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CONTEMPORARY
ART GALLERY & STUDIO

Designs of Living

17 March - 16 April 2011

Designs of Living

Exhibition essay

Anne McLaren

Eric Duplan

Sello Mahlangu

Lucas Thobeyane

EXHIBITION ESSAY

Elfriede Dreyer

This exhibition forms part of a series of exhibitions that will take place in 2011: Designs of time, Designs of living, Designs of nature and Designs of self. The idea is to link the four exhibitions in terms of how individuals live and 'design' their lives from within societies and how they operate in history, time and contexts. In Designs of living contemporary lifestyles and conditions in the context of the Global South are investigated, aspects of domesticity and the personal ordering of and interaction with space and environment.

Over the past decade-and-a-half, globalising processes and its ever-increasing expansion of the media in social, televisual and telecommunication networks have resulted in more and better knowledges, as well as new opportunities and an induced pace of transformation in many cultures. With reference to views on conditions in the globalising world such as those of Francis Fukuyama's The end of history and the last man (1992) and Immanuel Wallerstein's postulations on the leveling effect of capitalism, Flemish cultural theorist Rik Pinxten (2006:79) argues that a Macdonaldising of the world provides a too superficial and simplistic answer to growing cultural uniformity. Wallerstein (1999) maintains for instance that: "The derunalization of the world is on a fast upward curve. It has grown continuously over 500 years, but most dramatically since 1945. It is quite possible to foresee that it will have largely disappeared in another 25 years. Once the whole world-system is deruralized, the only option for capitalists is to pursue the class struggles where they are presently located. ... Even with the increased polarization of real income not only in the world-system as a whole but within the wealthiest countries, the political and market sophistication of the lower strata continues to grow."

Pinxten (2006:81) argues that cultures are forever voluntarily hybridising and continually adapting a part of their ownness to new circumstances and new offerings, which do come with losses. Of seminal importance to him (Pinxten 2006:82) is that the claiming of an identity should go hand-in-hand with the understanding that identity is synonymous with habitual change. In many parts of Africa, there has been a modernist cultural 'makeover', and artistshave been facilitated in their processes of letting the world know who and where they are and what they are doing.

Globalisation processes have seeped into Africa; Internet cafés are found in most rural areas, most artists have television and many make use of computer technology. Interactive machines designed for providing information in aquariums, museums, bookshops, shopping centres, automatic banks, library systems, the Internet, and so on, spring to mind. This is very evident in the paintings of Anne McLaren and the video production of Sello Mahlangu abounding with power stations; high-density skyscrapers; sub-stations and other systems polluting the city; big screen television; sub-zero refrigerators; hijackings; non-conductive webbing; headlines; generators; monitors; energy flows; and other images evoking dystopia African modernism. There are blow-ups, explosions and energy bursts. It is a world that is presented and represented as a threatening, cataclysmic setting in which the battle to survive is predominant.

In Eric Duplan's work these technological, social and engineered systems of thinking have been deconstructed into patterns of iconographic systems and barely visible grids that seemingly hold this human-made fragile world together. Frank Hendriks (1999:sp) describes this world as "Post-industrialisation … associated with the coming of the informational city. The informational city is a centre of strategic decision-making about production processes which are often taking place somewhere else. With the help of modern means of communication, this could easily be at the other end of the world … . This explains why many cities invest in so-called 'knowledge-centres' (technopoles, science parks, universities, archives, museums) as well as in other facilities that may attract knowledge-industries or knowledge-workers … ." The painted ruptures and crevices in the surfaces of his City skin recall Jacques Derrida for whom the metaphor of the slit, the crevice and the rupture occupied a central position in his philosophy: the crevice through which the yet unnameable glimmer beyond the closure can be glimpsed (Derrida 1976). It can be ruptures in a world self-confidently entrenched in ideals of progress, or the crevices in entities and systems that forever propel growth, new meanings and innovation through divergence and mutation. In Duplan's work, the ruptures could maybe be viewed as in the surface and artifice of the technological condition, revealing only glimpses of a different, pre-globalised life. Human form and nature have been transmuted into a symbolic language of compressed signs, comprehensible only to those caught up in the posthuman matrix.

When experiencing the onslaught of new technologies and the antagonism of urban territories, untrained artists from rural African communities could experience intimidation and coercion, but as history has shown, many of these artists choose to embrace Otherness and the advantages of the capitalist globalising world. Bhabha (1994:329) cautions that it is too easy to consider the discourses on minorities as symptoms of the postmodern condition, since the narratives of minority communities – also smaller rural communities - "substantializes cultural difference, and constitutes a 'split-and-double' form of group identification … [illustrated] through a specifically 'anti-colonialist' contradiction of the public sphere." The problem arises when, as Zigmunt Bauman (2007:82) argues, "The real powers that shape the conditions under which we all act these days flow in global space, while our institutions of political action remain by and large tied to the ground; they are, as before, local." The harsh realities of dystopian everyday life in South Africa are evident in conditions of people on the move, homelessness, violence and xenophobia. Such conditions are depicted in the work of Lucas Thobeyane who originates from a RDP town in a remote area of Limpopo. Most of these rural untrained artists utilise art to try and find ways out of the politically and culturally imposedrestrictions and most of these works utilise a naturalistic form of representation.

In the global market, art production is a matter of transcultural co-dependency where appropriation features prominently. In the Altermodern manifesto, Nicolas Bourriaud (2009) aptly extrapolated this relationship:
"More generally, our globalised perception calls for new types of representation: our daily lives … depend now on trans-national entities, short or long-distance journeys in a chaotic and teeming universe. … Artists translate and transcode information from one format to another, and wander in geography as well as in history."

Sources quoted
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Bauman, Z. 2007. *Liquid Times: living in an age of uncertainty.* Cambridge: Polity.
Pinxten, R and De Munter, K. 2006. *De cul turele eeuw.* Antwerpen/Amsterdam: Houtekiet.
Wallerstein, I. 1999. Globalization or the age of transition? A long-term view of the trajectory of the world-system. [O] Available: http://fbc.binghamton.edu/iwtrajws.htm. Accessed: 8 March 2011.

Sello Mahlangu

Artist's statement

Xenophobia Mars Legacy, 2010

My artwork takes a critical view of social, cultural and political issues. In my work, I deconstruct the South African dream, the spirit of Ubuntu, the Rainbow Nation and Democracy which was preached by South African iconic leaders. Having engaged subjects as diverse as the Xenophobia, and foreign and local languages, my work reproduces utopian visuals of a metro city, arranging them into abstract layered pieces.

The color black and white establishes a surrealistic, dream-like quality and suggests notions of deterioration of the spirit of Ubuntu, The work formally acknowledges the different locations where xenophobic attacks took place while the monologue provides clues to foreigner's state of mind.

Do we value the language, accent or origin of an individual to be accepted in South Africa? During research and production, new areas of interest arise and lead to the next body of work.

Artist's biography

Sello Mahlangu was born in Temba (North of Pretoria). Even though Mahlangu's schooling did not offer him the chance to engage with the visual arts, Mahlangu maintained his interest in are until he was able to pursue his multimedia studies through Allenby Campus and Unisa. Mahlangu has worked as a freelance illustrator for Nasou via Afrika (former Media24 division) and a graphic designer with Impact Communication as well as a tattooist for Zeelahcrane Tattoo Parlour.

Artist's CV

Education

2000 - Matriculated
2001 - Diploma in Office Administration
2003 - Prestige Certificate in Multimedia and Digital Art
2007 - Bachelors Degree in Multimedia and Digital Art (current)

Major Projects (selected)

2005 - The launch of Brutal Fruit (strawberry flavour)
2005 - SAB Miller City 2 City
2005 - The Launch of Castle Lager 9644
2007 - Designing of National Consumer Tribunal logo
2008 - Development of Pan South African Language Board CI Manual
2009 - African Jazz Magazine
2009 - FIFA 2009 Confederations Cup for Mangaung Municipality
2010 - FIFA 2010 City of Tshwane

Sello Mahlangu, *Xenophobia Mars Legacy,* 2010
Video production

Sello Mahlangu, *Xenophobia Mars Legacy,* 2010
Video production

Anne McLaren

Anne McLaren, *Planes,* 2010
Oil on canvas
234.5 cm x 112.5 cm

Anne McLaren was born in 1983 in Middleburg, Mpumalanga and studied at the University of Pretoria where she obtained her Masters degree. Anne is currently teaching Arts and Culture as well as Visual Arts at Pretoria Boys High School. Since 2006 she has been regularly participating in group exhibitions locally and nationally and was a Sasol 2010 finalist. In recent years Anne focused her body of work on the theme of the African Modern: Street Worlds and Urban Art in Contemporary South African Artworks; globalisation, about the city as a place of infinite possibilities, meetings, connections and interactions and about roads, the arteries in and out of the body of the city.

Anne McLaren, *Daybreak*, 2010
Oil on canvas
90 cm x 112.5 cm

Anne McLaren, *Night time sky*, 2010
Oil on canvas
90 cm x 112.5 cm

Anne McLaren, *Sunset boulevard*, 2010
Oil on canvas
229 cm x 112.5 cm

The city is created by the ways in which people inhabit it and work upon it: building houses, roads, superstructures, cities, mining and farming. This human-made world, a form of second nature, is the landscape which my own work arises from. My work has been developed through mixing forms of painting and drawing which creates its own visual language. The city is created by the ways in which people inhabit it and work upon it: building houses, roads, super-structures, cities, mining and farming. This human-made world, a form of second nature, is the landscape which my own work arises from. My work has been developed through mixing forms of painting and drawing which creates its own visual language.

My work explores interests and concerns about the Africanisation of Johannesburg and Pretoria as these cities become more globalised and turn into Afropolises. The Africanisation of Johannesburg and Pretoria is not simply about the multicultural demographics on the streets, but also about how people interact with each other, how their worlds mingle and impact on each other. What happens on the street in the sense of people living their many and complicated lives is also part of Africanisation. Street art, graffiti, banners, objects made of wire, tin, paintings, wall art – what you see on the street - attests to this in its many mixes of content, audience, media, market and style.

Cities have been imagined as places of infinite possibilities, meetings, connections and interactions; and the roads - the arteries in and out of the body of the city - are pointers to all those possible conjunctions. These cities have also been imagined as places of bondage and exile, and as sites of the production of culture that have their darkly grim counterpart in the lived experience of crime, poverty and sickness which accompany human habitation when it is crowded, dislocated, disjunctive and engaged in business.

The cities I paint are Afropolises by default – a default that is the changed political hegemony at one level. By painting an elegy for and of the cities which have necessarily lost the African or indigenous way of constructing knowledge because they are urban by definition, built to accommodate business, capital, flows of money, globalised, impersonal and technocratic, I remind viewers of the downside of urbanism.

The intensely schematised references to the industrial constructions, buildings and objects experienced on the street in a very subdued palette are not used as alienating devices to

Anne McLaren, *Blue signals*, 2010
Oil on canvas
160.5 cm x 112.5 cm

remove the viewer from the experience of the city. They become cipher which point to significant elements in the city as experienced and can be read as secret, complex signifiers to the multiple levels of interaction, exchange, commerce, trafficking going on in the city. The complicated patterns, the syntax of the city's discourses are alluded to in the repetitions and part repetitions of the paintings. At the same time the perspective is distorted, flattened out so as to further compel the onlooker into a closer reading, if sense is to be made of the artwork.

My work reflects my own sense of being in the cities which are crowded with lost histories, forgotten people, stories which are only alluded to. The cities represented in the paintings beg for many responses according to the imagination of its city dwellers. The layered quality of the paint speaks of the endless layers of construction and erasure, build up and implosion, flourishing and decay which characterise even such youthful cities as Johannesburg and Pretoria. The darkly emotional and seductive quality of the city for rural dwellers is conveyed in the black and grey tones expressively applied.

The histories of exploitation in South African cities are suggested as well as a certain melancholy for a new order that remains inchoate, lost in the bewildering but hardly understood shadows and lights which give so little access to any human figures. All the figures portrayed are turned away, engaged in their own interiority and not accessible to the viewer except as shapes.
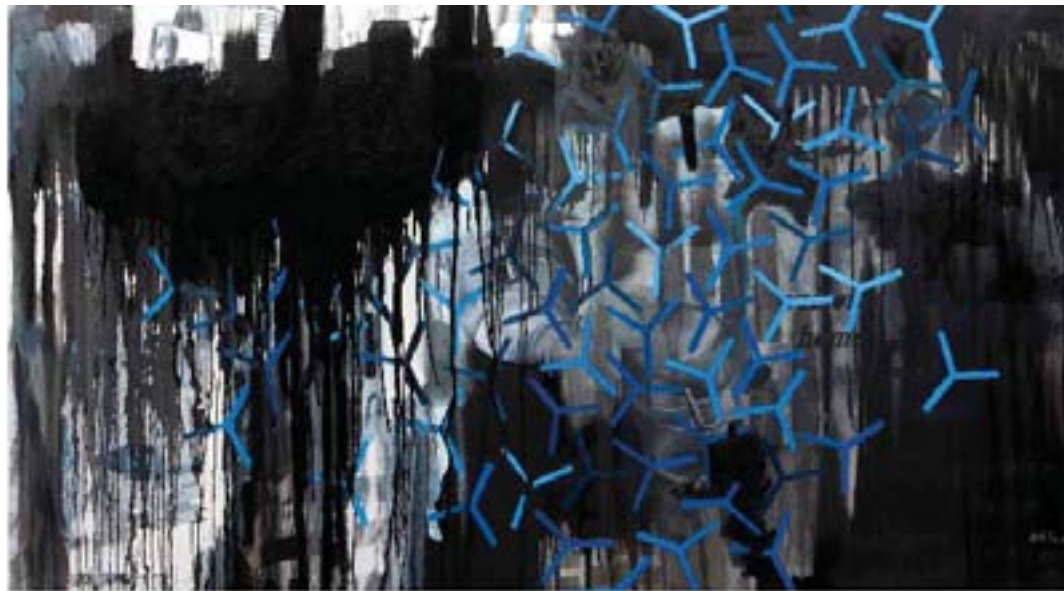

Anne McLaren, *Reach for the murky skies*, 2010
Oil on canvas
90.5 cm x 112.5 cm

Anne McLaren, *The Assembly*, 2010
Oil on canvas
90.5 cm x 112.5 cm

Anne McLaren, *Fire through the window*, 2010
Oil on canvas
164.5 cm x 112.5 cm

Anne McLaren, *Wired*, 2010
Oil on canvas
200 cm x 112.5 cm

Anne McLaren, *City Congestion*, 2010
Oil on canvas
231.5 cm x 112.5 cm

Lucas Thobeyane

Artist's statement:

My *Tribute to Jackson Hlungwane*, who passed away last year, shows a man wearing a jacket, which symbolises his importance and the elevated position he enjoyed in all of Venda and the world. Jackson influenced all the artists in his area and was the most important artist of Venda. He was like prophet. He was struggling with sores on his leg and was therefore always walking with a kierie. These sores he tried to heal with fire, therefore also the burning marks on the work. This shows that although you are famous and important, you still struggle with certain things. Hlungwane considered this problem as a sign of his sins.

Lucas Thobeyane, *Tribute to Jackson Hlungwane*, 2011
Stinkwood
167.5cm x 28cm x 21cm

Tap 1 shows lack of water and *Tap 2* abundance of water. Water is the most important thing for anyone; if you don't have it you will die. In a way it symbolises following good council or bad council, trying to find truth and goodness in life. Then the water becomes like blessing. The frog in *Tap 2* represent the people who council us and in this case it is good council. The baboon in *Tap 2* is my token and symbol: I am just like an ordinary baboon living close to nature and working with what nature can provide me.

Lucas Thobeyane in an interview with Elfriede Dreyer, 6 March 2011

Lucas Thobeyane, *Tap 1*, 2011
Stinkwood
159cm x 30cm x 40cm

Lucas Thobeyane, *Tap 2*, 2011
Stinkwood
171cm x 26.5cm x 32cm

Biography

Lucas Thobeyane was born in Ga-Nkoana Village, Sekhukhune District, in 1973. He now lives and works in Ga- Nkoana Village as a practicing artist.

Artist's CV

Lucas Thobeyane has participated in major exhibitions such as:

Polokwane Art Museum;
ABSA Art Gallery, Johannesburg;
Franco Mozambique Museum;
Sasol Gallery, Stellenbosch;
Gordart Gallery, Johannesburg;
Sasol New Signatures Competition;
Absa L'Atelier; Spier Contemporary 2007/08;
Spier Contemporary 2009/10.
Cities in Transition, Fried Contemporary Art Gallery 2010.

Eric Duplan

Eric Duplan, *NOISE N'5*, 2011
Oil on stretched canvas
1100mm x 900mm

Artist's CV

1989	Design Animation Rosebank, Johannesburg.
1990-1991	Seapoint, Cape Town.
1992	Framework Norwood, Johannesburg.
1993-1994	Primeart Claremont, Cape Town.
1995	Bordeaux Street Gallery, Franschoek, Cape.
1996	Gallery 68, Church Street, Cape Town.
1998	Millennium Gallery. Pretoria
1999	Albertein Gallery, Simon's Town, Cape.
2000	Dorp Street Gallery, Stellenbosch
2000	The Changing Screen Exhibition, Johannesburg
2001	Dorp Street Gallery, Stellenbosch
2003	Dorp Street Gallery, Stellenbosch
2003	Dorp Street Gallery, Stellenbosch
2004	Art CoZa, Parktown North, Johannesburg
2004	Art Space, Johannesburg
2004	Art Now, South Africa, (selected group show) Gallery Morena, Chicago, USA
2004	Art Space @ Harries, Pretoria
2005	Art Space,Fairlands, Johannesburg
2005	Dawid's choiceKKNK 2005
2005	Dawid's choice, AARDKLOP 2005
2006	Dawid's choice, KKNK 2006 Yearly Spring exhibition Held at the studio on the farm.
2006	Carol Lee FIneart, Johannesburg
2006	Thea Skukan Gallery, Pretoria, Group show with Rebecca Tetley
2007	Karoo Art House Gallery, Pretoria, group show (Eric Duplan, Rebecca Tetley, Johan Moolman and Cecile Heysteck)
2007	Carol Lee Fineart, Johannesburg
2007	Riaan Bolt, Johannesburg – Antique Fair
2007	Carol Lee Fineart, Johannesburg
2008	Dawid's Choice Johannesburg, Third one man show
2008	Carol Lee Fineart, Encounter Exhibition, Johannesburg
2008	Unisa Art Gallery, Intervention, Pretoria
2009	*Suburb*, Fried Contemporary, Pretoria
2009	Carol Lee Fineart, Johannesburg
2009	Posters, Investment Art Gallery, Loop Street, curated by Carla Crafford
2010	*Cities in Transition*, Fried Contemporary, Pretoria.

Eric Duplan, *MANUSCRIPT*, 2011
Oil on stretched canvas
600mm x 2000mm

Artist's statement

Notions of the imaginary, myth and memory have always been central to the articulation of the psychospace of the city, just as the sociological imagination is continually recast in the changing realm of new technologies which has fundamentally altered the ontology of the city as space of travel, mobility and transitivity.

Eric Duplan's mapping of the city becomes a form of individualist symbolic language that in abstract way relates to journey, discovery and road, always probing deeper and peeling off and stripping the layers of the city. His work deals with a kind of posturban condition where life in the city is a restless, disrupting state of being in-between places or liminality.

In my work technological, social and engineered systems of thinking have been deconstructed into a grid that seemingly hold our fragile world together. Human form and nature have been transmuted into a symbolic language of compressed signs, comprehensible only to those caught up in the posthuman matrix.

Elfriede Dreyer

Eric Duplan, *SKIN (detail)*, 2011
Oil on stretched canvas
1600mm x 1800mm

Eric Duplan, *SKIN*, 2011
Oil on stretched canvas
1600mm x 1800mm

Designs of Self

2 June - 9 July 2011

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Exhibition essay

Erna Bodenstein

Collen Maswanganyi

Celia de Villiers

Amos Letsoala

Diane Victor

Exhibition essay

Designs of self

Elfriede Dreyer

In the symbolic representation of the body through the rendering of the physical and 'mediated' body, artists use very different techniques and media to express their understanding of the body as well as its differing technological circumstances. Warhol's serialised constructions of the self could be considered as a kind of mimetic defense to consumerism. When artists experience traumatic events, these could be reworked as a symbolic order and a defense against the impact thereof, thereby providing a sense of catharsis.

To this effect, the ar'tworks on exhibition in Designs of space display a varied array in media that have been used to comment about identity and self. The ethereal stains and smoke deposits of Diane Victor comment as much on changing perceptions and structures in society and its impact on identity, as the washes and .uid media of Erna Bodenstein and the soft blurry and dispersing use of charcoal by Amos Letsoala. In turn Collen Maswanganyi comments on technological development in rural and RDP areas, entailing microwave and surveillance technologies and the impact thereof on societies and its citizens.

In '10 years, 100 artists: art in a democratic South Africa', Sophie Perryer (2004:6) states that since 1994 artists have been freed from the imperatives of the post-political environment to make work in response to the socio-political conditions of apartheid South Africa, and instead became concerned with complex issues relating to individual identity. In similar vein, Tumelo Mosaka (Perryer 2004:19) maintains that since 1994 many South African artists have moved away from working in a purely social protest idiom that was "regarded as an accessible vocabulary within the community. … By forging new identities of self, more and more artists looked within them-selves to question the meaning of freedom and democracy. The dialogue between the public and the private became a highly contested terrain that addressed a struggle for self-representation." Newly emerging perceptions of self regard, for instance, ideas of sameness and difference under in.uence of the commodi.cation of the self by the media and

the consumerist industry. Prescriptive and in.uential factions such as the fashion industry and printed media induce a sense of constricted identity, often indicating identity markers as localised in the exterior like clothing, accessories and other possessions. Yet, such in.uences are also manifesting in the 'interior' of the body, the mind and the emotional state of the individual.

In addition, a main transforming in.uence has been the new technologies of computer culture and virtual cyberspace. According to Kalsmose Hjelmborg [Sa]), "Ideal bodies and ideal states are promoted constantly through the mass media and it has become more and more accepted that this identity is transformative. The fat person can get skinny; the evil becomes good, the ugly beautiful etc. and this is more or less a result of the free choice of the individual. The body image presented in the mass media is a picture of how our understanding of identity through the body is extended and is still changing into a more .uid concept. The question … is not so much whether there is a stabile and autonomous self as the anti.essentialists like to deny but more how the self is affected consciously or unconsciously by changes in the exterior [the outside world]."

In increasing ways artists' consciousness and experiences have been transformed by the fast globalising world and Africa in particular. Victor's works speak about new hybrid identities that are forming – not between black and white, but also with other nomadic cultures such as Chinese culture that is in.ltrating every part of the world. As a result new questions are arising with regard to the object of the gaze in visual culture, including the female .gure and her identity, and accompanying matters such as beauty, desire and values. Beauty and the beast are reframed in creolised terms and the relationships amongst human beings, the natural world and history are being altered in new unchartered territories and constellations.

Maswanganyi 's playful works indulge tropes of the gaze through images of binoculars as surveillance technology gazing at indigenous culture, represented by cattle, and TV images of targeting through the pastime of shooting birds with a catty. References to colonialist attitudes of condescending fascination with the 'primitive' character of the 'uncivilised world' are set up through these images, but articulated as play and pastime, not 'serious' business.. A parallel is drawn between the imperialism of colonialism and the spread of technologisation all over the world, even in the most rural hide away.

Whether identity is essential or constructed leads Feminist theorist Judith Butler to conclude that gender – and the body – is socially and culturally constructed. She sees gender as an effect rather than an essence and talks about performative gender that constitutes the identity it claims to be. For Butler the constructed gender assumes form through a set of repeated actions within a regulated frame that over time become solid and created the idea of substance, of a natural form of being. Identity therefore remains potentially changeable instead of given (Kalsmose Hjelmborg [Sa].

The concept of gender as constructed is very evident in Bodenstein's work that articulates notions of essential inbetween ness in contemporary South African racial terms: not quite black, not quite white; being a coconut – black on the outside, white on the inside; 'acting' white or black; post-black, post-white; and an utter sense of confusion in germs of belonging. She expresses sameness and difference as interchangeable and .nds images of dissimilarity in similarity. Her autobiographic work, referring to her position as white mother to three adopted black children, raises the Butlerian question of whether

new nations are being formed in the new cultural dispensations of racial mix through a series of recurring encounters that over time becomes constant and established. Setting up narratives of fragmented memory, references to events and ritualistic experiences, Letsoala creates a much individualised vocabulary of emerging and fused identity in the new South Africa where cultural, racial and continental boundaries are fast fading.

The work of the artists on exhibition re.ects the patterns of difference in the changing morphology of late modernism that have been creating the new sociologies of the self. Today the grand narratives of identity – articulating gender, race and sexuality neatly according to traditional understanding of sexual and racial difference - have been collapsing into blurred, contested identity spaces engendering new vocabularies and forms of social agency and structure.

Sources quoted:
Perryer, S (ed). 2004. 10 years, 100 artists: art in a democratic South Africa. Cape Town: Bell-Roberts.
Kalsmose-Hjelmborg, M [Sa]. Personal identity in contemporary art. Mille Máster en Teoría Estética del Arte Contemporáneo. Dpto. de Filoso.a (U.A.B). [O] Available: http://www.millekalsmose.com/.les/documents/kalsomse..nal_speciale5.pdf Accessed 27 May 2011.

Exhibition view: Celia de Villiers and Erna Bodenstein,
Designs of Self 2011

Erna Bodenstein

Erna Bodenstein, *Mbeki Series 2*, 201?
Ink, watercolour, masking .uid, bleach
140mm x 300mm

Artist's biography

Erna Bodenstein was born in 1958, in Pretoria. She completed her BA(FA) degree in 1980 at The University of Pretoria, and completed her MA(FA) degree (with distinction) in 1998 at The University of Pretoria.

She lectured in printmaking at The Department of Fine.Arts, UP, from 1981 to 1991 after which she lived, and produced art, in Barcelona, Spain, over a period of several years. Moving between Barcelona and South-Africa, she continued teaching as a guest lecturer at the Department of Visual Art, University of Pretoria, focusing on Conceptual/installation art. She has also lectured in art at various other art Institutions in Pretoria over the years while working as a fulltime artist.
She has participated in numerous group exhibitions, both locally and internationally since 1981.

She has produced eight solo exhibitions in South-Africa and four in Barcelona, Spain.

The artist's work have been taken up in a number of public collections, namely; The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), University of Pretoria, University of South.Africa, The Pretoria Art Museum, and ABSA Bank, Johannesburg.

Erna Bodenstein, *Lebogang*, 2011
Ink, watercolour, masking fluid, bleach
500mm x 300mm

Erna Bodenstein, *Mbeki Series 3*, 2011
Ink, watercolour, masking fluid, bleach
140mm x 300mm

Erna Bodenstein, *Mbeki Series 1*, 2011
Ink, watercolour, masking fluid, bleach
140mm x 300mm

Artist's statement

Is being-black-in-the-world different in fundamental respects to being-white-in-the-world? (South-African psychologist, Chabani Manganyi)

I found this quote in the recently released book *RaceTrouble* by Kevin Durrheim, Xoliswa Mtose and Lyndsay Brown (2011: University of KwaZulu.Natal Press).

For some time now, the content of my artwork has revolved around my three black children, daughter, Lebo (23 years), and sons Tshepi, (18 years) and Mbeki (14 years). I continue to draw on my perception and experience and .ux of their identity and reality formations within their in-between cultural situation. In addition, my sense of 'self' and my experience of my selfhood and my otherness, also shapes and impacts on their selfhood and shared identity as a 'designed' family unit.

In the privacy of our home, being an a.typical 'designed' family unit, class and the .ux and .uidity of being 'simultane-ously black-white-white-black', is endlessly debated, questioned and explored amongst ourselves. All three kids and myself marvel; (not without humour) at the interesting, sometimes painful, intricate and uncanny processes surrounding their – my – our sense of 'self' / 'otherness' in this society.

In the works created for this exhibition, I have focused my 'gaze' almost exclusively on Mbeki as an artistic vessel. Being the youngest, and having been raised almost exclusively by us since he was a baby, within the cultural sphere of a 'white', a-typical Afrikaans speaking home and the impact thereof on his cultural identity is, at this stage of his life, sometimes experienced by him as a dif.cult and serious matter. In addition he has to cope with the .ux and .uidity of adolescence.

His ongoing questioning regarding his identity and reality formation, results in an intricate map of multi-layered experi-ence within his quest to uncover his 'selfhood'. Apart from the private sphere in which this process is evolving, there is also the public side in which his identity as 'not black and not white' is the subject of scrutiny by his peers and the 'public' society, in general.

The body of my work displayed on this exhibition is based on process and serial repetition through portraiture. My 'gaze' and subjective experience and visual representation of Mbeki as an adolescent and his search for selfhood, informs the layered content of the works. No attempt is made to capture his 'soul' in these portraits. The aim, rather, is to try to visually represent the state of .ux in which his reality formation is played out, against the backdrop of being in state of being a 'normal' adolescent.

Two 'snapshots' of his face were chosen deliberately. One in which he is smiling shyly and 'innocently' and the other, showing a more introverted, almost brooding aspect of mood.

The act of using process, evolved through the initial repetitive tracing of his features from the snapshots onto paper, evolving the creation of a series of 'identical' likeness of his features. The process continued and concluded through the spontaneous addition of colour, and mark- making, involving minimal control, while relying heavily on the 'accidental'. This act resulted in a '.eeting' 'catching of a likeness and then 'letting it go' through the effects realized by the inherent .uid nature of the media (ink, watercolour, masking .uid, bleach etc) and technique.

In the .nal act of the process, Chinese 'wisdoms' were inscribed into many of the portraits, playing on the didactic nature of society and a parental wish to control and to impart (often clichéd) 'wisdoms' (or platitudes) as an act to try and aid in the 'building' of the characters of our children.

Erna Bodenstein, *Brothers Series*, 2011
From left to right:
Mbeki (500mm x 300mm)
Tshepi 1 (500mm x 300mm)
Tshepi 2 (500mm x 300mm)
Ink, watercolour, masking fluid, bleach

Collen Maswanganyi

Collen Maswanganyi, *Macrowave and microwave generation* , 2011
Corkwood, jackalberry, ndhenga and acrylic paint
60cm x 55cm x 25cm

Artist's biography

Collen Maswanganyi was born in 1977 to a family of artists. His father, Johannes Maswanganyi, was taught the skill of
by his uncle, Piet Maswanganyi and the elders in his family. Johannes Maswanganyi, a well known sculptor who has ex
both locally and internationally, passed this knowledge on to Collen, and at the age of 12 years old, Collen Maswangan
already made his .rst artwork.

Collen Maswanganyi studied Fine arts at the Technikon of the Witwatersrand (now the University of Johannesburg). H
exhibited in a number of group shows as well as Solo exhibitions. In 2005, Collen exhibited with his family, Esther, Joh
and Pastor Maswanganyi, at *Fried Contemporary Gallery*, Pretoria. He has exhibited with his father, Johannes Maswan
number of times, and in 2009 participated in *The Measure of Success* exhibition at *Artspace*, Johannesburg. Collen Ma
ganyi recently took part in the 2011 curated exhibition at ABSA's KKNK.

Maswanganyi has won several awards during his career, including being a top ten .nalist at the 2001 *Absa L' atelier* co
tion. Nine years later Maswanganyi won another merit award in the 2010 *Absa L 'atelier* competition.

Maswanganyi's work features in a number of permanent collections, including Sasol, Unisa, University of Pretoria, the
Artbank collection, DBSA and the National Library, to name a few.

Collen Maswanganyi, *This cattle is under 24hour surveillance*, 2011
Corkwood, jackalberry, ndhenga and acrylic
120cm x 48cm x 48cm

Artist's statement

This Cattle is under 24hr surveillance

There is a lot of livestock theft. Once animals are stolen, they can no longer be tracked. If techn[o]
available so one is able to track where ones animals are at all times of the day, things would be si
herds would only go and collect the animals from whatever location that they might be in.
Cellphones were once expensive, but today they are cheap. Everybody can afford to have one. [N]
once also for those with money, but today they are available and can be bought by many people.
us move from macrowave generations (ancient life) to microwave generation (modern life).

In this sculpture, the tree has camera lenses carved into it and binoculars with camou.age leaves.

Ku Hluvukile ka hina (our developed place)

This work is about the development brought about by the world cup in the Republic of South Afri
television screens in parks enable those without them to be able to watch television. This does n
only, but the animals also, and we don't know what this means to them. There are also advantage
tages of our developed place. The disadvantage is there is violence shown on television which we
over. The disadvantage is these shows can affect our children and sensitive viewers.

Macrowave and microwave generation

This work is about what the modern generations of women have in mind, or the things they think
to the ancient ones. I call the modern women the microwave generation, as they have a lot more
prepare the food the whole day. They just pick up things that they can heat up and in two minute
can then eat and go. The ancient generations that I call the macrowave generation, spent days st
to make mielie-meal. They used to spend time cooking and looking after the children.

Collen Maswanganyi, *Ku Hluvukile ka hina (our developed place),* 2011
Corkwood, jackalberry, ndhenga and acrylic paint
116cm x 54cm x 57cm

Celia de Villiers

Celia de Villiers, *Death and Desire,* 2011
Detail: *Torso of Valkyrie*
90cm x 45cm x 29cm
Brass, Copper plated Iron and Resin
Installation

The artworks of Celia de Villiers are derived from environmental triggers and cultural conventions. They address the concept of the human body as a site of agency, idiosyncrasy, subjection, and post modern identity politics. These artworks are a wry, tongue in cheek comment on contemporary social issues such as the present climate of utopian modi.cation and the denaturing of the living being. Her most recent sculptures mirror the post-human existence fantasy where the magical and the techno logical become inseparable hybrids.

The artist's work has featured in fourteen solo and .fty eight group exhibitions worldwide. She has served on selection panels, curated and juried several South African art and craft exhibitions. International companies have commissioned her textile as well as glass and resin creations. She has been a Standard Bank Resident Artist at the National Arts festival in South Africa. Some of her works are in the permanent collections of UNISA, the Le Tousserok Sun International Hotel Mauritius, American Museum of Art and Design in New York. She was awarded an art fellowship to travel to Brazil by the Sacatar foundation of California in 2004.

She holds a MA in Visual Arts Cum laude (UNISA), she attained her BA in Fine Art (UNISA) with distinction in 1998. She also has a Higher Education Diploma from Johannesburg College of Education. She has curated and adjudicated numerous exhibitions locally and abroad of which the most recent is National judge for the 23rd ABSA L' Atelier Awards for 2008, the Thami Mnyele Awards in Ekhuruleni 2009 and the PPC Cement Sculpture Awards 2010 and the 26th ABSA L' Atelier Awards in 2011. Her artworks and articles have appeared in numerous publications.

The artist travels to venues outside Gauteng to facilitate and consult for the Arts interAction community outreach initiative and has been a board member of the WasteArt Foundation and on the advisory board to the South African Department of Arts and Culture. De Villiers was nominated as a .nalist for the Woman of Sub stance (Mosadi wa Kono kono) by the Gauteng provincial government in 2006 and was a University of South Africa nominee for Woman of the Year and the winner of Ekurhuleni Mayoral Achievers Award for Job Creation in the Arts and Crafts sector during 2006 and received a marketing excellence award from UNISA in 2009.

She has lectured in Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, and Conceptual art at the University of South Africa for ten years. She has presented academic research papers at a world Conference and at Universities in South Africa, Brazil, France and Romania.

Celia de Villiers, *Death and Desire,* 2011
Detail: *Wolf Torso*
50cm x 47cm x 43 cm
Brass, Copper plated Iron and Resin
Installation

Artist's statement

Celia de Villiers believes that "Art is a conversation, an experiment between the spiritual and the physical. But it's not like science. It is more philosophical, like alchemy. The accidents, the imperfections – glass bubbles, cracks, stains and streaks – speak of human frailty, and the vulnerability of the body in performance."

De Villiers' artworks consist of multiple techniques and materials. She uses Laser cutting, Brass, Copper, Stainless steel Perspex and Resin castings to provide the conceptual underpinning of the conjunction of opposites in her work for these materials contain latent references to coagulation and dissolution

The sculptures Death and Desire focus on neo-baroque exuberance, physical adornment and masquerade commenting on the fear, anticipation and mystery of the body. With one breath the work speaks of an existential quest, with the next of neo-gothic, bizarre rituals and the abject human yearning for transcendence.

It is through emblematic representation, mythology, fantasy and metaphor that de Villiers .nds her expression. In this body of work the artist takes a satirical look at herself as a performer in the world - it is an attempt to come to an understanding of this particular liminal phase of her life. Art gives us the opportunity to reappraise the ambiguities, which surround us, and to give new meaning to them. We live in a society that dreads old age and death and propagates youth culture and beauty, to equate charm, wealth and power. Therefore the work references the .ctional designer bodies and futuristic utopian fantasy to suggest the symbiosis of human, animal & otherworldly hybrid identities. At the same time the work alludes to ancient female iconography - the Norse myth of the Valkyrie: an ambiguous shape-shifting female warrior goddess who has protective powers, but is associated with turmoil and the decision concerning the fate of life or death of soldiers in battle. The Valkyrie was believed to accompany the dead to Valhalla riding on a pack of wolves or a winged horse.

De Villiers' zodiac sign of Gemini contains a dualism, which is manifested here as sensual desire equating life impulse, juxtaposed to the negotiation of death's immanence.

Celia de Villiers, *Death and Desire,* 2011

Detail: *Valkyrie Boots* size 5

Brass, copper plated Iron and resin

Amos Letsoala

Amos Letsoala, *Fisherman*, 2011
Charcoal on paper
100cm x 71cm

Artist's biography

Amos Letsoalo is a visual artist as well as a curator at the Polokwane Art Museum .

He has served on selection panels, curated and juried several well known competetions recently. In 2010 Letsoala was a judge for the MTN Contemporary Art Awards, Letsoala was a provincial coordinator 2009.2010 competititon. He served as a judge in the 2009 National Craft Awards and was one of the national judges for the Absa L'atelier Art Competition in 2006 and a regional judge for the same compe

Recently the artists participated in a number of major exhibitions, at venues such as Fried Contemporary Art Gallery, Pretoria and Everard Read Art Gallery, Johannesburg (2010). He also participated at th Autohaus BMW, Polokwane and *Africa Now* at the World Bank, United States (2009) as well as key exhibitions such as *A Decade of Democracy,* at the South African National Gallery (Iziko Museum), Cape T tion of Africa Day, Washington DC in the United States in 2001.

Letsoala curated an exhibition of contemporary South African Crafts for the South Africa House in London in the United Kingdom, the exhibition was part of the celebrations for South Africa in London festi then SA High Commissioner in London and now the CEO of Tourism South Africa, Ms Cheryl Carolas. In 2004 Letsoala co.curated an exhibition *Initiation as a Rite of Passage* with Frank Ledimo in Grahamsto curate and put up a number of shows at the Standard Bank National Arts Festivals in Grahamstown.

Artist's statement

' … Letsoalo's work is obviously abstract or expressionistic but lies somewhere between these genres and fragments of memories of shapes, texture, .gure and objects…' – Sharlene Khan, artist & curator.

This particular works deals with Power and Dispossession. In Amos Letsoala's work, he looks into the theory of land dispossession through Power and how corruptible power is.

Amos Letsoala, *Kenang Bohle*, 2011
Charcoal on paper
100cm x 71cm

Top:
Amos Letsoala, *Kenang Bohle*, 2011
Charcoal on paper
100cm x 71cm

Bottom:
Amos Letsoala, *Maruuruu*, 2011
Charcoal on paper
100cm x 71cm

Top:
Amos Letsoala, *Phalafala*, 2011
Charcoal on paper
100cm x 71cm

Bottom:
Amos Letsoala, *Stefapano* 2011
Charcoal on paper
100cm x 71cm

Diane Victor

Artist's biography

Diane Victor was born in Witbank in 1964.
She received her BA(FA) at the University of the Witwatersrand 1986, majoring in Printmaking.

Diane Victor has worked part.time in tertiary education since 1991; teaching,drawing and printmaking. She has worked most consistently at the University of Pretoria, although also teaching at Wits Tech
Rhodes university.

Diane Victor has exhibited widely in South Africa and abroad. Her major shows include 7 solo shows at the Goodman gallery. Victor's work was included in the Art Contemporain D'Afrique du Sud group s
Contemporary South African Art show, Oslo National Museum of Contemporary Art in 1996; as well as a two.person show at the Akademie der Bildende Kunste Schillerplatz, Vienna, in 1998. Another ma
images from South Africa, at the Museum of African art, Queens and Cathedral of St John the Divine, Manhattan, New York, in 2004. Diane Victor was the 2008 Festival artist at Aardklop Art Festival in So
 Innibos.In 2011 she presented a retrospective of her work at Grinnell College in the USA and was part of the 2011 'Impressions from South Africa: 1965 to Now ' show at MOMA in New York.

Artist's statement

Perhaps the words that best describe both Diane Victor and her work is social commnent,
paradox and dichotomy. Her workexamines the underbelly of society and our lives with an
extraordinary intensity and yet the marks that she makes are exquisitely beautiful.

In this series of works Victor comments of globalisation as part of the contemporary
human condition which entails the in.ltration of cultures within cultures. In this case,
she refers to Chinese nomadic culture and how this culture is taking onthe form of new
empirialism in Africa so to speak.Diane Victor has won numerous awards (since the time
of being a student, some twenty years ago) and has exhibited widely within South Africa
and overseas.

Her work is in leading South African corporate, state and private collections (where it has
been known to stir up staff sensitivities) as well as in international collections including
the Museum of Modern Art in New York - her Disasters of Peace prints being purchased to
complement the museum's collection of Goya's Disaster's of War.

Previous page:
Diane Victor, *Miss September*, 2011
The new Colonials Series
One colour lithograph with hand colouring
Artist proof: Unique print
A2

This page:
Diane Victor, *The Lion who loved the lady*,
2011
The new Colonials Series
One colour lithograph with hand colouring
Artist proof: Unique print
A2

FABLES FOR NEW COLONIALS

These litho's are part of the project – Fables for new Colonials, which was begun in Connecticut as a series of dry points. The body of work looks satirically at the neo colonial interests currently emerging in Africa speci.cally those from china and the Far East. Unable to compete in the initial race to exploit the continent, a race dominated by Europe, the east now requiring inordinate amounts of raw resources appears to be initiating a second wave or colonial revival.
 My work seeks to examine these exchanges and all too familiar trail of exploitation that accompanies such appetites.

MISS SEPTEMBER [rhino]
The appetite for rhino horn, brought about by the superstition that the horn holds aphrodisiacal and medicinal powers is decimating our rhino population through ongoing slaughter.

THE LION WHO FELL IN LOVE WITH THE LADY
One of Essop's fables – a lion madly in love with a lady ask for her hand in marrage, the parents give permission but only if the lion agrees to have his claws and teeth removed so as not to offer future harm to the daughter. One disarmed the lion is harshly beaten and driven out by the parents.

MIGRANT LABOUR [HAN HORSE]
 The small bronze .ying horse from the Han dynasty becomes the mode of transport for a group of migrant labour miners. Flying horse is a bus company running between Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa used by many workers. Chinese interest in Africa's mineral wealth is resulting in massive open cast workings in central Africa.

 RULE OF THUMB AND RULE OF LAW
 The term ' Rule of thumb' has a unclear origin but is suspected to have originated as a term used in English common law , where by a man was allowed to give correctional discipline to his wife by beating her but was limited to using a stick no thicker then his thumb- kind justice.
The stains are quite .oral, often becoming decorative and almost beautiful, and hide the damage and bruising.

GOAT [SMOKE]
 The .rst in a series of life sized smoke drawings of animals. The animal selected are those most bred as sources of meat for our tables.

Left: Diane Victor, *Migrant Labour,* 2011
The new Colonials Series
One colour lithograph with hand colouring
Artist proof: Unique print
A2

Right: Diane Victor, *Smoke Goat,* 2011
Smoke drawing
150 cm x 120 cm

Diane Victor, *Rule of Law*, 2011
Black-and-white charcoal stain drawings
A1

Diane Victor, *Rule of Thumb*, 2011
Black-and-white charcoal stain drawings
A1

designs of nature

05–28 MAY 2011

curated by elfriede dreyer

EXHIBITION ESSAY - ELFRIEDE DREYER

JENNA BURCHELL ■ FRIKKIE EKSTEEN

CHRISTIAAN HATTINGH ■ RINA STUTZER

EXHIBITION ESSAY

For real?

Throughout the ages artists have aspired to reproduce the natural world, that is, to create illusions of the real, through various technical and mechanical means. Pretwentieth-century Western art expression was premised in the imitation of the natural world and illusion, alternatively phrased as the simulation of the real. Art production today is ambivalent in many senses, but especially so with regard to the issue of representation. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries not only marked a time of avant-garde vistas opened up by photography, but also a time when the drive to represent the observed world in a naturalistic mode ceased to a large extent and the inner world as well as self-based, non-shared representations were generated. This was a time when art, in the wake of the invention of the camera, aspired to invent new forms of representation, mostly in counter-direction to naturalism.

In contemporary terms, through the avenues created by computer technology, various alternatives to the notion of illusion in the context of visual representation have emerged. The concepts of 'cyberspace'[1], 'virtual reality', 'simulation' and 'hyperreal' are in varying ways and degrees related to the notion of illusion. There are many different interpretations of these concepts, but most technotheorists view the term 'cyberspace' as describing the broadest domain of artificial reality and as encompassing all its mutations. However, the term "the artificial", as coined by Massimo Negrotti is more useful as an umbrella concept that includes all the afore-mentioned nonreals as well as manufactured objects and therefore describes artificial reality in the broadest sense.

At the root of the construction of the artificial lie the human needs to invent something new as well as to reproduce a real. David Trend supports this view and interprets cyberspace (as part of the broad domain of the artificial) as a fiction, arguing that it " is not so much a 'new' idea as it is a repository for a variety of conventional ideologies disguised as novelty" (Trend 2001:295). Negrotti views the thrust behind the construction of the artificial as grounded in the real. He argues that "[the] world's events enter the mind through channels which are compatible with it, and, in the same way, the mind processes the events in the world in ways that derive from its nature and from its individual and species history, including the cultural" (Negrotti 1999:11). He argues further that the concepts of observation, reproduction, invention and representation, as grounded in the real, underlie the drive to create the artificial (Negrotti 1999:8). The Cartesian duality of mind and world, which can be deconstructed as the dichotomy of the real and the artificial, springs to mind here. The artificial is always a subjective reality and a controlled interface. Negrotti (1999:15) argues that "[It] does not matter what the world is in itself, since the only ways we have at our disposal to describe the world are our representations of it." Since it is a controlled interface, humans feel at ease with the artificial. Kiku Adatto argues that "Today we pride ourselves on our

knowledge that the camera can lie, that pictures can be fabricated, packed, and manipulated. We have even developed an affection for artifice, an appreciation of slick production values whether in political campaigns, beer commercials, or a favorite movie" (Adatto 1993:2).

Michael Heim (1990:41) defines artifice and cyberspace as follows: "... each world is made from previous world's, and each process of worldmaking proceeds by composing or decomposing older materials, by identifying repetitions and evolving new patterns, by deleting and supplementing, by organizing and ordering aspects of the world(s) already there". To Heim (1990:42), cyberspace is essentially a "broad electronic net" in which virtual realities are spun as products of the imagination, a process very evident in the resourceful worlds created by Christiaan Hattingh. According to the artist, his work is concerned with "induced ambiguity, or simply shifts in meaning, as a result of mathematical abstraction" and there is "some reference to the interplay between mathematical analysis and mathematics as a creative force in our technological age." Heim (2001:70) develops a metaphysics of cyberspace and raises questions such as whether allegiance to one single reality should be pledged, arguing that underneath all such speculations runs an ontological continuity that connects Platonic knowledge of ideal forms to the information systems of the matrix (Heim 2001:73). Such ontological questions need to address the status of cyberspace as construct, the phenomenon itself, and the way entities exist in cyberspace, as reflected in Hattingh's work.

Also relevant to the notion of illusion is the concept of simulation as coined by Jean Baudrillard. His theories of representation problematise the notions of real and illusion. In *Simulations* (1983), Baudrillard's first important step toward theorising the postmodern, he presents the concept of the "simulacrum" – the copy without an original – and "simulation" as an attempt to arrive at a closer understanding of the concepts of mass reproduction that characterise our electronic media culture. In his essay, 'Simulacra and simulations', Baudrillard describes a movement from "representation" (of something real) to "simulation" (with no secure reference to reality), which changes the relation between sign and referent, so that the connection - once presumed to exist, between sign or image and the reality to which both were thought to refer – is lost. As evident in Hattingh's work, reality is then nothing more than a map of simulated signs, a virtual territory.

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1. The journalist and science fiction writer, William Gibson, coined the concept of 'cyberspace' in his novel, Neuromancer (1986). The word 'cyber', derived from the Greek kybernan which means 'steer' and freely translates as 'into the space of the future', has since developed into the signal word for anything online and digital. Mutating in various directions and forms, the concept of cyberspace has come to mean a "new world", a transmutation of the old world as we have known it thus far; not a totally new world but one that is folded in the old one.

In Jenna Burchell's simulationist *Portrait of Anderson* (2011), an uncanny relationship is set up between the naturalistic depiction of a set of human mouths, a depiction of the natural real that through the isolation of the human detail and its severance from 'meaningful' depiction becomes a forensic portrait and a comment on the dissonant side of human existence. Surreal ambivalence becomes hyperreal in the methodological and calculated placement of human parts in an all-white, sterile constellation. Paired with *Lilies* (2011), a discordant relationship is set up between the natural and the artificial due to the unsettling voices played when the wire 'stems' are touched. The work is presented two-dimensionally and as "framed painting", yet it is entirely electronic and a circuit that plugs into the midi port which converts the touch signals into binary code As the artist states, "The gentle flow of the stems and grounding circuit mimic the nature of the lily plant. The viewer can explore and play with the interactivity of the artwork to discover the multifaceted portrait held within." Burchell's dialogical works speak about displacement from the real, but also about an eroticisation of the Other, a desire for alternative reality and a fusion of polyphonic interconnecting elements where the cyberspatial network becomes the ultimate 'metanarrative'. The works speak of desire incarnate, of solipsism in the return to the self where the mouths speak but are not heard and the speaking voices are without origin. Whilst *Portrait of Anderson* and *Lilies* personify disembodiment, simultaneously there is a reference to the epistemic structures by which physical bodies have become culturally encoded, and as such, ascribe meaning to gender, identity and the physical body itself.

In Frikkie Eksteen's *The Understudies* and *Stock Characters*, 2011, paintings from an original series of official paintings in the University of Pretoria's collection (which includes two of his own commissioned portraits) were digitised and merged to produce new figures. Although on the face of it following in the painterly, chiaroscuro genre of Renaissance portraitists such as Holbein, who the artist has studied and appropriated in other works, an anti-aesthetic seems more prevalent in the portraits through the evocation of an anxious psychosis claiming a peculiar genealogy and heritage, and becoming disturbing in their photographic clarity. Before the photographic camera was invented, one of art's prime functions was to communicate visually and document information such as on-court events, wars, historical and other events. Another major expectation of the artist was the ability to produce a faithful portrait, a function that the camera largely took over. Eksteen's works hark back to this tradition and subverts it simultaneously, therefore 'recording' the illusion but also presenting the phenomenon in a way that both affirms and disguises its fictive status. His characters emerge out of nowhere, from an undefined chaos, but they remain in liminality, almost suspended in the grip of intense ultramarine blue in the large The Understudies, and seized by the grid of posthumanity in the smaller works.

As part of this gendered human-machine relationship, the idea of the nomad - both in the 'real' urban environments and cyberspace - is prominent, due to new technologies that have fundamentally altered the ontology of contemporary living and especially the city as a space of travel, mobility and transitivity. Already in the 1990s cybernauts predicted a shift to a telemediated and posturban society, the logic of which brought with it inevitable global travelling, urban decentralisation and even urban dissolution.

In Rina Stutzer's *An accumulation of Change II*, 2011, planet earth has become a global village, small and manageable. It reflects the contemporary city's ontology that manifests as a condition of transitivity evident in the mobility of communication networks and high-volume traffic on highways. Images in other works such as feathers referring to birds in flight and caravans speak about being constantly on the move.The caravan may be seen as representing identity as a posthuman being, super-technological. It is a floating capsule, displaced and alien in the natural world, functioning according to its own rules and systems - heterotopic like Foucault's idea of prison that contains a group of people isolated from the rest of society. Stutzer's work depict posturban condition as essentially liminal and always being in-between places, neither comfortable in nature nor in worlds of artifice, further articulated through the use of the transforming patina of bronze as medium.

The artworks exhibited on *Designs of nature* thus comment on technologies that are encroaching upon our inner space, invading our bodies and consciousnesses. The participating artists articulate views of nature (as the real) that range from the personal and the sentimental to nature as a geometric system through algorithmic reworking. Cosmetic intercession and artificial transmutation of the natural world interface with references to the human experience of nature. In the work, transience, mutation and fragmentation run riot in the creation of imaginary designs of nature.

Designs of nature forms part of a series of exhibitions curated by Elfriede Dreyer in 2011. The other exhibitions in this series are *Designs of time*, *Designs of living* and *Designs of self*. The four exhibitions are linked in terms of how individuals live and 'design' their lives from within societies and how they operate in history, time and contexts.

Elfriede Dreyer. Pretoria, May 2011

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JENNA BURCHELL
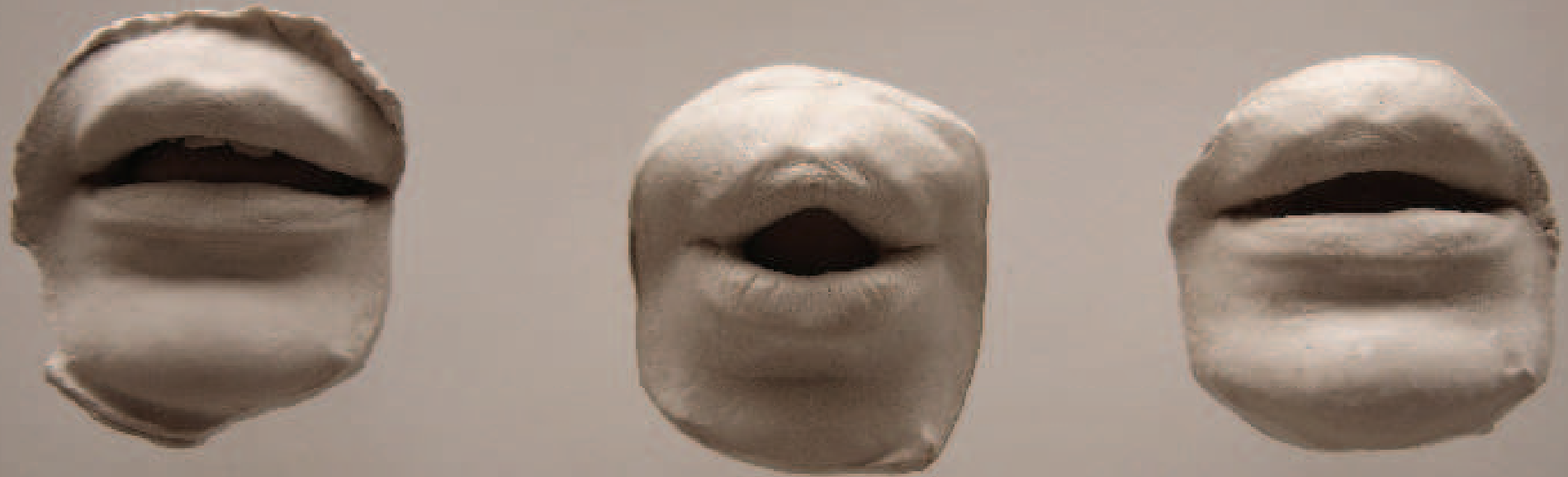
Jenna Burchell, *Portrait of Anderson (detail)*, 2011
Marble cement
1070 x 1570 mm

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Jenna Burchell is a young and upcoming installation artist born in 1985. After her parents immigrated to East Asia, Burchell developed an inquisitive eye towards relationships when struggling to communicate through technology. She also observed the organic aging process on her family as witnessed at yearly intervals.

In 2004 Burchell began exploring the relationship between organic and technological change in a series of artworks during her Fine Arts degree at the University of Pretoria. In 2006, a trip to Europe opened her eyes to the field of interactive installation art, a medium that became her field of specialisation when she graduated in 2007.

Burchell is currently (2011) working as an exhibition designer in the fields of national and private history and heritage. As a result, Burchell's new series of work has an added theme of preservation and object display. Burchell is steadily building a following for her art which aspires to immerse the viewer in an honest, interactive and tactile experience of art.

Jenna Burchell, *Portrait of Anderson*, 2011
Marble cement
1070 x 1570 mm

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

In our fleeting environment we need to question what is changing from the natural into the mechanical and how that affects changes onto us as individuals. My artworks are meant to open this discourse by parodying the Natural with the Mechanical by sculpturing spaces or mental ' inscapes' of people in their context.

Through these inscapes, the viewer can find in his or her own mind how each artwork can exhibit the multi-layering of Self (natural) in communication or miscommunication with Other (mechanical).

Portrait of Anderson, 2011

This artwork of the mouth in motion forms a record of the South African artist Audrey Anderson over a period of a month while her mouth was being cast. Each mouth sculpture captures a fragmented syllable of a repeated sentence that has personal significance to Anderson. The small nuances and habitual gestures that are caught here define her talking manner, capturing within them the personality, though process and portrait of her as an individual.

The mouth is displayed as a mechanism, isolated from the context of the face. This refers to the philosophical theory that all natural phenomena, including human behavior, can be explained by physical causes and processes. The mouths have been framed like heritage objects, preserved for interpretation or misinterpretation for those who follow the fluid design of her natural speech pattern.

Jenna Burchell, *Portrait of Anderson*, 2011
Marble cement
1070 x 1570 mm

Lillies, 2011

The tension between the natural and the mechanical in Lilies pulls apart a portrait of an individual. The story is communicated through disquieting voices that play when the wire 'stems' are touched. An electrical circuit that forms an organic pattern inside the art frame controls the stems. This circuit then plugs into the midi port that converts the touch signals into binary code for the computer to read and emit the audio sounds.

The gentle flow of the stems and grounding circuit mimic the nature of the Lily plant. The viewer can explore and play with the interactivity of the artwork to discover the multifaceted portrait held within. Depending on how it is interacted with, Lilies can reveal the experience of thoughtlessness in its silence and cacophony of thought in its multi-layering of voices when stems are touched simultaneously.

I would like to thank the team that worked with me on this artwork, without their amazing generosity and enthusiasm this artwork would not exist outside my mind;

Lienster Grimes - Electronic Engineer
Dave De Gaspari - software Programmer
Schalk Erasmus - Installation production
Ola Kobak from Fulka - Voices
Benjamin Studios - Audio recording

Jenna Burchell, *Lillies (detail)*, 2011
Electronics, wire, archival paper, thread
1070 x 1570mm
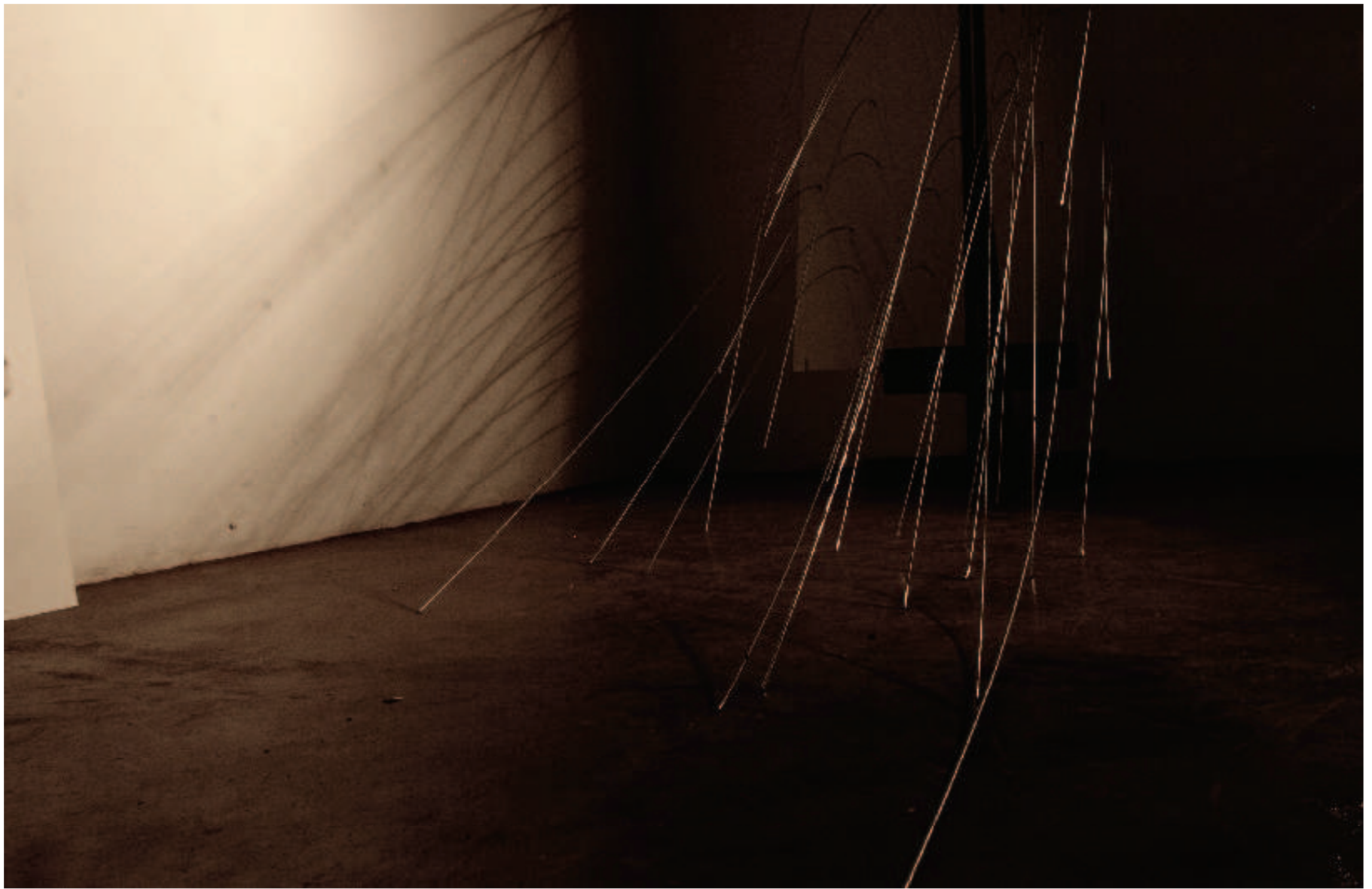
Jenna Burchell, *Lillies*, 2011
Electronics, wire, archival paper, thread
1070 x 1570mm

FRIKKIE EKSTEEN

Frikkie Eksteen, *The Understudies*, 2011
Oil on canvas
1695 x 2165 mm

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

A graduate in the town of his birth, Frikkie Eksteen completed his Master's degree at the University of Pretoria in 2000. He has been involved in numerous group projects, which include The Trinity Session's Broadcast quality: the art of Big Brother (2002), Bell-Roberts' art-advertising showcase, *Mettle and Paint* (2003), *CLEAN/GRIME: exhibitions of desaturated art* (2001-2003), *Spier Contemporary* (2010) and *Dystopia* (2009-2010). His prize-winning *Hanging Garden* (2004) exhibition at the Klein Karoo National Arts Festival in Oudtshoorn is his most current solo project. He was formerly a permanent lecturer in fine art and multimedia at UNISA, and currently lectures part-time at the University of Pretoria.

His work is represented in the Pretoria Art Museum, University of Pretoria, SASOL, ABSA and MTN permanent collections, and has been shown in London and Edinburgh as part of the Royal Overseas League exhibitions. Eksteen's art is a multi-disciplinary permutation of traditional and non-traditional art practices, and often questions the underlying mechanisms of representational systems. His current work is concerned with the uses and aims of formal portrait painting; specifically its relationship to power, notions of likeness, the artist's stylistic signature and the passage of time. He has produced a varied body of work incorporating x-ray and digital imaging, photography, animation, video, projection, painting, drawing and mushroom cultivation.

Frikkie Eksteen, *The Basely Covetous Man*, 2011
Stock Characters Series
Oil and inkjet print on canvas
36.2 x 94.2 cm

Frikkie Eksteen, *The Lover of Bad Company*, 2011
Stock Characters Series
Oil and inkjet print on canvas
36.2 x 94.2 cm

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

The Understudies and *Stock Characters* [1] are part of a genealogy of portraits that was originally based on a series of official paintings in the University of Pretoria's collection. Paintings from this original series, which includes two of my own commissioned portraits, were digitised and merged to produce new figures. These figures became the source material for a new set of paintings, which returned them to the medium from which they came.

The aim of this project was to examine the uses and conventions of formal portrait painting – a rarefied genre which is seldom considered progressive, and is mostly appreciated for its veneration of likeness. By creating new characters from institutional dignitaries and more recently, by also incorporating the influence of key examples of seventeenth-century Dutch group portraiture, the underlying mechanisms of formal portrait painting are framed in peculiar terms.

Although the body of work may at first have appeared to present a form of caricature, the paintings do not exaggerate the distinctive features of any living (or once-living) sitter. They accurately, if selectively, translate the merged identities on which they are based, but any resemblance to the real people in the background of these images has been diluted over generations to free these portraits from an actual commemorative purpose. Instead, they show a disregard for idiosyncrasies, which frees painting from age-old contractual obligations, such as producing a likeness. In traditional portraiture the model is often seen as a script that needs to be intuitively performed in paint, but by disconnecting portrait from model, a space is created for a kind of portraiture more concerned with the anomalies of the evolutionary process of digitally breeding paintings *from* paintings, than accounting for some ever elusive likeness.

Apart from the fusion of different portraits that characterise the larger project, the combination of traditional and digital media produces its own fictions and tensions. They speak *to* as well as *against* each other in the paintings. The varied painterly surface demands a viewing process that happens over time, a selective and multidirectional scanning very much like the painterly extraction of tactile and three-dimensional clues from the evenly pixelated and more instantly generated digital image. Inevitable losses and gains are sustained in the process of bringing these imaginary subjects to "life". Translating a painting into a digital idiom, and once again returning it to painting, becomes both the authentication and denial of the undiscriminating and numerically precise computer screen.

The obvious fictions we have come to associate with the digital image are enforced but also disguised behind the painted surface.

[1] The titles of the portraits in the Stock Characters series are from Theophrastus' The Characters (c. 319 BC), which mentions 30 common character types found in Greek comedy and tragedy.

Frikkie Eksteen, *The Man of Petty Ambition*, 2011
Stock Characters Series
Oil and inkjet print on canvas
36.2 x 94.2 cm

Frikkie Eksteen, *The Man without Moral Feeling*
2011
Stock Characters Series
Oil and inkjet print on canvas
36.2 x 94.2 cm

Frikkie Eksteen, *The Complaisant Man*
2011
Stock Characters Series
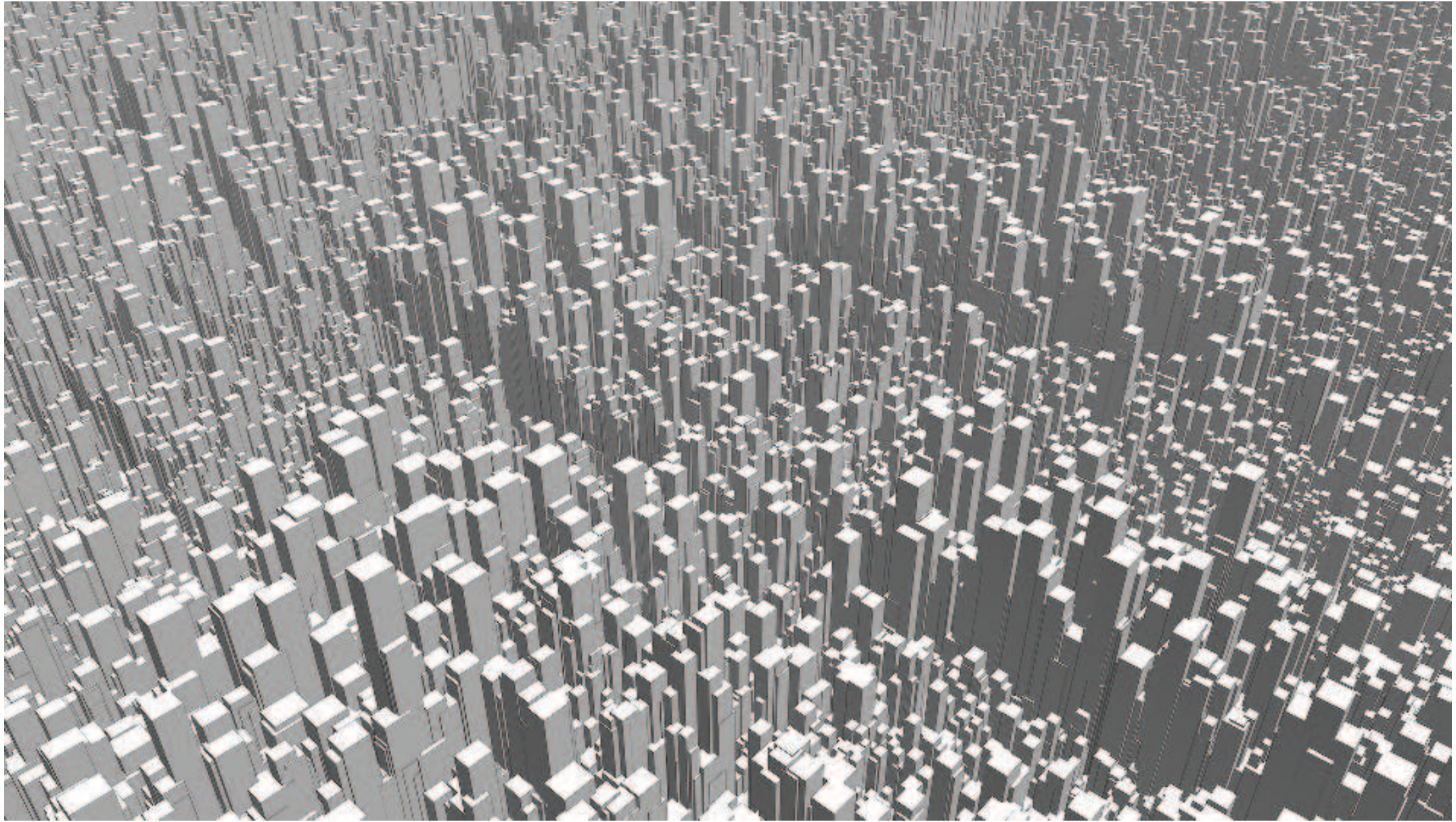Oil and inkjet print on canvas
36.2 x 94.2 cm

Frikkie Eksteen, *The Faultfinder*
2011
Stock Characters Series
Oil and inkjet print on canvas
36.2 x 94.2 cm

Frikkie Eksteen, *The Unsociable Man*
2011
Stock Characters Series
Oil and inkjet print on canvas
36.2 x 94.2 cm

CHRISTIAAN HATTINGH

Christiaan Hattingh, *The Future of bad design*, 2011
Archival print, 840 x 470 cm. Edition of 5

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Christiaan Hattingh is an engineer/mathematician working in the field of mathematical modelling and simulation, but is also a qualified and practicing new media artist. Processes and media that the artist specialises in include real-time interactive design, algorithmic and generative processes, 3D design and animation and various forms of analytical and numerical methods.

Qualifications:

B.Ing (Metal) (UP - 1996)
BA (Multimedia) (UNISA – 2007 – with distinction)
BSc (Mathematics) (in progress at UNISA)

Awards:

SASOL New Signatures: Merit prize (2005)
Construction New Media Awards: Finalist in two categories (top three) (2006)
ABSA l'Atelier: Merit prize (2008)
SASOL new signatures: Merit prize (2008)

Collections:

UNISA Art Gallery
Various private collections
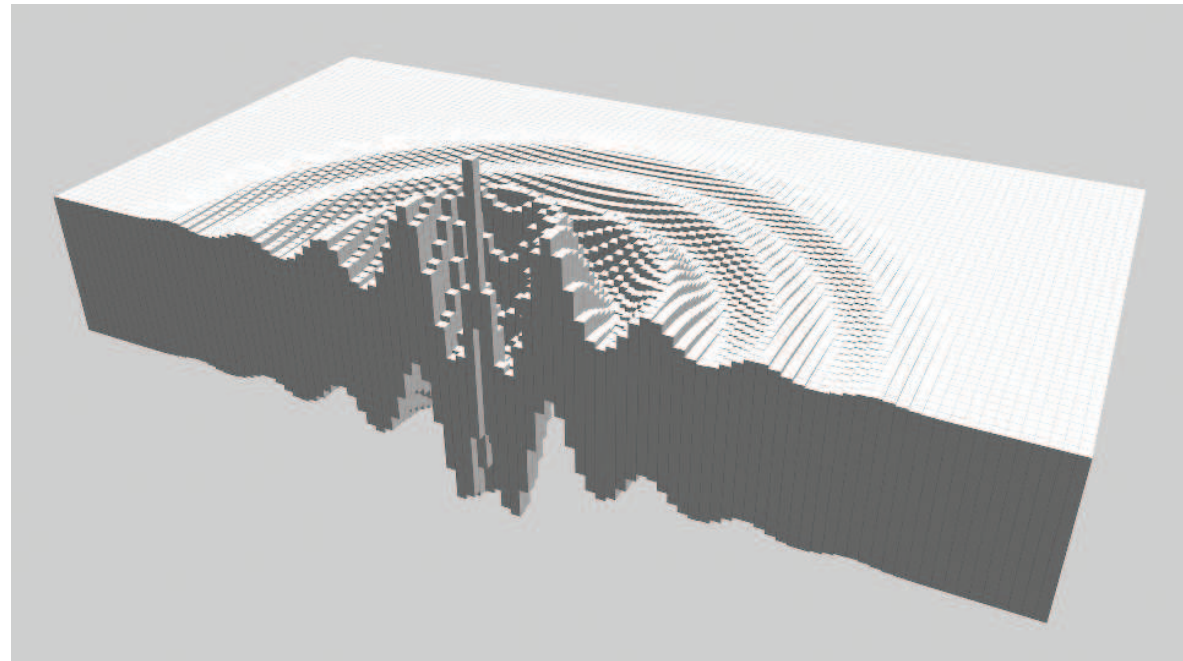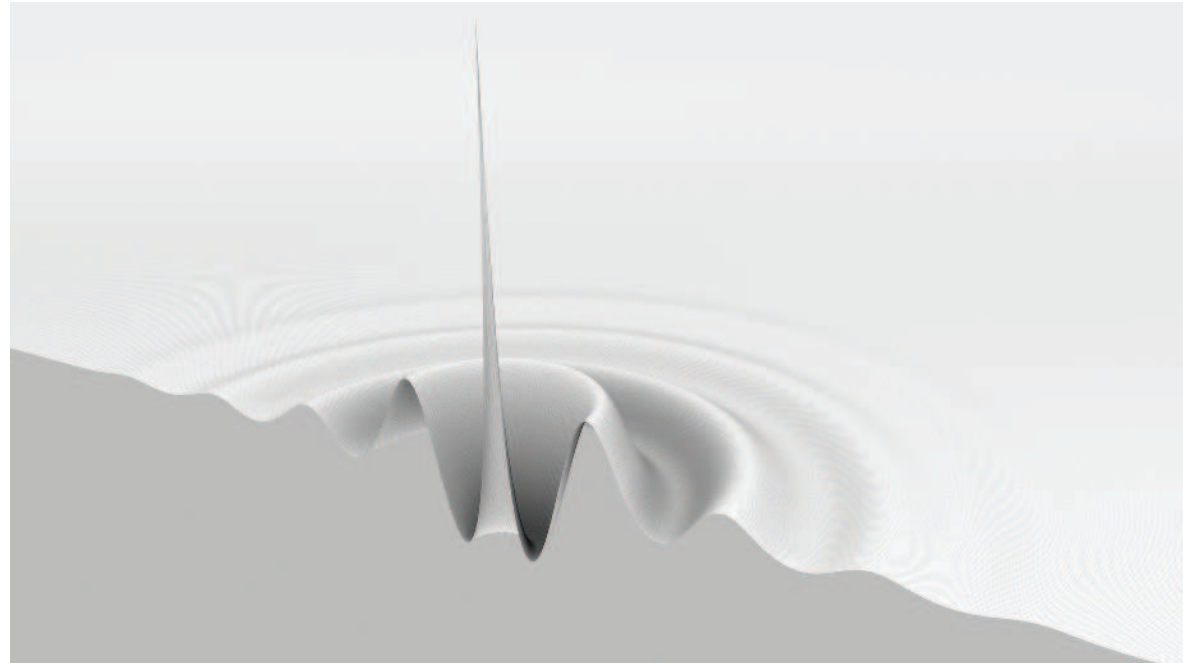
(Top) Christiaan Hattingh, *Gaussian Pulse*, 2011
Archival print, 590 x 330 mm. Edition of 5

(Bottom) Christiaan Hattingh, *Epicenter*, 2011
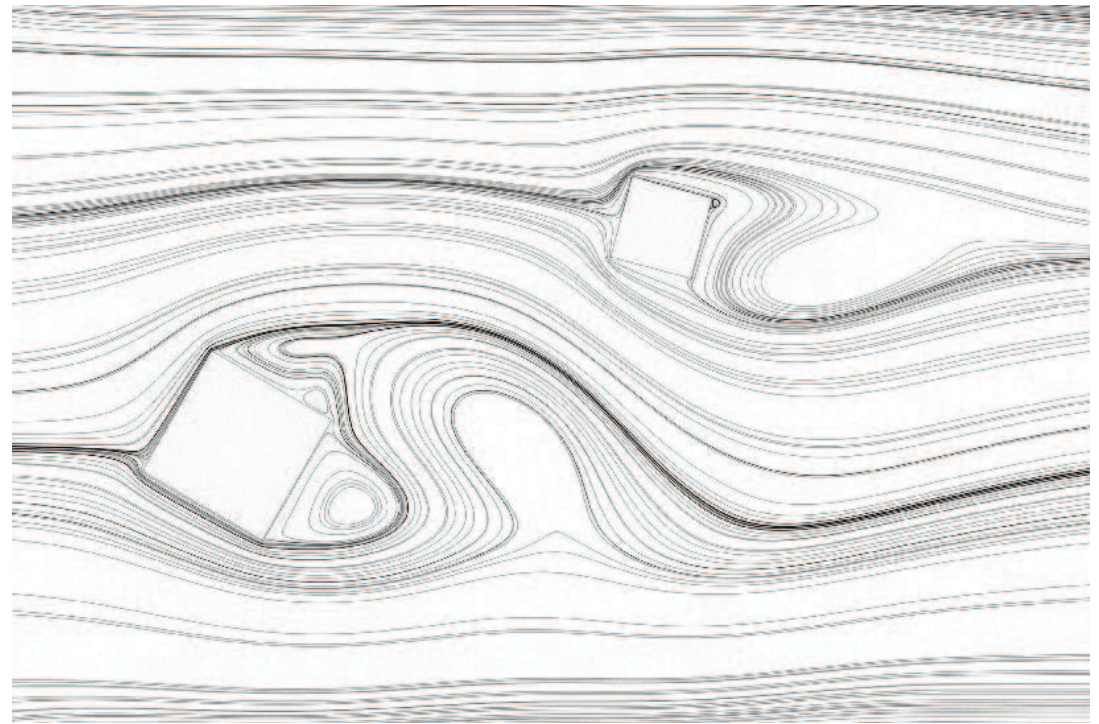Archival print, 590 x 330 mm. Edition of 5

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

This study is firstly concerned with induced ambiguity, or simply shifts in meaning, as a result of mathematical abstraction. Secondly there is also some reference to the interplay between mathematical analysis and mathematics as a creative force in our technological age.

1. Mathematical meaning could be categorised according to a range of subjects – in terms of my concerns I have focussed on what could possibly seen as the most pragmatic of these: a description of the physical world – specifically, numerical analysis (and description) of physical processes is probably one of the most often employed forms of "mathematical communication". And within this context mathematics has been very successful, to the extent that it has become a source of puzzlement for some philosophers. (Eugene Wigner – T*he unreasonable effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences*). But although most would agree, and some would even consider mathematics in this sense as some form of absolute truth", there have been various debates surrounding the shortcomings of mathematics in this area as well. I have tried to highlight some of these ideas in a process where I use the same underlying mathematical data/structures within different contexts.

2. Mathematics could be applied as a tool for analysing processes, phenomena, *etcetera*, but it is also applied daily in the manufacture of technological objects and the built environment around us. As such mathematics has also become a force acting on our world and shaping our daily lives. Of course the mathematical concepts and data used in design is predominantly managed/guided by the "human hand" – perhaps we could even say "emotionally". In this sense I have tried to explore a specific question within some of my work:

> If we could hypothesise the composition of elements involved in some design, what would a world consisting of predominantly "mathematical" designs look like – what if mathematics was the "guiding" principle?

(Top) Christiaan Hattingh, *Plastic Deformation*, 2011
Archival print, 420 x 300 mm. Edition of 5
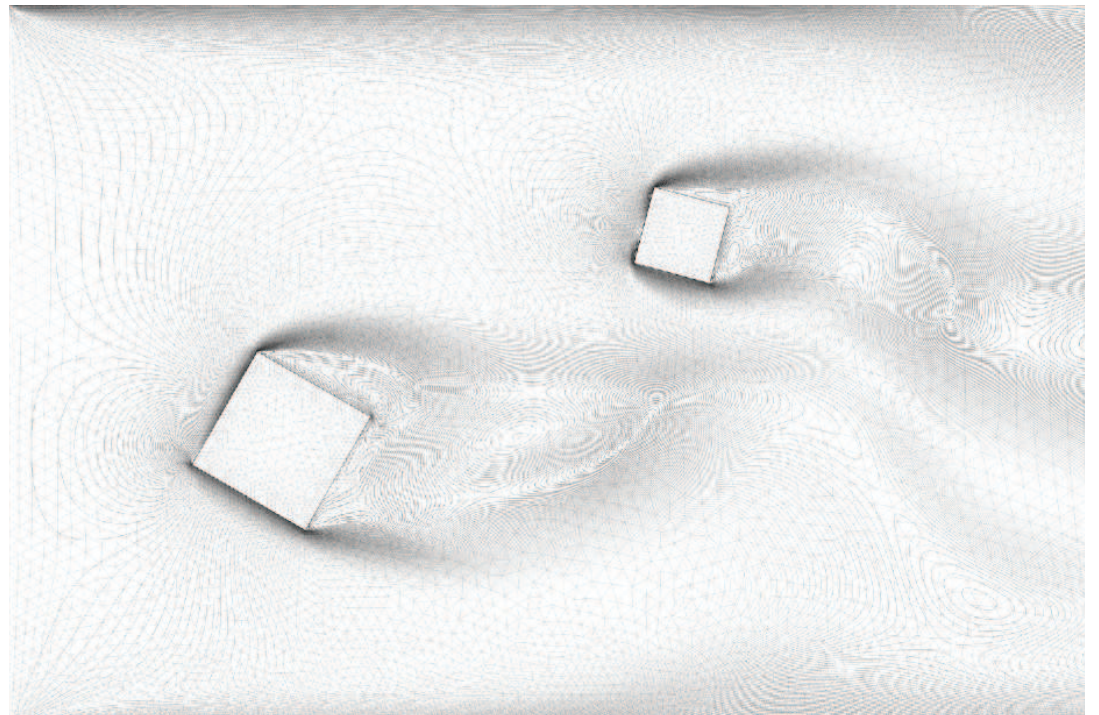
(Bottom) Christiaan Hattingh, *Flow Contour*, 2011
Archival print, 420 x 300 mm. Edition of 5

RINA STUTZER

Rina Stutzer, *Migratory Thoughts*, 2011
Oil on canvas
1900 x 1650cm

■ ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

About the artist

Rina was born in Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal in 1976 and completed the BA (Fine Arts) and MA (Fine Arts) degrees at the University of Pretoria. She has been a part-time lecturer in painting and drawing in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria since 2000. Rina has won a number of awards, including the Bettie Cilliers-Barnard Bursary for excellence in painting, the New Signatures Art Competition: People's Choice and the first prize in the Ekhurhuleni Fine Arts Award Competition (2007). She has participated in a number of group exhibitions since 2000, nationally as well as internationally. Her Masters in Fine Arts degree culminated in her first solo and her second took place during 2010 at Everard Read, Johannesburg.

Artist's short CV

2011	Friend – Request – Sent, The Cube, Bussum, Amsterdam
2010	Joburg Art Fair, Johannesburg (Everard Read Gallery)
	An Accumulation of Change, Everard Read Gallery,
	Johannesburg (solo)
	Group show, IS Art, Franschhoek
	Friends of JAG Auction, Johannesburg Art Gallery
	University of Pretoria lecturers' exhibition, Fried Contemporary
2009	Joburg Art Fair, Johannesburg (Rooke Gallery)
	Collaboration, Reservoir Gallery, Oliewenhuis Museum
	Group show, Knysna Fine Art Gallery, Knysna
	The Owl and the Pussy Cat, Association of Arts, Pretoria
	Dorsiduct, 47 Market Street, George (two person show)
2008	Group show, Grande Provence Gallery, Franschhoek
	Visuality/ Commentary, Visual Arts Centenary Exhibition,
	Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria
2007	Medium Re-pulse, University of Pretoria, Pretoria (solo)s
	Contemporary Visions of Southern Africa, Pretoria Art Museum,
	Tongue and Tail, Magpie Gallery, Pretoria
2006	'Anderkant die Hexsrivier', Stellenbosch University Gallery, Stellenbosch
2003	King Cetshwayo, Tatham Gallery, Pietermaritzburg
	Sedibeng Sa Limpho, Soan Studio, London, Great Britain
2001	Women's day exhibition, ABSA Gallery, Johannesburg Launch, Open Window Art Academy, Pretoria

Rina Stutzer, *Promises of Nomadic Thought I & II*, 2011
Copper sheet, patina, aluminium sheet, ink print
400 x 500 mm

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Postmodern nomadic discourse theory was the original point of departure for this body of work, essentially referring to fixed frames of thinking are not open to the subtle knowledge that the observation of accumulated change offers. In my opinion, crossing a border cognitively, allows one to transcend habitual thinking and shift in the stagnant patterns of belief and therefore it stimulates change. The central idea in my works on exhibition is the opposition of change versus inertness, being in the self.

One of the mediums on exhibition, that of the patina paintings, hints towards the underlying message or idea behind the body of work. The paintings challenge the viewer with a change of surface, since the patina grows and accumulate unpredictable layers as it oxidises further. In my work, the process of change is accelerated, since the surface has not been sealed by wax and the change is intentional and visible.

Metaphoric motifs such as an everchanging landscape, a caravan, a bird and a
continental cage form part of my nomadic vocabulary. Acceptance of frames of reference in thought and set-
tlement in these objects and systems limit forward movement in an individual's thinking.

Rina Stutzer, *An Accumulation of Change II* (Close up), 2011
Stainless steel, steel base, cast bronze and patina
120 cm x 80 cm x 102 cm

Rina Stutzer, *An Accumulation of Change II,* 2011
Stainless steel, steel base, cast bronze and patina
120 cm x 80 cm x 102 cm