIVATE INTIMACIES, PUBLIC EXPOSURES

16h20-17h20

Chair: Heidi Grunebaum
Presentations: 20 mins each
Discussion: 20 mins

Being called to the rivers of Birminam: secrets, lies and the relational choreography of white looking (Shona Hunter)

Address in drag (John Peffer)

19/03/15 | THURSDAY 19 MARCH

08h30-09h00	TEA

09h00-10h00

FILM: **African Lens: The Story of Priya Ramrakha** (Vidyarthi S, 1997)

PANEL 3: CURATING THE ARCHIVE

10h00-11h00

OPENING PRESENTATION
Priya Ramrakha: independence and optics from Kenya to Biafra (Erin Haney)

Presentation: 40 mins
Discussion: 20 mins

11h00-11h20	TEA

PANEL 3: CURATING THE ARCHIVE

11h20-13h00

Chair: Erin Haney
Presentations 20 mins each
Discussion: 20 mins

The film titled **Coloniser/Colonised** (Sipho Mdanda)

Snapshots of freedom (Siona O'Connell)

In search of South African photographic archives (Paul Weinberg)

Sightings: archive in exhibition practice (Amy Watson)

13h00-14h00	LUNCH

PANEL 4: PHOTOGRAPHIES, COMPLICITIES AND POSSIBILITIES

14h00-15h00

OPENING PRESENTATION
Fashionable clothing, segregation, and the counter-archive in the photographs of Gordon Parks (Kimberly Lamm)

Presentation: 40 mins
Discussion time: 20 mins

PANEL 4: PHOTOGRAPHIES, COMPLICITIES AND POSSIBILITIES

15h00-15h40

Chair: Kimberly Lamm
Presentations 20 mins each
Discussion: 20 mins

Documenting **Isipantsula** dance and culture (Daniela Goeller)

An infinity of traces - the photographic archive and memory
(Pervaiz Khan)

15h40-16h00   TEA

16h00-17h20   Stuck in the middle/side and going nowhere (George Mahashe)

Wearing the archive: immersion via dress (Mary Corrigall)

Behind the billboards (Alex Opper)

08h30-09h00   TEA

PANEL 5: THE ARCHIVE IN PRACTICE

09h00-10h50

Chair: Leora Farber
Presentations 20 mins each
Discussion: 30 mins

Colonial specimen/neocolonial chic: commodification of archival
portraits in contemporary south african fabric design
(Annemi Conradie)

A confounded subject: representational issues raised by Ayana V.
Jackson's **Archival Impulse** (Shashi Cook)

Zanele Muholi: on picturing the invisible
(Rael Salley)

Time in the cemetery (Raimi Gbadamosi)

10h50-11h10   TEA

FILM: **Handsworth Songs** (Akomfrah, J 1986)

11h10-12h30

HANDSWORTH SONGS DISCUSSION
led by Pervaiz Khan (20 mins)

12h30-13h30   LUNCH

PANEL 6: NEW PHOTOGRAPHIES

13h30-14h30

OPENING PRESENTATION
Mobile images: spatial tactics and tagging in/as archival practice
(Jennifer Bajorek)

Presentation: 40 mins
Discussion time: 20 mins

PANEL 6: NEW PHOTOGRAPHIES

14h30-15h50

Chair: Jennifer Bajorek
Presentations 20 mins each

A post-digital practice: systems and glitches in making a self-portrait and an infinite column (Marc Edwards)

The Revenant (Minnette Vári)

Perfect Gentleman: Fake It Until You Make It!
(Tabita Rezaire)

15h50-16h00

TEA

16h00-16:30

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION
Marc Edwards, Jennifer Bajorek, Minnette Vári & Tabita Rezaire

16h30-17h00

SUMMATION AND DISCUSSION
led by Carolyn Hamilton

LINES OF SIGHT: ARCHIVES, COUNTER-ARCHIVES, AND THE REVISIONING WORK OF CROSS-MEDIUM ARCHIVAL ENGAGEMENTS

Carolyn Hamilton

Prof Carolyn Hamilton holds an NRF Research Chair in Archive and Public Culture at the University of Cape Town (see www.apc.uct.ac.za)   Her research areas include the ethnography and history of the archive; the history of pre-industrial South Africa; the public life of ideas and the anthropology of the past in the present. Attentive to the entanglement of the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial, her research pursues the interplay of archive and public life, across disciplines, in and out of institutions and media, and in the everyday locations of home, church and grave. Her books include, variously as author and editor/co-editor, *The mfecane aftermath* (1995), *Terrific majesty* (1998), *Refiguring the archive* (2002), *A prisoner in the garden: opening Nelson Mandela's prison archive* (2005), *The cambridge history of South Africa* (2010), *Uncertain curature* (2014), and *Tribing and untribing the archive* (in press). She is a member of the Public Life of Ideas Network, host of the Archival Platform (see www.archivalplatform.org), a trustee of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, and leader of the 500 Year Archive Project.

My contribution kicks off with a discussion of the limits of the meaning of the term archive, a review of recent critical approaches to using established and hegemonic archives, and a critical discussion of the notion of counter archive. It explores the conceptual and methodological differences between activating counter archives and countering the archive, paying attention to the shifts involved when the frame is postcolonial and when it is decolonial. In particular, I spell out what it means to change lines of sight on archives and counter-archives, paying attention to what happens when we move out of disciplinary and institutional silos, and taxonomic grids, to work across media and to proceed obliquely. I explore the multiple possibilities in the notion of revision, of seeing differently, re-imagining and revising.

ARCHIVY, HAUNTOLOGY AND BANDITRY

Verne Harris

Director of Research and Archive at the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Verne Harris was Mandela's archivist from 2004 to 2013. He is an honorary Research Fellow with the University of Cape Town.

In this paper, I explore what I call 'primary spectral movements' in the archive. The exploration is positioned within a framing provided by Derridean hauntology. I suggest that spectral readings of archive unfold fresh epistemologies and ontologies. Drawing on the work of Esther Peeren, I focalise particular ghosted voices and narratives in 2015

South Africa. This becomes the basis for a call to what I name 'memory banditry' – a strategy, if not a praxis, to create space for ghosts in oppressive societal contexts.

EPISTEMIC RESISTANCE: THE OPPOSITIONAL ARCHIVES OF VANLEY BURKE AND VRON WARE

Say Burgin

Dr Say Burgin is currently an American History Teaching Fellow in the School of History, University of Leeds, and a Research Associate with the VIAD Research Centre, University of Johannesburg.

Over the past decades, scholars have been positioning the archive as a site of many kinds of violence, particularly the kinds of epistemic violence that occlude resistant histories, obscure or minimise the agency of various groups of people, and which sometimes, through the literal destruction of archives, seek to eradicate collective memory. In this paper, I consider transformations and resistances that occur within, through and against the archive. It is indeed in part because we have a better understanding of archival violences now that we have begun to see so many efforts of archival resistances. By thinking through the examples of Vanley Burke's huge archive of ephemera and documentary photography housed in the Birmingham Central Library's archive in Birmingham, England, as well as Vron Ware's collection of digitised documentary photographs held by Autograph ABP in London, I re-think the epistemic challenges that these holdings pose and present – not just to racism, but to the ways in which we theorise knowledge. For, as Burke says with regard to the objects in his archive, "the actual objects when you are able to touch them, to feel them, they evoke the whole". I meditate on the more holistic, the more whole, ways in which these oppositional archives force us to think about the affective – rather than simply the cognitive – nature of our epistemologies around race and resistance.

THE ANALOGUE ARCHIVE

Warren Siebrits

Warren Siebrits has been active in the South African art world since 1988 as both a dealer and collector, with a special interest in the work of the sculptor Edoardo Villa.

The crux of my talk, in which I make particular reference to Edoardo Villa, highlights the importance and function of collating a paper archive. Conversely, I use examples from the archive as part of a digital Powerpoint presentation to indicate how the locating, archiving and storing of art invitations, original photographs, exhibition catalogues,

ephemera and newspaper clippings have played an essential role from 1986 to the present for me as a collector of Villa's work and owner of his house and studio in Kew, Johannesburg.

OFF THE RECORD: LATENT ARCHIVES

Uriel Orlow

Dr Uriel Orlow is a London-based artist and Senior Research Fellow at University of Westminster, London. He teaches at the University of the Arts, Zurich, University of the Arts Geneva and Royal College of Art, London.

In this presentation, I talk through archival concerns and approaches in my recent work, exploring what happens when the archive becomes the document or when we read the world as an archive of latent documents.

UNSEAMING IMAGES: THE LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR RECONFIGURING ALBUMS OF COMPLICITY

Heidi Grunebaum

Heidi Grunebaum is a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Humanities Research, University of the Western Cape. Her work focuses on memory, narrative and aesthetic responses to the afterlives of mass violence and psycho-geographies of displacement.

With this paper, I inquire whether counter-archival strategies deployed in cinematic and artistic works to engage questions of complicity must risk failure as a necessary condition of their deployment. Taking the documentary film, **The Village Under the Forest** (Mark J Kaplan and Heidi Grunebaum 2013) as a way into this inquiry, my paper tracks the question of complicity and counter-archival strategy through a consideration of the repurposing of photographs from personal albums that appear in the film. In its excavations of complicity, the visual narrative of the film incorporates archival footage from a range of film archives, archival stills, and photographs from personal albums. During the states of emergency in 1980s South Africa, the albums of travel photographs represented a desire to affiliate to Israel and its promise to non-Israeli Jewish people to belong to its polity. In the visual bed of the film, however, the photographs are 'cut into' and, sometimes over, footage and voice-overs of interviews with Palestinians, redirecting the vectors of the photographs' meaning and reconfiguring their political claims.

What limits may be encountered in the repurposing of the photographs towards offering an account of complicity? On the one hand, the repurposed images may

interrupt the apparent seamlessness of their earlier ideological performance as they are inserted into a more entwined and relational historical unfolding in which remote places, temporal conjunctures and human subjects become connected. On the other hand, the travel album photographs in the film may offer a redemptive narrative in which Palestinians are again displaced; instrumentalised within an interpretative framework that explores complicity with their displacement. And what is displaced of South Africa, given the period in which the photographs were taken?

If, as Ariella Azoulay (2012:18), argues, the "event of photography" is constituted through an "ontology of the many, of the human being with others in which camera and photo are implicated", I explore the possibilities, limits and risks of failure for travel album photographs in the film to open different ethical relations, a dissenting political vision. For if a counter-archive of complicity is to be assembled as a simultaneous account of the very conditions of possibility for it's becoming then the risk of failure may constitute a necessary outcome in accounting for complicity.

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BEING CALLED TO THE RIVERS OF BIRMINAM: SECRETS, LIES AND THE RELATIONAL CHOREOGRAPHY OF WHITE LOOKING

Shona Hunter

Dr Shona Hunter is a RCUK Fellow in the Machinery of Governance Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds, and a Research Associate with the VIAD Research Centre, University of Johannesburg.

This talk is part of a reflexive response to my involvement in the showing of the black British photographer Vanley Burke's latest exhibition **By the Rivers of Birminam** at the FADA Gallery in 2014, University of Johannesburg. It is a personal, professional and political response to considering my relationship to Burke's work, as well as a development of my earlier (2005) work on thinking through my own enactment of racialising practices through researching and teaching about racialised power and inequality, and in particular in teaching about the intersections of whiteness, femininity and class through the enactment of racialised power. Burke's archive is interesting to explore from this point of view as, in his own words: "The photographs [in it] are very much part of a documentation process which we as Black people need to go through … It is not an attempt to show the Black community to the wider community. This is where we are. It is more importantly a record" (Burke 2004:9). Yet, for me as a white woman from Birmingham (as somewhere distinct from yet paradoxically interdependent with Burke's Birminam), Burke's archive speaks to me in a number of ways, telling me at least as much about myself, my relation to gendered, racialised and classed power,

the absent presences enacting my family history, my biography and my whitened subjectivity and agency as it does about black Britishness. For some specific and other more general reasons it demands that I look at and engage with my own responsibilities for ongoing complicities in racialising practices and forms of racist domination. Complicating my response to the demand for self reflection that I read in Burke's work, is the way in which whiteness is performed through the acts of watching, looking, visibility and invisibility the distancing of the self from the self through the act of self-reflexive looking and watching. As Sarah Nuttall (2001:135) recognises, autobiography, like the one I am prompted to think through here, "is at some level always about secrets and lying, visibility and invisibility". From the context of post/decolonial critique it is a struggle over the power and agency to define the self as author of the world around it. This fits well within the practices of the (neo)colonial enterprise where I see myself as being called to question through an engagement with Burke's archive.

Conceptually, I am interested in extending my (forthcoming 2015) work, which offers the notion of 'relational choreography' as a means to understanding the interdependencies of power and vulnerability within subjectification practices such as the autobiographical practice I engage in this paper, and the difficulties this sort of choreography presents in taking personal responsibility for the reproduction of racism. Relational choreography helps us to understand the dynamic splits between personal and collective responsibility which hinder effective resistance to racism as a form of *institutionalised domination enacted through subjectification*.

Sources cited

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ADDRESS IN DRAG

John Peffer

Dr John Peffer is a specialist in modern African art and photography and Associate Professor of Art History at Ramapo College in New Jersey. His research examines the historiography of African Art History, art and visual culture in South Africa during apartheid, and general issues of global modernity and human rights in art, photography, and visuality.

A current interest among photography scholars is how the camera may record and simultaneously reinvent personae, via various aspects of costuming and framing. Especially with studio portraiture, the address of the image itself has to do with how it is dressing up and otherwise accessorsing the public identity of the person. But also our

expectations about what is called an archive or what is called a collection depend on how they are attired and how they are approached. Through a discussion of my current research on family albums this talk explores, for South Africa, why it is important to not just identify and display new categories of 'popular', or 'found' photography, but also to understand what I refer to as the 'vernacular of' visual objects. This means considering how images address their viewers then and now, their oral and lived-in aspects, and what these can reveal about how people lived through apartheid or relate to it today in the everyday sense. For this, a definition of 'archive' is needed that includes family collections and information about personal uses of pictures, as well as a conjunctive collection of narratives surrounding the images which relate them to other histories and other images.

PRIYA RAMRAKHA: INDEPENDENCE AND OPTICS FROM KENYA TO BIAFRA

Erin Haney

Dr Erin Haney is a writer and curator, and a Research Associate with the VIAD Research Centre, University of Johannesburg. She is also the co-founder and co-director of Resolution, a non-profit organisation dedicated to photography and image archives in Africa: www.resolutionphoto.org

Shravan Vidyarthi and Erin Haney are starting a new collaboration to creatively expand access to two important collections in Nairobi. Both of these collections are, in their DNA, counter-archival and decolonial. One is the archive of **The Colonial Times**, the first anti-British Kenyan newspaper printed in English, Gujarati, and Swahili. Started by the Indian-Kenyan Ramrakha family in the 1940s to contest the British-controlled press, it became the mouthpiece for prominent Kenyan nationalists, and illustrated key anti-colonial struggles in its pages. The second collection is the photography collection of Priya Ramrakha, the first Kenyan photographer hired by **Time/Life** magazine. Priya was of the few Africans to cover such a range of independence era events across the continent, and the recovery of his archive in Nairobi repositions a crucial source of historical photography for African and international audiences.

    The potential for these two distinct collections – of photography and of media – is enormous. **The Colonial Times** collection is thus far inaccessible to the public, and now kept in a family collection. Shravan has researched these archives, as well as made a documentary feature film on Priya's biography, and digitised part of the photography collection for a soon-to-be-published volume. Because of Priya's exceptional access to events across the continent on the eve of independence, his negatives constitute an unprecedented collection of political and social photography. They reveal the early optimistic years, and are interspersed with photography he took in the United States covering key civil-rights and other public figures, as well as front-line photography in east, central, southern and west Africa. Together, the coverage of national and

international moments in the 1950s and 1960s is truly extraordinary, and anchored by memory and assessment of people in every country covered here.

Expanding access to an image archive usually goes relatively unnoticed, its impact minute. Kenya, like most countries on the continent, does indeed face a dearth of access to historical documentation, but an archive can be a burdensome treasure. With both of these collections, their very expansiveness degrades the character of editorial authority.

Because they are so central to the visual material and consciousness of the early nationhood of Kenya, their value lies in a much more generative sense. They might become a means by which we can question how images and text access or are absent from our own memories, and how these selections and eradications are transmitted more broadly.

Taking moments captured (by the day, by the second) in late colonialism, as new nations, and today, we are asking communities, artists, visual strategists to collaborate to create in the present. To create new constructions (texts, video, physical exchanges) that grapple with pages and images, or comprise a larger interactive project on language and images. Among other things, these projects might illuminate the discursive and generative character of these vivid images and documents.

THE FILM TITLED COLONISER/COLONISED

Sipho Mdanda

Sipho Mdanda is Curator at Freedom Park, Pretoria and a Research Associate with the VIAD Research Centre, University of Johannesburg.

During the second phase of the Freedom Park project, a permanent museum exhibition was established. It was named '//hapo' which derives from a Khoi proverb, meaning 'a dream is not a dream until it is shared by the entire community'. This implies the story told at //hapo will be by all South Africans, giving legitimacy to the 'shared' wider meaning, and balancing South Africa's historical narrative, dating back from 3, 6 billion years to the present.

The history of South Africa is a contested archive with multi-faceted narratives. With a view to countering the colonial narrative, Freedom Park employed a number of curatorial experts who were consulted as to how to emancipate the 'African voice' and foreground 'Indigenous knowledge' and 'freedoms of the people', thereby, implicitly, telling the story from an African perspective. This approach, although noble in the context of postcolonial South Africa, is flawed with assumptions around what is meant and understood by an 'African' and 'shared community'.

The film titled **Coloniser/Colonised** was initially conceptualised to provide new insights into the colonial encounter and its impact on how South Africa became the eclectic society it is today. The film explores and provides insights to the visitor in response to the question, 'what was the nature of the coastal area of the Cape before

the arrival of Europeans into the southern-most tip of the African continent?' This creates a binary narrative, positing on the one hand, that the Khoi-San were settled, and on the other hand, questioning the notion that they were waiting on colonisers. But due to power relations that played out during the curation of the Freedom Park exhibition, the outcome is a far cry from what was expected from the curatorial team.

Through a critique of the film, I explore the complex dynamics of a counter narrative against the stakeholders that oversaw the creation of Freedom Park's permanent exhibition. The stakeholders included the Presidency, Council members, Chief Executive officer, and Senior Management forming the Management Committee, as well as the Curator and outside experts who were used as service providers. This structure posed numerous challenges for the Curator to make independent decisions in the curation of the film, particularly those related to reporting and approval processes. Issues of 'curatorial independence', against opposing political stakeholder's interests and contestations of referencing the colonial archive with a view of transformation, are analysed.

SNAPSHOTS OF FREEDOM

Siona O'Connell

Dr Siona O'Connell is a Senior Curator at the Centre for Curating the Archive at the University of Cape Town. She has been a lecturer at the Centre for African Studies and a curator of the Centre for African Studies Gallery. Dr O'Connell is also a Trilateral Reconnections Project Fellow and a BIARI (Brown Internal Advanced Research Institute) alumnus.

In this presentation, I examine the archive through two case studies of curated exhibitions in from Cape Town, namely **Movie Snaps** and **Spring Queen i**n an attempt to think about broader questions of representation, memory and freedom in postapartheid South Africa. I suggest a consideration of archives that fall beyond the mainstream but more importantly, argue that it is in looking to the archives of the oppressed that we can begin to imagine the production of a different kind of knowledge in how we live after oppression. These questions have profound implications for post-1994 South Africa, as they seek to confront legacies of historical injustice that continue to play themselves out in often tragically violent ways on several socio-economic levels in South Africa. I suggest that the work of creative and curatorial practice demonstrates that we do not have to work within old categories in our urgent quest for understanding the human.

IN SEARCH OF SOUTH AFRICAN PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES

Paul Weinberg

Paul Weinberg is a Senior Curator in Visual Archives at the University of Cape Town and lectures in photography and film. Weinberg has also lectured at the Centre of Documentary Studies, Duke University. He was a founder member of Afrapix, the collective photo agency that played a key role in documenting resistance to apartheid in the 1980s, and South, which also put South African photographers on the world map.

South African archives share with their fellow African countries a similar historical malaise. Plunder and appropriation during the colonial past meant that many of our archives are not in the countries where the images were taken but are usually sitting in institutions in the first world. In contradiction to this 'African Photography', in particular 'vernacular' photography has enjoyed a recent high concentration of interest in the last two decades. It has been 'discovered', or more accurately 'rediscovered' and is finally finding a place in world visual heritage. Its new-found home has come mainly because of the Art Gallery and the ever present curiosity for exploring the exotic and the romantic, or what Okui Enwezor calls 'Afro-romanticism'.

 The difficult path for African archives continues to provide challenges for those who work with them. Perennial issues like the important need for repatriation of heritage, lack of resources, capacity and skill bedevil those who work in this space. Against this though is the need to work with what we have and acknowledge simultaneously our own sense of agency in collecting, curating and making material accessible and available.

 This presentation also examines the dance between the mainstream photographers and the 'forgotten' or 'hidden' archives and the challenges they present in the process of collecting national and African visual heritage. I share my journey as an archivist and the road the University of Cape Town Special Collections has travelled, citing examples including the latest project **The Other Camera,** as we engage with material that is 'endangered', 'vulnerable' and potentially 'up for sale'.

SIGHTINGS: ARCHIVE IN EXHIBITION PRACTICE

Amy Watson

Amy Watson is an independent curator, currently based in Johannesburg.

In this paper, I provide some theoretical reflections on an exhibition entitled **Sightings**, to be realised in June 2015, at the KZNSA Gallery (Durban). The premise of the exhibition is to consider how artists have engaged with the materiality of the archive, particularly its slippages, omissions and 'blind spots'. The exhibition reflects upon the ways in which the scattered and incomplete remains of past are tenuously assembled to produce the materiality and veracity of the present, in the construction of both collective and personal memory.

 For the artists involved, the archive is engaged not simply as a material repository of history, but as a methodology for a critical (de)construction of the narratives and

fictions of the present moment. The exhibition includes works by artists working largely through lens-based media, and points to the complicity of these media in the production of both the past and present, through the material (dis)integrity of the media: film, photography and digital media are, in their materialities, complicit in the construction as well as disintegration of the archive. The exhibition explores how artists have negotiated the variously fragile and tenuous materiality of analogue film and photography, which is susceptible to decay, disappearance and disorder; and conversely the ubiquity and proliferation of digital media, which raises questions regarding the (im)possibility of the containment and memory of the present.

In this paper, I suggest that the archive be seen as a repository of traces, which have the potential to be destabilised and thus signal the construction at work in any single account of an historical narrative and remembrance. Artists' works included in the exhibition variously question the veracity of personal and historical archival material and often employ archival material to construct both fictional and faithful accounts, signaling the archive's susceptibility to exploitation, and further that archives are inherently formulated by those that have the agency to collate and constitute them.

BETWEEN THE OPEN AND THE HIDDEN: FASHIONABLE CLOTHING, SEGREGATION, AND THE COUNTER-ARCHIVE IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF GORDON PARKS

Kimberly K. Lamm

Prof Kimberly K. Lamm is an Associate Professor in the Women's Studies Department at Duke University, and has a PhD in English, University of Washington. Her field of research includes contemporary feminist art, contemporary poetry, feminist theory, and 19th- and 20th-century US Literature.

This presentation focuses on the colour photographs of the Jim Crow South Gordon Parks produced for the 1956 **Life** magazine photo-essay 'The restraints open and hidden'. As my title makes clear, I am interested in Parks's thematic and compositional interest in the fashionable clothing African-American women are wearing in these photographs, which is not considered central to their subject matter or design. On the one hand, this omission is strange since fashion was a crucial part of Parks's career, and fashion photographs constitute a large part of his archive. On the other hand, the lack of attention to Parks's visual investment in women's clothes makes sense. Jim Crow segregation was consequential; its punitive effects continue to reverberate (and still exist in different forms). The images that depict segregation are considered central to the photographic archive that documents racial oppression in the United States. Women's fashionable clothing, on other hand, is linked to the presumed superficialities of both femininity and the image, and is not thought to possess the weight of historical importance the archive names. In my paper, I challenge the latter assumption and demonstrate that Parks brought his talent for fashion photography to bear on his visual

depictions of segregation, thereby troubling the two dimensions of Parks's archive that are considered distinct.

By deploying his skills as a fashion photographer in the context of segregation, Parks's photographs suggest that fashionable clothing was a stealth strategy – taking place somewhere between the 'open' and the 'hidden' – that resisted Jim Crow culture and the denigrations it was designed to enforce. More specifically, Parks's photographs testify to African-American women's sustained resistance to what Hortense Spillers (1987) calls the "ungendering" at work in the transatlantic slave trade and its institutional reiterations, like Jim Crow segregation, that attempted to relegate African-Americans to the status of the non-human. This resistance is not just a subject in Parks's photographs; it is integral to their visual design. I argue that Parks drew upon and even emulated the meticulous attention to sartorial adornment the women in his photographs display. These visual meditations allow us to see fashionable clothing as an expression of African-American women's desires to arrange images of themselves that align with the legibility of gender identity. Together, Parks's photographs and the fashionably dressed women that appear within their frames reject the 'ungendering' of African American women passed down from, and circulating through, dominant American culture, thereby creating a counterarchive that addresses the specific forms of racism women had undergone. At the same time, Parks's photographs also suggest a movement between gendering and ungendering that might be at play in the counterarchive's work undoing fixed and recognisable categories.

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DOCUMENTING ISIPANTSULA DANCE AND CULTURE

Daniela Goeller

Dr Daniela Goeller currently holds a Post-doctoral Fellowship in the VIAD Research Centre, and is a Research Associate with the Department of Esthetics of Performing and Spectacular Arts (EsPAS) at Université de Paris 1 Sorbonne/Institut ACTE/CNRS, and with the Research Centre Esthétique, Pratique et Histoire de l'Art (EPHA), Université de Paris 8 Saint-Denis, Department Arts des images et art contemporain (AI-AC).

Isipantsula is South Africa's predominant township subculture. It is rooted in the Sophiatown jazz culture of the 1950s, and developed in the 1970s to become the main youth culture in the townships. It is both a mindset and lifestyle, expressed through language, music, dress code, and a narrative dance form. To the best of my knowledge, little, if any, scholarly research has been conducted around **Isipantsula**; as far as I can ascertain, it has not been historically analysed as a culture, and there

is very little substantive or critically informed information and documentation to be found in museums, university libraries and archives. The existing archival material is predominantly in the hands of the people involved in the culture. The historical documentation and materials are therefore in danger of becoming extinct.

Since 2012, I have been collaborating with the South African photographer Chris Saunders in documenting **Isipantsula** culture by portraying its current actors, namely, the numerous **Pantsula** dance companies in the townships around Johannesburg and their members. In this paper, I address the process we have developed over several years; picturing and writing **Isipantsula's** partially lost history. The images are documents of a living culture. They differ from what is generally considered as documentary photography in specific ways. Firstly, they are posed, staged and contextualised, almost always in collaboration with those portrayed and therefore have to be considered as re-enactments. **Isipantsula** articulate their image in specific poses or signature movements; Saunders's images contextualise these poses. Secondly, they show similar characteristics to photographs of performance art from the 1970s. They are the only remains of these actions at a specific moment in time within the ever-changing world of fashion and subculture, and they respond to the challenge of how to picture a dance form – that is to say, movement – in a photograph – that is to say, a still.

AN INFINITY OF TRACES - THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE AND MEMORY

Pervaiz Khan

Pervaiz Khan is a writer, filmmaker, visual arts curator and artist who has made documentaries, short fictions, music videos, new-media installations, and worked on feature films. He lectures in the Wits School of the Arts Film and Television Dept., University of the Witwatersrand.

During the 1990s, I curated a series of exhibitions for **The Drum**, a black arts centre in Birmingham, England. The first two exhibitions on the 1950s and 1960s drew on the images of high street studio photographer Ernest Dyche, who specialised in taking promotional shots of musical hall performers during the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. When TV became popular in the 1950s, music hall died. Dyche's studio was located in an area where newly arrived immigrants, invited to come from the Caribbean and South Asia, began to settle. He applied his skills to taking photographs that the new settlers could send back home to show they had 'made it'. The third exhibition, on the 1970s, drew on a series of photographs called **The Handsworth Self Portraits**. This was a project conceived by three white photographers living and working in Handsworth in the 1970s – Derek Bishton, Brian Homer and John Reardon. They were also the founders of the radical photography magazine **Ten-8**. One summer they set up a street studio outside the terraced house where they worked, and invited passers to take their own self-portraits using a cable release. Photographs by the Birmingham-based photographer, Vanley Burke, were also included the 1970s exhibition.

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE/SIDE AND GOING NOWHERE: AN ATTEMPT AT IMAGINING A METHODOLOGY FOR ENGAGING COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES, HISTORIES AND SUBJECTIVITIES

George Mahashe

George Mahashe is a PhD Fine Art candidate at the University of Cape Town (UCT), with a Masters in Fine Arts degree from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, UCT. As a practicing Fine Arts photographer, Mahashe is the head photographer for Visual Uprising Communication, and has exhibited in a variety of group and solo exhibitions locally and internationally.

Over the last eight years, as I try to locate myself, and that which has somehow been designated as 'my culture' within the postcolonial impulse of self-representation, I have encountered historic photographs in a variety of forms. The uses of historical photographs, and specifically those produced, and archived, through the agency of various colonial institutions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are vast.

In this paper, I explore the challenges that I have faced in my dealings with the wider Humanities' use, approach to, and scholarship of, these archived historical photographs. I present my research into the visualisation of Rain-Queen Modjadji's Balobedu. It tracks late nineteenth-century German missionaries' use of photography for self-promotion and mission publicity. I also look at an early twentieth-century anthropologist's monograph illustrations, produced in terms of the anthropologist's desire to show that Balobedu culture was not static, but flowed from a long history of constant change. In the paper, I not only question the source of disavowal in historic photographs, but also the lenses that we – the academy – are using to decide on this disavowal.

In part my method is historical; notably in the activity of tracking. However, I also use my freedom as an artist to explore the material differently. I am interested in archived historical photographs, not only as sources of information or evidence, but as material documents. In my artwork, explore the photographs' quality as disruptions in time, bringing what is past into the present, and constituting the future. I also explore the personal proximity that they enable, engaging not just the viewers' minds and inhabiting their spaces, but also imposing on their physical bodies. In response to the photograph's materiality, I engage the archived historic photographs through installations that invite the viewer into close proximity with the photographic document itself. The work, artistic and scholarly, plays with the boundary of observer (photographer and audience) and observed (subject and photographer), imagining photography beyond the photograph itself, towards the extended photographic process, further questioning the very impulse to police how the photographic residue of a past moment may be perceived today.

WEARING THE ARCHIVE: IMMERSION VIA DRESS

Mary Corrigall

Mary Corrigall is a Johannesburg-based art critic, editor, journalist, blogger and art historian. She is the Books Editor and Senior Feature writer at **The Sunday Independent** newspaper. Corrigall is also a Research Fellow with the VIAD Research Centre, University of Johannesburg.

In 1991, the second year of my Fashion Design studies, I was sent to work at the now-defunct Bernberg Fashion Museum in Johannesburg, where I was put to work on restoring dated garments in the collection. I spent hours laboriously unpicking seams of garments, carefully disassembling the garments to prepare them for the restoration process. This meditative act transported my imagination elsewhere as I contemplated the identity of the maker and the wearer; the opposite ends of the social, economic and perhaps even racial boundaries that separated them; and how these garments not only bound them intimately to each other despite the discrepancies in their status, but also physically and temporally united them.

As I pulled the binding threads out of the textiles, it felt as if I was severing these bonds as a means of inserting myself into the moments of the garments' creation and life. I feared the history embedded in the garment would be erased if it could no longer be worn. In retrospect, this set me on a discursive journey to discover the ways in which contemporary cultural producers engage in acts of 'wearing the archive' and the risks and contradictions this entails. This has manifested most obviously in the pseudo-Sophiatown inspired fashion by Stoned Cherrie in the early 2000s via style lines and accessories that evoke the legendary suburb's heyday to images of Steve Biko imprinted on T-shirts.

However, it is the ways in which performers and visual artists have more consciously and deliberately sought to immerse themselves in the archive via dress that has held my attention. In this presentation I touch on examples of this compulsion to 'wear the archive' as a means of coming to terms with identity, history and vexed psychosocial schisms, and the gendered nature of this pursuit – it is largely one pursued by female performers and artists.

Given that I would like to curate and commission an exhibition centred on the theme of this paper, my presentation functions as a means through which I can engage with the flaws and difficulties entailed in 'wearing the archive' – inviting participants to contribute to ways in which these could be negotiated or acknowledged in a display.

BEHIND THE BILLBOARDS: FACILE FRONTS, FRAGILE PRESENCES AND PHOTOGRAPHY'S DUAL ROLES OF COMPLICITY AND POTENTIAL IN CONTEMPORARY ABIDJAN

Alex Opper

Alex Opper is a Senior Lecturer in the Dept. of Architecture, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg.

The context for this paper stems from a recent invitation to present a workshop in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, focusing on the upgrading of informal settlements in urban areas. I structured the workshop around lessons learned via my engagement in various immersive, community-driven informal settlement upgrading processes in Johannesburg, since 2011. The invitation came in the wake of, and because of, massive slum clearances in Abidjan. This overlap drove home the considerable value and necessity of the sharing of upgrading methodologies in a highly unstable environment: unstable in the sense of the apparently mostly absent civic rights of Abidjan's dislocated urban poor.

Upon my arrival, the only days-old erasure of many informal neighbourhoods made it impossible for me to access Abidjan's auratic reality, in the Benjaminian (1997 [1936]) sense. A palimpsestual reversal meant I was looking at rubble, ruptured earth, beach sand, or a combination of these, swaths of exposed land which days or hours before many informal dwellers had called home. The scenes jolted me into mental reconstructions of the racially motivated tactics of violence attached to the notorious forced removals of South Africa's apartheid period.

The only means at my disposal, for holding onto (rather than archiving) what I was seeing, or perhaps more accurately, was not seeing, was photography. I resorted to snapping images, mostly with my mobile phone. What these photographs amount to is the capturing of violence, damage and loss: a hard-to-grasp counter-archive of situated absence.

Starkly revealing about the Abidjan experience is that a significant reversal occurs in the scenes my viewfinder settled on: as a result of the erasure of self-made infrastructure (infrastructure, in the form of self-built houses and homes), the phenomenon and reality of Abdoumaliq Simone's (2004) "people as infrastructure" – its intelligence, tenacity and value – comes to the fore. The photographs show, to a certain extent, the rapid human reconstitution of disrupted social networks – in the physical realm – of dislodged informal settlers, in order to regain an urban foothold for themselves and their families. In stark contrast to this attitude of the reconfiguring of lives, livelihoods and homes, stand, disembodied and distanced, the advertising billboards referred to in the abstract's title.

Such billboards, of which I documented a number, cunningly employ the mechanics of the mass-reproduction of the image via the medium of photography. Walter Benjamin's (1997) ideas are, again, important here: the billboard's pretense – of aura via authenticity, individuality and the aspirations for material wealth, status and wellbeing it brandishes – disqualifies itself almost immediately (as soon as a reproduction of a given image is served up on another generic billboard on the city's asphalt horizon.

In summary, this paper serves as the beginning of the definition of a counter-archive of situated absence. I propose that this archive of removal may function as a counter-voice, useful to interrogate and challenge the paper-thin and marginalising sign-signifier role of Abidjan's billboards, and the one-sided neo-liberal agendas attached to its marketing machine at large. The paper should be read together with an envisaged photographically inspired installation. Both formats of experimental investigation intend to shed new light on contemporary photography's dual roles: of complicity and potential.

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COLONIAL SPECIMEN/NEOCOLONIAL CHIC: COMMODIFICATION OF ARCHIVAL PORTRAITS IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN FABRIC DESIGN

Annemi Conradie

Annemi Conradie is reading towards a PhD in Visual Studies at the University of Stellenbosch. Her research is focused on relationships between visual and material culture, commodification and the social sciences, particularly within colonial and neocolonial contexts.

Colonial photographic archives have, in recent decades, become increasingly accessible to a broader public, whether through the digitisation of archives and dissemination on the internet, or through the work of researchers, curators and visual arts practitioners. Such archives have been revisited in order to counter historical masternarratives, interrogate hegemonic ideologies and uncover subaltern histories. The democratisation of information has not only meant easier access to descendants, scholars and arts practitioners, but also to entrepreneurs who repurpose colonial photographs with the explicit aim of producing commodities *en masse*.

The **Cameo** range of fabrics by South African company Design Team (released in the early 2000s) is one such example. The range features portraits – collaged into decorative antique frames – of indigenous Southern African women photographed in the mid-nineteenth century by AM Duggin-Cronin and JE Middlebrook. These photographs reached a wider audience in the 2001 publication *Surviving the lens, photographic studies of south and east African people, 1870-1920,* edited by Michael Stevenson and Michael Graham-Stewart.

In this paper, I explore the shifts in meaning and value that occur when these portraits are moved from the semantic space of the colonial anthropological archive to that of glossy scholarly publication, and finally to the spaces of interior design stores, magazines and middle class homes. Semiotic theory and Aimé Césaire's (1972 [1955]:6) equation "colonisation = thingification", are employed in the interogation and

problematising of the postcolonial commodification of portraits of colonised people. I explore the shifts in representations of identity and subjectivity that occur during, and within, the resultant cycle of knowledge, image and capital.

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A CONFOUNDED SUBJECT: REPRESENTATIONAL ISSUES RAISED BY AYANA V. JACKSON'S EXHIBITION ARCHIVAL IMPULSE

Shashi Cullinan Cook

Shashi Cullinan Cook is a freelance writer and editor, and a part-time art and design theory Lecturer in the Dept. of Multimedia, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg.

The Duggan-Cronin photographic archives from the colonial era in Southern Africa include thousands of images black Southern African people taken predominantly for ethnographic purposes. In the exhibition titled **Archival Impulse**, Ayana V. Jackson's (2013: 2) intention is to critique and counter archival constructions of black subjects by repeatedly representing her body in the poses commonly used to represent black subjects in colonial-era photographic archives. In these archives black subjects were persistently shown in settings and attitudes prescribed by colonial-era photographers. Many portrait sitters were contextualised in photographic studio settings, while the movements of those photographed *in situ* were sometimes directed by the photographers (Godby 2010: 59). In some cases, the appearance of black subjects was augmented according to the photographers' fantasies of what constituted 'African dress' (Godby 2010: 60). Emphasising the exotic appearance of these subjects made for more sensational photographs and served to highlight racial and cultural differences between Europeans and Africans.

In some cases, sitters were photographed in European dress which, for the subjects themselves, was *de rigueur* (Jackson 2015; Godby 2010: 60). To European eyes, Africans wearing fashionable Victorian clothing might have been indexical of the 'success' of the colonial 'civilising mission', but it was also disappointingly conventional. A choir of young black South Africans who embarked on a school fund-raising tour in England between 1891 and 1893 became well aware of this attitude when British theatre-goers neglected to attend the choir's concerts until they performed in pseudo-African outfits (Erlmann 1999). Jackson's **Archival Impulse** draws attention to this sort of costuming and stage-management of the 'black African' construct by referencing dioramas, exhibits and human zoos, in which black bodies were overtly presented as spectacular objects. In many respects Jackson's critical intentions in Archival Impulse are clear: the

theatrical clothing, pastiched landscapes and digitally-collaged bodies emphasise the construction of the photograph and its subject; the captions and poses in the work evoke particularly dehumanising and objectifying archival practices; and Jackson's use of her own body in her photographs arguably diminishes the powerful, protected position of the photographer. However, the works in **Archival Impulse** are deliberately seductive and beautiful in ways that could be seen as problematic because of their traumatic source material. Some of the images effectively rebuff the gaze, while others may perpetuate the viewer's (and photographer's) complicity in the consumption of images of black subjects. In this presentation, I discuss some of the questions Jackson's work prompts about the conceptual issues surrounding the representation of the spectacularised black body, and the politics involved in drawing on colonial archives as source material.

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ZANELE MUHOLI: ON PICTURING THE INVISIBLE

Raél Salley

Raél Jero Salley is an artist who writes. Previously a Lecturer at Columbia College Chicago and elsewhere, Salley is currently Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town and Visiting Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

At the heart of this paper lies a single question: what is the relationship between recent South African art and ideals, notions and practices of freedom? Seeing the lives, loves and desires of black people in South Africa is the focus of my response.

Zanele Muholi's photographs document, archive and imagine LGBTI lives in a practice of picturing that is at once activist and artistic. Excitement, awe and romantic visions appear in the portraits. The pictures are charged by a convulsive power that re-imagines the visible constitution of beings articulated by political debates about feminism, gender, sexuality, race, violence and African existence. A Prince Claus award

winner, Muholi has a fast growing international reputation. In her activist artwork, Muholi consciously endeavors to produce an archive of pictures that document individual beings to make new communities. In this paper, I begin to address the following questions: what are the dynamic relationships between document, archive, community, social belonging, gender, sexuality and blackness? How do archive, memory and history work as political, social and ideological forces? What does it mean and what does it take to see, celebrate and/or commemorate black queer South African citizens? What are some meanings and markings of blackness, LGBTI and marginalised people now? What visions of a future reality are shaped by activist modes of creative awareness?

TIME IN THE CEMETERY

Raimi Gbadamosi

Prof Raimi Gbadamosi is an artist, writer and curator, with a Doctorate in Fine Art from the Slade School of Fine Art, London. He is a member of the Interdisciplinary Research Group 'Afroeuropeans', University of Leon, Spain, and the 'Black Body' group, Goldsmiths College, London. Prof Gbadamosi is on the Editorial board of **Third Text**, and the boards of Elastic Residence, London, and Relational, Bristol. He is currently lecturing in the Fine Arts Dept. at the Wits School of the Arts, University of the Witwatersrand.

Using my current exhibition, **Cemetery**, as a starting point, I investigate the role of memory in the creation of a political and theoretical canon. The private space of the imagination is often defined by public spectacle, and yet meaning comes from nuances that are privately held.
Cemetery is a mixture of private reminisce and public declaration.
Cemetery is a collection of thinkers, makers, and individuals of significance that have had a profound impact on collective thought. Starting from my own mental archive, it is an investigation into how mutual thought processes are formed, how canons are created, how they form themselves into communal inspiration, and how rehearsals of canons have the tendency to reinforce the power of particular thought. Canons are not necessarily going to be the same for all people: geography, social position, education, class relationships, and the list can go on, have an impact on the way that individuals structure their imaginations, and deal with their lives.

MOBILE IMAGES: SPATIAL TACTICS AND TAGGING IN/AS ARCHIVAL PRACTICE

Jennifer Bajorek

Dr Jennifer Bajorek is a writer, curator, and a Research Associate with the VIAD

Research Centre, University of Johannesburg. She is also the co-founder and co-director of Resolution, a non-profit organisation dedicated to photography and image archives in Africa: www.resolutionphoto.org

In this paper, I explore tags and tagging as they are emerging in new collaborative research interrogating creative visual and spatial practice incorporating locative media and new geospatial technologies in Johannesburg and Nairobi. This project examines existing participatory and public art practice using locative media and location-aware devices in both cities, with a view to exploring multiple genealogies – in relation to participation, local histories of socially engaged art, and broader trends in tactical and locative media. It also explores, in a way that is still preliminary and tentative, how locative media and location-aware devices are changing the ways that artists and their publics are engaging with urban space and/or using these media to articulate new urban scales. The particular focus of this presentation is on tagging and geo-tagging in relation to photography and video. Specifically, I outline a series of questions that are being brought starkly to the fore by work that incorporates multiple layers of images and/or multiple data streams – work that uses images, for example, both as a site or space of participatory practice and as documentation of that practice – or that uses crowd-sourced or multi-perspectival video. These questions about tagging and geo-tagging are brought directly to bear on questions of the image archive and on related archival paradigms, which are being transformed by geo-tagging and geo-spatial technologies.

A POST-DIGITAL PRACTICE: SYSTEMS AND GLITCHES IN MAKING A SELF-PORTRAIT AND AN INFINITE COLUMN

Marc Edwards

Marc Edwards is a Senior Lecturer and Head of the Multimedia Dept., Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg. His research interests are in the fields of digital technology, contemporary art and design, with a particular interest in the postmedium, mediated body.

I speak about two projects that I am currently working on; one is an on-going digital diary/self-portrait/'selfie' project, using a database to construct image and identity. The second project involves scanning the body and using the database of information gained from the scans to grow and print a 3D infinity column. In making these artworks of repeated numerical construction, I attempt to turn away from creating a master narrative, and instead look to a practice involving technology and a more mechanised process to suggest that the creative practices of making adapt and explore new models of production, in which technologies become instruments of systems and order, to take us elsewhere. In a very short time, the computer has colonised cultural production;

a machine that was designed for calculating numbers has now become a conclusive instrument of systems and order; a media machine that demands constant change and gives rise to unintended consequences.

PERFECT GENTLEMAN: FAKE IT UNTIL YOU MAKE IT!

Tabita Rezaire

Tabita Rezaire is a Danish-Guyanese artist-filmmaker and video-new media curator, based in Johannesburg, with a Masters in Artist Moving Image from Central Saint Martins College, London. Both her research and practice focus on the political aesthetic of resistance in and through screen based practices.

Perfect gentleman: fake it until you make it! presents my latest work: **Janmspart Fan Page. Janmspart Fan Page i**s a fanwebsite showcasing a selection of profile pictures from my Facebook friend Mwa Dha Janmspart Jorem, based in Jinja, Uganda, as well as various fan mails from a worldwide fan community.

Through **Janmspart Fan Page,** launching at VIADUCT 2015, I address a history of fan art and the comodification of cyber-selves through social media. Widely used as platforms to create an avatar, which seeks to project to the outer world, i.e. the online community – how one would like to be seen, social medias allow you to curate yourself, elaborating your own politics of representation. Although acting as a parallel visual economy, those cyber-identities are often designed as responses to offline realities.

Power relations, cultural neo-colonialism and normative standards of success and happiness are often at stake in the construction of online performative personae. As there is a world of those who have and those who haven't, of those who matter and those who don't, cyberspace allows you to be and act beyond your social, economical, and personal realities. Fake it until you make it.

Playing with the social complexities of self-esteem and self-confidence construction in our global economy, like Amalia Ulman's **Excellences & Perfections** Instagram performance, Jorem's Facebook profile pictures allow him to perform success, and thanks to Photoshop, he poses like a boss by a pool, sport cars, or at the gym. In the era of the selfie, art of self-entrepreneurship and of one's own visual campaign, the traditional relationship between photographers, photographed, and viewers becomes one between the self and the followers. **Perfect Gentleman** is a critical manifestation of the Art Gaze onto Jorem's digital imaging, whose practice does not need the art world.

THE REVENANT

Minnette Vári

Minnette Vári is a Johannesburg-based artist, and part-time Lecturer in the Dept. of Visual Art, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg. She works in diverse media, from ink drawing to video installations, often incorporating performance elements into reworked media and historical documentary and archival footage.

The Revenant is a single channel video work based on Victorian/Edwardian memorial photography. In this narrative, figures wake from their deathly slumber, linger awhile before returning to their eternal sleep, sometimes trade places with, or morph into their living companions. They are 'revenants', returned from the dead. On this premise, I uncover and connect themes that run deep within the colonial and contemporary South African psyche.

While referencing how technology would be applied in the search of the paranormal and the world of spiritualism in the late nineteenth century in its visual lexicon of double exposures, I also set it against the backdrop of the Johannesburg of the Randlords era. In a similar way to that of mythology's regenerational sojourns underground, this historical framework references a return laden with precious goods – referencing both the exploits of mining and the nature of the creative process.

In **The Revenant,** nothing is as it seems; even the photographs and ornaments come alive momentarily. The appearance of film fragments and portraits from the gold rush era and early Johannesburg make a dark link with the similarly exhuming nature of photography as it now serves as a haunting index of colonial values.

At a time when mining is again so much in the forefront of contemporary South African history – and problematically so – **The Revenant**, while being a work of whimsy, is at the same time a satirical moment of pause at the greed and hubris of the human drive to excavate and exploit. In a moment that foreshadows a true a loss of innocence that was the golden promise of the Witwatersrand, I work around the visual conventions of the photographic archive to consider another human impulse: that of remembrance.

The Revenant, while incorporating and assimilating actual archival elements, in its nature and execution becomes an imaginary archive and as such is concerned primarily with the productive slippages and ghostly spaces between remembering and forgetting: neither of which is ever comprehensive or complete.

NOTES

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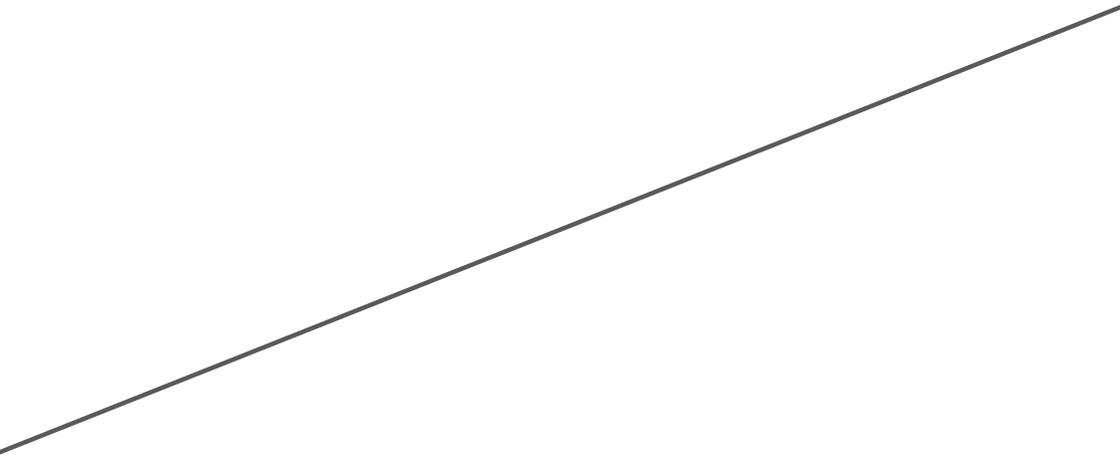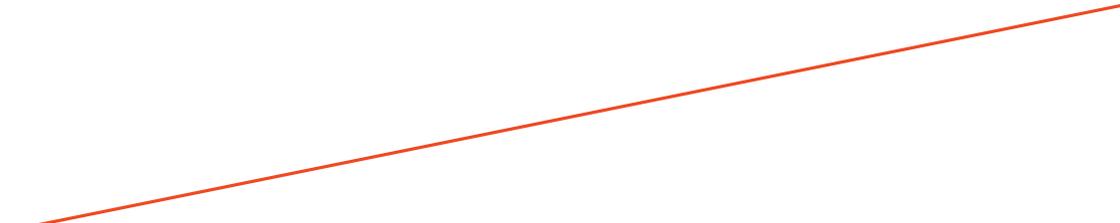
Room 120
FADA building
Bunting Road Campus
Auckland Park
Johannesburg
2006
South Africa

University of
Johannesburg
PO Box 524
Auckland Park
2006
South Africa

t +27 (0)11 559 1393
e clairej@uj.ac.za