

Visual & Performing Arts of Africa

Fine Art Focus Area ~ Rhodes University



Maurice Mbikayi, *Intersection*, Arts Lounge performance, National Arts Festival in Grahamstown

Research ~ The Audacity of Place

The ViPAA research Focus Area was established in the Fine Art Department, Rhodes University in January 2011. The research team is currently working on a three-year theme: *The Audacity of Place*. In a time of unmoored geographies, the team considers a range of cultural, socio-political and socio-economic issues related to 'place' in contemporary art and performance.

Continued on **4**

Exhibitions & Research

Team members' research activities in 2011.

Page 2

National Arts Festival

The Arts Lounge was launched at the 2011 festival and will be an annual event.

Page 3

Talks & Visitors

Rassool discusses research methodologies. Khumalo & Mabulu talk about art in China.

Page 5

DOTUN MAKUN

MFA Exhibition



~ Albany Museum ~

1st to 9th Dec 2011

Machona at the Art Fair

Gerald Machona was showcased at the Johannesburg Art Fair as one of the top ten emerging artists in Africa.

The Geography of Somewhere exhibition

Machona and Bereng were involved in the exhibition *Geography of Somewhere* at Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg in April and May. Bereng assisted curator, David Brodie, and Machona exhibited his digital video of a cross-border trader in Zimbabwe.

ViPAA research activities

Team members have been very active in 2011 and three students, Nsele, Lochner and Makun, have completed Masters theses.

Simbao presented at the **CIHA/SAVAH** international symposium at Wits and the **AAANZ** in New Zealand. In April Simbao and Makhubu presented at the **ACASA** conference, UCLA and in May, Simbao, Makhubu, Machona and Bereng spoke at *the names we give* symposium at GIPCA, UCT.

Makhubu conducted PhD fieldwork research in Lagos on Nollywood and she presented her work in Nigeria and Canada. Bereng presented portfolio reviews at the 9th *Bamako Encounters* in Mali.

Cooper has published in *de Arte* and *Art South Africa*, and Conradie has written a book review for *de Arte*. Baasch's first article has been accepted by *de Arte* and will appear early next year.

While working on her PhD, Makhubu has also published a review and book chapter on Nollywood, as well as an essay on Zak Benjamin.

Simbao published in the inaugural edition of the *Journal of African Culture and New Approaches, Art South Africa* and the *African Sociological Review*. She also wrote the catalogue essay for the Standard Bank winner (Nandipha Mntambo) and a chapter for the *Visual Century* books produced by Wits Press.

Exhibitions and performances

Makun's MFA exhibition *ALIEN-Nation* opened at the Albany Museum in December and he was presented with the Rhodes University Top 100 Award for his involvement in the *Tower Hospital Art Project*. Baasch held an exhibition, *Bent*, at the 2011 National Arts Festival and Conradie produced the *Suspension Lecture* with John Wayne Sive and Alice Harlyquin.

Cooper participated in the group exhibitions *360 degrees of Johannesburg* and *Marvelous World*, and Machona exhibited at the Bag Factory and the prestigious Michael Stevenson and Goodman Galleries.

For further details on research outputs see www.research-africa-arts.com/outputs.html.



~ Arts Lounge ~

National Arts Festival: Art conversations, screenings and performances

The ViPAA team founded the **Arts Lounge** with the support of the National Arts Festival. The Lounge was open for three hours a day during the festival and offered an interdisciplinary programme of contemporary performance, video and film screening, panel discussions and art chats.

Artists participating in the festival were invited to engage with the public in a relaxed, intimate setting, and highlights were discussions with **Serge Alain Nitegeka** and **Nandipha Mntambo** (above).

Lochner organised a vibrant panel discussion on public and community art with **Merran**

Marr, Meshack Masuku, Bronwen Salton, Vusi Khumalo and **Carole Karemera. Mandie Van der Spuy** (Standard Bank Gallery) and **Michelle Constant** (BASA) spoke about business and the arts, and GIPCA Director **Jay Pather** shared ideas about contemporary performance.

Significant collaboration was established between the Fine Art and Drama Departments at Rhodes and **Athina Vahla, Ford Evanson, Heike Gehring** and **Mark Wilby** curated a series of performances titled TOPOS. (DVDs are available).

Please send proposals for the 2012 Arts Lounge to rsimbao@gmail.com by January 15, 2012.

Continued...

The Audacity of Place

Research sub-themes for 2011 included:

- * South Africa's relationship to the African continent
- * Global Africa and international diaspora
- * The Global South
- * China-Africa relations and Sinophobia
- * Nationalism, transnationalism and post-nationalism
- * The deterritorialization of culture
- * 'Authenticity' in relation to 'place' and culture
- * Intra-continental diaspora, movement and migration
- * Xenophobia, Afrophobia and Afro-indifference
- * 'Community' and re-conceptualizing 'the local'
- * Parochialism and cosmopolitanism
- * Performance and 'heritagization'
- * Site-specific art in post-geographic contexts
- * Geo-politics and issues of access
- * Nostalgia & melancholia in relation to 'place' & 'home'
- * Socio-economics of the art world
- * The 'leaning tower-of-globalization'
- * 'Small places' and transnational biennales



Lucy Kruger and Rachel Baasch,
Nude on Cabinet, *Topos* performance.



Andrew Buckland in *Car Guard*, a *Topos* performance at the Arts Lounge during the 2011 National Arts Festival.⁴

Ciraj Rassool on Heritage Transformation

Ciraj Rassool, Professor and Chair Person of History at the University of Western Cape presented the paper, "Bone memory and the disciplines of the dead: human remains, transitional justice and heritage transformation in South Africa" at a Humanities/Fine Art seminar at Rhodes University.

Rassool also spent time with Fine Art postgraduate students at the Visual and Performing Arts of Africa Focus Area research house. As a historian with rich experience in museum studies and heritage, he shared ideas on research methodologies and ways of engaging with the archive.



Ciraj Rassool talking to postgraduate students about research methodologies



Ayanda Mabulu at the ViPAA research house

China Week Talks: Khumalo & Mabulu

During the Rhodes University Confucius Institute China Week in September, the Fine Art Department hosted a panel discussion, *Contemporary Chinese Art and Cultural Exchange*.

Ruth Simbao talked about contemporary art spaces in China and the Shanghai Biennale, and visiting artists Vusi Khumalo and Ayanda Mabulu discussed their artists' residencies in China. Khumalo was the first South African artist to be sent to China by the Chenshia Art Foundation in 2007.

Mabulu visited China this year and held the exhibition *Beautiful Imperfection* at the Chenshia Museum in Wuhan. He is currently an artist in residence at Greatmore Studios in Cape Town.

ViPAA member, **Lerato Bereng** spoke to the Fine Art Department and to an Arts Lounge audience about her recent curating ventures. Bereng received an undergraduate degree from the Rhodes Fine Art Department and is currently doing her MFA at Rhodes in curating. Before she started her MFA she worked at Cape Africa Platform and is a curator at the Stevenson Gallery in Johannesburg. Bereng curated *Featuring Simplicity as an Irrational Fear* at the Stevenson Gallery and *A re Fanon* at the Blank Projects Gallery in Cape Town.



2011 Team Members

- Ruth Simbao ~ Project Leader & Associate Professor
Nomusa Makhubu ~ Lecturer & PhD candidate
Annemi Conradie ~ Lecturer & PhD candidate
Paul Cooper ~ PhD candidate
Zama Nsele ~ MA student
Eben Lochner ~ MA student
Rachel Baasch ~ MFA student
Dotun Makun ~ MFA student
Lerato Bereng ~ MFA student
Gerald Machona ~ MFA student



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

Thanks to the Fine Art and Drama Departments, the Dean of Humanities and Karen Kouari, the Research Office, the VC's Office, Communications and the Director of the National Arts Foundation for ongoing support.

ViPAA is funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation. Its intellectual home is the Fine Art Department, Rhodes University. For more information see www.research-africa-arts.com.