



This year's MFA students would like to thank the Director of Michaelis School of Fine Art, Professor Stephen Inggs, Associate Professor and Head of the Division of Visual Arts David Andrew, Professor Jeremy Wafer, Virginia Mackenny, Nontobeko Ntombela, Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, Marike Cronjé, Teena Dawoo, Nicholas Simane, Justin Brett, Sarah Sinisi, Abel Mputing, Naadira Patel, Josephine Higgins and the Michaelis Galleries.

Special thanks to Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town and Division of Visual Arts, Wits School of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand.

Published by:

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ISBN: 978-0-620-57447-1

Catalogue Design by Marike Cronjé and Christine Cronjé  
Photographs by Ashley Walters, and the artists.  
Copy Edit by Josephine Higgins  
Exhibition Curated by Josephine Higgins and Naadira Patel

Printing by Hansa Print, Cape Town  
Edition of 150 copies



**MICHAELIS**  
**GALLERIES**

# herethere

**ashley**walters

**alice**gauntlett

**kristine**kronjé

**jovoysey**

**madeline**groenewald

**nadine**froneman

**jeanette**unite

**alta**botha

**diana**cilliers

**danielle**wepener

**lawrence**lemaoana

**naadir**patel

**niall**bingham

**talya**lubinsky

**gina**kraft



# preface

stepheninggs

The conversation between our two schools has been growing over these past few years through reciprocal exhibitions of postgraduate work. These have provided our students with the opportunity to measure themselves against their peers, to get the work out of the studio and present it to new audiences and, importantly, to do this on their own terms. This we see as central to their growing sense of themselves as independent artists anxious to bridge the gap between academia and the art world out 'there'. This year the format of a joint exhibition and catalogue has provided the opportunity for a more intense interaction where the individual works will speak more directly to and between each other and from which interaction, some creative sparks may fly.

# preface

**david**andrew

HereThere marks a further development of the important collaboration between the Division of Visual Arts at the Wits School of Arts and the Michaelis School of Fine Art. Conceived as a joint exhibition rather than the two separate shows of the last number of years, HereThere deepens the exchange potential of the earlier collaborations with students from both schools brought together in conceptualising a joint show. This 'bringing together' of work but also of the nodes that are Cape Town and Johannesburg, and all the associated surrounding experiences these cities generate, further extends the collaboration as a critical moment in the postgraduate programme. Earlier, in the first semester, I spent a day with colleagues and the extended group of MAFA students visiting studios and discussing the work being produced. These are always stimulating and generative occasions and I am curious to see how six of the students have continued to translate their ideas in response to the opportunity offered by HereThere. Equally, I am curious to see how the works speak back-and-forth to each other and to those of their peers from Michaelis. The work from the Wits School of Arts is diverse – from Lawrence Lemaana's Mkokotelo to Naadira Patel's rollercoasters as vehicles of desire and fantasy, to Talya Lubinsky's The Johannesburg Central Library project journeying to Cape Town. And, as always, I am interested in how the joint show allows insights into the state of postgraduate work in Fine Arts. Thank you to all those staff and students at Michaelis who have made this exhibition possible - we look forward to hosting the 2014 show.

*Associate Professor and Head, Division of Visual Arts, Wits School of Art, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.*

# preface

jeremywafers

The conversation between our two schools has been growing over these past few years through reciprocal exhibitions of postgraduate work. These have provided our students with the opportunity to measure themselves against their peers, to get the work out of the studio and present it to new audiences and, importantly, to do this on their own terms. This we see as central to their growing sense of themselves as independent artists anxious to bridge the gap between academia and the art world out 'there'. This year the format of a joint exhibition and catalogue has provided the opportunity for a more intense interaction where the individual works will speak more directly to and between each other and from which interaction, some creative sparks may fly.

*Professor of Fine Art, Wits School of Arts, The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg*

# preface

josephinehiggins

I find that I cannot read the title, HereThere, without mentally adding 'and everywhere'. However, beyond the clichéd idiom and the title of a Beatles song perhaps there is some interest in this concept, especially considering the diversity and potential of the work displayed.

The title, HereThere, draws not only on the coming together of Wits and Michaelis Masters students in one group exhibition for the first time, but also on the transitional and fluid nature of the exhibition and artwork. Each piece selected forms part of a more extensive, even obsessive, Master's project, still in process and under construction. Due to the nature of the project, there is no prescriptive curatorial drive framing the works according to one particular theme but rather an attempt to encourage conversation. It is this 'conversational' aspect which serves as the entry point, allowing the individual pieces to speak to and between each other, and with the audience. The links and differences between the works are purposefully negotiated, explored and teased out further.

Amongst the works of the fifteen individual artists, there is a broad engagement with the multiple mediums of painting, sculpture, site-specific installation, photography, video and performance. Niall Bingham's work Underdog is a time lapsed video projected onto the wall of a gallery, depicting the artist working from a representation of a classical sculpture to create a lino-cut ordinarily governed by conventions of printmaking. There is an emphasis on the process of creation, whilst the conventions of the mediums are exploited and challenged.

In Jo Voysey's exploration of medicine as paint, the materiality and surface of her medium is highlighted. The affect of the various medicines on canvas, both controlled and spontaneous, is inescapable in its colour and form as it glints, oozes, collects and even burns through. Visceral and emotive, Ursus Arctos is based on Voysey's own experience of a caged bear in Eastern Europe; memories which she repeatedly returns to. For Alice Gauntlett, the surface of her images are also significant, with the traces of her repetitive reworking of photographs made visible. Gauntlett employs various visual devices to fragment and fracture her body performing, out of place, in spaces such as her childhood home. Even the sheen of her two diasecs prints suggests the reflection of a mirror, and the complexities of looking and photography.

Jeannette Unite's intense devotion to the investigation of mining, fuels her work. Unite experiments with personally collected by-products of mining to represent the very machineries which created them, with sweeping expressive gestures so suggestive of the daily consumption which drives this scarring process. In comparison to the grand headgears of Unite's work, Lawrence Lemaona focuses on one small, quotidian object, the primus stove, to explore how something so process and function driven, maps social interaction and needs. Referring to an array of ideas, such as economics and politics, Lemaona also employs the reworking of the primus stove as a metaphor for a new approach in his work and as a means to complicate art historical concepts of the ready-made and what is 'original' or authentic.

This adaption of an object, or space, to fit one's needs is explored again in Ashley Walters' large panorama, capturing the personal details of the artist's family home in Uitsig. As a critical image in his Masters series, this image speaks to the life lived by those who Walter is so intimately familiar with, and their interaction within the spaces around them. Like Walters, Danielle Wepener focuses on the details of site-specific spaces. For HereThere however, Wepener was forced to respond to a space not yet personally explored, complicating her ordinarily precise site-specific installations which she builds on scene. Based on a work originally created for the gallery in Wits, Danielle's painting of the Michaelis gallery door employs space itself as medium in a multi-layered play on 'here' and 'there'.

In Gina Kraft's performance, both playful and serious, the entrance is into a 'community' and is marked by the stain of shared beetroot. A carefully composed text, almost religious in its gravity, is uttered by the artist to each initiate. There is an interesting absence when the performance is complete, as it is then only the 'un-initiated' which enter the gallery space. Diana Cilliers draws the viewer's attention to the visual language of clothing, by taking advantage of the signs that we read in fabric every day. Here, the familiar cut of a South African Police uniform, is disturbed by the unmistakable colours and vibrancy of Shweshwe fabric. Humourous yet intimidating, the headless figures invade the viewers space with their off-kilter poses and weapons.

Tayla Lubinsky continues this interest in language in her installation which makes visible a complex and personal process of collecting, ordering and sorting of text. In this re-presentation of her masters proposal, now almost completely decontextualised, she points to daily processes of meaning making – which are almost rendered random when viewed so closely. This obsessive collection and ordering is also present in Nadine Froneman's private archive of carte-de-visite. The purpose of the cards was for the sitter to be remembered, yet today, their individual narrative is long lost. For Nadine, there is a trauma in this forgetting, one which she attempts to lessen through an emphasis on the 'aura' of the object; created by the indexicality of photography and the details of each subject which it captured.

Trauma, memory and processes of meaning making seem to surface in Alta Botha's carefully considered work focused on the process of filtering, both mental and physical. For Botha, repetitive filtering is a mechanism by which one copes. Although never an express focus, with Botha's previous career as a nurse, trauma and processes of healing seem intrinsic. Kristine Kronje, like Botha, approaches complex concerns, with a lightness and economy of means. In her projected video, Inspiration, both fragile and monumental, traces of the artist's breath - visually suggestive of lungs - fade in and out towards and away from the viewer. With this awareness of the process of breathing, Kronje aims to suggest the complexity and transience of being.

Continuing with this almost phenomenological interest, Naadira Patel, in her video of a rollercoaster suspended in time and frozen in its tracks, aims to trace the grammars of human desire. Without the expected rush of movement and adrenaline, the viewer experiences a tension between speed and stasis; the fear and fun of the ride. As my eyes repeatedly run over the multitude of lines, I wait for a release which doesn't come and consider the eerie absence of the thrill-seekers whose desire fuelled the construction of this machine. Based around a fascination with the scientific contribution made by John Herschel 175 years ago, Madeline Groenewald's work suggests an interest in time not frozen, but bridged. Struck by the change in landscape between Herschel's experience of the Cape and her own, Groenewald plotted a constellation of light-turned-shadow through the leaves of a tree dating back to Herschel's time.

Through hours of careful observation, meticulous execution and absorbing quality, Groenewald, like each of the artists addressed here, created a work full of subtleties and nuances that depend on interaction and investment, encouraging a quiet conversation about here, there and ...



# herethere

A selection of work from participating MICHAELIS and WITS Masters students





**Untitled** (2013)  
Digital Print on Archival Paper  
60 x 200 cm

**ashley**  
walters

My Masters project is a photographic investigation into my own community of Uitsig, as well as the surrounding suburbs of Parow Industrial, Ravensmead, Florida, Cravenby, Belhar and Eureka, and the interaction of these communities with their landscape and existing structures.

Uitsig is a point of departure into my investigation of people and places in this area. The Afrikaans word 'uitsig' has three main descriptions. Firstly, it implies seeing that which is out of sight, or hidden. Secondly, 'uitsig' can refer to a prospect or a view, to look onto or over a city or landscape. Lastly, the word 'uitsig' means to show one's persona or character. Following these descriptions, Uitsig becomes central to investigating the relationship between spatiality and social ordering, within the representation of this place, the different communities, gangs, religious and cultural groups, and its architectural landscape.

Many of the current challenges found in places like Uitsig include high levels of unemployment, the ravaging drug epidemic amongst low-income households, turf wars between gangs and the increase of violent crimes due to drug and alcohol abuse.

My Masters focuses on a landscape of structures, community and violence that is demarcated by cultural constraints, socio-economics and influenced by the modernist ideology of apartheid.





**Untitled** (2013)  
Diasac  
50 x 72 cm

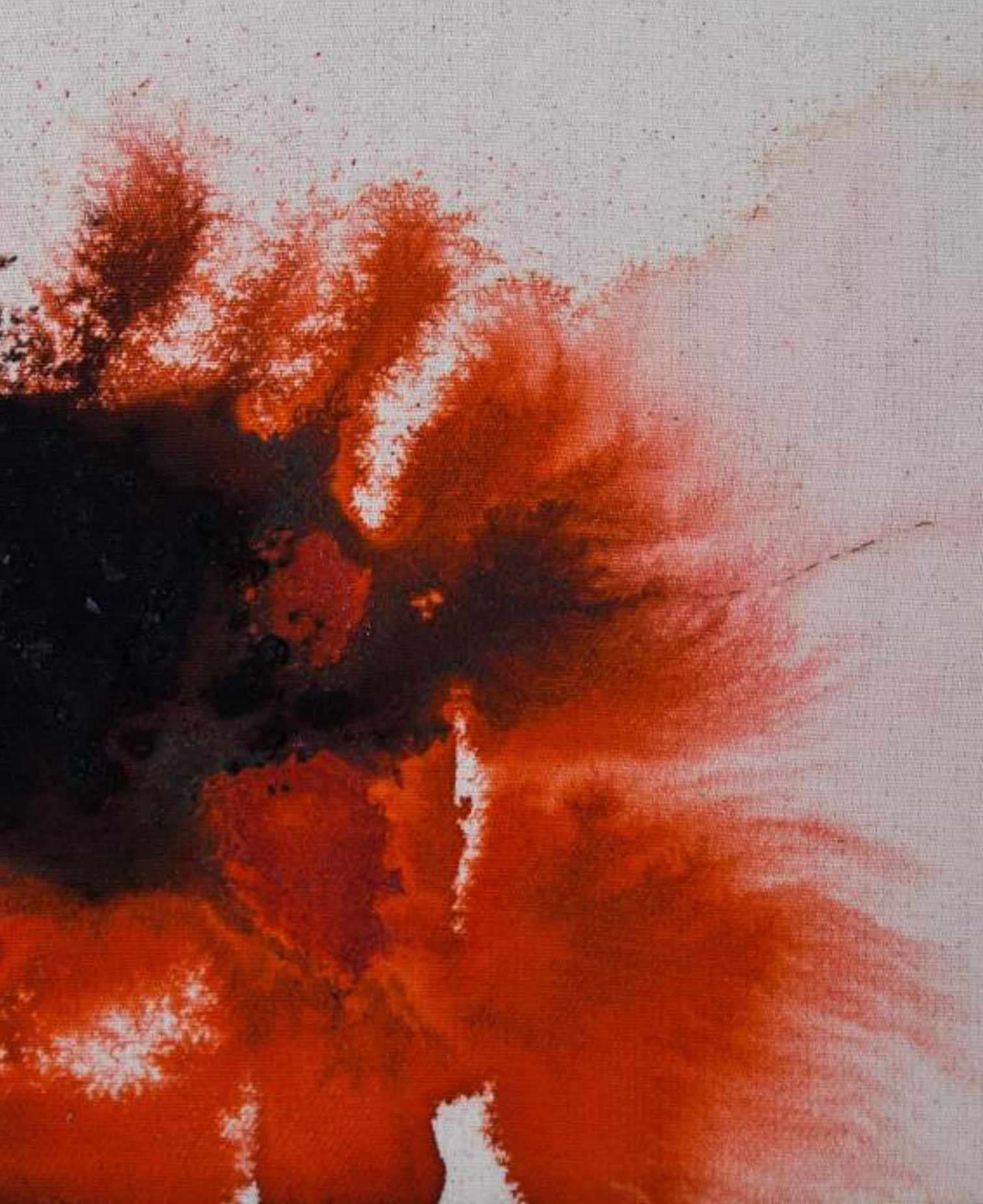
**Untitled** (2013)  
Diasac  
50 x 72 cm

## alice gauntlett

In 2012, I started taking photographs exploring the home, the uncanny and the body. I photographed my body performing within the personal spaces of my family home, my mother's new house and my studio. In the photographs, my body was obscured in shadows, behind architecture and through blurring and movement. These elements all suggest, and enhance, feelings about being out of place.

This work later expanded into what I refer to as collages. These are pieces that I have physically reconfigured by cutting up photographs, stitching them, submerging the surface in glue or covering them in stockings, masking tape, micropore and bandages. Often cropping and layering, I re-imagine the images collectively.

In these photographic collages, there is a fractured and fracturing view of the relationship between the body and home space. This is negotiated and renegotiated through various actions and/or performances; the performance of the body in the space, which is then documented; and the performance of transformation of the photographs, through my sticking, cutting and stitching. As I fracture my space and body, so do I try to cosset and repair them.





*Ursus Arctos* (2013)  
Mercurochrome, Potassium Permanganate and other  
Galénicals on canvas  
Dimensions Variable

jo  
voysey

I am particularly interested in using medicine as a medium for painting, more specifically, the use of self-medicated pharmaceutical remedies, tinctures and galénicals. My focus is on the associative aspects of medicine as painted surface and how these aspects can transform into visual metaphor.

There is a stimulating unpredictability in medicine as a means for painting, as it flows and moves across the surface. The medicines I use react to the atmosphere and to each other in ways that cannot be controlled (some dry quickly, others change colour when exposed to the air and light). The outcome is based almost entirely on chance and the uncontrollable aspect of the medium.

Using medicine, I paint on a variety of small canvases, displayed sporadically on a wall, to refer to my recent encounter with a caged bear in Georgia, Eastern Europe. I immediately felt drawn to this confined beast and visited the bear every day during my stay. The notion of the bear, his surroundings, his behaviour and what I perceived to be his keen desire for contact with me triggered strong feelings in me that I wanted to explore through painting.





*Untitled* (2013)  
Powdered found charcoal, filter paper

## alta botha

I believe that the manner in which we attempt to contextualise, rationalise and control our life situations can be equated to a filtering system. The continuous assault of new information and experiences leads to a revisitation of personal history and memories. When recalled, this stored information is reconsidered. Perceptions of what is 'true' or false, 'real' or imagined or 'fact' or fiction are adjusted and readjusted in an attempt to comprehend and make decisions.

Central to my focus in these works is the belief that strategies of power are realised through structures and mechanisms which seem to 'normalise' the context of abuse and trauma. While I address these issues from the perspective of personal upheaval and trauma, I am aware of doing so against the broader backdrop of the sociopolitical context of South African society. Here, the discourse of patriarchy becomes central to exposure and resistance.

Such issues are explored through my process-based work, commenting on the need for catharsis. Charcoal, as substance, is the concrete product of a process of transformation, representing both the destructive and purifying potential of fire. The processes employed - eroding, scraping, tearing, covering and stitching - suggest wounding and healing.



MAART



**Homogenation** (2012)  
Shweshwe fabric, cast metal buttons,  
vintage police insignia and rank,  
vintage police boots, shoes,  
fibre glass and metal.  
Life size figures

diana  
cilliers

My work engages with the emotional language and communication of dress. Taking a critical view, my interest lies in the psychological, social, economic, cultural, religious and political narrative of clothing. I set out to delve beyond the material and popular culture of clothing and transform the emotional narrative. Clothing is much more than the cloth that it is cut from.

For these two particular installations, I used shweshwe, a local fabric traditionally associated with women, to manufacture South African Police uniforms. Here, focus is placed on the ambiguous and forever shifting emotional impact of garments, specifically concerning authority and power. My work hopes to question issues of gender and to highlight the indisputable semantics associated with dress and its codes.

Designing the costumes for the soon-to-be-released film, *Long Walk to Freedom* (2013), focused my attention, for the moment, on uniforms and issues of domination and subordination. Future pieces will deal with broader sartorial issues and the emotional resonance of colour, style, pattern, structure, tradition and culture.





## nadine froneman

**Unknown 2013** (2013)  
LED Lightbox, Silk Screen on Japanese  
Archival Washi Paper.

In 1837, Natalie Herzen wrote to her cousin explaining how she felt about sentimental objects:

*Looking at your letters, at your portrait, I have wished I could skip a hundred years and see what their fate would be...what will they be when we are gone? Will their virtue, their soul, remain in them? Will they awaken, will they warm some other heart, will they tell the story of us...? How sad I feel when I imagine that your portrait will one day hang unknown in someone's study.*

(Quoted in Henisch & Henisch 1994: 4-6)

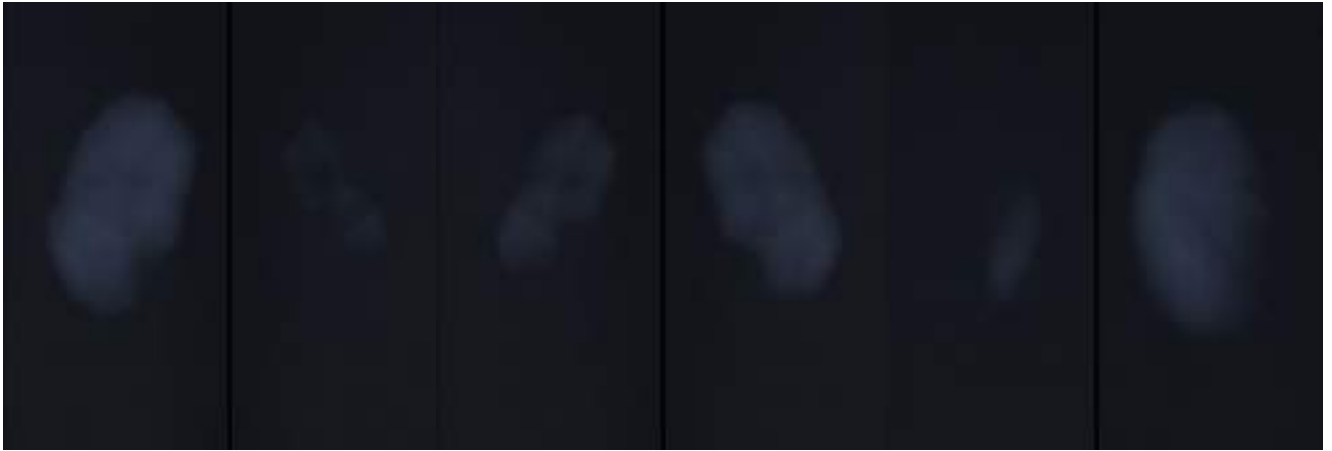
The sentiment expressed by Herzen is the heart of my project, partly guiding my collection of carte-de-visites.

The carte-de-visite is a six and a half by ten and a half centimetre printed albumen photographic portrait mounted onto card. On the reverse side of the photograph, sits the photographer's details. Carte-de-visites were a global social phenomenon ('cardomania') and circulated in Cape Town in the third quarter of the 1800s.

I have sourced such portraits, originally private memorabilia, from markets and second hand stores in Cape Town since 2011. I attempt to explore their history and the possible meanings that they held, through details such as clothing, poses, props and the location of the photography studio. I am especially interested in the surface details presented in the carte-de-visite. Traces of time such as foxing marks, fading and abrasions emphasize the materiality of the object, exposing these artifact's provenance and social existence.

In this project, I am interested in collections, archives, preservation, and curiosity. I try to find a historical narrative by referring to the archive and curiosity cabinet as well as to conventions of archiving and conservation, further complicated in an age of digitization. My aim is to recapture and revive the object's resonance of the sitter's lost life.





*Inspiration* (2013)  
Video Stills

# kristine kronjé

*I breathe onto a dark surface. An image evaporates as mysteriously as it appeared.*

Inspiration plays on the interchangeable states of inhaling/exhaling and appearing/disappearing. It marks the absolute equilibrium inherent in the act of breathing; a continuous action in need of constant reiteration. The liminal spaces between these states, however, affirm the futility of my attempts to ever capture breath and, by implication, ‘being’<sup>1</sup> in its entirety. The traces of my breath/ing therefore remain merely as subtle manifestations or remnants of my embodied existence.

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<sup>1</sup> My use of the word “being” refers to an awareness or consciousness of the fact that we “are” rather than merely referring to living things.





***A Tree as Time*** (2013)

Dappled light from the shadow of an oak tree, plotted over the course of three hours.

Indian ink on cotton paper

300 cm X 107 cm

# madeline groenewald

There is a monument in Claremont, Cape Town that commemorates the scientific contributions made by John Herschel. The monument marks the spot where this British astronomer's telescope stood when he visited the Cape, between 1834 and 1838, to complete a systematic survey of the Southern celestial sphere. Over the course of time, this spot has changed significantly yet, a few steps away from the monument an old oak tree stands and continues to grow. There is a strong possibility that this tree could have been there when Herschel resided and worked in this area 175 years ago.<sup>1</sup>

My Master of Fine Art project, titled "Variations on a Theme by John Herschel", aims at creating translations and connections across time and space: between myself, my environment and John Herschel's explorations in Cape Town. For *A Tree as Time* (2013), I plotted the dappled sunlight that shone through the leaves of this oak tree and onto the paper laid out under its shadow. I followed and traced these light shapes as they travelled across the paper, from right to left, over time. The work is a personal attempt to capture an alternative view of my space: to imagine an inversion of time through the approximate age of this tree, to invert the traditional view through a telescope by plotting light on the ground instead of light in the sky, and to invert light by tracing it in shades of ink.

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<sup>1</sup> This possibility has been confirmed by Professor Edmund February of UCT's botany department.





**Extract** (2013)

Multi-media on prepared laminated surface with artists paints and pastels incorporating mineral oxides including iron, manganese, chromates, coal, carborendum, engine oil, graphite, titanium, copper, gold mine dust, site-specific samples from mine tailings and industrial sites.

250 x125 cm

# jeannette unite

Mining as phenomena and metaphor has fuelled my interrogation into the African industrial landscape over the past fifteen years. A forensic geological excursion over prospecting pits, whilst living on West Coast alluvial diamond mines during the 1990s, uncovered an aspect of humans relationship to earth that shifted my practice and visual exploration into mining.

Images of power structures, engineered machines and the industrial sublime form part of my extensive archive of resources. I have travelled through twenty-five countries, photographing and collecting material evidence of industrialisation, ecological impact, neo-colonisation and mineral extraction. These site-specific metal oxides, pigments and detritus, from industry and mine tailings, are incorporated into large-scale pieces, as my artist's material. Research into laws and regulations that grid, divide and distribute the subsequent wealth flowing from land through mineral rights and title deeds, informs recent work.

Public awareness about mining and its complexities has shifted, it is no longer perceived as something that other people do. We are all complicit in the rapacious cycle of consumption and waste through our demand for cheaper technologies that drive metal harvesting and the production from ore, often with devastating social consequences for those at the coalface. By incorporating 'soiled' residual material that is reactive, toxic at certain temperatures and loaded with association, I render our manufactured existence.





*Original Mkokotelo* (2013)

## Lawrence Lemaana

In South Africa, the primus stove, originally meant to be used as a temporary stove, is used as the primary stove in the majority of households without electricity, predominantly townships and homelands. This overuse of the object accelerates its wear and tear, until eventually it stops working. The flow of paraffin to feed the fire gets clogged up, creating a thrombosis-like effect, of injured 'veins'. Individuals supplement the life of the primus stove by adding an electric stove plate. This action can be described as "ukukokotela", and the object an "Mkokotelo". The word "kokotela" means to knock something into shape, but has gathered other meanings such as fake, not original and self-made. The design of the objects gets improved and its life as originally determined by the manufacturers is extended. It now functions as a stove, a heater, and a place to heat up a clothes iron.

Made out of necessity, the creative process takes over, and the sculptural and functional qualities are welded and woven together. The process of creating is a map making process, one that begins with the tracing the qualities of the stoves infrastructure, but also extends them...to meet new uses in giving out heat. Because the heat is informal, meaning that the electricity coming from the wall is directly leading to the plate, it burns uncontrollably producing intense heat. There is no limitation.

In a similar manner, I am interested in refreshing my own processes by using alternative methodologies for my productions. "Mkokotelo" in the township is a word that defines many ideas, describing something that is not a standardised genuine article, but a genuine fake or interpretation of the original design. In the case of the extended life and function of the primus stove, the new machine is now an "mkokotelo".





*Waiting for Formula Rossa* 2013  
Video stills

## naadira patel

Sensory / sensuous / curves / continuous horizontal and vertical lines / movement / speed / play / tension / expansion / congestion / acceleration / proportion / bipolar / manic / modern behemoths / exaggerated / arbitrary / form / formless / horrid / spectacular / emotion / illusion / clones / symphony / pop / schizophrenic / looping / staged / cloned / amalgamated / fantastical / nauseating / imaginary / speculative

The rollercoaster, designed for pleasure and amusement, is on the one hand restricted and safe but simultaneously forces a momentary suspension of life, death and belief. The intoxication of speed and adrenaline produces a rush that fascinates as much as it perplexes. What can explain this impulse towards death? It is within this paradox of fear and thrill that I situate my practice.

My work is video/installation based, with a focus on amusement parks/fantasy lands/spectacle cities. My research project attempts to create a language around the themes of fantasy and desire, piecing together fragments and moments, shiny and grotesque, wonderful and depressing.

Waiting for Formula Rossa is a 'still' video of the Formula Rossa rollercoaster at Abu Dhabi's Ferrari World, the fastest rollercoaster in the world. The video captures this mega structure machine in a state of stasis, dormant and unmoving. Anticipation builds and crashes. Desire for the ultimate thrill is unfulfilled.





***Sub-station Doorway*** (2011)

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas  
328 cm x 198 cm

***Gallery Door*** (2013)

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas  
332 cm x 166 cm

**danielle**  
wepener

My research and practical work covers a range of on-going explorative projects that engage with the nature of spatial practices that combine illusionism and the readymade. These projects take the form of architecturally inserted paintings, linear constructions and drawings. Made from a reflective obscuring aluminium sheet, they are intended to act as a means of exploring space as a medium.

The HereThere joint-exhibition has offered me an interesting opportunity to challenge my own familiarity with spaces which I have responded to in the past. How do you respond site-specifically to a site you've never seen or experienced first-hand?

Gallery Door, the work produced for this exhibition, can be seen as an adjacent work to its predecessor Sub-Station Doorway (2011). However, where Sub-Station Doorway acted as an illusionistic readymade within the Wits Substation Gallery, Gallery Door will demand the viewer's attention, acting as an alternative architectural element within the space. Placed on the other side of the dividing wall in the Michaelis Gallery door entry, it is my intention that the dislocation between the two gallery doors becomes present in the stereographic, curatorial nature of the work.





*Underdog* (2013)  
Video Installation  
Time lapse loop, 15 minutes.

## niall bingham

My piece comprises of around 50 hours of GoPro footage shot from the ceiling in my home studio. This was condensed into a 15-minute time lapse loop.

At the time of shooting I had planned for the loop to be used in a different capacity, but its role was always likely to metamorphose.

Time is documented through shifting shadows, friends enter the frame- observe and then leave, Linoleum is removed.

The carving process that I went through over a period of one month is captured.

The resulting Linocut print that was pulled off the plate I am carving is now represented by the video. Or rather- the act of 'making' has been acknowledged ahead of the resulting print. This notion of one medium 'representing' another, or more specifically, a video piece representing a Linocut, is worthy of enquiry.

1

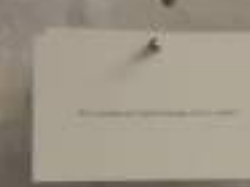
2

3

4

5

6





**Untitled** (2013)  
Installation  
Dimensions Variable

**talya**  
lubinsky

The book is already an outdated mediation between two different filing systems: for everything that matters is to be found in the card box of the researcher who wrote it and the scholar studying it who assimilates it into his own card index.

Walter Benjamin, *One Way Street* (2004: 456)

This piece was developed for a recent show as part of the Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism Life of Forms Project Space. I took continuous notes throughout the ten day workshop of lectures and discussions. The phrases that I chose to document were specifically decontextualised, referring to a wider set of ideas than that which was being discussed in each specific lecture. Once all of the phrases were collected, I placed each individual piece of text on its own index card. I then developed a classification system whereby coloured stickers and a simple grid were used to reclassify the information on the index cards.

In this iteration of the project, I will be using decontextualised text from my notes for my Masters proposal. This allows the work itself to provide me with an opportunity to reorganise the information at hand, productively mixing it up to allow for new meanings and connections.

I use the above quote by Benjamin as a conceptual frame for the work. All information is subject to classification; when it is ordered inside a book, it is just one iteration of its potential ordering, thus creating one meaning. When information exists on index cards in a cabinet, it still holds many potential meanings because it may be reorganised in an infinite number of ways.





*Beta Vulgaris* (2013)  
Performance

gina  
kraft

*Dear unknown initiate, I invite you to kneel  
with me.*

*Your separation from pre-sighters  
commences your transformation into  
renewed thought and belonging.*

*As we touch our foreheads together, let us  
greet in the name of friendship, community  
and understanding.*

*We take this embodied amity with our  
fingers and taste its luscious flavour.*

*Carry its mark with pride and  
predilection into your new community.*

Ritual ceremonies create a sense of community, a feeling of belonging and participation. Rewards or visual marks during initiation rites increase group identity, feelings of affiliation, and link individuals to the community. Sharing food with another person creates a sense of camaraderie and togetherness. In my current work, I have been exploring the relationship between ritual, play and performance. I create performances that involve audience participation/collaboration and active physical and verbal response. I am interested in these responses as they relate to the forming and/or recognition of the specific communities in which they occur, as well as viewers' contributions to art as an experience.

This ritual/performance makes use of beetroot (botanical name: *Beta Vulgaris*) as a central point for action. Its vivid colour leaves traces not only on the plate from which it is consumed, but also on the parts of the body that represent outward expression through words and actions, the fingers and lips.







