Inside Out -
The Iziko Slave Lodge as Witness to Slavery

Mini dissertation in partial fulfilment of requirements for an MPhil in Conservation of the Built Environment

University of Cape Town

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ABSTRACT

Inside Out - The Iziko Save Lodge as Witness to Slavery

The thesis investigates how the Iziko Slave Lodge has witnessed slavery from when it was erected as the VOC SL in 1679 to its current configuration as the Iziko Slave Lodge Museum. It traverses the story of the Lodge both historically and critically through its various iterations over time, in order to understand how the Slave Lodge has occluded, witnessed, and borne witness to the history of slavery in Cape Town.

Although the study is framed by the underpinnings of the act of witnessing, it has also been about uncovering and acknowledging the layers of patina of the Iziko Slave Lodge Museum itself as a witness to slavery over time. The modalities of witnessing, testimony, memory, memorialisation and museumization are explored as they pertain to the building and museum. The outcomes of the research are augmented by my own reflexive analysis, having worked at the Slave Lodge in its earlier museum iteration as the South African Cultural History Museum and having witnessed its transformation into the Iziko Slave Lodge in the 1990s.

Despite the apparent resilience of the architecture and the Slave Lodge building, I suggest that witnessing should not only be confined to the built environment but should form part of a greater public heritage complex, embracing identity, memory, and socio-political resonance. The practices of witnessing drawn on in this thesis are established as a complex, multi-directional processes. Acts of witnessing, bearing witness, occlusion and illumination may serve as useful frameworks for reflecting on and representing histories and spaces of atrocity beyond this case study example.

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	Credit Value of Research: e.g., 60/120/180/360 etc.	60
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If this is a researchcontract, indicate the source of funding/sponsorship		
Project Title		Inside Out - The Iziko Slave Lodge as Witness to Slavery

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HOD (or delegated nominee) Final authority for all applicants who have answered NO to all questions in Section 1; and for all Undergraduate research (Including Honours).	p.tumubweinee	pp: 	2022 03 16
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This project has been a journey back through time and has often been as much about witnessing myself over time as it has been about witnessing the Slave Lodge.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents who have always supported me and allowed me to follow my true path over the past 70 years. My late father Leslie was always ready with gentle encouragement for anything I embarked on and my 95-year-old mother, Pessa has been supportive, encouraging and ever present during this time.

Thank you all with enduring love.

Jon

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ABBREVIATIONS

VOC	Dutch East India Company
SL	The Slave Lodge
SACHM	South African Cultural History Museum
ISL	Iziko Slave Lodge
SAM	The South African Museum
ISAM	Iziko South African Museum
SANG	South African National Gallery
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
DACST	Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology
SAHRAS	South African Heritage Resources Agency
ICOM	International Council of Museums
WMHM	Washington Holocaust Memorial Museum

1. INTRODUCTION - WITNESSING THE SLAVE LODGE

> Architecture is the least incorruptible witness of history.
> Octavio Paz (Cuetos, 2018:151)

Introduction

This study addresses the question of how the SL has witnessed and borne witness to slavery over time.

This introductory chapter provides a background to the study, establishes the rationale for this work and the central research question, documents the methodology used, and emphasises the importance of my positionality in this area of research.

Within the framework of the building as witness to slavery, I firstly explore the original purpose-built SL in its context within the urban environment of the VOC's settler Cape Town, and how it was later re-purposed to become a museum in current urban Cape Town. Secondly, I suggest that witnessing not only pertains to the built-environment space but forms part of a greater public heritage complex embracing identity, memory, and socio-political resonance.

As slavery at the Cape and the SL as museum are connected through witness, experience, and memory, the Iziko Slave Lodge is inextricably tied to the act of memory. With the notion of witness in mind, I explore the building as both a museum and memorial.

Central to the outcomes of this study, I describe through my positionality and personal reflexive commentaries how I have witnessed and observed the SL as museum. This includes my observations from my time working in the South African Cultural History Museum (SACHM) and more recently, whilst I have worked and collaborated with the ISL on exhibitions and conducting research.

Consequently, this dissertation is not only confined to how witnessing has happened within the built environment of the Lodge but also includes the process of witnessing the museum and management practices in the SL as museum. The idea of "witnessing" is established in this study as a multi-faceted and perpetually incomplete process, which is nevertheless crucial to how memory is constructed and represented.

I have often returned to the ISL to work on exhibition projects or to hold meetings with colleagues and reflected on this as witness to my own experience of having worked there. As my work as a museologist and museum designer has evolved over time, I have developed a greater awareness and a more nuanced understanding of museology and exhibition design. This has allowed me to become more cognisant of the meaning and presence of objects, exhibitions, and museum spaces. This is particularly the case in the context of the Iziko Museums of South Africa where I worked between the years of 1980 – 2000.

Research question and objectives

The central research question for this dissertation is: How has the SL borne witness to Slavery?
The main objectives of this study are:

- To trace the history of the transformation of the SACHM into the ISL, in order to analyse how ideas about 'witnessing' and the building as an object that 'bears witness' have been mobilised differently through time
- To explore ideas around the concept of 'witnessing' to better understand how the SL can be understood as a witness of history and specifically the atrocity of slavery in Cape Town
- To reflect critically on my own experience as a witness and participant in a particular historical moment in the SL's history

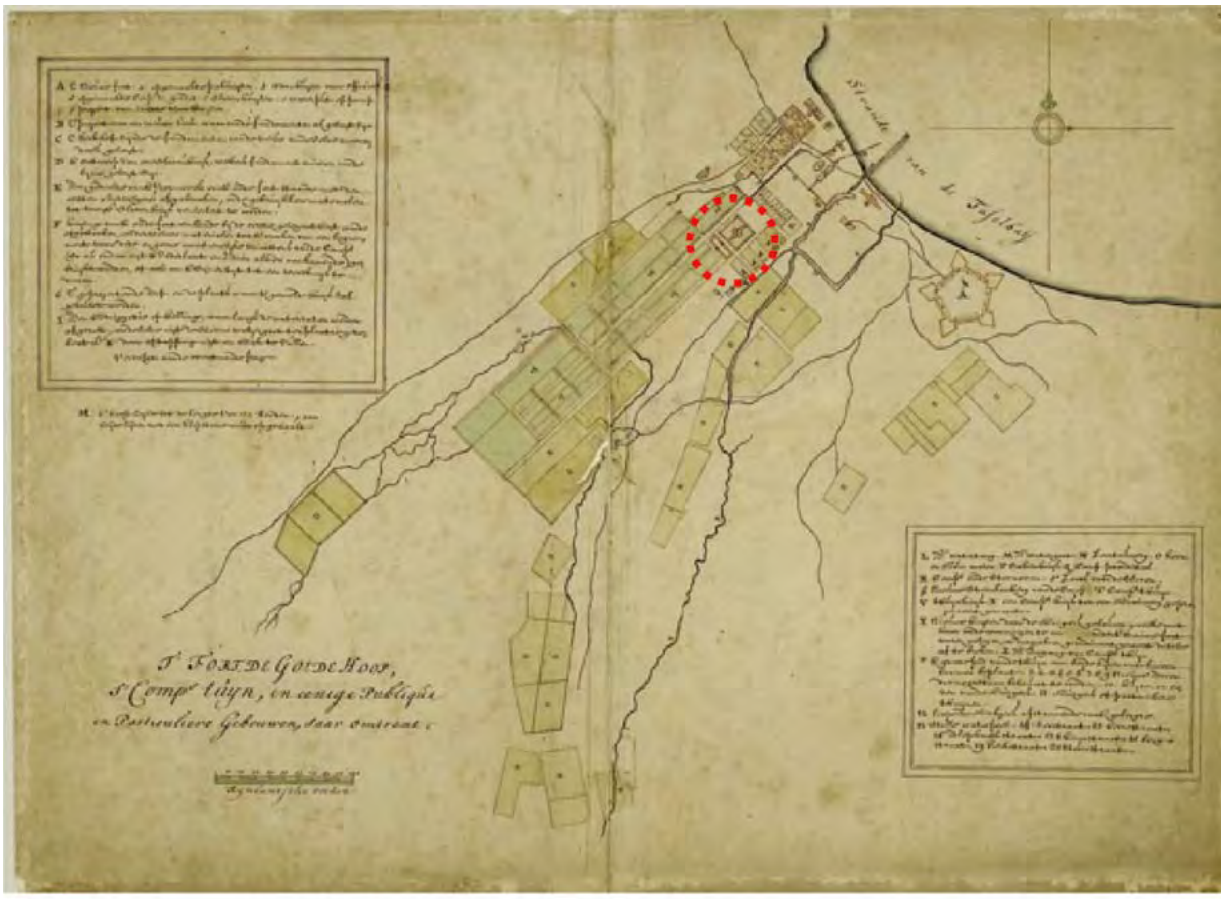

Figure 1: A map from 1700 of the Cape of Good Hope by de Graaf showing the position of the Slave Lodge on the northern aspect of the Company's Garden.

The VOC Slave Lodge

The SL building was erected in 1679 by the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The original SL is the second oldest remaining colonial building in the country, after the Castle of Good Hope. It was purpose-built to house the slaves who worked as “menial and productive chattel” for the VOC, as the colonial government went about creating a town at the southern tip of Africa. People enslaved by the VOC were housed in the Lodge in order to serve the needs of the early Dutch settlers, and later those of the British Colonial government in the early 1800s (Worden, 2014:72).

The building was strategically situated at the Table Mountain end of the Heerengracht (now upper Adderley Street), to enable easy access for enslaved people to work on various projects, including the Company’s Gardens, the nearby Burgher farms, the VOC Hospital, and others (see Figure 1).

An 1803 layout map of the original lodge by L.N. Wildt shows the positioning of the rooms and spaces. Worden describes how the activity, behaviour and punitive control of the slaves within the Lodge was highly monitored and regulated by the “Opzichters”, and how the internal spatial arrangement enabled control and regulation (see Figure 2).

Worden (1999) describes the spatial arrangement inside the SL as follows:

> Across from the hospital lay another fortress representing Company power, the Slave Lodge. This large and windowless brick building housed the Company’s slaves who were locked up at night and were under the control of a Company Opzichter. Lunatics were also consigned to special rooms in the Lodge, and it occasionally acted as an overflow from the neighbouring hospital (Worden, 1999:78).

In 1998, over 320 years later, the building was formally renamed the Iziko Slave Lodge and became a museum on the original site of the SL, with the intention of publicly re-inscribing the history of slavery that had unfolded in and around the building.
Although the SL has been used for many different purposes over the past 340 years, the focus of this study is confined to three specific thematic focus areas framed by its historical timeline.
These are:

- The VOC SL (1679-1808), when it served the Dutch East India Company. A historical overview of this period sets the scene for its later transformations into government offices and the Supreme Court.
- The SL as the South African Cultural History Museum (1966-1998), when it was a South African government administered museum spanning the time of the Apartheid era into South Africa’s new political dispensation.

- The SL as the Iziko SL Museum (1998 – 2006), the period when the museum transitioned from the SACHM to the Iziko SL. This was to become a division of the Southern Flagship Institution, later to become Iziko Museums of South Africa. When it was re-named the SL in 1998 in a new democratic South Africa, it continued as a state-run museum but with a very different focus and purpose, that of showcasing the story of slavery at the Cape.

The iterative and transitional process from the SACHM to the Iziko SL is described in Chapter 3. This period in the building's history is the central focus of my analysis in terms of the twin concepts of 'witnessing' and 'bearing witness'.

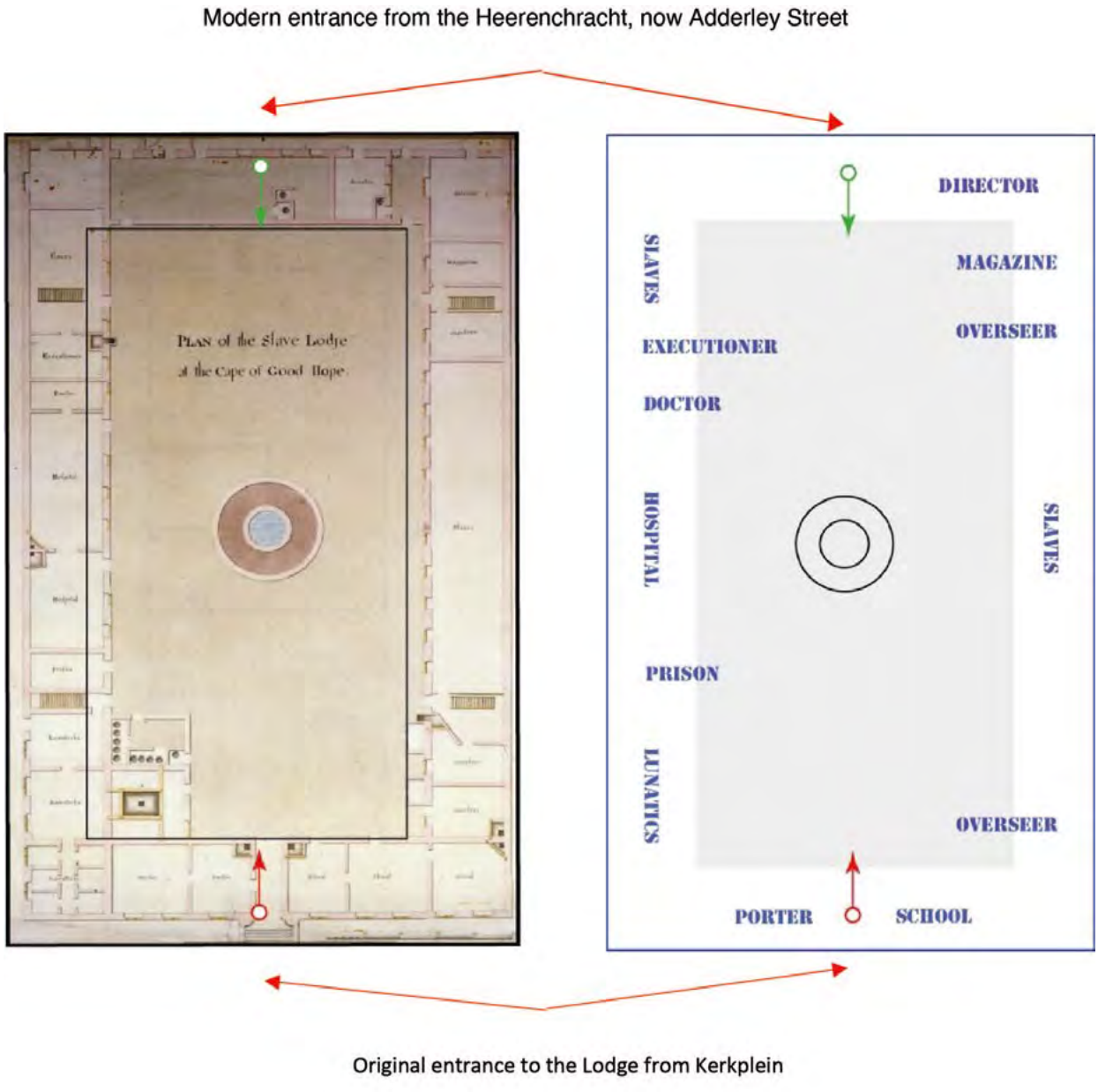

Figure 2: A layout plan of the Lodge by L.N. Wildt. c 1803. The map is annotated by the author to show the positioning of the functional spaces in the Lodge.

The building as Witness

Latour (2017) describes how buildings are in a state of continuing flux and that they transform according to their purpose over time:

> … a building is not a static object but a moving project, and that even once it is has been built, it ages, it is transformed by its users, modified by all of what happens inside and outside (Latour, 2017:107).

The SL is, in many ways, a "moving project" of this kind, both in terms of its physical construction and its received and constructed meanings. The SL became a museum in 1966 and for most of its time as the SACHM, the institution was aligned to the political practices and ideology of the Apartheid era government.

Mazel (2013) confirms the ideological intent behind the setting up of the SACHM:

> There is no doubt that the ruling political culture influenced the museum, the establishment of the museum is also the result of a long support-canvassing process by the white population of Cape Town (Mazel, 2013:167).

I describe in Chapter 4 how these sentiments were endorsed for me when I recently went about conducting research at the Iziko Social History archive for this study. While involved in this process, I began to realise how cogently the SACHM was used as a vehicle for transmitting so-called "white culture" for the Apartheid government.

While interviewing respondents for this thesis, all made mention of the fact that until the early 1990s the SACHM reflected the National Party's ideological lens of heritage and culture for whites only through the frame of colonial domination and Eurocentric ideals. In this regard, the occlusion of histories of slavery in this building also serves as a kind of "witnessing" – in this case, a witnessing of processes of erasure in the name of racialized political ideology.

My Positionality - 'A prisoner of my own advantage'

In this section I reflect on my positionality in relation to this study. The researcher's background, personal beliefs, values, and biases are a critical point of reflection for any study (Malterud, 2001:189). In this instance, my analysis of witness and witnessing at the SL cannot be meaningfully separated from the building's presence in my own professional life. I have long intended to investigate the meaning and significance of the spaces within the SL Museum. When I worked at Iziko for twenty years, between 1980 to 2000, ten of those years were spent working in the SL, in its previous iteration as the South African Cultural History Museum (SACHM). I held the position of 'artist/technical officer' and was part of a team of exhibition makers whose responsibility it was to develop the exhibitions.

When I started working there, the making of exhibitions was highly controlled. We were briefed by curators and then required to develop the exhibitions and make the spaces "look good". This process generally involved technical acuity and aesthetic design and we were not invited nor encouraged to be part of the exhibition planning process from the beginning. The 'object' was central to the design process and the information panel, label or caption became the descriptor of that item, most often reflecting a particular historical and/or authoritative voice. There was little if any room for critical reflection or critique of the orientation or positioning of exhibition narratives or concepts.

I have revisited the SL exhibition spaces many times since working in the SACHM and have often wondered how I could not have been more aware of the building's painful history, and how the dark spaces of the building may have witnessed the cruelty within it. Why this misrecognition? It is only in hindsight and on reflection that I have come to realise some of the reasons for this. Cornell (1998) partly answers this question when she describes a visit, she made to the SACHM in the early 1980s as giving the impression that slavery never existed.
In attempting to answer this question, I came to realise that the SL building and the spaces within have been subject to adaptive re-use so many times since its inception in 1679, that any overt signifiers and clues to the physical presence of slaves and slavery had long been expunged from of the spaces. In this regard Cloete (2021: 1234) writes that the original building and its purpose have long been erased:
The SL itself no longer resembles the original building. Instead, the building is now a more accurate reflection of its state function as a government building and as the Old Supreme Court, and as such conceals the violence of its slave past and the atrocity of the living conditions for those who were enslaved there (Cloete, 2021:1234).

The practice within the SACHM and some other local museums, was largely to facilitate the National Party's ideology by controlling the cultural experience and displaying collections, content, and interpretative narratives through both a Eurocentric and Colonial lens. This was further perpetuated in 1987 when the museum was declared an 'Own Affairs' institution, an act designed to showcase an Apartheid-held colonial approach and to endorse the superiority of a 'whites only' culture. These dynamics are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

We, as staff at the museum, were constrained in our ability to oppose the will or the mandate of the directorship. In Apartheid South Africa of the 1980s and particularly so at the SACHM, we were either too afraid or not permitted to be critical or move beyond our job descriptions in the workplace. The senior management of the institution was extremely conservative and served the interests of the Apartheid government. The director, Anton Roux, was previously an officer in the South African Navy and the Assistant Director, Magda Olivier, had been head-hunted from the South African Military Intelligence wing of the South African Defence Force. It is apparent both from the appointments made at senior management levels, and

the approach to representation in the museum, that the SACHM was a highly conservative institution dedicated to reflecting objects and information through the lens of coloniality and Apartheid-era practices and ideology.

At the time, this was only my second “real job” in the world of work. When I joined the museum, I was suffering from Myxoedema , a debilitating endocrine condition which had the effect of limiting my energy and work options. Given my condition, I was not inclined to or in a position to be confrontational. After one year of working at the museum I was forced to take long-leave due to the side-effects of the illness. During this time my condition worsened, and I was eventually admitted to Groote Schuur hospital in a semi-coma. While in hospital my condition was fortunately diagnosed. After three weeks of hospitalisation, I was discharged, and I returned to work a month later. Although I did not have an easy relationship with the conservative management at the museum, I did realise at the time that I was fortunate not to have been fired or “boarded off” as “too sick to work’” and I was grateful for this reprieve.

Although my time spent working at the SACHM was relatively comfortable, I recall it being tinged with fear, anxiety and often unhappiness. In retrospect, this was probably largely due to the political circumstances of the time and the approach of the executive management. I recognise now that as a white South African working in a state-run institution, I was, in a sense a prisoner of my own advantage.

I was recently reminded of how difficult the physical spaces of the SL were to work in, while installing an exhibition on the Slave Ship Meermin in my current capacity as an independent consultant. The space allocated to this exhibition was situated on the Bureau Street side of the building and occupied the area which was originally used as the ‘MAGAZINE’ and ‘OVERSEERS’ rooms, according to the Wildt map of 1803. The Meermin story is highly significant as it recounts how slaves aboard the Meermin slave ship staged a mutiny on board while nearing Cape Agulhas in 1766. Unfortunately, this did not last long as the ship ran aground near Cape Agulhas and the slaves were re-arrested. This was one of only a few instances where slaves managed to gain control over their enslavers. For this reason, this event has been recognised as particularly apt for slave descendants in the framing of identity and the crafting of a slave narrative at the ISL.

In 1990 I was offered a management position at the South African National Gallery (SANG), in the Gardens. It was a great relief to walk out of the toxic space of the SACHM, which too often felt like being in an army camp. I turned my back on the SACHM and immersed myself in my new job at the National Gallery as Exhibitions Manager.

The contrast between the two institutions could not have been starker: the SACHM with its sinister dark spaces and repressive control versus the seemingly positive, and collaborative approach at the SANG. It is only with hindsight that I have connected with the realisation

that those ‘sinister dark spaces’, the same dark spaces where the slaves were housed and abused, had been deliberately and visibly sanitised out of the institution via adaptive re-use and deliberate political amnesia over time.

Towards the late 1990s, I was offered the opportunity to lead the design of the new Cape Town Holocaust Centre (CTHC). The Director of the Gallery at the time, Marilyn Martin, allowed for a portion of my time to be seconded to the development of this project. The approach to the narrative and thematic development of the Holocaust Centre exhibitions was one of collaborative engagement. The project director Myra Osrin, the researchers, copywriters, architects, and designers, worked closely to brainstorm an approach. In my years of work as a museologist and designer, this was the first time I had been professionally included as part of a museum team to collaboratively lead and evolve a museum design concept. Coupled with this, my familial Jewish connection to the Holocaust made this experience especially meaningful for me as members of my family who had lived in Latvia at the time had been murdered during the Holocaust.

Around 1998, while deliberating over the thematic structure for the centre, I initiated a discussion of how to include the story of the Apartheid experience within the Holocaust exhibition. This soon became a sticking point as many of the members of the planning committee felt that the story should be kept purely to the Holocaust experience. I and other colleagues responsible for narrative development, including the lead writer Milton Shain, were strongly in favour of entering the Holocaust story via the Apartheid experience. We felt this would introduce a familiar thread into the story around racial ideology, the rise of race thinking and legislation not too dissimilar to Nazi ideological thinking.

After much heated debate, Myra Osrin agreed to a workshop to be facilitated by political and human rights activists Melanie Verwoerd and Rhoda Kadalie . This process culminated in a novel approach to museum conceptualisation, design, and narrative development where the museum visitor would enter the exhibition via South Africa’s ‘recent past’ in order to become acquainted with the parallels of the Holocaust story. This approach served as a positive contribution to the interpretation and understanding of the exhibition as it subverted the notion of a chronologically led thematic exhibition structure. Additionally, the core narrative for this project was augmented by a sub-narrative consisting of witness testimony panels. These took the form of low-angled display shelves which ran throughout the lower perimeter of the entire museum as parallel text. (See Figure 3). This was the first time I had used parallel texts of witness testimony in an exhibition concept. I return to this concept of witness as parallel text in Chapter 4.

These interventions were empowering turning points for me and important learning experiences which at the time afforded me new-found agency and respect as a museum designer.

Figure 3: Views of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre exhibition showing the orientation through the story of Apartheid (above). Image below shows the witness testimony panels (blue) as part of the exhibition. Photographs: Jon Weinberg

The SACHM transforms

Returning to the present, as I went about researching the life of the SL for this dissertation, I was impressed by the tomes of unreferenced and as yet, undigitised documentation including meeting minutes and workshop planning notes.

While interviewing the respondents for this project, some of whom had worked at the previous SACHM, I was struck by their descriptions of how courageous and confrontational certain staff became during this time. Helene Vollgraaff, who worked at the SACHM and then Iziko between 1990 to 2007, described how both the emerging political pressures from the outside and the internal opposition to the stifling of free-thinking from the inside, galvanised staff in confronting the executive governance of the SACHM at the time.

In the interview with Vollgraaff, I posed the question of what she thought the causes were of the growing dissension amongst staff in the lead up to this transitional period. She recalls that there was a “mini-insurrection” triggered by both internal issues and external political circumstances”.

With greater understanding and knowledge, it has taken me years to recognise and acknowledge the nature of the SL space as one of oppression, atrocity, and trauma. Furthermore, as a museum designer and museologist and with the benefit of practice, and progressive engagement in the workplace, I have developed a greater awareness of the socio-political and socio-historical importance of the SL spaces over time. This is described in greater detail in Chapter 4.

I have had to unlearn much over my years as a museum practitioner, not only influenced by new knowledge and awareness of the changing nature of the museology but also because of how powerful the effects of socio-political circumstances in different periods and change are, in the museum world. Importantly over the years, I have learnt that the story of an object is not just about the object itself but rather a signifier of its meaning in the museum space in its relation to its provenance, and community. In the case of the SL, and other buildings like it which have stood witness to atrocity and transformation, the building itself becomes an historical artefact laden with meaning and memory.

The Significance of the study

A case study of the SL as witness to slavery, both within its walls and in the city of Cape Town, allows an exploration of how witnessing happened within the built environment of the SL and the process of witnessing it as a museum. This multidimensional, ongoing process is significant to the manner in which memory is constructed and represented. The relatively untapped archival material from Iziko Social History Department on the transition of the SL

from the SACHM to the Iziko SL provides new information and insights on its transformation during the period of South Africa's political transition during the 1990s to the mid 2000s.

Research Methodology

Described below is the research methodology approach I have used in this case study, including the research techniques and the processes involved in data collection, management, and analyses. It also documents the procedures for ensuring rigour and addressing research ethical considerations. I describe my approach to the primary and secondary research on the SL, drawing on archival documentation from the Iziko Social History archives, University of Cape Town Libraries, the National Library of South Africa, the Western Cape Archives and my personal collection of documents and books. Additionally, in order to compare how other site-based museums of atrocity have conceptualised and managed these spaces, I have augmented my research with two comparative studies, one local and another global. The first is the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town and the second, ESMA, in Buenos Aires in Argentina.

I also conducted interviews with staff from the previous SACHM and the current Iziko Museums of South Africa to better gain an understanding of the museum's recent history. Finally, I applied the research outcomes to analyse and synthesise the notion of the SL as witness to slavery.

Within this methodology, I have applied a strategy aligned to the framework-descriptor of "witnessing the museum". This has included observing the SL over time, including the notion of the building as witness to slavery, and then the museum itself as an entity bearing witness to slavery. I describe the SL through the lens of sound historiographical research, and I then examine the building in its iteration as museum as the SACHM and later as the ISL. In Chapter 4, I describe a broad range of causes leading to the transformation of the SL as museum.

Research approach: Positivism and Phenomenology

I have applied an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach to this study. This is described by Miller et.al 2018, as a contemporary qualitative research method grounded in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography (Miller, 2018:240).

IPA is used by researchers to explore individuals' meaning making related to certain significant experiences. In-depth understanding is gained by exploring the meaning people give to their context, and how their situation affects their decisions. According to Robson (2016), this is achieved by "social and material experiences, perspectives, and histories". This approach is particularly well-suited to the aim of this study in exploring the notion of

witness. The flexible and lateral techniques used in the IPA approach allow questions to be open-ended and assist in the understanding and determining of phenomena. Such techniques prioritise diversity attached to lived experience, freedom to explore context, and the relationship to exploring witness, memory and museological applications (Miller, 2018:241).

This method also incorporates interpretivist values, which emphasise that understanding arises from both experience and reflecting and thinking about what happens to oneself (Richie & Lewis, 2003:16).

Research Strategy

This single case study includes the following research strategy:

- Historical desktop research, described below as part of the primary and secondary research
- Two comparative case studies to augment my focus on the SL as a site of atrocity
- Qualitative in-depth interviews with four key informants, detailed below
- My positionality where I reflect on my current work as a museologist in relation to the SL as well as the period of time when I worked in the Iziko Museums of South Africa

Primary research

I have gathered primary research from unpublished data found in the Iziko Social History Archives and from interviews with previous and current staff at the ISL.

Four open-ended interviews were conducted with current and previous staff of the ISL. This small set of respondents was purposively sampled as key informants who could provide critical information related to the topic of this thesis (Etikan, 2016).

The setting for conducting the interviews included a private space in a café, the private offices of the informants and a Zoom interview with Dr Mazel who lives in Newcastle in the U.K. I conducted all the interviews in English, the language in which all informants were conversant and comfortable.

The respondents included:

Current Iziko staff:

- Esther Esmyol: (Currently, Curator of Research and Exhibitions for Social History Collections and the William Fehr Collection).
- Paul Tichmann: (Director, Digitisation and Collections).

Previous SACHM and Iziko staff:

- Aron Mazel: (Director of the SACHM, 1998-2002)
- Helene Vollgraaff: (Curator of Philately and Numismatics, 1999 -2007).

See the interviews schedule attached as Annexure A.

Secondary Research

I gathered my secondary research content through a combination of desktop research and published articles on the various iterations of the SL, the SACHM and the ISL.
In addition, I used recognised online data bases as well as for grey literature using key search words such as 'slavery', 'museum', 'museums as buildings', 'museums as witness', 'memory' and so forth. I systematically went through the archival material taking detailed notes. I have also drawn on several documents including previous SACHM, Iziko minutes, workshop notes and council meetings.

Data was collected from files, documents and books housed in the Iziko Social History Collection (ISHC) archives and library. I also extracted content from various other books and articles found in the Cape Archives, UCT Library and from my own collection of books.

In-depth interview analyses

I used thematic analysis to identify and interpret patterns which emerged from the in-depth interviews. Firstly, I familiarised myself with the information by carefully listening to the audio recorded interviews. This allowed me to fully acquaint myself with the information and gain an overall perspective. Secondly, I took notes to augment the interviews. I then transcribed the interviews and identified potential themes. Finally, I reviewed the transcriptions and my notes again and confirmed suitable themes (Clarke, 2015).

My personal recollection of having worked within the conservative SACHM institution is that most of the staff who worked there in a curatorial capacity during the 1980s had been trained at the then conservative University of Stellenbosch where the emphasis was on the so-called "cultural object" rather than its provenance or critical meaning-making. For this reason, I have taken a cautious and circumspect approach to the interpretation of the interview comments and outcomes from previous staff members of the SACHM.

Rigour and trustworthiness

I ensured that the findings were reliable and dependable by checking on their credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Spencer, 2012).
I ensured credibility by firstly fully reviewing the literature to enrich my understanding of the

topic. I reviewed my notes so that I captured the experiences, opinions and body language of the informants interviewed. The study's rigour was enhanced by interviewing individuals who had occupied different positions in the two museums and by reviewing archival material (Shenton, 2004). I have fully described how I collected the data from differences sources. This creates dependability and also transferability so that other researchers can explore these issues in their own context and gain insights for their museum environments (Nowell, 2017). These processes all contributed to confirmability.

Ethical considerations

As human participants were interviewed, these were guided by the ethical principles of autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice (Mann, Bradley, & Sahakian, 2016). The participants were informed, not harmed, they provided consent and agreed for their names to be used in reporting the findings. They were provided with information on the study prior to interviews and the questions for interview. They were informed that they did not have to take part in the research if they chose not to, could stop the interview at any stage, and skip any questions they preferred not to answer. The participants gave written consent to be interviewed. There were no reimbursements for the interviews. All audio and interview data will be destroyed after five years.

I obtained permission from the Iziko Social History, Collections Manager, Lailah Hisham, to go through the archival material at the Iziko Social History archives and was given the assurance that the information did not have to be kept confidential.
Ethical clearance for the study was received from the University of Cape Town and was obtained before data collection occurred and was valid for the period February 2019 to December 2022. (See Ethics form attached.)

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1: The SL, Then and Now

In this introductory chapter I provide the context for the central research question of the thesis: How has the SL born witness to slavery? Within this process, I document the study objectives.
I examine the notion of "witness" in the context of slavery, within the building now known as the ISL. I document and track how the building has stood witness as the original SL then, and as museum, now. I explain the study's significance and describe my methodological approach and include an overview of my own positionality.

With this in mind, I detail historiographical milestones linked to three key phases of its lifespan. Firstly, as the SL (1679-1808), when the Lodge served the Dutch East India

Company. Secondly, as the South African Cultural History Museum when it first became a museum between the years of 1966-1998 and finally as the ISL Museum (1998 – 2006), when the museum transitioned as part of the Southern Flagship Institution later to become Iziko Museums of South Africa. I then augment these with my own reflexive observations as part of the outcomes of the research findings.

Chapter 2: Witnessing the SL – A Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the literature and previous studies into the notion of "witness" and "witnessing" in the context of the SL.
The literature review establishes a theoretical framework around the concepts of "witnessing", "bearing witness" and making visible. This in turn forms the basis for my analysis in the later chapters of my dissertation and where I describe how these concepts were mobilised in the transition from SACHM to the ISL.
By way of comparative analysis, I look at two case studies of previous sites of atrocity now turned into museums. I then broadly synthesise, interpret and compare these to the trajectory of the ISL.

Chapter 3: The Edifice Complex

This chapter explores the historical trajectory of the building in relation to its built environment, occupation, use and meaning-making, culminating in the ISL Museum. In this chapter I track the evolution of the SL from its inception as the SL in 1679, to its current iteration as the ISL Museum. This historical overview provides important context for the ways in which the building has both 'witnessed' and 'borne witness' in different ways over its lifetime. Importantly, it also establishes the historical context for the period of transformation from the apartheid-era SACHM to the ISL, which is the primary focus of Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: The Rooms are Dark

This chapter summarises and articulates my findings around the notion of witness as it applies to the ISL. It focuses primarily on the period of transition to the ISL, as a moment in time when ideas around 'witnessing' and 'bearing witness' were being harnessed in transformative ways not just at the ISL but also in South African museology more generally. These outcomes have been guided by archival research in the Iziko Social History archives, in depth interviews with current and previous staff at the museum and personal reflexive observations.

Chapter 5: Fishbone Stories

In this concluding chapter I summarise the history of the SL as both edifice and social entity, as a witness to slavery in the Cape and within its walls. The conclusion suggests how the

research question posed at the outset of the study could be answered, tracing the ways in which the theme of ‘witnessing’ is made visible inside and outside the SL.

2. WITNESSING THE SLAVE LODGE – A LITERATURE REVIEW

> We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us. Winston Churchill after the bombing of London, 1943 (Volchenkov, 2018:151).

An overview

This literature review chapter places the study in the context of existing work on memory, participatory agency, identity, and modes of interpretation in a museum context. I explore how the interrelated, interdependent but differing concepts of 'memory' and 'history' are encapsulated in the concept of the building as witness.
The historical scaffolding detailed in Chapter 3 provides the background to an investigation of the SL as firstly the SL, the SACHM and then as the ISL.

Memory and the SL

The ISL is both museum and memorial. The ISL deals with history and memory of slavery at the Cape from over 380 years ago and does so without recent witness testimony and few authentic artefacts. In this regard, Cloete (2021) refers to two modes of memory-making in relation to museums and memorials. The first is the form of the museum that foregrounds, in more traditional ways, the history of slavery. The second, is how memory is linked to memorial (Cloete, 2021:1232). Cloete (2021) suggests that the ISL and other sites of slavery offer little as sites for grief, mourning and reflection about these atrocities.

Whigham (2014), meanwhile, writing on South American museums and specifically in reference to la Escuela Mecánica de la Armada a former clandestine detention centre in Buenos Aires, Argentina, alludes to the difficulties and challenges of converting a site of atrocity into a museum space:

> This process of converting the site of atrocity dedicated to the memory of the thousands who were tortured or disappeared during the junta into a site of memory was neither simple nor quick (Whigham, 2014:90).

Taking these observations into account, the spaces of the ISL pose a significant challenge and in Chapter 4, I describe how staff are currently attempting to grapple with these issues. In a similar vein, the SL building carries what Dolores Hayden describes as "the power of place", a document of its own past, shaped by history (Hayden, 1994:266).

Exploring the complexities of memory

To further augment this study and to better understand the connections between museum and memory in the context of the ISL, I briefly explore how various scholars have researched

and described memory. With reference to recent generational memory and memorial sites, several scholars have interrogated the theme of the Holocaust.

Applicable to the SL and on the notion of memory and trauma, Bernard-Donals (2001:1302) references the Jewish Studies scholar Dominick LaCapra who describes memory as always being “secondary” and what really occurred at the time can never be “directly remembered”. Nora (1989) further offers insights into the complexities of linking history to memory when he implies that memory is in a constant state of flux and is “a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present” (Nora, 1989:8). He argues that while “history is a representation of the past”, memory is “vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation…and only accommodates those facts that suit it” (Nora, 1989:8).

With these observations in mind, linking the deep memory of slavery to place and experience is complex, and more so with the ISL as no current generational memory exists of the space’s links to slavery. However, in relation to the current “community” of slave survivors at the Cape, Halbwach’s description of “collective memory” may be applicable. In this regard, Steffi de Jong (2018) notes that Halbwachs (1925) was the first to make a distinction between what he called “mémoire individuelle” (individual memory) and “mémoire collective” (collective memory). Unlike individual memory, collective memory consists of the memories that are important for a group’s identity, but that are not necessarily based on the individual experiences of the members of that group (de Jong, 2018:11).

With respect to inter-generational memory, in a recent project hosted by the Cape Town Holocaust and Genocide Centre (CTHC), the film “Witnesses-of-the-Witnesses” was shown to an inter-generational audience. The CTHC described this interaction and outcomes of this project as a “choral memory” that “weaves different viewpoints into a layered fabric, guided by the voices of surviving witnesses”. They described this as the “transmission of memory in time” .

This description is akin to the notion of “post-memory” as described by Hirsch (2008). Hirsch (1998) has described the phenomenon of what she calls ‘post-memory’, specific to the transmission of traumatic collective experiences, when writing about Holocaust memory. Post-memory, in Hirsch’s formulation, is the process by which memories of one generation are transmitted to the next or to descendants, becoming in some way indistinguishable from individual/personal memory. She refers to relatively recent observations around the memory of the Holocaust and notes that “inter- and trans-generational transmission of trauma raises more questions than answers”. She further highlights the inadequacy of defining memory, when she notes that “received memory” is distinct from the “recall of contemporary witnesses and participants” (Hirsch, 2008:106).

Dubow in a similar vein makes reference to past atrocity and trauma while delivering a set

of lectures to the UCT Summer School programme entitled On Memory, Monuments and Memorials in 2001. In the introduction to his first lecture at the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies at UCT, he stated: "Remembrance, as a vital human activity shapes our links to the past and the ways we remember define us in the present" (Dubow, 2001). He goes on to differentiate between monuments and memorials, describing how memorials are adaptive and can take on many forms and that these may include public programmes, lectures, interpretive centres, museums, and memorial buildings all of which contain the notion of memory and memorial. Dubow reflects the notion of Hirsch's "post-memory" linking the theory of Memory Studies and the process of knowledge-making in museums and memorial sites of atrocity and trauma. He argues that memory as part of witnessing is always present (Dubow, 2001).

Returning to the Holocaust and memory, Edward Linenthal believes memorials serve a complex and important role and has written much about the Holocaust and memory. He states that Holocaust museums presently work under two accepted core ethical imperatives, the onus of remembrance and the onus of credibility (Linenthal, 1994:410). In this regard, LaCapra adds two more imperatives, those of witnessing and agency. He emphasises the importance of concentration camp survivors telling their story "In order to regain the agency taken from them by the trauma they have endured" (LaCapra 1998:12).

Exploring the complexities of Official Memory and Dark Tourism

"Official memory" is described by Stiles (2016) as selective, revealing as much through what is forgotten (or displaced, either temporarily or permanently) as through what is officially remembered. Within the museum, memory is intrinsically linked to material culture, as the construction of official memory involves choices that determine what is collected and preserved, or what is rejected and possibly lost from official memory. This process is cyclical, as collected material embodies an official memory while this official memory also determines what material will be collected (Stiles, 2016:12).

The appearance of the term 'Dark Tourism' has arisen recently in parallel with the development of museums and memorial on sites of previous atrocity. Dark Tourism, according to Sodaro (2017), has become a popular catch phrase for describing and branding sites of previous violence. She states that memorial museums focused on past violence, atrocity, and human rights abuses reflect a demand today that those darkest days in human history are not only preserved but "musealised" and interpreted in a way that is widely accessible to present and future audiences.
They are part of the ever- growing trend of dark tourism and reflect a significant shift in the late twentieth century in how societies, nations, and groups memorialize past violence (Sodaro, 2017:4).

As can be seen here, the various investigations into the meaning of memory reveal a myriad of approaches. This exploration into the complex nature of memory served to heighten my understanding of it in relation of the ISL.

Exploring the complexities of Testimony and Bearing Witness

To understand the notion of "bearing witness" in the context of the SL is to understand firstly the notion of what it is to 'bear witness' and then to analyse how the experience of "bearing witness" has been present within its spaces.
In this context, I explore types of witnessing. Firstly, I examine the notion of bearing witness as a performative experience. Secondly, I consider this notion in the context of the ISL. I then explore what the building itself has witnessed in its historical context as the SL, and how the idea of witnessing has impacted on its later iterations as the SACHM and the ISL.

While researching the story of the SL, I became aware of the work of Peters (2001) who argues that to witness is nuanced and describes it as an "intricately tangled practice": "The notion of witnessing is multi-faceted and has been interpreted in a multitude of different ways". He notes that the act of witnessing raises questions of "truth and experience, presence and absence, death and pain, seeing and saying, and the trustworthiness of perception - in short, fundamental questions of communication" (Peters, 2001:707).

In relation to the viewer's experience of witnessing objects, de Jong (2018) references Walter Benjamin and his essay "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", (1940):

> As a category of experience, aura is thus based on the viewer's anthropomorphising of the object. Aura resides in the viewer imagining a reaction coming from the object. (de Jong, 2018:113).

This points to a critical aspect of knowledge-making around museum collections, that of the notion of provenance. Provenance embraces the origin and story of "the object" including its maker and its intended purpose. The object's "aura" is conveyed in this way grounding it as authentic. When considering the means of communication in a museum environment, witnessing, and bearing witness to the spatial environment and the objects exhibited within, are critical factors contributing to the experience. Both the building and the objects have a sense of "aura" and carry the traces of their production and provenance of the past.

From these observations it could be understood that to witness can apply to a person, or to an object which affords evidence. The implication here is that when we go about the performative act of experiencing in the context of museum, we apply a mode of witnessing which calls on us to bear witness. In the case of the SL specifically as museum, the deduction is that the experiential act is reciprocal and the building as an anthropomorphised

character is presenting knowledge to the viewer. Although this mode of witnessing may seem hypothetical at first glance, it is nonetheless specific to the process and practice within memorial museums where witnessing, observing and interpreting in the space are critical features of experiencing and processing knowledge.

De Jong (2018) adds another perspective to this, linked to the concept of justice. She notes that the notion of witnessing is juridical, and references the philosopher Sibylle Krämer in describing five ideal-type characteristics of the juridical witnessing: "…the creation of evidence, perception, the speech act, the audience and trustworthiness" (de Jong, 2018:34). In this sense, witnessing becomes a forensic practice, subject to the scrutiny of evidence and corroboration.

These approaches to the challenges of interpretation point to the importance of ethical practice in authoring information as well as implying that there is a reciprocal moral obligation on behalf of the witness to process and interpret the knowledge. The act of performative witnessing couched in this way, implies a moral and ethical engagement. This is particularly so in museums and interpretation centres which act as memorials to atrocity. Simon et al., (1997) expand on this concept and frame witnessing as a 'practice of commemorative ethics' (Simon, 1997:183). They note:

> If witnessing is to be understood as one possible response to the "power to which the past has a claim," determining the specific obligations of witnessing that constitute a just and compassionate response to testimony becomes a vital concern (Simon, 1997:178).

In a South African context, the obligation of witnessing was brought into harsh light by the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) hearings, which happened between 1996 and 1999. Unlike the Nuremberg trials held after the Second World War, the approach of the TRC was one of restorative justice rather than punitive justice. The outcomes of the hearings, according to Fullard (2008) led to a "consensual view of the past" that would allow the nation to "close the door on the past". In this way, although reconciliation was explicitly tied to the hearings and the project of nation-building, a new form of national community was forged based on a "collective memory", a "shared" history (Fullard, 2008:234).

The TRC process, undoubtedly had a bearing on the way witness and testimony entered public consciousness and contestations about the past. In a South African context this was to manifest across the political terrain including in the transitions happening within the greater heritage sector and specifically in the transitioning of museums in the late 1990s and early 2000s in South Africa.

The notion of "witnessing" in the context of museum interpretive theory is generally understood to be linked to testimony by witnesses or survivors in relation to an event, object,

narrative or particular exhibit. It appears particularly in writing on Holocaust memorialisation and museum representation, as well as in research around memory making in the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is important to note here that the TRC dealt with actions taken after 1960 and slavery, early indigenous massacres, colonisation and land appropriation has largely remained as unmarked unspoken signifiers of memory. The ISL is both a space of slave memory as well as a museum to memorialise slavery where the process of constructing meaning within and without these spaces occurs despite the benefit of recent memory.

Human witnessing and testimony are common memorial tools that appear in museums and heritage sites and inform representations of the past. But to what extent can we describe a building or the built environment as witnessing? Karp and Gieryn (2002) suggest a possible answer to this question in their description of buildings as objects of human agency. They postulate that there is a synchronous relationship between the built environment and the people who engage with it: "…we deconstruct them materially and semiotically, all the time" (Gieryn, 2002: 34). In this way the authors imply that buildings are "objects of human agency" and the synchronous engagement of human engagement with the space combine to convey their pasts through the act of "witnessing".

Framing the power of the past determined by witness and testimony has been instrumental in conveying the memory around atrocity which occurred at the Holocaust centres and other sites of genocide. Whigham (2014) has observed the ways in which these former sites of mass atrocity may act as both witness and testimonial to such events, including via physical traces, remnants, and other forensic approaches to the built environment itself:

> Despite the particularities that are present within every instance of genocide or state terror, one thing they all share is that, once the physical violence ends, there are always sites that are left behind, many of which contain material reminders or even concrete evidence of the violations that occurred within their boundaries (Whigham, 2014:89).

Young (1994) takes this further in reference to Holocaust sites as reminders of evidence and atrocity. He asserts that through the act of witnessing, monuments and memorials "public memory is constructed", that "understanding of events depends on memory construction" (Young, 1994:15).

Much of the literature in this area of study refers to this kind of "inside-out" understanding of the concepts of witnessing, testifying, and bearing witness. In the case of a building where atrocity occurred, especially where memory of atrocity has been erased and requires some form of recovery, the building or site can be seen as a witness; buildings and sites can also

be read forensically, as documents testifying to what occurred in them; and, in the case of sites of atrocity which are transformed into memorial museums, eventually come to bear witness by representing violent pasts.

The SL and Post-Apartheid Heritage-making in South Africa

There is no doubt that heritage is complex yet Shepherd claims that heritage practice interventions are critical:

> The notion of heritage offers a language through which to discuss contested issues of culture, identity and citizenship in the postcolony, even as it determines and delimits this discussion in particular ways (Shepherd, 2008:17).

The SL is both memorial and museum and is embraced by the complex concept of heritage. Laurajane Smith (2006) claims that there is a "…hegemonic authorized heritage discourse", which is fuelled by aesthetic experts" (Smith, 2006:11).

To embrace these complexities and reconcile them as essential aspects within the museum environment, Walsh refers to the term "diachrony" which he describes as a component of post-modern heritage with the "unnerving ability to deny historical process" (Walsh, 1992:149).

In the instance of the Slave Lodge North (2017) references Baderoon, who suggests that the use of slave labour and the geospatial growth of Cape Town from the mid 1600s laid the foundations for subsequent models of control and oppression including Apartheid (North, 2017:83). The spatial planning of Cape Town has always been predicated on the establishment of access to land, water and labour. Buildings and infrastructure were constructed to facilitate these needs and in the case of the SL, slaves were held in the purpose-built SL to meet the needs of the labour needs of the settlement at the time. Buildings are imbued with histories and as a result become active agents in these stories. In this regard, The SL building and surrounds then and now are loaded with traumatic experiences.

Paz (in Cuetos, 2018:151), in stating that "architecture is the least incorruptible witness of history" implies that buildings carry their histories and stories through their iterations over time and despite being subject to adaptive reuse, that experiences they have witnessed will always remain uncorrupted. This approach provides for an interesting and challenging conundrum in relation to heritage and museum work. It suggests that the presence of exhibition spaces and objects in a museum are a critical aspect of exhibition and interpretive development. This is highly relevant to the SL as museum, as it has proved difficult to utilise the space which was originally designed as place of incarceration.

The SL building is intertwined with an “authorised heritage” marking it as both museum and memorial. In this way it will always carry the mantle of memory around slavery for what happened inside and outside of its walls.

Politicising Heritage

In 1987, President Botha’s National Party’s tricameral government promulgated regulation for “Own Affairs” and “General Affairs” institutions to propel ideology within the system of Apartheid. There were three separate “Own Affairs” administrations which included the racial minorities of white, Indian, and so-called coloured and a fourth “General Affairs” administration for all other institutions. The SACHM was designated an ‘Own Affairs’ Museum. Only ‘whites’ were permitted to visit the museum and the approach was to collect, interpret and exhibit collections reflecting the practices of the previous colonial governments. Exhibitions were constructed in such a way as to promote the South African ideology at the time, framed by the National Party’s highly ethnicised laws (Kros, 1994:16). Soudien (2008) later wrote that museums like the SACHM “denigrated the experiences of people who were not white”, and drives home that this approach was a “white supremacist one” (Soudien, 2008:6).
Having worked in and with museums for most of my working life I have come to realise that museums are in some senses an enigma. They are generally built of brick and mortar but at the same time they are expected to carry the responsibility of conveying the intangible realm of memory and identity within their spaces. As Weil (2012) notes:

> Museums have always been aware of their role as custodians of the evidence of people’s identity. In the past, this awareness was often limited to the identification, collection, and protection of material culture; and what grew up around this role was the notion and practice of curatorship (Weil, 2012:229).

Museums, through the constant process of researching, exhibiting, and interpreting, by their very nature are always projects in process. For their legitimacy, Silverman (2015) contends that that there needs to be ongoing collaboration between the museum and communities. He also alludes to the fact that museums are based on objects which often possess multiple layers of meaning or what he terms ‘epistemological patina’ and that objects in the context of museum will always act as ‘discursive objects’ (Silverman, 2015:3).

In this way the ISL can be seen to embrace the diachronic nature of heritage as memorial and museum interlocuter simultaneously. The SL as museum has been left with the arduous task of conveying this complex memory.

Exploring the SL and decolonisation

The tentacles of colonialism have a direct bearing on the SL story. Ariese et al (2022) view colonialism as far-reaching including the practice of racist ideologies and identity domination through the application of language and tradition:

> The colonial is not merely a question of continuity or rupture, of influence or appropriation, but a presence that is all-saturating, overflowing, ever-present, persistent and fundamental to the experience of contemporary life (Ariese, 2022:11).

By way of example, a current exhibition in the ISL, 'My Naam is February' reflects how slaves were de-humanised by having their names changed when they were sold. This exhibition looks at this practice and describes how many of the slaves were named after days of the week. This was just one way in which slaves were stripped of their identity through colonial appropriation (see figures 4 and 5). The undignified legacy of name changing which happened to slaves at the Cape several hundred years ago reveal how the threads of coloniality remain intact today.

In the introductory chapter to the International Committee for Museology Series on The decolonisation of Museums from 2021, François Mairesse identifies the major issues pertaining to modern museums as the need to reformulate policy. He mentions specifically the violent character of colonisation associated with the colonial European empires of Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal. He states that the "decolonisation of museology is more complex than the greater decolonial process", suggesting that the deconstruction of the "founding myth" of the colonial museum is tied to the Enlightenment and its propagation throughout the colonies. Rather than considering the problem only from the point of view of colonisation, he calls on us to analyse the work of museology and to engage in the work of re-interpreting colonial practices (ICOFOM Soares, 2021).

The importance of decolonising the ISL and the story of slavery in the Cape is reflected in a book review published in the Business Day of 23 January 2023. Hans Pienaar reviewed the book, 'Die Kaapse Slawe 1652-1838' by Eunice Visser. This book was a comprehensive study of the 'cultural contributions', by slaves at the Cape. In the review, Pienaar raises the issue of why the Dutch Government has ignored Cape Slavery in their efforts to acknowledge, apologise and compensate for slavery in the previous Dutch colonies. He notes, that on 19 December 2022 at a state function, the Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte issued a general apology to the previous Dutch colonies for 250 years of Dutch involvement in slavery. In the responding to questions afterwards, he mentioned that while seven ministers had been despatched to former colonies to spread the message, none had come to South Africa. Pienaar states "…one got the impression that South Africa was being added

as an afterthought, an “also” region, whereas a Dutch word, ‘aparthijd’, through its colonial derivative, became the central concept driving the first globalised campaign against racism”. This he describes “as an admission that despite all the weaponisation of progressivity there is still an Orwellian gap in public knowledge about this crime against humanity” (Pienaar, 2023:1). Through these comments, Pienaar alludes to the need to embrace the tenets of de-colonisation as critical for local projects to redress and inculcate healing around slavery.

The issue of public knowledge around slavery and the de-colonising of the museum is pertinent and essential to the story of the SL and specifically to the building. Slavery has been recognised as a deep wound in the psyche of those oppressed and their descendants, by colonisers over time. Furthermore, it is now a museum and memorial to slavery, yet it still embraces the spatial characteristics, practices, and post-memory of the colonisers and importantly slavery at the Cape.

Figure 4: From a digital banner for the exhibition ‘My Naam is Februarie’ which opened in October 2016.
Iziko Museums of South Africa Facebook page.

Figure 5: Image from an article in the Big Issue dated 28 October 2017. The person in the panel is Mr Alfred May. Photograph by David Prior. https://www.bigissue.org.za/my-naam-is-februarie-iziko-opens-window-on-calendar-slaves/

The approach to colonial practice around museology in South Africa and specifically the setting up of the SACHM contributed to the erasure of slavery and its associated generational memory. It is essential that the ISL museum through its programmes, research and exhibitions continually include this in redressing this pervasive legacy.

The building which was created to house slaves has seen many functional iterations over the years. Each one of these has served to erase the true purpose and deep memory of slave history. Apart from the ISL museum, the slave plinths in Church Square, and the Prestwich Memorial site, there are presently very few public markers or memorials to slavery in urban Cape Town. This lacuna and the weight of making the past public, is the responsibility of the ISL. This is further elaborated on in Chapter 4.

Two Comparative case studies

As a way of comparing, benchmarking and understanding the processes at the SL Museum, I have selected two studies pertinent to its history. Both are museums developed on and within their original purpose-built sites. Both are memorials to atrocity. The first, the Castle is situated in Cape Town, South Africa while ESMA is a site museum in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Importantly, pertinent, and present in the examples of the Castle, ESMA and the SL is the challenge of how to represent the past with its multiple memories and shapeshifting over time.

Case Study 1. The Castle

The Castle of Good Hope (The Castle) is regarded as the oldest colonial building in South Africa. Completed in 1676, the Castle has always been a central signifier of political control and identity. Ownership and control of the Castle can be broadly bracketed into three time periods. During the period of 1679 to 1948 the ownership of the Castle lay with the colonising authorities, first the Dutch and later the British. From 1948 to 1994, the South African Government was in control of the Castle. This included the management of the Castle throughout the Apartheid period. In 1994 the new democratic government of South Africa assumed control of the Castle. Since 1994 its role, meaning and identity has evolved from a bastion of military control into a site of story-telling and significance focusing on the colonial experience and later the years of political oppression in South Africa.

Johannes (2019) states that although the Castle of Good Hope has been declared a national monument, its “history is distorted and reinforces Eurocentric narratives” (Johannes, 2019:9). The SL building which was completed three years later in 1679 formed an extension of the Dutch / VOC settler project at the Cape as it was used for the housing of chattel slave labour to work for the VOC. These two building projects, developed hastily in the two decades after the Dutch arrival at the Cape, contributed to fast growing Dutch Indian Ocean trade

project which relied heavily on the Cape as a victualing point. This was later followed by land appropriation for farming and slave labour.
More recently the Castle has become a home to a heritage site, which contains a suite of museums and the ceremonial headquarters for the current South African military. As indicated earlier, no building can be disassociated from its urban situ and according to Martin Hall (2006) most often buildings and sites of this status and nature represent statements of political intent, power and identity (Hall, 2006:189). In the current context, the Castle and the ISL are no exceptions as they are both situated within busy economic and pedestrian hubs in central Cape Town.

Johannes (2019) further argues that the Castle holds deep and complex traumatic memory including '(his)stories /(her)stories / (their)stories / (our)stories' that interconnect with the history of a nation(s), the history of a continent(s), as well as the history of the Indian Ocean trade' (Johannes, 2019:9).

Gubb (2012) notes that the during the apartheid period the Castle became a symbol of Afrikaner heritage:

> With rising Nationalism and increasing world isolation as a consequence of apartheid policies, the Castle (along with other historical buildings) gained increasing stature as a symbol of Afrikaner heritage (Gubb, 2012:3).

The Castle and the SL hold similar historical and memory patterns. These time-specific interpretations of value and memory have varied depending on the complex of power relations and control. Hall (2006) refers to the "gaze" and how over time the Castle would have been understood in different ways:

> …a Dutch East India Company official looking at the Castle in 1720 would see a mark of Dutch authority and sea power. A British merchant looking at the same ramparts in 1860 would see a scruffy and irrelevant anachronism. A government minister looking at the Castle in 1960 would see a mark of the superiority of white civilization in Africa, while a government minister taking in the same prospect in 1994 would see victory over oppression (Hall, 2006:204).

Both the Castle and the SL were built to assert and manage colonial power in the region. Both were declared national monuments, and both are now memorials to oppression and slavery. Furthermore, both spaces act as site specific museums and memorials.

Case study 2: ESMA - Escuela Mecánica de la Armada, Buenos Aires, Argentina

This is a study of the site-based museum Escuela Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA), in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which was the largest former 'junta' concentration camp. It was set

up by the military junta dictatorship in Argentina between 1976–1983. Over 500 detention centres were set up where so-called 'leftists' were kidnapped and detained. At most of these detention camps, the detainees were tortured, forced to perform slave labour, and subsequently murdered or 'disappeared'. ESMA (The Navy Mechanic's School), was one of the largest clandestine detention camps and was used as a site of incarceration, torture and killing by the junta.

Whigham (2014:90) notes that developing this site of atrocity dedicated to the memory of the thousands who were tortured or disappeared during the junta, into a site of memory was neither simple nor quick. She states:

> Despite the particularities that are present within every instance of genocide or state terror, one thing they all share is that, once the physical violence ends, there are always sites that are left behind, many of which contain material reminders or even concrete evidence of the violations that occurred within their boundaries (Whigham, 2014:88).

In the setting up of a memorial centre and museum site, Whigham (2014) turns to the experiences and lessons learnt in the re-purposing of many of the post WWII Holocaust sites in Europe, as sites of memory. Although she acknowledges that the context of trauma and genocide is different at each site, she intimates that these site-specific places of trauma can most often act as guiding examples of how to achieve this.

When ESMA was re-cast as a site of memory, it was subject to a range of re-purposing processes including evacuation, alteration, and destruction. When the military personnel moved out of the space, they altered many of the buildings and removed much of the evidence perpetrated at the site, presumably to lessen or negate any evidence and culpability raised by witnesses and survivor testimonies at a later stage. In a positive act of re-framing of what Whigham (2014) refers to as "resonant violence" the developers and makers of this memorial were therefore charged with the challenge of emptiness and the absence of evidence. In the wake of these absences, the developers were faced with the task of "both encountering the past and activating that past in the present" (Whigham, 2014:90).

Whigham (2014) further argues that the performative act of post-trauma seeing and witnessing is critical in the recuperation of "lost personal agency" (Whigham, 2014:91). The notion of "resonant violence" is embodied in spaces of atrocity like ESMA and a visitor to such a space is reminded via the performative process of experience of the legacy of the space.

These two case studies offer parallel examples of how site-based museums elsewhere have grappled with the issues presenting and representing histories and memories of

atrocity. The obvious difference between the creation of ESMA and the SL is the challenge of recent memory versus generational memory or post-memory. However, with respect to time-specific memory, these two sites do coincide in their respective current iterations as museum, as they showcase atrocity and reflect individual and collective memory.
The ISL as museum was set up to address and memorialise the containment camp which was the SL between 1679 and 1811 while the ESMA museum and memorial was set up post the ousting of the junta in 1976 to recall, redress and memorialise the atrocities of the internment camp of the junta period in Buenos Aires. The SL was declared a memorial museum site when it underwent a name change in 1998 from the SACHM to the ISL.

ESMA, like the ISL, is a site-based museum and memorial. They both include spaces of dark memory and atrocity and consequently many of the problems encountered in the conversion of ESMA to a memorial and museum are echoed in the ISL.

3. THE EDIFICE COMPLEX - AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE IZIKO SL

The SL building over time

In order to better understand the ways in which the SL has stood witness to history and memory, this chapter describes the biography of the building from 1679 to the present. The SL was built by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) for its original purpose – to house enslaved people – in 1679. Over the next 300 years, it served multiple purposes, and was renovated, adapted and added to in various ways. While traces of its original purpose remain, its history has undergone several physical and symbolic erasures. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, it underwent a period of transformation into the ISL where it attempted to reclaim the past and make this history visible. This has involved transforming and re-interpreting the spaces which witnessed the horror of slavery. The political and administrative transformation of the ISL is described in greater detail in Chapter 4.

The Occupation of the Cape

The VOC occupied the Cape between 1652 and 1795 and the SL was built under the administration of the VOC in 1679. The VOC then lost the colony to Great Britain following the 1795 Battle of Muizenberg. In 1802, the Cape was ceded by the British to the Napoleonic Batavia Republic through the Treaty of Amiens. It was re-occupied by the British following the Battle of Blaauwberg in 1806. In 1814, British occupation was affirmed with the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814. The Cape of Good Hope then remained in the British Empire, becoming self-governing in 1872. In 1910, it united with three other colonies to form the Union of South Africa, when it was renamed the Province of the Cape of Good Hope. South Africa then became a sovereign state in 1931 and a republic in 1961 (Worden et al, 1998).

The various periods of ownership of the Lodge can be divided into four major periods: between 1679 – 1811 when it was a SL run firstly by the Dutch and then British governments; 1811 to the mid 1960s when it became government offices and later the Supreme Court; 1966 to 1998, when it housed the South African Cultural History Museum (SACHM); and the period from the late 1990s to the present, when it was renamed the SL, later becoming known as the ISL. Each of these periods left their mark on the building in some way (Worden et al, 1998), and the building stands as witness to these successive periods of management and ownership.

Worden (2014) states that when the VOC arrived at the Cape there was little European urban development, although ships had been landing at the Cape for many years. He ascribes this to the “highly transient nature” of the VOC employees and the paucity of passing ships (Worden, 2014:72). This was in stark contrast to the other VOC settler colonies like Batavia and Colombo, where there was greater evidence of specific European development (Worden,

2014:72). While in other respects, the Cape evolved along the lines of other Dutch settlements like Batavia, Recife and New Amsterdam. However, unlike those colonies, the Cape was not predicated on enforced military occupation. Local inhabitants like the Goringhaiqua viewed the settlers as a threat when in 1656 the VOC authorities insisted that they "move their cattle further behind the Lion Mountain ... out of sight of the Company's settlement" (Worden, 2014:75). This situation sowed enmity among indigenous communities and led to years of strife in the region.

Slavery at the Cape

The first ship to transport slaves to the Cape was the Amersfoort. It off-loaded 174 Angolan slaves on 28 March 1658. In that same year another slave ship arrived with 228 slaves from Guinea. On seeing the slaves disembark and in presumably in anticipation of their much-needed labour, Blommaert quotes Van Riebeeck as saying that they were "a particularly handsome, capable and merry race" [sic] (Blommaert, 1938:20).

The original Fort de Goede Hoop was built in 1652 and acted as a haven for VOC officials and soldiers, storage for food and as a precaution against a perceived "anticipated indigenous and European attack" (Worden, 2014:116). The Castle of Good Hope was built between 1666 and 1679 and replaced the original fort.

The SL was situated on a section of land granted to the VOC by Governor Simon van der Stel. It was positioned alongside the Heerengracht canal, opposite the VOC Hospital and near to the Company's Gardens. The VOC was careful to position to their benefit every site and structure in the evolving urban planning of the new city. The SL was no exception. It was strategically situated at the upper end of the Heerengracht (now upper Adderley Street), to easily enable access to slaves to work on the various projects including the Company Gardens, the nearby farms and the VOC Hospital.

According to both Lewis (2010) and Shell (2013), there is little information on how the actual building was altered over time. Their limited historical observations offer clues to the design and construction elements of the building, extracted from early plans and a detailed physical model of the lodge, made by Peter Laponder. A plan of the SL drawn up by Wildt in 1803 shows the layout of the spaces. (See figure 2.)

Life in the SL

The number of occupants of the lodge grew steadily. In 1685 there were 335 slaves in the lodge: 137 males, 106 females and 92 children all under 12 years of age. Amongst these 92 children were 25 boys and 19 girls of Dutch fathers. Of the latter, the Commissioner van Rheede declared that their work must be differentiated from that of other slaves (Worden et al: 1998). However, according to Geyser 1982, he insisted that although these children were

conceived of white fathers they were nevertheless born into slavery and were consequently subject to the same administration and discipline as the other slaves.

In 1713 the settlement at the Cape at the Cape was hit by a major public health catastrophe. The crew of a ship which was on its way to the Netherlands from India had contracted smallpox. It was the job of the slave women in the Lodge to wash the clothes of the sailors and consequently, they were the first to fall ill. In due course the epidemic spread from the SL to the rest of the settlement (Worden et al: 1998).

In 2010, librarians at the National Library of South Africa discovered a notebook belonging to a Johannes Smiesing where he had journaled his experience of living in the Lodge. Smeising who was born in the Lodge in 1697 and later became a teacher there (Dick, 2010).
In the 1714 census of the Cape SL of the Dutch East Indian Company (VOC), seventeen-year-old Johannes (Jan) Smiesing was identified as a third-generation creóle 'halfslag' slave. Manda Gratia (daughter of Armozijn Claasz) and Jan Smiesing of Amsterdam (an employee of the VOC) were his parents (Dick, 2010:159). When his request for manumission was granted on Thursday 8 November 1731, he was described in the VOC's Council of Policy Resolutions as a "Comps Lijfeijgene" (company slave), and as a 'schoolmeester' (school master). In his notebooks Smiesing recorded births, baptisms, deaths, notated hymns and described herbal remedies used. While Smiesing described himself as a reading and writing servant of the 'honourable' VOC, his notebooks provide insights into the daily life in the SL during the early 18th Century (Dick, 2010:160).

By 1716 the lodge became overcrowded and was no longer able to adequately house the number of slaves within its walls. Recognizing this, the VOC and the company authorities contacted the Council of 17 in Amsterdam requesting that the building be enlarged. It took several years for permission to be granted and these alterations were only completed in 1732. A special Commission of inquiry into the state of the SL reported on the 26th of October 1803 that the building was in such a state of decay that repairs were urgently required. Once permission was granted, the architect Louis Michael Thibault undertook a survey of the repairs and drafted a report. As a result, partitions with ventilating holes were installed inside the building, mainly to improve the comfort and privacy of the occupants (Geyser, 1982:38).

The British House of Commons passed the Slavery Abolition Bill in 1833 which aimed to put an end to slavery in the British colonies. The act was only commissioned on 1 December 1834 in the Cape. Slavery however continued for another four years under the guise of "apprenticeship training", which in effect was a ploy to allow the slave owners time to adjust to their loss of labour.

Over the years, commemorations were held to celebrate the abolition of Slavery. Ward and Worden (1998) make mention of an ex-slave Lydia who each year on 1 December held

a prayer meeting in her District Six house. In 1910 the African Peoples Organisation (an organisation representing 'coloured interests') published an interview with a 96-year-old formerly enslaved woman, Katie Jacobs from District Six. She recounted how painful it was to be separated from her family as a child and mentioned that there was a sense of love and community at that time; "there was more love in the old slave days…it was more peaceful". (Ward and Worden, 1998:204).

Over time, slavery commemorations started disappearing. This was in the main due to the government's racial discrimination policies and the effects of apartheid. Among other protocols, the Group Areas Act served to wrench many coloured and black families and communities away from their places of residence to make way for inner city development. This served to further minimise the memory of slavery. The SACHM launched in 1966 and due to its alignment with the apartheid government displayed nothing about this story of slavery. This, despite it being located in the original SL building (Ward and Worden, 1998:202).

In 2000 Gabeba Abrahams-Willis archaeologist at the SACHM, embarked on an excavation at the museum in the hope of uncovering artefacts. In her unpublished and undated notes shared on the Iziko Museums website in 2000, she noted that sections of the original building were found which revealed cellars and several artefacts including animal bone deposits, ceramic-ware, clay pipes and other disparate items and lamented the fact that there was little extant material culture offering clues to the lived experience of slaves in the Lodge.

Control, administration and education in the SL

Around 1691, Commissioner van Rheede was the first to institute significant administrative reforms in the SL. Up until this time there was not even a formal record of the number of slaves in the lodge. The slaves were then categorized into married or unmarried, young boys and young girls, and children of white slave owners. The boys within this latter category were placed under the care of a so-called master and had preferential education in the lodge. Slaves had specific tasks that they were expected to perform daily. The men were made to work at the various labour yards of the company, and the women worked around the town, as nurses, nannies and at the VOC hospital across the way (Dick, 2010:161).

The overseer, who lived offsite, was instructed to be in-person at the lodge every evening at 18h00 to do a rollcall and to check that all the slaves were indoors. He also had to ensure that all the slaves were in prayer every evening before he left and that no fires were lit in the lodge after dark. Food and provisions were managed in the Lodge by way of a tender system. Local suppliers, mainly consisting of Free Burghers, were contracted for food supplies including butchers and private vegetable suppliers (Geyser, 1982:38).

The VOC made it compulsory from the 1680s for enslaved children in the lodge to be taught the Dutch language. This suited their communication purposes and attempts to enforce Dutch culture onto the slaves. Commissioner van Rheede expressed this in instructing the schoolmaster to do the following: a.) “The boys were to be taught from exactly 08h00 in the morning until 16h00 in the afternoon”. b.) “Only Christian values and manners will be allowed, and malicious and filthy language was to be eradicated”. c). “The Commissioner would listen in on the classes twice a day” (Geyser, 1982:55).

In 1807, the British government took full control of the Cape. The Governor, the Earl of Caledon, wrote to the colonial secretary in Britain and suggested that all the slaves should be removed from the Lodge and the building should be converted into government offices. At that point there were only 187 men, 73 women and 23 children living in the building. The Colonial Secretary agreed, and the slaves were removed from the lodge over the next few years. Most of them were sold to so-called “respectable” people such as military officers and farmers (Worden et al 1998).

The Changing SL

In the late 1760s, the VOC’s Commissioner General Adriaan van Rheede visited the Cape, and expressed concerns to Governor Simon van der Stel that the solid structure of the SL building could be a threat to the Castle as a fortress, and that it “serves as a safe harbour for an invading enemy force” (Geyser, 1982:27).

Due to an increased number of enslaved people, repairs needed to be made to the building throughout the 18th century. In 1732 and again in 1752 the Lodge was renovated and enlarged with a second storey added, and the building was given a flat, plastered roof. At this time, the western wall was moved up to the moat near the Company’s hospital in the Heerengracht. In 1811, when slaves were moved out of the Lodge, the West wing was converted into colonial administration offices. A new front facing façade was designed by the architect Thibault and built by Schutte to an exact replica of the original.

Classical forms of architecture were popular in the Netherlands and replicated in the Cape. A neoclassical style was embraced for most of the 18th century public buildings at the Cape. This approach influenced Louis Michel Thibault when the SL was converted to government offices. The architecture of the later Supreme Court represents what was known as the Cape Style. The facades on both the Adderley Street and Parliament Street sides are examples of

Cape Dutch neo-classical forms and both include highly detailed relief sculptural motifs. These features serve as a document of the history of the building, but also erased elements of its original purpose and history, effectively occluding the building’s links with slavery and the work of enslaved people in building early Cape Town. The inner and outer built

environment aspects of the current SL are powerful indicators of the making and meaning of Cape Town, as a town built largely on the back of slave labour. Every character change of the SL was initiated and aligned to its specific purpose at the time, enabling the building to serve as both a multi-layered document of history, and as a space of erasure and forgetting.

The SACHM and the fight to save The Old Supreme Court building

Due to the expanding nature of upper urban Cape Town, there was pressure from the local city council to demolish or completely renovate the SL. Various bodies opposed this initiative. These included the South African Association of Arts, the Cape Historical and Museum Society, the Historical Monuments Commission, the Institute of South African Architects, the Cape Town Photographic Society, the South African Academy of Sciences and Art, the Cape Town Bar Council, the New Group of Professional Architects and the then the City of Cape Town Committee of Investigation into Old houses and Buildings. Among the individuals who submitted reports in opposition to this was Dr Mary Cook, who worked at the South African Museum as a Cultural Historian. She was a specialist in Cape Dutch architecture and was later to be considered as a candidate for the Directorship. The petitioning from the various heritage bodies and individuals won out and the demolition of the SL was abandoned in favour of the new South African Cultural History Museum.

When plans were mooted in the late 1950s for the setting up of a cultural history museum, the Old Supreme Court (OSC) building was considered the appropriate venue of choice. The decision to use the OSC immediately silenced the city engineers in their proposed demolition of the Lodge and in so doing, provided a layer of protection against plans to demolish the building. As described in Chapters 2 and 4, the South African Cultural History Museum opened its doors to the public in 1966 (Geyser, 1982).

Heritage and the SL - The conservation protocols at the SL

It is fortunate that despite being subjected to adaptive reuse over time, the authentic structural form of the SL has remained more or less intact. This can be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, following regulations in their own countries, the Dutch and later the British governments had relatively strict protocols and controls governing how state buildings could be adjusted and renovated.
Büttgens (2010) notes that the Natural and Historical Monuments, Relics and Antiques Act (1934) and later the National Monuments Act (No.28 of 1969) controlled and regulated the conservation of historical buildings in South Africa. This Act established the National Monuments Council and almost all the declarations “were buildings constructed by people of European decent since the establishment of the VOC station at the Cape” (Büttgens, 2010:50). In this vein, when the SL building became a museum, it fell under the control of the Apartheid government. In keeping with the need to preserve what the ideologies at the time perceived to be part of their Dutch heritage, the building retained its structural style and

integrity, while only internal adjustments were made to facilitate the museum's requirements. No major structural alterations have been made to the built environment of the Lodge since 1966 when it became a museum. In 1969 The SL became a National Monument under the National Monuments Act and thus afforded further heritage protection.

Figure 6: An architectural sketch by Louis Michel Thibault from 1811 showing the front pediment of the building. Source: Iziko Social History Archives.

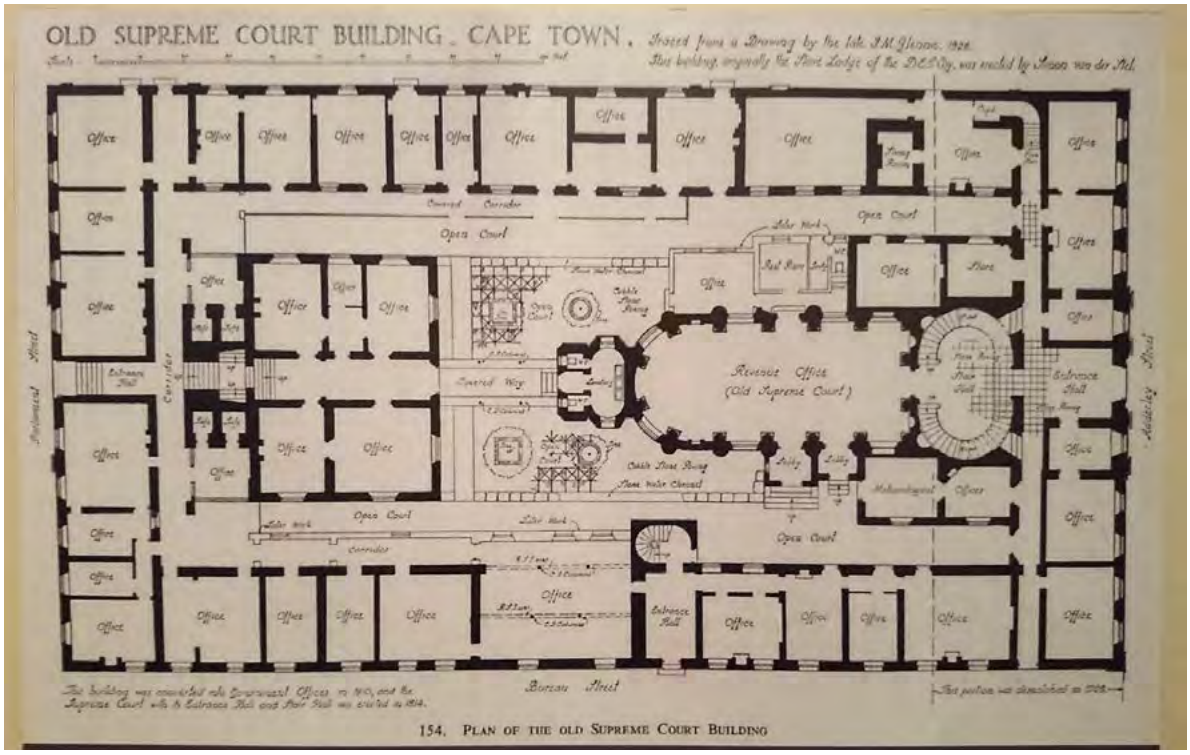

Figure 7: A plan of the Old Supreme Court building traced from an earlier drawing of 1926 by G Pearce. It shows the portion of the building which was demolished in the 1920's to ease traffic flow. Source: Iziko Social History Archives.

Figure 8: A view looking into the Entrance of the SACHM, c.1970's. Source: Iziko Social History Archives

Figure 9: A contemporary view looking into the Entrance of the Iziko Slave Lodge 2022 . Photograph. J Weinberg

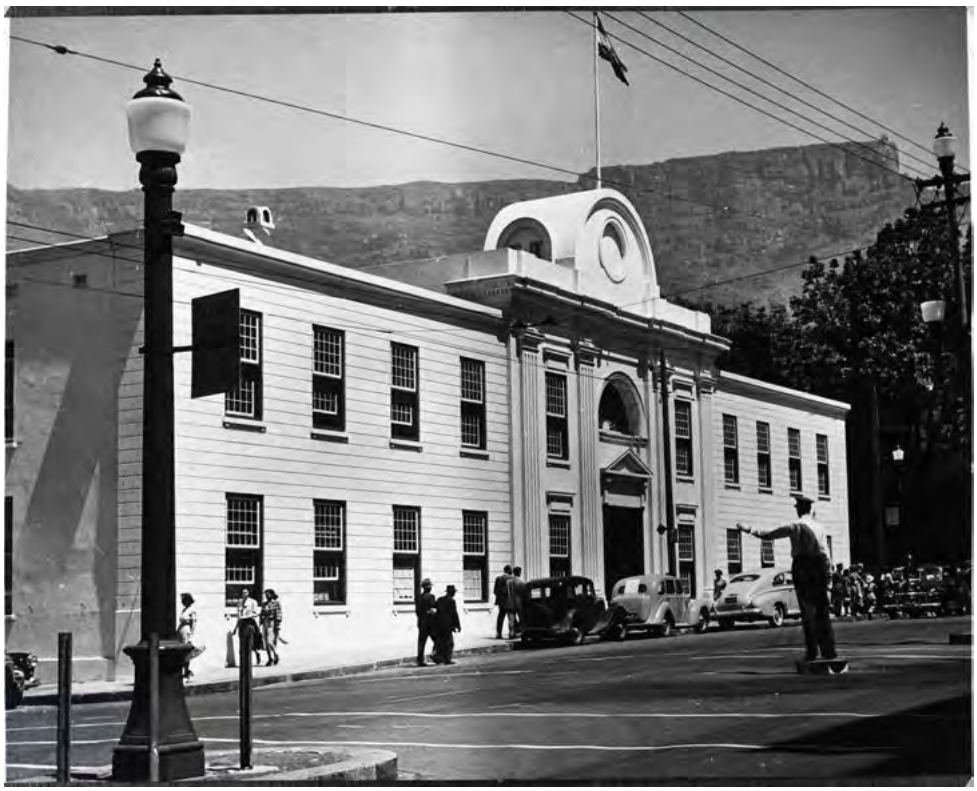

Figure 10: A view of the Old Supreme Court (previously the Slave Lodge) c.1940s. Photograph. Iziko Social History Archive

Figure 11: A view of the Iziko Slave Lodge from upper Adderley Street, June 2022. Photograph. J Weinberg

4. THE ROOMS ARE DARK – THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE IZIKO SL

> "Witnessing is a discourse with a hole in it that awaits filling" (Peters, 2001:710).

Overview

In the preceding chapters, I have sketched out a particular perspective of the SL through the lens of the SL as "Witness to Slavery". This has included a broad sweep of the historical evolution of the Lodge, slavery at the Cape and the more recent iterations of the SL as museums between 1966 to the present. Within this frame I have included summations around the studies done into memory, memorialisation, identity and museumisation. The primary purpose of this chapter is, firstly, to analyse the research findings which underpin the act of bearing witness to slavery in the SL as museum and memorial to slavery. Secondly, this chapter includes some self-reflexive analysis of my own experience of having worked there and more recently of having collaborated with staff at the ISL. Thirdly, as a form of witnessing over time I comment on observations of the management practices at each of the two museums, and the implications for each. Finally, I reflect on recent data uncovered in the Iziko Social History archives, and the outcomes of the interviews with the respondents. The research I undertook together with my own reflexive analysis helped to better understand the transition of firstly, the Supreme Court to the SACHM museum in the late 1960s and then from the SACHM to the ISL in the late 1990s.

Change in South Africa, 'cultural activism' and the SL

Throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s, there was a growing rumbling of disillusionment and anger with the injustices of Apartheid. Waves of resistance were often triggered by political events like the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, the 1976 uprisings in Soweto, the States of Emergencies in the 1980s and the generalised brutality of the security regime in quashing resistance. Protest art and cultural activism became one of the ways of resisting the regime.

Garuba (2008) reflects on resistance art from that period and notes that 'culture' and 'cultural workers' had been fully engaged in resistance to Apartheid for some time. In reference to culture as a form of resistance, he notes that "...in South Africa, culture has always been regarded as a significant tool of struggle and resistance and, more recently, as a means of constructing new identities" (Garuba, 2008:43). Garuba references the various "historic conferences", initiatives, and festivals during the 80s which had a huge influence on the changing nature of heritage in the country. These included "Culture and Resistance" organised by Medu Cultural Ensemble in Gaborone in July 1982, the "Voice of Resistance: Dutch and South African Artists Against Apartheid" in Amsterdam in December 1982 and "Culture in Another South Africa" in Amsterdam in 1986, among others.

The internal and external resistance organisations and mass democratic movements were gaining traction and art and culture as a form of resistance was intertwined with the work of the anti-Apartheid activism. Despite the repressive Apartheid policies and regulations around political gatherings and resistance groups, a vibrant and independent non-racial culture was being forged by artists and activists working in alternative communal organizations. Some of these included the Bill Ainslie Studios , Mofolo in Soweto, Katlehong in Germiston, Black Art Studios in Durban, the Community Arts Workshops in Durban and Community Arts Project and Nyanga in Cape Town, Rorkes Drift in KZN, Alexandra Art centre, Funda in Soweto and Fuba and the first black art gallery in 1977 in the Market Theatre precinct, Johannesburg. (The Conversation, May 30, 2021).

Nelson Mandela was released from prison on 11 February 1990 and the ANC unbanned shortly thereafter. These events inspired change and in the early 1990s initiatives and policy documents aligned to redressing heritage and cultural matters were being negotiated and drafted. A Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology - (DACST) initiative led by the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) was tasked with scoping and drafting new practices and policy for cultural organisations and museums. This led to the drafting of the first White Paper on Arts and Culture in 1994. In his opening message in the white paper, the then Minister of Arts, Culture Science and Technology Dr Ben Ngubane stated:

> The arts, culture and heritage cannot be an exception in this transformation process, since they too were overtly affected by the maldistribution of skills, resources, and infrastructure during the Apartheid era (DACST, 1994:2).

Key museum projects were in planning around the country from the early 1990s, driven mainly by Department of Art, Culture, Science and Technology. One of the main initiatives was “The Legacy Projects”, which included the development of new projects, community centres and museums. This project is still active today and the current DAC website states; “Government has initiated several national legacy projects to establish commemorative symbols of South Africa’s history and to celebrate its heritage” (DSAC, 2022).

Several museum and memorial sites were identified for development at the time, including the Robben Island Museum, the former homes of anti-Apartheid struggle heroes Nelson Mandela and Albert Luthuli, the former prison site of Constitution Hill in Johannesburg and others. In relation to these developments, North (2017:19) states that not all of the Legacy Projects focused purely on the Apartheid-era past and that there was a common narrative thread to redress and “overcome the violence and division of the commemorated recent past”. It appears that the trajectory of these developments, particularly in the fast-changing museum sector, emboldened staff at the SACHM and opposition to the current structures became more vocalised and pervasive.

Witnessing in the SL as museum

When I approached the Iziko Social History Division in search of data for this study, I was not aware of the full extent of the developments which occurred during the 1990s at the museum. Notes and minutes lodged in the Iziko archives document the efforts by staff to introduce changes at the SACHM in the run-up to this period. Lailah Hisham (Iziko Collections Manager) and Esther Esmyol (curator) both mentioned that these documents had never been accessed before and that there was a need to describe and articulate the evolution of the SACHM to the SL from the late 1990s until the formation of Iziko Museums of South Africa. This dissertation, in part, contributes to addressing this gap.

Throughout this chapter I regularly return to argument that the SL is an environment where memory and museum practice coalesce bound by the context and landscape of South Africa's political past. As museums are also partly premised on the act of witnessing, I reflect on this in relation to the SL in a post-colonial, post-Apartheid context.

Peters has described witnessing as intrinsically dualistic in nature: one can witness and one can bear witness. He argues that there is "the passive one of seeing and the active one of saying" (Peters, 2001:709). As noted earlier, although both these acts can be seen as performative: to witness is about the immersive act of the 'experiencing' whereas, bearing witness may include the full gamut of internalising, conscientising and interpreting. With reference to witnessing at memorial sites of atrocity like the SL, Young (1994) expands on the notion of bearing witness and notes that there are complex layers of information and memory which inform "memory construction". He argues that at Holocaust museums and memorials as sites of atrocity, through the act of witnessing "public memory is constructed" and that "…the understanding of events depends on memory construction". (Young, 1994:15).

Coombes (2003) similarly implies that in an exhibition and museum context the signifiers are dialectical and can act as a site of possible resurrection of and for memory (Coombes, 2003:148).

During the 1990s the SACHM embarked on a path of transformation with a new agenda and mandate which culminated in the formation of the Iziko SL. The nature of South Africa's political landscape at the time provided for a complex matrix for change. This was felt in the fast-transforming heritage sector including museum development, where so much was being re-strategized.

Many of the primary drivers for this change came from within. In the late 1980s, Deputy Director of the SACHM Magda Olivier tasked Helene Vollgraaff, a then Curator of Numismatics and Philately, to re-organise the exhibitions on the Ground floor of the Museum

for an exhibition to be called ‘The Cape Wing’. This was to include the re-ordering of the exhibitions to start with the antiquities, including the Egyptology collection, and end with The Cape History wing. Vollgraaff recounts, that according to Roux and Olivier, this was to show the trajectory of “civilisation and history”, culminating in the important influence of the Dutch on (white) South African culture.

About the Cape Wing exhibition, Vollgraaff recalled in her interview with me that Olivier and Roux instructed her to use objects which they had identified and to exhibit these with captions. No expanded narrative was considered necessary. In the interview, Vollgraaff said “The Cape Wing was my first project …I started reading and looking at objects…”. She continues, “I came up with ideas of how to tell the story… I had a meeting with Olivier and Roux where they disregarded my approach and instructed me to use objects which they had selected and to apply labels to them…after that, I was so upset that when I took the train home that afternoon, I had missed my stop and I had to call my mother to collect me from Kraaifontein Station. … I couldn’t believe that there was no narrative”.

Vollgraaff mentioned that she found this upsetting at the time due to the fact that this approach by the senior management undermined her. She said, “It was so frustrating to have my agency as a young curator at the time, removed and subverted”.
This dictatorial approach of the senior management at the SACHM at the time reveals just how difficult it had become for staff who it seems had no choice but to tow the line.

Both Roux and Olivier left the institution in 1998 and Aron Mazel was appointed as the new director. Vollgraaff, with the support of Mazel, later authored a publication entitled ‘Geskiedenis van die Suid-Afrikaanse Kultuurhistoriese Museum’ . This document presented a critical overview of the functional, political and ideological trajectory since its inception, with the primary focus being the period of 1980 to 1998. This account presented a unique ‘insider’s’ view of the SACHM, something which would never have been tolerated during the time of Roux and Olivier.

In her article Vollgraaff (Vollgraaff, 1998:33) mentions three key observations in the evolution of the SACHM. Firstly, she identifies that the creation of the SACHM made from the collections passed on by the South African Museum in the 1960s was essentially a failed project. She notes that the “dream project of 1966” was in tatters by 1997. Vollgraaff elucidated on this in her interview explaining that the “dream project of 1966” was the long-anticipated creation of a social history museum.

Secondly, Vollgraaff notes that there were very few changes made to the permanent collection exhibitions in the SACHM building from its inception in the 1960s to the 1980s, apart from a few temporary exhibitions. The collections and forms of cultural representation in the museum, in this sense, remained relatively stagnant throughout most of its existence.

Thirdly, she describes a period of intense introspection and growing opposition to the management structure at the SACHM that began to emerge between 1990 and 1998. She describes how regular meetings were held and how the staff began to rail against the harsh management structure put in place by the Director Anton Roux and Deputy Director Magda Olivier. She refers to this as a "bubbling over of grievances" , where staff challenged the status quo and where an irretrievable rift began to develop between the management and staff.

Vollgraaff further mentions that one of key symptoms of dissatisfaction at the SACHM at the time was the unfair performance appraisal practice at the institution. She gave the example of Olivier, who was assessed by Roux her senior, being repeatedly given an 'A' rating each year. She stressed that "These assessments carried financial compensation" and that hardly any other staff were rated with such a high mark. Along with other external changes, this led to bitterness within the museum structures.

During my time at the SACHM I recall that most of the curatorial staff seemed politically unaware or unwilling to discuss politics or the effects of the National Party Apartheid regime on the museum. This could be attributed to the fact most received their training at either the "whites only" conservative universities of Stellenbosch and Pretoria. Despite the fact that Vollgraaff's account appears to oppose the dictatorial management practices of the museum, the accuracy of her comments, viewed in the cold light of the present, require a degree of introspection and scepticism. Young 1994, reminds us that "public memory is constructed" and that "understanding of events depends on memory construction".

"Will we all be killed?"

I worked at the SACHM from 1980 to 1990. I recall several uncomfortable meetings with Roux during my time working there. The first was in 1984 on the Monday after the weekend I had been arrested by the South African Riot Police on Greenmarket Square, for participating in a march by Koeberg Alert, a sub-group of United Democratic Front. The purpose of the demonstration was to oppose the Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant to be built near Bloubergstrand on the Cape West Coast. Roux had called me into his office to berate me for protesting and shaming the museum.

When I mentioned to him that the purpose of the protest was environmentally based, he adopted a more conciliatory tone and reminded me that he didn't enjoy associating with people who have been in gaol. I remember he distinctly pronounced this word as 'goal' which rather puzzled me at the time. What I did not dare tell him at the time was that I had sneaked several of my fellow protesters into the studio of the SACHM early on the Saturday morning of the march to use the screen-printing equipment in the museum art studio to make posters protesting South Africa's production of enriched uranium to develop a nuclear

capability, at the Pelindaba plant near Pretoria. I recall at the time how good it felt to have bucked the system, albeit in a small way.
The second meeting was in Roux's office in 1990, when I met with him to inform him that I would be resigning from the SACHM as I has been offered a management position at the South African National Gallery. His words to me were something along the lines of, "You and your wife are activists, is that not right? Maybe you can tell me what will happen to us when the ANC takes over? Will we all be killed?" I replied that this was a question I could not answer. The fact that he knew of our political activism at the time did not surprise me as I had had heard from a member of the admin staff that Roux had kept personal files on the political activity of certain staff members. I recall distinctly his quivering voice, and I became aware of how palpable his personal fear was.

Pandoras Box - The Planning Work Group and 'The Community'

From the data which I uncovered at the Iziko Social History archive, I found many documents which reflected that the changes already mentioned were beginning to filter through the bureaucratic channels to the management of the SACHM. While searching through the data I was surprised to find several documents which reflected proposed radical changes to the structure of the of the SACHM. As I worked through the archive, I came to realise the value of the documents and data and how critically important it was that the staff have been able to retain these records.

In her interview Esmyol, it appears that these discussions, meetings, and workshops throughout the 1990s seemed to be the primary pre-occupation of the work of staff at the time. Very little was happening by way of conceptual, strategic, or curatorial planning around exhibitions within the museum. Esmyol states, "it was almost as though these channels of work were suspended while the structures of the museum were being challenged".
Some of the data from the Iziko Social History archives reveals that discussions and workshops were interrogating the modus operandi across the board and included attempts to oust the senior management. Debates, discussions, and interventions were happening at all levels especially at the level of the Board of Trustees. One such document reflected that on 30 November 1994, a memo was sent from the Chairperson of the Board of the SACHM to all Board members. The memo acknowledged the changes taking place in government institutions and stated that the "Board wishes to reconstruct itself as an interim Board with the intention of creating a process whereby a smooth transition to a new board can take place in June 1995" (SACHM 1994; Minute note 'A').

Another record from the introductory statement of a set of minutes dated 07/10/94, drawn up by Philip Wheeler, Chairperson of the Friends of the SACHM stated, that the Planning Work Group undertook to debate six main areas pertaining to the future of the museum. "Relevance, community/alliances, education, marketing, research, and fund-raising"

(SACHM 1994; Minute note 'D').
From this point onwards, the Planning Work Group came into its own by involving mainly staff and later members of the 'community' to draw up the various reports on the key objectives and strategies already mentioned above. The use of the term 'community' in most of the documents showed a huge shift towards the need for change at the SACHM. While interviewing the respondents, I enquired from all of them what was meant by the term 'community'. They all responded in a similar way referencing 'the community' as a broad amalgam of interested people some of whom included political and heritage activists, academics, slave descendants, Friends of the SACHM and others.

Although the word 'community' was often used at the time, it appeared too vague in the context of these documents, and I felt it necessary to explore its meaning in this study, as it related to 'museum' and specifically the SACHM. Understanding the meaning and the role of 'the community' was to become critical for the changing face of the museum. Debates were initiated around this in the meetings. During 1994, the Planning Work Group felt is necessary to interrogate the meaning of 'community' during their regular workshop sessions. The minutes of a meeting held in 1994 reflect the need to define the term community in the context of the SACHM. 'To define community more closely, and to make it more manageable for our purposes, it is preferred to talk about specific interest groups and/or target audiences'. (SACHM 1994; Minute note 'C').

Having been active in the struggle against Apartheid and having lived through the period of transformation in South Africa, I came to understand that the notion of 'community' in a local context was complex. In the context of the SACHM, this would have generally included members of the so-called marginalised black communities and activists who would have had some vested interest in the transformation of the museum. What I found particularly interesting about the Planning Work Group workshop discussions was the reference to 'Target Audience' as community. This showed a broad understanding of the purpose of the museum as one providing access and agency to the people of Cape Town (SACHM 1994; Minute note 'C'). Regarding the definition of 'community', Laurajane Smith makes the point that communities carry a direct relation to the past and to own this past is a "politically profound act". (Smith, 2006:29). This was to become the case at the SACHM where members of interested communities became integral to the changes at the museum. But the idea of 'community' can also flatten out questions of fragmentation or difference. Coombes (2003), for example, notes that the meaning of 'community' is not necessarily a homogenous group of people who share the same interests but rather a group of people with similar political imperatives, drawn together to forge transformation and change. In this regard, she argues:

> …what stakes may be involved in negotiating different pasts and histories at time of social and political transition in the history of any nation when the very notion of what constitutes a "citizen" is being refined (Coombes, 2003:5).

In another document I discovered at the ISH archive, the names of prominent so-called community members were listed as candidates to serve on the Planning Group Committee. I recognised the names as well known and prominent community activists, academics and heritage practitioners and included among others; Naledi Pandor (Education Faculty, UCT), Vincent Kobe – (Historian, librarian and member of District Six Committee), Franklin Sonn – (Rector of Peninsula Technikon), Mario Pissario – (Director of the Community Arts Project), Farieda Kahn – (UCT historian and slave activist), Ozmand Shaboodien – (Activist and member of the Bo Kaap Civic Association, Thandabantu Nhlapo – (Assoc. Prof. Roman Dutch Law at UCT), Andre Odendaal (Director of the Robben Island Museum and professor of History at UWC). Many of these "community members" later assumed senior leadership positions in the new government. It appears obvious from this list that there was serious intent by concerned members of the "community" to work with staff to turn things around at the museum.

Throughout this time, the SACHM continued to operate as a public museum reflecting the same narrative and showcasing parts of the collection through the lens of colonialism and Apartheid as previously. In a sense the SACHM exhibitions spaces were active, yet in limbo, seemingly awaiting the outcome of the interrogative process by the staff and interested communities to re-strategise a new direction. The efforts of these working groups ultimately influenced change for the museum, towards a museum reflecting the history and memory of slavery at the Cape.

Re-thinking the museum

Much of the discussion and critical thinking that happened around this time was geared towards the creation of a completely different museum, one which was reflective of the history of the Cape and inclusive and representative of the people of Cape Town. It was also able to imbibe new thinking around what came to be known 'New Museology'. Silverman (2015) has argued that museums by nature are projects in process:

> The notion of museum as process suggests that museum work, especially collaborative work with communities, is fundamentally processual in nature… spaces in which diverse intellectual, professional, and cultural communities meet and engage in work that yields new ways of thinking, new ways of living (Silverman, 2015:2).

The planning and introspection at the museum was escalating and every aspect and purpose of and for the SACHM was being interrogated as work in progress. For the SL, this was to include not just the history of the Lodge but also post-colonial and post-Apartheid pasts. It was being cast as an interpretive space which would be representative and aligned to the identity of a specific sections of the target audience. Residents of Cape Town who identified as slave descendants were becoming increasingly involved in the work.

Anne Frank and Apartheid and Resistance

In mid-1994, while working at the South African National Gallery I was tasked with the installation of the travelling exhibition 'Anne Frank in the World' supported by the Anne Frank Centre in Amsterdam and the Cape Town Holocaust Committee. At the time, I was approached by Gordon Metz of the Mayibuye Centre at UWC to co-design an exhibition with him called 'Apartheid and Resistance'. This exhibition set out to show how art and media played a part in the fight against Apartheid. Juxtaposed alongside one another, the intention was to highlight certain parallels between Apartheid and Nazi ideology. Metz and I spent a frantic 'cut and paste' week researching and assembling the exhibition in my garage at home, to complete the work and meet the installation deadline. At a later date, Annie Coombes interviewed Metz about the purpose of showing these two exhibitions together. He responded:

> South Africans have lived under their own system of oppression. We can't equate the Holocaust with Apartheid but there are many parallels and lessons to be learnt…We have tried to ensure that our component of the exhibition has a wide focus. An important point that comes through is that ordinary people make history (Coombes, 2003:85).

The Anne Frank exhibition travelled around the country, and I was responsible for its installation at each stop. One of the stops was Museum Africa where it was visited by a large range of school going children from across the class spectrum. Mark Gevisser wrote a feature in the Mail and Guardian on 19 August 1994 entitled 'Anne Frank Through a Prism of the Present' where he observed schoolchildren responding to the experience of the viewing the exhibition juxtaposed against the Apartheid and Resistance exhibition. He quotes two learners, one from a Sebokeng township school called Residentia and the other from the more economically privileged Kempton Park school. The Residentia student said of Anne Frank's experience in hiding in Holland during the Holocaust, "I've never been to such a place, but it's as if I I've seen it many times before". The other student from Kempton Park remarked, "We need to learn from history. If we had learnt from the example of Nazi Germany, Apartheid wouldn't have happened here" (Mail and Guardian. 26 November 1996).

This experience of juxtaposing and reflecting recent and current political circumstances undoubtedly influenced my thinking as a museologist and designer. I initiated a similar approach in the design of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre in 1999. The visitor experience at the Centre began with examples of Apartheid practices and ideology as a way of entering the story around Nazi ideology which was the platform for the Holocaust. Similar initiatives, meanwhile, were happening in museums around the country and new directions for exhibitions and museums were being planned and implemented. These included Freedom Park in 2002, The Apartheid Museum in 2003, Constitution Hill and others.

Aron Mazel was appointed as the director of the SACHM in early 1998. One of Mazel's first key undertakings as director was to facilitate the name change of the SACHM building to the SL on Heritage Day, 24 September 1998. During his interview with me he described the event, as a "sacred and moving ceremony". He mentioned that the proceedings were led by the Reverend Michael Weeder and that 186 floating candles were lit and floated in a temporary pond to remember and commemorate the 186 years since the since the last slave was released from the SL.

This name change was highly significant as it marked the culmination of years of institutional introspection, lobbying and change by staff and heritage activists working to transform the SACHM. In a sense this also formalised the symbolic morphing of the museum from one of colonial and Apartheid ideology to one of memorialisation of slavery at the Cape. From that point on, the SL essentially adopted a new identity and mandate, that of bearing witness to slavery. (See Figure 8.)

The launch of the Flagship Iziko

During my interview with Vollgraaff in December 2022, she made mention of an article written in the Mail and Guardian by Mike Nicol on 28 November 1996 where Nicol describes his attempts to discover the original Slave Tree and to view public pointers to Slavery at the Cape. He writes, "There is plaque on Spin Street just off Church Square and opposite the SACHM which proclaims that this was the tree under which slaves were auctioned". He meets up with Reverend Michael Weeder, activist and founder of the 1st December Movement, and now Dean of St George's Cathedral, at the place where the tree once stood. Weeder turns to Nicol and says:

> What does this say? … What does this tell you about what happened here? Families were destroyed here. Children sold to one person; their mothers sold to another. A woman sold to a farmer in Stellenbosch, her man sold to a merchant in Cape Town. Can you imagine that? Can you just imagine what it was like, all the misery that happened here on the ground beneath our feet… This is a sad place" (Mail and Guardian. 26 November 1996).
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> .

This comment lamented the lack of public memory around slavery at the Cape. Despite a few initiatives including the 1st December Movement and other projects, there was very little focus at the time on slavery at the Cape. Two years after Weeder made this statement, the South African Cultural History Museum was renamed the SL. And not too long after, in 2001, the Iziko Museums of South Africa was established as the Southern Flagship Institution with the ISL cementing its stake as a memorial museum to slavery. However, the presence of slavery in public heritage and memorial markers in Cape Town remains relatively occluded, as Cloete (2001) has shown.

Figure 12: Images from the Name changing ceremony of the SACHM to the SL. 1998. Photographs, Pam Warne

The Crossing

In November of 2000, a document titled Iziko Museums of Cape Town Draft Corporate Plan 2000 - 2003, was drafted and circulated to HOD's by the newly appointed CEO of Iziko, Jack Lohman. It listed the projected aims and objectives of the participating Iziko institutions at the time. With reference to the SL, it read; "Making a start on our new projects: A Reconceptualized (new) SL/SA Cultural History Museum". This showed the intent of Iziko to take this project forward.

Countless workshops and meetings were held over the next two years. In June of 2002, Lalou Meltzer, Head of Social History at Iziko at the time, sent out a document calling for comments and suggestions for the re-organisation of the Iziko displays. This request indicated for the first time a concrete and collaborative approach for the conceptualisation and exhibition design and development for the ISL. The introductory paragraph, Meltzer noted: "The idea is to re-design the SL around the theme of slavery and to create an exhibition of Cape Town history at the Castle beginning the story with the indigenous people of the Cape".

This document, which was circulated two years after the call by Jack Lohman to create a museum of excellence to focus on slavery, reveals the delays and difficulties staff were experiencing in getting exhibitions on slavery into the SL exhibition space. Although small temporary exhibitions on slavery had been shown, this exhibition was the first substantial one reflect to focus on slavery at the Cape. However, these documents albeit almost two years apart indicated continued intentions to revision and re-conceptualise the exhibitions and the museum.

It appears that finally in 2003 preparatory efforts began for new exhibitions for the ISL. In an undated document issued by Curator Anlin Boshoff, instructions were given to staff to dismantle all the ground floor exhibitions in the ISL. These would be replaced by a new exhibition called 'Echoes from the Lodge: Domestic Life Under the VOC'. This project was funded by Nedcor, guest curated by Deon Viljoen with advisors from the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague. This exhibition appeared to reflect the effects of coloniality without properly critiquing or being critical of the Dutch Empire at the time. This was perhaps due to reticence on the part of the curators as the project was a collaboration with the Dutch Gemeentemuseum.

"Epistemological Patina" - The SACHM Collections

While I was sifting through the data in the ISH archives in December of 2022, it occurred to me that for close on 40 years the SACHM had been acquiring objects and loan collections mostly framed by a colonial and Eurocentric approach. I found no references in the archive

to the museum's collection and how it might have been adjusted to meet the needs of the new vision for the museum. In my interviews with Mazel, Esmyol and Tichmann, I discussed with them the fate of all the collections held by the previous SACHM and whether the issue of the de-accessioning of collections had been considered. Mazel replied that he had no recollection of this other than the fact there had been some discussions around the return of a few loan collections to their original owners. Esmyol mentioned that none of these had yet been returned, as the process of return and/or de-accessioning was highly complicated due to legal agreements being in place for both the lenders and for the museum.

In the years following the initiatives mentioned, further plans began to emerge for the re-display of the ISL. Esmyol (at the time the Curator of Collections) recalls that between 2004 and 2010, her time was dedicated to the de-installation, removal, renovation, and re-installation of the new exhibitions around the theme of slavery. Countless planning and project management exercises were put in place, each one requiring debates, permissions and iterative development and installation.

When the building became the ISL, the museum space and the collections as such continued to constitute the bulk of the ISL collection. How to integrate and include these items within the spaces of the SL and in ongoing exhibitions proved challenging.

Echoes of the Lodge - This Room is Dark – the Lodge was Dark

A planning document from 2004 listed the various conceptual approaches of how to redesign the exhibits drawing on appropriate material culture to be drawn from the previous SACHM collection. The document tabulated the recommendations room-by-room and the section dealing with the Entrance read: "This room is dark – The lodge was dark…refer to the Wildt plan?". This comment was in reference to an early 1800s layout plan of the SL by L.N Wildt. The document continued, "Slave Wing Entrance: The area should be kept light and flexible. At this stage it should introduce the idea of Cape slavery but hint at broader issues of colonial history and racism in South Africa...Include Images of slaves in chains at Greenmarket Square or Castle; Sarah Baartman chained (detail); 'Freed' Madiba - (Madiba walking free) or otherwise intersperse banners with images of Khoe, San, emancipation, women's march, Madiba free". Although these recommendations appear to be 'catch-all' in terms of their content, they do show the will to reconceptualise and re-design the exhibitions aligned to the history of slavery at the Cape.

Between the name change in 1998 and 2006, the ISL remained open to the public, and according to Esmyol, objects from the original SACHM collection were included and interspersed as part of a counter-narrative within new temporary exhibitions. One of these was to be called 'Origins' where items from the SACHM collection were re-integrated and re-interpreted aligned to their original link to slaves at the Cape.

During the Esmyol interview, I mentioned that on my recent visits to the ISL, I found the exhibit content in the Foyer and Entrance Hall to be confusing in that there was no orientation to the slavery exhibition. She acknowledged that the ISL Foyer area and main Entrance Hall had always been difficult to adapt as an orientation space for the exhibition. She remarked; “In my opinion, what is missing from the Foyer area, is the model of the original SL by Pieter Laponder”. She continued that the model was in storage in the Social History Collection building and that there were plans to re-introduce the model of the Old SL into the space, which would offer the visitor a spatial context for how people lived in the original SL (see Figure 8). Although I agree with Esmyol that the model would make a difference to the viewer’s orientation experience, in my opinion the entire space of the Lodge would need to completely overhauled and re-worked to allow the space to invoke the story of how slaves lived and how the building has witnessed slavery.

From Human Wrongs to Human Rights

Over the past approximately 24 years since the name change to the SL there has been a regular procession of exhibitions some permanent and some temporary. I interviewed Paul Tichmann, current Director of Digitisation and Collections in the Iziko Social History Department, to gain clarity on why this has been the case. The interview took place in the quietest corner of a busy coffee shop in the afternoon of the 14 December. It felt appropriate that the venue was the ‘Bread, Milk and Honey’ café which used to be an old haunt of mine when I needed to escape the suffocating clutches of the SACHM in the 1980s. We discuss and empathise around the problems of contemporary display-making in the South African museum context. Tichmann decries the difficulties and complexities in obtaining funding for these various projects and exhibitions, a predicament which I am very familiar with.

In response to my question regarding exhibitions in the Lodge from the mid 2000s he mentions that as recently as 2019, that there were several temporary exhibitions on different themes installed in the ISL. I found several references to many of these in the Iziko Annual Reports between 2004 to 2010. After ‘Echoes from the Lodge’ in 2003 some of these exhibition projects included:

- *Breaking the Silence: A Luta Continua*, the work of the Khulumani organization from 2006-2007. This exhibition included survivors of Apartheid violence commenting in their own words and drawings.
- *Separate is not Equal: the struggle against separate schooling in America*. A history of segregation in the USA with a focus on education. July 2006.
- *Ties that Bind Us* - A panel exhibition on the history of people of the Western Cape was installed. The exhibition was installed in the ISL in September 2006.

A post on the blog site of author, academic and activist Patric Tariq Mellet from 11 September 2006 notes that the exhibition explored the African-Creole heritage of 'Coloured' South Africans and the shared ties that cut across all ethnic groups in South Africa. The exhibition was produced by Mellet and Inyathelo, the South African Institute for Advancement for display by Iziko Museums. This exhibition was the second to include a guest curator after Deon Viljoen. This approach appears to be an attempt by the museum authorities at the time to explore the stories of South Africa's past through collaboration outside of the staffing structure of the museum.

The discussion with Tichmann then moves to recent and current exhibitions in the ISL. He hands me an unpublished document from 2022, entitled *Draft Concept Paper - ISL: From Human Wrongs to Human Rights. Proposal for Upgrading the SL Narrative / Exhibits*.
He mentions that he drafted this as a summation of outcomes from an interdisciplinary community-based workshop group "before Covid hit". He says that this theme has the potential to encompass issues surrounding the interpretation of slavery. A section of the Introductory paragraph of the concept paper states, "This theme enabled a focus not only on the narrative of slavery but also on the agency of the enslaved and on the afterlives of slavery".

He explains that the projected concept for the ISL Ground Floor will be dedicated to the narrative around slavery at the Cape whilst also alluding to global narratives around slavery. The plan for the First Floor will be to augment this theme with a selection of 'sub-theme' exhibitions and public programme initiatives over time including a combination of historical and contemporaneous issues like; 'Resistance (Slave Resistance; the KhoiSan; the Liberation Struggle); migrancy (migrant labour; xenophobia); race and identity; labour history; environmental issues; social movements (freedom; democracy; economic development)'
He describes that the themes should act as potent attractions which local visitors and communities can identify with. He mentions that these themes will be comprised of:

- *Mozbiekers: African slaves at the Cape* – A research and exhibition project
- *Enslaved Knowledges* - Garden Project
- *Education in the SL and Personalities of the Lodge*
- *Women and Children in Slavery*
- *Slave Resistance*
- *The Story of the Building: From Slavery to Apartheid*
- *Slave Roots/ Memory Centre*

Towards the end of our conversation, Tichmann emphasises the need for a reference group that will "…serve as a sounding board and give guidance and assistance to the work of the ISL. Such a reference group would help to establish closer links between the SL and communities of the Western Cape".

He explains that some of these concepts are already included in exhibitions in the ISL but that the new curator for the ISL, Shinaaz Galant, is currently developing a more comprehensive concept plan for the Lodge.
Between 2006 and 2022 there have been several concept documents pertaining to a master plan for re-conceptualising the space of the ISL. I ask Tichmann why he thinks these have never been realised, and he replies that although many of the re-visioning documents have recommended how the spaces could be re-imagined and re-displayed, there has never been enough funding available to Iziko to develop these. This final comment expressed by Tichmann revealed one of the key frustrations and problems encountered by staff at state museums: that of a lack of genuine funding and support for heritage institutions. It a sad indictment that even though heritage can be potent healer in restorative justice and redress it is rendered lame without significant commitment and financial support.

The deep dive into the archives, together with the interviews of the respondents has helped to develop a clearer picture, albeit in a small way, of the evolution of the SACHM to the ISL. In time, this data will need to be studied and analysed in greater detail to unravel a more complete historical trajectory of the ISL. Through witnessing the SL in this way, I have begun to realise how recall, memory and appropriate activism has led to the re-shaping of the ISL as museum.

5. FISHBONE STORIES – THE CONCLUSION

Figure 13: Scale model of the original VOC Slave Lodge built by Peter Laponder in 1999.

In this study, I have posed the question of how the SL has borne witness to slavery at the Cape. I have also expanded the concept of not only 'to bear witness' but also to how I have observed or witnessed the SL. This thesis is therefore about both witnessing in and about the SL over time.

As indicated in the Introduction the main objectives of this study are:

- To trace the history of the transformation of the SACHM into the ISL, in order to analyse how ideas about 'witnessing' and the building as an object that 'bears witness' have been mobilised differently through time
- To explore a set of critical ideas around the concept of 'witnessing' to understand how the SL can be understood as a witness of history and specifically the atrocity of slavery in Cape Town
- To reflect critically on my own experience as a witness and participant in a particular historical moment in the SL's history

When I embarked on this project my original intention was to restrict the scope of the study to the SL building alone and how it has borne witness to slavery and atrocity. However, as I progressed through the phases of the research, I realised that understanding the act of bearing witness included much more than the inside-out physical manifestation model which I had projected. I recognised that to witness is both complex and diachronic and relies on the act of human engagement in and with the space. This understanding has allowed me to include my own reflexive observations of having worked within the space of the SL and to apply them to my analysis for this study.

By way of summary, Chapter 1 lays out the aims, purpose, and objectives of the study. Chapter 2 deals with the themes and methodology applied. Chapter 3 offers a brief historical overview of the SL over time. Chapter 4 acts as an analysis of the research outcomes while this chapter provides a summation, synthesis and context for the outcomes including my personal reflections.

In revisiting the question of how the SL has stood witness to slavery over time, in this chapter I have synthesised the underpinnings of the various interpretations of the act of witnessing in relations to my findings and then applied them to the SL as museum. The gathering of evidence in the Iziko Social History archives provided me with a critical insight to how the SL evolved from an Apartheid era institution to a place of memory and meaning making around slavery.

Inside Out – the context

The historical trajectory of the SL starts with the SL and culminates in the Iziko SL Museum. The museum therefore has become the vehicle for conveying this history and narrative. Crafting the narrative around how the SL has witnessed and embraced the complexities of memory has become a critical mandate of the museum. When the SACHM was re-named the SL in 1998 in a new democratic South Africa, it continued as a state-run museum but with a very different focus and purpose, that of showcasing the story of Slavery at the Cape. Describing the design process for the Washington Holocaust Memorial Museum, Linenthal remarks that the museum designer Appelbaum understood that a museum must function "from the inside out …to create a whole environment that supported the interpretive story" (Linenthal, 1994:407). The phrase, 'Inside Out' in the context of a Holocaust Museum raises the complex and profound suite of modalities applicable to framing narratives and invoking memory-making through the act of witnessing. Both the story and the space, whether fabricated or original, give credence to the notion of 'inside out'. Furthermore, this description is particularly apt in the context of a site-based museum space like the ISL where witnessing, memory and meaning-making are largely driven by experiencing the history and memory in the presence of the space.

For this study, I spent many hours combing through documents in the Iziko Social History archives in search of how I could frame the notion of witnessing of the SL. I discovered a treasure trove of untapped data mainly pertaining to the transformation of the SACHM to the ISL Museum. Up until this point I had grappled with how to cast an appropriate stance to this concept of witnessing. The evidence led me to the affirming realisation that the changes which occurred in the 1990s formed part of a struggle to validate the purpose of the museum. This discovery in turn, freed up my focus to explore the ISL as more than just a building with history but rather an essential meaning marker in the lives of thousands of people who formed part of the greater community of Cape Town. Through this I was able to understand not just why the term 'community' became essential to the survival and success of the museum but importantly how 'the community' around the life of the SL became entrenched in this endeavour. Having worked in other entities within the Iziko complex, I realised for the first time how instrumental these initiatives were, during the change from an Apartheid era institution to a post-colonial / post-Apartheid-museum.

In 1998, Helene Vollgraaff authored a book on the SL titled *Geskiedenis van die Suid-Afrikaanse Kultuurhistoriese Museum*. This publication is unique in that it is the only comprehensive study reflecting the early stages of the SACHM between 1967 and 1998. In the book she points out that not much had changed in the museum between 1967 and 1980, by way of exhibition conceptualisation and the process of exhibiting. This points to the fact that during the early period of museum, exhibitions were largely object-centred based and there was little in the way of interpretation.

Mazel noted that the management and members board of trustees of the SACHM were hand-picked to align to the Apartheid government's ideology. In the mid-1980s the system of 'Own Affairs' was promulgated to reflect the new tricameral system which was to include a new house of representatives, including Whites, so-called 'Coloureds' and members of 'Indian' descent. The SACHM was branded an 'Own Affairs' museum and this according Mazel, further entrenched the status of the museum as being one for Whites only 'culture'. (Mazel, 2013:167)

The definitive change for the museum happened from early the 1990s when staff and community members went about workshopping and planning the transitional nature of the museum. From the research data I unearthed I was able to chart a chronological trajectory of the transformation of the museum.

Witnessing, Memory and heritage

As noted previously, witnessing is dualistic and informed firstly, by the 'act of seeing' and secondly by 'the act of saying' (Peters, 2001:709). In this study I borrow from this notion of 'the act of saying' as a way of observing, witnessing and describing the SL over time. Witnessing and the making of memory are both iterative processes, engaged in reconstructing a remembered past: as Nora (1989) argues, memory is in a constant state of flux. While "history is a representation of the past" memory is "vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation…and only accommodates those facts that suit it" (Nora, 1989:8). In a similar vein, Young reminds us that "public memory is constructed" and that "understanding of events depends on memory construction" (Young, 1994:15).

The phenomenon of witnessing is apt for the ISL as it describes memory which is not contemporaneous. Simon notes:

> If witnessing is to be understood as one possible response to the power to which the past has a claim, determining the specific obligations of witnessing that constitute a just and compassionate response to testimony, becomes a vital concern (Simon, 1997:178).

This framing of the "power of the past" determined by the obligations of witnessing, are instrumental in facilitating the memory around atrocity as it applies in the case of the SL.

Within the frame of "the power of the past", and in writing about the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, Whigham (2019) describes the effect of the 'power of place' and the presence of the space "to perform upon visitors and inspire some visitors to exercise their personal agency in creating embodied memory practices" (Whigham, 2019:7).

Benjamin contends that 'aura' resides in the viewer's imagining a reaction coming from the object. From these observations it could be understood that to witness can apply to a person or an object which affords evidence. The implication here is that when we go about the performative act of experiencing in the context of 'museum', we apply a mode of witnessing which calls on us to bear witness. In the case of the SL particularly as museum, the deduction is that the experiential act is reciprocal and the building as an anthropomorphised character is presenting knowledge to the viewer.

Returning to the statement by Octavio Paz, as quoted in Chapter 1, that "Architecture is the least incorruptible witness of history" and the implied resilience of architecture as it applies to the SL, I suggest that witnessing should not only be confined to the built environment but forms part of a greater public heritage complex, embracing identity, memory, and socio-political resonance. I have used an historical overview to frame how the Lodge has borne witness or facilitated witnessing over time. Within this I explore how memory has and is being constructed and why this has become so important for the SL as museum. On historic buildings, Hayden suggests these form both a document of its own past, shaped by history as well as act as a storehouse of collective memory which transmutes history into memory (Hayden, 1994:467).

Taking these observations into account, and as the ISL is predicated on memory, the interpretive spaces of the ISL building as a museum can be described as evolving fragments of memory of the past.

The SL as Museum – Frozen in the Mood of Memory

As described in chapters 2 and 4, the change of name from the SACHM to the SL happened in 1998. This was significant as it endorsed the original purpose of the lodge and ostensibly paved the way for new exhibition development around slavery. This event shifted the focus away from the sorry past of the SACHM to a new focus aligned to the history, memory and lives of the people Cape Town.However, it took until 2003 to develop the first exhibition around slavery called *Echoes of the Lodge*. It took another 3 years thereafter to develop the next exhibition in 2006. Since then, there have been a plethora of temporary exhibitions installed in the museum. While visiting the ISL recently, I recalled Linenthal's description of "the mood of memory" with reference to the design work in the WMHM, where he noted that the museum designers felt intimidated and overwhelmed by the weight of this responsibility. (Linenthal, 1994:407). This observation left me wondering whether the exhibition developers in the ISL have perhaps been frozen in "the mood of memory".

In reflecting why, the ISL has had difficulty in creating a substantial exhibition experience around slavery in the museum I consider Silverman's question, "what has to be done, de-constructed or re-imagined for the museum to succeed?" (Silverman, 2015:4).

Conclusion

Overtly acknowledging the practice of slavery and the deep-seated effect it had over generations beyond should form part of a critical mandate for the ISL, as both memorial and museum.

The SACHM collected and exhibited objects and showcased exhibitions which pumped through colonial and conservative ideologies for over 30 years. This was predicated on an inherited practice of colonial museology and the fascist political dictates of the time. Soares suggests that it is essential to analyse the 'founding myth' of the colonial museum and engage in the work of re-interpreting colonial practices. (ICOFOM 2021).

On reflection, I found the ISL collection to be weighed down by the baggage of previous collections. The SACHM was originally premised on a collection of artefacts aligned to western interpretations of civilisation coupled with conservative apartheid ideology. It is imperative for the success of the ISL as interlocuter to slave memory and identity, that these histories and practices are interrogated, exposed and redressed in the museum.

The outcomes of the participant interviews highlighted for me the challenges and complications of both managing a state-run museum and developing appropriate exhibitions to convey the deep history of slavery at the Cape. Applying this to the outcomes of the research and my personal observations, I have come to realise that the ISL has struggled to meet its mandate as museum and memorial to slavery and is still, in the words of the Tichmann, "...a work in progress".

Cloete reminds us that perhaps the overt acknowledgment and interpretation of slavery in South Africa and specifically in museums like the ISL, has become a fishbone in our collective and "indigestible memory".

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Annexure A: Interview schedule

Name:
Position:
Date:

Informed Consent 'Open ended' Interview questionnaire
Inside Out – The Iziko SL as Witness to Slavery

1. What is your official title?
2. What are your responsibilities, broadly?
3. The SL:
   - Can you summarise the exhibitions programme since it became the ISL in 1998?
   - Describe briefly, the conceptual and thematic approach to exhibiting and the use of the spaces.
   - Preferable sequentially from 1998 – present time.
4. Describe the rationale behind naming/dedicating the various ISL exhibition spaces to certain individuals?
5. How involved are members of the slave descendant communities in planning, narrative development, programme participation and thematic decision making?
6. What programmes have been initiated over the years for the ISL?
   - Are programmes and events a feature of the ISL work?
7. How is the ISL museum funded and what is its percentage of the overall Iziko budget?
   - Is the funding for the ISL satisfactory?
   - In your opinion, what is the attitude of the Iziko Executive Management toward funding of ISL slavery exhibitions?
   - If the funding is inadequate, what amount of funding would be required to develop the ISL to your satisfaction?
8. Is there private funding for specific exhibitions and if so, how does this work?
9. What is the relationship like of the ISL to the other museums in Iziko?
   - Is there collaboration, sharing and cross-facilitation of Iziko collections?
10. Is there a SL-specific management committee or are the decisions made part of the Iziko Social History division and the greater Iziko planning executive?
11. In your opinion, what is the attitude of the Iziko Executive Management toward projects and exhibitions on the history and narratives of slavery at the Cape? (phrased differently, how supportive is the Iziko Exec management towards the ISL)
12. What difficulties, if any, did you experience/are you experiencing, in the conceptualisation and planning of exhibitions in the SL building.
13. What difficulties, if any, did you experience/are you experiencing, in the maintenance and upkeep of the SL building.
14. If you had to re-image the spaces and the programming of the ISL, what would it look like. ('Broadly-speaking').
    - If at all, would you envisage the spaces designed and arranged differently?
    - If at all, what programmatic activity would you change or put in place?