

35th Annual SAVAH CONFERENCE, to be hosted by the research entity Visual Narratives and Creative Outputs and the Faculty of Humanities, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, 21-23 September 2020. FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS

Untold stories

“Stories give flesh to the bare bones. Out of stories, we make culture, not from the bones of the dead, though the bones are the rationale for stories being told. Whereas in art, this impulse is clearer, science too is about telling certain stories. It is out of stories that we make society. Out of stories an individual constructs a self.”
Kopano Ratele, *Life of Bone* (2011)

“All of which makes up a story I do not choose to tell. I choose not to tell it because to no one, not even to you, do I owe proof that I am a substantial being with a substantial history in the world” JM Coetzee, *Foe* (1986)

Stories capture the elusiveness of creating and imagining by linking the act of telling with being. Stories make us, and we make ourselves through the stories we hear and don't hear, tell and don't tell. Over millennia and across cultures, stories about particular places, persons, materials, objects, or ideas have been told and retold in different ways and from different perspectives. In the process, some narratives have gone unheard, unseen or have even actively been silenced. The year 2020 marks the beginning of a new decade. How might we re-imagine our collective past and imagine the future through the creation of new stories or the un-telling of old stories? How do we go about uncovering, sharing or recording previously untold or silenced stories – our own and those of others?

We propose that engagement with the work of artists, artworks, visual culture and design, as practices of storytelling or narrative, may offer constructive ways of understanding, unravelling, and contributing to current discourse on the visual field.

We invite papers that explore, inquire, and reflect on visual expression and ways of storytelling that work towards acknowledging, understanding, and (re-)visualising narratives. This is an invitation to scholars to evaluate and re-evaluate positions taken in the field (conceptual and metaphorical frameworks and locations), or in relation to material objects and their existences or locations.

Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Tensions between visibility, materiality, orality, and textuality in and through narrative
- Visual storytelling (such as artist's books, graphic novels, cartoons, illustration, animation, branding and campaigns)
- Relating experiences of place and space or situatedness through stories
- Collaborative storytelling and ways of collectively engaging with or sharing stories
- Notions of truth and fiction, history and myth in visual storytelling
- Memory, remembrance, visual narrative and *re-story-ation*
- Palimpsests, intertextuality, bricolage and (visual) layers of narrative
- Liminality and boundary crossing
- Surfacing the hidden through storytelling,
- Archives, archival material and subaltern voices

We also invite papers from SAVAH members on current research that engages topics not included in this call for papers. **Please submit an abstract of between 300 and 400 words via the Savah.org.za website by 30 March 2020.**

We are excited that the conference coincides with the Aardklop National Arts festival. Please book accommodation well in advance. Any questions relating to the conference can be sent to conference@savah.org.za.