

One day exhibition

Uncut and Uncensored - Marikana's Memory: The Brush is Mightier than the Bullet

Remembering Marikana and the Youth of 1976

On 16 August 2012, 34 striking Black mineworkers in Marikana were gunned down by the police with automatic weapons capable of shooting 600 rounds of live ammunition per minute. The African National Congress (ANC), once perceived as the liberator, had for millions of South Africans in that moment become the oppressor. Despite the 2015 release of the findings of the commission of inquiry which was appointed by then President Jacob Zuma to investigate the killings, to date no one has been prosecuted. The community, the widows and the mineworkers themselves remain scarred by the experience of violence and exclusion and have yet to find peace within and amongst each other. Building upon the history of research and solidarity undertaken with the men and women of Marikana over the last decade, partnerships have formed across universities in South Africa including between the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) as we move towards a national annual lecture at higher education institutions that commemorates the Marikana massacre on 16 August. We plan to host an inaugural Open Studio: Art and Dialogue Intervention at UJ in May-June 2023 which is spearheaded by the Human Sciences Research Council and UJ's Sociology department.

The Open Studio: Art and Dialogue Intervention is a 4-6 week residency focussed on challenging Western and ivory tower or elite forms of knowledge production which tend to extract from indigenous people. In conversation and in interaction with students and faculty at UJ as well as with the people of Marikana and Thembelihle communities, we aim to construct the lived experience of the people of Marikana through artwork, film and dialogue, in order to demonstrate what decolonisation means in both theory and in practice.

The project calls for a return to the idea of the public African university and argues that the decolonial approach must be located within the everyday lived experiences of the oppressed.

During the intervention, Mabulu will be creating a new body of work. Mabulu, Benya and Desai's contributions will be documented and form part of an online publication. Mabulu draws on personal experience, memory, and Xhosa folklore to confront and articulate hidden and complex forms of knowledge about the violence embedded within racial capitalism as this relates to the Marikana massacre. He illustrates how racial violence dehumanizes, traumatizes and situates Black mxn, womxn and non-binary people in a perpetual state of abject misery. A self-taught artist and oral historian, the layers and entanglements explored in Mabulu's work provide fertile grounds for critical dialogue and new insights regarding the contemporary political social context.

The series of seminars will question the extent to which seemingly moral, negative and stereotypical portrayals of those within and outside of power can paradoxically heal individuals and society. The one-month exhibition and residency will be used as a springboard for the development of a national programme leading up to 16 August 2023. In line with one of the MSC's long-standing view that the day of the massacre must be declared a national holiday as confirmation of the injustice done but also to provide a consistent point of reflection, this proposed series of sociological and arts events at UJ in partnership with the HSRC will begin in May and culminate on 16 June, Youth Day. We envision that a traveling exhibition will accompany various actions in provinces across the country where civil society commemorates Marikana in a multitude of ways each year. A publication which documents the proposed engagements leading up to the inaugural event will form part of an archive on the experiences of the disenfranchised. The proposal builds on the brief discussion we had at the departmental strategic meeting whereby it was suggested that we should link what scholars are doing at universities in South Africa together and we also seek to unpack and develop decolonial research methodologies. There will be a strong focus on the application of art and research to challenge gender inequality (in mining) and we believe that the events will form part of HSRC and UJ's contribution towards the UNSDGs - specifically goal 5 which seeks to empower women and promote gender equality.

