Visit Sisonke Msimang

Kier Schuringa  --  14 February 2019

On Sunday, February 10 in a packed Amsterdam City Theatre South African writer and opinionista Sisonke Msimang delivered the Nelson Mandela lecture, organised by ZAM under the theme Building a world beyond them and us. See the ZAM-website for a one-and-a-half hour livestream of her speech and the preceding cultural programme: https://www.zammagazine.com/engage/events/823-sisonke-msimang-live-stream (externe link)

The next day Sisonke Msimang paid a visit to the International Institute of Social History (IISH), hosted by Afelonne Doek (director collections), Machteld Maris (communications) - both also present at the Mandela lecture - and myself. I was able to give her a presentation of the Anti-Apartheid and Southern Africa collection of the institute, including our Mandela related material and the photographs etc. of the ANC community in exile in which Sisonke grew up. Besides, she also proved to be very interested in other parts of the IISH collection, as well as the research programme of the institute. A good and inspiring visit.

Myself, Afelonne Doek, Bart Luirink, Laurens Nijzink (both ZAM), Sisonke Msimang.
Photos: Pieter Boersma.
Sisonke Msimang, Laurens Nijzink, myself presenting some highlights of the collection.
In November my partner Maud Kortbeek and I paid a visit to South Africa (Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban) in which I also had a number of meetings with people and organisations in relation to my work with the Anti-Apartheid and Southern Africa collection of the International Institute of Social History, a.o. with the Dutch embassy, South African History Archive, South African History Online, ANC Archives and the still developing new Museum and Archive of the Constitution at the Hill (MARCH). I met a.o. with Lauren Segal, head curator of MARCH, who I presented at Constitution Hill a set of spare copy posters and other campaigning materials of the former Dutch anti-apartheid groups as a contribution to the MARCH collection.

Sadly, during our visit, we were confronted with the passing away of our friend Lucia Raadschelders, former staffmember of the Dutch AAM, Vula operative and the last 10 years colleague archivist at the Nelson Mandela Foundation in Johannesburg. Hence, on Sunday November 25, Maud and I participated in (and contributed to) a memorial meeting for Lucia Raadschelders at the Nelson Mandela Foundation.
Some time ago I processed a small collection of photographs by Dutch photographer Pieter Boersma, which he made during various AWEPA-missions in Southern and East-Africa between 1992 and 2005. A nice addition to our collection and a small but fitting tribute to Pieter Boersma who photographed so much in the region and contributed significantly to the broad Anti-Apartheid and Southern Africa solidarity movement.

The Pieter Boersma Photo Collection Southern and Eastern Africa consists of over 750 photographs of political events and social-economic conditions in a number of Southern and Eastern African countries. Topics include AWEPA election observation missions in South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Tanzania, AWEPA fact finding missions on living conditions and health (esp. HIV/AIDS) for refugees and people in general in these countries as well as Rwanda and Kenya, and economic activities, small business, labour and working conditions in esp. South Africa, Tanzania and Namibia. 89 of these photographs have been scanned and made visible in our online catalogue:

http://hdl.handle.net/10622/COLL00324 (link is external)

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Short movies introducing the IISH Anti-Apartheid and Southern Africa Collection

Kier Schuringa -- 10 August 2018

Nelson Mandela 100 activities

Kier Schuringa  --  16 July 2018

Earlier this month I was in London, a.o. for the opening of an exhibition Mandela and Me in the office building of the British Council. On July 17, the day before Mandela's 100st birthday, a much bigger exhibition will be opened in the Queen Elizabeth Hall of London's Southbank Centre - the Nelson Mandela Centenary Exhibition, curated by the AAM Archives Committee, the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg and the Southbank Centre. For more information see: [http://www.aamarchives.org/](http://www.aamarchives.org/)

In The Netherlands also activities are being organised focusing on the Nelson Mandela Centenary. Information on that can be found at the special Mandela 100-page of ZAM: [https://www.zammagazine.com/mandela-100](https://www.zammagazine.com/mandela-100) featuring blogs, video’s, photography and agenda items.

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Nelson Mandela Centenary meeting in Leiden

Kier Schuringa  --  4 June 2018

Friday, June 1, I was at a meeting in the Academy building in Leiden where the Africa Study Centre together with the Free University and the South African embassy in The Netherlands organised a lecture on the importance of Nelson Mandela, on occasion of his birth now 100 years ago. The keynote speech was delivered by prof. Tom Lodge, who presented an interesting analysis of the characteristics of Mandela's leadership style. I had a small selection of our archival items on Nelson Mandela with me, which I could present in the corridor. Later this year there will other events on the Nelson Mandela centenary organised in The Netherlands and abroad.
Consultations of the Anti-Apartheid and Southern Africa collection in recent years

Kier Schuringa -- 15 January 2018

I made an overview of the consultations and other usages of the Anti-Apartheid and Southern Africa collection of the International Institute of Social History in the last six years (2012-2017). Both of the consultations of our archives and collections through the reading room of the institute, and of the requests for sources and information material, scans of photographs and other visual items, advice for research projects, exhibitions, etc. which were handled by me personally. The overall picture is clearly positive, as far as I'm concerned, especially because the interest shown in the collection does not diminish but remains more or less stable throughout these years - some 30 to 40 substantial consultations each year. More than half of these are from Dutch students, researchers, journalists, etc., mainly consulting the archives of the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement, Angola Comité/Holland Committee on Southern Africa (together ca. 60%), Comité South Africa (1960s), Working Group Kairos and other groups in the collection. Also, in the last two years, increasingly the anti-apartheid and Southern Africa photo and documentation collections which became available, are consulted.
through the reading room. The consultations and requests from outside The Netherlands come mainly (almost 50%) from South Africa - archives, museums, students/researchers, former ANC-members in exile, etc. From the rest of the world, especially Canada/US and England are well represented (some 25%), but they come also from countries like Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Mozambique, Namibia and Switzerland. International consultations focus on sources and documentation material and even more on photographs and other visual documents; much less on the archives. The subjects of these consultations and requests vary even more widely. Of course, the activities of the Dutch anti-apartheid and Southern Africa groups in the past feature regularly, but also a lot of other aspects (of the history) of the struggle against apartheid and colonialism in Southern Africa and the international solidarity movement. Next we see a lot of requests for photographs of struggle activists and specific events in history, as well as photos and other visual items for exhibitions - in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Nelson Mandela Foundation in Johannesburg for instance - and for the websites of various archives. Most of these subjects relate to South Africa, but also to countries like Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau.