

Citation

UCT Creative Works Award – Professor Gavin Younge

Gavin Younge is a professor at the Michaelis School of Fine Art and works internationally as a sculptor, author, film-maker and curator. ***Cheval de Bataille*** his recent exhibition project for the French Monuments Council that was nominated for a UCT Creative Arts Award, reflects on the notion of freedom, but insists we pay attention and remain vigilant to oppression.

Younge's creative work, particularly the sculptural work he has pioneered in vellum, has garnered significant attention and been recognized internationally. Younge uses vellum, traditionally a parchment for manuscripts, to wrap his sculptures, suggesting a form of protection by substituting and evoking the objects that it replaces. In this way Younge's work engages with ideas of absence and forgetting by giving life to neglected aspects of history and regenerating meaning through creative translation.

Younge's work has been acknowledged in numerous publications on contemporary art including Sue Williamson and Ashraf Jamal's chapter 'Vellum' in ***Future Present: Art in the new South Africa***, Jill Bennett's book, ***Empathic Vision - Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*** and Maud de la Forterie's essays "Deep" and "Skin", published in French.

Younge has fostered an international following since his book ***Art of the South African Townships***. His work has been selected for numerous national and international exhibitions as well as four solo exhibitions in France (2000, 2007, 2009 and 2011). In 2010, the curator of the ***Monuments et Animaux*** cycle of exhibitions selected his work for inclusion on the ***Cheval de Bataille*** exhibition in Salses, and the ***Bêtes Off*** exhibition in Paris. The works address the idea of freedom by giving form to an African species rendered extinct by mankind's willful actions. By choosing to express this through such a delicate material, the artist signals not only an impending ecological disaster, but the ephemeral quality of the works also symbolize all that was lost through colonization.

The exhibitions were seen by over 45,000 people and received critical reviews.

The UCT Creative Works Award acknowledges the substantive and discursive contribution Younge's work has made to contemporary art practice.