

COMMUNITY HOUSE ARTWORKS



COMMUNITY HOUSE

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It's a sort of splendid torch which I've got to hold up for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

ON COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY: George Bernard Shaw

6. UNNATURAL LIVING CONDITIONS

It is because the police do not give us time to sleep night and day, demanding "dompass", sometimes my wife arrives here sick and they arrest her because of having no permit after they have refused to give her a permit at Langa Administration Offices.

Solution

- I would solve my problem easy were I not a contract labourer because sometimes the contract ends before I have finished my pressing needs.
- I have to work to solve my problems.

7. LACK OF CLEAR DEFINITION OF THE LAWS THAT GOVERN US

- Firstly we are persecuted through laws we do not know.
- The reason why we break these laws is because we do not know them.
- The reason why we do not know them is that we do not take part in the making of the laws.
- Even though we know we are forced to break because they are death to us.

8. THE INHUMANITY OF THE CONTRACT LABOUR SYSTEM

- Injustice of working under the contract system is closely associated to no. 7 above.
- The chief aim is to keep an African in poverty.
- The practice makes an African homeless hence he has no rights in the urban area and also is ignorant of what is happening in the reserve, for most of the time is in the city though with no full rights as a worker.
- This again makes an African remain a boy for the rest of his lifetime. The source of the above is influx control.

9. NKJHLALA NGENOLEDA EPHIKISANE HENDALO

Causes The chief aim of the above is

- To keep down the African population as far as possible.
- To inflict mental pains to an African so to bring him into frustration.
- To deny him the fruit of modern civilization in order that an African should accept a propaganda of being inferior to a white man and as such not fit for the (modern?)
- To disrupt family unity. The last point easily produces prostitution among Africans and humiliate the dignity of our people.

PROBLEMS

- Doing skilled work and getting wages for unskilled workers.
- At work we have two foremen - a white man and an African man. There is also a Director - he does the work of his foremen and he cannot (does it badly) deal with people - often beating people up or dismissing them although (despite) the contract.
- I work for Murray and Stewart. I've worked for a month without any pay and when I make enquiries I get assurances about tomorrow - I have sent nothing home.
- My problem is I want to build - I have a wife and children. I am experiencing difficulties about getting a site from the chief now I stay with my wife at the (zones) 'Single men's quarters' and the police arrest her.
- We earn very little money at the Royal Dairies and if one takes it upon himself to request a rise in wages one can find oneself without a job.
- At the Barracks we sleep on cement slabs although we pay rental every month and the lights sometimes go off for a week and we're left in the dark.
- If your wife happens to come here because of illness or some other serious matter Langa refuses to issue her with a permit saying she should go home or she is arrested.
- Another thing we do not like is the selling of Jabulani in the zones - white and Coloured are not sold this commodity which is made available only to us.
- One of our problems is that at our home districts (rural) one can take up to a year and over trying to get a contract without success. This creates great hardships as problems/hardships at our homes become unbearable - on top of these one is forced to borrow money for travelling costs to and from the town/recruiting centre.
- On arrival and assumption of duties we are shuffled about/bossed by the manager although there are foremen under whom we're supposed to work and this results (more often than not) in dismissal and there is no one to protect you and to whom you can appeal.
- Another issue is that even if/when there is a telephone call, at our place of work, from our families, we are unable to answer these as we are not called to the phone because we are busy (as the bosses say) we are at work - this leads to a breakdown in contract.
- If a member of your family is ill you have difficulty getting leave to go and be near him/her and should you want him/her to come to you and be near medical treatment she is not allowed to come, or is arrested, and then should you overcome these problems there is the accommodation problem which is a very big one.
- A wife is important to each husband, the enforced separation can lead to adultery. This means that the life of a migrant is not the life of healthy, normal people. All this means that migrant labour and a jail term, as far as our condition is concerned, is not is not very different - for even in our restaurants we can hardly sleep because of the relentless raids of the police. All this, therefore, means that the day you are fortunate enough to get a contract your life as a convict has begun.



An anti-LRA planning meeting in the Community House courtyard. Throughout the 1980s mass struggles of school and community youth merged with township struggles to form civics and contest apartheid's reforms. Many of these struggles galvanised around the United Democratic Front (UDF). At the same time workers were launching new independent trade unions. These unions started discussions in Cape Town to form a united trade union body and by 1985 many had united to form the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). In 1987, more than half of the membership of COSATU was on strike. Some called it "the year of the working class". The government made plans to clamp down on this threat to its control. It planned amendments to the LRA which would make it far more difficult for the trade unions to take action and survive. COSATU responded with a stay-away in June 1988.

Community House has been a centre of political activism since it was founded in **1987** - a period of mass working class struggles against apartheid-capitalism across South Africa



Photo: National Archives, 1930

Community House is located in Salt River, an area which housed the light industries of early 20th century Cape Town.

In earlier decades the building reflected the apartheid-era divisions of the day. In the early 1900s the site housed the 'Bond vir Maatskaplike Werk', a white, Afrikaans social service that conducted community work in Salt River. Then from 1930 the site was a hostel for young white rural women who had moved to the city looking for work. It was run by the Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereniging (ACVV).



Salt River Circle

Guava Juice

shake shake my comrade
shake that invention of the working class
shake that unifying medicine before it's too late
shake before the time come to pass
shake that guava juice

throw throw qabane
throw that liquid of capitalist invention
throw the blood of Ntsikane
throw before they see your intention
throw that guava juice

dance dance my hero
dance around the fire of resistance
dance at the success of your throw
dance because the dogs are still at a distance
dance for that guava juice

make make my young lion
make another guava juice
make another one as strong as iron
make many more until they beg for a truce
make those many guava juices

beg, beg you bastard
beg that your filthy skin be spared
beg that your blood does not flood
beg because we have many guava juices stored
beg those little dangerous guava juices

Sandile Dikeni, 1980



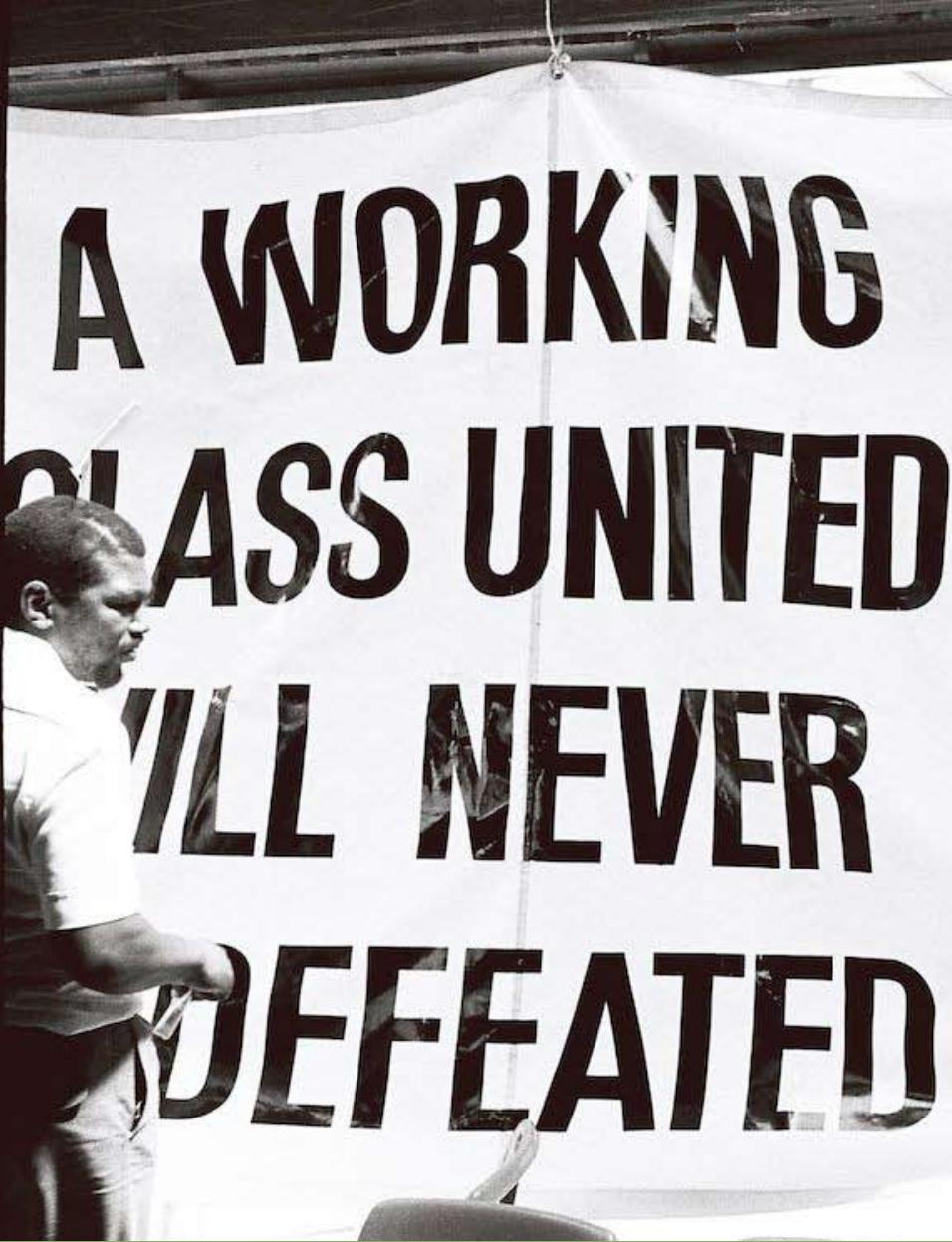
In the mid-1980s, apartheid South Africa saw heightened repression, the revival of the workers' movement and an intense struggle for liberation.

Trade unions and civic and service organizations needed a base from which the struggle could be waged. The Western Province Council of Churches (WPCC) and an NGO, the Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT) purchased the Community House site, a dilapidated auto-workshop in Salt River. The area marks the origins of industrial unions in the province and is known for its textile and light metal factories and the site has history of service and support to the surrounding community.

After two years of renovations, Community House was official opened on 21st August 1987. Agents of the apartheid state bombed it eight days later. Despite this, a base of support and collective mobilization for a diverse range of organizations was established.

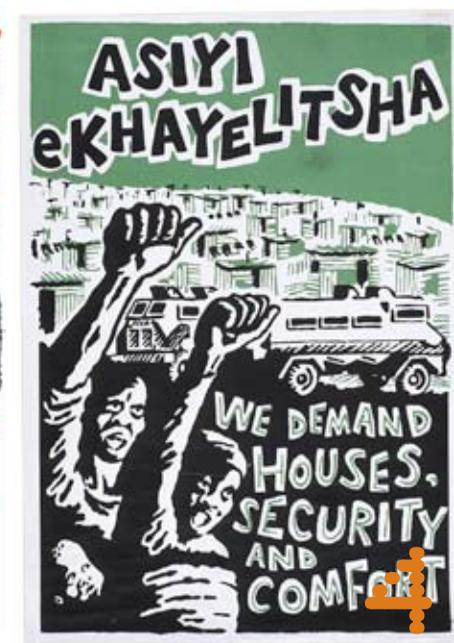
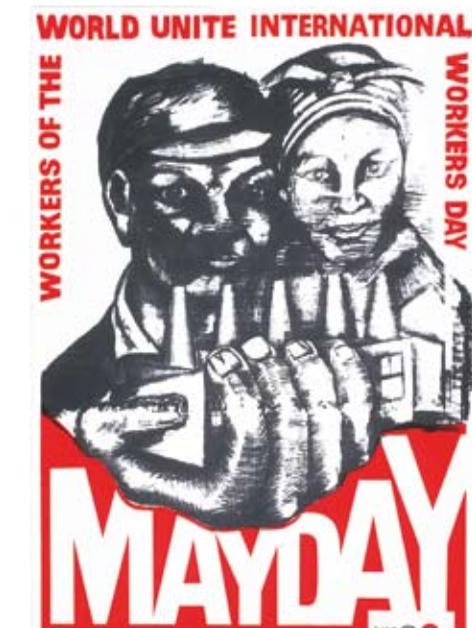
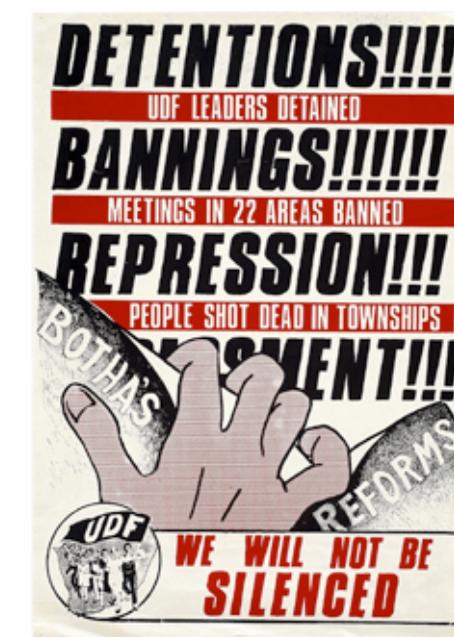
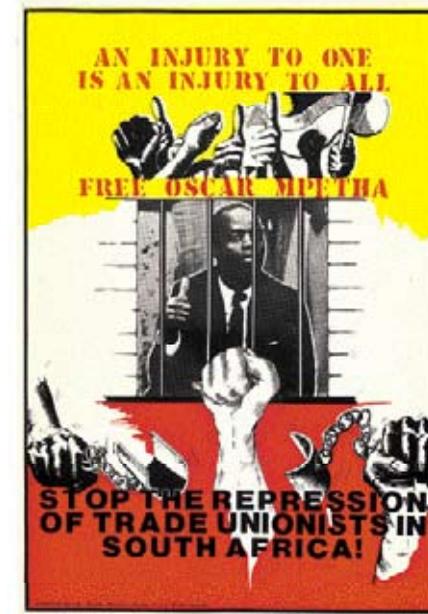
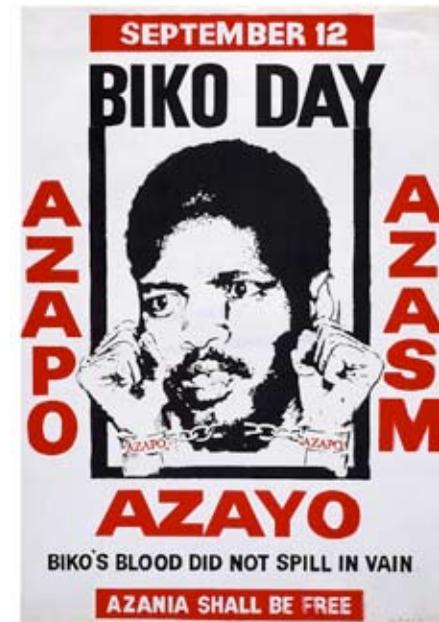
Today, Community House continues to house organisations engaged in struggles for social change.

Mural, Falko, Community House, 2011



During the 1980s & early 1990s many organisations engaged in the struggles against apartheid-capitalism were located at Community House:

Afrapix, AIDS Support and Education Clinic IHRG, ANC Election Office 1994, Association for Women in Development (AWID), Biowatch, Call of Islam, Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC), Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU), Children's Resource Centre (CRC), Churches Urban Planning Centre (CUPC), Community Arts Project (CAP) Media Project, Community Research Group, Congress of SA Students (COSAS), Congress of SA Trade Unions (COSATU), Earthlife Africa, Education, Research and Information Project (ERIP), Engender Health, Environmental Justice Network (EJN), Frontline Africa, ICHAWU, Institute for Petroleum Strategy and Research (IPSR), International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG), Khulumani Support Group, Koeberg Alert, Labour Research Services (LRS), Mandlovu/Social Trends, Menstrust South Africa, Molo Songololo, New Women's Movement (NWM), Ogoni Solidarity Forum, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers' Union (PPWAWU), People's Choice, SA Communist Party (SACP), SA Domestic Workers' Union (SADWU), SA Railways and Harbours Workers' Union (SARHWU), Security & Allied Workers Union of South Africa, Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Trust (SWEAT), South African National Zakha Fund, Trade Union Labour Education Centre (TULEC), Trade Union Library, TRIANGLE Project, Unemployed Workers Movement (UWM), United Democratic Front (UDF), Western Cape Students' Congress (WESCO), Western Province Council of Churches (WPCC), Western Province Students' Council, Woodstock Advice Office (WAO)



2010: COMMUNITY HOUSE DECLARED A PROVINCIAL HERITAGE SITE

The heritage project aims to ensure a resourced site that reasserts Community House's identity as a vibrant centre of debate and action – a worker and community resource for reflection, knowledge production and self-organisation.

Community House Board 2010

In 2010 the site's significance was gazetted: *"At the height of Apartheid repression in the 1980s, Community House came to symbolize the collective spirit of a mass movement that fought the final battle against an unjust regime. Today it still functions as a home for civic organisations".*

In the construction of South African national heritage, the histories of organized workers and working class communities have been largely ignored. In 2007 the Community House tenants and activists embarked on a plan to establish Community House as a multi-purpose labour and community heritage site. Key elements of the plan were to seek provincial heritage status, to resource public areas as a museum precinct and to conserve the building.

The process was driven by the collaborative work of the longstanding anchor tenants, COSATU, the Labour Research Services [LRS], and the International Labour Research Group [ILRIG]. As part of the site development process the founding representatives have stepped down from the Board of Community House. They have been replaced by the anchor tenants - COSATU, LRS, ILRIG and a tenant representative from the Workers World Media Project.

The heritage project celebrates the role of working class communities in the making of history; enhances the working environment of tenants and their constituencies; revitalizes the site to meet the needs of local communities and communities of interest; and strengthen its long history of self-reliance through office rentals and the hiring of its three halls.

Community House adopts the concept of museum as a multi-purpose site of civic engagement, a space of knowledge and debate, informed by memory and history but forward-looking.

The proposed accommodation of the CAP Poster & T-shirt Workshop on the ground floor of Community House in 1986 saw me delegated as CAP representative on the Board of Trustees where I negotiated that CAP should paint a mural in the renovated building. Not an easy negotiation as the Trustees were (understandably) hesitant about mess, unfinished and/or possibly hideous results. The passage between the foyers was the compromise offer. A bunch of volunteer recruits of CAP teachers, students and associated stalwarts prepared the design through processes that included life drawing sessions (various struggle poses), model-making and scale drawings.

Once approved, the painting had to be done while the builders were off-site; this involved many wet and windy evening and weekends in the half-completed building. While the volunteer group thinned out as time went by, a hardy core persisted to the end, joined from time to time by drop-in contributors and visited by critical observers who joined in, and often provoked, the on-site arguments about gender representivity, 'workerism', anti-racial v. non-racial, ANC hegemony, 'liberation before education'....and so on.

To the amazement of the trustees, the mural was completed in time for the opening, the floor was spotless and we thought the results were pretty OK.

Trish De Villiers

COMMUNITY HOUSE ARTWORKS

Prior to the opening of Community House in 1986 the Community House Board commissioned the mural below.



During the 1980s, a number of labour and community activists were commemorated in Community House's halls and foyers. The commemoration of Elijah Loza, Jeanette Curtis, Ashley Kriel, Neil Aggett, Imam Haron, Storey Mazwembe and Wilfred Rhodes represents thousands of others who were detained, tortured and killed by the apartheid regime.

As part of the heritage project, Community House called for artist to submit proposals for seven art installations, as permanent memorials to those commemorated - and for a large-scale outdoor mural reflecting the significance of the site. Proposals were selected by an independent committee. These artworks are central to the heritage project.





JEANETTE EVA CURTIS: 1948 – 1984

At 18, while still at school, Jeanette Curtis became politically active, campaigning against the Sabotage Act. As a university student she played an active role in the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), holding key positions in the organisation. In 1971 Curtis was instrumental in the establishment of the Wages Commissions on various campuses throughout the country. They aimed to provide labour related services and education for workers while mobilising for ‘workers power’.

The early 1970s saw a revival of the workers’ movement in South Africa. The Wages Commissions joined forces with older trade unionists in the building of workers’ organisations. Curtis was key to a number of these developments. These initiatives led to the Western Province Workers Advice Bureau (WPWAB) launched in Cape Town on 5 March 1973 and the Industrial Aid Society (IAS) in Johannesburg.

Employed as an archivist at the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), while continuing her trade union activities, Curtis’ passport was confiscated 1974. In 1975 she was detained for three months under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act. In November 1976, in the Apartheid state’s brutal efforts to suppress dissent after the student uprising in June, Curtis like many trade unionists across the country, was banned.

In January 1977 Curtis enrolled for the Development Studies postgraduate course at Wits. In April that year she was charged with contravening her banning order. The hearing was postponed, but in June, Curtis married Marius Schoon, a recently released political prisoner. The following day they skipped the country, into exile in Botswana. Here, registered as refugees, they worked to build the ANC and SACTU. Both Schoon and Curtis taught at a secondary school in Botswana until July 1981 when they started working for a British organisation, International Voluntary Service, as field officers.

Their daughter, Katryn, was born in 1978 and their son Fritz in 1982. Constantly under threat from the apartheid state, the ANC redeployed them to Lusaka, Zambia in July 1983. After three months they were sent to teach in Lubango, Angola. It was during the time that Schoon was reporting to the ANC in Lusaka that Curtis and their daughter were killed by a letter bomb. Their son Fritz witnessed the killing.

Craig Williamson, a spy of the apartheid government who had infiltrated NUSAS, was responsible for Curtis’ assassination. He applied for amnesty to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Schoon engaged in a prolonged legal battle around Williamson’s amnesty. In 1999, Marius died without seeing justice done. Williamson was granted amnesty.



LOVELL FRIEDMAN
artist

Lovell Friedman is a practising ceramicist and mosaic artist. She completed a BA (fine art) and MFA at Michaelis UCT. She has exhibited her sculptures in many individual and group shows. In recent years she has worked on public art projects and commissions. She has taught and shared skills in various communities since the 1980’s.

Her public commissions include Guga Stebe’ (Langa), Red Cross children’s Hospital, UCT Medical School, artwork for I.R.T at Green Point Stadium, Khayalitsha library with VPUU, and a recent memorial for destitute children in the city centre.



As a way of honouring the memory of Jenny Curtis, I have combined image and text to tell her story. In the process of making this mosaic, I have pieced together fragments and shards from her personal and public life. In revisiting and researching her story, I thank Sherry and Fritz . I have included some of their archival pieces, which have been fired onto ceramic tiles. In addition, I have included a powerful and meaningful poem, by Chris Mann, and a poster made by Patti Henderson, both of whom were Jenny’s friends. The crude lettering and even spelling mistakes of letters she wrote are intended to evoke the look and style of the hand made posters of the 1980’s. These convey a sense of the haste and urgency of the time. **LOVELL FRIEDMAN**



DONOVAN WARD

artist

Donovan Ward is a Cape Town based artist, having studied at The Ruth Prowse School of Art and the Community Arts Project. Ward's solo exhibitions include Residues and Emergences (1998), Ash, Dust and Trade Marks (2002), and Barbie Bartmann Homecoming Queen (2005). Ward has also participated in several group exhibitions, most recently A Natural Selection (2011/12). International exhibitions include the Dakar Biennale (2002, Senegal), Apartheid / the South African Mirror (2007, Spain) and Uniform: South Africa's New Clothes, (2007, USA).



ASHLEY JAMES KRIEL 1966-1987

Ashley Kriel grew up in Bonteheuwel, a working class township on the Cape Flats. Bonteheuwel was established in the 1960s to house those people classified as 'Coloured' who were forcibly removed from their homes, in particular from District Six. Ashley was the only son and middle child of the Kriel family. His father was killed when he was six and from an early age Ashley did part-time work, selling 'Die Burger' newspaper to supplement the family income.

Ashley Kriel attended primary school in the area and Bonteheuwel Senior Secondary for most of his high school career. He excelled in maths, physics and science. Criminal gangs are a feature of life in Bonteheuwel and in the early 1980s Ashley and two friends established the GAP Brotherhood, providing a positive alternative for youth in the area.

Kriel was actively involved in youth and student movements in the area. At the age of 14 he joined the Bonteheuwel Youth Movement, BYM, (an affiliate of CAYCO, the Cape Youth Congress,). He was a founder member of the Bonteheuwel Inter-Schools Congress (BISCO), which was formed to coordinate the activities of the student representative councils of Arcadia High, Bonteheuwel High and Modderdam High Schools. Actively involved in civic issues as well as workers struggles in his community, Kriel assumed leadership responsibilities and was renowned throughout the Western Cape as a charismatic public speaker. Kriel was involved in the establishment of a paramilitary, revolutionary group, the Bonteheuwel Military Wing (BMW). The group, which embarked on a programme of violent resistance, had the endorsement of the United Democratic Front and Umkhonto we Sizwe operatives provided them with arms and training.

Kriel and his family were under the constant surveillance and harassment by the Security Police who would frequently enter and raid their house at night, threatening to shoot him down 'like a rabbit' should they get hold of him. At times he went into hiding. The last time his family saw him was on Christmas Eve in 1985 - a week later they were informed by one of his comrades that he had left the country. Their nightly harassment and threats by the security police continued until his death in 1987.

Upon leaving the country in late December 1985, Kriel joined the ANC and underwent military training in Angola. He infiltrated the country in April 1987 and was living at a house in Hazendal, a small working class suburb near Athlone. On 9 July 1987, WO Benzien of the Terrorism Detection Unit and Sergeant AD Abels went to the house in which Kriel was staying. They allege that Kriel opened the door holding a pistol concealed beneath a towel and a scuffle broke out during which Benzien shot Kriel in the back with his own weapon.

However witness testimony and forensic evidence contradicts the police version of events. Kriel's sister Michél Assure found a bloodstained spade as well as bloodstained clothing at the scene. The TRC Commission established that the incident had been planned in the Athlone police station. The Kriel family opposed the Benzien's amnesty application to the TRC. The TRC granted Benzien amnesty.

"He was loved, not only by his family but also by many of us who saw in him the embodiment of all our hopes. He was young, from an impoverished background but held his own on public platforms with veteran leaders such as Alan Boesak and Oscar Mpetha. Watching Ashley made me conscious of his commanding presence offering assured leadership. The youth of the Cape had somebody they could admire, who had transcended all boundaries."

Zubeida Jaffer in her memoir, *Our Generation*.

an excerpt from Nadine Cloete's film 'Action Kommandant'.



The portrait of Kriel is laser cut, from steel, in the style of the cardboard stencils utilized by artists/activists, with the spaces in the steel revealing a cement like base, partly covered in graffiti, collage and text, illustrating Kriel's life and time. This surface was aged by abrasion, and the application of dust, silt and rust stains. Stainless steel razor wire, suggestive of the cross hairs of a gun, intersects and circles behind the portrait, bolting it down. **DONOVAN WARD**





NKOALI NAWA
artist

was born in Welkom in 1965 in a goldfields area. In 1980's Nawa worked as mine labourer and also as security patrolman. He obtained his National Diploma in Fine Art (1998) and a B Tech Fine Art (2001), both from the Central University of Technology (previously known as Technikon Free State) in Bloemfontein. Nawa has participated in residency programmes at the Bag Factory in Johannesburg and at Greatmore Studios in Cape Town. In 2003 he took part in Thupelo International Workshop. In 2005 he participated in an artist-in-residency programme in Pontardawe Arts Centre in Swansea in Wales. Works in this programme toured throughout several art museums in Wales. Nawa has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally and has completed numerous commissions. Nawa currently work as a temporary educator teaching Visual arts at Letsete Secondary School and previously at Teto Secondary School both in Welkom.

LUKE STOREY MAZWEMBE: 1944 TO 1976

Luke Mazwembe, known as Storey to his friends, was the first detainee to die in police detention in the 1970s. Originally from Engcobo in the Eastern Cape, on his death in detention in 1976 he was 33 years old. At the time he was an organizer for the Western Province Workers Advice Bureau (WPWAB).

The early 1970s mobilisation of workers was deemed critical. The Western Province Workers Advice Bureau (WPWAB) was established on 5 March 1973. Their immediate objective was to establish, advise and train works committees.

In early 1975 workers at Lupini Brothers, a stonemasonry firm in the building industry, dissatisfied with their working conditions, established contact with the WPWAB. They decided to set up a works committee affiliated to the Workers Advice Bureau. Mazwembe, a contract worker, was key to this initiative. Chairperson of the works committee and an excellent organiser, he and his committee successfully challenged their management, who acceded to their demands, with the exception of their wage demand. Their success was evidenced in management's counter-offensive. In May 1975 Lupini Brothers management informed Storey Mazwembe and a fellow committee member that their labour contracts had expired and would not be renewed. This, despite the fact that their contracts had been renewed annually for more than 10 years. Their reinstatement never took place in spite of their fellow workers' demands. Lupini management was able to use this offensive to break the back of the works committee .

Given his strong organisational skills, the WPWAB employed Mazwembe as an organiser. However the Department of Bantu Administration blocked his registration as an employee. In 1976, following the Soweto youth uprising, the Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC) called three successful consecutive political strikes - national stayaways. The WPWAB supported the strikes and they met on 1 September 1976 to discuss strategy. His comrades noted: "On occasion strong criticisms were voiced against the state, amongst others by Storey Mazwembe, one of the organisers. At 4.00am three organisers, including Mazwembe, and two office-bearers were detained."

He was dead within a few hours of his arrest, allegedly found in a police cell. The police were unable to explain how the razor blade and twine had got into the cell. His death was officially described as 'suicide by hanging'. At the inquest the state pathologist stated that given Mazwembe's physical state he could not exclude the possibility that he had been killed and then hanged to fake a suicide. Despite this, the magistrate ruled that Mazwembe was neither tortured nor assaulted by the police.

"Storey will always be remembered by his friends and acquaintances as a person who died in the prime of his life while standing shoulder to shoulder with his fellow workers in the struggle."

Obituary: South African Outlook 1975



Creating the artwork was a huge challenge. After reading a given brief about Storey Mazwembe I felt spiritually connected to his hard

labouring experiences. As an ex-miner, security patrolman and also worked as an organizer for the Trade Union, this helped me a lot in coming up with ideas related to the brief. The chosen medium used to create the art piece denotes the hardships experienced or still experiencing by ordinary labourers. **NKOALI NAWA**



Luke Mazwembe c 1975





ATHI-PATRA RUGA

artist

Exploring the border-zones between fashion, performance and contemporary art, Athi-Patra Ruga makes work that exposes and subverts the body in relation to structure, ideology and politics. Bursting with eclectic multicultural references, carnal sensuality and a dislocated undercurrent of humor, his performances, videos, costumes and photographic images create a world where cultural identity is no longer determined by geographical origins, ancestry or biological disposition, but is increasingly becoming a hybrid construct. A Utopian counter-proposal to the sad dogma of the division between mind and body, sensuality and intelligence, pop culture, craft and fine art, his works expresses the eroticism of knowledge and reconciles the dream with experience. Athi-Patra Ruga has exhibits locally and internationally and was recently included in the Phaidon book 'Younger Than Jesus', a directory of over 500 of the world's best artists under the age of 33.

ELIJAH NKWENKWE LOZA: 1918 – 1977

Born in Langa, Cape Town, in 1918, by the early 1960s Elijah Loza was a militant activist, a South African Congress of Trade Union (SACTU) trade unionist, secretary of the African Commercial and Distributive Workers Union in the Western Cape, and member of the Regional Command of the African National Congress' (ANC) military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. In 1963 he was detained for three successive 90-day periods. He was then sentenced to six years on Robben Island for furthering the aims of the ANC. Although released on appeal after five months, he was served a five-year banning order and placed under house arrest. When he and other ANC-SACTU leaders were un-banned in 1972, many of their comrades had gone into exile for military training. Despite the repression of the time Loza and his comrades renewed their political activity. It was decided that unions in the Western Cape should be revived - but not under SACTU.

By that time the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) students at the University of Cape Town had established a Wages Commission, with the intention of organizing workers. The trade unionists and student activists agreed that it would be strategic to establish an advice bureau rather than organize the workers into trade unions. Their objective was to establish works committees in factories - their longer-term objective was to establish a federations of these committees and ultimately, independent democratic trade unions. Thus the Western Province Workers Advice Bureau (WPWAB) was opened on 5 March 1973.

The 1970s saw the revival of a militant, independent workers movement in South Africa, paving the way for the mass struggles of the 1980s - with organized labour at its centre. Through his involvement in the WPWAB and as an organizer for the General Workers Union (WPGWU), Elijah Loza played an important role in this mobilization of the working class. In the wake of the 1976 national stayaways, called by the Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC) many trade unionists across the country were served with banning orders. Loza was served his third banning order.

On May 27, 1977 Elijah Loza was again detained under the 90-day legislation. Two weeks later he was found in a coma in his cell and was admitted into Tygerberg hospital with brain damage . On 1 August 1977 he died, still detained, in hospital. Officials at the time stated that he had died of a stroke. Relatives insisted that he had been severely beaten during interrogation.

“...the government feared men like Elijah Loza who not only understood the workers struggle but also the students and young people of his day.“

Crisis News, September 1986



“Elijah Loza was not powerful and rich.

He did not have a string of degrees and he had not written articles for well-known publications.

His strength and power lay in this commitment and willingness to struggle for others

- for those who are ignored and unwanted, for those who face the daily brutal reality of apartheid.”

Crisis News, September 1986



The title "trauma/traum" refers to the feeling that I and many south africans of my generation have with regards to the atrocities: "Was it a bad , bad , bad dream?". The fantasy scene brings this feeling to life. **ATHI-PATRA RUGA**





CHRIS LEDOCHOWSKI
artist

In the mid eighties Ledochowski began an extensive documentation on the formation and development of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and affiliated unions in the Western Cape as well as other non governmental organisations, many of which were based at Community House. In the late eighties he co-established the Cape Town Branch of Afrapix Photo Agency at Community House and held photographic workshops for the Cape Artists Project's (CAP) Media Project, developing the media skills of union and NGO activists.

ABDULLAH HARON: 1924 - 1969

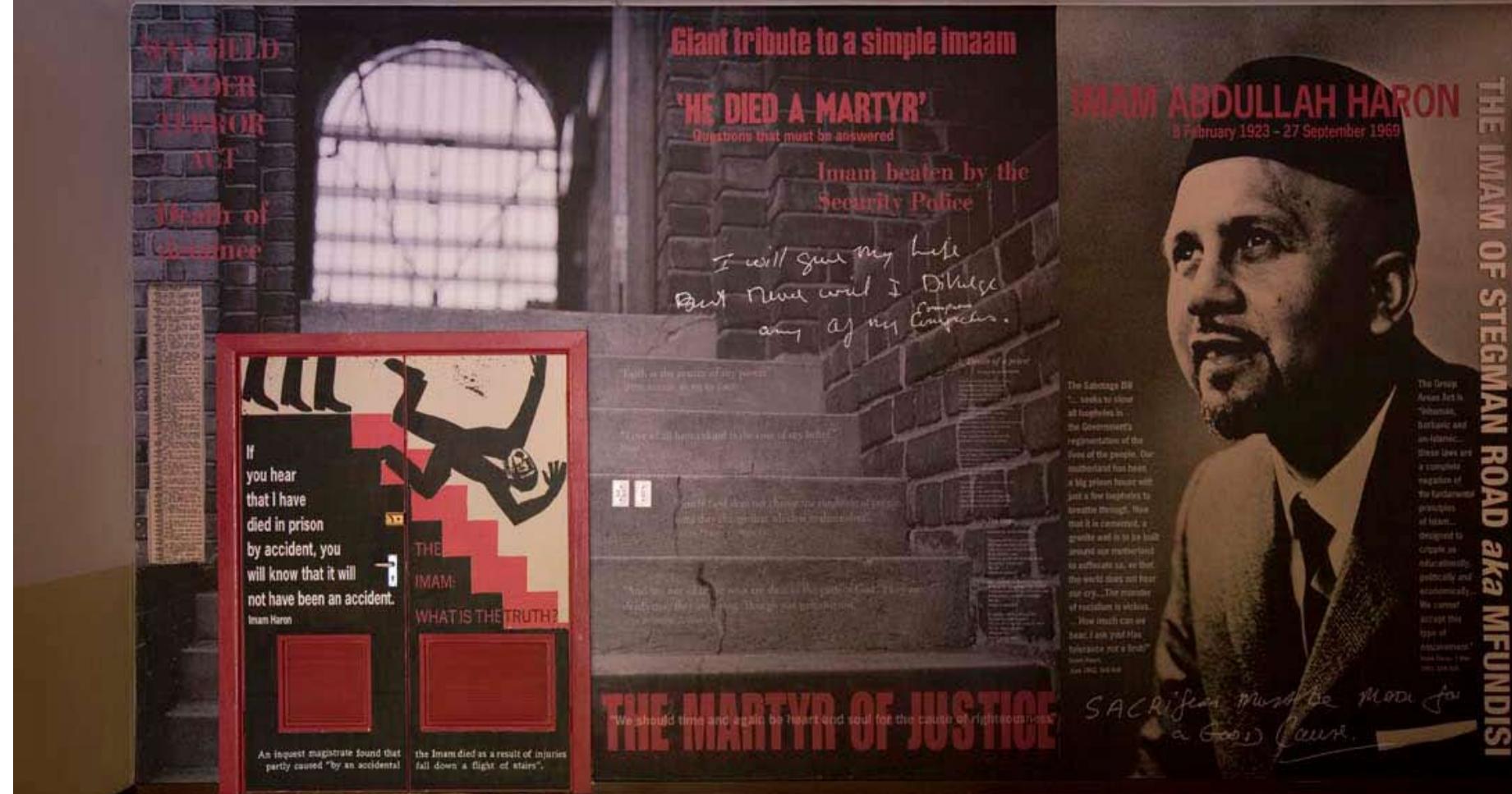
Abdullah Haron was born in Claremont, in the southern suburbs of Cape Town. He was very young when his mother died and was brought up by his aunt Mariam. After his primary school years he travelled to Mecca (Saudi Arabia) where he spent two years to pursue 'Islamic Studies.' On his return to South Africa he continued his studies under local shaykhs. As a youth he was concerned for the social welfare of his community and the broader Cape Town communities. Some of his close friends who were members of the Teacher's League of South Africa and the Non-European Unity Movement shared with him ideas and these further advanced his socio-political conscientisation.

Haron worked first in his father's shop in 'Sambokland' (in the Lansdowne area) and later secured a job as a sales representative at Wilson Rowntree; a British sweet company. In 1950 he married Galiema Sadan and his daughter was born in December that year. In late 1955 when he fathered a second child, he was appointed Imam of the congregation at Al-Jamia Mosque in Claremont. He served this congregation with dedication and vigour until his death in 1969. Imam Haron refused any salary and his community work was conducted on a voluntary basis. The appointment as Imam provided him with an opportunity to implement his thinking on a range of issues. During the 1950s and 1960s those regarded as 'non-Africans' required permits to enter African townships. As a sales representative, the Imam was able to obtain a permit. This gave him the opportunity to enter the areas of communities and meet people whom, under the conditions of Apartheid separate development in South Africa, he would generally have not. Consequently, he knew and was known by many people in the Cape Flats townships, who affectionately called him 'mfundisi' - priest.

In March 1960, after the historic Pan Africanist Congress of Azania [PAC] march of 30 000 people on Cape Town, the Imam, in his Friday sermon spoke of human brotherhood in Islam and the role that Muslims should play in supporting those who were worse off within the Apartheid system. In the early 1960s, thousands of workers, in particular PAC activists, were detained and imprisoned for their political activities, leaving many families destitute. Haron felt it his duty to assist these families. He supported the activities of the PAC and developed strong ties with Barney Desai, a PAC member and former member of the Coloured People's Congress, who had by then gone into exile.

In 1965 the Imam and his family were forced to move from Claremont to Lansdowne, under the Group Areas Act. In 1968 he journeyed to Mecca, addressed a conference in Cairo and met with PAC members in exile there. It was suggested that he seriously consider exile as he was under constant security police surveillance. On May 28 1969 Imam Haron was detained under the 180-Day Terrorism Act. Throughout his detention he fasted as he had done every Monday and Thursday since his youth.

On the evening of September 27, 1969, Haron's wife was informed by the security police that he had fallen down a staircase in prison and died. Prior to this - on 17 and 19 September, the Imam had been taken from the police cells and interrogated. At the time of his death there was evidence of prior multiple bruising. The family's legal representative argued that he had been beaten in efforts to extract a statement from him, and that this trauma had resulted in his death. Nevertheless the Apartheid state's inquest ruled that no-one was responsible for his death. To date no one has been charged, arrested or tried for his murder. Imam Haron's Janazah (funeral) Prayer was attended by almost 30,000 people.



The primary aim of my artwork was to reintroduce a once familiar portrait of Imam Haron to the hall. Over many years, the presence of the portrait cemented the identity of this space in Community House. The second element to the composition is a photograph I took of the actual staircase down which the Imam 'allegedly' fell. This introduces a tension in the work- fact versus fiction – what is the truth? The third visual element in the work is a reproduction of the cover of Barney Desai's book "The killing of the Imam" by artist Ken Sprague, which provides a link to the animated film entitled "The killing of the Imam", courtesy the film maker Khalid Shamis, screened on a monitor. The installation, in essence, brings together works by four artists in the spirit of collective creativity. **CHRIS LEDOCHOWSKI**



STACEY STENT

artist

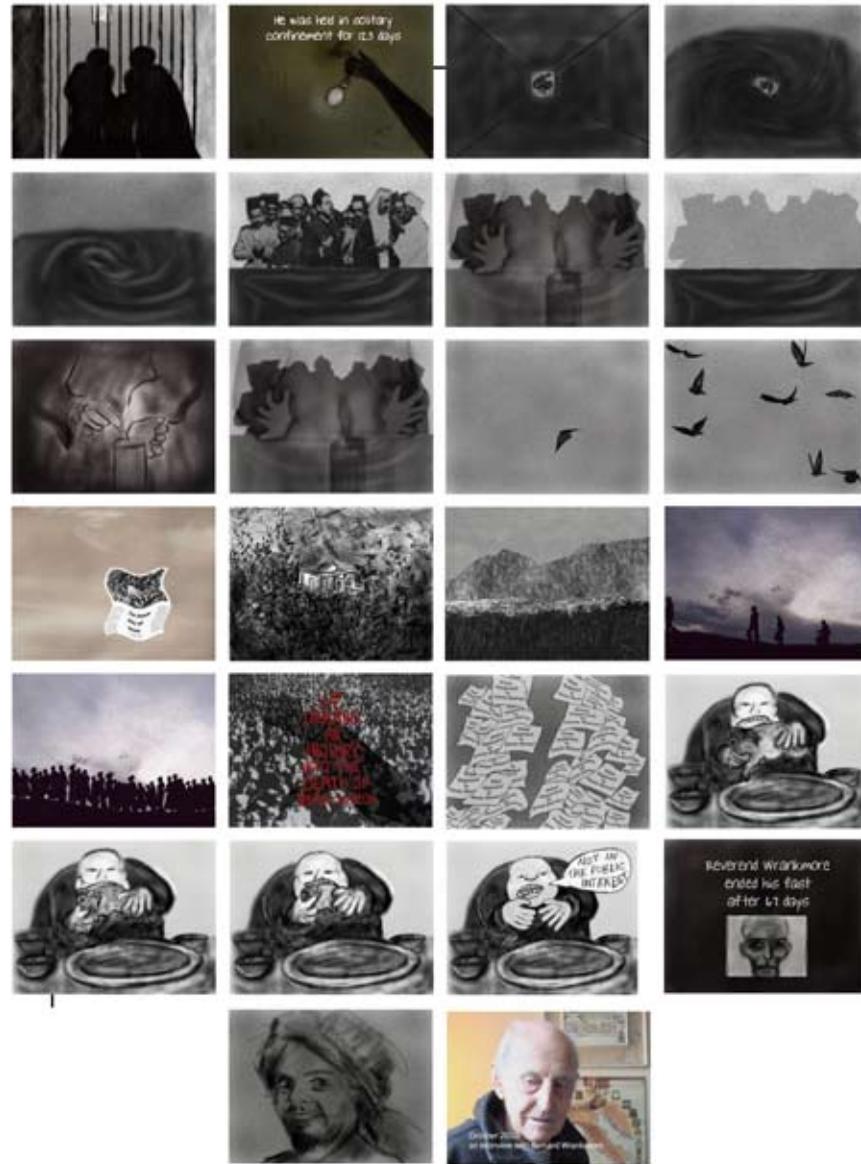
Stacey Stent presently works as a graphic designer, illustrator and animator at the Centre for Educational Technology at University of Cape Town. She also does a regular political cartoon for Noseweek magazine. She started doing cartoons in the 80s and developed a strip called "Who's Left?" for the Weekly Mail from 1987 to 1991. For most of the 1990s she worked as the media officer/graphic designer for Industrial Health Research Group at UCT.

I was not in South Africa when Imam Abdullah Haron was murdered by the apartheid security police. I only became aware of this tragedy in 1971 when Reverend Bernard Wrankmore staged a 67 day fast at the Kramat on Signal Hill in an effort to persuade the Nationalist Party Government to carry out a full inquest into his death. He never succeeded in this quest but he did succeed in enlightening thousands of people, the majority of them white, to the atrocities that were being committed by the apartheid regime and to the words and wisdom of the Imam.

I was a student at the time and this event was a turning point in my life. When the opportunity came to address the Imam Haron story, I welcomed the chance to explore, through my art, this extraordinary piece of history where two men, from different churches, who never met – one, a disciplined academic and orator, the other a passionate wild card, became linked in their search for truth and justice. They are both in their own ways, an inspiration to activists worldwide.

It was my privilege to meet the children of Imam Haron who were very supportive of my work. They allowed me access to their carefully kept archive of writings, pictures and articles by and about the Imam which were invaluable for my research. They were happy that I included Bernard Wrankmore in my story.

The other privilege was to meet Reverend Wrankmore. The excerpt from the film is part of a conversation with him where, despite his frailty, we covered a multitude of subjects including, religion, politics, history and personal stories. Unfortunately Bernard Wrankmore died shortly before I was ready to show him my work in progress. I am forever grateful to have had that time with him. **Stacey Stent**

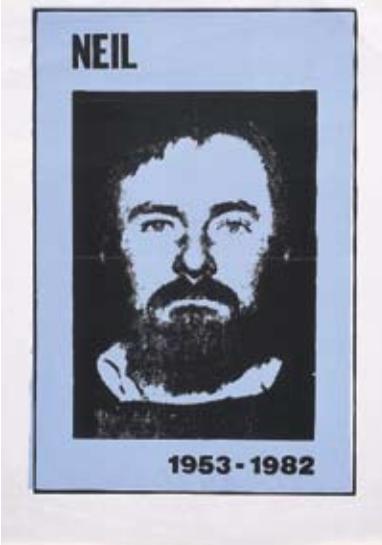


NEIL AGGETT: 1953 – 1982



"Neil saw illness as a manifestation of people's living and working condition. He realized that to treat the affliction he had to change those conditions. The best way for him to play a part in achieving this change was to work as a trade unionist."

Editorial, *Critical Health Journal*, Number 7, NUSAS, April 1982



According to those that knew him Aggett was a shy person, modest and unassuming, leading by example "He commanded respect, by the example he set of quiet hard work and by the respect he himself showed to others."

Neil Aggett Funeral Programme

Born in Kenya in 1953, Neil Aggett was the youngest son of a Kenyan farming family. At the age of ten the family left Kenya and settled in Cape Town, South Africa. The young Neil attended Kingswood College, a boarding school in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. With an excellent academic record he went on to study medicine at the University of Cape Town.

It is during this period that Aggett became aware of the impact the apartheid system had on the health of those it oppressed. As editor of a medical student magazine he promoted the concept of community health. Upon graduating in 1976 he spent the first six months of his internship at Umtata Hospital (then Transkei). The second period of his internship was spent at Thembisa Hospital in Johannesburg. These experiences confirmed his belief that social problems lay at the heart of his patients' health problems.

On completion of his internship in 1977 he worked at night at Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto as a Casualty Officer. During this time he also did part-time work for the Industrial Aid Society (IAS). The IAS had arisen out of an alliance between Wages Commission students at Wits University and SACTU members and aimed to provide workers education and legal assistance. Aggett dealt with health complaints and assisted workers with Workman's Compensation issues.

Through the IAS he deepened his relationship with workers' organisations. The experience spurred his belief that change in South Africa was dependent on the building of a strong workers' movement. He became involved in the African Food and Canning Workers Union (AFCW) and was later asked to assist in an official capacity. In 1979 he was secretary of the Transvaal branch of AFCWU.

At this time the Fattis and Monis strike was underway. Aggett's commitment assisted in the building of AFCWU branches in, what was then, the Transvaal. According to the union he also played a leading role building solidarity and comradeship between the various unions in the region. In 1981 he was tasked with organising a campaign with workers in Langa, Cape Town. His work to establish a strong, democratic and united trade union movement made him a target of harassment by the security police.

He was detained on the morning of the 26th of November 1981 under Section 22 of the General Laws Amendment Act and re-detained 14 days later under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act. His partner Liz Floyd with whom he had worked in the IAS was detained on the same day and released five months later. Aggett was taken to Pretoria Central Prison and later transferred to John Vorster Square in Johannesburg. He was held in solitary confinement.

He died in detention on 5 February 1982, allegedly by hanging himself by with a scarf, although the inquest revealed his death was as a result of police torture.



DAVID HLONGWANE
artist

David Hlongwane was born in Zwelethemba Township, Worcester. After completing his high school education, he joined CAP [Community Arts Project] in 1984 - after reading about it in Grassroots, a community newspaper.

From 1988 to 1991 David studied art in Italy. David has exhibited in South Africa and abroad. He currently works in the Heritage Department of the Robben Island Museum.



The purpose of the artworks is to interpret the life of Neil Aggett and the work he has done as an activist in the food and health sector and to commemorate his untimely death. He will be remembered as one of our fallen comrades, a leader which one could look up to. He reminds us that what he stood for, workers' rights, are human rights.

David Hlongwane



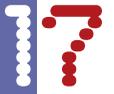
The Neil Aggett Painting Installation is a collaboration artwork between David Hlongwane and myself. It was quite a challenge to come up with a concrete concept to work for both of us, as we are two very different artists in term of our techniques and approach to art making. But the outcome is indicative of the philosophy of Neil Aggett, that people of different backgrounds can work together and achieve a positive meaningful result.

Selvin November



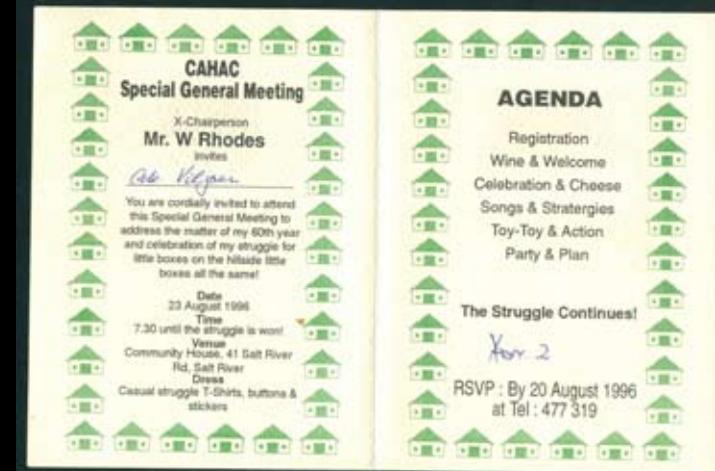
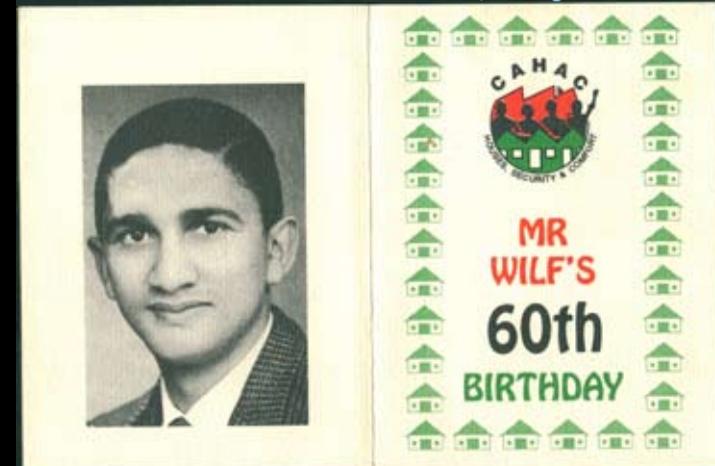
SELVIN NOVEMBER
artist

Since the early years of 2000's, Selvin's has been involved in the creation of conceptual socio-political work that includes paintings, video installations, sound performances and performance art. The work explores issues of globalization - in terms of international influence exerted on South African culture at large. "The idea is to investigate culture, and in my case to deconstruct my 'community' and as Dewey said: 'art expresses the life of a community'" (Art as Experience 1934)



“The first words that come to my mind are principled and total commitment... He was a very humble man, a factory worker who lost his job because of the struggle ... He lived his whole life in service of the community. As chairperson of CAHAC he had always put the lives of others before his own. I will always remember him as a dedicated comrade, very reliable and dependable.”

CAPE UDF STRUGGLE LEGEND PASSES AWAY, 15 August 2002



WILFRED RHODES: 1936 - 2002

Wildred Rhodes was legend on the Cape Flats, renowned for his involvement in civic struggles. Throughout his life Rhodes demonstrated a commitment to community. He was a founder chairperson of the Cape Housing Action Committee (CAHAC), an umbrella body for civic structure across the Cape Flats, established in 1980. Sports development was Rhodes' passion. At the time of his death he was involved in a badminton development programme on the Cape Flats. He was also a lay preacher in the United Congregation Church.



Rhodes, married to Magdalene, had two daughters. He worked at a textile factory for about 28 years before he was retrenched for his political activities. With the formation of the UDF in 1984, Rhodes campaigned tirelessly to achieve a non-racial, democratic South Africa. At the annual meeting of CAHAC in 1984, Rhodes opened his address with this statement: “We have reached another milestone in the life of CAHAC. The PC [Presidential Council Proposals], the Tricameral Parliament and the formation of the UDF forced us to see our struggle in a far broader context than the struggle for decent houses.”

In 1986 Rhodes was detained for a long period. On his release, he indicated that, because of his desire to work with community members, he preferred to work as an organiser. In the early 1980s, “the focal personality of the social movements in Cape Town had been largely redefined as the organizer; a person who identifies commonly held grievances and facilitates a group's collective action. The role of the organizer had been defining a common platform in local communities and at local work places for a diverse cross-section of radicals who only began to split into their different camps once organization had reached a certain level The UDF would never have emerged without a core of radical organizers driving the process through their deep commitment to practical recruitment.”¹

With the unbanning of the ANC in 1990 Rhodes was nominated branch chairperson in Kensington. In the early 1990s he took on the task of managing Community House, where he lived and work until his death in 2002.

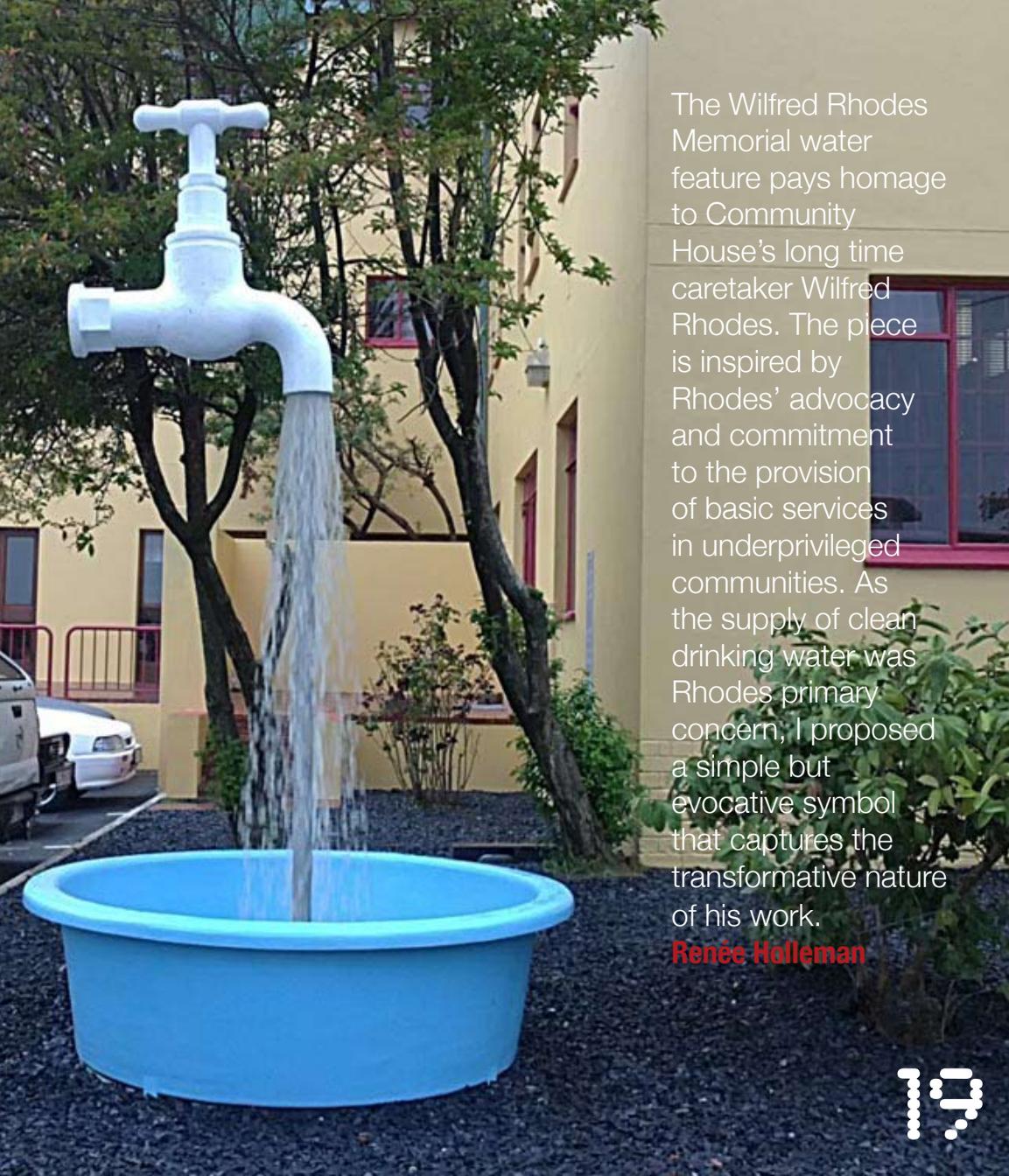
1. The Tricameral Boycott of 1980, Gorm Gunnarsen



RENÉE HOLLEMAN artist

Renée Holleman is an artist and writer working in wide range of media including text, drawing, installation and sound. She completed her postgraduate studies at the Michaelis School of Fine Art in 2008, and has exhibited individually and collaboratively with Doing it for Daddy on various local and international shows. Recent exhibitions include A Novel in Parts (2011) (solo show), There is a Lovely Land: Museet for Samtidskunst, Denmark (2010), In Other Words: Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2010) and Johannesburg Art Fair with What if the World Gallery (2010). Holleman lives in Cape Town where she is currently lecturing at the Michaelis School of Fine Art.

Unlike others commemorated at Community House, Wilfred Rhodes was not killed by the apartheid regime, nor did he die prior to South Africa's liberation. However, at the time of his death Wilfred Rhodes was the manager of the Community House in Salt River. It was considered appropriate to commemorate this stalwart of the liberation struggle, a committed activist within the civic movements of the Western Cape.



The Wilfred Rhodes Memorial water feature pays homage to Community House's long time caretaker Wilfred Rhodes. The piece is inspired by Rhodes' advocacy and commitment to the provision of basic services in underprivileged communities. As the supply of clean drinking water was Rhodes primary concern, I proposed a simple but evocative symbol that captures the transformative nature of his work.

Renée Holleman



**MANFRED
ZYLLO**
artist

Born in 1939, Zylla lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa and Munich, Germany. Manfred is a renowned resistance artist and experienced muralist and has recently worked on a large mural project in Germany. Zylla's traveling museum retrospective is currently touring throughout the country.

“My paintings are dealing with issues, which affect all of us. They tell the plight of the world, and point to my strong concern with the destiny of humanity, the future of the planet and most importantly art as a tool for change.



think of me, sometime,
as you rise at dawn
the day like your heart,
filled with dreams and
hopes that will come true
while i am filled with doubt

extract from a poem written by James Matthews in detention, 1976

songs of freedom
flap and soar
in factories, streets
and community halls
they can never
cage
the bird
in us

Heather Robertson, 1980s



a site of activism

A LABOUR & COMMUNITY HERITAGE SITE ● A LABOUR & COMMUNITY HERITAGE SITE