



DIANA FERRUS is a South African writer, storyteller and performance poet. She was born in Worcester and completed her postgraduate studies in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape. Ferrus writes on identity and has published numerous poems on the slave trade and its effects. She has published two books, *Ons Komvandaan*, and *I've come to take you home*. She is well-known for her poem by the same title, which played a role in the remains of Sara "Saartjie" Baartman being returned to South Africa. She is currently working on an Afrikaans collection of poetry.



Born and raised in South Africa and now living now in Cambridge, England, **ISOBEL DIXON** works in London as a literary agent. She has published several poetry collections and contributed to many collaborative works and anthologies. In 2000 she won the South African Sanlam Award for Poetry. In 2004 she won the Olive Schreiner Prize and the Oxfam Poems for a Better Future competition. She was commissioned to write poems by the British Film Institute in 2007 and currently works as Director and Head of Books at Blake Friedmann.



PAULA MORRIS is an award-winning novelist, short story writer and essayist from New Zealand. She writes fiction for adults and supernatural mysteries for younger readers. Her short stories are widely published in journals, magazines and anthologies, and a number have been adapted for radio. A frequent book reviewer, interviewer and festival chair, Morris holds degrees from universities in New Zealand, the UK and the US, and has been awarded numerous residencies and fellowships.



ZP (ZAINAB) DALA is a novelist and essayist from Durban. Her debut novel, *What About Meera*, won the inaugural Minara Aziz Hassim Literary Awards, and was longlisted for the Etisalat Prize and the Barry Ronge Sunday Times Fiction prize. Her short stories and essays have appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, *Marie Claire* and *Elle*. She is a Fellow of the International Writers Program at the University of Iowa. Her second novel, *The Architecture of Loss* is out in the US and will soon be published in the UK and on the Indian sub-continent, and translated into French.

TOWERING mannequins in vivid African fabrics will welcome visitors to the "Carnevale" visual arts exhibition curated by the all-female Curate.A.Space team of Carol Brown (executive curator), Zinhle Khumalo, Sumayya Rawat and Nindya Bucktowar.

The exhibition theme of "Carnevale" was chosen to link with New Orleans' strong history of carnivals such as the Mardi Gras, which is one of the city's major tourist attractions as well as being a liminal space for its citizens who use this occasion to forget differences and celebrate as one.

Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian linguist and literary critic, used the term "carnivalesque" to characterise writing that depicts the destabilisation or reversal of power structures, albeit temporarily, as happens in traditional forms of carnival.

Although this may take the form of writing about, or otherwise representing (in film, painting, sculpture, etc.) actual or imagined carnivals, for Bakhtin it was important that the work itself should come to embody the spirit of carnival too. It can do this, as Bakhtin shows in *Rabelais and his World* (1968), by mobilising humour, satire and grotesquery in all its forms. François Rabelais, a French author from the early 1500s, is regarded by Bakhtin as an almost perfect exponent of carnivalesque writing. It shows a world in which transgressive social behaviour thrives beneath the veneer of social order, constantly threatening to upend things.

Conceived in the dark days of the Second World War, Bakhtin's concept is often read as a utopian antidote to repressive forms of power everywhere and a celebration of the possibility for affirmative change, however transitory in nature.

The overall exhibition is multi-layered and is not restricted to the spaces at the ICC where the main festival is situated. Performance and ephemeral art are part of the mix and Curate.A.Space is taking certain elements into the street with parades, street and mural art.

The main venue at the ICC features a broad spectrum of artists working in various mediums including



The dynamic all-female Curate.A.Space team, from left Nindya Bucktowar, executive curator Carol Brown, Sumayya Menezes and Zinhle Khumalo. Photo: Paulo Menezes

sculpture, photography, printmaking, painting, installation and multimedia. Artists have been drawn from various parts of South Africa as well as overseas, and the broad exhibition themes of "Enchant. Celebrate. Create. Disrupt" have informed the artwork selected.

Another highlight is the much-anticipated talks programme. Among the invited speakers is former Durban artist and now internationally recognised painter Penelope Siopis, in conversation with Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi, a Johannesburg based artist recently selected to represent Africa with a body of work at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris. Renowned auctioneer and art expert Anton Welz is also on the programme, providing insight into investing in the arts and how to start a collection.

The curatorial team also facilitated pre-Carnevale workshops with the aim of bringing new artists and communities into the festivities. A major partner has been Durban's BAT Centre where students have designed and built giant puppets for a street parade activation. Additionally, the Centre for Fine Art, Animation and Design has come on board with students planning a fun fashion event, featuring unique outfits made entirely from recycled materials.