

**Panel Convener:** Kamogelo Molobye, Wits University

**Panelists:**

Nomcebisi Moyikwa, UKZN

Pumelela Nqelenga, UCT

Nondumiso Msimanga, Wits

Billy Langa, Independent artist

“Home is where the heart is”: locating and centering home as a space and site for pedagogic and creative knowledge production

Artistic research in Africa applies practices that challenge hegemonically established and rigid research configurations within institutions of learning towards transforming their geography of power vis-à-vis knowledge and artistic practices. Artists and scholars in Africa are decentering Eurocentric rationality to recenter African experiences as ontologically and epistemologically legitimate ways of inquiry, knowledge-making, and artistic research and practice. This challenge dismantles epistemic hierarchies that persist to privilege Western rationality at the expense of other ways of knowing. Furthermore, it rebuts notions that Africans have no history, no knowledge and no practices worth contributing to the world at large (Zondi, 2021).

Artistic practices, as currently learned and taught, embody a kind of ‘epistemicide’ due to the exclusionary nature of other ways of knowing. It further embodies forms of erasure for practices that have not been legitimated by institutions of teaching and learning. As such, practices of locating and centering home and the self as points of departure for artistic and academic research proposes an exploration of knowledge production in Africa that rejects the notion that Africa has knowledge without a point of origin, history, or position. In supporting the project of centering, recentering and locating African knowledge systems, Siphamandla Zondi argues that it “involves insisting on freedom (political, economic, cultural, epistemic) [and] proclaiming our Africanity as a legitimate ontological position from which to think...” (2021: 5). It is through these two strategies, that center home and the self, that new languages and vocabularies are explored, introduced and developed within the academy to allow artistic research and scholarship to find relevance.

The proposed panel seeks to invite scholars, researchers and artistic practitioners to theorize on home and self as points of departure for creative and academic knowledge. Through the panel, we seen to explore the ways in which the body and the home from which it originates – both as a space and a site – serve as archives of narratives and memories that inform the many ways artists and arts researchers interact with knowledge production in Africa.

Furthermore, the panel seeks to explore the ways in which processes of locating and centering allow for interrogations about the body and home as sites of embodied and living knowledge production that nuance systems of power vis-à-vis knowledge and artistic practices in Africa. In this panel we ask: what new knowledge can be gathered from locating the self from home as an ontological site and space for knowledge production? How do processes of location and centering allow the artists and researcher to recover and re-member points of origin regarding African ways of knowing and doing?

## **Biographies**

**Kamogelo Molobye** is a choreographer, performer, and lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand' Theatre and Performance Department. He is also a Ph.D. candidate with the same department with a focus on decolonial movement studies and research pedagogies and practices in South Africa.

**Billy Langa** is an actor, playwright, director and educator. Langa takes a curious approach to theatre that is deeply relational to the body – puzzling out what theatre means to those who perform it and those who witness it. A recent interest of Langa's is the presence of language, and how it fits into the physicality of theatre.

**Nondumiso Lwazi Msimanga** is known for her public arts activism and her work as a performance arts intellectual. She creates her own performance events in public space and curates performance-based conversations. Nondumiso is a writer with a pedagogical interest driven by her penchant for paradox and the possibilities of performance as worldmaking.

**Nomcebisi Moyikwa** is a mother to Khayone, an artist, and a Drama and Performance Studies Lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. Her artistic (anti-disciplinary/genre) practice is a movement toward developing conceptual spaces and critical tools to develop frameworks to read, write and think about the creative expressions of Black South African artists.

**Pumelela Nqelenga** is an interdisciplinary practitioner with an interest in Contemporary Nguni Performance, Site-Specific Performance and the role of the Black Female Body in Performance. She is a lecturer at the Centre for Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town.