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New Leaders and Old Texts

Recycling the Archive

The members of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) were always very much aware that the richness of the material gathered and the complexity of individual accounts required a deeper working through than could be accomplished within the remit of the commission itself. Indeed, if the process of truth finding and reconciliation was to have any structural impact, the material gathered needed to be studied, compared, contextualised and analysed in much greater detail. As the commission's chairman, Desmond Tutu, claimed in the introduction to the TRC report delivered to President Mandela in 1998,

> Everyone involved in producing this TRC report would have loved to have the time to capture the many nuances and unspoken truths encapsulated in the evidence that came before us. This, however, is a task which others must take up and pursue. (TRC 1998, 4)

The document mentions similar remarks by other TRC members, expressing the hope that the seemingly endless chain of atrocities recorded will become part of the collective memory of future generations:

> It is impossible to capture the detail and complexity of all this in a report. The transcripts of the hearings, individual statements, a mountain of press clippings and video material are all part of an invaluable record which the commission

> handed over to the national archives for public access. This record will form a part of the national memory for generations yet to come. (TRC 1998, 113)

The commission thus explicitly urges the South African people to take the material gathered into account, not only to carefully archive it but also to deepen and implement the TRC's findings in the national memory.

Now that a never-ending series of testimonies of gross human rights violations has been put before the commission, broadcast on radio and TV, and eventually documented in the report, it should no longer be possible for anyone to claim that they simply did not know about the human rights violations committed by the apartheid regime – neither now nor in the future. Further, it can never be denied that the predominant portion of these gross violations was perpetrated by the state and its agents. However, at the same time, uncovering a whole spectrum of facts and experiences does not mean that all parties concerned have reached a consensus with regard to what exactly happened during the period researched by the TRC, and exactly who was responsible for what (Wilson 2004). In this sense, the TRC hearings marked not only the end of a totalitarian regime but also, as demonstrated in previous chapters, the beginning of a heated debate about the past, present and future of South Africa (see also Cole 2010; Coombes 2003; Nuttall 2009; Jaising 2014), part of which questioned whether the debate should have been conducted at all. What, for example, is implied by the mantra 'never again'? How can we, generally speaking, free ourselves from violence? Is the trauma of the past not wedged too deep into our history? Should we even be digging into such a traumatic past? And how can we reconcile ourselves with those traumas that, far from solving, the TRC reactivated? Would it not be better for South Africa to focus on gaining a prominent and integrated position within an increasingly globalised world, rather than licking its wounds? In other words, is it not better to leave the past behind and set one's eyes on the future?

REwind

In 2006, ten years after its first hearings, local as well as national commemorations of the TRC in South Africa concerned themselves with the aforementioned questions. Not only did the many public debates and academic conferences thematise the relation between forgetting and remembering but also, and especially, the role that the construction of a collective memory should

play in the new South African democracy. After all, the ten years after the publication of the TRC report saw the gradual unfolding of a process in which the country's fledgling democracy once again threatened to degenerate into a one-party system. At least partly because of this, many TRC commemorations were concerned with the question of whether we should be concerned with the past at all, and if so, what the future implications might be.

One such commemorative event was the performance of *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony* (2006), composed by Philip Miller. In Europe, Miller is known as the composer who collaborated with William Kentridge in the monumental installations *The Head and the Load*, *More Sweetly Play the Dance*, *Blackbox* (see chapter 8), *The Refusal of Time* and the musical score for the film *Forgiveness* (2004), amongst others. The material for *Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony* is wholly derived from audiovisual recordings of the TRC, based on an idea from TRC reporter and poet Antjie Krog. Having heard the score of *Forgiveness*, Krog suggested to Miller that he should compose a musical work commemorating and working through the historical facts revealed by the TRC. Miller's musical reuse of historical material, a decade after the global media spectacle of the TRC, inevitably casts a fresh spotlight on the fundamental questions raised by the commission. Of course, such questions are not limited to the political transition in South Africa but also extend to ways of dealing with the memories of gross human rights violations in a broader context. As became evident in chapter 5, Krog's (1998) poetic and journalistic report on the TRC process, *Country of My Skull*, calls attention to similar questions: How to restore consciousness and dignity, and how to create a space for dialogue in a traumatised nation? Does commemoration, the telling of stories, lead to catharsis and reconciliation indeed, or does it merely deepen the trauma? What does it mean to listen to one another? What does it mean to truly acknowledge the information that is being shared?

In Miller's cantata, this balancing act between remembering and forgetting is thematised by means of both the literal and the metaphorical effects of sound and voice.[1] As Miller emphasises, from the perspective of its national history, the voice is South Africa's preeminent musical and political instrument. A centuries-old cultural determinant and indigenous means of expression, throughout the struggle, the singing voice remained the inalienable instrument of human bonds and dignity. Singing enables people to connect across the barriers of language and other boundaries. Moreover, the voice is

an essential part of the well-known toyi-toyi dance, a combination of spontaneous chanting and foot stamping, jumping from the left to the right foot, which developed into an activist or militaristic dance and became an integral part of the protest culture of the late apartheid era. For a politically engaged composer, the explicit deployment of the voice thus seems an appropriate gesture, both materially and conceptually, not least as the human voice is capable of performing both the micro and the macro level of national history simultaneously.

Although Miller's journey through the audiovisual archive of the TRC is led by the sound and the tone of the voice, and not by the extended narrative, his method of approaching history via sounds and images is inevitably connected to exemplary and thus meaningful moments in the TRC. Voice and narrative are naturally always linked in an opera-like cantata; however, in *REwind*, it is a carefully selected sound bite, rather than the narrative told, that becomes the carrier of information that connects the community of listeners. Both those who have participated in the process and those who observe the cantata with little background knowledge of the TRC are touched simultaneously and by the same sign. Listening to the cantata encourages an acknowledgement of the facts as constitutive parts of a collective imagery, whilst also inviting the verification and further examination of those facts. The sound bites and images used incite the listener to learn, or more fully comprehend, the different yet simultaneously unfolding stories that lie beneath them. The political and narrative force of Miller's cantata therefore resides in its ability to evoke a broad range of questions, events and experiences by being both selective and exemplary.

The title song of *REwind* illustrates this principle of motivated selection as the instrument of inclusiveness and the exemplary. The song begins with the sound of a woman crying. It was common during the hearings of the Human Rights Violations Committee for victims to be overcome by emotion whilst giving testimony. This was the case in the testimony of Eunice Mya, who was one of the mothers of the so-called Guguleto Seven: seven boys who were caught and killed by the national security forces. At the time, the mothers of the boys only learnt of their deaths via a television news report. Mya told the TRC how, whilst watching her son's dead body on the screen, she was overwhelmed by a wish that the news could be rewound – she must and shall give a different meaning to this otherwise unsurmountable event and is left

with just one single desire, one single thought: to *REwind*. The sound of her voice recorded on tape during the TRC process thus became a musical motif in the cantata. Her heart-wrenching desire for the news to be rewound is transformed into a more general metaphor for the phenomenon of revisiting traumatic events, for the need to rewind memory, for the making present of the past, for telling untold stories, for giving loss a name and for the desire to regain that which has been lost.

The power and importance of artworks such as *REwind* are not simply that they revisit the archives and, in that sense, reveal the truth, but are found precisely in their medium-specific engagement with the fight against social amnesia – an amnesia that could otherwise lead to the repetition of a past not fully worked through. As we have seen in previous chapters, in contemporary South African art, this dialogue with, and working through, the past is embodied both in the choice of themes and in the deployment of medium-specific material. Tied neither to the endeavour of completeness nor having the obligation to document forensic truths – as was the case with the TRC, or might be the case with a tribunal – artists can take the route of artistic research in order to contribute to the ongoing construction of a post-apartheid truth.

As I have argued thus far, contemporary, politically committed art in South Africa reflects the axiom of 'never again' mainly by exhausting the possibilities of the material used (see Buikema 2012).[2] In this sense, *REwind* can easily be placed in a genre that I have called the poetics of recycling – a concept that refers to a practice in which working through the past literally means the working through of meaningful historical material. The repetition, the working through, in a single gesture, becomes both an artistic and a politically transformative act. The new results from reforming and rearranging the old. More precisely, the new is inextricably intertwined with working through the old. The old is structurally reframed in such a way that it changes and, thus, can no longer be conceived of as separate from the process of working through. Previously hidden aspects of the material, and thus of the mediated past, become visible in medium-specific repetitions. Trauma is repeated, but simultaneously made fluid. It acquires a different perspective, is put into motion and is rewritten. In doing so, art derives its ability to create beauty from materials charged with the burdens of the past. Here, change, both individually and politically, is a process of working through (*revolvere*). Working through the experiences of the past, thus, is a strategy via which to effect structural change. As will become

clear when discussing the works of Miller and Botha, without this structural change, there is little hope of realising 'never again'.

REwind reflects this principle of transformative repetition via the deployment of musical strategies. For example, the political imagery of univocality versus polyphony is superbly orchestrated and made complex in the song 'Who's Laughing'. Working through and repeating both the solo voice and the choir elicit new political overtones that are discharged in a confrontation that sheds new light on the issues of guilt and innocence. This particular choral in the cantata is based on an interview with P. W. Botha, prime minister during the height of apartheid in the early 1980s. The interview was conducted at Botha's house after he had refused to appear before the TRC. In the interview, Botha states that 'apartheid' is an Afrikaans word that admittedly has acquired a 'negative connotation' but is actually a synonym for a more positive word, namely, 'good neighbourliness'. Someone at the press conference bursts out laughing at this ludicrous defence of the totalitarian regime, whereupon Botha wags his finger and pronounces the words 'Who's laughing?' These words are repeated in the cantata and thus form the motif of the song: 'Who's laughing, who's laughing'.

Just as with the title song 'Rewind', the repeat of a short sound bite acquires metaphorical value and is subsequently combined with another sound bite, upon which it morphs into something new: 'Who's laughing? Who's laughing?' Who dares to laugh here? There is really nothing here to laugh about. Here is a man who, through thick and thin, has defended the state of apartheid and who simply refuses to be held accountable. However, precisely because of the repetition, the reframing, the play and counter-play, this choral is one of the nimblest as well as most ironic moments of the cantata. The song begins with the baritone Fikile Mvinjelwa, who sings in the toyi-toyi rhythm: 'U left, U right, Nyamazan'. He calls out to the choir: 'Come guerrilla!' Whilst the black singer, by way of metronome – and of course in a reference to Botha's pedantic and imploring gesture – wags his finger, we hear an archival recording of Botha, saying, 'I'm a believer, and I'm blessed by my creator.' The choir's singing of the militaristic toyi-toyi and Botha's preposterous attempt to justify his actions meet in part-song, expressing mutual violence and mutual patriotism. It all culminates in the choir sung 'hahahahaha'. The violence of the state that provoked so much violence within the resistance – because (as also discussed in chapter 5) in the ANC training camps human rights were

violated, too – eventually leads the listener to the question: Who is still laughing, and why?

REwind is not so much about articulating answers as it is about formulating questions. Miller's cantata forces the audience to listen, look and wonder. Historically fixed boundaries are destabilised when, for example, white opera singers perform *Hamba Kahle*, the battle song of the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Elsewhere, traditionally harmonious Christian hymns are disrupted, becoming dissonant and asymmetrical, whilst the accompanying visual images become fragmented. Long-established identities and colour boundaries disintegrate. The audience is forced to listen very carefully before attributing meaning. What exactly happened, and what impact did it have, and for whom? How to restore humanness to this new society, how to re-establish a dialogue between victims and perpetrators? Miller states in an interview with Cole (2010) that *REwind* is indeed essentially a question. For him, the cantata is about the lack of resolution, both musically and metaphorically, frustrating our desire for unity and harmony. Differences and tensions amongst people, stories and historical backgrounds refuse erasure simply in the interest of a more palatable story (Cole 2010, 146).

For Miller, the theatrical mode of the cantata offers a unique opportunity to connect a new generation with the many conflicting visions of the nation's history, also confronting them with contemporary political questions that, whilst they must be posed, are not so easily resolved. Are only those with a 'good story' truly believed? Does the new national unity imply only harmony, or can it also accommodate dissonance? And what is meant by peace? Should it be univocal, or is peace precisely the art of tolerating polyphony? And what meaning does temporality have, or the relation between cause and effect, when different voices from the past are simultaneously staged and listened to?

Giving voice, performing polyphony, valuing the dialogical process of truth finding in the deepest sense of the word were the ambitious targets of the TRC's Amnesty Commission. Its aim to address the human rights violations committed on both sides – the oppressors and the oppressed – was its strength, yet also its weakness, and, as Miller suggests, resulted in its lack of resolution in the form of a generally accepted solution or outcome. Indeed, on the one hand, by enabling a differentiated image of victims and perpetrators, and the complexity of living under and fighting against apartheid, the TRC steered clear of an all too easy and homogenising victim-perpetrator dichotomy. Yet,

on the other hand, as demonstrated in chapter 5, when the two forms of violence are conjoined, there is a risk of relativising the state's wrongdoings, or an apparent equation of the official repressive apparatus with the abuses of the liberation movements (Greenawalt 2000; James and van de Vijver 2001; Mamdani 2002; Minow 1998, 2000). This risk, which is brought to an artistic climax in 'Who's Laughing', is also briefly touched upon in the TRC report. Of course, as the report's compilers stated, striving for forgiveness does not necessarily lead to the acceptance of impunity nor does it necessarily put emphasis on the victims' possible agency alone. As Nelson Mandela stated in his opening address to the third session of parliament in 1996,

> We can neither heal nor build, if such healing and building are perceived as one-way processes, with the victims of past injustices forgiving and the beneficiaries merely content in gratitude. Together we must set out to correct the defects of the past. (Mandela 1996)

Therefore, the creation of possible reconciliation and thereby the creation of a collective community as a means to transcend a deeply polarised society in the aftermath of the TRC has come to mean, not so much the readiness to forgive on the part of the victims, but more significantly that both perpetrators and victims should continue to record the stratification of their history, share information and tell their stories. Today, this aim seems to have become the primary legacy of the TRC. Indeed, sharing the truth, the diversity in facts and experiences, rather than a primary striving towards reconciliation, became its mandate. Only when different perspectives on a shared past are exchanged can a collective consciousness emerge. The TRC provided the impetus, and now, on a sociocultural level, it is up to the arts, amongst others, to implement its findings. In this book, in order to illustrate the specific effect of politically engaged art, I have offered several examples thereof. By meaningfully framing micro stories, a perspective on both past and present can emerge that reaches beyond the individual, or even the national level. Miller's cantata effects just such a far-reaching perspective. By uncovering and working through memories and traumatic incidents, and subsequently transforming them in a medium-specific way, Miller's art creates a reality in which returning to the archives simultaneously becomes a means to look towards the future. Via the process of working through, human relationships are established that destabilise the

old dichotomies of perpetrator and victim, white and black, wrong and right. Motivated by the insight that any system contains the conditions for its own transition, the practice of (almost literally) ploughing through historical material offers the potential to discover the gaps in the system and, in doing so, detect potential exits. Working through is thus an instrument of both resistance and change.

However, as well as working through history, Miller's cantata is also a reflection on those traumas that were rekindled by the TRC in its attempt to 'stop the bleeding'. The song 'Who's Laughing' commemorates three of the TRC's lowest points: P. W. Botha's refusal to appear before the TRC, De Klerk's denial of knowing about the Khotso House bombing, and his refusal to be accountable for the existence of death farms. In its attempt to work through the past and to reformulate the positions of both victims and perpetrators, the commission hit a brick wall. The attempts of those apartheid leaders responsible to stay out of reach almost led to the failure of the entire TRC process, as we also saw in chapter 5. Although clearly aiming towards 'never again', the commission ultimately failed to force the leaders to confess. Thus, whilst such an instrument of transitional justice can have healing powers, it can also unwittingly generate new traumas when the process of working through certain aspects of the past fails. Here too, the arts can play a key role.

PORTRAITS AND WITNESSES

The refusal of the leaders of apartheid to be held entirely accountable for the past is an aspect of post-apartheid South Africa's recent history that, in addition to Miller's cantata, is addressed in the work of the contemporary sculptor Wim Botha. His work also raises the question of whether it is possible to effect structural reform if the leaders of the apartheid movement continue to avoid taking responsibility for their acts. What does such a refusal mean for the project of 'never again'? To address this question, I now turn to a particular series of sculptures by Botha, entitled *Portraits* (2009), *Portrait Busts* (2010) and *Witness Series I–V* (2011), a set of archetypal busts that hang from the ceiling.

In some ways, the busts appear familiar, evoking the genre of the stately portrait and its concomitant connotations of autonomy and power. However, simultaneously, there is something undeniably disconcerting in these works. This has nothing to do with their form as such but, rather, with the

combination of matter and form. The sheer weight of the traditional bust acquires a certain tension when contrasted with the fragile-looking material from which Botha's works are crafted. The busts are sculpted from compressed paper, their form carved from stacked books. Sometimes it is possible to recognise the covers that hold the texts together, and at closer inspection, it can be seen that these busts are hewn from bibles, African dictionaries, encyclopaedias and government documents. Thus, rather than a random collection of books, the texts are metonymically related to the institutions that supported the apartheid regime. The original function of the material used by Botha to carve his busts invariably buttressed institutionalised mechanisms of in- and exclusion via the church, language politics, education, censorship and the laws of apartheid (figure 6.1).

Hence, these are not simply stately portraits, and the books are not just books. Even aside from their specific and meaningful content, the link between the icons of the nation state and the book – or rather, the invention of the printing press – is telling (figure 6.2).

As Marshall McLuhan explains, the formation of the nation state was significantly facilitated by the invention of the printing press and the rise of national languages and grammars (McLuhan and Fiore 2003). Indeed, Anderson's (1991) seminal reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism ensure that the book and national consciousness are forever and explicitly intertwined. Thus, in the context of a country in transition, Botha's choice of materials is relevant in its own right. The choice of the book, and specifically books and texts endorsing racial ideologies, language politics and practices that subscribe to censorship, problematises a tradition in which political leaders are honoured and respected with monuments. Triumphalism and narratives of male power are both thematised and undermined via the interaction between matter and form. These monumental statues are made of politically incriminating, yet simultaneously ephemeral, fragile materials. The busts, carved from the documents that sustained questionable institutions, such as the South African church and state, inevitably evoke numerous quotations by P. W. Botha, such as those commemorated by Miller ('I am a believer and I am blessed by my creator').

Not only the materials but also the way in which the sculptures are suspended in space play with the weight of tradition. Not only are the usually heavy statues made of feather-light paper, but they have also been removed from their pedestals. Botha's installation breaks with the convention of creating a

FIGURE 6.1
Portrait II (Patriot), 2009, Wim Botha. Afrikaans dictionaries and vocabulary books, wood, stainless steel, 34 × 15 × 27 cm. *Source*: ©Wim Botha, courtesy Stevenson Cape Town and Johannesburg.

distance between the bust and the viewer. As in Miller's cantata, the icons of colonial history are thus adequately dethroned and urge us to problematise white male power and Afrikaner heroism. The white male subject is being called to account and forced to reconsider not only his history and his current position but also his possible future.

FIGURE 6.2
Portrait Bust (Mother), 2010, Wim Botha. Afrikaans bibles, wood, stainless steel, approximately 118 × 35 × 38 cm. *Source*: ©Wim Botha, courtesy Stevenson Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Again, the literal working through of historical material provides the essence of the artefact, and, in doing so, this technique sets into motion previously fixed meanings. As Wim Botha states in the exhibition catalogue (2005),

> In my work there is seldom a distinction to be drawn between the prominence of the concept and that of the medium. I work with materials that are central

> to mass consumerist applications, that are subsequently transformed in essence and meaning to a point at which material and concept become integrally interdependent.

Whereas *REwind* uses the voice to complicate and differentiate the relation between victim and perpetrator, Botha's busts mobilise space and the gaze. The spectator is physically positioned amongst the busts, which appear simultaneously familiar and strange – a position that inevitably invites a moment of contemplation. Not only the unfolding of history that occurs both within and through the sculptures, but also the context from which one is looking at the statues, is hard to escape. White South Africans in particular are interpellated by the statues and the space between them, not only because of recent political developments – in which the dominant white population has become a political minority and national icons have lost their prestige – but mainly because of the chronicling of human rights violations that were committed in the name of such icons and institutions, first under colonialism and then under apartheid. These crimes have been committed in the name of the institutions that are upheld by the documents from which the statues have been sculpted.

Via the material, form and positioning of the busts, political transition is framed as a gradual process, both at the macro level of institutions and at the micro level of individuals. Here, form, material and positioning reveal how each system contains the conditions for its own transformation, how the meaning of citizenship can be transformed by breaking open hegemonic definitions and how revolt – understood in this instance as the working through of a legacy of violence – might ultimately open up new worlds. Yet Botha's busts also provoke insights into the risks of such processes of transformation, when the implementation of the conditions of change does not entirely succeed (figure 6.3).

As van der Watt (2005, 9) suggests in the exhibition catalogue, it could be argued that whilst thematising and visualising the impossible disjuncture between surface and depth – and thus the entanglement of the personal and the political, the private and the public – Botha turns more explicitly towards an interrogation of masculinity and ethnicity. By linking power to masculinity and the law – most notably to the laws and rules that simultaneously create and destroy particular communities – the white male South African seeing these images cannot help but now realise the precariousness of his position. As the series of busts progresses in time, a different kind of meeting between

FIGURE 6.3
Untitled (Witness Series I), 2011, Wim Botha. African encyclopaedias, wood, stainless steel, 45 × 21 × 22 cm. *Source*: ©Wim Botha, courtesy Stevenson Cape Town and Johannesburg.

institution and individual imposes itself. White as they are, these busts, carved from institutional documents, increasingly seem to resemble black men.

The geopolitical and historical backdrop to these simultaneously black-and-white busts seems to suggest that the clear opposition between colonial white leaders and the postcolonial black Mandela is giving way to a more diffuse, postcolonial duality. As demonstrated by the vicious succession battle between Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma between 2005 and 2008, the two recent black postcolonial leaders turn out to crave power no less than their white colonial forebears, nor do they appear to have any reservations when it comes

to using state institutions to wield and sustain their political power. Hence, by also carving indigenous faces from the materials upholding the white colonial and apartheid regimes, Botha's sculptures provoke not only contemplation on the actions of totalitarian white leaders but also an insight into the accomplishments of the new black leaders. As Jolly (2010) convincingly argues, the problematic aspects of contemporary South African postcolonial leadership pivot, amongst others, around a conflict concerning the meaning and function of black male identity in a postcolonial society. The clash between Mbeki and Zuma ultimately developed around the question of how a postcolonial, post-apartheid black masculinity should be understood and performed. Mbeki sought to perform a masculinity that rejected racist and colonialist stereotypes. In his speeches, he repeatedly refers to the white theologians who, Bible in hand, systematically humiliated the black man and institutionalised segregation. He fiercely resisted the neocolonial image of black men as promiscuous, and/or of black leaders as corrupt and drunk on power. Therefore, his postcolonial – or, perhaps more accurately, anticolonial – politics have, for example, resulted in the rejection of modern Western knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The implementation of the 'Western' solution – the prescription of antiretroviral (ARV) medication – according to Mbeki, implicitly involved endorsing the colonial stereotype of excessive black sexuality. Conversely, Zuma's leadership was based on a hypermasculine precolonial performance of Zulu manhood, which he hoped (not entirely in vain) would bring him political power – albeit also threatening to undo many of the achievements of the TRC.

CONCLUSION

Based on the works of Miller and Botha, on balance, we can conclude that more than a decade after the publication of the revolutionary (albeit contested) TRC report in South Africa, the general consensus was that the formation of a post-apartheid society necessarily had to be based on the accountability of political leaders and citizens alike. The implementation of the truth – and importantly, different kinds of truth – concerns a process that was started by the work of the TRC. The TRC has been the messenger, and now it is up to the institutions of the new South Africa to carry on the message, to establish and make operational a new rule of law and to work towards repair and justice. The arts have their own, specific, yet undeniable role in saving these political ambitions from obscurity. Social and economic equality are still a

distant dream and violence and segregation prevail. The new black leaders, rather than simply repeating capital- and power-driven forms of leadership, should now continue the process that was set into motion, both by the TRC and by the arts. In order for something new to emerge, and to sustain hope in 'never again', the legacies of colonialism and apartheid must be acknowledged and structurally worked through. As Wim Botha's work suggests, this process also entails taking into account those gender-specific connotations that are implicated in the metaphor of 'fathering a nation'. How do gender-specific occupations and interests impact the style and nature of political choices?

In the years following the commemoration of the TRC, the South African pavilions of the fifty-fifth (2013) and fifty-sixth (2015) of the Venice Biennale exhibited work by the aforementioned artists – work that was again invested in the relation between memory and democracy, transition and especially the stagnation and failure of the new democracy. Yet, no matter how much criticism the TRC received, and despite the limitations of the TRC mandate, empirical studies demonstrate that the non-white majority in South Africa does not perceive the TRC as a concluded process that has, or indeed should have, offered all-encompassing solutions to all of the country's problems but, rather, should act as a catalyst, a necessary instrument for clearing the path to a new society and different relations between the various population groups and new relationships between individual perpetrators and victims (Cole 2010, 126; see also Grunebaum 2011). This is why some South African intellectuals now refer to the present political and social condition as 'the becoming' of post-apartheid in South Africa, as if to underline the processual character of the transition (Lalu 2009). It is in this process of becoming that the analysis of the relationship between colonialism and hegemonic masculinity will have to play an essential role, and it is in such an analysis of the gender-specific aspects of political practice that the arts have already proven to be an essential player.