

The Constitution of Public Intellectual Life Research Project: Core Group



Professor Carolyn Hamilton
(Research Project Leader)

The Archive in South African Public Discourse

Professor Hamilton's research project investigates how archive is drawn on and shapes public discourse in South Africa. The project examines the way in which a particular concept of archive has shaped South African intellectual history. It tracks the connections between that concept of archive and ideas about South African identities that existed in the past, as well as those that prevail in the present.

Rory Bester
(Doctoral Fellow)

In Circulation: Documentary Publics in South African Photography

Rory Bester's research project analyses the contribution of documentary photography to public discursivity in South Africa. The study focuses on the relationship between politics and aesthetics in South African visual culture, and the ways in which this relationship impacted on the public understandings and uses of documentary photography from the 1960s to now. The thesis investigates four documentary case studies that each involve books and exhibitions: Ernest Cole's *House of Bondage* (1967), David Goldblatt's *The Transported of KwaNdebele* (1989), Joachim Schonfeldt's *Calendar* (1997-2001), and Guy Tillim's *Jo'burg* (2005). From these four case studies the thesis develops a number of critical positions regarding book and exhibition publics.

Anthea Garman
(Doctoral Fellow)

Antjie Krog, Self and Society: the Making and Mediation of a Public Intellectual in South Africa

This doctoral thesis research focuses on Krog, the poet, journalist and public figure, as a case study of how a particular individual has exercised the power to speak for nearly 40 years into the South African public space. The investigation looks into mediation, adaptive subjectivity and Krog's trajectory through literary, political and media fields in order to understand how an individual attains the power to speak in public with authority.



Yvette Greslé
(Doctoral Fellow)

Contemporary Art in South African Public Discourse

This project investigates the ways in which contemporary South African artist Berni Searle's enactments of self and body – both in photographic and video installations, and in related statements – circulate in the post-apartheid public domain. Marked as Coloured by apartheid classificatory practices, Searle consistently and deliberately resists immutable conceptions of identity. When the circulation of her staging of self and body is mapped, tensions emerge between her deliberate emphasis on the fluidity of identity (as a way of escaping colonial and apartheid inheritances) and the positioning of her by, for example, curators, in terms of rigid categorisations. In particular instances Searle herself invokes the very categories whose limits she largely seeks to question and transcend. The thesis offers an analysis of texts that mediate between the art world and the wider public domain in post-apartheid South Africa and considers the ways in which the field of art and the arena of political discourse interact.

Litheko Modisane
(Doctoral Fellow)

Circulating Rogue Signs: The Public Lives of 'Black' Films (1974-2004)

Through an examination of the public lives of a selection of South African films deemed black made between 1974 and 2004, their inception, contexts of production, circulation and appropriation, Litheko Modisane's study investigates the critical potency of film in public. The four films under study are uDeliwe (1975), Mapantsula (1988), Fools (1997), Yizo Yizo 1-3 (1999, 2001, 2004). The study is undertaken against the background of challenges presented by the condition and discourse of modernity, in its historically specific manifestations, on the public intellectual import of film.

Pascal Newbourne Mwale
(Doctoral Fellow)

GM Maize: a Case of Public Debate on Science Via the Media in Southern Africa (1997-2007)

This research project analyses public debate on GM maize in four southern African countries, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe from 1997 to 2007. The study argues that the regional debate on GM crops was not exclusively informed and driven by questions of scientific truth or reliability related to the Safety of GM foods. Rather, considerations around political-economic consequences of GM cropping, grounded in historical circumstances such as colonialism and imperialism, drove the regional debate.



Media and Public Debate Research Cluster

Lesley Cowling
(Research Associate)

Selling the Sowetan: Concepts of the Commercial and the Public Interest in the Imaginings and Practices of Media Work

This study investigates key concepts in the professional ideology of journalists, and the relationship of these notions to practices employed in both the newsrooms and boardrooms of media companies, using *The Sowetan* newspaper as a case study.

Alan Finlay
(Masters Research)

Making Space: The Role of Post-Apartheid Independent Literary Publishing Activities in Public Debate and Deliberation

Alan Finlay's research investigates how independent literary publishing activities during the period 1994-2004 sought to engage public debate and deliberation, and thereby move beyond purely literary concerns. It explores how the publishers understood their publishing activities as acts of public engagement and contestation, and the extent to which the publishing activities can be considered counterpublic formation.

Rebecca Kahn
(Masters Research)

Oop Vir Misinterpretasie: An Examination of the Mediatization of Fokofpolisiekar.

This research project examines how (if at all) ideas about race and language promoted by the Afrikaans rock band Fokofpolisiekar were propelled into public debate by the South African media.

Philile Masango
(Masters Research)

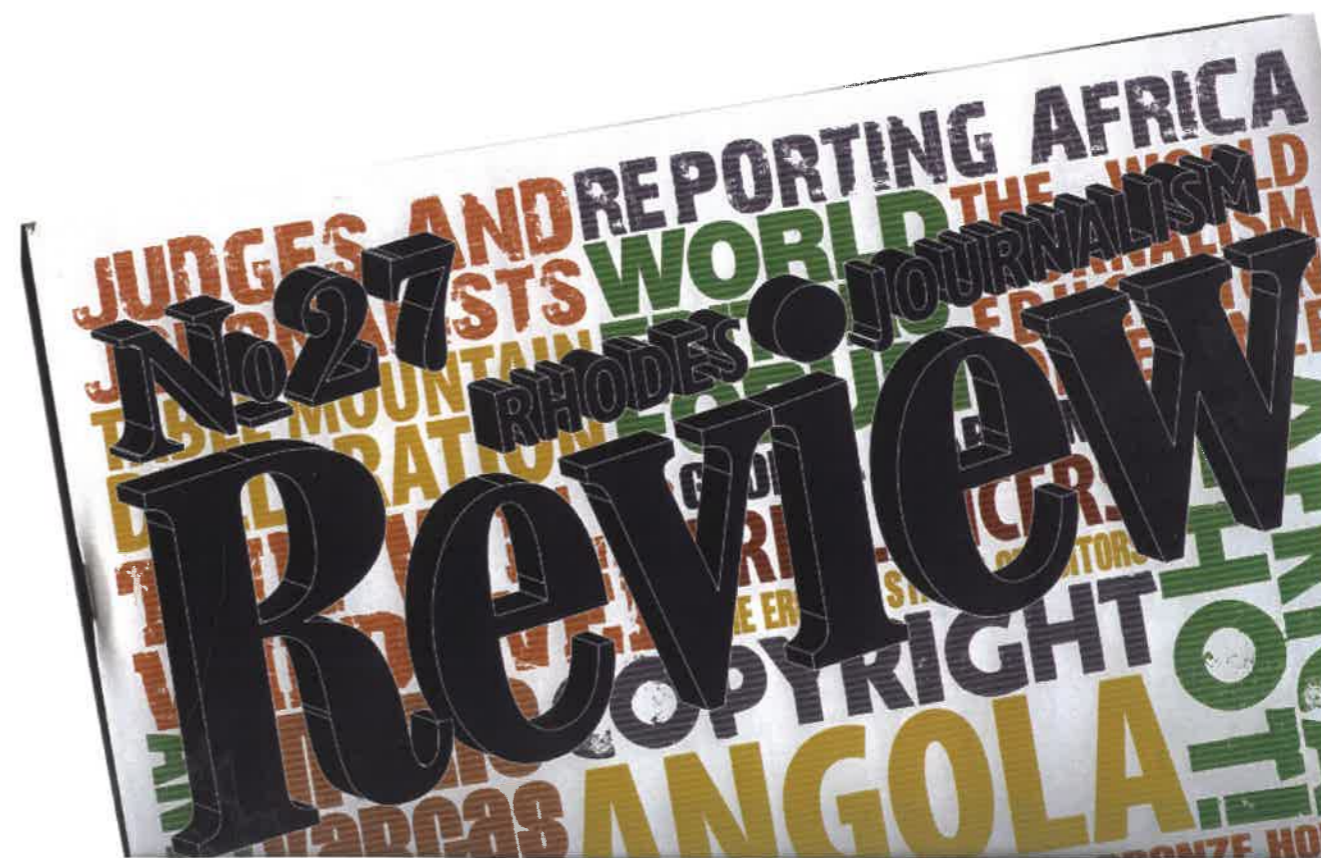
What does the way in which the Native Club has Surfaced in the Media tell us about the Public Intellectual Life as Realised through the Media?

Through an in-depth investigation of engagements in the media, centred on the launch of the Native Club, this study explores the issue of how intellectuals and intellectual activity is engaged in the media. It investigates this issue by focusing on how the Native Club entered public debate and also by tracking the issues around the reaction and responses to its launch, covered in the media.

T. Kenichi Serino
(Masters Research)

The Origin of Ideas in the 'Paper for the People'. What Topics Enter the Sunday Times' Opinion Pages, How do they Emerge and by what Process?

This project examines how ideas and topics enter the print media for public discussion, specifically, by examining how opinion pieces and columns are chosen for the opinion pages. The research maps what topics are discussed and who discusses them from what perspective. It explores whether there is a link between the subject matter of the news pages and what is discussed in opinion pieces and columns and how those columns and opinion pieces are selected and how their writers are chosen. It investigates whether links between the opinion pages, topical news and concurrent news values can be established.



Refiloe Lepere
(Honours Research)

Blacklisting: How Lists Work at the SABC

This study identifies and examines the criteria used by the SABC in its choice of commentators as a way of analyzing how the public broadcaster understands its mandate to provide a space for discussion and debate and to fulfill the requirements made of it in terms of diversity and representivity.

Shirona Patel
(Honours Research)

Imagining the Role of the Fourth Estate

This study examines the media coverage that flowed from the public discussion of the 2006 SABC blacklisting controversy in order to determine how the media envisages its role in an open society.

Rehanna Roussouw
(Honours Research)

The Media and Public Debate

This study investigates how the SABC demonstrates its commitments to act in the public interest and to be accountable to the public. It does this by mapping and analyzing the steps taken by the SABC in relation to the blacklisting allegation.

Nazeem Dramat
(Honours Research)

Blacklisting and the contestation of power in the SABC

This study explores how power operates in terms of what appears as news and commentary on one radio programme, SAFM. It does this by mapping how AM Live determines its daily news agenda. The essay then tracks the blacklisting controversy to establish who intervened and how power was exerted and resisted.

