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American Suffragist in Africa

Course code: 1003

AN AMERICAN SUFFRAGIST IN AFRICA: REBECCA HOURWICH REYHER (1897–1987)

by Professor Sandra Klopper, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape Town, art historian

This three-lecture course will explore the remarkable life and influence of Rebecca Reyher, a New York based journalist who first visited South Africa in 1924 and returned to Africa repeatedly until the 1960s. She befriended the young aspiring artist Irma Stern early in her career, and, opening Stern's exhibition at Ashby in 1925, prophesised that Stern would achieve international acclaim.

On one of her early visits, she described the country as 'breathlessly beautiful, maddening, and intoxicating'. Among her many contributions, she had an unintended impact on the career of the Zulu-speaking carver, Tivenyanga Qwabe, whom she met on her trips to Nongoma to interview Christina Sibiya, the first wife of Zulu King Solomon kaDinuzulu, who died in 1935. In her moving biography of Sibiya, Reyher challenged gender stereotypes and racial clichés in an effort to make sense of the life experiences of this extraordinary woman. Her subsequent publications included *The Fon and His Hundred Wives*, inspired by her concern for the ways in which societies marginalise and abuse women. This course will reflect on the history of Reyher's involvement in the Suffragist movement, her varied experiences in South Africa and her friendships with local academics and political activists.

LECTURE TITLES

1. Friends, artists, academics and political activists in Cape Town
2. Explorations in Zululand
3. Christina Sibiya and the role of women in nineteenth and early twentieth century Zulu society

Recommended reading

Reyher, R.H. 1998. *Zulu Woman: the Story of Christina Sibiya*. Feminist Press, City University of New York. Women Writing Africa series. (First published in 1948.)

Date: Monday 21–Wednesday 23 January

Time: 5.30 pm

Course fees: Full: R210,00

Staff: R105,00

Reduced: R53,00

• Important dates:

The 63rd annual Summer School will take place from Monday 21 January to Friday 1 February 2013.

• Downloads

- [Course Timetable](#)
- [Summer School Brochure 2013](#)
- [Registration form \(MS Word\)](#)
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