



# Re-vitalising the Humanities

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*A Retrospective of  
the Centre for Humanities Research*

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UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE



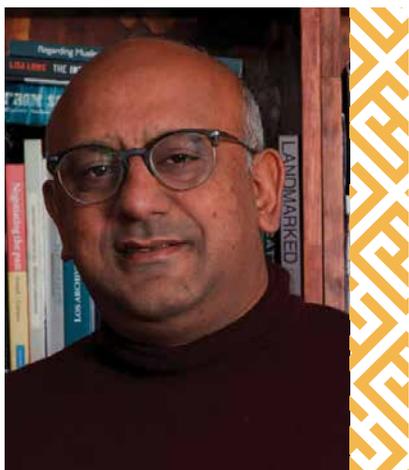
Centre for  
Humanities  
Research ■





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Professor Premesh Lalu  
(Director)

## THE ROLE OF HUMANITIES CENTRES IN BUILDING A GLOBAL HUMANITIES FUTURE

Humanities centres are necessarily plural formations that are generally established to circumvent instrumental reason in the academy. They cannot and should not ever be reduced to a single idea or even a single disciplinary mode of inquiry.

The object of the humanities centre is to remain open to ideas in their vitality and to lend these ideas, collaboratively conceived, to the reformulation of the very grounds of always renewing the university. The humanities centre accomplishes this by directing focused and inventive inquiry towards renewing the pedagogic projects of academic disciplines, considering emerging research themes and expanding the range of research questions. It also works towards developing a next generation of scholars, and enabling the university to find a footing in the world towards which it is also oriented. This goal it realizes not only by way of organisational feat or individual academic leadership, but as an epistemic driver that eschews standpoints in the interests of itineraries of thought and elaboration of concepts. A humanities centre is at the very core of what it means to explore knowledge committed to the idea of freedom; while recognizing traditions of received wisdom, it pushes knowledge beyond inherited ideological presuppositions.

In the fourteen years since its establishment in 2006, the CHR accomplished its goal of giving new impetus to the experiments on building a post-apartheid future that defined the University of the Western Cape in the 1980s. This allowed it to reflect critically and affirmingly upon earlier debates about race and class, the university and anti-racist community struggles in South Africa. Rather than casting itself as neutral and devoid of perspective, the CHR insisted on beginning with an inquiry into the very conditions that brought the university into being under apartheid. In place of assuming the role of diagnostician, it offered a space of working through but also working out its relation to this untenable inheritance. The centre

provided a space in the university in which to think its way out of the legacies of apartheid and to think about what it means to be a university in Africa. This very specific inaugural conception defined the ethos that has governed the aesthetic and scholarly approaches of the CHR since its inception. It has guided its research, defined its local and international collaborations, enabled the selection of fellows and activated its relationship to a nascent post-apartheid public sphere. It was in this tone that the CHR emphasised that the humanities and an aesthetic education are central to the post-apartheid remaking of the University of the Western Cape.

Through the first reading programme of the CHR which considered Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* as its inaugural text, a series of questions about the archive, trans-hemispheric thought, subalternity, aesthetics and postcoloniality animated fellows as these relate to the problem of post-apartheid freedom. The reading groups and seminars, conferences and public lectures, exhibitions and performances, convened by the CHR have emerged as a major resource for post-graduate education in the humanities at UWC. This is a conversation that is global in reach.



## FORGING SCHOLARSHIP AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

### The CHR's Research Profile

The inaugural inquiry of the Centre proved sufficiently broad to provide for some movement across research platforms and also to posit new conceptions of a discourse on freedom as a practice that had become detached from experiments with deracialising higher education. Through a scholarly programme open to the generative possibilities of cohering humanities scholarship and artistic practice, the CHR has produced an intervention that is increasingly part of a global conversation on the shape of humanities scholarship that would be responsive to the world, having supported the publication of 26 monographs and edited collections, supported approximately 150 graduate students and artists in residence through its fellowships programme, and published numerous articles in leading journals across the world. To the extent that the CHR enhanced the standing of the humanities, it set itself a task of elaborating a concept of the post-apartheid where no such object was readily available or identifiable. This it did by attending to the ways in which aesthetic education, the technical becoming of the human and the political subject of the migrant each in their respective ways proved to be refocusing the attention of the humanities in South Africa, in Africa and globally.

In 2006, the newly formed CHR was constituted around a small fellowship grant from the AWMF on the Programme for the Study of the Humanities in Africa (PSHA). It was in the reading programme supported through this grant that the urgency of encountering the aesthetic

alongside a robust theoretical and political intervention on the humanities first became apparent. In 2008, with the appointment of the PI for this inaugural grant as a designated director of the CHR, the outlines of what would cohere as an exceptionally rigorous and influential humanities inquiry began to take shape. Over the next few years, through the funding support of the AWMF (through the Subject for the Humanities and the CHR Fellows grants) as well as a year-long grant from the Ford Foundation, the CHR's research projects expanded with a view to strengthening postgraduate qualifications at UWC, discerned by the deepening theoretical and conceptual investigation into the meaning of post-apartheid freedom that was set against the backdrop of an imperilled human condition. With this inaugural inquiry at its core, the CHR increasingly began to attract and support postgraduate fellows who are located under its specific research platforms (either 'Aesthetics and Politics', 'Migrating Violence', 'Becoming Technical of the Human', or 'Visual History and Theory') which run a year-long, fortnightly reading programme that fellows are obliged to attend as part of their fellowship.

Due to its innovative postgraduate programming, the CHR has contributed to exceptional and extraordinary achievements in humanities research at UWC and beyond. In 2012, the CHR was awarded a major new grant by the AWMF for a research project on Aesthetics



The CHR's programming is built on a strong foundation of reading alongside an engagement with the aesthetic.

and Politics. This grant enabled the CHR to establish an artist in residence programme and also supported the African Programme in Museum and Heritage Studies (now an AWMF supranational grant on Remaking Societies, Remaking Persons, based in the History Department); the programme in Visual History (which has since resulted in an NRF South African Research Chair Initiative (SARChI) Research Chair in Visual History and Theory based in the CHR); a programme to work with the arts of kinetic objects, and specifically the Handspring Puppet Company's involvement in the annual Reconciliation Day Barrydale Parade (which has since become the core of the AWMF grant on the establishment of a Laboratory of Kinetic Objects (LOKO) and an AWMF research chair in Aesthetic Theory and Material Practice); the development of a post-graduate documentary film course; an archival, exhibition and publication initiative on the Community Arts Project; and an exhibition and book titled "Athlone in Mind" which accompanied the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Consortium of Humanities Centres and Institutes.

The Aesthetics and Politics grant has held the intellectual core of the CHR as it embarked on its broadened research initiatives. Out of the reading programmes, a clearer

intervention on 'migration and political formations', on the one hand, and role of 'aesthetic education and the becoming technical of the human', on the other, began to emerge as overarching research concerns. Supported by two grants from AWMF, these projects have expanded into what is now an AWMF funded supranational grant on the study of Other Universals together with a project on Citizenship and Justice that is aimed at developing an institutional programme on political theory and philosophy at UWC, and the advanced studies programme in aesthetic education supported by the LOKO grant as well as a new Artist in Residence grant as part of the 30-year celebration awards. This initiative forms the core of UWC's prioritisation of the humanities, and is the project around which the Department of Science and Technology and National Research Foundation Flagship award was made.



## ACADEMIC STAFF AND RESEARCH CHAIRS

The CHR brings together a dynamic group of researchers, practitioners, and scholars alongside two research chairs as its staff complement. Under the leadership of Professor Premesh Lalu, the CHR has emerged as a critical contributor to the global debates on the humanities as well as offered important interventions in both local and international academic spaces.

### Senior Staff

#### Director



Professor Premesh Lalu

Professor Premesh Lalu is Director of the DST-NRF Flagship Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. Following an MA from the University of the Western Cape, he was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Doctoral Fellowship to read towards a doctorate in History at the University of Minnesota. In 2003 he successfully defended a doctoral dissertation titled "In the Event of History". After sixteen years in the Department of History as an Associate Professor, Lalu was awarded an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant to convene a fellowship programme on the Study of the Humanities in Africa. He was promoted to full professor upon being appointed as Director of the Centre for Humanities Research in 2008.

Lalu has published widely in academic journals such as *History and Theory*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *Afrika Focus*, *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, *Kronos: Southern African Histories*, *Current Writing*, *Afrika Focus*, *Journal of Africa, Middle East and Asian Studies*, *Social Dynamics*, and *History in Africa*. Lalu's writing has appeared in newspapers and online platforms such as the Mail and Guardian, Dailymaverick, Africa is a Country, Business Day, the Cape Times as well as in edited publications. His book *The Deaths of Hintsa: Postapartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Pasts* (2009) argues that a postcolonial critique of apartheid is necessary in order to forge a concept of apartheid that allows us to properly formulate a deeper meaning of the post-apartheid. He is co-editor of *Remains of the Social: Desiring the Post-Apartheid* (2017) and *Becoming UWC: Reflections, Pathways and Unmaking Apartheid's Legacies* (2012). Lalu is a board member of the Consortium of Humanities Centres and Institutes, former chairperson of the Handspring Trust for Puppetry in Education, and former trustee of the District Six Museum in Cape Town, South Africa.

In 2019, Lalu was awarded a writing fellowship at the Humanities Long Room at Trinity College, Dublin where he worked on a monograph titled *The Techne of Trickery: Race and its Uncanny Returns*. He has previously held fellowships at Emory University, Amherst College, and the University of Minnesota. Lalu has been invited to lecture at Cornell University, University of Virginia, Shanghai University, Northwestern University, University of Bologna, Addis Ababa University, American University of Cairo, Ghent University, Macalester College, University of Minnesota, Columbia University, University of Fort Hare, Rhodes University, University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, and Tropenmuseum (Amsterdam), among others. As director of the CHR, he is the Principal Investigator for the DST-NRF Flagship on Critical Thought in African Humanities and served as PI on seven major Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grants at the University of the Western Cape. With a stellar team of colleagues at the CHR, Lalu hosted the international annual meeting of the Consortium of Humanities Centres and Institutes and co-convened the Global Humanities Curriculum Workshop with Homi Bhabha, director of the Mahindra Humanities Institute at Harvard University.

## Senior Researchers



Professor Heidi Grunebaum

Heidi Grunebaum works on the research theme, Aesthetics and Politics, and with the Factory of the Arts. Grunebaum's work focuses on social and aesthetic responses to the afterlives of genocide, war and mass violence and on the Holocaust, apartheid and the Palestine Nakba, in particular. Her research interests include Holocaust and genocide studies; critical memory studies; aesthetics and politics; comparative literary, film and narrative studies; postcolonial theory and public culture.

Grunebaum is author of the monograph, *Memorializing the Past: Everyday Life in South Africa after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (New Jersey: Transaction, 2011) co-editor, with Emile Maurice, of *Uncontained: Opening the Community Arts Project Archive* (Cape Town: CHR, 2012) and *Athlone in Mind* (Cape Town CHR, 2017) with curator, Kurt Campbell. With Mark J Kaplan she made the documentary film, *The Village Under the Forest* (2013), which received the audience award for Best South African Documentary Film at Encounters

International Documentary Film Festival in 2013. Grunebaum has published in *Current Writing, Research in African Literatures, Fantomas, the PMLA, Encounters: International Journal on Culture and Society, Third Text Africa, Southern African Anthropology and Critical Arts amongst others. Her poetry is published in Botsotso Journal for South African Arts and Cultures and Running Towards Us: New Writing from South Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2000) and *New Contrast*.



Professor Suren Pillay

Suren Pillay has held the position of Senior Researcher and Associate Professor in the CHR since 2010. From 2007-2010 he was seconded to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) of South Africa as a Senior Research Specialist in the Democracy and Governance Programme. From 2003-2004 he served as a Programme Officer at the Centre for African Studies at Columbia University. He held a position of senior lecturer in the Dept. of Political Studies, UWC, from 1995-2010. Prof. Pillay holds an Mphil, and a Phd in Anthropology with distinction, from Columbia University in New York (2011). He also has a Masters (cum laude) in Development Studies from the University of the Western Cape (UWC). While at the HSRC, Pillay led a research team on violence. The team initiated projects, developed funding proposals, and established international research networks, with an emphasis on the global South.

In 2008 he helped co-ordinate a team of researchers from the HSRC in response to the xenophobic violence which broke out in South Africa. He currently plays an active role in the Centre for Humanities Research: in 2011 he served as Acting Director of the CHR during the sabbatical year of its director. Pillay also served as Editor of the journal *Social Dynamics*, published by Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town (UCT) between 2009 and 2012. He has published extensively in the press, including the Mail and Guardian, Cape Times, Ugandan Monitor, Jerusalem Post, and Al Jazeera international online. His awards include a prestigious Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Award for Anthropological Research, a CHOICE Award from the American Publishers Association for Outstanding Book title (2011), and a Special Mention for authoring one of the ten most downloaded articles in African Studies by the African Studies Association (USA) in 2010.



## Convenor of the Factory of the Arts

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Itumeleng Wa-Lehulere

Itumeleng is an intellectual who strives to tell current and thought provoking works, that speak to the times. His approach to theatre is avoiding the over use of props to encourage the actor to use his/her instrument (body and voice) to tell the story holistically. Itumeleng's life in the arts and political fraternities spans over thirty years, beginning as an activist in apartheid South Africa. He played a significant role in the formation of COSAS in the Western Cape, while playing a prominent role in the church, being part of the choir and playing marimba for the St Gabriel's Catholic Church. His artistic career started as a poet, musician and dancer who later worked with Gibson Kente Productions in Johannesburg, playing lead roles along side Brenda Fassie in "Hungary Spoon". Affectionately known as Bra E, he has conceptualized and directed a number of prominent pieces of provocative pieces for theatre, like "You strike the woman, You Strike the Rock", "Down Adderly Street", "Gap toothed Sisters", "Roxy" the musical, "Diaries of my Womanhood",

"Red Winter" and "Echoes of our Footsteps", all of which were played out in the major theaters of South and abroad, spanning a period of over 20 years. After completing his performance diploma under the prolific Professor Mavis Taylor, Itumeleng worked with many directors in Theatre that include, Barney Simon, Janice Honeyman, Ester van Ryswerk, Mark Fleishman and others. Itumeleng has also worked intensively with the legendary Mike van Graan at the Community Arts Project School of Popular Theatre. His best work appeared at the Market theatre under owners of The Handspring Puppet Companies Basil Jones and Adrian Kholer in a production entitled "Carnival of the Bear". Itumeleng was instrumental in the forming of the Market Theatre laboratory along side Mark Fleishman under the leadership of Mannie Manim and Barney Simon. Having taught at various institutions such as the Alexander Arts Centre, Fuba Academy, New World Foundation, and the Community Arts Project, Itumeleng was one of few actors to be contracted to the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (1990). Itumeleng was the Artistic Director of the Jozi Bookfair, hosted by Khanya College at Wits University (2014-2016).

## Convenor of International Partnerships

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Michelle Smith

Smith is the Convenor of International partnerships at the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape. She is currently in her final year of a doctoral degree, which is concerned with how race, the body, and community are figured in three Eastern Cape museums. The study has taken history not as empirically produced but, rather, constituted through multiple sites and processes, not only through the archive and academia, but unfolding in a public sphere where history is constantly (re)negotiated and (re)constructed. More specifically, her analysis looks at how material objects, photographs and text intersect in the exhibitions of these museums, and how meaning is made at the nexus of, and interaction between, these forms of display.

## Research Manager



Maurits Van Bever Donker

Maurits van Bever Donker's works at the intersection of postcolonial theory, critical theory, political theory and literature. His current book project is titled *Texturing Difference: Black Consciousness Philosophy and the Script of Man*. He reads black consciousness as constituting a philosophical intervention that draws on and re-works the projects of figures such as Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, so as to set to work on the limit of the philosophical and political constructions of man that order the world after Europe. Other current research projects include a book project on the concept of desire as this structures the post-apartheid, in conjunction with Ross Truscott and Premesh Lalu, as well as work on contemplation as a practice unfolding at the rough edge of what Deleuze calls "de-territorialisation".

## Research Chairs

### Visual History and Theory



Professor Patricia Hayes

A scholar of African history, gender studies and visibility, Patricia Hayes began research on **photography and the question of history** after completing her PhD at Cambridge University. Patricia Hayes was educated in Zimbabwe, and she gained her BA (Hons) in Modern History & Modern Languages from Oxford University (UK), a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) from the University of Zimbabwe, and completed her PhD on the history of the colonisation of northern Namibia at Cambridge University in 1992. Supported by an innovative History Department, research and teaching in Visual History became established at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) from the late 1990s. Specific paradigms and postgraduate research associated with the Chair now include documentary photography; liberation struggles and the post-apartheid; digital photography in the postcolony; and photography and historical method. Patricia Hayes has edited several journal special issues

on visibility and gender including *Gender & History* (2006) and *Kronos* (2000). She co-authored *Bush of Ghosts: Life & War in Namibia* (Umuzi 2010) with photographer John Liebenberg, and has published articles on several South African and Mozambican photographers. Her work appears in Okwui Enwezor's *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (International Centre for Photography 2012), Crais and McLendon's *The South African Reader* (Duke 2014), and Mofokeng's *Chasing Shadows* (Prestel 2011). Recent critical historical articles on photography and the making of publics have appeared in *Cultural Critique* (Issue 89, 2015), Sanil V & Divya Dwivedi's *The Public Sphere from Outside the West* (Bloomsbury 2015), and the 2017 special issue on the 1980s of the journal *Photographies*. Hayes is also series co-editor of the new **Photography, History: History, Photography series** at Bloomsbury Academic publishers (<http://www.bloomsbury.com/us/series/photography-history-history-photography/>). As a postdoctoral Junior Research Fellow at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge (1993-5) Hayes began work on two collaborative research projects on Namibia supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities (USA), resulting in *Namibia Under South African Rule* (James Currey 1998) and *The Colonising Camera* (Ohio University Press 1998). She joined the History Department at UWC in 1995, teaching 20<sup>th</sup> century African history as well as postgraduate courses on gender and visual history. She co-edited *Deep hiStories: Gender & Colonialism in Southern Africa* (Rodopi 2002) with UWC colleagues Gary Minkley and Wendy Woodward. She was Chair of the History Department in 2006-07, and national Convenor of the NRF Rating Panel for History in 2011-2. She has held Visiting Fellowships at Columbia University (1993), Emory University (2001), University of Michigan (Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies 2005), Cambridge University (Smuts Fellowship 2006), Calcutta Centre for Social Science Research



(2008), Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi (2009), and the Internationales Kolleg Morphomata at the University of Cologne (2011 and 2013). Hayes is one of the convenors of the **Seminar in Contemporary History and Humanities**, co-hosted by the History Department and the Centre for Humanities Research. She was seconded to the CHR in 2016 when appointed to the SARChI Chair in Visual History & Theory.

## Aesthetic Theory and Material Performance



Professor Jane Taylor

Professor Jane Taylor has a history of scholarly as well as creative work within these domains. She has written several plays for puppets, working with artist William Kentridge and Handspring Puppet Company, as well as a recent puppet play for Renaissance scholar Stephen Greenblatt – a work dealing with the early history of neurology. She has written a novel on transplants, and most recently has completed a monograph on William Kentridge's production of *The Nose*, for the New York Met.





The CHR hosts important international scholars, such as the philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne pictured here, who participate in the reading programmes of the CHR with fellows and faculty.



## STRUCTURING AN INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY

Following the Aesthetics and Politics intervention, the CHR cohered its research inquiry across three guiding research platforms: Aesthetics and Politics, Migrating Violence, and The Becoming Technical of the Human. A fourth guiding area on Visual History and Theory was inaugurated in 2016 and is convened by a DST-NRF SARChI Chair. A fifth, born out of the work of the advanced studies initiative in aesthetic education and LoKO, is the Artist in Residence Programme.

### Research Platforms

#### Aesthetics and Politics

**Convenor:** Professor Heidi Grunebaum

Aesthetics and Politics as a thematic area critically investigates the relationship between the arts and the making of a post-apartheid society. This research theme renews a humanities inquiry in which its foundational concepts and categories can be rethought through its encounters with visual arts and photography, music and sound, puppetry and performance, literary and cinematic forms. Concerned with critical investigations at the intersection of the arts, politics, and publics in post-apartheid South Africa, the theme is conceived in terms of a “distribution of the sensible” (Ranciere, 2004), where disciplinary categories, artistic conventions and expressive practices structure social orders of inclusion, visibility and hidden-ness. Out of this conjunction of arts practice and humanities scholarship, the research platform proposes to “redistribute the sensible” from within the very histories, geographies, and institutional conditions of apartheid conceived as a condition that surpasses the geo-political territory and historical particularities of South Africa. This research platform, together with Becoming Technical of the Human, also oversees the Artist in Residence programme.

#### Migrating Violence

**Convenor:** Professor Suren Pillay

This project addresses itself centrally to more general dilemmas of citizenship in the postcolonial world, where political modernity is the product of a colonial encounter. Theorizing political violence and political practices by historicizing the “migrant” allows us to track conceptions of community, equality, citizenship and the defining categories of western modernity. The inquiry brings into sharper relief not only the ruptures, but also the continuities that define many postcolonial conditions, including the location of postapartheid South Africa in the world. This platform has been further developed through two other projects interested in theorizing the political subject: Other Universals is a supranational project- with partners in the Caribbean, elsewhere in Africa, and the Middle East--which engages with anti-imperial political and cultural thought and internationalist intellectual traditions and practices of solidarity. The Citizenship and Justice seeks to reanimate the study of political theory and political philosophy at UWC through supporting a new generation of scholars exploring new lines of inquiry, and new curriculum initiatives.

#### Becoming Technical of the Human

**Convenor:** Professor Premesh Lalu

The focus is on the relation of techné and desire as these are marked in traditions of African humanities, critical theory and philosophy. What are the shifting dynamics of the relationship between the human and technology, between technogenesis and race, that impinge on the debate on aesthetic education? This is not only a question of an intellectual history, but rather an effort to trace particular philosophical constellations in key figures in Western critical



theory, and intellectuals such as Molema, Sobukwe, Mandela, Fanon, Senghor, Maxeke, and Biko. It will also work with the implications for the thinking of the human through collaboration with the Handspring Puppet Company and its specific interests in movement, technology and the human. As this consideration has become ever more focused on the humanities in the world, it has also opened questions through a new grant on Constitutional Revolution focussed specifically on the meaning of free and equal citizenship in a united and diverse society and the technologies at work in forming subjectivities under conditions of seismic constitutional, revolutionary and technological change.

## Visual History and Theory

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**Convenor:** Professor Patricia Hayes

Visual History looks to larger processes outside the image itself, examining multiple histories, sciences and forms of knowledge over time, avoiding a narrow focus on the image in isolation. It acknowledges the way photography, as Pierre Bourdieu put it, is a 'medium that mediates' and flows into many other institutions and practices (such as art, the museum, science). It takes autonomous and unconventional approaches to images in relation to history, society and culture, drawing on the methodologies of different disciplines and varied media and replenishing them with new insights in their turn. Visual History has taken up difficult epistemological issues with regard to two particular issues. The SARCHI Chair in Visual History & Theory was inaugurated in 2016 and is the first DST/NRF SARCHI Chair to be awarded in the Arts Faculty of UWC. The overall aim of the SARCHI Chair is to set up a routine of research and related activities that can be consolidated each year, resulting in publications, graduating students and expanded internal and external research networks, partnerships and exchanges.

## Artists in Residence

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**Convenors:**

Professor Jane Taylor and Itumeleng Wa-Lehulere

Under the intellectual frame of Aesthetics and Politics and the Becoming Technical of the Human, the arts and art practices specific to but not exclusive to puppetry arts, fine arts and music have increasingly become central to the CHR. Since 2012 its fellows have included artists in residence who contribute to the Centre's broad intellectual project and, in 2015, the CHR expanded its programme by launching the Factory of the Arts. The Factory of the Arts was coupled with the AWMF funded Laboratory of Kinetic Objects in 2016. With funding from the NIHSS (formerly the Charter for the Humanities and Social Sciences), the DST-NRF Flagship and the AWMF, the Centre has been able to appoint a diverse range artists in residence since its inception -- in jazz guitar, visual arts, photography, theatre, architecture, puppetry arts, film, and sound -- all of whom participate in the reading programmes of the CHR as well as a monthly artists' forum. The "factory" and "laboratory" are two intersecting approaches to the work of manufacturing an aesthetic education for our time. To this end, the Factory of the Arts, the Laboratory of Kinetic Objects and the A.W. Mellon Artists in Residence Programme in Sound, Image and Movement, constitute an experiment for cross disciplinary arts practice integral to the CHR's vision of humanistic inquiry.

## Aesthetic Education

### The Factory of the Arts and the Laboratory of Kinetic Objects

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How do the arts recalibrate thinking about the humanities in relation to public institutions, politics and critique? How could contemporary debates on aesthetics and politics offer new ways of thinking the subject of the human at the limits of the disciplines marked by apartheid and state oppressions? What conceptual elaborations may emerge out of an encounter between critical thought and multidisciplinary arts practices? And how may these provide for imagining new ways of being, of being in relation, and of modes of thinking that enact a post-apartheid sensibility? It is through the Factory of the Arts and the Laboratory of Kinetic Objects that the CHR takes up these questions most forcefully. The Factory of the Arts provides a forum for artists in residence to practice autonomously and to create new spaces for interdisciplinary collaboration. Itumeleng Wa-Lehulere, South African theatre practitioner, acts as artistic director and convenor of the Factory of the Arts.



Resident artists have held educational workshops with learners from secondary schools in Khayelitsha and collaborated with the Handspring Trust for Puppetry Arts (of which CHR Director Premesh Lalu is the chairperson) and the NGO Net Vir Pret to produce an annual puppetry parade and performance in the rural town of Barrydale in the Western Cape. Funding from the DST-NRF Flagship that allows the Factory to host Ukwanda also provides accompanying fellowship support for the projects in Barrydale, as well as Masiphumelele.

## PARTNERSHIPS IN PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE

In the words of Professor Ian Baucom, Executive Dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Virginia, the CHR has been fundamental to bringing UWC to international attention. The CHR has partnered with a number of international institutions, which have opened substantial collaboration across multiple disciplines in the sciences, arts, and humanities. These partnerships with institutions such as the University of Minnesota, University of Toronto, and the University of Virginia, as well as the CHR's active participation in the Consortium for Humanities Centres and Institutes, the Global Humanities Curriculum project and CODESRIA, have ensured and promoted not only a strong international standing for the CHR but also contributed significantly to institution building efforts at UWC.

To acknowledge these efforts, an edited volume reflecting on fifty years of UWC as it breaks mould of its apartheid foundation was produced in 2012. This was accompanied by an extended study of the idea of the university in Africa that culminated in a Kronos special journal issue on "What Is The University For", and a collaborative course on Global Apartheid convened in partnership with the Interdisciplinary Centre for the Study of Global Change at the University of Minnesota. Through the CHR's sustained interdisciplinary conversation around the human condition and postapartheid futures, it has inspired a range of new pedagogical directions in film, studies in kinetic objects, and the digital. Scholars from the CHR have not only found posts and fellowships at UWC but at universities, centres, institutes, and heritage institutions in South Africa, Nigeria, Rwanda, Spain, the USA, Germany and India.

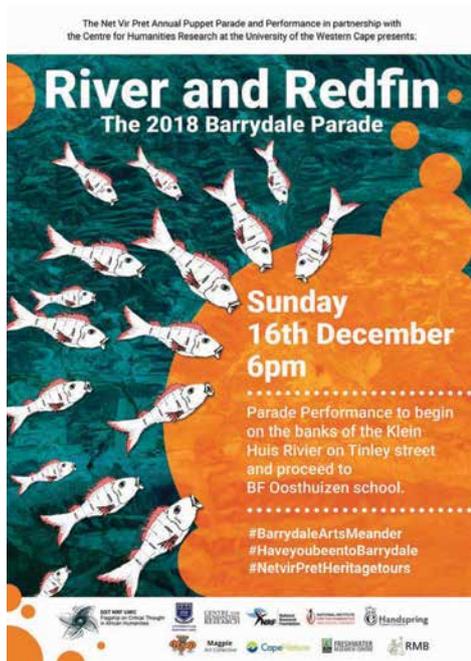


## Annual International Winter School

The Winter School was convened out of a commitment to create a space for discussion, presentation and response to questions around the humanities, the philosophy of history and the challenges of critical theory. It is also committed to a sustained critical engagement with texts, theory and concepts; to exploring genealogies of thinking and critique; to the consideration of how individual work relates to these concepts and arguments; and to how text reveals itself to individual participants (how it relates to their work). Although sensitive to the possibilities of the present conjuncture of the postapartheid, the Winter School remains committed to think[ing] beyond the geohistorical frameworks of the South African particular. All CHR fellows and artists in residence attend the Annual Winter School, which has been running since 2011, comprising lectures from visiting international scholars, postgraduate reading groups and workshops, and more recently, performances and screenings of artworks. The Winter School is convened together with the SARChI Chair in Social Change, University of Fort Hare and the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change (ICGC), University of Minnesota.

A critical part of the Winter School is the intellectual environment it nurtures, seen here in an image of Professor John Mowitt asking a question of both the speaker and the audience at the 2016 Winter School, held under the theme 'What is the University For?'

The thematic focus and format of the Winter School shifts every year so as to accommodate the research interests of fellows and to consolidate research questions in common across institutional partners. Since its inception, the Winter School has covered themes such as "a crisis for the humanities?"; concepts such as "ground/grounded" and "acting/act" which developed into an edited collection on *The Remains of the Social*;



In 2018, the Barrydale Parade was set around the theme of the redfin minnow, an endangered species in the rivers surrounding the town of Barrydale.



the question of “Race for the Humanities” which sought to comprehend the strategies by which the problem of race has been anticipated and contested in the discourse of the humanities and, more succinctly, what it means to teach the debate about race in the humanities. The very urgent question of “What is the University for?” which was coupled with a public lecture series and that became the focus of a special issue on “The Idea of the University”. Most recently, the winter school explored the theme “After Technology” and was organised by advanced doctoral students. Over the last 8 years, the Winter School has served as a context through which to expose graduate students to lectures and workshops with leading international scholars such as Gayatri Spivak, David Scott, Jim Chandler, Arunima G, John Mowitt, Sanil V, Baidik Bhattacharya, Cesare Casarino and Elizabeth Giorgis.

## Annual Reconciliation Day Large Puppet Parade and Performance

As noted, the CHR has developed a very significant and meaningful engagement with the rural community of Barrydale, a region beset by systemic problems of foetal alcohol syndrome, social violence and educational degradation. There are several very strong partnerships with local Barrydale community activists, such as Net Vir Pret. Through a partnership with the Handspring Trust for the last seven years, the CHR has been engaged in a program of arts education and skills transfer with the community; have secured University placement for 48 matriculants; have given youth access to world-class performances; and have deployed music, arts, and performance practitioners to work with local residents. We have also established programmes in oral history, environmental activism, and historical research; and the initiative between the CHR and Barrydale, with Handspring, has been the subject of several major CNN profile documentaries.

This Barrydale initiative is not just a supplement to the research and scholarship of the CHR. The project is inaugurating challenges to our Northern partners, for example, the University of Toronto, Berkeley, and Minnesota; who are keen observers of our practice as well as our research into the links between tertiary education and grassroots arts and educational activism. The CHR welcomes visitors annually from Royal Holloway University; from Berkeley, and from the University of Toronto, amongst others. The questions generated by our practice feed back into the research being undertaken at the Centre; and often challenge paradigms from the ‘global north’.

The puppetry festival has a complex pedagogical and research purpose. Since the CHR has begun this collaborative project in Barrydale, the number of high school learners graduating from high school to pursue studies in higher education across the province went from zero to more than fifty.



## Consortium of Humanities Centres and Institutes

The CHR is a member of the Consortium for Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) and the CHR's Director, Professor Premesh Lalu, is a member of its board. The CHCI is an international member-based organization consisting of 260 directors of humanities institutes around the world that holds an annual general meeting at differing partner institutions each year. In 2017 the CHR hosted the landmark international conference, "The Humanities Improvised", on behalf of the CHCI. The CHCI meeting and conference revisited the work of improvisation in a global context where changes in work, politics and technology have reorganized the repertoire of consciousness, memory and desire that grounds the Humanities. It included lectures and performances from some of the most influential humanities scholars and artists from around the world and was accompanied by three public exhibitions that helped to animate and shape the discussions, debates and reception of the lectures.

The CHCI meeting in 2017 brought together artists such as Isaac Julien and William Kentridge in discussions around aesthetics, the human, and improvisation.



## CHCI Addis Ababa

The CHCI, in collaboration with the College of Performing and Visual Art and the Center of African Studies at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, hosted the first CHCI Africa Graduate Institute on the theme "Africa as Method, Africa as Concept". Professor Premesh Lalu was intricately involved in the planning of the programme for the Institute which brought 40 doctoral students from across the African continent together for 16 days of intense lectures and workshops on the theme, led by scholars such as Simon Gikandi, Elizabeth Giorgis and Premesh Lalu.

CHR researchers and fellows joined other colleagues from across the continent of Africa around the theme 'Africa as Method, Africa as Concept' in Addis Ababa in 2019.

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## Global Humanities Institute: The Challenges of Translation

The Global Humanities Institute on the Challenges of Translation is hosted by the Centre of Studies on Philosophy, Humanities, and the Arts at the University of Chile in Santiago, in collaboration with Humanities Commons (UCI Commons, University of California Irvine), Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation at the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities, and the CHR at UWC. The Institute aims to "establish an academic exchange articulated on the basis of a multidimensional concept of translation with poetic and theoretic outputs. It will privilege an interdisciplinary approach articulating philosophical, literary and artistic perspectives in order not just to contribute to the state of the art of translation studies, but also to extend the model of translation to heuristically explore and rethink enduring questions in the realms of epistemology (the constitution and passage of meaning), ethics (responsibility, violence, hospitality), history (temporal economy, memory), and politics (status of the subject, foundation of the community)." The Institute is the beginning of a longer collaboration on the problem of translation that is emerging out of several joint research projects in the CHR.



## GEARING AN INQUIRY TOWARD THE FUTURE

The CHR has had great success over the last years in shaping the debates in the humanities in South Africa (reflected in its being made a National Flagship for the Humanities) and internationally while, simultaneously, working tirelessly towards institution building. The CHR plans to continue its important research and interventions through existing research platforms as well as to accentuate this with an even stronger focus on the development of a next generation of humanities scholars and practitioners. This continued commitment is most clearly seen in the latest grants and proposals submitted to the Mellon Foundation.

## Collaborations in Humanities Curricula



Professor Judith Butler, who leads the International Consortium of Critical Theory Programmes, delivered a lecture as part of a panel discussion titled 'The University and Its Worlds' with Professors Wendy Brown, David Theo Goldberg, and Achille Mbembe at UWC in 2016.

### International Consortium of Critical Theory Programmes

The CHR director has been invited to participate at a senior level in the definition and evolution of ongoing programmes arising from Professor Judith Butler's Mellon-funded initiative on Critical Humanities, and to serve as co-editor of a Polity Press series titled Critical Encounters. The task of this international consortium is to document, connect, and support the various programs and projects that now represent critical theory across the globe, especially in light of contemporary global challenges to thinking about democracy, violence, memory, and the critical tasks of the university. The Consortium rests on the view that critical theory is not only an important interdisciplinary field of research and teaching within the university, but crucially informs the university as an institution charged with the task of safeguarding and promoting critical thought.

### Global Humanities Curriculum Workshop

The Harvard lead project on a Global Humanities Curriculum convening an interdisciplinary and geographically diverse group of humanistic scholars and public intellectuals, primarily from Africa, the Cape Town Global Humanities Curriculum workshop offers a venue for discussing the ideas, methods, and practices of "the global", both in relation to the local and the regional and as a critical step towards creating an intellectually challenging and institutionally effective global humanities curriculum. The first workshop of this project was held in Cape Town and co-organized by Homi Bhabha at the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University and Premesh Lalu of the CHR.



## Institution Building

### Next Generation Scholars

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The CHR, through its research platforms and programs, aims to provide an environment within which a next generation of scholars can begin publishing articles from their doctoral dissertations, bringing a first monograph to completion, and gaining, through the assumption of organizational responsibilities in the programs of the center, a well-rounded experience of academic life, including teaching and administration. The work of these scholars, funded in part through the Mellon Foundation but supported through the projects of the Flagship, traverses a range of issues—aesthetics and politics, submerged twentieth century figures of black female critical thought, the colonial archive, state bureaucratic technologies, psychoanalysis, its conceptual inheritances, and postcoloniality, the postal system as technology of subjectivation, museums and its figurations of black death, to name a few. This work finds its points of connection, however, in a shared question of the postapartheid, which has been taken up in ways akin to the above formulation, but also along other productive lines of thought.



Kim Gurney

Kim Gurney works in an interdisciplinary way between writing, art practice and academic research. Her research curiosities include contemporary art, urbanism, the public sphere and media studies. Kim is widely published including two recently authored books anchored to Johannesburg: *The Art of Public Space: Curating and Re-imagining the Ephemeral City* (2015) and *August House is Dead; Long Live August House! The story of a Johannesburg atelier* (2017). Her own art practice deals with disappearances of different sorts and makes restorative gestures, while engaging other practitioners through curatorial platforms. Kim's former occupation as a journalist and managing various newsrooms informs her interdisciplinary work through an abiding interest in current affairs and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



Thozama April

Thozama April (Next Generation Scholar): Writes on Women and Feminist Historiography with a dissertation titled 'Theorising Women: The life of Charlotte Maxeke'. She is currently working on the broad historiography of colonialism in the Eastern Cape and on de-colonial and nationalist thought.



Ross Truscott

Ross Truscott works between the disciplines of Psychology and History, drawing on poststructural, psychoanalytic, and postcolonial theory. His research interests lie, generally, in the psychic life of postcoloniality, and, specifically, in histories of technology, aesthetics, and affect. He is on the editorial teams of *Kronos: Southern African Histories and Psychology in Society* (PINS), and is a co-editor of *Remains of the Social: Desiring the Postapartheid* (Wits University Press, 2017). The monograph he is currently working on is tentatively titled, *The Order of Empathy: An Archaeology of Postcolonial Fellow Feeling*.



Lauren Van Der Rede

Lauren van der Rede is a Next Generation Scholar at the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. Her research engages with the question of genocide and focuses on its expressions in three African contexts, namely, Rwanda, Ethiopia and the Darfur region of Sudan. Located at the intersection of genocide studies, psychoanalysis and literature, her doctoral intervention, titled *The Post-Genocidal Condition: Ghosts of Genocide, Genocidal Violence and Representation* asks what it might mean to think genocide beyond the framework of the phenomenon.



Aidan Erasmus

Aidan Erasmus is a Next Generation Scholar at the DST-NRF Flagship for Critical Thought in African Humanities at the Centre for Humanities Research, University of the Western Cape. His research interests include technology and the senses, sound and media, and war and colonialism.



## Planning for the Archives at UWC

The CHR has received a planning grant to help lead a discussion and planning process at UWC to build on an existing historic vision of the university to support collections development and management, and to re-conceptualise and operationalise an updated and more far-reaching archival integration into teaching, research, scholarship, and creativity for both the university and its external constituencies and publics. The planning grant will support conceptualising and operationalising a far-reaching archival vision for the university in order to extend existing collection development and management, and to support teaching, research, scholarship, and creativity. This is an inter-institutional project that aims to make collections like the Mayibuye liberation struggle collection publicly accessible and a re-purposed resource for humanities and broader academic inquiry.

## Communicating the Humanities

A strong focus for the next five years will be the further development of our next generation programmes. Through a new proposal the CHR seeks to consolidate its research programmes and platforms through a lead initiative involving senior post-graduate students critically engaging on the future of the humanities PhD. This will be achieved by constituting a dedicated space in the overarching structure of the CHR that will allow next generation and early career fellows to explore how the humanities PhD communicates understandings of the human condition in an age of expanded digital and technological resources, as well as to place the work of recent humanities post-graduates in dialogue with the university's publics, both locally and globally.



## The Greatmore Building

The CHR has also worked towards enhancing student access to the city by breaking up the geography of apartheid urban planning. One of the key commitments of the CHR is to bridge the divides between the institution and its publics, as well as the racial divides that still mark the City of Cape Town and its relationship with its rural surrounds. In 2018, the CHR, with the strong support of the University's Executive Management, has worked to secure a lease on a new building on Greatmore Street in Cape Town.

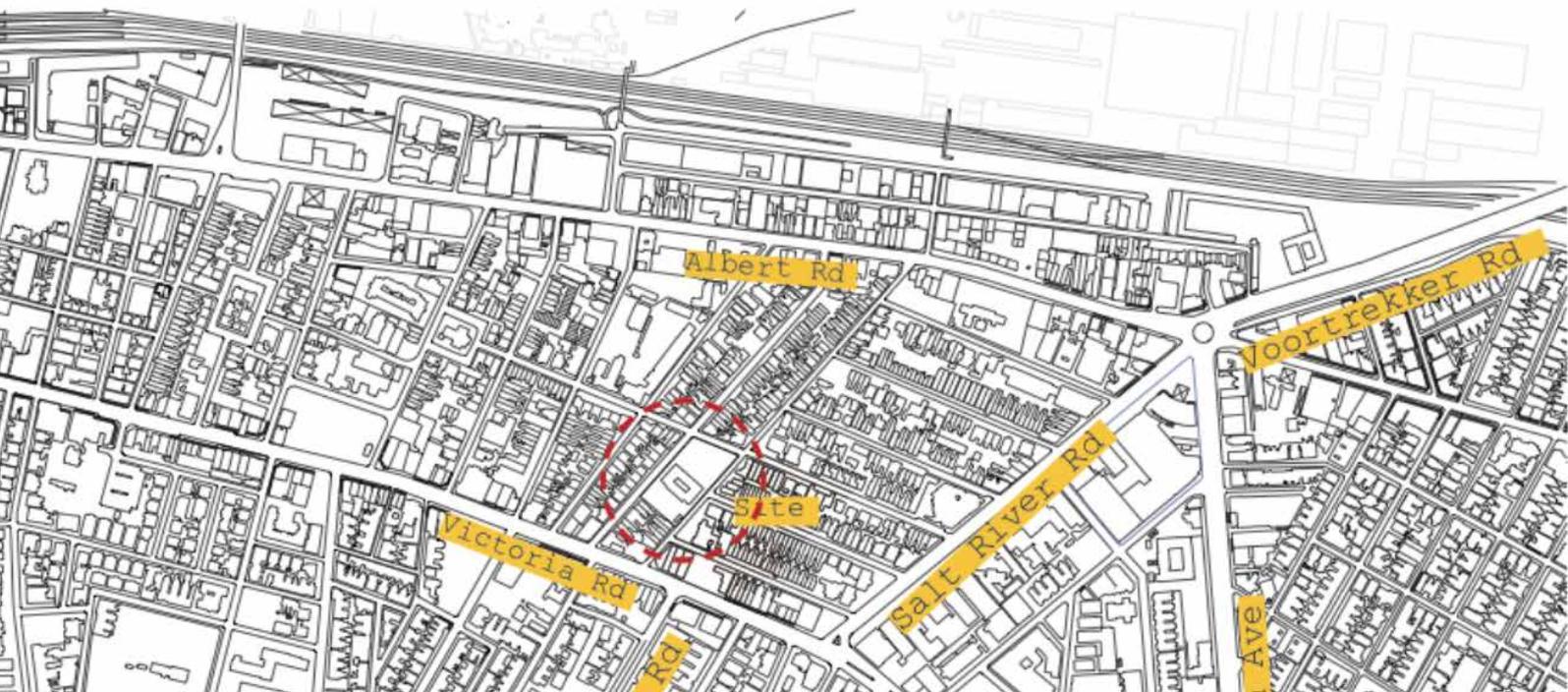
The new international humanities hub intends to bring together scholars, artists and community members in an ongoing exploration of the changing relationship between new technologies and the human condition, while attending to the need to connect humanities scholarship and public space. It will provide for an opportunity to connect artists and scholars from UWC and its international partners to local youth and communities, creating a pipeline for youth from Cape Town and surrounding neighbourhoods to engage with high level artistic and research processes. It will also serve to encourage the youth of Cape Town to consider a future in and through higher education.

As a partnership project between UWC and six leading international universities, the Greatmore Street project will bring the very best scholarship globally into conversation with artists and artistic practices in South Africa. The facility will house the CHR's Factory of the Arts and its Laboratory of Kinetic Objects and Puppetry Arts, a gallery, seminar rooms and facilities to accommodate international partner institutions in an inquiry on the human condition. It will be the site for the CHR's public lecture and artist in residence programming, as well as a base for the advanced studies in the humanities project that is critical for the CHR's

The new building in Greatmore Street, pictured above, will serve as both a venue for collaborative projects as well as a studio space for the artist in residence programme of the CHR.

next generation scholar programme. This is an exciting new development that will further help to strengthen the study of the humanities at UWC and across Cape Town.

The opportunity to build an internationally recognized research and creative hub in Cape Town aimed at fostering youth programmes in arts education, and enhancing educational opportunity has been adopted by the UWC executive as a key priority to foster and nurture future generations of artists and scholars committed to the ideals of a non-racial future. This, alongside the partnerships in pedagogy and practice that structure the CHR's networks, takes forward UWC's Vice-Chancellor Professor Tyrone Pretorius's proposal for extending the university to serve a nascent democratic public sphere.





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