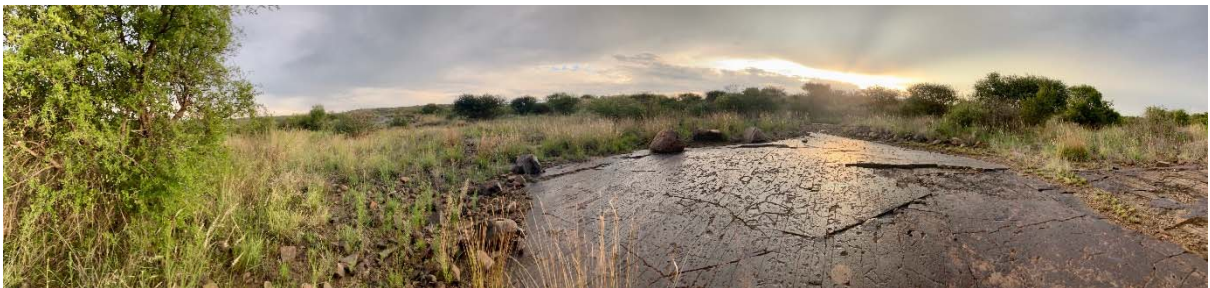


APPLICATION TO SAHRA  
To produce paper artworks at the  
NOOITGEDACHT GLACIAL PAVINGS  
on the farm Nooitgedacht 66,  
Barkly West (Dikgatlong)  
Northern Cape Province



CRAO MCCLENAO WAINMAN ARCHITECTURE  
17<sup>th</sup> March 2023

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## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Hosted by La Biennale di Venezia at its venues, Arsenale-Artiglierie, the Venice Biennale is one of the world's most prestigious architectural events, attracting a multitude of diverse academics, practitioners, writers and critics from around the world, to present, discuss and debate a broad range of ideas through the architectural lens. The 18th International Architecture Exhibition is scheduled to run from the 20th of May until the 20th of November 2023.

With a strong focus on Africa, decolonisation and decarbonisation are two primary themes framed by the exhibition curator, Scottish-Ghanian architect, academic and novelist, Lesley Lokko - the first black architect appointed by La Biennale di Venezia to lead the event.

Entitled "The Laboratory of the Future" the exhibition aims to place Africa at the centre stage of the conversation - for the first time in the biennale's history. The curator's phrase 'what happens in Africa happens to us all' is not only a powerful affirmation, but also a challenge to take responsibility for us, as Africans not only to participate, but to lead.

Lokko has developed a set of themed projects, for which she has invited a small group of participants, in which I, along with three others, David Adjaye, Mabel Wilson and Looty, who's design research, like mine, also resides within the genres of architecture and memory (and simultaneously within the realms of practice and teaching) have been invited to participate.

My proposal, '' is an explorative mapping project in which paper and water are explored as materials of memory - and are the media through which landscape is recorded, translated and presented, in the form of an artefactual 'atlas' at La Biennale di Venezia in 2023.

## PHANTOM CARTOGRAPHY & MATERIALS OF MEMORY

Marks on the landscape hold the memory of ancient material choreographies of water, fire and earth – within, around and over which, the fleeting presence of human imagination is carved, folded and draped.

This project is an experimental mapping proposal explored across multiple scales of place and time, in which landscape and artefact are interchangeable; and recorded in fragments, imprints and residues.

Conceptualised as a material of memory, paper will be explored as the medium through which landscape is mapped, translated and presented, as an artefactual 'atlas' at La Biennale di Venezia in 2023.

Historically, the invention of paper enabled new methods for the recording and spreading of ideas across the ancient world. Albeit originally in the form of papyrus, paper was invented in Africa and has evolved to become a major character in the narrative of human globalisation, enabling rapid and expansive technical advancement. This has however, come at an extremely high environmental cost, with annual global paper production amounting to 300 tonnes, causing 4,1 million hectares of deforestation and accounting for 26% of municipal landfill mass. The production of a single sheet of A4 paper consumes around ten litres of fresh water.

Extracted from paper-producing plantations, the primary ingredients of paper (bark, fibre and lignin) are combined through various industrial processes to form pulp. The paper in this proposal, is constructed by hand, and comprised of locally sourced plant matter and water from the nearby river.

Much like evidence on natural surfaces, the presence of water (required in the paper-making process) evaporates to leave no trace except the paper itself, the properties of which (through the process of drying) become brittle and vulnerable to the impacts of bending, folding, imprinting, tearing, even burning... visceral tactics of drawing, which the paper itself 'remembers' ...



The installation of the atlas is comprised of three components: an artefact, a film and a soundtrack.

The artefact will be presented as a series of paper sheets, each suspended vertically from a light-weight rectangular frame. It is suggestive of pages in a book, sections through a landscape, or even the skeleton of a body, and while topographic in form, it does not replicate the landscapes of its origin. Much like the water from which paper-making is so reliant, the original landscapes will only exist here in fragments, suspended in time and space, touching the ground only in shadow and suggestion.

Displayed on three, linear suspended monitor screens, a film provides the backdrop to the artefacts, offering silent glimpses of landscape, material, making, manipulating and remembering.

For paper to exist, water is not only harnessed for participation, but its disappearance is also demanded. Sometimes visible, sometimes not, water is the binding agent that enables this project to take form. Though itself formless, it is invited here to act as narrator, in the 'form' of a soundscape, the final component of the atlas.

Paper is the medium through which ideas have been recorded and territories claimed. In this proposal, paper is the landscape, the artefact and the laboratory. While deeply embedded in the theme of memory, this experimental project is also forward-looking, or more appropriately forward-searching. It is perhaps within the apparent contradiction of this installation title, Phantom Cartography, that conversations around alternate methods of reading, thinking and making can be reframed and reimagined.

## SITE

**Nooitgedacht Glacial Pavings,**

**Address: Farm Nooitgedacht 66, Barkly West (Dikgatlong) Northern Cape**

Nooitgedacht's sprawling rock surfaces, aged two and a half billion-years has been selected as the site for this project.



## COLLABORATIONS

Archaeologist **Dr David Morris**, has offered support for the project and proposed methodology and we will be working closely with him on site.

The Landowner, **Mr Michael Hall**, has also offered support for the project and has granted permission to spend time on the farm on which the site is located.

**Phumani Paper**, Hand-made archival paper-making specialists based in Johannesburg have been instrumental in the development of the paper-making methodology.

## **METHODOLOGY FOR PAPER-MAKING**

Developed in consultation with Dr David Morris, and Phumani Paper Mill

### **PART 1: Harvesting of plant material for the paper**

The paper is made from two ingredients only: plant and water. There are no other additives.

The paper will be made from an indigenous fast-growing reed (*Typha capensis*) which grows throughout South Africa. It will be harvested from water bodies near Nooitgedacht. Once harvested, it will be brought to Johannesburg for pulping.

### **PART 2: Preparation of paper pulp.**

After harvesting, the reeds will be transported to the Phumani Archival Paper Mill in Johannesburg. The reeds will be cut into small lengths (approximately 10cm in length) and boiled for several hours. Once boiled the pulp is rinsed thoroughly and then placed into a mechanical beater for several hours. This will be done in a paper mill in Johannesburg.

Two types of pulp is produced:

1. Long fibre pulp is produced by beating for a shorter period of time. This is a slightly more fibrous pulp, and provides strength to the paper.
2. Short fibre pulp is produced by a longer period of beating. This is a smoother, finer pulp, and gives the paper a softer surface for embossing.

### **PART 3: Paper Production**

We will return to the site with the pulp, a large vat, paper-making deckles and frames, a series of pressing boards and felt sheets.

The two types of pulp is mixed in the vat with water (collected from the river nearby)

Once mixed, the frames are lowered into the vat, lifted out and placed onto a wet layer of felt over a large flat board. Another wet sheet of felt is layered on top of the paper. This process is repeated until there are 6 or 7 sheets of wet paper stacked on top of each other, separated by felt in each instance.

Another flat board is placed on top of the 7 sheets and is pressed tightly for several minutes to remove as much water as possible.



The top board is removed and one by one, each sheet of paper is removed from the pile, taken to the rock surface, and laid down, paper first onto the rock. The felt is carefully peeled off, with only the wet paper remaining on the surface.

The wet paper is then gently pressed by hand onto the rock, to emboss the textures of the rock surface into the soft paper material. This is gently done by hand. No other utensils are used. The only material that touches the rock is the soft wet paper and the only pressure is exerted by hand.

This process is repeated until all the sheets are laid out on the rock.

The paper is left in situ for several hours, to dry.

We anticipate producing between 30-40 sheets in this manner.

#### **PART 4: Paper removal**

Once dry, the sheets are carefully lift off the rock surface, starting from the edges. The paper will not involve any mechanical scraping. Any residual plant pulp that may adhere to the surface would be easily cleaned off (refer to PART 5)

#### **PART 5: Cleaning**

Once all the pages have been removed, any residual pulp left on the rock surface will be wet, dabbed and gently wiped off with wet felt. The pulp is comprised only of local plant matter so there is no pollution generated. Rain would further remove any other trace of production.

## **APPLICATION INFORMATION**

Craig McClenaghan is a Johannesburg-based architect, exhibition designer, artist and teacher, with a particular interest in 'cultural heritage'. In 2016, he formally established his eponymous studio, CMA - an exploratory multi-disciplinary design and research platform that engages with researchers, writers, artists, curators, educators and students.

Prior to the formation of CMA, Craig worked on several museum and exhibition projects with Mashabane Rose Associates, including Freedom Park, Apartheid Museum, Hector Pieterse Memorial Museum, Liliesleaf, Origins Centre Engraved Rock Gallery and the Golden Gate Dinosaur Interpretive Centre.

More recently, CMA completed 'Enclosures' - a permanent exhibition of pre-colonial history at the Apartheid Museum, an exhibition for the Nelson Mandela Capture Site Museum, the Mapungubwe Gold and Ashanti Gold of Africa exhibitions at the Javett Arts Centre and 'Truth to Power' - an exhibition on the life of Archbishop Desmond Tutu at the historic Old Granary building in Cape Town.

In 2016, Craig collaborated with Dr David Morris for the design and construction of a new walkway installation through Wonderwerk Cave, a project which, recognized for its sensitivity to heritage, received a national Award of Merit from the South African Institute of Architects in 2018.

Current work includes the OKR Leadership Academy in Dar es Salaam, the Winding House reconfiguration in Kimberley, an exhibition for the Mapungubwe Beadwork Assemblage and ongoing interior improvements to the historic 'Old Merensky' sculpture gallery at the University of Pretoria.

Craig is the lead tutor for Unit 21 (Phantom Cartographies) at the University of Johannesburg's Graduate School of Architecture (GSA) and frequently participates as an external examiner at architectural schools across South Africa.