



# **Land Art Project 2013**

**University of the Free State**

**Department of Fine Arts**

**Genevievé Clarke** WTFRACKING!?

My work is made in protest against companies like Shell, who's logo I have incorporated into my work, who will benefit most from the fracking project in the Karoo. I chose a site that the local teenagers had already decorated with many chalk and spray-paint messages, adding my protest to theirs. By doing this I wanted to emphasise that it would be the writers of these messages, the young, whose health will be risked by careless and faceless corporations.



**Jade Hoffman LETS PLAY**

Lets Play is an interactive protest artwork. The gaming environment that I created in a broken down municipal building is symbolic of the human lives that are being played with. The participants are led by arrows on a journey that would lead to an oasis with clean water thru the rooms/levels of this environment. Once the participant finds a martini glass, not meant for their consumption but "reserved" for those who will truly benefit from fracking, they advance to the next level. The oasis at the end of the journey turns out to be nothing but toilet water, Karoo's Finest. The bowls filled with bottled Karoo toilet water remind the viewer of what might no longer be available to them.



**Bianca Olivier** SWEEPING THE KAROO

After doing research on fracking and exploring the sublime region of the Karoo I realized what beauty will be lost when fracking is introduced to this landscape. My concept is simple: I want to sweep out the Karoo. The broom represents fracking and the single-mindedness with which this process deals with beauty and nature.



## **Marozelle Stegen INENTING**

Die proses tydens fracking waar daar vloeistowwe in die aarde in gepomp word om die rotse te kraak het my herinner aan die inentings wat ons almal as kinders ervaar. Insteede dat dit die aarde egter gesond hou maak dit die aarde net sieker. Ek het die nie-afbreekbare rommel in die omgewing soos plastiekbottels en sakke in die vorm van 'n outydse inentings-litteken gepak om die mens se "merk" op die aarde te simboliseer asook die akkumulerende aard van hierdie gifstowwe.



**Hiliza Steyn** DESSERT DESERT

During our visit to the Karoo I was repeatedly struck by the beauty of this expansive landscape and the magnitude of our loss should we loose it to the environmental damage fracking would cause. I centred my concept around porcelain objects that I found in the veldt. These objects were originally used on electricity poles and the broken pieces reminded me of human bones. By building a light bulb-shaped wall around a flower shrub I wanted to invoke the use of fracking to generate power but also the fragility of the environment out of which these materials will be taken. I made my light bulb to look like an explosion to emphasise the severity of the damage that will be caused by fracking.



**Jaco Steyn** KAROOBOSSE

In ons verkenning van die omgewing was dit die prosesse van verwerking, waar die natuur mensgemaakte objekte probeer terug eien wat my die meeste bygeval het. Die gedetermineerdheid waarmee die natuur probeer terug veg. Ek het dus geroeste staal en draad gebruik en dit so vervorm dat dit karoobossies naboots. Die skaduwee wat die strukture gooi is 'n belangrike deel van beide my komposisie en konsep. Ek verwys nie direk na fracking in my kunswerk nie, maar is eerder geïnteresseerd in die naasplasing van die tydelike en die permanente, die mensgemaakte en die natuurlike.



**Kara Schoeman VREKING**

The site that I chose for my project is the part of Richmond's conjoined cemetery not yet filled with graves. The artwork depicts an old fallen down windmill laid out on the ground transforming into a fracking tower. This represents a change in epog: the time of the windmills are over. I used bricks from the neighbouring brick factory with the word vrek on them. The cemetery is the source of both windmill and fracking well as an indication of what will happen once we commence with fracking.



**Corneile van der Merwe WREATH**

As I am chiefly interested in seasonal change and the colour palette found in nature I set out to create a work that would incorporate this while keeping the environmental issue of fracking in mind. In our exploration of the area I came across a site scattered with coloured glass shards: blue, purple and green. I used these shards, traces of humankind's mark on nature, to make the Karoo a wreath as a gesture of condolence.



**Rowan van der Westhuizen HANGMAN**

As I wanted to work with the idea that potentially destructive endeavours like fracking is frequently presented to the public as “beautiful” or beneficial I started out creating a work that functions and looks different during different times of the day. The three pillars, signifying human endeavours that use natural resources, only reveal itself to be the gallows of The Hangman word-game at about 16:30 in the afternoon. The participant moves up the steps towards the noose to hang himself when the word kalopsia (the illusion that something is more beautiful than it truly is) is not guessed in time. By making the viewer participate in this work I wanted to emphasize that by doing nothing we are actually participating in the destruction of this beautiful landscape.



## Land Art Project

As part of the First Year Sculpture module (B.A. Fine Arts degree), students from the Department of Fine Arts, University of the Free State, participate in a Land Art project in accordance with the stipulated curriculum. Land Art has generally become a prominent field and mode of expression in contemporary artistic practice. More specifically, it is often closely related to what is understood as Sculpture and it is thus vitally important for Art students to gain knowledge and experience of this artistic discipline.

Land Art as artistic practice has the potential of being particularly relevant in the South African context for various important reasons: historically, our national, cultural and personal identities have been closely associated with the "land" and "landscape". Land Art – like Landscape Art – has the ability to question, emphasise and address contentious issues in ways not possible through other avenues. Furthermore, recent ecological concerns related to fragile ecosystems such as those found in the Karoo have come to the forefront with the advent of the so-called "Fracking" (Hydraulic Fracturing) mining activities.

Because of this great potential in addressing social and ecological concerns, the Land Art project of 2013 in Richmond mainly focussed on the implications of Fracking. All of the work done by students during the project was somehow linked to this theme. As Artists, we employ external elements as metaphors in our Artworks because – like in language – it serves as carriers of meaning, which are more interesting, powerful and effective than merely stating the obvious. For this reason someone might use a cemetery to talk about the probable effect of Fracking on the ecology of a specific environment: "The land will die".

Prof. Willem Boshoff, world-renowned Artist, Sculptor and Educator lead the project with tireless enthusiasm and in the process students were exposed to his vast knowledge and experience. Jaco Spies, Artist and Lecturer at the UFS and also Miné Kleinhans, Masters degree student in the Department of Fine Arts, assisted Boshoff. Andrew Munnik, Artist and retired Educator also joined the group, which further strengthened the educational aspect of the project. Arguably one of South Africa's foremost Land Art Artists, Strijdom van der Merwe, also briefly visited Richmond and talked to the students.

Throughout the duration of the project the students visited numerous important cultural and historical sites in the area such as the Owl House of Helen Martins in New Bethesda. Together with other stimulating activities – viewing Films and Artworks, visiting sites of existing Land Art pieces in the area and continuously discussing their own and others' ideas during evening sessions – the students became completely immersed in the project and had the opportunity to experience the Art making process without other interferences.

The project concluded with a showing of the resulting Artworks to the group as a whole, joined by Community Leaders and a large group of school children. This was important because it served as an educational opportunity for the Community as well as demonstrating the notion of Community involvement during the project.

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