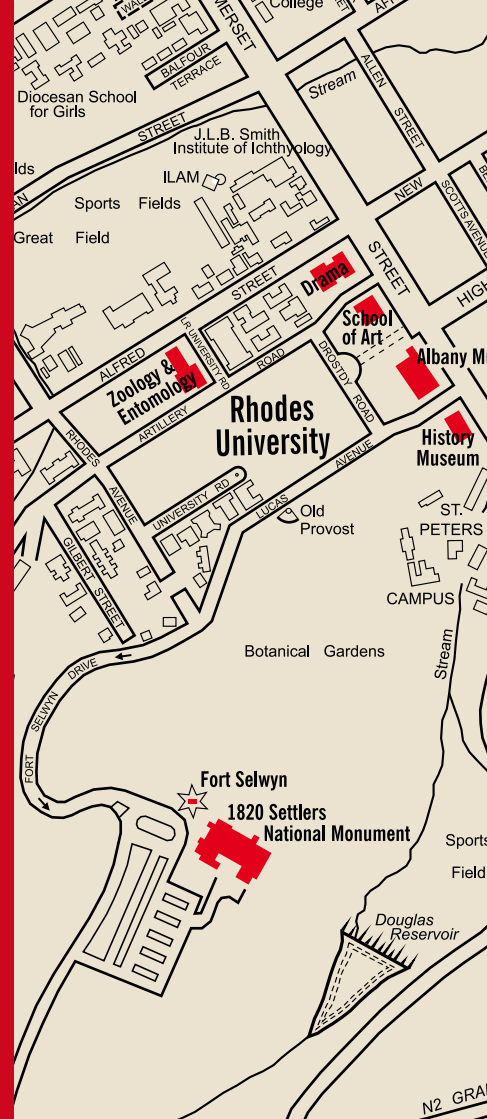


# RHODESFINE ART

## graduate exhibitions

2010



Whitney Ashton Turner

Ruth Nussbaum

Martin Lund

Rebekah Spyker

Willem Venter

Jessica Foli

Amirah M Tajdin

Nicole Robinson

Jarrett Erasmus

Mary Hensman

Amie Tarr

Cassandra Wilmot

Lynne Avis

Daniel Hewson

Nyaniso Lindi

Mathias Chirombo

Krystal Kruger

Candice Cruse

Jo Higgins

Pips Heydenrych

Siphesihle Biyela

Warren Kernick

Xanthé Jackson

Ivy Kulundu

Emalie Bingham

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## FOREWORD

The work exhibited on the 2010 Graduate Exhibition is the culmination of four years of Bachelor of Fine Art study by twenty-five emerging artists. In their final year, our students are required to conceptualise and produce a cohesive exhibition in a manner that is largely self-directed. The result is a range of submissions which differ significantly in subject matter and technique, within and across the media of painting, printmaking, sculpture, photography, digital arts, drawing, performance and installation.

Once again, our Graduate Exhibition takes the form of a walkabout to a number of venues on Rhodes Campus and in Grahamstown, enabling viewers to engage with submissions in their entirety. In many cases, the choice of venue is itself significant. This catalogue serves to introduce each submission and to communicate, in the students' own words, the ideas informing their work.

For many students, the Graduate Exhibition is an opportunity to exhibit publicly for the first time; as such it is an important rite of passage. On behalf of the Rhodes University Fine Art Department, I would like to congratulate the class of 2010 and to wish them well in their future endeavours. I would also like to thank my colleagues in both Studio Practice and Art History & Visual Culture. The inventiveness, conceptual rigour and technical finesse evident in the work represented here bears testimony to the high calibre of our students as well as our staff.

**Maureen de Jager**



## WHITNEY ASHTON TURNER

### Overture

Performance is ephemeral and fleeting. It only exists for as long as it is being performed and for as long as it is being watched. Thus, the bigger the audience, the more 'real' my work becomes. It is for this reason that the exhibition occupies a starting space — an opening point for the entire audience about to embark on this evening.

The main part of my exhibition consists of a number of performances which have been recorded. These recordings represent nothing tangible — they are merely a collection of images, evidence of something that was, or something that could possibly have been... Who knows?

The word 'Overture' refers to an offer that indicates readiness to undertake a course of action or open a relationship. This is my offer: a promise of possibility.





## RUTH NUSSBAUM

### The Beach

Over the past ten months, I have explored the unique dynamics of people living in small seaside towns and villages along the Eastern Cape coastline. It became apparent to me that the beach is the focal point and common space shared amongst these locals. The multiple uses of this single space to an entire community of varying characters became a theme of intrigue for me.

By setting up a makeshift outdoor 'studio', I created a space of my own that subjects could choose to step into and become a part of. The inclusion of a backdrop allowed me to separate the individuals from their environment, thus highlighting their individual characteristics or purpose for visiting the seaside. The aim is to bring to light distinctions between the varied uses these spaces have for different people on a daily basis.

Despite the obvious fingerprint of the photographer in this series, the friendly locals of the seaside towns are represented as themselves.





## MARTIN LUND

### Desire/Delirium

The work entails a fusion of past and present regimes of representation. Clement Greenberg's idea of 'flatness, consciousness of shape and brushstroke' brought about by the Abstract Expressionists is complemented by the proverbial posturing of urban art aesthetic and absurdity. The styles are, however, doused by a feel of Pop, the first Post-Modern movement used as a means of deflating the notions of high seriousness.

The work is intended to be unnerving. It is in a sense an automatism, in the impulsive application of paint and in the arbitrary relation of figures. While the works were intended to function void of a set narrative, the rising themes of aggression and stylistic tensions have come to light. The abstract, painterly playfulness explores the contrasting notions of a home-like comfort and a seemingly violent delirium, one that may be attributed to the hostility and dynamism of a day-to-day Westernised existence. This is contrasted with the uncanny relations and tensions formed between the figures, both hostile and absurd. Each work is different in itself, yet there is an ongoing theme of improbability and forgotten control, existing in a state between the real and surreal.







## REBEKAH SPYKER

### All that is Gold is Rusting

Keren is 6  $\frac{3}{4}$ . She hates pumpkin and having her hair brushed. Her biggest fear is to meet the wolves that chased Belle through the forest in *Beauty and The Beast*. She likes to climb onto the kitchen counter and make herself toast with syrup. Keren is not keen on going to grade one next year because then she will have to start doing homework, and believes that if everyone in the world destroyed their clocks time would stop.

I am interested in creating art in a way that is intuitive and unbound. This attraction stems from the desire to let go of all inhibitions caused by restrictive expectations and obsessive rationalising of art ideas which had become so familiar and ingrained in the thought processes of my art production. This predicament becomes the underlying theme of the exhibition. Another significant element has been the process of production through the welcoming of spontaneous imaginings inspired by the relationships I share with my two younger sisters. *All that is Gold is Rusting* deals with the uncomfortable groans of being outgrown.





## WILLEM VENTER

### Lylekkerland

'Lylekkerland' references 'Luilekkerland', the Dutch equivalent to the Land of Cockaigne: a concept which, in medieval times, referred to a mythical land of plenty. It is an imaginary place in which all of one's desires could be instantly satisfied — a wishful land of pleasure.

'Luilekkerland', which translates into 'lazy fun land' or 'lazy luscious land', has been manipulated to create a play on words. The word 'lui' (lazy) has been replaced with the Afrikaans word 'ly', which means 'to suffer'.

This series of drawings focuses on laughter as the physiological response to pleasure. There is however, innate violence in the act of laughing. The facial muscles contract while the epiglottis half closes the larynx, upsetting the respiratory system. Breathing becomes irregular and more difficult. When the laughter becomes more intense the tear ducts are activated. The face becomes red or even purple in some cases. The mouth opens and closes while the struggle for oxygen intake continues. After extended periods of laughing, one may reach a threshold where pleasure turns into pain and the act becomes unbearable.







## JESSICA PHILILE MAWUIENA FOLI

### Happily Ever After?

These works were inspired by African-American fairytale books that were given to me by my aunt when I was younger. I was fascinated by the 'black' protagonists (who looked like me) in comparison to the 'lily-white' characters in the books that I encountered as a child at school and in libraries.

The life-size sculptures on *Happily Ever After?* — alluding to Red Riding Hood, Snow White, Cinderella and Rapunzel — are cast in black cement, this being a pun on skin colour and an inversion of the bright, garish colours normally associated with fairytales. Cement as a medium is heavy and weighted and fairytales in themselves have underlying meanings that surpass, and often contradict, the sugar-coated ending of 'happily ever after'. These themes are further explored in a video piece entitled *Phela Phela Ngantsomi* ('That's how the story ends') and a dinner-table installation which references all the fairytale characters who were eaten or almost eaten.





## AMIRAH M TAJDIN

### The Garish Melancholy of Everywhere and Nowhere

Through the visual language of photography, I've attempted to capture the beautiful tension of city life: the loneliness of existing in cities, while, ironically, being surrounded all the time by hundreds of other souls.

My fascination is with the evocations of familiarity in characters and spaces that we come across in every city the world over - courtesy of globalisation, migration and the universality of the human spirit.

In doing this, I traversed nine cities across America, the Middle East and South Africa to translate, narrate and consequently share this sense of urban ritualism which I feel is nothing short of poetic verse that spells out documentary fictions.





## NICOLE ROBINSON

### De-Compose

“Who saw him die?  
‘I’ said the fly,  
‘With my little eye, I saw him die.’” — Anon. *Who Killed Cock Robin?*

The inspiration for this project originated from found slides of insects. The slides which are used for teaching entomology had an exciting beauty to them that was in contrast to my aversion to insects. I had previously been thinking of the boundaries which we create to keep certain things away from ourselves. The idea of death and forensic entomology formed a link to pull the slides into an interesting context.

Forensic entomology involves studying the insects found in, on and around a corpse. Depending on what insects, eggs and larvae are found and at what stages of development they are found in, the entomologist can determine the time of death of the victim. Death and disease are two things which we work hard to keep at bay; death represents the unknown and the final boundary to cross. These images represent the beautiful insects which are attracted by death, and create life from it.





## JARRETT ERASMUS

### Plures Tectonicus (Many Mansions)

“In my father’s house are many mansions...” — John 14:2

My body of work takes its departure from the above quote where Jesus speaks to his disciples promising them that there is a place for them in heaven. Today governments act as our ‘messiahs’ since they are the institutions appointed by their public to take care of their people, and with the public’s trust bestowed upon the government, a great responsibility is asked of them which they promise to uphold. With the biblical quote in mind, I chose to focus my work on the issue of housing and the promise made to the people who have no means of obtaining shelter other than from their government. Government housing in this country can hardly be considered as sufficient living space for a family of destitute human beings, but every year government promises to spend more on housing plans, and what happens instead? We spend billions to host the biggest sporting event in the world.

I want my work to convey the instability of this promise made to the people, not by purposefully depicting crudely constructed buildings, but rather that the images themselves appear as unstable and inconsistent throughout each canvas as the promises and the people’s faith in delivery.







## MARY HENSMAN

### Small Moments

This exploration came about through trying to create a social documentary on tattoo artists in Grahamstown. In this research I tried to document their work and the places they inhabited. I found them to be particularly interesting because their interests and ways of operating were out of my comfort zone and they live a completely different life to what I do; exploring and pushing the boundaries of the body through body hanging and performance piercings as well as 'excessive' tattooing on themselves.

Whilst exploring these spaces, I became interested in the 'small moments' that were not specifically focused on the subjects of my research but rather incidental vignettes that took place around this 'sub culture', the places they go and the things that they do... capturing moments out the corner of my eye.







## AMIE TARR

### Childhood Nostalgia

As the title suggests, the works on *Childhood Nostalgia* refer to the nostalgia with which I remember my childhood years. I spent the first seven years of my life as an only child, before the birth of my twin brothers. It is these first seven years for which I feel nostalgic, and it is to these years that *Childhood Nostalgia* alludes. For the seven-year-old me, the birth of my twin brothers was traumatic. I did not like the fact that all the attention had shifted to them and that I had been displaced. The advent of constant sibling rivalry prompted me to think about my life before the twins as an idealised, utopian space which became tainted by my brothers, literally and metaphorically (hence the stains and burns ‘defacing’ some of my sculptures). Certain works also reference the people who were most important to me back then. My grandmother, who recently passed away, was a constant source of comfort during my formative years: I have memorialised her by transforming her many handmade dresses into a bedspread of fabric roses. In another work, the vacuum-packed toys relate to my parents, who obsessively kept all my childhood toys in their own nostalgic attempts to preserve the past.





## CASSANDRA WILMOT

### Scan

This body of work is comprised of three interrelated series which were inspired by objects of duality or ambiguity — objects tentatively poised on a fine line between being constructive and destructive.

Irony is an undercurrent which runs throughout the three series: the irony of presenting airline passengers with objects which could be used for harmful ends even after rigorous security measures, and the irony of the invasive full body scans which require vulnerability and exposure for one's security.

The works in their entirety therefore comment on the ostensible or possible threat of mundane objects and the way that picturing them in certain ways can make one re-consider their innocence.

More obviously, the works also explore notions around privacy and access, personal security and policing by alluding to contentious airport full body security scans, the aesthetic of the x-ray, and the sealed, complimentary utensils given to passengers on airplanes.







## LYNNE AVIS

### Fissures

This work is an exploration of the flaws found within myself and others, from the slight unnoticeable fault to the defects we all hide. It explores the self as flawed through the representation of cracks and fissures in plates and later developing through the medium of plaster and kaolin (a substance used in the creation of porcelain).

Through the process of creating and planning this work I have drawn on the failings found within myself and represented them in such a way that others can relate to this work, realising, accepting and working through the flaws and problems which we all hold within ourselves.





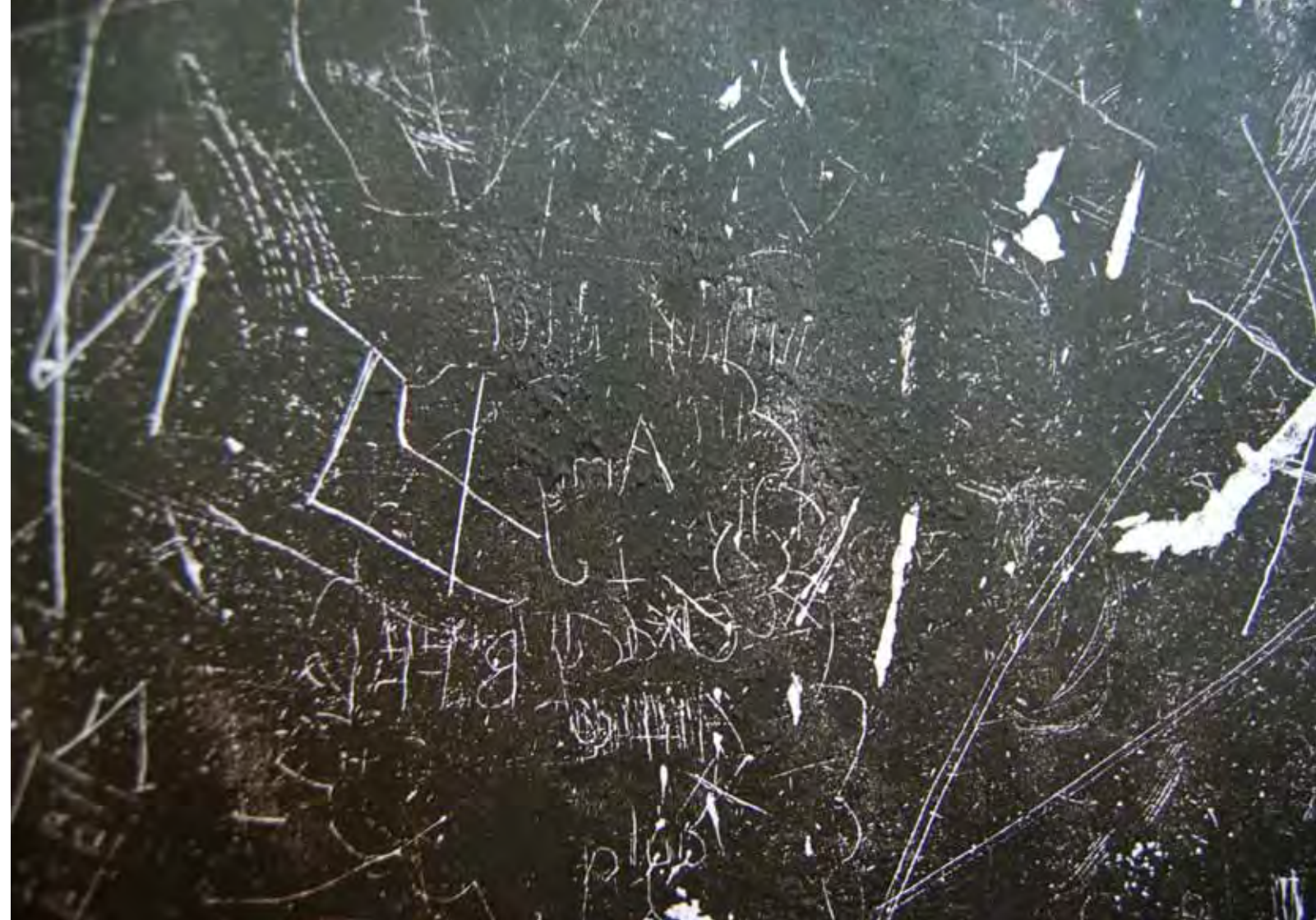


## DANIEL HEWSON

### Class

This installation attempts to disrupt the classroom space. The alteration of a fixed space questions the identities of a classroom space and the individuals who use these spaces. By altering the space of a classroom, the viewers' perspective of the space is shifted.

The process of offset relief printmaking has captured the varying textures of the surfaces found in a classroom. This reveals the disruption evident in such a controlled environment. The theme of disruption is further investigated by printing the engravings and marks found on school desks and benches. Engraving an individual motif or name is an attempt to separate oneself from the many that pass through educational systems.





## NYANISO LINDI

### Hybrid

Hybrid — an offspring resulting from cross-breeding

Hybrids are mythological creatures combining body parts of more than one species. They can be classified as partly human hybrids (such as mermaids or centaurs), and non-human hybrids combining two or more animal species.

For this show, the hybrid constitutes a cross-breeding between what is considered to be fictional and what is considered to be real or true. Basic domestic objects are fused with representations of the human body. The work is influenced by myth, history, dreams and day to day experiences but most importantly it is an introspection of what my name entails.

My name is 'Nyaniso' which, translated directly into English, means 'truth' or 'reality'. Sometimes when parents give us these names they expect us to live up to them and to be ambassadors of the meanings these names carry. For many years I have been struggling to find a balance between the world I live in and the kind of name that was chosen for me.







## MATHIAS CHIROMBO

### Sacred Spaces

“Like the sun at noonday, mysticism explains everything else by the blaze of its own ... invisibility.” — G.K. Chesterton

In Shona tradition a sacred space, *nzvimbo inoera*, is a natural place where spirits are present. Traditional laws of access often protect these spaces as they are treated with caution and respect due to the life force or spirits they hold. They possess the ability to evoke a special state of mind as well as to catalyse a deeper spiritual awareness or altered state. As much as these spaces are wellsprings of spiritual vision and healing they can also produce a sense of unease or fear because of the unknown spiritual elements. It is in this space of knowing yet not knowing, of mystery and of understanding what we cannot always explain, that sacredness exists.

This series of paintings seeks to explore this physical landscape in which spiritual forces reside, and to arouse in the viewer a questioning and reflection of the origin and overlap between the physical and spirit worlds and their personal relation to each.





## KRYSTAL KRUGER

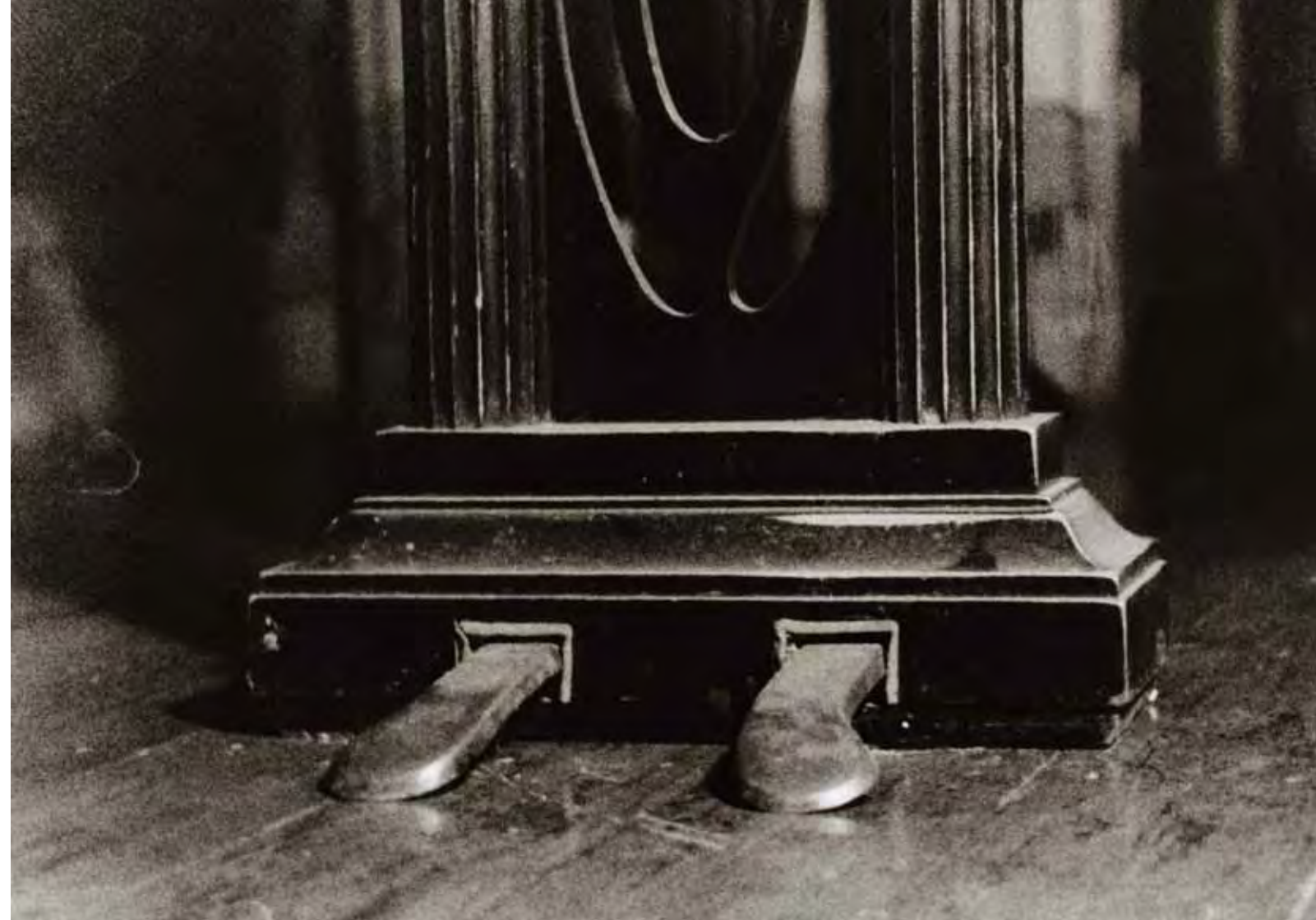
Kaburu

“It remains for us a painful matter that Christians who had a church in a land for 45 years, left only a building when they left the country.”  
— Anon. (unknown clergyman)

In 1906 families from South Africa packed their belongings and started their trek towards a new life up in the highlands of Kenya. Six hundred and twenty four families made the East African country their home. Today, there is no evidence to prove that the Afrikaners were ever there, only stories, and a mountain of family slides that my father inherited.

This work became a journey for me, a journey to learn about my family’s history, and follow in my father’s footsteps as he took me to visit the last remaining shreds of an era that one would not have noticed if one had not been looking for them. I wanted to capture what had been and what remains, and to attempt to bring to light this forgotten era.

The title, *Kaburu*, is Swahili for ‘Boer’.





## CANDICE CRUSE

### The Context is in the Title

This body of work is an exploration of art historical references from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in which women were displayed together in intimate poses. Through a performative, self-reflexive exercise, I inserted myself into the images to embody each character. This resulted in a series of strangely disconnected photographic references on which I based my drawings.

Through the drawing process, I became aware that the work emphasized the space of the absent other. By stripping the work of all contexts i.e. time period, clothing, the background and the interaction with the missing figures, the drawings became decontextualised. Thus, the body of work evokes an enhanced sense of loss and absence.







## JO HIGGINS

### Perception

Ultimately this exhibition stems from a personal obsession with looking, and the way in which this seemingly simple act renders our everyday surroundings strange and unfamiliar. Photography is the perfect investigative tool to yield the real surreal, and by which to explore the banal yet bizarre places we inhabit yet overlook daily.

This series is both the documentation and interpretation of supposedly public, but essentially private spaces. The knowledge of the space, provided merely by each title, changes the perspective of the viewer allowing the work to become about the abstract and the conceptual. The detail depicted in each image serves to create a narrative and disturb the viewer's reading of the photograph. A ruptured ceiling becomes bodily in the context of a funeral home's mortuary. Each photograph, in all of its banality, is then a subjective interpretation of an objective reality where the photograph's meaning is essentially left open. The photographs become products of projections and introjections on the part of the viewer.





## PIPS HEYDENRYCH

### Human Nature

We are creatures of habit. Stemming from our innate desire for routine and order is the obsessive need of humans to constantly construct the world that we inhabit. With the bustle of modern life we specifically engineer spaces, mini 'paradises', to create the feeling of escaping the everyday. This exhibition centres on people's insatiable need for control and beautification.

The nature of the double frame exposure technique adopted in each image plays on the element of chance, opposing the instinctive notion of control. The images superimposed over each other juxtapose the 'paradise' we live in with the rules that we have to abide by to retain an 'orderly' life. Each individual photograph has an image of nature as well as an image of how humans impose their control over what is supposedly natural. The images bring out an awareness of the banal and everyday 'eyesores' to which we turn a blind eye, merged with the aesthetic perspective we strive to control. Without the rules and structures of control, the beautiful would be impossible to achieve.







## SIPHESIHLE BIYELA

### Locked withIN

In my life, I have been influenced by many people especially my family, my friends and members of my church. These people have been instrumental in developing the way I look at things, how I deal with things and how I live my life. Although they have been influential leaders in terms of guidance, wisdom and advice, I have also often found myself without my own voice or original opinions. My thoughts and words sometimes seem to be those of the people who have had influence over me rather than my own.

In this series of portraits of my family, friends and religious leaders, I have worked with the symbolism of locks inscribed into or embossed onto the works. The technical drawings of the inner workings of locks have a dual meaning of both protection and trapping. While I have had the privilege of having been protected all my life, I have realised that I cannot live only through other people's ideas.





## WARREN KERNICK

### Ruptured

Creatures and monsters take root in one's imagination and grow to become very real. As a child escapes into the seemingly safe confines of his or her imagination, the monsters within gain favour. So too does the fascination with 'real' or fictive entities who live according to different norms and discourses.

These are the themes explored in *Ruptured*, an installation combining elements of the human form with animal skulls and skins.

I chose to use people close to me as the foundation from which my monsters were realised, suggesting that the monstrous is not something alien and unfamiliar but something we all recognise, to a certain extent, in ourselves and each other.

The figures were cast in expandable polyurethane foam, which literally ruptured through the moulds in places adding to the tension between animal and human, the formless and its containment. It is as if there is a deep confusion within each creature as to direction of its transition between these two worlds: between life and death, decay and preservation, the corpse and its renewal in another form.





## XANTHÉ JACKSON

### Trace

Metal is seemingly masculine in its strength but can be feminine in its beauty. Its strength is a façade as it is vulnerable in its pliability: sheets of metal can be gouged, cut, bent, manipulated and sculpted relatively easily. Despite its apparent resilience and stubbornness, metal bears the marks of its transition on its surface in the form of dents, discolouration and oxidation.

I relate to this medium on a personal level because of this. For the sculptures in this exhibition, I traced basic, modular shapes onto sheets of mild steel, cut them out, and assembled them into misshapen orbs. The traces of process, and the tension between resilience and vulnerability evident in these works, makes each orb a self-portrait of sorts.







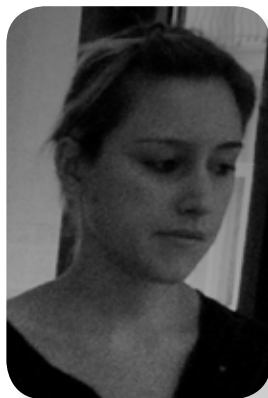
## IVY KULUNDU

### Breaking Water

This exhibition explores the transient nature of one's physicality and emotions. Using ice as a metaphor for change – which is inevitable, unavoidable and an integral part of life – I attempt to visually articulate my emotional and physical journey during pregnancy.

The choice of installation/performance and digital components in this exhibition highlights the multiple levels and layers of being in utero, as well as the blur between the private and public experience faced. This ever-evolving slippery juxtaposition and tension, of joy and anxiety, form and formlessness, knowledge and the unknown, are tentatively framed – nervously awaiting the breaking of water.





## EMALIE BINGHAM

I threw a ball for Baxter but it was actually a grenade but he caught it so gently no one heard

A couple of years ago I made a rather dismal attempt at constructing a dissolving three-dimensional figure out of scraps of cut up board and paper.

The parts were sketched out roughly in charcoal, then cut at conflicting, awkward angles and drawn hastily together by a piece of thread. The thing clung to itself tenuously with the aid of a bit of tape, paper and glue, slapped on only as an afterthought. Finally the entire half-work was doused in coloured inks and left to disintegrate quietly in the corner of my studio.

For months she dangled awkwardly above my make-shift studio space. Barely-assembled, cross-legged with a single arm, handleless and headless, she was to me a perfect expression of the intolerable and inevitably humorous process of trying. Not just trying to create, but trying to be. The increasing abstraction of form on account of her imminent collapse only endeared her to me all the more.

Eventually and reluctantly her transitory frame disappeared. But her relentless presence has sought residence in every thing I touch to twist or slice.

This work is her wake, and an anti-monumental ode to her making.



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