



RHODES UNIVERSITY

2015

Graduate
Exhibitions

FINE
ART

Rhodes School of Art

ERIN HILL
GINA FIGUEIRA
SKYE BURNS

Rhodes Drama Department

BYRON MCLEROTH

Festival Gallery

SARAH MURIEL LARKIN

Albany Natural Sciences Museum

OLIVER SEBASTIAN
WHITFORD
JAMES DRURY
LARA HARVEY

Albany History Museum

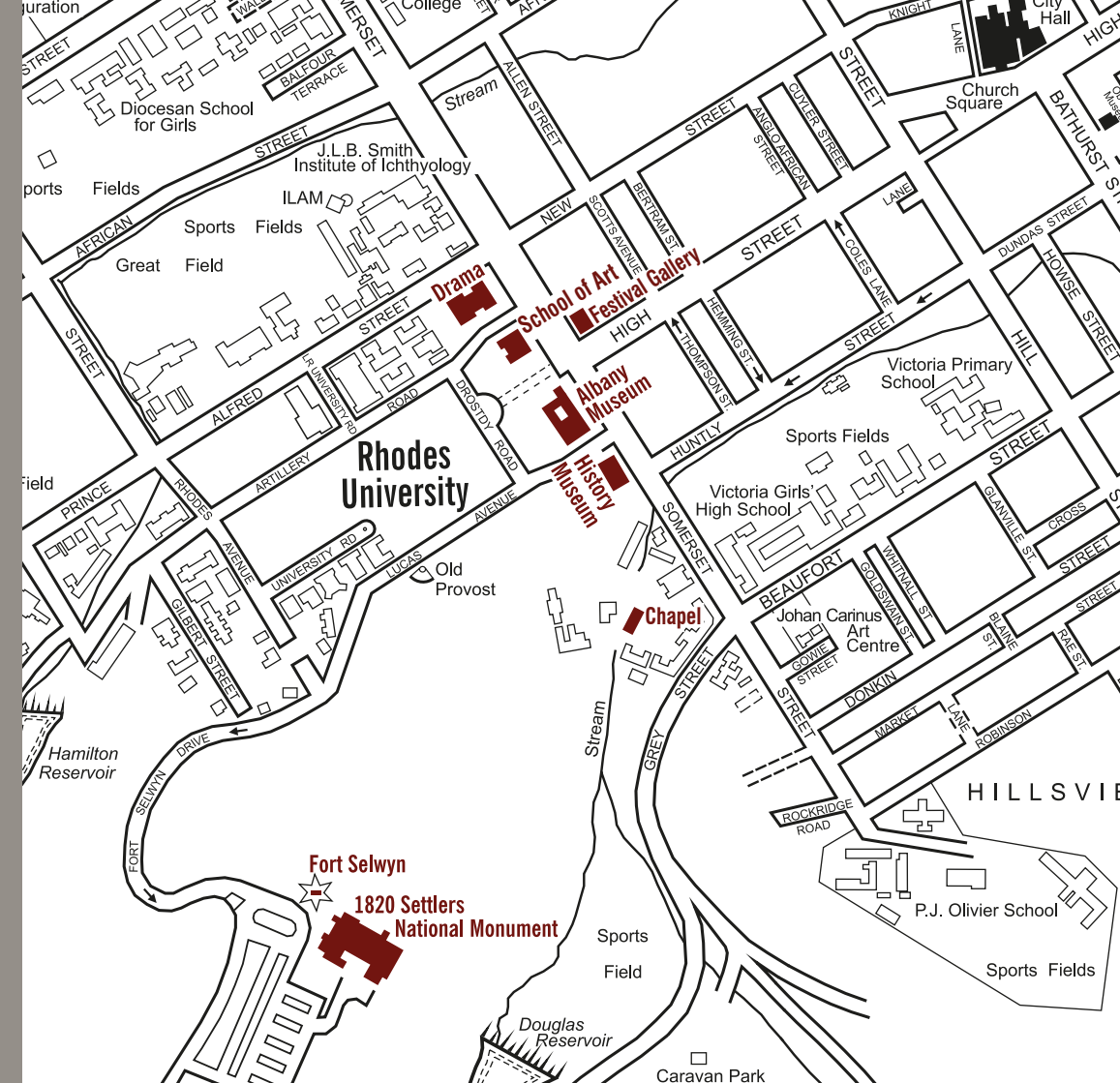
SHARON MOSES
CHELSEA SKARUPKE
TAMRIN SILCOCK
COURTNEY SCOTT
DONNAY LYNN PONQUETT
DAVE GLOVER

Rhodes Chapel, St Peter's Campus

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1820 Settlers Monument

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MARI SCHULTZ



FOREWORD

Attempting to write a foreword on behalf of young artists and students alike should not be an attempt to reach definite and unmovable answers. For many people living or studying in South Africa, 2015 has been a year where challenging fixity in the country's complex socio-political sphere has reached stages of mass action. Over the last few years we have been encouraged to find our voice as 'artist' and in so doing we have engaged with art as a visual vocabulary, a means of communicating not only an idea between artist and viewer but a conversation between artist and environment. The Fine Art Department at the university currently known as Rhodes has taught us that the process of art making is a dialectical engagement that provides more questions than answers. The process of producing artwork can be seen as an interrogation of ourselves and our environment, whereby discussions arise that push us to consider our voices and our ways of being as artists, as people and as a society. Each exhibition of this year's graduate show represents this kind of figuring, whether such processes are deemed successes or failures, the value lies in the act of this engagement itself.

This platform for figuring has been made possible by the combined support from our Art Studio Practice and Art History and Visual Culture lecturers and staff. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the support from family and friends. Lastly, we would like to thank the viewers for the chance to extend these conversations. Echoing one of our lecturers, we hope you leave with more questions than answers.

~ Graduates of 2015

#FeesMustFall



Human Animals

The greatest difference between humans and all other animals is one of conception. Humans conceive themselves as fundamentally different from all other nonhuman animals. There is a disconnection and an abstraction of a relational reality manifesting a distinct barrier in the conception of humans to other species. The general belief is that humans are superior to animals. Humans use language to distinguish themselves as separate by categorising all other species under the label of “animal” and themselves as “human beings”, “people” or “persons”. In this way, animals are denied personhood and humans are deemed un-animal.

According to Buddhist beliefs, violence in the mind leads to violence expressed in the world. If we can change the way the human mind perceives other animals, perhaps we can change the human culture of exploiting other species. Scientifically human and nonhuman beings are more similar than different, In the year 2000 human intelligence discovered the human genome and proved that “. . . our genes look much like those of fruit flies, worms, and even plants. . . the genome shows that we all descended from the same humble beginnings and that the connections are written in our genes” (David Baltimore).

Humans are animals.



ERIN HILL

Rhodes School of Art



memory and mobility

"I want my bones to feel the hard ground. I want to put my boots on. Walk the mountains . . . My body has lost an incredible amount of condition, everything is so weak, flabby, thin . . . I know my limitations by their sheer lack of mobility."

Tony Figueira (7/12/2014)

"I never seem to get any feedback so I guess I must still be okay."

Sonia Wolfe-Coote (31/08/2010)

This exhibition stems from my coming to terms with the illnesses of close family members. Over the past year, my adventurous photographer father has been undergoing rehabilitation and recovery after Multiple Myeloma — a cancer surreptitiously eroding his bones — left him largely immobilised. At the same time, my witty and accomplished grandmother, whom I used to bake with as a child, has suffered the gradual onset of Dementia marked by memory disorder. My own experience of this exhibition acknowledges how both mobility and memory can be taken for granted, as well as the natural desire to stop, fix, contain, make better; the impossibility of such control; and the potential creation of a space of peace.



GINA FIGUEIRA

Rhodes School of Art



Echo

Narcissus and Echo

Shall the water not remember *Ember*
My hand's slow gesture, tracing above *of*
Its mirror my half- imaginary *airy*
Portrait? My only belonging *longing;*
Is my beauty, which I take *ache*
Away and then return, as love *of*
Teasing playfully the one being *unbeing.*
Whose gratitude I treasure *Is your*
Moves me. I live apart *heart*
From myself, yet cannot *not*
Live apart. In the water's tone, *stone?*
That brilliant silence, a flower *Hour*
Whispers my name with such slight *light:*
Moment, it seems filament of air, *fare*
The world becomes cloudswell. *well.*

- Fred Chappell (1985).



SKYE BURNS

Rhodes School of Art



"The Writings of an Unsure Customer"

The Writings of an Unsure Customer, for all the title covers, is very much exactly that. Heaved, or neatly sliced into a fraction of space, not too hot and just wet enough to allow life to cling like moss to a rotting tree, we become. On this ordinary day, we are given our papers. This much is universal to anyone who is, beyond that though the similarities begin to dwindle. On my way, unguided, clumsy, sort of rushed way mind you, towards my pink floundering infant suit I surely missed the opportunity to garrison the life of another almost baby. As customer number 9207285166080 though, there is a no returns policy. Business hours are flexible. Herein we can play and work, scratch, bite and kiss. Categorize, Segregate and divide, privilege and oppress, and make statistics charts too. The law is man, and man made the law. Well writing history is tantamount. Coloniality chose the lucky demographic, the silver spoons and ivory towers of pink babies whose only bestowed task, that which is entrusted with the transfer of the sacred code, is to keep the starving, starving. Unsure as to how to reconcile broken bones, the patterns of saline and mascara and the universally accepted red of bloodied noses, with the giant gaunt less grin and brilliant white teeth of the book keeper, This Audio Visual obscures nitpicks and points fingers, rants and exclaims in the scarlet way of the hungry many who might never be heard. The viewer can expect a great deal of the colour blue.



BYRON MCLEROTH

Box Theatre,
Rhodes Drama Department



Blinding Memory: Blurring Re-inscription

Through a series of heavily inked botanical prints and blind intaglio embossings, I have attempted to mimic the confusion and blurring of one's memory as one ages by alluding to the disappearance, distortion and confusion that must cloud the mind in old age. I have explored the fragility of memory and the degradation that is eminent in an attempt to reflect upon my relationship to my grandmother and her influence on me in my life, all the while being acutely aware of the transience of my own memory of her.

While researching imagery to describe my history, ancestors and old familial threads that link me to my past, I stumbled upon a number of photographs on which my grandmother had inscribed dates, names, places and significant events. As she grew old and frail of mind she incessantly rewrote and scribbled on existing annotations in a futile attempt to remember her past that was rapidly blurring further out of focus as each day passed. Some annotations presented at least four different attempts, written on separate occasions in which she had, in frustration, tried to re-remember important factual information by scribbling, crossing out and re-writing the names of her family members, as if to connect the points, dot-to-dot, by remembering one name at a time. On closer inspection it seems that she was desperately trying to recall exactly who each son or grandchild was, and although the correct inscription frequently existed, her deletions and re-inscriptions were repeatedly incorrect. As her attempt to re-collect and re-inscribe dates to events, names to faces and faces to identities seemed all the more futile, she stopped writing in cursive and reverted to childlike and messy print, so uncharacteristic of her generation.



SARAH MURIEL
LARKIN

Festival Gallery, Corner of
Somerset and High Street



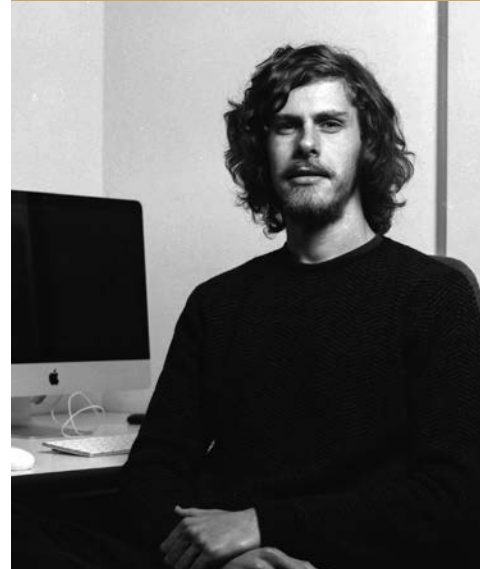
Altschmerz

n. weariness with the same old issues that you've always had—the same boring flaws and anxieties you've been gnawing on for years, which leaves them soggy and tasteless and inert, with nothing interesting left to think about, nothing left to do but spit them out and wander off to the backyard, ready to dig up some fresher pain you might have buried long ago.

– John Koenig

This exhibition explores how personal phobias impact the way we interact and respond to our surroundings. Our perspective of the world is changed by the tensions that play out in our mind. These tensions disrupt/define our ability to deal with different situations and environments.

Present within this body of work are tensions that illustrate how interactive situations may trigger individual responses within the same experience. The viewer will encounter environments which rouse a sense of claustrophobia or a need to escape. The virtual realities that are depicted share a close connection with the physical world. By navigating through these realities one deals with the past, present and future.



OLIVER SEBASTIAN
WHITFORD

Shell Gallery, Albany
Natural Sciences Museum



The thing about here

Watercolours were used to paint what was beautiful and what was desirable; the idea of a good painting was one of the typical English countryside. This was passed down to the colonial settlers where in Africa it became common to paint the idyllic African countryside, often an expansive savannah under a large sky. This tradition is tried and cliched and redundant. I have used this redundancy in my own work and subverted it. The idea is to paint not the traditionally beautiful landscape but still one that I as a Zimbabwean find beautiful, it may be flawed and tainted but it is what we still consider to be our home. It is in the vein of thought that the generators have become my not so official symbol of Zimbabwe and its people. We are not ones to shy away from adversity or struggle and instead tend to lean toward that Zimbabwean motto of 'we will make a plan'. My works challenge the conventions of old colonial watercolours, the idea of painting what is desirable and loved, but it simultaneously uses the redundancy of that colonial practice to parody it.



JAMES DRURY

Shell Gallery, Albany
Natural Sciences Museum



Paresthesia

This exhibition consists of mixed media sculptures that unpack tensions between the themes of trauma, loss, disintegration and regeneration. Many individuals have experiences of loss and trauma; however, my work focusses on the regeneration that can and often does take place subsequent to this. My interest in these particular themes stems from occurrences in my personal life that changed who I am today. When I was a child, my mother had a stroke, causing the left side of her body to be limp and to droop, and nearly resulting in her passing. She claims to still lack feeling in her left hand, and compares the feeling of paresthesia to that of wearing a glove. This situation has moulded her outlook on life, as well as mine. More importantly, it has moulded our relationship with one another in fundamental ways. To emblematised this relationship I have taken moulds of the left sides of both our bodies. These moulds have then been opened up, manipulated and distorted, to produce casts that evoke the malleability of the body, its inherent fragility, but also its enduring potential for regeneration.



LARA HARVEY

Cube Gallery, Albany
Natural Sciences Museum



"Girl finally gets the face of her dreams!"

The impetus for this body of work was an article titled *"Girl finally gets the face of her dreams"*. It was a clickbait article — I would normally ignore it; however something compelled me to read this particular article this time. The notion of achieving perfection is a construct, with facial beauty being one of the most highly prized and 'perfect' attributes that one could possess. The subject of the article was indeed transformed and objectively beautiful after enduring brutal surgeries and it was this aspect of brutality that compelled me to click. Surgery has long simultaneously fascinated and horrified me; therefore to express one's internal desires, insecurities, or complexes externally becomes an extension of that horror. Manufactured beauty becomes a violent act in the name of achieving delicate perfection through wounding oneself. The quality of paint as a flesh-like medium lends perfectly to exploring surgery, and the process of painting becomes surgery in and of itself.



SHARON MOSES

Grahamstown Gallery,
Albany History Musuem



'Phallacy' and Fantasy

Shifting through different levels of consciousness, two characters (Lilly and Byron) explore the gender-based power relations in which they find themselves entangled, in a society they neither created nor control. Through exposing the patriarchal discourse of 'masculinity as power' as a fallacy, it becomes evident that this male sense of entitlement and power has no revolutionary or biological stance. Instead, this fallacy becomes not a reflection of the nature and differences of men and women, but a mechanism to enforce, or reinforce, patterns of social power through superficial aspects of biology. Battling the lingering implications of patriarchal divide and stereotypes of male and female binaries, Lilly and Byron enter a realm of conscious thought and site of female contestation. Through exceeding emotional and physical thresholds, Lilly explores her options as a woman to feel and act. Placed in a feminized landscape, Byron is faced with the task of redefining himself to fit the context of his surroundings. In this series of paintings, the female imagination becomes an ungoverned space of self-exploration, where all emotions can be expressed and all concerns addressed.



CHELSEA
SKARUPKE

Grahamstown Gallery,
Albany History Museum



Dandledipity Disorder

(a fragment of memory remembered by chance).

Memory is subjective and influenced by emotions and perception, complicating how we remember events. Even so, we often depend upon it for an objective understanding of the past. The way we remember any moment changes in response to the chaotic external, often becoming fluid as social opinions and ideas shift. With this comes a feeling of detachment along with the want and need to place oneself within a situation or memory. There is a desire to assert (or insert) oneself within the past. It is within this void that my work finds its place.



TAMRIN SILCOCK

Standard Bank Gallery,
Albany History Museum



"Mum At Work"

"Mum at Work" is an installation exhibition consisting of found objects and painted or photographic elements that work together to speak to notions surrounding gender norms and dynamics in society using my family history as a backdrop. As a part of the first generation of women in my family who have been given the freedom of complete choice in my career path, I have chosen to take the time to remember the women in my family before me. Each woman in my immediate family has suffered a sense of loss; being forced into the role of secretary through financial constraints and a lack of choice offered to them. My grandmothers, aunts, and my mother, were only offered a choice of either teaching or secretarial work as career options, and chose the latter. None-the-less these women excelled in this field; constantly working toward easing the workload of a higher, male authority figure. These women still perform this role. My exhibition is centred on interrogating the roles performed by, and lack of choices given to these, and other women under what was then, and is still arguably now, a society dominated by patriarchal ideologies and values. The evolution of time has rejected the machinery and the shorthand language, but the constant has always been the woman; thus my exhibition acts as an ode to them.



COURTNEY SCOTT

Standard Bank Gallery,
Albany History Museum



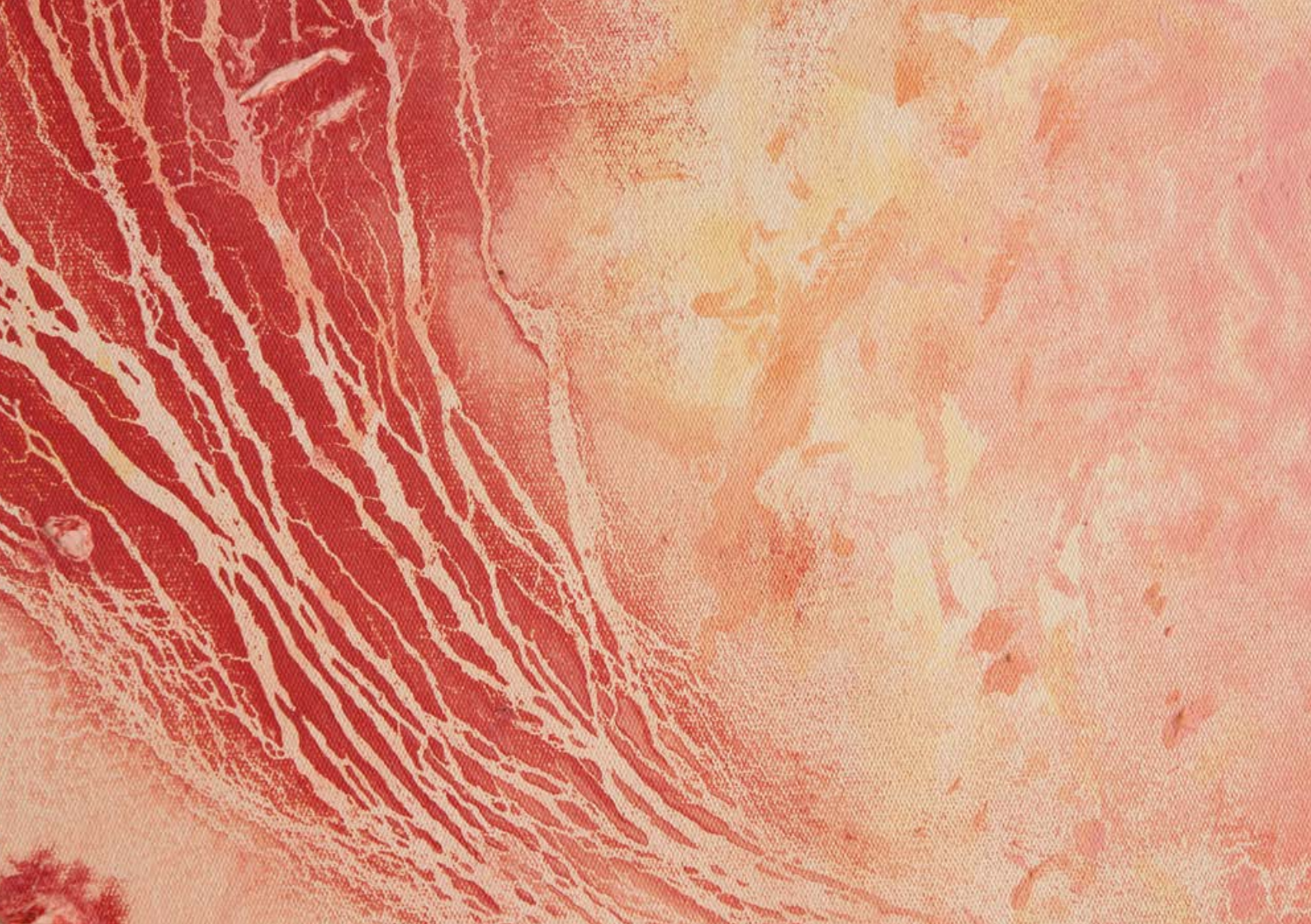
Sibling Bonds

I have two younger brothers, one fifteen and the other twenty. My project stems from their relationship and the ways in which it has changed over the years. When my parents divorced and my dad left the household, the older of the two sub-consciously tried to fill the empty role of the father. Obviously this puts a strain on the relationship between siblings, particularly brothers, as the older brother can become a disciplinarian. Recently my brothers' relationship has shifted to become more equalised, yet power dynamics still exist between the two. It is their ever-changing relationship which I have strived to represent in these pieces. At the same time, my own presence as the older sister reveals itself through the ink. I created these works by applying water to paper in different amounts before adding varying concentrations of ink where the paper was wet. The figures of and shapes surrounding my brothers take form through this process. Working with ink I have learnt to step back and allow the medium to develop its own aesthetic qualities. As the artist I can guide the mark making but ultimately the ink spreads and dries on its own accord. Similarly, I can be there for my brothers as an older sister but in the end I have to relinquish control and let them be.



DONNAY LYNN
PONQUETT

Alumni Gallery,
Albany History Museum



Privileged Pink Skin

What it means to be pink:

My eyes, groggy and crusted with sleep open incrementally at times, only to close again and drift back into the blurry doze of comfortable forgetfulness.

Thinking back on what my whiteness and maleness means to me, as well as what it may mean to others, has become an ambiguous ritual. It has become a painful yet important journey into the self that makes me consider the less obvious violences that the privileged may project onto others by being birthed (not by choice) into a socialised space with undeniable dynamics of power and inequality. The South African Dream, the Rainbow Nation, the myth of universal equality, is no longer believable. The luxury to live such a dream comes from a perpetual sleep, deepened by strong doses of privilege and leisure and . . . is the only world I have known.

While I take full responsibility for my social position, I simultaneously fail to dislocate myself.

My work may represent a jaded relationship with my white-maleness, but always brings the focus back to the very notions I wish to shed. What you see is a narrative of a self-reflexive white male attempting to dislocate the dominance of his social position . . . yet HE is all you see.



DAVE GLOVER

Alumni Gallery,
Albany History Museum



“Did I plan my ten kids? No, but did I want to have a big family? Yes, how big? I wasn’t sure but the Lord had a plan for us and it was perfect for us”.

My grandparents have 10 children and approximately 50 grandchildren. How they managed this has always fascinated me as they were Methodist missionaries who relied on their church congregation for food and money, and the church did not have much. Because of their frequent travels they could not keep all 10 children with them (between my grandfather’s appointment in 1957 and his death in 2009, my grandparents moved 16 times, founding churches as they went). Thus my aunts and uncles grew up dispersed across South Africa, raised by extended family in much the same way that I was then raised.

My work is about my grandparents’ struggles; the conviction of their ‘calling’ as missionaries; and how their sacrifices impacted on the lives of their children, reverberating through generations. The churches they founded and ministered in were very rudimentary, and it is for this reason that I have chosen to present my exhibition in the ornate Rhodes Chapel, in an attempt to recolonise for black South African missionaries the type of sacred space that would have been denied to them.

uThixo ebenathi (and the Lord was with us)

“Zandigazi ukuba ndizoba nabatwana abanizi, uthixo zayene ncinga ezohlkeneyo ku-nezethu, incinga zayisilungele thina”

umakhulu notamkhulu wam babe sebenza emission babenabatwana abe-10 naba-zukulwana a ekuqikelelwa ukuba bayi50 andazi ukuba baphila kanjani, bezimisson za-seWisile ngoba babethembele kwicawe. Babe fumana ukutya nemali yabo kwabantu becawe, icawe ingananto ezinindzi yokuba nika. Babengakwazi ukuhlala nabobonke abantwana babo (bahlala kwindawo ezi-16, apho utamkhulu wam waqala wade was-weleka behamba) omakazi nomalume wam bahlale kuzozonke indawe emzansi, indlela nam ndakhuliswa ngayo.

Umsebeni wam uthetha ngosebenzi wotamkhulu wam nomakhulu, inedlela babephila ngayo, ubundzima kwemphilo yabo, nedlela abatwana babo baphila ngayo, ngenxa yokuba babe nabazali ababesebenza kwimission. Ndifuna ubabeka kwindawo abazange ba vum-elwe ukuyingena, ngenxayama xeshe babephila ngayo, kwindawo babengavumelwanga kuyo. Indawo utamkhulu wam agayivuyela ukungena kuyo.



THULISILE
SIGUCA

Rhodes Chapel,
St Peter’s Campus



"Man the Masterpiece"

The leather-bound volume "Man the Masterpiece" by JH Kellog MD, was given to my husband's great grandfather in 1896 as a coming of age gift and has been passed down through the generations onto my sons. It is in essence a 'how-to' guide; advice for young men on how to conduct themselves. Patriarchy as a social system is still well entrenched in Eastern Cape life, and the rituals and performances of masculinity that reinforce and ensure the continuation of the structure are so accepted as 'normal' that they are often unquestioned. From one generation onto the next traditions are passed, passed times are re-enacted and young minds take on an identity that is burdened with the histories of their heritage. The device of the colonial portrait frames works as a referent to a framed or restricted way of seeing and understanding life, one that is inherited and therefore generationally repeated, perpetuating an imagined reality.

Throughout my life I have been surrounded by men, growing up only with brothers and now, the mother of sons only. With a suffocating resentfulness, I have tried to disrupt a patriarchal way of thinking in our home; it hasn't been quite so simple though.



JUSTINE KNOWLES

Fort Selwyn,
1820 Settlers Monument



The Nadir Point

I have been photographing built environments, focusing on four main human basic needs: food, water, shelter and community. Although these photographs never include human beings, they are clearly about human behavior and a compulsion to observe under controlled circumstances.

This is a key implication of its title, The Nadir Point, where photographs mark out spaces inhabited by the viewer's imagination rather than physical bodies. We see more than is actually there; we see ourselves. This shock of recognition can be unsettling. It is even surprising to inspect these same spaces years later and find them — unchanged.

The interpretive possibilities of these photographs allow the viewer to pause — if only momentarily — to consider the ceaseless flow of art-world trends and critical vocabularies; social, economic, political and environmental concerns. In such an exercise, the images in The Nadir Point remain fixed in their formality, but capable of carrying various meanings, providing both a critique of the synoptic or altruistic approach and an argument for acknowledging minimalism and incrementalism as a means of achieving basic human shelter and as part of the process of personal self-actualisation.



MARK GODFREY

Monument Gallery,
1820 Settlers Monument



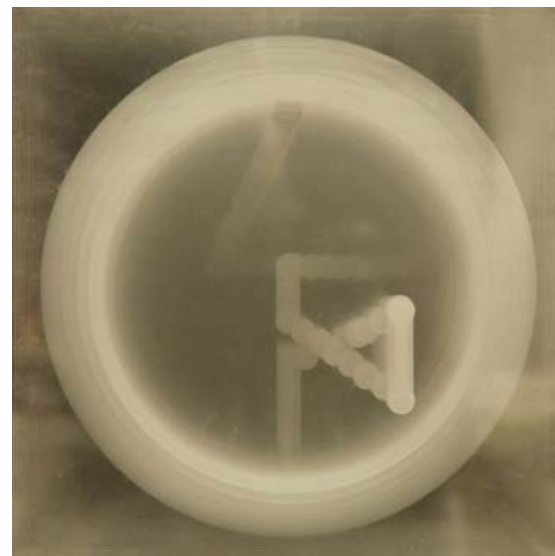
Interlaced Terrains

Wi-fi is something that cannot be directly physically felt yet it surrounds most of our living and working spaces. Wi-fi allows for wireless internet access that is available to those who have a password for the particular router in that region, if a password is required. The range of a particular router can stretch from anything from a few rooms to many square kilometers and because of the increasing demand for wireless internet, often more than one wi-fi access point is accessible in a particular region. This means that the wi-fi signals that stretch out over their particular terrain can come into contact with other wi-fi signals meaning that a nest like structure can become present when more than one router is sending out wi-fi signals in a particular region. These intertwined signals are ephemeral and cannot be physically seen without the use of particular devices, such as applications, that analyses the strength and extent of the wi-fi.



SHAY BROWN

Monument Gallery,
1820 Settlers Monument



Gaps in Seeing / here neither there

While we operate from insights of the visible and tangible, it is often in the gaps in seeing that we find our most concrete interfaces between objects, others and ourselves.

How fantastical and bizarre is the interaction between any two people — that we each operate within our own network of histories and experiences and yet manage to alchemise a single shared understanding at all.

How outlandish and incredible are those frequent moments where we discover that a chance-encounter inexplicably involves a mutual person or experience.

How remarkable is it that we constantly and unknowingly arrange a random collection of parts into a categorical and understandable whole.

So when sifting through the world and artistry of another profession, the dental practice simply became an exquisite platform of deconstruction, misappropriation and the finding of new imaginaries. It opened a space in which to investigate the interface of overlapping but divergent labours — the ‘bite’ on a copper plate, the ‘impression’ of print and the ‘cast’ of a mould — and so to explore the ‘unseeable’ that operates between others and the self, the ever-constant and concrete phenomenon of the ‘neither-here-nor-there’.



KIRSTY
HAYDEN-SMITH

Rehearsal Room,
1820 Settlers Monument



Not the Daddy

There once was a girl without a dad
So she set out to find one, to make her less sad
Along the road she happened to see
A man like a giant toad, watching TV
‘Could this be him?’ she dared to think
Then she heard a din, and before she could blink
He started to croak and curse and yell
Using words she didn’t understand too well
So she ran and ran, away from this baddie
This Frogman — he was not the daddy

Next up she found a man watching a screen
With a big, porky belly — the biggest she’d seen
Could he be the dad she was trying to seek?
She sighed in relief and then started to speak
But before she could talk about why she was here
He squealed and bellowed and filled her with fear

She jumped aside, barely missing a smack
She wanted to run and to never look back
He hadn’t been nice this Hogman, had he?
He was worse than the frog —
he was not the daddy

Dejected, she laid her search to rest
But along came luck and showed her a nest
Inside it was sitting a mommy-like form
With elephant eyes, very gentle and warm
This creature was kind and held her tight
And kept her safe from the scary night

And thus the girl found what could make
her happy
In the arms of a mommy —
and not the daddy



NINA VAN TONDER

Gallery in the Round,
1820 Settlers Monument



MARI SCHULTZ

Side Stage,
1820 Settlers Monument

Umbra

We are all going to die. And so we search, and we measure, and we deconstruct things in order to understand and find some certainty, some kind of way to preserve things, and some kind of safety from our imminent degeneration.

*Julle sit onder swart telescope
en kyk na die son
Tot julle besef dat julle nooit daar sal kom. Pateties bepaaljulle dan ligjare
en vertel dat die son as't ware
Inkrimp en eendag gaan verdwyn.*

*Ons sit maar hoog op die windpomp
en kyk hoe die son sy kop stamp
teen die rant
hoe hy bloei
hoe die vaal lug gloei
hoe die bome tot silhoeete verskroei.*

-Excerpt from *Wetenskapmannetjies* (Small Science Men) by Antjie Krog

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FINE ART

Graduate Exhibitions

photography **SHALOM MUSHWANA**
design **WALKERDIGITAL.CO.ZA**
printing **THE REPRO HOUSE**