

FROM DALIBHUNGA TO ROLIHLAHLA: MAKING TROUBLE WITH MANDELA

INDABA REPORT



14-15 AUGUST 2025

Ocean Sciences Conference Centre, Nelson Mandela University and Zoom

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FROM DALIBHUNGA TO ROLIHLAHLA: MAKING TROUBLE WITH MANDELA

Indaba Report

A collaboration between the Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS) and the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET). Hosted at the Nelson Mandela University Ocean Sciences Campus, Gqeberha

For more on the intellectual and programmatic work Nelson Mandela University has been pursuing around *Mandela* as social figure, please visit:

<https://criticalmandela.mandela.ac.za/>

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Watch the full event on YouTube [here](#).

One issue that deeply
worried me in prison was
the false image that I
unwillingly projected
to the outside world
of being regarded as
a saint

I never was one
Even on the basis of
an earthly definition
of a saint
As a sinner who keeps
on trying

Between the Lines
Section of fabric installation
Zama Spellman, 2025

Is one justified in
neglecting his family
on the ground of
involvement in larger
issues?

Is it right for one to
condemn one's young
children and ageing
partners to poverty
and starvation in
the hope of saving
the wretched
multitudes of
this world.



Between the Lines
Section of fabric installation
Zama Spellman, 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

From Dalibhunga to Rolihlahla:
Making Trouble with *Mandela*

In 2017, the Nelson Mandela University re-imagined itself with an official name-change. [In this moment](#), then-Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa emphasised the “great responsibility” the University was taking on with the change. In response to this new responsibility, the University has been engaging with the name in [a plethora of ways](#), from rethinking its brand, posture, and identity to creating artworks on campus that represent Mandela; from running focus groups on the ‘meanings of Mandela’ to initiating projects and programmes aligned with social justice.

The *Dalibhunga: This Time? That Mandela?* colloquium held in 2019 was driven by the imperative to formulate a scholarly response to the name-change and to develop an academic expression of the name. As the only institution of higher education in South Africa carrying the name, the University was aware that it needed to engage with (as the [concept note](#) for the colloquium put it) *Mandela* “the social figure: a figure of justice”. The colloquium was interested in the myriad meanings and figurations of *Mandela* – *Mandela* in the plural – and argued that “the labour of praxis calls upon us to disclose the interpretive schemes and associated social practices that we can distil from *Mandela* to cultivate humanity in the interests of socio-economic equality.”

Six years on from that colloquium, and longer since the name-change, we would like to extend an invitation to the University community to join us in grappling with the figure of *Mandela* once again – this time through the intellectual, engagement, and transformation work that has been ongoing throughout the University that speaks, in one way or another, to *Mandela*. The platform for this is an indaba that will take the form of a University ‘get-together’, with different modes being encouraged and several voices from outside the University being invited to offer provocations. A fulcrum session will grapple with a draft *Embedding Mandela* resource document, which TIMS will make available to participants before the Indaba.

From Dalibhunga to Rolihlahla offers space for reflection on the University’s journey with its name since 2017, for exploration of the social figuring of *Mandela* for the University in the contexts of a rapidly changing world, and for a contribution to the many initiatives designed to clarify the University’s task in these contexts. Pursuing these lines of enquiry can be troubling. On the other hand, making trouble is something that Nelson Mandela didn’t shy away from. In some ways, his life journey exemplified the ‘troublemaker’ meanings of his birthname Rolihlahla. For the University, ‘making trouble’ is unavoidable if it is to use the social figure *Mandela* as its compass in navigating the rapidly changing world it finds itself in.



Would you sit next to this Mandela?

Linocut print on hahnemuehle, A3, framed; edited yellow for report
Zama Spellman, 2025

PROGRAMME

A collaboration between the Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS), and the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET)

DAY 1: THURSDAY, 14 AUGUST 2025

TIME	ITEM	FACILITATOR / SPEAKER
08h30-09h00	REGISTRATION	
09h00-10h30	OPENING SESSION	Edgar de Koker
09h00-09h15	Opening & Welcome Dalibhunga to Rolihlahla – the Mandela Name Journey	Sibongile Muthwa
09h15-10h00	DVC Panel Embedding Mandela Across the Portfolios	Luthando Jack, Muki Moeng, Azwinndini Muronga & André Keet
10h00-10h30	Discussion	All
10h030-11h00	TEA	
11h00-12h15	CARRYING THE NAME 'MANDELA'	Giselle Baillie
11h00-11h45	Panel	Mbongiseni Buthelezi, Judy Sikuza & Vuyani Booï
11h45-12h15	Discussion	All
12h15-13h15	LUNCH	
13h15-14h30	EMBEDDING MANDELA ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY	Vuyo Bongela
13h15-14h00	Panel	Lathitha Mbuzwana, Sinethezekile Mpanza, Reetumetsi Malefane & Qhama Noveve
14h00-14h30	Discussion	All
14h30-15h00	EMBEDDING MANDELA – FRAMING THE DAY 2 WORKING SESSION	André Keet, Jenny du Preez & Verne Harris
15h00	TEA & ARTIST WALKABOUT WITH ZAMA SPELLMAN	

DAY 2: FRIDAY, 15 AUGUST 2025

TIME	ITEM	FACILITATOR / SPEAKER
08h30-09h00	REGISTRATION	
09h00-10h15	THINKING FANON, THINKING MANDELA	Verne Harris
09h00-09h45	A Conversation	Joel Modiri, Victoria Collis-Buthelezi & David Scott
09h45-10h15	Discussion	All
10h15-10h45	TEA	
10h45-12h00	EMBEDDING MANDELA – WORKING SESSION	
10h45-11h00	Framing & instructions	Verne Harris
11h00-12h00	Breakaway room discussions	All
12h00-13h00	LUNCH	
13h00-14h30	PLENARY & BREAKAWAY GROUP FEEDBACK	All
14h30-15h00	SENSE-MAKING & CLOSING	André Keet
15h00	CLOSE & TEA	



Rolihlahla (troublemaker), work in progress
Oil painting on canvas
Zama Spellman, 2025

INDABA REFLECTIONS

INDABA OVERVIEW

By VERNE HARRIS
Interim Director of the Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS) in 2025

The purpose of the Indaba was twofold – on the one hand to reflect deeply on the meanings of *Mandela* at this moment (in the world, in history, in Nelson Mandela University's journey) and on the other, to contribute to the development of a resource on *Mandela* for the University. The intention was to create a forum for the continued troubling of Nelson Mandela, both as historical figure (*Man-dela*) and as social figure (*Mandela*), as well as to deepen the University's work in the spaces of transformation, decolonisation, and Africanisation. Creating a context conducive for both dialogue and provocation was of critical importance. A key element in the curation of context was an exhibition of artwork by Zama Spellman, commissioned especially for the Indaba. Her brief was to use her art to trouble dominant imagery of Nelson Mandela.

The opening session was about establishing a container for the rest of the Indaba. The Vice-Chancellor's opening address did three important things – remind participants of the University's journey with the name *Mandela*, offer a reflection on the world the University finds itself in right now, and strongly signal a hospitality towards diverse views and inputs. She sketched a global reality defined by rapidly shifting geopolitical forces, growing polarisation, and deepening uncertainty about human belonging. The question lingering after her address had to do with what the name *Mandela* offers – and demands – in these contexts. She then joined the four Deputy Vice-Chancellors in a panel discussion, ensuring that at the Indaba's outset there would be clearly articulated perspectives from both disciplinary and functional spacings.

The other two sessions on day one provided a juxtaposition of external and internal voices. A panel comprising the Chief Executives of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Mandela Rhodes Foun-

dation (MRF), and the Nelson Mandela Museum opened lines of enquiry related to responsibilities, challenges, and opportunities for institutions carrying the name Mandela. Strongly emphasised was affirmation for the University's approach to carrying the name responsibly and for its determination to "look in the mirror". Judy Sikuza's (MRF) input offered a fascinating reflection on the challenges, both conceptual and practical, in counterpointing figures like Mandela and Rhodes. The last session of the day brought together voices of student leadership and faculty for a deeper dive into perspectives from these critical university constituencies.

Day two of the Indaba repeated day one's juxtaposition of voices. The opening panel brought together eminent scholars from the University of Columbia (David Scott), University of Johannesburg (Victoria Collis-Buthelezi) and University of Pretoria (Joel Modiri). Their brief was to reflect critically on *Mandela* in a counterpointing with *Fanon*. This was both to mark the centenary of Frantz Fanon's birth and to explore the possibilities emerging from such a counterpoint. All three contributed powerful provocations, urging the university to keep holding, in creative (and dynamic) tension, the historical figure and the social figure, and to always expose *Mandela* to conversation with and interrogation by other figures.

The final session of the Indaba was a workshopping of the draft "Embedding *Mandela*" document, which had been circulated to participants in advance. Facilitated by Deputy Vice-Chancellor Keet and Professor Harris, the goal was to enable a more granular critique of the document. There were many helpful inputs from this configuring of internal and external voices, all of which will be harvested for the next phases of the process. Revision of the document is well underway, drawing on inputs from all sessions of the Indaba.



OVERVIEW OF SESSIONS

SESSION 1

DVC Panel: Embedding *Mandela* Across the Portfolios

Panellists: Luthando Jack, Muki Moeng, Azwinndini Muronga, & André Keet

Facilitator: Edgar de Koker

Watch the session [here](#).

The opening panel discussion was facilitated by the University Registrar, Edgar de Koker, in conversational mode with the four Deputy Vice-Chancellors – covering the portfolios of Learning and Teaching; People and Operations; Engagement and Transformation; and Research, Innovation and Internationalisation. The Vice-Chancellor joined the panel as a respondent towards the end of the session. The panellists all affirmed the continuing value of the name Mandela as both compass and as provocation across the portfolios. Three themes emerged strongly from the discussion: the importance of reckoning with all aspects of Nelson Mandela's long and complex life journey; the imperative for the University to be geared to having impact in society; and the need to find ways to live with multiplicity and with uncertainty.



SESSION 2

Carrying the Name 'Mandela'

Panellists: Mbongiseni Buthelezi, Judy Sikuza, & Vuyani Boo

Facilitator: Giselle Baillie

Watch the session [here](#).

The second panel discussion created space for the University to listen in to the experiences of three other institutions carrying the name Mandela. Three very different positionings were described – a museum in the Eastern Cape, funded by the state but grappling with under-resourcing and growing challenges in reaching local and international audiences (the Nelson Mandela Museum); a well-endowed non-profit based in Cape Town, highly focused on leadership development and scholarship management (Mandela Rhodes Foundation); and a legacy institution in Johannesburg holding the bulk of Nelson Mandela's intellectual property and pulled in multiple directions by those wanting a piece of it (Nelson Mandela Foundation). There was consensus on the weight of responsibility associated with the name and on the avenues of opportunity it continues to unlock. The three institutions expressed respect for the ways in which the University continues to wrestle with the meanings of Mandela.



SESSION 3

Embedding *Mandela* Across the University

Panellists: Lathitha Mbuzwana, Sinethezekile Mpanza, Reetumetsi Malefane, & Qhama Noveve
Facilitator: Vuyo Bongela

Watch the session [here](#).

Facilitated by Vuyo Bongela, this panel deliberately brought together a medley of younger voices from within the Nelson Mandela University space – two lecturers, one in architectural technology and the other in sociology, the SRC President, and a post-graduate student researching the sociology of violence in institutions of higher education. While there was agreement that the name Mandela still has relevance to younger people and that the University needs to carry the name with responsibility, a strong challenge was given to the University leadership to pay close attention to “how people practise Mandela” and to heed the imperative to translate an aspirational embrace of the name into day-to-day reality. Students must ‘feel’ the name speaking to their general well-being at the University and to their routine experience of ‘the classroom’. The language of the classroom must find an embeddedness in the languages of the broader society.



SESSION 4

Thinking Fanon, Thinking Mandela

Panellists: Joel Modiri, Victoria Collis-Buthelezi, & David Scott
Facilitator: Verne Harris

Watch the session [here](#).

This panel was designed to achieve two things simultaneously – on the one hand, provide a platform for eminent scholars from outside the University to critically explore the meanings of Mandela at this historical juncture, and, on the other hand, to juxtapose the names Mandela and Fanon. The year 2025 marks the centenary of Fanon’s birth, so the panel was asked to honour him by putting his name to work. The discussion provided a blend of perspective from outside South Africa and from within. The panellists emphatically affirmed the value of the *Embedding Mandela* working document and offered encouragement to the University to keep thinking deeply and critically about Mandela as historical figure and as social figure. Much of the reflection on Mandela and Fanon sought the connections between ‘life’ and representation of that life. There was a strong injunction not to sever social figure from historical figure.



SESSION 5

Embedding *Mandela* – Working Session

Facilitators: Verne Harris & André Keet

Watch the session [here](#).

The discussion session on the *Embedding Mandela* draft document drew from all previous panel discussions, and especially the panel on Fanon and Mandela. Students and staff, from across disciplines, and community members contributed to the conversation, which was facilitated by Verne Harris and André Keet.

An early question highlighted the trap of dichotomies. In the question, these were the dichotomies of the oppressor/oppressed and coloniser/colonised and how we might explore the ‘middle spaces’ between these binaries to imagine a future beyond them. The idea of dichotomous formulations and the tensions between the ‘poles’ underlaid many of the contributions. Interlocutors often returned to the tension between what might be called ‘material conditions’ and ‘theorising’. This was specifically in relation to the material struggles faced by students, such as hunger and lack of accommodation, due to funding challenges.

Another tension that was frequently referred to was that between the ‘present’ and the ‘past,’ or, to be more precise, our relationship with history in a present fraught with challenges. The discussion proposed that this past/present tension could be explored through imagining a future without icons such as Mandela and Fanon. It engaged Fanon’s assertion that each generation has a mission it must either fulfil or betray, linking this to the responsibility of forging our own legacy in the present. This was followed by a ‘rebuttal’ drawing on Marx’s view that we should not attempt to replicate history, but instead borrow from it what is useful for today. The discussion also emphasised the importance of understanding colonial history and its underlying logics in order to avoid inadvertently reproducing them in contemporary struggles for justice. Finally, it identified the “deep trouble” of Mandela as it

had emerged at the Indaba, ranging from outright rejection to historical reinterpretations that seek to render Mandela usable to the present.

The ‘troubling’ of dichotomies was echoed by the troubling of hierarchies, such as those within student societies and extra-mural activities, and the troubling of centres, such as American technology monopolies. One contributor, from an engineering background, suggested polarities as an alternative metaphor for dichotomies because charged poles are always interacting with each other. Another, when invoking Biko, and referencing the often-dichotomous framing of Biko versus Mandela, stated: “It’s not like two legends cannot co-exist”. The discussion also troubled the framing of material challenges in the University as merely ‘institutional issues’, speaking to the layers of societal and governmental challenges that are putting increasing pressure on universities. This part of the discussion also revolved around the challenges of university bureaucracy and how one might resist or transform such systems.

The question of stand-point, in terms of *standing for* something, was raised as being important if we are to really grapple with the question of what an academic expression of *Mandela* might look like. This was framed as aligned to scholar activism and in opposition to the concept of ‘academic neutrality’. The *personal* as a point to move from for action was also raised, specifically in relation to the question of violence in South African society, and the ways in which Mandela both stood for peace and reconciliation, while also enacting violence in personal spaces.

Three other important themes emerged from the discussion: firstly, Mandela & Nationalism(s); secondly, Mandela & Technology; and, thirdly, Mandela & Languages. The Mandela & Nationalism(s) theme was initially framed in relation to the old question of ‘Who is the Nation?’, and the prescient Fanonian critique of the pitfalls of national consciousness. Neville Alexander’s *One Azania, One Nation*, published under the female pseudonym, Nosizwe, was also noted as an important contributor



to this discussion. Critical Mandela Studies was proposed as a field that might productively take on this question/critique of nationalism/s in the face of the rise of global fascism and South Africa's own national challenges, including violence and state violence.

In terms of Mandela & Technology, contributors spoke about the challenges of technological monopolies and their neo-colonial extraction of resources from the continent; as well as the growing reliance on AI through a decolonial lens – referring to Biko's caution that the greatest weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. If taken up, it was proposed that the theme of Mandela & Technology, under the field of Critical Mandela Studies, could drive research around the cultural impact of digital and technological advances, on such deep questions as what it might mean for *being human* and for our relationships with others.

The importance of African languages to the decolonial project was also raised, with reference to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind*, and how language and being are intrinsically related.

Finally, while the *Embedding Mandela* document was largely seen by the contributors to be valuable as a document outlining important philosophical foundations, the question of implementation was raised. This included consideration of Business Studies approaches such as an implementation plan with timelines, persons responsible, key performance indicators, and measurable impact metrics, as well as cautions against certain methodologies for implementation that might be embedded in capitalist ideologies. It was highlighted that, in terms of the implementation of change, broad-stroke critiques might provide moral edification for those presenting it, but do not provide workable alternatives. Working against managerialism and the neoliberal university, it was proposed, had to include self-reflexive consideration of how we, in our daily practice, contribute to the creation of the neoliberal university, so that we understand what we both *can* and *need* to change.



Nelson (Champion)
Oil painting on canvas, framed
Zama Spellman, 2025

INDABA EXHIBITION: ARTIST STATEMENT ROLIHLAHLA: THE MAN AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

By ZAMA SPELLMAN

"My appearance had nothing to do whatsoever with the state of my feelings... The personal feelings that make one feel like a separate individual rather than part of a mass movement."

- Nelson Mandela (1970)

This body of work was commissioned by the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education and Transformation for their *From Dalibhunga to Rolihlahla: Making Trouble with Mandela Indaba* in collaboration with the Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies at the Nelson Mandela University.

I was tasked with the objective of rethinking and re-evaluating Nelson Mandela University's existing representations of Mandela. In particular, the iconography of the branded image of Nelson Mandela used as the institution's logo. Furthermore, the Madiba Shirt sculpture that stands as centrepiece and gathering place in South Campus, as well as the Mandela Bench sculpture situated in front of the South Campus library.

While engaging with the relationships between these three diverse representations of Mandela, a golden thread connecting all three came to the fore – this is, the use of the elderly Mandela with a bright expression, and the inviting nature of the works that encourage student engagement.

My body of work, in response to this golden thread, consists of two oil paintings, four linocuts and six fabric sheets. The two portraits directly juxtapose the use of the elderly figure, with a bright smile, with my two oil paintings, which both depict a young Mandela: one in a suit and the other in elements of traditional dress. The linocut series directly contests the corporate logo use of Mandela's image, using the graphic nature of linocuts to evoke diverse thinking of Mandela. Lastly, the sheets of fabric consist of quotes by Nelson Mandela which oppose the dominant quotes and phrases that the University has made use of to date.

With the aim of troubling the existing dominant imagery of Mandela; these works have been developed to directly and indirectly play with juxtaposition, to contest the visual choices of the University, and to question whether the current images engage in the act of making trouble as an institution which embodies the multi-dimensional name that is Nelson Mandela should.



Photograph of linocut test prints
Linocut prints on paper
Zama Spellman, 2025



Would you sit next to this Mandela?, in progress
Linocut carving
Zama Spellman, 2025

ARTIST REFLECTIONS: ART EXHIBITION AND ARTIST WALKAROUND

By ZAMA SPELLMAN

Overview of Exhibition

The exhibition, titled *The Man and Everything in Between*, opened on the first day of the Indaba. I quickly noticed attendees engage with the artworks. Visitors paused to observe, read, and photograph the pieces.

The exhibition was curated in three main sections. The first section featured the linocut series: four framed linocut prints, centrally displayed on a plain grey wall, allowing viewers to engage with the graphic and stark imagery without distraction. These works included titles such as *Are we free?*, *No rest for the angry*, *No hope*, and *Would you sit next to this Mandela?* The next section, titled *Between the lines*, presented a four-part fabric series made from hand-dyed sheets, incorporating personal entries, letters, and dialogues of Mandela. Finally, as viewers entered the venue, they encountered two portraits of Mandela, positioned on opposite sides of the entrance, offering further engagement as the panel discussions commenced.



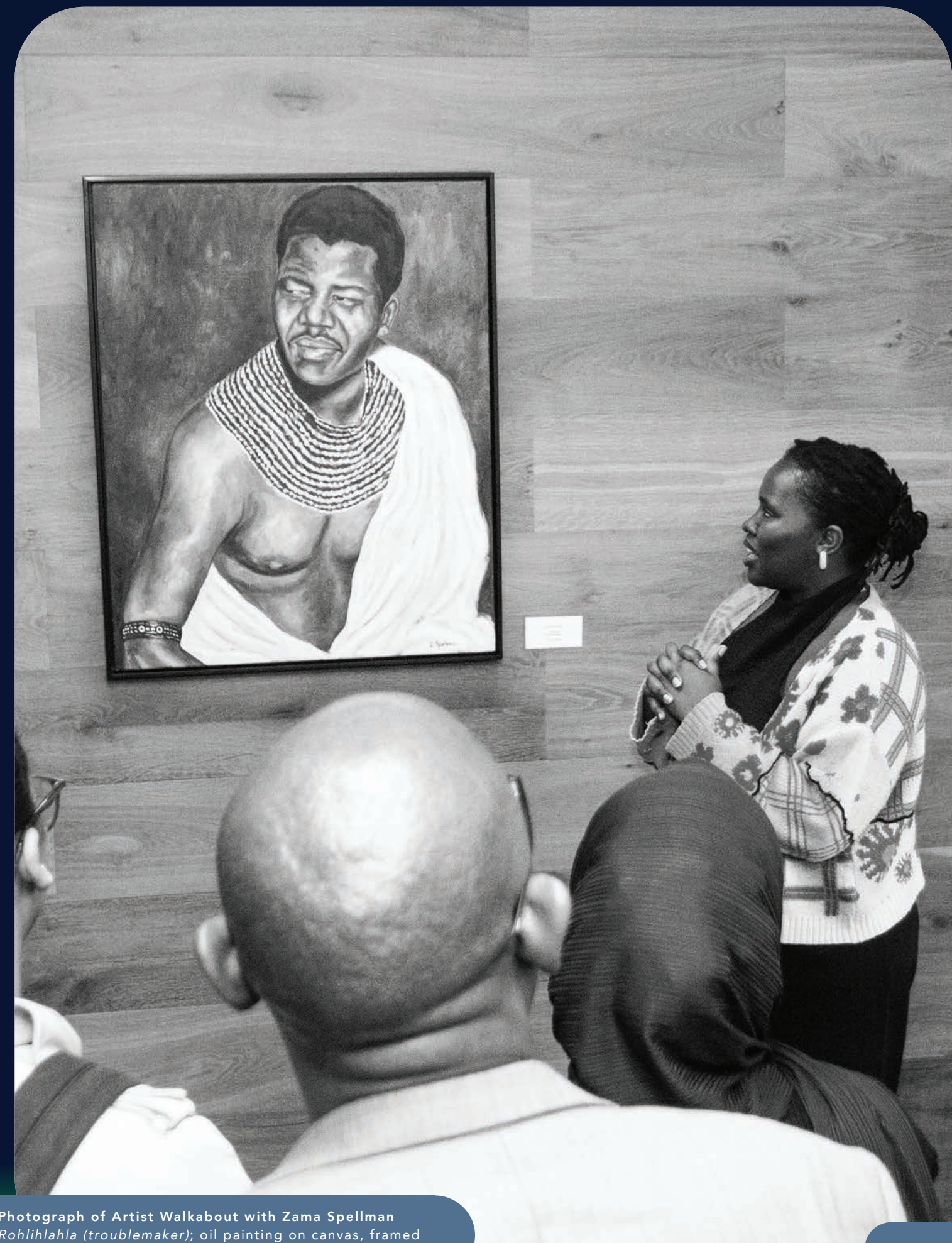
Left to right: *Are we free?*, *Would you sit next to this Mandela?*, *No rest for the angry*, and *No hope*
Linocut prints on hahnemuehle, A3, framed
Zama Spellman, 2025

Artist Walkabout Outcomes

The walkabout began with a discussion of the two oil paintings. Many people asked about my choices in colour palette, facial expression, body language, and dress of the two portraits of a younger Mandela. I intended for the two works to contrast one another in many ways, so it was exciting to listen to how audience members picked up on the subtleties within those choices.

I was especially asked about why I titled the paintings *Nelson (champion)* and *Rolihlahla (troublemaker)*, and I explained how it had to do with the different ways black figures have to present themselves in society. In particular, how different versions are perceived. I believe it was Joel Modiri who brought up 'double consciousness'. In my personal work and research, double consciousness is a prominent theme; however, I did not realise, until the walkabout, that it had slipped into the meaning of the two paintings. For a long time while making these works, I reflected on them as a distant exploration outside the themes I focus on within my practice. After the walkabout, I quickly realised that I never really separated myself from the work. My own themes and identity markers were always present, whether consciously or subconsciously.

The linocut series portion of the walkabout prompted many questions about the choices in reference images. Prof André Keet asked if illustrator and visual artist Pola Maneli was an influence while making these works. This was an exciting connection because I admire his work greatly even though he was not a direct influence. What sat with me most after the exhibition and art walkabout was the question of whether I believe I succeeded in troubling the perception of Nelson Mandela. I have concluded that this was my version of making trouble. A subtle but impactful exploration of making trouble. I could not help but wonder how another artist would approach the same challenge, and how that excited me. That, maybe, a continuation of this legacy of making trouble – through artmaking – is what will bring us closer to the answers we are looking for. Overall, I believe it was a successful addition to the engaging panel discussions over the course of the two-day Indaba. I am so grateful to have been a part of such rich dialogue.



Photograph of Artist Walkabout with Zama Spellman
Rolihlahla (troublemaker); oil painting on canvas, framed
Zama Spellman, 2025



Rolihlahla (troublemaker)
Oil painting on canvas, framed
Zama Spellman, 2025

“MAKING TROUBLE WITH MANDELA” – REFLECTIONS FROM A MEMORY SCHOLAR

By KATRIN ANTWEILER
University of Bremen (Germany)

In 2019, when the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET) held their first colloquium on Mandela, I came to the Nelson Mandela University for the first time. I still remember how intrigued I was by the conversations around the meaning of Mandela – as a symbol, as a legacy – for today’s South African society in general and as name-giver to a university in particular. In 2025, and really more by chance than anything, I was fortunate enough to be able come to Mandela University again, to attend the second edition of this conversation – the Indaba entitled “From Dalibhunga to Rolihlahla: Making Trouble with Mandela”.

I joined these reflections on Mandela somewhat as an outsider, because I am, even if a quite frequent one, only a visitor to South Africa. At the same time, as a German memory scholar, many of the broader questions that were posed during the Indaba connect to questions that I think about in my work too, and that revolve around the issue of historical representation and, ultimately, around comfortable closure vis-à-vis the quest to remain open to the unsettling. Therefore, and not only because I was asked to take notes, I scribbled away in my notebook, finding myself, after summarising each panel, drawing fat arrows that point me to follow-up questions more than to any conclusions. And I immensely appreciate that.

Already, the introductory remarks by the university’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sibongile Muthwa, hit a critical note that kept me thinking for weeks to follow. She made reference to a speech that Naledi Pandor, former South African Foreign Minister and now Chairperson of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, had given at the United Nations in July 2025, just a few weeks prior to the Indaba. In that speech, Dr Pandor had called for more “good trouble”. Like the Indaba’s title, she made reference to Mandela’s birth name, Rolihlahla – meaning “troublemaker” in isiXhosa.

With this, Dr Pandor, and then Prof Muthwa in her opening remarks to the Indaba, invoked Mandela as a symbol as well as a challenge. Both urged us to think of Mandela as “the kind of good troublemaker that we need more of in the world today”; “the kind who confronted systems of oppression that were convenient and profitable to some, and who did so with unwavering dignity” (Pandor, 2025). Prof Muthwa similarly cautioned the audience when she explained that this kind of “good trouble” was urgently needed because the times we live in are increasingly marked by a decline of democracy and a subsequent dismantling of many of the measures that had been – after decades of struggle – put into place to make the world more equitable.

How, then, at such a juncture, can we draw from the memory of Mandela to make “good trouble”? But also, which version of Mandela do we turn to in order to ignite such trouble, and would not different Mandelas – meaning, different facets of what the figure of Mandela stands for – evoke different notions of what “good trouble” and the transformative change it is envisioned to spark might look like?

The quest to think Mandela in plural – together with the reminder that for the University as much as for other institutions that carry Nelson Mandela’s name, the ambition needs to be to constantly reconsider the meaning of Mandela in (or for) the present moment – could be traced as a thread throughout the Indaba. However, the problem of trouble, what it means or should entail, and where it could take us, was addressed much less, despite it featuring so prominently in the name for the conversation.

The first panel, a discussion with the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, shifted the focus from the “world” and its deteriorating democratic structures to Mandela University and how it engages with social justice issues within the University cosmos but also in wider society. The panellists named a problem that for me, as someone whose work is concerned with representations of the past and the knowledges that build dominant narratives about certain times, events or people, instantly resonated: That *Mandela* as a social figure is, first of all, produced (and reproduced) by society; and that, secondly, this (re)production, is influenced by and mirrors other discourses around national identity and ideals of the “new” South Africa.

Generally speaking, public memory – such somewhat authorised recollected historical narratives and the ways in which they are “emplotted” (White, 2016: 56) in public discourse – can tell us a lot about the societies in which they materialise. In this regard, scholars such as Benedict Anderson and Stuart Hall (and of course many others) have theorised the interdependency of history and identity. Focusing on Europe, Anderson has showed how nation states centre their biographies around a founding myth. He conceives of nations as “imagined communities” whose trajectories, emerging from a distant past and projected into a limitless future, encompass a territorially defined population as an essential unity.

Presuming that there is an interdependence between history and identity places value on events and historical figures that resonate with the perception of a supposedly unique culture (e.g., of a group, a nation state etc.) and its distinguishing features, such as language and customs. Memory is, therefore, intrinsically connected to the project of establishing and upholding a national culture and identity (Hall, 2018). Processes of telling and retelling stories of the past, and of making certain people the bearer or, as David Scott put it on the second day of the Indaba, the signifier of this specific memory, are necessarily incomplete. This means that not everything that has happened is recounted, that not every side of a person-turned-social figure is acknowledged, and that these selections and orderings of past events are “determined by the present-day needs of the storytellers” because “it is in the process of choosing and telling stories of the past that groups, or social and political actors, gain identitarian self-understandings” (Korycki, 2023: 161).

We can clearly see this when looking at the representations of Mandela – at Mandela University, in South Africa and even beyond, where the person Mandela has long been a signifier of certain narratives and values. Of course, the Indaba and its speakers, from students to academic staff to Nelson Mandela Foundation and Museum directors, aimed at critiquing and self-critiquing exactly the kinds of usages of Mandela that serve identitarian purposes and convey normative messages. Nuanced reflections around representation and the challenge to not just mobilise but actually *live* the values of Mandela came up in every single panel.

Yet, how did Mandela become this signifier and why? When the memory of Mandela is conjured, what else comes up? Which images and narratives? And is it even possible to make trouble with Mandela – in the double sense of troubling a too-narrow memory of Mandela and to make trouble in an increasingly hostile world by living up to the legacy of Mandela – if he is so firmly emplotted in a specific discourse around peace and reconciliation that seems to allow for only one version of Mandela?

Prof André Keet spoke of Mandela as an “episteme” or a “knowledge project”, which is a fascinating way of thinking about the making and the effects of societal memory in general. Even though never



fully closed or pre-determined, an episteme is neither arbitrary nor completely open-ended either. Knowledge-projects can, therefore, not be understood without thinking about power. This approach can point us to what, on the second day of the Indaba, Prof Joel Modiri called “the crisis of the Mandela project” and its repercussions. He began his provocation by citing from a poem by Koleka Putuma (2017: 101), that begins as follows:

“I want someone who is going to look at me
and love me
the way that white people look at
and love
Mandela.”

What knowledge makes “white people [...] love Mandela” in such a particular way? At the same time, what has to go unsaid, unrepresented, to make this love possible? Is it the implications of the “political project” for which Mandela has come to stand, like Modiri posited? Or is it the contradictions of his actual life, as David Scott suggested in the same panel? Or is it something larger that exceeds Mandela and has more to do with the discourses that authorise(d) him as an icon of successful postcolonial nation-building?

Surely, a bit of all of the above. And, just as surely, there are even more aspects that did not come up. I already briefly mentioned the intimate connection between the projects of national identity and

collective memory. In the discussion between Victoria Collis-Buthelezi, Joel Modiri and David Scott, this also surfaced. The three panellists contemplated how Mandela is inscribed in the state-building process of post-Apartheid South Africa and vice-versa. Yet, the Mandela “mythology” (Collis-Buthelezi) exceeds South Africa and the “smiling old man” (Zama Spellman) can be found being lauded and memorialised across (especially the Western) world.

Listening to the discussion, I was reminded of a visit to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg, where, in 2018, I found myself in a large special exhibition on Nelson Mandela. It was titled “Mandela: Struggle for Freedom” and had been developed in partnership with South Africa’s Apartheid Museum. The temporary exhibition was based on the premise that “Mandela continues to inspire struggles for freedom around the world” and, in the interpretative framework of the CMHR, the struggle for freedom is simultaneously a struggle for human rights (Antweiler, 2023). What I found particularly striking about the exhibition was its effort to engage visitors by asking them questions like, “What would you do if you were imprisoned for 27 years?”

At one point in the exhibition, a letter was displayed that Mandela had written to his daughter while in prison. After reading the letter, visitors were encouraged to write their own letter to a loved one, almost suggesting that any one of us could find ourselves imprisoned like Mandela, or could at least imagine what it must have been like. Later in the exhibition, visitors were also asked to design their own poster of resistance and, at the end, a video collage showed people from across Canada speaking about Mandela. Interestingly, all of the people speaking in these videos concluded that “the future is in my hands”. Therefore, in a sense, this temporary exhibition laid the foundations for the core objectives of the CMHR, which are to “foster an appreciation for the importance of human rights” and to encourage visitors to get involved in human rights causes.

This message is strong throughout the museum and emphasised through the stories of so-called “upstanders”. They include Nelson Mandela as well as the Canadian civil rights activist Viola Desmond, and the Swedish diplomat Raul Wallenberg who saved hundreds of Jews during the Holocaust. The museum defines the term as follows: “An upstander is a person who recognizes injustice, knows their personal strengths and uses those strengths to create change” (CMHR/Be an Upstander). In the accompanying educational materials, learners who visit the museum with their schools are called upon to “use [their] personal strength to create change” and to reflect on the people around them who might be considered “upstanders”.

In a virtual programme available on the CMHR’s homepage, visitors are invited to choose a person close to them and explain why this person (a neighbour, family member, or friend) is an upstander. The sentence to be completed is: “My... is an upstander in my life because they used their personal strength of...” The options that the programme provides to fill in the blanks are “organisation”, “education”, “communication”, “kindness”, “honesty”, “perseverance”, “optimism” and, lastly, “help-



fulness". There is no single option available to pick that refers to supposedly negative emotions like anger as the engine behind taking action. Did Viola Desmond go the difficult road of taking racist Canadians to court because she was aware of her "perseverance"? Did Raul Wallenberg choose to help Jewish people during the Holocaust out of sheer "helpfulness", and did Nelson Mandela risk his life in the fight against apartheid out of "optimism"?

Even if these emotions or characteristics did play a role for these particular individuals, they are far from being the most common cause of (political) activism. Nowhere in the CMHR do we learn about the many actions that have been taken out of exasperation for having to experience gross injustices, or about those that have resulted from despair. Nor do we learn about political opposition as a driving force behind activism. This neglect of the political (as opposed to moral) dimension of struggles for freedom, of troublemaking, is not merely an omission on the side of the Canadian museum but is instead characteristic of a global human rights discourse that frames human rights as a universal "last utopia" (Moyn, 2010). The Mandela "episteme", "the political project" of Mandela, is closely intertwined with this discourse, which not only makes it difficult to read Mandela the person as well as Mandela the freedom fighter beyond the specific vocabulary of human rights and reconciliation; it also makes it very difficult to divorce the memory of Mandela from the future visions that are proposed as part of human rights discourse.

From the perspective of critical memory studies, the limits of "making trouble with Mandela", of making space in the public memory for other, more open versions of Mandela, need to also be

located in the very epistemology of memory itself. Joel Modiri tried to link his input at the Indaba with what he called "constitutional abolition". Even though he did not get to elaborate on this in more detail, I would like to pick up the notion of abolition and link it to a society's "memory", which I believe should be understood as an institution that has, though operating more on a symbolic level, many similarities to, for example, a constitution. Why? Memory structures a society's sense of time, it authorises certain political imaginaries and thus makes some forms of civic engagement (or trouble-making?) more probable than others.

In my research on different discourses around memorialisation of violence, I came to understand that the very idea of a society having a memory, and thus the very project of building a society's memory, is epistemologically bound to the ideal of purity; one cannot think about collective memory without upholding the premise of wholeness and its inherent demand of "freedom from contradiction" (Lossau et al., 2019: 4) that underlies dominant euro-modern¹ epistemology and the violence it has caused and continues to cause. For this reason, collective memory will never be fully inclusive, nor can it be the arena in which new solidarities emerge. Therefore, if we seek to transform, or to *pluriversalise* (Escobar, 2020) memory discourse in order to make it more open and less harmful for those who were moulded into or entirely erased from the dominant narratives, we need to abolish the ideal of a collective memory all together.

¹ I use the term "euro-modernity" in accordance with Bragato and Gordon (2018: 4-5), who aim to capture the constructedness of *modernity* and seek to point to modernity's complement, which is *coloniality*: "There was a transition from euro-modern colonialism to global coloniality. [...] Coloniality persists not only in global political, social, and economic relations, but also in many ways in which one constructs and adheres to knowledge. [...] Drawing from a decolonial perspective, euro-modernity is a global phenomenon whose underlying grammar is coloniality"



Now, the Indaba was not about memory, at least not explicitly. It asked about how to live a legacy (or legacies); how to grapple with the contradictions that Mandela, like every other human being, embodied; pondered how to place him and other figures of the liberation struggle in their historical time and take seriously the, oftentimes differing, political idea(l)s they fought for, instead of reconciling them in one easy narrative.

To me, all these questions are also questions of memory – itself a knowledge-project that relies on, as well as prompts, certain ways of thinking about the world(s) we live in. The dominant concept of memory is tied to the logic of contradiction, which includes the imperative of resolving contradiction, and which has become a discursive “ordering figure” that often stands in a relationship of tension to the many complexities of social life.

The logic of contradiction thus becomes a means of control, one that “derives normativity” via the imperative to avoid contradiction. Allowing for contradiction is, according to this rationale, viewed as irrational, while maintaining consistency is associated with reason and the ability to think (and act) logically (Febel et al., 2023). To understand the very idea of a *contradiction* in relation to power – from which public memory is, of course, inseparable – our reflections need to include discrepancies, disproportions, aporias, deviations, differences, etc. that are declared as contradictory in fields of contested knowledge. Public memory, with its underlying linear temporality, is one of the many fields of contested knowledge that contributes to the epistemic disavowal of contradiction by helping to structure and harmonise the chaos of times, stories and anticipations.

In a way, the topics that were discussed during the Indaba, and the attempts to create more just structures within the university and beyond that were reflected upon, were a glimpse into an effort at such a thinking about deviations; attempts to sit with the contradictions of Mandela. At the same time, questions around the meanings of trouble and troublemaking, what can be considered “good” trouble, and who gets to decide where good starts and where it ends, were less explored. They will be necessary, however, to try and come to terms with what David Scott (2024) calls elsewhere “the paradox of the irreparable”, and which poses immense challenges for readings of Mandela as well as for the hegemonial idea of memory that assumes that which it memorialises to be of the past, i.e., to be behind as opposed to still in front of us.

Modiri suggested, at the end of his provocation, that South Africa needs to become “post Mandela” if the structures laid by colonial conquest and apartheid are ever to properly be dismantled. It is not my place to support or contest this claim, but what I can offer is the perspective that, if ever this becomes the focal point – be it for CriSHET or anyone else – a reckoning with the very project of memory and its (even unintentional) effects needs to be included.

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Are We Free?
Linocut on hahnemuehle, A3, framed
Zama Spellman, 2025

FACILITATOR AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

OPENING & WELCOME: DALIBHUNGA TO ROLIHLAHLA – THE MANDELA NAME JOURNEY

SPEAKER: SIBONGILE MUTHWA

Professor Sibongile Muthwa is the Vice-Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University, South Africa. She holds a PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, an MSc in Development Policy and Planning from London School of Economics and Political Science, a BA (SW) Honours (Wits), and BA in Social Work (Fort Hare).

She has a distinguished career both in South Africa, the United Kingdom and internationally, working in both development and public sector institutions, as well as in academia. Between 2010 and 2017, she was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Support at Nelson Mandela University.

Between 2004 and 2010, she served as Director General of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government. Before joining government, she was Director of the Fort Hare Institute of Government, University of Fort Hare for five years.

In 2014, she was appointed as a Commissioner of the Financial and Fiscal Commission, and in July 2017, she was appointed as its Deputy Chairperson.



EMBEDDING MANDELA ACROSS PORTFOLIOS

FACILITATOR: EDGAR DE KOKER

Edgar De Koker is currently the Registrar at Nelson Mandela University and has been in this position since July 2019. Prior to this, he was Deputy Registrar: Secretariat and Policy Management at the University of the Western Cape. He was also employed at Parliament South Africa from 1996 to 2003.

He holds a BA degree from the University of Cape Town, a BA(Hons) degree from UNISA, a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Warwick (UK), and has recently enrolled for the Doctor of Business Administration in Higher Education Management at the University of Bath (UK).

He has provided governance training in various capacities and is one of the principal authors of the *Registrar's Handbook* that was published in 2022. As a member of the Registrars' Forum, he currently serves on the Legal Advisory Committee of Universities South Africa (USAf).

- His personal philosophy is three-fold:
- He must always add value to the organisation at which he is employed or leading or is involved in.
 - Change is inevitable and he ensures that change adds value and does not compromise good corporate governance.
 - Life is about balance i.e., spirituality, family, work, and continuous personal development.



SPEAKER: MUKI MOENG

Dr Muki Moeng has been the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching at Nelson Mandela University since 2023. She served as the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the same institution for seven years. Prior to that, she was the Director of Teaching and Learning at North-West University for 5 years. Her academic career in Higher Education spans over 25 years. She was appointed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for two terms to serve as a member of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). She was the Chair of the Education Deans Forum and is currently serving as the Chair of the DVCs: Academic Forum in South Africa. She is a qualified teacher with vast experience in teacher education and expertise in curriculum and instruction. She is the host of "On the Couch Conversations with Muki", a YouTube Channel that explores stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Muki was born in Graaff-Reinet and matriculated with exemption from Nqweba Secondary School in 1991. She first registered for a Bachelor of Arts degree at the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) in 1992 and continued to do her Higher Diploma in Education and B Ed Honours at the same institution. She received a scholarship to study at St Cloud State University in the USA for an MSc in Curriculum and Instruction from 1998-1999. She obtained her D Ed in 2009 from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Her research interests are in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), Democracy and Education, Humanising Pedagogy, and Social Justice.

She believes that teachers and lecturers who reflect on their teaching and the learning of their students are in a better position to improve the teaching and learning experience and the environment in which it occurs. These reflective practitioners and scholars can, therefore, inform theory, policy, processes, and systems to better cater for the needs of students. She is passionate about student access, academic development, and success.



SPEAKER: AZWINNDINI MURONGA

Professor Azwinndini Muronga is a theoretical physicist and senior academic leader, currently serving as Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation, and Internationalisation (DVC: RII) at Nelson Mandela University. He holds a PhD in Physics from the University of Minnesota, an MSc and BSc Honours in Theoretical Physics from the University of Cape Town, a University Education Diploma and a BSc (Mathematics and Physics) from the University of Venda. Azwinndini's own research field lies at the intersection of nuclear physics, particle physics, astrophysics, and cosmology.

He studies the nature and properties of matter under extreme conditions in heavy ion collisions and astrophysical environments. His recent research interests include complexity science and transdisciplinary approaches to addressing 21st-century global challenges through the integration of diverse knowledge systems.

Prior to his appointment as DVC: RII in October 2024, Professor Muronga served as Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and as Director of the University of Johannesburg Soweto Science Centre. He is a passionate science educator and advocate for scientific development in Africa. He plays a leading role in coordinating regional collaboration through the Southern Africa Physics Network, which aims to strengthen physics capacity across the region. He has also served on numerous national and international science bodies, including the boards of South African National Space Agency, South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions, and National Institute for Theoretical and Computational Sciences, and held leadership roles in the South African Institute of Physics and the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics.



SPEAKER: ANDRÉ KEET

André, originally from Kylemore, Stellenbosch, is a teacher and scholar-practitioner whose work spans academia and executive leadership, in the never-ending pursuit of a transformative and responsive university. After working at the South African Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality, he transitioned into academia at the end of 2007. He has since held professorial roles at various institutions both within South Africa and internationally. He currently serves as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Engagement and Transformation and Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET) at Nelson Mandela University. His work is relational and intergenerational, exploring the intersections of friendship, politics, love, and justice. These themes inform his praxis in higher education transformation, human rights, decentred critical university studies, and the relationship between universities, science, industry, and society.



SPEAKER: LUTHANDO JACK

Mr Luthando Jack is a Deputy Vice-Chancellor for People and Operations at Nelson Mandela University, which is situated in the Nelson Mandela Bay, in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

He is a leader and a public discourse figure who is rooted in Afro student-centricity, and an advocate for indigenous knowledge and Afrocentricity. He is a dynamic system thinking and complexity thinker who contributed much to the fields of policy development, youth development, and entrepreneurship, and he is a catalyst for social agency and transformative change.

He is the holder of a master's degree in commerce, and he is currently doing his PhD in Education.



CARRYING THE NAME MANDELA

FACILITATOR: GISELLE BAILLIE

Currently, the Deputy Director for Arts, Culture and Heritage of the Nelson Mandela University, Giselle has worked with, and within, the associated sectors since the early 1990s, across a range of projects and programmes.

These have spanned, among others, higher education, skills, museums and heritage, community, corporate, youth development, ex-combatants, and traditional leadership realms - focused on understanding and activating the role of arts, culture, and heritage in broader transformation objectives.



SPEAKER: JUDY SIKUZA

Judy Sikuza is the Chief Executive Officer of The Mandela Rhodes Foundation, a Nelson Mandela legacy organisation focused on building exceptional leadership in Africa. A leadership and organisational development specialist, she previously worked in the banking sector with Absa and Investec, and now also serves as a non-executive board director at Oxford University Press South Africa.

Judy is a Fulbright and Mandela Rhodes Scholar, an Archbishop Tutu Leadership Fellow, and a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader (2024). She holds a Master's in Organisation Psychology from Columbia University and is a certified coach. Passionate about education, leadership, and social impact, she's also a Kilimanjaro summiteer, mom, and lover of nature, travel, and the arts.



SPEAKER: MBONGISENI BUTHELEZI

Mbongiseni Buthelezi is the Chief Executive Officer of the Nelson Mandela Foundation and a former Associate Professor of Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Johannesburg. His research focuses on studying land, governance, and the state in South Africa.

He is interested in trajectories of land reform, the role of traditional authorities in land governance, the study of institutions of the state, as well as on corruption, and state capture.

He explores how we can think with pre-colonial pasts to forge decolonial futures in areas ranging from identity and archives to governance and state building.

Mbongiseni holds a PhD in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University in New York. His most recent co-edited publication with Peter Vale is *State Capture in South Africa: How and Why it Happened* (2023, Wits University Press).



SPEAKER: VUYANI BOOI

Dr Vuyani Gweki Booi holds a PhD in Social Sciences from the University of Fort Hare and is Chief Executive Officer of the Nelson Mandela Museum in Mthatha. He oversees Mandela legacy sites in Qunu, Kantolo, and Flagstaff, all part of the Eastern Cape's Liberation Heritage Route. His doctoral research focused on liberation archives and their transformative role.

Dr Booi has led key projects, including the digitization of Mandela's memorabilia and the UNESCO nomination of heritage sites. He previously managed major political archives and curated the De Beers Centenary Art Gallery at Fort Hare. He has represented South Africa globally, studying memory practices in Italy, Egypt, the UK, the USA, and Germany.

A public historian and advocate for youth, democracy, and social justice, he partners with global institutions like Anne Frank House and Goethe-Institute to promote international dialogue.

His work centres on preserving and advancing South Africa's liberation history and Nelson Mandela's legacy.



EMBEDDING MANDELA ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY

FACILITATOR: VUYO BONGELA

Vuyo is currently the Director: Madibaz Sport at Nelson Mandela University. She has served in the Higher Education sector for fifteen years in various roles. She has held various leadership roles and project-managed the renaming of Nelson Mandela University and branding of the Ocean Sciences Campus, to name a few. She currently serves in the University Sport South Africa (USSA) National Executive Committee. She is also a life coach, starting difficult conversations that reflect on the self is her favourite pastime. A fitness enthusiast with a background in endurance sport such as ultra marathons and triathlons. To reset, ground and calibrate, you will find her taking advantage of nature's healing, either swimming, cycling, or running.



SPEAKER: SINETHEZEKILE MPANZA

Sinethezekile Mpanza is a former two-term Secretary General of the Student Representative Council at Nelson Mandela University. Ms Mpanza is an MA candidate in Sociology Research; she has completed her undergraduate Bachelor of Arts degree in 2021 and her honours in 2022 at Nelson Mandela University. Her research interests seek to dismantle patriarchy, promote the role of Black women in society, and research that seeks to confront the increasing statistics of Gender-Based Violence in South Africa. Currently, her Master's dissertation is on the "Makings of the Sociology of Violence in Higher Education Institutions in South Africa: Tracking Gender-Based Violence Cases Between 2019-2024".



SPEAKER: REETUMETSI MALEFANE

My name is Reetumetsi Malefane, and I'm a lecturer in Architectural Technology at the School of Architecture. Still, within 5 years in this trade, I consider myself as an early-career academic at Nelson Mandela University. In my role, I bring a blend of professional experience and academic rigor to the field of architecture. With industry-built practice as a Professional Architect, I have honed an understanding the application of architectural principles and their real-world applications. My academic journey at Mandela University started with my Master's in architecture in 2017, with my treatise exploring themes of culture and identity in contested socio-spatial landscapes. The design proposal demonstrated how architectural hybridity could serve as a catalyst for forging a new African discourse within colonial-dominated public spaces. After much professional experience, I returned to academia in late 2021, and I've carved out my research and pedagogical practices centred around Decolonisation in Architecture. Through explorative and qualitative methodologies, I have integrated indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum, challenging the epistemic canon of knowledge production in architectural education. This lens is rooted in local contexts and fosters innovative hybridised architectural solutions that embody authentic cultural identity, whilst advancing sustainable construction practices in African contexts. Anchored in this vision of "what a decolonial African University can be" – Vice Chancellor, Sibongile Muthwa, Africanisation-Decolonisation Indaba 2024.



SPEAKER: QHAMA NOVEVE

Qhama Noveve is a PhD candidate and Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Nelson Mandela University.

Her scholarship is located within higher education studies and women and gender studies.



SPEAKER: LATHITHA MBUZWANA

Lathitha Mbuzwana is currently the Student Representative Council President at Nelson Mandela University, where he is enrolled for postgraduate studies.

His undergraduate degree is a BSc in Sport Science, also from Mandela University, and he is a former head boy of Cradock High School.

He is a member of the Democratic Alliance Student Organisation.



THINKING FANON, THINKING MANDELA

FACILITATOR: VERNE HARRIS

Verne Harris is the Interim Director of the Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS) at Nelson Mandela University, where he is also an Adjunct Professor. He was Mandela's archivist from 2004 to 2013, directed the Nelson Mandela Foundation's archives programme for 15 years, and the dialogue and advocacy programme for 5 years. He participated in a range of structures which transformed South Africa's Apartheid archival landscape, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and is a former Deputy Director of the National Archives.

He has authored or co-authored six books, the most recent one being *Ghosts of Archive* (2021). He is the recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of Cordoba in Argentina (2014); held the Follet Chair at Dominican University (Chicago) in 2018-9; received archival publication awards from Australia, Canada, and South Africa; and both his novels were short-listed for South Africa's M-Net Book Prize. He has served on the Boards of Archival Science, the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, the Freedom of Expression Institute, and the South African History Archive.



SPEAKER: JOEL MODIRI

Joel M Modiri is the Acting Deputy Dean: Teaching and Learning and Head of the Department of Jurisprudence in the Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria (UP). He holds the degrees LLB cum laude (UP) and PhD (UP). His PhD thesis was entitled "The Jurisprudence of Steve Biko: A Study in Race, Law and Power in the 'Afterlife' of Colonial-Apartheid".

His research and teaching interests are located in the broad field of jurisprudence and relate to critical race theory, Black political thought, and African philosophy. His current projects intersect under two umbrellas rooted in the ethics and politics of the global Black radical tradition: Azanian critical theory and constitutional abolitionism. He was recently appointed as a United Nations Independent Eminent Expert in the area of race and racial discrimination.



SPEAKER: VICTORIA COLLIS-BUTHELEZI

Victoria Collis-Buthelezi is Director of the Centre for the Study of Race, Gender, and Class and Associate Professor of English at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. She is a senior research fellow at the Johannesburg Institute of Advanced Studies (JIAS) and a research associate at the Institute for Research in African American Studies (IRAAS) at Columbia University.

Some of her work on black intellectual and literary histories has appeared in *Callaloo*, *boundary2* and the *UK Journal of Arts and the Humanities*. Her research interests include Black intellectual history as well as Caribbean, African, and African American literatures.



SPEAKER: DAVID SCOTT

David Scott is the Ruth and William Lubic Professor at Columbia University. He is the author of *Formations of Ritual: Colonial and Anthropological Discourses on the Sinhala Yaktovil* (1994), *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* (1999), *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (2004), *Omens of Adversity: Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice* (2014), and *Stuart Hall's Voice: Intimations of an Ethics of Receptive Generosity* (2017), and co-editor of *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and his Interlocutors* (2006).

He is currently completing a book tentatively titled "Irreparable Evil: New World Slavery in Moral History," and working on a biography of Stuart Hall. Scott is also the founder and editor of the journal *Small Axe*, and director of the Small Axe Project. In this context he is also the curatorial director of the exhibitions, *Caribbean Queer Visualities* (Belfast, Glasgow, 2016, 2017), and *Visual Life of Social Affliction* (Nassau, Miami, Rotterdam, 2019, 2020), director of the Caribbean Modernisms project, and has recently been appointed the curatorial director of the forthcoming Kingston Biennial, 2022, *Pressure*.



For long you may
live like orphans,
without your own
home and parents
without the natural
love, affection
and protection
mummy used to give you.



NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY



No hope
Linocut print on hahnemuehle, A3, framed
Zama Spellman, 2025