



## *Curating as World-Making – An Art on Our Mind* Creative Dialogue

Sharlene Khan, Nontobeko Ntombela, Nomusa Makhubu, Same Mdluli,  
Nkule Mabaso & Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani

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## **Curating as World-Making – An Art on Our Mind Creative Dialogue**

Sharlene Khan , Nontobeko Ntombela, Nomusa Makhubu , Same Mdluli, Nkule Mabaso and Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani

**African Feminisms (Afems) 2018 Conference**, Makhanda, Department of Fine Art, Rhodes University, 28 September 2018

This creative dialogue is part of the *Art on our Mind* Research Project public talk series run by South African visual artist and scholar Sharlene Khan, which invites South African women-of-colour creative practitioners to discuss their working methodologies, influences, challenges and inspirations, and seeks to encourage written discourse on these practitioners' artworks. The *Curating as World-Making* dialogue was held during the 2018 African Feminisms (Afems) Conference between Sharlene Khan and South African curators Nontobeko Ntombela, Nomusa Makhubu, Same Mdluli, Nkule Mabaso, Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani on the challenges and possibilities of curating. The conversation follows how each of the curators (many of whom are also artists and scholars) came to curating in the South African visual arts field and the difficulties experienced in establishing themselves in a gendered terrain conditioned by money and opportunity. The curators discuss the potential of curating – as a world-making exercise – that creates particular modalities of visibility that need black-African feminist interventions and articulations.

***Curating as World-Making – Art on our Mind*** Creative Dialogue between Sharlene Khan, Nontobeko Ntombela, Nomusa Makhubu, Same Mdluli, Nkule Mabaso, Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani<sup>1</sup>

**African Feminisms (Afems) 2018 Conference, Department of Fine Art, Rhodes University, Makhanda, 28 September 2018**



*Curating as World-Making Creative Dialogue* (L-R: Sharlene Khan, Nomusa Makhubu, Nontobeko Ntombela, Same Mdluli, Nkule Mabaso and Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani), Afems Conference 2018, Rhodes Fine Art Department. Credit: courtesy of Sharlene Khan.

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**Sharlene Khan:** Thank you very much for coming. To give you a little context about *Art on our Mind*<sup>2</sup> – the project started in 2017 and it's a National Research Foundation Thutuka/Rhodes University funded project. *Art on our Mind* is inspired by bell hooks' book *Art on my Mind*<sup>3</sup> in which she theorises the importance of visuality and various creative visual productions within the African-American community. She speaks about art that she experienced as a child, about the informal/formal ways she learned about art, looking at the importance of photography in the African-American community, and she has a range of interviews with various African-American artists. That book, for me, was really inspirational and so I thought how fantastic it would be someday if I ever had money, to do something like that for our communities. That is why I returned reluctantly to academia (laughing) a few years ago because this is still where the money is at – yeah, let's be true, we are not always just doing it for the love.

So, *Art on our Mind* was born from that and the premise of this is that every three months we have a public creative dialogue with a South African woman-of-colour<sup>4</sup> visual artist or creative producer and over those months leading up to the talk, I have a team of exceptional volunteer students from the Department of Fine Art who research the artist, and we come up with questions for the artist based on her influences, her inspirations, working methodologies, the challenges she faces and then we ask her those sets of questions at our public creative dialogue. We video the dialogue and put the video, along with the transcript, the audio, and every piece of material that we find on our public archival platform, as what we want to do is to have ease of facilitation – whether it is for a high school researcher or a professional research scholar – that every bit of material that is available on this artist, is placed online on this digital archive. We know how difficult it is sometimes to find material on artists – even though we in this country are blessed with some of the most amazing women artists who hardly ever have funding, but produce out of the love and tenacity of their spirits, there is not enough discourse on them and, as Nontobeko Ntombela's work has shown on Gladys Mgudlandlu<sup>5</sup> in the 1960s and 1970s, that without that kind of discourse, without us historicising artists, without the writing, that within even the space of 10 years, you can be completely forgotten.<sup>6</sup> So, the task of writing and putting people into history is an important one, but for the time being, as that history is being written up, we need to make sure that the material is available for those who come after us to write.

What we also like to do is to talk and today I am really excited about the kind of panel that I have put together. omusa Makhubu is an art historian, she is an artist, and a theorist. You are a curator as well, based at Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Nontobeko Ntombela is well-known to us and she is a curator who is based at the Department of Art History at Wits University. She is a lot of other things which, every time I mention she then refuses (laughing), so I am just going to stick to curator for now. Same Mdluli is a curator, and artist, an art historian. She is since the beginning of the year, based at the Standard Bank Gallery in Johannesburg, which is such an amazing prospect and we are all very excited about her appointment. Nonkululeko – we call her Nkule – Mabaso, is the curator at Michaelis Galleries at UCT. You also do a lot of independent curating as well, Nkule, and it is fantastic to have you here. And last, but not least, is Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani. Zodwa is an independent curator. She also makes artwork, but she is probably more into curatorship right now and is completing an MA in Curatorial Practice here at Rhodes University. Today we want to speak about the challenges of curating, what that means for South African black women curators but also the possibilities of it, because I guess none of us would be doing this if there weren't possibilities in it. So, my first quick question is can each of you tell us briefly how you came to curating?

**Nomusa Makhubu:** I started on the National Arts Festival<sup>7</sup> curatorial committee – at the time I didn't call myself a curator because the work was as part of a team, and we just oversaw all the exhibitions that would be on at the National Arts Festival. Then, of course, I have learned a great deal from working with Nkule Mabaso where I think the first major show was *Fantastic*,<sup>8</sup> which I will speak about at a later stage, was really memorable for me – shifting from the theoretical into the curatorial was something that I think was facilitated by our collaborative work.

**Nontobeko Ntombela:** It's a very difficult question for me to answer ... but I would say my first real experience in curating would be the BAT Centre<sup>9</sup> in 2001. Walking in there as a young graduate and working with artists at the Centre. That would be my experience.

**Same Mdluli:** For me it was sort of accidental because I didn't seek out to become a curator, it kind of landed upon me as a necessity. I think the first real curating that I did was with the gallery,<sup>10</sup> that I started with Johannes,<sup>11</sup> and we put together little shows, with having started it from conception right through to putting it up exhibitions.

**Nkule Mabaso:** My starting point is when I did a BA in Fine Art and, at the end of the degree, I realised I really don't have the patience and the limitations of sitting in a studio and being self-absorbed, and that's really not the kind of thing that I was interested in. Also, often what I'd learned in Fine Arts and my personal practice was just not accessible, so I wanted to expand that and find out how do I become a researcher that engages in wider questions that are avoided within artistic practice? And so how do I marry those two things? My interest is in research and artistic practice, so, then I embarked on a MA in Curating in Switzerland.

**Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani:** I started off being interested in telling stories and when I was at Walter Sisulu<sup>12</sup> watching how people created so much valuable work from literally nothing, things were always broken, but you see how that is created out of old fabric and brokenness, and that's where I came up with the first show that I had called *Margins*,<sup>13</sup> working from the margins with a whole lot of lack and all the stuff that comes out of that. It really inspired me. So that's how I got the interest in curating.

**Sharlene Khan:** I want to quote from an N'Goné Fall article.<sup>14</sup> It's called 'Providing Space for Freedom – Women Artists from Africa', that was published in the *Global Feminisms* catalogue in 2007: 'Until the late 1980s, being a female artist was supposed to be a part-time diversion. Women were allowed to be involved in such areas as craft, home décor, fashion, and hairstyle. And when they did paint, they were supposed to produce pretty canvases to be hung in the homes of the local bourgeoisie. No questions, no provocations. They were expected to create decorative beauty, not deal with intellectual theories. By confining them in that narrow role, African societies were in effect denying that a woman could be a full-time artist challenging conceptual issues.' What would your response be to N'Goné's assessment?

**Nomusa Makhubu:** If one were to shift her quote to thinking about curating, if you think about the major biennales, that's always been sort of the man's world. Some of the major curators that we can think of – the Enwezors and the Njamis – have defined the so-called 'African canon' and I think that's made it really difficult for us to shift it.<sup>15</sup> But, it's also very

important for us to do that. I mean, especially from my experience of having worked on teams – the Works of Art Curatorial Committee at UCT<sup>16</sup> but also National Arts Festival – you're outweighed. There is very little movement in terms of how much critical work you can do with your curatorial practice. So, I think it is an important question to think through as an artist, but also as curator – the limitations that come with a particular canon that's been created, especially in relation to African art.

**Nontobeko Ntombela:** I think, from what I remember the article speaks to is her trying to map where practice comes from, but also beyond the kind of scholarly writing to think about practice in a more expanded sense, so artists who have not actually been considered 'artists' from the Western or modern sense. The article calls us to think about how do we begin to historicise and think about who has been a player, and to do that arming ourselves with tools to think outside of what we are finding provided even in our cultural box, and, saying that, the practice then begins to map where women artists are, outside of which expected spaces and what that means in terms of even pushing the understanding of who is an artist and what is an artist, and how do we think about artists who are women.

**Same Mdluli:** I think just in the kinds of names of female African artists I have come across, and I will take Noria Mabasa<sup>17</sup> as an example, and the way in which she has been written about, the agency she has placed on herself in both curating her own work but also her practice – there's a very deliberate thing she is doing in how she has removed herself from the centre.<sup>18</sup> I think at a time she was quite prominent among those artists that were considered as working in the peripheries,<sup>19</sup> and, yet, now she's still alive and making work, but nobody is paying attention to her. So, negotiating how someone like that enters and is erased in a sense like you were saying – literally we haven't heard anything about Noria Mabasa in the last ten years or so. We have Dr Esther Mahlangu, on the other hand, who has been very much hyper-visualised in a sense, and that kind of speaks again about when and how African black female artists come in and out of the centres and who dictates that.

**Nkule Mabaso:** Yes, and if you're thinking about artists, black women who were operating in the 1980s and the basic framing, that they wouldn't have named themselves as 'craft' but they would have been pigeonholed into that, e.g. if you look at *Magiciens de la Terre*<sup>20</sup> and those kinds of exhibitions, it's not as if they necessarily had a choice in their framing, but this was the operative space, which their work was somehow pulled into and recognised. Whether they were painting or doing craft they got lumped into one area, and so, it's also about the time and what's possible within the timeframe.

**Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani:** I think it is pretty important that we, as Black women curators, are today doing the kind of work that we are because there are a lot of women that are not visible in the art space because of the fact that they have been placed in the margins for the kind of work that they create, which is always seen as decorative only and then nothing else is said. I work with woman in the Eastern Cape that do beadwork in rural spaces and you find that there is so much content, but it doesn't have a platform yet, which I am trying to create. Women are always lumped in, like you said, into that space where you are either a crafter or a tourist attraction, so, I think it is really important to have people like us to foreground that work.

**Nomusa Makhubu:** There is something quite interesting about the difference between the 'modern' and 'contemporary', where modern women artists were often put into this 'craft' category, and contemporary women artists are faced with this predicament of engaging with the critical in terms of their bodies (but, again, having to engage with spaces where those bodies then become the spectacle). So, I mean – again, I am going to use Pumla's term here – the 'hyper-visibility'<sup>21</sup> type' of artists, often, because they are so hyper-visible, are the only ones that come to mind. ... It's a kind of predicament in terms of what has happened with contemporary women artists that curators often find hard to circumvent because they have become the canonical artists.

Video excerpt 1: <https://youtu.be/DVe-6rKKCso>

**Sharlene Khan:** Nomusa, to get back to the point that you were just saying, in the same article Fall<sup>22</sup> also mentions the prevalent use of bodies, particularly their own bodies, by African women. How do you account for this preoccupation?

**Nontobeko Ntombela:** Well, I mean, it resurfaces a number of questions that artists – what you have written about<sup>23</sup> – are constantly being burdened to speak to the past, to speak to these ills. If you recall what Okwui reminds us in the 90s, you know, this idea that people were mirroring what is identity and so where do you start?<sup>24</sup> You start with your own body as a way to reconcile with the way that you are thinking about your practice. Again, I think responding to a long history of bodies being represented in problematic ways. So, how do you regain your own agency, your own voice and speaking about the body and representing it in ways that you want people to engage with it. Artists naturally, particularly around the time of the 1990s, there is that turn of people immediately resorting back to speaking from the self and wanting to ask questions about their own identities. The body becomes a starting place. Obviously, over time, artists have complicated what that means and asked further questions beyond just race, identity, asking questions around social justice. I don't want to say it is a predictable start but N'Goné is hinting at a trend that begins to also point at a political moment and asks us to think about that. This is what she tries to do even in that essay – you know, she has also spoken about the kind of questions she had to grapple with being asked to write about women artists in Africa and what that actually means, the responsibility to be asked to do such a thing. So, she tries to talk about the problematics and the complexities of place and trying to map those kinds of things, but also in getting closer to artists she was interested in writing what they were speaking to.

**Same Mdluli:** I think about my own kind of experiences in art training and I am taken back to my choice of choosing to go to Wits Technikon as opposed to Wits University, and that was a very conscious choice at the time. But it was also then looking at – because I have peers and friends that were at Wits University and we would converse around what were the different ways in which we were being taught this art thing – and in the early 2000s, there was a lot of encouragement in looking at yourself. More so of black students than White students. It was something that also was quite glaring as well in the class as to why black students are being pushed towards interrogating themselves and White students can have free reign. That was quite a dynamic at the time.

**Nkule Mabaso:** For me, one of the complications when working in curating artists' work and they're working with their body, is how do they do this because there is sometimes the danger that one might say I am intending to be satirical or reverse the image in some sort of way, but in actual fact without the textural component what you see is just a reproduced image of this normal or normalised kind of violences that are always perpetuated on black women's bodies. So, while there are possibilities in how artists work with their bodies, there is, sometimes, for me a danger when the work is not pushed far enough to take it away from just re-representing, in a satirical or metaphorical kind of way, the violences or the negative connotation, of trying to deal with stereotypes, and ending up reproducing them.

**Nontobeko Ntombela:** Another thing that happened particularly in the 1990s was this moment of autobiographical stances. It had a lot to do with wanting immediacy. So, performance arts were a medium shift (other forms of work like painting it was fixed – a fixed image of the body), were artists wanted a reaction, they wanted to see that engagement with their audiences, and so there was also that medium shift at the particular moment ...

**Sharlene Khan:** ... And we saw that last night with the performances of Viwe and Micayla and the ululation<sup>25</sup> – there was a certain atmosphere with the body being performed live. Even though we have seen so much performance art, it still has that impact when it is good. So, the next question I want to ask is, in each of your practices, at one time or the other, you have shown us a way in which the mute always speak.<sup>26</sup> You have sought out your voices via your curation or you have highlighted practices or answers that have deserved attention and have gone unnoticed. So, for instance, Nonto, you have done this with Gladys Mgudlandlu and Valerie Desmore;<sup>27</sup> Same, you have done this with Fatima Meer's artwork,<sup>28</sup> which a lot of us are still not very familiar with; and Nomusa, your scholarship on Nollywood Nigerian film<sup>29</sup> – you took Nollywood seriously a long time before many scholars were doing so and considered them as proper research areas; Zodwa, with your *Margins* exhibition this year at Steve Biko Centre; Nkule you have curated on Helen Sebidi, a retrospective.<sup>30</sup> So, can you tell me about how you came to these interests, and what your chosen working methodologies were? Some of you are working with dead artists, so, tell me about these recuperative, unearthing and validating strategies that you have used.

**Nontobeko Ntombela:** Maybe to give people context, when I decided to go back to school,<sup>31</sup> when I was working at the Durban University of Technology Art Gallery, I was constantly interested in what it meant to be a woman curator, who are these references that I am placing in my work. In shifting my creative practice into this kind of administrative role, to me the administrative role was a creative practice. I began my Masters degree wanting to ask who are these women artists, because of course I finished my first degree without ever encountering black women in the classroom. I searched and it all started with Helen,<sup>32</sup> Noria.<sup>33</sup> One or two books had Gladys<sup>34</sup> and there was this question mark as she appears and disappears in Art History and there is very little said about her. She then became this fascination. I wanted to know who she was and, also, of her writing into history, because whenever she was mentioned, she's mentioned as a 'first'. What does it mean for her to be the first? What is the yardstick that is the measure that is being used here to say that she qualifies to be the first black woman artist to appear in the

1960s? I wanted to go back to the first appearance and how did she get to become known and what was this moment?

That became my curatorial project in trying to return to the 1960s and her very first exhibition<sup>35</sup> and trying to recoup what that exhibition is like. It was not about producing a replica of that exhibition but to present an archive of what that is. So, how do we speak from this moment to understand politically, art historically, what this means, who gets written out and, of course, as a result of doing research I discovered Valerie Desmore,<sup>36</sup> who appears even earlier, and then leaves the country. So, this shows, again, a gate-keeping that is happening with artists and I wanted to reveal that. And so, as an infusion of that exhibition in the 1960s, I introduced Valerie as someone who becomes a question mark in that kind of art history, and the possibility in saying if Valerie can appear in 1943, then of course there may be many others that have been written out. In South Africa we have this tendency to want to own the first, this kind of obsessional naming of things as a 'first'.

This was the starting place and it was important to immerse myself in this journey back with Gladys. I have mentioned that she haunts me. It was that kind of conversation – a generational conversation for me – because she is this elder that was asking for answers. So how do you appear? I flew to Cape Town to a parking lot, to that place where she first had the exhibition to understand what the environment of that place was. I was lucky enough to encounter people who witnessed that exhibition and had to bring in those voices as a way of bringing back her voice into the exhibition. Her first exhibition was held in a boardroom and so how is a boardroom turned into an exhibition space? So that's Gladys with me.

**Nontobeko Ntombela:** With the *Fantastic* exhibition it was really complex, because it was engaging with a number of themes that were a part of my doctoral research on Nollywood representational spaces. The fact that it was called *Home Video* was seen as something that only women consumed in their domestic spaces, and by the working class and young people. We had a number of artists engaging with different things, like Zina Saro Wiwa (Ken Saro Wiwa's daughter) who worked with these television installations and of women mourning, which is something you see quite a bit in the home video medium, but also, what that representation means. And I think from Zina Saro Wiwa's work,<sup>37</sup> the idea of home was then expanded to thinking about the post-colonial nation space and what place women occupy in it. We often think about post-independence movements and very rarely do we think about women leaders and where women were in the 1960s transition from colonialism to post-colonial independence. What does it mean for those bureaucratic systems to have either excluded or violated women, which then complicates the way that we are engaging with modern nuclear family structures ... but, also, the fact that this idea of home as nation, home as house is, in itself, this precarious space.

A number of artists that were part of the exhibition were artists who were engaging with very different connective themes. Also, religion: again, the place of women in those religious movements, but also how religious movements sort of create these states within states, so, in Nigeria, for example, some of the major churches would have running water, electricity, pre-natal services for women, clinics, etc. – all the things that you assume the state would provide but does not. So, what happens is you get a state within a state, or the supranational – but also, what they do is that they are so pan-



*The Fragile Archive* (2012), Johannesburg Art Gallery, Curator: Nontobeko Ntombela. Credit: Photograph: Russel Scott.

African and global that they actually trouble the very idea of the African nation state. From that exhibition emerged this idea of turning around Benedict Anderson's notion of the imagined community into the 'unimagining' of the community within the representational access of the different spaces of Nollywood, which is the home, the television box and, of course, you can span the geographical scale of it.

**Same Mdluli:** The Fatima Meer project was part of my Masters degree and I was very happy to see last year<sup>38</sup> Constitution Hill at the Woman's Jail finally realise what I had been proposing.<sup>39</sup> I was working at Con Hill and I landed up finding these paintings.<sup>40</sup> Only five are shown in the actual women's jail but I discovered there was subsequently twenty more that Fatima Meer had done. They were water colour paintings that she was doing in secret, because, of course, she wasn't allowed to be documenting the prison, but she was doing them under the pretence that she is painting cards for some of the prisoners that were with her – birthday cards or mother's day cards – but in between that she would document some of the things that were happening within the women's prison. Those paintings were subsequently smuggled out of the jail by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's lawyer and they then came back into the country. So, my Master's was about looking at the dominant political narrative, and more so the dominant ANC narrative, that the woman's jail was framed around, and in bringing out these paintings again and disrupting that narrative and saying, well, there were other things happening within the jail with the women and in the way in which the women were interacting. For example, there is one watercolour where a prison guard and a prisoner are playing cards, which was obviously not allowed. Then there's also the time that she took to paint these, right, if you look at the detail in it. So those were kind of my interests in the actual paintings



*Fantastic* (2015), Goethe Institute, Johannesburg, Curators: Nkule Mabaso and Nomusa Makhubu. Credit: Courtesy of the Goethe Institute and Curators.

themselves and what they started to do, in disrupting this narrow political narrative that a women's jail had been framed around. In bringing them out, it would present a much more fuller account of that space as there were women that were held there as political prisoners like Winnie,<sup>41</sup> like Fatima Meer, but there were also ordinary women like prostitutes and those women engaged with each other and they interacted and that should be reflected in the space and presented to the public too. I'm glad that those other paintings have since come out. They are now up in the woman's jail and are presented as part of the larger narrative there.

**Nkule Mabaso:** The exhibition with Helen Sebidi<sup>42</sup> was held in 2016 but the conversations began in early 2015. The idea was to invite her to Michaelis for workshops and to have a generational conversation with students in the painting department, but she couldn't make it in 2015 because she was working on a new body of work. We moved it to 2016 and, in that period, we decided that we would also then have this exhibition at Michaelis. The exhibition was not so much a retrospective as much as it was a presentation of new work that she had made between 2000 and 2016. By the time that we had the exhibition it was the middle of the student protests, and so the exhibition technically never opened. (laughing) She also never arrived at the time. So, it was the exhibition that never opened. What we were then able to do is tape the conversation, and earlier this year, she eventually was able to make it. This was in tangent to an exhibition that she was having at the Norval Foundation with Portia Malatjie,<sup>43</sup> which was more retrospective in dimension, and we were then able to have the conversations and the workshops with the students. But in arriving and sort of trying to then write about the exhibition that didn't happen in relation to Mme Helen's practice and the way that her career has



*Makgabo Mmapule Helen Sebidi* (2016), Michaelis Art Galleries, University of Cape Town, Curator: Nkule Mabaso. Credit: Courtesy of the Curator.

developed over the years – what’s generally been happening is that she would make work and the work would go to the gallery and would be for sale, and so beyond the commercial, not very much of her work has been engaged in more critical ways and in trying to find what’s written on her, much has a biographical focus that doesn’t really touch on what she’s doing with her work. And so, when the exhibition did not work out, I started working on a paper that contextualises her practice and her paintings, and what she attempts to do. That became the basis of the workshops, and, so we were trying to sustain an ongoing conversation where we will work on an exhibition that it will be a larger retrospective, but it’s in the future.

Video excerpt 2: <https://youtu.be/-6R1e0oD4Bk>

**Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani:** The exhibition I had at Steve Biko,<sup>44</sup> was called *Zundiqondisise*,<sup>45</sup> which basically is a sassy way of saying ‘Know who I am.’<sup>46</sup> The exhibition really started out from my obsession with Nontsizi Mgqhwetho, who was a poet during the 1920s, and she’s said to be the first woman to publish poetry in isiXhosa in a newspaper,<sup>47</sup> and how that came about was she called herself an imbongi (she’s from Tamara here in the Eastern Cape).<sup>48</sup> An imbongi is a performing poet who is allowed to call people out on whatever and is not reprimanded.<sup>49</sup> And so, (laughing) her being a woman, she was not allowed to be imbongi. So I’m thinking, because she was friends with Charlotte Maxeke,<sup>50</sup> whose husband<sup>51</sup> edited the newspaper<sup>52</sup> she was like, okay (laughing), I can do this through the newspaper and not to be reprimanded. So, she became an imbongi through a newspaper which I found extraordinary because she could still call people out and get what she wanted. So, I’ve been very obsessed with that because I hang out

with old ladies a lot and I listen to how they navigate their spaces and their oppressions. For instance, one lady hid her money under a rock in order to educate her daughter and only three people knew about that and this is how she basically was able to educate five grandchildren. She was like well, I can't save money in the bank because it's going to be found by my husband or whoever, so, I will use a rock, and I will educate my children based on hiding money under a rock.

Having had these conversations with women in villages I realised that they also have spaces where they work from like art centres, old-age homes and all of that, and they work with beads. I also realised that we could have these conversations, which we are not allowed, using our beads, our art in expressing what we wanted to, like Nontsizi, in our own way, and be killjoys<sup>53</sup> in different ways. So, we then take the beads and turn it into something else that will question, disrupt and still be in the same spaces that they work in. And so *uZundiqondisise* came from basically having conversations with women and then having a platform where we listen and then perform the beads in whatever way that they wanted to, without having that whole cloud hanging over you that you are not allowed to do this because you're in a marginal state.

**Sharlene Khan:** So, do you consider yourself as a bit of an imbongi?

**Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani:** I think I would because I think that I do have that trickster thing in me where I'm told I not allowed to do this, then I'll find a way to do it, like uNontsizi.

**Sharlene Khan:** So, Nonto, in your article 'Practitioning. A Few Notes on Curatorial Training in Africa' you say: 'The meaning of the word "curator" has shifted so much so that it no longer denotes one straightforward thing, but a constellation of conglomerate things that often define a process, an approach or way of being that is sometimes seen to serve a coterie, but is at the same time adaptable enough to be claimed by anyone.'<sup>54</sup> The word 'curator' in Latin, means 'to take care of.' So, can you talk about the constellation of what it means to be a curator today; and what does curating mean for each of you; and what, and whom are you taking care of?

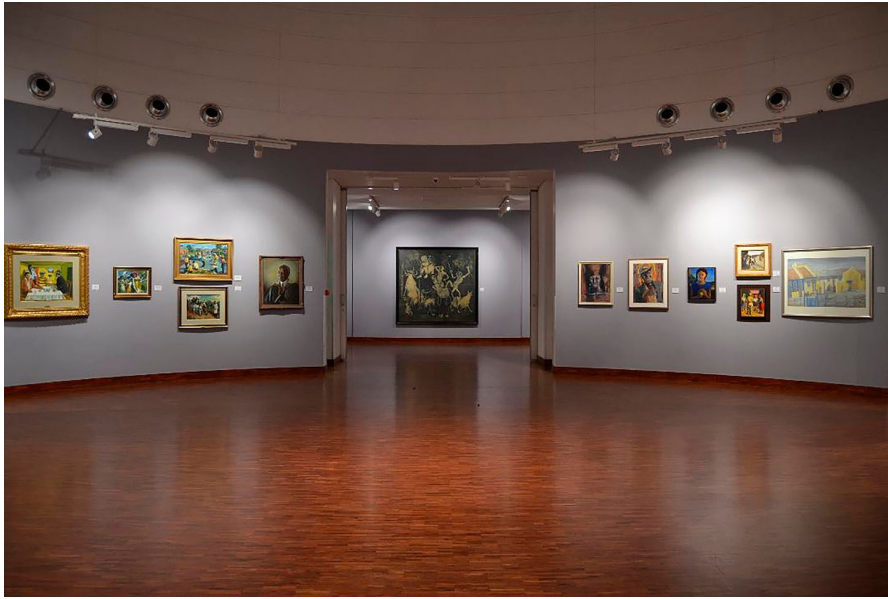
**Nontobeko Ntombela:** There's an interest in speaking to a practice that is about thinking through a series of ideas and constantly how we are creating a meeting place: a meeting of things that speak between each other and whether we do that in our personal spaces or whether we're doing that consciously within a gallery space, there is a way in which it begins to enable an ordering of thought; a putting forward a question, and asking for people to meet you at a particular place to speak to a series of questions, and that's how I view curating. I constantly talk about this triangulation of curating where you are negotiating the artist, the institution and the public, and how in negotiating these three elements your role is to create an encounter, and a meeting place that allows for a very fruitful engagement, that allows for asking questions that are not always obvious in the everyday. Then, of course, that in a way becomes a taking care of how – how do we take care of these spaces that enable us to ask these questions? Of course, there is the kind of institutional taking care of, of collections that comes from that space (of conservation), but also looking after collections. In that essay I was interested in provoking this idea that there is a practice that we do, both consciously and unconsciously, in our every day, but there's also a practice that is calling us into understanding a visual practice that we are engaged with.



*Zundiqondisise! Reclaiming Our Voice* (2018) – Nosikhumbuzo Jali and Lindelwa Jali pictured in discussion, Steve Biko Centre, Curator Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani. Credit: Tyileka Mbanxa

**Nomusa Makhubu:** A lot has shifted from the work I did with *Fantastic ...* during a time when the art campus<sup>55</sup> was occupied by the Umhlangano movement.<sup>56</sup> Eventually it became the space where we said ok, as you are protesting over a long period of time, let the space become the space for conversation, dialogue, and this changing process. That exhibition changed almost every day, because people moved things and they ate and slept, and they woke up the next day and would shift one object from one place to another. That's become a very exciting prospect of what curating means for me. Not just working with artworks as objects but working with these social processes. So, the Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum<sup>57</sup> exhibition that just closed was also part of just inviting Pamela to come into this space, engage with its context and have people come in and work on it collaboratively. So, the focus is more on process than it is about the finished, pristine exhibition. It's quite a leap from what *Fantastic* was, but I think that's what the idea of caring and curating has become – creating the social spaces that don't quite easily fit into the framework of the institution.

**Same Mdluli:** I work for, as you know, the Standard Bank<sup>58</sup> and this space has a historical privilege in a way. As an example, the other day I had an elderly street photographer – he's been photographing for years in Newtown,<sup>59</sup> and he decided to come in and ask how to go about having an exhibition in the gallery. But he started first by telling me that I've walked past this gallery for five years now. It was only when I saw that you had been appointed that I decided to walk in. That placed a whole lot of responsibility on me, and that's where the question of who are you curating for comes in? What then do I do with this responsibility of the general public, or people who have felt unwelcome in this space? How do I then create a space that's welcoming? That's something that I've been



*A Black Aesthetic* (2019), Standard Bank Gallery, Curator: Same Mdluli. Credit: Same Mdluli

thinking about quite deeply. I haven't arrived at the answer yet, but as a way of starting to look at ways of how I get to start grappling with it.

**Nkule Mabaso:** I think I arrived at my curating on a relational basis and taking care of people and ideas as opposed to objects, which is what curating generally is – and this is basic because Michaelis doesn't have a collection to be taken care of, and the collection that it does have is not necessarily under my purview. What that allows me to do is be able to think about how does one support the people who are coming up with their ideas and the work in that space? How do I become a conduit but also a collaborator and a supporter to bring ideas into that space and, also, allow whomever is in that space to realise what they would like to, putting myself in the background of supporting their project to its best potential with the resources I have?

**Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani:** I am in the experimental process of creating exhibitions that are mainly accessible to everybody and so being inclusive mainly because when I went to study art, everyone in my community did not get that, what is it. So, usually we curate for ourselves as artists and are not inclusive of everybody else because we somehow complicate it. I've learned that working in these spaces that I work in, and I mainly work at an art centre, Gompo Art Centre in Duncan Village, you have to create with an understanding that not everybody understands what you are doing and so, it's a learning space – even I'm learning while I'm doing. But I'm also aware of the fact that not everybody that I work with is an 'artist'. So, that's what I want – I want my work to represent everybody. So, when you say, who am I taking care of, I will say everybody, including the marginalised spaces as well.

**Sharlene Khan:** So, in the in the 90s and the 2000s, you know, if you asked me for a black woman curator, the only name I could come up with possibly was Bongzi Dhlomo-

Mautloa?<sup>60</sup> And now, we're at the point where we can just rattle off names: Natasha, Refilwe, Thato, Portia, Segomotso, Ijeoma, Joan, Melissa, and, of course, Gabi is completely international now.<sup>61</sup> So, black women from South Africa have made quite a headway in terms of curatorship. That doesn't erase the fact that curating is such a challenge. So, what I am very aware when we're talking to an audience like this – there are art students in here – is that there are people that are possibly thinking if this could be a career for them. What are the very real challenges you face as black women curators and creative producers?

**Nomusa Makhubu:** ... Having to be pitted against commercial galleries. I think there's something quite toxic about the way commercial galleries do things. It's hard for us to get into them. You also try and carve out alternative spaces, which aren't always easy to get the same kind of currency and engagement in the same way as commercial galleries do.

**Nontobeko Ntombela:** When I started out, I was also working in an alternative space<sup>62</sup> and had to think about the possibilities of working outside of that and imagining yourself engaging in a particular kind of professional space. I found that my gender was a question. Your experience counted a lot – artists will look at names. Of course, funding, that's a challenge, and as Nomusa was saying, without funding, without a reputation and going to a gallery – and when an international curator doesn't have to be ticking all those boxes, you just say I am from Paris/US and you get catered for. It's very difficult to then imagine possibilities of working in particular ways.

What I wanted to say to your earlier question around my essay was a provocation to say there *are* ethical questions and a practice that speaks to – demands – ethical questions. Because we know artists have been exploited because everybody comes and they call themselves a curator. That also means that you are eventually dealing with other difficulties of artists being hesitant to work with people or also producing certain things without necessarily thinking. But who is engaging with your ideas? And how does that also speak to and involve a particular ethical practice.

**Same Mdluli:** For me the biggest challenge has been a tokenising of black women curators, and where it's hard to tell, for instance, if you are being invited on the basis of your own merit and the value that you will add to the project as opposed to when are you being used to legitimise a project. That's a big challenge negotiating that in your head because, of course, you want to curate so that you have experience, but questioning am I being tokenised here, am I being used to legitimise something?

**Nomusa Makhubu:** In addition, not being trusted, because anybody can say that they are a curator. So, before arriving at Michaelis it was so hard to try and do anything at all because somehow you have to prove first that you can – I don't know what you have to prove, but you have to prove something ...

**Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani:** I totally agree with you! With my experience it's applying for funding and then not being trusted, exactly like you said. And needing experience which you need funding for. I mean where are you going to get this experience when nobody is funding you based on the fact that you are a black woman? And you somehow cannot be trusted which is weird, as black women have done so much with a little money.

**Sharlene Khan:** Again, referring to that N’Goné Fall article, she says, ‘Despite difficult circumstances, African women have been able, throughout the ages, to maintain a space of freedom for themselves. Today, art is the new weapon for preserving and enlarging that free zone. Female African artists explore the challenges of the world without complaisance. Vigilant, they exhume demons, hunt down preconceptions, scatter taboos, and are unafraid to reveal our darker fears. Their art is a metaphor, an ongoing transgression of all that is forbidden. And even when lyrical or delicate, it marks a radical rupture with the idea of an African “feminine” art supposed to be “pretty” and never disturbing or challenging’ (Fall 2007). My question to you is what are the zones of freedom that curating has opened up for you?

**Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani:** I think it’s exactly what I was talking about in being a trickster, it’s in being able to, through my curation, allow conversations that are not allowed to happen in those spaces. That’s what I’ve purposefully tried to put in place, to allow our voices to be able to express whatever it is that we wanted to express in societies where it is often muted.

**Nkule Mabaso:** Being able to bring in people who otherwise would not have been able to come in to that space previously. To do things that you like to do with people that you like it’s very important because the rest of the time you are fighting funny institutions but, in the meantime, I also get to do something that is pleasurable for me.

**Sharlene Khan:** And you do it with a whole soundtrack of 90s RnB.

**Nkule Mabaso:** You’ve been in my office! (laughing)

**Same Mdluli:** It’s a free zone. There are certain things I can’t articulate through writing or making, and they’re expressed better through a curatorial engagement because of the nature of what it is. So, for me it’s been liberating. I think there can be limitations, for instance, in theoretical work. Even in making work as a black female it’s hard to escape the rubrics that you are put in, whereas with curating there’s something that refuses that. I’m not sure if it’s the agency that as a curator you’re playing and that you’ve empowered yourself to becoming the source of telling a particular story.

**Nontobeko Ntombela:** I’ll say three things. The first thing would be being a lifetime student. We know that artists make art about the world, about everything that happens in our everyday. One discovers history, so many other fantastic things through art and, of course, the opportunity to make friends. So, meeting people you grow with and have the choice to engage people’s work and, at the same time, learning. And then, an extension of my own creative practice. In getting close friends, you are getting people who allow you to expand your own creativity.

**Nomusa Makhubu:** I think in a collaborative project it’s always been the relief, it’s like, ‘Oh! We can do what you want to do, this is a heart project,’ which I mean I’ve never found that freedom in the Works of Art Committee.<sup>63</sup> You know, it’s always because the collection belongs to everybody, and everybody has an idea of what must happen to it, and you can’t please everybody. You move one thing from here to there, someone is bound to complain. So, it’s harder to find that freedom doing formal curatorial work than it is with independent projects where you can choose. The spaces you want to work in, you

can choose the people you want to work with, you can choose the artworks you want to, and you can begin to work against the grain. ... Someone said that it's accidental, but also because my involvement in curating has always come from my work in art history. So, I've always drawn from an art historical project into curating and then out comes another written theoretical piece. It's always a cycle between writing and curating and I think that's where I find my freedoms.

**Sharlene Khan:** The question I want to end with is: What is the role and potential of the imagination?<sup>64</sup>

**Nkule Mabaso:** Limitless. It's up to you what you do with the creativity and the role can be subjective to what it is that you intend with your creative work and creative practice and, so, the outcomes of that will vary, but it will be based on the intention.

**Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani:** I think the role of the imagination is being able to create for the future. In the curatorial form being able to creatively archive the present.

**Same Mdluli:** The role of the imagination in terms of curator if I was a six-year-old girl in a gallery space right now, what would I want to see in there? What kind of world would that space create for me (if you know what I mean)?

**Nontobeko Ntombela:** Everything starts with imagination, things are possible and then there are budgets. (laughing) But without this possibility of being able to imagine things, we wouldn't be able to produce what we produce.

**Nomusa Makhubu:** It plays an important role in enabling you to work against convention. I mean imagination enables you to not say 'this is how you curate and so, therefore, I shall curate in the way that people have always curated.' It allows more freedom outside of convention. For a lot of people, the first question they ask is, 'could you have imagined yourself as an artist having grown up in a place where people couldn't even imagine blacks earning a living.' It's not true, but we do come from the kind of social spaces where it's assumed that we can't even imagine a woman working in the arts, or a black woman working in the arts, so it's been important to establish new terrains and work against convention.

**Sharlene Khan:** Thank you. Many years ago, when racism pushed me out of the art field and I was working as a personal assistant, I plotted out events that I would have some day. One of those was Afems and these kinds of conversations with such amazing women and I would like to publicly thank you for the courage of your imaginations, for your intellectual generosity and for the ways in which you build up knowledge, history and you take care of other women as well.

## Notes

1. This is a heavily edited version of the interview by Sharlene Khan for publication. For the original dialogue please see: <http://artonourmind.org.za/curating-as-world-making/>.
2. *Art on our Mind* is an NRF Thutuka/Wits University funded research project initiated by Sharlene Khan. *Art on our Mind* works with undergraduate and postgraduate student volunteers from the Department of Fine Arts (first initiated at and co-funded by Rhodes University in 2017 and subsequently at Wits University in 2019) to generate a public archive of primary

- information and secondary documentation of South African women-of-colour artists. See: <https://artourmind.org.za>.
3. hooks 1995.
  4. This research utilises the term 'black' for Black, Coloured and Indian South Africans grouped under the term 'previously disadvantaged' (which also constitutionally includes Chinese South Africans), as does the term 'women-of-colour'. This term is also used to denote identification with blackness as a political self-affirmative, seeking to have greater nuanced discussions around 'blackness' and 'brownness' projects and stances, and in preference over terms such as 'non-white', although it fundamentally questions the foundationality of all racial categorisations upon which the 'Republic of South Africa', 'Empires' and nationhoods are built. Generally, quotes and discussions follow the capitalisation and usage of specific authors in their contexts with regard to racial terms such as 'white', 'black' or 'coloured', as well as the international spellings employed by authors when quoting them.
  5. South African curator Nontobeko Ntombela's (2012) Master's Degree in Art History thesis entitled a *Fragile Archive: Refiguring | Rethinking | Reimagining | Re-presenting Gladys Mgudlandlu* traces South African visual artist Gladys Mgudlandlu's emergence into South African art historical discourse, her being hailed as the 'first black woman artist' in the 1960s as well as her high profile trajectory in the next two decades before disappearing into obscurity after her death in the 70s. As part of her Masters' work Ntombela re-staged an early exhibition of Mgudandlu at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in 2012, uses gaps, silences and biomythographical renderings as a curatorial strategy in this important re-staging but also linking to other early and earlier black women South African artists, thereby questioning the colonial notion of the 'first'.
  6. See: The Art on our Mind Creative Dialogue with Nontobeko Ntombela held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2017 in which she holds an in-depth discussion around her work on Gladys Mgudlandlu: <http://artourmind.org.za/category/nontobeko-ntombela/>.
  7. Annual arts festival in Makhanda (South African town formerly called Grahamstown) in the Eastern Cape.
  8. *Fantastic* is an exhibition co-curated by Nomusa Makhubu and Nkule Mabaso in 2015, which explores notions of the 'fantastic', 'supernatural', 'extraordinary' in Africa. Visual artists included: Zina Saro-Wiwa, Milumbe Haimbe, Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, Kudzanai Chiurai, Terence Nance, Tracey Rose, Aida Muluneh, Andrew Esiebo, Dineo Seshee Bopape and Jelili Atiku. See: <https://www.fantasticcontemporary.co.za/>.
  9. Established in 1995, The Bartel Arts (BAT) Centre in Durban is a multidisciplinary arts space. See: <https://www.batcentre.co.za/about.html>
  10. Sosesame Gallery in Melville, Johannesburg, was started by art historian, visual artist and curator Same Mdluli with visual artist Johannes Phokela in 2016 and ran until 2017.
  11. Johannes Phokela.
  12. The Walter Sisulu University is a public higher education university in East London, South Africa.
  13. *Margins* is an exhibition curated by Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani. It was exhibited at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda from the 29<sup>th</sup> of June to the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2017 and at the FNB Johannesburg Art Fair from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2017. The exhibition which centred on the marginalisation of women in society through the works of artists such as Yanela Jija, Mthokozisi Mboobo, Phila Paliso, Nelisa Nonyukela, Selby Jibilikile and Viwe Msali.
  14. N'Goné Fall is a Senegalese curator and writer. See: Fall 2007.
  15. For instance, Nigerian curators Okwui Enwezor (1963–2019) and Bisi Silva (1962–2019), Sudanese curator Salah Hassan (1964–) and Swiss curator Simon Njami (1962–) are known for exhibiting contemporary African Art and being concerned with the notions of the contemporary African through the discursive realms of modernity and contemporaneity.
  16. The Works of Art Committee (WOAC) was formed in 1978 to administer the University of Cape Town's artwork collection and manage acquisitions. The Works of Art Committee differs from the Artworks Task Team, which was only set up in 2015 in response to the issues raised by

students and staff after the Cecil John Rhodes statue was removed and was aimed at addressing the imbalances in the collection generally.

17. Same Mdluli's PhD dissertation explores the works of South African sculptor Noria Mabasa in a context where her work is read as that of a 'rural artist', a categorisation that greatly impacted her practice and her experience of the mainstream art industry. See Mdluli 2016.
18. Within the realm of colonial modernist notions of 'fine arts', the notion of centre and periphery denotes the systemic exclusion of artists based on the assumed centrality of the Western canon of artists – whether those artists are located in the West or whether they are in the colonial diaspora, and whose practices follow Western defined 'fine arts' methodologies of what is 'arts' and what is not. Thus, Western modernisms, as grafted by anthropologists, ethnographers and art historians have gone on to define a field of art versus craft in the global South that systematically situates creative practitioners of either side of this hierarchical aesthetic divide that also extends discursively and philosophically. See: Khan 2012a; and Khan 2018a.
19. By this she means the rural areas of South Africa.
20. *Magiciens de la Terre* (Magicians of the World) was a large scale contemporary visual arts exhibition curated at the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Grande Halle de la Villette in 1989 by French curator Jean-Hubert Martin. The exhibition was composed of half Western and half non-Western artists and became a landmark exhibition for incorporating (not unproblematically) non-Western religious, popular and 'primitivist' art into a contemporary art exhibition.
21. Referring to Gqola 2017.
22. N'Goné Fall 2007.
23. Khan 2012b.
24. See: Okwui Enwezor 1997; 2003; 2010.
25. Viwe Madinda's *I'm too Sad to Tell You* (2018) and Micayla Sam's *Self Liberation: A Piece Concerning Current Events* (2018) performances were part of the Afem's 2018 exhibition which were a performative response to South African feminist Nthabiseng Motsemme's theme for the conference 'the mute always speak'. Madinda's performance was an adaptation of Bas Jan Ader's video *I'm too Sad to Tell You* (1971) and Sam's performance was an amalgamation of Marina Abramovic's performance *Rhythm 0* (1974) and Yayoi Kusama's film *Self-Obliteration* (1967). The ululation refers to the performance piece *Moshito wa basadi* (2018) by Phemelo Hellemann, Katlego Gabashane, Evelyn Notoane and Nompumelelo Kubheka, which was a collaborative thread-through performance woven through the exhibition opening night.
26. A reference to South African feminist Nthabiseng Motsemme's treatise 'the mute always speak', where she imaginatively puts forth the idea that oppressed women can use silence, sighs even in muteness, and a refusal to answer as a speech act. See: Motsemme 2004.
27. In Ntombela 2012.
28. Fatima Meer was an academic and anti-apartheid activist whose experiences as a visual artist are largely elided in historical accounts. She spent much time incarcerated but managed to paint whilst behind bars. See: Mdluli 2010; Hassim 2019.
29. Visual artist, scholar and curator, Nomusa Makhubu has dealt extensively with Nollywood and the Nigerian film industry, reflecting on it as a popular visual medium and interrogating its place within an African visual art arena. See: Makhubu 2018a; 2017; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2014; 2013; 2011.
30. Nkule Mabaso curated an exhibition entitled *Mmakgabo Helen Sebidi: An Exhibition of Paintings and Prints* held at the Michaelis Galleries in Cape Town in 2016. Due to the student protests at the time the doors of the gallery remained closed by the students for the duration of the exhibition with only the audience on the opening night having viewed the exhibition. Mabaso tried to extend the duration of the exhibition, but writer Valeria Geselev (2016) says Everard Read, Sebidi's gallery, wanted the works back.
31. She went back to university to complete a Masters Degree in Art History.
32. Referring to Mmakgabo Helen Sebidi.
33. Referring to Noria Mabaso.
34. Gladys Mgudlandlu

35. Mgudlandlu's first solo exhibition was in the boardroom of the Liberal Party office in Cape Town in 1961 (Ntombela 2012).
36. In her MA thesis work, Ntombela mentions the earlier figure of Valerie Desmore, a Coloured woman artist who began exhibiting as a teenage in the 1940s, leaving to London in 1946. She remains relatively unknown in South African art history.
37. Zina Saro Wiwa is a Nigerian-born video artist and filmmaker based in New York. See Makhubu 2018b.
38. In 2017.
39. Mdluli 2010.
40. At the Constitution Hill Gallery
41. Referring to Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.
42. Mmapula Mmakgoba Helen Sebidi (1943–) is a South Africa visual artist most renowned for her paintings and prints which deal with African ancestral scenes, dreams in which figures often morph and twin, in what could be seen as viewed as a 'pointillist' technique. See: Leeb-du Toit 2009.
43. The retrospective curated by South African curator Portia Malatjie entitled *Batlhaping Ba Re!* was hosted by the Norval Foundation in Cape Town in 2018. See: <https://www.norvalfoundation.org/batlhaping-ba-re/>
44. The Steve Biko Centre is a museum and cultural centre in King Williams Town, South Africa. It documents the life and death of political activist Steven Bantu Biko and also acts as an important space for hosting cultural and entertainment events in this province.
45. *Zundiqondisise! Reclaiming Our Voice* is a visual arts exhibition curated by Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani at the Steve Biko Centre from the 9<sup>th</sup> of August until the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2018. Skeyi-Tutani collaboratively works with women from the Gompo Arts Centre and Nomzamo Old Age Centre over several months in the year exploring concepts and creating works for the exhibition. Skeyi-Tutani aims to break down the distinctions that exist in the area between 'fine art' and 'craft', that particularly renders women in that area (that caters for international tourists) as voiceless, anonymous, collective, exotic crafters. The women artists who have participated in the exhibition are: Mrs Nombuyiselo Skeyi, Mrs Nosango Tshabalala, Mrs Masithathu Balani, Mrs Nomthandazo Shweni, Mrs Nomeisie Khuphiso, Mrs Nombuyiselo Kokwe, Mrs Nowam Vika, Mrs Lindiwe Zweni, Nosikhumbuzo Jali and Yanela Jija.
46. isiXhosa translation.
47. The Xhosa newspaper *Umteteli Wabantu* (Mouthpiece of the People) was established in 1920 by the Chamber of Mines and the Native Recruiting Corporation and ran until 1956. According to SA History Online it was established by John Dube, Saul Msane, Horatio Mbele and Rev Marshall Maxeke.
48. Near Mount Coke between King William's Town and Peddie.
49. Usually a role performed by a man.
50. Charlotte Maxeke (1874–1939) was a Xhosa political activist and religious leader married to Rev Marshall Maxeke.
51. Her husband was the Reverend Marshall Maxeke.
52. *Umteteli Wabantu* means 'mouthpiece of the people' (<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-abantu-batho-newspaper-1912-1931>).
53. A term first coined by Ghanaian author Ama Ata Aidoo in her 1977 novel *Our Sister Killjoy*, and in the 2000s brought back into feminist circulation by black feminist scholar Sara Ahmed through her notion of the 'feminist killjoy' in her books *The Promise of Happiness* (2010) and *Willful Subjects* (2014).
54. Ntombela 2017.
55. At the University of Cape Town in 2016, which continued into 2017.
56. Umhlangano is a black student movement based at the University of Cape Town, aimed at decolonising the university. According to a statement issued by Tšhegofatso Mabutla of the movement on the 9 July 2017, 'Umhlangano was conceived as a caucus of artists with the spirit to deconstruct, decolonise, and disassemble the "arts" campus as we know it.' See: Mabutla 2017.

57. Nomusa Makhubu and Nkule Mabaso jointly curated Pamela Patsimo Sunstrum's exhibition *There are Mechanisms in Place* at the Michaelis Galleries in 2018.
58. The Standard Bank Gallery in Johannesburg which is a gallery attached to the Standard Bank consortium.
59. Inner-city cultural precinct in Johannesburg.
60. Bongwiwe Dhlomo-Mautloa is a South African artist, curator and arts administrator who is largely recognised as one of the first black woman curators in South Africa. See: <https://asai.co.za/artist/bongwiwe-dhlomo-mautloa/> and <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/bongwiwe-bongi-dhlomo-mautloa>.
61. Referring to Natasha Becker, Refilwe Nkomo, Thato Mogotsi, Portia Malatjie, Segomotso Palesa Motsumi, Ijeoma Uche-Okeke, Joan Legalamitlwa, Melissa Mbonweni and Gabi Ngcobo.
62. She started off working at the BAT Centre in Durban.
63. Internal arts committee at UCT.
64. Khan here is continuing a line of questioning she addresses to creative practitioners and theorists on the role of the imagination, and as seen in a range of responses in the need to harness the imagination in response to the eco-crisis but also the ways in which the right has hijacked the imagination as explicated by black feminists Pumla Gqola, Betty Govinden, Neelika Jayawardane and Yvette Abrahams in Khan 2018b.

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