



"This is the paradox of live art—that it articulates the impossibility of securing presence (the graspability of the 'now', as well as the immediacy of the artist) even as it claims to define itself on the basis of doing so. Performance art thus exposes the radical conundrum that continually bedevils human existence (not to mention performance and art theory): the impossibility of knowing, keeping, or anchoring the present (present experience) without it slipping away".

Amelia Jones, "Performance, Live or Dead" in *Art Journal*, Fall 2011, p34.

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MAKING WAY PERFORMANCES

2012

Performances from the MAKING WAY exhibition at the 2012 National Arts Festival, Grahamstown.

CURATOR:
Ruth Simbao

PERFORMANCE ARTISTS:
Athi-Patra Ruga
Doung Anwar Jahangeer
Gerald Machona
Randolph Hartzenberg

www.makingway.co.za



Catalogue insert published by ViPAA (Visual and Performing Arts of Africa)
www.research-africa-arts.com

2013

© Text: Ruth Simbao
© Photographs: Ruth Simbao (images for Ruga, Jahangeer and Hartzenberg)
© Photographs: Mark Wilby and Paul Greenway (images for Machona)

Front cover: Doung Anwar Jahangeer (*The Other Side with the Matebese Family*)
Back cover: Randolph Hartzenberg (*Three Days*)

Layout: Cathy Lambley. Printer: Repro House, Port Elizabeth.
Brochure is funded by the Eastern Cape Provincial Arts and Culture Council.



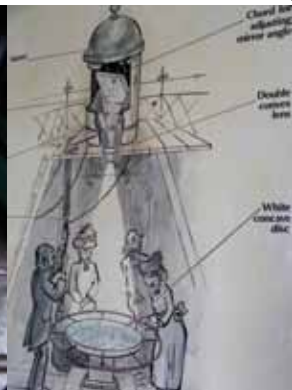
Athi-Patra Ruga

*Performance Obscura**



* The idea for this performance was developed in collaboration with Mikhael Subotzky.

Venue: Grahamstown streets in the vicinity of the Albany Museum *camera obscura*.
All photos by Ruth Simbao

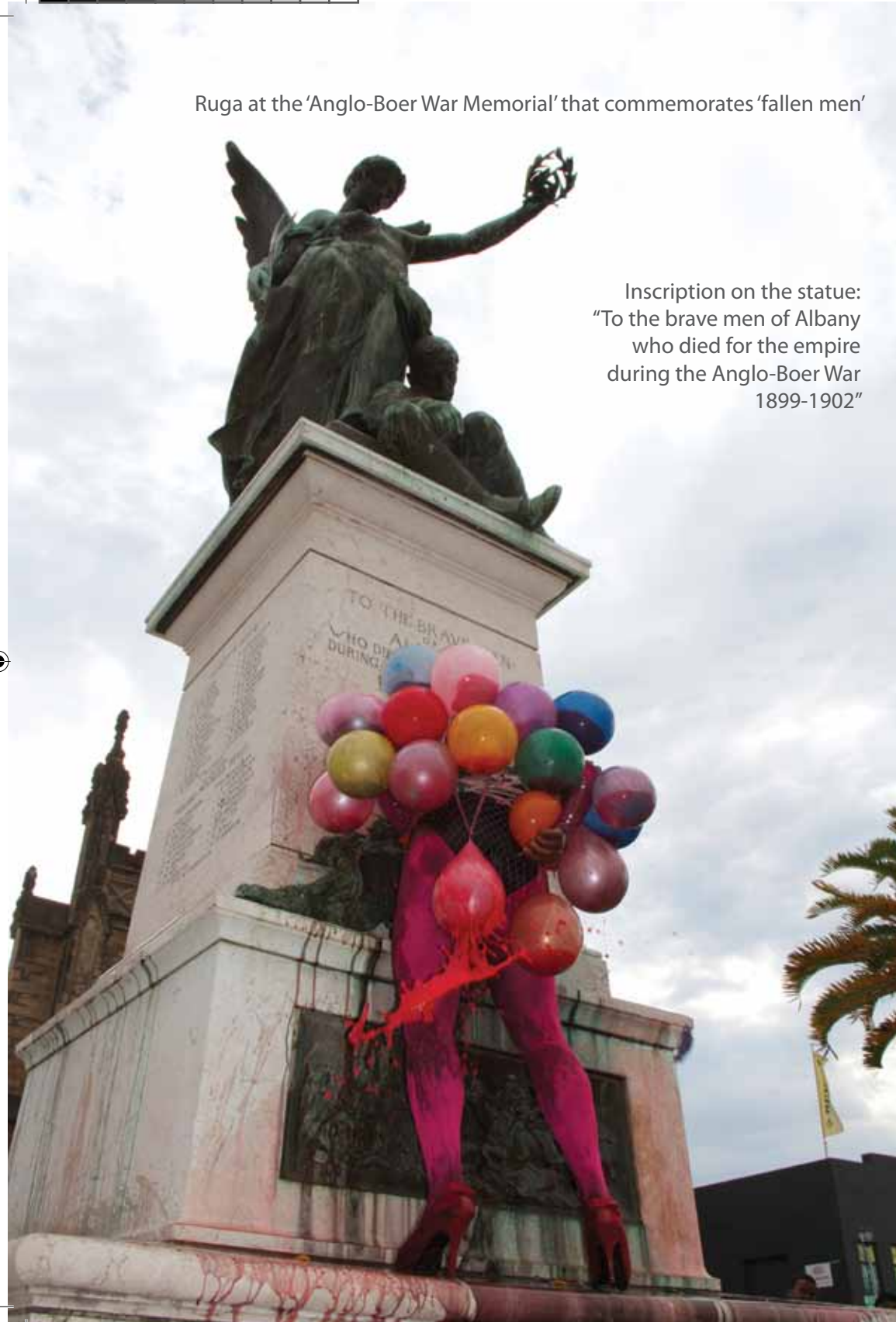


Official audience members attempted to view Athi-Patra Ruga's performance through Grahamstown's 19th century *camera obscura*. However, confined in the tower at prescribed times, this ticket-holding audience missed the 'moments of danger' down below. On the street, Ruga returned the gaze of the cloistered 'viewers' who, ironically, were robbed of satisfactory vision. As such, this Victorian tool of surveillance was trumped by the gritty action below that encompassed sounds, smells and emotions that the elevated audience was unable to grasp.

"In what I see as the best writing on live art...performance has been thought of not as confirming presence but as provoking, precisely, 'moments of danger' that flash up and (if we are open to it) open the possibility for acknowledging the impossible folds of time that defeat the desire to write history in the old-fashioned, art-historical sense as a final and true choreography of objects progressing over time. The evanescent nature of a live act reminds us that we cannot fully know or codify the past..."
Amelia Jones, "Performance, Live or Dead" in *Art Journal*, Fall 2011, p34.



Ruga at the 'Anglo-Boer War Memorial' that commemorates 'fallen men'



Inscription on the statue:
"To the brave men of Albany
who died for the empire
during the Anglo-Boer War
1899-1902"

The Future White Woman of Azania



Venue: Provost Prison, Grahamstown.
All photos by Ruth Simbao



Doung Anwar Jahangeer
The Other Side with the Matebese Family



Accompanied by a soundtrack of spanking, Athi-Patra Ruga performed *The Future White Woman of Azania* in the upper tower of the Provost Prison that is inspired by the architectural design of the panopticon surveillance machine.

Venue: Grounds of the 1820 Settlers National Monument, Grahamstown.
 All photos by Ruth Simbao



Painting the faces of the Settler Family, Jahangeer attempted to 'Africanise' the Settlers in a restorative gesture. Using clay from the earth, he symbolically brought them closer to the ground, questioning the role of the pedestal in its attempt to exalt the British Settlers.

While no formal pathway leads to the Settler Family statue, a number of passers by wandered over to examine the reformed statue, including a municipal worker wearing a bright orange uniform that mirrored the orange worker's overalls deliberately worn by Jahangeer. Rather than being voyeurs from cars on the N2 highway, local pedestrians and festival-goers composed, step by step, their own pathways towards this reanimated and revised colonial tale.



Doung Anwar Jahangeer
The Other Side (City Walk)



Venue: Streets of Grahamstown. All photos by Ruth Simbao

Jahangeer's City Walks are inspired by the writing of Walter Benjamin who describes the style of the walker, the flâneur, as "botanizing on the asphalt", for "only he who walks the road on foot learns the power it commands".

Benjamin 1983. *Charles Baudelaire: a lyric poet in the era of high capitalism*, p 36 and 1979; *One-Way Street*, p 50.



Leading his audience from the privileged town centre towards the township, Jahangeer points to cultural shifts along the way, observing how borders are erected, how signposts are framed and how the presence of walkers literally becomes enmeshed in the ground.



Gerald Machona
From China, with Love

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Machona explores China's rise as an industrial superpower, and its complex history of trade and new economic ties with African states. By stitching objects out of Zimbabwean dollars and then labeling them "Made in China" he raises important questions about China-Africa relations and global socio-economic shifts.

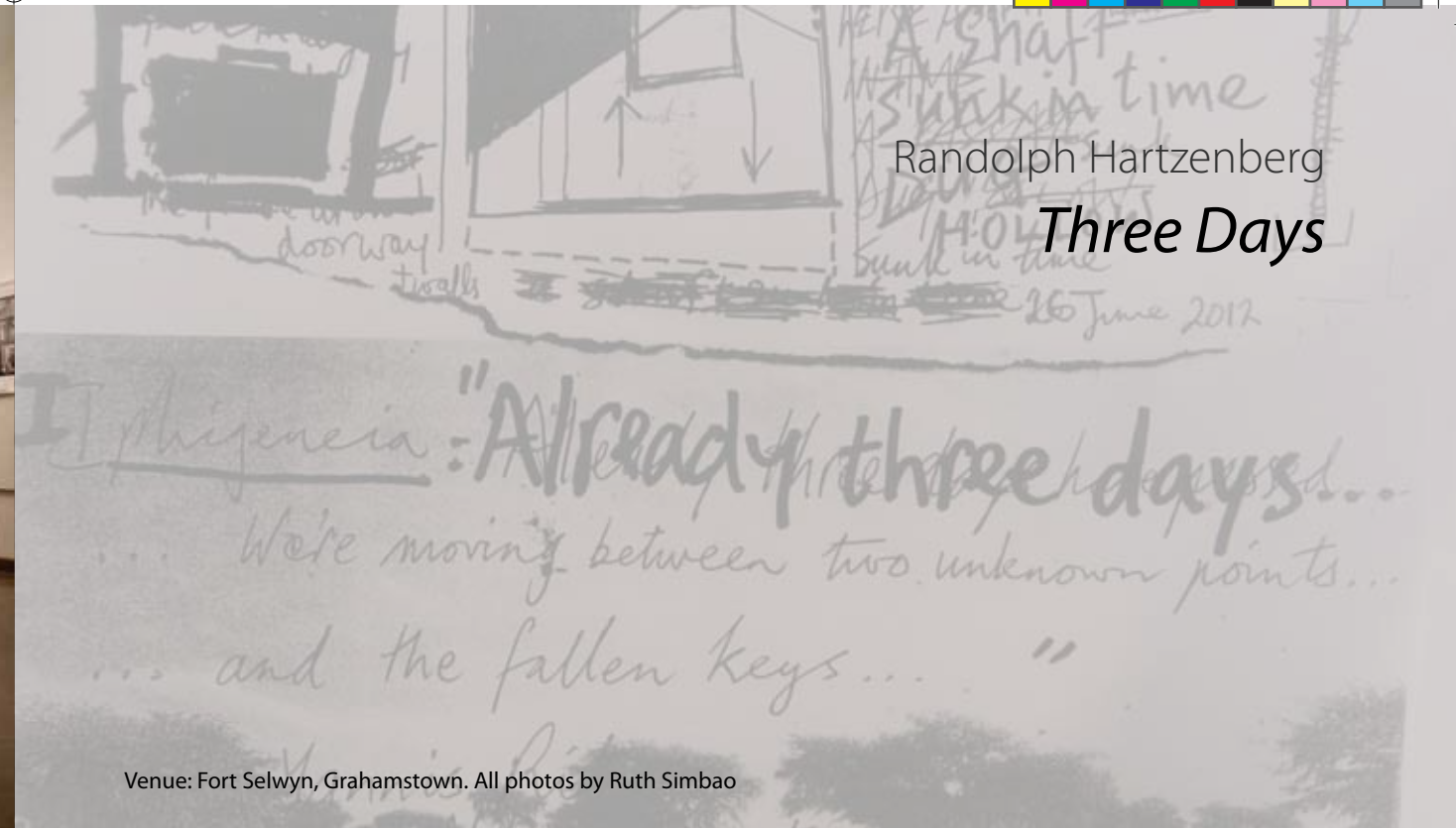
In all of his work Jahangeer relies on the corporeal experience of placing one foot in front of the other, as he literally steps out transformations of social space. While for many in South Africa, walking might be viewed as an unwelcome necessity due to meager resources, Jahangeer imbues this act with authority and sway, reminding us of the power that the road commands.



The Alumni Gallery in the Albany History Museum, Grahamstown
 Photos by Mark Wilby



Photos by Mark Wilby



Venue: Fort Selwyn, Grahamstown. All photos by Ruth Simbao



Photo by Paul Greenway

If you travel east far enough you end up in the west and if you go far enough west you end up in the east.

Decomissioned Zimbabwean dollars, USA dollars, Chinese RMB, fabric, foam padding, Velcro and nylon thread. Courtesy of the artist

