Nick Shepherd
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The Walking Seminar

Embodied research in emergent Anthropocene landscapes

"Walking is the speed for noticing – and for thinking. The Table Mountain Walking Seminars suggest just how much we need walking to imagine alternatives to the intertwined human and nonhuman catastrophes of the Anthropocene."

– Anna Tsing, Aarhus University and the University of California, Santa Cruz

"According to a German proverb, 'you think with your feet'. I am impressed to see how 'walking seminars' – by combining scholarly and bodily practices – are creating new and inspiring communities for the future: of empirical observations, challenging ideas, and interesting people."

– Cornelius Holtorf, Linnaeus University

photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Preface

I have been involved in a number of walking seminars over the years, and each time I take away something different. I think that for researchers it is probably a good thing to abandon a distanced and disinterested stance and to feel more implicated in the situations that they study. Implication, entanglement, empathy, messiness: these are the strategies and situations to which, I believe, we will have to turn if we are to find a way through the social and environmental challenges of the Anthropocene. The university as institution, with its lumbering traditions and hallowed formats, needs to be more nimble and more humble. Scholars should be encouraged to write from the heart, as well as from the mind.

I find that it is often in the weeks and months following a walking seminar that I feel the full benefits of the conversations, reflections, new experiences, and ideas. As occasions, they nourish my research and teaching practice. Increasingly, I experiment with taking the classroom outdoors. My visits to Cape Town now take on a kind of valedictory aspect, which itself may be part of our shared journey deeper into the Anthropocene. I have seen landscapes that I thought I knew well over the course of 30 years changed over the past four or five years. I feel as if I have taken too much for granted, that I should be paying more attention – that we should all be paying more attention. Finally, this is what the walking seminars do for me: they provoke curiosity, they invite questions, they dare me to pay attention.

This publication is the result of my time as artist-in-residence at the Reinwardt Academy of the Amsterdam University of the Arts in 2017 and 2018. The intellectual origins of the project predate the artist-in-residence period. In April 2014 Christian and I, both at the time based at the University of Cape Town, visited South Africa's Cederberg area, well known for its rock art, with Colombian archaeologist Cristóbal Gnecco and Swedish historian of ideas Mikela Lundahl. During this get-together, the project's three lines of inquiry were articulated: namely, 1) exploring the intersection between conventional scholarship and forms of artistic research and practice; 2) using walking as a methodology to engage landscapes and histories; 3) rethinking time, materiality, and memory. Project funding for the Table Mountain Walking Seminar has come from the Amsterdam University of Arts, the University of Gothenburg, Aarhus University, and the University of Cape Town. Funding for this publication came from the Amsterdam University of Arts. All these institutions are acknowledged with gratitude.

Nick Shepherd

photos: Sara C. F. de Gouveia

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The Table Mountain Walking Seminar has become a semi-annual event. The seminar brings together between 12 and 18 scholars, artists, activists, curators, and practitioners for an intensive week of walking, talking, and sharing work and ideas. We follow the route of the Hoerikwaggo Trail, the approximately 80 kilometer trail linking Cape Point to the city of Cape Town along the spine of mountains that make up the Cape Peninsula. Days of walking are interspersed with days of workshopping and practice. Nights are spent in the trail's beautifully sited tented camps.

Our starting idea was simple: to bring together the most interesting possible group of people and create the kinds of environments that allow for the free exchange of work and ideas. At the core of the seminars is the practice and craft of walking, as a form of embodied research and as a way of engaging with the new and emergent landscapes of the Anthropocene. We have an interest in the notions of body as archive, landscape as archive, performance as archive. We have an interest, too, in what it means to think through the body, affect, and senses. Paying attention to the materiality of sites and remains, we are interested in the layering of memory and experience as palimpsest and as stratigraphy.

Conceptually speaking, a key source for the walking seminars is the contemporary debate around the Anthropocene. We argue that, among other things, this debate gives us a strong mandate to pursue innovative transdisciplinary research methods, and to break with conventional distinctions between culture and nature, mind and body, intellect and imagination. In his important essay "The Climate of History", the postcolonial historian Dipesh Chakrabarty makes a startling admission. Writing about climate change and global warming, he says: "As the crisis gathered momentum in the last few years, I realized that all my readings in theories of globalization, Marxist analysis of capital, subaltern studies, and postcolonial criticism over the last twenty-five years, while enormously useful in studying globalization, had not really prepared me for making sense of this planetary conjuncture in which humanity finds itself today" (Chakrabarty 2009: 199).

To situate oneself in the Anthropocene is to write from the midst of a crisis. We argue that the nature of this crisis demands bold and unconventional responses, including from scholars and creative practitioners. An ironic contradiction between form and content characterizes much of the discourse around the Anthropocene, as we discuss the radical implications of the current conjuncture using familiar and tired old forms: jetting around the world to conferences and workshops, sitting in hotels and convention centers, setting up talk-shops that explore ideas at arm's length.

Another source for the walking seminars is the contemporary discussion around decolonial thinking and practice. The debate surrounding the environment often seems like a rather white, middle-class affair, especially in South Africa. The middle classes fuss about species loss and the destruction of habitats, while poorer communities struggle to survive amid conditions of bare life. The disconcerting fact of the Anthropocene is that we are all in this together, but some are more "in it" than others. It seems likely that poorer and more marginalized individuals and communities in the Global South will bear a disproportionately large share of the burden of climate change. The Anthropocene threatens to recapitulate the planetary injustices of colonialism and imperialism. It becomes vital to join the debate around global environmental change to the debate around social and economic justice, just as it becomes vital to locate the roots of the current crisis – which, after all, is the crisis of a certain kind of modernity and globalization – in historical processes of racism, colonialism, and imperialism. Colonialism was not just about the conquest of people and territories; it was also about the conquest of the natural worlds, opened up by a strategy of geographical exploration and colonial conquest.

"We argue that the nature of this crisis demands bold and unconventional responses, including from scholars and creative practitioners."

There are many ways of approaching the challenges of embodied research in the Anthropocene. For us, walking provides a productive and interesting way of opening out to some of these questions and concerns. Rebecca Solnit writes: "Walking itself is the intentional act closest to the unwilled rhythms of the body, to breathing and the beating of the heart. It strikes a delicate balance between working and idling, being and doing. It is a bodily labor that produces nothing but thoughts, experiences, arrivals" (Solnit 2001: 5). Later in the same passage, she writes: "Walking, ideally, is a state in which the mind, the body, and the world are aligned, as though they were three characters finally in conversation together, three notes making a chord. Walking allows us to be in our bodies and in the world without being made busy by them. It leaves us free to think without being wholly lost in our thoughts" (Solnit 2001: 5). In this regard, she writes of "walking's peculiar utility for thinkers" (Solnit 2001: 6). We like the fact that walking involves physical effort, and the fact that it provokes curiosity. For us, there is something respectful about walking as a way of engaging landscapes and socialities, something effortful and up-close – very different from the kind of god's-eye perspective of conventional modes of scholarship. In a beautiful phrase, the Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gomez calls this latter mode of engagement the "hubris of the zero-point". Walking discourages this kind of hubris, placing you firmly in a particular place and time, halfway up a mountain with 10 kilometers to go before dinner.

Each week-long seminar is convened around a theme. The 2015 Table Mountain Walking Seminar, which took place in December 2015 in the aftermath of the events of #RhodesMustFall, themselves sited on the lower slope of Devil's Peak, a part of the Table Mountain chain, was themed around "Decolonizing Table Mountain". The 2018 Table Mountain Walking Seminar was themed around "Fire and Water", picking up on the current water crisis in Cape Town. Involving students from the Reinwardt Academy, we convened shorter walking seminars as part of their course programs in Berlin, in the Groningen province of the Netherlands, and at the Artis Zoo in Amsterdam.

One of the intentions of the walking seminars is to flatten out the hierarchies between theory and practice, and between scholarly and creative practices. We favor hybrid collaborations involving, for example, an architect, a philosopher, and a choreographer in thinking about the micro-politics of collecting water from a particular city spring. We also favor a model of quick publication, whereby work is produced in multiple formats inside and outside the formal academic apparatus. We have tried various formulations in thinking about the work (or craft) of putting together a walking seminar. We "stage" or "curate" these occasions, which feel performative in a relaxed and unselfconscious way. They also feel like interventions of a particular kind. Through time, we have developed certain practices and protocols, a kind of "how to" of walking seminars. We invite participants on the walking seminars with the theme in mind, and we share literature and reading lists. We also invite "resource people" to drop in and tell us about their research, activism, or passion. Some of our protocols speak to group dynamics and relationships. As conveners or curators we work hard to create a framework for each walking seminar, inviting interesting participants and putting in place the logistics – warm beds, good food, viable routes – but then we tend to leave things alone. This allows for the group to find its own logic and way of working. One of our ideas is that the group is its own resource. People bring amazing subject knowledges, rich bodies of experience, and incredible skills. It becomes important to open the spaces and occasions that allow these to be shared. Another guiding idea is that the walking seminars are co-curated by all the participants, meaning that everyone shares responsibility for the outcome. Often these outcomes are subtle and difficult to define: a change in affect, or a deep change in feeling about a topic.

Creating flat hierarchies among scholars, creative artists, and activists sometimes means working against established modes of engagement. We have experimented with encouraging ideas but banning theory, where theory then becomes the self-conscious performance of a certain kind of expertise: name-dropping, or using the five or ten keywords currently in vogue. We have also experimented with not carrying maps and only having a hazy idea of the road ahead. Often the weather is unpredictable: high winds, harsh sun, sudden storms. Feeling lost, improvising, making a plan: all of this feels like good training as we journey deeper into the Anthropocene.

Often the seminars become playful as choreographers improvise movement exercises with the group, photographers play with different exposures, and scholars turn to poetry. In fact, thinking about the relationship between seriousness and playfulness, and about the uses of playfulness as a resource through which to approach serious topics, becomes a conceptual point of departure. Focusing on methodology is an unexpectedly rich way of collaborating across disciplines. We love learning new ways of working. Sometimes our starting instruction to the group is: "Tell us how you would make sense of this issue or phenomenon, working from your own discipline or practice. Teach us how you work."

We are often asked, especially by funders: What are the outputs and outcomes of the walking seminars? We ask participants to make a commitment to collaborate and to produce work in multiple formats. So, at one level, the outputs can be measured in standard-format academic articles, photographic essays, creative non-fiction, poetry, musical compositions, project proposals, performance proposals and scripts, collaborative grant applications, work published for the media, public talks and lectures, conference presentations, and so on. At another level, though, the outcomes are more subtle and difficult to calibrate, and possibly more transformative. Putting people together for a week in an environment of shared challenge, thoughtfulness, and creativity creates a hothouse atmosphere that can be generative of "newness": new ideas, new perspectives, new collaborations. Engaging the body, the senses, and affect aligns ideas with deep feelings and profound commitments.

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Walking Seminar 2014: Traces in the landscape

Landscape as palimpsest

A key source for the walking seminars is an interest in deep time and in history as a form of material inscription on the landscape. Bringing an archaeological sensibility to bear, one can interpret the landscape as a palimpsest of a particular kind. The site of Peers Cave on the northern edge of the Fish Hoek Valley has archaeological deposits that attest to half a million years of hominin occupation. Further south, the ruins of Red Hill Village and the dystopian dormitory town of "Ocean View" speak of apartheid-era forced removals and the racial cleansing of urban spaces. What would it mean to push these sites into the same frame, or to read them together as part of a story of human dwelling and being in this part of the city? We are used to chopping up and segmenting time, and then parceling out this segmented time to the different disciplines. Is it possible to think of time differently, in ways that allow us to make connections between times, places, and phenomena?

Viewing history as a form of material inscription on the landscape opens up ideas around attentiveness and the possibilities for a close reading of landscape based on fragments and traces. Our engagement with the past and with elapsed time is then potentially mediated by something other than text, image, and the forms of narrative history: it becomes mediated by fragments, traces, and the signs of ruination. We explore this mode of engagement with the past under the heading of "a history of fragments". If some forms of narrative history are premised on text, voice, and a certain kind of plenitude, which may be the plenitude of the archive, then the idea of "a history of fragments" works from other sources: shells, bones, bricks, pieces of ceramics, graffiti, the temporary shelters of the dispossessed, plastic containers for holding water, house foundations, remains of footpaths, discarded toys, orphaned photographs, trees scorched by fire. We like that these fragments do not tell a story with a recognizable beginning, middle, and end, and that their status as sources is ambiguous and unreliable. We also like the fact that they present us with the entangled processes by which they were made and discarded, but also with the accident of their survival, as assemblages without reason. This kind of detritus forecasts the future, in that it is precisely by such signs that our civilization will be known, in the archaeological way.

Slangkop camp
photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

British World War II bunkers, Cape Point
photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Returning the gaze of the Elephant's Eye

— Hedley Twidle

Last time I did it with three old friends, and in the opposite direction. This time from Cape Point to town with a group of people whom I didn't know quite as well, most of them university types. The idea (not mine) was to turn it into a walking seminar on "nature cultures", a trial run for a residency that will happen not in institutional buildings but out in the air.

Slightly sceptical of this at first – all I wanted from the hike was to decompress, let the mind empty after a strangely shaped year. But still, on the first day I played along, using my primary school teacher Mr. Bench's memory technique (one-drum, two-shoe, three-tree, four-door etc.) to log impressions that seemed worth rescuing from the tide of heat, sweat, walking, foot on rock, sand, gravel. The sensorium changes, opens…

One was a drum turning like a wheel: we are picked up by taxi at 6 a.m., driven the length of the peninsula that we would track back along over the next five days. Driving in hours what we would walk back along in days. I remember this also from my father running me up the N2 to the trailhead at Storms River, many years ago: over the gorges, over the bridges.

Two was…I can't remember. The link is broken. Once it existed, but by the end of the day, blood or dehydration had flushed out or shut down that neural pathway. This was the thing we soon realized: after a day hiking across the Cape Peninsula, being strafed by sun and wind, there is not much to say. The knowledge gained is implicit, recorded in joints, muscles, darker skin, stiffer hair, delicious tiredness. Was it that the shoe pinches? Two months later, my big toenails are still black.

Three: Snipers in a tree. We go past the training grounds of the South African Marines and the taxi driver tells us they train snipers here. Elevation, surveillance, lines of sight and fire. That is one way of understanding the mountain chain, from the small canon that warned the British about hostile ships entering False Bay, to World War II radar posts, lighthouses with their own frequency of flashes. Lo-fi technologies still at play: the shark-spotters above Muizenburg, the Mountain Men scanning backyards from above Fish Hoek. Apparently they can tell likely criminals just from their gait: hands behind the back, because in Pollsmoor you're not allowed to touch the walls. Can that be true? Meanwhile those in prison look at the mountain over the walls like Mandela did, returning the gaze of the Elephant's Eye. The imprisoned poet Breyten Breytenbach: "the mountain: my companion, my guide, my reference point, my deity, my fire, my stultified flame, and finally – like a prehistoric receptacle – the mould of my mind, my eye, my very self."

Postscript

As the hike progressed, our evening seminars fell entirely silent – we were too tired to muster the explicitness that academic discussion requires. The knowledge was being registered in our bodies: in our skin that began to burn or darken; in calf muscles that began to work all morning; in livers and kidneys that were being squeezed and torqued and squeezed and torqued all day. In eyes that were focusing on things farther away than screens. In hair (mine) that I took pleasure in wiping sticky and sweaty hands through.

Back home after the hike, I talk with Tyler through the kitchen window. He speaks about his planned trip back to the Eastern Cape, how his wife went to buy an Intercape ticket but the Shoprite was too busy. He will only take buses, because at least there are two drivers, while the taxis just shuttle up and down the N2, solo pilot.

"I pray to God before I go, I believe in the Big Man up there."
"Bawo Thixo Somandla," I say.
He recognizes the song and we begin singing to each other through the burglar bars.

No such thing as writer's block: just give an objective account of the difficulties you are facing.
My difficulty is that I don't know what horse to back. Throw my energy behind personal writing, narrative essays, or academic work. All at the same time? I feel scrambled and my attention span is corroded. I am not reading enough, certainly not in my specialization. My friends are all having children; my car's paintwork is atrocious. My deactivation of Facebook lasted all of one morning. I want to dive into something, submerge myself entirely. But what? In the absence of knowing that I just dive into water.

Fragments
photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Black Rock Cave

— Nick Shepherd

Well, this is a surprise: my hands. They look worn, archaeological. It's not often that we have a part of our own body presented to us in this way, as the point of such focused looking. We see photographs of faces, in which case our gaze is drawn to the eyes. There is the slightly misleading sense of intimacy and collusion, the sense of traffic with the image. (The eyes interpolate us.) Here the hands appear as something alien, as specimens. There is something strange about the positioning of my left hand, an awkward articulation of the fingers. I have fragments of newspaper in my palm, and I'm trying to prevent them from blowing away. There is also an irony to this image, which has to do with the appearance of text in an archaeological setting. The story goes like this. We are in Black Rock Cave in Cape Point Nature Reserve, a site of hunter-gatherer occupation with a dense accumulation of shell debris, bedding material, ash, and so on. Bits of shell and bone erode out of the sediment, and something else… What do we have here? Bits of decayed newspaper: words, text, pretty much the last thing we would expect to find in this context. A rule of thumb: archaeology begins where text leaves off. The fragment that I am holding says "Personal" (or "Personals"), which I find slightly unnerving. The literary scholars in the group are all encouraged: you see, the entirety of human experience is actually comprehensible through written text as medium. A vague sort of defeat for archaeology, and another moment to add to the thick file titled "strange encounters".

Looking south from the promontory

The first day of the hike takes us through Cape Point Nature Reserve, starting at the tip of Cape Point and exiting in the afternoon at the northern gate, where the rest camp is located. The reserve has to be one of my favorite places on earth, and the hike allowed me to experience it in a new way. When you visit a place by car you have "destinations": this beach, that mountain, that view. The point of the hike is instead to cross territory, to thread together destinations. It feels calmer, more integral, somehow more honest. Right in the middle of the image we see the reconstructed Dias cross, used as a navigational beacon. It puts us in mind of the Portuguese mariner Bartolemeu Dias (c. 1451 to 29 May 1500), who rounded the Cape in 1488. This is part of the official history of South Africa that every school child has drummed into them. So this photograph turns out to stage colonial history for us. We have Black Rock Cave in the foreground, site of hunter-gatherer habitation, and then we have the sign of an assertive European presence in the mid-ground. So much for macro-history; I'll tell you a story. Two weeks before the hike my friend Mary took me diving in the little bay that you see to the left of the frame. This is known as a spot where gully sharks gather, and where occasionally you will see eagle rays. You swim out into the bay. When you find a likely spot, you hang onto the kelp and watch the seabed below. The sharks swim into your field of vision, sometimes two or three at a time. Gully sharks are small, maybe a meter and a half in length. Still, there is something sinuous about their movement that freaks out a very ancient part of the human brain. (It is the same sinuous motion that snakes have.) You get over your fear; you hang in the clear water; the sharks do their thing beneath your feet. I think of the words "bottom feeder". I think of the Neil Young song "Cortez". Maybe Bartolemeu Dias moved with a sinuous motion? Or maybe, diving, I am in the position of the historian, observing life, overcoming my fear.

photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Beach talk

— Christian Ernsten

Shipwreck on Long Beach photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

It's hard to think of anything other than the crazy hike up Chapman's Peak during Day 3. Walking an eroding path curving up the mountain while carrying full packs and challenged by strong winds. Not one of my best moments!

But actually the day started with a soothing walk on Noordhoek Beach. For the first time perhaps, we walked and talked. We exchanged ideas on walking and travel literature, resulting in an impromptu and kind of random reading list:

Dirk and Nick spoke about Dutch author Geert Mak and his books *In Europe* and *Travels without John,* the latter about John Steinbeck's travels through the US, as well as Tony Judt's *Postwar*. I spoke with Hedley about W. G. Sebalt's *Austerlitz* and *Rings of Saturn*. Hedley mentioned Robert Macfarlane's *The Old Ways* and *Mountains of the Mind* and, in relation to city walking, Teju Cole's *Open City*. I recalled how Dutch artist and mapmaker Jan Rothuizen had advised me to read Bruce Chatwin's *Songlines* and Barry Lopez's *Artic Dreams*. Specifically for our hike, we spoke about Dan Sleigh's *Islands* and Nicolaas Vergunst's *Hoerikwaggo.*

Escaping from the "white cube" of the seminar room

Nick Shepherd

"We become aware of our bodies in new ways as we sweat our way to the end of the trail: our reliance on basic things like water, good shoes, a map, and the ability to find our way around an unfamiliar landscape."

One of the sources for the idea of the walking seminars is an irritation with the white cube of the typical seminar room, and an awareness of all that it excludes. The discourse of the seminar room imposes a stringent set of rules: we sit in chairs around desks; we meet as disembodied intelligences, as eyes that see, as mouths that speak; we speak one of the imperial ("global") languages; we talk about "theory"; we cite from approved canons; we mention the five or six currently trending keywords. Apart from a few important exceptions – discussions in queer theory, certain strands of feminist theory, forms of decolonial thinking and practice – we agree to leave at the door, as it were, many aspects of what defines us as embodied beings in the world: memory, experience, desire, imagination, fear, delight, the small details of daily life that saturate our affective selves. The discourse of the seminar room is presented here in slightly parodied form. Nevertheless, it is true that our principle forms of scholarly engagement are remarkably disembodied, and that they tend to be based on and to reinforce a set of distinctions: mind versus body, reason versus emotion and imagination, thinking versus feeling. I am interested in the political and epistemic consequences of this dominant form of scholarly engagement. What happens to black bodies, or to queer bodies, or to women, or to bodies that have grown up speaking languages other than English in such a set-up? My past experience as a scholar based at the University of Cape Town in South Africa presented this situation to me on a daily basis as nothing less than a savage indictment of the coloniality of the university as institution. In the average seminar situation, students were required to discuss abstract knowledge in an imperial language, disavowing the things that condition their daily experience: being black, being a woman, being worried about personal safety, being worried about money, having to negotiate the long journey to and from the university each day, being denied the forms of discourse through which to have a meaningful discussion about any of these things. In other words, their relationship to knowledge begins by excluding the very thing that so profoundly conditions their experience under and after apartheid: embodied being in the world.

I would argue that this is a form of scholarly practice that is not so much about making connections between things as it is about making and enforcing a set of disconnections: disarticulating knowledge from experience, and thinking from feeling. So how do we bring the body into play in more embodied forms of research practice? And how do we break down some of the distinctions set up by the discourse of the seminar room, in ways that are productive and that open out to new research understandings? There are many ways of answering these questions, with the walking seminar being one modest answer. The idea of walking as a form of embodied research practice draws from a rich literature on the anthropology of walking, referencing the work of Tim Ingold, Rebecca Solnit, and others. It also draws from a rich and generative strand in urban studies on walking as a methodology through which to engage city spaces, referencing the work of Michel de Certeau and others. Drawing on affective and sensorial research methods, it asks questions about what it means to encounter emergent Anthropocene landscapes through the surfaces of the body. Drawing on the debate around artistic research methods and practice as research, it asks questions about the productive uses of imagination, creativity, and desire in the pursuit of empirical research, and about the use of experience as a resource.

Perhaps most pertinently, it draws on contemporary discussions in decolonial thinking and practice around challenging hegemonic modes of knowledge production. In his recent work, Walter Mignolo has described the forms of knowledge attendant on colonial modernity as an "ego-politics of knowledge", grounded in the Cartesian dualism between mind and body. Against this ego-politics of knowledge he proposes a "body-politics of knowing/sensing/understanding", grounded in an understanding of the place from which knowledge proceeds (Mignolo 2013: 132). In conversation, he talks of linked processes of "reasoning" and "emotioning" (Mignolo 2015; Ernsten and Shepherd 2016). Some of Mignolo's most engaging writing takes place in his evocation of this embodied other place of knowledge, imagined not as an essentialized outside of Western reason, but as an embodied inside/outside: the place of "border thinking" and of things known "in the bones". As a source for these various ideas, Mignolo cites the "prayer" with which Frantz Fanon so memorably concludes *Black Skin, White Masks*: Oh my body, make me always a man who questions. He writes that this single sentence expresses "the basic categories of border epistemology" (Mignolo 2007: 495).

One of the things that I like about the walking seminars is that they involve passages of hard work and are sometimes physically challenging. We become aware of our bodies in new ways as we sweat our way to the end of the trail; we become reliant on basic things like water, good shoes, a map, and the ability to find our way around an unfamiliar landscape. We are thrown back on ourselves, and on the idea that our technology will not save us as we journey deeper into the Anthropocene. A real concern on the most recent Table Mountain Walking Seminar (March 2018) was a concern with the physical safety of the group, following a spate of knife attacks on hikers. In the end, we put our faith in stout walking sticks, vigilance, and the solidarity of the group.

I like the idea that walking involves a certain kind of dwelling in the landscape, with ideas around duration (being in the landscape for a passage of time) and exposure (being open to, or exposed to, external influences). This works in both busy urban environments and in the more contemplative environments of Table Mountain National Park. I also like the idea that the physical work of walking points towards a certain practice of respect, like a pilgrimage, as we pass through known and beloved or new landscapes. As climates change and beloved landscapes are transformed before our eyes, as is happening in Cape Town right now, perhaps the act of walking takes on an elegiac quality, as we say goodbye to the landscapes that we know and begin our ambiguous journey into the future, into landscapes shaped by fire and drought and as yet unchartered social formations. As raced and gendered bodies, subjected to local histories of colonial modernity, our relationship to these landscapes will be very different and will run the spectrum from hedonism to bare life. Table Mountain, one of the most heavily touristed sites in Africa and a recently proclaimed "natural wonder of the world", was historically a site of refuge for escaped slaves from the Cape Colony, and it is currently a refuge for migrants fleeing conflict and economic hardship in other parts of the continent.

Partly because many discussions of the Anthropocene take on a serious and censorious tone, as Bruno Latour has noted, I am interested in using playfulness as a resource through which to address a serious topic. I am thinking of playfulness not as the opposite of seriousness, but as something that exists in a more complex relationship to seriousness, even as the index of a special kind of seriousness. That the walking seminars often turn playful is a big part of their appeal.

Walking Seminar 2015: Decolonizing Table Mountain

Reasoning, emotioning, dreaming

The conceptualization of the 2015 walking seminar happened against the backdrop of rising student activism and protest in South African universities, initiatives that demanded (and continue to demand) radical academic transformation. In addition, 2015 started with an epic Table Mountain fire that destroyed 5,500 hectares of land and ended with the worst drought in the country ever. These quite different events conveyed a strong sense of urgency, both with regard to the struggle to reformulate knowledge in the context of a transitional society faced with manifestations of the violent principles at the heart of colonial modernity and with regard to the Anthropocene, as one of colonial modernity's unintended consequences.

In response, we were interested in what it meant to be physically present in the act of inquiry, and in the resultant palette of emotions (pain, fear, anxiety, irritation, pleasure, desire). We were also interested in the linearity and rhythm of walking and in its relationship to talking and thinking. So much scholarship involves forms of disembodied research and reportage: what happens when the body, affect, the senses, and the imagination enter the equation? We were keen to validate emotion alongside reason, drawing on discussions of "emotioning".

As Walter Mignolo explains it: "Emotioning implies responses to body-knowledge that reasoning processes through semiotic systems. Emotioning was banned from Western epistemology under the belief that it obstructs objectivity. In so doing, it hid from view the fact that no one is convinced by reasoning and arguments, if one is not also convinced in his or her emotioning" (pers. comm. 2016). We were also interested in exploring fantasy and imagination as sources for creative and intellectual work. There are many points of inspiration and connection for this set of approaches. For us, they included affective research methodologies, forms of artistic research methodologies, and discussions of decolonial love, inspired by the work of the feminist scholar Chela Sandoval. Referring to Che Guevara and Frantz Fanon, Sandoval speaks of love as "a 'rupturing' in one's everyday world that permits crossing over to another" (Sandoval, 2000: 139).

Sandoval C. 2000. *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

photo: Barry Christianson

Good hope after #RhodesMustFall

This is a review of the exhibition "Good Hope: South Africa and the Netherlands from 1600" at Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 17 February to 21 May 2017

Nick Shepherd
Christian Ernsten

A Dutch translation of this text was published in the Dutch daily newspaper *NRC*.

We see the back of a head. It is a beautiful head, both recognizable and distinguished. Nelson Mandela! We understand that we are in safe hands. As scholars who divide our time between Cape Town and Amsterdam, we approached the exhibition "Good Hope: South Africa and the Netherlands from 1600" with high expectations. And, indeed, there is much to admire. The beautiful panoramas by Robert Jacob Gordon, the eerie portraits of children born after 1994 by photographer Pieter Hugo, and a set of stereoscopic images of the South African War that bring the past to life with startling clarity are some of the highlights. So why did we walk away from the exhibition with the sense of an opportunity missed?

"Good Hope" tells the story of relations between the Netherlands and South Africa from a date just prior to the Dutch settlement. As the exhibition statement somewhat disingenuously puts it: "What happens when white folks come to live in a black country?" Such a formulation immediately provokes a set of questions. In what sense did van Riebeeck and his fellow settlers think of themselves as "white"? (They didn't: they might have thought of themselves as Dutch, and possibly as Christian and Protestant.) In what sense is South Africa a "black country"? Surely, the story here is about the historical coming into being of ideas of "whiteness" and "blackness" as a result of colonial institutions and apartheid, rather than a retrospective projecting of such identities back in time?

A general critique concerns the under-representation of black South African artists and scholars. In fact, there seems to be surprisingly little traction with the rich South African tradition of historical scholarship in general. A vagueness around historical agency and motivation is also a problem with an exhibition that presents the account of relations between the Netherlands and South Africa as a story of "culture shared and influence reciprocated". The major impact of the Dutch on local lifeways at the Cape had to do with the introduction of racial slavery and the genociding of the Cape San. One suspects that this is not the sense of culture that the curators have in mind.

Such comments are the sort of thing that curators have come to expect. The job of the critic is easy: you stand back and find fault. So let's change gears. Instead of standing back, let's walk together. We want to suggest that the deeper reasons for the exhibition's missed opportunity have to do with the nature of the present moment. Ten years ago, the exhibition might have worked. But something has shifted in South Africa in the past few years, and this shift has everything to do with questions of history and representation.

We would argue that South Africa has entered a different era: not the post-apartheid, but perhaps the post-post-apartheid. The elements of this shift are complex, but they include a popular turn away from the ideology of non-racialism that drove the liberation movement as well as ongoing student protests that have shut down the country's top universities. South Africa now appears to be a country haunted by unfinished business and by the weight of its own history. The "colonial" has come roaring back, and, with it, ideas of decoloniality. The terms of engagement in South Africa have shifted: in public culture, in parliamentary debates, in the university seminar room, around the dinner table. The unavoidable question that follows for curators and audiences is: How do we approach an exhibition like "Good Hope" after the events of #RhodesMustFall (the student-led social movement that began in March 2015 at the University of Cape Town)?

Rhodes Memorial
photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

The rest of this short review is an account of how we would explore such a question with our museology and heritage studies students at the Reinwardt Academy and the University of Cape Town. From a formal, curatorial perspective, the exhibition is governed by two ideas.

The first is the idea of episodic history. The exhibition is arranged in a series of rooms. Each room deals with a different period, or topic, starting with the distant past and ending with the present. Walking through the exhibition is like a walk through time. This is a conventional curatorial device, but one of its consequences is that, as we enter each new room, we leave the things of the previous room behind us. Time becomes a line marked by breaks, and what we experience in an embodied way is the discontinuity between periods, which are presented as discrete historical episodes. The second governing idea is a focus on key personalities. These include Jan van Riebeeck, Paul Kruger, and Nelson Mandela. Again, this is a conventional curatorial strategy, and one that is useful in that it seems to provide an easy entry point into complex historical moments. On the downside, it tends to obscure social processes and ideas of relationality. Individuals become representative of historical periods.

So how are such strategies challenged by the events of #RhodesMustFall? This social movement began as a series of spontaneous protests against a statue of Cecil Rhodes situated in a prominent location on the University of Cape Town campus. They quickly morphed into a more expansive critique of the legacies of colonialism and apartheid in the university, and in South African society at large. Students asked questions about the Eurocentric nature of knowledge and of the university curriculum, about the over-representation of white scholars, and about an institutional culture that they characterized as institutional whiteness. Later in 2015, these critical energies broadened beyond their initial base at the university, and, under the heading of #FeesMustFall, assumed the character of a national student revolution. Intense conflicts between protesting students and university management shut down South African universities in 2015, and again in the second half of 2016.

The #Fallist critique of history and representation runs in several directions, but for our present purposes there are two points that bear repeating. The first is a critique of episodic history, or the tendency to think of history as a series of discrete periods. Rather, the emphasis is on legacies and afterlives. Perhaps the #Fallists most radical idea is to think of the past not as past, but as present, in the sense that it shapes and conditions the contemporary moment. Structures and social relations from the past recur through time, often in new forms and disguises. Hence the return to the idea of the colonial as a way of naming the structural constraints of contemporary society, and hence the call to "decolonize" knowledge, the curriculum, and society itself. Rather than a modern notion of linear progressive time, the idea here is one of recurrence, a certain stuckness in the social relations of the past, and the concomitant need to break free of these relations.

The second point concerns the perspective from which history is told and imagined. Precisely because colonial institutions and apartheid constructed whiteness as power and blackness as alterity, students in the #Fallist movement question what it means to develop a white gaze on black histories. They talk about white bodies and black bodies in formerly colonial institutions – universities, museums, galleries – and about what it means to navigate such spaces. In this context, the decision not to co-curate the exhibition "Good Hope" with South African – especially black South African – scholars and curators becomes a strong statement.

The challenge is to think history differently. The opportunity is to use such reflections to pose critical questions about the present. One starting point would be to approach such histories from an awareness of the geo-politics and the body-politics of the persons doing the knowing. Another starting point would be to think of history not as a series of rooms located in the past, but as a living, breathing presence that both burdens the present and acts as a kind of birthright.

One could try to develop a more radical notion of relationality between the Netherlands and South Africa. Such an account might try to connect contemporary xenophobia in South Africa with anti-immigration sentiment in the Netherlands, or it could connect the globalism of the Dutch East India Company with contemporary forces of transnationalism the world over. Or one could think about how the ideas and practices of race developed in the former colonies get deeply scripted into the story of colonial modernity, in the Global North as much as in the Global South. In this perspective, South Africa would be not the "other" of the Netherlands but its reflected self.

Rhodes at the University of Cape Town, 2014 and 2018
photos: Dirk-Jan Visser

photo: Barry Christianson

Blip, blip, blip

— Meghna Singh

I have no recollection of this image being taken. I think it was at Slangkop or Orangekloof. It's too close for my comfort, and yet not. I met Barry recently, and he said something about choosing it because of my interest in surveillance. The way it's framed within the window makes it seem voyeuristic, but it is an honest image, I guess. I am attaching two images with the text. The first is the one Barry chose for me. The second is a time-lapse image of the sun in the fog.

I. Bad people and Nelson Mandela

As a child, growing up in India, I remember the two phrases that were used to describe South Africa: "bad people" and "Nelson Mandela". Obviously a strategy to shelter us from any detailed account of what apartheid meant. When I first arrived in Cape Town in 2011, this strange impression from my childhood days lingered in my memory. I had to tell myself, "It's a beautiful place. Look at the picturesque postcard image of the mountains and the sea. Surely there is much more to this place than what we were told in socialist India of the 1980s."

Our hike was set against the backdrop of student protests, building tensions, an engagement, an anxiety, race relations, black and white, an inescapable reality. The only way to escape would be to return to India, but why run away from the choices one makes.

The first day of the hike, driving into the Cape Point reserve, I sat in the front of the van, next to the driver, filming with my iPhone. I remember thinking to myself, "This image is incredible: thick fog, mysterious landscape, near-zero visibility." And then someone from the back of the van said "A scene out of the Lord of Rings!" We drove on and the vista didn't change. The sun struggled to come out, to shine on us. It tried, tried really hard, but it struggled to shine on us. I remember my thoughts drifting back to the Cape Town we had left behind.

Mandela is dead. I can't tell the good people from the bad.

II. The distant perspective of a drone

It's the third day and we stop at the Redhill forced removal site. Ilze gives a beautiful talk where she mixes personal anecdotes and family narratives to present the story of forced removals, not just in the Redhill area but in Cape Town as a whole. She and Barry seem to understand each other very well. They nod knowingly at each other. It's that look that says, "We know this, our families went through this." I cannot remember if or what Gcobani shared during that talk. It's a point in our hike where Cape Town's apartheid politics physically presents itself within this disjointed Hoerikwaggo Trail. I am looking around and wondering how many people can really comprehend it beyond the level of some discussion, a lecture, a paper, a jargon? This is followed by a relaxing swim in the dam. For me, what was a point of heightened personal emotion melts into a leisurely swim, another adventure in nature. At that point I feel a strange disconnect. I am left imagining how things would have been during these forced removals. I think about those lives and I watch people enjoy a swim. I feel like a cyborg, suddenly numb, devoid of emotions. I try but there's nothing. I want to fly above all this, have a bird's-eye view of the place and people. I look up and there's me: a drone in the sky.

III. When men and mountains meet

"As a challenge for explorers the mountain wilderness between India and inner Asia was unique. The Western Himalayas were seen as a barrier guarding fabled cities. It took half a century to penetrate this barrier – evidence enough of the appalling difficulties involved" (John Keay, 1977).

In reading an account of the explorers of the Western Himalayas, *When Men and Mountains Meet: The Explorers of the Western Himalayas 1820–1875*, which glorifies the adventures of a few Englishmen, I can't help but think about the mountains we traversed during our hike. Isn't an adventure for some a story of conquest for others? I recall Hedley's talk about the Portuguese rounding the Cape. A conquest of the ocean, to reach the so-called "fabled cities", to discover spices, to trade via oceanic routes – it all tells the story of capitalist ventures. Surely, it must have been the same to conquer someone's mountain? Do we walk in the footsteps of the conquerors or the footsteps of the ancestors? Or are the two the same? Going off on a tangent, I am thinking how can one walk this "path of nature" in search of solitude without reflecting on what peace and solitude really mean? I understand it's different for different people. We had a discussion (I think it was at Orangekloof) where I expressed the contrast in beliefs around what it means for me to "go alone into the mountains". It means to go into exile. On the other hand, there is the lonely figure of the ascetic who gives up worldly pleasures in search of enlightenment. I am confused. I don't understand the meaning of "solitude" anymore.

IV. The Swedish theory of love

"Love thy neighbor." But what if you never want anything to do with your neighbor? I was exposed to a new idea of "independence" in a thought-provoking documentary I watched at the IDFA film festival in Amsterdam just before the hike. *The Swedish Theory of Love* by Erik Gandini reflects on the notion of independence that the Swedes fought very hard for in the 1970s. The blurb describes the film as "a provocative portrait of a nation of loners". I was excited about discussing this with our Swedish colleagues whom I was about to spend the next ten days with. I think I had a brief, interesting discussion with Mikela on the topic and then for some unexplainable reason I dropped it. Mikela did mention that the director was only half Swedish and half Italian. However, during the course of our discussions and workshops, I heard people express how touched they were by the care that was provided among people, the thoughtfulness, the companionship, it being an un-forgetful experience. It was a great boost for the camaraderie and tightness of the group, and I myself couldn't agree more about the wonderful set of people participating in the hike. However, I couldn't help but think to myself: "What set of experiences does this person come from that companionship and care seem to be the highlight of the entire residency experience?" Are sharing and care something one takes for granted? Are they something that not everyone experiences all the time? The sharing of very honest personal experiences left me wondering about the different nature of the societies we inhabit.

V. The sound of blip, blip, blip…

Blip, blip, blip: the sound on the edit timeline when you don't render the footage. It means you don't get to hear the recorded sound or watch the footage without interruptions.

Back into the city from the mountains, I wonder if I am the only person happy to be back. I am happy to get lost amid a mass of people: to be part of a large unknown group, to see humanity in all its negative or positive glory. I like crowds. I grew up being a no one in a sea of crowds.

The last day is spent at Hidding Campus discussing, sharing, and presenting our creative ideas, thoughts, et al. I have hours of audio recordings of group discussions, people speaking, presenting, workshops, etc. It was a pre-decided methodology for a final audiovisual work. Along with the audio, I have several video clips too. It's an exciting day to collate everything, hear from all these incredible, talented people. Ilze has pulled out a never-ending sheet of paper (I can't wait to see what she does with it). Dani has been writing poems. Christine has the most amazing collection of acquired objects. Hedley is always informing us with his amazing knowledge about the new project of the Anthropocene. But time's tight and I need to use my iMac in my studio to create a quick video. I sit in my studio, staring at all the footage and audio wave formats. All that comes to my mind is my first memory of the sun trying so hard to break through the clouds, and all the voices turn into a blip, blip, blip…

artwork: Meghna Singh

Dislocation

— Barry Christianson

I. Methodology

I took this picture on the Tuesday evening. Nick, Linda, Daniela, Gcobani, and I had stopped to buy a few bags of ice after the entire group had drinks in Kommetjie. We walked back along the boardwalk and decided to walk down to the lighthouse before entering the camp at the sea-facing door.

I felt happy to be outside in the cool air and also happy that the gale force winds we were exposed to at Smitswinkel were nowhere to be found.

I liked how defined the beam from the lighthouse was as it swept across "the Kom" and tried to capture it with my camera. At first I could not get it right and decided to try a longer exposure, hoping that the camera would record something like the fan-like blurs light sabers make in *Star Wars*. That obviously did not work, but the camera did record the greens of the shrubs and the blue of the sky.

I think Linda was curious about the photo, as always. I showed her. She suggested that someone stand inside the frame and that is how that photograph was finally made.

The next morning, I took Henric and Christine through a short musical tour of the Cape Flats, and they explained to me exactly what "methodology" means by describing it as what had just happened right then and there.

My methodology is generally a "one thing leads to another, and another, and another" kind of exercise that is rarely planned from the start – basically what led up to taking this photograph.

II. (Dis)comfort zones

A few years ago, I dislocated both knees. In the years that followed it would happen again sporadically. The last time it happened was in 2012. Since then, I've been cycling a lot and my knees haven't given me any problems…until the day this photo was taken.

I had no problems on the first day's long hike, and I was fine until the descent into Kommetjie. I started to feel some pain in both knees as I started to walk down but I didn't really think much of it. It was a familiar kind of pain, the kind I would feel in the days post-knee-cap dislocation, the kind that would usually be accompanied by a feeling that the knee-cap would dislocate again. In the past, that feeling was also accompanied by me staying off my leg for about a week.

The pain was there; the feeling of impending dislocation was not. I decided that it would probably be fine if I took it moderately easy but kept it in use. I knew there would be pain, but I also knew how much I could manage, and I knew I would end up re-evaluating that for the remainder of the residency.

III. 20 seconds

Ever since I learned about the concept of light years, I've been fascinated by the idea that the stars we see in the night sky may no longer exist. They are literally images of the past forcing themselves into our present.

On the residency, there's been lots of talk about time, histories, how they overlap with the present, or how the present will affect the future. Hedley's thoughts on the proposed new nuclear reactor – the effects of our actions now on future homonids; Nick's thoughts on Peer's Cave – the uncomfortable past thrusting itself into the 1920s pre-apartheid present; Christian's thoughts on the histories found in District 6 and District 1 – looking back to way before the forced removals.

I left the shutter open for about 20 seconds and was left with a photograph comprising ghostly traces of three people inhabiting the present, a more defined landscape that will be there when those three people have left, and the light from stars that may no longer exist but will probably still be seen when that landscape no longer exists.

IV. The white sand of the Flats

The day after this picture was taken was a rest day. Most of the group decided to go for a long walk up the beach from Kommetjie to Noordhoek.

Given the situation with my knee, I stayed behind with Christine, Henric, Daniela and Linda (who were sleeping), and Mikela.

At this point I was a bit annoyed with my situation. I felt like I was missing out big time. The thought of walking down a long beach, swimming along the way, and possibly grabbing a drink in Noordhoek before being picked up by the shuttle seemed a lot more appealing than staying behind and cleaning up.

That said, it became a bit of a turning point in the trip.

Christine was feeling frustrated with not having a geographical or visual context for where she was. I decided to show her a Google Earth-type map of Cape Town, pointing out where we were, where we had come from, and where we were going. I showed her the location of the Cape Flats, District 6, and District 1. I spoke about the winds and the sands of the Cape Flats, both of which were absent in District 1 (although District 6 would have been an incredibly windy place), and what it would have meant to be moved from District 1 to Bonteheuwel or Mannenberg: a complete attack on all the senses.

We spoke about how the townships subsidize the suburbs and the middle-class ways of life in Cape Town. We spoke about wine farms as places where this was particularly apparent. I brought up Soms Delta as a farm with some of the better practices regarding workers and then their music museum and their resident ethnomusicologist, the late Alex van Heerden, and his work on Goema and Vastrap. At this point, Christine asked me what Goema sounded like, and I played the Mac Mackenzie song "Goema Goema". From there we moved on to Kyle Shepherd, and from Kyle we moved on to Paul Hanmer's beautiful solo track "The White Sand of the Flats", which was played at a concert commemorating Alex van Heerden.

At that point, a bridge seemed to have been formed between Christine's world on the Australian landscape and the South African landscape. I would have a really interesting conversation with Henric and Christine about methodologies, starting with the statement "I have no idea what you guys are talking about when you say methodology!", and we would listen to some jazz from Cape Town and Switzerland while cleaning up and packing up before heading to the next camp.

V. Preparation for the long exposure

That evening before we walked to the lighthouse we went to a bar for drinks. While chatting and laughing with Daniela and Hedley, I took pictures of both of them using Daniela's sunglasses as a lens filter.

I then decided to take quick portraits of everyone using one of the solar lamps on the table as lighting. People were starting to feel a little more eased in. I was starting to feel more comfortable using my camera around them.

photo: Barry Christianson

Post and lintel

— Ilze Wolff

Dear Barry,

It is the first week of 2016 and I finally have a moment to view the image you sent me on 18 December. When the email came through that day, I saw it briefly on the screen of my phone and thought: “OK…it must be part of a bigger image. I’ll look again later.” Now I see it in its full glory on a bigger screen on the computer in a better resolution. No, it’s not a fragment of a larger image. It is a focus on a small part of a bigger space, a shot that highlights a detail of the larger architecture. It is a “detail shot”, or at least this is what we call it in archi-lingo (lingo that both repels and endears me, depending on my mood). Normally, “detail shots” are taken to highlight specific innovations that the architects are keen to show off when publishing their work. One famous architecture journal called *DETAIL* is focused specifically on publishing these small moments of genius in buildings. In this case, it is a detail of a post and lintel. We are taught in architecture school that this is the fundamental element of architecture: the point where the gravitational forces of the roof over your head are transferred to the ground under your feet.

But your image shows detail of another kind. I remember the day that it was taken. Nick and Christian invited me to present a talk about forced removals at the site of the Red Hill ruins, the site where your photo is taken. Their brief to me was appropriately open and vague (thankfully so, as too much specificity makes me panic). Nick’s emails reads: “Would you be interested in talking to the group about this site and forced removals in general? I don’t see this as involving major research – maybe just a little reading beforehand and some talking from background knowledge. Does this sound OK? Are there other/different topics you might want to talk about? The mountain camps that we will be staying in? Ocean View? Spatial apartheid? Postmodern tourism in Cape Town? Any and all contributions would be welcomed…”

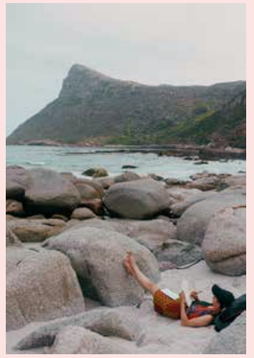
I responded, in part, by reading excerpts of the short stories that my father wrote about his memories of Die Vlakte, a forced removal site in Stellenbosch. It was a story about the elderly Sies Roefie and how she would sit on her stoep in the late afternoon and wait for a hapless young child to interrupt from his childish missions and send to the shop to buy ingredients for that evening’s supper. My father, in a story titled “Groente vir die pot”, describes Sies Roefie as a chameleon-like figure, still and unmoved in her shaded stoep facing the street, then suddenly spitting out her long tongue to capture a passing child whom she would coerce into this chore.

I looked up from reading this excerpt and I remember your reaction: nodding with a smile as if to say, “I know that feeling, I was once that kid.”

Thanks for the photo, Barry: great choice.

Talk soon,
Ilze

photos: Barry Christianson



The ghostly homestead

To the Wanderer of Red Hill,

Fellow walker Barry Christianson has sent me a photo depicting a detail of one of the Red Hill homes. The photo is perfectly symmetrical: the left half of the image is taken up by a brick wall, roughly plastered and sharply in focus. On the right is a part of the surrounding landscape, out of focus and divided into three horizontal bands: a flat, low-lying foreground, a lush, green middle ground, and a rocky, hilly background. Between the middle ground and the background, right at the center, is a structure: a simply constructed homestead with the front door facing the camera. A chimney to the left of the front door marks an end to the flat profile of the house. The focus on the homestead is blurry: it is easy to miss the structure and think that it is a large rock or another part of the natural landscape. But its position in the middle of the frame makes it hard to unnotice it once it’s been discovered.

Why am I pointing this out to you? I am not sure, but its presence in the image made me think of you, wandering in the landscape of the ruins, dreaming of a return even though your presence marks the landscape in inescapable ways. You dream of returning with your family, the Kallises, of rebuilding your family home, Kallville. You dream of swimming in Kleinplaas Dam, of finding the rock with mythical powers, and you dream of dwelling, yet again, in the spaces of your childhood dreams.

I wonder to what extent these dreams haunt you. And to what extent do we allow the structures of these dreams to remain spirited moments of the past that could tell us something deeper about our present.

Any thoughts?

– A walker

Stoepdreaming

Dear Sies Roefie,

I have never met you before, but I know about you from the stories that my father, Wilfred Damon, has written about Die Vlakte, the Stellenbosch neighborhood in which you lived. Part of me hopes you never get a chance to read the stories: some of it you may find is unkind towards you. Nevertheless, I read about you to a group of people – some of them strangers to me, others close friends – during what we all comfortably called a “residency”. Residency: a fancy word for creative time outside our usual 8–5 work activities and everyday humdrum existence, time to produce or reflect on our current creative preoccupations. The internet describes artist-in-residency programs in these terms: “creative residency opportunities exist to invite artists, academicians, curators, and all manner of creative people for a time and space away from their usual environment and obligations. They provide a time of reflection, research, presentation and/or production. They also allow an individual to explore his/her practice within another community; meeting new people, using new materials, experiencing life in a new location. Art residencies emphasize the importance of meaningful and multi-layered cultural exchange and immersion into another culture.”

The luxury of residency programs is that one travels to another location and gets absorbed in the novelty of the place, and this then potentially induces creative thought and action. But this residency program is different to others that I have been on or heard about. Firstly, it was not in a location that I was unfamiliar with, yet at the same time it was. It was in my home town – Cape Town – the place that I have called home for 35 years, but it was a walking route along Table Mountain, a space and terrain that I have never explored. I am not sure why, but it shames me to say this. I have never walked among the Red Hill ruins, yet I found the space profoundly familiar; I have never swum in the Kleinplaasie dam before, but I have imagined many times a similar space. I have never viewed Ocean View, Slangkop, or Kommetjie from that vantage point, yet I knew the construction of its architecture and its layout as soon as I saw it. It was at once both new and familiar to me.

Apologies, I am rambling about strange things to you, who would prefer probably to be left alone to dream on your stoep. But one last thing that I would like to mention is that the stories that my father has written, with you as a central figure, talk to me about a place in his imagination that reaches far beyond what one can read from architecture, ruins, and the lay of the land. It talks about a space that perhaps one can inhabit in various ways in our dreams and in memories.

On that note, I leave you in peace to continue your stoep daydreaming unhindered.

Best wishes,

Ilze

A single nail

Liewe Ma Rose,

Iemand het vir my ’n foto gestuur. Dis ’n mooi, maar vreemde foto. Daar is niemand in die foto nie. Daar is net dele van mure en kosyne. Daar is ook ’n landskap wat mens deur ’n venster, wat sonder sy raam of glas is, kan sien. ’n Klein spykertjie steek uit langs by die kant kosyn van die venster. Mens sal dit nie kan sien as iemand dit nie vir jou uitwys nie. Die spykertjie het my laat dink aan Ma Rose en die eerste dag van ’n staproete van waar ek ’n maand gelede terug op was. Hulle het ons gevra om ’n voorouer te kies en dan op hierdie manier iets oor onsself aan te bied aan die groep - ’n mooi manier om met ander, meestal vreemdes, kennis te maak, het ek gedink. Dit was laat in die middag, op Smitswinkelbaai, ’n rustige, weggesteekte baaitjie aan die ooste kant van Kaappunt. Ek het daai oggend nog haastig reëlings gemaak dat die kinders, Heinrich, my ma Brenda, en die huis in orde is vir die tydperk dat ek sal weg wees. Ek moes winkels toe om kos te koop (ek hoop Ebrahim kom maak ’n draai met sy bakkie vol vrugte en groente), ek moes betalings maak (vir Kersfeesblomme by Karen in Adderley straat vir die kinders se klasonderwysers) en ek moes last-minute goed by die kantoor uitsort. Heelwatse gerond hardloop (in my kop) en ry voordat ek in die bussie kon klim, oppad na my week lange stapkursus op Tafelberg. Dit klink vreemd om te dink dat voortebereiding vir ’n staproete kos meerendeels ’n haastige rondgerhardlopery en rondegeskarrelry voor die tyd.

Die lug was koel toe ons by die baai aankom, na omtrent 40 minute se stap van die kampterrein. Ek onthou dat die water nie onmiddelik my aangetrek het nie, maar dat ek liewers eers op die sand wou lê met my kop

Some new terms

disposable cutting
– Daniela

death-road
– Christian

shitty photos
– Barry

methodology or the natures of things
– Gcobani

adamastor
–Hedley and Meghna

cave
– Nick

whale shit
– Christine

teen 'n rots. Christian Ernsten, iemand wat ek geidentifiseer het as 'n tipe van 'n leier van die staproete, het ons nader geroep en gevra dat ons ons moet voorstel aanmekaar deur 'n storie oor 'n voorouer te vertel. Walking with Ancestors – om te stap met die bewusheid van jou voorouers – was 'n tema wat aangebied was deur middel van tekste wat aangestuur was en informele Facebook gesprekke met die res van die groep. Die 12 van ons staan toe in 'n kring, ons deel stories oor ander lande, intieme perspektiewe word gedeel tussen meernedeels mense wat jy nou net ontmoet het.

Ek praat toe oor Ma Rose, die een storie wat Anty Josie my vertel het toe Ma Rose vir daai madam on die dorp gewerk het. Anty Josie het gesê Ma Rose het goed oor die weggekom met die oubaas en sy vorige vrou. Daai vrou is toe dood en hy het toe weer getrou. Die nuwe madam het nie vir Ma Rose gelike nie en het altyd goed gedoen om Ma Rose se tyd by die werk te versuur. Ma Rose was toe eendag besig om groenboontjies te trim en voorteberei vir daai aand se skaapbredie vir die oubaas en die madam. Mamma Eunice was ook in die kombuis. Die nuwe madam kom toe in die kombuis en begin skoor soek. Ma Rose sit die klein opkapmessie stadig neer en lig Ma se kop op van die enamel bak water waarin in die opgekapte boontjies lê. Ma Rose kyk die madam in die oë en sê: "Ek het nou genoeg gehad van madam se genag, ek kan dit nie meer vat nie. Ek sê nou vir madam dat ek vat my goed en ek loop. Dan moet Madam en die oubaas maar sien en kom klaar." Ma Rose stap to uit die kombuis, trek Ma se overall uit en daar loop Ma en mamma Eunice uit by die deur, huistoe, na julle skakelhuis in Banhoekweg.

Hierdie storie spook gedurig by my. Ek het baie vrae. Ek wonder oor wat kon Ma Rose gedryf het tot daai oomblik? Om 'n vaste job optegee in die 1930s was baie onverskillig, veral as 'n mens sewe kinders by die huis het. Was daar 'n opmerking van die madam oor die manier hoe die boontjies gesny was wat Ma Rose opgevryf het? Of was daar 'n jaloesie oor die goeie verhouding wat die oubaas gehad het met Ma Rose, 'n rol wat die nuwe vrou gesukkel het om te vul? Of was dit die teenwoordigheid van Eunice, jou dogter wat seker nie ouer as ses kon wees nie, wat haar gekonfronteer het met iets in die toekoms, 'n skrikwekkende herhaaling van gebeure, 'n herhaaling van menslike verhoudings wat terselfdetyd intiem en verlangs (indifferent) kan wees. Die dag met die groenboontjies was duidelik vir Ma Rose, soos hulle sê in Engels: "the final nail in the coffin".

Ek kyk weer na die foto met die spykertjie en ek wonder: was dit dalk iemand se "final nail"? Wat was die omstandighede? Wat het op daai spyker gehang? 'n Hoed, 'n foto van 'n familie voorvader, dalk 'n kruis. Wie weet?

Ma Rose, ek groet end dalk skryf ek gou weer, miskien oor minder somber gebeurtenisse, volgende keer.

Liefde,
Ilze

Serious sunblocking

— Mikela Lundahl

Coming from the far north, with skin that hasn't seen daylight in months, requires some serious sunblocking. And while applying it I'm also so grateful that my right knee carried me all that way that we walked on Monday. From Cape Point to the camp. That gratefulness also makes me think about being in itself, and what ageing does to being. Or how one can age, knowing that the rest of the road will be a story of loss, losing capacities, people, family.

These reflections are made on a stunning winterish day well back in the north again. The kind of winter that we almost forgot that we had, the kind of winter that makes skiing the absolute best way to move about, even in the city. The kind of winter that many of us place back in childhood, in the last century. They are also made after a long week of many deaths, and the biggest for me personally was that of David Bowie.

So nostalgia. Loss. Memories. Childhood and youth. In relation to ageing. (I know I am not that old, but let's just agree that I've reached a point where I cannot ignore what's coming.) What once brought me to South Africa was that, sort of. Heritage studies. Not that I even care about that. But somehow, how we narrate ourselves, and the world, matters. Not long after that photo was shot, we were on the road again, and we walked through the ruins of Redhill, on our way to Ocean View. And I was again reminded of how diverse and yet similar the world, our worlds, is and are. The day before, when we walked up and down all these mountains, alongside False Bay, I was surprised to see (even though I made the reflection also when I was in this area the first time, a couple of years back) how many similarities there were between the landscape in front of me, and the one I know from the Scandinavian fjäll. Even if on the Swedish side especially the forms are rounded due to the Ice Age that took all the edges away.

And then Ilze's talk both through the content and her way of narrating, with the help of her family's and especially her grandmother's memories and experiences. The story of modernization. But within the framework of apartheid. And I again made associations and parallels. That I felt was somewhat inappropriate, since I am talking from the inside of Scandinavia – the supposedly best place in the world – and she was sharing a story from inside of apartheid. And yet. If we want not only to remember, but also to understand the world in new and hopefully better ways, "better" as in more useful in undoing those current inequalities that still rule the world, we need to make new connections. Connect the unconnectable.

photos: Barry Christianson

Nuclear summer

— Hedley Twidle

Three images from our walking residency, 6–12 December 2015. The first is the official prompt for this exercise (me and Meghna at Smitswinkel Camp). The second is one I asked Barry to take for me (a brass dial, or is it a toposcope, at Cape Point: a False Bay sundial). The third (me giving a talk on Dias, Da Gama, and the Khoikhoi in the shade of a windskerm at Buffels Bay) is one he sent me because I wanted photographic evidence of scholarly pursuits.

So, five quick impressions…

1) The minimalist, slightly spartan decor of the camps. Slats of wood and stone, no cushions. Rigorous, good for reading and writing, not for reclining. The limited color scheme, shrubs deformed by wind, a landscape always on the verge of mourning. Meghna and I both seem withdrawn, inward, even a little sombre. Why? Perhaps because we have both stayed here before, and we know about the tent flaps that will keep us awake all night, flapping in the permanent wind. Or perhaps because we have already spent a night here and have, like Kafka's Gregor Samsa, awoken from uneasy dreams…

2) I am reading *About a Mountain*: a book not about Table Mountain, aka Hoerikwaggo (Sea Mountain), but about Yucca Mountain near Las Vegas. It was going to be the permanent storage facility for the nuclear waste of the United States. But the billion dollar program was abandoned. Yucca Mountain is one of the most studied places in the world, but still it could not be understood sufficiently. Its risks could not be calculated, or mapped adequately across geologic time. The mountain is more porous than expected; it is still in motion. After the residency, I will carry on to the nuclear power plant at Koeberg (Cow Mountain), up the west coast on the edge of Cape Town, still thinking about all this. I am fascinated by the subject, but the book is disappointing: "creative non-fiction" that is too creative. The author gets in the way of his subject. Perhaps this explains the look on my face: I am skeptical.

3) The baboon fence separating us from the mountains that run between here and Simonstown, and that are (as usual) spinning cloud off the ocean. This section was originally meant to be part of the Hoerikwaggo Trail, but it never worked out because of private landowners arguing with SANParks, or some such feud. This lost leg entices me, since the overgrown path still leads up to the ridge. Paths never taken. I still hope to do the whole hike from Cape Point to my front door one day. Three years running, at the height of summer, I have done different versions of the Hoerikwaggo Trail, but never this whole traverse. It's like the missing piece of a puzzle I hope to complete.

4) The whole Hoerikwaggo Trail, in some ways, is a post-apartheid ideal that has fallen on hard times. Originally it was going to start not at Cape Point but on the Cape Flats. There would be trained guides, providing local employment. The Khoi name "Hoerikwaggo" was used to signify historical redress. Now it is a self-booked exercise, and the camps are often empty. The route is not entire; there is transport required between Smitswinkel and Redhill. (Why does this bother me so much?) One of the most beautiful overnight stops, Silvermine, has been destroyed by fire, making another gap in the route. Somehow I think of a faulty line of argument, or a neural pathway that is beginning to malfunction, routes to a memory hard to retrieve, becoming overgrown…

5) A Lexicon for Hiking in the Anthropocene
(with apologies to Douglas Adams's *The Meaning of Liff*)

Kommetjie: n. the deposit that collects under your nails on days with no hot shower (e.g. Can you borrow me your pen knife to get rid of this kommetjie?). Also v. the act of removing this substance (e.g. Can I borrow a pen knife to kommetjie my nails?).

Judas Peak: n. the peak that promises to be the last in a hike, but isn't, and so betrays you (e.g. Yoh, that Karbonkelberg was a real Judas Peak).

Ocean View: adj. secret/coded real estate term for a property that does not really have a view of the ocean (in contrast to "beachfront" and "ocean-facing"). Perhaps only a glimpse of water can be seen out of the corner of your eye, or if you crane your neck out the bathroom (e.g. Charming Ocean-View apartment in a government-built block tucked into the Bokramspruit valley). Orig: high apartheid.

Cape Point: A claim or argument that is vague, cloudy, and ill-defined, and so contentious (e.g. That's a very cape point that you're making about "walking in footsteps of the ancestors").

Smitswinkel: n. The raised but still painless patches of skin that precede full-scale blisters during a hike (e.g. Those new boots have given me some smitswinkels on my heel).

Etc.

Ways of reducing mountain ranges to two dimensions:
Contour lines | Writing | Toposcopes.
A False Bay sundial.

A talk on the long, staggered history of colonial encounters on the southern African coast prior to 1652. I think that here my hands are demonstrating how the Dias and Da Gama crosses in Cape Point reserve line up in the direction of Whittle Rock, a large, permanently submerged shipping hazard in False Bay. It is a hot day.

I go on to describe the quincentenary celebrations of Dias's rounding of the Cape in 1488. Held in Mossel Bay in 1988, these represent a moment of high apartheid absurdity. I can't tell the story better than Dennis Walder does in the collection *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid and Democracy, 1970–1995*:

> In 1988, a time of the most massive repression the country has ever seen, the 500th anniversary of the "discovery" of South Africa by the Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias was commemorated in the small seaside resort of Mossel Bay. Three white actors in a rowing boat landed on a "whites-only" beach, there to be welcomed by seven more whites wearing curly wigs and painted black. This simple ceremony was applauded by some 2000 people, including the then President, P. W. Botha, in full regalia, with his cabinet. The spectacle would have been complete were it not for the absence of the local black population – and action precipitated by a "Coloured" high-school teacher, who had warned the authorities that unless beach apartheid were ended, he and his pupils at least would not welcome Mr Dias back.

He goes on:

> As Fanon long ago pointed out, apartheid is but an extreme example of the colonial condition in which it is the "settler" who thinks he (and it is "he") makes history, while the "native" does not. Worse: it is as if the colonized are outside the imaginable, the settlers appropriating for themselves the identity of "native" too; whence the laughable sight of whites embracing whites as a representation of European arrival upon the alien shore.

Rashomon

— Henric Benesch

1) This is me the last day I wore a cap (an old black Nike turned grey).

2) This is me thinking of how the intense fog somehow brings Antarctica closer (just within reach).

3) This is me being bewildered by the fact that someone has thrown an empty can (energy drink) at the ledge (being equally frustrated by the fact that it is just out of my reach).

4) This is me about to get an MMS from my daughter. A short animated GIF depicting Kiki – the young witch in Hayao Miyazaki's *Kiki's Deliverance Service* – throwing herself on her bed in tears, because of both me at Cape Point and my wife (trying to find a parking slot) failing to attend her theater play.

5) This is me smitten by the drop that I cannot see (but that Nick just made me intensely aware off).

photos: Barry Christianson

Prospecting

— Gcobani Sipoyo

This is my experience of a week that instilled a lot of hope and privilege in terms of having a moment to meet people who came together in order to share their experience through thinking, walking, and engaging with nature. We were a "motley crew" of individuals on a journey of discovery. What that was none of us were quite sure; however, what transpired was an engagement with ourselves in nature as a result of a certain camaraderie, which was a very clear part of the journey.

This image is a beautiful depiction of that first morning. In the foreground stands Linda Shamma; opposite is Nick Shepherd listening to Daniela Joffe, who is barely visible due to being obstructed from view by Linda. On the left of the picture stands Ilze Wolff, and the rotund-looking young man with a potbelly in the right-hand corner is me, Gcobani Sipoyo. The look on Linda's face tells a story from that first morning of walking and of listening to oneself, listening to others, and listening to the natural environment around us. This listening was in the form of walking next to someone while navigating yourself along a narrow trail, watching for signs in the landscape that gave you some clues as to where you were going. I can get a sense of the wind and the ghostly fog that was lifting at the time the image was taken. Behind Linda I can see a sneak peak of Daniela's cap as she addresses Nick in conversation. Ilze is looking yonder with arms crossed attentively, listening, which I discovered to be something I envy about her. In the background one gets a glimpse of the coastline hugging the mountain. The full image of what lies ahead is not yet fully visible; we are still about to set out on the journey, which is as yet uncharted. The expression on my face is one of joy at being finally in that moment where I am outside and starting the walk.

The moment is filled with a sense of expectation; there were not yet attachments or affiliations made; we were all strangers in a strange place. Some were experiencing the landscape for the first time in a foreign land with a foreign landscape. Some of us were coming back to something that we knew was there but that we were experiencing in a different way. When there is a sense of expectation, there is also a level of prospecting bound by uncertainty. This is where we found ourselves.

Wherever you looked, your sense of perspective was slightly altered by each tentative step taken. I want you to imagine for a moment that you have just woken up, used to your routine, only to be interrupted by the awareness of each breath you take when walking. Each of your muscles navigates every step through rocks, vegetation, and the weather, through it all the constant pounding of blood through your body, which only you can hear. Each of us was seeking our own rhythm of walking while slowly traversing the mountain trail. The mountain: oh THAT mountain! Even though when we set out the weather looked ominous, throughout the day we were greeted by the beauty, the majestic beauty, that is the Cape of Good Hope.

The stage was set for us to move forward, however tentative those first steps were. For me, it was an opportunity to have a beginning in a process that was utterly new to me. My prospecting was a drilling down to the core and finding my discipline and how I locate myself in relation to the work I do and whether the work is valid. Upon embarking on this journey I became aware of the need to begin. Because in any beginning lie possibilities that were never before envisaged. Nature has a way of bewitching us into feeling insignificant. Walking with the sound of waves crashing and the clouds rolling in around us, I was in awe.

Nostalgia

— Linda Shamma

Saturday, 12/12, Cape Town
There are few things that have made me reconsider my most basic conceptions of life. This trip was one of them.

Sunday, 13/12, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Frankfurt
I am glad we never said a proper farewell. I would not have managed it after the days we spent in the mountain.

I have just sat down on the plane that will take me to Johannesburg, Frankfurt, and finally Stockholm. Home. The battery on my computer is dead, and there are no power outlets. I am writing on a sick bag offered to me by my neighbor. I try to imagine how it will be for me to arrive home. I remember your reactions when we first came to the city after being on the mountain: how you said you were not ready for your friends, the noise, and sociability. I also felt this. It is not until now that I think of my life in Sweden. The trip has given me a strange kind of taste – a strange awareness – that has made me, in a way, subdued, even melancholy. This is a familiar feeling, from the time before Cape Town, but I have not known it with the same intensity before. I think it started in connection with my new job in Gothenburg. Since then it has increased. Stepwise, I let go of things: objects and relationships. This has taken me away from the context that I established in Stockholm, mentally and physically. At the same time, I cannot say that something new is formed. It feels like I am in an emotional jetlag. So the question is whether I will return to the previous stage – as I would if this were an ordinary hangover – or if something more substantial occurred?

Yesterday I was told that (1.) my cat has had four kittens, and (2.) my brother X will be at the airport in Stockholm when I arrive, in transit to our family house in Jericho, Palestine.

Monday, 14/12, 07:56, Frankfurt, Stockholm
Morning: "Panic first. Think later." I panicked twice during the trip. The first time was when I tore open a wound and began to bleed uncontrollably at passport control. (I used the last napkin that you gave me to staunch the blood.) Then, when I changed flights in Frankfurt, I thought I was delayed and did not realize that I was actually an hour early. In between, I have had some partial panic situations: when I dug in the bag for my passport and boarding passes, which I thought had disappeared. I see you vividly as you articulate those words, even your voice is very clear. The thought struck me that it probably will not always be so. It makes me continue to wonder whether – or perhaps when – these images will slow down, and eventually completely capitulate to the actual content of your statement. Either way, I practice it.

I worry about getting home. I rented out a room in my apartment just before the trip and imagine that problems have occurred. I will write back later today.

Evening: Everything was in order. My tenant had cleaned the home and we had a nice evening together. "Think first. Panic later (i.e. never)."

Tuesday, 15/12, 08:52, on the train to Gothenburg
I was so tired yesterday I did not even unpack my bag. I put all the clothes that would fit in the laundry basket. First I smelled your shirt, which took me back to the mountains: a mixture of sweat and sun block.

There is not much snow in Stockholm, but it gradually increases as I approach Gothenburg. When I arrive I'll eat a Christmas lunch with my colleagues at the Department of Conservation. I feel that it will be a bit strange to eat lunch after our hike. I still have nuts with me in my bag.

I just published a picture of the mountain on my Instagram page. It made me feel nostalgic.

Wednesday, 16/12
Today was the first day in a few weeks that I did not take a sleeping pill. I slept well until I woke up in the middle of the night. I could not fall asleep again. I am trying to process all the impressions; sometimes at night I can actually think clearly.

I then had an intense day at work. My colleagues asked me about the trip. They had met our colleague from the residency, Y, a few days earlier; he told them that we had it good. I find it so difficult to answer questions about this journey. I speak mostly of the format and its significance in relation to other, more traditional formats for knowledge sharing, such as conferences, seminars, and so on. But this is just a way to avoid talking about, and thinking about, what occurred on a more personal level. In conversation with one of my closest colleagues, I said that there was a very strong sense of community in the group. I told him that I experienced strong feelings of a particular kind. It made him think of religious communities. The conversation ended there. I spent the rest of the day to helping students get started on their essays.

I try to describe the essence of this tentative text, and I realize that there are so many good examples of texts that are both narrative and somewhat scientific, and that also provide space for personal comments and reflections. Later I had a glass of wine with a colleague and saw an art film that took place in the interstitial space between nature and civilization. I thought I would relate to it, but it was poor.

Before I came to Gothenburg, I spent a day with my daughter in Stockholm. I gave her some gifts that I bought on the trip, including a pair of earrings that represent a wild boar. She took these with her when she went to her father. Last night, she called me crying hysterically because the earrings have disappeared. It made me sad when I realized that the earrings actually formed the small part of the trip she got the opportunity to be part of.

Thursday, 17/12, Gothenburg
I'm still waiting for a response from you?

Friday, 18/12, Stockholm
Nostalgia is a skill, not an emotional state.

Before I went back to Stockholm, I had lunch with my colleague Z. She asked about the trip and I tried to describe it as fairly as possible. I asked her how she would describe the concept of nostalgia, and what could be seen as its opposite. It laid the foundation for an interesting conversation. While nostalgia is often interpreted as a feeling or desire, we came to talk about it as an ability that has to be developed within the individual, like a skill. An opposed concept would then be the lack of the necessary skill (or sensitivity).

I just got back to my apartment, and bed, in Stockholm. It still feels strange. My daughter was very sad when I came home today. She almost started crying in the grocery store. My travels have been tough for her and we both need to rest.

I heard from you this evening! Everything is back on track.

Saturday, 19/12, Stockholm
It's 3:00 in the morning and I have just woken up. I realize I will not be able to fall asleep again. I thought I could sleep without pills, but I am not ready for that yet. I will write back later.

Cecil Rhodes' zoo and the coloniality of nature

"Colonial worlds gave rise to kinds of encounters, forms of affect, and forms of the gaze that constitute a deep, and often hidden, part of the inheritance of the relationship between human and non-human animals."

Nick Shepherd

photos: Dirk-Jan Visser

In the early 1890s, Cecil Rhodes, the British imperialist and mining magnate, set in place plans for a zoo to be constructed on his estate on the slopes of Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa. Rhodes is remembered for his belief in the civilizing mission of the British empire, and in "the white man's burden". Recently, he has been in the news via the events of #RhodesMustFall, a student-led social movement calling for the removal of a statue of Rhodes strategically sited at the pedestrian entrance to the University of Cape Town.

Like many zoos, the zoo that would come to be constructed on Rhodes' estate was intended as a social and political statement. It collected animals from throughout the British empire, so that it constituted a mini-empire of animals. The spatial layout of the zoo followed a broadly metaphorical plan. At the bottom of the slope were ponds and cages containing the "lower" animals: crocodiles and wild fowl. At the top of the slope was the lion's den, the king of beasts. Somewhere in the middle were the bigger mammals and the apes. In this way, the organization of the zoo was a bit like the British empire itself, with its belief in the stages of civilization, and its division of humanity into lesser and more advanced races.

Rhodes identified personally with lions. He liked to be known as the "lion of Africa". He had his architect, Herbert Baker, design an ambitious and impractical "lion house", a colonnaded structure meant to resemble a classical temple. Rhodes imagined wild African lions wandering free, set against the backdrop of this stirring architecture. The lion house was never constructed in this form, but as an idea it exists as a dense metaphor that encapsulates several of Rhodes' ideas. These had to do with the civilizing influence of the Western classical tradition, and with the energy of wild African lions. The neo-classical architecture was meant to reference the Mediterranean worlds of Ancient Greece and Rome. Rhodes dreamed that the Cape, with its Mediterranean climate, would become a white, Western civilization at the tip of Africa.

This project of projecting social and political ideas into natural worlds extended beyond the zoo, into the landscape of Rhodes' estate. He imported 200 English songbirds to Cape Town in the belief that their birdsong would restore his health. He said: "It is my dream to fill my forests with the sounds of all the birds of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire…their song is nothing less than the song of civilization." He also imported llamas, fallow deer, kangaroos, and grey squirrels. The grey squirrels out-competed the local red squirrels, and have since become a pest.

One of his most enduring legacies is a botanical legacy. Rhodes had three species of trees planted on his estate: English oak trees, a species of pine tree known as "stone pines" or "Corsican pines", which are native to the southern Mediterranean, and a local species of "silver tree". Together they were meant to construct a hybrid landscape that – like the lion house – spoke to Rhodes' dream.

Rhodes died in 1902, and in 1912 Rhodes Memorial was dedicated on the slopes of Table Mountain. Designed by Baker, it takes the form of a neo-classical temple. A double row of bronze lions flanks the steps of the temple, replacing the real lions that Rhodes had wanted for his lion house.

Rhodes Zoo, later known as Groote Schuur Zoo, after the name of Rhodes' estate, closed in the 1980s, and the lions were sold to a

canned-hunting operation in Namibia. For a while, the empty cages and enclosures of the zoo were inhabited by homeless people, until they were partially demolished by the Department of Public Works. Today, Rhodes Zoo exists as a ruin. The largest surviving structure is the lion cage at the top of the slope. This continues to be inhabited by homeless people and is also visited by students from the nearby university to have sex and smoke weed.

In the 1920s, the University of Cape Town was constructed immediately adjacent to the zoo and Rhodes Memorial. It repeats the architectural trope of the temple-on-the-hill, with the university's great hall – "Jamieson Hall" – taking the place of the temple or inner sanctum. Recently, the British publication the *Daily Telegraph* placed the University of Cape Town third in its list of the ten "most beautiful universities" of the world. (Oxford was first and Harvard was second.) In recent years, it has been the site of almost continuous student-led protests against the legacies of colonialism and apartheid.

My themes in this short account have been, first, the entanglement of natural, cultural, and political worlds. Places like zoos become powerful sites for the projection of social and political ideas. They become exemplary sites: living, material metaphors. They also become didactic sites, sites of instruction. Rhodes' zoo was meant to address, and to bring into being, a new South African public: white, English speaking, and filled with imperial zeal. In this way, it was as much an address to the future as it was to the present.

A second theme is what I would call "the coloniality of nature". This refers to the manner in which colonial and imperial projects extend into natural worlds, appropriating and transforming these worlds, and embedding themselves in plant and non-human animal species. Perhaps the ultimate form of imperialism is a kind of species imperialism, in which we bend non-human animals to human designs. Zoos like Rhodes' present us with a powerful set of oppositions: caged versus free, safety versus danger, the everyday versus the exotic. They stage or enable or invite a potent set of affective encounters. The scripting of these encounters is often a kind of mastery. There is the being who looks, and there is the being who is looked at, who delivers up their private life for scrutiny.

Historically, these ways of looking and forms of the gaze extended into human worlds, in the case of beings who were figured as not fully human. Human zoos and ethnographic displays, like the Ethnographic Hall of the South African Museum in Cape Town, became occasions on which white bodies gazed at black bodies delivered up for exhibition and scrutiny.

The idea of the Anthropocene is that this kind of mastery now extends on a planetary scale. Humans become agents in geological time and hold the fate of natural systems in their hands. The irony of the Anthropocene is that the moment of our mastery over natural worlds is also the moment of their collapse. As a result, we now live in a permanent state of emergency. This suggests that zoos might gain a new kind of power and potency as sites of looking and sites of encounter. Perhaps, for us, these will be excruciating encounters, filled with guilt and accusation, as we exchange looks

with our accusers, those whose worlds we have destroyed? Or perhaps we want to be kinder to ourselves and see zoos not as stages for historically overdetermined encounters, but as something else: as life-rafts, perhaps, where human and non-human animals greet one another as fellow survivors. Perhaps one idea of the Anthropocene is to abolish the idea of wild nature itself, so that all that counts is to survive, and the whole world becomes a kind of zoo.

I want to make a point about the embeddedness of the idea of the zoo in a certain kind of history. The zoos that we are familiar with have conventionally been thought of as being the product of modernity: that is to say, of a particular turn in the relationship between culture and nature, and between humans and non-human animals. I want to suggest that the idea of the zoo is also the product of a second, broad historical context: colonialism. Colonial worlds gave rise to kinds of encounters, forms of affect, and forms of the gaze that constitute a deep, and often hidden, part of the inheritance of the relationship between human and non-human animals. It is this that I am calling the coloniality of nature.

These colonial settings were also contexts in which human and animal worlds interpenetrated, in which some humans were regarded as animals, and some animals – like lions – were regarded as kings and symbols of empire. So that when we ask what the future of the zoo in the Anthropocene would be, another way to ask this question is: How do we decolonize the zoo? Or even: How do we decolonize the relationship between humans and other animals?

Timeline
— Daniela Franca Joffe

Found poem:
Safety in round objects

Prelude: Smitswinkelbaai

He's been dead for six years but I've been in love with him the whole time. My sanity is questioned.
I play Tetris. They prescribe it now for PTSD.
My mother has saved a synagogue in Israel. I keep it a secret, because of Palestine, the shame.

Cape Point to Smitswinkelbaai

The lighthouse, full of birdshit
They don't have Gothenberg!
This is it. This is ground zero
Nature showing off

(Hot black iron against my hand)

Tsoketso
❤
Forever

The archaeological selfie:
"I was here!"

This prefabricated cast iron tower was
The lighthouse proved to be ineffective
Iron tower by Victoria Foundry Co.
Greenwich
1857
Lantern & lights by Devile & Co.
London

(Devil and Company)

Keep an eye out for surface plunging gannets and terns in pursuit of small shoaling fisherm
MASTERS OF THE SKIES
These navigational wizards
Their waterlogged wings

BABOONS ARE DANGEROUS

I will bring surely a lock next time I come

The seam
and that very suturing shows the pulling apart and the scar
the immense time depth of occupation in this landscape
a galleon, a ship, painted in ochre on a cave wall

Adamastor
Adamastor

Spur!

I tumble down the stairs, rushing somewhere. I see one of my students, playing a round plastic harp. I will go to the gospel church every Sunday, I decide, to listen to her play.
I see the band on YouTube. The brown-skinned girl in the middle has one finger on each hand and twirls her long black hair with it. Later I learn that she is in blackface, and her surname is De Greef.

Red Hill to Slangkop, via Ocean View

The Wanderer from Red Hill, and his wife June
Kallville, Calleville

double sense of the return,
permanent and impermanent

(What?)

"This place would make an amazing fashion shoot"
"I am a mountain man. I know this because I know what the wind says when it blows"

Zoning zoning zoning

Material inscription on the landscape

but why leave walls?
but why leave ruins?

The 18-year-old white boys
had the additional task of racializing people
and spacializing people

The mountain edge was the best place to be

(50 Glencoe Road, Higgovale. We would ride our bikes looking up at the cable cars, as Vathiswa looked on.)

high water table, duney

Verwoerd got on a plane and pointed:
There

Maybe there are different kinds of return—
through dreams, through memories, through storytelling
Maybe we should facilitate a dreamscape

Development as dreaming?
Absence/presence as a promoter of dreaming practice

(What?)

Development can be haunted, development can fail, because of other archives

return
haunting
dreaming

How landscape divides, how landscape unifies

Banook Weg/Banghoek Weg
the gumtrees (blomkom bome)
Sies Roofie
Picking vegetables in China

(Proust and the madeleine, the lime-soaked tea)

Apartheid city planning, viewed from the eagle's vantage point
But a neighborhood is more than the box you live in!

Ocean View, the cruel misnomer
the singular narrative of the house becomes something else

It looks exactly the same as the other side. Just beige

Oh Etien
Is that all you could come up with?
His brain leaked out of his

"Cost-effective"

Urban regeneration, clearing, slums
We gonna be modern yo

Go to the smokkie!

There's the brain drain, then there's the labor drain
Work here till 5—now leave

BABOONS ARE DANGEROUS

Imizamo Yethu
Pam Golding is the new forced remover

I am terribly ill. I curl into a ball and ask everyone to please leave me alone. Everyone has babies. I am the only one.

Slangkop to Orange Kloof, with Peter

Laura would like to ask Kitty a question, one she can't quite phrase. The question has to do with subterfuge and, more obscurely, with brilliance. She would like to know if Kitty feels like a strange woman, powerful and unbalanced the way artists are said to be, full of vision, full of rage, committed above all to creating… what? This. This kitchen, this birthday cake, this conversation. This revived world.

This is not fun and games

2 + 2 = yellow

"Firstliness"
the resting position

Formulas to avoid the formulaic

What happens to the commons when you transpose it to the global south?

(What?)

Following the ancestors
Whose ancestors?
The ghostroad, the deathroad

Deathliness in the drive to impose coherence, rigor—
rigor, a literal stiffening of the body

What does it mean to work at the edge of the discipline?

Colonial science, or now, disciplinary science—
indistinguishable, in fact

How can we undo the ways secularization, reason and critique secure
each other

(What?)

Traces collected on the islands
from the ocean

Number 25: Intangible Heritage

Have you considered the violence of the question “Is there heritage in Langa?”
Who posed the question and why should you have to answer it?

Architecture in everything
Architecture in everyone?

Architecture is so Oorocentric

(But everything is so Oorocentric)

Discipline as an alibi that creates a kind of violence

Finding a logic that works in space
Waiting as a kind of violence on the body
Pamouk’s museum of

I wonder whether we’re too quick to call whole practices conservative

“Ah,” says Quentin, and without seeing them Virginia knows that he and Julian are laughing, quietly, at Angelica and perhaps, by extension, at her. Even now, in this late age, the males still hold death in their capable hands and laugh affectionately at the females, who arrange funerary beds and who speak of resuscitating the specks of nascent life abandoned in the landscape, by magic or sheer force of will.

(Will Peter be remembered in our chronicles of this trip?)

Oh, if men were the brutes and women the angels—if it were as simple as that.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

Orange Kloof to Overseers’ Cottage

Laura releases Kitty. She steps back. She has gone too far, they’ve both gone too far, but it is Kitty who’s pulled away first. It is Kitty whose terrors have briefly propelled her, caused her to act strangely and desperately. Laura is the dark-eyed predator. Laura is the odd one, the foreigner, the one who can’t be trusted. Laura and Kitty agree, silently, that this is true.

Another fuck up
We’re about to cross into the realm of fiasco
Oh that line was crossed long ago
Ha ha ha ha ha

The funding
The funding
The funding
The funding

But it works both ways

“Look! They’ve had a walk and a swim! Look how lucky these dogs are!”
Fuck your dogs

How caves are like stoeps

Releasing nature from the grip of the Western sublime

(Working for Water. Sitting quietly at the edge of the damn. They’ve done it.)

The Swedish Theory of Love
Follow the instructions to put the sperm up your vagina, yourself

The naturalness of this nature can be called into question

Language, images, baggage

If we could take nature out of temporality, somehow
Nature wasn’t there before, culture wasn’t there afterwards
They are always both becoming

The grieving landscape
Landscapes that grieve

(I’m not ready to let go of grieving people. Not yet)

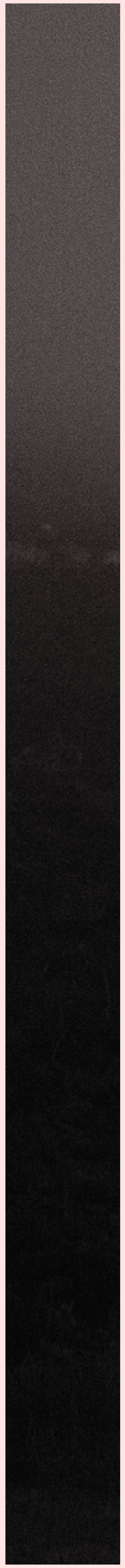
Kipling—
wanted to draw inspiration from the mountain, “as if through a tap”
The colonial dreamscape that Rhodes tried to build
Kirstenbosch to Groote Schuur to UCT to Rhodes Memorial

The ghostroad, the deathroad

The castaway above the city, alone

She still exudes, somehow, an aspect of thwarted romance, and looking at her now, past fifty, in this dim and prosperous room, Louis thinks of photographs of young soldiers, firm-featured boys serene in their uniforms; boys who died before the age of twenty and who live on as the embodiment of wasted promise, in photo albums or on side tables, beautiful and confident, unfazed by their doom.

I am writing my PhD as a novel. It has become the only way for me to communicate.
I find him at the edge of the party. He is no longer himself: eyes wide, body moving in spasmodic jolts. I resign myself to losing him.
I wrap my head in a brown bandage.
I notice a rural community, living on the periphery of the party.
They sway to the music.



Overseers’ Cottage to Muizenberg, via Metrorail

Miracles Happen
Lost Lover Spell
Money in your account
Win Lotto Casino
Clear your debts
0719770020

DR. HAPPY
PENIS PROBLEMS
ALL LIFE PROBLEMS
0742176931

GOODNEWSINYOURLOVELIFE
PENIS 30 MINS
LOST HOURS
DO OB S CREAM
CALL 85291

When we were walking from the lighthouse, we were referring back to it

Look at us. Look where we are now.

Postscript: Hiddingh

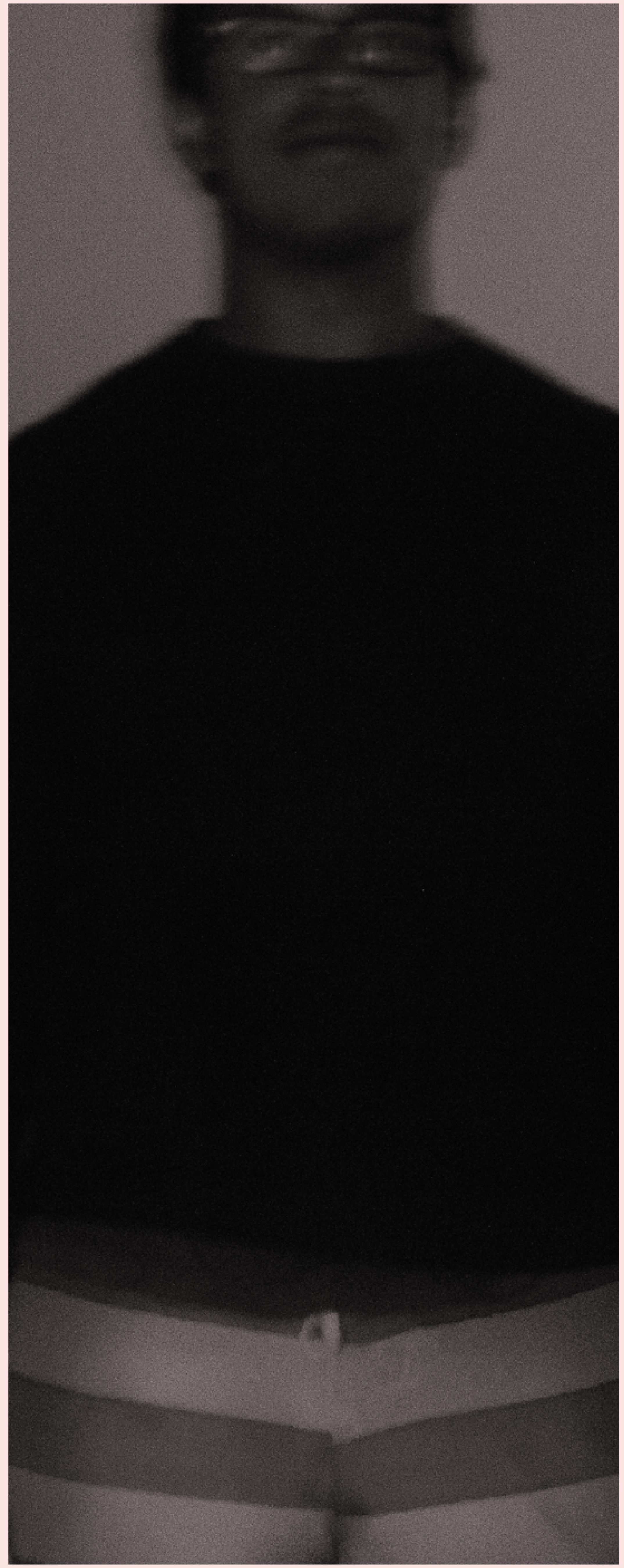
He clashed with the president over apparently shady plans to spend trillions of rands on Russian nuclear technology without any due process to the deal

Try explaining nuclear waste to humans inhabiting Piers Cave 100,000 years ago

When it comes to nuclear, no one really has any idea what they’re talking about

(No one has any idea what’s they’re talking about no one has any idea what they’re talking about no one has any idea what they’re talking about no one has any idea what they’re talking about no one has any idea what they’re)

The sun explodes like a flashbulb in his face. He rejoins, gratefully, the people of the world: a ferrety-looking man walking two dachshunds, a fat man sweating majestically in a dark blue suit, a bald woman (fashion or chemotherapy?) who leans against Clarissa’s building sucking on a cigarette and whose face looks like a fresh bruise. Louis will return here, to this city; he will live in an apartment in the West Village, sit in Dante with an espresso and a cigarette in the afternoon. He isn’t old yet, not yet. The night before last he stopped his car in the Arizona desert and stood under the stars until he could feel the presence of his own soul, or whatever you wanted to call it; the continuing part that had been a child and then stood—it seemed a moment later—in the desert silence under the constellations.



Black-and-white photos this page and previous spread: Barry Christianson

Hoerikwaggo Diary 2014–2018

Hiking the Hoerikwaggo Trail is an "unforgettable experience of travelling in the footsteps of the Cape ancestors," writes cartographer Peter Slingsby. This is a diary of notable moments during the 2014–2018 walking seminars. Each day explores a set of ideas.

Dirk-Jan Visser
Christian Ernsten

Overseer's Cottage
photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Day 1. Adamastor

Hiking the Hoerikwaggo Trail means traversing 75 kilometers of the Table Mountain National Park. It is an "unforgettable experience of travelling in the footsteps of the Cape ancestors," writes cartographer Peter Slingsby. Who are these Cape ancestors? Most likely, Slingsby is referencing the nomadic Khoi, even as he recommends following the neat line of yellow footsteps indicating the pathway connecting the Cape of Good Hope with the top of Table Mountain. The histories of crossing paths and encounters that lead to the contemporary make-up of the people of the Cape are of course a much messier affair. Shell middens, sheep remains, and pottery found in caves at the Cape Peninsula indicate that the area has been consistently inhabited since as far back as 50,000 years ago.

The route of the first day of the seminar runs from the old lighthouse in the Cape Point Nature Reserve, along Buffels Bay beach and the Bordjiesrif tidal pool, and then the path winds its way up and follows a series of undulating mountain ridges until it joins the main road of the nature reserve. The final stretch of this day is a rather dull walk on a tar road to the Smitswinkel Tented Camp, our base for the night. In December 2015, at the start of the walking seminar, the southernmost point of the Cape Peninsula, Cape Point, was covered in a fog that hid the sea. The strange vista that resulted allowed for a kind of warping into a deeper time, and we started to imagine the landscape as it might have looked 50,000 years ago: instead of the clouds, we could almost see the green fields of the Later Stone Age.

The first footprint of an outsider at the Cape is generally attributed to Bartholomew Diaz, the Portuguese navigator who made landfall here possibly in 1497. The Cape or Cabo terminology stems from this period. On the first day of the walk in 2015, at the Vasco da Gama cross near Buffels Bay beach, literary scholar Hedley Twidle spoke to us of Diaz, Vasco da Gama, and the Khoikhoi. As a starting point for a literary history of the Cape, Twidle introduced the epic poem *The Lusiads* (1572), composed by Portuguese poet Luís de Camões (1525–1580).

In particular, Twidle provided commentary on the monstrous character of Adamastor in the poem. Adamastor describes how he is locked in stone under the earth of South Africa's Cape Peninsula, having been punished for the pursuit of the pale nymph Thetis, the daughter of the sea-gods.

> Into hard earth my flesh converted lies,
> My bones are turned to rocks all rough and strange,
> These members and this form ye see, likewise,
> Extended through these spreading waters strange;
> In fine, my stature of enormous size
> Into this Cape remote the Gods did change;
> While for redoubled anguish of my woes,
> Thetis around me in these waters flows.
>
> (Brink, *The First Life of Adamastor*, 1993)

Adamastor, as a mythical figure, symbolizes the first, troubled encounter of the Europeans with the Cape Peninsula and with the Khoi. The Portuguese conquistadores were terrified by the harsh terrain they found at the Cape and, in the end, did not stay long or settle. Adamastor is perhaps also an invitation to make an affective connection with a different, deeper time at the Cape. This invitation was taken up by novelist Andre Brink, who introduced in his novel *The First Life of Adamastor* (1993) the main character of T'Kama, or Big Bird, leader of the Khoikhoi, "who'd inhabited these parts ever since the rock-time of Tsui-Goab".

Red Hill
photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Day 2.
Forced removals

This photo by photographer Dirk-Jan Visser shows the point of departure of Day 2 of the trail. This part of the route starts with a disconnect: because property owners could not come to an agreement about letting Hoerikwaggo Trail hikers pass through their lands, we had to transition from Smitswinkel Bay to Red Hill Village by minivan. All of a sudden, we found ourselves in the midst of lush fynbos and the stone ruins of the village. The second day of the seminar follows the untarred road from Red Hill above Simon's Town, along Kleinplaas Dam, and then down a slowly descending stone path – offering views of the Ocean View township – to Slangkop Lighthouse.

During the hike in 2015, we were introduced to fragments of the histories of Red Hill by architect and fellow hiker Ilze Wolff. Her presentation started with a reference to a blog written by a man named Anton, who calls himself "the Wanderer". She read, among other pieces, these excerpts from the Wanderer's blog posts:

> Welcome to the Hill. Here you can journey with me through time as I remember my roots…This is a journey of happiness and sadness as well as victory as we come full circle after more than 28 years to reclaim our ancestral inheritance.
>
> […]
>
> I am a mountain man! I know this because I know what the wind says when it blows. I am a Redhill man! I know this because I know what the rocks say when they whisper…The house on the right as you stand facing the mountain is "Kallville" where I grew up and this is where my story begins…We were minding our own business in the Village of Redhill, going about our normal daily routine in those repressive apartheid years of 1948 onward, unaware of the storm clouds gathering as decisions in Parliament were being taken on our behalf. Decisions that would irrevocably change our lives forever.

These pieces of writings are individual accounts of the infamous forced removals that happened during the apartheid period as a result of the 1952 Group Areas Act. At the time, villagers were given as a reason for their removal the realization of a dam project in their valley. Yet construction work on the dam never commenced, and, to this day, the land stands empty, a series of crumbling houses in a barren grassland.

Cape Peninsula
photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Day 3.
Alien intruders

The walk on Day 3, starting at Slangkop near Kommetjie, is probably the hardest. First, we walk across the immaculate Noordhoek beach, and then we make a steep ascent up Chapman's Peak towards the Silvermine Nature Reserve. In 2014, harsh winds jostled our full backpacks as we struggled to make our way up. Fortunately, the Silvermine reservoir offered refuge from the wind and a fantastic place to swim. In 2015, we could not follow this trajectory, as 6,900 hectares of the mountain had been scorched by wildfires earlier in the year, including the area enclosing the Silvermine Tented Camp, which was completely destroyed. The intensity of these fires in 2015 brought back, for many, the traumatic experience of Cape Town's "fire climax" of January 2000.

This millennial fire burned 8,370 hectares on the Cape Peninsula. In response to this catastrophe, anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff wrote about how anxious discussions about the causes of the fire turned its focus to the invasive alien plants – especially pine trees – that burned better than did the native flora. Outrage against the "intruders" increased steadily, with the Cape's natural heritage perceived to be at risk. The Comaroffs subsequently wrote about the "naturalization of xenophobia" and about the link between this anti-alien sentiment and the fear of foreigners.

Day 4. Mountain romanticism

Day 4 of our journey started at Orange Kloof Tented Camp, nestled within the forest that stretches between Cape Town's wealthy suburbs of Constantia and Hout Bay, with the Hout Bay river close by. That day, the path from Orange Kloof led us up the back of Table Mountain to the Overseer's Cottage, perched on the mountainside. This beautiful section of the Hoerikwaggo Trail passes through Disa Gorge and ends above the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens and Wynberg Hill. While we hiked our way up through Disa Gorge, we came across an old pumphouse, with pipes randomly strewn across the landscape, and eventually we were stopped by the 44-meter-high wall of the Woodhead reservoir. After climbing ladders, we walked along the Woodhead boundary and then past the Hely-Hutchinson reservoir, as well as the Alexandra and the Victoria reservoirs and De Villiers Dam, before ending up at the Overseer's Cottage.

Some walking seminar participants in 2018 were struck by the remarkable beauty of the red disa flower during this part of the walk. This member of the Orchidaceae family, known as an ornamental, signals a particular local intersection of the histories of mountaineering, botany, and white nationalism at Table Mountain. Historian Lance van Sittert explains how, from the 1880s onwards, bourgeois European settlers' interest in alpinism and their craze for orchid collecting led to a kind of mountain romanticism. The mountain was to become the counter-image to the rapidly urbanizing Cape Town and its perceived poverty and public health problems. By the 1860s, the disa came to be known as the "pride of Table Mountain", and the increasing interest in hiking and botany led to the establishment of the Mountain Club of South Africa in 1891.

Orange Kloof
photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Near Red Hill
photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Day 5.
Body talk

On Day 5, we typically spend some time at the Overseer's Cottage before walking the final stretch of the Hoerikwaggo Trail. Some of us spend the morning writing, swimming in De Villiers Dam, or just resting or meditating on the walk so far.

On the most recent walking seminar, I thought about how we walked the trail: as tourists? as researchers? Artists Nicola Visser and Hanna Loewenthal joined us during the last days of the seminar in 2018. Each woman walked all the way up the mountain from Orange Kloof with a bowl of water in her hand – a performative response to the ongoing water crisis in the Cape. Visser's practice in particular is that of a movement artist. During our resting time at the Overseer's Cottage, she invited us to join her in a movement exercise. We experimented as a group and individually with hearing and feeling the mountain, instead of seeing it. She shared a conceptual language with us, using phrases such as "body insights", "body experience", and "body as a landscape of sense, affect, memory, and desire". Visser also spoke of "body time" and of sensing, engaging, witnessing, and revealing through the body as well as signaling, translating with the body. Can we think of the body as an archive and a landscape?

The final stretch of the trail starts at the Overseer's Cottage and then involves a series of surprisingly strenuous climbs with great vistas, back in the direction of the Slangkop Lighthouse, before leading to the tourist destination that is the flat top of Table Mountain. Sitting down at the ridge before our final descent into Cape Town via Platteklip Gorge, we could already see and hear the city. At the end of each walking seminar, the time spent on the mountain felt like a much longer absence from the normalcy of existence than just five days. A strangely fulfilling and enriching intervention in the daily business of life.

Walking Seminar 2018: Fire and Water

An Anthropocene moment

A key intention of the Table Mountain Walking Seminar is to bring together the debate around the Anthropocene, with a debate around social justice after apartheid. Our impression is that these debates have tended to run on separate tracks, with the "environmental" debate remaining a predominantly white, middle-class affair. From a decolonial perspective, the problem with the notion of the Anthropocene is that it represents a radical flattening out of history. Who is this "Anthropos" that is said to be driving global environmental change, and how can it encompass equally capitalist and peasant, former slave and former slave master, over-consumer in a Global North suburb and precarious urban dweller in a Global South slum? The startling and sobering fact of the Anthropocene is that, as Chakrabarty and others point out, a disproportionate burden of the cost of global environmental change is currently, and will in all likelihood continue to be, borne by precarious populations in the Global South – the same populations immiserated through historical processes of racial slavery, colonialism/imperialism, and capitalist underdevelopment. Industrialized populations in the Global North – the historical agents and perpetrators of these disastrous changes – are likely to pay a disproportionately smaller cost: socially, politically, and economically. In South Africa, we are used to the fundamentally unjust idea that historical injustice frequently translates into forms of contemporary social injustice. This is the real injustice of apartheid: that black South Africans continue to make up the vast majority of the poor, the socially excluded, and the most precarious of urban dwellers. The Anthropocene threatens us with a kind of global apartheid as the historically underdeveloped and exploited populations of the Global South, pillaged in the course of the overdevelopment of the Global North, now pay a disproportionate share of the costs of that overdevelopment in the form of disastrous environmental changes.

One of the interesting aspects of the current water crisis in Cape Town is the way in which the environmental debate is being joined to the debate around social justice. A range of social movements now organize around water justice and environmental justice, against corporate water interests and the city managers who are perceived to be in bed with these interests. One aspect of this phenomenon is the emergence of what we would call "Anthropocene vernaculars": a lively discussion of core concepts and phenomena from the debate around the Anthropocene, rendered in everyday language. While the academic debate around the Anthropocene has tended to be highfalutin, dominated by a handful of authors – a matter of boutique scholarship, or so it sometimes seems – the discussion of key Anthropocene concepts now dominates dinner-table conversation in Cape Town, casual exchanges, and conversations between strangers at Cape Town's springs and water points. Water, and the politics of water, is the subject on everybody's tongues.

Nick Shepherd

Kildare Road, Cape Town
photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Countdown to Day Zero

Nick Shepherd

"Water lays things bare. In South Africa – of all places – there has been so much secrecy, so many lies, so much obfuscation, so much that it repressed and left unsaid: perhaps this is what it takes?"

Staana Stodel @ Samantha Reinders / for NBC News

Based on current projections, "Day Zero" is forecast for April 12, according to officials. That would make Cape Town the world's first major city to run dry.

Newlands Brewery Spring photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

My water

I am interested in exploring the idea that water, and a critical shortage of water, becomes an opportunity to think in new ways about practices of urban life, dwelling, and relatedness. I am also interested in the forms of scholarly practice that allow us to grapple with the meanings of water, and with the politics and poetics of water shortage. The fact that it happens to be water that is at stake is useful. On the one hand, there is a whole vast literature on water policy and management, on the geopolitics of water, and so on. On the other hand, our relationship with water is intimate and personal. Like clean air, clean water is a basic requirement for survival. We need – absolutely need – to drink water regularly to keep the organism of our body functioning. We use water to clean and to flush away our shit. Civilizations have risen and fallen around the control and regulation of water. Water seems to be one of the basic mediums or registers through which global climate change expresses itself: flood, drought, melting ice, rising sea levels. In a way, we can say that it was always going to be about the water.

It is also useful (interesting, expressive) that it happens to be Cape Town. Cape Town must be one of the most disjunctive, jarring, socially and economically divided cities on earth. Local histories of racial slavery, colonial genocide, and apartheid have left their marks on a population divided by race, space, and class. A recent (2016) report states that Cape Town has the world's second highest seasonal fluctuation of US-dollar multimillionaire populations in the world (after the Hamptons, near New York city). According to the Knight Frank Prime Global Cities Index, in the second quarter of 2017, Cape Town had the ninth highest performing residential property market, ahead of Melbourne and Paris, and behind Berlin. At the same time, conditions in many of Cape Town's townships and informal settlements are staggeringly awful and degrading of human life. Often, as in the case of Hout Bay, these two faces of the city exist side-by-side.

A clear implication of the news reportage on the water crisis, and the hook via which it garnered so much attention in the global media, is that in looking at the situation in Cape Town we are looking at the future. I would argue that Cape Town is one of a small number of locations in which we can begin to read Anthropocene futures: the "ground zeros" of climate change. This makes the unfolding story compelling, quite apart from the potential human tragedy. Many news reports followed Western Cape Premier Helen Zille in predicting a kind of Mad Max scenario: local mafias and warlords seize control of water points to extort money from city residents as a black market in drinking water develops and a criminal underground takes charge of a weakly policed and poorly managed city. This may indeed come about – is indeed already beginning to happen – but another possibility exists. For residents of Cape Town's vast informal settlements, the current situation is not new; they have always dealt with the inadequate provision of water, queuing at stand-pipes and using communal loos. This is a decades-old situation that dwellers in the suburbs have been happy to ignore. In an absolutely embodied way, the current crisis forces the middle classes to experience what it means to live with limited water: washing in a plastic bucket, flushing every other day. In this scenario, perhaps water becomes the great leveler, forcing the wealthy and oblivious to empathize with what it means to be poor and black, something that two and a half decades of "rainbow nation" rhetoric has signally failed to accomplish. Indeed, in an intriguing twist, city managers have announced that, come Day Zero, should the water to suburban households be cut off, water will continue to flow to Cape Town's informal settlements. So, while the wealthy sink boreholes, buy water tanks, and put their faith in guard dogs and high fences, as they have always done, perhaps they would be better off pursuing other strategies? Perhaps what really counts in such situations is having developed social networks and the ability to cultivate human relationships? If this turns out to be the case, then water will take on the guise of the prankster, messing with everybody's mind, upsetting settled versions of the world.

Metaphors for the movements of money and capital often have water in mind: capital flows, revenue streams, trickle-down effects. At the same time, the actual movements of money and capital seem to be increasingly mysterious – all that we know for sure is that the real money pools in a diminishing number of pockets. I like how direct and unambiguous the movement of water is, and how the politics of water cuts to the bone. To commoditize water, to extort higher rents, to attempt to shut down public springs and water points, to peddle paranoia – all of which city managers are currently said to do – speaks not just of an injustice but of a kind of sin, like denying a glass of water to a thirsty person. Indeed, this image of offering water to a thirsty person has traditionally been used as a symbol of Christian charity and is deeply written into our consciousness and culture. The person with the green lawn and the full water tank stands in contrast to the person queuing for their daily ration; the person who pays for the delivery of water from a truck stands in contrast to the person who pushes a 25 liter can through the streets on an improvised trolley. It takes six to twelve hours for thirst to become a raging obsession, and most people cannot survive much beyond three days without water.

Finally, though, I like swimming. My personal theme for the most recent walking seminar was "swimming across Table Mountain". I swam wherever I could: in the sea, in dams and ponds. To me, water has always meant freedom.

The Water Master

— Steven Robins

I met the "Water Master" in January 2018, during one of my first visits to the Newlands spring at Kildare Road. "Day Zero" was then on the horizon, and I wanted to find out how Capetonians were responding to the crisis. I also needed to collect water. I tried to start up a conversation with a white woman in the queue, but nothing came of it. I then approached a forty-year-old man and he was very willing to answer my many questions. I learnt that it was Riyaz, my interlocutor, who had made the improvised PVC pipe structure with 26 holes that allowed two dozen people to fill their water containers at the same time. Even before the drought, he would come to the spring regularly because he liked the taste of the sweet water and the serenity of the place: "The setting was wonderful, with greenery, and the river flowing and the sound of the water, the sky, butterflies, dragonflies, birds, all in this little cul-de-sac, and I loved it." He recalled that, at the time, "there wasn't anything more than a hole in the ground with a pipe sticking out, and the odd person coming along and awkwardly filling up a half a liter bottle." It was his childhood passion for solving puzzles that led him to start tinkering with his PVC pipe structure. As the self-designated "Water Master", he later recruited the "water porters" who made a meager livelihood carrying water containers for tips. He also mediated the social tensions that surfaced at the spring and worked ceaselessly to appease the residents at the old age home adjacent to the spring, who complained about the crowds and noise. Meanwhile, the councilor and local Newlands residents were determined to close the spring on the grounds that it was a "public nuisance". Most of those coming to the spring came from the Cape Flats and had relatives who, like Riyaz's own family, had lived in the area prior to being forcibly removed under apartheid racial laws in the 1960s. Riyaz, together with anti-privatization activists from the Cape Town Water Crisis Committee, were determined to defend this place of memory and belonging. Now, in the shadow of Day Zero, this politics of the commons was being defended on a daily basis by Riyaz and thousands of others drawn to this place of dragonflies, birds, and sweet water.

[Editors' note: The Kildare Road spring was closed and destroyed by the City of Cape Town in May 2018.]

Kildare Road, Cape Town
photos: Dirk Jan Visser

Near Silvermine
photos: Dirk-Jan Visser

Trees tell stories if you listen closely

— Glen Ashton

When we see a dead tree the first thing we wonder is what killed it? Why is it dead? Why is it not thriving like the trees below it and in the distant background? Was it infested by insects that killed it? Was it drought? Was it intentionally killed for being an alien invasive plant, a weed, a tree in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Knowing this mountain well, I can say with some certainty that this tree fell victim to one of the regular fires that scorch this mountain chain from one end to another. It is an Australian eucalyptus, and yes, these are invasive alien plants, unwelcome intruders into the Cape Peninsula mountain chain, an important global biodiversity hotspot. These trees abstract vast quantities of scarce water, drying the slopes below them while exuding a mist of plant growth suppressants that reduce the ability of other plants to compete with them. These actions disrupt and displace native flora, finely attuned to the poor soils and variable climate among these exposed peaks.

In a way, these trees present as something of a parable. They are, like most of the people living on and around these mountains, invaders that displace native inhabitants. Through this displacement, these exotic invaders create something different: different cultures, attitudes, politics, and natural diversity and space. The trees and the people who brought them not only symbolize but also epitomize colonialism, which actively reshapes our world into something intrinsically different to what came before.

And while the trees are without malice, they are a biological manifestation of the imposition of colonialism, portrayed as a superior and more advanced cultural construct than its antecedent. The trees echo the imposed change that in turn changes everything. One consequences is loss. And this is a profound loss of what went before, of innocence, of the Garden of Eden embodied in this "fairest cape in all the world", as Sir Francis Drake is reputed to have said.

We have lost not only an innocence but the complex system of people who dreamed their existence into being, nurtured by a land that was both raw and primeval, but simultaneously rich and welcoming. It provided all that was required by the first people of this place. And these were not just any first people. They were the first people who eventually spread through the earth and became us.

What is notable in this time of global crisis is that these people lived in relative harmony with their environment, realizing their intrinsic bond and dependence on this world. Yet the colonial reality disrupted this harmony. Consequently, diversity is at risk, water sources are under pressure as invasive alien plants dry the land, while increasing numbers of people demand more water than ever. Crisis builds on crisis. The entire edifice now creaks under the strain.

So these trees, these stark echoes of colonial imposition, are symbolic in several ways. They stand as sentinels, reminding us what went before. They remind us of both the innocence and the introduction of a new order, an allegedly better order that forever morphs, shaping the world in unpredictable and unfathomable ways. In even changing just one thing, we readily overlook the reality that that one thing is connected to everything else. A change perpetuates cascades of change. Beyond disruption, the end result is utterly unpredictable. Change is a constant in the world of biology, of nature, of humans, and of the spaces and places where these intersect.

So the image is poignant, not perhaps for the reason that may first be evident, as in the sadness of seeing a dead tree, making explicit the loss of a large living thing. Rather, these dead trees are a reminder of our loss of an irredeemable past, resulting in an ever more uncertain future as we unravel the complex interconnected Gaian system of mutual relationships. These dead trees are perhaps a harbinger that warn of our collective failure to comprehend the impacts we have on life around us, both in the present and in lives yet to come. Changes echo through time, manifesting change upon change, leaving little more than an imagining of the innocence that was lost.

And yet, in the foreground, a lone native gladiolus blooms, providing hope for restoration and integration.

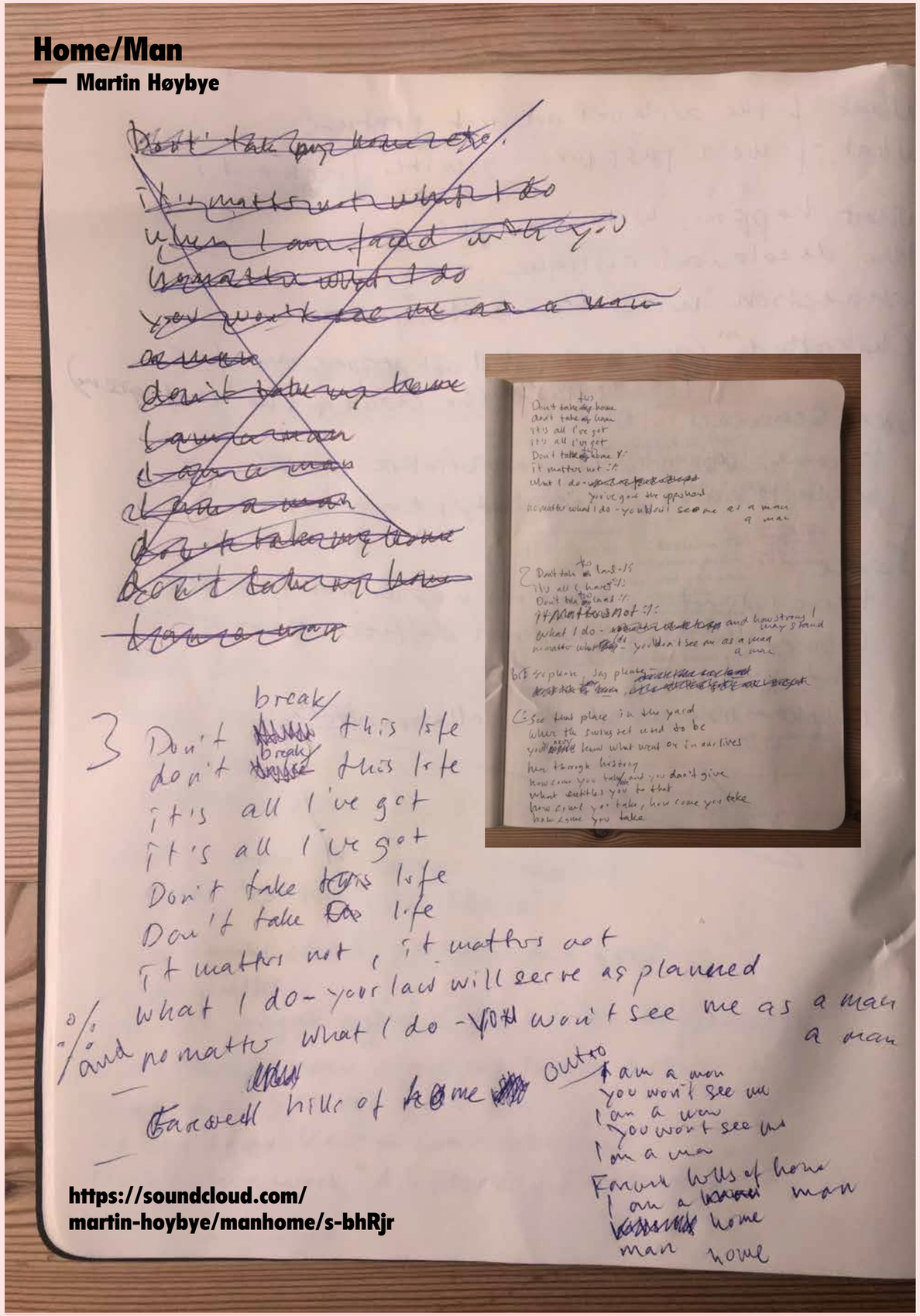
Disa flora

— Hannah Lowenthal

photo spread: Dirk-Jan Visser

Home/Man

— Martin Høybye



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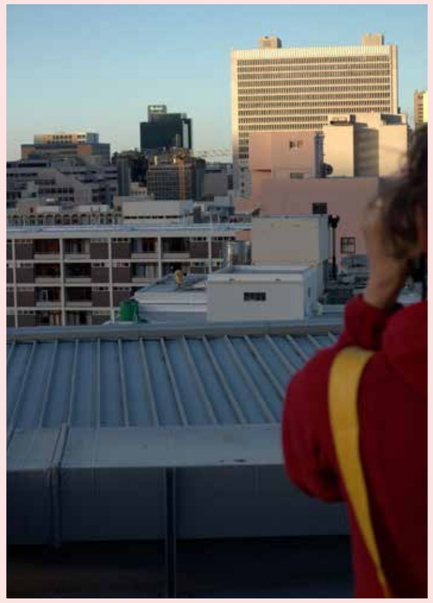

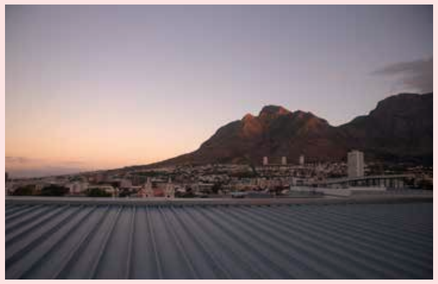

photos: Alice Buckley

Somaphore: a partially realized proposal

— Nicola Visser and Hannah Loewenthal

Keywords
Site-line, Sight-line, Skyline, Time-line, Through-line, Desire-line, City messengers, Heritage, Place, Body, Community, Connection, Performance, Live installation

Synopsis
Look up from the street to the building rooftop, look out across the harbor to a nearby boat, look a little to the left, look through the window next door across from your apartment.

See a person standing or sitting in bright security yellow. Binoculars around their necks. They peer through them, you follow their line of sight. All along the skyline and through a building and on are sentinels on rooftops and balconies, and dropping to street level, harbor level, water level are young people in bright yellow jumpsuits, highly visible, vivid against the grey November sky.

Still and quiet, watching. They look. You look…

At one end of the line a slow clear movement begins. It is wide and arcing, it is both intimate and neutral, it is slow and careful. It is a restful carving of the air and space, it is utterly clear and calm, it knows what it is in that moment. It takes its time. It comes to a complete rest.

Beyond, a young person in yellow has been watching through binoculars. They take the final pose and begin from there, they move in response to what they have seen, to where they are and in some way to who and how they are in the world. They come to a rest, watched carefully by another person in yellow, on a balcony five blocks away, who begins where the second ended.

This continues. And continues…Quietly, with utter focus, a message passes over the city: across, through, over and out to sea.

Carrying water

— Nicola Visser

We carry water back up the mountain in open enamel bowls. We fill them with water from the spring, three quarters full.

At night the bowl is close by. It catches starlight, sunlight, rain, dust, leaves. At times water tipped, slopped; a bird drank from it and a frog had a brief swim.

The water in the bowl waits.

At the end of the walk I have become attached. I take it back down the mountain onto the bus and home. Hannah kept hers on a windowsill in her kitchen. I pour mine into a mountain spring 300 kilometers away.

photo: Dirk-Jan Visser

Don't go chasin' _ _ _ _ _ falls

— Mark Stern

•••••_____	_____ •••••
Slide	Spring
Loo	Bottled
Bucket	Dirty
Logged	Rain
Lily	Privatized
Shortage	No
Melon (see also, "Watermelon Man")	Lots of
Table	Un-_____-ed
Filling Station	My
Babies (i.e. Miles Davis)	Back
-y (e.g. this coffee is a bit…)	Grey
Buffalo (maybe also Ox or Moccasin)	White
Tank	Black
Ice (in Philadelphia, this would be pronounced: *Wuder Ice*)	Ground
Meter	Potable
-ed (or, -ing; e.g. the plants)	Under
Cycle	Sal
Pipe	Tide
Boarding	Cold
Bill	Hot
Source	Yummy
Cress	
Fountain	
Balloon	
Access	
Master	
Crisis	

Colophon

GLENN ASHTON is the director of Ekogaia, based in Cape Town. He is a freelance writer and researcher and is currently completing his PhD at Stellenbosch University. Glenn has written on wide-ranging issues, including waste management, water use, food security, genetic engineering, nanotechnology, health, agricultural fuels, marine resources, climate, and many other environmental and socially relevant issues.

HENRIC BENESCH is an architect, educator, and researcher working on issues such as critical spatial practice, institution building, and critical heritage. He is a senior lecturer at the Academy of Design and Craft at Gothenburg University, and he coordinates the "Curating the City" research cluster within the Centre for Critical Heritage.

BONNIE CHEN is a master's student of museology at the Reinwardt Academy, Amsterdam University of the Arts. She graduated with a bachelor's in art history from the Chinese Academy of Art.

BARRY CHRISTIANSON Barry Christianson is a South African photographer. He uses photography to document issues of identity and the long-standing effects of apartheid still evident in society today. He aims his camera on stark social contrasts and threats of identity-lost while still highlighting the magic and beauty in everyday life.

CHRISTIAN ERNSTEN is a researcher in heritage studies at Maastricht University. His research is situated at the intersection of critical heritage studies, archaeology, and urban studies. He holds a PhD from the University of Cape Town. Previously, Christian taught cultural heritage and museology at the Reinwardt Academy in Amsterdam.

LEA GRÜTER works as a provenance researcher on "museum acquisitions from 1933 onwards" for the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. She studied art history, French, and museology in Göttingen, Paris, and Amsterdam.

MARTIN HØYBYE is a musician and song-writer. He has a background in journalism and heritage studies and is currently a PhD candidate at Aarhus University, Denmark.

DANIELA FRANCA JOFFE is a writer, editor, and scholar based in Cape Town, South Africa. Her PhD at the University of Cape Town focused on the relationship between David Foster Wallace's literary output and the history of feminism, multiculturalism, and identity politics in the USA. She has an MA from Oxford and a BA from Harvard.

CHRISTIANE LINDNER is a curator and museologist. She has worked and studied in Vienna, London, and Amsterdam. She currently works as a freelance curator on an exhibition about contemporary Jewish life in Germany for the Jewish Museum Berlin.

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MIKELA LUNDAHL is a historian of ideas based at Gothenburg University. Her work deals with power in relation to issues as race, gender, sexuality, class, identity, and culture. Previously, she studied nominations of Bagamoyo and Stone Town, Zanzibar, as UNESCO World Heritage and the postcolonial challenge of ethnographical museums across Europe.

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LINDA SHAMMA is a conceptual artist and researcher based in Stockholm, Sweden. Her work involves various forms of art, such as museum and gallery exhibitions, as well as public works and academic research. She is best known for her unconventional depictions of the Virgin Mary.

GCOBANI SIPOYO is a heritage officer at the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). His work employs a multidisciplinary approach to heritage management by engaging various communities on what constitutes heritages in the New South Africa, on behalf of the state.

MEGHNA SINGH is a visual artist and a researcher. Blurring boundaries between documentary and fiction, she creates immersive environments highlighting issues of humanism. She is a PhD candidate at the University of Cape Town and an associate fellow at the Centre for Migration and Society at the University of the Witwatersrand.

MARK STERN is an Associate Professor at Colgate University in upstate New York. He has been an honorary Research Associate at the Centre for African Studies, School of African and Gender Studies, Anthropology and Linguistics, University of Cape Town.

DIRK-JAN VISSER is a visual storyteller based in the Netherlands. Collaborating with creative minds from different backgrounds, he tells independent stories with a strong visual narrative. His publishing platforms vary – from mainstream media to books, from interactive documentaries to exhibitions – as long as the form serves the story.

NICOLA VISSER is a dance animateur based in Aarhus, Denmark. She has been Artistic Director of Remix Dance Company, based in South Africa, and is currently Creative Producer and Collaborating Artist with the Danish company Wunderland.

NICK SHEPHERD is Associate Professor of Archaeology and Heritage Studies at Aarhus University in Denmark. Until recently, he was Associate Professor of African Studies and Archaeology at the University of Cape Town, where he convened the graduate program in Heritage and Public Culture in Africa. During 2017–2018 he was Artist-in-Residence at the Reinwardt Academy of the Amsterdam University of the Arts.

HEDLEY TWIDLE is a writer, teacher, and scholar based at the University of Cape Town. His collection of essays and creative non-fiction, *Firepool: Experiences in an Abnormal World*, was published in 2017 by Kwela Books. His next book, *Experiments With Truth: Narrative Non-fiction and the Coming of Democracy in South Africa*, will appear in 2019.

ILZE WOLFF co-directs Wolff Architects with Heinrich Wolff and is a fellow at the Centre for Humanities Research, UWC. In 2016/2017 she was the recipient of the L'erma C International Prize for Scholarly Works in Modern and Contemporary Art and Architecture, Rome, for her dissertation *Unstitching Rex Trueform, The Story of an African Factory*, published in 2018.

ERIK WONG is a graphic designer, art-director, and teacher. He runs a village café/space for work and research in the northwest of Groningen, the Netherlands.

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PARTICIPANTS IN THE 2015-2018 WALKING SEMINARS Hedley Twidle, Meghna Singh, Barry Christianson, Gcobani Sipoyo, Daniela Franca Joffe, Ilze Wolff, Henric Benesh, Christine Hansen, Linda Shamma, Lesley Green, Dirk-Jan Visser, Hannah Loewenthal, Nicola Visser, Glen Ashton, Steven Robins, Khuram Hussain, Martin Høybye, Mark Stern, Bob Crezee, Hester Dibbits, Marloes Willemse, Jasmijn Rana, Noa Rudolph, Jan-Dirk Gardenier, Erik Wong, Ana Ramos, Christiane Lindner, Sinem Cerrah, Lea Grüter, Elena Melkumova, Yuqi Bao, Flora Greenberg, Heidi Elena Stanionyte, Lilly Marlene Peterson, Karyn Larson, Purity Senewa Kinaiyia, Roberta Bertini Viégas, Marcela Zafra Durán, Paula da Costa Gargioni, Carla Sofia Galli, Lisa Bakker, Marina Piquet Fernandes, Elias Osorio, Erin Tulloch, Yulia Dolinina, Vittoria Ramirez Zanquetta, Ghislaine Schlechta, Chen Zhixi, Jannyke Kloosterman, Camila Miorelli, Andrea Lagrutta, Laura van Westbroek

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Nick Shepherd's period as artist-in-residence was a cooperation between the Reinwardt Academy and the AIR program of the Amsterdam University of the Arts. The Amsterdam University of the Arts invites the artist-in-residence to inspire students and teachers by confronting them with topical developments and issues from arts practice. These tailor-made AIR programs focus on innovation and connection in an international and multidisciplinary context. Shepherd taught for the Reinwardt Academy's Master of Museology, a program that is always looking to incorporate in its curriculum innovative and creative ways to research and experience heritage, both in- and outside the traditional museum setting.

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