

**REPORT**

**INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON  
GENDER & VISUALITY**

**CAPE TOWN, 26-29 AUGUST 2004**

Submitted by Convenor Organising Committee (Patricia Hayes),  
5 November 2004

Summary assessment: the Gender & Visuality Workshop was an innovative and dynamic event that packed 30 formal presentations into three and a half days. Its range was huge, with no restriction on media or discipline. The workshop could be criticized for offering too many things in too short a time, without the requisite time and space to pursue methodological and theoretical issues (whether visual or gender) to any final resolution. But such expectations would be unrealistic. This was the first platform in the South for any kind of scholarly interchange in the new field of visual studies, at a time when many have picked up the challenge to engage with visual material. It was a success in that it offered the first phase of a new kind of dialogue which could revolutionize thinking about sources and culture, gender and eurocentrism. It was a highly complex event with multiple exchanges and connections made, as well as potential trails not followed. We attach a sample of workshop evaluations and reports that will give some indications of the varied responses. The need is now to harness the momentum and channel the debates into new and productive research agendas, building particularly on the fresh South-South linkages that have emerged from this specific workshop experience.

A. History of the event.

In 2002 the Convenor was invited to join the editorial collective of the journal *Gender & History*, along with Urvashi Butalia from India. The journal has two editorial offices, in the UK and USA, and was embarking on a 'global turn' to make its readership and authorship more inclusive of the south. The Convenor was invited to submit a proposal for a Special Issue on visuality and gender, which was approved by the UK editorial meeting in May 2002. In April 2003 both Urvashi Butalia and myself spent several days in Ann Arbor, participating in workshop events and meetings to raise awareness and funds for the new 'Global Turns and Gender Returns' programme at University of Michigan. It was agreed that the programme would support three workshops for special issues of *Gender & History*, the first in Cape Town, the second in Delhi, and the third at University of Michigan which is home to the Global Turns programme. The importance of prioritizing participation from the

South in the first two workshops in particular was highlighted. Proposals were then submitted to SEPHIS and other appropriate funding bodies.

In June 2003 SEPHIS Board members held a meeting with Cape Town historians and other academics at the District Six Museum. Further informal discussions were held to explore the possibility of not only the proposed Cape Town Workshop on Gender & Visuality for academics, linked to the Special Issue of *Gender & History*, but a training workshop in visual sources for postgraduate students from the South. In retrospect, given the burgeoning of scholarship in the visual field, and the need for methodological development and refinement, both workshops were well-conceived and brilliantly timed.

### B. Organisation.

In late 2003 a small Organising Committee (OC) was convened at UWC, consisting of **Patricia Hayes** and **Zuleiga Adams** from the History Department, **Tamara Shefer** and **Lindsay Clowes** from the Women's & Gender Studies Programme. Two postgraduate students later involved in the workshop organization (including exhibitions) also joined the Organising Committee, **Thandi Chihana** (WGS) and **Farzanah Badsha** (History). Unfortunately in early 2004, Zuleiga Adams was appointed to a new lectureship at Stellenbosch University and could no longer attend regular organizational meetings at UWC, though she remained fully committed to participation in the workshop itself and was available for consultation.

In late 2003 the Call for Papers was circulated on various email networks dealing with gender, visual arts, African Studies, Cultural Studies etc, and notice of the workshop was incorporated in the *Gender & History* Special Issue on Visual Genders advertisement in early 2004. The initial task of the OC was to review abstracts submitted in response to the Call for Papers, design a preliminary programme according to the papers accepted, and assess those applicants from the South who might qualify for SEPHIS support. Some of the earliest abstracts submitted were invited to be further developed; certain candidates were informed of the greater appropriateness of the workshop for postgraduate students which was now scheduled to be held in Maputo in September 2004. The OC was also requested to participate in a selection procedure set up by journal editors (Nancy Rose Hunt and Helmut Puff) based at University of Michigan. University funding under 'Global Turns and Gender Returns' provided for 3 faculty and 3 PhD students to attend the workshop (though only two faculty would present papers), and the OC assisted in the formal selection procedure (see workshop report Helmut Puff). Using network links at Michigan, a final call for papers was made in March-April 2004, which brought in some late proposals.

### C. Workshop staff.

The OC advertised the position of workshop organizer in late 2003, and after applications and interviews appointed Thandiwe Chihana to the position from February 2004, for a period of six months. Thandi had commenced her postgraduate studies in the Women's & Gender Studies Programme, and showed great proficiency

in organization, communication and administration. The job became extremely demanding in the run-up to the workshop, and the OC is extremely grateful to Thandi for the enthusiasm, commitment and professionalism that she sustained throughout a punishing schedule. Thandi carried responsibilities beyond her years and co-ordinated both people and arrangements very skillfully. Her role was acknowledged with enormous appreciation by participants at the end of the workshop.

The most suitable candidate for exhibition organizer was Farzanah Badsha, a Masters student in Visual History. Farzanah brought considerable exhibition experience to the workshop, and handled the co-ordination of artists and curators with an impressive combination of competence and creativity. She assisted the workshop organizer and workshop participants in low-key but effective ways. It was through her connections and negotiations that we were able to stage the play *At Her Feet* by Nadia Davids on the second night of the workshop (see theatre activity), at almost no cost. The salaries of both workshop and exhibition organizer were paid from funds donated by the University of Michigan's 'Global Turns and Gender Returns' programme.

Additional students from Women's & Gender Studies worked part-time to assist with the website and registration (Peggy Myeza), catering (Ritha Mwamanga), as well as one visiting PhD student from University of Michigan (Monica Patterson). Hermann Wittenberg of the UWC English Department kindly assisted the workshop by constructing the website. Mduduze Xakaza, Ulna Ngwabo and Richard Boateng assisted in the mounting of exhibitions. The Organising Committee owes much gratitude to all who worked for or volunteered their labour towards this demanding but rewarding event.

#### D. Planning of workshop programme.

Once the bulk of workshop applications were received (closing date was end January 2004 and a final round allowed in April) an immediate tension arose at the heart of the workshop planning. In brief, for a workshop to be effective and provide rigorous feedback and discussion, it needed to be limited in number, ideally allowing no more than 20 paper presentations over the planned period of 3 days. This was the figure given in the original workshop proposal. Very soon however the OC realized that the workshop resonated with far greater numbers of interested scholars than predicted. It seemed that almost all disciplines in the social sciences and humanities had a burning desire to participate in the visual turn (of varied description), and were in search of methodological training and answers. Certainly the many South African and African abstracts received suggested this scenario. The specialized nature of the gender issue did filter this response to some extent, but the organizers were left with the problem of receiving far too many applications that were tailored to fit the bill.

The majority of the OC was uncomfortable about excluding any interested persons with something of quality to offer, and who wanted to learn. In particular the local sensibility is strongly against exclusion in the postapartheid university climate. While some applications were rejected because of quality or irrelevance, on paper the

workshop itself started to metamorphise into a conventional conference. The first draft programme had approximately 40 papers packed into panels of four presentations of 20 minutes each, with only one session dedicated to methodological discussion (see programme). It was consistently maintained that the workshop must at all costs have no parallel sessions but that all participants should be able to attend each session, in the interests of building closer dialogue. To make room, an extra half day was added to the programme. The Chair of the OC withdrew her proposed paper, and the OC depended on further cancellations to make more space. Ultimately at the workshop 30 presentations were given, and this attrition allowed space for more dialogue.

With the shift from workshop towards conference format, some adjustments were necessary. Keynote speakers had never been on the cards because the event was not a conference, but now decisions were made to address the need for rigorous feedback, stimulation and discussion. It was agreed that discussants and chairs for each panel would be approached to assist the workshop, with panel discussants in particular invited to contribute specific expertise after very close readings of papers. Discussants and chairs were selected from amongst a pool of intellectuals in Cape Town, and from workshop participants. The aim was to intensify workshop interaction, replenish the group with new energy, and raise the stakes in each panel.

To address the level of demand for access to the workshop that had become apparent, a strategic decision was made to locate the workshop at UWC for the first 2 days, with free access to all interested parties and with students encouraged to attend. The programme was shaped to appeal to this audience, for example by placing the postgraduate, film and artists' panels at the university. The second 2 days of the workshop would relocate to a venue close to the Breakwater Lodge at the Waterfront, where delegates were housed. The Two Oceans Aquarium offered the most reasonable and appropriate package for this purpose. Interested persons were invited to participate at special rates for these 2 days, but the intention was to narrow down the participation (from 70 to 50) and intensify the exchanges through the shift in venue.

The SEPHIS funding that enabled scholars from the South to attend made the programme selection process a particularly interesting one, and became a fundamental strength of the workshop. In view of the existing asymmetries in South African universities and the art world, it was decided to fund two 'development' candidates within the country (Mxolisi Mchunu and Zanele Muholi). When funds from SEPHIS were insufficient to meet the costs of all desirable candidates from the South, the National Research Foundation was approached for an International Science Liaison travel grant, and the UWC Rectorate requested to assist with subsistence, to pay for two relatively expensive workshop candidates (Onookome Okome from Nigeria and Sonia Khurana from India). SEPHIS was notified that the OC planned to pay a local subsistence rate of R250 per diem to all sponsored participants, and the latter were informed of this. All delegates coming from universities in South Africa, North America and Europe who were attached to

institutions would be required to pay a flat workshop registration fee of R500 each, to assist in covering workshop costs.

#### D. Exhibition planning.

Another fundamental decision made by the OC was the need to include art production and exhibitions in the workshop, without marginalization by academic agendas. Thus a second call was sent out in early 2004, asking for proposals for mini-exhibitions. The response was again much greater than predicted. Very limited funding through the NRF-sponsored Visual History Project in the History Department meant that a tough approach was taken, and given that our venue was UWC and not an art gallery, the criteria of social relevance and intellectual/thematic coherence (around gender and visuality) prevailed. Thus the exhibitions selected tended to originate from community-based projects rather than from elite art schools, resulting in a streamlined and compelling set of exhibitions in the atrium of the University Library from 26 August to 9 September 2004. A separate exhibition report by our Exhibition Organiser Farzanah Badsha is attached, with summaries of the selected exhibition proposals.

#### E. Funding and financial administration.

Initial budgeting suggested that while the agreed workshop grant from SEPHIS was the funding pillar of the event and made most things possible, supplementary funds would be needed to top up the workshop and cover any exhibition expenses. When the original budget was submitted in 2003, however, the South African rand was approximately R7 to \$1, having been at R12 to \$1 in late 2001 and early 2002. Economists had not expected the rand to strengthen to this degree, and predictions suggested it would fall. The behaviour of the rand became one of the biggest challenges of organizing this workshop. The currency kept strengthening against the dollar/euro and this affected our workshop plans very directly. The first SEPHIS funding installment arrived when the rand was 6.4 to \$1. Besides cutting costs wherever possible, we were forced to embark on further, full-time and last-minute fundraising activities with new grants being written and submitted to local embassies, international cultural funding bodies and national agencies. This was mostly futile given the time constraints and agency funding cycles and considerable energies were spent to little avail. In late June and early July, the rand hit 5.9 to the dollar and bewildered finance economists predicted the trend would continue until it reached R5 to \$1. It was at this point that we contacted SEPHIS to point out that we stood to 'lose' a good percentage of the second instalment of our grant. In fact the rand subsided to approximately 6.4 to \$1 once again and we have attempted to live within our original budget.

Apart from grant adequacy questions raised by the South African currency, financial administration also raised certain challenges within the structures of UWC. As a government institution and HDI (Historically Disadvantaged Institution) or HBU (Historically Black University), certain procedures set out by the South African Revenue Services (SARS) and Ministry of Finance need to be followed just at a

moment when funding is extremely favourable to the institution. The result was and remains a frequently slow disbursement of funding, due to proliferation of paperwork in an apparently overstretched Finance Department. Transfer of grant funds into accounts is also slow, especially if these depend on prior reporting and accounting. In addition, new auditing procedures by government and the need to fulfill 'preferential procurement' or Black Empowerment Enterprise (BEE) requirements at all stages meant that urgent payments due to go out for a small event like this workshop became tied up with delays, documentation problems and blockages.

When the workshop moved off campus and relocated to the Waterfront Aquarium, initially to avoid high transport costs and the loss of time through commuting to campus from the hotel, we paid another organization (which met BEE requirements) to handle conference venues, catering, audio-visual and so forth for the last 2 days of the workshop. This move cut the proliferation of claims, with attendant amounts of time needed to monitor and intervene in the Finance Department in order to avoid the frustration of numerous service providers who still await payment. Observing this simplification of financial administration, the OC would encourage UWC to make its financial administration procedures more efficient and user-friendly. If not, the campus might tend to be increasingly bypassed in this way and fail to realize its potential on the international academic map, to the detriment of our university community.

The interim budget of the OC showing all expenses and sources of payment is attached. Not all services and materials have yet been paid, due to abovementioned problems, and thus a full financial report from the Finance Department has not yet been compiled. This will be forwarded when complete.

#### E. Circulation of papers & workshop website.

For a workshop of this nature to offer genuine intellectual exchange, papers needed to be submitted one month in advance and circulated to all workshop participants for prior study. Most workshop delegates submitted work in time and a Workshop Reader was quickly printed and made available locally. To save postage costs and time, a website was constructed with access through Women's & Gender Studies in which papers and other information about the workshop were made available prior to the opening. It also offered a vehicle for those papers submitted late. The website however was not intended for general public access, and included warnings that copyright should be obtained before citing any material from the papers. This website was originally scheduled to close down soon after the workshop to avoid unauthorized use of papers, given that its purpose was intra-workshop. However, the OC has been encouraged to develop new ways of using the website for post-workshop exhibition and related discussions. The website address is [www.uwc.ac.za/arts/gendervisuality/](http://www.uwc.ac.za/arts/gendervisuality/)

#### G. Publicity.

The university communities in Western Cape were notified of the workshop approximately one month in advance, and invited to contact the OC. The District Six

Museum's Public Education Programme carried a link to the workshop, and the press was contacted concerning the exhibition programme at UWC. Several radio interviews were conducted with members of the OC, with both conventional and community stations in Cape Town. Farzanah Badsha played a prominent role in these interviews and is following up with various reviewers in newspapers.

Workshop posters were designed, printed and posted up around the UWC campus and other venues in Cape Town, highlighting the exhibitions and the more accessible panels at UWC. As a prelude to the exhibition experience in which certain materials were removed by UWC students (see exhibition report), most posters disappeared from the walls of UWC within hours of being placed there, repeatedly. The OC believes that it was the appeal of the photograph in the poster that was responsible for this problem. Eastern Cape photographer Daniel Morolong took the picture in the 1950s, showing middle-aged women at the beach in a golden era before African urban communities in East London were destroyed by forced removals. The UWC phenomenon of the disappearing poster and of the stolen exhibition probably merits research in its own right.

#### H. Workshop materials.

The International Relations unit at UWC provided basic folders for the workshop, and a deal was made with a Durban-based small business promoting women's craftwork to provide workshop bags and locally-produced CD gifts at a very competitive price. Unfortunately Southern Grooves were not able to deliver the workshop bags on time, though the CDs arrived and formed part of the conference pack to delegates. After the bags arrived the following week they were sold to the African Programme in Museum & Heritage Studies at the University of Cape Town, whose payment of R4500 to the workshop will appear in the financial record.

#### I. The workshop (see Programme).

Delegates arrived from as early as the weekend prior to the workshop, but mostly on Tuesday 24 August 2004. This gave time to recover from travel fatigue, and also to visit exhibitions and cultural sites in the city. Registration began at UWC that afternoon, and previews could be had of the workshop exhibitions in the library atrium. Registration for the most part went smoothly, with funds deposited the next day and in the week following the workshop.

The Workshop opened with the panel Visual Traffic Across Empire, with papers on Caribbean art and the black presence in British art. In retrospect these were perhaps not the most well-related and compelling papers with which to launch the workshop. The overstretched audio-visual services also had some teething problems but these were soon resolved and projection went smoothly the next day.

After the panel, the workshop adjourned to the Library atrium for the official workshop and exhibition opening. The UWC Vice-Rector for Student Development, **Professor Lullu Tshiwala**, had studied the workshop proposal carefully and made very thoughtful remarks concerning its relevance to the university's agenda on gender and scholarship. After this impressive beginning, the exhibitions were then opened by

Professor **Uma Duphelia-Mesthrie**, Chair of the History Department at UWC. Professor Mesthrie had already engaged with students taking their first sample of the exhibitions, and gave a provocative speech that encompassed the range of works and their likely challenge to the student body. As author of a book on photography herself (*From Cane Fields to Freedom*), her comments were theoretically and historiographically informed. She also assisted visiting delegates gain a preliminary grounding in the complexities of South African society, in a very short space of time. This exhibition opening was attended by a large gathering beyond the workshop audience, and the ensuing fork dinner was stretched beyond expectation. Feedback on the exhibitions and on the workshop event from the broader public was very positive.

At this stage some adjustments were made to the programme. Last-minute apologies and cancellations came from Angela Thibodeaux and Jan-Erik Lundström, and Sonia Khurana alerted us to a delay in her arrival. Her place was switched with Zanele Muholi, who had to return to Johannesburg for the opening her solo exhibition. Farzanah Badsha withdrew her paper from the Sunday panel to make more time available for Khurana's video presentation. The programme was thus slightly streamlined and more time for discussion was available. Each discussant was instructed that they had 12 minutes to comment on papers in their panels, and kick off debate. In all cases without exception, this method of focusing rigorous critique worked superbly, and the quality of discussants' contributions was uniformly very high. The rest of this section will simply highlight the most salient features of the panels, and attention is drawn to more detailed reports from participants attached separately.

During the first panel on Friday, two postgraduate students presented their research-in-progress. **Mxolisi Mchunu** drew parallels between paid domestic work by Zulu-speaking men, and older forms of initiation, through the vehicle of the kitchen suit (so-called garden-boy's attire). He showed photographs of the work situation, and it only emerged later that the garden-boy in the kitchen suit was Mxolisi himself, prior to taking up university studies. The first of two workshop papers on skin-bleaching in Africa was presented here by American graduate student **Kathleen Robinson**, part of a larger project on 'the modern girl'. Commoditisation through cosmetics in Ghana was linked to its slave trade history. **Premesh Lalu** brought a very high standard of discussion to the proceedings, setting an excellent precedent. Audience discussion expressed uneasiness around too-easy historical associations made between firstly male precolonial male initiation and colonial domestic employment as ways of attaining manhood, and modern and slaving pasts in West Africa. While the environment was supportive, both student speakers had their intellectual baptism of fire.

The film panel opened with **Onookome Okome's** exceptionally interesting study of women's audience role in shaping Nigerian home videos. **Marianne Gullestad** gave a mostly expository overview of the possible ways of using a Norwegian missionary film from Cameroon. **Desirée Lewis**, an associate of the African Gender Institute, gave an outstanding critical discussion of both papers. This

was followed after lunch by the artists' panel, with **Zanele Muholi** presenting a more polemical and organizational-driven talk than she gave at District Six Museum (see below). As her pictures were on exhibition in the atrium upstairs, she did not show the photographs and thus audience interaction was not centred on the images.

**Colette Veasey-Cullors** suffered from lack of internet access to use the right projection software, but managed to show her triptychs concerning women's bodily expression of emotions, and the pregnant body. She was perhaps the most eloquent artist of the workshop, arguing for more dialogue between scholars and producers of images. Her work on maternity triggered debate. The artists were ably discussed by **Zayd Minty** of the District Six Museum.

The last panel of the day, competently discussed by Africanist historian from the USA **Lynn Thomas**, allowed **Mireille Rabenoro** to speak to her fascinating paper about precolonial queens and power in Madagascar. **Yvonne Winters** from Durban gave a fairly orthodox art history paper on Zulu headrests, gender and cosmology. **Andrew Bank's** rigorous research on the /Xam photographs taken at the Breakwater prison in the 1870s ended the long day's presentations. This was one panel where thematically the papers were rather diverse and did not connect as well as other panels, but discussion was productive nonetheless. The Breakwater paper gave workshop participants more sense of a connection with South African history, especially given their hotel accommodation.

After the last panel the workshop moved by bus to Groot Schuur High School for a fork dinner, after which **Quanita Adams** performed in *At Her Feet* in the school's excellent small acoustic auditorium. See below on theatre performance.

On Saturday participants were pleased to simply cross the road from their hotel to the Two Oceans Aquarium for the day's sessions, instead of the long commute to UWC. The auditorium opens up to a deck on the water with magnificent views of Table Mountain, and together with perfect weather this made each coffee and lunch break very relaxed and restorative. It was fitting that the first panel on Saturday therefore broke stimulating new ground, dedicated to invisibilities. **Anette Hoffman** argued that praise poems still current among Herero-speaking Namibians are one of the few reference points to those who disappeared in the genocide, whose other traces (visual, documentary, archaeological) are otherwise enormously hard if not impossible to find. How do we read their genealogical and topographical information as history? How do visual studies assist methodologically? Then an intriguing paper by **Kopano Ratele** engaged with questions of being unseen. Using the incident of a farm worker with a donkey cart who was attacked by a white farmer because he had one white and one black donkey, Ratele asked some profound questions about race and visibility. This generated some of the liveliest discussion of the workshop, very competently launched by **Karen Adler**, an editor of *Gender & History* UK collective.

**Lynn Thomas** presented research on the African leg of 'The Modern Girl' global gender research project, based at University of Washington. Her study focused on skin bleach advertisements in Kenya and South Africa, tracing links with African-American business interests and aesthetics in the USA. **Lindsay Clowes** analysed a

series of photographs from *Drum* magazine to trace the masculine ideals proposed in the 1960s and 1970s, showing the marked shift from men with wives and children in domestic spaces to men alone and out in the world. This was followed by **Ayhan Akman's** rather playful approach (paper not circulated prior to workshop unfortunately) to Turkish cartoons. He traced some genealogies of political and popular cartoons, and concluded with his self-confessed favourite, concerning a couple of unappealing losers who thrived on alleged European female sex tourism. **Ciraj Rassool** as discussant focused on histories of hair and skin colour in Cape Town, cosmetics and prosthetics, and tried to open up questions on Islam and Turkish secularization.

After lunch, both **Marijke du Toit** and **Lorena Rizzo** gave excellent presentations on photography and African women, in urban South Africa and Northwestern Namibia respectively. Rizzo argued for a lesser number of images in any study, allowing for more depth. This was certainly productive in her case. One Kaoko photograph of a woman with a donkey later prompted a rich discussion on the history of donkeys around the world. But the main discussion of this panel centred on the presentation of **Jeanne van Eeden**, concerning a controversial Land Rover advertisement (soon withdrawn) that showed a Himba woman with breasts flying sideways as the vehicle passed. The discussant for this panel **Leslie Witz** shot many holes in van Eeden's historical and theoretical arguments. Then criticisms from the audience started asking why van Eeden had no compunction about displaying the image, not only to show the audience the ad in question, but as her backdrop on each Powerpoint slide with text. Thus several in the audience registered distress at being forced to view the repetition of the derogatory image, without any explanation or seeming awareness on the speaker's part. This issue then uncovered a deeper undercurrent that had been growing in magnitude through other panels. This concerned the politics of representation, or as Michelle Rowley put it, the ethics of articulation. Rowley gave voice to a more general concern at the insensitivity shown in presentations concerning skin lightening, hair, and fairly violent and graphic sexist cartoons from Turkey. This was probably a turning point in the workshop, and debate was very intense and sustained into the break and beyond.

The final panel on Saturday concerned visual sexualities, starting with a close-grained reading by **Helmut Puff** of Dürer's *Death of Orpheus*. This was followed by a young art historian **Elizabeth Birdsall**, working on an exhibition called *Faggots* by Arne Svenson. Her use of the literature on photographic archives and repression gave rise to a particularly rich discussion, with numerous suggestions around theory and interpretation. The willing participation of queer subjects in Svenson's project, and the latter's attempt to turn the tables on official forms of photography, shifted the focus of discussion into different channels of representational politics and power from the previous panel. **Tammy Shefer** acted as discussant. The day ended with a workshop dinner, allowing a more relaxed opportunity to pursue the day's issues.

Sunday began with **Bernice Stott**, using fairly standard gender literature to analyse recent artworks by South African women artists. The workshop did not however have the opportunity to grapple with the problems of the notion of the male

gaze. Papers by **Tammy Shefer** and **Rob Morrell**, both well-known for their studies of gender and masculinity, turned the focus to HIV/AIDS. Morrell did not offer any real critical discussion of the photographs selected for the *Fatherhood Project*, but the audience tried to push this. Shefer gave a critique of photojournalism of HIV/AIDS subjects, arguing it reduced their individuality – interesting in light of the problem for photographers of not wanting to identify people with the disease because of the social implications. **Javier Sanjines** from Michigan gave a vigorous discussion of the papers on this somewhat difficult panel.

The second panel of the day was probably the richest of the workshop. The three Argentine scholars **Cecilia Tossounian**, **Ana Lia Rey** and **NAME** presented their paper on the awards for virtue given to working class women, accompanied by outstanding photographs. **Michelle Rowley** spoke on election campaign visual imagery in the Caribbean and its hypermasculinity, hinting also at the choreography of election speeches and rallies whose study would add enormously to this work. **Sadan Jha** gave his presentation with calendar art, one film clip and other images to suggest the nation-ing and gendering of a particular landscape. The complexity of the subject matter highlighted more than any other paper the problem of giving too short a time to each presentation, because of the workshop numbers involved. Far more time was needed to absorb and address this work, that is only being followed up later in pursuit of a submission to *Gender & History*. The workshop however appreciated the wealth of this panel, which was very competently discussed by Ayhan Akman and generated very lively discussion.

By lunchtime the artist Sonia Khurana had arrived, after going astray between Nigerian airspace and Barcelona (see below). She was slotted into the third panel of the day. The panel commenced with a short presentation by **Marcel Mutombo**. This in fact said more about gender equality discourse in DRC than the promised popular artworks. Mutombo had brought original works with him from the Lubumbashi Museum, which were displayed in the Auditorium. However he said little about these particular items. Instead he twice showed a DVD recording from DRC television with clips of music video showing young women dancing in scanty dress, after much extraneous matter. Attempts to purchase a music CD of Congolese music, which would have been more appropriate, had been unsuccessful. He was followed by a riveting presentation and sequence of urban images from Manila by **Loma Quejong**. Then **Sonia Khurana** presented a number of her video works, with a short set of remarks about her *modus operandi*. This work again suffered from the short time available for discussion, with Khurana reluctant to give simplistic or expository explanation, and more intent on gauging audience response. However, given the difficult nature of certain imagery on video, much more time was needed for the audience to be able to articulate their responses. The discussant for this panel, **Cheryl-Ann Michael**, did excellent work pulling certain issues together.

After the last coffee break, one hour had been set aside for a methodological summing-up. This was opened by **Jan Marsh**, who contended that most images had not been studied closely enough in the workshop, and advocated more art historical methods. She also asked the workshop what would have happened if some of the

audience had been blind. **Patricia Mohamed** gave a series of carefully argued points, concerning methodology and the politics of representation. She tied together certain papers very persuasively in terms of their method issues, plus various important comments across the workshop. She insisted on the productivity of the visual for opening up new theoretical spaces for gender. **Patricia Hayes** added to these concerns by arguing that the visual also offers new possibilities for reading what comes before and outside modernity, colonialism, industrialization, especially in the case of African history. A short discussion ensued, then thanks were given and the workshop closed.

An overall assessment of proceedings (see also attached sample reports and evaluations) would highlight the following issues:

1. there were too many papers, thus the proposed workshop began to resemble more of a conference with insufficient time for in-depth feedback
2. papers covered too many different media of visual representation, not allowing enough discussion to develop around the specifics of each one, with the possible exception of photography
3. the quality and insight of the independent discussants invited to critique each panel was not simply a redeeming but an outstanding feature of the workshop. Almost without exception they provided excellent individual feedback and developed a focus for the ensuing debate
4. the range of works offered in different fields, disciplines and countries was an eye-opener for all participants, thus putting each work in a greatly enlarged and more politicised perspective
5. the corollary of this was (for some) a particular set of frictions between South-South and North-South engagements, specifically around the politics of representation, though this should not be seen in a reductive or uniform way. This report is not the appropriate vehicle for a full examination of the complex dynamics at play: it needs to be explored and incorporated in further collaborative research.

Finally, what became apparent as the workshop unfolded was the uneven-ness of visual, gender and discipline-based work presented. It was rare to find fluency in all fields. Some participants came from backgrounds with greater visual literacy and theoretical study but had problems with anthropological or historical nuance; others came with strong discipline-based papers but needed assistance with visual methodology and even gender theory and politics. These discrepancies reveal the penetration of gender studies over many years, but the relatively new impact of visual studies. The next step forward is obviously to hone in on areas of productive overlap and connectivity, in order to promote deeper insight into how questions stemming from the visual open up new analytical spaces and challenges for gender and the regular disciplines.

#### I. Accompanying activities.

i. Visit to South African National Gallery. A visit to the South African National Gallery with an excellent guided tour of the Ten Years of Democracy new collection was arranged for the morning of Thursday 26 August, and most delegates took advantage of this. Highlights included the new video installation called *Chimera* by Minette Vari which offers a critical, gendered reworking of the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria.

ii. Theatre performance. The OC hired a small theatre venue in a city school to stage *At Her Feet*, an award-winning one-woman play by scripted by Nadia Davids, and acted by Quanita Adams. The group offers this play free of charge for educational purposes, though lighting had to be arranged. The play explores the lives and histories of a series of Cape Town Moslem women, young and old, as they are encountered in the wake of events such as September 11 and the debate over the Amina Lawal case in Nigeria. The play added enormously to the workshop, which had no presentations dealing with women and Islam, and was received with acclaim.

iii. Workshop dinner. On the Saturday evening of the workshop, the participants and additional persons met at the Wild Fig Restaurant for dinner. Given the hectic pace and organizational needs of the workshop, this was an opportunity for the OC to sit and spend time getting to know some of the participants from the South, and for the latter to engage with the South Africans present. It also gave an opportunity to engage in more informal ways with issues raised by the workshop.

#### K. Workshop logistics.

The Breakwater Lodge proved on the whole a reasonable and convenient accommodation venue, close to facilities at the Waterfront. The public safety of the Waterfront was a factor in this hotel selection, and while some delegates from Europe appreciated this aspect, others from the South pointed out that they were felt 'whitened' in this tourist-oriented location. For the first two days of the workshop, commuting by bus to UWC added nearly two hours to the day's schedule and greatly to the fatigue of participants, thus for practical reasons it made sense to shift across the road from the hotel to the Waterfront Aquarium venue for workshop proceedings.

L. Publishing workshop. See attached report by Dr Lindsay Clowes (WGS).

M. District Six Museum Public Education Programme (PEP). This community museum runs a weekly Tuesday evening public event, with an invited speaker and regular audience. It is well-organised and advertised across different constituencies. The latter consists of the museum's own aficionados and volunteers, the old corpus of Zayd Minty's discussion forum for black cultural activists BLAC, and on our account, a number of feminist artists and writers based in Cape Town. Given the short duration of the workshop, and the seminal importance of gathering such a range of artists and scholars in Cape Town working on gender & visibility, it was

judged important to spread the benefits of their presence as widely as possible. PEP offered itself as one way to address a more popular and alternative intellectual constituency outside the university. Two workshop speakers/artists were invited to address the PEP for two consecutive weeks, Zanele Muholi on 24 August and Sonia Khurana on 1 September 2004.

**Zanele Muholi's** presentation concerning black lesbian communities in Gauteng's townships, documented in conventional black & white photography, attracted a diverse audience. Her talk focused on the loneliness and lack of support and young lesbians in the big city, sometimes brutally victimized for their sexuality. Her photographs represented the companionship, love and desire that these young women nurture among themselves, against the unfriendly urban backdrop of Johannesburg. They also challenged viewers very explicitly about heterosexual norms, and the human cost extracted from those attempting to live beyond such boundaries. This approach at District Six differed greatly from the talk she gave at the workshop, which was more designed to mobilize particular political agendas.

The presence of Zanele and her work in Cape Town, followed immediately by her well-reviewed solo exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, resulted in negotiations by the South African National Gallery in Cape Town to purchase her photographic prints for the national permanent collection. This accolade can be weighed against the conflicted responses the work received from UWC students (see exhibition report) to give a sense of the diversity and contests within South African visual culture at present.

The workshop financial report will show that fine art printing of Zanele's exhibition photographs was done by photographer **Andrew Meintjies** in Johannesburg. The workshop organizers learned with shock and sadness of Andrew's brutal murder in his studio, in September 2004, during an armed robbery. We wish to acknowledge his role in the artistic production of work that is now part of South Africa's visual heritage.

**Sonia Khurana** gave a presentation of her video work at the District Six venue a week later. Technical problems delayed projection but she also attracted a feminist and visually oriented audience from outside the academy. The PEP talk was useful in providing more time to Khurana to explain ways of viewing video, which are quite specific, and how she conceived and produced her work. Her presentation included filmed performances by Mona, an individual of complex sexed and gendered history of identity, who is coincidentally the subject of a biographical project by Urvasha Butalia (*Gender & History* editorial collective). Khurana's platform at District Six was extremely useful in promoting greater visual literacy around video.

#### N. Lecture tours

It is a requirement of NRF (National Research Foundation) funding through the International Science Liaison to arrange for sponsored scholars to present their work more broadly than at any one workshop or seminar venue in South Africa. Thus two lecture tours were organized for the recipients of this grant, **Onokome Okome** and **Sonia Khurana**.

Okome's scholarship on Nigerian home video attracted interest from a number of disciplines and departments. Collaboration with Wits University School of the Arts enabled Okome to give both a faculty seminar presentation and a lecture on film to undergraduates, as well as attending a study group of young academics dealing with race and film in Gauteng. His lecture tour then took him to Durban, to the Department of Historical Studies at University of KwaZulu-Natal, where he presented work on Nigerian video and female audiences. He ended his lecture tour in Cape Town, first presenting his paper on video and gender at the Gender & Visuality Workshop, then offering a longer discussion and film viewing at the regular seminar of the UWC History Department a few days after the workshop had ended.

Khurana had been delayed in reaching Cape Town in time for the opening of the workshop, due to her own illness en route from Asia, and that of another passenger when traveling from London who had to be flown back from Nigerian airspace to Spain for medical treatment. These mishaps won Khurana the award for most difficult journey to the workshop. Khurana thus began her tour with a late presentation at the workshop, followed by her spot at the District Six Museum. She then traveled to Durban where she engaged in research and built contacts for later projects, and gave a video presentation at the Durban Art Gallery with the collaboration of Director, Storm van Rensburg. She briefly returned to Cape Town and continued research activities around local film archives before leaving the country.

Both lecture tours brought original research and artwork to South Africa from parts of the world that have been outside the usual local academic and artistic orbit. Both were a resounding critical success with all concerned, mobilizing audiences with whom they had contact. Future collaboration is anticipated. Both Okome and Khurana are required to report to the NRF directly on the results of their visits.

M. Exhibitions. See separate report by Farzanah Badsha.

O. Publication. The journal *Gender & History* is currently receiving submissions for its Special Issue on Visual Genders, due to come out in Spring 2005. An editorial meeting was held after the Gender & Visuality Workshop to assess which workshop papers were suitable for submission to the journal. A number of impressive papers were identified and preliminary editorial suggestions sent to authors, prior to the submission date of 15 October. The journal in addition received over 100 abstracts from around the world and requested submissions from a considerable number. It is expected that approximately forty full papers will enter the review process, with some going into other issues of the journal. The goal is to secure 12 to 15 full papers for the issue, with a possible section in the journal for methodological debate, and a review section that will include film and video. The Guest Editor is responsible for selecting the cover image for *Gender & History* for all 2005 numbers, and is currently negotiating copyright.

P. Follow-up to workshop. The most important consequence of this workshop is the motivation to take the visual theme to the next phase of collaborative discussion and exchange. The workshop itself and subsequent reports and feedback indicate that narrowing the focus is essential, and building on shared concerns in the South vital. To this end, an invitation has already been issued by Patricia Mohamed in Trinidad to Patricia Hayes and Kopano Ratele (WGS) to consider a follow-up meeting in 2005 in the Caribbean. No dates have been set, and funding needs to be found. This meeting is proposed as a way to continue certain crucial lines of debate issuing from the workshop. Patricia Mohamed played a key role in the methodological summing-up of the workshop. Thus discussions are underway as to the potential of a small group of collaborative researchers from the South taking the methodological issues to the next stage.

Signed: Patricia Hayes

Date: 5 November 2004