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2017

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Intersections of Jazz and Art: Exploring Curatorial Methodologies in Sam Nhlengethwa's 1994 and 2010 Exhibitions through Synaesthesia and Exhibitionary affect

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This thesis is submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Heritage Studies by Course Work and Research Report.

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1. I Boitumelo Tlhoaele (0508325m) know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and to pretend that it is one's own.
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21 August 2017

Acknowledgments

When many of us are hungry for education and most like me have struggled to pay for it, this research report becomes a political statement, that piercing through the system is a courageous act. With it come tears, pain and frustrations. But when determination prevails, and the loving acts of loved ones sustain you then it also means moments of victory. A big thank you to my supervisor Nontobeko Ntombela for the beautiful intellectual conversation we've shared through this work. Thank you for your patience, encouragement, your belief in me and treating this work with sensitivity and respect. Thank you to Sam Nhlengethwa, David Koloane and Neil Dundas, for their generosity with their wealth of knowledge and information. Thank you to every single person who has been a source of help and motivation. To my parents and sisters - no one has shown me as much love and support as you. Finally, Dr Ramakgobotla John Mekoa passed away on the 3 July 2017 and Robert Loder on 22 July 2017. Both men are acknowledged for their contributions in the worlds of jazz and art respectively and through this study their names have been mentioned.

Abstract

The objective of this study it to understand the intersections between jazz and art and what this means in the context of curatorial practices that focus on jazz as its theme. Its focus is to explore curatorial methodologies found in visual artist Sam Nhlengethwa's exhibitions *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994) and *Kind of Blue* (2010), through the implementation of two theories, namely Syneasthesia and Exhibitionary Affect. These theories are applied as an interdisciplinary inquiry to investigate Nhlengethwa's exhibitions and suggest this to be an effective way of not only analysing but re-imagining these exhibitions. This study asks for a consideration of the notion that beyond the object is the impact of ambience (exhibitionary affect) in an exhibition, and considers the meeting points of jazz and art. This is first achieved by understanding synaesthesia in art and to what extent this speaks to Nhlengethwa's artistic practice and his exhibitions, and then, to what extent synaesthesia is intertwined with notions of exhibitionary affect and the way these theories propose for curatorial methodologies of jazz exhibitions through the analysis of these case studies. The use of these theories have been motivated by the links between jazz and art and the way this relationship has existed within the visual arts globally since as far back as the nineteenth century. Artists of this period and beyond have factored music in their art and tried to assimilate musical qualities in their work. Jazz too has been a subject of inquiry for visual artists with quite a number of exhibitions drawing on jazz as a theme, and being staged as a result. But what does it mean to curate a jazz exhibition and in what ways can this happen through synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect?

Introduction

> As I paint, I listen to jazz and visualise the performance. Jazz performers improvise within the conventions of their chosen styles. In an ensemble, for example, there are vocal styles that include freedom of vocal colour, call-and-response patterns and rhythmic complexities played by different members. Painting jazz allows me to literally put colour onto these vocal colours. Jazz is rhythmic and it emphasises interpretation rather than composition. There are deliberate tonal distortions that contribute to its uniqueness. My jazz collages, with their distorted patterns, attempt to communicate all of this (Nhlengethwa, 2007).

In an article titled *The Light Bulb Moment-The Artist's Concept* (2007) by journalist Gillian Anstey, visual artist Sam Nhlengethwa explains about the process of producing his body of jazz-inspired artworks. This study is preoccupied with the intersections between jazz and art through the context of Nhlengethwa's two exhibitions namely *Sam Nhlengethwa*: *Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994) and *Kind of Blue* (2010). I cite the above statement as a point of departure for this study, not as a way of focusing on Nhlengethwa's visual interpretation of jazz, but rather how this interpretation gets carried into the presentation of his exhibitions.

I investigate these two case studies using two main concepts, synaesthesia (Zilzcer, 1987; Kennedy, 2007) and exhibitionary affect (Fisher, 2006) as forms of interdisciplinarity. Synaesthesia, as curator Sharon L. Kennedy defines it at as the "blending of senses…that the sensory perception of one kind can manifest itself to the sensory experience " (2007: 2)…where through sound one can see colour and through colour one can hear sound. While exhibitionary affect, investigates and articulates the impact of ambience or mood in exhibitions and the possible curatorial methodologies thereof. These concepts are applied to explore curatorial methodologies applied in these exhibitions. This study asks the questions, what are the most effective ways to demonstrate the intersections of jazz and visual arts in an exhibition context and which methodologies can be applied to communicate this relationship? Put another way, this study suggests that these concepts can be considered as both curatorial frameworks as well as methodologies to communicate these intersections. To try and answer these questions, I first argue for the understanding of *synaesthesia* in art; secondly, I propose for

an understanding of how the concept *synaesthesia* as an exhibition making concept can affect methods that produce an *exhibitionary affect* in the creation of jazz exhibitions[1].

Given that this study explores exhibitions that have already happened, it can also be located within the study of exhibitions histories. Scholar Martha Ward in her article titled *What's Important about the History of Modern Art Exhibitions?,* posits that the history of exhibitions and its study is an important aspect in carving out the trajectories of the different periods undergone in the art world as well as the socio-political moments in which they occurr(ed). This is to understand the extent to which the "relationship of viewer, object could or should be mediated through presentation". (1996: 454) She argues that it is through exhibitions that tensions arise between individual art experiences and public ones (1996: 455). Essentially this means that the broader socio-political contexts impact on the way individuals experience art and that the way these exhibitions are represented, communicate different things to different publics. Ward's points are important for this study in looking at the two case studies that retrospectively give insight into Nhlengethwa's art trajectory, especially his jazz exhibitions. It also allows for the investigation of the context in which these exhibitions occurred, curatorial methodologies applied and their impact in further enabling meanings in Nhlengethwa's work. These exhibitions are further explored through the reading of other scholarly texts which are augmented by newspaper articles, art catalogues and personal interviews. Having said that, it is important to note that the concepts synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect are not new ideas, they are historical concepts which have previously been examined through artistic process. However this study looks at these concepts through exhibition making processes. When looked at from an exhibition point of view they begin to offer new ways and also re-centre artistic processes as curatorial processes. The structure of this thesis is also to suggest that the artistic methods can be applied as curatorial methods; it has examined the artistic process as a way of how this artistic process is evident in the exhibitions.

Research Context

The study grew from my interest on the intersections of jazz and art. I was interested in the extent to which these connections, especially when looking at exhibitions concerned with the jazz theme, could

[1] By the phrase jazz exhibitions I mean art exhibitions which explore the jazz theme and ones which usually occur within the confines of an art gallery although this is not to say that the gallery is the only setting in which the theme can be explored. However I am guided here by the spaces in Nhlengethwa's exhibitions took place.

be theorised. As I conducted research I found it challenging to find articles that engaged histories of exhibitions which investigate the intersections of jazz and art, a further challenge was finding material about relevant and workable methodologies despite evidence of their histories existing analogously in both the South African and North American. For example, in an interview with me, Nhlengethwa recalls collaborations in the 1970s when he started as an artist, between musicians and other artists at spaces such as the Federated Union of Black Arts Academy (FUBA)[2] in Newtown Johannesburg. I return to this later in the thesis. He himself also used to sketch jazz musicians whenever they would be playing during their rehearsals or at jazz gigs[3] in the city (Nhlengethwa, 2016). Yet academic writings on these very specific moments within South Africa's history of art remain under theorised and undervalued as scholarly work.

In 2016 I curated an exhibition for Johannesburg based radio station, Kaya FM as part of their *Jazzuary* programme. The exhibition titled *Considering Genius* (2016)[4], attempted to answer these questions I have been grappling with in relation to the creation of jazz exhibitions and which form the basis of my research questions. I had a number of concerns. The first was the question of how would I curate a jazz exhibition that would successfully interrogate the junctures and or even the cross-pollination of the two disciplines, while remaining true to the convention of their disciplines? What would be the best methods to achieve interdisciplinarity? Was it enough to have artworks depicting jazz musicians on the walls? Would factoring in live music be a satisfactory way to incorporate the actual jazz or would the auditory nature perhaps then overpower the visual works?

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[2] FUBA was founded in 1978 and it offered programmes in the visual arts music and drama. FUBA's policy or ethos was one that worked alongside the Black Consciousness Movement and that it offered not just training but also financial support to aspiring black musicians (2007:261) see Coplan, D. 2007. *In Township Tonight!: Three Centuries of South African Black City Music & Theatre*. 2nd ed. Johannesburg: Jacana Media.

[3] These gigs would take place at popular jazz clubs such as Kippie's and Yard of Ale among others. Kippie's and Yard of Ale were situated in the Newtown area.

[4] Considering Genius is an exhibition I curated for Kaya FM,'s Jazzuary programme. The name of the exhibition is taken from American jazz writer Stanley Crouch's book. The programme takes place in the month of January every year where the station's programming focuses predominantly on the genre of jazz. It was held at Res Gallery in Parkwood from 14 to 28 January. The intention was to pay homage to the jazz musicians Dr. Philip Tabane (guitar), Johnny Dyani (upright bass), Letta Mbulu (vocalist), Louis Moholo (drums), Pat Matshikiza (piano) and Winston Mankunku Ngozi (Tenor Saxophone) and Hugh Masekela (Trumpet), through using the vehicle of visual arts. These musicians were chosen because of their different instruments as a way of portraying a seven piece band and seven visual artists interpreting their music visually. These musicians were also chosen because they are seldom celebrated in the mainstream media, with the exception of Masekela and Mbulu. One of the ways this exhibition was achieved was through a two day workshop with the artists whom were asked to do basic searches on any one of the musicians they could choose and create work based on the information they found as well as their music. . These artistic interpretations then yielded the staged exhibition. The opening night was accompanied by a live jazz band.

What new knowledge would these creative endeavours offer my own emerging curatorial language, the broader curatorial studies, jazz and the heritage management?

As I produced this exhibition I attempted to apply curatorial knowledge gained from the course *Curating Exhibitions: Politics and Aesthetics of Display* (2015) taught at the Department of Art History and Heritage at the Wits school of Arts as part of my programme (Heritage Studies) electives. However, I realise now that most of *Considering Genius* (2016) was curated quite intuitively and in an experimental fashion, even though I applied all the necessary steps of creating exhibitions from conceptualisation of the exhibition, to the choice of artists, to choosing the venue, to the lay out plan, to putting together the catalogue, (the curation) as well as marketing the event. While these were things I felt quite comfortable to undertake I wondered whether the interpretation of the exhibition reflected the intersections of jazz and art especially in the way artists tend to use musical analogies to describe their artwork as Nhlengethwa's comments in the introduction of this thesis.

Choosing Nhlengethwa's exhibitions I was motivated to analyse how these exhibitions communicated the connections of jazz and art. I was curious about what set them apart from other art exhibitions in terms of curatorial methodologies and modes of display. As I have mentioned the focus on the 1994 and 2010 exhibitions tracks Nhlengethwa's trajectory as a South African artist who has pioneered in this area of art and jazz. Having said that, it is also through this study that I have realised that Nhlengethwa's oeuvre is celebrated more for his seriously politically concerned works than his jazz ones. His politically engaged art has attracted more academic inquiry and journalistic interest than his jazz artworks which are seldom interrogated in depth.

This can be signified by three key moments in his career: the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. In 1976 there was the Soweto Uprising, when black school pupils protested against being taught in a language they did not live in or understand, Afrikaans. Like many others at the time, Nhlengethwa's education was also disrupted during this time. A year later he enrolled at the Rorke's Drift Art Centre to study art. In the late 1980s[5] Nhlengethwa started to show his work internationally despite the existing dichotomies in the South African art context, which was still heavily influenced by apartheid. Many

[5] In 1986, Nhlengethwa was part of a group show at the Museum of Frankfurt in Germany and the same again at the Academy Gallery in Paris. this exhibition was titled *Young South African Artists* (1986) and it featured other artists Gerard Sekoto, David Koloane, Dumisane Mabaso, Tony Nkotsi and Durant Sihlali

black artists like him were denied access to institutions of higher learning to train formally in art making as explained by scholar and artist David Koloane in his article titled *Collective Exhange and Politics of Space 1976- 1995* (2006:43). Other writers who have expressed similar ideas to Koloane are artist and writer Sue Williamson (1989) and curator Okwui Enwezor (1999), among others.

In 1990 he produced his iconic image depicting the death of Steve Biko, *It left him Cold (the death of Steve Biko) (1990)*[6]. This was also the dawn of a new South Africa as Nelson Mandela had been released from prison. In 1994 he won the Standard Bank Young Artist Award and there was a growing sense in the art world that with political freedom now art could be done for art's sake.

Winning the Standard Bank Young Artist Award came with it a shift from the moments mentioned above. It is this time that he gained more attraction in the art world. Winning the award afforded him the opportunity to exhibit across the country in nine different galleries[7]. The exhibition was also accompanied by a catalogue and Nhlengethwa received extensive coverage from the press.

While I am cautious not to impose the broader political narrative of the visual art and jazz histories on Nhlengethwa's personal aesthetic agency, these narratives cannot be entirely separated in the reading of this study, in fact they form an integral part.

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[6]This image is a portrayal of the dead body of the Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko whose death, at the hands of the apartheid state police became symbolic of the magnitude in which the oppressive apartheid government and its laws were towards black South Africans. To date this image has been listed as one of the most powerful images of the twentieth century art in the 1996 art catalogue titled *The 20th Century Art Book* (2006:60). This image has been shown in the exhibitions Seven Stories (1995) in London, South Africa: The Art of a nation, the British Museum (27 October 2016-February 2017), Standard Bank Young Arts Awards Retrospective (2009) amongst others.

[7] The exhibition travelled from Grahamstown to the Standard Bank Gallery in Johannesburg, followed by the Carnegie Gallery in Newcastle (7- 28 September), Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg (11-30 October), William Humphreys in Kimberley (15 November-12 December,) Durban Art Gallery (29 January -19 February, 1995) and the South African National Gallery in Cape Town (2-26 March, 1995), The Namibian Arts Association Gallery (11-29 April, 1995), the Ann Bryant Gallery in East London (15 May-6 June, 1995) and the Johannes Stegman Gallery in Bloemfontein (19 July-16 August, 1995).

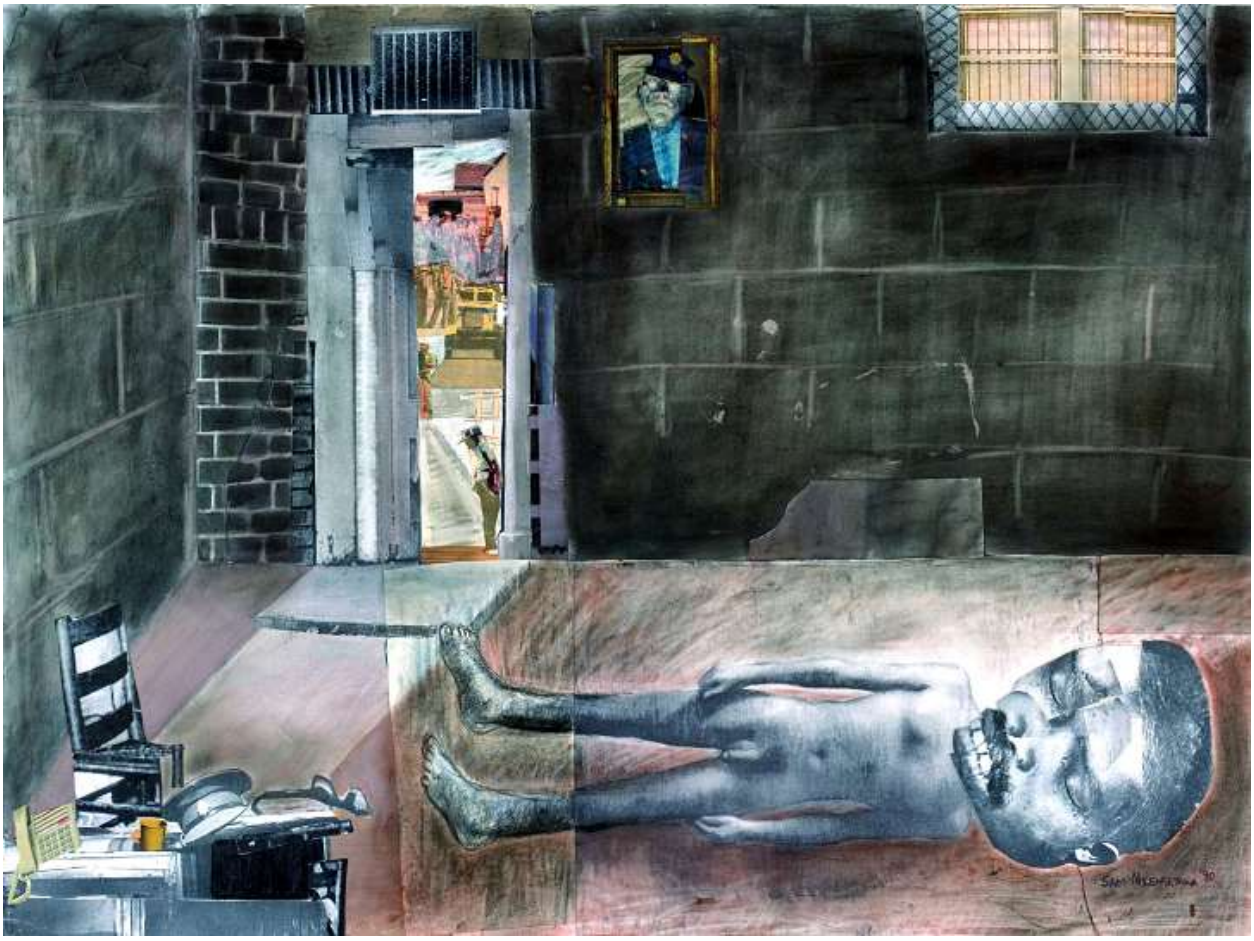


Figure 1. Sam Nhlengethwa, *It left him cold (The death of Steve Biko)* 1990, collage, pencil and charcoal on paper, 69 x 93.2.cm. Image supplied by Goodman Gallery.

At the same time, while Nhlengethwa's background is important to know, this study is however not a biographical analysis of the artist. It is also not an analysis of specific artworks, but a cluster of works that get located within a specific concept, context and site through the mentioned exhibitions. The description of the artworks may be given, for the purpose of explanation. The selected exhibitions are also not about the history of jazz in South Africa but to what extent jazz has been integrated, interpreted, and its "language"[8] borrowed in the visual arts as well as to what extent this music speaks to the concepts of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect within the larger context of exhibition making.

[8] Jazz has a language not just in musical terms but has specific phrases which are unique to the genre which should be looked at through the lenses of cultural interpretation as well the challenges presented by race and culture. I am referring here to Ingrid Monson's book *Saying Something* (1996) in particular her study of improvisation in jazz. One of the points she makes in chapter three is how important the uses of language are and how it helps us understand improvisation.

This study is also not about individual curators but speaks to exhibition creation, as an emerging practice within the South African context. Curators interviewed here are those who have worked with Nhlengethwa and by extension have delved in the jazz theme through their curatorial work. Although this study locates itself in the Heritage Management discipline, it however borrows heavily on theories taken from art history and jazz studies, given the nature of the case studies, i.e art exhibitions and their jazz orientation. In light of this it considers strongly the position of this study within the context of interdisciplinarity, which I interrogate in the theoretical framework section.

Methodology

This study is linked to qualitative research methods, which I have found to be the most appropriate given the specific case studies I am in investigating. As scholar Zoltán Dörnyei states, "qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analysed primarily by non-statistical methods" (2007: 24). Supporting this understanding of qualitative research another author Michael Quinn Patton of the book *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation* defines it as "qualitative methods permitt[ing] the evaluator to study selected issues, cases, or events in depth and detail…" (1987: 9).

Through these authors' analyses I am able to discern the workings of qualitative research in the following ways: first how qualitative research enables an exploration of uncharted areas where literature and empirical data are limited. Second, it is useful when making sense of complex issues in the way it allows one to know which information they ought to pay attention to. Third, it is useful in broadening ones understanding of different interpretations. And lastly it is being able to use unexpected results emerging as an added advantage to the study (2007: 39-40).

Given that I look at two specific exhibitions or case studies to answer broader questions relating to the concept of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect I've also considered Quinn Patton's definition that "a case [study] can be a person, an event, a programme, a time period, a critical incident or a community. Regardless of the unit of analysis, a qualitative case study seeks to describe that unit in depth, in detail, in context, and holistically" (1987: 19). When it comes to case studies, there are two conflicting points which have been argued, one is their limiting nature which is that their micro focus on specific moments or things does not necessarily apply to the broader context. However, it is through this micro focus that helps to reveal patterns or trends of developing practices. As scholars

Jacques Hamel, Stéphanie Dufour and Dominic Fortin in their book *Case Study Methods* ask these questions "…how could one particular case explain a problem in general terms? Even more important, how could such generality be achieved in the absence of evidence that the case study is truly representative?" (1993: 20).

While I may be inclined to take heed to these questions, I however take to the second point about case studies which Quinn Patton states as these methods being very useful in understanding a particular problem or situation, as looking at a smaller number of cases allows for a much more in depth analysis. Therefore, working with these cases becomes a starting point to understanding how this particular interdisciplinary practice is developing. The case study method is important to this study as the analysis of these cases takes place outside of the original objective of these exhibitions. The concepts of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect were not intended by the curators involved as well as the artist, which in turn adds to the complexity of this study.

I have relied on secondary research, using some key texts which have offered a fundamental foundation. Empirical data has also been collected using various methods. Emails were sent to galleries which hosted Nhlengethwa's exhibitions. These emails requested any information which had to do with the exhibitions; these could be correspondence letters, press releases, images and newspaper clippings. Open-ended interviews with the curators of the institutions were also requested. These included the Standard Bank Gallery (Johannesburg), Carnegie Art Gallery (Newcastle), Tatham Art Gallery (Pietermaritzburg), William Humpreys Art Gallery (Kimberley), the Durban Art Gallery (Durban), the South African National Gallery now Iziko Museums of South Africa (Cape Town), The Namibian Arts Association Gallery (Namibia) as well as the Ann Bryant Gallery (East London) and lastly the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery (Bloemfontein). These listed galleries were hosts to the travelling exhibition *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist* (1994). I also wrote to the Goodman Gallery which hosted the 2010 exhibition *Kind of Blue*.

However, it must be stated that this data collecting was quite challenging. I was unable to visit all of the libraries of the galleries listed here with the exception of the Standard Bank Art Gallery and the South African National Gallery (Iziko Museums of South Africa). The Standard Bank Art Gallery was far more accessible due to its close proximity to Wits University which is a walking distance or a

bus ride away. Therefore given this reason, I have interrogated and written on *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist* (1994) mainly from this venue and the information they have provided. Information from several other galleries had been made available to me by the current curator and librarian, namely the Tatham Art Gallery and the South African National Gallery. The remainder of the galleries provided no information or did not respond to my email requests.

When it came to interviews with the curators of these institutions; most who had been working at the mentioned galleries during Nhlengethwa's exhibition were no longer affiliated with those particular institutions, with the exception of just two, namely the Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg and the Carnegie Gallery in Newcastle. Brendan Bell (Tatham Art Gallery) declined to be interviewed and Judy Jordan (Carnegie Gallery) was unreachable. Reasons cited by Bell for declining to be interviewed were that he felt he would not be able to give adequate assistance for this particular topic.

Former curator of the Standard Bank Art Gallery Roslyn Sugarman, now head curator of the Sydney Jewish Museum in Sydney, also declined to be interviewed stating similar reasons to Bell. Former director of the South African National Gallery Marilyn Martin too declined to be interviewed stating that the South African National Gallery were not involved in the curatorial processes of the exhibition (Martin, 2017). Martin's response however raises some important considerations. Space is an important aspect of curating alongside the modes of display. The different galleries mentioned here are certainly not the same in their design and layout plan and in each space one would need engagement with not just the artworks but how they are displayed which in turn impacts on the way they are received by the audience members.

Semi-structured interviews with Nhlengethwa were conducted during December 2016. Other interviews were conducted between February and May 2017 with David Koloane and curator Neil Dundas and again with Nhlengethwa. With regards to the semi-structured interview approach, Zina O'Leary (2004) states that this type of interviewing method, allows for the researcher (I) to gain insight through the experiences and perceptions of the participants and that this also allows for follow up questions as well as the unpacking of key issues and points. I opted to conduct semi-structured face-to-face interviews with Nhlengethwa and Koloane which were recorded using a dictaphone. An email interview was conducted with Dundas as he was unavailable to meet in person.

Koloane and Dundas were key interviewees. Koloane has written and reflected on Nhlengethwa's jazz interests through his exhibition catalogue (1994) and he has had a relationship with him as a fellow artist from their working days at the Bag Factory Artists' Studios. Nhlengethwa left the Bag Factory Artists' Studios in 2015. Dundas was involved and continues to be involved in the making of Nhlengethwa's exhibitions. Dundas is the current senior curator of the Goodman Gallery and whom Nhlengethwa in an interview with me has named as the person who continually plays a critical role in the assemblage of his solo-exhibitions (Nhlengethwa, 2016).

This empirical data has been integrated throughout this study alongside various types of literature, which help to contextualise the jazz and art histories but also to start thinking of ways in which these case studies could be re-imagined or re-curated utilising the concepts in question. As American artist-researcher Shaun McNiff in his article *Art-Based Research* states, "The search for a method, in art and research, is invariably characterized by a crucible of tensions, struggles, a certain degree of chaos, and even the destruction of cherished assumptions" (2008: 39). It is in the process of analysis of these case studies through the workings of these concepts that moments of lucidity and complexity have risen but that these moments have been critical in cementing further these ideas as considered curatorial frameworks and methodologies.

Chapter Outline

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter explores the theoretical framework which unpacks the concepts of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect. I use the term and concept interdiscplinarity in this section to convey the complexity of this study and its areas of focus. Although interdiscplinarity is concerned with the mixed theoretical approaches, it is used in this context in a different manner. It not only considers both the mixed theoretical approaches but the nature of the fusion of jazz and art through the exhibitions of this study and the manner in which these are derived at through a particular artistic practice as explained below.

Synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect are firstly demonstrated through the understanding of synaesthesia in art and to the extent to which this theory demonstrates the relationship of art and jazz and how it lends itself to Nhlengethwa artistic practice and exhibitions of this study. Synaesthesia is also explained in the way it relates to notions of exhibitionary affect, which this study proposes is a

potentially effective curatorial methodology for representing exhibitions concerned with the jazz theme.

Chapter two considers histories of South African jazz and the visual arts in South Africa. It gives an historical overview of Nhlengethwa's works that incorporate and experiment with both jazz and art. The chapter considers why this historical account is important to the study and larger considerations of the concepts in this research.

Chapter three unpacks and analyses the first case study, which is the exhibition *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Art Award* (1994) through using the conventional or traditional considerations of what makes a great exhibition. I consider the following elements related to the exhibition, such as venue, the concept, the curation, the marketing and the reception or audiences (Storr, 2006). The chapter also incorporates supporting material such as newspaper clippings and other reports about the exhibition. The chapter is interested in what these various elements to the exhibition might reveal about Nhlengethwa as an artist, the curatorial methodologies and the gaps present in this type 'interdisciplinary' of work.

Chapter four analyses the second case study, the exhibition *Kind of Blue* (2010). I follow the same process as outlined above in relation to my analysis of the 1994 exhibition while chapter five tries to re-imagine both the exhibitions from the conceptual perspectives of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect even though I am congnisant of the fact that these ideas were not originally part of the curatorial framework of the exhibitions, but that through their understanding and considerations, it is possible to apply these as curatorial methodologies for jazz exhibitions. The chapter is concerned with thinking about the breadth of such a theoretical approach as well as other, attending processes and ideas, to really grapple with how to deepen an understanding of this intersecting terrain – jazz and art.

Chapter One:
Theoretical Framework

This chapter unpacks the two main theories of this study, namely synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect. It links these two concepts to interdisciplinary practices as an idea that supports the integration of drawing knowledge from various disciplines, in this case jazz and visual art. These concepts are used to examine the two case studies *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994) and *Kind of Blue* (2010). While these concepts stand on their own, I argue that they cannot be read separately in the context of this thesis and the works discussed. Through reading these works in this way, there is a re-imagination that takes place in relation to how we perceive the works in the first place.

The concept of synaesthesia is unpacked firstly to delineate the relationship between music and art and how it lends itself to exhibition making processes. Synaesthesia is applied in relation to exhibitionary affect, which asks for the consideration of the mood as well as the effect it has on the body in exhibition making. Curator and scholar Jennifer Fisher states "As forms that are at once both spatial and relational, exhibition environments impact upon the synaesthetic system through a range of sensory stimuli" (2006:31). This chapter uses these theories to unpack the case studies of this research. In turn it considers these concepts as the theoretical framework of this research.

1.1. Synaesthesia in Art

This section firstly explores the concept of synaesthesia in relation to art creation (the object) as this applies to some extent in Nhlengethwa's jazz-inspired artworks. Understanding synaesthesia in art brings to the fore notions in which jazz exhibitions can be contextualised and conceptualised for exhibition making processes. Therefore it is important to first understand synaesthesia in the way it relates to art and then in which it also relates to Nhlengethwa's art practice. As indicated in the introduction, Sam Nhlengethwa pays close attention to both jazz sounds and the use of colour. Therefore, both sound and colour are important aspects when speaking about ideas of synaesthesia in art. There is a history to this process of art making.

Cultural studies and comparative literature scholar, Richard Leppert states in his book *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation and the History of the Body*, "For much of Western History, at the most

fundamental levels of human perception, the sound is the sight, and the sight is the sound" (1993: XX). What is indicative in this statement is that artists have long used the concept of synaesthesia to advance new ways of making art (1987). If one thinks about a music concert for example, the elements of sight and sound are always infused with the actions of a playing musician and their instrument. It is not just what is heard but the manner in which the sound is produced. The sight of the musician's inflated cheeks as she/he blows a trumpet is as important as the sound being produced. This seeing and hearing happen simultaneously and the actions inform each other.

According to scholar Judith Zilczer in her article *"Color Music": Synaesthesia and Nineteenth-Century Sources for Abstract Art*, (1987) synaesthesia as a concept in art is one that existed in the early nineteenth century during the outgrowth of the Romantic and Symbolist movements in Europe. Zilczer also points out that this was also a time where music was considered as the highest form of expression (1987: 101).

Curator Sharon L. Kennedy in her article, *Painting Music: Rhythm and Movement in Art* explains that synaesthesia can be defined as the "blending of senses…that the sensory perception of one kind can manifest itself to the sensory experience of another" (2007: 2). She explains that one of the elements used to express this was colour, for colour was seen as the core element of this sensory perception which as Zilczer also explains gave rise to the term "colour music"; where colour was considered a crucial element of art creation as it (colour) could impact on human emotions and senses (1987: 101). Kennedy states that certain artists of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, who were inspired by notions of synaesthesia associated colour to be linked with certain musical instruments. She mentions Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky who associated yellow for example "with the sound of the trumpet, red with the tuba or drum and blue with the cello contrabass or organ" (2006: 2). Kandinsky, according to Zilczer was one of the European pioneers of abstract painting, a form in which this "colour music" also became known for (1987: 103).

The colour spectrum then became a site of inquiry where it was continually attempted to be interpreted visually, despite the direct physical linkages of sound and light already disputed by a German scientist Hermann von Helmholtz in the 1860s, however still "…the notion of an equivalence between the colour spectrum and the musical scale, persisted well into the twentieth century" states Zilczer (1987: 118).

While both Zilczer and Kennedy's texts refer mainly to music in the western sense i.e. classical music and not necessarily jazz, the former author gives an account of an American painter Arthur Dove, in the 1920s who also applied the concept of synaesthesia to produce his jazz paintings (1987: 111). This he achieved by listening to jazz during the process of painting. Zilczer writes, "He was convinced that abstract painting could attain an emotive power comparable to that of music" (1987: 111). While jazz and classical music are different genres, by citing these texts I use it to delineate the concept of synaesthesia and the way it has featured historically in art making more broadly.

In light of this, it could be said that Nhlengethwa has used synaesthetic inspiration which has come about from the act of listening to jazz while painting his jazz series. In fact one of Nhlengethwa's earlier abstract paintings *Harmony 3* (1989) is an example. His painting is characterised with lots of triangular patterns and zig zag lines overlapping each other in shades of pinks, blues, greens and reds and looking at the title and some of the abstract work of the artists mentioned here one could claim to say Nhlengethwa's work to have qualities of synaesthesia as explained by Zilczer.

Figure 2. Sam Nhlengethwa, Harmony 3, 1989, oil and acrylic paint, paper, canvas and string on canvas, 130.1 x 156.8 cm. Image supplied by Goodman Gallery.



That said, while Nhlengethwa has not explicitly used the word synaesthesia to describe his work as articulated by the artists mentioned by Zilczer and Kennedy, who believed and expressed of their work to possess qualities of this idea, Nhlengethwa has applied musical analogy and colour which are both components of the concept of synaesthesia. This is demonstrated in the interview published in Nhlengethwa's monograph, titled *Kind of Blue*. In the section "Johnny Mekoa in Conversation with Sam Nhlengethwa and Kathryn Smith", Nhlengethwa states,

> I like what Bra Johnny said about the colour blue. That's a very common thing you hear from any person who's into jazz. Blue is the only colour that any musician talks about when it comes to jazz. Take Miles Davis, for instance, with Kind of Blue. And somebody else might say, "Blue is the colour of my skin". I've always used various shades of blue when painting jazz pieces. So there's that relationship for sure (2006: 112).

Going back to the point of colour music, Zilczer further explains that this term came about because artists believed that painting was comparable to music (1987: 101). So some used musical terminology just like Nhlengethwa's painting above, to label their paintings, others listened to music as a form of direct inspiration and others tried to paint visual representations of musical scores and compositions.

Zilczer also explains that for some this went as far as teaming up with scientists to "study synaesthesia as a phenomenon of human perception" (1987: 102) as the concept mainly existed from two philosophical perspectives, one which advocated for the "interchangeable of senses" as evidence of the individual to connect to the mythical reality. The other was the scientific study of synaesthesia which sought to make mathematical calculations and analyse the relationship between music and making art. As Zilczer argues, "these two schools of thought represent the quasi-mythical and the pseudo-scientific arguments for synaesthesia" (1987: 101). However, Zilczer also points out that this concept of musical analogy for the artists was not necessarily based on any real understandings of the study of music itself. She states,

> Proponents of musical analogy based their aesthetic theories on the abstraction of the idea of music, rather than on a clear understanding of musicology. For them music represented a non-narrative, non-discursive mode of expression. They reasoned that music in its direct appeal to emotions and senses, transcended language. Just as music was a universal form of expression, so should the visual arts attain universality by evoking sensual pleasure or an emotional response in the viewer (1987: 101).

Leppert, whose study also focuses on music's visual representation in visual art rather than the musical performances which are experienced and written about, also supports this statement. He states "visual art cannot replicate musical acoustics, but can provide an invaluable hortatory account of what, how and why a given society heard and hence in part what the sounds meant" (1993: XXII). Suggested in this state, is that it is also important to take into account the context, in other words, to pay attention to which musicians are being represented, and to consider what these musicians 'tell us' and in turn, thus what these images represent in the broader sense.

While jazz is a phenomenon which comes from the United States of America, it also has a strong history in South Africa too, in the way it has been developed and how it speaks to the broader South African culture, politics, and the socio-economic narratives. Part of South Africa's cultural resistance was inspired by American culture through music and literature as a way to resist against the apartheid regime. Some of the scholars who have written on these histories include musicologists Christopher Ballantine (2012) David Coplan (2007) and author Gwen Ansell (2005), among others.

Following Leppert's comment above, perhaps Nhlengethwa, in his collage images could have been giving praise to the kind of jazz that was heard at the time and what this music meant for the different communities. This he does for example when he depicts the everyday jazz experience in an image titled *Discussing Jazz at the Shebeen* (1994), the way in which he captures the mood and energy of the shebeen[9]. You can see this by the falling beer bottles on the table which is covered by a table cloth characterised by frills, the checkered flooring, and the fashion which nuances periods of the 1960s and 1970s. The question that could be asked is which jazz was played at the time of this image and what was happening during this time.

[9] According to David Coplan, a shebeen is "an illegal private house of entertainment selling beer and liquor to black people" (2007:443).



Figure 2. Sam Nhlengethwa, *Discussion Jazz at the Shebeen*, 1994, mixed media on paper. Photo Supplied by Goodman Gallery.

1.2. Exhibitionary affect

Fisher's theory of exhibitionary affect asks us to place the effects and affect of exhibitions and artworks ahead of representations and their meanings. Fisher argues that often the methodologies which account for exhibition creation usually foreground elements such as, content, context, space, layout and design and the artists who are chosen for the exhibition as well as the curator. While these are important factors, Fisher argues that there is often little consideration or emphasis on the mood or atmosphere of the exhibition. She further explains that exhibitions are far more than just being cognitive endeavours but also include the extent to which these exhibitions impact on the body and other non-visual senses.

Fisher's notion of exhibitionary affect stems from the theory of affect which "conveys a locus of sensation, ambiance, and synaesthetic cognition" (2006: 28). This perspective is also supported by artist Simon O' Sullivan, when he states in his article *Aesthetics of Affect* that, "Affects can be described as extra-discursive and extra-textual. Affects are moments of intensity, a reaction in/on the body at

the level of matter. We might even say that affects are immanent to matter. They are certainly immanent to experience" (2001: 126). For Fisher however, the term affect should be looked at beyond the individual emotions but more as a collective pull. She explains, "Instead, affect consolidates collectively sensed singularities of feeling, for instance the social climates of urgency, love, evil, shock, joy, shame, awe, conviviality or even terror" (2006: 28). She further explains that being able to articulate this concept of affect would require that the exhibition's concept and practical elements happen simultaneously and also automatically, leaving room for the unplanned and organic processes.

This in turn puts the spot light on the curator and implies that for the curator to achieve this means she/ he needs to be decisive (and perhaps has less room to be playful), as "the aesthetics of affect then poses agency as inextricable from passion" (2006: 28). What Fisher means is that being passionate about a particular subject as a curator and finding ways in which to demonstrate these through modes of display, is an act of giving that subject or theme agency; the two passion and agency need to be considered simultaneously . In light of Fisher's above statement, I might then say that Nhlengethwa's exhibitions give agency to the jazz community and the discipline of jazz in as much as they do for the visual arts and the way the two disciplines exist with each other.

Fisher also points out that the impact of affect is an indeterminate one and may vary amongst individuals, as the affect is about the "hereness" or "nowness", conveying a sense of immediacy (1996: 32). The artworks themselves contribute to this through their pull, as often one isn't always certain why one might be drawn to a particular image. There is a sense that this is an intuitive process.

To further illustrate this point Brian O'Doherty in his article *The Gallery as a Gesture* (1996) speaks about the idea of 'gesture' to "emphasize idea, emotions and is often made only for effect. This deals with its immediate impact, for the gesture must snare attention or it will not preserve itself long enough to gather content" (1996: 338-339). O'Doherty's gesture to cover the museum building with a tent in order to make it inaccessible for people to enter speaks to the notion of exhibitionary affect when thinking about the kind of bodily and emotive affect this may have had on the viewers.
O'Doherty's gesture and article serves as critique of the gallery and museum, which he states are spaces perceived as a locus of power struggles, spaces for co-optation as well as a spaces of insularity

(1996: 324-330), amongst other negative concerns. While this study is not about the critique of the gallery, I find O'Doherty's work productive in the context of this study. It is important to note as the gallery is a charged space[10], even before the insertion of its contents. Galleries are political and not neutral and taking these considerations into account is an important premise in which the concepts of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect can start to take shape, considering the site and how it impacts the mood of the exhibition. Returning then to Fisher's theory on accounting for the mood of the exhibition and in relation to the gallery as gesture, it is important to note that exhibitions embody notions of an experience which are foregrounded by participatory elements. She gives an example of American and Parisian based artist Lee Ming Wei's intimate dinners in the gallery among other similar projects. Wei's work grapples with issues of trust, intimacy and so forth by asking audiences to participate in his varied participatory installations as a way to draw out these social climates.

One can imagine what it may be like having dinner with complete strangers as an artistic engagement, what feelings may come forth, how the work on display would be experienced and interpreted etc. It is from these moments that the affect of the exhibition is realised. Having said that how would then synaesthesia in art as explained here, especially factoring the elements, colour, the act of listening while painting and musical analogies (text) as ways in which notions of exhibitionary affect or the "transmission of affect" be realised practically in the process of exhibition making?

1.3. Interdisciplinary(ity)

This study is interdisciplinary in nature as it straddles the conceptual and practical worlds of visual art and jazz music. According to the online Collins dictionary, interdisciplinary means the studies which involve methods that combine knowledge of "two or more academic disciplines" (2017). According to scholar Myra Strober in her You-Tube seminar *Interdisciplinarity: The Four Wheel Drive approach to Complex Problems* (2010), interdiscplinarity is defined as an "inquiry that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts and theories" (Stober, 2010). This is usually towards a particular activity such as a research project as is the case with this study, (the notion of trying to establish curatorial methodologies using the two main concepts situated in art but fusing it with perspectives and information of another discipline that is jazz). With interdisciplinarity the idea is to create something new by thinking from various lenses (synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect) or

[10] By a charged space, I mean in the way that they can be problematic but also in the manner they are held in high regard like one would a shrine for example.

perspectives, which can also cross over into each other. Strober however also states that it is not necessarily the combination of all of the above points mentioned at one time but that two or more is likely to lead to interdisciplinarity.

Scholar Julie Thompson Klein says interdisciplinary scholarship has been growing since the late 1970s although much of it can be traced even earlier since the era of Plato and Aristotle (1990: 19). Much of interdisciplinary work, she states has been highlighting the "restructuring of knowledge" in the 20th century and the growing concerns which have come with overspecialisation in advanced education (1990: 20). To further support Klein's statement on notions of overspecialisation it is when Strober speaks about the age of "busting up the silos" in order to produce work that is innovative, creative and due to its varied problem solving methods of using the multiple perspectives in turning up productivity" (2010).

Reverting to Klein, she also states that aims of interdisciplinary work have been centred on various aspects which include the need to formulate a common "epistemology of convergence", "to answer complex questions, to address broad issues, to explore disciplinary and professional relations, to problem solve beyond the scope of any one discipline, to achieve unity and knowledge" (1990: 15).
That said, interdisciplinary has also been a source of confusion due to its definition not being absolute in "theory, methodology or pedagogy" (1990: 12). These problems have been exacerbated due to its lack of understanding, which is fuelled by discourse that cuts across the many spheres, not just in academia, but the sciences, the governmental spheres and other professional environments. Curator Jane Rendell, whose scholarly work is concerned with the intersections between feminist theory and architecture, supports Klein's writings when she states that interdisciplinarity is often viewed as "ambivalent" (2007: 59) which is as a result of its complex nature given the reasons stated above.

However the views expressed by scholar Julia Kristeva in Rendell's article*, Curating and the Interdisciplinary: Encounter, Context, Experience*, which state that despite what often seems to be a general resistance of interdisciplinary work, it is the advocating of interdiscplinarity as a way of formulating new ways of learning which I believe apply to this study. Kristeva argues for what she terms "diagonal axis" which forces for the questioning of that which we know, examining methodologies that usually govern just one discipline and the need to come up with new terminologies (Kristeva cited in Rendell, 2007: 59). Rendell poignantly explains this diagonal axis as thus,

> In demanding that we exchange what we know for what we don't know, and give up the safety competence, the transformational experience of interdisciplinary work produces a potentially destabilizing engagement with dominant power structures allowing the emergence of new and often uncertain forms of knowledge (2007: 60).

This supports Klein's comments, that one of the challenging things about this type of work is not that there isn't much scholarship but that it is often under-utilised and that often individuals who are invested in it "find themselves in a state of social and intellectual marginality" (1990: 13). It is important to note the period gap between Klein and Rendell's texts, yet it would seem based on the latter, not much has changed with these views and seemingly that the confusion remains. But to echo Kristeva's sentiments, this study is one which aims at interrogating and asking questions which in turn demands that we think of new ways of exhibition making. That said it is through the integration of the concepts synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect that this study is one of an interdisciplinary nature and one which proposes a different way of seeing and analysing. Understanding interdiscplinarity as explained by the scholars, further demonstrates the use of these concepts as a way of exploring curatorial methodologies of the case studies in question.

Chapter Two:
Nhlengethwa and a historical view of the South African visual arts and jazz scenes (1950s-1980s)

This chapter gives a brief historical overview of the intersectional South African jazz and visual arts landscape(s). I locate these histories starting from the 1950s, not as a claim that these are the birth periods of jazz and the visual arts in this country but rather from a consideration of Nhlengethwa. This was the era in which he was born. Looking at this landscape aids an understanding of the relationship between jazz and art and the extent to which these have made an impact on the broader arts of South Africa, in turn, allowing me to contextualise Nhlengethwa's art and the reading of the jazz exhibitions *Sam Nhlengethwa*: *Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994) and *Kind of Blue* (2010).

Several scholarly texts and art catalogue books which trace the South African visual arts as well as the jazz scenes and the broader cultural landscape, tend to foreground art that expresses black identity. This study too contributes to this body of scholarship.

Sam Nhlengethwa was born in 1955 at Payneville, in Springs, east of Johannesburg. His birth coincided with the height of apartheid's group areas act[11] enforced by the then government. This resulted in the displacement of many black South Africans across the country. Shortly after the passing of the group areas act, many other significant historical events took place, such as the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 and the destroyed suburb of Sophiatown[12] where there was a vibrant

[11] The group Areas act of 1950 was passed by the National Party to limit the property rights for African, Indian and Coloured people. In 1955 about 2000 policemen were sent by D.F. Malan to remove the 60 000 dwellers of Sophiatown. The police destroyed properties and forcefully removed the residents breaking the families apart. This act was also seen across the country in spaces such as District Six in Cape Town. However it is also important to note that while the group areas act of 1950 seemed the most brutal, there have been previous ones to this, legislation that had been put in place to limit the movements of the non-white communities, such as 1913 Native Land Act , the 1906 and 1908 Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance 29, and the 1936 Native Trust Land Act.[v] see http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/forced-removals-south-africa

[12] Sophiatown was an area in the West of Johannesburg, which was bought by an investor called Herbert Tobianksy in 1987. He named the land Sophiatown after his wife Sophia. Originally a suburb for white people, this changed in the late 1920's when a sewage dump was built next to the area and white people left. It subsequently became occupied by the black people, Indians, Coloured and Chinese. Also known as Kofifi it became the centre of urban black music and culture where jazz was popular and musicians such as Dolly Rathebe were regular features in the area. See http://www.sahistory.org.za/place/sophiatown

culture of jazz music. Nhlengethwa's upbringing existed in an environment in which South African jazz, also described at the time as Mbaqanga[13], was prominent in the townships and some urban areas.

According to musician and anthropologist, David Coplan, the prominence of jazz in the townships came as result of black performers being denied access to perform in spaces in and around the city which were considered areas for white people only (2007: 226). In, *In Township Tonight!: Three Centuries of South African Black City Music and Theatre*, Coplan explains that how many of the spaces run by black people in the city which featured live music, were especially targeted if they featured black performing bands. Or, if other spaces, like city halls wanted to host black performers, they were often faced with much resistance. Coplan writes,

> By the mid-1960's Union Artists and Alf Herbets's African Jazz and Variety, the companies that showcased the top black professionals at city halls all over South Africa and beyond, were forced to stop touring. The legendary Inchape Hall had burned down in 1951. Pinocchio Mokgaleng's famous, epochal sessions 'Jazz at the Odin' ended with the removal of Sophiatown. Most of the black cinemas that had played such a key role in spreading jazz and other forms of African-American performance culture were closed. African restaurants in the city that featured live music, such as that run by the father of Lucky Michaels, who later opened the famed Pelican Nightclub in Soweto's Orlando West township, were shut. By 1970 there was not a single legal venue for black performers (2007: 226).

Coplan explains further that the reasons for these sorts of impositions by the apartheid government was to limit access to the black performers and to "de-skill" them as it was felt that through their performances they could be self-expressive and independent. Also, he adds that the mimicry of American music, culture and cinema would lead to the appropriation of elements beyond the music, such as ideas with which the music embodied, (2007: 226). That said, black performers of jazz had mainly the township halls to show off their skills and talents.

2.1. Alternative spaces

This reality encouraged the establishments of other cultural venues which were run mostly by white liberals. In 1952, the venue Dorkay House of Jeppe Street, Johannesburg was established under the management of Ian Bernhardt due to the need for performance arts among black musicians and artists to continue to flourish. According to Steven Sack in the catalogue *The Neglected Tradition:*

[13]Originally, the most widely distributed term for popular commercial African jazz in the 1950's which developed from Kwela and blended African melody, *marabi* and American Jazz. In the 1960's it came to be applied to a new style that combined urban neo-traditional music and *marabi* (not jazz) and was played on electric guitars, saxophones, violins, accordions, and drums. See Glossary in Coplan B. 2007. In township Tonight! Three Centuries of South African Black City Music and Theatre (2007:441).

Towards a New History of South African Art (1930-1988), "…the establishment then of Dorkay House in Johannesburg, (is) an independent cultural venue, was a recognition for such facilities in town. There were simply no buildings in the townships suitable for such activities" (1988: 17).

Dorkay House existed alongside with the Polly Street Art Centre which was replaced later by the Jubilee Centre[14]. Both Polly Street Art Centre and Jubilee Centre both shut down in the early 1970s and around this time it compelled musicians and artists to "develop artistic and political responses to an increasing polarised society" (1988: 17). Another cultural centre which also emerged after the Polly Street Centre and Jubilee Centre of the 1950s was the Federated Union of Black Arts Academy, also known as FUBA. FUBA was founded in 1978 and it offered programmes in the visual arts music and drama. Supporting Sack's statement on the rationale of the emergence of Dorkay House being a space for an artistic response to the polarised society, Coplan states that FUBA's policy or ethos worked alongside the Black Consciousness Movement[15] and offered not just training but also financial support to aspiring black musicians (2007: 261).

In 1986, a jazz club called Kippie's was opened. Kippie's was situated in Newtown, near the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. It was named after the saxophonist and clarinettist Kippie Morolong Moeketsi. Moeketsi was a formidable alto saxophone player who became quite well-known in the jazz scene. He died in 1983. Kippie's jazz club however shut its doors in 2005. The club was a vibrant space, where those with vested interests in the cultural affairs convened. About Kippie's, musicologist Brett Pyper, in his article titled *Memorialising Kippie: on representing the intangible in South Africa's jazz heritage*, writes that the opening of Kippie's "…seemed to mark a new cultural assertiveness, buoyed by the Mass Democratic Movement whose rallies were another major focus of re-emerging jazz performance". (2006: 37)

For Nhlengethwa some of these venues also became significant places where his personal artistic expression developed. FUBA gallery was one of the earliest places where he exhibited his work and

[14] The Polly Street Art Centre was established in 1949 and in 1952, artist Cecil Skotnes became its cultural recreation officer. According to Steven Sacks in the catalogue, The Neglected Tradition: Towards a New History of South African Art (1930-1998) the appointment of Skotnes was the beginning of the advancement of black artists in the Transvaal area (1988:15).

[15] The Black Consciousness Movement was a political movement with roots in the Congress Youth Movement of the 1940s that uses pride in African cultural values and heritage as a philosophical basis for African political activity and unity. It became the ideological base of political resistance to apartheid among South African black students during the 1970s (2007:439).

came into interact with other artists and musicians. He, like many other jazz appreciators, also frequented Kippie's jazz club. This is reflected for example through one of his sketches titled *A night at Kippies* (1993) which is a sketch that was developed into a collage and was also part of the 1994 exhibition.





Figure 3: Sam Nhlengethwa, *Kippies, Johannesburg*, 1993, mixed media on paper. Photo image by: Boitumelo Tlhoaele.
Figure 4: Sam Nhlengethwa, *A night at Kippies*, 1993, pencil on paper. Photo image by: Boitumelo Tlhoaele.

Simultaneously, in the townships, the jazz movement was ever growing and on the East Rand where Nhlengethwa grew up, musicians and bands who would later have an impact on him continued to find their way onto the scene. The East Rand is comprised of townships such as Springs (Nhlengethwa's birth place), Kwa-Thema, Katlehong, Benoni and Vosloorus, among others, and music bands such as the Jazz Maniacs, and the Jazz Ministers came from the area. One of the members of Jazz Ministers'[16], trumpeter and educator Dr Ramakgobotla "Johnny" Mekoa, has been an icon of the jazz culture of the East Rand. Mekoa had been running a music school in Benoni called the *Music Academy of Gauteng* which he opened in 1994. The school teaches aspiring jazz musicians how to read and play jazz (2015). Mekoa died in July 2017.

Nhlengethwa was also influenced by his late older brother Ranky, who was a jazz musician. In an interview with Alex Dodd which appears in the monography, *Sam Nhlengethwa* (2006), Nhlengethwa explains that he would visit his brother over the weekends at his uncle's place in Katlehong. Here he

[16] The Jazz Ministers band originally comprised of musicians Aubrey Simani, Furnace Goduka (saxophones) Duncan Madondo (saxophones) Boy Ngwenya (piano) Fana Sehlohlo (bass) Shepstone Sethoane (drums). The band was started in 1967. See https://sisgwenjazz.wordpress.com/2017/07/04/dr-ramakgobotla-john-mekoa-1945-2017/

would listen to him rehearse on the piano and they would exchange ideas (2006: 67). This ironic interaction was a regular occurrence for Nhlengethwa and his brother who grew up in an apartheid township, an interaction that reflected both the absurdity of apartheid as well as the incorporation of jazz as part of the everyday.

2.2. Black visual artists and their plight

Similar to the jazz scene, the black visual artists of the time were also denied space for self-expression and places where they could learn and hone their craft. As artist and writer David Koloane candidly states in his essay *Collective Exchange and the Politics of Space 1976-1995,* "Apartheid legislation was essentially a politics of space" (2006: 57). What Koloane means by this is that many black artists were denied training in institutions of higher learning such as technikons and universities, compared to the white artists and that these restrictions are part of the politics of space of how apartheid demarcated who could access education and thus success and certain lifestyles.

Instead, the majority of the black artists received their training in art centres in the townships throughout the country which, according to Sack, was as a result of the West Rand Bantu Administration Board which "took over the affairs of black people from the Johannesburg City Council" and saw no need for cultural centres for black people in the city (1988: 16). As a result, spaces such the Alexandra Arts Centre, Katlehong Art centre, Community Arts Project and even Rorkes Drift where Nhlengethwa received his training, became the places where black visual artists could learn art, albeit at a basic level. In *South African Art Now*, Sue Williamson writes that,

> For those young black artists in the sixties, seventies, and eighties who might have wished to make a career out of art, a major hurdle was that almost without exception, the color of their skin precluded them from entering the white universities: An application had to be made to the Minister of Education for admission, and this application was seldom successful (2009: 26).

Just like in the case of the performing arts, there were a few spaces made available, the majority which were usually owned or managed by white liberals where both white and black artists were allowed. The Johannesburg Art Foundation of Parktown which was founded by Bill Ainslie and his wife Fieke in 1971, was a place where the likes of William Kentridge, Ricky Burnett and Koloane among others also received their training, despite their educational backgrounds (Sassen, 2001).

Rorke's Drift Art Centre was located in a rural part of what was designated then as Natal (now Kwa-Zulu Natal). It was founded by the Swedish Lutheran Mission in 1962. Rorke's Drift was known previously as the Ecumenical Lutheran Centre and because of its ecumenical focus, managed to fly under the radar of the apartheid surveillance state, which would have otherwise intervened to undermine the integration practiced at the establishment. The centre offered a multidisciplinary artistic practice and became known for tapestry, painting, sculpting and print making. However, it was especially through print making that many black artists became visible to other artists and collectors. Artists like Dumisani Mabaso, Azaria Mbatha and John Muafangejo were all at the centre.

Nhlengethwa was a student at both the Johannesburg Art Foundation (1976) and Rorke's Drift Art Centre (1977-1979). At Rorke's Drift, Nhlengethwa dabbled in various art forms, including printmaking and sculpture, but it was his interest in and discovery of collage that led to him finally finding his voice.

Nhlengethwa continued his part time classes at Ainslie's Johannesburg studios during his holiday breaks away from Rorke's Drift and even after he completed his two-year diploma. Although Nhlengethwa's collage technique was self-motivated, other artists with whom he studied also encouraged him. Ainslie, at seeing Nhlengethwa's collage interest, introduced him to the work of renowned African American collagist Romare Bearden, who remains one of his influences. As Nhlengethwa has said in the catalogue *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994), "the late Bill Ainslie gave me valuable advice on how I could make the collage technique more exciting and personal. He also showed me a book on the work of African American collagist Romare Bearden, from which I gained confidence and technical insight". (1994: 6)

Bearden was a collagist from Harlem. He was born in 1911 and died in 1988. His oeuvre depicts black life and culture of Harlem, which also includes references to jazz as a continuous theme. According to Nhlengethwa, it was through Bearden that he gained inspiration, even likening his style to his own. Nhlengethwa notes that, "With Romare Bearden there was this commonness that led me to relate more to what he was doing. He was doing black people and my collages were based on the townships. Maybe that's something that was subconsciously at work" (Nhlengethwa cited in Dodd, 2006: 77). Nhlengethwa has continued to draw from Bearden's motif especially with regards to both form and content and this influence will be revisited later in the chapter.

2.3. Romare Bearden's exhibitions: The Painted Sounds of Romare Bearden (1997) and Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey (2014) a case of synaesthetic inspirations

I would like to take a slight detour to speak briefly about Bearden's exhibitions which both made it to South Africa. This part of the chapter does not speak to the South African jazz and visual arts histories within the period stated (1950s-1980s) but elaborates briefly on Bearden and relates to contextualising Nhlengethwa more. This is not only to try to make connections between the two artists but also to engage to what extent these exhibitions speak to notions of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect.

In June 1997, the Johannesburg Art Gallery staged the travelling exhibition titled *The Painted Sounds of Romare Bearden* (1997) which was arranged and funded in part by the Arts America Progam, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. The exhibition was curated by American curator and scholar Gail Gelburd and featured a collection of Bearden's work depicting the African American jazz culture and experience. The exhibition featured Bearden's work spanning two decades from the 1960s right to the 1980s. The artworks were borrowed from various collectors and institutions to make up the exhibition.

Except for the catalogue that speaks to the exhibition in its totality, there is no other photographic evidence and or newspaper clippings of and about the exhibition at the JAG. It is thus hard for me to unpack the elements conventionally used in the assessment of exhibitions, namely the concept, the curation, the marketing and PR and the reception as ways of understanding the complexity of Bearden's collage style and to what extent this has been significant in his jazz work and the depiction of the African American experience.

Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey (2014) was an exhibition that opened at the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery in Columbia on November 2014 and ran through to March 2015. A version of the exhibition travelled thereafter to the Global Center in Paris, Instabul and South Africa where it was presented at Gallery MOMO at Parktown North, Johannesburg on 11 August 2015. These

presentations were part of the on-going series of programmes, lectures and performances which were inspired by the exhibition.

The exhibition was curated by American professor of English and jazz studies, Robert O'Meally. It featured 50 collages and watercolours depicting images interpreting the Western classic poem by Homer called *The Odyssey*. The *Odyssey* tells the story of a Greek hero traveller named Odysseus searching for a place called home. Bearden's art works and the exhibition however took the story to not only highlight the tales of the "ancient Greece as having modern relevance, [but] also made the claim of global cultural collage-that as humans, we are all collages of our unique experiences" as expressed on the exhibition's website, (O'Meally, 2015).

The presentation at Gallery MOMO therefore, featured a brief lecture by O'Meally on the images of this Bearden's exhibition which were shown on a projector screen. This lecture was then followed by an improvised jazz performance from the band *Eye to Ear Trio* which featured South African jazz musicians, Ayanda Sikade (drums), Feya Faku (trumpet) and Herbie Tsoaeli (bass). The band members were to respond to the images and interpret them in sound after the presentation. These images were seen for the first time by both audience members and the musicians during the lecture.

The band improvised based on what they saw but also how they interpreted the works. Then there was the collective response of the audience members through the band's playing in an improvised form but doing so in unison. Perhaps this can be considered as a moment of agency for the ideas presented in the story of Homer and how this search then takes shape in the form of individual interpretations of the art through the music as the band. As Fisher points out about the collective expression of things such as urgency, love, evil etc (2006: 28), this moment could be read in relation to Fisher's comment. Although these particular moments did not occur in the context of an exhibition as this was more of a presentation, what this demonstrates are indicators to what could possibly be considered in curatorial methodologies when speaking about synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect. If, following Fisher's ideas that the participatory modes of art are the ones that encourage ideas of exhibitions as experiences (2006: 28), then in what ways can these moments as I have described, be acts of participation beyond just the viewing? I am particularly interest in how this affects audiences. And what this would mean for the making of jazz exhibitions?

It is this moment that I wish to highlight, the moment that jazz and art met and that notions of synaesthesia can be said to have been applied. This time however, the process of synaesthesia were reversed as the musicians were responding to the image and not the other way round. This does start to point to the concepts of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect as being expansive but also points to how they invite other ideas of presenting them and accounting for this mood or feeling and sensory stimuli in exhibition making. Secondly this moment also points to Fisher's explanation of affect as being an indeterminate thing, this being not only in the way the audience had received the presentation and the improvised playing from the band but from the organic relationship between musicians themselves during their performance.

In conclusion, this chapter has mapped out the histories of jazz and visual arts in South Africa and the way in which Nhlengethwa's narrative fits in these broader histories. It has also zoned in on Romare Bearden, the man who has inspired Nhlengethwa's collage style and demonstrated the way in which jazz can be expressed through art or how art can be expressed through jazz as well as ways in which curators interested in this type of work can make these links through exhibition making practices. The next chapter analyses the exhibition *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994).

Chapter Three:

An analysis of Sam Nhlengethwa's Standard Bank Young Artist Award (1994)

This chapter investigates and interrogates the first exhibition under this study, *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994). It looks at this exhibition in relation to the concepts synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect that I have unpacked in the theoretical framework above. It investigates the extent to which these concepts are applicable to this exhibition. As a way of unpacking this exhibition I engage Robert Storr's essay *Show and Tell*, in which he explores what the key elements are of making an exhibition. As mentioned in chapter one, these key elements are: the exhibition concept, the choice of artists, the venue, the lay out plan, putting together the catalogue (the curation), as well as marketing the event and the reception.

I use these analytical tools as a method in which exhibitions are analysed within curatorial and art history studies as also mentioned by Fisher. (2006: 27) That said, I wish to make a disclaimer that in relation to the theory exhibitionary affect as well as Storr's key elements or analytical tools for exhibitions, I am aware of Fisher's critique when she states that while these analytical tools are valid when it comes to analysing exhibitions in general, analysing exhibition as "events" requires different methodologies for "such critiques tend to focus on the ways that exhibitions are framed or produced. What is left unaccounted for in such methodologies are the realms of the non-representational and extra-discursive". (2006: 27)

Keeping this in mind and realising that while it may seem contradictory to use these analytical tools and still advocate for Fisher's theory, it has been necessary to assess the exhibitions using these methods for the following reasons: first, it is that the framing of the exhibitions as they originally occurred did not factor in the notions of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect. Second, it is that exhibitionary affect now functions as a proposed and overarching concept in which the best curatorial methodologies can be formed and utilised for curating jazz exhibitions. This does not mean however that through the data combing and analysis there weren't any moments where synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect were not realised as had been the case and demonstrated with the Bearden presentation.

As I continued to conduct research on these two exhibitions it became quite evident that both exhibitions, *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994) and *Kind Of Blue* (2010) are distinct in terms of how they existed, the processes involved, the contexts and the type of audiences which received them. I have also mentioned earlier in the theoretical framework in chapter one that the concept of synaesthesia as a study of the early nineteenth century especially with regards to its ideas of the concept being a scientific formula as Zilzcer explains, do not apply to Nhlengethwa's holistic artistic practice. This concept does apply when considering Nhlengethwa's methods of producing his jazz artworks, i.e. the use of colour and the act of listening to jazz as his artistic process.

Mostly this concept (synaesthesia) has been used to demonstrate the relationship between art and music and how it exists in relation to ideas of exhibitionary affect in exhibition making, especially

when considering these points in the way they start to speak to modes of display. How can the use of colour be important in creating the artwork which in turn can be translated into the exhibition? Equally, to what extent does the music which has produced syneasthetic inspiration for the production of the artwork also be communicated in the exhibition to create a particular mood that taps into the senses or that bodily experience. Also and in what ways would the titles or texts function as a means for the creation of this feel?

Since the exhibitions mentioned here, especially *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Art Award* (1994), have little photographic evidence, I have made use of corresponding letters between the Standard Bank Art Gallery and other art galleries to map out certain details about this exhibition. I have also looked at various newspaper clippings and other supporting material. When looking at the newspaper clippings, I have tried to find any clues, in the various reviews that speak to notions of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect or questions alluding to them but also how this exhibition was received and what else it may have revealed. I have also factored in some of the interview responses from Nhlengethwa and Dundas. This has been done, as studying the histories of exhibitions requires also looking at the context of their existence. This has been achievable through the incorporation of quantitative research methodological approach.

3.1. The concept

Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award (1994) was an exhibition that saw Nhlengethwa become critically acclaimed within the South African art world. The Standard Bank Young Artist Awards were established in 1981 by the National Arts Festival to recognise the talent of emerging artists in various disciplines around the country and in 1984 Standard Bank took over the sponsorship of the awards, incorporating the name of the bank in the title. It is perhaps of this sponsorship that the title of the exhibition though very specific to the jazz genre was simply titled *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994).

This exhibition has been referred to as *Homage to Jazz* however research has led me to the latter title as being an exhibition by the American artist Bearden, which was held in 1964. When I asked Dundas and the former curator of the Standard Bank gallery Barbara Freemantle[17], neither could recall where

[17] Barbara Freemantle took over as the curator of the Standard Bank Gallery after Roslyn Sugarman had left in the year 2000. She however had joined working for the Standard Bank Museum also situated within the Standard Bank Gallery

the title *Homage to Jazz* comes from. Nhlengethwa however states that the exhibition was in fact titled *Homage to Jazz* but "I do not know why the invite and the catalogue did not bear the same title. Perhaps it was in line with the prescriptions of the Standard Bank National Arts Festival then" (Nhlengethwa, 2017). This points to the complex nature of the archive and the power it possesses, as in moments of record keeping, what gets to be included and excluded. To use the words of scholars Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Greame Reid in their publication *Refiguring the Archive,* "an inquiry around archive(s) also demands an attempt to understand the conditions and circumstances of preservation of material as, and the exclusion of material form, the record, as well as attention to the relations of underpinning such inclusions and exclusions" (2002: 9). And in this instance, since Sam is alive and has a different recollection to the documentation evidence, the question is how does one navigate between the personal memory and evidence found in material?

Nhlengethwa's title spoke very little about what was to be shown, (which was a jazz inspired exhibit) and how viewers could take cues from this title to reflect on the show itself. If one pays close attention to the catalogue, one could see the allegro music symbol underneath Nhlengethwa's name (on the cover), an overt symbol that references music.

In my interview with Nhlengethwa says that the jazz concept came about through what may have seemed to have been an opportune moment. Nhlengethwa had a sketch book which was made up mainly of the musicians he sketched when he visited Kippie's and the likes and around the time that he was announced as the winner of the Standard Bank Young Artist award later in the year 1993. This he saw as an opportunity to finally turn these sketches into collages for the exhibit. This award came with a cash cheque which was to go towards the creation of the new work. The cash prize has grown exponentially over the years.

3.2. The curation

Nhlengethwa recalls that Alan Crump, who was the festival committee of the Grahamstown Arts festival had suggested that because of the short time period between the first opening of the exhibition at the festival, it would not be ideal for the artist to create new works, and thus felt it would be prudent to loan artworks from the various art collectors and exhibit from those works.

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premises in 1992. She then moved on to become the curator of the Standard Bank Corporate Art Collection and thereafter become the curator of the gallery. She left the position in May 2017.

However, Nhlengethwa was adamant that he could create mostly new works and saw this as a great challenge and opportunity. Roslyn Sugarman and Mary-Jane Darroll who were the Standard Bank Gallery's co-ordinators, facilitated the administrative duties of the exhibition by liasing with the various galleries and ensuring that its travel was successful. Even when glitches were experienced such as when some crates of arts works had gone missing from the Namibian Arts Gallery, swift action and control of the situation was taken by Sugarman as the fax letter addressed to the then director of the Namibian Arts Gallery Annaleen Eins, dated 18 May 1995 explains,

> As you may have heard, we have a very serious situation on our hands: crates from the Sam Nhlengethwa exhibition which recently left your venue have gone missing. I would like you to fax me urgently the copy of the forms that Stuttafords would have left you when they left the consignment. The exhibition was meant to open in East London tonight, but obviously cannot because the majority of the work has not arrived there… I feel you should be informed of the consequences of the above mentioned oversight. If you have any information that may assist us in locating the missing crates, please phone me (Sugarman, 1995).

The Ann Bryant Gallery in East London subsequently postponed the show to a later date of May 25 due to the mishap involving the missing crates. The travelling exhibition which was made up of 61 artworks, included some collages, pencil sketches, lithograph prints and two tapestries by artist Marguerite Stephens. The final selection of art works was made by Nhlengethwa himself. Prior to the exhibition, regular studio visits at the Bag Factory Artists' studios where Nhlengethwa's was based were made by Crump and the rest of Standard Bank team to check on his progress and whether the work was up to par.

Judging by the list of the titles of these artworks, it can be said that the exhibition captured jazz in four varying forms: firstly he paid homage to the American and South African musicians[18] whom Nhlengethwa loved and listened to at the time, he also tips his hat at prominent South African and American jazz clubs, and lastly, the works are impacted by his trip to New York a few years earlier in 1991. Nhlengethwa had travelled to New York as one of the artists who participated in the Triangle Workshop[19]. While there; he managed to visit some of New York's popular jazz clubs such as the

[18] Bud Powell, Wes Montgomery, Abdullah Ibrahim, Modern Jazz Quartet, Natalie Cole, Keith Jarrett, Benny Goodman, Gary Bartz, Kippie Moeketsi, Duke Makasi, Gideon Nxumalo, Chris McGregor, Charlie Haden, Ron Carter, Victor Ndlazilwana, Charles Mingus, Victor Ntoni, Carla Bley, Miles Davis and Zim Ngqawana.

[19] The Triangle Workshop was started by Robert Loder and Anthony Caro in 1982. The concept was to bring together artists from the UK, USA and Canada to a two week workshop, usually held at a remote place. The workshop was artist led, which encouraged the sharing of knowledge amongst artists and to share their artistic experiences. The inclusion of artists outside of the Triangle, took place in 1984 with the participation of Bill Ainslie and David Koloane. Nhlengethwa

Village Vanguard, the Blue Note and Sweet Basil. It was also during this time that Nhlengethwa saw the Romare Bearden's retrospective exhibition at the Studio Museum in Harlem (2006: 52).

According to Nhlengethwa, most of the artworks at this exhibition were originally sketches which he had drawn over a couple of years and which he then interpreted into collage form (Nhlengethwa, 2016). The exhibition was also characterised by some workshops, which especially catered to school children. It also included some jazz performances. These workshops and performances however only featured in some galleries and not all. A jazz performance by a band called *Fate 4 Africa* took place at the Tatham Art Gallery on October 14, 1994. A series of workshops also took place at the Carnegie Art Gallery in Newcastle and The Johannes Stegmann. The workshops at these spaces were centred on demonstrating the techniques of collage.

At the Tatham Art Gallery, the performance took place a few days after the official opening night which was Friday evening and according to the programme from the gallery's brochure, the performance took place in the gallery's newly renovated workshop and exhibition area which was the Old Presbyterian church. The purpose of this new space, as the brochure explains further was to "accommodate the Gallery's growing educational needs as well as providing a much-needed exhibition, performance and experimental area in the centre of town" (Tatham Art Gallery, 1994). And this space also showcased an exhibition produced "during Sam Nhlengethwa's Guest Artist Project in the gallery" (Tatham Art Gallery, 1994). This project was designed by the gallery and aimed at using Nhlengethwa's talents to give a workshop in the medium of collage. The works produced during these workshops which took place on the 13th the day before the concert, were shown at the Old Presbyterian church on the evening of the concert on the 14th. What was important about this particular workshop was the participation of the jazz band and as the brochure further explains, to "provide the subject matter [jazz] and inspiration on the final evening" (Tatham Art Gallery, 1994).

Judging by the brochure, perhaps the participation of the band came in the form of playing some jazz while the students were also being guided by Nhlengethwa in the process of collage making. It is through these moments that notions of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect are realised on the basis

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participated in 1991 after he was chosen at the Thupelo Workshop which took place at Ainslie's studios in Parktown. The Thupelo workshop was birthed from the Triangle Workshop model and it was started by Koloane and Ainslie. See Loder, R. 1995. An international Workshop Movement, Summer: 26-31

of the act of listening to jazz while painting as mentioned by Zilzcer in her theory of synaesthesia in art which I have explained in the theoretical framework found in chapter one. Second, notions of exhibitionary affect are forged here by the culmination of the exhibition site, the art works, and the jazz performance but most importantly "the process of interaction within a collective experience" (2006: 28).

The idea of the collective experience comes in the hearing of the music within a group in the workshop and on the night of the performance the following evening. Further, this experience extends to individuals' abilities and desires to process what this music means in relation to the participation with the art object as made by the students through Nhlengethwa's demonstrations, and finally, on the evening where the work hung in the gallery existed in dialogue with the live jazz that was performed again by the band. It is these moments that speak to the "auratic quality of an exhibition" (2006: 28) and how curators can become aware of such moments and deliberately engage with them for exhibition making or what has been explained by scholar Teresa Brennan when she speaks about the "transmission of affect" (Brennan cited in Fisher, 2006: 28). This transmission is one that can be realised using various modes of display which would include, as Fisher states, the "impact of colour, lighting, spatial resonance, and flow as they contribute to an exhibition's tone or ambiance" (2006: 29) and in this instance also the inclusion of a live band.

As mentioned, due to lack of photographic evidence it is unclear what the layout of the spaces were exactly. This raises questions about the kind of experiences that may have emerged at the project space of the Old Presbyterian church compared to that at the main site where Nhlengethwa's exhibit took place. Questions lead, how was the jazz in relation to the artworks felt or engaged? Did the jazz band's participation during the workshop aid in making the collages come alive? Did the church building itself aid in the overall mood of the exhibition? And how was this received by the audience members?

Asking these questions makes us think about synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect in a much more practical sense and how through the application of these theories in exhibition making requires the conceptualisation of the exhibition and its "…practical motivations be brought to bear reflexively on each other" (2006: 28). The activities planned and described here by the Tatham art gallery, suggests approaches of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect even though the curators had not articulated it as

such or worked with the theories proposed by this thesis. For them, this curation was merely part of the exhibition's educational programme. Yet these moments become tools to think about bringing out these auratic qualities of an exhibition and ways in which these can impact on the body, mind and emotions. It is also important to state that once again based on the limitations of the lack of photographic and or video evidence it is unclear which artworks were created in what particular way especially when considering the act of listening to music. However this also raises the notion of the process itself, that understanding and seeing it may lead to understading synaesthesia in art and in turn inform how curatorial methodologies can be formulated for this exhibitionary affect in exhibitions.

3.3. Marketing and PR

Marketing and PR are important aspects of exhibition making and *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994) exhibition had ample marketing drive. The participation of the different galleries led to tailor-made invitation cards and press releases reflecting not just the exhibition in question but also the representation of the hosting galleries by way of inserting their logos, using different chosen images and their different styles of presentation. A total of 1500 catalogues were printed and distributed to the various galleries and sold for R5 each. Posters containing information of the exhibition serving also as memorabilia were distributed as part of the broader marketing strategies. Unlike the title of the exhibit some of the invitation cards of the various institutions captured the energy of the exhibit. I am particularly drawn to the invitation card by the Tatham Art Gallery.

On the front of the invitation card for the Tatham Art Gallery, is an image titled, *Dedicated to Victor Ndlazilwana*, who is a saxophone player, blowing his horn dressed in colourful attire and sunglasses looking suave. The invitation for the Johannes Stegmann gallery for example also incorporates Nhlengethwa's image but is in black and white. I found this a curious choice as it is not clear whether this was an economic matter (cheaper to print in black and white) or whether it was done to incorporate something of a 'jazz' aesthetic. Black and white tends to invoke nostalgia and speak of a particular era and Nhlengethwa speaks to this which will be seen in the following chapter. The invitations play an important role not only as informational tools but also because of the way in which they could start to invoke the mood in which the exhibition is framed or set the tone.

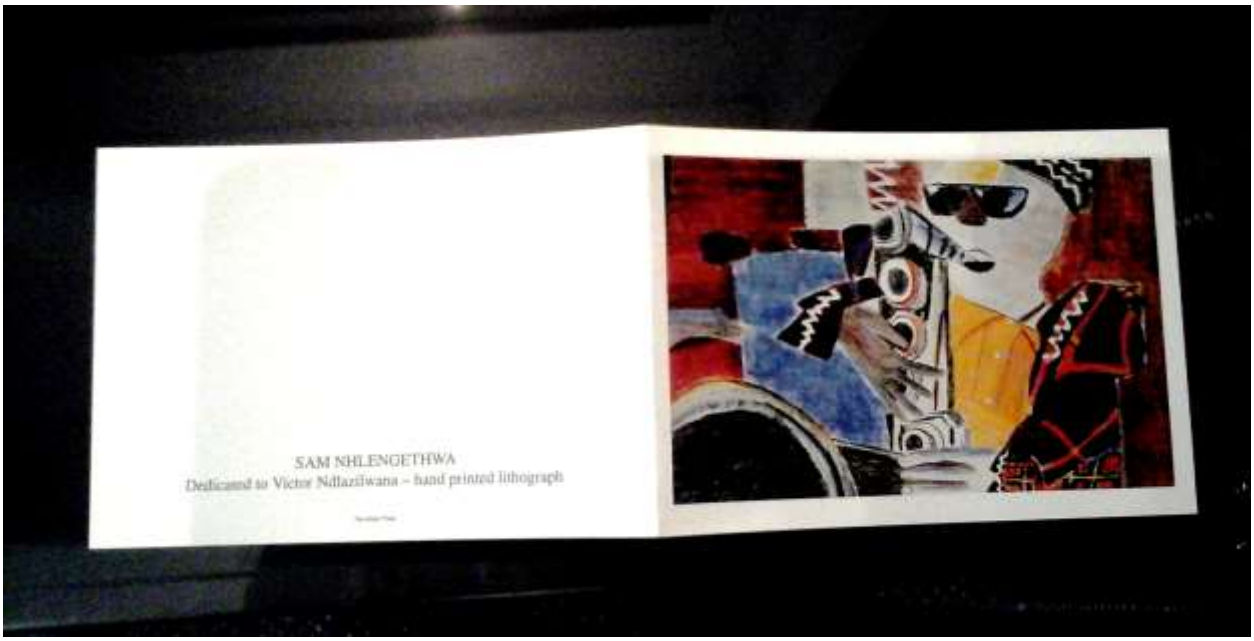


Figure 5: Sam Nhlengethwa exhibition invitation card by the Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg, 1994, Photo image by: Boitumelo Tlhoaele.

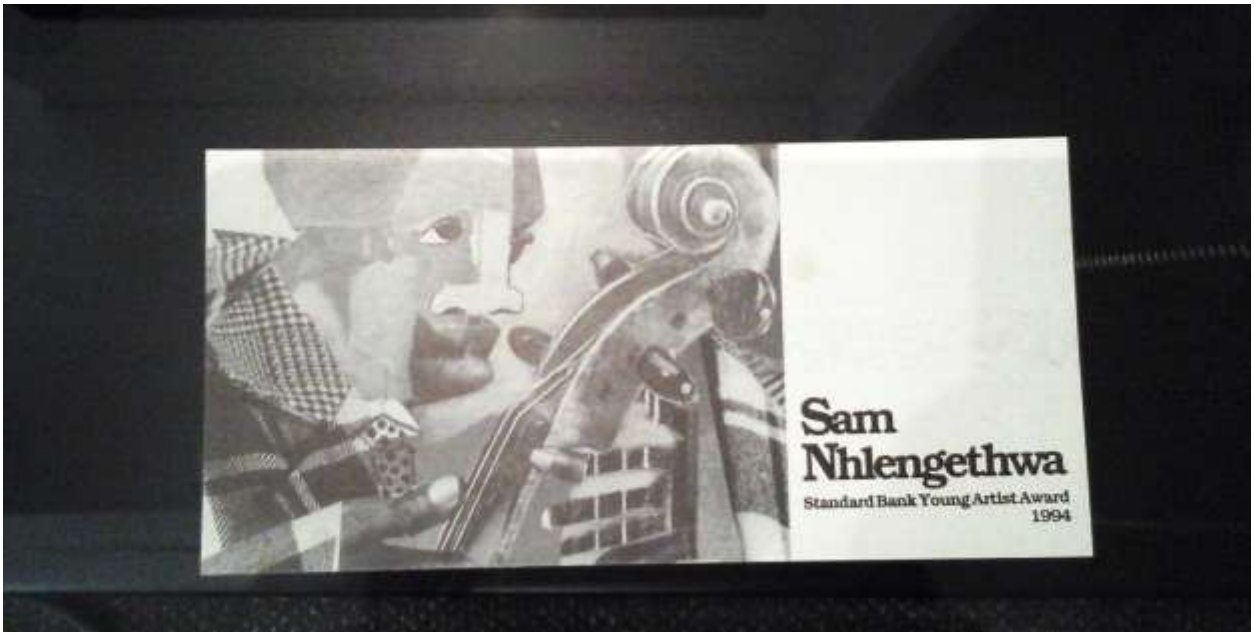


Figure 7: Sam Nhlengethwa exhibition invitation card by Johannes Stegmann Gallery, Bloemfontein, Photo image by: Boitumelo Tlhoaele.

3.4. Reception

For this particular subheading I will be looking to the newspaper clippings as a way to try and assess how Nhlengethwa's 1994 exhibition was received and how, if at all, these receptions speak to notions

of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect. These newspaper clippings are also read in light of how the work of black artists has historically been written, parochially (predominantly) by white writers. As art historian Juliette Leeb-du Toit states in her essay titled *Basadi ba Malapa: Reflections on the Self-Realisation of Mmakgabo Mmapula Mmankgato Helen Sebidi*,

> Critics and historians sought to contextualise the work of black South African artists within the parameters of their cultural origins and experiences, but often overlooked inter-cultural experience and the concerns that have shaped black self-definition. Until recently, art by black South Africans was collectively categorised in a historical timeframe as pioneer realism, township, protest, transitional or struggle art and more recently as post-apartheid or, rather blandly, contemporary art. Artists who did not fit into these categories tended, nonetheless, to be subsumed into them, often on the strength of only a fraction of their oeuvre (2009:14).

Mentioning this is to contextualise as I have done in the second chapter, Nhlengethwa's art and the way it, amongst other artists, has existed within South African art history and also the way his work has possibly not been fully grasped in documentation as Leeb-du Toit's comments suggest. I make the latter claim based on my observations which I have mentioned in the introduction as some of the reasons why I have chosen to investigate in particular Nhlengethwa's jazz exhibitions.

Second, it is also to acknowledge the context in which Nhlengethwa's artistic journey has taken shape as he is one of the many artists whose art education was restricted based on the policies imposed by the apartheid state on black artists. Third, the points as mentioned by Leeb-duToit mean that it is likely that these outlooks could have influenced the way people would have experienced Nhlengethwa's exhibitions and perhaps continue to do so. It is in relation to the exhibitionary affect concept, especially when Fisher states that affect poses agency that perhaps Nhlengethwa's jazz exhibitions could be considered as giving agency to a part of his oeuvre that is seldom interrogated at length and to the jazz genre as well its connections to the black experience. Furthermore it is also in the way these elements fit within the visual arts and the broader arts of South Africa.

In an article by curator Marilyn Martin titled *It must be African. Look at that leopard skin* (1987) which appeared in the *Weekly Mail,* Martin argued similar ideas proposed above by Leeb du-Toit. She suggested that the debates of South African contemporary art are ones which continued to bring up words such as "transitional, acculturation, Africanisation, synthesis, symbiosis" (1987: 21). Moreover, she stated that these debates have been ones which have sought to keep in place the views of "formalism" (1987: 21). Martin further stated that the South African arts commentators had mostly failed to make a distinction between artists whose work is created with insight and understanding and

those artists who have merely fallen into the trap of "the comfortable, copyable and stylish way of Post-Modernism" (1987: 21).

I use Martin's article and Leeb-du-Toit's observations as a sounding board against the newspaper clippings of various national publications which covered Nhlengethwa's 1994 exhibition. These I have listed in the appendix. I have primarily examined the reportage for any clues on moments in which notions of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect could be considered in this exhibition, where writings also considered jazz not only as a political but an emotive and complex art form. That said, there has been little evidence of this concept coming through in the writings of the newspaper clippings. This is something I anticipated as I have mentioned earlier that this study has applied concepts which were not originally part of the conceptual framework but which I see as very boldly present and useful to interrogate curatorial methodologies.

However having said that, the newspaper articles have been quite revealing about the treatment of Nhlengethwa's exhibitions and the way these articles become evidence in which black visual artists have been documented within the visual arts sphere. They also speak to the reception of the work. For example, most of these articles have reported about the exhibition quite simplistically, giving an account of what medium Nhlengethwa has used, where the venue of the exhibitions were, who the guest speakers were and offering other such inane information. Only a few articles reported on the nuances of the jazz theme and what it means for the broader black culture or experience and how this exhibition could have been read against the new democratic South Africa.

Hazel Friedman of the *Star Tonight* section wrote in his two paragraph article for example, "Sam Nhlengethwa feeds off the fragments –both literal and metaphoric-that make up the South African experience" (1994: 14). Art critic Ivor Powell wrote in the *Weekly Mail* that, "Particularly these last, mainly as a result of the planar effects of the medium begin, to transcend their nominal subject and acquire socially metaphorical overtones" (1994: 32). And in another article by Orielle Berry in the publication *The Pretoria News* titled 'Township Collage', the author wrote, "Nhlengethwa's images resemble a photographic archive of township life." Berry further stated, "Nhlengethwa's love of music and in particular jazz is an urban phenomenon common to township culture. Music within communities is interwoven with the mosaic of custom and worship ritual from the cradle to the grave" (1994: 4). Berry, whose latter sentence hints at the exoticisation or mystification of black

culture, failed to make further interrogations of the art works, the exhibition or even explaining her own meanings of the latter phrase. In fact, Berry's article seems to reduce Nhlengethwa's work back to notions found in phrases such as township art, black art, transitional art as explained by Leeb-du-Toit and Martin. The headline of the article itself also proves this point.

What is apparent is that like Berry's article, the articles mentioned did little analysis of the artworks and the exhibition but rather quickly painted a picture of Nhlengethwa's background, where he grew up and the struggles he's faced as an artist. This information is certainly important when we speak about the artist but shouldn't be over-emphasised above his art, as the object itself can bring about enriched interrogations and meanings. Most of the articles also made mention of the influence by American artist Romare Bearden as also explained by Nhlengethwa but no explanations were given to the extent Bearden's style may or may not have been comparable to Nhlengethwa's and what that could mean in the South African context.

The articles also subtly presented what could be said was a prescriptive tone in relation to Nhlengethwa's art. As Martin argued in her article *It must be African. Look at the leopard Skin* (1987), writings on black artists tended to document their work within certain parameters and aesthetical values. Martin began her essay with the mention of the Thupelo Arts Project exhibition which had featured Nhlengethwa and artist Madi Phala at the FUBA art gallery and whose intentions as she stated were "to highlight the fears of the faint-hearted who are uncertain about the exposure of black artists to foreign aesthetics such as post-Abstract Expressionism"(1987: 21).

No more were these fears highlighted than in Kendell Geers' article published two years later after Nhlengethwa's 1994 exhibition in the *The Star* newspaper titled 'Nhlengethwa Braves the Drawing Board', Geers aptly stated that Nhlengethwa's 1994 exhibition had failed to live up to its importance and that the works displayed were rehashed pieces from his previous exhibition at the Market Theatre the year before (1993). Geers was in fact reviewing Nhlengethwa's exhibition *Mine Trip* (1996) in which he gave Nhlengethwa praise for his drawing technique. "With Mine Trip Nhlengethwa had more than anything else, revealed the ability to work with line" (Geers, 1996).

Similar views were also expressed by Powell when he suggested that Nhlengethwa's collage was yet to be refined (1994: 32), while art critic Melanie Hillebrand of *The Herald* newspaper explicitly wrote in

her column, titled 'Young Artist winner still has a lot to learn', that despite Nhlengethwa's training with Bill Ainslie and his schooling at Rorke's Drift, that "Nhlengethwa's case collage would seem to be the first step, experimental at best, in a creative process which still has a long way to go" (1994: 3).

These articles raise questions about whether or not the curatorial methods were successful in relation to the jazz theme and what it meant for Sam to dedicate an entire exhibition to this theme. Was it also a failure of the exhibition to highlight the relationship of jazz and art (synaesthesia) and the experience of this music in the exhibition space (exhibitionary affect)? Or could it be the stubborn perceptions that white writers continued to uphold about black artists that brought about the seemingly narrowly written reviews. Reading these reviews in relation to exhibitionary affect as posing agency it is the words as expressed by scholar Gilles Deleuze in Fisher's article I'd like to highlight, when he explains affect "as immanent evaluation… "I love or I hate" instead of "I judge" (Deleuze cited in Fisher, 2006: 28).

Therefore, while there may have been some merit to these criticisms, especially when it comes to form, I argue that the writers were blind sighted in relation to the content. This brings me to the question, borrowing from writer Kathryn Smith's words, "If you were to try and describe to someone who didn't know anything about jazz, or didn't know anything about art, how Sam's work makes the connection, how would you do that?"(2006: 111) This question lends itself to the impetus of this study and the consideration of these theories synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect as guides for effective curatorial methodologies of jazz exhibitions.

And to attempt to answer Smith's question I argue that to achieve this it would be firstly paying close attention to those nuances found in the art works themselves as the writers have alluded to which when interrogated could also suggest notions of the South African black aesthetics in relation to this collage technique and the jazz references in this work, that jazz has predominantly been part of the "black experience" as delineated in Coplan's In Township Tonight (1985) and therefore cannot be ignored. This then once again brings us to the idea of exhibitionary affect as posing agency as I've mentioned above. It is to also, I suggest, that notions of the black aesthetics could be a key to formulating curatorial methodologies when put in practice and I will revise this in the last chapter.

This chapter has analysed the exhibition *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994) through utilising the analytical tools for examining exhibitions as per the subheadings the concept, the curation, marketing and PR and the reception. It has done so in an attempt to highlight moments of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect in the exhibition's curatorial methodologies through the reading of archival material, newspaper clippings and interviews. These have aided in piecing together the exhibition and what it may have looked like or experienced since there is no photographic material available. While this exhibition originally took place outside of the concepts synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect, there have been key moments where these concepts apply as demonstrated at the Tatham Art Gallery. This chapter has argued that the presence of these theoretical and practical positions has aided in formulating the most effective curatorial methodologies for jazz exhibitions.

Chapter Four:
An analysis of Kind of Blue (2010)

4.1. The concept

Unlike the 1994 exhibition, *Kind of Blue* (2010) focused on paying homage to an American jazz icon, Miles Davis and his band for his ground breaking record of the same name. For most jazz collectors and lovers, this is an easily recognisable record. Nhlengethwa wasn't only paying homage to one of his adored jazz musicians but the year 2010 marked the 50 years anniversary of that album since its release in 1960, a milestone for Davis' sextet, which Nhlengethwa felt needed further recognition. Davis in this exhibition was alongside the other band members namely John Coltrane (saxophone), Jimmy Cobb (drummer), Bill Evans (piano), Wynton Kelley (piano), Julian Cannonball Adderley (saxophone) and Paul Chambers (bass). *Kind of Blue* opened on 26 August and closed on 29 September and was held at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg.

In his artist statement for the exhibition, Nhlengethwa explained that *Kind of Blue* is an album he first heard when he was 15 years old at his eldest brother's wedding. This was the album that cemented his love of jazz. He states, "Kind of Blue was played repeatedly from the 1st track, *So What?* to its last track *Flamenco Sketches*. I can proudly say since that day, I was introduced to the "jazz bible". He continued,

> 'I fully agree with the author, Ashley Khan when he says, 'jazz musos call it the bible and critics call it the one jazz album every fan must own'… 'Miles Davis and his entire sextet, Bill Evans, Wynton Kelly, John Coltrane, Julian Cannonball Adderly, Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb, left a legacy that is still inspiring the jazz musicians and jazz lovers' (Nhlengethwa, 2010).

Comparatively this exhibition was different, apart from Nhlengethwa dedicating to a single band of a very specific era, *Kind of Blue* (2010) was not a travelling show. Based on the newspaper clippings I had found, which were not as plenty as the ones for the 1994 exhibition, it seems the exhibition was limited in terms of media coverage. The title of the exhibition wasn't only just telling of the subject matter it would deal with (at least for those who are familiar with the album) but also speaks to the musical language of the jazz genre and notions of synaesthesia as explained in the theoretical framework (music analogy).

According to Monson, jazz musicians are not just famous for their sounds but also their talk, the use of jargon and metaphors to analyse and speak of the music (1996: 73-74). For example, the word 'blue' is explained, in support of the above statement by jazz musician Johnny Mekoa when he states in relation to Nhlengethwa's art making, "…and obviously jazz has blue notes. You know the flat three, the flat seven, the flat five…he portrays them all" (Mekoa cited in Smith, 2006: 111). This metaphoric expression using music language as explained by Mekoa once again points back to music analogy found in the concept of synaesthesia as explained by Zilczer not just in its descriptive form, but because of the way in which the colour blue was quite important in Nhlengethwa's artworks to communicate the exhibition's concept as he has described.

4.2. The curation

Contrary to the 1994 exhibition the medium of the artworks had changed. The artworks were not the collages of photographs, magazine and newspaper cuttings. These artworks featured a series of etchings, lithographs, drawings and paintings. It also comprised of an installation of musical instruments emulating a bandstand, which was placed at the centre of the gallery. The sizes of some of these artworks were similar in size to the vinyl records and were mostly monochromatic with hues of blue. The reasons for choosing the small-scale sizes for the artworks were because Nhlengethwa wanted the "show to breathe, I don't want it to be too cluttered" (Nhlengethwa, 2010).

His use of predominantly monochromatic colours was to bring out the essence of a particular era. "Black and white rendered silhouette figures recall another era, an age when taking risks was central to the cultural development" (Nhlengethwa, 2010). Elsewhere in an article by writer Robyn Sassen, Nhlengethwa stated, "I didn't want to break my focus on paying tribute to Miles Davis and his band. In the 50s and 60s, everything was in black and white or sepia and I wanted this show to be nostalgic" (Nhengethwa cited in Sassen, 2010).

Central to this exhibition was Neil Dundas, who is the senior curator of the Goodman Gallery. Dundas' role involved embarking on most of the administrative tasks and overseeing the process of hanging the exhibition. Dundas had spent some months engaging with Nhlengethwa on the idea of the show and they were both responsible for its execution. The exhibition's lay out, was divided in the gallery between the main room and the side rooms. In my interview with Dundas who worked closely with Nhlengthwa explains the lay out plan as follows:

> We wanted to cover all the rooms, but have really intimate scale portraits of various musical accompanists and collaborators in one side gallery, and in the other, the close up images of the man himself... Miles on trumpet, full face, side portrait, and link those to one or two larger works in colour. That side room became very much more potent and visually "noisy" while the first was the more contemplative and shared space. Sam really wanted the album to be played as a background, and that worked very well to conjure the right atmosphere for the exhibit. I was also very pleased to have number of vivid smaller works in colour, which emulated the scale and style of old vinyl album covers and we were able to make a powerful feature of these in the main room, with these grouped and easily able to compete for attention with the few very large works (Dundas, 2017).

Three important things stand out about the curation of this exhibition: the deliberate use of the chosen colours for the artworks themselves, secondly, the use of music to create a particular mood as Dundas has pointed out which all lead to the explained ideas of synaesthesia in art. Thirdly, it is the deliberate thought, using the various modes of display that were applied to transmit this affect as Fisher states, "In a similar way, curating involves the transmission of affect in that it stages situations that evoke particular kinds of feelings in the art audience" (2006: 29). Judging by Dundas' explanation, these situations could lend themselves to spatial consideration and orientation and the way this exhibition might have been able to achieve a particular kind of atmospheric energy and therefore experience. I am inclined to also point to the installation of the bandstand in the centre of the room which could have created a participatory element to the exhibition. Although it is likely that there was discouragement for the audience to touch it, it doesn't necessarily mean that its presence had failed to evoke sensorial engagements with the artworks themselves and the exhibition as a whole.

What is clear in this instance is the conscious effort made to adhere to details concerning modes of display. That said it is also perhaps through Dundas' availability to be interviewed that such matters could be addressed and interrogated and that since the exhibition has already happened has had time to reflect on it and therefore be articulate about his curatorial intentions for this particular exhibit. This however doesn't suggest that the Tatham Art Gallery was not conscious of their efforts in considering their various modes of display in Nhlengethwa's 1994 exhibition, especially since I have demonstrated where such moments occurred.

Lastly this analysis also raises the question or highlights ways in which these concepts synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect be could be carried out in a travelling larger exhibition versus a smaller one taking place at one particular site and in this case one which had a dedicated curator (Dundas), unlike

several curators from different institutions. Given this, I am encouraged about this question and the response Fisher gives through her example of curator Lisa Corrin who is engaged in feminist curatorial practices and expresses how she thinks about space in her exhibition making practices and which is to making permanent gallery spaces 'feel different each time an exhibition is presented' and when Fisher then states that "it is precisely in this aspect of feeling different that the transmission of affect can be located" (2006: 29).

4.3. Marketing and PR

Marketing of the exhibition included the distribution of a press release which was sent to the different media representatives. This was followed by invitations to the opening night which Nhlengethwa in my interview with him explains as being a "festive" opening. This perhaps he states could have been due to the existing euphoria of the 2010 World Cup, in which South Africa was a host city. The tournament had just ended at the time of the exhibition. Having said this, the marketing of the exhibition was not tied to the happenings of the World Cup or sought to take advantage of the moment. According to Dundas, Nhlengethwa's exhibitions are generally well attended and while there was traffic from audiences from abroad due to the tournament, "there is always a local audience who have followed his musical knowledge that might not attend other shows in the gallery" (Dundas, 2017).

This once again brings to light my observations on Nhlengethwa's oeuvre not being holistically documented or in part celebrated. It also brings to the fore how his exhibitions, as Dundas has mentioned, caters to different audiences across the two disciplines of jazz and art as well as ways in which these audiences can also engage through the exhibitions. Dundas also states however that the reason for a seemingly more international and tourist audience was encouraged by an online promotion as the exhibition was positioned as one to watch out for when visiting Johannesburg (Dundas, 2017). This raises something that can be explored in relation to these concepts and the ways in which the use of technology and the online platform can advance these theories in a practical sense.

Technology has changed the way in which we communicate. It was common practice to post personal printed invitation cards just like the ones demonstrated in chapter three, of the 1994 exhibition. Marketing material in present times often includes the distribution of material online.

While there isn't any evidence of any other promotional material apart from the press release perhaps this is a moment in which technology could have be utilised to advance the concept of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect, especially in the way which social media spaces and particular apps such as instagram, snapchat, tumblr propel information, not just as text but through short videos and other multimedia effects. Perhaps e-invitations that could have been utilised could have included the video and or audio sounds to evoke the feelings of the audiences and capture the mood of the exhibition itself.

4.4. Reception

Despite the exhibition receiving international traction due to the circumstances stated above, it wasn't well covered by the local mainstream media. Few newspaper articles were found, perhaps due to the fact that it was not a travelling exhibition and that it had a shorter running period than the 1994 one. Despite the gap between the 1994 exhibition and *Kind of Blue,* I once again found that most of the articles similarly to those cited in chapter three also could not provide an in-depth analysis of the exhibition itself. Could it have to do with Martin's and Leeb-du-Toit's points about the parochial writings of black visual artists being still a prevailing phenomenon? Could it also be that the jazz theme as a subject for exhibition making and its interdisciplinary nature require beyond the surface comprehension of such artistic practices or perhaps maybe even an indictment on Nhlengethwa's part for having not yet theorised his own artistic practice for his jazz work? While I ask this question with caution to not impose or over burden Nhlengethwa's artistic practice, it is also through his own explanations that cues, meanings and constructs can be forged around his work.

Once again these questions and statements raise the ideas of Nhlengethwa's jazz artworks and exhibitions as not being sites of intellectual, academic rigour and critical journalistic writing, unlike his political work. Dundas who has been with the Goodman Gallery for thirty-five years agrees in part, and states that Nhlengethwa's oeuvre is two-fold and that his work which references jazz needs some more critical engagement than what is already out there:

> Perhaps it is true that his political works are more seriously regarded, but many collectors do see that the two parts of his career are what make this man, and this artist, stimulating, a good observer of life and culture, and what it is that might have carried him through the hardest times in the history of our divided nation. I do believe that some scholars too, see this is a true reflection of the artist making a life in the challenges of South Africa, and that both elements of his work do deserve critical appreciation (Dundas, 2017).

This exhibition however raised a notable question from writer and art historian Mpho Matheolane in his article *On Jazz On Art* when he asked, "…how would you represent it (jazz) without words or sound?" (Matheolane, 2010). It is unclear what Matheolane meant by his comments here as he does not elaborate further, however his question raises more questions about the ways that audiences expect to experience a jazz exhibition and what methods would best apply to ensure they gain a true experience. By sound does Matheolane mean the inclusion of live music? Or the invocation of sound through the images? Since Matheolane doesn't give an answer to this question or give suggestions I wonder whether perhaps he was also indirectly asking whether the object is the best source for making jazz references and that the limitation of the object, if it is a limitation at all, lends itself to the limitation of the gallery as a site for such exhibitions.

Furthermore, it is when Matheolane also says it is a commitment to "give still representation to something as fluid as music, dare I say in one of its purest forms expressive genius, Jazz" (Matheolane, 2010). Dundas however explains that the answer may lie in the aesthetics of the collage technique and the ability to express holistically the culture of jazz which then in turn would inform how synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect can be implemented in exhibition making.



Figure 8: Sam Nhlengethwa, 2010, Kind of Blue exhibition at Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg. Photo supplied by Goodman Gallery



Figure 9: Sam Nhlengethwa, 2010, Kind of Blue exhibition at Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg. Photo Supplied by Goodman Gallery.



Figure 6: Sam Nhlengethwa, 2010, Installation for Kind of Blue exhibition, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg. Photo supplied by Goodman Gallery.

Chapter five:
Re-imagining Sam Nhlengethwa's exhibitions and a case of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect

This chapter looks at both the exhibitions of this study from the perspective of re-imagining what it might mean if synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect were to have been applied in the actual curatorial methodologies and intentions of the shows. Although one may not necessarily be able to re-imagine the curatorial intention, but it is through considering these proposed theories that the exhibitions can be re-imagined. My approach of considering this notion of the affect has come as a result of observing some things that have come about during the research process. There have already been references to the act of listening to jazz while painting, the use of colour in the art works, the meanings that come forth through the artworks, as well as the context in which these artworks reside. In addition, continued research questions arose about things such as the aesthetics of the medium as Dundas has alluded to, and the cultural aesthetics found in jazz which also speak specifically to the South African black experience and the way Nhlengethwa has interpreted them as described in the image Figure. 3. *Discussion Jazz at the Shebeen* (1994). I have thought about the artistic practice itself and ways in which it can go beyond the act of listening to jazz while painting or being deliberate about the use of colour, but also the way this process itself can be communicated in exhibitions.

When speaking of re-imagining I do not necessarily mean having compiled a step by step guide as to what exactly could transpire should these exhibitions be re-created one day. However, I am suggesting that points raised here could aid in how one may start to think about these exhibitions differently. It is quite apparent that the concepts which this study proposes have not been able to be fully applicable in these exhibitions though there have been critical moments where synaesthesia and exhibitionary have in fact been realised in the exhibitions of this study. This as mentioned is due to the fact that the concepts were not originally part of the initial curatorial conceptual framework but have only in part been able to fit into the mould of these theories.

This has been demonstrated in these ways, the act of Nhlengethwa himself listening to jazz while he paints and the use of colour in his artworks to try and recreate a mood of a particular era as he has explained about his *Kind of Blue* exhibition (synaesthesia). Secondly, it is through the inclusion of music to create a particular mood or feeling as was the case for both exhibitions (exhibitionary affect).

But still how can these elements which have characterised some moments of capturing the (jazz) mood be integrated for a much more impactful exhibition creation? How and in what ways can curators start thinking about the various modes of display to communicate these very specific themes? My answers lie in considering the points below.

5.1. Nhlengethwa, the South African black aesthetics and the transatlantic connections

To try and answer the questions above, I pay close attention to Nhlengethwa's chosen medium style and what the artworks themselves depict. I also consider the newspaper reports which alluded to the particular black cultural experience of the time. Though I have highlighted the problematic way in which these notions have been written about in some of these publications, what I believe these reports have achieved is to hint at the reading of Nhlengethwa's jazz artworks and exhibitions as a case for a South African black aesthetics for/ with jazz that cannot be devoid of race politics and cultural interpretations and meanings.

In *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction,* Ingrid Monson states that her use of various terms throughout her book (black and white, African American, non-African American), "draw attention to the fact that race has been a particularly salient category in American history in general and jazz music in particular" (1996: 102). That this has then "deeply affected the material, historical, political, and cultural positions of all Americans, even (or especially) when it is not mentioned" (1996: 102). While this text is geographically specific, the points which Monson cites are also relatable in the South African context as jazz in the South African context existed within the politics of race. Gwen Ansell states in her book, *Soweto Blues Jazz, Popular Music & Politics in South Africa*, that

> …as soon as jazz went on record in America, in the early decades of the twentieth century, those wax impressions arrived in South Africa. They landed on fertile ground for South Africans had a rich and dynamic musical culture of their own, into which they had already drawn aspects of earlier and parallel African-American musics (2004: 4).

This was due to the different yet similar political and cultural contexts of the African Americans and the black South Africans but more importantly the aspirations for black South Africans to achieve their political freedom just like the African-Americans abroad. Ansell continues to explain about this desire for political freedom and the relationship between America and South Africa:

> The America that was loved was both illusory and real. The reality was that 'Africans in America' had achieved much formal emancipation from the kind of legal oppression that rendered life for all South Africans of colour intolerable-and that was to increase. That achievement had come through a struggle whose history was known to politically aware South African (2004:48).

While there are many other examples in Ansell's book, I cite these two above quotes as a demonstration of these connections and the way this leads to thinking more specifically about the South African black aesthetics. In her article *The Case for an African American Aesthetic*, Gena Dagel Caponi explains that African American style or aesthetic as being "a set of techniques and practices-a technology of stylization-that recur over time and across different forms of cultural expression"(1999:8). She explains that this African American style is found everywhere in sports, music, literature, dance and even religion which is underpinned by the African American way of life or experience. Caponi gives an example of this style by quoting musician Johnny Otis in his book *Upside Your Head! Rhythm and Blues on Central Avenue*,

> I never had to instruct my horn players how to phrase a passage… The music grew out of the African American way of life. The way mama cooked, the Black English grandmother and grandfather spoke, the way daddy disciplined the kids-the emphasis in spiritual values, the way Reverend Jones preached, the way Sister Williams sang in the choir…(Otis cited in Caponi, 1999:1).

Caponi further explains that the African American aesthetic hinges on notions of cultural aesthetics, where "cultural expressions such as dance, religion, music and play, societies articulate and transmit the ideas, values and beliefs that bind people together" (1999: 7). She continues "Varieties of cultural expression are manifestation[s] of the culture as a whole, the visible sign of unity [that] reflects or projects the 'inner form' of collective thinking and feeling" (1999: 8). It is in this phrase of collective thinking and feeling that I am led back to Fisher's theory when she speaks of affect as the "collectively sensed singularities of feeling" (2006: 28). If I am to understand Fisher, then it is in the individual thoughts, emotions and reactions, though different and ways in which they could communicate a specific set of values and beliefs about a particular thing.

However, Caponi also points out that although we speak of cultural style that pertains to a particular group of people it takes place within contexts of a people of different classes, regions and even gender for "do an eighty-year-old east Texas cotton farmer and a south Philadelphia adolescent girl practice the same cultural style?" (1999: 7). It is through this question that Caponi highlights that while cultural expression evolves, some fundamental things remain the same (1999: 8). There will

always be certain things that always form part of the African American experience and expression even between different generations.

While Caponi's text also explores connections of African to the African American experience, she cautions at making over-simplified direct links for there is no common interdisciplinary methods where the relations of African American and African aesthetics can speak to one another (1999: 9). Regrettably, Caponi's writings do not include the exploration of the African American aesthetics in the visual arts but what her text does help to do is to think more pointedly about Nhlengethwa's jazz artworks as well as how these may extend to his exhibitions. It is in considering his personal aesthetic agency which also speaks to the broader black aesthetics that the exhibition may take shape. Put another way, perhaps it is the artist leading the curator through his understanding and artistic interpretation of jazz and then this being highlighted more explicitly through curatorial methodologies in the exhibition.

5.2. Nhlengethwa, Bearden and a case of 'Rediscovery of the Ordinary'

Nhlengethwa has expressed being influenced by the work of American collagist Romare Bearden and earlier I described Bearden's exhibitions in ways they can also demonstrate these theories in relation to Nhlengethwa jazz work. Bearden is mentioned here albeit briefly, to serve as a reminder of the South African and American jazz connections, that though different, they are also similar. Although the latter part of this point also raises the problematic ways in which the West and Africa are often spoken about, there still remains little influence from South to North.

That said, Nhlengethwa and Bearden have both used music analogies to express their jazz themed artworks as Nhlengethwa has stated or when Bearden was quoted from an interview conducted by writer Calvin Tomkins which appears in American artist and writer Diedra Harris-Kelley in her article *Revisiting a Romare Bearden's Art of Improvisation* about his processes of painting his jazz art, "I take a sheet of paper and just make lines while I listen to records. A kind of shorthand to pick up the rhythm and interval" (Bearden cited in Harris-Kelley, 2004:251). However, while conducting research I have also noticed ways in which Bearden and Nhlengethwa depict the jazz in relation to the ordinary life of their communities. This observation has led me to what writer Njabulo Ndebele conceptualises as a "Rediscovery of the Ordinary": the idea that in the midst of chaos and pain there is beauty, there are lessons in amongst other things moments that seem ordinary. Ndebele argues

against the phenomenon of "representing the spectacle" (2006: 31), of representing spectacularly the pain and suffering of the black communities leaving small windows or moments of imagination in the way this suffering is told for "…the more exploitation is revealed and starkly dramatised, the better" (2006: 40). Nhlengethwa, in an interview with me alludes to this when he states about his work:

> I dealt with several subject matters. I was once asked by a writer from UK, saying to me, 'I see in your subjects, there are also people who are socialising like [in the] sheebens here in South Africa.' So I said yah it doesn't mean that when we have this dark cloud of apartheid then life is not going on in the townships. People get married, people go to parties, people spend time in the pubs, [and] people play sport. And of course they'll be the day people are burying their beloved ones who were shot by the police. So it's a mixture of those and I cannot be on one side of life [be]cause it will be boring for me, (Nhlengethwa, 2016).

Nhlengethwa's statement starts to weave into the proposed notions of the black aesthetics as explained by Caponi, that the black experience is varied, it is vast and renders different meanings in different contexts. When we factor in a genre such as jazz or thinking in jazz terms the meanings, understandings, representations become even more layered and perhaps even complex.

5.3. Practice-based research a consideration for effective curatorial methodologies

Once again, Nhlengethwa has made mention of listening to jazz while painting and elsewhere he has also used music analogy and employed jazz titles to his work. However, as Harris- Kelley has asked about Bearden who has similarly done so with his jazz inspired works that the "the analogy doesn't account for differences in genre and technique" (2004:49). Harris-Kelley's statement read in tandem to Nhlengethwa's comments has led me to consider the application of practice-based research as forms of methodology in which Nhlengethwa himself (artist) and the art practitioner (curator) may start to investigate the relationship between jazz and art through practice as a form of methodology.

In his article *Representing Creativeness: Practice-Based Approaches to Research in Creative Arts*, scholar Peter Dallow states that "In practice-based research, investigation through practice is the methodology" (2003: 54). This means that the process becomes a significant part of the method. Dallow explains that:

> The task of investigating the conditions under which something new is produced, creativeness calls for a processual approach. It requires an art of thought, a certain tact, by which artists might track their movements into the unknown, as they pursue the 'lines of flight' of their music, writing, painting or performance (2003: 50).

This he further explains that this practice allows for emergent qualities of the process which also show up through the art form, the exhibition, the receptions and by whom it will be seen and under what kind of conditions; all these elements are part of the enquiry and not necessarily the end product (2003: 53). While Dallow expands further on the practice-based research as something that can both be abstract and theoretical and to the extent in which context may play a role as well other sources of information such as history, literature etc. it is the notion of the investigation of process which I believe may start to expand the knowledge about the relationship between jazz and art as well the curatorial methodologies to which this study has been alluding to.

I considered a tandem reading of Dallow's theory alongside Monson's study of improvisation in jazz. To summarise her argument, Monson writes that while improvisation is an organic process, it is also highly structured and organised and with all that's been said then how can synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect then be realised in relation to these subheadings. There are no clear cut answers but instead more questions rise. However, I am encouraged at least by a key factor in Fisher's theory when she speaks of affect as giving agency to a particular subject or cause and whether then through this there could be such a thing a jazz curatorial practice. Based on the research, I would say yes. Second, Fisher states that "Shared sensibilities and affiliations have a tremendous impact upon the interpellation of subjectivity within the art audience. In addition to the content of its objects, the product of an art even most importantly lies in its affective relations" (2006: 29).

But still in thinking about modes of display, I consider the subheadings above and the process of finding the curatorial methodologies to express jazz and art by thinking of the ways the artworks and their arrangements are able to invoke sounds and other sensorial experiences. Thinking about this in tandem with notions of rediscovery of the ordinary and the demonstration of the black aesthetics a can offer us, for example, thoughts on what improvisation is in the jazz language and how this can be translated in artistic engagements. When looking at Nhlengethwa's artistic processes in what ways can they account for the transmission of affect and how could this processual approach, enhances the bodily experience of the audience. While more questions surely arise perhaps these could be answered on several artistic engagements, experiments and the recording and unpacking of these.

This chapter has tried to re-imagine Nhlengethwa's exhibitions. It has done so through having engaged some observations made, many of which recurred throughout the research process of this

study and which I believe could speak to the theories synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect. While there have been no answers or clear linkages of the subheadings and the theories of this study, what this chapter has done is to open a window by allowing to start think about these exhibitions differently and perhaps through these different lenses finding the methodologies that account for this mood or feel in jazz exhibitions may emerge more clearly.

Conclusion

This study has investigated Nhlengethwa's exhibitions, namely *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994) and *Kind of Blue* (2010) through proposed theories synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect as both the framework of this study and the way these theories could exist as curatorial frameworks to express the intersection of jazz and art. It has proposed that jazz exhibitions can be expressed using the modes of display which account for the mood or feel of the exhibition as a necessary factor especially when thinking of jazz and the way it relates to art. Through this investigation both exhibitions were analysed using the theories and analytic tools of assessing exhibitions, even despite the fact that these theories were not necessarily part of the original conceptual frameworks of these exhibitions. However it was found that elements of these theories came through in the analyses of these exhibitions, demonstrating therefore that there is room for these theories to be developed further as curatorial frameworks for jazz exhibitions.

Although the study has not produced conclusive results, it has raised more questions highlighting inquiries of an interdisciplinary nature. Using a qualitative method approach has been most necessary as various literature and perspectives have aided in the provision of intellectual scaffolding to create coherent ideas and put them into a comprehensive and challenging articulation.

These theories synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect, while they seem to have produced a study that isn't fully tested in a practical sense through curatorial intention, they have nonetheless provided ways in thinking of exhibitions/ jazz exhibitions beyond their representational forms and the way they produce meaning through modes of display in which affect or its transmission is centralised. Though content, context, the object amongst other things are important in analysing an exhibition, accounting for a mood requires a zoning in on methodology that is specific for this affect.

Reflecting briefly on both exhibitions *Sam Nhlengethwa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award* (1994) and *Kind of Blue* (2010), both exhibitions have shown potential as sites of inquiry for the two theories mentioned here as in both cases there had been moments where the theories had become realised. This further supports the ideas that notions of synaesthesia and exhibitionary affect can aid in establishing curatorial methodologies that allow for a better communication of the relationship between jazz and art. And by better I mean the effort by curators perhaps to think in jazz terms which will therefore inform their modes of display.

This study has also demonstrated the limitations of the histories of exhibitions as well as the archive. This was achieved through working from information provided mainly by three galleries out of the nine. The limitations of the archive have come through a moment in which Nhengethwa recalled the exhibition named *Homage to Jazz* while the recorded material could not link what he said to the material that was found. It has also come in a way in which I have used it, which has been quite a subjective experience as the collation of this information was informed by two very specific ideas and my personal interests in the topic, the intersections of jazz and art, and in the way these are communicated through curatorial practice. It is when Achille Mbembe states in his article, *The Power of the Archive and its Limits* that this study is and is research process is reflected upon, "…it is enough to state that however we define archives, they have no meaning outside the subjective experience of those individuals who, a given moment come to use them" (2002: 23). Therefore what is found has an impact in what gets to be analysed and then presented to the public.

Nevertheless, there is something to be appreciated about the findings of this study and the ways in which interdisciplinarity can help bring new ideas in curatorial practices. Interdisciplinarity also invites us to think about art as well as ways in which jazz in the South African context might or can be re-written or expanded on through these kinds of inquiries.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions for Sam Nhlengethwa

1. What made you choose the jazz theme for your 1994 exhibition?

2. Were you involved at all in the process of putting your exhibition together?

3. Is there an appreciation of jazz by the curators whom who've worked with and would you say that they understand it?

4. There's a narrative that in 1994 and afterwards that there's a move away from resistance art and that with struggle and apartheid being abolished artists can now do art for art sakes. What are your thoughts towards such a narrative?

5. Given the context of jazz wouldn't you say it is political?

6. How do you express jazz into your artwork? I've read interviews where you speak about the analogy of jazz to describe your art in jazz terms but is there a specific method of expressing the jazz language into your art?

7. What about the use of colour is there a specific formula or method in the wayyou use colour to express jazz through your paintings?

Appendix 2: Interview questions for Curator Neil Dundas

1. You've been with the Goodman Gallery for many years, when did you start working for the gallery?

2. Tell me a little bit about your curatorship training, how did it begin and where did you study

3. Sam mentions that you were quite pivotal in putting up the Kind of Blue exhibition, what did this entail exactly?

4**.** As someone who's worked with Sam closely and seen his trajectory, would you say that he is most celebrated for his Political work, than his jazz ones, especially when we read it in the context of academic writing and research? Would you say this is a correct observation?

5. From a curator's perspective, how would you say Sam's exhibitions communicate the intersections of jazz and art?

6**.** Borrowing from Karythn Smith's question, "If you were to try and describe to someone who didn't know about jazz, or didn't know anything about art, how Sam's work make the connection, how would you do that?" What kind of display techniques or exhibition making methods could we use?

7. One of the things that charaterised the Kind of Blue exhibition was the album playing on loop throughout the duration of the exhibition, how did this enrich the exhibition?

8. What kind of reactions did it receive?

9. Given that it was the year of the world cup, were there a lot of international audiences? Or it was it the usual art crowd that filled the gallery?

10. How do Sam's jazz exhibitions do in terms of sale, than for example his other exhibitions such as Glimpses of the fifties and sixties or say Interiors or Mine Trip for example? Do they do well?

Appendix 3: Interview Questions for artist, curator and scholar David Koloane

1. You've known and worked with Sam Nhlengethwa since his early days as a visual artist and looking at his work he seems to be more celebrated for his political art than his jazz ones, especially when it comes to writings on him in the academic arena. Would you say this is an accurate observation/ perception?

2. If yes why do you think that is? Could it be because of the skewed way in which white scholars, historians have written about black visual artists? Titles such as township art, protest, resistance art, and transitional art come to mind, which some have criticised that these labels further box the black visual artists.

3. Would you say considering these debates of representation and identity within the visual art, especially when we talk of black artist that Sam's jazz series is an attempt at self-realisation, self-writing and self- imagining?

4. I want to take you to back to the days of when you were a curator of the FUBA? Can you tell me which year this was exactly and what was the ethos of FUBA place?

5. Can you share a little bit about that experience, being in that space, what did your role entail and what kind of exhibitions did you usually put together?

6. FUBA also had a music school and it's not surprising that there would be interactions between jazz musicians and visual artists, what kind of work was produced as a result of this?

7. Did you put up any exhibitions that saw jazz featuring in your exhibitions? And if so can you try to describe what where these like?

8. As a curator, how do you think the nuances that speak to jazz and its culture be communicated in exhibition making? What kind of display techniques could we start to look at?

9. Having followed Sam's work and his exhibitions and how do you think he narrates the relationship between jazz and art? Is it the use of colour for example?

10. I'm wondering if Sam's jazz series starts to communicate a black aesthetics, what is your take on this suggestion?