



DISTURBING

VIEWS

Visual Culture and Nationalisms
in the 20th and 21st Centuries

An online conference hosted by the
South African Research Chair in
South African Art and Visual Culture,
University of Johannesburg

15–18 November 2021

www.southafricanartandvisualculture.com

Programme



science & innovation
Department:
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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



National
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Visual Culture and Nationalisms in the 20th and 21st Centuries

15–18 November 2021

In the conclusion of his book *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995, p. 177), Michael Billig writes: 'If the future remains uncertain we know the past history of nationalism. And that should be sufficient to encourage a habit of watchful suspicion'. This warning has perhaps never been more relevant than in the second decade of the new millennium, which has been characterised by a marked turn towards right-wing populism and nationalism.

For academics working on art and visual culture, critical questions arise about how the visual domain has been implicated in, or responded to, instances in which nationalist groups have sought or assumed power and influence. Working in light of a perspective that understanding the relation of visual culture to instances of nationalism can enable new and enhanced perspectives about not only the past but also the present, the conference explores two broad questions: How has art and visual culture been deployed to foster the interests of those who, in seeking to elicit support and power for only their own (perceived) nation or group, develop rhetoric and ideas underpinned by prejudice against groups conceptualized as outsiders? Alternatively, how has the visual domain served as a space for the critique and activist refusal of right-wing and exclusionary nationalist interests and discourse?

The conference is intended to complement a launch of ***Troubling Images: Visual Culture and the Politics of Afrikaner Nationalism*** (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2020), a book of essays edited by Federico Freschi, Brenda Schmahmann and Lize van Robbroeck. This conference, like this volume, is intended to raise debates that are especially important – and urgent – in a current context.

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Programme

15 November 2021

09:45 – 10:00 Welcome

CARTOONS AND COMIC BOOKS

10:00 – 10:45 Paper 1

Sanjeev Kumar and Sweetie Tindde

Democracy, Dissent and Nationalism: Narrative
Through Cartoons Related to Gandhi

10:45 – 11:30 Paper 2

Stephen Symons

"Achtung Spitfeuer!" How British war comics of the 60s, 70s
and 80s aided the formulation of a militarised state-of-mind
among white English-speaking boys during apartheid.

11:30 – 12:15 Paper 3

Peter Vale

Cartoons, Intellectuals and the Construction of Afrikaner Nationalism

12:15 – 12:45 BREAK

CONSTRUCTS OF BORDERS AND NATIONS

15:00 – 15:45 Paper 4

Benoit Vaillot

Nationalising the Border through War Monuments: "Nationalist
Landscape" at the French-German Border (1871-1918)

15:45 – 16:30 Paper 5

Erika Wolf

The Passport as a Symbolic Site for the Contestation and
Performance of Citizenship across National Borders

16:30 – 17:00 BREAK

STAMPS AND NATIONALISM

17:00 – 17:45 Paper 6

Sarita K. Heer

Food for Thought: India, Postage Stamps and Banal Nationalism

16 November 2021

09:15 – 10:15 Launch of *Troubling Images: Visual Culture and the Politics of Afrikaner
Nationalism*, edited by Federico Freschi, Brenda Schmahmann and
Lize van Robbroeck (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2020).
Ismail Mahomed will introduce the volume and will conduct a
discussion with the editors and participants.

10:15 – 10:45 BREAK

FEMINIST RESPONSES TO NATIONALISMS

- 10:45 – 11:30 Paper 7
Marion Arnold
"Courage Calls": British Women Confronting Patriarchal Nationalism
- 11:30 – 12:15 Paper 8
Irene Bronner
"Your shadow blocks my sun": Reading alternate histories in
The New Parthenon and other films of Penny Siopis
- 12:15 – 13:00 Paper 9
Roxy Do Rego
Diane Victor's *Birth of a Nation* (2008-2010): A Critique of
Post-Apartheid Nationalism and Patriarchy

13:00 – 15:00 BREAK

ISRAEL, NATIONALISM AND VISUAL DISCOURSES

- 15:00 – 15:45 Paper 10
Horit Herman Peled and Yoav Peled
Art, Religion and Jewish Nationalism in Israel
- 15:45 – 16:30 Paper 11
Zohar Elmakias
Between the Minefield and the Temple: Spatial Transformation
and National Imaginaries in the Golan Heights and Jerusalem.

16:30 – 17:00 BREAK

MODERNIST RESISTANCE AGAINST AUTHORITARIANISM

- 17:00 – 17:45 Paper 12
Danielle M. Johnson
Otto Dix's *The War* and MoMA: Art and Activism
between the Two World Wars

17 November 2021

MODERNIST RESISTANCE AGAINST AUTHORITARIANISM (cont.)

- 10:30 – 11:15 Paper 13
Ariyuki Kondo
Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's Resistance to Authoritarianism in Twentieth-
Century Architecture: A Study of the Jerusalem Committee

PHOTOGRAPHIC RESPONSES AND CRITIQUES

- 11:15 – 12:00 Paper 14
Paul Weinberg
Shooting Back

12:00 – 12:45 Paper 15
Abri de Swardt
“Because this is the river of unmindfulness: On Alice Mertens, *Ridder Thirst* and the First River as historical witness”

12:45 – 13:30 Paper 16
Staffan Löfving
Figurations of the Child in Bosnian Nationalisms

13:30 – 15:00 **BREAK**

BETWEEN THEN AND NOW: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR COLLECTIONS

15:00 – 15:45 Paper 17
Ana Mehnert Pascoal
Undiscussed heritage? Considerations on the mural paintings for the Noble Hall of the Palace of São Bento in Lisbon (1933-1947) and their present-day permanence

15:45 – 16:30 Paper 18
Gail Levin
Blinded by Nationalism: the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City

16:30 – 17:15 Paper 19
Juliette Leeb-du Toit
Competing Zulu nationalisms in commissioned art for structures in Ulundi and “Zululand” in the 1970s

17:15 – 17:45 **BREAK**

17:45 – 18:30 Guided tour of the online exhibition
“Family Dissemblance” by its curator, Annemi Conradie

18 November 2021

UNPACKING GREAT TREK IMAGERY AND OTHER AFRIKANER NATIONALIST ICONOGRAPHIES

09:00 – 09:45 Paper 20
Elizabeth Rankin
Paradox and politics in the Voortrekker Monument frieze

09:45 – 10:30 Paper 21
Katharina Jörder
Between Afrikaner Culture, Nationalism and Technopolitics. The Voortrekker Monument and the Hendrik Verwoerd Dam in Propaganda Photographs

10:30 – 11:15 Paper 22
Vineet Thakur, Brenda Schmähmann and Peter Vale
A Globe in the Veld: A Voortrekker Centenary Monument for Karel Landman

11:15 – 11:45 **BREAK**

RESISTING NATIONALISMS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

11:45 – 12:30 Paper 23

Barnabas Ticha Muvhuti

Confronting selective amnesia in the supposedly collective memory of a nation through art: Owen Maseko's *Sibathonthisele*

12.30 – 15.00 **BREAK**

RESISTING NATIONALISMS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (cont.)

15:00 – 15:45 Paper 24

Deléne Human

The anti-censorship campaigns and works by Walter Battiss in apartheid South Africa

15:45 – 16:30 Paper 25

Deirdre Pretorius

The *Staffrider* illustrations of Mzwakhe (Muziwakhe Nhlabatsi)

16:30 – 17:15 Paper 26

Philippa Hobbs

Tapestry, nationalism and counter voices in Southern Africa during apartheid