

Reimagining contemporary Africa: Circulations of objects, knowledges & spiritual practices

24 & 25 January 2024

University of the Western Cape
Seminar Room, Department of Anthropology

Convenors:

Heike Becker, University of the Western Cape
Agnes Kedzierska-Manzon, EPHE Paris Sciences
Lettres/ IMAf, France



UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE



École Pratique des Hautes Études
Sciences religieuses



IMAF
Institut des mondes africains
UMR 6171 (CNRS) - UMR 243 (IRD)



Wednesday, 24 January 2024

9:30 Workshop opening and participants welcome

Introductions of participants

Panel 1: Religious encounters in Africa

Chair: Xolile Simon (Stellenbosch University)

10:00-11:00

Benjamin Soares (University of Florida)

“Islam, History, and 'Tradition' among Muslims and 'Rasta' Sufis in Urban Mali”

Ala Rabiha Alhourani (University of Cape Town)

“Sensational Embodiment of Sufi Piety in Cape Town. Spiritual Knowledge and Virtue Ethics”

Break

11:30 – 13:00

Christian Williams (University of the Free State)

“Becoming Christian and Namibian in South West Africa: The Early Life of Salatiel Ailonga, 1932-63”

Remember Namushinga (University of Namibia)

“Exploring the Religious Life of the *San* People in Tsumkwe, Namibia: Rites of Passage and Rituals”

Tristan Kapp (University of Pretoria)

“South Africa’s Occult Crimes Unit: How Apartheid shaped South African attitudes toward Paganism and the Occult”

Lunch

14 :15-15:00

Conversation with Philippa Megan Schmulian (Magickal Gem) on contemporary alternative spirituality in Cape Town and beyond

Break

Panel 2: Healing Africa

Chair: Julia Theron (University of the Western Cape)

15 :30-16 :30

Fernand Idriss Mintoogue (EPHE-PSL, IMAf)

“Neo-Gnosis in Africa: Samaël Aun Weor and contemporary therapeutic rituals in Cameroon”

Michael Shirungu (University of Namibia)
"Transformation of Traditional Healing Practices: An Exploration of *Vanganga* (traditional healers) and diagnostic methods in Kavango, Namibia"

Break

17:00- 18:00

Dudzile Voigts (Humboldt University Berlin)
"Moving through Transformative Spaces: Religious and Therapeutic Context of Dance and Healing in South Africa"

Zikhona Kokoma (University of the Western Cape)
"Project: Amagqirha Nemicimbi-The Art of Healing"

Braai (conference dinner)

Thursday, 25 January 2024

Panel 3: Re-reimagining African selves: histories and art

Chair: Lee Scharnick-Udemans (University of the Western Cape)

9:30-10:30

'Practices of Self': Embodied Memory Work and Performance Art in Namibia
Screening of video: 'Man of War: Leave My House'
Conversation with artists Gift Uzera and Muningandu Hoveka (Windhoek) -- online

10h30-11h00

Heike Becker (University of the Western Cape)
"Ancestral voices: Reimagining African pasts and spirituality in the art work of Tuli Mekondjo"

Break

11:30 -12:30

Fikile Vilakazi (University of the Western Cape), in conversation with Li'Tsoanelo Zwane (University of the Western Cape) and Vuyolwethu Quinela (Stellenbosch University): Traditional healing and queer citizenship.

Lunch

Panel 4: Material(s) transformations: objects and subjects in motion

Chair : Pierre Robert (EHESS, France)

14:00-15:00

William Ellis (University of the Western Cape)
“Plantology and the love of stars for flowers”

Matthieu Soullignac (EPHE-PSL, France)

“From Bwiti to New Age: transformation of the Bwiti-objects through their circulation outside Gabon”

Break

15:30-16:30

Piotr Cichocki (University of Warsaw)

“Powerful objects in motion. African medicine and technology in Malawi”

Agnes Kedzierska Manzon (EPHE- PSL/IMAf, France)

“Circulations of materials, subjects and concepts in southern African ritual and healing practices”

Break

17:00-18:00

Concluding discussion