

Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Arts and Architecture (Gqeberha, 4-5 Sep 26)

Gqeberha, Nelson Mandela University, Sep 4-05, 2026

Deadline: May 21, 2026

Catharina de Klerk

First call for the 2026 conference of the South African Journal of Art History, to be held at the School of Architecture, Nelson Mandela University, Gqeberha, South Africa, 4-5 September 2026. Conference theme: Place, Practice, and Knowledge: Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Arts and Architecture. Submission deadline: 21 May 2026.

This call invites scholars, practitioners, and creatives to submit abstracts that engage with the spatial dimensions of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in arts and architecture. The conference seeks to foster multidisciplinary dialogues while advancing critical debate that transcends geographic boundaries.

IKS are understood here as place-based epistemologies and dynamic, relational frameworks passed on through intergenerational practices, embodied experiences, and ongoing relationships with Mother Earth, her creatures and resources. These systems shape how the living space is understood, inhabited, represented. In art and architecture, IK inform not only the discipline's philosophical approach to the environment, or practices of making, but also questions of memory and identity.

While this knowledge has been disrupted by colonialism and modernisation, these practices continue to be maintained, adapted, and rearticulated nowadays. They are not limited to rural settings, to ideas of origin, or to the past. Rather, they operate across both rural and urban contexts, and through historical, contemporary, and emerging conditions.

This conference welcomes contributions that examine how IKS shape creative practices and spatial thinking.

Abstract submissions should focus the following topics:

- 1-Indigenous spatial practices and design methodologies.
- 2-IK approaches in art and architectural discourse.
- 3-Indigenous storytelling, place and practices.
- 4-Climate resilience and ecological knowledge in IKS.
- 5-Community-led and participatory design practices.

Submit an abstract of no more than 300 words for a 20-minute presentation, along with a short biography of the author(s), including current institutional affiliation and contact details.

Please send your abstract via email to the Editor, Dr Yolanda van der Vyver, at

yolanda.vandervyver@icloud.com no later than Friday, 21 May 2026.

Publication of conference papers as peer reviewed articles in the South African Journal of Art History: Draft articles to be submitted no later than 28 August 2026 to yolanda.vandervyver@icloud.com.

Virtual presentations by international participants are welcome; however, preference will be given to in-person attendance. Conference fees: R1,800 per participant (due by 21 August 2026).

For more information or questions, please contact Dr Yolanda van der Vyver by email at yolanda.vandervyver@icloud.com

Reference:

CFP: Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Arts and Architecture (Gqeberha, 4-5 Sep 26). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 27, 2026 (accessed Jun 21, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52290>>.