

Dr Same Mdluli, Wits School of Arts, Research Associate

*South African corporate and private art collections as interlocutors of shared knowledge, accessibility and inclusive narratives.*

**Keywords:** Collections, corporate and private art collections, interlocutors, shared knowledge, accessibility, inclusive narratives.

**Abstract:**

South Africa's corporate and private art collections make some of the richest holdings of art in the country collected and owned privately. Many of these collections were started through the private initiatives by individuals working within these various institutions, with either personal interests or invested interest to grow the art as an asset. Over the years however, the composition of these collections has not only become important resources for research material and historical accounts but also a rich means for curatorial interventions and initiatives that begin to question whether or not it is possible to create pedagogies outside of curatorial practices that rely and/or are anchored on canons of art historical significance or visual arts conventions. Historically, some of these collections have a similar if not the same footprint, encompassing of the same artists from the same period, collected during the same time, and most likely for the same rationale. In this paper I argue that the general historical make up of South African corporate and private art collections do not only form part of particular kinds of western pedagogies and epistemological frameworks of collecting but are also a source of artistic research for interrogating how such collections have shaped South African art discourse in particular ways. I suggest that corporate and private art collections are not only an important missing link in filling the gap to some art historical accounts but also a critical component of interlocutors of shared knowledge, accessibility and inclusive narratives.

Same Mdluli is an artist, art historian and curator, and writer living in Johannesburg. She holds a PhD in History of Art, MA in Arts and Culture Management from Wits University and a B-Tech degree in Fine Arts (cum laude) from the University of Johannesburg.