KNOWING WHAT WE DON'T WANT TO KNOW
"The ego is not master in its own house"
SAPA
SAPI
INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOANALYTICAL ASSOCIATION

KNOWING WHAT WE DON'T WANT TO KNOW: the ego is not master in its own house is a psychoanalytic inquiry into the known, the hidden, the disavowed and the unknowable — not only in the individual psyche but also within social, historical, and political life. Psychoanalytic thought, from Freud to the present, has persistently returned to the question of what is defended against, what cannot be symbolised and what the self (or society) resists and refuses to know. Whether through repression, denial, disavowal, or foreclosure, the human psyche is structured around gaps and absences — things not only forgotten but actively unthought.

Echoing the currents of erasure, distortion, and wilful blindness that flowed through our 2025 conference, we aim to explore how unknowing (and knowing) operates — not just as lack, but as force: political, psychic, affective. What do we not want to know about trauma, sexuality, gender, race, privilege, history, the body, the self? What truths are scotomised, warped, rendered abject? What kinds of knowing are forbidden, punished, or declared unspeakable? How do we survive the dread and angst that reside in both uncertainty and conviction?

SAPI/SAPA
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Kelly Bild
Bruce Laing
Michelle Jackson
Wonique Dreyer
Jonathan Percale
Ronald Davies
Vanessa Dantas e Sá
Glynis Ponton

THURSDAY				**28th May**
12.30 13.30	**REGISTRATION**			
13.30 14.30		**Drumming Circle** Facilitated by Drum Cafe		Auditorium
14.30 14.45	**Welcome**	Mary-Anne Smith (SAPI/SAPA President)		Auditorium
14.45 15.00		**COMFORT BREAK**		
15.00 16.30	**Plenary**	Ronald Davies **On knowing and some other things** Respondents: Maxine Dennis + Nicky Roberts	Chair: Jonathan Percale	Auditorium
16.30 17.00		**BREAK**		
17.00 18.15	**Parallel Session 1**	Carol Richards **Apartheid's Brutality on My Family and some Psychoanalytic Reflections** Respondent: Pieter du Toit Smit	Chair: Rooksaar Amod	Boardroom
17.00 18.15	**Parallel Session 2**	Larissa Albertino **Notes from the aftermath: letters from a black candidate training in Brazil**	Chair: Ntshediseng Tlooko	Downstairs room
17.00 18.15	**Parallel Session 3**	Elana Jacobs **The Desire for History as Will to Power – On the Significance of Sigmund Freud's Lesser-Known Theory of the Drive to Master**	Chair: Martina Griller	Auditorium
18.30 19.30	**Book Launch Jonathan Ball Publishers**	Mark Solms **The Only Cure: Freud and the Neuroscience of Mental Healing** In conversation with Greg Jonsson		Auditorium
FRIDAY				**29th May**
08.30 09.00	**REGISTRATION**			
09.00 10.45	**Plenary Panel Session**	Bruce Laing, Kelly Bild, Zama Radebe **Hidden Desires: The Knowledge We Bury Alive**	Chair: Thomas Burkhalter	Auditorium
10.45 11.15		**BREAK**		
11.15 13.15	**Walk About 1**	**Ponte City Tower**	Chair: Kelly Bild	
11.15 13.15	**Walk About 2**	**The Wilds**	Chair: Jonathan Percale	
11.15 13.15	**Walk About 3**	**Joni Brenner**	Chair: Bruce Laing	
11.15 13.15	**Walk About 4**	**Sanctuary Mandela**	Chair: Greg Jonsson	
11.15 13.15	**Film**	**And She Didn't Die** In conversation with director Kethiwe Ngcobo	Chair: TBC	Auditorium
13.15 14.30		**LUNCH**		
14.30 16.00	**Plenary**	Mark Solms **Making a mind** Respondent: Jonathan Shock	Chair: Enzo Sinisi	Auditorium
16.00 16.30		**BREAK**		
16.30 18.00	**Opt-in Thinking Space**	Facilitated by: Maxine Dennis and Jonathan Percale		Auditorium
SATURDAY				**30th May**
08.30 09.00	**REGISTRATION**			
09.00 10.30	**Plenary**	Bongi Zwane **When the Toba volcano supereruption reached Southern Africa: implications for understanding human climate interaction in the past** Respondent: Corné Wentzel	Chair: Gael Beckett	Auditorium
10.30 11.00		**BREAK**		
11.00 12.30	**Parallel Session 1 - panel**	Eckehard Pioch and Mary-Anne Smith **On the role of psychoanalytic organisations to facilitate thinking on political extremes today**	Chair: Ronald Davies	Auditorium
11.00 12.30	**Parallel Session 2 - panel**	Ntshedieseng Tlooko and Larissa Albertino **Refusing to know: psychoanalytic dialogues on racial denial in Brazil and South Africa**	Chair: Vanessa Dantas e Sá	Downstairs room
11.00 12.30	**Parallel Session 3 - panel**	Rachel Makoni, Francois Rabie, Hasmita Hardhud-Dass **Infant Observation: "lets begin at the very beginning..."**	Chair: Katharine Frost	Boardroom
12.30 13.30		**LUNCH**		
13.30 14.45	**Parallel Session 1**	Tanya Wilson **A Glimpse of the Unknowable: Death, Grief and Bion's O**	Chair: Alan Sosnovik	Boardroom
13.30 14.45	**Parallel Session 2**	Jacqui Zaina **The Unthought Known and the Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma**	Chair: Bhamini Rugnathji	Downstairs room
13.30 14.45	**Parallel Session 3**	Coletta Canale **Victim in the Perpetrator - A Psychoanalytic Exploration of Conscription in Apartheid South Africa**	Chair: Clint van der Walt	Auditorium
14.45 15.15		**BREAK**		
15.15 16.45	**Plenary**	Nkosikhona Swartbooi and Esther Chunga **Who has the rights to play?**	Chair: Wonique Dreyer	Auditorium
16.45 17.00	**CLOSING**	Glynis Ponton		Auditorium
17.00 17.15		**BREAK**		
17.15 18.45	**Opt-in Thinking Space**	Facilitated by: Maxine Dennis and Jonathan Percale		Auditorium
19.00 22.00		**CONFERENCE CLOSING DINNER WITH DJ CHARLES LEONARD**		

ON KNOWING AND SOME OTHER THINGS
Ronald Davies

Epistemology has always concerned itself with the conditions and limits under which knowledge is possible. The skeptic's challenge to any claims to objectivity is based on the premise that since we only have access to our own internal world, that is, our thoughts, sensations and feelings, any claim to objective knowing is bound to end in failure and that we are better off concerning ourselves with the nature of our existence - ontology and the nature of our suffering. The skeptic's premise has birthed several highly influential intellectual movements over the last two hundred years: existentialism, postmodernism, deconstructionism, critical theory and social constructionism. In the process, it has radically influenced our thinking regarding gender, race and class - psychoanalysis itself was born into this intellectual climate. This brief philosophical essay presents a challenge to the skeptic's premise and then examines the implications of the possibility of knowledge for psychoanalysis – in doing so, it challenges both the phenomenologist and neuroscientific traditions, while also exploring the skeptic's premise through looking at some other things: physiognomy, executioners – both legitimate and unlawful, tasseography, black cats, dentists, chocolate and vanilla ice-cream, killer plants, rocks, AI, and inverted zombies.

Ronald Davies **is a psychoanalyst based in Cape Town. His primary intellectual interests have always been the philosophy of psychology and mind and, more recently, how that intersects with psychoanalysis. He regards himself as a materialist who is agnostic surrounding the possibility of an embodied subjectivity.**

RESPONDENT: Maxine Dennis is a psychoanalyst and consultant clinical psychologist. She is a member of the British Institute of Psychoanalysis and the IPA. She is private practice in South London. Maxine is a founding member of 10 Windsor walk (psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and training in South London) and a founding member of Black Psychoanalysts Speak. She is a speaker and lecturer for various psychology, counselling, psychotherapy organisations in the UK and abroad and is a training analyst for child psychotherapy and various adult psychotherapy trainings. She has directed and staffed on numerous Group Relations Conferences in the UK and internationally.

RESPONDENT: Nicky Roberts is an Associate Professor in mathematics education, at University of Stellenbosch and director of Kelello Collectives. She has served on the Southern African Association for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, and is currently a trustee of the International Group for Psychology of Mathematics Education. She has authored two edited books and numerous journal articles.

APARTHEID'S BRUTALITY ON MY FAMILY AND SOME PSYCHOANALYTIC REFLECTIONS
Carol Richards

This paper explores the enduring psychic impact of apartheid's forced removals through a deeply personal and intergenerational account. Drawing on letters, journals and memory, Carol Richards traces her family's displacement from South End, Fairview and Korsten, revealing how land dispossession fractured identity, belonging and continuity across generations. The paper situates these lived experiences within a psychoanalytic framework, drawing on Long, Lazali, Kaminer and Eagle to examine alienation, shame, psychic homelessness and cumulative trauma. It shows how structural violence is internalised and transmitted across generations, while also highlighting memory, storytelling and witnessing as essential acts of psychic repair, ethical responsibility and collective reckoning in post-apartheid South Africa.

Carol Richards **is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst in private practice, committed to making psychoanalytic theory and practice accessible to communities in South Africa. Her work explores the impact of social context and intergenerational dynamics on psychological life. She serves on the board of the Johannesburg Psychoanalytic Clinic, providing high-quality, low-fee therapy services to diverse and historically marginalised communities.**

RESPONDENT: Pieter du Toit Smit is a psychoanalyst in private practice based in Tamboerskloof, Cape Town.

NOTES FROM THE AFTERMATH: LETTERS FROM A BLACK CANDIDATE TRAINING IN BRAZIL
Larissa Albertino

This presentation is a critical testimony from within the first cohort of an affirmative action program in a major Brazilian psychoanalytic society. It traces the trajectory for initial idealisation to the inevitable disillusion - or "fall" - that occurs when dissident bodies disrupt the institution's imagined neutrality.
Drawing on the visceral experience of this rupture, the paper analyses the institutional response through the lenses of Robin DiAngelo's "white fragility" and Carol Anderson's "white rage", faring them as defence mechanisms against this forced disillusionment. To decipher the specific Brazilian contours of this resistance, we turn to a powerful local theoretical arsenal: the psychic dynamics of "clareamento" (whitening) described by psychoanalyst Virginia Bicudo; the painful process of " Tornar-se Negro" (Becoming Black) articulated by Neusa Santos Souza; and the call for a radical "descolonização" (decolonization) of structures, as proposed by Lélia Gonzalez.
This testimony details the psychological cost of embodying the disavowed knowledge: the affective overload, the conditional belonging, and the burden of navigating a field that refuses to fully see itself, By placing the work of Franz Fanon and Grade Kilomba on the colonial trauma in dialogue with this Brazilian psychoanalytic context, the presentation argues that the "fall" of the institutional ideal is not a failure, but a necessary crisis. It is the precondition for unethical praxis that can finally confront what psychoanalysis, in Brazil and beyond, has refused to know about itself.

Larissa Albertino **is a psychoanalyst in training, scholar of the racial social program and current general representative of the students and provisional members of the Brazilian Psychoanalytical Society of Rio de Janeiro. Larissa is president of the Brazilian Candidates Association 2026/2027 and vice-president of the Latin American Candidate Organisation 2025/2026.**

THE DESIRE FOR HISTORY AS WILL TO POWER — ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SIGMUND FREUD'S LESSER-KNOWN THEORY OF THE DRIVE TO MASTER
Elana Jacobs

This presentation explores psychoanalytic dynamics in encounter groups as a form of memory work within an exchange between German and Israeli students and minority communities in Israel/Palestine, such as Druze, Bedouins, and Maronites. While participants joined with an explicit motivation for dialogue, critical reflection, and mutual recognition, the lived immediacy of meeting the Other repeatedly destabilised these intentions. In the group's interpersonal field, antisemitic and xenophobic tendencies surfaced not as abstract "opinions," but as affectively charged eruptions shaped by unconscious defences. The resulting tension between declared openness and enacted hostility illuminates how memory work can be derailed by the forceful return of what is disavowed. The analysis underscores the relevance of Freud's drive to master for contemporary inquiries into history, politics, and collective memory—where what is unbearable or inconvenient insists on returning in the social field.

Elana Jacobs **is a psychoanalyst and psychotherapist specialising in working with children, adolescents, and parents in private practice. Since 2014, she has led encounter-group projects between Israeli and German universities. Her research examines encounter groups as a tool for reflective memory work, drawing on the contact hypothesis and psychoanalytic intersubjectivity theory. She teaches at the International Psychoanalytic University Berlin and at the Anna Freud Institute Frankfurt.**

HIDDEN DESIRES: THE KNOWLEDGE WE BURY ALIVE
Bruce Laing, Kelly Bild, Zama Radebe

This panel examines sexuality as a site of disturbance, disavowal, and privileged not knowing. Attending to homosexuality, bisexuality, and the often-unspoken shame that saturates heterosexual life, we ask how sexuality unsettles moral certainty, theoretical reassurance, and personal coherence. Drawing on clinical material, psychoanalytic theory, and personal narratives, the panel approaches sexuality as something that resists being fully known and resurfaces in unsettling ways. Rather than an absence, not knowing is treated as an achievement, sustained through shame, moralization, and psychic labour.

Bruce Laing **is a clinical psychologist and senior candidate psychoanalyst with the South African Psychoanalytical Association and works in private practice in Cape Town. He teaches psychoanalytic theory for GRASP and the SAPI College.**

Kelly Bild **is a clinical psychologist and candidate psychoanalyst with the South African Psychoanalytic Association. She works in private practice in Johannesburg. Previously she worked with the Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust and People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA). Kelly teaches psychoanalytic theory for GRASP.**

Zama Radebe **is a clinical psychologist and a psychoanalyst. She is a member of the South African Psychoanalytical Association and the IPA. Zama previously worked in the public sector and currently works in private practice in Johannesburg**

Walk Abouts

Ponte City Tower stands tall as Johannesburg's most iconic skyscraper and a symbol of urban transformation. Once notorious for decay and peril, this 54-storey cylindrical giant has risen from its turbulent past to become a living testament to resilience and renewal. On our Ponte Experience tour, expert local guides will lead you from the building's engineered heart up to breathtaking panoramic views on the 51st floor, sharing stories of its evolution from luxury residence to misunderstood landmark and back to a vibrant community space. This bespoke journey blends history, architecture, and the spirit of contemporary Johannesburg.

The Wilds is one of Johannesburg's most extraordinary stories of urban renewal.
Once neglected and considered unsafe, this 16-hectare ridge above the city has been reclaimed through visionary community activism and bold public art. Today, winding stone paths lead visitors through indigenous gardens, dramatic city viewpoints, and a growing collection of striking sculptures and installations woven into the landscape. For our conference, an expert guide will offer a bespoke tour, sharing the history of its revival and the creative energy that transformed a forgotten space into a vibrant sanctuary of beauty, resilience, and imagination.

Our visit to ***artist Joni Brenner's home and studio*** invites an encounter with examples of her portraiture practice with long-term models in the studio, and with the hand-loomed beaded necklaces, produced in collaboration with the Marigold women's beadwork co-operative in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Both endeavours share processes of close observation and reflection, of repetition (different from replication), listening, responding, and following leads that could not have been known at the outset. The portrait practice and the bead studio's monthly production of necklaces are, in different and shared ways, tactile and tangible material representations of time, place, presence and connection.

Sanctuary Mandela is a hotel set in Nelson Mandela's former Houghton residence. Once home to Madiba after Robben Island and later the Nelson Mandela Foundation's headquarters, the hotel features exhibits honouring Mandela and invites reflection and engagement with his life and values. The Heritage House Tour will guide us through the home's history, revealing the stories and significance behind each corner of this reimagined landmark.

"AND SHE DIDN'T DIE"
Kethiwe Ngcobo

"And She Didn't Die" follows a daughter as she chronicles her mother Lauretta Ngcobo's journey from rural South Africa to revolutionary courier to acclaimed feminist writer in exile. Using family archives, historical footage, dramatic re-enactments, and powerful readings from Lauretta's works, the film reveals how her dangerous political work, her escape through Swaziland and Zambia, and her ultimate exile in the UK, where she found her voice as a writer, became acts of resistance. With a non-linear narrative structure that mirrors memory's fragmented nature, the film documents not only Lauretta's political journey but the complex relationship between mother and daughter, preserving Lauretta Ngcobo's voice and legacy for future generations.

Kethiwe Ngcobo **is an accomplished South African filmmaker and founder of Fuzebox Entertainment, with over two decades of work across drama, features, and documentaries. Drawn to a wide range of genres, her storytelling is united by a commitment to unapologetically African narratives that explore memory, identity, and the richness of human experience. Her films have screened at leading international festivals including Sheffield Doc Fest, IDFA, FESPACO, Berlinale, and Encounters.**

MAKING A MIND
Mark Solms

There is much to be learned about what a 'mind' is by trying to make one. Solms is part of a team that is currently doing this. Not trying to make an artificial intelligence, but an artificial mind: one that possesses a subjective perspective, that is affected by good and bad feelings of various kinds, on the basis of which it acts in its own interests with a sense of free will, and that learns from experience and thereby follows an individualized path through life. Except it is not alive. This talk will describe the current state of this fascinating project.

Mark Solms **is Director of Neuropsychology in the Neuroscience Institute at UCT. He is Director of Training for SAPA and Science Director for the American Psychoanalytic Association. He is also a member of the British Psychoanalytical Society, an Honorary Fellow of the American College of Psychiatrists, and an Honorary Lecturer in Neurosurgery at the Royal London Hospital. He received the Sigourney Prize in 2011. He has published 350 peer-reviewed articles and nine books, the latest being The Only Cure. He is editor of the Revised Standard Edition and is currently editing the four-volume Complete Neuroscientific Works of Sigmund Freud.**

RESPONDENT: Jonathan Shock is an Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics at the University of Cape Town and Adjunct Professor at the INRS, Montreal. He is also the interim director of the UCT AI Initiative and runs the African hub on AI Safety, Peace and Security. After completing his PhD in string theory at the University of Southampton, his research now spans theoretical physics, artificial intelligence and neuroscience. For the last five years, he has collaborated with Professor Mark Solms to try to understand artificial consciousness.

FACILITATORS OF OPT-IN THINKING SPACES
Maxine Dennis, Jonathan Percale

Maxine Dennis **is a psychoanalyst and consultant clinical psychologist. She is a member of the British Institute of Psychoanalysis and the IPA. She is private practice in South London. Maxine is a founding member of 10 Windsor walk (psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and training in South London) and a founding member of Black Psychoanalysts Speak. She is a speaker and lecturer for various psychology, counselling, psychotherapy organisations in the UK and abroad and is a training analyst for child psychotherapy and various adult psychotherapy trainings. She has directed and staffed on numerous Group Relations Conferences in the UK and internationally.**

Jonathan Percale **is a clinical psychologist and member of SAPI. He was previously the Head of the Department of Psychology at The Tara H. Moross Centre. At Tara, he was passionate about the development and delivery of psychological services to the in and out patient community and supported the promotion and delivery of services to the broader community. Jonathan currently works in private practice and maintains his interest in individual therapy and supervision, working with couples, families and groups.**

WHEN THE TOBA VOLCANO SUPERERUPTION REACHED SOUTHERN AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING HUMAN CLIMATE INTERACTION IN THE PAST
Bongekile Zwane

Lake Toba is the source of a volcano eruption that almost sent modern humans to near extinction 74 ka. In the year 2018, it was revealed that the Youngest Toba Tuff (YTT) reached southern Africa. Since it was determined that this is the only volcano super-eruption to occur during human history, the impact of this event on the late Pleistocene human populations has been explained through the Toba Catastrophe Theory (TCT). Environmental evidence of the MIS 5/4 transition in southern Africa suggests that this super-eruption was mitigated by the proximity of the landscape from Lake Toba and human cultural resilience.

Bongekile Zwane **is an anthracologist and a lecturer at the Palaeo-Research Institute, University of Johannesburg. Her research focus is in archaeobotany and palaeoecology of southern Africa. She specialises in using archaeological wood charcoal to reconstruct past climates and infer how ancient societies utilized woody plants for food, fuel, medicine and other resources. Her research currently investigates how the Last Glacial Maximum affected vegetation distribution and people's well-being on the east edge of the Palaeo Agulhas Plain through the anthracological analysis of wood charcoal from the Knysna locality.**

RESPONDENT: Corné Wentzel is a senior psychoanalytic candidate psychoanalyst with the South African Psychoanalytical Association. Prior to her entry into this profession she worked in the IT industry as a business analyst and executive. Her psychoanalytic practice is in Johannesburg, where she works with adults as individuals and couples. She volunteers with the Ububele PIP initiative at Edenvale Hospital. Corné has a special interest in how the practice of psychoanalysis engages with its context.

ON THE ROLE OF PSYCHOANALYTIC ORGANISATIONS TO FACILITATE THINKING ON POLITICAL EXTREMES TODAY
Eckehard Pioch, Mary-Anne Smith

Most psychoanalysts would agree that it is our task to show empathy for the suffering experienced by all victims of collective atrocities. And yet this does not always seem to be successful. The discussion on the current conflict in the Middle East shows: there is also a struggle within our psychoanalytic community over the question of whose suffering is deserving of our attention. A toxic polarization has emerged. Along with Jessica Benjamin (2019), we would like to propose the idea that behind this lies the phantasy that "only one can live." Benjamin´s concept of the "moral third" seems to be helpful to shed light to these dynamics as Jill Stauffer´s "ethical loneliness" does. After Eckehard Pioch's paper Mary-Anne Smith will be in dialogue with the presenter, followed by a discussion with the audience.

Eckehard Pioch **is a psychologist and training and supervising analyst of the German Psychoanalytical Society (DPG) and of the IPA. He is the current DPG president. Eckehard teaches at the Psychoanalytical Institute of Berlin and has written various clinical papers. He is editor and co-author of several books. He is chair of the EPF committee on prejudice and discrimination.**

Mary-Anne Smith **is a clinical psychologist and training and supervising psychoanalyst of the South African Psychoanalytical Association. She is a member of the IPA and the current president of SAPI and SAPA.**

REFUSING TO KNOW: PSYCHOANALYTIC DIALOGUES ON RACIAL DENIAL IN BRAZIL AND SOUTH AFRICA
Larissa Albertino, Ntshediseng Tlooko

This panel establishes a critical dialogue between Brazil and South Africa to explore how colonialism and racial violence create parallel psychic landscapes. Despite different histories—apartheid versus "racial democracy"—both societies are structured by collective disavowal: the deep trauma of racial subjugation and mechanisms that maintain inequality. Through a psychoanalytic lens, we investigate defences—repression, denial, psychic numbing—that allow societies to not know what they know. Examining subjective experience, the social unconscious, and whiteness, we ask how psychoanalysis can listen to marginalised experiences and deconstruct psychic investments in racism, developing practice responsive to the Global South.

Larissa Albertino **is a psychoanalyst in training, scholar of the racial social program and current general representative of the students and provisional members of the Brazilian Psychoanalytical Society of Rio de Janeiro. Larissa is president of the Brazilian Candidates Association 2026/2027 and vice-president of the Latin American Candidate Organisation 2025/2026.**

Ntshediseng Tlooko **is a clinical psychologist and a senior candidate psychoanalyst with the South African Psychoanalytical Association and works in private practice in Johannesburg. She co-authored an article with Coralie Trotter and Bruce Laing, titled the Mark of the Decanting and the Brick Mother Report, published in The Psychoanalytic Review, 2023. Ntshediseng was a SAPI/SAPA Conference committee member for six years and worked at the Johannesburg Metro Clinics for seven years.**

INFANT OBSERVATION: "LETS BEGIN AT THE VERY BEGINNING..."
Rachel Makoni, Francois Rabie, Hasmita Hardhud-Dass

This panel discussion aims to show how the practice of infant observation offers an opportunity for participants to enter into an exploration of their own unknown and unacknowledged prejudices, an opportunity to explore and experience the impact of primitive anxieties and to reflect on the value of these for psychodynamic training and development. This practice asks observers to set aside any assumptions they might have about themselves and others, and to offer themselves up to learning from experience by starting right at the beginning of life – learning from an infant; adopting a beginner's mind. We'll show how the deeply emotional impact of learning from experience changes those who are open to learning and allow themselves to experience deeply the pain and hope in what they see by attempting to view the world from the infant's perspective.

Rachel Makoni **is an educational psychologist, and a qualified early childhood development and primary school teacher. She has a Masters in Infant Mental Health from Stellenbosch University. Rachel currently works in private practice as a psychologist, supporting adults and children. She is involved in a project that equips healthcare professionals in maternal and infant mental health in Zimbabwe.**

Francois Rabie **is a senior clinical psychologist at Stikland Psychiatric Hospital, Cape Town and a senior lecturer in the Psychiatry Department, Stellenbosch University. Francois is in the final phase of training as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist with the SAPI College and he holds psychotherapist-in-training status with the American Psychoanalytic Association. He is also completing his PhD at the University of Cape Town.**

Hasmita Hardhud-Dass **is a social worker and clinical psychologist with a special interest in mother-infant attachment. During her internship she initiated mother-infant psychoeducation and support programs within government hospital maternity units. Hasmita currently works in private practice and is training as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist with the SAPI College.**

A GLIMPSE OF THE UNKNOWABLE: DEATH, GRIEF AND BION'S O
Tanya Wilson

This paper charts a personal journey of traumatic grief and of the undifferentiated states that accompany it. Weaving between the personal and the theoretical, it tracks a collapse of language in the face of grief, a loss of faith in psychoanalytic theory, and a return to both through the portal of Bion's ontology. Also drawing on literature, as well as Freud and Klein, it ultimately highlights the value of Bion's contribution to our psychoanalytic understanding of how we truly 'come to know' the unknowable. It argues that his concept of unknowable O is the best possible psychoanalytic orb in which to cast the experience of death and, in turn, that grief may be one of the human experiences that offers us a glimpse of O.

Tanya Wilson **is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist based in Cape Town. She works primarily with individual adults but did also work with young children for many years. She is a long-time member of SAPI and currently on the SAPI College Committee. She was on the Committee of the Institute for Psychodynamic Child Psychotherapy (IPCP) for fifteen years. She has taught the theories of Wilfred Bion for the IPCP as well as for the SAPI College.**

THE UNTHOUGHT KNOWN AND THE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF TRAUMA
Jacqui Zaina

This paper attempts to explain the mechanisms involved in the intergenerational transmission of trauma experienced by families labelled "coloured," who were forcibly removed by the apartheid regime. Using vignettes from two clinical cases, the author draws on Raphael-Leff's concept of "psychic geodes" (Dark Side of the Womb, 2015), to expound a theory of how an inexplicable trauma can be split-off, remaining unprocessed. The cases presented here, suggest that to the extent that forced removals disrupted "coloured" communities' sense of belonging and identity, they constituted the kind of psychological erasure discussed by Lazali in, A Clinic of Colonial Trauma, from Algeria (2025). The author proposes that subsequent generations potentially suffer a lingering sense of "phantom pain" (Raphael-Leff, 2015), which they struggle to understand or articulate.

Jacqui Zaina **is a member of SAPI and a counselling psychologist in private practice in Cape Town. She obtained her D. Litt et Phil from the University of Johannesburg. Jacqui specialised in Post-structural theory, Diversity and Ecology during her doctorate and worked at Agape, an outdoor community clinic in Mamelodi, Pretoria.**

VICTIM IN THE PERPETRATOR - A PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPLORATION OF CONSCRIPTION IN APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA
Coletta Canale

This paper offers a psychoanalytic exploration of white South African men conscripted into the SADF during apartheid. Drawing on testimonies from the TRC, memoirs and clinical reflection, it considers how adolescent vulnerability, authoritarian grooming and militarised masculinity positioned conscripts as perpetrators against their own emerging moral selves. Themes of paternal betrayal, disavowal and moral injury are examined to understand the enduring psychic traces of an 'unpopular war'. The paper argues that to contribute to national recovery, thinking about the victim within the perpetrator is required, and facing up to conscription's intimate legacy.

Coletta Canale **is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice in Cape Town. Previously, as a social worker, her work experience was varied such as in a hospital trauma unit in London, a children's home in the Eastern Cape and running a shelter for homeless boys in Cape Town. She holds a Diploma in Communication with Children and Adolescents from the Tavistock and Portman Trust and qualified as a couple therapist through the Association of Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists.**

WHO HAS THE RIGHTS TO PLAY?
Nkosikhona "Face" Swaartbooi, Esther Chunga

THE RIGHT TO PLAY AS PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE: HEALING JUSTICE, YOUTH WELLBEING, AND THE STATE'S DUTY OF CARE.
This presentation examines the Right to Play and Healing Justice Network as a response to systemic neglect that compromises children's safety in poor and working-class communities. Unsafe play environments, coupled with limited access to psychological support, perpetuate trauma, inequality, and developmental harm. By leveraging local football infrastructures, the network integrates mental health education, counselling, mentorship, and community-led healing spaces, equipping young people and coaches to address intergenerational trauma and gender-based violence. Framing play as a public right and safety as a state responsibility, this work demonstrates how healing justice can transform sport and play into platforms for inclusive, preventative, and culturally grounded child wellbeing.

Nkosikhona "Face" Swaartbooi **is an urban justice strategist and movement builder with over 15 years of experience working at the intersection of youth politics, housing justice, mental health and participatory democracy in South Africa. He is the founding organiser of Reclaim the City, the founder of Movement for Collective Action and Racial Equity (Movement for CARE) and the founder of the Healing Justice Network. Nkosikhona has previously held leadership roles at Social Justice Coalition, Ndifuna Ukwazi and Bertha House, and has served on multiple boards in the civil society space. He is a Ford Global Fellowship, a Mail & Guardian Top 200 Young South Africans alumnus and an alumnus of the University of Cape Town Building Bridges Programme.**

WHO GETS TO PLAY? ACCESS, OTHERING AND PSYCHOANALYTIC PLAY AT THE MARGINS
This presentation explores the Ububele Ubuntu Bus, a mobile psychoanalytic playgroup intervention in Setswetla, Alexandra; an informal settlement marked by poverty, overcrowding, and environmental precarity. Following extensive community consultation, twice-weekly 90-minute play-based sessions formed the intervention. These groups created shared spaces where children and caregivers could engage in play that supported reflection, caregiver responsiveness, and nurtured parent–child relationships within a collective community experience. Practitioners navigated complexities of race, power, privilege, safety, and "otherness," often being named Umlungu, regardless of racial identity. Supervision provided a space to process these dynamics. Over time, the community increasingly claimed and protected the play space, illustrating how mobile, relational interventions can expand access to play, amplify community voice, and sustain ethical engagement amid structural inequality.

Esther Chunga **is a psychologist, psychoanalyst, and the Executive Director of The Ububele Educational and Psychotherapy Trust. She is a member of the South African Psychoanalytical Association and the IPA. Esther is especially concerned with the application of psychodynamic and psychoanalytic approaches in contexts marked by social inequality, structural violence, and intergenerational trauma. Through her leadership at Ububele, she contributes to the development of interventions that are responsive to the complex psychic needs of children, families, and communities living in highly deprived and under-resourced environments.**

CONFERENCE CLOSING DINNER & DJ CHARLES LEONARD
NELSON MANDELA FOUNDATION
SATURDAY 30 MAY 2026,
19:00 – 22:00

Dinner menu by The Village Café

Dinner will be an abundant harvest table including an assortment of meze platters, loaded hummus, chimichurri rump platters, caprese salad, artichokes and whipped feta, Asian chicken salad, roasted chickpea caesar salad, crushed baby potato salad as well as a cheese board and an assortment of pita breads. Dessert will be pasteis de nata wonky meringues served with seasonal berries and granadilla coulis.

Charles Leonard is a DJ, editor, broadcaster, podcaster, award-winning journalist, music critic and an obsessive collector of vinyl. He has been a DJ for 26 years.
As collector of vinyl records for five decades now, he loves sharing records from his eclectic, vast collection in his DJ sets. Charles's approach with his sets is to introduce, remind, surprise and entertain – he plays everything from jazz to soul, reggae to rock, dub to electronica, township jive to hip-hop, disco to funk.
His vast record collection is a mix of old and brand new. "I never stop collecting, which you can hear in my sets," Charles explains. "I enjoy my DJ sessions to be like when a friend comes to visit me at home, and I play them a selection of my favourite jazz records."
As someone who became politically involved during the anti-apartheid struggle, Charles also still believes that music needs to tell stories and engage with society and politics. He says this is reflected in his record digging habit: "After all, we're not only diggers, we're dreamers too."
Charles is the resident DJ at the Breezeblock Cafe in Brixton and has DJ'd at clubs and bars such as The Orbit jazz club (before its closure), LeVine in Rosebank, One Park in Cape Town, Kitchener's in Braamfontein and has regular jazz and reggae sets in Vosloorus and Katlehong shebeens on the East Rand. He has previously done music specialist programmes for RSG, a public service radio station at the SABC.
Charles recently DJ'd at the first Montreux Jazz Festival South Africa in Franschhoek.
He is also a music podcaster and arts journalist.

CONFERENCE PREPACKED LUNCH OPTIONS
by The Village Café
FRIDAY 29 & SATURDAY 30 MAY 2026

A. **Panini Caprese Ciabatta - Vegetarian**
Fresh Mozarella, juicy tomatoes drizzled with basil pesto and balsamic olive oil dressing tucked into coarse salt and rosemary foccacia bread

B. **Rump and Caramelised Onions**
Pan fried rump thinly sliced and tucked into a crispy baguette, garnished with rocket, caramelised onions and a drizzle of fresh chimichurri

C. **Honey Mustard Chicken Roll**
Crumbed chicken breast strips crammed into a french baguette, garnished with crunchy greans, avocado and tangy honey mustard mayo

D. **Muffuletta Sandwich - Vegan**
Focaccia bread filled with marinated brinjals, roasted red peppers, grilled courgette and olive tapenade, drizzled with fresh basil pesto

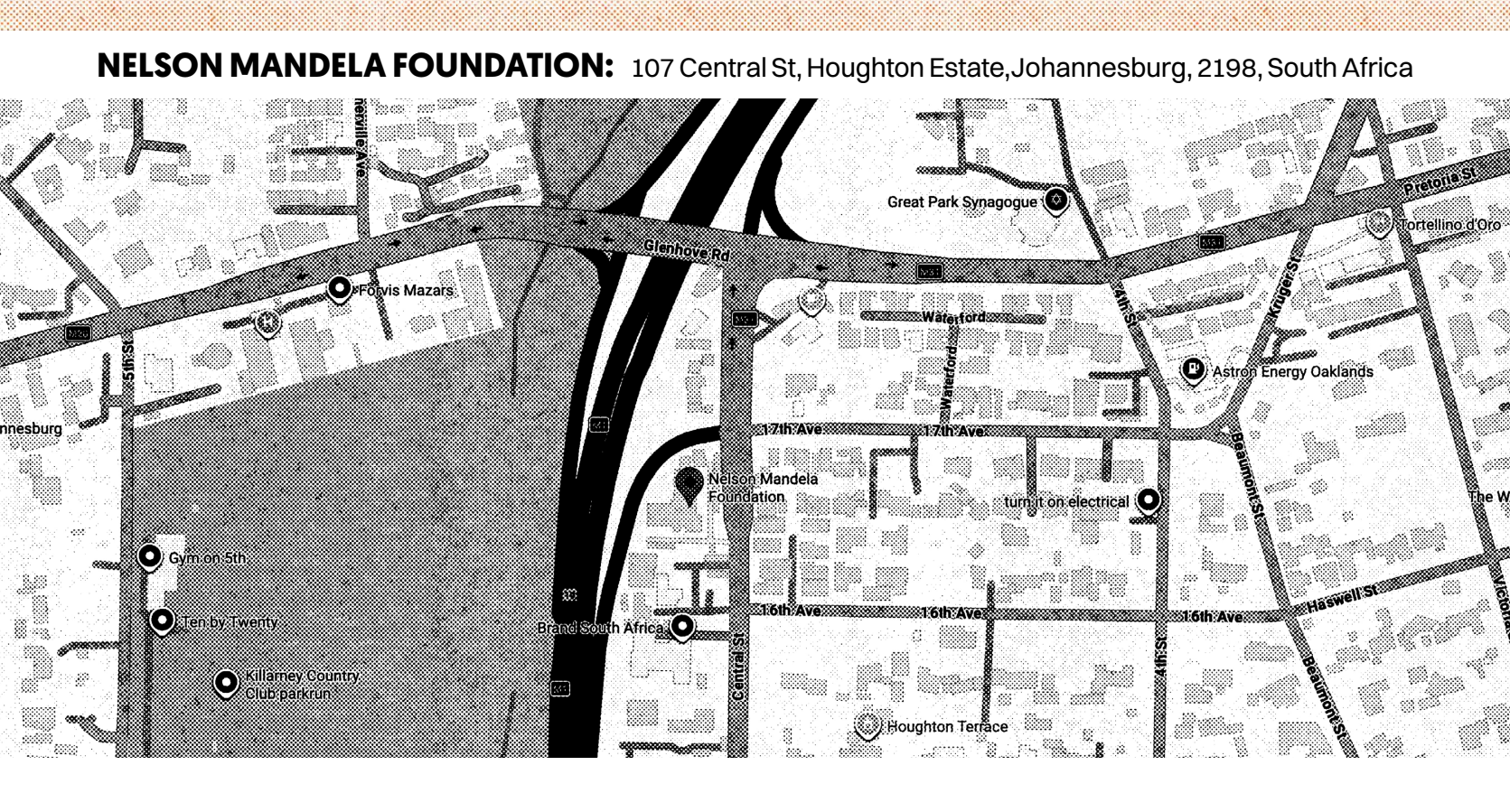
E. **Mediterranean Steak Bowl**
150g pan fried rump on a bed of crisp kos lettuce, hummus, sweet balsamic tomatoes, roasted red onions, feta, calamata olives and a drizzle of green goddess dressing

F. **Roast Beetroot and Pumpkin Bowl - Vegetarian**
Balsamic glazed roasted beetroot and charred pumpkin served on a bed of kos lettuce and wild rocket, garnished with avocado, feta and chargrilled red onion and toasted walnuts, served with a balsamic reduction

G. **Chicken and Pearl Barley Bowl**
Tender grilled chicken breast served on a bed of pearl barley, garnished with feta,cucumber, spring onions and a light tzatziki dressing

H. **Sweet Roast Potatoes with Miso and Sunflower Seed Clusters - Vegan**
Roasted sweat potato rounds served on a bed of coarse cous cous, garnished with wild rocket, cranberries and sunflower seed clusters, served with an umami miso dressing

NELSON MANDELA FOUNDATION: 107 Central St, Houghton Estate,Johannesburg, 2198, South Africa



KNOWING WHAT WE DON'T WANT TO KNOW:
The ego is not master in its own house

SAPI/SAPA 2026 Conference