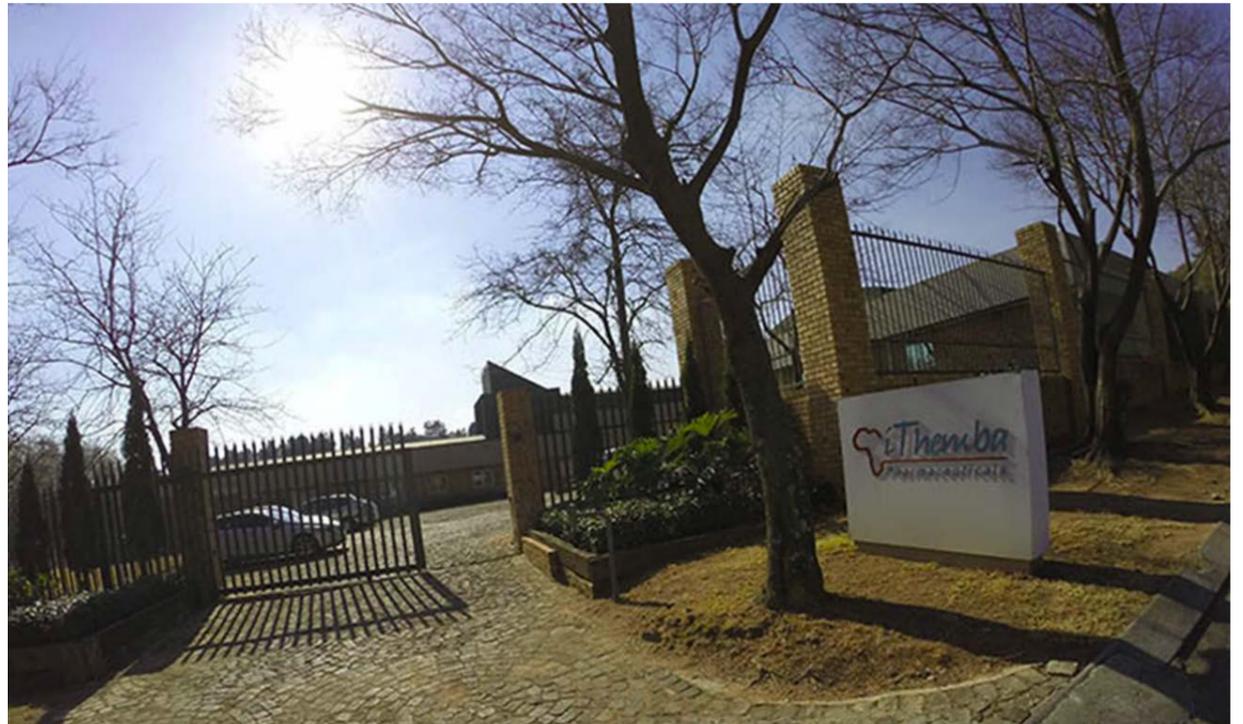


Synthesizing Hope

Matter, Knowledge, and Place in South African Drug Discovery

Biopolitics of Science Research Network



Speaker

Anne Pollock ([bio](#))
King's College London

When

4.00-5.30pm, 16 April 2019

Where

Seminar room 342
Social Sciences Building (A02)

Please register here:

<https://bit.ly/2DvU0c1>

Chapters of her new book are available upon request, contact:
Sonja van Wichelen
sonja.vanwichelen@sydney.edu.au

ABSTRACT

In this talk, Anne Pollock will be presenting from her new book, *Synthesizing Hope: Matter, Knowledge, and Place in South African Drug Discovery*, which will be published by the University of Chicago Press in May 2019.

Synthesizing Hope opens up the material and social world of pharmaceuticals by focusing on an unexpected place: iThemba Pharmaceuticals. Founded in 2009 with a name taken from the Zulu word for hope, the small South African startup with an elite international scientific board was tasked with drug discovery for tuberculosis, HIV, and malaria. Anne Pollock uses this company as an entry point for exploring how the location of scientific knowledge production matters, not only for the raw materials, production, licensing, and distribution of pharmaceuticals but also for the making of basic scientific knowledge. Consideration of this case exposes the limitations of global health frameworks that implicitly posit rich countries as the only sites of knowledge production. Analysis of iThemba identifies the problems inherent in Global North/South divides at the same time as it highlights what is at stake in who makes knowledge and where. It also provides a concrete example for consideration of the contexts and practices of postcolonial science, its constraints, and its promise. *Synthesizing Hope* explores the many legacies that create conditions of possibility for South African drug discovery, especially the specific form of settler colonialism characterized by apartheid and resource extraction. Paying attention to the infrastructures and laboratory processes of drug discovery underscores the materiality of pharmaceuticals from the perspective of their makers, and tracing the intellectual and material infrastructures of South African drug discovery contributes new insights about larger social, political, and economic orders.

Anne Pollock is Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine at King's College, London. She is the author of *Medicating Race: Heart Disease and Durable Preoccupations with Difference* (Duke 2012).