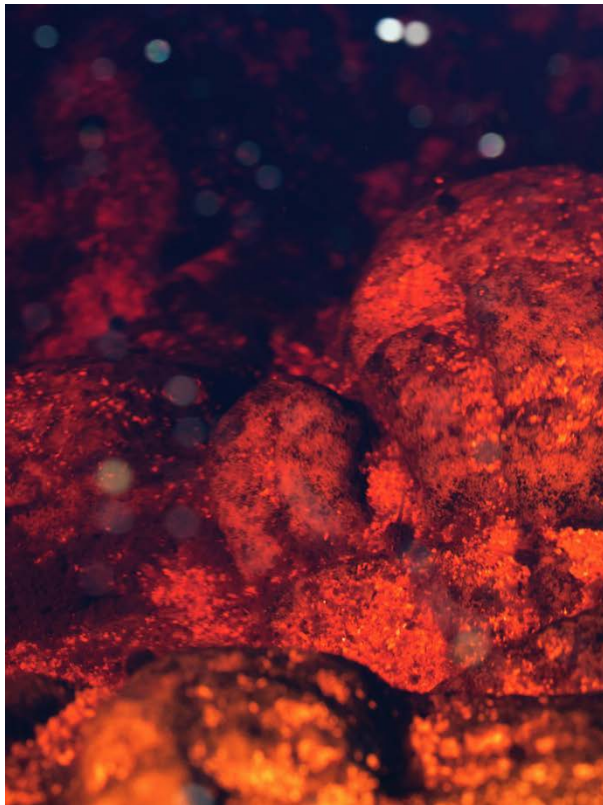


Call for Papers: Visual History &  
Theory International Workshop 2024

**D** deep  
time,  
shallow  
time



Abstracts are invited for participation in the annual workshop in Visual History & Theory to be held at the Centre for Humanities Research, University of the Western Cape, on **19-20 September 2024**.

In previous years our workshops have addressed a range of themes that have moved from the visual subject as a predominantly human question, to the visual as a means to think critically about human/nonhuman relations and ecologies.

The 2024 workshop builds on the insights and inter-connections developed across earlier keynote lectures, panels and debates, and will venture more deeply into concepts of time and temporal fluidity in relation to the visual. This is especially apt given photography's initial conception as a triumph against the corruption of time, superseding the loss of the moment, arresting decline and even mortality. What are the modes of historical consciousness related to this? What are the cultural and anthropocentric constructions of time in which we are trapped? Drawing on photographs and other visual and sensory media, the workshop will address the question of time through a range of concepts and framings. These include:

**Scale:** photography in particular gives us access to the micro, the macro, the planetary, the virtual, and to the abstraction or 'distortion' of the human - and the nonhuman - through scale, whether temporal or spatial. Contributions are invited that deal with scale, distance, and their implications, including the potential of African experiments to bring new critiques and creativities to a growing global literature.

**Genesis/gestation/gesture:** larger philosophical frames might include ideas around the 'life force' (Diagne) and its increase through the fullness of time, related in turn to cycles/rhythms that encompass reproduction and rebirth as well as decay and extinction.

**Returns/oscillations:** looking or reaching back into deeper time through older images - termed *ukuzilanda* by Nomusa Makhubu - is a strategy adopted by many contemporary artists, and is often a symptom of the 'unfinished work' of political or racial justice in the present. For many artists, an unstable past might continue to 'inhabit and punctuate a fluid present.' Shawn Michelle Smith points to the 'temporal recursivity intrinsic to photography, a backward and forward movement inherent to the

medium that invites returns, collisions, disruptions.'

**Liquidity:** framings of depth and its antitheses also conjure notions of what Jeff Wall calls the 'liquid intelligence' of photography, whose resonances are extended by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer in their concept of 'liquid time.' The fluidity of image signification over time can also stir new and/or alternative methods of reading, seeing and feeling photographic meaning in the present through its multiple pasts.



**Emergence/emergency:** Leigh Raiford writes of 'emergence' as a coming into visibility, and of the visual forms of insurgency that result in visual transvaluation and iconisation. How do we think of such emergent visibilities that imply duration, process, futurity, as against 'emergency' with its urgencies and portents of catastrophe and annihilation - the killing of time, as it were?



**Cide/s:** to consider genocide, scholarcide, femicide or ecocide is to engage with questions of violence in different temporal and political registers. What in particular can we bring to the discussion of Gaza/Palestine, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo or Sudan by working critically with images?



**Curator/caretaker:** a photograph can be an invitation to a relationship, shifting and re-organising time; it can be a chance to listen and provide care, as in the 'Black feminist tradition of an ethics of care' that Raiford describes; it can be an opportunity for 'looking together' (Zeynep Gürsel) to build new understandings and discourses.



Abstracts and inquiries should be sent to Patricia Hayes at [visualhistoryuwc@gmail.com](mailto:visualhistoryuwc@gmail.com) or [phayes@uwc.ac.za](mailto:phayes@uwc.ac.za) by **3 July 2024**

## References:

- Diagne, Souleymane Bachir. 2021. 'The Way of the Africans. Césaire, Senghor and Bergson's philosophy' in Mark Sinclair, Yaron Wolf (eds), *The Bergsonian Mind*. London: Routledge.
- Gürsel, Zeynep. 2022. 'Portraits of Unbelonging: Photography, Nationality, Mobility.' Keynote lecture, International Workshop in Visual History & Theory, University of the Western Cape, 19 August 2022.
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- Makhubu, Nomusa. 'Doing the Undoing: Ukuzilanda, Speculation and Responsibility.' Keynote lecture, Photography Network Symposium (online), 12 October 2023.
- Raiford, Leigh. 2023. 'Home is a Photograph. Blackness and Belonging in the World.' Keynote lecture, International Workshop in Visual History & Theory, University of the Western Cape, 27 July 2023.
- Smith, Shawn Michelle. 2020. *Photographic Returns: Racial Justice and the Time of Photography*. Durham: Duke University Press.
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Photos courtesy of Visual History class 2023: Rui Assubuji, Jenna Hiscock, Tammy-Lee Lakay, Limpho Makapela, Julia Raynham.