



**Imfihlo**  
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MFA Research Paper

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*Imfihlo*

**Official Declaration**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution and quotation from the work, or works, of others, has been attributed, cited and referenced.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

For Mawe who decided to teach Africa's children, I am learning.

Esi sisinikelo kumakhulu wam owayezimisele ukubona abantwana  
bama-Afrika bexhamla kwimfundo.

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## Abstract

The discourses of ritual, culture and ethics has, over the years, been a primarily ethnographic, philosophical and dramaturgical concern in which secrecy plays a central role. Secrecy seems central in setting boundaries. Using ritual and culture as the common thread, I question the boundaries that are transgressed by contemporary South African artists in 'showing' and 'telling' things that are otherwise considered as secret. I discuss the ways in which my own practice as an artist and *isangoma* troubles the threshold. Considering the ideological function of the secret, my work examines the power relations implied in both keeping and divulging 'secrets'. This research poses the question: how does the performance or re-enactment of the secret elements of cultural and traditional practice in live, performance and installation art complicate cultural ethics? Through a discussion of my work, *Imfihlo*, as well as works by artists such as Nicholas Hlobo, Pieter Hugo, Churchill Madikida, Nelisiwe Xaba and Mocke J van Veuren, I relate the role of secrecy in ideological structures with the trace. This concept exists throughout my research, whether it be in: forgotten histories; rituals and people (what the artist leaves behind); tracing space, or; by exploring the trace as an existential body, a trace of someone who once was, who exists in another realm, and many traces in one body.

## Okomoya okanye ingqondo

Intetha yokwenza izithethe, amasiko yeyona nto engundoqo kwindlela yokuphila. Ukusebenzisa isithethe nenkcubeko njengerhali, ndixoxa indlela endisebenza ngayo njengomntu oqhuba umsebenzi wezenkcubeko. Ndiphinde kwalapha ndibuzisise umda okuphelwa kuwo ngabadlali bezenkcubeko kwelishesha siphila kuyo xa besenza naxa bebonisa izinto ezijongwa njenge mfihlelo. Ndingayichasanga umthetho wezemfihlelo owam umsebenzi ujongana namandla phakathi kukugcina izinto zifihlakele nakukuzibonisa. Le ngxoxo ijonga into yokuba imfihlelo zenkcubeko umdlalo weqonga okanye indlela okwenziwa ngayo izinto uziphazamisa kanjani indlela okwenziwa ngayo izithethe? Kule ngxongxo yomsebenzi wam ogama linguMfihlo nakweminye imisebenzi eyenziwa ngabanye abajongene nezenkcubeko abafana noNicholas Hlobo, Pieter Hugo, Churchill Madikida, Nelisiwe Xaba noMocke J van Veuren ndidibanisa inxhaxheba yemfihlelo. Ezingcinga zikhona kuyo yonke ingxoxo elapha. Ingakulibaleka kwembali, isithethe okanye abantu (izinto ezishiywe emva ngumntu ojongene nezenkcubeko); ukulandela umzila okanye ukufumanisa lomzila njengomzimba ophilayo, umzila womntu owakhe waphila, ngoku uphila kwelinye ilizwe.

## Introduction

*Andihambi ndedwa ndikatshwa ngoMakhulu bam, nezinyanya zam, nogogo bam. Akhonto uzayiyenza, awunamandla wena, ngeke uyimele lento oyiyenzayo. Sondela apha mhlobo wam, ndikuxoxele indaba ngogogo bethu, abeNguni, kuthwa kudala, kudala, umhlaba usayimvelo, bebepha phezulu, phayaphesheya besale ngoTanganyika, ndithi wwoyi, ndizalwa ngabe Nguni, andihambe ndedwa, ndizalwa ngabeNguni, wena uzalwa ngabantu.*

*-Thandiswa Mazwai (2009), AbeNguni*

Loosely translated<sup>1</sup>, this song asserts: I do not walk alone; I walk with my grandmothers, my ancestors and my elders. There is nothing that you can do, you are powerless, you are not strong enough for what it is you want to do. Come closer relative, let me tell you a story, a story about our people, the *Nguni*, in ancient times, long ago, at the very beginning of time, they were up there, over the rivers, close to the Tanganyika, I am birthed by the *Nguni*, you are birthed by people.

In my practice as an artist and as *isangoma*, I am invariably faced with the fluidity, multiplicity and malleability of the self. The song, *AbeNguni* by Thandiswa Mazwai, evokes this multiplicity in that the self is constituted of others who, even in their absence, have strong presence. The key principle in both practices, therefore, lies in negotiating what is visible and invisible. Working through performance and installation art, I examine the interplay between what can and cannot be said and seen. In this text I therefore move between observer and subject. In this way, the trace becomes a key theoretical concern. In the song, the trace is ethereal and relates to multiple presences within one's body. For the purposes of this research, I draw from Jacques Derrida (1974) for whom the trace, as evidence, has a "testamentary structure" and Rosalind Krauss (1977) who observes that the trace is ephemeral.

My exhibition titled *Imfihlo* comprises performances and installations that refer directly to individual and shared experiences. In this body of work, I interrogate my spiritual journey. This journey involves rites of passage, and rituals centered on culture and tradition in relation to being located in an urban context. This positioning shuns the simplistic definitions of 'urban' and 'rural' as particularly biased in relation to both race and class. This project, therefore, considers not only the complexities related to the body as medium or as a vessel but also the complexities and contradictions embedded in bodily experience of place.

## Isiqalo

*Andihambi ndedwa ndikatshwa ngomakhulu bam, nezinyanya zam, nogogo bam. Akhonto uzayiyenza, awunamandla wena, ngeke uyimele lento oyiyenzayo. Sondela apha mhlobo wam, ndikuxoxele indaba ngogogo bethu, abeNguni, kuthwa kudala, kudala, umhlaba usayimvelo, bebepha phezulu, phayaphesheya besale ngoTanganyika, ndithi wwoyi, ndizalwa ngabe Nguni, andihambe ndedwa, ndizalwa ngabeNguni, wena uzalwa ngabantu.*

*-Thandiswa Mazwai (2009).*

Ngokwenguqulelo elula le ngoma ithetha into yokuba andihambi ndedwa; ndihamba namaxhegwazana am, izinyanya zam nabantu abadala. Akukhontounokuyenza. Awunamandla, awomelelanga ngokwaneleyo kule nto ufuna ukuyenza. Sondela silamane ndikuxelele ibali, I bali ngabantu bethu. AbeNguni, kwixesha lakudala, mandulo, ekuqalekeni kwexesha, babepha, phezukwemilambo, ecaleni kweTanganyika, ndizalwa nguNguni, uzalwa ngabantu.

Ekwenzeni umsebenzi wam njengomntu ojongene nezenkcubeko nanjengeSangoma kusoloko ndijongene nokuyekelela nokuphindwaphindwa bobumna. Le ngoma, AbeNguni iculwa nguThandiswa kaMazwai ivusa olu phindaphindo kum olusekelwe ngabanye abangabonakaliyo ngelenyama, bavakale bekhona. Esona sitshixo ekwenzeni ezi zinto kukuthethathethana phakathi kwezinto ezibonakalayo nakwezingabonakaliyo. Ekwenzeni imidlalo yeqonga nemboniso lwezenkcubeko ndiqwalasela indibano phakathi kwezinto ezinokuthethwa nezibonakalayo kunye nezingabonakaliyo. Ngale ndlela lo mzila ubangoyena ndoqo. Kwi ngoma lo mzila udibana nawo ngokomoya apho abantu baphila ngaphakathi emzimbeni. Oyena nobangela wale ngxongxo, ndifumanisa kuJaques Derrida (1974) into yokuba lo mzila unobungqina obusekelweyo. uRosalind Krauss (1977) yena uwubona lo mzila njengento engehlali xesha elide.

Umzimba womsebenzi obizwa *Imfihlo* uqulathe umdlalo waseqongeni nemboniso ezinxumelanise nesiqu kunye namava. Kulo mzimba womsebenzi ndigrumba uhambo lwam lwakamoya nendlela endichaza ngayo ngomzimba engenguwo owam. Olu hambo ludibene nendawo ekunyanzeleke ndigqithe kuzo, izithethe eziyintsika kwisiko nakwindawo eziphucukileyo. Le nto ayijonganga impixano edibene nomzimba qha, kodwa nakwezinye izinto ezinokwenza nakwindawo endikuyo.

I have been reluctant to align the term *isangoma*, a spiritual medium, with myself, both in the academic environment and to describe my identity in relation to other people. *Ubungoma*, the blanket term for the spiritual affiliation, is often misconstrued, exoticised or othered. People misunderstand what is otherwise a medicinal practice for witchcraft, or a magical practice. *izangoma*<sup>2</sup> are often ostracized in urban settings and by family members. *isangoma* uses divination to connect with their ancestors in order to provide answers to spiritual ailments. *Ubungoma* is a malleable word that can also mean a song or a drum, which are both used to induce trance states and to awaken the ancestors within the body of *isangoma* as though s/he is a vessel.

Through performance, I consider the re-positioning of specific rituals and their generated meaning(s) within a contemporary South African context. This research engages with the double bind of engaging the ethics of performing rituals whilst maintaining the secretive nature of the ritual and/or rite of passage. I consider American art critic and historian, Hal Foster's (1996) leftist notion of the "artist as ethnographer" in which "the object of contestation remains, at least in part, the bourgeois institution of autonomous art, its exclusionary definitions of art, audience, identity." Through this framework, the body is a site of transformation. Hal Foster (1996) points out that with the ethnographic turn, the "subject of association" changed to "the cultural and/or ethnic other in whose name the artist often struggles". I am also mindful of the assumptions pointed out by Foster (1996:302):

And yet, despite this shift, basic assumptions with the old productivist model persist in the new quasi-anthropological paradigm. First, there is the assumption that the site of artistic transformation is the site of political transformation, and, more, that this site is always located *elsewhere*, in the field of the other: in the productivist model, with the social other, the exploited proletariat; in the quasi-anthropological model, with the cultural other, the oppressed postcolonial, subaltern, or subcultural. Second, there is the assumption that this other is always *outside*, and, more, that this alterity is the primary point of subversion of dominant culture. Third, there is the assumption that if the invoked artist is *not* perceived as socially and/or culturally other, he or she has but *limited* access to this

2 *Izangoma* is the plural form of *isangoma*. *Isangoma* has no gender, the word is used to describe one of any gender.i

Bendala ukudibanisa le nto yokuba sisangoma nobumna, kwamazwe omabini, kwezemfundo naxa ndizichaza ubumna kwabanye abantu. isangoma sisebenzisa ubunyulu bomoya ekunxumelaneni nezinyanya ukuze sifumane iimpindulo kwizinto ezidibene nomoya. Eli gama lithi sangoma lisuka kwigama elithi Ubungoma. Ubungoma ligama elithetha ingoma okanye igubu. Ngokufana la magama omabini, ingoma negubu zikuthumela emoyeni ukuze kuvuke nezinyanya emzimbeni wesangoma ngokungathi ligobhogobho.

Eli gama lithi ubungoma soloko lingaqondwa kakuhle luninzi lwabantu. Isininzi soloko sicinga ngamayeza okanye ubugqirha okanye imilingo. Isangoma soloko sibhekeliswa qelele kwindawo eziphucukileyo nalusapho lwaso.

Kwimidlalo yeqonga ndijongana nesimo sezithethe ezithile nentetho zazo eMzantsi Afrika. Amaphepha ajongana nentetho entlangothi mbini nendlela ekwenziwa ngayo izithethe kwelinye icala ndijonga ukuzigcina imfihlelo zezi zithethe. Ndipicotha le ngxoxo njengomntu ojongana nengcaciso ezinzulu Foster (1996:302) kwizithethe zomntu.

transformative alterity, and, more, that if he or she *is* perceived as other, he or she has automatic access to it. Taken together, these three assumptions lead to the danger, for the artist as ethnographer, of ideological patronage.

My role as both artist and isangoma subverts the framework and dismantles the boundary between insider/outsider or one/other in which my role as artist cannot be seen as superior in relation to my role as isangoma. Ubungoma is not “other” and differs from predominant (Eurocentric) notions of self.

Professor of performance, Richard Schechner (1988,) notes that all performances are actions and that performance operates in four methods. Firstly, performance operates as behavioral studies, secondly, as artistic practice, third, it operates as participant observation and finally, as engaging in social practices and the performer’s own advocacies. Performance theory is a broad and inter-disciplinary. Performance is not fixed, it can move from the mundane to the unimaginable, and it exists within every discipline and everyday life, often mimicking everyday life, routine and ritual (Schechner 1988).

The body, in performance art, is the medium; it is a transformative instrument that compels one to face one’s own corporeality. Complicating this are social inscriptions on the body, or what American feminist and performance scholar, Peggy Phelan (1993), calls “the marked body,” such as race and gender, which are ultimately political subjectivities. The body mirrors society. In my performances the body is not just a physical medium, the body is a powerful symbol. As a young black woman, my appearance and presence is political, in this way looking towards Foster's idea of the artist as ethnographer provides a way of understanding my research. While I do not fully agree with Foster's entire theory as it appears to posit that the artist as ethnographer is fundamentally skewed. However, I feel that the relationship between art and ethnography is inevitable when producing work from the position of the other.

In my work, I refer to the body as a vessel with multiple subjectivities. Rather than ‘I’, ‘we’ is significant. The word “vessel” in this research relates to a body that has many other subjectivities within that body and exists as ‘we’. In isiZulu when people greet an individual they usually use the plural form: *ninjani?* In this way an individual exists because of the collective. Implied in this, however, is the unseen ancestry that is also always referred to in defining oneself.

The element of secrecy in my work lies in the assumption that secrets are personal – relating only to the individual – yet they become secrets because of the possibility that they might become public collective knowledge. Mary Nooter

uRichard Schechner (1988) uthi into yokuba emidlalweni kukho izinto ezine ngoba imidlalo yeqonga yinto eyenzekayo, eyokuqala yindlela yokuziphatha kwezemfundo, eyesibini, yindlela yokwenza ezenkcubeko, eyesithathu kukujongisisa ngobayinxalenye, eyokugcina kukuba yinxalenye ekusebenzisaneni ekuhlaleni nokuthetha. Inggqiqo kwimidlalo yezenkubeko yinto ebanzi kakhulu. Umdlalo ayisiyonto engagungqiyo. Ingasuka kwinto ephambeneyo ukuyotsho kwinto engacingelekiyo kwaye iphila nakweyiphi indawo nakubom bemihla ngemihla, ithatha okwenzeka kubomi bemihla ngemihla, kwindlela nakwisithethe (Schechner 1988).

Umzimba emidlalweni wezenkcubeko nguwo othethayo, yinto ejikajikayo endenza ndijonge indlela umzimba owenziwe ngayo. Eyona nto ephixanisa yonke le nto yomzimba zizinto zasekuhlaleni nangendlela odalwe ngawo kutsho uPeggy Phelan (1993), njengo hlanga nesini ngokujonga zizo ezopolitiko. Umzimba uchaza ukuhlala. Kwimidlalo yam umzimba ayonto ethetha nje kodwa yimboniso enamandla. Njengentombazana entsundu owam umzimba ejongekile nke ucalulekile.

Kwimidlalo yam ndijonga umzimba njengegobhogobho elinezinto ezininzi. Endaweni kobumna ndisebenzisa ubuthina ngabom. Eli gama lithi igobhogobho kule ngxoxo ndilidibanisa nomzimba onemizimba emininzi ephila kuwo yiyolonto ndisithi ubuthina. EsiZulwini abantu xa bebulisana basebenzisa esi sininzi singu 'ninjani?' Ngolu hlobo isiqu siphila ngenxa yabanye abantu. Ngale ndlela kuchaza into yokuba kukho nabanye abangabonakaliyo abakulo mzimba.

Imfihlelo emsebenzini wam ihlala kwisigqibo sokuba imfihlelo yinto yomntu edibene nalo mntu. Iba zimfihlelo ngoba kunokwenzeka ekuhambeni zingavela zibelulwazi esidlangalaleni. Mary Nooter-Roberts (1993), Gilles Deleuze (1987), Felix Guattari (1987) noBeryl Bellman (1981), bonke babhalile ngemfihlelo kwaye bachazile into yokuba intlangothi mbini ngoba ayomfihlelo xa abanye beyazi ukuba iphila njenge mfihlelo. Ngolo hlobo uMary Nooter-Roberts (1993:41) uxoxa ukuba "imfihlo nomtsalane wayo ukumqondiso wokuvela

Roberts (1993), Gilles Deleuze (1987), Felix Guattari (1987) and Beryl Bellman (1981) have all written perceptively about secrecy, and have pointed out that it embodies a paradox because a secret is not a secret when others know that it exists as a secret. In a similar vein, Nooter Roberts (1993:41) argues, “the power and attraction of the secret lies in the possibility of its disclosure.” The paradox and interplay of revealing and concealing frames my practice as *isangoma*, *inyanga* and artist with a responsibility to keep some secrets secret. As an artist working with a set of nebulous ideas, this interplay presents a risk. The question arises: what are the implications of the photographic medium and video in documenting performances of secret rites? What does it mean to perform these in a gallery and for an audience that regards traditions as “other”?

In chapter one, I focus on the paradoxes of secrecy as well the uses of language and access. Using the work *iGagasi (2015)* and *Uthengisa unokwreze elunxwemene (2014)*, I unpack the ways in which secrecy is guarded. I also draw from work by Nicholas Hlobo, *Umtshotsho (2009)*, and Churchill Madikida’s *Struggles of the Heart (2003)*. In these examples, both artists use various aspects that reveal specific characteristics of ritual and tradition by presenting the promise to divulge that information. In Nicholas Hlobo’s work, the strategy is language, which seems to divulge but limits access for those who do not understand isiXhosa. In my own work it is both language and enunciation, in performing and not performing.

In considering the centrality of the body as structures of power and oppression, chapter two focuses on these complexities. The body, primarily, reveals and conceals. Rethinking the racialised and gendered body, my research seeks to problematize fixed ideas about femininity and blackness in relation to tradition and ritual.

Although Black Feminism presents discourse that deals with the politics of the bodies of black women, I am more interested in the body as a transcendent vessel through which many beings can exist. So while Black Feminism will surface throughout the paper, for the purposes of this research, it does not provide the central guiding point in understanding my relationship to the body and performance.

This chapter considers performance as an extension of ritual and rites of passage, based on the notion that the body is a crucial communicative instrument in performance that drifts between the physical and spiritual world. Looking at *Uncles and Angels (2012)* by Nelisiwe Xaba and Mocke J van Veuren in relation to my work, the state of inbetween-ness, plurality and subjecthood reveals the political potency of the body. I align these concepts with my practice, specifically the video pieces *uNgenzelephantsi (2014)*, *uMhlekezi (2015)* and the installation, *Ubunxaxha (2015)*. I also analyse Pieter Hugo’s *In Spirit, portraits of traditional healers communing with the ancestors (2005)* in relation to race.

kwayo". Ndiyangqinelana nabo bobabini uBellman noNooter kulendawo yokuba imfihlo intlangothi mbini ngokwazi umsebenzi wayo ekutyhileleni nasekufihleni kwizithethe. Olu ngquzulwano phakathi kokutyhila nokufihla iqukumbela umsebenzi wam njengesangoma, inyanga nomdlali wenzenkcubeko ekugcineni imfihlo iyimfihlo. Njengomdlali wezenkcubeko osebenza ngengqiqo ezingagqibelelekanga iba yingozi. Kuthetha ukuthini ukwenza le midlalo kwindawo ebonisa ngenkcubeko phambi kwababukeli abajonga into zakwantu ngenye indlela?

Kwisahluko sokuqala ndiqwalasela ungquzulwano nzisa ulwimi nasekufikeleleni. Ekusebenziseni eligama lithi *iGagasi (2015)* kunye *noUthengisa unokwreze elunxwemene (2014)*, ndityhila indlela imfihlo ekhuselwa ngayo negqiqo zezokufikelela. Ndichaphula nakwimisebenzi kaNicholas Hlobo *Umtshotsho (2009)*, noChurchill Madikida *Struggles of the heart (2003)*. Aba bantu bjongene nezenkcubeko basebenzisa indlela ezahlukileyo ezityhila izinto ezithile zezithethe namasiko zithembisa ukuphalaza ulwazi. Kumsebenzi kaNicholas Hlobo, iqhinga lulwimi ekubonakala ukuba luyaziveza imfihlelo kodwa lubeke umda ekufikeleleni kwabo bangasaziyo isiXhosa. Kum zizo zombini, ulwimi ekudlaleni nangaphandle ekudlaleni.

Xa uthatha ukujonga kwezo meko zemfihlo nobumsulwa obubona umzimba njengeyona nto ibalulekileyo, kwisiqingatha sesibini ndijonga isininzi somzimba. Ndinga ucalucalulo kunye nesini somzimba kwaye nengxoxo ijonga ekuziseni ingxaki kwingcinga ezingqongqo kubufazi nakubumnyama xa budibene nezithethe kunye namasiko. Ekongezeni isihloko sesibini uqwalaselisa indlela umzimba obaluleke ngayo ekutyhileni nasekufihleni. Esi sihloko sijonga ukuba umdlalo njeje lungu elongezelweyo kumasiko nezithethe. Umzimba wona sisixhobo esihamba phakathi kwelizwe lwenyama nelomoya. *Uncles and Angels (2012)* kaNelisiwe Xaba kunye noMocke J van Veuren, ndijonga kwinto yobuninzi. Ndidibanisa ezi ngcinga nento endiyenzayo kanyekanye nomboniso wam womdlalo othi *uNgenzelephantsi (2014)*, *uMhlekezi (2015)* kunye *Ubunxaxha (2015)*. Ndihlalutya nomsebenzi kaPieter Hugo othi *In Spirit, portraits of traditional healers communing with the ancestors (2005)*.

Ndiyithathela engqondweni into yokuba into akholelwayo kuyo umntu iyakwazi ukuphindaphindana, isihloko sesithathu sijonga ingxaki zomzila sibonisa nesiqobo sobunye ngoba kukho imizila ekhoyo esiqwini ngasinye, ubuninzi

The third chapter delves into concepts of the trace. The trace is linked to cleansing, which is a major element in some rituals. For example, the passage of young girls to adulthood is seen as a process of identifying “pure” virginal, clean women. Bathing and washing is a significant social and performative part of the process. The work *Qunusa! Buhle*. (2015) is about seeing the regulation of what is seen as “impure,” as suppression of knowledge. However, washing something off is also to refer to its existence; it is evidence or testament. The trace implies both absence and presence. Here, I also consider the presence of ancestors in one’s body. Multiple subjectivities present a dialectic of presence and absence. Furthermore, I investigate the trace that the artist leaves behind: an extension of the performance which ultimately becomes the art piece. The trace of the artist presents liminality. I see the key medium in my practice, photography, as a trace of reality. I critically discuss, *Inzilo: Ngoba ngihlala kwabafuleyo* (2014), *iSana libuyele kunina* (2015) and the video piece *Imfazwe yenkaba* (2015), in thinking theoretically about the notion of the trace in a socio-political framework. I also examine the notion of purity in relation to the trace, with the work.

bomntu. Lo mzila ubonisa zombini, ukungabikho nokubakhona. Le nto yophindaphindo ibonakalisa intetho yokubakhona nokungabikho. Ngale ndlela ubuninzi bubonakalisa ukubakho nokungabikho. Isihloko sesithathu sigrumbagrumba umzila oshiywa ndabadlali benkcubeko ngasemva kodwa nongezelelwano lomdlalo ophinda abengumdlalo wenkcubeko. Umzila womntu ojongene nezenkcubeko xa upha uye uqhubeke nomsonto wengcinga kwindawo. Ndiwubona lomzila njengento emele umzimba nesithombe (yenye yezinto ezibaluleke kakhulu emsebenzini endiwenzayo). Oko mzila wokwenyani. Ndixoxa ngokuqiqileyo *Inzilo:Ngoba ngihlala kwabafuleyo* (2014), *iSana libuyele kunina* (2015) nomboniso *Imfazwe yenkaba* (2015) xa ndicinga ngemeko yalo mzila kwezokuhlala. Kwa kwesi sihloko ndiye ndijonge ubumsulwa kulomzila ngomsebenzi u*Qunusa!Buhle*. Apha imfihlo ayikokunkonya ulwazi kodwa nokucinezela ulwazi oluphangaleleyo njengomzila wobumdaka.

## Chapter One Secrecy's guarded tongue

By using the term secrecy, I am alluding to the boundaries that are set in the 'preservation' of cultural traditions. I also regard the preservation of cultural traditions as a response to colonialism and to overly homogenizing global cultural exchange. Taking into consideration that British colonialism used ethnicity and ethnic-specific traditions divisively (Ranger 1983), I want to think of African tradition as a necessary antithesis to colonialism. As Herbert Cole (1985:14) observes, tradition is "a transmission over time, a handing down from generation to generation of something in words, practice, or style and form." Culture is seen as "a repository for values that have been evolved by the different social strata in that society over time, in the sense that it holds a given society together it is more conservative than the economy and political life of the society which change relatively more rapidly" (wa Thiong'o 1993, XV). My own practice reflects the historical processes of change over time. Culture is something that sustains the longevity of inherited memory and is also a constant engagement with performance. In this chapter, I think about different metaphors for culture and secrecy as well as the role of language and accessibility.

## Isahluko Sokuqala Imfihlo ekhuselwa lulwimi

Xa ndisebenzisa eli gama lithi imfihlo ndithetha ngemida esekelwe ekukhuseleni izithethe namasiko. Ndiyayijonga nendima yokukhusela amasiko nezithethe njenge mpendulo kwizithethe ezisekelwe mbombe zone zomhlaba. Xa ndithatha ukuqwalasela unxinzelelo lwamaBhilitane lwasebenzisa umahluko kwezemveli ukwahlula (Ranger 1983), ndifuna ukucinga ukuba imveli ngengento abakuleli lwaseAfrika abayisebenzisa ukulwa unxinzelelo. Ndisebenzisa imveli ngendlela ayisebenzisa ngayo uHerbert Cole, (1985:14), "njengomnikelo exesheni, umnikelo osuka kwisuzukulwana uye kwesinye isizukulwana ngamagama, ngokwenza nangendlela okwenziwa ngayo." Imveli yindawo "apho kugcinwa khona izinto ezibaluleke kakhulu ezitshintshayo emaxesheni ngenxa yendlela yophilwa ekuhlaleni. Ibamba abantu kunye ngendlela ekhuselayo ngaphezu kwezoqoqosho nezopolitiko kulo zona zitshintsha tshintsha oko" (wa Thiong'o 1993, XV). Eyam indlela yokwenza izinto ibonakalisa indlela yokwenza izinto zakudala nokutshintsha kwamaxesha" Imveli yinto egcina izinto ezakudala zingalehleki ngolo hlobo uyafana nokwenza umdlalo.

Kulo msebenzi *Uthengisa unokwreze (2014)* noi *Gagasi (2015)* amanzi aye afane nemveli, indawo yokugcina, ukuhamba hamba, wazi uphinde ungazi. Kwezi zithombe ndizifaka elwandle. Amanzi njengendawo ebambekayo nendawo yomoya echaza izinto ezinokwenzeka kum njengomdlali wezenkcubeko nanjengeSangoma. Kwinkolo yaseAfrika amanzi, ulwandle, umlambo, udama yonke nje into enokwenza namanzi ibonakalisa olunye izinga lokuphila. Kulo mdlalo bekunyanzeleke ndiqanyangelwe ngentsontela ukwazi ndingatshoni ngoba umzimba uyakwazi ukuba ngumoya, le nto ibaluleke kakhulu ngoba kwenzelwa ukuba noba kungenzeka ukuba nditshone ndikwazi ukuhlangulwa ngoba amanzi ngumzimba womoya nam ndingumoya.

### Secrecy, depth and fluidity

In the works *Uthengisa unokwreze elunxwemene* (2014) and *iGagasi* (2015) water becomes like culture, a repository. It is about fluidity, mobility and knowing and not knowing. In these photographic works I am immersed in the sea. The water as a topographical and spiritual space represents both possibilities for me as an artist and *isangoma*. In African mythology the ocean, sea, rivers and lakes – any natural bodies of water<sup>3</sup> – are representative of another realm. During this performance I had to be tied by a rope, so that I did not drown. Water is a spiritual home and I am a spirit. The risk lies in the possibility of being pulled in. I consider the ocean as a significant metaphor for secrecy. The depth of the ocean bearing unknown life, as well as the ebb and flow that brings some things out into the open but keeps other down, points to the fluid nature of the secret.

There is a story about how people who are spiritually inclined (*abantu abagulayo*) go into a house in the ocean to *twasa* (the initiation process for *isangoma*). In direct correlation to that story is another one about those who are taken by the water because they refuse to *twasa*, therefore people who are spiritually inclined should be wary of the water as there is the possibility that their ancestors reside in the water. Similarly, my encounter with the water has always been a complex interaction.

The ocean is a very volatile space because it is a space where many sea and land spiritual energies converge. For *isangoma*, the ocean is a birthplace but it is also a place where one goes to die. I have never been able to go into the ocean alone. During my initiation we had to go into the ocean. My mentor ensured that there were five people who she felt were strong enough to pull me out of the ocean should anything happen. She and other prophets prayed for the woolen ropes that were tied around my waist and ankles. I set foot into the water with a chicken in my hands while two people held each rope. I managed to walk into the ocean and returned without the chicken. There is a saying that a silver coin buys one permission to enter this sacred space as a spiritual being. In the

<sup>3</sup> There is a difference between natural and man-made bodies of water. In natural bodies of water there is something inside that tells me to stay away, the vastness and other-worldliness incites fear. Whereas in man-made bodies of water, pools for example, I could easily swim.

### Imfihlo, ubunzulu kunye nobumanzi

Kukho ibali lokuba abantu abagula ngokomoya baya endlini elwandle beyokutwasa. Kwelinye icala kukho ibali labo bathathwa ngamanzi ngoba bayala ukuthwasa, ngolo hlobo abantu abagula ngokomoya kufuneka bawalumkele amanzi ngoba maninzi amathuba okuba izinyanya zabo zihlala emanzini. Kuyafana nendibano yam namanzi oko yabayimpixano. Kwesi sahluko ndijonga ulwandle njengesikweko semfihlo. Ubunzulu bolwandle obuqulathe ubomi ubungaziwayo, nendlela lokukhupha imfihlokodwa likwaziukugcina ezinye yenye yendlela yokucinga ngokugcina kwemfihlo.

Ulwandle yenye yendawo etshayo ngoba yenye yendawo apho kudibana khona imimoya ngemimoya, imimoya ephila kwelinye ilizwe neminye imimoya edibana emhlabeni. Kwizangoma yindawo yokuzalwa kodwa iphinde ibekwayiyo nendawo aphoumntu ayofela khona. Zange ndakwazi ukuya elwandle ndedwa. Ebukhwetheni bam kwakunyanzeleke ndiye elwandle kodwa ikhankatha lam laqinisekisa ukuba kukho abantu abahlanu owayesazi ukuba bondlekile ngoba kwakunokwenzeka nantoni. Bona babenzelwe ukuba ndihlangulwe xa nditshona. Bandibophelela ngentambo ziwuli esinqeni nasemaqatheni ezazithandazelwe sisininzi sabaprofeti. Ndifake inyawo emanzini ndiphethe inkukhu esandleni ngoku abanye bebambe intsontela. Ndikwazi ukungena elwandle ndabuya ndingayiphethanga inkukhu esandleni. Kukho intetho ethi imali ekhazimlayo ithenga imvume yokuba umntu angene le ndawo igcwele ngokomoya. Kumdlalo othi *Uthengisa unokwreze elunxwemene noiGagasi*, ndingena elwandle ndichulumancile ndizibuza ngawaphi amathuba ahleli phantsi kwamanzi.

Kukho umahluko kwimizimba edaliweyo nemizimba yamanzi. Kwimizimba edaliweyo yamanzi kukho into ngaphakathi endixelelela ukuba mandimele qelele, ubukhulu namanye amazwe andihlohla uluyiko. Kwimizimba eyenziweyo yamanzi ndingakwazi ukuqubha. Kukho indawo yobungozi kumdlalo. Kukho indlela yokuphila engakwazi ukuthethek ngamagama.

Kumsebenzi *iGagasi*, ulwandle lubonakalisa ukutshintshatshintsha kobuNgoma okanye umzimba. Ubungona lungamanzi ngokwendalo. Kukho ungquzulwano kwezomoya ekwazi ukuchazeka xa umntu esamkela ukholo ngamanzi apho umphefumlo ezalwa okutsha. Umzimba wenyama uzifaka engozini ukuze kufike ubomi obutsha, ithuba lokuguquka njengeSangoma. Olo guquko lomphfumlo lubonakala emizimbeni yamanzi ahambayo efihla etyhila. Ulwandle luhlala luyindawo engaziwayo, indawo yemfihlo engafikelelekanga.

performances titled *Uthengisa unoKrwece eLunxwemene* and *IGagasi*, I walk into the ocean slowly and wonder what possibilities lie underneath the water. There is an element of risk involved in the performance. There is a different type of life force that exists there, which is inexplicable.

In the work *iGagasi*, the ocean also signifies the transformative nature of *ubuNgoma* or the transformation of the body as it is submerged. *Ubungoma* is fluid in nature. There is a metaphysical dilemma that is best articulated in the form of a baptismal where the spirit is reborn in water. The physical body risks life for the newness of life, the possibility of transformation as *isangoma*. That transformation is represented in large bodies of moving water that conceal and reveal. The sea remains unknown terrain: a space of secrecy and inaccessibility.

Kumdlalo nakwimboniso ezijongene nemveli nezithethe ezingcwele ezibalulekileyo nezinto eziphumayo. Umdlalo wento ezifihlakeleyo, umzekelo kwisiXhosa, isiSotho, isiZulu nesi Vhenda, luveza umbuzo ngohlanga, uGilbert kuNooter-Roberts 1993:123

Nokuba zizinto ezingatyhilwayo zobomi bemihla ngemihla okanye imfihlelo ezidibene namandla ezithixo nenkosi, imfihlelo ibingasozwe ukuba zaziwe njenge mfihlelo ukuba bezingachazwa. Imfihlo inongzuzulwanooluthile: ubukho bemfihlo bungaziwa jikelele kodwa ubunzulu bayo baziwe ngabathile. Umsoco benye imfihlo bungaziwa nguwonkewonke nokuba ichazwa ngesikweko. Kukho into ngazo zonke ezi mfihlo, ziyinto enye.

Kwixesha lobukhwetha izinto ezininzi zivela ngendlela efihlakeleyo. Umzekelo intetho ezisetyenziswa kwabantu basetyhini namadoda iyatshintsha kodwa lo nto ixhomekeka kulo meko. Amakhwenkwe asebenzisa intetho ethile xa esentabeni. Amabhinqa akufuneki eyazile ukuba kuqhubeka ntoni okanye bathethe ngayo. Wonke umntu luyayazi kuqhubeka ntoni kodwa ngabo nabo abayazi ukuba yintoni kanye kanye into eyenzekayo ngoba amasiko ayohluka kwintlanti ngentlanti.

Ndixoxa nzulu ngabadlali benkcubeko abasebenza ngezi meko, kwicala elikhanyayo endisebenza kulo ukwazi ndigrumbe imida yezithethe nendima yemfihlo kwizisekelo zengqiqo. Ngokucacileyo imfihlo ligama labeNguni elithetha into efihlakeleyo, nokufihla, nokungcwaba nokufa.

## Language

The Nguni word for secret is *imfihlo*, which refers to something hidden, to hide, burial and death. In my work, I use Xhosa titles because I feel that English translations of certain words fail to carry the full meaning. The use of Xhosa in a Eurocentric institution is a form of transgression and makes accessibility ambiguous. In performances such as *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini (2015)* and *Inzilo: Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo (2014)*, I speak in isiXhosa, revealing some things while I conceal others. In the South African context, indigenous languages have been inferiorised, and often treated as though they are not intellectual languages.

In my performances, I treat Nguni languages as scientific and intellectual languages.

Performance, live and installation art that focuses on traditions and sacred rituals necessitate conscious 'guarding' of things that surface. The performance of secret elements in, for example, Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu and Venda, poses ethical questions but also functions as transgression. As American scholar Michelle Gilbert (in Nooter Roberts 1993:123) argues:

Whether as the undisclosed things of everyday life or the unexplained mysteries associated with the powers of the gods and the king, secrets would not be known to be secret if they were never told. Secrecy is necessarily ambivalent and contradictory: the existence of the secret may be widely known, but its content only to a few. The content of another secret may be known to all, though it is revealed only metaphorically, in carefully orchestrated contexts. There is a continuum between these different types of secret; they are all part of one system.

During a rite of passage (which vary between clans) numerous things are revealed metaphorically. For example, the language that is used for women and men alters depending on different situations and circumstances. Young boys use a certain dialect while in seclusion. Women are not meant to know what takes place or speak about it. Everyone knows what is going to happen but only a few know what really occurs inside the enclave of the ritual.

## Ulwimi

Kweyam imisebenzi ndisebenzisa isiXhosa, ulwimi lwenkobe, ngoba ndlela le ndibona ngayo iSengesi siyoyisakala ekuthwaleni izinto ezibalulekileyo zakwantu. Ukusebenzisa isiXhosa kwamaziko aphezulu ezemfundo yenye yendlela yokuphula umthetho kwaye ibangumqobo. Kwimidlalo enjenge *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini (2015)*, *nelnzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo (2014)* ndithetha isiXhosa ndityhila ezinye zezinto kwelinye icala ndifihla ezinye. Emzantsi Afrika ilwimi zakwantu ziyeshelwe kwaye ziphathwa njengwelwimi zabantu abangazongqondi. Kwilomidlalo yam ndiziphatha ilwimi zakwantu njengolwimi zolwazi nezengqondi.

Abadlali bezenkcubeko abafana noNicholas Hlobo kunye noChurchill Madikida basebenzisa lo maqhingana. uHlobo usebenzisa izihloko zesiXhosa qha kwimisebenzi yakhe yenkcubeko. Ngokwenza ngolu hlobo yena uMadikida usebenzisa umdlalo kakhulu ngaphezu kolwimi ukubonisa engazixelanga ezinto ezithile. Kumdlalo, *Struggles of the Heart (2003)* ugangatha ekuthetheni nasekuthulisweni. Kumboniso wakhe uhlafuna ipapa yomgubo, ukutya kwabakhwetha. Lo mgubo ucgwalisa umlomo abe lulwimi olunentsingiselo efihlakeleyo.

Izigqibo zikaHlobo kwizihloko zemifanekiso eqingqiweyo yesiXhosa yakha umqobo ofihla ulwazi kwabo bangasivayo isiXhosa. Uliphalazile ulwazi kwabo bangazaziyo izithethe. *Umtshotsho* kaHlobo ubuza ngobuthina, ngezesini nakwindlela esigqitha kuzo kweli xesha siphila kulo. Ifana nqwa nale ndlela ndicinga ngayo ngomsebenzi wam.

Kukhu ukuhambela phambili kwesi ngesi. Ulwimi yinxalenye kwinqubo yokudibanisa umba wembumba. uPaul Ricouer (1978:144) ubandakanya ukuba "intetha yombhalo ayifihlakalanga kumbhalo kodwa phambi kwawo. Ayonto ifihlakeleyo kodwa iveziwe." Ndikhethe ukubhala iphepha lam ngesiXhosa ukwazi kuziphixana umba wokuhlalutya komsebenzi nolwimi. Izigqibo sam sokuthiya imidlalo yam yeqonga nemiboniso yam ayibeki mqobo kodwa ivula isikrobo sokuthethathethana kwizinto ezidibene nezolwimi kwezopolotiki.

How does the performance or re-enactment of the secret elements of cultural and traditional practice in performance, live and installation art dispose of their symbolic function, and simultaneously concentrate important social meanings? But like conventional routines, they owe their origins to willful creations aimed at effective application of power. In light of my own practice, I critically discuss specific artists who work with these issues.

South African artists such as Nicholas Hlobo and Churchill Madikida have used similar strategies. Hlobo uses, almost exclusively, Xhosa titles for his artworks. Hlobo's decision to title oeuvre in isiXhosa creates a barrier that conceals knowledge for those who do not understand isiXhosa. He has also shared information with those that do not know the ritual. Hlobo's *Umtshotsho* (2009), for example, alludes to many narratives that are often obscured by the overarching narrative of masculinity as race, gender, and sexuality questions.

Madikida, however, uses performance, a bodily language, rather than a spoken language to show but not tell certain things. In the performance, *Struggles of the Heart* (2003) Madikida alludes to being silenced. By not speaking or showing the difficulty of speaking about certain things, Madikida points directly at power structures in which language is a core apparatus. In this video he chews *mielie pap*, a staple for initiates.

The pap fills his mouth and becomes symbolic of language.

The hegemony of the English language, in my view, does not universalize communication but functions to silence and disable different ways of communicating. Language is part of the process of social reproduction. Paul Ricœur (1978: 144) points out that "the meaning of the text is not behind the text, but in front of it. It is not something hidden but disclosed." I have chosen to write my paper in isiXhosa to complicate the process of interpretation of work and of language. My choice to title my performances and installations in isiXhosa and isiZulu does not impose a limitation but opens up that space of engagement with political hierarchies of language in relation to the traffic of knowledge.

## Spectatorship and performing the secret

In performing practiced cultural rituals there is always the risk of divulging too much, altering too much, and showing too much. Performance art has a particular audience in the public, theatre and visual arts. Theatre, visual and public art has an audience while most rituals are based on not having an audience. However, the exoticisation of traditional rituals is also a form of spectacularisation. “Traditional objects” in museums for example are treated as extraordinary things that are for “show.” There is an element of visual consumption in practices such as male circumcision, for example. My interest lies in the manner in which an artist chooses to perform rituals in public spaces, while managing to keep certain elements secret.

In my own practice, the distinction between private and public is porous. It is important however to keep in mind that “the audience” which is often referred to as “the public” is not a homogenous public. In the South African context, there is uneven spectatorship. Public spaces are only public to those who are able to access the space. The city of Cape Town, for example, still reflects architecturally the way in which public spaces are not easily accessible for all who live in Cape Town, reinforcing the point that public has the propensity to remain largely private.

Nicholas Hlobo and Churchill Madikida both work within the liminality of showing and not showing. Nicholas Hlobo is a South African performance and installation artist whose use of Xhosa cultural idioms in rites of passage

problematises the relationship between the performer and relation to secrecy. In the Xhosa culture, *ukwalusa* or circumcision is often referred to metaphorically but never explicitly discussed. As he had done in his earlier work Hlobo critiques the *construction* of culture. For Hlobo, the normalized heterosexuality that dominates understanding of *ukwalusa* conceals the possibility of varying sexual identities and relations formulated during that process.



Nicholas Hlobo, *izithunzi*, 2009  
Rubber, inner tube, ribbon, organza, lace,  
found objects, steel, couch

## Ukubukela nokudlala imfihlo

Ekudlaleni amasiko nezithethe kukho ubungozi bokuveza kakhukulu. Amanye amasiko akho ngokugcina izinto ezininzi zifihlakele. Kodwa ke into yokuveza amasiko esidlangaleni kwenzelwa ukuba mawabonwe. Imveli kwindawo yokubonisa imibono yenkcubeko ziphathwa njegemisebenzi engaqhelekanga efuneke iboniwe. Kukho into ekufuneka ehlfuniwe kwimibono yolwaluko.

Kwimidlalo yam ndijongana nezinto eziqhubeka ngoku nezithethe namsiko endithe ndangqubana nawo. Indlela umdlali wenkcubeko akhetha ngayo ukudlala amasiko esidlangaleni, kodwa akwazi nokugcina ezinye izinto zifihlakele kulapho owam umdla ukhoyo. Ingxaki yokudlala amasiko esidlangaleni ingayinto yokuba hayi wonke umntu obukele umzimba owenza lo masiko uzokwazi ukuphendla imfihlo yawo. Umdlalo wenkcubeko unababukeli. Kusesidlangaleni apho umntu abonakalisa izinto eziyimfihlelo, ezingafane zithyilwe.

uNicholas Hlobo noChurchill Madikida basebenza ekulinganeseleni kwindaba yokukutyhila nokufihla, nokuxela nokungaxeli kwimisebenzi yabo. uNicholas Hlobo ngumntu wenzenkcubeko kwimboniso nakwimidlalo, usebenzisa amaqhalo esiXhosa. Kwindlela eya ebudodeni ugrumba umba wokubukela nokutyhila. Esikweni lakwaXhosa ulwaluko lusoloko luqhuskekiwe akuthethwa ngalo phandle. Njengokuba enzile kwimisebenzi yakhe yakuqala uHlobo uxulunxa umba wamasiko ekwenziweni kwemveli esebenzisa imiboniso nomdlalo. KuHlobo esi siqhelo sokuthungana kwesini ezohlukeneyo siquma into yokuthungana kwesini esinye (lo nto iphela iba yimfihlo).

*Umtshotsho* (2009),  
ngomfanekiso oqingqiweyo owenziwe ngerabha, ribhoni, umtya, intsimbi nezinye ke izinto. Yindibano yemifanekiso eqingqiweyo esibhozo ebonakalo ebumanzirha nokuba yenziwe ngerabha. Le mifanekiso



Nicholas Hlobo, *izithunzi*, 2009  
Rubber, inner tube, ribbon, organza, lace,  
found objects, steel, couch

*Umtshotsho* (2009) is a sculptural installation consisting of rubber inner tube, ribbon, organza, lace, steel and found objects. It is the congregation of eight ghostly figures that appear to be rather fluid despite being made of rubber. The figures are ominous and looming. In their positioning and scale, the figures also isolate the viewer. Much like the idioms that Hlobo uses in his titles, the figures possess a dualistic quality.<sup>4</sup> They could be either male or female. The space is both masculine and feminine, soft and hard, ugly and beautiful, much like the ghostly figures. The word *izithunzi* refers to shadows, but it also refers to integrity. Both the word and the installation exist twofold.

*Umtshotsho* in Xhosa culture is a gathering of men, women and boys from and around an initiate's village.<sup>5</sup> The gathering begins in the early hours of the morning until the time when the initiate begins to make his journey from his home to where his introduction into manhood will take place. During *umtshotsho* the majority of women sing traditional songs with some of the men. The other men drink *umqombothi* or watch the stick fights between boys from different villages. *Umtshotsho* is the initiate's farewell to his boyhood, the men who are around him before his "ascent" into manhood impart advice and *inqalatha* is chosen for him. According to Hlobo, "*umtshotsho* rarely takes place in its old form and young people have found alternatives such as going to bars and clubs" (Perryer 2009:9). I have experienced *umtshotsho* as one of the females in my family and the communities that I have been part of *emaXhoseni*.

As time passes the younger generation and those who have taken part in sacred rituals become the gatekeepers and guardians of knowledge. As Nooter Roberts observes "probably the most widespread, institutionalized revelation of secrets in African societies involves the initiation of adolescents into adulthood" (1993:43. "Initiation may constitute the most transforming and enduring social boundary that secrecy can set in Africa, separating old from young, men from women, even royalty from commoner" (Murphy 1980). The new generation is needed for the purposes of continuity otherwise a fracture and loss of information occurs between generations. Yielding to intergenerational mistrust, the crisis rests with the younger generation being unresponsive to the older rituals and rites. This may be because knowledge is inadequately passed on, or not at all. Its primary focus is to reproduce

and lace. Some of the figures are standing; some are suspended from the ceiling while another claims his/her space on a sofa. The figure seated on the sofa is placed at the edge of the room for another figure, the figure appears to demand its own space evoking thoughts of subservience as the sofa begins to resemble a throne. It is as if he is an authority on the ritual, he presides over pertinent issues surrounding *umtshotsho*.

<sup>5</sup> *Umtshotsho* is not confined to villages, within the urban context people from neighbouring townships and the city participate in the same way that people from the villages would participate.

iqingqiweyo ijongeka ngengento enokuwa naninina kwaye ayiqhelekanga ngokujongeka. Kwindela ebekwe ngayo lo mfanekiso uqingqiweyo ubeka umda phakathi kwawo nombukeli. Lo mfanekiso uqingqiweyo unemboniso ezimbini kanye ngolwa hlobo uHlobo asebenzisa ngayo izihloko zakhe. Zingakwazi ukuba yindoda ziphinde zibengumntu wasetyhini, ngumdlali yedwa owaziyo. Umdlali wezenkcubeko uyayazi yeyiphi imfihlo equlethwe sisihloko ngoba zingayinqwaba into ekungathethwa ngazo esiXhoseni.

Isiqithi asenzayo uHlobo kulomboniso uthetha ngqo kwizinto zakwaXhosa zomtshotsho. uHlobo ukhethe ukubeka ingqwalasela kwisiko lolwaluko, isiko .elombathiswe ngemfihlo. "Impikiswano kwimfihlo ikwinto yokuba eyona nto ibalulekileyo zezimfihlo zibekwa emehlweni kawonkewonke" (Nooter 1993:185. Intetha kaHlobo kule mfihlo ivusa imubuzo kwimveli. Imboniso iqhakazile yimibala ebhanyabhanya, leyo yenye yendlela uHlobo ashukuxa ngayo izisekelo zesini. Wenze indawo eyimpikiswano, ugcina imfihlo kwimpixano. Indawo sinobudoda sinobufazi, siqinile sithambile, sihle sibi, njengala mfanekiso uqingqiweyo obubuthunzela. Usinika ithuba kwinto ehlala ifihlakele, enempixano.

*Umtshotsho* esiXhoseni ngumhlangano wamadoda, amabhinqanamakhwenkwe aphuma kwilali yekwekwe nakwezinye. Indibano iqala pha ekuseni ukuyotsho kwela xesha lokunduluka kekwekwe isiya apho ke ilindwe khona bubudoda. *Umtshotshweni* isininzi samabhinqa sicula ingoma zesintu kunye namanye amadoda. Amanye amadoda asela umqombothi okanye abukele amakhwenkwe asuka kwilali ngelali equla. *Umtshotsho* yinto yokuthi ndelantle enkwenkwen, amadoda ayirhangqileyo apha lama amazwi enkuthazo ezindlebeni zayo kukhethwe nenqalatha. NgokukaHlobo "*umtshotsho* kunqabile ukuba anziwe ngolwa hlobo lwamandulo ngoku intsha ifumene enye indlela ngokuya kwipotsoyi" (Perryer 2009:9). Nam ndakhe ndazivela *umtshotsho* njengentombi kusapho lwasekhaya. Imveli isajongiwe *umtshotshweni* kusapho lwasekhaya nakuluntu kwindawo zamaXhosa.

Ekuhambeni kwexesha isizukulwana esitsha nabo bathe baxhamla kwizithethe nakwamasiko akwantu ibangabo inzululwazi. Njengokuba eyibekile uNooter Roberts "Ingenzeka ukuba elona tyhilelo lwenzeka kakhulu xa kususwa umntana ebuntwaneni esiwa ebudaleni "(Nooter-Roberts 1993:43). "Ukuqala kwebakala elitsha kungaqulunqa eyona nto imfihlo ingayenza eAfrika, ingohlula omdala komncinci, indoda ebafazini, inkosi kumntu oqhelekileyo" (Murphy 1980). Esi sikulwana sitsha siyadingeka kakhulu nobangela wokuqhubeka nemveli okanye isikrobo nokulahleka kolwazi luyenzeka phakathi kwezizukulwana. Ukuya elungqzulweni lwezizukulwana, ingozi ilala kwisi zikulwana esitsha esingenankathalo. Ingqwalasela yaso kukuphinda luzale umsenenzi wesini

heteronormative practices using ritual as the premise. The foundation of ritual reinforces the stereotypes where sexuality is central. Based on reproduction, traditional practices cloak sexuality in secrecy. Young girls becoming women or boys becoming men go through initiation based on secrecy but also squarely on sexuality. By doing this they transform sexuality into a biologically determined act of reproduction rather than pleasure. Secrecy, therefore, operates in suppressing sexual pleasure. This issue surfaces in Hlobo's work.

By choosing to title the piece *Umtshotsho*, it is possible that too much has been revealed about the build up to this sacred ritual. The immense and jellylike sculptures could be a metaphor for the impossibility of separating private from public, where sexuality is not only something private, but also something that is regulated publicly by a community or a nation-state. Judith Butler, whose feminism lends something to my argument, (1993: 93) notes

The constructed character of sexuality has been invoked to counter the claim that sexuality has a natural and normative shape and movement, that is, one which approximates the normative phantasm of compulsory heterosexuality. The efforts to denaturalize sexuality and gender have taken as their main enemy those normative frameworks of compulsory heterosexuality that operate through the naturalization and reification of heterosexist norms.

Foremost in secrecy is the manner in which the secret reproduces certain types of social normativity, such as women being courted by men, or the weighting of sex purely for reproductive processes, with sex for pleasure being denaturalised.

In his work, Hlobo creates a cultural diorama. A diorama is a representation of otherwise banal things that people do (like cooking, hunting, eating, dancing), regularly found in anthropological and ethnographic museums. The South African National Gallery had one in existence a few years ago. But the dehumanizing anthropological framework of the diorama turns these acts into spectacles placed on stage. As Madruna has noted, the "diorama is a visual structure that transcends the boundaries of representation itself, consolidating a three-dimensional arrangement with its pictorial setting, which extends the viewer's point of view stressing the *mis en scene* of the real" (2007:1). It is a scene usually fenced off by a glass frame with life-sized figures put on show. It is the apex of anthropological hypocrisy reflecting desires and bigotry of its viewer.

sohlukeneyo sisebenzisa amasiko. Isiqalo samasiko sinika umkhomba ndlela apho isini singundoqo khona. Ekuzaleni, ekwenzeni amasiko nakwi mfihlo yezesini. Amantombazana abangamantombi okanye amakhwenkwe abangamadoda adlula kwibakala elithile elininto yokwenza nesini. Imfihlo isebenza ngokucinezela inkanuko zesosondo. Lo mba uyavela kumsebenzi kaHlobo.

Ngokukhetha isihloko esithi umtshotsho, kunokwenzeka ukuba izinto ezininzi sezityhiliwe ukuya kwesi sithethe. Ukungcangcazela kwimifanekiso eqingqiweyo ezinkulu kungasisikweko kwisiko lolwaluko. Kungenzeka le mifanekiso iqingqiweyo isihloko sawo sithi, izithunzi ngoba zenento emesithunzi kuwo. Lo msebenzi uyabamba ngoba unento eza nempendulo aphinde ayiphicothe ubuXhosa nesi siseko sobudoda kule ndawo yesiko.

The constructed character of sexuality has been invoked to counter the claim that sexuality has a natural and normative shape and movement, that is, one which approximates the normative phantasm of compulsory heterosexuality. The efforts to denaturalize sexuality and gender have taken as their main enemy those normative frameworks of compulsory heterosexuality that operate through the naturalization and reification of heterosexist norms (Judith Butler 1993: 93).

Eyonanto kwimfihlo yindlela imfihlo ezala okutsha ngayo izinto ezithile eziqhelekileyo. Into yokuba abafazi bayatshatwa, ukwabelana ngezesondo akubalulekamga, ukwabelana ngezesondo kupha ukuze kwenziwe abantwana. Amadoda namabhinqa afundiswa lukhulu de kubenzima ukushenxa nakancinci kumthetho osekelwe wona kwibakala oqhithe kulo.

Emsebenzini wakhe uHlobo wenza Into ekuthiwa yidiorama. Idiorama ngumboniso wezinto eziqhelekileyo abantu abazenzayo (ukupheka, ukuzingela, ukutya nokuxhentsa) kodwa ke eyona nto ibulala ubuntu kule diorama ijika ezi zenzo njengemiboniso eqongeni.

Ezona mpixano ngemfihlo nemisebenzi yayo yinxalenye yokuzivavanya amandla. Imfihlo isebenza ekugcineni umda. "Umphakathi, obanakala kulowo uqala ibakala elitsha, lilizwe lezikweko, lentetha ezingaqondi nto, izityhilelo. Ubungqina buyathathwa, kuyafungwa, abaqala elo bakala litsha bayafundiswa ukuba kuza

Secrecy and its uses are part and parcel of the exercise of power. Secrecy works in the maintenance of boundaries. “The inside of the boundary, visible only to initiates, is a world of metaphors, allusions, and revelation. Vows are taken, oaths are sworn, and initiates are taught what may happen to them if they violate the secret” (Nooter Roberts 1993:142). Knowledge is a device for power and governance, the secret is governed by discipline. Michel Foucault (1975; 1978) and bell hooks (1992; 1995) locate sexuality in structures of power. While both theorists write about power and sexuality, bell hooks defers from Foucault as she introduces race in relation to patriarchal and capitalist power, which is enforced through state and governance structures. These ideas are echoed in Hlobo's work which deals with an intersectional and complex masculinity, exploring the tensions between blackness and homosexuality.

Churchill Madikida is a performance, installation and new media artist who offers a contrasting view to Hlobo's, whilst dealing with the same subject matter in *Struggles of the heart* (2003). Madikida has stated that his work is about Xhosa circumcision.

It is not that secret but it is sacred, but it encompasses the involvement and the interaction of the whole community. Before you enter initiation, you first shout and announce your status: I'm still a boy but I'm planning to go through the process and be a man (Madikida 2004:81).

While what happens there is public knowledge, only people who have been through the process really know what happens. It is still something that is based on the principle of a secret.

In his performance, *Struggles of the Heart*, Madikida deliberates about private and public spaces. He has chosen which public will see by putting it up in institutions and galleries. Access would be limited within the traditional community that practices these traditions, apart from the people who are intimately engaged with the practice itself. In the Eastern Cape, for instance, it would only be men who are really exposed to whatever happens in the practice. Beyond that, some people are involved within the various levels of the community, “certain people will have access to what happens; some people will assume they know, and others do not” (Madikida 2004:81).

kwenzeka ntoni ukuba bathe baziphalaza imfihlelo” (Nooter-Roberts 1993:142). Ulwazi lucingo lwamandla nokuphatha, imfihlo iphathwa ngempatho entle. uMichel Foucault ku*Discipline and Punish* (1975), *The History of Sexuality* (1978) kunye noBell Hooks ku*Art on my mind: visual politics* (1995) naku*Black Looks: Race and representation*(1992) babhale kakhulu ngempatho kunye nezesini nokuba zenzeka njani. Umthetho wokuba kuyafihlwa okanye kuyatyhilwa ungasebenza ukuba ugcine ezinye izinto zemveli zinjalo. Ugcithiso lwamasiko ngokomdlalo wezonkcubeko lungajongwa njengento entsha kodwa kwelinye icala lungabonakala lunyemba. Luqhekeza umda phakathi kwinto ezinobunzulu nezinto ezingonyemba kwamasiko.

Uchurchill Madikida ngumdlali wezonkcubeko, mboniso nakwizinto ezintsha kumabonakude, yena uza necala aliphikisayo neli likaHlobo kodwa ke naye ujongana nento efanayo ku*Struggles of the heart*, 2003. uMadikida utshilo wathi owakho umsebenzi ungolwaluko lukaXhosa. “Ayomfihlo kodwa inobunzulu, yenza uluntu luthethe kwaye lubumbane. Phambi kokuba kwindlela eya kulwaluko, uqale ukhwaze uzlixele ukuba uyikwekwe uzichze into oyiyo (2004:81). Lulwazi luka wonkewonke into eyenzeka pha kodwa owona ndoqo waziwa ngabo bayihambileyo la ndlela. Yinto yokwenza nemfihlo.

Kumdlalo wakhe othi *Struggles of the Heart*, uMadikida udlala kwindawo ezifihlakeleyo aphinde adlale esidlangalaleni kodwa akavezi konke. Uzikhethile ezinobonwa sisidlangalala ngokuzibeka kwamaziko nakwi ndawo ezibonisa izithombe zenkcubeko. Indawo ezisesidlangalaleni zifihlakele ngoba ayozondawo zikawonkewonke kwaye akukho lula ukufikelela kuzo. Isidlangalala ayondawo yomntu omnye. Emzantsi Afrika into yesidlangalala inento nokwenza nohlanga okanye uzinga. Ufikelelo lunomda nakuluntu lwemveli olwenza lamasiko ngaphandle kwabo basondeleyo emsini. eMpuma Koloni, xa ndithetha, ibangamadoda odwa abonakalayo kulo msebenzi wenzekayo. Ngaphezukoko abanye abantu bayinxalenye kumabakala ohlukeneyo ekuhlaleni, “abanye abantu bayafikelela kwinto eyenzekayo, abanye bayazigqibela kwelinye icala abazi nto” (Madikida 2004:81).

u*Struggles of the Heart* neminye imizimba yemisebenzi eyayisenziwa nguMadikida ngela xesha yangquzulana nemisebenzi emininzi eyayithetha ngolwaluko. Kwezemfundo uqajisela kwezolwaluko nokufa okuvelayo ngenxa

*Struggles of the Heart* and the body of work presented by Madikida at the time coincided with many works focusing on circumcision. In academia, the spectacularisation of circumcision (and death resulting from it) became a convenient way of rebuking tradition as backward, patriarchal and barbarous.

The line between the insider and outsider was drawn by the influx of artists both white and black who began opening up the debate on circumcision, artists such as Peet Pienaar, Colbert Mashile and Thembinkosi Goniwe began to question the idea of secrecy and tradition. Mashile and Goniwe problematize this collective and individual memory, which is part of their culture by speaking from the inside, whereas Pienaar convolutes the tradition. Pienaar creates his version of what it might be to be on the inside by performing his own circumcision ritual, administered by a female nurse. Whereas Mashile and Goniwe create from the inside, Pienaar creates from a superficially appropriated and imagined inside. The complexities of a culture for an 'outsider' can be misunderstood.

The digital prints of the performance show Madikida chewing a ball of *mielie meal*<sup>6</sup> with his face covered in *imbola*. In creating work for the gallery, the work takes on a new context and meaning, where people are unaware of its original significance. He critically assesses the subject as a violent tradition, however, he remains aware of the limitations that are inherent inside the gallery space. In this sense Madikida asserts agency around what is hidden and what is revealed and controls the insider/outsider dynamic. The male artists mentioned attest to Clifford's notion of "the slippery terrain of interpretation", as expanded in the quote below.

He is gagging on the *mielie meal*, struggling to chew the food and there is the possibility that it might choke him. His work at the time had a predominantly white middle class audience who would not know, for whom they are already questioning South African black traditions.

Whether the search for the secret occurs from within a society or from without, secrecy eludes and dissolves, remaining always on the slippery terrain of interpretation: countless stories of concealment, revelation and initiation are structured by a desire that posits secrets in order to reveal them, imagines an other with a true within. What remains are surfaces, mirrors, doubles – an ethnography of signs without essential content (Clifford 1988:159).

<sup>6</sup> *Mielie meal* is regularly fed to initiates because of their dietary constraints.

yako yenye yendlela ezenze lula ukuba luxulunxwe, lugwexwe lunyejwe njengento yakudala yamadoda kwaye yinto yamaqaba.

Umgca phakathi kwabaphathathi nabaphandle wenziwe luthontelwano lwabo lwezenkcubeko bamhlophe nabantsundu abaqale ngokuvula ingxoxo ngozolwaluko, abantu abafana noPeet Pienaar, Colbert Mashile kunye noThembinkosi Goniwe baqale ngokuyibuzisa le nto yemfihlo kwimveli. uMashile noGoniwe bayenza ingxaki le nto ngoba bona bathethwa ngento abayaziyo, uPienaar kunzima ukuyilandela kuye. uPienaar uzakhela elakhe icala ngokuzibuzisa ukuba kunjani ukuba ngaphakathi kodwa esebenzisa ulwazi lwesiko lwakhe lolwaluko owalufumana kugqirha. Ngokuhamba le ndlela imenza abengumntu wangaphandle kweli siko, into ayifundileyo kumongikazi, omnye umntu owazi kancinci kunomntu oyindoda ngezinto zolwaluko. Ulingcolisile ulwaluko ngokuya esibhedlele adibane nomongikazi. uMashile kunye noGoniwe bathetha ngento abayaziyo yena uPienaar uzakhela elakhe ilizwe lwemifanekiso ngogqondweni. Impixano zamasiko kummi wangaphandle zingaviwa ngendlela engeyiyo.

Imiboniso yomdlalo kaMadikida imbonisa ehlfuna umgubo ubuso buqatywe imbola. Umdlalo wakhe ukhutshwa iyasuswa kubuyona xa esenziwa apho abantu bengazi ukuba ithetha ukuthini. Uwuhlalutya lumba wemveli njenge nto enobundlobongela. Uhlfuna umgubo kwaye kunziwa ukuwuhlfuna kunokwenzeka ingathi angatsarhwa. Ngela xesha umsebenzi wakhe wayebukelwa kakhulu ngamagwangqa angazinto, angayiqondi nakakuhle le nto yemveli yabantsundu baseMzantsi Afrika. Kwesisenzo silula sokuhlfuna lo mgubo kukho impikiswano yokubonisa nokungabonisi. Le mpikiswano ikuye ngokungathethi nelinye ilizwi kodwa ebonisa.

Whether the search for the secret occurs from within a society or from without, secrecy eludes and dissolves, remaining always on the slippery terrain of interpretation: countless stories of concealment, revelation and initiation are structured by a desire that posits secrets in order to reveal them, imagines an other with a true within. What remains are surfaces, mirrors, doubles – an ethnography of signs without essential content (Clifford 1988:159).

Ukuze ususe into kwimfihlo kufuneka uyenze ngobulumko, imfihlo ifuna ukugcinwa kwaye ibanjwe yimbumba ukwazi izohlala ihleli ngehlobo elilo.

Secrets are subject to interpretation, the origin of the secret lie with those that have surely passed away, over time the secret morphs and changes. There are countless ways the subject of secrecy can be obscured when it pertains to rites of passage and rituals. Black people who continue to practice traditional secretive practices are subject to question, they become political tools for those outside of the traditions, and then black people begin vilifying these practices and stop practicing them altogether. Every society holds its own secrets, secrecy is layered, it is complex and can be used against or to preserve ideologies within societies. Secrets can be a divisive and exclusionary tool. Working on the premise that only those who need to know need the information, what use is the information to someone who knows not what to do with it? There is the possibility that a secret does not exist to exclude, it serves those that need the knowledge.

Zininzi indlela lo mba wemfihlo angagcinwa ngawo kwizinto zolwaluko. Isininzi sabantu abenza izinto zemveli eMzantsi Afrika ngabantu bemveli. Kunokwenzeka ukuba abakwazi kufikeleleka kwezolwimi, isini nohlanga ngoko ke babazixhobo zepolitiki kwabo bangaphandle kwezemveli, ngolo hlobo abantu abamnyama bajike banyembe amasiko wabo bayeke nokuwenza bonke. Zonke imbumba zinemfihlo yazo, imfihlo inezinto ezininzi, iyimpixano kwayona kwaye ingasetyenziswa ukulwa okanye ikhusele ingqiqo zalo mbumba. Iyakwazi nokwahlula, ivela kwabo kunyanzelekileyo beyazile nabayidingayo. Yintoni ukwazi kumntu ongayaziyo kwinto ayifundileyo. Inobangela wokuohilakwemfihlo ayikokuqhekezwa okanye ukulahlea abanye ngaphandle kodwa kukwenza umsebenzi wayo kwabo badinga ulwazi ngayo.



Churchill Madikida  
*Struggles of the Heart*, 2003

Churchill Madikida  
*Struggles of the Heart*, 2003

## Chapter Two The transient body

Each time I perform I must ask my ancestors to walk into the performance with me. Not to overpower me, but for us to manifest as one physical being. There is a risk of falling into a trance unwillingly or having the work taken over by my ancestors. In all my performances, I have felt that my body is not something I own or have full and constant control over. For this reason, this chapter takes up the conceptual contradictions embedded in the notion of, firstly, the body as a medium, secondly, the body as a vessel and thirdly, the body as an instrument. The body is regarded as the primary medium in performance art and, in that way, one can begin to think about the implications for subjectivity.

In my practice, there is the double play on the word 'medium'. While the body is regarded as the medium in performance art, it is also used to describe *isangoma* as spirit medium. Since *izangoma* communicate with ancestors, there is the assumption that *izangoma* are in constant communication with people who have passed on. However, ancestors are alive, present and can inhabit my body. It is in this way that I describe the body as a vessel (a point I raised in the first chapter). It is also an instrument through which political assertions can be made. These conceptualisations of the body locate it in a network of racial and gendered relations where violence is implied. In this sense my body is situated amidst numerous colliding social, racial, gendered-political-violence and therefore becomes a complex and multifaceted site of expression.

## Isahluko Sesibini Umzimba Wexeshana

Qho xa ndizokwenza umdlalo wezenkcubeko ndiyazicela izinyanya zam ukuba zihambe nam kumdlalo kodwa zingandongameli, ziziveze ngokuba zibezinye nam. Kukho ingozi yokuya kwela lizwe labo ngokungathandanga okanye bawuthathele kuboumsebenzi. Ndizivile ukuba umzimba wam ayonto yam okanye endinomthetho kuyo phezukwayo. Ngesi sizathu kwesi sahluko ndithetha ngongquzulwano lweengcinga. Into yokuqala ndijonga umzimba njesixhobo sokuthetha, okwesibini njengegobhogobho okokugqibela njengexilongo. Umzimba yeyona nto ibalulekileyo kwezenkcubeko ngalo ndlela omnye angaqala ukujonga iziphumo.

Kumsebenzi wam kukho uphindaphindo kweli gama lithi medium. Njengokuba umzimba enjongwa ngegento yokuphalaza imizwa kwimidlalo yezenkcubeko kwelinye icala usetyenziswa ukuchaza izangoma njengemimoya iqulathe eza neyayo imizwa. Ngokwazi izangoma siyakwazi ukuqhagamshelana zezinyanya, kukho uqikelelo lokuba izangoma soloko zikuqhagamshelano nabantu ababhubhayo. Kodwa ke izinyanya ziyaphila, zikhona kwaye zingawuthatha umzimba wam. Kungenxa yoku ndichaza umzimba njengegobhogobho (into ebendiyiveze kwisahluko sokuqala). Sisixhobo apho ndinokuthi inkolo kwipolitiki ingabekwa khona. Ezi ngqiqo zomzimba ziwubeka apho ezobandlululo nezosini nobundlobongela benzeka khona.

## Re-conceptualizing the body in performance

In the video *uNgenzelephantsi*, I examine the body as medium through a consideration of pain and mortality. In this video piece, I am covered entirely with white chicken feathers that I then pluck off my skin. The use of cold glue to attach the feathers exacerbates the pain felt throughout the performance. The display of the video is such that one sees, in one projected frame, the top half of my body and, in the other frame, the bottom half of my body. The body in this performance is corporeal but more significantly it is represented as a critical site for thinking about race, gender and mortality.

The reason I used white feathers rather than black feathers in my performance is that black chickens are used to rid one of evil spirits while white chickens are used to bring about light and luck. In this way, the body of the chicken is seen as a carrier, a site and a medium through which good or bad forces are transferred. The performance revises and questions the Manichean distinctions based on black and white. As a black woman, I pluck off white feathers. By doing this I aim to destabilize the dichotomies of black as evil and white as light and good luck. I will return to the question of race. I first want to address the positioning of animals in relation to the human body. In my performances, I use a chicken, cow (skulls), and a goat. These animals in my practice as *isangoma* represent ancestors or represent various spiritual forces.

The chicken in the photographic series *iSana libuyele kunina* is significant. It refers to an animal being a substitute for ancestors. In this case the chicken is the substitute, and although it would usually face death as the substitute, it becomes a way to think about death as continuity. In one photograph I am wearing a dress made of *Injeti* standing in the middle of a street with a chicken in hand in Makhaza, Khayelitsha, and in the other, I am walking away from a Pentecostal church with the chicken on my head. The road becomes an important metaphor for continuity but the church represents discontinuity.

The church has been seen as antithetical to *ubuNgoma* and has proffered the idea of being 'born again' not in flesh but in spirit. The body in Christian belief is the very basis of 'man's disgrace' from heaven. In order to reach heaven, a human being must transcend corporeality through actual death or symbolic death. The body and what it consumes is therefore the site for 'evil' titillations (sex, food, intoxicating drink, etc.) These ideas are opposed to indigenous ways of thinking about the body. AmaXhosa, for example, do not regard the body as first and foremost a debasement. While there are beliefs in *uQamatha*,

## Ukunika umzimba ingqiqo entsha kwezemidlalo yezenkcubeko

Kumboniso othi, *Ngenzelephantsi*, ndijonga umzimba njegomyalezeli wemizwa kwintlungu nakukufa. Kulo mboniso bhanyabhanya ndombathiswe ngempiko zembambana endithi ndixhwithe isikhumba sam. Ukusebenzisa kweglu ukuze ndidibanise ezi mpiko zenza le ntlungu ndiyibonisa kumdlalo iqaqambe kwanobom. Kumboniso bhanyabhanya umntu ubona nje umntla womzimba wam kwenye indawo ubona umzantsi womzimba wam. Umzimba kulo mdlalo nguwo nyani, eyona nto ubonisa elinye icala ngokucinga banzi ngohlanga, ngesini kunye nokufa.

Oyena nobangela wokuba ndisebenzise impiko ezimhlophe kunezimnyama, ezimnyama zisetyenziswa ukuba zigxothwe imimoya emdaka, zona ezi zimhlophe zizisa ukukhanya kunye nentlahla. Ngale ndlela umzimba wenkukhu ujongwa ngengomphathi, indawo nomyalezi wemizwa apho ezimdaka nezintle zifakwa khona. Lo mdlalo wezenkcubeko uqhekeza yonke into ibekukungcola okanye ukukhanya kwabamnyama nakwabamhlophe. Njengentombi yomgquba ndixhwitha impiko ezimhlophe. Ngokwenz njalo ndisusa le nto yokuba umnyama kukungcola ubumhlophe kukhanya nentlahla. Ndizobuyela kumbuzo wohlanga. Ndifna kuqala ndibeke lombwa wezilwanyana ekudibaneni nemizimba. Kumdlalo wam, ndisebenzisa inkukhu, intloko yenkomo nebhokhwe. Ezi zilwanyana kumsebenzi wam njengesangoma zibonakalisa izinyanya okanye imimoya eyahlukeneyo.

Inkukhu kumdlalowesithombe, *iSana libuyele kunina* ubalulekile. Ichaza isilwanyana njengomeli wezinyanya. Kule into, inkukhu ngumeli, nokuba ijongana nokufa ngengomeli, iza nenye indlela yokujonga ukufa njengento eqhubekayo. Kwisithombe esinye ndinxibe ilokhwe eyenziwe ngenjeti ndimi esiphakathini sendlela. Ndiphethe inkukhu esandleni, eMakhaza, eKhayelitsha kwelinye icala ndihambe kude necawe iPentecostal ndithwele inkukhu entloko. Indlela iba sisikweko esibalulekileyo kwinkqubela kodwa yona icawe ibonakalisa ukugangatha ndawonye.

Icawe ijongwa ngengendawo ebuchase kakhulu ubuNgoma kwaye ibeke phambili le nto yokuzalwa okutsha hayi ngokwasenyameni kodwa ngokwasemphefumleni. Umzimba kwinkolo yobuKrestu sisiqalo sohlazo somntu esisuka emazulwini. Ukuba umtu ufuna ukufika ezulwini kufuneka kuqala angene kowona mzimba ngokufa okanye ngemboniso zokufa. Umzimba nezinto azityayo uzalekisa ukungcola (ukwabelana ngezesondo, ukutya, ukunxila, njalo njalo). Ezi mgcina zichasene kwindlela zesintu ezicinga ngayo ngomzimba. AmaXhosa awawujongi umzimba njengeqokobhe elingabalulekanga. Kukho iinkolelo kuQamata, ophuma kuthithixo omkhulu welanga, uThixo (Asante,

descendant of the omniscient sun god, *uThixo* (Asante, M.K & Nwadiora, 76), the body does not represent the ‘fall’ but it becomes a way in which ancestors manifest.

This multiplicity can also be seen in work such as *Uncles and Angels* (2012), a 42-minute performance and live stream video installation by Nelisiwe Xaba and Mocke J. van Veuren. The performance piece begins with the sound of chickens and *Mbacanga* music while Xaba tiptoes onto the stage in front of the screen. She walks to and fro to create the effect of multiple bodies (her own body recorded and replayed). As she is tiptoeing, seven replicas appear on screen following her and mimicking her every movement, this occurs throughout the piece. She is dressed in a little girl’s dress that allows the viewer a glimpse of her white underwear, and ballet shoes. As the performance continues she changes her outfit from a drum majorette uniform, a puffy white dress, a traditional Zulu beaded skirt (one worn by Xhosa and the other by Venda girls), khaki’s and lastly a feather-laden outfit.

Nelisiwe Xaba, a ballet dancer refers to the body as a “communicative instrument.” Xaba acts as a storyteller, a critic, and a performer who cunningly explores political, cultural, and sexual issues. *Uncles and Angels* interrogates virginity testing as a way in which the body is violated. Virginity testing is seen as social reproduction of patriarchal relations. Xaba and van Veuren use the Venda *Domba* dance as well as the Swati and Zulu reed dances as themes to reflect on the disregard for individuals where masses of girls are turned into ‘good women’. Xaba plays both the role of a girl and the matron who reinforces tradition. She becomes both perpetrator and victim. Xaba re-enacts snippets of the *Domba* dance, the Zulu reed dance and the Swati reed dance.

Xaba kneels and tucks her feet underneath her bottom, and then walks away only to reappear in a drum majorette outfit while her “troupe” (images of herself) follows her. She continues to transition in and out of the frame, changing in and out of costume. Here, the body is transient. Xaba creates an entire performance piece delivered using carefully chosen parts from the rites



Nelisiwe Xaba and Mocke J Van Veuren  
*Nelisiwe Xaba in Uncles & Angels*, 2013

Nwadiora 2007:76) “umzimba awubonakalisi kuwa kodwa ubayindlela yokuzibonakalisa kwezinyanya”.

Olu phindaphindo lungaphinde lubonakale kumsebenzi ofana *noUncles and Angels* (2012), umdlalo nomboniso bhanyabhanya othatha imizuzu eyi42, wenziwe nguNelisiwe Xaba no Mocke J. van Veuren. Lo mdlalwana uwala ngezandi zeenkukhu noMbhacanga ngeli xesha uXaba echwechwa esiya eqongeni edlula phambi kwesi kirini. Uya phambili aphinde abuye ebonakalisa le nto yemizimba ephindaphindeneyo (umzimba wakhe edlala kumboniso obhanyabhanya). Ngenokuba echwechwa, abalinganisi abasixhenxe bavela kulo mboniso bhanyabhanya besenza ngqo leno ayenzayo, yenzeka de umdlalo ayophela. Unxibe ilokhwe yentombazana eyenza ukuba umbukeli abone into ayinxibe ngaphantsi nezihlangu zebhaleyi. Njengokuba umdlalo eqhubeka umane etshintsha isinxibo. Unxiba ezemajorensi, ilokhwe egcweleyo, isinxibo samaZulu sentsimbi (ziyanxitywa nangamantombazana amaXhosa nawamaVhenda) isinxibo esikaki okokugqibela unxiba isinxibo esenziwe ngentsipho.

uNelisiwe Xaba, umdanisi webhaleyi uthetha ngomzimba njengesixhobo sokuthetha. Uxaba usebenza ngokubalisa abamali, ngokuphicotha nanjengomdlali ojongene nokuthetha ngezopolitiki, ngezamasiko nangezosi. Ku*Uncles and Angels* ugoqagoqana nosiko lokuhlwa njengento ebulala umzimba oyinto yokuzala kwelinye ibhinqa. Uxaba no van Veuren basebenzisa uxhentso obizwangokuba yiVhenda Domba nomxhentso wesiSwati kunyewesiZulu wengcongolo bebonakalisa ukungathathelwa ntweni kwabantu apho amantombazana evela uzokwenziwa amabhinqa alungileyo. Uxaba udlala indima yomfazi omdala onyanzelisa eli siko aphinde adlale nentombi encinci. Ubalixhoba aphinde abengumntu ontlonta ixhoba. Uxaba udlala imidlalwana edityanisiweyo yomxhentso weDomba, umxhntso wesiZulu wengcongolo nomxhentso wesiSwati wengcongolo ukongezelela kule nto ubayintombazana ehlolelwayo aphinde abengumama uhlolelwayo.

uXaba ubalisa ukudlulela ngaphaya ngokubonakalisa amantombazana, uyaguqa aqhusheke inyawo zakhe



Nelisiwe Xaba and Mocke J Van Veuren  
*Nelisiwe Xaba in Uncles & Angels*, 2013

of passage for young women. She invokes the very public nature of the female body. That is, although women's bodies are regarded as belonging to private, domestic spaces they are modeled on very public ideas of what they should be.

At a particular point during the performance Xaba slips a glove onto her hand and brings out a paper full of gold stars, the kind used for children's books. Xaba reduces the ceremonies to a class merit system, which functions to mold children to fit certain hegemonic social structures. Furthermore, she highlights a process of commodification. Her transition from the *Domba* to the two reed dances, which leads up to the virginity test, performs a subjective narrative that examines systems that value and regulate women's bodies. The *VhaVhenda domba* dance<sup>7</sup> has been in existence for centuries and usually takes place at the chief's homestead. This happens during the third and final phase of a young *vhaVhenda* woman's initiation. It is the culmination of the rites of passage that the young women have undergone. The *VhaVhenda domba* dance is said to symbolize the foetus. During their initiation the initiates are taught about motherhood, how to please their husbands sexually, and how women must behave in *VhaVhenda* culture.

Similarly, *Umkhosi woMhlanga* and the Swati reed dance are also exemplary of gendered performance. *Umkhosi woMhlanga* is the Zulu reed dance that takes place at the royal palace in Nongoma, KwaZulu Natal every September. It is the pre-requisite for all the girls who partake to submit to a virginity test before the prophylactic ceremony. The girls choose the longest, straightest and strongest reeds to approach the king. If a reed should bend, then the girl has already been sexually active. This result disqualifies her. The Swati reed dance is similar to *Umkhosi womhlanga* that occurs at the Queen mother's royal homestead where the girls also adorn themselves with beads, sashes and skirts.

By using *Mbaqanga*, Xaba and van Veuren's remind us that although indigenous traditions are important, they also change as the political and socio-economic spheres change. They are transient and malleable. While *Mbaqanga* is seen as

<sup>7</sup> Before the dance is performed the young women and girls rehearse the dance during the year-long initiation process. The young women and girls form a chain using their arms; some anthropologists have named it the snake dance because of the chain created and the temperamental up and down movement of the conjoined arms. The bare-chested and bare-bottomed initiates are led in song by one of the women who were instrumental in their training until they themselves join her and break into song, with only traditional beads covering their pubic region. The movement and song is accompanied by traditional drumming, all of which comes to a standstill once the girls reach the center of the space and lean into the circle they have configured.

ngaphantsi, ahambe kanti uzophinda abonakale enxibe isinxibo sokudlala imajorensi ngoku isithombe sakhe simlandela. Uphuma engena kwifreyimi etshintsha tshintshana nesinxibo. Apha umzima awuthathi xesha lide. Uxaba wenza umdlalo esebenzisa ukuya kwelinye ibakala lwamantombazana. Ubeka indlela owaziwa ngayoumzimba womfazi. Nokuba umzimba womfazi ujongwa ukuba ufanele ukuba kwindawo ezifihlakeleyo, endlini, wenziwa ukuba angajongeka kanjani esidlangaleni.

Endaweni eyodwa kumdlalo weqonga uXaba utyibilikisa iglavu esandleni sakhe akhuphe iphepha eligcwele iinkwenkwezi zegolide ezenzelwe incwadi zabantwana. Uxaba uhlisa le micimbi eyenza into yokubumba abantwana ukuba bakwazi ukungena kwesi sisekelo sembumba. Utshintsho lwakhe ekusukeni kumxhentso weDomba okuya ekuxeshentseni ngengcongolo imqhuba kwintoyokuholwa, le nto iba yingqwalasela kwindlela yokujonga nokunika isidima kumzimba webhinqa. Umxhentsno weVhaVhenda wayekhona kwantlandlolo kwaye besenzeka apho pinkosi ihlala khona. Yenzeka kwibakala lokugqibela xa kufakwa amantombazana ebudaleni. Ngunobangela wale ndlela uhanjwe ngamantombi amancinci. Umxentso weVhaVhenda kuthiwa ubonakalisa usana olusesesibelekweni. Xa besaziswa ebudaleni bafundiswa ngubumama,indlela ebamabaphathe ngayo abayeni kwezesendo nendlela yokuziphatha kwizintoezidibene namasiko.

Umkhosi Womhlanga nomxhentso wamaSwati ngengcongolo ngumzekelo womdlalo wesini. Umxhentso woMhlanga ngumxhentso wamaZulu ngengcongolo eyenzeka ebukhosini kwaNongoma, KwaZulu Natal qho September. Yinto ekunyazekile ukuba yenziwe ngamantombazana, ahlolwe ukwazi azokhuseleka kwizifo. Amantombazana akhetha ezona ngcongolo zinde, zomeleleyo ukuya enkosini. Ukuba ingcongolo igobile lo nto ithetha ububa lo ntombazana seyidibene nendoda-uye afumane isohlwayo. Umxentso wamaSwati ngengcongolo uyelelene kuUmkhosi woMhlanga. Umxentso wamaSwati ngengcongolo wenzeka kwindawo ekuhlala kuyo inkosikazi, amantombazana azihombisa ngentsimbi nangelokhwe.

Ngokusebenzisa umbaqanga uXaba novan Veuren bayasikhumbuza nokuba abaluleke kanjani amasiko akwantu kodwa ahlala etshintsha njalo, kwaye atshintsha nokutshintsha kwezoqoqosho nezepolitiki. Azihlali xesha elide kodwa ziyajikajikeka. Njengokuba uMbaqanga ejongwa ngengomculu wesiZulu ekudala ekhona, kodwa nawo yinto entsha evuka ngoku ngokufuduka kwabasebenzi. Eli gama lithi mbaqanga lithetha umxube wendidi ngendidi zemiculo okanye isidudu.

traditional Zulu music that has always been there, it is a fairly recent innovation arising out of the conditions of migrant labour. The word *mbaqanga* refers to an eclectic mix of styles or *mielie pap* porridge.

Xaba's choice of three cultural rites of passage for young girls question the condition in which the female body performs for men. "These rituals, predicated on maintaining certain racial, political and sexual boundaries are rooted in a desire for power – in the form of economic and social supremacy" (Henderson, 2009:38). There exists an anomaly in the code of societal ethics that is supposedly attributed to the male hegemony. The female body is easily devalued or either venerated according to a male perspective.

Xaba's performance demonstrates different types of violence inflicted upon the vagina, the physical, psychological and emotional effects of that violence. The violence is inherent in the music, which cites political violence in reference to migration and the upheaval of societies. The vagina in the performance is opened, handled, and inspected while bodies lie legs apart. As Schechner (1993:230) points out,

rituals are ambivalent actions pointing at the real transactions even as they help people avoid the too direct a confrontation with these events. Thus rituals are also bridges from past to present. In this regard, many rituals are 'rites of passage'.

This work therefore locates the process of social reproduction (with the body as its basis) within broader processes of violence.

"La masiko enzelwe ukuba agcine ezinye izinto zobuhlanga, politiki nemida kwezosini zizinto zokunyokulela ukuphatha, kwindawo yezoqoqosho nokubamkhulu ekuhlaleni" (Henderson, 2009:38). Ekuhlaleni kukho izinto ezenzelwa amadoda qha. uXaba ukhethe into yokuba makenze indidi ezintathu zokwaziswa kwamantombazana ebudalwini. Zonke ezi zinto zinento yokwenza nomzimba wobufazi.

Umdlalo kaXaba ubonisa indlela ezahukeneyo zobundlobongela ezenziwa kwilungu langaphantsi lwabafazi, emzimbeni, engqondweni nasemphefumleni nendlela obuchaphazela ngayoubundlobongela. Ubundlobongela yinto ekwaziyo ukusuka kwisizukulwa ukuyotshokwesinye apha emculweni. Eli lungulwabafazi lwangaphantsi luvulekile, lubanjiwe, luyahlolwa ngoku yona imilenze ivuleke gangalala. Njengokuba esitsho uSchechner (1993:230) "Amasiko zezenzo ezingquzulanayo. Ngolu hlobo amasiko yibriji yezinto zayizolo nezamhlanje. Ngoko ke amasiko amaninzi yindlela yokungena ebudaleni". Lo msebenzi ubeka umzimba esiphakathini sobundlobongela.

### Violence and the perormed body

Violence is implicit when performing in the public sphere because it remains a site of contestation. The work *Zemk'inkomo magwalandini* (2015), consists of a hundred and twelve cow skulls, *iXhanti* (a pole found in a kraal or yard, with skulls of a

slaughtered goat or cow) and two performers who stare at *iXhanti*. One performer begins playing *uhadi* (a musical instrument). The performers interact with each other and *iXhanti*, while one sits in the center of the mass of cow skulls. Each skull has a bullet hole. The skulls are covered by the dresses worn by the performers. During the performance *imbola* is applied gently then vigorously onto the performer's eye area, while the instruments continue to play in the background. The skulls are gradually revealed by the performer wearing the white dress, lightly lifting the dress. This performance refers to the cattle-killing crisis of 1856. Recorded narratives about this tragedy intersect with the violent tactics of British colonialism.

The performers act as Nonkosi and Nongqawuse. Nongqawuse is known as the prophetess of doom, she was 'found' by British troops at the age of fourteen with a nine year-old Nonkosi after her uncle had passed. Her prophecy which led to the annihilation of two thirds of amaXhosa (Crampton 2005) is where my interest lies. Nongqawuse witnessed "new people" (Peires 1989:90) and relayed her vision to her uncle who told others. This split amaXhosa into believers and the non-believers. According to Peires (1989), it was not just a response to the prophecy "but a reflection of the deeper communal tensions generated by the breakup of Xhosa society under colonial pressure."

Similarly in *Ubunxaxha*, violence is thought of as a something that is generated through the subjugation of societies. This installation, made with steel, wood, leather and soil, is imagined as monument. This structure is modeled after *igoqo*, a structure that is prevalent in many villages in the Eastern Cape. It is a structure that stands upright, with the ends of the wood facing upwards as opposed to lying on the floor after *ukutheza*. This is for the preservation of the wood. This wood is used for firewood, construction, weaponry and household items. The wood's primary purpose is to aid the survival of the people who collect it. The wood in *Ubunxaxha*, is fashioned as spears. Spears were impractical against guns and ammunition. Furthermore, violence inherent within the construction of nationhood and monumentalizing figures and selected histories (Gobodo–Madikizela 2014). The quest to create a nation and to build nationhood has had detrimental effects on black people, as they were not given the chance to move through the stages before being forced to forgive and omit the crimes of the apartheid government and coloniser before that. Spears in this work can be seen as testament to monuments of survival; that which is used for sacrifice.

### Ubundlobongela Nomzimba wondlalo

Ubundlobongela abuziwa ngqo xa kudlalwa esidlangalaleni ngoba yenye yendlela zokukulwa. Xa uthatha ukujonga kumsebenzi othi *Zemk'inkomo Magwalandini*, uqulathe ikhulu elinamashimi amabini entloko zenkomo, *iXhanti* nabadlali ababini labajonge ntsho exhantini. Umdlali uqala ngokudlala uhadi. Bobabini abadlali bayadlala bemane bejongana neXhanti omnye esiphakathini senqwaba yentloko zenkomo. Intloko nganye inomngxuma wembumbulu. Intloko zigqunywe zilokhwe ezinxitywe ngamantombazana. Ekwenzekeni komdlalo imbola iyasetyenziswa ngobunono nangodlame emehlweni ngoku uhadi ludlala ngasemva. Intloko zenkomo zivezwa ngokuvezwa kakuhle ngokuphakamisa kwelokhwe. Lo mdlalo unentsingiselo kwinyikityha eyenza ngomnyaka ka1856 mhla kubulawa inkomo. Imboniso ezigciniweyo zale ntlekele zidibana nobuchule bobundlobongelwa bonxinzelelo obabuvela kwamaBhilitane.

Abadlali badlala uNonkosi kunye noNongqawuse. uNongqawuse waziwa njengomprofeti wentlekele. Wafunyanwa ngamajoni amaBhilitane eneminyaka elishumi elinane noNonkosi owayeneminyaka esithoba emva kokubhubha kukamalume wakhe. Imbono zikaNongqawuse zabalala amaXhosa amaninzi (Crampton 2005). uNongqawuse wabona abantu abatsha (Peires 1989:90) abazovuka ukuba imphahla yayibulewe. Wayondlala imibono yakhe kumalume wakhe othe wahamba exelela abemamelayo. Le nto yaqhekeza amaXhosa, abanye bakholelwa abanye zange bakholelwe. NgokukaPeires (1989), yayingokulandela imibono qha "kodwa kwakukho umba onzulu ekuqhekekeni kwamaXhosa phantsi konxinzelelo lwamangesi."

Ngokufanayo kuUbunxaxha, ubundlobongela icingwa njengento eyenziwa ekucinezeleni imbumba ethile. Lo mboniso wenziwe, ngenkuni nomhlaba ubonwa njengomikelo obalulekileyo. Esi siseko senziwe safana negoqo. Sisiseko esijonge phezulu ngokungafaniyo kwenkuni ezihlala phantsi emva kokutheza. Le nto yenzelwe inkuseleko yenkuni. Ezi nkuni zisetyenziselwa ukwenza umlilo, ukwakha, izixhobo nezinye izinto zomzi. Oyena nobangela kukunceda impilo yabantu abayiqokelelayo. Inkuni kuUbunxaxha ibayimikhonto. Imikhonto ayonto kwimipu nakwezotshabalalisa. Kukho ubundlobongela edlulelayo ekwakheni isizwe nasekwenzeni iminikelo eqingqiweyo nakwimbali ekhethiweyo (Gobodo–Madikizela 2014). Imikhonto isetyenziswa ngamadoda namabhinqa. Bubungqina kwizakhiwo ezizingqiweyo zokuphila ezikhoyo, ezisetyenziselwa udini nokuba ngumntu okanye impahla. Kukho ubundlobongela obungathethwayo endiya kubo ngalomdlalwana. Ubundlobongela basenyameni obenziwa kwamaXhosa ngexesha lokubulawa kwempahla, ngexesha lokugutyungelwa naqhekezwa kwentlanga. Kukho into

Many colonial battles were marked by this inequality. The bullets in the skulls result from the methods of killing used in an abattoir. Here, the conception of animals as substitute for ancestors is complicated by metaphors of colonization and capitalism. The skulls speak about the trauma, death and starvation suffered by amaXhosa who could no longer own or acquire their land legally.

Historically, the black body is inscribed with narratives of violence. In elaborating on the black body in history, Jay Pather cites Sarah Lincoln, a writer who speaks about the African continent as a waste heap, trash heap of disposable raw material, and degraded off-cut of the processes that have so greatly enriched, dignified and beautified their beneficiaries (Pather 2015:1).

In this way I would like to think of the continent's occupants as the continent: that their bodies have undergone and are still in the process of these developments. Frantz Fanon writes about the pursuit of the colonized body by dehumanizing it with violence. Similarly, I have thinking about *ubunxaxha*, where ammunition regulates the black body and violates it. Fanon elaborates further on the physical precursor to the emotional and mental violence, which ultimately violates the black body (Fanon 1961).

The African - American black female body, as discussed by Lisa Farrington (2003), has been subject to various forms of explicit and implicit violence. She discusses the changing representations of women but more importantly refers to what can otherwise be seen as a violent white male gaze. Farrington refers to African American artist, Carrie Mae Weems' work "Mirror, Mirror" (1987), "Mirror, Mirror, on the wall, who's the finest of them all?" The mirror answers, "Snow White, you black bitch, and don't you forget it!" In this quote the violent retort: "Snow White you black bitch" functions as an act of violence, that is present in everyday social relations. Farrington outlines these violations through the devastating violation of Sara Baartman's body, which was not only subjected to a Eurocentric gaze but was also taken apart, scientifically inspected and bottled.

During the performance, *Zemk'inkomo Magwalandini* I use my arms and the dress to communicate the violation against this particular black body. The dress becomes the burden and the fallacy. I flail my arms slowly to create the bodies that lie under my body, the dress begins to move and balloon as there is a wind caused by flailing my arms rapidly. There is a violence implied in the act. Nongqawuse, like Baartman, is a figure that is continuously violated, spoken for, and used as a scapegoat. She is punished for the misinterpreted failures of amaXhosa and treated with cynicism.

ngezixhobo zakwantu nezixhobo zangoku (imikhonto nemipu). Imilo emininzi yoganyamelwa yayichazwa kukungalingani. Imbumbu esentlokweni yenkomo isuka kwindlela zokubulala apho zixelwa khona. Apha le ngqiqo yezilwanyana ezibalidini kwizinto ziminyanya iyidida kakhulu ngenxa yoganyamelo nezokwenza iqhosha elingenamthunja. Intloko zithetha ngentlungu, ukufa nendlala efunyenwe ngamaXhosa phantsi kwamaBhilitane. Baphulukana nomhlaba wabo.

Ngokwembali umzimba omnyama ugwele ngamabali obundlobongela. uJay Pather ucacisa kakuhle ngomzimba omnyama kwimbali esebenzisa amaga kaSarah Lincoln, umbhali waDyunivesithi yaseDuke othetha ngeli laseAfrika njengo "monakalayo omninzi, ubumdaka obuninzi, ubumdaka ofunanelwe ukulahlwa emva kokuba busetyenzisiswe" (Pather 2015:1). Ngale ndlela ndingathanda ukujonga amaAfrika njengeAfrika, izinto imizimba yabo edlule kuzo kwaye isekwibakala lokukhula. uFrantz Fanon uthetha ngokuxhaphazeka komzimba oganyamelweyo. Iyafana nendlela endicinge ngayo *Ubunxaxha* apho izitshabalalisi zimosha umzimba omnyama. uFanon ucacisa lukhulu ngobundlobongela basengqondweni nasemphefumleni obuthi bufumane umzimba omnyama (Fanon 1961).

Umzimba webhinqa xa exoxwa nguLisa Farrington (2003), ubekwimeko ezininzi ezinyembayo nobundlobongela obungaqaphelekanga. Uxoxa imboniso ethintshayo yabantu basetyhini, ekubalulekileyo uthetha ngeyona nto ijongwa ngengobundlobongela kukithiwa ntsho yindoda yegwangqa. uFarrington ujonga kuCarrie Mae Weems "Sipili, Sipili, edongeni, ngubani oyena yena kubo bonke?" Isipili siye siphendule sithi "Snow White, nondindwa omnyama, kwaye sukulibala" apha unundlobongela buyavela "khephu elimhlophe nondindwa omnyama" yintetho yobundlobongela. Kwaye yinto eyenzeka mihla le. uFarrington uzigqamisa ezi zenzo zobundlobongela kubulaleka komzimba kaSara Baartman, owayengazange agonyamelwe ngamagwangqa qha kodwa wasuswa amalungu wafakwa ebhotileni.

Kumdlalo othi *Zemk'inkomo Magwalandini* ndisebenzisa izandla zam nelokhwe ukwazi ndizophalaza ubundlobongela obenziwa kulo mzimba umnyama. Ilokhwe ibangumthwalo iphinde ibengumnqa. NdiJulajula ingalo zam chulileyo ndibonisa imizimba ephantsi komzimba wam. Ilokhwe iqala ukuthabatheka ikhukhumale ngoba kukhoumoya owenziwa kukujulajula kwengalo emoyeni. Kukho isehlo sobundlobongela apha. uNongqawuse njengoBaartman ngumfanekiso ekusolo kuthethwa kakubi ngawo esetyenziswa njengesiyatha. Esohlwaywa ngokuwa kwamaXhosa. Ujongwa njengemboni yesiphelo. Iballi eli lingaviwa kakubi, mhlawumbi wasetyenziswa ngamaBhilitane ngoba ayefuna ukungqongaphalisa

Although, acknowledged as the prophetess of doom, the full story is misconstrued. She could have been used by the British to denigrate the logical actions of amaXhosa to kill all their cattle as some were diseased and the disease might possibly spread. Or, the British used her as part of their scheme to take land. It is convenient that this is a female body that is constantly violated as historical cognizance does not venerate the female body.

Farrington shows how African American artists reimagine and reinvent the female black nude body by using new visual archetypes. The archetypes are designed to obliterate the insistent notion that the black female nude body lacks agency, is ugly and silent.

Consequently since the body is a bedrock on which the social order is founded, the body is always in view and on view. As it invites a gaze, a gaze of difference, a gaze of differentiation – the most historically constant being the gendered gaze (Oyewumi 1997:2).

The gaze manifests violence. Oyewumi reinforces the idea that the gaze is not only violent because it is racialised, as noted by Farrington, but also because it is gendered.

In my performances, I am challenging the inscriptions of violence on the black body, belonging, and sexual normativity by positing the work as self-reflexive. Plucking feathers from my body, rubbing various materials into my body, and working with different types of weapons is conscious transgression. It takes into consideration women who have fought for their convictions and whose narratives have been suppressed.



amaXhosa kwaye nenkomo zasinesifo, neso sifo sasizakusazaseka okanye wasetyenziswa ngamaBhilatane ukuze afumane umhlaba. Lona ngumzimba webhinqa kwaye uyandlandllathekiswa oko. Akathatheklwa ntweni, mhlawumbi kunqwenelwa ukuba lo mzimba angajongi emva, ungabuzingoba awuziphethanga.

uFarrington indlela ayikhethileyo yeyokuba asebenzise amaAfrika aseMelika ekutshintsheni umzimba womfazi ontsundu ngokusebenzisa izixhobo zemboniso zokwakha ekuchitheni le nto yokuba imizimba emnyema mibi kwaye ithule, “Umzimba omnyama soloko eselisweni, elisweni lomohluko naselisweni lokwahlula. Eyonto kudala isenzeka yokujongwa kwayo ngenxa yesini” (Oyewumi 1997:2). Kumabhinqa oku kujonga buzala ubundlobongela. Kwimisebenzi exoxwa nguFarrington kujongisiswa isithombe somzimba webhinqa elimnyama.

Kumdlalo wam ndilwa nobundlobongelwa obenziwa kumzimba omnyama. Xa ndixhwitha intsipho emzimbeni wam, ndizigudla ngezinto ndisebenza nangezixhobo ezahlukeneyo yindlela yam yokulwa nemithetho esekelweyo. Ithetha namabhinqa alwelwe inkolelo zawo namabali abo acinezalweyo.



Pieter Hugo, *In Spirit*  
Jacob Diem, *Urs Richter*, Cape Town, 2005  
Pieter Hammersma, *Anel Hammersma*, Cape Town, 2005

Pieter Hugo, *In Spirit*  
Zamelethongo, *Martin Hahn*, 2005  
Kaela, *Colin Campbell*, Cape Town, 2005

## Race, performance and ubuNgoma

In my practice, I have become increasingly conscious of the body as marked in terms of race. In performance, it is important to consider that my performances are interpreted in a racial framework. The very practice of *ubungoma* seems to be exclusively black<sup>9</sup>. The choices that I have made about my black body are conscious choices made in direct opposition to the brutal way in which the black female body had been portrayed historically in art.

One series of photographs is particularly intriguing. Pieter Hugo's photographic series *In Spirit: Portraits of traditional healers in trance communing with the Ancestors* (2005) depicts white traditional healers in traditional *sangoma* garb<sup>8</sup> caught in a trance. These portrait style images are problematic to me. They are not problematic in their technique but rather it is in the delicate and historically complex subject matter that he has chosen to depict: white *sangomas*. Race becomes the basis of the photograph, and the basis for spectacularisation and othering.

Pieter Hugo depicts white *sangomas* as an exotic commodity. Hugo approaches white subjects engaged in what is otherwise associated with blackness. The theatrical portrayal of white traditional healers almost ridicules the tradition of ubuNgoma through the claim to have captured trance. UbuNgoma is based on ancestry but this biological determinism is interlaced with social constructivism. Similarly, race ceases to be a biologically determined status through ritualization.

As McKenye (2001:42) states "the role of ritual as a general model of efficacy has declined, or rather, ritual has itself become the raw material for another modeling process, one centered around performance art." The images of white people employing a 'traditionally black cultural ritual' can be seen in the ritualization. It is a performance of otherness. Victor Turner (1987) and Richard Schechner (1993) distinguish between performance and ritual, marking the difference between forward-looking performance and tradition-seeking performance. Turner (1987) addresses the important question of performance as culture, drawing from anthropology.

<sup>8</sup> Traditional healers often dress in beaded headgear, leopard print material and *amahiya*, beads around the neck, wrists ankles and animal skin, normally the animal has been slaughtered for the *Sangoma*.

<sup>9</sup> In Southern Africa there are different ethnic groups, that is what I am alluding to when I mention traditionally black, this does not include, Coloured, Indian or Asian people. I am speaking about Basotho, amaXhosa, amaZulu, vhaVenda amongst others who make use of similar rites of passage and rituals.

## Uhlanga, Umdlalo nobuNgoma

Emsebenzini wam ndiyawuqaphela umzimba njengokuba enobuhlanga. Kumdlalo kubalulekile ukuba kujongwe imidlalo yam njengefrijimi yobandlululo. NjengeSangoma kum kubonakala ukuba le nto yobuNgoma yeyabamnyama qha. Umkhethe endiwenzileyo ngomzimba wam omnyama yinto yokuba ndilwe nendlela umzimba webhinqa elimnyama ojongwa ngayo nakwezenkcubeko.

Omnye umboniso wezithombe unika umdla. Umboniso zithombe kaPeter Hugo othi *In Spirit* (2005), *Portraits of traditional healers in trance communing with ancestors* ubonakalisa amagqangqa kumafele esangoma. Indlela engayo lemifanekiso iqingqiweyo yingxaki kum. Ayongxaki kum indlela eyenziwe ngayo kodwa yinto le kuthethwa ngayo yobuSangoma bomntu omhlophe. Uhlanga lubayeyona nto yesi sithombe nezinye ke izinto.

uPieter Hugo ubonisa isangoma esimhlophe njengento engaqhelekanga. Uyiza lengxoxo njengento enokwenza nobumnyama. Indlela eyenziwa ngayo into yobuNgoma ngabamhlophe inyemba le yobumnyama ngoba bathi nabo bafunyenwe yinkenqe. UbuNgoma budidbene nezinyanya. Ubuhlanga buye buphele kwizinto ezidibene nokwenziwa kwamasiko obuNgoma.

Njengokuba uMckenzie (2001:42) esitsho "indima edlalwa lisiko jikelele kwehla iziphumo zayo, ngoku seyinto ebekwa kwimidlalo yezenkubeko" Imboniso ezibekwa ngabamhlophe besenza izithethe namasiko wakwantu ibonakala njengomdlalo wenye into. Victor Turner (1987) noRichard Schechner (1993) bohlu phakathi komdlalo nesisithethe esenziwayo. Baqwalasela kumdlalo nkujonga ezemveli kumdlalo. Turner (1987) uthetha nhemibuzo ebalulekileyo ekwenzeni imidlalo yamasiko.

In order to understand ritual it is important to define it. Redressive rituals include divination into the hidden causes of misfortune, personal and social conflict and illness (all of which in tribal societies are intimately interconnected and thought to be caused by the invisible action of spirits and deities, witches and sorcerers); they include curative ritual (which may often involve episodes of spirit possession, shamanic trance, mediumship and trance states among the patients who are subjects of ritual); and initiatory rites connected with these “rituals of affliction”. Moreover, many of those rites that we call “life crisis ceremonies”, particularly those of puberty, marriage and death (Turner 1980:11).

Rituals and rites of passage have different functions. Although they are all connected and formed on the precipice of ancestors and ancestry, it is important to note that all rituals have specific actions that are enacted in only those rituals. Some are more related than others because of the manner in which the ritual is used. In the South African context redressive rituals would include *iNyanga*, *isangoma* or *amadlozi*. Initiatory rites might include male circumcision, reed dance, *uMemulo* and *Intonjane*.

Joanne Thobeka Wreford (2007), is a white South African *sangoma*, offers insights into the multi-layered nature of being both *isangoma* and white. She highlights the history of *izangoma* both during apartheid and post-apartheid using biomedicine as a tool. Further, she observes the difference between Western-taught doctors and *izangoma*, as well as the social perceptions that complicate relations between different doctors. Reflecting on hers and Wim van Binsbergen’s experiences, she argues that it is acceptable that white *izangoma* are a valid part of the post-apartheid cultural landscape. She identifies their challenges and outlines Dr. Nokuzola Mndende’s, a traditional healer and academic, criticism about the authenticity of white *sangomas*. She places Mndende in opposition to Nosibele, whose surname is not given in the text, her spiritual mentor (ugobela). Mndende argues that white practitioners are attempting to re-colonise African culture (Wreford 2007:836). Wreford declares that white *izangoma* have been racially stereotyped. She points out that it is easier for people to believe a white *sangoma* than a black one. So there are two types of racial stereotypes: the belief that it is not possible for a white person to be *isangoma* and that what a white *isangoma* divines would be more accurate. Van Binsbergen’s proposes a new *sangoma* format in comparison to the standardized method of consultation. Van Binsbergen feeds the anthropological need for othering by creating a computer program that gives the ‘authentic African’ experience without having to experience it physically. I

Amasiko nokufakwa ebudaleni, kunezinto ezahlukeneyo. Nokuba anento yokwenza nezinyanya kodwa okubalulekileyo kokokuba amasiko anezinto azo. Amanye ayelelene kwamanye ngoba anezinto ezifanayo ezisetyenziswayo. Emzantsi Afrika izithethe ezinziwa ekulungiseni zifuna inyanga, isangoma okanye amadlozi, ezokuya kwelinye ibakala zinganento yokwenza nolwaluko, umxento wengxongolo, uMemulo nentonjane.

Umbhalo othi ‘Long-Nosed’ Hybrids ubhalwe nguJoanne Thobeka Wreford (2007) osisangoma esimhlophe, unika izambatho ezininzi zokuba sisangoma uphindeubemhlophe. Ubonisa imbali yezangoma ngexesha lengcinezelo nakwelixesha langoku ngokusebenzisa amayeza njengesixhobo. Uphinde aqwalaselise phakathi kogqirha basentshona anafundisiwe nakwizangoma nakwezinye impixano eziye zenze ungquzulwano kogqirha abangafaniyo. Ekujongeni kuye nakwamava kaBinsbergen uxoxa ukuba kubalulekile ukuba izangoma ezimhlophe zibe yinxalenye yeli xesha. Ubonakalisa ingxaki zazo nengxoxo kaNokuzola Mndende ngesentsusa yezangoam ezimhlophe. Umbeka qelele uMndende kwindlela esakhe lakhe ihashe lomphefumlo (Gobela) eliqhuba ngayo. Uthi uMndende uxoxa into yokuba izangoma ezimhlophe zifuna ukugonyamela amasiko nemveli yaseAfrika kaphinde (Wreford 2007:836)

uWreford uthi izangoma ezimhlophe ziyacalucalulwa. Uthi kulula ebantwini ukuba bakholelwe isangoma esimhlophe kunesimnyama. Kukho indlela ezimbini zocalulo: Le yokuba abantu abamhlophe soze babezizangoma okanye ukuba babezizo amandla wabo azabangaphaya koqonda lo nto izokwenza abantu bakholelwe sona kunesangoma esimnyama. Ndiyibona njengento enikisa umdla into yokuba uWreford adibanise ingcambu nezinyanya kodwa uyibekela phantsi indima yokufunwa ayisebenzisileyo efana novan Binsberg, yuppie sangoma nesangoma esazisa amanye amachiza kula bafundiswe ngawo. Akazigxeki nakancinci izangoma ezimnyama.

Asikho isangoma esinebali elinye lokuba salufumana kanjani ubizo lokuthwasa ukuba makabesiSangoma okanye iNyanga. Zonke indlela azifani kodwa kukho apho zingqamana khona. Omnye angalifumana ubizo ngendlela ezinzi, mhlawumbi izinyanya zisebenzise amaphupha, imobono okanye izigulo nangezinyeindlela. Ezi zigulo ziyakwazi ukuthatha ingqondo okanye umphefumlo kwaye ogqirha basentshona akusoze babone nto. Ubuzi luphemdulwa ngokuthwasa. Ukuthwasa kukubamtsha nokuzalwa okutsha kukamoya, yonke le nto yenzeka endlini yomntu okuphethwe kwezomoya. Le ngqeqesho ikufundisa ukuzijonga ngokomoya, ukwazi ukuqhagamshelana nabakwelemimoya, ukunyanga izigulo, ukuphicotha amaphupha namathambo, ukudibanisa amayeza uphile okutsha ngokomoya.

find it interesting that Wreford links origin to ancestry but subjugates the case studies that she has used, such as anthropologist van Binsbergen, the yuppie *sangoma*, who introduces holistic medicines in addition to the pharmaceutical medicines while learning about natural medicines. She does not at any point critique black *izangoma*.

No *sangoma* has the same story about how they received the calling to *twasa*, to become *isangoma* or *inyanga*. All experiences are different, they are however, marked with similar infirmities. One can receive the calling in myriad ways. One's ancestors draw one closer using dreams, visions and various illnesses and conditions. These illnesses and conditions range from physical to mental illnesses that cannot be explained by western trained doctors. *Ubizo*, the calling, is answered by *ukutwasa*. *Ukutwasa* is the renewal of self and the rebirth of the spiritual self, characterized by training, which takes place at a mentor's house (*ephehlweni*). This training includes learning how to divine, act as an intercessor, how to heal ailments, interpret dreams and bones, make medicine and live as your new spiritual self.

It is unexpected, given the knowledge that I acquired while in training, to perceive a white *sangoma*. Unless the white *sangoma* has a black person in their bloodline. *Ubungoma* is primarily constructed around lineage and culture. It is the passing down of mediumship from generation to generation. It is difficult to believe that these '*Sangomas*' were able to go into the studio to be in trance (or to allow the spirits of ancestors to dwell within them at that moment).

Imithetho ayifani nakwezinye indawo ngoba ziselizweni lenyama. Isangoma ngumyalezi. Akulindelekanga, kolu lwazi ndinalo lungaka ndisaqeqeshwa ukuba ndibone isangoma esimhlophe ngaphandle banomntu omnyama egazini labo. Ubungoma bakhiwe nokwegazi nesiko. Kukudlulisa le nto kwizizukulwana. Kunzima ukukholelwa into yokuba ezi zangoma bezisiya kwamaziko ukuze afunyanwe zezomoya.

Umbalo *Where New Age and African Religion Meet* eMzantsi Afrikanezifundo zikaCredo Mutwa obhalwe nguChristina Steyn (2003) wazisa le ntetha ithi New Age nangendlela edibana ngayo nemveli yaseMzantsi Afrika. Esebenzisa uCredo Mutwa esona Sanusi sikhulu siphilayo samaZulu, uSteyn ubonisa izinto ezifanayo nomahluko phakathi kwenkolo zaseAfrika nale intsha. Ujonga uCredo Mutwa indlela ngayo, umbiza impikiswano ehambayo. Uyindoda elungileyo kodwa pahinde abeyinto engeyonto. KuCredo Mutwa ukuba sisanusi yimfihlo kodwa ekuhambeni kwexesha uthi kubalulekile ukuba ezinye izinto zityhilwe. uMutwa ujongwa njengendoda egxekana nohlanga lwayo kodwa unqula amaxesha engcinezelo kwaye ujongela phantsi iANC. Ungumntu olwa nabantu bakhe kunye namasiko akhe. KuCredo Mutwa ubomi butshintsha oko. Noba ezinye inkolelo neengqiqo zezinye abantu angazithandiyo. uMutwa uzibona njengomntu onyalo ngokwasemoyeni, intoenaluleke kakhulu efana noYesu. Ukungazinzi kwindlela angayo uMutwa kwenziwa yindlela esongamelwe ngayo lucalulo.

Christina Steyn (2003) compares “New Age approaches of healing” to ethereal and homeopathic methods, and South African indigenous traditions. Using Credo Mutwa, the only living high Sanusi of the Zulu people, Steyn establishes similarities and differences between what she calls ‘African religion’ and New age. She explicates the terms and describes Credo Mutwa’s persona, as a ‘walking paradox’. He is both revered as a holy man and shunned as a fraud. For Credo Mutwa, his being a Sanusi is embedded in secrecy – but he also mentions that at some point it became important to disclose certain things. Mutwa is portrayed as a man against his race who praises the apartheid regime and belittles the ANC. He is a man who is in opposition to his own people and his own culture. For Credo Mutwa, life is ever-changing, even though some of his ideas and beliefs are not shared by everyone. Mutwa referred to himself as a holiness, a living national treasure likened to Jesus. The inconsistencies of Mutwa’s persona are exacerbated by an overwhelming racial discourse.

The commercialization of *ubungoma* by an insidious, bourgeois neo-liberal agenda serves the interest of monolithic whiteness. Traversing the physical realm is already violent for the body because the body is not in control of itself. This loss of self-control is implicit in all the subjects discussed, where the subjects have lost their own subjectivity. This loss of self is in itself violent. It is further appropriated and placed under surveillance for the scrutiny of the west to subdue the black body. The black body’s agency is used as currency to manipulate other black bodies into regulating each other by picking it apart. This violence capitalises on the current socio-economic situation that is marred with a painful and complex past, which the black body aims to address by asserting itself in contemporary art practice. The works discussed in this chapter re-visit historical narratives and the figuration of the black body. Histories have been concealed, and only traces of these incidents exist.

### Chapter Three

#### In the footsteps of history: regarding performance and the trace

Contemporary performance art is not the complete re-enactment of rituals. Performance is biased, subjective and personal. It is a narrative mapped out by the artist, by virtue of private knowledge that is revealed. It does, however, maintain the trace of ritual. Furthermore, the 'end' of a performance leaves traces and can also be seen as parenthesis, this is not true of all performances. The trace of the artist, of the body and of the performance is an ethereal pursuit.

I look at the trace in numerous ways: as a left-over to be consumed; a reminder of the process of making the work; a site which the artist can no longer occupy or reconfigure. It is the presence of absence. Throughout, the trace serves as a reminder of that space in time, that moment which cannot be recreated. The performative work that is discussed in this chapter focuses on the trace and takes into account the metaphysical and omnipresent Derridian (1988) notion of the trace as well as Rosalind Krauss's (1978) memory as a trace.

*Inzilo: Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* is a performance piece but its installation is the trace of the performance. The work is about death and spaces of mourning. Death implies traces of the person that is departed but it is also liminality. *Inzilo: Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo* is a deeply personal piece that speaks about death and the other world, a world where the physical manifestation of human life is absent. In 2013, I lost my grandmother, my great aunt, an aunt, a seven-month-old cousin and three other distant relatives, all in the space of five months. I was unable to attend all funerals but one, my grandmother's.

As a *sangoma*, I am seen to be in a liminal space: between life and death. Due to this, I cannot, as a rule, encounter dead bodies unless the blood of a four legged animal is spilt after attending a funeral. This performance piece is an imagined mourning space. I began by remembering what happens in black homes when an immediate family member passes away. It is customary that the bereaved are confined to a particular room on a mattress. They don black, navy or green clothing, a black button is placed on their chest. The bedroom of the deceased is cleared and the mourners sit on the mattress of the deceased. There is no television, and only visitors who are required to sit in the living room, normally on a wooden bench, would sing church songs for the bereaved family. Through this piece I imagine the deaths of family members by sleeping in my own grave. I commemorate my death by their deaths, each time one dies, I too die because I can now reach them from the other world.

### Isahluko Sesithathy

#### Ezinyaweni Zembali: Ezinokwenza nomdlalo kunye nomzila.

Imidlalo yeli xesha ayisoyinto yokungciba amasiko. Umdlalo yinto enomkhethe, kwaye inokwenza nomntu. Libali elibekwa ngumdlali wezenkcubeko ngokutyhila ulwazi analo. Inako ukugcina umzila wamasiko. Ngokwenene isiphelo somdlalo sishiya umzila. Umzila womdlali wezenkcubeko, nowomzimba kunye nowomdlalo yinto engabambekiyo.

Ndithanda ukujonga lo mzila ngendlela ezininzi. Lilifa elishiyiweyo ukuthi lisetyenziswe. Sisikhumbuzo sokuba kwakhe kwakho into okanye kwakhe kwaphi umntu. Luphawu olungabonakaliyo elithetha ngendawo eyakhe yahlalwa. Isikhumbuzo sokuba umzimba womdlali wezenkcubeko ebekhona xeshikweni kusenziwa lo msebenzi. Indawo umdlali wezenkcubeko angasakwaziyo ukuyihlala. Indawo angakwazi ukuyigxotha ngenye. Ubukho bento engekho nobungekho kwento ekhoyo. Umzila uba sisikhumbuzo sokuba le ndawo soze umdlalo wezenkcubeko akwazi ukuyihlala. Akakwazi ukuyihlala la ndawo ngela xesha. Lo mdlalo uqulathe ulwazi kuzo xoxwa ngawo kwesi sahluko uzojonga kwezomoya nobukho bento ndawo yonke ngexesha elinye, Derrida (1988) kunye nezibhalo zika Rosalind Krauss (1978) ezithi Memory as a Trace.

Inzilo;Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo ngumdlalwana ize imboniso zithombe ibengumzila womdlalo. Umsebenzi ungokufa nendawo zokuzilela. Ukufa bungqina umzila womntu obhubhileyo. Inzilo;Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo ngowona msebenzi onzulu othetha ngokufa nangelinye ilizwe. Apho ubomi bomzimba bungaphili khona. Apho izinyanya zihlala khona. Ngonyaka ka 2013 ndashiywa ngumakhulu, ngumakazi omkhulu, ngomnye umakazi, nomzala oneenyanga ezisixhenxe nezinye ke izizalwane ezithe qelele kum, bonke babhubhe enyangeni ezintlanu. Ndandingavumelekanga ukuya emingcwabeni kodwa hayi oka makhulu.

Njenge Sangoma ndibonwa ndisesikhewini, phakathi kokufa nobomi. Ngenxa yoku, umthetho awundivumeli ndidibane nemizimba ebhubhileyo ngaphandle igazi liyachithwa emva komsebenzi. Lo mdlalwana ngumfanekiso wendawo yokuzila. Ndiqale ngokuzikhumbuzo ukiuba kwenzeka nto emakhayeni antsundu xa umntu ebhubhe ngesaqophe? Ngokomthetho abazili bahlala egumbini phezu komatrasi. Abanxibi ezimnyama, ezineyivi okanye eziluhlaza impahla, iqhosha elimnyama libekwa esifubeni. Igumbi lomfi liyaqhuqhwana bona abazili bahlale kumatrasi wakhe. Akekho umabona kude kwaye abahambe bahlala kwigumbi lomntu wonke. Ngesiqhelo bahlala esitulweni somthi bacule ingoma zecawa,

*Imfazwe yenkaba* is a performative video, performed in a 'skirt', known as *umhlambi*. *Umhlambi* was worn by Xhosa male initiates from the Eastern Cape. This piece tracks the traces of ancestry and lineage of the Chieftancy of *iMdushane*. In it I attempt to find my place within my family history using the 'skirt' and walking from one of the rondavels in the homestead to the royal kraal. *emaXhoseni*: when a woman gets married she is not allowed to step foot in her new family's kraal. This is because she does not share a clan and blood relations with her in-laws. She is allowed in her own family's kraal. In the royal kraal I assume the presences of those who are absent. In the kraal traces of the absent are present, the past manifests in the 'skirt', the kraal where the ancestors are present and in *iXhanti* which is also in the kraal.

In the video piece *uMhlekezi*, I step farther and farther into a dam until the body disappears. The idea that there are owners of the water, and that these spaces are imbued with their own socio-historical content. The dam is also a space of risk. The body seems to dissipate, disappear without a trace. The body and the water exist as one, they merge and become one. The body dissolves into the water and ceases to exist as a human body – it exists as a trace of that human body. The body exists as a body of water with all traces of the physical lost and therefore the memory of it. I walk into the dam wearing *inkciyo* (there are different variations of the skirt, they are worn according to age appropriateness).

Stepping into the dam and beginning the dissolution of self and *imbola* begins to query the removal of self in the water. Water removes all traces of dirt, erases marks created and formed by the immeasurable day. Water clears away spiritual and physical dirt, leaving one an unmarked and clean, pure body.

beziculela abazili. Kulo mdlalwana ndibona ukufa kwabo bonke ababhubhileyo kusapho lwam ngolala edlakeni lam. Ndizikhumbuza ukufa kwam ngokufa kwabo ngexesha omnye ebhubha. Nam ndiyafa ndikwazi ukubafumana kwelinye icala.

Imfazwe yenkaba ngumboniso bhanyabhanya womdlalo kunxitywe isikeyiti esinxitywa ngamakhweknkwe amaXhosa eNtshona Koloni. Lo mdlalwana ukhangela umzila wezinyanya zam nomgca wobukhosi ka iMdushane. Ndifumana eyam indawo kwimbali yosapho lwam ngokusebenzisa isikeyiti, ngokuhamba ndisuka komnye woronta ndisiya kwindlu yobukhosi. EmaXhoseni xana intombi itshatayo ayivumelekanga inyathele kwintlanti zakulo mnyeni kodwa ivumelekile kowayo. Entlantini zobukhosi, ndifumana ubukho babo bangekhoyo. Exhantini imizila yabo ikhona. Okwadlulayo buvela kwesa sikeyiti, exhantini apho izinyanya zikhoyo.

Kumboniso obhanyabhanya kumdlalwana othi Wangena uMhlekezi ndingena ezanzulwini zedama de umzimba wam anyamalale. Ingqiqo yeyokuba kukho abaphathi bamanzi kwaye ezi ndawo zizele yimbali yabo. Idama yenye yeendawo ezinobungozi. Umzimba uyakwazi ukunyamalala angabonakali. Umzimba namanzi yinto enye, ziyadibana zibenye. Umzimba uyanyibilika emanzini ayeke ukuphila njengomzimba womnye, aphile njengomzila walo mzimba womntu. Umzimba uphila njengomzimba wamanzi neminye ke imizila yomzimba wenyema nenkumbulo zawo. Ndingena edameni ndinxibe inkciyo (zingendidi ngendidi ke ezi zikeyiyi, zinxitywa nokweminyaka.)

ukungena edameni ndiqala ukuphelisa ubumna. Imbola ibuzwa ukusuka bobumna nobumna emanzini. Amanzi asusa zonke intlanga zobumdaka, asusa namaphawu enziwe yimini. Asusa ubumdaka ngokwasemoye nasenyameni ashiye umntu ecocekile, umzi esulungekile. Ngokuziqwabulula ndizicoca imizila emdaka lo nto ithetha into yokuba umzimba owohlukileyo ubuphila, umzimba ongasulungekanga.

## Purity

*Qunusa Buhle!* examines the manner in which the body is cleansed, as an act and as a ritual. Traces are stubborn remnants after the cleansing/ cleaning/ washing up is done. The work queries “cleansing” in coming-of-age rituals. Its intention is to solicit a response from the viewer regarding different ways of purification. In this subsection, using the Maskandi song *Khula khula tshitshi lam* – which was written, composed and performed by uMfaz’Omnyama, 1997 – I work with the complexities inherent in the lyrical content and my own practice.

The photographic series stems from a performance piece, which was influenced by my memory of the ways in which I was washed as a child and how I now purify adults as *isangoma*. I began thinking about cleansing in a multitude of ways. Washing can be violent (scouring, scrubbing, burnishing), or it can be cold and callous (unemotional, impersonal), because the person who performs the cleansing is often a stranger. I utilize three different materials to symbolize the different types of cleansing: cow dung, holy ash and green soap in water in an enamel bath. I draw from my memory and what I have learned as a participant in various cleansing ceremonies. The materials mentioned are used to rid the body of spiritual baggage. I am particularly interested in how all these materials are used to cleanse the female body and how the female body is regarded as impure, especially after a menstrual cycle, childbirth or a sexual act. I am interested in how the act of washing clears one of the traces of “impurity.”

In *Purity and Danger*, social anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966:33) differentiates between cleansing with what she calls a superficial resemblance and spiritual purification. A superficial resemblance would be washing, bathing, showering or purifying oneself for hygienic purposes. This could be shampooing hair, washing hands after using the bathroom and showering to cleanse the body. Spiritual purification could be cleansing oneself of harmful spirits in a river, or cleansing oneself in the ocean for spiritual purposes.

I am concerned with the interplay between what is perceived to be an idealistic and romantic view of purity and an otherwise very gritty process. By being *isangoma* one is already considered dirty. This dirt lends itself to traces of human life, the Derridian notion of the trace. For example there is the perception that *izangoma* do not wash because during the period of *ukutwasa* one transforms. It is likely that *itwasa* smells because of the motor oil and *dzumani* used to lock or twist hair, the goat-skin that becomes an appendage, and the constant working that occurs at the mentor’s home. Incidentally it is a rule that *itwasa* superficially purify in the morning, so that all that see him/her encounter a clean *twasa*. *Twasa*s are in

## Ubunyulu

Qunusa.Buhle! Ujonga indlela umzimba ococwa ngawo njengesenzo nesiko. Imizila zizikade ezinenkani emva kokucocwa/xa kugqitywa kuhlamba. Ibuza into yokuba umzimba ahlanjwe ebuntwaneni de uyotsho ebudaleni. Unobangela ikukufumana impendulo kumbukeli ngokwenziwa ubenyulu. Apha, ndisebenzisa ingoma ka Maskandi ethi Khula Khula tshitshi lam, eyabhalwa, yaqwetywa nguMfaz’ Omnyama, 1977, ndisebenza nempixano esuka emagameni nale nto ndiyenzayo.

Lo mboniso wezithombe usuka kumdlalwana ondawenziswa ngokukhumbula indlela endandihlanjwa ngayo ndingumntana nendlela endihlamba ngayo abantu abadala njengesangoma. Ndicinge ngokuhlunjwa ngendlela ezininzi. Ukuhlamba kungandlongondlongo okanye ingayinto nje ngoba lo mntu uhlambayo soloko engumntu ongamaziyo. Ndisebenzisa indlela izinto ezahlukileyo zokubonisa ukuhlamba: ubulongwe, uthuthu olumsulwa nesepha ehlaza, ndisebenzisa nebhafu yenkcnkce. Ndizifumana kwinkumbulo nakwizinto endizifundileyo njengomntu obethatha inxaxheba kwimisebenzi yokuhlamba. Ezi zinto ndizikhankanye apha zezosusa umthwalo ongadingekiyo emzimbeni. Ndinomdla wokuba ezi zinto zokuhlamba zisetyenziswa njani ekuhlambeni umzimba webhinqa nendlela ojongwa ngayo umzimba ngokungabikho msulwa, kanyekanye xa esexesheni, ekubelekeni okanye ekwabelaneni ngezesondo. Izenzo zokuhlamba ziyisusa kanjani imizila yokungasulungeki.

*KuPurity and Danger* uMary Douglas (1966:33) wohlula phakathi kokuhlamba nokususa ukungcola ngokwasemoyeni. Ukuhlamba nje kukuzicoca okanye kukuhomba. Oku kungakuhlamba inwele, izandla emva kokusebenzisa indlu yangasese nokuhlamba umzimba. Ukuhlanjwa ngokwasemoyeni kukususwa imimoya engendawo emlanjeni okanye kukuzihlamba elwandle.

Ndiyakhathazeka yile ngxwabangxwaba yendlela ekujongwa ngayo ukuhlamba. Ngokuba siSangoma umntu sejongwa ngobuxelelegu. Umzekelo kukho into yokuba iZangoma azihlambi ngoba xa zitwasa umntu uyakhukhumala ngokwasemoyeni. Kuqhelekile into yokunuka kwetwasa ngenxa yeoli nedzumani esetyenziswa ekubiopheni inwele okanye uziqinisa, nevumba lebhokhwe nokusebenza oko apho ikhankatha lihlala khona. Ngelishwa ngumthetho into yokuba itwasa lihlambe kusasa ukwazi oko kudibana naye budibane naye ecocekile. Amatwasa akwindlela yokuqhagamshelana nezinyanya nemimoya nokushiya imizimba yabo yenyama. Le nto kwesinye isandla iqulathe into enobuthixo. Kukho ingqikelelo yokuba umntu wazi konke kwaye umsulwa,

a transition between communing with the ancestors and spirits and leaving their physical self. This interplay includes the idea of a demigod. There is an assumption that one is all knowing, and that there are pure, good spirits at work, as opposed to the dirty physical manifestation of one's body.

*Hlamba from Qunusa. Buhle!* is a photograph of a body bent over an enamel basin with green soap in hand. It evokes a memory of my passage into adulthood from childhood. The green soap is used for many purposes. It is not only used to cleanse one's clothes but also one's body and the digestive system (enema). *Qunusa* means 'bend over', refers to getting washed in the most private and most vulnerable parts of the body in public. In the photograph I am holding the soap inscribed with the word *qunusa*. The bowl – although a place of cleansing – is also an exit from childhood. The green soap is the washing off of childhood and the induction into adulthood, it signifies washing off *imbola*, worn for the entire period of the *Intonjane*. During *Intonjane* one is taught certain things about her clan, to solidify the roots of her family tree before joining the clan of whomever she may marry. The female body is highly regarded as one in transition. Men do not enter the space and the young women are taught about their socio-economic and political histories in addition to lineage. The bowl is used to bathe, wash clothing, store food. It exists as a multi-functional object that belongs solely to the young woman. It is the washing of self into a new self, the virtuosity implied by participating in *Intonjane*.

This virtuosity becomes more complex when one thinks about this use of ash, in *Khanyisa* from *Qunusa. Buhle!* depicts a female figure in an enamel bath. I have holy ash<sup>10</sup> on specific parts of the body such as behind the ears, under the feet and on my hands. The holy ash is used when one has to enter specific ritual spaces during a time when one is menstruating, after a death, and after a sexual act. The reason the holy ash is placed on these parts of the body so that you can absolve the spirits from your filth and enter when the body is considered dirty. Ash is placed on the ears in order for your ancestors to continue communication, hands and feet so that one's presence does not spoil the medicine and objects in *iNdumba*.

In the period before *ukutwasa*, female initiates have to undertake a more rigorous cleansing routine than their male counterparts. When females are on their menstrual cycle they have to strip themselves of their spiritual regalia, leaving only the beads around their ankles, wrists and perhaps waist. During this time

unemimoya emihle esebenzayo kunale yomzimba wenyama emdaka. Hlamba uphuma ku*Qunusa. Buhle!* Sisithombe somzimba ogobe ebhafini kukho isepha ehlaza esandleni. Ivusa inkumbulo yam yobudala esuka ebuntwaneni. Isepha ehlaza isetyenziselwa izinto ezininzi. Ayisetyenziswa ekuhlambeni impahla qha kodwa iyasetyenziswa ekuhlambeni umntu ngokwasemoyeni nemdawo yolucola ukutya. Uqunusa kukugoba. Ukuhlanjwa kwendawo ezinqabileyo esidlangalaleni. Esithombeni ndiphethe isepha ebhalwe, qunusa. Ilistya yindawo yokuzihlamba kodwa ikwayiyo nendawo yokuphuma ebuntwaneni. Isepha yeokuzihlamba ubuntwana nokwazisa ebudaleni. Ibonisa ukususwa kwembola ebixitywe ngexesha lentonjane. Kwintonjane umntu ufundiswa izinto ezithile ngosapho lwakhe ukwazi kuzoqina iingcambu zakhe, yonke le nto yenziwa phambi kokuba ayodibana nomnye umzi apho ayotshatela khona. Lena yindlela yamantombazana, amadoda awavumelekanga ukungena, amantombazana afundiswa ngezoqoqosho ekuhlaleni kunye nembali yamakhaya abo. Esi sitya sisetyenziselwa ukuhlamba, ukuhlamba impahla, ukufaka ukutya, siyinto yokwenza izinto ezininzi, siyinto kwintombazana. Ukuba yinxalenye kwintonjane kukuzihlamba ukuze uzalwe okutsha.

Ubukrelekrele kwezenkcubeko ibayimpixano xa umntu ecinga ngokusetyenziswa kothuthu ku*Khanyisa* osuka ku *Qunusa. Buhle!* Ubonisa umzekeliso webhinqa ebhafini yenkcenkce. Ndinothuthu olumoyoli kwamalungu ama omzimba afana nasemva kwendlebe, phantsikwenyawo nasezandleni. Olu thuthu lumyoli lusetyenziswa xa umntu kufuneka engene kwindawo zomoya esexesheni, emva kokufa okanye emva kokwabelana ngezesondo. Isizathu sokubekwa olu thuthu lumyoli yinto yokuba ukwazi ukuva imimoya nasebumdakeni bakho, ungene nokuba umzimba umdaka. Ithuthi ezindlebeni lwenzelwe into yokuba ukwazi ukuthetha nezinyanya, ezandleni nasezinyaweni ukwazi ukungabulali amayeza kwiNdumba.

Exesheni phambi kokuba utwase, abasetyhini ngabona bahlanjisiswayo kunab basebuhlanti. Xa besexheni kunyanzelekile ukuba bazikhulule okwasemoyeni bashiye intsimbi emaqatheni, esihlahleni mhlawumbi nasesinqeni. Kweli xesha bangangawathi chatha amayeza okanye amathambo abanceda ukuba babemsulwa, abavumelekanga bangene kwindawo zokunyanga ukuba benze njalo kufuneka bafake uthuthu kwezi ndawo zibalulekileyo. Xa bephumile exesheni kufuneka bahlambe imizimba xa begwibile bangaqhubekela nemisebenzi yabo. Kuyafana nomntu xa ehlamba owasetyhini intlungu yasemphefumleni kusetyenziswqa amandla ukodlula indoda.

they may not handle any medicine, touch the bones that help them divine, and, if necessary, enter spaces where people who are there to get help are. They may not occupy spaces of healing and when they enter spiritual spaces they have to place ash on those particular parts of their body. When their menstrual cycle has come to an end they have to cleanse the body a day later. Only after this is done can one resume their regular routine. Similarly when one treats a female for a spiritual affliction, she is cleansed more vigorously than the male.

*Xobula* is a figure carrying a bowl full of cow dung, the body is also smeared with the material. I am referring to how I would cleanse other people and the manner in which the females in my family have been cleansed, some unknowingly. Cow dung is used to polish the floors in many rural homes. It is used to build seating platforms that are not actually used for sitting in most Xhosa homesteads. The cow dung is combined with other materials to create a spiritually purifying agent. Excrement is regarded as the opposite of purity but often it forms the makeup of the cleansing processes in the rural area. There are different uses of cow dung, such the production of energy and being a home for various other beings. Cow dung is excrement. When an animal is used, it is not disposed of by throwing the remains and inedible parts away, since it is a potent substance it is usually buried during various ceremonies. It is something that is handled by *iZangoma* higher up in the hierarchy. It is used to cleanse people of death, and females are bathed in the excrement after a rite of passage where an animal has been used.

As a black woman, I have participated in a number of rituals that require cleansing, such as *ukususwa isinyama*. Purity is associated with the colour white. The words related to white are clean, spotless, light, flawless, perfect, unblemished, immaculate and the opposite of black. Black is defined as dirty, unclean, murky, obscure, dishonest, shadowy and the darkest colour owing to the absence of or complete absorption of light. In spiritual practices, objects are used to get rid of dark spirits. To bring about luck and light one uses white objects. Evil spirits are thought of as black, whereas good spirits are white. Black is dirty and white is clean, this differentiation has continued to pervade society today, where black people, religion, and objects are viewed as dirty or dark. In contrast white people, religion and objects are considered clean and untainted.

Western missionaries attempted to coerce Africans into assimilating using Christianity. Christianity cast African traditions as evil. Christianity was posed as cure for blackness and inferiority. There is the perception that *izangoma* oppose the bible. However, *izangoma* are in opposition

Xobula, ngemzekeliso ophethe isitya esigcwele ubulongwe, umzimba uyaqatywa. Ndidibanisa nendlela endingahlamba ngayo abantu nendlela ekuhlanjwa ngayo umntu wasetyhini ekhaya, abanye abaziwa. Ubulongwe busetyenziselwa ukusinda emakhaya. Isetyenziselwa ukwakha indawo zokuhlala, ibekelwe bucala kumnyango. Ubulongwe budityaniswe nezinye izinto ukwazi kuzobakho indlela yokukhawuleza yokuhlamba ngokwasemoyeni. Obu bulongwe buyangqzulana nokubanyulu kodwa buyakwazi ukuhlamba. Esithombeni ndisebenzisa ubulongwe njengento esetyenziswa njengekhaya nezinye indlela ezahlukeyo, inzalo yeminye imimoya. Ubulongwe ngumphakathi wamathumbu wesilwanyana afakwa phantsi komhlaba kodwa zona iZangoma ziyakwazi uwathatha zihlambe ukufa ebantwini, nabasetyhini kodwa ke kuxhomekeka isilwanyana eso sisetenzisiweyo.

Ndimnyama, mdilibhinqa ndingowakuleleli laseMzantsi Afrika kwaye ndithathe inxaxheba kumasiko omoya afa nokususa isimnyama. Ubunyulu budityaniswa nebala elimhlophe. Amagama angqamelene nobumhlophe ngu cocokile, ukhanyo, msulwa, ugqibelele uyakhabana nobumnyama. Ubumnyama ujongwa njengobumdaka, ukungcola, ukunganyaniseki, ubuthinzi, ibala elimnyama elichaza ukungabikho kokhanyo. Kwimisebenzi yezomoya ukuze umntu asuse imimoya emdaka, umgqwaliso afumane ukhanyo kufuneka asebenzise izinto ezimhlophe. Imimoya emdaka ijongwa njengento emnyama elungileyo imhlophe. Ubumnyama bubumdaka, ubumhlophe bona kukucoceka, le nto. igcwele nasezinkolweni apho izinto zijongwa ukuba zimdaka okanye zimmnyama. Kuyo yonke le nto abantu abamhlophe bojongwa njengabantu abacocekileyo. Inkolo yobuKrestu buxinzelele iinkolo zabantsundu, yazijika zazizinto ezingcolileyo ezinziwa ngabantu abangenasiko, beyenziswa lo nto kukufuna ukuba sibebamhlophe. Kuyafana nangoku ndandingumntana, amabhinqa ewayesebenza emakhitshini ayehlamba phimbi kokuba basebenza naxa begqibile. Kwakunyazeleke bacoceke phambi kokuba bangene emasangweni wabamhlophe phofu anga azophinda ahlanjwe kwangabo, ngokucacileyo imizimba yabo kwakufuneka icoceke ingabinabala phembi kokuba bangene emasangweni wabamhlophe ngoba bona baluhlanga olumsulwa. Inkolo yobuKrestu isebenzise ubuqhinga bokwenza umntu omnyama akholelwe ukuba iMesiya umhlophe, benza onke amaAfrika akholelwe into yokuba umntu omhlophe mkhulu kunomnyama. Umntu omnyama makazinyange kubumnyama. Kukho nento yokuba izangoma ziyayikhaba iBhayibhile. Kodwa ke izangoma ziyasikhaba isithombe esingadibaniyo noba kunye nezinyanya. Bayayichasa into yokuba lo Yesu umhlophe umele wonke umntu ophezu komhlaba.

to an image that does not bear any likeness to them or their ancestors, they are in opposition to the idea that white Jesus represents every single human being.

As a child, I recall that domestic workers used to wash before and after work. They needed to be clean to enter the 'white space', which they clean. The assumption of whiteness as a 'pure' race during apartheid saw relations with black Africans as contamination. As a woman, the issue of purity is not only a race matter but also gender.

In his song, Mfaz' Omnyama refers to the "purest of females", the untouched, the virginal *itshitshi*. In the same breath he refers to the prototype of a traditional Zulu warrior, "a man's man." Mfaz' Omnyama refers to a certain type of virgin (the word is far more complex than its English equivalent). In the song Mfaz' Omnyama speaks about a type of virgin where a virtuosity is implied. Male dominance reinforced by the musician, who encourages the young virgin to grow up so she can be courted by the warrior, *insizwa*. The virgin is considered innocent, principled, clean and traditional. In most Nguni cultures girls undergo virginity testing<sup>11</sup> precisely to prove purity. Some females find that this instills a sense of pride in young women, that they should be proud of being pure in present day South Africa. With this in mind there aren't any methods for testing males to see if they are still virgins and still pure. It is interesting that this is not a point of contestation in the Nguni culture. Therefore the issue of virginity and purity is based on gender. Women are pure until "defiled" through a sexual act, and it is possible to maintain a degree of respect if cleansed.

C.W Kies describes how *ukusoma* – non penetrative thigh sex – made it possible for young men and women to partake in sexual practices before marriage, without fearing for the consequences in terms of teenage pregnancies (Hunter in Arnfred 2005:16). Is purity linked to a penetrative act? Prior to the seventeenth century "women shared the position of the head of the house with their husband, there was a clear distinction of sex for procreation and sex for pleasure, there was a clear separation of sexuality and fertility" (Arnfred 2005:16). UCT academic and scholar Dr.Yanga Zembe, complicates this unblemished notion of purity by explaining the sexual practices of amaXhosa pre-seventeenth century. In this research Zembe complicates sexual purity by asserting the claim that women were virtuous even after sexual acts, as sexual activities were advocated by parents of young girls and boys. It is only a degree of respect for parents that was

Kwingoma yakhe, uMfazi' Omnyama ithetha ngoku kubunyulu babesetyhini, ongabambekiyo, itshitshi ngale ndlela ajonga ngayo kwinduntsumba yomnqolobi wamaZulu, indoda emadodeni. Kule ngoma yakhe uMfaz omnyama ujonga kumntu othile onyulu. uMfazi' Omnyama kule ngoma uthetha ngomntu othile onyulu apho kuphatha .Kwamadoda buhlolwa ngomculo ukuze intombaza ikhule inyulu,ikhulela ukuthathwa zezi ndutsumba zamadoda. Le ntombi inyulu, inomthetho, icocekile kwaye inemvelo. Kwezinye intlanga zikaNguni amantombazana ayahlolwa. Aamanye amantombazana ayijonga le nto njengento efaka iqhayiya emantombazaneni, ngebevuya ukuba nyulu kweli xesha eMzantsi Afrika. Azikho indlela zokuhlola abesilisa ukuze babonwe ukuba banyulu okanye hayi. Ngoko ke le nto yobunyulu ikwisini esithile. Amabhinqa anyulu de abalene ngezesondo, likhona ithuba lokuba bafumane uwonga oluthile lokuhlonitshwa xa behlanjwe.

uC.W Kies ucacisa ukusoma,ukwabelana ngezesondo emathangeni. Le ndlela ivule amathuba wokuba umthinjana akwazi ukwanelisa inkanuko zomzimba bengoyikanga ziphumo zithile, zokwenzana bakhulelwe (Hunter, 2002:106, cited in Arnfred, 2005:16). Ingaba ubunyulu bunento yokwenza nokwabelana? Mandulo, "amabhinqa ayezintloko zezindlu kunye namadoda wawo,kwakukho umahluko ocacileyo kwezesondo. Ukufezekisa inkanuko okanye ukuqhamisa" (Arnfred, 2005:16). uYanga Zembe uyayiphixanisa le nto yobunyulu ngokucacisa indlela amaXhosa ayesenza ngazo izinto zokwabelana mandulo. uZembe uyayiphixanisa into yokwabelana ngezesondo njengento yayibekwa iliso ngabadala. Yimbeko eyayibekwa phambili. Amakhwenkwe namantombazana ayebekwa phantsi kwiliso ukuze bahloniphe omnye (Zembe, Y. 2015). Le nto isuka kwimbali elibalekileyo,imbali yabantu abantsundu,abangasakwaziyo ukuyikhumbula imbali yabo. Ezi zinto zazifihlakelwe ngokubakho kobuKrestu.

Ngokunanayo kuKhula khula tshitshi lam uMfazi omnyama uyawangxolisa amadodsa,onyulu yena makangayiboni indoda xa ikho egumbini. Le ngoma ithetha ngokubanyulu kwabafazi enyameni ngokwengcinga ezimdaka zamadoda. Ibeka ubandlululo ngokungabuzi. Owona nobangela wemboniso kumdlalo kukujonga le nto yokugqibelela ngokwasemoyeni,apho amandla angena khona nokungacingeli isini esithile kule ngoma kunye nomsebenzi wam.

maintained. The young women and men were placed under observation in order for both parties to preserve an air of dignity for each other, which would be a version of courting (Zembe, 2015:2). This draws from forgotten histories, conveniently forgotten at the expense of black people, by coloniser's post 16th century, who are unable to trace their own practices. These practices were concealed supposedly with the advent of Christianity.

In *Khula khula tsitshi lam Mfaz'* Omnyama reprimands the male. The virgin is to remain virtuous by not acknowledging the presence of a 'man's man' who pays attention only to beer as opposed to highly regarded 'pure' women that he is expected to be looking at. It is through assuming that women who are virginal are undoubtedly virtuous that I use this text to question the validity of the subject of purity in a contemporary setting. The song considers the physical purity of women and the impure thoughts of men. It reinforces the stereotype without questioning. The aim of the images in production is to question notions of spiritual wholesomeness, the power relations and gender biases that are inherent in the song and my work.

The absence of physical dirt does not mean that there is an absence of it in other ways. Spirits can be dirty and dark, thus one may appear to be pure yet the spirit lurking inside them or their spiritual identity and/or baggage survives the clearing and remains as an omnipresent trace, an absent presence. This is an example of how not all traces can be washed away. Traces of our gritty history still exist and are carried by the body ethereally. Traces of our ancestors are carried by our genes. The body also carries traces as markers of time and events, such as scars and age. The trace is selfless as it lends itself to any object and subject.

Ukungabikho kobumdaka enyameni ayithethi into yokuba abukho kwezinye indawo. Bubukho bento engekho obuvakalayo. Umntu angajongeka ecocekile enobunyulu kodwa lo nto ayithethi into yokuba azikho ezinye indidi anazo zobumdaka eziphilayo kuye, Umoya angakwazi ukubamdaka kodwa umntu ajongeke enyulu kodwa wona umoya abe ehexahexa. Okanye ubuyena bunyamalale bubengumzila, kubekho into engekho. Lo ngoweminye imizekelo yokuba eminye imizila ayihlambeki. Imizila yezinyanya zethu ikuthi ngaphakathi. Umzimba aphatha imizila njengenkumbulo kwexesha nakwiziganeko, ezifana namanxeba nobudala.

## Conclusion

Secrecy in relation to traditional practices is fraught with negative perception. As an artist and traditional healer, I leave a trace of the secret, a remnant of the secret for one to decode and find a way to relate to. Through this body of work, I have explored the ideological significance of secrecy. As an artist, I am expected to “show” but as iSangoma, my role is based on the dialectics of showing and not showing. I do not see the two roles as separate but rather as way that enables me to open up important questions about my “situatedness” as a black woman artist. My artwork is therefore not completed through an image but continues in a process of traces and alterations that are key to my performances.

Language is largely connected to revealing and concealing, to power and policing bodies. Indigenous languages are inferiorised as English has become the marker of a “well read” person. Seen as a marker of so-called intellectual capital and capacity, it is used as a tool to maintain the status quo. However, it is also a limitation to nuanced understanding of cultural exchanges and socially stratified difference. This body of work therefore questions the assumed hierarchies in languages. The power of language lies in its manipulability; that is, it is used by those in power but *can* be used to challenge power. I use indigenous languages as intellectual, scientific, philosophical languages and propagate the idea that they are academically viable.

My body in performance is political. The question of race is therefore central to my body of work. The black body in relation to secrecy is emblematic to deeper politics of invisibility and hypervisibility, or concealing and revealing. The failure to acknowledge the black body as human is essentially a way to obscure the multiple centers of knowledge in existence. Therefore, the denial of diverse human existences violates the right to equal access. In this way, violence is implicated in representations of the black body. In my work I have reconceptualised the body as more than material, but also as conceptual as abstract, transient and transcendental. It inhabits its own secret. The body in its complexity becomes a paradoxical sign. It can stand alone yet it always indexical of other collectivities.

## Umqokumbelo

Imfihlo yingqiqo ebonisa umntu okanye into engalunganga. Njengomdlali wenkcubeko neSangoms ndikhetha ukushiya umzila wemfihlo, intshiyekelo yomzila ukwazi umntu aziphendlele ngokwakhe afumane indlela azodibana ngayo, le ayonto imbi. Ndikhetha ukungasijikeli isinqumo endasithathayo. Ndiyakholelwa ukuba umntu uyazikhethela ukufihla into okanye angayifihli ngoba uyakwazi ukuzifumana noba seyixelliwe. Ukundwendwela ezagqithayo nenkumbulo ukwazi uqhubekeke ukufihla ayonto imdaka ngaphandle kokuba lo nto isetyenziswa kwabo bagcina imfihlo njengesixhobo sezopolito.

Umzimba usetyenziswa ngumdlali wezenkcubeko, yinto enokwenza nezo-moya, iyakwazi ukuzimela, ithethe iilwimi izininzi sabantu abaphezukomhlaba abangasoze bazive okanye baziqonde, unemfihlo zawo. Umzimba uyakwazi ubenengqzulwano. Ukwazi ukuma wodwa gqungqu kwalapha aveze ingcinga ezininzi aphinde abengumbini wezingcinga. Umzila womzimba yeyonanto umdlali wezenkcubeko anqwenela ukuyishiya emva ukwazi isininzi sizityebele, sizifumane naso. Abadlali bezenkcubeko bazibonanjenge nyama into etyiwayo wona umzila sisipho.

Umntu akakwazi ukohlula phakathi komzila nomzimba ngoba ubukho bomzilabubo obuchaza yonke into. Ngalo ndlela umntu uyekela umntu angene kwilizwe elingangenwayo ngoku kukutya kwesidlangalala. Amasiko wabantu abamnyama ayasitshintsha isiqhelo sokwenza izinto lo nto ingeza nobungozi xa imveli ityhiliwe. Umzila wona luphawu lwemfihlo. Imveli engamchapheziliyo omnye umntu ayikwazi kuba yimfihlo, ukuba abo banamava bayakwazi okwenzekayo bayakwazi nokuvala amathuba.

The trace of the body is what I seek to cast a critical eye on. The trace as residue is an act of memory and is also archival. Concerning memory, we choose what we remember and how we remember it. Mnemonic tools such as photography have been used in this work as traces of the performed work, which is process based. In referring to the trace I am alluding to traces of my ancestors who reside in my own body, but also traces left behind in performing certain traditional practices. In light of Krauss's notion of memory as trace, I consider not only memory as abstract but also something that manifests materially. Materially the body bears marks of the past, but also many traditional practices are embedded in washing off, cleansing or purifying as a way of structuring memory. One would remember the transition from being a young girl to a woman because *Intonjane* involves washing as a symbolic act, washing off traces of childhood.

The root of the secret is location and how one locates oneself. Often, the secrets that are concerned with the rituals and traditions of black people are those that are considered bad secrets. Revisiting the past and tracing memory is considered a dark and impure thing pertaining to rituals and rites of passage. Black traditional rituals and rites of passage have the propensity to shift the reality of societal structures and the way which we understand knowledge production.

*uThengisa unokrwece elunxwemene, 2014*  
C-print on cotton paper, archival ink  
83 x 56 cm



*iGagasi*, 2015  
C-print on cotton paper, archival ink  
83 x 56 cm



*Ngenzelephantsi*, 2014  
HD video, sound, widescreen projection  
20:00 minutes



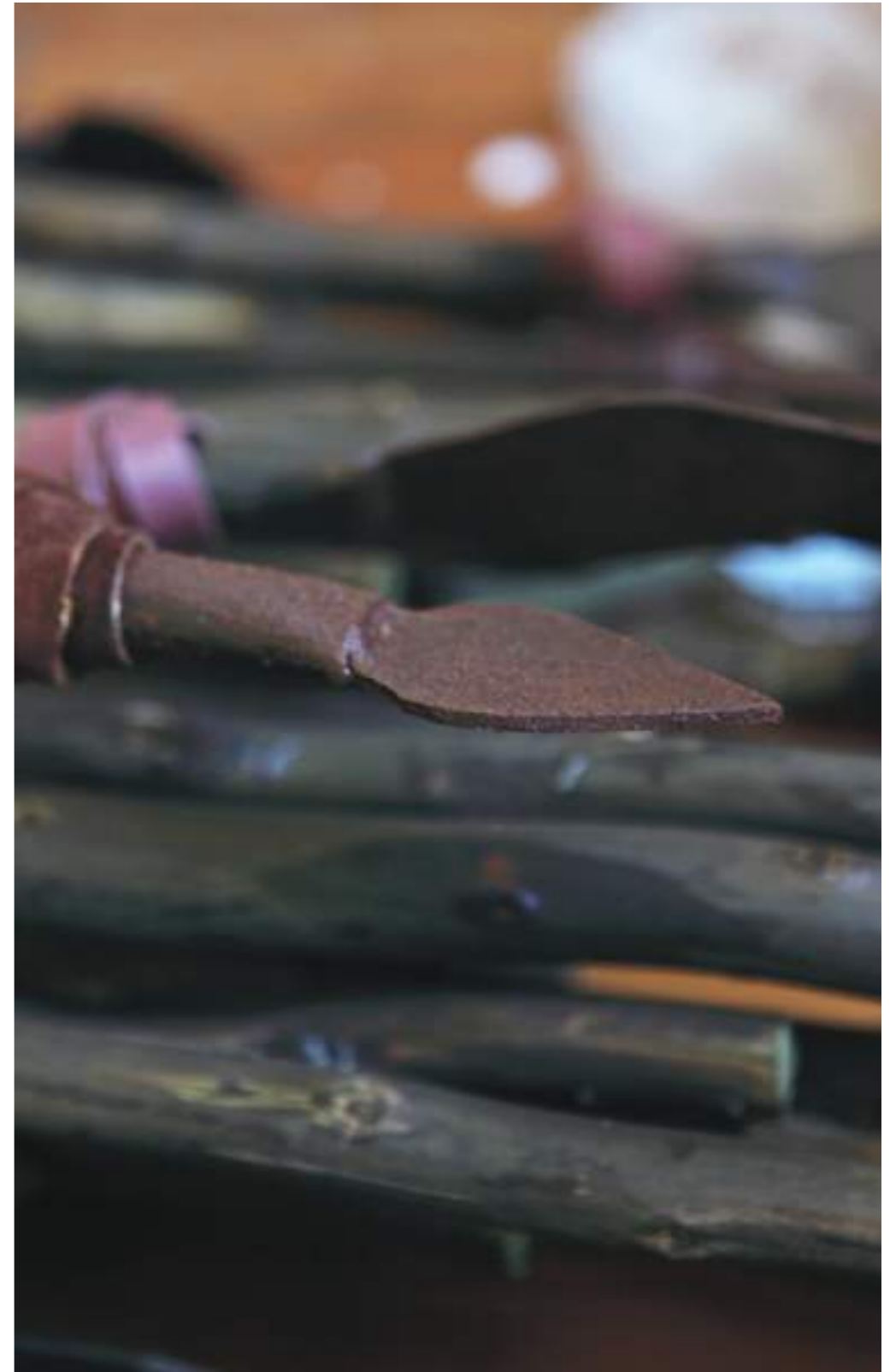


*Mhlekazi*, 2015  
HD video projection  
2:35 minutes  
Nonibe, Eastern Cape





*Ubunxaxha* (detail), 2015  
Leather, wooden poles, soil and steel.  
Dimensions variable







**Imfihlo**  
Buhlebezwe Siwani

**Qunusa. Buhle!**, 2015  
C-print on cotton paper, archival ink  
36 x 55 cm





*Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo*, 2014  
C-print on cotton paper, archival ink  
74 x 112 cm







***Inzilo; Ngoba ngihlala kwabafileyo, 2015***

Mattresses, soil, television screen, wooden bench, candles and leopard cloth.  
Dimensions variable  
(stills of performance)  
Performance stills courtesy of Gipca







*Zemk'inkomo magwalandini*, 2015  
Performative installation 45 minutes – hour  
Wooden poles, cow skulls and red powder.  
Dimensions variable  
Stevenson Gallery, RAMP, 2015







*iSana libuyele kunina*, 2015  
C-print on cotton paper, archival ink  
112 x 74 cm



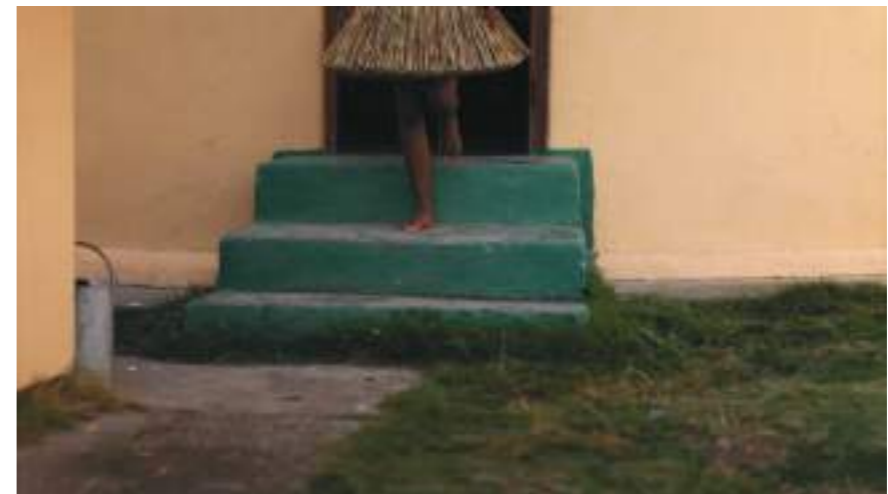
*iSana libuyele kunina*, 2015  
C-print on cotton paper, archival ink  
112 x 74 cm

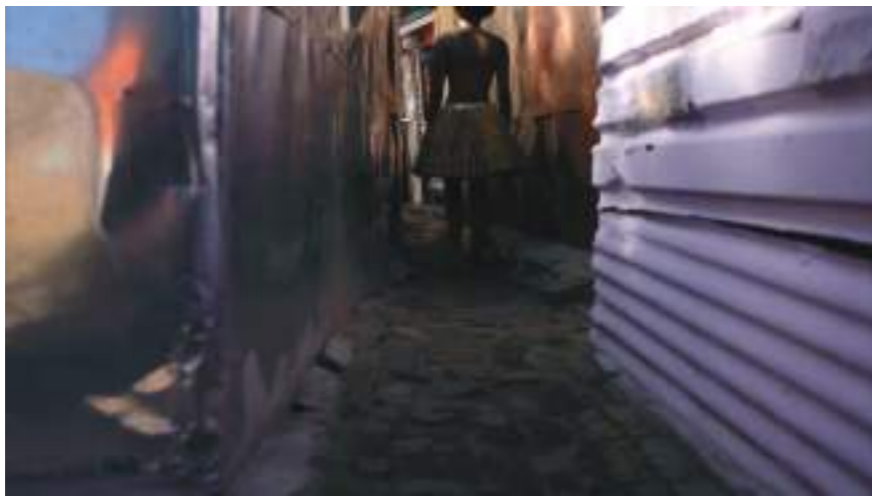


*Imfazwe yenkaba*, 2015  
Wide screen HD projection, sound  
5:10 minutes  
Langa, Western Cape  
Tamara Great Place, Eastern Cape



Ikumkani  
Inkosi yemiMdushane.  
Aah, Ngubesizwe!  
Nguye lo othetha kulevidiyo







*Zise"right ibabies?"*, 2015  
Monitor, sound, HD video  
0:34 minutes  
Tamara Great Place, Eastern Cape



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