



UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL

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INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

**CONTESTED MONUMENTS IN A CHANGING  
HERITAGE LANDSCAPE. THE INTERFACE BETWEEN  
THE VOORTREKKER MONUMENT AND FREEDOM  
PARK, //HAPO MUSEUM, PRETORIA**

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## **DECLARATION:**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Graduate Programme in the School of Arts, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

**I, Michele Eileen Jacobs, declare that**

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## ABSTRACT

The development of heritage sites in South Africa since the first democratic elections twenty years ago is a continuing process. The post-colonial policy of erecting new monuments in opposition to old colonial and apartheid monuments is ongoing, as is the construction of new heritage sites to redress the biased legacy of the past. This dissertation attempts to unpack this policy by analysing the interface between the Voortrekker Monument and the Freedom Park, //hapo museum as the flagship heritage site of a democratic South Africa and the Blood River, Ncome Museum sites which were the precedent for The Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park, //hapo museum in Pretoria. The notion that old monument sites such as the Voortrekker Monument can be reimagined and rehabilitated rather than destroyed is also discussed. This policy is also evident in sculptural heritage sites such as Botha Gardens in Durban with the dynamic between the General Louis Botha and King Dinizulu statues which can be seen as a successful precedent for similar contested sites.

The emergence of Nelson Mandela as the preferred face of the Struggle is also discussed in terms of recent sculptures in four locations as part of redressing the legacy of the past. The problem of artistic interpretation is also highlighted through the examples of Andries Botha's three elephants project in Durban and the King Shaka statue at the King Shaka International Airport in Durban, where political interference caused both projects to be halted. The South African memorial field can also be compared to similar international sites with the fusion of landscape, architecture and sculpture where common markers such as walls of names, paths, water features, eternal flames and the addition of a museum, visitor centre or similar building is erected to contextualise the monument site for visitors.

The contents of the //hapo museum are also discussed in terms of Foucault's theory of the heterotopia and the siting and architecture of the //hapo are analysed in relation to Baudrillard's notion that museums are clones capable of being built anywhere in the world from computer models. The elements of Freedom Park are analysed and the question is asked whether Freedom Park is a place for all South Africans to commemorate the past. While the development of separate heritage sites juxtaposed with older sites has been debated, continued cooperation between contested sites such as those of the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park, //hapo museum, suggests that reconciliation in the South African heritage field is becoming more of a reality.

## **DEDICATIONS**

**To my Dad, Bill King and my late Mom Kath King:**

**You indulged my individuality, instilled discipline, provided me with a home, valued education, promoted travel, encouraged excellence, and introduced me to the wonders of South Africa's natural beauty. All this with a limited budget, unconditional love and loads of fun. This is your legacy.**

**For Clem: our journey continues.....**

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### INTRODUCTION

My interest in the architecture of monuments, memorials and museums has developed over the nearly thirty years I have worked as an architectural librarian for the School of Architecture at the University of Natal and University of KwaZulu-Natal. The commemoration of both heroic and tragic events in the form of monuments and memorials, and the celebration of the lives of fellow human beings we consider heroes and heroines by erecting statues in their likeness is to me, fascinating. I also find the recent development in South Africa to build new museums that also function as architectural monuments and memorials while their contents attempt to redress the biased histories depicted in the museums of the past, worth investigating. In a country like South Africa which has a long history of tragic conflict interspersed with many events worth celebrating amongst a diverse cultural, political, religious, racial and socio-economic population, it is understandable that the memorial field would be fraught with tense debate. Our monuments reflect this tension and conflict. That the memorial field of South Africa has not been representative of all groups in South Africa is obvious. That this biased view of history reflected in our monuments, memorials and museums needed to change is also obvious. My dissertation attempts to address some of these issues, primarily in relation to the contested Voortrekker Monument and the recently completed Freedom Park and //hapo museum precinct.

I discuss the various definitions of the terms monument and memorial and the similarities and differences between the two. I also discuss the fusion of the two terms in South Africa and the decision to use the term 'heritage site' for monuments, memorials and museums. I also make the connection between remembering and forgetting to the erection and construction of monuments, memorials and figural statues and the content within museums. The notion of the Foundation Myth upon which a nation comes into being and which influences monuments and memorials is also discussed. It is the Struggle that has become the Foundation Myth of post-apartheid South Africa. The findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have also been given as the reason to erect monuments or memorials, including Freedom Park as a form of symbolic reparation for victims, to commemorate those who lost their lives as well as to facilitate reconciliation.

I take the view that the destruction of monuments and memorials should not be undertaken and that any changes to monuments and memorials or removal of statues should only take place in a democratic and inclusive manner. I use Baudrillard's example of the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York to argue that the physical destruction of a monument does not necessarily efface it in space, in people's minds or from the multiple representations in the form of photographs, films, internet images, television programmes, documentaries, and all other multimedia in which it may have appeared. I discuss three examples of accidental destruction, neglect and vandalism to illustrate the problems facing heritage sites. In South Africa new heritage sites are erected to redress the legacy of the past and South Africa has adopted the post-modern solution to the problem of colonial and apartheid monuments: to juxtapose new monuments, memorials or statues in close proximity to old ones as a means of opposing, complimenting or adding to their narratives. I discuss the dynamic of the new Dinizulu statue erected opposite the Botha statue in Botha Gardens in Durban to argue that with discussion and compromise this solution can be used as a precedent for other contested statues.

I believe that Nelson Mandela has emerged as the face of the Struggle and I look at four recent sculptural representations to argue that these statues are being erected as part of the policy to redress the legacy of the past. I also look critically at how they are used in different contexts to promote the political and ideological message of the African National Congress as the current ruling party as well as tourist attractions at the various sites. The difficulty of interpretation that artists experience in the face of political pressure is argued and I use the examples of the Andries Botha three elephants sculptural project in Durban that was stopped after complaints by a local councillor and remains incomplete, and the statue of Shaka at the Shaka International Airport in Durban to question the legitimacy of the destruction of part of his project and replacing it with another. I use the Ncome Museum which has been built across the Blood River from the Blood River Monument and Museum near Dundee to justify the argument for juxtaposing new monuments in opposition to old. While arguments are made that this reinforces an apartheid type system, I am of the opinion and argue the point that this is not the case and that this project is the prototype for the Freedom Park and //hapo museum, built in opposition to the Voortrekker Monument with the purpose of providing a different narrative that reflects the more recent historical developments of the Struggle and commemorates new heroes and heroines.

The Voortrekker Monument is historically one of the most politically and culturally contested monuments but I question whether that is still the case. I discuss how the management committee of the Monument under the leadership of General Gert Opperman has undertaken

various, sometimes unpopular strategies within the Afrikaner community, that have changed the policy of exclusivity to one of inclusion with the various cultural activities that take place within the grounds around the Monument. It has also become a repository for other Afrikaner media culture, a research centre, a Wall of Remembrance has been erected for the former South African Defence Force fallen and a Garden of Remembrance where the ashes of loved ones can be deposited. Facilities can be hired out for functions such as weddings and other events. I also argue that the political hegemony of the Monument is no longer relevant since the advent of democracy and as such the Monument has been reinvented as a popular heritage tourist destination.

The construction of Freedom Park as a uniting and inclusive monument and memorial space, and the recent opening of the //hago museum to counteract the narrative of the Voortrekker Monument is open to debate. I contextualise the historical development of the Freedom Park and deconstruct the elements and buildings individually and as a composite whole. I question whether the elements and buildings are indeed inclusive or whether the most controversial element, the *S'khumbuto* Wall of Names is divisive as the names of deceased former South African Defence Force soldiers names have been omitted while deceased Cuban soldiers who fought in Angola are included. I discuss the *Isivivane* as a place of mourning and commemoration and the other architectural elements of the *S'khumbuto* such as the Sanctuary and Gallery of Leaders along with the *Mveledzo* and *Tivo* as part of the overall composition of Freedom Park. I make comparisons between the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington and the Wall of Names at Freedom Park and I also show the fusion of sculpture, landscape, architecture and design that is prevalent in monuments and memorials throughout the world. I discuss the similarities between the Monument to the Victims of State Terror in Buenos Aires and Freedom Park to illustrate this. I also discuss the way these two monuments as do many other international monuments and memorials, draw on the same markers such as walls with names engraved into them, eternal flames, water features, indigenous planting, pathways, architectural elements such as sanctuaries and visitor interpretation centres and sculptures to commemorate traumatic events and create landscapes to facilitate healing and reconciliation.

The //hago museum is the most recent of a number of museums completed to redress the legacy of the past. I argue that the museum's architecture does not conform to Frampton's theory of Critical Regionalism and also ask if it is not just another Baudrillard monstrosity or clone that can be built anywhere in the world from computer models and programmes. I critically analyse the interior exhibits of the seven epochs in terms of Foucault's theory that a museum is a

heterotopia by virtue of the impossibility of attempting to capture infinite time in an enclosed architectural space with static exhibits, when time continues to move on outside, thereby affecting how visitors will respond to the exhibits considering the visitors changing political, social, cultural, religious, racial and socio economic backgrounds. I also focus particularly on the exhibit of the clothes of Body #1 and Body #2 which acts as a double heterotopia and which I argue works as a dialectical-rhetorical transcendent intermediary between the consubstantial identities of the visitors. I also argue that both Freedom Park with the //hapo museum and the Voortrekker Monument are both heterotopian in character and I state that their necessity and relevance will be directly related to their success as tourist heritage sites rather than the political or ideological reasons for their construction.

### **MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS, MEMORY AND MYTH: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS**

Since there is a direct relationship between the erection of monuments and memorials, remembering and forgetting, collective and individual memory, identity and power, in this chapter I firstly explain the various definitions of monuments and memorials and the relationship between all the concepts on which the erection of monuments and memorials depend. I define their similarities and differences while explaining that these terms have become interchangeable in South Africa and that monuments and memorials now fall under the universal term heritage sites. I also define the concept of the Nation and the Foundation Myth and the notions of collectivity and belonging upon which a nation depends and that are generated through the invention of national traditions. I explain that in South Africa, the Foundation Myth of the Great Trek has been replaced by the Struggle as the narrative that is intended to forge people of diverse origins into the nation. A nation's monuments and public architecture, like the flag and national anthem can contribute to the sense of continuity between a nation's present and its past.

#### **Monuments and Memorials: differences and similarities**

Choay's (2001:6) definition of the original meaning of the word 'monument' is derived from the Latin *monumentum*, itself derived from *monere* (to warn, to recall), which refers to the faculty of memory. To Choay the monument appears to be 'a cultural universal' which is present in some form or another among cultures and societies throughout the world, regardless of whether they are literate or not. (2001:7). There is a long standing tradition of 'the memorialization of the dead in most cultures. (Mitchell 2003:456). This form of public memorialization is largely a 19<sup>th</sup> century invention. Although there have always been individual gestures to personal honour,

'the large-scale evocation of human worth, dignity and sacrifice, and the connection of these emotions to the spaces of city, nation and empire, came together in the last 150 years. These linkages rose alongside the imperial ambitions of nation states who were grappling with identity formation on new scales, requiring national narratives of loyalty, timelessness and belonging.'  
(Nora 1989 in Mitchell 2003:456)

In colonial South Africa we have witnessed what Enwezor (2004:30) describes as ‘the crisis of the fusion of the monument and memorial’, the Voortrekker Monument being the best example of this. Here the monument and memorial while spatially connected are disconnected structurally by time. He describes the concept of the monument as tending towards the secular and heroic, as celebratory, authorising events in history. On the other hand memorials have a sombre, contemplative and sacral character tending towards the commemorative. They also tend to consecrate events in history. The ambiguity and inter changeability of the two terms is particularly prevalent in South Africa. ‘The state-directed process of institutionalising the memory of resistance, combined with the trend towards more ambitious, “monumental” commemorative developments, may suggest that memorials are being turned into monuments.’ (Marschall 2010:119). This fusion of monument and memorial is also evident in Freedom Park where a combination of the characteristics of both are inscribed in the various elements that comprise the Park.

As Marschall (2006:166) points out the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) ‘does not have clear definitions of the terms and in policy documents the term “monument” has been discarded in favour of “heritage site”.’ The replacement of the term ‘monument’ with the term ‘heritage site’ by the SAHRA, according to Marschall (2010:120) is ‘an attempt to create a more comprehensive category that can include intangible heritage.’ In this respect Huyssen (1995:254) concurs that the boundaries between the museum, the memorial and the monument have become fluid in ways that render the old critique of the museum as a fortress for the few and the monument as a medium of reification and forgetting, obsolete. ‘An old medium is enjoying new possibilities in a hybrid memorial-media culture.’ (Huyssen 1995:255). Marschall (2010:120) quotes Thabo Kgomommu from the SAHRA who explains that ‘the word monument is now limited to those structures that are built to memorialise or commemorate something, paradoxically suggesting that one can build a monument but not declare one.’

Mare (2002:56) and Marschall (2010:11) both quote Danto’s (1987:112) definition that ‘monuments make heroes and triumphs, victories and conquests, perpetually present and part of life while the memorial is a segregated enclave where we honour the dead.’ Danto declares ‘triumphalism and celebration to be the key features of monuments, whereas memorials are about healing and reconciliation’. The effective nature of the monument’s purpose according to Choay (2001:6) is ‘not simply a question of informing, of calling to mind a neutral bit of information, but rather of stirring up, through emotions, a living memory. In this original meaning one would term a monument any artefact erected by a community of individuals to

commemorate or to recall for future generations individuals, events, sacrifices, practices or beliefs.’ As architectural structures, monuments and memorials are regarded by Mare (2006:37) as a ‘political genre with propagandistic intent.’ They cannot be seen as an artistic genre or specifically as functional architecture, instead they should be viewed as a ‘cultural resource with a bias toward a propagandistic intent for influencing the remembrance of a patriotic group or of a past event or heroic figure(s) in a prescribed way.’ Monuments erected to commemorate political events are therefore a common phenomenon throughout history and all over the world. (Mare 2006:95)

So too Lefebvre (1997:134) explains that actions of social practices are precisely acted in monumental space, it has a horizon of meaning: ‘a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore, by the means of – and for the sake of – a particular action.’ The monumental edifice erases traces of violence and death, negativity and aggressiveness in social practice, replacing it with a ‘tranquil power and certitude which can encompass violence and terror.’ Social practice in monumental space transcends the limitations of the literary arts in that ‘spatial action overcomes conflicts, at least momentarily, even though it does not resolve them; it opens a way from everyday concerns to collective joy.’ (Lefebvre 1997:134).

Stocker (1996:41 in Mare 2006:95) describes a monument as ‘a physical object such as an architectural structure or statue displayed in public and intended to remind viewers of specific individuals or events.’ For Mare, monuments are primarily erected to celebrate military victories and all wars and claims ‘no matter when or where they are fought have one thing in common: a relentless progression of monuments and memorials for the dead.’ They are also erected ‘to celebrate the prominent stature and prestige of a living or deceased political leader, or to serve as political statements rooted in some current ideology.’ Dubow (2004:375 in Marschall 2010:12), however notes that monuments are historical markers as well as structures that are predominantly celebratory and potentially self-aggrandising. While monuments outwardly proclaim something, memorials are structures and institutions whose essence is reflective and contemplative and they invite introspection and interpretation.

For some ‘monuments are there to represent the story – as chosen for remembrance by the now dominant political forces – to the people. Monuments are public, lasting visual expressions of narratives; they interpret history for the people.’ (Marschall 2008:5). For others ‘the monument is a flash point around which group and national narratives get articulated, gaining power and authority.’ (Herwitz 2011:233). The logic of monuments according to Herwitz (2011:235) is to

‘articulate group origins, implicate group destiny.’ Peters (2004:16) describes the function of the monument as ‘intended to capture a moment in time and help shape our understanding of the past.’ The monument functions to mobilize and engage memory in such a way to recall the past while bringing it to life as if it were the present. But the past according to Choay (2001:6) is ‘not just any past: it is localized and selected to a critical end, to the degree that it is capable of directly contributing to the maintenance and preservation of the identity of an ethnic, religious, national, tribal or familial community.’

Architecture too according to Jones (2006:550), ‘has been an important cultural expression of collective identities, with states often using landmark buildings to reflect their national identity and to supplement the historical narrative of collective memory.’ But in late modernity Baumann (2004 in Jones 2006:550) points out that cultural communities have become increasingly fragmented and contested with the result that associated identities have become more fluid. Such fragmentations and re-appropriations of collective and national identities has challenged the state’s ability to control and stabilize state-driven ideals of collective identities in an era of diverse cultures within nations. Unlike the monuments of the ‘metaphysical’ ages that were ‘built on the basis of choices that were regarded as legitimate because they appealed to values that were evidently held by everybody and because they proceeded from the authoritative decision of a sovereign who was felt to be the legitimate representative of such values’, according to Vattimo (1995:45), late modern societies, are de facto pluralistic and, generally speaking, democratic and therefore there is no such thing as ‘everybody’s values’ nor the ‘legitimate sovereignty’ of an individual subject.

In post-apartheid South Africa ‘notions of individual, community and national identity are in constant flux and subject to negotiation, as pre-given, fixed, racial and ethnic identity categories entrenched during the apartheid era are no longer taken for granted and are often explicitly questioned or discredited.’ (Marschall 2006:171). What is particularly relevant in the post-apartheid South African context is that ‘the maintenance of identities linked to the nation-state is dependent on its ability to represent and symbolize diverse cultures in an appropriate and significant way.’ (Jones 2006:550). But if, as Beck (1998:115 in Jones 2006:550), states that ‘architecture is politics with bricks and mortar’, then such landmark architectural projects such as Freedom Park, ‘are increasingly sites of symbolic conflict and competition over identities.’

‘Monuments in modern times are often forged out of experiences of ruination, which stirs communities to monumental changes in their terms of empowerment.’ (Herwitz 2010:232). Monuments built to address rubble, loss or decimation, tend to convert the experience of

ruination into communalizing memory, public resolve, and identity marshalled into power. The ashes of the past become symbolically reconstructed into something else: hard currency of stone. 'The power of the stone is the occasion for the genesis of group power.' (Herwitz 2011:235). The commemorative monument 'is the ultimate symbol of stability or permanence in the external world', 'constructed from the most durable, affordable material available' and in the broader context of commemorative politics of a nation-state 'the values encoded in the officially endorsed memory landscape serve as a basis upon which the dominant socio-political order rests, thus presumably ensuring its stability and permanence.' (Marschall 2006:171). Even if as Greenblatt (1996:36) states that the 'heavy inertness of matter is present in monuments, the makers of monuments are generally fascinated by the stoniness of the earth, by hardness, its smoothness, its polish.' According to Huyssen (1995:255), however there is 'no guarantee that today's monuments designed and built with public participation, lively debate, and memorial engagement will not one day stand, like their predecessors as figures of forgetting.'

Monuments, according to Mare (2002:56), are 'presumed to be functional, preserving a particular memory for a specific community or group, and should be designed that they satisfy the general expectations of those for whom they were created.' Mare also suggests that ideally future monuments 'remember the past without celebrating an ideology or a person.' (Mare 2002:61). A monument, Steenkamp (2006: 250) quoting Lefebvre (1997:136) 'offers an individual in society an image of their membership of that society.' 'The power of monumental space is always restrictive in that it benefits some, includes some, excludes some and deprives some. At the same time, monumental space is determined by what may or not take place in it.' Monumental space therefore 'permits a continual back-and-forth between the private speech of ordinary conversations and the public speech of discourses, lectures, sermons, rallying cries, and all theatrical forms of utterances.'

Mitchell (2003:445) quotes Osborne (1998:432) in suggesting that 'national history is rendered as a mythic narrative acted out on, bounded by, and bonded with, particular places.' These 'particular places' are conflated spaces where geography, history, identity and memory run into and through each other and are usually located in central squares and intersections of cities, linking familiar landscapes, times and selective memories in an inextricable embrace. They aid in the establishment of memory by materializing history. The power of the monument according to Peters (2004:16) 'lies in its concentration of complex events into symbols to guide our perception of the past.' Despite the flawed and contested mediation of history as expressed in monuments and memorials, as Jones (2006:550) reiterates 'state-led landmark architecture has

been a key way of expressing and developing the national code.’ But according to Mare (2006:95), monumental structures harm the environment, are built on prime urban land with a high visibility, and actually encourage a false sense of memory of the historical truth which they are supposed to commemorate.’ They are also usually afforded ‘a visibility in places where they often have a negative impact, not creating a sense of place that endures because the vicissitudes of nations and societies change.’ The Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park, along with the Union Buildings and the University of South Africa (UNISA) main campus, have all been built on the ridges of Pretoria and ‘proclaim the power that the clients wielded when they selected peak areas on which to stamp their diverse images.’ (Mare 2006:98). The Union Buildings, projecting colonial power, the Voortrekker Monument projecting Afrikaner nationalism and emerging political power, the UNISA building projecting intellectual power and now Freedom Park projecting the ANC’s post-apartheid power.

The monument according to Choay (2001:7), is a ‘defence against the traumas of existence, a security measure. It is the guarantor of origins, allaying anxieties inspired by the uncertainties of our beginnings.’ It is an ‘antidote to entropy, to the dissolving action of time on all things natural and artificial, it seeks to appease our fear of death and annihilation.’ Monumentality, says Lefebvre (1997:133) ‘transcends death, and hence also what is sometimes called the “death instinct”, a monument transmutes the fear of the passage of time, and anxiety about death, into splendour.’ Greenblatt (1996:36), however maintains that ‘despite an understanding of the finality of death’, ‘monuments cannot defeat oblivion’. He argues that monuments are ‘not only expressions of the dream of renewal; they are paradoxically expressions of the dream of containment: through the monument, the dead will be given a proper place and kept in this place.’ It is, he says, the dream of renewal after death that is one of the motives behind the building of monuments. It is ‘not simply the honour that accrues to the dead, but the benefits that the dead, and more generally the past, can continue to confer on the living.’

It is Sert, Leger and Giedion’s first point in their *Nine points on monumentality* (1943) that sums up what a monument really is by stating that:

‘Monuments are human landmarks which men have created as symbols for their ideals, for their aims, and for their actions. They are intended to outlive the period which originated them, and constitute a heritage for future generations. As such they form a link between the past and future.’

Therefore as Herwitz (2011:235) concludes: ‘without the monument (and museum and church and university) it is hard to imagine the practice of heritage ever arising.’

## Remembering and forgetting: memory and amnesia

Memory is as much about remembering as it is about forgetting. Politically some memories are expediently prolonged while others are conveniently forgotten. ‘Memory is bound up with power, and both memory and its corollary, forgetting are hegemonically produced and maintained, never seamlessly or completely, but formidably and powerfully nonetheless.’ (Mitchell 2003:443). ‘Some forms of memory are not at all fading, but indeed being nurtured and intensified with the passage of time.’ (Marschall 2008:2). Memories are ‘linked to that society’s present sense of identity or a new identity it intends to foster.’ (Marschall 2008:2). Memory, it can be concluded is ‘unstable’ and ‘must be revised constantly to suit our current identities.’ Postmodernists ‘insist that memory is not simply retrieved but actively constructed.’ Thelen (1993:119 in Mare 2007:36) says ‘memory is an invention that can be assembled with many contents and styles’.

‘Memory is always transitory, notoriously unreliable, and haunted by forgetting – in short, human and social. As public memory, it is subject to change: political, generational, individual. It cannot be stored forever, nor can it be secured by monuments; nor, for that matter, can we rely on digital retrieval systems to guarantee coherence and continuity.’ (Huysen. 2000:38).

Schwarz (2000 in Autry 2012:147) points out that ‘collective memory while indeed socially mediated, is rarely invented or constructed anew from one period to the next. Instead, vestiges of formerly dominant historical narratives and styles of remembrance remain, irrespective of how unevenly they may be embraced.’ Identity therefore is also ‘constructed’, based on which memories society chooses to remember and which it chooses to forget. Selected individual memories are incorporated into cultural memory through institutionalized remembrance. Mitchell (2003:443) says that

‘there is a deep politics to memory and each age attempts to refashion and remake memory to serve its own contemporary purpose. Memory is sustained through the interplay between collective recollection and repetition. The repetition engaged in various commemorative events and rituals is crucial in blurring the differences between individual interpretations of events, and creating a single, highly idealized, composite image.’

Events that take place or performed in memorial space: ‘the “spectacular” memorial event, is created in order to produce a certain kind of collective memory.’ (Mitchell 2003:443). The ‘monumental seduction’ of which Huysen speaks or the grand spectacle of the memorial event is an interplay between the ‘fixed’ monument, stage, building, flags or lights and the ‘mobile’ commemoration, ritual, march, pageant, meeting and event. (Mitchell 2003:444).

According to Till (2003:297) places of memory:

‘include museums, monuments, cemeteries, statuary, public buildings and squares, streets, historic preservation projects, plaques, and memorials, as well as rituals, images, and practices associated with them. They punctuate and create symbolic space and function as nodes of collective politics at and through which notions of identity are performed and contested.’

It is understandable then that in post-apartheid South Africa it is ‘primarily the memories of apartheid, colonial oppression, and resistance that are preserved for transferral into cultural memory.’ (Marschall 2008: 2). And it is these memories and their relationship to the ‘Struggle’ that forms the basis of what is termed the ‘Foundation Myth’ for post-apartheid, democratic South Africa.

### **The Nation and its Foundation Myth**

Nations are not a naturally occurring phenomenon. ‘The nation is primarily an idea.’ And nations, are planned by people and built upon particular foundations. (McLeod 2000:68). Central to the idea of the nation according to McLeod (2000:69) are ‘notions of collectivity and belonging, a mutual sense of community that a group of individuals imagines it shares.’ This sense of mutual national belonging is ‘manufactured by the performance of various narratives, rituals and symbols which stimulate an individual’s sense of being a member of a select group.’ For a nation to develop ‘depends upon the invention of national traditions which are made manifest through the repetition of specific symbols or icons.’ (McLeod 2000:69). National symbols such as the flag and the national anthem are part of the invention of tradition that contributes to the sense of belonging for members of a nation.

Marschall (2002:67) states that ‘new nations do not only need new heroes but also a compelling foundation myth into which the chosen heroes can be embedded.’ The concept of a ‘foundation myth’ is linked to the notion that every narrative has a beginning. Lambek and Antze (1996:xvii in Marschall 2008:2) explain that ‘this concept is engrained in our consciousness and the search for a foundational moment for the establishment of the self can be found in individuals and in nations alike.’ Herwitz (2011:237) argues that with the unravelling of apartheid in the 1980’s and the ruins of the national narratives conveyed in the monumental ‘architecture’ of the apartheid state meant the collapse of the nationally asserted heritage and the ‘fact of a singular narrative, an official national consciousness or ideology, widely believed, which links people

together under the shared banner of truth, aspiration and identity' is better lost than found. But in the place of such a singular narrative or a national foundation myth Herwitz, (2011:237) questions whether without such a shared way of speaking to the world a nation will find it difficult or impossible to grow into existence.

In more general terms, 'in post-apartheid South Africa the meta-narrative of the Voortrekkers has now been replaced with the 'Struggle' as a Foundation Myth intended to similarly forge people of diverse origins into one nation.' (Marschall: 2002:67). 'If the invention of tradition is central to the nation, then so is the narration of *history*. There are as many different versions of history as there are narrators but a national history makes one particular version worthy of study. A national history functions like a story of the tribe, providing the people with a sense of shared origins, a common past and a collective identity in the present.' (McLeod 2000:70) But as Marschall (2010:179) points out 'the challenge lies in creating a new, inclusive myth of origin or foundational story that can be shared by all and provide the basis of identification with the new nation.' Internationally, the submissions to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 'seems to be the national/moral story that has gained global currency as the story of the South African nation', according to Herwitz (2011:243). Marschall (2010:179) maintains that the immediate 1994 post-election concept of the 'Rainbow Nation' as introduced by Archbishop Desmond Tutu as the key Foundation Myth of the post-apartheid state has lost currency recently. She therefore argues that the imaginary foundation story of the post-apartheid nation does not rest with just one key foundation but rather rests on four interrelated foundational pillars:

'a) the "meta-narrative" of the struggle for liberation; b) resistance – against apartheid, colonial domination and all forms of disenfranchisement of the marginalised, as well as against negation of their value systems; c) the notion of triumph over oppression and d) the concept of *Ubuntu*.'

National monuments and public architecture need to be responsive to the foundation myth and the invented traditions of the nation. Like the flag and anthem they can become the nation's 'revered symbols that help forge a sense of particular, idiosyncratic identity in which the nation's people emotionally invest.' They can contribute to a 'sense of continuity between the nations present and its past and help concoct the unique sense of the shared history and common origins of its people.' (McLeod 2000:69).

### **MONUMENTAL DILEMMA: TO DESTROY AND EXPUNGE OR RECONSTRUCT AND REHABILITATE**

The argument of whether to destroy old monuments or reconstruct and add to them, is debated in this chapter. The dilemma is contextualised internationally and argued using the Baudrillard notion that annihilation does not mean the total effacing of a monument in space. The example of the World Trade Centre in New York is used as the basis of this debate. In the South African context I discuss three examples of monuments subjected to vandalism, accidental destruction or neglect, used to illustrate that the destruction of monuments is not a straightforward process. I will also discuss that post-apartheid monuments are built to redress the legacy of the past, that the bronze statue has been adopted as an appropriate form of commemorating new heroes and that a policy of juxtaposing new monuments in close proximity, either in opposition to or complementary to older monuments is valid and appropriate. I use the example of Botha Gardens in Durban where a statue of Dinizulu has been erected in close proximity to that of Botha as a conciliatory gesture rather than taking down the Botha statue and replacing it.

I also discuss the difficulty of representation in the current political climate and describe the example of Andries Botha's Shaka statue at the Shaka International airport, where political interference has resulted in a stalemate and the destruction of the integrity of the work as a result of this political interference. I also discuss what I call the cult of Nelson Mandela and use the four recent examples of statues that have been erected to highlight how he has become the accepted face of a democratic South Africa while analysing the political significance of these monuments and their relevance in terms of their siting. I use the example of the Blood River Monument and Ncome Museum as a valid precedent for Freedom Park, built in opposition to the Voortrekker Monument and to argue that instead of destruction, the policy of erecting new monuments close to older ones can be successful despite arguments against the policy.

## **The international context**

Numerous examples of live images flashed across the world on television news broadcasts of monument destruction have illustrated just how widely differing reactions of outrage or celebration are, depending on which side of the annihilation debate you were positioned. The destruction over several weeks of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, Afghanistan in March 2001 by the Taliban drew widespread outrage. On the other hand the tearing down of Saddam Hussein's statue in Firdos Square, Baghdad, Iraq in April 2003 by U.S. Marines was welcomed by local Iraqis and the international community with celebration. The decapitation of Gaddafi's golden statue in Tripoli, Libya in August 2011, the destruction of the statue of the Green Book in Tobruk, and the tearing down of the Fist Crushing sculpture by protesters in Tripoli that was eventually relocated in Misrata were also greeted by jubilation and cheers. But the ransacking of the Ahmed Baba Centre and the destruction of shrines and temples in Timbuktu, Mali, in January 2013 by Islamist rebels were greeted by outrage and fury internationally. All these examples have raised questions about who has the right to decide which monuments are worth preserving and which may be destroyed. The removal of monuments according to Mare (2002:58) can be explained in terms of Rene Girard's 1987 concept of 'mimetic desire'. The unleashing of violence perpetrated against the envied yet despised symbols of the dominant by its opponents are motivated by the urge to 'get even' with those who have suppressed them. Mare quotes Wink (1986:15) who 'observes that once an individual or group succumbs to the urge of reactive opposition "we become what we hate", our hate almost invariably causes us to respond in the same terms laid down by the enemy. We turn into the very thing we oppose.'

The destruction of monuments and memorials is not a recent occurrence and 'from time immemorial conquerors and revolutionaries eager to destroy a society should so often have sought to do so by burning or razing that society's monuments' (Lefebvre 1977:133). Marschall (2006:190) quotes Russian art critic Viktor Misiano who claimed that 'all successful revolutions end with statues coming down.' Forest and Johnson (2002:525 in Mitchell 2003:448) argue, that during moments of major political disjuncture, monuments become sites of conflict as national and individual identity is challenged. Examining the fate of existing monuments can reveal a changing conception of the nation. 'During periods of historical disjuncture, monuments often suffer one of three possible fates: co-optation and glorification, disavowal, or contestation.' Monuments are 'in perpetuity, exposed to the ravages of lived time. Forgotten, secularized and disused, they are allowed to become deserted and fall into ruin. Voluntary and concerted

destruction threatens them as well, inspired by the will to annihilate.’ (Choay 2001:13) ‘Social, political and cultural values continually change while physical artefacts which celebrate ideologies endure for longer periods of time even though their meaning will inevitably also change in changing contexts and ultimately become irrelevant.’ (Mare 2006:102).

At times of revolution such as the so called velvet revolution of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, are ‘often about tearing down the icons of authoritarian monumentality.’ (Herwitz 2010:236) but with South Africa’s ‘soft revolution’ the policy of the post-apartheid government according to Marschall (2006:177) to ‘leave the existing record of colonial and apartheid era monuments largely untouched’ was a ‘strategic move intended to contribute to nation-building in the spirit of inclusiveness and racial reconciliation.’ While some of the more offensive statues such as those of Verwoerd and other discredited apartheid leaders have been removed, Marschall (2006:177) explains that memorialisation in the post-apartheid period is characterised by the erection of bronze busts and statues on pedestals depicting so called ‘struggle heroes’, memorials commemorating apartheid era activists and victims of shootings are mushrooming and new public monumental structures often incorporating or accompanied by a museum are being built. Radical iconoclasm, a feature of many countries undergoing upheaval has been largely absent from the monumental field in South Africa.

Shepherd (2008 in Herwitz 2011:238) argues that a ‘decision was made not to expunge the memorials of Afrikaner National History, but rather to retain them as a record of apartheid and to set them in dialogue with newer more critically inclusive sites’, and in deconstructing the colonial and apartheid monuments through what Herwitz (2011:238, 239) describes as gestures of live action heritage whereby a parade of spectacles take place at new heritage sites in direct opposition to old sites which he says lessen the effect and ‘reduce, ridicule, stand on its head, and in general, denature the power of the apartheid monument.’ Perhaps the best example of this commemoration at opposing heritage sites would be the Ncome Museum site opposite the Blood River Monument where on December 16 activities commemorating both sides of the battle take place. This will also in all likelihood be evident at Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument where various commemorations will coincide at both sites. While Marschall (2006:190) argues that old statues, monuments and memorials are protected by current legislation, ‘the interpretation of current policy may shift in time’ and it is not impossible that they could come down in the future. This scenario has not yet happened and it remains to be seen whether this will happen. According to Herwitz (2011:237) the ruination of the monument means the collapse of the nationally asserted heritage, the terror of one group over all others and

the collapse of the singular national narrative that links people together under the shared banner of truth, aspiration and identity.

It is interesting to note the solution by some post-communist countries in dealing with soviet-era statues and whether a similar solution could be applied to South Africa and apartheid-era monuments and statues. After the collapse of the Soviet Union some post-communist states have found a unique solution to the dismantling of discredited statues. In Russia the State Tretyakov Gallery Park, an outdoor extension of the National Museum of Russian Fine Art has displayed some relocated political statues, deposed from their plinths, intermingled with art pieces. In Hungary, the Budapest Statue Park Museum, a purpose built, state funded heritage park opened in 1993 with about 40 artefacts. While criticised economically as a waste of money, politically as a matter of partisan politics and aesthetically for failure to distinguish between communist kitsch and genuine works of art. It has however become a popular tourist attraction. In Lithuania on the other hand, the private sector Soviet Sculpture Garden at Grutas Park funded by business magnate Viliumas Malinauskas who won the tender for the park where over 80 statues are displayed in landscaped grounds, about one and a half million artefacts are exhibited in wooden buildings. A playground and mini zoo for children has also been added. In this criticised commercial and tourist atmosphere the park does aspire to be a serious educative and entertainment site. While well-researched historical information along with a photograph of the statues in their original setting, the reading of its meaning in its original context has been lost. (Marschall 2010:147-151).

It was the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11 2001 that resulted in recent debate on monumental destruction. The World Trade Centre was one of the postmodern monuments that Herwitz (2010:237) describes as the ‘skyscrapers, malls, theme parks and places of business where information circulates on computers in offices touching the sky – hence the monumental terror of attacking the World Trade Centre.’. Baudrillard (2006:XIII) explains that ‘although the two towers have disappeared they have not been annihilated. Even in their pulverized space, they have left behind an intense awareness of their presence. No one who knew them can cease imagining them and the imprint they made on the skyline from all points of the city. The end in material space has borne them off into a definitive imaginary space.’ The act of effacing the symbol has not necessarily eliminated the image which is fixed in people’s minds and in the form of a myriad of multimedia films, television series, documentaries, photographic images, internet images computer pixels and a new memorial as its replacement. Baudrillard’s notion (2006:XIV), that the actual or possible

disappearance of a symbol of omnipotence resulting from its destruction does not guarantee total effacing of the image of the symbol in space. The potential destruction of the Voortrekker Monument, and for that matter other equally visible and contested monuments, would pose the same dilemma. Destruction does not guarantee total effacing. For Marschall (2006:172) ‘monuments can be thought of as palimpsests, or slates, upon which history can be layered’ and quotes Mills and Simpson (2003: xxv) that ‘the old message is not erased, but new language is written over it or beside it.’ This can be seen as affirmation that the policy of the retention of old monuments, rather than their destruction, and the erection of new ones in opposition to them is in all probability a sound one. Despite the policy of not expunging apartheid monuments, apartheid and post-apartheid monuments and heritage sites are subjected to a form of natural ruination from vandalism and neglect.

### **The South African context**

An event of monumental irony occurred in the early hours of the 31 May 2001, the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of what would have been Republic Day when the monument of South Africa’s Prime Minister from 1954 to 1958, J.G. Strijdom in Strijdom Square, Pretoria, collapsed into the underground parking beneath the square and was demolished. (Figure 02). The massive Interplan designed sculptured head and shell roof inaugurated in 1972 (Figure 01) and based on Oscar Niemeyer’s 1950 Rio de Janeiro unbuilt monument to Ruy Barboza, (Peters 2012:44) were destroyed in the collapse. The Square had been controversial since its inception and later particularly in terms of it being the scene of the massacre of seven black people and the wounding of sixteen others by the right-wing extremist known as the ‘*Wit Wolf*’, Barend Strydom in November 1989. He was sentenced to death but was released after four years in jail after negotiations between the National Party government and the African National Congress. The double irony of this event was the reaction of the Tshwane mayor at the time of the collapse, Smangaliso Mkhathsha who bemoaned the destruction of the monument and was quoted as saying ‘I have learned with regret of the collapse of the Strijdom Square monument. The monument was one of our most prominent landmarks, and a work of art. It is always a sad day when an irreplaceable artwork is lost.’ (<http://www.iol.co.za>)



Figure 01: Interplan. 1972. *Strijdom Square*. Pretoria  
(Source: [www.tia-mysoa.blogspot.com](http://www.tia-mysoa.blogspot.com))



Figure 02: Interplan. 1972. *Strijdom Square*. Pretoria (Source: [www.tia-mysoa.blogspot.com](http://www.tia-mysoa.blogspot.com))

The Voortrekker Monument at Winburg consists of a cluster of five concrete crescent-shaped shafts, each of differing radii and heights and sliced at a steep vertical angle, symbolising the five main treks, ‘each of which was identified at the base by the surname of the leader of each trek’. (Peters 2012:39). The generative idea of a laager, the circular defensive encampment of wagons, in which the shafts reach outwards to form a protective space. (Figure 03). The shafts are bonded by a low roof designed as a cistern to harvest rainwater from five cantilevered spouts that decant into large bowls to be reticulated via a water chain and recirculated by a pump with additional water from the nearby Rietfontein dam. The centre of the roof is distinguished by a central oculus to throw daylight on a bronze tableau inserted in the floor and it is here also that ‘views up into the heights of the shafts and the heavens above’ can be appreciated. (Peters 2012:39).

Despite the 16 December remaining as a public holiday and now designated as the Day of Reconciliation, the day is still significant to Afrikaners and commemorated in ceremonies at the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria and the Blood River Monument, the site of the Voortrekker Monument at Winburg, designed by Hallen & Dibb and inaugurated on 10 October 1968 but as Peters (2012:44) points out it ‘appears to have long last witnessed any *gelooftefees* ceremonies. Custodianship remains in the hands of the provincial authorities and the site is inaccessible as the gates are kept locked without any note or explanation.’ The water chain lies dry, the pump room abandoned, the outdoor theatre overgrown and a maze of trenches dug open to steal the cables beneath. But it is the theft of the bronze plaque that according to Peters (2012:44) is ‘unconscionable and deeply lamentable.’ The monument can be viewed from the fence, accessible by a pathway from Fred Osborn Road. (Figure 04), but this is obviously not satisfactory as the full architectural experience that the architect conceived ‘as a sculpture to be experienced in the round’ (Peters 2012:39), is only possible by its intended approach, the oculus

in the centre of the shafts that is the connection to the heavens and the tactile experience of the raw concrete.



**Figure 03: Hallen & Dibb. 1968. Voortrekker Monument. Winburg (Source: Michele Jacobs Sept. 2011)**



**Figure 04: Hallen & Dibb. 1968. Voortrekker Monument. Winburg. (Source: Michele Jacobs Sept. 2011)**

Fortunately, almost half a century on, as the monument was well built and requires little maintenance, the structure itself remains in excellent condition with minimal spalling, for as Peters (2012:45) points out, ‘it might take a long time before a critical mass of sympathisers can be found to save it from its otherwise insidious path to ruination.’

On the other hand, in Johannesburg the Drill Hall, has been reduced to ruin despite a R10 million rand refurbishment in 2004 after it was destroyed by fire in 2001 when occupied by squatters after the military moved out. Built in 1904 as headquarters for the Transvaal Volunteers it remained in military hands until 1992. According to Neil Fraser, The Drill Hall has witnessed some significant moments in South Africa’s history. During the strikes of 1922, the buildings headquartered the troops used to quell the riots. Troops gathered at the Drill Hall en route to fight in the First and Second World Wars. And in 1956 and 1957 it was used for the preparatory hearings of the 156 Treason Trial accused that included Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu. The formal trial was relocated to Pretoria and began in August 1958. (Darroll 2005:26). The new Drill Hall, officially opened in June 2004 on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its first opening, was

intended to provide skills training, a crèche, community centre and clinic and be a platform for emerging artists. The Drill Hall would be occupied by the Joubert Park Project and the community arts initiative. The main courtyard square, which is now in disarray, was framed by off shutter concrete columns along the south and north edges. The columns carried the names of the 156 Treason Trial accused on pewter plaques, most of which have been destroyed including those bearing the names of Mandela and Sisulu and fewer than twenty remain according to a report in *The Times* (Wagner 2013). The derelict state is attributed to non-existent security and a lack of structures to manage the public space and buildings. On completion of the transfer of the Drill Hall from the Public Works Department to The Johannesburg Property Company of the Johannesburg City Council, the city spokesman Gabu Tugwana said ‘the city would restore the Drill Hall to its former glory.’ (Wagner 2013).

It would seem in the light of these South African examples that the wilful vandalism and destruction, accidental or neglectful destruction and ruination of colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid monuments and heritage sites and the results thereof and reaction thereto, is a complex issue. It would be wrong therefore to assume that only colonial or apartheid era heritage sites would be subjected to vandalism and destruction while post-apartheid sites would be cared for, respected and maintained, as these three examples attest to.

As von Hennenberg (2004:41) quoted in Mare (2007:37) notes monuments and public spaces are ‘open to reinterpretation by the literate and the illiterate, the custodian and the vandal.’ They cannot says Mare, ‘escape being an integral part of an ongoing cultural discourse and being left to the tender mercies of societal change.’ Interpretive meanings of public monuments, according to Marschall (2006:172), ‘is invariably informed by personal experiences; ideological orientation and the cultural context of individual visitors’ and in decades to come monuments are going to be viewed under ‘different circumstances, in a changed socio-political landscape when different interpretations of the past may have gained hegemony.’

### **Post-Apartheid monuments: redressing the legacy of the past**

Forest and Johnson (2002:525 in Mitchell 2003:449) write that intense and rapid changes in the symbolic landscape, tends to occur earlier and more radically in core cities and especially the capital. This is particularly true of Pretoria and in the case of The Voortrekker Monument and

Freedom Park and //hapo museum, the focus of my research. As Shepherd (2008 in Herwitz 2011:238) states, the most powerful realization of the approach of setting new monuments in dialogue with old, is the Freedom Park Project opposite the unreconstructed Voortrekker Monument. According to Mare (2007:44) the post-apartheid monument should dialectically be informed by the post-colonial ethos that positions monuments ‘in the proximity of – if not physically inside – a “colonial” monument as is clearly the case of the choice of the Freedom Park site on a Pretoria ridge, from which the Voortrekker Monument is in full view.’ The ‘mimetic envy’ that Burton Mack (1985:157) describes, in Mare (2002:58) whereby the coveting or emulation of the object of desire intensifies to the point where admiration is transformed to conflict causing a ‘double bind’. In this the imitator becomes the oppressor’s ‘monstrous double’ and the object of desire is eliminated out of a desire to appropriate its identity. Fortunately this ‘mimetic desire’ has not transformed into a violent form of ‘mimetic envy’ in South Africa and certainly with the positioning of Freedom Park to the Voortrekker Monument, the desire for revenge of the oppressed on the cultural artefacts of the vanquished oppressor has been resolved through compromise, at least for the immediate future.

Discussing colonial and apartheid monuments in South Africa, Enwezor (2004:26) says ‘monuments erected all across the country to celebrate and inculcate European culture, colonial and apartheid power systematically worked to erase the presence of autochthonous groups that made-up pre-colonial South Africa’, resulting in what he describes as a landscape of ‘counter-memory’, to which post-apartheid monuments, memorials and museums have to respond. Marschall (2006:166) notes that ‘the socialist model held considerable appeal for the designers of monuments in neighbouring states as well as other African countries, has essentially been rejected in South Africa.’ On the surface however, ‘some aspects of post-apartheid monuments share familiar traits with socialist commemorative traditions.’ Marschall (2006:173). This can be seen in ‘the penchant for bronze statues of male heroic liberation leaders’ but she says ‘no post-apartheid commemorative initiative can really be categorised as a socialist monument.’

Post-apartheid South African monuments have been and still are deeply influenced by Western monumental traditions, but according to Marschall (2006:166), ‘a significant quest for African-inspired models of memorialization can also be detected.’ Perhaps the best example of this quest for African inspired memorialisation can be seen in the Memorial to the fallen Zulu warriors at the Battle of Isandlwana site. Four traditional headrests on a circular concrete base on which a bronze Zulu *isiqu*, a necklace given in recognition for bravery in battle, is placed. Marschall (2010:309) describes the sculpture as a western form ‘filled with African content, or an old

Eurocentric medium has been appropriated by a new Afrocentric order to express its own values and identity.’ As Peters (2004:16) states, the conventional statue as an art form is no longer adequate and today conceptually based monuments aim to engage with viewers in the memorial process.

In his paper ‘Preparing ourselves for Freedom: Culture and the ANC Constitutional Guidelines’, Albie Sachs (1991:190) made it clear that in the sphere of culture, the importance of putting ‘the emphasis on building national unity and encouraging the development of a common patriotism, while fully recognising the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country.’ Furthermore he pointed out that ‘each culture has its strengths, but there is no culture that is worth more than the other.’ (Sachs 1991:191). But Labuschagne (2010:112) asks the pointed question: ‘will new monuments reflect an objective perspective of history which will enhance reconciliation and nation building or will the process be subservient to a hidden political agenda?’ However, Janse van Rensburg (2009:33) argues that buildings throughout architectural history have been deliberately used by the commissioners of great building projects, to manipulate political will.

Post-apartheid monuments and memorials range ‘from the very simple and modest, to highly elaborate, large-scale and pretentious.’ (Marschall 2004:82). Massacre memorials commemorating innocent people, protesting peacefully and slaughtered by ruthless security forces, statues on pedestals of struggle heroes Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko and Solomon Mahlangu, to name a few, and group memorials dedicated to those who sacrificed their lives such as the Gugulethu Seven, Cradock Four and Pebco Three proliferate and heritage sites reflecting the quest for freedom have been developed all over the country. (Marschall 2008:4).

South Africa, it would seem is understandably no different in identifying and celebrating heroes which seems to be one of the first actions pursued by every marginalised social group in the process of emancipation. (Marschall 2006:183). The heroes of the past are the ideological and moral ancestors for the leaders of the present. ‘We do not want to inherit our ancestors, we want to choose them in order to create our own preferred genealogy.’ (Marschall 2006:186). That ‘figural sculptures of heroes or statesmen usually fail the aesthetics test’ because of their dominantly ideological importance, according to Mare (2002:61), hasn’t deterred the current government in placing a certain value on the erection of figural sculptures as a form of valued commemoration. ‘The most respected mode of publicly commemorating an individual hero is the life-size or over life-size bronze statue or bust, set up as a *point de vue* in public space.’ (Marschall 2006:187).

She further points out that ‘virtually all post-apartheid monuments and memorials that have been built thus far in post-apartheid South Africa follow, in their formal language, essentially western models of commemoration’. Marschall (2004:83). Visual appearance is of secondary importance as local communities idea of a ‘proper monument’ is derived from a western and colonial era prototype of a bronze statue on a pedestal. This imitation of Western commemorative forms derived from the colonial past gives the monument legitimacy and authenticity. Post-colonial theory explains how ‘the post-colonial agent can appropriate the language of the coloniser as a means of ‘writing back’ or ‘de-scribing’, thereby expressing his/her own message countering the colonial record.’ (Marschall 2002: 65).

Just as ‘the coloniser used statues to parade his heroes, the postcolonial subject parades his own heroes also by using statues in a deliberate or subconscious act of appropriating the colonisers own visual and commemorative language.’ (Marschall 2006:183). By juxtaposing new monuments in close proximity with existing older monuments, the new monuments ‘seek confrontation with the colonial and apartheid legacy and aim to set up a constructive and reconciliatory dialogue.’ (Marschall 2002:65). While it can be argued that ‘erecting bronze statues on pedestals is hardly an Afrocentric measure’, Marschall (2006:178) states, historically, ‘building on existing traditions and appropriating forms and symbols of the past order, is a general principle of commemoration among all peoples’ and she argues that a ‘Eurocentric medium is being appropriated and pressed into the service of establishing an African identity.’

### **Botha Gardens, Durban: the dynamic of the Botha and Dinizulu statues**

In Durban this policy of juxtapositioning is most evident in Peter Hall’s statue of Zulu King Dinizulu (Figure 06) situated opposite Anton van Wouw’s 1921 General Louis Botha (Figure 05) first prime minister of a unified South Africa, in Botha Gardens opposite the Durban University of Technology in Berea Road. The statue of Dinizulu was erected in 2006 but remained covered until its official unveiling by current Zulu monarch King Goodwill Zwelethini ka Bhekuzulu on September 20, 2008. Interestingly in this case the erection of the Dinizulu statue was less in ‘opposition’ and more ‘complimentary’. The City of Durban had announced that Botha Gardens was earmarked as a suitable site for a ‘heroes’ monument and a competition was held at the end of 2000 for a Heroes Monument in which recommendations for the Botha statue were to be included. Paul Mikula’s winning design recommended that the Botha statue be retained and

joined by various other statues of the ‘old guard’, relocated from various sites around the city similarly to the statue parks created in Russia and former Soviet states. Furthermore, all statues were to be taken off their pedestals to stand on their feet. (Marschall 2002:66). Taking the statues off their pedestals would symbolically depose them and reduce them to the level of the viewer and to each other, thereby symbolically reducing their power and domination. Amafa, the KwaZulu/Natal heritage agency however refused permission to alter the Botha statue or any other statues. While Marschall (2006:180) called it ‘South Africa’s most decisive step towards a truly open, populist and democratic form of commemorating the past’ its implementation was stalled by controversy and bureaucratic processes.



**Figure 05: Anton van Wouw. 1921. *General Louis Botha*. Durban. (Source: Michele Jacobs Sept. 2013)**



**Figure 06: Peter Hall. 2006. *King Dinizulu ka Cetshwayo*. Durban. (Source: Michele Jacobs Sept. 2013)**

In March 2005, in his state-of-the-province address, the then Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, S’bu Ndebele, announced that in a gesture of reconciliation the Botha statue would remain, with the addition of the King Dinizulu statue positioned in close proximity to Botha. In his address Ndebele referred to Botha as Dinizulu’s ‘comrade-in-arms’ since it ‘should be noted that one of the first things Botha did when he became prime minister was to arrange for Dinizulu to be released from prison and to be settled on a farm near Middelburg.’ (Khumalo 2005). Ndebele further stated that this was an act of reconciliation as Dinizulu was an important political

prisoner who was exiled to St. Helena Island in 1890. The statue of Dinizulu is an example of the appropriation of the oppressor's iconographic language by the oppressed to actively negate the power of the existing statue with the new. Dinizulu is elevated on a pedestal almost equivalent to the Louis Botha statue, he does not wear his traditional Zulu attire but wears colonial military clothes, has adopted a similar pose and in every way is the symbolic equivalent to his opposing statue. That he has been depicted wearing the white man's clothing is significant, and could be interpreted differently, either as a sign of defeat and capitulation or acknowledgement and embracing of the reality of the changes to Zulu culture and circumstances due to the influence and impact of the white man's power. As a result of their positioning the statues are less confrontational and more complimentary, a result of the interpretation of the unique historical relationship between General Louis Botha and King Dinizulu. (Figure 07).



**Figure 07: Anton van Wouw. 1921. *General Louis Botha* and Peter Hall. 2006. *King Dinizulu ka Cetshwayo*. Botha Gardens, Durban. (Source: Michele Jacobs Sept. 2013)**

This more reconciliatory stance and sensible compromise to the problem of retaining a statue from the past, is particularly significant as a precedent for the resolution of similar statue precincts. South Africa has a long and complex history and heritage sites from the colonial and apartheid era need to be fully interrogated and negotiated in an inclusive and impartial manner so that the post-apartheid heritage does not erase the historical heritage that these sites represent. Connerton (1989 in Marschall 2002:68) emphasizes the ‘importance of a shared memory upon

which a new social order can rest’, and its significance in creating social cohesion ‘consensus must be created about the past as a foundation of a mutual understanding and experience of the present.’

The consensus reached on the shared memory depicted by the Botha and Dinizulu statues can be said to contribute in some way to desirable social cohesion in post-apartheid memorials. It is unlikely that any new statues erected in the future or the political furore that might arise from such additions would in any way impact on the homeless and indigent who make the park their home where the importance of such sites, their preservation or destruction is clearly not a priority. It puts the intellectual debates, the political one-upmanship and emotional response surrounding heritage sites, clearly into perspective.

### **Nelson Mandela as icon in recent sculptural representations**

Nelson Mandela has emerged as the favoured hero to collectively represent the Struggle, is becoming the benevolent face of the ANC, and has been actively promoted as the Father of the Nation. That Mandela has emerged as the chosen face of the Struggle and the Father of the Nation is understandable considering his election as the first black president of a democratic South Africa but also perhaps as a result of his acceptance across the political spectrum as a unifying force in post-apartheid South Africa and thus has enhanced his marketability in the heritage field. The appropriation and monopolising of his image as ‘founding father’ in public spaces, even where he has had little or no association, politically reinforces this notion. But in many cases his iconic image has been linked to heritage economics of making money. (Marschall 2006:189).

In an interview with Ryland Fisher in the Daily Maverick in 2013, Nic Wolpe founder of Lilliesleaf Trust lamented that the liberation struggle is being forgotten and that ‘the names synonymous with our liberation struggle are being forgotten and not being recognised. The only one is Mandela, but there are many others who played just as important and as key a role as him.’ Four recent examples of monuments to Nelson Mandela, the bronze statue at Sandton Square (now Nelson Mandela Square), Sandton, another bronze statue on Naval Hill in Bloemfontein, a sculpture of Mandela’s head near Howick at the place of his arrest, and the most recent bronze statue erected at the Union Buildings, clearly show the multiple ways that the

image of Mandela in these four monuments has been used to convey distinct political messages in four diverse locations, not only to reinforce and affirm the notion that he is the Father of the Nation but to make economic mileage from heritage visitors.

Marschall (2010:339) argues that Mandela ‘constitutes South African’s only truly shared heritage.’ But she also points out the danger of exploitation and commodification of Mandela which reduces ‘complex events and multi-faceted personalities to one-dimensional images and recognisable signs.’ The symbolic lives of heroes, she says, supersede their real lives, ‘excessive glorification and sanitisation and suppression of unsuitable aspects of their actions and personality can lead to a veritable process of sanctification’ and as with the case of Mandela, culminating in the most recent sculpture at the Union Buildings, this particular hero is ‘effectively shielded from criticism.’



**Figure 08: Kobus Hattingh and Jacob Maponyane. 2004. *Nelson Mandela*. Sandton. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**



**Figure 09: Marco Cianfanelli. 2012. *Nelson Mandela*. Howick. (Source: Michele Jacobs July 2013)**



**Figure 10: Chris Hattingh. 2012. *Nelson Mandela*. Bloemfontein. (Source: www.flickr.com)**

According to the SouthAfrica.info website (2004), the sculpture by Kobus Hattingh and Jacob Maponyane was commissioned by anonymous donors in 2002, completed in February 2004 and unveiled when Sandton Square was officially renamed Nelson Mandela Square on March 31, 2004, almost ten years after the first democratic elections. It shows a happy Mandela dancing

the 'Madiba jive' but the siting in the heart of Sandton Centre, at such a symbol of commercial excess and wealth, should not be seen as a coincidence but a shrewd political strategy. The official explanation of the Nelson Mandela Square manager Gary Vipond to the positioning was that the donors chose the square for its 'geographical location in the centre of the Sandton CBD and that the square is one of the largest public open spaces in South Africa', but also that 'the square is optimistic, expressive and confident, like the Madiba jive, and represents a sophisticated, eclectic, cosmopolitan success story.' ([www.SouthAfrica.info](http://www.SouthAfrica.info)). The statue (Figure 08) was unveiled by Mandela's granddaughter Ndileka who reinforces the notion of Mandela as 'not just a grandfather to us, but to the whole nation.' ([www.SouthAfrica.info](http://www.SouthAfrica.info)) This statue not only represents the politician, the prisoner, the martyr, the freedom fighter, but just a grandfather and father, the preferred image to appeal to the vast numbers of tourists, shoppers and prospective donors who would make donations to the Nelson Mandela Foundation receptacle next to the statue. Marschall (2010:335), quotes Corrigan (2007:15) that 'critics have condemned the rebranding of the square as one of the worst excesses of capitalist commercial exploitation' but visitors continue to be fascinated by the statue, many having themselves photographed next to it despite criticism from the art community of its poor craftsmanship.

Another sculpture dedicated to Mandela has been erected near Howick to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nelson Mandela's capture on 5 August 1962, and was unveiled by President Jacob Zuma on 4 August 2012. (Figure 09). The heritage site was a joint uMgeni Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs initiative thereby reinforcing the event's political significance and the site's heritage value. The integration of sculpture and landscape with the inclusion of a museum to contextualise the narrative of the site, various shops, a book/souvenir shop selling books and memorabilia related to Mandela and the Struggle, and the Truth Café, all conform to international trends in the monument and memorial field. These developments further legitimise the importance of the site and the tourist value attached to the Mandela name.

The sculpture by Marco Cianfanelli consists of a portrait of Mandela looking west and which is made up of 50 laser cut steel vertical bars that only comes into focus at a distance of 35 metres. (Figure 12). The paved walkway leading to the sculpture has been deliberately planned so the visitor experiences a 'long walk' before the image emerges into focus. This is Mandela the prisoner, the martyr, statesman and intellectual, whose two-dimensional image dissolves into a symbolic interactive three-dimensional porous, skeletal prison formed by the steel bars.

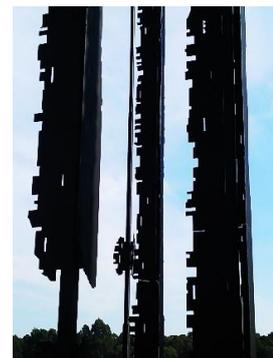
**Figure 11: Marco Cianfanelli. 2012. *Nelson Mandela*. Howick. (Source: Michele Jacobs July 2013)**



**Figure 12: Marco Cianfanelli. 2012. *Nelson Mandela*. Howick. (Source: Michele Jacobs October 2013)**



**Figure 13: Marco Cianfanelli. 2012. *Nelson Mandela*. Howick. (Source: Michele Jacobs July 2013)**



The prison symbolism in the sculpture is powerful on two levels, firstly that the imprisonment of apartheid opponents was ineffective in curtailing the struggle for freedom but had the opposite effect of galvanising the resolve against the system. Further, prison tempered its Struggle victims, making prisoners like Mandela, Struggle heroes and martyrs. The prison referencing also alludes to the belief that the body can be imprisoned but the mind and human spirit can never be incarcerated. (Figure 13). The poles also make reference to the surrounding forest of trees and electrical poles, while the shadows cast by the sculptures poles could be interpreted to symbolise the extensive and permanent shadow of Mandela's influence. (Figure 11). The access road to the sculpture, leading off the R103 to the on-site buildings, has been lined with large posters proclaiming Mandela as 'Comrade', 'Character', 'Leader', 'Prisoner', 'Statesman' and 'Negotiator'. 'I am inside Mandela's brain' said a youngster who was scrutinising the poles at the capture site, confirming the multiple ways the sculpture can be interpreted by visitors of all ages. The plaque on the site has also become a shrine with flowers, small rocks and letters being placed by visitors expressing their love and prayers in 2013 for the then ailing Mandela. Unfortunately on the day I visited the site, the museum and Truth Café were closed, with no explanation, but it is obvious from the activity around the site that it continues being developed as a major tourist attraction which has already been well supported.

The bronze Chris Hattingsh statue of Nelson Mandela on Naval Hill in Bloemfontein (Figure 10), was unveiled on 13 December 2012 ahead of the ANC's 53<sup>rd</sup> Elective and National Conference that also coincided with celebrations of 100 years of the founding of the ANC. It shows

Mandela facing Waaihoek Methodist Church where the ANC was founded 100 years previously. Mandela is depicted with a clenched fist raised in the classic Struggle salute. The political significance of the statue on Naval Hill cannot be overlooked as he looks down on the city where the ANC was founded. Politically the unveiling was particularly significant as President Jacob Zuma further reiterated Mandela's credentials as a 'selfless, humble and principled leader' who had dedicated his life to leading South Africans out of oppression, discrimination and economic suffering and that his values would 'forever be a symbol of our reconciliation and tolerance as a nation.' (Moloto and Ndaba 2012). The monument depicts Mandela the struggle icon and the politician, and with this unveiling in the presence of all the senior ANC members, the validated father of the Struggle and the nation. With this statue, as with all politically inspired monuments, the hegemony of the ANC is confirmed as the only legitimate party to continue Mandela's legacy. That the statue was donated by businessman Freddy Kenny and together with the donated Mandela Square statue, has reinforced Mandela as the accepted father of the nation amongst the South African people. It could be said that the ANC as the governing party, in accepting these donated monuments of Mandela from the public, is State affirmation of the South African peoples' acceptance of Mandela as the father of the nation.



**Figure 14:** Andre Prinsloo and Ruhan Janse van Vuuren. 2013. *Nelson Mandela*. Union Buildings, Pretoria. (Source: [www.timeslive.co.za](http://www.timeslive.co.za))

Arts and Culture Minister Paul Mashatile announced on 26 September 2013 that yet another statue of Mandela would be erected at the Union Buildings. This latest statue, created by Andre Prinsloo and Ruhan Janse van Vuuren is nine metres tall and was unveiled on December 16 2013, a day after Mandela's burial and the day which also marked the centenary of the completed construction of the Union Buildings. (Figure 14). The statue was commissioned for the government and the National Heritage Foundation with Keketso Growth, a heritage development company, headed by Dali Tambo the CEO, son of Oliver Tambo who were appointed to manage the project. In this particular statue, Prinsloo said he intended to depict Mandela smiling and arms outstretched, intended to convey how he embraces the nation. A decision was made not to depict Mandela with his signature fist raised in the Struggle salute but instead a non-political more neutral but symbolic embracing stance was deemed more suitable. Mandela is also shown stepping forward, suggesting the nation walking together into the future. It is probably no accident that the statue invokes messianic qualities in a similar vein to the Christ the Redeemer statue of Rio de Janeiro. Whilst certainly not on the same gigantic scale Mandela has become something of a Messiah for many, who has symbolically led South Africans out of the wilderness and into what should be a democratic utopia.

This sanctification is reinforced in the reaction, or what some, including myself, termed an overreaction, when it came to light that a tiny rabbit had been sculpted into the right ear of the statue. Not a month after the unveiling the furore arose when it became known that the tiny rabbit had been sculpted into the right ear as a signature of the artists. The agreement between the artists and Keketso Growth and the governments' statue steering committee stated that no marks, including signatures would be engraved on the surface of the statue. The names of the artists would be printed on a plaque to be installed on the site. The sculptors had included the tiny rabbit or '*haas*' in Afrikaans, which also means 'haste', representing the tight deadline to which the artists had to work. What seemed an innocuous quirk, barely visible without binoculars or a telephoto lens, quickly turned into a public spat where a furious Tambo said in an interview with Associated Press that appeared in *The Guardian* of 22 January 2014, that the statue 'is not just a statue of a man, it's the statue of a struggle, and one of the most noble in history. So it's belittling, in my opinion, if you then take it in a jocular way and start adding rabbits in the ear.' The artists apologised profusely and promised to remove it. The statement by Tambo is very revealing in that it shows once again the elevated stature of Mandela as the image to represent the Struggle and that nothing must contaminate this image, not even a tiny barely visible rabbit. Perhaps it is too soon to sculpt any physical sense of irony or humour into the face, let alone the ear, of the Struggle.

Politically too, the statue is significant because like its Bloemfontein counterpart, it reinforces Mandela as the representative of ANC power, occupying the Union Buildings and significantly replacing the Herzog statue, thereby confirming the end of white rule. The choice of a reconciliatory Mandela could also be seen as more acceptable to all South Africans, especially for some Afrikaners whose statue has been moved to accommodate the Mandela one and whose occupation of the Union Buildings has been both symbolically and physically replaced. Mashatile was quoted as saying that ‘the statue was part of efforts to establish new symbols to reflect the collective aspirations of South Africans.’ Mandela, he said ‘remained an enduring symbol of our struggle for freedom, democracy dignity and equality.’ (SAPA 2013). At the unveiling ceremony, President Jacob Zuma said that the Mandela statue ‘was a constant reminder for the nation to maintain Madiba’s values of unity, reconciliation, compassion and Ubuntu.’ Zuma also declared the Union Buildings a national heritage site declaring it ‘not only rich in terms of its aesthetic beauty only’ but ‘rich in moral value and symbolism as well.’ (Maromo 2013).

The Mandela statue has replaced the statue of J.B.M. Herzog, which has been moved east of the Delville Wood memorial. President Jacob Zuma explained that after an exhaustive consultation process, and in the spirit of reconciliation, the representatives of the Herzog family agreed to the relocation of his statue to make way for the Mandela statue. Zuma further ‘expressed gratitude to the Herzog family for their understanding and co-operation.’ (Maromo 2013). This compromise through consultation and negotiation confirms the policy that the destruction of old heritage statues has not been adopted but that new heritage statues be placed in relation to and at times in opposition or dialogue with older statues. That such a positive resolution could be found to what could have been a confrontational stalemate is admirable and bodes well for future additions to the existing heritage field where negotiations and compromise may be needed to accommodate new monuments and memorials. This statue further confirms that Mandela remains the favoured political icon to represent the Struggle and that the desire for statues of him has not diminished. Clearly Mandela’s marketability has not been lost on his immediate family who have been caught up in a very public dispute about where Mandela was eventually to be buried with obvious financial benefits to be made from future pilgrims to his grave site.

It was also announced by Premier Zweli Mkhize in his 2013 budget speech in the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, that ten statues of various KwaZulu-Natal people who had excelled in various fields would be erected in KwaZulu-Natal during the current financial year. Statues of anti-apartheid activists Ismail Meer, Phyllis Naidoo and Fatima Meer, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK)

soldiers Shadrack Maphumulo, Judson Khuzwayo and Steven Dlamini, composer of *Imbube* Solomon Linda, Dr. John Nembula and Dr. Benedict Wallet Vilakzi would be erected. A tombstone would also be erected on the grave of the first wife, Nokutela, of John Langalibalele Dube in Brixton Cemetery (Johannesburg) and the repatriation of the remains of *Drum* journalist Nat Nakasa would be undertaken and a monument built in his honour. (Mbanjwa 2013). There was no indication of where most of these sculptures would be erected but it is clear that the memorial field in KwaZulu-Natal is still considered biased in favour of colonial and apartheid representation for an ongoing process of memorialization of struggle, anti-apartheid and MK heroes.

These new monuments are, according to Marschall (2004:85), ‘a form of symbolic reparation, officially in addition to, but in reality, perhaps, in lieu of tangible monetary reparations’. As with the former apartheid monuments they also function as ideological tools, ‘legitimizing the current socio-political order, celebrating carefully selected memories to rewrite history, to control the representation of controversial events and persons to create a new national identity.’ (Marschall 2004:86). Post-apartheid identity is therefore linked to what Volkan (1997 in Marschall 2004: 81) terms the ‘chosen’ trauma of ‘apartheid oppression and the suffering and loss sustained during the long struggle for liberation.’ Meskell and Scheermeyer (2008:156) maintain that heritage ‘is called upon again and again in the rhetoric of politicians to help pay for the socio economic depredations of the apartheid regime.’ If heritage is a form of therapy in a trauma ridden post-apartheid South Africa, the latter authors say that ‘the past labouring in the service of a better future,’ must be of productive benefit for all, but ‘specifically for the disempowered, dislocated and disadvantaged.’ (Marschall 2004:81). Monuments and memorials ‘can facilitate or help to complete the process of mourning, which is essential in dealing with trauma and accepting loss. Monuments and memorials not only facilitate mourning but also form a focal point for ritual actions.’(Marschall 2004:82).

Most of the post-apartheid monuments, memorials and heritage sites are ‘in one way or another linked to the notion of struggle or resistance’. The post-apartheid nations ‘foundation myth’ on which these heritage ‘products’ are cast in bronze and stone, solidify and preserve the carefully selected memories of the images of the past, for the future. (Marschall 2008:3). However to some such as Mare ‘to remember the past without celebrating an ideology or a person seems to be a constructive ideal for the future.’(Mare 2002: 61). As a result there is a tendency towards an *antimonumentalism* that is needed to meet the challenges of contemporary practices of memorialising, according to Steenkamp (2006: 254). She quotes Huyssen (2003:38,39), who

notes a ‘single prescribed truth is replaced by a multiple, dynamic approach, not proscriptive of any truth, a mnemonic space that activates memory and accommodates diverse and complex meanings.’ This will probably not happen until the desire to build monuments and memorials to commemorate Struggle heroes has been satisfied. As Peters (2004:16) observed ‘the continued production of public monuments by both the official, and interestingly, private sectors suggests that the necessity for monuments remains recognised and desirable.’

Labuschagne (2010:112) states that:

one of the challenges within this new socio-political and cultural historical context was how to (re) construct the existing monuments and statues to reflect the broader history and values and the future goals of the new nation in a more equitable manner that could enhance reconciliation and nation building in a new South Africa.

The urge to restore the balance has, however, resulted in many ‘uncoordinated *ad hoc* initiatives on a broad front, a process which has been predominantly politically driven.’ (Labuschagne 2010:113). As Marschall (2006:182) argues, ‘building monuments and setting up statues is really about pleasing the electorate.’ Herwitz seems to concur with Marschall (2006:182) that ‘contestation and conflict over ownership of key events’ and ‘distortions and omissions of dissent and violence between rival black groups is suppressed in favour of a desirable sense of unity’ noting further that ‘as soon as the story of the struggle begins to be told, all unity of narration breaks down with everyone vying for their angle on the narrative.’ (Herwitz 2011:243). Marschall (2006:188) explains that ‘Black Consciousness was in reality a movement in opposition to the ANC, in the view of many, it now almost becomes part of it or rather both become ideologically neutralised parts/partners in the public memory of the Struggle for Liberation.’

Not surprisingly therefore, there has been an overwhelming sense that memorial sites including Freedom Park, ‘are more about crafting a political pageantry than reflecting national heritage or building multi-ethnic constituency’ and that these monuments have had little currency with ordinary South Africans and attract more foreign than domestic visitors. ‘In many of the spectacles of new nationhood there is a tendency to direct attention to the struggle years and heroes of the ANC, possibly at the expense of society’s poor and needy, not to mention those communities that fall out of the all-pervasive ANC dominated narrative.’ (Meskell and Scheermeyer 2008:158). But as Marschall (2006:180) points out, the reason that virtually all new heritage sites and public monuments are political in content, is that in the current socio-political climate it would be considered trivial and unsuitable to erect monuments dedicated to non-political events and persons.

## Negotiating the political minefield

Vattimo (1995:46) argues that, when it comes to monuments, architects and by extension artists ‘shall have to conceive of their own function less as creators than as interpreters.’ This he argues is because they must negotiate with clients such as democratically elected public administrations which cannot be ‘the adequate – that is, reliable, legitimate – subjects of decisions concerning matters of taste, let alone of moral choices.’ South Africa, it could be said is no different and just how difficult the South African political minefield that the South African memorial field has in some cases become for artists, architects and sculptors to negotiate, can be epitomised in two recent and still unresolved controversies around sculptures by Andries Botha.

The Three Elephants project at Warwick Junction, commissioned by the eThekweni Municipality as part of his Human Elephant Foundation, while the King Shaka kaSenzangakhona Memorial at King Shaka International Airport was commissioned by the Province’s Dube Trade Port at La Mercy. Both works have been compromised by political interference that has resulted in stalemate, recrimination and wasted money. Work on the Three Elephants was halted in February 2010, two weeks from completion of the project, after the late ANC Regional Chairman John Mchunu complained that the sculpture resembled the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) logo. The sculptures have been subjected to vandalism and neglect as a result of this stalemate. After an ongoing legal battle with the City Council, according to his website, Botha is currently in discussions to begin the rebuilding phase.



Figure 15: Andries Botha. 2010. *King Shaka kaSenzangakhona Memorial*. Durban. (Source: [www.iol.co.za](http://www.iol.co.za))



Figure 16: Andries Botha. 2010. *King Shaka kaSenzangakhona Memorial*. Durban. (Source: [www.andriesbotha.net](http://www.andriesbotha.net))

The King Shaka memorial was unveiled by President Jacob Zuma on May 10 2010 but was dismantled on June 2 2010 when the statue of King Shaka was removed after complaints by the Zulu King and other members of the Royal House who averred that it was not a true reflection of the Zulu warrior king. (Figures 15, 16). According to reports in September 2011 Peter Hall was commissioned to replace the King Shaka sculpture. Andries Botha declined an invitation by the Office of the Premier to facilitate in the process, stating ‘I did not think my presence would in any way facilitate the process he was trying to engineer, due to the complexity of political perceptions of the artwork, and notions of ownership and nationalisation.’ (Attwood and Hlongwane 2011). In October 2012 Botha asked that the remaining pieces of the work, consisting of a bull, cow and two calves, be removed because ‘in its current state, it violates the integrity of the work.’ (Figure 18) (Mbonambi quoting Botha 2012).



**Figure 17: Andries Botha. 2010. *King Shaka kaSenzangakhona Memorial*. Durban. (Source: Michele Jacobs July 2013)**

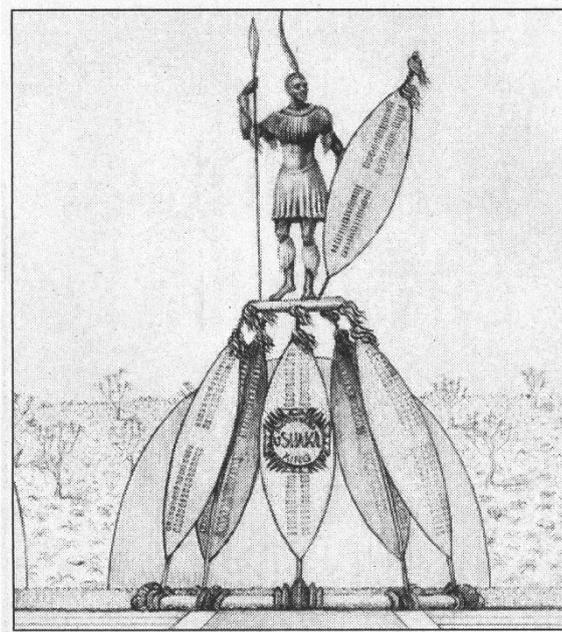


**Figure 18: Andries Botha. 2010. *King Shaka kaSenzangakhona Memorial*. Durban. (Source: Michele Jacobs July 2013)**

In July 2013 when I visited the airport, the remaining pieces were still in place, the composition, already compromised by the removal of Shaka and further devalued by the reed hut placed strategically so as to separate the cow and bull from the calves, and other tacky temporary commercial structures in close proximity. (Figure 17). In an interview with Greg Arde in the Sunday Tribune of 6 June 2010, Botha summed up the role of the artist as ‘consultative, but also interpretive and independent. It’s not reflective of a collective or dominant world view....the fact that artists can have autonomy is a reflection of a healthy democracy.’ That public space is owned by everyone and as such, everyone must have a say, but ‘to say that creativity must function in an environment of consensus will mean the end of creativity and the power of individual perspective.’ Botha told Mbonambi (2012) that ‘Constitutionally no one can deconstruct a work of art.’ (Figure 18) As Vattimo (1995:45) states ‘even the most faithful rendering of the community’s shared values must always ultimately be filtered and interpreted by

an individual artistic personality that brings its own peculiar sensitivity and its own original creativity.’

These two examples highlight how substantially the political influence continues to inform the memorial field in post-apartheid South Africa. Just as Jones (2006:562) states that landmark architectural projects ‘so frequently become embroiled in heated debates about the collective identities they purport to represent’ and could be ‘considered a reflection of a healthy public sphere’ that architecture provides a focus for ‘collective identity discourses in a way that reveals something of the conflicts and tensions inherent in their construction.’ As these two sculptural projects resulted in such an impasse and state of inertia through political interference resulting in much debate and discussion, this should have been regarded as a healthy part of a maturing democracy. But as Botha ponders the value and integrity of such debate noting ‘I look at the debates and wonder if it’s a sign of our complexity and cultural promise, or if it’s an index of our collective stupidity.’ (Arde 2010). Either way the partial dismantling or changing of an artists’ commissioned work should never be tolerated let alone carried out.



**Figure 19. Peter Hall. *Shaka*. Due for completion 2015. Durban. (Source: Independent on Saturday 22/3/14)**

According to the most recent report in the Independent on Saturday of 15 March 2014, the replacement Shaka statue is due to be unveiled in March 2015. Peter Hall’s 5 metre tall sculpture ‘depicts King Shaka standing on a series of raised shields in a victorious pose holding a long spear symbolic of his authority as king. (Figure 19). He is wearing a towering crane feather reserved for someone of his stature.’ (Mbuyazi: 2014:5). According to the report it will

be placed in a position of landscaped prominence, where according to provincial spokesperson Ndabe Sibiyi 'we want it to be visible to all local and international tourists landing in the city.' Furthermore he states that 'our history must be packaged properly for the world. We want to have art exhibitions and museums at the airport. We need to have traffic coming to the airport of people wanting to see the magnificent work done by our artists.' (Mbuyazi 2014:5). It is not clear what will happen to the remnants of Andries Botha's sculpture but the manner in which the artwork has been dismantled and discarded can never be accepted.

Looking at this latest 'acceptable' representation of Peter Hall's Shaka who is raised on a pedestal of shields, in comparison to Andries Botha's where Shaka was standing on the ground perhaps adds weight to debate that the current Zulu monarch's interpretation of the Andries Botha representation had less to do with his interpretation of Shaka as a herd boy and more to do with the perception that the bronze figural sculpture has added prestige, power and acceptance when raised on a pedestal. The royal family have reverted to Peter Hall's European concept of heroic sculpture, drawn from a contested colonial source, rather than the subtlety of Andries Botha's depiction of Shaka. The nuances of Botha's Shaka as the leader of a nation who assigned commercial value to cattle and spiritual and cultural importance on the family as symbolically represented by the bull, cow and calves have been permanently erased.

While there is still a desire for figurative representation, in the sphere of public architecture and monuments Steenkamp (2006: 250) in reference to the example of the Red Location Museum, Port Elizabeth, (designed by Noero Wolff Architects, 2005), argues that there is a shift from the figurative representation of the Voortrekker Monument and other heritage sites to mnemonic representation related to the everyday and 'every' body memory of the past. Le Roux identifies this shift as state influenced. 'The post-apartheid government developed such sites as a policy of representation: unable to bring immediate wealth to their vast number of impoverished supporters, it invested in symbolic projects for museums and parks that could bring the subsequent benefits of tourism.' (Le Roux 2008:45). Freedom Park has been developed as the flagship project of this policy but recent developments as discussed earlier, suggest the desire for figurative representations has not been exhausted.

According to the second of Sert, Leger and Giedion's *Nine Points on Monumentality*:

'Monuments are the expression of man's highest cultural needs. They have to satisfy the eternal demand of the people's translation of their collective force into symbols. The most vital monuments are those which express the feeling and thinking of this collective force – the people.' (Sert, Leger and Giedion 1943)

Post-apartheid monuments should therefore ideally reflect the collective desires of the majority of the people. But as Pitika Ntuli interviewed by Marschall (2006:178) in 2002 said, ‘it is necessary to move away from conventional solutions for monument design and (re) investigate African traditions.’ He advocates community participation and an emphasis on people making a contribution to establish a ‘sense of ownership and identification with memorials, addressing the current problems of negligence, indifference and even vandalism that can be widely observed in South Africa.’ Meskell and Scheermeyer (2008:158) however maintain that ‘there is an overwhelming sense that these edifices have little currency with ordinary South Africans, are attracting more foreign than domestic visitors, and are more about crafting a political pageantry than reflecting national heritage.’

### **The Blood River Monument and Ncome Museum: prototypes and precedents for the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park**

The similarities between the Blood River Monument and the recent addition of the Ncome Museum across the river from it, are important precedents to my research on the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park. As Marschall (2008:104) points out ‘the Ncome museum/monument and its crucial relationship with the existing Blood River monument/museum has had an explicit or implicit influence on many other commemorative projects.’ She further maintains that this

‘principle of “countering” an existing colonial or apartheid era monument, memorial or statue with a new one – often directly juxtaposed or employing a similar conceptual approach or aesthetic – has become so common in South Africa that one could easily consider it as one of the defining characteristics of post-apartheid public commemoration.’

The Ncome project ‘constitutes an early and prominent precedent for what soon became a popular strategy of the post-apartheid state’s politics of public memorialization: the concept of “completing” the memorial landscape by “countering” existing monuments with new ones.’ (Marschall 2008:90).

The Blood River site has long been a site of commemoration and memorialization for Afrikaners, and before them the Boer community. The first commemorative marker of the Battle which took place on December 16 1838, a small cairn, was erected by the Boer community in 1866. A larger cemented pyramidal cairn was erected on the occasion of the centenary of the

battle in 1938 which coincided with the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek and a life-sized granite ox-wagon sculpted by Coert Steynberg was unveiled in 1947. In 1967 the battle site was declared a national monument by the National Monuments Council. The most ambitious intervention for which the site is best known, was unveiled on December 16 1971. Designed by Cobus Esterhuizen, it comprises 64 life-size, cast-bronze recreated ox-wagons constituting a *laager*. (Figure 20). The Blood River battle site ‘became one of Afrikanerdom’s holiest shrines, closely associated – historically, ideologically and aesthetically – with the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria and the Voortrekker Museum and Church of the Vow in Pietermaritzburg.’ (Marschall 2008:90). The historical and symbolic significance of the Zulu defeat in the construction of Afrikaner nationalism and their foundation myth was built on the covenant made with God on December 26 1838, that victory and subsequent occupation of the land was divinely ordained. (Marschall 2008:90). The celebration of the centenary of the Great Trek in 1938 galvanised the Afrikaner and further confirmed their right to the land.



**Figure 20: Cobus Esterhuizen. 1971. *Blood River Monument*. Blood River/Ncome. (Source: Michele Jacobs 2007)**

The building of a new museum was proposed in 1994 and financed by the Voortrekker Museum and the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge (FAK)* the proposal resulting in considerable controversy in the context of significant socio-political change and the critical reassessment of historical narratives and their public representation at the time. (Marschall 2008:93). The new museum opened in 1996 and depicted the battle exclusively from the

Afrikaner perspective. On April 1, 2002 the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria took over the administration and management of Blood River from the Foundation for the Blood River Covenant Site, originally managed by the Voortrekker Museum which was temporarily put in charge in 1994 from original owners the Dutch Reformed Church.

Ownership of the site was transferred to the Voortrekker Monument on 31 October 2002. With this change of administration the exhibition and video in the Blood River museum were changed to 'acknowledge the existence of other perspectives on the battle and its historical context' although the Afrikaner narrative version was presumed to be reliable and accurate since it was based on written accounts whereas the Zulu version was based on oral history, implying it to be largely fictitious. (Marschall 2008:99). 'In the spirit of reconciliation and reflecting recent revisionism, the curatorial voice replaces smugness with a tentativeness that would have been absent pre-1994.' (Dubin 2009:188).

At the official launch of the Ncome project as a Monument of Reconciliation in 1998, Professor Jabulani Maphalala head of the Department of History at the University of Zululand, was less than enthusiastic for the venture arguing that 'monuments of this type were not really part of Zulu culture' and that 'Zulu traditionalists would not have built a monument on a battle site from which the spirits of the dead had long departed.' But he conceded that Zulu culture had changed due to westernizing influences. (Dubin 2009:187). According to Marschall (2008:91), the conceptual and aesthetic elements of the proposal for the Ncome heritage project unfolded long before the National Legacy Project came into being and must be seen against the background of the post 1994 political changes that affected the agencies that administered heritage sites and the provincial and national governments' political agendas.

At this time the western bank of the river belonged to the province of Natal, temporarily administered by the Voortrekker Museum in Pietermaritzburg and reporting to the National Monuments Council Natal regional office with Andrew Hall as Regional Manager, while the eastern bank was part of the "homeland" of KwaZulu, with the KwaZulu Monuments Council administering heritage conservation under director Barry Marschall. Both agencies were finally amalgamated in 1997 through the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act (Act 10 of 1997), well in advance of national legislation, as Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali and officially founded on 1 June 1998. Both Andrew Hall and Barry Marschall were in agreement on the unifying of the site but the agency created to manage the site, the *Bloedrivier Stigting* was not prepared to allocate enough money to produce a significant icon or Zulu symbol which according to Marschall (2008:94) 'laid the foundation for the national government's later decision to finance the Ncome

project through its inclusion in the National Legacy Project, hence turning a provincial initiative into a national venture.’

The Ncome project was included in the National Legacy Project early in 1998, and through the intervention of Lionel Mtshali who had assumed the portfolio of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, the project was prioritized and the eastern side of the battlefield was finally declared a national monument on December 1, 1998. As Marschall (2008:95) explained, Mtshali was a senior member of the IFP in the ANC led Government of National Unity and a Zulu nationalist who had grown up in the area and thus had a ‘personal interest in the project and its anticipated economic and development benefits for “his” area.’ The Ncome museum/monument was unveiled on the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle on 16 December 1998 after this protracted political negotiation. The museum exhibition was unveiled a year later but was soon changed when due to logistical and funding difficulties the Voortrekker Museum in Pietermaritzburg was requested by government to administer Ncome and ‘much of the originally displayed material culture has been removed and the focus is now on the representation of the battle and the historical circumstances that surrounded the conflict.’ (Marschall 2008:98). Disputes continue as to how many Zulus died. Numbers range from 3000 according to the Voortrekker Monument and the Blood River Battle Heritage Site. Many Zulus were killed, ‘as many as the hairs on an elephant’ according to a guide at the Ncome Museum while an accompanying pamphlet asserts that only ten Zulus died in the battle. As Dubin (2009:189) points out, disputes like this will continue when interpretations of key historical events are based on eye-witness accounts, oral tradition, ideological manifestos or legend, depending on which group is making the interpretation and for which audience. ‘Recently both sides have edged toward resolving those differences, revealing the tentative stage of reconciliation that currently characterizes South Africa’ says Dubin (2009:261).

Despite the many criticisms levelled at both sites, as Marschall (2008:103) explains: ‘a potential ambiguity pervades many aspects of the project, opening up a possible multiplicity of interpretation and meanings’ - multiple ways for visitors to interpret the two monuments. As Dubin (2009:186) observes ‘through two distinct interpretive sites, these forces face off one another yet again, across the water and across history.’ The Voortrekker wagons stand silently and mute, ‘encircled in perpetuity in commemorative self-defence’, while on the opposite embankment the physical structure of the Ncome Museum and Monument, ‘the curvilinear shape alludes to the renowned Zulu fighting strategy initiated by Shaka, the war horn formation.’ Marschall (2008:97) describes that the ground plan of the museum space inside recalls the shape

of a shield while the metal shields painted with cowhide patterns representing the different regiments that fought in the battle, are mounted on the convex centre that faces the boer *laager*. Marschall (2008:102) argues that while the ‘iconographic references support a reading of both monuments as two hostile camps facing each other frozen in time’ there are many visitors who will interpret the Ncome ‘as an embracing form reaching out to the other side in a gesture of reconciliation.’

I concur with Marschall who defends the official approach despite criticism that the policy of deliberate juxtapositioning of old and new monuments replicates apartheid era identity categories and falls short of transformation. ‘The new competing symbols neutralize or displace the existing ones without physically destroying them.’ (Marschall 2008:105). While then Minister of Arts Culture Science and Technology, Lionel Mtshali expressed his satisfaction with the ‘two monuments at the site of battle, commemorating the participation of both sides’, Jabulani Maphalala’s (Marschall 2008:101) view that ‘the Ncome monument on the other side of the river constitutes an apartheid style solution to the problem of publicly commemorating a contested battle’ and ‘ostensibly perpetuate old divisions’ while Barry Marschall, director of the South African Heritage Resources Agency also says ‘it is a classic case of apartheid because you’ve got a white museum, and a black museum on the other side of the river.’ (Dubin 2009:188). Rankin (2013:96) argues that museums ‘should avoid perpetuating concepts of conflict, as has happened at the site of Blood (Ncome) River in KwaZulu-Natal.’ The Ncome Museum ‘seems to create a stand-off that re-enacts the confrontational and adversarial battle itself’ and a ‘strong impression of opposing accounts is generated, reinforcing a sense of historical opposition.’ (Rankin 2013:97). While this argument carries some weight, many museums that reflect neglected past histories have been built on various sites significant to the Struggle and attest to the fact that heritage sites are not only erected in opposition to older colonial and apartheid era sites.

Unfortunately the symbolically significant footbridge between the two sites has not been realised which has compromised ease of access to and from each site and therefore the ability of the two sites to contribute to reconciliation and suture some of the wounds ‘of continuing tensions between the utopian vision of a non-racial society, at peace with the world and itself, and the daily reality of a deeply divided society.’ (Marschall 2008:102). Dubin (2009:261) quotes Bongani Ndhlovu manager of the Ncome Museum who argues that ‘some people who revere the Battle of Blood River Heritage Site do not wish to see the bridge installed because regular traffic from one side to the other “could pollute it with new influences.” And Gert Opperman CEO of the Voortrekker Monument and Museum in Pretoria, who also oversees the Blood River site,

candidly admits that this is one of the most difficult matters he's had to confront.' The pylons of the unconstructed bridge that could have facilitated this reconciliation and symbolically sutured the wounds on both sides of the river, stand as testimony to continued fissures in the South African heritage field. Opperman has to proceed carefully despite the fact that he personally 'advocates bridge building, in both the physical and psychological senses.' (Dubin 2009:261) But as Maphalala so aptly told Marschall (2008:102) in an interview in 2005, 'the bridge must start in the mind' suggesting that there is still a long way to go before physical bridges can overcome what the heart and mind refuse to accept. The incomplete bridge on either side of the river act as 'forlorn reminders of the difficulty of fulfilling good intentions, and the overriding objective of achieving a truly reconciliatory representation of South African culture' says Rankin (2013:97). Reconciliation, is to Marschall (2008:102) a long term process and until the bridge between the two sites is completed, visitors will have to drive the circuitous route to experience both sites for themselves and make their own assessment if they are successful and contribute to advance reconciliation and nation building.



**Figure 21. Blood River Battle site. (Source: Google Earth 2014)**

By November 2013 the Bridge of Reconciliation had been completed but not opened. (Figures 21 & 22). The bridge was opened for the duration of a conference titled 'Courageous Conversations' commemorating the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle, organised between November 6<sup>th</sup> to November 8<sup>th</sup> 2013 by Msunduzi Museum at the newly constructed additions to the Ncome Museum. The conference originated from a speech at the centenary of the museum at

the Church of the Vow, Pietermaritzburg by the late Professor Russel Botman rector and vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University. He called for ‘courageous conversations’ to achieve the objective of national reconciliation at spaces such as museums that can foster this reconciliation.

Stephen Coan, reporting on the conference for *The Witness* on November 14 2013, questioned Major-General Gert Opperman, director of the Voortrekker Monument and Blood River, on the closure of the bridge and he explained the financial practical reasons behind this. The Ncome Museum as a National Legacy Project is funded generously by the Department of Arts and Culture whereas the Blood River Museum is privately funded. There is a bricked pathway leading to the bridge from the Ncome Museum but not from the bridge to Blood River Museum and Monument. Opperman explained that money had become available and a tender process to complete the path had been undertaken. The question of entrance fee has also been a barrier to free access between the sites. A R25 entrance fee per person and R10 per car is charged at Blood River while Ncome Museum is free, while vandalism of the laager site has also been a problem. That the bridge has been constructed at all is according to Opperman evidence that attitudes have changed.



**Figure 22: LVDW Architects. 2013. *Bridge of Reconciliation*. Blood River/Ncome Museum. (Source: [www.dac.sita.co.za](http://www.dac.sita.co.za))**

Stephen Coan also reported that evidence of rapprochement between the sites also emerged from the conference. While political analyst Somadodi Fikeni observed that ‘reconciliation is still an incomplete process’, adding that ‘social reconciliation and social justice cannot be replaced by symbols of reconciliation’, Fransjohan Pretorius of the University of Pretoria and Opperman agreed that the two versions of the battle needed to be integrated. This was echoed by Bongani

Ndhlovu, executive director: core functions, Iziko Museums of South Africa, who called for ‘an examination of the different and selective truths concerning the battle’ and that there was a ‘need to move away from having two sites taking offensive/defensive positions.’ Resolutions drawn up from the conference included: ‘the establishment of a committee, with members from all involved parties, to carry the reconciliation process forward; an annual conference to take place on alternate sides of the river; and an invitation for historians to create integrated version of the battle.’ (Report by Coan in *The Witness* 14 November 2013).

It seems that the unresolved issue of the bridge has now changed. Nicki von der Hyde, writing in the *Sunday Times Travel Weekly* of 9 March 2014, reported that the bridge has been opened thereby facilitating easy access from the Blood River Monument and Voortrekker Museum to the Ncome Museum. While this negates the debate of the previous paragraphs, it is worth mentioning that this can only benefit both heritage sites, facilitate reconciliation and provide visitors with both perspectives of the battle. It could be that the realisation by the two respective independent sites’ management that the benefits to be obtained from tourists visiting both sites outweighed political and historical tensions to ensure the bridge was completed and opened. Perhaps the divisions of the past are slowly closing, if only physically by a bridge but with hope that psychologically it will facilitate reconciliation as intended when the bridge was initially proposed.

### **THE VOORTREKKER MONUMENT: APARTHEID RELIC OR HERITAGE ICON?**

To understand the interface between the heritage sites of the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park, it is necessary to analyse their respective historical, political, ideological and architectural contexts. In this chapter I describe the historical background to the construction of the monument and describe the similarities between the acknowledged source of inspiration Bruno Schmidt's *Volkerschlachtdenkmal* in Leipzig, and the Voortrekker Monument and also discuss whether the Voortrekker Monument can be termed a Masonic Temple based on these similarities. I also discuss the marble frieze and analyse the significance of its representation in the context of how the Monument has had to reposition itself in a changing South Africa. I also explain how the Monument has become a heritage site and repository for Afrikaner media culture and how management of the Monument has had to adjust to reflect the political and cultural changes that have had a widespread impact on the Afrikaner community. I explain this repositioning and argue that the Monument's popularity with international visitors and its successful marketing as a heritage site can be seen as an example and precedent of how monuments in the future need not be destroyed or even physically changed.

#### **The historical context of the Voortrekker Monument**

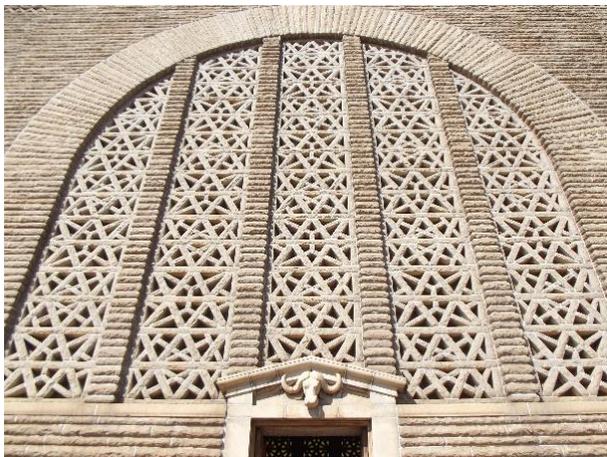
According to Marschall (2010: 164), the Voortrekker Monument is the most prominent commemorative structure of the apartheid era, the penultimate icon of Afrikaner nationalism and for many a prime symbol of apartheid oppression. To Coombes, however, (2004:28) the Monument is culturally and historically 'of critical significance for the foundational myths of Afrikaner nationalism – in particular the idea of the Great Trek as the moment of emergence of the Afrikaner as the founding ethnic group of a new nation'. The 1938 centenary celebrations of the Great Trek 'served as a powerful binding agent and represented a truly unique moment of cross-class ethnic mobilization.' 'At the heart of the celebrations lay the perception that Afrikaners were strangers in their own land, victims of British imperial capitalism and an alien political culture.' (Grundlingh 2001: 98).



**Figure 23:** Gerard Moerdyk. 1938-1949. *Voortrekker Monument*. Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 24:** Gerard Moerdyk. 1938-1949. *Voortrekker Monument*. Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

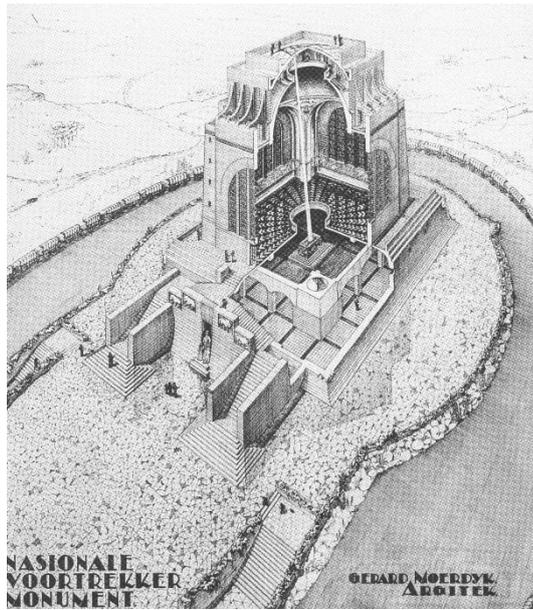


**Figure 25:** Gerard Moerdyk. 1938-1949. *Voortrekker Monument*. Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 26:** Gerard Moerdyk. 1938-1949. *Voortrekker Monument*. Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

The Great Trek was however ‘a bunch of migrations that Afrikaner mythmakers retrospectively amalgamated to create the illusion of a grand mission.’ (Dubin 2009:170). The exodus of the Voortrekkers from the British Cape Colony ‘in search of new lands and independence, mythologised as the move of ‘God’s chosen people’ to the ‘promised land’ became the key symbol of the Afrikaner Foundation Myth.’(Marschall 2010:164). The Monument (Figure 23) was inaugurated on December 16 1949. The victory over the Zulu’s at the Battle of Blood River in 1838, officially named the Day of the Covenant (The Day of the Vow, and later post 1994 the Day of Reconciliation), as it was believed that God had ultimately given them victory over the ‘savages’. (Grundlingh 2001: 98). The annual observation of this day ‘reinforced the legitimacy of Afrikaner existence, culture and policy, supported their sense of identity as a people.’(Marschall 2010: 164).



**Figure 27: Gerard Moerdyk. 1949. Voortrekker Monument, Pretoria. (Source: Grobler, Jackie. 2001. *Discover the Voortrekker Monument*. Pretoria: Grouie Entrepreneurs. p.15)**

According to Mare (2007:2007:42), nothing of historical importance ever happened on the site of the Voortrekker Monument prior to its selection as the Monument site, and ‘it was simply chosen for its strategic position and high visibility from the southern entrance roads into the city.’

However architecturally the monument is ‘ostentatiously positioned in the sight line of the Union Buildings, built as a symbol of South Africa’s dominion status within the British Empire’, the site of British legislative authority. (Coombes 2004:28). Architecturally the architect had no local precedents from which to work so the Voortrekker Monument not only reinforced the construction of the Voortrekker nation but signaled the birth of a national monumental architectural style. (Delmont 1992:5). The architect is said to have invoked the Old Testament patriarch Abraham who built an altar to found a new state in Canaan. The symbolic altar in the Voortrekker Monument is the cenotaph of Piet Retief in which the connection between God and country is overtly made through the conflation of the spiritual symbol of the altar with the symbolic grave of a war hero and the closing words of Die Stem, the national anthem, ‘*Ons vir jou Suid Afrika*’ engraved into the stone. (Delmont 1992:6, 7) (Figure 24). While the architect Gerard Moerdyk made reference to the scale of the pyramids, Zimbabwe ruins, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, les Invalides, the Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China and the *Volkerschlachtdenkmal*, Leipzig, he denied any precedents.

Yet the unacknowledged but obvious source of inspiration was the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bruno Schmidt’s, German *Volkerschlachtdenkmal* in Leipzig, which clearly provided direct source

material. Like the Voortrekker Monument ‘it is a vast block-like rectangular structure with four huge arched windows on each face of the building.’ (Delmont 1992:5). Where the Van Wouw Mother and children sculpture is positioned on the Voortrekker Monument (Figure 29), the equivalent space on the *Volkerschlachtdenkmal* is occupied by a towering sculpture of Saint Michael with the words ‘*Got mit uns*’ carved on the parapet above. (Figure 28). The sixteen sculptured figures that encircle the top of the *Volkerschlachtdenkmal* (Figure 32) were reduced to the four heroes located lower down on the corners of the Voortrekker Monument. (Figure 33) Both monuments are covered by domes with an oculus at the top (Figures 30, 31), and both have a vast opening in the floor of the main hall that reveals a lower hall. The *Volkerschlachtdenkmal* lower hall features sculptured figures of warriors weeping for the dead heroes while the upper hall features four colossal figures symbolizing sacrifice, religion, bravery and national strength. (Delmont 1992:5). Herwitz (2010:234) calls the Leipzig monument ‘the architectural unconscious of the Afrikaner one’. Its construction he says, ‘began at the time of the Boer War, allowing Afrikaners to identify its memorialization with their own.’ The *Volkerschlachtdenkmal* visual imagery communicated the conscious programme of building a nation of heroes, such sentiments especially significant during the revival of 1930’s German nation-building. It therefore provided an ‘eminently suitable prototype for the Voortrekker Monument’ to which a fiercely anti-imperialist group in South Africa could ally themselves. (Delmont 1992:6).

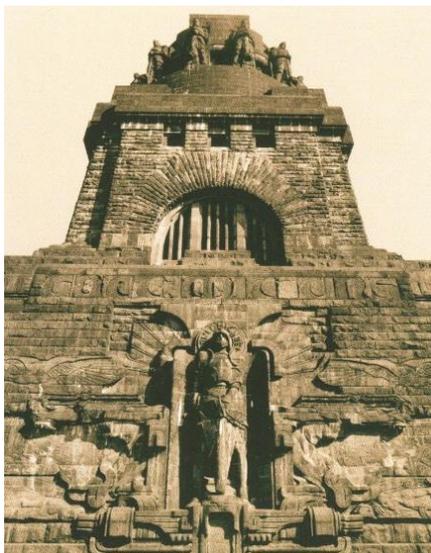


Figure 28: Bruno Schmitz. 1913. *Volkerschlachtdenkmal*. Leipzig. (Source: Poser, Steffan. 2009. *Monument to the Battle of the Nations. Short Guide*. Leipzig: Dr. Volker Podekamp)

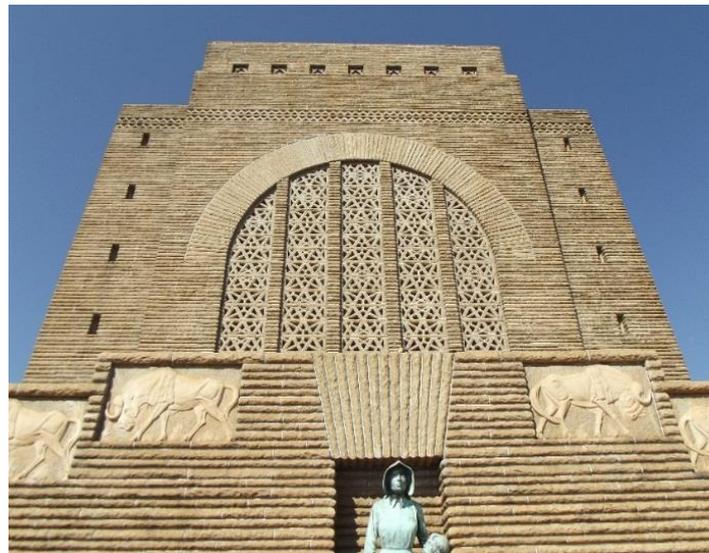
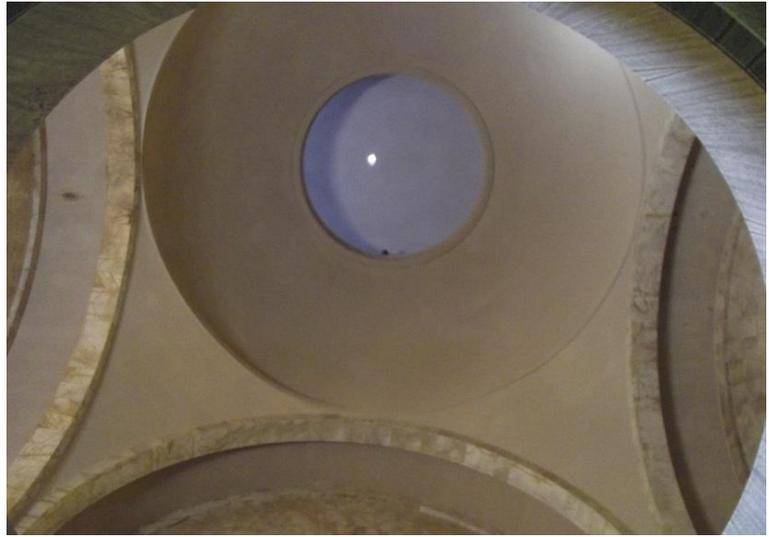


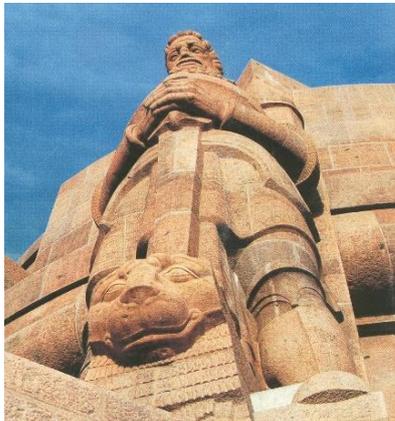
Figure 29: Gerard Moerdyk. 1949. *Voortrekker Monument*. Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 30: Bruno Schmitz. 1913. Volkerschlachtdenkmal. Leipzig.**  
 (Source: Poser, Steffan. 2009. *Monument to the Battle of the Nations. Short Guide.* Leipzig: Dr. Volker Podekamp)



**Figure 31: Gerard Moerdyk. 1949. Voortrekker Monument. Pretoria.**  
 (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 32: Bruno Schmitz. 1913. Volkerschlachtdenkmal. Leipzig.**  
 (Source: Poser, Steffan. 2009. *Monument to the Battle of the Nations. Short Guide.* Leipzig: Dr. Volker Podekamp)



**Figure 33: Gerard Moerdyk. 1949. Voortrekker Monument. Pretoria.** (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

These two monuments are further ideologically connected, according to Steenkamp (2009:150), and can be sourced in the book *South Africa – Reaping the Whirlwind of National Idolatry* (2006) by Denise Woods, that has led to speculation surrounding the connection between the Voortrekker Monument and Freemasonry which may have influenced Moerdyk in referencing the *Volkerschlachtdenkmal* in his design of the Voortrekker Monument. Steenkamp however maintains that ‘the Masonic spatial qualities in the Voortrekker Monument is probably due to the fact that it borrowed design ideas from the Leipzig monument and inadvertently imported the esoteric qualities.’ Apart from the festivities and rituals conducted during the Centenary celebrations of the Great Trek, according to Woods, Masonic elements and symbols such as the altar, perpetual flame, the floor pattern, the exhalation of womanhood and the inclusion on the

bas relief panels of the Governor's hand symbol, the mother and child, the anchor, building implements, the circle of wagons and Piet Retief's water bottle clearly marked with Masonic symbols are all evidence 'that the monument is an altar endowed with spiritual authority to "govern" the affairs of the nation and direct its destiny for a thousand years and more.' On this basis she concludes that the dismantling of the Voortrekker Monument and all the associated minor monuments erected during the 1938 Centenary Celebrations are 'open to debate as each offer an entry point for demonic activity.' (Steenkamp 2009:151).

'Because of the strong association between Architecture and Freemasonry, some buildings and especially monuments, can often be read by a Freemason in a Masonic Way.' Steenkamp (2009:151) says however 'this does not make it a Masonic Temple.' That the influence of Freemasonry on the *Volkerschlachtdenkmal* is undisputed and 'has two faces, one that serves to commemorate the battle of liberation and another as a testament to future generations of Freemasons.' (Steenkamp 2009:154, quoting Affeldt and Heinrich, 2001). The four-level spatial representation of Freemasonry in the *Volkerschlachtdenkmal* that can be compared with the Voortrekker Monument are: Level 1, the physical world, is the approach on the outside and which corresponds with the cenotaph level on the interior, Level 2, the symbolic level of the soul, would be the Hall of Heroes accessed by stairs either side of the Mother statue that looks down on the cenotaph, Level 3, the symbolic level of the spirit, is the dome level and Level 4 is the immaterial world outside the dome above. The representation of the spatial order is also 'characterised by spaces that lie below as having some association with death, and spaces that extend upwards being associated with a connection to a higher being.' (Steenkamp 2009:156). She points out that 'this analysis makes it possible to imagine that the route followed into the monument, the descent into the crypt and ascent into the dome overhead can be read as a spiritual journey of self-discovery.' 'With the necessary framework of reference a Freemason would make these connections without any difficulty.' (Steenkamp 2009:158)

The evidence of the inclusion of Masonic symbols in the Voortrekker Monument, and spatial comparisons between the two monuments of the four-level Masonic metaphysical system may be valid and conclusive. However, to suggest the dismantling of the Voortrekker Monument on this basis would seem absurd and only confirms the multiple ways that monuments can be interpreted and reinterpreted as new information becomes available and interesting comparisons and analyses are made. According to Steenkamp (2009:158), 'this interpretation is forced and manipulated to adhere to a desired reading of the monument.' 'It is not that the Voortrekker

Monument is a Masonic Temple but simply that it borrowed so liberally from a monument with a sub text deliberately Masonic.’ (Steenkamp 2009:160).

‘Like its Leipzig source’ says Herwitz (2011:236), the Voortrekker Monument speaks from the position of historical victim at the hands of a stronger European force. It speaks of a settler culture that has endured ruination at the hands of another, stronger settler culture.’ The Voortrekker Monument converts suffering into sovereignty, relying on suffering to justify such rule. The form that this conversion of victimhood into sovereignty reflects, is the apartheid state, according to Herwitz (2011:236). The ruination of which Herwitz speaks and which radicalized Afrikaners that ultimately led to the Apartheid state, was the ‘memory of ruined farm, ruined earth and ruined people’ of the Anglo-Boer War. The Afrikaners own experience of the British concentration camps (1899-1902) in effect contributed to the master plan for apartheid. ‘Like concentration camps, apartheid is a way of controlling people, of regulating work, leisure, circulation, and dwelling. And so one architecture of humiliation becomes another.’ (Herwitz 2011:235). ‘The trauma of losing the Anglo-Boer war to the British compelled them to construct a sense of collective identity to help counteract their sense of dispossession and political weakness.’ (Dubin 2009:170).

Enwezor (2004: 30), further avers that the Voortrekker Monument ‘mimics the fascist style of similar structures’. The huge structure is ‘meant to be understood as a series of protective layers radiating out from the innermost core, the cenotaph of Piet Retief in the crypt below the hall of heroes.’ (Marschall 2010:165). Herwitz (2011:236) describes these layers as a ‘marriage of male and female with its rings of encircling “maternal” spaces and its rising phallic forms.’ An eternal flame and altar is strategically placed so that a shaft of sunlight would strike the tomb each year on December 16. A carved marble frieze narrates the ‘encounter and conquest’ of central incidents of the Great Trek – ‘dominantly a tale of Boer heroism and God-fearing righteousness and of Zulu and Ndebele treachery and savagery.’ (Coombes 2004: 28). ‘The portrayals make no concessions: black people are uniformly represented as barbaric savages standing in the way of brave and heroic boers claiming to bring civilization to the interior.’ (Grundlingh 2001: 96). The emphasis on accuracy, the stress on research and authentic detail and the Western canon of naturalism on the frieze ‘validates the “truth” of historical “fact” and shows the Afrikaners past with apparent accuracy and immediacy ‘communicated by the naturalistic style with objects and people represented in a recognizable comprehensible and familiar form.’ (Delmont 1992:9). That real life models, and descendants of the characters depicted on the frieze were used to ensure accuracy of representation, further valorized living people while stressing individuality

and realism. This was also evident in the representation of ethnic differences between peoples of Portuguese, Sotho, Zulu, Italian, Swazi and English origin portrayed in the frieze. (Delmont 1992:12). The fusion of the monument and memorial mentioned earlier is evident in the narrative structure of the frieze which combines the messianic with the mythical. (Enwezor 2004: 30).

‘The figurative representations symbolise the “civilised” and “uncivilised” in the “white” and “black” body respectively.’ (Steenkamp 2006: 250). She quotes the architect Moerdyk who argued that ‘the savages of Southern Africa had buildings but they lacked any knowledge of geometry and therefore they lacked architecture.’ Moerdyk saw the monument as a truly African building, belonging to a ‘civilised’ Africa, this civilisation evidenced in the architecture of the monument by its order and geometry. Aesthetically it is tied to an architectural language that equates order with ‘the civilised’ (Steenkamp 2006: 254). ‘The construct of civilization foregrounded in the ideology of the Monument is the notion of order, control and dominance over the natural environment and over the local inhabitants’, and is constructed in terms of ‘oppositions’ in several ways on the Monument: the civilizing force of the Voortrekkers as opposed to the barbarism of the Zulus and Matabele, the ordered, disciplined ranks of the Boer soldiers as opposed to the crowded and confused melee of falling and retreating bodies of Dingaan’s warriors. The Mother and children statue symbolizing civilization and Christianity as opposed to the wildebeest symbolizing the barbarism of Dingaan’s warriors. (Delmont 1992:14, 15).

By invoking the technical excellence of the early Renaissance sculptors Donatello and Verrochio whom Moerdyk admired and the association of the frieze by Moerdyk to the battle of the Giants and the Gods on the altar of Zeus at Pergamos ‘situates the cultural ideals of Afrikanerdom firmly within the heritage of European civilization.’ (Delmont 1992:8). The racially charged political space of representation evidenced in the marble frieze cultivated and enforced the distinctions between the white and black body while physically separating them in the external political space, limiting the physical access and presence of the ‘other’, and thus by implication the black ‘savage’ body, the source of white Boer/Afrikaner trauma and suffering marked by the monument. (Steenkamp 2006: 252) The marble frieze is also characterised by ‘the selective recording of the past, the creation of heroes, and manipulation of events in the cause of inspiring the nation’ and is most evident in the absence of representations of servants. For Delmont their role in the Great Trek ‘has been sculpted out of history’, their bravery marginalized and their status as servants entrenched. Delmont (1992:10).

## Rehabilitation, reinvention and re-inscribing the Voortrekker Monument

While Janse van Rensburg (2009:33) points out that ‘true unification has more often been achieved by the symbolic destruction of architecture representing an immoral force’, to understand how post-apartheid monumental architecture can address future generations of visitors during political and historical change and where monuments need to meet the desires of a new generation, it is necessary to understand how the Voortrekker Monument has been ‘rehabilitated’ and ‘reinvented’ rather than destroyed. He notes that while the monument was not dismantled, its ‘ideological foundations have been profoundly deconstructed.’ The current management were faced with ‘turning an edifice that was once so tightly entwined with a specific brand of politics into a site celebrating a particular cultural history.’ (Dubin 2009:169).

Before the advent of democracy in 1994, the symbolism of the Voortrekker Monument has ‘habitually been remoulded over time.’ Changes within the social composition of Afrikanerdom from the 1950’s to the 1970’s and the pressure for change in the 1980’s ensuing post-apartheid era, prompted Grundlingh (2001, in Marschall 2010:168), to emphasise that ‘one can no longer describe the significance of the Voortrekker Monument in the same terms as when Afrikaner nationalism was dominant.’ Unlike the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Trek in 1938, that so successfully galvanised many Afrikaners, the 150<sup>th</sup> re-enactment in 1988 ‘exposed significant rifts among Afrikaners. The ethnic unity and cross-class alliances that were once so evident had disintegrated over the preceding half century.’ (Dubin 2009:171). Factions clashed over what it meant to be an Afrikaner and who owned the monument, suggesting that Afrikaner disunity had to be seen in the context of broader socio-political upheavals in South Africa during the mid-1980s.

Re-inscribing meaning of the monument should not be seen exclusively from an African perspective but also from an Afrikaner perspective. The photo-shoot in 1995 of porn model Dina by *Loslyf*, the Afrikaans porn magazine illustrated what Coombes describes as the ‘multiple meanings within the fragmented and transforming post-apartheid Afrikaner community’, disrupting Afrikaner identity while disrespecting the boundaries between the sacred and profane and functioning as a critique of the most oppressive Afrikaner ethnic absolutism. (Marschall 2010:169). Peffer (2005:45) calls these acts ‘temporary or symbolic defacement of public monuments’ in that ‘they did not make permanent material changes to their objects, only to a reproduced image.’ These acts are a specific class of metaphorical iconoclasm where acts of

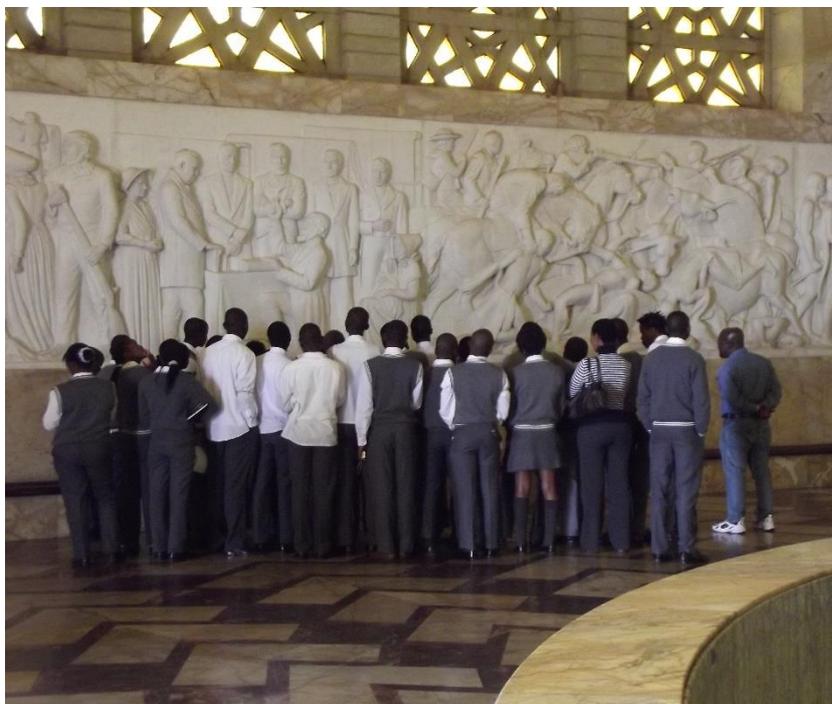
witty erasure or intrusive addition displace the potency of the symbol that bolstered the paternalistic ideology of whites-only rule. (Peffer 2005:45). Through the text, rich with innuendo and double meanings in conjunction with the images, Ryk Hattingh, the editor of *Loslyf*, wanted to show Afrikaners not as a 'khaki-clad repressed people' but as 'normal, sexual, f\*\*\*ing human beings' but also to 'make the Afrikaner appear less "repressed" and to give the Boere a new self-image for a new South Africa.' (Peffer 2005:53, 54).

'The *Loslyf* pictorial was iconoclastic, in the sense that it slyly assaulted the image of the monument by profaning it, while at the same time claiming to be on the side of its founders.' (Peffer 2005:53). Published a year after the historic first general elections and during a time of public debate around the question of the former regime's monuments, the impact of the *Loslyf* issue in the context of changing Afrikaner identity and their own relationship with the Voortrekker Monument was enormously significant. This first issue sold out ultimately topping 80 000 in sales while in recent years, since Ryk Hattingh left the magazine, the sales have evened out around 20 000 (Peffer 2005:53), confirming the importance of this particular issue in contributing to the re-inscribing of the monument to a younger selective generation of Afrikaners.

The visit to the Monument in 1996 by Tokyo Sexwale, then Premier of Gauteng further 'appropriates the monument for a new political order and the population majority'. His visit was regarded as significant in that it removed the stigma attached to the structure and its manipulation of meaning and significance in that it 'appropriated the formerly exclusive structure for a new inclusive national agenda.' (Marschall 2010:168). In this the Monument becomes 'the focus for an active process of "translation" in the sense of Gayatri Spivak's proposition of the "reader as translator."' 'He attempts to render the structure "safe" and to disinvest the monument of the power of its oppressive legacy.' (Coombes 2004:37). In this the Monument has provided the stage upon which new identities and challenges have been launched to disrupt the hegemony of the version of Afrikanerdom symbolized by the Monument.

In 1993 various Afrikaner organisations transformed the Voortrekker Monument into a non-profit private Section 21 company, pre-empting any possible interference by future government or proposed physical changes to accommodate different groups. But it was only with the appointment of Major-General Gert Opperman as CEO in 2000, motivated by the political changes and the reality of economic pressures of ensuring the Monument became economically independent in the face of shrinking state subsidies from the 1990's. (Autry 2012:157). These realities have forced the repositioning of the Monument 'from an ideologically tainted political

icon to an important cultural icon.’ (Marschall 2010:170). Autry (2012:154) notes that ‘he directed the push to demythologize the site by turning it into a professional, hospitable organisation that welcomes everybody.’ Its mandate was now to celebrate the overall accomplishments of the Afrikaner people and to disentangle their group identity from a narrow focus upon the apartheid system that its members once upheld. (Dubin 2009:169). The invitation in 2002 to former president Nelson Mandela to attend a wreath-laying ceremony and statue dedication was a bold gesture of reconciliation that raised the ire of certain segments of the Afrikaner community who tried to intimidate and threaten Opperman into cancelling the event. The event took place without incident but it highlighted just ‘how much change a site’s core constituency can tolerate.’ (Dubin 2009:171, 172).



**Figure 34: Gerard Moerdyk. 1938-1949. Voortrekker Monument. Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**

Dubin (2009:173) notes that when General Opperman assumed the helm, the Monument was a ‘stagnant remnant of a discredited culture.’ But under his leadership he has radically transformed the site by introducing and allowing such diverse activities as moonlit horse riding with complimentary wine and biltong, skateboarding and mountain biking around the terrain. Here people can also get married, celebrate New Year and rock out to contemporary bands. Marketing and fundraising are now targeted at diverse paying audiences and controversially renting out the building as a backdrop for fashion shoots, pornography and an issue of a gay magazine. Black tour guides and strategic marketing ‘sells’ the monument as an educational experience to visiting school groups, many of them black, (Figure 34), which has ironically made

the monument more palatable to blacks while some events and activities have caused outrage and offense to conservative Afrikaners. (Dubin 2009:173). That the monument's management have to 'walk the tightrope between different constituencies', the recent declaration of the site as a National Heritage site is important for its repositioning and recognition of its educational value. (Marschall 2010:172).

As Autry (2012:154) states, the Voortrekker Monument has also become a 'repository for Afrikaner material culture, which no longer fits easily into the exhibitions of national culture and history at mainstream museums.' *Die Erfensstigting*, a non-profit organisation was established in June 2002 under the supervision of General Gert Opperman to 'identify and acquire artefacts with emotional and cultural value linked to the Afrikaner community'. The Heritage Centre was opened on 5 September 2008. Donations from government and private citizens and an aggressive acquisition strategy has expanded the Voortrekker Monument's archive, artworks and sculptures, diaries and family heirlooms. Among the sculptures relocated are the Danie de Jager *Quo Vadis* that was originally featured in the main lobby of Jan Smuts ( now O.R. Tambo) Airport, Hennie Potgieter's *Curbed Freedom* that was originally in front of the Transvaal Provincial Administration building in Pretoria and the Kudu statues from Strijdom Square, on a 10 year loan from ABSA – in this 'the Monument has embraced its new public role as the steward of cultural objects of a bygone era, including the artwork that formerly adorned the walls of state buildings.' (Autry 2012:155).

The museum in the basement has been updated to include new texts that demystify the Great Trek describing the it as 'one of many migrations that was not a unique occurrence in South African or world history' and dispels the myth that the Great Trek was a 'pivotal moment for all Afrikaners noting: 'in reality only one tenth of Cape Afrikaners and many black and coloured employees participated in this migration.' (Autry 2012:126). Descriptive text panels in some of the official African languages have also been added to the Afrikaans and English panels. The latest addition is a Garden of Remembrance to inter ashes of loved ones or relocate remains that have become inaccessible on lost farms or graveyards where informal settlements now stand. (Dubin 2009:173). Despite these superficial changes and the desire for inclusiveness, 'the politics of memorialization and the premium placed on the safety of the white body is especially evident in the Garden of Remembrance' says Autry (2012:155). 'Insecurities about physical safety of mourners and graves at cemeteries are amplified to cast the Voortrekker Monument as a safe haven, and more importantly, as a culturally sympathetic alternative to state funded cemeteries.' (Autry 2012:156). She further states that the site is re-politicized by its shrewd

marketing campaign, translating popular perceptions of crime, expanding the image of the Monument as a safe refuge away from the chaos and danger of urban life, ideal for picnics, hiking and biking, a rare, safe family destination in an otherwise menacing public sphere.

A Wall of Remembrance to pay tribute to fallen South African Defence Force (SADF) members has also contributed to this repositioning as a result of the refusal by the Freedom Park Trust to include the names of SADF personnel on the Wall of Names. It was inaugurated on 25 October 2009 to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the service of the country between 31 May 1961, when South Africa became a Republic, and 27 April 1994, the formation of the South African National Defence Force. A Wall of Special Heroes has also been erected for 259 ex-SADF members awarded decorations and medals for valour and 280 niches have also been made available to purchase for remains of serving, former members, and civilian employees to be interred. The 32 Battalion Tree of Honour containing the names of their members killed in action and the 31/201 Battalion Memorial Needle containing the names of their members killed in action have both been relocated to the Voortrekker Monument. Similar to Freedom Park, these initiatives have attempted to bring all the heroes of the SADF into one place and an annual commemoration service is held every year on the Sunday closest to 31 May to honour the dead. 2489 names are engraved on the wall with an added 27 recently added as ongoing updating and verification continues. There is some irony in the fact that such an iconic symbol of Afrikaner nationalism and exclusion has become the official chosen place for the commemoration of the many varied race and cultural groups that served in the SADF. As with Maya Lin's Washington Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the SADF personnel have a place of mourning and remembering fallen comrades, a site for congregating and from which to speak.

Sert, Leger and Giedion (1943), claim that 'monuments are only possible in periods in which a unifying consciousness and unifying culture exist' and that 'periods which exist for the moment have been unable to create lasting monuments.' Certainly the Voortrekker Monument was built during a period of some Afrikaner disunity but it became a symbol of white Afrikaner domination and national aspirations. However it proves that monuments built during periods of disunity can become 'lasting monuments' if, like the Voortrekker Monument their political power is diminished or replaced and they become reminders both of a contested past and a shifting inclusive future. The continued popularity of the Voortrekker Monument with international and domestic tourists illustrates that 'the decision by key stakeholders not only to preserve the site but also to expand its grounds and collections shines a light on multiple lives of monuments, even those with images and text literally etched into stone.' (Autry 2012:147).

The construction of Freedom Park on Salvokop as a counterpoint to the Voortrekker Monument and the cooperation and maintenance of good relations between the two sites through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Freedom Park Trust, The Voortrekker Monument and the Heritage Foundation that recognises their independence, the opening of the road link between the two, will further reposition the Voortrekker Monument. Rankin (2013:95) says that the uniting of Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument ‘is not likely to be a straightforward amalgamation’ but the opening of the reconciliation road between the two heritage sites by President Jacob Zuma on National Reconciliation Day on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011, is further affirmation of the policy of building new monuments in opposition to old ones. While maintaining their independence the road will enable easy access between the sites for tourists and contribute to mutual understanding and appreciation of the differing perspectives of South Africa’s history that both sites offer. In the most recent gesture of reconciliation between the two sites, a joint wreath laying ceremony for the Annual Memorial Service was held at the *Isivivane* in Freedom Park and the SADF Wall of Remembrance at the Voortrekker Monument Heritage Site on the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2014. Representatives of all military veterans’ organisations gathered in what the Freedom Park website called the ‘greatest show of unity and reconciliation amongst former sworn enemies.’ ([www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za)).

That the controlling bodies of these ‘opposing monuments that stand for conflicting ideologies, using differing architectural language’ (Janse van Rensburg 2009:33), could reach a compromise may be surprising to many people, but over time, may prove to be the most rational decision. Just as the reconciliation bridge linking the Blood River Memorial and the Ncome Museum suggests that over time and with continuous dialogue between management committees of conflicting and opposing heritage sites, reconciliation may be more of a reality than previously thought.

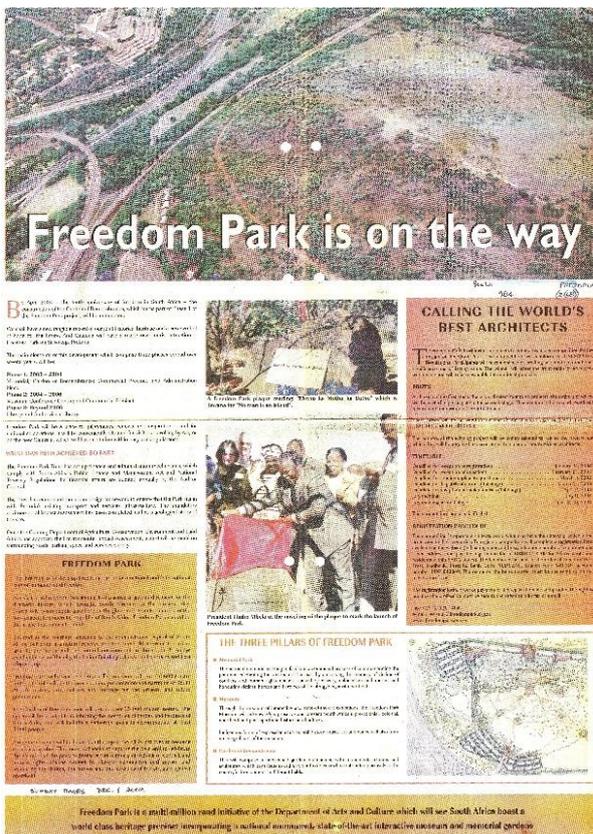
### **FREEDOM PARK: UNITING AND INCLUSIVE OR DIVIDING AND EXCLUSIVE?**

In this chapter I discuss the historical background and context of the Freedom Park project, question the political significance of its siting in close proximity and in opposition to the Voortrekker Monument and analyse the physical layout of the elements that make up the Freedom Park precinct. I also describe the significance of the stone construction and discuss the obvious references between Freedom Park and the Great Zimbabwe ruins. The elements of Freedom Park are comprehensively described in terms of their architectural symbolism, religious and cultural significance, while I also discuss the political controversy surrounding elements such as the Wall of Names. The obvious comparisons between Freedom Park's Wall of Names and the acknowledged international precedent of Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington are made but I also discuss the anomalies of the Freedom Park Wall of Names. Similarities between Freedom Park and the Memorial to the Victims of State Terror in Buenos Aires are also discussed and analysed. I also position Freedom Park within the international memorial field which the fusion of sculpture, landscape, architecture and design contribute to the creations of a memory site of trauma, to which Freedom Park can be said to conform.

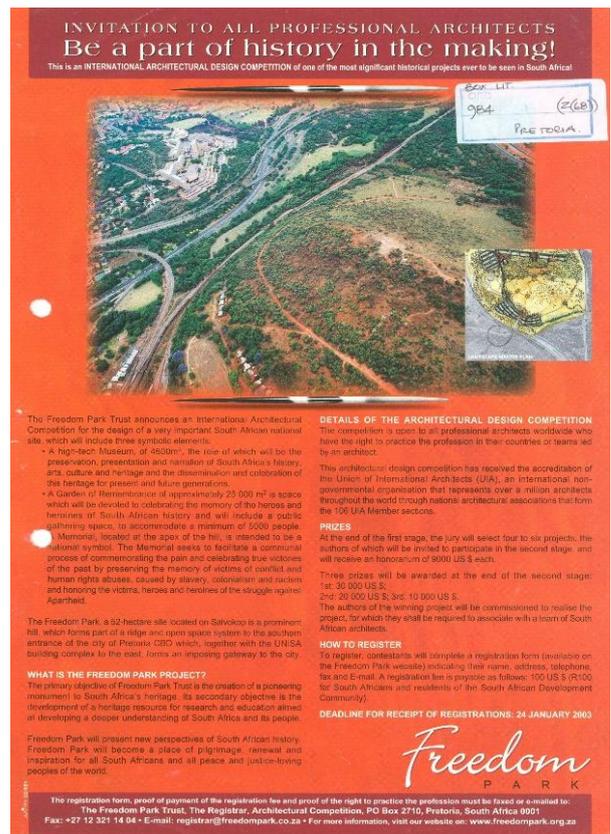
#### **The historical context of Freedom Park**

The Trustees of the Freedom Park met for the first time on 1 June 2000, officially launching the Freedom Park project. Historian Lulu Callinicos drafted a nine-page Position Paper which outlined a basic concept of the park, listed possible components and discussed feasibility and logistical aspects. Three interactive themes were central in this discussion document: Struggle, for liberation understood in a broad historical perspective, Democracy, processes of reconciliation, reconstruction and development and the South African narrative as a universal case study and international role, and Nation-building, the conceptualisation of a national consciousness which will only emerge over time in a process of contestation and debate.

The Freedom Park Trust began its operations in April 2001 with Dr. Wally Mongane Serote as the CEO. (Marschall 2010:211-213). Thabo Mbeki, then President of South Africa, officially launched the Freedom Park site on 16 June 2002. He unveiled a plaque etched with the words *'Motho ke Motho ka Batho'* reflecting the concept of *Ubuntu*: 'I am because you are' or 'a person is person because of other people'. In his address Mbeki (2002) stressed the importance of celebrating freedom and that countries across the world celebrate their freedoms in a variety of ways by 'building museums, constructing statues and designating specific dates as Freedom Days.' The aim of Freedom Park he said was to tell 'the true history of our country that has not been told in its entirety.' Mbeki also noted that the central message of Nelson Mandela's address on his inauguration as South Africa's first democratically elected president on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1994, 'must forever be etched in the consciousness of our nation' through a monument such as Freedom Park. (Mbeki 2002)

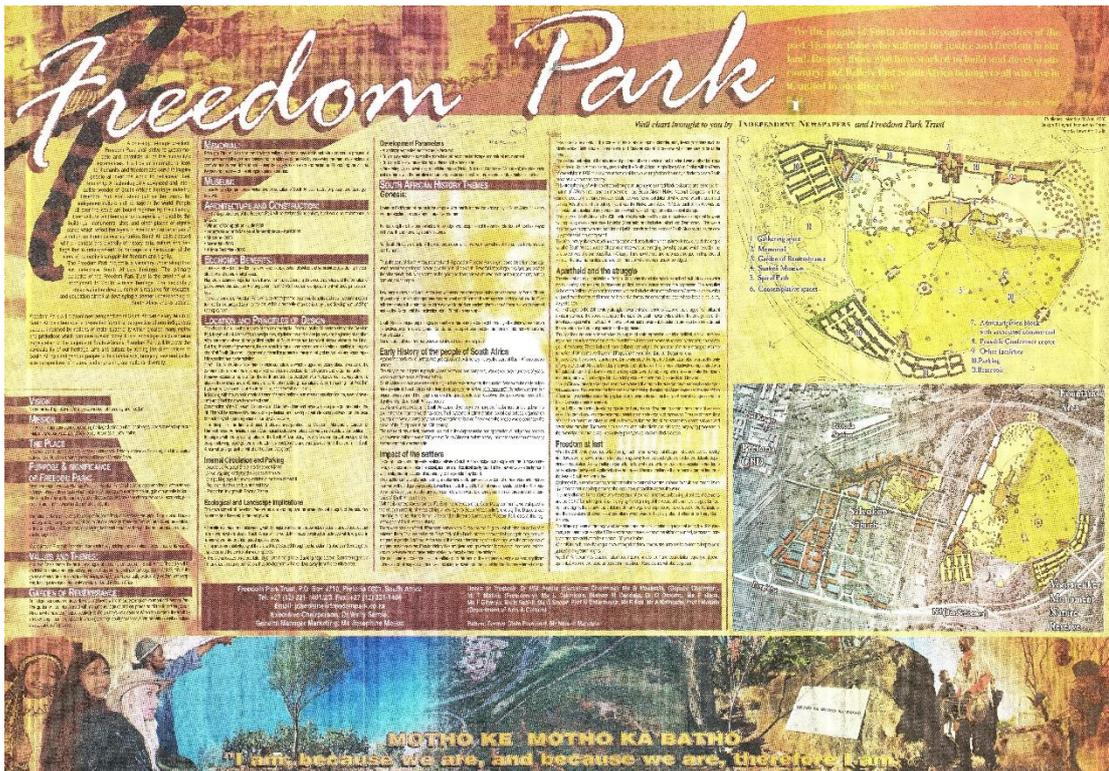


**Figure 35: Freedom Park architectural competition announcement. (Source: Sunday Times 1 December 2002)**



**Figure 36: Freedom Park architectural competition announcement. (Source: Architect & Builder Nov/Dec. 2002)**

Figure 37: Freedom Park wall chart (Source: Independent Newspapers 28 April 2003)



The announcement of the Freedom Park architectural competition appeared in the Sunday Times on December 1 2002 (Figure 35) and in several architectural journals including the Architect and Builder of Nov/Dec. 2002 (Figure 36). On 28 April 2003, (Figure 37) Independent Newspapers also published a wall chart explaining the core aspects of Freedom Park. This wall chart outlined its stated Vision: ‘to be the leading national and international icon of humanity and freedom.’ Its Mission was: ‘to provide a pioneering and empowering heritage destination that challenges visitors to reflect upon our past, improve our present, and build on our future as a united nation.’ The Purpose and Significance of Freedom Park:

‘As an envisaged one-stop Heritage Precinct, Freedom Park shall strive to accommodate all of the emerging experiences and symbols which unfold to tell one coherent story of the struggle of humanity in South Africa ie the struggle for survival, land and resources and how they shaped the social, economic, political, cultural and historical landscape of our country. The rationale behind the establishment of Freedom Park is to address the gaps, distortions and biases and to provide new perspectives of South Africa’s heritage. Freedom Park will be a broad presentation of the entire South African story, challenging traditional narratives through the re-interpretation of previous heritage sites.’

According to the wall chart the Values and Themes of the park are:

‘Freedom Park’s central theme is the struggle of humanity for freedom in South Africa. This story will be depicted in a visual and interactive manner. Freedom Park will acknowledge South Africa’s role in the genesis of early life forms and later humanoids, some of which eventually evolved into modern homo sapiens, tracing evidence of humanity’s evolution found in South Africa.’

The wall chart also described the three major elements of Freedom Park: The Garden of Remembrance, (*Isivivane*) the Memorial (*S’khumbuto*) and the Museum (*//hapo*) as well as the five major South African history themes that would eventually be included as the seven epochs in the *//hapo* museum: Genesis (Earth, epoch 1), Early history of the people of South Africa: telling the story of pre-colonial indigenous people, their culture, social and political organisation and trade. (Ancestors, epoch 2 and Peopling, epoch 3), Impact of the settlers: (Resistance & Colonisation, epoch 4 and Industrialisation & Urbanisation, epoch 5), Apartheid and the struggle: the National Party victory in 1948 and emergence of Apartheid and response to it. (Nationalisms and Struggles, epoch 6), Freedom at last: (Nation Building and Continent Building, epoch 7).

The first phase of the international competition for its construction was adjudicated in April 2003 with five finalists selected to advance to the second stage. The second phase was completed in July 2003 to award the first three prize winners but ultimately the Freedom Park trust found that none of the five final schemes were suitable. ‘The Freedom Park Trust’s decision not to implement any of the winning entries, but rather to develop a suitable structure through a gradual design process, which would evolve in negotiation between key members of the Trust and selected local architectural firms, was ground-breaking.’ (Marschall 2006:174). A gradual design process in negotiation with local architectural practices Mashabane Rose Associates, Mpheti Morejele and GAPP Architects and Urban Designers who designed the architectural structures and members of the Trust was developed in extensive consultations with various stakeholders and communities. ‘21 sectors of the nation including youth, women, traditional healers, faith-based organisations, representatives of the different racial groups, labour, veterans associations and organisations from both sides of the political divide were engaged in workshops conducted throughout the country over a number of years.’ (Marschall 2010:215, 216). As Marschall (2006:175) observes, the ‘prestige and status associated with the products of a world-class architectural firm was forfeited in favour of a home-grown design, informed by the specific South African context and rooted in local traditions.’ That this democratic and inclusive approach was adopted unlike the top-down imposition of the Zimbabwean and Namibian national monuments, was significant but would also prove to be time-consuming and expensive.

The *Isivivane* was completed by the tenth anniversary of the first general elections the 27 April 2004. The *S'khumbuto* was officially opened on December 16 2006 and the *//hapo* museum while completed in 2010 was only officially opened in April 2013. At the opening of the *//hapo* museum on the 22 April 2013, then Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe stated that 'This Freedom Park has been conceptualised as a monument for all South Africans to consolidate and preserve their freedom heritage in an all-encompassing and inclusive manner; including its links to the Voortrekker Monument and Union Buildings within the Tshwane Heritage belt.' He noted further that 'the park is also unique in that it extends freedom beyond the regurgitation of institutionalised history by expanding the definition of freedom to include spirituality, symbolic and multi-faith freedoms of expression by, amongst others, offering visitors a quiet place for meditation and reflection.' ([www.info.gov.za/speech](http://www.info.gov.za/speech)) Whether the vision of the park has been achieved continues to be open to debate and discussion.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was according to Janse van Rensburg (2009:36), the 'first attempt to address the deep pain and division perpetrated under Apartheid.' Freedom Park was informed by recommendations of the TRC and forms part of the healing and cleansing process on a national scale.' Freedom Park gives spiritual recognition through symbolic design rather than financial reparation or legal recognition. (Loots 2006:37). It is the flagship heritage site arising out of proceedings of the TRC. It responded to a critical need to build one nation from conflicting factions that could be concretized into a built memorial. (Janse van Rensburg 2009:36). The Freedom Park Trust according to Baines (2009:334) not only derived its mandate from the TRC but followed its lead in adopting the notion of *Ubuntu*, the invented tradition of a synthesis of African philosophy that stresses a common humanity and Christian theology that emphasises the need for forgiveness as a prerequisite for reconciliation, as the foundational formula for an integrated nationalism. '*Ubuntu* became the cornerstone of the nation-building project.' (Baines 2009:334).

Politically the park embodies the African Renaissance that former president Thabo Mbeki frequently referenced, in order to correct the notion that Africans had contributed nothing to civilization and that 'by returning to an artificially constructed precolonial past', his vision of the African Renaissance 'is filled with paeans to the great African monuments from the past at Timbuktu, Axum, in Zimbabwe, Aswan, praised to substantiate the claim that Africa's greatness resides in something both precolonial and monumental.' (Herwitz 2011:244). The aim of a public memorialization site such as Freedom Park is the 'rediscovery of the soul' to address the psychological damage and collective trauma of colonialism and apartheid and the restoration of

the basic humanity of the black African. (Autry 2012:158) Mare (2007:45) was somewhat more sceptical mooting that a party political agenda also applied as Freedom Park ‘is intended as the ANC’s national therapy for the anti-apartheid struggle’s trauma.’

Since Freedom Park is a state funded initiative ‘the original idea was that the park should honour those who gave up their lives for freedom, but should also contribute to reconciliation and nation building.’ (Labuschagne 2010:114). To enable reconciliation and nation building, ‘Freedom Park not only strives to unite all the different tongues of South Africa into one nation, but to express an African continental identity.’ (Janse van Rensburg 2009:35). Freedom Park also represents a conscious move away from imitating monuments of the past to visible differentiation from the old order, and therefore the ‘architecture, design and commemorative point of view signal a departure from the Eurocentric styles of memorialization that characterized the colonial periods. Rather than solemn statues and towering monoliths the memorial park is built into the landscape with circular structures eased into the hillside, reminiscent of Great Zimbabwe.’ (Autry 2012:157). The conceptualisation of Freedom Park, according to Marschall (2006:176), ‘has undergone a significant process of development since its first inception.’ A more appropriate Afrocentric expression of commemoration in line with Thabo Mbeki’s vision of the African Renaissance and to the post-apartheid nation has meant a ‘trajectory away from the emulation of prestigious Western or regional socialist models of commemoration.’

The site chosen for Freedom Park was also disputed and Labuschagne argues that historically Wonderboom with its wild fig tree located northeast of Wonderboompoort, would have been a more suitable site for Freedom Park. It can therefore be assumed that ‘the original decision to place Freedom Park on Salvokop bypassed the symbolic and heritage status that the Wonderboom area could have offered because political priorities were regarded as more important than spiritual and symbolic values.’ (Labuschagne 2010:117). The political intent in the placement of Freedom Park directly between the Union Buildings and the Voortrekker Monument ‘can be seen as a visual amputation of the historic link between the cultural dimension (Voortrekker Monument) and Afrikaner control of political power, politically manifested by its supporters occupying the offices of the Union Buildings.’ (Labuschagne 2010:117). Serote, the CEO of Freedom Park, acknowledged the deep symbolic power of the placement of Freedom Park close to the “bastion of Afrikaner identity” but was desirous of ‘accepting the past and marry the two and both move into the future.’ (Autry 2012:160).

The significance of the location of Freedom Park on Salvokop, was explained in the Independent Newspaper's wall chart published on April 28<sup>th</sup>. 2003 which stated that:

'with panoramic views of the political capital of South Africa and important historic vistas to the Union Building, the seat of government, the site aims to forge a commanding and inspirational position in the psyche of all South Africans. High ground such as this appeals to the spirituality of individuals and encourages introspection and contemplation.'

Furthermore, the wall chart indicates, the hill also has historical connotations which 'suggest a meeting place, a venue for the gathering of clans and nations, a place of worship, a step closer to the heavens and to our humanity.' More practical reasons such as freeway access from north and south, the proximity of Pretoria railway station and the fairly reasonable 40 minute drive from Johannesburg International Airport, ensuring accessibility for South Africans and International visitors, were also given. While no specific reference was made to the Voortrekker Monument on the wall chart, there can be no doubt that one of the purposes of Freedom Park - to challenge 'traditional narratives through re-interpretation of previous heritage sites' was referring to the Voortrekker Monument.

While Labuschagne argues that the placement of Freedom Park in opposition to the Voortrekker Monument generated conflicting emotions that contrasted with the initial idea of peace and reconciliation and the intention to restore the balance as part of reconstructing the past, this was done in a manner that does not reflect good planning, architectural imagination or the enhancement of the values of unity and nation building. (Labuschagne 2010:118). Mare (2007:45) notes that while the physical layout in the form of an indigenous garden with African symbolic features, was awarded a design prize, 'no "garden" layout can compensate for either the scars caused by the costly entrance road or the brutal retaining wall of reinforced concrete constructed to hold the filling necessary to level a large enough site on a naturally sloping ridge.' She further notes that the 'dozens of poles bristling in line on top of the ridge, the image of destruction of a natural site is complete.' Marschall (2010:172) points out that both monuments are contested for various reasons and 'two monuments juxtaposed on opposite hills, separate but equal, inevitably testify to continuing divisions.' Instead of levelling or reworking the Voortrekker Monument the aim of Freedom Park is to transform one of the most politically charged Afrikaner cultural spaces and attempt to eclipse it with a monument of African tradition and ingenuity, a post-apartheid historical monument that rises on a nearby hill (itself charged with being symbolic of Africa), with overburdened symbolic regalia representing the new nation. (Maskell and Scheermeyer 2008:159).

Freedom Park can be seen as ‘more than a postcolonial memorial to liberation heroes, Freedom Park also stands as a counter-monument where the relationship between nation, memory and landscape are reconfigured.’ (Autry 2012:148). The relationship between the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park has been acknowledged with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two sites affirming their independence and states that ‘it is accepted that visitors to one should be encouraged to also visit the other.’ Disregarding the contested political ideological intentions and the distorted historical basis for the siting of Freedom Park on Salvokop, the architecture and interpretive strategy of the various elements to achieve what Labuschagne (2010:122) refers to as the ‘created, invented and enforced symbolism’, is a shrewd one.



Figure 38: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2000-2013. *Freedom Park*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Digest of African Architecture 2008 )

Describing the plan of the Freedom Park as ‘organic, weaves through the landscape and incorporates and refers to natural elements which represent a dynamic interaction with the spirit world.’ (Janse van Rensburg 2009:34). According to project architect Dieter Brandt ‘Freedom Park draws on nature’s core elements – air, water, fire and earth’ for its symbolism and metaphors. (Anonymous 2010:70). Indigenous Knowledge Systems, of which sensitivity to the *gestalt* of the site is an essential requirement, informed the design of the site and its components. Architecturally the ‘built structures were designed in such a way as to sit discreetly in the landscape.’ (Loots 2006:32). Each element of Freedom Park also provides a unique view of the

surrounding landscape and buildings, symbolically connecting these individual elements with buildings from the past. While Labuschagne (2010:120) suggested that the spatial positioning of Freedom Park displays little intra-harmony or visual conciliation with the Voortrekker Monument and surrounding monuments, he concedes that Freedom Park ‘displays a far stronger harmonious compatibility with the topography of the area than the Voortrekker Monument. Freedom Park, in contrast, nestles snugly and unobtrusively around Salvokop’s gentle incline.’ The Freedom Park’s composition of elements ‘reveals itself in subtlety which greatly reduces the intrusive nature of the Park.’ (Figure 38).

There is undoubted reference to the stone construction, architecture and symbolism of the Great Enclosure at Great Zimbabwe and to a lesser but equally important degree, the stone remnants of Mapungubwe, so sensitively reinterpreted in Peter Rich’s Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre. This reinforces the vision of Freedom Park to reflect Thabo Mbeki’s vision of the African Renaissance which is ‘filled with paeans to the great African monuments from the past praised to substantiate the claim that Africa’s greatness resides in something both precolonial and monumental.’ (Herwitz 2011:244). The parallels with Great Zimbabwe is particularly evident from the best vantage point from where to view Freedom Park, from the top of the UNISA building on Muckelneuk Ridge and symbolically reaffirms its relation to its broader (African) roots. (Labuschagne 2010:121). Freedom Park has monumentalised in concrete and stone Thabo Mbeki’s monumental language of the African Renaissance at the time of South Africa’s transition to democracy, of celebrating a legacy of African monuments, in which his words ‘call those monuments back into existence, create them as monuments for the present.’ (Herwitz 2011:244).

‘In his words resides an Africa of the distant past where colonialism and apartheid do not figure, where black and indigenous Africa are the sources of virtue and value, where language itself becomes the new monument, and through it, the future destiny of the continent may be inaugurated.’ (Herwitz 2011:244)

The parallels between the extensive use of stone construction at Freedom Park and the Great Zimbabwe complex is relevant for two reasons. Firstly the consensus by Aspinall (2000:14) quoting Garlake, Huffman, Denbow, and Hall that as stone was the symbol of the ruling class, stone became the symbol of royalty and the development of stone walling for royal enclosures assisted in the validation of the *mambo*’s power, setting the royalty apart from the commoners. The stone walls according to Garlake ‘were built primarily to display the power of the state. They symbolise in permanent and obvious fashion, the achievements of the ruling class. They are therefore essentially a political statement.’ (Aspinall 2000:14). Freedom Park’s use of stone

walling, therefore, by association and symbolically, it can be said is likewise a political statement that was built to display the achievements of the state and validates its power but also sets the ruling class apart from the commoners.

Secondly, Great Zimbabwe was ‘the expression in stone of a highly creative culture consciously and actively motivated by powerful religious and political symbolism and by the need to honour influential ancestors with stone monuments’ (Aspinall 2000:14). Similarly Freedom Park was constructed on powerful religious symbolism to honour the ancestors of those who fought for freedom and naturally also to reinforce the power of the ruling ANC and this is actively expressed in all the elements. The idiosyncratic nature of the ‘amorphic free-form style, seductive geometries, innovative techniques in masonry skill and the vivid presence of symbolic image all combine to create a dynamic architectural language’ of the stone architecture now stands as a legacy of the cultural achievements of the Karanga people of Zimbabwe. (Aspinall 2000:14). While it cannot be said that Freedom Park’s architecture could be considered idiosyncratic, the serpentine *Mveledzo* displays a similar amorphic free-form style, with multiple symbolisms evident in the *Isivivane* and the various elements of the *S’khumbuto*. The notion of the African Renaissance has been incorporated in Freedom Park through its direct referencing to Great Zimbabwe’s stone architecture. (Figures 39 a-d)



Figure 39a: Stone detail



Figure 39b: Stone detail



Figure 39c: Stone detail



Figure 39d: Stone detail

Figures 39 a-d: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2000-2013. *Freedom Park*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

The strategy of uniting different political, language and culture groups by naming each component of the design in a different official language thereby giving each group equal recognition, is a shrewd one. The overall site plan is based on that of an African royal homestead and functions to symbolically bring all the children into one house, (Janse van Rensburg 2009:38) while ‘metaphoric references to cleansing and healing are found throughout the site.’ (Loots 2006:32).

**The elements of Freedom Park are:**

***Isivivane:* (an Nguni word meaning ‘heap of stones’)**

According to Marschall (2006:176), African ways of commemorating the dead ‘never involved the construction of solid, large scale monumental structures or sculptures’, leaving architects and designers with ‘no precedents for an African-based commemorative aesthetic, and demands a more creative and interpretive approach.’ The *Isivivane* is the symbolic resting place for the spirits of those who died in the struggles for humanity and freedom in South Africa, containing ceremonial trees and boulders from significant places. The *Isivivane* consists of two primary elements The *Lesaka* and the *Lekgotla*.



**Figure 40:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004. *Freedom Park: Isivivane: Lesaka*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 41:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004. *Freedom Park: Isivivane: Lesaka*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

*Izivivane* can be found dotting the landscape of South Africa. The origin of this practice is said to have been (Marschall 2010:223), adopted by Bantu-speakers from the Khoi, who regarded them as graves connected with their mythical ancestor Heitsi Eibib. The Xhosa followed the Khoi practice of picking up a stone, a branch or bunch of grass, spitting on it and placing it on the cairn. Cairns are used as place markers for travellers and erected to commemorate persons or events in which the whole community participates. Greenblatt (1996:36) says he thinks of the cairn as ‘what I might call zero-degree monumentality: the trace of an intention, a will to guide, stripped to its barest essential, with no name inscribed, no corpse below’. In the *Lesaka* the boulder metaphor is strongly represented by 11 boulders placed in a circle representing the nine provinces of South Africa, the national government and the international community. (Figure 40). Each boulder thus symbolises something unique associated with place of origin. The

concept was derived from the African tradition of bringing stones to the grave of the deceased person. Each boulder of the *Isivivane* went through a ritual cleansing process in each province of origin before being brought to its final resting place. In the *Lesaka* symbolically, therefore, all the spirits of the deceased heroes were collected through the provincial rituals and were brought home to their final resting place. (Loots 2006:33). The design of the *Isivivane* according to Marschall (2006:176), was meant to ‘bring out the “African voice” by drawing on indigenous knowledge systems, African philosophy and African cosmology.’

The Freedom Park Trust insists that the iconography and ritual practices are not exclusively African, but cross-cultural, interfaith and inter-denominational drawing on shared common denominators, universal spiritual concepts and ritual elements shared by many religions. (Marschall 2010:225). As Marschall (2010:225) suggests: meaningful joint gatherings may be premature for South African society and that separate gatherings of different, culturally homogeneous groups of such a multi-racial, religiously and ideologically diverse population with their own religious leader or ritual geared towards their respective cultural needs, may be more appropriate in the immediate future. This might also change since nation building is a long term project that is constantly evolving.



**Figure 42:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004. *Freedom Park: Isivivane: Lekgotla*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 43:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004. *Freedom Park: Isivivane: Lekgotla*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

In some African traditions matters of importance are discussed in the presence of the ancestors and the symbolic *Lekgotla* consists of a circular seating area constructed around an *Umhlahlankosi* tree, where such matters can be facilitated in close proximity to the *Lesaka*. (Figure 42). The siting of the *Lekgotla*, in direct view and alignment of the University of South Africa (UNISA) campus and distant views of the Union Buildings is significant in suggesting that matters of importance need wisdom and insight to resolve while adhering to requirements of

the State. An artificial spring allows for ritual cleansing upon leaving the symbolic burial ground.

It is self-evident that the *Isivivane*, as the original element constructed in Freedom Park, forms the central focus of the Freedom Park experience. The guide gives detailed explanations of the origins of each boulder and goes to great lengths to describe the spiritual significance of speaking to the ancestors but also of the multiple ways all faiths and cultures can interpret their experience. This is reinforced by encouraging everyone to take off their shoes and join hands in the centre of the ring of boulders and silently bow their heads in a unified sign of respect and washing their hands afterwards in a cleansing ritual. (Figure 41). Unfortunately the whole spectacle lacked immediacy and was rather contrived, rather than the expected spontaneous reaction that a group might feel when confronted with an exceptionally inspirational space. It is precisely the ‘zero-degree monumentality’ of which Greenblatt (1996:36) speaks that is evident in the *Isivivane* and as such each visitor should be able to experience it without prior explanation and according to their own notions of what constitutes spirituality.

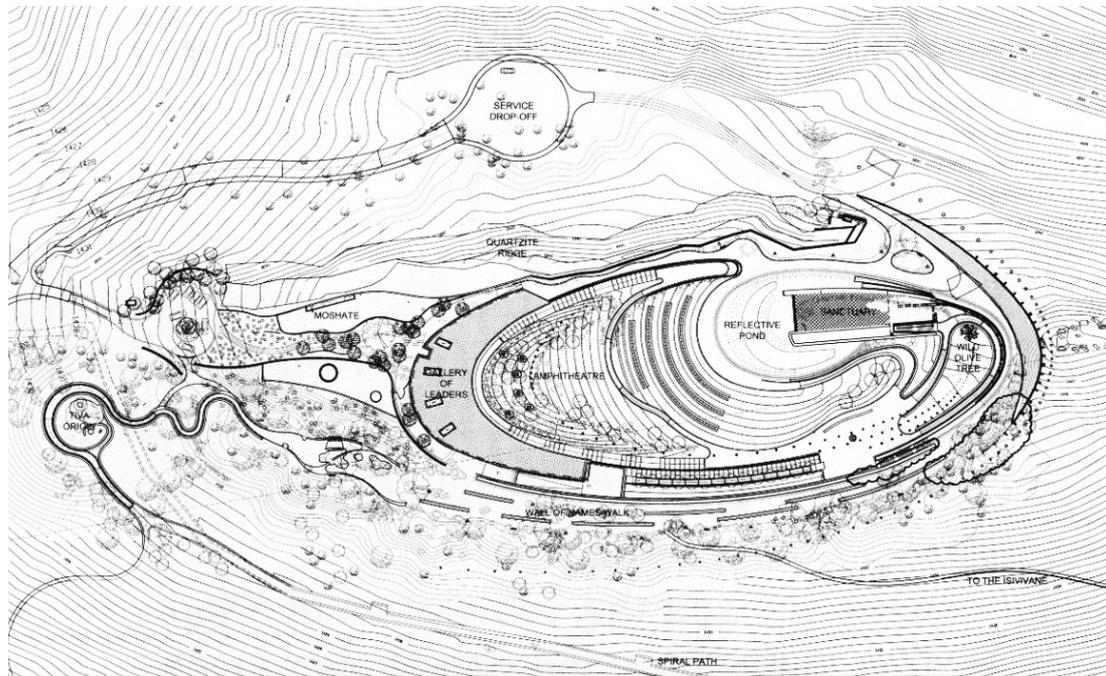
***S’khumbuto*: (an iSwati word meaning ‘memorial/place of remembrance’)**



**Figure44:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. *Freedom Park: S’khumbuto*. Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: To Build Issue 9, July/Oct. 2013:24)

The *S’khumbuto* consists of several elements: The Sanctuary, reflecting pool, eternal flame, amphitheatre, Gallery of Leaders and Wall of Names. (Figure 44). According to the Freedom

Park brochure ‘The design configurations of the *S’khumbuto* memorial space, are “steeped in the traditions of Africa”.’ (Marschall 2010:228). The symbiotic relationship between the Gallery of Leaders and the Sanctuary with the Wall of Names invoke layered symbolisms associated with birth, death, burial and rebirth. (Figure 45).



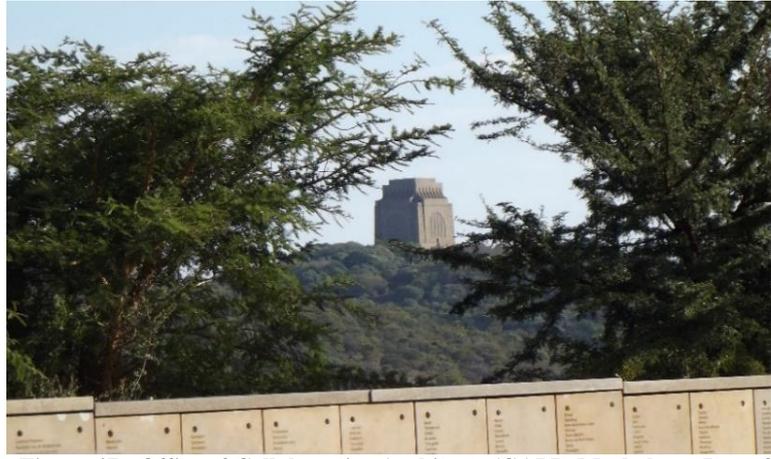
**Figure 45: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. Freedom Park: S’khumbuto. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Digest of African Architecture 2008:70)**

### ***S’khumbuto*: The Wall of Names:**

A memorial wall that commemorates those who died in the major conflicts that shaped South Africa, termed The Wall of Names ‘will be divided into eight parts, each representing a different conflict event and epoch in the history of South Africa.’ (Loots 2006:34). The eight conflicts are Pre-Colonial Wars, Slavery, Genocide, Wars of Resistance, the South African War, The First World War, The Second World War and the Struggle for Liberation. (Figure 46). The Wall of Names was built in ‘response to Thabo Mbeki’s concern that the *Isivivane* is not sufficient in honouring the country’s heroes, but that the nation needs to know the names of those who sacrificed their lives for humanity and freedom.’ (Marschall 2010:226)



**Figure 46: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. Freedom Park: S'khumbuto: Wall of Names. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**



**Figure 47: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. Freedom Park: S'khumbuto: Wall of Names. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**

It is the Wall of Names (Figures 46, 47) however, that is the most controversial and contested aspect of all the park elements. The inclusion of Cuban soldiers and exclusion of former South African Defence Force (SADF) members from the wall however is the most contentious. The preferred site for Republic Day and Remembrance Day commemoration was at Fort Klapperkop, where P.W. Botha, then Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, unveiled a statue of a uniformed soldier on 31 May 1979. A series of walls with names of soldiers who died in both world wars, the Korean War and nearly 2000 names of deceased soldiers who died up until 1994 and the formation of the new South African National Defence Force (SANDF). The site however has not become a well frequented place of remembrance or mourning for friends and family of deceased SADF soldiers, and has become an ‘overlooked memorial to an undeclared war.’ (Baines 2009:334). It would have been logical then for the direct transferral of the names on these walls to the Wall of Names at Freedom Park to create a true place of national mourning and reconciliation but this has not happened as a result of their controversial exclusion by the Freedom Park management.

The argument for inclusion or exclusion of SADF personnel on the Wall of Names centres on several complex issues. The first revolves around the so-called ‘Border War’ waged in Angola/Namibia and the Liberation Struggle. Baines (2009:330) believes that ‘one was an extension of the other, that the country’s low-intensity civil war was very much part of southern Africa’s struggle for decolonisation that occurred within the context of the late Cold War’, unlike Steenkamp who sees them as separate conflicts. The argument that the names of combatants on both the British and Boer sides of the South African (Anglo-Boer) Wars have been included on

the wall, has been used by those who advocate inclusion of the SADF personnel, thereby questioning the consistency of the Freedom Park Trust to upholding the principle of inclusivity. (Baines 2009:338). While it has also been argued that conscripts and citizen force soldiers did not necessarily support apartheid and many believed they were fighting Soviet imperialism and authoritarianism, the moral high ground continues to be occupied by the ANC and liberation movements who supposedly fought a ‘just war’ against the illegitimate apartheid regime. Any inclusion of SADF personnel would effectively undermine this. (Baines 2009:338). Freedom Park operates under the Department of Arts and Culture and late in 2007, Pallo Jordan, then Minister of Arts and Culture, publicly declared that the names of the SADF members who died during the Bush War in Angola and Namibia should not be included on the Wall of Names. In what could only be termed a compromise, Freedom Park Trust hosted a wreath-laying and launch of a memorial book inscribed with the names of deceased SADF soldiers on 9 August 2008. The names and biographies of these soldiers has also been compiled in conjunction with a number of organisations, to be included on the database and archives at Freedom Park.

([www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za))

The justification for the inclusion of the Cuban soldiers by the Freedom Park Trust has been based on the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, from 1987 to 1988, in which ‘Angolan, Namibian and Cuban forces triumphed over the Apartheid military forces, whilst South African liberation armies, fighting in Northern Angola managed to contain the Angolan rebel armies, thus preventing them from reinforcing the Apartheid armies.’ According to the Freedom Park Trust the peace negotiations that followed led to the withdrawal of the South African military from Angola and Namibia and the independence of Namibia. ([www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za)). That the names of more than 2100 Cuban soldiers were included on the Wall of Names can also be interpreted as a slap in the face of those Angolans who died in their civil war and furthermore relegating them to anonymity while elevating the Cubans to heroic status and thus valuing their lives over and above native Angolans. The impasse and refusal to include the SADF names on the Wall of Names in the *S'khumbuto* has resulted in a Wall of Remembrance being erected at the Voortrekker Monument widening existing schisms between the two monuments instead of bridging them.

Another notable absence from the listed conflicts is that of the Korean War in which 12 South African pilots were killed and 30 reported missing. While their names are recorded on a memorial at the Union Buildings and at Fort Klapperkop, once again the Wall of Names does not reflect a unified approach to inclusion and questions ‘the definition of who deserves to be

honoured for their contribution to freedom and humanity arguably lacks consistency.’ (Marschall 2010:240). While the Korean War might be considered less significant than other conflicts, those who lost their lives represented South Africa and paid the ultimate price for doing so.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission had taken a principled decision that ‘the suffering of all apartheid-era victims, irrespective of which side of the ideological divide they stood, was to be of equal moral significance.’ (Marschall 2010:375). Victims that Marschall calls ‘collateral damage’ such as white bystanders killed through acts of sabotage and politically motivated bombings and those whom she says are ‘the most discomfiting victims of the liberation struggle’, black individuals, approximately 450, who died through the grisly practice of “necklacing” have still not been memorialized. As Baines (2009:337) argues, ‘the names of those killed in the 1960 Sharpeville massacre and during the 1976 Soweto uprising were added to the wall.’ Yet some of these deceased were not activists but innocent bystanders creating slippages between categories of hero/heroine of the Liberation Struggle, victims of apartheid and the blurring of the distinction between combatants and civilians. This can be ascribed to the fact that as Marschall (2010:376) observes, ‘some victims are politically more opportune to remember than others.’ Over time this may change but ‘at the current moment, acknowledging such “bad” victims in the memorial landscape would be considered counterproductive to the government’s goals of regaining dignity and instilling pride in a shared history of resistance.’

If ever there was a more powerful opportunity to create a truly unique site of reconciliation between victims of opposing traumas, it is on the 8<sup>th</sup> conflict wall. If through the inclusiveness of naming deceased Cuban soldiers alongside deceased conscripted SADF soldiers as well as the perpetrators and victims of bombings together on the wall, then this unique site would be a reality of reconciliation. This opportunity however has been lost with these exclusions. If as Dr. M.W. Serote ([www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za)) notes, that ‘Freedom Park acts as a catalyst for reconciliation and nation building’, the exclusion of SADF soldiers on the Wall of Names, has I believe resulted in the failure of the mission of the park as an inclusive place of mourning and reconciliation for all South Africans.

A unified place of mourning and reconciliation for some victims of South Africa’s violent traumatic past has yet to be realised. How one might ask can families of these excluded victims of conflicts visit the *Isivivane* and symbolically reconnect to the spirits of their loved ones when their names have not been included on the wall? As I experienced and understood the symbolic journey that the visitor takes between the two elements, both components are symbolically and

spiritually connected. While all the spirits of those who gave up their lives for freedom have symbolically been brought home to the *Isivivane*, unless their names are reflected on the Wall of Names, I don't believe they are truly 'home' and closure for some families and loved ones is not possible. If the Wall of Names is constantly under review and open to discussion, then the inclusion of victims on all sides of the Struggle should be considered to truly unite and reconcile. The unifying and reconciliatory power of the wall would be in its inclusiveness and this power has been compromised by these glaring exclusions.

***S'khumbuto*: Sanctuary, Eternal Flame and Reflecting Pool:**



**Figure 48: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. *Freedom Park: S'khumbuto: Sanctuary*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**

Considering its externally large scale, (Figure 48), the interior of the *S'khumbuto*'s Sanctuary is relatively small and intimate. The combination of stone and sandstone cladding is a common feature of the elements that make up the *S'khumbuto* making reference to the ancient stone

construction of Great Zimbabwe while positioning the Sanctuary firmly within its contemporary context. Internally (Figure 49) the space is characterised by the dark timber floors and low lighting that contrast starkly with the bright outside, the two embracing wings of the Sanctuary providing shelter and protection to the eternal flame that seemingly floats on the lake water. The eternal flame acts as a reminder of those who have died while the water in the reflecting pool can be interpreted as the element so necessary to life.



**Figure 49:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. *Freedom Park: S'khumbuto: Sanctuary*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 50:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. *Freedom Park: S'khumbuto: Sanctuary*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

Approaching the glass, which looks directly onto the pool, the visitor is confronted by their own reflection staring back at them as a reminder that reconciliation and healing starts with self-reflection and introspection. (Figure 50). Unfortunately permanent seating is not a feature of the Sanctuary so this discourages visitors from spending any length of time on reflection and contemplation. While seating is supplied for official functions, even a few permanent seats for the use of visitors close to the glass wall that looks out onto the eternal flame and water, would add to a visitor's experience and partly fulfil the Parks stated aims of healing and reconciliation through introspection and reflection. If the lack of seating is a permanent arrangement, I found myself questioning the purpose of the building to the average visitors overall experience of Freedom Park since there appears to be no clear function for the architectural space. The provision of seating such as that along the *Mveledzo* as discussed later, is a strategic part of providing visitors with a complete experience in spaces that encourage reflection and introspection.

## ***S'khumbuto: Gallery of Leaders:***

The *S'khumbuto* also consists of a Gallery of Leaders which according to the Freedom Park Trust:

‘pays tribute to the achievements and represents the leadership qualities of those exceptional leaders who brought about qualitative leaps in the struggle for humanity and freedom nationally, continentally and internationally. To date twenty four names of South African, African and International leaders who are deemed exemplary role models in terms of the above criteria have been researched, verified and selected for inclusion.’ ([www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za))



**Figure 51:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. *Freedom Park: S'khumbuto: Gallery of Leaders*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 52:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. *Freedom Park: S'khumbuto: Gallery of Leaders*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

In response to the critique offered on the announcement of the names of the leaders, on 29 March 2009, the Freedom Park Trust indicated on their website that the context in which the included leaders need to be viewed is one in which Freedom Park is ‘articulated in terms of being a national and international icon for freedom and humanity’ and the leaders selected for inclusion ‘have been chosen with a specific objective in mind: emancipating the African voice and showcasing African leadership as being on par with the rest of the world.’ Furthermore the broader scope of humanity and freedom for all should be considered when talking about humanity and freedom and to view these terms in the broadest possible sense, beyond cultural, ethnic and racial confines. ([www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za))

The names of the included leaders to date are:

South Africans:

Stephen Bantu Biko (1946-1977)  
King Cetshwayo (1826-1884)  
Yusuf Mohammed Dadoo (1909-1983)  
Abram Louis Fischer (1908-1975)  
Helen Beatrice May Joseph (1905-1992)  
Moses Maune Kotane (1905-1978)  
Chief Albert John Luthuli (1898-1967)  
Regent Queen Manthantisi (c.1781-1836)  
John Beaver Marks (1903-1972)  
King Moshoeshoe I(c.1786-1870)  
Lillian Masediba Ngoyi (1911-1980)  
King Shaka (1787-1828)  
Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe (1924-1978)  
Oliver Reginald Tambo (1917-1993)

Continental:

Amilcar Lopes Cabral (1924-1973) Guinea-Bissauan, agricultural engineer, writer, thinker  
Samora Moises Machel (1933-1986) Mozambique president (1975-1986)  
John Garang de Maboir (1945-2005) Sudanese politician and leader  
Antonio Agostinho Neto (1922-1979) Angolan president (1975-1979)  
Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972) Ghanaian president (1960-1966)  
Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922-1999) Tanzanian president (1964-1985)  
Thomas Sankara (1949-1987) Burkinese military captain, Marxist revolutionary, President of Burkino Faso (1983-1987)

International

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963) American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author  
Ernesto 'Che' Guevara de la Serna (1928-1967) Argentinian Marxist revolutionary, guerrilla leader, military theorist  
Francois Dominique Toussaint Louverture (1743-1803) Leader of Haitian revolution

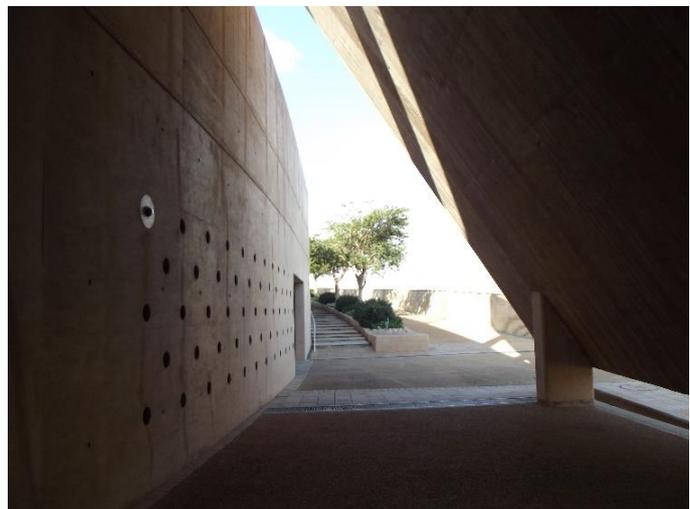
While twenty four names of approved leaders are currently listed, it seems the Gallery exhibition accommodates only seven at any given time along with an explanatory banner indicating the criteria for inclusion in the Gallery. The exhibit takes the form of red and black roof hung banners with a picture, year of birth and death and a significant quote of the featured leader on the banner. (Figure 52). The temporary nature of the exhibits seem at odds with the solid structure of the building. Instead of educating and informing the visitor, the lack of explanation and information relating to each leader's life and achievements, diminishes their importance and leaves the visitor with a distinct lack of insight into their inclusion in the Gallery. The

assumption that the viewer would be familiar with the biographical details of all the leaders listed or whose banners are displayed is short sighted. It could be said that this is particularly true of the names of the International and Continental leaders. Even if a leader's name is familiar to the visitor, exactly why they are included as having 'brought about qualitative leaps in the struggle for humanity and freedom' needs an explanation given that the inclusion of names of leaders that some visitors might not consider 'exemplary role models' worthy of inclusion on the basis of the given criteria. As with the Wall of Names, inclusion in the Gallery of Leaders is an ongoing process of scrutiny and validation by the Freedom Park Trust. Since his death on December 5, 2013, Nelson Mandela would be the next obvious inclusion on the Gallery's list.

The building itself is a sweeping semi-circular concrete bunker, burial chamber or symbolic mausoleum, built into the site, that in combination with the Sanctuary encloses the amphitheatre, lake and eternal flame, to form an oval footprint resembling a womb. The Gallery is lit by soft down lighters and natural light from a continuous roof light at the apex and several alcove windows that frame views towards Pretoria. Large concrete columns reach up at an acute angle to hold up the slanting concrete roof that is externally faced in stone to further embed it into the site and reinforce the connection to the Great Zimbabwe Enclosure. (Figure 52).



**Figure 53:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. *Freedom Park: S'khumbuto: Gallery of Leaders.* Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 54:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. *Freedom Park: S'khumbuto: Gallery of Leaders.* Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

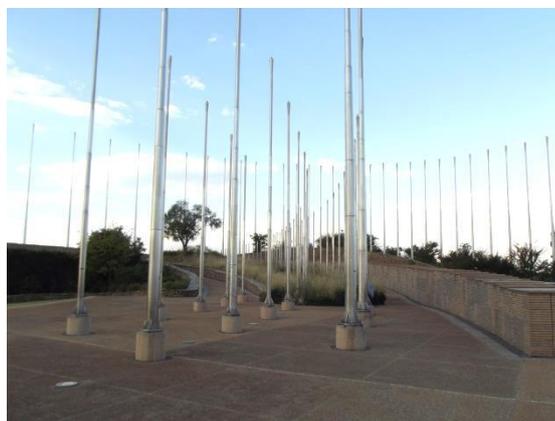
The use of unfinished concrete gives the building a feeling of permanence and strength while the columns provide stability and support, qualities symbolically embodied in the stature of the named leaders. The cool of the roughly finished concrete contrasts with the warmth of the smooth highly polished dark wooden floor that adds to the tomb like interior. It could be

interpreted that the Gallery symbolically entombs the images and by extension the spirits of the leaders. (Figure 54).

The Gallery of Leaders also functions as a ceremonial space. On the 14 June 2013 the exhumed remains of ten MK veterans were handed over to their families for burial by the Missing Persons Task Team (MPTT) that was set up by the National Prosecuting Authority on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This process has not been without problems with incorrect remains being handed to families on previous occasions, but DNA has ensured that this has been rectified and mistaken identities less likely to occur in the future. The importance of a ceremony like this for the families has been given added value by taking place in the Gallery of Leaders, symbolically amongst the spirits of revered Leaders whose names are included in the Gallery.

As with the Sanctuary, no seating has been provided for visitors and the lack of permanent exhibits with very little explanation, suggests a brief walkthrough with no encouragement or reason to linger longer than it is necessary to read the brief text on the exhibits.

### ***S'khumbuto: Reeds:***



**Figure 55: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. Freedom Park: *S'khumbuto: Reeds*. Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**

The imposing ascending steel poles, define the rear edge of the *S'khumbuto* and form the most striking visual marker, especially at night and are known as Reeds (Figure 55). Reeds are used to define space and provide enclosure while connecting the earth and heaven and symbolically the nation and spirits of people that have sacrificed their lives. (Loots 2006:35). ‘The references to reeds/stems from the more specific Zulu story of creation by the God of the Sky, *Mvelinqanqi*,

or by his praise name *nKulunkulu*, who creates, earth, sky, water and all living things. Mankind emerged from the reeds or from a hole in the ground through a process representing the sprouting of reeds. (Jethro: n.d.). The further importance of the reeds is that they are ‘a conduit between earth and the ancestors and signify the emergence of new life.’ (Morojele 2008:69). The reeds therefore also symbolise the rebirth of the South African nation as well as a nation moving forward. (Marschall 2010:226)

***Mveledzo*: (Venda word meaning ‘success/progress’)**



**Figure 56: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. Freedom Park: *Mveledzo*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**



**Figure 57: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. Freedom Park: *Mveledzo*. Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**

The *Mveledzo* consists of a spiral path and forms a commemorative journey linking the different elements of the park together.

This commemorative journey not only links the visitor with all the elements of Freedom Park but also provides the opportunity for the visitor to experience the emotional and spiritual symbolism of each space with punctuations along the way for reflection and introspection. The route to the *Isivivane* from the Sanctuary, Gallery of Leaders and Wall of Names and back, is particularly relevant as the path provides views towards the Union Buildings, the seat of power of the past and present, the UNISA buildings as the symbolic connection to intellectual power, and the Voortrekker Monument, the most prominent and constant cultural reminder of a divided past but now, in a sense, a cultural partner (Figure 57). The objective of the *Mveledzo* (Figure 56) is also to provide the visitor with emotional relief from what could be traumatic or overwhelming experiences of the other elements of the Park. The gently undulating serpentine walkway

provides a symbolic journey from trauma and division to possible unity, rebirth, reconciliation and celebration. Whether the desired monumental fulfilment can be achieved or a state of monumental fatigue is the reality, is entirely dependent on the visitors own ‘live action’ experience of each element and their interpretation and conversion of these individual experiences into meaningful closure and reconciliation.

***Mveledzo: Tivo***

The *Tivo* (Figures 58, 59), or Origin provides a secluded and tranquil breakaway area near the culmination of the *Mveledzo* route, allowing for final reflection and symbolic rebirth before the completion of the Freedom Park experience. Once again the stone construction makes strong references to Great Zimbabwe, in this instance the conical tower, a universal form which has also been utilised in the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication in Kliptown and the Northern Cape Legislature building in Kimberley.



**Figure 58: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2004-2006. *Freedom Park: Tivo*, Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**



**Figure 59: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA) 2004-2006. *Freedom Park: Tivo*, Salvokop, Pretoria (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**

Ethnographically, Aspinall (2000:120, 121) explains that the conical tower has been interpreted as a symbol of the grain bins used to store grain and crops and also as symbols of tribute and authority. In mythology, the grain bin is interpreted as a symbol of both male and female fertility, while on a cosmological level, the conical tower symbolises the provision of crops for the fields and on a biological level, the provision of children and could also refer to Divine strength, God often referred to as the ‘builder of towers’. Aspinall (2000:121) concludes that the ancestors of Great Zimbabwe, as builders of towers are associated with God, as the ultimate

“builder of towers” and are therefore a symbol of the power and strength of the founding fathers and the creativity of God. ‘They bring together in one structure the significance of the ancestors, God, fertility and the social and biological roles of men and women.’ The *Tivo* also consists of a tranquil pool of water and like the water cascade at the *Isivivane* and surrounding the Sanctuary, represents the necessity and value of water to life and as a symbol of cleansing. The *Tivo* then can be seen as a place of symbolic spiritual rebirth, a place to remember the ancestors as founding fathers and God as the ultimate power of authority.

***Moshate:* (Sepedi/Setswana word meaning ‘palace’)**

The *Moshate* is a high-level hospitality suite for presidential guests and signing of treaties etc. The *Moshate* is not accessible to visitors.

***Uitspanplek:***

*Uitspanplek:* An Afrikaans word meaning ‘place of relaxation.’ A picnic site.

***Vhuawelo:* (A Venda word meaning ‘nesting place’)**

*Vhuawelo:* A venda word whose direct translation is ‘nesting place’ Serves a similar purpose as a labyrinth. According to the Freedom Park website ([www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za)) the *Vhuawelo* is a ‘peaceful garden and walkway; an ideal space for meditation, self-discovery, healing and spiritual contemplation. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path.’ It forms part of the //hapo museum but is still under construction.

The stated function of Freedom Park is to ‘unify a nation and to speak on behalf of the nation’ but as Janse van Rensburg (2009:45) points out, ‘the architectural clues indicate that the majority African Traditional belief construct has been singled out to achieve this unification.’ The exclusiveness, especially with the Wall of Names and exclusion of Eurocentric symbols negates the goals of reconciliation and nation building and the atmosphere and spirituality that the park wishes to convey is what is commonly known as “invented history”. The political decision to establish Freedom Park on Salvokop which has no historical or anthropological basis has resulted in created, invented and enforced symbolism. (Labuschagne 2010:122). With no historical link to the site, what is lacking in Freedom Park ‘is the link between memory and

place; commemorative monuments serve to tie memories to certain places.’ (Marschall 2006:182). Mare (2007:45) quotes Rodney Warwick (2007:10) who stated: ‘from the beginning, Freedom Park's official rationale is a confusing bundle of historical non-sequiturs, inconsistencies, myths and blatant political bias.’ He argues further that ‘rather than embracing a diversity of viewpoints, the park’s mission enfolds the nations’ distinct experiences and symbols into one coherent narrative of the struggle for humanity.’ According to Bremner (2007:85 in Meskell and Scheermeyer 2008:161) Freedom Park and new memory works ‘effectively sutures previously antagonistic, competing, conflicting, non-compatible histories which are brought together and rewritten.’ It can also be argued however that ‘colonial rule in South Africa alienated many of its citizens, but postcolonial commemoration, as in the case of Freedom Park, leaves many with the feeling of no longer being at home in their country.’ (Mare 2007:45). The popularity of Freedom Park for international tourists is that it is ‘likely to be attractive as an alluring, “authentically” African monument, associated with the mystery of traditional healing rituals and ancestral spirits.’ (Marschall 2010:237).

If as McLeod (2000:69, 70) states that ‘a sense of mutual, national belonging is manufactured by the performance of various narratives, rituals and symbols’ then the Freedom Park and //hapo museum as the flagship monument and museum for a democratic South Africa should be central to the invention of the traditions and narration of a national history that includes all South Africans. This desire for a uniting commemorative place and a national history narrative at Freedom Park, however can have the opposite effect as ‘by attempting to accommodate all it may end up being meaningful to few’ (Marschall 2010:225). Despite the democratic, transparent and consultative manner of the evolution of the Park, Marschall (2010:239, 240) points out that Freedom Park ‘has not been conceptualised in such a way as to allow for multiple interpretations.’ This is especially true of the //hapo museum exhibits. As a communicative medium, ‘architecture is not only responsible for shaping collective memories, but also provides potential for the expression of new identities.’, furthermore ‘the extent to which landmark architecture is truly representative depends upon its potential to include a range of positions and give voice to those identities such buildings symbolise.’ (Jones 2006:562). The success of any monument says Huyssen (1995:255), has to be ‘measured by the extent which it negotiates the multiple discourses of memory provided by electronic media to which the monument as solid matter provides an alternative.’

That not all South Africans are represented in the various elements of the Freedom Park and if the historical narratives in the epochs of the //hapo museum are seen to be biased, then the stated

aim to unify the nation will not be successful. Like the Voortrekker Monument, the Freedom Park precinct may be seen as just another political monument that will have to be reinvented in the future when the political order changes. That Freedom Park has been conceptualised to accommodate future modifications in accordance with potential shifts in socio-political values and that the Park has the potential to adjust to changing interpretations is noteworthy, but until this happens ‘a celebratory struggle history with a specific purpose, symbolising the universality of connections among South Africans of all backgrounds and ages’, (Marschall 2010:240) will remain a dream and not a reality. I suspect that the contradictions do not just exist in the nation alone as Wally Serote maintains, but are cast in the concrete and stone of the elements.

### **Freedom Park and the international memorial field: the fusion of sculpture, landscape, architecture and design in the memory site of trauma**

Huyssen (2003:96), argues that the narrative of memory projects are ‘invariably located in a space somewhere between the global and the local.’ The expanded memorial field of which he speaks ‘involves the crossing of borders, not only with regard to artistic medium, but also in relation to geographies, politics and the discourses of traumatic memory themselves.’ The *lieux de memoire* of Nora, today function in a field altered by globalization. (Huyssen 2003:97). Furthermore, ‘print and image media contribute liberally to the vertiginous swirl of memory discourses that circulate globally and locally.’ His hypothesis is that ‘human rights activism in the world today depends very much on the depth and breadth of memory discourses in the public media.’ Memory discourses have crossed borders, entering into a network of cross-national comparisons, and creating what he calls a ‘global culture of memory.’ (Huyssen 2003:95). Memory politics have become part of the legitimacy of regimes today and ‘monuments, memorials, public sculptures, commemorative sites and museums are being created at an accelerated pace the world over.’ (Huyssen 2003:94).

The older 19<sup>th</sup> century style of figurative sculpture on a pedestal so prevalent in many cities that led to Austrian novelist Robert Musil to observe ‘nothing may be as invisible as a monument’ (Huyssen 2003:109), and is relevant in South Africa today with the proliferation of statues, many of them of Nelson Mandela, that have been erected in cities around South Africa. The continued erection of sculptural figures on a pedestal in South Africa can be attributed to the policy of levelling the memorial field where new heroes still need representation in what could still be

perceived as less representative of struggle icons. But there is also evidence that the South African memorial and monument field is conforming to an international field that according to Huyssen (2003:109), this older practice has been replaced by the ‘preferred construction of memory sites in the expanded field that combine sculpture, landscaping, architecture and design and their incorporation into an urban fabric.’ To maintain a visible presence in the urban public sphere, aesthetic appeal, formal construction and persuasive execution remain essential elements.

While South African designers and architects may deny that their work emulates any international models, Marschall (2006:170) correctly argues several compelling reasons that dispel this denial. Firstly sculptors, architects and designers are ‘influenced by their formal and informal training, by their personal or mediated experiences of contemporary and historical examples encountered in their surroundings or elsewhere in the world’ and by ‘current discourses and international trends in art and design.’ Secondly, ‘the accessibility of international air travel facilitates first-hand experience’ and monument designers would ‘commonly travel to other countries in search of inspiration.’ Thirdly ‘modern information technology allows images of famous memorials from all around the world to be obtained at the touch of a button.’ There is a ‘proliferation of glossy magazines and academic journals in the field of art, architecture and design’ that ‘disseminate images of new commemorative structures in the global arena.’

Features of international museums and memorials are according to Huyssen (2003:105), ‘creatively appropriated and transformed’ from the larger context of the international memorial field to local buildings, memorial sites and monuments. He uses the word *creatively* ‘for it is not imitation that is at issue, but rather a new form of mimicry that acknowledges how local cultural discourses, be they political or aesthetic, are increasingly inflected by global conditions and practices.’ Ross (2004) in his personal communications with Marschall (2010:116), observes that ‘much of the power of museums, monuments and memorials rests in how “generalizable” they are.’ ‘Designers of commemorative monuments make frequent use of images and iconographic formulae which – through extensive repetition and a long process of cultural diffusion – have become instantly recognisable.’ Rankin (2013:96) concurs: that ‘gateways, standing stones and memorial columns, the honorific inscription of names, the purifying effect of water and the solace of eternal flames’ drawn from memorials the world over are characteristic in many post-apartheid South African heritage sites.

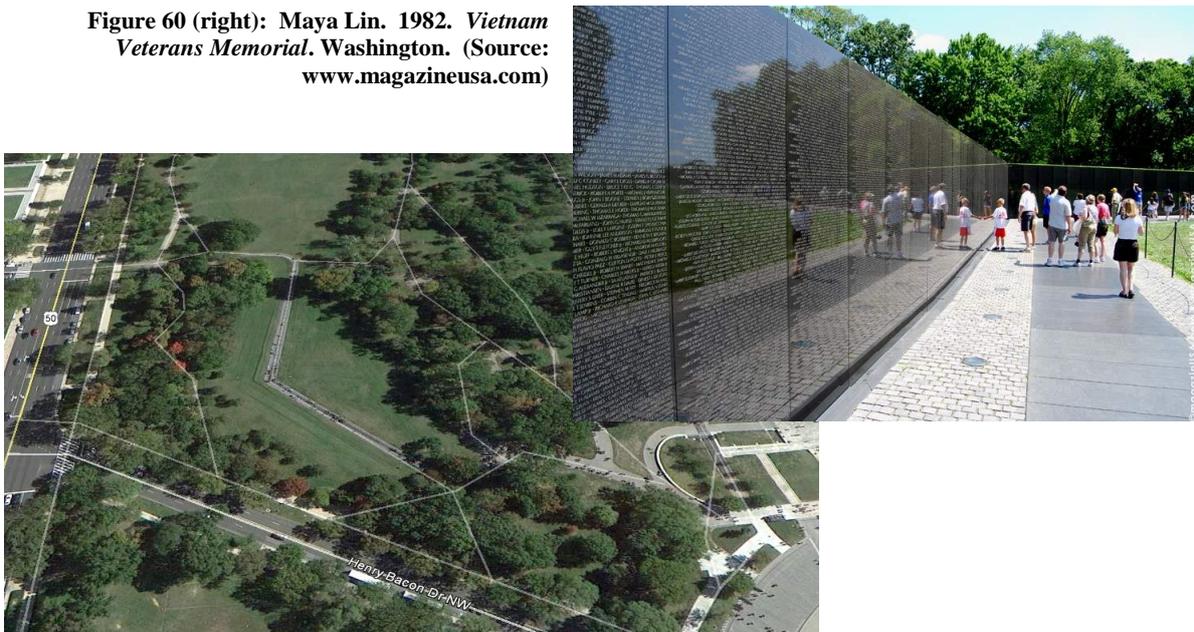
A common characteristic of these international monuments and memorials has been the emergence of a complete experience through the addition of a museum, visitors centre,

interpretation centre, research centre or similar facility that enhances the visitors' experience of the site through interactive exhibits that contextualise and explain the circumstances that informed the reasons for the erection of the monument or memorial.

### **The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial and Freedom Park's Wall of Names**

An analysis of international precedents of these particular types of memorial sites reveals that the architects of Freedom Park and //hapo museum had anticipated the way the memorial field had changed and included these changes in their design. Parallels can therefore be drawn between the design of several of these international precedents and the elements of Freedom Park and //hapo museum. Perhaps the most prominent of the memorials that influenced some design aspects of Freedom Park was Maya Lin's 1982 Vietnam Veteran's Memorial (VVM) in Washington. There are two reasons for these comparisons: Firstly, is the obvious influence of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Wall of Names at Freedom Park. Completed in 1982 near the Lincoln Memorial in Constitutional Gardens and in 1984 a figurative sculpture of three soldiers by realist sculptor Frederick Hart, and a flag both facing the VVM from a distance of about thirty yards, were added.

**Figure 60 (right):** Maya Lin. 1982. *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. Washington. (Source: [www.magazineusa.com](http://www.magazineusa.com))



**Figure 61:** Maya Lin. 1982. *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. Washington. (Source: Google Earth: 2013)

The VVM ‘consists of two walls of black granite set into the earth at an angle of 125 degrees. Together the walls form an extended V almost 500 feet in length, tapering in both directions from a height of approximately 10 feet at the central hinge.’ (Sturken 1991:119). The monument ‘delicately balances between effacing and embracing the earth – it cuts into the earth, yet it strikes a harmony with the terrain.’ (Sturken 1991:121/122). (Figure 61). Before it was built the memorial was labelled ‘the black gash of shame’, ‘a degrading ditch’, ‘a tombstone’, and other derogatory terms (Sturken 1991:122), but the metaphor of the healing wound has prevailed, ‘the memorial is seen as representing a wound in the process of healing, one that will leave a smooth scar in the earth.’ (Sturken 1991:132). Maya Lin wrote in her book *Boundaries* ‘I imagined taking a knife and cutting into the earth, opening it up, an initial violence and pain that time would heal.’ Pearson (2007:158).

The VVM, with its placement in West Potomac Park provides a ‘generic violation’ of the stately white Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument and Jefferson Memorial that impose on the landscape and draw attention to themselves by means of their size and emulation of ancient architectural forms. (Blair et al. 1991:275). So too Freedom Park with its positioning in opposition to the large scale, imposing Voortrekker Monument provides a ‘generic violation’ that similarly embraces the earth and strikes harmony with the terrain. Similarities can also be drawn between the reading of the combined elements of the VVM and the combined Freedom Park, Voortrekker Monument precinct. Blair et al. (1991:281) argue that a reading of the combined elements of the statue/flag and wall ‘constitute the outcome of political compromise’ and ‘vouchsafe the cultural legitimacy of two opposed points of view about the Vietnam war and commemoration of its veterans.’ ‘The two components oppose one another in what they say about the war.’

So too Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument it can be said was the result of political compromise, even negotiation, together they provide cultural opposing views on South Africa’s diverse history and how to commemorate victims and heroes of its many struggles. Just as the combined elements of the VVM ‘argues for numerous readings’, ‘embraces contradictory interpretations’, ‘both comforts and refuses to comfort’, ‘provides closure and denies it’, and ‘does not offer a unitary message but multiple conflicting ones’. (Blair et al. 1991:281), so too Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument provides visitors with opportunities for numerous readings and conflicting and contradictory interpretations and like the VVM speak agonistically and do not add up to a correct or synthetic interpretation. Applying this political compromise of the VVM to South Africa’s wider policy of placing new monuments and memorials in

opposition to older ones is sound, and that over time, the legitimacy of multiple readings, conflicting and contradictory interpretations will be the desired result.

The 58 132 chronologically listed names on the walls ‘begin on the right-hand side of the hinge and continues to the end of the right wall; it then begins again at the far end of the left wall and continues to the centre again.’ (Sturken 1991:119). The significance of this arrangement is that the last person who died in the conflict is listed next to the first person who died, creating a continuous loop but also provides a point of closure. This chronological listing as opposed to alphabetical ensured individuality where ethnicity and cultural entities of an alphabetical listing were subsumed by the American melting pot. (Sturken 1991:127). The power of the memorial lies in its emphasis on the ‘worth of the individual.’ But at the same time the ‘structural integrity of the wall unifies as a collective those who died or were listed as missing in Vietnam, but the unity disintegrates in the face of the symbolic potency in each name.’ (Figure 60). The memorial therefore ‘preserves reference to the veterans as individuals *and* as a group.’ (Blair et al. 1991:278). This is also true to an extent on the Wall of Names at Freedom Park, where certain groups of victims are listed together chronologically and individually within their group.

Similarities between the Vietnam veterans and the South African Defence Force (SADF) personnel can be made. Both involved conscripts recruited to fight in unpopular conflicts in foreign countries. Where the VVM has succeeded in providing veterans with a place to congregate, and from which to speak, unfortunately the Wall of Names at Freedom Park, by excluding SADF veterans who died in various conflicts between 1961 and 1994, has vilified them further and has excluded them as contributors to the ‘new’ South Africa. Those who have written the history for Freedom Park have branded them complicit in upholding the apartheid regime and fighting to defeat the struggle for liberation. As Baines (2009:331) argues, ex-conscriptionists do not speak with a single or cohesive voice, they are not a homogeneous group and when the initial request by veteran’s organisations for their inclusion on the Wall of Names was rejected the fight was taken up by the Afrikaner interest group Afriforum, the trade union Solidarity and singer, activist and SADF veteran Steve Hofmeyr who erected an alternative memorial on the access road to Salvokop on 16 January 2007.

The Freedom Park Trust has remained firm that they will not be included which has led to the Wall of Remembrance being constructed in their honour at the Voortrekker Monument. This Wall of Remembrance is commendable, however as a monument that can hardly be considered neutral, the Voortrekker Monument may not be seen as an appropriate place of mourning or remembrance to all surviving members of the deceased families, one thinks specifically of

English-speaking South Africans. This gesture could also be interpreted as resignation to the fact that their names will never be included on the Wall of Names at Freedom Park in the future: exclusion and marginalisation from Freedom Park's Wall of Names which has ironically been promoted as a national place of mourning and reconciliation has been finalised.

As Risen (2008:49) points out, the VVM has altered the way we interact with memorials: 'despite – or because of – its cool abstraction, visitors have rendered the memorial an active space; every day, hundreds of people make rubbings of the names of lost relatives and friends, while some 110 000 items have been left at its base.' The desire to have the visitors to the Wall of Names emulate those to the VVM would seem an obvious one but has not transpired at the Wall of Names thus far. The almost unimaginable taxonomic problems of the 58 000 names on the VVM in which remains were often unidentifiable and errors of at least fourteen and as many as thirty-eight men have been found alive, with names to be continuously added as the verifying process continues. A similar problem exists with the Wall of Names where verification of remains continues, missing persons have not been located and names of who deserves to be included is an ongoing public participation and contentious process.

Secondly, the announcement in 2008 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Centre, a visitors centre designed by Polshek Partnership to open in 2012 to 'enhance the visitor experience – to add depth and context' for the annual 4 million visitors, (Risen 2008:49) serves to confirm the necessity for the //hapo as an added experience to the abstract and symbolic elements of Freedom Park, especially for future generations who may have forgotten key aspects of the Struggle narrative. Risen (2008:50) gives several reasons for the inclusion of the visitor's centre at the VVM: More than 40% of visitors to the VVM are too young to remember the war resulting in a less poignant experience.

A cultural shift where experience is everything today resulted in the limits and discomfort with aesthetic abstraction and the contemplation it requires, but which 'allows different people with different identities to see something their own way, and through it give expression to their own ideas.' For anyone under 30 Vietnam is a fashionable place to visit 'not a painful cultural memory – let alone a lodestone for war and remembrance.' Included in the centre will be 75ft. high plasma screens, a timeline of Vietnam-era events and a selection of medals, fatigues, and letters left at the memorial every year. But the main challenge according to Risen (2008:50) is that the centre will 'render an official interpretation of the wall, and of the war' thereby 'handing the wrong people a powerful propaganda tool.' And as with the VVM, the limitations of abstraction in the Freedom Park elements, negate the multiple ways that visitors should

experience and interpret its various abstract and symbolic elements and can also be seen as the dilemma of the //hago too, of presenting an 'official' narrative of the Struggle to new generations that have no experience of apartheid or the Struggle and who perhaps just don't care.

### **The Monument to the Victims of State Terror and Freedom Park**

It is the Monument to the Victims of State Terror in Buenos Aires, Argentina that can be compared in many ways to the Freedom Park. In Argentina between 1976 and 1983 almost 30 000 people went missing during the military regime but only 12 000 were officially documented. A tribute to these victims, Alberto Varas' Monument to the Victims of State Terror in Memory Park, Buenos Aires was opened in 2008. The Memory Park, a rebuilt landfill, forms one part of a larger site with the Nature Park, two half-moon shaped sites resembling a butterfly and connected by a future Plaza de la Concordia consisting of offices and a café. The monument (Figure 62) takes the form of a polished concrete zigzag ramp cut into the grassy slope which rises from the access plaza. Four, noncontinuous walls of gray Patagonian porphyry stelae located on only one side of the sloping walkway have been inscribed with the names and ages of victims listed chronologically and alphabetically. The names have been inscribed on removable plaques allowing for future names to be added.

As Huyssen (2003:104) states, 'naming names is an age-old and venerable strategy of memorialization', and the Monument to Victims of State Terror, the naming is not of the traditional heroic kind, heroes of war or martyrs of the fatherland but ordinary people 'who had a social vision at odds with that of the ruling elites.' While Freedom Park's Wall of Names was expanded to include war dead, the names on the Struggle wall were similarly ordinary people, students and workers whose vision 'shared by many young people across the globe at the time, that led to imprisonment, torture, rape and death.' (Huyssen 2003:104). A separate programme of 17 large thematic sculptures to be placed around the site was announced and so far seven have been completed. (Martignoni 2012:89). The only building in the park is the Centre for Information and Arts and provides space for temporary exhibitions and a library dedicated to the theme of memory. The building is recessed into the earth to keep a low profile in the landscape. (Martignoni 2012:95).

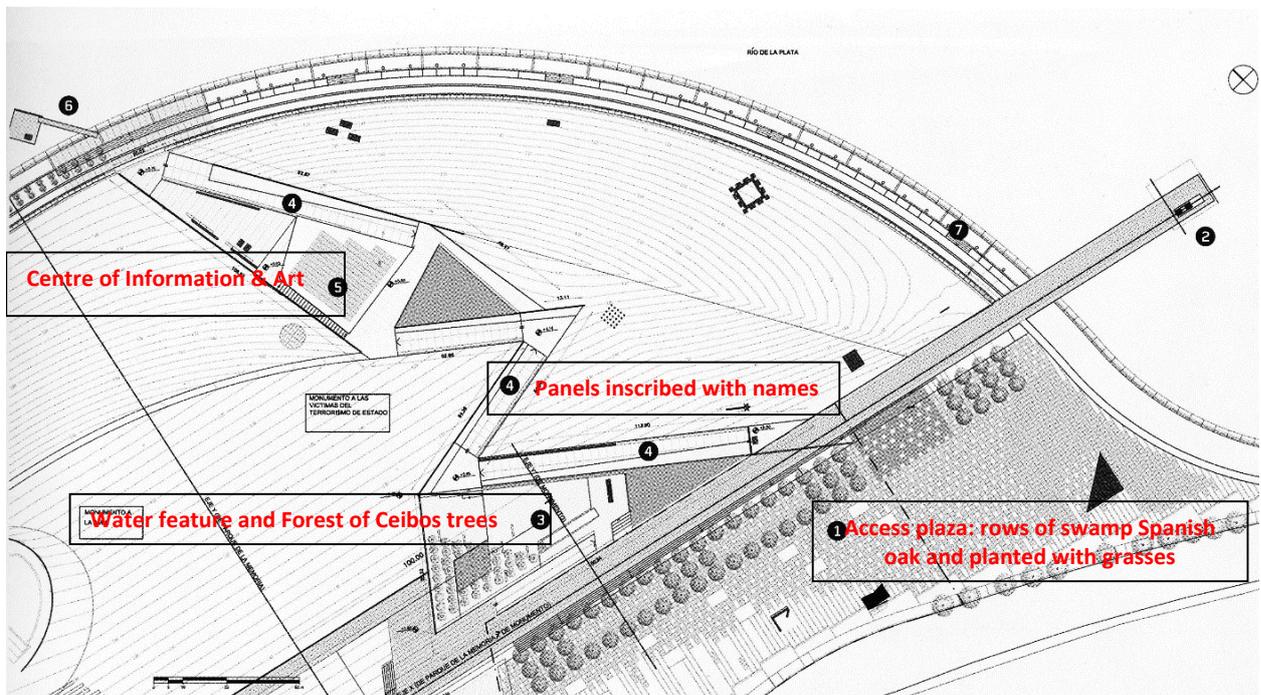


Figure 62: Alberto Varas. 2008. *The Monument to the Victims of State Terror*. Buenos Aires, Argentina. (Source: Landscape Architecture April 2012 p.87).

There are several comparisons that can be made between Freedom Park and The Monument to the Victims of State Terror in Buenos Aires. Both were constructed in response to national trauma. As with Freedom Park, the identification process of victims on the Monument to Victims of State Terror has not been completed. Both are what Huyssen (2003:101) calls the ‘residue and reminder of a shameful and violent national past.’ According to Huyssen (2003:101), ‘many of the most compelling projects to nurture and to secure public memory involve intervention in urban space.’ This is also true of both memorial sites, erected on prominent sites in their respective capitals. Varas’s design was ‘informed by his understanding of architecture as part of a complex composition, not as an arrangement of objects on the land.’ (Martignoni 2012:86). But as Huyssen argues, such monuments must ‘function as part of a network of urban relations, rather than standing disconnected from city life and ultimately referring only to itself.’ The fraught question according to Huyssen (2003:101), is how to represent historical trauma, how to find a persuasive means of public remembrance, how to construct monuments that evade the fate of imminent invisibility. It is in the fusion of sculpture, landscape, architecture and design that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Monument to the Victims of State Terror and Freedom Park that will ultimately prevent this imminent visibility.

Both the Monument to the Victims of State Terror and Freedom Park sites have drawn on other global icons of memory culture to commemorate their respective national traumas. In the

Buenos Aires memorial, the design elements of Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM) and Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin have been 'creatively appropriated and transformed', while in the Freedom Park design elements from Maya Lin's VVM and Great Zimbabwe have been incorporated in its design, while the //hapo museum has also taken its inspiration from Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum as well as Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao. The Monument to Victims of State Terror is 'cut into the earth rather than rising above it as a building.' The zigzag of the discontinuous walls as opposed to Maya Lin's continuous angled walls suggests 'it yields the additional emphatic sense of a wound to the earth or a scar to the body of the nation much more than the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.' (Huysen 2003:107).

Using Greenblatts analysis of the VVM, comparisons can be made between the VVM, The Monument to the Victims of State Terror, and Freedom Park. Greenblatt (1996:36) describes the dream of the monument is 'to inscribe the name forever in the earth', that it is not enough to see a photograph of the memorial but its power is obtained from 'what it means to descend gradually below the level of the ground and to see the names cut into the lustrous polished stone.' He also describes the VVM as a path, 'it describes, it invites, it requires a movement, a narrative progress.' One of the benefits of the monument says Greenblatt, is this marking of paths, 'places to go, places to avoid, routes to safety.' Both of these characteristics of the VVM can be said to be inherent in The Monument to the Victims of State Terror and the Wall of Names at Freedom Park and the other elements of Freedom Park as a whole. It remains to be seen if the resonances of Freedom Park with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and The Monument to Victims of State Terror 'will give rise to the same kind of moving popular dedications as the VVM, with family members depositing flowers, pictures, letters and candles near the names of those who lost their lives.' (Huysen 2003:108).

South Africa, like other countries in the developing world continues to emulate Western, especially American models of memorialization. Marschall (2006:169) speculates that

'South Africans feel drawn to these models because of their acknowledged fame, instantly recognisable iconic quality and symbolic power. These models represent the ultimate standard or benchmark, and they signify prestige and status, perhaps suggesting that through emulation of them, some of their power can be harnessed.'

This is not a new phenomenon as Marschall (2006:170) refers to Michalski's survey of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century monuments which included numerous examples of recycling of commemorative forms and concepts, even in monuments representing opposing ideological values. 'South Africa today utilises a monumental style of commemoration essentially associated with colonialism,

while simultaneously rejecting the political system it represents.’ (Marschall 2006:185). She confirms that most South African monuments appropriate Western commemorative forms but modify and adapt them to suit local needs, while Africa has a history of cannibalising Western cultural forms, which are creatively modified, adjusted and adapted to the needs of local communities. (Marschall 2006:185).

It has been discussed that the design of The Voortrekker Monument was influenced by the ‘creative appropriation’ of design elements of the *Volkschlachtdenkmal* Monument and to a lesser degree, Great Zimbabwe, confirming Marschall’s statement that this is not a new phenomenon in monument design, but the Voortrekker Monument has also adapted and changed by adding elements such as the research centre, a Garden of Remembrance and a remembrance wall for South African Defence Force soldiers and thus providing visitors with a complete experience and to ensure it has remained relevant in the changed monumental and memorial field.

While Marschall (2006:185) argues that Freedom Park investigated indigenous precolonial, rural traditionalist African culture, the Freedom Park precinct was ultimately designed in line with international trends by incorporating the //hapo museum as part of the site at the outset of the design and the inclusion of elements recognised internationally in other monuments and memorials such as the Wall of Names, pools of water and eternal flame and locally by referencing the stone architecture from Great Zimbabwe. She points out, the top management officials and project leaders from the Freedom Park Trust saw it necessary to undertake a number of exploratory trips to visit monuments, memorials and museums in Europe, the United States and other parts of the world to gather information and gain personal experience of state-of-the-art commemorative projects in the international arena which might prove useful for the conceptualisation of Freedom Park. (Marschall (2006:170). This would tend to confirm the notion that international examples are used as a standard and benchmark against which local monuments and memorials are compared and constructed.

### **THE //HAPO MUSEUM: THE MUSEUM AS MONUMENT AND MEMORIAL**

With the completion of the //hapo museum, the final phase of the Freedom Park precinct, this chapter focuses on the emergence of the museum as a utilitarian monument in the recent South African memorial field. I discuss the various museums that I believe are precedents for the //hapo museum and which explain why the museum has become a successful addition in the South African context, to the traditional monument and memorial of the bronze sculpture. In this chapter I also describe the historical background of the //hapo museum, its architectural development from conceptual boulders into a building and whether it conforms to Frampton's theory of Critical Regionalism. I also question whether, architecturally, it is just another Baudrillard monstrosity such as Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin and Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. I also discuss and analyse the museum exhibits and narrative of seven epochs in relation to Foucault's heterotopia. The exhibit of Body #1 and Body #2, which I found to be most disturbing but also more relevant and meaningful than all the other exhibits is discussed as a Lyodardian micronarrative within the larger meta narrative of the //hapo museum exhibits as well as a Foucauldian double heterotopia within the encompassing heterotopia of the //hapo museum. I also explain why I believe both Freedom Park and The Voortrekker Monument are Foucault heterotopias and will therefore always be excluding to some rather than inclusive to all.

#### **The museum as utilitarian monument: positioning //hapo museum within the South African context: precedents and prototypes**

As the period from 1994 to 2000 in South Africa was a time of reluctance to monumentalise, Herwitz (2010:238), maintains that 'social transition required a symbolic break from the monuments of the past, given their complicity in forms of hegemonic power conveyed through symbols like the Voortrekker Monument.' A hybridized style of monumentalization didn't emerge during this time and Africans in South Africa developed little interest in the culture of

monuments since ‘the landscape of monuments and styles of monumentalization have little to do with the majority Africans in the country’. The styles of monumentalization were written in the script of the settlers in that they spoke to the excluded majority only as confirmation of their exclusion.

The erection of many new statues and the building of several museums confirms Herwitz’s observation that ‘South Africa has now reclaimed the desire for the monumental, unlike many transitional democracies elsewhere, which have had enough of monuments it would seem.’ (Herwitz 2010:238). ‘Man’s urge to commemorate was supposed to have advanced beyond the building of monuments to the endowment of institutions dedicated to human betterment.’ (Elliott 1964:51) But apart from the many statues being erected, to its credit, the African National Congress government’s ‘current focus is the museum, which it sees as a monument to the struggle against apartheid. That museums honouring the struggle are now being designed and built is a sign that the new ruling party wishes to confirm its state power by monumentalizing its own past struggle.’ (Herwitz 2010:240).

Rankin (2013:95) observes that ‘it is telling that so many heritage projects in post-apartheid South Africa have included the development of museums, a reflection that a monument alone does not in itself seem sufficient when there is a need to tell stories anew and set the record straight.’ It could be said that museums functioning as monuments in post-apartheid South Africa has been a logical and more appropriate means of remembering and curating apartheid, and redressing the legacy of the past. The strategy of museums as institutions for healing the deep wounds inflicted by apartheid, was not an obvious solution according to Findley (2004:26), where the majority of the population was denied access to the nation’s museums, and where oral histories made up the bulk of memorialisation among the black population.

Williams (2007:8), quoted in Rankin (2013:96) says ‘the coalescing of the two (memorial and museum) suggests that there is an increasing desire to add both a moral framework to the narration of terrible historical events and more in-depth contextual explanations to commemorative acts.’ It would seem that the combination of an iconic building to house exhibits that reflect the histories of the immediate past that have been neglected, ignored or biased, has been a successful strategy which started with the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg. An analysis of the immediate historical origins of these museums and their contextual siting have, I believe influenced their design and provided the precedent for the development of the //hapo museum.

## The Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg (Mashabane Rose)

The story of the Apartheid Museum is absurd according to Bremner (2002:34) – conceived as part of their bid for a gambling licence for the Gold Reef City Casino, by Solly and Abe Krok, who made their fortune developing and selling skin lightening creams ‘to a nation where light skin was a precious cultural commodity.’ (Findley 2004:21). ‘It sits incongruously in a landscape otherwise devoted entirely to having fun – roller coaster ride, slot machines, takeaway chicken, foot-long suckers, dance spectacles and a themed mining town.’ (Bremner 2002:34). The unfortunate siting of the Mashabane Rose Apartheid Museum, which opened in 2001, in such close proximity to the Gold Reef City amusement park, casino and theme park resulted in a dilemma for the architects: ‘the gap between the air of amusement and entertainment and that of the contemplation of serious history’ and ‘how to separate the experience of the museum from the immediate landscape of pleasure.’ (Figures 63, 64).

Figure 63 right: Mashabane Rose. 2002. *Apartheid Museum*. Johannesburg. Plan. (Source: Architecture S.A. Nov/Dec. 2002 p.42)

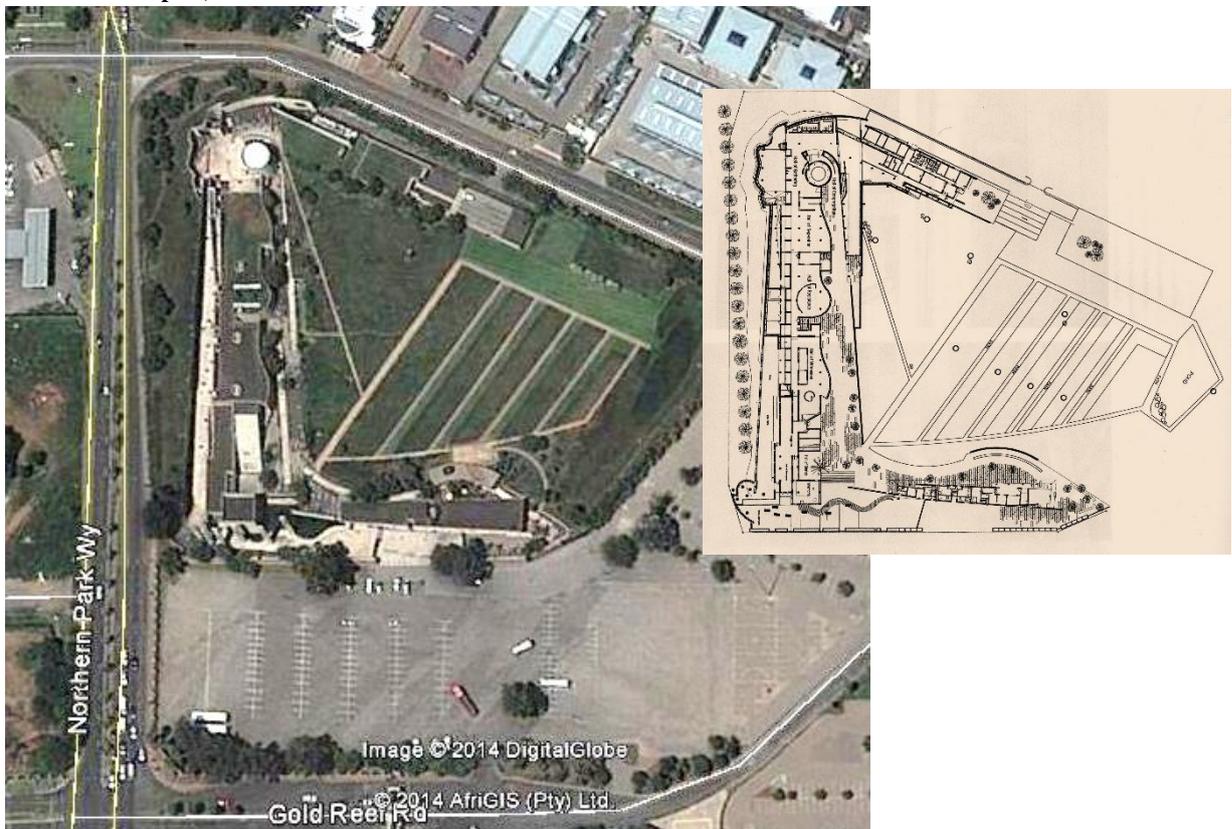


Figure 64 left: Mashabane Rose. 2002. *Apartheid Museum*. Johannesburg. (Source: Google Earth. 2014)

The architects were inspired by the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC which provided the prototype of ‘how architectural language might be deployed to create metaphoric spaces of oppression.’ ‘The architectural qualities of the spaces act in concert with the content to generate an almost visceral experience of events described in the display.’ In this regard, the Apartheid Museum itself became a prototype for other similar museums, where the narrative curatorial style reveals the impossibility of trauma and oppression representation but also the shortcomings in representation that ‘leaves much unsaid and many points of view unrepresented.’ (Findley 2004:27). Narrative apart, as Bremner (2002:43) concludes, ‘using the materiality, “thingness” of building, it has come to exemplify metaphorically the conditions and experiences it also represents.’ ‘The building does not simply provide spaces in which a particular framing of apartheid’s history is told. In a sense, it could be totally empty and still stand between apartheid’s memory and amnesia.’

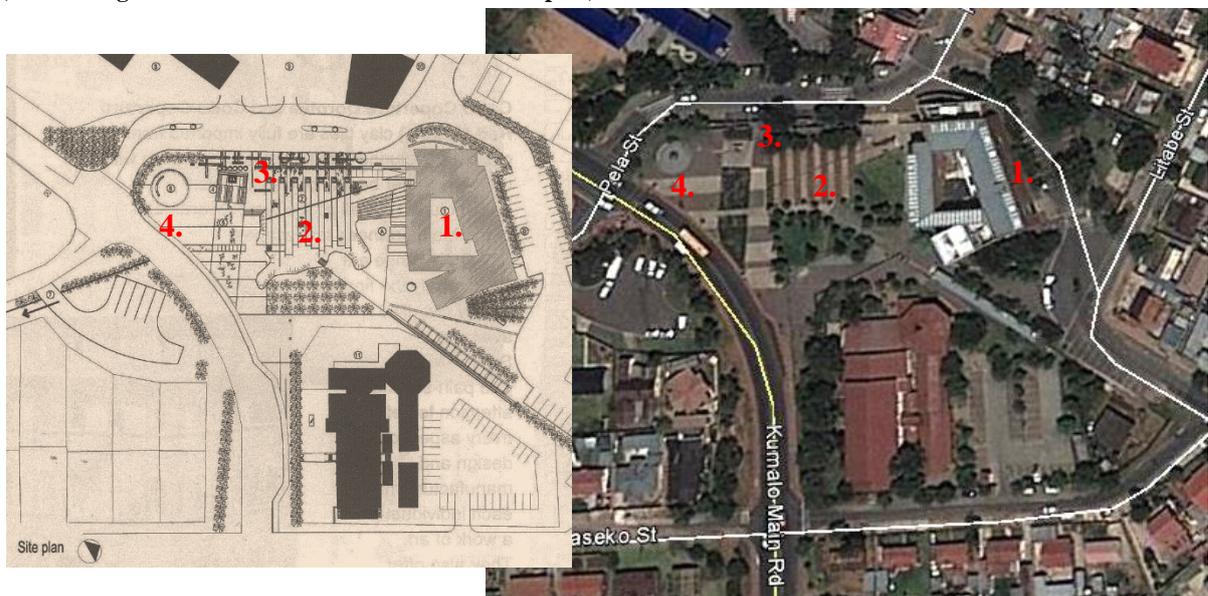
Several architectural strategies were used to extricate the museum from its paradoxical setting. The architects ‘have submerged it under an artificially constructed mound of earth and surrounded it in a packed stone wall.’ Its context has therefore been denied under a reconstructed world of ‘waving Highveld grasses, rocky outcrops, vast skies, mining headgear, underground stopes and exploited labour.’ (Bremner 2002:40). The utilisation of ‘enrefined, hard, neutral materials – red brick, steel, raw concrete – and intentionally crude detailing’ have created dungeon-like interior spaces that are ‘dull grey, sombre and devoid of natural light.’ (Bremner 2002:39). However successful the architects appear to have been in resolving the difficult siting of the museum, the inescapable reality of its setting is unavoidable and like the //hapo museum, confirms that there is no substitute for genuine historical, archaeological and cultural context.

### **Hector Pieterse Memorial Museum, Soweto, Johannesburg (Mashabane Rose)**

The beginnings of the museum can be traced to a display of photographs assembled to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Soweto uprising of 1976. The popularity of the exhibition and widespread community interest ‘called for something more permanent and distinguished.’ (Dubin 2009:201). The Hector Pieterse Memorial Museum was opened on June 16 2002 after long delays before the Soweto Heritage Trust sourced financing from Standard Bank, The Department of Environment and Tourism and the Johannesburg City

Council. Financing aside, local developers had earmarked the site for a hotel, retail centre and shebeen. Defending the site as an important place of heritage was successful and the museum went ahead. Situated on Kumalo Street, (Figure 65, 66), Orlando West it is two blocks away from the intersection of Moema and Vilikazi Streets where the actual shooting took place but the placing of the museum had to take into account the houses on the four corners of the intersection. The original Hector Pieteron memorial was laid in 1992 by the ANC Youth League on the island at the intersection of Moema and Vilikazi Streets but the museum is visually connected to the shooting site by an 800m line. (Reilly 2003:14). (Figure 65: 2)

**Figure 65 left. Mashabane Rose. 2002. *Hector Pieteron Memorial Museum*. Soweto, Johannesburg. Site plan. (Source: Digest of South African Architecture. 2003 p.32)**



**Figure 66 right: Mashabane Rose. 2002. *Hector Pieteron Memorial Museum*. Soweto, Johannesburg. (Source: Google Earth. 2014)**

**Legend: 1. Museum. 2. Site line towards actual shooting site 800m away. 3. Memorial landscape. 4. Boulder.**

As Dubin (2009:205) points out, ‘the relationship between social memory and factuality is always dodgy and selective.’ Hector Pieteron became immortalized as the first fatality of the extended struggle, the symbol for the ruthlessness and cruelty of South Africa’s power structure (Dubin 2009:200), when in fact a boy named Hastings Ndlovu warrants that distinction. ‘But no photo of Ndlovu’s lifeless body was broadcast across the globe. Pieteron has been granted immortality because a keen photographer’s eye froze him in time. *He’s* become the icon, irrespective of the actual facts of that day.’ (Dubin 2009:204). Marschall (2010:113/114) argues that the memorial’s exclusive focus on Hector Pieteron was justified for several reasons: ‘the boy constitutes the epitome of innocence, vulnerability and blamelessness, and he is free from any suggestion of aggression and violence, which might contaminate the story of the protestors’

morally elevated cause.’ It is however the internationally recognised photograph by Sam Nzima that has conferred iconic status on Hector Pieterse. ‘The museum has chosen to sustain a mistaken impression in order to tell an important story.’ This strategy enabled a ‘specific, named individual to powerfully personify a much larger event.’ (Dubin 2009:205). The memorial ‘condenses emotions and projects them into one person whose suffering represents that of many others.’ (Marschall 2010:114).

‘The materials used for the public spaces, as well as for the external and internal elements of the museum, are as closely matched to the surrounds as possible.’ (Reilly 2003:14). ‘The texture of the memorial is informed by street imagery such as cobblestones, gravel, slate, and curbs. The emphasis was on smallish elements, human scale, and the usage of predominantly natural materials, notably rocks and water.’ (Marschall 2010:115). The use of the Soweto context to maximise the exhibition is according to Reilly (2003:15) more effective and telling than the visuals on the wall. Basic and unadorned materials of steel, brick, glass, concrete and stone, integrated with the physical landscape, the museum ‘engages with its environment, powerfully linking history, memory and place.’ (Dubin 2009:200). Marschall (2010:118) describes the museum’s ‘face’ as ‘strangely anthropomorphic’ and ‘turned towards the memorial.’ ‘Its red brick architecture takes its cue from the surrounding township.’

The windows have been placed strategically to frame significant sites such as the Orlando Police Station, Orlando Stadium, the long rows of monotonous township houses and the shooting site. According to architect Jeremy Rose ‘the integration of the narrative, museum space and the physical landscape outside is the most potent and memorable aspect of the museum.’ (Reilly 2003:15). ‘The carefully calibrated placement of spacious windows creates vistas of key places of interest, dissolving the boundaries between inside and outside.’ Text overlaid onto the glass explains the significance of these locales. (Dubin 2009:203). ‘The memorial complex thereby becomes the nexus of a much larger geographical matrix of significant places.’ Explaining the significance of these sites with text on the windows ‘turns them into symbolic signifiers in their own right’ according to Marschall (2010:119). The narrative focusing as it does on one event, ‘is not as obliged as the Apartheid Museum is to present a sweeping history.’ (Dubin 2009:200).

## **Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre, Mapungubwe National Park (Peter Rich Architects)**

Peter Rich's Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre is situated within the Mapungubwe National Park. The Mapungubwe National Park is located where the three countries of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe meet, at the junction of the Sashe and Limpopo Rivers, creating a regional Peace Park with boundary fences between the three countries removed to facilitate a shared, united preservation of the natural and cultural environment. The site is also a UNESCO World Heritage site, recognising its 'global historical importance.' (Rich 2009:28). 'The Interpretation Centre serves both the ecological park and the archaeological sites, which together form the World Heritage Site.' (Fitchett 2010:30).

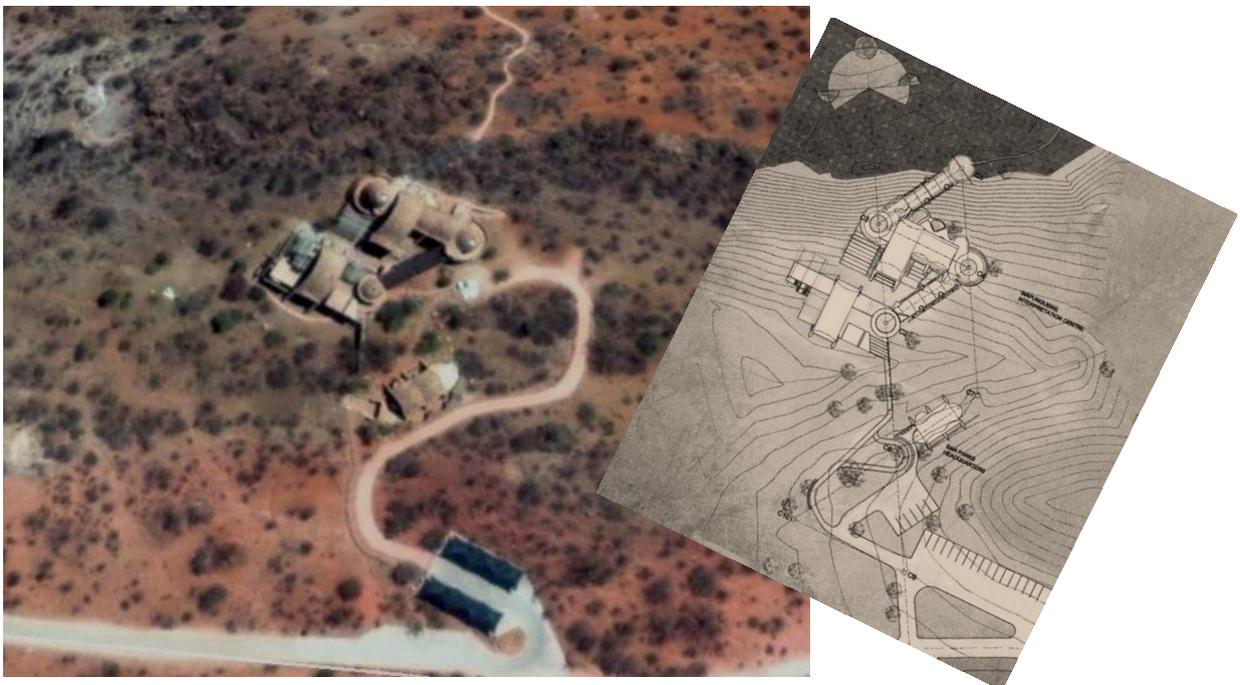
The citadel on Mapungubwe Hill formed the focus of a civilisation between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries, 'inhabited at various times by 17 ethnic groups, each of which can make some kind of claim: to the land, the artefacts or as custodians of history. It also formed part of a trading network linking Persia, Europe and the Far East.' (Fitchett: 30). Grave sites located on the Mapungubwe Hill confirm this and the 'Golden Rhino found in a grave on the site has become an African icon, symbolic to many Africans of the greatness of Africa before colonialism.' (Rich 2009:28). The site of the Interpretation Centre was chosen for its proximity to the entrance gate of the Park on the R572 Musina (Messina) Road, appetising 'glimpses of the Centre are offered from the road – a chameleon that blends into the land, revealing glimpses of forms in anticipation of the architectural encounter.' (Fitchett 2010:30). The site is a kilometre away from Mapungubwe Hill thus creating a 'visual link between the Interpretation Centre site and the locus of the major archaeological discoveries.' (Rich: 2009: 28).

The 'complex nature of the politics of the ethnic groups attached to the site, meant that Rich 'could not engage in community consultation' and as such, no overt references could be made to any one group.' (Hall: 2011:19). Therefore 'the landscape was the central inspiration for the design. Timbrel vaulting, which originated in Egypt in 1300BC and further explored by Catalans in Spain and more recently used at Pines Calyx, an Issy Benjamin project in the south of England in collaboration with engineers from MIT, was chosen as an ideal technology to achieve an architecture in synergy with the landscape. (Rich 2009: 28). This method also complies to the notions of a relevant architecture that adheres to sustainable construction practices and appropriate material use 'to minimise resource consumption, promote social and

economic development, development of human resources and where possible labour intensive methods of construction’ as described by Marschall and Kearney (2000:95, quoting Hill (1998:13). The simplicity of construction meant hand pressed tiles could be made by local unemployed women on site from local sand, potentially empowering local people in the process of building with further benefits of low embodied energy and low cost. (Rich 2009:29).

The design and construction ‘draws from indigenous forms and ordering principles’ while the ‘diaphanous vaults establish a rhythm that speaks of geological formations and of the earliest regional dwellings’, emerge from the landscape while ‘the cavernous spaces are reminiscent of archaeological sites in Southern Africa’ (Ramage, Rich et al 2009:29), and ‘stone cairns traditionally used in Southern African culture demarcate the way.’ (Rich 2009: 30). (Figure 68). The cave-like quality of the vaults draws on the significance of the cave as shelter and refuge, but also of ritual practice including rainmaking. Fitchett (2010:32) describes the ‘interiors as a place of refuge from the natural realm, a wilderness traditionally associated with fear and fertility.’ The stone cladding of the Centre makes reference to the stone buildings uncovered at the archaeological sites and ‘the buildings made from earth, clad in stone would read as an extension of the land.’ (Rich 2009:29).

**Figure 67 right: Peter Rich. 2009. *Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre*. Mapungubwe National Park. Site plan. (Source: Architecture S.A. Jan/Feb. 2009 p.27)**



**Figure 68 left: Peter Rich. 2009. *Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre*. Mapungubwe National Park. (Source: Google Earth 2013).**

The Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre is a ‘monument to the past, but also the future of the African continent.’ (Fitchett 2010:30). As a building, the Interpretation Centre addresses the principles of regionalism in its response to ‘the local climate, topography, landscape and flora, as well as man-made parameters of the surroundings’ and 1980’s postmodern theory of achieving meaningful architectural expression through the significance of context. (Marschall and Kearney 2000:118). In Frampton’s Critical Regionalism (2002:26) of “in-laying” the building into the site and the inscription of its history in a geological sense, the ‘idiosyncrasies of place find their expression.’ The ‘prehistory of the place and its archaeological past’ (Frampton 2002:26) is clearly evident in Mapungubwe’s site sensitivity and the architectural references to the archaeological history of the citadel.

An important characteristic of Critical Regionalism is that ‘the tactile is an important dimension in the perception of the built form. The liberative importance of the tactile resides in the fact that it can only be decoded in terms of *experience* itself. Critical Regionalism seeks to complement our normative visual experience by readdressing the tactile range of human perceptions.’ The strong presence of the tactile dimension in Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre counteracts what Heidegger terms the ‘loss of nearness’ that the prioritising of sight and the suppression of smell, hearing and taste and distancing of a direct experience of the environment that characterises the domination of universal technology.(Frampton 2002:28, 29).

### **Red Location Cultural Precinct, New Brighton, Port Elizabeth (Noero Wolff)**

Red Location derives its name from the distinctive rusted corrugated iron barracks originally built at for a British concentration camp at Uitenhage to house Boer families interned during the Boer War. When the war ended in 1902, the barracks were moved to the outskirts of Port Elizabeth to house a battalion of British soldiers and after their repatriation, black families moved in. ‘Red Location and the surrounding township of New Brighton became an important site of resistance to the apartheid regime and many prominent cultural and political leaders were either born or lived there.’ (Slessor 2006:45).

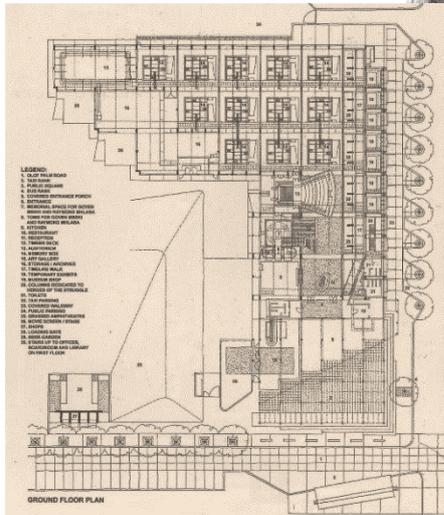
The completion of the digital library, archive and art gallery to join the Museum of the People’s Struggle forms a city centre cultural precinct ‘in contrast to the default option chosen for most town centre developments, a shopping mall.’ The precinct ‘was an opportunity to treat

people with dignity, as something other than units of production and consumption.’ (Melvin 2011:49). The buildings present opportunities to engage with the contested concepts of culture, memory, history and public space and ‘suggest how contest might move towards fulfilment.’ (Melvin 2011:46). The starting point for the development of public space according to Noero, are streets. Streets ‘take you from point to point and are lined with formal and informal retail activity.’ (Melvin 2011:53). Each building has its own forecourt which creates an intermediate zone between the building and public street creating points of social contact and the evolution of an urban culture where public space ‘at least might become less a scene of contest and more a place of pleasure.’ (Melvin 2011:53) This is the human centred approach of ‘the interaction of indoor and outdoor spaces, the creation of public spaces that allow for accommodation of spontaneous, random activities’ of which Marschall and Kearney (2000:134) speak.

Architecturally, ‘the language deployed over the whole site is one of straightforward, slightly industrial aesthetic. It is a celebration of the ordinary materials the locals have scrounged over the years. And it is a nod to the factories across the railroad tracks.’ (Findley 2004:29). The lack of architectural precedents meant that ‘Noero had to fashion an architecture that was relevant to its community.’ (Melvin 2011:49). Despite the limitations of a low budget and a procurement system of unskilled labour making up a proportion of the labour force, using simple materials, coaxing unusual forms with unexpected effects has resulted in buildings that are ‘embedded within their context and community.’ (Melvin 2011:53).

The precinct, starting with the museum, was conceived as a catalyst for the development of its surroundings, to create a town centre around the museum. (Le Roux 2008:45). Despite questions around the monumentality and scale, clearly at odds with the low rise, makeshift houses of the surroundings, the museum precinct has had the effect of boosting local civic pride. (Slessor 2006:46). Sited as it is in an unattractive, run down harsh environment, the precinct can be seen as an architecture of resistance against what Noero termed ‘apartheid’s deliberate and cynical attempt to make the majority population invisible to the white population.’ (Melvin 2011:46). Marschall and Kearney (2000:125) highlight the challenges of designing facilities in monotone African townships, where lack of infrastructure and resources combined with visually impoverished environments rarely supplies the architect with reference points worth relating to. The emphasis shifts to the provision of upliftment, buildings that brighten and enliven drab depressing surroundings. (Figure 70).

**Figure 69 left: Noero/Wolff. *Red Location Museum*. New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. Plan. (Source: Architecture S.A. May/June 2006 p.22)**



**Figure 70 right: Noero/Wolff. *Red Location Museum*. New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. (Source: Google Earth 2013)**

**Legend: 1. Museum. 2. Art Gallery. 3. Archive. 4. Library.**

‘With its simple concrete block walls topped with a jagged profile of saw-tooth roof lights, the museum seems more like a place of industry than culture.’ (Slessor 2006:45). An industrial factory aesthetic in conjunction with materials commonly used in township house construction such as concrete blocks, standard steel windows and corrugated sheets ‘conjure a kind of architectural Arte Povera through poetic use of the cheap, the commonplace and the disregarded.’ (Slessor 2006:46).

‘The architecture acts as a vast, non-hierarchical container. While the language and materials of the container have meaning, the building itself does not strive to affect emotions. Instead it has the abstract potential of emptiness – an emptiness to be filled by imagination. The main exhibit hall is one large memory box.’ (Findley 2004:31)

The museum can be seen as ‘a container of containers, a repository for an array of memory boxes, linked in scale and material to the houses of the location.’ (Le Roux 2008:45). The twelve monolithic 6x6x12 metre memory boxes are unmarked, clad in rusted corrugated iron are:

‘inspired by the boxes (trunks) migrant workers kept to protect their prized possessions during their precarious existence in hostels or hovels on the outskirts of cities.’ ‘The trunks, containing mementos of distant families were treasured and decorated by their owners, evoking their “urban” lives and a yearning for their faraway homes.’ (Gerneke 2006:20).

Each memory box is self-contained, ‘closed on all sides except for a door, and open on top to varying degrees to allow light to filter in from above.’ As separate entities each memory box ‘presents a different perspective on the experience of Apartheid. Each tells its own story in its own language.’ (Findley 2004:31). The strategy of using these memory boxes ‘would allow the shifting of content and the evolution of perspective that inevitable happens with hindsight and with new developments.’ (Findley 2004:29). In consultation with the community the focus of the museum ‘must be not only about memory, but about current events, about the history that is being created daily in the nation.’ ‘The struggle against Apartheid was the first step of the larger struggle that continues today.’ (Findley 2004:30). The ability to change the contents of the memory boxes over time resolves the problem of the museum becoming what Baudrillard terms ‘a burial chamber for dehistoricized and frozen secrets.’ (Findley 2004:30). Noero quotes Huyssen on the curatorial and spatial strategy of museums to ‘move beyond the museums present role as a giver of canonical truths and cultural authority, duping its visitors as manipulated and reified cultural cattle.’ ‘To shake off Huyssen’s image of museum-goers as cattle moving inexorably through chutes to slaughter’ (Findley 2004:30), there is no prescribed route that the visitor has to follow, no mandatory order in which to view the contents of the boxes and despite the arrangement of the memory boxes resembling a factory production line, the memory boxes and the spaces around them can collectively and individually be experienced as places of memory without necessarily entering to view their contents.

### **Lilliesleaf Liberation Centre, Rivonia, Johannesburg (Mashabane Rose)**

Lilliesleaf Farm, Rivonia, was acquired by the South African Communist Party in 1961 as a meeting place for senior party leaders and Politburo members. In December 1961 the family of artist and designer Arthur Goldreich moved into the manor house posing as the white owners but as cover for the covert operations of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK). The purchase of the property coincided with the decision by the African National Congress (ANC) to take up the armed struggle and the farm subsequently evolved into headquarters for MK. It was here that leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Raymond Mhlaba, Walter Sisulu, Bob Hepple, Arthur Goldreich, Andrew Mlangeni, James Kantor, Denis Goldberg, Harold Wolpe, Elias Motsoaledi and Rusty Bernstein met and planned their operations. The security police raid

on July 11 1963 resulted in the Rivonia Trial that led to the life imprisonment of most of the leaders. (Raman 2008:60 and Eicker 2008:7).

Nicholas Wolpe, the son of Harold Wolpe who fled into exile before the start of the Rivonia Trial in 1963, returned from exile in 1991. In 2001 Nicholas Wolpe was asked by Mendi Msimang the then treasurer general of the ANC, to organise a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration of the founding of MK at Lilliesleaf. The 16<sup>th</sup> December 1961 has generally been accepted as the founding date of MK. A reunion of the Rivonia trialists was organised but no information on Lilliesleaf was available which led Nicholas Wolpe to suggest that the Lilliesleaf Trust buy back the three properties on which the historical structures were built as a legacy project. A public-private partnership in which 45% of funding comes from government with the balance coming from the private sector. In 2002 the three properties were purchased which included the manor house. Over an 18 month period the original three structures were uncovered in various degrees of preservation. (Ryland 2013). Archaeological studies were undertaken to establish structures and artefacts that existed before the 1963 raid. Ironically security police photographs aided in this process. Extraneous additions to the site since 1963 were removed. (Raman 2008:63).

**Legend: 1. Visitors centre. 2. Original manor house. 3. Historical outbuildings. 4. Resource centre.**



**Figure 71 left: Mashabane Rose. 2008. *Lilliesleaf Liberation Centre*. Rivonia, Johannesburg. Site plan. (Source: Digest of South African Architecture 2008 p.42)**

**Figure 72 right: Mashabane Rose. 2008. *Lilliesleaf Liberation Centre*. Rivonia, Johannesburg. (Source: Google Earth. 2013)**

The project brief called for the restoration of the manor house and its conversion to exhibition and museum and as much of the outbuildings as possible and adaption of as many of the outbuildings as possible to film spaces. (Eicker 2008:9). Three new additions, modest containers, are an auditorium and administration, restaurant and crèche, and archives, library and office spaces for the trust. (Raman 2008:63). Figure 71). Craig McClenaghan of MRA explains that ‘the primary story is told in the buildings. The new buildings do not seek attention but rather offer space for the old buildings to breathe.’ (Eicker 2008:9). The three new additions to the site are set at the periphery, ‘enabling the space between the old house and the old outbuildings to be the focus.’ (Raman 2008:63). The effectiveness of the site was contingent on the restoration and rebuilding of the old structures to their original state of ordinariness, while the three new contemporary structures extend this ordinariness by using similar materials, with the whole working as a family of interconnected structures. (Raman 2008:64). ‘For once, there is no museum fatigue as the central green space with mature trees is visible from everywhere on the site.’ (Raman 2008:67). (Figure 72).

Wolpe explains his own view on Lilliesleaf, calling it a place of memory. He does not call it a museum but a ‘site of memory where activities and events actually happened.’ ‘Museums are manmade, and have specific things: you go and view pictures and historical artefacts.’ (Fisher 2013). Describing the development of the Lilliesleaf Liberation Centre, Wolpe says: ‘It has been a journey of enlightenment from struggle, to liberation to transformation.’ (Eicker 2008:12). In a sense Wolpe’s reflection mirrors the similar historical journey that South Africa has undertaken in its quest from conflict to democratic transformation.

### **//hapo museum: from boulders to building (Mashabane Rose)**

The //hapo museum is the latest of the museum initiatives to be completed, is probably the most ambitious, and is the final phase of the Freedom Park project. The name of the //hapo museum is derived from the following Khoi proverb:

***‘//hapo ge //hapo tam a /haohas ib dis tamas ka i bo’*** ‘A dream is not a dream until it is shared by the whole community’

‘It is also the word for the trance state into which the Shaman enters to communicate with the spirit world. In San rock art, this is symbolically depicted as entering through the rock face into the rock and indicated by the thin line of white dots which disappears and reappears into breaks in the rock.’ (Janse van Rensburg 2009:41)

Janse van Rensburg (2009:41) quotes Rose to explain the conceptual and metaphorical aspects of the //hapo museum:

‘The architectural concept for //hapo was conceived as an arrangement of boulders, based on the boulders in Credo Mutwa’s transcendental healing garden: the idea being that one enters into the boulders to access the deep knowledge and memory of the archives and collections of indigenous knowledge systems.’

According to the Freedom Park website, //hapo was designed ‘to blend into the landscape, rather than impose on it. By sculpting the building frames using steel structures overlaying them with copper, //hapo was shaped to resemble boulders.’ (Anonymous 2012). The exterior of the //hapo is clad in copper and the materials malleability has provided the opportunity for the complex surfacing and furthermore allowing the building skin to transform over time, slowly merging with the hillside. (OCA 2012). (Figure 73).



**Figure 73: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2008-2013. Freedom Park: //hapo museum Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**

In their entry for the Civic Buildings Award for World Architecture News, the architects, (OCA 2012) state that:

‘the vision of //hapo as a series of boulders pays homage to the rocky African landscape and reflects the spirit of traditional, indigenous knowledge systems. Cracks and fissures of natural boulders changing over thousands of years are mimicked in the design of the windows with their deep-set openings and complex irregular shapes permitting just enough natural light to reinforce the sense of a dimly lit cave.’

Project architect Dieter Brandt explains the metaphor of boulders and how different forms of symbolism were used to create open and compressed boulder shapes for the buildings housing the different epochs. The more 'ethereal' building to house the Ancestors, extended to represent the country's industrial period, while the section that represents nation-building consists of boulders that are light-filled and open and the final block breaks off from the nation-building boulder that represents the notion of looking towards the future. (Anonymous 2010:70, 71). Jones (2006:554) argues that 'it is impossible for the vast majority of people to link the highly symbolic and narrative architectural form of landmark buildings to equally abstract social meanings.' The architects role in translating their building, and disseminating meanings is key to the 'extent to which such a building is accepted by the public, politicians and other architects as an appropriate symbol of a given collective identity' and is highly contingent on the architects successfully aligning their building with the abstract discourses that pertain to identities. (Jones 2006:556).

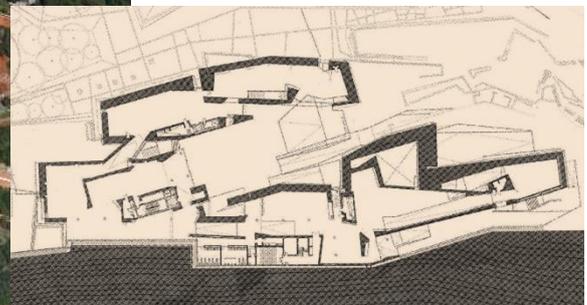
This is true of the //hapo, whose architects have successfully 'translated' their landmark building to the extent it has been accepted and embraced by the politicians. The identity discourses associated with the San, and meanings attached to the architectural symbol of boulders with the //hapo museum have been appropriated and socially constructed to interpret Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance concept, with the aim of the //hapo to 'access' African traditions and indigenous knowledge systems within a highly sophisticated architectural landmark. There is however a tragic irony to the name //hapo and the elegant symbolism of the boulder and cave interpretation in the architecture when the existence of the Khoi has been virtually annihilated and their culture written about fleetingly in the narrative within. Jones (2006:556) quoting Hedetoft (1995:122) notes: 'it is nevertheless far from uncommon for the same symbolic material to change its functions and connotations over time, and even at the same temporal intersection to imply different meanings to different groups.' That future audiences may not interpret the //hapo in the same way and accept the official interpretation, translation therefore will be reliant on the explanatory texts and explanations within the //hapo and whether tour guides conform to the official interpretation.

According to Frampton (2002:26), 'Critical Regionalism necessarily involves a more directly dialectical relation with nature than the more abstract, formal traditions of modern avante-garde architecture allow.' As a sustainable critical practice, architecture must assume an *arriere-garde* position, 'to remove itself from both the optimization of advanced technology and the ever-present tendency to regress into nostalgic historicism or the glibly decorative.' (Frampton

2002:20). Unlike the rest of the Freedom Park elements, the //hapo museum does not conform to these requirements of Critical Regionalism with its ‘high-tech approach predicated exclusively on production and the provision of a compensatory façade to cover up the harsh realities of this universal system.’ (Frampton 2002:17). The optimum use of earth-moving equipment is strongly evident in the //hapo museum site (Figure 75) and while many of the indigenous trees and extensive planting have softened the severe connections between the cooper cladding of the museum and the surrounding hard brick landscaping, the impression is still that of a constructed and invented landscape.



**Figure 74 right.** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum*’ Salvokop, Pretoria. Plan. (Source: Digest of South African Architecture 2010 p.55)



**Figure 75 left:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum*’ Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Google Earth)

In Marotta’s (2013:84, 85), analysis of museum typologies the most recent museum typology is the *museum-landscape*, which has its origins in the American Land Art movement of the 1960’s and 1970’s, where ‘land artists reclaimed both materials and processes from the land to produce their work.’ The museum site context is understood as a ‘palimpsest, a place of layers from which followed the interpretation of the museum and land as being inseparable.’ The *museum-landscape* means making the environment central again, where ‘archaic remnants are all part of a new aesthetic that links nature with the manmade, memory and landscape.’ Salvokop according to Marschall (2010:215) was ‘historically known as Bron Koppie, Railway Hill, Signal Hill or Time Ball Hill, testifying to different uses and connotations associated with this landmark over time for different communities.’ But as Labuschagne (2010:115) points out that there are no ‘footprints in the sands of time’ at the Freedom Park location, unlike the Wonderboom site which ‘stands out as a true heritage site and a place of specific symbolic and religious meaning for migrating black tribes in the pre-colonial era.’

‘Salvokop is not a heritage area and has no physical, symbolic, spiritual or sacred nexus with the past. Salvokop has a strong colonial link with the past because its name is derived from the British custom during their occupation of Pretoria during the Anglo-Boer War of discharging cannon fire (salvos) when a dignitary arrived or departed.’ (Labuschagne 2010:117). The only archaic remnants on Salvokop were sparse remains of the Boer fortifications of Fort Tullichewan dating from the First Anglo-Boer War also known as the First Transvaal War of Independence (1880-1881) but plans to preserve the architectural traces of the old Boer fort were eliminated, thereby erasing the layered history of the site to clean up the contaminated historical traces in order to create a pristine place for pure development where the intended symbolic meaning can unfold unencumbered. (Marschall 2010:215). The Freedom Park site ‘should have preferably had a strong existing historical, cultural, anthropological or religious links that were not invented or artificially imposed on the area.’ (Labuschagne 2010:117).

The relationship of this invented, artificially imposed archaeology of the *museum-landscape* to the site is more evident in the other elements of the Freedom Park site than the //hapo museum, which has its origins in the *museum-city* typology of the late 1980’s and early 1990’s where

‘The museum became a work of art and a theatrical space that was more important than even the works on display. Attention had shifted from a concept that focused on the works on display, often enhanced by the neutral character of the museum that housed it, to a stereophonic one in which the museum experience itself provides the primary stimuli.’ (Marotta 2013:81)

In Critical Regionalism this inclusion of the archaic remnants of a site is referred to as the ‘in-laying’ of the building into the site, where the layering into the site, the specific culture of the region, its history in both a geological and agricultural sense becomes inscribed in the form and realisation of the work and where the idiosyncrasies of place find their expression without falling into sentimentality, to embody in built form, the prehistory of the place and its archaeological past (Frampton 2002:26), which is not evident in the //hapo museum site. That the //hapo museum has no archaeological, anthropological, geological or historical connection to its site has resulted in what I believe is an invented architectural representation of a fictitious landscape.

Unlike the problematic siting of the Apartheid Museum, the siting of Mashabane Rose’s Hector Pieterse Memorial Museum in Soweto, Noerro Wolf’s Red Location Cultural Precinct, Peter Rich’s Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre and Lilliesleaf Farm, also by Mashabane Rose, posed no such problems and unlike the Apartheid and //hapo museums, they are rooted in their historical context and they are ‘more responsive to the immediate historical and cultural environment’ in which they are located and which Venturi argues for. (Woods 1999:97). These

museums embody, in built form, the prehistory of their particular places, the history in both a geological and agricultural sense, the archaeological past have become inscribed in the form and realization of the works that Frampton's Critical Regionalism promotes and to which the Apartheid Museum and the //hapo do not conform. With the Lilliesleaf Liberation Centre, the evolution of the museum in South Africa according to Raman (2008:62) has moved from what he terms the 'aggressive fist of memory' of the Apartheid Museum to one of reflective history. 'History is an enquiry into the past; memory is a conviction about the past.'

According to Rankin (2013:96) it is notable that all these post-apartheid projects 'have avoided the extravagances of colonial buildings' and to 'impart a unique flavour to museums, many post-apartheid projects have also relied on the specific locality and historical links of their sites, rather than simply the content of exhibitions, to forge a narrative.' What the Apartheid Museum and the //hapo have in common is the lack of site history, archaeology and context. Both museums have used their materiality and the symbolism of their architecture to create museums on sites with no historical connection to their contents or narrative. Their contents are also characterized by the sweeping foundational metanarratives that Lyotard (Wood 1999:21) said augments power at the expense of truth.

This is unlike the Hector Pieterse Memorial Museum, the Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre, the Red Location precinct of buildings and the Lilliesleaf Liberation Centre where the designs were informed by the outside physical landscape that has been integrated with the museums, and where the historical context of the sites have influenced the construction materials and the architectural symbolism, as well as the related site specific contents of the museums. The Lyotardian micronarratives of these museums, in which specific events directly related to their site that are depicted in the contents of the museums, are in contrast to the meta-narratives of the Apartheid and //hapo museums contents.

One of the problems of these new museums as Rankin (2013:89) points out is the danger of stereotyping victims and perpetrators and that it is 'essential to avoid encouraging a kind of atrocity voyeurism amongst visitors', especially amongst tourists who specifically seek out similar sites around the world. With the completion of the //hapo museum, it is necessary to question whether South Africa has finally reached saturation point in the heritage field of museums commemorating the Struggle or has museum fatigue not yet set in?

## Just another Baudrillard monstrosity?

The seventh of Sert, Leger and Giedion's Nine Points of Monumentality (1943) states that 'the people want the buildings that represent their social and community life to give more than functional fulfilment, they want their aspiration for monumentality, joy pride and excitement to be satisfied.' But according to Baudrillard (2006:77).

'architecture in its ambitious form no longer builds anything but monsters, in that they no longer testify to the integrity of a town, but to its disintegration; not to its organic nature but to its disorganization. They do not give rhythm to the town and its exchanges, they are dumped on it like space debris "fallen from unknown disaster". Their attraction is the way in which tourists are amazed and their function is as a place of expulsion, extradition and urban ecstasy.'



**Figure 76: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2008-2013. Freedom Park: //hapo museum, Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**



**Figure 77: Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2008-2013. Freedom Park: //hapo museum, Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**

Using the Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano designed Pompidou Centre in Paris as a prototype for his monstrosities, Baudrillard explains that The Pompidou is 'a display of itself more than of its contents' the art 'fails to match the art of the building.' The building dominates the art and the building brings about the end of art. The works of art 'become anachronique, dated and removed from a time when they could be relevant or have an authentic existence.' 'The Pompidou becomes the mausoleum of culture and its exhibitions the last despairing vestiges of art.' (Hegarty 2008:325, 326). If all the cultural contents of the Pompidou are anachronistic, then to answer the question: what should have been placed in the Pompidou? 'Only an empty interior could correspond to this architectural envelope.' (Baudrillard 2006: 138).

With the advent of the virtual dimension, the capacity of computer technology in architectural design and presentation that enables these extravagant forms, Baudrillard claims that ‘everything that takes the technological route with its immense possibilities for producing diversity, is now exposed to the full range of its technical possibilities’ and therefore ‘all architectural forms can be revived out of a virtual stock of forms arranged either conventionally or in some other way. As a result, architecture no longer refers to a truth or originality of some sort, but to the mere technical availability of forms and materials.’ (Baudrillard 2006:166). Using the example of the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Baudrillard sees it as the ‘prototype of virtual architecture,’ and ‘a virtual object if ever there was one.’ According to Baudrillard the Guggenheim, Bilbao, Jewish Museum, Berlin and now the //hapo, could have been ‘put together on a computer out of optional elements or modules, so that a thousand similar museums could be constructed merely by changing the software or the scale of the calculations.’ The relation to their content – art works and collections – is entirely virtual. (Baudrillard 2006:167).

And while Baudrillard says the Guggenheim is a marvel, it is an experimental marvel, ‘which will give rise to a whole host of clones and chimeras.’ The Guggenheim says Baudrillard, is a ‘spatial chimera, the product of machinations which have gained the upper hand over architectural form itself.’ He further says that it is in fact a ‘ready-made’. ‘Under the impact of technology and sophisticated equipment everything is becoming ‘ready-made’. All the elements to be combined are there already; they merely have to be rearranged.’ (Baudrillard 2006:167). Baudrillard observes that ‘whilst the Bilbao Guggenheim is aesthetically brilliant, it is built from computer models, and can be reassembled anywhere. It represents the furthest advances of architecture, but it is a combinatory, arbitrary object.’ (Hegarty 2008:329). In Frampton’s *Critical Regionalism* (2002:16), this is the ‘universalization’ of which he speaks, the universal system with a compensatory façade, where ‘modern building is now so universally conditioned by optimized technology that the possibility of creating significant urban form has become extremely limited.’

Like the Pompidou/Beaubourg, the //hapo museum ‘is a display of itself more than of its contents’, its contents fail to match the art of the building something which Baudrillard argues has become a model for galleries and museums such as Gehry’s Guggenheim in Bilbao and Libeskind’s Jewish Museum in Berlin. (Hegarty 2008:325). Herwitz (2011:246) describes Libeskind’s Jewish Museums monumentality as that of ‘a neo-liberal brand item: the virtuoso “Libeskind building” branding him and using his celebrity to brand it.’ Furthermore, Herwitz speculates that the successor to the old monument is not just the centres of commerce, but the

neo-liberal virtuoso brand item that enters the marketplace with such astonishing bravura. The museum as utilitarian monument confirms what Choay (2001:8) says has been the migration of the meaning of the monument from pleasure provided by the beauty of an edifice and replaced by ‘the awe or surprise provoked by technical *tours de force*. The monument imposes itself on our attention without context or preparation and calls for instantaneous reaction, trading its ancient status as sign for that of signal.’ (Figures 76).

Architecture according to Baudrillard (2006:168) is ‘doomed today merely to serve culture and communication, doomed to serve the virtual aestheticization of society.’ People are siphoned off to huge, more or less interactive warehousing spaces that are the world’s cultural and commercial centres and turned into museum pieces on the spot. These buildings are according to Baudrillard a ‘world-wide proliferation of an architecture of clones, a proliferation of transparent, interactive, mobile, playful buildings built in the image of the networks and virtual reality.’ (Baudrillard 2006:169). Numerous buildings are designated for cultural ends packaging the immaterial needs of the social form known as culture. (Baudrillard 2006:168).

It is not difficult to see the //hapo museum as a Baudrillard monster, dumped like space debris from some unknown disaster, a clone, a chimera, a virtual object or a Herwitz neo-liberal virtuoso brand item, like Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim in Bilbao and Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum in Berlin. It could be one of the proliferations of an architecture of clones, a proliferation of transparent interactive, mobile, playful buildings as Baudrillard (2006:77, 169) states. The //hapo, like the Guggenheim, Bilbao and the Jewish Museum, Berlin is aesthetically pleasing and brilliantly crafted, but if as Baudrillard states, the contents cannot match the art of the exterior envelope of this computer generated clone, only an empty interior could match the envelope of the //hapo museum. (Figure 77).

According to Marotta (2013:82), the most comprehensive examples of the development of spatial relationships of the importance of the void over the solid, the dynamics of movement that take precedence over linearity of 19<sup>th</sup> century plans are Libeskind’s Jewish Museum in Berlin and Gehry’s Guggenheim in Bilbao. Libeskind’s museum ‘turned the plan of the city into a map of paths that became a web of memory’ while in Gehry’s design articulation became spectacular and the museum traced the defining lines of the city like an urban sculpture, an icon in the landscape of public domain. Similarly the //hapo museum is situated on the axis between the Voortrekker Monument and the Union Buildings with the intention for the //hapo to symbolically complete the amputation of the connection between the two buildings that commenced with Freedom Park, a new intervention in the historical axis, its articulation of boulders creating voids

that culminate in a framed view of the Union Buildings through a fissure in its façade. It could be said therefore that the //hapo museum ‘became a work of art and a theatrical space that was more important than even the works on display.’ The neutral character of the museum with the focus on the works on display has been replaced by a ‘stereophonic one in which the museum experience itself provides the primary stimuli.’ (Marotta 2013:81).

But like the Jewish Museum in Berlin where the powerfully empty void was filled with exhibits, so too the cave like //hapo is likewise filled with combinations of interactive screens, exhibits, showcases, explanatory texts, spot lights and other technological wizardry of the interactive space where ‘architecture is enslaved to the functions of circulation, information, communication and culture, a functionalism of the virtual, a functionalism relating to useless functions in which architecture itself is in danger of becoming a useless function’ and where ‘the works or people moving around in them seem like virtual objects themselves, there being no need for their presence.’ (Baudrillard 2006:169).

### **Interiority of the //hapo cave: representation and interpretation of the pre-colonial, colonial and Struggle narratives**

While the //hapo museum building was completed in 2010, Deputy President at the time, Kgalema Motlanthe officially opened the //hapo museum on 22 April 2013. In his opening address he states that //hapo has ‘immeasurable memorial value for the evolution of our struggle for freedom and it embodies our national values of reconciliation, reconstruction and rebirth of our country post 1994. Preserving our history in this way is an important historical imperative which allows us to reflect on our past, present and future in a manner that helps to heal our past and foster reconciliation, social cohesion and nation building’ (Motlanthe: 2013)

//hapo is an ‘interactive museum combined with the Pan African Archives, intended to address the gaps, distortions and biases in South African history.’ (Marschall 2010:220). //hapo will ‘also include an exhibition hall, restaurant, kiosk, curio shop and Pan-African library where research data and all information relating to Freedom Park will be stored.’ (Anonymous: 2010:70). //hapo is a fusion of African and Western scientific knowledge. ‘By relaying the history of our region from an African perspective, we dip into the deep wells of African

indigenous knowledge as well as reservoirs of contemporary western scientific knowledge.’

([www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za))



**Figure 78:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum*, Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

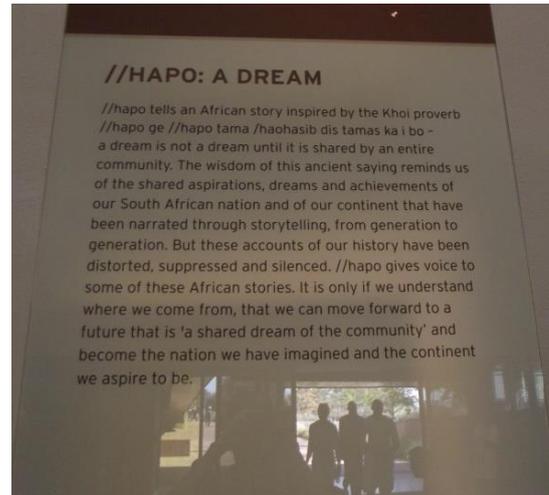


**Figure 79:** Office of Collaborative Architects (GAPP, Mashabane Rose & MMA). 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum*, Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

The //hapo is approached from the ticket office to the entrance via a maze like zig-zag path (Figures 78, 79). This pathway constructed of cold rough concrete and warm brick briefly disorients and confuses visitors who can only catch glimpses of each other and of the destination over the pathway walls and vegetation. This journey is, I believe, symbolic of the difficult path that South Africans have undertaken on the road to democracy and reconciliation. Frederick (2007:11) reinforces this ‘denial and reward’ method of enhancing the satisfaction and richness of experience for users, especially along paths of travel through the built environment. By presenting users with a view of their destination and momentarily screening it from view as they continue their approach, diverting users onto an unexpected path to create additional intrigue and momentary confusion and a sense of ‘lostness’ makes the journey more interesting and the arrival more rewarding. The arrival at the entrance to //hapo after this interesting approach creates a sense of expectation and anticipation for what is contained within. (Figures 80, 81).



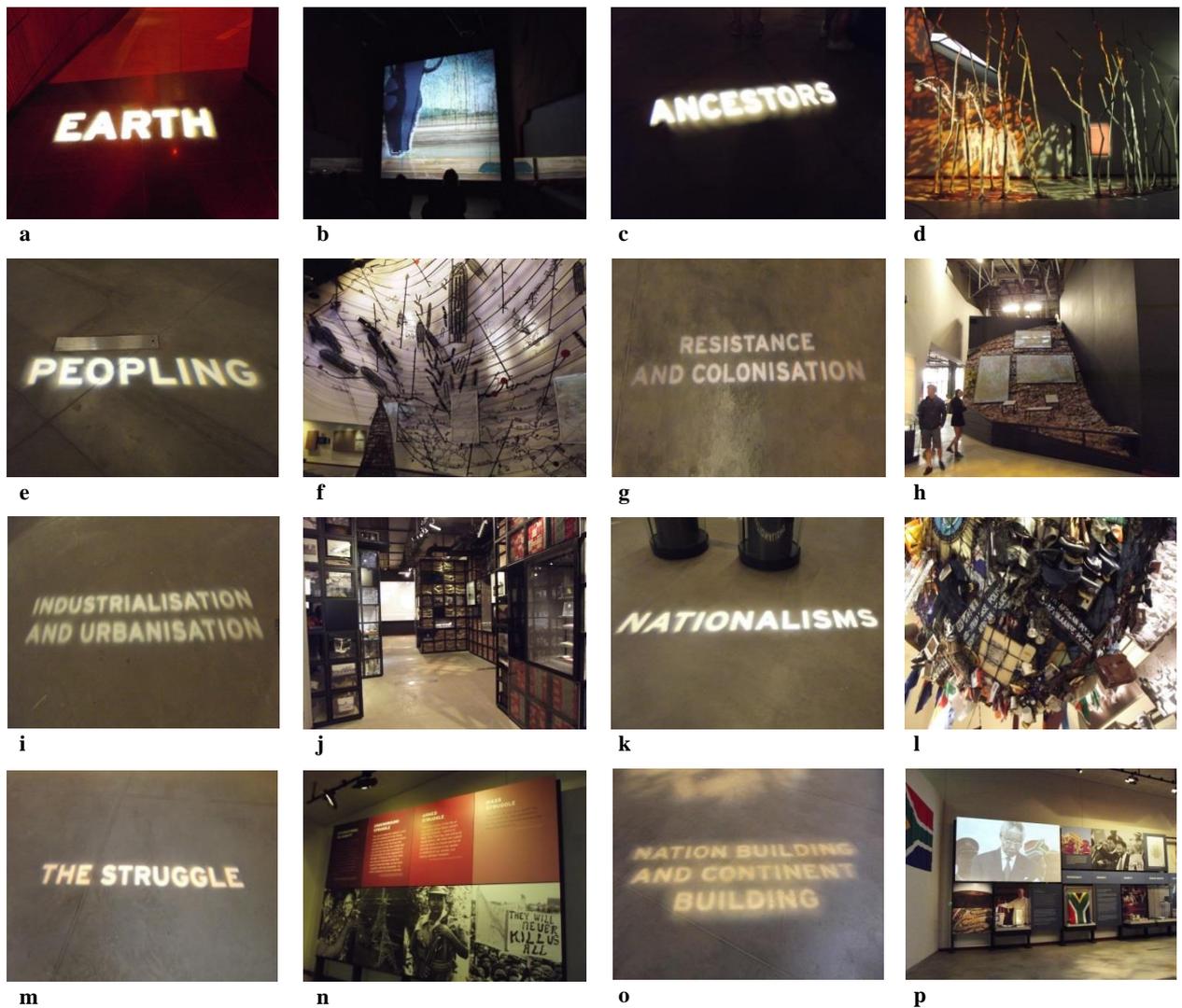
**Figure 80: Clive van den Berg. 2008-2013. Freedom Park: //hapo museum: Entrance Foyer. Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**



**Figure 81: Clive van den Berg. 2008-2013. Freedom Park: //hapo museum: Entrance Foyer. Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**

Internally, //hapo depicts seven epochs of South African history dating back 3.6 million years, combine scientific and indigenous knowledge systems that allow participation and live interpretation by visitors. (Figure 82 a-p). Epoch 1: The Earth: A scientific and geological approach to the history of the earth, along with African and other creationist interpretations of how the universe came to be. Epoch 2: Ancestors: Explores the concept of ancestors from a physical and spiritual perspective. Epoch 3: Peopling: Show cases pre-conquest societies in terms of science, culture and spirituality. Epoch 4: Resistance and colonisation: The story of Colonialism and its impact on the African people and the resistance struggle to subjugation and exploitation. Epoch 5: Industrialisation and Urbanisation: The story told from the labour perspective and the coercive and violent ways in which the African work force was created and the exploitation of minerals and its impact on the indigenous population. Epoch 6: Nationalisms and Struggle: The creation and consolidation of white power and the apartheid state. Epoch 7: Nation Building and Continent Building: The story begins during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup>. Century and explores the transition from apartheid to democracy and the reclamation of freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. ([www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za)) (Figures 82 a –p)

In his speech at the opening of the //hapo museum, then Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe (2013) said ‘this museum is the result of nation-wide consultative processes that solicited advice from youth, organic intellectuals, academics, artistic communities, women groups, traditional leaders and healers and faith based organisations. It is a product of South Africans from all walks of life and is in every shape and form, a community’s dream.’



Figures 82 a – p Clive van den Berg, 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum: The seven epochs*. Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

If the museum is truly a South African dream place of reconciliation, reconstruction and rebirth as past Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe (2013) states, then a critical analysis and interpretation of how the //hapo’s narrative is represented almost twenty years after democracy in terms of Foucault’s heterotopia (Lord 2006, Foucault 1984:7), the three spatial motifs of ‘singularity’, ‘interiority’ and ‘outside’ that Hetherington (2012) says influences museum experience, Huyssen’s (1995:25), explanation of the three museum models as they apply to the //hapo exhibits, as well as the Lyotardian ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ and the emergence of ‘micronarratives’ in their place. (Woods 1999:20).

The six characteristics of Foucault’s heterotopian spaces are that ‘they are culturally specific, their function shifts over time, they juxtapose several seemingly incompatible spaces within a single site, they organize temporal experience, they have distinct rituals of entrance, and they perform a necessary social function.’ (Saindon 2012:26). This concept of Foucault’s

heterotopian space ‘has often been used in discussions of place in geography, architectural theory and studies of the built environment, linked to non-places, spaces of conflict, or alienating spaces.’ Lord (2006:3). Foucault’s fourth principle of the heterotopia which includes museums, defines the heterotopia as:

‘the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place.’ (Foucault 1984:7)

Lord (2006:3) says the museum is a heterotopia by virtue of the spatial aspect and the temporal aspect of bringing together disparate objects from different times in a single space that attempts to enclose the totality of time – a time that is protected from time’s erosion. As a heterotopian space the museum thus ‘engages in a double paradox: it contains infinite time in a finite space, and it is both a space of time and a “timeless” space.’ What makes the museum a heterotopia appears to be threefold: firstly, its juxtaposition of temporally discontinuous objects, secondly, its attempt to present the totality of time, and thirdly its isolation, as an entire space, from normal temporal continuity. For Foucault, says Saindon (2012:26), ‘space and time are closely linked and he isolates three ways in which the concept of time relates to heterotopian spaces: heterotopias are *kairotic*, responding to specific contextual circumstances; they establish “heterochronies,” different experiences of time enabled by the arrangement (disposition) of space; and their functions change based on the passage of time.’

Hetherington (2012:12) explains the three spatial motifs of the museum as a heterotopia: firstly, the spatial motif of singularity is what provides the sense of a museum as a legitimate geographical site of experience- a container for the experience of whatever the theme of the collection might be. Secondly the spatial motif of interiority is the motif of enclosure and a sense that there can be no possible understanding or valid experience of what is on display except through the museum as an archival totality, and thirdly, the spatial motif of the outside, the museum ‘as an archiving space is endlessly challenged by a possibility of a disordering outside coming within.’ It is this motif of the disorderly outside that reveals the contrived or fabulated nature of the mimetic realism that is promoted through the singular and interior spatial motifs. It is the space of the disorderly outside over which no one has control that inevitably encroaches on the space of the singular and the interior. (Hetherington 2012:11). It is precisely this problem that new ideas, new manifestations of culture and artefacts, new interpretations that challenge the narratives told within the museum displays that threaten the long term validity of displays such as evidenced in the //hapo. ‘Over time, museum narratives lose their validity; new

readings are sought or are made apparent through events.’ ‘Events intervene in the story of history.’ (Hetherington 2012:11).

As Lord (2006:6) points out

‘Museums are centrally concerned with the problem of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophy: how can the things of the world be adequately represented in the conceptual systems of reason? And museums are met by the same problem that conceptual systems will always fall short of perfect adequacy of the world.’

The problematic characteristic of the museum throughout history is ‘that objects must be interpreted according to representational systems that are never absolutely adequate to them, has remained the foundation of the museum through its historical transformations up to the present day.’ (Lord 2006:6). The 18<sup>th</sup> century museum offered virtually no textual interpretation for its objects or for the order that brought them together. The visitor reflected on the order of objects presented and the adequacy of order on the completeness of nature. Pedagogic, sociological and political changes in the museum idea of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘modernist museum’ that persisted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, saw the rise of the authoritative, text-heavy displays, didactic in presenting the order of things as historical and progressive that left little room for contesting curatorial authority.

Over the last thirty years, the limitations of the didactic model, with socially and culturally inclusive learning a primary aim of museums, museum displays today encourage visitors to consider how objects are related to concepts and categories. (Lord 2006:6, 7). ‘Museums, from their beginnings to the present day, do not only display objects, but display the way in which objects are related to words, names and concepts: they display systems of representation.’ (Lord 2006:6). As Hetherington (2012:11) sums up: ‘museums exist as points of representational temporal stability in a world in which time is in flux. They typically seek to hold the world at bay and make sense of it through various ordering narratives in the construction of an orderly topos for visitor experience.’

Using Foucault’s genealogy as a method to ‘diagnose’ history and realize our capacity to liberate ourselves from the contingencies of the past and progress out of the historical conditions of governing ideas and structures of the past, is a rejection of ‘total history’ in favour of a ‘general history’. This genealogy is achieved through ‘archaeology as a method.’ (Lord 2006:9). It is impossible to entertain the idea of a ‘total history’ under these conditions, since the genealogical ‘tree’ of historical enquiry has so many possible branches to pursue, while the archaeological method can never acquire all ‘documents’ relevant to each branch. In line with Freedom Park

the //hapo museum reflects a carefully chosen and very specific genealogical historical branch as well as the specific archaeological ‘documents’ to support the chosen narrative of the pre-colonial utopia of Thabo Mbeki’s African Renaissance, the Struggle against colonialism and apartheid, and the post-apartheid euphoria of 1994. Nuttall and Wright (2000:31), quoted in Marschall (2004:87), have observed that the post-apartheid heritage sector representation, has been actively ‘producing reconciliation histories’ characterised by the ‘glossing over of the differences’ and that ‘conveys the impression that South African history throughout the ages was marked by a continuous flow of more or less well-coordinated acts of resistance, organised by able, courageous leaders’.

The heterotopia according to Lord (2006:10) is a ‘realm of difference in which contingent fragments of a large number of possible historical series become evident.’ ‘The museum is not a heterotopia by virtue of housing a collection of objects different from one another. The museum is a heterotopia because it displays the difference inherent in its content: the difference of words and things.’ (Lord 2006:10). Analysing some of the museum objects, the contingent archaeological ‘documents’, records and artefacts of the exhibits within the //hapo museum reveals the museum as a Foucault heterotopia, a space of difference, a space of inadequate representation, a space of dispersion that reveals the gaps and discontinuities inherent in the genealogical museum that facilitates contestation and interpretation, that ‘present historical events not as a decision, a treaty, a reign or battle’ but ‘reveal conceptual systems and political orders to be contingent and reversible.’ (Lord 2006:11).

It is also necessary to position the //hapo’s exhibits within the three competing explanatory models ‘that seek to make sense of the museum and exhibition mania of recent years.’ Firstly: the neoconservative position of the hermeneutically-oriented culture-as-compensation model of Hermann Lubbe and Otto Marquard ‘based on Arnold Gehlen’s social philosophy, Gadamer’s hermeneutics of tradition, and Joachim Ritter’s philosophical thesis that the erosion of tradition in modernity generates organs of remembrance such as the museum.’ Secondly: the poststructuralist position and ‘secretly apocalyptic theory of musealization as terminal cancer of our *fin-de-siecle* as articulated by Jean Baudrillard and Henri Pierre Jeudy.’ And thirdly: the sociologically and Critical Theory-oriented model of *Kulturgesellschaft* ‘that argues the emergence of a new stage of consumer capitalism.’ (Huysen 1995:25)

In the first model of culture-as-compensation, it is clear that the //hapo museum could not be considered a space where ‘the museum and real world of the present remain separated, and the museum is recommended as the site of leisure, calmness, and mediation needed to confront the

ravages of acceleration outside its walls.’ In the compensation model, compensation means ‘culture as oasis, as affirming rather than questioning the chaos outside, and it implies a mode of viewing that is simply no longer in tune with the specular and spectacular nature of contemporary museum practices.’ (Huysen 1995:29). It is more difficult however to position the //hapo museum and its exhibits in either of the other models as it would seem that characteristics from both apply in some way or another and it is worth discussing the dichotomy in relation to specific examples of exhibits.

Baudrillard and Jeudy, in the second simulation and catastrophe model, view the museum as ‘just another simulation machine: the museum as mass medium is no longer distinguishable from television.’ Musealization, like television, simulates the real and in so doing contributes to its agony. They take the view that ‘musealization is precisely the opposite of preservation: it is killing, freezing, sterilizing, dehistoricizing and decontextualizing.’ In the wake of an anticipated nuclear holocaust, disappearance, annihilation or any other equivalent calamity today, ‘all life will have been drained from the planet, but the museum still stands, not as a ruin but as a memorial.’ (Huysen 1995:30). In the third model, *Kulturgesellschaft*, ‘suggests that the mass media, especially television, have created an unquenchable desire for experiences and events, for authenticity and identity, which television is unable to satisfy.’ Because visual expectation has been raised to a degree where scopical desire for the screen has mutated into the desire for something else. It is the museum that is in a position to offer something that cannot be had on television. (Huysen 1995:32). An indisputable key factor of our museumphilia is the ‘need for auratic objects, for permanent embodiments for the experience of the out-of-the-ordinary.’ (Huysen 1995:33).



**Figure 83:** Clive van den Berg. 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum: Epoch 3: Peopling*. Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 84:** Clive van den Berg. 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum: Epoch 3: Peopling*. Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

In the three Epochs of Earth, Ancestors and Peopling (Figures 83, 84), the pre-colonial utopia of Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance have been actively represented. The African voice of the earth's creation, the role of the ancestors and pre-colonial society's scientific, cultural, indigenous knowledge systems and achievements are explained and promoted. A combination of mythical stories played out through story-telling and portrayed in text and image alongside scientific artefacts and material culture and records, attempts to provide a history of pre-colonial societies that counteracts the colonial notion that these societies were unsophisticated and had achieved nothing of significance.

According to Herwitz (2011:244), Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance short-circuits modern South African history by 'returning to an artificially constructed precolonial past, which becomes the material for official origin and myth.' The attempted recreation of destroyed precolonial societies in the //hago museum through representation and simulation, acts like Baudrillard and Jeudy's catastrophic model where the museum is a burial chamber, 'where musealization simulates the real and in so doing contributes to its agony.' The relics on display are dehistoricized and decontextualized and in the wake of the reality of the annihilated precolonial societies, 'the museum still stands, not as a ruin but as a memorial.' (Huysen 1995:30).

Similarly in the Epoch for Industrialisation and Urbanisation (Figure 85) exhibits portray the controlling and dehumanising aspects of these systems through the use of symbolic cages and multi-media images. Al Sayyad (2010:84) quotes Wright (1991) who warned that 'the past cannot simply mean a retreat to a golden age before the European, before modern industrialisation, for these factors have changed us irrevocably.' South Africa too, as a developing nation must come to terms with the colonial urban legacy. There comes a point when all formerly colonised peoples according to Al Sayyad (2010:84) 'must cease to perceive their history as colonial and start absorbing this heritage as their own.'

For South Africa that would mean moving beyond seeing industrialisation and urbanisation as the controlling and dominating mechanisms of the colonial and apartheid state, accept their irreversibility and rather develop their potential as mechanisms to empower new generations who have no desire to revert to a mythological pre-colonial state. The precolonial past can only be artificially reconstructed and mythologised in the present.



**Figure 85:** Clive van den Berg, 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum: Epoch 5: Industrialisation & Urbanisation.* Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 86:** Clive van den Berg, 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum: Epoch 6: Nationalisms & The Struggle.* Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

The Epoch on Nationalisms and Struggle (Figure 86) acknowledges the many liberation movements from 1882 to 1960 but the primary focus is on the white nationalisms of the colonial and apartheid eras against which the liberation movements rebelled. The exhibit on Nationalisms is characterised by the net hanging from the roof containing symbols of repression, domination and humiliation: flags, apartheid signs, *dompasse*, police uniforms, insignia and truncheons. The net hangs like a veritable sword of Damocles or a dark storm cloud - a constant reminder of the repressive past but which can also be symbolically interpreted as a warning, that the net is not necessarily secure, that the mistakes of the past will always be a constant threat if not held in check. (Figure 86). Against this backdrop and with screens relaying old news clips, it is clear that white nationalism has been singled out for particular focus.



**Figure 87:** Clive van den Berg 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum: Epoch 6: Nationalisms & The Struggle.* Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)



**Figure 88:** Clive van den Berg, 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum: Epoch 6: Nationalisms & The Struggle.* Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

Just as the narrative of the Great Trek in the Voortrekker Monuments' marble frieze has combined several treks into one narrative, so too the depiction of the Struggle narrative gives the impression of a unified, continuous event against colonialism and apartheid. Key events have been carefully extracted to represent the Struggle (Figures 87, 88) that 'conveys the impression that South African history throughout the ages was marked by a continuous flow of more or less well-coordinated acts of resistance, organised by able, courageous leaders.' (Marschall 2004:87). This emphasis of post-apartheid monuments on the celebration of resistance and triumph functions as a counterpoint to the narrative of oppression, sadness and reproach - South African identity transcends the mould of eternal victim. (Marschall 2004:88).

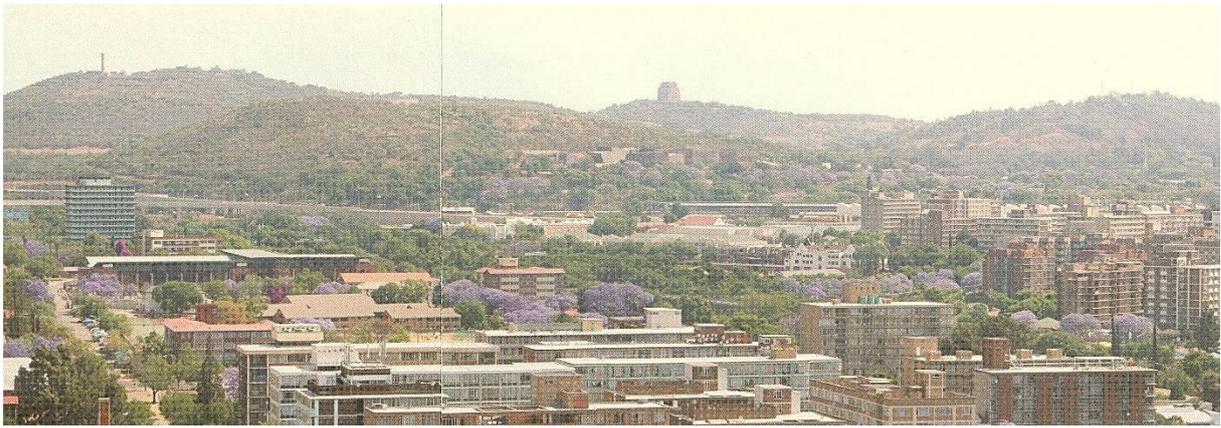
It is in the final exhibit of Nation Building and Continent Building that this so-called celebration of triumph over oppression is most evident. The words Democracy, Ubuntu, Dignity, Human rights, Unity, Nationhood, Pride, Reconciliation, Back to the source, Social cohesion, Revival, Stability and Peace are used on the final exhibit of Epoch 7 Nation building and continent building in the //hapo. (Figure 89) These words and phrases combined with explanatory text and images are used to portray a sense of utopian unity to the visitor. This final exhibit is Thabo Mbeki's vision of the African Renaissance, if not realised in practice and perhaps like the //hapo, a wishful dream: *Ubuntu* is the Birth Certificate of the Nation, Human Rights are guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, Nationhood is expressed in the new Coat of Arms, flag and national symbols and Pride expressed in the National Anthem, Reconciliation celebrated on December 16 as a unified holiday, Back to the Source promotes African solutions to African problems while Revival is the African Renaissance in operation and Peace is achieved by Renewing Africa. Almost twenty years after the first democratic elections of April 1994, the sentiment expressed in these words and images may not always be interpreted as intended and may be greeted with a measure of scepticism.

The role of museums as cultural mediators function in an 'environment in which demands for multiculturalism, and the realities of migrations and demographic shifts clash increasingly with ethnic strife, culturalist racisms, and a general resurgence of nationalism and xenophobia.' Huyssen (1995:35) While the international tourist for whom the museum is also intended, may find the sentiment and clichés convincing, against the backdrop of crime, xenophobia, poverty, slums, unemployment, corruption and service-delivery protests, the South Africans who can afford the entrance fee, might find the utopia represented, less so. Has the vision of Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance and the wishful dream of the //hapo been realised or indefinitely deferred?



Figure 89: Clive van den Berg. 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum: Epoch 7 Nation Building & Continent Building*. Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)

The culmination of the //hapo experience is the symbolic significance of the framed view of the Union Buildings in the distance through a fissure in the façade. This highly significant part of the museum experience is however not obvious to the visitor and has to be pointed out by the guide. The final exhibit dominates this culminating space and it is unfortunate that the fissure through which the Union Buildings can be viewed can easily be bypassed. The connection between the past and all the governments that have occupied these buildings and the respective ideologies they have come to represent, is particularly relevant. The past and all the histories that have been created cannot be erased and the Union Buildings stand as a constant reminder of all the conflicting histories of the past, the present, but with hope for the future. The appropriating and occupying of the oppressors' symbol of power by the new political order, the Union Buildings come to represent the triumph of democracy over colonialism and apartheid and the oppression and racism they once represented.



**Figure 90: The view from the Union Buildings. (Source: Digest of South African Architecture 2010 p.56/57)**

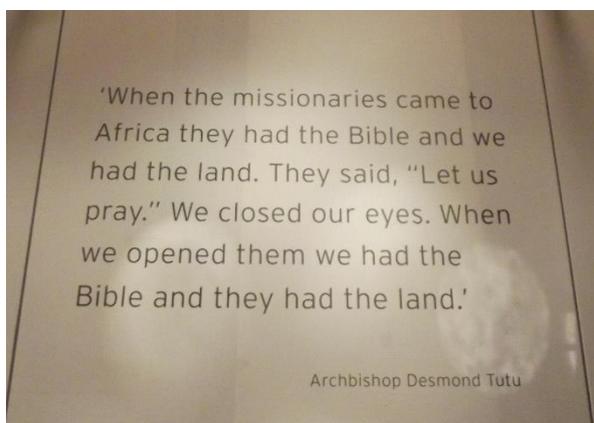
The view from the Union Buildings is still dominated by the Voortrekker Monument but the intervention of Freedom Park and specifically the //hapo museum, has successfully created the desired amputation of the axis between the Union Building and the Voortrekker Monument, in a subtle physical, psychological and symbolic sense. (Figure 90).

The //hapo museum has the capacity to liberate us from the power structures of the past through critique, autonomy and progress. Museums ‘perform’ genealogy because they consciously move away from ‘total history’, reveal the unpredictability and uncertainty of political orders and historical events, they contribute to liberation by enabling the growth of abilities and capabilities that facilitate such liberation, and have enormous importance in cultures struggling for liberation, and are recognised as tools in helping society to heal. (Lord 2006:11). If South African museums are meant to facilitate liberation and help our societies to heal, it is necessary to question whether this liberation and healing applies to those recognised as victims only and the inherent danger that they will always be portrayed as victims. Will those groups represented as perpetrators in the museum, ever be liberated from the guilt of their past or will they continue to have the stigma of perpetrator attached to them in which case can the museum indeed facilitate healing?

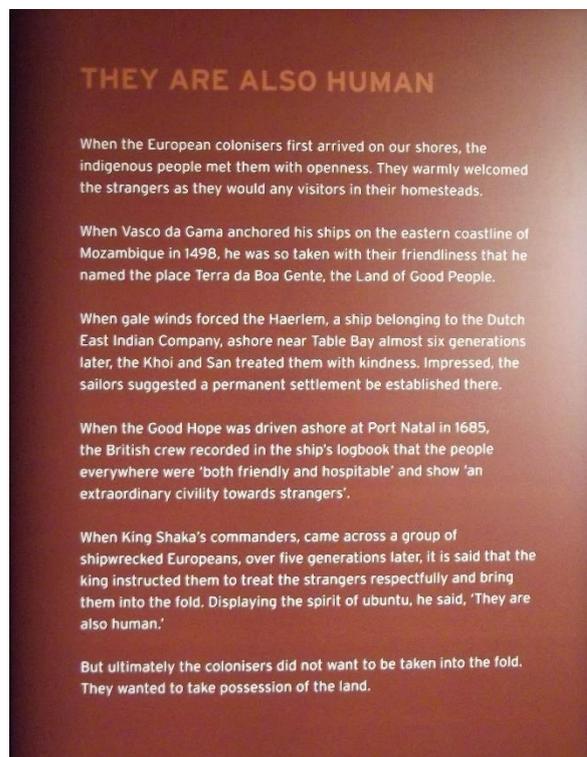
But as Hetherington (2012:11) reminds us the ‘fabulation’ of the narrative that the museum constructs, that are naturalised within the authority of the archive and dependant on a seamless and unquestioned relationship between ideas of commencement and commandment, are revealed through the questioning, interrogating, understanding, knowledge, ideological background and changing experiences of the visitor. The historical development of the museum in which ‘many museums today rely less on objects than they do on narrative and the experience of the architectural space’ is evidenced in many of the post-apartheid museums. (Lord 2006:4).

Marschall (2004:90) concludes that monuments, and this would include the //hapo museum, 'are not an objective means of educating the public about history: they interpret history.' The preferred use of text and images to 'fix' meaning 'thereby attempting to ensure the viewer will get the intended "correct" message' is a characteristic of post-apartheid monuments, museums and heritage sites.

The two texts that best illustrate this attempt at fixing meaning and interpreting history for the intended correct message are those shown in Figures 91 and 92. It is clear from these two texts and particularly the exhibits of Epoch 4: Resistance and Colonisation and Epoch 5: Industrialisation and Urbanisation, the effects of colonisation, urbanisation and industrialisation are used to effectively promote The African Renaissance concept. But what is also clear from the texts is the problem with all the post-apartheid museums where exhibits are static: that the 'victim' and 'perpetrator' are fixed to group identities that still exist twenty years after democracy. Once again the question needs to be asked: does the perpetuation of these identities really facilitate reconciliation and healing or does the post-apartheid museum perpetuate divisions and contribute to continued tensions in society?



**Figures 91 & 92: Clive van den Berg, 2008-2013. Freedom Park: //hapo museum: text details. Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**



The //hapo museum is indeed such an interpretive museum, but the interpretation may not produce the desired result as almost twenty years after the advent of South Africa's democracy, many of the artefacts on display may have little resonance with some visitors. At the root of this unsettling problem is what Hetherington (2012:10) says is the 'changing character of experience' and what Lord (2006:5) terms 'the difference inherent in interpretation.' and which is, I believe, universal in the challenge to the museum and archives representational authority: the interpretations of the visitor from the 'disordering outside'.

Marschall (2006:172) reiterates this when she says that 'once completed, the monument and its "message" might not be understood as it was intended by those who battled over its design.' Furthermore 'the process of making meaning is invariably informed by personal experiences, ideological orientation and the cultural context of individual visitors.' Similarly with the //hapo exhibits that are 'going to be viewed in decades to come, under different circumstances, in a changed socio-political landscape, when different interpretations of the past have gained hegemony.' (Marschall 2006:172).

A museum's activities, according to Huyssen (1995:34) should be judged according to

'what extent it helps overcome the insidious ideology of the superiority of one culture over all others in space and time, to what extent and in what ways it opens itself to other representations, and how it will be able to foreground problems of representation, narrative and memory in its designs and exhibits.'

Whether the //hapo's design and exhibits could be said to have overcome the previously dominant ideology of white, colonial and apartheid culture and power, is debatable. What is equally important is whether it is new 'superior' ANC dominant metanarratives of the African voice, the Struggle and the new South Africa as portrayed and represented in the //hapo museum are closed to contestation and different interpretations. It is precisely this type of foundational, totalising grand narrative that Lyotard regarded as 'violent and tyrannical in its imposition.' (Woods 1999:21). The metanarrative of South Africa's history in the //hapo in a Lyotardian sense can therefore be seen as a modern/postmodern paradox. The //hapo exhibits can be said to characterise the metanarratives of modernity but the impossibility of representation of a total history dating back 3.6 million years, also 'puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself' of postmodernity. (Woods 1999:23). But there is also evidence of a further paradox represented in the exhibits: that of the micronarrative within the metanarrative of the //hapo of the exhibit discussed next.

## **Defining the //hapo experience: the exhibit of Body # 1 and Body # 2 as micronarrative and heterotopia**

If there is one exhibit that confirms the position of the //hapo museum in the third explanatory model of the museum and its exhibits, it is the symbolic, coffin-like structure that contains the blood-stained clothes of two missing victims of apartheid state terror whose bodies were never found. (Figure 93). If the museum is capable of offering something that cannot be conveyed on television through the fetishist longing for the material, auratic, authentic museal object of this current museumphilia, (Huysen 1995:32,33), it is surely expressed in this one exhibit. It is the permanence of the museum object, formerly criticized as deadening reification that takes on a different role in a culture dominated by the fleeting image on the screen and the immateriality of communications. (Huysen 1995:255).

It is the physical materiality of the museal object, the exhibited artefact, in this case the very real salvaged clothes that enables authentic experience. If, as Huysen (1995:33) says, ‘the more mummified an object is, the more intense its ability to yield experience, a sense of the authentic’ then this object achieves that. Unlike some of the other exhibits, the power of the object is precisely its isolation from its genealogical context, out of its everyday functional context, that enhances its alterity. While some of the other exhibits may lose their validity over time, these objects have the necessary authenticity to withstand the temporal ravages of dialogue, contestation and reinterpretation of future ages. But the exhibits’ power lies also in its postmodern characteristic of the Lyotardian micronarrative. Making sense of South Africa’s history in a metanarrative such as the //hapo, and as with the Apartheid Museum, is too exhausting, too overwhelming and too anonymous but with this exhibit, the postmodern micronarrative individualises a specific event in South Africa’s history and therefore resists the legitimation of the power and truth that the //hapo represents by presenting the unrepresentable, the sublime.

Saindon (2012:26) says that ‘heterotopias are not *just* different spaces; they actively confirm, mutate, or resist the sensibilities of a culture,’ and heterotopias ‘work like a collective mirror, allowing a culture to glimpse some essential aspect of its self-image through an arrangement of space.’ Saindon (2012:28) uses the example of Israeli artist Menashe Kadishman’s installation *Shalechet* or *Fallen Leaves* within Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum, Berlin to argue that it performs a unique function in the spatial rhetoric of the museum: ‘it “doubles” Libeskind’s

original heterotopia in that the exhibit constitutes a second heterotopia within the encompassing one provided by the architecture.’



**Figure 93: Clive van den Berg. 2008-2013. *Freedom Park: //hapo museum: The clothes of Body #1 and Body #2.* Salvokop, Pretoria. (Source: Michele Jacobs May 2013)**

In the same way, I believe, the power of this exhibit of the clothes of Body #1 and Body #2, also resides in its function as a crisis heterotopia within the encompassing heterotopian architectural space of the //hapo museum, thereby also creating a double heterotopia.

Similarly, for South African and international visitors of all races, cultures, ages and backgrounds and whose experiences of colonialism, apartheid and oppression would be varied and diverse, this exhibit works as a dialectical-rhetorical transcendent intermediary between the consubstantial identity of the visitors, ‘a method of overcoming the particularity of parochial cultural interests through generalizations that create analogies of history, experience, or belief between distinct peoples.’ (Saindon 2012:39). If ‘the figuration of time in Kadishman’s installation furthers the artworks call for memorial transcendence, linking violence of past, present and future into a single aesthetic form’, (Saindon 2012:40) then so too this exhibit, therefore, works as a collective mirror for these diverse viewers, representing in a symbolic sense, the conflicts of the past, present and future and the violent deaths that arise from them.

The exhibits close proximity to the 'heroic' narrative of the Struggle Epoch and the final euphoric Epoch of Nation and Continent building, belies the victorious narrative but rather confirms the exhibits crisis heterotopian characteristic where the 'unusual arrangement participates in the transformation of values, sometimes imperceptibly, by rearranging the "lines of making sense" available to a culture.' (Saindon 2012:26). In the same way that Saindon (2012:42) argues that the dialectical-rhetorical transcendence strategy in the Jewish museums historical displays should not be 'consubstantial with the viewer's own history, but that they should be seen as a lesson in intolerance, violence and diasporic perseverance in which the viewer can find potential analogies in their particular cultural background,' so too this exhibit in the //hago therefore questions the viewers' own complicity, resistance against or absolute indifference to acts of violence in all its forms. The visitors to both the Jewish Museum and //hago museum 'can relate this history to other examples of violence against cultural diasporas closer to the visitors own experience.' (Saindon 2012:28).

This exhibit needs little explanation and says more about the violent effects of colonialism, apartheid and even has resonance with more recent political conflicts. It also illustrates the difficulty of memorialising trauma, and has, I believe, more impact on the visitor than all the other exhibits together. The persons to whom the clothes belonged are unnamed and simply labelled Body # 1 and Body # 2. (Figure 93). Just as the image of Hector Pieterse came to represent a collective group, so too the clothes of Body #1 and Body#2, transcend political allegiance and therefore represent symbolically a collective group, all those who disappeared and whose bodies have never been located.

The significance of this exhibit must be seen in the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's attempt to bring closure to families whose loved ones disappeared without a trace and testified before the Commission their 'desire simply to find the bodies of their loved ones' (Herwitz 2010:237). If the //hago museum had contained this exhibit alone and no others, the impact and power of the statement contained within the exhibit expresses succinctly 'that for many, including the millions displaced from their homes under apartheid, and the relatives who died at the hands of the security police, there is a complete disjunction between personal suffering and public memory.' (Herwitz 2010:237). 'Where the context is one of trauma, the appropriate form of acknowledgement is to say nothing and to resist monumentalization.' (Herwitz 2010:239).

The silence, simplicity and absence of monumentality and sublimity of this particular exhibit is in stark contrast to the theatrical nature of the rest of the exhibits in the //hago museum, putting

into perspective the words of Herwitz (2011:243), that ‘monument and event are becoming merged’ and as with the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg and many of the other museums:

‘the monumental nature of the anti-apartheid struggle is portrayed through the buzzing pixels of a web of floor-to-ceiling, electrolight-projected images. The amber light of the computer-generated image is the gold standard of the twenty-first century, the neutral event-speak through which South African and other local realities may be profiled for an international set of users.’

It is true that modern technologies have enabled us to experience history as it unfolds in real time and as Herwitz says ‘we prefer the amber glow of the computer to the sunlit aura of the monument.’ (2011:243). Heritage sites, therefore, have to respond to this by commodifying the experiences they offer and market them to attract a wider audience. The //hapo museum and the Freedom Park precinct, with its future commercial additions is in line with this process of commodification evident in the utilitarian memorial field of South African museums and heritage sites, that is necessary to compete with other equally popular forms of heritage such as beaches, game reserves, places of natural beauty, cultural villages, malls and casinos and thereby remain relevant. The Voortrekker Monument has successfully made this transition to commodification with the addition of a café and research centre and by allowing a wide variety of cultural activities to take place within the monument and around the monument site.

### **Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument as heterotopias**

If the //hapo museum can be seen as a Foucauldian heterotopia, then so too the total sites of Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument could also be termed heterotopias by virtue of the inherent characteristics of Foucault’s principles displayed in their design, choice of site and symbolisms. ‘The heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public space.’ (Foucault 1984:7). This is true of the Freedom Park precinct which has physically been fenced off and excludes by charging an entrance fee to both Freedom Park, the //hapo museum. Similarly the Voortrekker Monument perimeter has been fenced off and an entrance fee is charged to visitors, thereby excluding access. On a more cerebral level exclusion occurs if the visitor does not believe in the cultural and religious rites that take place within the heterotopia or if a particular group or culture has been excluded from the narrative. In both the Freedom Park and Voortrekker Monument exclusion from certain cultural and religious rituals and activities confirms the heterotopian characteristics of these two monumental spaces. ‘Society, as its

history unfolds, can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion.’ Monumental spaces such as Freedom Park, are subject to continual change and reinterpretation over time. Like the Voortrekker Monument, Freedom Park has multiple functions ‘according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs’ (Foucault 1984:5). ‘The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.’ (Foucault 1984:6).

The many elements that make up Freedom Park can be seen as incompatible in several ways. They are individual spaces with a possible multiple functions that attempt to combine as a unified whole. The positioning of the amphitheatre which lends itself to political rhetoric and theatrical celebration between a sanctuary for quiet reflection and a hall containing the symbolic remains of revered leaders attests to this incompatibility. The role of the heterotopia is to ‘create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled.’ (Foucault 1984:8). Positioned as they are on ridges above Pretoria, both Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument can be seen as this ‘other’ space against the backdrop of the chaotic world that they look down upon. Their heterotopian space is confirmed by their specifically chosen sites high on the ridges, fenced off and isolated from the chaos below them, but also reinforcing the monumental characteristic of exclusion which both monuments profess to deny.

Perhaps the last words on both the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park and the //hapo museum should be reserved for Barrie Biermann (1991:32) who stated so clearly: ‘In the unresolved debate on the distinction between mere buildings and works of architecture, one of the more persuasive arguments for the latter is contextual relationship – the way the structure fits in with its surroundings.’ ‘Buildings are too often regarded as individual prestige symbols rather than as functional solutions to social problems, and extravagant forms are conceived in deliberate discord with their environment.’

The Occam’s razor of architectural design according to Biermann (1991:32), is Fr. Luca Pacioli’s notion that ‘a thing may endure in nature only when it is duly proportioned to its necessity.’ The necessity of the monument has been debated and continues to be debated internationally and locally, but in South Africa necessity has been compromised by political expediency that has led to the construction of what some may call totally unnecessary or extravagant monuments and memorials and the retention of some considered inappropriate as colonial or apartheid relics. If ‘monuments are produced in which visitors are expected to participate actively in the construction of the thing itself, as well as the festivities surrounding its

commemoration' to thus 'become active producers of plural pasts and multiple memories' as Crampton (2001:243) states in Mitchell (2003:447), then it could be said that Freedom Park and the //hapo museum will never be the all-inclusive monument they proclaim, while the Voortrekker Monument, while 'transformed' to some extent, will remain a monument to a particular time in history, interpreted narrowly by the group for whom it was constructed. Over time their endurance in nature will in all likelihood be determined by their value and popularity as tourist and heritage sites rather than the political or ideological reasons for their construction.

### Conclusions

During the course of my research it became clear to me the unique nature of the commemorative field of previously neglected historical events and the people who are now considered the main contributors to this history in post-apartheid South Africa. In the twenty years since the first democratic elections, numerous sculptures, memorials, monuments and museums, now preferably called heritage sites, have been erected and constructed in various sites throughout the country. I believe that this was understandable and inevitable considering the memorial field in South Africa has in the past been saturated with sculptures, monuments, memorials and museums that have only commemorated and reflected the minority view of South Africa's conflicted history.

I also found that the iconoclasm that has characterised many other societies in a state of flux and change, has not materialised in South Africa. Instead a more rational policy emerged as this desire for redressing the past became inevitable. This policy, where new statues, monuments, memorials or museums functioning as utilitarian monuments, are placed in close proximity or juxtaposed directly in opposition to old heritage sites, has I believe been a wise one. I used the example of the King Dinizulu statue erected opposite the General Botha statue in Botha Gardens, Durban as a successful resolution resulting from this policy and that it confirms this policy to be sound. While some have argued that this can be seen as perpetuating apartheid in the heritage field, I believe this is only partly true considering the many new heritage sites that have been constructed in places of historical significance to the foundation myth of the Struggle. The study of the Blood River Memorial and the Ncome Museum was also used as a precedent to explain that the construction of Freedom Park as opposition to the Voortrekker Monument, while flawed, was also an acceptable means of countering the narrative of the Voortrekker Monument.

While some aspects of this counter-monument solution may be problematic, over time I believe it will prove to be a satisfactory response to the option of iconoclasm and destruction. South African heritage sites are subjected to natural or wilful neglect or vandalism, especially when ceremonies of commemoration no longer take place around them but more especially if they are not marketed and promoted as tourist destinations. I used the examples of the Strijdom Square in Pretoria, the Voortrekker Monument at Winburg and the Drill Hall in Johannesburg as examples

of this but I also believe that old heritage sites can be rejuvenated and benefit with the addition of new opposing heritage markers that tell another side of the narrative.

My research also revealed the difficulties facing artists and architects who have to negotiate a myriad political and cultural niceties that influence their work. The Andries Botha Elephant sculptures in Durban and the Shaka memorial at Shaka International Airport were explored to illustrate this difficulty. I also concluded that the figurative sculpture on a pedestal has become an accepted means of commemorating individual heroes of the Struggle. I have discussed that it is image of Nelson Mandela that has become the iconic figure to commemorate, due to his status as the accepted 'Father of the Nation' to all South Africans. I unpacked four of the most recent of these sculptures and concluded that his image has been used in multiple ways to portray the political power of the African National Congress and as a tourist magnet at the various locations where they have been erected.

I have also concluded that recently constructed South African heritage sites, like their international counterparts are characterised by the fusion of sculpture, landscape, architecture and design and include internationally recognisable markers such as walls of names, water, and eternal flames to commemorate and memorialise. Despite architects being influenced by international precedents, I believe a more uniquely South African interpretation seems to be successfully emerging in other heritage markers such as museums and memorials. An international trend of adding a museum or visitor interpretation centre to an existing heritage site or including a museum or visitor interpretation centre as part of new heritage sites has also become standard practice in the South African Memorial field. I discussed this at length to show that the //hapo museum is one of a series of museums that have been built to redress the past and to provide historical context to a memorial or monument such as the Hector Peterson Memorial and Museum. Other museums such as the Apartheid Museum, The Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre, the Red Location precinct and Lilliesleaf Centre have been built to address specific shortcomings in the museum field.

I also concluded that the Voortrekker Monument was a monument that has become a heritage icon since it has lost its hegemonic power and its management team have marketed it as a heritage site with educational value. The Monument has also been marketed as a place where visitors can undertake a number of cultural events within the Monument grounds and conforms to the commercialisation of heritage sites to attract international and local tourists and in line with a changing Afrikaner community for whom the Monument was originally built. A number of additional structures have been erected on the site to facilitate these new diverse activities

including a research centre, a wall of names for fallen soldiers of the pre 1994 South African Defence Force, sculptures and other Afrikaner material culture and a garden of remembrance for the depositing of ashes of the deceased.

I described and analysed the elements of Freedom Park and found that it conformed to the international memorial field in several ways while attempting to create a uniquely South African specific solution to the memorialisation of the dead who contributed to freedom in South Africa. I made comparisons to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington and the Memorial to Victims of State Terror in Buenos Aires and found that it confirmed my analysis that in the memorial field of trauma, similarities can be made between sites internationally and that architects and designers draw on and appropriate similar markers to commemorate this trauma. I concluded that while many elements were successful in creating an atmosphere conducive to mourning, the Wall of Names was particularly problematic with the exclusion of the SADF soldiers and innocent victims of sabotage and politically motivated bombings which I believe could have been a major contributory factor in making the site a space for reconciliation and unity. These criticisms aside, I recognise the reality of the two separate and opposing sites of the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park that are continuing to be interrogated. Dialogue between the management of both sites has resulted in measures that facilitate reconciliation through interventions such as the connecting reconciliation road and inclusive ceremonies being held at both sites to commemorate the fallen of both sides of the many conflicts in which South Africans have been involved.

My analysis of the //hapo museum concluded that it can be seen as part of an international trend in museum architecture that Baudrillard termed a 'clone'. Computer technology and high tech materials have facilitated the construction of museums that could be erected in any city in the world. They are not site specific because their design is just manipulations of computer programmes. Concerning the interior of the //hapo museum, I analysed the exhibits and concluded that the concept of the African Renaissance has been actively promoted and that the Struggle narrative is problematic in terms of the impossibility of representation of fixed time in an architectural space when time moves on and visitors bring with them their own cultural, political, religious, socio-economic and racial perceptions which affect how they interpret and read the intended messages contained within.

However the exhibit of Body #1 and Body #2 was an exception and I found that it had a profound effect on how I personally saw the Struggle. I also concluded that the fissure in the façade at the conclusion of the Nation Building exhibit was not exploited enough but nonetheless

was an effective means of conveying the connection between the power of the occupiers of the Union Buildings and the narrative of the //hapo museum. While the Voortrekker Monument still dominates the view from the Union Buildings I believe that the Freedom Park precinct and more specifically the //hapo museum has successfully amputated the symbolically powerful political connection between the Voortrekker Monument and the Union Buildings.

Finally I concluded that both monument sites can be considered heterotopian spaces by virtue of their otherness, their exclusiveness and their siting high on opposing hills and that their existence and relevance over time will only be secured if they are successful as tourist heritage destinations.

## List of abbreviations and terms:

### ABBREVIATIONS:

<b>AMAFA</b>	–	KwaZulu-Natal provincial heritage agency
<b>ANC</b>	–	African National Congress
<b>FAK</b>	–	<i>Federasie van Afrikaanse Kulturvereneginge</i>
<b>IFP</b>	–	Inkatha Freedom Party
<b>MIT</b>		Massachusetts Institute of Technology
<b>MPTT</b>	–	Missing Persons Task Team
<b>MK</b>	-	<i>Umkhonto we Sizwe</i>
<b>NHF</b>	–	National Heritage Foundation
<b>NMC</b>	–	National Monuments Council
<b>OCA</b>	-	Office of Collaborative Architects
<b>SADF</b>	–	South African Defence Force
<b>SAHRA</b>	-	South African Heritage Resources Agency
<b>SANDF</b>	–	South African National Defence Force
<b>TRC</b>	–	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
<b>UNESCO</b>	–	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNISA</b>	–	University of South Africa
<b>VVM</b>	–	Vietnam Veterans Memorial

### TERMS:

*//hapo* – Khoi - dream

*Dompas* – Colloquial – literally ‘dumb pass’, pass book

*Fin-de-siecle* – French – turn of the century, 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Geloftefees* – Afrikaans – festival commemorating a vow or promise

*Gestalt* – German – unified whole

*Got mit uns* – German – God with us

*Haas* – Afrikaans – rabbit, hasty

*Isiqu* – Zulu – necklace given in recognition of bravery in battle

*Isivivane* – Nguni – heap of stones

***Kairotic*** – Greek – critical juncture, moment of truth

***Kulturgesellschaft*** – German – cultural society

***Laager*** – Afrikaans – encampment of protective circle of wagons,

***Lekgotla*** – Nguni – assembly/meeting place

***Lesaka*** – Nguni – spiritual resting place

***Lieux de memoire*** - French – realms of memory

***Mambo*** – ruler of the Karanga society in Zimbabwe

***Moshate*** – Sepedi/Setswana - palace

***Mveledzo*** – Venda- success, progress

***Mvelinqanqi*** – Zulu- God of the Sky

***Ncome*** – Zulu – pleasant one

***nKulunkulu*** – Zulu – praise name of *mVelinqanqi*

***Ons vir jou Suid Afrika*** – Afrikaans – We for Thee South Africa

***Point de vue*** – French – outlook vantage point

***S'khumbuto*** – iSwati – memorial, place of remembrance

***Tivo*** - Venda – origin

***Tours de force*** – French - impressive achievement because it is done successfully, skillfully

***Ubuntu*** – Nguni – The concept of humanness, kindness.

***Umkhonto we Sizwe*** – armed wing of the African National Congress

***Uitspanplek*** – Afrikaans – place of relaxation, picnic

***Vhuawelo*** – Venda – nesting place

***Wit Wolf*** – Afrikaans – White Wolf

***Volkerschlachtdenkmal*** – German - Monument to the Battle of the Nations

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