

CCA Speaker Series #19

Same Mdluli

*Art and Politics: Retention of visual
expression in South African art schools*

Thursday, 12 November 2015, 4 pm

Anatomy Lecture Theatre

Centre for Curating the Archive
Level 3, Old Medical School
Hiddingh Campus
31 – 37 Orange Street
Cape Town

The exclusion of black artists during the apartheid era cannot be put down to the lack of trained individuals, given the existence of formal training centres for black artists such as the Federated Union of Black Artists (FUBA) Academy, Mofolo Art Centre and Nyanga Arts Centre, all of which were established in the 1970s along with existing fine arts departments in two universities (UNISA and The University of Fort Hare) that allowed black students to study art. These exclusionary selection processes are accentuated by the fact that some of the largest exhibitions of South African art took place during the same period as the 1982 *Culture and Resistance Symposium and Festival of the Arts* organised and hosted by MEDU Ensemble in Gaborone, Botswana. It was one of the most important gatherings of South African and international cultural workers showcasing literature, poetry, film, theatre, dance, music and visual arts. It also signified the need to defy the separatist laws of apartheid and advocate for equality in South Africa's cultural landscape at the time. One of the defining aspects about the MEDU ensemble was its commitment to the articulating the role art and culture in South African society. While this was perceived as narrowly political, there are numerous lessons that can be taken from that moment of the mobilisation of cultural workers towards a common aim.

Same Mdluli recently completed her PhD in Art History at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She completed her B-Tech in Fine Arts in 2006 at the University of Johannesburg (formerly Wits Technikon) and an MA in Arts and Culture Management at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2010. In 2012 and 2013 she was selected as a Junior Research Scholar at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles and as a participant at the Diversitas Summer School in Oldenburg, Germany respectively. She was recently invited as guest researcher at the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (INHA) in Paris for the 'Culture Profession' programme under the Department of Art and Globalisation.

For further information, kindly contact
Nancy Dantas at 021 480 7151
or nancy.dantas@uct.ac.za

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