

# Nolan Oswald Dennis



## Biography

Nolan Oswald Dennis (b. 1988, Lusaka, Zambia) is a para-disciplinary artist from Johannesburg, South Africa. Their practice explores what they call 'a black consciousness of space': the material and metaphysical conditions of decolonization. Dennis' work questions the politics of space (and time) through a system-specific, rather than site-specific approach. They are concerned with the hidden structures that predetermine the limits of our social and political imagination. Through a language of diagrams, drawings and models they explore a hidden landscape of systematic and structural conditions that organise our political sub-terrain.

In 2025, Dennis presented their first UK institutional solo exhibition at Gasworks London, and their first US institutional solo exhibition at the Swiss Institute. On the occasion of the exhibition, the Swiss Institute together with Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town and Koenig will publish the first ever monograph on Dennis's practice in April 2025.

In 2024, Dennis designed the 'Traces of Ecstasy' pavilion and exhibition project for the Lagos Biennial in Tafawa Balewa Square. An adapted version of this project was on view at the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University in the same year. Dennis was also shortlisted for the Future Generation Art Prize 2023/24.

Dennis was the 2020 artist in residence at NTUCCA (Singapore) and the 2021 artist in residence at the Delfina Foundation (London). They were awarded the FNB Arts Prize in 2016. They are a founding member of artist groups NTU and the Index Literacy Program, as well as a research associate at the VIAD research centre at the University of Johannesburg.

Solo shows include: Nolan Oswald Dennis, Gasworks London (2025); overtures, Swiss Institute, New York (2025); UNDERSTUDIES, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town (2024); geo-logics, Kunstinsituut Melly, Netherlands (2024); Nolan Oswald Dennis, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2023); Positions #7, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands (2023); models (from a black planetarium), Centre d'Art Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel, Switzerland (2022); Specifications for a Reverse Archaeology, The Javett Art Centre at the University of Pretoria (2022-2023); conditions, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town (2021); Options, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, (2019).

Group shows and biennales include: Black Ancient Futures, Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon (2024); back wall project, Kunsthalle Basel (2024); 12th Seoul Mediacity Biennale (2023); the 12th Liverpool Biennial (2023), Frieze, Seoul (2023); the Young Congo Biennale (2019), Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, MACBA (2018); Palais de Tokyo, Paris; ARoS Aarhus, Denmark; 9th Berlin Biennale (2016); Poetics of Relation, LIYH, Geneva (2015).

Collections include: A4 Arts Foundation Cape Town, South Africa and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

Dennis lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa.

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2025** \_overtures, Swiss Institute, New York, USA
- 2025** *Nolan Oswald Dennis*, Gasworks London, UK
- 2024** \_geo-logics, Kunstinsituut Melly, Netherlands,
- 2024** *Understudies*, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2022** *no conciliation is possible (working diagram)*, CCA Berlin, Germany
- 2021** *Conditions*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2019** *Options*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016** *Furthermore*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

## Group Exhibitions

- 2024** *Black Ancient Futures*, Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2023** *Biennial SescVideobrasil*, a recurse for three oceans, Brasil
- 2023** \_THIS TOO IS A MAP, Seoul Mediacity Biennale, Korea
- 2023** \_From the void came gifts of the cosmos, 35th Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts, Slovenia
- 2023** \_uMoya: The Sacred Return of Lost Things, Liverpool Biennale, UK
- 2023** *Umhlaba uyalingana*, Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland
- 2023** Positions #7: Everything worthwhile is done with other people, Van Abbe Museum, Netherlands
- 2022** *Living with Ghosts*, Pace Gallery, London, UK

\*2022\*\_Magical Hackerism, SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, Germany  
**2022** \_LIAF (Loftoten International Art Festival), Norway  
**2022** \_Matter of Art Biennale, Prague  
**2022** *20 Artists: Global Positioning*, New York, USA  
**2021** *Ubuntu, A Lucid Dream*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France  
**2021** *Silence calling from one continent to another*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town  
**2021** *Deeping Listening for Longing*, Boras Art Biennale, Sweden  
**2021** *University of African Futures*, Institut Francois, Lieu Unique, Nantes, France  
**2021** *This is Not Africa, Unlearn What You Have Learned*, ARoS Aarhus, Denmark  
**2019** \_Young Congo Biennale  
**2019** *I've grown roses in this garden of mine*, Goodman Gallery London, UK  
**2018** *A Better Version of You*, Goethe Institute, Beijing, China  
**2018** *African Mobilities*, TUM, Munich, Germany  
**2018** *In the Open or in Stealth*, MACBA, Barcelona, Spain  
**2018** *Tell Freedom. 15 South African artists*, Kunsthalle kAde, Amersfoort, Netherlands  
**2017** *Deep Memory*, Kalmar Konsthall, Kalmar, Sweden  
**2017** *In No Time*, MIT, Cambridge, USA  
**2017** *89plus: Americans 2017*, LUMA Westbau, Zurich, Switzerland  
**2017** *the silences between*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
**2016** *NTUSAVE*, Berlin Biennale  
**2016** *In Context: Where We Are*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
**2016** *New Revolutions: Goodman Gallery at 50*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa  
**2016** *New Revolutions: Goodman Gallery at 50*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
**2015** *Young, Gifted and Black*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa  
**2015** *Edge of Silence*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
**2015** *Post African Futures*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa  
**2015** *Other Peoples Memories*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa  
**2015** *Poetics of Relation*, LIYH, Geneva, Switzerland  
**2015** *Lumieres d'Afrique*, Group Show, Theatre National de Chaillot, Paris, France  
**2015** *Activate/Captivate*, museum show, Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg  
**2014** *Working Title*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa  
**2014** *The Brother Burns the Bullion*, site intervention, Johannesburg  
**2013** *Ussher Fort\_*, *Chale Wote*, Art Festival, Ga-Mashie, Accra, Ghana  
**2013** *Transitions, mural installation*, Market Photo Workshop Gallery, Johannesburg, SA and Rencontres d'Arles, Arles, France  
**2013** *Memory + Speculation*, Chale Wote community art festival, Accra, Ghana  
**2013** *LAND*, Mural installation, Cape Town City Hall, GIPCA  
**2012** *SOCIAL LANDSCAPE PROJECT: Transition and Show Us Our Land\_*, *Market Photo Workshop*, Johannesburg, South Africa  
**2012** *SOCIAL LANDSCAPE PROJECT: Transition and Show Us Our Land*, Les Rencontres d'Arles \_, France  
**2011** *Golden Eggs*, Cape Town Spier Public Art Festival

## Teaching, Lectureships and Workshop

**2017** Presentation Paper – Under Super Vision, symposium, University of British Columbia,  
**2017** Presentation Paper – Environments and the Ecological self, conference, University of Rochester  
**2017** Published Paper – Solomon Mahlangu House' – Centre des Laboratoires Associés  
pour la Recherche en Architecture (CLARA) No. 4  
**2017** Published Paper 'Anxious South' – University of Rochester Journal for Visual Culture (InVisible Culture)  
**2016** Lecturer, Architecture department, University of Witwatersrand  
**2015** Artist talk – 'Space and Transformation' lecture series, School of Architecture,  
University of Cape Town  
**2015** NTU artist talk, Swaartnet, Post African Futures

## Awards and Merits

**2023** *The Jury Prize at Biennial SescVideobrasil*  
**2016** \_FNB Art prize, Johannesburg  
**2011** \_Gauteng Institute of Architects Award, Johannesburg

## Academic Record and Residencies

**2020** NTUCCA, Singapore  
**2017** MeetFactory, Studio Residency, Prague, Czech Republic  
**2016** Atelier Mondial, Studio Residency Basel, Switzerland  
**2016** Berlin Biennale (with NTU)  
**2016** MIT Department of Architecture Graduate Fellowship  
**2015** Research Artist, Wits Art Museum collection, Johannesburg  
**2014** VANSAs open office residency, Johannesburg

## Collections

Van Abbemuseum, The Netherlands

## Commissions

\*2023\*\_Kunsthalle Basel\_backwall project