

# Creating a Disturbance:

## Interventions to Historical Monuments and Statues

13 – 16 November 2024

**CONVENOR:** This conference is convened by Brenda Schmahmann, Professor at 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.

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Image credit: Intervention to Anton van Wouw's *Marthinus Theunis Steyn* (1929) at the University of the Free State taken in August 2018 before the sculpture's removal. Photograph by Paul Mills.



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Movements such as #RhodesMustFall and #BlackLivesMatter have contributed to a far greater critical engagement with people and issues commemorated in historical monuments and statuary than was hitherto often the case. But the “falling” of statues and monuments commemorating individuals and events associated with problematic ideologies and practices has not been the only outcome of this enhanced sensitivity or abhorrence.

Of importance also has been a critical reworking of monuments and sites. Sometimes statues and sites have been reworked permanently through additions intended to counter or correct the narratives they formerly told. When not given a permanent makeover, statues and sites have served as a prompt for performances, installations, graffiti, digital art, and other kinds of temporary creative interventions to them. Although some monuments are ultimately removed, their removal may be prefaced with various interventions that operate as a form of protest against the objects in question.

How do these various kinds of interventions operate as critique and commentary? How do they shift the relationship between viewers and monuments? How successful have they been in enabling new understandings of histories? How might the practice of reworking monuments, or intervening in them, contribute to the contemporary heritage landscape? These are among the general questions that presenters address in this conference.

# Creating a Disturbance

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## PROGRAMME

13 November 2024

14:30 – 15:00 Registration and tea/coffee at 33 Twickenham Avenue, Auckland Park, Johannesburg

KEYNOTE

15:00 – 15:15 Welcome and introduction of keynote speaker

15:15 – 16:15 **Marisa Lerer**, Covering Columbus and the Conquistadors

PANEL 1

### **Decolonising and Critiquing Museum Collections in Belgium and Germany**

16:15 – 17:00 **Annette Loeseke**, Reclaiming Public Space, or Beyond Restitution – Activist Protest around Berlin’s Humboldt Forum

17:00 – 17:45 **Jessica Lindiwe Draper**, Between Light and Loss: Shadows and glass as agents of memory in Freddy Tsimba’s *Ombres*

17:45 – 18:45 Exhibition by Lira van Staden, and reception in the gallery at 33 Twickenham Ave

18:45 Dinner at 33 Twickenham Avenue

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PANEL 2

### **Repurposing Monuments in the Light of Regime Change**

08:30 – 09:15 **Melissa Gerber**, From the Amphitheatre to the Inner Sanctum: The Voortrekker Monument as a Music Stage

09:15 – 10:00 **Barbara Vujanović**, From Zagreb to Chicago: Change is the only Constant

10:00 – 10:30 Tea/coffee break

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PANEL 3

**Monuments and the Aftermath of World War II**

- 10:45 – 11:15 **Staffan Löfving**, A Woman in No Man's Land: Engaging the Monuments of Vraca Memorial Park, Sarajevo, through Curation and Desecration
- 11:15 – 12:00 **Piotr Lasek** and **Marta Ziętkiewicz**, Interventions into Monuments Commemorating World War II as a Tool of a New Polish History Policy after 2015
- 12:00 – 12:45 **Sabrina Kern**, How to Deal with a Gift from Adolf Hitler: The Aphrodite Statue in Linz, Austria
- 12:45 – 13:45 Lunch

PANEL 4

**From Columbus to Craven:**

**Exposing and Redressing Histories of Individual Culpability or Complicity**

- 13:45 – 14:30 **Johanna Spanke**, At Home with Columbus: Tatzu Nishi's Domestication of Historical Monuments and the Inversion of Public Space
- 14:30 – 15:15 **Kavita Peterson** and **Prarthana Narendra**, The Elephant in the Cityscape: Contemporary Contestation of the World's Largest Bismarck Monument
- 15:15 – 15:45 Tea/coffee break
- 15:45 – 16:30 **Nicholas Parkinson**, Imperialism on the Peripheries: The Monument to Colonel Villebois-Mareuil (1902) and the French Far-Right in South Africa
- 16:30 – 17:15 **Gera de Villiers** and **Leslie van Rooi**, Engaging with "Mr Rugby": Confronting the Danie Craven Statue at Stellenbosch University through Visual Redress
- 17:15 – 18:00 **Roger Crum**, "Give Me Your Disbelief, Your Indignation, Your Disgust": Cartooning a Recurrent Disturbance around the Statue of Liberty in the Era of Trump
- 18:30 Dinner at restaurant

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PANEL 5

**From Virginia to Indiana to Mississippi:  
Critical Engagements with Confederate Monuments**

- 08:30 – 09:15 **Evie Terrono**, "Liberated by the People": Artistic and Performative Interventions on the Confederate Landscape
- 09:15 – 10:00 **Wesley R. Bishop**, Burying the Confederate Dead: Indianapolis, Indiana's Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument, and the Confederacy as Memory in an American Northern City
- 10:00 – 10:45 **Jenne Altomonte**, Memorializing the (Im)moral
- 10:45 – 11:15 Tea/coffee break

PANEL 6

**Projections and Imprints as Critical Strategies:  
Engaging the Ephemeral**

- 11:15 – 12:00 **Noah Randolph**, Projecting Representation: On Materiality and Ephemerality in Public Space
- 12:00 – 12:45 **Irene Bronner**, Critical Commemorative Practices in Two Works by Paul Emmanuel
- 12:45 – 13:45 Lunch

PANEL 7

**Across South America and into Mexico:  
Activist Engagements with Colonial Monuments**

- 13:45 – 14:30 **Carla Guimarães Hermann**, Painting Bandeirantes in Baniwa Colours: Denilson Baniwa's *Brasil Terra Indígena* (2020) in São Paulo, Brazil
- 14:30 – 15:15 **Juan Carlos Guerrero Hernandez**, Decolonizing Heritage, Culture, and History: Visual and Performative Interventions in Popayán and Bogotá
- 15:15 – 15:45 Tea/coffee break
- 15:45 – 16:30 **Fabiola Ramirez**, Art and Resistance in Abya Yala: Cloaking Interventions on Colonialist Monuments in Mexico, Bolivia, and Argentina

PANEL 8

**Destabilising the Familiar**

- 16:30 – 17:15 **Shanade Barnabas**, Monuments as Marionettes: Puppetry Through Protest Action and the Creation of *Jamais Vu*

PANEL 9

**Activating Derelict Spaces**

- 17:15 – 18:00 **Emily L. Newman**, Abandoned Park, Abandoned People No Longer: The National AIDS Memorial in San Francisco
- 18:30 Dinner at restaurant

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PANEL 10

**From Chicago to New Haven to Johannesburg:  
Disturbing Markers of City Identities**

- 08:45 – 09:30 **Joséphine M. Yanasak-Leszczynski**, Don't Forget Your Umbrellas: The Changing Landscape of Public Art in Chicago
- 09:30 – 10:15 **Laura Macaluso**, The Decade of Intervention: Critiquing the City of New Haven and Yale University, 2011-2021
- 10:15 – 10:45 Tea/coffee break
- 10:45 – 11:30 **Hazel Cuthbertson**, Falling Short: Mining Financial Exclusion from "One-Pound-a-Day" to #Asinamali
- 11:30 – 11:45 Concluding remarks
- 11:45 – 12:30 Lunch
- 13:00 – 15:00 Post-conference tour to view Ecospheres at the Johannesburg Contemporary Art Foundation