

[Re] Directions / Ukutshintshwa Kwendlela
Knowledge, Praxes and the African-Purposed Curriculum

Is a critically white project possible?



**Christi van der
Westhuizen**

Prof Christi van der Westhuizen is an author, academic, columnist and former journalist.

Her publications include the monographs *Sitting Pretty: White Afrikaans Women in Postapartheid South Africa* (2017, UKZN Press) and *White Power & the Rise and Fall of the National Party* (2007, Zebra Press).

Race and racism have proven grimly adaptable, forging ahead in new and old manifestations in the 21st century. Thus whiteness, as a political and structural position, is again re-asserting itself globally in the face of the anti-racist, anti-apartheid, anti-colonial and anti-slavery struggles of the past two centuries. Several strategies are deployed to rehabilitate and restore white power, particularly at the intersection with patriarchal power. Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) is one of the most recent theoretical attempts to research, analyse and debunk claims of white superiority. The potential and pitfalls of CWS are discussed, including its South African permutations. It is argued that the political intent of critical whiteness work as part of the larger anti-racist project must be clear to avoid it serving as a mere cover to reify whiteness. It follows that the activist dimension of CWS is essential. However, white people broadly engaged in anti-racist thinking and activism have become a specific target of globally rising racial populisms of all hues. Are solidarities possible across these frontiers that continued racialisation has newly erected? If at all possible, what would such politics look like? Could it even include sociality?

Date: Friday, 26 October 2018

Time: 14h30 – 16h00

Venue: Drawing Room (upstairs), Art Gallery, Bird Street Campus

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Refreshments will be served