

An aerial photograph of a densely packed informal settlement, likely a township in South Africa. The buildings are small, rectangular, and closely packed together, with a central dirt road running through the middle. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple and blue gradient. The title 'CROSSING BOUNDARIES' is written in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters across the top left portion of the image.

# CROSSING BOUNDARIES

*Contemporary Art and  
Artists from South Africa*



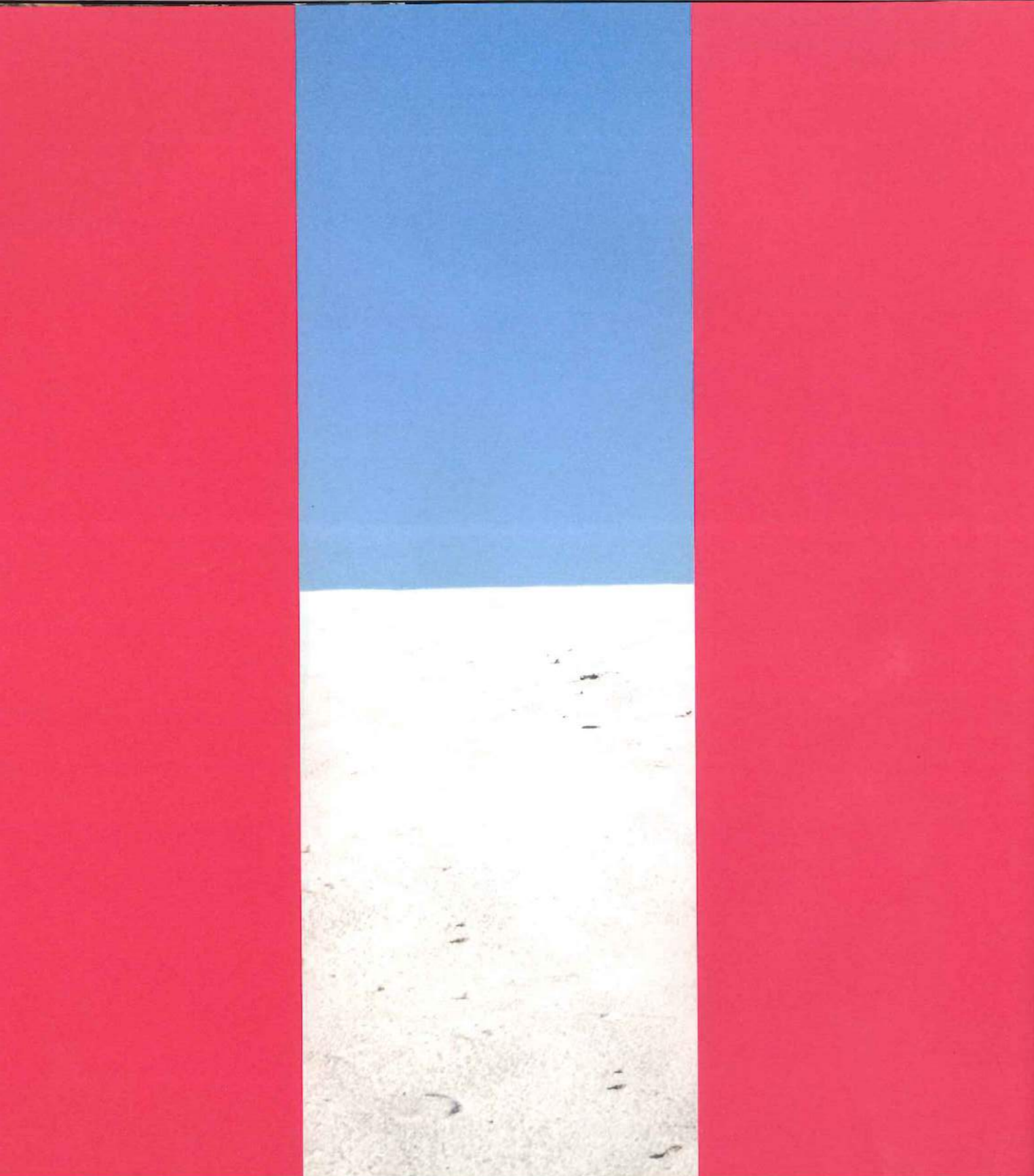
## **CROSSING BOUNDARIES**

CONTEMPORARY ART AND ARTISTS  
FROM SOUTH AFRICA

LIEN BOTHA  
NADJA DAEHNKE  
HASAN ESSOP  
HUSAIN ESSOP  
SVEA JOSEPHY  
SHARLENE KHAN  
NOMTHUNZI MASHALABA

CURATED BY  
ORTRUD MULDER  
& JOCHEN SOKOLY

THE GALLERY | VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY IN QATAR  
26 JANUARY – 5 MARCH 2011



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Standing from left to right: Jochen Sokoly, Sharlene Khan, Svea Josephy, Lien Botha, Nomthunzi Mashalaba, Allyson Vanstone  
Seated from left to right: Hassan & Husain Essop, Nadja Daehnke

## Acknowledgements

Foremost we would like to thank the participating artists Lien Botha, Sharlene Khan, Husain and Hasan Essop, Nomthunzi Mashalaba, Svea Josephy and Nadja Daehnke for lending works to this exhibition. We are both grateful to the Gallery Committee of Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar and the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development for supporting our proposal and funding the exhibition, supporting the artists and inviting them to Qatar for the opening. Furthermore we thank the art critic and writer Melvyn Minnaar for contributing an introductory essay and for his insights into the South African contemporary art scene. We are furthermore grateful that the Director of the South African National Gallery, Riason Naidoo, graciously accepted our invitation to speak at the opening night and agreed to publish his lecture as part of this catalog. As curator of the art gallery of the Michaelis School of Art at the University of Capetown, Nadja Daehnke's insights into the subject of art education in South Africa has also been invaluable. Last but not least we are indebted to both Storm Janse Van Rensburg and Tony East of the Goodman Gallery in Cape Town for facilitating the loan of works by Hassan and Husain Essop.

*Jochen Sokoly & Ortrud Mulder*

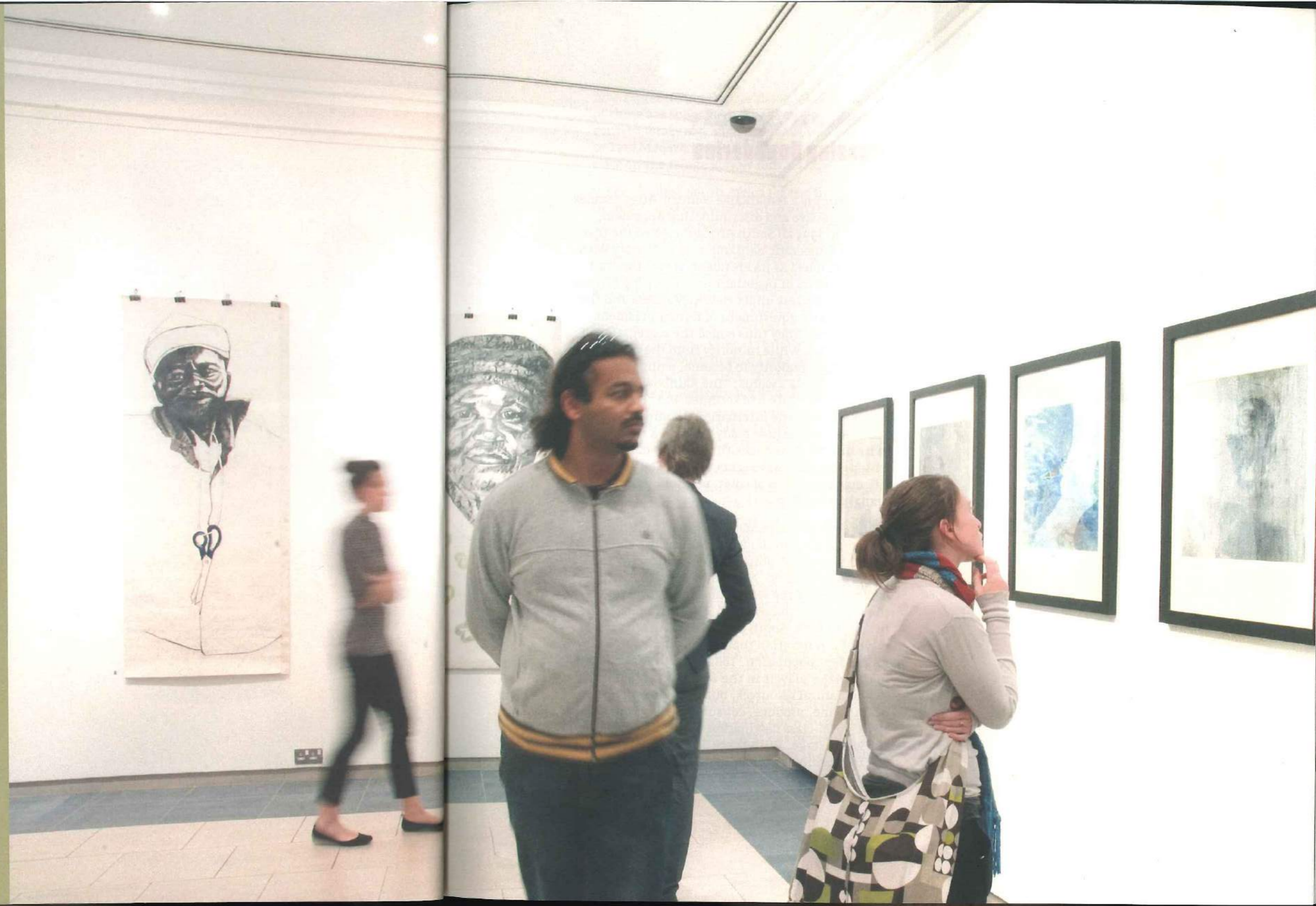
## About the Curators

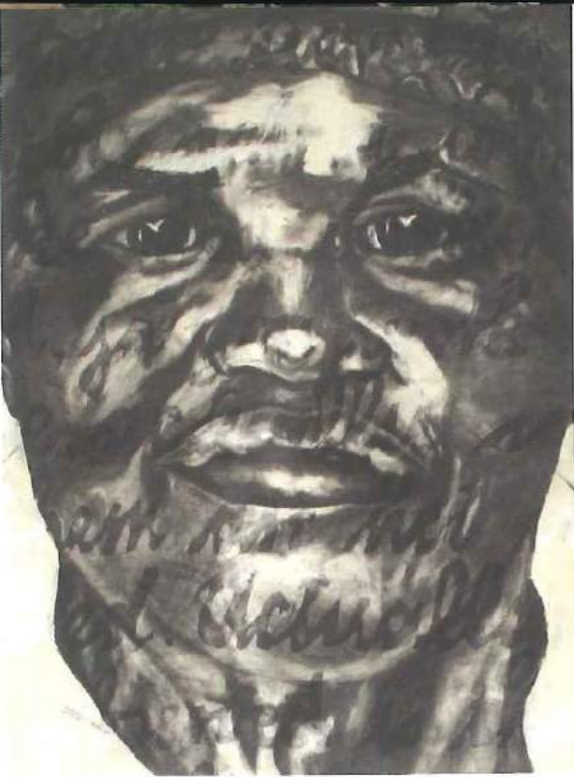
### Jochen Sokoly

**Dr. Jochen Sokoly** received his doctorate in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford where he specialized in the History of Islamic Art and Architecture. He has been a research fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, London. Dr. Sokoly has worked as a UNESCO curatorial consultant for the Al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait National Museum, Kuwait where he is preparing the publication of the museum's collection of early Islamic inscribed textiles. He currently holds the post of Assistant Professor in Art History and Gallery Director at Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, where he lectures, curates exhibitions, and creates public programs that address issues of cultural discourse.

### Ortrud Mulder

Born in Germany, Ortrud Mulder holds a B.A. in Art History and German Literature and a Masters degree in German Literature from the University of South Africa. Since 1986 she has been working as a gallerist in Pretoria - in partnership with Frieda van Schalkwyk - and in Cologne, Germany. Presently she runs Abalone Gallery in Hermanus in the Western Cape region. She has introduced South African art to an international audience as both a curator and gallerist through exhibitions in Austria, Belgium and Germany at public museums and art associations.





## Jochen Sokoly

### Crossing Boundaries

South Africa is a remarkable country. After decades of an oppressive and discriminating Apartheid regime, in 1994 all South Africans elected the first free and democratic parliament in its history with Nelson Mandela as its President. It was the fruit of several years of negotiation between the African National Congress under Nelson Mandela and the National Party government of former president F.W. de Klerk. They thus ended the segregation of South Africa's white minority from the country's multi-ethnic majority to become, using President Nelson Mandela's words: "The Rainbow Nation". The Apartheid state had secluded and ostracized South Africa in the international community. South Africa was now ready to begin a new phase in its history. A new constitution was enacted which gave the same rights to all of South Africa's citizens, regardless of color, religion, culture or sexual orientation.

While South Africa under Apartheid continued very much its colonial legacy, it was the end of Apartheid, which propelled the country into an age of globalization. Not only did South Africa become part of the world community and rejoin the British Commonwealth, the world now came to South Africa. South Africa began to attract a wave of immigration that was just as diverse as its resident population. Today, South Africa is one of the major players in the world, an exporter not just of natural resources, but home to producers of fine wine, produce, consumer goods and style. It's a world-class destination with a firm place on the world stage. With these developments came the recognition of contemporary South African art by a world audience. South African galleries are

now representing their artists globally and some of these are collected by the temples of global contemporary art, such as MoMA in New York or Tate Modern in London. An art scene that was once on the fringe is now center stage.

When I visited South Africa for the first time in 2006, I was overwhelmed in amazement by this country, its people, landscape, and culture. Although I only visited the Cape region around Cape Town, I got a sense of excitement that I felt should be transported to Doha and our Gallery at VCUQatar. It was then that Ortrud Mulder, a long-time gallerist and curator in Hermanus near Cape Town, and I started to make plans for an exhibition. When I revisited Cape Town and Johannesburg in 2010 I was able to meet all the participating artists, the art schools of the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Cape Town, as well as curators, and gain a more concrete sense of the issues that contemporary artists in South Africa are faced with.

The exhibition that Ortrud Mulder and I managed to bring together represents a diverse group of contemporary artists (Lien Botha, Nadja Daehnke, Hasan and Husain Essop, Svea Josephy, Sharlene Khan, Nomthunzi Mashalaba) whose work represents artistic practice in photography, mixed media, print, installation and text. It reflects discourses with culture, environment, society and self and provides an insight into the multicultural world of contemporary post-Apartheid South Africa. "Crossing Boundaries: Contemporary Art and Artists from South Africa" also opens up a dialog with the location of the exhibition in Qatar. As an institution, VCUQatar is part of a critical moment in the development of Qatar as an international knowledge base. The speed with which Qatar has developed and expanded in the last fifteen years is astonishing. It has embarked on a journey to create a society based on the idea of citizenship, civil

responsibility and innovation. Therefore, it too has crossed boundaries, to leave parts of its past behind and embark on a journey into the future. Art plays a vital role in this journey in Qatar, as it does in South Africa. It is a chronicle of the present, through the eyes of the artists' experiences. We can feel with them, see what they think, share in and comment on their statements and expressions. They make us think and shake us up to see what we otherwise might not see. It is hoped that our exhibition does exactly that: make us cross boundaries.

**Dr. Jochen Sokoly** is Gallery Director and Assistant Professor of Art History at VCUQatar

Detail from:

Sharlene Khan

Tea Lady (2009)

Series (in progress): Other Stories

Mixed media on canvas (charcoal, acrylic, embroidery) / 164 x 80cm

# Melvyn Minnaar

## *Escaping the Land*

### Melvyn Minnaar **Escaping the Land**

One cannot blame Southern African artists that landscape has been a dominating theme. The geography of our part of the globe is so vivid, so varied, so formative of all our endeavours that art, since the beginning of history, ever since humans have reflected on their place in the world, has looked at, recorded and responded to the view.

Of course, the reality of the surrounding land the hills and dales, the dry and the lush, the distant and the near, the dramatic and the dull - also became a synecdoche to transpose easily to the mind-set of the people. When we consider our landscape(s), we inevitably shift the concept to abstraction: how we live and deal with life - all of us, in our varied and multicultural environment - and make sense of it. It is easy to see how art connected and connects with the land.

Original southern inhabitants of the continent expressed reaction to where they found themselves, where they had to survive, by recording on stone cave walls images of the animals and spirits in their landscape. Even before the colonials arrived to settle, European travellers, in awe of the places and people they saw here, put pen and brush to paper. (As far as Africa is concerned, much of this 'colonial gaze' remains to this day. What is reassuring is that the return stare, now own-appropriated and sensing adventure, is getting more potent and persuasive.)

Skip a few hundred years, and it is clear, even or exactly from the present exhibition that you cannot get the land out of our art.

On this exhibition, Lien Botha, Husain and Hasan Essop and Svea Josephy directly incorporate and engage with the landscape, or aspects of it, in their artworks. Yet, one clearly also senses a background, an awareness of place, an African topography, if you want, in each of the contributions by Nadja Daehnke, Sharlene Khan and Nomthunzi Mashalaba.

Naturally, this is to be expected within the context of the curatorial theme. Boundaries can only be crossed, if you know where you are. And you can only cross a border when you are aware that you have reached it.

The best of South African art has always been hyper aware of the critical junctures. Important artists have never shunned the adventure of the new, the dare of unknown territory, in their art-making.

If the political panorama and social scene pre-1994 was dark, dysfunctional and distrustful, finer-tuned artists - those tuned into the dangers of the moral morass were constantly searching ways out of it, a way forward.

Those artists, mainly white, who, during the heydays of the last century, were tracking the sharp changes of unfolding 'movements' in modernism within the Western world's art paradigm, did so with, at times, remarkable tenacity.

The best art of those times - making up a cache of artists represented in the formal, institutional collections, and recorded in the very few overview publications that saw the light of day was often charged with an edginess, a frisson of discomfort.

Depictions of the environment often captured this, or linked to it. It would make an interesting study to trace the growing role of the landscape and the prominence of the settings in South African paintings and pictures, as the apartheid state became increasingly repressive in the 1980s. The 'wasteland' became more and more obvious as the heat increased and the cultural boycott kicked in. (J.M. Coetzee, in his *White Writing* of 1988, reflects on this changing representation of the land, starting with the first European traveller-adventurists and culminating in the postmodern scenarios invented by artists like William Kentridge.)

Accusations of ivory-tower art making, and white elitism in art education and the curatorial dispensation of the time are valid. Supported by the ruling apartheid regime in its spirited expansion of its cultural hegemony, a clutch of 'anointed' artists dominated the gallery scene. But not all artists fitted that canon.

Now, 20 years later, a clearer and less politically-tainted view is emerging of the achievements of those artists who truly had to struggle with their personal creativity within the system.

Fortunately, many South African art institutions, the formal museums and collections, have, over the years, identified and acquired the better work. Despite the one-sidedness of representation in those establishments, which eschewed many (black) artists, foreign visitors will be pleasantly surprised at the creativity and invention of artworks in public holdings.

Correcting the imbalance, of course, led to a brisk expansion of collections and 'remedial' programmes by these institutions during the liberated 1990s. Over-enthusiasm and political-correctness sometimes stretched that process. Some artists benefited, while others are still awaiting their due. The same can be

said about the art market in which some found instant international reward.

Black artists have a different history to that of the 'privileged' artists who entered the canon of South African art before 1994. The expression 'previously-disadvantaged' has become a cliché in contemporary discourse, but there are few spheres where it applies as succinctly as that of the South African cultural workers who were not white.

Lack of education, not to mention facilities, and repressive policies which offered no opportunity to develop audiences, exposure and collectors, meant non-white artists were stuck in a constant struggle for survival. If, indeed, they were even afforded the means to make art.

Nevertheless, justifying the romantic notion that 'art that will out' and that creativity must find resolution, a number of black artists developed solid careers against severe odds. Today, a handful of those who were working in the earlier and middle of the last century are duly acknowledged and acclaimed.

The circumstances of black artists in colonial, and later apartheid, South Africa were so different and difficult that their art, for the most part and for obvious reasons, is politically charged, with humanism as an overarching construct.

'Struggle art' - somewhat of a cliché too - acts as metaphor to describe a wide range of art actions. Much of it was overtly political: 'struggling' against the regime - densely didactic and propaganda-driven. The best is powerful and unique. (Necessitated by the lack of other media and means, 'cheap' printing methods like lino and woodcuts were widely used. This has made this medium a particularly potent and expressive one in South African graphics.)

Today, the different strands of South African art history, untangled to a degree, offer curators interesting opportunities. The lay of the land, in a manner of speaking, can be negotiated from various points of departure. Contemporary international curators have found this liberated landscape of particular interest - at a time when so much art elsewhere appears stultified, and often beholden to moneyed interests as the so-called art market increases its power over museological connoisseurship and academic expertise.

The Southern tip of Africa is often evoked as the halfway house between the 'old' and 'new', the 'first' and 'third' world - the crossing between the 'known' and the 'to-be-known'. It's a metaphor that sits well with contemporary South African art-making - as viewers of this exhibition will no doubt pick up on.

Local artists are up to date with developments and trends in the global art world. There is no medium, however cutting edge or revolutionary, that isn't or cannot be mastered. South African artists travel, and show their work successfully at the important art festivals and fairs. Yet, they cherish the distance from the 'hot-spots' and the perspective it allows. Meaningful cultural production is, by nature and essentially, regionally based.

However, the realities and politics of the global art environment cannot be denied. It is within this dynamic and developing paradigm that one must consider where and how the borders are to be crossed. From a number of views, contemporary South African art can be seen to be at a crossing, one that necessitates vigilant navigation.

Two decades after the land became free, a new generation of artists and curators is taking control. Many will be untainted by the

country's dark past, carry no grudges or guilt. While opportunism is a tempting option in the art world, one cannot lock out history when dealing with matters of culture and social endeavour. (South Africa, with its wide-ranging multicultural construct, presents a particular test. And it offers opportunities.)

The 're-writing' of South African art history too is a delicate operation. It is an ongoing process. Do the skills exist to find the balances? More importantly: how do artists and the art they produce respond to the changed situation?

Then there is the impact of global shifts and strategies, whether in influence or buying power. (Art can and has been the currency of many power players as long as cultural production was invented.) With Western 'art capitals' no longer necessarily the bases of influence they were, and even important art auctions and gallerists shifting East, the art environment is changing radically. With art from places like India, Turkey and South American countries coming into play, we are dealing with an entirely new world art order. Borders have been crossed. Many simply disappear.

**Where will South African art feature?  
And how?**

Especially in uncertain times, art tends to either step into the front boldly, or retreat parochially to bourgeois shelter. Given the lingering aftermath of the economic crash and capitalist folly, we're still not out of the woods as the second decade of the 21st century unfolds. How artists react to what is essentially a global crisis of cultural confidence, is difficult to anticipate.

Whilst we cannot claim high ground, being safely on the sidelines, or even offer absolute solutions, this urgency is sure to charge art making in South Africa even more in the immediate future.

It is in this demanding sense that South African artists are at the crossroads. It is within this unfolding paradigm in which another generation will have to take note of the physical and metaphysical landscape(s). They will take up where the fine artists of this exhibition leave their contemplations of the land, take the journey further. They will renegotiate and reassess the borders to cross, but they, like all others who live here, will never escape the land.

*Melvyn Minnaar is an art critic and cultural commentator based in Cape Town, South Africa.*

**Riason Naidoo**

***Reflections on  
1910 - 2010:  
From Pierneef to  
Gugulective -  
An exhibition on a  
century of South  
African art***

Riason Naidoo

## Reflections on 1910-2010: From Plerneef to Gugulective An exhibition on a century of South African art

The South African National Gallery's initial schedule for 2010 was looking like the schedule of many other art and cultural institutions in the country: it was about football. At the National Gallery we had numerous requests from abroad to show high profile foreign artists in the year of the FIFA World Cup.

But I thought that if I was a visitor to a foreign country I would want to get a glimpse of that country's art and to see how the context of the country – the politics, the economics, the social, the historical, etc. – had informed the work produced there. When we look at the art of the Renaissance today we can see the influence of the church and the state on art produced during that era. On a recent visit to Leipzig in the former East Germany, I visited the art museum there and it was a treat to see the art produced during the time of the GDR and how that directly or indirectly linked with the political context.

So it seemed inappropriate to me to show celebrity foreign artists at the South African National Gallery, who could choose to show anywhere in the world, anytime they wanted. Historically South African art has been under the international radar, and so this was an opportunity to reflect on our art, and showcase our artists. This was the first shift that had to be made towards the exhibition.

With a store of over nine thousand artworks in the national gallery collection, we cleared the schedule and decided to reflect on our stories. At the same time it was not just about putting up an exhibition showcasing a century of South African art. It was also an opportunity to tie in a new vision for the gallery with the exhibition. It was a moment to address long-standing and pertinent issues.

For example how do we address the legacy of apartheid ideologies that determined which artworks were collected and which exhibitions were shown?

But if we say that we are the National Gallery, then the next question is how representative is our collection of the nation's art? I wanted to move away from a kind of geographic parochialism, away from a Cape Town centred exhibition, in a show that we could say was truly representative of artists and works from around the country; an exhibition that celebrated the richness and diversity of cultures on offer, while engaging with the history of the country over this period. So it was not simply about raising the National Gallery flag, but about meaningfully and sincerely working with other museum collections and learning from them and not being afraid to show the gaps in our own collection, for the benefit of visitors, for research, for students and learners.

And so there was a drive to go out and look at other collections around the country. With this in mind, I travelled around with Joe Dolby, long time curator of works on paper at the National Gallery. We visited the big municipal collections as well as university, corporate, and some significant private collections. We also looked to the main commercial galleries in Cape Town and Johannesburg for oversights in our contemporary collection.

I grew up in Durban and worked at the Durban Art Gallery so I was familiar with some of the collection there, and I had been a regular visitor at Johannesburg Art Gallery during the seventeen years I studied and worked in Johannesburg, so I knew some of that collection. But to go through the storerooms at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, the Durban Art Gallery, the Tatham Art Gallery, the Pretoria Art Museum – was revealing in the story of how art was collected around the country. This yielded a number of pleasant surprises. Jabulani Ntuli's drawings (c.1940s) from the Killy Campbell Collection (University of KwaZulu Natal), Richard Baholo's painting *What a Horror!* (1992) from the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Bongzi Dhlomo's abstract painting *Serving Time*, (2004) from the Standard Bank collection, Harold Strachan's *Nature Morte*, (1970) from the Durban Art Gallery – these were unexpected. Most of the collections were strong in collecting artists from their cities and provinces, as maybe one would expect.

One of my main intentions was that someone walking through the gallery would get an idea of who the important artists were and are; that a visitor would get to see works from around the country, and would also get a sense of place via the history, which in my mind is one of the most interesting themes when talking about South Africa. While the intention of the show was to also showcase prominent artists and some iconic works of art in the permanent collection such as Jane Alexander's *Butcher Boys* (1985/86) and Andries Botha's *Alleenspraak in Paradys* (1991), many of the loans were intended to open a window on some less known artists and pieces.

Also, how do we speak about the diversity of cultures through aesthetics in the country, about artists from different communities,

about art production through formal and informal schools within the context of privileged racial access to art education; and where do these all fit into the larger narrative of what we call South African art?

Another important issue was how do we get audiences who have never been to the National Gallery to see their own histories (and themselves) reflected in the space? For long considered elitist and exclusive, part of the challenge of how to broaden our audiences and invite communities to take ownership of the National Gallery relates directly to the exhibitions that we show and the artworks that we collect. How do previously marginalised individuals, artists and audiences see themselves, their histories, their cultures, their art reflected in the National Gallery? So it was also about changing the image of the National Gallery, creating a new space where all kinds of people from different backgrounds (of culture, nationality, race, class, in levels of education, etc.) could feel more at home; that this was also their National Gallery.

These were all questions I was trying to address simultaneously.

Apart from the general chronology there was a grand structure. For instance the rooms were allocated according to a variety of themes. Some were chronological like looking at the period roughly from the time after the union from around 1910-1930; or the articulations of an early modernism from 1930-1960; or the photographs from DRUM magazine, which at its peak in the 1950s was distributing 450,000 copies a month across the continent; or the informal art school Polly Street in Johannesburg, where Bill Ainslie and Cecil Skotnes guided many talented black artists like Durant Sihlali and Louis Maqhubela; or Rorkes Drift, that

other prominent art training ground for black artists, especially for work on paper, that produced the likes of Lionel Davis, Bongi Dhlomo-Mautloa and Azaria Mbatha; or the theme of abstraction, which has been so contentious in the history of South African art; or the period we now refer to as Resistance Art, which looked at the political where artists of all backgrounds both black and white and all shades of brown, took on the apartheid state with their art, the posters and photography and inspired by the slogan of using 'culture as a weapon of the struggle'. Significantly half of the gallery - 6 rooms - was allocated to art of the last twenty years. I won't go into details of each art movement here because that would require some detail but each was significant in the telling of the South African narratives of art and history.

Recognising the perils of nationalism, and its manifestations, I also wanted to be critical of the South Africa in the now. I am reminded of the graffiti painted on a wall on the corner of Hunter and Cavendish streets in Yeoville, Johannesburg. It quotes from Nelson Mandela's 1994 inauguration speech, "Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another." Fourteen years later, the xenophobic attacks left many bodies in its wake and thousands mentally scarred. With this in mind I also included a selection from the exhibition *US*, curated by Bettina Malcomess and Simon Njami, that featured a handful of mainly young South African artists, including Gugulective (an art collective from Gugulethu, the township of on the outskirts of Cape Town) commenting on the issue and bringing the making of art in this country full circle. Gugulective is the other end marker in the contemporary, also reflected in the title of the exhibition.



View of the exhibition *From Pieterse to Gugulective*, South African National Gallery

So while we have a broad chronology and the major themes there were also other intentions in the curation. I did not want it to be a tedious staid chronology. Where's the adventure in that? An important idea I was playing with was different takes on the past; that if you ask a diverse group of South Africans about the history of this country you are likely to get, in return, many different versions of that history.

I wanted to put those different responses next to each other, to set up relationships between them, to juxtapose them.

For example, you've got JH Pierneef's painting of the Union Buildings (1938) – The South African parliament buildings in Tswane (previously known as Pretoria) – and Willie Bester's bench after the 1913 Land Act (1995) directly opposite each other. You also have Anton Momberg's marquette of Gandhi in close proximity to the same Pierneef. Gandhi lived in the country for twenty-one years from 1893-1914, at the same time as the formation of the Union, so this is a direct and relevant connection to the Union Buildings and the British history in the country. The intention was not to obliterate the Pierneefs or Afrikaner history, or the Union, or British colonialism – we all acknowledge these things – they are part of our history. But what else was happening?

So apart from the Maggie Laubers and the Irma Sterns interpreting South African landscapes, how did black artists such as the Moses Tladis and the Jabulani Ntulis differ in representing the landscapes, their own environments and their own people? How does their work differ in the broader discussion on the representation of blackness? This was another major thread that ran throughout the exhibition: the politics of representation. How do the ethnographic and scientific photographic

studies of Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin differ to these portraits by Gerard Bhengu and Simon Nguni? And how do these relate to the emergence of black photographers working for DRUM magazine in the 1950s, whom for the first time give insight into intimate instances of black urban life. So while we have a chronological installation in a room for instance there is already another major theme on the politics of representation working alongside. That was definitely a strategy on my part, so that someone walking through a room gets different takes, multiple voices, rather than a master narrative.

Also there were visual connections that sprang up that I could not resist. Pierneef's Karibib (1924) next to Wayne Barker's Blue Colonies (1995), a parody on Pierneef, which is easy to see when these works are next to each other, was also about introducing an element of play, while still raising serious issues.

Portrait of Ali Bhai (c.1950s) by Ebrahim Badsha is shown together with Bertram Dumbleton's Abdul, (c. 1942) and Edward Roworth's White Wall on Signal Hill, (c.1920) (Roworth was also the first director of the National Gallery in 1930) touch on the presence of presence of Muslim communities in the country. Elsewhere in the show works by Faiza Galdhari and Chris Ledochowski reflected more contemporary expressions on the same theme.

As we know art does not operate in isolation so the intention was to simultaneously reflect on important moments as well as attitudes of different eras.

Tretchikoff's figure of the Herb Seller (1948) was set against the backdrop of United Party and National Party election posters. This was a turning point in South African politics that brought the National Party into power in 1948

and that led directly to apartheid policies being enforced. Tretchikoff, a Russian emigrant to South Africa, was an art phenomenon in the country. He sold thousands of prints of his paintings in unconventional places like department stores in the 1960s and 1970s which made their way to millions of households both within the country and outside of it. And his appeal cut across race and class – very important in the context of apartheid South Africa. Because of a certain genre of his work that was regarded as kitsch, the artist was an outcast of the South African art establishment. This painting being included in this show was the first instance of a Tretchikoff being shown at the National Gallery. (I'll let out a little secret: we're now in the middle of organising a long overdue retrospective on the artist in 2011.)

So juxtapositions, multiple layers and narratives, and visual connections were the threads of the exhibition.

Well known artists like Gavin Younge and Sue Williamson shared limited hanging space with fairly obscure names like John Roome and Vedant Nanackchand. Zulu earplugs sparked off a relationship with Kevin Atkinson's Arena (1975). A similar affair developed between the group of Ndebele beadworks and Georgina Gratrix's Les Demoiselles D'Avignon (2008).

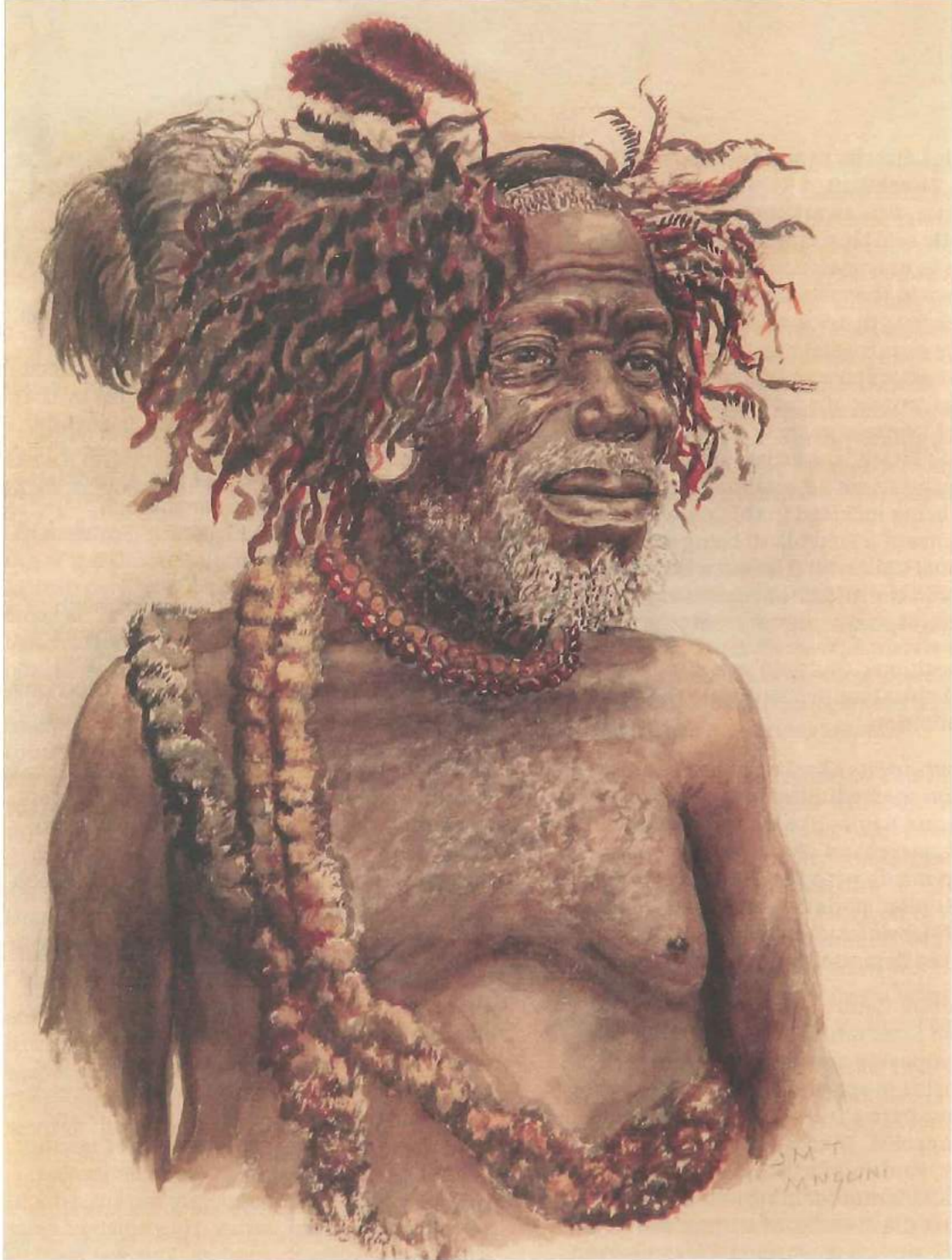
Harold Rubin, Gerard Sekoto, Gavin Jantjes and Harold Strachan offer very different takes on the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, a violent turning point in apartheid history. A range of expressions from the likes of Colin Richards, Tyrone Appollis, Dikobe Martins, Jane Alexander, Paul Stopforth and Derek Bauer on Steve Biko's murder in 1975 speak volumes about the diversity of art production in South African society. Sharing the same room though, Deborah Bell's Lover's in the Cinema

(1985) offered articulations on the universal themes of romance and love, something that we can all identify with.

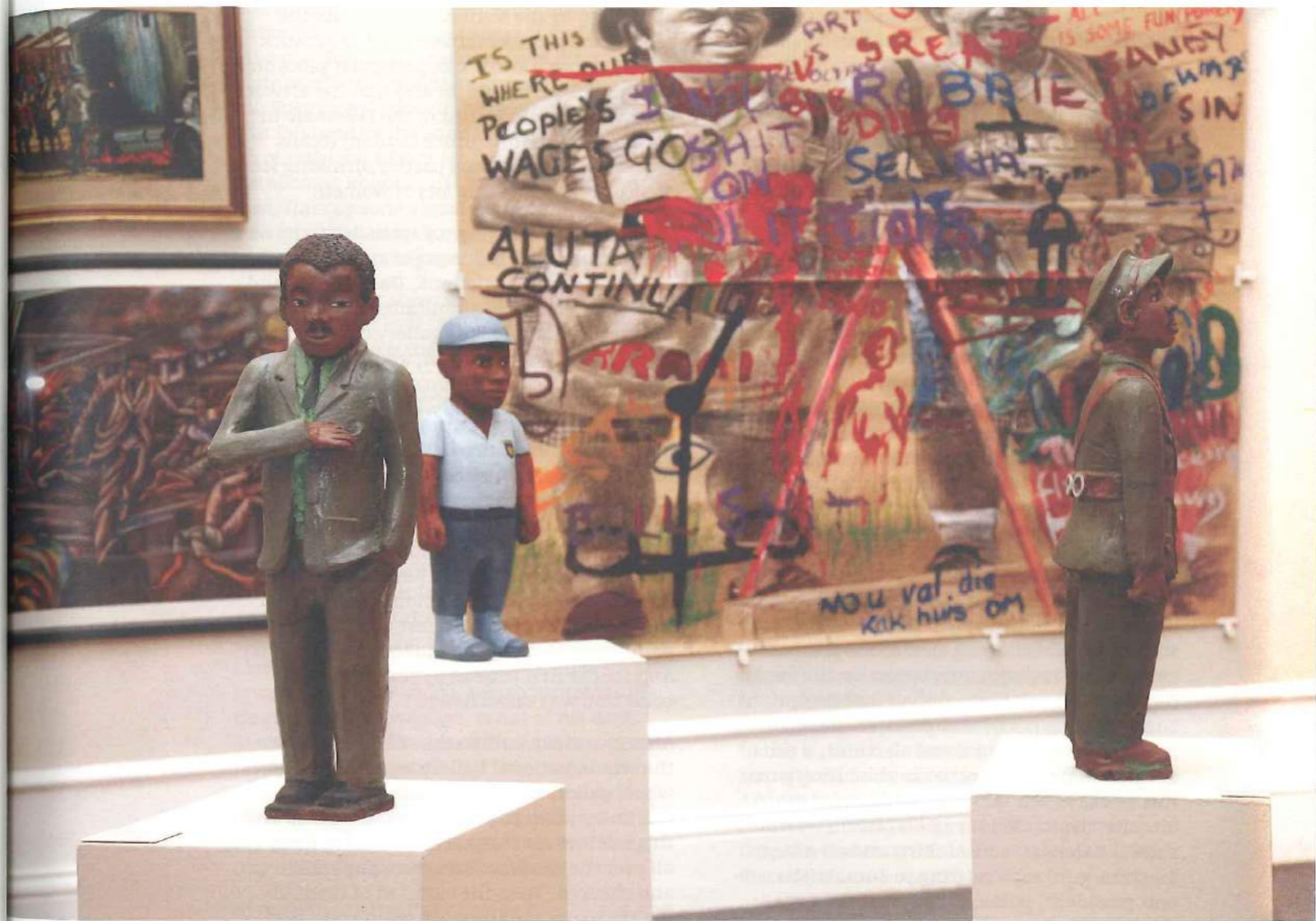
Archival posters from the Community Arts Project (CAP), housed the University of Western Cape, provide context to the activism of the violent 1980s prior to Mandela's release. Photography also plays a very important documentary role at this time as illustrated by the range from the Afrapix collective. The exhibition also closely traces the development of photography in the country, and David Goldblatt's trajectory from Family on Northbeach, Durban, June 1949 to work of an old mineshaft simply entitled 12 July 2003.

Progress Matubaku's Something for Growth (1995), Jackson Nkumanda's charming work entitled The Presidential Inauguration (1994) and Joe Ratcliff's Vlakplaas (1999) are reflections on voting for the first time, the inauguration of the first democratically elected government in 1994 and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission respectively, which are all in close proximity. These shared the same room with other outstanding works from the period by key artists such as Penny Siopis, Clive Van den Berg, Johannes Segogela and Noria Mabasa.

During the curation many smaller themes made their way into the show. Indigenous initiation rites, influences after colonial Dutch masters, the influence of San art, landscape, afternoon tea, depictions of township life, humour, the formation of a new national identity, representation and reflections of Africa, romance and sexual politics, domesticity, AIDS, and identity politics give some idea of the sub themes that were operating in contemporary section, which were not pre-scribed, rather, they emerged from the selected works themselves. This was an important process of the curation.



Simon Mnguni  
Untitled  
Watercolour and pencil on paper



View of the exhibition installation *From Pierneef to Gugulective*,  
South African National Gallery

The Sun and the Moon (2007) by First People Pomegranate Quilters from the [Nieu] Bethesda Community Arts Centre in the Karoo strikes up a conversation with a work by San artist Dada Coex'ae Qgam entitled Young Women's Initiation, (undated) and Walter Battiss's work Beautiful Bitch Suzie (c.1972). Photos by Santu Mofokeng and Guy Tillim, an astonishing painting on board by Trevor Makhoba entitled Pain in the Mountain, 1999, and a single channel video piece by Churchill Madikida called Struggles of the Heart, (2002) open up dialogue on Xhosa and Zulu initiations.

Both Zanele Maholi's photo Katlego Mashiloane and Nosipho Lavuto Ext. 2, Lakeside, Johannesburg 2007, and Pierre Fouché's Kiss, (2008) in crochet lace depict homosexual couples in tender embrace that are visually echoed by Tracey Rose's The Kiss (2001). Muholi, who describes herself, first and foremost as a lesbian activist, had been the centre of media attention when the Minister of Arts and Culture Lulu Xingwana had found offensive her photograph of a nude lesbian couple lying in bed together. The media debate surrounding the furore also gave Muholi's career a gentle shove in the right direction.

Works by Brett Murray (Xhosa, 2002) and Sthembiso Sibisi (Going Home, 2005) use humour to poignantly reflect on the local condition. Stuart Bird's tongue-in-cheek Zuma Biscuits (2007) encapsulates the moment preceding the 2008 national elections, a time of internal power struggles in the ruling party. This work, which is evocative of the ice zoo biscuits, depicts four symbols (a Zulu warrior's shield, a shower, a mini skirt, and an Ak-47 machine gun) each relating to Zuma's (the current president) public portrayal at the time.

Ed Young's Bruce Gordon [Torino] (2005) may have had special place for Cape Town art groupies recalling the conceptual piece from 2003, where a bar owner (a found object) was purchased by the National Gallery and the acquisition number tattooed on the artwork (or bar owner's arm). This particular piece on show is the suit made for and that the artwork wore when it was loaned to the Triennale in Torino. The artwork (Bruce Gordon) recalls three weeks of non-stop parties, drinking lots of alcohol and meeting lots of women.

The logistics were a piece of art in itself. We scheduled the three major exhibitions (Strengths and Convictions, Dada South? and the Alexis Preller) to simultaneously close at the end of February. The gallery closed its doors from the 1 March - 15 April; allowing for the concurrent de-installation of the three large shows that occupied the whole gallery.

In the meantime I also had a meeting with the Bailey Trust that oversees the collection of over 400 paintings and works on paper donated to the National Gallery in 1947. These include the likes of William Turner, Thomas Gainsborough, George Stubbs and Joshua Reynolds, etc - English artists from the colonial era. One of the conditions of the bequest was that at any point the collection is permanently on display. And for the first time in 63 years the Bailey collection was taken down.

After two and a half weeks of de-installation the whole National Gallery was empty. The whole gallery was re-painted - no big deal. But Dolby joked that he had never seen it look so good! The 280 loans arrived at once from all over the country. They were unpacked and checked. Then the curation of integrating the loans and the permanent collection (680 in total) started in earnest. We had three

installation teams working simultaneously following closely as a wall was finished.

The programme for the opening evening was also meant to indicate a shift in thinking. Cameroonian born guest speaker Prof Achille Mbembe (Research professor in politics and history at Wits University and author of On the Postcolony) opened the exhibition. This was followed by the band Hassan'adas (made up of musicians from Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo) playing an afro/luso/francophone signature style. The opening also attracted a much more diverse and younger audience than other openings previously.

Of course no art show is ever complete without the critics' part in it. Miles Keylock in a review entitled Out with the Old (Mail & Guardian, 23-29 April 2010) wrote, "In what can only be described as a revolution the National Gallery has been entirely rehung. Gone are the hallowed halls of 'putrid' colonial treasures. Gone are the same tired artworks eternally oozing out the permanent collection."

In what may have been a response to Keylock's piece The South African Art Times ran their article on the cover for the May edition boldly emblazoned with the headline SA National Gallery's reputation thrashed for 2010 show. Lloyd Pollak penned the piece which read, "It is apparent that Naidoo, who has piteous little curatorial knowledge, is out of his dept. As none of his fellow curators have ever been responsible for a pratfall of this magnitude, one can only conclude that he refused to heed their advice, and consequently one entertains the gravest fears vis-à-vis the future of the gallery under the present incumbent."

In response to the intention to the themes and ideas I mentioned earlier Gerhard Schoeman wrote in Art South Africa (Vol 08, Issue 04,

Winter 2010), "A reflective selection? What is all this clutter then? Where beyond the disingenuous platitudes about insight into the 'soul of the nation', is the lucid theme, the Adriane's thread, the astute discernment, the rhyme? Anne Sasson writing for artcritical.com (29 June 2010) a New York based online journal wrote, "There is color, wit and gravitas, not only within the works themselves, but in the unpredictable relationships set up between them. There were many other reviews too (<http://izikomuseums.com/blog/?p=279>). The negative criticism was outnumbered by the numerous other reviews in the national newspapers and reviews in New York, London, Amsterdam and Berlin.

Bronwyn Law Viljoen, the new editor of the Art South Africa magazine, questioned the outcry in the two main publications The South African Art Times and Art South Africa? She said that some of these reviews were particularly visceral and sometimes these were disguised as being about aesthetics, composition and curatorial decisions.

Let's look at what the exhibition did. We closed the gallery to the public for six weeks to prepare for the show. It was the first time the whole national gallery was used for one show. We loaned works from forty eight other collections from all over the country exposing gaps in the National Gallery collection. The Bailey collection was taken down for the first time in the National Gallery's history. The exhibition placed fairly obscure artists next to South African 'masters'. A Tretchikoff was shown in the National Gallery for the first time... One can then maybe start to understand the reactions?

Interestingly at the conference we held at the end of the exhibition panellist Lloyd Pollak, responding to a question from one of the members of the audience about ethics in reviewing the show, indicated that one or two of the National Gallery curators and some of the Friends of the National Gallery approached him privately to say that the new director was not heeding their advice. So I'm not sure how to read that and to what degree that influenced his review of the exhibition. It does pose all kinds of questions and is very revealing of how relationships and old networks of power function both within the National Gallery and outside of it.

The debate has been good though in drawing attention to the exhibition and getting numbers in. Compared with other museums in Cape Town that experienced a two percent drop, we doubled our visitor figures for the same period for the previous year.

**Curator Riason Naidoo** is the director of the South African National Gallery in Cape Town.

1910-2010: **From Pieterneef to Gugulective** was held at the Iziko South African National Gallery from the 16 April - 3 October 2010. Curated by Riason Naidoo.

# Nadja Daehnke

## *The role of education in the formation of artistic practice in South Africa*

## Nadja Daehnke

### The role of education in the formation of artistic practice in South Africa

Access to art education is, of course, not a pre-requisite for becoming an artist, but can nonetheless be seen as a vital influence on trends in artistic practice. I trace this correlation between art education and the formation of artistic practice in South Africa through a historical overview, concluding with a summary of the importance of tertiary education in the contemporary South African art world. To distill current trends I have drawn heavily on a statistical analysis of the South African art market recently published by the governmental Human Science Research Council.

Given the scope of this essay, I present only a superficial analysis and focus solely on adult art education. Whilst I have a personal interest in university art education, since this is the milieu in which I work, one has to look wider than tertiary educational institutions to understand the history and importance of adult art education in South Africa. Due to the late development of higher education art schools, and the exclusion of the majority of the population from these on racist grounds, any analysis of art education must also include alternative teaching, outside that offered by tertiary institutions.

In South Africa, as in so many post-colonial countries, the word 'history' should be replaced by 'histories' in acknowledgement of the deep divisions wrought on society and

the arts by thirty decades of racial segregation. Even before the formation of the country we now call the South Africa, fractious relations existed between indigenous peoples and white settlers in the late 17th to 18th centuries. These divisions were intensified under subsequent British Colonial rule, followed by the Union of South Africa proclaimed in 1910 and finally in the Republic of South Africa formed in 1961. In the ensuing decades division between blacks and whites became not only the backdrop, but the very foundation of life in South Africa. Race relations during these various stages of modern South African history are critical to understanding the education systems of this country. Societal and institutional racism resulted in art education running in two separate streams, ostensibly until the democratization of 1994. This democratization introduced, at least on a legislative level, racial equality and educational access to all.

If one leaves aside age-old indigenous artistic production and focuses on an urban western understanding of art, there was only very limited artistic expression, exhibiting and art patronage in this region before the mid-19th century. Even with the establishment of broader artistic culture in the mid-1800s, art was centered on the values and expressions of the colonial motherland – Great Britain. The sole extensive purchase and display of art was sponsored by the *nouveau riche* who immigrated as poor Jewish or German settlers and struck it lucky on the goldmines of early Johannesburg. For this new class of people the reason to buy art was to profess a (non-existing) pedigree of Englishness in an attempt to infiltrate the old-money British upper class.<sup>1</sup>

1 Carman, J. 2006. *Uplifting the Colonial Philistine: Florence Phillips and the making of the Johannesburg Art Gallery*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. p.3

In this period the few artists resident in South Africa were without exception trained abroad, or were foreign visitors to South Africa on a short sojourn. Self-taught immigrants Thomas Baines and Frederick L'Ons were arguably the first South African-based and South African-focused artists, although seen by many of their contemporaries as travelers who recorded their wanderings, rather than as artists.

By the late 1800s art schools were being established in the region. Cape Town's Roeland Street School of Art (established 1864) was the first of these, but significantly had as its main objective the teaching of practical drawing to the artisanal class.<sup>2</sup>

Given the context of a colony in which art was seen as synonymous with British art, it is hardly surprising that the art schools opening in the beginning decades of the 20th century showed a similar strong bias toward English academic art and methods, with teachers sourced by and from prominent British art schools, such as the Royal College of Art in London. Teaching conformed to the South Kensington model, which demanded the lengthy study of Roman sculpture copies, with a student only progressing to studies from life once deemed sufficiently competent at drawing from the antique. This emphasis remained the status quo well into the 1930s, with some schools, such as the Port Elisabeth School of Art under directorship of Frank Pikford, structuring the curriculum thus from 1903 to 1953.<sup>3</sup>

The result of this schooling was, predictably, an art which tended to deny the local and

2 Bull, M. & Leigh, V. 1975. *One Hundred Years Ago: an exhibition to commemorate the opening of the "Cape Town Art Gallery" in New Street (now Queen Victoria Street) on 21st April 1875*. Cape Town: South African National Gallery. p.2

3 Alexander, L., Bedford, E. & Cohen E. 1988. *Paris and South African Artists 1850 - 1968*. Cape Town: South African National Gallery. pp.26 - 27 & 32.

imitated the art of the coloniser. Interestingly, artists tended to depict landscapes devoid of native people – and hence devoid of the evidence of the land being other than British.<sup>4</sup> Lighting, tone, landscape features depicted mostly echoed the appearance of the motherland. It must, however, be remembered that at least until the formation of the Republic in 1961, the English speaking South Africans who formed the bulk of the art aware public generally considered themselves as British.<sup>5</sup>

Whilst in art and art education the dominance of all things British continued until at least the 1930s, mainstream continental styles infiltrated South African art from the 1920s. This was not due to a shift in teaching style within South Africa, but rather was the result of frustrated South African artists seeking out alternative sources, and especially France, for art education. Other influences were occasional continental artists traveling to South Africa or inspiration being drawn from the few international magazines locally available from the 1920s.<sup>6</sup> For non-white artists their escape to Europe was from a larger political conservatism which limited their role in South Africa to that of labour, with no structured formal art classes available to them.

The result of artists' travels to the continent was a grouping of avant garde artists working in South Africa in whose work trends explored in French art are evident: the (very early) exploration of impressionism in works by Strat Caldecott (1886 - 1929), the Matisse-like work of Maud Sumner (1902 - 1985), Cezanesque cubism of Frank Graham Bell, amongst others. This fascination with French avant garde tendencies continued alongside British

4 Ibid. p.6

5 Carman, J. 2006. p.172

6 Alexander, L., Bedford, E. & Cohen, E. 1988. pp.29 & 34.

enthrallment until the late 1940s. In this period local art schools existed, but it was still de rigeur for any artist with professional ambitions to complete their education abroad.

Reception of continental *avant garde* tendencies was outrightly hostile in the conservative South African market, leading to numerous artists adopting a schizophrenic double-style of conservative academicism in commissioned work, and an exploration of the *avant garde* in private work.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, these progressive artistic approaches, though seen as radical in South Africa, tended to lag a decade or two behind their first expression in Europe – a trend which until recently characterized much of South African art production.

During the isolation experienced during the Second World War a community of painters set out to counter the conservatism and lack of professionalism of the South African art scene through lectures and exhibitions. This attempt at informal art education by the New Group, active 1938 to 1953, is historically significant for its attempts to further the cause of modernism, whilst embracing a sense of a local idiom within South African art.

Walter Battiss, lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand from 1964 to 1971 is often credited as being primary in furthering such a sense of African contemporary art. Whilst his insistence on incorporating local indigenous art forms did have its followers, most university art education of the 1960's to 1980's instead emphasised working within international trends. Production emerging from the university art schools of this period focused on European and, especially, North American trends, though limited access to information

<sup>7</sup> Rankin, B. 'Training and Trading: the influence of tuition and the art market in the work of some South African sculptors,' *De Arte* Issue 43, April 1991, pp.5 - 25. p.11

meant that this art often lagged in its understanding of international contemporary artistic trends. An African expression was at times sought, but couched in the terms set by current western art practice. Thus in the 1960s, for instance, Pop and Op Art was used as a means of 'asserting a quality of africaness within (...) work'.<sup>8</sup>

It must be acknowledged that some universities did become islands of liberalism during this period of state oppression, acute racism and near civil-war, and lecturers did use their position to speak out against state injustices. Nonetheless these institutions were still catering almost exclusively to the white South African minority.

In contrast, for much of the late 19th, early 20th century the opportunities of a South African or international art study career were closed to most non-white South Africans. With the 1953 Bantu Education Act university enrolment was denied to black Africans on the grounds that the sole education they would require was that appropriate to a labourer. Effectively, however, even before this date economic and social realities made it unlikely that black students would attend tertiary educational institutions, or any other art schools. Art education for white South Africans included formal art classes at academies, private schools and, from 1920, universities. In contrast the education open to black South Africans was far more restricted and, in consequence, more informal and diverse. I will sketch some of the primary sources for black art education below, from apprenticeships to mission schools and community art centres. It should be noted, however, that in comparison to whites only a very small percentage of black South Africans could access any form of art education.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander, L. in *ibid.* p. 61

An informal, usually familial, art apprentice system had presumably always existed, but skills handed down were predominantly for the making of use-objects; so these efforts were interpreted by many as craft rather than art. The history of South African art is, nonetheless, filled with anecdotal tales of informal 'apprenticeships': artists mentoring other artists. Whilst not formalized, the existence of such apprenticeships should nonetheless be acknowledged. In some cases of black mentees and white mentors, well-meaning (mis) guidance imposed prejudicial views on artists, with examples of black artists being discouraged from investigating anything other than an African traditional aesthetic.<sup>9</sup> Other (white) mentors more sensitively picked up on African visual expression, often fusing aspects of this with their own work.

From the early 1900s Christian Mission schools were the primary providers of education for blacks. These were administered by the provinces from the formation of the Union of South Africa, until the establishment of the department of Bantu Education in the 1950s and the subsequent gradual demise of the mission influence. Art education in Missions varied greatly with two diverging approaches: a number of Missions taught artist exclusively in the carving and, to a lesser degree, painting of ecclesiastical icons and objects. In contrast, Anglican Missions encouraged a broader approach to art. In approach to source material we again see two schools of thought: a teaching of western styles and emphasis on imitation of these, versus a concern with an africanising of ecclesiastical (and other) subject matters. This latter approach at times sprang from a patronising belief that the African has an innate artistic sensibility which exposure to western art would spoil,

<sup>9</sup> Miles, E. 1997. *Land and Lives: a study of early black artists.* Cape Town: Human and Rousseau. p.7

or from a conception that africanising of visual expression would make it more relevant to the artist, reasserting African cultural pride, or, depending on focus of the mission, allowing for the biblical message to be understood on a more intimate level.<sup>10</sup>

Limited access to materials and visual sources meant that mission teachers unwittingly influenced the art that was produced. The production of art for a tourist market also restricted experimentation, as carving was understood to be a more African expression, and hence more appropriate for this market.

In the latter part of the period in which predominantly rural mission art education played a leading role, small night-schools and voluntary organizations started up in the urban centres of South Africa. Mission art education finally waned in the 1980s, partly due to greater urbanization, and also due to exposure to wider options which led to experimental work which possibly was becoming inappropriate for a Mission context. The impetus of art education now shifted strongly to urban-based art centres and groupings. Most such urban black adult education classes were volunteer driven, though the most significant, Polly Street Art Centre, was initiated and supported by the Johannesburg Local Committee for Non-European Adult Education, which was the co-ordinating body between various literacy groups and the Union Education Department.<sup>11</sup> Polly Street became a catalyst for the teaching, development and promotion of urban black African art, leading to a mature artistic expression and greater prominence of black artists in South Africa.

<sup>10</sup> Leeb-du Toit, J. 'St. Pientia of Malenhill: diversity in interaction, Conference proceedings, 5th Annual Conference of the S.A. Association of Art Historians, 17 - 19 July 1989. pp.83 - 88

<sup>11</sup> Berman, E. 1983. *Art and Artists of South Africa.* Cape Town: A.A. Balkema. p.38

the burgeoning number of urban art centres in the 1970's coincided with the establishment of the first Department of Fine Arts at a black university, the University of Fort Hare, which grew out of Lovedale Mission, as well as at the correspondence University of South Africa. Community art centres should not be seen as on the periphery of these more formalized university structures, but as alternative, politicised avenues of education, running counter to the dominant ideology. This emphasis on the politicization of arts, largely through an emphasis on community arts, marked much production of the 1970s to early 1990s.

Increasingly, artists aligned themselves with local political committees and neighbourhood pressure groups. It is in this period that for the first time one can see a growing unity in artistic approaches and concerns between black and white South African artists, as increasingly desperate state oppression was countered by artists from a range of backgrounds, at times under guidance of university based student organizations.

In this context universities, including the previously mentioned University of Fort Hare and 'white' universities, became important agitators towards social change, with a number of lecturers leveraging their positions to speak out against racial and state oppression.

This should not suggest that higher educational institutions were, and perhaps still are, innocent of perpetuating racial divisions in South Africa. Vuyile Voyiye and Julie McGee simply through the documentary video *The Luggage is Still Labeled: Blackness in South African Art* that narrow western-centric definitions of entry criteria and artistic excellence continue to ensure a bias in the South African

art educational system against black aspirant artists.<sup>12</sup> Whilst following the shift to democracy in South Africa numerous scholarships, special academic programs, bridging courses, etcetera were made available to encourage the inclusion of black Africans in tertiary arts education, the number of black students who enter the system remains woefully low, with black students making up just over 40% of enrolments in tertiary arts education, and just under 40% of completions, in a country where blacks form about 92% of the total population.<sup>13</sup>

This problem needs to be understood in a context in which higher art education is a major criterion of the professional success of contemporary South African artists: the Human Sciences Research Council in 2010 released a research report on the South African arts sector, which revealed that 72% of professional artists in South Africa completed an arts degree at a tertiary educational institution.<sup>14</sup>

The same survey found that the most successful educational interventions in allowing access to a career as artists are teaching in primary and secondary schools, residencies and post-graduate visual arts degrees. Government or industry sponsored learnerships, training through private classes, colleges or self-teaching lag far behind these in success rates.<sup>15</sup>

The implication of these figures is that curricula and approaches of higher education institutions, and especially post-graduate programs, are central in determining the artistic practices adopted by artists in this country.

12 Vuyile, C.V. & McGee, J.L. 2003. *The Luggage is Still Labeled: blackness in South African art* (Video).

13 HSRC. 2010. *The Visual Arts in Numbers: data from a research report commissioned by the National Department of Arts and Culture*. Johannesburg: HSRC.

14 *ibid*

15 *ibid*

These tertiary educational programmes continue to be marked by a strong focus on International arts, though a number of lecturers are lending strong impetus to a shift towards an Africa-focused theory curriculum. To support this, an increasing emphasis is placed on co-operation with visiting scholars, discussion groups and guest lecturers, and engaging not only with Western, but also strongly focusing on African trends, concerns and personalities. This sort of co-operation of the institutions with wider social and artistic structures is also evident in the stress placed on interdisciplinary collaborations and research organisations aligned to the universities. These initiatives allow universities to develop an inclusive public profile, as lecture series and events become draw-cards to the wider community. The establishment and exhibition of university collections, or the recent trend towards establishing galleries connected to university art schools similarly allow for a wide social network and impact. Students attending these universities thus understand the universities they are studying in, and by implication their role as artists, within a broader social context.

As to the question whether tertiary education is critical to the development of the arts in South Africa: there is a remarkably strong correlation between the art education historically available to aspirant artists, and those who do indeed manage to become professional artists. Therefore the primacy of tertiary education in the establishment of a successful and thriving community of artists is evident. The legacy of generations of racial exclusion from such highly enabling education that has left a lasting negative stain on the history of South African art, despite the successes achieved by alternative non-tertiary art education. Recent statistical research has re-emphasised that, without tertiary art education, aspirant artists have a slim chance of realising their goal.

*Nadja Daehnke is the curator of the Art Gallery of the Michaelis School of Art at the University of Capetown.*

***The Artists***  
**& Their Works**

Lien Botha

***Nadja Daehnke***

Hasan Essop

***Husain Essop***

Svea Josephy

***Sharlene Khan***

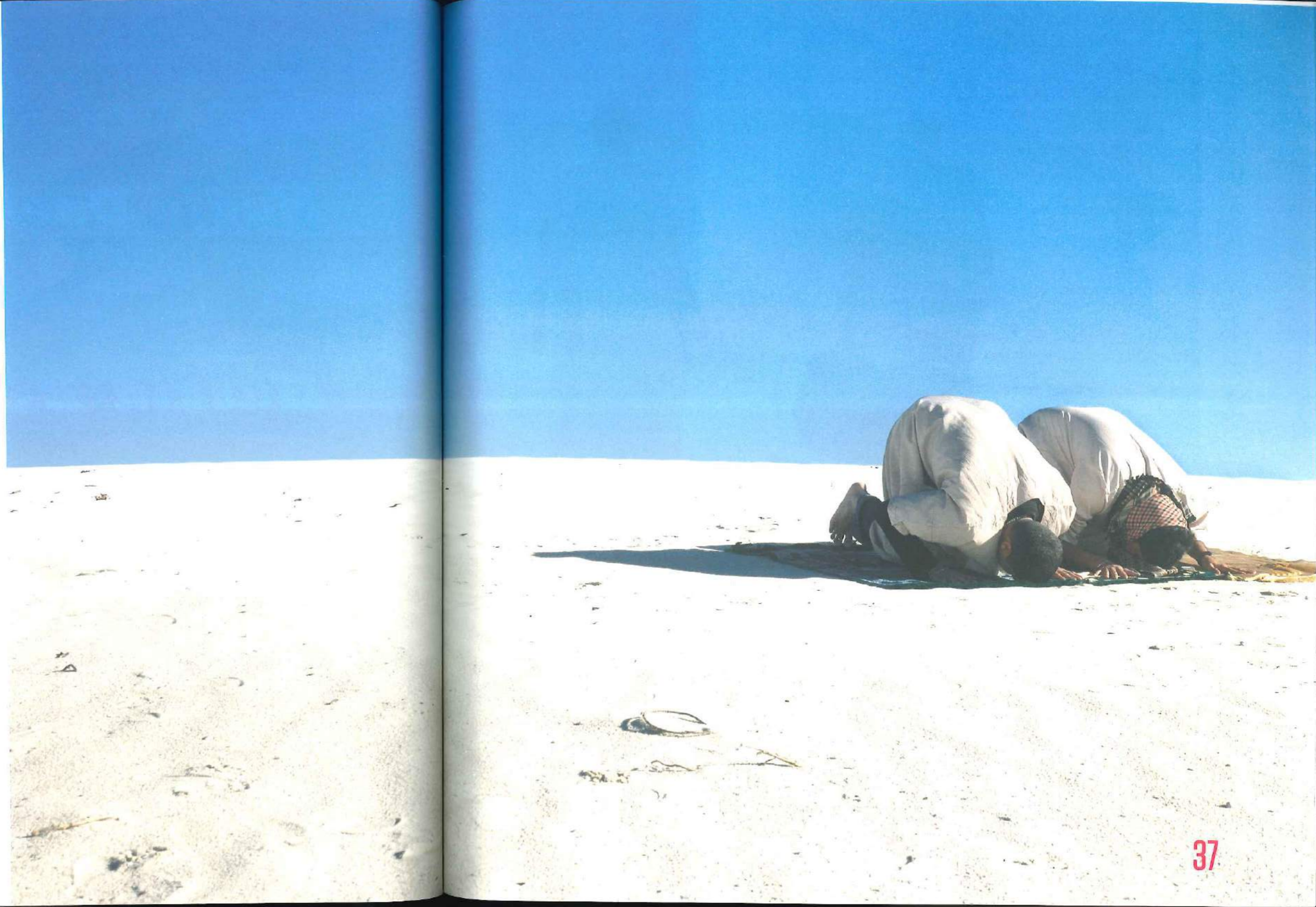
Nomthunzi Mashalaba

## Hasan & Husain Essop

Hasan and Husain Essop's series of work highlights a multi-cultural clash between religion and popular cultures. They explore the dominating influence of Western theatrics and those narratives that are constructed to depict a certain reality. "Inspired by Hollywood's visual language and tactics, we create our own narratives. Each photograph reflects one another in a battle for the moral and immoral. Two dominant personalities appear, East and West with all its stereotypes. The environments we choose define our behavior, using it as a stage to perform.

"Several characters may appear repeatedly as it is our own clothing being used. Our daily uniforms, some branded to its class. It becomes a tool for acting opportunities, adapting to their surroundings thus creating a variety of people. Those clothed in Islamic wear are aggressive but humble in their quest, popular fashion attacking our beliefs. The pit bull demonstrates loyalty but no sense of reason. Similarly soldiers in war portray a patriotic commitment for their country, bred for a purpose.

"Creating a moment in time, a dream or something seen, we tell a story of growing up." Being competitive with each other is a constant battle for the best. Hasan and Husain Essop use their own iconology to provide a political context for the wars being fought. "The viewer is able to translate these signs with their own understanding of the present, imagining the possibility of the work being true to nature. The images are a personal viewpoint that capture the growth and hunger





for our art. Finding boundaries that we are able to test, debating the truth in our actions. A satirical thread stitched in its process, a designed layout demonstrating our knowledge for our reason.”

As twin brothers, they have set out to find themselves in each other, the similarities become interesting and exciting. Trying to create something new each time, a story unfolds and never ends.

Hasan and Husain Essop were born in Cape Town in 1985. They graduated from the Michaelis School of Fine Art at University of Cape Town in 2006 with Bachelor of Fine Art degrees, majoring in Printmaking and Photography respectively, continuing their studies in 2009; they completed their Postgraduate Diploma in Art, at Michaelis. Exhibitions include Spier Contemporary 2007 at the Spier Estate, Stellenbosch and Johannesburg Art Gallery, ‘The Loaded Lens’ (2007) and ‘Power Play’ (2008) at Goodman Gallery Cape, The Johannesburg Art Fair and Art 39 Basel (both in 2008). They participated in the prestigious Havana Biennale under the theme, ‘Integration and Resistance in the Global Age’ in March 2009. They are represented in the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Durban Art Gallery and the Spier collections as well as in local and international private collections. The Essops are represented by the Goodman Gallery, Cape Town.

Hasan and Husain Essop

Cape Town (South Africa), from “Halal Art” Edition 2009

Pigment prints on cotton rag paper - 64x92cm

Edition of 5 + 2AP's

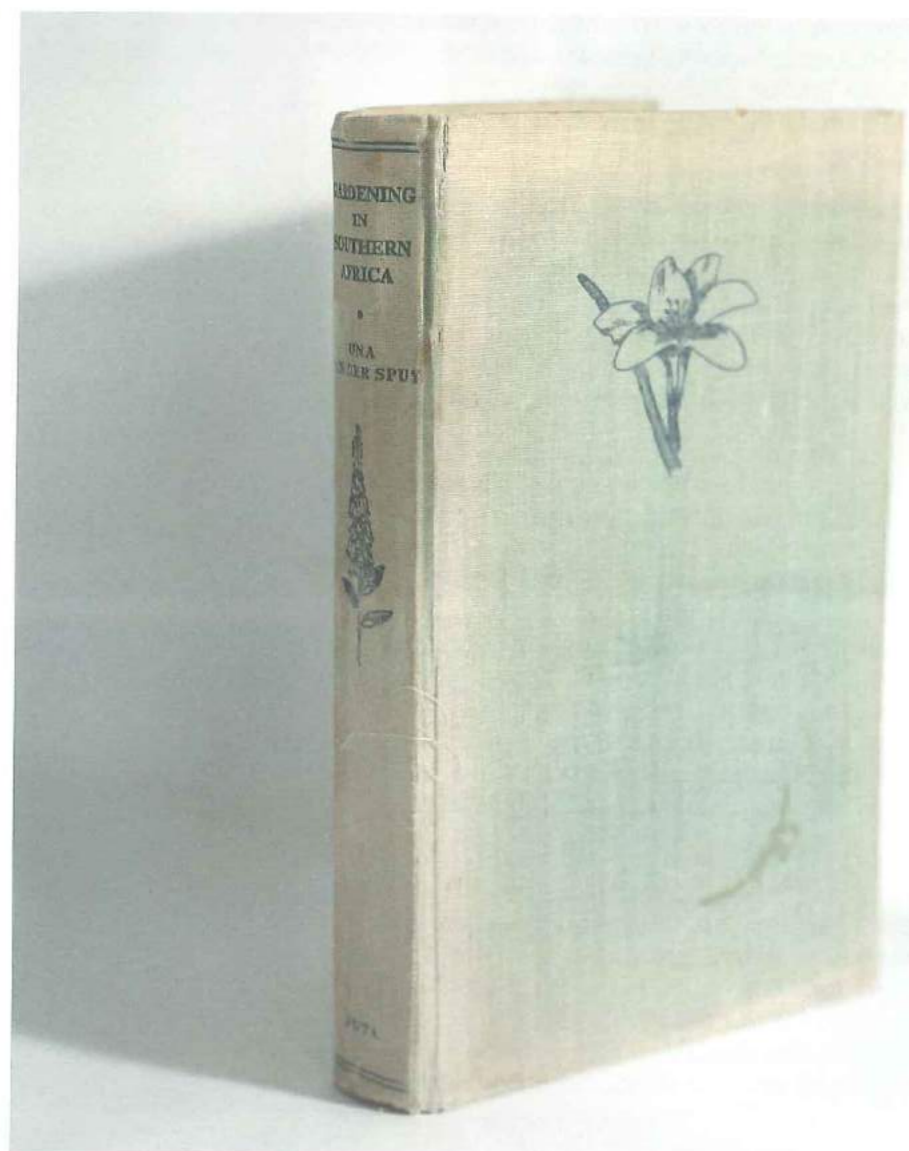
## Lien Botha

Lien Botha was born in Gauteng, South Africa in 1961, studied languages at Pretoria University and worked as a Press Photographer for Beeld newspaper before moving to Cape Town in 1984. In 1988 she obtained a B.A Fine Arts degree from the University of Cape Town. Since that time she has participated in more than 80 South African group shows and 40 international group exhibitions and has held nine solo exhibitions. She has curated five exhibitions including Photo Works by Women in 1994 and Bloedlyn for the Klein Karoo Arts Festival (1999). During the same year she served on the curatorial committee of the first Cape Town Month of Photography.

Over the past 20 years she has consistently produced portfolios of lens-based work including: *Africana Collectanea* / 1994, *Krotoa's Room* / 1995, *Boxing Days* / 1997, *Postscript* / 1998, *Ten trees growing nowhere* / 1999, *Radio Maria* / 2002, *Safari* / 2004, *Amendment* / 2006 and *Parrot Jungle* / 2009.

Botha maintains a professional photographic practice and has been invited as part-time lecturer at the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, the Ruth Prowse School of Art as well as Studio Art Centres International - Florence, Italy and the San Francisco Art Institute.

In 2002 her work appeared in the fifth edition of the TAXI series on contemporary South African Artists. In 2005 she collaborated with the French Theatre group Compagnie des Limbes on a piece called *Cutting Water*, based on *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf. In the same year she attended a residency



Lien Botha

**Amendment 1: the case of beginning at the end** - 2006

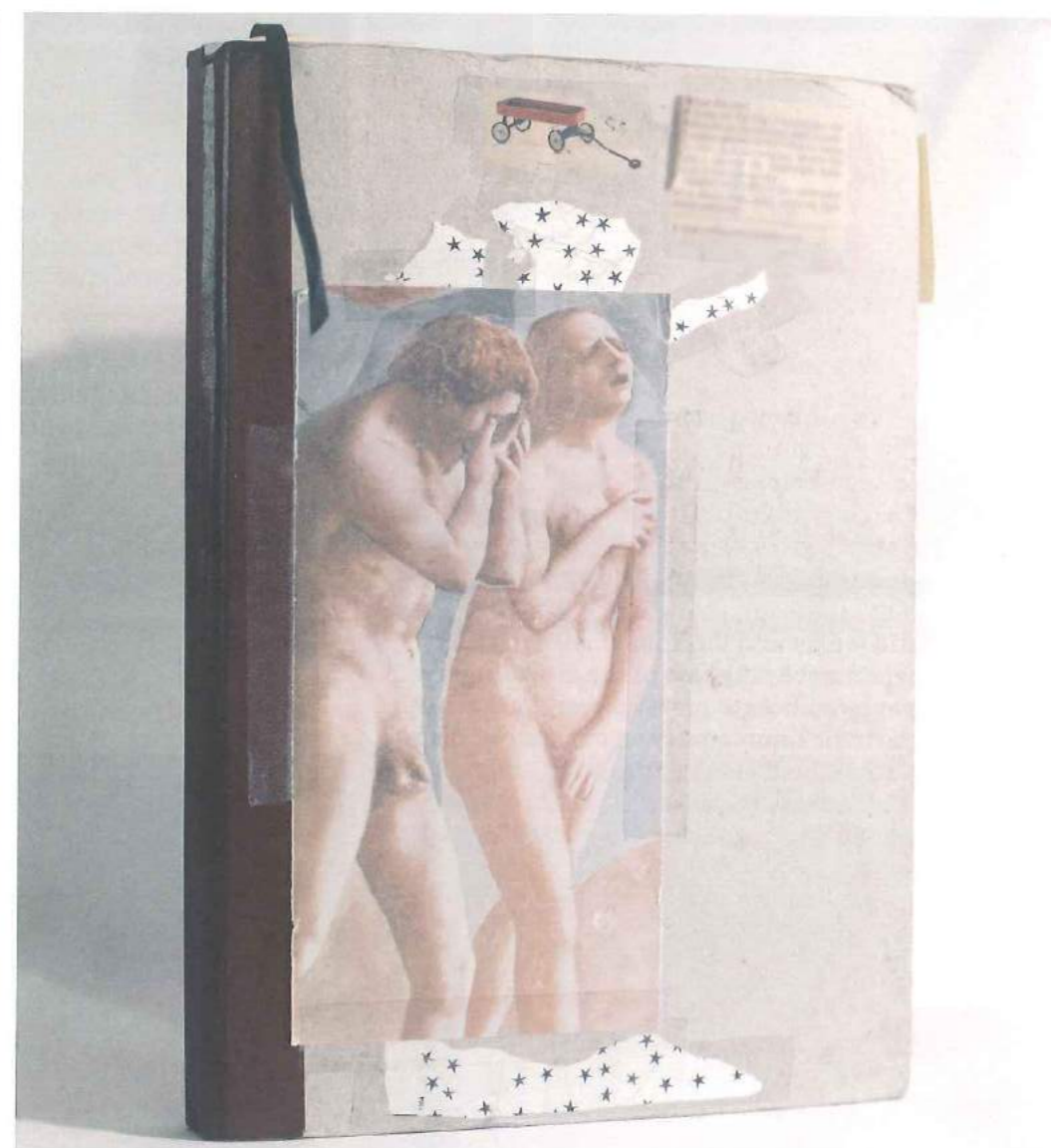
Digital print on paper - 44x88cm

at Nouaison in Pujols with exhibitions at L'Ete Photographique de Lectoure and Mc2a, Bordeaux France. Also, her work was included in the Bamako Biennale: Another World, Mali, 2005.

During February 2006 she attended the Amper-sand Fellowship in New York and in October of the same year her solo show Amendment opened to critical acclaim at the Photographer's Gallery in Cape Town and was selected for Towards a balanced earth, at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in June 2008.

Her work was included in the group show Construct: Beyond the Documentary Photograph which toured selected South African venues such as the Durban Art gallery, National Arts Festival/Grahamstown and Goethe Institute/Johannesburg), through 2009 and in the same year White stick for the Arctic was exhibited at Reflets d'Afrique: Panafrican Festival, MOMA, Algiers. In June 2010 she attended an invited residency at kunst: raum sylt quelle, Germany. Botha continues to facilitate scholars and students with project research assignments.

Her work is represented in major collections throughout South Africa such as the SA National Gallery, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Durban Art Gallery, Pretoria Art Museum, University of Stellenbosch, Standard Bank Corporate, SASOL, Telkom, MuseumAfrica and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum as well as in private collections locally and abroad.



Lien Botha

**Amendment 2: the case of ending at the beginning - 2006**

Digital print on paper - 44x68cm

## The Amendments

The Amendments followed me for three years, covering as invisible codes on a building site, walking through a fishing net, disappearing with the waning moon, small words in an itinerary, love lost in another language, a drastic change in habitat and three journeys later: I finally saw them when driving past a cluster of Cape beech trees. It is not that they were long-barked; they were just struggling against the south-easter.

With this image in mind, I was able to start measuring out a visual poem stretching across sets of photographic ternaries, alluding to a circuit on the brink of a deranged paradise. The work has a satirical undertone, possibly even cunning, as it is largely implied by this society. There is another link with the writers Ingrid Jonker and Virginia Woolf such as in Amendment 8: the case of the drowning river. Other references to previous work prevails but with ironic commentary on our state of disintegration, both environmentally (Amendment 10: the case of extinct threats) and socially (Amendment 12: the case of a crime less classic).

Spending a solitary residency in Pujols, France during September/October 2005, I produced a series of small books called Springbok poems, in which certain clues for Amendments were foregone. Then, during a recent stay in New York as part of the Ampersand Fellowship, I found a minute clue in the Bronx Botanical gardens while meandering through the snow in Beth's Maze (Amendment 5: the case of the mute praise singer).

It is possible that the work is a metonymic reflection of our genesis: murmurings lost to fractured atonement. But then again, it is also possible that these are just fourteen pages from a personal chronicle.



Top right: Lien Botha

Amendment 5: The case of going dutch in the desert - 2006

Digital print on paper - 44x88cm

Bottom right: Lien Botha

Amendment 4: The case of the absent lifeguard - 2006

Digital print on paper - 44x88cm



## Nadja Daehnke

Resident in Cape Town, Nadja Daehnke is currently curator of the University of Cape Town's Michaelis Galleries. Prior to this posting Nadja taught art history and visual literacy on a part-time basis at various tertiary educational institutions, before joining the Iziko South African National Gallery as Curator of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture. She holds two Masters Degrees, in History of Art and Fine Art, and has been active as an artist for most of the last two and a half decades.

### Napoleon's Turk

The Cape Town City municipal library has a delightful room selling worn copies of magazines and well-thumbed second-hand books. Here I found an A4 sized French children's book, telling the story of Napoleon Bonaparte. I do not speak or read French, so my interest was in the garishly colorful illustrations in the book, showing either reproductions of History Paintings depicting Napoleon in all grandeur, or engravings after such History Paintings. Napoleon is, to me as to many others, a fascinating figure in his repeated will to power and banishment to exile. He is a figure of history writ large, the grand narrative of war and power. It is only after looking at the book a number of times that I became aware of a peripheral figure, depicted in all but three of the images: a dark-skinned turbaned man, dressed in the clothes of a Turk. This led me on a search for further images of what I in my head came to refer to as Napoleon's Turk: indeed I did find him over and over again, depicted in various paintings.

For the current exhibition Nadja Daehnke has investigated Napoleon's Turk, this peripheral figure who, hardly noticed, nonetheless invades so many (non-portrait) images depicting Napoleon. In *Napoleon's Turk* she imagines a narrative, interprets the symbolism, grapples with this figure and, through him, the relation between the Occidental and the Oriental. The outcome of her research is a book of images with some limited text, as well as a drawing on the gallery wall.



Nadja Daehnke  
Color Deathbed

## Nomthunzi Mashalaba

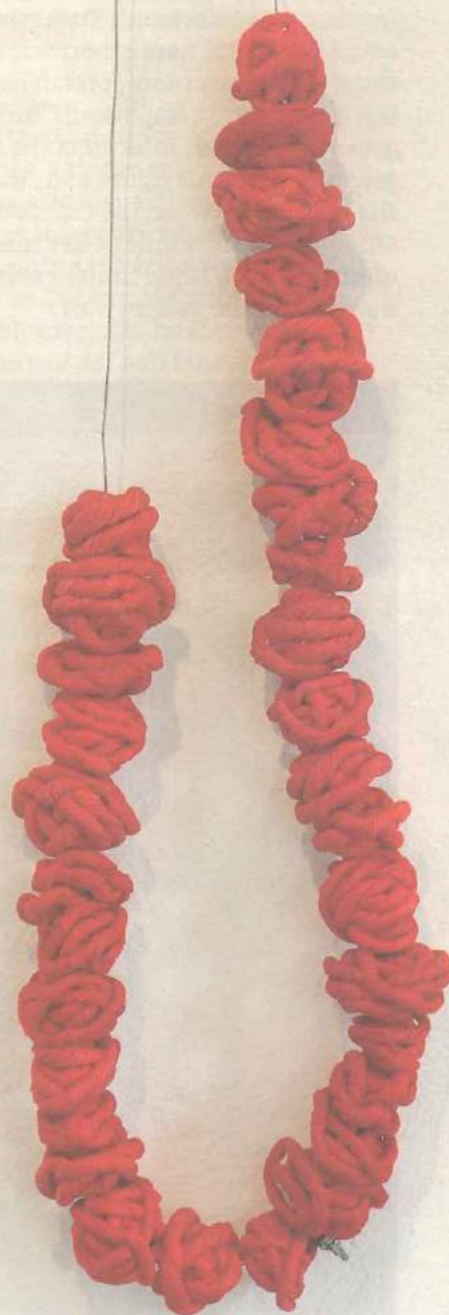
Nomthunzi Mashalaba holds a B-Tech (Fine Arts), and a National Diploma in Fine Arts, both from Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria. She is currently working as a practicing artist in Cape Town, South Africa. Trained in visual arts Nomthunzi Mashalaba's work is often interdisciplinary, encompassing print, video and installation. Works produced include performance, video work, painting, printed image and sculptural objects. Her primary interest is in creating works that present themselves as intricate networks of ideas, formulating everyday experience into chronicles: personal or otherwise. The objective is to try and employ technical and formal structures which best serve each particular idea," as she states. She has participated in numerous exhibitions in South Africa and worked on collaborative projects and commissions.

"think"

*Play the Part: Nomthunzi Mashalaba - "think" is an installation with a performative element. The work borrows from a "psychological" term holophase. The color red has been chosen as a representation of Nomthunzi Mashalaba's thoughts, which are then solidified visually through the use of fabric. The piece is an ongoing work.*

### Songs on a Rainy Day

*The 9 works comprising "Songs on a Rainy Day" are a visual translation from an album of music on the subject of rain. Each work represents its own track.*



Right: Play the Part: Nomthunzi Mashalaba

"think" - 2011

Sketch & Installation - Fabric, metal wire

PLAY THE PART NOMTHUNZI

MASHALABA

think :

- is a performative piece transforming stripes of cut out fabric into solid coiled forms.

- once the coiled ~~forms~~ piece are ready they are put together on a vertical huge steel wire.

fabric stripes to be coiled



on single sturdy table and a chair

Pages 80 to 87: Nomthunzi Mashalaba

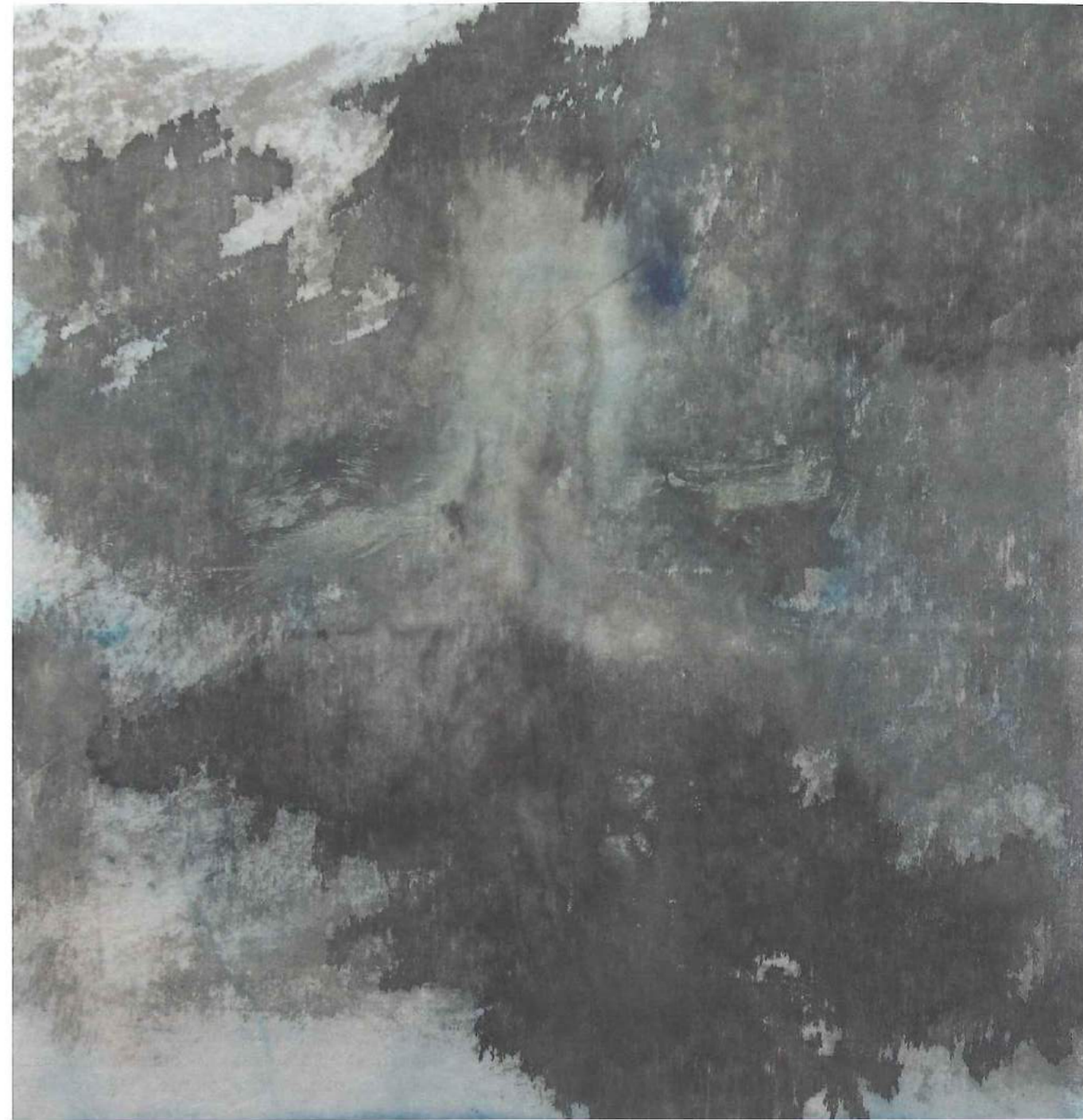
Songs on a Rainy Day - 2010

Mixed media









## Sharlene Khan

born in Durban in 1977, Sharlene Khan completed both a BA (Fine Arts) and MA (Fine Arts) at the University of Durban-Westville, before moving to Johannesburg to complete a second masters degree in Fine Arts at the University of Witwatersrand. She has exhibited in group exhibitions in Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Switzerland, India, France, USA, Sweden and the UK, and has held solo shows in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town. Since 2002 she has participated in international residency programmes and visual art workshops in Cape Town, Johannesburg, KwaZulu-Natal, Cairo, London and Italy.

Her work for over eleven years has focused on the street trade and the large informal economy in South African city centres. Although primarily a painter, Khan's paintings are often presented in a range of media resulting in installations and performance pieces incorporating photography, music, video, ink and charcoal drawings in mock fashion presentations.

Her work, as of 2008, has increasingly focused on issues of identity and family history. Her series *What I look like, What I feel like* features staged photographic portraits of the artist which portrays images of how she thinks others view her juxtaposed against images of how she views herself. These dualistic portrayals question images of the self and representations of otherness, complicating perceptions of contemporary urban womanhood, race, class and identity.

Khan has also been extensively involved in various mural projects in the KwaZulu-Natal region between 1999 and 2002 and is also a freelance writer and curator. She coordinated

and co-curated *The ID of South African Artists in Holland* in 2004, has participated as both curator and artist in the *10 Years, 100 Artists Project* by Bell-Roberts Publishing (2004). In 2008, Khan, as a member of the *Dead Revolutionaries Club*, co-curated the *Esikhaleni – Spatial Practices* exhibition (an official Joburg Art Fair fringe exhibition). The *Dead Revolutionaries Club* is a non-profit collective which presents visual art classes, talks and a website that engages with cultural production in southern Africa. Khan is currently a Visual Arts lecturer at the University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria.

For a over a decade now, Sharlene Khan's work has focused on the informal sector that trades on the streets of South African cities. Her engagement with street vending has sought to subvert stereotypical images of people who work on the streets as only beggars and criminals and try to show the dignity with which many people try to make a living. In her works various terms used in the Johannesburg inner city regeneration discourse are juxtaposed to text passages from interviews with street vendors. Phrases such as 'inner-city regeneration', 'urban renewal', 'high risk areas' do more than define a location – they come to define the people who live and work in these urban centres, mostly Black South Africans and African immigrants. Thus, urban regeneration terminology simultaneously creates a harmful image of already marginalized, peripheral citizens, while trying to entice middle-class people back into the Johannesburg city centre.

Since 2007, Sharlene Khan has increasingly become interested in issues around her own identity as a South African Indian woman, and the intersections of race, gender, class, education, religion and nationality that influence my life daily. External pretences and internal conflicts are presented in the 2008 series *What*





I look like, What I feel like which combines digital photography with various mixed media (embroidery, embossing, paint, ink). In 2009, she began working with hand-made lace for an installative video artwork entitled *My Mother's Tears, My Grandmother's Legacy* that interrogates her own family history and the private home space as an arena for patriarchal abuse (ongoing project).

Other Stories is her last body of work on street trade and depicts African immigrants and refugees who trade at traffic lights around local shopping malls she visits in Johannesburg. "We see them daily as they approach our cars at traffic lights hawking cheap wares. We know little about these people who come from many African countries – shockingly many of them tertiary educated – who are forced to migrate to South Africa in the face of debilitating economic conditions back home in Zimbabwe, Malawi, the Congo, Sudan. Who are they? What are their hopes, their dreams for their families? Where do they see themselves in five years time? What stories do they have to share if they were asked? Khan conducted a series of interviews with such persons from Zimbabwe, Malawi, Rwanda, Botswana, etc., and asked

Sharlene Khan  
Edward (2009)  
Series (in progress): Other Stories  
Mixed media on canvas (charcoal, acrylic, embroidery) / 164 x 80cm

them questions about this fleeting job prospect, how South Africans reacted to them, what were some of the hardships they experienced, what were their hopes and dreams for their children and families back home. These interviews were transcribed and painted onto the canvases and images of the street traders were then drawn onto the canvases and embroidered. The first part of the series (presented in the Crossing Boundaries exhibition) was executed before the May 2008 xenophobic attacks in townships around Johannesburg. The second four artworks have an additionally embroidered level which depicts the empty streets, as immigrants fled South Africa and prominent spaces during May and August 2008. The last four paintings in this series depict the return of the migrants to vending around Johannesburg, despite the continued threats of xenophobia they are faced with.



Sharlene Khan  
Edward (2009)  
Series (in progress): Other Stories  
Mixed media on canvas (charcoal, acrylic, embroidery) / 164 x 80cm

work investigates the construction of local settlements in relation to similarly named places in distant parts of the globe. These photographs place the suburbs and townships surrounding South African cities at the heart of a network of interconnected perspectives and relationships between the 'copy' in South Africa and the 'original' in other geographic locations. The images reveal correspondence, resonance and parallels with other places in the world.

Starting point for these photographs is a connection with the naming practices of places in South Africa. During the apartheid era, areas were usually given names by bureaucrats but the recently formed communities have been responsible for naming their own neighbourhoods.

A noteworthy post apartheid era naming practice is to reference current news events (Melona, Lost City, Tsunami) or war zones (Congo, Kuwait, Burundi, Bosnia, Bagdad, Kosovo, Vietnam and Beirut). The photographs shown for display show the 'twin towns' - Kuwait, Middle East - and it's named 'other' Kuwait, in Cape Town. The shared names connect the different locations as sites of struggle, conflict, war, liberation and reconstruction in the early 1990s.

**From Kuwait Towers, Ad Damsa', Kuwait City, Kuwait**

Kuwait's (Middle East) name is derived from a diminutive of an Arabic word for "fortress near water". Kuwait was propelled into international press when it was invaded by Iraq in August 1990. This led to the Gulf War

in which a coalition of several nations drove out Iraqi forces. A scorched earth policy followed by the retreating Iraqi soldiers had huge environmental, health and economic consequences for Kuwait.

The Kuwait Towers were completed in 1979 in Kuwait City. These towers are an important landmark and a national symbol of Kuwait. During the Gulf War (1990-1991) the towers were heavily damaged and there was substantial destruction of the towers exteriors. They have subsequently been restored.<sup>1</sup>

**Informal Settlement Near Kuwait Taxi Rank, Cape Town, South Africa**

Kuwait, Cape Town, is an area centred on Kuwait Taxi Rank in Site C, Khayelitsha. Initially an informal settlement today the area consists of a combination of informal settlements, backyard dwellings and Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing. According to M.G. Mbatha (Mr Big) of Saint Kizito's Catholic Church nearby, Kuwait taxi rank was named after the war in Kuwait in the Middle East, in the early 1990's because of the taxi violence and regular shootings here. According to Mbatha, communities used current affairs and news prominent in the media when naming their areas.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [online] Available: <http://www.arab.de/arabinfo/kuwait.htm> [10 February 2010]

<sup>2</sup> Mbatha, M.G. 2010. [Personal communication] January 12



Seva Josephy

**Informal Settlement Near Kuwait Taxi Rank, Cape Town, South Africa - 2009**

Photographic color print / 110 x 127 cm



7, bottom: Seva Josephy  
from Kuwait Towers, Ad Damsa', Kuwait City, Kuwait - 2009  
graphic color print / 110\*110 cm

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