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Bottled seawater: a sea inland

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BOTTLED SEAWATER: A SEA INLAND

Abstract

This project is concerned with the wide-spread practice of using sea water for healing and spiritual purposes. Deriving from Nguni and other traditions, this practice is linked to the 'people of water', usually water-based diviners, for whom the sea is a realm of ancestors, a site for spiritual cleansing and grounding. The sea holds potential to heal and its curative powers live in the water. While in the past such practices occurred at the coast, with urbanization and industrialization the practice has been adapted and now one can purchase bottles of sea water inland. The main purpose of this research is to artistically explore and reflect on beliefs and practices involving bottled seawater for spiritual, health and healing purposes.

The first chapter introduces the study, outlines its research purpose and sets out the frameworks informing the project. These are African Indigenous Knowledge, Caribbean and South African oceanic perspectives, and ritual. The second chapter explains the performative methodologies of play and ritual which have informed my ongoing series of performances. Through this framework, the body is a site of transformation. Through performance, I consider the re-positioning of rituals and their generated meaning/s within a contemporary South African context. The third chapter explores my durational performance *Black is Blue* (2019) and links it to the ideas set out in the first two chapters.