

Greer Valley (University of Cape Town) and Sibonelo Gumede (Durban University of Technology)

Greer Valley is a lecturer in History of Art at the Wits School Arts (University of the Witwatersrand). She is doctoral candidate in Art Historical Studies and Creative Knowledge fellow at Michaelis School of Fine Art. She is also a Doctoral Fellow at the Archive and Public Culture Initiative at the University of Cape Town. Her research and practice interests include curatorial interventions in institutions and exhibition spaces focused on African colonial histories. She is a board member of the Africa South Arts Initiative (ASAI) and serves as a member of Council of the KwaZulu Natal Society of the Arts (KZNSA). In 2018 she was a curatorial Fellow at the Institute for Creative Arts (ICA), and was selected as a Getty Foundation MAHASSA Fellow (Modern Art Histories in and Across Africa, South and Southeast Asia) 2019-2020. In 2019 she was part of the Dak'art Biennale 2020 selection committee and selected as guest curator for the upcoming Dak'art Biennale.

Sibonelo Gumede is an urbanist and researcher based in Cape Town who is interested in the intersection of city-making processes and citizenship in post-colonial urban environments. Gumede works across multidisciplinary projects with communities, policy-makers, built environment practitioners and artists. He has served at the Kwa-Zulu Natal Society of Arts (KZNSA) educational committee and as a Vice President of the arts community. He has been a part of the Urban Futures Centre, an urban research laboratory which is based at the Durban University of Technology. Gumede currently holds a Master's degree in Development Studies from the University of Kwa-Zulu and is currently pursuing a Masters in Philosophy in Southern Urbanism at the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town.

Save Our Berea: Whose heritage?

The civic activist group *Save Our Berea's* main organizing principle seems to be focused on exactly that, saving the Berea – from what it doesn't specify. From the frequency the following phrases occur in the posts on the page, it appears that it is simultaneously fighting “developers”, “trojan buildings” and generally, “people who have zero respect for the heritage of *our* area”. The Berea is a largely residential area of the city of Durban, made up of the suburbs Upper Glenwood, Musgrave, Essenwood and Morningside. Its mix of Victorian and Edwardian architecture, (many buildings can be traced to the mid 1800's) are the remains of the city's British Colonial period when this part of the city housed Durban's most affluent white families. Some of these grand manor houses now stand in ruins and while I empathize with the efforts of this group to protect heritage buildings, *Save Our Berea* seem to misunderstand that the heritage these buildings represent is not held in the same regard by all Durbanites.

As a Capetonian who recently moved to Durban I am struck by how vastly different the socio spatial dynamics of the two cities are. On the surface, Durban seems like it is at least making attempts at social cohesiveness. Its major public spaces are representative of the demographics of the country - spaces like the Durban promenade and beachfront come to mind. However, upon deeper scrutiny, it becomes apparent that Durban struggles with same complex issues in the aftermath of colonialism

and apartheid that many post-colonial cities are dealing with. For this proposed presentation I will interview members of the Save Our Berea group that would act as the catalyst for an explorative textual and visual essay on the politics of heritage, ownership, nostalgia and race and its relationship to affect in the settler-colonial city. I will also interview the home-owners who are accused by the group of ignoring the heritage bylaws and guidelines of bodies like AMAFA (KZN Heritage) as well as those who are reclaiming 'heritage' buildings to create independent community spaces outside of developer driven urban regeneration, such as the new Ikhomkulu Arts Space.



Comments taken from the Save or Berea page, Facebook 2016.