

**THE USE OF RITUAL AS A PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL MEDIUM AND ITS
DOCUMENTATION IN BUHLEBEZWE SIWANI'S CONTEMPORARY VISUAL
ARTS PERFORMANCE**

By

Philiswa Lila


A thesis submitted in fulfilment of
The degree of Masters in Arts (Art History)
Department of Fine Art
Rhodes University

February 2020

Supervisor: Professor Ruth Simbao
Co-supervisor: Professor Sharlene Khan

Declaration of originality

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by complete references.



Signature

Date

Abstract

This thesis is motivated by my experience of *Inzilo: Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*, a live performance by South African visual artist Buhlebezwe Siwani. The performance took place at Michaelis Galleries, University of Cape Town (UCT), as part of a group exhibition *Between Subject and Object: human remains at the interface of art and science* (2014), which accompanied the *Medical Humanities in Africa Conference* (from 28 – 29 August 2014). As an entry into my discussion, I describe how Siwani's performance makes use of death and burial ritual in what seems to be an intention to make art that is (re)presenting an activity of reality to invade and control the sphere of feelings, emotions and a sense of ceremony that is dependent on both ritual and rites of the performance. I grapple with the fact that I experienced a ritual performance in a gallery space. Furthermore, I question how walking out of the performance I thought of the lines between art and/or life.

The role of ritual in my thesis explores the symbolic meanings, powers and intentions of ritual rites in Africa. This reflection maps out historical locations that are relevant to the major debates, definitions, themes and the experiences of ritual as part of academic research. From Siwani's practice as an artist and *isangoma* to other expressions in the fields of history, sociology, religion, feminism, to mention a few, my thesis is an enquiry that engages ritual and performance art theory and scholarship. Through a qualitative analysis, my methodology rejects a chronological, thematic and discipline centered research. Rather, I use a multidisciplinary approach based on critical visual analysis as knowledge creation in the visual arts, for example archives, documentation, performance, text, video, installation, painting, sculpture, etc. The findings suggests that the role of ritual in performance art is not a singular exploration, nor is it based on separating ritual and performance art. The results further reveal that ritual in performance art is not a reenactment of patterns and human behaviours, nor is the notion of reenactment used to denote the myriad meanings and functions of re-performing historical ritual events into performance art.

Throughout, my thesis provides a focus that demonstrates the significance of how ritual in performance art has a profound subjective (personal or individual) and collective holistic way of serving human and spiritual needs, and that of creating an environment that is open to the content and context of art as it relates with traditional African religious practices, beliefs and knowledges. Focus is given to three major themes that make up the three chapters of my research: firstly, I reflect on death as personified by Siwani's performance *Inzilo: Ngoba*

ngihlala kwabafileyo and her role as *isangoma*. Here death is used to draw specific attention to the body in process of embodied presence and absence of physical and spiritual worlds. Secondly, drawing on Siwani's concept of secrecy and boundaries of concealing and revealing rituals meanings and powers as *isangoma*, I question the role of secrets, which highlights the significance of bodies (human and natural sites of ritual) in ritual performance. Finally, the idea of a trace is explored. The intersecting use of a trace as the thinking-making-doing of ritual in performance articulates a connected thread that sets in motion the trace of ritual (installation, image and marked space of ritual) as an afterlife that offers a continued space of processual ceremony for multiple effective encounters and movements.

Keywords: Ritual, performance, African religions, physicality and spirituality

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the support, help and co-operation of many people, libraries and organization. I am, therefore, grateful to my supervisors, Professor Ruth Simbao and Doctor Sharlene Khan for their guidance, time and patience during this challenging but rewarding process.

My sincere thanks to Professor Ruth Simbao for the funding support through the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

I would like to thank all those who gave advice and who encouraged me.

I am grateful to my family and appreciate their unwavering love and support.

Most importantly, I thank God for my life in this time.

Table of Contents

THE USE OF RITUAL AS A PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL MEDIUM AND ITS DOCUMENTATION IN BUHLEBEZWE SIWANI'S CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ARTS PERFORMANCE

	Page
Declaration	
Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
List of illustrations	vi

INTRODUCTION

Research question and contribution	1
<i>Amasiko</i> : A definition of Ritual	5
Traditional African religions	9
Methodology	13
Ritual in performance art	19
Cultural performance	21
Anthropology	25
Chapter outline	27

CHAPTER ONE: *Inzilo: Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*

1.1 <i>Inzilo: Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo</i>	30
1.2 Siwani, the <i>isangoma</i> and artist	34
1.2.1 What is <i>isangoma</i> ?	36
1.3 The spaces of mourning	39
1.3.1 Subverting mourning and negotiating boundaries	42
1.4 A Death left to the imagination	44

CHAPTER TWO: *Imfihlo*

2.1 The power of secrecy	50
2.1.1 On being an insider of <i>Imfihlo</i>	53
2.2 Two studies of secrecy: <i>UThengisa unoKrwece eLunxwemene</i> and <i>iGagasi</i>	55
2.3 Water Baptismal	60
2.4 Dare to tell: The subjection of ritual secrecy	61

CHAPTER THREE: *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*

3.1 <i>Zemk'inkomo magwalandini</i>	64
3.2 The Story of Nongqawuse and Nonkosi	67
3.3 A Xhosa historiography	69
3.4 The substance of image.....	70
3.4.1 <i>Zemk'inkomo magwalandini</i> : The trace.....	73
3.5 The substance of language – <i>ulwimi</i>	75
3.6 Integrating Material culture	76
CONCLUSION	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY	81

List of illustrations

Figure 1. A map of the Eastern Cape. *Oxford Secondary Atlas for South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern African (Pty) Limited. 2016.

Figure 2. Buhlebezwe Siwani, *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* (performance stills), 2014, C-print on cotton paper, archival ink 74 x 112 cm (Published in *Imfihlo*, Masters thesis)

Figure 3 a, b & c. Buhlebezwe Siwani, *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* (photographic series), 2014, C-print on cotton paper, archival ink, 74 x 112 cm, (Published in *Imfihlo*, Masters thesis)

Figure 4 a, b & c. Jelili Atiku, *Biofeedback (Araferaku #1)*, 2013, stills of performance: Ejigbo, Lagos, Nigeria, 2013), Photographer: Soibifaa Dokubo, (Published in jeliliatiku.webs.com/ accessed 30/02/16)

Figure 5. Jelili Atiku, *Isin' Pari Bami (Araferaku #2)*, 2013, stills of performance: Ejigbo, Lagos, Nigeria, 2013), Photographer: Soibifaa Dokubo, (Published in jeliliatiku.webs.com/ accessed 30/02/16)

Figure 6 a, b. Buhlebezwe Siwani, *uThengisa unokrwece elunxwemene*, 2014, C-print on cotton paper, archival ink 83 x 56 cm (Published in *Imfihlo*, Masters thesis)

Figure 7. Buhlebezwe Siwani, *iGagasi*, 2014, C-print on cotton paper, archival ink 83 x 56 cm, (Published in *Imfihlo*, Masters thesis)

Figure 8. Samson Mudzunga, *Aeroplane Drum*, 1997, Mutobvuma wood, fabric, vellum and bitumen (Published in Artthrob <http://artthrob.co.za/04oct/artbio.html> 06/09/2018)

Figure 9. Samson Mudzunga, *Performance with Tshigombela dancers and drummer*, 2013, performance (Published in Artthrob <http://artthrob.co.za/04oct/artbio.html> 06/09/2018)

Figure 10. Samson Mudzunga, *Vivho Venda*, 2007, performance, wood, hide, fabric, paint, tape, bolt, padlock and chain, electric cable, lightbulb, photograph, 160 x 325 x 130cm (Published in Artthrob <http://artthrob.co.za/04oct/artbio.html> 06/09/2018)

Figure 11. Samson Mudzunga, *Lake Fundudzi Performance* (1996), performance (Published in Artthrob <http://artthrob.co.za/04oct/artbio.html> 06/09/2018)

Figure 12a, b &c. Buhlebezwe Siwani, *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* (2015), Performative installation, Wooden poles, cow skulls and red powder (Dimensions variable) (Published in *Imfihlo*, Maters thesis)

Fig. 13. A photograph of Nongqawuse and Nonkosi (Published in *SA History Online: Towards a people's history* <http://sahistory.org.za/people.nongqawuse> 07/06/2019)

INTRODUCTION

Research background, question and contribution

This thesis starts by describing a live performance that took place at the Michaelis Galleries, University of Cape Town as part of the group exhibition *Between Subject and Object: Human Remains at the Interface of Art and Science* (2014). The performance is by visual artist Buhlebezwe Siwani, based in South Africa. Entitled *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* – ‘A mourning/A time of mourning: I live with the dead’, Siwani’s performance takes the form of staging death that raises an awareness of personified ways of mourning, grieving and burying or bereavement. Siwani is dealing with the concept of death as a ritual, in which people express their private spaces of mourning, and in which the ritual demonstrates collective or public support of family and community during the grieving and burial process. *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* is a ritual ceremony about the meaningful preparations of death, grief, funeral, burial and bereavement (chapter one). A ceremony can be considered the anatomy of a death ritual, or as that which shows what is taking place in the visible connection between life and death (Mbiti 1975). Meanwhile, the invisible part of the death ritual, that which happens as a result of spirituality, is what carries the ritual quality within itself as the center during a ceremony (Somé 1993: 32, 1994: 198). Spirituality represents the unique, personal, individualistic and collective African beliefs and practices that are centred on the articulation of ritual experiences (which I outline under the sections ‘*Amasiko*: A definition of ritual’ and ‘traditional African religions’) (Mbiti 1975; Somé 1993; Mndende 2002; Shahjahan 2005).

Siwani (2015) makes it known that she is connected to death as a spiritual symbol of those people who have died in her family (her ancestral lineage). This means that *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* portrays the ritual when a family member has died. A funeral and burial ceremony is the action of covering the deceased body in the soil as a way of cutting physical ties and forming connections with death in the spiritual world (which I will describe and analyse in chapter one). My argument in this thesis is that *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* made me feel as though I was attending an actual ritual in the name of “performance art” (by performance art here I am speaking in the field of visual arts).¹ What makes Siwani’s

¹ In this text, I employ the term ‘art’ to represent the phenomenon in which art-making or art-creating is the central activity. ‘Art’ is sensibly to represent the art of the artist and the production of knowledge on art of Africa. Both terms, ‘art’ and ‘artist’, in the visual arts have been defined to represent a person making fine arts in sculpture, painting, architecture, music and poetry, and later also included applied arts such as design, jewelry, photography, ceramics, printmaking and performance [see for example, Beardsley 1958; Wölfflin 1950; Minott 1992 ; Lucie-Smith 1996]. [These visual arts mediums refer](#) to a range of creative art practices that can be traced to the 1900’s

performance thought-provoking, for me, is the evocative use of a death ritual as an intention to make art that is (re)presenting an activity of reality. The concept of death induces conflict and tensions that filled me (based on my amaXhosa beliefs in ritual) with confusion because I am convinced of the “ritualness” of the activity more than the “artisticness”. In other words, the process of “ritualness” is an artistic strategy that I observed as “actual” ritual performance in a gallery. The key question I am asking is: What is the use of ritual as a physical and spiritual medium and its documentation in Siwani’s artworks?

To engage with the above key question poses interesting and ultimately more difficult sub-questions: What is contemporary “African ritual” and what does it encompass? What is the current interest in African rituals in contemporary art? And is there a difference between ritual performance and ritual in performance art? In chapter one, I examine how walking out of a ritual in performance art, I thought of the blurred lines between an art experience and a life or everyday ritual performance. Could they be separated, or should they even be separate? The idea of ritual influences my critical reading of visual arts performance. In my thesis, ritual in performance art refers to multidisciplinary creative practices that are analysed in relation to social, cultural, political, psychological and other methods of theory that are relevant enough for the engagement with ritual performances. I consider the role of ritual in performance art as one that represents a continuation of ritual rites as mediations within the spaces wherever rituals are performed, rather than creating distinct difference between events of rituals. More specifically, the meaning of ritual is based on African religious ceremonies that include, rites of passage, initiation, healing and death, amongst others (see the section on ‘*Amasiko: A definition of ritual*’).

In a sense, the subject of ritual in this introduction is still very broad and far reaching as an inquiry. A definition of ritual remains vexing because I believe there is no one meaning, outline or overview. This is true for most research work, but most importantly, for this thesis, because it is not meant to give answers nor offer solutions that limit the concept of ritual. This thesis maintains that rituals, in common understanding, are everyday routines of the body (see Goffman 1956; Carlson 1996). Rituals exist everywhere around the world (see Goffman 1956),

and found across artistic disciplines that are primarily visual in nature. As a dominant area in Western art history, visual arts mean art production by an artist that serves a practical, theoretical, conceptual and critical purpose (Minott 1992). Thus, ‘fine art’ or ‘high art’ is a European term that denotes the purity, aesthetic or beauty of art according to traditional Western European traditions and art history [see, Herold Osborne in *Aesthetics and Art Theory: An Historical Introduction* (Green and Co.: London, 1968); Lee A. Jacobus in *Aesthetics and the Arts* (St. Martin’s Press: London, 1968)].

but the research does not focus on many of them (for example, everyday rituals such as brushing teeth, greeting, sleeping and waking up, washing and dressing, are excluded). Rather, I use a historical tracing of the major debates, descriptions, definitions and themes of ritual in the history of African religious practices (which I outline under the sections ‘*Amasiko*: A definition of ritual’ and traditional Africa religions). This approach views rituals as symbolic processual activities in which the meanings of rites of passage and performance are changing, evolving, re-interpreted and transformed. By historical trace, mine is not a focus on a chronological order, nor is it about formulating a thematic history about ritual, which would be the result of restrictive, feudal and categorical epochs. Historical traces of African religious practices and beliefs are largely associated with what existed in the past, in order to make sense of the present and imagined future (Awolalu 1971; Mndende 1994, 2002). I map out locations (based on the idea of culture and society) that are relevant to my research and the context of ritual in Siwani’s work.

Siwani (2015) makes use of historical traces to explore the ideological structures of her biological links (or amaXhosa cultural concepts), whether it be in forgotten histories, rituals and people (particularly the culture and society of amaXhosa and amaZulu). She is interested in re-interpreting the embodied tension between the self-consciousness of doing and re-doing contents from the past in relation to the ever changing present. Siwani (2015) gives focus to the trace as an existential body in her performances, for example, the many traces in one body (ancestral lineage), tracing space as an affective space of ritual and what the artist leaves behind in a space as a trace of ritual. Her work includes traces of installation, photographs and videos. She is able to interpret historical traces in the many sensory provocation of ritual as an important modality of processual and transverse encounters (chapter three). For example, Siwani includes ritual ceremonies that denote everyday life experiences like testimonials, prayer, spoken work, divination, storytelling and ancestral worship. Such ritual practices can manifest in diverse forms of dance, song, symbolic harmony, various uses of herbs and animal matter (Mbiti 1975; Mndende 2002: 4). Myths and folktales, songs and dances, rituals, proverbs, pithy sayings, names and oaths are amongst the beliefs and practices of Africa religious practices that are updated by each generation in light of new experiences through the dialectical process of continuities and discontinuities (Kanu 2014).

Rituals, therefore, are the yardstick by which people in a community measure the state of connections and relationships within a group. The key principle is that no individual is without

a community and no community is without the individual (Mbiti 1975; Somé 1993; Mndende 2002). This means that there are energies that individuals bring together in communal spaces through gatherings aimed at providing structure or continuity to their lives. A community, as in definitions of culture, tradition or society, reflects and meets a group's needs of unity, codes and social coherence (Mazrui 1996). Thus, African religious values systems are the measure of shared responsibilities – political, economic and social behaviour of a people by all or most members of a community (Mbon 1991). Values are forms of respect within a community. People can be expected to keep promises and agreements, secrets, rights and responsibilities of both individual and community's integrity, character and so on (Mbiti 1975; Mbon 1991). That is why there is importance in communal rituals, such as when there is challenges of separation or conflicts in a community (Kendall 1999). Communal religious practices include purposes like thanksgiving, divination rituals, rites of passage, and sometimes special rituals as requested by ancestors (Mndende 2013: 78). Communal rituals are performed by the living for the spiritual world, thus enforcing acts of unity and healing through relationships especially in families, clans or kinship.

As a South African, black and female Xhosa,² I am part of a group and community that believes in rituals of different kinds, for example, initiation, rites of passage, funerals, childbirth, marriage, amongst others, even as my spiritual commitment is also based in Christian beliefs. My involvement in everyday rituals, which I choose not to share in detail here, serves as a key to this research problem on ritual: in and of itself, I see ritual as neither good nor bad, beneficial nor dangerous, progressive nor reactionary – it is simply part of my syncretic differing beliefs that understands more than one religion. Syncretism appears alongside concepts of hybridisation and creolisation as a mixing of different religions, cultures or races (Stewarts and Shaw 1994; Stewarts 1999; Mqala 2003). In my thesis, syncretism is represented by a hybrid between traditional African religious values and a strong influence of Christianity, which demonstrates how cultural and historical phenomenon respond to multicultural awareness (Bhabha 1994). In referring to syncretism, however, it is not my intention to make distinctions between Christianity and traditional African religions (see Kiernan 1990; Mndende 1994; Ashforth 2005). Such an approach would require largely qualitative research and it might possibly appear to favour one religion over the other. I am interested in the links ritual forms

² The terms 'woman', 'black' and 'Xhosa' denote issues of race, gender divisions, social segregation, abuse and oppression under the apartheid rule in South Africa. One can reflect on the conditions that carry the cultural divisions that took place during the same regime.

as a physical, spiritual, social, cultural, material and conceptual form of expression that produces enriched sites, narratives and knowledges of amaXhosa that maintain the integrity of language, culture and spatial politics amongst amaXhosa as a region (Fig. 1).

The cultural significance of amaXhosa in my thesis means the culture and language used for the discussion purposes of defining ritual. AmaXhosa (the plural form when speaking about the isiXhosa cultural group or community) are the Nguni group or culture of the southernmost region of South Africa (Opland 1983; Mndende 2002). AmaXhosa are predominantly found in the Eastern Cape, previously known as the Transkei and Ciskei, and some parts of the Western Cape. IsiXhosa (*ukuthetha* or speech) is the language spoken by amaXhosa (Peires 1986: 13; Opland 1983: ix). The name amaXhosa is a generalised term for a diversity of groups like amaPondo, amaMfengu, amaBhaca, abaThembu, amaBomvana, and amaXhosa as a group in itself (Mndende 2002; Mlisa 2009). These groups also recognise different clans amongst them: namely amaTolo, amaBhele, amaZizi, oRadebe, amongst others (Opland 1983; Mndende 2002; Mlisa 2009). However, my thesis does not have space to take into consideration the individual historical context of amaXhosa culture, groups, clans or dialects.³ I approach the meaning of ritual in Siwani's work from a frame of mind that is based on amaXhosa, and having participated (or being involved in) and attended *amasiko*.

Amasiko: A definition of ritual

Amasiko is defined as ritual performance in works such as: *Signifying Practices: AmaXhosa Ritual* (2002) by Nokuzola Mndende, researcher in traditional African religions and practicing *isangoma*; *Ukuthwasa Initiation of Amagqirha: Identity Construction and the training of Xhosa Women as Traditional Healers* (2009) by Lily-Rose Nomfundo Mlisa, researcher traditional African religions, *isangoma* and faith-healer (*unthandazeli*); and *The Material Culture of Hlubi Male Initiation: A Case Study from Matatiele, Eastern Cape, South Africa* (2016) by scholar John Zulu. Mndende's research on ritual speech (*ukuthetha*), for instance, is important when observing the use of verbal and non-verbal communication during rituals, the culture of the people and what they speak. She (Mndende 2002) especially places emphasis on the meanings, powers and performances of ritual speech within amaXhosa social contexts of communicating with the spiritual world. The idea of performance and power is associated with divination

³ More contextual work on the history of amaXhosa is discussed extensively in Soga (1931 and 1989), Alberti (1968), Hunter (1979) and Opland (1983), to mention a few.

techniques of *amagqirha* (traditional healers) in rituals that deal with death.

Zulu (2016: 61) elaborates that *amasiko* is a Nguni term used to refer to different cultural beliefs and rituals performed at different times of the year by individuals, families or community. Zulu's study is significant in the discussion about material culture and the various kinds of cultural processes associated with initiation rituals in the Eastern Cape Province (in chapter one and chapter three). Male circumcision (*isiko lolwaluko* or *isiko lokweluka* in isiXhosa) is performed to transform boys into men. This contributes to the constructs of masculinity in Xhosa men, and other traditions like Zulu, Sotho and Venda (to mention a few) in South Africa. Other practices of *amasiko* include key rites such as: *imbeleko* (rites of birth), *intonjane* (women's rites) and *thwasa* (traditional healing) (Mlisa 2009: Zulu 2016).⁴ For instance, Mlisa's study draws on the possible inexplicable realities of *ukuthwasa* (the initiation ritual to become *isangoma* or traditional healing). She (2009: 68) agrees with Mndende's notion of ritual speech (*ukuthetha*) as the centre of the communication strategies and linguistic aspects of isiXhosa (the language and culture). Mlisa 2009: 136) describes isiXhosa linguistic aspects as those that relate to social knowledge regarding contextualised meanings and the "reality" of ritual performances (*amasiko*).

The socio-cultural landscape of amaXhosa in Mlisa's work aims to reveal the existential realities of ritual experiences and communication with ancestors during *ukuthwasa* initiation. Traditional African healing encompasses the role of ancestors, as it is the argument that traditional healers (*isangoma*) communicate with those who have departed in their lineage. The term "ancestors" refers to those who are deceased and are usually family members or elders – a perpetuation of generational relationships that provide a family with protection, divination and health (Edward et al. 2009: 4). Ancestors are a generational lineage of great-grandparents who have passed from the living but continue to be alive in the spiritual realm (Mndende 2002; Mlisa 2009). As soon as a person dies, they become the "living dead", which implies that death is a bridge that enables the person to pass from the physical to the metaphysical-spiritual realm (Mlisa 2009: 212). Ancestors are living spiritual beings, as s/he is an ancestor who is no longer in the body but retains characteristics that have features in the physical form (Mbiti 1975;;

⁴ For example, *imbeleko* is regarded as an introduction of a newborn child to ancestors. *Imbeleko* is a compulsory ritual because it is impossible to undertake the other rites – *ukwaluka*, *intonjane* and *twasa* – until the rite of birth is completed. Therefore, *imbeleko* is still performed even when a person is older, which entails providing ritual speech where the speaker explains the lateness of ritual to the ancestors, almost in the form of an apology.

Kendall 1999). For example, to prove their living existence, ancestors are said to attributed living characteristics like cold, hunger, thirst and other human attributes (Buhrmann 1982; Mlisa 2009). “They are not dead spiritually, just physically” (Mlisa 2009: 212). Acts from birth to death connect the person as a communal being to everyone around themselves and those that have passed on to the metaphysical worlds and those still to be born.

Constant communication with ancestors maintains relationships and harmony in the family or clan and brings holistic healing to their lives, environment and community (Kendall 1999; Mndende 2002). Mlisa (2009: 62) says that “The ancestors are mediums between the Creator/God and people; they do not share any status with God and are lower than Him.” Ancestors are accorded a higher role than humans (or the living), but not as high as the Creator (Mndende 2002: Mlisa 2009). In isiXhosa language and culture, the Creator is the image of *uQamata*, *uMdali*, *uSonini-nanini*, *uSomandla*, *uPhezukonke* or *uMvelinqangi* who resides in the spiritual realm and whose powers cannot compare to any persons on earth (Bongela 2001; Mndende 2002: 5; Mlisa 2009: 47). Hence, when Mlisa refers to ancestors as mediums, she is referring to the high rank of *amagqirha* as a spiritual leader who have positions that are close to the Creator, since *amagqirha* are able to communicate and guide harmony between the living and ancestors. Both Mndende and Mlisa’s researches are conveyed from the perspective and position of traditional African religious practitioners or *amagqirha* (singular for *igqirha* – diviners) who communicate with ancestors.⁵ Mndende and Mlisa examine the multifaced identities during the training process of *amagqirha*, which provides some clarity on the metaphor and reality of amaXhosa rituals.

I have relied upon Mndende and Mlisa’s text when it comes to the processes, meanings and languages of ritual in my investigation of *izangoma* (plural form of *isangoma*), which include the connected stages of the role of *isangoma*, *isangoma* training (*thwasa*) and healing amongst amaXhosa. In my thesis, the word *isangoma* (Kendall 1999; Wreford 2005; Edwards et. al. 2009) is used when writing about the *ukuthwasa* (the initiation ritual) and the traditional healing process of *izangoma*.⁶ Other names of *isangoma* include *igqirha* (diviner) and *inyanga*

⁵ Mndende (2002: 59), chooses to use *igqirha* or *amagqirha* when describing a diviner, or a person called by the ancestors to heal. To Mlisa (2009), *igqirha* means healer, as she writes about the stages of *ukuthwasa* initiation and training of *amagqirha*.

⁶ Mlisa (2009: 299) says that the meaning of *isangoma* carries a lot of differences from *igqirha* as to how the two are trained. For instance, *isangoma* training has a short duration of six to eighteen months, while *amagqirha* training amongst amaXhosa are between two to five years (in average period) (Mlisa 2009: 246). However, an

(herbalist) (Mbiti 1975; Edwards et. al 2009). In chapter one, I give a brief background on what is known about *izangoma* as traditional leaders, traditional healers and diviners. The role of *isangoma* is significant to the key question on ritual as a medium of physicality and spirituality in performance art. The process of *ukuthwasa* represents the major aspects that associate the concepts of death and secrecy in Siwani's artworks – performance, installation, photography and video. I concur with Mndende (2002) and Mlisa's (2009) proposition that the theoretical perspectives of rituals are influenced by the social (community) and creative performance formed in traditional African religious practices. In a sense, it means that traditional African religions are critical in ensuring the role to transmit knowledge during rituals.

Scholar of traditional African religions Maboe Mokgobi (2004: 26) suggests that ancestors are revered, remembered and venerated, but not worshipped. This statement is based on an analysis of traditional African healing as it relates to traditional African religions and spirituality. With amaXhosa and amaZulu, for example, there is a belief that ancestors communicate through dreams and visions (Mndende 2002; Mokgobi 2004; Mlisa 2009). Dreams (*ukuthonga* in images and voices of *ithongo* (dream)), for instance, is held in significant regard as communication from ancestors that guide, provide warnings and/or the appointment of someone for divination (*ukuthwasa*) (see Ngubane 1977; Thwala, Pillay and Sargent 2000; Mndende 2002; Edwards et al. 2009; Edwards 2010). Several scholars believe that dreams are the preliminary symptom of *ukuthwasa* that is significant to the call of the ancestors (see Mndende 2002; Edwards 2010). Communication can also take place through a combination of performances, songs, dances, objects and symbols in forms such as stones, pots, domestic animals and human bodies; and sounds of animals, trees and figures.⁷ I agree with Zulu's (2016: 61) view in that "rituals are performed to either appreciate or make petition to ancestors when things were not going well." To appease ancestors, it means people in the living (the family) bring before the ancestors sacrifices through ritual (Mndende 2002; Mlisa 2009). Ritual sacrifices include (but are not limited to) slaughter of animals such as goat, sheep, cattle and chickens.

interchangeable use of *isangoma/igqirha* is evident when it comes to the similarities in the *ukuthwasa* initiation processes of *izangoma* and *amagqirha* (see Mndende 2002: 177; Van Binsbergen 2003; Cumes 2004).

⁷ This is because Africans celebrate life and their religions through ceremonies of different forms like rituals and festivals that are personal, with family or community, and may accompany initiation, harvest, planting, birth, marriages and funerals) (see for example, Parrinder [1967], Mbiti [1975], Somé [1993]). Through these events, people embody what they value, believe and apply in their daily life and development.

Communication with ancestors takes place in sacred places depending on which clan one belongs to – such as the grave of the deceased relative, mountains, cattle kraal, forest or rivers (Mndende 2002: 6). Mndende (2002) associates the sacred with amaXhosa practices of sacred animals, sacred objects and sacred time and place during different rituals. For example, she (Mndende 2002: 7) regards the linking between the physical and spiritual worlds as always sacred and all-encompassing of sacralised objects used in ritual sacrifice. This means that ritual is taken to mean ritual sacrificing (*amasiko*) as the process of practicing traditions by an individual, clan or community. In isiXhosa, for instance, traditions are called *isintu*, which is the way people practise culture, because culture is the lived experience of tradition (Mndende 1994: 9). The recognition of *isintu* (traditions and ritual) in Mndende's (1994: 12-13) other text, entitled *African Religion and Religion Education*, is her way of showing that "Ntu who is believed to be the original black nation" or *Ntu* is "the generation of great-grandparents" or that "all the black people are the generation of *Ntu*." *Isintu*, in other words, explains the connection to the acts of kindness or *ubuntu ngumnti nabantu* (a person is a person because of others), which encompasses an influence from African religious rituals, beliefs, practices and languages, amongst others (Mndende 1994).

Traditional African religions

Christian religious philosopher, John S. Mbiti's book *Introduction to African religion* (1975) informs my first encounter with traditional African religions. Mbiti is one of the pivotal earliest scholars of traditional African religions, amongst thinkers such as Bolaji E. Idowu (1973), Omosade J. Awolalu (1976) and Geoffrey Parrinder (1967) to mention a few, who have written about African religions. Mbiti (1975: 11) says that African religions are represented by the five elements of African religious practices that include beliefs, ceremonies and festivals, religious objects, values and religious leaders. No singular element alone defines the nature of African religions, rather "all these parts must be seen as working together to give us a complete picture" (Mbiti 1975: 11). This means that traditional African religions represents the African way of life, which is founded in ritual and ceremonies by the individual and community.

In Mbiti's view, the word ritual is powerful. Mbiti considers the meaning and importance of ritual as a serious religious action in ceremony. "It is a means of communicating something of religious significance, through word, symbol and action. Therefore, a ritual embodies a belief or beliefs" (Mbiti 1975: 131). I agree with Mbiti, because it is essential to note that an overview of African religious practices, values and beliefs are applied in the everyday life of Africans in

diverse regions. Traditional African religions focus on the continuity of the ritual, culture and tradition from one generation to another in diverse places in Africa (Idowu 1973; Mbiti 1975; Awolalu 1976). Take as an example the role of ancestors, which exists in several religious groups and localities. There are different names for “ancestors” in South Africa depending on one’s cultural group: the baPedi, Batswana, and baSotho call ancestors ‘*badimo*’, amaZulu and the amaXhosa refer to ancestors as ‘*amadlozi*’ and ‘*izinyanya*’ respectively (Mokgobi 2014: 25). Names and communication with ancestors carry with them complexities of language in meaning, experience and understanding. The phrases used in communication with ancestors come from oral expressions that help preserve cultural and social values (Simelane-Kalumba 2014).⁸

Mndende disagrees with scholars who write about traditional African religions from the perspective of Christian faith – for example, Mbiti, Magesa and Parrinder. Mndende does not contend with how Christianity influenced terminology that is constructed from preconceived criteria and classifications, which include categorising terms like ‘ritual’, ‘tradition’, ‘religion’ and ‘culture’. Idowu (1973) and Awolalu (1976), similarly suggest that Mbiti chooses to write about traditional African religions from a plural perspective, which he, Mbiti, believes to mean that African people have diverse religious systems from different groups. Idowu (1973) and Awolalu (1976) argue against the plural form in African religions because it highlights difference. Rather, Idawo and Awolalu focus on the similarities between religious practices of African. Idawo (1973: 92), Awolalu (1976: 2), Mndende (2003: 78) indicate that the approach to similarities exposes the nature and spread of communicative power and understanding of the way African religions provide practitioners with immediate access to past experiences, relationships of trust, values and communication within a culture, tradition, group or community. This means that rituals are connected as the awareness of people’s histories in their communities, lineages and traditions.

Hence in this thesis I find relevance in Mndende’s work, as she often questions the historical trajectory and school of thought that documents the important transmissions of indigenous knowledge systems for the growth of traditional African religions in South African and Africa. For instance, Mndende (1994) urges the recognition of indigenous knowledge systems in the

⁸ In South Africa there are eleven official languages. In each of the above-mentioned cultural groups ritual is interpreted according to the diverse symbols, interpretation, experiences and representations of each regions. In the thesis, I find in this idea of traditional African religions a significant repository of unity, cohesion and value that holds together diverse cultural beliefs, practices and languages in Africa.

education of South Africa the main argument that can be drawn from Mndende's views is that the scope of culture and tradition in South Africa is encapsulated in traditional African religious beliefs that are connected to ancestors. Additional writings like "Underground Praxis to Recognized Religion: Challenges facing African Religions" (1998) and "Praxis to Recognized Religion: Challenges facing African Religions" (2013), Mndende problematises the South African governmental laws against traditional African religious practices. Several scholars have cited Mndende by emphasising the often negative prejudice and labels against African religions and how the South African government has failed in not incorporating African spirituality as a religion where Africans continue to draw on it in their daily lives.⁹

In recognising the importance of diversity and pedagogy, I again agree with how Mndende makes certain that women or feminist positions are heard around issues of gender, sexuality and perpetual biases of patriarchy.¹⁰ Further contribution on traditional African religious studies in South Africa that are relevant to this thesis include finding ways of developing everyday experiences which attend to historical, medical, governmental, economic and political issues about religious beliefs, practices, values, methods, theories, philosophies and skills (in education and pedagogy), amongst others.

The words "tradition" and "traditional" in traditional African religions is considered to denote indigenous knowledge systems and facts that are upheld and practised by Africans today (Idowu 1973: 104; Mafeje 1975: 166; Awolalu 1971: 1).¹¹ Traditions (in this instance invariant traditional societies) are the rites of passage, dress codes, food and eating, languages, greetings and other behavioural practices surrounding their everyday life. Thus, Mndende adds that "traditional" does not belong to the archives but refers to the fundamentally indigenous value systems of historical inferences that continue to expand and evolve (Mndende 1994: 15). Indigenous knowledge systems are a collection of knowledge that is associated with traditions and social values of a place (Dei, Hall and Rosenberg 2000). In the article on "Mapping the

⁹ See for example, Nthabiseng Motsemme "Lived and embodied suffering and healing amongst mothers and daughters in Chesterville Township, Kwazulu-Natal" (2011)

¹⁰ See Mndende N. (2009). *Tears of Distress: Voices of Denied Spirituality in a Democratic South Africa*. Cape Town: The Printing Press.

¹¹ When it comes to traditions, although they promote the past as unchanging, the purpose is in examining the relevance in which the practices, objects and beliefs in traditional African religions continuously reflects and instigates agency that is needed to stimulate exciting creative imaginations about tradition-based ideas in the visual arts. This means that 'tradition', as much as it appears or claims to be old, it is recent in its everyday practices and, thus, 'invented' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983/1992: 1).

field of anti-colonial discourse to understand issues of indigenous knowledge systems: Decolonizing praxis” (2005), for example, scholar Riyad Ahmed Shahjhan (2005: 215) attests that indigenous knowledge systems are useful in the cultural contexts that pertain to spirituality, healing, and sustainable development, amongst others.

Shahjhan writes from a perspective of a South Asian-Canadian Muslim, but I find his focuses on the critical areas of knowledge production and indigenous knowledge systems relevant to the discussion about traditional beliefs. I also think that Shahjhan contribution in “Centering Spirituality in the Academy: Toward a Transformative Way of Teaching and Learning” (2004), is important as engagement with the significance of centering spirituality and culture in teaching and learning academic institutions.¹² In my thesis, I agree that indigenous knowledge systems make up occupancy of certain places as cultural contexts for diverse purposes in the world. It is also true that indigenous knowledge systems embody the experiences of physical and metaphysical realms of people’s lives (Somé 1993). In the same way that indigenous knowledges encapsulate traditions as indigenous knowledge transmissions of the past that are passed on from generation to generation (Awolalu 1971). Mndende (1994: 14) describes the word “traditional” as something that comes from a long ago, but it is not static. What this mean is that the processes of *amasiko* are not fixed as culture and tradition are also not fixed.

I agree with Mndende’s criticism of interpretations and perceptions that consider traditions to be backwards, naïve and unchanging. For example, as illustrated by British Marxist intellectuals Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in *The Invention of Traditions* (1992) invention or reinvention represents traditions which appear or claim to be old but are quite recent in origin. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992: 1) define the invention of tradition as a broad and imprecise concept in this sense of “starting or initiating” a ritual of a symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour. By including words like emerging, traceable, dateable, values, ritual, rules, values, norms and repetition, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992: 1) take “invention of tradition to mean a set of practices”. The appearance

¹² The academy or academe, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* is a scholarship of interaction with different worldviews, languages, identities and religions that traces its etymology to ancient Greek, which derives from the *Athenian* -meaning hero - and *Akademios* - the centre of learning. An academia or academic (hence the expression ‘academe’, which is dedicated to goddesses of wisdom) is composed of researchers and professors at institutions of higher learning but does not only mean the universities but includes colleges, schools and churches [also, see George Dei Rethinking the role of indigenous knowledge systems in the academy (2000). In *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 4(2), 111-132]. This means that academia is a cultural accumulation of knowledge that describes the kinds of development and transmission in higher learning institutions.

and development of practices associated with ‘invented traditions’ seeks normality as the establishment of continuity with a suitable historical past; or the passing of a practice or tradition that is influenced by a historic past. In other words, traditions may claim to be old and not necessarily present, but they are often quite recent in origin and invention (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992).

Methodology

The methodology of this thesis demonstrates what is meant by ritual in performance art, and has been greatly influence by ritual practices in traditional African religious systems. My discussion includes consideration of the current state of contemporary art in South Africa and internationally. The development of some of the theoretical and cultural epistemologies on performance in Africa is also included. The challenges experienced during the process of this research are outlined.

This thesis is a qualitative analysis, which aims at producing in-depth findings rather than quantitate understanding (Henning, Rensburg & Smit 2004). As the approach requires a collation of recorded information and documentation, books, academic journals, newspaper articles, exhibition catalogues and the internet have been used to provide the collection of content from which to work.

At the beginning of my research, my selection of visual artists included Buhlebezwe Siwani, Jelili Atiku, Oudunayo Orimolade and Samson Mudzunga. In January 2017, I went on a field research trip to Lagos in Nigeria, where I interviewed Atiku and Orimolade. These artists’ works are influenced by their Nigerian traditions within the Yoruba worldview. Mudzunga’s work is similarly influenced by his Venda culture, sculpting drums which he uses as burial performances dealing with Venda traditions and political issues. I was unable to interview Mudzunga, who died in 2019.

My selection of artists was affected by my lack of understanding for their cultures and traditions. The comprehensive historical context of Atiku, Orimolade and Mudzunga required a larger scope than this thesis could handle. I failed to come up with a way of making sure that each artist’s background stands out without coming across as a misrepresentation or lack of understanding. Through a reflection on my position as an outsider in Atiku, Orimolade and Mudzunga’s use of ritual beliefs and practice, the analyses on the tensions and possibilities of ritual in this research would have been reduced to biases that restrict the use of ritual in

performance art. While I do not focus on their work, however, I do include in the thesis an analysis of selected artworks as example that support my interpretation of Siwani's work. This is done by considering the role of a ritual that is called a work of performance art. In my visual analysis, I engage the photographic documentation of performance, which includes a visual analysis of the discursive, interpretative and evaluative discussion about ritual in performance art.

This research, therefore, focuses mainly on Siwani's work. It begins with a description of my experience of a live performance, which influences my engagement with the idea of ritual. My purview of "experience", as a word, is to acknowledge that it is ambiguous and broad, and should not fix, generalise and universalise encounters that are considered as continuous cultural interactions of live conditions that involve the process of living. In the article "The Evidence of Experience", gender and intellectual history scholar, Joan Scott (1991: 37), reminds one that experience is not a word the world can go without because it is part of the everyday language. Scott raises a discussion around experience and theory within the context and debate of feminism, literature, visual, physical, spiritual and emotional issues.¹³ Scott (1992: 780-795) suggests that there is legitimacy on the "authority of experience" in theory, pedagogy, epistemology and performance. Thus, it goes without saying that the experience in this thesis is a personal reflection that considers diverse impressions that are related to the processes of subject creation (or the subject voice or language used to produce art by the artist and the writer when writing).

Similarly, scholar of American feminism, Bell Hooks, in *Essentialism and Experience* (1991), attests that experience is an access to ways of knowing that are rooted in experience. Hooks seems to guard against the silencing of experience, which tends to exclude from the ways of knowing that are rooted in experiential processes. Thus, I agree with Hooks (1991: 189), in that there is "passion of experience", which means there is "passion of remembrance." This is experience that is situated in the moments or episodes that one spontaneously expresses as being "real experiences". This is when one says in recalling them, "that was an experience",

¹³ The notion of experience has been evident in Black American feminist text: see for example, Sonia Johnson, *Going Out of Our Minds: The Metaphysics of Liberation* (1987), bell hooks in her book *Ain't I a Woman: black women and feminism* (1981), Vivian Gordon's *Black Women, Feminism, Black Liberation*, Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her article "Feminist Encounters: Locating the Politics of Experience" (1992), amongst others. In another perspective, Dian Fuss (1988: xii) in her book *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference* critically deals with the possibilities and potentialities of experience that are based on choice, especially in the forms that call into question idealistic and materialistic, progressive and reactionary, mythologising and resistive writing.

explaining how aspects of the self and the world come to be, thus qualifying experience with emotions and ideas in life or art. In my writing, it is important to decipher the experience of a ritual in performance art as a sight and/or site designed for real or symbolic encounter with rituals.

My encounter with Siwani's work opened me up to the fundamental forms of ritual and rites of performance as knowledge creation by a (female) artist in an unexpected space like the gallery. The space of a ritual is what troubles the often-hidden subjectivities and objectivities in understanding the works of rituals in their diverse forms by the performer(s). Hence, the question of ritual in performance art in this thesis is directed at the contemporary engagement with rituals. The idea of experience in my methodology section is used as an epistemological approach to both the engagement with a live performance and its documentation. My methodology also includes an analysis based on the visual interpretation between a live performance and its documentation. Performance art exposes the contingencies of body/self in both the communicative exchange (the performer and audience) and modes of (re)presentation. Thus, the notion of identity in Siwani's work is an expression of multiple and fluid positions. As a concept, identity is questioned by the artist and various scholars to develop diverse readings and approaches in visual arts performance (McKenny 2001). I am interested in the creative, experiential and experimental activities of visual arts performance as a process that recognises an autobiographical, biological and biographical exploration of bodies (dead and alive).

I contextualise Siwani's work in relation to the many bodies presented or represented in the role of ritual performance as a medium of physicality and spirituality. Performance art exposes the contingencies of body/self in both the communicative exchange (the performer and audience) and modes of (re)presentations between the physical body and the spiritual body. Performance provides artists from different disciplines, places and spaces in the world with dimensions that deal critically, politically and creatively with issues around them and the possible tensions this has evoked in the field of the visual arts (Goldberg 1979, 1988, 1998; Carlson 1996; McKenny 2001). In my thesis, the focus is on visual arts performance as a genre that has brought an important visual image and language where both artists and writers are actively engaging in ways that transgress what has been accepted as fixed categories of behaviour in society, culture, theory, methodology, artistic practice etc. My thesis attempts to offer enough of an overview to address the relevant issues raised by the complex field of visual arts performance and ritual as a significant manifestation in performance art. The visual arts

field is a fundamental form of expression for the key question about ritual as a medium of physicality and spirituality, and the creative communication strategies and experiences within the tangible idea of the body.

The meaning of the body grows from connections that involve the physical anatomy, histology (microscopic structure of tissues) and psychology as focused systems of a human body, its functions and organs (Johnson 2007). In performance art, the body can be treated as a metaphor for a corpus of knowledges in the visual arts that include the body as the material or medium for making art (Goldberg 1979; Kaprow 1993; McKenny 2001), body and body art (Jones 1998), body and sexuality (Oguibe 2004; Butler 2011), body and text (Jones, Nfa and Stephenson 2005), body and archive (Warr 2015), body and language (Vergine 2000) and body and artwork (Lewis 2001; Hassan 2001; Makhubu 2012), to mention a few. Material refers to the physical and visible body, the artist, as a central part of a performance artwork. During performance, the body is inserted in a selection of different space(s), place(s) and image(s) (Makhubu 2000; Hassan and Oguibe 2001; Phelan 2003; Jones 1997). The body itself is treated as a stage, screen, canvas, or site for histories, politics, cultures, economics, races and social issues (Goldberg 1998; McKenny 2001).

In the article “‘Presence’ in absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation” (1997), art historian, art critic and curator specialising in body, live, video and performance art, Amelia Jones (1997: 2) suggests that “body art instantiates the radical shift in subjectivity.” Jones argues that the context of subjectivity is informed by an embodied phenomenological model that explores intersubjectivity. This means that intersubjectivity creates a shift from singular positioning to multiple and multiplying representations of subjectivities (Jones 1997; Hassan 2001). Moreover, subjectivities represent the many bodies or subjects (performer and performer (self), performer and camera or performer and audience) during a live performance and the same applies to the documentation (Jones 1997; Hassan 2001). Jones (1997) describes the presence of the performer in the phenomenological relation of flesh-to-flesh engagement that the audience experiences as live art or body art. As I know from my own engagement with live performances in South Africa and internationally, experience is a fundamental encounter with the liveness and being present as an audience, viewer, spectator or participant.

Jones (1997: 12) acknowledges the importance of a live performance as matched between the performer and the audience, but a live performance should not be privileged over the development of knowledges that emerge in relation to the documentary traces. The visual

analysis encompasses approaching “body artworks through their photographic, textual, oral, video and/or film traces” (Jones 1997: 11). In other words, through ideas of performance art, the body of the artist is inscribed or inserted into the final configuration of images, videos or installations (Hassan 2001). This is when the work of the artist is influenced by the quest for self-representation (Hassan 2001). Jones (1997: 11-12), thus, treats the viewing of documentation traces within the many subjectivities as not only an important role in the process of constructing a live performance, but that which is encompassed in the multiple intersubjectivities that exist in relation to the world of other inter-objectivities.

Several scholars define the use of the body as a subject and object of art that is congruent with how performance art is continuously redefining itself through meanings, qualities and properties that are based on the relationships between performer, audience, object and event (Goldberg 1979, 1988; Phelan 1993; Fusco 1995; Carlson 1996; McKenny 2001; Makhubu 2012). Performance art is an all-embracing genre that is influenced by everyday actions that are embodied in the word “performance” (Goldberg 1979, 1988; Carlson 1996; Schechner 2002). Thus, a simple way of understanding performance art is that it is live art by an artist (Goldberg 1979; McKenny 2001; Jones and Heathfield 2012). Unlike theatre, visual arts performance makes use of site-specificity, timeline, history of place or the state of a place (Goldberg 1998; Warr 2015; Makhubu 2012). Some might argue that theatre is able to do the same, however, performance art eliminates sticking to a script for multiple performances and the distance created by a performance stage, between the performer and audience members. Visual arts performance, thus, includes spontaneity and improvisation.

In some aspects of performance art, the body as medium can involve the physical form being either stripped naked, enduring physical, emotional or spiritual pain, pleasure or posing sexually explicit content (Jones 1997). This can entail an exploration and experimentation with the different aspects of the body in other exaggerated or overstated manipulations in human and special contexts. For instance, the idea of ritual in performance art has been applied to shock the audience when there is an inclusion of blood and blood splatter and other body fluids like urine. Artists like Damien Hirst, Ron Athey, Marina Abramovich and Gina Pane, amongst others, the body is a canvas of intense experimentation and violence, thus making the element of shock controversial, ugly and disturbing visually. The element of shock can act as a critical point to the claim that ritual is art, because of the meaningful places that ritual resonates with symbolic significances. In my thesis, at the basis of progressive use of performance art, the issue about the legacy of exhibition or exhibitionism is questionable.

It is important that (black) African artists, especially in the genre of performance art, and its use of the body, do not continue to fall into the trap of an exogenous representation that might further play into the stereotyping of Africa. Exogenous has to do with the concept of the gaze, or a way of looking that seeks to determine the understanding of the body: what it is, what it means, what it represents, how it is seen and who is doing the looking (McKenny 2001). One cannot look past the historical exploitation of the black body and the sexual desire it represents and the ongoing objectification (Phelan 1993; Fusco 1996; hooks 1996; Enwezor 1997; Lewis 2001; Makhubu 2012). What becomes even more important and to keep in mind the above questions, is the individual and communal relationship within the deeper debates about private and public environments – personal power, state power, land, urban–rural discourses, indigenous knowledges, gallery and art institutions – in the practice of contemporary South African art.

My concern harnesses the responsibility of the performer to create an environment that produces a reaction or response to the artwork. The gallery environment influences behaviour; its white spaces, and display components when creating an atmosphere for viewing art, enable the audience to think or behave in response to the subjects and objects observed. More than anything else, my response to Siwani's performance is influenced by the environment where the performance is taking place. This is based on the questions about the audience spectatorship, participation, involvement or engagement. During *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* (2014), for instance, the outcome of ritual is stronger, because it translates into the 'real' experience of communal attendance in a death ceremony, as it is a usual practice in diverse African regions (chapter one). My preliminary encounter with Siwani's live performance, described in chapter one, will show that the exhibition context and gallery space plays a significant role in the experience of art.

The gallery space appears to shape Siwani's work, such as the expectation an art gallery provides for the audience experiencing art in paintings, sculptures, installations, photographs, videos, performances, or texts. Through new-media techniques - inclusive of performances, installation, photography and video - Siwani¹⁴ explores the practical, theoretical and critical endeavour when it comes to artistic display (Gonzalez 1990; Hassan 2001). In a location like the gallery, *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* raises tensions and possibilities about the

¹⁴ Siwani's work is predominantly achieved using performances that are recorded in photographs and video. She includes installation as artworks that are left from site-specific performances, especially in the gallery space.

context and complexities of how death rituals (processions, ceremonies, ritual speeches, gestures and objects) have an immensely powerful potential as performance art. The questions I ask about Siwani's background are related to her live performance: What does it mean when she says in her title "I live with the dead" – *Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*? And, more especially, what are the implications for such a claim of death? What does the intimate proximity of ritual, performer and viewer mean? What happens to somebody in the gallery space who does not have the same understanding of the codes and investment in this ritual? Even as much as they might seem to understand, how do they truly comprehend about the involvement in a ritual that involves death?

Ritual in performance art

What is important in my analysis is how the integration of African religious practices plays on the historical, present and future cultural, social and political situations of reclaiming or retracting identity. For instance, as an artist and researcher writing in the field of art history, I find importance in the recent concentration of artist and art events exploring rituals in performance art (in contemporary art world or current art scene). Artists in and outside Africa have been strongly incorporating the subject, process and idea of ritual; for example, artists' works like Jelili Atiku's *Mama Say Make I Dey Go, She Dey My Back* performance at the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017; Rehema Chachage's work *Nankondo* (2017) video and text recently shown at the Dak'Art Biennale in Senegal and last but not least, Miriam Syowia Kyambi, *Fracture (i)* (2011) in the exhibition *Body Talk* in Sweden. Ritual has been visible in contemporary visual arts events like exhibitions, fairs and museums such as the *Lagos Photo Festival 2016: Ritual and Performance in Lagos*, Nigeria; *documenta 13: Collapse and Recovery* (2012), in Kassel, Germany; and *Ritual Paths* (2017/2018), Loft Acht Gallery, Vienna. Ritual in performance art is a critical interpretation, not a category, classification nor discipline, I use to explain the impact ritual actions has on artists who work closely with African histories, cultures and traditions. In other words, my thesis is a discussion about how the role of ritual is re-contextualised in performance art as a way of expanding mediations in the important social, cultural and economic meanings associated with representation, identity, gender and sexuality, visual construction and interpretation, for instance.

My inquiry in this thesis observes the role of rituals in visual art events like the art fairs,

biennales, conferences and artist talks amongst civic realms¹⁵ where artists get to showcase their work in diverse spaces that serve for the presentation of “contemporary art”. In the South African context, contemporary art is associated with artists who have the opportunity to study visual arts, fine art or fine and applied arts at higher education institutions or universities. Such an artist is contemporary because they are part of the dimensions of global networks that are viewed as important links of transnational, international and, almost, worldly associations (Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu 2009; Chikukwa 2011).¹⁶ Globalisation prompts self-representation and a way of rewriting from within, to reflect, imagine and engage with socio-political matters, social realities, life experiences and human emotions. Art museums and galleries are the center of activity in the visual arts and contemporary world, as it often means that the notion of globalisation is thought to be a “contemporary” development (see Enwezor 2008).

It is also known that galleries and museums in South Africa are institutions that have been deemed as elitist, specialist and exclusionist environments that privilege a minority white community and marginalise the predominantly black communities (Koloane 1988). In art, museums and galleries, in both private and public institutions, have been in a process of addressing the imbalance of the past representation of black artists (Enwezor 1997). For instance, in the last twenty years, the value of everything that defines the old South Africa is derived, mostly, from the interregnum of white curators, art historians and critics (Enwezor 1997: 379).¹⁷ It goes without saying that the majority of South African art continues to be owned by a South African white minority, “a system that continues to privilege, reward and support achievements based on race” (Khan 2006: 2). It could be argued, therefore, that contemporary relevance is both a necessity and consequence of contemporary African cultural production. Through Siwani’s work, I am not simply relying on labels to define the

¹⁵ According to art historian Nomusa Makhubu (2012: 75), African society consists of primordial public realm (moral) and the civic public realm (amoral). Performance art engages with the latter in the urban and peri-urban contexts that include civic institutions such as museums and galleries. This means that the former, a primordial public realm, fits in defining the public in rural areas, especially in relation to performance art.

¹⁶ As far as global integration is concerned, several theorists in the visual arts see it as full of unanswered questions and assumptions that embrace Western values, economies, and culture; for example, see Grace A. Musila, in her article “Part-Time Africans, Europolitans and ‘Africa lite’” (2016); John Picton and Law, J. 2000. *Cross Currents: Contemporary Art Practice in South Africa: An Exhibition in Two Parts* (2000); Raphael Chikukwa in “Curating contemporary African art: questions of mega-exhibitions and Western influence” (2011).

¹⁷ See Marschall, S. 2001. “Strategies of Accommodation: Towards an Inclusive Canon of South African Art” *Art Journal*. v. 60, no. 1; Perryer, A. 2004. *10 Years 100 Artists: Art in a Democratic South Africa*. Cape Town: Bell Roberts; Richards, C. 1998. “Peripheral vision: Speculations on art criticism in South Africa.” K. Deepwell (ed.), *Art Criticism and Africa*. London: Saffron.

relationships between ritual, performance art and artist, and contemporary art and artist, even as I am aware of the history of visual arts as it has focused on objects of visual forms for aesthetic purposes (Elkins 2006). Rather, I respond to how Siwani creates provocations from which she seems to challenge the viewer in a critical and innovative praxis.

Cultural practices

The idea of cultural practices or cultural performances appears to suggest performance art as the engagement with historical, social and artistic life in the broad sense of culture playing a central role in the ideologies and analyses of local, national, state and other producers of values and cohesions held by a group (Turner 1982; Drewal 1983; Bell 1992, 1999; Schechner 2002). In the 1980s and 1990s, the notion of cultural performance became increasingly popular as a general approach and category of performance as a multi-cultural and media-driven model in academic disciplines (Bell 1992; Bial 2004). Religious studies scholar Catherine Bell, in *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (1992) points out that popularity appears in a variety of discussions, especially those connected to the theoretical issues concerning various thoughts and actions in ritual theory – anthropology, sociology and religion. She raises questions about the influences of theoretical practices and theories of ritual. Bell prefers to use ritualisation to describe ritual as culturally diverse ways of acting.¹⁸ She takes on a less limited function of cultural analysis by elaborating on the sense and power of ritual which develops interest on the human body and external systems within ritual performances.

For Bell (1992), the main aim is to dismantle the theoretical knowledge and coherent whole that is based on opposition of thought and action. In other words, she uncovers the body of theory that is generated by European (or Western) intellectual life and logical practical context for the term ‘ritual’ as an analysis and category of social experiences. Bell (1992: 113) argues that, “If culture is the giving of performances, then culture is that which is given to an ‘audience’ or the outside theorist who has joined it.” Bell is interested in the relationship between the audience and those who perform rituals. She is considering how the meaning of rituals comes from being observed as symbolic acts that are meant to have an impact on the

¹⁸ Ritualisation derives from strategies of differentiating between ritual practices, which means that “sacred” (holy things) and “profane” (unholy things) reveal highly significant constructions of difference and have features like fixity, repetition and structures as systems of dealing with culturally specific circumstances. Much of the work about the sacred and profane is concerned with how societies are able to maintain their values and coherence as a group or culture. The major social and religious ties can be observed in the early text by sociologist, David Émile Durkheim in *The Sacred & The Profane* (1957) and *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912) and Jonathan Z. Smith in *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (1992): methodological studies on scholarly tools as description, interpretation and comparison.

audience and entreat the audience's interpretative appropriation. Thus, in Bell's statement, she is referring to the researchers, fieldworkers or theorist who are positioned as spectators of performances in African in the practice (or participation fieldwork) and theory.

In the essay, "The State of Research on Performance in Africa" (1983), for example, art historian Margaret Thompson Drewal compiled a survey that shows how European scholars – in books, articles and presentations – from different disciplines have theorised performance or human actions using drama or theatre paradigms and metaphors that associate with the notion of ritual in Africa. Drewal's survey inscribes names and methods that are problematic when it comes to performance research conducted in Africa. Amongst the instrumental or dominant figures mentioned for shaping research on performance in Africa are cultural anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists and folklorists from the 1950s onwards. Their publications include: Arnold van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* (1909); Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959); Clifford Geertz, in *The Interpretation of Culture* (1973); Victor Turner, in *The Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes among the Ndembu of Zambia* (1968) and *The Anthropology of Performance* (1986); Richard Bauman's *Verbal Art as Performance* (1977); and Richard Schechner, in *Essays on Performance Theory* (1977) and *The future of ritual: Writings on culture and performance* (1993) Drewal 1983; Bell 1992: 98).

The foremost source of influence is Kenneth Burke's notion of "dramaticism", which is a rhetoric that focuses on the effects of performance on the audience (Drewal 1983). Similarly, Goffman's model of self in everyday life through dramaturgical presentation and interactive ritual had an influence on theoretical language – show, audience, and setting (Drewal 1983; Bell 1992; Carlson 1996). Goffman is said to have been one of the first social scientists to turn to theatre for a framework with which to interpret non-theatrical behaviour. Turner is influenced by Goffman's model of everyday life and subsequently for performance theory, and van Gennep's model that analyses the role of ritual between individual and society. Turner's work includes the idea of social drama as a tool of social anthropology, which is explored under the study of the Ndembu people of Zambia, which employs the ritual process to define physical and spiritual dynamics of performance as liminality (in-between) and *communitas*. Thus, Turner's idea of social drama is modelled in relation to cultural performance or specifically of theatre, and upon traditional structures of dramatic performances.

The use of the word "performance" emerges from the scholarship of performance studies, a field established by Schechner in his book *Performance studies: An introduction* (2002).

Schechner calls for a shift in reconstruction and higher education curricular to include the study of performance in ritual and social contexts. The goal was to develop the general theory of performance by exploring how the resistance to traditional disciplinary structures helped shape contemporary performance studies. Schechner's main aim was to critically change the curriculum, arguing that the framework of performance studies is for the analysis of twentieth century global culture. In the broadest sense, Schechner (2002) observes performance as activities that include, at the very least, performing arts, rituals, healing, sports, popular entertainment and performance in everyday life. Schechner's (2002) own definition is that performance is "behaviour-twice-behaved or twice-behaved-behaviour", "repetition" and "restored behaviour", as a transformational process that involves re-presentation, not reproduction, with critical difference. This definition suggests that the ritual process is identical to the preparation and rehearsal process of theatre.

Ritual and theatre, according to Schechner (2002) become material for the restoration of behaviour: either in repetition, rhythmic action, exaggeration and the transformation of "natural sequences" of behaviour into "composed sequences". The critical difference between the last two shows how people conduct themselves through movements (actions or performances), thoughts and feelings. Several scholars define performance studies as a field that takes performance as a concept and a study of a wide range of behaviour. The possibilities are outlined in Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's survey, which is a detailed account of the field the establishment of performance studies. From the early 1980s, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1989: 43) outlines "Performance Studies sets no limit on what can be studied in terms of the mediums and culture. Nor does it limit the range of approached that can be taken." With this statement Kirshenblatt-Gimblett acknowledges the objects of performance studies are not divided into medium by medium, discipline by discipline or various other parceled out disciplines like dance, music literature, drama and art history. This means its very existence involves performance as a concept of embodied skill, embodied practice and the practical application of knowledge to the task of taking action or centre stage (Drewal 1983; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1989).

For example, the two theorists, Schechner and Turner, collaborate in what Turner calls a self-reflexive anthropology during a workshop/rehearsal process enacted from various rituals of the Ndembu people. This self-reflexivity is what Bell (1992) highlights as cultural performance. This means performance studies is understood as a presentation of rehearsed or pre-established

activity, which includes the element of enactment or cultural event as that which brings people together through polyvalent signs and symbols of ritual experience (Abrahams 1986). Schechner theory adds to Turner's model of ritual process and social drama, amongst other theorist perspectives of Bateson and Goffman, to employ restored behaviour as human behaviour – intention and action – applied to forms of social and cultural states.

In my thesis, I want to move away from the assumptions that have confined ritual to order and sequential action in direct forms that point to a behaviour (custom).¹⁹ Behaviour has components of formality and symbolism of ambivalence and contradiction when it comes to how meanings of rituals in Africa appear fixed in stylised bodily actions, forms and orders about religions, policies, objects and mental depositions. As much as in the beginning of my research it was tempting to design a comprehensive collation of definitions about ritual to show the paradoxes, contradictions and dilemmas that have thrived in the contemporary studies of ritual in Africa, my view of them was illusory. Disparities create boundaries as opposites that form orderly or disorderly formation, and formal or informal illusory associations that include judgement and forging strategies that at times have contained contrary accounts of translational interpretation (wa Thiong'o 1988; Bhabha 1994). Yet, this does not mean that the dichotomies and tensions between theories, systems, methods and ideas will not be discussed as they tend to be situated in the problems that will arise between what is known as ritual practice and what is known as performance art. I have, therefore, in different ways, questioned, rejected, considered and reconsidered several theories by the above-mentioned authors. When observing the wide range of anthropological research methodology and phenomena that several scholars - with perhaps exceptions to one or two - have called 'ritual' over the decades, it seems neither thoughts of defining ritual explicitly or arguing against this term would assist this thesis.²⁰

¹⁹ For instance, the term 'ritual' comes from the Latin *ritualis*, which pertains to religious usage *ritus*, a proven way ... of performing religious services or doing something, which pertains to rite (*ritus*) or custom (singular of *cōnsuētūdō* or custom, habit, become used or accustomed). "Custom", customary or common law is what traditional societies do, which does not preclude innovation and thus appear as formalised practices that are invariant, fixed, repetitive and non-changing. Take another example, the definition of the word 'ritual' in the *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Firstly, ritual is defined as "A religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order." Secondly, ritual is seen as "A prescribed order for performing a ritual ceremony, especially one characteristic of a particular religion or Church." Both meanings are descriptions based on religions or religious practice. The idea of ritual is provided with structure, order, ceremony and a sense of repetition to reinforce beliefs and values. The last definition recognises the definition of ritual as "A series of actions or type of behaviour regularly and invariably followed by someone." Behaviour in such religious descriptions refers to how a person or persons conduct themselves through movements, actions, dress, performances, thoughts and feelings.

²⁰ An example can be found in the work of Ronald Grimes, a scholar of ritual studies. See his appendix for his book, *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Anthropology

Anthropology reflects on a period based on 19th century research and studies characterised by human activity and, as the name implies, human study: ‘anthropologia’ derives from the combination of the Greek words ‘ánthrōpos’ (meaning a human) and ‘lógos’ (meaning study) (Ross 2018). Nineteenth-century anthropology has a long historical association with a discourse which assumes a connection between the genesis (‘origin’) and phullon (‘race’) development of art in Africa or ‘African art’ and the cultural historical development of performance studies, which assumes the role of ritual in performance in Africa. In the book, *The Invention of Africa: Genosis, Philosophy, and the Other of knowledge* (1988), African philosopher Valentine Y. Mudimbe refers to the ‘African Genesis’ or ‘gnosis’ as “a hypothesis about the epistemological locus of Africa’s inventions and its meanings for discourses of Africa” (Mudimbe 1988: 17). Mudimbe provides a post-colonial reading of history, theory, methodology and knowledge about the invention of Africa based on the relationship between the European and African continents. For Mudimbe (1988) anthropology is a marginal understanding of the European wider hypothesis about the classifications of beings and societies as ‘primitive’, ‘primitively’ or ‘savage’. The word ‘primitive’ is in historically synonymous with descriptions like ‘naïve’, ‘uncivilised’, ‘remote’, ‘authentic’ and ‘pure’. Primitive was invented as the image of Africa in order for the European (West) intellectual to maintain and justify its power and knowledge (Mudimbe 1988).

Mudimbe (1988) critiques anthropological models of ‘primitive art’ as it becomes the central symbol of ‘African art’. According to Mudimbe (1988: 10) “primitive is a judgement, an ideology, rather than a fact.” Ideology underscores that one of the basic features of anthropology is a consciousness that shows how much of the European interference is a product of the exploration of other cultures manifested in a subversive way; a central point that Mudimbe (1988: 12) calls “alterity”. For instance, the allocation of African objects to nineteenth century anthropology meant that aesthetics and functions became the symbols of art of Africa (Mudimbe 1988). “The objects – masks, vessels, clothes and figures – which perhaps are not art at all in their “native context,” became art by being given simultaneously an aesthetic form” (Mudimbe 1988: 10). This meant that common descriptions of ‘art’ from a European perspective are based on views and symbols of ‘Africa art’ often including ‘African objects’ as artefacts which are primitive, simply childlike, nonsensical in nature and interpretation and

with crudity of design and execution believed to be made with an innocent eye and lack of sophistication that is not quite right or not quite European art – painting, sculpture, printmaking and photography. Anthropology framed ‘African objects’ into a long historical association where ‘primitive’ equates with the negative or the lesser.

Drewal (1983: 17), for instance, attests that the descriptions like ritual reflects overlapping perspectives of structuralist/symbolic and aesthetic approaches: “The former is the hallmark of anthropology...; the latter is the hallmark of art history even though art historians have been profoundly affected by structural and symbolic approaches.” Both early nineteenth century approaches of anthropology and early art history in Africa are hallmarks of structuralism, amongst other researches in sociology, history and theology - which are methodologies that analyse underlying patterns of human culture, thinking, behaviour and experiences.²¹ The challenge with structuralism is that it focuses on the phenomenon of human life that it believes is not intelligible except through interrelations that constitute structure, local variation and laws of abstract structures (see Blackburn 2008). For the Western discourse, structuralism is a model scholarly thinking that has established research procedures and perspectives from Western academic subjects that place interest on communality, coherence, connectedness, collective conscience, and efficacy characterized the social order (Drewal 1983).

The West(ern) in my thesis, is viewed according to sociologist and cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall’s (1990) description of a capitalist and modern society; a concept that classifies, providing models of comparison which function as an ideology by making power dynamics. In “The West and the Rest: Discourse of Power” Hall (1990) aims to deconstruct “the West”, as a system of representation by ranking power and dominance over “the Rest”, as a system of cultural difference from “the West”. He points out that the binary emphasis between the West and the Rest emphasises European uniqueness as dominant and other cultures as inferior. Comparison, in this regard, is a construction of a language of speaking or representation that is informed by Western discourse. Hall (2006: 201) sets out that “...a discourse is simply a coherent or rational body of speech or writing; a speech, or a sermon.” This means that a discourse is a group of statements which provide a language for speaking about – i.e., a way of

²¹ Structuralism developed during the 1900s in Europe. Ferdinand de Saussure, a theorist in the structural linguistics, is one of the earliest users of structuralist modes of reasoning, which focused on the theory and literary analysis of the standard language of cultivation during 1928 – 1939 (Deleuze 2002). Other structuralist theorist include linguist Roman Jakobson, and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and anthropologist and ethnographer Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose work argued that human characteristics are the same (Doland 2009).

representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. A discourse is an ideological campaign that is set around European power and configurations of knowledge as the epitomes of the Western intellectual against which all other people are judged and compared (Mudimbe (1988: 20). Thus, the encounter with the West maintain focus on the tensions of power, inequalities and differences that the West created between itself and the other (Nemo 2005).

In my thesis, the theory of ‘other’ or ‘otherness’ constitutes issues about the silencing and policing of the ‘other’, ‘othered’ or ‘othering’²² by colonialism.²³ Part of a polemical discussion around othering, as suggested by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999) and related to views from Shelley Walia (2001), Edward Said (1978), Margery Fee (1989), Homi Bhabha (1994), amongst others, is that the term is a dialectical process because the colonising *Other* is established at the same time as its colonised *others* are produced as subjects. Africa has been ‘othered’ by the various unequal institutional arrangements of colonialism (Mudimbe 1988) and framed under ideologies that have resulted in various stereotypes, like the ‘exotic’ and ‘primitive’. The problem with stereotypes is that they make a story become the only story (Okeke-Agulu 2010; Adichie 2009). In my discussion of Siwani’s work, I sought to bring out how othering is at the core of academic work and the relationship between theory (as in discourse) and practice. I was focusing on the theoretical models that emerged through anthropology and influenced visual arts performances in the application of difference through performances.

Chapter Outline

Chapter one addresses the nuances found within the description of *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* (2014). In this chapter the encounter with Siwani’s performance is important to the ideas of death, mourning, burial and ceremony. These concepts are at the centre, because they pertain to lived experiences or narratives that are personal and collective accounts, structures and relationships with cultural practices. For the most part, this chapter examines the interrelationships and connections that ritual reinforces in traditional African religions and performance art, which are guided by the physical and spiritual relationship between the living

²² See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Triffin in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial literature* (1989)

²³ The dominance of colonialism is both dominance of physical space and the reformation of the ‘native’s’ minds as colonisers structures systems that embraces the physical, human and spiritual aspects of experience (Mudimbe 1941). Dominance is based on the fact that the ‘native’ could be used as an economic trade or exchange in any political currency, for example slavery in the United States of America and Europe. This means, as a way of ensuring that the face value of organisation, colonialism had to be arranged carefully.

and ancestors. The question asked is: What does it mean that Siwani is performing ‘secretive’ values in a gallery space?

Chapter two outlines secrecy as a theme in Siwani’s practice and writing. The idea reflects on the aspects of secrecy in the role of ritual, which encompasses the meaning and power of ritual speech and objects used in ritual performances. Secrecy is implemented as the power that lies between revealing and concealing. This is an important complex duality that Siwani confronts as a *isangoma* and artist, which it makes the process of art an essential encounter, analysis, trace, interpretation and evaluation of ritual in performance art. In this chapter, I focus on performance and photographic series *Uthengisa unoKrwece eLunxwemene* and *iGagasi*.

Chapter three looks at Siwani’s use of African historiography and the interpretation of historical narratives through ritual in performance art. I analyse Siwani’s performance *Zemk’inkomo magwalandini* (2015). This is done through observing the trace of ritual. I explore the idea of the trace of ritual and language as continuities of ritual spaces and performance. Therefore, the use of isiXhosa is applied mainly to the cultural and linguistic analysis, meaning and power of language in ritual performance. Siwani applies isiXhosa cultural knowledges that include oral transmissions, translations, idioms and ritual experiences. Siwani’s work shows that language is far from being a neutral instrument of communication placed at the disposal of culture. Siwani’s isiXhosa language worldview includes issues such as identity, race, gender, sexuality, intersectionality, geography, private and public space or ritual, amongst others. These are social and political perspectives within the South African historical context.

Africans, in different and diverse regions, continue to believe in ritual as a way of communication with eternal and ubiquitous ancestors that reaffirm the life force of the living. In Africa, and throughout the African diaspora, are not monolithic but include a wide range of expressions and continuation with different experiences. There are no singular experiences of ritual shared by individuals of the same community (see, Somé 1993; Monteiro and Wall 2011; Freeman 2017). My thesis attempts to broaden the knowledge base for understanding the creative use of ritual in performance art, which is focused on Siwani’s concerns with ritual rites and performance. In my analysis, the outcome of ritual in Siwani’s work is much stronger than the performance art – blurring boundaries between art and life.

CHAPTER ONE: *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*

The chapter starts by narrating a personal encounter with Buhlebezwe Siwani's works, a live performance entitled *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* (Figure. 2).

1.1 *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* (2014)

I enter a room with a dim reddish lighting, which is a part of the Michaelis Galleries space at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa. The main purpose of my visit is to see a performance by South African visual artist Buhlebezwe Siwani. The performance is entitled *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* – “mourning or a time of mourning; I live with the dead”. *Inzilo* or *ukuzile* is the process of mourning a family member's death and it is not an easy period. The issues of mourning, loss, grief and bereavement are both a private and public moment that is experienced, handled and treated differently in diverse places and cultures in Africa. In the gallery, Siwani's performance is a visual expression of her body as the subject and object of art.

Before Siwani's performance begins, a sharp aroma of *imphepho* (incense) is the primary incitement to enter the gallery space. *Imphepho* (*Helichrysum odoratissimum* or species) is an African plant or herb that is dried, burnt and the smoke used as incense during different rituals in amaXhosa culture (Hutchings 2007; Zulu 2016). It is believed that the plant has powers embedded in it, which are associated with ancestral spirits and rituals like cleansing, purifying and protecting the physical and spiritual bodies (Hutchings 2007: 203; Dold and Cock 2012: 73; Zulu 2016: 61). For example, Zulu (2016: 61) explains that amongst the Hlubi people in the Eastern Cape, the smoke and scent of *imphepho* evokes ancestors, which invites the spirits of those in the spiritual realm. *Imphepho* has powers that cleanse, purify and take away negative energies by protecting people from evil spirits (Bongela 2001; Hutchings 2007; Zulu 2016: 61). The burning of *imphepho* is an important element at diverse transcultural events and ceremonial functions, and at the inception of Siwani's performance.

Inside the gallery, Siwani is kneeling facing the wall, with her back to the audience – as if waiting for everyone to enter and fill the room. There is a rectangular shaped pile of soil in the middle of the floor. Next to the soil is a candle on a holder with enough space to hold a Lion matchbox.²⁴ There is a wooden bench, on the right side from where I am standing in the gallery.

²⁴ The Lion Match Company (Pty) Ltd is an iconic South African consumer brand.

On top of it is an old small television with a boxing match and an advertisement from a high fashion show playing on it. IsiZulu or isiXhosa traditional songs provide a background sound. On the opposite far end of the gallery space, a pile of mattresses, about five or six of them, are stacked on each other. On the top mattress sits a black textured cloth, leopard-skin fabric and a broom.

Siwani begins her performance with an incantation or ritual speech that sounds like a prayer: *umthandazo ofana noBawo wethu Osemazulwini* – A prayer with a tone like “Our Father in Heaven...” – words in isiZulu or isiXhosa. (The incantations, which might not even be a prayer, I describe in this way because my understanding of prayer is influenced by my Christian background).²⁵ *Umthandazo* (prayer), for me, is a way of worshipping God the Holy Spirit, whereas, from the smell of *imphepho*, I am drawing connections to my cultural background as a South African Xhosa. In a sense, prayer without understanding is subject to different meanings, such as Christians prayer in tongues (or Glossolalia) - when a person speaks in an unknown language or speech-like syllables that are believed to be divine a language that carries spiritual gifts. During Siwani’s performance, I simply cannot come to terms with the intentions of the ritual speech or ‘prayer’ for that matter.

Thus, I immediately question Siwani’s incantations: *Sekutheni enqula abaphantsi?* (Why is she evoking her ancestors?). *Ukunqula* or *nqula* is also called “intoning” or “incantations” (Bloch 1986). *Ukunqula* is an intimate communication with ancestors, or an important place of establishing contact with the deceased members of the lineage (Mndende 2002: 44-45). This means that *ukunqula* is ritual speech to ancestors, because their praise names or clan names – *izinqulo* and *izibongo* (performative utterances) – are used or called, which are the same names they had before they died. Mlisa (2009: 68) explains that *ukunqula* is composed of “dance and singing clan praises” or “saying traditional praises.” Such praises (*izinqula*), according to Mndende (2002: 44) are always coupled with a sacrifice or offering made to the ancestors by the living. Sacrifices include several ritual speeches, utterances, objects and animals (ox, goats, sheep or chickens) that convey meanings in relation to specific ritual occasions as requested by the ancestors.

Siwani’s performance uses ritual speech to evoke the ancestors. As much as she seems to be

²⁵ I am connecting my understanding of prayer with important forms of worship like thanksgiving, sacrifices and offering.

revealing a space in which the incantation may be widely known, however, its contents are concealed in the dynamics of language or *izinqulo*. I carry on observing as Siwani holds a lit candle, while she continues with the incantation. She then approaches the mattresses and puts on the textured black cloth, which is a transparent dress that is decorated with small black buttons. She climbs onto the mattresses and starts folding the leopard print fabric into a triangular shaped pillow (like a military flag). Siwani walks with the folded cloth in hand to the pile of soil. She then continually folds and buries the fabric many times in the soil. During this time, the incantation has turned into a conversation that is only known to the performer. Siwani seems to have entered a dialogue with her ancestors. Continuously, Siwani talks while burying the fabric and lying on her back on the soil with the fabric under her head like a pillow. At this point, her body and the fabric are covered under the pile of soil.

In this final stage of her performance, Siwani is lying on her back on the pile of earth, facing upwards, with her eyes closed. Siwani looks as if she is dead, because she represents a moment of stillness that projects a corpse. She is giving death the meaning of life, and life, the meaning of death. This is a relationship that is not to be separated because it opens a space that converses with the physical and spiritual relationship between the individual, ancestors and society during a death ritual. Death is the symbolic physical separation of the flesh from the living (Mndende 2002: 6), however, in traditional African religions death is regarded as the transitional stage to the spiritual world. A spiritual world is a realm of ancestors, which Mndende (2002) and Mlisa (2009) describes as a continuation and an opening to another life that is considered to be powerful, holy and eternal. This means that Siwani personifies death. Her personification is an embodied experience of accepting death as life and life as death, especially since Siwani is not dead. Thus, when she leaves the performance space, what is left on the soil is an imprint of her body, a trace of what has occurred. The performance is an open secret that there is a death and burial taking place because I cannot shake off this now intense feeling of having attended a ritual.

The above description is my experience and expression of a live art performance by visual artists Buhlebezwe Siwani. *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafuleyo* is part of a group exhibition *Between Subject and Object: human remains at the interface of art and science* (2014), curated by Josephine Higgins, Kathryn Smith and Penny Siopis. The exhibition explored the ethical imperatives of working with human remains at the interface of art and science, which accompanied the *Medical Humanities in Africa Conference* (from 28–29 August 2014). (There

were actual human limbs and organs displayed in the space, courtesy of the Pathology Learning Centre, UCT). In the project *Between Subject and Object* – including the panel discussion, film screening and catalogue that were part of the exhibition and conference – death is a universal topic that is incorporated as a primary concern. Death in general is treated as a substance of the human form that is no longer in the living body or linked to the living body. The idea of death is in the physical body because it is defined as the end of life, or the end of breathing (Luper 2009). Death, loss and pain coincide with immortality (Broome 1993). A person's attitude towards immortality can depend in part on one's attitude towards death and the loss of life (Nagel 1970).

Between Subject and Object invites visual artists to explore the encounter with death as a personal, intently felt and shared experience between the performer and the audience.²⁶ In the exhibition, the issue of the “real” is expressed either through objects, performance, performer, photography, film, science or other modes of interpretations that are between the performer and audience and those that are perceived to be a particular kind of “truth telling”. In the works of the artists, death is individually performed and represented, while also interpreted as a collective of a worldview that is much larger than the arts. For example, the curatorial statement places emphasis on the “continuum, or sliding scale, between the subject-ness of the deceased individual and the object-ness of the corpse” (Higgins, Smith, Siopis 2014). This means that death, in such a framing of the “subject-ness” and “object-ness”, becomes a heuristic process. The concept of death in this exhibition challenges the “fixed” frameworks around departure from the physical body, the end of life and breath, dead bodies, gestures and fragmented human bodies. It also challenges the attitudes towards death, and the social assumptions that consider death a harmful, bad or evil thing when a person dies from an accident, sickness or killed.

However, how much is really known about the state of death, beyond the physical body? Unless one dies, what is death? In other words, does it mean that so long as a person has life, s/he has not yet died? Does death have life or is there life in death? Does it mean that life and death are the same, or which one is real or defines the other? These are some of the questions I think make death a transformable consciousness that is beyond the physical body or physical thinking, feeling and emotions. My thesis will show that the significance of death is central to

²⁶ Artists in the exhibition include a performance by Igshaan Adams, entitled *Please Remember II* (2013), Pieter Hugo's work *Monwabisi Mtana* from *The Bereaved series* (2005), *Death Mask* (2000) by Sue Fox, Colin Richard's photographs of *Veil I – Veil III* (2008), amongst others.

Siwani's life and work, as it becomes evident in the following sections that her biography is an embodiment of ancestors. Hence when dealing with death as a concept, Siwani retains psychological connections and continuities across representations of time, place and the space where her ritual performances take place. In the following section, I present the background of the artist – Buhlebezwe Siwani – in order to understand her artistic practice and the context of her using ritual in performance art.

1.2 Siwani, the *isangoma* and artist

Buhlebezwe Siwani, as a performance and multimedia artist in the visual arts, draws upon a variety of cultural materials and narratives to ask essential questions about rituals. On her website, it is stated that she was raised in Johannesburg, but describes her background as that of a “nomadic nature” with her upbringing in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces in South Africa (Siwani 2016).²⁷ As an artist, Siwani predominately works in site-specific performance and installation which also spans photographic stills and video performances: “She uses the videos and the stills as a stand-in for her body, which is physically absent from the space” (Siwani 2016). She explores different personal experiences that incorporate issues of race, class, identity, violence, sexuality, gender, and intersectionality. Siwani's work reflects on personal experiences that are located within public and private spaces in the broader contemporary visual art context in South Africa, Africa and internationally. A few weeks after my experience of *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*, I learnt Siwani is *isangoma*, which filled me with the need to enquire about what it means that she is performing rituals in a gallery space.

Delving through interviews conducted with Siwani brings to light a common thread; as a main point of entry to her performance work it is important to know that she is both an *isangoma* and artist. The interviews include, for example, Kwanele Sosibo's “A sangoma connects the arts of performance and of healing with a search for identity” (2016); Malibongwe Tyilo “Meet Buhlebezwe Siwani, Artist, Sangoma, Womanist” (2016); Lwandile Fikeni “Here and now” (2016) and Layla Leiman “Buhlebezwe Siwani: We are woke, we are lit” (2016). As *isangoma*,

²⁷ In trying to understand her ‘nomadic nature’, Siwani does not state the reasons for growing up in different places and spaces. Rather, I am left to speculate because it is without question that the apartheid regime had a role to play in the different movements of people and families in South Africa: for jobs, land dispossession, displacement, banishment etc. Notably, the history of forced removals is another issue that has known no rest in South Africa because of land stolen from black people by the white oppressors.

Siwani states: “Definitely, I can’t separate being a sangoma from being an artist” (Matakala 2017); “I’m not first a sangoma and I’m not first an artist. Those things happen harmoniously and they happen together” (Fikeni 2016: 7); “One cannot exist without the other” (Leiman 2016). While these interviews are conducted for different interests, and with differences in approach and artworks discussed, the position of being *isangoma* and artist seems to frame who the artist is and what she does.

Siwani holds a Master of Fine Art from the University of Cape Town, Michaelis, a self-directed, studio-based (or practice-based) research degree. Her thesis is entitled *Imfihlo* (2015), meaning “The Secret, or what is hidden” (Siwani 2015: 32). Siwani pursues research, writing and developing skills that encompass a creative body of work, analysis and contextualisation of visual arts practice. She (2015: 16) explains her approach as a journey that involves rites of passage and rituals centered on culture and tradition. A journey is a process that can be reflective of historic, present and future concerns about cultures and traditions, in the contexts of South African religious practices. This means that Siwani’s (2015) position as *isangoma* and artist compels her to consciously consider her spiritual journey as the emic and etic experience (spiritually, physically, socially and emotionally). In her work, she includes a wide-range of amaXhosa events, ceremony and idioms in which she connects ideas and images from personal ritual experiences, thus, producing dualities that are the result of her process as *isangoma* and artist.

Like Siwani, in my thesis, I do not pose a division between *isangoma* and artist or artist and *isangoma*. This choice has a contradiction within itself because at times in my thesis and argumentation, the idea of an artist is one which should maintain a critical distance with *isangoma* and vice versa. Positionality here, even though it can be discussed in separate theories,²⁸ seems to define the nature of Siwani’s creative perspectives. By creative perspectives, I am drawing attention to the artist asking essential questions about human conditions that include historical, cultural, traditional, national, economical, and so forth. How does Siwani’s position and location influence or affect the diverse perspectives of ritual experiences which constitute the everyday social connections and conditions, especially when it comes to death and burial? And how does the use of ritual in performance art by an individual

²⁸ For example, when it comes to positionality and *isangoma* see Wendy Urban-Mead in Subjectivity and Structure: Anthropologies of the Workings of Spirit in Africa (2011), in *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue canadienne des études africaines* 45(1), 129-138; HeJin Kim in Positionality and Privilege in Spirituality: I am a Healer; Eleanor Ross Traditional Healing in South Africa *Social Work in Health Care* 46(2):15-33

– for other individuals and her community influence or affect the creative nature brought on by ceremonial treatment of interpersonal narratives? Both questions are within the context of religious, historical, governmental and political issues within the South African context of traditional African religious healing practices and beliefs.

1.2.1 What is *isangoma*?

Izangoma, historically, are legally recognised under the South African Constitution (1997) and its Bill of Rights as traditional healers (Mndende 2002). *Izangoma* are highly revered, well regarded and respected as religious leaders (men and women) who hold the very important roles of healing and medicine in (black) South African societies.²⁹ As traditional healers *izangoma* effectively take the role of directing harmony during birth, death, physical and spiritual danger, illnesses, misfortunes and narrating history (Cumes 2004). *Isangoma* is called or consulted in situations of ailments in the family, conflict in families and communities, celebrations and festivals and serve as important eminence in ritual (Kendal 1999). The role of *izangoma* is to mediate between the spiritual and living realm (Mndende 2002). Ancestors communicate through *izangoma*, whose primary duty is to use rituals in order to provide answers to spiritual situations.³⁰

The word *sangoma* or *ngoma* in isiXhosa and isiZulu means ‘drum’, or the sound of the drum that brings forth spirits (Naidoo and Nyundu 2016). In early studies of isiZulu traditional healing, *ingoma* is interpreted as the idiom that has a specific association with the stick known as *izibulo* (Berglund 1976: 186). *Isangoma* healing practices define ritual, and the emphasis on song, dance, speech and music during ritual practices. Healing, traditional healing or indigenous healing amongst *izangoma* is an umbrella concept that encompasses the different styles that are used by traditional healers with diverse training and expertise (Mokgobi 2014: 28). The word “healing” can be derived from “whole” (Graham 1990), which embraces the physical and spiritual aspects of humanity as portrayed in relation to isiXhosa and isiZulu terms *ukuphilisa* (to heal), *ukuphiliswa* (to be healed) and *uphilile* (to be whole) (Edwards 2010: 211). A person entering *ukuthwasa* initiation, enters healing: “a new moon and becoming a new person” (Mlisa 2009: 6).

Therefore, a calling (*ubizo*) – the vision, song and dreams – is different for each individual as

²⁹ See for example Mbiti (1975); Kendall (1999); Denis (2006)

³⁰ See, Mbiti (1975); Mlisa (2009)

the process of *intwasa* (an inflected form of *ukuthwasa*) is associated with a family's ancestry. A person with a calling is directed by the ancestors to undergo a period of apprenticeship under a qualified diviner (Edwards 2010). Mndende (2002) attests that the role of the person with a calling is to accept the call by ancestors, which produces *ukuvuma* or *vuma* (to agree, accept, promise, confirm or submit), before practising any form of healing. Accepting the call to *thwasa* is to accept *ubizo*, which indicates the death as a shedding of the old person in order to embrace the new person who enters healing. It means that a person has accepted the call to be healed, *imvuma kufa* – accepting the sickness and the call to heal, and *imvuma kufa* – accepting or admitting death as a form of bringing holistic healing. For one to heal, it means listening and respecting communication with the ancestors. When the person rejects the call, that is when afflictions occur, and nothing will seem to go right. For example, the delaying and rejection to enter *ukuthwasa* leads to traumatic experiences that are described as crisis. Mndende and Mlisa both associate the crisis with *inkathazo*, an ancestral sickness associated with afflictions such as psychic and mystic experiences, accidents, deaths and endless lawsuit. *Inkathazo* means trouble, and indeed, involves crisis as signs that resemble hallucination and illusions, which are similar to madness (Mndende 2002; Mlisa 2009; Hirst 2005). *inkathazo* should not be misrepresented with being possessed or crazy (Van Nieuwehuisen 1974), rather that it resembles madness, in the form of hallucinations and illusions.

Traditional healing encompasses those who function as either diviner or spiritualist (*igqirha*: *isangoma*) and herbalist (*ixhwele*: *inyanga*), or both (*amagqirha*) based on a combination of naturally derived medicine and rituals that include drumming, dancing and singing (Mtuze 2004). An *inyanga* or herbalist does not divine but focuses on the use of herbs and the functions of the human body to make diagnoses based on physical and mental symptoms.³¹ However, there are diviners who also treat their patients with herbs and other traditional medicine like animal fat. Other complex positions of traditional healing include, for example, *isangoma samathambo* or bone throwers, *isangoma sesibuko* or mirror diviners and *isangoma sabalozi* or whistling spirit or ancestral diviners (Edwards 2010). There is also an *amatola* (rain doctor), *amagqirha omlambo* (those called by the river) or *amagqirha ehlathi* (those called by the forest) (Mndende 2002: 66). Mlisa (2009), for example, trained as *umthandazeli* or *umprofethi* (a faith healer) (or *abathandazi* in the plural – spiritual mediators) before becoming *igqirha*,

³¹ Anthropologists Alfred T. Bryant (1970), Alex-Ivar Berglund (1976) and S. A. Thorpe (1993) agree that approximately 95 percent of *isangoma* are women whereas *inyanga* are usually men who are apprenticed to a practising doctor, sometimes an older relative, and use mainly herbal medicines (Edwards 2010).

which she says, “support[s] the African world view of one universe” or syncretism (Mlisa 2009: xii). The role of faith healers has a strong Christian influence, which becomes evident in chapter two.

In isiXhosa, *izangoma* are described as the illuminating light (*uyeza mhlophe*), in which the symbol and colour of white with purity of the spiritual realm (Mndende 2002; Mlisa 2009). Purity of the ancestors is associated with whiteness of bones (*amathambo amhlophe*) of the deceased (Mndende 2002). *Amathambo amhlophe* and *amthambo athethayo* (bones that speak) are associated with the material culture and the sacred status of the formulation or reformulation of ambiguous links between the living and ancestor. White represents light, hence *isangoma* is called *umntu omhlophe* (literally translated as a white person), and the process of becoming *isangoma* is known as *ingulo emhlophe* (white sickness or *ukuthwasa*) or *ukufa okumhlophe* (call to divination). *Ukuthwasa*, *invuma kufa*, *ukufa ohumhlophe* or *onsholungu* is a spiritual journey that reveals itself in diverse ways (Sityana, cited in Mndende 2002: 65), in that, it culminates rituals that mark the function of rites of passage. According to Mlisa (2009: 270) “rites of passage represent the transformative passages through which *umkhwetha* [initiate/novice] in training must pass through.” It means that rites of passage are performed during *ukuthwasa* to mark the transformation of a person from the time they accepted the calling (*ubizo*).

Ukuthwasa, for example, is seen as a transformative concept from a pre-liminal to a liminal social position, state or place (van Gennep 1909; Turner 1968, 1969; Turner 1976). Liminal or liminality is taken from cultural anthropologist Victor Turner to describe the notions betwixt and between that have liminal qualities or situated events like death and life, or day and night (Turner 1985: 113). For instance, the process of *ukuthwasa* is associated “betwixt and between” principle. Mlisa (2009) interprets this betwixt and between as a dual position of *isangoma* that is perceived as the reality. According to Mlisa (2009: 272) “Because they are mysterious, powerful, and liminal beings as Turner suggests, they can be sources of renewal, innovation and creativity.” Liminality represents the complex nature of time from birth to death, which is not determined by human-beings.³²

That is why for Siwani (2015), “death” is the liminal state of her position as *isangoma*: between

³² The notion of time represents the ambivalent social zone, or a boundary or corridor between two different places. Hence, one can conclude that the three phrases created by Turner are phases of the passage of ritual – pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal.

life and death. She is seen in the liminal space, and thus, as a rule, she cannot “encounter dead bodies unless the blood of a four-legged animal is spilt after attending a funeral (Siwani 2015: 72). As a result, in an interview by Tyilo (2016), when Siwani is asked why she cannot attend funerals, she explains that she is not allowed to be around dead bodies because they represent spiritual enigma. What this means, she continues (Tyilo 2016), is that “we’re spiritual carriers, so it doesn’t work for us to be in the same space”. This can mean that “liminal”, for a person who lives with the dead – *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* – is defined by time; for instance, a time of situation and event, a time to mourn, a time to plan the next situation, or a time to rest. Such situations are confronted by ritual processes that mark different liminal positioning, “implies traces of the person that is departed” (Siwani 2015: 72), especially about the process of *ukuthwasa* (chapter two).

1.3 The space of mourning in *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*

Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo focuses on the realm of death as a principal sphere to which the considerable purpose of ritual performance rites applies. Siwani calls the performance “an imagined mourning space” (Siwani 2015: 72), but not totally foreign to the actual process of women’s experiences. In her own words, Siwani (2015: 72) says that “I began by remembering what happens in black homes when an immediate family member passes away” (Siwani 2015: 72). Socially, amaXhosa mourning, grieving and bereavement processes encompass various rites and rituals in diverse communities. Mourning is a psychological experience and expression of deep grief, sorrow and pain for a loved one who has died (Weizman & Kamm 1987; Pearsal 2001). The thoughts and feelings of loss are an emotional suffering and reality of the little preparation or no preparation of death. As soon as a husband dies, the mourning process begins for the wife and the close relatives in the family, which especially means taking the position of widowhood for the wife. The beginning of mourning, according to scholar Happy Setsiba (2012: 23) includes a chief mourner (the widow or widower) occupying a sacred mourning physical space in their home. Setsiba’s text focuses on the phenomenological study investigating mourning ritual experiences of urban township communities in South Africa. During mourning, Setsiba (2012: 23) explains that the widow will wear all black garments (or green or blue, depending on the culture) that cover the female form. The mourning garment is specifically designed for the duration of *inzilo* (the ritual of mourning). Children and close family members of the deceased will wear a small black pin (like buttons), or even shave their heads, to show the period of mourning.

Studies estimate that the mourning period for widows in South Africa is usually a year following the death of the husband (Maloka 1998; Setsiba 2012; Somhlaba and Wait 2008:354; Bongela 2001). The mourning ritual processes differs from one culture to the other, however, not significantly distanced, especially when it comes to the focus on respect that the widow has to maintain during the mourning period. For example, in both AmaZulu, amaXhosa, Basotho and vhaVenda, mourning (*ukuzila*) is a process for females, because it shows respect for the deceased husband (Ndlovu 2013). Mourning is a sign of abstinence (Pauw 1975), and in that way the widow honours. The widow is restrained from social activities like chores, dress, diet, routine or daily activities and even sexual contact. She must avoid eye contact with people at all cost and not greet until she is greeted. The mourning period dictates how a widow should avoid speaking loudly and exposing her back to people, because her back is said to give off bad luck (Rosenblatt and Nkosi 2007). This is because the duration of *ukuzila* is given the symbol of contamination, because death is considered a highly intensified form of pollution emanating from the corpse (Hutchings 2010: 198).³³ *Isinyama* in isiXhosa is a show of death (*isithunzi esimnyama* - a black shadow), which is the representation or metaphor of a death that has befallen a family.

Death is believed to be the mark of evil or bad things or situations (Setsibe 2012: 4), hence the widow is believed to carry a shadow of death and she must not contaminate other people with it (Ndlovu 2013). During mourning, darkness hovers in the emotions of the mourners as death is considered a dark moment of loss and pain. That is why after the year of mourning, a cleansing ritual is performed, and the widow takes off the *inzilo* ritual garments. The cleansing ritual includes washing with herbs for the widow to take away the bad luck and remove contamination with death (Mndende 2002; Manyedi 2003: 78). The action of purification evokes the state of purity as a symbolic moral or spiritual practice of healing and restoration (Hutchings 2007; Mlisa 2009: 89). Death is not only seen as a position of danger to the relatives but a source of pollution to the society, and in relation to the importance of washing bad luck, which is a process of making ceremoniously or ritually clean to get rid of unwanted spirits (Ngubane 1977; Hutchings 2007: 198).

When incense is burnt, it purifies the air and help disperse calming properties (Hutchings 2010: 213). Smoking and inhaling, scholar Anne Hutchings in “Ritual Cleansing, Incense and the

³³ According to Hutchings (2007: 190) “The meaning of the verb pollute (p. 2760) includes ‘to make morally corrupt’, ‘to violate purity or sanctity’, ‘to desecrate or to defile’, ‘to make physically impure, foul, filthy, dirty or tainted and ‘more recently, to contaminate, especially with reference to the environment’.”

Tree of Life - Observations on Some Indigenous Plant Usage in Traditional Zulu and Xhosa Purification and Burial Rites” (2007) explains that *imphepho* is used to give a clear mind and air for the ancestors, to safeguard the home against evil spirits during the night and to be used in cleansing rites to purify the body before sleeping. Hutchings’s paper reflects on field work of collecting and identifying plants that are commonly used by amaZulu and amaXhosa purification and burial rites, or as incense in amaZulu and amaXhosa rituals. Smoking and inhaling of *imphepho* is better understood in the meaning and role of ritual with reference to ancestral communication and well-being (Hutchings 2010). Such communication denotes everyday life experiences like modes of testimonials, prayer, spoken word, divination and ancestors. In the previous mentioned, ritual can manifest in diverse forms of dance, song, symbolic harmony and silence. *Imphepho* is not to be taken for granted because it can be used as an offering in ritual processes, amongst various other characteristics like tobacco, snuff or an accumulating array of bottles of brandy and vodka depending on the requirements from ancestors or in cases where people are giving thanks to the ancestors (Wreford 2005). This makes *imphepho* a significant medium of communication and a good medicine for the communication with an ancestral atmosphere.

Thus, during *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*, the scent of *imphepho* in a gallery environment has a powerful effect that creates what might be needed to enhance communication with ancestors. For example, Mndende (2002: 5) explains that

Looking at the body language of those who utter those special words and also the nature of such speeches, it is fundamental to find out the meaning and purpose of such speech-acts which are called *amasiko* or ritual sacrifice from a specifically African context.

It is my understanding that there are special oral transmissions of ritual knowledge and communicating with ancestors in all practices of *amasiko* (Cook 1930; McAllister 1998). Most importantly, ritual speech or formal speech (*ukuthetha*) provides a profile of distinguished formalised speaking in different ritual settings (Mndende 2002: 7). I observe serious healing principles in Siwani’s performance, a system based on the combination of incantation, candle light, *imphepho*, soil and cloth. As objects of performance that have been placed in a gallery, the senses of smell, sight and sound connects the physical and spiritual links of emotions, feelings and memories of a ritual experience. If this was an intention, Siwani is able to create an environment that incorporates much needed creativity to stir up sense and feelings that I might or might not have wanted to experience in the gallery. Bongela (2001: 15), for example,

mentions that it is alleged ancestors respond quickly when communication is made by *amagqirha* because of their specific training during *ukuthwasa*. This can be true because traditional healers use of *imphepho* and ritual speech is again powerful, especially when the presence of the ancestors causes bad dreams and sickness through offence or failure for their family members or communities to carry out certain required rites. This means that in the processes of rituals, respect is important when handling any medicines and communication or the process will not have the desired effect.

1.3.1 Subverting mourning: a ritual in performance art

There is a scholarship that has highlighted the marginalisation and stigmatization of women's experiences during the mourning process of a deceased husband (Aborampah 1999; Manyedi, Koen and Greff 2003). Recently scholars in psychology Makondelele Sarah Radzilani (2010) and Seretlo-Rangata ML (2017) reports on the emotional experiences of widows in Venda, in the Botlokwa community in the Limpopo Province in South Africa. Both authors reflect on *ukuzila* and the negative context for widows as a reflection of bad omen of death, sadness and loneliness. Similarly, Grace Akol (2011) and Cecilia Ndlovu (2013) believes that negative experiences by widows during mourning in African and the world-wide are influence by culture and tradition, which is contained in patriarchal gender roles. Akol's study focuses on amaXhosa, while Ndlovu focuses on AmaZulu. In Akol (2011) and Ndlovu's (2013) text, the widow's perceptions and experiences of mourning rituals are explored with regards towards gender discrimination, stigmatisation and the treatment of isolation from society, which results in challenges and consequences widows experience during the mourning period. For example, in her description of amaXhosa, Akol's findings indicate that most widows go through mourning ritual mainly to show respect for their deceased husband; so that the dignity of the family and clan is maintained.

Siwani's funerary dress is transparent and her body (bra and underwear) is exposed under the dress. She seems to question the idea of the widow concealed in black clothing for a year, thus creating an interpretation of a mourning ritual that indicates the contrary image to the structure of widowhood. Ndlovu, for example, points out that reluctance to wear the mourning dress in the younger generation or to not wear it for the period expected by society is interpreted as disrespect to the community, grieving family and the deceased husband. Signs of disrespect are contrary to cultural norms, and thus, regarded as rebellion and neglect (Bongela 2001). That is why Siwani subverts the normal processes of mourning by creating an interpretation that is

questioning or contradicting the conditioning concepts of culture. For example, Radzilani says that a Tsivenda woman is expected to comply and accept the prescriptions of the mourning period whether they agree with the rituals or not. The cultural demands and expectation places widowhood as a form of submission, compliance and obedience to the cultural restrictions, discrimination and exclusion against widowhood in the name of respecting culture. Her interpretation questions the very idea of respecting culture and traditions as a woman.

In Siwani's performance of *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* she kneels on a wooden bench, which in amaXhosa culture is used by men. The bench always sits on the right side of the room, especially in common areas like the sitting room and kitchen. When a husband/man has died, and during the preparation of the funeral and burial, the bench is placed on the left-hand side of the room where the coffin is in the home of the deceased. The wooden bench is also reserved for visitors who have come to support the family of the deceased. One can say that Siwani's use of the bench, is a form of disrespect of the gender positions that surround cultural values. During the mourning period, the grieving widow is obligated or forced to sit on a mattress on the floor. The period spent on the mattress is a week, if not more depending on the nature of the husband's death. Sitting on the mattress meets the cultural expectations and respect for her deceased husband. Failure to do so will bring shame to the family and the in-laws will insult her and immediately disown her after the husband's burial.

In figure 3, for example, Siwani's posture on the bench and mattresses is upright and stern. She seems to represent *isithunzi* as one with dignity and self-worth, thus, placing herself in the position of a higher rank, majesty, pride and regal. In Siwani's photographs, the gallery space (room) is dark, as the candle seems to provide the only light, which is usually the case from the day of the passing of the deceased, a candle will be lit, until the day of the funeral and burial. On the wall, the same light makes shadows or shades (*isithunzi*) of Siwani's body (Figure. 2 and 3 a & b). *Isithunzi* (shadow) also means the dignified image that the deceased has left in the community, which often results in a very respectful funeral and burial ritual to highlight the legacy (*isithunzi*) the deceased is leaving behind. The mattresses could be the support that the widow receives until the day of the funeral and burial ritual, when the body is concealed with soil. According to the Higgins, Smith and Siopis (2015: 3), the mattresses delineate a zone of earth, as the artist's body embodies sites of death. In a sense, the mattresses raise and elevate Siwani's body for her to see the earth (soil) from a higher position. That is why, in Figure 4, Siwani is with the earth. It seems to me that because Siwani's body is the crucial

communicative instrument or medium in her performance art, both the imagination and memory are at play in all aspects of her identities as an artist and *isangoma*. The following section asks the question: What is the meaning of death and burial ritual that is left to the imagination?

1.4 Death left to the imagination

In Siwani's case, as the death and burial ritual have been brought into a gallery, as an imagined space of mourning, it should not mean that imagination is a make-believe or fantasy. Her imaginative performance makes ritual a personal and self-reflective investment in narrative forms of art. Creativity of narratives through death and burial ritual can be considered as processes of visual, performance, artist, social and cultural practices of real everyday actions. Not only that, imagination enables a sense of reality that Siwani constructs in the gallery where she seems to address the very manner in which death and burial presents opportunity for those present to grieve individually and communally. By making use of the imagination, for example, the process of Siwani's spiritual journey is important, as it remains the question on whether a death ritual can be left to the imagination as art is, and whether remembering can be used as a foresightedness of rituals. It can be argued, indeed, that imagination and remembering are the essence of a spiritual journey.

In Siwani's case, death and burial ritual have been brought into a gallery as an imagined space of mourning. Recreating a space might allow the presentation of "artistic" actions of remembering what happens during a death ritual, however, if Siwani is aware of the death and burial process, then recreation, or an imagined process, is the making of something real and important. My analysis in this section is to explore what may seem imaginable as a real experience of ritual in performance art. An imaginative performance makes ritual a personal and self-reflective investment in narrative forms of art. Creativity of narratives through death and burial rituals can be considered as processes of visual, performance, artist, social and cultural practices of real everyday actions.

Not only that, but imagination enables a sense of reality in what Siwani has constructed in the gallery. She seems to address the very way death and burial presents opportunity for those present to grieve individually and communally. Communal grieving has the power to send the deceased to their resting place and be with the ancestors. During a funeral ritual, the community provides support, brings healing to those that are hurting and experiencing loss. Siwani not

only created an imagined space for the dead and the living to meet in the gallery where *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* was performed, but she also existed in the spiritual space of and with the dead – occupying two spaces at once – that she introduces to her audience.

It is now my understanding that participating in *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* is a mutually inclusive and exclusive process involving the levels of life, death, loss, grief, mourning and closure as significant and powerful emotion. This is because the idea of death and ancestral power stirs up feelings that I might not have wanted to experience in the gallery. The ritual is a response to the needs of the physical and spiritual worlds both for Siwani and for me as an audience member. Although I might not be able to relate to the feeling or feelings that Siwani has during *Inzilo; ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*, the imagined space of ritual is an expressive, experimental, experiential or creative space of physical, mental, bodily processes associated with death and burial as a complex event. Moreover, mourning that is left to the imaginary is death not put to rest by Siwani personally.

For instance, in the work of Jelili Atiku, another visual artist, performance art serves political concerns of human rights and justice, and the consequences of crises, abuse, conflict and wars (Atiku 2016). Based in Lagos, Nigeria, Atiku draws upon a multi-disciplinary process, making use of a variety of material that includes sculpture, installation, drawing, video, photography and performance as being the central media of live and body art.³⁴ Atiku's performances are site-specific expressions that explore political, social, personal and economic issues that are current and relevant to his time. He creates an integration between public and private space, where the latter often finds him performing in international galleries making for diverse audiences in the art scene. The public represents his community or citizens, for example, in his home town streets or roads.³⁵ Part of Atiku's interests is based on the significant production of a visual analysis that is focused on the commemoration of those who have suffered from death,

³⁴ On his website, he (Atiku 2016) says "... I strive to help viewers understand the world and expand their understanding and experience, so that they can activate and renew their lives and environment." Atiku's work addresses the tensions and resistance between the individual and community in his region, while directly being involved in active experimentation, collaboration and audience participation in the improvement of collective existence.

³⁵ For Atiku, performance art is a way of bringing awareness, which sees him taking as role that some have described as activist or activism (see, Otu, Johnson and Sani 2015) maintains that it is routine for this artist to express his discontent with the multidimensional anomalies of society through creative prospects or what he calls "activist-art" realised through performances. For example, *Senator Yarima's Wedding* (2003), *Kill Not This Country* (2014) and *Aragamago must rid this land of terrorism* (2016) are examples of Atiku's activism-based performances charged by subject matters of inequality, sexual abuse, kidnapping, land, oil, marriage, assassination, amongst others. Atiku's efforts to emphasise the physical and mental conflicts are conveyed in gestures that imply, somewhat metaphorically, one person's agony as resonating with the collective.

loss and pain during the Biafran War (1967 – 1970), including himself.

In the performance *Biofeedback (Araferaku #1)* and *Isin' Pari Bami (Araferaku #2)*, (2013) (Figure 5) (loosely translated from the Yoruba as “A Part of Me is Missing”), for example, there is an anchoring of memory, filled with pain, while acknowledging the life of the person who has died. The two-part performance (mourning and funeral), commissioned by Contemporary Centre for Art Lagos (CCA) in Nigeria, for *The Progress of Love* exhibition (2012-2013). The project took place over three days in a room in Atiku’s home. *Biofeedback (Araferaku #1)* (Figure 4b) is about his father, a soldier during the Biafran War, who died in the war seven months before Atiku was born. Atiku grew up with the pain of losing his father, whose body was never found. The father’s death was treated as a disappearance, resulting in his spirit not being laid to rest (Løvholm 2013).

In *Biofeedback (Araferaku #1)*, (Figure 4a) Atiku presents a life-size corpse, constructed out of papier mâché. The room has white floor and wallpaper with a design believed to be fading photographs of Atiku’s father in the military as a backdrop that almost looks like a diffused pattern of green and brown (Figure 4a, 4b). The room is filled with text that is handwritten on the white floor. Around the head of the corpse, bottles are placed in a half circle to a wall with a window providing enough light as it is also covered with the wallpaper with no access to the outside. There are other bottles assembled around the floor, a blue bucket below the feet and balls of wool. This must be the beginning of the performance, which allows the viewer to focus on the corpse as it is kept in isolation at the centre of the images. There is a lifeless figure on its back with darker and dry flesh tones as if mummified on the floor of a room that looks clean and almost empty. Figure 4a shows two bodies, as Atiku can be seen in a similar position below the corpse wearing white trousers and appearing still and silent. The artist is not dead but, in the act, deprives himself of the earthly sensations of life. In the final images, Atiku’s body appears frozen, with arms away from his torso and strands of intertwined wool over his body that are spreading to the corpse. It appears there is a bodily connection being made, from the artist to the corpse or vice versa, while the distance between the two can be interpreted as the absence of a father-son relationship.

The idea of distance means there is a connection between two spirits, Atiku and his father. Absence represents Atiku’s father as not being there. The appearance of distance – from the corpse being isolated – provides a way of evaluating the idea of an imagined space of mourning. As a performance that draws from the various aspects that make use of a conventional reality

about the existence of the departed in a non-physical way: one speaks of the departed as living (Mndende 2002). Over the period of three days, Atiku is in self-confinement, isolation and in secret with the corpse. The corpse is not left alone until the burial, which Atiku conducts at the end of the performance. Burial sets free the body and spirit of his father to join the spiritual realm. This means that Atiku's performance fulfils the idea of the imagination as a reality that is supposed to express grief and bring closure.

In *"Insertion": Self and Other* (2000) art historian Salah Hassan's explains that the idea of insertion in performance art embodies the elements of traces as significant sites in which aspects of self – imaginary, emergent or residual – can be explored. Hassan introduces the notions of likeness and self-portraiture as inscriptions that are based on presence and absence which allows the artist's body image to transcend the conventional boundaries and questions of imaging and/or imagining. In a sense, insertion is a self-representation or the negotiation of self-identity. For example, I critically consider the experience of the body in performance art and its documentation as a medium within the visible codes of multiple identities that signal genders, races, names, languages, cultures, societies and other social markers (Jones 2012 and Hassan 2000). The notion of identities in my analysis is formed in the insertions and intersections of self, autobiography, dislocation and displacement (Hassan 2000). The rationale of identities is meant to question the environmental influence of identity as a historical, political, cultural, social, economic and academic factors (Jones 2012; Hassan 2000).

The theoretical underpinning of both live performance and its documentation in my thesis is further informed by the individual identities within the experiences of collective identities in ritual performances. There is a corporeal body in the staging of the artworks, thus making insertion not just digital and photographic, but using spirituality as a layer of the physical body. This can entail the artist acknowledging presence and absence as identities within the body and bodies of those believed to be ancestors. In this case spirituality functions as a presence in the face of presumed absence. Hassan (2001) suggests that there is a surrogate likeness rather than a physical likeness. This means that Atiku inserts his body in the artwork as a primary surrogate of his fathers. Surrogacy transcends the conventional boundaries of verisimilitude, it allows the body of the artist to be a surrogate of a person who has died (Hassan 2001).

That is why the idea of performing identities highlights Siwani's body as a fluid medium of physical and spiritual worlds. Ancestral ties are the identities that link an individual with their lineage, a significant representation of multiplying supplementary mediation during ritual. I

apply Jones (1997: 2) suggestion that “body art instantiates the radical shift in subjectivity” Jones argues that the context of subjectivity is informed by an embodied phenomenological model that explores intersubjectivity. This means that intersubjectivity creates a shift from singular positioning to multiple and multiplying representations of subjectivities (Jones 1997; Hassan 2001). Moreover, subjectivities represent the many bodies or subjects (performer and performer (self), performer and camera or performer and audience) during a live performance and the same applies to the documentation (Jones 1997; Hassan 2001).

In relation to Siwani, Atiku’s performance evidently proves that a personal ritual that embodies death as a subject is a form of content that displays every day, local and lived experience as more than an art concept but a performance of life (Kaprow 1993). Such self-positioning exposes the nature of human existence, relationships and the pain of death. As a subject matter, death, in this sense, represents the body and spirit, as these two are means of communication with the living dead. Although the flesh decays, the physical body, bones or spirit of the deceased is always treated with great respect. For example, amongst amaXhosa, when a person dies away from home as a result of having to work in another place like an urban area (for example, in Gauteng or the Western Cape), their body or bones needs to be brought to their resting place through a ritual of bringing back (*ukubuyisa*).

By acknowledging the body of the deceased in this way, burial evokes the spirits of their family members.³⁶ According to Mndende (2002: 13), “returning home” means reunion with the ancestors, and “going home” means to perform a ritual. In most cases, a thanksgiving ritual (*umsindlela*) is performed.³⁷ The two concepts of home are not different; the important thing is the state in which a person returns home, alive or in death. A thanksgiving ritual is still performed in both cases for the return of their bodies in the physical and in the spiritual sense. Suffice to say, the important relationship between life and death is an important dimension to the human physical and spiritual relationships. That is why, in most cases, it is necessary to unify the living with the living dead as a way of appeasing ancestors. In the images of Atiku’s performance, there is support from the community. The performance ends with the burial of

³⁶ Mndende (2002: 13) explains that due to the labour systems and increase urbanisation, people have been scattered in almost all the provinces of South Africa, especially in larger metropolitan areas in Gauteng and the Western Cape. Most of these people often return to their place of birth, their home, in the rural areas, either during holidays or when there is a family burial. The idea of returning home applies to a person who is still alive and when they have died.

³⁷ *Umsindlela* is also done by everybody who has achieved something or who has been personally instructed by the ancestors (Mndende 2002: 13).

the corpse, witnessed and supported by his family members and community and family members (Figure 5). In a series of photographs, there is a crowd gathering to witness the corpse outside the room, carried to the grave in a street procession with drums and led by Atiku. He and the group are wearing the same choice of fabric, which somewhat resembles the Biafran military uniform. For example, the choice of green can be compared to the soldiers' camouflage trousers, shirts and berets. An umbrella is held above the corpse, resembling a war flag or military flags. This makes Atiku's performance a real spiritual meeting between himself and his father, which is also a connection that brings together his family and community. As a result, with both Siwani and Atiku's performances, the success of ritual in performance depends on the collective representation between the performer and audience. My encounter of Siwani's live performance reflects what could be seen as her duty or responsibility in terms of involving participation from an audience. The ritual within *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* is very important, especially towards me as an audience member who has now formed part of the ritual.

CHAPTER TWO: *Imfihlo*

2.1 The power of secrecy

In chapter one of this thesis, I discuss South African artist Buhlebezwe Siwani's live performance and its documentations that are not only constructed from rituals but are also rituals within the genre of performance in visual arts. In this chapter, I focus on the concept of *Imfihlo* – something hidden or to hide - within Siwani's visual work. As a concept that is central in Siwani's Master of Fine Art (MFA) thesis, *Imfihlo* grapples with secrecy as the depth and fluidity of spiritual spaces and language. *Imfihlo* is about Siwani's ability to create boundaries between showing and not showing, telling and concealing varying elements of ritual rites that are considered secret. Siwani (2015) works with the paradox and interplay of power relations implied in both secreting and revealing secrets. Her practice as *isangoma* and artist troubles the threshold and function of secrets. Being an *isangoma* entails the responsibility of keeping some secrets secret, while as an artist Siwani has to at times reveal that which is meant to be hidden. This chapter understands that the role of secrets (*imfihlo*) is part of ritual practices and beliefs, secrecy forms part of the historical ways in which rituals are used to communicate indigenous knowledge systems in everyday life (Mlisa 2009; Zulu 2016).

I examine some of the ways that secrets and indigenous knowledge systems are governed by the discipline of not telling. The idea of discipline is important because it involves the regulation, obedience and control over events that should be respected. Siwani's use of the concept of *Imfihlo* provides some ways of engaging and navigating rituals. In the Xhosa language, the term *Imfihlo* relates with *ukufihla* (to hide) and *fihla!* (hide!). To hide is a phrase and action of hiding something with the intension of concealing or burying. *Uyafihla* translates as 'you are hiding something', which is embracing *imfihlo*, *ukufihla* and *fihla!* as ways in which a person chooses to conceal things or is required to conceal things that are considered secret. Therefore, the notion of hiding (*imfihlo* and *ukufihla*) involves keeping secrets from people who are not supposed to know them. Hiding is also represented by a person physically hiding themselves and who they are from others and even hiding their own secrets from themselves.

Several scholars who have written about secrecy include Beryl Bellman and George Simmel (1981), Mary H. Nooter Roberts (1993) and 'Wande Ambimbola (1993). The word 'secret', according to anthropologist Thomas O. Beidelman (1993: 47), "derives from Latin terms for setting things, for sequestering things and experiences into meaningful and useful categories, and for the power of such discerning operations." Beidelman contextualises secrets within the

similar paradox of concealing and revealing, which connects with Siwani's notion of *Imfihlo*. He says that "someone must not only conceal something but someone else must know or suspect this concealment" (Beidelman 1993: 45). This implies that secrets remain hidden only if they are concealed. The act of concealment, according to Beidelman (1993: 46), "must be revealed if the secret is to have an audience and hence a social existence." While it is important to keep secrets concealed, an audience can be attracted to the power that lie in the act of disclosure or the possibility that a secret may be revealed. Disclosure might be a positive thing to do when people are uninformed, or disclosure can be a betrayal on the part of those who hide the secret (Beidelman 1993). In either case, disclosure implies the possibilities that secrets might become public or collective knowledge, which does not mean that secrets are secret. The power of disclosure lies with those who know the secrets have the power over what is hidden.

In the book and exhibition, *Secrecy: African Art That Conceals and Reveals* (1993), art historian Mary H. Nooter-Roberts, explores secrecy as a central tool that relates to personal and communal matters when making and interpreting of African indigenous knowledge systems and art. The book observes the ambiguous and complex nature of secrets within the demarcation set up by social boundaries through language, writing and art. Nooter-Roberts (1993) focuses on art from the African continent as it is intimately related to knowledge in African regions such as South Africa, Mali and Nigeria, to mention a few. The purpose of Nooter-Roberts's book *Secrecy: African Art That Conceals and Reveals* is not to tell secrets but explore secrecy as a strategy and dimension for African cultural knowledge and communication for secreted things (Nooter-Roberts 1993: 24). Nooter-Roberts (1993: 56) acknowledges the value of secrets as a necessary coherent part of social reality. Secrets are effective when considering the contingencies of history intended to form the basis for a number of recorded events that are made from layers of situations and experiences. This means that secrets are socially and culturally constructed within the frameworks in which they exist and operate (Roberts 1993; Roberts 1993, Abimbola 1993).

Secrets exist in several ways that include myths, idioms, oral transmissions, conditions of living and proverbs, to mention a few (Mbiti 1975). Secrets are intended to form the basis for several recorded events. For example, ritual speech, dance, music and ceremony are filled with secrecy because each recorded event has an effective way of maintaining cultural values (Roberts 1993). In this way, secrets are treated as powers and values that are socially and culturally constructed, and thus, considered within the societal frameworks in which it operates (Roberts 1993: 56). Nooter-Roberts (1993: 57) learns that that the power of secrets is in the tensions and

boundaries they create between communities, adults, children, genders, etc. This power is found in the one who knows the secret, and they show that they know the secret. Such power seemingly determines the levels of power during rituals (Nooter-Roberts 1993).

As an illustration of the power that lies with the bearer of a secret, I am reminded that when I was younger there was always a strong warning when there was a sacrificial ritual ceremony at home. The warning entailed us to not ask or go in the direction where the animal slaughtering – the killing of either a cow, goat or sheep – was taking place. Often the slaughtering of an animal during the performance of a ritual took place in the kraal, as such we avoided going near it.³⁸ (Boundaries were strictly demarcated, as though everything was done in secrecy. However, I later understood that sacred spaces are shown respect. The little information I received as a grown-up was from my uncle. He told me that the main reason was to teach children to respect the kraal area as a sacred space for elders. These elders are ancestors who reside in the sacred space of the kraal. A kraal, however, is given a masculine status (chapter three). This means that gender, sex and age also play a role in the important activities of sacred spaces. A kraal is kept sacred by the elders who give instructions during rituals, both the living and ancestors.

Nooter-Roberts (1993: 55) attests that secrecy is established from early childhood. The fact that growing up there was so much secrecy about matters of ritual ceremonies, I have since considered certain practices and spaces where rituals take place as secret. As a result, secrecy leaves much room for speculation, gossip, curiosity, suspicion, confusion and assumptions that are not corrected. Incorrect perceptions of ritual have, thus, made me a sceptic when it comes to rituals, not because of my syncretic identity, but towards not trusting several ritual experiences that were never explained, and thus, not to be spoken of. A level of trust is needed during rituals, which means that secrecy acts as an element that is used to entrust people with the values and codes of diverse events that are considered sacred. Trust increases the symbolic continuity rituals have from one generation to the next, which always means that people and the community have a sense of responsibility and accountability. Hence, it is important in my thesis to ask about Siwani's role when performing what I consider to be 'secretive' ritual practices. The following section will show the power Siwani has when she conceals her personal experiences of rituals.

³⁸ In the introduction I mentioned that the kraal is a sacred dwelling space of ancestor for ritual sacrifice (*amasiko*).

2.1.1 On being an insider of *Imfihlo*

During my initiation we had to go into the ocean. My mentor ensured that there were five people who she felt were strong enough to pull me out of the ocean should anything happen. She and other prophets prayed for the woolen ropes that were tied around my waist and ankles. I set foot into the water with a chicken in my hands while two people held each rope. I managed to walk into the ocean and returned without the chicken (Siwani 2015: 28).

This is a description of Siwani's initiation, an important intersection in the process of her calling (*ubizo*) and becoming *isangoma* (the graduation to being *isangoma*). She writes from an insider perspective that is based on a narrative that supports her spiritual process as *isangoma* and artist. "The insider status", according to Mlisa (2009: 91) "provides first-hand access to rare privileges not often offered to strangers." This first-hand background emanates from the narrations and testimonies that place the feelings of the *thwasa* into words. Siwani understands the contextual basis of her initiation to be *isangoma*, the languages used, the terminologies, phrases and meanings behind the gestures, symbols and rituals. Mlisa (2009: 92) adds that the insider integrates a picture that serves as a text alongside self-coherence (a coherence informed by narratives which come from the process of becoming *isangoma*). This means that the personal experiences of the insider are coherent reflections and interpretations of what the narrator (Siwani) went through and what they know from experience (chapter three).

Siwani's use of secrecy is involved in the assumption that secrets are personal – relating to the individual and self, society and academic research. All these are encompassing of her position as *isangoma* and artist, which grapples with the responsibility of concealing and revealing as *isangoma*, while her role as an artist has the responsibility to interpret and reveal the concept of the artwork. The concept of *Imfihlo* in Siwani's work is a combination of her views, feelings, ideas and the existential learning and experiences that are derived from insider/outsider insight, as well as an understanding of the meaning of full involvement and in ritual performances. When it comes to *Imfihlo*, Siwani reveals some accounts of her insider experiences during *ukuthwasa*, because the centrality of her spiritual journey informs the "'inside' knowledge (emic view) is of great importance in research" (Mlisa 2009: 91). Siwani (2015) makes the choice of what she considers secret and therefore conceals and what she considers secret and therefore reveals.

For example, she does not reveal the ‘actual’ prayer or ritual speech during her initiation but writes about the activities and elements like those of water discussed in section 2.1.2. She chooses to conceal the identity of her mentors (a qualified diviner), prophets and the people who are holding the rope. Lastly, Siwani does not share with the reader what happened when she went into the ocean and returned without the chicken. Elsewhere in her thesis, she explains that “the body of chicken is seen as a carrier, a site and a medium through which good or bad forces are transferred” (Siwani 2015: 50). Black chickens are used in rituals where one is getting rid of evil spirits, while white chickens are used to bring about good fortune and enlightenment (Siwani 2015: 60). In her description of the initiation, Siwani does not reveal the colour of the chicken. Siwani (2015: 28) instead lets the reader know that “there are different types of life forces that exist under the water, which are inexplicable, mysterious or mundane. She does not name the life forces, nor does she explain in detail the mysteries that are beneath the water.

For Mlisa (2009: 86), the “inner mystery of life” influences the intra-psychic factors of human consciousness. She relates the intra-psychic factors to dreams, visions and symbolic structures that are not dependent on external objects, but by way of projection. Mlisa (2009) places emphasis on dreams and intuition or instinctual behaviour as two crucial strategies of a psychological view. For instance, the intuitive (*umbilini*) abilities of *isangoma* are beyond the conscious level of a normal person or a person who has not gone through *ukuthwasa* and, thus, becoming *isangoma* (Mndende 2002; Mlisa 2009). It is the unconscious level that created boundaries between the conscious and unconscious, because the narrative of dreams is linked to mystery and the strong inward healing abilities of *isangoma* (Mlisa 2009: 90). The context of mysteries depends on the cultural environment, influence and the collective projection of those present during Siwani’s initiation. I suppose, in *Imfihlo*, the implementation of secrecy in Siwani’s is a way respecting the sacred elements in ritual practices.

In other words, it becomes clear then that Siwani conceals the inner mystery of her initiation, not because it is meant to be secret, but she needs to respect it. This type of respect begs the question why she then reveals the elements entailed in her personal experience during her initiation? When Siwani reveals the elements of her initiation process, it means that they are not quite secret. What should be kept in mind about Siwani’s description is that not all *thwasa* initiations experiences are the same for all *isangoma*, and whatever was communicated during Siwani’s initiation is evident of what carries ritual and the responsibilities individual initiates

have with themselves and their society and ancestors. She shares her inner personal experiences in a discreet and, simultaneously, experiential way that mark the sense of maintaining cultural values and knowledge transmission that are between herself and her community (in this case, those who were involved in her initiation process). I am interested in how Siwani re/creates the boundaries of secrecy for herself, and how the concept of secrecy in ritual and performance art is implemented as part of academic research. I analyse two performances that she associates with ritual secrecy, which means that Siwani's performances are rituals within the spaces in which they exist.

2.2 Two studies of ritual secrecy: *Uthengisa unoKwrece elunxwemene* (2014) and *iGagasi* (2015)

In the performances and photographic artworks entitled *Uthengisa unoKwrece elunxwemene* (Figure 6 a & b) and *iGagasi* (Figure 7), Siwani makes use of water as a metaphoric representation for secrets. In the performances, the conceptualisation of ritual is a central and main aim of secrecy. The photographic stills are performed in front of the camera, which means that Siwani does not allow an audience to witness her 'actual' ritual performance, since it has private information to those who are not insiders to *ukuthwasa*.

Uthengisa unoKwrece elunxwemene is an idiom, which loosely translates to what lives in the ocean can be spat out into the seashore. The literal meanings of *uthengisa* is to sell, *unoKwrece* is a crayfish and *elunxwemene* is the seashore, while *igagasi* means waves in the ocean in isiZulu (Ngwenya 2006; Thompson 2014). The meaning behind *Uthengisa unoKwrece elunxwemene* can be loosely translated as 'What benefit do you get when you take a crayfish and sell it to the same people it is exposed to instead of selling it where there is no crayfish?'. It is in the form of a question because it provides a space for the reflection on the figurative meanings evoked in the water and the ocean.

In *Uthengisa unoKwrece elunxwemene* (Figure 6a), Siwani is wearing a long white dress and a head wrap (*doek*). She is approaching the rough waves of the sea, with her back to the viewer. She is standing inside the ocean, with the water up to her ankles, as the waves fold towards her and the seashore. In the second image of *Uthengisa unoKwrece elunxwemene* (Figure 6b), her whole body is inside the water up to her neck. She is facing the horizon of the sea. The waves continue to form and fold, as they also mirror the clouds in the blue sky.

In *iGagasi* (Figure 7), Siwani is walking towards the ocean from the seashore, with her back to the audience. The ocean looks calm, with a few waves approaching from the horizon where the water and the sky seem to almost meet. She is wearing a short white dress. There is a thick woven rope in different colours tied around her waist. Both of her arms are raised away from her torso, with her wrists tied with a thinner rope pulling her on either side. I also recognise the rope as a form of protection when a child is born.³⁹ The ropes seems to provide some form of protection or security. In the second image of *iGagasi* (Figure 7), Siwani is inside the water, up to her knees. This time, she is facing the camera, viewer or audience. Her back is being hit by a strong wave. It is almost as if she is falling backwards in the water, with her arms spread out and the ropes loosened.

In *Uthengisa unoKrwece eLunxwemene* (Figure 6 a & b) and *iGagasi* (Figure 7), the representation of the ocean is a topographical space of fluidity and mobility (Siwani 2015). The thought of the ocean is that it is vast and commands its own character on the earth. As an experience, the ocean has elements of sight, smell, sound, humidity and wind, thus, expanding human consciousness.⁴⁰ The vastness of the ocean is a powerful image by nature and creation, and as a body of life on earth. Siwani (2015) treats the ocean as a space where the movement of water and waves conceals and reveals. The depth and movement (waves) of the ocean are known and unknown, visible and invisible or seen and not seen, thus, bearing an awareness to an unknown life, a flow and fluidity of spiritual secrets. The ocean, as the body of water, according to Siwani (2015) signifies the nature of *ubungoma* as a transformative space where *isangoma* can be submerged, thus becoming involved in the liminal process of *ukuthwasa*. A transformative space has elements of consciousness, which in this case, is associated with the risk of dying, hence she had to have the ropes during her initiation.

The risk is possibly more ancestral related than just physical or external danger, because risk for Siwani is introspective, enigmatic, experiential and intellectual. “For *isangoma*, the ocean is a birthplace and a place where one goes to die. I have never been able to go into the ocean alone” says (Siwani 2015: 28). She is risking being pulled in into the water (Siwani 2015). Since Siwani is a liminal being, “Water is a spiritual home and I am a spirit” (Siwani 2015:

³⁹ In my family I have seen young boys and girls with the same rope on their waists, wrists and ankles. At times a ceremony will be conducted to ask ancestors to protect the child. Animal fat can also be tied to the wrists.

⁴⁰ The ocean is a sentimental space that individuals have diverse connections and purpose for it. One of those of also it being a political space, especially in South Africa – the ocean is beautified and made into an elite space for the white and leisure time [Koleka Putuma’s poem *Water* (2016) look at water in the significance of water in the world of religion].

28). This means that the ocean is seen as a respective space of ancestors; it is a representation of another realm. Ancestors are believed to be in the water, amongst natural sacred spaces like rivers, lakes and dams, including mountains, forest and depending on the clan a person belongs (Mndende 2002).

South African visual artist Samson Mudzunga, for instance, is a self-taught artist, having no training or attending an art institution but represented in the ‘contemporary’, local and international art scene and collections (Nettleton 2006). Mudzunga sculpts drums to portray ‘burial performances’ in his place of birthplace Dopeni, in the region of Venda in South Africa (Coates 2001). Mudzunga’s performances represent the significant role of funeral, burial and resurrection procession: the performances include, *The first funeral event: June 29, 1996* (1996), *Vivho Venda* (2007) (Figure 10), and *Performance with Tshigombela dancers and drummer* (2013) (Figure 9). The drums created for these performances are carved from animal skin and wood; they are given doors, text and cloth lining.⁴¹ Mudzunga’s drums resemble airplanes, bodies of men and women or boys and girls (Figure 8). The symbolism of the drum, according to Mudzunga (cited in Coates 2001: 18) relates to the *ngoma* or the process of drumming.⁴² Drumming can be observed as the instrument for the call and response within ritual performances that include rhythm, song and dance (Somé 1993). Drums are central to Mudzunga’s ‘burial’ performances and significant to Venda ‘culture’ because *ngoma* can be used for purposes of initiation ceremonies and rites of passage such as birth, death or marriage (Kaplan 1998). Mudzunga invites audiences - art scholars and people from his community - to most of his performance. These are academics and his community. The audience are spectators, and not participants. The audience is invited to witness the performance as performance *tshikona* girls entertained the attendants of the performance with music, dance and singing, thus, making the event a celebration. *Tshikona* girls dance through different stages of Mudzunga’s performances.

In *Lake Fundudzi Performance* (1996) (Figure. 11), Mudzunga conceptualises a site-specific performance. In “Creativity at the Margins: The Performances of an Artist in the Venda Region of South Africa”, scholar Oren Mark Kaplan (1998: 63) says “Vho-Mudzunga planned to go to Lake Fundudzi with his drum and to bathe in the waters of the Lake.” Mudzunga believes

⁴¹ Salempore is a colored cotton cloth with woven stripe and check designs made in India and England usually for export to Africa and South America

⁴² Drumming is associated in the same way with the *izangoma* initiation process of *ukuthwasa* (chapter two).

that if he returned from the lake unharmed after bathing in the water, it means that he would have found favour with the gods that live in there. In his written announcement, Mudzunga states:

This idea is arising specifically at this time because I am still very much rooted to my traditions and proud thereof. As a traditionalist I happen to have been called back home where I came from by Makhadzi Vho Mulondo herself. She has made it known to me that the 'gods of Fundudzi would like to see me'. It is then that the gods will acknowledge whether I am one of them or not. As a sacred Lake if I happen to bath in there and I being not one of them I shall never come back (something awful will happen) but if I am one of them nothing will happen to me (cited in Coates (2001: 20).

Lake Fundudzi Performance refers to Venda traditions, but quite differently in relation to recognised rites of passage. Kaplan (1998) suggests that Mudzunga's lake performance arose from challenging Venda myths and mysteries about the lake having zombies and spirits. For example, "no man was to dare wash in the Lake as he will be dragged under by the spirits" (Stayt, cited in Kaplan 1998: 63). The warning is a superstition that some scholars believe is a taboo and sinister narrative about supernatural phenomenon (Nettleton 1984; Coates 2001). Mudzunga challenges the superstitions which had been attached to the lake, because he claims that the myths are created to prevent people from visiting the lake without the permission of the local headman associated with the lake. Mudzunga (cited in Kaplan 1998; Coates 2001) says that myths and superstitions maintain mystique about traditional beliefs. His own view of the lake is that it contains special powers and he associates himself with the spiritual energies that reside in the water, because the Lake Fundudzi is considered a sacred place.

Nooter-Roberts (1993: 64) suggests that mystical beliefs and mythology operate at the very level of secrecy and ritual and ceremony. She associates these levels with human behaviour and social forms, which are engaged in the paradoxes and ambiguities of revealing and concealing. Mystical beliefs tend to be associated with sacred places of ritual in Africa, especially in events that are visually unimaginable. For example, the great impact of water in rituals is based on the invisible view that marks the aura power and concealment. The power of secrecy resides in the unknowableness of both Mudzunga and Siwani's claim of water as home. The fact that water conceals is dominant and interesting upon what is unseen rather than what is seen, revealed or known about the idea of home (Nooter-Roberts 1993). Hence, concealment is associated with risk, because the unknown terrains of water do not reveal what

has been concealed. The element of risk is important because for people who are spiritually inclined, there is a possibility that their ancestors reside in the water.

For Mudzunga, the risk of not coming back affected the purpose of his announcement. In the proceedings of the trip to the lake, Mudzunga had a conflict with the local headmen associated with the lake (see Kaplan 1993). The fact that Mudzunga was challenging traditional beliefs, he was dismissive and did not follow the procedures of the local headmen. Mudzunga's performance is turned into a risk and rebellion, knowing that there are important secrets and values associated with respecting sacred spaces and ancestors (Bongela 2001). As a result, the headman gained his authority and told Mudzunga he had wronged the very ancestors that he is going to meet (Coates 2001). "In his speech, he commended Mudzunga's bravery whilst insinuating that, having offended the ancestors of the lake, Mudzunga would not return from its water (Coates 2001: 21). It is a risk Mudzunga was not willing to take because instead of entering the lake, he drinks the water from the lake. Mudzunga claimed that by drinking the water, the lake is inside him (Kaplan 1998; Coates 2001).

Some of his family members, Mudzunga's brother Vho-Wilson Mudzunga and *Makhadzi* Mulondo believe that playing with death is an omen which could bring about real death (Kaplan 1998). For example, Wilson, is genuinely concerned for the safety of his brother. He believes that Mudzunga might not emerge from his 'coffin' performance and the lake performance alive – that the play-death would result in real death (Coates 2001). Such feelings from the family member heightens the ritual performances in a true sense of death, even when it is intended to be play, enactment or drama. This makes a person's attitude towards death to be the result of fear towards death. It could mean the thought in the occurrence of death is seen from a perspective of harm. This means that risk during ritual is harmful, because it is precisely at the moment of death that dying becomes 'bad' for the person.

Siwani challenges the risk of being concealed by the ocean. *Uthengisa unoKrwece eLunxwemene* (Figure 6 a & b) and *iGagasi* (Figure 7) may be interpreted as descriptions of Siwani's initiation, however, they are not re-enactments. Both performances are metaphors of reality. The actual ritual performance exists because Siwani's interpretation is not a copy of the real, but becomes the real, in its own right. In other words, secrecy may be a situation that looks like something else or that which is made to look like something else, but if it continues to conceal, it continues to reinvent the complexities of ritual.

2.3 Water Baptismal

In her poem *Water* (2016) South African curator/writer/artist Koleka Putuma describes black people's relationship with water through historical identities, religions, politics, and other categories. Putuma (2016) states:

But we, we have come to be baptised here
We have come to stir the other world here
We have come to cleanse ourselves here
We have come to connect our living to the dead here

Putuma's words are a metaphor for ritual secrecy (or ritual speech) and a testament on the significance of water. Putuma's poem explain the significance of submersion in the ocean, in which water becomes a space for the liminal space of life and death. A poet (*imbongi*), according to Mlisa (2009: 47) is naturally stimulation by intuition and visions. Putuma may or may not consider her poem in this manner, but it is plausible that a poet's "calling could be defined as depicting the need for people to understand the broader perspective of the image they had of their Creator" (Mlisa 2009: 48).

Mlisa (2009: 191) suggests that in both traditional and Christian practices *ukuphehlelela* (baptism) is a symbol of repentance, purification and transformation, changing old habits to new. What is true of both practices is that water is seen as a symbol of life and healing. In traditional healing practices *isangoma* is immersed in the water and into *ukutwasa*. In *Uthengisa unoKrwece eLunxwemene* and *iGagasi*, Siwani is ritually prepared to assume her *isangoma* mode of being, that is, to embody *ubungoma*, while keeping her responsibilities in society and in the spiritual responsibilities which are ancestral in nature. The sacred and secret wisdom that Siwani conceals shows a fundamental worldview shift of how she deals with indigenous knowledge systems.

Although Siwani seems to be demonstrating what happened during her initiation process, in *Uthengisa unoKrwece eLunxwemene* and *iGagasi*, Siwani performs the rituals having gone through the process of *ukuthwasa* and becoming *isangoma*. What does this mean? Siwani makes use of the ocean as a spiritual space that represents possibilities for her as an artist and *isangoma* to make art (but one which could be overwhelming even threatening - one to be treated with respect). Siwani's performances reflect ritual because of the content of her calling, initiation and her becoming *isangoma*. The performances could be more of continued spaces

of ritual, because of the broader perspective of the ocean as a ritual space and water as an important medium for cleansing.

2.4 Dare to tell: The subjection of ritual secrecy

From the late 19th to the early 20th century, the mission age dominated over major regions in South Africa, as one example, and became aggressively opposed to traditional African religions, which they considered to be ‘barbaric’ and ‘superstitious’ (Denis 2006). As promoters of Christianity, missionaries were not accepting of traditional African religions based on the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance of the heathens or unbelievers, glorifying God all over the earth and planting churches [see, for example, Peirea 1986]. Scholar of church history Philippe Denis (2006: 311) in “The rise of traditional African religion in post-apartheid South Africa”, places emphasis on the impact of Christian missionary on traditional African religions in a democratic South Africa. Denis (2006: 312), investigates the initial accusation by European Christian missionaries, whether they were Congregational, Methodist, Anglican and Lutheran or Catholic, was that Africans “had no religion”. The subsequent apartheid government imposed Western worldviews on the people of South Africa without attempting to determine the validity of issues such as traditional African healing and traditional African religions or spirituality (Mokgobi 2014: 24).

Denis observes secrecy to be part of the traditional African religions and the situations that relates to transcendental reality, a definition which applies to the relationship between the living and spiritual world. In other words, under the apartheid government, traditional African religions were widely practiced in South African but secretly (Denis 2006: 311). Today, there is greater public and social visibility than before. Thus, Denis commends a person like Mndende as a practising *isangoma* who has cemented her role as a (female) spokesperson and intellectual knowledge promoter about traditional African religions in South Africa (Denis: 2006: 315). This might be true because Mndende’s (1998, 2000, 2002) argument is convincing in terms of the challenges that continue to be faced by traditional African religions, even today. From the above, it is evidently clear that there are historical, political, economic and cultural situations that occupy the importance of positions within civil society (see, Denis 2006).

Both Mndende (1998) and Denis (2006) (also see, Ntsimane 2006) argue for the position of the field of traditional African religions and how it has been restricted and lacks support from the government. Denis (2006: 315) observes the dichotomy between Christianity and traditional

African religions as the battle of traditional healers to obtain legal recognition for their profession. The principles of a mutual accommodation of traditional healing in the political, economic and cultural situation is aimed at guiding the health organisations in South Africa defence and promotion of indigenous knowledge systems. Denis, like Mndende, is challenging the boundaries that have misrepresented and misinformed the world about traditional healing. In other words, in both conclusions from these authors, they make important observations and reservations about the future of traditional African religions as tensions between traditional medicine and doctors (or modern medicine) continue to affect the attempt by the government to harmonise both medical practices.

For instance, scholarly perceptions on traditional medicine in the public health care include how issues of pregnancy and delivery (Van der Kooi 2006), biomedicine (see, Wreford 2005; Gibson 2013), phycology and alternative medicine operate in parallel with each other (Denis 2006). It has become evident that the practice of traditional healing has placed *izangoma* in difficult situations where their role is conflicting with that of modern medicine (or doctors) (Edwards 2010). In current literature, while some present-day scholars have argued on the positive impact of *izangoma* as traditional healers (Thwala 2000; Edwards et. al. 2009; van Niekerk 2012), others continue to highlight the conflicted and contradictory positions between traditional healing and government health sectors (Makhubu and Green 1984; Gibson 2013). There are those who still feel the urgency in bridging the gap between medical health and traditional healing (Ngubane 1977; van Niekerk 2012). Thus, important emphasis has been placed on how to develop the practice of traditional healing and indigenous knowledge systems in health care (Moshabela, Zuma and Gaede 2016). Such research helps decrease seeing traditional medicine as backward, which has resulted in *izangoma* being accused of witchcraft and false divinations and often caught in criminal issues like killing people (young and old) and using human parts for medicine, love portions and tikoloshe.⁴³

⁴³ See how Ignatius W. C. Van Wyk in *African witchcraft in theological perspective* (2004), and author Mfundo Badela *Why Witches Are Still Flying in Africa?* (2015) engage with the topic of *isangoma* and witchcraft

CHAPTER THREE: *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*

This final chapter examines Siwani's use of complexities surrounding representations immersed in South African historiography and storytelling techniques. I am interested in the trace of ritual as a continued space for multiple encounters.

3.1 *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*

Zemk'inkomo magwalandini (2015) (Figure 12 a, b & c) (Cattle Are Departing, You Cowards!" or "Defend Your Heritage!" or "There goes your heritage, you cowards!) is a performance that took place at the Stevenson Gallery in Cape Town. The gallery invited artists to create site-specific artwork in their entrance space. Entitled *Ramp* (2015), the Stevenson Gallery project focused on a series of installation works from Siwani and other South African visual artists, such as Nyakallo Maleke, Mitchell Gilbert Messina and Laura Windvogel, also known as Lady Skollie. The entrance point provides an examination of performance art for a public audience. By public audience, it is the everyday people, a mixture of those in the arts.

Zemk'inkomo magwalandini (Figure 12 a b) is comprised of a hundred and twelve cow skulls: "Each skull has a bullet hole" in the part of the brain or forehead area (Siwani 2015: 58). The bullet holes represents the physical violence inflicted as a method used for killing. "One performer begins playing *uhadi* (a musical instrument). The performers interact with each other and *iXhanti* (Figure 12b), while one sits in the centre of the mass of cow skulls" adds Siwani (2015: 58). *Ixhanti* (Figure 12a) is a wooden pole with a sharp edge like a spear, placed in the gate of the cattle kraal (*ubuhlanti* or *enkundleni*) (Simelane-Kalumba 2014; Siwani 2015). At the tip of *ixhanti* there is usually an animal skull (a slaughtered cow or goat) that has been offered to ancestors, and thus plays an important role in the homestead (Mpola, 2007; Simelane-Kalumba 2014: 68). Simelane-Kalumba (2014: 68) explains that occasionally family members visit *ixhanti*, especially when there is evil or an unacceptable fate. The cattle kraal gate is where ancestors are addressed, stated by *ukunqula* (Mndende 2002; Mlisa 2009: 118). As a result, *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* (Figure 12 a, b & c) takes the form of a kraal or a sacred space of rituals using the cow skulls and *ixhanti*, amongst other things (Figure 12a).

Cattle kraals play a significant role as a space for sacrificial animals, which form part of the ancestral lineages. For instance, cows can show signs of ancestor intervention (Mndende 2002: 39; Ndungane 1992: 63). Mndende (2002: 39) attests that such cows – even other animals, species and objects – are no longer regarded as being of this world but are sacred beings that are controlled by the spiritual world. "The cry of the animal is the medium through

which acceptance is conveyed to the living” Mndende (2002: 45). *Yakhal’Inkomo*, is the bull bellowing its final cry as a sacrifice and offering to the ancestors (Mbiti 2001).

The metaphor of the cow is a source of inspiration for contemporary scholars and artists. In 1968 Winston “Mankunku” Ngozi released his record of the same name. Dr Mongane Wally Serote in 1972, published his first collection of poetry entitled *Yakhal’Inkomo* – the cry of a cow at the slaughterhouse. Serote puts into poetics the bellowing of Ngozi’s saxophone, while later, during a Ngozi live performance, South African musician Sibongile Khumalo provides lyrics to the jazz instrument. The re-release of *Zemk’inkomo magwalandini* (2003) by Professor Sizwe Satyo is another example of isiXhosa poetry, clan praises and poetry. In addition, Serote’s poem *Yakhal’Inkomo* (1972) makes reference to South African visual artist Zwelidumile ‘Dumile’ Feni’s description of a cow being killed in the kraal. In a review of Feni’s charcoal drawing *African Guernica* (1967), the artwork is dominated by pseudo human-animal figures, stark white against a darkened background that contains repetitions of this maddened scene (as well as wandering figures) (Khan 2016).

In this view, it means that Siwani’s use of the cow skulls is significant in relation to animal sacrifice and divination. In the article, ‘Diagnosis Practices of *Izangoma* in Durban South Africa’ scholar Winifred Ogana (2009: 118) points out that through *amathambo*, the throwing of bones, *isangoma* is able to interpret images and symbols communication by ancestors and then *isangoma* will share the information with the client(s) who need help interpreting their dreams, sicknesses and other issues affecting the client’s life especially in cases of misfortunes. Intuition (*umbilini*) is not excluded from the bone throwing process because it gives details to locate clients issues accordingly (Ogana 2009; Mlisa 2009). Bones, according to Mlisa (2009), help contextualise the problem brought by the client. Bones are used to communicate with ancestors, which then shape the narrative (or intuition) that *isangoma* gives to the client (almost like an aura).

Siwani states:

During the performance, *Zemk’inkomo magwalandini* I use my arms and the dress to communicate the violation against this particular black body. The dress becomes the burden and the fallacy. I flail my arms slowly to create the bodies that lie under my body, the dress begins to move and balloon as [if] there is a wind caused by flailing my arms rapidly (Siwani 2015: 60).

In *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* (Figure 12 a, b & c), the two performers are Siwani, wearing a big red Victorian designed dress that is cinched in at the waist and balloons all the way down to the floor. Siwani explains that the red dress is used to cover the skulls, which are slightly concealed and revealed during the performance (Figure 12c). Siwani sits at the center of the cow skulls; while the second performer, whose name is not given, sits closer to *ixhanti*, playing the musical instrument. The dress is big enough to cover most of the ramp space, the bones and the two performers. Rather than refer to the cow skulls as dead objects, Siwani “create[s] the bodies”. Bones are a method of divination to interpret through symbols or images (Tedlock 2001: 193). Divination with bones is through the spirits and the inductive process of an interpretative approach. For example, Mlisa (2009) says that bone throwing by *isangoma*, makes use of the skill *umbilini* (intuition) to divine and help contextualise the diagnosis of the client. Bones for divination provide information from the ancestors that can help the client, because the role of the traditional healer is to access the spiritual healing energies. It might mean that the dress is carrying the bones as a metaphoric interpretation of *isangoma* throwing bones in the encounter with a client. As already stated in chapter one, sacrifice is offered to ancestors as an obligatory means of bringing unity between the living and the deceased, for example, thanksgiving and rites of passage.

As an example, I want to draw attention to the importance of the grave, which is where a dead body is buried. However, the grave is a space where the bones of the deceased sleep peacefully – *amathambo alala ukuthula* (the bones are not dead but sleeping). The interpretation of sleep is based on the belief that those whose remains are inside the grave are not dead bodies but sleeping bodies that are at rest (Mndende 2002: 98; Mndende 2013: 80). For the bones to be asleep means that they are still alive, which defines the nature of ancestors.

A reference to bones, as attested by Mndende (2002: 98), “is symbolic of ancestors.” This means that the symbolism of the bones is understood in regard to the belief that bones are living organs that reside in the mortal and immortal souls and spirits of a living and deceased person. Thus, the symbolism of the bone, explains the way Siwani rests in soil with her eyes closed at the end of *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafuleyo*, the performance and photographs. As expressed in the description above and analysis of *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafuleyo*, Siwani is not dead. Her performance and photographs are a representation of the state of being alive, and death bringing life. Siwani (2015: 16), for example, accepts that her body in performance is the medium that is a transformative instrument. In a sense, since Siwani’s role as *isangoma* and

artist is to communicate with ancestors, her identity in the physical and spiritual worlds is to speak to the bones of the living dead: in other words, *ngamathambo athethayo* (ancestors are bones that speak) (chapter three).

It is believed that the bones of the deceased still possess the qualities of their nature while still alive (Mndende 2002: 98). For example, bones have imbued in them human qualities, which include the abilities to hear, speak, see, as well as display of emotions like anger and mercy. Siwani, thus, possesses qualities and powers to discern the ancestors and heal the living spiritually. As elaborated in the previous section, *ukuthwasa*, within the context of divination, is a real death or dying as a symbolic expression of communication with ancestors.

3.2. The story of Nongqawuse and Nonkosi

In *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* (Figure 12 a, b &c) performance, Siwani acts as Nongqawuse⁴⁴ and the other performer is Nonkosi (Figure 13). Nongqawuse was a teenage girl from Centani in the Eastern Cape Province (then part of the Cape Colony) in South Africa (Peires 1989). Nongqawuse enters history as a “prophetess of doom” whose predictions initiated the violence of what are commonly referred to as the “Cattle-Killings” (or *iNgawula*) that left devastation amongst the Xhosa population: many died of starvation, were left destitute, and their land appropriated by the British Kaffraria colonial authorities (Peires 1989; Davis 2010). Nonkosi is as an orphan who got arrested and detained by the British Kaffraria military officers after they had killed her father (Bradford 2010).

The British settlers’ true agenda was land dispossession and subjugation, with their infiltration into the African continent, which contributed to the so-called “Scramble for Africa”, between 1849 and 1855.⁴⁵ Nongqawuse, along with Nonkosi, met two strangers, who instructed Nongqawuse to make an ancestral pronouncement that led to the slaughter of more than 400,000 head of Xhosa livestock and crops being destroyed through an act of purification against lung sickness (possibly introduced by the British) (Peires 1989, Davies 2010). Nongqawuse, supported by her uncle Mhlakaza, claimed that the amaXhosa ancestors appeared

⁴⁴ Also spelled as *Nongqause* in H. I. E. Dhlomo’s book *The Girl Who Killed to Save (Nongqause the Liberator)*, *Nonquassi* appeared in 1939 Leon Schauder’s short film *Nonquassi* appeared in 1939 (Iannaccaro 2013).

⁴⁵ The “Scramble for Africa” was a European initiative to set Africa’s colonial boundaries that started from the Berlin Conference of 1884. Also known as the Partition of Africa or the Conquest of Africa, according to Ieuan Griffiths (1986: 204) “The boundaries themselves are only one aspect of Africa’s inherited political geography. African states are territorially identical to the European colonies they replaced, for all their grotesque shapes and varied sizes. European colonialism lumped together peoples of diverse cultures and traditions, sometimes leading to secessionist movements and civil war.”

to her in a vision. The ancestors were expected to rise from the dead, to bring amaXhosa new cattle and uncontaminated grain (Iannaccaro 2013). The Cattle-Killing would somehow send the British crawling back into the ocean from which they had come to enslave and pillage (Peires 1989; Iannaccaro 2013; Mnyanda 2017). The extreme violence of the Cattle-Killing remains as a reference to the oppression, slavery and murders by the white colonial rulers. In *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*, Siwani focuses on violence as a site when engaging with history, race, identity, gender and the inequalities that exist in each of the notions, and the ways in which they often are connected. She says that “Violence is implicit when performing in the public sphere because it remains a site of contestation” (Siwani 2015: 58). Siwani considers performance as a repositioning when engaging with institutions of visual arts.

For example, the violence exercised on amaXhosa kingdom is implicit in the two distinct divisions: *amagogotya*, the Unbelievers or Unyielding “hard” ones and *amathamba*, the Believers or Submissive “soft” ones who still acknowledge the prophecy and worship in memory of Nongqawuse. According South African historian Jeffrey B. Peires’ book, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856–7* (1989) (cited in Iannaccaro 2013: 196), the believers were the majority who accepted the truth of the cattle-killing prophecy, and the minority were the unbelievers who rejected it. The act of division has been a colonial tactic that is centred on construction of social difference. The British delineated spatial boundaries, set mainly on race, gender dynamics and the greater issues of violence, oppression and language (Bradford 2010).

Peires’ work is considered a full or complete historical monograph and analysis of the various nineteenth-century records of Xhosa Cattle-Killing, including Nongqawuse’s supposed words of the prophecy (Davies 2010: 4, 2007: 19; Iannaccaro 2013). Several scholars provide various theories about the story of Nongqawuse, which make it a convoluted topic (Theal 1877; Peires 1989; Opland 1983). However, I agree with Mkhize who describes Peires’s text as showing a historiographical deficit that is filled with an anthropological historical account that remains contested in terms of its approach. The story of Nongqawuse can be a partial, biased and incomplete narrative of many secrets of the period that were never told. Numerous writers dismiss linear theories that set an authoritative narrative about Nongqawuse, and, rather, they seek to understand the perceived significance, shifting truths and use of this event for the range of diverse South African early histories (Mndende 1997; Davies 2010; Iannaccaro 2013). I will discuss this history further in the following sections, including emphasising the background of

South African historiography as a way of mapping out the concept and interpretation of *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*.

3.2 A Xhosa historiography

In her essay “The Missing Idiom of African Historiography: African Historical Writing” in Walter Rubusana’s *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*’ (2018),⁴⁶ historian Nomalanga Mkhize argues that African historiography is inadequately synthesised in the historical writings of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Her point in the text, according to the editor of *Whose History Counts: Decolonising African Pre-colonial Historiography* (2018) Lungisile Ntsebeza (2018: 8), an academic in sociology and African studies, is that South African historiography has been documented through accounts that exist in precolonial narratives. According to Ntsebeza (2018: 1) the idea of historiography is a platform for nurturing research and to promote the development of methodologies that take forward the work on South African history. *Whose History Counts* focuses on the Eastern Cape (known as the Cape Colony in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) and the scholarship and research group whose objectives are to conduct studies that promote life in the area pre-colonialism. As a result, Mkhize’s argument concerns the omission of South African historians like Herbert I. E. Dhlomo, Walter Rubusana, William Gqoba, John Henderson Soga (the son of Tiyo Soga) and Samuel E. K. Mqhayi, to mention a few. Mkhize (2018: 58) places an emphasis on how the tradition of mission education contributed to African writers who deliberately wrote as historians.

For Mkhize (2018) South African historiography, which conveys traditional oral literary genres, is a discursive form of history and non-fiction prose that conforms to the stylistic conventions of the nineteenth century university. She explains that large bodies of oral traditions, have been – and are still – a way of sharing histories in Africa but have been omitted from the historical canon. In her words, Mkhize (2018: 60) asserts that “by and large, South African historiography refers to white writers writing on South Africa, in Afrikaans and English.” This means that the idea of “South African historiography” is an academic field that refers largely to white historians. It is thus an argument by several scholars that the body of South African historiography of the precolonial period is marginalised (Davis 2010; Mangcu 2013, 2016), because the analytical perspectives of Africans are written by white academics

⁴⁶ Mkhize’s text was presented in the conference by Centre for African Studies in collaboration with the Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (CANRAD), held at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (now Nelson Mandela University). The essay by Mkhize is featured in the third volume of the *Rethinking Africa* series of the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town (UCT).

(Mkhize 2018). This marginalisation occurs through omission, exclusion and anthropology. Mkhize (2018) adds that the scholarship of white historians drew from the scholarship of African writers.

African writing has been approached as an archive rather than a source of historiographical body of work in and of itself (Mangu 2013; Mkhize 2018: 61). African writers, according to Mkhize, provide the primary sources of background information. To some extent, in the engagement with archives questions of methodology, research and location are raised in both Mkhize and Ntsebeza's text, amongst other contributors, to further convey the foundation of history, searching for questions and who wrote or writes history. For example, *Whose History Counts* is both a statement and question, in which Ntsebeza (2018) explains that it challenges epistemologies that convey the very concept of "precolonial" in relation to the questions about reconstructing the past. *Whose History Counts* is not based on facts, nor is it based on speaking for the Eastern Cape and the indigenous African groups. As a way of concluding, Ntsebeza mentions that the debate of de-colonisation is revisited.

In fact, the idea of Nongqawuse has been a counter-narrative, which traverses divisionary disciplines like literature, drama, music, orature and performance; as well as those of race, gender, class and ideology (see, Davis 2010). For example, Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* (2000) and Mtutuzeli Matshoba's *Call Me Not a Man* (1979) set up interchanges between the narration of the past and present times. This means that Nongqawuse's story has proved to be a reference for storytellers [or example, Sindiwe Magona's *Mother to Mother* (1998)]. Most importantly, retelling of Nongqawuse's story is about the imaginative and creative energy that feeds on historiography, and thus, contributes to the multiple readings embedded in religion, history, and politics of South Africa. The next section provides one example, amongst many historical texts produced by black historians concerning the precolonial period.

The Xhosa region of the Eastern Cape as a location is used to document the visual history of the region and, to some extent, adds to the narrative-based events from oral, textual and visual history. Thus, visual arts interpretation becomes another way in which precolonial histories are told, retold, remembered, commemorated and interpreted. The following sections provide an account behind the narrative of Nongqawuse and the title *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*. The sections foreground the context of how the two representations of South African historiography facilitate the way in which Siwani interprets her performance.

3.4 The substance of the image

In the article “Framing African women: visionaries in southern Africa and their photographic afterlife, 1850–2004” (2010), historian Helene Bradford discusses the lack of visibility of the broader frames of Nongqawuse and Nonkosi as black women. In the photograph of Nongqawuse and Nonkosi (figure a), the two figures are seen posing for a portrait. This image was taken in 1858, in King Williams Town in the Eastern Cape (Bradford 2010), after the two had been kept captive. According to Bradford (2010: 79) Nonkosi is dressed in European clothing. “The brocaded skirt swamps Nonkosi; unseemly billows (cropped by the [photo] frame) trail over the carpet” (Bradford 2010: 80). The dress in the Victorian style that is too big for her body and appears untidy for a posed photo: “the marker of class and distinction, is absent” (Bradford 2010: 80). Nongqawuse is dressed in tanned hide, ornamented with bell buttons (a cloak) and a head-wrap or head-covering that is mandatory for members of amaXhosa women after puberty. The head-wrap adheres to the precolonial codes. Xhosa women cover the foreheads upwards with their head-covering. Nongqawuse is also not as decently dressed, as Bradford (2010: 81) notes that there is a form of ridicule that discredits those portrayed by impugning their femininity. In *Zemk’inkomo magwalandini* Siwani seems to reinterpret the description of Nongqawuse and Nonkosi with her dress, and the role she herself takes as Nongqawuse.

The image of Nongqawuse and Nonkosi provides reference to the nature of the colonial photographic record as a documentation that puts emphasis on archives that are marked with subjugation towards the two figures. For example, Bradford (2008: 80) explains that white men virtually monopolised the camera for a vision of black women rendered darker than the norm, with sagging breasts as a focal point alongside other racial and sexual signifiers and gestures.

Siwani makes use of the Nongqawuse and Nonkosi’s photographic description to highlight the visible and multifaceted challenges entailed in documentary and colonialism. She integrates both characters in the image by observing their dress codes as points of interaction. Siwani (2015: 58) explains that “During the performance *imbola* is applied gently then vigorously onto the performer’s eye area, while the musical instruments (*uhadi*) continue to play in the background.” As Siwani is dealing with the idea of secrecy in her work, the use of traditional African religious beliefs is still representative of the multiplicities and fluidities of *isangoma*, as she grapples with her body as a vessel. As a result, I consider the idea of *Zemk’inkomo*

magwalandini under the notion of Siwani's body as *isangoma*, as an important communicative instrument.

In *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*, the story of Nongqawuse seems to suggest that a historical past is able to provide the contemporary narratives with a kind of inventiveness and technical experimentation. What I mean by narrative as interpretation, relates to how Siwani provides the narrative form to experience. The idea of narrative form is twofold: the experience of Nongqawuse's story and her description of her performance. The former positions Siwani as the interpreter of the latter in a space and time, and as a way of making sense of what happened during the performance of *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*. In these two narrative realms Siwani seems to encounter research *with* narrative and *on* narrative. This means that through narrative as interpretation Siwani extrapolates a unique analysis of the story of Nongqawuse in performance, and a textual, photographic and installation project. All elements together are central to the inquiry and connotations that intersect the impressions of complex and multi-layered characteristics of narrative as text with a form of a story that is connected to the narrator. Thus, one of the goals of this chapter works through narrative as visual practice, and the process of ritual in performance art.

For example, Siwani's analysis of *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* in her thesis suggests that race is at the forefront of violence against a nation, continent, individual and collective bodies, culture, society, class, gender, and religion. Siwani highlights points that are based on the physical inflictions of violence that apartheid had on black bodies – slavery, rape, imprisonment, miseducation, displacement, forced removals, to mention a few. Race in the South African context, and in relation to *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* is the foundation upon which colonialism is established and black people are oppressed (Mkhize 2018). As a counter-narrative of history, Rubusana's book suits the purpose against racialisation and violence implied in Siwani's performance. Race qualifies as an analysis that Siwani uses to perform as a black female in relation to the collective idea of the Cattle-Killing and how black people suffered during the colonial period in South Africa. Enwezor (2004: 37) calls it the "indexical body."

What is interesting about the idea of the "indexical body" relates to the remnants of culture, which are part of the recaptured past "on the vanishing present" (Enwezor 2004). In other words, the indexical body is the relationship between the past and the present, memory, archive and consciousness, which culminates in the body as an archive and referent of historically

determined juridical methods of apartheid law, surveillance and disappearance. For example, with the dress, Siwani might be suggesting that the historical connection of Nongqawuse is a burden of history as a contested area of knowing. When it comes to fallacy, she might be suggesting the inconsistencies and omission of history in the past and present as it is often reconstructed for the future. Both concepts together further suggest that Nongqawuse's prophecy has produced historical contradictions.

However, what makes *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* a ritual in performance art is relevant to the imagination that drives the essence of attitudes towards the analysis of history in the present and possible future. Here I am not only referring to the extensive literature on Nongqawuse, but the encounter and sensitivity of Siwani's movement with the dress. It is relevant in so far as Nongqawuse's story has been a subject of dispute; seen as delusion, genocide, a resistance movement and a clash of divine inspiration and material reality (see Davis 2010; Bradford 2008). On the other hand, it is a narrative that seems to suggest that a historical past is able to provide the contemporary narratives with the kind of creative techniques that seek commemoration of historical events. Then again, it seems that the idea of knowing for *isangoma* is that of intuition as the very construction of history, present and possible future, as if providing information for the client who consults with *isangoma*. Knowing lies in the language used and in understanding and familiarity the client has with the symbolic nature of Siwani's actions.

3.4.1 *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*: The trace

Siwani's title *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* is a historical reference from one of the leading black politicians and intellectuals in South Africa, Walter Benson Rubusana. Rubusana's anthology *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* (1906) is one of the first collections of traditional poetry of the Eastern Cape clan histories, amaXhosa idioms and oral traditions (Mkhize 2018: 57). Rubusana's life was anchored by three pillars – education, religion and politics, and his writing was inspired by all three (Xaba 2016). Rubusana's contribution as an intellectual included the historical and literary values of both Christianity and traditional African religions. Mkhize (2018: 57) attests that *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* fits the collected writing of works produced by mission-educated Africans from the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. The book focuses on various traditional, clan and national identity. It is a recording, recovery and recounting of what Mkhize (2018: 58) refers to as “posterity, the history of Africa

in the days prior to European colonialisation.” This means Rubusana’s book is meant to give a sense of origin from one generation to the next.

Several scholars provide a similar biography (Satyo 2003; Bradford 2008), while adding that Rubusana’s work involved translating English religious text into isiXhosa as an active participant in the Native Education Association, led by Elijah Makiwane, an ordained priest, and the Xhosa Bible Revision Committee in the 1850s, supervised by Tiyo Soga, a South African journalist, minister, translator, missionary evangelist, and composer of hymns (Bradford 2008; Mangcu 2013). In the article ‘*Akukho Ntaka Inokubhabha Ngephiko Elinye* (No Bird Can Fly on One Wing): The ‘Cattle-Killing Delusion’ and Black Intellectuals, c1840–1910’ (2008), Helen Bradford points out that Nongqawuse’s death (in 1905), *Zemk’inkomo magwalandini* is a fitting summation of historical research. Bradford offers a historical narrative of Nongqawuse that opens the debate to the voices of black intellectuals that have attracted little attention, even when they reveal concepts and analytical innovations of considerable interest. It is interesting that Bradford raises attention to the feminist scholarship that called into question the masculine concept behind the Cattle-Killing (Mndende 1997). As suggested by historian Jeff Guy (cited in Bradford 2008: 211), “Cattle in the male world subordinate women and the agricultural world – and this dominance has been continued.” The association of cattle and masculinity will be explained in various positions of ritual. Guy (cited in Bradford 2008) argues that the Cattle-Killing was more than simply entrenched gender roles, especially in the way ideologies of the past tend to live on in historical reconstructions and in attempts to make calamitous event intelligible.

In a sense, the title *Zemk’inkomo magwalandini* is considered a wartime call for masculine action: “Cattle Are Departing, You Cowards!” or “Defend Your Heritage!” or “There goes your heritage, you cowards!” According to Bradford (2008: 224) “His [Rubusana’s] book title, idiomatically, and his preface, explicitly, called on men to recapture the little that remained: fragments of their intellectual heritage.” Rubusana, as well as Gqoba and Soga, amongst others, advocated promoting African literature in isiXhosa mother-tongue education. Thus, the masculine emphasis by Bradford dominated the African literature domain, especially in history writing or the intellectual lineage of male historians. This is in spite of the female scholars contributing at that time: for example, Charlotte Makgomo Maxeke, Phyllis Ntantala, Lilian Ngoyi and Fatima Meer, to mention a few. However, Mkhize seems to agree when raising the fact that Africa writers deliberately set out to write as historians – they engaged, sourced,

debated, and haggled with dominant missionary interpretations of African history at the time (Mkhize 2018: 58).

Thus, another reading of the title *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* also reflects on the metaphor of the cow in Xhosa culture, since the title is in isiXhosa language. Later in this chapter, the male association with the cow is explored in relation to Siwani's rendition of the kraal. The cow is a metaphor, because it has been used as a subject of symbolic idioms, songs, rituals and myths. For example, Mkhize (2018: 59) elaborates that *izibongo* and *imibongo* (the tradition of Xhosa and Zulu poetry by *imbongi*), praise poetry and poems, are particularly important because they provide an account and an interpretation of events. For instance, *izibongo*, are presented by women, but mostly by males, both as praise and to convey critiques, political analysis and a sense of teaching moments for young people and adults. Historian Nomathamsanqa C. Tisani (cited in Mkhize 2018: 59) points out that the popular use of *izibongo* is for expressing lofty thoughts and historical topics. Mkhize and Tisani's views bring together the importance of *izibongo* for the idiomatic, oral and philosophical record of African historiographical expressions, experiences and traditions. As a result, sustained historiographical efforts within the South African historical context contribute to the wider scholarship that offers potential challenges to how precolonial perspectives are reflected on.

3.5 The substance of language – *ulwimi*

In *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*, Siwani (2015) speaks in isiXhosa. Her thesis is written in isiXhosa and English. Her use of an indigenous language plays into the idea of secrecy, “revealing some things while I conceal others” (Siwani 2015: 32). This means that Siwani practises ritual in performance as a conscious guarding of sacred traditional beliefs that might transpire. She continues to pose an ethical question on the function of secrecy, and in how secrets are shared and communicated. Thus, the substance of language is based on understanding the meaning and power of ritual symbols in Siwani's work. Language is an important and vital component in all Siwani's practice and writing.

In this case, Siwani's use of isiXhosa provides me with two analyses about language. In her thesis, she specifically highlights *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* and *Inzilo: Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* under the subject line: language – or *ulwimi* in isiXhosa. Both performances are related in how Siwani positions herself at the centre and as a subject and object of ritual as a physical and spiritual medium. In considering *Inzilo: Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*, for instance, I discuss Siwani's use of incantations or ‘prayer’ as one of the most important actions of ritual

(chapter one). This section adds not only to using language as significant verbal communication in ritual but in how language is transmitted through symbolic objects that are central in a ritual and contact with a ritual space.

While the meaning of the word “language” transmits people’s ideas, emotions, feelings and understanding of events (wa Thiong’o 1994), its meaning in isiXhosa – *ulwimi* – provides an interesting take. The isiXhosa sense of ‘language’ can be interpreted as the burden and fallacy of the historical narrative of Nongqawuse’s story. *Ulwimi* can be interpreted as the unsound burden and fallacy that the role of Nongqawuse’s prophecy plays in history. In other words, *ulwimi* also means lies (*unolwini*) and tongue, as in the physical organ in the mouth. To say a person *unolwimi* means that their tongue/mouth is providing lies, which may be seen as the case for some interpretations of Nongqawuse’s prophecy.

3.6 Integrating material culture

In this section it becomes important that I highlight material culture as a way of understanding how objects and experiences become fabricated from the stories attached to them, and their meanings and preservation. Material culture is evident in all of Siwani’s performances, as I have described in the previous chapters and introduction; I am also counting the artworks of the other artists discussed in this thesis. Zulu (2016: 2) notes that material culture plays a very critical role in the importance of ritual, the process of selecting specific material objects used in ritual and in people’s discourses about rituals. As a case study, Zulu’s text particularly places a focus on the changes that have taken place regarding male circumcision in the Hlubi initiation rituals in Matatiele in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

I find it interesting that his aim on the key material components or objects of male initiation place interest on the contemporary nature of the ritual process and people’s experiences. Herman (in Zulu 2016: 3) notes the two categories of material culture: “object-centred” and “object-driven”. The former focuses on the details, outline, description and the physical attributes of the object, while the latter concentrates on understanding the object in relation to the people who made and used the objects. It is the “object-driven” contextualisation that becomes important in Siwani’s performance, which can be observed as a symbolic significance of how objects of ritual embody the practice of *amasiko*, as discussed in the introduction.

Siwani’s sentiments about sacrifice might be “true” in terms of her retelling the story of Nongqawuse, nevertheless, sacrifice might not be the “true” representation of Nongqawuse historiography. This is also not to say that Siwani includes ritual sacrificing within the

historiography of Nongqawuse's story. Rather, the cow skulls in Siwani's performance were not killed as sacrifice, nor were they meant for any traditional African religious purposes. Mndende (in Bradford 2008: 227) attests that sacrifice requires clan specific rituals, which she says were absent in the Cattle-Killing. She adds that sacrificing and ordinary killing are different, and those who call the Cattle-Killing sacrificing, lack familiarity with African religions (Mndende in Bradford 2008: 227). However, it is understandable that in the narrative of Siwani's performance sacrifice is an implied interpretation of ritual, which is what drives Siwani's practice. What I think is compelling in Siwani's practice is the understanding that the outcome of ritual in performance considers the material culture as an artistic expression. It is the attention to the symbolic textures and nuanced approach to ritual that involves exploring the numerous points of ambiguity where ritual contact is available to both expand and contract.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I focused on Buhlebezwe Siwani's visual arts performance work. The motivation to write this thesis is influenced by an encounter with Siwani's live performance entitled *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*. *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* is a death ritual that explores mourning, loss, grief and bereavement. In this performance, Siwani's use of ritual is stronger, in that, she included elements and characteristics that reflected on traditional African religious practices and beliefs. My description is an analysis of *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* in chapter one reflects on my engagement and atmosphere of a death ritual that Siwani has created for an art audience. I consider my position during *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* as that of a participant, because of the communal role involved in death rituals.

In the thesis, death in the human life does not terminate at the loss of breathe, but continues in the spiritual realm. Thus, the idea of physicality and spirituality is used to define the role of death and mark the point where the humans communicate with ancestors. It shows that the importance of ancestors maintains the process of ritual through speech, sacrifice and other connected elements that make-up a ceremony.

As a response to Siwani's work, ritual in performance art has been used to interpret the meanings of ritual when making art. The aim is for the reader to understand that ritual in performance art is not a category or classification that is placed on Siwani's work or any of the artist's works included here. Rather that ritual in performance art represents the context in which ritual performance is complex in its definition, practice and everyday life. Thus, the objective aimed for is not to confine ritual, nor is it aimed at providing complete answers on what is considered ritual.

In this thesis, I define and analyse ritual in relation to *amasiko*, which is the nature in which I engaged with Siwani's live performance. *Amasiko*, as a practice of ritual amongst amaXhosa, allowed me to reflect on the role of tradition and culture, and the meanings that show the two as evolving rather than fixed and unchanging. AmaXhosa are the central region in my thesis, and to whom language and culture influence the everyday life and practices of rituals. I associate culture and language with the social, communal, cohesiveness and spiritual development of amaXhosa community. Hence, the thesis focused on the significance communal activity as a critical component of *amasiko*.

In her practice, Siwani identifies as *isangoma* and artist. The two are not separate, as she elaborates that no one role is higher or more important than the other. This thesis supported

Siwani's position as *isangoma* and artist, however, explored the contradictions that often see her two positions in contrast to each other. For example, *isangoma* have a significant relationship with ancestors because they are mediums who intervene between the living and the spiritual world. The role of *isangoma* is to heal or healing, which is associated with the training process of *ukuthwasa*. Not just anyone can become *isangoma*. A person needs to have a calling (*ubizo*) from her/his ancestors who provide guidance on different stages of *ukuthwasa* initiation process. More in-depth knowledge on the stages of *ukuthwasa* are found in Mndende's (2002) and Mlisa (2009), amongst other scholars who reflect on the historical, medical and practices of *isangoma*. Mndende and Mlisa's text offered a reflection on personal experiences, as knowledge contribution to the fulfilment of transferring the intended purpose and recognition of rituals and African religions.

In performance art, the body is treated as a medium for making art. A medium is the physical material involved in the creative process of performance art, which is the live engagement with an audience. In my thesis, ritual is treated as a medium of physicality and spirituality. The idea of physicality and spirituality is used when interpreting the presentation or representation of the body as a subject and object of art. Throughout this thesis, it tries to show the reader that Siwani is performing rituals. The actual ritual performances make references to traditional African religious practices of amaXhosa and AmaZulu. As *isangoma* and artist, Siwani makes use of her spiritual journey as a central point to her practice as an artist. A spiritual journey is about her personal experiences of rituals, but most importantly, she creates complexities by subverting and questioning the idea of cultural and traditional within contemporary South African art.

In her thesis, entitled *Imfihlo*, Siwani explores the boundaries of revealing and concealing ritual events that are considered secret. She focuses on secrecy as a concept and to demonstrate the deeper concern when keeping cultural practices secret. When secrecy is encountered in rituals practices, it encompasses sacred qualities that should be respected. The idea of respect is connected values, beliefs and teachings that preserve *amasiko*. At the same time, respect maintains coherence and indigenous knowledge systems that are integral to society.

In her performance and photographic series *Uthengisa unoKrwece eLunxwemene* and *iGagasi*, Siwani chooses what to conceal and reveal. Her act of secrecy conceals the details of ritual speech and meanings entailed in the process of ritual in performance. Siwani reveals the characteristics of ritual, based on her personal experience during the initiation to become

isangoma. What is revealed in her work is no longer secret, in the sense of recognising that secrets are at the risk of being revealed. In the thesis I show that concealing is more powerful to those who are insiders, who know and keep the secret.

In moving forward, there is more research that can be done by integrating the importance of traditional African religious practices in the visual art. Such research can be explored through diverse locations and religions that are relevant and beneficial to the evolving nature of indigenous knowledge systems and beliefs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abimbola, W. 1993. Secrecy and Objectivity in the Methodology of Ifa Divination. In M. H. Noortter-Roberts (ed.), *Secrecy: African Art That Conceals and Reveals*. New York: Museum for African Art. 213 - 221.
- Abrahams, R. 1986. Ordinary and extraordinary experiences. In V. Turner & E. Bruner (eds.), *The Anthropology of experience*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 45 - 72.
- Adichie, C. 2009. *The Danger of a Single Story - Transcript. TED X*. Available at: <http://ssw.unc.edu/files/TheDangerofaSingleStoryTranscript.pdf> (16/07/2016).
- Akol, G. 2011. Widow's Experiences of Social Mourning amongst amaXhosa: An Interpretative Phenomenological study. Masters Thesis, University of Fort Hare.
- Alberti L. 1968. *Account of the tribal life and customs of the Xhosa in 1807*. Translated by W Fehr in 1810. Cape Town: Balkema.
- Appiah, K. A. 1996. Why Africa? Why Art? In T. Phillips (ed.). *Africa: The Art of a Continent*. Los Angeles: University of California.
- Ashcroft B., Griffiths G. & Tiffin H. 1995. *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Ashforth, A. 2005. *Witchcraft, violence and democracy in South Africa*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Atiku, J. 2016. *Jeliliatiku*. Available: jeliliatiku.webs.com/ (accessed 30/02/16).
- Awolalu, J. O. 1976. "What is African Traditional Religion?" *Studies in Comparative Religion*, 10(2): 1 - 10.
- Bauman, R. 1977. *Verbal Art as Performance*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Beardsley, M. C. (1958). *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Bell, C. 1992. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, C. 1997. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Bellman, B. L. & Simmel, G. 1981. "The Paradox of Secrecy". *Human Studies*. 4: 1 - 24.

- Beidelman, T. O. 1993. Secrecy and society: the paradox of knowing and the knowing of paradox. In M. H. Nooter-Roberts (ed.), *Secrecy: African Art That Conceals and Reveals*. New York: Museum for African Art.
- Berglund, A. I. 1976. *Zulu-Thought Patterns and Symbolism*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Bhabha, H. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bial, H. 2004. *The Performance Reader* London: Routledge.
- Bloch, M. 1986. *From Blessing to Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blocker, G. 1994. *The Aesthetics of Primitive Art*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.
- Bongela, K. S. 2001. *Isihlonipho amongst amaXhosa*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of South Africa.
- Bradford, H. 2004. "Framing African women: visionaries in southern Africa and their photographic afterlife, 1850 – 2004". *Kronos*. 30: 70 - 93.
- Bradford, H. 2008. "Akukho Ntaka Inokubhabha Ngephiko Elinye (No Bird Can Fly on One Wing): The 'Cattle-Killing Delusion' and Black Intellectuals, c1840–1910". *African Studies*, 67(2), 209-232.
- Brizuela-Garcia, E. & Getz, T. 2012. *African histories: new sources and new techniques for studying African pasts*. Boston: Pearson.
- Broome J. 1993. Goodness is reducible to bitterness: the evil of death is the value of life. In P. Koslowski & T. Shionoya (eds.), *The good and the economical, Studies in Economic Ethics and Philosophy*. Berlin: Springer.
- Bryant, A. T. 1970. *Zulu Medicine and Medicine-Men*. Cape Town: Struik.
- Buhrmann M.V. 1982. "Training, growth and development of Xhosa *amagqirha*". *Humanitas*, 8(1): 59 - 67.
- Butler, J. 2011. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. London: Routledge.
- Chikukwa, R. 2011. "Curating contemporary African art: questions of mega-exhibitions and Western influence". *African Identities*. 9(2): 225 - 22.

- Coates, K. 2001. Samson Mudzunga. P. Hobbs & K. Coates (eds.), *Taxi-002 Samson Mudzunga*. David Krut Publishing: Johannesburg.
- Colman, A. M. *A Dictionary of psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press online.
- Comaroff, J. & Comaroff, J. 1993. *Modernity and its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Cook, P. A. W. 1930. *Social Organisation and Ceremonial Institutions of the Bomvana*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Coombes, A. 2003. *History after apartheid: visual culture and public memory in a democratic South Africa*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Cooper F. & Stoler A. L. 1997. *Tensions of empire: colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cumes D. M. 2004. *A surgeon's odyssey into the spirit world of African healing*. Claremont: New Africa Books.
- Davis, S. B. 2010. History in the Literary Imagination: The Telling of Nongqawuse and the Xhosa Cattle-Killing in South African Literature and Culture (1891 – 1936). Ph.D. Thesis. University of Cambridge.
- Deepwell, K. 1998. *Art Criticism and Africa*. London: Saffron Books.
- Dei, G. J. S. 2000. "Rethinking the role of indigenous knowledges in the academy". *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 4(2): 111-132.
- Dei, G. J. S., Hall, B. & Rosenberg, D. G. 2000. *Indigenous knowledges in the global contexts: Multiple readings of the world*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Denis, P. 2006. "The rise of traditional African religion in post-apartheid South Africa" *Missionalia*. 34(2/3): 310 - 323.
- Dixon-Gottschild, B. 1996. *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance*. Westport: Preager publishers.
- Drewal, M. T. 1983. "The State of research on performance in Africa". *African Studies Review*. 34(3): 1- 64.

- Durkheim, D. E. 1957. *The elementary forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press.
- Edwards, S., Makunga N., Thwala J. & Mbele, B. 2009. "The Role of the Ancestors in Healing". *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous knowledge systems*. 8(1): 1 - 10.
- Edwards, S. 2010. "On South African Indigenous healing". *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous knowledge systems*. 9(2): 211 - 229.
- Elkins, J. 2006. *Art History Versus Aesthetics*. New York: Routledge.
- Enwezor, O. 1994. "Redrawing the Boundaries: Towards a new African Art Discourse". *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art*. Fall/Winter(1): 3 - 7.
- Enwezor, O. 1997. "Reframing the Black Subject: Ideology and fantasy in contemporary South African art". *Third Text*. 11(40): 1 - 40.
- Enwezor, O. & Okeke-Agulu, C. 2009. *Contemporary African Art since 1980*. Bologna: Damiani.
- Fee, M. 1995. Who can write as the other? In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths & H. Tiffin (eds.), *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge. 242 - 245.
- Fikeni, L. 2016. Artist Buhlebezwe Siwani is a millennial sangoma for the 21st century. *Sunday Times Lifestyle*. 13 March. Available at: <http://www.timeslive.co.za/sundaytimes/lifestyle/2016/03/13/Artist-Buhlebezwe-Siwani-is-a-millennial-sangoma-for-the-21st-century1> (27/05/2017).
- Fred, T. S. 1987. "Death, Ritual, and Art in Africa". *African Arts Journal*. 21(1): 28 - 34.
- Fusco, C. 1996. "The bodies that were not ours: Black performers, Black performance". *Nka Journal of Contemporary Art*. Fall/Winter(5): 28 - 33.
- Fuss, D. 1988. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference*. New York: Routledge.
- Gandhi, L. 1998. *Postcolonialism: A critical introduction theory*. New York: Colombia University Press.
- Geertz, C. 1973. *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gibson, D. 2013. "Perceptions of traditional health practitioners on violence in the Helderberg Municipal Area, Western Cape". *Health SA Gesondheid* 18(1): 673 - 679.

- Goffman, E. 1959. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Goldberg, R. & Christiane P. 1979. *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Goldberg, R. 1998. *Performance*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Gonzalez, J. 2008. *Subject to display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Graham, H. 1990. *Time, Energy and the Psychology of Healing*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Hall, S. 1990. The west and the rest: discourse of power. In R. Maaka & C. Andersen (eds.), *The Indigenous Experience: Global Perspectives*. USA: Canadian Scholars Press Inc. 275 - 331.
- Hall, S. 1996. Politics of identity. In T. Ranger, Y. Samad & O. Stuart (eds.), *Culture, Identity and Politics: Ethnic Minorities in Britain*. Aldershot: Avebury..
- Hassan, S. 1999. The Modernist Experience in African Art: Visual Expressions of the Self and Cross-Cultural Aesthetic. In O. Oguibe & O. Enwezor (eds.), *Reading the Contemporary: African Art from Theory to the Marketplace*. London: International Visual Arts (inIVA). 30 - 74.
- Hassan, S. & Oguibe, O. 2001. *Authentic/Ex-centric: Conceptualism in Contemporary African Art*. New York: Forum for African Arts: Prince Claus Fund Library.
- Henning E., Van Rensburg W. & Smit B. 2004. *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schalk.
- Higgins J., Smith K. & Siopis, P. 2014. *Between Subject and Object: human remains at the interface of art and science*. Cape Town: Michaelis.
- Hirst, M. M. 2005. "Dreams and Medicines: The Perspective of Xhosa Diviners and Novices in the Eastern Cape, South Africa". *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*. 5(2): 1 - 22.
- Hobsbawn, E. & Ranger, T. 1992. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: United Kingdom at University Press.
- Hooks, B. 1991. "Essentialism and Experience". *American Literary History*. 3(1): 172 - 183.
- Hooks, B. 1996) *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press.

- Hunter, M. 1979. *Reaction to conquest: effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*. Cape Town: David Phillip.
- Hutchings, A. 2007. Ritual Cleansing, Incense and the Tree of Life – Observations on Some Indigenous Plant Usage in Traditional Zulu and Xhosa Purification and Burial Rites. *Alternation*. 14(2): 189-216.
- Iannaccaro, G. 2013. “The Story of Nongqawuse in South African Twentieth-Century Fiction”. *Textus*. 3: 191- 212.
- Idowu, E. B. 1973. *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. London: SCM Press.
- Jacobus, L. A. 1968. *Aesthetics and the Arts*. London: St. Martin’s Press.
- Johnson, M. 2008. *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding*. USA: University of Chicago press.
- Jones, A. 1997. “‘Presence’ in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation”. *Art Journal*. 56(4): 11 - 18.
- Jones, A. 1998. *Body Art/ Performing the Subject*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Jones, A. 1999. Art History/Art Criticism: performing meaning. In A. Jones & A. Stephenson (eds.), *Performing the Body/Performing the Text*. New York: Routledge. 39 - 55.
- Jones, A. & Warr, T. 2000. *The Artist’s Body*. London: Phaidon.
- Jones, A. & Heathfield A. 2012. *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*. Bristol: Intellect Books.
- Kanu, I. A. 2014. “African Traditional Religion in a Globalizing World”. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*. 1(8): 4 - 12.
- Kapferer, B. 2004. “Ritual Dynamics and Virtual Practice: Beyond Representation and meaning”. *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*. 48(2): 35 - 54.
- Kaplan, O. M. 1998. *Creating Art at the Margins: The performances of an artist in the Venda region of South Africa*. Masters Thesis. University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
- Kaprow, A. 1993. *Essays of the blurring of art and life*. California: University of California Press.

- Kendall, K. 1999. "The role of Izangoma in bringing the Zulu Goddess back to her people". *TDR*, 43(2): 94 - 117.
- Khan, S. 2012. Becoming: The art of everyday performativity. In C. M. Stemberger (ed.), *Performing Performance art in South Africa Catalogue for Exhibition Alterating Conditions*. Vienna: Goethe Institut. 16-24.
- Khan, S. 2016. Under the influence of Dumile Feni's 'African Guernica'. *The Conversation* [online]. Available at:
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. 2002. Performance Studies. In H. Bial (ed.), *The Performance Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge. 43 - 55.
- Koloane, D. 1998. Art criticism for whom? In K. Deepwell (ed.), *Art Criticism and Africa*. London: Saffron Books.
- Law, J. 2000. Unleashing Energies. In J. Picton, J. Law & M. Pissarra (eds.), *Cross Currents: Contemporary Art Practice in South Africa: An Exhibition in Two Parts*. Parklands: Delta Books.
- Layton, R. 1981. *The Anthropology Art*. New York: Granada.
- Leiman, L. 2016. Buhlebezwe Siwani: We are woke, we are lit. *Between 10and5: the creative showcase*. Available at: <http://10and5.com/2016/06/16/buhlebezwe-siwani-we-are-woke-we-are-lit/> (Accessed 27/05/2017).
- Leiris, M. 1968. "The discovery of African art in the West". *African Art*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Lentz, C. 1995. "'Tribalism' and ethnicity in Africa: a review of four decades of Anglophone research". *Cahiers des sciences humaines*. 31(2): 34 - 56.
- LeVine, K. 2014. Jelili Atiku: Performance Artists' Efforts Towards Visual Education & Change. *Another Africa*. Available at: <http://www.anotherafrica.net/art-culture/jelili-atiku-a-visual-education> (accessed 09/05/16).
- Lewis, D. 2001. "The conceptual art of Berni Searle". *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*. 16(50): 108 - 117.
- Loots, L. 2001. Re-situating culture in the body politic. *Agenda: Empowering women for gender Equity*. 16(49): 9 - 14.

Løvholm, L. 2014. Enacting and Re-inventing Identities: Cultural Translation, Haunting Spaces, Decolonization, and Politics of Performance through Contemporary Nigerian Performance Art. Master's thesis. University of Copenhagen.

Lucie-Smith, E. 1996. *Visual Arts in the 20th Century*. London: Laurence King Publishing.

Luper, S. 2009. *The Philosophy of Death*. London: Cambridge University Press.

MacKenny, V. 2001. "Re-presenting identity – Post-Apartheid South African performance art as a site for gender resistance – an examination of the work of Carol-anne Gainer and Tracy Rose". *Agenda: Empowering women for gender Equity*. 16(49): 15 - 24.

Mafeje A. 1975. Religion, class and Ideology in South Africa. In M. G Whisson and M. West (eds.), *Religion and Social Change in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip.

Makhubu, N. 2012. "Race and the anxieties of cultural obscurity: Meditations on blackness in South African performance and video art". *International Journal of Cultural Studies*. 16(1): 41 - 53.

Makhubu, L & Green, E. C. 1984. "Traditional healers in Swaziland: Towards improved cooperation between the traditional and modern health sectors". *Social Science & Medicine*. 18(12): 1071 - 1079.

Maloka, E. T. 1998. "Death, dying and mourning in the mine compounds". *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*. 38(149): 17 - 40.

Mangcu, X. 2013. "Retracing Nelson Mandela through the Lineage of Black Political Thought". *Transition*. 112: 101 - 116.

Manyedi, E., Koen, M.P. & Greeff, M. 2003. "Experiences of widowhood and beliefs about the mourning process of the Batswana people". *Health SA Gesondheid: Interdisciplinary Research Journal*: 8(4): 69 - 87.

Marschall, S. 2001. "Art in South Africa: 'redress' through terminology". *De Arte*. (64): 63 - 74.

Matakala, C. 2017. Studio Africa: Buhlebezwe Siwani and Unpacking the Witch's Baggage. *Okay Africa* [online]. Available at: <http://www.okayafrica.com/studio-africa-buhlebezwe-siwani> (accessed 09/07/2017).

Matshoba, M. 1979. *Call Me Not a Man*. London: Longman African Classics.

Mazrui, A. 1996. Perspective: The Muse of Modernity and the Quest for development. In P. Albach & S. Hassan (eds.), *The Muse of Modernity*. New York: Trenton Africa World Press. 1 - 18.

Mbiti, J. 1975. *Introduction of African religion*. Oxford: Heinemann.

Mbon, M. 1991. African traditional socio-religious ethics and national development: the Nigerian case. In J. K. Olupona (ed.), *African Traditional religions in contemporary society*. New York: Paragom House. 101 - 109.

McAllister, P. A. 1988. "Inclusion and Exclusion in the Oral Transmission of Ritual Knowledge: A Xhosa Communicative Strategy". In E. Sienaert and N. Bell (eds.), *Catching Winged Words: Oral Tradition and Education*. Durban: Natal University Oral Documentation and Research Centre. 43-68.

Mda, Z. 2003. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador.

Minott, C. 1992. *History of Art*. New York: Harpercollins Publishers.

Mkhize, N. 2018. "The Missing Idiom of African Historiography: African Historical Writing" in Walter Rubusana's *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*. In J. Bam, L. Ntsebeza & A Zinn (eds.), *Whose History Counts: Decolonising Africa Pre-colonial Historiography*. Stellenbosch: African Sun MeDIA. 54 - 76.

Mlisa, L. N. 2009. Ukuthwasa Initiation of AmaGqirha: Identity Cconstruction and the training of Xhosa Women as Traditional Healers. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Free State, Free State.

Mndende, N. 1994. African religion and religion education. Masters Thesis. University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

Mndende, N. 1998. "Underground Praxis to Recognized Religion: Challenges facing African Religions". *Journal for the Study of Religion*. 11(2): 115 - 124.

Mndende, N. 2002. Signifying Practices: amaXhosa Ritual Speech. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

Mndende, N. 2013. "Law and religion in South Africa: An African traditional perspective". *Stellenbosch Theology Journal*. 54(1): 74 - 82.

Mokgobi, M. G. 2014. "Understanding traditional African healing". *African journal for physical health education, recreation, and dance*. 20(2): 24 - 34.

- Mosaka, T. 2000. "Liberated voice: Contemporary art from South Africa". *NKA Journal of Contemporary African Art*. Winter/Fall(11-12): 105 - 107.
- Moshabelai, M., Zuma T. & Gaede, B. 2016. "Bridging the gap between biomedical and traditional health practitioners in South Africa". *SAHR*. 4: 74 - 82.
- Motsemme, N. 2011. *Lives and Embodied Suffering and Healing Amongst Mothers and Daughters in Chesterville Township, KwaZulu-Natal*. Ph.D. Thesis. University of South Africa.
- Mpola, M. 2007. *An Analysis of Oral Literary Music Texts in IsiXhosa*. Ph.D. Thesis. Rhodes University.
- Mqala, L. M. 2003. *An Assessment of African Christian Beliefs in Ancestors in view of a Responsible Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 8: 4-6 within the South African Context*. Masters Thesis. University of Stellenbosch.
- Mtuzi, P. T. 2004. *Introducing Xhosa Culture*. Alice: Lovedale Press.,
- Mudimbe, V. Y. 1994. *The idea of Africa*. London: Indiana University Press.
- Mudimbe, V. Y. 1988. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. London: Indiana University Press.
- Musila, G. 2016. "Part-time Africans, Europolitans and 'Africa lite'". *Journal of African Cultural Studies*. 28(1): 109 -113.
- Naidoo, T. & Nyundu, K. 2016. "Traditional Healers, their services and the ambivalence of South African youth". *Unisa Press*. 14(1): 144 - 156.
- Ndebele, M. 1999. "Cost of dying". *The Sowetan* (Johannesburg), 22 September.
- Ndlovu, G. 2013. *The Mourning Cultural Practices amongst the Zulu-Speaking Widows of the Kwanyswa Community: The Feminist Perspective*. Masters Thesis. University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.
- Ndungane, T. A. 1992. *Ubungcambu Bobuzwe*. Umtata: Shuter and Shooter.
- Nemo, P. 2005. *What is the West?* Pittsburg: Dequesue University Press.
- Nettleton, A. 2006. "Samson Mudzunga, Dzingoma, and New Methodologies". *African Arts*. xxxix(4): 68 - 77.

- Ngubane, H. 1977. *Body and mind in Zulu medicine: An ethnography of health and disease in Nguwa thought patterns and practice*. London: Academic Press.
- Ngubane, S. 2004. "Traditional practices on burial systems with special reference to the Zulu people of South Africa". *Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*. 3(2): 171 - 177.
- Ngwenya, T. 2006. "Introducing critical language awareness in isiZulu: the why and the how". *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language*. 24(2): 165 - 173.
- Njami, S. 2006. *Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent*. Johannesburg: Johannesburg Art Gallery.
- Noorter-Roberts, M. H. 1993. *Secrecy: African Art That Conceals and Reveals*. New York: Museum for African Art.
- Ntsebeza, L. 2018. Introduction. In J. Bam, L. Ntsebeza, A. Zinn (eds.), *Whose History Counts: Decolonising Africa Pre-colonial Historiography*. Stellenbosch: African Sun MeDIA. 1 - 14.
- Ntsimane, R. 2006. "Navigating turbulent waters: The challenges facing women traditional healers in post-apartheid KwaZulu-Natal". XIV Conference of the International Association of Oral History, Sydney, 12–16 July 2006. (unpublished).
- Ogana, W. 2009. "Diagnosis Practices of Izangoma in Durban, South Africa. *Indiliga African Journal of Indigenous knowledge Systems*. 8(2): 115 - 126.
- Oguibe, O. 1993. "African Explores: 20th century African art - Book Review". *African Arts*. 26(1): 16 - 22.
- Oguibe, O. 2004. *The Culture Game*. USA: University of Minnesota.
- Okeke-Agulu, C. 2006. "The challenge of the modern: An introduction". *African Arts*. 39(1): 14 - 15.
- Okeke-Agulu, C. 2010. "Nka roundtable II: Contemporary African art history and the scholarship". *Nka: Journal of Contemporary Art*. Spring(26): 80 - 151.
- Opland, J. 1983. *Xhosa Oral Poetry: Aspects of a Black South African Tradition*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Osborne, H. 1968. *Aesthetics and Art Theory: An Historical Introduction*. London: Green and Co.

- Otu, J. Johnson, O. and Sani, B. S. 2015. "Artist Activism in Nigeria Art: A Course, a Cause". *International Journal of Arts and Humanities*. 4(2): 209 - 223.
- Parrinder, E. G. 1967. *African Traditional Religion*. London: Sheldon Press.
- Pauw, B.A. 1975. *Christianity and Xhosa Tradition*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Pearsall, J. 2001. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Peires, J. B. 1986. "'Soft' Believers and 'Hard' Unbelievers in the Xhosa Cattle-Killing". *Journal of African History*. 27(1): 443 - 461.
- Peires, J. B. 1989. *The Dead Will Arise. Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7*. Indiana U.P.: Bloomington.
- Perani, J. & Smith, F. T. 1998. *The visual arts of Africa: Gender, power, and life cycle rituals*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Perryer S. & Bedford, E. 2004. *10 Years 100 Artists: Art in a Democratic South Africa*. Cape Town: Bell-Roberts Publishing.
- Phelan, P. 1993. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. London: Routledge.
- Putuma, K. 2015. *Water*. [Video file]. Available at: <http://www.youtu.be/UGdqclGhw> (05/06/2017).
- Picton, J. & Law, J. 2000. *Cross Currents: Contemporary Art Practice in South Africa: An Exhibition in Two Parts*. London: Atkinson Gallery.
- Radidzilani, M. S. 2010. A Discourse Analysis of Bereavement Rituals in a TshiVenda Speaking Community: African Christian and Traditional Africa. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
- Rosen, R. 1989. *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream 1970-85*. USA: Abbeville Press.
- Rosenblatt, P.C. & Nkosi, B.C. 2007. "South African Zulu widows in a time of poverty and social change". *Death Studies*. 31(1): 67 - 85.
- Rouget, M. 2017. Jelili Atiku, Performance Artist. *Arterial Network*. Available at: http://www.arterialnetwork.org/article/interview_jelili_atiku_march_2017 (05/06/2017).

- Rozik, E. 2005. *The Roots of Theatre: Rethinking Ritual and Other Theories of Origin*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.
- Said, E. W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Satyo, S. 2003. *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*. Cape Town: NEA.
- Schechner, R. 1977. *Essays on Performance Theory*. New York: Drama Book Specialists.
- Schechner, R. 1988. *Performance Theory*. New York: Routledge.
- Schechner, R. 1993. *The Future of Ritual: Writing on Culture and Performance*. London: Routledge.
- Scott, J. W. 1991. "The Evidence of Experience Critical Inquiry". 17(4): 773 - 797.
- Seekings, J. 1988. *Why was Soweto different?: urban development, township politics, and the political economy of Soweto, 1978-84*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute.
- Seekings, J. 2005. *Class, race, and inequality in South Africa*. Cape Town: Yale University Press.
- Serote, M. W. 1972. *Yakhal'inkomo*. Donker. London.
- Setsiba, T. H. S. 2012. Mourning Rituals and Practices in Contemporary South African Townships: A Phenomenological Study. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Zululand, Durban.
- Shahjahan, R. A. 2004. "Centering spirituality in the academy: Toward a transformative way of teaching and learning". *Journal of Transformative Education*. 2(4): 294 - 312.
- Shahjahan, R. A. 2005. "Mapping the Field of Anti-Colonial Discourse to Understand Issues of Indigenous Knowledges: Decolonizing Praxis". *McGill Journal of Education*. 40(2): 213 - 240.
- Shaw, R. & Stewart, C. 1994. *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism The politics of religious synthesis*. London: Routledge.
- Simelane-Kalumba, P. I. 2014. The use of proverbial names among the Xhosa Society: Socio-cultural approach. Masters Thesis. University of the Western Cape, Cape Town.
- Siwani, B. 2015. Imfihlo. Masters Thesis. University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

- Siwani, B. 2016. *Buhlebezwe Siwani*. Available: www.buhlebezwesiwani.com/ (accessed 30/02/16).
- Smith, J. Z. 1992. *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Soga, T. B. 1931. *Intlalo KaXhosa*. Alice: Lovedale Press.
- Soga, J. H. 1931. *The AmaXhosa Life and Customs*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Soga T. B. 1989. *Intlalo namasiko ka-Xhosa*. Alice: Lovedale Press.
- Somé, M. P. (1993). *Ritual: power, healing, and community*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Somé, M. P. 1994. *Of water and spirit: Ritual, magic, and initiation in the life of an African shaman*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Somhlaba, N. Z. & Walt, J. W. 2008. "Psychological adjustment to conjugal bereavement: Do social networks aid coping following spousal death?" *Journal of Death*. 57(4): 341 - 366.
- Sosibo, K. 2016. A sangoma connects the arts of performance and of healing with a search for identity. *Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg). 25 July 2016.
- Spivak, G. C. 1999. *The post-colonial Critic*. London: Routledge.
- Stewart, C. 1999. "Syncretism and Its Synonyms: Reflections on Cultural Mixture". *Diacritics*. 29(3): 40 - 62.
- Tedlock, B. "Divination as a way of knowing: Embodiment, visualisation, narrative and interpretation". *Folklore*. 12(2): 189 - 197.
- Theal, G. M. 1877. *Compendium of South African History and Geography*. Alice: Institution Press.
- Thompson, L. 1985. *The political mythology of apartheid*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Thompson, L. 1990. *A history of South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball.
- Thompson, G. 2014. "Otelo Burning and Zulu surfing histories". *Journal of African Cultural Studies*. 26(3): 324 -340.

- Thorpe, S. A. 1993. *Shamans, Medicine Men and Traditional Healers: A Comparative Study of Shamanism in Siberian Asia, Southern Africa and North America*. Pretoria: University of South Africa Press.
- Thwala J. D., Pillay A. L. & Sargent C. 2000. "The influence of urban/rural background, gender, age & education on the perception of and response to dreams among Zulu South Africans". *South African Journal of Psychology*. 30(4): 1 - 5.
- Turner, V. 1968. *The Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes among the Ndembu of Zambia*. New York: Ithaca, Cornell University.
- Turner, V. 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.
- Turner, V. 1982. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness Play*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.
- Turner, V. 1985. *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Turner, V. 1986. *The Anthropology of Performance*. New York: Performing Arts Journal.
- Turner, V. 1974. *Dramas, fields, and metaphors: symbolic action in human society*. New York: Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- Van der Kooi, R. 2006 "Traditional medicine in late pregnancy and labour: perceptions of Kgaba remedies amongst the Tswana in South Africa". *Traditional Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. 3(1): 11 - 22.
- Van Binsbergen, W. M. J. 2003. *Intercultural encounters: African and anthropological lessons towards a philosophy of interculturality*. Munster: Lit Verlag.
- Van Gennep, A. 1909. *Rites of Passage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Gennep, A. 1960. *Rites of passage*. Translated by M. B. Vizedom & G. L. Caffee. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Niekerk, J. P. 2012. "Traditional healers formalised?" *South African Medical Journal*. 102(3): 105 - 106.
- Van Nieuwenhuisen, J. W. 1974. *Diviners and their Ancestor Spirits: A Study of the Izangoma among the Nyuswa in Natal, South Africa*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.

- Van Robbroeck, L. (2003). "Writing White on Black: Identity and Difference in South African Art Writing of the Twentieth Century". *Third Text*. 17(2): 171 - 182.
- Van Wyk, I. W. C. 2004. African witchcraft in theological perspective. *Theological Studies*. 60(3): 87 - 110.
- Vergine, L. 2000. *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language*. New York: Rizzoli International Publication, Incorporated.
- Wainaina, B. 2005. How to write about Africa. *Granta: The magazine of new writing*. Available at: <http://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/> (accessed 01/10/15).
- Wassing, R. S. 1968. *African art: its background and traditions*. London: Portland House.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. 1988. *Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature*. Kenya: East African Educational Publishers.
- Warr, T. 2015. *Reading Contemporary Performance Art: Theatricality across Genres*. Routledge: New York.
- Wegley, A. 2007. Ritual failing: Turner's theatrical communitas. In M. Franko (ed.), *Ritual and Event: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Weizman, S. G. & Kamm, P. 1987. *About mourning support and guidance for the bereaved*. USA: Human Sciences Press.
- Willett, F. 1971. *African art: An Introduction*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Williamson, S. 2010. Ways of seeing. *African Bibliography*. Available at: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=8209643&jid=AFB&volumeId=2009&issueId=-1&aid=8209641&bodyId=&membershipNumber=&societyETOCSession=> (accessed 20/03/16).
- Wölfflin, H. 1950. *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Wreford, J. T. 2005. Ukusebenza nethongo (Working with Spirit): The role of *sangoma* in contemporary South Africa. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

Xaba, P. 2016. Mpilo Walter Benson Rubusana: Man of many talents. *The Journalist Context Matters* [Online]. Available at: thejournalist.org.za/pioneers/mpilo-walter-benson-rubusana-man-of-many-talents (4/10/2019).

Zulu, J. 2016. The Material Culture of Hlubi Male Initiation: A Case Study from Matatiele, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Masters Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.



Fig. 1. A map of the Eastern Cape. *Oxford Secondary Atlas for South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern African (Pty) Limited. 2016.

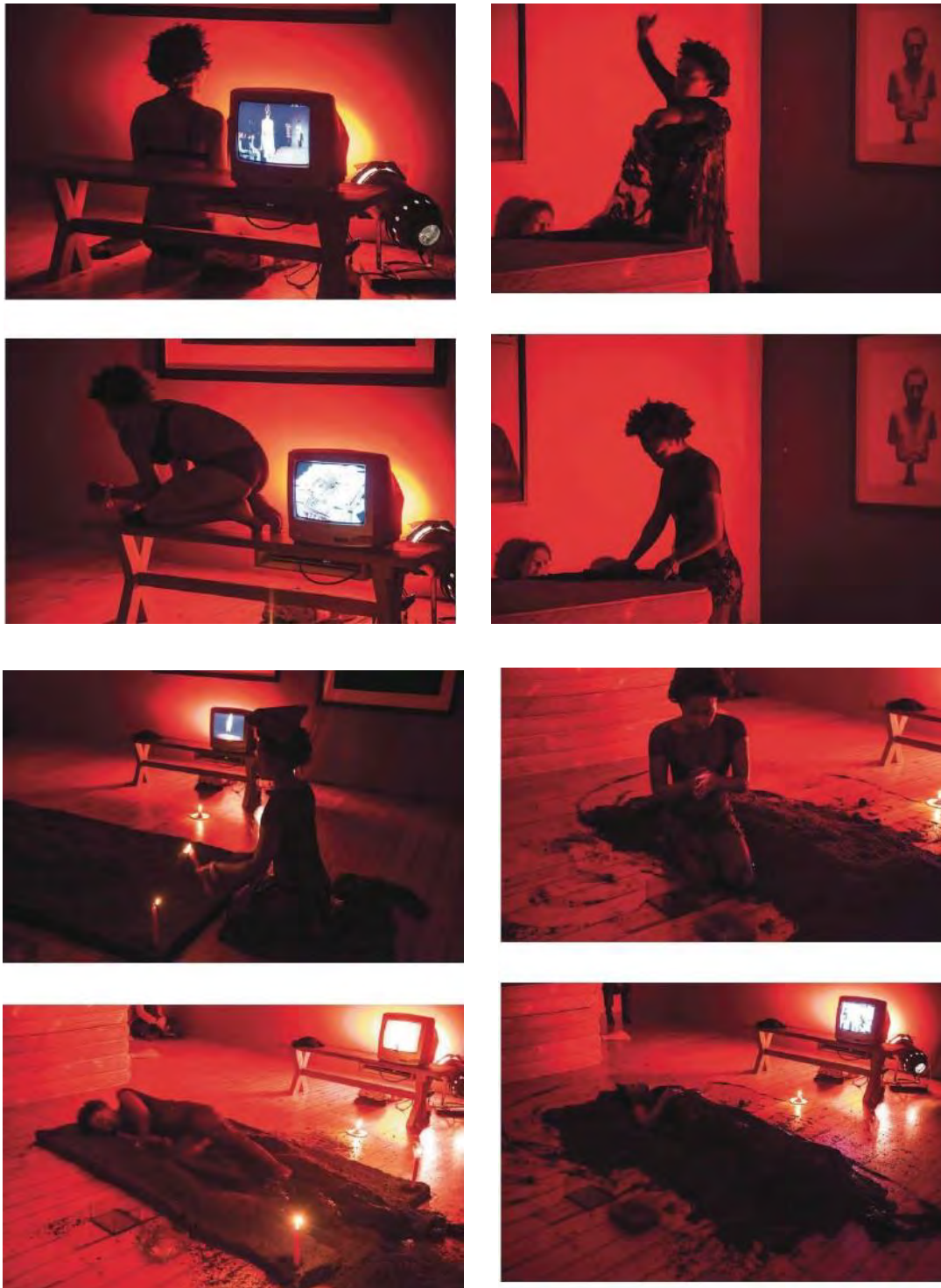


Fig. 2. Buhlebezwe Siwani, *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafuleyo* (performance stills), 2014, Mattresses, soil, television screen, wooden bench, candles and leopard cloth. Dimensions variable (stills of performance), Published in *Imfihlo*, Maters thesis.



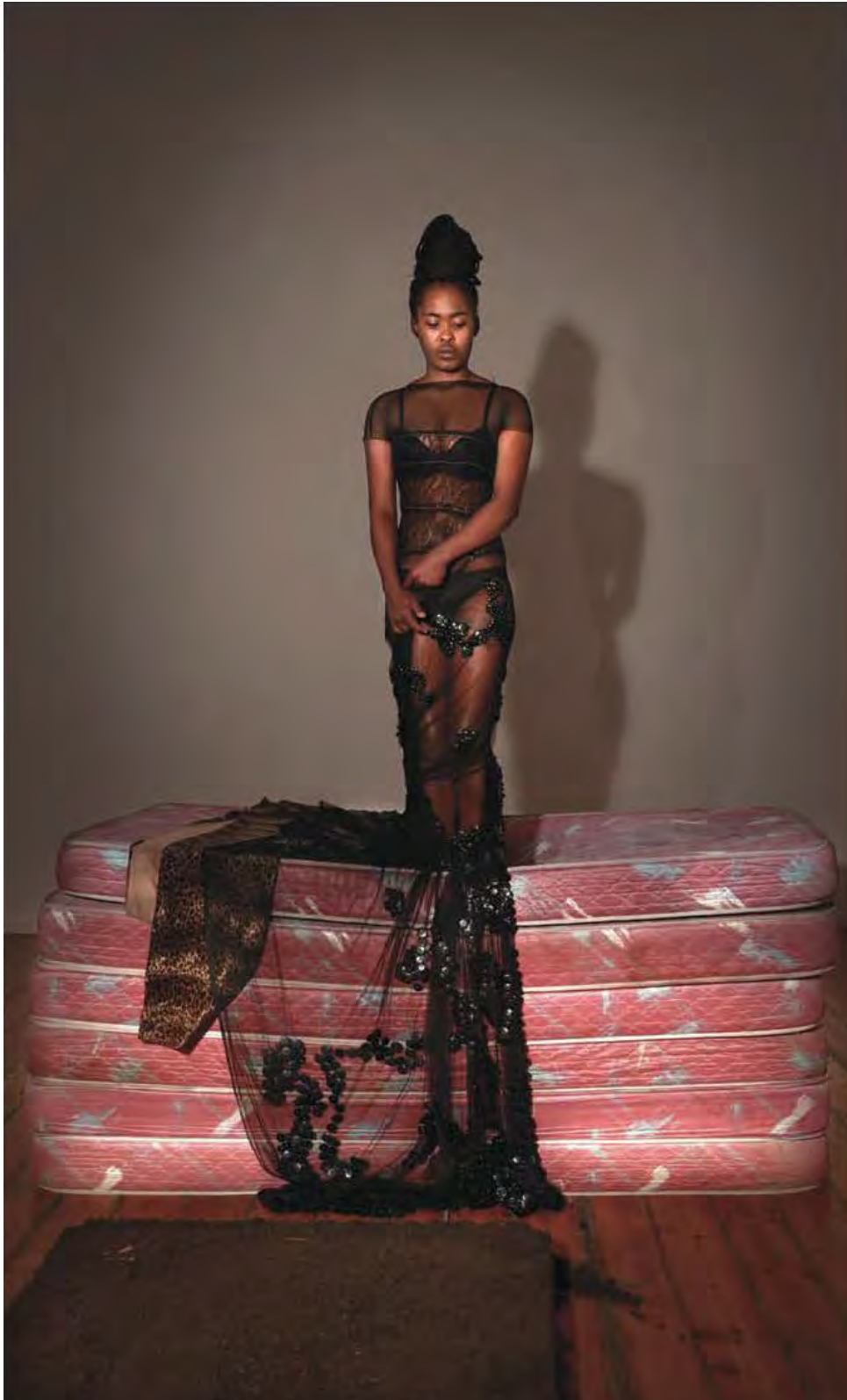




Fig. 3a, 3b, 3c Buhlebezwe Siwani, *Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* (photographic series), 2014, C-print on cotton paper, archival ink, 74 x 112 cm, Source taken from Siwani's thesis, *Imfihlo*.



Fig. 4a. Jelili Atiku, *Biofeedback (Araferaku #1)*, 2013, stills of performance: Ejigbo, Lagos, Nigeria, 2013), Photographer: Soibifaa Dokubo, Available at: jeliliatiku.webs.com/ (accessed 30/02/16)



Fig. 4b. Jelili Atiku, *Biofeedback (Araferaku #1)*, 2013, Image of Atiku's father, Available at: jeliliatiku.webs.com/ (accessed 30/02/16)



Fig. 4c. Jelili Atiku, *Biofeedback (Araferaku #1)*, 2013, stills of performance: Ejigbo, Lagos, Nigeria, 2013), Photo by Soibifaa Dokubo, Source taken from Atiku's facebook



Fig. 5. Jelili Atiku, *Isin' Pari Bami (Araferaku #2)*, 2013, stills of performance: Ejigbo, Lagos, Nigeria, 2013), (Photographer: Soibifaa Dokubo), Published in jeliliatiku.webs.com/ (accessed 30/02/16)

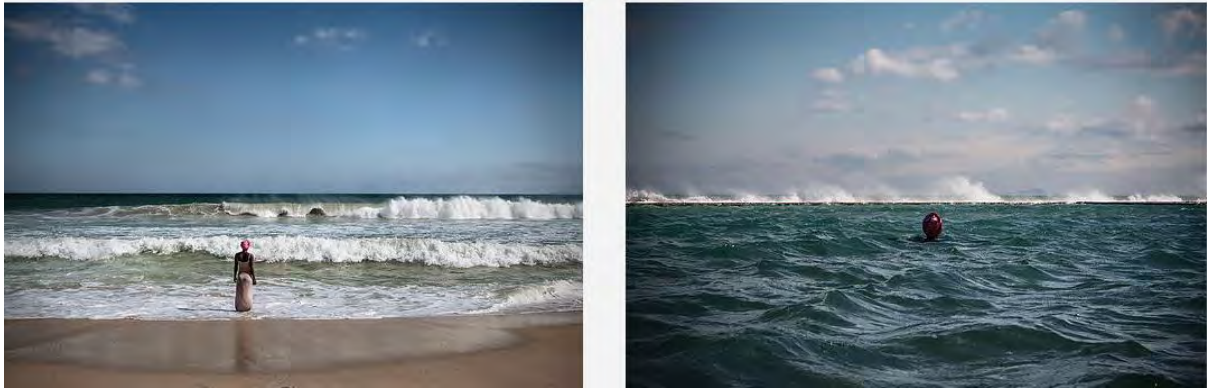


Fig. 6 a, b Buhlebezwe Siwani, *uThengisa unokrwece elunxwemene*, 2014, C-print on cotton paper, archival ink 83 x 56 cm, (Published in *Imfihlo*, Masters thesis)



Fig. 7. Buhlebezwe Siwani, *iGagasi*, 2014, C-print on cotton paper, archival ink 83 x 56 cm, (Published in *Imfihlo*, Masters thesis)



Fig. 8. Samson Mudzunga, *Aeroplane Drum*, 1997, Mutobvuma wood, fabric, vellum and bitumen, Published in Artthrob website

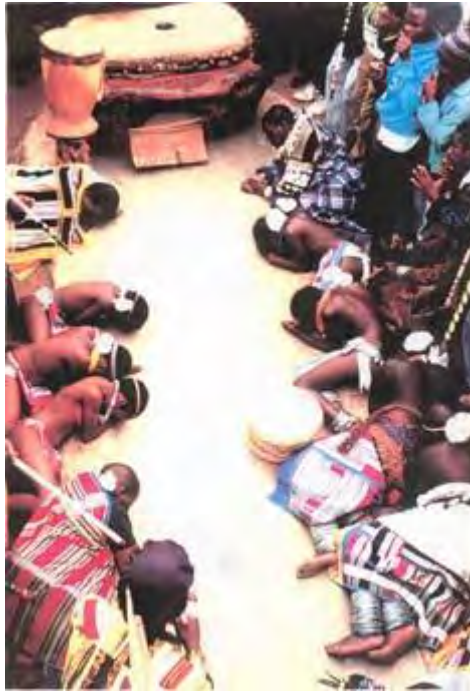


Fig. 9. Samson Mudzunga, *Performance with Tshigombela dancers and drummer*, 2013, performance, Published in Artthrob website



Fig. 10. Samson Mudzunga, *Vivho Venda*, 2007, performance, wood, hide, fabric, paint, tape, bolt, padlock and chain, electric cable, lightbulb, photograph, 160 x 325 x 130cm, Published in Artthrob website



Fig. 11. Samson Mudzungu, *Lake Fundudzi Performance* (1996), performance, Source taken from Artthrob



Fig. 12a. Buhlebezwe Siwani, *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* (2015), Performative installation, Wooden poles, cow skulls and red powder (Dimensions variable), Source taken from Siwani's thesis *Imfihlo*



Fig. 12b. Buhlebezwe Siwani, *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* (2015), Performative installation, Wooden poles, cow skulls and red powder (Dimensions variable), Source taken from Siwani's thesis *Imfihlo*



Fig. 12c. Buhlebezwe Siwani, *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* (2015), Performative installation, Wooden poles, cow skulls and red powder (Dimensions variable), Source taken from Siwani's thesis *Imfihlo*



Fig. 13. A photograph of Nongqawuse and Nonkosi, *SA History Online: Towards a people's history*. Available at: <http://sahistory.org.za/people.nongqawuse>.

