

**“Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda”: Reciting Performative Memories at the Ntaba
kaNdoda Monument**

By

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Abstract

“Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda”: *Reciting Performative Memories at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument* serves as a theoretical examination of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a commemorative marker. My mini-thesis unpacks the notions of memory and performative memorialisation at a nationalist memorial in the former Ciskei by examining the concepts of place, memory and memorialisation, which are theoretically integral in my professional practice. This research initiates an investigation into the effects on memory in a situation where the construction of the Monument disrupted an efficacious memorialisation by the communities of Ntaba kaNdoda.

In my accompanying MFA exhibition *Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda*, I explore notions of place, memory and memorialisation through installations of a variety of photographic processes that are based on what I call ‘de-monumental’ and performative monuments (Widrich 2014). The written component of my MFA submission relates directly to my professional art practice, developing and situating it within a relevant context. In my mini-thesis, I consider photographers working with notions of place, memory and memorialisation. Lebohang Kganye and Nassim Rouchiche’s works retrace and recall past memory in the present, while David Goldblatt and Cedric Nunn, who have photographed the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, point the viewer to the values and histories of the communities most affected by colonialism and apartheid. These photographers’ works operate as mnemonic devices that seek to translate a lived experience at a particular place.

I use Widrich’s (2009; 2014) conception of “performative monuments”, Lippard’s (1997) “sense of place” and Nora’s (1989) “lieu[x] de mémoire” and “milieux de mémoire” in approaching my professional art practice and my research into the Ntaba kaNdoda memorial. Using these entwining nodes of theories in formulating what I term ‘de-monumentalisation’ in my photography practice at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, my photography functions as both performative memorialisation and de-monumentalisation. Remembrance, using photography as a vehicle to represent this notion at Ntaba kaNdoda, transcends the materiality of the Monument. My exhibition, in conjunction with this mini-thesis, therefore reframes and reconfigures the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a multiplex memory place.

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by complete references. This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for Master of Fine Art at Rhodes University. I declare that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at another university.

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INTRODUCTION

The Ntaba KaNdoda Mountain is located in the area called Debe Nek in the Eastern Cape, where the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument is situated. The name *Ndoda*¹ refers to the Khoi chief who died on the mountain during the wars with the amaXhosa under King Rharhabe in the 1700s. Having accrued a history of conflicts over the years, the mountain developed a mythical legacy within the Xhosa national identity. In the late 1970s, the former Ciskei Bantustan government under its president Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe commissioned *The National Monument of the Republic of Ciskei*, built at Ntaba kaNdoda². Designed by Zakzrewski Associates (Border) INC., and built by the LTA Company at the cost of about 4 million Rands³ at the time, it was completed in 1981. The former Ciskei President Lennox L. W. Sebe officially opened the Monument on the 14th of August 1981. Ntaba kaNdoda had, by that time, come to symbolise both spirituality and independence before British colonialism for the Khoi, the San and the amaXhosa. However, Sebe inserted an imperious and obnoxious commemorative marker on this sacred ground under the pretext of fostering Xhosa nationalism. In Sebe's mind, Ntaba kaNdoda was to become a place where people came to worship (Leroy Vail 1989; Janet Hodgson 1987); perhaps a place where they would idolise him. His action could have erased all other layers of history of Ntaba kaNdoda; the erection of the Monument, causing a transformation from a remembered place to a constructed commemoration, in effect overshadowed other narratives of this place, however, it has not completely erased Ntaba kaNdoda's history and memory⁴.

In my mini-thesis, I investigate how the construction of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument affected the collective memory of the people of Ntaba kaNdoda. I use collective memory here in the sense of Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam's (1996: 47) assertion of 'myth' based on 'social stereotype', constructed from a figment of personal memory or an individual mind that imposes itself in the broader social environment –the individual experience is transferred onto the collective consciousness. Ntaba kaNdoda has always presented a

¹A direct translation of this word from both Xhosa and Khoi is 'man'; hence the mountain is called *iNtaba kaNdoda*, the 'Mountain of Man'.

²Sebe got the idea of building the monument after he visited the Jewish monument at Mount Masada in Israel in 1977 (Vail 1989: 404).

³Vail (1989: 409) put the estimated costs at this amount, while Goldblatt (1998: 173) put it at 1 million rands.

⁴Janet Donohoe (2014) explores the role of place in the understanding of memory at a particular landscape.

contestation of memory and memorialisation, which is evident in how the site was chosen and how Sebe constructed the monument (Hodgson 1987). Ntaba kaNdoda Monument sits in a particularly curious position within the socio-political landscape in South Africa, and, as such, my approach is to challenge the Monument's position and its meaning in the present time.

Monuments as commemorative markers⁵ have been at the centre of memorialisation and have been fundamental in the study of memory, remembrance and national identity. They serve to remind people of their history and enable them to reflect on their future through the recording and preservation of socio-political narratives. In my MFA research, I attempt to position my understanding of memorials and professional art practice by foregrounding it on ideas of place, memory and memorialisation at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

In the late 1990s during the transitional government in South Africa, the statue in Pretoria of the former prime minister of South Africa, J.G. Strijdom, was the subject of contestation, where it was suggested it must be covered with a cloth during Thabo Mbeki's presidential inauguration (Annie Coombes 2003: 14). Ironically, in 2001, the statue buckled, splitting into pieces, never to be seen in public again (Steven Dubin 2006: 186). These events and others across the country marked a turning point in public commemoration in post-apartheid South Africa, serving as a genesis for the call for de-colonialisation of colonial and apartheid commemorative markers. However, post-apartheid memorials that were initiated from the 1990s focused on reconciliation more than in redressing the absent and suppressed voices missing from the previous commemorative discourse in South Africa. Sabine Marschall (2009) notes that these new commemorative markers – from 1997 onwards – were essentially reconciling the Eurocentric monuments with the new Afrocentric commemorative markers, rather than critiquing old models of memorialisation. This approach detrimentally affected the reception, particularly on the issues around the complexities of core museum and memorial purpose and function, which were largely emanating from a 'myth' foundation

⁵ Marschall (2009) uses the term 'commemorative marker' when referencing memorials as denoting significance of what is commemorated, both as site and as the object; where "[t]he memorial is a lasting marker of the site and it endows that site with added import" (Marschall 2009: 78).

of the ‘new’ South African nation⁶. The difficulty of the myth foundation manifests where the remote past is confused with recent historical events and, for South Africa, the struggle and liberation narrative are promoted over other histories, past or recent (Michelle Burns 2006:2). All the same, post-apartheid memorials and monuments “transport the past into the present and can become the foci for cultural memory and... [sites] for remembrance and healing” (Burns 2006:3).

Post-apartheid commemoration can be traced back to 1997, when Nelson Mandela criticised how museums were positioned at that time in the ‘new’ South Africa (Dubin 2006: 187). This led to what were to become known as National Legacy Projects; these ranged from small-scale installations, such as commemorative benches in the streets of Cape Town, to ambitious projects, such as the Ncome/ Blood River Museum in KwaZulu-Natal, and Freedom Park in Pretoria/ Tshwane. The Legacy Projects were initiated to identify the gaps in the ‘true’ South African history and anti-colonial narratives, in order to balance the biased colonial and apartheid commemorative markers dominant at that time.

Monuments and other commemorative markers such as *isiVivane*⁷ and photographs assist communities to engage with the practice of remembrance, and in the transference of memory from an older to a younger generation, who will take that new memory with them into the future. In this mini-thesis and in my professional art practice, I embrace the notion of “*noeuds de mémoire*” or “knots of memory” (Michael Rothberg 2010: 7). Exploring the knotted-ness of memories, and the potential for memory to expand over time and place, and across cultures where my practice does not only function within the limits of the social-political conditions of South Africa, but could also be linked with other ‘knots’ of memories in other post-colonial communities in the continent of Africa and the global South, in this research, I suggest that knots of memory include the de-monumentalisation

⁶ The ‘foundation myth’ is pertinent to the former Ciskei because at its independence there were no national symbols or built structures in place except for places such as Ntaba kaNdoda, which have attained a spiritual significance for almost all of AmaXhosa, not only for the Ciskeins. The monument was built to facilitate and maintain this ‘foundation myth’ by indoctrinating a narrow nationalist goal supported by the apartheid government at the time.

⁷ *IsiVivane* is a pile of stones thrown at a specific place by travellers; these stones used to be found all across the Eastern Cape. This practice held a deep spiritual meaning for amaXhosa people, because the belief was that the traveller would be under the protection and blessings of the ancestors on long journeys.

of commemorative markers by advocating for performative monuments as politically conscious performances on the sites of memory (Mechtild Widrich 2014).

In approaching the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, it is necessary to understand the context in which its history is centred: the foundation myth. Conceiving that history alone cannot be relied upon, I have pursued the reconstitution of the meaning of the Monument and its embedded memories by excavating its forgotten past, immersing myself *in to to* in its landscape. In early March 2016⁸, I embarked on a field trip to the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, and for the next fifteen months, I spent anywhere between three hours and twelve hours per day at the Ntaba kaNdoda. I walked from early mornings to evenings, photographing⁹ the landscape in and around the Monument. At times I would be alone on the mountain, setting up the camera to take self-portrait shots, and in those moments, I could feel the overbearing presence of the Monument; yet felt the emptiness of the Monument's mystical presence which I have come to believe abounds in this place.

Any re/construction of the past has to happen through the process of photography. The camera becomes an important tool in scrutinising the Monument's history and the impact it has on the memory ascribed into that history. My exploration at the Monument is therefore a form of performing remembrance, triggering emotions that make it possible for me to demystify the Monument's past in relation to the collective memory associated with it. My photography at Ntaba kaNdoda functions as performative memorialisation, which reconstructs or reinvents past experiences at this place. I present in this mini-thesis and in my professional art practice what I venturesomely declare as de-monumentalisation¹⁰ of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument through the medium of photography. In Chapter 2 of this mini-thesis, in the section "*Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda*": *The Monument on the Hill*, I look at the visual and performative engagements with memory through re-enactment memory, and discuss in detail my photography at the Monument. I illustrate how my

⁸ I have visited the site between 2011 and 2014, and subsequently produced a video titled 'Of Nationhood' in 2015. This is prior to my undertaking of the MFA at Rhodes.

⁹ Photography was done with DSLR Canon 5D, Ricoh KR-10 35mm (colour and black and white films), and Pinhole with 35mm Fine Grain Positive film in 35mm film canisters.

¹⁰ By de-monumentalisation I mean that I subject, and re/cast off the idea of the monument as a substrate of memory that is fixed in a specific location. I also use this term to peel off the monumentality of commemoration. In Chapter 2, section 2.4 *Reconfiguring the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument: Performative Memorialisation, Counter-Monumentalisation/ De-Monumentalisation*, I discuss in detail this idea of de-monumentalisation, relating it to my own professional art practice.

approach to the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument does not suppress indigene memory narratives, nor does it erase the multi-memories of the local communities at Ntaba kaNdoda.

Photography has contributed immensely to the incredible and multifaceted history of South Africa, and as a medium it has helped in the writing of that history (Michael Godby 2014: 150). Walter Benjamin comments, “photographs become standard evidence for historical occurrences, and acquire a hidden political significance” (Benjamin in Susan Sontag 1973: 184). There seems to be a correlation between the foundation of modern South Africa and the beginning of photography in South Africa in the mid-1800s. This is evident in the work of Peter Metelerkamp (2010) in *Considering Coloniality in South African Photography*, of Marjorie Bull and Joseph Denfield (1970) in *Secure the Shadow: The Story of Cape Photography from its Beginnings to the End of 1870*, and of A.D. Bensusan (1966) in *Silver Images: History of Photography in Africa*. Others also have commented on the role of early photography in South Africa in helping to shape the country’s history. These early photographs were largely of an ethnographic¹¹ persuasion, focusing mainly on the so-called ‘natives’ or black subjects (Okwui Enwezor and Rory Bester 2013: 26).

After 1948, and with the implementation of apartheid policies on all political, social and economic strata of South African society, there grew what was to be recognised as distinctive South African photography. The political conditions sprouted by apartheid affected the type of images produced at the time. These images were no longer about ethnographic studies of the ‘natives’ but demanded political urgency as a result of the changing social conditions of South Africa. Anne Fisher, Margaret Bourke-White and others were prominent at this time, photographing mainly white political and social figures, with signs of discontent evidenced in their images, while on the other hand, Dan Wiener, Ernest Cole, Peter Magubane, Omar Badsha and others were making images that showed the conditions of black life at the time (Enwezor and Bester 2013: 26). Around this period, some of these photographers’ works were published in books¹² – the apartheid government banned almost all of this material.

¹¹ Ethnography in photography has also been explored by Chris Wingfield (in Richard Vokes (ed.) 2013), and Linje Manyozo Mlauzi (2003), among others.

¹² Alan Paton with Dan Wiener (1956) – *South Africa in Transition*; Ernest Cole (1967) – *House of Bondage*; David Goldblatt (1973) – *On the Mines*; Peter Magubane (1978) – *Soweto*; Omar Badsha (1979) –

Photography became a tool that was used by Peter Magubane, Bob Gosani, Jurgen Schadeberg, Alf Khumalo, and others who were active between the 1950s and 1970s to expose the apartheid government. June 16, 1976 was to become the turning point in South African political history (Enwezor and Bester 2013: 29). The publication of the photograph of the dying Hector Pieterse¹³ sparked an explosion of photography that was immediate and intense, which documented without favour or fear of the government the socio-political conditions in South Africa (Heidi Saayman-Hattingh 2011: 196). Omar Badsha, Cedric Nunn, Paul Weinberg, Juda Ngwenya, Peter McKenzie, Mxolisi Moyo, Guy Tillim, Santu Mofokeng and others became much more proactive in the liberation struggle, identifying themselves with that cause through their work as photographers. This collective of photographers was known as *Afrapix*, operating between 1982 and 1991, and their work would acquire the term 'struggle photography'.

How can we therefore contextualise contemporary photography in light of this medium's role in the history of South Africa? What was significant about the images that documented the socio-political conditions of the disenfranchised at that time, and what impact did these photographs have on those who saw them? Whose values were projected onto the marginalised via the commemorative events and memorialisation during apartheid between 1948 and 1990 in South Africa? How have some of these photographers transcended the label of social documentary, reportage or struggle photography? David Goldblatt and Cedric Nunn come from these backgrounds, so their works cannot be removed from this history. Nonetheless, their later works started to investigate the effects or after-effects of apartheid in post-apartheid South Africa. When viewed today, neither of these photographers' images play into the spectacle; rather they convey a thoughtful, moving and evocative composure of subjects, whether the subjects photographed are people, landscapes or structures. They give a measured sensibility to their subjects and, by so doing, portray in a realistic manner their subjects' changing societal values or forgotten histories in the post-apartheid period.

Letters to Farzanah; Eli Weinberg (1981) – *Portrait of a People*; and Omar Badsha and Francis Wilson (1986) – *South Africa: the Cordoned Heart*.

¹³Hector Pieterse (13) was killed when the police opened fire on protesting students in Soweto. Sam Nzima took the photograph and it was published by *The World* newspaper on June 17, 1976.

Photograph can be read as “*memento mori*”¹⁴ (Sontag 1977) that disrupt and resist inscription, paradoxically of memory; photographs of monuments attain the capacity of destroying or reinterpreting that commemorative marker represented in the photograph. Photography, or any performances for that matter, reenacted on places of memory such as monuments, reanimate these commemorative markers, transforming them into performative monuments (Widrich 2014). My photography at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument brings forth, or rather makes visible, textural memories suggested by my own performative memorialisation. My professional art practice at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument attempts thus to excavate the forgotten past, especially memories that I perceive as under the threat of being lost. My research has led me to enquire, through photography, about effective commemorative gestures that may be engaged in the reconstruction of an abandoned monument at Ntaba kaNdoda: not in the literal rebuilding of the monument, but in the symbolic and metaphysical memory remembrance of this place.

David Goldblatt’s photography of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument in particular brought for me memories of the stories I have heard growing up about Ntaba kaNdoda, and gave a visual form to this monument that was fully realised when I visited it for the first time in 2012. There is, however, no singular, all-encompassing memory experience of Ntaba kaNdoda that a photograph could represent. Also, photographs of monuments are not always guaranteed to be successful in capturing that elusive collective memory theoretically represented by them. What photographs are capable of doing is to inscribe places with multi-layered narratives that respond to the recalling of the past. By extension, photographs act as a means of preservation of how the past, places, and events should be remembered, most often as unchanging experiences of those moments. Do we then recreate or recall memories of those moments and places through photographs as preserved history, or do we try to understand the significance of that past and how it affects us today?

This mini-thesis is divided into two chapters. Chapter 1 draws on the theoretical and conceptual examination of place, memory and memorialisation. I discuss, further, how I approached the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a site of investigation. In my professional

¹⁴In the second section of Chapter 2, *Reciting Memories of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument: The Photography of David Goldblatt and Cedric Nunn*, I briefly explain what I mean by this term as used by Sontag within the context of this mini-thesis.

art practice I draw on the idea of the reframing and reconfiguration of my own body, where place, memory and performative memorialisation are all interlinked. I then make memory links of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument to my own experience through performative memorialisation captured in my images, which I produced during my visits there. I briefly discuss, through the photographic works of Lebohang Kganye and Nassim Rouchiche, performative memorialisation that goes hand in hand with the re-enactment of memory.

In Chapter 2, I expand on this notion of performative memorialisation and commemoration in my own practice. This chapter is in two sections. In Section 1, I analyse photographic documentation of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument by David Goldblatt and Cedric Nunn. I draw on their experiences and approaches in capturing the Monument in my own professional art practice. Through the analysis of their photographs of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, I contextualise them for the reader, so they can be pieced together as narratives that reveal the underlying structural societal problems associated with this Monument. David Goldblatt's *The National Monument of the Republic of Ciskei at Ntaba kaNdoda (Eastern Cape)*, made in 1990, seeks to question social values associated with the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument during the fall of apartheid. Cedric Nunn's *Ntaba ka Ndoda, In the Vicinity of Dimbaza Township*; *Ntaba ka Ndoda Monument, Debe Nek*; and *Ntaba ka Ndoda, The battle of Amalinde was fought in this region*, completed between 2013 and 2014, question the colonial legacy of land dispossession in the Eastern Cape. I convey my own experience of encountering both Goldblatt and Nunn's photographs of Ntaba kaNdoda as a bridge into my research into Ntaba kaNdoda, which I discuss in the second part of Chapter 2.

In this second section, I look at the representation of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument in my own photography which explores and reconfigures performative memorialisation, counter-monumentalisation and de-monumentalisation as my *modus operandi*. My practice is contextualised and conceptualised within theoretical notions of place, memory and memorialisation which I develop for the de-monumentalisation of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. In concluding Chapter 2, I explore Ntaba kaNdoda in depth through photography as research, through which I produce a MFA exhibition titled *Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda*. I must state that there is little understood of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a commemorative marker, and this lack of awareness and interest is indicative of the

disregard or dismissal of Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe's nationalist project in the former Ciskei. This is reflected in the way that the Monument was left out when there were plans to redress South African commemorative and heritage history post 1994 through the National Legacy Project of the Department of Arts and Culture¹⁵.

How do we then revisit the past or the history of Ntaba kaNdoda Mountain today, and how do we start reinterpreting the Monument as not just an obnoxious built structure that replaced other memories at Ntaba kaNdoda? My research and professional art practice consider efforts of reassessing the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as an intangible repository of memory, where memories of the people of Ntaba kaNdoda are buried under layers of history. My photography therefore responds to and endeavours to unveil and release these encapsulated memories from beneath this memorial. Finally, I suggest new approaches to commemorate so-called collective memory and experience through performative memorialisation and de-monumentalisation at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

¹⁵Please see the listing of official National Legacy Projects at <http://www.dac.gov.za/content/10-what-are-legacy-projects>

CHAPTER 1: SUMMITING REMEMBRANCE AT PLACES OF MEMORY

1.1. Introduction

Memory and place are invaluable in the study of memorialisation and in understanding the past in relation to commemorative markers such as monuments. Considering the monument at Ntaba kaNdoda as a place of memorialisation, we come to recognise that the collective memory of that place is a reflection of who we are; and that can be a contested terrain, a disputed memory (Cresswell 2004: 90). Ntaba kaNdoda Monument can be seen as a contested environment, which I explore in this mini-thesis.

Place in the context of memorialisation can mean being drawn to a shared collective memory and, to a degree, could mean a location that only has meaning to the individual experience. As opposed to space, place for me represents an exploration of possibilities of being rooted, or a locale in which refuge, home, region and identity come together to make up a place that is uniquely symbiotic to where I position myself in the context of my research and photographic production. Ntaba kaNdoda Monument came into existence where Ntaba kaNdoda as a place already existed. This Monument transformed the space¹⁶ known as Ntaba kaNdoda into a dynamic, socially constructed place, but imbuing it with selective memories of the past. My approach to place therefore, is in light of Lucy Lippard's (1997) and Tim Cresswell's (2004) "sense of place", which the former refers to as the "lure of the local" or the "pull of place". I use these ideas to expand on my understanding of the world with particular meanings that resonate with my own varied lived experiences. I also explore this notion of place as an abstract repository of memory, as well as what Cresswell (2004) calls "a way of looking", as my visual narrative in approaching Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. "Way of looking" means, for me, seeing a place as an exploration of embedded memories and layers of history at the site of memory, thus providing a new interpretation of memorialisation. Others who have explored the significance of the notion of place are Dixon and Durheim (2000), Cuba and Hummon (1993), and Williams et al. (1992) in cross-disciplinary discourses.¹⁷

¹⁶Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a space in post apartheid South Africa contends for an inclusive evocation of multiple memories. Individuals, communities and society as a whole can today negotiate their own memorialisation at this place, and this is what my practice achieves.

¹⁷I will not dwell on these authors in this mini-thesis.

Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a place forms the central axis to my investigation of memory in my photography at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, where I have experienced this sense of “pull of place” (Lippard 1997). In early 2012, I had my very first experience of walking onto this monument; I felt an emotional and psychological connection to it (Agnew in Cresswell 2004: 7). When the time came to explore for myself this place and take photographs of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, there was a feeling of being overwhelmed by the Monument. Finding myself being in the physical presence of the Monument, the emotions of undocumented memories started to overcome me and to foreground my thinking about the significance of this particular place in my works¹⁸.

The Monument at Ntaba kaNdoda can be described as a historical memorial¹⁹ and as a monument. It is recognised by its materiality as a built environment, and it is generally perceived to stand for the great Xhosa history and warrior spirit of the nation, a memory that is somehow intangible. The Monument also represents the narratives of this place and is a visible manifestation of the memories of the communities of Ntaba ka Ndoda. Harvey sees place as a “locus of collective memory” where memories link a “group of people into the [ir] past”, shaping them (Harvey in Cresswell 2004: 61). When a new nation emerges, it sees itself as different from another and, needing to take on a new identity, it will construct new memorials and monuments. In the case of the former Ciskei, this ‘new’ nation chose the Ntaba kaNdoda Mountain to construct the memorial. This memorial was a manifestation of what was meant to be collective memories of the history of the former Ciskei, imposed on the citizens of the new nation; nevertheless, it was never internalised by the communities of Ntaba kaNdoda and the people of the former Ciskei as a whole. This was partly because the monument at Ntaba kaNdoda never fully embodied the multiple identities of the diverse peoples and histories of this place; even in the late 1970s and 1980s, the memories and/or lived experiences of the communities of Ntaba kaNdoda were absent at the Monument’s commemoration.

¹⁸ This feeling is also exacerbated by my encounter with David Goldblatt’s photograph of Ntaba KaNdoda: I describe this sensation in detail in Chapter 2 of this mini-thesis.

¹⁹ Other historical and contemporary memorials in South Africa include the Ncome Monument to the Battle of Blood River near Dundee in KwaZulu Natal; the Memorial to the Fallen Zulu Warriors of the Battle of Isandlwana in KwaZulu Natal; and the Egazini Monument to the Battle of Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. In terms of architectural aesthetics, monuments similar to Ntaba kaNdoda Monument are found in the former Soviet States, such as the Buzludzha Monument, Stara Planina, Bulgaria, and the Park-Monument of the Bulgarian-Soviet Friendship, Varna, Bulgaria. Other memorials that got positive receptions are Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC, USA and Peter Eisenman’s Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, Germany.

Marschall (2009), Vail (1989), and Hodgson (1987) refer to the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a memorial, although Hodgson goes further by referring to it as a national shrine (Hodgson 1987: 28). Memorials are places where memory narratives are placed and inscribed, and function as acts of recalling the past with the intention of providing responses for the future (Bonder 2009: 62). Although memorials correspond to commemoration and function as tools of preservation of events and/or place (ibid), contestation of these commemorated memories, events and places are evident in how the public reacts towards most monuments, either by vandalism, abandonment, or forgetting about the significance of the monument. The feelings and emotions of the community of Ntaba kaNdoda, and perhaps those of the people of the former Ciskei, are shown in the destruction and desecration of the Monument. This is in part because the public memory which was officially authenticated by the construction of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, and which was meant to symbolise Xhosa unity, de facto erasing a place that had existed before (Hodgson 1987: 27), was not as a result of a national consensus.

1.2. On Approaching the Monument: Reframing the Ntaba kaNdoda Memorial

Coombes (2003), Bal et al. (1999), and Moore and Whelan (2007) define collective memory along the lines of a lived experience of people with common identity or individuals who have over a period developed a mutual social structure. These collective communities will often recollect their own remembered past, and make it apparent as to how they want it to be represented, either in storytelling, art making or heritage commemorations (Coombes 2003: 8).

Huyssen defines monuments as representing the origin narrative and culture stability of a particular nation – held together by accepted codes of time and space (Huyssen in Bal et al. 1999: 200). As events that occurred a long time ago recede back in history, collective or living memory becomes less vivid, making it necessary for these communities to construct monuments to keep those memories alive (ibid.). For generations, the communities of Ntaba kaNdoda have always passed down their memories orally, with no need of constructing a monument for them to develop a sense of identity or collective

memory²⁰ at a place they have identified as important to their heritage and history. On the other hand, construction of memorials celebrates new national identities, commemorates events that are associated with a traumatic past, and honours people who are often associated with the past as well. Whilst commemoration work is a multiplex and fluid process, monuments tend to fix memory in their authentication of the past. In this respect, I acknowledge that contestations will come into play, with contradictory narratives, which demand equal recognition, recollection or remembrance in places of memory or at commemorative markers (Moore and Whelan 2007: 34).

There is no one or singular memory of place or past, especially among a diverse group of people even if they have occupied the same piece of land for hundreds of years. What memories were used to formulate the ‘historical knowledge’ of Ntaba kaNdoda before the Monument was built? Did the communities of Ntaba kaNdoda have any contributions toward the ‘visual material’ of the National Monument at Ntaba kaNdoda? I argue that the official narrative of the former Bantustan State of the Ciskei did not, in any way, consider the local/ place memory in commemorating the collective memory of the communities at Ntaba kaNdoda. Moreover, the construction of the Monument displaced and erased these multiple histories and memories for a monumentalised fixed memory (Hodgson 1987: 30–31).

One of the common exercises of memory projects, especially with an oral-story-oriented society, is that of a narrative memory where the participants’ own voice in the narrative is reflective of their history. This allows for possibilities of fluidity and reflective memorialisation, especially for those people who were affected by the construction of the Monument; to a degree, my practice work responds to this notion as well. What contestation does at commemorative places is to make monuments important outlets for displaying elements that trigger memory recall and forgetfulness in what, or how, commemoration of certain events in our history is undertaken. In the case of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument that has dominated the landscape and day-to-day life of the people of the former Ciskei since 1981, and with its disused, vandalised and abandoned structure, the Monument has rendered memory invisible and forgotten in the public memory. As it

²⁰ Although there is intergenerational memory and a sense of community in the surrounding villages, some act as if they do not see the monument. Perhaps they show defiance or an act of erasure of its history. After all, the monument continues to be associated with the former Ciskei leader Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe, even though there is still nostalgia about that period amongst the older generation.

stands, the Ntaba kaNdoda memorial is in a way a non-monument (Coombes 2003: 12; Widrich 2014: 161).

Monuments and statues have come under scrutiny, and there has been a revived interest in them in South Africa, where the old colonial and apartheid commemorative markers have reanimated²¹ themselves in the imagination of South Africans during the Rhodes Must Fall movement²² (Figs. 1–4). Reanimation of commemorative markers can only be possible “through performance” (Coombes 2003: 12). Performance acts on and around these colonial and apartheid monuments, even in their violent manner, ignited resentment towards the memories of the people and events that are commemorated in these memorials. Rhodes Must Fall and other Fallist movements have played an important role in reanimating these monuments, and in bringing to the national consciousness South Africa’s unresolved colonial and apartheid socio-political issues, after 1994.



Figure 1. David Goldblatt. *The dethroning of Cecil John Rhodes, after the throwing of human faeces on the statue and the agreement of Cape Town University to the demands of students for its removal* (2015). Dibond-mounted silver gelatin print on fibre-based paper, 84 × 119 cm. Courtesy of the artist, and the Goodman Gallery. Image source; https://thepicta.me/user/goodman_gallery/1347814671

²¹ I am using “reanimate” here as a term that Coombes (2003) calls attention to, which necessitates the reviving or activating of the contested histories of monuments. My use of “reanimate” refers especially to the action leading to the removal of the Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town, and its effect.

²² The Rhodes Must Fall movement became a catalyst and agent in animating these memory markers at the University of Cape Town’s Rhodes statue (2015), the City of Tshwane/ Pretoria’s Paul Kruger Memorial (2015), Port Elizabeth’s Horse Memorial (2015) and King William’s Town’s Queen Victoria Statue (2015).



Figure 2. Photographer not identified: Pretoria Paul Kruger Memorial Church Square, Pretoria, Gauteng. Image Source: <https://www.rnews.co.za/m/article/3535/statues-effed-part-5-security-around-historical-statues>



Figure 3. Photographer not identified: The Horse Memorial, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape. Image Source: <https://www.rnews.co.za/m/article/3535/statues-effed-part-5-security-around-historical-statues>



Figure 4. Thando Mama: Queen Victoria Memorial Statue, Maclean Square, King William's Town, Easter Cape. Courtesy of Thando Mama.

Memorials and monuments have nonetheless assisted communities to engage with remembrance, even if some members of the community were not there to witness those events. The commemorative markers allow for a space for communal participation in memory work (Bal et al. 1999: vii). For example, the use of *isiVivane* by the amaXhosa amounts to cultural memory practices on sites associated with spirituality. *IsiVivane* functions as a commemorative marker in the form of pile of stones, connecting the living with the ancestors (Soga 1936: 133–5). If travellers see these stones, they will know that place is a sacred space and will remember to throw a stone to the pile, thus taking part in that commemorative performance. Thus, the travellers would acknowledge their ancestors, through remembrance and performance, by presenting a stone to indicate their respects,

regardless of the time the placement of the first stones was done. *IsiVivane* memorials therefore connect the past with the present in a continuous memory performative re-enactment. Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a memorial fails to make any connections with the cultural commemoration which the amaXhosa could possibly associate with memorialisation.

When talking about cultural memory, we are enunciating a field that includes but is not limited to “generational memory, memory in public culture, national memory, memory in architecture and memory in place” (Huyssen in Bal et al. 1999: 191). Hence, this mini-thesis analyses the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument’s role in perpetrating the false perception of the former Ciskei–Xhosa unity, in asking how the construction of the Monument and the national (Ciskei) commemorations at the Monument unified the people of the former Ciskei. Are there any traces of national unity found at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument today, and in what way did it present a commemoration that is alive (living memory) or in/visible²³ today in whatever is left of the traces of this unity (nationhood) purported by Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe?

While there has been a “memory boom” (Huyssen in Bal et al. 1999: 191) worldwide, and in the South African heritage and visual arts landscape, there has been sparse engagement with Ntaba kaNdoda Monument; however, Buntu Fihla (*Isizathu Esihle Singafihla Ububi* 2011), Thando Mama (*Of Nationhood* 2015), and Maqoma Legacy Management Trust (*Wall Mural* 2016) and others have worked on the Monument recently²⁴. The inscription on the grave of iNkosi Jongumsobomvu Maqoma by the ECPHRA (Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage and Resource Agency) and the Amathole District Municipality, recognising it as a provincial heritage site, saw a renewed interest in the conversation about and engagement with the memorial. (Figs. 5–8)

²³Huyssen reiterates the notion of the scale of monuments, usually grand and bigger than life, as leaning towards being invisible. We are likely to forget them; in a way, we stop seeing them (Huyssen in Bal et al. 1999: 192).

²⁴ These are all artworks that were done at various periods, and include paintings and graphics inside the monument, a wall mural on the wall overlooking the amphitheatre at the monument, and video art piece.



Figure 5. Buntu Fihla, *Inyeke kaSebe / Sebe's Lip* (2011). Pigment Print on Photo Fiba. 70 x 50 cm.

© Courtesy of the Artist. Image Source: www.buntufihla.com



Figure 6. Buntu Fihla, *Ukufa kukuqhutywa, impilo kuzenzela / Death is inevitable, life is what you make it* (2011). Pigment print on Photo Fiba. 70 x 50 cm. © Courtesy of the Artist. Image Source:

www.buntufihla.com



Figure 7. Thando Mama, *Of Nationhood* (2015). Digital video still, duration of video is 4 minutes 7 seconds.
© Courtesy of the Artist.



Figure 8. Thando Mama, *Ingcwaba kaNkosi Jongumsobomvu kuNtaba kaNdoda* (2016). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7 x 69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist

Ntaba kaNdoda Monument was built as a memorial to the nation of Ciskei, a unifying symbol of the Xhosa nation under the leadership of Dr. Lennox. L. W. Sebe. It was a grand gesture and an imposing structure to announce to the world that Ciskeians are a

great, united black nation. Its scale embodied this image of unity, strength, permanence and ego. To a large degree, the Monument overshadowed all other past histories and memories of Ntaba kaNdoda, destroying or replacing them with its own agenda.

O’Keeffe explains the relationship dynamics between history and memory in this way: history is about memory, but history on its own is not able to tell the whole narrative of a place or experience. To bridge the gap between the present and the past without extended memory, history has to be written or recorded to stand for the memories of that past (O’Keeffe in Moore and Whelan 2007: 5). Therefore, history gives an impression of what is experienced as absolute truth written for people to remember or be made to remember, instead of people themselves remembering from their own collective memory. History is given as an authority of past events, unquestioned, unchanged and linear, and is given to us even if aspects of that past are not validated through any social or communal engagement. Consequently, history is read, observed and presented as selective memories, which we are made to remember (O’Keeffe in Moore and Whelan 2007: 5).

In his argument O’Keeffe proposes that collective memory is historical and it is something that we are constantly reminded of, which presents us with a challenge: that which we might think of as *collective memory* is in fact decided or ‘programmed’ for us by an exterior authority (O’Keeffe in Moore and Whelan 2007: 5). This indicates to us that, even though we recognise that there are shared memories of Ntaba kaNdoda as a collective engagement, what is commemorated is in fact prescribed for us. The community then allows historical memory presented by the state to define what is conceived as their past, in terms of their memory, and the preservation of their cultural practices, rituals and spiritual practices at commemorative places such as Ntaba kaNdoda.

Ntaba kaNdoda Monument was meant to honour memories of those who died in the nineteenth-century conflicts in the Eastern Cape, and was Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe’s idea of “social unity for a new nation [*of the Ciskei*] that just emerged” (Barsalou and Baxter 2007: 4). In the old Ciskei, the political voice that won was that of Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe; he then managed to suppress other voices and overshadowed communal memories and their historical narratives (Hodgson 1987; Vail 1989). From this political manoeuvring, Ntaba kaNdoda Monument could be read as exonerating Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe and serves as his way of portraying himself as saviour of the Ciskei–Xhosa nation by

having his statue mounted on the Monument²⁵. The site itself has always been a place of contentious history, an unsettled historical memory which my practice begins to engage with, where I employ the duplexity or perhaps the enigma of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument in what could be read as forgetting through remembering (Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi 2007: 70).

In approaching memorials, Bonder (2009) asks what they do for us, and how we relate to or engage with them. My photographic approach uses methods that work with, alongside and against the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument's purpose of recalling the past, and tries to provide alternative responses in the present²⁶ (Bonder 2009: 62). The monument at Ntaba kaNdoda is a site that encourages remembrance of a forgotten history of this region in the Eastern Cape. For Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe, it was a place to forget the conflict and fighting within the black clans and remember the unification of the so-called Xhosa nation in the former Ciskei. Therefore, the construction of this memorial was to single-mindedly impel remembrance of a singular historical narrative "in the interest of forging a particular historical consciousness and shaping collective memory" of the people of the Ciskei to identify with (Marschall 2009: 2; Hodgson 1987: 29, 30). One is left to wonder about the merits of this Monument as a truthful representation of the amaXhosa, who saw it as removed from their reality, especially in areas where repression was felt from the "betterment" system²⁷ in the former Ciskei.

Lastly, in thinking about how the Monument is to be approached, this mini-thesis looks at how my photography necessitates the reframing of the meaning of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a memorial, or commemorative marker, post 1994. How does my photography at this monument achieve multiplex representation of memory, and how can my work produced at this place be read within the contemporary visual culture and art history in South Africa? My theoretical grounding in my research allows me to consider my photography as a tool that charges this place with renewed life, a reanimating of

²⁵The statue is not there anymore – only the plinth remains; ironically a new statue of iNkosi Maqoma has been installed there, which is also of significance and has introduced another meaning to the place, where one layer is inserted onto the already existing layers of narrative in the centre of the amphitheatre at the monument.

²⁶ I will discuss in detail in Chapter 2, Section 2 how my photography process proposes alternative ways of commemorating the present at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

²⁷For further reading on betterment programmes in the former Ciskei, please see Chris de Wet (1980) and Alan Hirsch (1984).

forgotten memories through re-invented memorialisation, or a reassembling of the Monument's purpose to explicate multiple meanings that need to be recognised at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

1.3.“Sense of Place”: Memory Links to Place and Experience at Ntaba kaNdoda

Looking closer at the idea of place, we are confronted by the historical narratives of the people found there. These historical narratives are normally found on the landscape or place where people live, perform rituals and observe sacred cultural activities. These narratives, in the words of Lippard (1997: 7), “lure” or “pull” us to the place. When tackling the Monument at Ntaba kaNdoda, what approach do we apply in photographic terms, and how do we draw from the known/ visible and unknown/ invisible histories of this place? Where do I position my own personal memory in relation to what the communities of Ntaba kaNdoda say about and read into the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument? My photography in this sense provokes and evokes shared memories left unmarked on this landscape. As this research relates to a particular significant place in my history, my practice searches for a place in the “depth and width” (Lippard 1997: 7) of our collective and historical memories of Ntaba kaNdoda.

It is important to understand that Ntaba kaNdoda is also a place of displacement, where people in the former Ciskei were moved by force by the apartheid government's policies²⁸, yet this place holds spirituality and identity within the greater Xhosa history that is not bound by the so-called Ciskei. We cannot dismiss the memory displacement of the communities of Ntaba kaNdoda's history or their apprehensive relationship with the Monument. Recognising that such memory displacement could not limit our understanding of the history and memories associated with this place to what the Ciskei state ‘official’ history instituted, any interventions, especially through performances and installations on this memorial, call into question this Monument's authority. My research also responds to the Monument's unitary representation of Ntaba kaNdoda history and memory.

²⁸ For further reading on forced removals, please see Baldwin (1975) and Evans (2014).

What really is remembered about Ntaba kaNdoda, and what memories the Monument holds and for whom, are questions that could help us unpack this notion of place as a contested site of memory at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. That past, and the memory of place, are interpretations reproduced in different contexts. The history of Ntaba kaNdoda stems from the tradition of Ntsikana²⁹, who was the son of Gabha, a chancellor to King Ngqika of amaRharhabe, who was born in around 1760 and died in 1820. Ntsikana was in the forefront of the religious practice of Christianity but kept his traditional African beliefs and values, and was known as a great orator, creating hymns that were prophetic about Ntaba kaNdoda (Hodgson 1987: 20–21). S. E. K. Mqhayi, who was born in 1875 and died in 1945, also has a strong connection with the history of Ntaba kaNdoda. Mqhayi is known as the great national poet and Xhosa historian. He was part of the group of people who founded the St Ntsikana Memorial Association (SNMA), which strongly reinforced Ntsikana’s message of a united Xhosa nation, and he also wrote the great poem *Ntaba kaNdoda* that is heavily influenced by the story of Ntsikana. This poem depicts Ntaba kaNdoda as a seat of God, a holy place, referring to it as “the great shrine of the nation” and the “dwelling place for the Xhosa nation” (Hodgson 1987: 24–25). Mqhayi continued with Ntsikana’s tradition and “honour[ed] ... Ntsikana as the symbol of the reassertion of an African consciousness and of the building up of African national unity” (ibid). These two figures in Xhosa history were used by political individuals such as Dr Lennox L. W. Sebe who adopted their narratives as the group history and heritage of the former Ciskei–Xhosa nation (Hodgson 1987: 20–26).

In this mini-thesis, I demonstrate my acute sense of place: not only my understanding of the history or memory of Ntaba kaNdoda, but also my own psychological and spiritual connections with this place. As my home is close to the mountain, the Monument is present in my day-to-day life; and my everyday observation of the mountain has been influenced by the stories I have heard over time. Even before I set my foot on the mountain, it was a place that felt familiar. Ntaba kaNdoda was a home that I have made a connection with for all these years, and it has existed in my imagination and affected my psyche for a very long time. As a result, I have a very deep sense of connection to this place. In a sense, my professional art practice keeps to the “lure of the local” in positioning the Monument within an embedded history of Ntaba kaNdoda in a “place-

²⁹Also see Zaze Soga and William Kobe Ntsikana in G.W. Bennie (1935: 2 – 6, 7 – 10).

specific”³⁰(Lippard 1997: 14) way that I relate with. This place-specificity in my practice allows for a deep immersion inside a multiplex and lived experience, re-enacting deep-seated memories that link my own experience to the history of this place (Lippard 1997: 33).

1.4. Memorialising Monuments and Re-enactment Memory in Photographic Material

Pierre Nora’s concept of the “*lieu de mémoire*” or “site of memory” has been influential and also contested in the studies of remembrance since the mid-1980s (Rothberg 2010: 3). He declares that there are “lieu[x] de mémoire” because societies have lost “milieux de mémoire” or “true environment[s] of memory”(ibid.) –meaning that what we remember now is second-hand memory, because societies have constructed archives (monuments), “collect[ing], organiz[ing], exhibit[ing], catalogu[ing], ... observ[ing] the form and not the substance of memory” (Winter 1997: 1).

With the acceleration of industrialisation in Western societies and the move away from the everyday experience (social environment), there began a shift to pass down memories to “sites of memory” such as monuments and archives (Marschall 2009: 5). When a monument is constructed, it might replace the remembrance function of local communities or their lived experience (historical events can be misconstrued for political agendas): in this way, local communities hand over their own memories to the memorial. The Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a memorial is an example of this memory phenomenon, where the Monument has become the political site where one historical memory trumps alternative (environment) narratives at Ntaba kaNdoda Mountain.

Marschall (2009) critiques Nora’s claim of monuments as “*lieux de mémoire*” (places or objects which hold special significance for a group’s remembrance) and places them “as a

³⁰ According to Hine (1997), Lippard laments artists who make site-specific art about place without engaging with place specifically in their work. Where site-specific art is about place, Lippard states that “very little is about place ... made by artists within their own places or with the people who live in the scrutinised place, connecting with the history and environment”, but the needs of artists change and the demands of the market are a factor in how artists approach site-specific work. However, I agree with her on ‘place specificity’ of work rather than site specificity, where ‘place specific’ draws us to the possibilities of discovery, whereas ‘site specific’ narrows or fixes our understanding of place to a certain time and environment (Hine 1997).

contextual factor [the environment – *milieux de mémoire* –][which] impact[s]... on the meaning of commemorative marker[s]” (Marschall 2009: 6). She further argues, “Monuments can be understood as articulated spaces, as signifying landmarks which inscribe the surrounding environment and its people with meaning” (ibid.), not the other way around. Just as other societies have not entirely “banished” the ritual of passing down memory as argued by Winter (1997), monuments are constructed as “*lieux de mémoire*”, while “*milieux de mémoire*” are becoming much more important for the development of commemorative markers that respond to communities’ needs today.

O’Keeffe speaks about “*milieux de mémoire*” (social environments) that are both private and public memory (O’Keeffe in Moore and Whelan 2007: 6–8), while Rothberg suggests a new model of remembrance, calling it “*noeuds de mémoire*” or “knots of memory”. That is where collective or cultural memory is thought of as something that goes beyond the framework of that specific community or the nation-state (Rothberg 2010: 7). Although my mini-thesis’s scope is limited in its capacity to explore in depth these “*milieux de mémoire*”, what my photography tries to do is to explore the possibilities suggested by “knotted”-ness of memories. In Chapter 2, in the section on my professional art practice, I explain what I mean by the possibilities of “knotted” memories, and link that to the general theme of my exhibition.

How do individualistic memorialisations disrupt nationalistic notions of commemoration at places of memory, and vice versa (O’Keeffe in Moore and Whelan 2007: 5–8)? How do we keep away from remembering, and conversely, do memorials in fact help us forget in some ways? Are our engagements with memorials helping us to recall or keep our memory of our past? Do our performative³¹ bodies in re-enacting³² memory in such spaces help us against forgetting? Can we preserve our histories whilst we deconstruct and de-monumentalise³³ colonial and apartheid commemorative markers? I view these questions as guiding us through the embedded meanings and interpretations of place memory and

³¹I use the word “performative” to refer to an action that takes place at a particular time and site or place; the action can take the form of a live performance.

³² Re-enactment refers to an action, acted out again as a performance that recreates experiences that have been lived with the hope of archiving a profound purpose for individuals or groups of people.

³³ De-monumentalisation is the term I use within the context of my mini-thesis to mean reviewing and reconfiguring the meaning of monuments, particularly the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. De-monumentalisation offers a critical reading of the Monument’s purpose and symbolism beyond the material and monumentality of the built structure.

memorialisation at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a dilapidated memorial today sits precariously between forgetting and remembering; my engagement with it is an attempt to position it to and think critically around its relation to the post-apartheid memorialisation in a way that breaks with the previous regime, whose ideologies of monuments or monumentality in South African memory landscape are ever contested.

The Ntaba KaNdoda Monument's having been constructed during the apartheid era and in a Bantustan of the Ciskei was indicative of the complexities and contested memories or political ideologies that were apparent in the late 1970s in South Africa. By the late 1980s and early 1990s the monument had been vandalised: the people were no longer identifying with the monument as 'a spiritual place of identification' or of Ciskei–Xhosa nationalism. The feelings of the community manifested in destroying and physically dismantling what they could of the Monument. Another aspect of my engagement with the Monument is an attempt to look at how the preservation of individualised memory of Ntaba kaNdoda post-apartheid could set up or open up discussions around what has essentially become a forgotten place.

To avoid memory loss (Themba Wakashe in Marschall 2009: 32), memorials and monuments become places where we perform our own histories. They are also places where these performative histories and/or memories are re-enacted against and with the monument's materiality. As a critical response that either subverts or engages with the idea of commemorative memorialisation, the representation of monuments through photography could always be read as embedded with symbolism, history and memory.

Reenactment is used in my mini-thesis and professional art practice as an expression and tool for activating a performative reading and application that engages memory recollection at commemorative markers, or any place of memory, such as monuments. These places will often have a particular meaning to a community and/or individuals; in my research the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument is such a site. My photography as performative memorialisation looks at my performing body, inserted or juxtaposed with the existing monument, and recalls acts of reenactment, proposing new commemorative

approaches at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument³⁴. Informed by my understanding and experiences at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, my approach to commemoration at Ntaba kaNdoda not only engages with the processes of photography, but also recalls for me forgotten memories of this place through reenactment performance.

In this respect, my approach to reenactment is not a historical exercise; on the contrary, I look at the effect of history on reenactment memory, and with the performative body on places of memorialisation. We understand reenactment as performances that recreate experiences; reoccurring acts that hope to archive meaningful goals, either as individual or collective experience. People seek clarity of past events and traumas, or they find closure to the gaps in their memories of places and people. Agnew (2004) refers to this kind of reenactment as a “body-based discourse in which the past is reanimated through physical and psychological experience” (Agnew 2004: 330). Coombes (2003) uses the term “reanimate” in relation to the act of reenactment, resuscitating and stimulating renewed memories “through performance” or “rituals” at monuments (Coombes 2003: 12, 14). Therefore, the use of the term reanimate in this mini-thesis is to stimulate and activate particular memories, visible and non-visible, through performative commemoration at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

The photographic series *Ke Lefa Laka*³⁵ (2012/13) (Fig. 9) by Lebohang Kganye emblematises reanimation by reenactment using the photographer’s own personal family photographs. In this series, Kganye re-inserts her own body into photographs (from a family album) of her mother who had passed on; her own image is a ‘ghost’ or trace of her mother’s presence. Viewers might interpret Kganye’s actions (and photography process) as recapitulating memories of her mother. Rephotography³⁶ is particularly interesting in this instance, because Kganye uses it to reanimate forgotten memories through this process; for viewers, her photography depicts a physical representation of her mother’s

³⁴ In Chapter 2, in the section *Reconfiguring the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument: Performative Memorialisation, Counter-Monumentalisation/ De-monumentalisation*, I propose a reading of my photography at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument that is de-monumental.

³⁵ *Ke Lefa Laka* is Sesotho for ‘It is my inheritance’, referring to the photographer’s heritage and personal history.

³⁶ Rephotography is a process whereby a repeat photograph is taken of the same site, creating a ‘then’ and ‘now’ framework; this was pioneered by Mark Klett (Klett 2006).

memory. In a way, her reenactment (performing memory)³⁷ of her past helped to resuscitate her capacity to recall particular memories of her mother.



Figure 9. Lebohang Kganye, *ka 2-phisi yaka e pinky II* (Her-story/KeLefaLaka series) (2012). Inkjet print on cotton rag paper, 42x42cm. © Courtesy of the Artist. Image Source: <http://www.afranova.com/artists/lebohang-kganye/more-artworks/>

ÇaVaWaka (2015) (Fig. 10) by Nassim Rouchiche also uses the photography trace – in a different approach to Kganye – to reanimate place rather than memories, adding an affective historiographical meaning to the place where these photographs were taken. Rouchiche's subjects are undocumented immigrants in Algeria, arrested and deported; the viewer witnesses, in these photographs, inhabited places as empty or ghost-places with

³⁷Charl Blignaut (2017) also uses this term in describing Lebohang Kganye's photography series.

only the subject's trace as evidence of their existence. These photographs reanimate the spaces formally occupied by the illegals through reenactment.



Figure 10. Nassim Rouchiche, *ÇaVaWaka*, (2015). © Courtesy of the Artist. Image Source: <https://www.lensculture.com/nassim-rouchiche?modal=project-128859>

The representation of the body in Kganye and Rouchiche's photography re-enacts performative memorialisation and constitutes an understanding of photography as a tool for processing multiple memories associated with place and history. The manifestation of reenactment performance at places of memorialisation, and in remembrance through photography, affects how collective memories and their meanings are produced and passed down over the course of time, and, finally, in how symbolism is attached to meanings in photography and could be identified with reenactment memory or performance memorialisation (Walkerline 2016: 700). Thus, making meaning from memory based on re-enactment performances at places of commemoration becomes conflicted by mediations that take place on such sites as memorials.

Reenactment, as a form of performative memorialisation, alludes to a longing for aspects of the past, whilst omitting or discarding a past that is "... uncomfortable and troubling" (Agnew 2007: 302). Photography "... allow[s] the observer to 'return to the past'" (Modrak&Anthes2010: 10); it also allows for memories to be recalled, bringing

remembrance of the past in the present through reenactment (Modrak & Anthes 2010: 10). What re-enactment does is to elect, recall and retell selective memories, events, or persons for commemoration as authentic collective memory (Modrak & Anthes 2010: 15). Even though my photography practice and my work executed at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument engages with reenactment, I tread this terrain very carefully. I expand more on this argument in Chapter 2, in the section “*Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda*”: *The Monument on the Hill*.

What happens when the return to the past encompasses not only the individual, but also the history of the community or the nation as a whole? Two photographers who have captured the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument on film are David Goldblatt and Cedric Nunn. In the next chapter, I analyse and contextualise their photography in relation to my own professional art practices at Ntaba kaNdoda. I further discuss in detail how I have applied the notions of place, memory and memorialisation in my own practice. I then illustrate how my MFA exhibition *Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda* suggests new readings of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a place of commemoration.

CHAPTER 2: FORGETTING NTABA KANDODA/ RECLAIMING NTABA KANDODA

2.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 of my mini-thesis is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the works of David Goldblatt and Cedric Nunn, who both visited and photographed the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, albeit at different periods. I then utilise their works as a bridge into my own practice, going on in the second section to discuss and expand on my practice and my production processes of photography, with theoretical grounding on memory, place and memorialisation. In developing photographic works that function as performative monuments, I also claim that my photography serves as de-monumentalisation of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

Goldblatt's photograph titled *The National Monument of the Republic of Ciskei at Ntaba kaNdoda (Eastern Cape)* (1990)³⁸ (Fig. 11), together with Cedric Nunn's selection of photographs of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument³⁹ (Figs. 12–14), will be central to my main visual and critical analysis in this section of my mini-thesis. Goldblatt's photograph ignited my fascination with and exploration of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a significant place in my own history. It also raised unsettling questions about my own lack of historical positionality⁴⁰ to a place I have been calling home.

³⁸Goldblatt's black and white photograph of Ntaba kaNdoda was developed in the darkroom, with silver gelatin print on paper; the size of the print is 55cm x 69cm.

³⁹The title of Nunn's portfolio of photographs is *Unsettled: One Hundred Years War of Resistance by Xhosa Against Boer and British* (2013–2014).

⁴⁰I use positionality to refer to my own 'position' in relation to the social-historical complex of Ntaba kaNdoda, which is a factor in how I relate to the memorial. For further reading on positionality, please see Qin, D. (2016).



Figure 11. David Goldblatt, *The National Monument of the Republic of Ciskei at Ntaba kaNdoda (Eastern Cape)* (1990). © Courtesy of the Artist and the Goodman Gallery. Image Source: *South Africa: The Structure of Things Then*. Oxford University Press. Cape Town/ Oxford. Pg. 172.



Figure 12. Cedric Nunn, *Ntaba ka Ndoda Monument, Debe Nek* (2013–2014). Ilford fibre based archival paper. 40 x 50cm. © Courtesy of the Artist and David Krut Projects. Image Source: <http://davidkrut.com/pastExUnsettled.html>



Figure 13. Cedric Nunn, *Ntaba ka Ndoda, In the Vicinity of Dimbaza Township*(2013–2014). Ilford fibre based archival paper. 40 x 50cm. © Courtesy of the Artist and David Krut Projects. Image Source: <http://davidkrut.com/pastExUnsettled.html>



Figure 14. Cedric Nunn, *Debe Nek; and Ntaba ka Ndoda, The battle of Amalinde was fought in this region* (2013 –2014). Ilford fibre based archival paper. 40 x 50cm. © Courtesy of the Artist and David Krut Projects. Image Source: <http://davidkrut.com/pastExUnsettled.html>

Goldblatt's and Nunn's photographs have forced me to take that journey to the Monument. Their photographs evoked in me forgotten memories of this place at Ntaba kaNdoda which have dominated my youth for a very long time. This experience unearthed memories of Ntaba kaNdoda and histories associated with it for me. Both photographers' approaches to the situated-ness⁴¹ of the Monument, in relation to its history, must be read as important contributions to the art history and visual culture of South Africa.

In the second part of this chapter, I flesh out my own practice and discuss how I engage the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a commemorative site, using photography as a process that comments on notions of memorialisation. I start with establishing the conceptual and theoretical basis of my practice work, and through this critical visual analysis provide an alternative interpretation of the commemoration at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. As someone who has been preparing to embark on a journey to Ntaba kaNdoda, I have had to prepare for a private or introspective examination of what Ntaba kaNdoda means for me in the context of this research, and to explore memory meanings associated with this commemorative marker through photography.

Finally, in this mini-thesis and in my MFA exhibition *Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda*, I present my findings, where concepts of place, memory, and memorialisation interlink as an integrated performative memorialisation of my personal experience at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

⁴¹ Although the theory of being Situated started as a concept of situating knowledge production within the feminist cultural disciplines propagated by Donna Haraway (1988), I am using it here as a position that recognises knowledge as coming from a particular place. That knowledge is situated within a certain lived experience of which dissident voices must be allowed to determine their own narratives (Ericka Engelstad and Siri Gerrard 2005: 1).

2.2. Reciting Memories of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument: The Photography of David Goldblatt and Cedric Nunn

It is an unnerving experience to suddenly find oneself standing in a photograph. That is, standing in an actual place which up to that time one only knows, but knows very well, through a photograph ... [so] that the first sight of the real thing can be almost hallucinatory.

Ian Walker in David Brittain 1999: 127

The opening direct quote captures lucidly my own experience of visiting the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument for the first time. I realised that this was a familiar place, kinetically experienced through a David Goldblatt photograph (Fig. 11 on page 32). I had found myself at a place I remembered from a photograph, “standing” in Goldblatt’s image.

Photographs have the potential to represent the forgotten; Goldblatt’s and Nunn’s photographs, I argue, operate within the realm of the possibility of forgetting. In photographs, lived experiences, for example of Ntaba kaNdoda communities, could be blotted out of memory. In *Oral History and Photography*, Alexander Freund and Alister Thomson (2011: 14) argue that a photograph could be ripped off from a family album leaving “large blank spaces, smears of old glue, and torn paper”. In this way, the destroyed photograph represents different meanings of memory, most often those of forgotten “scars left behind” by that process (ibid.). The absences of people from Goldblatt’s and Nunn’s photographs of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument tear-off their existence, and could potentially scar our memories of this place. In the presence of the Monument, we forget about Ntaba kaNdoda as a place.

However, I want to suggest that a photograph can be capable of representing forgotten memories of places, specifically in referring to images of Ntaba kaNdoda as a commemorative place for memories of wars, festivities, rituals and ceremonies that are being obliterated from collective history. However, in their zest for socio-political activism, Goldblatt and Nunn omitted other layers of history at Ntaba kaNdoda⁴². The discarding of or, more precisely, forgetting about multiple meanings at this

⁴² Although Goldblatt and Nunn are committed photographers, I feel that they could have explored this socio-political charged place with greater sensitivity. Perhaps their works could have highlighted the socio-political effects on the local communities of Ntaba kaNdoda.

commemorative marker in the process of producing these images expunges the sense of place and spirituality associated with Ntaba kaNdoda.

Goldblatt's and Nunn's photographs represent an object that over a period has decayed or no longer exists as originally constructed. Their photographs in this way function as "*memento mori*"⁴³ (Sontag 1977); that is to say, the viewer is cautioned about the ephemerality of memory, even for the monument: it is not meant to last forever (Sontag 1977: 15). In this mini-thesis, I use Goldblatt's and Nunn's photographs of Ntaba kaNdoda as a form of an ingress into my own photography practice.

My first-time encounter with the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument was via David Goldblatt's photograph (Fig. 11 on page 32). I have grown up hearing stories of Ntaba kaNdoda, whether in books, poems or from Xhosa songs sung at primary school. It was a place of Ciskeian nationalism; a call of Sebe in the Ciskei of the 1980s for unity within the new nation. Ntaba kaNdoda would come to dominate my pneumatic later on, as my new home is just a few kilometres from this legendary mountain.

At first glance, the photograph itself has no special appeal *per se*, but, on a closer look, it shows perhaps what has been, that which today is gone – not only in terms of the structural integrity of the monument, but also of its closeness to how people remember that time and place. The Monument was clean and neat, and had military guards all the time. Thousands would gather at the Monument, including chiefs, dignitaries and common people; they would be seated in the amphitheatre and the hall of the Monument, during all festivities or ceremonies during Sebe's presidency of the former Ciskei (personal communication with Mr. Mfanelo Mfenqe, Debe Nek, 24 February 2017). As a visual document, the framing of this photograph is perhaps Goldblatt's way of showing his state of mind in choosing to capture the monument. As the only photograph published, we are left to wonder why Goldblatt did not take other shots to represent Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. Using a 4x5 Large Format Camera, Goldblatt did manage to take a few negatives, but only had one usable negative from the shoot (personal communication with Mr. Goldblatt, 04 August 2017). The rear of the monument could have been an iconic

⁴³ *Memento mori* refers to an object, such as a skull, that is kept as a reminder of the inevitability of death. Sontag's use of the term in reference to all photographs could be read as the futility of trying to keep memories alive, because everything eventually passes.

image, but Goldblatt chose another vantage point just on top of the crest near the entrance to the Monument. Through this photograph, more questions arise than there are answers – such as: why was the monument abandoned; what happened to the people at this place, and what happened to the commemorations at this place? Most importantly, the question that begs to be asked is: What happened to the memories of people from this place?

It is evident that, even in the early 1990s, vandalism and neglect started to take root; the plinth in the amphitheatre stands without the statue of Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe⁴⁴, and the paving on the grounds and glass in the frames of the roof structure are gone. There is a sense that this place has been abandoned for a while. Seen through Goldblatt's photograph is the decay, abandonment and disarray of the former apartheid structure towards the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. It was perhaps a prophetic sign to the future of a unified, reincorporated, and post-1994 South African 'rainbow nation'.

Cedric Nunn's photographs *Ntaba ka Ndoda, In the Vicinity of Dimbaza Township; Ntaba ka Ndoda Monument, Debe Nek*; and *Ntaba ka Ndoda, The battle of Amalinde was fought in this region* (2013–2014) (Figs. 12–14 on pages 32–33) are part of an extensive photographic portfolio titled *Unsettled: One Hundred Years War of Resistance by Xhosa Against Boer and British*. These photographs were first shown at the Albany Museum, Fort Selwyn, Grahamstown, in 2014. Fort Selwyn (Fig. 15), a colonial military citadel of settler Grahamstown, is an interesting site for Nunn to position the *Unsettled* exhibition launch. *Unsettled* asks questions about the displacement, dispossession and landlessness of the indigenous peoples in the Eastern Cape from the very fort that originally was built to keep the indigenous people of the region out. *Unsettled's* installation at Fort Selwyn impels an interrogation of the role of British imperialism in the Eastern Cape. In this way, these photographs could be read as a comment on the legacy of both Charles Jasper Selwyn⁴⁵ and John Graham⁴⁶ in the Eastern Cape. Nunn's work documents the events that happened over a period of 135 years, focusing on what is commonly known as the

⁴⁴ The bust of Lennox Sebe used to be at the centre of the amphitheatre. The bust was destroyed in the aftermath of the coup in Ciskei on 4 March 1990, and the Monument was "gutted ... of usable materials and then, in the frenzy of destruction, smashed ..." (Goldblatt 1998: 253) and personal communication with Mr. Goldblatt (04-08-2017).

⁴⁵ Charles Jasper Selwyn was responsible for the design and construction of the Fort in Grahamstown; he was in the Eastern Cape between 1834 and 1842. For further reading on Fort Selwyn, please see Colin Coetzee (1995: 184-186).

⁴⁶ John Graham is attributed as founding Grahamstown in 1814 – this after a scorched earth approach in destroying both the Khoi and the Xhosa in the region.

Frontier or Xhosa Wars⁴⁷ between 1779 and 1879. Nevertheless, as a form of reclaiming that history, Nunn subtitled his exhibition *War of Resistance by Xhosa against Boer and British*, the emphasis being on resistance.



Figure 15. Fort Selwyn – Albany Museum, Grahamstown. Cover page of the Albany Museum Brochure (n.d.). © Courtesy of the Albany Museum.

It is the traces of these stories that Nunn notes and documents, showing the aftermath and the legacy of the tragic history of the people and places affected by land dispossession between Grahamstown and the great Kei River. “The neglected spaces of historical importance ... [and the] images tell us how black history remains to be systematically wiped out of collective memory” (Joja 2015), as evident in the vast empty landscape of the dispossessed. The strengths of Nunn’s photography of Ntaba kaNdoda lie in their power to recall the unremembered past of this place. It is this unremembered past, a shameful history of defeat and land dispossession, that drove Nunn to reclaim this narrative of the Eastern Cape history. The Xhosa and the Khoi, Nunn argues, had shown the resilience of their human spirit over adversity, and that the recollection of forgotten and neglected memories is essential in reclaiming black pride within the context of South African history (personal interview with Nunn 27 May 2017).

⁴⁷ A number of historians have written about this period in history; the best-known author is Noel Mostert (1992).

Nunn's photographs of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument draw the viewer closer by using multiple view or vantage points, which are not present in Goldblatt's photograph of the Monument. Nunn uses framing in his photography to bring the Monument closer, and in some images uses wide shots of the Monument to give the sense of space where the monument is situated. The viewer is potentially pulled closer to the landscape and at the same time, the viewer is virtually taken away from the Monument by the images that are wide.

With his photographs, Nunn keeps the viewer's eyes fixed on the Mountain where, as a terrain, it forms a backdrop to the ensconced monument (Figs. 12–14 on pages 32–33). It is important here to note that the Battle of Amalinde in 1818⁴⁸, which took place in and around Ntaba kaNdoda, made it more important for Nunn to revisit Ntaba kaNdoda and connect it with the “changing nature of ownership of the land” in the Eastern Cape (personal communication 8 August 2017). Nunn's photography at Ntaba kaNdoda, therefore, could be read as a form of resisting imposed commemorative hegemonies found in commemorative structures and places of memory or events associated with the traumatic past.

Goldblatt, Nunn and I have chosen to use the camera as a tool against forgetting⁴⁹, that is to record at the place of commemoration at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. We brought the camera not only for documentation, but also to critique the Monument's presence at Ntaba kaNdoda. Our approach to Ntaba kaNdoda Monument is that of recorders of history, even if the festivals and the annual ceremonies of the past are absent in these photographs; viewers are witnesses to the traces of memories suggested by the abandoned Monument. Goldblatt and Nunn in turn did not touch any stones, insert any markers on the landscape, or change the nature of the Monument. Nevertheless, they left an imprint with long-lasting memories of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument through photographs.

The photographs of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument presented by Goldblatt and Nunn invoke for me remembrance of memories of lived experience at Ntaba kaNdoda. Beyond the

⁴⁸ The Battle of Amalinde was fought in the area called Debe Nek, which is on the foothills of the Ntaba kaNdoda Mountain. The battle is said to have taken place in October of 1818 between uKumkani Ngqika and iNkosi Ndlambe (S. E. K. Mqhayi 1953).

⁴⁹ Esther Leslie in Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (editors) (2010) discusses the relationship between memory and photography, and how photography as a technology tool has been used against forgetting, particularly in the texts of Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer.

function of the Monument, their photographs contest a past that was officiated by the former Ciskei state. While photographs of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument do not necessarily cause the viewer to recall actual lived experience at Ntaba kaNdoda, I nonetheless try to view these photographs as being transformed into monuments, or markers of our memories. In this way, Goldblatt's and Nunn's photographs epitomise markers of memories that inscribe forgotten memories of Ntaba kaNdoda that no visual representation had achieved before.

Goldblatt's and Nunn's photography shows the viewer that there are threats of perpetual erasure or rejection of multiple collective memories at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. This is evident not only in the abandonment or in the vandalism of the structure itself, but through an inability to engage with multiple histories at Ntaba kaNdoda. In addition, I am arguing for the de-monumentalisation⁵⁰ of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument within the context of conceptual and critical analysis of photographs that I produce at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument which reflect on the multiplicity of meanings of Ntaba kaNdoda.

2.3. Monument Preparations: The Road to Ntaba kaNdoda

My photography at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument has become not only a recording of personal and collective memories, but also an exploration of what Ntaba kaNdoda means for me as a place. Ntaba kaNdoda has been a place that I could identify with as a participant in the creation of lived and experienced memories, a place that has historical meaning. Either because of the mountain's proximity to my home or its close association with my own history, I have a deep sense of 'kinship' with this place; I feel connected to it in a way that my roots are grounded in its past. My research seeks to confer this sense of place onto the viewers of my photography and readers of its text as a continuous experience of memory on an individual or personal level. While, in one way, collective memory seems to be fixed in the past, what is remembered about this place in my research and professional art practice is my active exploration of experience at Ntaba kaNdoda in the present.

⁵⁰ Although my work deals with the monument structure at Ntaba kaNdoda, de-monumentalisation in my thesis and practice looks at the notion of the deconstructing and reconfiguring the meaning of the monumental. In my practice, I apply this concept in the context of 'performative monuments' discussed in the next section, *Reconfiguring the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument: Performative Memorialisation, Counter-monumentalisation/ De-monumentalisation*.

Positioning the Monument as a place of memory exploration, I question its commemorative significance and how it has affectively programmed forgetfulness of the past in the present. In reflecting on this exploration, and in producing my work, I had to critique my own attitude towards a monument that no longer holds a position of influence today either in official government business or in public opinion. In my investigation of Ntaba kaNdoda, I found an enchantment with the Monument in my first visit there; being in the presence of the Monument and being on the mountain complicates an elusive contested memory and history of Ntaba kaNdoda against the backdrop of Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe's nationalism.

David Goldblatt's and Cedric Nunn's photography at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument started the work of fracturing the commemoration hegemony established and maintained by Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe. Not only did their photographs document the Monument as a structure built on Ntaba kaNdoda, but they also lodged in me self-reflective questions about how the history of Ntaba kaNdoda as a place infused my recollection of collective memories of the people of the former Ciskei. My work then responds by engaging the Monument's commemorative and nationalistic urgency as propounded by Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe, and sets a trajectory for my own performative memorialisation at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument that also explores multiple memories associated with the Monument.

I have approached the Monument as an excavating researcher who uses the camera as an exploration of the many layers of history and memory at Ntaba kaNdoda. In light of Goldblatt's and Nunn's works which evoked for me a form of performative response to the call of the Monument, and having arrived at the monument thirty-six years late; missing the time it was unveiled and not witnessing the fall of apartheid. I find this place missing the incorporation of the former Ciskei into the South African contemporary memory landscape. My photography has allowed me, nevertheless to contest this perpetual erasure of memory of the Monument over time, and to re-perform those very memories forgotten at Ntaba kaNdoda by reenacting and rephotographing my performative body against, with, and on the Monument.

2.4. Reconfiguring the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument: Performative Memorialisation, Counter-Monumentalisation/ De-Monumentalisation

My encounter with, and time spent on, Ntaba kaNdoda Monument looking through the camera and using other photographic processes, such as pinhole, presented me with an opportunity to start to think about how to reconfigure the meaning of this monument. I then looked at how the Monument is represented in my photography, and how this representation reproduces new performative memorialisation. My performative photographs propose a shift in how I experienced being on the Monument at Ntaba kaNdoda. My photography at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument represents alternative ways of commemoration at places of memory, and expands on the notion of counter-memorialisation or counter-monuments. James E. Young (1992) advanced this idea of counter-monuments. He describes and analyses Esther Shalev-Gerz and Jochen Gerz's *Monument against Fascism* (Hamburg-Harburg, Germany 1986–1993) and Horst Hoheisel's *Aschrott Fountain* (Kassel, Germany 1985) as counter-memorials or anti-monuments. Young asserts that counter-monuments are not fixed in time or place; they change with the environment, and are non-everlasting and open to violation (Young 1992: 277). For those reasons, these new monuments were intended to disrupt existing memorials, providing new conceptualisations that produce alternative monument meaning and function (Krzyżanowska 2016: 7, 9).

However, Marschall (2009; 2012) finds counter-monuments paradoxical, especially in post-apartheid South Africa. Post-apartheid monuments or memorials in South Africa pursued an Africanising aesthetic of monuments while remaining Eurocentric in their memorialisation model and conventions (Marschall 2009: 264; Marschall 2012: 201). Commemorative memorials, such as *The Ncome Monument – Battlefield of Blood River* (1998), and the *King Dinuzulu* statue (2008), cannot be classified as counter-monuments because they attempt juxtaposition without countering the conventions or models of the older monuments. Although these two examples do not represent the whole spectrum of post-apartheid commemorative markers in South Africa, they give a good indication of attempts to counter old colonial monuments. What they do is to reproduce the conventional monument model (Marschall 2009: 288). I agree with Marschall on the

account that these new monuments in South Africa only function as reconciliation, and not as confrontation as posited by counter-memorialisation.

In my photography, I have embarked on confronting and scraping off the meaning of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as an old memorial; in doing this, I seek new or alternative meanings in counter-memorial work at Ntaba kaNdoda. Even though I work within counter-monuments, I lean more towards Widrich's (2009; 2014), Krzyzanowska's (2016), and Tello's (2016) interpretations of counter-memorials. They contend that counter-monuments reproduce what traditional monuments have always produced: that is, counter-monuments repeatedly fail in their remembrance function to anticipate the audience's active participation. The role of the audience or the viewer in counter-monuments is only elicited for responses, not creation. And finally, counter-memorials' messages are potentially misinterpreted or lost to the audience due to the contradictory nature of these monuments.

As an alternative to counter-monuments, Widrich (2014; 2009) proposes what she calls "performative monuments". These performative monuments are developed from diversified fields of public performances or actions, which are interdependent, and intervene in "public space, in which political responsibility is performed by historically aware individuals in acts of commemoration" (Widrich 2009: 3). As much as my photography counters the Monument at Ntaba kaNdoda, I position my practice within this notion of performative monument or memorialisation that Widrich (2014) proposes, and further explore ways to express this performative memorialisation on Ntaba kaNdoda Monument in my practice.

Margaret Iverson (in James Elkins 2007) and Liz Kotz (in Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson 1999) suggest that photography could be read as performative when photography or the camera is used in performance art, and/or in happenings. Performative photography in this context refers to documented events presented as representation of the original performance or happening at another space or gallery. Performative photographs are in fact representations of those happenings and/or performance, taking place and/or engaging an audience in attendance, which was not at an original space (Iverson in James Elkins 2007: 97). My photography follows this performative method in representing my

performances at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument; the audience can then engage with the work on that level.

My photography is not a direct documentation of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument; my work rather functions as an expression of my engagement with, and meditation on the meaning and the significance of my physical presence at Ntaba kaNdoda. This process of engaging my body does not stop with image-making on the site, but continues in postproduction through the Adobe Lightroom and the Adobe Photoshop⁵¹ software editing. I use image layering, rearranging my body to emphasise a particular notion of performativity, which I meditate on as performative memorialisation in my photography. As with Widrich's (2009) performative monuments, my photographs as visual works transcend the commemorative place at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, and speak to *noeuds de mémoire* of Ntaba kaNdoda as a place in relation to collective memory of a South African society. Applying this approach of performative monuments in my photography at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, and opening up my practice to *noeuds de mémoire*, my objective is to advocate for reenactments at Ntaba kaNdoda that transform ordinary photography into performative memorialisation.

When inserting my own body in my photographs, I am in fact performing my own memorialisation; reclaiming and reconstructing my social and political history associated with this commemorative place. My photography starts to de-monumentalise the Monument and by 'de-monumental', I am not referring to the scale or the monumentality of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a built structure. Rather, I am working with the notion of relooking and reconfiguring the meaning of the Monument for a critical reading of its purpose and symbolism through photography. In establishing that my photography practice can be viewed as *noeuds de mémoire* or knots of memory, it is important for me to reconfigure how I conceptualise a "collective or cultural memory beyond the framework of the imagined community of the nation-state" (Rothberg 2010: 7). Even though my work is produced at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, a territorial⁵² place, my

⁵¹ Adobe's Lightroom and Photoshop software are extensively used in the editing and production of the final image of my photographs. The only exception is of darkroom film and printing processes for pinhole and large format photography, which used minimum computer photo-edit tools.

⁵² Rothberg (2010) contextualizes *noeuds de mémoire* as countering the effects of territorialising localised and nationalised memorialisation. He instigates for cross-national or global inter-connectedness of "rhizomatic networks of temporality and cultural reference that exceed attempts of territorialization ... and identitarian reduction" (Rothberg 2010: 7).

approach to this site has been about the possibility of boundlessness in the representation of memory that transcends locality. Moreover, I see my photography functioning as de-monumental in its exploration of the knotted-ness of memories at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, potentially opening up dialogues with other similar commemorative sites in South Africa.

2.5. “Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda”: The Monument on the Hill

Exploring notions of memorialisation at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, my MFA exhibition titled *Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda* at the Albany Museum – The Grahamstown Gallery, and at Fort Selwyn contends for performative de-monumentalisation, and exploration of the knotted-ness of collective memories at Ntaba kaNdoda. *Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda*, as an exhibition, expresses my interest in how performative memorialisation at Ntaba kaNdoda inscribes new meanings at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. In reimagining and reconstructing new meanings and memories through reflective and performative photography, I endeavour to trace the inscribed multi-layered memories of Ntaba kaNdoda, reviving and renewing interest at this place. Through various photography processes, installations, and audio-visual and site-situational performances⁵³ (Simbao 2016) in my professional art practice, I extrapolate forgotten memories of Ntaba kaNdoda.

Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda is divided into two parts, the exhibition mounted at the Albany Museum and the exhibition/ installations at Fort Selwyn. The first part of the exhibition comprises mainly photographic work that could be read as having three themes. These themes are performative photographs, photographs that investigate the built structure of the Monument, and photographs that seek alternative ways to represent commemoration at places of memory. The second part of my MFA exhibition comprises works that augment my photography that is installed at the main Albany Museum space. These works at Fort Selwyn consist mainly of installations in the form of video and slide projections, sound, banners and the *isiVivane* installations.

⁵³ In analysing site-specificity in performance art, Ruth Simbao (2016) argues for site-situational-performance art. Drawing from the Situationist International group's (1957–1972) theorisation of situation constructions that disrupt the spectacle of place or site-based works, site-situational-performance involves work that is in continuous movement and “in-the-moment-relationships between environments and people, and between the acts of recognizing, interpretation and creating...” (Simbao 2016: 6). For further reading, please see Claire Doherty (2009: 20-61).

The exhibition at Fort Selwyn contemplates particular sensibilities of the fort as a monument, which was originally a colonial military fort, in relation to Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, which is a commemorative monument or a national shrine. It is important to note here that my use of Fort Selwyn as an exhibition space complements Cedric Nunn's *Unsettled* exhibition that was shown at the fort in 2014. Nunn's *Unsettled* exhibition explored the role that the fort and other forts in the Eastern Cape played in the dispossession of the land of the amaXhosa and the Khoi. In this light, it is important to acknowledge this link between my own work and that of Cedric Nunn at the fort, and place our bodies of work within the changing art history and visual culture studies of South Africa. The installations at the fort augment and complement the exhibition at the Albany Museum. The installations comprise a video and slide projections (*Ubizo* digital video) (Fig. 16) that have sound components (Ntsikana's Hymns or *iNtsimbika Ntsikana*), the pinhole banners (pinhole with text of Ntsikana's Great Hymn) (Fig. 17), and the outdoor installations (*IsiVivane*— pile of stones and *Iintonga* – the walking sticks) (Fig. 18).



Figure 16. Thando Mama, *Ubizo* (2017). Digital video, 16:9, 4 minutes duration. © Courtesy of the Artist.



Figure 17. Thando Mama, *Untitled (Ntsikana's hymn)* (2018). [Installation view] Pinhole transfer on fabric with text of Ntsikana's Great Hymn, digital print on fabric. 80 x 165 cm. © Courtesy of the Artist.



Figure 18. Thando Mama, *Untitled (IsiVivane)* (2018). [Installation view] Pile of stones; and *Intonga* (2018) – the walking sticks. Dimensions and sizes are variable. © Courtesy of the Artist.

2.6. “Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda”: Part One

My engagement with Ntaba kaNdoda Monument envisions photography that is performative; that reenacts and reanimates dormant or forgotten memories at Ntaba kaNdoda. My practice reimagines an alternative history, excavating some of the forgotten

memories by devising ways of seeing the body in the landscape and against the Monument background in relation to available historical narratives of Ntaba kaNdoda. Even when engaging with the photographic conventions of the frame⁵⁴ and of reframing in my photographs at the Monument, the performative body is always visible. I use this concept of the frame in my work as a dual function inherent in photography, that of being visible and invisible at the same time. What is visible inside the frame is distinct from what is visible outside the frame, but at the same time, the frame can dissolve into the work, collapsing into the work (John Tagg 2009: 246). By reframing, I mean for the viewer to rethink what is represented in photographs from a different viewpoint, not to accept what is shown, and to see relationships between two objects in a photograph (George Barr 2007). Thus, the reframing in my photography at the Ntaba ka Ndoda Monument has begun a process that liberates my body, through de-monumentalisation and other photographic processes, from the conventions of memorialisation and memory inscription of monuments.

The white border frames, traditionally associated with the Polaroid⁵⁵ in photography, expand on this notion of framing and reframing my body in my work. The framing and reframing in my photography, then, intrinsically link place-memory complex in my own reenactment performances with the viewer – to the extent of opening up critical interpretation of reality in the photographs I produced at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. The use of the Polaroid frame in my photography follows this line of critical investigation of the photography practice. In exploring the use of reframing as a form of self-reflective photography⁵⁶, I reflect on the notion of repetition, or mirror imagery that sets up a self-introspection during my performances on the Monument and in post production of the photographs.

Framing itself has a particular history in photography, which means photography lends itself to the idea of image construction within the limitation of a visual boundary or border. As a photographer, I decide on what to frame when taking a photograph, and I

⁵⁴ Also see Jae Emerling (2012).

⁵⁵ The “in-the-camera developing technique” which made instant photographs within minutes was invented by Edwin H. Land in 1940s, and was called the Polaroid (Editors of Time-Life Books 1970: 137). The white borders of the Polaroid print are a distinct characteristic of the Polaroid photograph. Also, see Michael Archambault (2015).

⁵⁶ I use self-reflective photography as a device to reestablish the image within the image, reproducing a repetitive image usually found with works that are said to be “*mise-en-abyme*” (Craig Owens 1978).

decide on what to leave out of the frame. In my practice, reframing is used to problematise the notion of individual experience of memory at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, and by using the Polaroid frame, I suggest that the viewer should approach time as a fleeting moment; yet frozen in time, memory becomes the photograph's burden. This makes for a complicated interpretation of memory or commemoration through photography representation. As such, I consider how framing and reframing could best navigate this complicated memorialisation terrain, through temporality suggested by the Polaroid-type image. The viewer is invited to question the reality of photographic representation of memory, even at places of commemoration such as Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

In my photographs, I invite the viewers to reframe what they perceive as given memory, through my own experience at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. The viewers' perceptions of the reframed images play within the notion of boundaries or borders in photography; however, my use of framing encourages the viewers' eyes to move back and forth, never taking the image as a singular composition or meaning. Furthermore, the framing tool in my photography not only references a photographic process, but it also suggests to viewers a psychological reading of the pictorial⁵⁷. By that, I mean an approach to the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument that starts to relook and reassess the Monument as a symbol of Xhosa unity or nationalism, and goes beyond the visual aesthetics of the Monument. Additionally, reframing as seen from my photography could mean rephotography and reenactment of my own experiences at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. Alternatively, reframing in my photographs could represent my own recollection of the history of Ntaba kaNdoda as told through history books, through oral traditions and through literature. Reframing also represents the complexities of memory of this place and the multiplicity of layered histories at Ntaba kaNdoda.

The photograph titled *KaNdoda – I* (2016–17) (Fig. 19) shows Ntaba kaNdoda Monument dominating the skyline and filling the frame of the image. A frame at the centre of the image introduces the idea of reframing: the viewer might recognise this particular style of a frame from Polaroid prints. The use of the Polaroid frame in this photograph – and the rest of the photographs in this sequence – operates as a reframing device, and as a tool to

⁵⁷ Pictorial is used here not in the sense of Pictorialism of the late 1890s and early 1900s, but in the sense of finding a conceptual visual language of representation of memorial landscape that goes beyond the meaning of monument symbolism at Ntaba kaNdoda. Also see E. H. Gombrich (1960) on pictorial representation in the visual arts.

subvert imaginative references of a singular photographic frame. This style of photography could produce the same effect of framing whether there is a visible or an imaginary border in the visual representation of a scene or object.

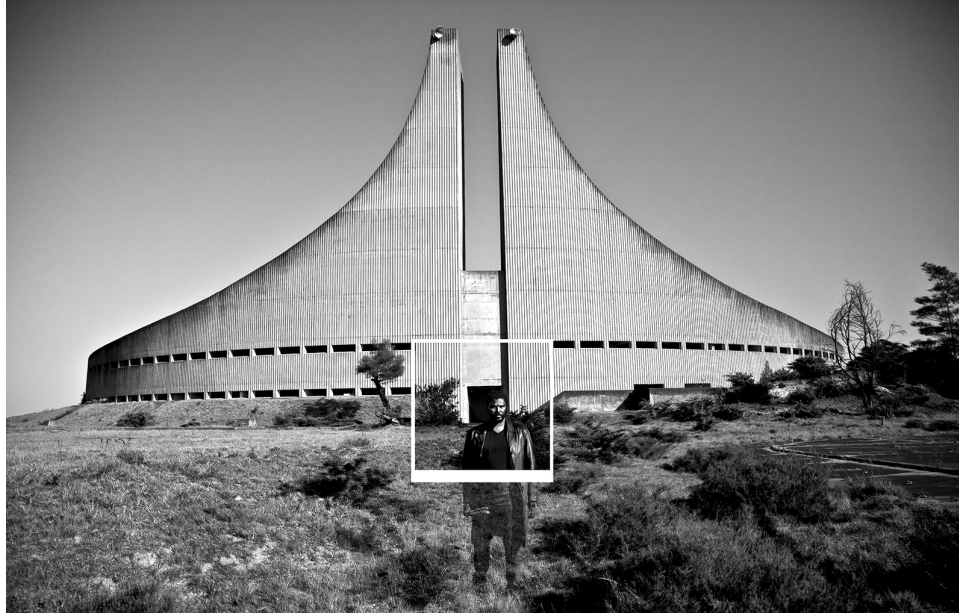


Figure 19. Thando Mama, *KaNdoda – I* (2016–17). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

My use of symmetry in my compositions refers to the notion of balance in seeking to retell untold narratives, or forgotten memories. As much as symmetry in my photography is a visual tool, it reflects the agency of my own body's relationship to the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument – playing with ideas of depth, distance, perspective, scale and the size of the Monument. By placing my body in the centre in *KaNdoda – I* (2016–17), and foregrounding my own body closer to the viewer, I have begun to subdue the dominance of the Monument for the viewer. Thus, my body activates this space between the depth, distance, perspective and scale of the Monument, where the attention of the viewer is constantly drawn to the figure in the foreground.

In the photographs titled *Eludongeni kaNdoda – I and II*⁵⁸ (2017) (Figs. 20 and 21), the figures are much closer to the wall of the Monument. For the viewers, they could almost feel the weight carried by these photographs; weight in this sense relates to how the positioning of the figures in the photographs parallels and weighs against the wall of

⁵⁸ *Eludongeni* means in isiXhosa 'where the wall is, or by the wall' – *Ndoda's wall*.

the Monument. Even though I feel confined to this small space framed against the wall, I anticipate stepping out of the frame; yet, I might be stepping into another frame within the photograph. This positioning enhances the heaviness, and presents the immensity, of my attempt to initiate remembrance against the Monument at Ntaba kaNdoda.

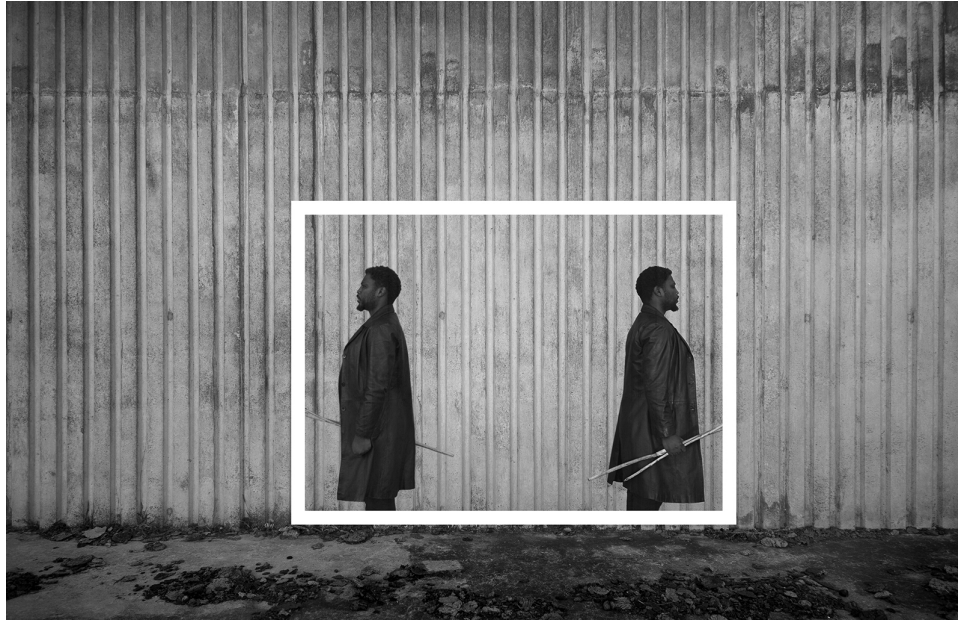


Figure 20.Thando Mama, *Eludongeni kaNdoda – I* (2017). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper.108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 21. Thando Mama, *Eludongeni kaNdoda – II* (2017). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist⁵⁹.

The framings in the photographs titled *Esivivaneni – I, II and III*⁶⁰ (2016–17) (Figs. 22, 23 and 24) are in different positions within the photographs. While maintaining their centrality throughout the photographs, the viewer's eyes are directed much lower in the photograph (in Fig. 22). There is a slight change in the function of the frame in *Esivivaneni – II* (2016–17) (Fig. 23) that makes the central figure much bigger. The movement in the position of the figure here reads as a form of removal or turning away from the ritual being observed from the back. In this way, there is a break from other photographs, which makes this image emerge from the trepidations of the commemoration happening at the time.

⁵⁹This photograph has been edited out from the final exhibition submission, but has been included in the mini-thesis to contextualise my professional art practical process.

⁶⁰*Esivivaneni* means a place where tributes are paid. It is taken from *isiVivane*, which means a pile of stones where tributes and prayers are said to the ancestors and spirit guards.



Figure 22. Thando Mama, *Esivivaneni – I* (2016–17). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 23. Thando Mama, *Esivivaneni – II* (2016–17). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist⁶¹.

⁶¹This photograph has been edited out from the final exhibition submission, but has been included in the mini-thesis to contextualise my professional art practical process.



Figure 24. Thando Mama, *Esivivaneni – III* (2016–17). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

*Izingqi Zesikhumbuzo*⁶² (2016–17) (Fig. 25) utilises the notion of repetition and self-reflective photography. This photograph plays with the idea of repetition as an extension of rephotography, with multiple photographs taken of the same subject tracking across the frame. In this photograph, I insert my body in multiples that represent a sense of rhythmic stomping of the feet (*Izingqi*) that connects the ground on which I stand or perform with my spiritual self, believing that stomping the ground connects me to my ancestors. AmaXhosa believe that one talks to the ancestors through dance, and that in traditional ceremonies the stomping of feet connects one to them. This photograph thus symbolises a spiritual imprint evoked by the body on the Monument. In *Izingqi Zesikhumbuzo* (2016–17), the performance happens in the gaps between each frame taken, and between each figure. The camera, though, does not capture the stepping from and to the position as a documentation of the performative movement. Rather, the viewers are invited to fill that gap, imagining what is happening in the space unoccupied.

⁶² *Izingqi Zesikhumbuzo* means 'the Memorialising Footsteps' in isiXhosa; the emphasis is on the sound of the stomping.



Figure 25. Thando Mama, *Izingqi Zesikhumbuzo* (2016–17). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

The works titled *Sisondela kuNdoda*⁶³ – *I, II and III* (2016–17) (Figs. 26, 27 and 28) expand on the notion of self-reflective photography. As mirror images⁶⁴, they engage the monument in a reflective way. My own body reflects itself and actively balances the monument against the bodies represented in the photographs. As much as these images are self-reflective, they have a sense of the abandonment and stillness of the Monument.

⁶³ A direct translation of *Sisondela kuNdoda* is ‘Moving Closer to Ndoda’ – implying that we affirm our belonging to Ndoda, not necessarily to the Monument called by his name.

⁶⁴ In my photography, I use mirror images as a form of images responding to each other, reversing the structure of things, as in a mirror effect.



Figure 26. Thando Mama, *Sisondela kuNdoda – I* (2016–17). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist.⁶⁵.



Figure 27. Thando Mama, *Sisondela kuNdoda – II* (2016–17). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

⁶⁵This photograph has been edited out from the final exhibition submission, but has been included in the mini-thesis to contextualise my professional art practical process.



Figure 28. Thando Mama, *Sisondela kuNdoda – III* (2016–17). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

In *Isithunzi sikaNdoda*⁶⁶(2016–17) (Fig. 29), the picture then changes, or plays with the notion of the ‘shadow’ and a trace or an imprint of the image that used to be there. When I entered the Monument from this entrance, I wondered about the people who might have carried out the same actions of coming and going through this very doorway. How can I recall their state of mind, or their preparations going into the Monument? It seems to me to be an impossible task. I wanted to record their traces through photography, taking instead their ‘shadows’ and observing the commemorations that took place – even if I have arrived too late to witness these events.

⁶⁶ The direct translation of *Isithunzi sikaNdoda* is ‘The Shadow of Ndoda’. The shadow could mean the shadow caused by the light or sunlight falling onto the body, or it could mean one’s spiritual being. It is believed that his or her ancestors protect a person who is with the shadow. In the title of this photograph, *Isithunzi* implies the dignity or aura of the Khoi chief, Ndoda.



Figure 29. Thando Mama, *Isithunzi sikaNdoda* (2016–17). Black and white photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper. 108.7x69.4 cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

*Libheku Moya – I and II*⁶⁷ (2017) (Figs. 30 and 31) are a pair of photographs that explore the performative reenactment of memories at Ntaba kaNdoda. Placed side by side, these photographs create a conjuncture of visual representations that starts to take the self-reflective theme further. I utilised self-reflectivity in how the photographs are displayed side by side – on the left is an empty chair, also representing a mysterious object, and on the right a figure standing on the chair from another point of view. *Libheku Moya – I and II* (2017), as the titles suggest, speak to the strife that still exists today at Ntaba kaNdoda, and my expression of personal strife against a contested monument, a monument without shared memory. These photographs are about my position or relationship to Ntaba kaNdoda, in which I find myself negotiating its complex historical narrative. In essence, *Libheku Moya – I and II* (2017) ask questions that further problematise contemporary commemoration at apartheid memory markers, such as Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

⁶⁷ This title is taken from a Xhosa idiom and proverb *Iliwalibhek'umoya*, which means a situation or a period of great strife for a person or a nation.



Figure 30. Thando Mama, *Libheku Moya – I* (2017). Colour photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper mounted on dibond. 59.4 x 39.6cm. © Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 31. Thando Mama, *Libheku Moya – II* (2017). Colour photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper mounted on dibond. 59.4 x 39.6cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

The last photograph in this series of performative works is the work titled *Umhlahlo*⁶⁸ (2017) (Fig. 32) – this photograph is more of a reflective photograph than *Libheku Moya* –

⁶⁸*Umhlahlo* could mean the open space in the bush that has been cleared for a particular purpose. It could also mean the “procession [of a diviner, his or her neophytes and other people]... singing the *Umhlahlo* song

I and II (2017). *Umhlahlo* (2017) further explores this idea of rephotography – a repeat photograph – taken again at the same place and position, reemphasising the sense of replication and multiplicity, and reliving the experience of performing for the camera at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. Instead of using Goldblatt’s or Nunn’s photographs of Ntaba kaNdoda, I returned to reshoot my own photographs at the same site, position, and time of the day, focusing on reframing the original photographs. In reinserting my own body in this photograph, holding up the photograph, taken with pinhole⁶⁹, I have begun to reanimate and readjust my own memory of being at Ntaba kaNdoda through a rephotography process. *Umhlahlo* (2017), as a photograph, reveals for me dormant memories of this place. By consulting my own experience and those who have photographed this Monument, like Goldblatt and Nunn, I managed to piece together a visual narrative of memory at Ntaba kaNdoda.



Figure 32. Thando Mama, *Umhlahlo* (2017). Digital Cross processed photograph. Inkjet print on photographic paper mounted on dibond. 59.4 x 39.6cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

Ntaba kaNdoda Monument as a built structure serves as a commemoration marker on Ntaba kaNdoda Mountain that is visible from great distances, and provides local people

in order to receive inspiration of the ancestors and the power to divine; this is done at the formal divination and when training the neophytes” (S.L. Tshabe and F.M. Shoba 2006: 736).

⁶⁹An image of the pinhole is reproduced as a print inside the photograph, thus exploring two different mediums in one: that of digital photography (I have shot this image with a Canon 5D) and pinhole photo (image captured on 35mm Fine Grain Positive film), then combined in Adobe Photoshop.

with a form of bearing. In surveying the dominant position normally associated with the formal structure of monuments, and as a method in engaging the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument environment, I took hundreds of images from different angles on many return visits at the site, trying to excavate the little memory material I could from what it could potentially reveal to me. I became aware of the prominence of the built structure of the Monument, presenting me with a challenge not to reproduce the same monumental conventions of monuments that I wanted to deconstruct. I am nonetheless mindful of this challenge of de-monumentalising photography of the Monument.

As early as the 1960s, Goldblatt had an affinity to built structures and decided to photograph them (Goldblatt 1998: 7). Most of the structures that he photographed were religious places of worship, structures for him that represented a sense of belonging and communal value (personal communication with Mr. Goldblatt, 04-08-2017; and Goldblatt 1998: 8–10)). My interest in the medium of photography at Ntaba kaNdoda is partly inspired by David Goldblatt's work at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, and my own efforts to understand this sense of belonging at Ntaba kaNdoda. I question the singular visual treatment of the Monument by Goldblatt by producing a series of photographs that consider multi-dimensionality and multilayered imagery achieved through various photographic techniques and representations of the Monument. As the monumental structure is prominent in the case of Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, one feels an uneasy sense of not belonging. The materiality of the Monument is enticing, yet it is difficult to photograph the Monument up close; at times, one experiences an attraction to the Monument and is repulsed at the same time.

The Monument from the ground – I and II (2016–17) photographs (Figs. 33 and 34) are black and white photographs transferred to wallpaper. I used the large-scale print (approximately 2.8m x 2.1m) to create a sense of being at the site, as if the viewers were on the ground, taking the photograph. In these photographs, the viewers are enticed to the image – the Monument – and are invited to explore or 'excavate' the landscape of memory in and around the Monument. With these photographs, I tried to allude to my sense of alienation and voyeurism, meaning that my time spent on the Monument was fraught with self-doubt and isolation. I felt as though I was in a foreign place, even though I knew I belonged to this place. These photographs, for me, represent these feelings.



Figure 33. Thando Mama, *The Monument from the ground – I* (2016–17). Black and white photograph transferred to wallpaper. Approx. 280 x 210cm. © Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 34. Thando Mama, *The Monument from the ground – II* (2016–17). Black and white photograph transferred to wallpaper. Approx. 280 x 210cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

The Yellow House (2016–17) (Fig. 35) is a projected still image on the wall from a series of photographs I took at Ntaba kaNdoda. By editing out the Monument with an erasure effect, the Monument's dominant structure is brought into question, proposing perhaps

doubts for the memorial capacity of this Monument. Visitors to the Monument expect to find answers of the past, but this becomes difficult to achieve as the Monument's meaning has become lost over time. Accordingly, this image works with the notion of reclaiming the lost past; taken over a period of four months I selected two images to make up this photograph, showing the effect of the passing of time.



Figure 35. Thando Mama, *The Yellow House* (2016–17). Digital video still. Duration 20 minutes, looped and with sound. Approx. 400 x 310cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

Incorporating rephotography and, at the same time, animating the photograph by using a film or video format, the projected photograph starts to change over time, looping continuously after one hour. This change is noticeable at intervals of five minutes, with small details in the foreground, such as the door opening on the yellow house side building, and the shade being bright on the far right of the house while everything remains the same on the background. The house in this work symbolises the presence of the community that has come back to Ntaba kaNdoda; in *The Yellow House* (2016–17), their presence is visible.

Lastly, this photograph represents for me a complex relationship that exists between the Monument, the history of Ntaba kaNdoda as an enshrined place, and myself as the photographer– but most importantly, the value of revisiting this particular place of memory 27 years after the fall of apartheid.

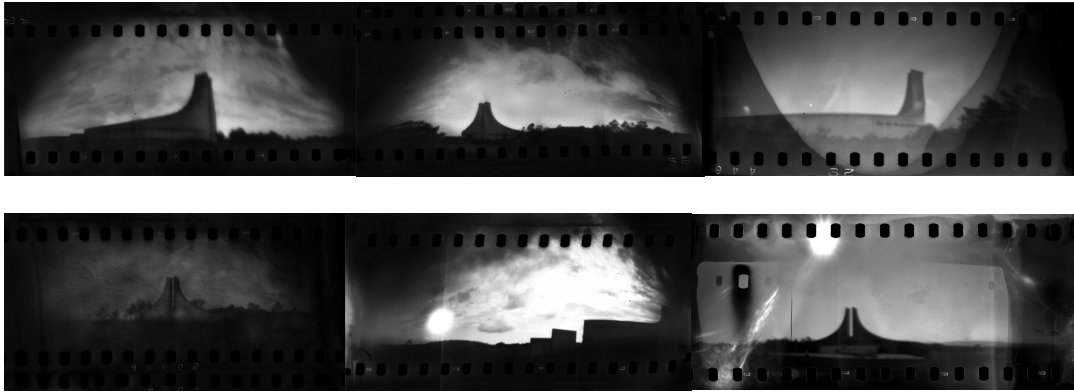
Embracing the Monument and exploring the fluidity of memory against the fixity of the Monument at Ntaba kaNdoda, I imagined that this Monument needed to be de-monumentalised. The pinhole photography for me started this de-monumental process, which allowed me to explore the environment where the Monument is situated by producing images that problematise the existence of the Monument.

The photographs in the pinhole⁷⁰ series completed in 2017 are untitled, and are grouped into three parts; namely the double sprocket edges pinhole images, the pinhole with performative and self-reflective images, and the vertical format pinhole images (Figs. 36–39, 40–48 and 49–54). Present in all of the images in this series is the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, which takes a position of centrality in these photographs. In this series of pinhole photographs, there are no close-ups of the Monument, nor are any of them in focus. They move from being visible to merging with the dark of the sky, and becoming less clear and semi-visible⁷¹. The Monument is in a constant fluid state of movement, from the east side to the west, and from the front to the back, but never fixed in position. There is a pictorial⁷² feel to these pinhole images, accentuated by the grey tones, soft focus, and inconsistent exposures, and the incidental reflective light leak in some of the pinhole images. All these elements make up the characteristics of the images produced by the pinhole photography. Furthermore, the pinhole images start to move away from the detailed, clearly defined images of the performative and structural photography discussed previously towards a materiality and aesthetics of the pinhole images that represent for me the notion of the myth or the legend that is Ntaba kaNdoda. These works evoke an elusiveness of memory narratives of Ntaba kaNdoda, which is evident in the literature, e.g. in Hodgson (1987) and Vail (1989), and in other works produced about this place.

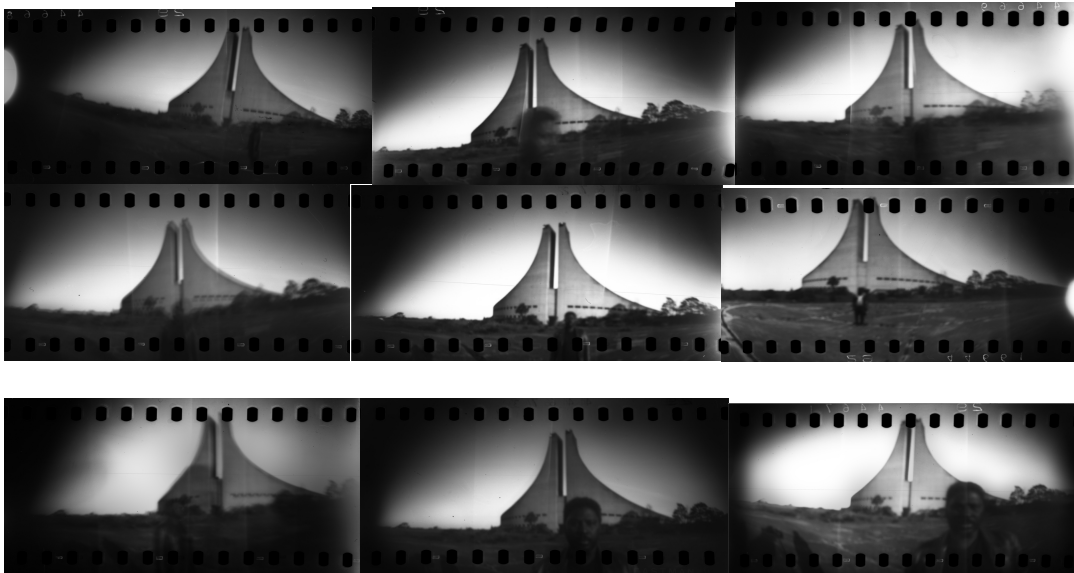
⁷⁰ Pinhole photography involves the production of images via a device, usually a small closed box, with a small hole to let in light to create an image. A photosensitive paper or film is placed opposite the pin-made hole and exposed to the light; the image is then processed as a print or positive film in the darkroom.

⁷¹ I have not done any touch-ups, or cleaning the pinhole photographs in postproduction; the scratches, dusts, and water stains are all intentionally left as are.

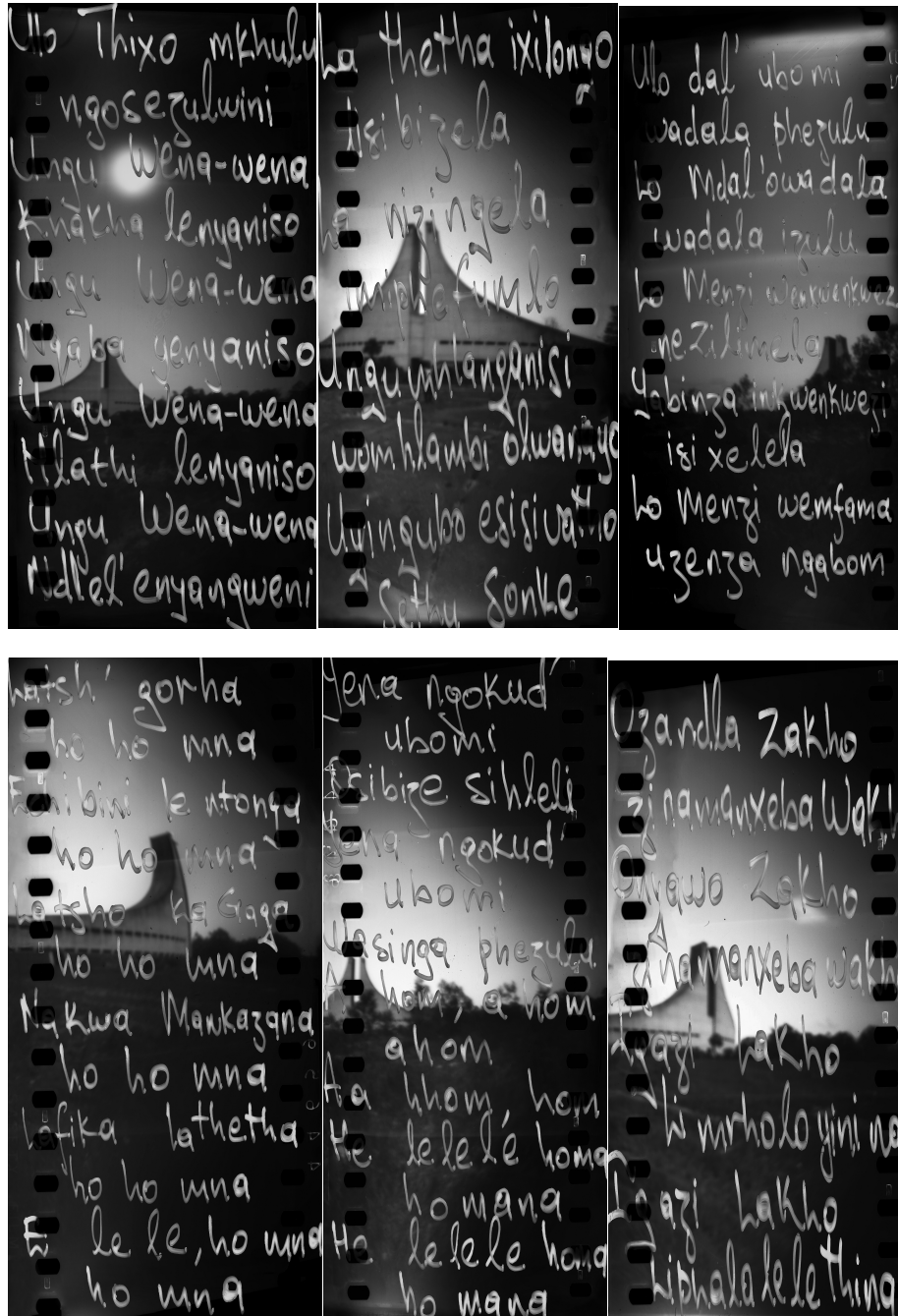
⁷² Pictorial is a photography process that expresses the beauty of the subject in the composition and the tonality of the image, and does not document reality (Kathleen Kuiper 2006).



Figures 36–39. Thando Mama, *Untitled – I (pinhole)* (2017). Inkjet print on photographic paper from 35mm film negative transfer. Approx. 59 x 30cm. © Courtesy of the artist.



Figures 40–48. Thando Mama, *Untitled – II (pinhole)* (2017). Inkjet print on photographic paper from 35mm film negative transfer. Approx. 59 x 30cm. Courtesy of the artist.



Figures 49–54. Thando Mama, *Untitled (Ntsikana's hymn)* (2017). Black and white digital transfer from 35mm film negative and printed to Polyknit (fabric) banner. 80 x 165cm. © Courtesy of the artist.

The pinhole photographs emplace the built structure of the Monument in each image; in so doing I try to keep in check my own narrative subjectivity of monumentality, potentially reproduced in my photography, and question my own work. In this way of producing these images, I am compelled to ask if these works succeed in de-monumentalising this notion of the Monument at Ntaba kaNdoda. Could my photographs dislodge the Monument as the absolute memory-holder of the place history? If they do, are they able to suggest ways that extrapolate and deconstruct the meaning of the Monument when performative commemorations are executed at Ntaba kaNdoda? As a process, my pinhole photography as the node of remembrance lives beyond the exposed image imprinted in a given frame. What happens in the spaces beyond the borders of known memory, where the forgotten memories are recalled to the present? This series, in particular the pinhole photographs printed on banners (Figs. 49–54), motions the viewers to see through the images as traces of inscribed memories at Ntaba kaNdoda, and by so doing to start the process of de-monumentalisation of the Monument at Ntaba kaNdoda. In inserting my own body into these particular photographs, I emphasise this notion of recalling collective memory against my personal experiences on the Monument, and ask what the nature of those experiences has to do with my history or past in the present time at Ntaba kaNdoda.

Today Ntaba kaNdoda Monument presents a challenge; I process this challenge in my research through de-monumentalisation, reenactment and rephotography as tools that deconstruct the commemorative practices associated with photography and monuments. At the same time, I propose ways to hold remembrance together as a collective action, where memory of the place has been subjected to fragmentation. My photography functions as a visual thread that tries to piece together the contested histories of the ever fading and scarcely recorded memories of Ntaba kaNdoda. The Monument as it is, epitomises this fragmentation of memory, and *Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda*, as a title for my MFA exhibition, plays on this notion. Forgotten histories and memories need recalling and retelling, and they need to be reproduced repeatedly (Oguibe 2004: 96), therefore my photography challenges the viewer to connect Ntaba kaNdoda Monument's fragmented memory with its supposed spirituality, history and symbolism through my performative memorialisation at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. My photography practice disbands the idea that the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument serves as an exclusive commemoration set up by Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe. Instead, my photography embeds Ntaba kaNdoda with an

assertion of self-reflective memorialisation which explores the nuances of individual experience and collective memories at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

2.7. “Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda”: Part Two

I started my journey to the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument over five years ago, having produced a video work titled *Of Nationhood* in 2014–15⁷³. The work produced for my MFA practice expands on the work started with *Of Nationhood* (2015), and considers my emotional, psychological and spiritual response to this history and these memories associated with Ntaba kaNdoda as a place. My photography therefore helped in the excavation of some of the forgotten memory narratives gathered there – which brought a challenge for memory and experience that could not ordinarily be captured nor recorded on film or by the camera. How could I conjure photographic images that adequately capture my experiences at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, and the extent of my experience and my struggles with Ntaba kaNdoda through my endeavours to faithfully represent what seems for me to be the ghosts that haunt Ntaba kaNdoda Monument?

I use Fort Selwyn to install the second part of my MFA exhibition submission as a way to reconcile my own journey of remembrance, which continues to be haunted by the traumatic memories found on the various landscapes of the Eastern Cape⁷⁴. My photography installation at Fort Selwyn is my attempt to start a new journey in realising a self-reflective and a personalised history narrative based on collective memories found at places of memorialisation in South Africa, such as the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, and at forts such as Fort Selwyn.

Overlooking Grahamstown on Gunfire Hill, Fort Selwyn was built during the sixth frontier war, what is today called the wars of land dispossession, in 1834–1835. It was named after Charles Jasper Selwyn, who was responsible for its construction (Gore 2005). It served as an artillery barracks and military magazine and guardhouse until 1870. Fort Selwyn forms part of the numerous lines of British military forts in the Eastern Cape that

⁷³ I completed a video titled *Of Nationhood* (2015) that looked at the notion of nationhood and the liberation anthem *NkosiSikelel'I Afrika*. It was exhibited in my solo show *Umhobe we Sizwe / Of Nationhood* at the Goethe On Main, Johannesburg (12 March 2015).

⁷⁴ These places include, but are not limited to, military forts, such as Fort Selwyn, Fort Hare, Fort White, Fort Brown, and rivers such as the Fish, the Kat, and the Kei; mountains and forests such as Amathole, Nkonkobe and Izidenge forests, and monuments and memorials, such as Ntaba kaNdoda, Cattle Killings.

were constructed to lay claim to the land of which the indigenous people were dispossessed.

In my MFA exhibition at Fort Selwyn, there are installations comprised of large banners hung from the ceiling, a video projection with sound installation, and an outdoor installation of *IsiVivane* (Fig. 18 on page 47). These installations make up the second part of *Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda* exhibition, and are meant to start a dialogue between the two parts of my MFA exhibition at the Albany Museum and at Fort Selwyn. The use of the fort is not to validate its history, but to question the role played by the military forts in the Eastern Cape in the fragmentation of memories of the indigene people during and after the time of wars.

The untitled banner installation (*Untitled* 2017) (Fig. 17 on page 47) engages the temporality of the performance and memory at the Monument. These images of the Monument are printed on translucent material, and are layered with text from Ntsikana ka Gabha's Great Hymn that calls upon the amaXhosa to gather at Ntaba kaNdoda. The pinhole images reemphasise and reflect on the Monument's presence on Ntaba kaNdoda, yet the fabric that the images are printed on alludes to the ephemeral nature of memory, which in this instance is represented by a see-through material. Installed as a circle, the audiences are encouraged to touch, look through, and walk through and around the installation. In so doing, the viewer or the audience takes part in what is set up as performance of recalling and reproducing performative memorialisation through continuous actions of commemoration.

*Ubizo*⁷⁵ (2017) (Fig. 16 on page 46) is a video projection with a running time of four minutes, looped, and has sound which plays the choral music of Ntsikana's hymn *Intsimbi ka Ntsikana* (Ntsikana's Bell; *iNtsimbi* means a 'bell' in isiXhosa). Over the years Ntsikana's hymn has taken different formats, altered for each occasion, such as traditional weddings, ceremonies or religious gatherings and festivities⁷⁶. Hodgson (1987), Simangaliso Khumalo (2014), and John Ross (2015) have interpreted The Great Hymn as a call for Xhosa unity. *Ubizo* (2017) is projected at the bottom of the wall; in this videoan

⁷⁵ *Ubizo* translates to 'The calling'. In addition, I use the term to title my video installation in response to the famous and legendary calls of Ntsikana and Mqhayi to Ntaba kaNdoda.

⁷⁶ Dave Dargie recorded and transcribed a variety of songs in the Eastern Cape.

image is projected and superimposed on another archival image of Ntaba kaNdoda⁷⁷, creating a frame within a frame or a double exposure effect. The chair featured in the photograph series *Libheku Moya – I and II* (2017) (Figs. 30 and 31 on page 59) continues to represent this idea or notion of the seat of power, once associated with Dr. Lennox L.W. Sebe's Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. In the video, the chair burns to the ground to signify for me the completion of what was meant to be a private ceremonial performance, closing this particular episode at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument.

The outdoor site-based installation is titled *IsiVivane* (2017) ('Pile of stones') (Fig. 18 on page 47). The pile of stones, collected near Fort Selwyn and the 1820 Settlers Monument, constitutes the *IsiVivane* memorial. Picking up stones and placing them in a pile at the Fort symbolises a performative gesture of commemoration. By bringing in a Xhosa customary gesture of memorialisation, I set up a scenario that encourages the public to rethink this notion of monuments and remembrance. Enclosing the *isiVivane* are *iintonga* (walking sticks), which invoke the idea of the sacredness of this place – the sticks are of *uMnquma* and *Mthathi* trees, customarily used in most amaXhosa traditional ceremonies and daily life. This enclosure creates for the public an entrance to my installation work at Fort Selwyn. As a gesture of acknowledging our past, and of respecting and commemorating those who died on the foothills of this place during the nineteenth century, the audience and the general public are invited to throw a stone – *EsiVivaneni*.

Having considered the ways in which my own photographic work engages with commemoration, and reenacts commemorative performance at Ntaba kaNdoda Monument, I feel compelled to assess whether or not my practice has adequately critiqued the nationalistic memorialisation at Ntaba kaNdoda. *Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda*, as a body of work that forms part of my practice-led research into performative memorialisation at Ntaba kaNdoda, has introduced this idea of de-monumentalisation, which I will pursue going forward.

⁷⁷In these images the Ntaba kaNdoda Mountain is shown from different vantage points in the Debe valley in the Eastern Cape; the image dates back to the 1900s (from the Cory Library, Rhodes University).

CONCLUSION

The introduction of the notion of de-monumentalisation as a concept or approach to my practice suggests commemorative gestures that are not bound by scale, material or the grandeur of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. As I have drawn from personal experience and consciously performed on the Monument, place, memory and memorialisation at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument have become a realm of participatory remembrance of my own history. David Goldblatt's and Cedric Nunn's photography at Ntaba kaNdoda provided a grounding and space for my research in expanding memorialisation at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. Thus, exploration and research on the site continue for me to be an important effort in the area of the memory and history of Ntaba kaNdoda.

The Monument as a subject of investigation proved to be a challenge because of the history of expropriation of memories of others for its own purpose, especially that of Xhosa nationalism under the apartheid regime in the former Ciskei. Through this research and my professional art practice, I have established that photography at the Monument is not only a mnemonic medium, but can also be a tool for decoding forgotten memories at places of remembrance. Consequently, I would like to explore and develop a theoretical argument in building research around memory, performative reenactment and photography at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument and other places of memory in South Africa.

Forgetting Ntaba kaNdoda reclaims Ntaba kaNdoda as a sacred place that was revered by the Xhosa literary tradition of S. E. K. Mqhayi and the oratory and spiritual tradition of Ntsikana ka Gabha, and as a site and an environment of memory. As much as it is about a private contemplation on memory at Ntaba kaNdoda, my practice also manifests public memory traces found in the works of S. E. K. Mqhayi, particularly his Ntaba kaNdoda poem, and the legacy of Ntsikana ka Gabha through the Ntsikana tradition established after his passing, and in addition acknowledges Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe's⁷⁸ posthumous role in post-apartheid South Africa. In placing my body within the contested terrain of memory and commemoration, I have attempted to reframe and explore the knots of memories entombed in the narratives of Ntaba kaNdoda.

⁷⁸ As much as the construction of the Monument at Ntaba kaNdoda was Dr. Lennox L. W. Sebe's, it remains to be seen what commemorative arrangements are conceptualised for the Monument from now on.

This research has provided me with the space to scrutinise my own resistance to the idea of fixed memory of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument. Working with the fragments of personal and historic memory of Ntaba kaNdoda, it is imperative to embark on reinvigorating performative commemoration in order to disruptor mark the knotted, moving, and evocative memories through visual narratives.

Finally, looking more closely at Ntaba kaNdoda as a significant and sacred place in the history of the amaXhosa, and in spite of the collective history, generational memories and commemorative memorialisation that have been associated with this place, it remains puzzling that there is still a gap in the academic research on Ntaba kaNdoda. It is my intention, therefore, to continue with further research on this place, with the hope that a wider scope of research could unearth the multi-layered materiality of the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument along with similar sites in South Africa and the African continent.

Although my current research has focused specifically at Ntaba kaNdoda, I am intending to broaden my research at the Ntaba kaNdoda Monument in order to explore the depths of “knots of memories” of South African commemorative markers, and those found on the African continent. My research not only has something to bring to the national dialogue on memory work, it could also be extended to other disciplinary areas such Anthropology and Archaeology; there could be an examination of how all these areas could cross-pollinate and enrich our knowledge of our past and present. Future research could then be extended to other sites of memory where comparable study could be done, extrapolating multi-layered histories of such locations. This MFA research validates for me the study on this place, which would expand on the exploration of performative memorialisation and de-monumentalisation as forms or tools for commemoration and personal memorialisation that could further and broaden Rothberg’s (2010) notion of “*noeuds de mémoire*”.

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