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Title: Reflections on public art installations in Masvingo urban: a scopic regime

Though public art is very limited in the city of Masvingo in Zimbabwe, significant historic locomotives are notable artifacts standing out as installations, drawing the attention of the viewing public in Masvingo Urban. These public art installations are located in the city council's garden commonly known as the civic center, thus at the core of the central business district (CBD). Masvingo city is the oldest city in Zimbabwe which evolved as a stop-over settlement situated along the major route of the pioneer column travelling from Cape Town to Cairo. The locomotives in situ are archaic resembling the earliest mode of communication used by the white settlers. Scopic regime indicates a non-natural visual order operating on a pre-reflective level to determine the dominant protocols of seeing and being on view in a specific culture at a specific time. The term scopic regime was first introduced by Christian Metz, the French film critic, and is used in opposition to the notion that "vision" is universal. The concept of scopic regime means that there are specific ways of seeing that are manifestations of culture. This paper explores the impact of history in the conception of installation forms of art in Masvingo town. It instrumentally explores the potential of perceptual embodiment, promoted by historical relevance of Masvingo city as the oldest city in Zimbabwe. Through these installations, the artifacts give room to speculate on the scopic regime of historical significance of Masvingo.

Key words: Installations, scopic regime, pioneer column,