

SESSION: Humanities in the South African National Antarctic Programme

MARS Themes:

Human Enterprise

Title:

Render | Remnant: Tracing the entangled histories of African and Antarctic whaling

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Abstract:

Taking a non-traditional form, this presentation draws on an ongoing body of site-responsive creative practice and archival research in which I trace transoceanic modern whaling histories spanning the South Atlantic, Indian and Southern oceans – from the waters along the coasts of Gabon, Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique and Madagascar to the sub-Antarctic and Antarctic whaling grounds. Mapping the former sites of twentieth-century shore-based whaling stations and the routes of pelagic factory ships and catchers, I explore the role of African seaports as gateways to the southern high latitude regions and the sprawling networks of capital, control and coerced labour that enabled the industrial-scale slaughter of cetaceans.

Montage sequences will combine examples of images and sounds, recorded at the crumbling remains of South African stations that operated seasonal Antarctic whaling fleets and became military training bases after the closure of the factories, alongside extracts from archival materials. Introducing not only histories of exploitation and violence that connect seemingly disparate places and times, but also questions of survivability and afterlives as new multispecies communities find refuge in the ruins.

Format:

Oral presentation

Keywords: (add ; between keywords)

Ex. Whaling; Southern Africa; Antarctic; Transoceanic; Art; Archival