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**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

Preserving an Artistic Journey

An analysis of how archival documentary films preserve cultural history, combined with the development of a short archival film documenting the life and artistic contributions of the late South African sculptor, Michael Gasa.

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Supervised by

Professor Michelle Stewart

DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
M-Arts, in the Graduate Programme in Digital Arts
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, Sfundo Cele....., declare that

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2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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Signature

Abstract

This study examines the role of archival documentary film in the preservation of cultural history and includes the production of a short archival documentary on the life and art of the late South African Sculptor Michael Gasa. The dissertation addresses the research problem, "What issues and insights about the role of digital archives in the preservation of South African cultural history are raised via the production of an archival documentary and an archival website on the life and art of the late sculptor Mr Bonginkosi Michael Gasa?". This study hopes to show, through the presentation of research and the curation of archival material, not only the importance of the role archival documentary film and the digital platform play in the preservation of heritage but also how this archival project promotes the idea of an African gaze, which Campt sums up as referring to 'a method of perceiving, understanding, and reflecting on the world, culture, and experiences through the eyes of an African' (2021). This is essential for preserving an authentic cultural voice and heritage. This study is conducted by following a practice-led slant, meaning the research primarily leads to new information about the practice. Practice-led research focuses on understanding the nature of practice and generates new knowledge that is meaningful and applicable to that practice. The primary goal of this research is to enhance understanding of practice or to contribute knowledge within the practice itself. (Candy; 2006) When conducting a study, the outcomes of practice-led research can be presented entirely in written form, without requiring a creative component. This approach integrates practice as a key element of its methodology and often aligns with action research. This differs from studies that incorporate physical artefacts or creative works as part of the submission, it puts an emphasis on advancing theoretical or practical insights about the practice itself. (2006) In this case, the practice will investigate the key elements that go into the production of an archival documentary and, secondly, the digital archiving of the project online. The study is designed using a case study approach, following the creative journey of Mr. Bonginkosi Michael Gasa, a sculptor who passed away on 18 April 2019 at the age of 55. The film about Mr. Gasa will be reported in the closing chapters of the study, which will also serve to elucidate the critical, theoretical, and cultural matrix from which the film emerges. The documentary film will be preserved on a website created using a free website builder, SITE123 and YouTube, both platforms serving as an online repository, curation, and record of Mr. Gasa's sculptures. Moreover, this paper and study hope to show that archives exist to be used for present and future generations and, in this way, can contribute to preserving our national cultural heritage.

Keywords

Archival documentary film, cultural preservation, participatory documentary, digital archive and curation, cultural heritage

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The study aims to investigate the role of documentary film as a means for preserving cultural heritage. In doing so, the research theoretically contextualises the study and includes a practice-based component and a reflective chapter. The research focuses on the undocumented work of the late South African sculptor Michael Gasa and explores and illustrates the idea of using archival formats to preserve cultural heritage. The purpose is to preserve and engage with the mode of participatory documentary (not from the audience's point of view but from the filmmaker and the documentary film participants).

Nichols defines a participatory film as "emphasising the interaction between filmmaker and subject. Filming takes place through interviews or other forms of even more direct involvement. Often coupled with archival footage to examine historical issues." (2001, pg. 34). Moreover, Kuhn and Westwell posit:

A documentary film relies on its ability to configure and elucidate visual and sonic information for the purpose of entertaining and educating. documentary film is described as the practice of filmmaking that deals with actual and factual (and usually contemporary) issues, institutions, and people; whose purpose is to educate, inform, communicate, persuade, raise consciousness, or satisfy curiosity, in which the viewer is commonly addressed as a citizen of a public sphere; whose materials are selected and arranged from what already exists (rather than being made up); and whose methods involve filming 'real people' as themselves in actual locations, using natural light and ambient sound. (2012, pg. 518).

This paper aims to address the role of archival documentary film in the preservation of South African cultural history and will adopt a practice-led approach and methodology. As this is a full research MA by dissertation only, the documentary film will be reported on in a reflective section within the dissertation. The film is presented in two languages: IsiZulu and English. The reason for doing this is because of the location where the study will be

conducted. These two languages are the most prominent around this province - KwaZulu-Natal. IsiZulu also represents the language and culture of the artist and his brother, who was interviewed. The English subtitles make it more accessible to a global audience.

Documentary films hold historical evidence by reproducing life as it is and, in doing so, can help present and preserve cultural heritage – which includes values, cultural artefacts, histories and belief systems. The use of documentary film has aided vastly in the growth of "realism" films. The reason for this is that documentary film has always been associated with telling the "truth". However, the issue of truth in documentary film has always been conventionally correlated to the one of objectivity; Blumenberg poses a question which he rhetorically dismantles regarding this notion, "How can a film most closely show events as they "actually" occurred... I believe it is a false one [problem]. In any medium in which selection or manipulation is made, strict objectivity is not possible." (1977, pg. 19) The reason for this unattainable objectivity can be traced in Nichols' chapter about the types of documentary films. He notes, "Every documentary has its own distinct voice. Like every speaking voice, every cinematic voice has a style or "grain" all its own that acts like a signature or fingerprint. It attests to the individuality of the filmmaker or director or, sometimes, to the determining power of a sponsor or controlling organisation." (2001, pg. 99) I lean towards the sentiments shared; for me, as a filmmaker. The subject matter coupled with my intuition (about the story being told) impacts on my creative decision-making in the creation of the film. Since achieving objectivity is not something we can reach, Blumenberg suggests we should strive for what he terms "authenticity". He observes that:

Authenticity may be desirable as a critical criterion for films that purport to show "truth". Authenticity is achieved by the two qualities [namely] legitimacy [shown by means of cinematography that events or actions actually happened] and significance [which results as events are made important only by virtue of the fact that they have been filmed] (1977, pg. 19)

Evidently, during Blumenberg's times it was that simple to identify traits that construct an authentic film, but times now proves it is harder to discern what is authentic on film given the amount of technology advancement we face. There is the rise of artificial intelligence which can aid with creating deepfakes, these are audiovisual recordings that have been created by altering and manipulating information such as the face and words of the person who is presenting the recording. In this study, the terms truth and authenticity are utilised interchangeably, as Blumenberg encapsulated, the Cambridge dictionary also attest to the relationship between the two terms by stating that 'authenticity' can be describe as 'the

quality of being real or true' (2025). The two terms of authenticity and truth are regarded as problematic in the field of documentary, since the film about Michael is non-fictional, I have opted to use the words interchangeably, reason being every film is authentic to whatever they are trying to show, how true that depiction is lies on the viewers' discretion and what they know. Trageton is aided by Brunner's (1994) argument that the deeper question to explore is not whether an object or place is authentic, but who holds the power to define authenticity. (2020) "This can be an allegory for narrative power, meaning the ability for a film to be felt authentic: The story of the film was true to itself." (Trageton, 2020) This is an interesting perspective to consider, knowing who has power over what is authentic is crucial. In film, I share a view that it is the audience that hold that power since they are the ones who need convincing to believe in a story, the fact that a filmmaker created a film would suggest he believes that story to be true to him/her. Since truth is based on what an individual knows, meaning information available to the individual at that point. The relationship between truth and authenticity is highlighted by Trageton's sentiment that for a film to be considered authentic, it must be "true to itself" (2020) In other words, a film feels authentic not because it mirrors external reality, but because its story remains consistent and sincere within its crafted world. This indicates that authenticity is a product of being truthful. Hence, in this study the two words truth and authenticity are used interchangeably.

Rancière argues that documentaries do more than just capture reality—they actively shape it through storytelling techniques like those used in fiction. He highlights how a filmmaker's decisions in composition, editing, and presentation influence the audience's perception, turning documentary into a deliberate act of interpretation rather than a passive recording. (2006) For Rancière, documentaries employ artistic tools—such as montage, narration, and sound design—to provoke emotions, construct meaning, and question established narratives. He challenges the rigid separation between fiction and non-fiction, suggesting that the two often overlap. By blurring these boundaries, documentaries can offer a richer, more layered engagement with reality. (2006) This perspective opens new ways for documentaries to explore social, political, and human experiences with creativity and depth, moving beyond simple fact-telling to become a dynamic form of expression. (2006)

Documentary is a broad term that encapsulates various forms and styles of filming. It is a genre that is described as 'filmmaking that focuses on real events, issues, institutions, and people, typically contemporary and aims to educate, inform, communicate, persuade, raise awareness, or satisfy curiosity. It uses existing material rather than fictional content. This

approach involves capturing real people in authentic settings, utilising natural light and ambient sound.' (2012)

This paper will explore the genre of archival documentary film. This style of documenting utilises a combination of live footage and interviews with found and/ or borrowed footage and images. Jaimie Baron argues that "what makes footage read as archival is first the effect within a given film generated by the juxtaposition of shots perceived as produced at different moments in time" (2012, pg.31). This sentiment is further explored by the filmmaker Manfred Becker when he describes how archives are utilised in documentary film, "the use of archival in documentary film is the re-appropriation of previously recorded documents, images and sounds from the historical world" (Hynes, 2015)

With the rapid advancements in technology over the years, the genre of documentary film has also evolved. The way films are created, distributed, and archived has changed. For example, the internet has provided alternatives to preserving and documenting film to make the medium easily accessible to the masses. Films now have numerous free distribution outlets, with YouTube, Websites, and Vimeo being the most prominent. In this regard, the study will engage with notions of archiving and preservation in terms of the digital platform. As well as discussing and contextualising the digital platform as an archival tool and notions around digital preservation, I will create a webpage that will serve as an archival platform for this film; this will include the dissertation, the film (YouTube link), an online gallery of works, a catalogue of Mr Gasa's artworks and the exhibition information. This will also be documented and reported on in the dissertation.

The short archival documentary film will adopt a participatory approach, meaning that I will interview and interact with subjects and use archival media and material to retrieve history. Archival footage can bridge the gap between different events that occurred at different times in history. The study will draw on film theory and film theorists (including Bill Nichols, Dirk Eitzen, Jaimie Baron, and Stella Bruzzi, among others). These commentators provide invaluable insights into the nature of documentary film, particularly the archival genre) to define and critically engage with the documentary genre I am exploring. The key concepts the documentary film explores are the archive and its ability to provide a fragment of history, the participatory relationship between the filmmaker and the subject, and how these help in the preservation of an artistic journey. The documentary film will follow the 3-act rule, which

is fundamentally the story in three parts: the beginning, middle, and end. The beginning of the film is intended to be as robust as possible; in my case, that means it should be rich in flavour; the introduction is about the one-man carving exhibition by Michael. This is an interesting place to begin the story of the artist.

The exploration will also draw on concepts of preserving cultural heritage and archives in general; this is significant to the study because the documentary film is part of a documentary heritage; this heritage reflects the diversity of peoples, languages and cultures. (Abid, 1995) Thereby, in creating this film, I hope to contribute to the mantra of entertaining with the purpose of educating since the medium of documentary film has been noted for its potential to affect "social change, education, and [raising] awareness on a global scale" (Shaibu, 2023). One can argue that this adds to the collective memory of a nation. This memory can be described as a 'reinterpretation of the past that relies on the shared recollections of a community, which are tied to the identity of that social group.' (2022).

Through a qualitative case study approach, the dissertation will look at three South African case studies that illuminate the theories coiled by this study and that impacted on the approach to the practice-based component. These include, firstly, a feature-length documentary film by Mickey Madoda Dube called *Sobukwe (A Great Soul) (2012)*; the interesting fact about this film is that, for as prominent the figure was, there were no archival videos and recorded speeches by Sobukwe that are used in the creation of this film. It is a performative documentary film that tells the story of the late great activist Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe. Even though this film was created using traits of a performative mode, there are various interchanges between the archival images and the performative nature of the film. The best example of this is when there is an archive newspaper article that is depicted from the Sunday Times that reads, "LEADER EXPELLED IN PAN-AFRICANIST ROW", and the narrator elaborates on how this was achieved. The way the archive document was utilised in the above scenario, I plan to also employ a similar strategy using an archive newspaper article juxtaposed with an explanation from one of the interviewees. even though *Sobukwe (A Great Soul) (2012)* is created using traits of a performative mode, it also uses archival images and videos to tell other parts of the story.

The second case study that influenced the film about Michael is by Ramadan Suleman, a documentary film entitled *Zwelidumile (2011)* that uses the interviews, archival videos, and

images about the late South African artist Zwelidumile Feni to convey a story about the artist's creative journey. This is the same way I plan to tell the story of Michael Gasa. The third documentary film that helped shape my creation process is called *The Cradock Four* (2010), directed by David Forbes. It follows the assassination story of Matthew Goniwe, Sparrow Mkonto, Sicelo Mhlauli, and Fort Calata. These four friends were killed during the apartheid days, and their killers were never convicted. The film also uses the archival video of Matthew Goniwe's wife, which was part of an interview she did in 1988 about her late husband and how the government "feared" him. It also features archive images of the men who were murdered and of the place where the event took place, and these are used to elucidate the words of the commenter.

These three documentary films speak about the lives of individuals whose lives are a part of our historical and cultural heritage. The films are biographical in nature, and they both showcase the history of not only the individuals themselves but also the country that birthed these icons.

The title of the short documentary film I have made is *Bonginkosi*. The film will be reported in a critical reflexive component in the research, which will also serve to elucidate the critical, theoretical, and cultural matrix from which the film emerges. *Bonginkosi* is about the archiving and preservation of Michael Gasa's artworks. Gasa was a sculptor who passed away on 18 April 2019 at the age of 55. He started out selling carvings on the tourist route in the Valley of 1000 Hills in KwaZulu-Natal (KwaZulu-Natal) to having his one-man carving exhibition at art galleries like the Tatham in Pietermaritzburg. He also had work on *Jabulisa* (The Art of Kwa-Zulu Natal), a travelling curated exhibition showcasing the art of the province. This film will serve to preserve Gasa's creative journey and will focus on documenting his development as an artist, as well as researching, photographing, and filming the work he has in private and gallery collections.

The documentary will also attempt to present a picture of the man himself as an individual. This will involve interviewing his brother, who can tell us more about him. From what I gather, they were very close, and I have sourced the person who supported Michael's artistic development and who has a large collection of his work, Peter Stewart. Peter worked closely with Michael for over 15 years. He has agreed to be interviewed and will walk us through the mind behind these artworks. Peter recounts that Michael decided to start carving after

encountering the "first wave" of Zimbabwean craftsmen who came to South Africa to sell their wood and soapstone carvings. At this point (before the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy), the Zimbabweans were not refugees; they tended to return to Zimbabwe with their earnings. It is believed that Michael had an epiphany and started carving "like a man possessed. When I met him, he already had an assortment of masks and a menagerie of snakes, birds, and imaginary creatures. Many were crude copies of carved curios from around the world that he happened to encounter; others were astonishingly original. A few were comparatively well finished." (Stewart, P. (2022) Email to Sfundu Cele, 26 April). The archival approach is pertinent to the practice component as my short documentary features a mixture of archive footage which is utilised to 'relive the past' (2012), media reports, photographs, and shots that have been captured by me (the filmmaker) that represent the now. This reiterates the point that Baron highlighted where he states archives help with 'reliving the past' (2012).

The dissertation also draws on the broader area of archiving and preserving cultural history. The study engages with notions of archiving and preserving in terms of the digital platform. This is done through the creation of a free website using SITE123, this is a free website builder and hosting site. The created site forms the digital archive for the documentary film. The film will also be uploaded to YouTube and Vimeo. This is digital archiving, which means storing and maintaining files that were created to be seen using a screen. These documents can be retrieved for future usage. Digital archiving, which is used to preserve fragile, rarely accessed materials, such as delicate manuscripts or audiovisual content, by converting them into digital formats. (Ramana, 2004) This approach allows researchers to study these items without physical contact, safeguarding their original artistic and textual integrity. The core objectives include secure storage, efficient retrieval, and enhanced accessibility. National archives such as National Archives & Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA) oversee this process, tasked with protecting a nation's cultural, economic, and intellectual heritage. Digital archives serve as repositories that employ strategies like data migration to maintain the longevity and authenticity of digital records, ensuring future generations can access this heritage. (2004)

1.2 Objectives:

The objectives of the research study are:

1. To define the central characteristics of the specific documentary film format used in this study and to reflect on how these apply to the practice-based component.
2. To explore the role preservation plays in cultural heritage in general, in the context of South Africa and in relation to my documentary film.
3. To demonstrate the documentary archival methods and materials used to create a useful and reliable documentary film about the life and works of Michael Gasa.
4. To document the creation of *Bonginkosi* film, reflecting on the process and unpacking the theory and context that underpin it.

1.3 Questions to be Asked:

1. What are the central characteristics of the specific documentary film format examined in this study, and how will I apply these to the practice-based component?
2. What role does preservation play in cultural heritage in general, in the context of South Africa and in relation to my documentary film?
3. What documentary archival methods and materials will I use to build a useful and reliable document of the life and works of Michael Gasa?
4. How will the website promote and create an archive documenting the life and works of Michael Gasa?

1.4 Chapter Outline

1.4.1. Chapter 1: Introduction

The chapter aims to provide background to the study; it also serves as an overview of the research and central aims and objectives. We are introduced to the main research question and the objective of the study. The chapter details what the term practice-led approach means and the definition of the term.

1.4.2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter aims to provide the definition of the documentary approach as defined by Bill Nichols. It also delves into the archival documentary genre, as explained by Bruzzi and Baron. It includes literature on the South African case studies that illuminate the theories coiled by this study: *Sobukwe (A Great Soul)*, *The Cradock Four*, and *Zwelidumile*.

1.4.3. Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology looks at the qualitative case study approach and the notion of practice-led methodologies. How the practice-led approach relates to the practice components (the film and the website) using archives as documentary evidence and the importance of preserving South African heritage.

1.4.4 Chapter 4: South African case studies that illuminate the themes of participatory, archive, preserving cultural heritage, and digital preservation in documentary film *Sobukwe (A Great Soul)*, *The Cradock Four*, and *Zwelidumile*.

This chapter explores the documentary *Sobukwe: A Great Soul* (2012), which delves into the story of Sobukwe and the history of South Africa. It also looks at the film *Zwelidumile* (2011), which is used to highlight its participatory approach. The chapter concludes by using *The Cradock Four*, which explores how the archive was utilised to communicate a story, how the film preserves the culture of South Africa and how the film is archived digitally.

1.4.5 Chapter 5: *BONGINKOSI (2023): AN ANALYSIS OF THE DOCUMENTARY APPROACH AND ITS DOCUMENTATION ON THE DIGITAL PLATFORM.*

This chapter is analysis of my short documentary film *Bonginkosi* and the participatory approach. It will also reflect on how the case studies impacted and influenced my approach. Moreover, a discussion of the use of found footage and its integration into the film. It is concluded by the exploration of the digital platform and repository used to document and archive the film and its supporting material.

1.4.6 Chapter 6: Reflection, Results, and Discussion

This chapter will discuss the interviews that were conducted between the researcher/filmmaker and the two participants, *Musa* and Peter. These include stories about the life and the art of Michael Gasa. The interviews will be broken into two segments, getting to know the artist which is with *Musa* and getting to know the art with Peter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review explores the potential role of archival documentary film in preserving a South African's artistic journey. It is structured in a thematic format and that it examines already existing knowledge within the stipulated boundaries of my research aims and objectives. It follows a broad discussion of "what is a documentary film?" this discussion is going to be led by Bill Nichols and his book *Introduction to Documentary Film*, which will also be utilised to further elaborate on the "participatory" nature of the short archival documentary film that is going to be reported in the final chapter of this dissertation. The study will also explore what the term "African gaze" means. This literature review will outline some key texts that will assist me in researching the critical aspects of my study. The review will draw on literature that will help the study define documentary film, understand participatory and archival documentaries, and the contexts of cultural preservation.

2.1.1 Definition of terms:

2.1.2 Archive

Archives are documents made or received and accumulated by a person or organization while conducting affairs and preserved because of their continuing value. The term "archives" can also be used to refer to the organization, agency, or programme responsible for the selection, care, and use of records of continuing value and the repository, building, or place dedicated to

their storage, preservation, and use. (Katumala et. al, 2013) The term relates to the study because we are creating a documentary film that is going to make use of an archive. The entire research is based on this notion of preserving the "archive".

2.1.3 Documentary Film

A practice of filmmaking that deals with actual and factual (and usually contemporary) issues, institutions, and people; whose purpose is to educate, inform, communicate, persuade, raise consciousness, or satisfy curiosity; in which the viewer is commonly addressed as a citizen of a public sphere; whose materials are selected and arranged from what already exists (rather than being made up); and whose methods involve filming 'real people' as themselves in actual locations, using natural light and ambient sound. (Kuhn & Westwell; 2012) This is important because we must understand the meaning of what we are trying to create; we should be able to picture it using words, and this allows us to see what the outcome should look like.

2.1.4 Preservation

The protection of cultural property through activities that minimise deterioration and prevent loss of informational content. The primary goal of preservation is to prolong the existence of cultural property. (NEDCC, 2015) Understanding the term helps with the notion we are trying to achieve; in creating the film, we are already "preserving" the story and the artworks of the late artist.

2.1.5 Digital Preservation

Digital preservation is the management and maintenance of digital objects so they can be accessed and used by future users. The main goal of digital archives is to ensure the long-term preservation of digital data so that it remains accessible for appropriate use in the future. (Yadav, 2016, pg.64) Being able to differentiate between the types of preservation helps with furthering the ways one can explore the idea of preservation, especially given the times now; we must adjust with the times. The study aims to explore this idea by creating a free website to store the dissertation and the documentary film.

2.1.6 Participatory Documentary Film

Participatory documentary gives us a sense of what it is like for the filmmaker to be in each situation and how that situation alters as a result. This mode of documentary film usually

employs interviews or interaction with subjects and archival film to retrieve history. (Nichols, 2001) Understanding the term participatory is mandatory for this study because this is the mode of the documentary film we are going to create. The mode in which the film is going to be shot will be based on its traits.

2.1.7 Archive Document

These are the audio-visual files that are stored in archives, such as pictures, texts, audio, and films. They are usually used in films to speak on history or to provide some evidence for the film. (Barons, 2014) For this study, an archive document is utilised to provide us with context or history. It is used to substantiate what the speaker in the film is saying.

2.1.8 Cultural Heritage

A way of life and, in a broader sense, traditional behaviours, including the ideas, acts, and artefacts which are passed on from one generation to another. (Banjo, 1998) It is important to this study because the entire process of this paper is to promote or pay homage to some of the heritage we have in South Africa, like the story of Michael. 20

2.1.9 Collective Memory

"Collective memory has been defined as a reconstruction of the past based on memories shared by a community, associated with the identity of the social group concerned" (2022, pg.56).

2.2 Defining Documentary Film.

Defining the term documentary film proves to be a challenging path. Nichols argues that every film is technically a documentary, including even fiction films, which document or portray something about the time context or culture in which it was made - whether through the technology, cinematic style, or viewpoints/ perspectives of the narrative or the filmmaker. He further explains that "in fact, we could say that there are two kinds of film: (1) documentaries of wish-fulfilment and (2) documentaries of social representation. Each type tells a story, but the stories, or narratives, are of different sorts" (2001, p.g1).

Documentaries of "wish-fulfilment" are what we usually consider fiction. While documentaries of "social representation" is what we consider as non-fiction. In this study, we have opted to create a short "social representation" documentary film. Nichols alludes that "documentary" can be no more easily defined than "love" or "culture." Dirk Eitzen in his

article "When Is a Documentary?" notes that the act of defining documentary film is a perturbing one because of the various questions that arise, which range from the "truth" to the "trust" (1995). These notions will be helpful for me to consider as I will be researching and archiving the work and life of someone based on various materials and sources, from interviews to photographs and live footage. My challenge will be to use, approach, and document these materials in such a way as to represent the individual truthfully and to raise awareness about his creative journey. Kuhn and Westwell best sum up the motive of this practical project and the dissertation. In *A Dictionary of Film Studies*, they define the documentary genre as:

The practice of filmmaking that deals with actual and factual (and usually contemporary) issues, institutions, and people; whose purpose is to educate, inform, communicate, persuade, raise consciousness, or satisfy curiosity; in which the viewer is commonly addressed as a citizen of a public sphere; whose materials are selected and arranged from what already exists (rather than being made up); and whose methods involve filming 'real people' as themselves in actual locations, using natural light and ambient sound. (2012, p.518)

This definition is not perfect, but it provides a decent foundation to comprehending what is a documentary film. The dictionary begins by noting that these films are using the truth "factual" to depict stories about 'issues, institutions, and people' that inform the viewers with minimal manipulation (editing that is necessary) regarding construction and the way the stories are told. Documentaries are a powerful medium that can influence how people remember and interpret historical events/figures, social issues, and cultural narratives.

The idea of documentary film can be traced back to the early development of the medium of film itself; McLane recalls in the chapter "Pre-Documentary Origins" the early recorded experiments, like those of Edison laboratory in New Jersey, as the early inception of documentary films. He extrapolates using the examples of Fred Ott sneezing in the 1893 recording and the footage of two Edison workers dancing to music played by the phonograph as early depictions. (2012) Even though these recordings were primarily intended as experimental entertainment, they bear similarities to later documentaries. (2012) Further citing the Lumiere brothers as the first to make an audience pay for watching documentaries at a Paris Café in 1895. (2012) The Lumiere brothers' approach to filming documentaries differed from one of Edison's; they opted for a portable camera to capture outdoor filming,

while Edison utilised studio-based methods that required larger cameras. (2012) It was not till John Grierson attempted to coin the definition of the term documentary film during the "British Documentary Movement" in the 1930s that he described it as "the creative treatment of actuality" (2012, p.6). Moreover, documentaries are known for "representing others". This process involves a sonic and visual resemblance of certain parts of our past events. The same sentiment is shared by Nichols, who posits:

...documentaries, then, offer aural and visual likenesses or representations of some part of the historical world. They stand for or represent the views of individuals, groups, and institutions. They also make representations, mount arguments, or formulate persuasive strategies of their own, setting out to persuade us to accept their views as appropriate. The degree to which one or more of these aspects of representation come into play will vary from film to film. Still, the idea of representation itself is central to the documentary. (2001, pg.5)

The short documentary film that I will create and report on in the final chapter of this study will be "representing" the story of Michael Gasa; this film will be shaped around the story of Gasa and his artworks. With "representing" comes modes of representation, situations and events, actions and issues can all be represented differently. Strategies, conventions, and constraints emerge, establishing commonality among different texts. Modes of representation are fundamental methods of organising texts about recurring features or conventions. Four modes of representation stand out as the dominant organisational patterns around which most texts are structured in documentary films. One of these modes is "participatory"; the short documentary film that will be created will have traits of a participatory mode.

2.3 Participatory documentary

Bill Nichols distinguishes the different modes of documentary from a participatory documentary thus:

When we view participatory documentaries, we expect to witness the historical world as represented by someone who actively engages with, rather than unobtrusively observes, poetically reconfigures, or argumentatively assembles that world. The filmmaker steps out from behind the cloak of voice-over commentary, steps away from poetic meditation, steps down from a fly-on-the-wall perch and becomes a social actor (almost) like any other. (2001, p.116)

This approach will be visualized in the short documentary in that the documentary will consist of the filmmaker interacting with the participants of the interviews I conduct. In "assembling the world" I will visit and document places essential to building the world Michael inhabited. I will go to the Tatham Art Gallery to see and document the artwork of Michael Gasa and, if possible, shoot footage that I could add to the documentary. I will also use archival footage of his funeral and film and document his work in a private collection. I also plan to get more people involved, including Michael's family or friends, as this is important because it adds layers to the story. This will be achievable with the help of *Musa* (Michael's brother). Everything regarding the number of participants will be indicated on the ethical clearance. For now, the participants are *Musa Gasa* and Peter Stewart.

It is important to note that even though a documentary film may identify with a particular mode, it does not necessarily mean it is limited to it. There is room for flexibility and the exploration of other modes, while the dominant mode is there to help with the overall structuring of the film. Likewise, Nichols reiterates,

A film identified with a given mode need not be so entirely. A reflexive documentary can contain sizable portions of observational or participatory footage; an expository documentary can include poetic or performative segments. The characteristics of a given mode function as a dominant in a given film: they give structure to the overall film, but they do not dictate or determine every aspect of its organisation." (2001, pg.100)

A dominant mode for my short documentary film is participatory. I had to go to the field, meaning I had to spend a day with Michael's brother at his home; he even took me to Michael's house, visited the area he lived in and captured the moments I could find. I also had to spend a day with Peter, who helped with the stories behind the artist and the artworks he left behind. To understand what this mode entails, I refer to Bill Nichols. He compares the work of an anthropologist, which relies on the practice of fieldwork and the "participant-observation" nature of it, to the work of a filmmaker as he contrasts the observational and participatory mode:

Documentary filmmakers also go into the field; they, too, live among others and speak about or represent what they experience. The practice of participant-observation, however, has not become a paradigm. The methods and practices of social science research have remained subordinate to the more prevalent rhetorical

practice of moving and persuading an audience. Observational documentary, on the other hand, de-emphasises persuasion to give us a sense of what it is like to be in each situation but without a sense of what it is like for the filmmaker to be there, too.

Participatory documentary gives us a sense of what it is like for the filmmaker to be in each situation and how that situation alters as a result. The types and degrees of alteration help define variations within the participatory mode of documentary. (2001, pg. 116)

Consequently, the documentary film consisted of the filmmaker interacting with the participants during the film's creation. This involved asking questions during the making of the film and adding details (for example, when *Musa* was speaking about the church Michael used to be a member of, the filmmaker can be heard on that scene with a follow-up question about whether the church is a form of "Izayoni") to aid the participants articulate the story of Michael Gasa. This interaction is more subtle as the indispensable aspect of this film is the story of Michael Gasa. Furthermore, to better comprehend what traits make this mode, Nichols reiterates that a participatory mode "emphasises the interaction between filmmaker and subject. Filming takes place by means of interviews or other forms of even more direct involvement. Often coupled with archival footage to examine historical issues." (2001, p.34)

The short documentary consists of live interviews, live footage of Michael's artworks captured by the filmmaker himself and archive footage and photographs of Michael and the day of his funeral. This is evident in the film's opening scene; we are introduced to Peter, who tells a story about Michael when Michael went to live in Gauteng. This was part of the interview with Peter that was captured to help narrate the story about the life and art of Michael. In a participatory documentary, the interview is one of the most common forms of encounter between the filmmaker and participants. Interviews are a unique type of social encounter. They differ from the ordinary conversation and the more coercive interrogation process due to the institutional framework they take place and the specific protocols or guidelines that structure them. "Filmmakers make use of the interview to bring different accounts together in a single story. The voice of the filmmaker emerges from the weave of contributing voices and the material brought in to support what they say." (2001, pg.122)

Furthermore, the short documentary film follows this pattern of connecting different accounts to represent the story of Michael. This is achieved through the interviewer's/filmmaker's questions. These questions range from Michael's upbringing to the inspiration of the different

sculptures he created. These interviews are enmeshed with archive footage and photographs to substantiate the story of Michael; evidently, Barons notes, "documentary film has long been enmeshed in a complex relationship with archives and archival practices. While many documentary filmmakers have drawn on archival materials—whether film footage, photographs, or other artefacts" (2007, pg.13)

We need to understand the role documentaries play in a society's collective memory.

"Collective memory has been defined as a reconstruction of the past based on memories shared by a community, associated with the identity of the social group concerned"

(Rosello,2022, pg.56). Documentaries mainly utilise visuals, personal stories, interviews, and audiovisual elements to create a vivid and emotionally resonant portrayal of events. This visual and emotional impact can leave a lasting impression on viewers and contribute to the construction of collective memory. So, we filmmakers need to create films that leave our intended intentions as these memories have a future impact on how people (viewers) perceive certain cultures and events. Rosello notes, "However, documentaries have a long tradition of employing discursive operations aimed at making the knowledge they supposedly contain 'seem true" (2022, pg.56). The same words are further echoed by Nichols, "Documentaries offer the sensuous experience of sounds and images organised in such a way that they come to stand for something more than mere passing impressions: they come to stand for qualities and concepts of a more abstract nature." (2001, pg.65)

It is essential to be aware that documentaries involve the process of selection and editing, just like any other film. This is done because filmmakers must decide what to include and exclude from the narrative. This selection process/ editing can influence how events are remembered in society's eyes, which may consist of views or aspects while downplaying others. Rosello further emphasises this when he speaks about how documentary film aids in the "construction of memory". Noting that "the selection process itself entails ordering, hierarchically structuring and narrativizing fragments for the purpose of creating a particular truth effect, which in turn raises the question of the traditional confusion between the concepts of history and story." (2022, pg.57)

Filmmakers have the power to frame events within a particular context or narrative. How events are presented, the language used, and the overall tone can influence how viewers interpret and remember historical occurrences. Nichols echoes these words when he talks about a trait of a documentary of social representations, "As stories, films of both types call

on us to interpret them, and as "true stories," films call on us to believe them. Interpretation is a matter of grasping how the form or organisation of the film conveys meanings and values. Belief is a question of our response to these meanings and values" (2001, pg.2)

Documentaries usually have a sense of power and genuineness about them. This might be due to how they make use of actual footage, interviews with experts or witnesses (people who were there), and other archival elements that can be referenced. This aids the viewer in believing in the documentary's version of events as a trustworthy source of information. This is achieved through, as Nichols notes that documentaries provide both visual and audio depictions of a particular aspect of the past. They represent or stand for the opinions of people, organisations, and groups. They also provide arguments, generate representations, or create their own persuasive techniques to influence us to agree with them when it is suitable. The concept of representation itself is essential to the documentary, even though the extent to which one or more of these elements of representation are used will differ from one film to the next. (2001)

What these films claim to present cannot always be taken as authentic in some cases, as Nichols further makes an example of how Robert Flaherty once utilised scenes that appeared to be shot in one place but were shot in a different place,

Documentary film practice allows for the image to generate an appropriate impression rather than guarantee full-blown authenticity in every case. Just as a photograph can be "doctored," so can a documentary. The "father" of the documentary, Robert Flaherty, for example, in his film *Nanook of the North*, created the impression that some scenes took place inside Nanook's igloo when, in fact, they were shot in the open air with half an oversized igloo as a backdrop. This gave Flaherty enough light to shoot but required his subjects to act as if they were inside an actual igloo when they were not. (2001, pg.85)

This shows that as much as the documentary film holds some evidentiary value, it can be manipulated in its creation process to make it fit the filmmaker's desired outcome.

2.4 Archival documentary

To grasp the definition of archival documentary film, one must first comprehend what an archival document (sometimes called archival footage) is. Barons observes that, 'In popular discourse, archival document is usually contrasted with footage that was produced specifically for the film we are seeing. Yet, I would contend that what distinguishes footage as "archival" is, first, the impact created within a given film by the juxtaposition of shots presumed to have been taken at different junctures in history.' (2014) Moreover, the short

documentary features footage recorded from different times in history. To be more specific, there is an archive document of Michael's funeral that is creatively depicted as the interviews are being played. This archive footage was taken at a different time (the day of the funeral), and this will be conflated with other footage and photographs (of Michael and his artworks) that were also shot at different times in history. The way these archival documents are applied in films has always been for two purposes. These reasons are noted, "archive material has rarely been used unadulterated and unexplained within the context of documentary film, rather it has primarily been deployed in one of two ways: illustratively, as part of a historical exposition to complement other elements such as interviews and voiceover; or critically, as part of a more politicised historical argument or debate." (Bruzzi, 2006, pg. 26) Evidently, Reece Augustine seems to share the same views with Bruzzi about how filmmakers utilise these documents:

In documentary filmmaking – particularly historical documentaries or those concerned with the historical residues of collective memory – the archive has traditionally been assigned a specific set of functions, such as the marker of historical evidence and signifier about statements made within voiceover narrative. As a result, these set of utilitarian functions ascribed to documentary film practice have assumed a hegemonic presence that serves the narrative objectives of the form; or is often the case, the filmmakers' political and ideological interpretation of historical events. (Augustine, 2015, pg.11)

In the film, I used archival documents to blend historical evidence and what is being mentioned by the interviews in the film at that specific moment. The interviewees' words will serve as the commentary for that archival document, as we will not be using 'Voice of God' voice-over commentary. With the understanding of what an archival document does and how it is utilised in documentary films, the definition of an archival documentary is a film that uses archival documents (sometimes referred to as archival footage). These documents are placed creatively in tandem with other documents/footage, such as interviews shot at different times in history, and these tend to tell stories of historical events or figures. Brunow reiterates this about the way archival documentary makes use of archival documents, "Documentary images are often considered a source of factual, positive knowledge. Therefore, conventional documentaries tend to use archival footage as a means of authentication, as visible evidence to show "how it was" ("wie es einst gewesen") in the sense of Ranke." (2015, pg.5) There are a couple of South African case studies that correlate to the

words uttered in the above paragraph, *Zwelidumile* (2010) and *Sobukwe: A Great Soul* (2012) to name a few.

The archive footage and private individuals' photographs will be used to construct the short documentary. The individual who provided the archive footage and pictures of Michael's funeral is Peter Stewart. Jaimie Barons opens her book "The Archive Fever: Found Footage and the Audio-visual Experience of History" with Nichols's quote, "History persists and seldom more powerfully than in filmed images – our externalized form of memory. What happens when the past meets the present in films that draw on archival films and photographs to engender meaning?" (2014, np) This question posed by Nichols offers insight into the definition of a film that uses archive footage when it mentions the past meeting the present. It is Barons who answers the question posed when she discerns 'archival footage has, in common discourse, frequently been defined in opposition to footage created – rather than found for the film we are watching. However, I would argue that what makes footage read as "archival" is the effect within a given film generated by the juxtaposition of shots perceived as produced at different moments in time'. (2014, p.1). Radu Jude makes a valid point in a discussion on YouTube titled "The Archive Effect: Found Footage and Photography in Documentary Cinema", stating 'any documentary that is made using found footage or documents is a representation of the truth, regardless of when it was made, it always speaks about historical truth' (Verzio International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, 2021, 11:41) This is further reiterated by Jaime Baron on her article *Contemporary Documentary Film and "Archive Fever": History, the Fragment, the Joke* - when she posits that 'archival documentary film's role is to engage this present moment with the past, with the dead and what they have left behind.' (2007, p.24). The historical truth that this documentary will depict is the artist's story. Since the artist utilized sculpture as his medium, this helps us preserve the artist's work in a different form of medium.

In the documentary *Zwelidumile* (2010) by Ramadan Suleman, the film opens with archive footage, an old interview that *Zwelidumile Feni* did. This archive footage shows *Feni* speaking about what inspires the work he created, he explains 'I am not going to be that artist who promotes redundancy, I must create something that is meaningful and that has to do with all humanity. I am not trying to be clever, if I were, I would be wealthy now'. (02:08) This footage plays a crucial role in establishing the story of this creative genius and it sets the tone

for the entire documentary film. We understand the mind behind the artefacts and where he came from when he created these artworks.

2.5 African Gaze¹

The term African Gaze is understood in contemporary critical discourse that challenges dominant Western perspectives. As asserted by Luckett: "...the critique by many African intellectuals would be that historically colonial power relations permitted the knower codes ('social' and even 'born gazes') of European philosophies to be imposed as universal knowledge codes. . ." (2019, pg.201).

In the context of the above, the African gaze in this study refers to the reverse gaze, which reclaims and decolonises the gaze that denotes a Western perspective. While Luckett may be referring to the philosophical gaze as it applies to historical and intellectual agency, it equally applies to visual studies, which includes artists and filmmakers. Campt (2021) posits a notion of the African gaze that refers to artists and filmmakers who dismantle the colonial gaze. She claims this "idea of a gaze opens up a different set of possibilities for understanding other potentialities of a Black gaze. It unleashes some of the multiple meanings of the gaze that are impossible to imagine when it is understood as always already tethered to a prior ... structure of dominance" (2021, pg.22).

As Campt implies, the term 'African gaze' is a nuanced and complex term. Even though the term has been utilised in academia in the recent decade, it still does not have a definite or widely acknowledged definition. Broadly, it refers to a method of perceiving, understanding, and reflecting on the world, culture, and experiences through the eyes of an African. But Campt suggests the African gaze does more than represent something from a Black perspective. She claims that more recently the term has come to include an approach that challenges the idea that Black life needs to be shown through a distance lens of pity and something that is seen as disparate to whiteness (2021, pg.7). This study and approach to the documentary film is influenced by this interpretation of the African gaze in that it aims first and foremost to highlight the value of the life and work of an artist, and not through the lens of pity or the notion of the other. Moreover, and in keeping with Campt's idea of the African

This section refers to a co-authored article, *Digital Archival Preservation and Cultural Heritage: A Practice-led Study and Preservation Project of the Work of late Sculptor Bonginkosi Michael Gasa*, for which I was the primary author, that emanated from the dissertation and was first presented at the conference DHASA 2023. Published in the Journal of the Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa, Vol. 5, No.1¹

gaze, the filmmaker hopes that his embedded cultural knowledge and context, which he shares with the artist, will add authenticity and some complexity to how the artist's works and life are presented, understood, and interpreted.

In Garritano's book review of *African Cinema: Decolonising the Gaze*, the reviewer makes a point regarding the gaze and African films, "Barlet suggests that African cinema offers another way of looking, one that revealed the African's belonging to humanity" (2003, pg. 215) Echoing Camp's views, Garritano implies that a gaze has to do with the perception that Africans belong to humanity in general rather than being part of a distant other.

The application of gaze in this study is not in the context of the subject being perceived as the 'the other', but rather from the context of a filmmaker with a shared cultural and ethnic knowledge to that of the subject of the documentary film and its main participants. In terms of the creation of the documentary on Micheal Gasa, the filmmaker takes heed of Simon Njami's comment, as observed by Bester during the Africa Remix exhibition, "that continental and diaspora artists had a responsibility to create the African gaze." (2008, pg.83) The concept of the African gaze comprises a range of perspectives, artistic manifestations, and worldviews founded on the history, cultures, and settings of the African continent. However, it commonly draws on wisdom and pools of knowledge, identity, experience, and understanding shared by ethnic groups and individuals from the African continent. The concept is further illuminated by Anasiudu, who describes a volume of poetry by Odia Ofiemun (Nigerian poet and polemicist) as offering:

... a unique form of African gaze to the discourse on Africa, African identity, and modern Africa. The poems in the two collections incarnate a vanishing tradition of oral poetry in Africa, similar to Okotp'Bitek Songs of Lawino. The poems are crafted in the dithyrambic-elegiac mode, and they also draw extensively from the African ethnophilosophical worldview and contemporary history of South Africa. (2022, pg.107)

Even though Anasiudu refers to the African oral tradition about an African gaze, implicit in his commentary is the potential of this notion to offer a uniquely African worldview and cultural and philosophical outlook which has equal potency in visual narrative and the genre of film.

An example of a uniquely African philosophy is "Ubuntu" – which some African commentators perceive as the driving force when creating art. According to Msila, Ubuntu

represents an ancient African philosophy, a lifestyle akin to a spiritual belief in pre-colonial African communities. It emphasises the principle of communal living. This ethos reflects the practice of sharing, selfless sacrifice for others, and the protection and care of fellow humans. Ubuntu is founded on the idea that the well-being of both me and others is interconnected and dependent on our collective environment.' (2015). It ties to the notion brought forward by Barlet about 'Africans belonging to humanity', meaning we Africans create from a place that is for humanity, and such philosophies as Ubuntu attest to that. This spirit of Ubuntu is what helped in the creation of this film about Michael. The people involved in the film's production were committed selflessly to its success, and everyone sacrificed their time to ensure the story of Michael was shared with dignity.

2.6 Archive and preservation of cultural history

The importance of preserving the artist's work is stressed by Kamatula et al. when they state,

Archives belong to the people as they document rich information about what happened in the past in their society. In other words, archival materials may contribute to people's enjoyment and inspiration, cultural values, learning potential, economic prosperity, and social equity. As such, archives exist to be accessed and used and, in this way, to promote national heritage." (2013, pg.119)

Accessing these archive documents to create this documentary aids in the furtherance of not only national but also cultural heritage. Diaro stresses the importance of creating content that is of African gaze:

In the era of globalization, films have become a tool of cultural transmission. Supported by online streaming platforms such as YouTube, audio-visual content is becoming readily available to individuals across the world. While globalization brings diverse people from all races together, there is the danger of emphasizing Western cultural values as dominant and most preferred. (2021, p.18).

This study is needed because not only does it show the role an archival documentary plays in preserving heritage, but it also promotes the idea of the African gaze to culture, which one does not see often, as Diaro stated. It is important to preserve our cultural heritage because "the cultural heritage of any nation symbolizes the history and legacy of the nation's values and artefacts transmitted from one generation to another for cultural longevity." (2021, pg.2) Moreover, Dr. Booms looks at the role the "archivist" plays in the preservation of

documentary heritage noting that ‘archives preserve certain materials because archivists judge them to have lasting value. By evaluating which records are worth keeping, archivists play a crucial role in shaping history—they decide what becomes a historical source. This process involves giving meaning to the chaotic flow of real-life events by selecting and organizing them into a form that researchers can study and interpret.’ (1986)

This indicates that historically archivists were somewhat like gatekeepers of documentary heritage, it was them who decided on which piece of materials was deemed fit to be preserved for other generations to source in future. By this piece information, we get to see the importance of how these people shaped our ideas of how we knew history.

2.7 Importance of preserving South African heritage.

To comprehend the importance of preserving our heritage, one must first understand what preservation means. It can be described as the 'protection of cultural property through activities that minimise deterioration and prevent loss of informational content. The primary goal of preservation is to prolong the existence of cultural property.' (NEDCC, 2015) The concept of heritage has evolved significantly over time. Initially referring only to cultural monuments, this concept has gradually expanded to include living culture and contemporary expressions. A nation's heritage represents its collective identity - national, regional, and local. Furthermore, it refers to humanity's historical experiences and contributions, as well as the values that have come to define a nation's distinct place in the world. Commemorating and preserving one's cultural heritage is a sure way to nurture pride, inspire a sense of civic duty, and promote social cohesion. Likewise, Kamatula et al. reiterate in their introduction:

Heritage can refer to anything that has been carried over from the past. It includes evidence of the past, such as documents that are to be considered the inheritance of present-day society. Manaf and Ismail (2010:107) also describe heritage as "our legacy from the past". Therefore, national heritage can refer to anything of national significance that is handed down and preserved through generations, especially documents, architecture, landscapes, and other artefacts. (2013, pg.109)

The same points are echoed on the UNESCO website about the importance of preserving our heritage, "as a source of identity, heritage is a valuable factor for empowering local communities and enabling vulnerable groups to participate fully in social and cultural life. It can also provide time-tested solutions for conflict prevention and reconciliation." (2021)

Likewise, Mkuwira's observation about the importance of preserving documentary heritage:

Documentary heritage is important to the society. Majumdar (2005) reported that documentary heritage is important as it depicts culture through various types of tangible circulating knowledge. Kamatula and Mnkeni-Saurombe (2013) also reported that documentary heritage provides people's enjoyment and inspiration, cultural values, learning potential, economic prosperity, and social equity." (2015, pg.57).

Singh distinguishes between the two types of cultural heritages we find and their importance, "'Cultural heritage' is a term that refers to tangible cultural heritage such as ruins, temples and buildings and intangible culture heritage such as traditional music, dance, performing arts and craftsmanship. Both the important forms of cultural heritage are closely linked together with each country's history, culture, and lifestyle customs." (2012, pg.289)

Even though Singh does not mention documentary film in his statement, I would add it to the list as it contributes immensely to a country's history, culture, and lifestyle customs. Abid echoes similar views when he talks about the impact of documentary film on the idea of collective memory and preservation, 'the collective memory of the people in this world is of vital importance in preserving cultural identities, in bridging the past and the present and in shaping the future. The documentary heritage residing in libraries, archives, museums, and the internet constitutes a major part of that memory and reflects the diversity of the people, languages, and cultures.' (1997, pg.40) The aim of this study is to also continue adding to this collective memory mentioned by Abid

It is crucial that we observe the issue of globalisation, as 'Cultural imperialism is rising, with an influx of Western films overshadowing Nigerian culture. While Western superheroes are embraced in Africa, traditional African figures like Sango and Mami Wata are often neglected. Filmmakers can promote African stories both locally and globally, as films can effectively communicate ideas and shape perceptions about cultural aspects like clothing and language.' (Diaro, 2021)

Even though Diaro is found making remarks about the issue of globalisation and the country of Nigeria, the same can be said about any other African country and this context applies to South Africans. This observation is the reason why we ought to produce stories that contribute to preserving our heritage as a country. It is important for coming generations to not only understand their heritage but also cherish these stories like we do when it comes to the global ones, as Diaro mentioned. It is needed for creators (filmmakers) to produce content that is for Africans by Africans, the reason being that we must not forget what makes us

(which is our cultural heritage) during the inevitable process of globalisation. In this sense, I believe it is important to document Michael's work in this way, from an insider perspective and by drawing on the memories and information of those who knew Michael and were part of his cultural heritage and those who may not have been within his culture but who were close to him and his work. An important part of my documentary process has been bringing together and curating Michael's large body of work. In this regard, in May 2023, I curated an exhibition that had over 50 sculptures/artworks that were created by Michael from the early 2000s till his untimely death in 2019. I was able to capture the footage of the exhibition, and I was also able to photograph and create a catalogue of the sculptures/artworks. The footage and photographs I shot at the exhibition will be integrated into the film and the website. The exhibition was reviewed and reported on in the University of KwaZulu-Natal's online newspaper, the Ndaba. This will go toward the archive. The exhibition was held at Jack Heath Gallery on the 30th of May 2023. This was an evening event, and due to time constraints, we were only allowed to put up the exhibition for one day. This was a restriction placed by the gallery at the last minute. The point of the exhibition was to archive the work in a clean gallery space and to document it professionally. The plan is to exhibit the work again in 2024. We are working on motivations for the work to be exhibited at a local gallery in KwaZulu-Natal, where the work can be seen and engaged with more extensively by the public.

This study is important because not only does it show the role an archival documentary plays in the preservation of heritage, but it also promotes the idea of African gaze to culture, which is something one does not see often as Diaro noted. It is important to preserve our cultural heritage because "the cultural heritage of any nation symbolises the history and legacy of the nation's values and artefacts transmitted from one generation to another for cultural longevity." (2021, p.2) Likewise, Alegbeleye notes:

In any society, the heritage materials play very important roles in establishing the identity, the accomplishments, and values of the people. Masakazi (2009) has therefore argued that in the present information society, every nation has to ensure the preservation, promotion and dissemination of its arts, culture and the overall heritage using the tools in the present age. This is because heritage is a source of strength and confidence that puts the changes of the society into perspectives and therefore enables the society to build a better future. (2009, pg.20)

By creating documentaries such as the one about Michael, we can attain the goal of preserving our heritage. The film is about remembering a life lived. It also features other individuals (*Musa*, Peter, and the community shown in the funeral footage) and paints a cultural and historical landscape. *Musa* and Peter help remember the life of the artist Mr. Gasa by recalling stories and memories about him. The community, shown at the end by the archival video, shows members of the "Hlabazihlangane" church, who sang during Michael's funeral.

To further understand why it is essential to preserve our heritage, Dr Booms observes,

If it is true that individuals exist only as human beings in so far as they belong to a group, a community, or a society and that, consequently, they are unable to separate themselves from the socio-historical conditions of their existence, it follows that they are also not able to avoid the specific posited values which are part of these conditions. This social context is all the more circumscriptive since individuals are unable to provide an absolute answer to the question of what they, in their daily lives, consider valuable or meaningful (unless, of course, they operate under ideological statements or philosophical creeds). They can only answer by referring to popular conceptions, ideas, or opinions which are deemed worthy by their social environment. Individuals share their esteem for such opinions with others in their respective life circles, which is why a person's origins, education, and social situation play such a significant role in determining to what extent an individual is influenced by the dominant values of society. (1987, pg.74)

This is certainly the case for filmmakers. We are inspired by the society around us. Filmmakers characteristically have a critical distance, even from the communities they are part of. This does not mean that they cannot share or document meaningful stories that reflect dominant values. But they do so with some reflective distance while at the same time having a deep understanding as someone who comes from the same community. Michael's family and community (apart from *Musa*) did not value his art, nor did they understand it. It was clear from his funeral and how people spoke of him that he was a revered and respected member of the community, but no one acknowledged him as an artist. Michael spoke of this and felt alone in his endeavour. Even his wife never had any interest in his work, nor did she see any need to preserve or hold on to any of his work. Some of the remarks made above can also be heard in the *Bonginkosi* film in the scene when Peter recalls the times Michael went

to Johannesburg to look for opportunities and that the majority of the sculptures, he left behind at home got damaged because of how they were not taken care of. One reason for making such a film is that the filmmaker - due to his unique critical and reflective position and as someone coming from the same cultural perspective - takes on the role of the archivist and sees the need to preserve and archive the collective memory. We create meaning because of all the collective memory we share with the communities that raise us. These values are crucial in the way we then tell our stories; these stories are always easier and more meaningful if they are told by a member of the community about the community. We are usually provided with necessary insights about the culture/society being spoken about. Booms tries to explain the role of the archivist in shaping our future, "The person who decides which events in social life are transmitted to us through the record, and, as a result, decides which are preserved to form part of a society's memory and which are not, is thereby making decisions which are important for society." (1987, pg.78) By this quote, we are shown the importance of those who hold the key to our collective memory as societies. This highlights the reasons why we should preserve our history as much as we can, this is because the past plays a significant role in shaping the future. If we get a better grasp of our history, it is not so much harder to predict how our future might look like. To further understand the significance of preserving our heritage, we have to understand what the importance of history is, "history serves as "a medium for illuminating human existence" (Schieder), as a means of obtaining a "clearer understanding of human action" (Kosselleck), "as an element of our reconciliation with the present and as a necessary criterion for our blueprint for the future, "40 or as "an aid for living and making decisions" in present-day society" (1987, pg.79). Also, the reason for us to continue to preserve our cultural heritage is highlighted by Singh that 'The threat of this cultural heritage's extinction due to globalization's advancement has been seen everywhere. The reason for this is that because of globalization, certain cultures are given more importance than others, which makes their cultural heritage less respected and even less accepted. The preservation and accessibility of the digital history of all areas, nations, and communities is essential to ensure that all peoples, nations, cultures, and languages are represented over time.' (2012)

To further fathom the importance of using archival documentary film in the preservation of cultural heritage, we must first understand the role of documentary film in collective memory. Documentaries play a crucial role in a society's collective remembering. Roberto Rosello defines what is meant by the term collective memory when we are referring to it in

this research. He quotes Halbwachs, "Collective memory has been defined as a reconstruction of the past based on memories shared by a community, associated with the identity of the social group concerned" (2022, p.g 56). Documentaries are a powerful medium that can influence how people remember and interpret historical events, social issues, and cultural narratives. These types of documentary films are what Nichols refers to as the documentaries of social representation; he describes them as "what we typically call nonfiction. These films give tangible representation to aspects of the world we already inhabit and share. They make the stuff of social reality visible and audible in a distinctive way, according to the acts of selection and arrangement carried out by a filmmaker. (2001, pg.1-2)

In the chapter "Constructing National Identity" in his book, Nichols describes the importance of community; this togetherness is required when we are trying to preserve a culture/tradition. Since documentaries reflect and shape the social and cultural context in which they are produced and consumed. They have the power to reinforce existing societal narratives or challenge dominant perspectives, and this has an impact on how events are collectively remembered. The construction of national identities involves the construction of a sense of community. "Community" invokes feelings of common interest and mutual respect, of reciprocal relationships closer to family ties than contractual obligations. Shared values and beliefs are vital to a sense of community, whereas contractual relationships can be carried out despite differences of value and belief. A sense of community often seems like an "organic" quality that binds people together when they share a tradition, culture, or common goal. (2001, pg.141)

These films can provide a complementary perspective to written historical accounts. They offer a sensory and emotional experience that can enhance understanding and engagement with historical events. "Documentary represents the historical world by shaping its photographic record of some aspect of the world from a distinct perspective or point of view." (2001, pg.168) Since documentaries have the potential for long-term preservation and accessibility, this allows future generations to engage with historical narratives dynamically. It can contribute to the perpetuation of specific cultures and memories over time. "The documentary is a persuasive strategy aimed at making its interpreter believe that the content it offers comes from extralinguistic reality, that it is objective and authentic, asserting 'this happened this way'. It is, therefore, a discursive phenomenon that involves making what is true" (2022, pg.57). This means films like the one about Michael have the power to persuade viewers into believing what is portrayed holds evidentiary value, and this is done through the

world the film creates. Documentaries can play a crucial role in representing and preserving the cultural identity of marginalised communities or underrepresented perspectives, allowing these voices to contribute to the broader collective memory of society. This can be achieved by giving marginalised communities a voice to speak and share their beliefs with the world. This is certainly the case with the short documentary film about Michael; even though the artist is late, his story can still be told by the ones who were close to him and using the work he left behind. Making a film about his life will help preserve his story and work for generations to come.

Over time, new documentaries or re-examinations of historical events/figures can lead to a reevaluation of how society remembers things. As society evolves and new information emerges, documentaries can prompt shifts in how events are remembered. In making this documentary film, I have been careful to consider that what we preserve contributes to how society remembers those events/figures. My films and others like them can be used to pass down information in a medium that has the potential to allow data to be stored in the long term. In this regard, I will use digital platforms such as YouTube and SITE123, which allow for videos and documents to be stored online. The preservation of sculptures, compared to the preservation of documentary film in an age where things are more digital, suggests that preserving the medium of documentary film has more ways to achieve this compared to preserving sculptures that storing online makes the work accessible to a larger global public and that it ensures the posterity of the work should it suffer catastrophic damage, be lost or stolen.

This is not the case for documentary film since it is preserved in a digital archive; the threat to this might be format changes over time, rendering the previous one obsolete. In terms of the long-term preservation of the digital repository where the film will be archived, we acknowledge that digital assets are fragile and can be lost, corrupted, or become redundant despite backup and cloud storage. This is recognised as a challenge with digital archiving and digital curation in general and one that is still being addressed. (Burdick et al, 2016, p.g 131).

Documentaries are often used as educational tools in classrooms, museums, and other places where we study/inquire. They can introduce viewers to historical events and encourage critical thinking about certain topics. As these films are not only for the sake of aesthetics, Nichols corroborates when he notes that "Documentary work does not appeal primarily or exclusively to our aesthetic sensibility: it may entertain or please but does so in relation to a

rhetorical or persuasive effort aimed at the existing social world. Documentary not only activates our aesthetic awareness (unlike a strictly informational or training film), but it also activates our social consciousness." (2001, pg.65). So, by preserving our heritage through documentary just like the film about Michael, we are providing the future generations with a sense of "social consciousness" of the people who lived through our history. This gives insight to the next generations as to what the thinking of the people of our times was like.

In an age of digital transformation, documentaries now have the potential to reach large audiences. They were always done to a certain extent by mass media, but now the internet allows a vast global audience, thus influencing how people around the world perceive and remember specific events in a particular culture or nation. This takes into consideration the technological advancement that has dawned on us as a society; we can distribute documentaries to millions of people at a fingertip using platforms such as Facebook (Watch), YouTube, and Vimeo. This also provides people with a chance to crucially and actively engage with content, empowering them to challenge, discard or affirm representations of their cultures. I would further argue that it is more necessary to preserve films like the one about Michael now since there is a plethora of tools and platforms to make knowledge of his life and work accessible to the public. The technology permits us to preserve stories that we have always longed to see being shown on mass media (such as TV and radio). Documentaries hold the power to influence and shape collective memory by presenting historical narratives in a compelling and visually engaging manner. They can reinforce, challenge, or even reshape societal perceptions of the past, thus contributing to the ongoing dialogue about history.

2.8 Digital Preservation

To further the idea of preservation, this dissertation will be accompanied by an archival website containing the material I will collect for this study, including the film, biography, and dissertation. This approach will be digital archiving, meaning these documents will be stored in a computerized format on the website. "Digital preservation is the management and maintenance of digital objects so they can be accessed and used by future users. The main goal of a digital archive is to ensure the long-term preservation of digital data so that it remains accessible for appropriate use in the future." (Yadav, 2016, pg.64) The website will be created using SITE123, this free website builder that is easy to create and manage. The

website will help with 'digital archive as it seeks to preserve the information in digital format regardless of media on which that information is stored.' (2016) For the film to be archived on the website created using SITE123, we must first upload it to a streaming platform such as YouTube or Vimeo, which allows the film to be embedded into our created site. This is the best solution to ensure a better film quality is preserved.

2.9 Archive as documentary evidence

Keith Beattie contrasts realistic fiction with documentary realism. One depends on what he terms as an "imaginative relationship" with the viewer, and of which this trait is the building block of realistic fiction. Conversely, documentary realism relies on an "inferential relationship", which is a relationship based on evidence. In this regard, such evidence is often archival and includes historical evidence, documentary heritage, and collective memory of the individuals, organisations, or governments that created them. As such, these one-of-a-kind records have the potential to promote a national heritage that can be passed down from one generation to the next. Furthermore, Baron implies, "archives, moreover, hold the promise of retaining a trace of "the real,". While both material and digital audio-visual archives offer us traces of "the real," our encounters with material and digital traces each produce a unique experience of difference between the archival document and our lived experience of the world these traces claim to represent." (2012, pg.474)

Beattie further breaks down the definition of documentary film first coined by Grierson, stating:

the documentarian draws on past and present actuality – the world of social and historical experience – to construct an account of lives and events. Embedded within the account of physical reality is a claim or assertion at the centre of all non-fictional representation, namely, that a documentary depiction of the socio-historical world is factual and truthful." (2004, pg.10)

This means documentary filmmakers try to depict a world that is true or authentic with a look into history, which is achieved using archives. The reasons why the filmmakers trust these records to relive history can be found in Booms observation:

As the archival documentary record provides historians with the essential material necessary for a systematic treatment of history, it also affords the historical researcher a rudimentary guarantee of scientific validity. Yet, this is not the only component of such a guarantee. The

scientific validity of history is also based on the assumption that the documentary record available to the historian does in fact represent the essential, substantive documentation of past human activity. (1986, pg.80)

Reviewing such records as archives can prove to be insightful for learning about one's history and culture, as these records hold the evidence of history and culture. As Augustine echoes, "in documentary filmmaking – in particular historical documentaries or those that are concerned with the historical residues of collective memory – the archive has traditionally been assigned a specific set of functions such as the marker of historical evidence" (2015, pg.11) My approach towards the creation of the archival documentary film about Michael Gasas draws strongly on Beattie's definition of documentary realism and the evidence-based nature of making these types of films. I use archival images, archival material, and videos as a way to provide context about the history the film speaks about. Beattie reiterates, "truth claims reflect a tacit contractual agreement or bond of trust between documentary producers (whether an individual filmmaker or broadcasting institution) and an audience that the representation is based on the actual socio-historical world, not a fictional world imaginatively conceived." (2017, p.g11). Baron adds when she speaks of the experience of archives in documentary film for viewers, "this foundness of the archival document exists in contradistinction to documents that we perceive as produced by the filmmaker specifically for a given film. Indeed, this sense of "foundness" is integral to the experience of the archival document. It is part of what lends the archival document its aura of "authenticity" and enhances its seeming evidentiary value." (2012) This feeling is not always assured, as it relies mostly on the viewer to be able to distinguish between the different footage/documents the film displays. I believe David Forbes provides a clear depiction that illuminates what Beattie is referring to; on his documentary film *The Cradock Four*, he uses captions to provide more information about the archive document being displayed by a scene, and I plan to use similar captions for my archival material in my film. This approach aids the "foundness" of the archival document as Barons refers and add emphasis on the archive as having "seeming evidentiary value". (2012)

Accessing these archival documents to create this short documentary film aids in the furtherance of cultural heritage. For example, the film is going to be using an archival newspaper article that has been digitised; this article is about the 'One-man carving' exhibition Michael had at Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg. In this way, we are preserving and expanding platforms for documents to endure. There are also going to be

sculptures that were created by Michael, which I have filmed and photographed and form part of the b-roll footage of the documentary film.

To assist with archiving Michael's work, I curated an exhibition that featured all his available works together in a formal setting, which allowed me not only to showcase his work to the local community but also to photograph and capture footage that has formed part of the archival documentary film. The exhibition was held at the Jack Heath Art Gallery in 2022 and featured sculptures from the early 2000s to 2019, when the artist met his untimely demise. The exhibition documentation allows Michael's works to be preserved in digital format and made accessible locally and globally. The artworks that were featured in the exhibition will also be archived in a visual catalogue, and this will be saved in a PDF using the archival website created as the digital platform.

2.10 Conclusion

This literature review examined the role archival documentary film plays in the preservation of a South African's artistic journey; this was supported using the case study of Michael Gasa. The chapter defined the documentary film that Eitzen, Kuhn, and Westwell led. It also looked at what a participatory documentary film means, using Michael's case study as an example, and Nichols supported this. Moreover, this section focused on archive documentaries and how the film on the life and art of Gasa will use archives; perspectives of Barons and Jude backed this. Furthermore, the archive and preservation of cultural history were explored and aided by views from Kamatula et al., Diaro, and Dr. Boom. Digital preservation was examined, including how Michael's film will be stored utilizing online platforms such as SITE123, YouTube, and Vimeo.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how the structure of the study is conducted. It begins with a discussion about the difference between practice-led and practice-based research. We will also look at the characteristics of a case study approach and the two types of case studies. Then, it will discuss how information was sourced for this study and also how a digital platform can act as an archive repository.

3.2 The Practice-led Approach

For us to understand what is meant when we say this study is a practice-led study, we must first comprehend the difference between the two types of research that are prominent, as differentiated by Candy, "If a creative artefact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-based. If the research leads primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice-led (2006, p. 1)." As mentioned, this study has opted for a practice-led

study as the creative component is supportive and will be used for data collection that will be reflected in the dissertation. Candy further elaborates on the dissimilarities of the two, by noting that practice-based research is concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice. The focus of the research is to advance knowledge about practice or to advance knowledge within practice. In contrast, in a thesis, the results of practice-led research may be fully described in text form without the inclusion of a creative outcome. Dean & Smith add that practice-led research refers "both to the work of art as a form of research and to the creation of the work as generating research insights which might then be documented, theorised and generalised." (2009, p.g7)

The primary focus of the research is to advance knowledge about practice or to advance knowledge within practice. Such research includes practice as an integral part of its method and often falls within the general area of action research. The doctoral theses that emerge from this type of practice-related research is not the same as those that include artefacts and works as part of the submission.' (2006, pg.4). Moreover, the short documentary film will be utilised as a reflective moment in "text form" for the final chapter. Furthermore, the creative outcome of the film does affect what the study reports; since this is practice-led, it means creative outcome leads to 'new information', as Candy stated.

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3.3 Case Study Approach

Simons provides a broad definition that a case study approach follows a "process of conducting systematic, critical inquiry into a phenomenon of choice and generating understanding to contribute to cumulative public knowledge of the topic." (2009, p.g18) This definition by Simons gives us an idea of what case study research includes, which is the gathering of information about society and how we formulate that information to form research. For a more detailed explanation of the term, Sammut-Bonnici et al. describe case study research as a 'research approach that involves examining and interpreting the detailed history and context of a specific situation, such as an industry, organization, or market. What sets this method apart is its emphasis on uncovering unique traits and notable variations in the observed scenario. Case studies are often used in idiographic research, which explores unusual conditions and distinctive results as subjective phenomena. They can also be applied

in nomothetic research to develop new theories, usually by analyzing multiple cases and extensive data within each one. (2015)'

Likewise, Taber shares a similar view when he compares the two types of research a case study approach is utilised for, "nomothetic research looks for general patterns and rules that once discovered will be expected to be widely applicable; whereas idiographic research recognises the value in exploring the idiosyncrasies of the unique individual case" (2013, pg.45) This study is going to be an example of idiographic research, this is achieved through the case study of Michael Gasa who's story has influenced the research problem, "What issues and insights about the role of archival documentary film in the preservation of South African cultural history are raised via the production of an archival documentary on the life and art of the sculptor Michael Gasa?". The type of case study approach that my research is based on has been regarded as an "intrinsic case study". According to Best, an intrinsic case study occurs "when the researcher conducts the case study because they want to know more about the case itself. In other words, the case itself is of primary, not secondary interest" (2012, pg.97). This means using Michael's case study, I will also be looking at different case studies that illuminate what Michael's case study iterates. I have utilised different case studies to tackle my research. This allows me to compare/contrast the different perspectives brought about by each case study.

This research referred to mostly secondary data, which is descriptive data, because it aids me to gather information and critically engage with that information. The qualitative methodology is the standard method utilised in the field of arts/humanities. Even Hyett *et al.* back this statement in their article when they mention, "There is a level of artistic license that is embraced by qualitative researchers and distinguishes practice, which nurtures creativity, innovation, and reflexivity" (2015, pg.2)

3.4 Qualitative Case Study

The ideal approach to obtaining information about a problem or idea, according to the premise of qualitative research, is to let the subjects express themselves freely rather than forcing them to conform to the researcher's predefined analytical framework. Both documentary evidence (where the researcher has no interaction with the source of the evidence) and investigative evidence (where the researcher speaks with a person who can offer information) are permissible when using the qualitative approach to acquire data. (Dean & Smith, 2009) The type of research I am conducting is considered qualitative case study

research. Qualitative case study research is "an investigation and analysis of a single or collective case, intended to capture the complexity of the object of study. Qualitative case study research, as described by Stake (1995), draws together naturalistic, holistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, and biographic research methods in a bricoleur design" (Hyett *et al.*, 2014, pg.2). This research is going to follow the case study of Michael. This case study will inform the short documentary film about the life of the late artist. This is a single qualitative case study approach, meaning we are following one case study (which is the story of Michael Gasa), and this case study will inform the dissertation.

3.5 Emic Perspective

For us to understand the role culture plays in our lives, we must comprehend the two perspectives from which culture is narrated. These views are namely emic and etic. The insider's view is commonly referred to as the emic perspective in research. According to Morris *et al.*, the emic perspective, which is an internal viewpoint, aligns with the longstanding tradition of examining folk beliefs in psychological research and the efforts of cultural anthropologists to gain insight into culture from the perspective of the people living within it. (1999) This means since the research about Michael and his life is done by a researcher who shares the same culture as Michael, we get to hear the story being told from an "insider's view". We have things that we share, such as language and cultural beliefs; this makes it easier for researchers like me to be able to not only understand Michael's story but also be able to share it with the world without the barriers of culture and language.

Furthermore, "methods in emic research are more likely to involve sustained, wide-ranging observation of a single cultural group. In classical fieldwork, for example, an ethnographer immerses him or herself in a setting, developing relationships with informants and taking on social roles" (Morris *et al.*, 1999, pg.782). This is certainly true in Michael's case study; the study focuses on the Zulu culture and how it has influenced Michael to become the artist he ended up being. There is a scene in the film about Michael that involves Peter talking about the sculpture of a colourful cow's head that was created by Michael, we hear comments from the filmmaker stating his interpretation of this artwork to Peter, and the filmmaker describes this with a Zulu saying that states "*ubuhle bendoda yizinkomo zayo*", this translates to "a man's beauty is defined by his cows". This saying is in reference to the culture of the Zulu people that supports the idea of *iLobolo*, meaning as a man, your beauty is judged by the standards of your wife (since the cows are used in the negotiations of *iLobola*). This example

is an emic perspective because one must be of the Zulu culture (same as *Mr. Gasa*) to come up with that interpretation of the cow's head sculpture.

3.6 Data Collection

The case studies that were used to illuminate the study were secondary data, and this data was collected using the Internet. There are streaming sites that are solely dedicated to researchers, like *Alexanderstreet*. For the literature, most of the tools used are e-books, online articles, and online journals that I referenced in my research, which were solely taken from the Internet. All the data is available on the various sites I have referenced in my bibliography. I took advantage of search engines like *Scholar Google* and *UKZN* online library to find the necessary source materials that I needed for this research. I applied the thematic criteria in the selection process of the information, the themes being documentary film, participatory, archive, preservation of cultural heritage, and digital preservation. I have collected e-books and academic journals online at the aforementioned websites.

The themes of this study were shaped by the research problem, "What issues and insights about the role of archival documentary film in the preservation of South African cultural history are raised via the production of an archival documentary on the life and art of the sculptor Michael Gasa?" as a guide to find the case studies and relevant information. The production of the short documentary about Michael will use primary means of acquiring information. This is through the interviews conducted by the filmmaker, which will aid in telling the story of Michael. This is important in our case since we do not plan on utilising narration (the interviews are the narration in our case). According to Roulston & Choi' interviews are ubiquitous today, encompassing various types such as journalistic, media, clinical, employment, parent-teacher, and research interviews, among others. What unites these various forms of interaction is that they all revolve around sequences of questions and answers.' (2018) These interviews are going to feature the brother of Michael (*Musa Gasa*) and the friend of Michael (Peter Stewart). They are going to be semi-structured, meaning "in which the organisation of topics is less tightly formatted." (2018, pg.233). This indicates that I will be providing a set of topics to speak with the brother and the friend of Michael, and some of these topics are not necessarily mandatory to follow in the order I have written them. Likewise, "In the semi-structured interview, the same topics form the basis for questioning, yet interviewers' sequencing of questions is participant-led." (2018, pg.233). This happened when we were shooting the interview with Peter; I ended up not probing him about some

questions (for example, the question about him sharing the experience he had helping Michael curate the one-man carving exhibition) because I felt like he had already answered these questions (without him knowing) in the discussion we were having. According to Koven (2014, quoted in Roulston & Choi, 2018), 'Interview data can be analysed to uncover two distinct aspects: the first one is related to the content that reflects the inner thoughts and genuine selves of individuals, often referred to as "referentialist" content, and the other involving interactional occurrences or speech events.' The website created is utilised as a database, and the archiving of Michael's work is a form of data collection, although it moves beyond data collection to data curation.

3.7 The digital platform as an archive repository

To further the idea of preservation, this dissertation is accompanied by an archival website which holds the material I have created and collected for this study - including the film, a biography, and a visual catalogue of the artists' works (and eventually the dissertation). The visual catalogue comprises captioned digital images of the sculptures/artworks that were part of the exhibition that I curated. The concept of digital preservation is explored by Deepak Yadav as "the management and maintenance of digital objects so they can be accessed and used by future users. The main goal of digital archive ensures the long-term preservation of digital data so that it remains accessible for appropriate use in future." (2016, pg.64) Likewise, Singh adds, "The aim of digital preservation is long-term, error-free storage of digital information, with the means of retrieval and interpretation, for the period of time that information is required." (2012, pg.289)

The website has been created using SITE123. This is a beginner-friendly, all-in-one tool that makes it easy to create a professional-looking website. It offers more than 800 design templates that allow you to customise a site for various blogging and small business needs. It allows users to connect to more than 300 third-party apps to add advanced features to your website.' I am going to be utilising the free version of SITE123, which allows the storage of PDF and video files. This is going to help with 'digital archive as it seeks to preserve the information in digital format regardless of media on which that information is stored.' The site created for the preservation of Michael's work is <http://6709086abcb2a.site123.me/>; the domain is written in numbers to signify that the site is made with a free version.

The UNESCO website lists the necessary things to consider when thinking of digital archiving, such as putting an emphasis on collaborating with creators (people who produce or

distribute) to set standards that extend access, selective preservation, secure storage, and comprehensive documentation. It also highlights the importance of protecting data integrity, adapting to technological changes, and managing preservation programs efficiently and responsibly. (2021) These factors are considered when you opt to use the free version of SITE123.

The user experience design of the websites is friendly for everyone, and you do not need to be much of a tech-savvy individual or know how to code to be able to create a website using this platform. This means everyone can create a website where they can digitally archive from all walks of fields, and in return, we get more stories from which we can draw as a society.

Even though there are cons to digital archiving, such as storage/ maintenance costs, the ratio of the positives outweighs the negative, and that might be the reason why it is better to archive digitally than in the conventional way. There are positives of choosing digital. These include the fact that a digital archive does not require a physical space to store the material, and it is more accessible since the storage is usually a click away for anyone to retrieve with internet access. Furthermore, Yadav observes that a digital archive decreases redundancy in collections, improves information sharing, and does away with the need for additional physical structures. Adding that, depending on their preferences, it enables users to access digital resources online at any time and from any location. Whether the resources are on-site or off-site, users can easily access a variety of information formats on computers or mobile devices, including text, photos, graphics, audio, and video.

Digital archives make it simple to make copies (duplicate), allow for local storage and printing, and handle numerous requests for records at once. Compared to previous systems, digital record management is easier to manage and guarantees long-term preservation and accessibility for future use. Moreover, they provide extensive worldwide accessibility to preserved materials and uphold democratic principles by expanding the reach of public records. (2016) A digital repository created using SITE123 allows for images, documents, and videos to be stored. This is achieved through uploading files, such as images and documents, onto your website. Videos are required to be hosted on third-party websites such as YouTube and Vimeo. This is because videos have a huge space compared to the other files shared, and you are then able to embed the video you hosted from the other platforms to your SITE123 website created for archiving.

It is important to choose the correct format (that is widely accepted and has a life span that can stand the test of time). In this regard, 'PDF' is an appropriate format for storing electronic documents that are textual/image in nature, thus making it a suitable format for the preservation of the dissertation and the biography. The advantage of storing documents in this format is that "Adobe PDF is a universal format that preserves all the fonts, formatting, colours, and graphics of the source document. PDF can be shared, viewed, and navigated and printed exactly as intended with a free reader." (Alegbeleye, 2009, pg.15). This is a longstanding global standard format. The disadvantage of utilising the PDF is, "in spite of its popularity remains technical proprietary." (2009, pg.15) This means that PDF is patented and owned by a company such as Adobe Inc.

One issue that arises from using free sites is that you get the most primitive features. This is a tactic employed to make users pay for more "add-ons", and these add-ons are features that are not included in free version websites, such as the domain name and the life span of your website.

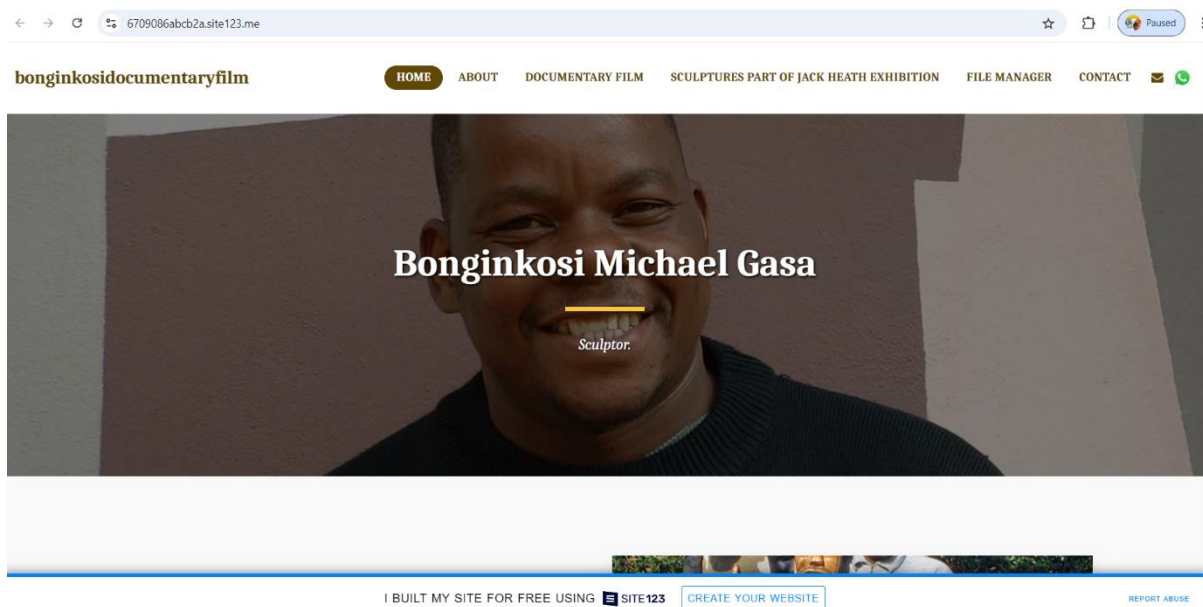


Figure 1: An image (screenshot) of Michael's website created using SITE123, showing the homepage. (2023)

SITE123. This website builder can also be used to host and distribute your documents (documentary films included). SITE123 is an easy-to-use platform that allows you to create websites in a short period of time. See Figure 1 An image (screenshot) of Michael's website created using SITE123, showing the homepage. (2023) and Figure 2: An image (screenshot) of the "About" page of Michael's website created using SITE123. (2023) In Figure 1, we are

introduced to the homepage of Michael’s website, which includes a picture of a smiling Michael and his name with his occupation beneath. This is used as a way to introduce the viewer to the website for the artist and his work. The second page on the website, as shown in Figure 2, shares a little biography about Michael and the purpose of the website.

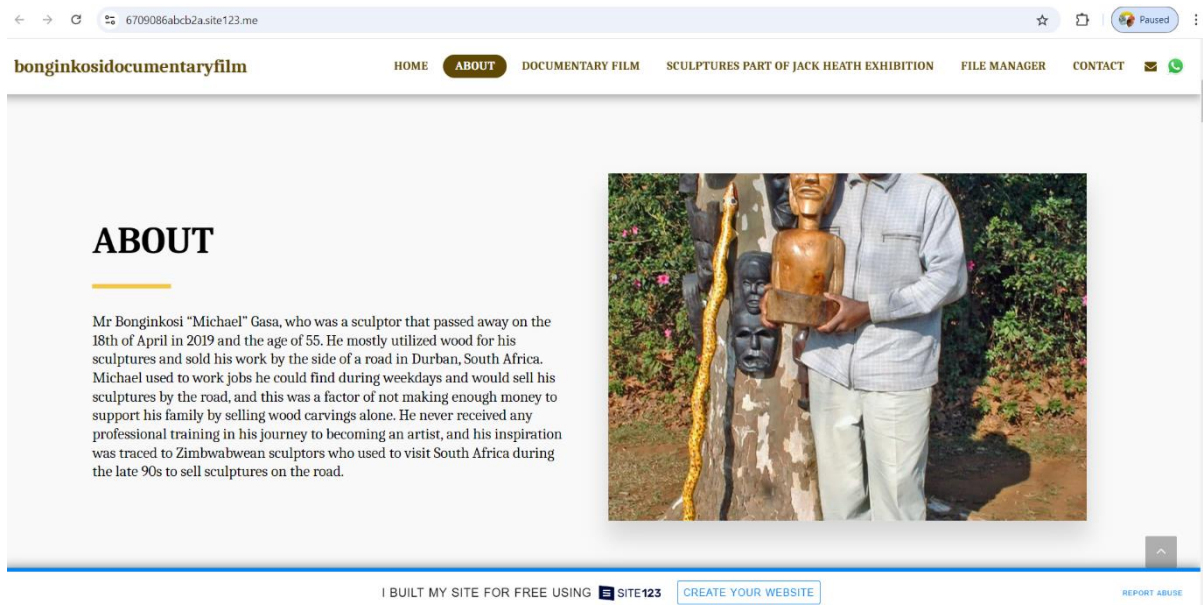


Figure 2: An image (screenshot) of “About” page of Michael’s website created using SITE123. (2023)

Since SITE123 is more of a website builder than an actual website created solely to store/host videos, it does not allow the platform to upload videos with a larger file size. Since the film's size is more than 20 GB, it is impossible to share directly with the website created. One needs to embed the video from other video hosting platforms onto the platform. You can make a page dedicated to your documentary film, and this page is where you can embed the

documentary video.

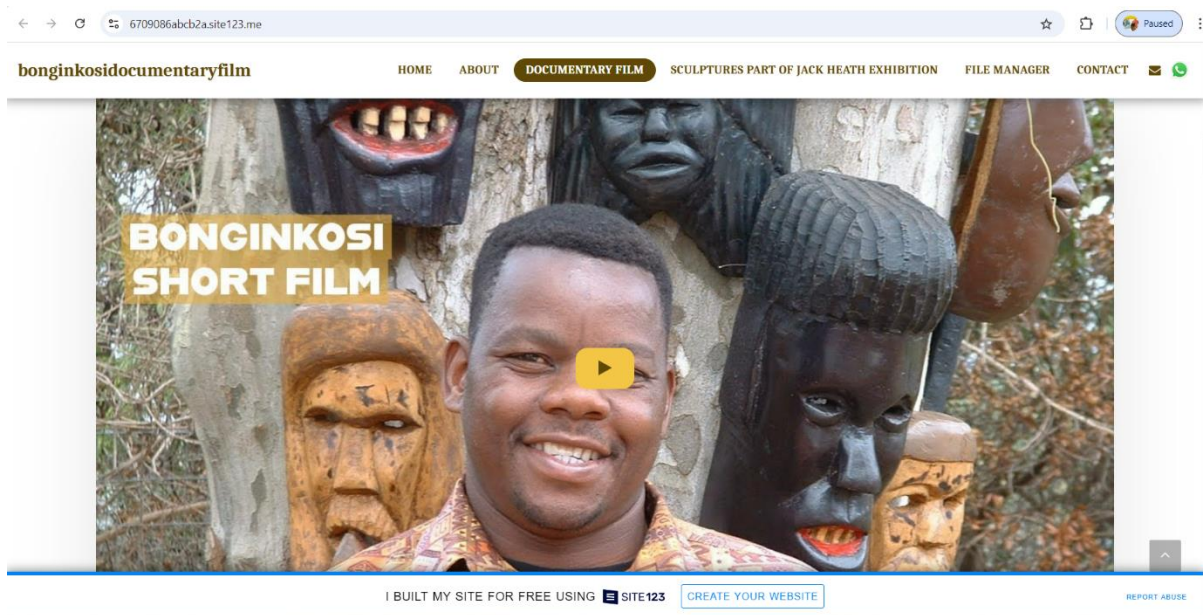


Figure 3: *An image (screenshot) of an example of how the film is embedded on a site created using SITE123. (2023)*

To embed the documentary film, one needs to upload the film to a platform like YouTube or Vimeo, as these platforms are best suited for video hosting and streaming. Once your documentary is uploaded to one of these platforms, you can easily embed the video on your SITE123 website; see Figure 3: *An image (screenshot) of an example of how a video is embedded on a site created using SITE123. (2023)*. I uploaded the video on YouTube since it is more accessible to people. The platforms come preinstalled on Android phones, and most people have an idea of what YouTube is. Vimeo does the same thing, but just not as popular as YouTube.

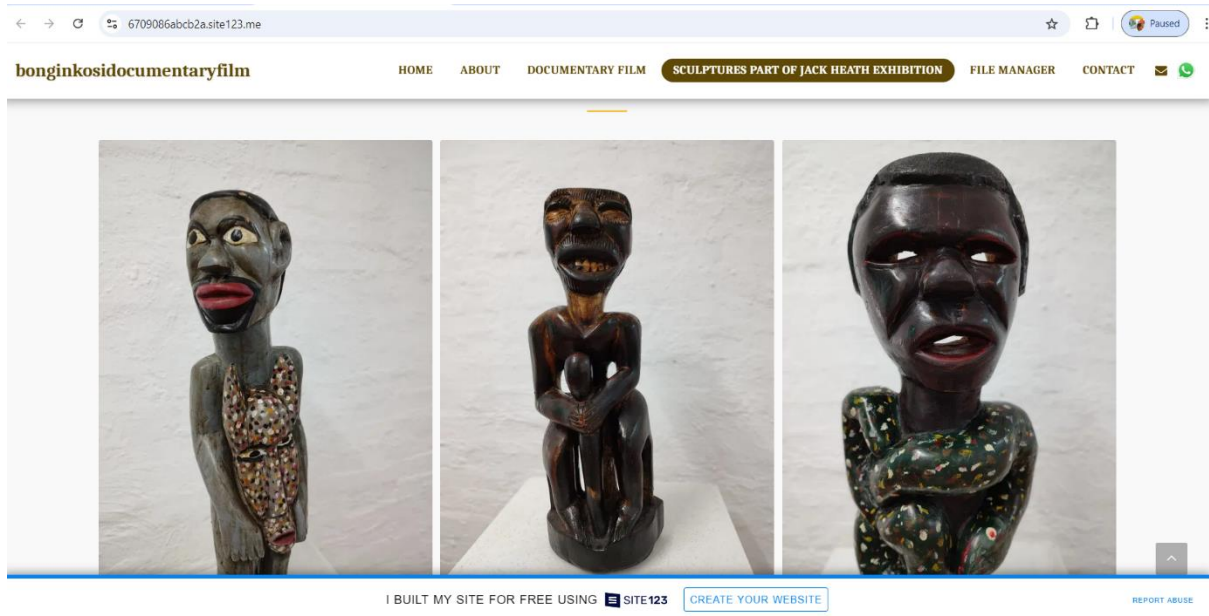


Figure 4: An image (screenshot) of Michael’s sculptures at Jack Heath Gallery exhibition on website created using SITE123. (2023)

The next page shows the sculptures created by Michael that were part of the exhibition at Jack Heath Gallery in May 2023. The exhibition was a way to showcase and document Michael’s work for the catalogue in a professional setting. In Figure 4, the sculptures are standing on plinths at the gallery, which aided in introducing Michael’s work to an audience that mostly did not know about the artist and his art. Having the images there on the website helps the viewer get a glimpse of what the artist created, as the sculptures shown are from different years, from the early 2000s till Michael’s untimely death.

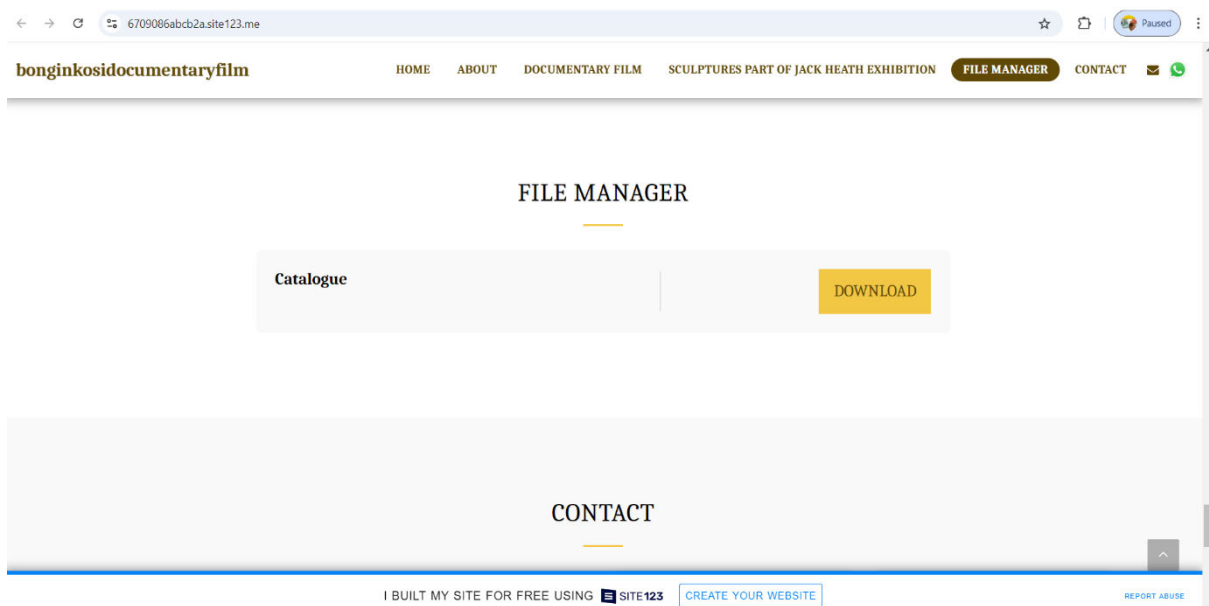


Figure 5: An image (screenshot) of Michael's catalogue on the website created using SITE13 (2023)

The file manager page that keeps content for download on the website is depicted in Figure 5; this is a catalogue created using the images captured at the Jack Heath Gallery. The website allows viewers to download and save the PDF file on their devices. It is accessible because the catalogue is saved to your device with one click (of the yellow download button shown in Figure 5). I also plan to add the dissertation once completed to the website for download (below the catalogue file).

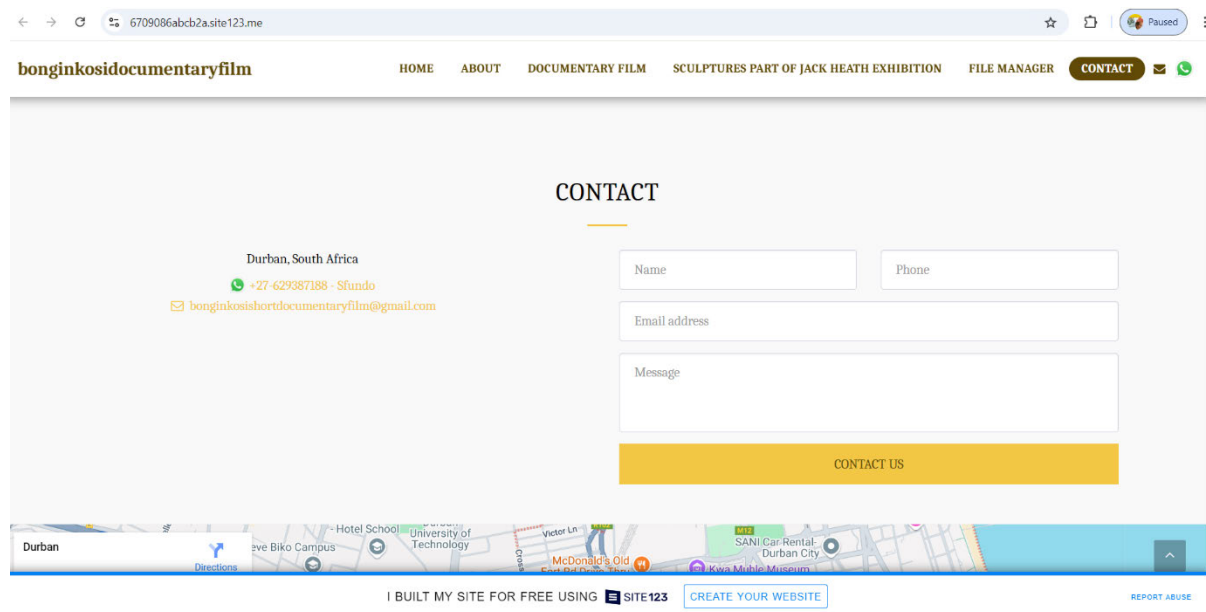


Figure 6: An image (screenshot) of contact page on the website created using SITE13 (2023)

This is the final page of the website shown in figure 6, the contact information is available for people who might like to get in touch with the filmmaker regarding this archiving project. It is also a way to hear the things people might share about the artist and his work. There is a phone number and an email address for people who would like to share their comments about the project.

3.8 Digital Curation

It involves maintaining, promoting, and ensuring long-term access to collections of heritage materials, data, and publications that are either born-digital or digitised. This supports research across obsolete, current, and new digital technologies. (Poole, 2015) The project about Michael's life and his art is a form of digital curation, since it includes a film about the artist, a catalogue of the artist's work, an exhibition held showcasing artist's work, and a website created to archive all the collected data pertaining the artist and this project. It is

essential to build such digital archives for preserving and safeguarding valuable information, historical documents, and cultural heritage for future generations. It enables easy access and data retrieval, supporting research, education, and cultural continuity. Additionally, it enhances data longevity, reduces physical storage needs (at least from users' view), and facilitates efficient global sharing and distribution.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter explored how the study is structured. This is achieved through the distinction of the two types of practices that are found in research: the practice-led and the practice-based. We also looked at what a case study approach is and the different types of case studies. Then, we provided an insight into how we sourced the information applied in the conduction of this study. We also looked at how digital archive and it can be achieved in this study.

CHAPTER 4: SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDIES THAT ILLUMINATE THE THEMES OF PARTICIPATORY, ARCHIVE, PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE, AND DIGITAL PRESERVATION IN DOCUMENTARY FILM: *SOBUKWE (A GREAT SOUL), THE CRADOCK FOUR, AND ZWELIDUMILE.*

4.1 Introduction

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe's story is told through a documentary film that employs mostly a performative mode to depict the man's life story. The film *Sobukwe (A Great Soul)* by Mickey Madoda Dube locates the activist as a leading individual in South African history. The film celebrates Sobukwe's role in forming Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the fight for freedom under an apartheid regime. Reading the archives (on their website) for the African Film Festival New York, it is interesting to note one thing about the Sobukwe film: despite his crucial involvement in the fight for liberation, there is no archive dedicated to the

man who was once among the most observed, documented, and well-known political prisoners globally. (2013) This indicates that the government of that time ensured those archive recordings of *Sobukwe* were never released to the public.

The film about *Sobukwe* serves as a tribute to a visionary figure who was ahead of his time. The film honours *Sobukwe* as a political leader, teacher, philosopher, global visionary, and humanist. The film's recurring theme focuses on *Sobukwe's* commitment to a world where racial inequalities cease to exist. The film seeks to ensure that *Sobukwe's* legacy and ideals remain relevant for future generations.

This film utilises archive documents in its creation. These archives are not of Sobukwe (aforementioned, that there are no archive documents that can be found of the man) but of people who are featured in the story of *Sobukwe*. In *Sobukwe: A Great Soul* (2012), we are shown an archival image of Julius Nyerere. The narrator tells a story of how Nyerere helped influence the philosophy that inspired Sobukwe to be the leader he turned out to be (2012, 36:24); see Figure 11: *An image (screenshot) of Julias Nyerere on the documentary film Sobukwe: A Great Soul streaming on Alexanderstreet.* (2012) This is what Bruzzi meant by the purposes of archive documents when she mentioned that these documents should be "as part of a historical exposition to complement other elements such as interviews and voice-over; or critically, as part of a more politicised historical argument or debate." (2006, pg.26)

In the film director goes further in that, he presents the political situation that Sobukwe was up against which includes an archival video of John Vorster (Minister of Justice from 1961-1966) where he speaks of 'not tolerating any hooligans when it comes to protecting the South African law' (2012). This footage plays at about 01 minutes: 28 seconds, setting the tone for the entire film. This footage referenced activists like Sobukwe, who were marching and not trying to abide by the law. The film's tone is based on the rebelliousness of the heart of *Sobukwe*, and the archive footage by John Vorster paints the image that this man was not just a heavyweight activist but was up against an oppressive regime. In this film, archival documentary filmmaker draws on archival material, such as that of Nyerere and Vorster, to build an accurate portrayal of Sobukwe, his ideology, and his political context.

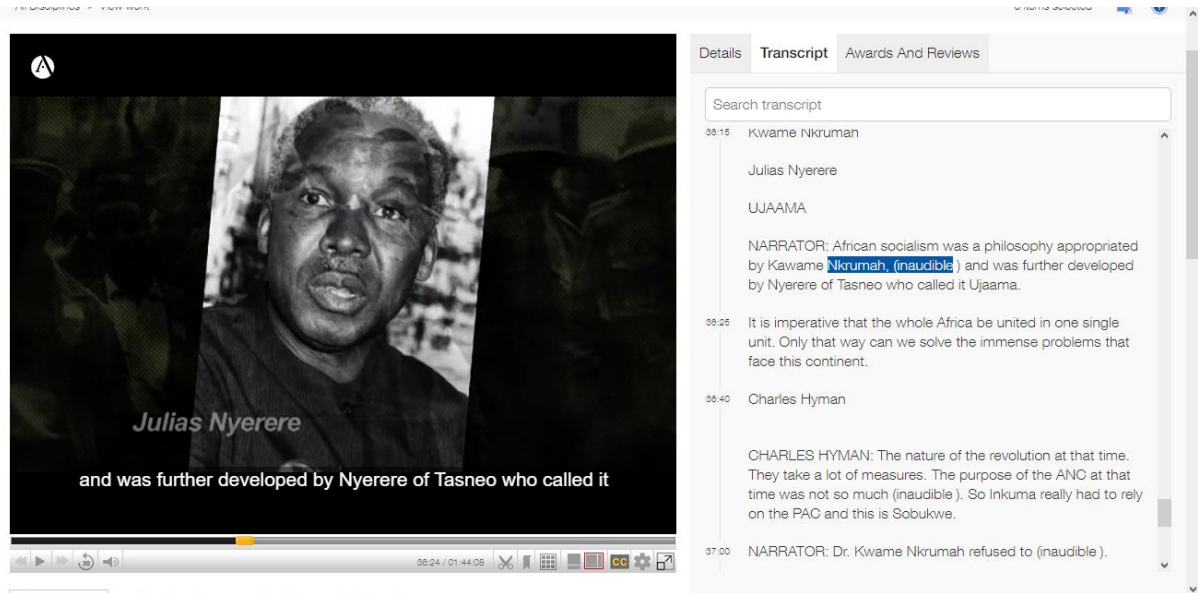


Figure 7: An image (screenshot) of Julius Nyerere on the documentary film *Sobukwe: A Great Soul* streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2012)

In the same way, *The Cradock Four* is a film that tells the story of the brutal assassination of activist Matthew Goniwe and his three friends that took place in 1985. It also paints a picture of the tense political climate in which the event occurred. Filmmaker David Forbes spent seven years researching the story of the *Cradock Four* and their fight for liberty. In the film, texts read, "In 1652, Europeans landed on the Southern tip of Africa. The local people lost their land and freedom." (2010). This depiction is followed by a black/white archive video of the local people (dressed in cultural attire) juxtaposed with a video of Europeans in horses and carriers. This archive document serves the purpose that was iterated by Brunow when he quoted Ranke "how it really was" (2015, pg. 5) because it tries to represent the events that took place as authentic as possible for the viewer to fully get the picture of the texts.

Furthermore, the documentary film *Zwelidumile* (2010) by Ramadan Suleman is about *Dumile Feni*, a visual artist who fled Apartheid South Africa and went into exile in 1968, and he left behind his pregnant wife. Feni died unexpectedly and tragically just days before his homecoming in 1991. The documentary film seeks to tell this man's story; the film opens with archive footage, an old interview that Feni did. This archive footage shows Feni speaking about what inspires the work he created as an artist, he explains 'I am not going to be that artist who promote redundancy, my duty is to create something that is meaningful and that has to do with all humanity. I am not trying to be clever, if I were, I would be wealthy now' see Figure 8: An image (screenshot) of *Zwelidumile*'s documentary film streaming on

Alexanderstreet, an interview by the late artist. (2011)

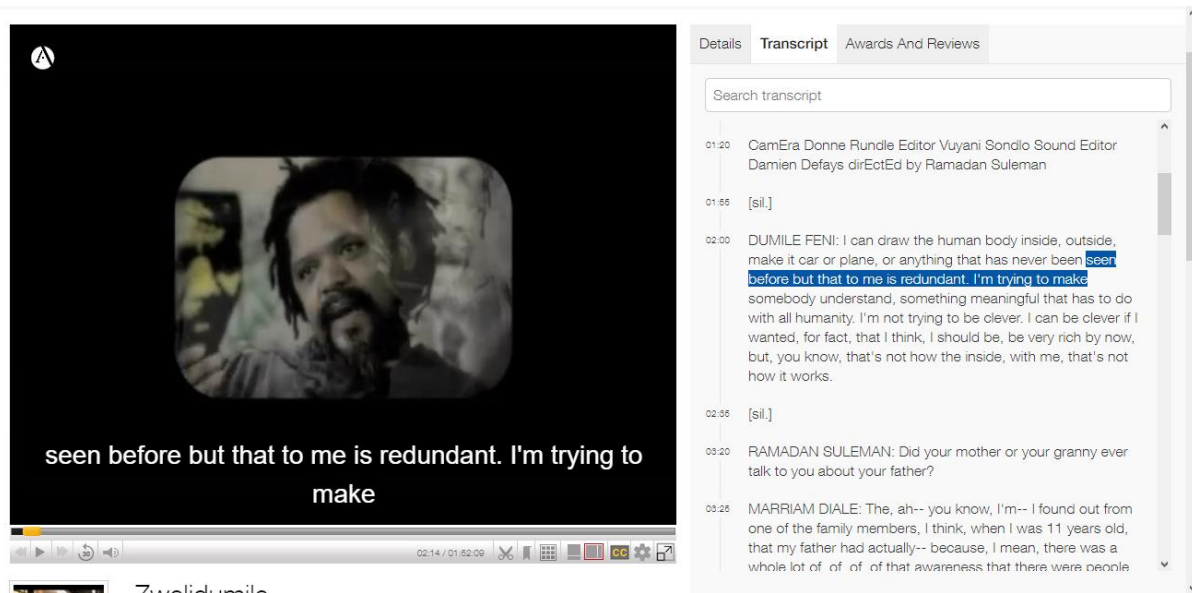


Figure 8: An image (screenshot) of Zwelidumile's documentary film streaming on *Alexanderstreet*, an interview by the late artist. (2011)

This footage plays a significant role in establishing the story of this creative genius, and it sets the tone for the entire documentary film. We understand the mind behind the artefacts and where he came from when he created these artworks.

4.2 An examination of the archival materials and cinematic process used in each of the three case studies.

This section critically analyses and engages with the archival material and how it is used to construct a personal and political narrative and a documentary archive.

4.2.1 Overview of the films.

The documentary about Sobukwe: *A Great Soul* (2012) by Mickey Madoda Dube is a feature film that runs for an hour and forty-four minutes. This film is biographical; it covers the story of Sobukwe from the beginning at Graaf Reinet, where he was born, to his last days. The mode employed for creating this is performative. It is important to note that the documentary film does not have to use the traits of a particular mode to its entirety, and the filmmaker can blend with other characteristics from the different modes. This section critically analyses and engages with the archival material and how it is used to construct a personal and political narrative and a documentary archive. The second case study tells the life of *Zwelidumile Feni*, entitled *Zwelidumile*. This documentary film follows the daughter of the late artist. The

film is told from the perspective of the artist's daughter (Marriam Diale), who never met his father while he was still alive. The documentary's journey is filmed in South Africa, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The documentary film uses captions, as we see in Figure 9: An image (screenshot) of the title translation of the film *Zwelidumile* streaming on *Alexanderstreet*. (2011), this provides context about the film's title. I plan on using a similar tactic; this will break down what is meant by the title "Bonginkosi". The final film the study will examine is *The Cradock Four* (2010). This film is about the brutal assassination of Matthew Goniwe and his three friends. David Forbes directed it, and it lasts 1 hour and 32 minutes. The story is about how the men who were killed in pursuit of freedom. The people believed to have committed this heinous act escaped without being reprimanded for such cruelty. This film features interviews from family and friends of the men who lost their lives in the Cradock four murders. It features captions from the filmmaker that help illuminate the visual images portrayed. The film employs traits mostly of archival documentary film

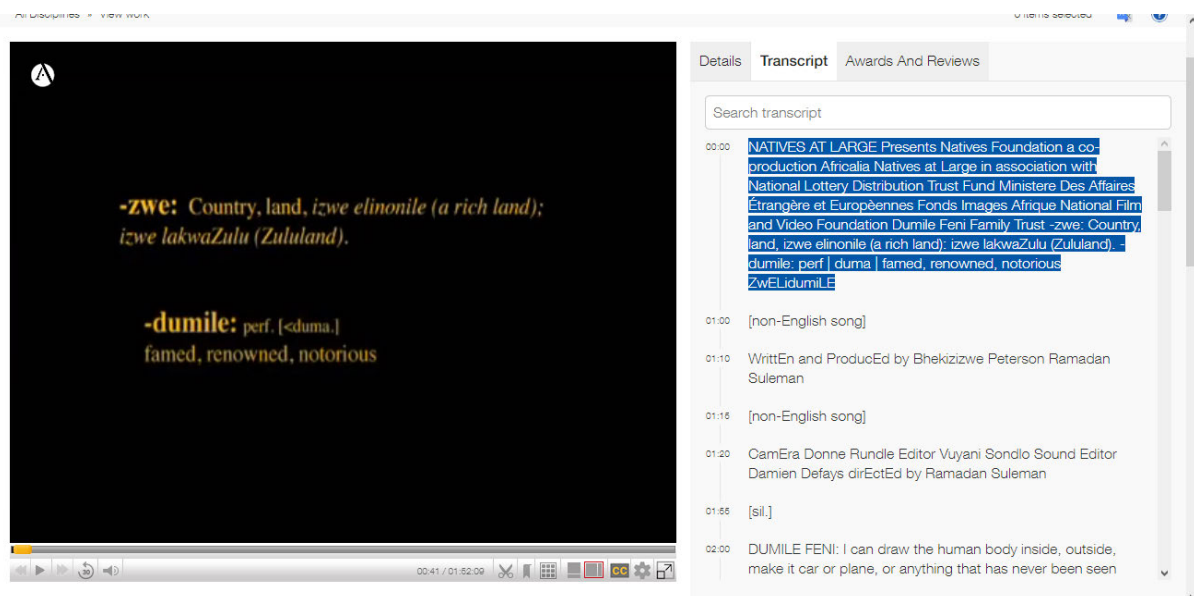


Figure 9: An image (screenshot) of the title translation of the film *Zwelidumile* streaming on *Alexanderstreet*. (2011)

4.2.2 The Archival material

There is no video footage and audio recordings that were left behind by on Sobukwe. I find it very interesting for a figure of his stature to have absolutely nothing audio-visual (except the images of the man). The documentary film about his life is still a great effort, nonetheless. The archive images are mostly edited using software like Adobe AfterEffects, and in this way, they create a sense of motion and linear cinematic tone. At approximately (01:28)

beginning of the film, there is an archival video of John Vorster where he urges the necessity of enforcing laws to protect South Africa from 'thugs', see Figure 10. The statement was directed to people like Sobukwe, who were fighting for equal treatment for all. The film's theme is based around this spirit of Sobukwe, indicating that he would essentially 'break the law' (Vorster's words) in pursuit of freedom. In the archival images used in this film, there is a b-roll (starts at about 32:19) of the images of Sobukwe edited in motion. A few seconds from that b-roll of the images of Sobukwe, the narrator is speaking about the formation of the Pan Africanist Congress; we are shown another b-roll of *Sobukwe* and all the executives of the political party, also edited in motion like the previous b-rolls that shows Sobukwe's images. At about 32:38 of the film, the narration reads, "And so the Pan Africanist Congress was born. Right from the outset, Sobukwe and PAC sought to make the destiny of South Africa". (2012) We are also shown an image of the Ghanaian politician and theorist Kwame Nkrumah, who was said to have inspired the philosophy of Sobukwe and the PAC, see Figure 12. The film uses a newspaper article from the Sunday Times that reads, "Leader Expelled in Pan-Africanist Row" (this refers to the time when one of the members of PAC who refused to lead the "Anti Pass Campaign", and this led to that member being let go of his duty, see Figure 13: An image (screenshot) of a newspaper article with the Anti-Pass campaign announcement/ a leader being expelled and Figure 14: An image (screenshot) of a newspaper article about ANC not supporting the campaign. Humphrey Tyler, the reporter who was present when the Sharpeville Massacre occurred, is reminiscing on the dreadful event that took place, "He was mowing the crowd. He was shooting live bullets into the sky. (inaudible). The chap turning him over. I don't know why I've heard it, or it appeared to me that he said, "My god. She's gone." (2012, 51:50). As Tyler is describing the scene he witnessed, we are shown an archive of images (people captured who are running and others holding placards with writings) and video (kids running in bicycles and an aeroplane in the sky) that edited in a fast-paced to match the speed of Tyler's recalling of the day, see Figure 15.

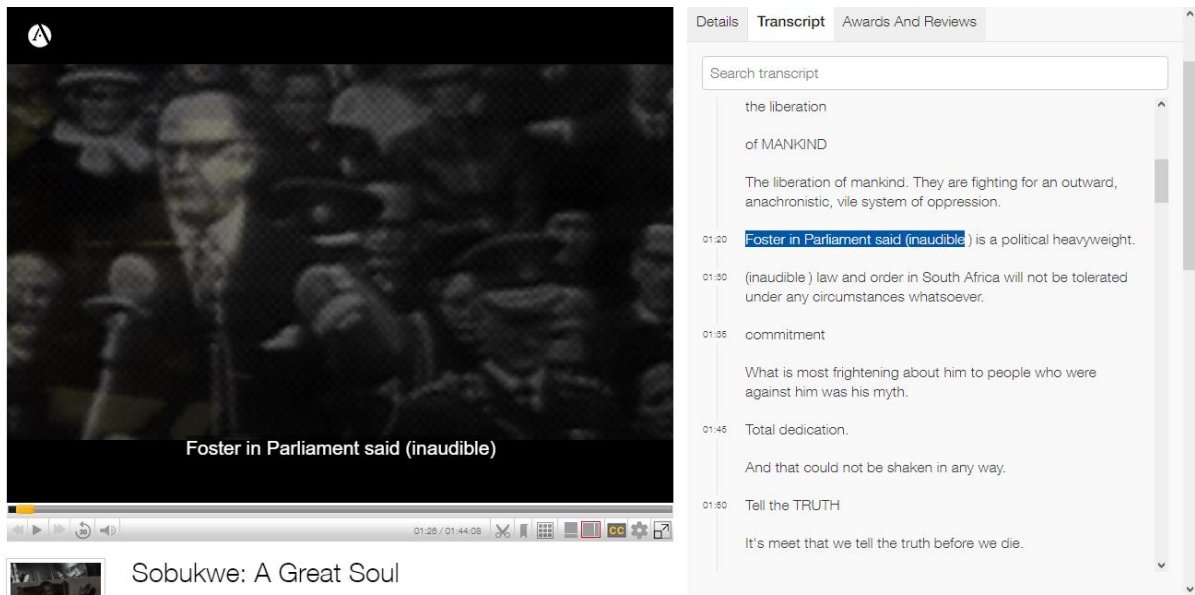


Figure 10: An image (screenshot) of John Vorster presenting a parliament speech in *Sobukwe: A Great Soul* film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2012)

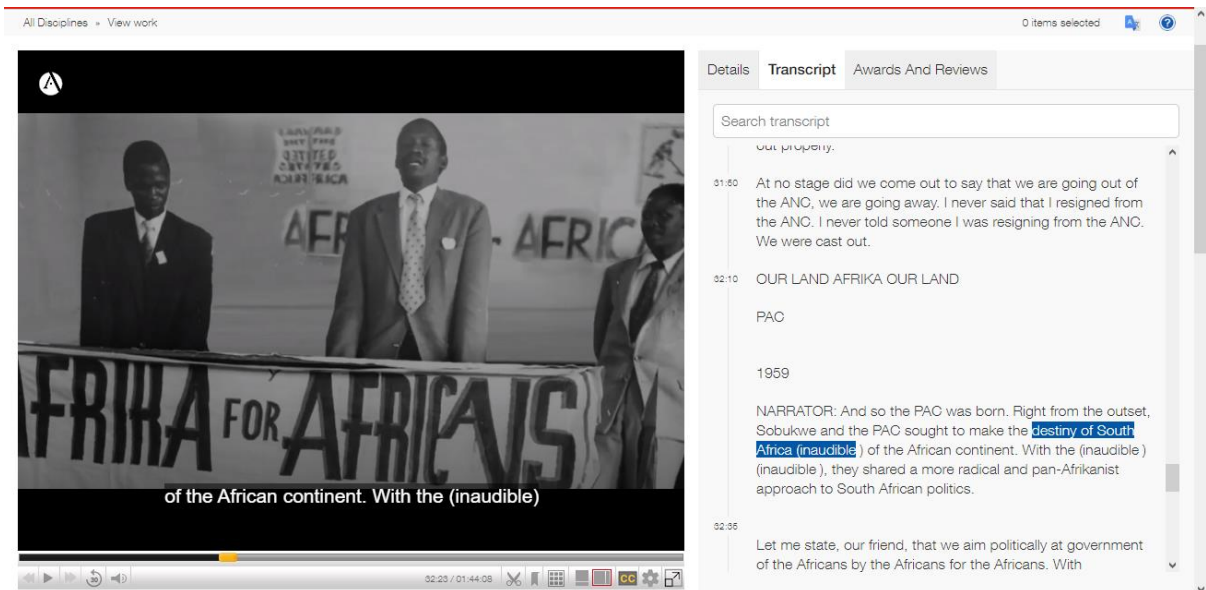


Figure 11: An image (screenshot) of Sobukwe and members of PAC wearing suits, in the film *A Great Soul* streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2012)

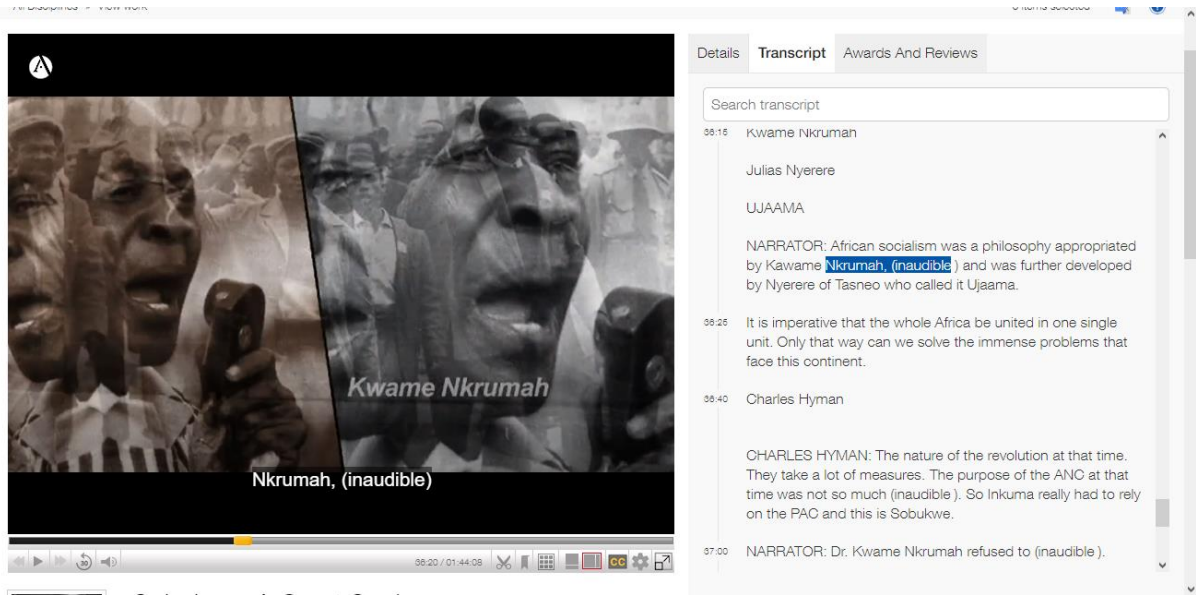


Figure 12: An image (screenshot) of Kwame Nkrumah in the film about Sobukwe streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2012)

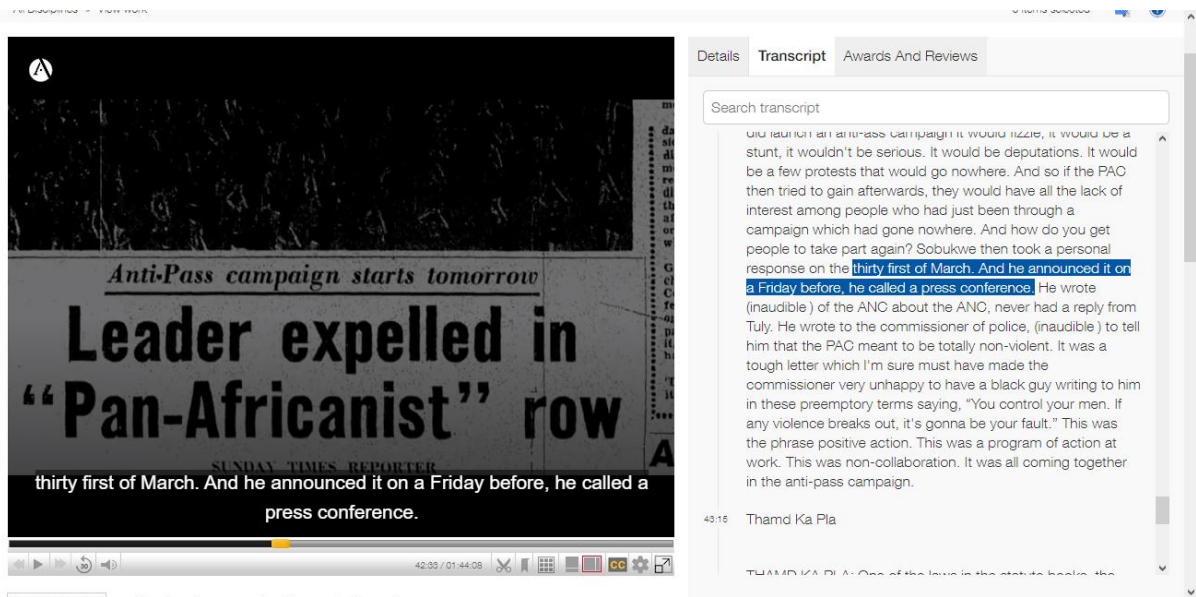


Figure 13: An image (screenshot) of a newspaper article with the Anti-Pass campaign announcement/ a leader being expelled on Sobukwe's film streaming Alexanderstreet. (2012)

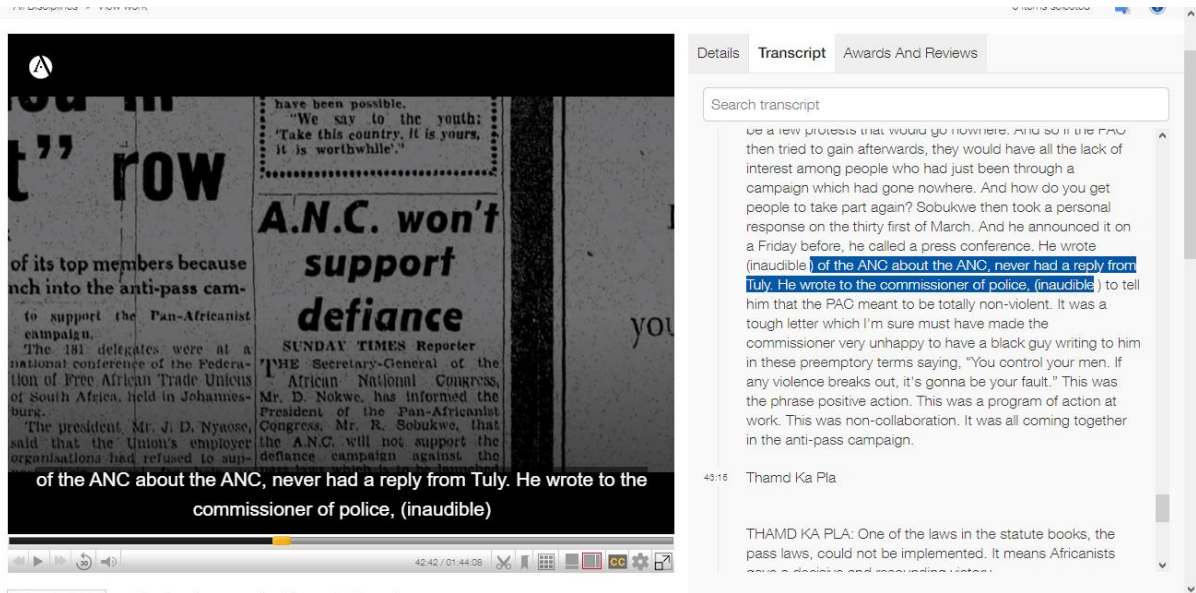


Figure 14: An image (screenshot) of a newspaper article about ANC not supporting the campaign on Sobukwe's film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2012)

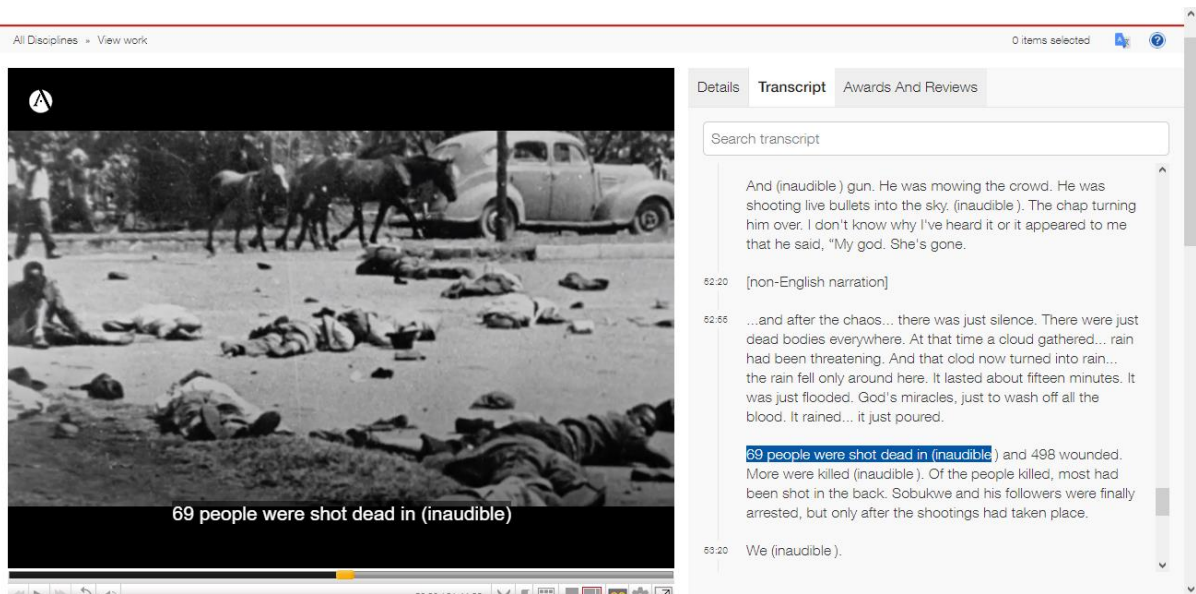


Figure 15: An image (screenshot) of the dead bodies of people during the depiction of the Sharpeville massacre on Sobukwe's film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2012)

There is also another archive article used in this film that tells the story of Sobukwe and followers getting arrested, the article heading reads "AWAITING TRIAL AT THE FORT" (53:17), see Figure 16. Subsequently, the narration echoes "Sobukwe and his followers were finally arrested, but only after the shootings had taken place." The scene that follows, we are shown another b-roll of the archival images of Sobukwe wearing a black suit and tie at the

funeral after the Sharpeville massacre (53:35), see Figure 17. A few days after the massacre, the film proceeds to show the time when Albert Luthuli was the president of the ANC, he appears in a newspaper article burning his passbook (54:07), see Figure 18. This later sparked the people of South Africa to follow suit.

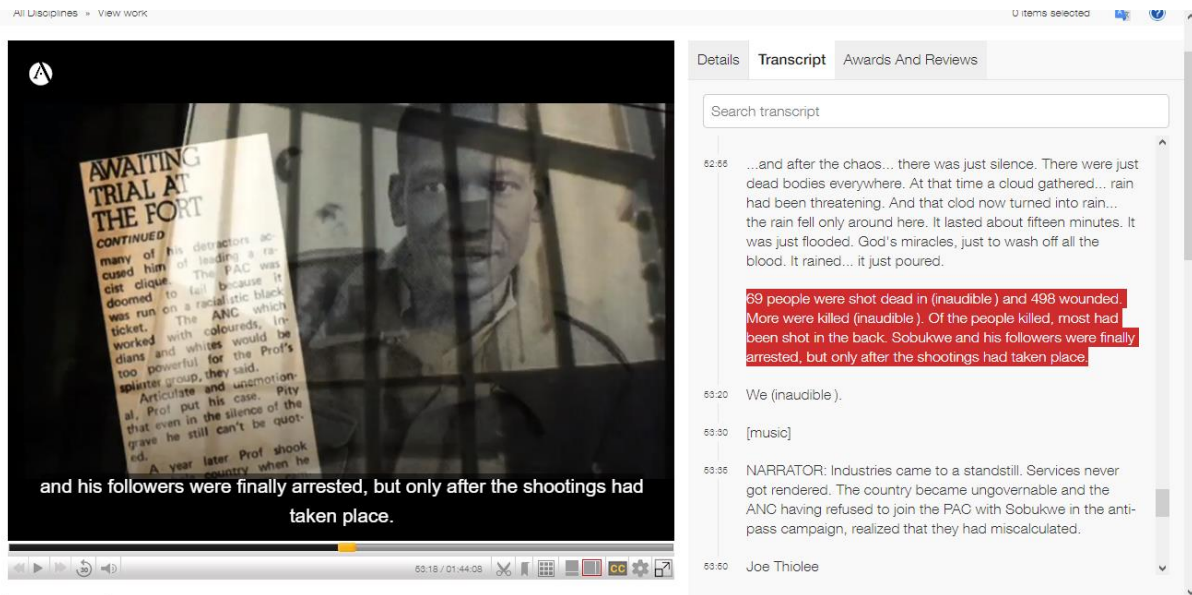


Figure 16: An image (screenshot) of a newspaper article about the arrest of Sobukwe and some of the protesters of the Anti-Pass campaign on Sobukwe's film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2012)

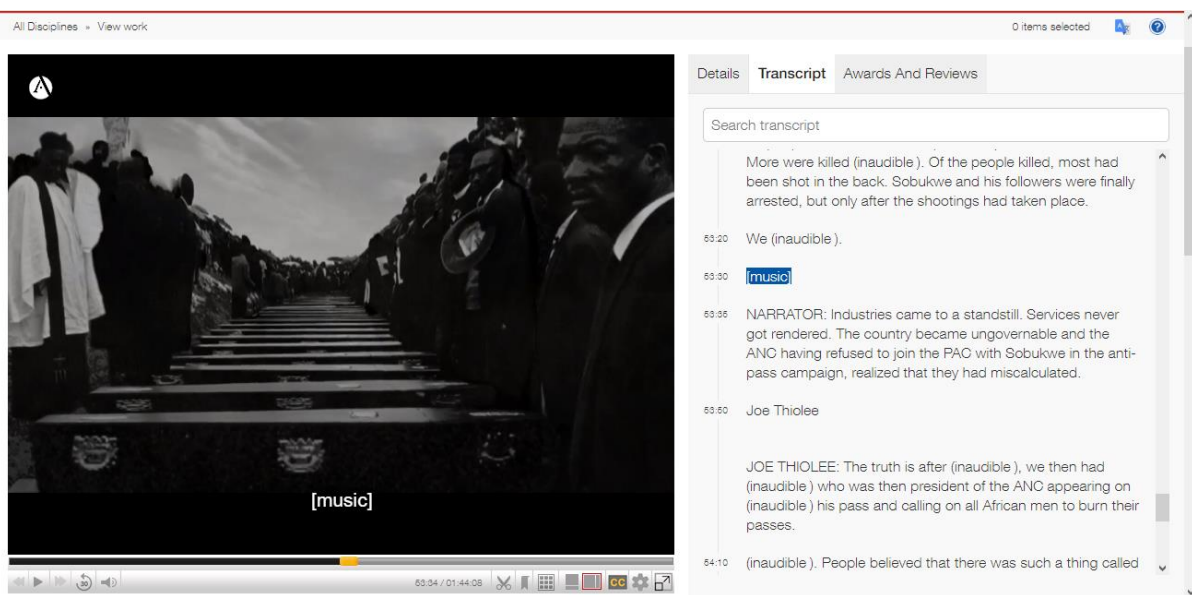


Figure 17: An image (screenshot) of Sobukwe and other men dressed in black next to coffins at a funeral on the Sobukwe film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2012)

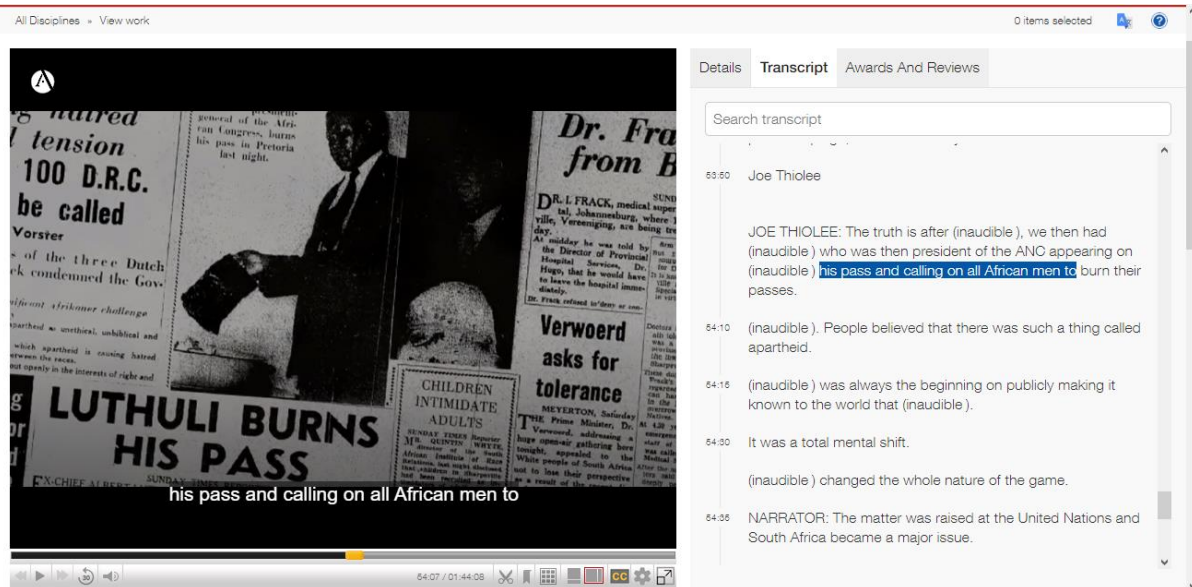


Figure 18: An image (screenshot) of a newspaper article about Albert Luthuli burning his Passbook on Sobukwe's film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2012)

Zwelidumile (2011) also utilized archival materials to tell the story of the late artist. The film at approximately (2:00) we are shown an archive interview (see Figure 1) of Dumile Feni. Parts of this archival video can be accessible via YouTube. Parts of this interview are recurrently featured throughout the film. The archive interview shows Feni speaking about what is the inspiration behind his creations:

I can draw the human body inside, outside, make it car or plane, or anything that has never been seen before but that to me is redundant. I'm trying to make somebody understand, something meaningful that has to do with all humanity. I'm not trying to be clever. I can be clever if I wanted, for fact, that I think, I should be, be very rich by now, but, you know, that's not how the inside, with me, that's not how it works. (2011).

These types of interviews are useful since they help tell the story from the subject's point of view. There is an archive image of Feni sleeping on a train subway. This image is edited with slightly reduced opacity to blend with an archive video of a moving train. This plays at about (10:34); see Figure 19, as Rashidah Ismaili-Abubakr explains the conditions Feni used to find himself in. He used to sleep on subways, as his time in New York was sometimes a burden he could not bear. The way the image is used is a way I plan to use the images of Michael in the documentary film, not so much the way it is edited but the way it is used. This will be done

during the time we get to know the man, and the interviews will provide the necessary narration of the archival images utilized.

The film also shows a creative way in which to show some of the artwork that was done by Feni, and this scene involves Rashidah's cat. The cat's movements are juxtaposed with the illustrations (archival images) of the different cats that were drawn by Feni; see Figure 20: An image (screenshot) of artwork of a cat by Zwelidumile. There is also another way an archival image is used to transition to the next scene, and this example is short and effective. We are shown an edited in motion photo of Feni as a young man wearing a striped shirt; see Figure 21: An image (screenshot) of Zwelidumile edited wearing a striped shirt, and this is used to transition to the next scene, which is Rashidah's interview. There is another scene where the archive interview returns, and this is when the reporter asks Feni to explain his name. Feni describes, see Figure 22: An image (screenshot) of Zwelidumile speaking about the meaning of his names in his film.

It's like, ah, a tree, that your name is supposed to tell the story of your life and family, and so forth. It's like the old paintings in the caves. Oh, I'm from the San people, you know, but urban because they don't have them anymore. The only ones that they have is like, they have them in camps, you know, and, ah, they have tourists go and take pictures of them, they have little blankets on. Little things, they call them the bushmen in South Africa which is really a bastardization of what they really are, but they have a long history of painting in the caves, you know, the oak, colours, grounds, colours, wonderful. It goes on and on. But, ah, the name like the paintings tells a story, you know, that this family was here, a son of so and so, or daughter of so and so. It goes on and on. (2011, 21:40).

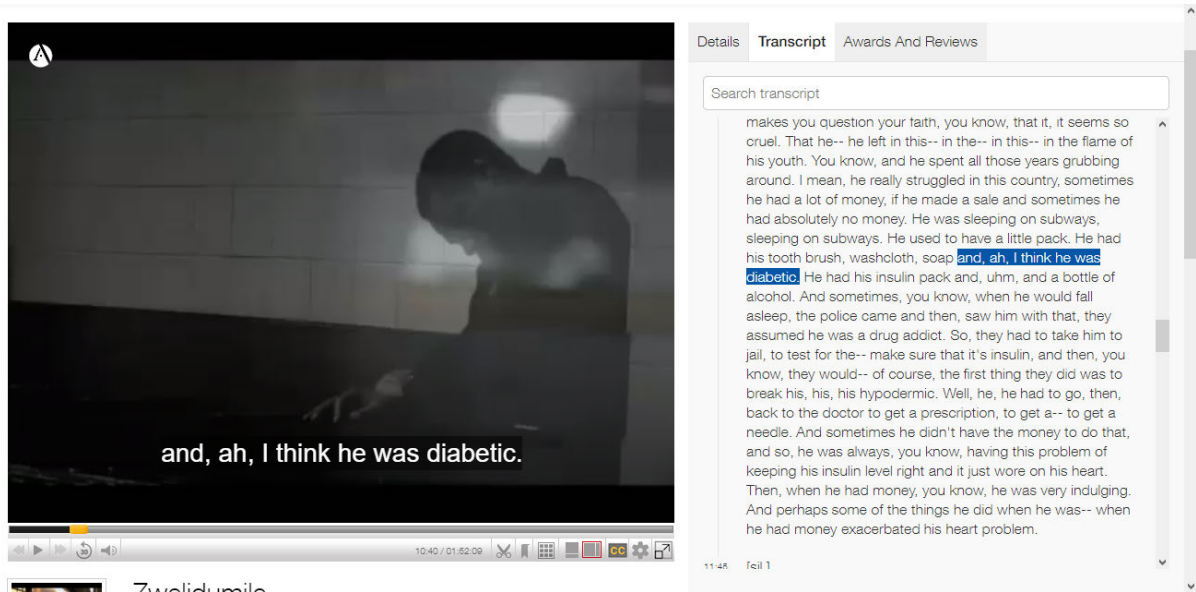


Figure 19: An image (screenshot) of Zwelidumile on a train station bench sleeping on his film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2011)

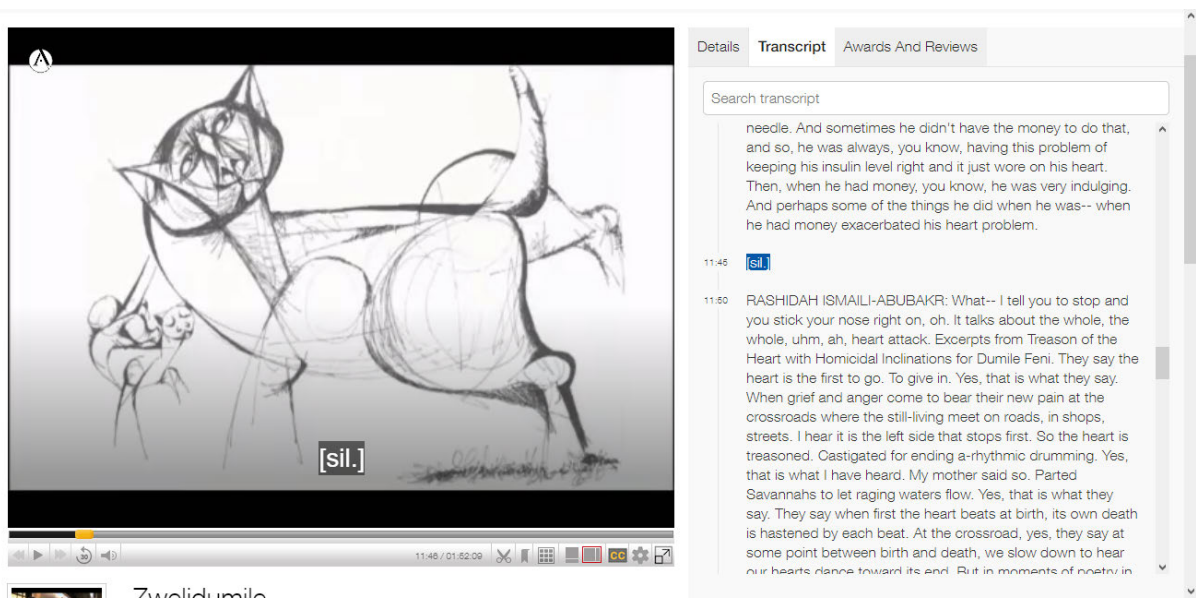


Figure 20: An image (screenshot) of artwork of a cat by Zwelidumile on his film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2011)

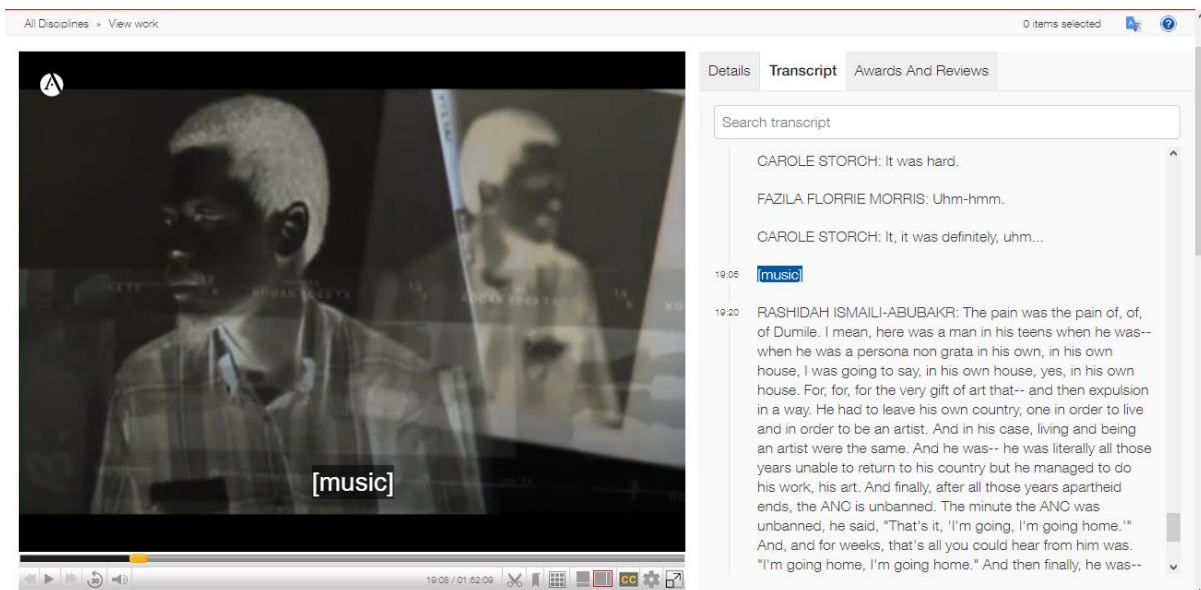


Figure 21: An image (screenshot) of Zwelidumile edited wearing a striped shirt on his film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2011)

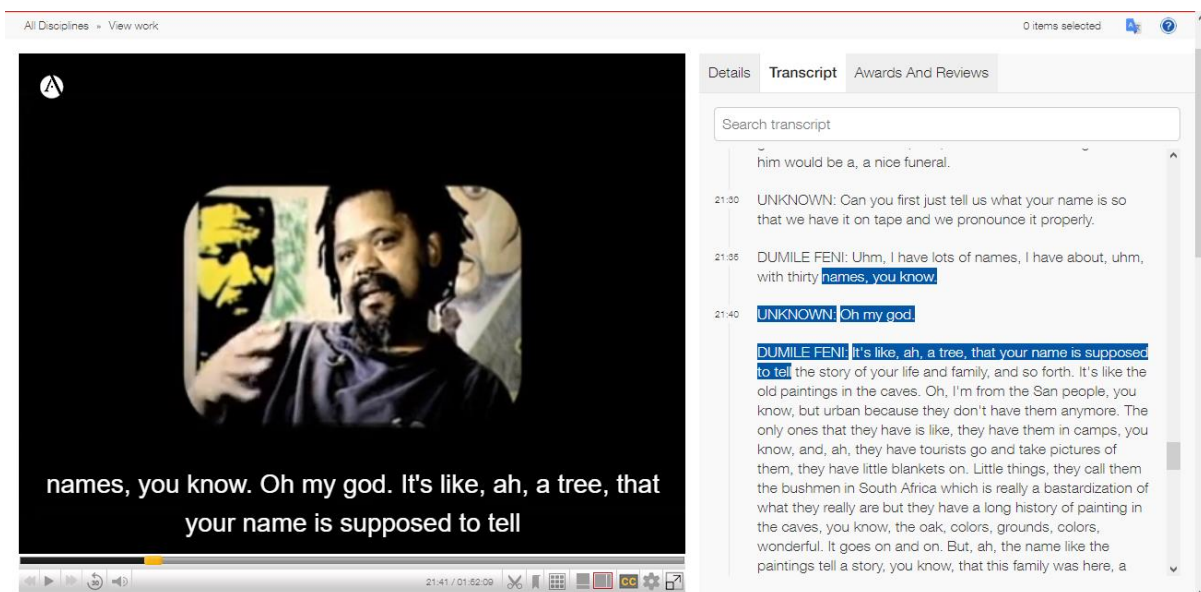


Figure 22: An image (screenshot) of Zwelidumile speaking about the meaning of his names in his film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2011)

This archival video is intriguing since it shows how the artist thought and articulated his points. When Julian Bahula explains how he met Feni, the scene shifts from the interview with him to the archival image of Feni. He is standing next to one of his artworks hanging on the wall; see Figure 23: An image (screenshot) of Zwelidumile standing next to his artwork wearing a blaze in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2011) This is how I plan to use the archival images of Michael, especially when the interviews are recalling a time about the

artist. Omar Badsha recalls a story of Dumile and Stanley Motjuwadi (of Drum magazine) being drunk at a party in Johannesburg and playing a game involving their passbooks. The little act performed by Dumile and Stanley that night, Badsha observes:

There's a famous drawing of-- uhm, it's not famous but for me, very significant, "I am not a donkey." Uhm, person with a donkey's head. It's in the Durban Art Gallery. And this is, ah-- yeah, it's part of him, part of that Johannesburg scene. Uhm, it's-- you're relating to the white liberal art establishment. Your life is dependent, and it revolves around that. Uhm, it was always, ah, ah, relationship of dependence and, and rejection but it played out itself out in that party. (2011, 26:45)

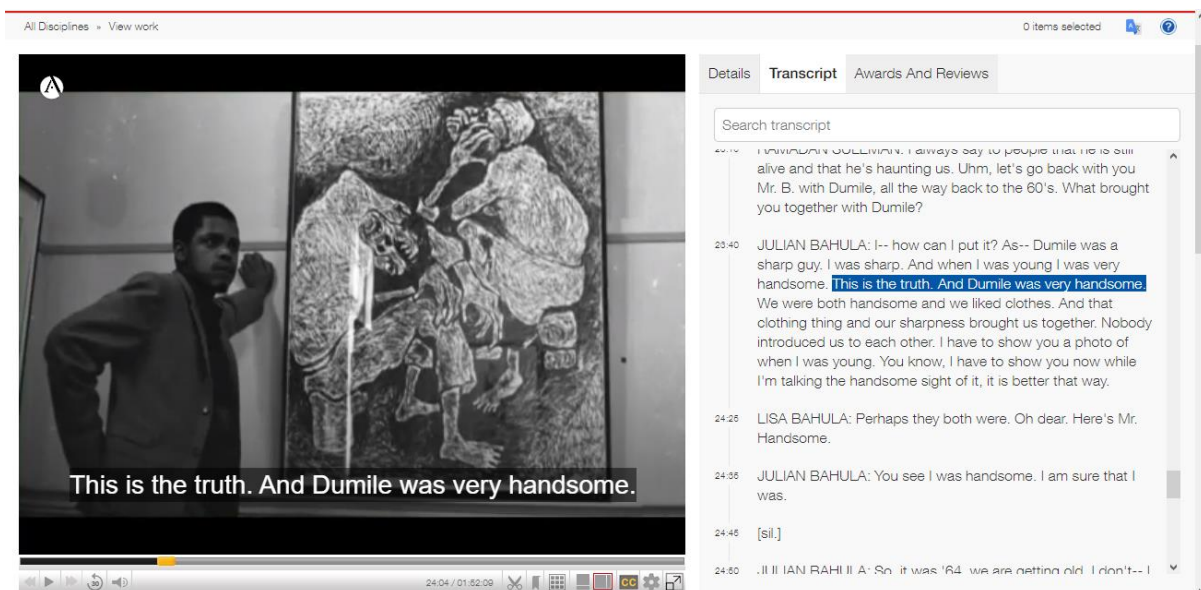


Figure 23: An image (screenshot) of Zwelidumile standing next to his artwork wearing a blaze in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2011)

As Omar narrates this story, the scene cuts from showing Omar, to showing archival videos and images that show people who were marching because of the unjust pass laws, see Figure 24. Omar draws parallel between the game they played during the night when they were having a Feni “go away” party before; this is when the pass by Stanley gets damaged, and the correlation being the artwork of the half-man half-donkey at the Durban Art Gallery. We are shown an archive image of the artwork Omar is referring to, see Figure 25 and what is the meaning behind it.

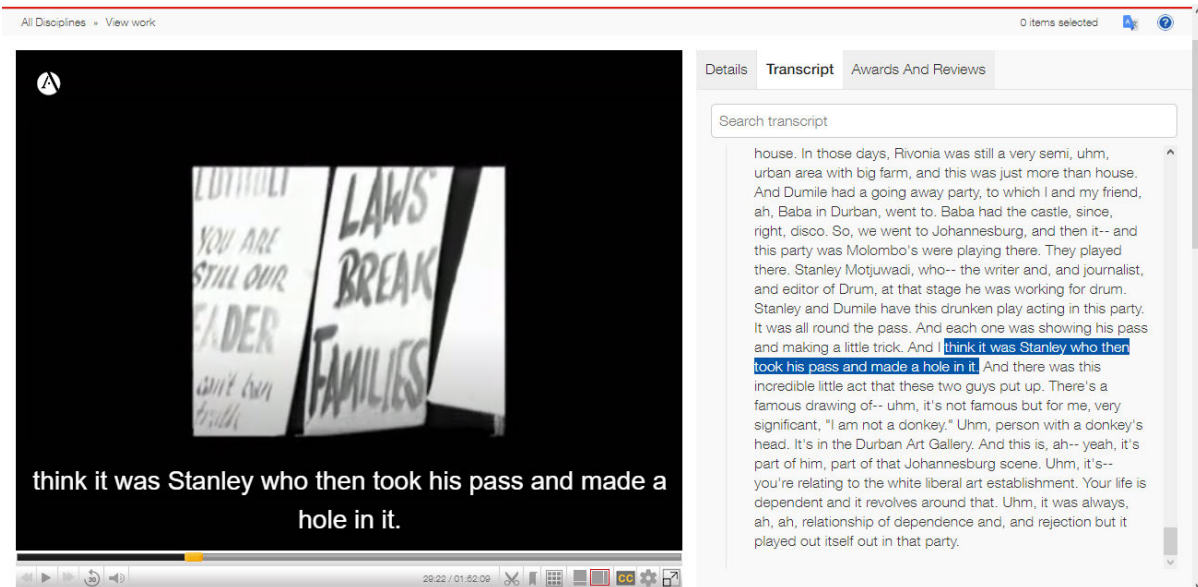


Figure 24: An image (screenshot) of an archival video with people holding protest placards in *Zwelidumile* streaming on *Alexanderstreet*. (2011)

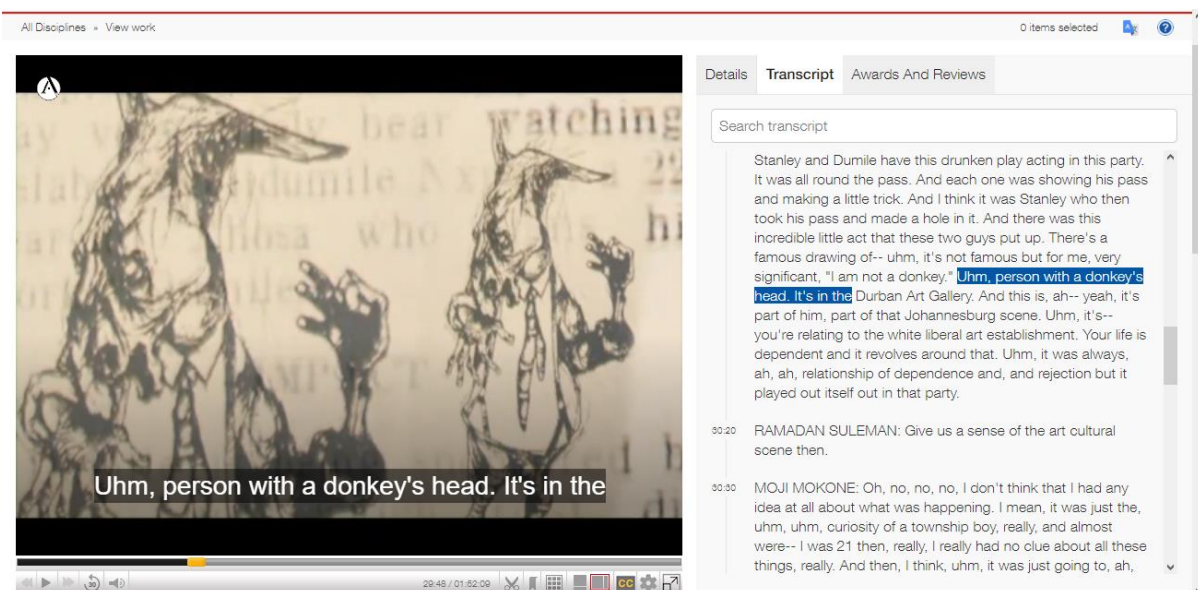


Figure 25: An image (screenshot) of an artwork by *Zwelidumile* of a halfman/halfdonkey in his film streaming on *Alexanderstreet*. (2011)

The Cradock Four (2010) also uses archival material to portray the narrative. At the beginning of the film, we are introduced to archival videos that depict a written message about how South Africa was during the times the apartheid system was introduced, see Figure 26. These videos show the use of archival images of the four men who were assassinated. These archives are edited with text to inform us which image belonged to who and what happened; see Figure 27. We are shown the image of Matthew's friend, Fort Calata, which

has a caption that reads, “Abducted with Matthew on his way home, was friend and lieutenant Fort Calata”. Another archival image of Fort when he was younger is shown; see Figure 38. The archive is used to fill in the information gap, which is achieved through the utilization of captions.

Consequently, see Figure 28, the next archive image transitions to another picture of the activist Sparrow and a child; the caption written on the image is “Activist Sparrow Mkonto and, in a cruel twist of fate, another friend.” (01:40) The image of Sicelo, see Figure 29, who was also part of the dreadful event is shown at approximately (01:44) with an inscription that reads “Sicelo Mhlauli, who had come along to catch up on old times”. We are introduced to the township of Lingelihle in Cradock; see Figure 30. This is done through an archival image of the place, which shows the cramped housing of the area. (03:06). This is used as part of the establishing shots where we are introduced to the study area.

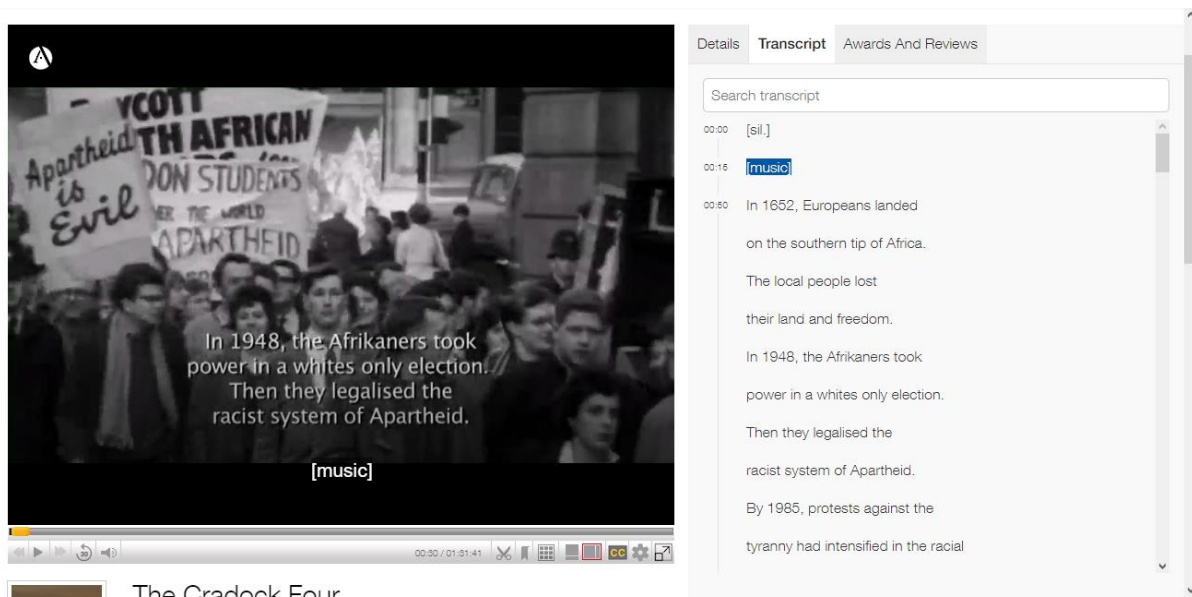


Figure 26: An image (screenshot) of an archival video showing people who are holding placards that speaks against apartheid in film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

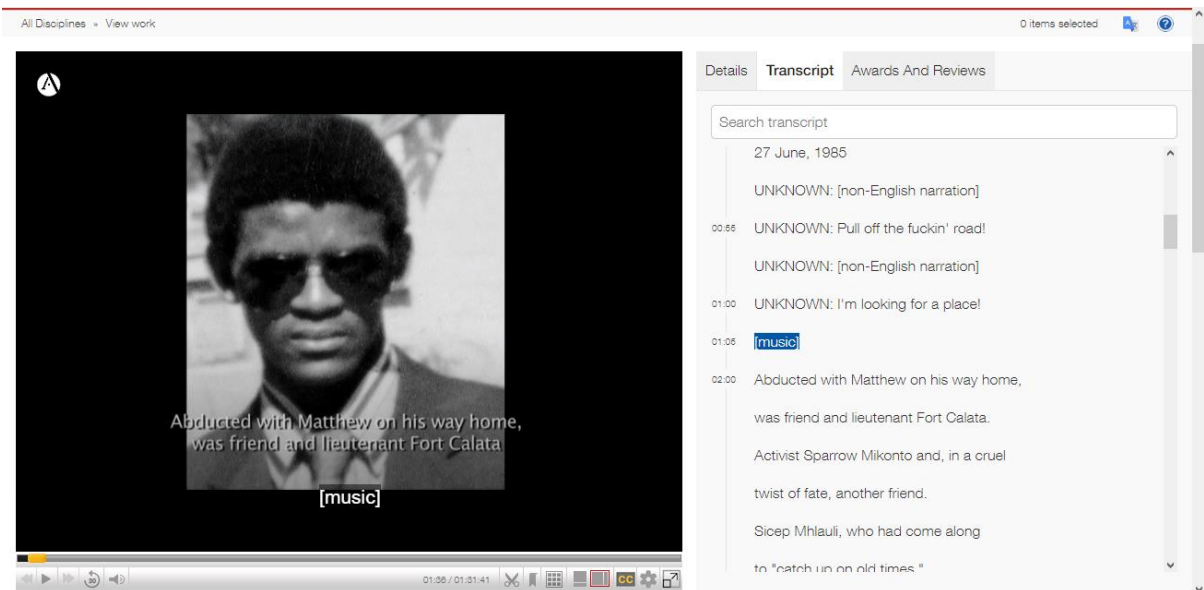


Figure 27: An image (screenshot) of lieutenant Fort Calata with a caption that describes what happened to him in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

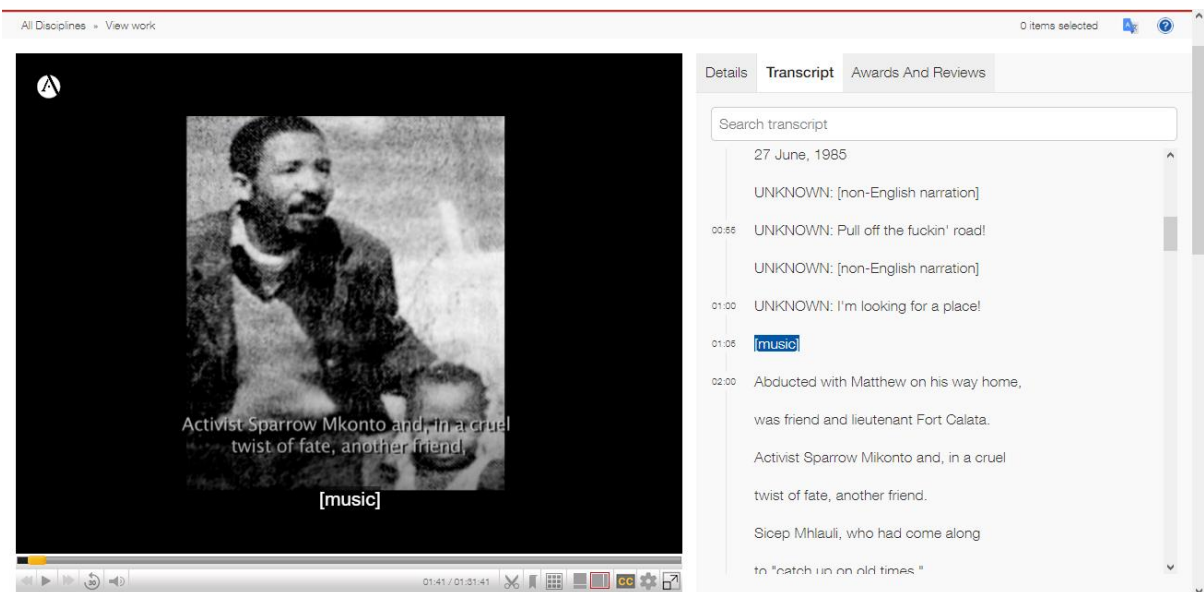


Figure 28: An image (screenshot) of activist Sparrow Mkonto next to a kid in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

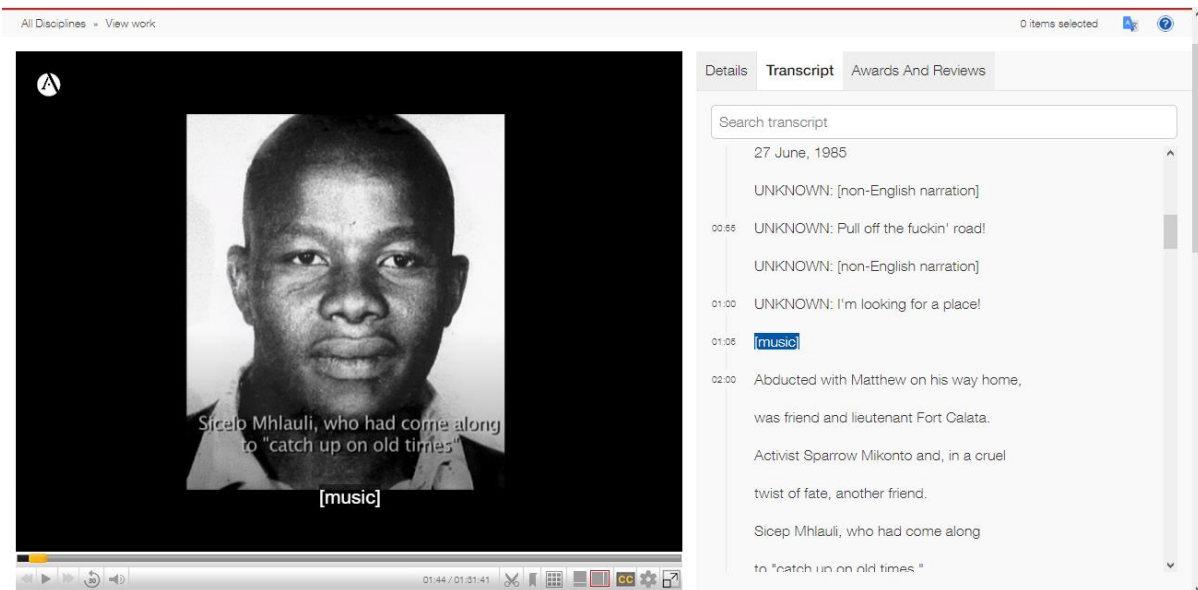


Figure 29: An image (screenshot) of Sicelo Mhlauli with a caption of what was his intention to ride along with the other friends in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

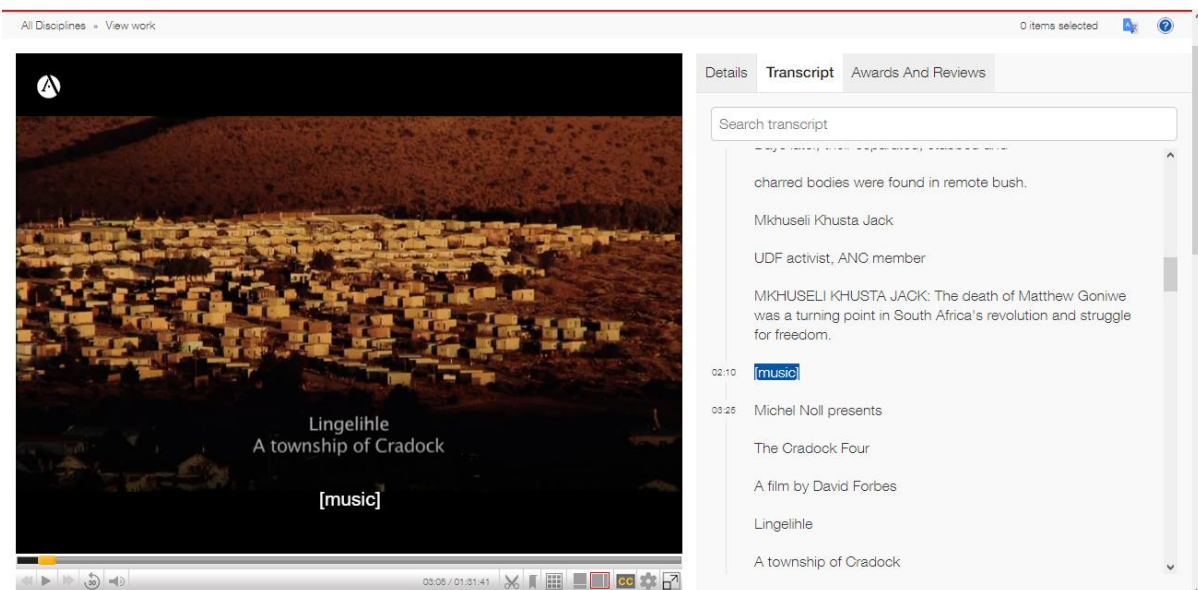


Figure 30: An image (screenshot) of Lingelihle; a township of Cradock with caption that describes it in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

The film also uses the archival video of Matthew's wife, which was part of an interview she did in 1988 about her late husband. Nyameka Goniwe is quoted saying, see Figure 31, "I think they feared Matthew in some strange way." (2010, 03:30). This quote is a reference to the apartheid government. Alfred Skwenya (a family friend of Matthew) speaks about the times in South Africa during the times of the apartheid regime, "We must never forget what happened to this country." (2010, 04:21). These words are abruptly transitioned to the video

of a helicopter flying above the thousands of people who are protesting in the street, see Figure 32, and the caption of this scene is “Soweto uprising, 16 June 1976” (2010, 04:24). Following this scene, we are shown a range of black/white archival images/videos of people marching holding placards, and these people are in front of police Casspir trucks and vans that were deployed, see Figure 33. Nyameka is found reminiscing on the times Matthew was arrested, and this scene of her interview is juxtaposed with an archival newspaper article that details the story. She can be quoted saying, “I remember my, I still was missing a baby. And Matthew got arrested.” (2010, 09:45). These words are followed by an article that reads, see Figure 34) “RED ACT: TRANSKEI FIVE ARE REMANDED” (09:50)

The application of the archive in this way, is similar to the way I plan to include the archival newspaper article that speaks about the *One-Man Carving* exhibition, and this way proves to be effective because the video is panning from one side of the article to the other making sure you are able to read the newspaper, see Figure 35. More of this is evident at about (15:22) when Di Bishop is speaking about how revered Matthew was, see Figure 36. The archival newspaper article shows Matthew amongst the kids (with clenched fists), and the heading of the article is “CRADOCK BUILDS PEOPLE’S POWER WITH DEMOCRACY”, see Figure 37. The film also uses the archival video of Matthew’s wife, which was part of an interview she did in 1988 about her late husband. Nyameka Goniwe and is quoted saying, see Figure 31, “I think they feared Matthew in some strange way.” (2010, 03:30). This is a reference to the apartheid government. Alfred Skwenya (a family friend of Matthew) speaks about the times in South Africa during the times of the apartheid regime, “We must never forget what happened to this country.” (2010, 04:21). These words are abruptly transitioned to the video of a helicopter flying above the thousands of people who are protesting in the street, see Figure 32, and the caption of this scene is “Soweto uprising, 16 June 1976” (2010, 04:24). Following this scene, we are shown a range of black/white archival images/videos of people marching holding placards, and these people are in front of police Casspir trucks and vans that were deployed, see Figure 33. Nyameka is found reminiscing on the times Matthew was arrested, and this scene of her interview is juxtaposed with an archival newspaper article that details the story. She can be quoted saying, “I remember, I still was missing a baby. And Matthew got arrested.” (2010, 09:45). These words are followed by an article that reads, see Figure 34, “RED ACT: TRANSKEI FIVE ARE REMANDED” (09:50) The application of the archive in this way, is similar to the way I plan to include the archival newspaper article that speaks about the one man carving exhibition, and this way proves to be effective

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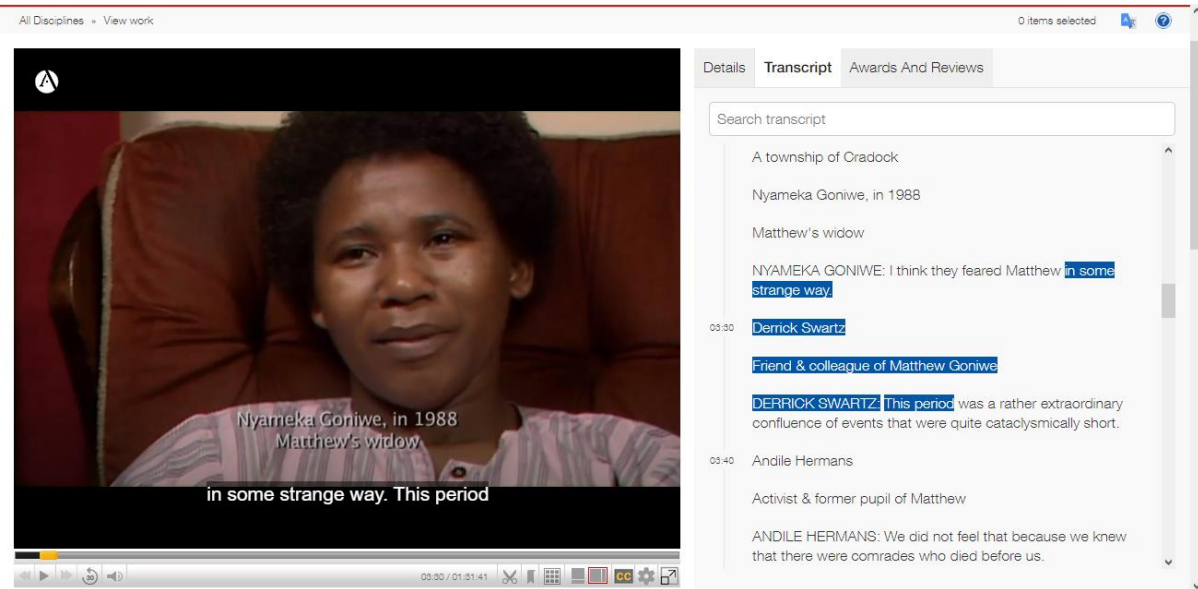


Figure 31: An image (screenshot) of Nyameka Goniwe in an archival interview with caption that explains when it was shot in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

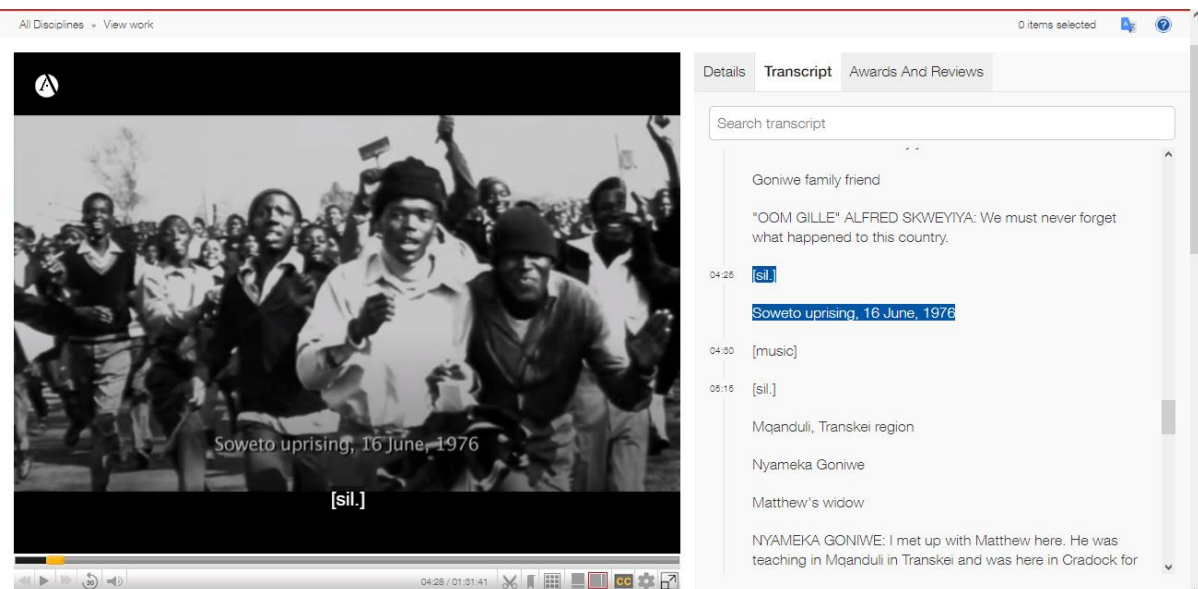


Figure 32: An image (screenshot) of an archival image of students marching during the Soweto uprising in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)



Figure 33: An image (screenshot) of archival image of Casspir trucks and road filled with people protesting in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)



Figure 34: An image (screenshot) of a newspaper article about the “Red Act” and five men being remanded in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

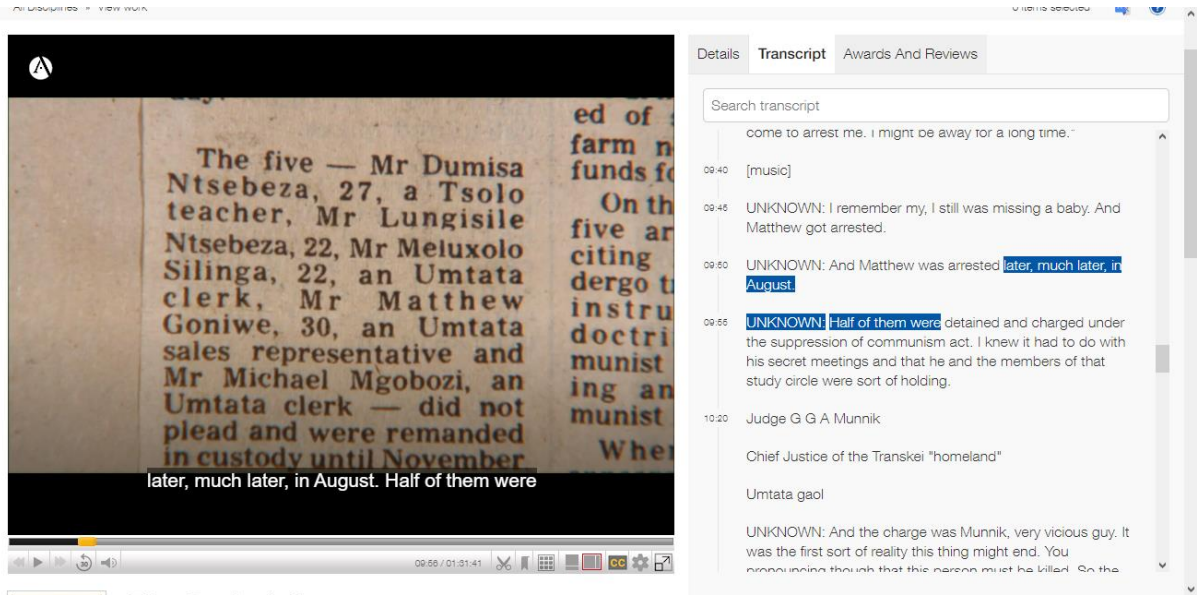


Figure 35: An image (screenshot) of a newspaper article about “Red Act” zoomed in the film streaming Alexanderstreet. (2010)

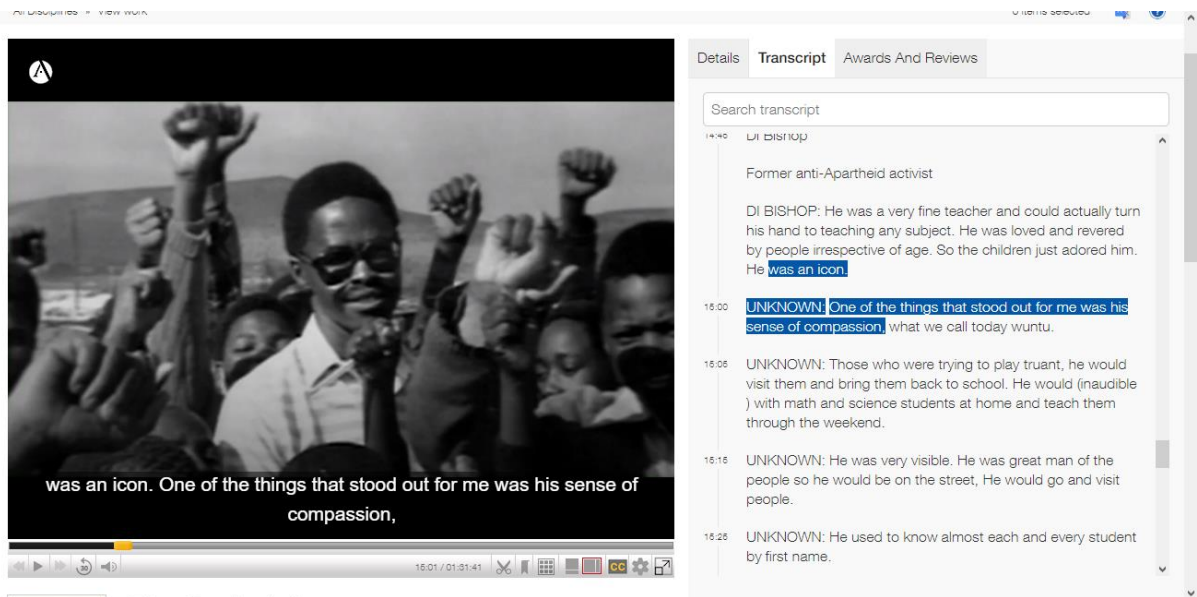


Figure 36: An image (screenshot) of Matthew amongst children who are clenching their fists in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

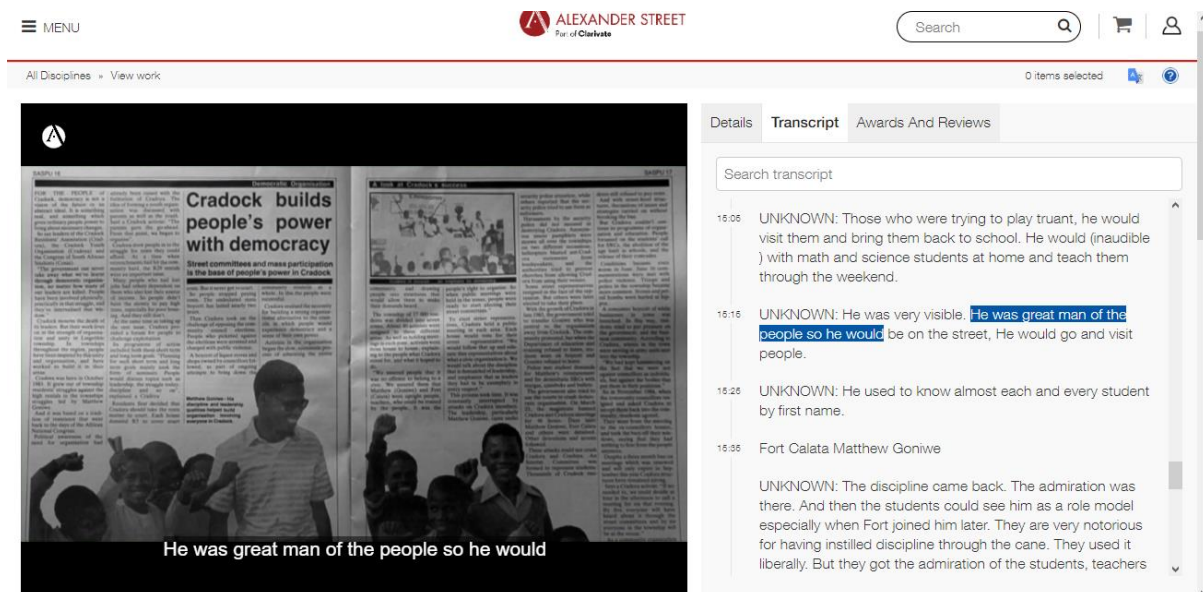


Figure 37: An image (screenshot) of a newspaper article about Cradock showing Matthew amongst kids in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

There is an archival interview of Matthew when he spoke on an international television interview, see Figure 39, where he is quoted stating:

People don't believe that a separation emanates from inequality and that as long as we cannot really speak of separate but equal. You know? The moment you say separate, people always believe that there is something behind it. There is inequality. The content of our education, as is presently structured, is such that it deprives the black child of accepting that he is equal with whites. It injects a kind of inferiority. I believe that this was stated by ministers, most particularly in the early 50s, that the education is meant to make blacks realize that they will never be equal to whites. So, we view that intention is still there. It is apartheid. And for as long as we have a separation of schools, the belief is that we cannot have equality. (2010, 21:26)

Interviews that are like this in nature give more insight to the viewer about the story, and this way, we are provided with unfiltered truth. As this narration plays, the scene shifts to a b-roll video of black/white archival images that depict the contradiction between the two races and how their living conditions differ, see Figure 40 and Figure 41. We are also shown a speech that was written by Matthew. This is an archival image of the letter he wrote, and we know this because of the caption attached to the image, see Figure 42, "Speech in Matthew's own

handwriting" (22:53). This letter explained what Cradock is and the situation at hand there during the times.

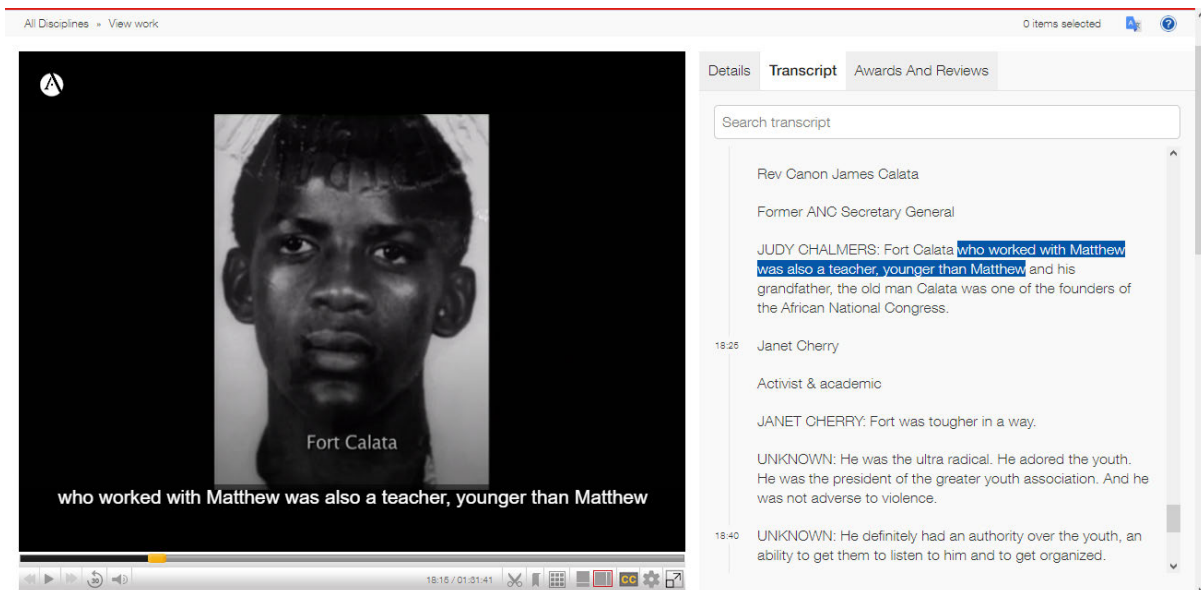


Figure 38: An image (screenshot) of a young Fort Calata in the film streaming on *Alexanderstreet*. (2010)

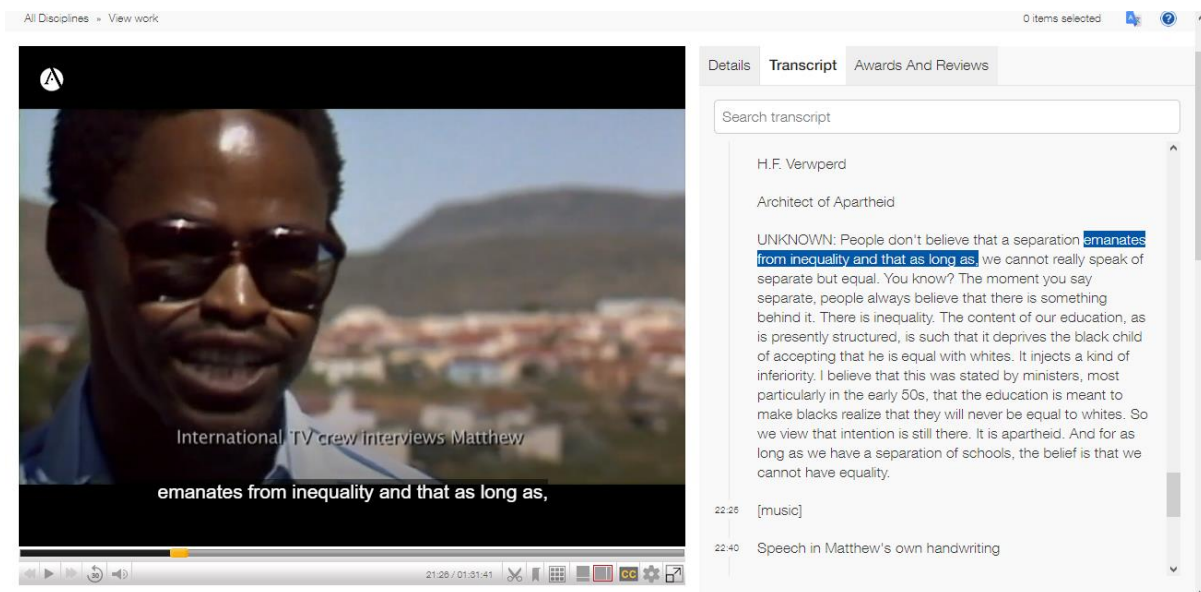


Figure 39: An image (screenshot) of an archival interview of Matthew interviewed by an international tv crew in the film streaming on *Alexanderstreet*. (2010)

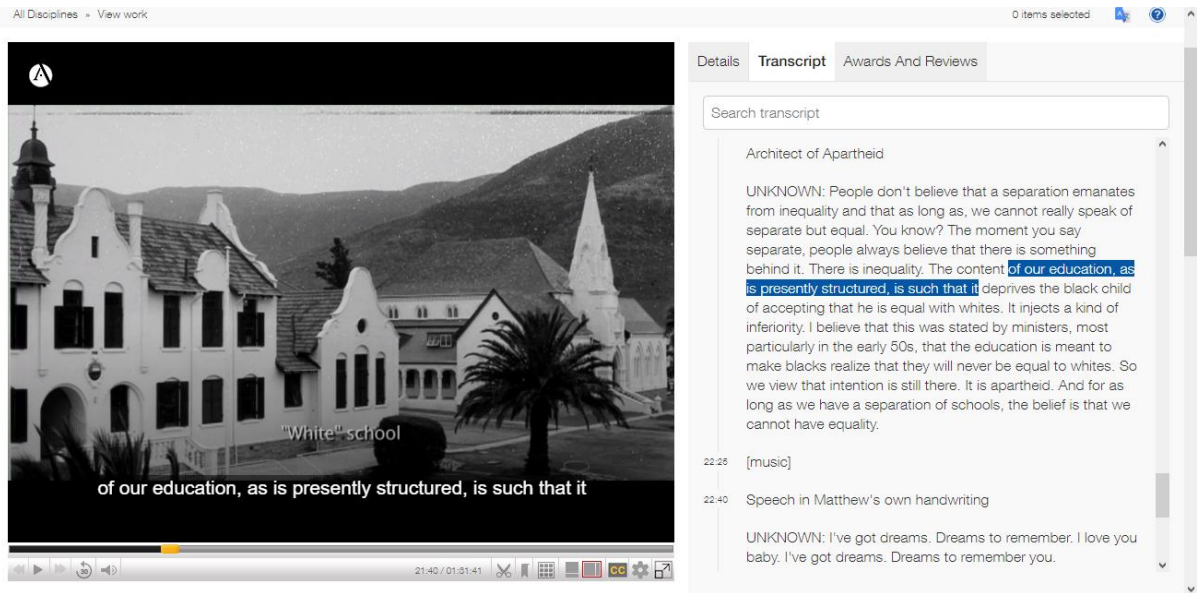


Figure 40: An image (screenshot) of a “White school” in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

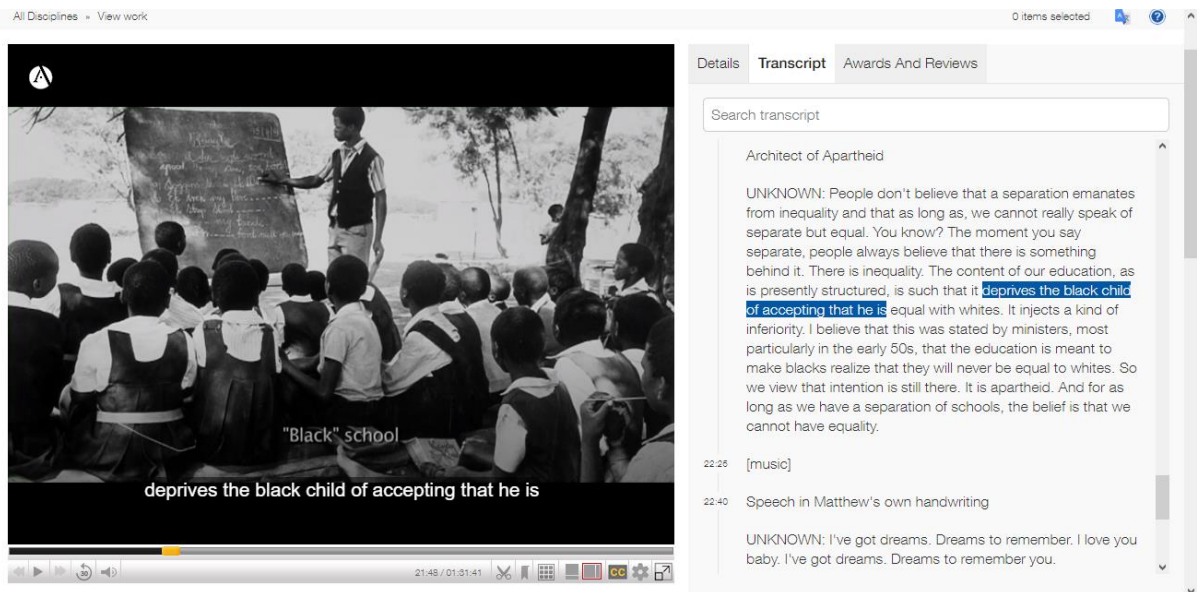


Figure 41: An image (screenshot) of a “Black” school in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

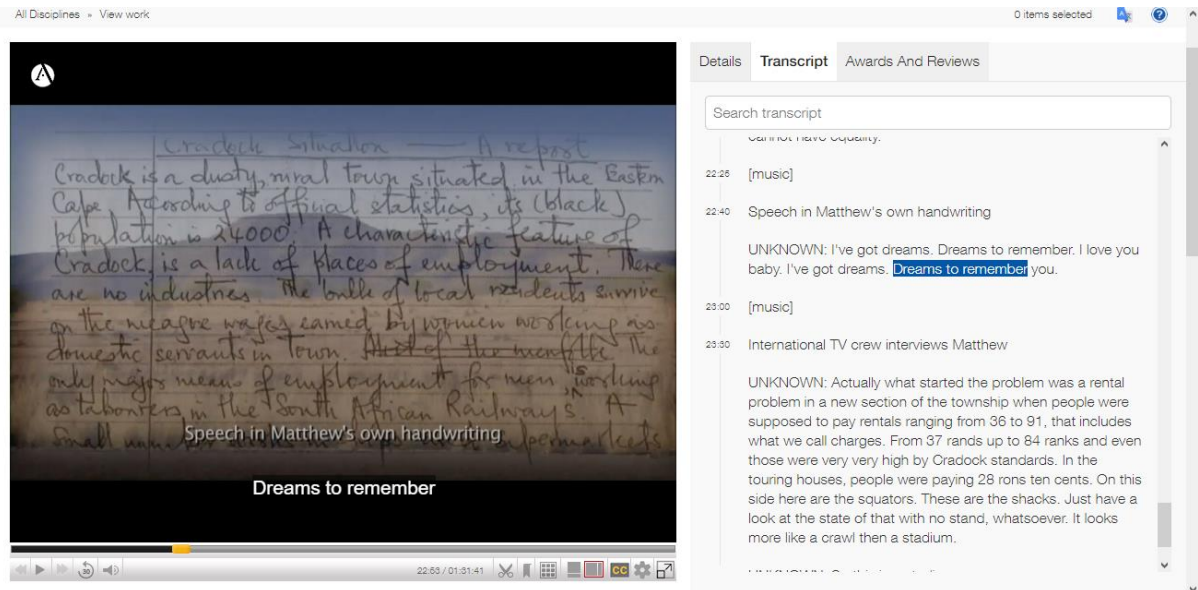


Figure 42: An image (screenshot) of a speech handwritten by Matthew in the film streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

4.2.3 The Participatory Mode

The director of the film, Ramadan Suleman, gets involved in the film by asking questions to the daughter of Feni. This is evident in the scene where Marriam Diale answers a question posed by the director, after a few scenes. see Figure 43, Suleman asks, “Did your mother or your granny ever talk to you about your father?” and Diale responds. This example shows the way I plan to participate for the conduction of the interviews for the short documentary film. There is also another example of this when Suleman meets Julian Bahula, he comments and ask, “I always say to people that he is still alive and that he's haunting us. Uhm, let's go back with you Mr. B. with Dumile, all the way back to the 60's. What brought you together with Dumile?” (23:15) Likewise, when the director is speaking to Moji Mokone, he asks about the about the arts during the times when Mokone and Feni were growing up. (30:20)

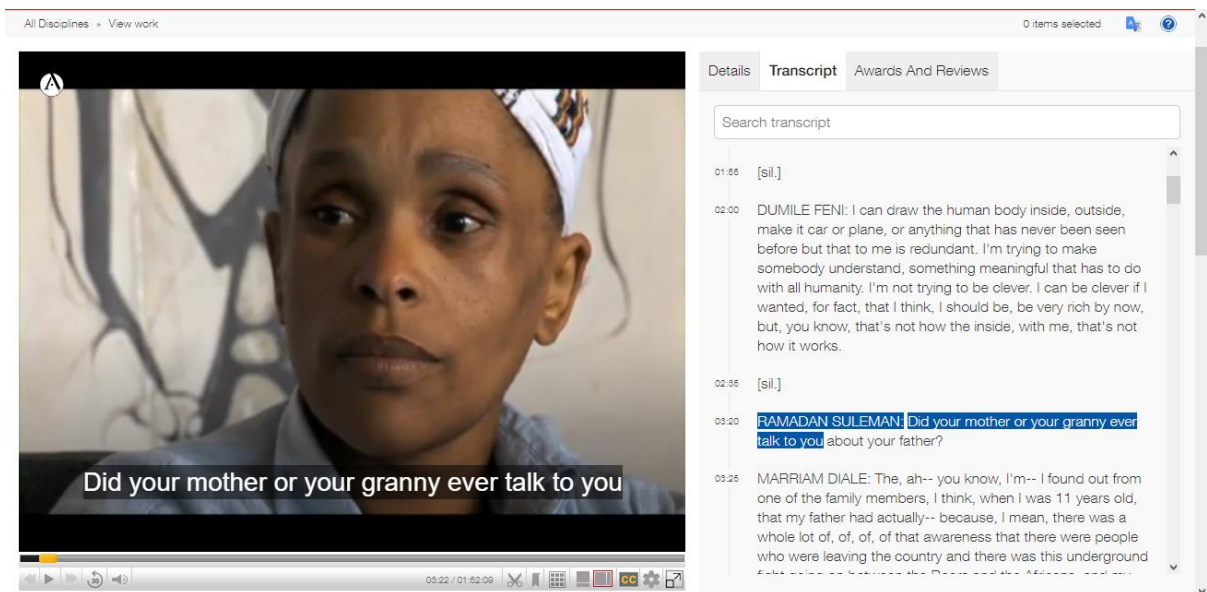


Figure 43: An image (screenshot) of Marriam Diale on Zwelidumile's film streaming on *Alexanderstreet*. (2011)

The Cradock Four also uses participatory traits to convey the story. The filmmaker's participating for this film is not heard, it is shown in textual writing (captions) on the screen, see Figure 44, in the film. The image on this scene establishes the story of Matthew and where this place took place. The film utilizes these captions as a bridge to fill information perhaps that would have been told through narrations in other modes of documentary. The captions written on videos and images are a prominent feature throughout the film.

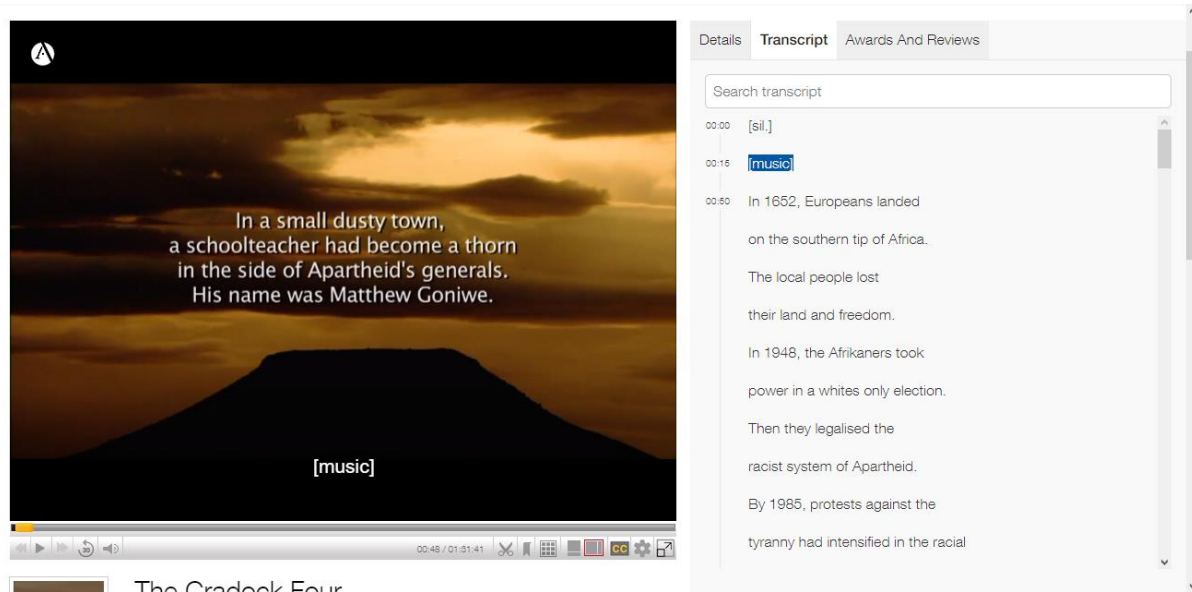


Figure 44: An image (screenshot) of a caption about Matthew Goniwe in the film *The Cradock Four* by David Forbes streaming on Alexanderstreet. (2010)

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter examined the documentary *Sobukwe: A Great Soul* (2012) by Mickey Madoda Dube, which explores the life of activist Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe and reflects on significant events in South African history, including the Sharpeville massacre and the harsh realities of apartheid. The film is an educational tool for future generations, emphasizing the importance of understanding history to inspire a just society. It also discussed *Zwelidumile* (2011), a participatory documentary highlighting the impact of apartheid on artists and families. The chapter highlights how these films use archives to preserve cultural heritage and share critical stories from the apartheid era. The final case study, *The Cradock Four* (2010) by David Forbes, recounts the brutal murder of Matthew Goniwe and his friends, using archival footage to convey the realities of apartheid and educate viewers about the past. Both films are valuable resources that should be easily accessible to South Africans, although they currently require premium subscriptions for access.

CHAPTER 5: BONGINKOSI (2023): AN ANALYSIS OF THE DOCUMENTARY APPROACH AND ITS DOCUMENTATION ON THE DIGITAL PLATFORM.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the documentary film titled *Bonginkosi*, which is about the life and art of Michael Gasa. It provides an insight into how the three archival documentary case studies discussed in the previous chapter influenced the practice of making the *Bonginkosi* film. The participatory approach used in the creation of Michael's film is discussed, as is how the archive is utilised in the making of the film. This section further explores how the film is digitally archived and will critically discuss the platform used to digitally archive the film.

5.2 South African archival documentary case studies and their impact on the practice.

When *Bonginkosi* begins, it starts with the archive image of a newspaper article of Michael's solo exhibition *One-Man Carving*, presented at the Tatham Art Gallery (30 May 2023) in Pietermaritzburg. In the film, we hear Peter's voice (in an interview between the filmmaker and Peter), Michael's friend and patron, narrating his experience of helping work toward and organising the show. He stresses how this was a major event for Michael's career, which proved to be a highlight of his sculpting career. The use of the archive image in this context is to provide more information about what Peter is describing. A similar utilisation of the archival document is seen in *Sobukwe: A Great Soul* (2012). As with this case study, the short documentary features a juxtaposition of footage that is recorded at different times in history.

This approach is further explored in archive footage of Michael's funeral, which was captured by Stewart in 2009 and edited and inserted into the narrative. This archive footage was taken at a different moment in time and is composited with other footage and photographs (of Michael and his artworks) that were also shot at different times in history. The way the archive was utilised in the short documentary film puts an emphasis on the words spoken by Peter - just like the archive document and the narration on *Sobukwe: A Great Soul* (2012). Moreover, *The Cradock Four* has a depiction of an archival video to emphasise the words of the narrator. Likewise, *Bonginkosi* has employed the use of texts and archival video/images to stress the words spoken by *Musa* (an interview between the filmmaker and *Musa*, Micheal's brother), where he is describing what inspires his brother (Michael) to create these

exquisite artworks. I show the archive material (which was shot at Tatham Art Gallery and at Peter's place, the latter being footage of the artworks by Michael that are part of the collection owned by Peter) /pictures of the artworks made by Michael. Likewise, in *Zwelidumile*, we are shown the late artist speaking about what inspired him to create the artworks he created; this archive footage was taken from an interview the artist did some time ago while he was still around. This archive footage shows Feni speaking about what sparked the work he created as an artist, he explains 'I am not going to be that artist who promote redundancy, my duty is to create something that is meaningful and that has to do with all humanity. I am not trying to be clever, if I were, I would be wealthy now' (02:08)

In my film, this footage plays a needed role in establishing the story of this creative genius Mr. Gasa, and it sets the tone for the entire documentary film. We get to understand the mind behind the artefacts and where he comes from when he creates these artworks. Since Michael cannot explain the inspiration behind the work on Bonginkosi, I have opted to use his brother. He is the one who explains the mind behind Michael's artistry. When Musa (Michael's brother) speaks of this artistry, we are shown images of Michael's work and archival images of the artist.

5.3. An analysis of the short documentary film "Bonginkosi" and the participatory approach.

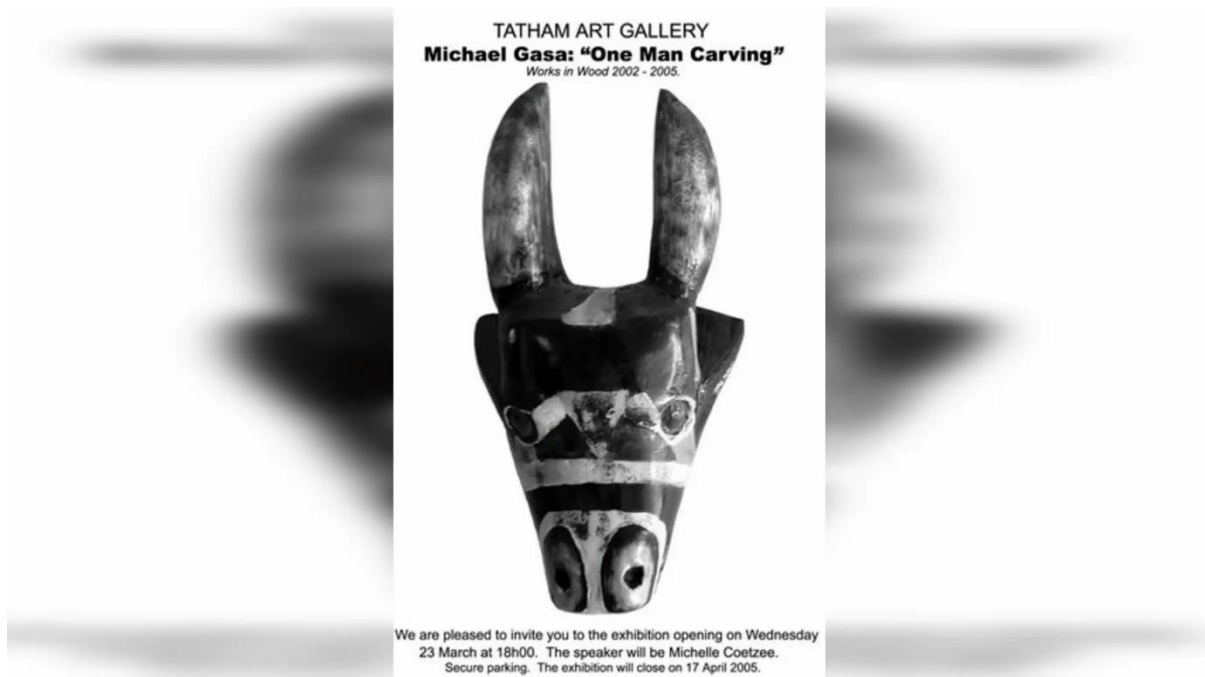


Figure 45: An archive image (screenshot) of Michael's poster for the one-man carving exhibition in the *Bonginkosi* film (2023)

The interviews that are featured in this film are set in a conversational way. The filmmaker is found engaging in conversations with the interviewees. (01:00) *Musa* speaks about the relationship he had with Michael, and we are introduced to the filmmaker (myself), who adds his perspective on what *Musa* is sharing. The filmmaker adds ‘He was your blood brother, a true brother that you can learn from.’ This is in reference to what *Musa* extrapolated, further stating that his brother never “underestimated” him and that he treated every person with respect. We get to hear more reasons why the documentary film about Michael follows a participatory mode through Peter’s explanation of the cover art for the one-man carving exhibition at Tatham by Michael. He explains the poster (as shown in Figure 45), which shows a colourful cow’s head which was sculptured by the late artist. The filmmaker is heard commenting on the symbolism of this aesthetic cow, ‘This sculpture reminds me of a Zulu saying, that a man’s beauty is signified by his cows’. Peter holds the actual sculpture in his hand, and this saying speaks about marriage and the idea of “ilobola”. In this scene, we are shown how the filmmaker interacts with the participants (interviewee, Peter); this sparks a conversation between the two about Michael and his personal life. There is also another example of an incident like this happens, it is when Peter tries to remember the name of the friend who worked alongside Michael in the street selling artworks; the filmmaker is the one who adds “Dodo Phungula” Peter continues with telling the story of how it was like in the street back then when he used to buy the work from the artists. There are scenes where the filmmaker is heard posing the questions to the interviewees.



Figure 46: *An image (screenshot) of Peter talking about Michael in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

Nichols notes, “Participatory documentary gives us a sense of what it is like for the filmmaker to be in a given situation and how that situation alters as a result.” (2001, pg.116) The beginning of the film *Bonginkosi* (seen in Figure 46) shows Peter telling a story of how he could buy some of the sculptures from Michael before he went to Gauteng after his *One-Man Carving* exhibition. In this scene, the filmmaker is heard asking Peter a question regarding something Peter has just spoken about: did Michael go to Joburg? This question is asked because, as the filmmaker, I felt it would be important to highlight this point as Peter already mentioned it in passing; me asking him what he has already stated allows him to add some of the things he remembers that were happening in Michael’s life during that time.



Figure 47: *An image (screenshot) of Musa listening to the filmmaker in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

This echoes the words shared by Nichols when he states, "We may see as well as hear the filmmaker act and respond on the spot, in the same historical arena as the film's subjects. The possibilities of serving as mentor, critic, interrogator, collaborator, or provocateur arise." (pg.116) In the scene where *Musa* is standing outside his home (seen in Figure 47), we hear the filmmaker's voice as he prompts *Musa* with a question about the sculptures that he keeps at his house that Michael created. This interaction provides an insight into the mode employed for this film that it did not take one individual to tell the story of Michael; it

required the participation of more than one party to tell the story in a way that would be easy for the viewer to make sense of what is being portrayed by the film. This is because when *Musa* responds to the question posed, he elaborates not only why he likes the sculptures he has kept but also what his interpretation of these sculptures is. Reiterating Nichols's words, we anticipate seeing the historical reality portrayed by someone who actively participated in it, as opposed to someone who only observed, poetically rearranged, or persuasively put together when we watch participatory documentary films. (2001) This means the filmmaker moves away from the conventions of using voiceover to convey his message to more of being involved like any other "social actor".



Figure 48: An image (screenshot) of Michael's sculpture which is part of the dream series in the *Bonginkosi* film (2023)

More of this is seen in the scene where Peter is talking about the sculpture, which was featured in the *Jabulisa Exhibition 2011* titled *The Dream Series: Baboon Man Ascends to the Throne* (2009). This footage was shot at the Centre for Visual Arts, Digital Arts Lab, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. We can hear the filmmaker commenting on Peter's remarks regarding the way cows and goats are slaughtered in Zulu culture. This is because there is a distinct way of slaughtering an animal for ceremonies in the Zulu culture. They both agree that what the sculpture represents is not the Zulu conventional way of slaughtering an animal. I can attest to this because, as a Zulu (person who practices Zulu traditions and customs), slaughtering cows and goats has been part of my tradition ever since

I can remember. I have slaughtered a goat before and witnessed such events numerous times. The animal for ceremonies is slaughtered by placing the knife on the neck of the animal while using the other hand to hold the horns, you then cut the neck but not completely off, and the animal has to be sitting down as opposed to standing. The sculpture by Michael titled *The Dream Series: Baboon Man Ascends to the Throne* (2009) shows an image (seen in Figure 48) of a man who is poking the sacrificial animal at the back, hence making it not the conventional way it is done for Zulu ceremonies.



Figure 49: An image (screenshot) of Peter holding 'A Boy with Snake' mask in the *Bonginkosi* film (2023)

This scene also shows an example of when the filmmaker and the “social actor”, as Nichols would term, Peter (seen in Figure 49), tells a joke about the number of sculptures that were found all over Michael’s room that there were so many of them that he could not even figure out how his woman was able to find a place to stay when she came over. The filmmaker and Peter can be seen laughing at these remarks; this trait of the participatory mode allows for such moments. The filmmaker’s emotions are shared on screen, like Peter’s, at that moment, and it shows that the filmmaker is not different from anyone who would hear that joke and laugh. Musa also recalls the times he would find his brother making sculptures while listening to church songs, and he would joke about Michael missing the “good old times” of going to church. This scene also finds the filmmaker laughing with *Musa* as he recalls these

moments.



Figure 50: *An image (screenshot) of Michael's sculpture showing a colourful cow's head in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

We hear the filmmaker's interpretation of the colourful cow facemask sculpture (seen in Figure 50). When I first saw this sculpture, I explained that it reminded me of a saying IsiZulu-speaking people would use: a man's beauty is his cows. This interaction provides context to the viewer, perhaps who is not *IsiZulu* speaking; it adds a layer of thinking to consider when interpreting Michael's work since he was also a Zulu person (someone who

speaks *IsiZulu* as a home language).



Figure 51: An archive image (screenshot) of Michael holding a sculpture in the *Bonginkosi* film (2023)

The scene starts with an archive image of Michael smiling and holding a sculpture (shown in Figure 51); we hear the filmmaker posing a question to Musa about how he thinks Michael would have loved to be remembered. This interaction helps the viewer understand the full context of what they are witnessing, meaning if you know the question, you are getting the full picture as opposed to only hearing the answer. As Nichols noted, the two fundamental pieces of a participatory approach include interviews that depict filmmakers who show their own involvement in the world being filmed and the use of archival footage (and photos).

These components are utilized to comment on “social issues and historical views”. (2002, p.g 123) As the filmmaker, I needed to enter Musa’s environment and win his trust and respect to interview him. This meant that on the day of shooting the interview, we ended up doing more than just filming; this included going to his home, travelled around the area where he lived, and going to the mall to buy lunch, which we ate after shooting the interview at outside Kearsney College (the same place Michael used to sell his work).

5.4 An analysis of the use of found footage and its integration into the film.

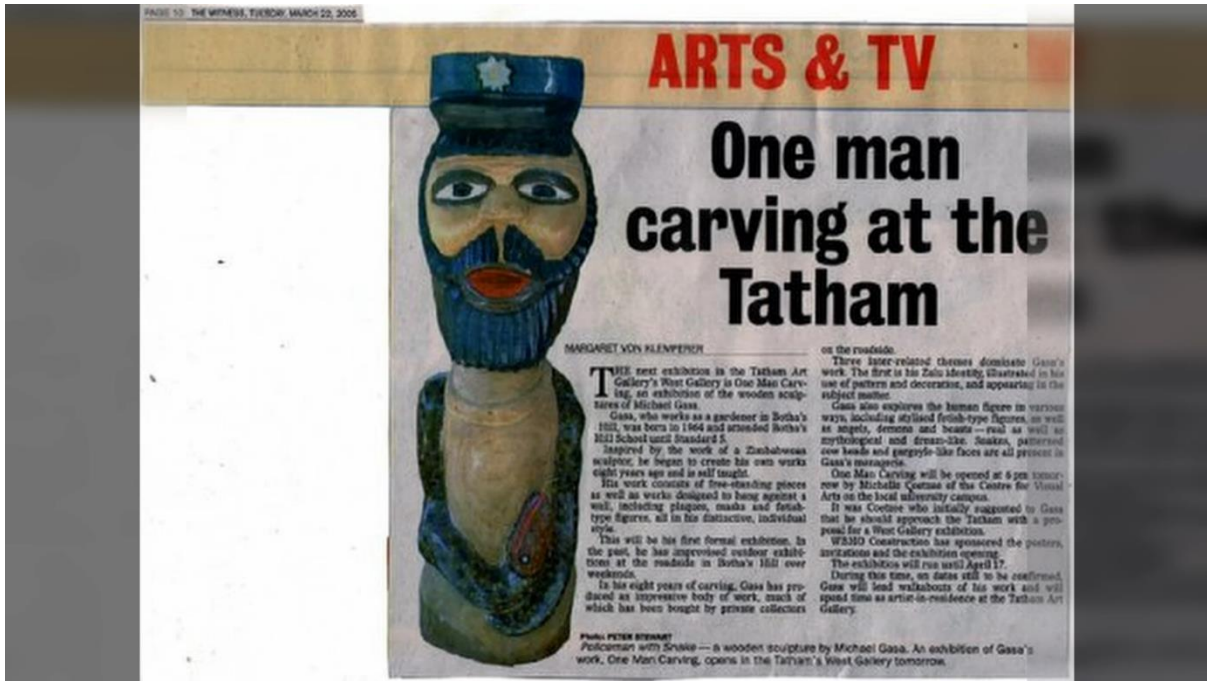


Figure 52: An archive image (screenshot) of *The Witness* newspaper article about Michael's exhibition in the *Bonginkosi* film (2023)

The black and white poster of the One-Man Carving exhibition held at Tatham Art Gallery, which Peter designed for Michael Gasa's show in 2005, is depicted in the film (Figure 45). Peter narrates his experience of what interested him in Michael's work and what it took for them to organize such an exhibition for the artist. Figure 52 shows an archive newspaper article from *The Witness* dated March 22, 2005. This newspaper article has been digitized, and it speaks about Michael's exhibition at Tatham. It acts as evidence for the viewers

because it records the event for those who were not there at the time.



Figure 53: An archive image (screenshot) of Michael standing at Tatham next to his artwork in the *Bonginkosi* film (2023)

We are shown an image of Michael standing next to his sculpture and artwork on the wall at Tatham in 2005 (seen in Figure 53), and these are some of the works that were featured for the exhibition.



Figure 54: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael's sculptures at Tatham in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

In Figure 54, we see face mask sculptures hung on the wall, while other sculptures are standing on plinths. These are more of Gasa's work that was part of the exhibition as Peter recalls the opening night. In Figure 51, Michael is standing beside the road in Botha's Hill seen holding a wood carving of a man. This image is used to show the artist with his work because the previous few scenes showed his work only. It helps paint the picture for the viewer that Gasa is the one being spoken about in this part of the film.



Figure 55: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael's sculptures on the floor at Tatham in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

Here (seen in Figure 55), we are shown facemasks and standing sculptures on the floor at the Tatham Art Gallery. These images were taken in preparation for the exhibition. This is used to highlight the words echoed by Peter, as he is talking about naming the sculptures and the

selection process of the works for the *One-Man Carving* exhibition

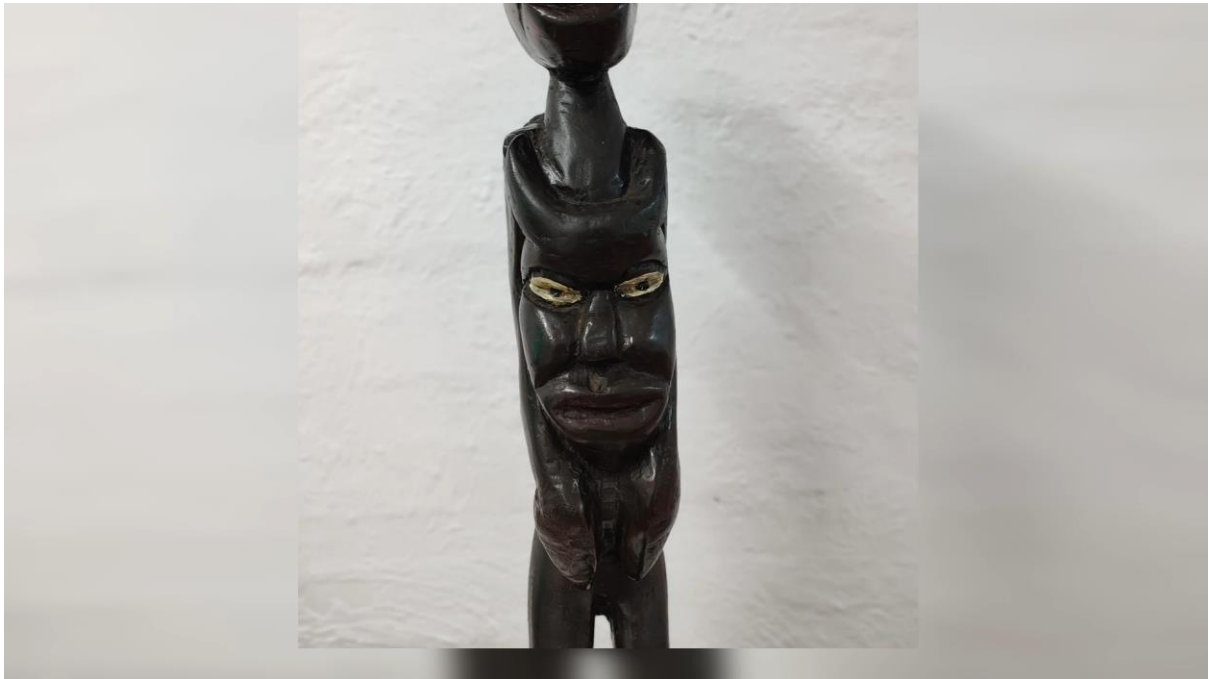


Figure 56: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael's sculpture at Jack Heath Gallery in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

The sculpture of the man with four faces, as seen in Figure 56, shows a scene of images I captured at Jack Heath Gallery for the catalogue of Michael's work. In the film, I have used it to show the distinctiveness of Gasa's work; this is what his friend Peter narrates as we are shown these images. When Peter mentions Michael's full name, we see a picture of Michael wearing a green shirt; this was done to show the man Peter is talking about.

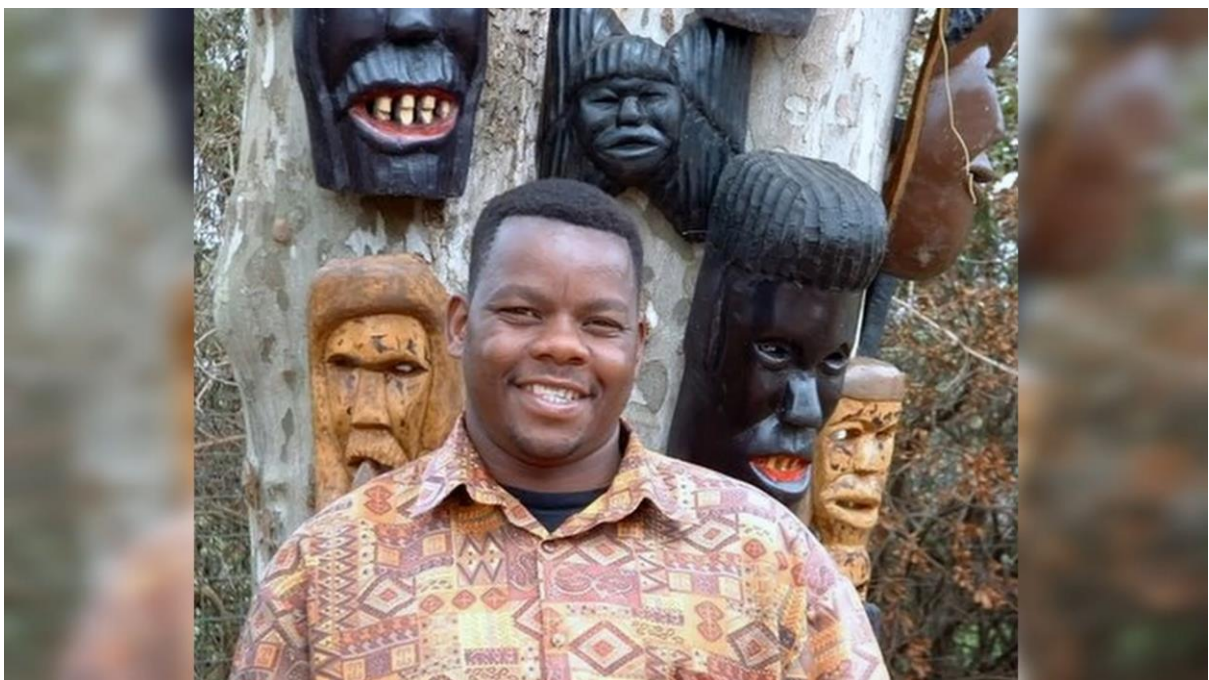


Figure 57: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael standing next to Kearnsey College in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

When Musa details the story of how Michael used to sell sculptures by the road next to Kearsney College (see figure 57), we are shown an image of Michael next to the tree with facemasks sculptures hung behind him. This image was taken in Botha's Hill in September 2003, and it is at the place where Michael sold most of his work. It also shows the viewer where Peter met, as Musa narrated.



Figure 58: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael and Livi standing next to Kearnsey College in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

We are shown an image of Michael and his friend Livi with a tree with facemasks sculpture (seen in figure 58), this is to highlight the story recalled by Peter as he details how he first met Michael.



Figure 59: An archive image (screenshot) of a page of the *Jabulisa Exhibition catalogue in the Bonginkosi film* (2023)

This is a page of the Jabulisa Exhibition Catalogue 2011 (as seen in figure 59), featuring a sculpture Michael created titled *The Dream Series: Baboon Man Ascends to the Throne* (2009). This is relevant to what Peter is talking about, which is the sculpture, and the archive image helps with remembering the artistic journey.



Figure 60: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael standing next to a tree with facemasks in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

Peter reminisces about the place where Michael sold his sculptures; we see an archive image of Gasa (seen in Figure 60) wearing a shirt and linen trousers while standing next to a tree with facemasks. The scene continues to depict more of Michael’s facemasks that were hung on a tree, as shown in Figure 61. These archive images provide the viewer with a sense of what people used to see when passing by Michael’s “store”.



Figure 61: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael’s facemasks hung on a tree in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*



Figure 62: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael standing next to a tree holding a sculpture in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

The same is evident in Figure 62; we are shown another image of Gasa wearing a grey shirt and holding a sculpture of a man wearing a hat; we can also see facemasks and a snake carving beside a tree. Similar archive images show that the artist used to frequent the place. Peter took these images at Mr Gasa's "shop". The context in which this archive image is applied adds to the viewer's belief in the story the narrator tells.



Figure 63: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael standing in front of a door in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

The film shows archive images of Michael (seen in Figure 63) that were taken by his friends and family over the years; *Musa* talks about how Michael got his first name from his parents, and we see an image of Gasa wearing a shirt. The integration of these archive images aids in reminding the audience that this part of the film is important; this importance is highlighted by a repetition of different images of Gasa, all to signify the vitality of remembering not only his face but the story behind the name



Figure 64: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael fixing the door at his house in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

In Figure 64, this scene shows archive images of the process it took to build Michael's house. Peter took these images of different phases of the home being built and some feature Michael

in the process. The use of these archives shows Gasa's versatility, and it adds to his story.



Figure 65: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael's sculpture of a man dressed in formal attire in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*



Figure 66: *An archive image (screenshot) of Michael's sculpture of a man covered in a snake in the Bonginkosi film (2023)*

In Figure 65, the scene shows archive images of the various works the artist left behind. Likewise, (figure 66) this scene shows more of the artist's sculptures, with an image of a man with a snake around his body. This archive is shown because the narrator talks about the inspiration behind the work, citing the artist's dreams and his everyday encounters.



Figure 67: An archive footage (screenshot) of people singing at Michael's funeral in the *Bonginkosi* film (2023)

Its Documentation on the Digital Platform

This was archived through the use of YouTube, this is not the ideal scenario as this platform function with its own set of rules that might one day not be favourable to the film. But currently and viably, this platform provided a way for the film about Michael to be embedded on the SITE123 website that was created for the purpose of this project. This also ensures accessibility, as the platform has already been established with an active audience (every Andriod phone comes with a pre-installed application).

Chapter 6: Reflection, Results, and Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the documentary film is to show the background of the life Michael lived and the artworks he created. This is done through an array of interviews from people Michael had a relationship with. The selection process of the participants is based on the relationship the artist had with the people featured on this film. Musa is the biological brother of Michael; he is younger than Michael but of similar age group. Peter is the friend of Michael and a collector of the artist's work, who had a working relationship with the artist for over a decade and the half. The interviews help narrate the story of the artist and provides insights into the creation process of some of the works left behind by Michael. The paper will also conclude by summarizing the key research findings in correlation to the research aims and research questions that were set out by this study. Furthermore, It will review the limitations of the study and make suggestions for future research.

6.2 Interview with Peter: Getting to know the work of the artist.

This is mostly done through the interview with Peter. The reason for that being, Michael and Peter had worked together collecting wood for Michael to create the sculptures for over 15 years. The film begins with Peter recalling the times Michael went to Johannesburg to look for opportunities that side, he recounts that there were so many sculptures the artist had left stored behind in Durban which got damaged, and they could only save a few. This interaction is utilized as the beginning of film because it helps establishes the relationship between Peter and Michael. When the filmmaker asks Peter to share his experience of putting together the one-man carving exhibition by Michael at Tatham Art Gallery, Peter notes that 'he was fascinated by the sculptures Michael created and thought it deserved to be seen' and this led to him writing a proposal on behalf of Michael to host the exhibition at Tatham. The proposal got accepted and the show was a success with positives reviews from people who witnessed it. The process building up to exhibition entailed of Michael and Peter selecting and naming the artworks that were going to feature for the show. Peter also shares his experience of what it was like planning for an exhibition like that, which he describes as a collaboration with the artist Michael, who had limited knowledge in coming up with names

for the sculptures he created. Peter describes Michael's as an individual who got most of his joy creating the work rather than naming it, that is why they would spend time deciding the names together. In the documentary film, following the story Musa shared about how Michael and Peter met, we get to hear Peter's recollection of the event. He reminisces about that one Sunday when he was on his way to see his in-laws and stopping by the side of the road captured by the wood carvings he had seen. Peter traces Michael's inspiration to the Zimbabweans who used to come to South Africa to sell their sculptures by the road during the early 2000s. It is believed that Michael was self-taught and had no guidance when he started to make these sculptures apart from the things he had seen and tried to create. During the time the filmmaker and Peter were at Digital Arts Lab, Peter sees the sculpture which he remembers as "Strange times call for strange sacrifices". This piece shows a man who is standing next to an animal, and the man has a spear on the back of the animal, Peter examines the animal being a male goat (*Impongo*) and the way the man appears to be slaughtering it seems odd to him because it does not symbolize the "Zulu way". After this moment, we see Peter explaining his working relationship with Michael, he notes that even though he is not an art teacher but a "responder" to Michael's work, he would try to encourage Michael to do more sculptures that were "freestanding" that could be on the surface as opposed to the "flat-wall masks" that Michael did mostly in his early days as a sculptor. The scene proceeds with Peter demonstrating a sculpture from a series he titled "The police series", this sculpture shows a policeman holding a child in hand. Peter notes that the sculpture is odd looking especially the way its feet are carved, commenting that it is akin to those of a "Tokoloshe". He goes on to claim that Michael's work can only be inspired by "dreams" and that he has never seen its precedent in South African art, adding that even if there was, Michael would have been "entirely unaware of it". As Peter continues looking at the different sculptures that were carved by Michael, he stumbles across a facemask he describes as "the boy with the snake", he recalls that sculpture was created during the time Michael was at his "first shop" and that it was inspired by a boy who Michael used to see in the street (of Pinetown) who carried a snake around his neck. It is believed that Michael was very committed to his craft to the point that he had lots of sculptures around his house, and Peter remembers that you can barely move around the house without seeing them around the floors and walls. Peter goes on to extrapolate even further on the point made by Musa, this is regarding the times Michael would stand outside the gate near the trees at what Peter terms as "one of the fanciest private schools in South Africa", Kearnsey College. Peter reiterates that Michael used to hang the facemasks on the trees while the freestanding sculptures would be displayed across the road.

He adds that “the school” had no problem with Michael selling his sculptures outside the premises, since it was art, and Michael was a well-mannered person who knew how to speak to people. Peter picks up a sculpture that shows a colourful cattle’s head, this sparks a realisation to him that he was the one who made suggestions that Michael should make sculptures that were inspired by cows. Explaining that Michael would sometimes look after (herding) his father’s and the chief’s cow. Peter reminisces about the time he and Michael were using his father’s trailer to go to the hardware store to buy building materials for Michael’s house, he claims that Michael was a “well-known” man around the area and that people would always greet them. The processing of building the house was done by Michael with help from friends such as Peter. It is believed that Michael did all the plastering of the house. In this scene Peter also describes the level of their friendship with Michael, nothing that he used to call him “mfowethu”. The inspiration behind most of Michael’s sculptures is believed to have been determined by the wood he would find, and the things he saw in the world/dreams, Peter cites by further reiterating the story of the boy with the snake that kept being a recurring theme in the pieces Michael created.

6.3 Interview with Musa: Getting to know the life of the artist.

Musa’s scene standing outside Michael’s house shows him telling us how his relationship with his brother Michael was based on respect. *Musa* acknowledges that Michael was an individual who respected everyone. It does not matter whether you were an old or a young person. *Musa* illustrates this point further by using an analogy of him having issues with his spouse, that he would not hesitate to ask his brother for advice, likewise too, Michael would do the same when in his shoes. *Musa* tells the viewers a story Michael once told him about the time he first met his friend Peter. He recalls that Michael used to stand and sell his sculptures next to Kearnsey College’s entrance, and this is where he claims the two met and developed a friendship based on the love of sculptures initially but turned to a brotherhood as the times progressed, with Peter offering to find a job for Michael since the sculptures did not make enough money to support Michael. *Musa* notes that this opportunity aided Michael immensely when it came to providing for the kids. When *Musa* is standing outside his home, the filmmaker asks him about his favourite artworks that was created by Michael. *Musa* notes the two artworks that can be found at his house, the first one as *Musa* claims depict a Zulu ceremony where there are two men that can be seen with shields (*Ihhawu*) and fighting sticks (*Induku*), he interprets that these men may have had Zulu beer (*Utshwala obungayiwe*) judging by the clay pot (*Ukhamba*) that can be seen on the artwork. This leads to the two men

testing each's strength by fighting using the sticks and the shields, which Musa reports this as part of Zulu ceremonies and it is called "*Ukugcweka*". An elderly woman can see on the same artwork, *Musa* claims that this lady is a married woman who is dressed in a Zulu headdress that signifies that she is a married woman. *Musa* continues to interpret the sculpture of two faces that are joined in tandem, he describes these two figures as his father (at the top) and his grandfather (beneath) and concludes that this sculpture is a representation of his lineage. These two pieces of art are significant to *Musa's* heart, and he adds that these stories of these sculptures can be passed down to his kids to learn from. Michael is believed to have gotten his first name from his parents, his brother *Musa* notes, that the name "*Bonginkosi*" was a way of showing gratitude to God for blessing them with a child. *Musa* adds that the name "Michael", is a name that his brother would utilize when he was "looking for employment" from people who were of different race than him. He claims that this "made it easier" for other races to identify his brother. Following the next scene, *Musa* starts by acknowledging the filmmaker's question as a "good" one. He explains how he would love for his brother to be remembered, noting that he was a such a good person who had manners towards everyone, and he never frowned upon other people. Michael was known to be a person who did not like doing the "wrong things", *Musa* recalls that he was a person who would advise people if he deemed, they were doing the "wrong things", and people would listen to him since they understood that he was a good person. *Musa* considers Michael as an individual who loved to go to church, and he remembers the times Michael would be making sculptures while he is jamming to "church songs". Furthermore, it is believed that Michael's father is the one who inspired Michael to go to church, *Musa* extrapolates that after his father came back from working away from the family for some time, he came back a changed man who even had bought a church uniform. The story about his father coming back a church person, was shared to *Musa* by Michael. When *Musa* is asked by the filmmaker which religion did Michael follow, he explains that Michael joined a church called "*Hlabazihlangane*", describing the attire worn by the people of the church as wearing 'a turban around their heads', and noting that they bang drums during ceremonies. *Musa* concludes his answer to the question by mentioning that Michael and his family (wife and kids) were all members of the church. *Musa* describes the role Peter played in Michael's life; he describes that Peter as a friend who made sure Michael was able to provide for his family. *Musa* recounts that Peter also helped him during the times he was unemployed by finding him a temporary job so he could make ends meet. The sentiments shared by *Musa* are that Peter and his family were very instrumental in aiding Michael and him, he concludes by thinking out loud that maybe his

mother (spiritually) sent Peter and his family to help her “kids” (in reference to Michael and *Musa*). The scene ends with a distraught *Musa* describing his brother got sick before he passed away and saying that he did not even get sick for a long period of time.

6.4 Findings

The fundamental inquiry this research study made was the central characteristics of the documentary film format and how will these traits be applied to the documentary film. The film *Bonginkosi* employed the mode of participatory, this allowed for a collaborative effort that saw the filmmaker/researcher become more of a “social actor” rather than an observer of the process. (2002) This is evident in the interviews that were conducted between the filmmaker and the participants *Musa* and Peter. The filmmaker can be heard posing questions and making comments throughout the film. This highlights that during the creation of the film, the researcher learns from the participants and the participants learn something from the researcher by his questions and comments. This can be found on the film, the scene where *Musa* speaks about the church Michael used to attend, he explains that Michael joined a church called “*Hlabazihlangane*”, describing the attire worn by the people of the church as wearing ‘a turban around their heads’, and noting that they bang drums during ceremonies. This is an interesting part of the film because the filmmaker had posed a question about which church Michael used to attend. The description of the attire is the same as the one wore by the Corinthian Church of South Africa, which is known as an African Initiated Church, Mbaya and Chetty note that the church was founded by Johannes Richmond, and it practices elements of ancient ritual cultic Hebraic traditions that utilize biblical imagery and a mix of fundamental Islamic traditions. It is mostly engraved in an African ethos and cultural milieu. (2012) The church is commonly known as the “Zionist” (*Izayoni*) type amongst African scholars. As a researcher I was intrigued to learn more about the church, I have never heard of the background of the church and speaking to *Musa* not only taught me more about Michael but also about the church.

The study further explored the role preservation plays in cultural heritage in the context of South Africa and in relation to the documentary film, *Bonginkosi*. It was reported that preservation is essential to cultural heritage as it helps prolong the identity of a society. This is elucidated on the UNESCO website, stating that “as a source of identity, heritage is a valuable factor for empowering local communities and enabling vulnerable groups to participate fully in social and cultural life. It can also provide time-tested solutions for

conflict prevention and reconciliation.” (2021) This can be done through the creation of art such as documentary films that can be shared with generations to come, which helps in the perpetuation of cultural beliefs. This can be seen in the *Bonginkosi* film, where Musa is discussing his favourite piece of art that was created by Michael, he notes the artwork that shows a Zulu ceremony with a married woman watching two men playing (fighting) with sticks and using a cow’s skin shields. *Musa* states that he is fond of this artwork because of what is happening on the artwork, showing “*umsebenzi*” (a ceremony) and that this message is important since he can be able to share it with his kids. (2023) The artwork depicting a ceremony indicates that Michael was a man who practiced rituals/ceremonies. Since a wood sculpture is a different medium to a documentary film, it is believed to be one of the ways to preserve the messages left behind by the artist. Film does not decay or get physically damaged when contrasted with a wooden carving. Peter also remembers the time Michael left behind numerous sculptures when he went to Johannesburg, he claims that most of them got damaged due to the way Michael left them stored. (2023) This further illustrates the reasons why it is required to preserve the work by Michael because there is a danger of it being damaged.

The research also focused on the documentary archival methods and materials that I used to build a useful and reliable document of the life and works of Michael Gasa. The film portrayed the life and art of Michael, this included the use of archival footage of Michael’s funeral. In the final scene of the film, we see members of the Hlabazingane church singing around the graveyard. Barons discerns that, ‘archival documentary film’s role is to engage this present moment with the past, with the dead and what they have left behind.’ (2007, p.24). This is certainly the case with this film, we get to engage with the artist’s life story and see the work the artist left behind. Evidently, the archival images of the work Michael left behind are found on scenes recurring on the film.

The final question that study aimed to address was, how will the project be stored in a digital platform? Poole illuminates the importance of digital curation as the focus to preserve and enhance the significance of a reliable collection of digital data, ensuring its usefulness for both the present and the future. (2015) The curational platforms that was used to store the film is SITE123 and YouTube. This was chosen as it accommodates various file and data formats. On SITE123, you can create a website for your documentary film as seen in the previous chapters. To embed the documentary on the created website, one needs to upload the film to a platform like YouTube, as this platform is best suited for video hosting and

streaming. Since there is an option to embed your video from YouTube to other websites, it is important to enable this feature when uploading your video on the platform.

6.5 Limitations and Recommendations

6.5.1 Limitations

This research study has been faced with deterring factors since it was planned to be conducted. The main factor was shooting of the documentary film by Michael. For majority of the time before shooting, funding was an issue as the participants and the researcher lived in different cities. Luckily Peter could afford to drive to Pietermaritzburg for his interview with me, the funding for shooting the film was approved at a later stage, and this was about three months before the year ends. It meant the shooting of the film had to be done before the year could end as the funding stipulations suggested. The film has a sonic mishap that is part of a vital scene which included Musa speaking about his favourite sculpture that was created by Michael, this was caused by shooting without the quality equipment as some parts of the film were shot before the funding approved.

In addition, I could not find more participants from Michael's family to help share his story. This would have helped the film be more believable as there would be more sources to corroborates how the artist was and the work he left behind. This would have required more time and funds to achieve, which I barely had enough of.

Evidently, the study was also limited in terms of preserving the project digitally. Using a free version of SITE123 to archive the film is convenient but also has its own curbs. Essentially, the film is preserved on YouTube because if something happened to it on the platform, it would also have an effect on the film shown on SITE123 since it is embedded (from YouTube) rather than uploaded.

6.5.2 Recommendations

The project illustrated that there is a great potential for documentary film and archiving in South Africa, especially considered our rich cultural heritage and the need to find ways of preserving this. Despite the stressors (time and funding) that comes with doing such a project, it is important that there is funding available for such endeavours. So, the

researchers/filmmakers can make these films to their full potential. In commemorating a person's life, the artist's story should not be summarized as these are not films for enjoyment only but also for social awareness. The ideal situation is constructing such documentary films that involve participants from the people who were involved in the artist's life. This helps in covering more aspects of the artist's story and coming to a more complex understanding of an individual and their work. For example, adding a female's perspective to the participants' list (that was male-orientated) such as the wife of the artist, this would provide a narrative the film (*Bonginkosi*) did not consider due factors mentioned above.

Since the goal of preservation is to make sure that the next generations can retrieve the data (films) created in the past and present. To preserve digitally and to the films maximum output, the *Bonginkosi* must be stored in more than one platform. This aids in the furtherance of the life span of the film. God forbids something happens to one of the platforms, we will have more places (platforms) we can still retrieve the film from. This may include free hosting platforms such as Wikimedia Commons and Vimeo. So, the correlation is that more platforms that the film is stored in, digitally, the better the chances of it being retrievable by others in the future.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the interviews that were conducted between the researcher/filmmaker and the two participants, *Musa*, and Peter. We are told stories about the life and the art of Michael Gasa. The interviews are broken into two segments, getting to the know the artist which is with Musa and getting to know the art with Peter. The study explored the findings of the research, these were looked at in relation to the research aims and the research questions.

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Agreement to participate in a research project

I am gathering information for my master’s research project at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg. I would be grateful if you would agree to be involved in the research process.

The project I am working on is entitled “*A study of the role of archival documentary film in the preservation of cultural history and the production of a short archival documentary on the life and art of the late South African Sculptor, Michael Gasa*”. I hope to collect information that will help me better understand the man and help shape the documentary film. I would like you to be involved in a process of interactive interviews over several weeks during the year of 2023. I will take notes from the interview, record videos of your responses and, all of which I would like permission to use as information for my research. In the creation of this documentary film and conducting of this research, I will not force you into engaging in anything that you are not comfortable with. Please note, that it may not be possible to destroy the data gained through the research process because there is a plan to digitally preserve the dissertation and the documentary film.

If you have further questions after the interview, you may contact me or my supervisor at any time. Our address is listed at the top of this letter and our telephone numbers are as follows: Mr. Sfundu Cele: 067 265 7459 or Ms. Michelle Stewart (supervisor): 033 260 5256. **AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT**

I..... (name of participant) understand the contents of this letter and the nature of the research project, and consent to participating in the research project from January 2023.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time if I so wish.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....

Appendix B: Catalogue

CATALOGUE OF SCULPTURES





2

ABOUT

Mr Bonginkosi "Michael" Gasa, who was a sculptor that passed away on the 18th of April in 2019 and the age of 55. He mostly utilized wood for his sculptures and sold his work by the side of a road in Durban, South Africa. Michael used to work jobs he could find during weekdays and would sell his sculptures by the road, and this was a factor of not making enough money to support his family by selling wood carvings alone. He never received any professional training in his journey to becoming an artist, and his inspiration was traced to Zimbabwean sculptors who used to visit South Africa during the late 90s to sell sculptures on the road. Mr. Gasa made sculptures of things he witnessed in his world and things he saw in his dreams. Two of the most memorable moments in Michael's artistic journey included his own 'one man carving exhibition' in 2005 and the feature of some of his work at the Jabulisa Exhibition in 2010, a festival that took place in different art galleries/ museums across KwaZulu-Natal. This catalogue features work from a private collector of Michael's work, it is important to note that these are not all the sculptures but a few of the I could find.

BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



Conflicted Policeman :
The Inner Demons Series
Wood (Medium)
2004



3

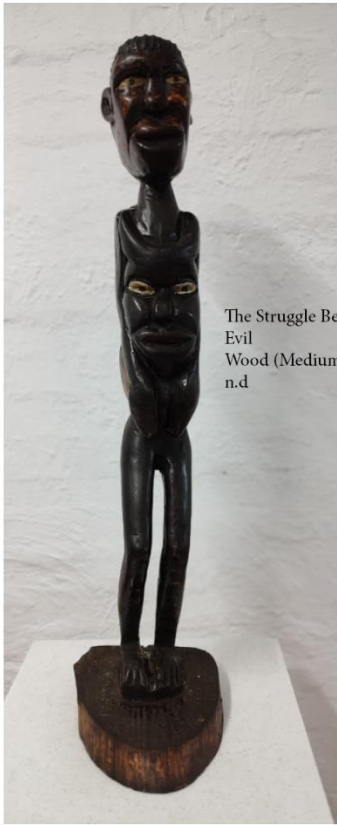
BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



Policeman III :
The Police Series
Wood (Medium)
n.d

4





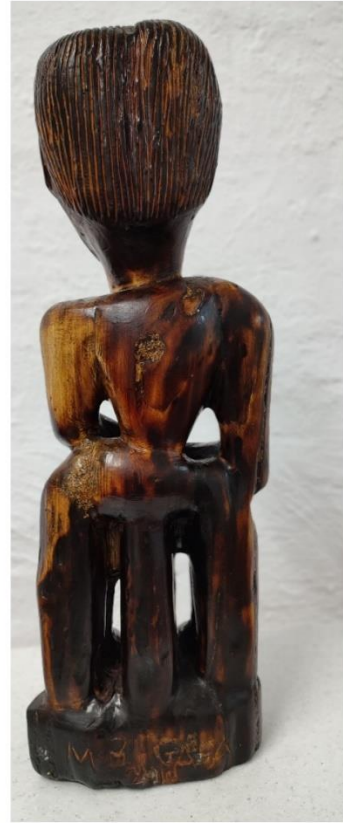
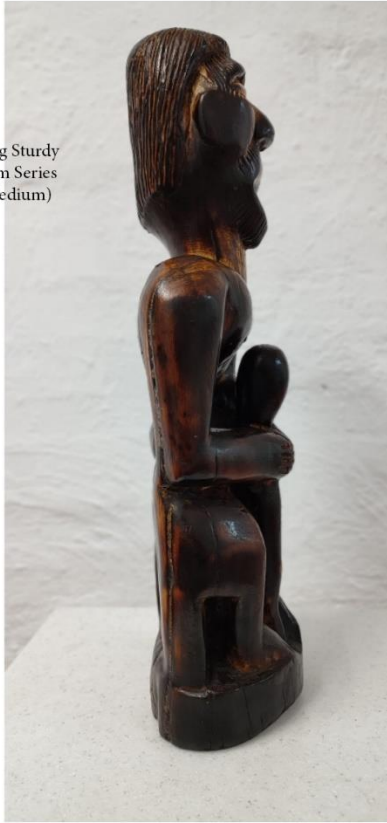
The Struggle Between Good & Evil
Wood (Medium)
n.d



BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA

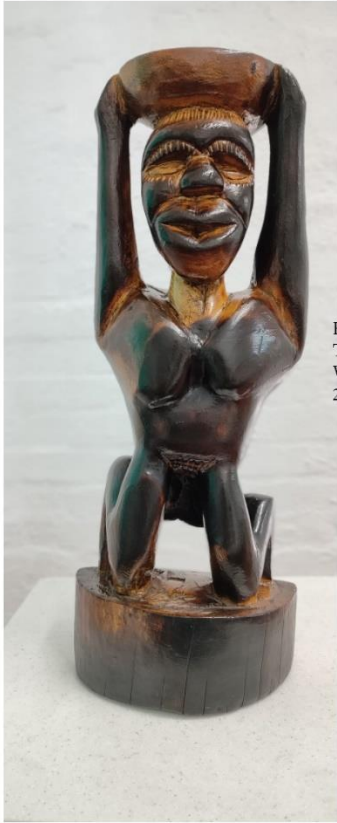


Something Sturdy
The Dream Series
Wood (Medium)
2009

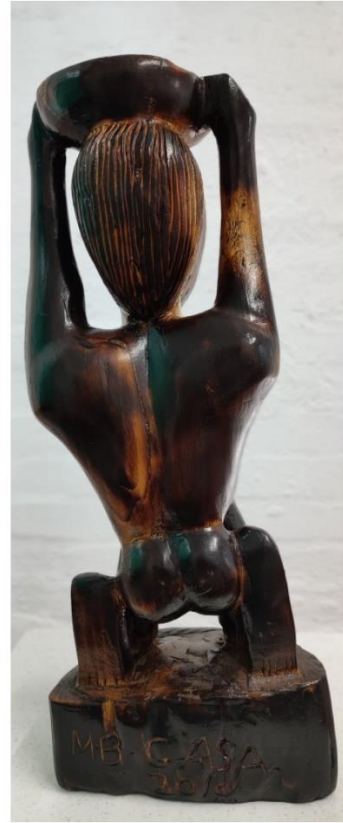
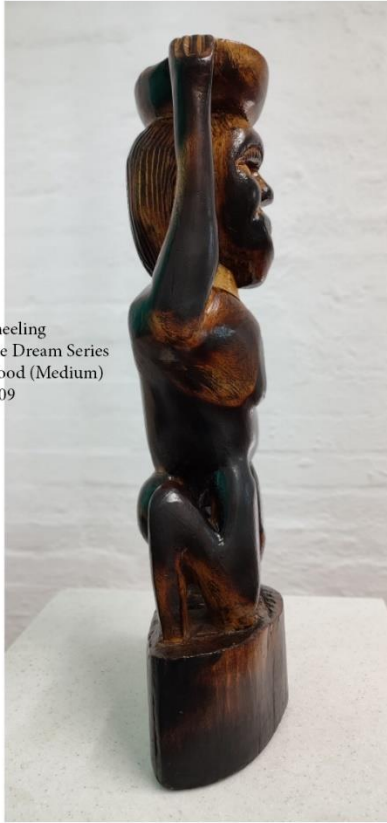


7

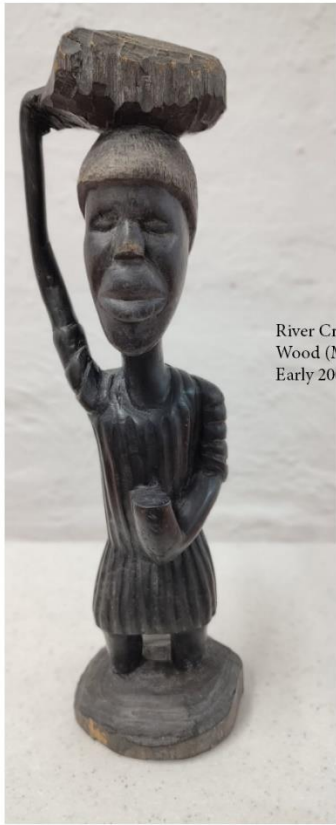
BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



Kneeling
The Dream Series
Wood (Medium)
2009



8



River Crossing
Wood (Medium)
Early 2000s

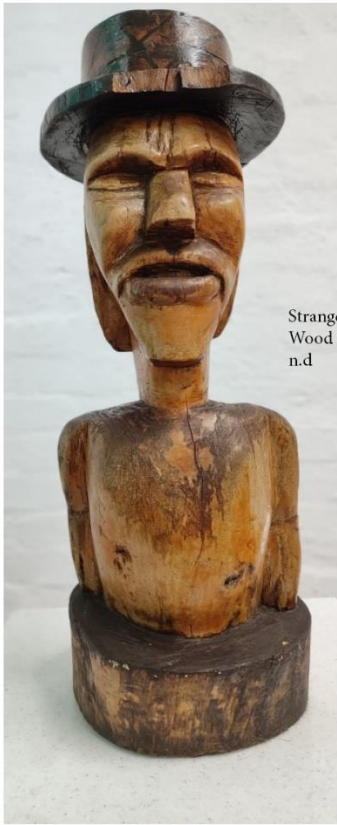


BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA

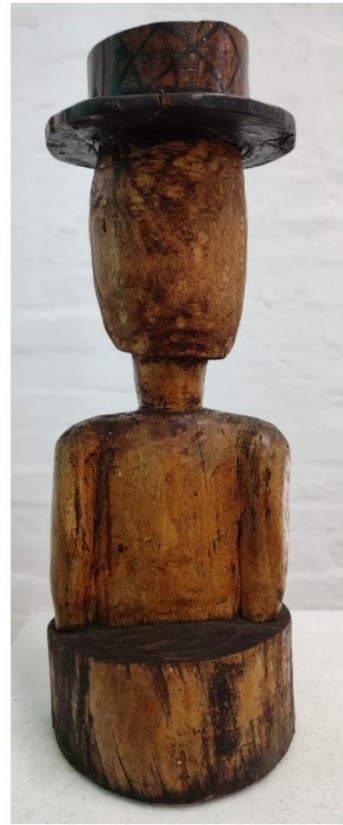


Africanist
Wood (Medium)
n.d

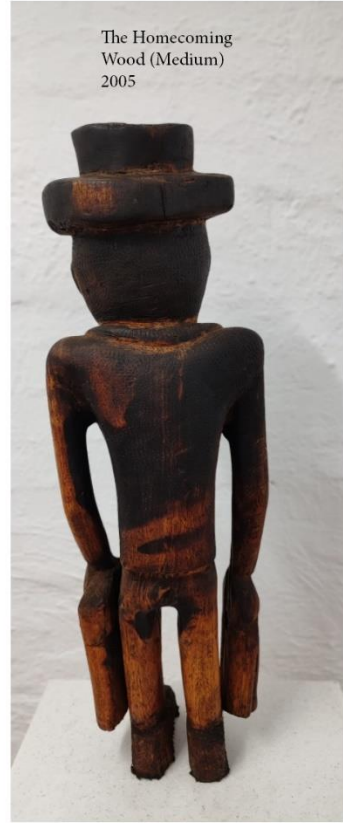
10



Stranger In a Hat
Wood (Medium)
n.d



BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



12



Sister
Wood (Medium)
n.d



BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



The Angel of History I
Wood (Medium)
2003

15

BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



Strange Times Require Strange
Sacrifices
Wood (Medium)
2009



16

BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



The Cow Series
Wood (Medium)
2004

BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



The Cow Series II
Wood (Medium)
2004

18

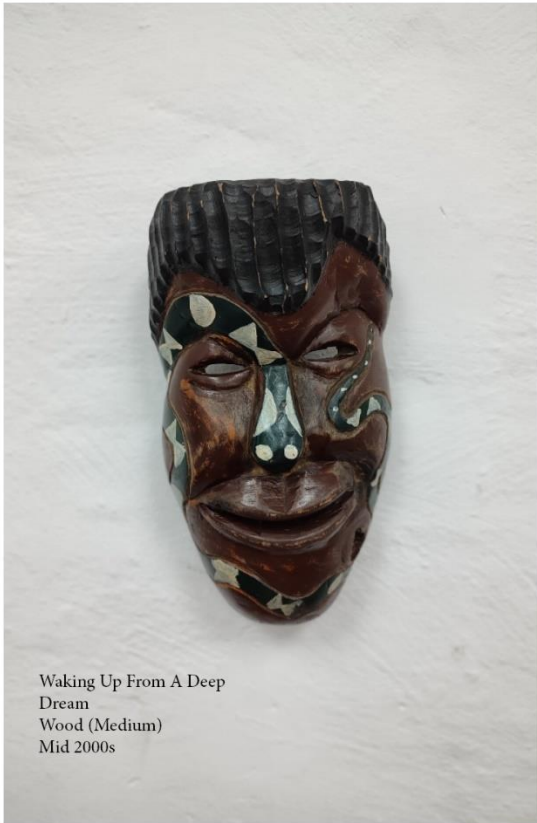


Dream Symbol: Xoxo
(The Frog)
Wood (Medium)
Late 2000s



Angel III
The Angels Series
Wood (Medium)
2004

BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



Waking Up From A Deep
Dream
Wood (Medium)
Mid 2000s



Worried Mind
Wood (Medium)
2004

20



Dodo Phungula, Shembe-ite
Wood (Medium)
2004



The Boy With Snake
Wood (Medium)
2001



Head II
Wood (Medium)
2004





Head I
Wood (Medium)
2004







Haunted Man
Wood (Medium)
2005



Poor Man Longs For
A Cow
Wood (Medium)
2005

BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



A Passing Thought
Wood (Medium)
n.d

26



Spoon
Wood (Medium)
Early 2000s



The Ponderer
Wood (Medium)
Early 2000s



Angel I
The Angels Series
Wood (Medium)
2003



The Angel of History
Wood (Medium)
2003



This Is Not A Pipe
Wood (Medium)
Early 2000s



Fish
Wood (Medium)
n.d

BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



30

Uggoko
Wood (Medium)
n.d



BONGINKOSI MICHAEL GASA



32





Khumbula: Memorial Party
(Izinduku & Utshwala)
Wood (Medium)
2005



Umuzi Nesibaya: Man Hunting
Bird
Wood (Medium)
2004



Appendix C: Documentary Film's Questions

Peter Interview Questions

- Please share your experience on the first-time meeting Michael and how long you have worked with him?
- From having a working relationship for this long, what can you say about his style of creating?
- What made the art Michael created special?
- Please share your experience of the one man show exhibition by Michael at Tatham Art Gallery.
- Also share your experience on how it was like putting together a show like that.
- Which artwork is your favourite one carved by Michael? Tell me, what do you like about it?
- Please share some of your favourite moments working with Michael.
- How do you think he would have liked to be remembered?

Michael's brother Questions

- Please share the experience of growing up with Michael.
- How would you describe him to a stranger?
- Please share in detail about your family upbringing, was it religious, cultural or both?
- In your own words, what sparked his passion for creating?
- Please your experience of the first time you saw an artwork created by Michael.
- Please share the meaning of his name "Bonginkosi"
- What are the things he enjoyed doing other than creating artworks?
- How do you think he would have liked to be remembered?