Blind Spots and Ways of Not Seeing is organized by the Rhodes University Fine Art Focus Area Visual and Performing Arts of Africa and the Residencies for Artists and Writers—Eastern Cape (RAW—EC) project funded by the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF), South Africa.

Thank-you to the artists, writers and mentors who agreed to be part of RAW—EC, and to the Rhodes University Department of Fine Art for hosting the project. Thanks to Gila Eustace and Moira Japp for administrative support, and to Lindi Lombard, Tanya Poole, Warren Hilpert and Mpumzi Mpasi for their assistance in hanging the exhibition.

Front cover image: Mbali Khoza, What difference does it make who is speaking? National Arts Festival, 2014
Residencies for Artists and Writers—Eastern Cape (RAW—EC)

The RAW—EC project was launched by Ruth Simbao 2014 under the umbrella of the Rhodes University Fine Art Department and the Visual and Performing Arts of Africa research group. The project is based in the Eastern Cape and aims to expand the pool of arts writers in the Eastern Cape, and in South Africa more broadly, by facilitating engagement with artists in residence and providing the support of experienced writers with a strong publication record. Each artist in residence is linked to a specific writer, and in turn, each writer is linked to a selected mentor. The emphasis is on capacity building in scholarly writing on the visual and performing arts, as well as the development of fresh voices and diverse perspectives. The residencies provide the opportunity for artists to experiment with new work in a relatively short period of time and to produce an exhibition.

This year two artists, Igshaan Adams and Mbali Khoza, spent two months each at Rhodes University. Adams and Khoza also participated in the Blind Spot performance art programme at the National Arts Festival. Their joint exhibition, titled SLIP, opens at the Alumni Gallery at the Albany History Museum on the 16th of October 2014.

Fourth year Fine Art student, Jennifer Ball has been assigned to Igshaan Adams's work. Jen is currently working towards the publication of an article with the guidance of Professor Michael Godby from the University of Cape Town. MFA candidate, Ivy Kulundu-Gotz is writing about Mbali Khoza's work and is being mentored by Professor Barbaro Martinez-Ruis. Kulundu-Gotz, Khoza and Martinez-Ruis have grappled with various aspects of language, writing and translation in their own work.

While the project was only able to support two residencies this year, a further two writers have been assigned to artists. Churchill Madikida, who teaches at Walter Sisulu University and is pursuing a MA in Art History at Rhodes, is writing about the work of Mohau Modisakeng, and has chosen to work with Mike de Graan. Chemu Ng’ok is working with the Johannesburg-based artist Kemang wa Lehulere, and is being mentored by Professor Raimi Gbadamosi from Wits University.
Visual and Performing Arts of Africa (ViPAA)

The Visual and Performing Arts of Africa research group was founded by Ruth Simbao in 2011 as one of four Rhodes University Humanities Focus Areas. The key aims of the team are to produce high quality research outputs (in the form of publications, exhibitions and performances), to foster academic cooperation and collaboration by working on related topics, and to engage with society by addressing pertinent social, political and economic concerns in Africa today. While research is based in a local context, it generates dialogue with the international art world and explores new ways of conceptualizing the ‘local’ and the ‘global’.

The current research themes are:

1) The Audacity of Place and the Global South  
2) Visuality and Ways of Not Seeing  
3) Performing Self/Performing Society.

Current ViPAA participants:

PhD candidates: Cassandra Wilmot, Eben Lochner, Nontobeko Ntombela, Paul Copper, Rachel Baasch, Rob Murray (Drama) and Zamansele Nsele.

MA students: Andrew Mulenga and Churchill Madikida.

MFA students: Chiro Nott, Desmond Mnyila, Ivy Kulundu-Gotz, Joseph Coetzee, Lindi Lombard, Patrick Mumba and Russell Bruns.

Past participants:

Dotun Makun, Gerald Machona, Nomusa Makhubu, Sam Munro, Simone Heymans, Lerato Bereng and Portia Malatijje.
SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

Thursday 16th October
Venue: Humanities Seminar Room, Randall House
Thursday 16th October 2014
8:30 to 9:00 Coffee
9:00 to 10:30

SESSION 1

Introduction
Prof Dominic Thorburn, Head of Department, Rhodes University
Welcome
Dr Sizwe Mabizela, Acting Vice-Chancellor, Rhodes University
Intro/Paper
Prof Ruth Simbao, Rhodes University, *Blanks, Failures and Ways of Not Seeing: Athi-Patra Ruga and Anthea Moys*
Screening
Athi-Patra Ruga’s *Performance Obscura* (Performance from the 2012 National Arts Festival)
Paper
Alexandra Dodd, Independent Writer, *Undoing Complicity: ‘We haven’t seen it yet’*
Discussion

10:30 to 11:00 TEA

11:00 to 1:00

SESSION 2

SLIP OF THE TONGUE AND THE CRUELTY OF LANGUAGE

Chair
Chiro Nott, Rhodes University
Screening
Mbali Khoza’s performance *What difference does it make who is speaking?*
Interview
Tanya Poole, Rhodes University and Mbali Khoza, Wits University
Paper
Ivy Kulundu-Gotz, Rhodes University, *Language Violence and Indifference: ‘Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me’*
Response
Prof Babaro Martinez-Ruiz, University of Cape Town
Discussion
1:00 to 2:00
LUNCH
SCREENING
Light finger lunch for participants and attendees
During lunch *Everse* from the 2014 National Arts Festival will be screened

2:00 to 3:00
SESSION 3
DELETED SCENES AND OTHER HOLES
Chair
Joseph Coetzee, Rhodes University
Artist’s Talk
Kemang wa Lehuere, Artist--Johannesburg
Screening
Kemang wa Lehuere’s *Homeless Song*
Paper
Chemu Ng’ok, Rhodes University, *Searching for memory as a form of ‘seeing’ in Kemang wa Lehuere’s work*
Response
Prof Raimi Gbadamosi, Wits University
Discussion

3:00 to 4:00
SESSION 4
ROUNDTABLE: WRITING AND PUBLISHING IN THE ARTS
Chair
Dr Phindi Mnyaka, Rhodes University
Short Dialogues
Prof Michael Godby, University of Cape Town
Dr Alexandra Dodd, Independent Writer
Prof Raimi Gbadamosi, Wits University
Discussion

5:30
Opening of Exhibition at the Alumni Gallery, Albany Museum, Somerset Street
Friday 17th October

8:30 to 9:00 Coffee

9:00 to 10:30
SESSION 5  NEOSCOPE

Chair  Prof Dominic Thorburn, Rhodes University
Screening  Igshaan Adams’s performance *Bismillah*
Interview  David Glover, Rhodes University and Igshaan Adams, Artist — Cape Town
Paper  Jennifer Ball, Rhodes University, *Rethreading Inkblots and their Indices*
Response  Prof Michael Godby, University of Cape Town
Discussion

10:30-11:00 TEA

11:00 to 12:00
SESSION 6

Chair  Prof Ruth Simbao, Rhodes University
Screening  Mohau Modisakeng and Sikumbuzo Makandula’s performance *Barongwa*
Artist’s Talk  Sikumbuzo Makandula, Rhodes University
Screening  Mohau Modisakeng’s *Inzilo* (Courtesy Brundyn+, Cape Town)
Paper  Churchill Madikida, Walter Sisulu University & Rhodes University
Response  Dr Phindi Mnyaka, Rhodes University (10 min)
Discussion

12:00-1:00
LUNCH  Light finger lunch for participants and attendees
1:00-2:30
SESSION 7  ROUNDTABLE: WRITING EXHIBITION REVIEWS AND PRESS RELEASES

Chair  Rat Western, Rhodes University
Short Dialogues  Mpho Matheolane, University of Pretoria
               Andrew Mulenga, Rhodes University
               Tanya Poole, Rhodes University

Discussion

2:30-3:00  TEA

3:00-4:45
SESSION 8

Chair  Zamansele Nsele, Rhodes University
Paper  Rachel Baasch, Rhodes University, *Sights of Division: Political Tourism and Site-Specific Seeing in the Occupied Palestinian West Bank Territory*
Paper  Nontobeko Ntombela, Wits University. *African Art, What For? Can’t We Just Talk about Art?*
Paper  Prof Barbaro Martinez-Ruiz, University of Cape Town

4:45-5:00  Closing/Thanks

6:00  DINNER FOR SPEAKERS
Igshaan Adams and Mbali Khoza

Exhibition opening: Thursday 16th October 2014 at 5:30pm
Alumni Gallery, Albany History Museum
On view until Friday 24th October
Alexandra Dodd is an independent writer, editor and researcher. Energised by the interface between visual and literary culture, she has worked on a vast range of public realm projects, from newspapers and magazines to novels, reportage projects, mixed-media installations, website content and monograph essays. She holds an Honours degree in Journalism and Media Studies from Rhodes University and a Master of Arts (Creative Writing) from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, and is about to complete her PhD in Literature at the University of Cape Town, where she is a research fellow in Archive & Public Culture. She has worked as arts editor of the Mail & Guardian and books & features Editor of ThisDay. She has also edited numerous novels, and contributed texts to several books, including David Goldblatt: Photographs (Contrasto, 2006), Sam Nhlengethwa (Goodman Gallery Editions, 2006), The Fire Walker (Fourthwall, 2011) and Hotel Yeoville (Fourthwall, 2013), as well as to catalogues on the work of Marco Cianfanelli, Frances Goodman, Ruan Hoffmann, Gabrielle Goliath, Joanne Bloch, and others. Contact: thisalexandradodd@gmail.com
Andrew Mulenga is an award-winning independent Zambian art writer who began his media career as a graphic designer. In 1998, he joined *The Post*, Zambia’s leading independent daily and was later appointed Deputy Editor for the Education Post, a youth-oriented weekly pull-out aimed at encouraging young readership and served under the capacity until the supplement’s closure and his subsequent retirement in 2012. Covering the visual arts, he publishes a column entitled ‘Andrew Mulenga’s Hole in the Wall’ in *The Post* (that has been running for 10 years), and he contributes to the Bulletin & Record Magazine and Partners Guide magazines in Zambia. He is also the interim chairman of Arterial Network (Zambia), a continental network for arts and culture professionals and is in his first year of study for an MA Art History. He is the recipient of the 2012 CNN Multichoice African Journalist of the year Awards and the 2014 Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA- Zambia) Best Art Review Award.
Bárbaro Martínez-Ruiz is an art historian with expertise in African and Caribbean artistic, visual, and religious practices. Born and raised in Cuba, Martínez-Ruiz taught art history at Havana’s High Institute of Art for five years prior to moving to the United States. Since then he has lectured on African art and Afro-Caribbean religions. Additionally, Martínez-Ruiz has curated exhibitions on contemporary and African art and presented his own multimedia work in solo and group exhibitions in New York and Alabama. Martínez-Ruiz completed his master’s and doctoral studies in the History of Art department at Yale University in 2004. He taught at Stanford University and Rhode Island School of Design, and is currently at the University of Cape Town.

Churchill Madikia was born in 1973 in Umtata in the Eastern Cape, and he obtained his BA (Fine Arts) from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in 2001. Madikida participated in a cultural exchange program between the University of the Witwatersrand from South Africa and Umeå Academy from Sweden. In 2002 he was selected to participate in two international projects: an Art Residency Programme in Norway and an internship in Museum Curatorship at the Musee de Arts de Afrique de Oceanie in Paris, France. In 2007 he was one of the few artists selected to represent the African continent in Dokumenta 12 in Germany. He currently lectures at the Walter Sisulu University and is an MA student at Rhodes University.
David Glover is currently in his third year at Rhodes University, studying a Bachelor of Fine Arts. He has had recent success with two art competitions, winning one competition and becoming a finalist in the 2014 Sasol New Signatures. This year Glover is one of six members of the Rhodes Fine Art department, consisting of performers and researchers, who will produce a newspaper investigating the *Infecting The City* performances in Cape Town in early 2015. Glover is a current member of the Useless Artist Collective.

Igshaan Adams is a Cape Town-based artist who works with installation, textiles and performance. He received a Diploma in Fine Art from the Ruth Prowse School of Art and he has exhibited at the AVA Gallery in Cape Town, the Stevenson Gallery, Blank Projects, and the Rongwrong Gallery in Amsterdam. In 2012 *Wanted Magazine* selected Adams as one of its 12 Young African Artists featured at the Johannesburg Art Fair. In 2013 he was awarded the IAAB/Pro-Helvetia residency in Basel, Switzerland, and in 2014 he was chosen for the 2014 edition of Sommerakademie im Zentrum Paul Klee, in Bern, Switzerland. He participated in the *Blind Spot* performances at the 2014 National Arts Festival and produced *Bismallah*, which he performed with his father. He participated in a residency programme at Rhodes University in 2014, and produced the exhibition SLIP with Mbali Khoza at the Alumni Gallery in the Albany Museum.
Ivy Chemutai Ng'ok Chemu is a science-fiction enthusiast interested in writing, analyzing and conceptualizing about the real and imaginary in the world of contemporary art. In the space of Africa, she negotiates the present and the past, coming to terms with what it means to create and write about art. She is in the early stage of developing and pursuing a career in the arts, and is studying a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, majoring in Painting and Art History at Rhodes University. Enamored by people and their connection to the world, she is currently conceptualizing and painting on the social consciousness of relationships. She will exhibit drawings and paintings for her final undergraduate show “Social Revolution” in November. Chemu chose to write on Wa-Lehulere’s work, as it would prove to be a challenging and interesting experience. Wa-Lehulere’s work is poetic, deals with the realm of imagination and takes one on a journey of unearthing narratives.

Ivy Kulundu-Gotz is a former Lawyer, a renegade mother and a cross disciplinary artist. Her work primarily focuses on social inertia and complicity--our inability to critically engage with the power dynamics which drive and make up society, that is, the way we are schooled into behaving and the type of knowledge that is prioritised, accepted and perpetuated. She is interested in process-driven art, because it is through the act of making art, for her, that is the gateway to liberation by providing the space to rethink yourself and the society that one belongs to. This urgent commentary opens up possibilities of the re-enchantment with the purpose of art and society.
Jennifer Ball is a fourth year BFA student at Rhodes University. She is fascinated by objects and their particular language in visual art, and plans to continue studying towards her Masters to pursue this interest further. Jennifer is excited to make a valuable contribution to South African art as a writer, critic and curator, or even practitioner.

Kemang Wa Lehulere was born in 1984 in Cape Town and lives in Johannesburg. He has a BA Fine Arts degree from the University of the Witwatersrand (2011). Solo exhibitions have taken place at Lombard-Freid Projects, New York (2013); Stevenson, Johannesburg (2012); the Goethe-Institut, Johannesburg (2011) and the Association of Visual Arts in Cape Town (2009). Group shows include Public Intimacy: Art and Social Life in South Africa at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2014); The Ungovernables, the second triennial exhibition of the New Museum in New York (2012); A Terrible Beauty is Born, the 11th Biennale de Lyon at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France (2011) and When Your Lips Are My Ears, Our Bodies Become Radios at the Kunsthalle Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern, Switzerland (2010). Wa Lehulere was a co-founder of the Gugulective (2006), an artist-led collective based in Cape Town, and is a founding member of the Center for Historical Reenactments in Johannesburg. He was the winner of the inaugural Spier Contemporary Award in 2007, the MTN New Contemporaries Award in 2010, and the Tollman Award for the Visual Arts in 2012, and was one of two young artists awarded the 15th Baloise Art Prize at Art Basel in 2013. He was also the recipient of an Ampersand Foundation residency in New York in 2012.
Mbali Khoza is based in Johannesburg. She has worked for Stevenson Gallery and is currently a postgraduate student at Wits University. She engages with performance, video and installation in order to translate and express her understanding of language and literature as a mode of communication. The act of stitching is important to her early work. She is inspired by the Zimbabwean writer Dambudzo Marechera who, in his novella *House of Hunger*, compares the act of writing to a violent stitching of a wound. She produced the performance piece *What difference does it make who is speaking?* for the 2014 National Arts Festival. She participated in a residency programme at Rhodes University in 2014, and produced the exhibition SLIP with Igshaan Adams at the Alumni Gallery in the Albany Museum.
Michael Godby is Emeritus Professor of History of Art at the University of Cape Town. He received his BA from Trinity College, Dublin, his MA from the University of Birmingham, and his PhD from the University of the Witwatersrand. He has published and lectured on Early Renaissance Art, English Eighteenth-century Art, particularly William Hogarth, Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century South African Art, and the History of South African Photography. He has curated exhibitions on South African art, notably *Is there Still Life? Continuity and Change in South African Still Life Painting* (2007) and *The Lie of the Land: Representations of the South African Landscape* (2010). He is currently preparing a collection of papers for a book on the History of photography in South Africa; and is planning a new exhibition on the theme of the Domestic Interior in European and South African Painting.

Mpho Mathlaone is an academic, researcher and writer with interests in art, history, semiotics and law. He sits on the Constitutional Court Artworks Committee and is a firm believer in the power of an informed and active citizenry. He is a PhD candidate at the University of Pretoria and is currently a Visiting Lecturer at Rhodes University.
Nontobeko Ntombela works as a lecturer at the Wits School of Arts. Previously, she worked as a curator of contemporary art at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Durban University of Technology Art Gallery and Bat Centre Art Galleries, Durban. Some of her most recent curatorial projects include: Spectaculaire (2013) at Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou France; The Two Talking Yonis (2013) at Constitution Hill (Women’s Jail), Room and Kalashnikovv gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa; A Fragile Archive (2012) at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. She is a recipient of the Ford Foundation Fellowship and was the guest curator of the MTN New Contemporaries exhibition in 2010. Her writing and research interest are mainly based on the visual politics of contemporary Africa art within curatorial and exhibition practices.

Phindezwa (Phindi) Mnyaka received her PhD in History from the University of Fort Hare in 2012. In 2013 she was awarded the Dulcie September Research Fellowship at the University of the Western Cape where she formed part of the Programme for the Study of the Humanities in Africa. She teaches and writes on race and pictorial photographic practices, the deployment of images in contexts of social change historically and the politics of visuality in heritage practice in South Africa. She has also presented papers at a number of conferences, workshops and colloquia in South Africa. Her research extends to the work of aesthetics in relation to transformation, both personal and collective. Having shifted disciplines academically by way of visually-oriented research, she believes that a greater focus on images and image-making practices can deepen and complicate a range of conversations and debates within the humanities, particularly with questions oriented around change.
Rachel Baasch is a visual artist and academic based in Grahamstown, South Africa. Born in Durban in 1987, Baasch completed a BFA (Rhodes 2010) and MFA (Rhodes 2012) specialising in sculpture and installation. Her doctoral dissertation *Visual Narratives of Division: South African and Palestinian Intersections* in the subject of Art History and Visual Culture examines the relationship between narratives of division, defensive aesthetics and representations of perspective in both a South African and Palestinian context. Her work as an artist and an academic is focused on the psychology of physical space and the way in which fear and insecurity inform the construction of real and imaginary borders and boundaries that influence social behaviour, personal perspective and the construction of houses, cities, communities and states. Her interest in the narratives that shape and often divide the socio-political landscape of a specific place, have resulted in fieldwork within Southern Africa (2010-2011) and Israel and the Palestinian West Bank Territory (2013-2014). As a researcher she is committed to the development of academic discourse that prioritises perspectives from the Global South and destabilises the North-South distinction and arguable privileging that accompanies these narrow conceptualisations of people in place.
Raimi Gbadamosi is an artist, writer and curator. He received his 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. He is on the Editorial boards of SAVVY and Open Arts Journal; and the boards of Elastic Residence and Relational. Recent national and international shows and events include: What’s Going On?; Usher Gallery, United Kingdom, 2013 – 2015; Banquet, South Hill Park Bracknell, United Kingdom, 2011; Exchange Mechanism, Belfast Exposed, Northern Ireland, 2010; Somewhere Over the Rainbow, Galleri Garaget Sweden, 2009; Solo, CAF, Alexandria, Egypt, 2009; ARCO Madrid 2009; Tentativa De Agotar Un Lugar Africano, CASM, Barcelona 2008; Human Cargo, Plymouth Museum & Art Gallery, Plymouth 2007; Port City, Arnolfini, Bristol 2007. ARCO 2009, Madrid/. Work media including multiples, music, websites, writing and audience participation. Works creates debate, instead of representing preconceived concerns defined by specific social, cultural and political cant. Books include: Independence; incredulous; ordinary people; extraordinary people; contents; Drink Horizontal; Drink Vertical; The Dreamers’ Perambulator; and four word. Recent publication contributions Include: Representing Enslavement and Abolition on Museums, Routledge 2011; Black British Perspectives, Sable, 2011. Recent essays include: What Is This Afroeuropean?, Book Chapter; Scuffles in the Cathedral: Of Principalities and Powers, Tate Encounters; Dancing In A Space Provided, Or Running Amok, Tate Liverpool; Imagination Hits Reality: Visualising the Self in Imoinda, Goldsmiths College, London. The Not-So New Europeans, Wasafiri UK and The Delight of Giant-Slayers: Or Can Artists Commit Their Lives to Paper?, ArtMonitor , Sweeden. Become a citizen at The Republic. http://www.the-republic.net
Ruth Simbao is an Associate Professor of Art History & Visual Culture at Rhodes University. She has worked as a freelance curator and arts writer in Canada and participated in two curatorial internships at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) and the National Gallery of Canada (NGC). She was a Research Fellow at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, and received a PhD from the Department of Art and Architecture at Harvard University. Simbao has published in various journals including Third Text, Parachute: Revue d’art contemporain/contemporary art magazine, African Arts, Social Dynamics, Mix, Lola, Art South Africa, De Arte, NKA: Journal for Contemporary African Art, The International Journal for African Historical Studies, Kronos and the Journal of the Contemporary African Art: New Approaches (JACANA). She curated the Blind Spots performance programme at the 2014 National Arts Festival, and Making Way: Contemporary Art from South Africa and China (www.makingway.co.za) at the National Arts Festival (2012) and the Standard Bank Gallery (2013). Simbao was the recipient of the Rhodes University Vice Chancellor's Distinguished Research Award in 2009, and in 2012 she was selected as author of one of the 50 most influential articles published by MIT Press. Ruth founded the Humanities Focus Area Visual and Performing Arts of Africa at Rhodes in 2011, which is funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation, and is currently the project leader of RAW—EC supported by the NLDTF.
Sikhumbuzo Makandala is a visual artist born in De Aar, and he currently lives and works between Johannesburg and Grahamstown. He is studying at Rhodes University and specializes in photography, video and performance art. As the 2011 Sasol New Signatures runner-up winner, he exhibited at the Pretoria Art Museum, and was part of the Play group exhibition at Nirox Sculpture Park in the Cradle. During the National Arts Festival, 2014, Makandala participated in the Blind Spot site-specific performances, as well as Analogue Eye Video Art of Africa. Early this year he exhibited at First Floor Gallery Harare, Zimbabwe, during the Harare International Festival of Arts. In 2012 he exhibited at the Joburg Fringe Art Fair and participated in the Art-Connect program facilitated by the Visual Arts Network of South Africa, and did a residency at the Nelson Mandela Museum, Mthatha in 2010.

Tanya Poole is an artist and a lecturer at the Rhodes Fine Art Department. Primarily a painter, Poole also works with animation, video and installation. She is currently working with ideas around the development and psychology of teenagers. Work from her most recent show is being exhibited in South Africa and Germany. Poole was born in Canada and grew up in Bahrain. She currently lives in Grahamstown, trying to balance a life spent between teaching art and making art.
Venue:
Humanities Seminar Room, Randall House, Prince Alfred Road

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School of Fine Art