

Programme

MAIA Making and Interpreting Art in 2025 | Honours & Master's Symposium 11 - 12 August 2025



Luyanda Zindela. "Maze wafana moy'ho" (2024) Credit: Luyanda Zindela

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About MAIA

Making and Interpreting Art in 2025 brings together current work by young scholars, artists and designers in South Africa as they explore and contend with many of the urgent issues of our times. This hybrid symposium, focusing exclusively on Honours and Master's students in the Visual Arts, Design and Art History, is hosted by the NRF Research Chair (SARChI Chair) in South African Art and Visual Culture at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. It is convened by Prof Irene Bronner and Dr Melissa Gerber from the SARChI Chair. The symposium allows young practitioners to meet peers from across the country and experience and participate in an academic symposium while receiving guidance, feedback and support in navigating these spaces.

SARChI Chair

Prof Brenda Schmahmann is the SARChI Chair in South African Art and Visual Culture. Hosted by the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA) and integrated with its work, this prestigious position is funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and administered by the National Research Foundation (NRF). The SARChI Chair serves as a forum for initiatives in research by not only Prof Schmahmann but also postdoctoral fellows, postgraduate students and others working with her.

Research falling under the ambit of the SARChI Chair is primarily in art history as well as in related disciplines and fields, such as design history, fashion theory, visual communication and cultural history. Some postgraduates are pursuing postgraduate qualifications in only theory while others involve art or design practice too. The SARChI Chair is particularly interested in research and projects within the rubrics of gender and visual culture, public art, and art and design in the context of community projects. Information about eligibility and availability of postgraduate scholarships is available online.

www.uj.ac.za/faculties/art-design-and-architecture/sarchi-2/

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Programme

DAY 1 – MONDAY, 11 AUGUST 2025

- 08:30 – 09:00 Arrival & Registration at 33 Twickenham Avenue, Auckland Park, Johannesburg
- 09:00 – 09:15 Welcome and Opening Remarks

PANEL 1

Visual Translations of Self and Place

- 09:15 – 09:35 **Shaifali Bramdev**, Interactive Landscape Art in Contemporary South Africa
- 09:35 – 09:55 **Sebotse Selamulela**, “Clothing the Stranger”: Textiles, Translation, Migration and the Self (online)
- 09:55 – 10:15 **Anso Van Wyk**, A Soft Landing
- 10:15 – 10:35 **Q&A Discussion**
- 10:35 – 11:00 Tea/coffee break

PANEL 2

Visual Dissent and Contested Histories

- 11:00 – 11:20 **Amohelang Martha Mohajane**, Critical Gestures in Artwork from the University of Bophuthatswana (1985–1994) (online)
- 11:20 – 11:40 **Naledi Maboe**, Temporal-Spatial Disjuncture in Discourse on “Township Art/ists” in Pietermaritzburg
- 11:40 – 12:00 **Tlhokomelo Molokwane**, The Labour of Memory: Reclaiming Commemorative Space in Post-apartheid South Africa
- 12:00 – 12:20 **Aaminah Darsot**, Israeli Hasbara: A Review of @Israel’s Activity on X
- 12:20 – 12:45 **Q&A Discussion**
- 12:45 – 13:45 Lunch

PANEL 3

Indigenous Epistemologies in art, design and culture

- 13:45 – 14:05 **Honest Hoeb**, Oral Histories and the Cultural Significance of Beads in Damara/ ±Nukhoen, and Hai//om Communities of Namibia (online)

Programme

- 14:05 – 14:25 **Anele Nzuza**, Visual Ethnography in Informal Craft Markets: Process and Insights from Durban Station Market
- 14:25 – 14:45 **Kutlwano Mokubung**, Analysing the Evolution of Semabejane through Afro-Modernism
- 14:45 – 15:05 **Sibenoxolo Foji**, Yintoni Ubudoda: Reckoning with Inheritance, Embodiment and the Materiality of Manhood (online)
- 15:05 – 15:30 **Q&A Discussion**
- 15:35 – 16:00 Tea/coffee break and end of Day 1

DAY 2 – TUESDAY, 12 AUGUST 2025

- 08:30 – 09:00 Arrival & Tea/coffee

PANEL 4

Queer Embodiments in Art Practice

- 09:00 – 09:20 **Luke Rudman**, Stilettos and Subjectivity: South African Perspectives on Drag, and the Subversive Potential of Embodied Queer Art Practices (online)
- 09:20 – 09:40 **Marizé Language**, Queer Autoethnography and Visual Grounded Theory: A Methodological Approach to the Liminality of Drag King and Thing Identity
- 09:40 – 10:00 **Francois Stephan Pietersen**, “Blooming” Masculinities: Deconstructing Gender through Flower Iconography in Contemporary South African Art
- 10:00 – 10:30 **Q&A Discussion**
- 10:30 – 11:00 Tea/coffee break



Programme

PANEL 5

Curation as Practice and Politics

- 11:00 – 11:20 **Lonwabo Chonco**, Curating the Archive: Curation as a Form of Creative Practice
- 11:20 – 11:40 **Palesa Segomotso Motsumi**, Reclaiming Space and Narrative: Black Womxn Curators in the Visual Arts (Online)
- 11:40 – 12:00 **Oratile Mosemangosi**, Speculative Curatorial Approaches
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Q&A Discussion**
- 12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

ROUNDTABLE CONVERSATION

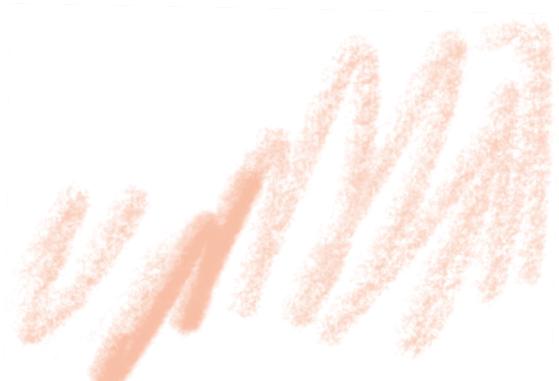
Surviving, Thriving and Sustaining Your Practice

- 13:30 – 15:00 **Guest Panellists: Neil Badenhorst, Anthea Buys, Ayobola Kekere-Ekun, Nthabiseng Mabale, Vanessa Tembane, Luyanda Zindela.**

A cross-disciplinary discussion exploring the emotional, intellectual and material labour of sustaining creative, academic, and activist practices in the contemporary moment and in southern contexts. Open-floor dialogue with participants encouraged.

- 15:00 – 15:15 Concluding remarks

- 15:15 – 15:30 Tea/coffee



Delegates

Shaifali Bramdev is a multidisciplinary South African artist. With experience and education in both the physical and social sciences, her practice explores human engagement with natural environments through critical thinking and research. Working in various mediums, she aims to raise awareness to complex ideas. Conceptually, her work is often rooted in theories related to history of art, anthropology, education and the environment. She is currently pursuing a Master of Visual Art at the University of Johannesburg.

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Lonwabo Chonco is a figurative painter and emerging curator originally from Imbali township in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Currently completing his Honours in Fine Art at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, his work draws from his lived experiences in the townships and how it interlinks with his formal art training. Lonwabo's practice focuses on painting and printmaking, and more recently has shifted to include curation as a form of creative practice. His body of work also explores the diverse stories of black people and the experiences of those around him.

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Aaminah Darsot is a second-year Design MA student. They completed their undergraduate degree in visual communication at Open Window and thereafter completed their Honours and Masters at the University of Johannesburg. They specialise in graphic design, illustration and animation, with their core ideological and research focuses on gender and sexuality, identity, postcolonialism and its intersections within media. They place equal focus on their design and research practice, with the two often going hand-in-hand.

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Sibenoxolo Foji is a visual artist and researcher from the Eastern Cape, currently based in South Africa. With a background in video art, printmaking, painting, sculpture, and installation, his creative work spans six years of exhibitions, collaborative projects, and academic inquiry. He is currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts at the University of the Free State. Foji's broader interests include indigenous ontologies, the politics of the body, ritual aesthetics, and the role of contemporary art in cultural repair. His practice is shaped by a deep orientation toward mourning and loss.

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Honest Hoeb is a Namibian visual artist, poet, and secondary school teacher with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. Currently pursuing a Master's degree in Fine Arts Education at Stellenbosch University and a practicing visual artist, Honest primarily works with watercolour and lino-printing. Her creative and academic work is rooted in her cultural heritage and engages with themes of Namibian restitution, heritage preservation, and the decolonisation of education and museum practices. Passionate about intangible cultural heritage, she actively contributes to heritage, cultural, and tourism initiatives that seek to preserve and reimagine Namibia's diverse traditions.

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Marizé Language, a current MA student in History of Art at North-West University (NWU), holds a BA in Graphic Design and a BA Honours in History of Art. Her interest in Queer and Gender Theory began during the third year of her undergraduate studies and has since guided the focus of her creative and academic work. In her Honours research, she examined Queer masculinity and performativity in photography. Her MA research expands into the world of drag king performance, with a focus on how gender is constructed, expressed, and challenged within this context.

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Delegates

Naledi Nyakallo Maboe is an artist and art researcher engaged in the redemption of individual voices within the broader, often cacophonous collective. Her artistic work considers the self as both a vessel and a record, much like an archive where multiple narratives coexist, each revealing a different facet of identity. This perspective informs her approach to research where she engages with personal and communal histories. She is now based in Pietermaritzburg and still dreams of Johannesburg.

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Kutlwano Mokubung is pursuing a BA Honours in Fashion Design at the University of Johannesburg. She graduated in 2024 with an undergraduate BA in Fashion Design from Stadio. Her research interests are on African historical fashion, contemporary African fashion, and the intersections between Afro-modernism and African indigenous fashion.

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Amohelang Martha Mohajane is a multidisciplinary artist, curator, and researcher whose practice explores memory, spirituality, and ancestral knowledge through conceptual and installation art. She is the Creative Director of Kealogile Art, a platform dedicated to nurturing women-led creative projects and cultural storytelling. Her current MA Art History research focuses on intertextuality between artworks from the University of Bophuthatswana (UNIBO) Art Archive and Spanish Old Masters. Deeply invested in digital curation, archival research, and indigenous knowledge systems, her work bridges the personal and the historical.

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Tlhokomelo Molokwane is a Johannesburg-based visual artist rooted in Soweto, working across drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture. His multidisciplinary practice explores heritage, identity, and decolonial narratives. In June 2025, he held his first solo exhibition, *Ithuteng Ditlhare*, at Stokvel Gallery in Johannesburg. Molokwane's work has featured in significant group exhibitions, including *Affect/Effect* (FADA Gallery, 2024) and the Sasol New Signatures 2024 finalist show. Through his practice, Molokwane invites critical reflection on history and social justice through a distinctly South African lens.

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Oratile Mosimanekgosi is a writer and visual artist based in Johannesburg, South Africa. She holds a BA in Visual Art from the University of Johannesburg (2023) and is currently completing her Honours degree. Her practice explores the intersection of care, critique, and power within art and institutional ecosystems. Mosimanekgosi has contributed to the sector through curatorial and writing workshops with BNAP, Latitudes, and the University of Johannesburg. She currently serves as Secretary to the Board at VANSAs, where she supports the development of ground-level strategies that respond to the needs of artists and practitioners.

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Palesa Segomotso Motsumi is the Founder of Sematsatsa Library, a social events initiative focused on empowering and strengthening the rich imagery and work of women of colour in the creative industries. She is a writer, communications practitioner by training and has worked as Art consultant for various artists in the past. Her writing has mostly been featured in independent publications related to life in South Africa's urban spaces and is currently works as an independent curator in collaboration with various projects and is based in Cape Town.

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Delegates

Anele Nzuza is a South African fashion designer and postgraduate researcher at the University of Johannesburg. With a BA Honours in Fashion Design, her Honours project, developed in partnership with the African Reclaimers' Organisation, explored the use of participatory design and textile waste to co-create sustainable working gear. She is currently completing a Master of Arts in Design, investigating the socio-material networks of craft at the Durban Station Market through Actor-Network Theory. Her interests span community-engaged research, African design practices, and the role of non-human agency in material culture.

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Francois Pietersen is an artist and researcher from Pretoria, South Africa. He holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Fine and Applied Arts and is currently pursuing a master's degree in the same field at Tshwane University of Technology. His research interests include gender studies, queer theory, ecology, deconstruction, and semiotic iconography. Francois's artistic practice focuses on sculpture and installation, using preserved flowers and mixed media to deconstruct perceptions of masculinity. Combining personal narrative with critical inquiry, his work reflects on his lived experience growing up gay within a white Afrikaans household.

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Luke Rudman is a South African visual and performance artist whose work marries painting, installation, portraiture and queer performativity. His career highlights include a Design Indaba Emerging Creative in 2022, contributing to the Colours of Africa exhibition by Google Arts & Culture and maintaining a 5+ year working relationship with Greenpeace Africa and other environmental organisations. He is currently pursuing his Fine Art Master's degree at Stellenbosch University under the supervision of Ernst Van Der Wal.

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Sebotse Selamulela is a multidisciplinary artist and researcher based in Bloemfontein, Free State, currently pursuing an Honours degree in Art History and Image studies at the University of the Free State. Her practice engages with installation, photography, printmaking, and digital media. Rooted in her township upbringing, her work reflects on African spirituality, cultural identity, and the complexities of black lived experience. Selamulela constructs mixed-media installations that explore the layered relationship between religion, identity, and community. Her current research interrogates spiritual segregation and syncretism in South Africa's visual and religious cultures.

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Anso Van Wyk was born in Witbank. Existing within a strongly conservative town, art was their only salvation from the treachery of social abjection towards women and queer people. They are currently completing their Master's in Fine Art at the University of Cape Town. Their research is practise-based with a conceptual interest in the Kristevan abject and its ability to speak to trauma. Through a methodology of vulnerability, their work is often sculptural and photographic. Their production and writing are biographical, and they intend to do their PhD next year where their research will be focussed on the concept of subjectivity.

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