



Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe  
Lefapha la Bomotho

# Exhibition

3 July 2017

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The Department of UP Arts invites you to a photographic exhibition

**Title: Mirror in the Ground**, curated by Dr Siona O'Connell and assisted by Isabelle McGinn

This exhibition begins with a question: What does it mean to decolonize disciplinary knowledges? Archaeology and photography share parallel histories in southern Africa. Advances in camera technology in the late-nineteenth century coincided with a growing interest in the material evidence of "prehistory". Cameras were carried into the field to document sites and sediments, record finds, capture mise-en-scenes, and record images of camp life. The optical empiricism of the period meant that the camera had the status of a "truth apparatus", valued alike by science and the modernising state. At the same time, unintended contents leaked into the frame to challenge conventional accounts of disciplinary histories and processes.

The photographs in this exhibition come from the archive of the South African archaeologist AJH "John" Goodwin (1900-1959). They speak of many things. They speak of an archaeological aesthetic, and the role of the visual imagination in processes of disciplinary formation. They speak of settler science, and of a passionate engagement with the landscapes of the past. They also speak of the entanglement of archaeology with forms of racial science, manifested as a white gaze on black bodies. In the case of archaeology, these are the bodies of both the living and the dead. They speak of the intimacy of the grave, and of the violence of the act of exhumation. More generally, they speak of absent presences, of the hauntedness of the archive, and of projection and "doubling". John Goodwin is doubled by his unacknowledged black co-worker, Adam Windwaai (Adam Blowing-in-the-Wind). Largely absent from the written archive, Adam Windwaai's presence in the photographic archive takes the form of a challenge and a reproach. In the directness of his gaze lies the genesis of a counter-project: an archaeology after archaeology.

**Date:** 3 July 2017

**Time:** 17:00

**Venue:** Lier Theater, Main Campus, University of Pretoria

**RSVP:** [marinda.maree@up.ac.za](mailto:marinda.maree@up.ac.za) by 27 June 2017



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