

VISUAL ESSAY

Visualising the iconography of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines in Tshwane (Pretoria), South Africa

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Amidst the plethora of statues and monuments constructed as part of the post-apartheid monumental project in Pretoria, photographs of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines are often used to remember and celebrate the contributions they made to the attainment of the new dispensation. Photographs (presented through statues and monuments) are crucial instruments used in conveying messages about these heroes and heroines, and at the same time denouncing issues of injustice and segregation that were the hallmarks of the colonial and apartheid regimes in Pretoria and South Africa. However, while a vast amount of literature has been published on anti-colonial and anti-apartheid monumentalisation in South Africa, not much attention

has been given to iconography of the statues as an aspect that could inform research and understanding of how post-apartheid monumentalisation is not a break with the past, but, rather, a continuation of the pre-1994 practices. Drawing from eight photographs taken from the 'Long March to Freedom' statues park at the former Groenkloof Nature Reserve in Pretoria, this visual essay highlights the role played by some of these heroes and heroines at their time. The photographs were taken during two months of research conducted at the park from July to August 2016.

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project in Pretoria, photographs of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines are often used to remember and celebrate the contributions they made to the attainment of the new dispensation. Photographs (presented through statues and monuments) are crucial instruments used in conveying messages about these heroes and heroines, and at the same time denouncing issues of injustice and segregation that were the hallmarks of the colonial and apartheid regimes in Pretoria and South Africa. According to Haaken and O'Neill (2014, 82), visual instruments such as statues and monuments are often deployed to highlight socio-cultural gaps resulting from marginalisation and neglect of certain cultural practices by dominant classes and voices. In Pretoria and South Africa as a whole, post-1994 statues and monuments in honour of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines can contribute to how viewers imagine the struggles and treatment they received from the colonial and apartheid regimes, with implicit and explicit aims of triggering compassion, since visual depictions of such icons are assumed to convey a certain reality, an assumption that such things existed (Szörényi 2006).

However, the above practice is not new. It dates back to 1896, with the construction of historical landmarks such as the statue of Paul Kruger at Church Square (Figure 1), and the Union Buildings constructed during the South African Wars of 1910–1913. However, it is important to note that Paul Kruger statue, located in a more central location in the central business district, commemorates a different history and set of heroes and heroines than those located in an inaccessible hilltop such as the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park, for example. Notwithstanding, statues such as those of Paul Kruger, for example, were used as cultural tools in the project of colonialism until the achievement of independence in the 1960s for most African countries, and the 1990s, for South Africa (Larsen 2013). However, monumentalisation gained greater momentum in South Africa from 1994, following the roll-out of the post-apartheid monumental project (Madida 2020).

One of the first monumental liberation monuments constructed in Pretoria after 1994 is Freedom Park, a presidential legacy project that was conceived before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Rankin 2018). As Rankin notes:

The Freedom Park Trust was established at the end of 2001, and the project was launched by President Thabo Mbeki on Youth Day, June 16, 2002, when he planted an olive tree and unveiled a plaque inscribed *Motto Ke Motto Ka batho*, literally translated as I am because we are. The official opening of Freedom Park was held in

2013 after the completion of //hapo Museum, a name which according to former president, Kgalema Motlanthe, was intended to reflect the ancient wisdom of the San and Khoi that a dream is not a dream until it is shared by the entire community. (2018, 17)

Drawing from the origins of humankind in Africa, the museum encompasses 3.9 million years of the history of Southern Africa, with the more recent centuries recast with emphasis on the perspectives of black people in comparison to the Voortrekker Monuments and other colonial and apartheid era monuments (Figure 2). However, the story narrated at Freedom Park is essentially an inclusive one because it recognises the place of all South Africans, regardless of racial differences (Rankin 2018).

However, while a vast amount of literature has been published on anti-colonial and anti-apartheid monumentalisation in South Africa, not much attention has been given to iconography of the statues as an aspect that could inform research and understanding of how post-apartheid monumentalisation is not a break with the past, but, rather, a continuation of the pre-1994 practices. Yet, the iconography of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid statues and monuments remain befuddled within the trajectory taken before 1994. For one thing, Pretoria, also known as Tshwane, highlights the nation's contradictions (Kenyon and Madlingozi 2022). The metropolis that is today known as Tshwane has gone from Tshwane in precolonial times to Pretoria in the colonial and apartheid era, and back to Tshwane and Pretoria again in present-day South Africa. Pretoria, the political capital of South Africa, was founded in 1855 by Marthinus Pretorius, the then leader of the Voortrekkers who named it after his father, Andries Pretorius, and chose a spot on the banks of the Apies River to be the capital of the South African Republic. Prior to this, oral history holds that the area used to be called Tshwane, probably named after a local chief, Tshwane, who lived there. Following the 1994 transition to democracy in South Africa, Pretoria was again renamed Tshwane Metropolitan City, but the name Pretoria remains as the capital of Tshwane and South Africa (Fubah 2020). Its demographics echo apartheid's spatial and income disparities, and its landmarks depicts conflicting commemorations: a statue of former President Nelson Mandela outside the Union Buildings celebrates the advent of majority rule, while 1949 Voortrekker Monument on the hilltop in the South of the city honours Afrikaner farmers' 1835–1854 journey inland from the cape and their conflicts with Zulu communities (Kenyon and Madlingozi 2022).

In visual studies, there is a need to understand the iconography of the statues of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines in Pretoria and South Africa. The concept of iconography refers to the symbols of a particular time period, for example, the iconography of the colonial period, the iconography of the apartheid era, and the iconography of post-apartheid South Africa. Understanding how post-apartheid statues and monuments in honour of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines reflect

the iconography of the new dispensation can help inform ongoing debates about memorialisation in Pretoria and South Africa. This visual essay focuses on eight photographs of statues taken at the former 'Long March to Freedom' statues park at the Groenkloof Nature Reserve in the City of Tshwane, Pretoria. It presents the photos of some of the key anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines represented at the park, and highlights the role they played at their time, but which was never recognised and celebrated



FIGURE 1. Paul Kruger. The Statue of Paul Kruger (Afrikaans: *Krugerstandbeeld*) is a bronze sculpture located in Church Square in Pretoria, South Africa. The statue depicts Paul Kruger, the Boer political and military leader and President of the South African Republic from 1883 to 1900, and four unnamed Boer soldiers. The Statue of Paul Kruger was sculpted in 1896 and was installed in its current location in Church Square in 1954. The statue was first sculpted in 1896 by Anton Van Wouw following a commission by Sammy Marks, an industrialist who made his fortune in the South African Republic, who was an enthusiastic supporter of President Paul Kruger. The statue was first installed at Prince's Park and was then moved to a location outside Pretoria railway station. The statue portrays Paul Kruger wearing a top hat and presidential sash with a cane on a plinth. Along with Paul Kruger, the sculpture has four unnamed Boer soldiers at the corners below the main plinth. In 1956, the statue was moved to its current location at Church Square with a new pedestal and was unveiled there by Daniel François Malan (Dr D.F. Malan Unveils the Statue of Paul Kruger on Church Square, Pretoria 1954).



FIGURE 2. Voortrekker Monument. The Voortrekker Monument is located just south of Pretoria in South Africa. The granite structure is located on a hilltop, and was raised to commemorate the Voortrekkers who left the Cape Colony between 1835 and 1854. It was designed by the architect Gerard Moerdijk. The idea to build a monument in honour of the Voortrekkers was first discussed on 16 December 1888, when President Paul Kruger of the South African Republic attended the Day of the Covenant celebrations at Danskraal in Natal. However, the movement to build such a monument only started on 4 April 1931 when the *Sentrale Volksmonumentekomitee* (SVK; Central People's Monuments Committee) was formed to bring this idea to fruition. Construction started on 13 July 1937 with a sod-turning ceremony performed by the chairman of the SVK, Advocate Ernest George Jansen, on what later became known as Monument Hill. On 16 December 1938 the cornerstone was laid by three descendants of some of the Voortrekker leaders: Mrs. J.C. Muller (granddaughter of Andries Pretorius), Mrs. K.F. Ackerman (great-granddaughter of Hendrik Potgieter) and Mrs. J.C. Preller (great-granddaughter of Piet Retief). The monument was inaugurated on 16 December 1949 by Prime Minister D. F. Malan. The total construction cost of the monument was about £ 360,000, most of which was contributed by the South African government. A large amphitheatre, which could seat approximately 20,000 people, was erected to the north-east of the monument in 1949. On 8 July 2011, the Voortrekker Monument was declared a National Heritage Site by the South African Heritage Resource Agency (Grundlingh 2009).

by the colonial and apartheid regimes. The photographs were taken during two months of research conducted at the park from July to August

2016. However, because of poor accessibility, the over 100 statues were removed and relocated to Century City in Cape Town (Figures 3–10).



FIGURE 3. King Mgolombane Sandile Nqika (1820–1878). King of the Gaicia Amarharhabe Xhosa, 1840–1878. King, warrior, resistance fighter and legend, king Mgolombane Sandile was born around 1820, and was the leader of the Gaiga amaRharhabe Xhosa - the Rharbabe branch of the western amaXhosa. Sandile was only eight years old when his father, the famous paramount chief Nqika died, and his mother Suthu was appointed regent. Sandile Nqika came to power around 1840 and reportedly had difficulty in establishing his authority. He was born with one leg (left leg) shorter than the other, which he concealed under a blanket as he was worried his disability could have been considered a sign of weakness. Despite this, he went onto become one of the most respected of the amaXhosa leaders. During his reign, Sandile resisted the ever-growing pressure of white encroachment on their land. He was forced to lead his people in the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Frontier Wars against the British (1846–1879). He was captured in 1847 during the war of the AZe (the Seventh Frontier War) and on his release was granted land in the then British Kaffraria (now the Eastern Cape). He continued to resist the British upon his release until 1878 when he was fatally wounded during the Ninth Frontier War. Following the new post-apartheid monumental project, his name was selected among those to be remembered through the erection of statues in their honour. Artist - Helena Vogelzang. Photo by Mathias Alubafi Fubah. Groenkloof Nature Reserve, July 2016.



FIGURE 4. King Shaka kaSenZangakhona (Early 1705–1828). Founder of the Zulu Kingdom, 1816–1828. King Shaka was born in Zululand, South of the Umfolozi River in present day KawZulu Natal. He grew up in a period of rapid political change, when new enlarged kingdoms were being established in much of the Eastern part of Southern Africa. Shaka and his mother lived in different places when he was growing up, but eventually, chief Dingiswayo of the Mthethwa took him into his army to help challenge other chiefs for domination in the area. When Shaka's father died, Dingiswayo helped him to claim the Zulu throne, as Shaka was not the great son of KaSenZangakhona and therefore not the natural heir. On Dingiswayo's behalf, Shaka was encouraged to challenge the Mthethwa's greatest rivals, the Ndwandwe under Zwide Kalanga, and destroy their power in the region. Instead, Dingiswayo himself was killed and the Mthethwa authority diminished. Zwide then failed to move decisively against the much weaker Zulu chiefdom. This resulted in the Ndwandwe kingdom breking up under the leadership of Shak, who rallied neighbouring chiefdoms to help him fend off Ndwandwe attacks. The collapse of the power of, first, the Mthethwa, and then, the Ndwandwe lleft Shaka as the strongest ruler in Zululand. When the traders arrived at Port Natal (present day Durban), Shaka was busy consolidating his kingdom, maturing it, though he had not initiated it. Shaka was assassinated by his half-brothers in 1828, one of whom (Dingane) would succeed him as Zulu King. The kingdoms he founded survived until it was defeated and broken up by the British imperialist forces in 1879. Artist Xhanti Mpakama. Photo by Mathias Alubafi Fubah. Groenkloof Nature Reserve, July 2016.



FIGURE 5. Rahima Moosa. Rahima Moosa is the lesser known of the four women who led the historic Women's March to the Union Buildings in 1956. The 20,000 strong march protested against laws that forced women to carry pass books and other repressive legislation and changed women's participation in South African politics forever. Together with Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi and Sophia Williams-de Bruyn, she delivered hundreds of signed petitions to the office of then Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom who refused to meet and accept the women's demands. Moosa was recruited in her early twenties by trade union stalwart Ray Alexander to become a shop steward in the Cape Town Food and Canning Workers Union. Founded by Alexander in 1941 the union was committed to non-racialism and the organisation of all workers in the food industry. Moosa helped enlist workers from other food factories and fruit canning plants to the organisation. Members of the Special Branch (Apartheid's secret security police) were often stationed outside her house to monitor her suspected political activities but were easily confused by Moosa and her twin sister, who managed to switch identities and hoodwink the patient officers. Artist - Zelda Stroud. Photo by Mathias Alubafi Fubah. Groenkloof Nature Reserve, July 2016.



FIGURE 6. Alan Paton. Best known for his first book *Cry the Beloved Country*, Alan Paton is one of South Africa's most recognized authors who challenged white reader's ignorance about Apartheid and brought worldwide attention to the plight of Africans under the racist system. In 1953 he founded the multiracial Liberal Party of South Africa (LPSA) and served as its president from 1955. It was disbanded in 1968 when an Apartheid law criminalized interracial participation in political parties. In 1934 he was appointed the Principal of Diepkloof Reformatory for Young Offenders and charged with transforming it into an institution focused on education rather than punishment. He examined prison facilities around the world, which inspired him to introduce several progressive and controversial reforms that allowed more freedom and rehabilitation for the young boys. Artist - Keith Calder. Photo by Mathias Alubafi Fubah. Groenkloof Nature Reserve, July 2016.



FIGURE 7. Fidel Castro. Fidel Castro became one of the most charismatic political icons of the 20th century when he established the first socialist state in the West after the Cuban Revolution in 1958. He significantly influenced global politics through his communist ideology and played a revolutionary role in Africa's struggles for national liberation and independence in the 1970s and 1980s. Between 1975 and 1991 over 425,000 Cuban soldiers volunteered to fight in Angola to resist invasions by the white racist regime that then governed South Africa. In 1988 Cuban troops helped defeat the Apartheid regimes armed forces in Angola. This led to the unbanning of liberation organisations in the region and to negotiations towards democracy in South Africa post-1990. Artist - Ruhan Janse Van Vuuren. Photo by Mathias Alubafi Fubah. Groenkloof Nature Reserve, July 2016.



FIGURE 8. Samora Machel. Samora Machel was a passionate Marxist leader who led Mozambique to independence from Portugal in 1975 and became its first president. During his 11 years as leader of independent Mozambique, he called for the nationalization (government ownership) of the Portuguese plantations and property and moved quickly to have his Frelimo government establish public schools and health clinics for the poor. Machel allowed revolutionaries fighting white minority regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa to operate within Mozambique's borders. In 1970 he helped form the Front-Line States, a group of southern African leaders committed to helping end Apartheid. Their support was however hampered because of the economic interdependence between its citizens and South Africa and because of the military might and superiority of its neighbour. Machel remained bedevilled by the Pretoria-sponsored rebel movement Renamo and died mysteriously in 1986 in a mysterious plane crash in South Africa. Artist - Xhanti Mpakama. Photo by Mathias Alubafi Fubah. Groenkloof Nature Reserve, July 2016.



FIGURE 9. Julius Mwalimu. Julius Nyerere (also called Teacher) led his own people to independence in 1964 and earned worldwide respect for his Pan-African vision to unite all newly independent African governments under a call for self-reliance and freedom from colonial rule. He is internationally recognised as one of the founders of the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union), established in 1963 to promote peace and solidarity among African states. Nyerere co-founded the Frontline States, a coalition of African states that provided support for the struggle for Black majority rule in South Africa. His country became a second home to several African liberation movements, including South Africa's Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the ANC. Artist - Otto Du Plessis. Photo by Mathias Alubafi Fubah. Groenkloof Nature Reserve, July 2016.

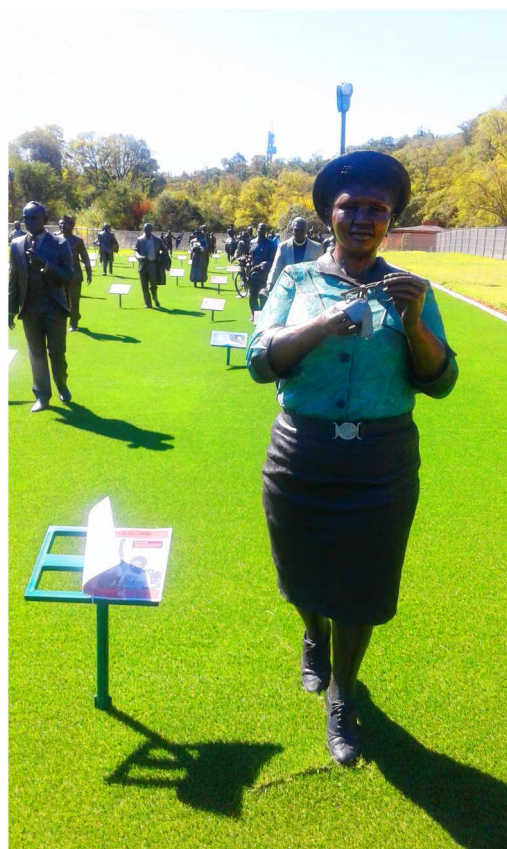


FIGURE 10. Dorothy Nyembe. A disciple of Chief Luthuli, Dorothy Nyembe was a prominent political activist in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) who remained a fiery protester throughout her life, despite all Apartheid government attempts to silence her. She took part in the 1946 Defiance Campaign and spent the next 20 years in and out of jail or detention. She led Natal women in the 1952 Defiance Campaign and again in the 1956 Women's March to Pretoria. She called for boycotts of government-controlled beer halls in Cato Manor in the late 1950s, as women lost income when beer-making at home was criminalised. She reportedly used a stick to chase non-compliant men out of the beer halls. When the ANC was banned in 1960 Nyembe was recruited by its military wing, uMkhonto weSizwe. Within a decade she was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Upon her release she joined the Natal Organisation of Women in their fight against Apartheid injustices. In 1992 Nyembe received the Chief Albert Luthuli Prize from the ANC for her life-long commitment and in 1994, she was elected a Member of South Africa's first democratic Parliament. Artist - Mamphuti Nelly Mabotja. Photo by Mathias Alubafi Fubah. Groenkloof Nature Reserve, July 2016.

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