CIRCUS

the cuss show: cape town
CUSS

bubble gum bubble wrap
KADROMATT

hillbrow public art project
RANGOATO HLASANE

one hour jingle
JOBURG.RADIO

sets
DOKTA SPIZEE
MMA TSELENG
MATHOTO
SEXJARO
CCTV - a space for local ideas in global practice, launches as a ticket (R50) to a group event titled CIRCUS, to be held on 14 September at a new art space called King Kong in New Doornfontein. CIRCUS includes Johannesburg-based artists and collectives: CUSS, Kadromatt, Rangoato Hlasane, joburg.radio, The Nation, Dokta Spizee, Mathoto, Sexjaro, Muptee and Mma Tseleng. Sharing the same ethos as CCTV, CIRCUS presents a playful and cheeky multi-disciplinary show by Joburg-based practitioners, in dialogue with themselves and the scene. Combining low-fi TV, interactive sound installation, dead tech slide show and experimental radio, CIRCUS borrows from the past, teasing out the new and the old, the digital and the analogue. It speaks to the centre and the periphery, and explores new spaces both in the physical and the virtual sense.

The publication is a survey of current practitioners and practices in SA and elsewhere, and will only come out on occasion of interesting events/projects. This issue profiles the work of participating artists/dj’s, as well as other contributions by practitioners in Johannesburg and elsewhere. It’s aesthetic is influenced by the Medu Newsletters (1979-1984), beautiful silkscreen covers with loose A4 sheets of contributions. CCTV’s influences includes, in no particular order or genre: Medu Newsletters, STAFFRIDER, Chimurenga Magazine, Stones Throw Records, YMag (the early years), Bassiq, Ninja Tune, YFM (the early years), CUSS, Botsotso, Pure Monate Show, Pan African Market, Kalawa Jazmee Records...

CCTV aims to use each cover as a platform, a canvas for innovative artists working in silkscreen, litho and lino. It is limited edition versus mass, precisely for the reasons of the cover as a platform for printmakers to access alternative platforms to display work, while the content itself is of quality, and enables writers and artists alike to access an alternative space for published work, for documentation and theorisation.

CCTV calls for rotating editors/curators who will define the theme, pull together a group of contributors and work with us to realise an edition. We are flexible and irregular and available for a chat on partnerships, exchanges and collaborations.
Cuss recently hosted a live talk show at the Stevenson Gallery (CT) as part of Out of Thin Air, a group exhibition curated by Lerato Bereng. The show combined live performances with pre-recorded video features by the members of Cuss and contributing artists Jason Staggie, Andrew Aichison and Jody Brand.

Drawing from iconic South African talk shows such as The Felicia Mabuza-Suttle Show and Dali Tambo’s People of the South, the show was hosted by JR Onyangunga and also featured conversations with all the artists who were involved with creating the show. Webisode 3 was recorded live, to be screened for the first time at CIRCUS.

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**BUBBLE GUM BUBBLE WRAP**

Malose Kadromatt Malahlela

BUBBLE GUM BUBBLE WRAP is a participatory sound installation that offers an experience of playfulness, fun & sound creation. It grants the audience access to interact with the installation with little restriction in act of soundmaking. BUBBLE GUM BUBBLE WRAP serves as a psychological trigger for unruly and rebellious behaviour, reminiscent of a teenage phase. Where the act of reckless chewing of a gum is deemed unmannered, BUBBLE GUM BUBBLE WRAP is a social space that releases the urge to pop the bubble wrap. It reverse discomfort into a fun and rehabilitating process.

I’m a creative practitioner on an exploration of sound as an emerging theater for the ear. I’m fascinated by the processes and dialogues that can be staged within sound, possibilities to narrate stories. I mould, manipulate, add, edit, apply effects and expand recorded realities of sound generated by our everyday world. Two of my latest work were part of group exhibitions. THERE IS HILLBROW FOR YOU was part of ‘Sounding Out’, a group exhibition curated by Kim Gurney at the Bag Factory, Johannesburg and DEAD AIR formed part of ‘Out of Thin Air’ curated by Lerato Bereng, at Stevenson Cape Town. Before that, I co-curated with Rangoato Hlasane the THATHI COVER ORKESTRA, an evolving Pan-African orchestra that explores and expands dance music.

[www.soundcloud.com/KaraokeKadromatt](http://www.soundcloud.com/KaraokeKadromatt)

Cuss is a group of artists based in downtown Johannesburg. Jamal Nxedlana, Zamani Xolo and Ravi Govender are the founders and core members of the group. The projects, which the group undertakes, connect with popular culture and are multi-disciplinary.

CUSS has broadcast two webisodes, published four online magazines, a video magazine, a print magazine and a trailer for a documentary titled Skopo. The Group was also commissioned to produce NEWWORK 11, a catalogue showcasing the work of the Wits School of Arts final year students.

The group has collaborated with Invisible Cities, show at the Goodman Gallery project space, the Independent Publishing Project) and conducted a ZINE workshop at the Wits School of Art as part of the Relocating the Studio Substation residency. The growth and development facilitated by collaboration is initially what led to the formation of the Cuss group. The culture of collaboration has continued developing within the group and over time the idea of cultural curation has become a key part of their work.

[www.cuss.co.za](http://www.cuss.co.za)
A FAMILY TREE - 1993 - 2003:
Mma Tseleng Review

late ate 80’s - early 90’s
CHICCO TWALA - 'SENYAKA' KEKANA - DAN ‘KAMAZU’ MALEWA - MANDLA ‘SPIKIRI’ MOFOKENG - JAIRUS ‘JAKARUMBA’ NKWE, MERCY PHAKELA - YVONNE CHAKA CHAKA - MM DELUXE (MANDLA MOFOKENG & MDU MASILELA), BRENDA FASSIE - LM JAM (LINDELANI MKHIZE & MDU MASILELA) - DJ OSCAR WA RONA - DJ CHRISTOS - DON LAKA

mid 90’s -
TROMPIES - BROTHERS OF PEACE - BOOM SHAKA - MDU MASILELA - MASHAMPLANI - TKZEE - ARTHUR - JOE NINA - JOE SHIRIMANI - THEBE

late 90’s - early 00’s
MASTERS AT WORK - GLENN UNDERGROUND - BROTHERS OF PEACE - DONALD DUCK - INTRODUCING GONG (LINDELANI MKHIZE & JOE NINA - HELLRAZORS (BRUCE SEBITLO & SKIZO) - BLUE SIX - GOOFED & DOPED (BRUCE SEBITLO & GUY) - DJs AT WORK

early 00’s - present
DJ SMANG MANG - DJ SMANG MANG - DJ SMANG MANG - DJ SMANG MANG

As Rangoato Hlasane’s moniker, Mma Tseleng plays music and conducts research into the social and economic impact of Kwaito. Furthermore, Mma Tseleng initiates music and audio projects that explores alternative avenues for Kwaito and electronic music production. Previous and ongoing projects include a mixtape and cassette sleeve publication titled HILLBROW: THE MAP, produced on occasion of the Independent Publishing Project and the THATH'I COVER OKESTRA: an evolving Pan-African orchestra that explores dance music, both co-curated with Malose Malahlela. Supported by the Goethe-Institut, the THATH'I COVER OKESTRA will collaborate with Paris-based conductor, Franck Biyong for this year’s Pan African Space Station festival in November.

www.mmatseleng.com
KNOT- SO-HARD

BY MATHOTO

1. INTRO· QUINCY JONES · MONEY RUNNER
2. THE POLICE · I BURN FOR YOU
3. RADIOHEAD · DOLLARS & CENTS
4. SAUL WILLIAMS · SCARED MONEY
5. THE CLASH · GHETTO DEFENDANT
6. TWO DJs AND A KEYBOARD PLAYER · SEKELE
7. JUNIOR MAFIA (FEAT NOTORIOUS B.I.G. & LIL KIM) · GET MONEY
8. SPOON · WHO MAKES YOUR MONEY
9. INTERLUDE · SLUM VILLAGE · GET DIS MONEY
10. DJ MUJAVA · LVIS 1990 KWAI TO DUB TOWNSHIP FUNK
11. JAY-Z & KANYE WEST · NIGGAS IN PARIS DUB MIX

Mathoto Matsetela – Creative-Strategic Planner, Writer, Blogger and DJ.
Mathoto currently lives in Johannesburg and works as a Creative-
Strategic Planner in Advertising. After graduating from Vega: the
Creative Brand Communications School she worked in agencies
and later in Editorial and Content Creation for print, Television
and New Media. Mathoto chronicles and explores her curiosities
around influence, ideation, cultural theory and narrative in both her
professional work and or her web space: www. anovelist.com
Hadron - Marino Pliakas • Michael Wertmueller • New Music • Johannesburg 11.9.12 + Cape Town 12.9.12 + Durban 13.9.12
later in 2012, supported by Pro Helvetia Johannesburg:
Carlo Hardmeier • Mario von Richenbach • Game Culture • Johannesburg 20.8.12 → 2.9.12
Color of 4 • Hildegard Knef • Semora Ntsebeza • Carlo Mombelli • Ronald Lahmepen • Music • Switzerland 1.9.12 → 8.9.12
Boris Nikitin • Imitation of Life • Theatre • Cape Town • Johannesburg • 20.11.12 → 2.12.12
Omar Blangiardi • Visual Artist in Residence • Cape Town • Johannesburg • 10.12 → 12.12
Claudio Radano • Photographer in Residence • Cape Town • Johannesburg • Maputo • 10.12 → 3.13
Beat Keller • Musician in Residence • Cape Town • 11.12.12
Kyle Shepherd • Musician in Residence • Berne • 10.12
Pro Helvetia Johannesburg • www.prohelvetia.org.za • 011 403 1880
strategic partner: SDG – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Word is, Stevenson has a Makhwapheni
To write on ourselves. more.

A few things you should consider for the central theoretical or conceptual precept of your next PhD, novel, non-fictional tome, kwaito track, house mono-lyric, poem, graffiti line, scratch into the school desk etc:

• The complete denial of the dogma of Newton that is the ability to sit on a brick standing tall-ways, balanced on its shortest side.
• The gentle poetry of the cat call, my size as the penumbra of public annunciations of temporary love between strangers.
• The light-footed ballet of keeping white Carvelas white, on an un-tarred township street.
• The precepts of ownership and the private; un-defined in the practice of walking through the front gate and out the back gate of a stranger’s property as a short cut to the other side.
• The corner, and the corner spaza /market /shop /car wash /chisanyama (often of the bezee kind) and local economies of the social.
• The ‘welcome dover’.
• Why nobody remembers Mzekezeke anymore.

PS: If you are not a PhD candidate, academic, novelist, musician or poet; the point still stands.
What first reeled me into the Johannesburg innercity workshop of violin-maker and restorer Svend Christensen, now relocated to Kensington, was a glimpse of the craziest looking piano you have ever seen. It stood just beyond his open doors, en route to my own studio upstairs – delightful, absurd and tantalising.

The all-glass façade above the Yamaha keyboard revealed its inner workings; the same applied to the kickboard. Yellowed lights jazzed the whole thing up like a jukebox on speed. The velvety black painted exterior revealed just a hint of sparkle. Yet the whole retro contraption held a dignified air. It made my fingers itch. So I lurked at the door and felt childish.

That is part of its allure, according to Christensen, who restored the piano with a team of collaborators. “From a distance, you switch the whole piano [lights] on, you can almost hear it playing. And as soon as someone does walk past it, even if they don’t play the piano, they immediately go over to it and start playing away.”

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This souped-up Yamaha, like many pianos, has a fine backstory that cues a larger theme of ‘distressed’ musical instruments. And Christensen knows all about those. He spends much of his time repairing instruments damaged by accident, neglect, ignorance and sometimes just seasonal change. He also makes instruments and related innovations: a bespoke double bass for the University of Cape Town’s music department is in production when we meet.

The “pimped piano”, as he calls it, was an answer to plain calamity. Its former self fell off the back of a pickup and Christensen received the panicked phone call. He recounts the incident with characteristic good humour, alluding its compacted form to Dr Teeth on the Muppets: “It was almost a diamond shape, leaning to the side – very comical … and the flap was open.”

Its original form was beyond redemption. “We pulled this piano as tight as possible and thought after all this work … let’s pimp this ride! The artist in me sprang out … and we swizzled it,” he says. “So how did its owner feel? ‘He’s wild about it!’ Christensen smiles. “I almost got him into the piano business because of it. I’m still working on it.”

The Yamaha is in many respects an anomaly for Christensen who focuses on violins and bow-making. Professional musicians tend to come, often in crisis, for repair work to exacting and traditional standards. “Restoring an instrument is really rewarding after it’s been done;” he says. “One happy customer is a violin player in Stellenbosch whose mother mistakenly drove over her beloved instrument and turned it ‘into matchsticks’ but now recons it looks and sounds even better.

Another brought in a violin painted green – not any old violin but one from the 1820s that had previously been glued together with epoxies and white glue, pried open, glued back
out of alignment and had pieces missing. Christensen says: “But you look at this thing – a delicate little scroll, such fine workmanship in the original… You can still see what it started off as once upon a time. It’s almost like having ‘superman eyes’ through all the other layers and seeing the real thing underneath in its finished form.” Removing the green paint took two weeks and the entire project two years. “That one was labour of love - to rub, polish, kiss, love and hug” the violin back into shape.

While professional musicians understandably require their instruments for performance purposes to be restored as seamlessly as possible, some are working in different ways with instruments in states of distress.

Musician and artist João Orecchia, for instance, has for several months been curating a Johannesburg innercity project called Invisible Cities, which is a year-long festival of live music, installation and multimedia art in the form of 12 one-off events in empty buildings. These have included the manipulation of musical instruments that at first glance might appear to the casual viewer destructive but are in fact best understood as poetic acts of reclamation.

In the first such event, Orecchia and his collaborators, a collective called The Skeleton Crew, bought a neglected piano from the classifieds for R500 and burnt it on an innercity rooftop to ashes – first planting handmade microphones inside it. The resulting time-lapsed video includes a haunting musical soundtrack created from the process where the microphones can be heard burning up at the end. The piano falls on what is left of its face and continues to smoulder away.

Orecchia says: “It was a piano – and then for all intents and purposes it wasn’t because nobody used it for years. We took it and played a different kind of music out of it, which was also very physical with the flames and the crackling and strings snapping … [The microphones] picked up the sound of the wind rushing through the body of the piano and smoke and all of that.”

The final result, he says, was a frame, strings and a whole lot of ash. “What you’re left with at the end is another kind of object, which is a symbol of that transformation and life, something underneath in its finished form.” Removing the green paint took two weeks and the entire project two years. “That one was labour of love - to rub, polish, kiss, love and hug” the violin back into shape.

The Skeleton Crew has collaborated for Invisible Cities on cutting a guitar into pieces while plugged into an amplifier, again creating a video and soundtrack. They have similarly compacted a trumpet, sourced from a pawn shop, with an industrial press into convoluting folds until a snap ends the tension. And they have plans for more instrument manipulations: “You have to give something up to get something back,” Orecchia adds. “You have a sense of sacrilege … that’s the emotional side of it. But the thing with instruments for Invisible Cities is it’s not about destruction at all; it’s about transformation, about taking something that’s not in use and changing it into something else and in that transformation getting something valuable out of that transformation itself.”

Another artist whose recent work featured the apparent destruction of a piano is Berlin-based South African Robin Rhode. Piano Chair, a video piece in Rhode’s signature style of interacting with chalk two-dimensional wall drawings, was exhibited in June at London’s White Cube Hoxton Square. It presents a scenario where a composer tries to ‘kill’ his piano by increasingly violent means – a rock, a knife, an axe, a pillow, fire and ultimately hanging it by a rope and kicking the chair away.

More recently, artist Paula Louw in November suspended an exploded view of a piano from the roof of the Circa gallery in Johannesburg as part of her redeconstructivist solo exhibition. The piano hung in painstakingly disassembled and reassembled pieces to reveal its various components in carefully considered arrangements. The overall effect was unexpectedly moving.

Louw, who has similarly exploded inner workings of other objects like a typewriter, says Piano shares the same themes: “I’m actually talking about communication and how it creates this paradoxical situation. ‘Harmony and discord’ describes it all: it can create communication but at the same time it can be a barrier.” This idea is reflected, for instance, by the keyboard suspended back-to-front. She adds: “Music is such an incredible communication medium … It causes such a response within us.” The hammers of the piano burst out from the installation like a cloud of crotchets.

What could this apparently increased incidence of creative engagement with distressed musical instruments mean? Let’s reel back to March 2010, when jazz musician Kyle Shepherd sat at Johannesburg’s Gallery Momo, his legs awkwardly tucked under himself, in front of a grand piano that was effectively lying on its belly. Its legs had been amputated in a vandalism incident, ostensibly for the copper underfoot, at the premises of the Zimology Institute, which was famed as an incubator of jazz talent under the tutelage of now deceased Zim Ngqawana. The performance was a fundraiser as well as a gesture of reclamation. The emotionally charged, distorted and improvised performance still haunts my memory.

Shepherd, a former Zimology Institute student, says it was part hurt, part nostalgia and part healing: “It also served to expose what happened – people need to see the kind of ignorance that the general person has in our country about instruments and their respect for them and their value – not just their monetary value but the value it has to people that play on instruments and make music and do their life’s work on instruments.”

Best known as a composer, band leader and improviser, he also found the experience liberating because the piano he knew so well had a totally different personality. He says: “It was simply about opening your mind and seeing to a different kind of sound that seemingly the same instrument could produce. And of course with the mechanical limitations of a piano that has been vandalised, you really have to push yourself into a different mindset … You have to still make music with what you have.”

Shepherd concludes: “Self-expression is not limited by the mechanics of an instrument, I really do believe that.” Many artists, it would seem, agree.

This article was first published in Sunday Independent.
The power of the image lies in the fact that we [women] are not made to witness the display but are, rather, involved in the process through which identity is formed” (Nead 1992:81)

My work challenges the viewer’s perceptions and the way in which female bodies have been represented in art and media. Themes such as, pain, ecstasy, female homosexuality and discomfort are portrayed in my work. The idea of pain and discomfort is juxtaposed with the soft and sensitivity of the flesh. The scars and wounds are used as symbols for physical and emotional pain. The body is tied to create a sense of discomfort. The discomfort and pain is felt by most lesbians in South Africa due to the hate crimes and constriction in society.

The identities of the figures are hidden to comment on the life of secrecy that most lesbians live in, especially in black communities. Secrecy is often necessary for lesbians because of the risk of punishment and violation, referred to as ‘corrective rape’. It is discussed that the rape of black lesbians in South Africa has become an ‘in-tolerable trend’. Ignorant members of some communities use their physical power to correct or ‘cure’ lesbianism through rape.

The tormenting experience I have encountered enables me to assess and reevaluate the prejudices and negative attitudes towards homosexuals, which still exist in our communities.


Reneilwe Mathibe was born in 1989 in a small town in the North West called Rustenburg. She completed her B-Tech Degree in Visual Arts at the University of Johannesburg with painting as a major. She works as Programmes Coordinator at Keleketla Library and facilitator at Artist Proof Studio, Mathibe shows her work at various group shows. Affliction is part of her new body of work that investigates the nature of hate crimes in South Africa.

- “Affliction I” 2012
  Digital Print 42 x 59.4cm
- “Affliction II” 2012
  Digital Print 42 x 59.4cm

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The performer is seated on a black crate. In front of the performer are four musical note stands (on tripods) with blank pieces of paper resting on them. The performer begins reading:

"*some deleted scenes*

**SCENE 47. To the late comers are left the bones**

**EXT. SOMEWHERE. DAY.**

Since they will never kill us all.
They will never love us all.

Take care not to mention bones
in the presence of the elderly
this makes them nervous.

Walk in an orderly fashion
to where they resuscitate time.

Take note of its grammar
Syntax. Treat it as a verb.
What lyrics would it sing?

I met a woman who said
“There is no song for this,
Even those who have tried gave up long ago”.

Ella Jare was incorrect
For this there is a song
Write your own lyrics
Compose your own rhythm but

Never to be sung out aloud.”

Once done reading, the performer sets alight the paper one of the papers on the music note stands (the one farthest to his right). The paper burns politely. The performer begins grating a book with a cheese grater. The performer grates the book as if playing an instrument. Once the performer has done grating the book, he sets alight another paper (farthest to his right), the paper burns politely. The performer begins reading:

"**SCENE 48. The Dark Room Manifesto:**

**INT. SOMEWHERE. DAY.**

*(This would be a white text on a black page)*

The performer sets alight another paper, watching it burn slowly. He continues reading, this time periodically inserting safety pins into his mouth so that at some point the text he is reading becomes inaudible:

"**SCENE 1. Prologue**

Opening. A black screen. Letters can be seen behind a mist with a red glow, but it is unclear what they say. The mist clears, revealing the words ‘Dog Sleep’, accompanied by dog barking sounds in the background.
Fade into night, outside. The moon is half sunken in to the screen.
Begin voice over.

V.O – The year 1989 was a common year that started on a Sunday. The one thousand nine hundred and eight ninth year of the Common Era, or Ammo Domini; the nine hundred and eighty ninth year of the second millennium, the eighty ninth year of the twentieth century; and the tenth and last year of the nineteen eighties decade. Fade to black.

**SCENE 47. The Black-Palm**

**EXT. HOUSE. DAY.**

Many people stand in a line that goes around the neighbourhood. In their hands, under their arms, or next to them are piles of blank papers. Next to some people are boxes with the very same blank pages. Besides the people in the queue are three women administering and ordering people to maintain straight lines. Thulang and Familiar Face are also standing in line and are close to the entrance of the house. Thulang is facing Familiar face so that his back is turned away from the direction of the queue.
Thulang: I can’t believe you still won’t tell me what happened to his hand?

Familiar face: We have been camping out here for 3 full days and you decide to ask all of this 5 minutes before we go in?

Thulang turns around to face Familiar Face.

Thulang: Hayibo Mfowe2!

Familiar face: Well rumour has it that when the sky fell along with the stars, one of the stars fell on his arm burning it. That’s why he’s called Black Palm.

Thulang: So why did he hide his hand for so long? And what does that have to do with the memories that he produces?

Familiar face gets irritated.

Familiar face: Come on dude, don’t you listen?!

Shakes his head.

Familiar face: Because he was scared people would think that he was the one who slept with the mermaid. Scared he would be accused of the fall. I don’t know about the pictures he makes, or memories as you call them. Unlike you, I’m only here coz my mother sent me. People say when the star burnt his arm, the star basically exposed his arm to all its memories. That’s why people come from all over the world to have him remake images from the past.

Thulang: But why would this star falling on his arm over expose and bleach all other photographs? I mean it doesn’t make sense...

Familiar face shoves Thulang forward indicating it’s their turn to enter the house.

Familiar Face: (Whispering) We have been camping out here for 3 days and you only decide to ask these questions 2 minutes before we go in!

Cut to Interior of the house.

Familiar face leads Thulang into the house following the corridor. They both stop when they notice the white squares on the wall. At first these look similar to the white papers that they have brought to be processed by Black Palm, but upon closer observation they realize that these are because of all the absent photographs that once were hanging on the walls.

The performer sets alight the last piece of paper and watches it burn while safety pins stay in his mouth. Fade out.

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Kemang Wa Lehulere was born in 1984 in Cape Town and currently lives in Johannesburg. He has a BA Fine Arts degree from the University of the Witwatersrand. Previous solo exhibitions have taken place at the Goethe-Institut in Johannesburg (2011) and the Association of Visual Arts in Cape Town (2009). Group shows include Air de Lyon at the Fundación Proa in Buenos Aires, Argentina (2012); The Ungovernables, the second triennial exhibition of the New Museum in New York (2012); A Terrible Beauty is Born, the 11th Biennale de Lyon at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France (2011) and When Your Lips Are My Ears, Our Bodies Become Radios at the Kunsthalle Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern, Switzerland (2010). Wa Lehulere was a co-founder of the Gugulective (2006), an artist-led collective based in Cape Town, and is a founding member of the Center for Historical Reenactments in Johannesburg. He was the winner of the inaugural Spier Contemporary Award in 2007, and the MTN New Contemporaries Award in 2010. He was the recipient of an Ampersand Foundation residency in New York in 2012.
Less than 20 years ago, black South Africans were prohibited by the "group area act" to live in Bertrams, Johannesburg. After Apartheid the neighbourhood has profoundly changed. Outsiders find traces of these changes as fractures in the face of the city. Informal businesses have found space between well kept suburban houses, other small villas are squatted now and the backyards have become vegetable gardens. High walls have been build – or been taken down. Today residents of Bertrams are a mix of poor South Africans, lower middle class, and refugees from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Eritrea. After a period a retreat, public space is again being used – signs of a new lively South Africa.

In early 2012, students and artists from Germany and South Africa created with the residents of the neighborhood of Bertrams in Johannesburg a heterogeneous portrait of the “Homezone Bertrams”. They used graphic design/print-making and 16mm film to gather material, which will be used for an installation to be exhibited in South Africa and Germany in 2013. The topic of this space/room was not only the neighborhood of Bertrams, but the installation will also present an inside as well as outside view on a society in transformation.

The artwork produced for the exhibition reflects the uncertainty of ownership in Bertrams: While some poor white residents struggle to keep ownership or control over property provided by the former apartheid regime, new structures, which could establish a more equal distribution and access to housing and other resources for black South African and immigrants are only partly in place yet. In this uncertainty the residents of Bertrams manage their daily lives. While the conflicts are sometimes racially motivated, at the same time the feeling of being left out from economic growth has shaped a new community beyond racial prejudice. After a period of retreat, public space is again being used. Some have lost wealth, considering themselves as losers of these changes. Others discovered chances for a better life in Bertrams.

The observations of HOMeZONe in Johannesburg discuss participation, wealth, migration and security in an African as well as a European context. Foucault uses the term Heterotopia: a single real place that juxtaposes several spaces. This place has a function in relation to all of the remaining spaces. The neighborhood represents more than itself. HOMeZONe describes with Hoelderlins words “die Wirklichkeit des Möglichen” ("reality of the possible"). Working in Bertrams, the process of collecting material, the exchange with the residents of Bertrams was an attempt to stay accessible in a strange, uncertain place. Openness and the resulting conflicts and challenges are the base for the work of HOMeZONe.

The documentary art project Homezone is based on the experiences of Mark Thomann (printmaker) and Thomas Heise (documentary film maker). Mark Thomann initiated in 2009 Homezone. Artists and residents of the neighborhood of Kottbusser Tor in Berlin (mostly immigrant children) created a portrait of their surroundings. The book "Homezone Kottbusser Tor" is the result of this work. The approach to diffuse the boards between the person portraying and the person portrayed is also essential to Homezone Bertrams. For Homezone Johannesburg, the concept was expanded through installation with illustration, photography and film. The project included film students from Johannesburg and Karlsruhe (Germany) to produce 16mm short films with the residents of Bertrams. For this purpose a workspace in Bertrams was rented ("Ex Adult Store"). The films were developed by hand in simple buckets.

The following artwork will be part of the exhibition:

PHOTO SERIES: My Storie (Sabelo Mlangeni)
SCREENPRINTED PORTRAITS: Anna Busdiecker, Jabu Matthews
INSTALLATION/SCREENPRINTS: OWN (Senzo Shabangu, Jabu Matthews Tshuma, Thshepo Rakosa, Lehlohonolo Dhlamini, Anna Busdiecker, Mark Thomann)
INSTALLATION: Council Houses (Mark Thomann)
INSTALLATION: Map (Anna Busdiecker, Jabu Matthews Tshuma, Thshepo Rakosa, Mark Thomann)
MULTIPROJECTION 16MM B/W: Thomas Heise, students from South Africa and Germany

OWN, 2012
Installation/Screenprints on sheets (Senzo Shabangu, Jabu Matthews Tshuma, Thshepo Rakosa, Lehlohonolo Dhlamini, Anna Busdiecker, Mark Thomann)

Days on End
Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi

Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi was born in New York City. She has lived in Johannesburg on and off since the early 1990s. She is a painter, video artist and filmmaker who divides her time between studio work and the field of collaborative practice. She is currently an artist in residence at the Bag Factory Artists’ Studios in Johannesburg.
Kim Gurney interviews Elgin Rust in a written exchange about her forthcoming research project and collaborative exhibition in Johannesburg that spans art, law and the media, opening 11 September 2012.

KG: One element that recurs to me in the story behind ‘APPEAL 2012’ is the question of voice. Achille Mbembe has spoken a lot recently about the capacity to voice and how this is linked to a crisis of language in this country, and in turn to imagination. And this project really began with the silencing of your voice. In what ways would you consider it an exploration of giving voice?

ER: ‘APPEAL’ is the continuation of an investigation that I initiated in 2008 for my Masters at Michaelis School of Fine Art, UCT. And yes, its roots can be traced back to a personal experience of the judiciary where I felt my voice was silenced and which propelled me into this journey investigating redress and what I have come to term “aesthetic redress”. It now attempts to allow other voices represented by a jury of artistic collaborators to explore notions around the judiciary.

KG: You speak about „aesthetic redress“, how the work may trigger memory for the audience to imagine the invisible rather than seeking to reveal some kind of hidden essentialist truth. Would you elaborate on how ‘APPEAL’ may explore this?

ER: I guess it would do so in a similar way as the initial fictional trial did in 2010. R v Judicial Redress was and still is driven by the invented characters Advocate Alice and Detective Prince. They collected ‘evidence’ from various Cape Town courts [including found furniture] and re-staged the material as a performative installation - the trial. This was based on three precedents that encapsulate aesthetic redress: research + reconstruction + reinterpretation.

For ‘APPEAL’, I have invited a jury of participants from different disciplines to re-investigate the same material (see http://ffr.elginrust.net). Much like a trial gets re-opened for an appeal where evidence is re-evaluated, the project is re-opened and investigated. And as a case that goes into an appeal moves between courts, the project now moves location from Cape Town to Johannesburg.

The exhibition comprising the evidence and part of the installation will be ‘trial ready’ for the opening 11 September. Over the ensuing fortnight, the jury will incorporate its judgements, understood as opinions, estimates, notions, or conclusions. I hope the collaborative processes will reflect the complex nature of emotional transformation.

ER: The metaphor of the ship is effectively used by many artists to express concerns around imagination, migration, colonialism and globalisation. Yinka Shonibare, Cai Guo-Qiang, Kcho and closer to home Cara van der Westhuizen and Renée Holleman come to mind. The ship for the trial Das Narrenshiff is made entirely from found courtroom furniture, the evidence collected by the case detective. It is conceptually based on Sebastian Brant’s The Ship of Fools, a reference indirectly to my roots but more pertinently to law as a problematic colonial import. The ship stands where the participants of a trial act out the controlled ritual of truth-finding. It invites us to play an imaginative game, with notions of childhood memories and contemporary social concerns.

KG: One of the main symbols that you use in the installation is a ship. What is the significance of this visual metaphor for you?

ER: The play across mediums allows for play between the judicial and aesthetic realm. Photographs, physical evidence and sound clips are read very differently when positioned in the court or in a gallery. This game, as described by Jacques Rancière, deconstructs in a Derridean sense the meaning and reveals inherent unresolvable binaries that create space for new meaning. This deconstruction of materiality is what makes it possible for the work to offer alternatives for emancipated subjectivities.

KG: Your work is described as a kind of serial, performative installation, much like a shifting archive of meaning. In an earlier personal conversation, we touched on an apparent increasing incidence in contemporary art-making that approaches the archival. Yet often this does not extend beyond the catalogue to personal affect, a realm wherein your work finds full meaning. What in your view is the key to this bridge?

ER: The key is the incorporation of affect, something that got a bit lost in the 60’s and 70’s, the heyday of critical art. It was so focussed on interrogating social systems by mimicking them that the artist’s personal touch almost completely disappeared. This project mimics the judicial system but it also elicits affect as it incorporates the artist’s mark. This leads the viewer to see rather than to think the truth - a truth which is viscerally sensed, also arising incidence in contemporary art-making that approaches the archival. Yet often this does not extend beyond the catalogue to personal affect, a realm wherein your work finds full meaning. What in your view is the key to this bridge?

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circular nature should encourage voices to re-imagine the judiciary. This dialogue fuelled by artists potentially has the power to embolden courts to produce creative and innovative judgements that no longer perpetuate what Foster terms a “trauma culture” but rather a culture of emotional redress.

**KG:** Of what particular significance is bringing this research project to Johannesburg?

**ER:** Johannesburg is richly steeped in matters pertaining to the judiciary. It houses the Constitutional Court and places like the Drill Hall. It seemed like a logical progression to allow for a broader band of artists and audience. This attempts to further an awareness of the role art can play in making abstract social systems more tangible. It also activates a visual and theoretical discourse between cities across art, law and media.

Elgin Rust is an artist, researcher and cultural practitioner based in Cape Town.

Kim Gurney is an artist, researcher and journalist based in Johannesburg. She helps curate ‘APPEAL 2012’ through guerilla gallery, an artist-led platform that hosts projects in makeshift spaces (www.guerillagallery-jhb.blogspot.com).

- **Das Narrenschiff (detail), 2010**
  Mixed medium installation of found material from courthouses and inflated swimming bands  
  4m (l) x 1.5m (w) x 2.3m (h) approx.  
  Elgin Rust

- **Exhibit C, 2010**
  6th in the series, Edition 1 of 3  
  Photomontage, collaged, archival ink on photo lustre paper  
  147cm (w) x 84cm (h)  
  Elgin Rust
An African City Rendered
Compiled by Thato Mogotsi with a selection of photographs by Kutlwano Moagi from the exhibition series SPLIT FACADES, 2012

‘One goes to the market to participate in the world. As with all things that concern the world, being in the market requires caution. Always, the market – as the essence of the city – is alive with possibility and with danger. Strangers encounter each other in the world’s infinite variety; vigilance is needed. Everyone is there not merely to buy or sell, but because it is a duty. If you sit in your house, if you refuse to go to market, how would you know of the existence of others? How would you know of your own existence?’ From EVERYDAY IS FOR THE THIEF by Teju Cole

A photographic project that explored the duality of experience and physical interaction that is manifested in the continuously changing landscape of Johannesburg’s inner city. The project aimed to interrogate how the continuing push toward a globally marketable and gentrified ‘African’ city, one that has taken place over the past few years, ultimately fails to consider the informal but longstanding identity and ingenious culture of Johannesburg’s current inhabitants as one that is tied to the physical landscape of the city itself.

The project was supported by the Goethe-Institut Johannesburg and the DUMS AND TERRIES is’n Groot Fabriek Arts Fund.

Kutlwano Moagi is an independent photographer. Born in Soweto, Johannesburg, 14 April 1983. He completed a photography learnership programme at the Market Photo Workshop in 2005 and has since participated in numerous group exhibitions locally and internationally. Among these is the Reportage Atri Festival in Italy. Split Facades was his first solo exhibition.

Thato Mogotsi is currently gallery assistant at Stevenson Johannesburg as well as being an independent curator and writer. In 2006 she received training in Photojournalism and Documentary Photography from the Market Photo Workshop and later went on to join the daily national newspaper, The Times, as assistant photo editor and online picture researcher. Previously she has been project assistant and co-curator on several projects such as the Wide Angle Forum on Participatory Photography Practice in association with the Goethe-Institut Johannesburg and the Wits School of Arts, among others.

• Boloba Fashion Store
• The Fifth Floor
• En Route I
• En Route III
• En Route VI
• 777 Joker
• Gambler’s Corner

‘The city’s [Johannesburg] fabric has been described as a structure in need of radical transformation and only rarely as an expression of an aesthetic vision’ From JOHANNESBURG, THE ELUSIVE METROPOLIS by Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, 2004

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Neko-neko
Lerato Bereng

Neko-neko, Indonesian for ‘one who has a creative idea which only makes things worse’.

We can all certainly relate to that moment when creativity dumbs us. The impossibly frustrating anxiety induced by a truly fantastic idea. Many a sleepless night has passed where I’m plagued by the thought of realizing something I’m burning to do. Fuelled by creative cocaine and an internal disco, insomnia becomes me. When something is almost too good.

In Sesotho we call it ‘ho tserehana’, which loosely translates as having a momentary incapacity to think, or a mental stupor where you’re about as productive as a goat grazing in a field. Ironically, ‘neko-neko’ which has become the subject of this text, was originally intended as an exhibition. Based on an ongoing exploration of the concept of simplicity within the arts, this project was to explore the creative weaving of words into gatekeepers for accessibility in contemporary art. When one mentions simplicity, the immediate association that ostentatiously rears its head is the popular role of “Easy” which is a term that is digested with great difficulty (if at all) in relation to art. “Easy” in art-production and discussion is about as insulting as the colloquial use of the term to describe a hot-pant-having, potty-mouthed, attention craving floozy that may cause some art prudes to break into a mild sweat. I had sought to investigate the failures of language as key communicator for the otherwise inexplicable in art. The term ‘neko-neko’, like other gems that I stumbled upon (e.g. muka-muka: so angry one could throw up), is sourced from Adam Jacot de Boinot’s The Meaning of Tingo (2005), which is a dictionary of words that exist only in certain languages, but at times define concepts that are universal.

Oftentimes language acts as a divisive factor or one of unification only to those where it is common, but I’d argue that we can relate to several commonalities that often transcend the available vocabulary. I allude this notion to the feeling you get when laughter is captured in your throat and it is highly inappropriate to release it, so you let it linger and form small eruptions in your chest, or that mortifyingly awkward moment when you see an acquaintance and your immediate instinct is to run or hide or pretend you didn’t see, but decency gets the better of you and you give a half-assed semi-wave. Simply stated, a keystone in the history of world art lies in the need to express that which cannot be communicated in any conventional form, but exists. Through this project I sought to re-evaluate this notion and encapsulate words, translation and understanding as commonplace.

A good idea I had, that was about having a great idea that could never amount to anything and as a result never did.

Lerato Bereng obtained a BA Fine Art in 2007 from Rhodes University. In 2008 she was selected as one of five Young Curators at the Cape Africa Platform (CAPE). For the CAPE 09 Biennale in May 2009, she curated Thank You Driver, an exhibition that took place on minibus taxis. She also co-produced CAPE’s Sessions Maputo in Mozambique in 2009. In 2010 she was assistant curator for Dada South?, an exhibition curated by Roger van Wyk and Kathryn Smith at the Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town. She was one of 13 young curators selected to take part in a curatorial workshop for the 6th Berlin Biennale in 2010. She is currently a curator at STEVENSON Johannesburg, and is pursuing her MFA in curating at Rhodes University.
I find it difficult to write about anything with its roots in pre democracy South Africa without being sucked into its role or place in the world of Apartheid South Africa. The obvious problem with this is that of course everything South African has roots in Apartheid, colonialism and the entire European settler discourse. I feel trapped, but I assume there must be some value in my analyses even if it is only from the fact that I want to do it. Catharsis maybe.

Is hard to imagine a topic more likely to evoke this self-conscious urge to find meaning through amateur historicism than the Carlton Centre – the tallest building in the world!

- If the world started on the northernmost shores of Tunisia and ended on the southernmost shores of South Africa. This marvel of engineering should be the crowning jewel of African urbanisation, its ridiculous height should represent the pinnacle of our city, nation and continent, and yet somehow it doesn’t.

Like all things South African, the Carlton Centre has an ambiguity that resists acceptance. We are not sure about its meaning. It exists in our time and yet it talks about another. It has an awkward relationship to the idea of Johannesburg. Unlike Ponte, or the Hillbrow tower, the Carlton Centre doesn’t have a secure place in our imagination of Johannesburg, it doesn’t have a distinct visual presence, from a distance it’s just another block on the horizon.

Major cities around the world tend to have unique urban features which are instantly identifiable, sort of symbols for the city: in Paris its the Eiffel tower; in New York, the Empire State building; in London its Tower Bridge; Moscow, the Kremlin. These iconic structures also tend to be built before the 1940’s and tend to be features of cities in the historical North (Europe and America). This is not to say that the cities of the South and East do not have unique urban features, Beijing has Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, Kuala Lumpur has the Petronas towers, Rio de Janeiro has the Christ the redeemer. I think, however, that modern cities (and by modern I mean new cities, the living, changing cities of South America, Africa and Asia, not the ancient, immovable cities of Europe and North America) are defined less by grand buildings - the projections of power by big businesses and governments - and

Carlton Centre 2050 Plans:
Notes on a proposal for the remodeling of the Carlton Centre shopping mall
by Nolan Dennis (text)
and Bogosi Sekhukhuni (illustrations)
more by the patterns and purposes of the people, the action of the living.

I find that despite the best intentions of government and capital to model modern cities on the example of the old metropolises of Europe and America, their defining features are still aspects of the lives of the people. In spite of the architectural monstrosities of China, when I think of Beijing I think of bicycles, in spite of Tokyo’s skyscrapers I still think of streets satiated with ultra neon signage, in spite of Christ the Redeemer I still think of favelas in Rio. So what of Johannesburg? What are our defining symbols, what characterizes this city.

The history of Johannesburg within the history of South Africa, has given this city an awkward character. Emerging from the Highveld bush as a gold rush settlement, it was designed as the centre of the Apartheid economy, and despite its pseudo-tribal/religious underpinnings, Apartheid was really about money, resources and access. More than Pretoria, Johannesburg was the apogee of apartheid, the engine that propelled the confluence of English capital, Afrikaaner votes and Black bodies.

The high point of Johannesburg urban development coincides with the high point of the Apartheid project – the late 60s through the 70s. Politically the clamp down on black opposition parties and leaders in the 60’s had led to a period of relative calm, the black homelands citizenship Act of 1970 had supposedly solved the demographic problem (black people were no longer citizens of South Africa and therefore no longer the majority); economically the mining companies started in the early 1900’s had reached their maturity and were awash in capital and financial institutions piggy backing off mining profits began investing heavily in the city centre.

The Carlton Centre was the ultimate expression of Apartheid optimism. A concrete behemoth of 50 floors, towering 223 metres above the street, it was, and still is, the tallest building in Africa. At its completion in 1973 it was the tallest building in the entire Southern hemisphere. It was an unequivocal statement that here, in the southern tip of Africa, we look down on you all.

There is no irony in the fact that it was developed by Anglo American, the mining company founded by Ernest Oppenheimer (of De Beers notoriety). As the largest company in South Africa it really was the point of it all, it illustrated the success of the concept of Apartheid. It was an English company, using cheap Black labour, to generate super profits, which funded the Afrikaaner Government as the largest taxpayer in South Africa.

That was Carlton Centre, an office block, a shopping centre, a hotel but really a symbol of just how great this South Africa was. Johannesburg can probably count itself as middle aged, alongside the other great settler cities of European colonialism – Sydney, Auckland, Buenos Aires – all of them at essence are a sincere attempt to reproduce the glory of the Old World in the New. And at the completion of Carlton Centre, Johannesburg was undoubtedly the most successful of the bunch.

But not long after that things changed. June 16 1976, is a good place to imagine as the beginning of the end – the forces that led to the unraveling of Apartheid can be seen here: the anger of black youth, the international recoil at the violence and fear of white South Africa, the reinvigoration of ANC. Through various ups and downs these forces ultimately led to April 27 1994 and the recreation of Johannesburg.

I like to think that while some of the buildings and roads have been around since the 1900, the city as we know it is a completely new creature. The historical Johannesburg died sometime in the 80’s and 90’s. And on its dead bones is being created a new city - the same name but quite a different organism. A contradiction: an old established city, which is actually the worlds youngest city, still forming itself, possibly not yet even a city.

Buildings like the Carlton Centre are lost in this process, unlike the Ponte tower, it hasn’t been completely re-appropriated, its height and size still attract the expression of power (it has been bought by Transnet and is now their head quarters) but it exists as an island. The rest of Hillbrow is in motion, the underground shopping centre is alive, on the street the clash of people and cars, the waves of action which is breaking and building this city do not really touch it.

The Carlton Centre still talks of the past, like a old white person’s complaints about potholes and crime, it projects a distasteful nostalgia. On the street it is seen and used and owned by the demands of today but its brutal concrete head, often hidden in the clouds is mostly ignored, an unacknowledged monument.

The Carlton Centre as a skyscraper hasn’t been able to pull a Union Buildings, its not yet ours, it hasn’t been hit by the Mandela effect, it is not the springboks, its glory belongs to another time.

Nolan Oswald Dennis was born in Zambia, raised in Midrand and currently lives in Johannesburg. For the time being he is desperately trying to understand post-human relations of conflict. He is especially interested in historical essence in a time of cultural fragility. He is studying architecture. www.magwinya.tumblr.com

Bogosi Sekhukhuni is a world famous visual artist and writer of a personalized kind of science fiction. He is interested in myths. He currently studies visual art at the University of Johannesburg. www.lefaufau.tumblr.com
Fananathi Media
Rangoato Hlasane hooks up with Tshepo Rakosa and Jabulani Tshuma of Fananathi Media to speak about print, Medu and the art of not selling out.

Rangoato Hlasane: The naming is fascinating, what is behind Fananathi?
Tshepo Rakosa: It’s a lifestyle that we invite people to join, yet do whatever they wanna do with it
Jabulani Tshuma: More than a reflection of us, but others creativity, style and personalities
TR: There is a dislike towards mediocrity, and somehow the name reflects that…
JT: We ask others to take what we represent, and grow it
TR: It was also seen as a movement in the beginning and now a culture

TR: Recycled material has been prominent in Fananathi’s profile, what are some of the material you print on?
JT: Any flat surface. We explore textile, board and all kinds of paper, especially the iconic city waste materials.

RH: Art training tends to promote Fabriano and other archival material, why are you going for these materials?
JT: Running out of material! We started with masonite from tomato boxes. We have been testing the longevity of these materials, looking at them after all these years of working with the material, five years on, to see how they respond to time. Masonite has been the most lasting. The one material that has been a challenge is plastic.

RH: And what is your dream material?
TR: For me a wall and a screen, let’s see what comes of that.
JT: It would be to print on cars, or a big ass window, glass.

RH: A common practice in contemporary art is the use of galleries. Is it something you want to play in vs functional art that you have mostly been doing?
JT: There needs to be a viewer for art and a gallery provides that. Also, for income, the gallery represents a market. Its not selling out but selling-out that attracts me to a gallery. Galleries can help artists to gauge their relevance.

RH: There is a lot of print output, with Artist Proof Studio and other institutions graduating new voices. How do you see Fananathi’s contribution in terms of innovation?
TR: Recycling, exploring alternative material, surfaces for print and collaborations.
JT: And also, going back to the basics. Silkscreen is relevant because you can produce work without a computer and electricity. People are caught up in the digital, we show that art can be effective with basic, analogue tools.

RH: Your recent work on the Dope Store is effective and powerful. What was the brief behind it?
JT: Actually we gave ourselves the brief! We suggested a guerilla marketing campaign, which they were skeptical of in the beginning. We have been re-inspired by Medu (the Arts Ensemble). The contemporary world has been neglecting that but at the same time taking from it while not aware that they are doing that. So we have been reliving that era and putting a contemporary twist to the style.

RH: Could you please speak about the Dope print with the speech bubbles?
TR: The print is analogue, by hand, reflecting Dope Store and other lifestyle stores that represent a new era of DIY, of making it, of imagining the future. Thinking about democracy that promises economic freedom, thinking about initiatives the likes of Thesis. It speaks of dreams and achievements.

JT: Again, taking from Medu, they had their struggles that they needed people to hear of. Today we are saluting young black South Africans who have achieved, or working towards their achievements. So while there are troubles, we are making work that says this is what’s going on economically and otherwise.
What are your challenges as artists and practitioners in the sector?

It’s the money – funding being able to access space, material and equipment amongst other things.

At the moment, the challenges are economic freedom that means money, being closer to the money. Space is another challenge. Exposure, being evident enough, being seen enough is a challenge that needs a spin-off.

What are some of the Medu strategies that addressed the challenge of exposure that informs your work?

Medu was an ensemble, people working together. Collaborating with people who are visible in their own spaces, city or sector. We make sure we interlink with people for exposure in different circles. Medu used any platform from halls to whatever. So we have been working with spaces outside of the gallery, guerilla, going out into the streets putting up posters, graffiti and so on. As much as we are contained in a small space, we need to make as much noise for the whole world to hear us.

At first we thought it could be about mass-production, quantity, but now we have been going through quality control before we return to large quantity that can reach the people.

Space is a big issue in Joburg. What are some of the issues with regard to space?

Either the space is far from where one would like to be or the rent is too high. The other thing is when you get a space is not for artists, a place you can mess around with, not conducive unless one is working in the digital realm.

How do you balance gallery and alternative output?

Fananathi is thinking of an Internet gallery where our work can be visible and putting together a range of merchandise including toys. We also want to work with ad agencies

Do we see a show coming?

There is, but that one is a surprise! It’s a tricky show. It’s gonna be something else. We are exploring our guerilla methodology. A space between non-tangible and tangible work

Space is a big issue in Joburg. What are some of the issues with regard to space?

A lot of local influences. Kwaito. My surroundings, music, meeting Sjava (Jabulani Tshuma) and Keith introduced to hip hop, jazz as well, local bands and a lot of African stuff, music of Sello Galane. Breeze’s [graffiti] characters influence me, and Rassik’s work. But really my environment and people I interact with. Books; Zakes Mda.

Who and what else informs your work as individuals and as a collective, besides Medu?

I am influenced by a lot of hip hop, the eighties stuff, your boom-bap era hip hop, your Black Noise, South African stuff. The Beastie Boys, as well as The Wu Tang Clang - in fact Wu brought me closer to silkscreen and guerilla because of the way they handled themselves within the whole hip hop thing. They made me more schizo than you can imagine. Graffiti played a big role, fused with a lot of stenciling and styles of European artists like Banksy. Also local guys like Dredda, Mak 1, Falko, Rassik, Breeze and Dice. And then Dumile Feni and Kay Hassan will seal it off! Literature includes the Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison.


If a print were to speak to you what would it say?

Holla back. There is one that would just say Fananathi!!

Do what you do, not everyday but any given day… creatively and otherwise.

Fananathi Media works from the Drill Hall studios in Joubert Park, Johannesburg.

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Hands Off! Fox-Den-Pub, 2012
Fananathi Media and Mark Thomann, a t-shirt campaign challenging the effects of gentrification around the Maboneng District

Untitled, 2012
From the Dope Store campaign series, Silkscreen on board, by Fananathi Media
When I think of my mother, the smell of cigarettes and beer comes to mind. Other people seem to have a different smell or thought altogether come to mind when they think of their parents but I guess we’re all different. Right?

If there is such a thing as making things right, I wonder what she’d do exactly. The problem I have with the methods deployed in raising me is how taboo matters become when adults start acting stupid, it should be kept quiet about and ignored by you, the child. It is none of your business, even if you see and know that it is wrong and unfair on you, as an innocent child. When I think of my mother, I think of cigarette smoke choking me. Her breath stunk of an ashtray when she helped me with my homework. Sometimes she’d brush her teeth but the smell would become worse. Throw in a cup of coffee and you have a lethal weapon of badass breath.

I wonder what it means to raise a decent human being. “Have you ever heard people ask: Didn’t your mother teach 1, 2 and 3?” my housemate said. “Of course your mother taught you 1, 2, 3 but you chose not to learn! The correct way to phrase the question is: “Didn’t you learn when your mother taught you 1, 2, and 3?” I never learnt when my mother said, “Smoking is bad for you.” Instead, I started smoking when I was eleven.

I used to love playing dress up with her clothes, I’d imitate her and walk about in her high heels. When I was eleven, I was left home alone because I hated the mall and she went shopping with my siblings. She forgot her cigarettes and lighter. I was dressed in denim shorts, her high heels and a fancy shirt of hers. I also put red lipstick and pink eye shadow. I looked in the mirror and reached for a cigarette, took the lighter and lit it. I inhaled and coughed till my eyes practically popped out of my head and I felt an insane rush to my head. I felt dizzy and threw it out of the window. With eyes red, I vowed to never smoke again.

I could never tell my mother she was wrong to smoke and tell me not to smoke. I found this out on two occasions. The first time was when I learnt the word: Ironic. I needed a context to use it in. It was shortly after I had the first cigarette, maybe three later. “Why do you smoke?” I asked. I don’t remember her answer. “Would you happy if I smoked one day?” “No!” she said quickly, “It’s very bad for you…” she took her last drag from it and extinguished it in the ash tray. “Ironic, isn’t it?” I said. She laughed for a little bit and said that I should never speak to her in that tone because she’s my mother.

The second time, I tried another one when I was about 13 or 14 in the toilet at a family gathering. She happened to need the toilet shortly after I went in. I was about to light the cigarette and she caught me. “Who taught you that?” she asked, “You…” I said. She yelled that I should never talk back to her like I do to my teachers and slapped me a couple of times to teach me a lesson.

Now, I’m an adult and I smoke cigarettes like I drink water. Sometimes I want to quit but the craving drives me insane, I’m addicted. Now when I smoke I think of lying quietly on my mother’s deathbed, breathing painfully, cancer eating up her lungs. Life leaving her body while we stood over her watching. She eventually died and left all suffering behind or faced more wherever she went.

I often read the packaging: “Smoking causes Cancer…” “Smoking is harmful to your children and those around you…” the list goes but still the bliss of slow suicide keeps me lighting one after the other...
**King Kong: Unboxed**

King Kong is a new space in the east of Johannesburg, founded by Belgians Guy Daems and Gerda Vergauwen for the promotion of the arts in Johannesburg and beyond. The name King Kong was inspired by the 1959 all African Jazz opera about the South African boxing world champion Ezekiel Dhlamini. The prominent role of Miriam Makeba in the King Kong opera was decisive for the choice of the name, as Guy & Gerda have been in tourism for 25 years, operating under the name Mama Africa.

King Kong wants to contribute an enabling space for relevant programming in Johannesburg. The 4-floor building aims to offer a mix of medium to long-term tenants as well as short-term activities. The venue will be kitted out with old and new technologies as basic infrastructure to enable a platform for the arts sector, including but not limited to live music, visual art, film, workshops and exhibitions. Access is promoted through reasonable rates, enabling a fertile ground for new experiments and ideas.

The first tenant, Visual Arts Network of South Africa (VANSA) occupies the first floor. We are delighted to host VANSA, as the network introduces a diverse audience within the visual arts sector. The second floor is currently fitted with top quality projectors and with the biggest independent screen in Johannesburg.

The top floor, in progress, is imagined as an open-ended multi-use space for live music, exhibitions and happenings. The inaugural project and official launch for the public will be in October 2012 with Belgian avant-garde jazz band, Maak’s Spirit.

Maak’s Spirit will do a series of jam sessions, workshops and master classes, in collaboration with Joburg-based musicians. Most of the concerts will take place at King Kong.

We envision King Kong as a necessary alternative to a growing infrastructure development for the arts in Johannesburg. With one of the best views in the east of Johannesburg, King Kong is absolutely unboxed, the to-go-to spot in the summer of 2012 and beyond.