

CENTRE FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN SOCIETY AND CULTURE
IN ASSOCIATION WITH MCGILL ANTHROPOLOGY

THE GAMBLERS

February 14, 2020**3 – 6 p.m.****Black Box, room EV OS3-845/855**

Third Basement, EV Building, 1515 Sainte-Catherine Street West (enter via MacKay)

Imagine that a mine can be thought of as your parent. Then imagine that the mine dies.

Made in the toxified landscape of South Africa's declining gold industry, 'The Gamblers' is a hybrid video and 16mm film installation about informal migrant miners who scavenge for gold in the abandoned gold mines of South Africa. Comprised of a two part, multi-screen immersive video projection directed by Rosalind Morris—with underground cinematography by itinerant miners—and a live-edited 16mm film and projection performance by Philippe Léonard, 'The Gamblers' explores the afterlives of deep level mining as a process of 're-manualization.' It is also testimony to those who wager their lives in an economy still haunted by the idea that gold is the first and last medium of real value.

Part of a larger, multi-formal experiment in sensory ethnography called 'The Zama Zama Project,' 'The Gamblers' was produced and directed by Rosalind Morris on the basis of long-term research, undertaken in collaboration with the men and women who make their livings in these deindustrializing zones. The larger Project includes a feature-length documentary film entitled *We are Zama Zama*, as well as other digital video works, and still photography. Together, these works explore the question of what gold has done to people and what it makes them do. It is also an exploration of the aesthetic forms through which the lives of those who inhabit the ruins of industrial and extractivist economies can be made to cross the threshold of visibility.

The screening will be followed by a roundtable discussion led by Lisa Stevenson and Diana Allan (both McGill Anthropology), David Howes (Anthropology, Concordia) and Joshua Neves (Film Studies, Concordia).

Rosalind Morris with Philippe Léonard

Rosalind Morris is an award-winning anthropologist, cultural critic and media theorist, who is Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. She has worked for more than two decades to document the transforming life-worlds around the gold mines of the Witwatersrand. She is the author of 7 books and more than 70 essays, and has been recognized with numerous awards. In addition to her scholarly writings, Morris has collaborated extensively with South African artists, including William Kentridge, with whom she has written three books, Clive van den Berg (whose work is the subject of her monograph, *Unlearning the Grounds of Art*), Ebrahim Hajee and Songezile Madikida. As a filmmaker, Morris has directed and produced works in documentary, narrative and expanded cinematic forms. With Yvette Christiansë, she is also the co-librettist on two operas with the composer Zaid Jabri.

Philippe Léonard (projection designer) is an experimental media artist who works in multiple formats in the pursuit of sensorially dense observational and expressive art. He has an MFA from Concordia University and has worked with Harun Farocki at the MIT Media Lab. His interest in historical technologies of photographic and cinematographic practices, including both 16mm and digital formats have made him a sought after collaborator amongst musicians and artists around the world. He regularly tours with 'Godspeed You! Black Emperor' as projection designer and his films have been shown in festivals and galleries across the globe.

This event is co-sponsored by the CISSC African Studies Working Group, and the Concordia Centre for Sensory Studies.