Imaginary Fact

Contemporary South African Art and the Archive

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Wim Botha
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Gerhard Marx, Maja Marx &
Philip Miller
Zanele Muholi
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Curator: Brenton Maart

An exhibition presented in the
South African Pavilion at the
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Imaginary Fact: Contemporary South African Art and the Archive
South African Pavilion, 55th La Biennale di Venezia, 2013

Exhibition

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Chief Executive Officer: Tony Lankester
Artistic Director: Ismail Mahomed

Curator: Brenton Maart
Curatorial Committee: Brett Bailey, Nomusa Makhubu, Jay Pather and Dominic Thorburn

Exhibitors: Joanne Bloch; Wim Botha; David Koloane; Donna Kukama; Gerhard Marx, Maja Marx and Philip Miller; Zanele Muholi; Sam Nhlengethwa; Johannes Phokela; Cameron Platter; Andrew Putter; Athi-Patra Ruga; Penny Siopis; James Webb; Sue Williamson and Nelisiwe Xaba

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*Survival in the conventional sense of the term means
to continue to live, but also to live after death.*

Jacques Derrida, 2004

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Curator's Essay

Brenton Maart

May 2013

INTRODUCTION

Art influences and reflects its world around us and, as the world changes, so too does its forms. In South Africa, during its turbulent twentieth century, visual art focused on political resistance and became a vehicle for insurgency against human rights abuses. After the advent of democracy it shifted towards an exploration of issues of identity, with race and gender gaining prominence. Today, contemporary South Africa is witness to a further significant movement – a renewed and invigorating focus on how and why histories continue to impact on the world today. To do this, contemporary artists are turning to the archive as the repository of these histories. This essay outlines the concept behind *Imaginary Fact: Contemporary South African Art and the Archive*, an exhibition that draws on South Africa's key practitioners who, in very different and vibrant ways, draw on the archived record in order to make sense of our worlds today.

What is it about the record that artists find so enticing? At the simplest level, it is the rare combination of memory with 'thing' – a coming together of the tangible and the intangible – which makes the record such a powerful force. It allows the artist to construct new bridges between history and the contemporary, thus to create an architecture of meaning. The agency of archives has been demonstrated by their ability to both construct and destroy ideologies. Working with archives, in a creative way, therefore allows the artist to create work with the potential to change the course of our contemporary world.

A literary example from Italo Calvino (1998) complicates this question when he writes: 'Perhaps the mistake lies in establishing that at the beginning I and a telephone are in a finite space such as my house would be, whereas what l must communicate is my situation with regard to numerous telephones that ring; these telephones are perhaps not calling me, have no relation to me, but the mere fact that I can be called to a telephone suffices to make it possible or at least conceivable that l may be called by all telephones.'

Calvino's text is taken from *In a network of lines that enlace*, a chapter in his book titled *If on a winter's night a traveller*. These titles – hinting at the relation of one concept to another – seem to set the stage for a continuous tale. But each chapter is discrete – different in character and narrative to the one before and the one following. It is only when the characters in different chapters start demonstrating commonalities,

Siemon Allen, *Screen ll*, 2010, Woven VHS video tape, 442 x 381 x 260cm
Photo by Terry Brown, Courtesy of the Artist

or when the effect of relationships between characters in different stories can be seen, that the interplay between chapters becomes legible. A dynamic crossing is established between all players in a complex game of interrelationships.

In all case studies, artists appear to function partly as facilitator to release the potential energy stored within the seemingly latent records, and partly as activist in allowing the agency to do its work within societies. The most common methods used are translation (into new and evolving languages), interpretation (into new and evolving meanings), and mediation (from one medium to another), sometimes used individually, sometimes in combination, but often to startling effect.

A RESEARCH CONTEXT FOR *IMAGINARY FACT*

I love conclusions, not because I'm lazy or expedient, but because my friends Biddi and Karen (aka *Built like a dress*) composed songs and performed them shamelessly incongruous, suddenly impromptu and brashly uninvited, in ignoble public places, to crowds whose numbers were delimited by, say, the size of the balcony or the capacity of the car. A verse from one of my favourites goes ... *Calling for the waiter, they leave politics till later, as another day goes by... Post-modern man, has a shower that runs backward, leaves him dry...*

A second reason I embrace, where possible, the chance to cut to the quick, is because a fridge magnet I remember from years ago urged the following: *Life is uncertain. Eat dessert first*.

It is thus in celebration of the generous gift of hindsight that this part of the essay begins with the presentation by Percy Hintzen (Florida International University/ University of California, Berkeley, USA) that brought to a close the conference on *Archives of post-independent Africa and its Diaspora*, 20–22 June 2012, Goree, Senegal). Hintzen's summary of the pitfalls that beset the field of contemporary archival practice demonstrated that the hazards lurk neither in 'knowing that you don't know', nor in 'not knowing that you do know'. Instead, he warns, the deadliest snare (that mine in the maze) is found in the condition of 'not knowing that you don't know'.

Ebrima Sall of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (or Codesria), in his opening address at the conference, insisted – against the protestations of international studies of Africa – that 'there is no fatality about the condition'. Sall underlined the importance of African scholars in positing questions, designing research, and formulating conclusions. It is the lived experience of African scholars of African modernities that allow for a new form of critical understanding – generated as much by academic scholarship as by affect – of the particular and contextual relationships between the state of the archives, the situation of the countries, the variable conditions within the continent and its loaded affairs with the rest of the world. These sets of variabilities within the continent, and the specificities of contemporary archival practice, allow African creativity to be at the forefront of a contemporary methodology that is part science and part humanities, part factual and part interpretative, part irrefutable and part conjecture, part documentary and part fiction, part rhetorical

and part substantive, part public and part civic, part summative and part formative, part contemplative and part performative, and part ethereal and part tangible.

Codesria (based on Goree Island, Senegal) was one of the conference convening bodies, along with the African Studies Centre (Leiden, The Netherlands) and the African studies Multi-Campus Research Group (University of California, USA), together representing three continents which themselves were (and still continue to be) participants in the disruptions that defined the pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial and independence periods of African countries. Today, these three territories are shaped as much by their entangled histories as by their contemporary diasporas.

The conference brought together theorists and practitioners to examine archives of seemingly different forms, times and places, which collectively describe a dynamic terrain in continual flux. Curatorial readings of interdependence create surprisingly new understandings that question the flow of influence and power, redirect complicity, and challenge dogmatic binaries established during the parallel growth of modernities. More importantly, the compound views presented by case studies come together in an attempt to understand the histories of the archival sectors, map its contemporary shapes, and plot its forward trajectories. Finally, the conference facilitates a working network that uses hypothesis and analysis as a stimulus for productive archival activism.

The conference mapped the terrain into five key themes which, in a liberal gesture that may be written off to curatorial licence, I have here applied directly to the intellectual and scholarly framework of *Imaginary Fact*.

Administering the archive

The avaricious demarcation (the 'founding'), so loved by Western hegemony, locates the origin of the theme of *Administering the archive* with the preservation of bureaucratic governments archives (beginning, of course, with colonial records). Fortunately Anaïs Wion (Centre d'Études des Mondes Africains & Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France), in *Electronic Publication of Ethiopian Manuscript Archives: Methods and Issues of an Electronic Management*, notes the early use of archives in the service of laws, policies and traditions. However, this theme looks forward

Photographer unknown, Untitled (Rankyand, eldest brother of Sam Nhlengethwa, on the occasion of his marriage to Manko), Undated, Digital scan of silver gelatin print, Dimensions unknown, Courtesy of Sam Nhlengethwa

from colonialism as its point zero, to here include more recent archives of social, union and other movements, records of private organisations, genealogical maps, personal and family 'tin-trunks' of manuscripts, religious texts and their commentaries: documents that move beyond the textual. Audio records, too, start to resonate in this theme, as does the cognitive potential of the visual (through photographs and other forms of imagery), thus partially and thankfully displacing the disproportionate emphasis on what James Elkins terms 'those beautiful, dry and distant texts'. (The next step would be a theme that explores more expansively the sensual properties of the archive, and their potentially generative role in constructing new understandings.)

A political concern in administering the archive is the shift from analogue to digital, where the privatisation of information clashes directly with the utopian ideals of open access. Although Sylvester Ogbechie (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA) appreciates the value of curating the digital archive as a process of intellectual synthesis, his paper titled *Archiving Africa Across the Digital Divide: The Ezechime Archive Project* interprets the digitisation of archives as a replication of an earlier colonial paradigm. His analysis of this 'new scramble for Africa' postulates as to the value of African cultural knowledge (produced in Africa using African resources, or extracted from Africa for processing elsewhere) within a global economy, how international digitisation

of African archives convert this value into economic currency, and why the benefits of these processes do not accrue within the continent itself. Francis Garaba (University of KwaZulu-Natal, SA) emphasises this anxiety when he asks of the digitised archive: 'Who shows it? Who vets the information? Who has access?' His paper, titled *The Digital Revolution and its Implications on Liberation Struggle Archives*, distinguishes the digitisation of African archives and their subsequent use by Western scholars as an act of neo-colonial capitalism. How do South African artists deal with this conundrum?

During the years that apartheid was being consolidated in South Africa, there were two publications that seemed to stand as icons for this time. The first was the hated *dompas* (dumb pass), a document issued by the apartheid government that limited the movement of black South Africans. The second was *Drum* magazine.

From just after its founding in 1951, until its (temporary) demise in 1965, *Drum* magazine was known as a progressive publication that focused not only on the effects of apartheid politics on black South Africans, but simultaneously celebrated the rich cultural life evolving in the burgeoning apartheid 'townships'. It was the first magazine in the country that published the work of black writers and photographers, and its popular culture appeal ensured a wide, almost national,

readership. Primarily, however, *Drum* became an outlet for some of the leading cultural activists whose work was, inevitably, a critique of apartheid South Africa. The magazine's period of greatest efficacy was delimited by the Defiance Campaign in 1951 (which formulated the ANC's insistence on democracy as the key to political liberation) and the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 (which saw a PAC demonstration against the *dompas* turn violent after confrontation by police). These were the bookends of *Drum*: optimism and determination on the one side, death on the other. And as for the nine years in between, life carried on in the face of increasingly brutal apartheid attempts to make illegal the evolution of black culture, politics and intellect. And it is this life that happens, regardless, that sparks the work of Sam Nhlengethwa, Sue Williamson and Joanne Bloch, three artists who draw on the principles of administering the archive to produce very different bodies of work.

'Administration', and its nasty relative 'bureaucracy', were the methodological cornerstones of apartheid; their tools were, understandably, the multiple copy and the transfer of information (the 'cut and paste'), tools chosen by Williamson and Nhlengethwa as their *modus operandi.*

Sue Williamson's *For thirty years next to his heart* (1990) is composed of multiple colour photocopies of Ncithakalo John Ngesi's hated apartheid *dompas*. Installed as a tight grid (a visual metaphor for the processes of administration and bureaucracy, and also for the apartheid management system), the work shows lists of dates of the movement of the book's holder, officialised with government stamps, details of tax payments, stipulations of authorised places of residency and employment… The *dompas* survived numerous attempts at eradication, and its persistence even after the Sharpeville Massacre ensured that life, for black South Africans, continued to be accompanied by that document of control. Its insidiousness can be seen by the fact that, even after it was no longer necessary, Ngesi continued to carry the book. *For thirty years…* is a detailed look at one aspect of black life under apartheid, using that hated icon of oppression.

Sam Nhlengethwa's *Glimpses of the Fifties and Sixties* (2002–2003), on the other hand, examines a multiplicity of views through his use of the technique of collage. And, like Ngesi's *dompas*, the iconography here is familiar: we have seen it in the pages of *Drum* magazine from that era; we know the visual language of the family photographs that commemorate birthdays, weddings and other family rituals; we recognise the places and situations that Nhlengethwa re-conjures. The violence inherent in the collage process (tearing, cutting, splicing) is manifest in the content of certain of the works that

reference the inhumanity that accompanied the growth of the apartheid form of capitalism: mining, migrant labour, urbanisation and the development of black townships. The violence is also evident in the depiction of the resistance movement against apartheid whether through direct confrontation or more nuanced cultural interventions. However, Nhlengethwa is also adept at using the constructive elements of collage (piecing together, making things work, transforming disjointed components into narratives of love, creating sense from chaos) to present evidence of normal, everyday life. And it is here that the series seems to do its most exciting work: where images of playing children, for example, stand in stark contrast to the notion of the 'abject black' that so often, still now, accompanies contemporary recollections of apartheid.

Joanne Bloch's *Hoard* (2013) is a faux anthropological installation of modelling clay facsimiles – wonky, not to scale, sprayed gold – of items selected from three collections. The bulk of the source objects are gleaned from the haphazard, often incoherent collection of the University of Cape Town's Manuscripts and Archives Department composed of objects tainted with the whiff of colonial expansion; less from the ancient Mapungubwe collection of gold objects now housed by the-then bastion of apartheid education, the University of Pretoria; and from the artist's personal collection. Together, rendered cohesive by the materiality of their copies, the three collections become one, merging the institutional with the personal, the historical with the contemporary, the really valuable with the ostensibly worthless, objects that carry feelings with those that are cold and lifeless, items rich in their heritage and provenance usually displayed under conservation grade lighting and security with those who wallow near-forgotten, without documented histories, in obscure drawers in cupboards behind doors in rooms hardly visited.

By giving these very different kinds of objects the same treatment, the artist adamantly calls into question, and defiantly overthrows, the arbitrary nature of the act of bestowing importance. *Hoard* brings to the fore multiple layers of value. The archives, including as they do rare material, are of course economically valuable. They are also important in terms of history and heritage. Their significance is intellectual in critical scholarship. Their role as contemporary cultural products leads to an appreciation that many find invaluable. Due to their temporal scope, they are essential as markers of highly specific shifts, and allow patterns to develop. It then becomes the curatorial role of the artist to utilise this scientific trope – selecting, categorising and presenting information – as the building blocks of their creative practice. The artist then mediates between the didactic,

analytical trope on the one hand, and the poetic aesthetic on the other. In this way, their contemporary practice reveals hidden meanings or creates new ones.

The preconditions for the assignation of value, and its subsequent enactment, may be interpreted as a form of cause and effect that finds an analogy in Pierre Bourdieu's *The Logic of Practice* (1990). He writes that conditional freedoms, manifest in dispositions, imply the possibility of 'the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production'. Initially used to explain cultural production, Bourdieu's theories may here be applied to the agency inherent in contemporary archival practice, where 'a change in agent's position necessarily entails a change in the field's structure'. It may not be too great a rhetorical leap then if the works on exhibition become partly an attempt to demonstrate how agents change position, and cross between fields, to enact constantly changing relationships. In other words, proactive archive practitioners have the agency to change their environment. Bourdieu postulates that fields are a range of 'structured spaces', each 'with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force independent of those of politics and the economy'. In other words, the power wielded by political agency may potentially have a counterpoint in the agency exerted by creative archival practice. At its simplest level, this logic replaces the rigidity of dogma (the grand narrative) with the fluidity of cultural agency (new and constantly evolving narratives that shift with each context). And herein is vested the most important question of the exhibition: could the situational and the specific – as evidenced in the diversity of exhibited case studies in *Hoard* – work as tools against the violent gloss-over – arising by the presentation of the 'norm', and its negation of dissenting voices and experiences – of the preconceived conclusions of a research process?

Performing the archive

In antithesis to the archive as a traditionally inanimate repository, *Performing the archive* draws attention to how contemporary live performances are able to personify the past and present these to a contemporary audience with immediacy, relevance and advocacy. Case studies of music, dance, theatre and arts festivals show how this embodiment of the archive is put to political use by shifting colonial stereotypes to the benefit of nationalist post-colonialities. It is especially in the manner in which it subverts the tropes of ethnography that performance is central in enacting, and understanding, the conversations that arise through the diaspora. Mirjam de Bruijn (African Studies Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands), in her report
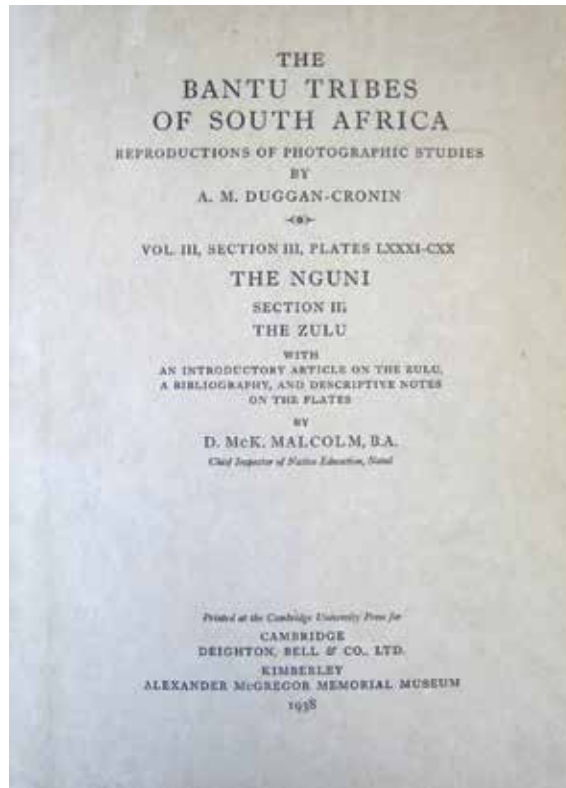
Cover of Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin's *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: Vol lll, Section lll, The Nguni, Section: The Zulu*, Published by Cambridge University Press for the Alexander McGregor Memorial Museum, 1938, Courtesy of the Duggan-Cronin Collection, McGregor Museum, Kimberley, South Africa

of the research by Walter Gam Nkwi (University of Buea, Cameroon) titled *The status of Memory in Family Photo Albums in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon*, describes how personal photographic archives were transformed, through nuanced and sensitive reading, and mediation via the making of a film, into an analysis of the aspirations of mobility. Of the range of curatorial methodologies applied here, one of the more powerful is the formative intellectual agency of the nature of affect, and its role in creating new readings, meanings and understandings. Of special interest is the manner in which the research directs a possible future of the physical object, a future that continues to define a path quite different to that of the digital highway.

In 1904, Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin started his life's path as one of the more successful perpetrators of a branch of ethnographic photography that sought to prove that black people could indeed be classified, and more importantly classified as comparably different to white Europeans. His was an anthropometric photography (devoid of the contexts that came to define ethnographic photography in the 1930s). And today, his work is an archival source of material that has come

to define the increasingly typological, tribalising and racist view of native South Africans in the early 1900s. The use of the definite article from the ethnographer's eleven-volume *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa* is telling in its fervent repetition: *The Bavenda*, *The Nguni*, *The Vathonga*... Thus named, the fearful swarm of Bantu (the mighty 'other') – individually unidentifiable to the colonial settlers – could be tamed through the principle and practice of divide and rule, and become more manageable through compartmentalisation into smaller groups.

In response to the photographic archive of Duggan-Cronin, Andrew Putter created *Native Work* (2013) which finds, in the 'stultifying, primitivising' work of Alfred Duggan-Cronin, an archive of images that the artists describes as deeply beautiful. The artist's reaction to this archive is manifest in two series. In the first, a group of black and white photo prints mimic Duggan-Cronin's images. It is only when the viewer starts noting the niggling unfamiliarity of the costumes, or the indefinable, fluid, malleable flexibilities of the races of the models (the non-category), that the power of the project emerges. Each of Putter's 'ethnographic' photographs is given a title that begins to hint at the performance inherent in the imagery from the early 1900s: *Notyatyambo Madiglana as An Initiate*, *Sakhiwo Ndubata as A Chief*, *Siyasanga Bushula as A Mbira Player*... The titles indicate that Putter's subjects (and, by extrapolation, Duggan-Cronin's subjects) are playing performative roles in their transactions with the photographers. It is not an ostensible 'truth' that is being portrayed, it is the filmic documentation of a performance. In an accompanying digital installation, each of Putter's 'ethnographic' sitters is then shown in contemporary garments of their own choosing. Thus, ironically, inasmuch as the ethnography may be described as performative, the 'real-life' may be equally performative, where the presentation choices made by the sitter are designed to convey the representation of the self, as constructed on an individual basis.

And this is where the full power comes to the fore: Putter may be concluding that Duggan-Cronin's subjects themselves played a significant role in their representation, and in the making of the anthropological archive. The repercussion of this is staggering in the way it emphatically negates the presumed unidirectional flow of power that so besets historical scholarship. Instead it is possible that early ethnographic photography may, with contemporary hindsight, be interpreted as evidence of mutual, equal and opposing displays of vectors of power and representation, in the meeting of two very different groups of people.

Jay Pather, a member of the exhibition's curatorial committee, describes that the evolution of live art 'emerged from what was known as performance art to include new media that does not necessarily have a performer. Traces of performance art emerged in the late 1800s in Europe, culminating at the beginning of the twentieth century in such movements as the Dadaists and the Futurists. But while these movements were happening, for example, Picasso was deriving much of his inspiration from the African continent. [Thus] the combination of performing and the visual and plastic arts was very much part of this continent, especially in such events as rituals and ceremonies. In the 1970s and 80s in South Africa, however, another kind of more anarchic live art began to emerge from the fringes of art making, giving this ephemeral form weight, history and focus. It has become impossible to ignore the great mavericks who transcend disciplinary boundaries with work that speaks directly to immediate experience and ironically requires fewer codes to understand what is going on.'
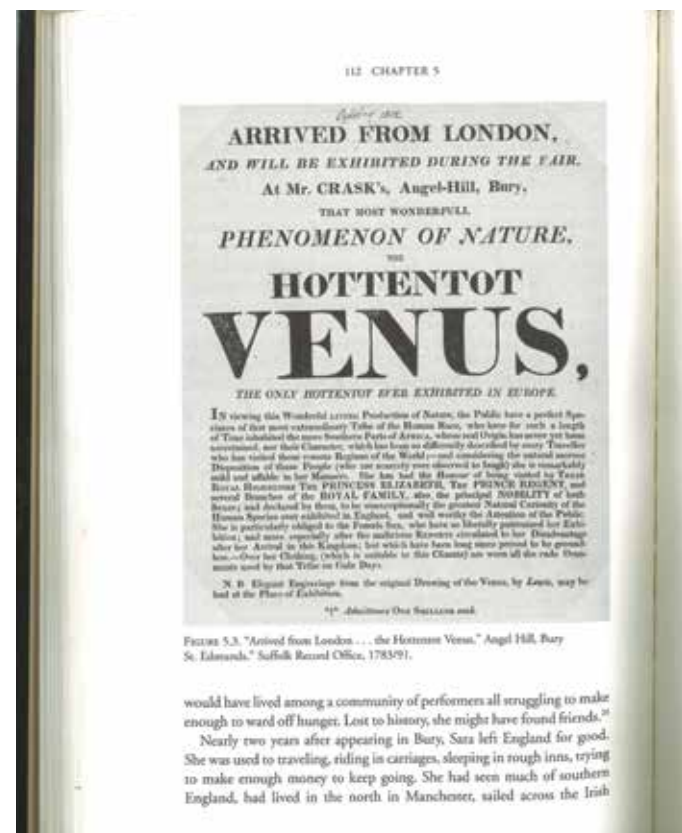

Excerpt from *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: a ghost story and a biography* by Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, Princeton University Press, 2009, USA Courtesy of Pamela Scully

It is within this realm that the public performances of Nelisiwe Xaba, Athi-Patra Ruga and Donna Kukama do their work. As with all archives worth their salt, the site-specific works presented as part of *Imaginary Fact* build on previous manifestations which then, in effect, become archives in their own right. Xaba's *Venus in Venice* (2013) is a reworking of two earlier solo pieces, *They Look at Me and That's All They Think* and *Sarkozy says NoN to the Venus*. Ruga's *The Future White Women of Azania* boasts a pageant of precursors, the Biennale's *The Trial* (2013) being a step forward from *The manifesto* and *The procession*. Kukama's *Investment Bank of Elsewhere (Is Survival not Archival?)* (2013) follows on from *Investment Bank of Elsewhere (est. 2012)*. Each further incarnation of these performances sees the concept develop with each site-specific performance, enriching the works' archive through a thorough engagement with – and a curation of – both the source material and the flexible functioning of that very material.

As enticing as the curatorial tasks set by these performers is the richness and diversity of their archival sources. Xaba draws on the archive of Saartjie Baartman who, until her death in 1815 at the age of 25, was displayed in European circuses and exhibition shows under the pseudonym 'Hottentot Venus'. Secondary to the act of mining an archive resonant with the human rights abuses that accompanied colonial expansion (and their subsequent post-colonial reiteration), Xaba's interests are here vested in the discord between the plethora of information on Baartman's physicality on the one hand, and her psychology on the other. The fixity of the archive of Baartman then becomes a body of material for interpretation with contemporary hindsight.

Although the earliest mention of Azania dates back to Pliny the Elder (born in AD 23), the first mention of the name in a South African context appears in the 1930s reports of archaeological diggings at Mapungubwe, and it is here that Ruga's mythological queendom finds her roots. Given more recent political grounding by the later Azanian People's Organisation (or Azapo, a South African liberation organisation formed in 1978 as an offshoot of the Black Consciousness Movement philosophy of Steve Biko), Ruga takes this ostensibly masculine history and imbues it with a violet hue that may, in a word, be described as queer, where 'queer' is defined by the insistence on taking an alternate stance. And it is here that the works start revealing their true queer practice as, in the words of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, 'a specific resistance to objectifications of society construed according to the normative coordinates of subjectivity, identity and community'. Even further, *The Future White Women…* (2013) seem to have, vested in their scholarship, some aspect of the

three methods of queer pedagogy described by Deborah Britzman as 'the study of limits, the study of ignorance, and the study of reading practices'.
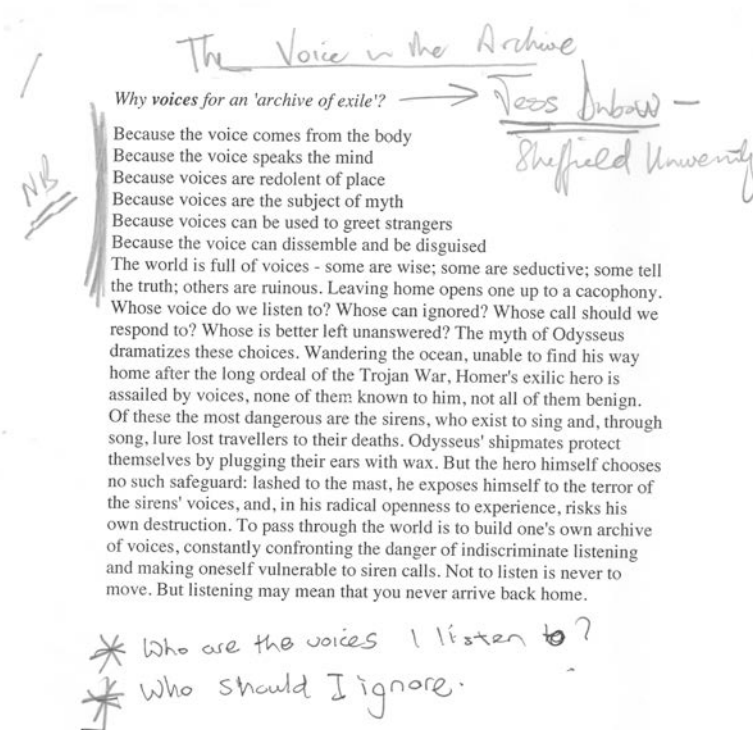
The project may be read as a set of 'impertinent performances' that are, to quote William Haver's reading of queer pedagogy, 'an *interruption*' of the world by pedagogies. It is then ultimately here that the work becomes more emphatic about its true allegiance to queer methodologies; that the actions of research become, not method or means to an end, but points of departures, positions of influence, intrusions and disruptions; constant creativity and the infinite possibility that, according to Britzman, what is important is not that 'anyone might be queer', but that 'something queer might happen to anyone'.

Kukama's *Investment Bank…* (2013) accesses altogether more contemporary archives: a global fiscal economy in the pits of recession, and an air supply that is rapidly losing its status of 'fresh'. By trading with these commodities, Kukama creates an archive of the now, preserving it for access later in life, possibly by another generation. Contrary to much of today's archival practice which looks at historical records with the benefit of hindsight, Kukama's agency is vested in the skill of her foresight, pointing the way to an exhilarating new creative direction in this sector.

Spatialisation of the archive

Case studies of the agencies of performance lead into the power shifts that define post-independence, and its public statements where the built edifice – the monument – functions as emblem of nationalist identities, and also as a shift to an era where heritage has become a product. *Spatialisation of the archive* addresses the irony of packaging the social imperative of liberation movements for capitalist consumption. In an extreme example, Olutayo Adesina (University of Ibadan, Nigeria), in *Archival Documents and the Gatekeepers in the Twenty-first Century: Reconfiguring Nigeria's National Archives*, draws similarities between Nigerian and South African national archives, with their removal of support and destruction of records. In the case of Nigeria, however, the trend is toward the creation of a black-market situation through the commercialisation of archival practice and privatisation of records. The consequence is that working with Nigerian records is becoming too costly an undertaking for scholars, precipitating a move toward research that does not require the use of these commercial archives.

At first viewing, the work of Johannes Phokela may be seen as beautiful and undemanding. In keeping with

The Voice in the Archive

Tess Dubow —

Sheffield University

NB

Why **voices** for an 'archive of exile'?

Because the voice comes from the body
Because the voice speaks the mind
Because voices are redolent of place
Because voices are the subject of myth
Because voices can be used to greet strangers
Because the voice can dissemble and be disguised
The world is full of voices - some are wise; some are seductive; some tell the truth; others are ruinous. Leaving home opens one up to a cacophony. Whose voice do we listen to? Whose can ignored? Whose call should we respond to? Whose is better left unanswered? The myth of Odysseus dramatizes these choices. Wandering the ocean, unable to find his way home after the long ordeal of the Trojan War, Homer's exilic hero is assailed by voices, none of them known to him, not all of them benign. Of these the most dangerous are the sirens, who exist to sing and, through song, lure lost travellers to their deaths. Odysseus' shipmates protect themselves by plugging their ears with wax. But the hero himself chooses no such safeguard: lashed to the mast, he exposes himself to the terror of the sirens' voices, and, in his radical openness to experience, risks his own destruction. To pass through the world is to build one's own archive of voices, constantly confronting the danger of indiscriminate listening and making oneself vulnerable to siren calls. Not to listen is never to move. But listening may mean that you never arrive back home.

* Who are the voices I listen to?
* Who should I ignore.

The voice in the archive: Notes to composer Philip Miller from Jessica Dubow, Sheffield University, Undated, Courtesy of Dr Jessica Dubow

the technique of Dutch and Flemish Old Masters, Phokela paints glowing light and broiling shadows in oils on canvas. His subjects are familiar. Upon closer view, however, African figures and faces often appear amidst the familiarity of the European settings. And herein is the first real element of disturbance. The signs lodged within the works start changing their possible historical and contemporary readings. The outcome is an in-your-face contestation of allegory in history, a shameless re-branding with contemporary hindsight, a re-assignment of meaning, and unconcealed attribution. It is in this position that Phokela is simultaneously artist and interpreter, practitioner and theorist.

Two works from Phokela are on exhibition on *Imaginary Fact*. In *South Pacific Seascape* (2012), an oil painting on canvas, a Polynesian native clubs a European shipwrecked sailor to death. The screaming text on the surface is as unambivalent as the visual it describes: 'Eating people isn't always wrong'. Based on an archival newspaper clipping, and referencing the historical and popular thinking, by Europeans, of the uncivilised 'other' native, the work may, on the surface, be read as an uncomplicated depiction of a popular mythology.

However, soon the text, the faraway ship and burning oilrig, and the blank book by the side of the 'victim' lose their literality and begin to be read as symbols. Collectively, one may be forgiven if they are interpreted as an ironic subversion of anthropophagia, through language and culture, economics and materiality.

Gradually it becomes increasingly startling to see just how unforgiving Phokela is in his overt subversion. Visual iconographic displacement, insertion and substitution become violent tools for stabs, gouges and rough welds. A further effect of the artist's allegorical shifts – placing contemporary Africa into historical Europe – is in condensing time. It is a neat trick that introduces temporal simultaneity into the art historical tradition of fixing time. In the same way that layering produces richness, this simultaneity of tenses is heightened when past and current are condensed onto a two-dimensional, painted plane. It is here that history merges with contemporary anthropology, the action of which compels new readings and meanings. Derridian definitely, attributively possibly, one may deduce that this device *also* creates the possibility of multiple meanings; *also* questions the master narrative that often defines modern European arrogance.

The *Collar Series* (2006) are three oil on paper works of the unpainted faces of a *City official/mayor, Son of a rich man* and an *Army officer*. Their collars depict professional and personal status. Although their iconographical presentation hints at their European lineage, the fact that their faces are left blank introduces the element of doubt into Phokela's rip-offs: creating subversion, creating parodies, characterising demeanour not origin. However, as we know that these characters have an alarming longevity, Phokela's work may be viewed as an act of insurgency against today's remainders of European colonial action, being and thought. It may be possible then that, through this reference, Phokela underlines his key intention: to question the insidious system of colonial values that perpetuate themselves through symbols, signs and icons, regardless of lineage, race, social or economic status.

Rorke's Drift, established in the 1960s as a centre for training artists, is renowned for its striking, narrative, black ink prints. Because much of the work directly commented on conditions experienced in the rural setting of the centre and its collaborators, the visual imagery indirectly became an important critique of the effect of apartheid generally. One of the centre's leading artists during that time was John Muafangejo, whose work was characterised by the inclusion of text that served not only as a visual device, but also to reinforce the narrative of the work, or series of works. His *A*

Good Shepard (1974), for example, shows the familiar iconography of Jesus as a shepherd reinforced by text that names the subject, and his activity: the powerful spiritual leader at the helm of those destined for conversion. That the western bible and its iconographies feature so strongly in Muafangejo's work is no coincidence: he was, after all, one of the unbelievers led onto the straight and narrow by the Lutheran missionaries who established Rorke's Drift.

Cameron Platter appropriates this print of Muafangejo in his pencil crayon drawing *The Good Shepard Presents Dr. Bomboka* (2009). However, unlike Muafangejo's (presumably) sincere depiction of the leader of the Christian faith, Platter presents him as a contemporary, crack healer, one of the many charlatans in South African cities who entice patients with promises of success at gambling and love, potions for penis enlargement and prolonged intercourse… Platter thus derives his work from two archives. By using just one of Muafangejo's prints, Platter is able to reference an important visual language in South African art history as an indicator of how European missionaries put to use their churches, schools and hospitals towards the colonisation of community and culture, often through spirituality and language. Often located within the country's rural areas, many of these institutions of colonial origin established in the early 1800s found themselves, after the 1960s, located within the new apartheid 'homelands', and the visual language that developed in isolation at places like Rorke's Drift provide a unique, dual insight into both European colonisation and apartheid. Further, Platter appropriates a second archive into his work: a contemporary collation of statements from leaflets of healers who, like the perpetuation of Christianity, create a situation for desperation. That is how the Christian movement made its money; this is how the crack confidence tricksters make theirs.

A further convolution appears when we consider that lino prints, like those produced by Muafangejo, have come to define the historical struggle against apartheid. Here though is that very medium put to colonial use by Muafangejo. The convolution becomes more convoluted when Platter notes that he is a (very) advantaged white South African male appropriating (cannibalising) the work of a black 'struggle artist'. What are we to make of this?

Nelson Mandela, Che Guevara and Mahatma Ghandi are leaders in the field of political resistance, and their popular appeal is reflected in the reproduction of their iconographic forms on consumer items. T-shirts and other fabric, peak-caps and other forms of headgear, posters advertising anything from music concerts to

beach parties, bags, and computer icons… Steve Biko, founder of the Black Consciousness Movement, has become such a popular icon. Tortured and killed by the apartheid police in 1977, the image of Biko has now assumed legendary proportions, and he is increasingly hailed as one of the heroes of the struggle for liberation and, with it, comes a t-shirt range. Forgotten is the archival history of his entrapment, torture and murder. His humanity, and his fallibility, gives way for the growth of Biko, the icon; individual memory becomes subsumed by a consumer-driven, collective appeal.

David Koloane's *The Journey* narrates the final few hours of Steve Biko. For the work, Koloane relied on his own memory (a personal archive) and also the more recent TRC hearing on Biko's death. Unlike the status of the icon, Koloane here attempts to restore the simplicity of the horror of torture and murder to a collective consciousness. The power of apartheid, and the methods it employed, have now become, for many, nothing more than a vague memory of a period in history. The TRC provided a temporary bump on an otherwise inevitable slide towards a relegation to the past; a forgetting.

The recurrence of motifs in Koloane's artworks reflects an enduring preoccupation with the continued effects of apartheid: urbanity, township living, dogs as metaphor for both comfort and terror… However, Koloane is a cultural activist, born in the 1930s, who has dedicated his life to the development of collective creative practice in South Africa. As with his visual motifs, memory has become one of his defining principles, underlined by an insistence on continuity. Unlike the stardom that comes with popular appeal, Koloane's depiction of the death of Steve Biko appears to be another form of monumentality, one altogether more subtle and nuanced. The vivid drawings that make up *The Journey* require great effort to establish their roots. Easy acceptance of the icon is surpassed in Koloane's insistence that remembering is a process that is dynamic and proactive. The consumerist sub-conscious appeal (the passive approach) is forgone in favour of a consciousness that stimulates enquiry about the event itself whilst it contributes to an analysis of the process of memory itself.

In the mid-1990s in South Africa, after the official 'end' of apartheid, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established as a tool for restorative justice, where both 'victims' and 'perpetrators' could give testimonies. This was a mammoth undertaking, and the resulting process of being heard, forgiveness and (possibly) amnesty became the subject of a number of critiques, both positive and negative, and provided subject matter for a number of books, films and theatre

productions. One such production was *REwind: A Cantata for voice, tape and testimony* (2007 to 2013), composed by Philip Miller and visualised by Gerhard and Maja Marx, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the TRC. Its timing, intention and execution was, in effect, an attempt at monumentalising the monument that was the TRC.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Home Page   04/11/2007 ... 46 MM

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

DAY 3 - 24 APRIL 1996

CASE NO: CT/00600

VICTIM: MLANDELI WALTER MQIKELA

VIOLATION: TORTURE

TESTIMONIES FROM: MLANDELI MQIKELA [son]

NTOSILE MQIKELA [father]

DR BORAINE:

Mr Mqikela can you hear me?

MR MQIKELA:

Yes.

DR BORAINE:

Have you got the earphones all right - okay I will be speaking to you in English the translation will be into Xhosa is that all right, is it coming through all right.

MR MQIKELA:

Yes I can hear it.

DR BORAINE:

Mr Mqikela I have to ask you to please stand for the taking of the oath.

MLANDELI WALTER MQIKELA Duly sworn states

DR BORAINE:

Thank very much. Mr Ntosile Private Mqikela that is you.

MR MQIKELA:

Yes that is me.

DR BORAINE:

---- www.doj.gov.za/trc/trc_frameset.htm

Transcript from the amnesty hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Day 3, 24 April 1996, Testimony of Mlandeli Walter Mqikela

For *Imaginary Fact*, the three artists again collaborated to produce *REwind* (2007 to 2013) which, although using the source material of its original manifestation, is here recreated into an installation with separate video and audio components. Two discrete archives provide the starting points. In the first, Miller samples audio recordings from the TRC hearings which, when woven into musical compositions, provide the operatic

soundtracks that tell individual stories. Whilst the original theatre production merged the compositions into a sequence, the audio-visual installation on *Imaginary Fact* allows each composition (each individual's story) to be heard as a separate audio feed. In this way, an individual story becomes a proxy for hundreds and thousands of similar narratives; one thing stands in for a host of others. This is a powerful device; one that takes the emotion of traumatic incident and expands it (at least psychologically) into a collective incident of infinite proportions. But even more intriguing is the manner in which Miller uses not only the words from the testimonies, but also the pauses, the sighs, verbalised punctuation, and the inhalations and exhalations that together compose one of the cornerstones of life. Not content with the archive in its traditional role as 'documentary', Miller here introduces the importance of an alternate archive; one based on the 'missing' aspects where an inflection is as much a form of communication as an accusation, or a repentance.

In the second archive for *REwind*, Gerhard Marx and Maja Marx accessed their immediate, contemporary, environments to provide the filmic accompaniments to the audio score. By taking the TRC testimonies, and finding their visual equivalents within the artists' (often domestic) surroundings, the artists succeed in transposing an archive into another context, paving the way for relationships between seemingly unrelated events, records and experiences. Again, the concept of the proxy comes to the fore, where a traumatic apartheid event may easily find a home in today's world. A direct result of this thinking is the fact that contemporary archive practice may be used as a means to trace the perpetuation of history into the world, as we know it, today.

Stop-frame animation was the main tool of visual production, a laborious and time-consuming process that re-creates the process of time by slowing it down. Each little movement, which in real time would go by often unnoticed, here becomes a gesture made monumental by the painstaking process of its production. As with Miller's audio compositions, one of the effects of slowing down time is the ability to examine, in greater detail, what would normally flash by in an instant. Its primary role would be in more effective reflection, and a greater depth of understanding, that arises from a more thorough consideration.

# Post-independence media formations

Front page of *The Star* newspaper, Johannesburg, 8 September 1966, showing a photograph of the killer of H. F. Verwoerd, Dimitrios Tsafendas, and a replica of the knife he used

In both colonial and post-independence regimes, traditional forms of video and audio played pivotal roles in political power plays and shifts. Their initial and often short-lived deployment in propaganda put to use the sector's greatest asset: that of the seemingly one-way flow, where information generated and disseminated by the group in power reached an audience rendered as passive consumers without the means to register their critiques. This scenario also came to define the early stages of the digital era. More recently however, enhanced digital functionality – with its proliferation of user-friendly social media – challenges this unidirectional flow of power. Now, the means to choose, generate, selectively reproduce, alter and redistribute mass media broadcasts results in a practice that is often beyond the control of the state. It is this public ownership of rhetoric (optimistically called the democratisation of media) that is explored by the scholars in the theme *Post-independence media formations*. Jonathan Cole (University of California, Berkeley, USA), in his paper titled *Is Google Good for African History?*, outlines the technical realities where digital archives can be applied as both a tool of the state and a threat to the state, a notion that Peter Bloom (University of California, USA), highlighted in his

opening address, noting that ideologies create archives and, reciprocally, archives themselves create ideologies.

The films of Penny Siopis weave together very different types of archives. For *Obscure White Messenger* (2010), Siopis re-imagines the death of H F Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid, by the hand of Demitrios Tsafendas, a South African deprived of his land and home. The most striking of juxtapositions in the film is a psychiatrist's interview with Tsafendas (played as text along the bottom of the screen) with found 8mm and 16mm footage of white South African families. The text and the film footage were originally unrelated; within their confines in history, they had different originators, audiences and functions. However, when Siopis splices them together, butts them up against each other, they begin to converse with each other, each supplementing the other as, together, they construct a narrative. Suddenly the films of white families at play reveal themselves as evidence of complicity in apartheid; simultaneously the psychiatrist's interview with the 'murderer' reveals the covert practices of an apartheid that relied on obfuscation, misrepresentations, and half-truths… By this creative act of juxtaposition (video collage, as it were), Siopis highlights the mutability of meaning, even meaning vested within the archive, that bastion of 'unchanging truth'.
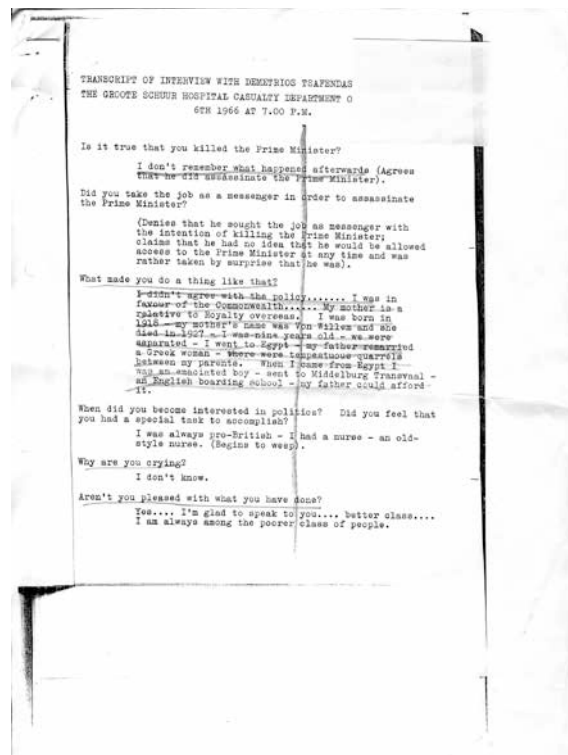
Digital copy of the transcript with Demetrios Tsafendas (sic), Groote Schuur Hospital Casualty Department, 1966

This is a radical approach to creative archival practice which extends on the traditional approach of using available archival fragments (what is there) to fill the gaps (what is not there), in a bid to construct a more complete and coherent narrative. By combining the tools of historiography and anthropology, these studies rely on extrapolation. Here, proof is never absolute, and the narrative is continually refined and channelled towards the realm of the increasingly probable (the possible). Eventually, this scientific approach reaches a tipping point where no further claims may be generated. It is here that the more unorthodox approach of Siopis steps in with the application of a contemporary literary technique, one that merges the documentary (the evidence) with fictional construction (the invention). This practice, termed 'documentary fiction' or 'fictional documentary', extends archival fragments to close the gaps with a narrative approaching the realm of the plausible (the believable). This blurring of genres signals an influential new direction in creative, archival narrative construction, one that celebrates a rare talent: that of productive imagination.

Obscure White Messenger has a further importance: by subversion and imaginary reconstruction, the work underlines how, as Peter Bloom noted, ideologies create archives and, reciprocally, how archives themselves create ideologies.

It is this practice of transposition that James Webb applies to his *Children of the Revolution* (2013), where his primary archive is the original 1972 rendition of the glam rock anthem by T. Rex. The song itself has an archive history that includes cover versions, extensive sampling and reproduction. Its lyrics speak about teenage rebellion and here, in Webb's remake, are translated into isiXhosa and arranged for voice and megaphone. The audio work plays into *Imaginary Fact* intermittently, catching people unawares.

In the 1970s the song became part of popular culture that joined people together in collective, revolutionary action. Its origins as an anthem of resistance thus removes it from its European spacial and cultural specificities, and enables it to be transposed to a 1970s South Africa defined by the 1976 Soweto youth uprising. The function of this transposition is more than just making rock 'n roll South African. It is certainly more than just a reference to a specific age. It resurrects an archived political statement and makes it contemporary in a manner that comments on the relevance of the past in today's world. In effect, the work becomes a renewed call for rigorous, concerted and sustained political action.

Even further, and possibly more importantly in the sector of contemporary archival practice, it calls into question the issue of ownership and copyright of archived voices of dissent. This is not a simplistic and innocuous enquiry into the legality of artist rights. Instead, the matter gains in resonance when it comes up against the silencing of dissention in the archive. Of central importance is the sticky political issue of custodianship. Arguably, the guardians of the archive direct what may be seen and not seen, and the manner in which it is seen. In this very obvious way, custodians present a highly specific, highly limited mode of reading the archive, steering its interpretation. The custodian of the archives is thus, problematically, central in the creation of its meaning. Archives are often held by institutions whose interests are vested in public perception; a veritable minefield in which forces, insidious and unseen, do their work. By devolving power to both the work of art and the tools of its custody, Webb underlines the subtle manner in which institutions create themselves through their modes and facilities of access.

Cover of *T-Rex, Metal Guru (Marc Bolan)*, Published through the collaboration of Wizard Artists and EMI South Africa, 1972, Photo by Elly Clarke

But, before we get bogged down in theories of conspiracy, let's have a look at the lyrics:

Yeah
Well, you can bump and grind, it is good for your mind
Well, you can twist and shout, let it all hang out
But you won't fool the children of the revolution
No, you won't fool the children of the revolution, no no no
Well, you can tear a plane in the falling rain
I drive a Rolls Royce 'cause it's good for my voice
But you won't fool the children of the revolution
No, you won't fool the children of the revolution, no no no,
Yeah
But you won't fool the children of the revolution
No, you won't fool the children of the revolution
No, you won't fool the children of the revolution
No, you won't fool the children of the revolution, no way,
yeah, wow

Archival absences and surrogate collections of the African state

As the field of archival practice advanced into new terrain, explorers who started their investigations at state-administered, centralised archives went in search of alternative repositories. The first port of call yielded abundant treasures within individual government departments, supplemented by the holdings of non-governmental organisations ('surrogates of the state'), and also private corporations and foundations. Although many of these archives were located within the colonised territory itself, others were formed and/or located outside of national borders, becoming important in studies of diasporas. The dispersal of archives, along with their inherent temporal and dynamic nature, highlighted an important reality: gaps were inevitable. Building a complete archive is an impossible task, and this is what the fifth and final theme – *Archival absences and surrogate collections of the African state* – interrogates with case studies that invent novel methodologies to make sense of ruptures in the archival body.

In *Shadow Archives and the Contingencies of Postcolonial History Writing: Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana, 1957–1966*, Jean Allman (Washington University, USA) writes about the challenges of working with archives of the colony and the post-colony not located within the nation state itself, and highlights the limiting effects of the 'illusion of the national archive'. One way around that difficulty was to follow the threads of a number of 'shadow archives' in collections across the globe, a process marked by dislocation, dispersion and a lack of cohesion. An initial frustration later matured into a

more productive question into the possibilities of how the lack of a national archive could lead to the writing of a new history.

From another perspective, Allman's work may also be read as a signal of an approach that negates the importance of the fragment. Instead, her study may point to an invitation to focus on archival fissures as a new, as yet unexplored, body of material. These absences may then be read not in their traditionally linear relationship to fragments but as an independent archive with its own structure, history and function. Allman's project is not an attempt to read between the lines, nor is it the identification of a palimpsest (both of which would continue to posit the fragment narrative as the dominant discourse). By denying these 'missing pieces' their traditionally abject status, Allman may be generating a radical methodology, one that endeavours to decipher, incredulously, an archive of absence.

Screen grabs from Inkanyiso.org, a WordPress.com site founded by Zanele Muholi in 2006 as an archive of contemporary human rights abuses

Zanele Muholi chooses to deal with this directly with her *Faces and Phases* (2006 to date), an ongoing photographic project that addresses the absence of black lesbians in prevailing bodies of records. Muholi's work is part activism and part art, a process she describes as 'visual activism'. In all photographs, the subjects look directly at the camera, indicating not only the relationship between the photographer and the sitters, but also creating a conversation between the sitter and the audience of the artwork. This is the first, and major step, in the process of self-representation: the counter-exertion of power through the gaze. Further, when the series of 200 images are installed in relation to each other, multiple conversations begin to emerge, and what began as an act of activism by Muholi has now, seven years later, developed into a network that inscribes a new archive into the prevailing canon.

This concept is, in effect, an extension of an African aesthetics that developed during the 1950s. Based on the intellectual pillars of Negritude and Pan-Africanism, Muholi's project is grounded in her earlier activist work which allowed an initial experience of a perceived otherness, a reflection on this disjuncture, a generalisation of its prevalence and effect, and an application of activist strategies to correct the problem. Because Muholi, and her subjects', perspectives are grounded in Africa, the action of legitimation may, in effect, be classified as a decolonisation of the mind. Here, as written about by Nigerian intellectuals, black Africa is adopted as a source of inspiration, tools for analysis are generated from within, and an epistemology is created.

The diversity of subjects is in direct counter to the modernist negation of African agency, the notion of difference as definitive and African art as derivative. Muholi plays a number of roles in this project, and her curatorial actions are levered on an assertion of the self and on the facilitation of the process of externalisation.

The title of the work seems to indicate that lesbianism is not a fixed state of being. Instead, the variability of the term comes about through interactions and continually transforms through conference. Further, the title, and the scope of work, transforms a conservative, nationalist notion into its plural reality. Just as there is more than one kind of black, there is more than one kind of black lesbian. This process of internal reflexivity here insists on the agency of black lesbian cultures within African cultures, and the continued role of black lesbians in the making of modernity and post-modernity. In the same way the anti-racist racism was applied as a tool of synthesis and as a strategy for subversion and rebellion to contradict colonial alienation, Muholi applies her anti-homophobic activism within a country that still continues to negate, and is unable to digest, a natural state of being.

Muholi, on her blogsite *Inkanyiso*, documents the stories of people she meets during the course of her work. The site also hosts an updated list of homophobic hate crimes, of which the following is a component:

2013

April   *Patricia 'Pat' Mashigo (36), murdered in Daveyton, Ekurhuleni, her naked body found near a local primary school.*

2012

November   *Sihle Sikhoji (19), member of Luleki Sizwe, a project that supports lesbian, bisexual and transgender women who have been raped, was stabbed to death in Samora Machel, Cape Town.*

September   *Desire Ntombana MAFU (25) was found brutally murdered at a cemetery in Dobsonville, Soweto, with multiple stab wounds.*

August   *Mandisa Mbambo (33), a lesbian, raped and murdered, found with multiple stab wounds in her outside room in Inanda, Durban. Funeral service documented in photos and video.*

June   *Hendrietta Thapelo Morifi (29), known as Andritha, lesbian, murdered in her home in Polo Park, Mokopane.*

June   *Sasha Lee Gordon, transgender person, stabbed to death in Wynberg.*

June   *Neil Daniels, transgender person, murdered in Cape Town.*

June   *Andrita Morifi, young lesbian, brutally killed in Limpopo.*

June   *Phumeza Nkolonzi (22), lesbian, shot three times in her home in front of her grandmother, in Mau Mau, Nyanga, Cape Town. Memorial and funeral service documented in photos and video.*

June   *Sanna Supa (28), lesbian, shot dead in her home in Soweto.*

June   *Thapelo Makutle (24), gay man, brutally murdered in Kuruman, Northern Cape. Memorial and funeral services documented in photos and video.*

Two bodies of sculpture make up Wim Botha's contribution to *Imaginary Fact*. In the first, a series of busts form a procession, with each bust constructed from a specific type of book: *Portrait I* (2009) is made of crossword dictionaries; *Portrait III* (2009) of bibles; *Untitled* (2011) of World Books and SA Yearbooks; *Generic Self-Portrait as an Exile* (2008) of learners' dictionaries; *Untitled (Witness series I)* (2011) of African Encyclopaedias; and *Composite Self-Portrait II* (2010) of dictionaries. These are discrete objects, defined in both their building blocks and in their forms. A certain amount of dogma has gone into their making, and the specificities of their component parts indicate the sector of the dogma. The books, and their content, come pre-loaded, dragging behind them the weight of their histories that then, through sculptural agility, find a new home within new figurative forms. In various ways various books find their way into the procession of busts, thus consciously or inadvertently addressing institutionalised attribution. Drawing on Hal Foster's writing on the 'theoretical elaboration of museological temporality and cultural temporality', Okwui Enwezor writes that 'like institutions dedicated to collecting, categories of meaning accrue and are built up over time and reframed according to institutional ideology'. Enwezor's writing on 'representations of representation' engaging 'new modalities of engagement' may be used to describe the objects on show. Phrased differently, the works highlight an epistemology of self-criticality by interrogating their activities and roles in the fields within which they operate, as they form a procession leading to Botha's second contribution to the exhibition.

Unlike its single-component precursors, *Study for the Epic Mundane* (2013) brings together a range of types of books. And unlike the busts, *Study* is seemingly physically incomplete, becoming increasingly fragmented with each new viewing. Sequences become splintered. Instead of generating a 'bigger picture' as the busts seem to lean towards, *Study* seems to lay bare provisional change; seems to revel in a situational contingency that flies in the face of the traditional approach to researching, recording, analysing and presenting historical information. This, in effect, subverts the arrogance of the modernist method of writing history: one ideology, one writer, one story that – through its prescription – becomes the prevailing dogma. Instead, Botha appears to employ a decentralised approach to presenting his modernist subjects with (if I dare use this word) a post-modern sensibility. Within *Study*, each type of book leads to a different set of data that coalesce within the figures, and then break up again into multiple and discontinuous narratives. Unlike the sombre monolithic busts, *Study* delights in figures that are fragmented and discontinuous; ambiguous; simultaneously form and

non-form; destructured, decentred, dehumanised. Unlike the busts with their leaning towards an impossible harmony, consistency, rationality and significance, *Study* revels in entropy, in the existence of the interim, in the incoherence experienced during dynamic flux.

But that is just my opinion; you may experience the work differently, thus drawing attention to the subjectivity of interpretation. The same argument holds for contemporary archival practice: different viewers read the same archive in different ways. It is here that Botha's *Study* underlines the work's remarkable contribution to the construction of the method of the open-ended conclusion.

MAPPING THE FIELD

The international contemporary visual arts sector is poised at the cusp of a radical shift, one that sees South African artists lead the way in a movement towards understanding how the past continues to impact on the world we today call home. Using the products of history as source material – from old apartheid *dompas*s, film and family snapshots, to African linocuts, paintings of the European golden age and entire libraries of books – archives have now become the building blocks for creative action. It is essential not only that an exhibition of South African art acknowledges this new movement,

but also that it makes a significant demonstration of the country's role in its international development.

The concept – artists who use materials of the past to comment on the contemporary – is also poised as an assessment to show how far South Africa has come, as we approach the 20th anniversary of our constitutional freedom. Even further, the exhibition provides us with an ideal platform to show how artists may be considered as activists in the evolution of democracy.

A current precedent of this international movement is vested in the curatorial strategy of the 2013 Venice Biennale curator, Massimiliano Gioni. Gioni has developed his exhibition on *The Encyclopedic Palace*, 'an imaginary museum … to house all worldly knowledge, bringing together the greatest discoveries of the human race, from the wheel to the satellite.' The archive may be his starting point as Gioni sets out to compile a 'cartography of our image-world [using the power of] the imagination.'

In this part of the essay, three case studies are discussed to give an indication of international and South African precedents, and each project describes how methods of collecting, curating and archival practice steer creative and intellectual production. The texts also pay close attention to the nuances between form and content in an attempt to understand the projects' trajectories. A key focus of contemporary critical practice is the promotion of archival agency, and the texts examine each project's contribution to this objective.

Case study 1:
54th Venice Biennale (2011)

The 54th Venice Biennale (2011) featured more than a hundred uses of the archive. Of special interest was *Speech Matters* at the Danish Pavilion, where curator Katerina Gregos presented the work of artists from twelve countries that explore the contested terrain of freedom of speech. The exhibition held significance not only to the South African battle for access to information, but also internationally, and the curator notes the works' direct responses to increasing press censorship in Russia, the embargo of Google through the 'Great firewall of China', suppression of voices in many North African countries, changes to media law in Hungary, the WikiLeaks scandal, increased

Thomas Hirschhorn, *Crystal of Resistance* (2011), Mixed media installation at the Swiss Pavilion, La Biennale di Venezia

surveillance in the UK and the USA, and highly charged debates about the limits of freedom of speech in several European countries.

The case of the truth, lies and the tampered archive

Zhang Dali's *A Second History* (2010) was initiated in 2003 when the artist started constructing an archive of photographs published during the reign of Mao Tse Tung. Through meticulous research at publishing houses across the country, the archive was extended using magazines and books, albums, newspapers and archival material not accessible to the public. Further, the artist located the original negatives, from which she made prints. Adopting a forensic approach in order to compare the original with the published images, Dali was able to track the changes that were made to the original material, in their transformation to the published 'official' images.

The work on the Biennale juxtaposes the original with the 'doctored' photographs and the alterations are startling: dilapidated houses of poverty transformed into middle-class apartment blocks; farms given an air of prosperity through the addition of fields of grain or increased herds; leaders moved to locations steeped in the iconographies of power more suited to managing their public image; empty fields populated with rows of productive happy workers; banks of political opponents or threats removed through airbrushing.

The project is endlessly fascinating, on many different levels. It is a reminder of a political era built through social manipulation. It demonstrates the methods of both the writing and the rewriting of history, and it maps the relationships between politics, history and its narratives. It is a story of truth and lies, and the management of slippages between them. It is an examination into the fabrication of memory. Importantly, it is presented as a historical case study that may still be ongoing, and may arguably be extrapolated into other countries. And finally, it is an indisputable reminder of the formative power – of, amongst others, the agency to construct political giants – that is vested within the archive.

Drama in the file room

Analogue material – paper and parchment, wax audio recordings, photographic and moving image film – are some of the earliest forms of physical archive. Subjected to physical wear and tear, the passing of time heralded even further indicators of decay — a process of aging exacerbated by environmental factors. Analogue documents today continue to show increasing loss of quality and, with it, an irreplaceable loss of information.

The advent and growth of digital technology has, somewhat, come to the rescue, with older analogue archives now being digitised and new material being digitally captured.

Dyanita Singh's *File Room* (2011) is a gridded installation of tightly cropped monochrome pigment prints. Printed in saturated black inks, the work's medium, format and aesthetic brings to bear a visual language that imparts a sensation of the analogue, of the paper-bound, of a room filled with files and then forgotten as time rushes on down the corridors and through the world beyond locked doors. The photographer, here, becomes the archaeologist; a researcher and recorder of a time gone by.

Obviously, the system in the filing room is one of classification. Bound volumes hold together documents of a similar nature (either a time period, or a subject field). These volumes are further grouped into stacks or rows on a shelf: a larger category. Whole bookshelves are then given over to even greater categories; shelves give way to cabinets and lockers which, in turn, give way to rooms further afield.

Yet, despite the increasingly desperate attempt at order, Singh's images relate an unmistakable instability: sheets of paper escape from their binding; files slide from the shelf they called home; shelves themselves buckle under the layered weight of time, threatening collapse. The file room, once neat and methodical (packed tight is a phrase that fits), continues to utter the ever-louder exclamations of ongoing surrender: papers flutter, books drop, shelves groan, the once accepted dogma rustles, creaks, whines, snaps.

Singh's photographs may be read simultaneously as a lament of the unstable analogue archive, but also as a celebration of the dynamic archive. It could be, the artist might be saying, that the archive has a life of its own, and will, regardless of stoic attempts, reorganise itself into a new set of meanings. Of course, until a common language is found, initial incoherence is inevitable.

Selling wreckage

In *GH0809* (2010), Palestinian artist Taysir Batniji presents a series of contemporary photographs in the format estate agents use in their shop-front windows: digital colour prints, on standard A4 paper, installed in plexiglass sleeves as a grid, illuminated by retro lighting. The viewer is seduced into coming closer, anticipating advertisements of real estate for sale. Instead we are confronted, not with pristine buildings, but with photographs of wrecks of Palestinian houses destroyed by the Israeli Army in the Gaza strip.

Below each photograph is a caption, again in the format estate agents use to describe their properties. However, instead of referencing the wreck, the descriptions are as if the buildings were healthy and whole, unscarred by the ravages of war. A particularly devastated pile of rubble boasts: 'Al-Qirim area, east of Jabalya, Al-Salam street', for example, is followed by the sales blurb: 'Area: 200 m². Building on stilts (*mezallah*), open ground floor. Three floors corresponding with three apartments. In each apartment: three rooms, grand sitting room with balconies, kitchen, and bathroom/wc. 1000 m² orchard. Main entrance 7m long, shaded by trees. Inhabitants: 40 people' (sic).

Batniji's work – exhibited on *The Future of a Promise*, a curated exhibition of Pan-Arabic art – is a contemporary archive photographed in 2010. But the places also have a strong historic resonance – of both biblical and more recent temporal dimensions – as the battleground of a people engulfed by war. In between the very recent past and the contemporary stands the reality of a politics of destruction. In this way, the artist uses the narrative of the specific and the local – the individual, the family, the home, and the community – to depict sudden, traumatic and devastating changes.

Although Batniji's project is grounded within the local, its true power is vested within the way it is able to do its work further afield. To this end, it uses the tools, tropes and languages of modernity and thus understood by modernity: the photographic image, war, land, the promise of peace, the premise of real estate, seduction through advertisement, the pursuit of market capitalism. In this way, through a common means of understanding, the artist is able to extrapolate the local into the global narrative.

Microfilmic obfuscation

The microfilm (microfiche) was an early, analogue method of archiving especially printed material. The printed page was miniaturised on photographic film, and could later be viewed, in areas selected mechanically, through an enlarging backlit reader. In her kinetic installation *The Innocents Abroad* (2011), Italian artist Elisabetta Benassi uses electricity to power nine such devices, driving the microfilm in seemingly random mechanical patterns where they stop at seemingly random positions for viewing. Set in a darkened room and lit imperceptibly by cool neon lights, Benassi's use of electricity to mimic a mechanical process is the first indication of the artist's interest in the application of different modalities to a common purpose.

Benassi selected microfilms with a range of photographic and textual of information. Because the microfilms stop randomly, only portions of the material are visible. In effect, this is an arbitrary visual editing process – a partial and incomplete relay of information – resulting in incoherence (the eyes and forehead may be that of a celebrity, a war criminal, or a politician; a half column of newspaper text is incomprehensible). It is unlikely that the visitor will ever know, with certainty, what they are looking at. The confusion is exacerbated by the time allocated for viewing each segment. However, the human mind is programmed to fill in the gaps, leading to mainly erroneous conjecture.

One interpretation of this artwork is its commentary on the temporal and subjective interpretation of information generally, and of the archive specifically. Knowledge and understanding are subject to the vagaries of time, degrees of prior knowledge, the intention of the viewer.

Nothing may matter

The powerful photographic installations of Christian Boltanski rely on re-animating photographic archives – long forgotten faces culled from found school photos, an inventory of the missing, a list of the dead – into monuments for the unknown. Grainy, black and white imagery and metal have become his materials of choice. Here, in the French Pavilion, the artist has created a number of new works drawing on these tropes, but this time to explore the matter of chance.

In *Be New*, Boltanski sliced the faces of his photographic archive of newborn Polish and deceased Swiss into three parts; eyes, nose and mouth. A computer sends them whizzing across the screen, at high speed. The viewer is able to arrest this process, where the push of a button composes a new face from an unimaginable number of permutations. Here, then, reading the archive becomes a simple matter of chance, dependent on factors that have little to do with either subjectivity or objectivity. Spatial certainty becomes uncertain as faces become fractured and recombined, linear temporality becomes distorted as the newborn merge with the dead. Always new narratives are formed, thus challenging modernity's key assumptions of the archive as being fixed in space and time. Boltanski celebrates this formative effect of chance. He writes, in the exhibition leaflet: 'like any human being I see that there are locks and I look for the keys that open them, even though for me no key is the right one and what counts is the desire to find it.'

With *The Wheel of Fortune*, Boltanski has transformed the vast central atrium of the French Pavilion into an analogue film projector. Created from chrome

scaffolding, and inset with cogs, the viewer walks into, between and through a large filmstrip as it whizzes through the 'projector' at high speed. The 'film' is composed of an archive of mug shot photographs of newborn babies which the projector stops at random places, projecting the face of a single baby onto the screen. Again, by using the methodology of random selection, Boltanski calls into question the information that is projected as one image (one person) is selected – not through considered opinion, calculation or objectivity – but by chance.

Ultimately it is the third work that both negates Boltanski's notion of chance and draws into sharp relief his possible disavowal of the archive. *Last News from Humans* consists of two components, each composed of electronic screens of numbers set into scaffolding. The first shows, incrementally, the numbers of humans that are born; the other shows the numbers that die. Here, the photographic detail of his archives becomes redundant; faces and bodies are presented as numbers on a screen. It might be that, with a negation of detail in favour of the numerical absolute, the artist is drawing attention to the futility of the material record. Boltanski hints at this when he writes that 'what is most important is not within us as individuality, it is the continuation of life… We are not replaceable, but we will be replaced.' Ultimately then, Boltanski might be suggesting that the true value of the archive – once fraught with corporality, loaded with emotive agency – may be in vested in, and only in, its ultimate statistical relevance as the ongoing proof of existence. Details are irrelevant.

The panic archive

The extreme end of the bell curve hosted the installation by artist Thomas Hirschhorn presented,

gregariously, on the Swiss pavilion. Titled *Crystal of Resistance* (2011), the work uses the philosophy that 'more is more'. Here Hirschhorn has flung together, in ordered entropy, a quartz crystal extravaganza, a little army of plastic mannequins (some human-size, some Barbie-size), a continent of broken mobile telephones, a warehouse of television sets (half playing, half smashed), stacks and rows of plastic chairs, lab volumes of kitchen and bathroom necessities (plastic), a universe of neon lights, ear-buds as numerous as blades of grass, sufficient broken mirrors for 7,000 years of bad luck, and books and magazines, crammed together variously in glass vitrines, along claustrophobic passages, up the stairs and past the taxidermied animal guards into dead-end caves.

The chaotic collection is given an aesthetic coherence by the expansive application of aluminium foil that forms a glistening silver bubble within which these found objects find themselves, ready for the big bake. The entire installation is fixed, with the zealous assistance of kilometres of packing tape, to the ceilings, floors and walls. In this way, massive collections of disparate objects are transformed into a cohesive, immersive environment – into a single space – that is part school project, part radical anarchy.

The central collection in *Crystal of Resistance* is an exploded multi-volume encyclopaedia of photo prints, comprehensive evidence of the soft-wet flesh of humankind – perforated by bullets, gored by bayonets, sliced by knives and chopped by axes, bitten by acid, branded and burnt, dismembered, hung or decapitated, torn from nave to chops – bleeding freely all over the place.

It appears as if Hirschhorn gathered his photo collection from electronic media sources, then ran 'em through an Epson with nary a thought to the universally accepted
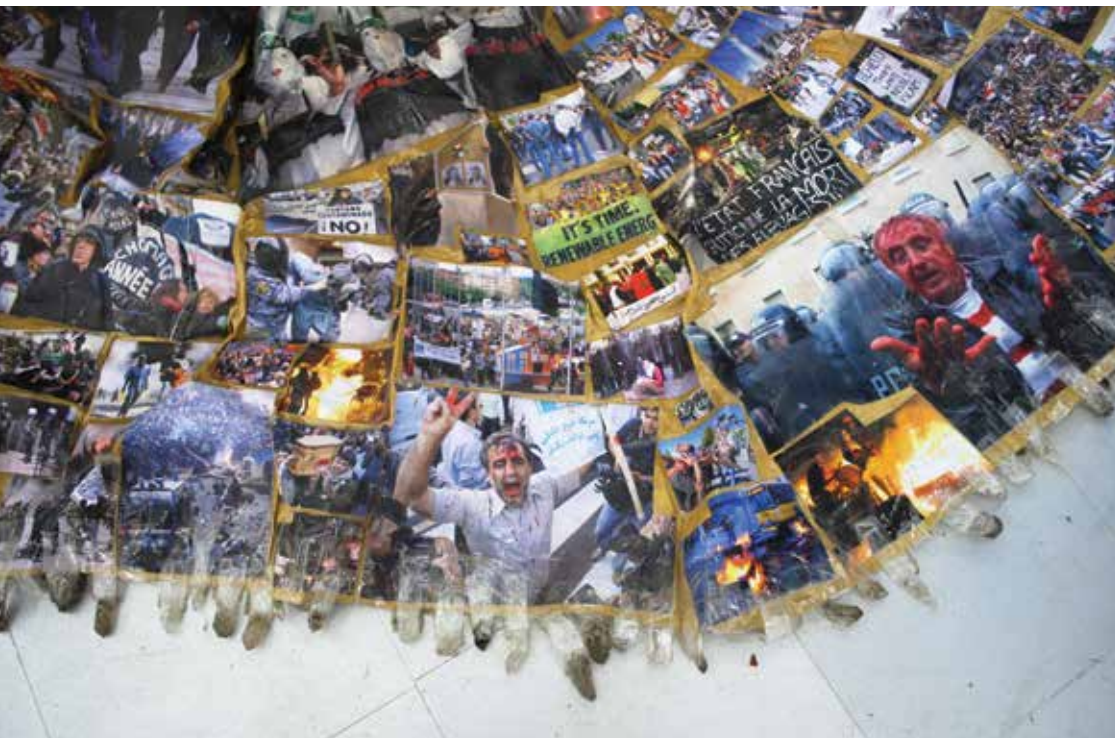
Thomas Hirschhorn, *Crystal of Resistance* (2011), Mixed media installation at the Swiss Pavilion, La Biennale di Venezia

guidelines of archival quality: rough cartridge paper trimmed roughly; prints banded as cartridges ran dry, all streaky; images already fading and it's only been a few months. Easy come easy go.

Hirschhorn then combines these photos into various configurations that slice across the installation: haphazard, jagged. Image after image, in very long strands, slapped together with packing tape, installed like drying laundry or bad-taste Buddhist flags. Gaudy, corporeal bands of colour function as markers and arrows, draw the eye along pathways, indicate points of concentration, highlight the significant and underline the important, as if the installation were a text.

This is a highly effective visual device expanded as the strands of photos connect to form vast expanses of collage. Even more unsettling is when these collages are fashioned into fabric, to dress a pair of mannequins hovering, disturbingly, mid-air, high above eye level. The garments, coated in photographic gore, give ghostly shape to Hirschhorn's take on the fabric of humanity.

Could Hirschhorn's complex work be considered as a composition of disparate collections? No, the term seems inadequate. Collections are simple; boast just one idea, proclaim stern criteria of exclusion. Collections are needy; want ongoing servicing… Collections are passive; do no work. Lazy. Collections are just not effective.

Crystal of Resistance, on the other hand, is anything but any of the above. All at the same time it is frenetic (bristling with crazy urgency), syntactic (the meaning is evident, immediately, clear and coherent), immersive (encasing its audience, swallowing it loudly), complexed. At the start, before it was installed, it may have been collections of stuff, in boxes. But then Hirschhorn tossed them out, forced them into cohesion, stuck them together, glued a dump into a narrative, and banged in the meaning. In this productive act of anarchic curation, he converted collections of crap into an archival allegorical proxy for the contemporary world, made sense of a whole big mess. These are not simple collections, they are the building blocks of palpability and they demand a response. It is an active, living, breathing thing.

In the publication that accompanies the exhibition, Hirschhorn both poses the political questions of 'how to act? How to work? With and under what conditions?' and answers them with 'in necessity, in urgency…'

'There's no solution to figure out', he writes, ' on the contrary – the problem must be confronted. And this is only possible in a panic.'

Really great works of art could be defined by consistency, tenacity and follow-through. In the case of *Crystal of Resistance*, the artist reliably applies the methodologies of panic in his approach to research, collation, curation, construction, presentation and installation. The cumulative effect, then, is one of an adrenaline-driven response to flight or fright. In a sentence: collections curated in a panic, into a panic. And here it is now, an archive of panic, doing its work on the bewildered exhibition visitor.

And finally this, for me, is the power of his archive, when Hirschhorn writes out his intent: 'I want to give a form that creates the conditions for thinking something new. It must be a form that enables *thinking*.'

Case study 2:
Mikhael Subotzky's
Retinal Shift

Mikhael Subotzky, *Who's Who* (2012), Digital slide installation, Installation dimensions variable, Courtesy of the Artist

In 2012 the main programme of the National Arts Festival – as a South African national indicator – hosted a total of five exhibitions (from a total of seven) that used archives in overt and direct ways. Of greatest pertinence to this text is the work of Mikhael Subotzky, Standard Bank Young Artist for Visual Arts (2012), who titled his exhibition *Retinal Shift*. The first work of Subotzky to confront the viewer is composed of two startling photographs of his retinas, here shown as large red orbs shot through with a network of veins. This entrance to *Retinal Shift* interrogates both the act, and the action, of photographing. Often still denoted as

an objective medium of 'truth', the fact of the matter is that, during the act of photography, the artist is unable to see the image being captured. In this way, the very act of photographing is a moment of blindness. However dramatic, that point is secondary to a greater implication of the viewer being confronted, at the start, by the artist's eyes: it places the viewer in the subjective position as interpreter of Subotzky's, a position that becomes significant later when Subotzky starts to question the reading of the archive.

Visually, the most arresting of the works is a wall-sized installation titled *I was looking back* (2012), composed of 100 colour prints of varying sizes selected from the artist's past ten years of photography. Known for his arresting studies of Pollsmoor Prison, the town of Beaufort West and, more recently, Ponte Tower in Johannesburg, this installation places selected images from these projects in and amongst more personal work, thereby drawing into sharp relief the assignation of value, a point driven home by *Who's Who* (2012), the installation on the facing wall. Here, eleven monitors show the more than 30,000 portraits scanned from the *Who's Who of Southern Africa*, arranged chronologically starting in 1911 and jumping in ten-year cycles, ending in 2011. The portraits are shown decontextlualised, becoming, in the words of the artist, 'an endless parade of importance'. Inevitably, the changing faces are telling as regards race, sex, moustaches and hairstyles, the shifting meaning of the smile and the oppressive assignation of importance (versus the assignation of non-importance). But this we know, a fact the work transcends in the manner in which it forces the viewer to read what is not there. By drawing our attention to an archive of absence, the work forces us to read between the lines of what was once deemed a colonial archive. The value of this act, in contemporary archive practice, is in repositioning a once-tainted archive as an archive of absence that is as telling of the original citizens of southern Africa as it is of the actions and intentions of colonial oppressors.

Following a similar conceptual thread, Subotzky brings the ordinary, mundane everyday and the extraordinary shock of the violent to equitable levels of importance with *CCTV* (2011) and *Don't even think of it* (2012). The former is a composite video of police archival video clips of crimes committed in central Johannesburg (a work that raises contentious ethical issues regarding both their availability and exhibition). The latter is a stop-motion video composed of stills Subotzky captured from the window of his apartment featuring the acts of homeless people, a neighbour's intervention and the actions of a security company. Both these works, in different ways, relate narratives that are specific in time and place yet, read together, become useful tools for

understanding the general characters of South African urban spaces.

Installed in a round underground gallery, the four-screen projection titled *Moses and Griffiths* (2012) borrows its title from Moses Lamani, the guide at the Observatory Museum who leads visitors through Grahamstown via views through the nineteenth-century camera obscura, and Griffiths Sokuyeka who takes visitors through the 1820 Settlers Monument to English language and culture in South Africa. Two screens offer the unchanging 'official' version of the history of Grahamstown, unrelenting in its Eurocentric insistence on a history of the town purported to start with the arrival of the 1820 British settlers. On the other two screens, each guide provides a tour of his own history in relation to the town and to the building in which he works. In this way, the official archival narrative gives way to personal views that unfold a history imbued with the richness of a contemporary accuracy that is the lived experience.

Case study 3:
An interview with Siemon Allen on his simultaneous roles as collector, archivist, curator and artist

Siemon Allen, *Stamps V* (2010), Stamps, stamp pages, pins, acetate, cloth, wood, Photo by Terry Brown, Courtesy of the artist and gordonschachatcollection

South African born Siemon Allen seems fascinated as much by forms of communication as by their media of transmission. His collections are the meeting points where his delight in the visual, the aural and the linguistic come together with his feel for the materiality of archival magnetic tape, postage stamps, newspapers, vinyl records, CDs and the increasingly rare 78 rpm shellac disks. He crafts his treasured collections over years, and research is a constant companion.

Allen was one of three artists invited to exhibit on *Desire*, the group show curated by Thembinkosi Goniwe for the South African national pavilion (the country's first at the Biennale since 1995). Taking this opportunity to continue his work with a burgeoning archive of South African music – an interest that started with the purchase of a single Miriam Makeba LP dating back to 1965 – Allen created the installation titled *Labels* (2011). Here, 2,500 digital labels are housed in a transparent structure 15m high and 4m wide, fixed into a tautly curving plane. From a distance, Allen's meticulous approach to categorisation is evident: disks from the same record label have the same form and colour, and these create vertical bands, as if they were lines on a graph. The strips of saturated colour, when viewed together, create a visual effect that is partly minimalist, partly op art. It is here that the artist works as mediator between the measured analytical power of the scientific trope, and the generous poetic agency of the nuanced aesthetic. A few steps forward erases the categorical linearity, as it is subsumed into a colour field that fills the visual frame.

Now, stepping right up to the work reveals the detail on the disks – text, images, marks – and bestows to each its value as an archival record of music and memory, as palimpsests of time and place, as marker of politics and people, societies and cultures, and as indicator of the processes of change.

It is also at this close viewing when the installation mechanics become visible, revealed as simultaneously structure, storage and exhibition. It is at here, possibly, where the first set of implications for critical archival studies are revealed: this is a body of work that performs differently in different realms; it is malleable, open to reconfiguration and reinterpretation, and sensitive and responsive to variables in its context. It is as much a creator (of intellectual experience through scholarship, of sensual experience through art) as it is created.

Allen also installed five works from the series *Records* (2009–10). Deviating from his norm of exhibiting the actual archive, this is a series of large-scale digital prints made from scans of scratched and distressed surfaces of selected vinyl disks. Allen writes, in the publication accompanying the work, that 'The damage to the record was for me a further marking by unknown authors who had unwittingly contributed their history to the object; the image in the print capturing not only the historical audio visually in the form of the lines or groves, but also the scratches, damage and repair work done by subsequent owners.' This appears to be a productive new departure in his work, this fascination with the lives lived by the objects.

Brenton Maart: There are different types of collectors: some have subject-specific passions that develop over long periods of time, others collect for reasons of history or association, some collect for research and others for reasons of the intellect, some may have a passion for the act of collection regardless of the object being collected … there must be a host of everyday and astonishing reasons. How would you describe the part of your personality that relates to your life as a collector? What drives you as a collector? What are your primary motivations?

Siemon Allen: My collecting impulse has been directed almost exclusively towards the finding and ordering of various kinds of artefacts that relate specifically to aspects of South African culture and history. So my motivations for collecting can't really be separated from this larger investigation. Perhaps this has everything to do with the fact that I now live outside the country and find myself conscious of looking from the outside in. This distance has made me aware of the way in which South Africa as a concept is not so much a stable singular thing as it is a complex provisional construct. And this seems resonant with how the archival makes claims to a kind of authenticity while at the same time operating as yet another fiction. I think that all of my collections are in part born out of a kind of anxiety of loss; a compulsion to not overlook anything, to reconstruct a complete narrative. Yet all the while I know that this narrative is always incomplete and so I collect with a certain awareness of on the one hand the limited framing that I employ and on the other hand the open-ended nature of any collection project.

BM: What have you noticed (or what could you imagine) to be the key differences between collectors and non-collectors? Could these be two groups of personality types?

SA: I am not sure if it is possible to distinguish between a collector and a non-collector in such a definitive way! As far as collecting things, perhaps there is a spectrum of human impulses ranging from abhorrence to accumulation to a kind of compulsive acquisition. I recall a story told by Bruce Chatwin where he described a man who lived by a simple rule. Every time he acquired

something he let go of something, so that the sum of his possessions filled a single small suitcase. Was he then the anti-collector? I wonder if the collecting impulse is just a sublimated effort to deny the certainty of change. Collecting often involves a kind of artificial digging up of discarded things. Collecting requires a certain kind of sustained focus. Also, perhaps all research is a kind of collecting, though a different kind of acquisition.

Since childhood I had an affinity for collecting and organising and a love for listing and naming. I think that things tell stories and that there is something satisfying about finding something almost lost. I think that history is always incomplete and this does not worry me, rather it comforts me. So my collecting is inseparable from a respect for the paradoxical ways in which contingency and purpose can converse.

BM: Would it be accurate to say that your artworks seem to start as collections, which then evolve through acts of curation, into archives? Do you see these as three distinct process steps? How do you negotiate them? How does the one inform the other?

SA: Perhaps the various collections each evolve in distinct ways. Still, I think that the collecting, curating, and ultimate archiving for me are not separate, nor are they linked through a linear process. Rather each is completely inseparable from the other. Though each of the collections began with a certain contingency, curating still occurs not only in the ordering, but also in the selection of the artefacts. Configuration is always giving way to reconfiguration. All of the collections have in common the sense that the artefacts, whether stamps, records, newspapers, or trading cards, are carriers of complex information.

BM: Your artworks use actual archival material as building blocks, which then require other specialist material. Why is the trope of the archive so important to you?

SA: The archival collections I assemble are emphatically presented as incomplete narratives but as a collector I am the agency of that narrative. I struggle with what part of my studio process is collecting and archiving and what part is an engagement with more formal and aesthetic moves. And they are inseparable. The artistic questions I wrestle with also have much to do with the level of intervention I make on the original archival materials. I am obviously driven to collect, but then how does this action operate in concert with translation or framing in my studio practice? I am interested in how configuration, for example, can be the most dominant operative in the work. That each specimen remains intact, and yet hopefully meaning is articulated through arrangement and context. It is my hope that small

moves can express larger narratives. Archive fever is an interesting term. Perhaps it is about finding something lost. Finding another thing that is lost. Making a third thing by allowing these to converse. I am not sure?

BM: How do you, as a cultural practitioner, mediate and negotiate productively between the very different forms of value you encounter in your work?

SA: My work has much to do with my sense of looking back at South Africa from the outside and my growing awareness of how cultural artefacts physically travel and through this how information travels. This question of value is also critical in that the use of archival items as 'raw' materials in making art – items, which are often rare and valuable in the non-art collecting market – can lead to some interesting and complicated dynamics. A mint stamp is often (though not always) by philatelic standards more valuable than a torn, damaged used stamp of identical issue. But a used stamp or hundreds of a virtually worthless stamp issues with varied marks and histories massed into a bold swath of colour is more interesting conceptually and visually to me. My record prints were intentionally made from scans of the most damaged rare records. So the intention of the artist in me trumps those of the collector in me. And yet I am very respectful of my original materials and seldom sacrifice the original artefact to make a new work. Perhaps this is why my interventions are small moves – I scan to make surrogates, or if I configure originals in displays they preserve the integrity of the found materials as artefacts. As far as the notion of heritage is concerned the *Records* project has, more than any other, led me to a real sense of urgency to create a database of the material – both visual and audio. It is a cultural history that is not accessible outside a small group of audio experts and I have been interested in sharing information from my collection through a web database at www.flatinternational.com. So this is a slightly different format, but one that developed out of a necessity to explore the web as a means of display.

BM: Until very recently, your installations mainly used the archival material from your collections. However, your current work deviates in their attempt to highlight the objects' lives, vesting importance in their biographies. How did this new exploration develop?

SA: Interestingly [this] evolution came out of my research with some of the more rare and damaged records in my collection. I was struggling to read one of the labels so that I could catalogue it properly and on a whim scanned the label in order to enlarge the text. The resultant images were visually stunning to me and I began to work with the scans to make large-scale digital prints. I had been fascinated by the patina of wear and individual markings on the records. Part of

the curse of collecting is that you may find one of a type, but every example will be different, each will carry a different history. This is intriguing, because with all of these mechanically reproduced things – stamps, newspapers, trading cards, records – they begin the same in the factory, indistinguishable. But they go out into the world and when collected they are brought back together scarred and marked and richer.

BM: In the field of critical archival studies, one of the key activities is the development of methods to increase the agency of the archive; to make the archive work more effectively, more powerfully. One possible method is to allow the archive to speak for itself, through its biography. If this were possible, what changes do you imagine this may herald for the field of critical archive studies?

SA: The dynamics of collecting are fraught with meanings that are particular to a given cultural circumstance. For example, if archival material has been recovered after having been subjected to censorship or systematic destruction, or if there is a sense that the past might be erased (literally) in order that a controlling political body might construct an official history, then the drive to discover and preserve archival material takes on a particular kind of urgency. When collecting of archival materials is seen within the context of a reclaimed history then the project goes beyond the actions of any individual.

The documents produced during the TRC are examples of how the archive can be politically current and profoundly relevant. There was a retrieving of history in the process and I think a sense that the necessity for retrieval is an ongoing process. Archival material is always inscribed by particular viewpoints for particular purposes.

Significant that many of my collections are assembled out of items that were acquired outside South Africa so this makes one think of a kind of returning – a reassembly – the things have travelled and are reassembled. I like to think about the records being pressed – dispersed, lost, damaged, and then being returned to the original context. The music begins in South Africa and it travels.

What seems interesting to me is that the collections have been for the most part mirrors of collecting practices that are socially acceptable – conventional collecting practices – stamps, old newspapers, trading cards, records. In fact part of the way I understand the work is in a kind of tension with the parallel universe of the conventional collection. My military trading card collection project had everything to do with a reflection upon the curious dynamic of how 'war' bubble gum

cards acted as propaganda to young collectors. And how stamp collecting, particularly in South Africa, reads as a quaint, even colonial, pastime. I am profoundly aware of how records that I collect come to me often through what has become an international market of buying and trading, and yet so many of the items I acquire show marks of heavy use. So there are two collecting practices in play – the original owners, who clearly had at one time collections of music that suited individual taste, and now collectors such as myself who collect out of a passion for the music as well as a keen interest in its historical context.

CONCLUSION

A conclusion comes at the end, so it is apt that this conclusion deals with that most problematic of prefixes, the presumptuous, optimistic and oft erroneous *post-*. *Post-* is usually accepted to mean *after*, so post-colonial and post-apartheid seem to imply that these are periods where the colonial and apartheid cease to exist. From the perspective of historiography, this may be acceptable as an attempt at linear temporality. However, from a perspective of the rest of the humanities and its scientific cousin, a web-like evolutionary theory, these terms seem not to take into account *effect*. So even though the legislative policies and practices of colonialism and apartheid are now a thing of the past, their *effects* continue into the contemporary. In other words, the past continues to live with us, and haunt us, in everything we do.

The research question at the heart of *Imaginary Fact* understands that the archives accessed by South African artists on the exhibition were constructed within the contexts of, and expressed aspects of the ideologies of, colonial expansion and high apartheid; that political change has ensued, colonialism and apartheid have been dismantled, with concomitant ideological shifts. The exhibition seeks then in the first instance to track what has happened to these archives and their original intentions and interpretations and, more importantly, to consider what they currently express. The shift in meaning then provides the context that artists engage visually through photography, installation, sculpture, drawing, painting and performance. *Imaginary Fact* will assess visually the matter of failed social engineering and its evidence in contemporary legacies. The ultimate curatorial intention, then, is to track the insidious perpetuation of history into the world we call home today.

Joanne Bloch

Hoard

2012/13

Modelling clay, gold spray-paint
and silk velvet

Installation dimensions
50 x 500cm

Photography by David Southwood

Courtesy of the Artist

Artist Statement

Via a collection of crude, faux-gold artefacts, displayed according to a slightly capricious personalised taxonomy, *Hoard* sets out to explore the slippery issue of value in relation to archival object collections. In the process it throws into question the categories 'real' and 'fake', 'valuable' and 'worthless', and takes a stab at disturbing established or expected systems of classification.

The artefacts represented in this work were drawn from three rather different archival contexts: two of them institutional, and one personal. My new collection, after vigorously jumbling together the remade versions, coalesces at the imagined intersection of a venerated institutional treasure and a buccaneer's glimmering loot.

The starting point for this work was a collection of around two hundred artefacts, ranging from curiosities associated with famous colonial figures such as the Scottish missionary and explorer David Livingstone and the writer Olive Schreiner, to sometimes interesting and sometimes unremarkable, often battered and scuffed everyday items (a tie, several Victorian games, an embroidered handbag) housed in the Manuscripts and Archives Department at the University of Cape Town Library. While some of these things only ever emerge from the gloomy depths of the archive when scholars scrutinise the collections they are attached to, most of them form part of a taxonomy-less object collection assembled between 1940 and 1970 by the then chief librarian,

R.F.M. Immelman. Inspired by his desire to preserve material in the interests of future scholarship, Immelman clearly considered these items as fascinating relics worth archiving. However, after his retirement in 1970, they underwent a gradual change in status. In response to intensifying countrywide resistance to the apartheid regime, the focus of the archive shifted, and the objects began their ignominious slide into obscurity. Nowadays, as slightly uncomfortable reminders of South Africa's ugly colonial (and in a few cases apartheid) past, as well as a telling pointer to the broad range of histories absent from the archive, their standing is altogether more dubious. Although they are still treated with the care accorded to all archival material, they are now all but ignored.

To this peculiar blend of shabby, unloved things I have added my own versions of a few items from the Mapungubwe collection housed at the University of Pretoria. In contrast to most of the Manuscripts and Archives Department objects – both in terms of the historical evidence of a thriving pre-colonial society the collection they form part of provides as well as in purely monetary terms – these (real) gold artefacts have the undisputed status of priceless national assets.

The third selection of objects making up this work is drawn from my personal archives. A few come from my collections of ephemera, but mostly they are both more random and more personal: an earring my mother wore to a party in the late 1960s, for example, and a blue wooden building block from a set I played with as a child. In terms of value, these objects fall at the opposite end of the

spectrum from the Mapungubwe material, holding meaning and value for nobody but me. Outside the realm of feeling and memory, where they serve as melancholic markers of experience, loss and the passage of time, they are worth absolutely nothing.

Hoard sets out to explore the ironies, anomalies and contradictions of these three collections, as well as to speculate on what amalgamating them in a new form might mean for a richer understanding of South African history, heritage and archiving. Many questions arise, none of them with easy answers. Might there be some value in revivifying the Manuscripts and Archives object collection, and the many other South African collections like it, despite their colonial taint? What value do personal archives hold? Might institutional collections be equally open to interpretations based strongly on feelings? And might there be a grain of truth to my impostor Mapungubwe rhino's cheeky assertion that it is every bit as valuable as the original?

In terms of material and process, *Hoard* marks a departure for me, since most of my previous work has been based on reconfigurations of my ongoing collections of small, trashy objects, toys, pompoms and other ephemera. However, certain continuities are evident. Firstly, in my earlier work, I also engaged with notions of value, often seeking to disrupt categories like 'throwaway', 'precious' and 'beautiful', in the interests of developing a new, personalised set of criteria for the assignation of value. Secondly, while in *Hoard* I am specifically concerned with the life (or death) of things housed within archives, this work picks up on an enduring interest in objects, the

circuits of exchange they engage in, their adventures as they travel through the world, the human lives they shape and are shaped by, and the stories they are able to tell us. Obviously, this interest also extends to the process of collecting and the making and display of object collections, both quirky personal ones as well as those found in archives and other institutions.

Finally, as I have been visually impaired for most of my life, my artwork has always celebrated the pleasures of sight and seeing. Having recently experienced further sight loss, I now feel it necessary to integrate a more tactile approach into my making process so that, without entirely abandoning the world of visuality, the limitations on my ability to see are both mitigated by another sensory dimension, as well as accepted and incorporated as a defining feature of the work that I make.

Hairbrush that belonged to trade union veteran Ray Alexander.
Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Clockwise from left:

(Real) gold sceptre from the Mapungubwe collection, University of Pretoria

Addressed piece of calico cloth in which the famous South African novelist Olive Schreiner wrapped her manuscript of 'The Story of an African Farm' when she sent it to England for publication in late 1879/ early 1880. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Blue wooden block from my childhood that some child – maybe me – drew a wonky cross on. Personal collection

Top to bottom:

Blue woollen hexagon crotcheted by my grandmother Susie Heyns.
Part of a blanket that was never finished. Personal collection

Pieces of a worn cardboard model of the human brain that belonged to amateur Cape Town
phrenologist J.G. Davidson in the 1950s. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Clockwise from left:

The gavel that belonged to Gideon Brand van Zyl, Governor General of the Union of South Africa from 1945-1950. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

An earring my mother Una wore to a Carnaby Street party in Port Elizabeth in the 1960s. Personal collection

Ten little black and white cards and the miniature mailbag they came in, produced to celebrate the centenary of Rhodes's birth in 1953. They depict various scenes such as his grave in the Matopos, as well as scenes from nature, including the Victoria Falls and an elephant, a lion and an eland in the veld. They also depict three or four scenes of rural African people, consigned via the racist colonial ethnographic gaze to the category of 'nature'. Amongst them are a bemused looking bare-breasted woman or two. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Clockwise from left:

Blue and red ceremonial sash with gold fringes, bearing a gold crest depicting a handshake. It was part of the ceremonial regalia of the Newlands Friendly and Benevolent Society. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

A wood and string Victorian puzzle. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Miniature bible, written up as 'the smallest printed bible in the world' and dated 1950. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Brass lock that used to belong to my mother Una. Sadly, I have no idea where it came from. Personal collection

Chip of wood from the almond tree under which missionary and explorer David Livingstone proposed to Mary Moffat at the Moffat mission station, near Kuruman, in 1824. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Wood from the Fram: Fragment of wood with 'Polarskibet Fram' inscribed on it ,from the Fram, the ship used by the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen in his attempt to reach the North Pole in 1893. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

15th Century letter from a woman to her husband. It concerns everyday matters, especially the price of coal. It has a blob of furry stuff on it that looks suspiciously like human hair... but may not be. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Top to bottom:

(Real) gold rhinoceros from the Mapungubwe collection, University of Pretoria. In the 12th and 13th Centuries, Mapungubwe in Limpopo was the largest kingdom on the African subcontinent.

Three frogs, or maybe toads, from a Victorian game called 'Frogs and Toads.' The originals are tiny and made from lead and enamel. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Bottles and tray from the medicine chest taken by dentist Walter Floyd on his hunting trip in the then Northern Rhodesia in 1913. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Clockwise from bottom left:

(Real) gold bowl from the pre-colonial kingdom of
Mapungubwe. Collection housed at the University of Pretoria

Bird/horse-headed oil lamp, part of the collection donated by Catholic clergyman
Monsignor Kolbe (1854-1936). Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

My mother's gold bracelet, which she always wore
on her right upper arm during my childhood. Personal collection

Cross donated by Catholic clergyman Monsignor Kolbe, who died in 1936.
The original is made from wood, and my celtic version is a bit of a
departure from its shape. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Little wooden rifle carved by South African War prisoner. The words 'Boeren Kamp Ceylon
1901 Mauser' are painted on it in tiny neat gold letters.
Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Nine-carat gold spoon. I have replaced its South African College crest with a hint of the
protea on the spoon I ate with as a tiny child. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Clockwise from top:

Passbook of a woman called Adelaide Olifant, described in the finding aid as 'crippled.' Now lost from the Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

A tiny bronze sculpture of the Hindu deity Ganesh bought from one of the Hindu shops in the Grey Street area, Durban, some time in the 1990s. Personal collection

A tiny plastic baby, somewhat enlarged. From my impressive plastic baby collection

Clockwise from top left:

A leaf from the bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya, India, under which the Buddha became enlightened. Personal collection

Hand mirror that was part of a set given to trade union veteran Ray Alexander. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Unlabelled beadwork 1. Of Nguni origin, and thought to be associated with Dorothea Bleek, so dating to the early years of the 20th Century. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Brown leather belt with a brass buckle supposedly worn by the poet C. L. Leipoldt during World War I, when he was on the personal staff of General Louis Botha. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

A crumpled, faded pink silk tie. No information about how it came to be in the archive. Manuscripts and Archives Department, UCT

Wim Botha

Installation of work from 2009 to 2013

Books (encyclopaedias, bibles, dictionaries, historical documents, etc.), wood and stainless steel

Various dimensions

All photos by Mario Todeschini

Artist Statement

Imaginary spaces provide an environment for the concrete to become malleable and fleeting. In room-sized installations, usually suspended by cables, ephemeral, metaphysical stages are created where objects have the freedom to exist as ideas.

Study for the Epic Mundane (2013), a large new installation, and its accompanying procession of portrait busts, are made predominantly from books. The books are bolted together and then carved to reveal both intentional form as well as the accidental patterns that occur in the process. The pages are not glued together, but rather held together under pressure.

The texts inside the books are hidden within the boundaries of the carved form. It leaves a visual trace on the surface; by cutting through the ink, a grey and white pattern appears, showing areas of text and of blank page. The overall whiteness of the figures, combined with the classical figurative form and these text-striations, visually evokes marble carvings, and so doing establishes a relationship with historical precedents for figurative sculpture.

Even if the text is inaccessible, the mind can create a non-specific but coherent idea of the bulk of the information contained inside the sculpture. Fragments of the book spines and titles give hints at the type and also the age of the books used. These include encyclopaedias that are dense with information and also laden with social and political polemic, likewise religious texts such as the bible, and the collections of diaries and letters from early colonial figures. These are accounts of the truths of mankind that have been variously accepted, rejected, made redundant or relevant, been superseded, refuted or validated or just become outdated, now forming part of the ever-increasing public record.

The work is loaded with a mass of content by virtue of its medium, and this gives me a certain freedom from the need to determine content or a specific reading of concept. *Study for the Epic Mundane* is my first life-size figurative paper carving since *Commune: Suspension of Disbelief,* a life-size crucifix carved from bibles in 2001. Working with the figurative, especially the full life-size human body, has a potential pitfall: it is easy for the visual and formal to be overlooked in favour of the conceptual intent. Once the figures are recognised, the mind immediately moves on to construct meaning – who they are, what they are

doing... To counteract the reductive viewing made so compelling by this kind of material, it seems that the visual impact or intricacy of the object itself has to be stimulating enough to satisfy the mind. I have found that portrait busts seem to be less problematic in this regard, perhaps because they fit very neatly into a canon of which the intent and parameters are more defined. Focusing on the format of portraiture in recent years has allowed for me a kind of figurative work that, through repetition, progressed beyond specific conceptual intent to become a visual and conceptual stimulus.

In contrast, the experience of creating the *Solipsis* series of large-scale installations (2011- , not exhibited here) from polystyrene and fluorescent lights has allowed me to move away from pre-determination of form and concept, and instead to allow for chance and intuitive processes in making and realising the sculptural forms.

This more open-ended process has permeated the making of *Study for the Epic Mundane*, thus allowing the visual object to become primary. It allows the possibility for the viewer to become engrossed with the visual experience in a dance of associations that gradually constructs a 'cloud' of meaning, transcending a single distilled communication.

Preceding and these pages:

Study for the Epic Mundane, 2013
Books (encyclopaedia, bibles, dictionaries, historical documents, etc.),
wood and stainless steel
Central group 155 x 188 x 183cm
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town and Johannesburg

Portrait I, 2009
Crossword dictionaries, wood and stainless steel, 48 x 18 x 24.5cm
Courtesy of Vincenzo Penta

Composite Self-Portrait II, 2010
Dictionaries, ink and wood, 58.5 x 26 x 23cm
Courtesy of Xavier Huyberechts and Briget Grosskopff

Portrait III, 2009
Bibles, wood and stainless steel, 32 x 15 x 28cm
Courtesy of Konrad Huettner

Generic Self-Portrait as an Exile, 2008
Learner's dictionaries (Afrikaans, English, isiZulu, Sesotho) and stainless steel, 46 x 32 x 27cm
Courtesy of Michael Roets

Untitled (Witness series I), 2011
African encyclopaedia, wood and stainless steel, 45 x 21 x 22cm
Courtesy of gordonschachatcollection

Untitled, 2011
World Books, SA Yearbooks (1983-1991), wood and stainless steel, 98 x 150 x 85cm (excluding pedestal)
Courtesy of Hans Porer

David Koloane

The Journey

1998

Series of 19 acrylic and oil pastel works on paper

Each 29 x 42cm

Photography by Anthea Pokroy

Courtesy of the Artist and Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

Artist Statement

The Journey is a series of drawings attempting to reconstruct the sequence of events that begins with Steve Biko's arrest in a roadblock in Port Elizabeth, followed by his incarceration in a notorious police station where apartheid activists were often brutalised. He was interrogated and systematically beaten and assaulted by the security policemen who arrested him. After he had collapsed from the beatings, he was driven 1,200 km from Port Elizabeth to a state hospital in the back of a 4 x 4 vehicle. I employed one of the most economical of media – oil pastel – in order to sequence the essence of the brutality of the saga and its aftermath, which culminated in the death of Steve Biko in detention in 1977.

I was personally moved by the sheer brutality of the event. It shocked not only South Africa, but the whole world at large – even more so when the then Minister of Police Jimmy Kruger publicly uttered 'Biko's death leaves me cold'.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in South Africa in 1996 to probe atrocities committed during the apartheid period. After 21 years of an eerie and chilling silence, a paradoxical turn of events took place when a group of policemen who claimed to have been responsible for interrogating Biko applied for amnesty to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (Their application was turned down.) Drawn towards creating a body of works around the commission's revelations I chose the Biko case as subject for the narrative. In nineteen scenes, The Journey narrates Biko's capture, interrogation, detention, death and autopsy.

The narrative isolates suffering and visually represents a horror commonly sensed in response to Biko's death. By concentrating attention on a lone figure, bound and naked, twisting and turning in a small space, the series records successive moments that many people have imagined. Such intimate scenes, which comprise more than half of the total narrative (11 of 19 works), personalise the experience of living through a slowly debilitating death. The focus on suffering rivets viewers' attention on time and offers a painful response to a question Biko once posed: Threatened by a police officer with the words 'I will kill you', Biko defiantly asked, 'How long is it going to take you?'
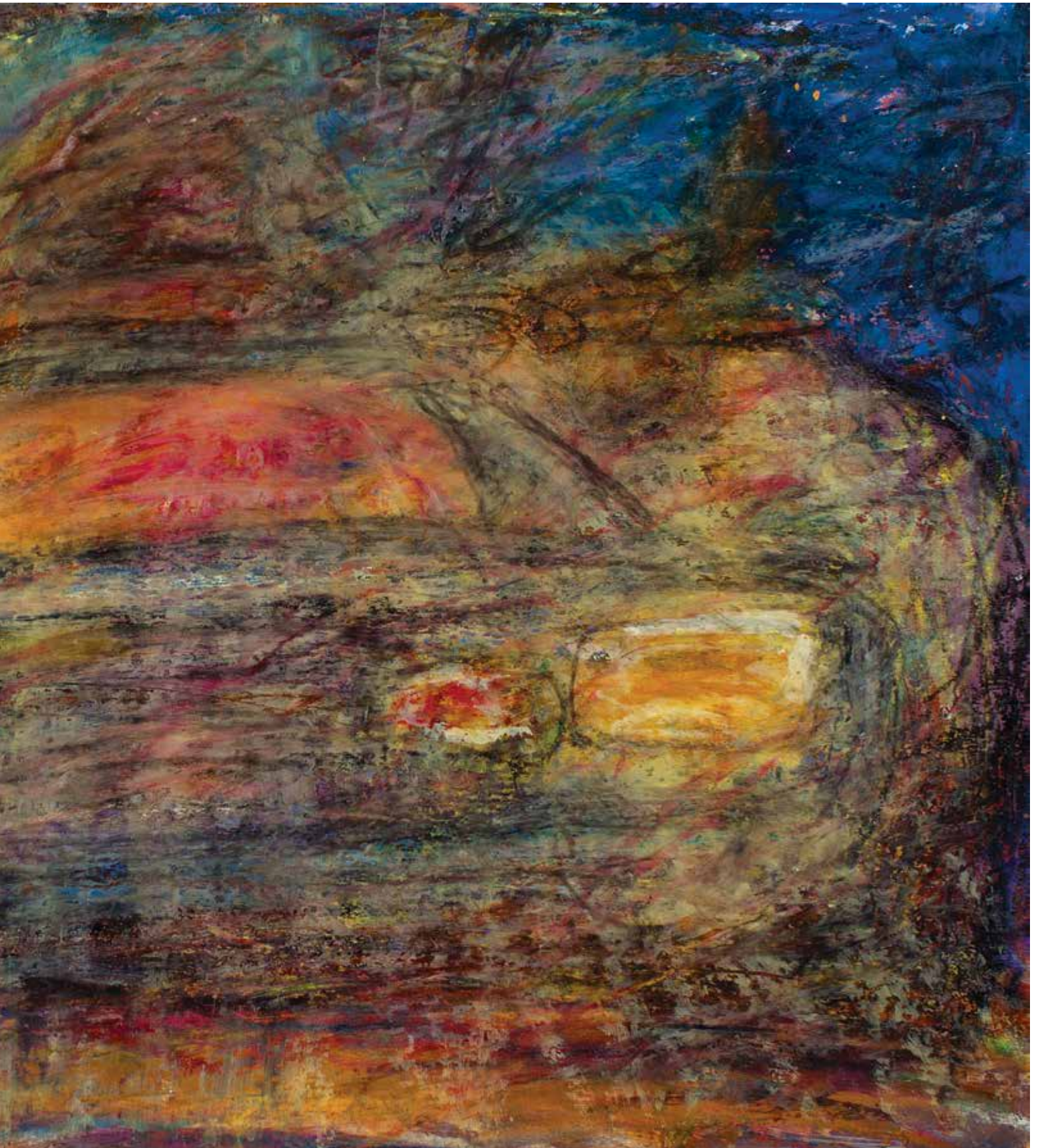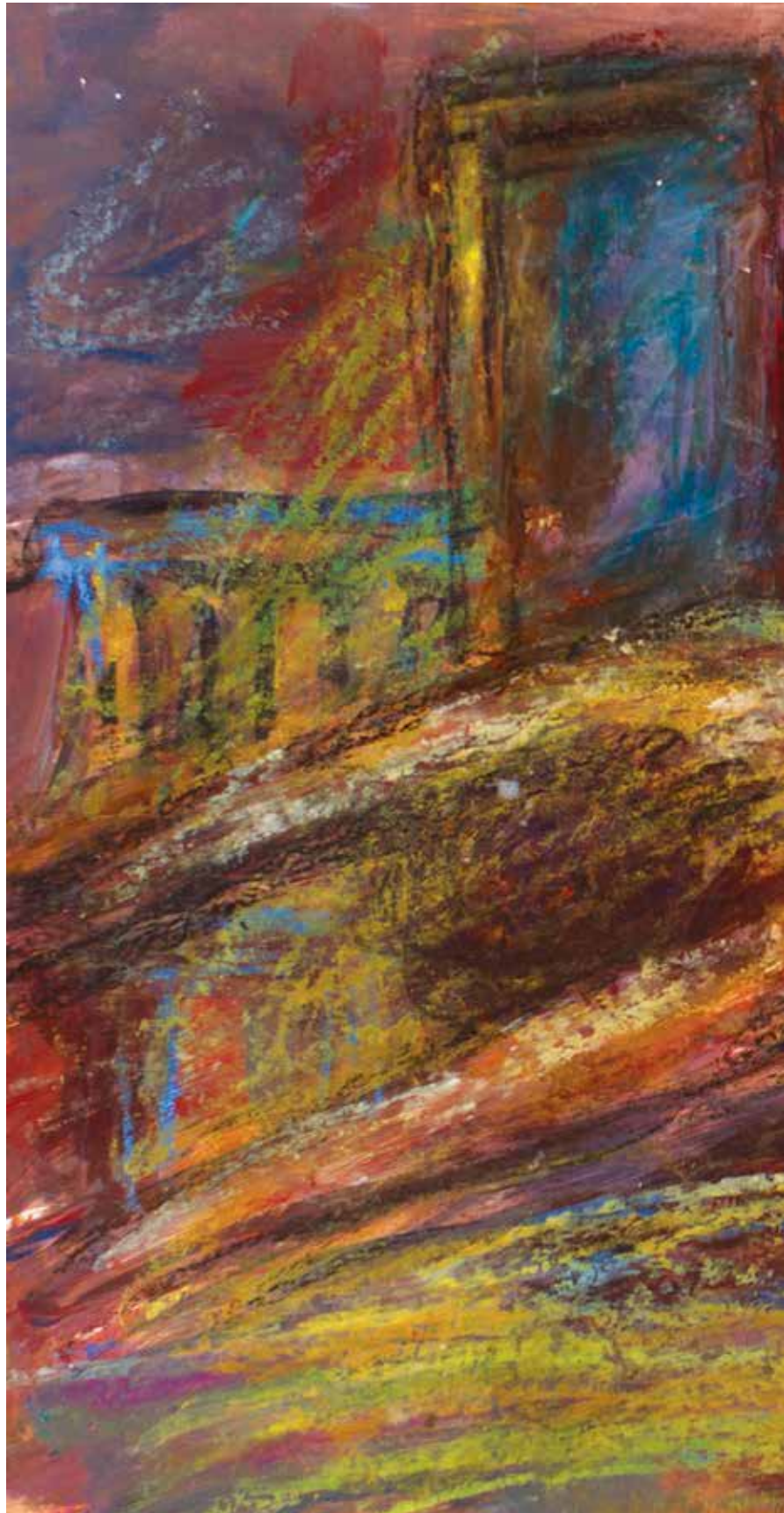
Donna Kukama

*Investment Bank
of Elsewhere
(Is Survival not Archival?)*

2013

Site-specific performance

Duration variable

Artist statement

My practice navigates the spaces of performance, video, text, and sound installations as laboratories for creative research in order to fictionalise reality. My work takes on a form that is experimental, applying methods that are deliberately undisciplined. As an artist whose interest is to occupy an existing canon, I use performance as a strategy that allows me to invent as well as to apply methods that are outside the canon of what is predictable or expected. I apply performance as a medium of resistance against already established 'ways of doing', moreover as a strategy for inserting a foreign 'alien' voice and presence into various moments in history, as much as in existing territories of the public. My work weaves major with minor aspects of histories, and introduces a fragile and brief moment of 'strangeness' within socio-political settings. These actions are intended as gestures of poetry with political intent and hopefully destabilise existing canons regarding the ways we look at reality.

Investment Bank of Elsewhere (est. 2012) promises to secure selected aspects of nature in an 'elsewhere' that extends the geographical into an imagined future. As already known, the stock market is as reliable a form of investment as a game of roulette. Buying shares at any company or financial institution as a form of investment operates completely on hope: the hope that, against all odds, whatever has been invested into will still exist, and thrive.

The function of the *I.B.S.* on the other hand is to guarantee the delivery of selected natural products (i.e. water, a tomato, dried fish) in 20, 30, or 40 years, in the same shape and condition as encountered today. In a future where nature is imagined to be under threat, would it not be sane to invest in guaranteed natural supplies? All products/shares of the first installation of the *I.B.S.* were sourced from Doornfontein, Johannesburg, and purchased honestly and against real money at various street markets. Investors were handed certificates to present at the collection of their material.

In its second incarnation in Venice, the *I.B.E. (Is Survival not Archival?)* offers air as a product of investment. This time around, investors have the opportunity to save towards a variety of quantities of breathable air, to be collected in 20, 30, or 40 years time at the same location of investment. The promise is that the air will be preserved as is, to be returned to the investor with not more and no less pollution than it contains in 2013.

The *I.B.E.* is a follow-up of *Black Money Market (est. 2010)*, a mobile money market that, during the global financial crisis functioned by having money electronically wired from Switzerland, to be later exchanged for 'low currency' or 'redundant' coins, which were transported in a suitcase and resold at an inflated rate in Europe, as limited-edition unique objects accompanied by certificates of authenticity. Both the *B.M.M.* and *I.B.E.* are subsidiaries of *The Red Suitcase (est. 2007)* and are currently involved in a corporate buyout of *The Chop Shop (est. 2011)*.

Black Money Market (est. 2010)
2010
Site-specific public intervention, Basel
Duration variable
Photos by Ivan Eftimovski

Philip Miller, Gerhard Marx and Maja Marx

REwind

2007–2013

Audio-visual installation
with monitors and headsets

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the Artists and
Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

Artist Statements:
Philip Miller

In 2010, just before *REwind: A Cantata for voice, tape and testimony* was about to be performed at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town, a local radio journalist asked me why so many artists were obsessed with harking back to the bad days of apartheid? Wasn't it enough now? 'Shouldn't we start fast forwarding instead?'

It is now seven years since the choral work *REwind* was born. It has been performed in a range of cities and cultural capitals. The choirs who have participated in the performances have ranged from an African-American Emmanuel Baptist Gospel in Brooklyn to a young community choir from Gugulethu, Cape Town. Yet each time it is heard and seen, it presents new challenges as the political landscape of South Africa shifts and reshapes.

In the live performances, the physical presence of the massed voices of the choirs sang out the songs and 're-voiced' the words of testimonial transcripts, thus a collective body of people singing is a unique symbolic act of communal remembering. But more

than that, it is a deep identification and deeper catharsis for those testifiers who have attended the live performances. Just as a parent sings a lullaby to calm a crying child, the choir singing has reached those who continue to mourn.

Here, *REwind* takes a new form as a multimedia installation in the South African exhibition in Venice. Multiple visual sequences by collaborators Gerard and Maja Marx, in response to my aural and compositional landscape, collectively weave around the testimonies of apartheid survivors at the public hearings of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

At the TRC hearing in Cape Town, Mrs Eunice Miya, one of the mothers of the Gugulethu Seven activists, testified as to how she came to hear of the news of her son's death. She had seen an image of his body broadcast on national television. She said to the commissioners: 'The reason why I am here again is because … nobody had come to tell me that Jabulani had passed away. First of all, we were listening to the news, with my daughter. One of the children was shown on TV who had a gun on his chest. Only to find out that it was my son, Jabulani. I prayed. I said, "Oh no, Lord!" I wished the news could be rewind.'

When I began composing the cantata, I spent many days in the National Archives of Pretoria, sifting through wheelbarrows full of analogue cassette tapes. On my tape recorder, I would press play, stop, fast-forward and rewind. In between the sounds of fragile tape stretching and spooling, I could hear other shards: sighs, gulps for air, feedback from microphones, clearing of throats, sips of water taken in moments when speakers lost speech. All this seemed to have its own grammar, but not one I could yet understand. What was I listening out for, hour upon hour? Was it for my own absolution, in place perhaps of my own confession? Did the act of listening to these stories again and again make me a different sort of witness or, at least, a carrier of the archive? Only a silent listener, or a member too of an oral history?

Thirteen years on, I realise that *REwind* has its own archive. I look at the postal addresses of people I wrote to when asking permission to re-imagine their voices. Messages to me from people who had sung the cantata when touring abroad. Messages too, from people who had heard their own words re-spoken by others. These are the new voices that echo in the work and ask their own questions.

Gerhard Marx and Maja Marx

When we started working on *REwind: A cantata for tape and testimony*, Philip Miller had already completed the project of creating an audio monument to the TRC, a court-like body assembled in South Africa after the end of apartheid. Anybody who felt that they had been victims of violence could come forward and be heard by the TRC. Perpetrators of violence could also give testimony and request amnesty from prosecution. The hearings made international news and many sessions were broadcast on national television and radio. Philip's engagement with the audio archives of the TRC relied on the fact that this event was essentially a sound event, relying on testimony, on the act of giving both survivors and transgressors the chance to tell their story, and for all the opportunity to listen to the stories of others.

The project of developing a visual narrative around *REwind* unlocked for us a process of translation between archives. As we listened to each testimony, to each song, the historical, political narrative opened through the vast, often contradictory chorus of voices that the TRC captured. But while we listened, our eyes would fall on the spaces and places and things around us. Our domestic world was necessarily politicised and the spaces around us were, in their own way, part of an archive; it was the secretion of the organism that was the past.

The result of our collaboration was a cantata that uses the full range of the audio archive – speech, rhythm, voice inflections, the sounds of sighs, murmurs and gasps, and the sounds of the technologies used for recording and translation purposes – as choral text, and weaves them into the structure of the music performed by a large choir, four soloists and a string octet.

The intention of our films was never to represent the world from which the testimony springs. Instead we focused on the acts of translation and transcription, processes that characterised the TRC as it sought to carry testimony across languages, cultures and time. To this extent the TRC was a visual spectacle made of microphones,

headsets, translator's booths and an endless jumble of cables. This simple act of bringing things 'across' is most easily explained by the structure of the historical confession box: two spaces are divided by a screen; the testimony or confession travels through this divide, bridging the space between speaker and listener. In a similar manner a story, song or testimony merges one person's intimacy with another's reality; it throws the past into the present.

We thought of our films as that which happens on that screen: the films investigate the space between the text (testimony) and the context (the space in which the testimony is received) as a means of negotiating the space between confessor and listener, and the political past and the contemporary (the private present of a post-democratic South Africa). This idea was explored by first animating and then literally projecting the testimonies onto the world, onto ordinary objects and places. In the process the texts get diffused, interrupted, broken up by what it falls on, and sometimes it erodes or affects that across which it moves.

The most literal contemporary version of this screen was, to us, the manner in which one sees the light of television sets flickering on the windows and curtains of our neighbours' houses at night. Standing outside, one has a sense of the lives lived inside: the windows and curtains communicate something of these interiors, and yet it also divides the interior from the exterior world. The manner in which the political seeps into the domestic and private is nowhere more poignant than in the testimony of Mrs Eunice Tshepiso Miya, who learns about the death of her son Jabulani when seeing his body on the news. The film for this piece, *REwind (REwind)*, was made by projecting her testimony onto the curtains of our neighbour's house, from the inside. The filming, in turn, was done from outside, seeing the interior world projected onto the veiled window.

The technique of stop frame animation allowed us to project the texts, frame by frame, onto the world, and in the spaces between frames we could negotiate the dialogue between the testimony and the surface on which it falls. In a number of testimonies, mundane household objects become emotional anchors in the emotional turmoil of the moment. In *REwind (Mrs*

Plaatjies), a loaf of bread collapses into crumbs as the text projected onto it communicates Mrs Plaatjies' testimony of the loss of her son while she was preparing lunch. *REwind (The Bed)* treats a bed as a book, with the texts of testimonies centred on beds literally turning the sheets, like pages.

Stop frame animation also unlocked the world around us as a potential archive. The basic premise that animation works on is that one's 'eye' seeks similarity across differing frames, a preference that constructs the illusion of coherence, mostly in the form of fluid movement across the screen. For *REwind (Siyaya)* we walked the streets of various areas around Johannesburg, collecting photographs of the façades of houses. We then positioned these images to follow frame upon frame, forcing the eye of the viewer to look for similarity in these small archives of domesticity. For *REwind (The Cry of Nomonde Calata)* we collected discarded photographs from the impromptu identity document photo booths that are found all over Johannesburg. The photos were inverted, thus emphasising the eyes of the subjects (the dark of the eyes becomes light). Again the photos were positioned in a manner that aligned the eyes, forcing the viewer to find coherence amongst difference.

In order to capture the visual effects created by an old television set as it flickered on or off, or moved between channels, we rented a television and installed it in our house. We placed a camera in front of it and filmed the effects as one of us fiddled with the dials. Upon replaying the footage, we discovered to our surprise that it featured archival footage of the TRC and the events it covered. By pure chance we managed to capture the political as it seeped into our domestic 'privacy'. This footage, now both representative of the era it captured, and also emblematic of the manner in which this past invaded our present, is the only archival footage used in our films.
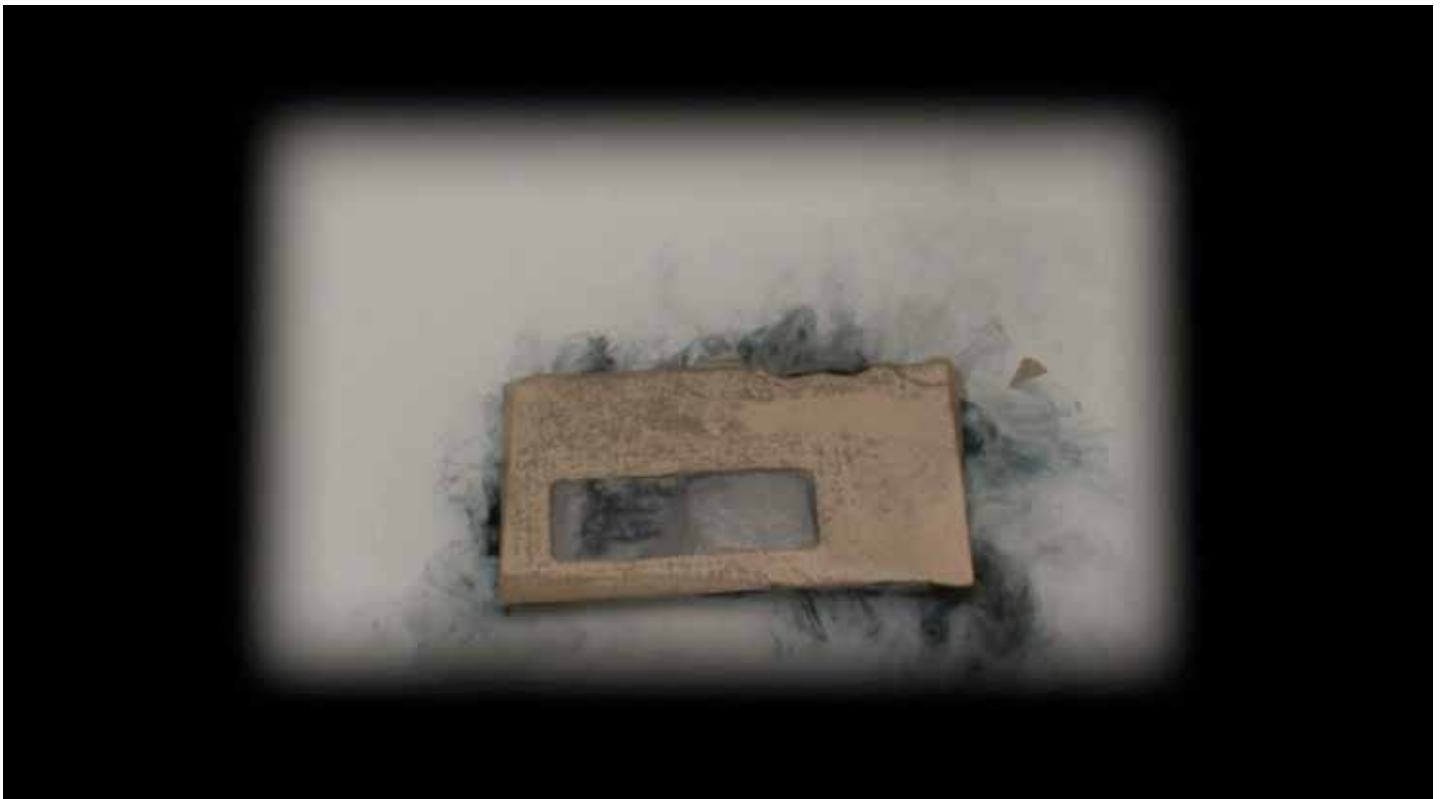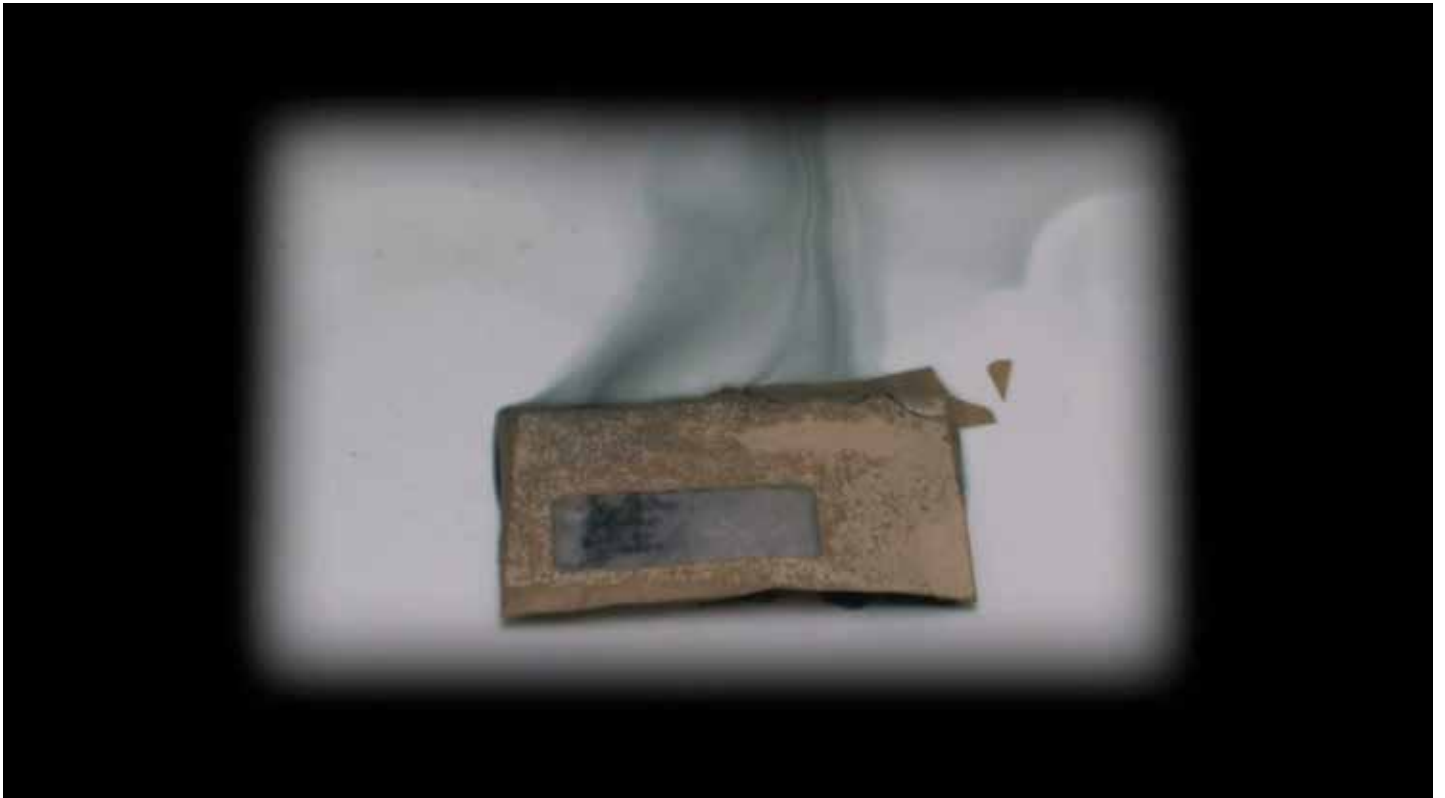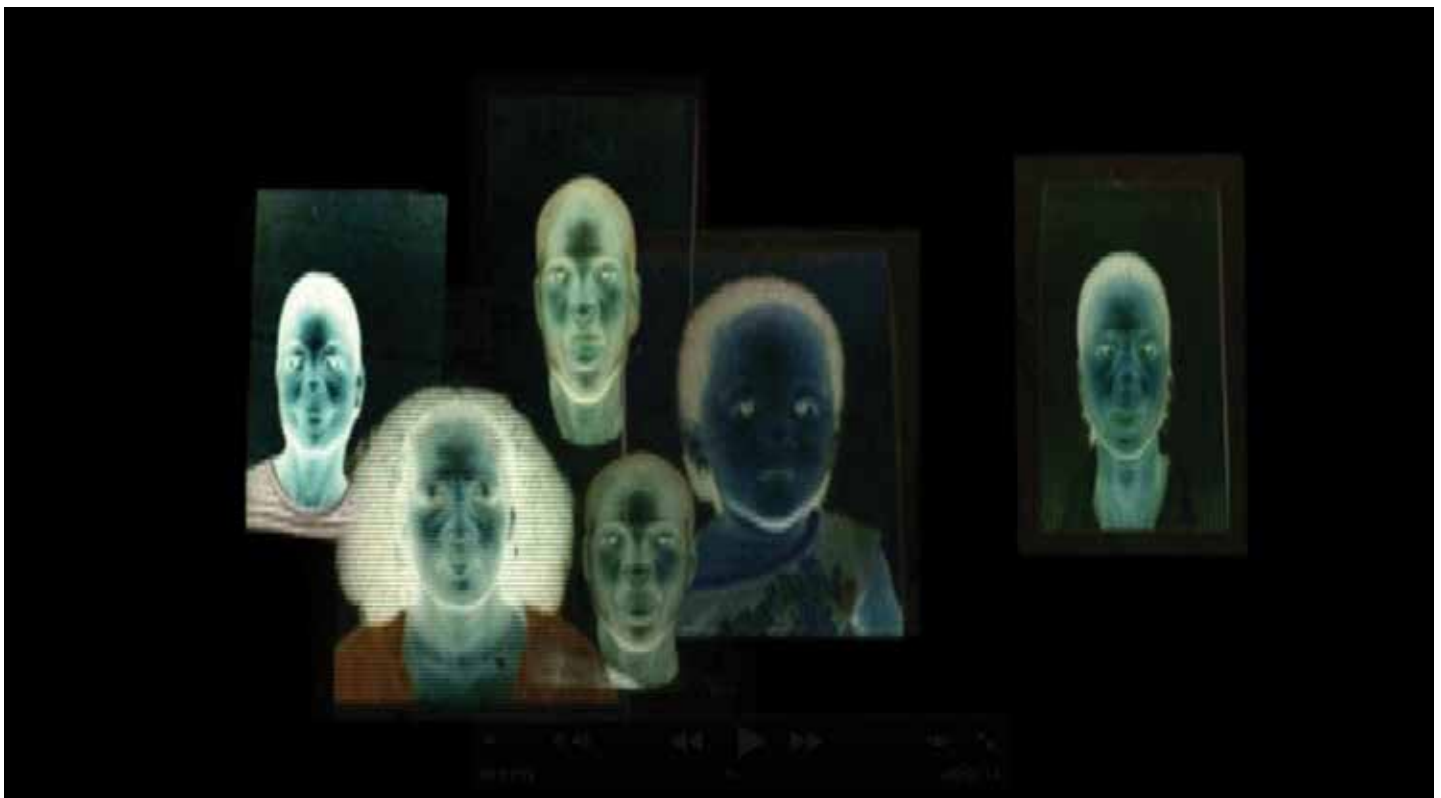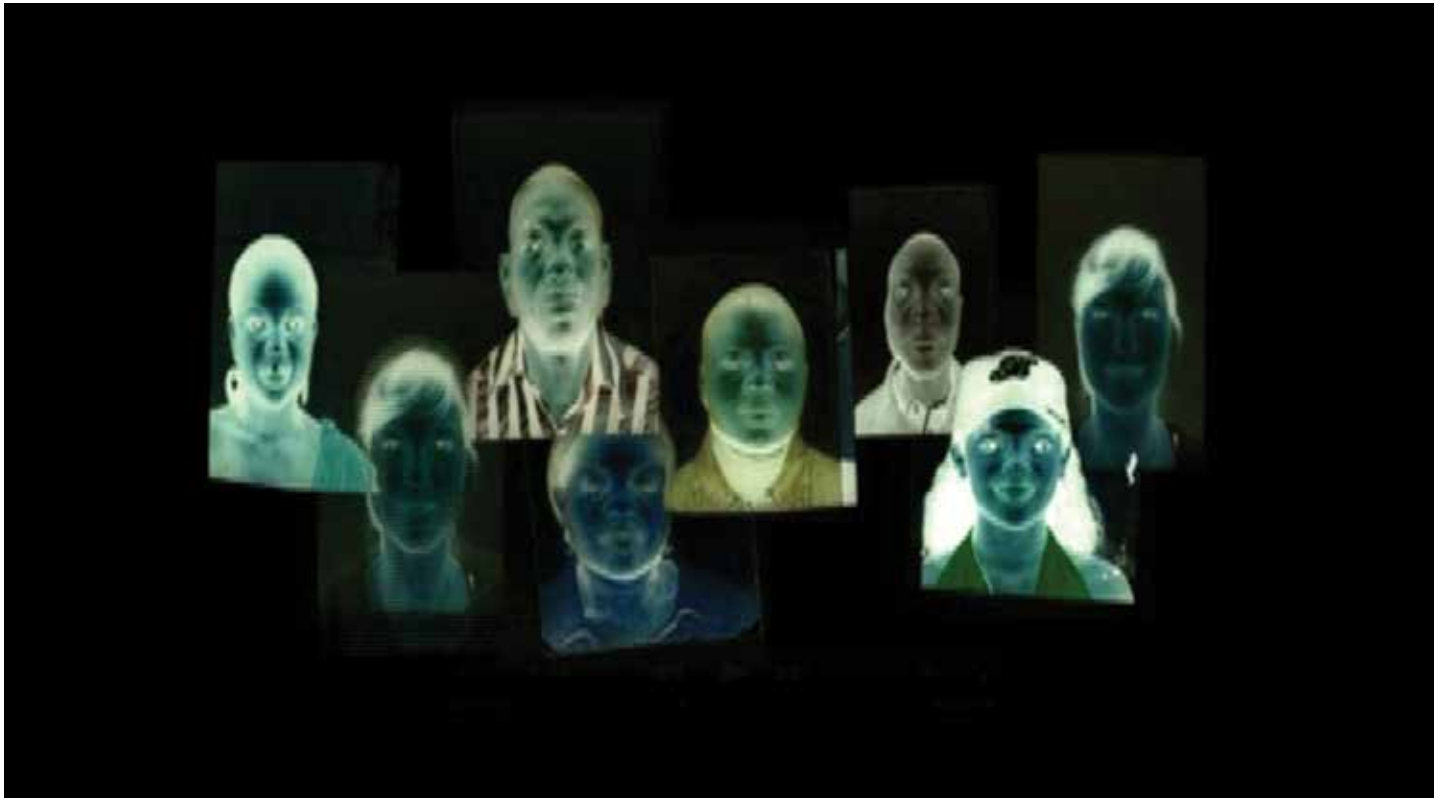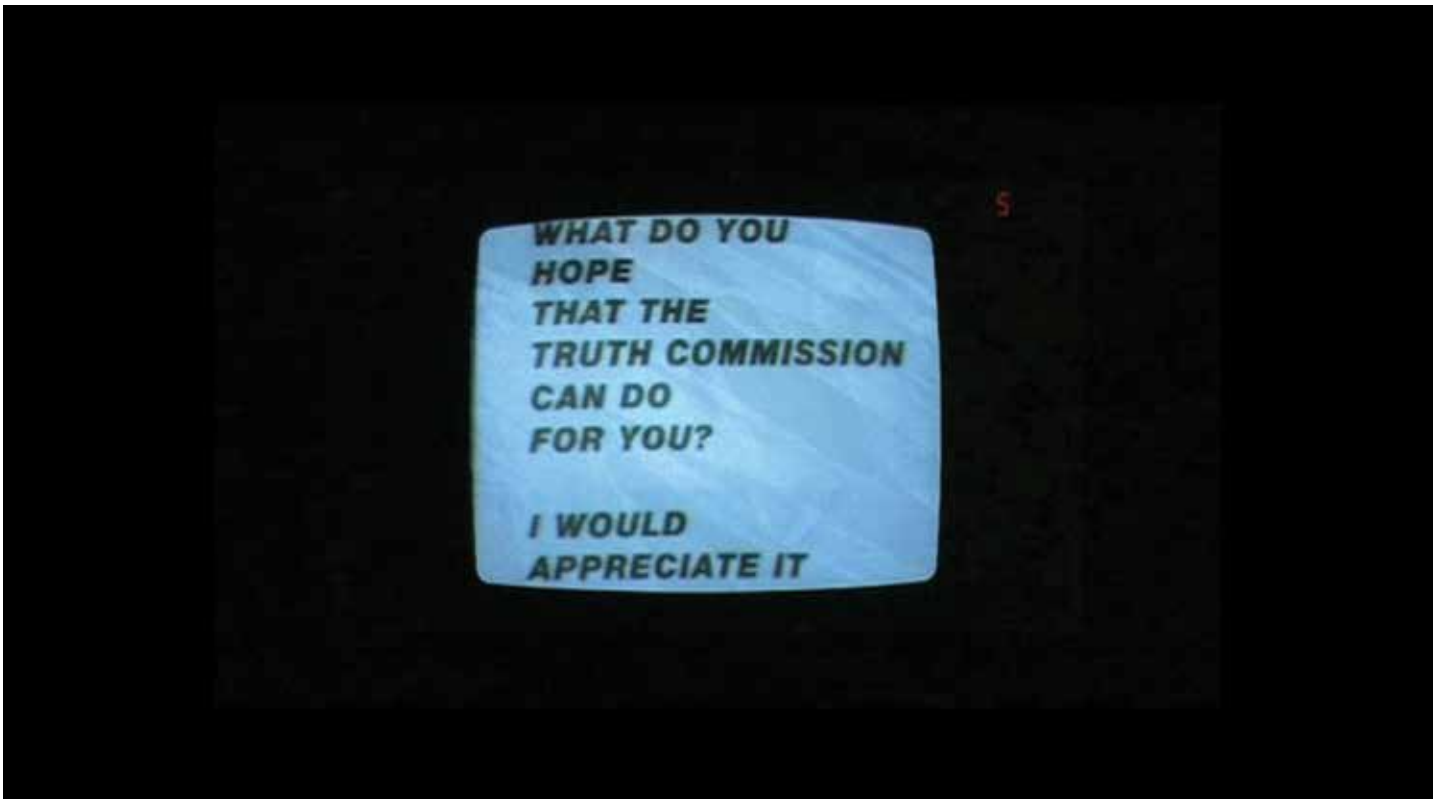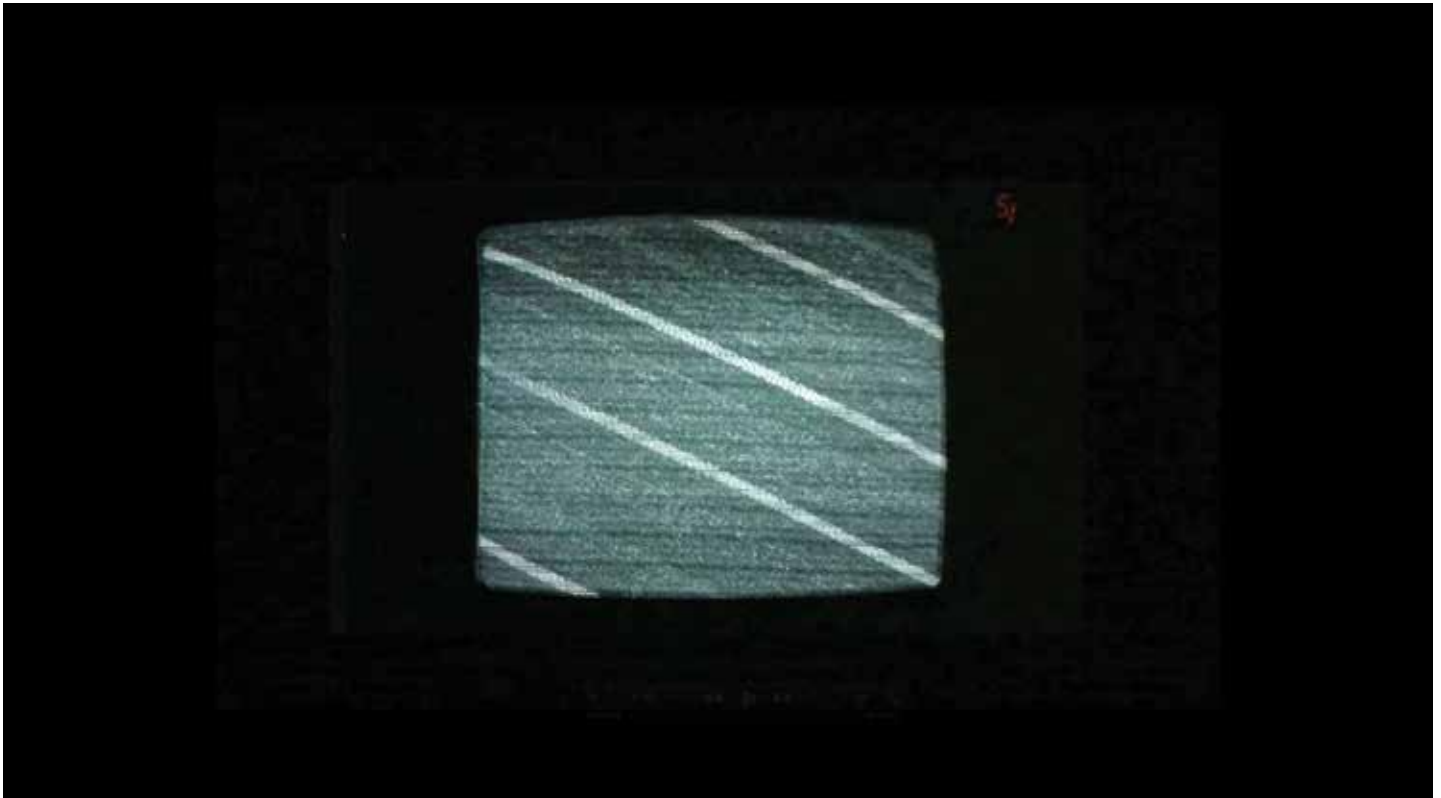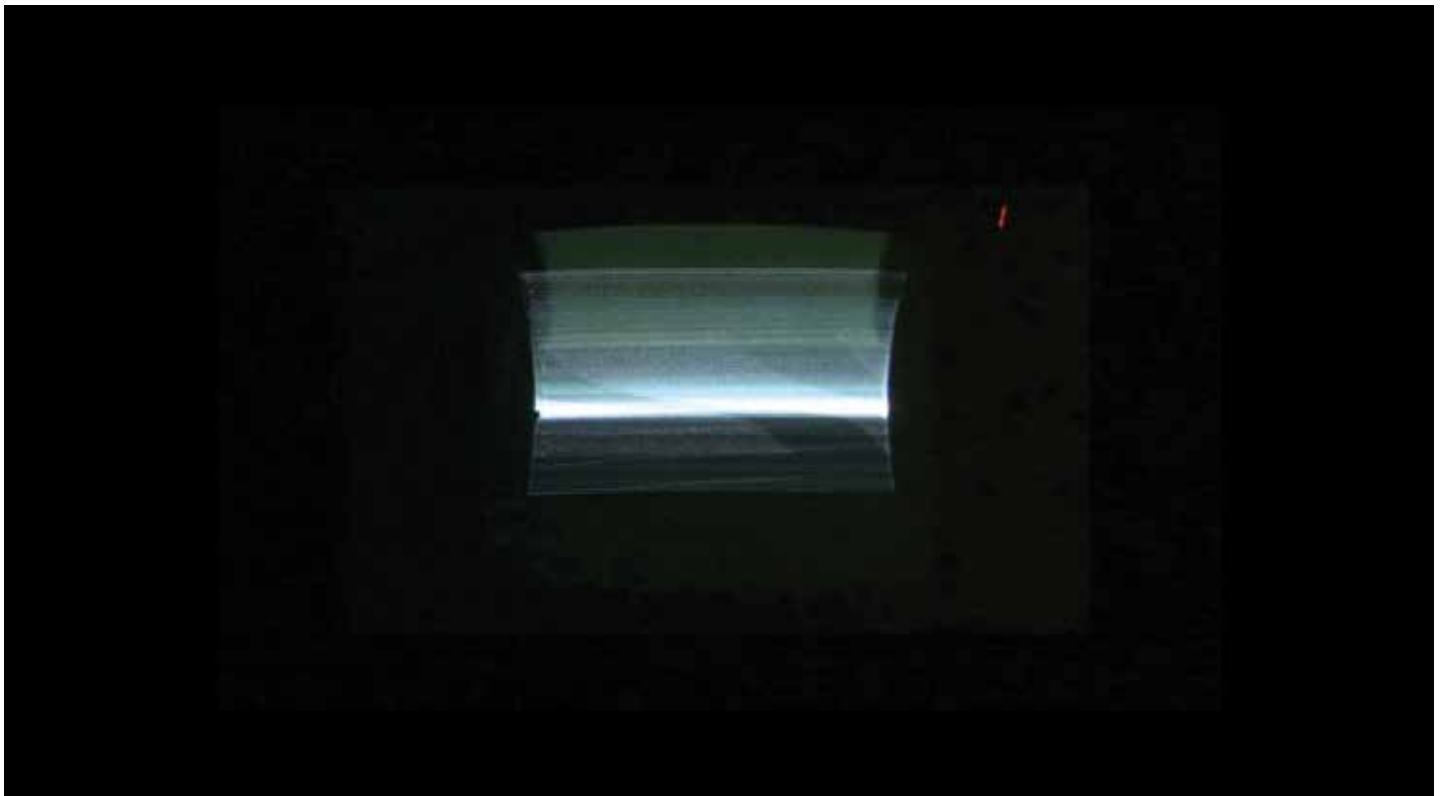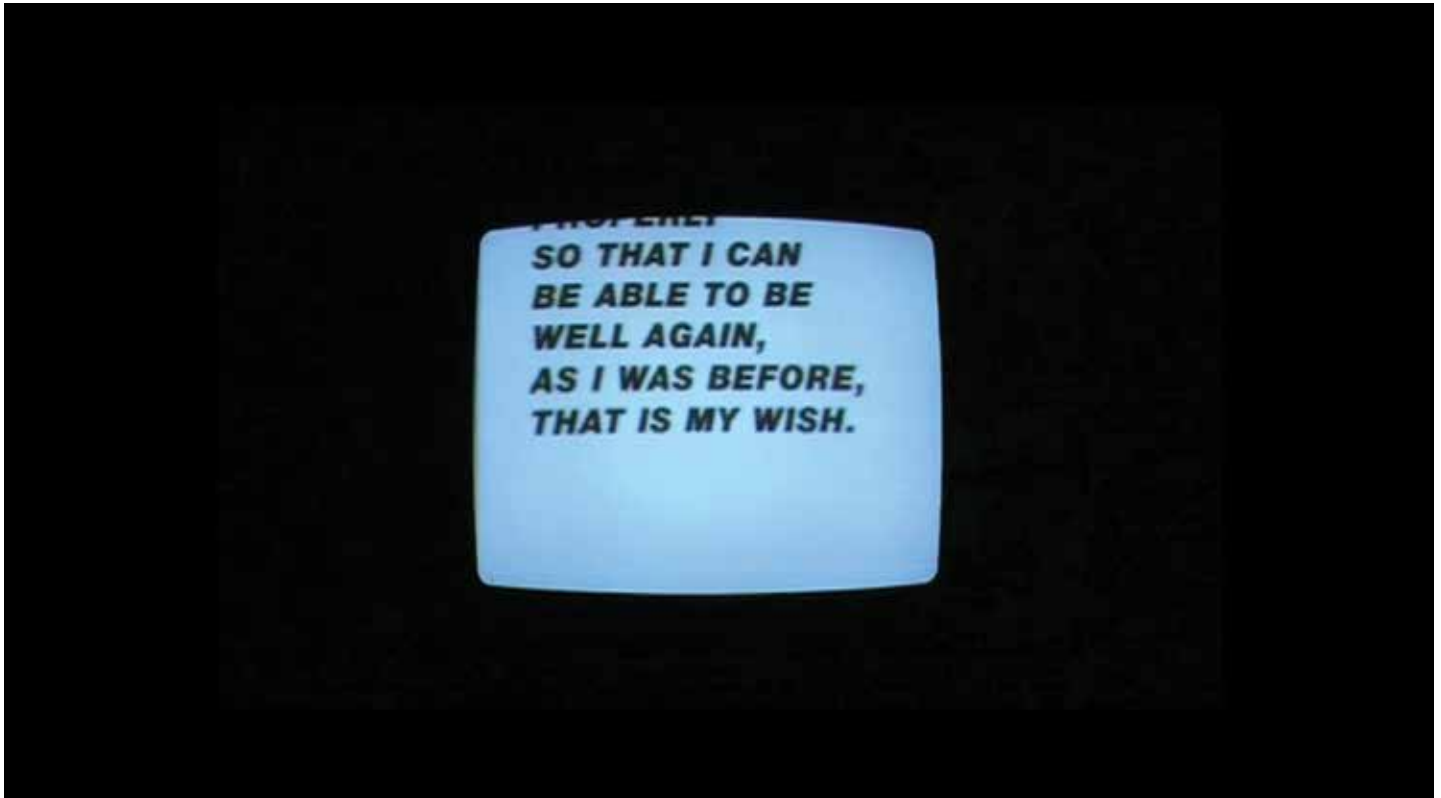
Stills from *Liza Lis'Dinga Lakho Trio*
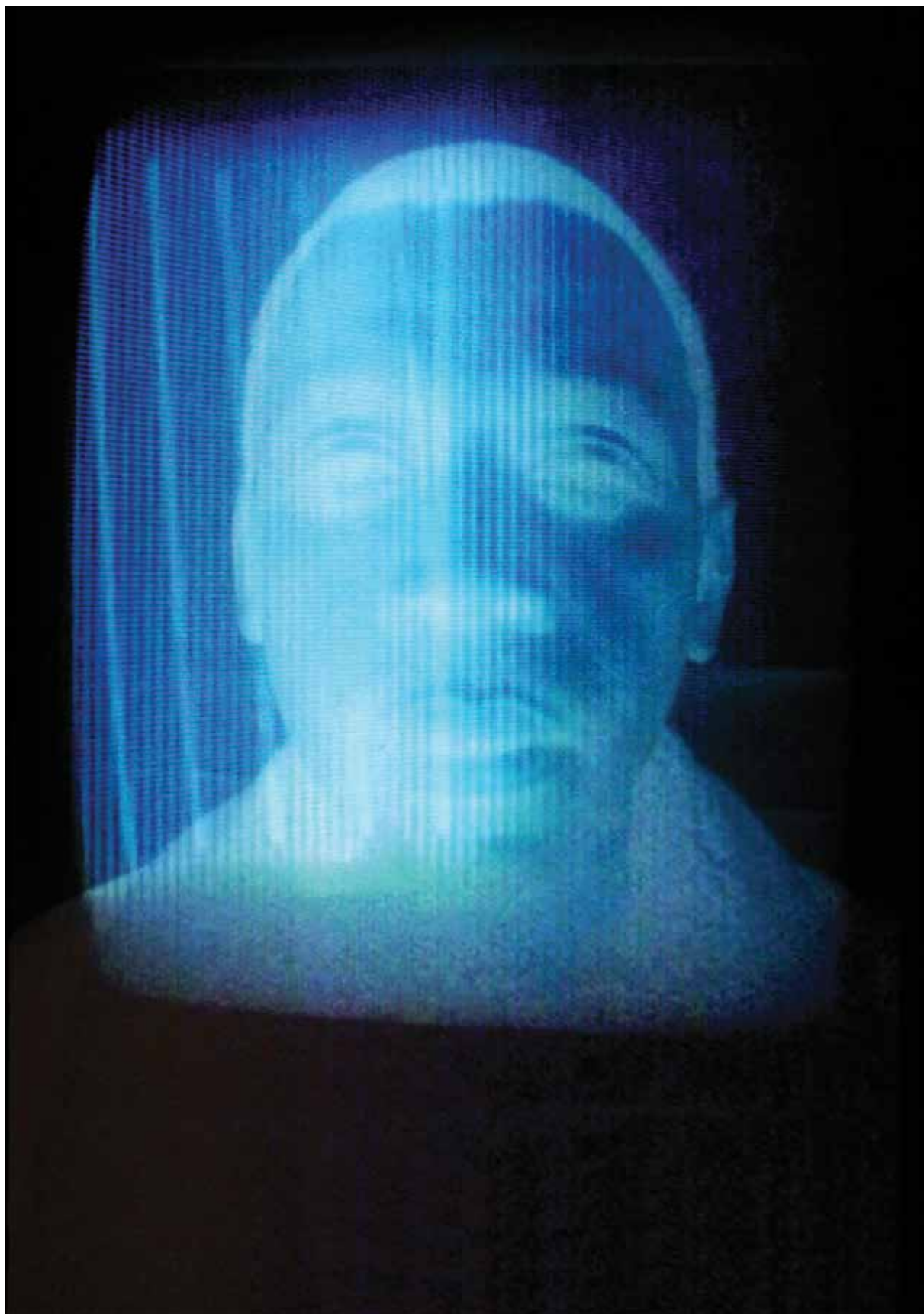
Stills from *The Cry of Nomonde Calata*

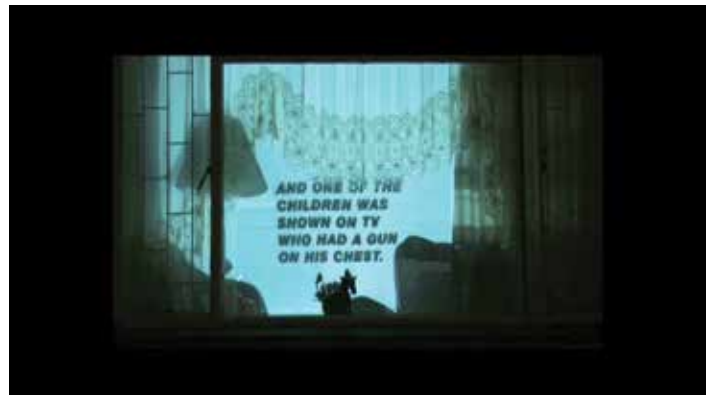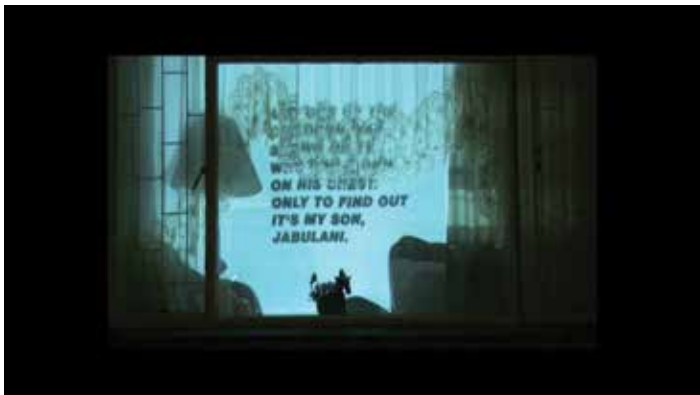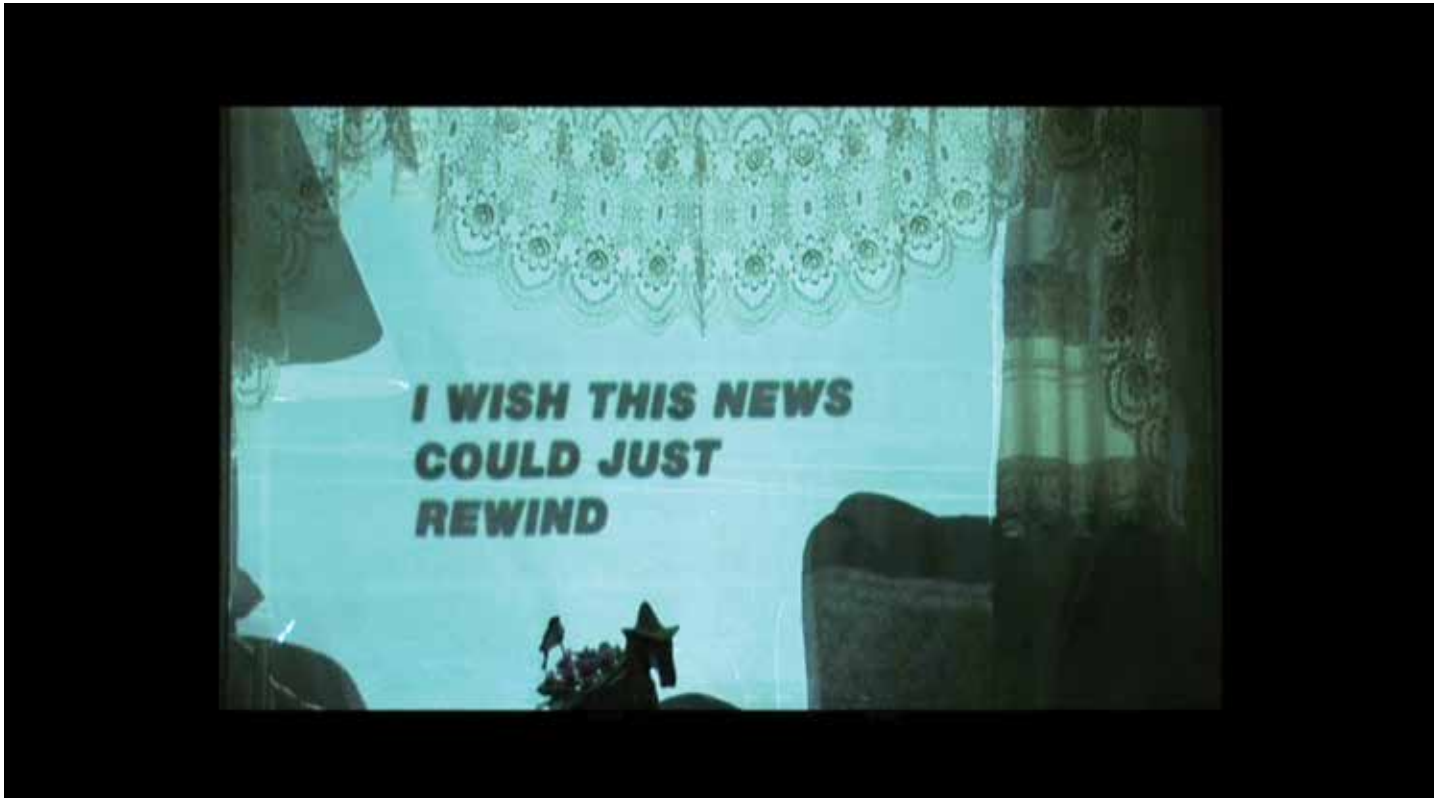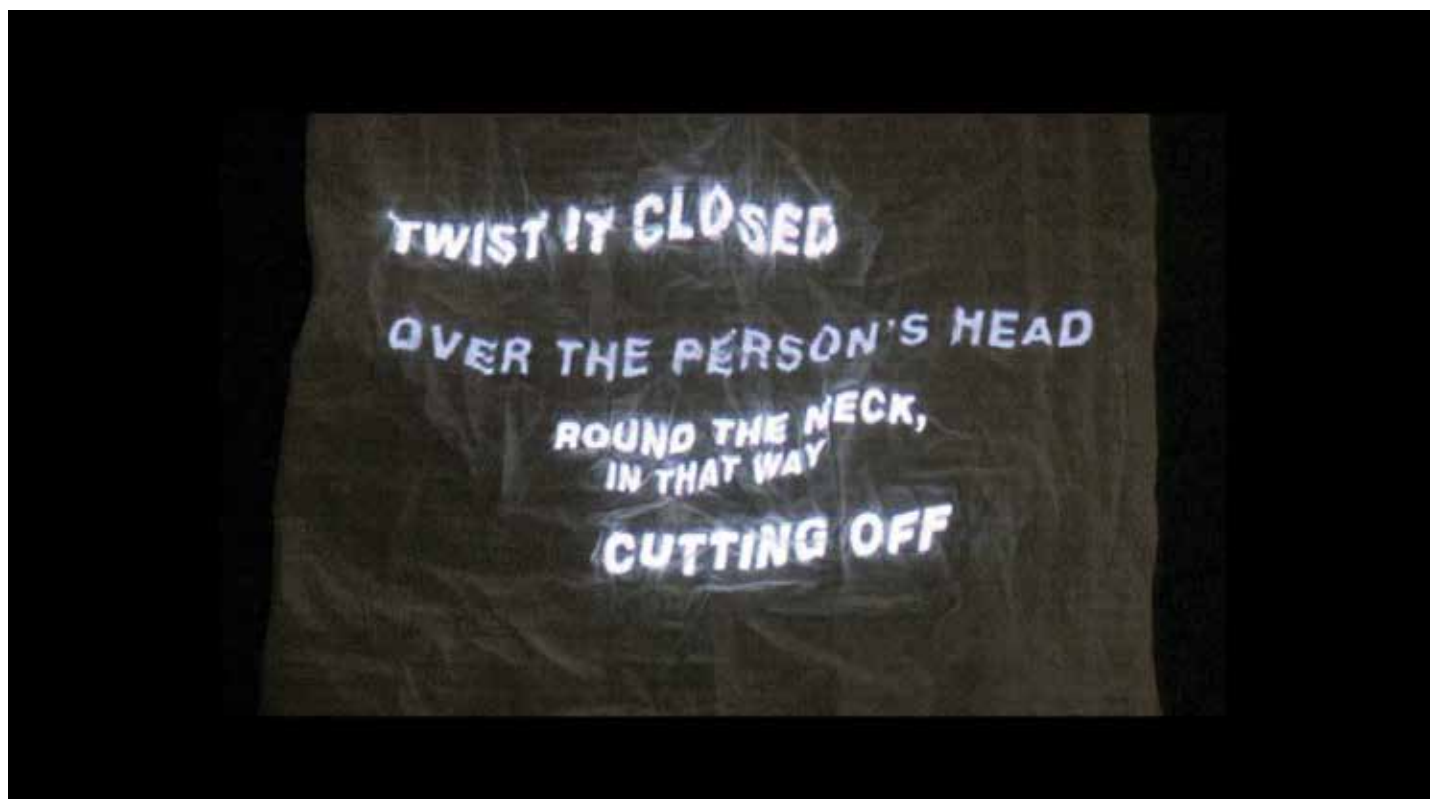Stills from *Memorial*

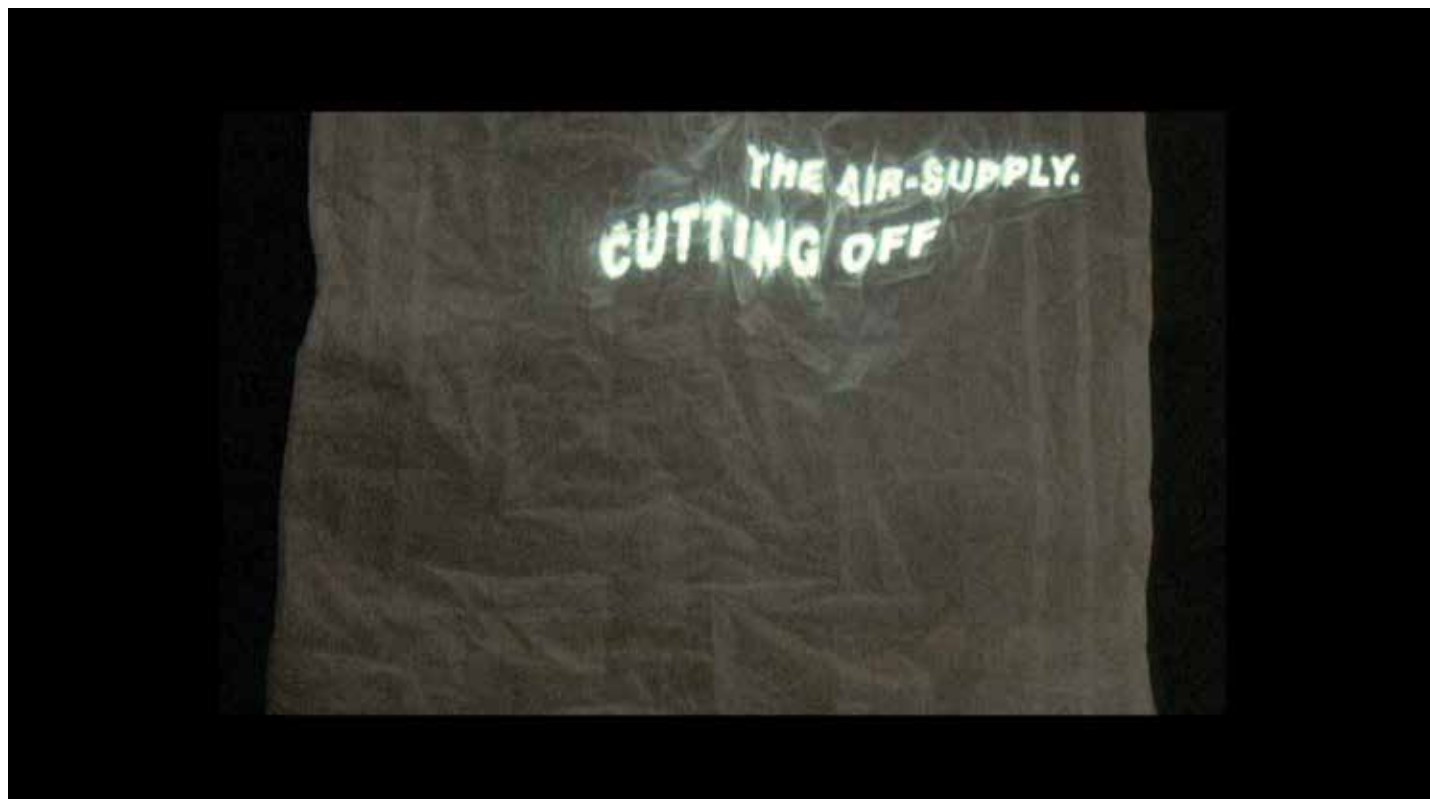Still from *Mrs Plaatjies*

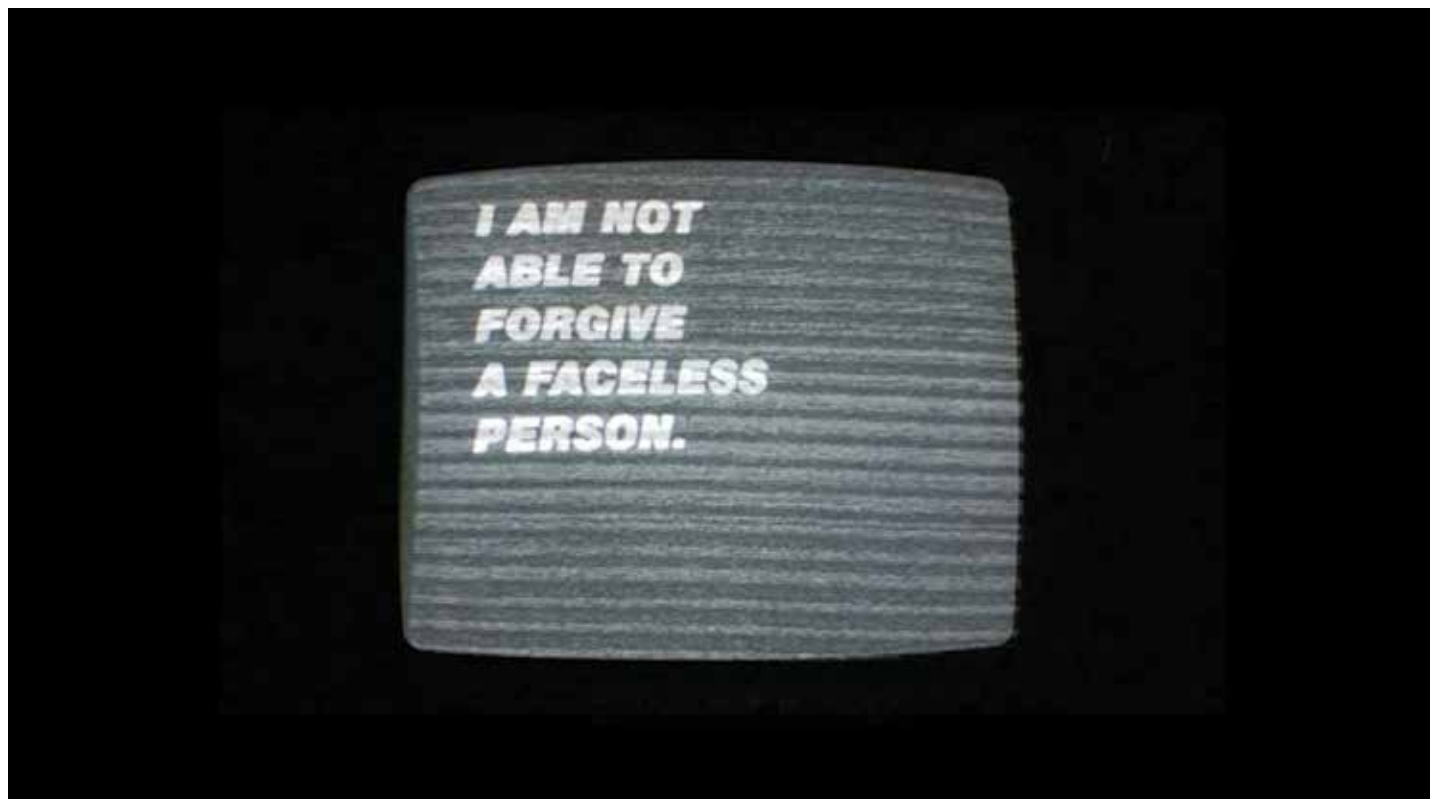Still from *The Bed*

Stills from *REwind*

Still from *The Goat*

Stills from *Tswarelo*

Stills from *Siyaya*

Zanele Muholi

Faces and Phases

2006 to date

Series of 200 photographic prints on paper

Each 25.5 x 38.5cm (image size)

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town and Johannesburg

Artist Statement

As South Africa moves beyond 20 years of democracy in April 2014, visual history demands that we document black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex people's lives. Queerphobic, xenophobic, transphobic, lesbophobic and homophobic incidents are regularly reported in the South African media. In 2012 alone, we read about queericides that claimed more than ten innocent lives. In the majority of these brutal murders, the victims were black lesbians, many of them younger than 30.

Such violent hate crimes suffered at the hands of aggressive perpetrators are often used to silence us as a community. Freedom of expression can put some of us at risk. Fundamentalists use the bible to justify their hate speech and influence those who are ignorant, in order to enforce further prejudice. Over the past few years we have also witnessed unjust situations in which members of our LGBTI community were clearly refused citizenship. However, we cannot let this brutality stop us from writing about these atrocities, and from juxtaposing them with what is projected on the surface, as we continue to face new challenges.

I decided to capture images of my community in order to contribute towards a more democratic and representative South African homosexual history. Up until 1994, we black lesbians were excluded from participating in the creation of a formal queer movement and our voices were absent from the pages of gay publications, while white activists directed the movement and wrote about gay issues and struggles. Hence, few of us were present in the forefront, although many operated underground.

A lot has changed since then, with the publication of queer books providing good information on subjects including spirituality and sexuality, same-sex marriage, gay youth speaking on their positionality, lesbians reclaiming their stance within the queer movements, and transgender persons emerging within those spheres claiming their existence. I embarked on a journey of visual activism to ensure that there is especially black lesbian visibility – to showcase our existence and resistance in this democratic society, and to present positive imagery of black lesbians.

There is a particular meaning and interplay to the words *Faces and Phases*. Aside from the dictionary definition of a face (the front of the head, from forehead to chin), the face also expresses the person. This means me – a photographer and community worker – being face-to-face with the many lesbians I have interacted with from townships in Gauteng, Durban and Cape Town, and even beyond those zones. Each photograph bears a caption with the subject's name, and where and when the image was documented.

In each township there are lesbians who are living openly regardless of the stigma and lesbophobia/homophobia attached to their lesbian identities of butch or femme or otherwise. Most of the time, being lesbian is seen as negative, as destroying the nuclear heterosexual family; lesbians are seen as aggressive people, masculine looking and wearing rugged clothes, probably dangerous.

For many black lesbians, the stigma of queer identities arises from the fact that homosexuality is seen as un-African. Expectations are that African women must have children and procreate with a male partner, the head of the family. Although some of us who embrace same-sex partnerships do have children, this is not seen as part of the 'African tradition'. Failing to conform to the societal expectations of womanhood, we are perceived as deviants, needing 'curative rape' to erase our male attitude and make us into true women, mothers, men's property.

To date there are more than 200 black and white portraits in the *Faces and Phases* series, which started in 2006 and continues to this day. Individuals in the series hold different positions and play many different roles within the black lesbian community; among them are soccer players, actresses, musicians, scholars, writers, cultural activists, lawyers, dancers, filmmakers and human rights/ gender activists. However, whenever outsiders represent us, we are merely seen as victims of rape and homophobia. We are often mocked as men-haters or those who were previously disappointed by men.

Our lives are always sensationalised, rarely understood. This is the reason for the word *phases*: our lives are not just what make newspaper headlines every time one of us is attacked. We go through many stages; we express many identities which unfold in parallel in our existence.

From an insider's perspective, this project is meant as a commemoration and a celebration of the lives of the black lesbians and trans(wo)men that I have met in my journeys through the townships and beyond. These narratives are told with both pain and joy, as some of these individuals were going through hardships in their lives at the time. Their stories caused me sleepless nights, as I did not know how to deal with the urgent needs I was told about. Many of them had been violated, and I did not want the camera to be a further violation. Rather, I wanted to establish and maintain relationships with them based on our mutual understanding of what it means to be fe/male, lesbian and black in South Africa today. I call this method 'visual activism', and I decided to use it to mark our resistance and existence as black queers and non-gender-conforming individuals in our country. It is important to put a face on each and every issue. *Faces and Phases* is about our her/histories, struggles and lives on this queer mother planet. We will face our experiences regardless of what they will be, and we will still move on.
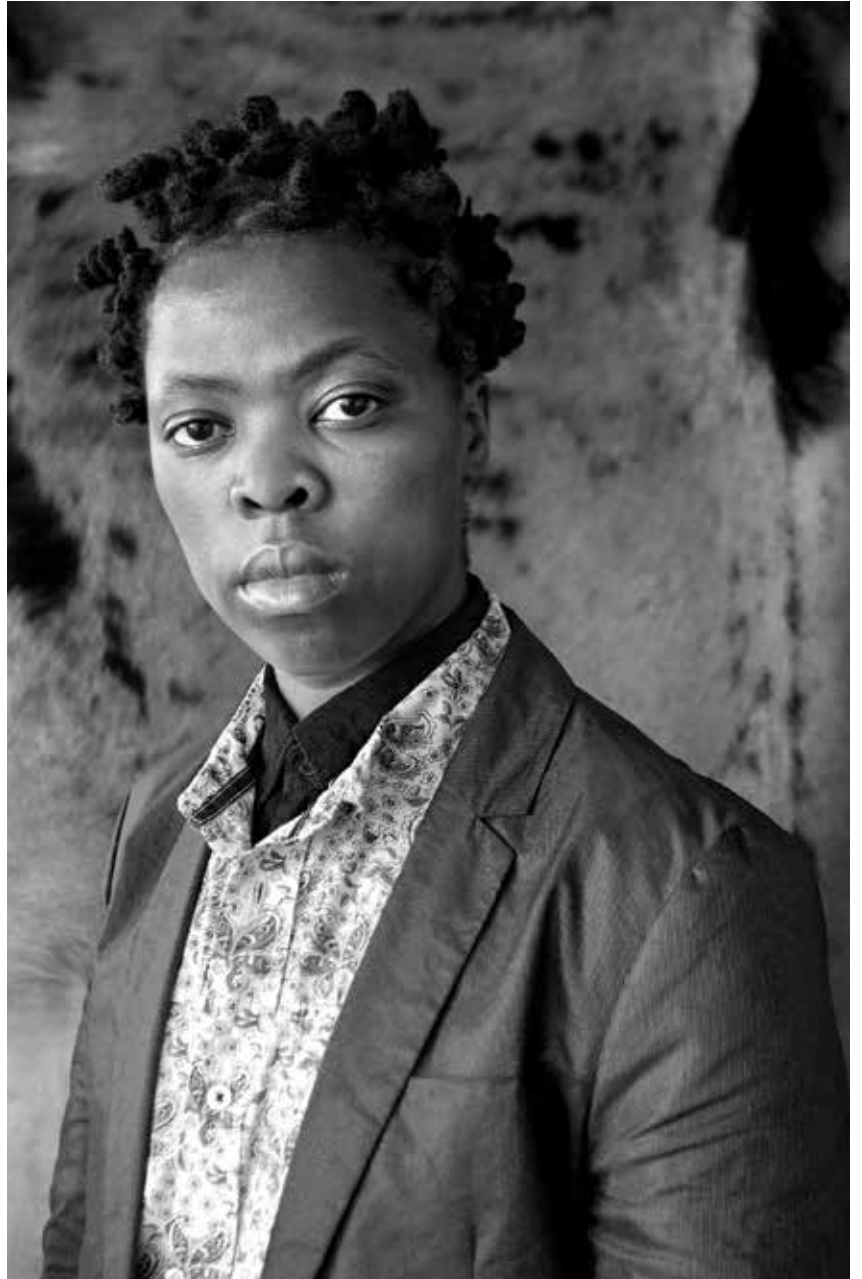
This page, clockwise from top left:

Audrey Mary, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011

Zanele Muholi, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011

Amanda Mapuma, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011

Amanda Mahlaba, Mt. Moriah, Edgecombe, Durban, 2012

Ayanda Magoloza, Kwanele South, Katlehong, Johannesburg, 2012

Facing page, clockwise from top left:

Des're Higa, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011

Anele Sibamba, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008

Amogelang Senokwane, District Six, Cape Town, 2009

Anelisa Mfo, Nyanga, Cape Town, 2010

Anele Sibamba, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011

Manucha, Muizenberg, Cape Town, 2010

Mutsa Honnor, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011

Mayita Tamangani, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011

Asanda Mbali, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011

Lo Mannya, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2010

Anele 'Anza' Khaba, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011

Ayana Leonard, Toronto, 2008

Clockwise from top left:

Lex, Gabarone, Botswana, 2010

Hlomela Msesele, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011

Dorothy Magome, Mafikeng, North West, 2010

Dikeledi Sibanda, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007

Lumka Stemela, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011

Linda Myataza, NY147 Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011

Lungile Cleo Dladla, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011

Facing page, clockwise from top left:

Gazi T Zuma, Umlazi Township, Durban, 2009

Eulander Koester, Nyanga East, Cape Town, undated

Jordyn Monroe, Toronto, 2008

Kamplex, Toronto, 2008

Kasha N. Jacqueline (SMUG), Toronto, 2009

Lerato Marumolwa, Embekweni, Paarl, 2009

Lesedi Modise, Mafikeng, North West, 2010

Eulander Koester, Guguletu, Cape Town, 2008

Lebo Mashifane, District Six, Cape Town, 2009 [1]

Katlego Phetlhu, Mafikeng, North West, 2010

Kebarileng Sebetoane, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2012

Lebo Mashifane, District Six, Cape Town, 2009 [2]

Lerato Nkutha, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010

Clockwise from bottom right:

Mosa Leballo, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2011
Millicent Gaika, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011
Matseko Mahlaba, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010
Matseleng Kgoaripe, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2011
'Makhethi' Sebenzile Ndaba, Consitution Hill, Johannesburg, 2010
Makho Ntuli, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010
Mamiki Tshabalala, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010
Matsheko Kekana, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010
Maponini Ntsala, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2011
Matshidiso Mofokeng, Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, 2010
Miles Tanhira, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011
Mbali Zulu, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010
Maxine Ma'atSankofa, London, 2008
Marcel Kutumela, Alexandra, Johannesburg, 2008
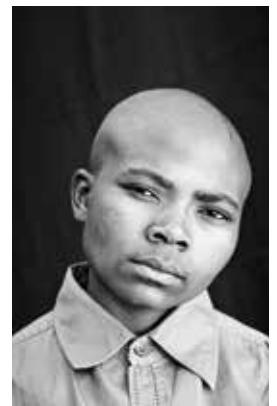
Facing page, clockwise from bottom right:

Ntobza Mkhwanazi, BB Section Umlazi Township, Durban, 2012

Ntandokazi Magaga, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011

Ntsiki Dlamini, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal, 2012

Mac Ilakut, Kampala, Uganda, 2011

Nokuthula Dhladhla, Berea, Johannesburg, 2007

Niko Blaxxx, Toronto, 2008

Nokuthula 'Pinky' Mbangula, Skhosana Section, Katlehong, Johannesburg, 2012

Noluthando 'Tebhasi' Sibisi, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal, 2012

Nopinkie Selepe, NY147 Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011

Nosipho Solundwana, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2007

Nosi 'Ginga' Molotsane, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007

Nosipho 'Brown' Lusondwana, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2007

Nondi Vokwana, NY147 Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011

Nonzwakazi P. Ncapayi, Spruitview, Johannesburg, 2007

Clockwise from second image, bottom left:

Pumezo Makasi, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008

Puleng Mahlati, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008

Namhla Kele, NY147 Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011

Nwabisa Skweyiya, Gardens, Cape Town, 2011

Nunu Sigasa, Germiston, Johannesburg, 2010

Nozipho Magagula, Melville, Johannesburg, 2011

Apinda Mpako, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2008

Refilwe Mahlaba, Thokoza, Johannesburg, 2010

Rena Godlo, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011

Clockwise from top right:
Oyama Mbopa, Athlone, Cape Town, 2010
Pam Dlungwana, Woodstock, Cape Town, 2010
Pam Dlungwana, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011
Sebenzile Nkosi, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2012

Facing page, clockwise from top left:
Nzura Ntombozuko Ndlwana, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011
Olivia Koyana, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008
Penny Fish, Vredehoek, Cape Town [RIP], 2008
Paballo Molele, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007
Palesa Mkhwebane, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011
Pearl Hlongwane, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2007
Phila Mbanjwa, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal, 2012
Puleng Mahlati, Embekweni, Paarl, 2009
Pinky Zulu, Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, 2010
Palesa Monakale, Buitenkant Street, Gardens, Cape Town, 2011
Patience Mandishona, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011
Penny Xoliswa Nkosi, Berea, Johannesburg, 2007

Skye Chirape, Brighton, United Kingdom, 2010

Clockwise from bottom right:
Sizile Rongo-Nkosi, Glenwood, Durban, 2012
Skipper Mogapi, Gabarone, Botswama, 2010
Sinenhlanhla Lunga, Kwanele South, Katlehong, Johannesburg, 2012
'Skipper' Mogapi, District Six, Cape Town, 2008
Shirley Ndaba, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010
Silva Dux Eiseb, Stockholm, Sweden, 2011
Sindi Shabalala, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2007
Sindi Shabalala, Queensgate, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2007
Siya Mcuta, Cape Town Station, Cape Town, 2011
Siza Khumalo, Berea, Johannesburg, 2007
Siphokazi Kula, Embekweni, Paarl, Cape Town, 2011

Clockwise from top left:

Thembi Nyoka, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2007

Teleka Bowden, Toronto, 2008

Thandi 'Mancane' Selepe, Braamfontein, Johannesburg. 2010

Thandeka Ndamase, 2010

Thembela Dick, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011

Tinashe Wakapila, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011

Thuli Ncube, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010

Thandi and Thandeka Mbatha, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2010

Thandeka Mbatha, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2010

Tash Dowell, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011

Clockwise from bottom right:

Zama Sibiya, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010

Zandile Tose, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011

Xana Nyilenda, Newtown, Johannesburg, 2011

Tlhalefo 'Zeal' Ntseane, Mafikeng, North West, 2011

Tumi Mkhuma, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007

Tumi Mokgosi, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007

*Tumi Nkopane, KwaThema, Springs,
Johannesburg, 2010*

Wewe Ngidi, Observatory, Johannesburg, 2009

*Vuyo Nkonwana, Site B, Oliver Thambo Hall,
Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011*

*Vuyelwa Makubetse, KwaThema Community Hall,
Springs, Johannesburg, 2011*

Facing page, clockwise from top left:

*Ayanda Magudulela, Braamfontein,
Johannesburg, 2010*

*Anele 'Anza' Khaba, KwaThema, Springs,
Johannesburg, 2010*

Dee Mashoko, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011

*Amanda 'China' Nyandeni, Yeoville,
Johannesburg, 2007*

Babalwa Nani, Cape Town Station, Cape Town, 2011

'Makhethi' Sebenzile Ndaba, Consitution Hill, Johannesburg, 2010	'Skipper' Mogapi, District Six, Cape Town, 2008	'TK' Tekanyo, Gabarone, Botswana, 2010	'TK' Themi Khumalo, BB Section Umlazi Township, Durban, 2012	Akhona Hentili Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011	Amanda ' China' Nyandeni, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007	Amanda Mahlaba, Mt Moriah, Edgecombe, Durban, 2012	Amanda Mapuma, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011	Amogelang Senokwane, District Six, Cape Town, 2009	Anele 'Anza' Khaba, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011
Anele 'Anza' Khaba, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010	Anele Sibamba, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008	Anele Sibamba, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011	Anelisa Mfo, Nyanga, Cape Town, 2010	Apinda Mpako, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2008	Asanda Fanti, Stockholm, Sweden, 2011	Asanda Mbali, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011	Audrey Mary, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011	Ayana Leonard, Toronto, 2008	Ayanda Magoloza, Kwanele South, Katlehong, Johannesburg, 2012
Ayanda Magudulela, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010	Ayanda Mqakayi, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011	Ayanda Msiza, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011	Ayanda Radebe, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2011	Babalwa Nani, Cape Town Station, Cape Town, 2011	Bakhambile Skhosana, Natalspruit, 2010	Bathandwa Mosho, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010	Betesta Segale, Gabarone, Botswana, 2010 [1]	Betesta Segale, Gabarone, Botswana, 2010 [2]	Bongiwe ' Twana' Kunene, Kwanele South, Katlehong, JHB, 2012
Clarissa Granger, Amsterdam, 2009	Deborah Dlamini, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011	Dee Mashoko, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011	Des're Higa, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2010	Des're Higa, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011	Dikeledi Sibanda, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010	Dikeledi Sibanda, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007	Dorothy Magome, Mafikeng, North West, 2010	Eulander Koester, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008	Eulander Koester, Nyanga East, Cape Town, undated
Funeka Soldaat, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2010	Gazi T Zuma, Umlazi Township, Durban, 2009	Hlomela Msesele, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011	Jordyn Monroe, Toronto, 2008	Kamplex, Toronto, 2008	Kasha N, Jacqueline of Smug of Farug, Smug Uganda, Toronto, 2009	Katlego Phetlhu, Mafikeng, North West, 2010,	Kebarileng Sebetoane, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2012	Kediemetse 'Kaybee' Thipe, Goodwood, Cape Town, 2011	Kekeletso Khena, Greenmarket Square, Cape Town, 2012
Kgakgamatso 'Kenya' Mogorosi, Goodwood, Cape Town, 2011	Lebo Mashifane, District Six, Cape Town, 2009 [1]	Lebo Mashifane, District Six, Cape Town, 2009 [2]	Lerato Bafedile, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010	Lerato Dumse, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010	Lerato Marumolwa, Embekweni, Paarl, 2009	Lerato Nkutha, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010	Lesedi Modise, Mafikeng, North West, 2010	Lesego Magwai, Pretoria, 2007	Lesego Masilela, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010
Lesego Thwale, Constitutional Hill, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2012	Lex, Gabarone, Botswana, 2010	Linda Myataza, NY147 Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011	Lo Mannya, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2010	Lumka Stemela, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011	Lungile Cleo Dladla, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011	Lynette Mokhooa, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011	Mac Ilakut, Kampala, Uganda, 2011	Makho Ntuli, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010	Mamiki Tshabalala, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010
Manucha, Muizenberg, Cape Town, 2010	Maponini Ntsala, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2011	Marcel Kutumela, Alexandra, Johannesburg, 2008	Matseko Mahlaba, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010	Matseleng Kgoaripe, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2011	Matsheko Kekana, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010	Matshidiso Mofokeng, Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, 2010	Maxine Ma'atSankofa, London, 2008	Mayita Tamangani, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011	Mbali Zulu, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010
Michelle Clark, Toronto, 2009	Miles Tanhira, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011	Millicent Gaika, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011	Mosa Leballo, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2011	Mpho Mtsweni, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010	Mpumi Moeti, Kwanele South, Katlehong, Johannesburg, 2012	Musa Ngubane, Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, 2010	Mutsa Honnor, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011	Namhla Kele, NY147 Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011	Neo Bev Bonokwane, Mafikeng, Northwest, 2010
Nhlanhla Esther Mafokeng, Thokoza, Johannesburg, 2010	Nhlanhla Langa, Meadowlands Estates, Madadeni, KwaZulu Natal, 2011	Nikiwe Bobotyana, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008	Niko Blaxxx, Toronto, 2008	Nokuthula 'Pinky' Mbangula, Skhosana Section, Katlehong, JHB, 2012,	Nokuthula Dhladhla, Berea, Johannesburg, 2007	Noluntu Makalima, Woodstock, Cape Town, 2010	Noluthando 'Tebhasi' Sibisi, PMB, KwaZulu Natal, 2012	Nondi Vokwana, NY147 Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011	Nonzwakazi P, Ncapayi, Spruitview, Johannesburg, 2007

Nopinkie Selepe, NY147 Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011

Nosi 'Ginga' Molotsane, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007

Nosipho 'Brown' Lusondwana, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2007

Nosipho Solundwana, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2007

Nosizwe Cekiso, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008

Nozipho Magagula, Melville, Johannesburg, 2011

Ntandokazi Magaga, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011

Ntobza Mkhwanazi, BB Section Umlazi Township, Durban, 2012

Ntsiki Dlamini, PMB, KwaZulu Natal, 2012

Nunu Sigasa, Germiston, Johannesburg, 2010

Nwabisa Skweyiya, Buitenkant Street, Gardens, Cape Town, 2011

Nzura Ntombozuko Ndlwana, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011

Olivia Koyana, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008

Oyama Mbopa, Athlone, Cape Town, 2010

Paballo Molele, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007

Palesa Mkhwebane, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011

Palesa Monakale, Buitenkant Street, Gardens, Cape Town, 2011

Pam Dlungwana, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011

Pam Dlungwana, Woodstock, Cape Town, 2010

Patience Mandishona, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011

Pearl Hlongwane, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2007

Pearl Hlongwane, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2011

Pearl Mali, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011

Penny Fish, Vredehoek, Cape Town [RIP], 2008

Penny Xoliswa Nkosi, Berea, Johannesburg, 2007

Phila Mbanjwa, PMB, KwaZulu Natal, 2012

Phindile Kubeka, Kwanele South, Katlehong, Johannesburg, 2012

Phumzile Nkosi, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2011

Phyillis Rongo-Nkosi, Glenwood, Durban, 2012

Pinky Zulu, Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, 2010

Puleng Mahlati , Embekweni, Paarl, 2009

Puleng Mahlati, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008

Pumezo Makasi, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008

Refilwe Mahlaba, Thokoza, Johannesburg, 2010

Rena Godlo, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011

Samkelo Makhathini, PMB, KwaZulu Natal, 2012

Sebe Shabalala, Umlazi, Durban, 2008

Sebenzile Nkosi, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2012

Sheila Plaatjie, Johannesburg, 2008

Shirley Ndaba, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010

Silva Dux Eiseb, Stockholm, Sweden, 2011

Sindi Shabalala, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2007

Sindi Shabalala, Queensgate, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2007

Sindy Dondolo, CBD, Cape Town, 2008

Sinenhlanhla Lunga, Kwanele South, Katlehong, Johannesburg, 2012

Siphokazi Kula, Embekweni, Paarl, Cape Town, 2011

Siphokazi Mntuyedwa, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011

Sisipho Ndzuzo , Embekweni, Paarl, 2009

Sisipho Ndzuzo, District Six, Cape Town, 2011

Siya Kolela, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011

Siya Mcuta, Cape Town Station, Cape Town, 2011

Siza Khumalo, Berea, Johannesburg, 2007

Sizile Rongo-Nkosi, Glenwood, Durban, 2012

Skipper Mogapi, Gabarone, Botswama, 2010

Skye Chirape, Brighton, United Kingdom, 2010

Smangele Mzizi, Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, 2010

Sokari Ekine, London, 2008

Sosi Molotsane, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007

Sunday Francis Mdlankomo, Vosloorus, Johannesburg, 2011

Tash Dowell, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011

Teleka Bowden, Toronto, 2008

Thablie Mbatha, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2009

Thabo S Brown, Toronto, 2008

Thabo Sosha, Thokoza, Johannesburg, 2010

Thandeka Mbatha, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2010

Thandeka Ndamase, 2010

Thandi 'Macane' Selepe, Alexandra, Johannesburg, 2008

Thandi 'Macane' Selepe, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010

Thandi Mbatha, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010

Thandi and Thandeka Mbatha, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2010

Thembela Dick, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011

Thembi Nyoka, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2007

Thobeka Khoza, Meadowlands, Estates, Madadeni, KwaZulu Natal, 2011

Thobeka Mavundla, Kwanele South, Katlehong, Johannesburg, 2012

Thuli Ncube, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010

Tinashe Wakapila, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2011

Tlhalefo 'Zeal' Ntseane, Mafikeng, North West, 2011

Tumi Mkhuma, Katlehong, Johannesburg, 2010

Tumi Mkhuma, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007

Tumi Mokgosi, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 2007

Tumi Nkopane, KwaThema, Springs, Johannesburg, 2010

Velisa Jara, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011

Vuvu Mdaka, Nyanga East, Cape Town, 2011

Vuyelwa Makubetse, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011

Vuyo Nkonwana, Site B, Oliver Thambo Hall, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011

Wewe Ngidi, Observatory, Johannesburg, 2009

Xana Nyilenda, Newtown, Johannesburg, 2011

Yonela Nyumbeka, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011

Zama Sibiya, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010

Zandile 'Nkunzi' Nkabinde, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2008

Zandile 'Nkunzi' Nkabinde, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2010

Zandile Tose, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2011

Zanele Muholi, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011

Zimaseka Salusalu, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2011

Ziyanda Daniel, Buitenkant Street, Gardens, Cape Town, 2011

Zizima Kom, Embekweni, Paarl, Cape Town, 2011

Zodwa 'Vovo' Nyongwana, Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2008

Zodwa Nkwinika, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2010

Zuki Gaca, Grand Parade, Cape Town, 2011

Zukiswa Gaca, Makhaza, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 2010

Sam Nhlengethwa

Glimpses of the Fifties and Sixties

2002/3

Series of 30 collage and mixed media works on paper

36 x 47cm (framed dimensions)

Photography by Anthea Pokroy

Courtesy of the Artist and Stefan Ferreira

Artist Statement

I wanted to go back to the life of the fifties and the sixties and highlight some of the issues that affected people's lives then. That feeling of the past is enhanced by the way the print media used to do pictures in sepia and black and white. The whole series is in those colours, giving the work a more social documentary feel, like the Steve Biko piece I did in the past. It's serious work, but in a more retrospective way. It's about how life affected us in those years.

All kinds of things were happening then. It could be things like the Sharpeville Shooting and the Rivonia Trial, but it could also be soccer or weddings and schools in the townships. It wasn't only looking on the more serious side. Life was going on in the townships during those times. And some of the things were very inspiring. When I look at photos of uncles of mine, I'm inspired by the way they used to dress, the cars people were driving ... These are things that came to life on the canvas.

I sourced material from the *Drum* magazine archives and I also looked through my own family albums. The use of my own archive was important because I wanted to reflect an intimacy and a familiarity that would make the images accessible. Looking through the albums I reminisced about growing up in my grandmother's house and how I always found the dining-with-the-wedding photograph so intriguing. I also recalled enjoying a softball match in Westonaria (a small mining community on the West Rand) amidst the many *dompas* [pass books] and curfew laws. Today these images have been revived in the music videos of Mafikizolo and the Stoned Cherry fashion label. I think I'm lucky in the sense that I have used art as an outlet for the frustrations I encountered during this time. My visual expression through painting was therapeutic and has now been transformed into what I believe to be a historical retrospective.

Using a combination of personal archives and archival fragments from public documents – cutting them up and reconstituting them to create an imaginary narrative of events that also really happened – creates a kind of remembered archive, an invented historical document.
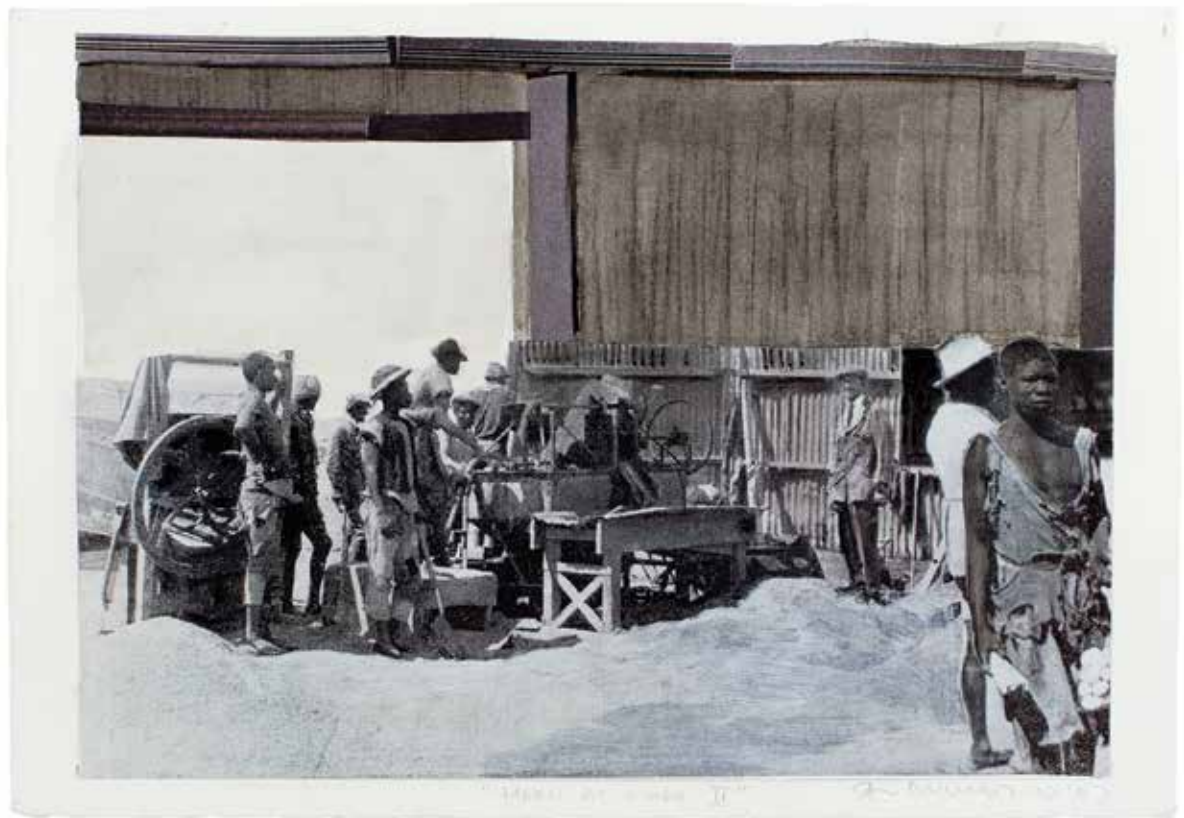
Migrant Labourers
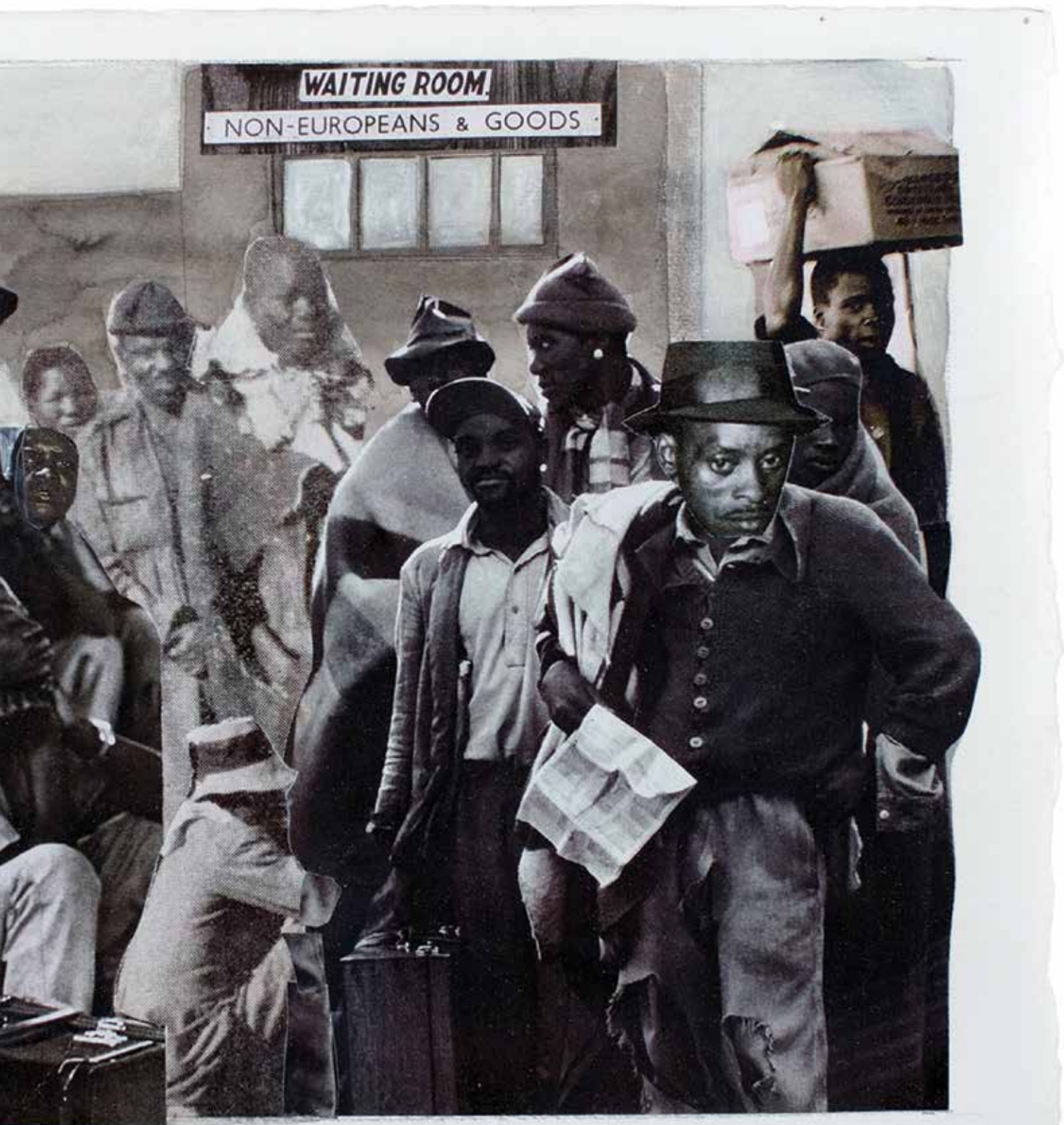
WAITING ROOM.
NON-EUROPEANS & GOODS

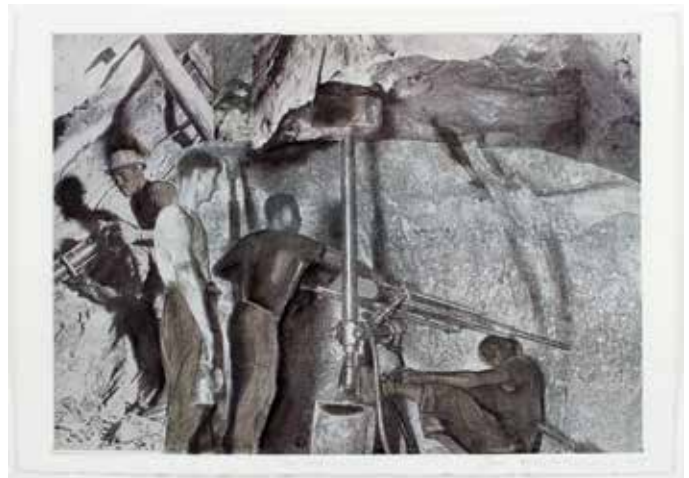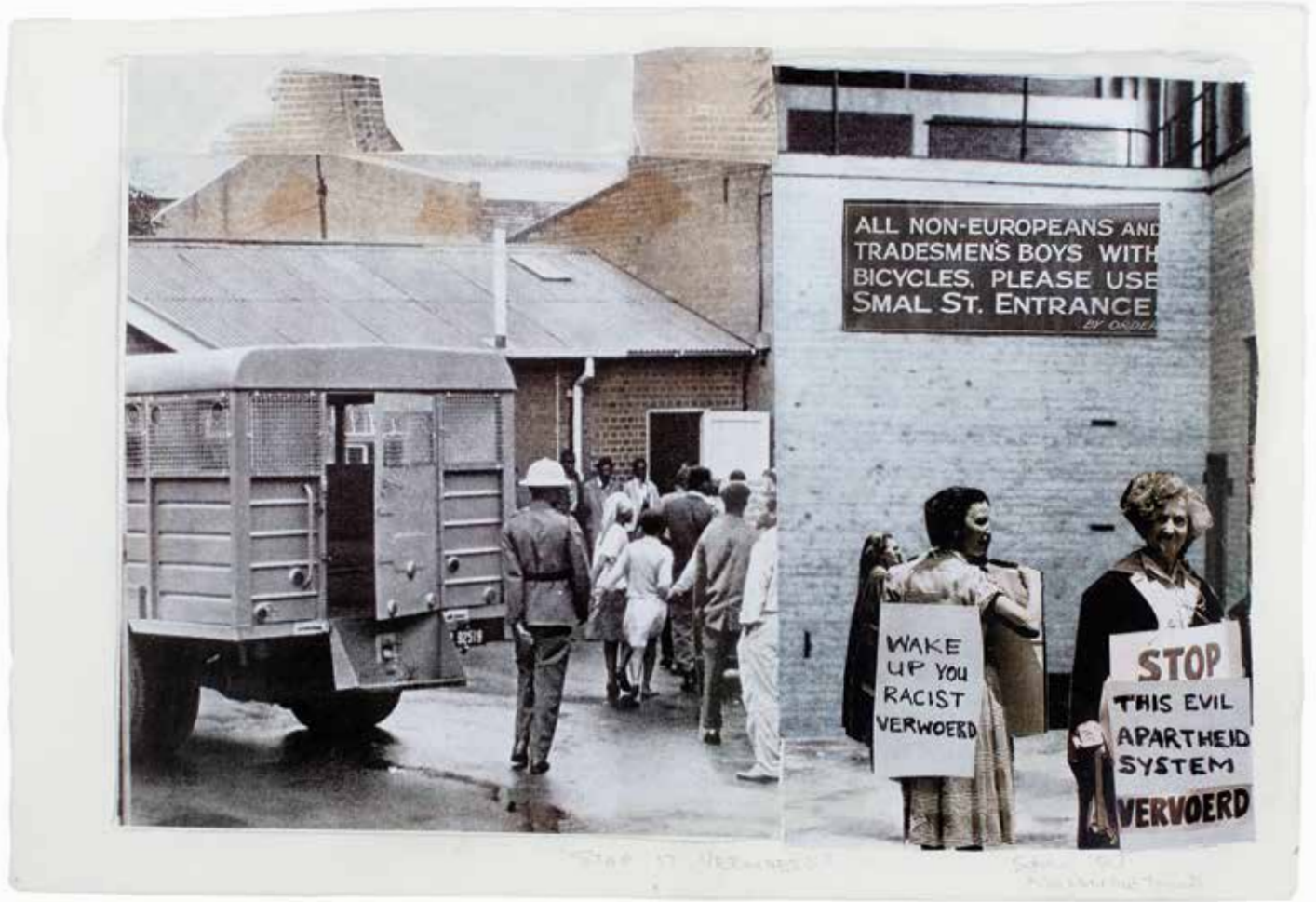Clockwise from top left: *Gumboot Dance; Hard at Work I; Skipping; Coal Shed*
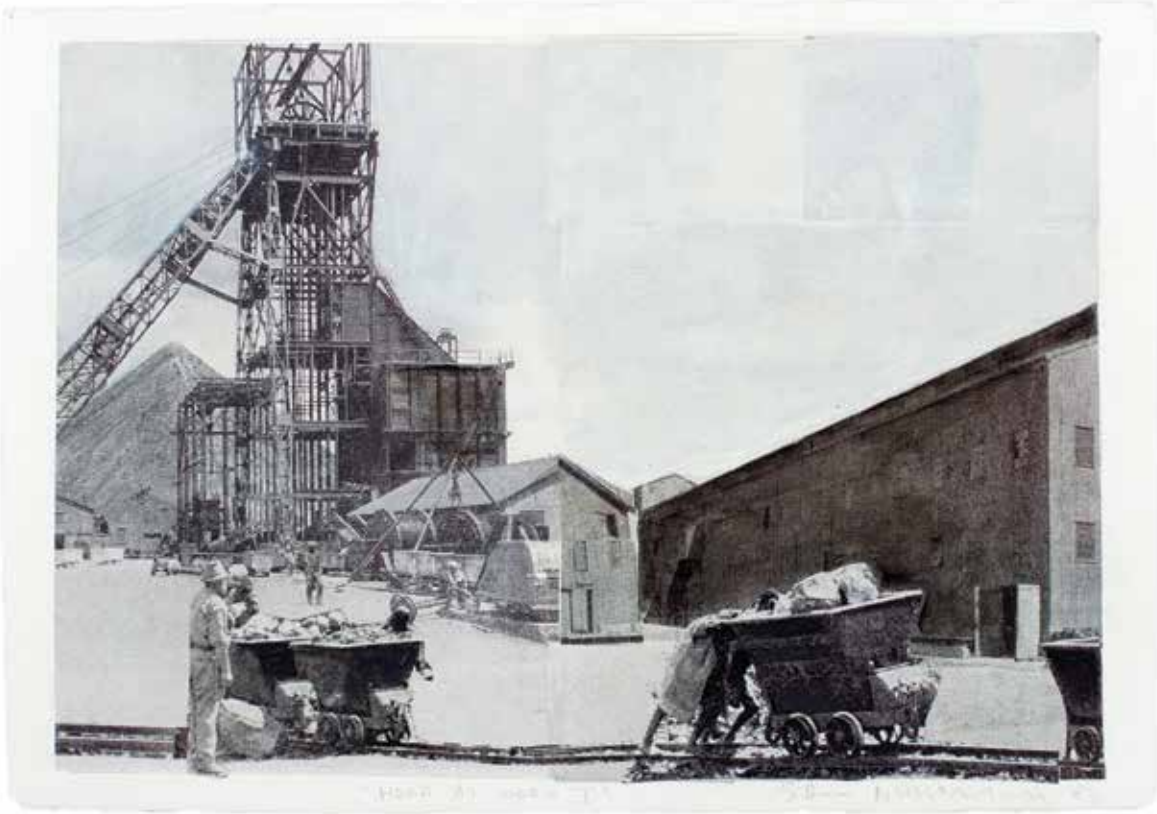
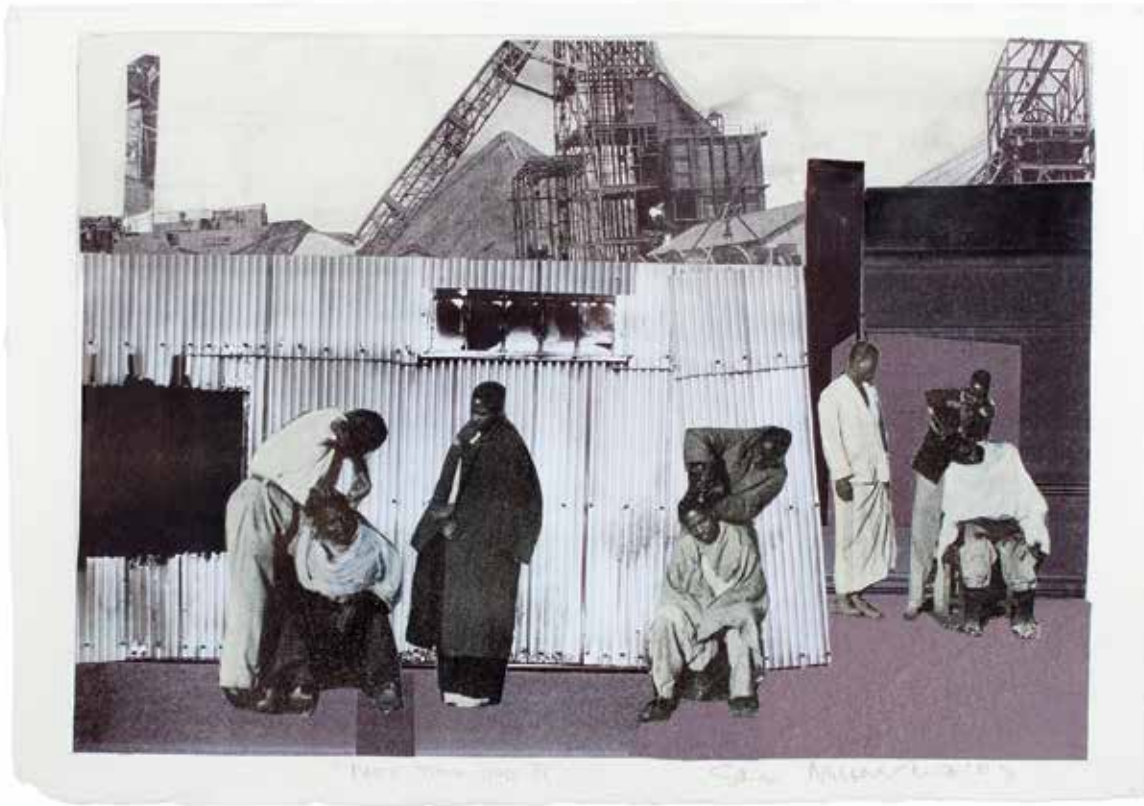Clockwise from top left: *The Grinding Stone; Humiliation; Protest; Whites Only Area; Colleagues; A Tired Miner*

Top to Bottom: *Sharpeville Massacre; Hard at Work II*

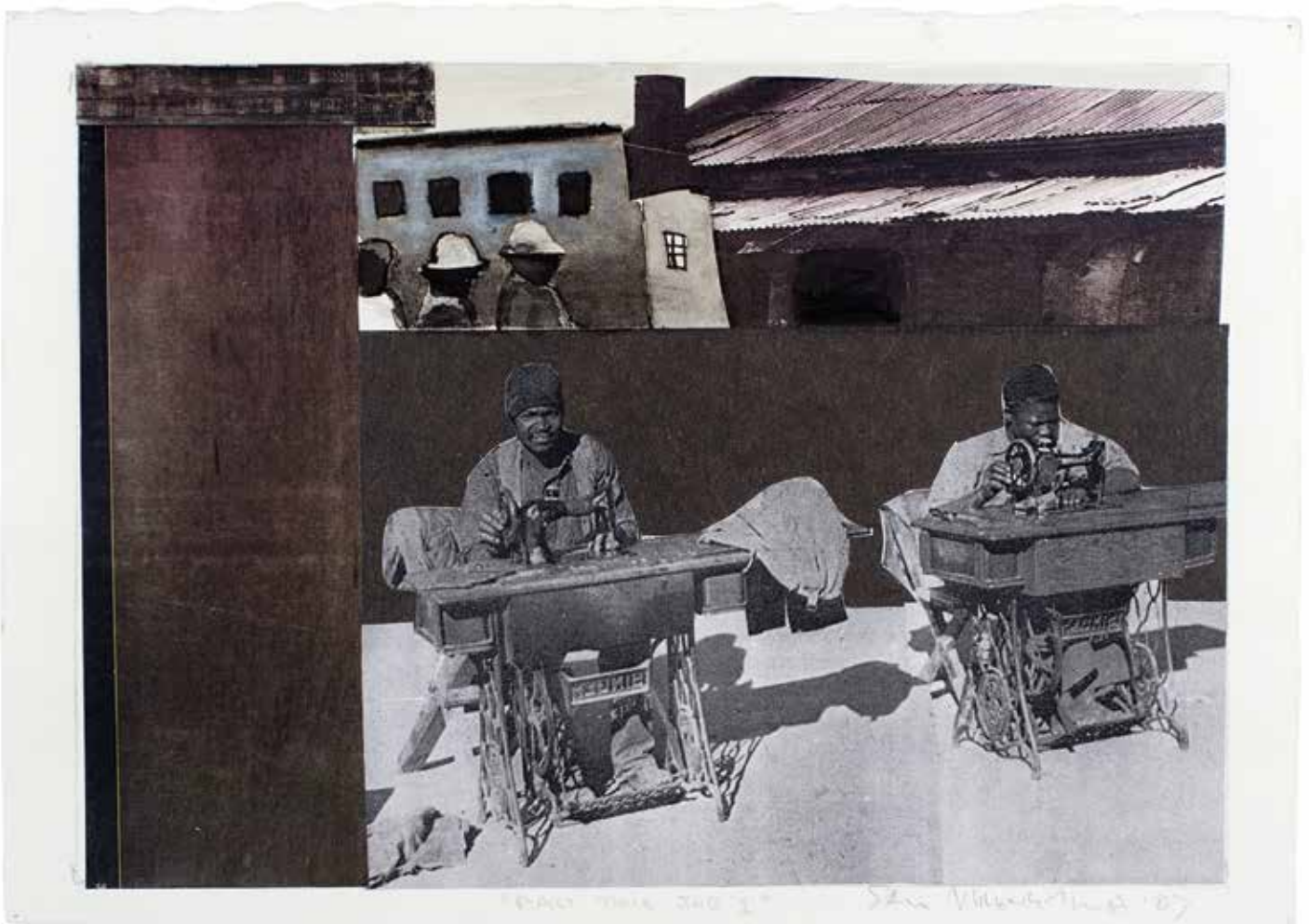Clockwise from top: *Stop it Verwoed; Underground; Pass Raid*
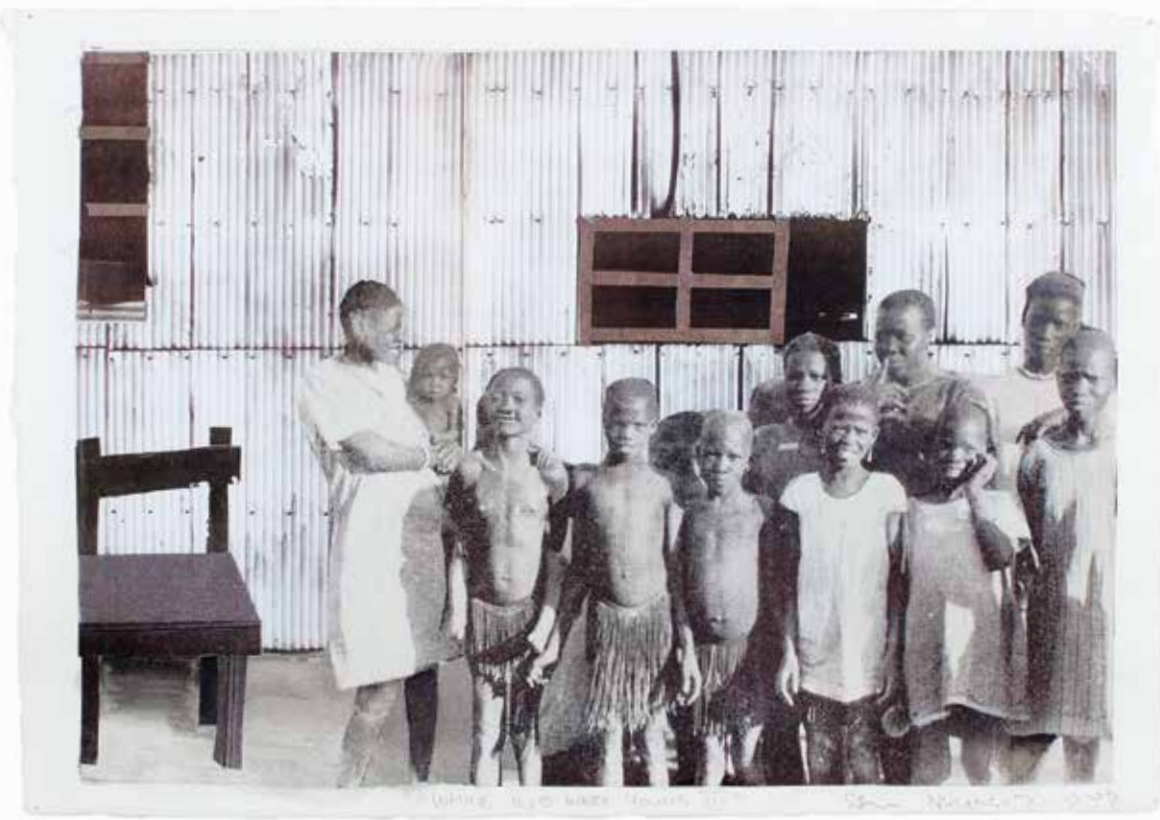
Top to bottom: *The Shebeen; While we were Young I*

Top to bottom: *Part Time Job II; Compounds*

Clockwise from top left: *Azikhuwelwa; The End of Kofifi; Near the Bus Stop; Miners Showering; Candlelit Studying; Pay Day*

Part Time Job I

Top to bottom: *Mbobela; While we were young III*
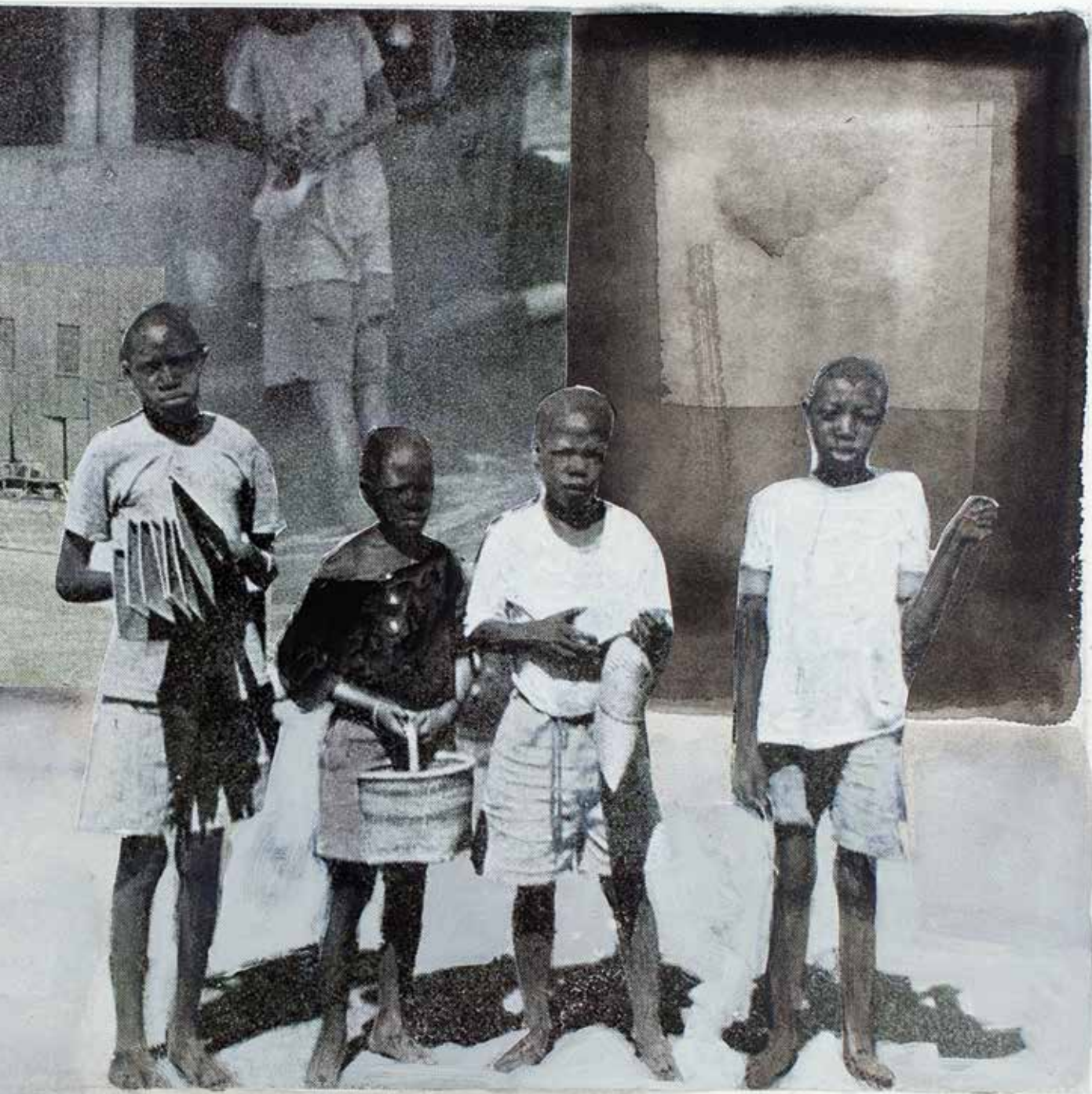
While we were Young II

"WHILE WE WERE YOUNG II"

Johannes Phokela

Various works
from 2006 to 2013

Oil on paper and canvas

Various dimensions

Photos by Anthea Pokroy

Artist statement

The *Collar Series* (2006) is an ongoing series based on faceless, mug-shot like portraits, with garment collars featuring prominently to stress 'social status' rather than personal character. Social or civic space – for example that which gets occupied by a churchgoer, school child, soldier or policeman – is often defined and reaffirmed through dress codes, with uniforms often, inevitably and initially assimilated from that which was not intended. For example, the colour khaki came into existence as a desperate measure taken by British soldiers during the South African War (the Anglo-Boer War), who resorted to dying the shirts of their vivid red uniforms with tea to camouflage them in the face of opponent sniper fire. Thus the idea of camouflage came to exist partly as stealth in military defence.

And again, in figurative terms, expressions such as blue/white collar worker (or job/crime, for that matter) are a form of communicating that inevitably came into being as a result of mental uniforms we seemingly adapt into physical ones. We are prone or inclined to judge a book by its cover; it is perhaps the only way we can communicate effectively without getting lost in translation. The *Collar Series* is about dress sense in relation to a fundamental iconography of status symbolism often prevalent in fashion, at its best or worst, designed to overlook human intelligence.

South Pacific Seascape (2012) was primarily inspired by a tabloid newspaper article on the subject of cannibalism as practiced, historically, by non-European, indigenous tribesmen in far-away lands (lands of lost civilizations), prior to their indoctrination by western or oriental monotheistic values of Christianity or Islamic morality. What served as an inspiration for the painting, and what communicated to me most vividly, was a published article titled *Eating people isn't always wrong*, illustrated with an 18th or 19th century anthropological illustration depicting a native Polynesian person assaulting, with a club, what appears to be a European explorer or a shipwreck survivor of colonial intent.

The subject of cannibalism is often used as a romantic proponent of the epitome of the western commercial movie industry. Characters portrayed in popular movies such as *Psycho* and *Hannibal* are a sort of romantic protagonist (or we may call them super-heroes though their possession of supernatural powers). And yet the fact remains that medical assessments or psychological studies carried out on those who devour human flesh as part of their dietary requirements often reach conclusions of mental insanity.

The text–image in relation to the figures' robustness and the gloomy seashore made me think of a scenario that could work within the composition, and the oil rig and cargo ship of weapons destined, oddly, to an inland African country brought balance to the completed work.
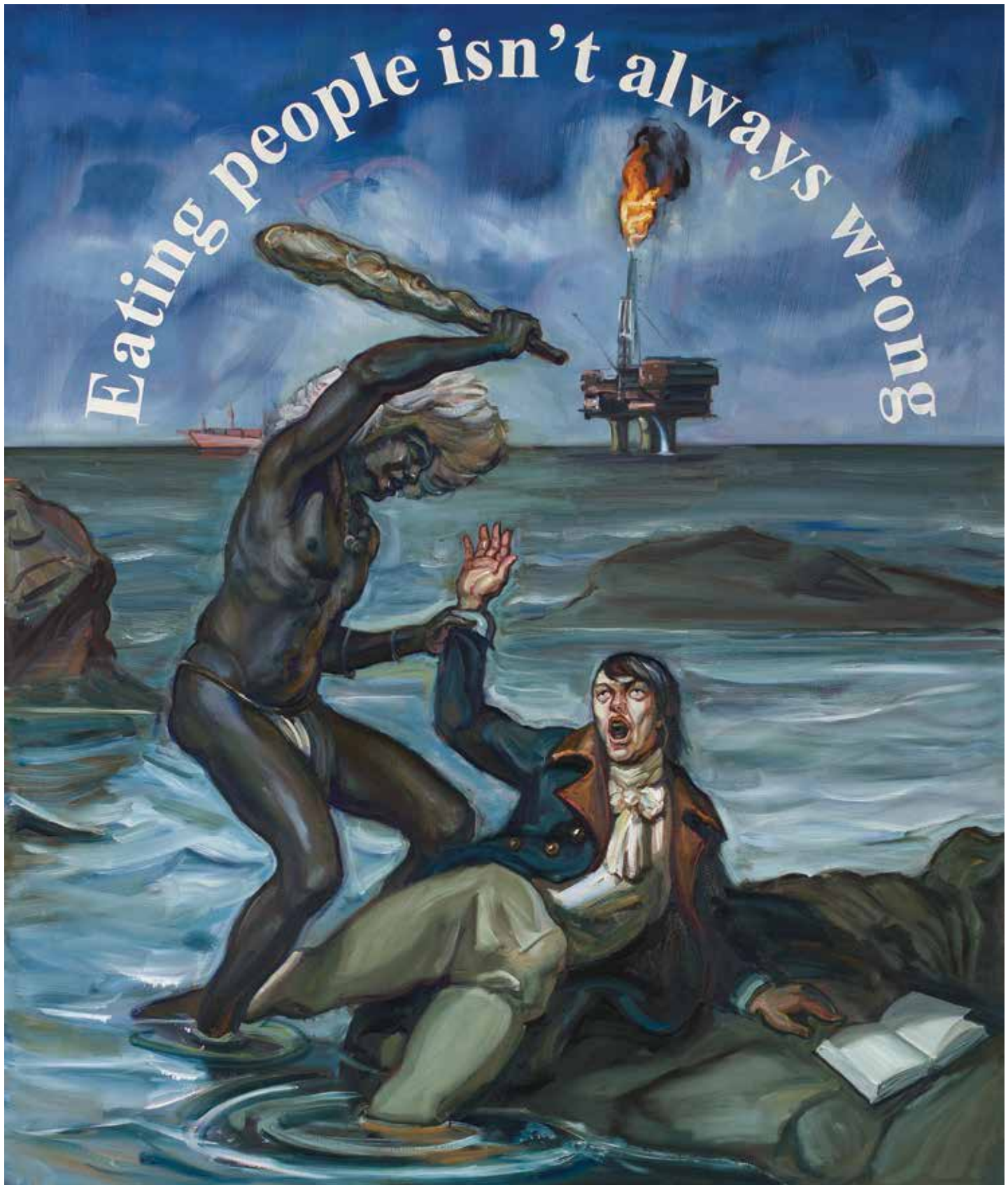
Collar Series ll: Son of a rich man, 2006
Oil sketch on paper, 77 x 59cm (frame size)
Courtesy of the Artist

Collar Series lll: Army officer, 2006
Oil sketch on paper, 77 x 59cm (frame size)
Courtesy of the Artist

Collar Series 1: City official/mayor, 2006
Oil sketch on paper, 77 x 59cm (frame size)
Courtesy of the Artist

South Pacific Seascape, 2012
Oil on canvas, 200 x 170cm
Courtesy of the Artist and whatiftheworld Gallery, Cape Town

Cameron Platter

*The Good Shepard
Presents Dr Bomboka*

2009

Pencil crayon on paper

240 x 240cm

Courtesy of the Artist and
Galerie Ernst Hilger, Vienna

Artist Statement

LIFE SOLUTIONS INTERNATIONAL

1.
What Do You Think?

2.
Black & White Pictures
(A projected ten-year series of 100 large-scale black and white pencil crayon documentary drawings, directly referencing the linocut works of John Muafangejo.)

3.
Pictures for End Times
(Archiving a confused, disintegrating, and entropic society.)

4.
Consumption, Excess, Waste, Violence
(Using contemporary societal obsessions as medium.)

5.
A transitory and transient praxis
(Reclaiming Muafangejo's *oeuvre*. A prohibited, illegitimate merger/ collage)

6.
Collage as Coalition
(Unity in Diversity.)

7.
Repudiation of History
(Fabricating own histories.)

8.
Documenting Real Life/ Intensity of Experience
(Through a parallel narrative, through transformation and transmutation)

9.
Anthropophagic
(Cannibalisation, Appropriation, Direct Translation. Excavating the remains.)

10.
A Shared Identity
(A single participatory identity crated by, and available to all. Affected by history. Rainbow Nation ideology.)

11.
Protest
(The Linocut as Activist, craft as therapy, craft as embodying existence.)

12.
A Product of our Environment
(Repression and Liberation, and the Signs, Symbols, and Signifiers.)

13.
Life is Our Life's Work
(Multinational pharmaceutical company Pfizer. Worldwide Research and Development combines research and technology units that have area expertise and cutting-edge science and platforms with an efficient R&D operating model, to discover and develop innovative therapeutic programs in small molecules and biotherapeutics.)

14.
Deviant Processes and Sources
(Paranoia, craft, politics, globalisation, decline, dissipation, excrement.)

15.
When Days Are Dark Friends Are Few
(Contemporary hegemony. The Love is Approaching but too Much of Anything is Dangerous.)

16.
Add Hope
(Give to Charity and Discover the Secrets of Mastering Sex, Money, and Power.)

17.
The Unification of Chicken/ The Crocodile AT the KFC
(Dialectical modes of seeing.)

18.
You Can Make a Difference

Andrew Putter

Native Work

2012

Installation comprising 15 selenium toned silver gelatin lightjet prints on fibre-based paper, and 17 digital colour images on screen, looped

Prints: 50 x 35cm each; digital screen: dimensions variable

Photography by Andrew Putter, Kyle Weeks and Hylton Boucher

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape Town and Johannesburg

Artist statement

Hi. I'm Andrew. I'm a 'white', gay, racist South African who was born at the height of apartheid (in 1965) and grew up in Pinelands, a middle-class and racially segregated suburb of Cape Town.

It is virtually impossible for apartheid-era South Africans like myself not to have been deeply affected by racism. Apartheid assimilated *everything* to 'racial difference': how people spoke, how they moved, their gestures, what their bodies looked like. One of apartheid's great successes was how it functioned by exerting obsessive control over the realm of human sensory – or aesthetic – experience.

Now if there's one thing that a certain stratum of white, middle-class, and gay apartheid-era men have in common, it's an interest in aesthetic experience. Many of us (I like to think) are predisposed to an interest in questions of style and beauty. But for many (most?) of us, our ideas of style, beauty, art – and 'culture' generally – have also been deeply determined by centuries of (first) colonial, and (then) apartheid 'cultural' racism.

In 2009 I chanced upon three old black and white portrait photographs of 'tribal', 'black' Africans on a wall in the quiet space of the University of Cape Town African Studies Library. These were taken by Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin. Duggan-Cronin was an Irishman who settled in South Africa in 1897. Between 1919 and 1939, he traveled extensively throughout southern Africa, taking roughly 5,000 large-format black and white photographs of black southern Africans in tribal settings. From a post-colonial perspective, these highly constructed, romanticised images are often read as having contributed to the

catastrophic abuse of Africans during apartheid. From this angle, they can be seen to have bolstered the erroneous idea that Africans are not modern. But seeing Duggan-Cronin's photographs for the first time had quite an impact on me. Something in these photographs made me take the 'primitive', 'African', 'native' sitters in them seriously. Some of my unconscious racist assumptions were thrown into tension with what I was seeing. There was something dignified and 'cultured' about these sitters, a bearing and a styling of costume which ran at puzzling odds to my received ideas about what to recognise as 'culture' and 'history'. Most importantly, these works appeared as ciphers to me, as metonyms for forms of local life and history of which I suddenly realised I was completely ignorant. It was as though a whole hidden constellation of universes of local meaning and secret life suddenly opened up before me. I was shocked. A compulsion to start learning about African life was born from this encounter with his portraits.

The more I looked at Duggan-Cronin's work, the more interested I became in a thread that might be said to run through his portraits. It appears to me as an impulse of tenderness, a desire to show each of his sitters in what he considered to be the most flattering light possible. Duggan-Cronin made photographs which he seemed to hope that others would find beautiful. And perhaps crucially these 'others' are not necessarily his sitters: he laboured to make 'native' South Africans beautiful to those very colonial viewers who would normally consider the subjects of these works as being unworthy of attention by artists. He brought all the devices of the long tradition of the Western European honorific portrait to bear on his sitters: a slightly lowered point of view in relation to the sitter's face, connoting importance; lighting from the top left or right – a device used in a wide range of Western European art historical practices to convey a sense of being singled out,

favoured, illuminated; a pyramidal, head-and-shoulders composition, communicating a quiet stability and monumentality – even a sense of 'timelessness'. In short, Duggan-Cronin was classicising and humanising subjects who were typically viewed by 'white' South Africans as wild, sub-human, primitive.

After getting to know more about Duggan-Cronin's *oeuvre*, there seemed to me to be something important in affirming 'traditional' inheritances in South African cultural history *now*. It was this impulse which underlay my making the series of black-and-white portraits of contemporary black South Africans wearing 'traditional' costume.

Most of these models would not normally wear costume of this kind: it's old-fashioned, archival, from a time past – even fictional. I conceived of this series as a kind of *homage* to Duggan-Cronin, an affirmation of what appears to be his unusual passion for the beauty of what he records/constructs, an acknowledgement to what I read as his complicated commitment to 'Africa' in the face of what so many of his colonial peers would have seen as the superiority of 'European' culture.

All this is not to say that my 'traditionalising' portraits are simple impositions by the artist on the sitters who model in them. For example, three of the sitters (Notyatyambo Madiglana, Linda Mhlawuli and Sisipho Matho) are young teenagers who spend most of their spare time in a large 'traditional' dance group, dancing in costume inflected by the archive. Another two (Sihle Mnqwazana and Given Mkhondo) are young actors, studying drama at the University of Cape Town, where – in the context of the modern academy – they are studying archaic forms of African storytelling and ritual. For these sitters then, African 'tradition' is an on-going dimension of their day-to-day life, a complex modulation of the present in

terms of the past – part invention, part memory.

Emphasising the beauty of 'tribal' or 'traditional' costume felt possible as long as I could also find a way to make clearer the fact that the sitters in these portraits could not be *reduced* to this presentation. I needed to have some way to unsettle the possibility that viewers might erroneously believe that this was how the sitters looked in their everyday lives – a potentially dangerous assumption given the still demeaning associations many people continue to have in relation to the 'tribal' or 'traditional'. I asked sitters if they wished to choose how to dress themselves for a formal colour portrait: all of them did. This second, colour series moved somewhat in the direction of representing sitters as they see themselves. More importantly, seen in relation to the black-and-white, 'ethnographic' portraits, they have the effect of complicating the assumptions that a viewer might make about the sitters, the place of costume in the portraits, the role of the photographer, etc.

Why the title *Native Work*? A primary concern of mine over the last 25 years of working as an artist and teacher in Cape Town has been to explore and make use of 'the local'. It is my experience that there is a depth of source material available for creative, socially and environmentally-conscious work in those territories close to, and in, what each of us call 'home', but of which we are unaware. As a native Capetonian (I have never lived more than half an hour's walk away from where I was born), the project being described here constitutes a labour – as a native of this place – to make sense of myself and the world I find myself in every day.

Athenkosi Mfamela as A Young Man Dressed for the Dance

Nopumzile Msengezi as A Traditional Healer

Sihle Mnqwazana as An Initiate

Athenkosi Mfamela

Nopumzile Msengezi

Sihle Mnqwazana

Row 1, left to right:
Anele Mbali
Anita Mbanyaru
Given Mkhondo
Jackson Mabena

Row 2:
Linda Mhlawuli
Nofikile Sibenga
Nokilunga Memeza
Nomboniso Runqa

Row 3:
Notyatyambo Madiglana
Sakhiwo Ndubata
Sisipho Matho

Row 4:
Thandokazi Mbane
Siyasanga Bushula

Athi-Patra Ruga

The Future White Women of Azania: The trial

2013

Site-specific performance
with five performers, costumes,
props, lights and music

Duration variable

Artist Statement

The Future White Women of Azania marks the culmination of a body of work that has been in development for a number of years. Initially created in 2010 for the *For Those Who Live in It – Pop culture Politics and Strong Voices* exhibition hosted by the MU Art Foundation in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, the performance has since travelled to Buenos Aires, Johannesburg, Grahamstown and Cape Town. Much like a painter will use her studies to develop the final artwork, I have used the various performances as a performance-in-continuum to build the population of *The Future White Women of Azania*.

The character, performed for the first time at the National Arts Festival in 2012, saw a procession through Grahamstown tracked with a 19th century camera obscura operated by my collaborator, Mikhael Subotzky. For the performance *The Future White Women of Azania: The manifesto* created for the GIPCA Live Art Festival (2012), the balloon character was cloned and *The Future White Woman of Azania* became *The Future White Women of Azania*. *The Future White Women of Azania: The procession* staged for *MAKING WAY: Contemporary Art from South Africa and China* (2013) expanded the style and scale. The four-hour performance began with the ritualistic blowing of balloons and the dressing of the seven performers that make up the population of *The White Women of Azania*, and culminated in a 20-minute procession from the Drill Hall

on Plein Street (site of the Rivonia Treason Trial) to the Standard Bank Art Gallery on Anderson Street in the Johannesburg CBD. This was a continuation of my exploration of alternative rituals as a means of intervention. In creating these rituals, I perform a kind of Jacobinistic purge of the staid and unimaginative in all aspects of existence.

These performances are an intervention, a way in which conflict is established through a miasma of stimuli. Here movement and non-movement, exoticism and mundanity, noise and silence, come together to challenge the rigid compartments within which we place them. It is also a confrontation of the politics of context, in that the artwork is taken out of the sterile controlled gallery environment and is exhibited in the most public way imaginable – right on the streets of the bustling city.

Azania to me has always existed in the form of a utopian identity/nationality, a merry Africa-of-old without a trace (in the same vein as Atlantis) made alive with an Azapo liberation agenda. Myth surrounds its modern geographic locations, in the same vein as the Xhosa/Nguni Embo. This was the springboard for creating a new mock narrative ... while keeping it real with the invented populations and their missions.

Penny Siopis

Obscure White Messenger

2010

Single-channel digital video, sound

Duration 15min, 4sec

Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson,
Cape Town and Johannesburg

Artist Statement

In my short films I combine sequences of found 8mm and 16mm home-movie footage with music and text (appearing as subtitles) to shape stories about people caught up, often traumatically, in larger political and social upheavals. The elemental qualities of these stories appeal to me as they speak to questions beyond their specific historical origins.

For my first film, *My Lovely Day* (1997), I used my mother's home movies. This sparked my interest in the home movies of strangers. I began collecting anonymous footage from flea markets and charity shops. I now have a huge archive of footage that I mine to make my films.

For me, this found footage operates like a kind of readymade. It is already inscribed with meaning, and this readymade meaning is part of my interest in the material. The way I use the footage bears little or no empirical relationship to its original content and context. What allows me to hook contingency to fact, however loosely, is my selective use of text in combination with film sequences.

In *Obscure White Messenger* the story is about Demitrios Tsafendas, the parliamentary messenger who, in 1966, assassinated South African prime minister and "architect of apartheid", Hendrik Verwoerd. The assassination happened in parliament, just as Verwoerd was about to make a speech. As a listed person, an alien, a sometime communist, Tsafendas should never have been allowed to set foot in South Africa. As someone of mixed race and stateless, he should never have been made a parliamentary messenger, a position reserved for white South Africans. Everything was a mistake.

Tsafendas was born in 1918 in Lourenço Marques (today's Maputo in Mozambique), where his Greek migrant father lived. His mother was a local African woman who worked as a domestic labourer in his father's household. Soon after Tsafendas's birth his mother left the household forever. His father then married a Greek woman. Tsafendas was dispatched to his grandmother in Egypt. Later he was sent to boarding school in South Africa.

Tsafendas spent most of his adult life at sea, literally and metaphorically. He had sojourns in different countries in Africa, Europe, North America and the Middle East where he did odd jobs, taught English, and spent time in prisons and mental asylums. He spoke many languages and on occasion worked as a translator. He was an oddball. An outsider. A drifter. His political views did not help his cause. No country would give him citizenship.

Throughout his life he tried to get back to South Africa. On a few occasions he succeeded. He associated the country with his mother. Also, the first and only woman who he thought might marry him was South African.

Tsafendas's last entry to South Africa was a bureaucratic blunder. The great, intricate machinery of grand apartheid had allegedly misspelled his name, allowing him to slip through and get within striking distance of the prime minister. The court case that followed the assassination declared that it was madness, not politics that drove Tsafendas. He was found unfit to stand trial, with the judge observing: 'He is a meaningless creature'.

The story went that Tsafendas's madness was manifest in his anxiety about a giant tapeworm that had afflicted him as a young boy. The media made much of the worm, less of political will. The idea that madness and political motive might be mixed up in his drive to kill the prime minister was resisted by the apartheid state and the public generally.

When news of Verwoerd's murder reached Nelson Mandela on Robben Island he showed little interest in Tsafendas, referring to him only as that 'obscure white messenger'.

Tsafendas was incarcerated in Pretoria Central Prison at the pleasure of the state president. For a period he was on death row, his cell adjacent to where people were routinely hanged, sometimes seven at a time. If he weren't mad when he assassinated Verwoerd, this experience – and the regular abuse he suffered at the hands of prison warders – would have made him so. In 1994 – the year of South Africa's first democratic election – Mandela released Tsafendas, who was then transferred to a mental asylum near Johannesburg's 'Cradle of Humankind'. He died in relative obscurity in 1999.

Most South Africans of my generation will remember the moment the news broke of Verwoerd's murder. It came as a massive shock and seemed like an omen signalling the collapse of the 'nation' Verwoerd had built. Many mourned. Some rejoiced.

I was thirteen at the time. I recall being very conscious of my Greek background and the fear that South African Greeks expressed about reprisals. A fear not unfounded. That Tsafendas was Greek was a main line in the media. Little was made of his African ancestry. Clearly it was less politically volatile to see the act as that of a crazy Greek, rather than a 'black' agitator.

Newspapers had a field day with stories about Tsafendas, but no one seemed to really *know* him. One reporter described his bed-sit in Rondebosch in Cape Town, as it was forbidden to take photographs of anything to do with the assassin. This short report captivated me. Its detail, its sadness, and how words worked when an image was not possible.

All this and more fuelled my filmic re-imaging of this moment in South African history.

The anonymous footage comes from South Africa, Greece and other unidentifiable places. The sound is 'traditional' Turkish music. For the narrative I used Tsafendas's words taken from different contexts and structured these into a question and answer format reflecting the interviews psychiatrists conducted with him after the murder. Sources include news and medical reports, legal documents, documentary films and the wonderful book by Henk van Woerden titled *A Mouthful of Glass* (2000).

Suspicion

I am a man without a country

Have you been a citizen of any country?

it started coming out

I see no progress for the African people

when you commited the murder?

James Webb

Children of the Revolution

2013

Speakers, CD player, filtered wires and audio

Duration 4min; Installation dimensions variable

Photo by Elly Clarke

Courtesy of the Artist

Artist Statement

This project begins with a 1972 call to rebellion, but not in South Africa, and not for political freedom, but in England and for teenagers to articulate the generation gap. T. Rex's glam rock hit, *Children of the Revolution*, written by Marc Bolan, was an anthemic song that has subsequently been covered by many bands, including The Violent Femmes and Patti Smith, over the last few decades.

To re-imagine and augment some of the themes perceived (and projected) in this piece of glam nostalgia, and to make them relevant to a local context, I have translated and transformed this track into a South African protest song. Arranged for voice and megaphone, with isiXhosa lyrics and traditional singing styles, *Children of the Revolution* (2013) can now fulfil what I believe to be its true purpose in becoming part of South Africa's deep and complex traditions of music and political criticism in the post-apartheid landscape. The original version of the song was written during a prolonged period of struggle in South Africa, and I would like to link these two histories in the creation of this work. This could be classified as translating, repurposing and recontextualising the archive.

This style of working is quite common in both contemporary art and popular culture, from Jeremy Deller's *Acid Brass* collaboration with the Williams Fairey Brass Band, to the countless cover versions of popular songs done to greater or lesser degrees of taste and success. But the technique used here is not the artwork. The appropriated and reworked song presented as part of *Imaginary Fact* is just the start of the project. The ultimate artwork is the introduction of this transformed song into the lexicon of the South African protest songbook. The new song will be scored and disseminated to choirs around the country in the hope that it can be learnt and sung and used. One hopes that the work will develop a life of its own and be appropriated once again, finding new meanings as people react and respond to the lyrics in relation to the political climate in South Africa. In this regard, the project looks towards a future archive. The new song is not an exotic cover version but rather an example of cultural appropriation and translation used to become a practical tool for expressing political and social concern.

For *Imaginary Fact*, the recorded freedom song will be débuted as a sound installation. The audio piece will act as an hourly interjection into the exhibition, like a public service announcement, a pledge of allegiance or an anthem. It plays unannounced, and works as an interruption in space and time to the experience of the pavilion. Just like a protest song should do.

The musical aspects of this project gave me the chance to collaborate with composer and arranger Bongani Magatyana, who brought his expertise to recontextualising the original song for local voices. The work was developed and rehearsed at the Zolani Cultural Centre in Nyanga, Cape Town, with the voices of Lindelwa Siqwepu, Ziyanda Siqwepu, Aviwe Kalipha, Siyabulela Qwabe, Thembulethu Bolo, Simthembile Lugotyo, Paul Petros and Babalwa Mrwetyana.

My work plays with themes of belief and communication, often explored using techniques of displacement and translation to challenge and transmit these concerns. Sound, with its political and poetic interpretations, is one of the primary media I use in my art making. This project links to previous works of mine using appropriation and displacement, for example *There's No Place Called Home* (2004 to date) which uses audio recordings of foreign birdsong broadcast from speakers concealed in local trees, and *Wa* (2003), an elaborate project wherein an imaginary Japanese DJ was booked to play a large Cape Town party. Unbeknownst to the audience, I had invented her profile, composed the music she would play and engaged a Korean tourist to learn basic DJ skills and perform as Wa. Her original identity was kept a secret, and the gig was advertised to the point where people were talking about Wa as if they owned her (non-existent) albums.

The collaborative and relational aspects of *Children of the Revolution* link to my on-going artwork, *Prayer* (2000 to date), a multi-channel sound installation comprising recordings of prayer from all the religions in a specific city collected through a process of research and contact made with the various faith communities in that city. Similarly, the theme of restarting lost anthems can be seen in *Ost* (2009), an audio recording of *Auferstanden aus Ruinen*, the national anthem of the late Deutsche Demokratische Republik, sung *a cappella* by a lifelong East German resident within the defunct studio hall of the former party radio station in Nalepastrasse, Berlin.

Sue Williamson

*For thirty years
next to his heart*

1990

49 colour laser prints
in handcrafted frames

Installation dimensions
196 x 262cm

Courtesy of the Artist and
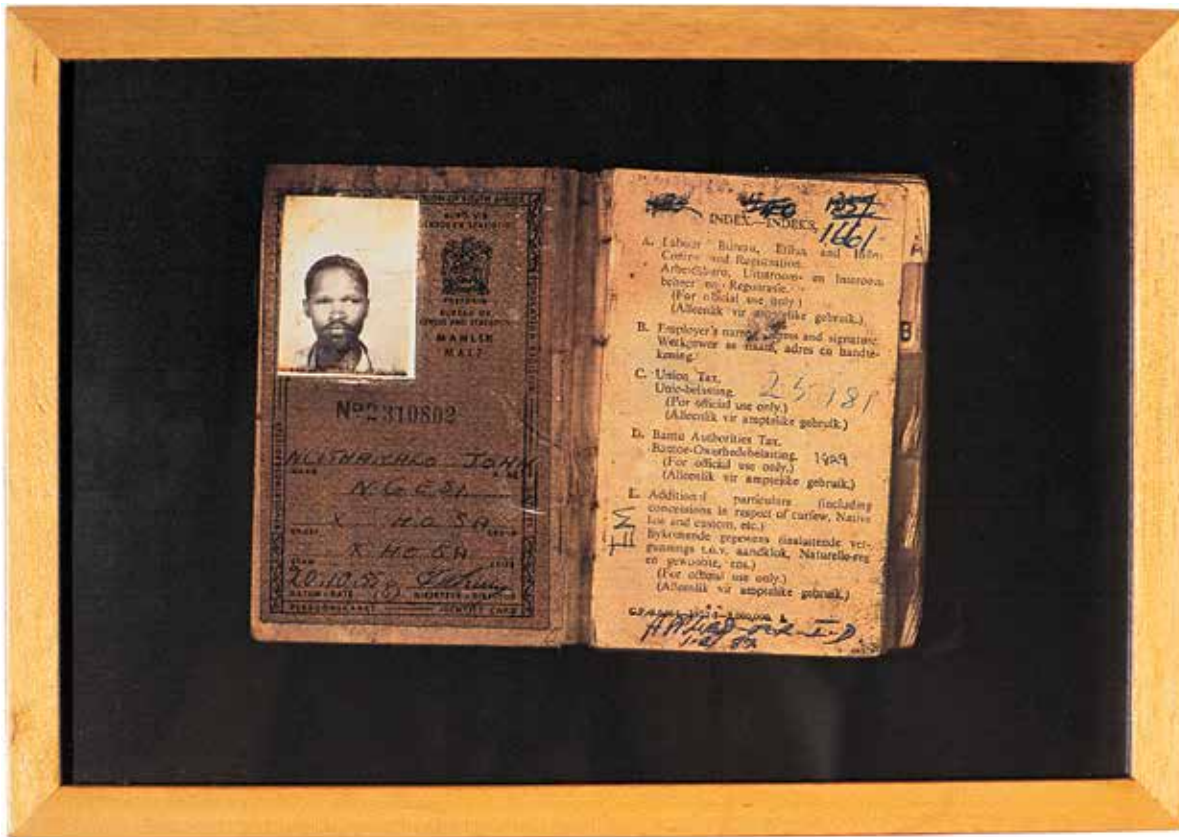Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

Artist Statement

If there is one icon for apartheid, it was the passbook (*dompas* or dumb pass). By law, every black South African had to carry one at all times, ready for inspection on demand. Should the entries not be in order, he or she could be arrested immediately. This law was repealed in 1987.

In 1990, I set out to find an old passbook. At the local Advice Office, I met Mr John Ngesi, who still had his passbook in the inner pocket of his jacket. I realised that although it was the hated instrument of control, it was also his security, and the habit of years. From this came the eventual title of the piece, *For Thirty Years Next to His Heart* (1990).

The passbook represented a complete record of Mr Ngesi's life, filtered through officialdom. I asked Mr Ngesi whether he would work with me to record it, page by page, and have his hand pulling the book out of his jacket pocket, as the first image. He agreed. The piece reads like a series of filmstrips, from top to bottom, through all the pages in the book. The grid form is a metaphor for restriction and control.

The book is divided into different sections and the old documents and banknotes used to cover the frames relate to these. The first section recorded the area where Mr Ngesi would be allowed to legally reside. The second dealt with labour – an employer would have to sign the passbook each month without fail. The third related to the taxes payable each year.

I still have the passbook. Mr Ngesi did not want it back. That passbook, along with the application forms a white person needed to fill in to employ a black worker in the Western Cape, which would have to be taken to three separate government departments each year, is part of my personal archive of apartheid documents.

Nelisiwe Xaba

Venus in Venice

2013

Site-specific performance with costumes, props and music

Duration variable

Courtesy of the Artist and Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

Artist Statement

Venus in Venice (2013) combines two solo performances based on the life of Sara Baartman [*] — *They Look at Me and That's All They Think*, and *Sakhozi says NoN to the Venus.*

In 2009, I was commissioned by Musée du Quai Branly to produce a performance. At the time I had begun to research the life of Sara Baartman, had created *They Look At Me...* and had become increasingly interested in what 'her story' had come to represent in contemporary analyses and postcolonial theory. The horrific treatment of Sara Baartman is well documented, and I was struck by the discord between the extensive documentation of her body and the physicality of her being, and the absence of any idea of her mental state or thoughts during her lifetime.

In previous performances such as *No Strings Attached*, I had explored the transience of performance and had become frustrated with the inadequacy of photographic documentation to portray the deep impact of live performance. The temporality of time-based performance and its inconsistency was for me a way in which I could attempt to access the discord and tragedy of Sara Baartman's life, while simultaneously looking at the problematic nature of the historical biographical process.

In *Sakhozi says NoN to the Venus* I played with performing in an intimate and limited space. I used animal bones laid end to end to form a perimeter or border. The sequence was choreographed to happen within the confines of the bone perimeter — a tactic that forces small movements to have big visual effects. Interspersed within the contemporary choreography are moments of Zulu dancing, used as an ironic exposition of what the audience would like to see me do with my body. In slowing down these movements – in performing them out of context – I also look at the exotic expectation of the black body.

If *Sakhozi says NoN to the Venus* is structured in order to explore the relationship between viewer and performer and unpack the interconnectedness of viewer and voyeur, then *They Look at Me and That's All They Think* is more involved in an attempt to perform biography. *Sakhozi says NoN to the Venus* is a performance concerned with the diaspora and cultural identity. *They Look at Me and That's All They Think* is a rumination on the impossible task of understanding or accessing the thoughts of the dead, and on the rigidity of the archive which paradoxically opens itself up to the interpretations of the living.

I am fascinated by the politics of display, who displays who, and why and where. Who consumes? What has been displayed?

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[*] Sara 'Saartjie' Baartman (1790–1815) was a South African Khoikhoi woman who was displayed in 19th century circuses and exhibition shows across London and Paris under the pseudonym Hottentot Venus.

They Look at Me and That's All They Think, 2011
Performance with costumes, props and sound, Jomba Dance Festival, Durban
Duration variable
Photos by Val Adamson
Courtesy of the Artist and Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

Imaginary Fact

Biographies

Joanne Bloch

Born in 1961; lives in Cape Town

In 2003 Bloch was artist-in-residence at the National Arts Festival and, in the same year, won first prize at the Ekurhuleni Fine Arts Award. She has held solo exhibitions at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (2004) and the NSA Gallery, Durban (2005), and has shown her work on various group shows including the *Brett Kebble Art Awards*, Cape Town (2003); *Monomania*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town (2008); *Harbour*, KZNSA Gallery, Durban (2009) and *Spier Contemporary*, Cape Town (2010). Bloch holds a Masters Degree in Fine Art awarded with distinction from the University of the Witwatersrand in 2004. Currently, she is studying towards a practice-based PhD at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town, under the auspices of the Centre for Curating the Archive and the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative.

Wim Botha

Born in 1974; lives in Cape Town

Wim Botha graduated from the University of Pretoria in 1996. He has received a number of prestigious awards, winning the prize for best artwork at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees in 2001; being named festival artist at the KKNK in 2003; sharing the first annual Tollman Award in 2003; and winning the Standard Bank Young Artist Award in 2005. His work has featured on major international group exhibitions of the work of African and South African artists, including *Africa Remix* (2004-2007) and *Personal Affects: Power and poetics in contemporary South African art* (2004-2006). Other group shows include *The Rainbow Nation,* Museum Beelden aan Zee, The Hague (2012); the Göteborg Biennial in Sweden (2011); the 11th Triennale für Kleinplastik in Fellbach, Germany (2010); *Cape '07* in Cape Town (2007); *Olvida Quien Soy - Erase me from who I am* at the Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (2006); and the 7th edition of *Dak'Art*, the Dakar Biennale (2006). He has held twelve solo exhibitions of his work, and is featured in major collections including Absa Bank, BHP Billiton, the Gordon Schachat Collection, the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Nedbank, Spier, the Sasol Art Collection, the SABC, the South African Reserve Bank, Standard Bank and the University of Pretoria. Botha is represented by the Stevenson Gallery.

David Koloane

Born in 1938; lives in Johannesburg

David Koloane's education at the Johannesburg Art Foundation led him to becoming Head of Fine Art at the Federated Union of Black Artists. He established the Thupelo Workshops in South Africa, a concept that developed into Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Namibia, and he was also instrumental in establishing the Fordsburg Artists Studios. Koloane's curatorial work includes *Seven Stories About Modern Art In Africa* at the Guggenheim Museum, New York (1996). His work has featured on major international group exhibitions including the Seville Biennale (2006), *Liberated Voices*, National Museum of African Art, Washington (1999), *Art from South Africa*, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (1995), *The Neglected Tradition*, Johannesburg Art Gallery (1989), *Contemporary Black Artists*, Academy Art Gallery, Paris (1987) and *Art Towards Social Development*, Botswana National Museum (1982). He has held ten solo exhibitions, and is featured in collections including Mobil, South African National Gallery, BMW and Botswana National Museum. In 1998 he received the Prince Claus Fund Award for his contribution to the development of visual arts in South Africa. Koloane is represented by the Goodman Gallery.

Donna Kukama

Born in 1981; lives in Johannesburg

Donna Kukama completed her postgraduate studies at the Ecole Cantonale d'Art du Valais in Sierre (Switzerland) in 2008, under MAPS (Master of Arts in the Public Sphere), and is currently a faculty member at the WITS School of Arts (University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg). Kukama has participated and performed in various exhibitions and art fairs, including the Joburg Art Fair in 2009 and 2012, Art Miami 2009, ARCO Madrid 2010, and in the Lyon Biennale 2011 she presented a collective research project as part of the Centre for Historical Re-Enactment. She has performed and participated in exhibitions at various public museums internationally. Award nominations include the MTN New Contemporaries Award (2010), the Ernst Schering Award (2011), and the Visible Award (2011). Kukama was a member of the former Centre for Historical Re-enactments, a Johannesburg-based independent platform that died by means of suicide on the 12th day of the 12th month in 2012 following a two-year existence between 2010 and 2012.

Gerhard Marx

Born in 1976; lives in Simonstown

Gerhard Marx received a Masters Degree in Fine Art, *Cum Laude*, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in 2004. His fifth solo exhibition, *Cumulus*, was held at the Goodman Gallery, Cape Town (2011), followed by *The Viewing Room* at the Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2011). His work has been shown at various international Art Fairs, including Art Basel and FIAC (Paris), and features in numerous public and private art collections. During 2009 he completed two large scale public sculpture commissions in Johannesburg, South Africa: *The Fire Walker*, a collaboration with William Kentridge, and *Paper Pigeon*, a collaboration with Maja Marx. He has extensive experience in theatre as scenographer, director, filmmaker and playmaker, including the recent production *REwind: A cantata for voice, tape and testimony* (directed by Marx, with interactive films by Gerhard Marx and Maja Marx, and composition by Philip Miller) performed at the Royal Festival Hall, Southbank, London (2010), the Market Theatre, Johannesburg (2008) and the 62 Centre, William College, Massachusetts (2007). Marx is a fellow of the Sundance Film Institute, the Annenberg Fund and the Ampersand Foundation. He is represented by the Goodman Gallery in South Africa.

Maja Marx

Born in 1977; lives in Simonstown

Maja Marx holds a Master's Degree in Fine Arts (cum laude) from the University of the Witwatersrand (2008). Solo exhibitions include *As Far As the Eye Can Touch*, Premises Gallery, Johannesburg (2007); *Crease*, Outlet, Pretoria (2010); and *Fold*, Whatiftheworld Gallery, Cape Town (2011). Marx is a fellow of the Ampersand Foundation (New York/Johannesburg) and a participant of MAPS (Master of Art in the Public Sphere), an exchange between the Wits School of the Arts, Johannesburg, South Africa and the Ecole Cantonale d'Art du Valais in Sierre, Switzerland. Her work is included in a range of public and private collections.

Philip Miller

Born in 1964; lives in Cape Town

Philip Miller is a composer and sound artist who works across a variety of media from film and live performance, to video and sound installations. After making a leap from a career in law into the world of music, he completed a postgraduate degree in electro-acoustic music composition at Bournemouth University in England, and then returned to South Africa to begin working full time in music. His long time collaboration with the artist William Kentridge, composing music for many of his films and installations, has gained him recognition in more recent showings of *I am not me, The Horse is Not Mine*, Tate Modern, London (2013); the live production of *Refuse the Hour*, which has toured extensively in theatres across Europe (2012); and his collaboration with Kentridge in the multimedia installation *Refusal of Time*, Dokumenta 13 (2012). His sound works have been exhibited at *Spier Contemporary*, Cape Town / Johannesburg, (2011) and the Kaunas Biennial, 2009. The live performance of *REwind, A cantata for voice, tape and testimony* has been performed at the Royal Festival Hall, London (2010), Celebrate Brooklyn, New York (2007), the 62 Centre Williams College, Massachusetts (2008), and the Baxter and Market Theatres in South Africa (2009/2010). Miller is currently an honorary fellow at the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative at the University of Cape Town. He is currently completing *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, a commission by Cape Town Opera exploring the subterranean sound world of miners in South Africa.

Zanele Muholi

Born in 1972; lives in Johannesburg

Prior to her photographic journeys into black female sexualities and genders in Africa, Zanele Muholi worked as a human/lesbian rights activist with the web-based *Behind the Mask*, co-founding the Forum for the Empowerment of Women in 2002, and founding *Inkanyiso* in 2009.

Muholi completed an Advanced Photography course at the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg in 2003, and held her first solo exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in 2004. She was the recipient of the 2005 Tollman Award for the Visual Arts, and the first BHP Billiton/Wits University Visual Arts Fellowship in 2006. In 2009 she received a Masters Degree in Fine Art from Ryerson University, Toronto, and a Fanny Ann Eddy accolade from IRN-Africa for outstanding contributions to the study and advocacy of sexualities in Africa. Also in 2009 Muholi was a Jean-Paul Blachère award-winner at the Rencontres de Bamako African Photography Biennial, and won the Casa Africa award for best female photographer living in Africa. Most recently, in 2013 she won the Index on Censorship – Freedom of Expression arts award.

Muholi's work has featured on Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany (2012); 29th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2010); *Figures and Fictions: Contemporary South African photography* at the V&A Museum, London (2011); *Face of Our Time II* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2011); *Appropriated Landscapes* at the Walther Collection, Neu-Ulm/Burlafingen, Germany (2011); and *Lesbians Seeing Lesbians* at the Leslie/Lohman Gallery in New York (2011). Her documentary *Difficult Love* (2010) has shown at various international film festivals, gaining numerous accolades. Three books have been published on her work, with *Faces and Phases* (published by Prestel) nominated as best Photobook of 2010 at the International Photobook Festival in Kassel.

Sam Nhlengethwa

Born in 1955; lives in Johannesburg

Sam Nhlengethwa was born in the mining community of Payneville in Springs, and grew up in Ratanda location in Heidelberg, east of Johannesburg. He completed a two-year Fine Art Diploma at the Rorke's Drift Art Centre in the late 1970s. While he exhibited extensively both locally and abroad throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Nhlengethwa's travelling solo show *South Africa: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1993) established him at the vanguard of critical consciousness in South Africa, and he went on to win the Standard Bank Young Artist Award in 1994. His work has been included in key exhibitions such as *Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa* at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (1996), and in major publications such as Phaidon's *The 20th Century Art Book*. He has had several solo shows in South Africa and abroad and has been a resident of the Bag Factory Artists' Studios in Newtown, Johannesburg since the 1990s. He is extensively represented in collections around the globe, including the World Bank, the Botswana Art Museum, Mobil, Anglo American, Sasol, Gencor, Standard Bank, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Telkom, Absa, Nedcor, Mandela Foundation, Johannesburg Stock Exchange, SABC, DaimlerChrysler, the Durban Art Gallery, the South African National Gallery, the Johannesburg Art Gallery, and the Tatham Art Gallery. Sam Nhlengethwa is represented by the Goodman Gallery in South Africa.

Johannes Phokela

Born in 1966; lives in Cairo, London and Johannesburg

Johannes Phokela was born in Soweto and studied at the Federated Union of Black Artists (FUBA) later completing his studies in London at the Royal College of Art, Camberwell College of Art and St. Martin's College of Art. Since rising to fame abroad, Phokela has exhibited extensively in solo and group shows in South Africa and abroad, including the second Johannesburg Biennale in 1997. Awards include the John Moores Painting Prize, the BP National Gallery Portrait Award, and the Decibel Artist's Award. He is represented in major public collections, including the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian in Washington, Standard Bank, the South African National Gallery, UNISA, BHP Billiton, and the Gordon Schachat Collection.

Cameron Platter

Born in 1978; lives in Shaka's Rock

Cameron Platter graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, Cape Town (2001). He has shown his work in at least twelve exhibitions internationally, and in group shows including *Impressions from South Africa, 1965 to Now*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2011); *Africa!*, Galerie Hussenot, Paris (2011); *New Positions*, Art Cologne (2011); *Rencontres Internationales*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2010); Biennial of Contemporary African Art, Dakar (2010); and *1910-2010: From Pierneef to Gugulective*, South African National Gallery (2010). He is represented in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Margulies and Sagamore Collections, Miami.

Andrew Putter

Born in 1965; lives in Cape Town

Andrew Putter has previously exhibited his *African Hospitality* and *Hottentots Holland: Flora Capensis* series at the Michael Stevenson Gallery in 2009 and 2008 respectively. Group exhibitions include *Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive II* at the Walther Collection Project Space, New York (2012); *Flora and Fauna: 400 Years of Artists Inspired by Nature* at the National Gallery of Canada (2012); *Life Less Ordinary: Performance and Display in South African Art* at the Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham, UK (2009); and the 10th Havana Biennale (2009). Putter won a 2007 Spier Contemporary award for his work *Secretly I Will Love You More*. In 2010 he was awarded a fellowship at the Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts at the University of Cape Town, and he graduated from UCT with a Masters Degree in Fine Art in 2012.

Athi-Patra Ruga

Born 1984; lives in Johannesburg and Cape Town

Exploring the border-zones between fashion, performance and contemporary art, Athi-Patra Ruga makes work that exposes and subverts the body in relation to structure, ideology and politics. Recent exhibitions include *Under a Tinsel Sun*, the main exhibition of the III Moscow International Biennale For Young Art (2012); *Making Way* in collaboration with Mikhael Subotzky at the National Arts Festival (2012); *Ilulwane*, a solo performance at PERFORMA11, New York (2012); *Infecting the City*, Cape Town (2009); *Beauty and Pleasure in Contemporary South African Art*, Stenersen Museum, Oslo, Norway (2009); the Guangzhou Trienalle, China (2008); *Ampersand*, Daimler Collection, Berlin (2012); *A Life Less Ordinary – Performance and Display in South African Art*, Djanogly Art Gallery (2009); *Athi-Patra Ruga – The Works* at FRED, London (2012) and Dak'Art – Biennale of African Contemporary Art, Dakar (2009). Ruga was also recently included in the Phaidon book *Younger Than Jesus* (2009). His works form part of private, public and museum collections here and abroad, including Museion – Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Bolzano, Italy; CAAC – Pigozzi Collection; The Wedge Collection and Iziko South African National Gallery.

Penny Siopis

Born in 1953; lives in Cape Town

Penny Siopis is an Honorary Professor at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town. She studied fine arts at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, and Portsmouth Polytechnic in the UK. She works in painting, photography, film/video and installation. Her work since the 1980s has covered different foci but her interest in what she calls the 'poetics of vulnerability' characterises all her explorations, from her earlier engagements with history, memory and migration to her later concerns with shame, violence and sexuality. Recent solo exhibitions have taken place at the Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town (2009 and 2011) and Johannesburg (2010); the KZNSA Gallery, Durban (2009); and the Freud Museum, London (2005). Recent group shows include *Prism: Drawing from 1990-2011*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo (2012); *Appropriated Landscapes*, Walther Collection, Neu-Ulm/Burlafingen, Germany (2011); *Black Womanhood: Images, icons, and ideologies of the African body* at the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH; the Davis Museum, Wellesley, MA, and San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego (2008-9); *Make Art/Stop AIDS*, Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles (2008); *Apartheid: The South African Mirror,* Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona (2007); and *Bound*, Tate Liverpool (2007). She has taken part in the biennales of Sydney, Johannesburg, Gwangju, Guangzhou, Havana and Venice.

Siopis is represented in collections including Anglo American, BHP, the Constitutional Court of South Africa, the Johannesburg Art Gallery, the Nelson Mandela Metro Art Museum, MTN, the Stockholm Museum of Modern Art, the Pretoria Art Museum, the SABC, the South African National Gallery, Cape Town, Standard Bank Collection and the World Bank, Washington.

James Webb

Born in 1975; lives in Cape Town

James Webb holds a Bachelor's Degree in Drama and Comparative Religion from the University of Cape Town (1996). His solo exhibitions include *MMXII*, Johannesburg Art Gallery (2012); *Untitled States*, MAC, Birmingham (2010); *Prayer*, Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham (2010); *JWAKZNSA*, KZNSA, Durban (2010) and Huddersfield Art Gallery, UK (2008); *Untitled*, Blank Projects, Cape Town (2006); and *Phonosynthesizer*, US Art Gallery, Stellenbosch (2002). Recent group exhibitions include *abc Art Berlin Contemporary*, Station Berlin (2012); *Making Way,* National Arts Festival, Grahamstown (2012); *In Other Words: the black market of translation,* NGBK, Berlin (2012); and *Neither Man, Nor Stone*, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town (2011).

Permanent installations include *There Is A Light That Never Goes Out* and *There Is No Place Called Home* (*Amman)* at Darat al Funun, Amman, Jordan; *Untitled,* Johannesburg Art Gallery and *Siren,* Main Street Life, Johannesburg. He has also performed in numerous live events, and published his sound works in a number of CDs. Webb is represented in public and private collections including Iziko South African National Gallery, the Johannesburg Art Gallery, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Darat al Funun, the Khalid Shoman Foundation and the South Africa Nirox Foundation.

Sue Williamson

Born in 1941; lives in Cape Town

Sue Williamson has been a key figure on the South African art scene since the early 1980s, as writer, editor, cultural activist and artist. Founder member of arts organisation Public Eye, Williamson is also a cultural organiser who contributes to many collective and group art projects.
Recent solo exhibitions include *All Our Mothers* at Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2013) and *The Mothers: A 31 Year Chronicle*, Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town (2012). Her work has also formed part of major group exhibitions including *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life* at International Center of Photography, New York and Haus der Kunst, Munich (2012-2013), the 12th Istanbul Biennial (2011) and *Impressions from South Africa, 1965 to Now* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (2011).

Williamson's work forms part of almost every museum collection in South Africa and is also included in many international art institutions and private collections including BHP Billiton, the Constitutional Court of South Africa, the District Six Museum, the Durban Art Gallery, the South African National Gallery, the Johannesburg Art Gallery, the Pretoria Museum of Art, Standard Bank, the Museum of Modern Art (New York), and the Smithsonian Institution (Washington). She was honoured with the Rockefeller Foundation Creative Arts Fellowship for 2011, and has taken up various residencies including Bellagio Center in Italy. Williamson is represented by the Goodman Gallery in South Africa.

Nelisiwe Xaba

Born in 1970; lives in Johannesburg

Born and raised in Dube, Soweto Nelisiwe Xaba began her vibrant career in dance almost 20 years ago. In the early 1990s she received a scholarship to study at the Johannesburg Dance Foundation, as well as the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance in London. Returning to South Africa in 1997, Xaba joined Pact Dance Company and later launched her solo career, and began working with a variety of esteemed choreographers, including Robyn Orlin. Since then Xaba has been involved in various multi-media projects, collaborating with visual artists, fashion designers, theatre and television directors, poets and musicians. Xaba's seminal works such as *Plasticization* and *They Look At Me and That's All They Think* have toured to various parts of the world for the past several years. In 2008, Xaba collaborated with Haitian dancer and choreographer Ketty Noel to create a duet titled *Correspondances*, a satirical look into the politics of women to women relationships, which toured to various countries in South America, Europe and Africa. In the same year Xaba produced *The Venus*, combining two of her solo pieces, the earlier work *They Look at Me and That's All They Think* and *Sarkozy says NoN to the Venus*, originally commissioned by the Musée du Quai Branly.

Since 2006 Xaba has been collaborating with filmmaker and artist Mocke J van Veuren in the creation of various performance works dealing with race, gender and sexuality, including *Black!... White?*, which premiered in Paris in 2009, and *Uncles & Angels*, which has been seen in South Africa and Europe. Xaba is represented by the Goodman Gallery in South Africa.

Brenton Maart, Curator

Born in 1968; lives in Cape Town

Brenton Maart is an artist, writer and curator, and is currently working towards a PhD in Fine Art, conducted jointly through the Centre for Curating the Archive at the Michaelis School of Fine Art and the Archive and Public Culture Initiative, University of Cape Town. He holds an Advanced Diploma in Photography from the Market Photography Workshop, and Masters degrees in Fine Arts (University of the Witwatersrand) and Science (achieved with distinction from Rhodes University).

Previous professional positions include Director of the KZNSA Gallery, Durban, Exhibitions Curator at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Curatorial Consultant at Freedom Park Trust and Curator of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature Art Collection. Previous curated exhibitions include *Structure: Avenues and Barriers of Power in the Work of Jeremy Wafer* (2009); *Red: The Iconography of Colour in the Work of Penny Siopis* (2009); *Harbour: The Expression of Containment in Contemporary South African Art* (2009); *Suss't: Sustainability in South African industrial, product and fashion design* (2008); *Production Marks: Geometry, Psychology and the Electronic Age* (2008); *Compendium: Post-colonial game structures in the paintings of Johannes Phokela* (2007); and *Sharp: The Market Photo Workshop* (2002).

Maart's photography and installation explore contemporary societies and structures in South Africa, and have been shown in the following solo exhibitions: *Temporary Architecture* (PhotoZA, Johannesburg, 2003); *Annotated Index* (The Factory, Johannesburg, 2005); *Crossword* (Gallery Momo, Johannesburg, 2005) and *On the Risk of Others: The Photosyntax of Brenton Maart* (LACE, Los Angeles, 2008). His work has also been included in numerous group exhibitions including *Not Alone* (Museum Africa, Johannesburg, 2009); *Of Want and Desire* (João Ferreira Gallery, 2006); *A Decade of Democracy: Witnessing South Africa* (Museum of the National Centre of Afro-American Artists, Boston, 2004; African American Museum, Dallas, 2005; Foster-Tanner Fine Arts Gallery, Tallahassee, Florida, 2005) and *City & Country* (Axis Gallery, New York, 2004).

Imaginary Fact

Inventory of
artworks
on exhibition

Joanne Bloch
Hoard
2012/13
Modelling clay, gold spray-paint and silk
velvet
Installation dimensions 50 x 500cm
Courtesy of the Artist

Wim Botha
Study for the Epic Mundane
2013
Books (encyclopedia, bibles, dictionaries,
historical documents, etc.), wood and
stainless steel
Central group: 155 x 188 x 183cm;
Installation dimensions variable
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape
Town and Johannesburg

Wim Botha
Portrait I
2009
Crossword dictionaries, wood and stainless
steel
48 x 18 x 24.5cm
Courtesy of Vincenzo Penta

Wim Botha
Portrait III
2009
Bibles, wood and stainless steel
32 x 15 x 28cm
Courtesy of Konrad Huettner

Wim Botha
Untitled
2011
World Books, SA Yearbooks (1983–1991),
wood and stainless steel
98 x 150 x 85cm (excluding pedestal)
Courtesy of Hans Porer

Wim Botha
Generic Self-Portrait as an Exile
2008
Learners' dictionaries (Afrikaans, English,
isiZulu, Sesotho) and stainless steel
46 x 32 x 27cm
Courtesy of Michael Roets

Wim Botha
Untitled (Witness series I)
2011
African encyclopaedias, wood and stainless
steel
45 x 21 x 22cm
Courtesy of gordonschachatcollection

Wim Botha
Composite Self-Portrait II
2010
Dictionaries, ink and wood
58.5 x 26 x 23cm
Courtesy of Xavier Huyberechts and Briget
Grosskopff

David Koloane
The Journey
1998
Series of 19 acrylic and oil pastel works on
paper
Each 29 x 42cm
Courtesy of the Artist and Goodman
Gallery, Johannesburg

Donna Kukama
*Investment Bank of Elsewhere (Is Survival not
Archival?)*
2013
Site-specific performance
Duration variable

Philip Miller, Gerhard Marx and Maja Marx
Rewind
2007–2013
Audio-visual installation with monitors and
headsets
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the Artists and Goodman
Gallery, Johannesburg

Zanele Muholi
Faces and Phases
2006 to date
Series of 200 photographic prints on paper
Each 25.5 x 38.5cm (image size)
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson
Gallery, Johannesburg and Cape Town

Sam Nhlengethwa
Glimpses of the Fifties and Sixties
2002/3
Series of 30 collage and mixed media works
on paper
36 x 47cm (framed dimensions)
Courtesy of Stefan Ferreira

Johannes Phokela
2012
South Pacific Seascape
Oil on Canvas
200 x 170cm
Courtesy of the Artist and whatiftheworld
Gallery, Cape Town

Johannes Phokela
2006
Collar Series l (City official/mayor)
Oil sketch on paper
77 x 59cm (frame size)
Courtesy of the Artist

Johannes Phokela
2006
Collar Series ll (Son of a rich man)
Oil sketch on paper
77 x 59cm (frame size)
Courtesy of the Artist

Johannes Phokela
2006
Collar Series lll (Army officer)
Oil sketch on paper
77 x 59cm (frame size)
Courtesy of the Artist

Cameron Platter
The Good Shepard Presents Dr Bombaka
2009
Pencil crayon on paper
240 x 240cm
Courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Ernst
Hilger, Vienna

Andrew Putter
Native Work
2012
Installation comprising 15 selenium-toned
silver gelatin lightjet prints on fibre-based
paper, 50 x 35cm each, and 17 digital colour
images on screen, looped
Installation dimensions variable
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape
Town and Johannesburg

Athi-Patra Ruga
The Future White Women of Azania: The trial
2013
Site-specific performance with five
performers, costumes, props, lights and
music
Duration variable

Penny Siopis
Obscure White Messenger
2010
Single-channel digital video, sound
Duration 15min, 4sec
Courtesy of the Artist and Stevenson, Cape
Town and Johannesburg

James Webb
Children of the Revolution
2013
Speakers, CD player, filtered wires and audio
Duration 4min; Installation dimensions
variable
Courtesy of the Artist

Sue Williamson
For thirty years next to his heart
1990
49 colour laser prints in handcrafted frames
Installation dimensions 196 x 262cm
Courtesy of the Artist and Goodman Gallery,
Johannesburg

Nelisiwe Xaba
Venus in Venice
2013
Site-specific performance with costumes,
props and music
Duration variable
Courtesy of the Artist and Goodman Gallery,
Johannesburg