

METRO MUSINGS



METRO
MUSINGS



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

METRO
MUSINGS

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CURATORIAL PREFACE //

ELFRIEDE DREYER (CURATOR)

CURATORIAL PREFACE

METROMUSINGS

Starting to write from the towers of academia, this preface for an exhibition presenting visual musings on the city, reminds me of Michel de Certeau who in 1980 started to write the chapter, 'Walking in the city', for the original French version of *The practice of everyday life* (1984) whilst looking at Manhattan from the now destroyed 110th floor of the World Trade Center. In this chapter, he describes New York City as follows:

Its present invents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future. A city composed of paroxysmal places in monumental reliefs. The spectator can read in it a universe that is constantly exploding (De Certeau 1984:91).

These words aptly describe the spectacle of South African cities brimming with inner-city movement on the streets and sidewalks and reflecting a rich cultural mix of people, styles and goods. "Is the immense texturology spreading out before one's eyes anything more than a representation, an optical fact?" De Certeau (1984:92) asks. And the answer is yes, since as he

continues to argue, the panoramic city is nothing more than a visual simulacrum whose very condition is that of oblivion, since the "ordinary practitioners" of the city "down below", walk as *Wandersmänner* "whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban text" and make use of spaces that they are "blind" to. It is here that *Metromusings* operates and attempts to uncover and transmute our everyday 'blind' or unthinking manner of engagement with South African urbanity into artworks in a varied array of artistic media and ideas.

Urban studies and the visual arts have shown a dynamic interrelationship since the nineteenth-century Haussmannisation of Paris and the subsequent writings of Walter Benjamin, for instance, who set up productive relationships between the artist as public figure, the artwork as public object and the urban or street culture of the time. Notions of the street walker or the *flâneur* have become extraordinarily significant in the visual arts since Baudelaire's nineteenth-century male stroller in the city, accompanied by a dedicated embodied take on the city reflecting the philosophical urban musings of, for instance, De Certeau, Lefebvre, Zukin, Tuan, Mirzoeff and many others. As Joe Austin (2010:33) argues, since the early twentieth-century

turn towards the everyday, there has been an adjustment of the analytic lens to centre on the mundane experiences within urban walls and streets, including aesthetic experiences, and artworks have since dealt extensively with this local urban place-scale in response to the human-scaled city experience.

Curating the city in its sprawling urban context means to identify a milieu and to produce an event with a built-in mechanism that will be instrumental in allowing visual, aesthetic and conceptual engagement with, for instance, a place or site's key role in its history and the socio-political and -cultural developments of an area or country; to relate to or contest existing conventions and styles of artistic expression and presentation; and of critical significance, through the former elements to make visible, communicate and render a specific vision of contemporary (and historical) urban life. Curatorial practice thus does not merely imply collecting a selection of works together and displaying these; Hans Obrist (probably the most important living curator of our time) considers the curator a *passeur*, a different kind of *flâneur*, stroller or walker who passes through the culture and histories of a country and facilitates a view thereupon by way of artworks. In

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this way, curatorial practice aims to produce new views, relationships and possibly 'erasures' in terms of the city in order, maybe, to discover layers of and links to histories of engagement and, hopefully, new ways of looking at the city. Curatorially, conceiving the contemporary city is thus essentially concerned with ways of imaging and imagining the city and subjectivities associated with these processes.

In the context of academia, the curator's role seems to have been implicit to some extent in the form of the curating of staff or student exhibitions. Yet, too often, these exhibitions have been the product of a compilation of available or existing work, without any intervention of a conceptual kind. An outdated, binarist view of the curator concerns either the curator-as-artist, that is, as understanding media, space, technologies and processes, or the curator-as-theorist as understanding concepts and theories. Since the late twentieth century, the curator has come to be seen as engaging with all of the afore-mentioned as well as with art history, therefore as a progression to the late nineteenth-century mediation of the avant-garde, challenging the status quo and enabling many an emerging artist into the art market. Curatorial practice is a relatively recent

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offspring of visual arts practice that has become far more than a mere preservation of looking after collections of art and artefacts, and functions on a level beyond the static and site-specific collection. The contemporary art curator has become more like an "artist-at-large, representing the world" (Chaplin & Stara 2009:1) through the work of artists. As spectacles and events, exhibitions and their histories appear to have been inseparable from modernity's greatest collections of art, and exhibitions have become the primary site of exchange in the context of the cultural and political economies of art.

In an interview of The Design Observer Group with Kees Christiaanse, the chief curator of the 2009 International Architecture Biennale in Rotterdam with the theme of 'Open city: designing coexistence', his view on the contemporary city is described as entailing a "condition, usually found only in fragments, in parts of cities, where a fragile balance between integrating and disintegrating forces is maintained" (Curating the open city 2009). Just as Christiaanse's idea of an 'open city' is somewhat utopian, relating to a translation of the ideals of an 'open society' and "a society ... where interaction leads to cultural enrichment and innovation,

and where the market flourishes" (Curating the open city 2009), the contemporary art curator acts as a dynamic and critical navigator of culture in terms of its meanings, directions and interfaces. The curatorial objective with *Metromusings* is to present recent work of permanent and part-time lecturing staff of the Department of Visual Arts of the University of Pretoria, that engages thematically in an open-ended way with the Faculty of Humanities' research theme of 'Capital cities'. Recoding a diverse and massive - 'invisible' - archive of stories and experiences, the exhibition offers visual representations of reflections on urban environments (and Pretoria in particular) that have been "shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces" (De Certeau 1984:93).

Metromusings endeavours to present a visual mapping of the social and political power geographies and complexes that dominate cities and how urban culture can be voiced, claimed, negotiated and contested. In paintings, drawings, sculptures, performance, photography, printmaking and video, a defining question in the context of the city is how space can be translated into place. Guy du Toit's street sign works comment on the change of street names in Pretoria and therefore the

uncanny defamiliarisation of the familiar. As such significant places associated with specific names are turned into 'unfamiliar' spaces that need to be recoded again. In Carla Crafford's work, the subjective gaze and viewpoint of the spectator and the city's ephemerality in terms of being a depository of spent ideas, designs and paradigms are rendered in images of 'ghosts', fleeting appearances and memories. She poetically depicts the change of season from summer to winter and how it affects both humans and birds. In almost audioscapes, she tries to decipher apparitions and ghosts, and how she has become the very ghost in her own dreams. The pigeons correlate with citizens: how they nest and how a place can often become empty when the fledglings have left.

Such ephemerality is also encountered in Diane Victor's use of transient media that speak about the frailty of life and temporality as an echo of life in the metropolis typified by the agitated movement and rapid rise and fall of the 'short lives' in the world of artifice and manufacture in the city. In their artists' statement, Celia de Villiers and Elsa van der Klashorst speak about a city that is never complete by being in a constant process of being produced by everyone who lives in

it and weaves their stories into the collective narrative. To them, the urban space of the inner city has become a site for contestation and constantly changing identities. In similar vein, Joao Ladeira's work deals with a large portion of the urban population, the migrant workers that have made a 'home' on the derelict periphery of the city.

De Certeau (1984:93) identifies urban practices that are foreign to the "geometrical" space of the city, and instead refers to another kind of spatiality that is anthropological, poetic and mythic. It is a 'blind' and 'opaque' mobility where the migrational city "slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city" (De Certeau 1984:93). These ideas seem to be prevalent in several works on the exhibition, such as Berco Wilsenach's, that deal with the relationship between location and mobility, and patterns of movement into and through the city. The artist presents a visual diary that delivers a chronology of his travel itinerary from place to place. Magdel Fourie's *Concrete conversations* reflects her sense of having a nomad identity, denoted by experiences of fragmentation and fluid change. Being psycho-geographically liminal, owing to the fact that her father lives in New Zealand, her mother in

METROMUSINGS: CURATORIAL PREFACE

Johannesburg and her brother in Hong Kong, makes her feel displaced and her life as “constituted by blurred notions of home, place and belonging, posited in memory and experienced through short, personal visits and the availability of technology (such as Skype, sms and telephone conversations)” (artist’s statement).

The play between entities such as here and there; dream and reality; copy and real; and concrete and human being in the context of the city is used as tropes in Pieter Swanepoel’s work where the the source for the paintings is a photograph. In the process of production, one reality is substituted for another, and it is doubled and mirrored in the one being reflected by the other. “Hence”, the artist states, “in the deliberately constructed image of Pretoria the one panel of the divided painting is flipped around... as a way of looking through the image of Pretoria at Pretoria.” Swanepoel’s double perspective becomes a reading of the past through the present, and as such addresses histories and cultures embedded in the city. This conceptual approach to the landscape and its histories reflects Yi-Fu Tuan’s (1977:122) view that “space is historical if it has direction or a privileged perspective. Maps are ahistorical, landscape paintings are historical.”

Leana van der Merwe’s sculptural installations of found materials comment on the consumerism and commerciality of the urban environment and its experiences, articulated especially through products, experiences and entertainment. To her, ‘making’ or ‘building’ correlates with one’s own existence and thus one’s understanding of oneself through embodied interaction with materials and forces. In her assemblage works, the interaction of found materials objects creates new meanings and relationships that defy the meaninglessness and neutrality of manufactured goods. Frikkie Eksteen’s works on exhibition become Debordian psychogeographies in the observation and experience of places and spaces that articulate home, belonging and identity. In his artist’s statement, he says that his relationship to Pretoria “is one that I take for granted. I am here because I am not somewhere else. I have been habituated to this environment and perhaps that has blinded me to what makes it what it is.” Memories of landscapes, places and spaces fill the artist’s head, which are then ‘remade’ in his paintings. In *The poetics of space*, Gaston de Bachelard (1994:48) states: “But the complex of reality and dream is never definitively resolved. The house itself, when it starts to live humanly, does not lose all its “objectivity”. ...

First of all, these old houses can be drawn -- we can make a representation that has all the characteristics of a copy.” Similarly, to Eksteen, traces of the original form of the place remain, but keep on changing, becoming a kind of fantasyscape. According to Andreas Huyssen (2003:15), the “fault line between mythic past and real past is not always easy to draw -- which is one of the conundrums of any politics of memory anywhere.” To Huyssen (2003:101), cities are after all, “palimpsests of history, incarnations of time in stone, sites of memory extending both in time and space.” Eksteen’s portraits become existential coordinates of positioning the self in a globalising space.

Sikho Siyotyla’s work entitled *The matrix of entanglement* is a reflection on the entangled cultural matrix of the city and the dimensions thereof. Such entanglement she finds in the metropolis “where ‘different’ pathways, histories and futures relate, collide or conjoin” (artist’s statement). Her work reminds of Edward W Soya’s (1989:102) view of the urban built environment as “embedded in the restless geographical landscape of capital, and specified as part of a complex and contradiction-filled societal spatialization that simultaneously enhances and inhibits, provides new

room and imprison, offer solutions but soon beckons to be destroyed”. *The matrix of entanglement* is rendered in caul fat, signifying human or animal presence in the concrete jungle, and according to the artist, survivalism in the urban maze of cultural fusion. Kai Lossgott and I both produced work that comments on water as an essential element in a city -- not only the reason for its initial establishment, for also for its continued health and survival. In Lossgott’s *Read these roads*, the film opens with the words: “I stopped in this city / to drink sweet water”. The words infer a personal narrative, but simultaneously hint at the human exploitation of natural resources. A dystopian narrative of global overcrowding and gradual impoverishment accompanied by governmental neglect of resources essential for survival and vigorous livelihoods is recounted in poetic form, maybe as a soft-option critique/resistance.

The artwork will always remain a space between the lines or the buildings for that matter. It is a memory space that will always be fragile and speak softly like the flow of the river in the distance. Perhaps this statement by performance artist, Loraine Beaton, encapsulates the collection of musings on the city included in the *Metromusings* exhibition as follows:

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On behalf of the city, the artist pauses and wilfully observes and questions. This process results in an offering that provides a busy city with a moment of clarity, a glimpse of themselves and a chance to consider the next step. A performance, a song or a painting can take viewers to inner places they wouldn’t have managed to find on their busy own.

I would to like express my sincerest thanks to my departmental colleagues for their support and participation in the project; Prof Jeanne van Eeden; Kyle Rath for his exquisite design of the catalogue; and UP Arts for logistical assistance in terms of setting up and installing the exhibition. A special word of gratitude to Prof Norman Duncan, our Dean of Humanities, who was instrumental in obtaining Mellon funding for the Faculty of Humanities in particular, which in the case of *Metromusings* provided substantial funding under the umbrella of the Capital Cities project. Thank you also to Prof Stephanie Burton, the Vice-Principal of Research and Prof Cheryl de la Rey, our Principal and Vice-Chancellor, for continuous support of this research project.

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BW

BERCO
WILSENACH

01.

JOERNAAL VIR DIE BLINDE REISIGER //

DIE BLINDE REISIGER KAN SLEGS DIE PAAIE VOLG WAT AS
HERINNERING IN DIE BOEK AGTERGELAAT IS

JOERNAAL VIR DIE BLINDE REISIGER

KUNSTENAARS BIO

Wilsenach (gebore 1974) het in 1996 'n BA(BK) aan die Universiteit van Pretoria voltooi. Na voltooiing van sy MA(BK) in 2002 aan dieselfde instansie, sit hy sy studies in Italië aan die *Accademia Ligustica di Belli Arti di Genova* en daarna in Duitsland aan die *Kunstakademie Düsseldorf*, met beurse van die onderskeidelike regerings, voort.

Op plaaslike gebied het hy reeds verskeie pryse verower. Hieronder tel die PPC Young Artist Kunstoekenning (1997) en Kemptonpark/Tembisa Kunstoekenning (1999). In 2005 tree hy uit as algehele wenner van die Absa L'Atelier Kunstoekenning, wat hom 'n sesmaande residensie aan die Cité internationale des arts in Parys verleen. Van 2009 tot 2013 werk hy onder borgskap van die Spier Patronage Programme aan sy *Projek vir die blinde astronoom*.

Wilsenach het reeds intensief in SA sowel as internasionaal uitgestal. Hieronder tel uitstallings in die Pretoriase Kunsmuseum (2002, 2009), Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Wenen (2006), Villa Croce

Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Genua (2002), Palazzo Ducale di Genova (2004), die Smithsonian Institute se Museum for African Art (2012), die Newark Museum in New York (2013) en die Museum of African Design in Johannesburg (2013).

Wilsenach is tans in Pretoria woonagtig. Hy is besig met 'n PhD in Visuele Studies en doseer soms as gasdosent in die Departement Visuele Kunste aan die Universiteit van Pretoria.

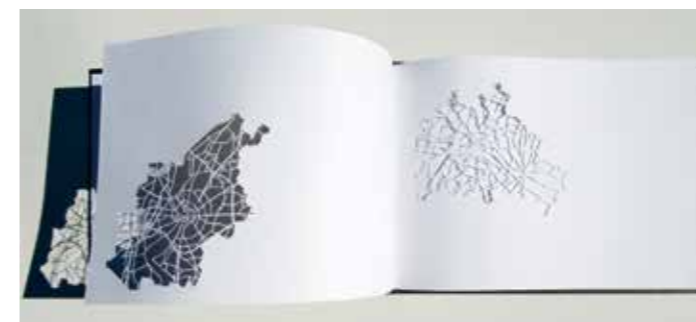
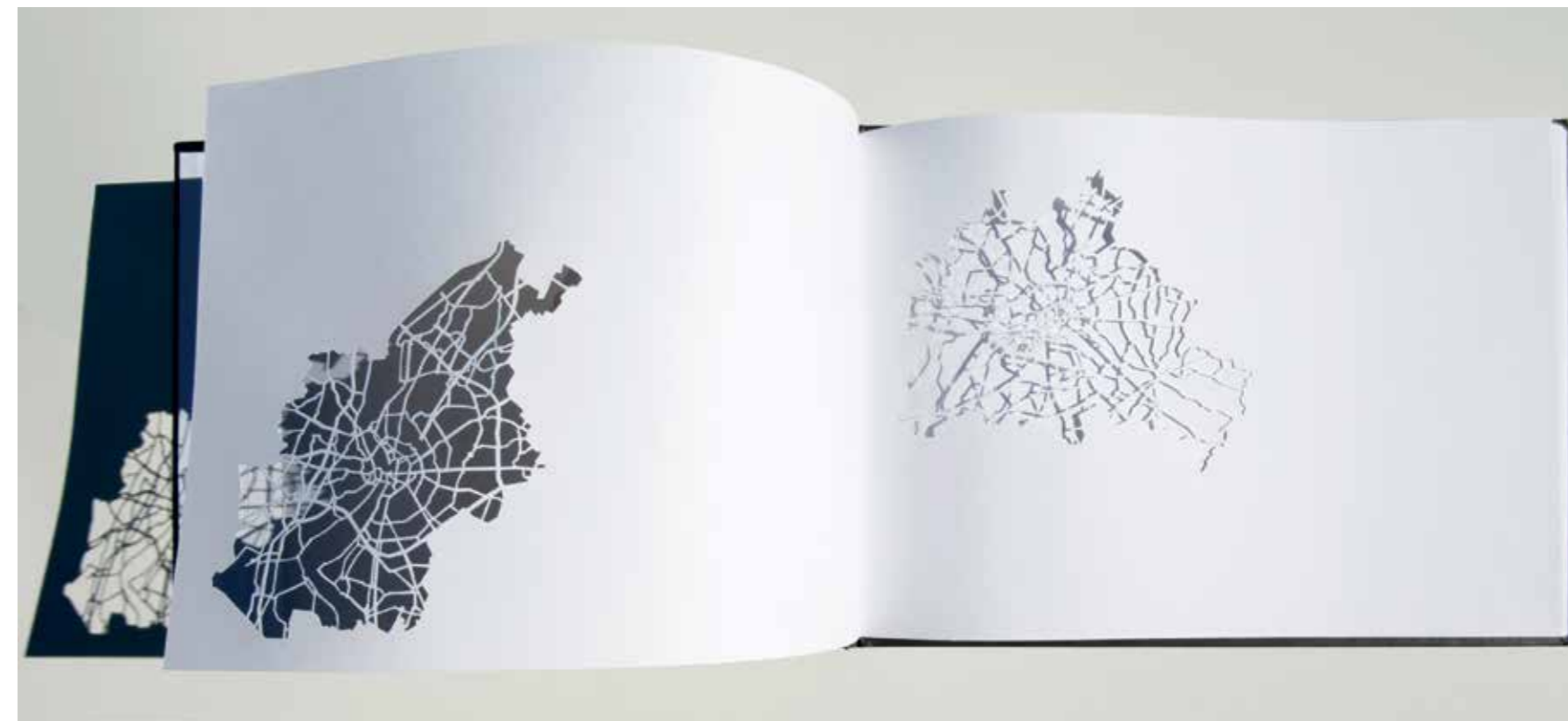
KUNSTENAARSVERKLARING

As gevolg van werks- en studieverpligtinge, het ek gedurende 2006 buitengewoon gereeld gereis na 'n groot verskeidenheid stede in Europa en Suid-Afrika. 'n Standvastige ateljeeruimte was nie 'n praktiese oorweging nie en ek moes my vervaardigingsprosesse daarvolgens aanpas. Die idee van 'n reisjoernaal was 'n logiese uitvloeisel van my eenjarige 'stralerjakerbestaan'.

'n Visuele dagboek, wat 'n chronologie lewer van my reisprogram van plek tot plek, het die lig gesien. In teenstelling met 'n pen het ek met 'n messie gereis en my dag tot dag se ervaringe as die leë ruimtes tussen die strate op die stadskaarte uitgekerf. Soos mens deur die boek blaai, word hierdie *Joernaal vir die blinde reisiger* 'n voortdurende, veranderde spel tussen lig en skadu; tussen dit wat daar is en dit wat weggekerf is; en tussen dit wat ek kan onthou en dit wat ek reeds vergeet het. Die blinde reisiger kan slegs die paaië volg wat as herinnering in die boek agtergelaat is.

2006 JOERNAAL VIR DIE BLINDE REISIGER (& DETAIL I, II)

Regs
Berco Wilsenach
300 x 420mm, Kunstenaarsboek





2006 JOERNAAL VIR DIE BLINDE REISIGER
(DETAIL I)

Links
Berco Wilsenach
300 x 420mm, Kunstenaarsboek

2006 JOERNAAL VIR DIE BLINDE REISIGER
(DETAIL II)

Regs
Berco Wilsenach
300 x 420mm, Kunstenaarsboek



CARLA
CRAFFORD

02.

GHOSTS
FLAP, FLUTTER //

WE ... HAVE BECOME THE PLAGUE, THE PESTS, THE
INTRUDERS, IN WHAT ONCE WAS WILD

CARLA CRAFFORD

GHOSTS / FLAP, FLUTTER

ARTIST'S BIO

Apart from lecturing in Photography to students in the Visual Arts Department at the University of Pretoria since 1997, Crafford's main interest lies in the photography of artworks, artists and architecture. Whereas her photography is primarily about art, her pre-occupation lies increasingly in producing reflexive artwork by means of various photographic and video-graphic methods.

Crafford has had five solo exhibitions, has taken part in numerous group exhibitions, and has works published in various local and international magazines and books. Her photography of other artists' work – for their own use or for collaborative projects, is an ongoing passion.



ARTIST'S STATEMENT

GHOSTS

These three images all show 'ghost figures': *Ghost* (vertical), *Ghost* (waking) and *Two Ghosts* (talking). Winter arrives in our city and with it comes dry, cold weather and long, icy nights. During the day, birds fly into our windows and break their necks. Others mate on the windowsills. There is too much to do in too little time, too much stress. Sleep is disrupted - either by neighbourhood alarms, barking dogs or by ghostly dreams. The ghosts try to tell me

2013 GHOST (WAKING)

Left
240 x 440mm, Pinhole photography - printed on Innova cotton

2013 TWO GHOSTS (TALKING)

Opposite, right
280m x 440mm, Pinhole photography - printed on Innova cotton





something, and I don't know what they mean. I also don't know why *I* am the ghost(s) in my dreams.

Note: Pinhole photography allows one a greater range of very slow exposure times, and thus more scope to show movement, overlapping of images and uncertainty than current digital photography would do. The idea of ghosts follows a quest to 'show' what I remember of dream images. While it is as impossible to *photograph* one's dreams, as it is to expose images of the mind's eye, these photographs represent the above as closely as any medium would allow.

FLAP, FLUTTER

I am again reminded of Diane Arbus' words: "I really believe there are things nobody would see if I didn't photograph them." With regard to this video installation, I really believe there are things *I* would not see if I didn't *hear* them. 'Flap, Flutter ...' I heard, and then saw. City living brings with it its own history. In a city as young as Pretoria, we, the inhabitants have become the plague, the pests, the intruders in what was once wild - and as much part of the celebrated South African nature - a haven for wildlife - as the game reserves and nature parks

GHOSTS / FLAP, FLUTTER

in our country are today. It is our human intervention and history that made the city what it is: a place where nature and the so-called wildlife simply had to make way, or shove off as we lay our claims to live here.

On an intensely quiet late afternoon, alone at home and aware of being in a so-called empty nest, the sound of flapping, fluttering and tapping against a high window drew my attention. There - against the setting sun, and seemingly unaware of my curious eye, two pigeons engaged in what appeared to be a violent mating game. At times, a third pigeon perched on an adjacent wall to look on. A dog barks in the distance, and then another joins in the barking. Guide dogs, watchdogs - our chosen companions - barking at the sunset or at an inadvertent passer-by.

Pigeons have become our constant pests and plagues. We take them for granted and we disregard or ignore them without noticing their beauty, or their correspondence to our own existence. They nest under our roofs, and their presence confirms our existence, heightening our awareness of 'home' as 'nest' - of a place where emptiness naturally follows the expectations and promises of an earlier fecund life.

2013 GHOST (VERTICAL)

Opposite, left
360 x 280mm, Pinhole photography - printed on Innova cotton

2013 FLAP, FLUTTER

Right
Dimensions variable, Video installation



This work shows a detail of one of Guy du Toit's 'Straattekens'.

What is a sign without a name? One that seems to be planted in a grassy landscape? Unlike the usual expectations from a street sign, this one fails to clarify - in words - either an identifiable place, or a particular historical event.

In its chromatic indifference it stands alone - perhaps posing as a monument to something that can be recognized only by the materials (brick paving?) from which it was once cast.

2013 STREET SIGN (AFTER GUY DU TOIT)

*Part of 6 works, exhibited in chapter 6
Opposite, right
390 x 560mm, digital photography printed on
Epson Velvet Fine Art paper.*



ELSA VAN DER KLASHORST
& CELIA DE VILLIERS

03.

**PRETORIA:
PAST,
PRESENT,
PRECARIOUS //**

A CITY IS IN A CONSTANT PROCESS OF NARRATION,
WOVEN BY THE STORIES OF THOSE WHO LIVE IN IT

ELSA VAN DER KLASHORST & CELIA DE VILLIERS

PRETORIA: PAST, PRESENT, PRECARIOUS

ARTISTS' BIO

ELSA VAN DER KLASHORST

- 1982** BSc (Agric.) University of Pretoria
- 1984** BSc (Agric.) (Hons) University of Pretoria
- 1998** BA (FA) UNISA
- 2006** Advanced diploma (Visual arts) UNISA
- 2013** MA (Visual Arts) UNISA.

CELIA DE VILLIERS

- 1964** HED (Physical Education and English) Wits
- 1989 - 2013** Community project co-ordinator and facilitator
- 1998** BA (FA) (cum laude) UNISA, 2008
- 2008** Masters in Visual Arts (cum laude) UNISA

Celia is a lecturer at UNISA, Design School SA and University of Pretoria She has presented and published research papers at Universities in South Africa, France, Brazil and Romania. She received an art fellowship from the Sacatar Foundation of California and received three governmental accolades for her contributions to job creation. Her corporate collections include two German banks (Raiffeisen & The Landedsbank) and the Museum of Art and Design in New York.

ARTISTS' STATEMENT

A city is never complete. It is in a constant process of being produced by everyone who lives in it and weaves their stories into the collective narrative. Many cities in post-apartheid South Africa, such as Pretoria or Tshwane, have grown and developed new spaces and identities, combining fragments of the past with the present, and producing precarious ambiguities. The contemporary French theorist and art critic, Nicholas Bourriaud (2009:30) aptly describes such an ongoing cultural translation as an act of harmonising and exchanging old codes for new ones, which inevitably remains incomplete. In representing this act of translation, the urban space of the inner city has become a site for contestation and constantly changing identities. In this essay, the lived space of inner city Pretoria is investigated, rather than its administrative alter-ego, the Metropolitan Council of Tshwane.

According to French philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1991:38), "the spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely." Lefebvre's understanding of urban space as a product as well as a medium being produced dialectically (i.e., through the concurrent negation and preservation of something), is a useful template towards understanding a city such as Pretoria. At its core Pretoria was structured, mapped and conceptualised as a space for the materialisation of Afrikaner ideals. Initially as capital of the ZAR,¹ and later as administrative capital of the Union and Republic of South Africa, it represented freedom and independence for Afrikaners. Its role as a geography of power is reflected by monumental architecture such as the Union Buildings and the iconic Voortrekker Monument. The city centre had been built to serve the administrative needs of its past Eurocentric governments. Apart from the numerous civil service buildings, the dream of the National Party to be scientifically, industrially and economically independent is reflected in local buildings like the CSIR, HSRC, SABS, ISCOR, UNISA, the Reserve Bank tower, and ABSA² towers. These utopian ideals led to the production of a formal city, both in its population and structure, today inhabited by a huge community of civil servants, academia and a diplomatic corps. The democratic elections of 1994 started a process of transformation and translation of the codes and identities evident on various levels within the city.

A vastly different group of people now inhabit the civil service buildings and the streets, while others have moved to the periphery.

Lefebvre (1991:169-228) stresses that in the production of space,³ the body is both a point of departure and destination. For him, the experience of a place through the sensory qualities of the body is essential in understanding the space, but also plays a role in producing that space. We, Elsa van der Klashorst and Celia de Villiers, are artists who have analysed, reflected and translated, and then created a response to the city. This is also in keeping with the phenomenological and hermeneutic approach to which we both ascribe. Appropriating the city in this way allowed us to come to terms with our *Dasein*⁴ in Pretoria.

De Villiers completed her studies in Pretoria and has lectured in the city for the past thirteen years - during this time she walked through the city centre regularly on excursions with her students. Despite having been a lifelong resident of Pretoria, the artist van der Klashorst had not frequented the city centre for many years.

PRETORIA: PAST, PRESENT, PRECARIOUS

The process of reconciling childhood memories of a distinctly Afrikaner city with the present space, resulted in initial feelings of alienation. The walking journeys that inform the authorship of this essay were an essential sensory experience, resulting in contradictory feelings. Some of the artworks discussed here reflect a subjective experience of Pretoria, and the selected artworks are the result of being a pedestrian in the city, while taking hundreds of photographs. Our initial perception was that the utopian phallogocentric urban space has been invaded by an informal materiality that seems to expand the space into a unique African city. We both gradually came to the realisation that a different and fascinating space is now being produced, alive with street vendors, food, music, different languages, and hooting taxis. To a certain extent, Van der Klashorst's recent Masters degree exhibition, which was based on Pretoria, represented an attempt to come to terms with and refigure this transformed space.

PRODUCTION OF SPACE AND MEMORY

In the context of a multicultural city like Pretoria, the traces and structures from different times, including present complexities, are contained in the production and the experience of space. French sociologist, Henri

Bergson (quoted in Judson 2011:19-21), defined *duration* as a non-spatial, continuous multiplicity of conscious states, where past and present form the whole of our experience. This multiplicity of states is related to the temporality of existence and is qualitative and non-measurable, a spatialised time. The influential French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (in Judson 2011:21) referred to this concept as *becoming*, despite the fact that for him it involved memory to connect moments of experience, in which the past and present is inextricably linked, or co-exists. Memory is usually involved in such complex states. This means that someone like the artists featured here, have memories of the city and its previous significance and will experience the space differently than a migrant who has no specific memories of the city. This experience will also differ from a person who has lived near the city, but has previously been excluded from taking part in city life.

The presence of memory is alluded to in the artworks entitled *What is left behind* (Figure 1), *Pretoria: spun city* (Figure 2) and *En route to the Voortrekker Monument* (Figure 3), where fragments of maps and images of the city are layered and interspersed with grids. The

layering offers a sense of multiplicity of states that Deleuze refers to. Bergson talks about spatialised time; the fragmentary aesthetic of torn and cut out memories of a colonial era are collaged layer upon layer to signify gravity and depth and the passage of time which includes plans for the future, as represented in *Dislocation* (Figure 4) and *Corrosion* (Figure 5).

The process of cutting, carving, tearing or obliterating maps, sites and images in *What is left behind* (Figure 1), *Dislocation* (Figure 4) and *Corrosion* (Figure 5) becomes metaphoric of a disorienting space. Space can also be represented by the absence of memory, as well as erasure of history. The removal and implosion of monuments, signs and names have the effect of deleting memory. The cut, torn and layered maps, landmarks and circumstances produce garbled documents, which can no longer be used to find one's way. The flip sides of these deconstructed plans, maps and sites are even less legible as the cutting produces either white abstract shapes or haphazard, 'ghostly' and randomly cut areas. This flimsy delicate residue of what used to be maps and familiar places evoke disorientation and simultaneously nostalgia, also prevalent in many of the laser-cut works of South African artist Lyndi Sales. In her series *In Transit*,⁵

1. ZuidAfrikaansche Republic.
2. CSIR: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, HSRC: Human Sciences Research Council, SABS: South African Bureau of Standards, ISCOR: Industrial Steel Corporation, now privatised, UNISA: University of South Africa, ABSA stems from the Afrikaner banking institution Volkskas.
3. In his book, *The production of space* (1991) and specifically the chapter, *Spatial architectonics*, in which Lefebvre follows a lengthy argument on the role of the body in the production of space.
4. Although Heideggerian, in a general sense *Dasein* an almost untranslatable German term, refers to human existence and self-awareness. It is about the automatic grasping of a situation, which triggers a response embedded in the context of the situation, and is also based on referencing accumulated previous experience.
5. Stupart, L. [O]. Available: <http://www.lyndisales.com>. Accessed on 19/09/2012.



2011 FIGURE 1. WHAT IS LEFT BEHIND
(FRONT & BACK DETAIL)

Left
Elsa van der Klashorst
420 x 320mm, Cut-out road maps

2012 FIGURE 2. PRETORIA: SPUN CITY
(DETAIL)

Opposite, right
Elsa van der Klashorst
1000 x 15000mm, Mixed media and photographs





finely cut paper works refer to the temporality of existence and the transition from the known to the unknown through the process of cutting away.

EVERYDAY LIFE AND THE BODY

Social space in a city is produced by people during daily life. In this process, the body is essential, because it is only through embodiment that sensory and sensual qualities of space can be experienced. Lefebvre (1996:32) insists that the body is both a point of departure and

a destination in the process through which space is produced. The actions and movements of people, boats, ships, vehicles, or even animals during everyday life produce different modes of knowledge in space, like linguistic, sound, visual, fragrant, and taste qualities that become part of a place. As bodies and other objects move through daily rhythms, they create rituals that become performances. For the French writer, Michel de Certeau (quoted in Leach 2005:299), these performances take place in the street geometrically defined by urban planning, and is transformed into an

organic space by walkers. He regarded people as the ordinary practitioners who write the text of the city and poetically describes the intertwining paths that people travel as "unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others" (De Certeau 2005:153).

2012 FIGURE 3. EN ROUTE TO THE VOORTREKKER MONUMENT
Left
Elsa van der Klashorst
440 x 660mm, Mixed media and photographs

2013 FIGURE 4. DISLOCATION
Opposite, right
Celia de Villiers
730 x 1030mm, Mixed media and collage

2013 FIGURE 5. CORROSION
Opposite, far right
Celia de Villiers
870 x 1030mm, Mixed media and collage



PRETORIA: PAST, PRESENT, PRECARIOUS



The artwork *Ship of Fools 2* (Figure 6), a collaboration between Celia de Villiers and Elfriede Dreyer, equates this as it is poetic, paradigmatic and reflexive. It is feminine: sensual, voluptuous and evocative of a swimmer/fish/boat in congealed water. Its character, like the city of Pretoria, is fractured and turbulent, and expresses incongruity through its junctioning of opposites and worlds. There are opposites and dualities in terms of the materials used, representing the fluidity and transparency of windows, water and light, as well as the rigidity and sturdiness of metal and constructed sites. In this sense, it conveys materiality and immateriality.

In the artwork *Pretoria: spun city* (Figure 2), a sense of daily rituals are depicted by moving bodies, taxis, busses and cars 'signalling' each other, carving paths through the city, creating a layered space across time. In this space, people from different times become entwined, and inextricably linked. Artist Dorothee Kreutzfeldt similarly dealt with the urban complexity in South African cities in her painting *The imminent inauguration of the 5th Corner*⁶ (2010, Figure 7). The fragmented forms in the painting are layered with references to billboards and decorative cement sculptures, depicting the contrasting codes of a post-apartheid city.

EVERYDAY LIFE AND ARCHITECTURE

The Australian Professor of architecture, Kim Dovey (2005:291), argues that as a form of discourse which constructs the narratives of place, architecture will always be political. This is mirrored by French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1997:324), who argues that "we appear to ourselves only through an experience of spacing which is already marked by architecture. What happens through architecture both constructs and instructs us." It can be argued that architecture is undeniably political and part of a discourse that commands us, but the question arises whether meaning and discourse is lost

in the translation of everyday life of the city. Dovey (2010:16-17) explains the 'translation' of a city as "an assemblage of material things, flows and spatial connections that co-exist with representational narratives, urban design codes and intensities". Comparable to the artworks discussed in this essay, the concept of assemblage is therefore both dynamic, but stable and interconnected. The important point that Dovey makes is that the meaning of place is not inherent in the material objects and urban form, or simply added on to it, it is an integral part of the assemblage. This description matches the inner city of Pretoria. It is at present an assemblage of colonial architecture, Eurocentric urban structure, and street markets. It is inhabited by a diversity of locals, immigrants, styles and languages, and they are connected through the flows of traffic, selling and buying of goods and musical performances. These occurrences are evident in the aforementioned artworks.

These assemblages are identified as territories by Deleuze and Guattari (1987:310). Territories are not rigid, and may refer to social or spatial boundaries. When a territory is eroded or destabilised, it leads to a de-territorialisation. When stability has been re-established there is a re-territorialisation.



2013 FIGURE 6. SHIP OF FOOLS 2 (DETAIL)

Opposite, left
Celia de Villiers & Elfriede Dreyer
Dimensions variable, Glass, steel, laser-cut stainless steel

2010 FIGURE 7. THE IMMINENT INAUGURATION OF THE 5TH CORNER

Right
Dorothee Kreutzfeldt
1800 x 4000mm, Acrylic and mixed media on canvas

6. Dorothee Kreutzfeldt, *The imminent inauguration of the 5th corner* (2010). Acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 180 x 400cm (Holleman 2011:68)

7. 'Radical' refers to rhizomic roots that grow outside the soil and can easily be transplanted.

Boundaries are not always material but can have similarities in culture, which resembles Bourdieu's notion of habitus. This process of forming and reforming territories as articulated in the artworks created by Van der Klashorst (Figures 1, 2, 3), De Villiers (Figures 4, 5), and De Villiers and Dreyer (Figure 6) describes the processes through which Pretoria has evolved into its contemporary state.

The dismantling of the original codes of historical buildings is visible in the artworks *Dislocation* (Figure 4) and *Corrosion* (Figure 5). *On the Square* (Figure 8) is a representation of contemporary life around the statue of Paul Kruger, deserted by his Afrikaner progeny, which has now become part of a new city life. Bourriaud's (2009:49) architectural metaphor is appropriate here when he argues that "[t]he modernist edifice has crumbled and collapsed, and its signs are floating and adrift, since they are no longer anchored by the weight of history."

With reference to the current influx of migrants into cities worldwide, as addressed in the artworks of



2012 FIGURE 8. ON THE SQUARE

Left
Elsa van der Klashorst
730 x 930mm

2004 FIGURE 9. WAITING FOR OUR TURN

Opposite, right
Joao Ladeira
800 x 650mm, Acrylic on canvas

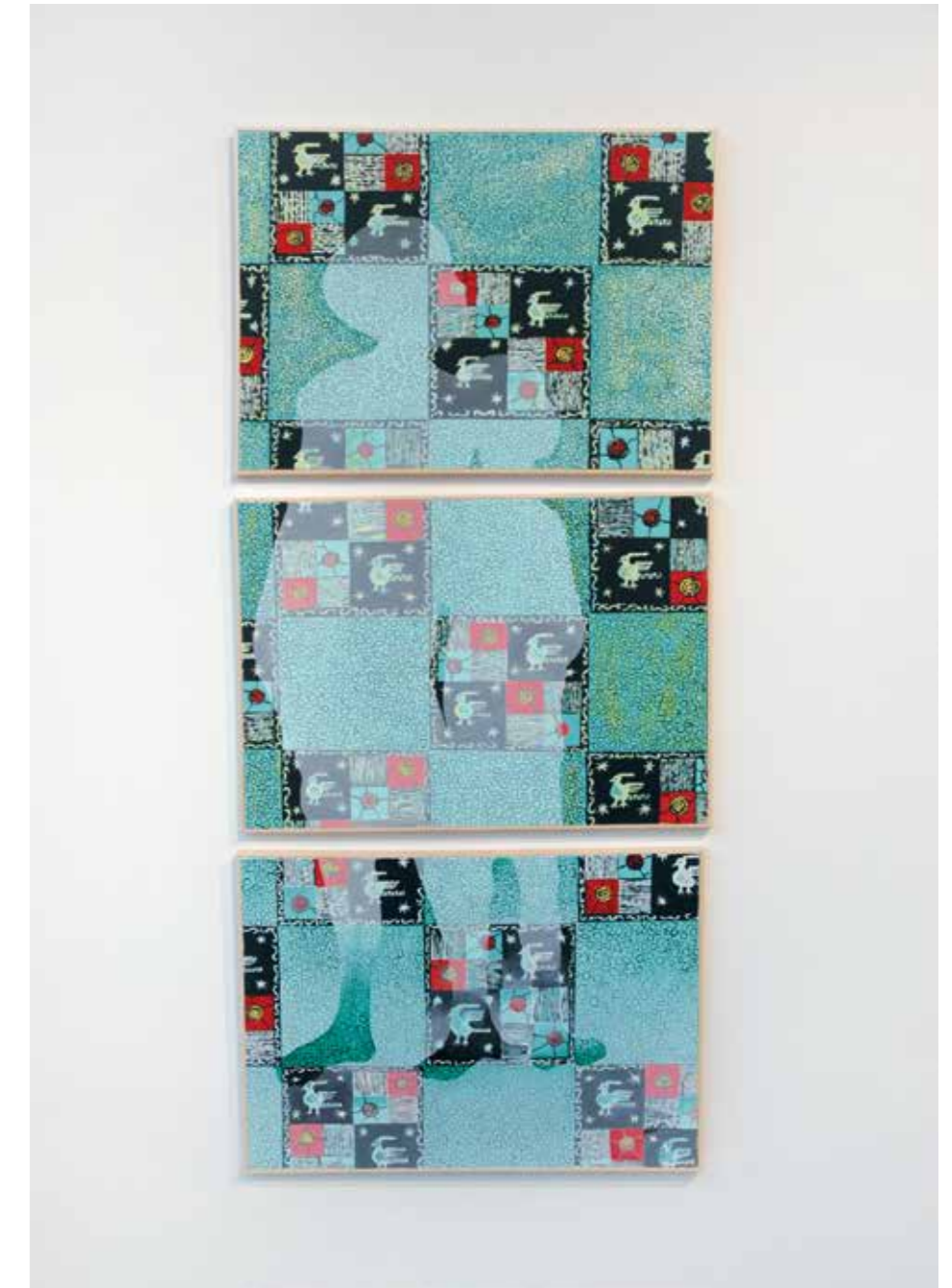
2012 FIGURE 10. DIALECTICAL INTERACTION (& DETAIL)

Following spread, left & right
Elsa van der Klashorst
Dimensions variable, installation. PVC tubing, paint, plastic

8. Franz Ackermann, *Mental map: Evasion V*, (1996). Acrylic on canvas, 275 x 305cm, ([O]). Available: www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/artists/franzackermann.htm. Accessed on 19/09/2012.

Joao Ladeira (Figure 9), Bourriaud (2009:53-570) describes the adaptable migrants as *radicants*⁷, a type of plant root that can “without injury, cut itself off from its first roots and reclimate itself”. The *radicant* is caught between the need to connect with its environment and its former identity and forms a precarious new identity through an act of translation in both directions. Individuals in the city are in a state of endless negotiation; therefore the geography as depicted in the images discussed here is regarded as *psycho-geography*. In the work of De Villiers and van der Klashorst, the dissolution of old buildings is contrasted with the way new spaces are created, often by migrants, spinning fragile webs of new identities.

The disintegration of the past, contrasted with the incorporation of different signs and performances which Bourriaud (2009:119-120) refers to as *psycho-geography*, represents the contemporary experience of space, as evident in many works in this exhibition as well as in the paintings of the German artist Franz Ackermann and the Kenyan-American artist Julie Mehretu. Franz Ackermann creates large scale paintings in response to cities. He incorporates elements of geography such as maps and buildings within colourful organic shapes that have the undertone of catastrophe.⁸



PRETORIA: PAST, PRESENT, PRECARIOUS



The installation, *Dialectical interaction* (Figure 10) by Van der Klashorst represents this kind of space that has become an abstract and complex psycho-geography. The electrical cords, telephone lines, PVC tubes, wire, paints and other materials that have been used form an integral part of the production of a city. The way that the material has been constructed indicates that it has become dysfunctional. The South African academic, Gwen Miller (2013:2), has commented that *Dialectical interaction* recalls both the veins and the wiring of the underbelly of the city. The structures also act as a metaphor for the way the old city is being spun into a web of different signs and values.

We believe that Pretoria will remain a political space even as new territories and patterns are formed. The conclusions that we have drawn emerged from in-depth research as well as personal, haptic viewpoints and are part of a larger discourse. However, the artworks reviewed in this essay infer that a city with such an unpredictable space-time continuum is an insecure territory - *terra infirma*. In conclusion, it can be noted that contemporary Pretoria is a living, growing city constantly producing new spaces, where reminders of the past are either invaded or fading. Lefebvre's reference to the body as both a point of departure and a destination in the process through which space is produced is apparent in many of the works in this exhibition, which reveal both poetic and sober reflections on cities. In this process, we propose that the experience of a city like Pretoria demands a constant re-negotiation and translation of one's identity and therefore the city remains unstable and precarious. There can be no final answers concerning such complex and evolving spaces and hopefully the multifaceted debates initiated through art exhibitions such as *Metromusings* and their accompanying publications will evolve into further discussions.

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DIANE
VICTOR

04.

**FOUNTAINS
CIRCLE
GUARDIANS //**

DIANE VICTOR

ARTIST'S BIO

Diane Victor (b. 1964 Witbank, South Africa) received her BA Fine Arts Degree from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1986. Known for her sardonic humour, Victor is a printmaker who in recent years has been drawing with ephemeral media such as smoke, stains and ash. Exhibitions include showings at the Goodman Gallery; Fried Contemporary Art Gallery; Johannesburg Art Gallery; Michael Stevenson Gallery; David Krut Projects, South Africa and New York, USA; Faulconer Gallery at Grinnell College, Iowa, USA; and many others. In addition to graduating with distinction and winning various awards, Victor became the youngest recipient of the prestigious Volkskas Atelier Award in 1988. She received, for instance, an Ampersand Foundation Fellowship (New York, 1997), a UNESCO Residency (Vienna, Austria, 1998), a Vermont Study Center Residency (Vermont, USA, 1999), a Gold Medal Award for Visual Art from the

South African Academy of Arts and Sciences (2005), and recently this year an award at the 4th Guanlan International Print Biennial in China. Victor's works are included in many collections, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, Museum of Modern Art, NY, New York Public Library, NY, Baltimore Museum of Art, MD and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN. Diane Victor has been a part-time lecturer at the University of Pretoria since 1990.

FOUNTAINS CIRCLE GUARDIANS

2013 FOUNTAINS CIRCLE GUARDIANS (DETAIL I)

*Opposite, right
Diane Victor
Ash drawing*





2013 FOUNTAINS CIRCLE GUARDIANS
(DETAIL II)

*Opposite, left
Diane Victor
Ash drawing*

2013 FOUNTAINS CIRCLE GUARDIANS
(DETAIL III)

*Right
Diane Victor
Ash drawing*



ELFRIEDE
DREYER

05.

**SHIP
OF
FOOLS //**

IN THE CONCRETE JUNGLE, BLINDNESS AND OTHER
IMPOTENCIES ARE OPERATIVE IN THE POSTHUMAN
GARDEN OF ARTIFICE

SHIP OF FOOLS

ARTIST'S BIO

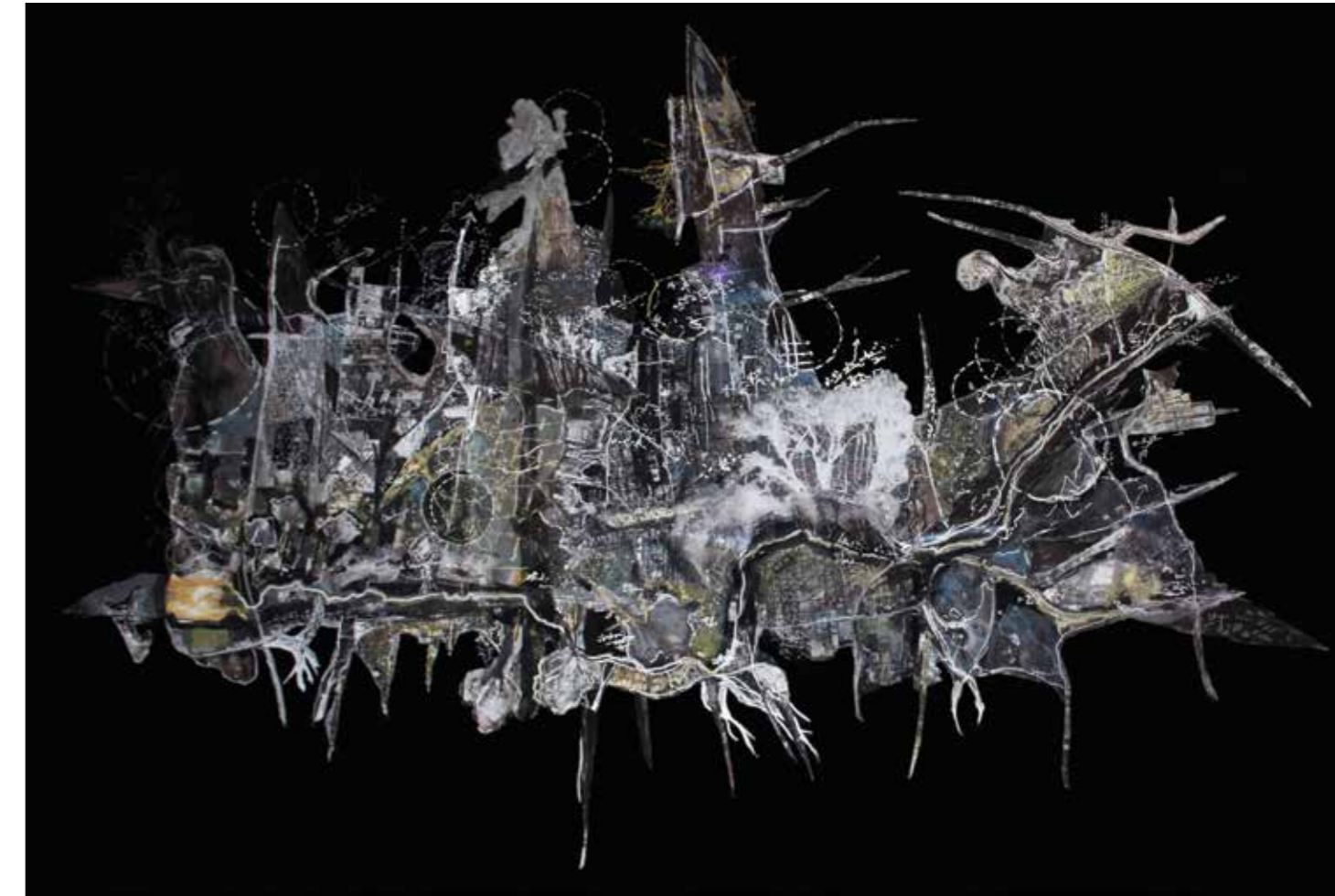
Elfriede Dreyer is a rated National Research Foundation researcher and a specialist in curatorial practice. She was educated in South Africa and the Netherlands, and in diversified way as a visual arts theorist, curator, writer and artist, she is engaged with African modernities, utopia/dystopia discourses and technologisation. She is Head of the Fine Arts division in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, and she is the co-founder and curator of Fried Contemporary Art Gallery & Studio in Pretoria.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My *Ship of fools* series of works has been profoundly influenced by Michel Foucault's theory of heterotopology and the derivative idea of a 'ship of fools'. In *Des espaces autres. Hétérotopies* of 1984 (English translation: *Of other spaces*, 1986), the philosopher Foucault (1986:27) points to the boat as a "heterotopia par excellence", since " ... the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, ... it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development, ... but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination." Foucault thus derives a triumvirate place that exists by its own rule (heterotopia), in relation to a particular economic structure, and infused by imaginative projections. This construct is appropriated and applied in my work to the context of the Apies' River flowing through Tshwane and simultaneously one of the founding reasons for the establishment of the city of Pretoria. My work, *Ship of fools 1* (2012, Figure 1), was the first to deal with this theme in relation to the conditions and histories surrounding the Apies River.

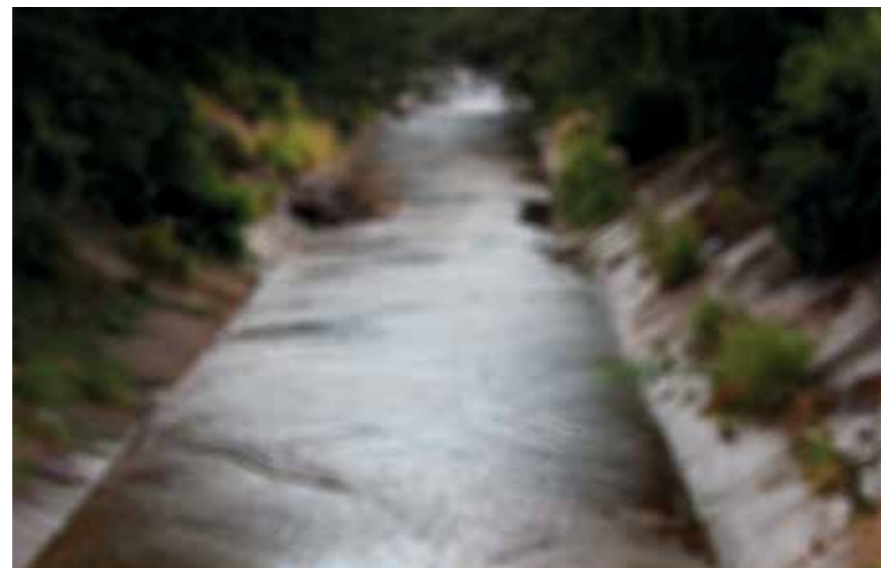
The founding of Pretoria² as the capital of the South African Republic in the nineteenth century marks the end of the colonial settlement movements of the Great Trek and reflects utopian ideologies premised in survivalism through racial othering. In Foucaultian (1986:24) terms, "Utopias are sites with no real place. ... They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces." Yet, on closer inspection, this condition could rather be interpreted as the reflection of heterotopology being "a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space" (Foucault 1986:24). For the purposes of my visual research for the Apies River series of works, Foucault's third and fourth principles of heterotopia are relevant. In terms of Foucault's (1986:25) third principle, heterotopia "is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible ... perhaps the oldest example of these

1. The designation of 'Apies' is not its original name: 'Tshwane' is, quite simply, the African name for the Apies River which runs through the city, as well as the name used for the Pretoria area. Although there is no doubt that this is the original name of the area, the actual origin of the name is unclear and still a subject of debate, as there does not seem to be conclusive evidence for any of the explanations given. Thus the precise origin may well now sadly be 'lost to history'. Perhaps the most plausible explanation so far, however, is described ... by Prof. L.J. Louwrens. According to this, the name 'Tshwane' comes from the Setswana word 'tshwana' meaning 'black cow'. During a time of drought, a black cow was used as a central part of a rainmaking ceremony whereby water was fetched from the (not yet so-named) Tshwane river and sprinkled on the cow. The cow was then allowed to graze freely, and, it was believed, rain would fall wherever the cow grazed. The story goes that the drought was broken in this way, and the river thereafter was named 'Tshwane', derived from 'tshwana' and meaning 'place of the black cow'. When the city of Pretoria began to develop around the Apies river, the name Tshwane was carried over to the city. Another explanation that has been put forth is that the river was named in honour of Tshwane, the son of Chief Mushi, who settled in the area about a century before the arrival of the Voortrekkers in the early 1800s. From <http://www.tshwane.gov.za/faq.cfm>: 'Chief Mushi and his tribe had moved from Zululand and first settled at Mkgapane (Mooiplaas, east of Pretoria). He later moved from Mooiplaas to what is now the Pretoria area, on the banks of the Tshwane River, named after his son Tshwane (today called the Apies River). Tshwane is the authentic



2012 FIGURE 1. SHIP OF FOOLS 1
Right
Elfriede Dreyer
1000 x 1500 mm, Mixed media on Perspex.

SHIP OF FOOLS



heterotopias that take the form of contradictory sites is the garden." Besides the importance of mountains as protection and large trees providing shade and functioning as natural coordinates and gathering places, water and rivers have mostly determined the sites for the establishment of cities, creating green banks and fertile surrounding regions³. In my work from the Apies River series, *Ship of fools 5* (2013, Figure 1), the garden stereotype of dark, sensual exotic Africa as discovered and penetrated by the coloniser is articulated. As Angela Rodrigues (2007:4) states, "[i]t is undeniable that the Western look and the colonial encounter have shaped, transformed, and domesticated African cultures. Indeed, they have created a problematic and essentialist idea of Africa". The water of the Apies is rendered as mystical, magical and as a repository of the utopian ideas projected onto Africa by both

the colonisers of the pre-twentieth-century period, as well as by an influx of diasporic Africans currently gathering in the vicinity of the Apies as the historical centre of Pretoria in search of better-world conditions.

The vicinity of the Apies has witnessed multiple cultural and political histories in terms of both colonial and postcolonial time frames. The heart of the historical city centre, with the Apies as main artery, is a place with its own utopianism and culture; it is a place where the homeless gather and seek shelter on the banks of the river; it is a site of pollution; a location where xenophobia flares up easily in the battle for survival and where violence and poverty are palpably obvious on the streets. Significantly, owing to large-scale pollution, in November 2011,

SHIP OF FOOLS

**2013** FIGURE 2. SHIP OF FOOLS 5

Opposite, far left
Elfriede Dreyer
970 x 1500mm, Unique archival print and ink
on museum etching paper.

2013 FIGURE 3. SHIP OF FOOLS 4

Opposite, left
Elfriede Dreyer
970 x 1500mm, Unique archival print on
museum etching paper.

2013 FIGURE 4. SHIP OF FOOLS 3

Right
Elfriede Dreyer
970 x 1500mm, Unique archival print and ink
on museum etching paper.

the Apies River was declared a disaster area by the Department of Water Affairs. What was originally the focus of a political and cultural teleology, thus became dystopian in the creation of dispersed, diasporic and nomad identities. The dystopia here seems to narrate social restriction through lack and loss, impaired mobility and dysfunctionality. In my work, *Ship of fools 4* (2013, Figure 2), the river is shown as a pathway towards an unknown future, leading nowhere. It shimmers with hope and good intentions, but the failed teleology is blurred into uncertainty and a rendering of loss of vision. In this context, individuals would revert to deviant tactics or behaviour in order to cope with or survive in the context, which links to Foucault's (1986:24) idea of so-called "crisis heterotopias" that are "absolutely temporal [chroniques]:"

African name for Pretoria. A third explanation commonly put forth, that is promoted in particular by the city municipality, is that 'tshwane' means 'we are the same' or 'we are one because we live together'. Although the word is similar to a Setswana word of which the stem has roughly that meaning, this explanation is unlikely, and is probably promoted only for its 'feel-good' political value. In fact, as a reader pointed out, 'tshwane' would actually mean 'we are not the same'" (Joffe 2003 - 2009).

2. As a consequence of colonial intervention, Pretoria was founded in 1855 by the Afrikaner Voortrekker Marthinus Pretorius, who named the city after his father Andries Pretorius, a leader of the Voortrekkers who trekked mainly towards the eastern and northern parts of the country to escape British rule in the Cape. The Ndebele occupied the Tshwane river valley at around 1600 and at the time of the Mfecane (also known by the Sesotho name *Difaqane* or *Lifaqane*) in Natal from 1815 (to about 1840), refugees started arriving in this area under the leadership of Mzilikazi, but were forced to flee during a Zulu raider attack in 1832. In 1899, Pretoria was swarmed by refugees from the Transvaal, who included the Fingo and Shangaans who came to Pretoria to escape the South African War (Ramoroka 2009).

3. In Pretoria, a specimen thereof is the miraculous *Wonderboom*, the thousand-year old fig tree with a diameter of more than 55 metres and perched on the northern side of the Magaliesberg in the Wonderboom Nature Reserve, a stone age site that has produced the largest single accumulation of Neolithic tools ever found in South Africa.

SHIP OF FOOLS

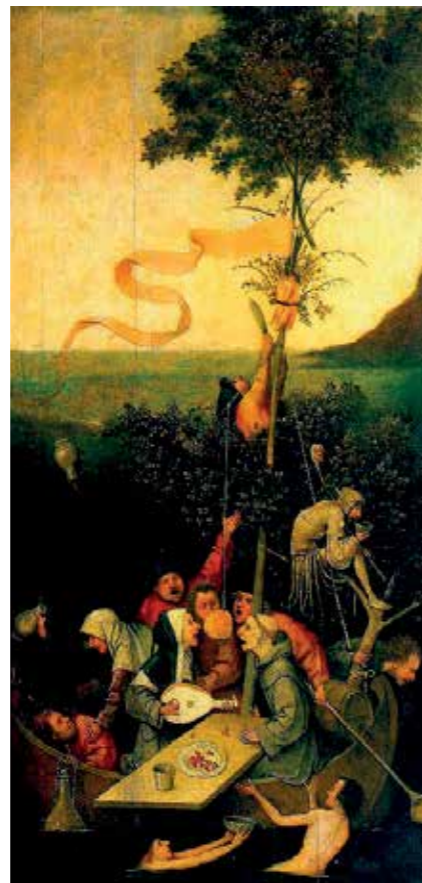
In a reductionist scheme of two dialogical elements, *Ship of fools 3* (2013, Figure 3) engages with the heterochrony of ideology and place, embodied in the images of the lion as representing both Dutch colonial strategies and ideals, as well as its African counterpart depicted as having become a powerless porcelain 'nice-to-have'. This work engages with Foucault's (1986:26) fourth principle that postulates heterotopias as:

most often linked to slices in time-which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time. This situation shows us that the cemetery is indeed a highly heterotopic place since, for the individual, the cemetery begins with this strange heterochrony, the loss of life, and with this quasi-eternity in which her permanent lot is dissolution and disappearance.

The blackened palm tree - reminiscent of African exoticism, leisure and utopic island conditions - ironically signifies disbanding and termination as a place that is attempting to recover and function according to its own decreed structures, but is struggling to do so owing to an overdose of ideological infusions.

In *Ship of fools 3*, lion and palm tree have become irreconcilable 'islands', parodying the metaphor of a ship of fools. A common phenomenon documented since the Renaissance was that mad people who were viewed as unfit for society were removed by consigning them to ships that were sent into the ocean without any supervision. At the turn of the sixteenth century when *allegory characterised art production in Europe*⁴, the ship of fools metaphor became popular:

Hieronymus Bosch painted *The cure of madness* (1475-1480) and *The ship of fools* (c. 1490 - 1500, Figure 4); Desiderius Erasmus wrote his *The praise of folly* (1511); and in 1494 Sebastian Brandt published a book of satire, *Ship of fools* (German: *Das Narrenschiff*, Latin: *Stultifera navis*, Figure 5), which most probably informed many of these works significantly and determined English satire. Brandt's *Narrenschiff* included the first commissioned work by Albrecht Dürer. It is interesting to note that whilst Thomas More coined the notion of utopia in his 1516 publication *De optimo reipublicae statu deque nova insula utopia*, the idea of the ship of fools as a dystopian concept in the sense of a senseless journey leading nowhere also emanated at the same time. In More's understanding of utopia, it is a construct derived from the Greek *δυσ-* and



- Prime examples thereof are Giovanni Bellini's *Four allegories of 1490: Lust (or Perseverance), Falsehood (or Wisdom), Fortune (or Melancholy) and Prudence (or Vanity)*. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.
- Hummel figurines are a series of porcelain figurines based on the drawings of children of Sister Maria Innocentia Hummel that appeared in the 1930s in Germany and Switzerland. These became popular through the printing of postcards and later they were cast in porcelain. The popularity of Hummel figurines grew as American soldiers stationed in West Germany began sending the figurines home as gifts.

c1490 -1500 FIGURE 5. THE SHIP OF FOOLS

Left
Hieronymus Bosch
580 x 33mm, Oil on wood
Collection Musée du Louvre, Paris. Source: <http://astronomy.nmsu.edu/akypin/ART/bosch.htm>

1494 FIGURE 6. SHIP OF FOOLS

Opposite, top right
Sebastian Brandt
Source: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20179/20179-h/20179-h.htm>

1976 FIGURE 7. SHIP OF FOOLS

Opposite, bottom right
Oliver Frey
Source: http://planetoftheapes.wikia.com/wiki/Ship_Of_Fools

SHIP OF FOOLS

τόπο that articulates the notion of a fictional society somewhere - in the imagination, in some unknown fictional or even a known location, or in the future. Although it has been popularised by the entertainment media into a dark, pessimistic, postapocalyptic construct, dystopia has always maintained a relation with the experienced real as a kind of critique of utopia, but also as a response to the utopian ideology-gone-wrong, evidenced by the practice of ship-of-fools.

In literature and the visual arts at the beginning of the twentieth century, the metaphor of the ship of fools was revived, and especially since the latter half of the twentieth century in film, comics such as the strip printed in Brown and Watson's *Planet of the Apes* Annual (1976), featuring the characters from the *Planet of the Apes* illustrated by Oliver Frey, a TV series (Figure 6), and a cartoon series entitled *Ship of Fools* was released by Caliber Comics in 2013 (Figure 7). All of these frivolously corroborate Foucault's idea of heterotopia and celebrate the notion of cocooning and a privately owned 'world' designed and functioning according to its own rules understandings, almost in the manner Walter Battiss conceptualised his 'Fook Island'. As a dance event, *Ship of fools* was presented on a boat in 2013 in Miami by the *cool junkie* DJ club (Figure 8).

British artist Paul McCartney's dystopian work, *Ship of Fools, Ship Adrift* (2010, Figure 9), created for the occasion of the 17th Sydney Biennale in 2010, parodies the medieval and Renaissance allegories of both ship of fools and utopia. McCarthy's *Hummel* series, of which the work forms part, present Germanic kitsch figurines⁵ of the same name - depicting these child figures on monumental scale, darkly corrupted, defaced and carnivalesque. Derived from the cast form in porcelain, the idea of utopia as an ideological imprint or blueprint is evoked. Substituting the medieval fools and the insane with (sane) children, McCartney seems to put forward the idea of the corruptibility of the youth as exemplified by Hitlerism and issues an innate warning that if the seduction of the youth through the mass media, the digital revolution and other influences - thus suggesting the dangers of heterotopic isolation - is not responsibly looked after, disaster looms. The dystopian character of the work hints at utopia-gone-wrong and engages Walter Benjamin's initial ideas in this regard as contained in his *Überkinder, Jugend und Erziehung* (1969).

In *Ship of fools 2* (2013, Figure 10), a collaboration with Celia de Villiers, a very different approach to the notion of the ship of fools is encountered and the fragility



SHIP OF FOOLS



and liminality of the heterotopic space are depicted through a floating glass ship. It is presented as in a state of fragmentation, almost post-apocalyptic as a dishevelled object that survived a disaster, or a post-event reconstruction. Metaphoric dualities emerge of the here and there; inside and outside; and being in motion versus a stationary state. Voyaging into the unknown,



the ship transmutes time and ventures passage into an in-between zone. This ship is simultaneously a kind of heterotopic island -- simulating the self or a world functioning according to its own internal structure, genetics, system and engineering -- navigating into the future, or life, for that matter.

The fractured state of the ship and its boundaries recalls Jacques Derrida's (1987) idea of the *parergon*, exemplified by the metaphor of a frame around a painting which essentially suggests the ontology of the nature of interpretation. Applied to the discourse 'around' an artwork, such debate attempts to uncover the concealed 'truth' or the

'presence' of the *ergon*/artwork and can never be finite or closed. *Ship of fools 2*'s ruptured state echoes this condition and reverberates with the relative nature of knowledge and 'truth'. In this regard, Derrida speaks about an existential 'blindness' in that we cannot 'see' beyond the personal point of view as frame, and therefore cannot make any authoritative statements. In *Memoirs of the blind: the self-portrait and other ruins* (1993), Derrida extends the metaphor by describing the very act of drawing as blind, as a differentiated kind of 'seeing' and as mostly rooted in memory and anticipation. For Derrida, all we have are our own memories and visions (Kelly 1991:102-104). Similarly, the graphic lines of drawing are complementary to and in simulation of discourse. The groping gesture of the blind person is metaphoric of both the artist and the interpreter who fumble in the dark with faint ideas and partial notions of vision, accompanied by memories (Kelly 1991:103), thus fragments. For Derrida (Johnson 1987:416), "[f]rames are always framed: thus, by part of their content. Pieces without a whole, 'divisions' without totality".

The relevance here in reference to the Apies River is obvious: the history, circumstance and state of the river are continually being inscribed and altered

2013 FIGURE 8. SHIP OF FOOLS

Opposite, far left
Caliber Comic
Source: <http://www.comicvine.com/ship-of-fools-3/4000-363389/>

2013 FIGURE 9. SHIP OF FOOLS (DANCE EVENT)

Opposite, left
Presented by cool junkie DJ club (Miami)
Source: <http://www.cooljunkie.com/Galleries/Miami/FL/The-Musette/265685>

2010 FIGURE 10. SHIP OF FOOLS, SHIP ADRIFT 2

Right
Paul McCarthy
600 x 365 x 730cm, Rigid urethane foam, steel, wood and carpet.
Source: <http://www.bos17.com/biennale/artist/67>



SHIP OF FOOLS

through interaction and intervention. Depending on who is taking possession of and responsibility for it, will determine its present and its future, regardless of its past. The 'blindness' of the short-sightedness not to preserve and look after the river is incomprehensible, since ironically the original significance of the river as a cultural gathering place, a life-giving source and a marker of accomplishment is still lingering somewhere in archival obscurity. Its original meaning(s) have not been lost, but all of these have been transmuted into oblivion by newly emerging cultural patterns and teleologies. New objectives are constantly born and die; alternative needs converge into hybrid cosmologies where the outcome is survival of the fittest.

In the concrete jungle, blindness and other impotencies are operative in the posthuman garden of artifice. Porcelain figurines and lions interface with sparkly dance sublimes at night whilst the rivers and the mountains have become but silent spectators in the orgy of forgetfulness. Porcelain, concrete and cemeteries as heterotopic metaphors of stale ideologies remind me of the poem by Rizwan Akhtar:⁶ 'The porcelain' (in memory of Faiz Ahmad Faiz), 2009:

*A city was once abundant in candles,
then darkness became a language
all lineage, all expressions were tightened
unknown maladies surfaced
on alveolar and dental ridges.
From the darkness emerged ghazals
carefully sifted, transplanted
and grew across the continent like an ivy—
in the exiled incubator
with my oxygenated English
and a souvenir worn for diplomatic huff,
I see you. From where I will bring
the pitcher-maker's whirl and an uncensored lurk—
you inserted putty on the right chinks,
had a porcelain brimmed with strange potions,
a hand familiar with similes and Persian fluff
quilting the cradling cities in poems.
Your poems have cloned
in the rugged and even places
where language is a mutilated wick.*

2013 FIGURE 11. SHIP OF FOOLS 2

*Opposite, right
Elfriede Dreyer & Celia de Villiers
Dimensions variable, Glass, steel, laser-cut
stainless steel*

6. Faiz Ahmad Faiz (1911-1984) is the renowned Urdu poet from Pakistan, and was the recipient of the Lenin Peace Prize.

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FRIKKIE
EKSTEEN

06.

THE
LIKENESS
IN
THE
LANDSCAPE

IT WAS A NOSTALGIA FOR THINGS I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW

ARTIST'S BIO

A graduate in the town of his birth, Frikkie Eksteen completed his Masters degree at the University of Pretoria in 2000. He has been involved in numerous projects, which include The Trinity Session's *Broadcast quality: the art of Big Brother* (2002), Bell-Roberts' art-advertising showcase, *Mettle and paint* (2003), *CLEAN/GRIME: exhibitions of desaturated art* (2001-2003), *Spier Contemporary* (2010), *Dystopia* (2009-2010) and *TRANSCODE // DIALOGUES AROUND INTERMEDIA PRACTICE (2011)*. He was formerly a permanent lecturer in fine art and multimedia at UNISA, and currently lectures part-time at the University of Pretoria.

His work is represented in the Pretoria Art Museum, University of Pretoria, UNISA, SASOL, ABSA as well as MTN permanent collections, and has been shown in London and Edinburgh as part of the Royal Overseas League exhibitions.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I am not a landscape painter. Most of my paintings have been portraits. When I received the brief for *Metromusings* with its focus on the history, geography and social dynamics of the city, I could think of nothing but landscape. A view of Pretoria. And the thought was not necessarily comforting or appealing. For a moment I thought of painting people I know instead - friends, family, faces from the social landscape I am familiar with (its always wise to stick with what you know). But things are not that simple, as I will explain below.

I am inexplicably drawn to portraiture and the few landscapes I have painted didn't have nearly the same appeal for me. I've tried to come up with reasons for this bias and two ideas have stuck. The first is that landscape painting lacks the specificity of portraiture. Move a tree or a landmark slightly to the left or right and it is still more or less the same place. Do the same to a face - by misplacing a nose, an eye, the corner of a mouth - and macabre things start to happen. The slightest flaw could make the difference between producing something familiar - capturing a likeness - or creating something monstrous. Putting things in

THE LIKENESS IN THE LANDSCAPE

exactly the right place seems paramount, if accuracy is the aim, of course.

According to recent research we are visually much more attuned to faces than most other things, which suggests that they are somehow 'special'. It has also been shown that newborn babies have "a predisposition to track face-like patterns", and a preference for "their mother's face rather than ... a similar-looking stranger's" (Hole & Bourne 2010:122,133). Because differences in the spatial configuration of faces, even across races, are fairly small, our ability to distinguish and identify them individually, is quite remarkable. If we are hardwired to look at and identify faces it could also explain why odd facial distortions are registered so quickly and acutely.

The specificity of faces, which lies at the root of portraiture's age-old preoccupation with likeness,¹ is, however, not necessarily to its advantage and may limit an artwork's interpretation. The purpose of a portrait could simply be to look like someone. Not much discursive depth there. A technical feat perhaps, but not much else. Yet one could approach a face as something that can be challenged. It is a very specific kind of template that can be tampered with to produce

1. In traditional portraiture the model is often seen as a script that needs to be intuitively, some would even say magically, 'performed' in paint. Art historian Paul Barlow (1997: 219), an authority on Victorian portraiture, describes this kind of "portraiture as a sacramental act, involving a mysterious and complex transaction between artist and sitter", where "the inner secret of the features" is extracted to convey the sitter's true character.

Barlow's comments are mentioned in the context of an analysis of a portrait of Thomas Carlyle by Pre-Raphaelite painter John Everett Millais. The second part of the quote is a direct quotation of James Froude, Carlyle's biographer and friend.

2013 BLINDFOLD - EAST

Top, left
Frikkie Eksteen
600 x 600mm, Oil and inkjet print on canvas



2013 BLINDFOLD - NORTH

Top, right
Frikkie Eksteen
600 x 600mm, Oil and inkjet print on canvas



2013 BLINDFOLD - SOUTH

Bottom, left
Frikkie Eksteen
600 x 600mm, Oil and inkjet print on canvas



2013 BLINDFOLD - WEST

Bottom, right
Frikkie Eksteen
600 x 600mm, Oil and inkjet print on canvas



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unnerving results. Faces can be made from scratch, or, as I have done in my own work from the past six years, created from other portraits to produce images that exist apart from anyone's specific appearance.²

The second and perhaps more practical reason why I am drawn to the human figure is scale. Portraits are somehow more amenable to a painterly format. Vast landscapes simply don't fit into a picture and to create an immersive experience usually demands a monumental scale. But even large landscape paintings can only partially account for what the painter saw if s/he was working *in situ*. Creating a portrait on human scale is fairly straightforward and perhaps closer to a *trompe l'oeil*. What is more important to me than the potential one-to-one scale relationship between portrait and viewer is the intimacy and strangeness of confronting something so much like ourselves in paint.

Pointing out that our perception of faces are 'special' - that we are innately programmed to notice and look for them - does not, however, mean that they are what is most appealing for us to look at. In a fascinating and controversial art project entitled *America's Most Wanted* (1993), Russian-born artists Vitaly Komar and

Alexander Melamid did a survey of "artistic preferences in ten countries" (Dutton 2009:13), which may suggest otherwise. The study was rigorous and overseen by independent market research firms. In some instances the findings were cross checked by arranging public meetings and focus groups (Dutton 2009:13). The results were surprising, especially considering the diversity of cultures that were involved.³ The outcome showed that "almost without exception, the most-wanted painting was a [bluish] landscape with water, people and animals" (Dutton 2009:14).

Komar and Melamid's study has received mixed reviews in spite of the rigour of their methods.⁴ To me, the outcome does make sense. The idyllic landscape is a universal motif and the presence of humans and animals, subordinate to peaceful surroundings, is as much a reality for some people as it is a fantasy for others.⁵ The description is of a place that is manageable, sustainable and picturesque. It also reminded me that landscapes are fantasyscapes - scenes the viewer can escape into. The likeness of the landscape to an actual place is possibly less important to most people than its ability to take us somewhere else. And this is perhaps also where portraits fall short. The problem is that,

to appreciate a portrait you also have to know, or at least, like, who is depicted in it. And many people don't care for images of people they don't know. Landscapes are a given, but people are not so easily trusted. Our responses to another face could even be defensive, rather than playful curiosity.

It is the universal neutrality of the landscape, if viewed superficially, that perhaps allows the viewer to make the image their own, irrespective of size or specificity. People may be too threatening and too specific for us to surrender to and engage with their depiction in the same way. These thoughts made me re-evaluate my own approach to portraiture. I imagined a portrait with the same open-endedness as a landscape; a portrait that gives the viewer access to an imaginary space.

I went to the Voortrekker Monument to take photographs from the rooftop balcony, one picture facing East, one North, one South and one West. This decision is of course not a neutral one and was motivated by two ideas. I am of Afrikaans background and in spite of having a somewhat complicated relationship with my heritage, I am nonetheless implicated in the history and questionable ideology that went

2. Since 2007, I have been working on an experiment with portraiture where computer imaging is used to manipulate and develop reference material for oil painting. What started with an investigation of computer based morphing as a way of creating an ambiguous subject for portraiture, has now developed into a process also concerned with the general status and significance of painting in visual culture today.

At first, this experiment focussed on a series of official paintings of vice-chancellors in the University of Pretoria's collection. Paintings from this original series, which includes two of my own commissioned portraits, were digitised and merged to produce new figures. These figures became the source material for a new set of paintings, which returned them to the medium from which they came. This series of paintings, entitled *Director's Cut*, was the first instalment in an ongoing project. From these portraits I subsequently created a genealogy of numerous characters by again recombining their features to produce multiple generations. I began to think of them as a kind of breeding stock that can be used as part of a physiognomic experiment. They were also like actors that could be cast in any way I choose.

3. The study represented a poll of people from China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Iceland, Italy, Kenya, Portugal, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States (Komar & Melamid: the most wanted paintings on the web [Sa]).

4. The web page for Komar and Melamid's project also includes a letters section where the public is invited to voice their opinions regarding the results. Opinions are varied, with some voicing support and others pointing

before me, which this landmark represents.⁶ The other reason was the location of the Monument. It is centrally located and offers a view of the urban sprawl that creeps away in all compass directions. Pretoria Central, which I rarely visit, faces North. To the West the nearest building is ISCOR's Head Office, shouldered by one Military Hospital right behind it. To the east, the traditionally white suburbs of Sunnyside, Muckleneuk and Monument Park can be seen. The Southern aspect faces towards Centurion, with the Zwartkop Air Force Base in between.

My idea was to change myself into the monument - to put myself in the place of a specific history and site, with the four main compass directions both describing, and reflected off, my own portrait. It would be both portrait and landscape, but not in any traditional sense. The landscape won't be shown as a backdrop for human action and the portrait won't simply be framed against it as often seen in Renaissance portraiture. I, and Pretoria, would become both landscape and portrait in equal measure. Conflating a portrait with a monument also seemed apt, since portrait painting, in its traditional relationship with aristocratic ideology, was often meant to memorialise and to situate the

subject within a privileged genealogy. Joanna Woodall (1997b:3) calls it "a mechanism for establishing a form of personal immortality [which] fits into a larger ideological regime".

To put myself in the place of the Monument, I mapped the photographs over a 3D mesh based on my own head⁷ In this way, Pretoria is pictured as something that describes me, something that engages with my own likeness. Once I began manipulating the photographs I discovered that the places in the city that I am most drawn to are uninhabited. Pockets of the original Pretoria before people began transforming the landscape through settlement, are places I regularly visit - Groenkloof, Faerie Glen and Moreleta Kloof Nature Reserves. This made me very aware of my somewhat anonymous engagement with the social environment I live in and a personal need to get away from it. A city is perhaps, in spite of the vast numbers of people who inhabit it, a place to hide and disappear in.

Another thing that struck me about the photographs was the feeling of landscape. In spite of more than a century and a half of colonial occupation in Pretoria, the landscape still dominates the view. The city,

thankfully, nestles in between areas of green. Koppies jut out between neighbourhoods like unspoiled islands. This brought on a strange feeling of loss for what the site must have been like before evidence of human settlement. It was a nostalgia for things I didn't even know.

Martin Zerlang (2003:11-12), in an essay in the catalogue for the Danish-South African travelling exhibition, *Sted // Place*, claims that: "History demonstrates that the collective memory concentrates on places where something has been sacrificed or lost. The place remains either a symbol of the lost or a vestige of something that no longer exists. Memories rely on places". I ended up reading about the earliest descriptions of Pretoria to find out about this absence, visible in between what we think of as the city today. This description by an Afrikaner woman (*Voortrekkermoontjie*) from 1844, is of the Apies River, a name I have taken blindly for granted:

Die rivier het sy naam gekry, natuurlik, van die duisende blouapies wat daar in die geboorte langs die rivier gehou het, - ratse diertjies, wat daar langs die toppe van die bome rondgeklouter het met die grootste gemak, en op dié wyse op en af gegaan het langs die rivier, van Daspoort tot in die Fonteine vallei, en grondtoe [sic] gekom het slegs op die stilste en veiligste plekke (quoted in Preller 1938:15, Afrikaans text).⁸

THE LIKENESS IN THE LANDSCAPE

out shortcomings (Komar & Melamid: the most wanted paintings on the web [Sa]).

5. Melamid had this to say about the uniformity of their results: "It might seem like something funny, but, you know, I'm thinking that this blue landscape is more serious than we first believed. Talking to people in the focus groups before we did our poll and at the town hall meetings around the country after ... almost everyone you talk to directly - and we've already talked to hundreds of people - they have this blue landscape in their head. It sits there, and it's not a joke. They can see it, down to the smallest detail. So I'm wondering, maybe this blue landscape is genetically imprinted in us, that it's the paradise within, that we came from the blue landscape and we want it" (quoted in Dutton 2009:15).

6. The Voortrekker Monument was built as a memorial for the Voortrekkers who left the Cape Colony between 1835 and 1854 to find a livelihood up North. It was inaugurated on 16 December 1949.

7. About three years ago, I started experimenting with painting over 3D wireframe models of figures printed on canvas. These un-textured, polygon-based models are approached as a kind of armature for oil painting. My intention was to contrast and merge painterly qualities with computationally precise renderings. The idea was to show both forms of depiction in a way that poses more specific questions about representational substance. The heads of these figures have been modified on the computer to 'receive' the faces of specific characters in the genealogy that was created as part of the morphing phase of the project. This was done by adapting the proportions of standard heads to the featural aspects of composite faces.

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In 2013, the Apies is now very much domesticated. The river bed, where it courses through the city, has been lined with concrete to prevent it from flooding its banks.⁹

Another description is from 1837, and is the words of Major William Cornwallis Harris (an English military engineer and artist who described his hunting excursions in the Pretoria area):

A grand and magnificent panorama was before us, which beggars all description. The whole face of the landscape was actually covered in elephants. ... Every height and green knoll was dotted over with groups of them, whilst the bottom of the glen exhibited a dense sable living mass, their colossal forms being at one moment partially concealed by the trees which they were disfiguring with giant strength; and at others seen majestically emerging into the open glades, bearing in their trunks the branches of trees with which they indolently protected themselves from flies. The background was filled by a limited peep of the blue mountain range, which here assumed a remarkably percipitous [sic] character, [sic] (the Magalies) and completed a picture at once soul-stirring and sublime! (quoted in Preller 1938:30, English text).

The remnants of these idyllic, wild visions are still legible in the photographs I took from the Monument, and in painting the scenery, I have absorbed human interference into the landscape so that the line between

culture and nature becomes less distinct. The outlines of buildings sometimes blend into the atmospheric haze and brush strokes of surrounding greens, browns, ochres and blues. Whether we acknowledge it or not we are still part of what remains of nature in this city, however much we hide, fail to see, or try to control it. This fusion of the human with the natural will persist in some form, even though it is now a far more constructed or regulated relationship.

The centrally placed portraits embedded in the paintings bracket narrow panoramas at the top and the bottom, and the tessellated tops of their heads could appear like alien moons rising above the landscape.¹⁰ The panoramas both cut the faces in half and course across their geometry, describing their topography while simultaneously camouflaging them within this narrow band of colour. The placement of the landscapes reminded me of a blindfold, and hence the title of the artwork. The eyes of the portraits are covered, as if the landscape itself is hiding something from us.

I was born in Pretoria and my relationship to this place is one that I take for granted. I am here because I am not somewhere else. I have been habituated to this environment and perhaps that has blinded me to what

makes it what it is. What the *Metromusings* brief forced me to do was to look in a different, more distanced, and perhaps more inquisitive way. Parts of the city, or its history, have become visible, but the picture is still sketchy and coherence is interrupted by abrupt slashes that bind certainty to the uncertain. The landscapes which cover, cut, and intrude into my head are not immortal or tectonic. They still bear traces of their original form but will keep on changing as we remake the site in our own image. The arabesque strokes that cut into the panoramas, and at times may appear to untangle them, could suggest something about the invisible presence of time, disruption and change. They could hint at the tenuous link between us and the changing face of the city.

I had to document the city from a symbolic site, insert myself as a simulation within it, and translate it in oil paint - that most colonial tradition of documenting the unknown - to see a phantom of these lost outlines emerge. This portrait of Pretoria is perhaps now also a monument, but what it makes visible is not useful in any real historiographic sense. It doesn't attempt to fix a memory in time. For that, it is too unspecific. If anything, it is a subjective mnemonic aid - an object that stands between myself and an imagined unknown.

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GTD

GUY
DU TOIT

07.

STRAATTEKENS 1 TOT 6 //

PROGRESSION OF THE CITY, A MEMORY
CAST IN BRONZE

GUY DU TOIT

STRAATTEKENS 1 TOT 6

ARTIST'S BIO

Guy duToit was born in 1958 in South Africa, graduating with a BA (FA) at the University of Pretoria in 1982. He has exhibited widely both at home and abroad - Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Ireland and the USA.

Guy has taught at various institutions in Gauteng, and currently teaches sculpture part-time at the University of Pretoria. He has a studio/foundry just outside Pretoria which he makes available to other artists that would not normally have access to such facilities.

Guy continually involves himself in community based projects and creative collaborations in an effort to demystify bronze casting and the art making process.

His approach to art and life, the relationship between the body and material, art and craft, discourse and practice, the domestic and the professional, inform his work and his influence on some of those he has taught.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

These six bronze plaques are impressions taken from my studio floor and from five intersections on the route I commute to and from the university. All the above have undergone name changes recently, since the peri-urban area my studio fell under has been absorbed into the Tshwane metropolis. A nameless street has been named and four other streets have undergone name changes. These plaques become markers that record a moment in this flux and progression of the city, a memory cast in bronze. After being exhibited in this exhibition, the works will become part of the Cool Capital Biennale 2014 in Pretoria, a citizen-lead creative initiative involving Tshwane and will be installed at or near the sites they were drawn from.

NAME CHANGES:

Kungwini to Tshwane
 Unnamed to Saint Street
 Hans Strydom Drive to Solomon Mahlangu Drive
 Genl Louis Botha Drive to January Masilela Drive
 Walker and Charles Streets to Justice Mahomed Street
 Duncan Street to Jan Shoba Street

2013 STRAATTEKENS 1 TOT 6 (1 TO 6)

6 works, (1 to 6 page 60 - 65 respectively)
 Guy du Toit
 150mm x 570 x 400mm each
 Bronze & Steel



SELECTED RECENT EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 Me.Ek, KKNK. Southern Guild, Collective Design Fair, New York
2012 Me 3, Fried Contemporary, Pretoria Southern Guild, Everard Read, Johannesburg
Egon Tania and Guy du Toit, Graulhet, France.
Makeshift, Staff and postgraduate show, University of Pretoria
Southern Guild, Woodstock Foundry, Cape Town
Takara Delicatessen, Franschoek
2011 Marvellous World, Prince Albert
UP Staff Show, Fried Contemporary, Pretoria
Southern guild and The Everard Read, Joburg Art Fair, Sandton
Convention centre, Johannesburg
Sculpture garden, IS Art, Franschoek
20/20 Sculpture, Stellenbosch
Horse. Curated show, Everard Read, Johannesburg
Surplus to requirements, Work horse, collaboration with Johan Thom, Slade school of Visual Art, London
MAP, University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg
Richmond, Part of 2010 reasons to live in a small town, VANSa and Goethe on Main, Johannesburg

- The length of a piece of string, Everard Read, Cape Town (solo show)
Guest artist, Design Indaba, Cape Town
2010 View from the South, Everard Read, Cape Town
PARAAT, Platform on 18th, Pretoria
Twenty, NIROX Foundation, Cradle of Humankind, Gauteng
2009 Dystopia, curated by Elfriede Dreyer: Unisa Art Gallery, Pretoria; Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein; MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg
Rooftop, group show. Pretoria and University of Johannesburg
Grande Provence, Franschoek (solo show)
2008 Visuality | Commentary, University of Pretoria. Centenary exhibition
Re-reading the Future, Triennial, National Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic
Marvellous World, Exhibition with Paul Cooper, Richard Forbes and Sarel Petrus. Outlet, Tshwane University of Technology. The Bag Factory, Johannesburg, Off the Wall, Paarl and Fried Contemporary, Pretoria.
2007 Cultivaria 2007, Paarl
Rendezvous, Johannesburg and Potchefstroom
" ", with Iaan Bekker, Platform Pretoria.
Figures in a Landscape, with Johann du Plessis, at The Gallery, Grande Provence Estate, Franschoek

- Klein Karoo National Art Festival. Oudtshoorn
Little deaths, curated by Elfriede Dreyer. Fried Contemporary, Pretoria; Bell Roberts Gallery at Lourensford (three person show)
2006 South African Art Now, Solomon Gallery, Dublin, Ireland.
I love you + or - , Grande Palais, Paris, HIV/AIDS benefit show.
pos+ive, Sun City, HIV/AIDS benefit show, 9 - 11 June
Transactions (with Pascual Tarazona) Artspace / Gallery@157, Johannesburg
Rings a bell. Absa Gallery, Absa Towers, Johannesburg (solo show)
At this stage, InniBos arts festival, Nelspruit (solo show)
2005 More (than) histories, Fried contemporary (one person show)
Sculpture park project, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein
Reconciliation, curated by Elfriede Dreyer. University of Pretoria
2004 Pretoria (selected group show) Everard Read, Cape Town
Brett Kebble (finalist) Cape Town
Art Now: South Africa, Gallery Mornea. Chicago, USA
Earthworks/Claybodies. Sasol/ University Art Museum. Stellenbosch

STRAATTEKENS 1 TOT 6

- Gordart (with Ivan du Toit and Johan Moolman) Johannesburg
South African Arts Association (with Judith Mason) Pretoria
2003 Brett Kebble Art Awards
Earthworks/Claybodies (with Deborah Bell, Wilma Cruise, Josephine Ghesa). Pretoria Art Museum and Standard Bank Corporate Gallery
2001 Observations. A group exhibition with Wilma Cruise and Diane Victor. The Open Window Contemporary Art Gallery, Pretoria
2000 Strata. An exhibition with Egon Tania. Bamboo, Johannesburg

PUBLIC AND CORPORATE COLLECTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

- Absa
Alexander Forbes
Olivenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
City Council of Cape Town
Durban Art Gallery
Durban Technikon
Foundation for the Creative Arts
Gauteng Provincial Administration

STRAATTEKENS 1 TOT 6

- Human Sciences Research Council
House of Humour and Satire, Gabrovo, Bulgaria
Mmabana Art Institute, Mmabathu
Mercedes Benz
Namibia Art Museum
Nampower: Windhoek
National Gallery, Cape Town
National Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic
Irene Village Mall
Pelnama Permanent Art Collection
Pietersburg Art Gallery
Port Elizabeth Art Gallery
Pretoria Art Museum
Pretoria Boys High School
Pretoria Technikon
Robbie Williams and Coline Waterwich Memorial, Athlone
SABC
Sharonsberg wine estate
Sasol Art Collection
Smithsonian Institute (USA)
St Stithians College
St. Mary's Girls School, Johannesburg
Telkom
UNISA



- University of Natal
University of Pretoria
University of the Free State
University of the Witwatersrand
Velocity Films
Virgin Airlines
WHIPS
Wits Business School
Wooltru

AWARDS

- 2006 Ramkat Award, DEKAT. Best overall contribution at InniBos Nelspruit
Carol Boys, Finalist in Metal Competition
AVA:JK Gross Public Sculpture Competition, finalist. Cape Town
2005 ABSA Gold Medallion, Best working artist
Waterwitch/Williams Cape Town memorial, public commission/competition
Oliewenhuis Art Museum sculpture park project, one of twelve winners
2004 Yster Vegter Forge-in, Proud winner
1994 Kempton Park/Tembisa Annual Art Competition, Third prize
1993 FNB Vita Art Now, Overall Winner

- 1990 Volkskas Atelier, Merit Award
1989 Sol Plaatjie Sculpture Award, Sculpture award
1988 Volkskas Atelier, Merit award
International Exhibition of Miniature Art, del Bello Gallery, Toronto, Canada, Honorary mention
1987 Style Lighting Design Award, Lighting award
Corona del Mar Young Artist Award, Sculpture award
1986 Vita Art Now, Quarterly award
1985 Hans Merensky Foundation Wood Sculpture Competition, Joint winner with Koos den Houting
Johannesburg Art Museum Centenary Sculpture Competition, Finalist
1983 Emil Schweikerdt Bursary, for a study tour of Europe
1982 New Signatures, Sculpture prize
National Fine Arts Students Exhibition, University of the Witwatersrand. Honorary mention

JOAO
LADEIRA

08.

**MIGRANTS
IN THE
CITY //**

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE VOICE TO THE
VOICELESS THROUGH ART

MIGRANTS IN THE CITY

ARTIST'S BIO

Joao Ladeira is a contemporary artist whose works comment on current affairs in society and particularly on the state of life in the African continent. For the past nine years, he has worked on issues affecting the migration of people around the African continent. Ladeira's art exposes the human side of displaced people on the continent of Africa. A victim of two civil wars himself, Ladeira uses his lived experience of displacement to shed light on the daily struggles and humanity of ordinary people. His works (printmaking and installations) capture the extraordinary people and places he portrays. Ladeira is a graduate of the University of Johannesburg where he earned a Masters Degree in Fine Art and Design and did his research on *Materials and New Designs in Sustainable Community Development Projects*. Ladeira has worked in various disadvantaged community engagement programs around South Africa, especially in the rural areas. He is a part-time lecturer in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My body of works for this exhibition, *Metromusings*, is dedicated to the city of Johannesburg and a section of the population that make their 'home' the derelict periphery of the city, the migrant workers. In particular, these works represent my reflection on how the Marikana incident of 2012 affected me as a non-citizen resident of the historically mining city of Johannesburg. This incident was making headlines in our homes through radio, television and the print media, and it was also the subject of our daily conversations with friends, colleagues and neighbours. Marikana news had become almost part of our daily routine and a commission of inquiry was instituted to get to the root of the tragedy.

The Marikana incident refers to an important part the country's identity as a place of 'gold' and other riches, thus producing a prevailing history in terms of the mining industry. The city of Johannesburg, also referred to as Egoli, the city of gold, is Africa's largest city and the financial capital of the Republic of South Africa. The city was established in 1886 when a large gold reef was accidentally discovered on a farm in the former Transvaal. This discovery triggered a massive gold rush and a period of 'excited' migration of workers, prospectors and speculators to the area in similar ways as happened in Brazil, the United States of America, Canada and Australia. Migrant workers were accommodated in compounds that were segregated by ethnic grouping and held 18-month contracts with no job security or guarantee of further reengagement (Centre for development enterprises 2013:4). In the twentieth century, migrant workers were recruited primarily from three classifications: (a) men from within South Africa and its former homelands; (b) those recruited from the former High Commission, now the independent territories which include Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland - often treated as honorary South Africans; and (c) those from foreign countries such as Mozambique, Angola, Zambia and Tanzania. The latter faced a double disadvantage in that they could not advance up in the skills ladder owing to restrictive migratory labour system that retarded their opportunity and also because of the race barriers imposed by the apartheid system.

2004 UNTITLED

Opposite, right (lightboxes)
Joao Ladeira
300 x 500mm, Fabric, cardboard, light bulbs,
photoshop on acetate and found objects

2004 LONG WALK

Opposite, right (immediately behind lightboxes)
Joao Ladeira
1100 x 1800mm, Acrylic on fabric

2004 EARLY HOURS

Opposite, right (diptych)
Joao Ladeira
450 x 1200mm, Acrylic on fabric

2004 TIME

Opposite, far right
Joao Ladeira
550 x 650mm (each canvas), Acrylic on canvas

2004 TIME (DETAIL)

Following spread, left
Joao Ladeira
550 x 650mm (each canvas), Acrylic on canvas

2004 SUNSET

Following spread, right
Joao Ladeira
500 x 700mm, Acrylic on canvas

MIGRANTS IN THE CITY



MIGRANTS IN THE CITY

The gold rush helped spur huge immigration that led to permanent settlements and within ten years an entire city, Johannesburg, was built replacing the farms where the large gold reef was discovered. Thirty years later, this town grew to become South Africa's biggest city and today, this same town is Africa's biggest city housing the deepest gold mines in the world¹ encircled by mountainous mining waste. The mining activity lies at the derelict periphery of the rapidly evolving modern city to such an extent that we almost forget about the industrial activity contributing the most mineral outputs. We forget too easily about the faces and hands that dig up the precious mineral until an uprising by workers draws our attention to what has been happening in the mining industry for years.



The Marikana incident gave South Africans an opportunity to debate the mining industry, the life of migrant workers and their daily challenges as city dwellers. This is one of many problems that many homes in the outskirts of the city face today. Whether it is about protest against bad working conditions, salary increase, or about the lack of basic services from local municipalities, it is in essence a city problem. The Centre for Development Enterprise argues that "the death of

34 migrant workers at the hands of the police makes it the most deadly encounter between the state and its citizens since the transition to democracy" (Centre for development enterprises 2013:4). These authors assert that no one has come out of Marikana with an unblemished reputation. This is confirmed by the reality that the incident gave many of us an opportunity to reflect on our own lives and those of the mine workers



According to Harrington et al (2004:65), single men are usually crowded together in their employee dwellings or migrant labour hostels while married migrant workers work very far away from their families. Likewise, the majority of migrant workers are illiterate and innumerate and have low levels of competency in any one common language: this coupled with limited personal security in their living quarters further dehumanises migrant workers (Harrington et al 2004:70).

My work on *Metromusings* celebrates all migrant workers who died during the Marikana violent protests of 2012 and raises awareness of our own passivity to injustice, human suffering and violence. It illuminates how we, as by-standers, divorce ourselves through our silence, therefore essentially perpetuating the suffering and

who are mainly migrant workers whose homes are in the peripheries of our cities which are fast growing and becoming modernized while the 'old sections' continue to disintegrate and dehumanise those who live in them. Scholars agree that the primary source of vulnerability for migrant workers arises not from migration per se but from conditions under which they live and a way of life on the mines (Crush et al 1999:266; James 1992:188).

1. With 159 mines Gauteng produces a quarter of the country's mineral products. There are 44 gold mines, and 80% of the mineral production is from the mining of gold. At present, mining produces 6% of Gauteng's total income and 3% of export earnings (Joburg - Mining 2013).

consigning of migrant workers to a status of the 'Other', detached and dissimilar to 'me', 'you' and 'us'. I also draw parallels in how similar 'you' and 'we' are to 'him' and 'them'. For this body of works I chose the medium of printmaking where images consist of printing and overpainting on canvas. My choice of printmaking is deliberate and has to do with the fact that as an art form, printmaking can be mass-produced. Conceptually and metaphorically this act of mass production epitomises the life of the migrant worker that has become routine and is taken for granted. By painting over the images, I bring an element of originality to the works since paintings cannot be repeated like the prints can be. The idea of originality echoes the cold, dark 'mechanical, 'production' aspect of the mining industry. It puts forward the human aspect of migrant workers and their distinctiveness as sons, parents, husbands, brothers, boyfriends, neighbours, community members, leaders and as dual-residents (underground, urban and rural 'dwellers'). Such dual residency suggests multidimensionality to the lives of mine workers whose lives are extraordinary.

For me, the opportunity to exhibit is an exceptional moment to contribute meaningfully to the current

discourse on the displacement of people and social cohesion. This is an opportunity to give voice to the voiceless through art. It is a moment for civic engagement to inspire compassion and to return 'ubuntu' and the human face to the suffering of some of the most crucial contributors to South Africa's economic landscape. This is also an opportunity to celebrate the greatness of this capital city. As an artist, I believe that I have a social responsibility to make a positive comment, no matter how small, to engage my audience in this dialogue. I further believe that by shifting the focus from the negative and confrontation, as manifest in the bloodshed and brutal images, I will be giving a chance to the audience to look at the mine workers from a different angle. Consequently, this act aims to restore the dignity of the mineworkers and sensitise the passive spectator to take an interest in the suffering of migrant workers.

I portray the extraordinary lives of mineworkers at work and in their 'homes' (shacks) on the outskirts of the big cities and some of the challenges that they face, such as lack of privacy, electricity, water or poor sanitation. The printing part of this work is a comment on how cheap or 'mass-produced' the image of mine workers has become. The act of printing turns the

image into a repetition, meaning that it can be mass-produced over and over again so that metaphorically the miner's image becomes almost mechanical. This echoes the fact that we have seen the incident pictures on TV, in magazines and in the newspapers, over and over again. On the other hand, the painterly touch on the canvas brings an element of uniqueness to it, because unlike the prints, it cannot be repeated. So is the life of each individual migrant worker; since although being a part of the same struggles as workers and members of a community, they are still individuals whose contributions and struggles in society need to be recognised. I aim to illuminate a dimension of the life of these very important contributors to the South African economy - the shack dwellers in the big city.

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KAI
LOSSGOTT

09.

**READ THESE
ROADS //**

AN AFTERTASTE IN THE WATER UNDER CAPE TOWN

READ THESE ROADS

ARTIST'S BIO

Transdisciplinary artist Kai Lossgott's award-winning work investigates human agency and the personal elements in green politics. It has been exhibited locally and abroad at venues such as the Johannesburg Art Gallery and Museum Africa, Johannesburg; Arnot Art Museum, New York; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Museum of Contemporary Art Maracaibo, Venezuela; Austin Museum of Art, Texas; Casoria Contemporary Art Museum, Naples; Bell Roberts Gallery and blank project, Cape Town. His curatorial projects include the internationally touring artists' film programmes CITY BREATH (2010) and LETTERS FROM THE SKY (2012).

The artist holds tertiary qualifications in dance theatre, documentary film, creative writing and fine art, all *cum laude*, including an MA from the University of Cape Town. He has written and edited tertiary coursework and lectured at various South African universities, as well as facilitating community arts initiatives. German by birth (1980), South African by upbringing, after almost a decade in Cape Town, Lossgott currently lives in Johannesburg, and teaches part-time at the University of Pretoria.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

On the Denial of Non-Anthropocentric Inter-subjectivity in Urban Spaces:

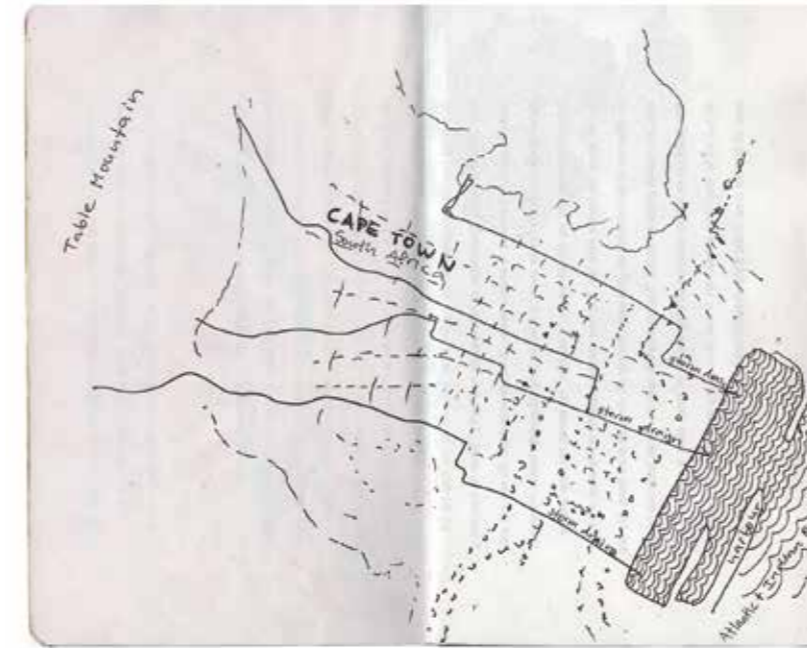
"The value of an artist's eye is to see relationships that might otherwise be missed."
(Interdisciplinary artist and environmental activist Aviva Rahmani, "What the World Needs is a Good Housekeeper".)¹

Our presence in the world leaves marks, the consequence of my species. I draw, I rip, I puncture, eat, I write. I am a 21st century consumer searching for sustainable solutions to my presence on this planet. As a fine artist and poet interrogating human agency through the metaphor of mark-making, I collaborate with industrial machinery and non-human life-forms in consuming and destroying natural materials, as well as human consumer waste.

As environmental activist, community engagement facilitator, collaborator and researcher, I am currently focused on meaningful and useful collaborations around waste management. My practice tends to manifest in photography, experimental film, performance, writing, drawing and exhibition. Water drawing, engraving in plant leaves, as well as lens-based practices, challenge my materials to the utmost of their lifespan, a pre-occupation with transience that I elaborate on below. Those object-based works, circulating in an art market obsessed with archival value, mimic their own temporality and eventual decay, interrogating the historical use of the art object to 'immortalise' aspects of human culture that are not sustainable.

What follows is an attempt to reflect on my video poem 'read these roads', inspired by the groundbreaking work of the South African interdisciplinary water systems scholar Caron von Zeil on the water heritage of the City of Cape Town, and her proposal to restructure the city according to environmental principles.² I contextualise it by drawing on the concepts of biocentrism (Deep Ecology)³ and trans-subjectivity (Matrixial theory).⁴

1. Rahmani, R. 2008. *What the World Needs Now is a Good Housekeeper, an ecological artist's field guide for how to approach a site*. Self-published booklet. http://www.ghostnets.com/ghostnets_book.html
2. Since the publication of her Masters thesis in Environmental Planning and Landscape Architecture (An opportunity for an appropriate public landscape, through the restitution of the city's socio-ecological link between the mountain and the sea), von Zeil's research and activism has been conducted under the umbrella of the non-profit organization Reclaim Camissa. <http://www.reclaimcamissa.org>
3. The term Deep Ecology was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, whose ideas based on Gandhian nonviolence were seminal in the formulation of the late 20th century environmental movement. Drengson, A. & Inoue, Y. ed. 1995. *The Deep Ecology Movement*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
4. In her extensive output challenging phallogocentric conceptualisations, the reputable Israeli-born psychoanalyst and visual artist Bracha Ettinger has amended the work of Freud and Lacan. Her Matrixial Trans-subjectivity theory formulates the intersections of human subjectivity as an ontology of transmissivity. These connections are envisioned as string-like subject-subject (trans-subjective) and subject-object (transjective) exchanges. Ettinger's work grappling with feminine sexuality and maternal subjectivity has implications for ethical responsibility towards others and the world. Ettinger B. L. 1995. *The Matrixial Gaze*. Feminist Arts & Histories Network.



READ THESE ROADS

READ THESE ROADS

01. *I stopped in this city
to drink sweet water
I wrote in my sweat all over this city
that I didn't come here
never was here
what was it you thought you
told me
everything that is your own
had always been inside you
and in talking too much
you had given it away.*

We can go for weeks without food, but only a few days without water. After oxygen, water is the most pressing need of every human being, and can be argued to be the most vital consideration in urban planning. Water is one of South Africa's scarcest natural resources, and water management is a national priority. On top of pollution, water scarcity as a result of climate change is an increasing problem.

The writing of a romantic poem is as much an act of what the Israeli-born visual artist and psychoanalyst Bracha Ettinger calls "fascinace" (aesthetic openness to the other and the cosmos), it is an act of bridging

2009-2010 READ THESE ROADS

Left
Kai Lossgott
Development sketches and poetry drafts.

Hydrological Map of Cape Town showing the current state of the Camissa waterway system. Fresh spring water from Table Mountain is channeled under the city through storm drains into the harbour. Development sketch based on research by Caron von Zeil (Reclaim Camissa).



2009-2010 READ THESE ROADS
 Left & Right
 Kai Lossgott
 Stills from video poem for floor projection
 Single channel SD DV PAL, stereo. 03 min 59 sec.

loss. In inviting the visitor to "read these roads" in the title, this video love poem fantasises about the erasure of its subjectivity through interpretation by the recipient. Whether or not the imagined authorial voice attempts thereby to enter into denial and abdicate responsibility depends on the interpretation of the text, in which the act of walking the city streets, the flow of the rivers, and the act of interpretation or reading itself acquire like meanings.

Projected from above onto the floor with the rumble of traffic noise, the video locates the viewer in Adderley Street in the Cape Town CBD, above the underground storm water drain where this untapped fresh spring water has run into the sea daily. Underfoot, the now forgotten Varscherivier, among others, is a seminally unacknowledged site of national heritage, one of the rivers which gave Cape Town its original Khoi name: *Camissa*, meaning "place of sweet waters". This was the fresh water that originally drew the Portuguese to the Cape.

As the video opens, a drop of sweat falls from a woman's fingertips, briefly staining the pavement before it evaporates. Destabilising the identity of the subject, my own ambiguous voice, possibly white, possibly male, possibly white middle class homo sapiens of uncertain



READ THESE ROADS

cultural origins, speaks the opening lines of the video poem, "I stopped in this city / to drink sweet water". The words reference personal biography, the colonial historiography of my geographical presence, as well as the grievous legacy my species has achieved at the top of the food chain through resource exploitation. The voice does not construct itself as a congruent subject, in the phallogocentric sense. The identity of the speaker is further drawn into question by the ethnicity suggested by the image that precedes it. Casting doubt on themselves, the opening words are followed immediately by the psychology of denial ("I wrote in my sweat all over this city / that I didn't come here / never was here").

Wiped from the land, just as the human speaker seems to deny his complicity in all of the above, the river is just one more item in a long line of exterminations in the name of modern urban culture. Reminiscent of the 20th century Rorschach test, the expanding and evaporating water puddles reference the repression of uncomfortable emotions, a pushing below the surface of all that is seen as dark and undesirable, in the same way as the river has been safely put away.

The site's hidden significance as an ancient waterway connects the past with the present, the personal with green politics, the city with the landscape, and the mythic lower world with the world of humans. Its symbolic value engages with the shifting of time, both historically and ontologically. This natural time versus city time is emphasized in the stop animation projected on the floor, in which the visitor takes the time to watch water dry in time lapse on the pavement. Water running in and out of drains and gutters spreads into tentative images, which evaporate as they morph into shapes, some of which flirt with anthropomorphic forms. There is, was and will be a time before and after the city, before and after human life on earth.

Like evaporating water, in the text, language and memory itself become unstable witnesses to the embodied relationship between subjects ("what was it you thought you / told me"). Seventeenth Century sailor and his Khoi-speaking lover, scientist and the discourse of empirical data, homo sapiens and planet in crisis – all these may be conversing here. The poem suggests that language is no substitute for embodied experience ("everything that is your own / had always been inside you / and in talking too much / you had given it away.")

What has always coursed inside us, and within the earth, is a majority percentage of water (on average 60%). The evaporating water forms reveal their multiple symbolic subjectivities. They hint at the living systemic relationship between Table Mountain's hydrology systems, the City of Cape Town's water system and the biological systems of the human body. In contrast with the visible evaporation (a metaphor for both waste and scarcity), a mysterious tunnel world of abundant water is periodically glimpsed beneath the streets. With many of our rivers now being the equivalent of drains, reclaiming the symbolic power of the river under Adderley Street confronts us with the lost emotional connection to the water within. Extending our understanding of symbolic subjectivity by connecting with other life forms in our ecosystem through empathy and respect is currently the most critical challenge to Western culture.

How many privileged South African urban citizens turning on the tap to wash their faces in the morning think of where their water comes from? So easily accessed, they may struggle to picture the reality that fresh water, one of our scarcest resources, is currently in drastic decline due to lack of infrastructure development to address climate change and pollution. Water management

of cities and rural areas is a national priority. Already in 2008, the top WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) official Deon Nel called the SA water crisis "a ticking time bomb" waiting to explode. Engaging with this, the video poem 'read these roads' further implies that there is an aftertaste in the water of Cape Town, and suggests the surfacing of a violent past and languages that have been silenced in the same way that the river has been silenced. In his research, Dr Anthony Turton, one of the foremost authorities on South African water affairs, warns that fresh water scarcity will restrict the country's future economic development, and predicts civic violence "in response to perceptions of deteriorating public health" as a result of declining water quality⁵.

Urban waste water, particularly from informal settlements which lack sewage and water purification facilities, is one of the most common pollutants. Serious health problems like typhoid, cholera and gastroenteritis are transmitted by water contaminated with untreated sewage. One of the three main causes of death in South African children under the age of five is gastroenteritis. Also, between 1980 and 1987, between half and one million South Africans contracted cholera.⁶

02. *open me like you would open flowers
I have asked this all along
you can read the roads in me like rivers
in my hands, flowing to the tips,
who knows where it goes.
some small fusion spills
the thing that jumps the heart
what breaks below the surface
like in leaves
like in trees
like in roots
like in flowers
undertugging, undertowing
and my ears are fat and ringing
I've got something on my tongue
I dissolve at the borders
I can hear rivers running
in the soles of my feet*

The second stanza of the poem draws on the interpersonal relationship established in order to extend the metaphor into a systemic narrative. Beginning with the words "open me", it enters into the bloodflow of the human body, likening internal biological systems to those in nature. Water's ability to disassemble and rearrange other molecules makes it essential in the chemistry of life. It is a perfect conductor of the electricity required inside the human organism, for instance in the brain

chemistry that makes thought possible, when electrochemical potential is shared by brain neurons through electrochemical transmitters.⁷

By the end of this stanza ("I can hear rivers running / in the soles of my feet"), the camera itself drops into the water system beneath the city, revealing some of the rivers that can be seen through manhole covers. Deep Ecology holds that well-being and flourishing of life on Earth has intrinsic value, whether it be human or nonhuman. The usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes does not determine its value. Seen in this light, water is valuable in itself, and not just because we need it to survive. It is this shift in understanding that presents a challenge for Western culture as we currently know it, most particularly urban society.

A new communion with the world is required for the times we live in. This is a change that has to come from within. On the occasion of his solo retrospective at the Serpentine Gallery in London,⁸ Gustav Metzger, the best known exponent of the auto-destructive art movement,⁹ says "Art, I believe, needs to sink into the centre of a human being, come up, and that will be hope - the art will be hope. The art will have the energy and the wisdom out of the deep entering into oneself and into nature."

READ THESE ROADS

The environmental philosophy Deep Ecology argues that the more we expand the self to identify with 'others' (people, animals, ecosystems), the more we realise ourselves. Through taking time to engage with what lies beneath the busy surface of our urban lives, for instance through meditation or spending time in nature, city parks and green lungs in the vicinity of cities, we may transcend our human-centred culture for one that is more life-centred and sustainable. This is the responsibility of our times and for future generations.

03. *there are maps I have not made
there are charts I cannot read
I am drunk on information
and I want you to read
me like rivers
written in a foreign tongue.*

Does literacy result in respect? The ambiguous conclusion may be read variously as a passionate apology for past injustices of phallogocentrism ("there are maps I have not made / there are charts I cannot read"), as well as a rampant desire by a species strange-to-itself to embody a better future ("and I want you to read / me like rivers / written in a foreign tongue"). Only the felt language of empathy can re-claim our intrinsic worth as life-forms within the built environment.

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LVD VDM

LEANA
VAN DER MERWE

10.

URBAN ONTOLOGIES //

DO WE CREATE THE CITY OR DOES IT
CREATE US?



ARTIST'S BIO

Leana van der Merwe finished her Fine Arts degree in 2011 with distinction at the University of Pretoria and has since been teaching first years drawing and painting at the Department of Visual Arts. She is currently also a Masters student at the Department and is conducting research on the depiction of hunted and sacrificial bodies by South African female artists. Her interests include feminism and gender as well as contemporary South African art. She works mainly with painting and sculpture with a specific interest in assemblage sculptural works, which employ the everyday in a new manner. Some of her paintings have been bought by the UP Arts collection in 2010 and her sculptural works have been exhibited in several group exhibitions, which includes the 2012 Absa L'Atelier Competition exhibition at the Absa Gallery in Johannesburg.

2013 UNTITLED I (DETAIL)

Far left
Leana van der Merwe
1400 x 800mm, Earbuds, tile spacers and hot glue

2013 UNTITLED II (DETAIL)

Left, middle
Leana van der Merwe
1300 x 1100mm, Earbuds, tile spacers and hot glue

2013 UNTITLED II (DETAIL)

Left
Leana van der Merwe
1300 x 1100mm, Earbuds, tile spacers and hot glue

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Do we create the city or does it create us? Following Darwin, Elizabeth Grosz (2011:31) asserts that life, in its emergence "brings new conditions to the material world, unexpected forces, forms of actualisation that matter in itself, which without its living attenuations, it may not be able to engender." She elaborates that life is not an alternative or an Other to matter, but rather a process emulating from the same energy source, an elaboration of the same matter from which it is born. Grosz (2011:33) describes life as being parasitic to matter, needing the physical to be what it is – to become what it is becoming, ever creating new forms as it emerges, changes and adapts to the materiality that surrounds it.

Dodson (2000:418) contends that within the postmodern city, the homogenising effect of American consumption creates "a variety of place-specific hybrids and juxtapositions", where economy and culture compete with the intentions and the identity of the individual. These individuals within the post-colonial, post-apartheid cities of South Africa, also face a certain displacement which, according to Ashraf Jamal (2011:2),

is "cultural, existential, psychic and epistemological" in addition to the sometimes physical displacement of people coming to the city from rural areas or across our borders from neighbouring countries. This displacement forces the individual to search continually for new forms and identities, becoming almost a kind of visitor to her own life, becoming not only a traveller of place, distance and identity, but also a creator of the new material world which she seeks to possess as a haven or even a home.

According to Grosz (1994:167), Deleuze and Guattari's work creates an understanding of subjects and objects where they are no longer in opposition with each other. In this context, the boundaries between the material and the immaterial become blurred and fragmented whilst having the ability to connect in a multiplicity of ways. The application of Deleuze and Guattari (1987:260) notion of 'becoming' might be helpful in order to gain a non-structuralist understanding of the city. As a material force, the city through its contact with different bodies and other forces, could be described in terms of "a discontinuous, non-totalisable series of processes, organs, flows, energies, corporeal substances and incorporeal events, speeds and durations"

(Grosz 1994:164). This leads to the formation of new hybrid identities and material forms that emerge from these different forces. Jamal (2011:3) acknowledges the difficulties which exist in finding coherent narratives or ways in which relationships between objects, flows and individuals could be understood or even explained in such places. The post-colonial, post-modern, post-apartheid city can never be explained as a unified whole or a structure into which individuals could fit or adapt, but should rather be articulated as an ongoing process, an emergence of forms to which no person, system or territory could stake a claim.

Following Heidegger, Randall Teal (2008:14) contends that it is not the isolated material units that form a totality that are important, but rather the connections between these, the conversations which happen and the movements which take place. Assemblage works explore these relationships between materials, forms and forces as well as our understanding of these elements, which we try to give a coherent form and attach meaning to. Together, the structures which emerge through our interaction with life and our understanding of "ourselves, the places we inhabit, the things we encounter and the people among who we live" (Teal

2008:14) are the main theme for my works on this exhibition.

Consumerism and commerciality create the illusion of importance and meaning (Dodson 2000:420), within the post-modern city, through products, experiences and entertainment. Heidegger (in Teal 2008:14) contends that western culture tends to focus on "things" when attaching meaning to life. He suggests an alternative approach where the exposure of the "backgrounds, processes and interrelations" between different objects could serve to bring meaning and significance to our understanding of the phenomena of our everyday lives. Buildings, roads, cars and crowds of people remain meaningless if we understand them merely for their sights and sounds, but are given a richness of meaning when read together with their interactions with the different forces of culture, nature and humanity as well as the impact which objects have on each other, their interrelationships and their associated meanings.

Teal (2008:22) contends that 'making' or 'building' correlates with one's own existence and thus one's understanding of oneself. 'Everyday-ness' becomes extraordinary through a "particular adjustment

URBAN ONTOLOGIES

within a specific environment" (Teal 2008:19), through embodied interaction with materials and forces. Assemblage works take the everyday and by 'building', 'making' and 'adjusting' create new forms that have their own meaning and articulate new understandings of the objects employed. The interaction of material objects creates new flows and movements, which have little relation to the small parts from which these new forms were created.

Assemblage art was pioneered by artists of the Dada and Fluxus movements, who aimed to alter conventional readings of consumer objects (Brownell 2008:30) and so prove that meaning is never a fixed or unifying force that can unobtrusively be ascribed to material objects. By using objects in different ways and by adjusting their reading within space, new meanings emerge. Emergent art is created by forging objects together in a manner which follows no clear steps or plans, but rather an intuitive process of adding, removing and adjusting continually, allowing forms to emerge in a non-linear, non-obtrusive manner. Assemblage, according to Grosz (1994:167), is non-hierarchical: no individual part can claim more importance or prevalence than the next. The whole is not just a sum of its individual parts, but also a conglomeration of the collective effect of its

attachment. The city then, can also be seen as an assemblage of different materialities as well as immaterialities, which are forged together through energies, intensities and flows (Grosz 1994:168), never just found the way they are. Their process of 'becoming' is never ending: it is a continuous process. Each attachment, each material form or immaterial force that emulates is temporary.

A "body without organs" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:174) is what emerges when different objects, subjects, flows and intensities are forged together, whilst apposing notions of unity and one-ness. The parts or the organs of the metaphorical body will never belong to the body. They are all provisionally attached and constantly moving. The body is always open to new inputs, which in turn changes the structure when it is forged together with the existing form. According to Grosz (1994:168), the parts of this body carry the same ontological status, despite its form. It can be "human, animal, textual, sociocultural and physical bodies" (Grosz 1994:168).

Heidegger (in Teal 2008:15) explores these interactions in terms of the 'everydayness' of our daily existence and how our routine actions are informed by already inscribed relationships between objects, flows and

individuals. It is the extraordinary interactions though, which have the capacity to create new forms and subjectivities. 'City', then, becomes both tangible and intangible. It becomes a structure but also a being, in various stages of Deleuzian becoming. The city emerges from our varied interactions within a certain time-space, which is articulated as a series of "becomings" of identities as well as matter. The material as well as the immaterial structures that we encounter change our relationships with regard to ourselves and others, as well as our understanding of the 'life' that emerges. The creation of emergent assemblage artworks aims to show how form develops through an explorative and ontological understanding of matter, flows and energies.

The works on this exhibition, *Untitled I* and *Untitled II* are assemblage works created from everyday objects, which are forged together in an intuitive way, which changes not only the way in which we view these everyday objects, but also their ontologies. The relationship between these objects as well as the connections between them creates meaning and movement and the work created is more than a sum of its individual parts. The works on exhibition cannot be described as 'finished' works, but can always be added onto or changed into a new form. The adding or

subtraction of one single unit does not make a noticeable contribution to the form in general, alluding to a Deleuzian notion of a 'body without organs'. The shapes remind us of natural as well as man-made shapes, which move together and influence each other as they create new forms and meaning. The process of the making of these works are emergent, since no structured, pre-meditated plan or process has been followed. The exciting shapes influence the emergent shapes and vice versa and form the basis for the work's own process of 'becoming'.

So do we create the city or does it create us? Urban 'life', its inhabitants as well as its structures are intrinsically linked. The movement between these elements is a life force which follows its own path, always open to new energies, flows, fragments and intensities. Jamal (2011:10) suggests the continuous search for better ways to live in our world, based not on "imagined and utopian realities" or fixed ideas about how history effects our everyday experiences today. A non-structural approach to urban life opens up possibilities for a fluid understanding of urban identities and life as well as the creation of alternative histories, which does not serve a unified grand narrative.





2013 UNTITLED I (DETAIL)

Previous spread, right
Leana van der Merwe
1400 x 800mm, Earbuds, tile spacers and hot glue

2013 UNTITLED I

Left
Leana van der Merwe
1400 x 800mm, Earbuds, tile spacers and hot glue

2013 UNTITLED II

Opposite, right
Leana van der Merwe
1300 x 1100mm, Earbuds, tile spacers and hot glue

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LB

LORAINÉ
BEATON

11.

PROMPT:
PERFORMANCE &
VIDEO //

ART IS THERAPY FOR THE CITY; WITHOUT APPOINTMENT
OR A SAFE SPACE, PRETORIA WON'T GET WELL SOON

LORAIN BEATON

PROMPT: PERFORMANCE & VIDEO

ARTIST'S BIO

Lorraine Beaton, a University of Pretoria Fine Arts graduate, has a keen interest in writing and directing. She incorporated theatre and film as multifaceted fine art mediums in her Fine Arts final year project in 2009. In order to develop her understanding of these mediums, she completed a third year major in Video at The Open Window School of Communication in 2010 and a BA Honours degree in Drama at Rhodes University in 2011.

At present, her creative work explores the interplay between live performance and video. Lorraine runs a performance troupe called PROMPT that meets regularly for 'play dates' in which she workshops with six performers with the aim of finding new ways to express meaning. Pretoria and romantic relationships are the prevailing themes in her work.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

How healthy is Pretoria? Forever divided by a multitude of differences, we struggle to move forward out of a stale, stubborn haze.

Our distracted city is in a constant hurry. There is no time to sit and wonder about life; to dream for the city or to wonder about who we are or where we're going. How healthy is someone who doesn't understand him/herself?

On behalf of the city, the artist pauses and willfully observes and questions. This process results in an offering that provides a busy city with a moment of clarity, a glimpse of itself and a chance to consider the next step. A performance, a song or a painting can take viewers to inner places they wouldn't have managed to find on their busy own.

Art is therapy for the city; without appointment or a safe space, Pretoria won't get well soon.

PROMPT IDENTITY

Right
Lorraine Beaton



MNR

MAGDEL
VAN ROOYEN

12.

CONCRETE
IDENTITIES //

... BINARIES OF PRESENCE AND ABSENCE IN RELATION
TO THE CONCEPT OF PLACE AND HOME

MAGDEL VAN ROOYEN

CONCRETE IDENTITIES

ARTIST'S BIO

Magdel van Rooyen is a process oriented artist, allowing the theme of her work to depict the medium. Magdel completed her MA Fine Arts in 2011 specialising in installation art dealing with the theme of place, space and liminality and the psycho-geographic state of being in between. Since then she was selected to take part in the Art-St-Urban residency in Switzerland providing her the opportunity to exhibit as part of Art Basle 2013. Magdel has been teaching drawing, sculpture, printing media and basic painting at the University of Pretoria since 2007.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

People today are continually on the move, presented with multiple possibilities of where to work and where to live, possibilities that stretch seamlessly across national and international borders. This is particularly apparent when compared with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where profession and address were largely determined by birth, marital status or inheritance and thus in most cases were not matters of choice, but were predetermined. Society was structured accordingly, and individuals were defined by these parameters; identity was forged within a very rigid structure or, rather, a rigid structure prescribed identity, as it was often not a matter of choice. Theorist Zygmunt Bauman (2004:51) has noted the multiple possibilities influencing identity formation today and argues that since the eighteenth century the solidity of social structures has moved, the "signposts" of what traditionally defined a large part of individual identity formation.

Identity has always been tied to place: where you work, where you live, a specific city, suburb or house. Over the past century, however, views of identity have changed and fluidity in the psychological and geographical boundaries of identity are commonplace: "A cohesive, firmly riveted and solidly constructed identity would be a burden,



2010 CONCRETE CONVERSATIONS

Opposite, left
Magdel (Fourie) van Rooyen
25 x 1200 x 180mm, Perspex

2010 CONCRETE CONVERSATIONS (DETAIL I)

Left
Magdel (Fourie) van Rooyen
25 x 1200 x 180mm, Perspex

2010 CONCRETE CONVERSATIONS (DETAIL II)

Middle
Magdel (Fourie) van Rooyen
25 x 1200 x 180mm, Perspex

2010 CONCRETE CONVERSATIONS (DETAIL III)

Right
Magdel (Fourie) van Rooyen
25 x 1200 x 180mm, Perspex

CONCRETE IDENTITIES

a constraint, a limitation on the freedom to choose ... [I]t would be a recipe for *inflexibility*", which is frowned upon by "virtually all genuine or purative authorities of the day" (Bauman 2004:53). As a result, people can today be described as nomads, originally denoting a group of hunter-gatherer type people who habitually travelled or shifted abode, but now referring to a subject whose "movement is based on perpetual displacement" (Kaplan 1996:66); in other words, an individual who travels with no singular sense of belonging to one place or nation.

Yet amidst the fragmentation, Okwui Enwezor (Zaya 1999:296) states that "we crave to attach ourselves to something, some moment, a location, an event; we crave an anchor." And so the result is a tug of war: on the one hand there is the nomad identity, informed and facilitated by effortless global transportation systems and the increased interaction and dependence of individuals on virtual platforms since the World Wide Web paved the road for effortless long distance communication - identity denoted by fragmentation and fluid change. On the other hand, there is the urge for stability and some sense of fixed structure from which to define ones self-identity defined by a sense

of place. Between these two desires lies a blurry gap containing a bit of both, which can be described by the term "liminal". This liminal state consists of a psychological awareness in relation to geographical orientation and emotions associated therewith, which can be described as feelings of longing and disconnectedness owing to the lack of a specific geographical place with which an individual's identity is associated – perhaps a city, house or country. This state of liminality is what I refer to as psycho-geographic liminality'.

It seems that amidst the instability of contemporary societies, people are in desperate need of anchoring and to reside in a 'place', understood in Massey's ([Sa]:63) words as a source of "stability and unproblematic identity." In global societies, tension seems to be created between finding and preserving a sense of identity, community and 'home', versus the dilemmas inherent in functioning in a globalised economy (Hauseman & Tavin 2004:48).

Home as a single stationary place has been replaced by the psycho-geographic liminal as a state where an uncertain, fluid midway is found containing both

place and placelessness, belonging and displacement. Featherstone (1995:102) argues that "what does seem clear is that it is not helpful to regard the global and the local as dichotomies separated in space or time; it would seem that the process of globalisation and localization are inextricably bound together in the current phase."

Pretoria and the greater South Africa houses many different culture/cultural groups and nationalities; some having been established here centuries ago and some using it as a temporary stop-over or hide-out from the social and political situation in their own countries. South Africans are suggested to find themselves in a psycho-geographic liminal state, either owing to having family and children overseas or in far off homelands, or just feeling unwelcome because of crime and the current political situation. Yet, many still stay in the country embracing or enduring the flux and uncertainty, learning to cope and recreating areas, activities or objects, in order to embrace a new created sense of home and belonging. If place is a construct based on personal experiences and memory, then it is correct to maintain that our sense of place or placelessness depends on the experience or position to the concept of place and home.

in the process individuals find themselves in. After a phone call to the place of origin, the liminal leans over more to placelessness, but after taking part in a new found ritual in the new location, the liminal can gravitate more towards a sense of place.

Concrete Conversations reflects my own sense of having a nomad identity, denoted by experiences of fragmentation and fluid change. I describe my understanding of my identity as a psycho-geographic 'liminal' due to my father living in New Zealand, my mother in Johannesburg and my brother in Hong Kong. Yet, informed and facilitated by effortless global transportation systems and the increased interaction and dependence of individuals on virtual platforms since the advent of the WorldWideWeb and the digital age, there is (seemingly) effortless long distance communication between us. The vast physical distances between us make me feel displaced, however, and my life is constituted by blurred notions of home, place and belonging, posited in memory and experienced through short, personal visits and the availability of technology (such as Skype, sms and telephone conversations). *Concrete Conversations* highlight one aspect of this complex identity focusing on two binaries of presence and absence in relation to the concept of place and home.

The Perspex sheets are derived from the sound wave recording of a conversation I had with my father while he was in New Zealand. Since my father is not able to be with me physically, it sometimes feels that the only evidence I have of a relationship with him is the conversation, or the memory of the conversation I just had with him. In this work I capture what the conversation would look like physically, with each Perspex piece representing a sound in the conversation. Through physically mapping the sound wave I am creating something tangible to hold on to, to represent the intangible.

The intangible on one level refers to the actual sound wave which cannot be seen or touched with the human eye and on another level it refers to the concept of our relationship. Just like the shadow cast by the transparent Perspex pieces so is our relationship, in that it has a presence in my life but I have no physical proof of it as such, it is more a concept. And so the piece represents how the intangible sound wave ends up being the material which constitutes our relationship. It has a presence in the same way as a shadow does and yet it is just as intangible as a shadow.

Through the shape of all the pieces the shadow is reminiscent of a cityscape. Since there are more specific landmarks recognisable in the shadow, the piece can be interpreted as any city. This anonymity denotes the way in which global communications has made the specificity of where you are or the specific city irrelevant to an extent because the city becomes part of a larger global network. And yet as David Crouch (2010:16) argues, Individuals do not live in a 'city' or a 'country' but in groups of friends, families, looser and stronger networks, gardens, pubs ... briefer moments in transit ... emotions, dreams and fears'. Leaving the residence in a psycho-geographic liminal state of being, juggling a secure know place with the fluid and slippery globalised world.

CONCRETE IDENTITIES

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CONCRETE IDENTITIES



space is consciously constructed, planned and administered, and associated with engineers, city planners and architects. Lived space, also referred to as 'representational space' is space mediated by 'images and symbols' through the 'users' or 'inhabitants', as well as writers, philosophers and artists. This is the space, dominated by imagination which can be experienced passively, without being in the physical space itself, allowing that space to be appropriated and changed by the imagination (Lefebvre 1991:39).

Looking at the paintings, *Construct I* and *Construct II* both depicts a building site next to a road. No street names or landmarks are visible to identify it as this or that site, but it is nonetheless a specific site with specific GPS coordinates. It is an area that is fixed in terms of De Certeau's definition of place. The construction safety netting demarcates a specific area which opens up this place through the creation of a void, and that void inside the place becomes a space, that can also be described as a liminal space.

Taking Lefebvre's (1991:39) classifications of space into consideration the demarcated space itself does not qualify as perceived space because the construction

safety netting prohibits the general public from interacting with it. The demarcated area does, however, interfere with the natural flow of this specific place, and consequently it causes new perceived spaces to occur; for the pedestrians and motorists find new paths to navigate around this site.

Lefebvre's second classification is that of conceived space, space that is consciously constructed. It links directly with the title of the pieces, namely *construct*. On a conceptual level this specific place had been identified on paper by engineers and city planners as a site where construction needs to take 'place'. The physical construction, or more accurately, the de-struction with the intent of construction, is underway, but not yet completed, also emphasising the liminality of this space.

As a verb, construct means the physical building or putting together of parts. Since the preparations for the Soccer World Cup in 2009 and 2010, the bright yellow and orange construction demarcations have been part of my visual understanding of Pretoria. It has activated certain areas or places I was familiar with into constructed spaces, areas where roads were extended and re-designed relaying traffic from the

fixed known paths. Frustration and traffic were part of the process but the improvement and redesign resulted in better flow and in the end less traffic. Thus these yellow and orange construction elements have become signs and symbols of change, improvement and progress (once you have been able to calm yourself down owing to the frustration of the traffic). This highlights the last space Lefebvre (1991:39) defines namely lived or 'representational' space.

The word construct used as a noun describes an image, theory or idea often formed from a number of simpler elements that is part of your thought processes. These ideas can influence your actions, but it does not need to result in a physical form *per se*. Similarly lived space, as defined by Lefebvre comprises symbols and signs communicated to the imagination. In this way one can argue that Pretoria is a place with fixed coordinates, but within this place spaces are continuously activated. Through the actions of people and the constructed space, street names have been changed and suburbs extended, landmarks removed and new landmarks built. All these elements reconstruct our ideas about Pretoria, how we identify with it and how we conduct ourselves in this ever changing space.

David Harvey (1996:296) describes the city, as a tension between the binaries, 'place-bound fixity and spatial mobility'. The dynamics of a city like Pretoria, with its rich history and many people results in a dynamic space that is continually changing and evolving. I would argue that a place cannot be left unchanged if the space it houses is continually changing. The place will inevitably be redefined, unconstructed and reconstructed to provide a new fixed area for a while, till the space requires a shift again. The unfixing of place might take years to change and transform, because it is reliant not only on the reconstruction of space through building roads and buildings, but because only when enough constructs and ideas about the place shift, can a re-fixing of a place occur. That is what *Construct I* and *Construct II* represent. Pretoria, as a place which is undergoing continuous construction not only through physical building but through changing our construct about the place.

CONCRETE IDENTITIES

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2010 CONCRETE CONVERSATIONS (DETAIL II)

Opposite, far left
Magdel (Fourie) van Rooyen
25 x 1200 x 180mm, Perspex

2010 CONCRETE CONVERSATIONS (DETAIL III)

Opposite, centre
Magdel (Fourie) van Rooyen
25 x 1200 x 180mm, Perspex

PIETER
SWANEPOEL

13.

**NOTES
ON
CONTENT/CONTEXT:
ERASURE //**

NO ART EVER APPEARS IN ISOLATION

NOTES ON CONTENT/CONTEXT: ERASURE

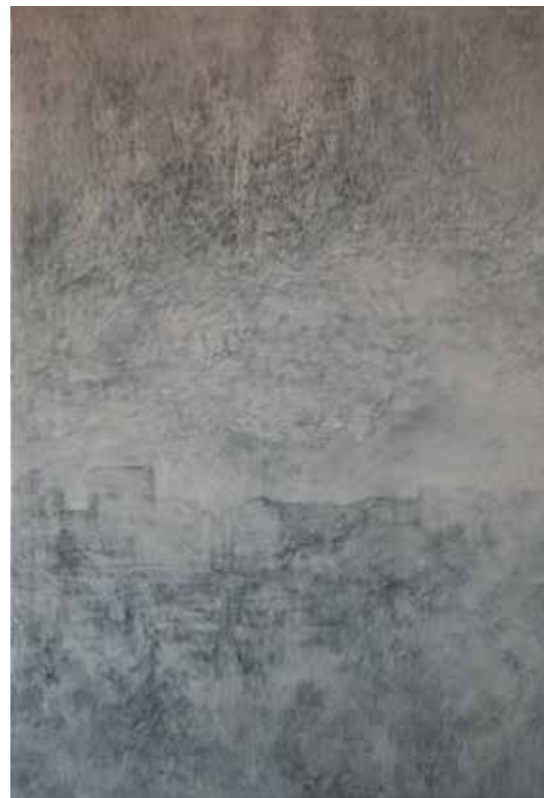
ARTIST'S BIO

Pieter Swanepoel completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Pretoria and obtained a Masters in Visual Art from the University of South Africa. He has been involved in many forms of the arts through a variety of formats, including literature, journalism, the theatre, graphic design and advertising, as well as education. As a tertiary educator he has over a period of some 20 years taught both studio based and theory subjects, ranging from computer graphics, to painting, copy writing, history of art, popular culture and art criticism at a number of institutions in South Africa. He has participated regularly in group exhibitions over the last 25 years, delivered papers at conferences and published academic papers in journals as well as in books. Pieter joined the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria in 2008 and lectures in Fine Arts.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

No art ever appears in isolation. On the contrary, a lot of art is often a reaction to and/or in opposition of a context within which it can be shown to operate. Against the backdrop of a tradition of stark, minimalist black-and-white paintings, the following most pertinent notes may be of consequence.

In 1917, in an avant-garde act associated with the modernist epoch in art history, the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich, painted a geometrically controlled white canvas which he entitled: *Suprematist Composition: White on White*. However, some two years earlier he had already painted a plain black square which he placed in the middle of a white ground (*Black Square on a White Field*), an act which is widely believed to have triggered a stream of abstract – more particularly 'geometric abstraction'.



In 1951, Robert Rauschenberg started working on a variety of white paintings for which he opted to use 'house paint', instead of the oil paints or acrylics associated with fine art paintings. At the time he created a radical minimalist series of seven white paintings, which inspired compatriot composer John Cage to present his silent composition, 4'33" in 1952.

In 1953, Rauschenberg bought a drawing made by the abstract expressionist Willem de Kooning, which he then erased and exhibited as an artwork. This was in reaction to and a commentary on Modernism's stronghold on the art scene. Still, in its defiance of a preceding period, it was not much different from one of Modernism's most pertinent master narratives: the obsession with an avant-garde, at the best of times bent on the destruction of tradition. Hence the ironic twist in Rauschenberg's action (for the erased drawing was none other than an obtrusive re-action, acted out in the process of erasure) as dancing to the tune of what he wished to defy. Still, it implied more than a simple tongue in cheek gesture as it foreshadowed what would soon become a wave of interest: erasure.

Similarly, the South African artist Christo Coetzee, eradicated a whole bunch of his paintings at a Pretoria exhibition in 1978, when he – rather than wiping away or rubbing out the paintings to erase them – blocked them out in black paint.

Of further note is the fact that there are theoreticians and philosophers who make an issue out of semantics in order to sufficiently probe our understanding of words that in the end remain significant enough to be retained as verbally illustrative of physical acts, as is the case with erasure. Both my *Whitewashed* and *Blackout* were painted, bearing in mind numerous contents and contexts, of which erasure was but one. These paintings should be seen as probing and commenting on such issues, rather than complying with theories they might hope to illustrate. Still, these paintings clearly reflect upon particular traditions of art as identified and speculated upon by art historians and theoreticians, the most pertinent of which would be erasure.

In terms of a more direct and literal identification of content, these works are clearly concerned with what could perhaps be best described as an apocalyptic vision. From within the perspective of an apocalyptic vision

NOTES ON CONTENT/CONTEXT: ERASURE

means to overcome such bickering around issues of theoretical concern.

TECHNICAL NOTES: ON MAKING

To work in black and white is to avoid colour: stay in monochrome; admitting to binary opposites/ stark contrasts.

To limit such contrast to its minimum through a process of erasure/reduction: a reference to classical formalism and structuralism; a method of deconstruction in practice.

The ground was treated with two layers of a pale yellow to support the suggestion of nostalgia, of what has been but is no more, of loss ... Combined with the varnish the charcoal created darker, at times almost brownish tones on the underground. These tonalities were then washed over in a great many layers with chalk in varnish.

A scene of the centre of Pretoria from a certain vantage point (in this case from the Union Buildings) was first drawn in charcoal on the prepared canvas.



2013 WHITEWASH

Previous spread, left
Pieter Swanepoel
20 x 22000 x 15000mm,
Charcoal, chalk and decorators varnish on canvas

2013 BLACKOUT

Left
Pieter Swanepoel
20 x 22000 x 15000mm,
Charcoal, chalk and decorators varnish on canvas

A commercial (decorator's) acrylic varnish was then applied to the charcoal drawing, mixing the charcoal with the varnish, often causing it to run/bleed. This process was left quite spontaneous and not controlled to deny the possibility of retaining the initial quite accurate rendition of the city. A mixture of chalk powder and varnish was then made and applied to the 'fixed' under-drawing on the canvas, in the process 'erasing' the drawing a little bit with each new layer of white-wash.

Both charcoal and chalk are drawing media that have to be fixed to the ground on which they are initially applied in order to preserve the drawing, that is, they are relatively easy to wipe away and/or erase. It is for this very reason that they were used.

To work within a romantic paradigm is itself nostalgic while the notion of the nostalgic was indeed explored to a level of sentimentalism within romantic literature, music and art.

NOTES ON CONTENT: CONTEMPLATING PRETORIA

Seeing Pretoria through a painting is an aesthetic experience which can be read according to the transparency theory put forward for photography by Walton (1984) and supported by Lopes (2002), a theory which in itself can be shown to be derived at least partially from Richard Wollheim's (1980) theory on pictorial representation in terms of a 'seeing in', which is different from a mere perception of resemblances.

In the case of the current paintings, the source is in indeed a photograph; here the transparency is not only doubled, but is in fact mirrored in the one being reflected by the other. Hence a process of reflexivity concerns considering the one in relation with the other, although not in order to simply compare but as a matter of re-thinking. Hence, in the deliberately constructed image of Pretoria the one panel of the divided painting is flipped around, that is mirrored. The casual observer would ofcourse not necessarily notice this, unless the image in the painting is literally put up in front of the actual scene of Pretoria – as a way of looking through the image of Pretoria at Pretoria. Attention is therefore

NOTES ON CONTENT/CONTEXT: ERASURE

drawn to the fact that the way in which the artist looks at, represents, and indeed presents Pretoria to the viewer, is an interpretation – a musing if you will – of the capital city. The painting hence references the act of appreciation through interpretation as much as it references the image (imagined) of Pretoria.

Moreover, what appears to be a seamless transition from the one panel to the next, is subverted through a radical interruption of the one side (panel) being seen from one side (of the scene: front) while the other side (panel) is seen from another side (behind). No matter which way you look at it from then, the one side will always be the wrong way around. Such a drastic fracture is clearly indicative of a trauma suffered in an effort to interpret the city in any conclusive manner. The pathological neurosis resulting from the experience of interpreting what should ideally be seen as a centre (capital) of a country as split into two could indeed be the cause of great anxiety.

Such complex obsession is alluded to metaphorically as a city consumed by fire. In this instance the fire is presented not as a source of light and warmth but as heralding darkness, as ashen augury: the blackening as signatory of an ending.

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SAKIE
SEOKA



14.

**THE
ARTIST
& ARTWORK //**

A PRAYER THAT WISHES A SPEEDY RECOVERY FOR THE
FORMER PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA

THE ARTIST AND ARTWORK

ARTIST'S BIO

Sakie Seoka was born in Tzaneen in Limpopo province. In 1990 he started work as a stone carver at Superior and Germs Prosslyn in Pretoria and in the following year he became an assistant in Guy du Toit's studio in Pretoria, where he stayed until 2000. Whilst working with du Toit, he gained experience in bronze casting. In 2001 Sakie registered at the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at Tshwane University of Technology and was appointed a student assistant in 2002. Whilst working there, he gained more experience in iron and brass casting, welding and making plaster moulds. He has participated in a number of exhibitions and competitions, including the Ekurhuleni Art Awards and Sasol New Signatures. In 2005, he won the PPC Young Concrete Sculptors Merit Award and was invited to participate in the Gauteng Artist Workshop at the Bag Factory in Johannesburg in 2007. Sakie is a technical assistant in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

The Prayer prays for a speedy recovery for the hospitalised Mandela from his lung infection. According to spokesmen his condition is "critical but stable."

Jacob Zuma urged his call for the country to pray for the ailing 94-year-old former statesman. The beloved former president has been battling a chronic lung infection and has spent a second night in hospital, with hundreds of people gathered to pray for his recovery.



2013 A PRAYER THAT WISHES A SPEEDY RECOVERY FOR THE FORMER PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA (ANGLE 1, 2 & 3)

Left
Sakie Seoka
Dimensions variable, Ceramic

2013 A PRAYER THAT WISHES A SPEEDY RECOVERY FOR THE FORMER PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA

Right
Sakie Seoka
Dimensions variable, Ceramic



SIKHO
SIYOTULA

15.

**THE
MATRIX OF
ENTANGLEMENT //**

THE METROPOLIS IS A SPACE OF MOVEMENT, CROSSING,
CLASH AND, INEVITABLY, ENTANGLEMENT

ARTIS'S BIO

Born 1989 in Johannesburg, South Africa, Sikho Siyotula lives and works in Pretoria, South Africa. The artist completed her BA (Fine Arts) studies at the University of Pretoria in 2011. Her research for the Honours year dealt with the defacing of the landscape and how graffiti destabilises contemplative and interpretive studies of landscape. Her practical work was engaged with notions of the ephemeral.

The artist worked as a gallery assistant at Everard Read Gallery in Johannesburg in 2011 and 2012, based at its contemporary wing, CIRCA on Jellicoe. Since the beginning of 2013 she is working as an assistant lecturer in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria and is currently enrolled for an MA (African European cultural relations) at the same institution.

In 2011 and 2012 she was commissioned to paint murals for the indoor Cricket centre at Super Sport Park cricket stadium in Centurion. Selected exhibitions include Trans-Africa (group exhibition) (2013), ABSA gallery, Johannesburg; Finalist for the 2012 Absa l'Atelier Art Award; Swift Transitions 2011, Pretoria Art Museum; in 2010 the Thami Mnyele Art Award Ekurhuleni, New Bee's at Van Wouw House, Pretoria, and a group exhibition at the Pretoria Art Museum in collaboration with KASI; in 2009 she was selected for the Thami Mnyele Art Award again; participated in the Fried Contemporary exhibition, 4 Sale, as well as the UP Principal's exhibition, Pretoria. In 2011 she was a participant in the Prosperity mural project, a project of Fried Contemporary funded by the development Bank of South Africa.

In 2011 the artist received a University of Pretoria bursary and in 2010 an award to complete a residency at the Cité internationale des arts in Paris, France.

THE MATRIX OF ENTANGLEMENT

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

The matrix of entanglement is a mixed media drawing made of caul fat and chalk pastels, sealed with silicone. It is produced in response to the title of the exhibition, Metromusings. In terms of musings or reflections on the metropolis -- if the metropolis could be understood as a city at the centre of a larger system -- this drawing explores the matrix of that system and specifically entanglement as an inevitable dimension of it. The inevitability of entanglement in a system becomes most visible at its metropolis where 'different' pathways, histories and futures relate, collide or conjoin. At the metropolis, a pinnacle of interaction is arguably reached. In The matrix of entanglement, it is implied that at this pinnacle entanglement becomes inevitable.

The drawing is a study for a series of drawings responding to a larger body of work exploring African-European cultural relations. The matrix of African-European cultural relations in this investigation can be used as a matrix for various other relations, namely, self and other; culture and nature; native and nomadic and likewise, other relations constructed as appositionally different yet bound to each other for their validity.

2013 THE MATRIX OF ENTANGLEMENT

*Opposite, right
Sikho Siyotula
1500 x 650mm, Caul fat and chalk pastels
sealed with silicone*

2013 THE MATRIX OF ENTANGLEMENT (DETAIL)

*Following spread, left
Sikho Siyotula
1500 x 650mm, Caul fat and chalk pastels
sealed with silicone*

Entanglement, and more specifically its structure, here too becomes important.

The work references the geometric vein system of caul fat, the membrane that protects the digestive system. Caul fat, as a drawing medium for me, stems from a previous body of work entitled, Reminders of the ephemeral (2011). In this body of work, I extensively examined issues of the materiality and the ephemerality of culture. The body of work was conceived as an attempt to make sense of my memory of caul fat as a 'cultural art effect' that at stages in my life I had access to but did not entirely understand the significance of. Retrospectively, there are a number of problematic elements in this body of work: at the moment of conceptualising it, I justifiably or unjustifiably fetishised caul fat as a material; I problematically considered the context in which this material was first encountered 'traditional' and 'cultural'; and, because I am part of the community from which this material is appropriated from the authority to fetishise it, is by and large unchallenged for the sake of art. Questions of the fetishised quality of the work - and moreover the authority I have to use the medium in this way - have propelled me to transform the sculptures from

the body of work, Reminders of the ephemeral into two-dimensional drawings. My idea was to collapse the sculptures physically, but also collapse some of the ideas that they evoked.

As with many installation artworks, the body of sculptures, Reminders of the ephemeral no longer exists outside of its digital documentation. In moving towards the idea of the collapsed three-dimensional form, the series of drawings, Ways of hanging around (2012) was created based on visual documentation of Reminders of the ephemeral. Artist Bronwyn Lace in her Collapsed series (2012) collapses various larger installations into floor pieces, commenting on the different lives of an artwork, a concept which I responded to. She literally breaks down her larger sculptural installations in order to give them "a second life" (Lace 2012). Similarly, my flattening of the sculptural form attempts to curate the meaning of the body of work, Reminders of the ephemeral, by extending the life of that which I see as valuable in the body of work and the context which the material is appropriated from and muting that which is not.





THE MATRIX OF ENTANGLEMENT

If, according to Attwell (2005:3), "Modernity is the currently governing concepts of what it means to be a subject of history" - a subject of history implying that which is seen, taken note of and remembered - the process of using caul fat as a drawing medium is an attempt to make the volatile sculptural material caul fat, as well as all the curated ideas it evokes, a subject of history and therefore 'modern'. Because The matrix of entanglement is rendered in this medium, ideas of the quest for modernity become entangled in its significance. In the same way, presenting caul fat as a drawing medium, as opposed to its sculptural form, is a means to an end – staying alive. The metropolis, too, constantly searches for ways to stay alive in order to keep the larger system that it governs alive. One of the ways this is achieved is through a constant working and reworking of the matrix of entanglement. The drawing therefore also deals with the desperation for modernity in the African city; a desperation to be seen, remembered and noted by history.

The matrix of entanglement as a drawing visually explores the structure of entanglement in both form and medium. The metropolis in this drawing is understood as a space of movement, crossing, clash and, inevitably,

entanglement. The drawing suggests that entanglement is both curated and organic; moreover, that this entanglement continuously refigures itself to remain a subject of history.

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