



NICOLA BRANDT

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## Bio

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As a Namibian-born artist of German descent, Brandt (b. 1983) reflects on the painful legacy of Namibia's colonization by German forces in the second half of the 19th and early 20th century. Brandt originally set out to understand how Namibian landscapes – an attraction for international tourists – took on a completely different meaning when she engaged with the idea of landscape from the historical and contemporary perspective of the German-Namibian War of 1904-1908. Brandt interrogates the long Romantic tradition of benign depictions of dramatic landscapes that still pervade popular visual culture and the touristic marketing of Namibia, to uncover memories of violent struggle.

After being invited to wear the Herero dress, which was originally introduced by missionaries and later appropriated and transformed by Herero women who still wear it today for special occasions, Brandt shares many hours of discussions over three years with Uakondjisa Kakuekuee Mbari. Through this invitation and exchange of ideas, a new body of work emerges. Together they explore their entangled colonial histories and how these spectres still haunt the present. As the artist seeks to record the invisible in the landscape, and how related memories and amnesia are situated in place, she turns the camera back onto herself and draws attention to the dualities that still pervade the land and the histories that mark it.

Brandt's work explores experimental and post-documentary practices in relationship to the role of memory, narrative, and positionality within the discourses of conflict and legacies of colonialism. Brandt will publish her Oxford doctoral thesis *Emerging Landscapes* with Bloomsbury Press in 2019-2020. Brandt has presented a solo exhibition at the National Art Gallery of Namibia. Her work can be found in a number of important collections including The National Art Gallery of Namibia; Embassy of Namibia, Germany; Würth Collection, Germany, and the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, Namibia.

Brandt lives and works in Namibia and the UK.





*An Inventory of Remnants*, Diaz Point, 2013. Digital Pigment Print. 90 x 60 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP

The wooden bridge shown here in 2013 leads from the replica Diaz Cross on a rock pinnacle overlooking the sea to the shore. It has since been washed away. The Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Diaz landed here at Angra Pequena, the present-day !Nami#Nus / Lüderitz, Namibia, in 1487. Archaeological findings show that long before the first Europeans arrived on the Namibian coast, the Khoisan already knew the area. Herero and Nama prisoners were kept in the vicinity at Shark Island during the German-Namibian War of 1904-1908.





*The Salt of August*, Between Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, 2012. Digital Pigment Print, 90 x 60 cm, Edition of 5 + 2AP





*Once*, Outside !Nami#Nus/Lüderitz, 2013.

Diptych, Digital Pigment Print, 80cm x 54cm, Edition of 5 + 2AP

These are some of the landscapes that surround the town of !Nami#Nus/Lüderitz and Shark Island, where the prisoner-of-war camp was situated during the German-Namibian War (1904-1908). Herero prisoners began to arrive here at the beginning of 1905. Nama prisoners were sent to the island from September 1906 onwards. According to the historian Marion Wallace, 'Photographs taken on Shark Island by a German officer, Lieutenant von Düring, in 1905 illustrate the desperate conditions endured by the prisoners and construct a visual choreography of domination by the military, of which the sexual degradation of female prisoners was an integral part...mortality on Shark Island itself was in the region of 70 percent.'

















*Across the River*, Uakondjisa Kakuekuee Mbari, Swakopmund, Namib Desert, 2013, 90 x 60 cm, Digital Pigment Print, Edition of 3 + 2AP

Uakondjisa Kakuekuee Mbari gazing over the Swakop river and desert near the Herero and Nama graves in Swakopmund.  
Many died of illness and exhaustion in the prisoners-of-war.





*The Return*, en route to !Nami#nūs/Lüderitz, Namibia, 2012. Digital Pigment Print, 90 x 60 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP





*Scheppmansdorf*, 2013. Digital Pigment Print, 90 x 60 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP

The mission settlement of Scheppmansdorf was founded in 1845 by the Rhenish missionary Heinrich Scheppman. German missionaries played a strong role in the history of Namibia, until the war of 1904 to 1908 between the Herero and Nama people and the German colonizers.













*Next to the Graves*, Swakopmund (2012), Digital Pigment Print, 72.4 x 52.6 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP

A private residence in Riverside Road, Swakopmund, built directly next to unidentified graves of Herero and Nama prisoners-of-war who died during the German-Namibian War (1904-1908).













*Light in February*, Uakondjisa Kakuekuee Mbari at her home in Swakopmund, Namibia, 2013.  
Digital Pigment Print, 90.6 x 64.6 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP.



## List of Images

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Cover image: *Illuminated, Unrecounted*, Diaz Point, 2013. Digital Pigment Print, 119 x 86 cm , Edition of 3 + 2AP

As an artist using the photographic and film medium, I have become increasingly aware of unrecorded events from the past, which remain hidden or not heard. I am also aware of the impossibility of capturing the complexity of lived experience. Photographs often do not record experience as much as it does its absence. The photograph detaches an experience from its original place or effect, and what is presented to us is something we might never have possessed in the first place. We are left with disrupted and fragmented narratives.

p. 7: *Captivity*, Namib Desert, 2013. Digital Pigment Print, 90 x 60 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP

p. 8: *Desert Storm*, en route to !Nami#nüs/Lüderitz, Namibia, 2012. Digital Pigment Print, 90 x 60 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP

p. 9: *Progress*, Salt Pans, Walvis Bay, 2011. Digital Pigment Print, 68 x 49 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP

p. 13: *Possession*, Uakondjisa Kakuekuee Mbari, Namib Desert, 2013. Digital Pigment Print, 90 x 60 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP

As a female figure moves through mysterious and hostile territories, she experiences a split identification between a traumatic past and an uncertain future. Through this state of precariousness, she develops a new form of defiance, acknowledging and reclaiming her unique position in these spaces. This series continues my investigation into the shared legacies of colonialism, honouring alternative stories and futures that hegemonic narratives often fail to acknowledge or develop.

p.14: *The Shape of Memory*. Wlotzkasbaken, Namibia (2012), Digital Pigment Print, 90 x 60 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP

On the desert coast of Namibia, Wlotzkasbaken was originally used by coachman and trader Paul Wlotzka as a halfway stop for water and food, circa 1915. The Wlotzka houses, originally recycled from shipping crates and often used as vacation homes, belong to a select class of mainly white Namibians who pride themselves on isolation and simplicity. Generous space both links and establishes distance between the houses. The virtually invisible boundaries strongly signify ‘separateness’, without actual physical impediment to access.

p. 16: *Guardian I*, Namib Desert, 2017. Digital Pigment Print, 91,5 x 62,5 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP

p. 17: *Extraction*, Namib Desert, 2017. Digital Pigment Print, 91,5 x 62,5 cm, Edition of 3 + 2AP

\* Please note that the photographs (90 x 60 cm printed area) come with a 5 cm margin on the top and sides, and 8 cm margin bottom = 100 cm x 73cm.  
The smaller photographs (65 x 43.4 cm printed area), come with a 3.7 cm top and side margin, and 5,5 cm margin bottom = 72.4 x 52.6 cm print.

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (most recent)

|                     |                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Oct 2017–Sep 2018   | Gerda Henkel Foundation fellowship, University of Hamburg, Hamburg                                                      |
| Sep 2016–Oct 2017   | Research Collaborator. Wellcome Trust: Seed Award in Humanities and Social Sciences.                                    |
| Mar 2016–March 2017 | Visiting Artist/Academic. Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford.                                                   |
| Jan 2014–May 2015   | Visiting Lecturer in History and Theory of Photography. History of Art Department, John Cabot University, Rome.         |
| Jan 2015–May 2015   | Visiting Lecturer in Digital and Media Practices. Film and Digital Media Department. American University of Rome, Rome. |

EDUCATION (most recent)

DPhil in Fine Art (March 2015), University of Oxford, Ruskin School of Art and Christ Church.  
 Thesis title: *Emerging Landscapes: Memory, Trauma, and its Afterimage in Post-Apartheid Namibia and South Africa*.  
 Examiners: Liz Wells (Plymouth); Malcolm Bull (Oxford).  
 MSt in the History of Art, Oxford University, Oxford, October 2007 – June 2008:  
 Thesis title: *William Kentridge: Processing Memory and the Grotesque* (distinction)

AWARDS + SCHOLARSHIPS (selected)

|           |                                                                  |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2017-2018 | Gerda Henkel Foundation fellowship                               |
| 2016–2017 | IFA (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)                           |
| 2016      | Wellcome Trust: Seed Award in Humanities and Social Science      |
| 2014      | Namibian Film and Theatre Awards: Special Mention of the Jury    |
| 2010–2014 | Christ Church, University of Oxford, Hugh Pilkington Scholarship |

SOLO + GROUP SHOWS (selected)

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2016 | <i>Kunst Einer Jungen Generation</i> , Museum Würth, Künzelsau                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2016 | <i>Mo(ve)ments: African Digital Subjectivities</i> , Yale School of Art, Yale University, Yale, New Haven                                                                                                                  |
| 2015 | <i>Land Matters in Art</i> , Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) & the Namibian Ministry of Land Reform, St. Johannes-Evangelist-Kirche, Auguststraße 90, Berlin                                 |
| 2015 | Christoph Schlingensief & Nicola Brandt, <i>Unrecounted: Historical Amnesia in Germany and Namibia</i> , Filmgalerie 451 and The National Art Gallery of Namibia, Conservatorio Benedetto Marcello, Palazzo Pisani, Venice |
| 2015 | <i>Re-presenting Photography in Namibia</i> , group exhibition, Annual Visual Art Museum Programme (AVAMP), Windhoek                                                                                                       |
| 2014 | <i>The Earth Inside</i> , solo exhibition, National Art Gallery of Namibia, Windhoek                                                                                                                                       |
| 2012 | <i>Namibia: Definitions of Space</i> , group exhibition, London Festival of Architecture 2012 at Ambika P3, University of Westminster, London                                                                              |
| 2012 | <i>In Site: Art as A Mode of Enquiry</i> , group exhibition, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford                                                                                                                                      |
| 2011 | <i>Fuori Campo</i> , group exhibition, Galleria Fuori Campo, Piazza del Campo, Siena, Italy                                                                                                                                |
| 2011 | <i>Wlotzkasbaken</i> , solo exhibition, International Photography Festival, Galleria Edieuropa, Rome                                                                                                                       |

PUBLICATIONS (selected)

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2018 | Brandt, Nicola, <i>Renegotiating Landscapes: Art, Photography and Politics in Postcolonial Documentary Practices</i> , Bloomsbury Press, (In press, publication date winter 2019).        |
| 2015 | Brandt, Nicola, 'Interviews with Raphael Chikukwa and Antonio Olé, Curators of the Zimbabwean and Angolan Pavilions, Venice Biennale, 2015' in <i>ArtWolfe Zine</i> Online, October 2015. |
| 2010 | Brandt, Nicola, <i>Das Reiterdenkmal</i> (Rome: Punctum Editions, 2010).                                                                                                                  |
| 2010 | Brandt, Nicola, 'The Afterlife of Images' in <i>A Question of Time</i> , exh. cat., American Academy in Rome (Rome: Punctum Editions, 2010).                                              |
| 2009 | Brandt, Nicola and Marco Delogu, <i>Guy Tillim, Roma, Città di Mezzo</i> , (Rome: Punctum Editions, 2009).                                                                                |
| 2009 | Brandt, Nicola, 53rd Venice Biennale ( <i>Art South Africa</i> , Vol. 08, Issue 01, Spring 2009).                                                                                         |
| 2005 | Brandt, Nicola, 'Moshekwa' in <i>Moshekwa Langa: MAXXI Museum: National Museum for 21st Century Arts</i> , exh. cat., ed. Paolo Colombo (Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2005).                  |

TEXTS + PRESS (selected)

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2018 | Denise Lim, 'What the Landscape Recalls' in <i>Art Africa</i> (online) (upcoming)                                                                                                                              |
| 2018 | Kea Wienand, 'Deutsche' Kolonialgeschichte als Thema postkolonialer Kunst, Iwalewaha, University of Bayreuth, Germany (unpublished/In press)                                                                   |
| 2017 | Fabian Lehmann, 'A Place of Eclectic Remembrance: Visiting Luderitz's Shark Island today,' paper, ECAS 7, Basel (study in progress)                                                                            |
| 2016 | <i>Kunst Einer Jungen Generation</i> , catalogue, Museum Würth, (Künzelsau: Swiridoff, 2016)                                                                                                                   |
| 2016 | 'Nos quatre coups de cœur de la foire d'art contemporain africain AKAA, à Paris' in <i>Le Monde (Afrique)</i> Online, 11 November 2016.                                                                        |
| 2016 | Middleton, Susan, 'Beelde wat in lae spreek' in <i>Rapport</i> , (Johannesburg, South Africa), November 2016, 11.                                                                                              |
| 2015 | Schaar, Elisa, 'Unrecounted: Historical Amnesia in Germany and Namibia: Exhibition Reviews' in <i>ARTMargins</i> Online, 6 November 2015.                                                                      |
| 2015 | Viscardy, Pascale, 'Théâtre Postcolonial: Biennale Internationale d'art de Venise 56e' in <i>L'Art Même #66</i> (Brussels: Ministère de la Communauté française), 16-17.                                       |
| 2015 | Koessler, Reinhart, <i>Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past</i> (Namibia: UNAM Press, 2015).                                                                                                              |
| 2014 | Hofmann, Eberhard, 'Herbe Schönheiten zwischen Lagen gruseliger Erinnerung', in <i>Allgemeine Zeitung</i> , August 2014.                                                                                       |
| 2014 | Ehlers, Hendrik, 'Analogie der Amnesie funktioniert' in <i>Allgemeine Zeitung</i> , August 2014.                                                                                                               |
| 2013 | <i>Land Matters in Art</i> , exh. cat., (Windhoek: National Art Gallery of Namibia and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ, GmbH on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany, 2013). |
| 2011 | <i>Personal Geography</i> , exh. cat., (Rome: Punctum Editions, 2011).                                                                                                                                         |



PUBLIC TALKS & SCREENINGS (selected)

- 2018 The MAXXI, National Museum of the 21st Century Arts, Rome
- 2017 FilmInitiativ Koeln e.V. "Filme aus Afrika"
- 2017 Iwalewahaus, University of Bayreuth, Germany
- 2016 Bergen International Film Festival (BIFF), Bergen, Norway
- 2016 Land/Water Symposium, Plymouth University, UK (keynote speaker)
- 2015 ABA Roma International Lecture series

COLLECTIONS (selected)

- National Art Gallery of Namibia
- Embassy of Namibia, Berlin, Germany
- Würth Collection, Germany
- Eimuth & Eimuth Collection, Germany
- Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, Windhoek, Namibia