

LANDscape[s]: artworks from the MAPSA collection of Contemporary Art

Curated by Miné Kleynhans in partnership with Modern Art Projects South Africa (MAPSA)

LANDscape[s] is a selection of artworks from the MAPSA Collection of Contemporary Art in Richmond, Northern Cape, in the Karoo. The selected work contemplates a lineage of artistic thought intersecting with the landscape.

The exhibition imagines and echoes the transitory reflections that this space elicits: ruminations on the passage of time, excavations into our past, the meaning and consequence of our present endeavours and that which will one day become relics to our future selves. Simon Schama writes: 'Landscape is a construct of memory, it is a work of the mind, built up as much from the strata of memory as from layers of rock.' *

MAPSA was founded in 2005 by Harrie Siertsema and Abrie Fourie.

*Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: AA Knopf, 1995), p. 7.



Boxed Bits

Sycamore, Walnut, Beech, Maple & Imbuia

20 x 20 x 5 cm (each variable)

2012

My works are based on the abstract forms and textures found in the landscape, the human form and succulent plants – hills and valleys, hips and breasts, undulations, curves, clefts and protrusions. By stripping these down to their essential, abstract forms, similarities are revealed. The artworks focus on these similarities, and specifically on the beauty, subtlety and sensuality of their forms and textures. Thus I negotiate a middle path between land, plant and body, locating congruencies, so an image could be a hill, or a breast, or a bulb, or something else entirely that the viewer identifies on a personal level that is linked to their individual experiences and memories.

ERIC DUPLAN



Future Calendar

Oil on Canvas

240 x 300cm

2013

“Future Calendar” explores the concept of time as a unified continuum, where past, present, and future are interwoven. The abstract symbols represent the fluidity and interconnectedness of temporal moments. This piece invites viewers to reflect on the cyclical nature of existence and how our perception of time shapes our reality.

ABRIE FOURIE



Former Tennis Facility Richmond, Northern Cape, South Africa
C-Type Hand Print; framed; L-profile oak wood frame; Museum UV glass
53,5 x 53,5 x 5 cm Edition: 1 of 3
2020

NEVILLE GABIE



Experiments in Black & White XIII

5 minutes 22 seconds

Video

Dimensions Variable

2014

Experiments in Black and White is an ongoing body of work developed by Neville Gabie which considers a relationship to place and material. In a series of filmed performances, the focus is on the use of four materials: crude oil, chalk, ice and air. Initially developed from a year-long residency working with Climate Research scientists at the Cabot Institute, Bristol University (2012/13), these short films present the tactile experience of volatile material influx. Filmed in Richmond, Northern Cape Province, South Africa, Experiments in Black and White XIII documents a day-long performance in which the artist Neville Gabie stood on a block of ice while it melted into the arid Karoo.

DAVID GOLDBLATT



The sports field at Hondeklipbaai

14.09.03

Pigment inks on archival cotton rag paper

67 x 55,5 x 5 cm

Edition: 37 of 60

2003



Hunter Gatherer

Thorns, Cable Ties, Skull & Nail Polish

50 x 50 x 50 cm

2017

'Hunter Gatherer' was created from found material collected on our walks in the landscape around Richmond during a residency. The sculpture developed from bits collected independently; it took on a life of its own. It appears to be a creature from a different epoch: maybe a small dinosaur from prehistoric times or perhaps a mythical creature from the not-too-distant future.

GRIETJIE LEE



Fubar—World War II 1944 military acronym for “Fucked up beyond all recognition (or repair)
Installation - Concrete, Wood, Industrial Plaster
112,5 x 28 x 20,5 cm
2017

Halt — Bring or come to an abrupt stop. Warning.
Installation - Concrete, Wood, Industrial Plaster
112,5 x 28 x 20,5 cm
2017



Encountered Fossils

Acrylic and Thread on Canvas

29 x 42 cm

2020

During my residency at MAPSA, I produced a body of work titled “Inner and Outer Experiences”. This body of work displays a series of the artist’s experiences while I was in Richmond, from the sensations felt when stepping onto the land to the early morning walks taken in the cold winds and conversing with individuals from the residency. The production process was somewhat of a daily reflection on each day, on the feelings, thoughts and energies of the surroundings.



The sign of the times that caused all the trouble.

Byrne Valley, KwaZulu Natal

Digital Print

72,5 x 58,5 x 3,5 cm

Edition: 15

2009



August's Flesh I

Fragmented & Reconstructed Maps

70,5 x 66,5 x 4 cm

2002

August's Flesh II

Fragmented & Reconstructed Maps

70,5 x 66,5 x 4 cm

2002

In August's Flesh 1 & August's Flesh 2, 2002, the side profile of a resting, elderly female is drawn entirely from reconfigured map fragments. Each subtle curve was cut from a South African road atlas and meticulously grafted to construct the portrait. The work was made shortly after the renaming of place names following the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. The renaming of place names meant that there was now a disjuncture between the physical landscape and the landscape that the (much older) atlas referred to; the maps that used to guide the reader would now get them lost.

By physically bringing the mapped landscape back to the human body through the act of collage, attention is drawn to the intimacy between the body and its surrounds, evidenced by the anthropomorphism involved in the naming of landscape (placenames that refer to 'necks', 'eyes' and 'mouths' for instance), and the subjectivity involved in 'constructing' the landscape through acts of naming and mapping.

The portrait refers to a photograph of a woman, arguably on her death bed, taken by the German photographer August Sander entitled "Flesh". It marked an entry point for Marx to a broader body of work, in which he negotiated these thoughts in relation to his own grandparents' processes of memory loss and their eventual passing.



Where the Landscape Begins

Steel & Perspex

165 x 107 x 100 cm

2007

I am not the spectator, I am involved, and it is my involvement in a point of view which makes possible both the finiteness of my perception and its opening out upon the complete world as a horizon of every perception.

Merleau-Ponty 1962: 303

Where The Landscape Begins is a sculptural object which invites the viewer to participate by viewing the landscape through an apparatus. In this sense the object is a tool, a device for looking. By observing the landscape through its 'view-finder', both the transparent Perspex grid as well as the text, "Where the landscape begins", is projected onto the backdrop beyond it.

As a perspectival machine, this device was constructed during the artist's engagement with the tradition of placing large stone texts onto the landscape. Maja Marx's interest is in the confluence

of an ocularised landscape and the naming of the landscape – how in the case of the chalked stone texts, the terrain and its nomenclature becomes one thing, becomes landscape itself. In this sense, the landscape is both seen and read as a text, by means of the gaze of a viewer that is not a mere observer, but an active participant in its construction.

Where *The Landscape Begins* places the viewer as central to the experience of the landscape, the viewer activates the work by projecting the text - through the act of looking - onto the landscape. By staring out and projecting onto the vast terrain, the distanced landscape is in the very same act “flattened” and brought up close, like a postcard. The viewer stares out onto the scene to discover that the landscape begins right there - the landscape begins with the eye itself.

MAURICE MBIKAYI



Fractals

Computer cables & Wood

53 x 52 x 10 cm

2015

There is a sense of incompleteness in this woven work. A residual (because of the obsolescence of the material); the texture of the canvas of cables has unravelled extremities. The canvas presented as fabrics-producing fibres—imagined potential fabrics for costumes. Fractals represents the infinity of an elusive virtual world. It also carries the residue of a functional purpose on the surface and the history of information that once passed through them.

THABO PITSO



Sins of our Fathers III

Nails, Steel & Plastic

66 x 38 x 35 cm

2017

There is constant confusion about what constitutes “need vs greed” as the push to consume obviates choice. Thus, a lifestyle of overconsumption is dictated, yet some consumptive behaviours have contradictory/undesirable outcomes, e.g., too much fast food and your trendy flashy clothes cease to fit. The sculpture undertakes an analysis of the impact and effects of consumerism. This work serves as a visual documentation, shedding light on the sociological role of mass-produced objects. These objects, desired, purchased, used, and ultimately discarded by the consumer, play a significant role in our society. It explores the intricate relationship between humans, mass-produced objects, and nature.



Assume a virtue, if you have it not

Paint on Dishcloth

70 x 52 x 3 cm

2017

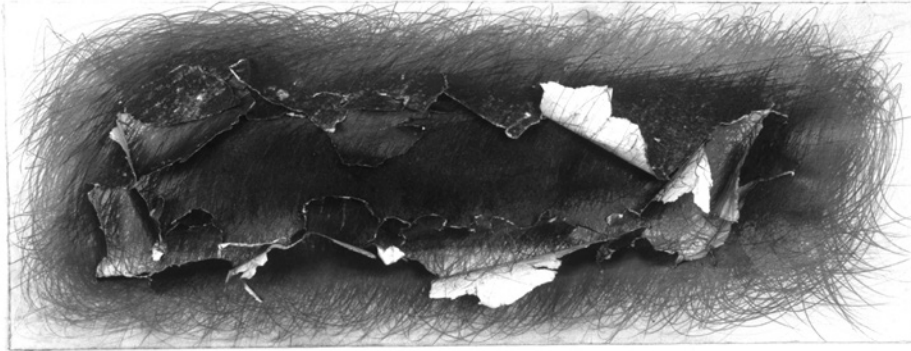
The artwork uses the grid of the household dishcloth to reference modernist painting. While Mondrian emphasised formal purity through his use of crisp straight lines, right angles, and primary colours, the natural markings of this domestic found object express a somewhat imperfection of this formal concept. With minimal intervention in this utilitarian object, one horizontal row has been left unpainted, while the remainder of the grids are painted white. This act renders the object as a painted artwork and, through the process, reveals the not so whiteness of the dishcloth. The title alludes to a sense of impersonation, suggesting that the dishcloth pretends to be white (pure, clean, virtuous), even if it is not that. Metaphorically, the artwork speaks to social and cultural expectations of women and perceptions around morality. A fresh, white, stain (blemish) free dishcloth is the pride of the kitchen.



Looking for Lucy
Plaster of Paris & Wood
30 x 277 x 36 cm
2007

Nine Janus-type human skulls were cast in Plaster of Paris as part of a process-based sculptural intervention I created in a small but vibrant waterfall that forms a part of a stream of water running through the Nirox Foundation (situated in the Cradle of Humankind Gauteng, South Africa). The idea was to create faux fossils that would gradually disappear – through the natural effects of water erosion and a time-based process whereby individual skulls were removed from the stream at regulated intervals of 12 hours. The plaster skulls were placed in the stream on Friday, the 19th of October, at 17h00 and gradually removed during the course of the next five days.

CLAUDE VAN LINGEN 1931 – 2024

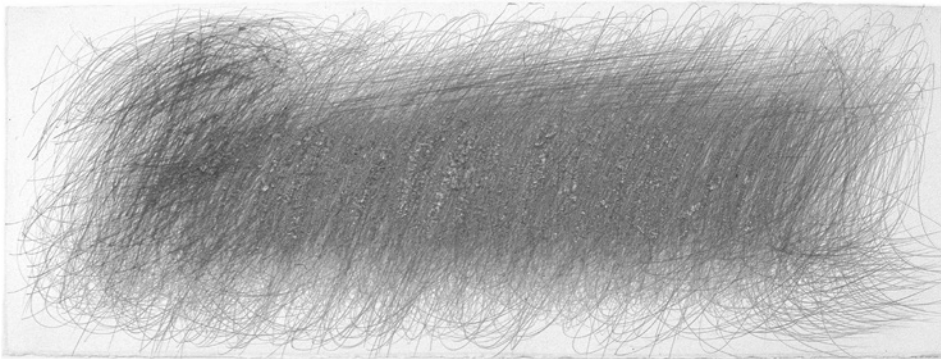


Endangered and Threatened Species of the 21st Century, All Species

6B Graphite Stick and 9H Pencil on Paper

27cm x 76cm

2006



Endangered and Threatened Species of the 21st Century, Clams

9H Pencil on Paper

27cm x 76cm

2006

Endangered and Threatened Species of the 21st Century, Snails

Graphite on Paper

27cm x 76cm

2006

The drawings in the “1000 Years From Now—Species Expected To Go Extinct In The 21st Century” series poignantly reflect Claude van Lingen’s deep concern for the welfare of our environment. The names of eleven species expected to become extinct are written in graphite of varying grades, one over the other, evoking a profound sense of loss and urgency.

JAN VAN DER MERWE



Ontwortel/Uprooted

Burned tree root and found object (chair)

150 x 100 x 100 cm

2011

A wooden chair is attached to the stump of an uprooted tree as if it has grown from the discarded roots. Fire has scorched and blackened everything—a skeletal remnant of an apocalyptic event. The work may refer to displacement, a universal occurrence in the present context, but also suggests cycles of life and death in nature and production processes.

STRIJDOM VAN DER MERWE



Far Away

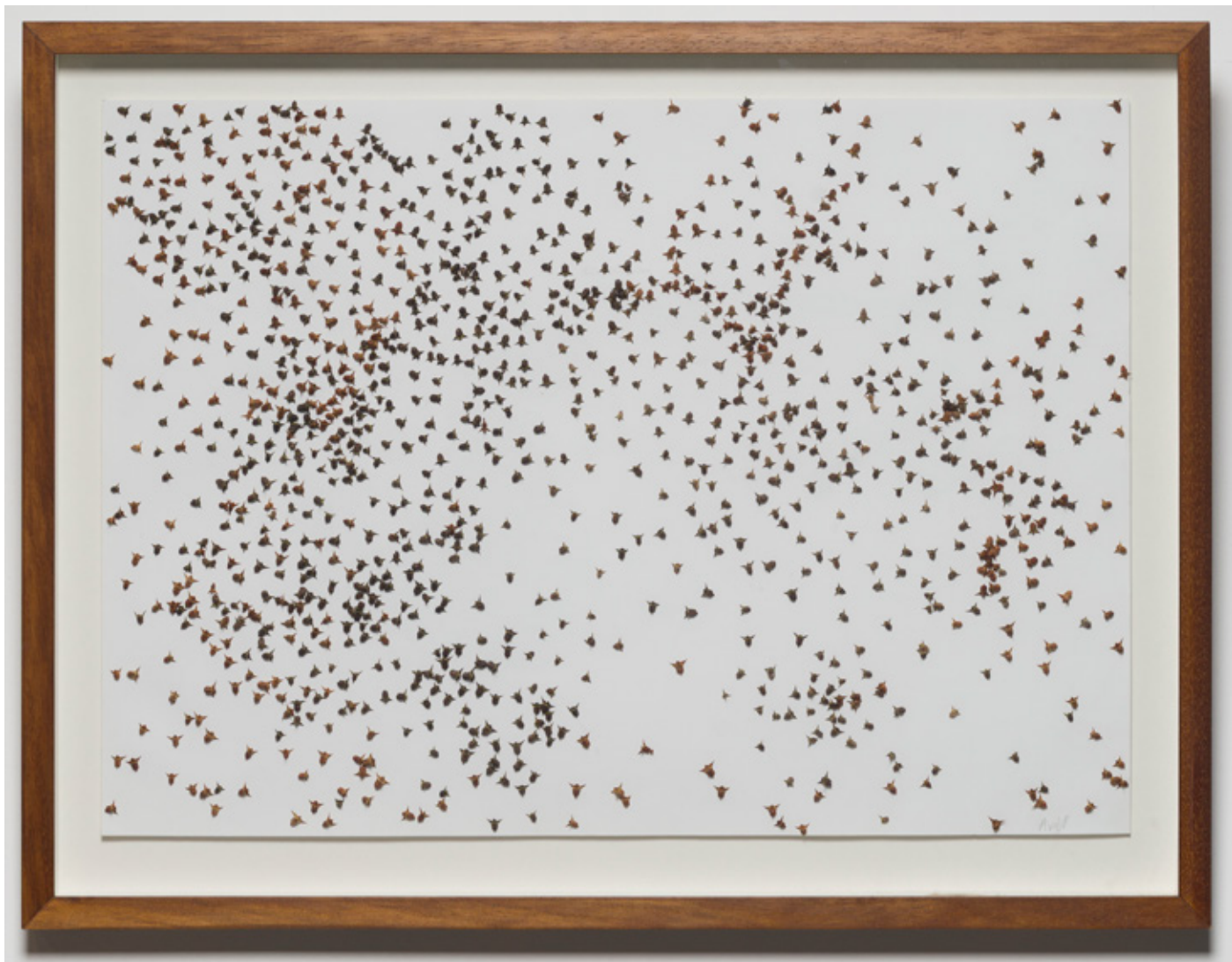
Site specific intervention, Richmond, Northern Cape, 3.12.2007

Digital print

108 x 204 x 6 cm

2007

When I received the invitation from MAPSA to create a piece for their first exhibition, "AWAY", in Richmond, I couldn't help but wonder why they chose Richmond as the location. It occurred to me because travelling from Pretoria to Cape Town and back was quite a distance for them. Being halfway between the two cities, Richmond served as the perfect middle stop. As a land artist who primarily works with ephemeral materials, I used paraffin to create my artwork. I drew a long line with a circle in the middle to represent Richmond and continued the line further. Setting it ablaze, I was fortunate enough to have a vehicle with people pass by at that very moment. They asked to stand in the circle, serving as a meeting point, for a photograph before continuing their journey. Once the paraffin burned out, it left behind a black line. In response to the invitation, I immediately titled the work "FAR AWAY" by writing it with my finger. As with most works created in the landscape, one must be open to changes and adapt to the elements and circumstances. I arrived with a concept in mind, but it ultimately unfolded and evolved in the moment. I documented that unique moment, knowing it could never be replicated.



Uprising

'Duiweltjie' Thorns on Paper

61 cm x 81 cm

2015

Small three-pronged thorns, the seeds of weeds known as 'duiweltjies' or 'dubbeltjies', were collected in Anna van der Ploeg's shoes during walks around Princess Vlei in Cape Town over the course of 2014-15, a time of mass student protest and collective mobilisation. In this work each thorn is stitched to a piece of paper with a thread loop. The artist, also a beekeeper, found several references to swarms of bees while researching crowd psychology, mob theory and superorganisms. This work dedicates time to what it is to become part of a concourse.

MINETTE VAN ROOYEN



Sketsboek

Indian ink on paper; selected pages from sketchbook

47 x 37 x 2 cm

1978



White Houses

Wood, Plaster & Whitewash

91,5 x 100 x 75 cm

2019

This pair of house shaped box structures come out of a series of older 2007 architectural drawings. The box-like container has been a theme which I have found myself returning to again and again. On the one hand it links to the basic cube emblematic of a minimalist concentration on the 'there-ness' of the object, on the other hand it socialises and personalises this into a house, indicative of human shelter and location in the world. These house shaped structures are made by alternating layers of timber lathes with a covering of plaster and white filler, the result being a somewhat organic and fragile surface.

In making the work I was remembering seeing the white washed Muslim tombs in Cape Town and connecting this with the familiar biblical phrase "a whited sepulchre" that I had also remembered from Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness.

In a very few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulchre. Prejudice no doubt. I had no difficulty in finding the Company's offices. It was the biggest thing in the town, and everybody I met was full of it. They were

going to run an over-sea empire, and make no end of coin by trade. ⁽¹⁾

What is striking in this passage is how white acquires not only sepulchral connotations but also moral dubiousness, Marlow's description recalling the Biblical phrase for the hypocrite, the man of inner darkness whitewashed by outer manner and conventional deed.

Rosmarin ⁽²⁾ points out that in *Heart of Darkness* white is the "the most explicit confusion" for the reader, since it is an "off-colour," the hue of ivory (upon which the whole European economic venture rests) and of Kurtz's complexion, a muddied, sullied white that, again to quote Rosmarin, "bespeaks contamination". The iconic house shape is something which has recurred throughout my oeuvre and these houses lying on their roofs and tumbled about like empty shells evoke something of an "explicit confusion" of the associations of house, home, stability and domesticity.

1) Conrad J. (1899) 1969 *Heart of Darkness and The Secret Sharer*, New York: Bantam p. 14, with a clear allusion to Matthew 23:27 "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

2) Rosmarin, A. 1989 "Darkening the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism and *Heart of Darkness*" in Murfin R (ed.) 1989 *Heart of Darkness: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*. New York: St. Martin's Press, pp. 148-169.

MARY WAFER



Blue Truck
Oil on Canvas
149 x 230 cm
2004

ELLA ZIEGLER



Four WORDS in Trevor Font Caps

Photographic Prints

42 x 29 cm

2015

INTARSIA

Ella Ziegler (GER), in collaboration with MAPSA and WERK VREK OF TREK Trevor Snyders (brickmaker Richmond, Karoo Desert). Trevor Snyder processes the desert soil in the Karoo Semi-desert into bricks. The mixture of dry, porous desert soil, lime, ash and water creates a soft, deformable mass that becomes a written character through sculptural de-/formation. The fire transforms the desert soil into a hard, heat-resistant state. The arrangement of the characters creates meaning: FEAR, ANXIETY, INVISIBLE LINES. Ella Ziegler comments on this work: 'Fear and anxiety are constant companions in South Africa because, as a stranger, I do not recognise the invisible boundary lines between danger and safety. Like inlays, I let the words into the ground, disappearing into the dust over the years.' The words are located in the vastness of the Karoo using GPS data.