

SOUTH  
HILLOS







# SOUTH

AUSTRALIA | MEXICO | SOUTH AFRICA

HAZELHURST REGIONAL GALLERY AND ARTS CENTRE



FOREWORD

*SOUTH* brings together the work of thirteen leading contemporary artists from three regions: Australia, Mexico and South Africa. While their practices and cultural backgrounds are diverse, they are united in the shared response to their identity as artists living and working in the relatively remote southern part of the world. The work presented is personal, political and socially engaged and reflects the changes in our globalised society.

Independent curator, David Corbet, first brought the concept for this exhibition to Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre in 2011. As a local resident he could see how the presentation of ideas about southern identity would resonate strongly with audiences in the southern region of Sydney where Hazelhurst is located. As Kevin Murray explains in this publication, ‘South’ isn’t just a location in the southern Hemisphere, rather it refers to a relationship where something exists ‘to the south’ of something else. In our case, the south as opposed to the north of Sydney, and the way our identity has been formed around this difference.

The essays published here present a critical discourse that deals with the nexus between contemporary art practice and socio-political-economic issues. David Corbet introduces the exhibition and its conceptual underpinnings, while Kevin Murray discusses Southern Theory. Cuauhtémoc Medina traces the emergence of contemporary art from the ‘Global South’, and more specifically Mexico, onto the world stage, and Pamella Dlungwana discusses the work of artists Zanele Muholi and Hasan and Husain Essop in

terms of contemporary practice in South Africa. Our thanks to all who have made this exhibition and publication possible, which we trust will be an enduring record of a unique project that reflects Hazelhurst’s commitment to engaging audiences through showcasing contemporary art by leading Australian artists. To the exhibition’s curator David Corbet, we are grateful for your unwavering creative vision and dedication to this project over its three-year development.

Many of the artworks in this exhibition have been created specifically for this exhibition, or are being shown in Australia for the first time. Thank you to the artists who have contributed their work: Eric Bridgeman, Maria Fernanda Cardoso, Destiny Deacon and Virginia Fraser, Hasan and Husain Essop, Michael Goldberg, Newell Harry, Archie Moore, Zanele Muholi, Diego Ramirez, Betsabeé Romero and Joan Ross. And, thank you to the writers: Pamella Dlungwana, Cuauhtémoc Medina and Kevin Murray.

This exhibition and publication has been made possible through the support of Museums and Galleries NSW and the Australia Council for the Arts. We are also wish to acknowledge the ongoing support of Sutherland Shire Council, Arts NSW and our generous sponsors including principal partners Transdev NSW and Global Specialised Services.

**Carrie Kibbler**  
Curator | Exhibition Program Coordinator  
Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre

Preceding pages:  
**MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO**  
*Emu works*, 2006-08 (detail),  
installation, variable dimensions

CONTENTS

THE ESSAYS	
<b>SOUTH: CURATOR’S INTRODUCTION</b> David Corbet	12
<b>THE ART OF SOUTHERN THEORY</b> Kevin Murray	18
<b>CONTEMP(T)ORARY: ELEVEN THESES</b> Cuauhtémoc Medina	22
<b>MOONWALKING</b> Pamella Dlungwana	28

THE ARTISTS	
<b>ERIC BRIDGEMAN</b>	34
<b>MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO</b>	38
<b>DESTINY DEACON &amp; VIRGINA FRASER</b>	42
<b>HASAN &amp; HUSAIN ESSOP</b>	46
<b>MICHAEL GOLDBERG</b>	50
<b>NEWELL HARRY</b>	54
<b>ARCHIE MOORE</b>	58
<b>ZANELE MUHOLI</b>	62
<b>DIEGO RAMIREZ</b>	66
<b>BETSABEÉ ROMERO</b>	70
<b>JOAN ROSS</b>	74

THE DETAILS	
<b>LIST OF WORKS</b>	80
<b>BIOGRAPHIES</b>	84
<b>THANKS</b>	90
<b>EXHIBITION CREDITS</b>	91





HASAN AND HUSAIN ESSOP  
*Athlone Superette* 2014 (detail)  
Lightjet C-print on archival paper  
114 x 193.5 cm





View of Betsabé Romero's studio  
in Mexico City, 2014  
Photo: David Corbet

# THE ESSAYS



## SOUTH

DAVID CORBET

*Modern western culture is in large part the work of exiles, émigrés, refugees.*

– Edward Said<sup>1</sup>

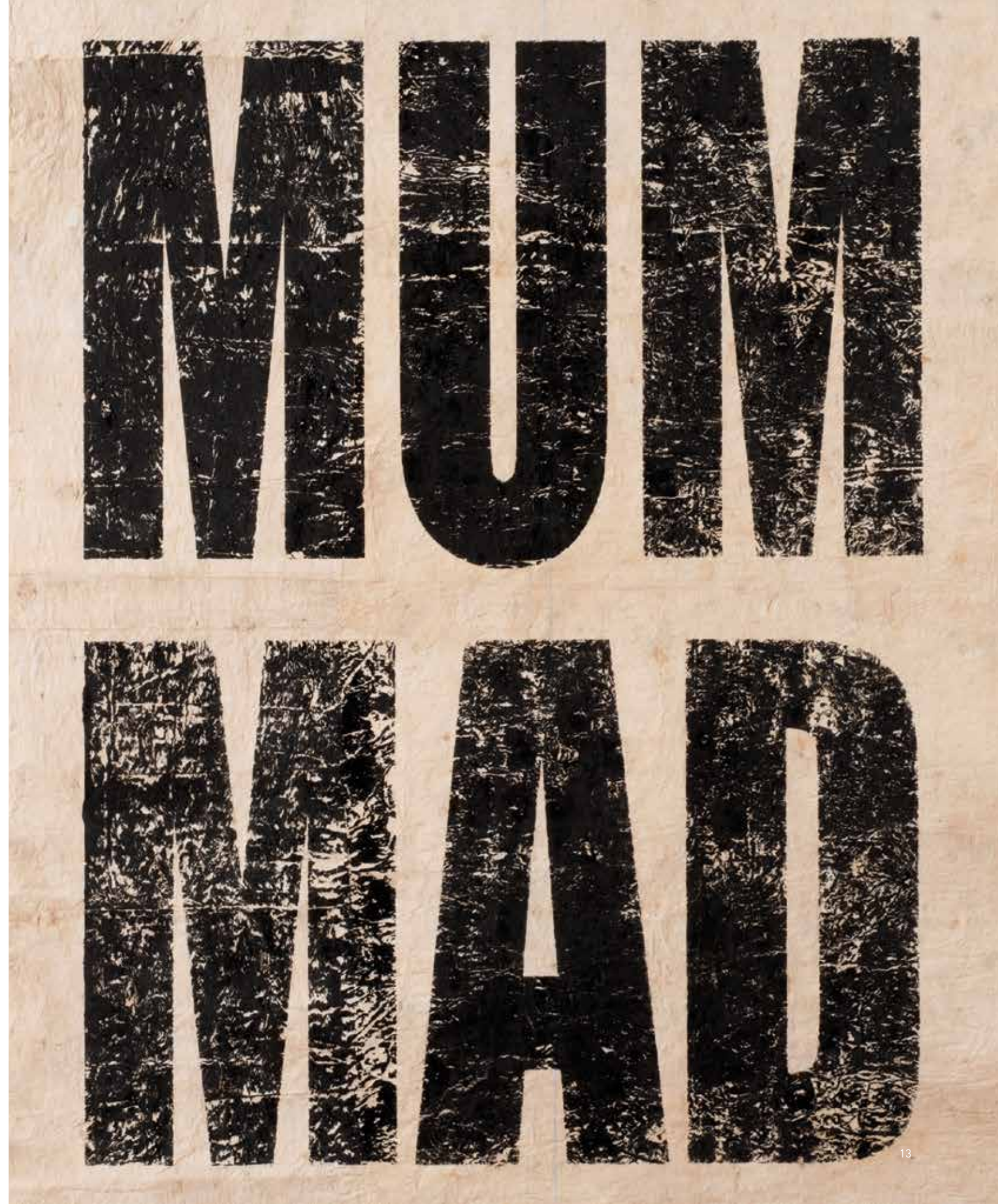
The conceptual seed for this exhibition was germinated more than a decade ago, when I wandered, somewhat awestruck, through the multiple venues of *Documenta11* (2002) in Kassel, Germany. The exhibition was curated by Nigerian-born Okwui Enwezor, the first non-European to direct the revered quinquennial (and curator of the upcoming 56th Venice Biennale in 2015, only the second person to curate both major exhibitions). Enwezor's Documenta doubled the number of non-western artists from previous exhibitions and its model featured a series of 'platforms' where discourse took place in far locales – New Delhi in India, the Caribbean island of St Lucia, and the African city of Lagos in Nigeria before culminating in the Kassel exhibition. It's easy to forget that, prior to then, it was rare to see contemporary art from third world and developing countries presented 'equitably' so to speak, alongside the great names of the developed North. In a bombed and indifferently-rebuilt north German city, I encountered an exhilarating variety of new work installed in surviving baroque palaces and late modern spaces. Art from Benin, Cuba, Iran, Cameroon, Argentina, Mexico, Senegal, India, South Africa, Lebanon, Nunavut, and more. Questioning, restless and sometimes disturbing, the exhibition spoke of worlds unknown, yet somehow familiar. Destiny Deacon was the sole representative from the antipodes and she showed quietly poignant black-and-white photographs [*Postcards from Mummy* (1998)] taken on a road trip through her mother's country in Far North Queensland. It seemed I had come to the heart of Europe to be reminded that some of the most significant work was being made in its one-time colonies and vassals. Alongside parallel

developments in literature, dance and music, it was a case of 'The Empire Strikes Back'.

Twelve years on, amidst the worldwide explosion of contemporary art biennials and art fairs, artists from diverse cultures exhibit worldwide. At home the Biennale of Sydney has been a significant force in this regard, as has the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art at Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, which has presented the work of contemporary artists in Australia's geographic region since 1993. In terms of contemporary Latin American and African art, Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art has presented major exhibitions such as *The Hours: Visual Arts of Contemporary Latin America* (2007) and solo exhibitions of artists Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (2011–12), Yinka Shonibare (2008–9) and Wangechi Mutu (2013). As the cultural landscape has developed the establishment of private museums like Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art, Sydney's White Rabbit and Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, and the independent 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, has enabled Australian audiences to see more of the dynamic art emerging from China, Indonesia, South Asia, Melanesia and Polynesia. Australia's regional galleries are playing their part, expanding their programs to include international artists, and not just the usual suspects.

The 'Global Contemporary'<sup>2</sup> phenomenon has given rise to huge volumes of critical discourse, not all of it in favour. The unease focuses on the levelling effect of international biennials and art fairs, where work emerging from unique cultural contexts is generalised under broad internationalist categories (for instance 'Identity Art'), arguably thwarting deeper readings of the work itself. On balance, however, the verdict is positive. The noted Mexican curator and critic Cuauhtémoc Medina, whose essay *Contemp(t)orary: Eleven theses* (2010) is reproduced in full in this catalogue, discusses the art-historical tags 'modernism' and 'contemporary':

**NEWELL HARRY**  
*Untitled [DAD/MUM/MAD/DUM]*, 2013 (detail)  
 Tongan Ngatu (bark cloth),  
 ink, 279 × 118 × 6cm





The global art circus of biennales, fairs, and global art museums has forced an end to the use of a metaphor that understood geography in terms of historical succession – it is no longer possible to rely upon the belatedness of the South in presuming that artistic culture goes from the centre to the periphery.

... And while the critical consequences of the policies of inclusion are less central to the agenda of the South than the critique of stereotypes, the activation of social memory, and the pursuit of different kinds of cultural agency, it remains the case that ‘contemporary art’ marks the stage at which different geographies and localities are finally considered within the same network of questions and strategies. Art becomes ‘contemporary’ in the strong sense when it refers to the progressive obsolescence of narratives that concentrated cultural innovation so completely in colonial and imperial metropolises as to finally identify modernism with what we ought to properly describe as ‘NATO art’.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this, it is apparent that Australia’s cultural gaze, and the aspirations of many young artists, remain fixed on the Northern citadels of New York, London, Berlin, Seoul, Shanghai, Tokyo... a ‘post-NATO’, G8 cultural hegemony if you like. Beyond the contemporary scene, exhibitions of Italian old masters remain a sure-fire winner for our art institutions, and people will pay to see anything involving the words ‘Impressionism’ and ‘Paris’. When exhibitions have an Asian focus, they tend towards antiquities, sacred art and cultural treasures. And that’s all well and good – a large majority of Australians have a European or North Asian heritage, and experiencing our historical inheritance first-hand is certainly worthwhile. But, what of contemporary conversations with the other great Southern zones? In recent decades there has been an explosion of extraordinary work in Africa and Latin America, as well as our own Oceanic region. We have arguably more in common with these zones – as former European colonies, as young and vigorous new worlds, and as tributaries of the cultural North – than we do with Europe, yet we hear and see little of their contemporary art.

And what of Australia, an ‘upside down’ country where the cool, cerebral North is in the South, where the cultural landscape is an uneasy amalgam

of old Europe and much older Indigenous cultures? An overwhelmingly Anglo-Celtic-European population of cultural Northerners inhabits a geographical and psychic South, the *Terra Incognita* of the old maps, the abyssal no-man’s-lands of the Northern imagination. As Australians strive for an easy internationalism within a fully wired global village, we know we are somehow different, whatever our parentage. There are many iterations of ‘otherness’ in our society. Personally, I feel this alterity most strongly when I look down at the interior desert from an aeroplane, and understand afresh that this land has been inhabited for over 50,000 years. I see where I live, in the narrow green fringe around the vastness. I see a thinly populated ‘Western’ nation-state, recreated on a great Southern island that is a country that is a continent. I see our multicultural success, how it is studied by other countries, and I wonder why, unlike gastronomy, this contemporary diversity is not always reflected in our cultural institutions.

In selecting the artists for *SOUTH*, I have set out to show work that could only have emerged from a particular locale and time – work with a strong sense of place and personal narrative. I have also striven to show the work of Australian artists of many cultural backgrounds, and most crucially to place their work in context with their Southern peers, in this case from Mexico and South Africa. Like Australia these countries were, not so long ago, polyglot amalgams of many (Indigenous) nations, upon which a dominant colonial tongue, national borders and an overarching nationhood were imposed. Mexico lies in the Northern Hemisphere, but relationally it is a South – economic, transactional, emotional – a cultural fracture-zone, which fought fiercely for its independence. South Africa is another kind of South, one where until a mere twenty years ago diverse Indigenous peoples endured a sustained oppression by a settler minority. The cultural memory and trauma of these histories is inseparable from the experience of Mexican and South African artists today. As in Australia, the North’s art academies were also imported, with their strict codifications of iconography, genre and historicity, and their influence has been sustained through the eras of Duchamp, Beuys, Warhol and Bourgeois.

In this sense, the thirteen artists in *SOUTH* inhabit multiple artworlds – they participate in the ‘Global Contemporary’, but simultaneously they tap into other narratives and older histories – tribal,

**ERIC BRIDGEMAN**  
*Wilma*, 2010  
Fibreglass, acrylics, linen, lightbulbs, spoon and fork, bilum cap, feathers, trophies, birdseed, variable dimensions



spiritual, ecological, mythical, phenomenological, metaphysical. It is their roaming of these cultural borderlands and liminal zones that makes their work so vital, and in a very real sense ‘worldly’. From the singularity of their vision emerges a surprising universality. However the aim of this exhibition is not to promote some sort of false equivalence in the practice of very different artists, but rather to facilitate a rowdy and unpredictable conversation, with many voices talking at once, each in its own argot and local accent. I hope this undermines the levelling effect discussed above, and perhaps, encourages us to see their work as a ‘... nomadic kind of practice that forbids any attempt at specification beyond the micro-narratives that each artist or cultural movement produces along the way’.<sup>4</sup>

Among these ‘micro-narratives’ certain common threads can be traced. Masquerade and metaphorical personae feature in the work of several artists, notably Eric Bridgeman and Diego Ramirez. Brisbane-based Bridgeman’s imagery and practice draws equally on a suburban upbringing

and his Papua New Guinea highland heritage, and he is often a subject in his own work, inhabiting a series of metaphorical characters. His photomedia and video projects interrogate Australian sporting culture, ethnographic representations and tropes such as ‘blackface’, gender politics, pop culture memes and indeed the very process of functioning as an artist. As a young, urban, black man he is the ‘other’ in Australian society, yet is not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, imposing on him a further layer of alterity.

Melbourne-based Diego Ramirez is from Guadalajara in Mexico’s mountainous Pacific West, and like most Mexicans his heritage is a combination of Hispanic and Indigenous influences. For *SOUTH* he playfully re-imagines himself as a semi-mythical ‘axolotl-man’, playing out on his fascination with these larval salamanders. His installation *aXolotl’s Smile* (2014) explores how ‘the trope of axolotl anthropomorphism has been translated across different cultures in the fields of arts, literature and pop culture’, and how ‘the axolotl as a cultural symbol has generated a large genealogy of cultural objects that have called upon the axolotl as a metaphor for the Latin American condition’.<sup>5</sup>

Destiny Deacon and Virginia Fraser, an enduring Indigenous/non-Indigenous artistic partnership, create distinctive personal worlds wherein certain character and object memes recur. Their photomedia works often depict everyday objects, mysteriously charged with sinister meanings, and their large extended family are frequently subjects in a series of ‘dress-ups’ and tableaux which explore quirky cultural tropes – from black vampires to fairground stalls. Deacon is of G’ua- G’ua (Far North Queensland) and Erub/Mer (Torres Strait) descent, and the installations occupy an uncomfortable terrain between family fun and a savagely funny ‘blak’<sup>6</sup> humour, laced with unbearable pathos. In *Home Security* (2007-14), a group of black dolls inhabit a kind of postmodern rumpus-room, where they watch on TV old documentary footage from mission schools, where many young Aboriginal children were taken for their ‘betterment’ after being forcibly removed from their families – a practice which aimed to remove all traces of Aboriginal culture and language that continued with official sanction until the 1960s.

The collaboration of identical twin brothers Hasan and Husain Essop, from Cape Town, South Africa, also enact and photograph elaborate



tableaux in which they themselves are subjects. Their works exhibit a sophisticated theatricality and technical mastery, expressing their ‘Cape Malay’ (in fact largely Indonesian) and Muslim heritage. They state: ‘creating a moment in time, a dream or something seen, we tell a story of growing up. Being competitive with each other is a constant battle for the best. We use our own iconography to provide a political context for the wars being fought on a local and global scale’.<sup>7</sup>

Also working in photomedia, Zanele Muholi, of South African Zulu descent, has for many years documented the ‘invisible sisterhood’ of South Africa’s lesbian community in an ongoing series of black-and-white portraits, titled *Faces and Phases* (2006–), of which 80 feature in *SOUTH*. These strong young women regard us with a defiant non-smiling gaze, leaving viewers to confront their own stereotypical ideas about race, sexuality and gender. The unadorned quality of these images is their strength. The message: ‘We exist. We are here. Deal with it’.

Sydney-born Newell Harry presents a dual-screen video work, *Untitled (Words and Pictures)* (2013), in which 147 black-and-white photographs taken in Vanuatu are combined with anagrammatic *Bislama*<sup>8</sup> words and fragments of recorded audio. The video ‘converses’ with six large-scale *tapa* banners, (a traditional Pacific Islander material made from bark cloth) which are inscribed with anagrammatic English words. Harry is of South African ‘Cape Coloured’<sup>9</sup> and French Mauritian heritage, and has spent his working life wandering between Australia, the Vanuatu archipelago, India, Africa and northeast Asia. His practice embodies his experience of exile and restlessness, ranging across anthropology, colonial trade and cargo cults, language, religion, cultural diaspora and exchange. The artist’s explorations of words and images fuse with a distinctive materiality, subtle metaphors for his nomadic existence.

Contested histories and travellers’ tales also feature prominently in the work of Joan Ross and Michael Goldberg. Ross, a Sydney-based artist, whose background is Anglo-Celtic, is fascinated by Australian colonial narratives and depictions of flora and fauna. Recent video works have ‘intervened’ in the picture-space of the works of early settler-painters such as the 19th-century convict-turned-artist Joseph Lycett. The works often show genteel ladies and gentlemen strolling about the landscape, while contented Aborigines



**MICHAEL GOLDBERG**  
*justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude* 2014, maquette (detail) for site-specific installation, variable dimensions

are depicted in their ‘natural’ state, often having a traditional ceremony among the eucalyptus trees. Ross re-frames these soothing historical narratives, creating compelling video works that question the veracity of painting as a cultural transmitter.

Michael Goldberg, born in South Africa, but of European ancestry, has lived in Sydney since 1988. His diverse curatorial and art practice includes sculpture and site-specific installation investigating wide-ranging themes including colonial histories, museology, financial and commodity markets, the ‘War on Terror’ and video game simulations. These projects often present alternative views of political and historical narratives. Goldberg has created a site-specific ‘Southern Cross’ installation, titled *justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude*<sup>10</sup>, in the Hazelhurst gardens, inspired in part by the stick charts once used by Marshall Islanders to navigate the Pacific Ocean by canoe.

Brisbane-based Archie Moore is of Aboriginal (Kamilaroi<sup>11</sup>) descent, and his work references this heritage, often concealing an ironic fist of political comment within the velvet glove of his facture. His objects, paintings and installations meld a deeply personal iconography with a sophisticated materiality, usually emanating a subversive humour. Moore is also a musician and performer, and a serious reader with an encyclopedic knowledge of Western philosophical positions. For *SOUTH* he presents a new project titled *Depaint*, in which his childhood memories of place are embodied in a site-specific ‘paint’ installation.

Also exploring notions of place and displacement is Columbian-born, Sydney-based Maria Fernanda Cardoso, who has long worked with materials from the natural world – ranging from cattle bones to



preserved insects, frogs, starfish, emu feathers and live fleas. She is fascinated by classification systems and the taxonomical methods of natural history museums, and the tension between these hierarchies and the natural world. For *SOUTH* Cardoso revisits her extensive work with emus, a creature inextricably bound up with Australian national identity. As a migrant who has lived across three different continents, the emu becomes for Cardoso a metaphor for a connection with place and ‘an interrogation of locational identity informed by Cardoso’s personal experiences’.<sup>12</sup>

A powerful sense of her Mexican identity and ancient cultural inheritance imbues the work of Betsabeé Romero, who lives and works in the heart of Mexico City, one of the world’s largest and oldest urban conurbations. Her work references contemporary tropes of consumption, transportation and popular culture, critiquing her country’s rampant ‘petro-culture’ through recurrent use of cars and the regalia of motoring. Her use of motifs drawn from Aztec, Zapotec and many other Mesoamerican cultures permeate her installations with multi-layered, historical resonances. In this exhibition Romero realises a site-specific work that incorporates Indigenous motifs from many cultures and periods of history.

Among these works I hope you will discover resonances and similarities, divergences and dialectics. Artists are in a sense society’s ‘seers’, and through their eyes I hope you will discover new ways of seeing the world. Welcome to the Global South. Enjoy the path less travelled.

**David Corbet** is an independent curator, writer and designer.



REFERENCES

- 1 Said, Edward W. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, Harvard University Press, Harvard, 2002
- 2 The term ‘Global Contemporary’ is used here to indicate a perspective where contemporary works previously ascribed the status of (often anonymous) ‘ethnographic artefacts’ are now viewed by the developed North as equal to its own contemporary art.
- 3 Medina, Cuauhtémoc ‘Contemp(t)orary: Eleven Theses’, *e-flux journal*, New York, 2010
- 4 Medina, Cuauhtémoc ‘Contemp(t)orary: Eleven Theses’, *e-flux journal*, New York, 2010
- 5 Ramirez, Diego, ‘aXolotl’s Smile’, artist statement, 2014
- 6 The terms ‘blak’ and ‘blakness’ were coined by Destiny Deacon in 1991 and began to be used by artists as a way of repositioning the derogatory use of the word ‘black’ to describe Aboriginal people.
- 7 Essop, Hasan and Husain Essop, artist statement, 2014
- 8 *Bislama* is a pidgin language of Vanuatu.
- 9 This term has historically often been used to differentiate people of mixed race in South Africa’s Western Cape from those of ‘Cape Malay’ descent. Both phrases persist as non-perjorative descriptors, however many people of these heritages prefer to be described simply as people of colour.
- 10 Ivor Evans, the fourteen-year-old designer of the Australian flag (1901), used the stars of the Southern Cross to represent Dante’s four moral virtues of justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude.
- 11 Kamilaroi is the language of one of the four largest Aboriginal nations, extending from upper New South Wales to southeast Queensland.
- 12 Jaspers, Anneke, *Maria Fernanda Cardoso: Emu Next 5km*, exhibition catalogue, Grantpirrie, Sydney, 2006

Left:  
**MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO**  
*Emu works*, 2006–08 (detail), installation, variable dimensions

Right:  
**JOAN ROSS**  
*Who is gonna clean up this mess?*, 2012 (detail), from the series *Touching Other People’s Shopping*, hand painted pigment print on cotton rag paper, 32 x 50 cm



# THE ART OF SOUTHERN THEORY

KEVIN MURRAY

*‘Passion for the land where one lives is the foundation of belonging and is an action we must endlessly risk.’*

– Edouard Glissant

*There’s no such thing as South.*

When presented with the idea of ‘Southern Theory’ for the first time, most people baulk at its perceived literalism. In a globalised world, does it really make a difference which half of the planet you live in? What about the Asian diasporas in England, or a first world nation like Australia that finds itself in the Southern Hemisphere? It seems unreasonable to grant historical meaning to accidents of location.

The first answer is to define South not as a specific location, such as the Southern Hemisphere, but as a relation – what exists ‘to the south’ of something else. Most northern nations have an internal South that is seen as less civilised than its North, such as Andalusia in Spain, Sicily in Italy and the Deep South of the United States. In the development of the world picture since the Renaissance, the South of the world was seen as a barbaric zone that needed civilising through colonisation. It seemed only natural when the convention of the world map developed in 16th-century Netherlands that North would be above South.

This colonising narrative entails a world view that imposes a vertical dimension in what is essentially a horizontal meridian. It still seems natural for a Sydneysider to talk about going ‘down to Melbourne’ for the weekend. Implicit in any vertical dimension is a hierarchy of position in which ‘above’ is better than ‘below’. High ideals rise above base motives.

Verticalism isn’t the only imaginary operation of colonisation. Jorge Luis Borges once speculated, ‘Perhaps universal history is the history of various intonations of a few metaphors...’<sup>1</sup> The metaphor

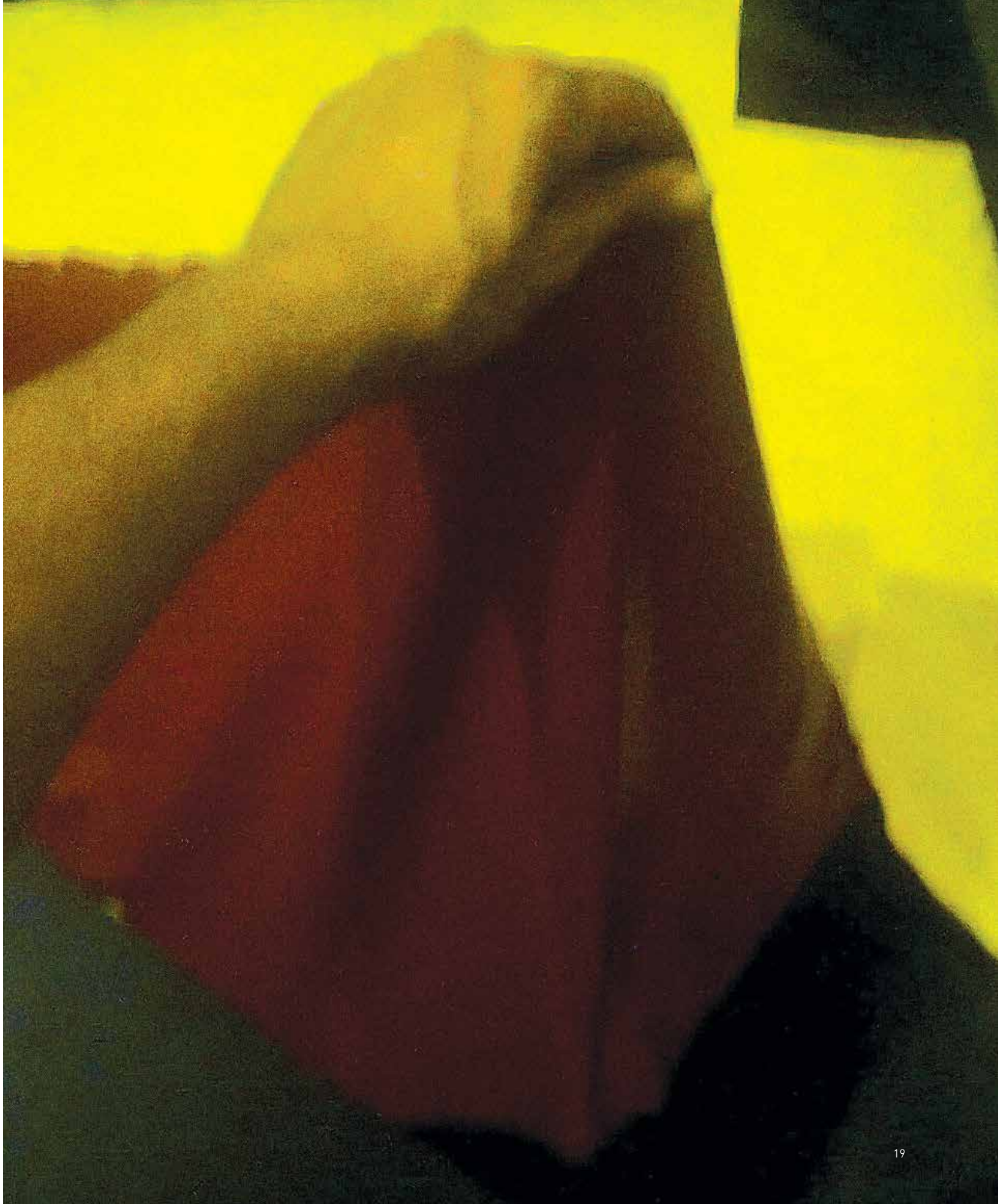
of knowledge as light has been the subject of much deconstruction. The clearly racist implications of an equation between whiteness and intelligence has made it an important association to unpick. Verticalism is a similar colonial metaphor, though it has yet to be deconstructed.

*But surely this colonial north-south divide is a thing of the past?*

On the contrary, the vertical metaphor is becoming more entrenched. With the Global Financial Crisis, the phrase ‘going south’ began to be widely used as an idiom for failure. The structures of power remain in the North. Those who resist the allure of the glittering prizes of the North risk being seen as parochial. The most pirated TV show in Australia, the HBO production *Game of Thrones* (2011–) confirmed a familiar moral topography that sets the honourable Stark family of the North against the perfidious Lannisters of the South.

Southern Theory is a critique of that form of universalism, which underpins the notion of development as a normative historical trajectory. The Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell<sup>2</sup> has analysed her discipline’s bias towards the transatlantic metropolitan centres: key theorists such as the French sociologist Emile Durkheim and German philosopher Karl Marx have had little to say about the process of colonisation that is experienced in the South. The Colombian theorist Arturo Escobar<sup>3</sup> has critiqued the assumptions of developmentalism that charted a course towards neo-liberalism for all countries regardless of cultural values. For the Benin philosopher Paulin Hountondji<sup>4</sup>, it is wrong to assume that African philosophy could just as well be studied from a professorship in Harvard as in Africa itself. Over the past decade, a wave of theorists across the South have been arguing for a multilateral world which presumes an autonomy of place, even in those

ARCHIE MOORE  
Studio production still, 2013





peripheral countries far from the centres of power. Southern Theory did not emerge *de novo*. It was preceded by the post-colonial critiques of writers such as Frantz Fanon<sup>5</sup>. Across the South during the 20th-century were intense debates about the relation of the colonial periphery to the imperial centre. In India, Rabindranath Tagore argued against Mahatma Gandhi that India should embrace Western humanism. In Senegal, Hountondji contested Léopold Sédar Senghor’s<sup>6</sup> view of negritude as a distinctly African way of being. And in Argentina, the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral argued against Victoria Ocampo that the Latin American literary magazine *Sur* (1931–91) should privilege indigenous writing above ‘international’ authors such as Virginia Woolf<sup>7</sup>. During the 20th-century there was a rich history of debate about the idea that the South can only emerge by turning its back on the North. Many writers were forged in the struggle against the military dictatorships in Latin America from the 1970s. Enrique Dussel<sup>8</sup> was one of many Argentinean intellectuals who escaped to Mexico, developing the ideas of liberation philosophy into a canon of southern ethics. Walter Mignolo<sup>9</sup> champions a decolonial aesthetics that reflects ‘border thinking’ that is common in the South. In the late 20th-century, this debate was inherited by post-colonial theory, which witnessed the emergence of figures like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha. Their critiques of colonialism were successfully assimilated within the United States academy. They offered strategies of cultural resistance against the perceived dominant paradigms. In Australia, post-colonial studies became institutionalised in university curricula, journals and independent centres. It was predominantly engaged in the discourse around the British colonisation of India. While the target of post-colonial critique persists, new challenges have arisen. The north-south dialectic of post-colonialism presumes a relatively concentric world view in which the metropolis remains at the centre, even if it is the subject of critique rather than adoration. In the 21st-century, forms of multilateral order have emerged involving south-south alliances such as BRIC (acronym for the economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China combined), in which there is a possibility of exchange that circumvents the North. While the United States may remain the pre-eminent world superpower, it is now possible to conceive of specific

international axes that bypass the North Atlantic. The transnational field now includes Indian interests in Africa and Chinese engagement with Brazil. Global financial structures are becoming less United States-centric. The BRICs alliance is developing an alternative investment body to the IMF (International Monetary Fund)<sup>10</sup>. Intellectual centres are emerging such as the Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism in South Africa and Programa Sur Global in Buenos Aires that stimulate theoretical dialogue across the South. These new lateral connections pose a particular challenge for Australia. In choosing to align itself with the Northern powers, Australia can be easily dismissed as irrelevant to these new connections. While the Australian government may find it easier to follow the familiar path North, artists and writers have the potential to trace alternative lateral trajectories. *What has this got to do with art?* Until now, Southern Theory has been mostly concerned with social and international relations, offering a critique of the structures of power that exist. But it needs alternative models that can be developed through creative practices such as visual arts and craft. In the visual arts, the recent emergence of World Art has challenged the belief in a universal canon of art history, through which all legitimate trajectories have to map themselves on a linear path from Renaissance, through modernism to the contemporary. Terry Smith<sup>11</sup> has developed his earlier work on the provincialism problem into a framework for the international art world that privileges difference. And in the academic field, James Elkins<sup>12</sup> has attempted to broaden the academic understanding of art beyond the secular Western field. But art theory has not yet risen to the challenge of Southern Theory. It would be easy to de-centralise our understanding of art through its capacity for representation. Rather than exhibitions of landscape painting, we could have portraits of Andean peasants or South African miners. But with this practice of art comes a set of presumptions that may not apply equally throughout the world, particularly those without a commercial economy of galleries and collectors. The key issue is the autonomy of art as a space of creative freedom. The Kantian principle of aesthetic uselessness runs parallel to other Western knowledge systems that are seen to reflect on but not be part of the world.

Tension has arisen around this autonomy as Northern science has shown increasing hunger for Southern resources. Until recently, it has seemed quite reasonable that anthropologists can embed themselves in a culture for the purpose of publishing books about a tribe’s inner workings for an audience from which the informants are excluded. Pharmaceutical companies are eager to garner biological materials from diverse flora of the South, which in the end become commodities that are sold back to the source, such as genetically modified seeds. The southern theorist Boaventura de Sousa Santos<sup>13</sup> has proposed an alternative southern epistemology that involves an ecological knowledge: theory should be accountable to the effect it has on the world. If we were to extend this logic to creative practice, then art must be judged by the interests of those involved. Santiago Sierra can pay heroin addicts the price of a hit to have a line tattooed on their back<sup>14</sup>, which reinforces the autonomy of art from moral restrictions. But what of the interests of those who participate? An alternative example is the 2004 social investment project titled *HIV(E)* by South African artist and curator Greg Streak where artists worked with a remote rural community in Kwamashu, a town north of Durban, to add features felt to improve the lives of people in the community, such as a shade-cloth in the playground. At the same time, the artists ensured that their interventions were carried out in consistency with their own aesthetic. Results were shown in a metropolitan gallery. The villagers had their amenities and the artists a platform for their work. Art in the South has potential for a double reading that combines heterogeneous interests. This exhibition *SOUTH* is a welcome south-south conduit of visual art. Many participants use their art to unpack cultural baggage, including gender, racial or religious stereotypes. Contemporary art offers a space to push against the grain. This is not just to reverse the primitivism that is often projected onto the South, but also contest the very traditional categories of gender and religion that come from the South itself. While we can readily interpret the works in terms of artistic freedom, the challenge for us as viewers is to make the second reading that places it in a specific local context.

*What does South think?*

**Dr Kevin Murray** initiated the South Project in 2004. He is an independent curator/writer and Adjunct Professor at RMIT University.

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# CONTEMP(T)ORARY: ELEVEN THESES

CUAUHTÉMOC MEDINA

## FROM THE CURATOR

Cuahtémoc Medina is a prolific thinker, curator and historian, and his writing has had a formative influence in my own curatorial perspective. I first encountered him in person during the 2012 Adelaide Festival, when he gave a powerful presentation titled *The New South*, as part of Artists Week. He is a passionate advocate for the view that the work of Southern artists should be seen within its own cultural context, not from the perspective of the Northern academies, and he makes a persuasive case that these artists are increasingly leading world discourses, producing art that is deeply political, socially engaged and based in real-world experience. Following this encounter I was intrigued to attend *Manifesta 9: The Deep of the Modern* (2012) in Genk, Belgium, which Medina curated, bringing together many artists from Northern and Southern zones in a disused coal works, itself a powerful metaphor for economic and cultural change.

Medina was the first associate curator of Latin American Art at Tate, London (2002-08) and curated the Mexican pavilion at the Venice 53rd Biennale in 2009: *Teresa Margolles: What Else Could We Speak About?* As a member of Teratoma, a group of curators, critics and anthropologists based in Mexico City, he has been central to the recognition of Mexican contemporary art practice in a worldwide context, particularly in relation to wider cultural discourses around the development of a global South. A seminal project was the 2007 exhibition *The Age of Discrepancies: Art and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1968-1997*, which re-contextualised in a global setting the influence of Mexican revolutionary and protest movements on contemporary art. Another significant project convened by Medina was *South, South, South, South: 7th International Symposium of Contemporary Art Theory, México* (2009). In 2013 Medina was appointed chief curator of the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) in Mexico City.

Medina's 2010 essay, reproduced here, interrogates concepts of what is contemporary, tracing how the South's influence has moved from the periphery to the centre, arriving at a point where art may at last be said to be truly global, and in that sense truly contemporary.

## 1.

It would appear that the notion of 'the contemporary' is irredeemably vain and empty; in fact, we would not be entirely mistaken in suspecting 'contemporary art' to be a concept that became central to art as a result of the need to find a replacement, rather than as a matter of legitimate theorising. For above all, 'contemporary' is the term that stands to mark the death of 'modern'. This vague descriptor of aesthetic currency became customary precisely when the critique of 'the modern' (its mapping, specification, historicising, and dismantling) exiled it to the dustbin of history. At that point, when current art lost the word that had provided it with a programmatic stance, chronological proximity became relevant—even if it did not indicate anything of substance. To be sure, 'contemporary' fails to carry even a glimmer of the utopian expectation—of change and possible alternatives—encompassed by 'the new'.

## 2.

Nothing would seem to so eloquently suggest the lack of substance in 'contemporary art' than the facility with which it lends itself to practical adjustments. Museums, academic institutions, auction houses, and texts tend to circumvent the need to categorise recent artistic production by declaring the 'contemporariness' of certain holdings or discourses on the basis of a chronological convention: the MOCA [Museum of Contemporary Art] in Los Angeles takes into account everything made 'after' 1940; the contemporary holdings of Tate Modern in London were all created sometime after 1965; Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz's sourcebook *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art* [first published 1996, revised and expanded 2012] takes 1945 as its starting point. In other contexts—particularly on the periphery—the horizon of contemporaneity tends to be narrower, usually defined as appearing

**BETSABÉE ROMERO**  
*The Geography of Objects*  
2014 (detail), site-specific  
installation, variable  
dimensions





in the early 1990s and associated with the rise of the postcolonial debate, the collapse of the Euro-American monopoly over the narrative of modernism, or the end of the Cold War. In any case, ‘contemporary art’ appears to be based on the multiple significance of an ‘after’.

3.

However, as is usually the case with chronological categories, this neutrality may soon unfold into a noun with a certain substance. As with ‘the modern’, it would not be hard to imagine ‘the contemporary’ one day becoming oxymoronically fixed, specified, and dated as the signifier of a particular shift in the dialectics of culture. There are at least two senses in which the contemporariness of artistic culture involves a poignant turn. There is the blatant immediacy of the relationship between a contemporary practice and its host society, and then there is its integration into a critical apparatus.

Never since the advent of historical relativism at the end of the 18th-century has the art of the day had a less contentious social reception. Claims concerning the esoteric nature of contemporary art in the West mostly derive from the density of theoretical discourse on the topic—discourse that actually operates on the basis of practices that involve a certain level of general legibility. It may well be that one of the main characteristics of contemporary art is to always demand, at least, a double reception: first as part of general culture, and later as an attempt at sophisticated theoretical recuperation. Nonetheless, the fact that contemporary practices are linked to a hypertrophy of discourse that tries to mobilise them against the grain of their social currency is itself an indication of the extent to which contemporary art is an integrated culture that makes use of widely available referents, involving poetic operations that are closely linked to the historical sensibility of the day. It is the interlocking of extreme popularity and the rarefaction of criticism and theory that define this phenomenon. ‘Contemporary art’ is, therefore, a form of aristocratic populism—a dialogical structure in which extreme subtlety and the utmost simplicity collide, forcing individuals of varying class, ethnic, and ideological affiliations—which might have otherwise kept them separated—to smell each other in artistic structures.

4.

The ideal of modern beauty that Stendhal articulated in 1823 as ‘the art of presenting to the peoples . . . works which, in view of the present-day state of their customs and beliefs, afford them the utmost possible pleasure,’ has finally been attained.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence, a temporal rift between radical aesthetics and social mores no longer exists today. The question of the death of the avant-garde ought to be reformulated to account for this institutionalisation of the contemporary. As we all know, the schism between the project of modern subjectivity and the modern bourgeois subject was defined in historical terms as consisting of advances, regressions, re-enactments, futurities, and anachronism, and summarised in the politics of the avant-garde, with all the militaristic implications of the term. More than the death of the avant-garde as a project of cultural subversion—always a ridiculous argument coming from the mouth of the establishment; such radicalism is sure to re-emerge in one disguise or another every time a poetic-political challenge to the nomos and episteme of dominant society becomes necessary—the shock of the postmodern involved the realisation that ‘the new’ could no longer be considered foreign to a subjectivity constantly bombarded by media and burning with the desire for consumption.

In any case, the temporal dislocation characteristic of both modernism and the avant-garde—the way the art of the day constantly defied the notion of a synchronic present (not limited to the chronological trope of the avant, which encompasses any number of other historical folds, from the theme of primitivism to the negotiations with obsolescence and the ruin, the refusal of the chronology of industrial labour, and so forth)—seems to have finally found some closure. In a compelling and scary form, modern capitalist society finally has an art that aligns with the audience, with the social elites that finance it, and with the academic industry that serves as its fellow traveller. In this sense art has become literally contemporary, thanks to its exorcism of aesthetic alienation and the growing integration of art into culture. When, by the millions, the masses vote with their feet to attend contemporary art museums, and when a number of cultural industries grow up around the former citadel of negativity, fine art is replaced by something that already occupies an intermediary region between elite entertainment and mass

culture. And its signature is precisely the frenzy of ‘the contemporary’: the fact that art fairs, biennales, symposia, magazines, and new blockbuster shows and museums constitute evidence of art’s absorption into that which is merely present—not better, not worse, not hopeful, but a perverted instance of *the given*.

5.

In this way, the main cultural function of art institutions and ceremonies in relation to global capitalism today is to instantiate the pandemic of contemporariness as a mythological scheme occurring (and recurring) each time we instigate this ‘program’. After all, the art world has surpassed other, more anachronistic auratic devices (the cult of the artist, of nationality or creativity) as the profane global religion for making ‘the contemporary’ manifest. The hunger to be part of the global art calendar has more to do with the hope of keeping up with the frenzy of time than with any actual aesthetic pursuit or interest. Mallarmé’s dictum that ‘one must be absolutely modern’ has become a duty to stay up-to-date. But given the lack of historical occasions which could represent an opportunity to experience the core of our era—pivotal revolutionary moments of significant social change or upheaval—a participation in the eternal renewal of the contemporary might not be completely misguided, for it at least invokes a longing for the specter of an enthusiasm that asks for more than just the newest technological gadget.

6.

But, once again, the devil of contemporaneousness does its deed: whereas the system of modern art was territorialised in a centrifugal structure of centres and peripheries around modernity’s historical monopoly in the liberal-capitalist enclave of the North Atlantic, we now face a regime of international generalisation transmitting the pandemic of the contemporary to the last recesses of the earth. In fact, the main reason for the craze surrounding the contemporary art market in recent years (and for its not having immediately collapsed after the plunge of global capitalism) has been the market’s lateral extension: bourgeois who would previously buy work within their local art circuits became part of a new private jet set of global elites consuming the same brand of artistic products, ensuring spiralling sales and the celebration of an age in which endless ‘editions’ allow artworks to be

disseminated throughout an extended geography. In turn, each enclave of these globalised elites drives the development of a contemporary art infrastructure in their own city, using a standard mixture of global art references and local ‘emergent’ schools. Contemporary art is defined by a new global social context in which disenfranchised wealthy individuals (who have abdicated their roles as industrial and commerce managers to the bureaucracy of CEOs) seek a certain civic identity through aesthetic ‘philanthropy’. In this fashion they interact with a new social economy of services performed by artists, critics, and curators—services with symbolic capital that rests on an ability to trade in a semblance of ‘the contemporary’. Contemporary art thus becomes the social structure defined by the dialectic between the new private *jet set* and a *jet proletariat*.

7.

This new machinery of the dialectic between the global elites of financial capitalism and the nomadic agents of global culture would be easy to dismiss as critically meaningless were it not for the way ‘the contemporary’ also stands for the levelling of the temporal perception of cultural geography and of a certain political orientation. Particularly for those who come from the so-called periphery (the South and the former socialist world), ‘the contemporary’ still carries a certain utopian ring. For indeed, notwithstanding the cunning imbalances of power that prevail in the art world, the mere fact of intervening in the matrix of contemporary culture constitutes a major political and historical conquest. The global art circus of biennales, fairs, and global art museums has forced an end to the use of a metaphor that understood geography in terms of historical succession—it is no longer possible to rely upon the belatedness of the South in presuming that artistic culture goes from the centre to the periphery. Although it probably does not seem so extraordinary now, the voicing of the need to represent the periphery in the global art circuits was, to a great extent, a claim to the right to participate in producing ‘the contemporary’. And while the critical consequences of the policies of inclusion are less central to the agenda of the South than the critique of stereotypes, the activation of social memory, and the pursuit of different kinds of cultural agency, it remains the case that ‘contemporary art’ marks the stage at which different geographies and localities are finally



considered within the same network of questions and strategies. Art becomes ‘contemporary’ in the strong sense when it refers to the progressive obsolescence of narratives that concentrated cultural innovation so completely in colonial and imperial metropolises as to finally identify modernism with what we ought to properly describe as ‘NATO art’.

8. This is not to say that such a process of inclusion is free from its own deformities: in many instances, a peculiar neurosis provoked by the stereotyping of ethnic, regional, or national authenticity and the pressures to accommodate art from the periphery into a subsidiary category of metropolitan referents produces so-called ‘alternative modernism’ or ‘global conceptualism’. Nonetheless, the inclusion of the South in the narratives of ‘the contemporary’ has already disrupted the genealogies of the present, such as the simplified concept of the ‘post-conceptual’ that arose in the late 1980s to describe an apparent commonality between the radical artistic revolutions of the 1960s and the advanced art of its day. In its various historical and geographical settings, ‘contemporary art’ claims a circularity between 1968, conceptualism, Brazilian Neo-Concretism or the French Nouvelle Vague, and recent works trapped in perpetual historical mirroring. In this sense, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin, ‘contemporary art’ appears as the figure of a revolution in standstill, awaiting the moment of resolution.

9. Complicated as this may be, however, it does not blur the radical significance of the cultural transformation that took place in artistic practice in the years after 1960. One crucial element of ‘contemporary art’ is the embrace of a certain ‘unified field’ in the concept of art. Beyond the de-definition of specific media, skills, and disciplines, there is some radical value in the fact that ‘the arts’ seem to have merged into a single multifarious and nomadic kind of practice that forbids any attempt at specification beyond the micro-narratives that each artist or cultural movement produces along the way. If ‘contemporary art’ refers to the confluence of a general field of activities, actions, tactics, and interventions falling under the umbrella of a single poetic matrix and within a single temporality, it is because they occupy the ruins of the ‘visual arts’. In this sense, ‘contemporary art’ carries forward

the lines of experimentation and revolt found in all kinds of disciplines and arts that were brought ‘back to order’ after 1970, forced to reconstitute their tradition. ‘Contemporary art’ then becomes the sanctuary of repressed experimentation and the questioning of subjectivity that was effectively contained in any number of arts, discourses, and social structures following the collapse of the twentieth century’s revolutionary projects. I suspect that the circularity of our current cultural narratives will only be broken once we stop experiencing contemporary culture as the déjà vu of a revolution that never entirely took place.

10. By the same token, it is no coincidence that the institutions, media, and cultural structures of the contemporary art world have become the last refuge of political and intellectual radicalism. As various intellectual traditions of the left appear to be losing ground in political arenas and social discourses, and despite the way art is entwined with the social structures of capitalism, contemporary art circuits are some of the only remaining spaces in which leftist thought still circulates as public discourse. In a world where academic circuits have ossified and become increasingly isolated, and where the classical modern role of the public intellectual dwindles before the cataclysmic power of media networks and the balkanisation of political opinion, it should come as no surprise that contemporary art has (momentarily) become something like the refuge of modern radicalism. If we should question the ethical significance of participating in contemporary art circuits, this sole fact ought to vindicate us. Just as the broken lineages of experimental music, cinema, and literature finally found themselves in the formless and undefined poetic space of contemporary art in general, we should not be shocked to find the cultural sector—apparently most compromised by the celebration of capitalism—functioning as the vicarious public sphere in which trends such as deconstruction, postcolonial critique, post-Marxism, social activism, and psychoanalytic theory are grounded. It would seem that, just as the art object poses a continuous mystery—a space of resistance and reflection leading towards enlightenment—so do the institutions and power structures of contemporary art also function as the critical self-consciousness of capitalist hypermodernity.



NEWELL HARRY  
*Untitled (Words and Pictures)*, 2013 (detail)  
two-channel video with audio

11. However, given the negative relationship of art to its own time, one would suspect the current radicalisation of art and the constant politicisation of its practice to be dangerous symptoms. Just as modern art rescued forms of practice, sensibility, and skills that were crushed by the industrial system, so does contemporary art seem to have the task of protecting cultural critique and social radicalism from the banality of the present. Unlike theorists who lament the apparent co-opting of radicalism and critique by the official sphere of art, we would need to consider the possibility that our task may consist, in large part, of protecting utopia—seen as the necessary collusion of the past with what lies ahead—from its demise at the hands of the ideology of present time. This is, to be sure, an uncomfortable inheritance. At the end of the day, it involves the memory of failure and a necessary infatuation with the powers of history. I do not know a better way to describe such a genealogy than by offering a quotation from the Dada artist and historian Hans Richter, who summarised the experience of Dada as that of ‘the vacuum created by the sudden arrival of freedom

and the possibilities it seemed to offer’.<sup>2</sup> And it may well be that contemporary art’s ethical imperative is to deal with the ambivalence of the experience of emancipation. If art has indeed become the sanctuary of revolutionary thought, it is because it deals with the memory of a number of ambiguous interruptions. With this, we hopefully find an advantage to the constant collision of perfume and theory that we experience in contemporary art events around the world.

Cuahtémoc Medina is a curator, writer and historian. He is chief curator of the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) in Mexico City.

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# MOONWALKING

PAMELLA DLUNGWANA

*You don't need to learn to walk on the moon, you already have weightlessness in you. To float in space you just need to forget the noise.*

When someone is nameless, the weight of the words and images they make persists – they are all that matters. Such is the work of artists Hasan and Husain Essop, and Zanele Muholi. These artists have emerged from the margins of mainstream gender and religious stereotypes, presenting their discourses front-and-centre in a national and global community that once seemed intent on erasing them from the scene. The notion of being an alien within the global contemporary arts discourse has been a fertile womb for many artists of colour, and in emerging from such a womb the language they have adopted has been as diverse as the issues that have propelled them from marginality to topicality – both for the commercial art market and the very communities affected by their efforts.

Zanele Muholi's photography began when the artist realised that there were no images of women like her anywhere. As a queer, black African woman, she felt that she had been erased from the country's political history. In an interview with *C&A* magazine Muholi stated:

Not having an active visual archive of black lesbians in the country meant that we could be casually or carelessly written out of our country's history, that our contributions would not be tallied, and as a community that's not acceptable. I did not see myself anywhere and so I sought to write myself in.<sup>1</sup>

In a sense, Muholi's body and narrative were adrift in a spaceship hovering above the country. In picking up her camera Muholi assisted the vessel to land in the homes of South Africans and the global community at large. *Faces and Phases* (2006–) is an ongoing portraiture project that documents black lesbians and transgender men in South Africa and the diaspora. These images, that initially appear to be simple portraits of black women in various

garb, morph into confrontational statements which force the viewer to reckon with the presence of the participants. In these works, issues around 'corrective' or 'curative' rape crimes are yanked from the offices of local police stations to be mounted on art gallery walls, and published in newspapers and art journals. Through a magician's sleight-of-hand, *Faces and Phases* propels conversations about gay rights, specifically the lives of black women. In Muholi's work black lesbians are no longer unicorns, the fictitious by-product of a perverse colonial discourse, but are in fact real people with families, jobs and the same daily concerns that affect the whole nation.

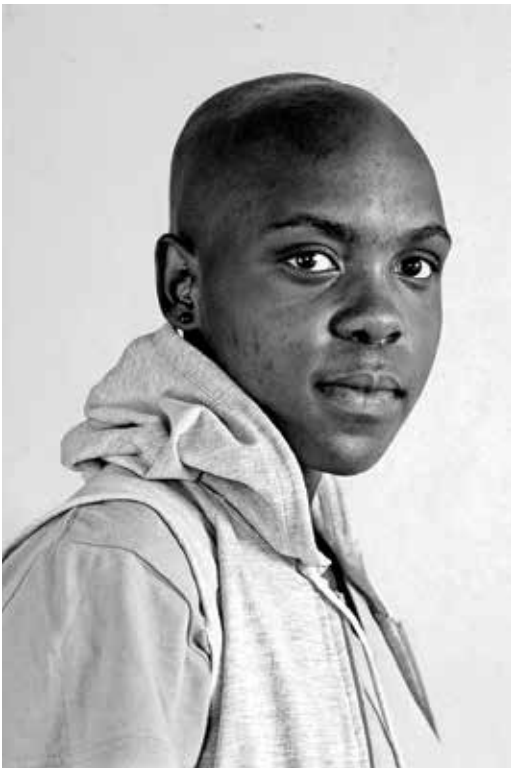
In seeing her body as the answer to the questions she had about being a phantom in society, Muholi has managed to expose herself – both figuratively and literally – to other worlds, and has extended her vernacular to include images of transgender women, transgender men and other queer people of colour in the South African diaspora. In the series *Miss (Black) Lesbian* (2009) Muholi debunks prevailing notions of black beauty, while illuminating the beauty pageant culture that has been appropriated by the black gay community in cities across South Africa. The *Beulabs* (2010) series includes portraits of Mini Mbatha and Le Sishi, two Zulu gay men in the traditional dress usually reserved for young virgins. Through these images Muholi interrogates prevailing norms of gender roles and dress in traditional cultural settings.

Muholi is not alone in excavating black queer culture in South Africa. Other artists of her generation like photographer Sabelo Mlangeni, performance artist Athi-Patra Ruga and installation artist Nicholas Hlobo are similarly engaged with themes of gay sexuality or same-sex intimacy, tradition and gender roles, and the exposure of societal hypocrisy around the existence of both gay men and lesbians. The emphatic voice of this new generation of artists indicates that the expression of black queer realities is finally being recognised in

**ZANELE MUHOLI**  
*Bakhambile Skhosana,*  
*Natalspruit, 2010 (detail)*  
 Lightjet C-print on archival  
 paper, 30 x 42 cm







Far left:  
**ZANELE MUHOLI**  
*Thola Sithole, Daveyton, Johannesburg, 2014 (detail)*  
Left:  
**ZANELE MUHOLI**  
*Charmain Carrol, Parktown Johannesburg, 2013 (detail)*  
Lightjet C-prints on archival paper, each 30 x 42 cm

South African visual landscape and history. Where Muholi beats the drum for public perceptions of gender and sexual orientation, the works of Hasan and Husain Essop focus on their Muslim faith and their identities as young Muslim men to erect mirrors that juxtapose modern and ancient religious sites, and explore secular and religious motifs. Performance and photography run in tandem in this artistic collaboration. The Essop brothers manipulate landscapes, filling them with their own bodies in various costumes, often using theatrical poses and gestures. The role of performance here is that of an alibi. In the series *Unrest* (2014) the artists find shelter in creating a misdirect between cloning and clowning around. Though many would argue that the work of the clown is that of a fool, it is through the armour of satire that some of the more sensitive and hyper-personal questions have been made public. The Essops employ this device to tackle uncomfortable issues – from their own roles as young men expected to be bilingual in their religious upbringing, to popular culture and its reach in their community. The act of duplicating or serialising their own image stretches the alibi further –

implicating only the artists in their tableaux, keeps others safe from whatever violence might be assumed, or whatever traumas might be expected. For example *Athlone Superette* (2014), which depicts a ‘siege’ scene in the Cape Town suburb of Athlone, and *Silat Mulut* (2014) where it appears the artists are performing martial arts in a mosque. The work of Hasan and Husain Essop questions the stricter tenets of traditional Islamic aniconism<sup>2</sup>. They have alluded to the absence of photographs showing peoples’ eyes in their childhood suburban home – an indicator of the very different cultural status attached to photography in traditional Muslim families in the Western Cape. In an interview with *City Press* Hasan said:

If you come into my house, there will be a photo of my wife and myself on our wedding day. It won’t be big but it’s there. But I can also appreciate the teachings – take images of celebrities a teenager might stick up on their walls, for instance. Celebs are elevated to godly status. So while some may view our work as wrong, it has a voice.<sup>3</sup>

The Essops adopt a meditative method of photographing sometimes barren, though socio-



politically and historically loaded, landscapes and stitching them together to form cohesive narratives around history, memory and the position of the post 9/11 Muslim male. This stripping-off and re-dressing of these terrains is an act of erasure and re-telling that amplifies the artists’ role, forcing new perspectives on our social landscape and political discourses.

The presence of the Essops in the South African contemporary art scene has created a new space for the expression of masculine, Muslim, ‘coloured’ identity, and methods of interrogating the hybrid nature of Cape Coloured and Malay history across a variety of mediums. Abstractionist sculptor and performance artist Igshaan Adams has similarly investigated his Muslim identity and its place, while acknowledging his liminal position as a gay-identified man. Haroon Gunn-Salie draws on the history of coloured communities in the Cape, at the same time being inclusive of other marginalised identities. In his case a Muslim identity is one usually imposed on him by a public hungry to name and claim another ‘Muslim artist.’

Zanele Muholi and Hasan and Husain Essop are in the early stages of their careers, however, in

a short time they have initiated important social discourses that will affect and inspire future artists. They have perhaps discovered how to phase out the noise, and discovered a weightlessness, expressing their stories and experiences across cultural and class divides in a way which one can only compare to the dexterity of a moon walker.

**Pamella Dlungwana** is a poet, writer, researcher and television coordinator/producer living in Cape Town, South Africa.

**REFERENCES**

- 1 Dlungwana, Pamella, Interview with Zanele Muholi, *C&A* magazine <http://www.contemporaryand.com/blog/magazines/im-an-activist-first-being-a-photographer-allows-me-a-greater-and-more-influential-audience/> accessed July 2014
- 2 A western term for the traditional Muslim stricture (especially in traditional Sunni teaching) against the creation of images of sentient living beings, both human and animal.
- 3 ‘Husain and Hasan Essop: Brothers in art’, *City Press*, 20 October 2013, <http://www.citypress.co.za/lifestyle/husain-hasan-essop-brothers-art/>

**HASAN AND HUSAIN ESSOP**  
*Freedom Fighters, 2014 (detail)*, Lightjet C-print on archival paper 114 x 145 cm



THE ARTISTS



# ERIC BRIDGEMAN

## SELECTED VIDEO WORKS (2008-13)

Eric Bridgeman's work reflects his experience as both insider and outsider, voyeur and viewed. He is frequently a subject in his own works, along with a posse of friends and artistic associates. Bridgeman's performance-for-video works have usually been made in tandem with his photomedia projects, which are shot on large-format film, in highly controlled and technically disciplined set-ups. By contrast the videos are often chaotic, real-time happenings, following a cast of characters as they go about their usual mayhem – a lurid, low-resolution world in which chance and interaction are key. More recently his video works have taken a more introspective, even dystopian direction, exploring themes of social isolation and the condition of being an artist.

An early video *The Fight* (2008) depicts two groups of men from his own clan (the Yuri, of Chimbu Province, located in the highlands of Papua New Guinea) acting out Western stereotypes of tribal war. This work critiques 'ethnographic' constructs, parodying the history of these representations and their impact on the national and cultural identity of his mother country.

A group of eight short videos (*Baby Boom*, *Labour Queen*, *Triple X Bitter*, *Black Labour*, *Eat the Chicken*, *Miss Mary Muffatt*, *Muka Lobsterdile Hunter*, *Gayer than all the rest*) were made concurrently with his acclaimed photomedia series *The Sport and Fair Play of Aussie Rules* (2009), in which Bridgeman's unforgettable alter-ego is *Boi-Boi the Labourer*.

*No Direction* (2012) was made during a studio residency in Liverpool, United Kingdom. The immolation of effigies of the English pop boy-band One Direction is, in the artist's words, a 'dramatisation of the ongoing tenuous relationship between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' – a social phenomenon that not only resonates in the northern parts of England but reflects many globally shared experiences.'

*In the Project* (2013) is the culmination of Bridgeman's video diary entries created during an artistic residency in Canada's Rocky Mountains. Bridgeman has said 'this work seeks to expose the processes involved in producing art, as the artist invites the viewer to observe his own artistic process, and the daily realities and non-realities faced while living in the project.'



ERIC BRIDGEMAN  
*In the Project* 2013,  
production/performance still  
Photo: Tanya Hartnett





**ERIC BRIDGEMAN**  
Performance/production stills, from  
*The Sport and Fair Play of Aussie Rules*  
series, 2009  
Clockwise from top left:  
*Triple X Bitter*, 2009; *Black labour*, 2009;  
*Labour Queen* 2009



Performance/production stills, from  
Top and below left:  
*No Direction*, 2012  
Right:  
*In the Project*, 2013.  
Photo: Tanya Hartnett



# MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO

## EMU WORKS (2006-08)

For Maria Fernanda Cardoso, working with materials from the natural world is a mechanism for examining relationships between humans, their environments, and other living species. In the past, her use of organic matter has ranged from cattle bones and guava to preserved insects, frogs, and starfish, privileging a direct engagement with the 'real' over representation. Responding to the formal and socio-cultural properties of such symbolically charged materials, Cardoso creates distinctive works in which the legacies of high modernist movements intersect with her personal concern for generating social commentary through everyday references.

Since relocating to Australia, Cardoso's work with emu parts stages the perspectives of a person who, being 'out of place', has endeavoured to connect with her environment through an investigation of its particularities. Using the emu as a primary source and point of reference, Cardoso draws upon its various associations: native emblem, subject of tourist paraphernalia, road kill, and economic resource.

Upon these allusions Cardoso imposes a formal reading of the emu according to her own aesthetic classifications. Using feathers salvaged from emu farming refuse – laboriously sorted according to the arbitrary categories of colour, sound, length and texture – Cardoso mimics the emu's own camouflage tactics to reconstruct the landscape. The resulting works may appear innocuous at first glance, grounded as they are in the sensuous qualities of tactility and accumulated density. Behind this masquerade, however, lies an incisive commentary with a pedagogic bent.

If there is a certain insistence in the obsessive labour and taxonomic allusions that underscore these works, it is on the way in which nature is paradoxically revered and treated as expendable. Cardoso's works highlight the irony in the fact that we market the image of the emu, like other native flora and fauna, as a national icon, and yet our knowledge of and engagement with the species is limited and removed. In addition, Cardoso's process underscores the relationship of humans to animals as one of power and control. The formal beauty of her compositions, with their emphasis on detail, balance and



repetition acts as a seductive mechanism by which to make viewers complicit in the more disturbing aspects of the works. For Cardoso's creations, though undeniably beguiling, defy any kind of gratuitous exoticism in their investigation of ideas of cultural specificity in a post-national context.

**MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO**  
*Emu works, 2006-08*  
(detail), installation, variable dimensions





**MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO**  
*Emu works, 2006-08*  
(details), installation, variable  
dimensions



## DESTINY DEACON & VIRGINIA FRASER

### HOME SECURITY (2007-14)

The friendship and artistic collaboration between Destiny Deacon and Virginia Fraser has produced works across a range of media including figures, objects, videos, installations and photographs. Portraits form a reference point in their work and they draw inspiration from both the realities of contemporary culture and their own lives. In particular, Deacon and Fraser's work reflects their engagement with Indigenous and feminist politics.

In *Home Security*, Deacon and Fraser play with stereotypes to approach serious themes such as Australian nationalism and child welfare. The artists refer to the casual and aggressive public racism expressed in a not so distant past through 'blackface' performances, and the stolen generations of mixed-race children. Taken from their parents by successive Australian governments, these children were placed in Christian missions or with white families who were expected to 'civilise' them and remove all trace of Aboriginal culture and language.

This evolving work was first shown as part of *Latitudes: Terres du Monde* (2007), curated by Régine Cuzin and has toured to various places including the 10th Havana Biennial (2009) and the group exhibition *The Phantasm* (2011) at Foxy Productions, New York.

### DESTINY DEACON AND VIRGINIA FRASER

*Home Security*, 2007-14 (detail)

Lightjet prints, DVDs, carpet, textiles,  
cast silicon, artificial hair, found objects,  
dimensions variable





**DESTINY DEACON AND VIRGINIA FRASER**  
*Home Security*, 2007-14 (detail)  
 Lightjet prints, DVDs, carpet, textiles,  
 cast silicon, artificial hair, found objects,  
 dimensions variable



# HASAN & HUSAIN ESSOP

## UNREST (2014)

Our work highlights a multi-cultural clash between religion and popular cultures. We explore the dominating influence of Western theatrics and those narratives that are constructed to depict a certain reality. Inspired by Hollywood's visual language and tactics, we create our own stories. Each photograph reflects us in a battle of moral, religious and cultural conflict. Two dominant personalities appear, East and West complete with stereotypes. Environments become stages on which to perform and define our behaviours.

Several characters may appear repeatedly. Our daily uniforms, brands reflecting class distinctions, become tools and opportunities for acting out multiple personae and adapting to specific surroundings. Those clothed in Islamic wear are aggressive but humble in their quest; those dressed in popular street fashion are questioning their beliefs.

Creating a moment in time, a dream or something seen, we tell a story of growing up. Being competitive with each other is a constant battle for the best. We use our own iconography to provide a political context for the wars being fought on a local and global scale. The viewer is able to translate these signs with their own understanding of the present and imagine a range of different possibilities. The images are also personal viewpoints that capture the growth and hunger for development: finding boundaries that we are able to test, debating the truth in our actions. They also reveal a satirical thread, a designed layout demonstrating our knowledge and experience.

As twin brothers, we have set out to find ourselves in each other, the similarities become interesting and exciting. Trying to create something new each time, a story unfolds and never ends.

*Unrest* was developed after Hasan and Husain Essop received the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Art, 2014.

### HASAN AND HUSAIN ESSOP

*Athlone Superette*, 2014  
114 x 193.5 cm

Following pages:  
Top left:  
*Malay Quarters*, 2014  
114 x 199 cm

Bottom left:  
*99 Steps*, 2014  
114 x 188.5 cm

Top right:  
*Silat Mulut*, 2014  
114 x 167.5 cm

Bottom right:  
*Freedom Fighters*, 2014  
114 x 145 cm

All works are Lightjet C-prints  
on archival paper









# MICHAEL GOLDBERG

**JUSTICE, PRUDENCE, TEMPERANCE AND FORTITUDE**  
(2014)

‘When suddenly they came upon their own tracks, Sally realised that they were lost and did the only thing she could, kept on going so that Roberta wouldn’t realise what had happened ... half believing and hoping, like most lost people, that soon she might recognise a hill or a tree that she knew ...’

This narrative of the disappearance of two young children from their parent’s outback station in John Heyer’s classic film, *The Back of Beyond* (1954), chillingly encapsulates the helplessness of any European who goes astray in ‘Terra Australis Incognita’. The film dramatises the isolation of the Birdsville Track; the approximately 500 km trail through the desert between the cattle stations of Marree in South Australia and Birdsville in Queensland. Punctuated by boreholes sunk every 40 km into the artesian basin for watering cattle and made discernible by the successive imprints in the sand and scrub traced by countless wayfarers, the track follows an ancient Aboriginal trading route between North and South, navigating a course through what was once called Australia’s ‘dead heart’.

In the midst of this isolation, without a GPS or map, the early traveller could gaze skyward to identify the Southern Cross, or *Crux*, and its two Southern Pointer stars. They gleamed brightly amidst the other stars that form the Centaur constellation, showing the way South, a sight that must have held some comfort.

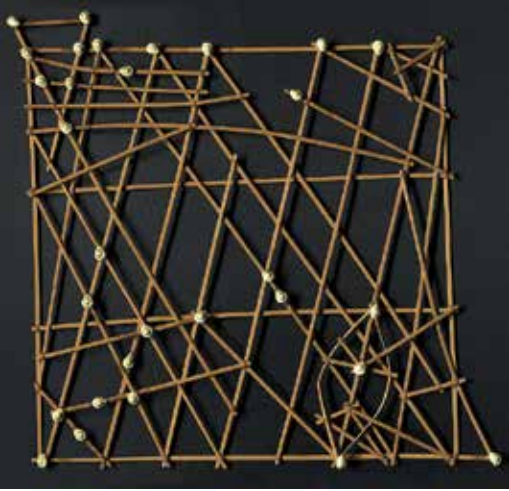
For over 40,000 years Aboriginal people incorporated *Crux* into their social, cultural and spiritual lives, part of a sophisticated cosmology and indicator of pending seasonal change. In more recent history, European settlement in Australia has seen the Southern Cross adopted as national symbol and flag, at times contested, setting Australians apart as well as uniting them: working class against authority; ethnic origin against ‘true blue’ Aussie, and Indigenous against white settlement.

As a migrant to Australia from another ‘great southern land’, South Africa, I have configured *Crux* and its pointer stars, *Alpha Centauri* and *Beta Centauri*, in this exhibition as a metaphor for ‘finding one’s way’, a sentiment that has inspired poets, artists and writers across all cultures. The term represents an inward journey as much as it does a

practical one: a search for spiritual meaning and an axis of stability where one has struggled to find a sense of place.

By inviting viewers to move around and through this installation in the garden at Hazelhurst, and to enjoy its nodes of rest and refuge, the work is also an exploration system, inspired by the beautiful stick and shell charts Marshall Islanders would use to navigate the currents and wave conditions of the Pacific Ocean.

Trivia: The Australian flag was designed in 1901, by Ivor Evans, a fourteen-year-old schoolboy who used the stars of the Southern Cross to represent Dante’s four moral virtues: justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude. He said they were principles all Australians should live up to.



Above left:  
*The Back of Beyond* 1954,  
feature film production still,  
produced and directed by  
John Heyer

Below left:  
**MARSHALL ISLANDS**, Stick  
Navigation Chart, circa 19th  
century, collection: National  
Library of Australia

Opposite:  
**MICHAEL GOLDBERG**  
*justice, prudence, temperance  
and fortitude*, 2014, maquette  
(detail) for site-specific  
installation, variable  
dimensions







**MICHAEL GOLDBERG**  
*The Wellbuilt Australian*, 1999  
Installation view, Art Gallery of NSW,  
variable dimensions



**MICHAEL GOLDBERG**  
*Toward a New World Order*, 2011  
(detail), site-specific installation,  
variable dimensions



# NEWELL HARRY

**(UNTITLED) WORDS AND PICTURES** (2013)  
**(UNTITLED) SIX ANAGRAMMATIC BANNERS** (2013)

Newell Harry's dual-screen video work, *(Untitled) Words and Pictures*, utilises 147 black-and-white photographs taken in Vanuatu between 2004 and 2011. These images slowly crossfade according to randomised algorithms, interspersed with a series of anagrammatic texts derived from slang/vernaculars, place names and wider linguistic fields. These anagrams incorporate English, Bislama and Afrikaans words, sometimes arrived at through translations of Bislama into English and vice versa. Added to this is atmospheric audio, recorded in Ngunesse Evangelical churches where trance-induced devotees speak and sing in Bislama. These audio fragments are also randomly determined, fading in and out of the visual footage, with long periods of silence. Harry undermines the notion of linear narratives or fixed relationships between the images, texts and sound, with no two elements ever appearing in the same sequence, creating a piece with no formal beginning or end – an infinite sequence of random pairings between words, pictures and spoken language.

Installed alongside this meditative work are six large-scale *tapa* (traditional bark cloth) banners, on which anagrammatic English words are roughly rendered in block letters, inviting the viewer to contemplate language systems and word constructions as ephemeral, shifting and ultimately subjective. Harry's use of metaphorical materials is intrinsic to his practice, and *tapa* (a Tahitian word), which is originally derived from the dye-fig (*ficus tinctoria*), has for centuries been widely used for ceremonial and trade purposes throughout Oceania, going by many different names. Here it becomes a metaphor for these complex interrelationships, and the artist's own wanderings along ancient routes of maritime trade and cultural exchange.

**NEWELL HARRY**  
*Untitled (Words and Pictures)*, 2013  
Two-channel video, installation view  
and production stills







NEWELL HARRY

*(Untitled) Six anagrammatic banners:*

*Untitled (CRAP/KRAP/CARP/PARK), 2013*

*Untitled (DAD/MUM/MAD/DUM), 2013*

*Untitled (FEET/FEAT/FETE/FATE), 2013*

All works are Tongan Ngatu (bark cloth), ink  
279 × 118 × 6cm

*Untitled (HEAT/HATE/MEAT/MATE), 2013*

*Untitled (MILF/FILM/LAME/MALE), 2013*

*Untitled (THIS/DAM/MAD/SHIT), 2013*



# ARCHIE MOORE

**DEPAINT** (2014)

For many people, the home is part of their self-definition, which is why we do things like decorate our houses and manicure our lawns – those large patches of greenery serve little real purpose, but they are part of a public façade people put on – displaying their home as an extension of themselves.

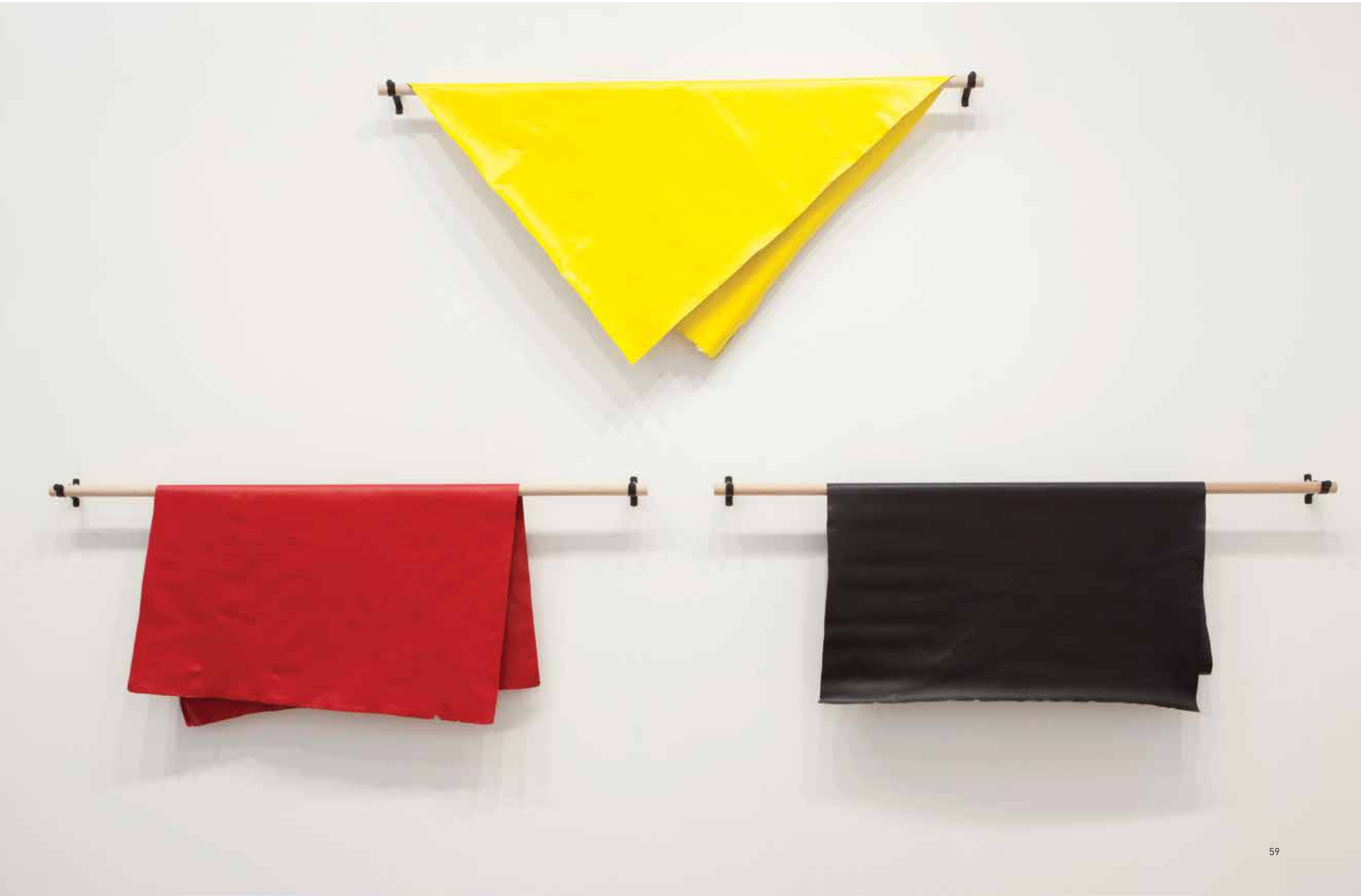
Some may feel a sentimental or nostalgic attachment to the places they’ve lived, and in the end see them as separate from their inner selves. For better or worse, the place where we grew up usually retains an indelible space in our mind.

Where and how I lived was determined by factors of economy, family and identity. We lived on the outskirts of town, in a house of peeling paint and holes. It didn’t seem to be worth much and that’s how I felt about myself. I would be ridiculed about who I was and the house got the same treatment. It was draughty in the winter and sweltering in the summer. The grass, or so-called lawn, was sometimes a metre high and would ‘mow’ itself... when it died of thirst. Someone once tried to paint the house but gave up half-way through. My brother and I would pick at the acrylic paint and peel it off the fibro in sheets. Other broken pieces of fibro – from the holes we, or others, made in the walls – would be played with and thrown like the frisbees we never had.

Looking at the half-painted house that everyone despised, it seemed to mirror my own sense of futility and entrapment. I felt as dirty, immobile and reluctant to improve as the house appeared. I did eventually leave and the house no longer exists. It became a ‘sorry place’ after my father had died. It seemed like that for as long as I had known it.

**ARCHIE MOORE**

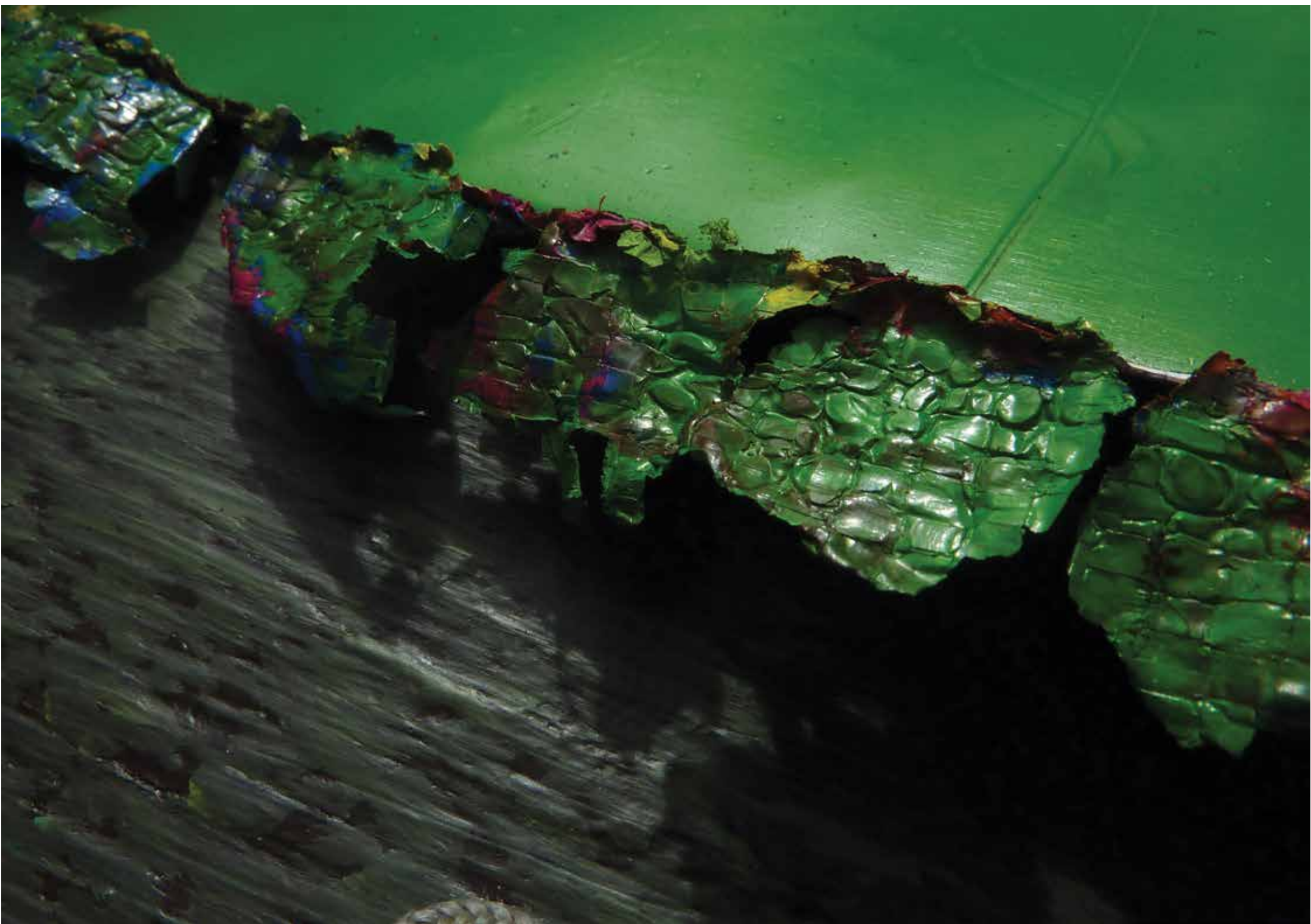
*Dermis*, 2012  
Acrylic paint, wooden dowel, steel brackets, three parts, overall dimensions: 156 x 338 x 12cm  
Collection: Queensland University of Technology Art Museum, Brisbane.  
Courtesy the artist and The Commercial Gallery, Sydney  
Photo: Jamie North.







ARCHIE MOORE  
*Studio production stills, 2013*





# ZANELE MUHOLI

FACES AND PHASES (2006–)

*What does an African lesbian look like?  
Is there a lesbian aesthetic or do we express our  
gendered, racialised and classed selves in rich and  
diverse ways?*

In 2006, visual activist Zanele Muholi began the ongoing photographic series *Faces and Phases*. Part visual statement and part archive, the series now includes more than 250 portraits, giving visibility to the various faces of black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people of South Africa and beyond.

Muholi endeavours to radically change the conventional perception of lesbian and transgender communities, who suffer from an epidemic of continuous attacks: ‘corrective’ and ‘curative’ rapes, physical and psychological assaults, and hate crimes. The subjects of her photographs stare defiantly into the camera lens while viewers confront their own preconceived or stereotypical ideas about race, sexuality and gender. In effect, she creates strong, positive images of empowered individuals showing self-expression and pride – giving a voice to a community that is too often invisible.

*Faces and Phases is about our histories and the struggles that we face. Faces express the person, and Phases signify the transition from one stage of sexuality or gender expression and experience to another.*

Prior to her art practice Muholi worked as a human/lesbian rights activist with members in her community to raise awareness of the issues facing black lesbian women living in South Africa. As a reporter and photographer for Behind the Mask, an LGBTI website, Muholi witnessed countless acts of violent hate crimes against many of her friends and community members. She later researched and documented early cases of hate crimes. In 2002, she co-founded the Forum for the Empowerment of Women, a black lesbian organisation based in Gauteng, dedicated to providing a safe space for women-loving-women to meet. She spent more than three years researching and documenting hate crimes in order to bring the realities of ‘curative rape’, assault, HIV and brutal murders of black lesbians to public attention. In 2009 she founded Inkanyiso, an organisation dealing with art, activism, media and advocacy.



**ZANELE MUHOLI**  
Lightjet C-prints on archival  
paper, each 30 x 42 cm  
*Bakhambile Skhosana,*  
*Natalspruit 2010*  
*Lerato Dumse KwaThema,*  
*Springs, Johannesburg 2010*

*Anele Anza Khaba KwaThema, Community  
Hall, Springs, Johannesburg 2011*  
*Thandi and Thandeka Mbatha, Parktown,*  
*Johannesburg 2010*  
Opposite page:  
*Xana Nyilenda, Los Angeles 2013 (detail)*







**ZANALE MUHOLI**

Lightjet C-prints on archival paper, each 30 x 42 cm

*Amanda Mapuma, Vredehoek, Cape Town 2011*

*Xana Nyilenda, Los Angeles 2013*

*Xana Nyilenda, Newtown, Johannesburg 2011*

*Akhona Hentili, Makhaza Khayelitsha, Cape Town 2011*

*Phila Mbanjwa Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal 2012*

*Molebogeng Raphala, Duduza, Johannesburg 2013*

*Refiloe Pitso, Daveyton, Johannesburg 2014*

*Mpho Putsoane, Duduza, Johannesburg 2013*

*Akhona Hentili, Makhaza Khayelitsha, Cape Town 2011*

*Nontuthuzelo Mduba, Daveyton, Johannesburg 2013*

*Benedicta Sekoati, Duduza, Johannesburg 2013*

*Sinenhlanhla Lunga Kwanele, South Katlehong, Johannesburg 2012*

*Boitumelo Mimie Sepotokele, White City Soweto, Johannesburg 2013*

*Thembela Dick, Vredehoek, Cape Town 2012*

*Sacha Kalmplex Morrison, Toronto 2008*

*Tumi Nkopane, KwaThema, Johannesburg 2013*



## DIEGO RAMIREZ

### AXOLOTL'S SMILE (2014)

*aXolotl's Smile* (2014) is an installation addressing the transculturation of the axolotl – a larval salamander of Mesoamerican origin endemic to the lakes of Mexico. More specifically, the work deals with the manner in which the trope of axolotl anthropomorphism has been translated across different cultures in the fields of arts, literature and pop culture.

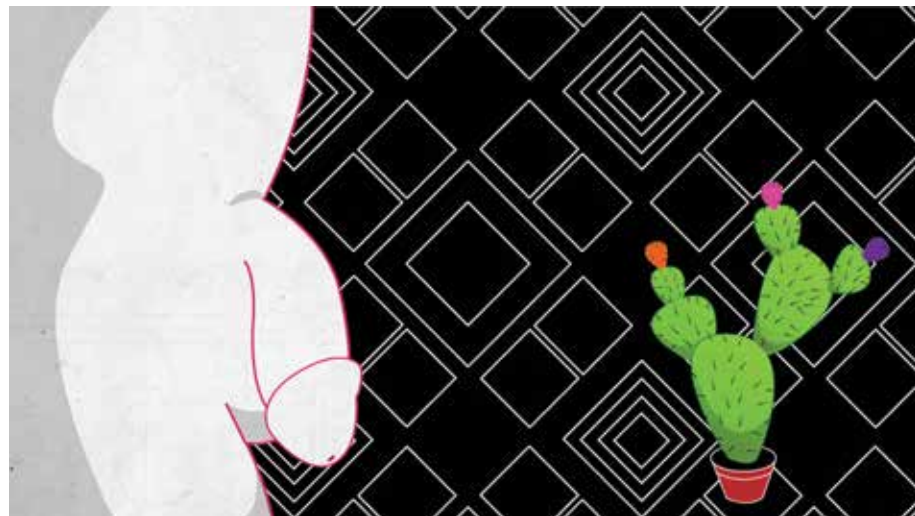
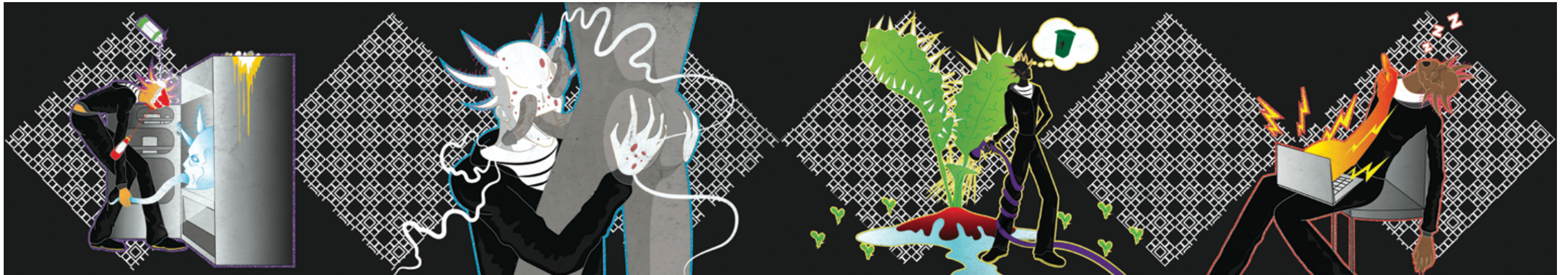
Indeed, the axolotl as a cultural symbol has generated a large genealogy of cultural objects that have called upon the axolotl as a metaphor for the Latin American condition – understood as the post-colonial desire to return to an era prior to the colonial encounter – and more broadly, the alienated self in late modernity.

This work revitalises these enquires by relocating them in contemporary Australia, a country characterised by the ongoing scrutiny of its white identity (defeated by the multiplicity of its population and native ancestry). Invoking humour, pastiche and pop culture, *aXolotl's Smile* queries the borders of normative formulations of 'home' as well as the skin politics operating in the construction of national identities.

### DIEGO RAMIREZ

*aXolotl's Happiness*, 2014  
(detail/production still)  
Single-channel video with  
audio, 9 min



**DIEGO RAMIREZ**

Above:  
*aXolotl's Joy*, 2014  
 Digital archival print on canvas  
 168 x 29.7 cm

Below:  
*aXolotl's Rapture*, 2014 (details/  
 production stills)  
 Single-channel animation,  
 1 min (loop)



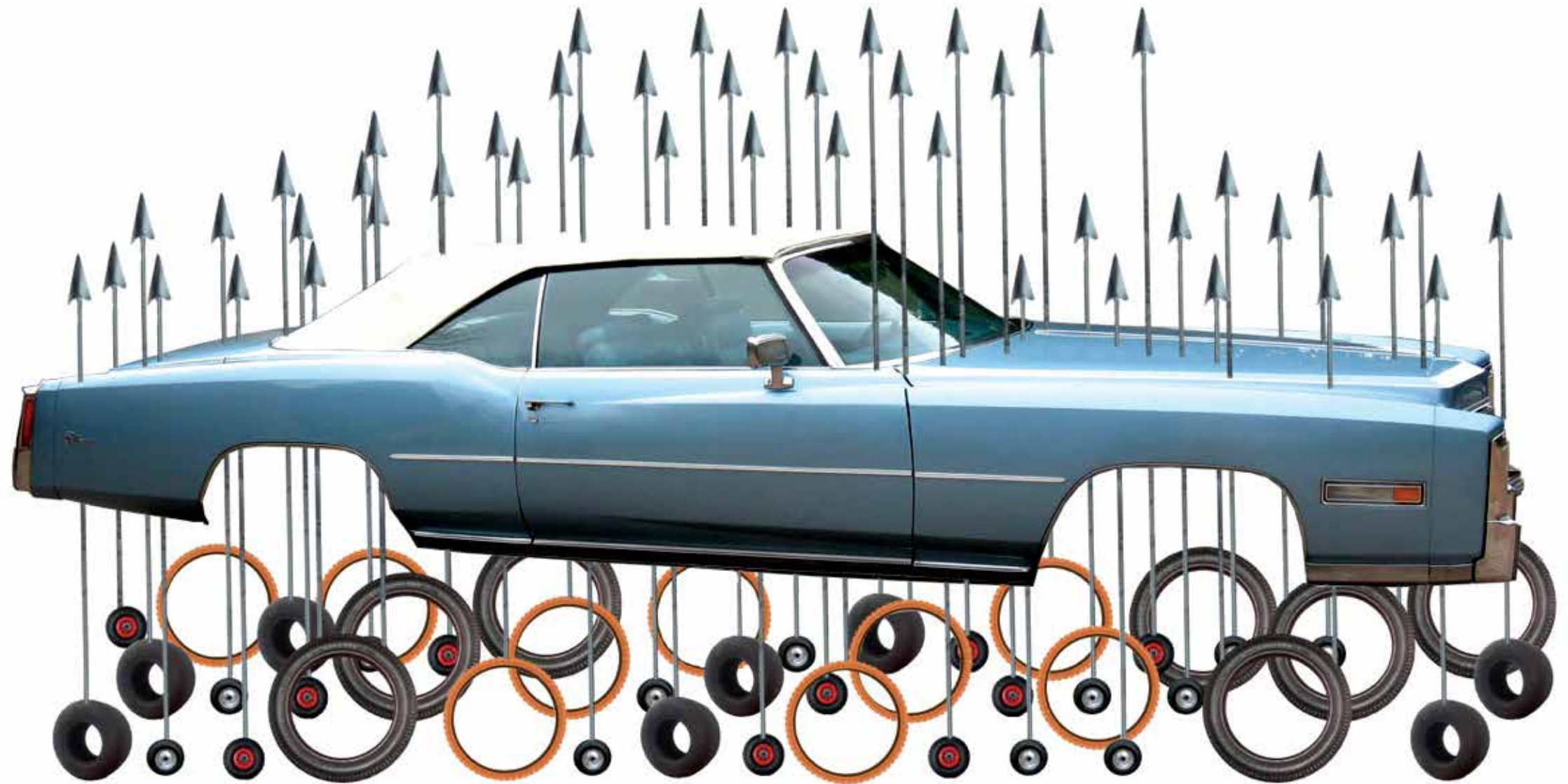
# BETSABEÉ ROMERO

## THE GEOGRAPHY OF OBJECTS (2014)

Betsabeé Romero interrogates prevailing 'vertical metaphors' of North-South relations, presenting a site-specific installation depicting a dismembered car body riding on a sea of small tyres, that have been pierced by 50 spears. The lightweight tyres representing the South miraculously support the heavy industrial car body of the North, which is simultaneously 'trampling and crushing' them.

The Spanish word Romero uses to describe the supporting wheels is *llantitas* (little tyres), which in Mexican slang also refers to rolls of body fat, like the English expression 'love handles'. This delicious ambiguity references the interrelationship between the seductive products of the developed North, and their consumption by the South. The car body encapsulates the conundrum of modern consumerism – an expensively engineered and marketed product of a particular brand, styling, year – with its planned obsolescence, ultimately destined for landfill. By contrast the small wheels signify the low-tech ingenuity and 'make-do' of the developing world, and its daily toil, where materials are endlessly re-used and re-purposed.

Linking these two 'worlds' the 50 spears, capped with crafted arrow-heads, evoke in Romero's words: 'a history of losses and massacres, the incisive and unforgiving tip of history, each containing a unique memory, rising with dignity, looking at the sky'.



## BETSABEÉ ROMERO

*The Geography of Objects*,  
2014 (detail), concept  
rendering for site-specific  
installation





**BETSABEÉ ROMERO**  
*The Geography of Objects,*  
2014 (details), site-specific  
installation, variable  
dimensions



## JOAN ROSS

### COLONIAL GRAB (2014)

Joan Ross's recent digital print and video works combine visual elements from a variety of early colonial Australian paintings and contemporary life in order to re-conceptualise and problematise our relationship to both. The work confronts us with colonial references made strange through historical juxtaposition, in order that we may recognise the underlying and ongoing power relations of imperial occupation within our own motivations and presumptions.

The desire to act upon someone else's property/space/person/culture is all too familiar; a desire perhaps as banal as touching someone else's shopping or as controlling and organised as the power of a yellow fluorescent high-visibility uniform. The work of Joan Ross recognises a secret desire to trespass upon another's private territory and identifies the increasing presence of day-glow fluorescence in our landscape as an alien invasion of control and possession, not that dissimilar to planting a flag in foreign soil.

For an Australian, the subject of colonialism is emotionally charged, highly sensitive and lived everyday. Joan's open narratives, disruptive chronologies, playful collaging and her re-visioning of 19th-century European aesthetics is a measured response to the multi-layered, often paradoxical mix of the brutal, the beautiful, the emotional and the institutional that is colonialism's legacy.

Joan Ross's video work *Colonial Grab* (2014) transports us, via a poker machine game of the same name, into the picture space of the colonial painter John Glover (among others) and out again, creating a world of dissonances – of scale, of aesthetics, of environmental custodianship – in which a personal metaphorical language is at play. One sequence involves whole trees being plucked from a Glover painting, along with the Aboriginal people painted in the branches, arranged *Ikebana*-style in a vase by an elaborately-coiffed colonial matron in the artist's signature high-visibility dress, her metaphor for colonisation, and subsequently placed back into the painted landscape. Another scene depicts a drone-like craft as it collects 'data' from a Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) landscape photographed by Ross, with each of these worlds accessed by the operation of her poker machine.

Alongside this work Ross has created a new installation, realising key elements from the video as large-scale free-standing objects.

Simon Cooper

### JOAN ROSS

*Colonial Grab*, 2014 (detail)

Single-channel video with audio, duration approx 5 mins







JOAN ROSS  
*Colonial Grab*, 2014 (details)  
Single-channel video with  
audio, duration approx 5 mins



THE DETAILS



# LIST OF WORKS

ERIC BRIDGEMAN

Selected Video works, 2008-13:

- The Fight*, 2008  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 18mins
- From the series *The Sport and Fair Play of Aussie Rules*, 2009:  
*Black Labour*  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 18 mins
- Baby Boom*  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 18 mins
- Triple X Bitter*  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 18 mins
- Eat the Chicken*  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 4 mins
- Miss Mary Muffatt*  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 4 mins
- Muka Lobsterdile Hunter*  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 6 mins 30 secs
- Gayer than all the rest*  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 6 mins 30 secs
- Labour Queen*  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 3 mins 30 secs

- No Direction*, 2012  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 6 mins
- In the project*, 2013  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 9 mins

MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO

*Emu works*, 2006-08,  
Installation, variable dimensions

DESTINY DEACON AND VIRGINIA FRASER

*Home Security* 2009-14  
Lightjet prints, DVDs, carpet, textiles, cast silicon, artifical hair, found objects, dimensions variable

HASAN AND HUSAIN ESSOP

- From the Series *Unrest*, 2014
- Athlone Superette*, 2014  
Lightjet C-print on archival paper, 114 x 193.5 cm
- 99 Steps*, 2014  
Lightjet C-print on archival paper, 114 x 188.5 cm
- Freedom Fighters*, 2014  
Lightjet C-print on archival paper, 114 x 145 cm
- Malay Quarters*, 2014  
Lightjet C-print on archival paper, 114 x 199 cm
- Silat Mulut*, 2014  
Lightjet C-print on archival paper, 114 x 167.5 cm

MICHAEL GOLDBERG

*justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude*, 2014  
Site-specific installation, variable dimensions

NEWELL HARRY

- Untitled (Words and Pictures)*, 2013  
Two-channel video with audio, continuous loop
- (Untitled) Six anagrammatic banners*  
All Tongan Ngatu (bark cloth), ink  
279 x 118 x 6cm:
- Untitled (CRAP/KRAP/CARP/PARK)*, 2013
- Untitled (DAD/MUM/MAD/DUM)*, 2013
- Untitled (FEET/FEAT/FETE/FATE)*, 2013
- Untitled (HEAT/HATE/MEAT/MATE)*, 2013
- Untitled (MILF/FILM/LAME/MALE)*, 2013
- Untitled (THIS/DAM/MAD/SHIT)*, 2013

ARCHIE MOORE

*Depaint*, 2014  
Mixed media installation, variable dimensions

ZANELE MUHOLI

- From the series *Faces and Phases* (2006 –)  
80 Lightjet C-prints on archival paper  
each 30 x 42 cm, including:
- Akhona Hentili Makhaza, Khayelitsha Cape Town* 2011
- Amanda Mahlaba, Mt. Moriah Edgecombe Durban* 2012
- Amanda Mapuma, Vredehoek Cape Town* 2011
- Amogelang Senokwane, District Six Cape Town* 2009
- Anele Anza Khaba, KwaThema Community Hall Springs Johannesburg* 2011
- Anelisa Mfo, Nyanga Cape Town* 2010
- Audrey Mary, Harare Zimbabwe* 2011
- Ayanda Radebe, Vosloorus Johannesburg* 2011
- Bakhambile Skhosana, Natalspruit* 2010
- Benedicta Sekoati, Duduza Johannesburg* 2013
- Betesta Segale, Gaborone Botswana* 2010
- Boitumelo Mimie Sepotokele, White City Soweto Johannesburg* 2013
- Charmain Carrol, Parktown Johannesburg* 2013
- Collen Mfazwe, Women’s Gaol Constitution Hill Braamfontein Johannesburg* 2013
- Eulander Koester, Nyanga East Cape Town* 2011
- Katlego Phetlhu, Mafikeng North West* 2010
- Kebarileng Sebetoane, Parktown Johannesburg* 2012
- Kirro Nomathemba Madikane, Parktown Johannesburg* 2013
- Lebo Magaela, Daveyton Johannesburg* 2013
- Lerato Dumse, KwaThema, Springs Johannesburg* 2010
- Lerato Marumolwa Embekweni, Paarl* 2009

- Lerato Nkutha, Braamfontein Johannesburg* 2010
- Lesedi Modise, Mafikeng North West* 2010
- Lesego Masilela KwaThema, Springs Johannesburg* 2010
- Lex Gaborone, Botswana* 2010
- Lithakazi Nomngcongo, Vredehoek Cape Town* 2012
- Liza Mokae Duduza, Johannesburg* 2013
- Lo Jones, Parktown Johannesburg* 2010
- Lumka Stemela, Nyanga East Cape Town* 2011
- Lungile Cleo Dladla, KwaThema Community Hall Springs Johannesburg* 2011
- Mac Ilakut Kampala Uganda* 2011
- Makhethi Sebenzile Ndaba, Constitution Hill Johannesburg* 2010
- Mamiki Tshabalala, KwaThema Johannesburg* 2010
- Manucha, Muizenberg Cape Town* 2010
- Maponini Ntsala, Vosloorus Johannesburg* 2011
- Marcel Kutumela, Alexandra Johannesburg* 2008
- Matseko Mahlaba, KwaThema Springs Johannesburg* 2010
- Matseleng Kgoaripe, Vosloorus Johannesburg* 2011
- Mayita Tamangani, Harare Zimbabwe* 2011
- Mbali Zulu, KwaThema Springs Johannesburg* 2010
- Meme Mofokeng, Daveyton Johannesburg* 2014
- Michele Clarke, Toronto* 2009
- Millicent Gaika, Gugulethu Cape Town* 2011
- Molebogeng Raphala Duduza, Johannesburg* 2013
- Mpho Putsoane Duduza, Johannesburg* 2013
- Mpumi Moeti Kwanele, South Kattlehong Johannesburg* 2012
- Mutsa Honnor, Harare Zimbabwe* 2011
- Nikiwe Bobotyana, Gugulethu Cape Town* 2008
- Niko Blaxxx, Toronto* 2008
- Nokuthula Dhladhla, Berea Johannesburg* 2007
- Nontuthuzelo Mduba, Daveyton Johannesburg* 2013
- Nosiphiwo Kulati, Orlando Soweto Johannesburg* 2013
- Nozipho Magagula, Melville Johannesburg* 2011
- Ntsiki Dlamini, Pietermaritzburg KwaZulu Natal* 2012
- Palesa Mkhwebane, KwaThema Community Hall Springs Johannesburg* 2011
- Pam Dlungwana, Vredehoek Cape Town* 2011
- Pearl Hlongwane, Vosloorus Johannesburg* 2011
- Phila Mbanjwa, Pietermaritzburg KwaZulu Natal* 2012
- Phumzile Nkosi, Vosloorus Johannesburg* 2011
- Pinky Zulu, Constitution Hill Johannesburg* 2010
- Refiloe Pitso, Daveyton Johannesburg* 2014
- Refilwe Mahlaba Thokoza, Johannesburg* 2010
- Rena Godlo, Nyanga East Cape Town* 2011
- Sacha Kalmplex Morrison, Toronto* 2008
- Sane, Pietermaritzburg KwaZulu Natal* 2012
- Sindi Shabalala, Parktown Johannesburg* 2007

- Sinenhlanhla Lunga, Kwanele South Kattlehong Johannesburg* 2012
- Siphokazi Kula Embekweni, Paarl Cape Town* 2011
- Siphokazi Kula Embekweni, Paarl Cape Town* 2011
- Stesh Gonya, Parktown Johannesburg* 2013
- Thandi and Thandeka Mbatha, Parktown Johannesburg* 2010
- Thembela Dick ,Vredehoek Cape Town* 2012
- Thola Sithole ,Daveyton Johannesburg* 2014
- TK Balekane Moloi, Duduza Johannesburg* 2013
- Tumi Nkopane, KwaThema Johannesburg* 2013
- Xana Nyilenda, Los Angeles* 2013
- Xana Nyilenda, Newtown Johannesburg* 2011
- Yonela Nyumbeka Makhaza, Khayelitsha Cape Town* 2011
- Zanele Muholi, Vredehoek Cape Town* 2011
- Zodwa Nkwinika, Parktown Johannesburg* 2010

DIEGO RAMIREZ

- aXolotl’s Smile*, 2014  
Mixed media installation comprising:
- aXolotl’s Happiness*, 2014  
Single-channel video with audio, 9 mins
- aXolotl’s Joy*, 2014  
Digital archival print on canvas  
168 x 29.7cm
- aXolotl’s Rapture*, 2014  
Single-channel animation, 1 min (loop)
- Exercise for Joy I-XI*, 2014  
Digital archival prints on cotton paper
- Exercise for Rapture I*, 2014  
Digital print on backlit film, aluminium light box  
29.7 x 42 cm

BETSABEÉ ROMERO

*The Geography of Objects*, 2014  
Site-specific installation, variable dimensions

JOAN ROSS

- Colonial Grab*, 2014  
Single-channel video with audio, duration 5 mins
- Untitled*, 2014  
Mixed media installation, variable dimensions





**ZANALE MUHOLI**

*Xana Nyilenda, Newtown,  
Johannesburg, 2011 (detail)*  
Lightjet C-print on archival paper,  
each 30 x 42 cm



# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

**ERIC BRIDGEMAN**

Born 1986, Redcliffe, Queensland, Australia  
Lives Sydney, Australia and Papua New Guinea

Eric Bridgeman’s first solo exhibition was held at the Queensland Centre for Photography, Brisbane, in 2007. He has since held solo exhibitions throughout Australia at commercial galleries and independent spaces including *New Photographs from Kokwara Trail* (2010) at Sydney’s 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. His work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including *Photoquai 4: World Image Biennial* (2013), Paris, *Primavera 2011* (2011) and *TABOO* (2012) both at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; *The State We’re In: Contemporary Queensland Photography* (2010) at University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane. The video series, *The Sport and Fair Play of Aussie Rules*, was exhibited as part of *Mind Games: Photography, Identity and Play* (2010) at the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney. Bridgeman’s work is represented in the collections of Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne and University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane.

Eric Bridgeman is represented by GallerySmith, Melbourne.

**MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO**

Born 1963, Bogota, Columbia  
Lives Sydney, Australia

Maria Fernanda Cardoso has held more than 43 solo exhibitions and 133 group exhibitions across 26 countries. She has exhibited at prestigious institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) and The New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York; Reina Sofia, Madrid; Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Sydney; The San Francisco Exploratorium; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Sydney Opera House; and Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogota, Columbia. In 2012 Cardoso presented the *MoCo\_Museum of Copulatory Organs* at the *18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations*. In 2003 she held the solo exhibition *Zoomorphia* at Sydney’s MCA and represented Colombia at the Venice Biennale. In 2000, MOMA commissioned her to make a major installation for their millennium show, *Modern Starts*. From 1995-2000 her celebrated project, the *Cardoso Flea Circus*, was exhibited internationally at festivals and museums. Selected collections include the Tate Gallery, London; Daros Latinamerica, Zurich, Switzerland; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; MCA, San Diego; Miami Art Museum; Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá; Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, and Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, both in Bogotá; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; MCA, Sydney.

Maria Fernanda Cardoso is represented by Arc One, Melbourne.

**DESTINY DEACON AND VIRGINIA FRASER**

Born 1957, Maryborough, Queensland, Australia and Melbourne, Australia  
Live Melbourne, Australia

Destiny Deacon and Virginia Fraser’s collaborative projects have been exhibited throughout Australia and overseas. In 1993, Deacon held her first solo exhibition, *Caste Offs*, at the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney, the same year her work was included in the group exhibitions *Can’t See for Lookin’* at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (NGV), and *Australian Perspecta* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (AGNSW). Deacon has since held more than 30 solo exhibitions including the major survey *Walk and don’t look blak* (2005), at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (MCA). Deacon and Fraser have been included in significant group exhibitions including the *Melbourne Now* (2013) at NGV; *Land, Sea, and Sky* (2011) at Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (GOMA); *Latitudes: Terres du Monde* at the 10th Havana Biennial (2009); *16th Biennale of Sydney: Revolutions - Forms That Turn* (2008); *Documenta11* (2002) Kassel, Germany; *Yokohama Triennale: MEGA WAVE Towards a New Synthesis* (2001), Japan; the 12th Biennale of Sydney (2000); *Beyond the pale: contemporary Indigenous art*, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art (2000), Art Gallery of South Australia; *Africus: 1st Johannesburg Biennale* (1995), South Africa, and the 5th Havana Biennial (1994). Their work is held in numerous public and private collections across Australia.

Destiny Deacon and Virginia Fraser are represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

**HASAN AND HUSAIN ESSOP**

Born 1985, Cape Town, South Africa  
Live Cape Town, South Africa

Hasan and Husain Essop have been collaborating since they both graduated from the University of Cape Town in 2006. Their work has appeared in numerous international exhibitions including *Am I not a man and a brother? Am I not a woman and a sister?* (2013), James Harris Gallery, Seattle, United States; *Photography of The Rainbow Nation* (2012) Museum Beelden aan Zee, Den Haag, Netherlands; *Figures & Fictions: Contemporary South African Photography* (2011) the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; *Integration and Resistance in the Global Age* at the 10th Havana Biennale (2010); and *Peekaboo: Current South Africa* (2010) Helsinki Museum, Finland. In 2014 Hasan and Husain Essop were the recipients of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award. Their work is held in private and public collections including the Durban Art Gallery and the South African National Gallery, Cape Town.

Hasan and Husain Essop are represented by Goodman Gallery, South Africa.

**MICHAEL GOLDBERG**

Born 1952 Johannesburg, South Africa  
Lives Sydney, Australia

Artist and curator Michael Goldberg was born in South Africa and has lived in Sydney since 1988. His early solo and curatorial projects in Australia examined the colonial era, with site-responsive installations produced in Sydney’s key heritage sites including Elizabeth Bay House, the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Australian Museum. These presented alternative views of history and challenged conventional museum interpretations of Australia’s past. From 2001 Goldberg began to critique global commodity and financial markets in projects that dealt with the ebb and flow of market forces and the aesthetics of speculation – even wagering real money on the stock market in the performance/ installation *catchingafallingknife.com* (2002). The complexities of geopolitics then became of prime interest in projects examining the collective unease of the ‘post 9-11’ era. Recent projects have drawn on the cult of survivalism and the anxieties of living in the so-called ‘End Times’. For Hobart’s Dark Mofo festival Goldberg created *An Inn for Phantoms* (2014), an installation exploring the shadow lives of museum artefacts in the Narryna Heritage Museum, an historic colonial-era house. Goldberg is an Associate Professor teaching sculpture, installation and performance at Sydney College of the Arts.

**NEWELL HARRY**

Born 1972, Sydney, Australia  
Lives Sydney, Australia

Newell Harry has been exhibiting since 2000. His work has been included in significant exhibitions across Australia and internationally. These include *Rendez Vous 2012* (2012) at the National Gallery of South Africa, Cape Town; *What do you mean, we?* (2012), Te Tuhi Arts Centre, Auckland; *Untitled: 12th Istanbul Biennial* (2011); *Rendez Vous 11*, Institut d’Art Contemporain (2011) Villeurbanne, France; *Tell me, Tell me; Australian and Korean Art 1976-2011* (2011) at National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Sydney; *17th Biennale of Sydney, Beauty of Distance, songs of survival in a precarious age* (2010); *We Call Them Pirates Out Here* (2010) MCA, Sydney; *Adelaide Biennial: Before and After Science* (2010), Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; *6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art* (2010), Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art (QAG/GOMA), Brisbane. Harry is represented in the collection of Les Abbatoirs, Musée d’Art Moderne et Contemporain, Toulouse, France; MCA, Sydney; QAG/GOMA, Brisbane; Ararat Regional Art Gallery, Newcastle Art Gallery; Monash University Art Collection and University of Wollongong.

Newell Harry is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

ARCHIE MOORE

Born 1970, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia  
Lives Brisbane, Australia

Since his first solo exhibition in 2002, Archie Moore has held regular solo exhibitions in artist-run spaces and commercial galleries throughout Australia. Significant group exhibitions include *My Country, I Still Call Australia Home: Contemporary Art from Black Australia*, which was shown at Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane in 2013 and in New Zealand at the Auckland Art Gallery in 2014; *Mémoires Vives: Une Histoire de l’Art Aborigène* (2013) Le musée d’Aquitaine, Bordeaux, France; *Experimenta – Speak to Me*, 5th International Biennale of Media Art at RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, and the University of Queensland in 2013 and 2014; *Contemporary Australian Drawing 2: Drawing as notation, text and discovery* (2012), University of the Arts, London; *Lie of the Land: New Australian Landscape* (2012), Australian Embassy, Washington DC; and *Making it New: Focus on Australian Contemporary Art* (2009) Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Selected collections include the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art, and Queensland University of Technology Art Museum, in Brisbane; Newcastle Art Gallery; University of Technology (UTS), and Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, UTS, in Sydney.

Archie Moore is represented by The Commercial, Sydney.

ZANELE MUHOLI

Born 1972, Umlazi, Durban, South Africa  
Lives in Johannesburg, South Africa

Since her first solo exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in 2004, Zanele Muholi’s work has been included in numerous international exhibitions including the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), Italy; Documenta 13 (2012), Kassel, Germany and the 29th São Paulo Biennial (2010), Brazil. Her work has also been exhibited at prominent international art institutions including Les Rencontres d’Arles, France, and Les Rencontres de Bamako, Mali; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, United States; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, and Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York. She has received many awards including the first BHP Billiton/Wits University Visual Arts Fellowship in 2006; the Fanny Ann Eddy accolade from IRN-Africa for outstanding contributions to the study and advocacy of sexualities in Africa in 2009, and in 2013 she received the Index on Censorship – Freedom of Expression arts award in London. Her award-winning documentary *Difficult Love* (2010) has screened at film festivals around the world.

Zanele Muholi is represented by Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa.

DIEGO RAMIREZ

Born 1989, Mexico  
Lives Melbourne, Australia

Diego Ramirez’s practice centres around themes of identity and the politics of media-audience identification, focusing on ideas surrounding gender, race and ethnicity. Ramirez has been exhibiting since 2012 and has held several solo exhibitions at artist-run galleries in Melbourne. His works have been included in the group exhibitions *Videoooooh* (2012), The Slade School of Fine Art, London; *WRO 15th Media Art Biennale* (2013) Wroclaw, Poland; *Modern Panic IV* (2013) (with Alejandro Jodorowsky), London, United Kingdom; *Currents: Santa Fe International New Media Festival* (2013) New Mexico, United States and *Unco* (2013) Torrance Art Museum, Los Angeles. His video work has been screened at numerous Australian and international video art/film festivals including the recent *FILE 2014 – Electronic Language International Festival*, Sao Paulo, Brazil; *Stuttgarter Filmwinter*, Denmark and the *Experimental Film Festival Portland*, United States. Ramirez is co-director of the Melbourne Video Art Society, an Artist Run Initiative without a space with the intention to promulgate video art culture.

BETSABEÉ ROMERO

Born 1963, Mexico  
Lives Mexico City, Mexico

Betsabeé Romero has held more than 30 solo exhibitions in Mexico, the United States and Europe, including those held at Amparo Museum in Puebla, Mexico; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO), Mexico; Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra; Carrillo Gil Museum, Mexico; the ‘Recoleta’, Buenos Aires; Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, and the Kennedy Centre, Washington DC. Romero has participated in numerous residencies and significant international exhibitions such as the Cairo Biennial (2006), Egypt, Havana Biennial (2004), Cuba; the Porto Alegre Biennial (2004), Brazil; the San Juan Poly/Graphic Triennial: Latin America and the Caribbean (2004), Puerto Rico; *KHOJ* (2003), Bangalore, India and *inSITE97* (1997) held between San Diego, United States and Tijuana, Mexico. Romero is also known for numerous monumental installations and interventions in urban communities including East Los Angeles; Chicago; Mexico City; and Toulouse, France. She is represented in international museum collections including the Los Angeles County Museum; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Daros Collection, Switzerland; and the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection, Mexico.

JOAN ROSS

Born 1961, Glasgow, Scotland  
Lives Sydney, Australia

Since 1989 Joan Ross has held more than 22 solo exhibitions throughout Australia. Group exhibitions include *Wonderland: New Contemporary Art from Australia* (2012) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei; *The Isle of Many Waters, Tasmania* (2012) at Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart; *Curious Colony: A twenty first century Wunderkammer* (2010) at Newcastle Art Gallery (NAG) touring to SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney in 2011; *Lines in the Sand: Botany Bay Stories from 1770* (2008), Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre; *Drawing Together* (2008), National Archives of Australia, Canberra; *Regarding Retro* (2005) Blacktown Arts Centre, Sydney and touring regional NSW, 2005–07; and *Home Sweet Home: The Peter Fay Collection* (2004), National Gallery of Australia (NGA), Canberra, which toured nationally. Ross is represented in the collections of the NGA, Artbank, Kaldor Art Projects: MOVE, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, Gold Coast Regional Gallery, NAG, Penrith Regional Gallery and Lewers Bequest, Campbelltown Art Centre, University of Sydney, and University of Wollongong.

Joan Ross is represented by Bett Gallery, Hobart and Michael Reid Gallery, Sydney.



WRITER BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID CORBET

Born 1955, Harare, Zimbabwe  
Lives Sydney, Australia

David Corbet is an independent curator based in Sydney. He has lived most of his life between Europe and Australia, working and travelling widely in Africa, Latin America and South Asia.

He completed interdisciplinary studies at Central St Martins School of Art (now part of the University of the Arts) in London, and more recently completed a Master of Fine Arts (Research) at UNSW College of Fine Arts in Sydney, exploring language systems in contemporary art. In 2011 he founded a contemporary art space, DNA Projects, and has curated numerous exhibitions and hybrid art projects by emerging artists, designers and photographers. He has also worked with diverse collections, curators, institutions and artists as an exhibition and publication designer and editor, and is founder of the Sydney design and communications consultancy DNA Creative.

He has written extensively for art journals and blogs, and has spoken at and participated in many conferences and forums worldwide. His personal creative practice encompasses painting, installation, printmaking, photography, new media, graphic/broadcast and large-scale environmental design.

PAMELLA DLUNGWANA

Born 1981, Durban, South Africa  
Lives Cape Town, South Africa

Pamella Dlungwana is a poet, writer, researcher and television coordinator/producer. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Film/Cinema/Video Studies from the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Fascinated by the hybridity in artistic discipline, individual and collective expression, she expresses herself best in poetry, fusing motion and still images. Dlungwana has collaborated with fellow poet Bandile Gumbi, co-creating the work, *No Holy Cows*. The emphasis of the project has been in morphing and blurring the boundaries between poetry performance and the visual art performance space, creating a work that invites the audience to co-author poetry in an enviroment modelled after a play pen. In 2009 Dlungwana collaborated with artist Zanele Muholi in a project for the *African Sexualities Reader* called, *What do you see when you look at us?* This project added poetic text to Muholi’s portraits of lesbians in South Africa. The elements of play and work, sobriety and intoxication, struggle and surrender feature prominently in her shy, short poems, and in her lengthier texts she explores biography/myth and memory. Pamella Dlungwana lives in Cape Town with her goldfish and soulmate.

CUAUHTÉMOC MEDINA

Born 1965, Mexico City, Mexico  
Lives Mexico City, Mexico

Cuauhtémoc Medina is an art critic, curator and historian. He holds a Ph.D. in History and Theory of Art from the University of Essex in Britain, and a BA in History from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Since 1993 he has been a full time researcher at UNAM’s Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, and between 2002 and 2008 was the first Associate Curator of Art Latin American Collections at Tate, London. In 2013 he was appointed Chief Curator at the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) in Mexico City.

Among other projects, he organised *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2001), Lima, Peru, by Francis Alÿs; *20 Million Mexicans Can’t Be Wrong* (2002) South London Gallery; *The Age of Discrepancies, Art and Visual Culture in Mexico 1968-1997* (2007-08) in collaboration with Olivier Debroyse, Pilar García and Alvaro Vazquez; Teresa Margolles’s project for the Mexican Pavilion at the 2009 Venice Biennale, *What Else Could We Talk About?; The Red Specter: Critical Fetishes Residues of the General Economy*, (2010-11) at CA2M, Madrid, in collaboration with Mariana Botey and Helena Chavez; and the year-long exhibition *Cannibal Dominoes* (2010) at Contemporary Art Project, Murcia, Spain. In 2012, Medina was Head Curator, in association with Dawn Ades and Katerina Gregos, of Manifesta 9 in Genk, Belgium, which was titled *The Deep of the Modern*.

KEVIN MURRAY

Born 1958, Perth, Australia  
Lives Melbourne, Australia

Dr Kevin Murray is an independent writer and curator, Adjunct Professor at RMIT University, Melbourne, and Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne. He was Director of Craft Victoria from 2000 to 2007 where he developed the Scarf Festival and the South Project, a four-year program of exchange involving Melbourne, Wellington, Santiago and Johannesburg.

His exhibitions include *Signs of Change: Jewellery Designed for a Better World* (2010); *Water Medicine: Precious Works for an Arid Continent* (1997-2001); *Seven Sisters: Fibre Works from the West* (2004); *Common Goods: Cultures Meet through Craft* (2006) and *Joyaviva: Live Jewellery Across the Pacific* currently touring Latin America. His latest book is *A History of Contemporary Jewellery in Australia and New Zealand: Place and Adornment* (with Damian Skinner, Bateman, 2014).

He coordinates Sangam: A Platform for Craft-Design Partnerships in Australia, India and Indonesia. He teaches at RMIT University, University of Melbourne, Swinburne University and the University of New South Wales. As part of Southern Perspectives, he is helping to develop platforms for creative exchange across the South for art that engages with the social fabric.

See [www.southernperspectives.net](http://www.southernperspectives.net)

THANKS

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Dharawal people, on whose traditional lands this exhibition is held.

To all the artists, I salute your continued courage, and the telling of your stories, against all adversity.

I would also like to thank a few inspirational figures. To Okwui Enwezor I have already paid tribute in my introduction, and I add the curator Jean-Hubert Martin, whose *Magiciens de la Terre* (1989) Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, first made my young eyes see. To Djon Mundine OAM, who encouraged me to explore this territory from an Australian perspective, I am grateful for ongoing support, as I am to Hazelhurst’s founding director Michael Rolfe, now CEO at MGNWSW, who initially commissioned a proposal, and to Liz Nowell, who championed it.

Heartfelt thanks are due to Hazelhurst’s current leadership, Belinda Hanrahan and Carrie Kibbler, and to their team, for so tenaciously nursing the project to fruition; to Julie Lomax and the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council for crucial support and belief; to Ace Bourke for patience and wise counsel; to Tracy Dunn for tea and sympathy, and for sowing an idea, and to Maurice O’Riordan, my sometime editor at *Art Monthly Australia*, for nurturing it; to Kevin Murray and Cuauhtémoc Medina for giving it a context; to Clinton Nain and the Deacon/Hardings, for their welcome to country and family; to Angus Leendertz for revealing his world; to Javier Gallegos for translation and insight; to Jane Somerville for her patient editing; to the late Octavio Paz for his inspiration.

David Corbet, Curator





EXHIBITION CREDITS

SOUTH

AUSTRALIA | MEXICO | SOUTH AFRICA

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Opposite:

MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO

*Emu works*, 2006-08

Installation, variable dimensions

**Hazelhurst**  
REGIONAL GALLERY & ARTS CENTRE  
A facility of Sutherland Shire Council

Sutherland Shire  
COUNCIL



Principal Partner

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.







NEWELL HARRY  
*(Untitled) Six anagrammatic banners,*  
2013, studio view  
Photo: David Corbet





ERIC BRIDGEMAN  
*No Direction*, 2012  
Production/performance still







