Pass, passing: Between frames of memory, cinema and the archive

by

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B.S. Broadcast Journalism, Emerson College 2009

submitted to

The Department of Architecture

in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Master of Science in Art, Culture and Technology

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Abstract:
This thesis explores the artistic process of producing a film, All We Have is Now, that is
about family and apartheid. The text traces various aspects of the film’s production
from the points of research, perspective, and representation. The thesis includes the
multitudes of challenges and considerations when producing work about a terrible
history and the barriers that have formed within the formal and informal sites of
memory: the collective memories of family and society, and the national and interna-
tional state and media archives. The thesis explores how one might produce artwork
that is complex and free of essentializing and simplistic representations, narratives,
and images of South Africa.

Recurring themes within the film and thesis include: memory and forgetting; the
notion of a centralizing truth; history and the present; racial segregation; cutting,
editing, and creating narratives; the position, power, and intention of the author and
artist as producer and presenter of narratives, images, and representations. How are
representations considered South African? How are they archived, reproduced, and
performed? Who gets to produce and reproduce, present and represent, play and
replay imageries and imaginaries in the realms of art and the archive, and for whom,
why, and to what end? The text will investigate in and through these questions and
themes in an essayistic manner of unfolding vignettes. The work is ongoing.

Keywords: memory; cinema; the archive; South Africa; apartheid; race; passing;
South African representation; South African art.

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THESIS STATEMENT AND METHODOLOGY

This thesis, through the mediums of photography, film, and writing, explores the architectures that can prescribe and frame narratives and representation. Through the various acts of framing, focussing, collecting, organizing, archiving, assembling, constructing, and reflecting, the thesis traces some of the questions and barriers present in practices of representation that can simplify and distort.

The process presented in this paper follows the author's production of the film, *All We Have is Now*. Filming and editing is often guided by intuition and a spirit of exploration through gestures of seeing and re-seeing, studying and meditating, whereby a "knowing" or "knowledge" of the subject is produced. The subject here is tracing the history of my family who lived between the frames of race during apartheid.

Much of my time at MIT has been focussed on developing a language in order to articulate my artistic practice. This thesis traces some of these articulations as they emerge and develop during filming. I, too, investigate my expectations and reservations about developing my artistic practice in relation to the personal subject matter and practice of art and question where the boundaries may lie. My position, and the position of the author and artist, is central to these questions.

Henk Bergdorf observes, "Artistic research invites 'unfinished thinking.'" The objective of this thesis is to analyze and investigate some of the intellectual problems I have engaged with in the production of *All We Have is Now*. My work does not suppose that any fixed or final understandings may be produced but rather, the thesis serves as multiple entry points into the complexity of traumatic national and personal histories, the question of the witness and viewer, and the artist as a cultural producer.

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M117(a)(2) Land Grant to Willem Adriaan Van der Stel, 1700. Considered one of the first land deeds on the Cape of Good Hope. Western Cape Archives and Records Service, Cape Town, South Africa 2016

*All We Have is Now* (2016)
M1/46 Baboons plundering a garden. Date unknown.
Western Cape Archives and Records Service, Cape Town, South Africa 2016
All We Have is Now (2016)
for mom, dad, Didì and Venetia.
it is a dry white season
dark leaves don't last, their brief lives dry out
and with a broken heart they dive down gently headed for the earth,
not even bleeding.
it is a dry white season brother,
only the trees know the pain as they stand still erect
dry like steel, their branches dry like wire
indeed it is a dry white season
but seasons come to pass.

For Don M. — Banned by Mongane Wally Serote
INTRODUCTION

IN 1998, FOUR YEARS AFTER South Africa's first democratic election, I was sixteen years old and out of school for most of 11th grade because my mother did not have the money to pay for school fees. I started waiting tables in the Tatham Art Gallery coffee shop, and though my wages were low, the job had the perk of free admission into the gallery. During this time, art stepped in as my formal education.

Eventually I was enrolled in a small vocational high school and while I caught up almost a year's worth of schoolwork, my education continued to be supplemented by the likes of Gerard Sekoto, Jane Alexander, Durant Sihlali, Cecil Skotnes, Penny Siopis, Willie Bester, William Kentridge, Santu Mofokeng, Sam Nzima, Dumile Feni et al. These artists articulated apartheid, expressed the threat and anxiety of a possible civil war, and grappled with the growing pains of the transition from apartheid to democracy in ways that no classroom could or would teach.

Many of the works evoked violence and violated bodies and expressed an angst and anguish towards apartheid's social landscape and many opened up the obscure and difficult world of enforced poverty and police-monitored township life. The photographer Sam Nzima, whose picture of a bloodied thirteen-year-old Hector Pieterson who died in the Soweto student protest in 19764 as a result of police open fire, helped draw international attention to the crisis in the townships and in the country. The image of Pieterson being carried by another student, Mbuyisa Makhu, his crying sister at their side, demonstrated the brutality of the police state on non-white civilians.

Jane Alexander demonstrated this warped South African landscape in her series, Butcher Boys (1985-86), where three twisted men's bodies have heads deformed into animals with wild eyes, horns poking out the skulls, no mouths. The sculptures were photographed in rubbish sites, suburbs, and city sidewalks around the country. The work suggested how the inhumane social landscape was morphing people into non-humans. It also suggested that the state's demons were manifesting in people's

3 Apartheid was the system of “separate development” of races in South Africa. The ideology was based upon a strict adherence to the construct of race. Apartheid has been understood as segregation but, Hendrik F. Verwoerd, known as the architect of apartheid, defined it as “separate development.”

4 The students were peacefully protesting against the implementation of Afrikaans and English as the mandatory first and second language requirements in schools when the police opened fire on them.
minds, protruding as brutal animal prosthetics.

J.M. Coetzee remarked in his acceptance speech for the Jerusalem Prize in 1987 that, "the deformed and stunted relations between human beings that were created under colonialism and exacerbated under what is loosely called apartheid, have their psychic representation in a deformed and stunted inner life." We would later see the continued deforming effect of apartheid in Coetzee's famous character, David Lurie, who becomes animal, specifically dog, in the Nobel winning novel, *Disgrace*.

Dumile Feni's sculpture, *Histories*, imagines apartheid as the end of the world. His works reside in the post-apocalyptic, his bodies are slave-animal-human-machine-labor. The apartheid-inflicted bodies of Feni's not only perform labor but become the ultimate modern capitalist vehicle-body of labor.

In the works of Alexander, Coetzee, and Feni, the human is no longer able to be human because of apartheid's social landscape. The once-human bodies are beyond human as they have been forced to become in-human from processing and internalizing the anti-human social landscape.

Nzima, Alexander, Coetzee, and Feni, along with many other artists, were censored under apartheid because their works were important articulations in furthering the understanding of the apartheid state. These works were acts of defiance and illuminations into the South African psyche. The images were important. And they continue.

The circulation of apartheid historic imagery has been promoted by post-apartheid administrations as a way of confronting the nation's past. The images and narratives have helped the country confront and deal with the legacy of apartheid, particularly in conjunction with the early goals of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. And this spirit of sharing oppressive imagery has helped the nation collectively heal with the help of the unifying agent, "The Rainbow Nation."

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7 Dumile Feni's sculpture, *Histories*, is located on Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, the former prison and now museum.
8 "The Rainbow Nation" was a term coined by Desmond Tutu in his speech in 1994: "Each of us is as intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country as are the famous jacaranda trees of Pretoria and the mimosa trees of the bushveld - a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world." President Nelson Mandela continued to use the term during his term as part of the symbol of unity for the "New South Africa".
As an artist producing a work on South African history, I have been interested in the question of how long the circulation of oppressive historical imagery might continue for? How might one embark on engaging and presenting material of victims and witnesses of apartheid without simplifying their images as performances of witnesses and victims of apartheid? In addition, at what point do these images of apartheid produce a “South African-ness” after apartheid? What idea and belief of South Africa is being considered important and innate and how is this idea and belief representable? Is “South African” and apartheid representable or do they exceed representation?

My experience of studying in an “art, culture and technology” program at a prestigious American university, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has enabled me to reflect on my position as an artist, a South African artist, a South African representative, and a South African representation. As Antonio Gramsci observed, one cannot have a position without considering one’s own inventory of historical traces. My threads can be traced to the experience of being a white South African woman born in the 1980s to a working class family of farmers, with six generations of settler/immigrant women on my mother’s side (United States, South Africa, Rhodesia, Britain, Italy, Sicily), and my paternal family whose buried and disavowed heritage of being coloured South Africans, I had little knowledge of.

I think it is important to define myself as a white South African woman because this shows that, while I was born into and grew up under apartheid, I was distanced from the worst of it. I think it is also important to acknowledge that I have lived in the United States for almost a decade because this shows that, while I still claim South African citizenship and visit the country regularly, I am distanced from it. I think it is also important to acknowledge that I was raised as a first generation South African and the only South African in my mother’s family because this shows that, while I am fluent and literate in the country’s culture, my mother’s family who raised me were not South African and subsequently were distanced from the culture.

I think these acknowledgements of distance are important when understanding some of the ideas I convey. I think that claiming all of the above allows the reader and viewer to locate me, the author and artist, as a South African representa-


10 In accordance with colonial, apartheid, and contemporary South African language, I employ the words “white”, “black”, “coloured”, and “Indian” which are the four racial constructs that have been used to label and categorize the country’s social landscape. This is a problematic practice that this paper will explore.
tion but one that is perpetually outside - a dominant theme in the text and the film.

My current film, All We Have is Now, traces the hidden and forgotten history of my father’s family who lived between the frames of the invented racial categorizations as white and coloured. The film navigates the apartheid-era racial classification system through historic and contemporary productions and representations located within my family and state archives. The project was motivated by a search to find out about the history of my father’s family and by extension, a way for me to consider how I came to exist and how I continue in the present.

In the milieu of circulated and lauded contemporary South African art such as the work presented in the South African Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale, which included Willem Boshoff’s Racist in South Africa (2015), Brett Murray’s Triumph (2015), and Angus Gibson’s Telling the Truth (2015), I have been interested in current representations of “South Africa” and “South African” as I try to figure out how I might fit into the context of South Africa.

It is no surprise that on platforms like the Venice Biennale, which insists on the concept of “national pavilions” for countries that are allowed to represent at the famous show, who in turn select a small number of artists to be represented, that only surface representations of a country and a country’s art and artists are portrayed. But, during my visit to the Biennale (which was like the Olympics for art), I was interested to see what South African artworks were shown at such a prestigious event whose focus was on nationhood and the global economy. What might the South African artworks look like, communicate and represent? Who were they communicating and representing to and for? And for what and to what end? What was the stake and at stake for the artist claiming South African nationality for South African artists and non-South Africans artists like Gerald Machona. And what was the role and responsibility of the artist when producing national artworks, if any?

Indeed, there appeared to be simplified representations within the South African exhibition which echoed the familiar circulated imageries of South Africa’s politics and history (Nelson Mandela, apartheid, corruption, crime, townships etc), Africa (wide landscapes, African tribes, poverty, animal detritus, resourcefulness etc), and, notions of “black” as extended representations of both Africa and South Africa (the “black body” as a site for and of violence, as witness to power struggles and oppression etc).

These images, narratives, and representations, as containers for ideas, beliefs, and perceptions, extend beyond the art show, beyond Venice, beyond South Africa, and reach across the globe. The contained narratives mentioned above have
been well documented and there exists a large body of scholarly literature on African representations,\(^\text{11}\) which have been aligned with the practices of anthropological and colonial gazing.\(^\text{12}\) These images are known to present false and neutralized and naturalized stereotyped documents,\(^\text{13}\) as defined by Homi Bhabha as "fetishes of colonial discourse."\(^\text{14}\)

This thesis traces the film, *All We Have is Now*, along its course to realization as I grapple with the architectures that can prescribe a way of telling and reproducing simplified South African images. The text, in the form of unfolding vignettes, weaves together considerations, questions, and experiences when researching, producing, and presenting the film from the positions of study, perspective, and representation.

The thesis begins with a reflection on my own practice and specifically, the tendency to abstract and remove bodies while photographing in South Africa. Why the distortions? Why the absences? What might be communicated and represented by not representing my body or any other fully realized body? How does obscuring produce a narrative and what does it mean when the central narrative of the film is about bodies and narratives that were obscured and silenced during and post-apartheid? How much of the author's presence is present when the author is obscured?


The next vignettes consider working with historical material such as family and personal memories. How are narratives formed when they are actively forgotten and discarded? Particularly when considering Borges who says, "Forgetting is a form of memory, its broad basement, the secret flipside of the coin." I am interested in the passive and active acts of forgetting that cut and discard and reassemble to produce new narratives.

In addition to family memories, there, too, is the challenge of sourcing information about people like my family during apartheid within the formal institutions of national and international archives and libraries. In South Africa, much of the film and video archives before 1976 (which was when television was first introduced to the country) was produced by Britain and the United States—a former colonizer and a country whose government was supportive of apartheid. The material produced by these two powers was often approved by and in-line with the Nationalist Party's agenda and way of seeing. Needless to say, much of the stories within the archive exclude the stories of the life under apartheid of the country's non-white citizens and when non-white bodies are presented, they are most often not presented as individuals but rather as an antagonistic body or a specimen of study.

Much of the representations of non-white bodies dates back to the early European settlements way of seeing non-white bodies in the 14th Century. Since early European Expansionism, South Africa has had regular contact with Europe, Asia, and the Americas primarily through the Portuguese who were led by the ambassador, Bartolomeu Dias; the Dutch who were led by the merchant general, Jan van Riebeeck; and the British who were headed by the businessman Cecil John Rhodes and others. Cape Town and Durban became major ports in the Indian and Atlantic Ocean Slave Trade. Apartheid was in-line with the Slave Trade practices.

The archives do not present South Africans and were produced by people who were not South African. And so begs the question, what is a South African representation? How are representations considered "South African" stored and projected? Who gets to produce and reproduce, present and represent, play and replay in the realms of art and the archive, and for whom and why? What is the role and function of the formal (state archives and libraries) and informal archives (family memory and contemporary reflections) as documents of South African society? How does one engage in the archive that is not friendly to people? How does one

The creation, circulation, and consumption of imagery is not benign. Like the simplified and distorted images sent back from the explorers, traders, scientists in the colonized territories that justified imperial expansion to their monarchies and generals, contemporary stories and imageries, too, have contributed to contemporary segregated societies, conflicts, and wars.

Science was, and continues to be, complicit in hegemonies that prescribe ways of seeing. I currently reside within the regimes of knowledge, science and global power, so how might my environment be influencing a work that is about a foreign time and about people I did not know and in a country I no longer live in? How might I and my camera be complicit in prescribing a way of seeing as formed by the context I produce within? Throughout this thesis, I consider these positions and perspectives in the form of visiting and researching observatory towers in South Africa and in the United States, filming from a helicopter over the Cape Peninsula, performing as a tourist in a township near Cape Town, all the while, collecting a context and study for the film.

What is my role and responsibility in presenting my work? How can the film, along with other South African artworks, not perform an “apartheid-ness” in the form of reductive explorations of race, culture, and identity? Considering my own gestures, performances, and actions, I reflexively question throughout the process, whether I am complicit in producing and reproducing the practices I am critical of.

The project is ongoing and its central questions will continue to develop and evolve. The text is meant to raise questions into the production of art as attached to a national subject matter serve as a way to demonstrate some of the vulnerabilities, oversights, and blind spots in attempting to produce a work that tries to circumvent the predominant images of South Africa, with the goal of producing a compelling, thoughtful, and complex work.

19 In his first film, Handsworth Songs, John Akomfrah investigated the riots in Handsworth, London in 1985 and how the media produced and presented the riots. Stuart Hall, the cultural theorist and friend of Akomfrah, wrote, “The mass media play a crucial role in defining the problems and issues of public concern. They are the main challenges of public discourse in our segregated society.” (De-Westernizing Film Studies).
BARREN

A STACK OF POLAROID PHOTOGRAPHS from my trip to South Africa sit on my desk. They look like postcards from a warm vacation. They are pleasant and nonspecific and easy to look at in a detached sort of way. They are not particularly well framed or compelling. There is nothing especially revealing about the images except that there are no people. Only one image shows small figures interacting - walking across the beach with mountains, buildings, and even smaller people in the background. Two of the figures are European tourists buying dagga from a third figure, a local guy. He offered me some a few minutes before.

At my desk, as I digitally process the polaroids and add them to the timeline of my film, All We Have is Now, the images change. It is not that they become pixels on a screen but, as the scale and framing is adjusted, the isolation of the photographer becomes stark. Aside from the three little figures in the one photograph, the images seem empty. There appears to be little engagement between things. There are no people.

Film editing is the practice of organizing various perspectives into a sequence. Editing is the process of classifying information whereby the dominating questions are whether an image resides inside or outside a narrative. Slang for editing is “cutting.” During editing, or cutting, the question of whether an image “belongs” to a narrative is important. What’s important about importance? In All We Have is Now, importance began as an inching closer to knowing my family, their story, and their lived experience in southern Africa, though I’m not sure that it is important anymore.

Edward Said writes, “Truth is a function of learned judgment.”20 The film, All We Have is Now, started as a search to learn about a family I knew little about after my mother passed away. The project began as a possibility of learning about the context of my life and attempting to locate its context. All We Have is Now started as a “not knowing much,” motivated by the idea of “finding knowledge.” This search is a process of learning about releasing and exploring, holding and grounding.

Jorge Luis Borges wrote in *Elogio de la Sombra (In Praise of the Shadow)*:

... and so many things.
Now I can forget them. I reach my center,
my algebra and my key,
my mirror.
Soon I will know who I am.\(^{21}\)

There are no people in the film. There are only dismembered parts of myself, snippets and shadows of others, voices detached from the bodies they belong to, surface representations of groups of people found in archives from countries with a vested interest in South Africa’s resources. The images look like what Walter Benjamin describes as “crime scene photographs.”\(^{22}\) I did not realize no one was filmed or photographed. I did not realize that when people were captured, I dismembered them. I did not realize the people in the film were abstracted or removed from the frame. Why the absence? Why the erasure? Why the violence?

---


A PICTURE OF MY MOTHER AND FATHER on their wedding day in April, 1981 was framed on various walls of the houses I lived in growing up. It was not a stiff wedding photograph of two families standing awkwardly together, nor was it the customary shot of the newlyweds in front of their wedding cake; rather the image was taken when my parents were caught off-guard, listening to someone talking to the side of the camera. My parents were seemingly unaware of the photographer as they engaged in a conversation with someone they enjoyed. A warmth radiates from the photograph. But about one quarter of the picture is cut out. The cut runs along my mother's left side and excludes anyone standing next to and behind her. When I asked my mother why it was cut and who she cut out, she said my father's mother "looked too dark."
CUT. CUTS. CUTTING. Merriam Webster defines cut as: “To use a sharp tool to open or divide; to make a hole or wound in; to make a hole in something by using a sharp tool. Synonyms include: “slice, bisect, divide, penetrate, hurt, skip, reduce, delete, discontinue, and discard.” Cut can be described as, "absent without excuse." 24 Keep is an antonym of cut and its definitions include: “to care, to hold, to seize, to desire, to see, to record, to maintain in good order, to guard, to defend.” 25 To keep is to nurture and to celebrate and to produce a continuity. Keeping is a choice to have and hold. Keeping is active.

Cut separates. It makes one two. When cutting the wedding photograph with scissors, the cut-off piece was discarded. It was removed, cast away, put in the rubbish to be taken away, to be out of sight, to be buried and forgotten. The cut-off piece was considered unwanted. But, the cut makes two. She silenced26 one piece and gave voice to another, which produced a new frame, a new narrative that she hoped would continue. A cut makes.

Passing is the act of moving toward or beyond someone or something, sometimes uncensored and unchallenged, sometimes unnoticed. Passing can also mean to go from one quality or state or form into another. It can mean to go from a space of control into another without possession. 27 A pass allows one to go by, to cross over, to have access, to move forward. 28 Passing is the movement between or through what is cut and what is kept.

Cutting is reframing, reorganizing, and producing something new. Cutting can silence but it can generate. Alain Badiou writes, “A real change is not a becoming, but a cut, a pure discontinuity. And its most important consequence is that a multiplicity, which did not appear in the world, appears suddenly with the maximal intensity of appearing.” 29 A cut makes.

IN FEBRUARY 2016, I VISITED CAPE TOWN for the first time on a research trip for my film, *All We Have is Now*. The trip served as an opportunity to learn about my father and his family's history, which I hoped would also glean some insight into the history of the Cape region and South Africa in general. I wanted to produce an essay film of the trip and my father’s family’s history, which would weave together personal history, archive materials, and fiction into an allegorical narrative similar to the great John Akomfrah whose work I have long admired. Akomfrah’s film, *Nine Muses* (2010), a project that was produced after the time of his mother’s passing, and, *The Stuart Hall Project* (2013), a film that traced the life and scholarly contributions of the great cultural theorist Stuart Hall, are the most significant works for my practice. And Akomfrah’s works, in general, reveal a grace which often move me to tears.

Over six days in Cape Town, I recorded archivists, librarians, tour guides, tourists, artists, family, and friends. At the Western Cape Archives and Records Service, I scanned some of the earliest illustrations and photographs of the region: the interactions between the Portuguese, Dutch, and British and the Khoi, San, and Xhosa; the area’s earliest astronomical observatories; slaves; maps of early Cape Town city planning; and the first land deed. I recorded conversations with family and friends, and sounds of animals and birds. I filmed from cars, helicopters, boats, on the beach, at observatory towers, and outside the home where my father was born. I was formulating a narrative that I hoped would provide context to my father’s story.

But once I combined the information from the formal state institutions of memory and knowledge with the stories I gathered from extended family, the project quickly began to form a complicated web of racial classification and reclassification, desired and assigned identities, and immigration to war-torn countries throughout Southern Africa.

During apartheid, my father’s immediate family were classified by the South African government as “white” but many of his extended family were classified as “coloured” and “Indian.” It is not clear if my father’s immediate family desired to 30 I only came across one image of slaves from the 1700 and 1800s in the Western Cape Archives and Records Service in February, 2016. See Appendix.
31 The 1950 classification of ‘White’, ‘Black’ and ‘Coloured’ would later include a fourth racial category, ‘Indian.’ According to the Nelson Mandela Center of Memory, “Classification was determined according to physical appearance and social acceptability (incl. linguistic skills). Anyone who contested their
be classified as "white" (who people called "play whites") or whether the "white" designation was assigned to them by the government (the white minority government tried to boost "white" numbers and encouraged some "passing into whiteness"), but the confusion of where people felt they "belonged" within the social and racial landscape was not a unique phenomena. Like many South Africans, my father's immediate and extended family found themselves caught between the four frames of the state's racial classification system - white, black, Indian, and coloured.

My father's family left South Africa in 1952 (along with thousands of others) in what seems like an escape from the discriminatory and classification laws that came into effect in 1950. My grandfather was a linesman on the Rhodesian Railways and the family moved with the railways into Bechuanaland, Angola, Northern Rhodesia, Zaire, and Southern Rhodesia.

There is little information about their movement around these countries - no letters, few photographs - but they returned to South Africa in 1981, after all of the countries they lived in became independent. Why did they move back to South Africa at the peak of the madness of apartheid and once all the other countries had come to be independent? I have considered that the family may have presented as "white" in other countries but whether this is true or not is uncertain. It is also unclear

classification could appeal in the first instance to a special board set up for that purpose and headed by a judge or magistrate, present or former, and then to the law courts. The separate laws were enforced by "inspectors" who were trained government officials that tasked to search neighborhoods and homes for individuals whose race they thought did not "belong" in an area. Individuals who were identified as the living in the "wrong area" were forcibly removed and relocated to a "correct" area, often far away from family. In Durban, I was told, inspectors drove green and yellow vans with the word "Parks Board" written on the sides. In some areas the inspectors were called "blackjacks" - named after the notorious weed

33 Since early European Expansionism in the 14th Century, South Africa had regular contact with Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Through the Portuguese ambassador Bartolomeu Dias, the Dutch trader general Jan van Riebeeck, and the British businessman Cecil John Rhodes and others, Cape Town and Durban became major ports in the Indian and Atlantic Ocean Slave Trade.
34 In 1950, the government passed four laws which set in motion "grand" apartheid. The Population Registration Act which required citizens to be classified into three groups: 'White', 'Black' ('African', 'Native' and/or 'Bantu') and 'Coloured' (Cape Malay', 'Griqua', 'Indian', 'Chinese', 'Cape Coloured' and 'Other Coloured'). The Immorality Act which prohibited sexual relations between races. The Suppression of Communism Act which banned any political group critical of the government. And, the Group Areas Act which assigned races to separate residential and business areas.
35 Dates of independence: Bechuanaland to Botswana, 1966; Angola 1975; Northern Rhodesia to Zambia, 1964; Zaire to Democratic Republic of Congo, 1960; and Southern Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, 1980.
whether the moves were migrations intended for short periods of time or whether the stops were immigrations intended to be permanent.

The only recurring story was my father’s immediate and extended families, classified as different races, and having to take separate public transportation to visit one another during family gatherings. But this story is the only unanimous memory. Family members each have different versions of “where we came from” though most share a desire to be European - specifically Italian, Sicilian, and Maltese. One person’s claims are frequently disputed by another’s and so there is little concrete, or at least, unanimous information. It is intriguing to hear how intertwined race is in the conversations of our family history. Oftentimes, discussions can be about locating a piece of property or about the surname “August” and the conversation turns into a conversation on the family’s historical racial classification. The question of race is inescapable. Some people echo segregated mindsets where they believe they belong within the country’s ongoing racial classification system, but many want to embrace an open multiplicity of histories.
that the rejection of idleness formed the ideological bedrock to colonial settling in Cape of Good Hope:

To understand why the Hottentot way of life, characterized by (and stigmatized for) its idleness, was in no way held up to Europe as a model of life in Eden... Mankind was widely held to be so weak that without the discipline of continual work it was bound to relapse into sin.¹

Michel Foucault, in *Madness and Civilization* writes, “Labour and poverty were held up as simple polar opposites: labour was imagined as having the power to abolish or overcome poverty.”² Idleness guaranteed poverty and ambition was the key to conquering poverty, an idea that is omnipresent today. Karl Marx writes, “The entire so-called history of the world is nothing but the creation of man through human labour.”³

The film seemed to communicate a survey of South Africa and showed the “whites only” beaches, non-white servants, poor townships, rich white suburbs, crying non-white babies, “traditional African” dress, and protesting black people. There are some unconventional images too, such as a garden tea party whose guests include South Africans from all four of the country’s racial groups. Perhaps an acknowledgement that there were multiracial clusters of South Africans that were resisting the segregation laws of the time? Or perhaps a hope towards a society whereby South Africans of all races are happy and equal?

Another unusual sequence shows an exercise where black South Africans are asked to say, “Yes, Baas” (the infamous acknowledgement by non-white South Africans to a white man’s ask) to the white American camera. Most of the actors deliver their line in a stern manner but one woman seems self-conscious and laughs after performing the exercise. What was the purpose of this act for a CIA film and what was it supposed to provide its American viewers - its American government viewers? It is important to reflect and consider the function of the film and its implication as a production for the American secret service at a time of America’s civil


CAPTURING, COLLECTING, MARKING

WHILE WORKING ON THE FILM, my mother passed away. During the processing of her passing, I was moved by the Greek myth of the River Lethe, one of the five rivers of Hades. It is said that after the death of the body, souls on their way to Elysium drink from Lethe. This “River of Forgetfulness” erases memories and allows souls to move into a new life, free of memories. The liberation from memories frees the soul of sorrow. I was affected by the gestures of release and holding in respect to memory, and how, in both expressions, the function is to produce continuity.

All We Have is Now began as a space that would produce a “continuity” in the form of a story that would ground myself and my family. The effort involved in trying to ground oneself without a story, particularly while grieving, is exhausting. But it has always been important for the project to not behave as an essentializing endeavor about South Africa or my family, nor be an ethnographic study of the life of an “unusual” family, or even a fascination with “the times of apartheid.” Rather, the film is conceived as a space within which to collect tales from formal institutions like national archives and libraries and the informal sites of memory located in family stories, documents, and photographs in order to imagine and produce a fact and fiction, which memory and historicization are always products of.

I had little knowledge of the history of my father’s family, and thus have had to rely on family memory and state and international archives as the primary sources of information. Subsequently, the function of memory has become a central theme and the archive has become a dominant actor in the film.

Videos and films created by American news stations and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) make up the bulk of archive materials about South Africa in the 1940s and 1950s (the decades my father was born and the family left the country). Television and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) was introduced to South Africa in 1976, and so the bulk of archive material before 1976 was produced and provided by a former colonizer and a country whose government supported apartheid. Needless to say, there is little information about South Africa by South Africans, especially non-white South Africans who were at the receiving end of the discriminatory racial laws. The predominant narratives available on non-

white South Africans is generally limited to images of political upheaval, crime, and poverty. The bodies presented in these archives generally do not present individuals with distinct stories but rather the dominating imagery of an antagonistic and wretched collective body in opposition to the status quo. John Akomfrah, in a conversation about the challenges of working with the limited narratives and represented figures within the archive, said:

They're like figures on a flat earth, in a Paracelsian universe. They go to the edge, ie they're filmed coming off the boat and they just fall off into obscurity and you never see them again. In 20 years of watching and using archival material, I don't think I've ever met one person in a factory who I've then seen in another film later on. In other words, the sense of their lives being continuous is not one of the obsessions of the archive, and so part of the challenge is to make these discrete fragments cohere into some whole. And one can't do that without them being left with lacunae, gaps...

One film in the archives does speak to individuals. It is untitled and was produced by the United States' CIA in 1957. The film has become the foundation of the archival material in *All We Have is Now*.

In the film, the reporter-protagonist, dressed in a trenchcoat and wearing black-rimmed glasses, speaks to South Africans from different racial groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and political leanings. The film begins with the reporter telling the viewer about black women who are protesting the "pass laws" in the town of Nelspruit. The reporter describes the scene as "a customary crowd of idlers on a front porch."

This entry point of the film is curious but not surprising. The notion of "idling" and "idlers" has a rich history, tracing back to the early global slave trade that was fueled by what Linebaugh and Rediker describe as "a revolutionary energy in militant Calvinism or libertarian antinomianism. The former was a doctrine of puritanical work-discipline; the latter offered a gracious view of freedom" which they continue, "set the tone for "biological and ideological racism."" A perceived lackadaisical way of living was not considered honest, good, and godly. J.M. Coetzee adds

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rights movement. Which perhaps ties the film as an investigation or "check-in" to the countries with similar racialized laws to the United States? Perhaps, too, the film was motivated by the civil rights movement and the popular culture of the time that was fascinated with "the question of race." This was another reminder that, despite the regional differences in race policies and politics between countries, there exists what Nelson Mandela called an "umbilical cord" connecting global racialized cultures and histories. The CIA film further illustrates how invested countries are in another's racial politics and how each might influence, inform, and reverberate from another in this respect.

The are a number of tense moments between the bespectacled American interviewer and his South African subjects in the film. One particularly difficult exchange shows a coloured South African man trying to explain to the white American man, the humiliation of the racial categorizing practices. The interviewer, seemingly intrigued, leans forward his chair and asks in his staccato transatlantic accent whether "one can be classified as coloured simply by looking coloured is true?" The South


40 Nelson Mandela writes: "I spoke to a great crowd at Yankee Stadium, telling them that an unbreakable umbilical cord connected black South Africans and black Americans, for we were together children of Africa. There was a kinship between the two, I said..." Mandela, Nelson R. Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela. Back Bay Books: 1st Paperback Ed edition. 1995. 359.
African seems embarrassed and explains that the concept may seem amusing but the practice is humiliating. The Department of Census' officials use a system to identify and categorize by sending them to the Native Commissioner's Office, even as they conduct quotidian tasks like waiting in line for the morning bus. He shuffles in his chair as he recalls his experience of reclassification and the infamous pencil test.\(^{41}\)

The interviewed man looks distressed as he tells the story. His discomfort is palatable and the intrusiveness and inability of the interviewer to conceive of the man's upset is cringing. I wondered if the interviewer could just not conceive of the man's experience or whether there was a "special fascination" of racial categorization as an exotic phenomenon for the white interviewer? It brought to mind what W.E.B Du Bois described as the "glee" sociologists, and I would add here, journalists and reporters, can have when learning/studying/working with "issues" such as race and poverty. In these instances, the fascination of the other's experience can produce both detachment, intrigue, and spectacle. These visitors to social issues, Du Bois called "car-window sociologists."

I included the exchange in early screenings of the film but I feared that my criticism of racial categorization practices and the archive's "fascination of race" was not clear. I worried that the film exhibited the man's discomfort again in front of another audience and that his memory of humiliation was featured as the subject of my work. I was troubled by the prospect of portraying the material as spectacle and fascination and concerned at the possibility of idealizing struggle and trauma.

When presenting work such as the trauma produced by apartheid, there is the added risk of exercising a nostalgia for the past. Walter Benjamin wrote in the sixteenth text in *Theses on Philosophy of History:*

> Historicism gives the "eternal" image of the past; historical materialism supplies a unique experience with the past. The historical materialist leaves it to others to be drained by the whore called "Once upon a time" in historicism's bordello. He remains in control of his powers, man enough to blast open the continuum of history.\(^{42}\)

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\(^{41}\) The man in the film described the pencil test as an exercise whereby the Native Commissioner would put a pencil in a person's hair and if it got stuck that person would be classified as black. Later, and in conjunction with other exercises, the pencil test would distinguish the group "Other Coloured" (where the pencil got stuck) from "Cape Coloured" (where the pencil did not get stuck).

There is the idea that the past is unique and separate from the present, that the past and present are not connected by the same hegemonies. Benjamin, in the ninth text, writes about Paul Klee's painting, *Angelus Novus*, which Benjamin describes as an angel "looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating."44 Benjamin, in his analysis of the painting, understands the work as an angel staring at a catastrophic past, unable to look away, and unable to involve himself. For Benjamin, the past the angel is observing, is under his very feet: the past and present are the same catastrophic event. Benjamin writes, "Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet."44

This reminded me again of the interconnectedness of apartheid and segregation in the United States and how both hegemonies are part of the same machine. When working with the archive, there lies the risk of a false distancing to such hegemonies, which we perceive as separate from where we stand. There too lies the risk of imagining these hegemonies as allocated to a separate space and time which at its worst can produce nostalgic sentimentality and a tendency to make the past precious.

Susan Stewart echoes Benjamin and the concerns of nostalgia in *Documents of Utopia*, where she writes, "Nostalgia is an escapist fantasy... expressing an impossible desire for authenticity and pure origins."45 When presenting and representing "the historical situation of South Africa" and relying on archival material, there exists an additional risk of presenting the past as "real" and "true." The past can produce a "reality" that is separate and precious. There too is the danger of fetishizing distress as "authenticity" that can be motivated by a desire for "purity" and "legitimacy" located in history and on and within bodies that have been subject to trauma. There can be a desire to capture trauma as "the reality of the situation" which can deform itself into an exploitative spectacle.

Antjie Kroeg in *Begging to Be Black*, says that during the Nationalist Party's apartheid administration between 1948 and 1994, over 21,000 political prisoners were murdered.46 When mapped across the country, these murders directly affected millions of people. Add the number of people dispossessed of their land, the people

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who were relocated to areas of abject poverty, and just the everyday oppressive apartheid practices, and there is seemingly no end to the traumas experienced by the majority of South Africans during those years. How might one engage in historical material about the trauma of apartheid without producing a caricature of the struggle? How might one engage in material that presents terrible histories? How does one engage with and present witnesses? Perhaps it is impossible. Giorgio Agamben writes in *Remnants Of Auschwitz*:

The witness usually testifies in the name of justice and truth and as such his or her speech draws consistency and fullness. Yet here in the value of testimony lies essentially in what it lacks; at its center it contains something that cannot be borne witness to and that discharges the survivors of authority. The “true” witnesses, the “complete witnesses,” are those who did not bear witness and could not bear witness. They are those who “touched bottom”: the Muslims, the drowned. The survivors speak in their stead, by proxy, as pseudo-witnesses; they bear witness to a missing testimony. And yet to speak here of a proxy makes no sense; the drowned have nothing to say, nor do they have instructions or memories to be transmitted. They have no “story,” no “face,” and even less do they have “thought.” Whoever assumes the charge of bearing witness in their name must knows that he or she must bear witness in the name of the impossibility of bearing witness.  

How might one navigate the incredible void of the “complete witnesses” who have “touched bottom”? It seems like a circling above a deep crevasse. Like a vulture. How does one engage with “incomplete witnesses” without overlooking their trauma? How might one work with archive material that is a “false witness”? Categorizing witnesses can be problematic too because it assigns who has a right to speak about trauma and difficult histories and who does not.

I have struggled to present my suspicion, rejection, and criticism of the archive and the various claims to witness while relying on both the archives and witnesses for the film. In addition, it is difficult to not feel like an imposter with imperial tendencies related to histories that are at once familial and intimate yet also learned and distant and alien. There seems to be a struggle to have a sort of “claim” to historical narratives and landscapes that have affected one’s life without “claiming” they are.

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one's own. Maybe the witness question again? Of course there are filmmakers and artists who have managed to work with historical material with enough compassion and distance to produce compelling works, John Akomfrah is one. But it occurred to me that were I to attempt to work in a similar fashion and practice at such an early point in the project, it would be a fallacy.

As a way to present the problems in the archive, a sequence in *All We Have is Now* show a black circle in the center of the archive material shots. I was interested in taking information away and simultaneously producing an imagined space where the invisible and missing narratives and questions and criticisms I had could live.

The sequence recalls Lisa Oppenheim's work, *Killed Negatives, After Walker Evans* (2008) that seems to address similar questions I have about the archive. *Killed Negatives* is a series of unpublished black and white depression-era photographs Oppenheim found in the National Library of Congress. The developed photographs each have a black hole that was made by a machine that "kills negatives." These images were deemed unimportant, unworthy, and unwanted and were subsequently damaged with the hole. The hole was to mark the images and prevent them from being published. Oppenheim recreated the missing information in the form of a color circle that she exhibited alongside the "killed" photographs.

My black circle, on the other hand, is an agent within the archive - pulling, pushing, repelling, intruding, interrogating, and making room. The black circle has a kind of manifesto:

- The black circle is an illusion of a center, a fantasy of a space that is fixed, a fallacy of a grounded center.
- The black circle asks, what is wanted, worthy, and important?
- The black circle asks, what is published and circulated?
- The black circle asks, for whom is the narrative created?
- The black circle asks, who is accountable?
- The black circle asks, who owns the image?
- The black circle asks, to what end are representations created?
- The black circle rejects the image and its layered inscriptions.
- The black circle is a target.
- The black circle is violent.
- The black circle deforms.
- The black circle asks, what is missing?
- The black circle imagines, what can be added?
Archive film material produced by the United States CIA in 1957 with a black dot.

*All We Have is Now* (2016)
PERFORMING

CAPE TOWN IS A TOURIST CITY and I was intrigued in the performative qualities of the city’s tourists. I had never been to Cape Town before my research trip and since I had been living in the United States for close to a decade and because I was sponsored by a United States military and academic institution, it seemed fitting that I embrace some of the gestures I was critical of and perform what I might be perceived to represent. I wanted to perform “gazing” and “seeing” in my country as an attempt to familiarize myself with the gestures in the event I performed them in the making of my film.

While filming *All We Have is Now*, I visited Langa, a township located between Cape Town and its international airport. The area is flat and dry and dusty, a stark plateau compared to the lush, green mountains of Cape Town proper. The historic township does not have many trees - the biggest trees stand near the community arts center where tourists get relief.

For about $100, one can go on a “Township Tour” which includes a private car, a driver, and a guided walk through the community center and township. The tour lasts about three hours and weaves tourists through different housing settlements: government multi-family rooms, government single-family rooms, private houses, and informal shacks. The guide will even walk tourists through the homes as people cook, and wash clothes, and even sleep.

Langa is not beautiful, it is not picturesque, it is not sublime. But it has a desired aesthetic because hundreds of tourists descend upon Langa everyday in their colourful clothes, with their backpacks and cameras ready to go. American, German, and British tourists are the most common visitors and there is great enthusiasm for Langa. The tourists are in Langa to see the story of a large poor population who overcame apartheid and who are now trying to overcome poverty. They are also in Langa to see the inequality of South Africa - which is known as one of the most unequal societies in the world. They are in Langa to see what is called abject poverty in a resource-rich nation and province. And it is the honesty of poverty that is divine.

The fervor of the tourists reminded me of a quote by Hal Foster where he

48 Langa was established in 1927 as part of the Urban Areas Act of 1923.
49 Langa was designed to allow maximum visibility of residents by the apartheid authorities. There are no trees, building are low rise, and there are no alleyways.
says, "Truth resides in the traumatic or abject subject."\textsuperscript{50} As an art historian and critic, Foster was speaking to what he called "contemporary art's fascination with trauma." He continues, "Bodies are witnesses to truths and testimonies against power."\textsuperscript{51} I was reminded of the CIA film interviewer and, again, the notion of bodies having bared witness to power struggles as representing "a kind of real." I was interested in the fact that the tourists in Langa coming to South Africa to see South Africans and how Langa's poverty was representing a kind of "South African-ness."

The tourists reminded me of the Dutch merchants who set up trade posts in Cape Town in the mid-1600s. These merchants did not wish to colonize the country because it represented something ghastly. The merchants were compelled by trade and exploration and consumption of the sobriety of an "Eden ruled by the serpent."\textsuperscript{52}

Our tourists in Langa, too, do not wish to colonize the country. They are visitors and are part of the global circulation of wealth. They too are consuming a sobriety in the form of poverty. Throughout the tour I hear words like "intriguing" and "fascinating" and "sad" and "inspiring" and that "it is important for us to be here." The tourists think I am not South African because there are no South Africans on the tours.

A film clip I captured during filming the performance of a tourist in Langa shows an American man asking a South African guide what kind of housing settlement he lives in. The guide says the shacks and points into the distance. The tourist grimaces and looks down at the ground. The guide, with hands crossed in front of his body, looks on steadily. Later, an American woman asks the guide why "people don't try get out of Langa." The guide asks why they should. She does not reply.


\textsuperscript{51} ibid.

REACHING BACK INTO THE PAST can carry the risk of performing a utopic dream. Paolo Magagnoli observed, "Nostalgic memories are histories of the future." Despite All We Have Is Now being critical of the policies of apartheid, it risked tracing a personal and regional history and simultaneously representing and sketching a future project based on the display of difficult histories. I wanted to keep Magagnoli's assertion in mind as I moved forward in representing my work. Questions that were central included: What was I choosing to represent, how, why, and to what end? What were the mechanics such as the "black dot" as a violation of a violating representation and narrative constituting? I considered the representations of historical documentation of South Africa like the famous Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings. The circulation of the TRC imageries and narratives can and have presented both a symbol of reconciliation of the past and a collective hope for the future in South Africa and around the world. In relation to All We Have Is Now, how might the narratives in the TRC, as symbols, manifest and transform? Especially when these symbols appear and reappear in the context of personal artworks? Might there be the risk of the symbols returning as simplified, surface reproductions? Yes. How might All We Have Is Now avoid the simplifying tendencies within the archival materials and when reproducing the archival materials in an artwork?

The filmmaker and artist, Angus Gibson, produced an work based on a TRC hearing for the South African Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale. Gibson's piece, Telling the Truth? (2015) is a three-channel video installation showing a black victim.

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54 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up by Nelson Mandela and led by Desmond Tutu as a court-like restorative justice body. Victims of politically motivated human rights abuses gave testimonies about their experiences, an enormously emotional process. Amnesty was granted on the grounds that the perpetrators confessed and that their crimes were politically motivated. There were over 20,000 statements collected during that time.

55 Cynthia Ngewu was one of the mothers of the Gugulethu Seven and during her TRC hearing she said: "This thing called reconciliation... if I am understanding it correctly... if it means this perpetrator, this man who killed [my son] Christopher Piet, if it means he becomes human again, this man, so that I, so that all of us, get our humanity back... then I agree, then I support it all." (Kroeg, Antjie. Begging to Be Black. Penguin Random House. Cape Town, South Africa. 2009. 211)
testifying and the white perpetrator listening. The work was shown in a dark auditorium with large high definition monitors curved towards the audience. Gibson’s piece seemed to question how truth at the hearings was determined. The work honed in on the victim as the primary subject, with the viewer, comfortable and with maximum visibility, in a position of power as witness and judge. For me, Telling the Truth? raised questions of how memories of violence and trauma told by a victim (punctuated with images, text, and crying), as an image, was performed for the art festival’s audience.

During the TRC hearings in the 1990s, a victim’s testimony was recorded and aired on televisions around South Africa’s transition period. These testimonies were omnipresent and it was a difficult time for the country. The same kind of image was now stylistically rendered and exploded onto multiple monitors, playing on a loop in a European art festival. At what point do images of oppression become parodies of oppression? Could the weight of a testimony, and the weight of the difficult transition period in South Africa, be communicated? How different were the viewers in the South African Pavilion from the reporter in the CIA film or the tourists visiting Langa? To me, there seemed to be little difference.

How had Gibson’s work transformed from its original frame and platform that was the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg now that it was presented at a prestigious international art faire? How much was the frame supplementing and distorting the narrative? And how might there be alternatives and means of circumventing the distortion from the environment?

John Akomfrah also exhibited at the 2015 Venice Biennale. His film, Vertigo Sea (2015), was screened in a dark room, on three large curved monitors that occupied a viewer’s front and peripheral vision in a setup similar to Gibson’s. Akomfrah, like Gibson, was presenting a film that was based on the traumatic and violent past of non-white people at the hands of white people: the Slave Trade. Akomfrah’s focus was the ocean and how it served not as an empty space between trade posts and economies, but rather, how the ocean was an actor, a vessel, a site that collects, transports, and transmits imprints of terrible memories, histories, and presents (in the form of global warming, environmental destruction, hunting, and pollution). Akomfrah and Gibson both utilized, at length, archive material and yet, despite the commonalities, Vertigo Sea felt and told a very different story to Telling the Truth?

Perhaps it is because Vertigo Sea was part fiction, part documentary, part essay film, and part “tone poem” as opposed to Gibson’s stylized archival render-
ings? In addition, *Vertigo Sea*, via multiple screens, seemed to provide a dialectic and a conversation *between* the images, appearing to challenge the audience to decipher the meanings, to trace the linkages between the images, readings, and audio - looking *between* the frames, with Akomfrah. *Telling the Truth?* also seemed to be challenging the audience to "look" but Gibson seemed to suggest a "fixed truth" lay *within* the frames. The screen explosion seemed to serve as multiple interrogation sites with the notion that there exists a linear and fixed truth at the center.

The TRC hearings were aired as a way for South Africa to try confront and process the past as opposed to burying it. As Desmond Tutu said at the time, "It is about opening wounds, cleansing them, so that they do not fester." The circulation of these images was conceived on the idea of collective healing and a distancing from the political establishment that spawned the perpetrator’s violence. At the oldest and what is known as the most important art show in the world, and almost twenty-five years after South Africa’s transition period, for whom were the images played for now? And to what end?

While sitting in the darkened room of Gibson’s *Telling the Truth?* installation of high-tech screens, I wondered whether the victim knew that their image was being performed as victim again and again on a loop in Venice. If truth is learned, what truth was being taught and learned by the replaying of a well rendered, traumatized, non-white South African victim? And how was video and time-based media, as a site for collecting, storing, and transmitting narratives, complicit?

I was reminded of Shigeko Kubota’s *Video Poem* (1968-76) where she describes video as a liberator. In the little room in the South African Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennial, it seemed, video was the captor.

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59 Shigeko Kubota, *Video Poem (1968-76)* "... Behind the Video Life / Man thinks, “I think, therefore I am.” / I, a woman, feel, “I Bleed, therefore I am.” / Recently I bled a half-inch... 3M or SONY... ten thousand feet every month. Man Shoots me every night... I can’t resist. I shoot him back at broad daylight with vidicon or tivicon flaming in overexposure. / Video is Vengeance of Vagina. / Video is Victory of Vagina. / Video is Venereal Disease of Intellectuals. / Video is Vacant Apartment. / Video is Vacation of Art. / Viva Video..." Stiles, Kristine and Peter Selz. *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook for Artists’ Writings*. Second Edition, Revised and Expanded. London: University of California Press, 2012. 504.
A photograph of an original button from the first democratic election in South Africa in 1994. I was twelve years old at the time and, even though I couldn't vote, I accompanied my family to the voting stations. The button is a memento. It shows the then leader of the African National Congress (ANC) and soon to be president, Nelson R. Mandela.
THE GESTURE OF LOOKING BACK to produce a present, such as using formal archives and family memories to make a film, led me to consider the performative qualities of observation. Observe can be defined as “careful watching, judging, deciding, evaluating.” Observation is both active and passive, it consumes as it produces, and can occur in a position and perspective of real or perceived dominance.

In the 1940s and 1950s, my father’s family lived in the Cape Town suburb of Observatory, a “grey” neighborhood home to one of the earliest European astronomical observatories in the country, The Royal Observatory of The Cape of Good Hope. This observatory was founded in 1820 by order of the British King, George IV. This observatory brought with it the many inventions central to the colonial argument which secured the colony of the Union of South Africa for The Crown and what would later sow the seeds for apartheid. These science institutions were closely aligned with the rhetoric of imperialism: progress, modernity, science, technology, culture, and civilization et al. Though ways and means of viewing and studying celestial bodies for timekeeping purposes dates back to earliest times, I was interested in the Royal Observatory as an apparatus and a producer of representation.

I visited the Royal Observatory in Cape Town and the MIT Haystack Observatory in Westford, MA to learn more about these machines that penetrate immediate and imagined spaces. These ‘seeing’ devices gaze, observe, and survey far away or hidden matter. The machinery also perform the actions of uncovering, looking, and collecting which seemed aligned with some of the gestures of a filmmaker making a work about a foreign historical landscape.

The people behind the machines - the colonial scientists, explorers, and astronomers who gazed, collected, and imagined onto and into the space of South Africa (and around the world) - contributed significantly to the discourse that helped justify European imperialism. The observation towers and regimes of scientific mapped the skies and landscapes, and categorized and organized the country into systems of resources and labor which furthered European expansion and power.  

61 During apartheid, a “grey” neighborhood was a neighborhood that was not classified as black, white, coloured, or Indian. Rather this community had multiple races and ethnicities residing in it.
A common phenomenon when recording distant matter, is often the time it takes information to reach astronomical receivers means the source no longer exists, the celestial bodies that created the information have expired. Therefore, these astronomical observatories are capturers of ancient light, kind of time-traveling devices that immerse themselves in the past and simultaneously maps new frontiers and future possibilities. These histories the observatories collect are filed with projected futures.\(^{63}\) Benjamin writes, "History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now."\(^{64}\) The past is visited and imagined in the present. History is a location created by the present and is filled with imaginings. Benjamin quotes Flaubert in *The Arcades Project*, "Observation is guided above all by imagination."\(^{65}\) Observation is an imaginary act.

Imperial in nature, observatories and observers and histories and historians, capture and lay claim to space and time while simultaneously projecting ideological fantasies. Observatories, like cameras and computers and other time-based seeing machines, bridge the gaps between and fill in the lacunas of the past and present, memory and current experience, real-imaginaries and imagined-imaginaries. While there is obviously a difference between scientists and artists, their gestures and performances can mirror one another. Both produce social narratives and both are cultural producers with rich implications to their ideological fantasies. Both practices, too, can insist on what Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha call a "final theoretical closure"\(^{66}\) which suggests that the knowledge and culture presented is closed, final, and true. This I noticed in the formal and informal archives, in some artistic works at the South African Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale, and was even present in the initial motivations for my film. The tendency for "closure" that Hall speaks of, is pervasive.

\(^{63}\) Lefebvre adds an interesting perspective to the notion of "filling the void" in a "social space" whether as an observer, artist, or government in the context of global space. He writes: "Global space established itself in the abstract as a void waiting to be filled, as a medium waiting to be colonized. How this could be done was a problem solved only later by the social practice of capitalism: eventually, however, this space would come to be filled by commercial images, signs, and objects. This development would in turn result in the advent of the pseudo-concept of the environment (which begs the question: the environment of whom or for what?). Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991. 125.


I was reminded of my own insistence of closure in seemingly meaningless fragments embedded in touristic and artist practices at a shopping area in Cape Town. The Watershed is an area that hosts independent artist and artisan stalls at the city's famous V&A Waterfront. Many of the goods sold in the stalls are handmade and most have "African themes" - colors, bold patterns, Venus of Willendorf-style women in colorful dresses, the Big Five, Nelson Mandela, township art, beading etc.

The bulk of one stall's inventory featured wooden sculptures of Tintin and "colonial African administrators" in various uniforms. Tintin was not popular in South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s and I was interested in whether the character had become popular in 2016. Was the character's presence motivated by the European tourists who were driving much of the business in Cape Town? Possibly. The colonial administrator sculptures, on the other hand, are common in most shops around the country. The skinny policeman, doctors, chefs, litigators, photographers, businessman (they are always all men) etc. can be found in airports, art galleries, malls, designer stores, and in decor magazines. The little bureaucrats are chic and they stand in service to the customer or owner at heights of 15 cm to 120 cm.

The little men made up the bulk of the inventory of one stall and I was told they were the most popular stock. I asked the owner if he thought that it was strange that Tintin and the colonial administrators were popular with tourists, particularly in the presence of one another, and since both sets seemed to present a sentimentality to the colonial past. The owner of the stall said no, that he was fine with it. He said things have changed.

It is not surprising that colonial narratives of Africa endure. The images are present everywhere in popular culture and there is an abundance of scholarly writing on the subject. But I was interested in learning how the narratives may have changed and expanded and by whom and why? I questioned what these subservient little brown men communicated now and considered the possibility of my illiteracy to, what I was told were, new representations. Could historical narratives that were very real and active contributors to colonialism be ignored? Had these old representations really collapsed? Tintin and the administrators were closely aligned to the anthropological renderings of the European colonial explorers, anthropologists, and scientist. How did the new codings differ from the old renderings? I wondered

67 Tintin as the European adventurer/colonizer/saviour and the administrators as tropes in the stories.
whether I was seeing only one absolute meaning embodied in the figurines and how I
may have overlooked the sliding-scale of signification. How might my literacy of sig-
nification to South Africa have changed because of my adopted context of the United
States in 2016? The experience and questions reminded me of a conversation Stuart
Hall had on postmodernism and articulation where he said:

We are in a period of the infinite multiplicity of codings... We have all
become, historically, fantastically codable encoding agents. We are in the
middle of new forms of self-consciousness and reflexivity. So, while the
modes of cultural production and consumption have changed, qualitatively,
fantastically, as the result of that expansion, it does not mean that representa-
tion itself has collapsed. 69

The experience at the stall represented one of the challenges of producing a work
from the United States, in a United States institution about a South African sub-
ject without much interaction with South Africa or South Africans. The question of
representation - of whom, for whom, why? - is central to the project’s ontology. As
was the question of how the codes, signifiers, and meanings outside a work alters the
meaning of the work itself. Works change based on their context and frame, but like
Angus Gibson’s Marikana Viewpoints, how was my work and my interpretations of my
subjects and subject matter being altered by the frames and platforms of the United
States and South Africa? Particularly as I navigated the subject of my family that
consciously and subconsciously escaped/circumvented/manipulated race as an act/
embrace/defiance of racialized politics, how was this subject being signified and un-
derstood in the various nation’s cultures? How were the meanings and the intentions
of the project (to locate a family history) and the filmmaker (a white South African
woman) being communicated and understood in Boston and South Africa. How
were the local definitions of race and representation and decolonization affecting the
understanding of the project and was that important? How were cultural frames
supplementing and distorting the narrative? And how might there be alternatives
and means of circumventing the distortion? It has been a major challenge to not let
the work suffer by being caught between the frames of the United States and South
Africa.

New York: Routledge, 1996. 137
Top left: *M101 Table Mountain with Hottentots*, 1625. Western Cape Archives and Records Service, 2016.
Top right, bottom left: Inventory at a stall at The Watershed, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town. 2016.
Filming in a helicopter over the Cape Peninsula requires a series of negotiations between the aircraft, the camera, the camera operator, and the subject. What is the subject? What size shot? What sort of movement of the camera? What is the focus, especially as the land begins to form patterns of the mechanical processes into a kind of data visualization?

I was interested in the performative gesture of gazing. I wanted to embrace the dominant perspectives of the United States, MIT and observatory towers in the form of a sequence filmed from the air overlooking land.

Below, the land was imprinted with technology and demonstrated what Lefebvre describes as “the processes on territory” in the form of “hierarchical productivities” demonstrated in the affluent suburbs, the poor neighborhoods, the natural heritage sites, the industrial areas, the central business district, and the trade routes.

Visualizations have a tendency to highlight recurring themes and present a surface understanding of a subject. From the helicopter, the landscape was fragment ed and codelike. In The Arcade Project, Benjamin quotes Focillon who raises a point about perspective: “It has been like some observatory whence both sight and study might embrace within one and the same perspective the greatest possible number of objects and their greatest possible diversity.” From the helicopter there is at once incredible diversity and homogeneity in one frame. At a lecture at MIT, the artist Rosa Barba while referencing one of her aerial films, said, sometimes “to see objects we have to see them from afar.”

It is true. The panorama presented new information but also obscured information. Elevation made plain the machinic and social processes and boundaries to familiar ground. Technology imprinted the land and the authoritative perspective presented the camera with the traces of human activity but showed no humans, an abstracted barely-human and anonymous landscape.

I was reminded of the South African artist, Warrick Sony’s film, Marikana.

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Viewpoints: Against Civilians (2013/14) from the 2015 Venice Biennale. In the piece, Sony shows previously unreleased aerial footage of the Marikana Massacre. The Marikana Massacre took place in 16 August, 2012. Miners were on strike to protest their working conditions and wages which was met with, and has been described as, disproportionate force by the police. Thirty four miners were killed and most were reportedly shot in the back running away from the clash. The Marikana Massacre has been distinguished as the first lethal use of police force against civilians since the apartheid era.

In the work, Sony uses aerial footage with audio recordings of police chatter and the police commissioner, Riah Phiyega, congratulating the police for the way they handled the protest. *Marikana Viewpoints* is about 5 min long and is composed mostly of aerial footage. The film is framed as a tense insight into the event using “secretly obtained footage.” Advertising the novelty of “obtained secret material” from a massacre for use at an art show was curious, especially since the incident had produced a number of documentaries and long-form investigative journalistic pieces that each advertised “new perspectives” from the various news networks (see Reuters, E News, and Eyewitness News etc). It seemed to me that there was enough video circulating of the massacre and I was curious what an aerial viewpoint during a massacre would reveal if not only tiny bodies with little individual identifiers. From a distance and from an authoritarian perspective, would “the human” in the landscape be present and was that important?

Mines occupy much of South Africa’s history and mythology. As the underworld upon which the nation’s wealth is founded, it is a dark realm hidden and not easily understood by the majority of the country’s populace. In Nelson Mandela’s autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, mines and miners occupy much of his thoughts. While growing up in Qunu, he dreamed of becoming a miner because of the mythos of Johannesburg urban life. But Mandela did not become a miner but later on, while living in the city, the circumstances of miner’s lives and their protests to improve their living and working conditions, he writes, helped develop his political consciousness.  

At the South African Pavilion, there was another work that centered on miners. Diane Victor’s *Ashes to Ashes* (2015) was a “smoke drawing” made from the smoke from the shells. When Nelson Mandela was a child, many of the men in Qunu traveled to Johannesburg to work in the mines. He writes that the mineworkers’ strike of 1946, “where 70,000 African miners along the Reef went on strike, affected [him] greatly.” The 1946 mineworkers’ strike was one of the largest acts of collective resistance in the country’s history, and like Marikana, the state quashed the revolt brutally, twelve miners died in the 1946 mineworker’s strike. Mandela, Nelson R. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. Boston: Back Bay Books. 1st Paperback Edition, 1995. 101.
The Cape Peninsula, Cape Town 2016

All We Have is Now (2016)
ash of a miner's handbook and the South African constitution. The figures in Victor's work resemble a woman, a man, and a child who seem to float off the paper. The center of the work is left almost bare suggesting the space between the figures and the landscape that separates and controls them. The ash suggests the residue from the depths the men work in, as well as fire and death from working in such a dangerous industry. But, Victor writes, the ashes also represent the idea of a phoenix rising from these depths. Ashes to Ashes echoes compassion and hope.

In Sony's work, on the other hand, there is little sentiment. The miners are unidentifiable and the men and police resemble cogs in an machine, and in the context of the conflict, an economic and war machine. The aerial viewpoint transforms the human bodies into machinic clusters. In Marikana Viewpoints, the miners were rendered as unidentifiable, machinic and laboring bodies, an essentialized narrative and image that is in line with what miners have come to embody. Ironically, and rather tragically, the machinic embodiments of the miners represented in Sony's work was related to the miner's protest at Marikana where they were demonstrating their treatment as obscure and subterranean in the South African narrative and treated as such. Whether this was the goal of Sony, is unclear.

While flying over Cape Town, I was made aware of the helicopter as an ultimate technological surveying vehicle, film as a time-based recording technology, the techno-processes on the landscape below, the cultural labor I was performing, and the production and reproductions that would be produced and stored and circulated from the digitized material I was capturing. Stuart Hall says, we are "enabled to endlessly simulate, reproduce, reiterate, and recapitulate." Indeed, and laboriously.

Dumile Feni was a sculptor in the 1980s and his works were considered to be psychic representations and responses to the ending of the world. In Feni's case, apartheid was his end of the world and he lived in poverty and exile most of his life. Feni's sculptures are not optimistic. Feni's figures represent contorted and deformed human-animal-machine hybrids laboring for other humans. His works appear to scream. They are nightmarish and Sarah Nuttall described his works as seeming to embody "modernization becoming complete."

While in South Africa, I recorded a conversation of nearly a dozen people who question and raise concerns about the racial landscape in contemporary South Africa. It was a friendly conversation, not provoked or controlled, and discussed amongst family and friends. I imagined the conversation imprinted on the aerial video of the Cape Peninsula, forming a layered textual history.

Within the conversation, the group tries to figure out the bureaucratic technicalities of their races. Using the numbers printed in identity books that every citizen is required to own and carry, experiences with police and laws during apartheid, experiences with the Department of Home Affairs and laws post-apartheid, the conversations forms an comical analysis of the absurdity of the system and its prevailing reminders that the racial classification system are important - as seen in the ID books, in education, in employment opportunities etc.

The four races the apartheid government invented are still utilized by the state and the conversation indicates some of the fears, injustices, and suspicions the speakers have towards the government in that respect. Like my family in the 1950s, some of the speakers felt that they reside outside the frames of the race categories and the conversation shows the ways in which some of the speakers attempt to circumvent the significations by imagining new and alternative identities. There seems to be a wishing that the borders may be crossed and contact be made, for an entanglement.77

The speakers voices are not heard in audio of the sequence, they are silent. Their voices are heard in the text that goes in and out in yellow. The conversation is not clear and it is difficult to follow. There are no identifying markers, there is no grammar or punctuation. It is an endless flow, an endless conversation on race and identity78 that continues as the video loops.

The sequence gazes onto the country's physical landscape and gazes within the social landscape of South Africa. There is a kind of diasporic quality present in both, a want to escape and be free of the manmade archives of the physical and social landscapes.

A: I think the ID number says, at the end of the number, what race you are. 087 is coloured. On our ID it explains... the ID number is to keep census, they keep the number so they can keep the census.
B: No, it's 088. 088 is coloured.
C: But I'm 085 and I'm classified as white.
B: But I'm 088 and I'm coloured. Where is my ID book?
C: Or I think I was. They once didn't want to classify me as white when I went for my passport. I had to stay out of the sun and go back later to get it.
D: That's funny.
E: Imagine me. You go to school and you're going as coloured and your surname is Terblanche and you're in your Muslim outfit...
B: Tell them this is the New South Africa!
F: That's classic, innit?
C: Well isn't that the "New South Africa"?
A: Ja, you must just put "South African."
B: But I make it worse for them, I write Asian.
C: Asian-African?
B: No, I'm Asian. Our forefathers came from Asia.
E: Ja.
A: Ja, but she's right: Asian-African.
(Long pause)
E: You know even on university forms when they asking you your race, they'll tell you that it's only for statistics purposes but it's not. But they will always tell you on the form that race is only asked for statistic purposes that it's got nothing to do with pass rate.
C: So when you fill in an employment form, they see what race you are?
E: Ja. For the pass rate.
A QUESTION

IN SCIENCE THERE EXISTS a genetic and technical ideal, a positivism about genus.\(^79\) Within the formal institutions of knowledge of libraries and archives and within the informal institutions of memory that is my family, there exists an inescapable racial and gender ideal. This is a legacy that can be traced back to the Slave Trade, Darwinism, and the regimes of science that produced knowledge that race was a scientific, and not a social, fact.\(^80\)

The premise of All We Have is Now, was based on the fact that I knew very, very little about my father's family. This is because my grandparents, my grandmother in particular, was a few shades darker and presented to my mother something that was not completely light, white, and right.\(^81\) It's difficult to not get upset at this attitude and her actions which created major barriers to my understanding of my place within South Africa as well as prevented important relationships between my grandparents and my extended family and myself from forming. And my mother is not the only one to echo these problematic sentiments.

In a conversation between two family members, which began as a way to locate the history of the name "August" and property, there is the assertion that my grandfather is "pure white." This declaration, which is problematic in of itself (What is pure? What is white? Why the claim and defence?) is odd because it contradicts what is revealed earlier in the conversation which is that my grandfather's mother was not white, that she was coloured and that the relationship between her and my white great-grandfather was kept a secret.

It is a provocative exchange. It is also difficult to follow because it spirals in and out of what is asked, it contradicts what is said, and it is emotional. But what stood out for me was not only the difficult assertions that were being made, but the

\(^{79}\) Goethe, for example, theorized an ideal plant from which all plants derived, a plant that would typify the plant kingdom. See: Ritterbush, Philip. Organic Form: The Life of an Idea. Routledge & Kegan Paul Books. 1972.


\(^{81}\) The 1950 Population Registration Act No 30 defined a white person as: "Someone who in appearance obviously is or is generally accepted as a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously is a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person." Anyone could be white so long as they were generally accepted as white and white was what white was not.
pressures the speaker seems to feel about the importance of having a white male lineage. There seems to be a burden present that disavows women and colour and a stress when trying to demand and claim a white patriarch.

The ideal of a “white male genus” is well documented in scholarly literature\(^82\) on race and the fantasy can be traced to apartheid,\(^83\) to the English colonists and the British Empire,\(^84\) to the Dutch merchants and the various East India Companies, beyond South Africa and into just about all areas of the world burdened with the history of the Slave Trade.\(^85\) Again, it is difficult to not get upset about what is said in the conversation or by the attitudes that were responsible for the lost histories of my great-grandmother and her family.

I have struggled with how to present some of the problematic mindsets. They have formed real barriers to the project and I want to create the space to demonstrate them in the film without presenting a “study on racism.” In addition, how does one present some of these mindsets present in one’s own family without the family as the subject? How does one present the ideas as actors or characters since they drive much of the narrative? How does a filmmaker prepare, visit, watch, gather, study, organize, and present histories without embodying imperial gestures?

The colonial scientists, explorers, and astronomers demonstrated deeply problematic practices that laid the groundwork for apartheid and I soon began to worry that my attempts to learn of my family would only produce a simplified essence. I had researched, toured, observed, collected, analyzed, categorized, and represented what I had found of the history and story but it seemed at every point of research, production, editing, and presenting I was at some point gazing, spectacleizing, or exploiting. It seemed that I, and the project, were performing the problematic gestures that I was critical of. I feared that I had contradicted my own criticisms of essentializing practices.

83 Apartheid, the separate development of races, was based on the idea of retaining a “purity” within each of the four racial groups.
84 See the British colonial racial classification system and the wars in South Africa that occurred as a result (and resources). The Anglo-Boer was based upon the racial classification of Afrikaners as sub-human. At the time, the war was the Empire’s most expensive war to date and was the first concentration camp of the 20th Century.
FORGETTING 1

2 February, 2016

There are times where I don't even know what a memory is. Today, for example, I went back home twice after leaving, because I wasn't sure if the memory I had was in fact a snapshot of the actual event or an image of what I imagined the event to be. Memory is just an image, a surface. Walter Benjamin writes in the fifth text in *Theses on Philosophy of History*, "The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again."  

Did I blow the candle out? Did I lock the door? Is the heat off? I know what it's like to do these quotidian tasks, I've done them a thousand times before, but the difference between the recording of the event and the projection of this memory. The only difference is now, and it's gone. Also, the repetition of the acts cloud the event. The more I do of something, the less memory I have of doing it. The problem is the event becomes a memory and the memory creates a template image for a future event which the event fits perfectly into. I would need to make the future and current event not fit perfectly into the memorable event. Is specificity what makes a recording memorable? If I knock my hand on the door to the point where it's painful, will that make me more likely to remember to lock it? Possibly. So do I need to burn my hand in the candle's flame or make the heater alarm for me to recall minutes later whether it happened? Surely not. But if I do, that repeated memorable action will eventually become immemorable, so there would need to be a new difference for every action, every time. What an incredible amount of work. So how can I remember repetition? How do I remember to not forget?

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FORGETTING

THE VERB "FORGET" is composed of the verb "get" and the prefix "for." A definition of forget is the "inability to think or to stop caring." The prefix moves the word towards or away. The prefix makes "forget" in the service of something, it gives it energy, it makes it active and slightly positive. Sentences forget intrigue are: "I want to forget but I can never forget it," and, "I couldn’t forget even if I wanted to."

Forget is a cousin to "oblivion." Oblivion is passive. It occurs as a slip, as not remembering, even though one might try recall. Oblivion is weak and preoccupied. It comes from a state of unconsciousness or unawareness and can be harmless or destructive depending on whether its source is inactivity or inability or uncaring. Oblivion is unstable. Oblivion is the most destructive kind of mother. Oblivion is dangerous. The etymology dictionary describes it as a "state of being destroyed." I am not interested in the absent and weak yet deep destructiveness of oblivion. I’m not even interested in the active placement of a memory in a dark storehouse, dreaming for the breath of oblivion to float in and take over. I am not interested in the dream to forget, though I once was. Lethe, again.

I am interested now, in the active act of forgetting. The purposeful burying that requires digging and stashing and covering and hiding. All these actions are sometimes frantic, sometimes covert and careful. But all these actions are definite and purposeful. This kind of forgetting is a purging and is driven by what Borges calls a "hygienic, ascetic fury" (a su furor higiénico, ascético). I am interested in the far away, deliberate placement of a memory. And the preoccupation with it. Relocating and willing the memory to be away, though not entirely, and not too far. There is always an eye kept on it, just in case. In case of what? Resurrection? An unwanted and unexpected reappearance? A regeneration and subsequent resurgence of pain or discomfort? Borges writes, "Forgetting is a form of memory, its broad basement, the secret flipside of the coin." Forgetting is active. Forgetting serves. Forgetting allows passage so one may pass through.

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90 ibid.
CONCLUSION

J.M. Coetzee, at his Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech of 1987, said:

South African literature is a literature in bondage, as it reveals itself in even its highest moments shot through as they are with feelings of homelessness and yearnings for a nameless liberation. It is a less than fully human literature, unnaturally preoccupied with power and torsions of power unable to move from elementary relations of contestation, domination, and subjugation to the vast and complex human world that lies beyond them. It is exactly the kind of literature you would expect people to write from a prison.

Coetzee was lamenting the distortions apartheid had produced within the psyches of the country’s cultural producers. The obsessions and suspicions with power, and the inability to move or to see a horizon outside of one’s fixation on authority produced by the police state. Coetzee also seemed regretful of the inability for South Africa artists to produce work that might be located in other realms of the human condition. Coetzee seemed to be suggesting an inability for South African artists to speak.

Ngugi wa Thiong’o h says language forms the body. 91 African literature is “Anglo-fied” or “Franco-fied” and wa Thiong’o calls for African authors to write in African languages as a means of decolonizing their minds and their bodies. wa Thiong’o says language makes visible.

This thesis has traced some of the film’s developments as it tries to uncover some of memories and histories of my father’s family that have been actively overlooked and forgotten by the state and my family. The thesis and the film have served as entry points to articulate some of my family’s “muteness”2 by producing a kind of language. This language allows for further contemplation into how I continue in the present. This language makes visible the historic traces that reside within me.

All We Have is Now was premised on a search for a story that was to produce a grounding. That elusive story has not been found because it does and does not exist and is not that important anymore anyway. The project has served as a means

of understanding my practice and an opportunity to consider and reflect on my performance as an artist before, during, and after the film is researched, produced, and presented.

Throughout the project, the gestures of cutting and keeping signifiers and memories are present. The cuts are in the representations of myself. The cuts are in the family stories and documents. The cuts are in the national and international archives. The cuts are there on the bodies that are spectacles for tourists. The cuts are present in the global economic markets and hegemonic powers. The cuts live.

This theme of cutting, has ironically, and rather tragically, left its mark on the thesis in a state of dismembered vignettes. This dismemberment initially represented a violence to me, I now consider the dismemberment as a means of branching out, as a means of extending into multiplicities and multilingualisms, as a further exploration into what lies beyond the frames. Dismemberment does not need to be paralyzing but rather it can be generating and can manifest and contain what Alain Badiou calls a "maximal intensity of appearing." The cut makes.

This project began as a way to try and locate "a real" in the form of a family story though this is not possible and it is not important anymore anyway because All We Have Is Now does not engage with the real. The writing presented here demonstrates some of the negotiations when trying to locate the real but they have produced an imaginary space of fact and fiction, which, as I have said, memory and historicization practices are always products of.

There might be a post-apartheid South Africa but apartheid continues. Just as the system of apartheid did not come from nowhere, its legacy continues and is everywhere. I have sought to problematize the "apartheid-ness" in the form of reductive explorations of race, culture, and identity and this work will continue.

The film is ongoing and the questions presented in this thesis will continue to develop and evolve. The text is meant to provoke more questioning into the production of imageries that are attached to a national history and to demonstrate some of the vulnerabilities, oversights, and blind spots in my own attempts at producing a work that tries to circumvent the predominant images of South Africa. The goal continues to be focussed on producing a compelling, thoughtful, and complex work.

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