



women's work
as creative
practice

a series of creative gatherings around
women's work as creative practice

Gathering 4 TRACES WE LEAVE

Thursday 14 September 2023
2 - 4pm

PROGRAM

Welcome – Bev Butkow
Introduction to prompter- Candice Allison

Keynote Provocation – Zayaan Khan - Spectacular entanglements in the rooted spaces

Speakers

- Io Makandal - Future remains and making mud
- Miliswa Ndziba - Ways of approaching site
- Langelihle Mthembu - When displaced, we use food for comfort
- Dr Meghan Judge - interlude of intrusions

Panel discussion and Q&A
Closing

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF PROCEEDINGS

Editor's note – in places, spoken phrasing and repetitions have been cleaned up slightly to facilitate smoother reading

WELCOME – Bev Butkow – co-curator

Good evening, everybody and welcome to the last one of our creative gatherings around the broad theme of women's work as creative practice. In this series of talks we have tried to provoke, question, and reframe how we exist in the world as individuals in community and in relation to all other living beings.

We have managed to create a space that has been simultaneously exciting, joyous, community and also celebratory. The feedback that we've had from audiences and from speakers, is as a space of

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safety where female creatives can say what they need to say, be vulnerable, be open and know that they are supported, has been an important addition to our creative landscape.

There is a big question that I think comes out of all of these gatherings which is: where do we go from here? Where do we take this incredible community, that has been created and this incredible openness and safe space? How does our community live on and continue? And what form will that take?

acknowledging Candice Allison

This is the moment in which I would really like to acknowledge Candice Allison, our curator, who has stood behind the camera the whole way through this process. She has been in the UK and, unfortunately, has not been able to experience the physical experience of being in this room. It has been so difficult for her not to feel the kind of joyous, exciting, stimulating presence of being in the room as we have had these discussions.

Candice, I would like to say to you that you were one of the first people who recognised my ability as an artist and who helped me grow my confidence in my own creative process. You sat by me, stood by me, pushed me, mentored me and helped me reach a place where I now feel confident within my own creative shoes. And I understand that that's how you frame your role as a curator. And I also understand how much of your curating has been focused on female creatives in South Africa and Southern Africa. And how you have really tried to create space for all of us female creatives. I know for sure that this program would not have happened without you. It was your inspiration, it was your confidence-giving, your contacts with artists. You and I working together late into the night. Moments with your child sitting on your lap. Moments of a crying child. Moments when you sneak out of meetings to try help me with a problem etc. And I am absolutely grateful and appreciative of what you and I have created together.

introducing the theme of our impact on this earth

It feels like this series of talks has been building up to a crescendo and I think this is the moment of that crescendo. When we start thinking deeply about our impact on this earth, we start thinking about materially, socially, environmentally and otherwise, how we engage with each other and on our earth in this age of the Anthropocene. What are our moral, ethical and material responsibilities? What traces do we leave? How do we walk upon this earth?

I understand that there is a lot of huge questions that need to be asked. Around climate change, and environmentalism, but there is also very small questions that need to be asked. Because when we look somebody in the eye, and give them a smile and say hello in a respectful, kind, supportive manner, we make that person feel valued and feel appreciated. I think that there is such a lot that we can do in this world using small gestures. Along, obviously, with our huge gestures in looking at the way that we walk upon this earth and the traces that we leave.

I am really excited by the group of artists and thinkers that we have managed to pull together tonight, because each one has a unique and interesting perspective to add to this discussion. Because we are on zoom, there are one or two house rules that we should be discussing. We have muted all the mics at the moment. If you would like to say something, you have the option of either typing it in the chat or otherwise raising your digital hand. As soon as we get to the Q&A section we will give everybody a chance to ask their questions. I would like to say that it has been so heartening to have the audience and to have people really engaging with the talks. As much as the creatives who presented have. I thank each one of you for being here and for supporting our process. With that, I'm going to hand over to our wonderful curator Candice Allison who is going to run us through the evening. Thank you

WELCOME | INTRODUCTION TO PROMPTER – Candice Allison – co-curator, writer

Good afternoon, everyone, thank you Bev for that introduction. I don't know if it was just me but I think that the video paused a little bit in some sections. Thank you so much for introducing me and for introducing today's gathering.

I'm Candice Allison. I'm the curator and the co-organiser of the women's workers creative practice gatherings. I am going to start off by saying a few thank you's.

gratitudes

- First of all, to Bev – yeah, it's an interesting reciprocity where you talk about me as a mentor in your artistic practice. And you have been a mentor to me. As a wife and a new mother, in my career, so thank you. I think we have learnt a great deal from each other over the years. I'm blessed and privileged to call you my friend. You have been the inspiration for these events. And definitely the driving force, making sure that logistically everything has been pretty much perfect. Your energy, work ethic, professionalism and hosting have been incredible. You are a mench.
- Ilan. our tech extraordinaire. Patient, unflappable, available all hours of the night. Thank you, thank you from the bottom of my heart for the many hours you have put in to make sure that everything has been seamless. We could not have done it without you actually.
- The Origin Centre and Tammy – thank you for hosting the in-person events. Tammy, thank you for fielding all the emails and the RSVP's. I don't think I've even met you in person, but your presence and your support has been felt.
- All of the prompters and speakers for your time, and for sharing so generously in every gathering.
- And Langelihle, AKA Lady Day, for providing the nourishment that has sustained the conversations that took place after the in-person gatherings.
- The National Arts Council for the support through funding, which has allowed us to financially acknowledge the labour, the time required by the speakers and prompters to participate in these types of events.
- And everyone who has joined us today, I am really excited to see some names. People who are zooming in from all around the world. It is really great to have you here with us. So, thank you.

I want to introduce today's topic very briefly with some of the texts that Bev wrote for the concept note which we sent to the invited speakers and the prompters. And to leave with some questions before we get started. Despite the wounding and trauma of the world we live in, we still feel the shimmery golden threads that bind us inextricable together. Focusing on our relationality and entanglement raises questions about the traces we leave materially, environmentally, socially and otherwise. We are obligated to think about both our ways of knowing, what knowledge we take in, how we make knowledge and ways of being, how we live.

This includes our individual and collective responsibility and ethical and reciprocal conduct to how we hold community as we coexist together. To mother earth and all living matter within her.

What is above me? What is below me? What is around me? What is behind me?

How sensitive am I to my context?

What is my complicity to materials, plant matter, living matter, mother earth herself?

What is my complicity to the connections, networks that that make us human?

Can we formulate an ethics of doing, of being, of seeing based on the collaborative values germinated in this creative laboratory or gathering?

I want to echo something that Tracy Murinik, who was the prompter of the second gathering, what she said about spaces don't exist until somebody creates them and then other people might have the idea to create similar spaces. That is what will happen, with this little seed that we have planted.

With that in mind, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge all of the speakers today. Almost every one of the speakers has been affected in the last week or two by sickness or family stuff. And yet they have still managed to power through, as Bev mentioned this earlier... I'm channelling Bev's words, but also my sentiments. It just goes to show that you have still managed to get everything to us. And the speakers who can't be here today, in the spirit of care and nurturing that we want to create with this space, I would like us to all hold them in our thoughts. And just you know hard it is to let people down, and I think as women we feel that extremely acutely, the guilt and the disappointment.

introducing the speakers

I want to introduce all of the speakers. Unfortunately, Jess isn't with us today and she hasn't been able to get her presentation to us, but I would still like thank her, and, like all the conversations her presentation hopefully will be added. Our keynote today is Zayaan Khan who is a story teller intrigued by the local, urban and ecological environments. Her work finds a resting place in the nexus of land, seeds and food as a means of understanding the world. Dr Jessica Webster is a contemporary painter whose critical writings and artworks are engaged with the poetics of agency in the face of climate change and trauma, informing her contribution to local cultural ecologies. Io Makandal is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice is concerned with ecofeminism, embodiments of process, entropy, urban ecology and hybrid environments during a time of environmental shift. Miliswa Naziba is an architecture practitioner and researcher. She approaches architecture as the practice of manifesting the fantasy of people through space making, world-building, mapping, alternate realities and child play as analogue modality. Langelihle Mthembu is a food researcher, music selector and social entrepreneur. Through a gastronomy-centred approach and practice, she creates an intimate, accessible and shared common ground that engages in experiments with food, sound and visuals. Dr Meghan Judge is an artist and lecturer at the Origin Centre Association at the University of the Witwatersrand. She was a fellow at the SARChI Chair in Science Communication and completed her PHD at Wiser in the Oceanic Humanities for the global South project, where she focused on ocean human relations and formulating an eco-social relational practice for inquiry.

I feel honoured that you have all accepted the invitation to share your work with us and your practice. I'm going to hand over to Ilan, who is going to press play on the presentations.

KEYNOTE PROVOCATION – Zayaan Khan - Spectacular entanglements in the rooted spaces

The places I found where I can make myself fit. Places dark and musty or bubbly and fuzzy. Places where I feel welcomed and called to, comfortable and uncertain. Places where I do not know anyone, well, no one human that is. And it has taken me years, and building on the lifetimes of others, to know what it is that I do. Although certainly, I still do not know. Except to walk the gentle and urgent path laid out for me. In full trust, I place one foot in front of the other hand, and wave my hair from my shins across the soft winds that gesture the way forward and backward.

I move where stories call. The stories that do not live in hierarchy, the stories that get left behind. We go for the discarded. The settled and unsettled. Where the knot is the deepest. The pieces of thread we cut long ago.

I suffer many things in my physiological self. Hypermobility which causes all this chronic pain, trigger to the mania, my old friend depression. And neuro divergence that feels safer the older I get. And tangled in all of this, I surged through some powerful orgasms, to birth through some powerful surges that urged through two powerful babies. Almost twins, but not really, really just very close in age.

Together, that I am only recently emerging from babyhood.

My youngest has finally untangled himself from myself, learnt the final boundaries of where my body is mine and his body is his. My breasts are mine and no longer does he need them.

And a gentle weaning it was, for which I am so grateful, because the sun is ferocious with me alone.

Of course, I am the safest place even if it frazzles me so.

He has uncovered his Aries horns, which is fine because I have learnt how to sharpen my rhino horns. Motherhood is overwhelming for me, but it has shown us our highest joys and unravelled the parts of my creative forces I thought I needed permissions for. Being a parent taught me to siphon time, to be courageous with what I know, and throw silence at the kak (Afrikaans slang for shit) that steals me from me.

It can also teach you a lot and to do a heck of a lot with what little time you have got.

And do it well.

I have learned to speak spirit thick, to wait for ecological permissions before making drastic decisions. To learn from material uprisings and deeply, deeply understand the traces we leave upon the earth. This is important, not just for these lifetimes but for that deep, deep time we cannot even comprehend. Some deep lifetimes, what of the clay bricks are built from the clays of forced removal sites. Laid at the step of the school library. What will they look like in 100 years, with millions of steps grooved into them?

And indeed, the sculptures I form could potentially still be here in 1000 years. What an overwhelm.

And is why I refuse to fire them, maybe. Or it is an excuse to hold onto my old life filled with self-doubt led by attention deficits.

Working this clay – harvesting, processing, discarding, recycling. To see this mother wasp collect this clay for her nest, in a land that is mostly sand. What a richness this must be. A beautiful blue body coming again and again over weeks. Collecting, mixing saliva, and moulding her work for her brood. It is so much effing work, motherhood it doesn't stop. Not that I am afraid of work, but the labour enters new heights of maximum. Emotional labour, spiritual labour, mental labour, physical labours. It also teaches heightened ways of care and weaving new methods learnt in the entanglements to be gentle in the fierceness and fertile in my leaves. Ensuring future nutrition for the rooted spaces when these leaves drop and decompose and feed me again.

Sickness has fallen our household in a very wet, post-Covid, first-year-at-preschool kind of year in the Cape. We have been sick for months. My voice feels like it will never recover. It makes me laugh that bittersweet laugh though. We rarely let our oily hair down. In the day zero months of 2016, hurtling towards no water in our taps, in the most severe drought we have seen.

Sterile was not on our agenda, and sickness didn't come then. Then Covid came where we said final goodbyes to loved ones over video calls. We were not allowed to attend funerals. But we saw our loved ones buried in plastic.

Covid was sterile, forefront at everything, so much high percentage alcohol, so many masks, so much sanitiser. I feel as if the traces of plastic and the trauma it left behind were covering the huge disinfection spaces that gave rise for many damaging viri and bacteria to thrive.

Now, it's as if this microbial diversity is readjusting. The microbes that make us suffer are leaning into their thriving livelihoods. With all this damp cold and new pollen season. All of them being so successful at making invisible life.

The political landscape of who gets to live and die, who gets to survive, who gets to thrive, often as an afterthought and not at all intention.

It takes time, but at the same time, like the work this garden has been over the years we have lived here. We have seen insects thrive and what we consider overpopulate this land we live on with them. For example, first as we tore out mouldy 40 years old chip board cupboards, earwigs were everywhere. They made themselves known for the first year.

Then as we changed up the garden, and pulled out invasive thirsty plants. We let the garden lay fallow for a year, mostly due to that first heavy-belly pregnancy that saw me bedridden for months. In that winter, the nasturtiums took over, making perfect canopy umbrella bodies for all that live at ground zero. Nestled away from the birds and the geckos and sun-loving lizards.

This meant that snails and slugs took over the following year when we cleared the nasturtiums to let the sun meet the seeds again. Imagining them in their umbrella-bodied cities. The snails were overwhelming, but they didn't bring in new birds that we had never met before.

And other bird lovers that came to investigate our peculiar space. Like this kingfisher couple that stayed and played and waited for our compost pit to turn into a pond.

The year after, we had this huge flux of caterpillars, but slowly we are starting to see so many predators finally, mantis especially. My pyjama shirt I had hanging for too long on the washing line. Those lazy days melting into lazy days. And finally, I took it down and I slept a solid night's restless rest with it.

That kind of restless rest a full moon brings but this being the beginning of Ramadan, the moon was only a tiny slither. And when I changed in the morning, I saw the most massiveness mantis egg sac I ever did see. Asleep this whole restless rest with me under my arm and how did I not feel it? How did I not see? It was thick as a finger.

I walked out to do a garden check that morning and found another mantis egg sac, but tiny tiny this time. Attached to the car's boot cover that was sitting out overnight.

It felt like a graceful scale to balance my days with them. Especially so early in the morning and especially at the start of such an auspicious month. Exactly one year after giving birth freely and by myself in our home, as my husband stressed about tending to an almost 2-year-old and tried to fill a birthing pool we never needed in the end.

We live in a big vlei (Afrikaans for shallow lake, or valley) in the south end of the city. There is water everywhere. We came to live here because, in the 70s, decisions were made to create a gated community, which is actually uncommon here. Sand was taken from Philippi not too far away and dumped onto the vlei, burying however many bodies lived at the moments and places where the sand dropped. Where the bulldozers drove.

I mean it is obvious once you know that, but somehow it didn't click for us. It wasn't obvious from the road that this was all vlei. The desire for a gated community was driven by trying to create safe white houses in the Mediterranean style. To keep white people safe.

This didn't work of course even through all the attempts to force out any people who were not white. The gates were never erected, and 40 years later that initial community is getting old.

Their houses are too big now that all their children have moved out and more difficult to upkeep. And so, it means it is more affordable for young families like ours. And many other young families have moved in over the few years we have lived here.

And we knew we had to live here. Walking into the home and out of the courtyard, I saw two young boys run out of the side door and into the garden. Similar heights that I thought, ah maybe this is our future child and their friend.

This home called us, and we knew it was right. I have a lot of visions while I'm awake, seemingly inconspicuous but, as time goes, and the vision becomes part of my life, I can only laugh and see that walking the gentle and urgent path laid out for me is really the only way I can go.

And now, when I enter the courtyard, two young boys run out of the side door into the garden. Similar heights because I birthed them 22 months apart. And I send prayers into the water that they remain friends for all of their days.

This home has held and healed me. The immense work we have put into it and the big dreams we birth inside it. I have been able to reflect on the traces I have left upon the earth. And seen time and time again how knife-blade thin my scope of living is.

If I veer too far off, something will happen that hits me up and brings on my depression or knocks me into some kind of sensitivity that leaves me open to extra healing. So, knife-thin means hard boundaries and less detritus and burn out. Less drama and less future trace of common place.

Boundaries are invisible too, curious and flexible in some ways, but makes me exceptionally porous to the traces others leave behind. To the spirit natures that invisible worlds bring, so much bigger than this visible world.

Once we realise that the place we live and love and dream in, was built on the invisible bodies of buried vlei beings, we decided to do what we could to honour those lives that were lost and continue to be lost. To mourn the ancient ecologies beneath us.

We planted keurboome whose tap-roots seek water and bring it up to the surface. We brought in river stones and carved out a stream that trickled through when it rained, and we did what we could to connect the water to the surface again.

And we see the ways that everyone who uses our garden appreciates it too. Like the pair of ducks that have just moved in. This is exactly a year that our beloved Aunty Macy dog passed away. Our youngest oldest sister. A dog that grew up between my niece and nephew. But quickly pulled rank to our sisterhood and moved with me as my Magram, my graceful protector.

Last year, exactly one month after Aunty Macy moved on as an ancestor, the most peculiar world opened up. A family of owls moved in. At first, we thought it was three sat in the tree opposite our home. And then we saw the fourth. And... oh my... four whole owls, but finally we spotted papa spotted eagle owl in the tree alongside.

They camouflage so well, they come alive at night. Hunting and flying with the bats. The next morning, they were in our courtyard, dozy and slightly nervous, four of them. Mama evidently with her feathery horns on top her head and her round headed soft plumage. Owlets three.

And after some time, papa become evident. Sat some ways away in a tree next door, waiting for mama. The parents left after the sun arrived fully and the babies stayed in the courtyard nursery, resting throughout the day. Gorky and awkward. Mama would arrive again as dusk fell and everyone woke up to the night. Gorky-ness gone and out to hunt.

The owls came practically every morning for months. The parents stopped coming once we witnessed the owlings grow their adult feathers. Until finally, they stopped coming in the day and only came at night. Adults themselves, soft hoots, and loud clanging talons on the roof.

These traces of life and death and death, life and dream space, carve themselves into my experience of this world, in this time and resonates out of me to all who witness. It is a duty to accept and transform accordingly.

Work is not just the content that I show. The reliable conditions that I know. The forms that I build. The jars that I fill. It is the offerings that I make. The lives that I take. The curses that I break.

There is so much if not more behind the scenes in the in-betweens. The cracks are deeper than they are wide, and you tend not to see them if you zoom out enough. The stories trickle and the stories shout.

From the orcas to the plastics to the ashes. These marks and traces we leave upon the earth.

SPEAKER 1 – Io Makandal – Future remains and making mud

Hi everyone. Firstly, please excuse my voice. I have just come out of a cold, and lost a bit of my voice, so I do apologise in advance for my croakiness, but I will do the best I can. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Io Makandal and I'm an artist, a researcher and mother born and based in Johannesburg South Africa. I would like to thank everyone for joining this evening and the cohort of speakers tonight and making this a generative talk for all of us. And of course, I would like to thank Bev and Candice for curating these gatherings and for the invitation to take part in this. I am really honoured. I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the place that I am speaking from. The land that I am speaking from, the soil and all its people that have come before me, from which I work and speak from in practices of care. I would also like to acknowledge my collaborators that I work with so often, that being the earth, soil, the plants that grow within it, fungi, and effective microorganisms specifically that I work with so often in my practice. I would also like to dedicate my practice to my children, who are possibly the largest traces I will leave behind on the earth. So yes, thank you.

When I was invited to speak on the topic of the traces that we leave behind in relation to my art practice, I thought it was quite interesting because over the last few years, I have aimed to be a maker that leaves little to no trace behind. So, allowing my work to dissolve or digest. And to be processed by other things and not to remain static or rigid in its form.

I have always questioned and been conscious of the waste that my work and art produces. Earlier in my career, I would use otherwise waste material and detritus generated from human activity. Plastics, debris and other organic matter, or matter out of place, I'd like to describe it as. To catalyse a new life for these materials and to arrange them in these immersive three-dimensional tactile drawings. I used to call them tactile drawings because they relate, very much, to the language in my more traditional media of drawing. Over the years, I've collected a lot of discarded objects and matter and materials, and I have this growing collection of an archive of material things to form part of a library that I work from in my installations.

More recently, I've become increasingly interested in using materials that will keep being processed and that leave no trace. So, for example with the tactile drawings, I used a lot of plastics and artificial materials, whereas now I have increasingly started working with soil and mud and clay and organic matter and effective microorganisms as a way to engage with the environment. And in a way that is not subtle, but sensitive to the environment. And that is material that can be processed back into the ecosystem.

I'm interested in the traces and potential future traces that are being generated by human beings. I'm interested in how these traces may be read in the future. Recently during my residency at Nirox Art Foundation, I encountered these two contrasting traces, or I like to think of them as traces, for the context of this talk. The first example is that I had the honour of visiting the Gladysvale caves in the

Cradle of Humankind, where we went down into the earth, and we were looking for fossils. And then the opportunity to visit the surrounding gold mine tailings in the west of Johannesburg, which was on the other spectrum of this place that is left behind by some humans.

For me, both places are a kind of trace making, on the kind of spectrum of what we are capable of leaving traces. This made me think about an area that I have been thinking about for a while, about this idea of agri-scars. When you zoom out on Google Earth, and you look down at the earth, and you see the kind of patterns and forms that industrial agriculture creates on the earth's surface. You see these grids and crop circles and they make quite provocative traces on the earth from these agricultural practices. That is something that has been interesting me, and that those kinds of conditioned traces juxtapose the natural undulations and forms and patterns and lines from the earth, just from being in existence with the rivers and mountains and astrological activity and whatnot. One of the other things that I have really been interested in, is this object of a grass cutter blade or cord. That is used to cut grass, and for me, this object is a really provocative object, in that it's kind of found all over the place, within the landscape, within parks and wherever grass particularly is being conditioned. When you see this thing, you might not think or know what it is at first glance. When you think about it further, you start to understand what it is used for and what it signifies. This object of this red—very vivid red—plastic remnant from this process is found in the landscape. I have started to work with that in my work as this signifier of this process of conditioning and constructing landscape, and conditioning nature to human needs and habitats.

Oh yes, that is another thing that I'm interested in my work is the kind of urban ecologies and ecology in relation to the human architecture and human cities. I'm interested in how these ecologies are adapting. What these red remnants—I've been collecting them over time and I have this quite sizable collection of it now, and although I am not quite sure what I am going to do with it, with the actual physical object yet, it is something that I am ruminating over as this contemporary trace that humans are leaving behind and within the landscape.

Lastly, what I want to end off on is currently, recently over my Nirox residency as I mentioned earlier, I have been working with EM (effective microorganisms). And when I arrived at the residency, I was confronted by a situation with the waterways where there has been a sewage spillage into the river. And then that is contaminating all the waterways. Because I've been working with EMs for a long time, having this environmental response to the waterways, seemed the obvious thing to do while I was here. I was thinking about how to make this into some kind of an art object or object to think with and artistic gesture to make. I created these bokashi mud balls. Essentially what it is, is bokashi bran effective microorganisms with clay soil and that solution is mixed together and then created into a mud ball. I played with that a bit in its form, of what form it took and then left that to cure for the white fungus to grow over it, which activates the kind of mycelium network in the ball. Then that ball is inserted into the waterways. It allows for a gradual and slow release of the effective microorganisms, which will digest the sludge in the water ways, and effectively—hopefully—process that material in the water.

That is my kind of introduction in a nutshell. I look forward to responding to and chatting to everyone else in this evening talk. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER 2 – Miliswa Ndziba – Ways of approaching site

Today, I will be discussing how I approach site in my architectural practice that I define as 'child play as analogue modelling'.

My Master's thesis 'Thoughts of Sand - a reimagining of black childhood through critical fabulation' explores the myth of black children in South Africa growing up faster than children of other political races. The work approaches architecture as the practice of manifesting the fantasy of persons or people through space making. In South Africa, the apartheid regime employed spatial segregation to produce a utopic vision of reality in which black South Africans were rendered invisible. It was an architecture of fantasy. Thus, black children were denied their childhood in order to fast-track their entry into adulthood so as to justify their sole function as labour on the periphery of this fantasy. In current day South Africa, black childhood remains continually erased through space making. The study makes use of sand playing critical fabulation as narrative devices to make sense of the spatial condition created by the São José shipwreck on the ocean floor off the coast of Clifton Fourth beach in Cape Town. It proposes a passage along the coast of the African continent from the site of the shipwreck to the island of Mozambique that bridges the journey home with the drowned child slaves to their final resting place.

Before world was created, there was the sky world high above the endless waters. In this world, children like us were stolen from their homes and carried across the surface of the water, in vessels to distant lands.

One day one such vessel that we were on, fell out of the sky world and we were plunged into the endless water and plummeted towards our final resting place, the seabed, for we could never return to the sky world.

We knew that one day the people of the sky world would come looking for us. So, we began to fortify our barrier ground against those who would seek to desecrate it.

For centuries we built and rebuilt forts of sand on the ocean floor to conceal our home.

Although it has been plundered in recent times, we have succeeded in concealing the vast majority of our final resting place from intruders.

In 1794, a Portuguese slave ship called the São José left the Africa embarked on a journey from Mozambique to Brazil, however shortly before it is scheduled for a pitstop at the Cape of Good Hope. The ship struck rocks and sank. Of the 512 slaves that were on board, 212 drowned. The remaining slaves were sold the following day in Cape Town. The site of the shipwreck is off the coast of Clifton 4th beach, and may reach as far at Cape Point.

In identifying my site as the site of the shipwreck, I set out to create the parameters in which my proposition would unfold. The parameters were guided by the artifacts found on site—archival evidence and the site conditions that were reported by the divers of the Slave Wrecks Project. It was in these parameters that I used critical fabulation as defined by Saidiya Hartman to fill in the gaps in the archive through world-building.

'Forts of sand' is a creation that is narrated by the spirit of a child slave who perished in the São José shipwreck, that maps and encodes the series of events that have unfolded at the site since the day of the shipwreck 229 years ago. 'The Creation Myth' maps the spatial implications created by the shipwreck, as well as the natural conditions of the site. The myth may also map what we cannot see, namely the shipwreck, the remains of the child slaves and their spirits. The São José shipwreck was discovered 54 meters off the coast of Clifton 4th beach in 2015 by the Slave Works Project. The artifacts that the divers found on site were an iron ballast, which is an indication that the cargo was human, as an iron ballast is used to offset the weight of human cargo in a ship; a portion of the ship's hull; a pulley block; and shackles which were an indication that the human cargo was shackled. The archival documentation that they sought to confirm that it was São José was a document of sale of a

slave and a manifest of the São José, testimony of the shipwreck and a treasure hunter's map from the 1980s.

I modelled the site in a transparent container. I used play pen sand for the ocean and tap water for the ocean water. In 'The Creation Myth', I used copper pieces to represent the artifacts that were discovered on site. Additionally, I recreated the event of the shipwreck and the washing machine-like churning on the ocean bed through sand play performance at the intimate scale.

(scroll through projected images)

Here is an analysis of the screenshots taken at different intervals in the film. I mapped the impact of the shipwreck on the sea floor—the artifacts that were found falling to the sea floor—as they were the only remaining visible components of the ship; the layers of sand that obscured the shipwreck over time; the hidden components of the ship that sometimes resurfaced, as in the case of the treasure hunter's mapping of the shipwreck in the 1980s. And the washing machine conditions on site that the divers reported, these conditions made it difficult to identify the artifacts and to extract them from site.

In my narrative, I attributed these conditions to the spirits of the drowned child slaves protecting their final resting place by concealing it. I produced a phase-section through the site of the shipwreck from all the data that I mapped, and I began to project my myth onto the site. The timeline spans over 200 years from the event of the shipwreck to current day:

- the section shows the found artifacts and how, over time, they have drifted and have at times been concealed within the ocean bed, and their eventual extraction from the site by the Slave Works Project in 2015.
- the remains of the drowned child slaves and how they have disintegrated over time, and in turn triggered the process of nutrification in the narrative of the myth.
- the establishment of the Clifton Surf Members at Clifton beach in 1970 and its current day presence, and
- the presence of the treasure hunters in the 1980s.

I then introduced mycelium to the world that I constructed to model the process of nutrification in which the remains of the drowned slave children became algin bloom that rose to the surface of the water at Clifton 4th beach.

I mapped the mycelium as it formed on the surface of the water and projected it onto site. I proposed a 4th passage in addition to the 1st passage and the interrupted middle and 3rd passages of the São José from Clifton 4th beach to the island of Mozambique, which was to be the children's final resting place. I used empirical data, such as ocean currents, speeds and directions to make the way home for the children who had been reborn as algin bloom to drift on the surface of the water. The final proposition was the colonization of the Chapel of Nossa Senhora de Baluarte on the island of Mozambique, which is also believed to be the oldest colonial structure in the Southern hemisphere. The point of departure in the study ocean in a box, a reimagining of demolition through analogue modelling is the final proposition in 'Forts of Sand' in which the proposed 4th passage culminates with the drowned child slaves whose spirits take on the physical form of algin bloom feasting on the ruin of Chapel of Nossa Senhora de Baluarte, which was built in 1522. The ruin is protected both from demolition and the natural process of decay and is required by the Law of the Protection of the Mozambiquan Cultural Patrimony to be secured and maintained. The protection of this, and other such colonial structures, become not only the protection of the structures, but of its fortifying, territorializing and dispossessing paradigms as well.

Due to its symbiotic and overlapping characteristics with algae, mycelium is used to model the projected growth of the algal bloom as well as the passage that the algal bloom drifts along on the

surface of the water. And the eventual colonization of the ruin by the algae which is fantasized as the ruin returning to earth and melting back into the landscape. The study is conceptualized as an experiment that seeks to identify the capacity of mycelium as an analogue for algae. I began hypothesizing how the algae would colonize the ruin of the Chapel. I then mapped the methods and materials for the process of modelling the site of the ruin at the scale of 1 to 500 as a ritual choreography at the scale of 1:1 or the intimate scale. These are weekly observations that I made of mycelium growth on one of the models during an almost 2-month period. I then projected the results of the experiment onto the slides and constructed drawings that mapped the colonization of the ruin in the narrative.

Thank you.

SPEAKER 3 – Langelihle Mthembu – When displaced, we use food for comfort

My name is Langelihle Mthembu. I am a food researcher, a music selector and the creator of Attaya, a research-based fruit and wine sonic experience. My work is inspired by how cultures and history share space on the continent, by celebrating ways, styles and behaviours of food by experimenting with the contemporary ways of tasting and imagining South African creole food.

My practice is a personal journey to learning the different oral histories of ingredients, recipes, and food. Investigating how, when displaced, we use food for comfort to create and reimagine home recipes and share them with others and our communities. Attaya is a bimonthly intimate dinner hosted by myself. It honours both food and sound, and the intimate foundation of community and friendship through stories and generational strategies of survival and thriving. Attaya seems to bring forward narratives to wave together our food systems, intimate traditions and ways of eating.

food and memory

Food defines ordinary life and special occasions alike. It can create pleasure and provoke shame. As a vehicle for stories, it prompts nostalgic and inspires utopian dreams. It embodies, generosity, community and culture. When you think of home, you think of security, warmth, comfort and of food. Food memories can be pleasant, recollections of your favourite childhood sweets and snacks, or less pleasant memories of foods that once made you sick or nauseous. Either way, taste of these food is usually significant and brings back detailed memories of past and childhood home.

sensory memory

The process of eating is more sensory than any other experience. It involves the process of information derived from all senses. When we eat food, we do not only see its appearance and we taste its flavour, but we also smell its odour, feel its textures and hear the sound while we chew it in our mouths.

For the past 3 years of my practice, I have been going through different food communities within Joburg at the moment, and involving myself within the communities that are created based on food. From Cyrildene, which is mostly an Asian market, to Mayfair and Fordsburg that are mostly engraved with very Indian and Turkish food. They have pretty much sourced out all of these oral recipes that I've thought about and histories of people moving from their homelands and creating these communities that are basically based on food. I'm interested in these stories compared to my own stories when I felt displaced, moving to different cities and living there, and feeling like food was the only thing that I would be able to use in order to create community.

Through history, I find all these different stories that connect people, or connect the way in which food navigates within the country. What started out as a personal discovery for myself, went into this whole different way of understanding ingredients and a way of understanding relations of stories, for other people that had the same feeling of displacement, and the ways in which they were using food to find comfort. This year, I spent most of my year in Yeoville. Yeoville is this very diasporic area that has mostly West Africans that land in Yeoville. My point of relation was from the story I read, about how both Vietnam and Senegal were colonised by the French. Vietnamese women married Senegalese soldiers and moved to Senegal with them. In their own displacement, these women started making food. That is how you find a lot of history within Senegal. I spent most of my time with women from Senegal that make food in Yeoville. They have been exchanging stories with me, and telling me their own stories. Teaching me how to make all the original recipes from Senegal.

This has pretty much been a continuous story for me to learn from, but also, I'm finding myself. Finding ways in which I can use different ingredients from a different cultural perspective, which has been very beautiful. If you were here throughout the 3 weeks of these talks, you would have had a taste of all of my journeys throughout my practice.

Thank you.

SPEAKER 4 – Dr Meghan Judge – Interlude of Intrusions

Editor's notes:

This is a sensory experience, rather than a traditional talk. The act of transcribing it flattens its sensory aspects and goes against what the presenter envisaged.

As an online talk, listeners were asked to wear headsets, to close their eyes and to experience.

The hurricane does not roar in pentameters
Kamau Brathwaite

I begin my talk from a transmission point. A point of transmission or deception that opens in both directions

a point

a node

a hole

Receiving through the bandwidth that is expanding. A bandwidth where signal moves and communication occurs, but my perception of this bandwidth is expanding. And I am receiving in this point, this node in spacetime, this boat, this boat that is far enough away from land to have lost signal with it.

In fact, at the point of signal disruption where interruptions and intrusions become transmissions and sensory modes for perception.

This is a boat, this was a place, it was a place that is somewhere along the Agulhas current moving up against so-called the Agulhas current, as the current washes in one direction.

This boat is trying to move up the current, to get to a destination far away from its departure point in the island of Mayotte, which is a part of the Comores in the Western Indian Ocean, that is sort of

nestled above Madagascar and off the east of the East coast of Africa. And the departure point was Cape Town.

I was on this boat, sailing up, working as crew on deck to try get voyage to Madagascar, which was the exchange that I managed to negotiate because I wanted to do research in Madagascar. But what I didn't expect, was becoming more attuned to what I didn't yet know.

Which has become an ongoing interlude that I return to and make sonic meaning from.

So... this boat ... somewhere in the waters ... in the waves ... in the sensitive waters of the Western Indian Ocean ... during tropical cyclone season ... moving against the current, was trying to grasp at signal, but found itself in static.

At least we were, the people on the boat.

And as we lost radio signal and the connection that it holds and has to land, those comforts, those terra firma knowings that are so bound up in language and word and the affective kind of surrounds of transmission. Which was at that time the weather report. And a very interesting character indeed who was delivering this report, that I grew very fond of. And through which I found connection to other lonesome sailors out in the ocean, who found connection with us.

We could feel

We could feel

that we touched through the radio signal as we plotted our locations and coordinates and gave updates about what was happening with the weather.

As that broke away, so did my grasp to everything that was land-informing position in ocean. And we turned then to the ocean as informing us about where we are.

I began my PhD 3 months postpartum ... in a state ... of liquid mess.

A mother falling like a whale's carcass from surface to depth, going to pieces.

Saturated and starving, the purification of tissues now in the stomachs of fish, crabs, amphipods, jawless hagfish.

The mother's nutrients absorbing into and through their translucent skin, then filling the squirming multi-segmented body sacks of polychaetes. She becomes multi—an array of creatures—some, like brittle stars, who continue to feed on each other.

Just as salt is washed into walls and finds its way down to corrugated iron and sets off an autocatalytic process, that is otherwise known as rust.

Submission is becoming weighted within vastness, being present without fight.

Submission is unbecoming into communities that become each other.

Submission is being edible, eaten and going to pieces. Unbecoming millions of present parts now outside of self, now inside of others.

How to submit to becoming partially permeable as you become partially permeable. You host while also being hosted, host and guest in a gulp.

The communication of such buoyant potentials asks what it means to fall, to fall toward buoyancy. The question is waiting to be uttered, it haunts, uncontainable and filling a jar.

Just as the atmosphere is never quite neutral in the continuous electrification of ionizing air, these eddies discharge gradually through their rims and centres.

PANEL DISCUSSION AND Q&A – led by Candice Allison

That was incredible.

Thank you to all of the speakers for those beautiful presentations. I can see the huge amount of time and effort and care that you have taken to share with us your concerns and your thoughts about the topic.

And your deeply personal connections to the earth, your surroundings, the environment. I am really amazed, I am speechless.

Bev, you are nodding, I can see you, thank you. And thank you again to everyone who has joined us today. I hope that you have been inspired by what you have seen.

I would like to open the floor to any questions.

As Bev and Ilan have said, if you have a question or you just want to respond as well. That's also OK, we are completely open, this is an informal space, and this is a safe space for sharing. So please just raise your digital hand and Ilan will unmute you.

Bev	<p>I am so blown away by each one of you, you are just absolutely incredible, I literally have no words.</p> <p>I guess I picked up on 2 phrases which I thought were so beautiful and so aligned. Meghan spoke about being partially permeable and Zayaan spoke about we are porous to the trace's others leave behind. Those both spoke to me so much about the conversation we were having last week about motherhood and about creative practice. And about the earth around us and kind of how all these things entangle. I'm looking at Io's face, and I'm looking at Zayaan and I know what you guys went through to get these presentations to us. I know being sick, having sick children, trying to manage a job, a life, a career, relationships is so hard.</p> <p>I actually firstly want to say that you guys are superstars. There are no other words to describe, I mean I don't know why we have this superwomen complex, but flip you are absolutely superstars and that goes to every one of the speakers. Meghan, your camera is not on, to Langelihle whose Gran passed away yesterday, who still got the presentation to us.</p> <p>To Jess, who has had the most terrible time, has just had a really hard time and is here a 100% with us through loss and death and sickness and whatever.</p> <p>So, I thought I just wanted to ask you guys a little bit. Can you describe what it is like being a creative and a mother and this relationship with earth and the traces of everything around?</p> <p>I think that people don't really know what we do. At 1:21am this morning, Zayaan is emailing me, so I am just kind of opening that up. It would be nice to know.</p>
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Zayaan	<p>Thank you, Bev, it is nice to see you face to face and thank you everyone for those presentations. I have been moved to respond to that provocation because we have been talking about it a lot lately.</p> <p>When you have to carve out a career for yourself in a way that you don't have a guidebook, or there is no corporate ladder that you climb, there can be a lot of second guessing. You know you wonder if you're making the wrong decision. But, because of that decision, of committing to that path that has opened up before me and the deep trust that I have for the process. I've been able to shake away those deeper uncertainties and have a lot of support within my immediate family and my extended community.</p> <p>It's really hard, but it's so fulfilling in so many ways that I think if I had different choices or safer choices, it would be a lot less rewarding and fulfilling. And the stories would not be as generative.</p>
Meghan	<p>I just wanted to say that I am here, and my video is off. I'm caring at this very moment as we speak, and I've been listening in and it's so wonderful (child speaking in background)</p> <p>What I wanted to say is that, honestly, what's kept me afloat through this is your work. Everyone who has shown work here, and the work that is happening alongside the work that I'm doing in the world, has given me such incredible encouragement to tune into the potentials of what I do. And to open my eyes to work with landscapes, seascapes, materialities, presences and to take creative risks inside all of this, while trying to balance this very dry kind of academic pursuit. Which is also very informative and interesting, but somehow asks for a lot of reclaiming within it too. I certainly have struggled with a kind of wet/dry divide, and my work has very much been trying to bring them together.</p> <p>It's really the juice of other people's work that has given me the encouragement to find those kinds of porous spaces where breathing together, and breathing into, and through each other's different atmospheres becomes possible. Because we are in such an incredibly divided and unrested space in South Africa, and I think that that's been very much a guiding and orienting point for me as I do my work.</p> <p>And so, listening into other people's work and sort of finding those porous holes to breathe through, with it, and alongside has been incredibly critical. So, thank you so much for this gathering because it's just such a reminder of that and I feel a kind of, yeah one of those wonderfully kind of moist spaces where we can somehow sense each other.</p>
lo	<p>It's funny how I feel like my face was pinned onto your voice. And what you said was so true and so beautiful. I couldn't agree more to how that this gathering affirms that space of breathing with, and through, each other.</p> <p>Bev, to respond to your question of how, I think it is also as Zayaan was saying, like I can't imagine myself doing anything different to what we are doing together and in these multifaceted ways of being who we are in the world.</p> <p>Mothering becomes a part of that. Parenting and creating these beings that will be these profound or maybe not profound, no they are profound traces.</p> <p>Thank you to everyone also for this evening. Each presentation was, I am quite also moved beyond words. I'm still kind of sitting with it here. Everybody's presentations were so beautifully made. Thank you so much for that and what you are speaking through is also just profound and incredible. It is remarkable that there is all of this present here together.</p>

Candice	<p>Responsibility that we all carry and maybe, it's the privilege of responsibility as well. Maybe weight you know is one hand of it. On the other side it's a joy and a privilege that you all seem to carry towards your families, your communities, the earth both past and present. Miliswa, I thought it was so beautiful, your project of honouring those who have come before us. And the way we think about the traces we leave and how they are going to impact those who come after us. I just wonder if you could speak a little bit about that.</p> <p>I know the question is not clear, I am leaving it open-ended for you to respond.</p>
Miliswa	<p>Hi everyone. I would say that, in my practice, initially I was making sense of how one can communicate, specifically to children and black children who are my primary audience, concepts of colonial and apartheid spatial planning, that legacy. But, to be able to communicate it to them in a way that a child can access it.</p> <p>That was the beginning of my inquiry and something that I explored when I was doing my honours degree. I explored it through a series of paper toys. Leading into my master's degree, I was already working with play and fantasy and storytelling, and we were introduced to the site of Cape Town and beyond, and we were free to choose a site of our choosing.</p> <p>In my desktop research, I came across the shipwreck, or rather came across an article speaking about the discovery of the shipwreck in 2015. From there, I began to make sense of mapping that spatial condition, using architectural language to map that. But also making sense of how one does that when there is a limited vocabulary in the discipline to map conditions like that. I don't know if I'm answering the question, but the film, the clip that you saw in the presentation, I'd say that was the turning point in my practice in working something I had been struggling with at the time – this was being true to the site condition. What that meant was also being true to the material condition of site.</p> <p>I had been working with sculptural forms to try and capture these different moments in the narrative. That wasn't accessible, but it also wasn't an honest representation of the condition that I was trying to map. I've been exploring sand play since the beginning of the year, but at that point when I constructed this little universe or little world in the plastic container, where I modelled this underwater condition of the seabed. Through play, through storytelling, I actually then mapped the different moments in that narrative like the shipwreck hitting the ocean bed; like the layers of sand; or mapping the water, the washing-machine condition of site that was reported by the divers. And how that, in turn, created a condition where the sand would reveal, but also hide, components of the shipwreck at times.</p> <p>So that process was extremely freeing because up until that point, myself as a practitioner, I had been very much in control of the process. It was something that I struggled with, always wanting to control what the outcome would be. That was the first time I got to relinquish that control. And almost get lost in the condition of site. And actually, transporting myself to that condition.</p>
Candice	<p>Yes, it's interesting what you are saying, the loss of control and Zayaan, how you talk about the garden and it rebelling, and you can't control how what you do this year is going to effect, the effect that it is going to have next year. I'm just curious to know a bit more about how your garden is for you now?</p>
Zayaan	<p>It's the best time of year now, the winter and everything that thrives in the wetness, and then that peters off very gradually. As the rains come at night, sometimes in the day and then the days are warm. So everything is very green and a lot of the flowers, I mean it is blom (flower) season now, so all the flowers are starting to come out. There are these sparks of yellow and pink and purple and orange. And it is masterful.</p>

	<p>But it is also a very sexy time, and there is a lot of nest building, and this has really become a bird sanctuary in as much as we are calling it in. Birds are building nests outside every window and in every possible space. I wonder what will be attracted to those eggs and babies and future possibilities.</p> <p>It has been a very, very generative space and this garden has been the saving grace of early motherhood. Because it allowed me to work from home and be at home with babies. Because they have a place that they can go, even when it is raining, there's a place that they can go that is not in the house. And so, the privilege and gift and hard work but the privilege and gift of the space has been profound.</p> <p>And it's great fodder, you know I am very happy to die here.</p>
Candice	<p>You mentioned that everyone uses your garden. I'm curious. Do you mean is that family and friends? Or is it open to the community?</p>
Zayaan	<p>It is everyone that lives in this space. So, not just human, and it is a very biodiverse space and because both my husband and I work in food, there is a lot composting that is happening.</p> <p>But it is open to community in the sense that when I was pregnant, in pregnancies I was very shocked at the silenced silencing of traditional knowledge around pregnancy and birth. And particularly in terms of plant medicine. As someone who birthed outside of the hospital system, I needed those medicines and so I needed to do a lot of research and so I started to build that into the gardens. And have these plants here and start that process again for future access. And really in beautiful sacred ways. Then I grow a lot, so part of honouring those that are beneath us here in the vlei. A lot of the garden is as minimal upkeep as possible, so it's a lot of stuff that is strand veld vegetation that technically could have been here if this was sandy vlei. A lot of those foods are edible, and a lot of those foods are medicinal and so I do, I mean I don't charge for it or anything, but I give out a lot of these plants. And people call on us if they need plants especially for indigenous food stuff. So, yes, in that way.</p>
lo	<p>I loved what you mentioned about the garden in relation to mothering, or being heavily pregnant and you know needing that space. I can relate to that so much and I think that really did turn my practice.</p> <p>Especially because it was turning in the time that I was doing a Masters, and then I fell pregnant unexpectedly and that was quite a shock. It brought me to the garden and it brought me to this kind of process of composting. It changed my practice fundamentally.</p> <p>Just being in that space with your children and generating that remembering and healing and stuff from the garden with the plants and the soil and stuff. Beautiful.</p> <p>I am sure you know Evette Abrahams—what you said about like the garden being a source of medicine and knowledge, and is also similarly what I'm trying to do too at home in the garden. That it becomes your extended pantry and a pharmacy.</p>

Meghan	<p>Could I chime in just a little second here? I'm going to have to sign off in a moment, but I just wanted to speak about the kind of noticing of scale that was so brought to our attention through all of the presentations. And especially through the sand in Miliswa's work. That sort of attention of scale that I think mothering makes you alert to, so you come into an awareness of the kind of incredible, minuscule activity. That also sits next to this really large kind of governed huge processes that are overwhelming and just too much. And really needing to pay attention to all of that. Which I think is a lot. And Zayaan, I really appreciated your mention of neurodiversity and the ways that mental health plays up when you are a mother, and I think that does a lot in terms of informing practice actually. I felt at home when you said that, it was a relief, I feel that too. And it has made me think about static as well which is a finding the sound of presences being weighted in weight. So, things that arrive in the present moment from all sorts of different temporalities and some finished events that have already occurred in the past, arriving right now. Sounding immediately in the same, in the present moment and the weight of that. And then the consideration of self in that weight. How to be present amongst all these presences, in a way that you find rest is just... I don't know. I think there is a justice in that, that I am still wrapping my head around. So, trying to find rest with presences and then thinking through what it feels like to be present. All the discursive thoughts, and kinds of discomfort, and issues and things that are political and interesting and necessary to move through in order to find a kind of a weight, and rest within your own weight. I just wanted to add that. Have to go, they are knocking on the window...</p>
Candice	Bye Meghan thank you.
Bev	<p>Candice, I have a question, unless anybody else wants to. I am very curious about Makandal saying that she is trying so hard to work in not leaving traces. Because it is really interesting as an artist where your job is to make, well, traditionally your job has been to make material objects. And then to try and not leave traces of that is really, really interesting. I mean, obviously, there have been artists who've done land art and done really interesting things. I just find that concept of "I sit with the materials and the only way that I can justify to myself what I'm doing is if I'm using waste or scraps or something and trying to kind of refashion them and reuse them". I just love what you are saying, so I'm not sure what my question is but I kind of wanted to explore that a bit more with you.</p>

lo	<p>Ya, thanks Bev. I think especially my earlier work where I also similarly collected these waste matter, plastics often, and all of that. And would create these installations where I felt also justified that I'm using these materials that would otherwise be thrown away and be wasteful to other people. I'm just collecting it and making other things out of it.</p> <p>I suppose it is a kind of a conflict in where I am at right now in my making. Where I have had this urge and desire to make art, or make work that won't be, it won't have a trace. That it will be dissolved, it will be digested, it will be transformed into something else.</p> <p>I was thinking about it just now with all the other talk. I don't know if that idea of it leaving no trace is erroneous, because how is it even possible? There will always be a remnant, whether it is my hand, or the material and matter being transformed and developed into something else. Nothings not going to go away forever.</p> <p>It's always there; it is just transferred. And whether it leaves its weight and presence and trace physically, or energetically, you know there is so much of it, it can never be gone. Nothing can ever be gone, but what I mean by that is that I am working with, I guess I didn't really illustrate that for people in my presentation much. I realised that, and maybe that is because I am not sure what it is as a visual, as a kind of artwork or art practise. I'm generating soil. And I'm making mud balls that dissolve. And I'm working with grasses and plants in the gardens, or the grasses that I have been working with also will do their thing.</p> <p>Like, I myself as a maker want to dissolve out of that and allow for the material to speak and be what they need to be. But then again, the contradiction is that I am still making drawing and I am still painting. And I love to do that, and it is a part of my practice that will stay.</p> <p>Ya, I don't know if that answers you.</p>
Bev	<p>What I liked, as we are all speaking, is how invested in process all the artists here are. It is really much less about an end result than it is about this process. And in the process, it is about growing self, growing those around u, using that to learn about the world and about ourselves through process.</p> <p>I have thought quite a lot through these talks about curatorial bias, because I wonder if we selected artists who fit in with what our frame of minds are, so to speak. Or, is this representative of where our kind of women artists in Joburg and in South Africa are at the moment? That we are all dealing with the same issues?</p> <p>Anyway, no question there, just a comment. It's very interesting that we are all so invested in process, and in transformation, and in fluidity, and in porous boundaries, and in things that just keep on changing. And this thing about just being so entangled, that you can't separate your children and you can't separate the rest of your life. And your making is just all part of... it's all just this entangled knot.</p> <p>Sorry no question there. I'm a useless Q&A participant.</p>

Meghan	<p>No, I like that, Bev. You know it sort of points to the kind of crux of where my creative explosions or releases or orgasms (as Zayaan put it) occurred when I was doing my PhD which was so dry. It's the feeling of not being able, of not existing within the language and not having expression within a language you know. And then reckoning with that, well within that, is completely there and a hurricane and moving and got all sorts of activities. And finding release from that. And again, this work of finding the language. And I thought it was so beautiful, beautifully explored in this gathering here.</p> <p>I especially loved the trying to find a language for children, which I thought was really, really beautiful again in Miliswa's work, so trying to shape language. And for me, that happens laterally inside each other's stomachs.... through each other in as ethical and unethical ways as that sort of thing kind of occurs. But I really recognise that kind of hole and that pit that exists in a sort of normal surface. I recognise being within that and needing to express from that.</p> <p>And it's really nice to—in the lonesome sort of spaces of mothering specifically—to feel each other across distances in that. Through each other's work or to find each other somehow. And I know that not everyone here is a mother, and that mothering is not necessarily about sort of biological birth, so I mean that in quite an expansive way.</p>
Candice	<p>Thank you, Meghan.</p> <p>I think, for all of the speakers, in all of the sessions, there really has been this very evident attempt to find a language or to communicate what previously has been invisible. And I think centring motherhood, nurturing relations to our mothers as well and our grandmothers, to our materials. It has been really powerful. And just again, thank you to everybody who has made these conversations—these gatherings—what they have been. We have 5 minutes left if there is any burning questions that need to be asked.</p>
Bev	<p>I have just got a point about the body, and going back to our very first session that we had which was about the body. I think there is such a strong link between every one of the talks here tonight—each one of the artists—and the body and the senses and the waking up the body. I don't know if anyone has anything to say about that, but I think the link is so strong. The senses... the sounds... the hearing... the smell... the taste of food... the looking... the way Zayaan filmed from the top and you are looking at these plants and materials in this way, which is so granular... and the way we had to use our hearing to listen to Meghan's speech... and Miliswas's the way everything moved.</p> <p>There is no doubt that these are conversations that are happening in our body in a way that goes way beyond what our intellect is. And Meghan keeps on talking it's all these connections which kind of sit between us. The networks of connections that we keep on talking about.</p>
Candice	<p>Thank you if anyone... Maria, your hand is raised darling.</p>
Maria	<p>Hi good evening, everybody. I'm not going to put on my video.</p> <p>But I have a question which kind of brings it back to this last presentation. To give you a little bit of background... I am quite divorced from experiencing the practices that have been presented today. But I'm very interested to hear from the artists of suggestions for potential strategies that, I guess community-based organisations could use, could implement to bring kind of broader visibility to these incredibly, how can I describe them... sensory, gestural practices that have been presented that kind of leaves marks, that have morphed into something else. Could you, I through your experience in presenting your work, what would you suggest?</p>

	Thank you.
lo	Hi Maria. I think that the format of a workshop is a really great strategy for connecting people to what you are working with, and thinking through, and giving them an experience of what that is. I think a lot of us do that: workshops where people have an opportunity to make with you and to encounter what your kind of methods of working through things. I don't know if anyone agrees with that?
Maria	Do you not think that being in situ is also super important, because then the experience becomes somewhat more visceral?
lo	And experiential, I guess. Learning through an experience has an impact. I mean I can imagine like cooking in the kitchen. How do you mean 'in situ'?
Maria	Well, of course the immediate example that comes to mind, is a building that is situated in a city, like for instance the Bag Factory, and the need to kind of come out of it in a sense. Because it is so divorced from the tactility of things that are somewhat natural
Candice	At the Bag Factory, I felt like we were transported, that you are in an inner-city building and not everyone can go out into the spaces where you know you would find these things. But it was just such a beautiful moment, and it is something I have held onto since then. And actually, this is why we invited you. It has been years and years, but just something like that to show and tell. And to experience everything that you were talking about, I thought it was very powerful. I think we have come to the end of the session. I know people are leaving. It is dinner time for you guys, I think we are an hour behind. But I think that there is one last video to play. So, thank you again to everybody; thank you Bev for all your hard work. I know you have appreciated everything, but we are also happy that it is over for now. And then we carry on to finding a way to document all of this. So, Ilan it is over to you. Thank you.
Bev	That's been the most stimulating and exciting and interesting conversation. I hope that it has left everybody with a lot of food for thought. Thank you so much for joining us for this incredible series of creative gatherings. It has been my honour. I feel so grateful in my heart for everything that has unfolded through this process. Thank you for joining us and goodnight.

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