

## *Outline of the project*

### ***Nothing of Importance Occurred: Recuperating a Herball for a 17<sup>th</sup> century enslaved Angolan midwife at the Cape***

An artistic project of recuperation of missing narratives at the Cape through speculative investigation and plants-as-archive. The project leads to the creation of a polyvocal Herball of contraceptive plants, the collaborative Fieldguides, and a journey of *return* from the Cape to Angola

2018-2025



Wendy Morris

November 2021

## ***Nothing of Importance Occurred: Recuperating a Herball for a 17<sup>th</sup> century enslaved Angolan midwife at the Cape***

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A journal entry and a proverb are brackets to the investigation:

***1731. A Dutch VOC official at the Cape wrote in his journal: "December 31st, calm, settled weather. Nothing of importance occurred. An old slave woman, Maaij Claesje, died in the Slave Lodge".***

***UNESCO 1960. Malian intellectual Amadou Hampâté Bâ related an African proverb: "When an old person dies, it is a library burning to the ground".***

The investigation begins with gaps in the record. On a family genealogy drawn up in the 1960s my father's family was traced back to immigrants who arrived in the Cape in the 17th century. European immigrants were named. There were a few female ancestors listed as 'unknown'. With the help of the First Fifty Years project that traces lives of the enslaved brought to the Cape in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was possible to trace the 'unknowns' or, rather, the intentionally forgotten, those actively written out of the record. Further, I found three documents referring to my grandmother eleven-births-back, Maaij Claesje van Angola. The first document has her listed as one of the Angolan enslaved brought to the Cape aboard the Amersfoort in 1658. These captives, five hundred at the start of the voyage from Luanda, had been aboard a Portuguese slave ship heading for Bahia, Brazil. The ship was attacked by a Dutch VOC ship and two hundred and fifty of the captives were transferred to the Amersfoort and brought to the Cape. The second document, an entry in 1731 in the *daghregister* of a Dutch VOC official, refers flippantly to the death of Maaij Claesje and gave rise to the title of the project. A third set of documents reveals that Maaij Claesje, in 1689, was taken aboard the Wapen Van Alkmaar on its voyage from the Cape to Batavia, as midwife, to assist Geertruyd Chasteleyn with the birth of her child midway between the two ports. Maaij Claesje, it seems, successfully negotiated her emancipation in return for this service. On her return to the Cape she was listed as a 'Free Black'. Later, for reasons uncertain, Maaij Claesje returned to the Slave Lodge. This last set of documents carries a suggestion – reading between the lines - that Maaij Claesje had a degree of agency due to her expertise as a midwife. **This project sets out to recuperate what expertise that might have been and to find artistic form to make this visible and transmissible.** Taking the lead from Amadou Hampâté Bâ, the project seeks to speculatively imagine, through investigation and analogy, the *library* that was Maaij Claesje.

First-hand narratives of enslaved lives and experiences at the Cape do not emerge from the written archives and alternative *archives* must thus be sought. In this project *hysterics* of plant medicinal uses are investigated as *bodies of knowledge* that might be revealing of the agency of an enslaved woman, a midwife, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Midwives attended women in labour but also had expertise useful to those who did not wish to bring children into the world. Given what we have learned or must surmise of the experiences of enslaved women and coerced sexual relationships, it is not hard to speculate that plant remedies would have been sought as a clandestine means of achieving a measure of control over their own reproduction, and that a midwife might have been a key holder of such knowledge. **The focus of the project is, therefore, an inquiry into historical plant remedy practices for 'women's ailments' – contraceptives, emmenagogues and abortifacients – that might have informed the practice of an enslaved midwife at the Cape.** Through research into African, European and Asian *hysterics* of plant contraceptive uses, the project explores *bodies of knowledge* that would have flowed to the settlement at the Cape during time that Maaij Claesje was there, 1658-1731.

The investigation attends to **five streams of medicinal plant knowledge that would have merged at the Cape.** The first would be from Angola, in the person of Claesje and others enslaved with her. The second would be from the Netherlands, through the bodies of Dutch women who accompanied their husbands to the Cape. The third from France, through Huguenot refugee women who migrated to the settlement. The fourth would be from South East Asia through the bodies of enslaved women taken to the Cape, and the fifth would have been medicinal plant knowledge already existent in the Cape through San, Khoi and Nama women living there. Contraceptive plant practices of enslaved African women in the Americas are – haphazardly - documented, unlike in the Cape, and so are investigated here as analogies that might prove insightful.

Working with female voices from the countries within the geography of the project (Angola, Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, France, Netherlands, Portugal) a series of experimental polyvocal works – duets, songlines, clandestine radio pieces - will be composed and performed to make up the ***Herball for a Midwife.***

Collaborations are established with ethnobotanists, anthropologists, healers of varying medicinal traditions, political scientists and historians of slavery whose work brings insights to the investigation. Through the chaplet series ***Fieldguides for a Preternaturalist,*** writings by these *guides* will provide satellite texts to orbit the project.

Alongside the plant-knowledge investigations there is a major artistic-fictive element to the project. This involves the conception of *the Company*, the *Travelogues*, and the journey of *return*.

***The Company*** is a constellation of organs and entities, a dissolving of the artist, myself, into a multiple body. This *Company* is the counter-image of that other *Company* – the VOC. Forfeiting any sense of wholeness or single-point-perspective, the artist-investigator devolves the work to a plurality of parts – the *Wandering Womb*, *Orlando Preternaturalist*, *Muriel Emissary to the Past*, and *I, the Ear* – and invites in other entities.

***The Travelogues of the Wandering Womb, Her Fantastic Encounters and Curious Utterings*** have become a framework for projects within the project. *The Company* assembles within the *Travelogues*, each entity or organ addressing a different form of enquiry.

Within these artistic-fictive constructions Maaij Claesje is conceived as an ancestor and spirit-being and is referred to as *!midwif* – from the ancient form of midwife denoting *with woman*. In the coming years a series of *Travelogues* are planned in which the *Company* will *accompany !midwif*

from the hills of Cape Town to the hinterland of Angola, a *return* that will be part narrative, part physical journey, part audio songline.

**Lost Volumes** are the project of narration in the form of sixty stories-within-stories that will be published at a later stage.

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This is a list of work that have been made, exhibited or are in production. An outline of each work can be found in the following pages. All works can be heard or seen on the website Nothing of Importance at:

<https://www.nothingofimportanceoccurred.org/>

- ⊗ **A Tale of Eleven Births** / installation / Lubumbashi Biennale VI, *Future Genealogies, Tales From The Equatorial Line*. Democratic Republic of Congo. Oct-Nov 2019.

Works contributing to the polyvocal **Herball for a Midwife**

- ⊕ **A Hysterie of Guiné Weed and Sorrow Seed** / audio songline and installation / exhibition Pinacoteca, Brazil / 2021-22
- ⊕ **Radio Hush Hush** / audio installation / Netwerk Aalst, Belgium / 2020 / part of **Herball for a Midwife**.

Works within the **Travelogues of the Wandering Womb**

- ⊕ **The Curious Utterings of the Wandering Womb** / audio installation / Netwerk Aalst / 2019 / emergence of the Wandering Womb
- ⊕ **A Thread Winding Backwards** / Audio-Eerie and installation / exhibition No One Would Have Believed / Netwerk Aalst, Belgium / 2020-21 / part of **Travelogue to the Copper Mountains** and the *return* / emergence of The Company
- ⊕ **What Béatrice Told the Inquisitor** / audio songline / cycle singing / fieldguide gathering Montailou, Pyrenees / 2021-2024 / part of **Travelogue of the Wandering Womb**

Publications

- ⊗ **Fieldguides for a Preternaturalist** upcoming 2022-25
- ⊗ **Lost Volumes** upcoming

Biography and affiliations Wendy Morris. CV on the website.

## ***A Tale of Eleven Births***

Lubumbashi Biennale VI, *Future Genealogies, Tales From The Equatorial Line*. Democratic Republic of Congo. Oct-Nov 2019.

With pins and threads - in which each pinhead represents an ancestor of both her paternal and maternal lineages and each thread a line of connection - Wendy Morris creates a genealogy of eleven generations. The threads weave the pins together and materialize the kinship of the individuals they embody, forming lace-like entanglements that become increasingly complicated as the generations ascend. This rethreading is a response to the state of *natal alienation* suggested by Orlando Patterson that ensues when an enslaved person is ripped from both her ancestral forebears and her descendants. The work was made on-site at the Picha studio in Lubumbashi, geographically close to borders of Angola and the region from where Maaij Claesje would have been born. It is both a re-threading of kin and a stitching into place.

*A Tale of Eleven Births* is part of the project *Nothing of Importance Occurred* (2018 - ) that is centered on Maaij Claesje, a 17th century Angolan midwife and enslaved ancestor of the artist. Of the eleven generations of ancestors on an old family tree, this woman was the only forebear of Morris who was not named. Research revealed her to be the enslaved woman Maaij Claesje of Angola.

Installation of 6 free-standing fabric-covered panels each supporting a pin and thread genealogy. Made on site at the Picha workshop Lubumbashi.

Wendy Morris 2019. Assistant: Soleita Kabwasa.

Curator: Sandrine Collard. Funding: Flanders State of the Art



## *A Hysterie of Guiné Weed and Sorrow Seed*

Pinacoteca, Sao Paulo, Brazil / 2021-22

A *duet* across the Atlantic between two esteemed *weedworts*<sup>1</sup> that have long histories as anti-fertility plants in West Africa and Latin America. *Sorrow Seed*, performed by Elisangela Rita in Luanda, is *Momordica charantia*, known then and now as an abortifacient, a plant taken across to Brazil by enslaved West Africans. *Guiné Weed*, performed by Tati de Tatiana in Sao Paulo, is *Petiveria alliacea*, a plant recorded to have been used by enslaved African women to end unwanted pregnancies. Both plants have a profusion of vernacular names, attesting to their long usefulness as medicinal plants. In the *duet* the *weedworts* sing out their many names, speak of weediness and stealth, of yard plants and clandestine uses, of bitterness as a signifier, of toxicity and careful preparations.

Audio installation in the exhibition *No One Would Have Believed*, Pinacoteca, Sao Paulo, Dec 2021-March 2022

Involved:

Concept, writing, composing: Wendy Morris (South Africa), Mariske Broeckmeyer / singer, composer (Belgium)

*Sorrow Seed*: Elisangela Rita / poet (Angola)

*Guiné Weed*: Tati de Tatiana (Tatiana Rodrigues Ribeiro) performer (Brazil)

*Wandering Womb*: Mariske Broeckmeyer, Wendy Morris

Curators: Pinacoteca: Fernanda Pitta (Brazil) Laurens Dhaenens (Belgium)

Also: Pieternel Vermoortel (Belgium), Paula Nascimento (Angola) / curators.

Rachel O'Connell / political sciences (USA), Barbara Bush / social and

political studies (UK) / researchers, authors.

Funding: Pinacoteca, Flanders State of the Art, LUCA-Arts, Netwerk Aalst

The work becomes a part of the **Herball for a Midwife**.



*Momordica charantia* + *Petiveria alliacea* + *Momordica charantia* / Morris / 2018

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<sup>1</sup> *weedworts* is a portmanteau of *weed* – for weediness is a characteristic of many medicinally useful plants that thrive in the company of humans – and *wort* – an ancient English suffix for plants that were useful medicinally – birthwort, barrenwort, feverwort.

## Radio Hush Hush

No One Would Have Believed / Netwerk Aalst, Belgium / 2020-21

*Radio Hush Hush* is a collaborative radio format that narrates and performs *fragmented* knowledge of plant-based antifertility remedies, knowledge that has been disappearing through the ages due to broken chains of vocal transmission. The project investigates what still circulates in the form of folksongs, poems and hearsay, and recuperates information that lies inactive in the pages of old herbals. *Radio Hush Hush* will create and transmit - across a range of installations and experimental radio platforms - a muted chorus of female voices whispering one to another.

In this version shown at Netwerk Aalst, *Radio Hush Hush* is an installation of six wooden finch-cage 'radios'. Each cage contains the voice of a woman singing, chanting, or whispering ancient plant contraceptive knowledge. As one piece ends another begins. Visitors need to move from birdcage to birdcage to hear the voices. The title refers to the clandestine nature of transmission of antifertility plant remedies as well as to the framing of the audiowork which mimics the format of secret numbers stations<sup>2</sup>. In Flanders these wooden finch cages are used in the 'sport' of *vinkezetting*. In competition the finches must sing as frequently as possible and the number of calls is chalked onto a stick. Foreign birds, trapped or traded, must learn the local variant before they can compete. The bird making the largest number of calls wins. The cages are metaphorically rich in ideas of entrapment, forced assimilation and lost language, issues investigated in the larger project.

*Radio Hush Hush* aims to trigger forgotten memories, stories, folk-songs and know-how passed on by generations of mothers and grandmothers. It is hoped the audioworks that we will make out of old knowledge will slip into circulation as a revival of oral traditions in which women discretely shared knowledge important to their reproductive autonomy and well-being. The work is part of the the polyvocal **Herball for a Midwife** and is an ongoing project.



Involved in this version:

Concept, writing, composing: Wendy Morris, Mariske Broekmeyer

Voices: Michele Burgers (South Africa), Theresa Ferreiro (Spain), Brunilda Pali (Albania), Pietermel Vermoortel (Belgium), Agnieszka Gratza (Poland), Renée Turner (Netherlands), Hendrike Scharmman (Germany), Nora El Arbi (Belgium), Alexandra Crouwers (Netherlands) / Curators: Laurens Dhaenens, Fernanda Pitta, Pietermel Vermoortel and Piet Mertens /

Funding: Flanders State of the Art and Netwerk Aalst.

Listen here: <https://midwif.deephistoriesfragilememories.com/radio-hush-hush-1/>

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<sup>2</sup> Numbers Stations are covert radio stations that broadcast coded messages to operatives in the field.

## *Travelogue of the Wandering Womb, Her Fantastic Encounters and Curious Utterings: With the Matriarchal Ginkgo*

Alias exhibition / Netwerk Aalst / 2019

Behind the old city hall in Aalst grows an ancient tree, a Ginkgo biloba, that produces a fruity nut that covers the grass below. Described by townsfolk as a gigantic vegetal uterus, the seeds of this tree ripen on the ground to develop a pungent and powerful smell. Townsfolk keep their distance. In the autumn of 2019 an encampment was set up in proximity to that tree. Inside the corrugated iron cabin there was a circular bed filled with dried and fragrant plants - mugwort, melilot, tansy and meadowsweet. A plaintive voice emerged from the four speakers in the corners of the cabin:

They say  
that in the middle of the flanks of a woman  
lies the WOMB, a female viscous,  
closely RESEMBLING AN ANIMAL  
that it is moved of itself  
HITHER AND THITHER in the flanks  
also UPWARDS in a direct line  
also OBLIQUELY to the right  
or the left  
to the liver or the spleen  
  
that it is likewise subject  
to PROLAPSE downwards  
  
and in a word  
it is altogether entirely ERRATIC

**E**RRATIC  
ERRATIC....



*The Curious utterings of the Wandering Womb installation / Morris / 2019*

A FUMING ceremony was held as an encounter between the two entities – the tree and the emerging wandering womb. It was an orchestra of the scented and the stinking.

They say  
women alone are possessed  
of a MECHANICALLY DEFECTIVE very  
FAULTY BODY PART that moves of itself  
that IMBIBES FUMES

Yes, imbibes fumes  
AS FUEL, we say  
AS FUEL, womb says  
AS FUEL, the errant itinerant journeying womb says  
AS FUEL, the straying wayfaring wandering womb says

SNUFF the candle!  
MOULDER the feathers!  
QUASH the stinkbugs!



In this first work of the Travelogues, the Womb emerges as an uttering voice, an organ-entity in search of knowledge and company, fueled by fumes.

The audio work *Travelogue of the Wandering Womb, her Fantastic Encounters and Curious Utterings* – a collaboration with vocalist and composer Mariske Broeckmeyer – is a response to ancient Greek ideas of the womb as a defective body part. This demonic being would, unless constantly pregnant or moistened with male seed, travel through the body and attack other organs. Exorcisms and fumigations were the prescriptions to steer her back to her rightful place.

***The Curious Utterings of the Wandering Womb*** / quadrophonic sound installation / 7min / concept and writing Wendy Morris / voice and composition Mariske Broeckmeyer. Curators Pieter Vermoortel and Piet Mertens. Fume performance with Mariske Broeckmeyer and Hendrike Scharmann / Fumeurs Tim Theo Deceuninck and Michael Delbeke / Tree guide Bart Backaert. *Alias* exhibition / Netwerk Aalst / 2019

## ***The Travelogue of the Wandering Womb, Her Fantastic Encounters and Curious Utterings: To the Copper Mountains***

From Signal Hill to the Kamiesberg / 2021-2022

In the coming years a series of Travelogues are planned during which the Company will accompany Imidwif from the hills of Cape Town to the hinterland of Angola, a return that will be part narrative, part physical journey, part audio songline. *To the Copper Mountains* is the first leg of this return<sup>3</sup> and a retracing of the **Simon van der Stel expedition from Cape Town to the copper mountains of Namaqualand of 1685**, narrated, now, from a plurality of perspectives and with particular attention to the plants along the way. *A Thread Winding Backwards: an Audio-Eerie* is a first work.

### ***A Thread Winding Backwards : an Audio-Eerie***

No One Would Have Believed / Netwerk Aalst, Belgium / 2020-21

An *audio-eerie* in two parts: First, a dissolving into a constellation of organs and entities, human plant spirit machine. Then, an invocation of an absent ancestor and the beginning of a journey north towards a place once called home. From Signal Hill to the Kanariberg, from Uilenberg to the Kamiesberg. Return, retrace, repair, refrain. The company will keep to the high ground, will travel with the winds.

The *audio eerie* is a work of collaboration with singer and composer Mariske Broeckmeyer and actor Michele Burgers. The work includes the voices of Imelda Coetzee and Jamaica Kincaid, the borrowed vocabularies of Yvette Christianse, Saidiya Hartman, Olive Schreiner, Jamaica Kincaid and Frederique Aït-Touati, and the borrowed plant knowledges of kruiedokters and midwives of Namaqualand, Anna 'Wiet' Brand, Anna 'Boom' Styewe, Elsie Kardinal, Gertruida 'Trooi' Klaase and Jan 'Brood' van der Westhuizen.

*Prologue*, on headphones, 4 min + *As a Thread Winding Backwards*, quadraphonic sound, 18min. + *A Tale of Eleven Births*, pin and thread genealogies + *The Ghosts of my Friends*, cloth.



Concept, writing, composing: Wendy Morris and Mariske Broeckmeyer / Curators: Laurens Dhaenens, Fernanda Pitta, Pietermel Vermoortel and Piet Mertens. Funding: Flanders State of the Art and Netwerk Aalst

Listen to extract of the work here:

<https://www.nothingofimportanceoccurred.org/as-a-thread-winding-backwards-an-audio-eerie-prologue/>

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<sup>3</sup> The Travelogue will also comprise: *To the Bay of Luanda* (2022-23) and *To the Hinterland* (2023-24)

## What Béatrice Told the Inquisitor

Montaillou, Pyrenees / 2021-2024

Audio songline / cycle singing / radio-work / fieldguide gathering  
part of *Travelogue of the Wandering Womb & Herball for a Midwife*

Streams of knowledge about anti-fertility plants flowed from different sources to the Cape. One of those streams was from France when Huguenot women, refugees fleeing Catholic France after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), took the VOC offer of land to farm and migrated to the Cape. The oldest female reference to using a plant contraceptive comes from the testimony of a Cathar woman in south western France in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Béatrice de Planissoles was living in the Pyrenean village of Montaillou when she was propositioned by the Cathar priest of the village. She asked of him, 'but what shall I do if I become pregnant by you? I shall be dishonoured and lost'. The priest replied that he had a certain herb that would prevent her becoming pregnant. In her testimony to the Inquisitor in 1320 Béatrice describes at length the pessary that the priest would bring to their couplings. He would not tell her the name of the herb. Béatrice's testimony is the earliest recorded account by a woman of using a herb contraceptive.

Following extensive research over the last three years into histories of contraceptive, emmenagogic and abortive herbs used by women in Europe, this Travelogue will be a return to the hills of Montaillou to seek out the identity of this particular herb as well as to investigate who the holders of this knowledge might have been: herb-women, shepherds or Jewish female healers (both mentioned by Béatrice). Working with French and Spanish ethno- and archeo-botanists, historians of wise women in the region, local herbal practitioners and radio stations, this work will comprise a series of *Fieldguides*, collaborative radio works and a Cycle Singing performance by the Wandering Womb in the ruins of the Fortress in which Béatrice once lived.



To be invited to contribute to the Fieldguides:

**Marie-Pierre Ruas:** archeo-botanist / French National Centre for Scientific Research / published research at Montaillou / or...

**Charlotte Hallavant:** paleo-archaeology / HADES Bureau d'investigations archéologiques, France / published research at Montaillou

**Carmen Cabellero-Navas :** Jewish and Hebrew Studies / University Grenada, Spain / Jewish female healers 14<sup>th</sup>c France

**Manuel Pardo de Santayana:** medicinal plants ethnopharmacology, / University of Madrid

## *Fieldguides for a Preternaturalist*

### *Suspended between the mundane and the miraculous*

Chaplet publications / 2021-25 / K. Verlag Publishers

**The Fieldguides are a series of small, single-essay chapbooks**, word-of-mouth essays to be read at gatherings of collaborators and audiences brought together around the art-research project *Nothing of Importance Occurred: Recuperating a Herball for a 17<sup>th</sup> century enslaved Angolan Midwife at the Cape*.

The Fieldguides are **generators** of collaborations, which is to say that they are the means to invite in researchers and practitioners – the *guides* - to beam light onto the investigation from multiple angles – historical, anthropological, experiential, ethnobotanical, literary. They are also the place in which the investigation is **worked** into experimental writing / try-outs / works-in-progress by collaborators in the project.

Three *fieldguides* will be published per year and three related gatherings will be organised connected to exhibitions and encounters within the project. The meetings will be shaped around the particular fieldguide/s being presented and will be decidedly transdisciplinary in composition. Locations will be as varied as art institutes, community halls, art school and university seminar rooms, domestic spaces, even a ruined fortress on a hill. It is intended that each reading leads to new collaborations, a thickening of the network, and material for further work. **Gatherings would be organised in Belgium, Netherlands, Portugal and France, in South Africa and Angola.**

Confirmed authors :

**Nadia Kamies:** Critical African Studies / University of Pretoria / Cape histories / **Gary Stafford:** Ethnobotanist / University of Pretoria / medicinal plants / **Joshua Cohen:** cultural anthropologist / University of Leeds & Aarhus University / ecologies of healing in Namaqualand / **Rachel O'Donnell:** University of Rochester, USA / Political Science / Contraceptive Plant Properties Caribbean.

To be approached :

**Yvette Christiansë:** poet & author of *Unconfessed* / **!Kora Brian Damonse:** member of Cape Bush Doctors Association, Stellenbosch / **Nox Makunga:** microbiologist / medicinal plant researcher / University of Stellenbosch / member of Cape Bush Doctors Association / **Paola Torres** / oncologist and healer of different medical traditions / Brazil

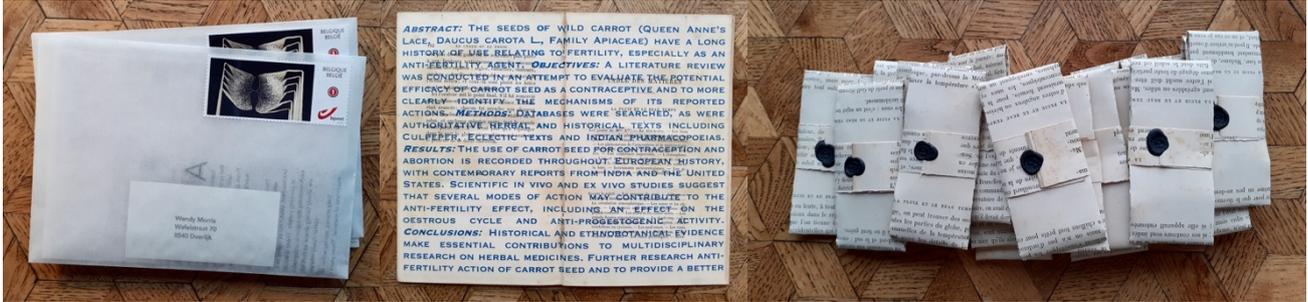
Concept: Wendy Morris, Pieternel Vermoortel, Anna-Sophie Springer

Editors: Anne-Sophie Springer, Wendy Morris

Publisher: K. Verlag / LUCA-arts deep histories fragile memories / Netwerk Aalst

## The Lost Volumes

(2021-2023) are a slow narration of the project in 60 stories-  
within-stories that are being sent to a small *Company of Readers* in the form  
of occasional letters. The *Lost Volumes* are written by *the Wandering  
Womb, Muriel, Orlando and I, the Ear.*



Wendy Morris [wendy.morris@kuleuven.be](mailto:wendy.morris@kuleuven.be)  
[bullybeef07@gmail.com](mailto:bullybeef07@gmail.com)

Nothing of Importance website at:  
<https://www.nothingofimportanceoccurred.org/>

Born in Namibia in the year that the South West African People's Organization was formed to resist South African control of the country, and then growing up in apartheid South Africa, Morris's work has always been shadowed by colonial and post colonial narratives, and directed towards the recuperation of marginalised histories. Through the medium of experimental animated film she has investigated histories of the South African Native Labour Contingent in Europe in World War 1 (*This, of course, is a work of the Imagination*, 2017 and *Off the Record*, 2008), the closely related histories of the colonialization of the Congo and the invasion of Belgium by the German army in World War 1 (*Bully Beef*, 2006), and the greed of the Leopold II regime in the Congo Free State (*A Royal Hunger*, 2002). In the animated research work, *Heir to the Evangelical Revival* (2013), she investigated the religious heritage of English ancestors who emigrated to South Africa in the 19th century, and then, keeping with the investigation into religious histories, she retraced, on foot, the route of Huguenot ancestors fleeing persecution in France in the 17th century for refuge in the Netherlands before emigrating to the VOC controlled Cape of Good Hope (*Off by Heart and Out of Breath & A Song of Longing*, 2016). In her current investigations she is exploring, through an examination of European, African and Asian (missing) histories of plant contraceptives, bodies of knowledge that would have flowed to the settlement at the Cape in the 17th century and informed the practice of a midwife in the Slave Lodge.

Wendy Morris is a associate professor of Contemporary Arts at KU Leuven where she teaches a Master workshop on artistic research practices in contemporary arts. She is also professor and researcher at Luca School of Arts, Brussels, where she has set up the interdisciplinary *deep histories fragile memories* research cluster that connects artistic researchers, writers, art historians and curators from the KU Leuven, Luca, VUB, and the art institute Netwerk Aalst.

Her work has a double focus on historical and transdisciplinary research, and the artistic and written forms in which this research manifests itself. Morris was one of the first artists in Belgium to engage in the artist's doctorate and defended her project 'Drawing on the Past' in 2013 with five animated films and a set of 52 letters.

**Studies:**

2013 / Doctorate in the Arts, *Drawing on the Past:Implicit:Explicit:Complicit*. University of Leuven, Belgium.

2004 / Master Visual Arts, University of South Africa.

1999 / Honours Bachelor of Arts in Art History, University of S.A.

1994 / Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts, 1994, University of S.A.