

PROGRAMME



Monumental Developments: Contemporary Approaches to Commemorative Public Art

8 – 11 November 2023

#RhodesMustFall and #BlackLivesMatter has been of inestimable value in enabling critical attention to be focused on monuments that commemorate individuals associated with problematical values or events that were part of shameful histories. But the corrections to the public art landscape that #RhodesMustFall and #BlackLivesMatter have encouraged have usually been only to the people and events we would seek to have represented in the public domain. Those responding to their necessary calls for changes to the contemporary heritage landscape sometimes overlook other important shifts that have arisen in the last years of the twentieth century and in the new millennium – namely, ones concerning the nature of monuments themselves and how they function.

This conference involves an identification and discussion of examples of commemorative monuments from the late 20th century or early 21st century that have enabled new and progressive perspectives and understandings of histories and experiences through not simply their subject matter but, most crucially, their actual form and design. It focuses on the kinds of visual strategies that have proved apposite in the contemporary world, revealing how enhanced understandings and experiences on the part of visitors and spectators are the outcome of design choices and new approaches to the art of commemoration that makers have deployed.

CONVENOR • This conference is convened by Brenda Schmahmann, Professor and the SARChI Chair in South African Art and Visual Culture at the University of Johannesburg.

VENUE • Offices of the SARChI Chair in South African Art and Visual Culture
33 Twickenham Avenue,
Auckland Park, Johannesburg.

Marco Cianfanelli, *Shadow Boxing* (2013), laser-cut painted steel, 5.3 m x 2.3 m x 0.5 metres, at the Magistrates' Court, Johannesburg. Photographs by Paul Mills.

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- 15:00 – 15:45 Registration and tea/coffee
33 Twickenham Avenue, Auckland Park.
- 15:45 – 16:00 Welcome by Executive Dean, Federico Freschi.
- PANEL 1**
Parody and Quotation in Public Art
- 16:00 – 16:45 **Hazel Cuthbertson**, Similarity and Difference: Relocating Alexis Preller's *Discovery* as postmodern parody.
- 16:45 – 17:30 **Clara Johanna Lauffer**, Under Construction: Thomas Lawson portraying monuments in *A Portrait of New York* (1989).
- 17:30 – 18:30 Exhibition opening and reception in the gallery at 33 Twickenham Ave. The show engages with the politics of public art. Featuring work by Tlotlo Sereisho and Lira van Staden, it is curated by Dineke Orton.
- 18:30 Dinner at 33 Twickenham Avenue.

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- PANEL 2**
Creative Interventions into Historic Monuments
- 09:00 – 09:45 **Alexandra Kokoli**. Two feminist performative interventions on and against the statue of John Bright, Rochdale, England.
- 09:45 – 10:30 **Staffan Löfving**. Mutilating monuments, not moving them: Iconoclasm and visual culture after Yugoslavia.
- 10:30 – 11:00 Tea/coffee break
- 11:00 – 11:45 **Sebastian Muehl**. Contemporary adaptations to socialist commemorative public art in post-socialist Europe: ephemerality, performativity, and radical democracy.
- 11:45 – 12:30 **Johanna Margaretha Spanke**. The ephemeral as a strategy of intervention: Aesthetic reframings of the Columbus Monument in Madrid.
- 12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

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PANEL 3

New Visual Languages and Strategies

- 13:30 – 14:15 **Tanja Schult.** Contemporary Monuments as Placemaking: Exercising Democratic Citizenship.
- 14:15 – 15:00 **Christian Berger.** Postmonumental Monuments for Postindustrial Sites.
- 15:00 – 15:30 Tea/coffee break
- 15:30 – 16:15 **Tim Cole.** On the plinth/Off the plinth: Re-imagining the monument in turn-of-the-century London and beyond.
- 16:15 – 17:00 **Nancy Dantas.** On high seas: The “whole picture” on Grada Kilomba’s performance-installation *O Barco*.
- 17:00 – 17:45 **Brenda Schmahmann.** Redefining Portraiture in Commemorative Art: Four Public Art Commemorations of Nelson Mandela.
- 18:30 Dinner at restaurant in Melville.

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PANEL 4

Mnemonic Strategies

- 09:00 – 09:45 **Son Van Huynh.** The Elements and Monuments.
- 09:45 – 10:30 **Elaine Sullivan.** Long and Severed Hands: Sammy Baloji’s *lukasa* monument at the Port of Antwerp.
- 10:30 – 11:00 Tea/coffee break

PANEL 5

Temporariness versus Permanence

- 11:00 – 11:45 **Analys Alvarez Hernandez.** Permanent Temporariness’: Decolonizing Commemoration.
- 11:45 – 12:30 **Christopher S Wilson** and **Gül Kaçmaz Erk.** Temporary Commemoration and Permanent Commemoration in Berlin.
- 12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

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PANEL 6

From Senegal to Brazil

- 13:30 – 14:15 **Anna Helfer.** The Portrait of Cheikh Amadou Bamba in the Médina: A Neighborhood as a Monument of Contested History.
- 14:15 – 15:00 **Ines Linke.** Art in Public Space: imaginaries of independence and liberty.
- 15:00 – 15:30 Tea/coffee break

PANEL 7

Redressing Marginalisation in the USA

- 15:30 – 16:15 **Sierra Rooney.** The One / The Many: The Collective Commemoration of *Hear Us* & *The Boston Women's Memorial*.
- 16:15 – 17:00 **Roger Crum.** Casting Away from Bronze Men: Native/ First Nations, Land Acknowledgement, and the New Age of Exploring Public Art and Presence of Indigenous Identity.
- 17:00 – 17:45 **Marisa Lerer.** Commemorating the Pandemic and Global Climate Change in the Work of Scherezade Garcia, Antonio Martorell, and Segundo Cardona.
- 18:30 Dinner at Thava Indian Restaurant in Norwood.

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Redressing Marginalisation in the USA (cont.)

- 09:00 – 09:45 **Christian Weaver.** Defending Public Memory: James "Double Dutch" Kimble's Black Holocaust Memorial.

PANEL 8

Reconsidering/Reworking Sites in South Africa

- 09:45 – 10:30 **Stephanie Gibson.** Walking Through the Past: Urban Design of Constitution Hill Human Rights Precinct.
- 10:30 – 11:00 Tea/coffee break
- 11:00 – 11:45 **Melissa Gerber.** "Applause for the past?": Recontextualising the State Theatre Pretoria through Danie De Jager's sculpture *Applause* (1981).

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- 11:45 – 12:30 **Sango Filita.** How do we close gaps between past and the future in questioning commemoration aspects?
- 12:30 – 12:45 Wrap-up
- 12:45 – 13:30 Lunch
- 13:30 – 16:00 Post-conference tour.



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