

Dossier TKZ-8993: **Hyperlinks, Space, and Apparatus**

Authored by Pebofatso Mokoena
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A Word of Thanks

This dossier would not be possible without Postgraduate funding from the National Research Foundation who have provided a safety net for me to experiment further and extend my creative and academic forays. At a time when **many** do not have access to funding, I am grateful to have been granted this opportunity.

To my mother, Thandekile Mokoena, father Diale Mokoena, siblings Lebohang Mokoena and Moleboheng (Mokoena) Mokholela. Your continued support remains immeasurable. I am eternally grateful for your trust in the highest forms possible.

I thank the Fine Art Department at WSOA for walking with me through my extended aesthetic, conceptual, emotional and philosophical forays. To my supervisor Zen Marie - thank you. Prof. Sharlene Khan, Fouad Asfour, Bettina Malcommess, Dorothee Kreutzfeldt, Rangoato Hlasane, Prof David Andrew, you continue to remain intellectual lights on the path to knowing myself.

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To Victoria Wigzell, and the PULP Paperworks team, thank you for producing the wonderful home that the *Kathorus Documents*, and this text live in.

Thank you to Lindokuhle Ntombela for always being there in helping organise my practice IRT and IRL, and for taking some of the load off my brain and shoulders.

This dossier is dedicated to Ntatemoholo Khoza, for whom living until 102 was an experience of love and trust in God I will always remember.

God's Love to You

Notes to Consider

Dear Reader,

Before we enter, it is vital to understand that this submission is not a conventional thesis, but rather is a multivocal, performative and experimental document - that is to say, a literary, sonic, visual, and philosophical assemblage that refuses linear teleological reading, and in its place, a more multidirectional process. This guide offers a few signs to help you navigate the terrain ahead...

In this submission lies a series of 6 sketchbooks, referenced photocopied research appendices, 120 A5 ink drawings, the Kathorus Documents (which comprise 61 A4 individual collages on paper), two pairs of woolen gloves. The thesis is intended to be seen, read and understood in its totality, not as appendages that support the written thesis.

1. This Is Not a thesis, it's a Dossier:

Rather than presenting a singular argument in a traditional academic format, this work functions as a literary container. It holds a cosmology of references (ideas, images, drawings, sounds, anecdotes, diagrams.) Think of it as a map of philosophical grounds, and not a single ground. Each section is a “zone” or “field” of thought, inviting the reader to engage with multiple registers simultaneously.

2. Reading as Experience

The reader is invited to read images, texts, and sounds together. The dossier encourages sensorial negotiation: a way of reading that is felt as much as it is understood. As the authoritative, I am aware that this kind of unconventional text is risky, in that it produces a kind of epistemological anxiety, precisely because of its refusal to conform to an academic standard. This feeling is to be expected, and felt, as the text moves between poetic, anecdotal, academic, and diagrammatic voices.

3. Assemblage Over Argument

This work is built through assemblage, and not linear assembly. It moves from structure to what I call “unstructured” and back again. As the reader, you will encounter methodologies that include: cutting-and-pasting, hyperlinks, binaural references, and diagrammatic notations that challenge binaries and coded thinking.

4. Hyperlinked Thinking

Inspired by the internet's hyperlinking logic, the dossier uses the gesture of the hyperlink as a profound metaphor for the reader's relational movement between ideas.

The reader is encouraged to trace epistemological threads, jump between street-zones, and allow one's reading to be far more intuitive than institutionally rigid.

5. Philosophical and Political Terrain

The work engages deeply with Black Studies, urban theory, sonic epistemologies, and apparatus theory (Foucault, Agamben, Moreno). It is rooted in lived experience, particularly in Thokoza, and explores how space, sound, and institutional power shape forms-of-life.

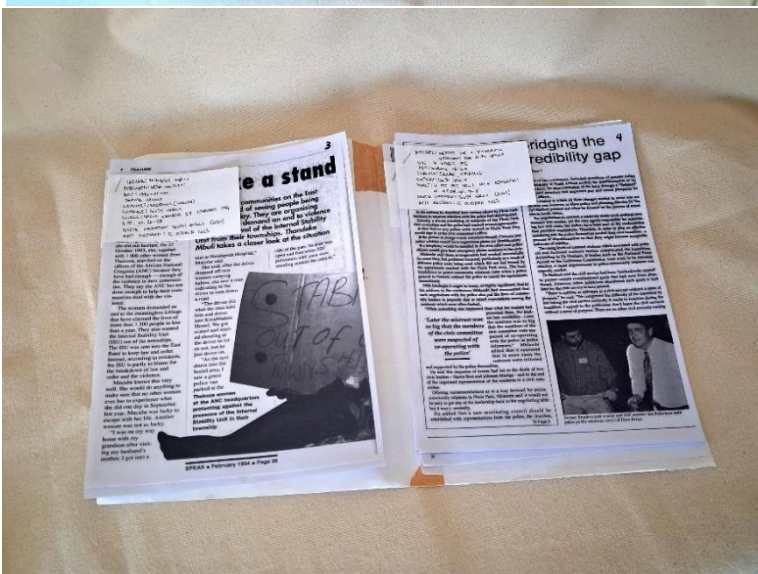
6. How to Read This Text

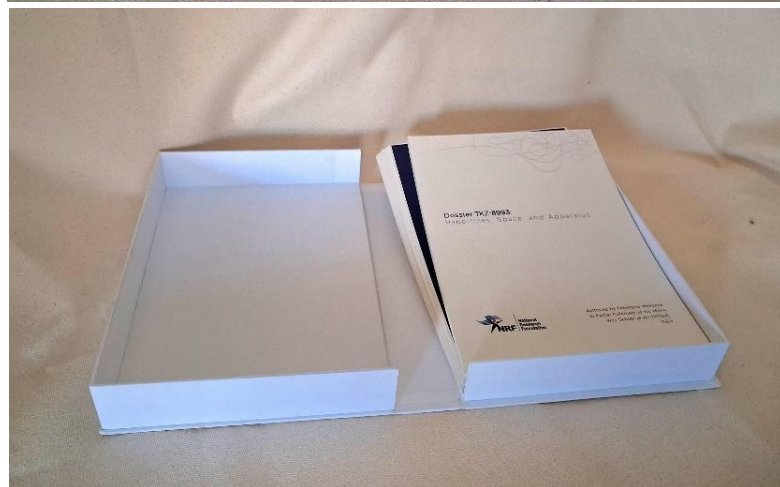
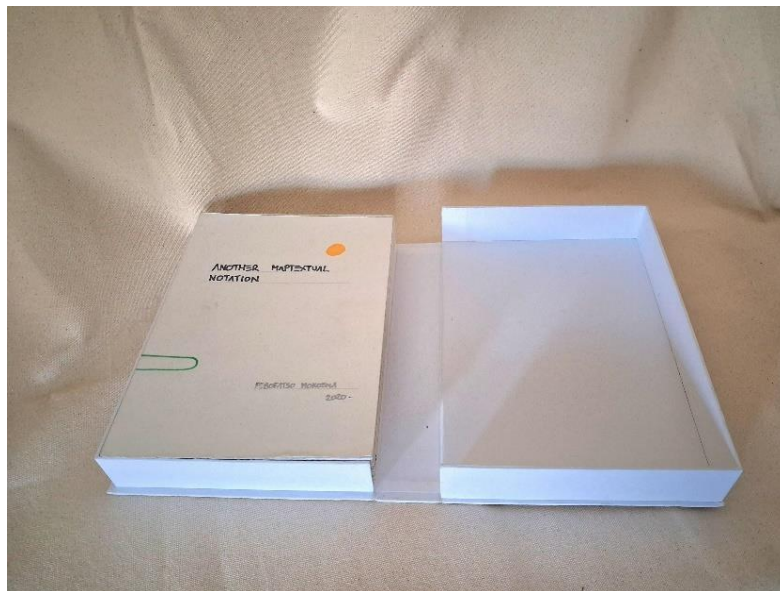
In the written component, zones (such as zone 1: High Court Systems) function as guides, and so each zone is a thematic and conceptual compass, each with subtle shifts in positionality and subjectivity. Notice vocal, tonal, emotional and intellectual and formal shifts. Slow. Down. There is no single path to engaging the dossier, this is intentional. This is a text to be felt, not just understood.

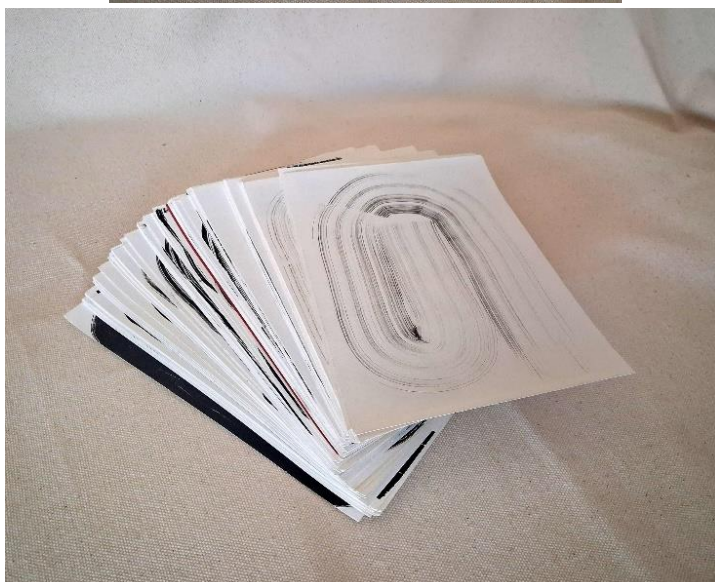
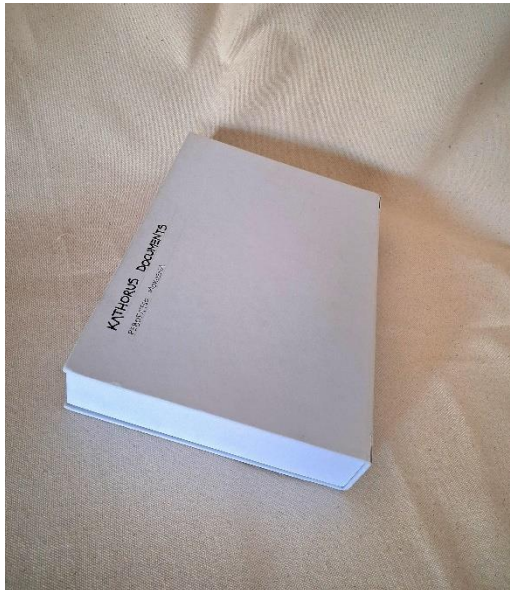
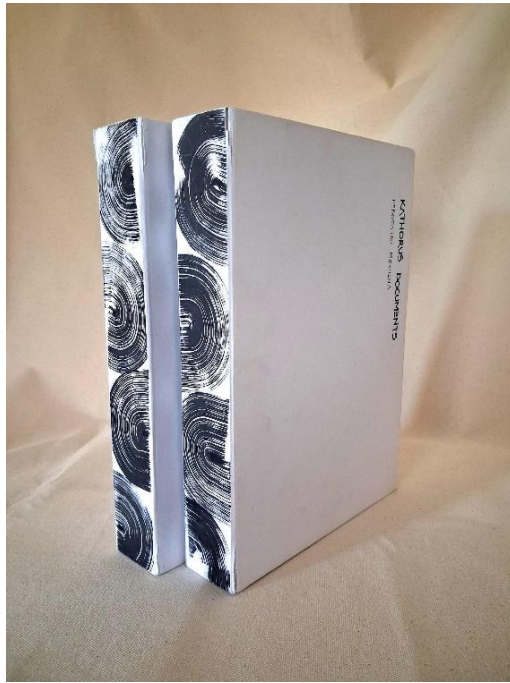
Final Note

This dossier is a living archive, a site of memory, resistance (political, epistemological, emotional, conceptually, intellectually), and invention. It asks you not just to read, but to participate — to (re-)assemble your own understanding from the fragments offered.

Documentations of the Dossier







It is vital to note that the critical position of this dossier relies on building sets of relations through drawing and mapping. Both these practices are methods I employ to understand what it means to compile a creative dossier.

In 2020, I began thinking about ways in which to engage with Thokoza and its historical impulses in the context concerning archival process towards South African townships, and discourses of a larger question around South Africa's transition to a democratic state circa 1989-1994.

The result of this thinking process resulted in the construction of a digital-site-place named The Kathorus Documents.

I wanted to engage this particular place not only as a research project, but as an assemblage of stories. With the aim of understanding the historical contexts that informs the place I was born into in 1993, I could sensorially negotiate this largely violent episode of the township's existence through creative theorisation.

The Kathorus Documents became a digital-site-place that proposes a nexus as site, cite, and a place of sight where archivo-material-history¹, speech, text, diagrammatic drawings and sonic materials coalesce.

Kathorus is an acronym which brings together the names of three townships [Katlhong, Thokoza, and Vosloorus] situated in the South East Rand, Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg. The Kathorus Documents is an online site that Pebofatso Mokoena built as a response to my BAFA (Honours) Creative coursework. The site was first built in 2020, and continues to exist. It can be found at

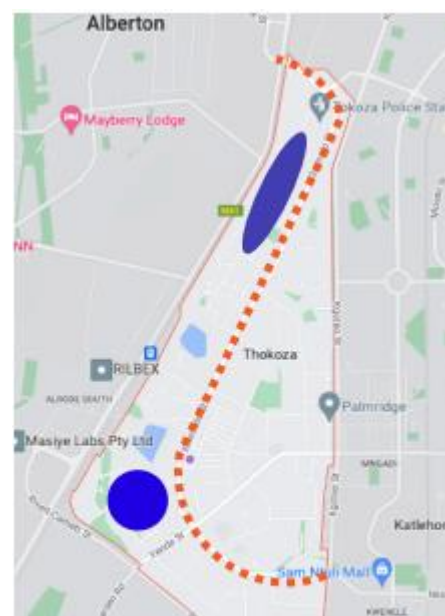
<https://pebofatsojmokoena.wixsite.com/kathorusdocuments>

¹ archivo-material-history is my understanding of pulling together threads from the fields of philosophy and artistic, that prelude physical, material and historical theorisation.

Thokoza, in particular, is a township +/-45kms south of the city of Johannesburg. Thokoza, particularly, was planned to be built on a site that was to be (and never was) Palmietfontein Airport, instead Mshayazafe Hostel emerged via an influx of migrant workers who were brought in as construction labour to build houses in, and for the above-mentioned townships.

Construction, occupation and development of Thokoza took place during 1958-1959. It was officially founded in 1973. The township continues to grow.

In reading this document, the reader is to be aware of a multitude of textual manoeuvres made by the author of this text: I ask the reader to think about the Kathorus Documents not as one ground, but as a series of philosophical grounds. Grounds in this sense helps us think about the documents as a chronology of happenings, proposing instead a more experiential method of reading images, texts simultaneously.



A Map of Thokoza, showing the main arterial road, Khumalo Street, Phola Park, Mshayazafe Hostel, and Sebotsa Street, Date Accessed; 24 February 2024

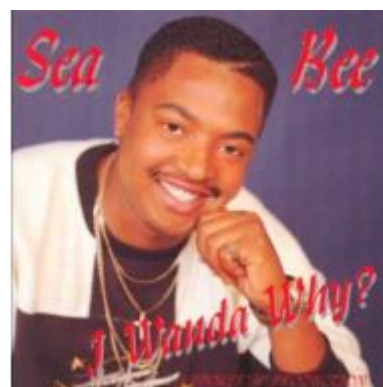
The dossier functions not as a legal document, but rather as a literary container that holds arguments for a multitude of textual, diagrammatic, sonic, referential, academic and artistic materials. This textual compilation is elucidated in many ways: through naming textual sub-sections of ideological locations as a literary compass. This compass guides the reader from place to place, idea, to idea and back again to place. These “places” are to be read as a line of thought.

Simultaneously, they are to be read as a field that hold the main ideas for the titled chapter. In making a spatial turn away from images of direct violence into diagrammatic notations, I construct a counter-language that

allows for visual art to emerge as a counter-gaze to the violent image itself.

At an ontological level, Dossier TKZ-89-93 seeks to make clearer the ideological relations between the micro and the macro connections of the socio-political, psycho-social, conceptual, and philosophical specific to the context taking place in Thokoza. This is to say that a recurring notion of from-assembly-to-assemblage-back-to-assembly² provides the reader with a sense of coming into order (the structure) to chaos [assemblage] and back again.

There is theoretical precedent here. I draw from Chief Albert Luthuli, Dr. George Mahashe, Dr. Ahmed Veriava, Dr. Zen Marie, Dr. Renzo Filinich, Dr. Rangoato Hlasane, and Dr. Bettina Malcommess. Each of the above political and creative practitioners come to terms with the difficulty of writing as a siloed practice.



Sea BEE, I Wanda Why?
1994 Album cover. Gallo
Music. Accessed 27
March 2023

Thus, each para-academic response finds creative methodologies that incorporate the assemblage, via the mobilisation of multiple visual, gestural, conceptual, philosophical, diagrammatic and textual materialities. Through the methodology of the assemblage, I mobilise drawing, hyperlink and photocopy collage as tenable strategies that bring to fruition intimate ways of negotiating viewing and reading as an experience – an experience where space, place and time are in constant motion.

Key notes to keep in mind when reading the text: the main essay/body text will stay in the same font and size as underlined. Captions, out of the text will be *written* as such. Anecdotal ruminations will be written such as the underlined. Referential quotations to this effect will be seen as the *written*.

² manoeuvre to entangle notions of structure and 3 disorganisation as part of one act of a form of life.

These textual keys are vital to notice.

These visual “shifts” show that the writer’s voice has changed from poetic, to anecdotal to academic and back again.

III

Preoccupations

My father came back home after another long day of work, and in a rare moment when his body doesn’t crumble to the pressure of his exhaustion, we chat about his day, and how energised he was when he was given the chance to be the MC at a fellow colleague’s farewell from the factory floor. It was at that moment I recalled seeing unbridled joy on his joy. I was reminded of his younger time being part of the large Chorale music community in Thokoza, being a preacher at Brethren Mission Church Thokoza section, a distinguished programme director at many community events in Thokoza, and a massive believer in education, especially among the young.

I can’t remember a day when he wouldn’t be working, his body seemingly unable to rest unless it is through pure exhaustion. Working in an aluminium plant in Alrode, a place consisting 12-hour days hauling aluminium. Waking up early every day. I bore witness to the machine he finds himself in.

The labour demands, the petty politics between factory floor, office management, higher level management, and the bosses - the portrait of this man is incredibly complex place that I only begun to comprehended as he gets closer and closer to retirement. How was I to understand?

One day, I had a realisation about my interest in describing this thing Foucault called a Despositif, what Giorgio Agamben called an Apparatus, and what Jacob Moreno terms a sociogram.

This is the place from which the roots of my hypothesis emerge.

You see, choosing *not* to make Johannesburg (the city) as my centre of engagement allows my visual sensibilities space away from *Project Johannesburg*, Jo'burg was never my primary centre of engagement, Jo'burg for me was, is and will continue to be a transactionally exploitative space where ecologies of labour, gender, race, capital, access, violence, history, joy, togetherness, hustle, knowledge, and architecture are all at work; at various scales; simultaneously.

I would often experience this simultaneity whilst taking taxis from Brackenhurst to Bree Taxi Rank. I would always encounter different albeit similar temporal feelings, such as the taxi driver's mood-swings in *his* taxi; *his* sound-system; *his* passengers; *the* passengers' conversations; babies crying, babies laughing etc. Knowing how long the ride took me always stressed me out. It was exhausting. My routine would look something like this:

After getting onto the taxi at 07:40 I see no seats open for me and a couple of people that get on for me. The taxi driver says that we should get in as some passengers' stop is near, we shan't be standing for a long while. Long story short, I end up standing the whole way - my neck feeling like it has morphed into the lid of a concertina Tupperware lid. My annoyance at the taxi drivers broken assurance settles, I think about the long queue I am going to face at Bree:

Eish, I just want to get onto campus and breathe I silently think to myself, and by this time, my face already screams 'leave me alone!'. Perhaps the best way to escape this rather busy temporality for a Monday morning is to listen to through my headphones, maybe a little Aphex Twin, King Krule, or maybe some Last Week Tonight with John Oliver. When I get to town, do I get off at corner Bree and again be at the mercy of flying objects disobeying the traffic lights. Get my senses shot by other sound systems the city, always checking my step, recalling how intense the architecture of the city has never really been responsive to black people, and now how black folks need to order their stalls to the grid-like design of its own blocks) OR do I keep my nerves in check... grab a coffee on Main, catch an Uber and spend that extra 20 bucks blocking myself from the early morning rush, and let the driver do it - *I think I'm going to take the Uber*. After spending so much time getting my nerves shot by passing by many temporalities. I just want to get to school by 09:00 with a fresh mind.

It's now 07:56, and I'm not late. Phew! I can arrive on campus, 'on time' and not be at the mercy of the multitudes of sonic, architectural, visual, aesthetic, physical, and psychological composites that make up the early morning physical + sensorial routine for so many making their way through Bree through – a routine for which they have no control.

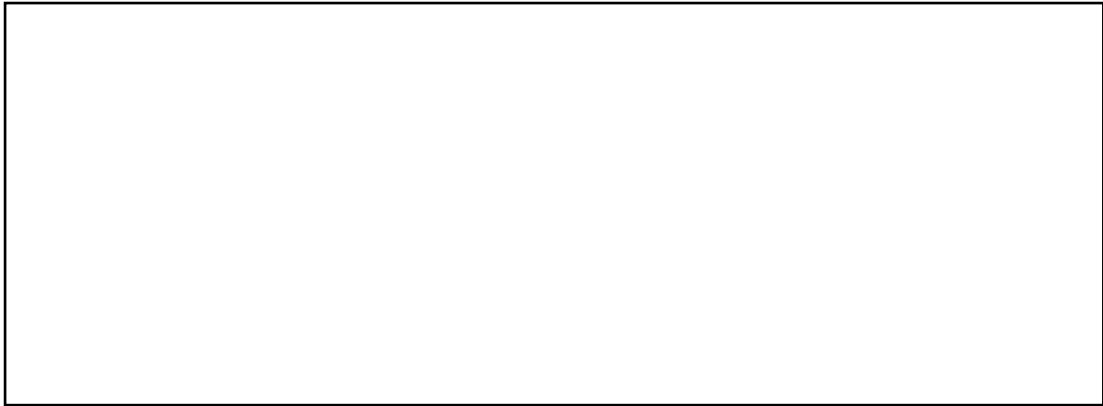
I wonder if everyone feels like this when they're constantly re-making their way through town?

The Uber wades into Braamfontein, and by extension, I wade into campus, finally glad that I can finally take on the day, having already finessed my way through the early morning rush. I feel like a mineworker going to dig for today's contemporary gold, my nerves are already exhausted due to the psychological gymnastics performed just through the first 3 hours of the morning.

These days, gold is a metaphor for skills, money, knowledge, education, opportunities, lunches in Hyde Park, networks and dreams.

“We decadents have
frayed nerves. Everything,
or almost everything,
wounds us, and what
doesn't will likely be
irritating. That's why we
make sure no one ever
touches us.”
[Tiqqun 2010; 11]

PLAYING FIELDS



This seemingly innocent empty space above is an illusion. This space is articulated here, as a frame which confines space. Fantasy, and imagination therefore fills this “empty” space. This imaginary fantasy imaging becomes an intoxicating playing field from which the visual forces of line, colour, form, shape, texture, composition and perspective coalesce. Meanings made from these imagination gestures produce characters that inhabit this *imagination-space*.

I’ve often heard friends say that they don’t feel safe in Johannesburg, and my first impulse routes its way to the way spatial configurations calculates its [often] economically poorer citizenry into input labour labouring *in service to* the larger economic machine that turn peoples’ lives as its output for the calculation of wages. The city has been calculated this way for at least 110 years. It is this precise programmatic undertaking that says [from the inside to those outward the city] that *this program* is the way this economy in South Africa’s heartland functions - townships like Thokoza receive the message through feeling.

The empty space above becomes a container for sets of relative negotiations [*between* labour and place, space and time, individual and group, work and play, practice and theory etc.] all to be visualised. These visualisations often produce iconographic *symbols* seen on storefronts, pamphlets and advertising boards scattered across the city. It is only when we start paying attention to these symbolic icons (and the directions which they prompt us to) that we have the capacity to garner some knowledge about how these visual cues map locations of semiotic, philosophical and visual loci of power.

In his text, *Black Op* [2008; 1743], Fred Moten states that Black Studies is simultaneously the centre and periphery of the study of black bodies through the academic lens. This assertion forces us to understand what a centre, and by extension, a periphery is. To my approximations, what may determine a “centre” is basically one’s approximated distance to one’s physical and emotional needs. Philosophically, this reads as one’s closeness to a tight-knit tapestry of ideas and philosophies that resist constant external disruption

This academic location of capital *B* ‘Black Studies’ according to Moten posits the idea of (small caps *b*) blackness not as an institution in and of itself only, but also, as a field of study that continues to defy singular definition *within* a set cosmology (*the academic* institution). Thus, becoming what AbdouMaliq Simone terms “intricate territorialization” [2004; 415]. Simone thinks through the idea of this kind of territorialization alongside Michel de Certeau’s *Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) in articulating the many ways a postmodern African city functions beyond the modernist (often brutalist) conceptions.



Bogosi Sekhukhune, *Query: where to from here?* (02-10-17), 2018, Pencil and earth on paper, [61 x 48.2 cm]. Artviewer. Accessed 15 February 2023

This idea of an *intricate* territorialization fascinates me. As Moten continues elucidating this academic study as a field aims to continuously critique the structure that contains ‘contents’ of “Black” [capital B], Critical Studies does not do a good job of it [2008; 1743]. Precisely because what we, scholars of ideas aim to study is *intricately* more complex, demanding a more open-ended approach to understand, and articulating this [re]territorialisation of probity and intimacy.

Here, I encounter an opening of a field I have come to know as the *interregnum*. A time between moments of singularity on social, political, artistic and philosophical registers. For the purposes of this paper, we shall attempt to make sense of these pendulum swings beyond a binary kind of thinking, attempting to construct nuanced

intimacies between structure and *unstructure*³.

So, where to from here? We can start to think through Ranciere's thoughts of what makes a *distribution of the senses*. Ranciere answers that this *distribution* is based on a shared experience of "sense perception" that allows for a shared participatory experience [Ranciere 2004; 12]. The things we sense through our bodies - is a part of a larger physical body that allows us to encounter the 'big, bad world' of pluriversalised objects and sensations [like that of the sun on our skins].

The impact of a sensation onto our bodies thus becomes an important marker for our memory in relation to spacetime⁵. Equally, our brains, catch a glimpse of this sensory distribution, allowing the body to mark events and build relationships through a remembering the sensory experience [Ranciere 2004; 12]. Ranciere reads the separation of these descriptions, not as a process of aestheticization⁴ emergent from a particular field, but as signs readily available to the senses, regardless one's participation in any field [2004; 12]. Those who are likely to have increased capacity towards perceiving the sensory aestheticization [people such as creative practitioners] become hyper aware of the directions of historical and contemporaneous visual trajectories. These visual trajectories produce a set of politics that eventually underwrite a socio-political regime.

*what is work?
and what are the philosophical
implications for when
"things" don't work?
when the apparatus
doesn't work, what is
the philosophical pre-
condition for when
things/systems don't
work, [critique]*

The idea that an aesthetic system is always readily available for engagement through the senses is a terrifying act of *recognition*. Simone attempts to recognise how these desires come to be [actions such as attaining high-quality education, social need, fleeing socio-political violence] but struggle to find a way to co-articulate the already existing distribution beyond the deceptive slogan of Jo'burg existing as a "World Class African City"

Here, we must not forget that we ought to think of the playing field as an abstract mechanism for visualising the fluid mechanics of visual proximity and conceptual distance of relationships and/or relationship-making. These two approaches allow us, as readers, to process how to plot ourselves in relation to the fields orienting our subjectivities⁵.

³ In chapter 2, I call this unstructure an assemblage.

⁵ Spacetime will be elucidated in Chapter 2

⁵ Benjamin's aestheticization of politics is a philosophical and sensorial process through which the field of politics produce an aesthetic effect, via the formalisation of particular arrangements, and orchestrations of colours, shapes, flags, symbols, sounds.

The playing field is a phenomenological tool.

When we talk about mapping, one cannot escape Deleuzian and Guattarian thought about the rhizomic approach to the nature of ideas on the territory and the map. What strikes me particularly is the textual sleight of hand on the idea of a movable centre. The idea that something such as an institution [which can be read as an embodied manifestation of a mythology] is rooted to mythological and geo-philosophical place and time via the production of a historical text, can use the process of writing and duplication - that an unbroken timeline is the only axis that this history can be shifted is fascinating. These 'places' denote a position on a geo-philosophical map, but the physical territory itself is always shifting that always respond to the need for a source of power and legitimacy.

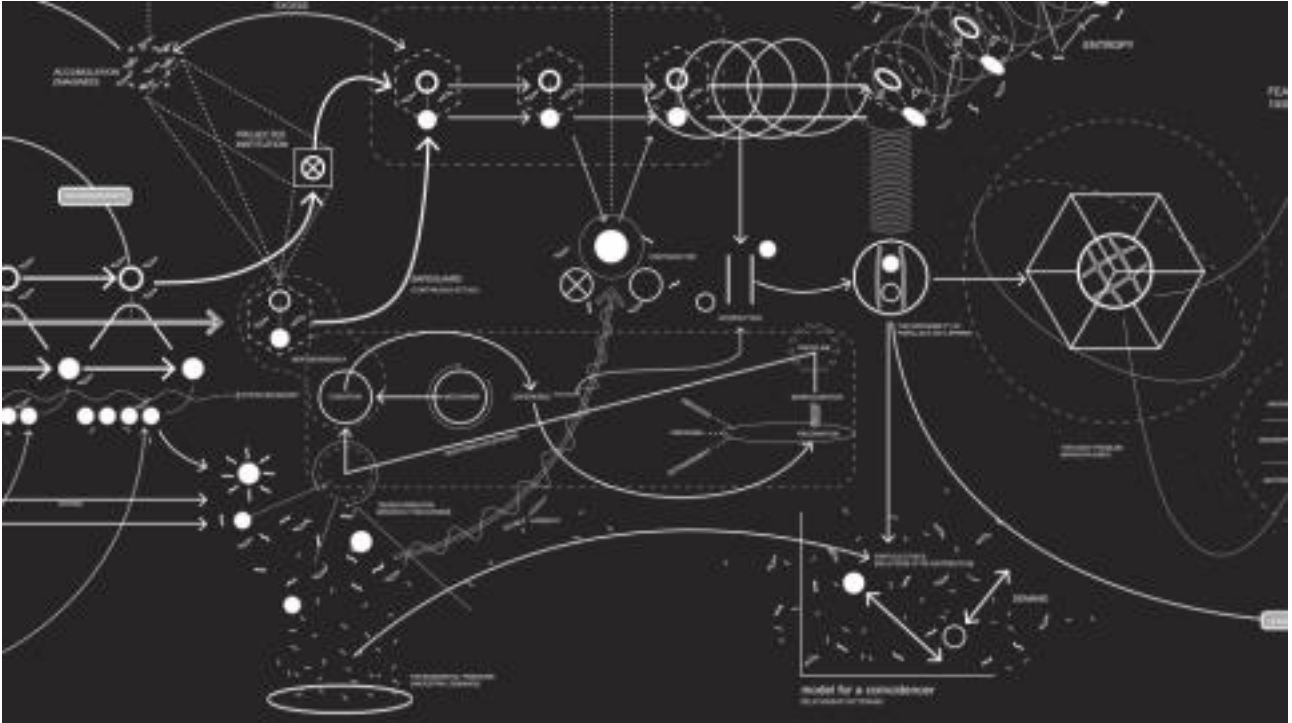
These maps may be shifted, morphed, expanded, shrunk, torn apart and assembled. If we are to trace any particular ideas through their line of thinking, one can, theoretically, philosophically and ethically relate one's subjectivity in proximity with another through the relations of theory, philosophy and ethics and not just time, place, and context. The power of the idea here, then lies not in an individual abstract quality, but its ability for it to be [de]contextualised and put into action by another human being, or within a theoretically, philosophically and ethically process in a completely different space, place and time.

"On the other hand, those who do not renew the image of thought are not philosophers but functionaries who, (are) enjoying a ready-made thought..."

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F.

"What is Philosophy?" [1994; 51]

ZONE 1: HIGH COURT SYSTEMS



Nolan Oswald Dennis. a recurse 4 [3] worlds. 2023. Site-specific wall mural installation. Culturescapes Festival. University of Basel. Centre for African Studies. Basel. Accessed. 22 November 2023.

The relational theological discourse about heaven reserved for particular [white] bodies has always been in close proximity to South Africa's subterranean national discourse towards theological, spatio-economic, socio-relational, intercontinental, politico-racial, and geographic operations of the running of this particular nation state. Those who are seen to exist outside of this frame are not vital enough to be able to affect the quotidian operations of such an immense politico-machine. In this context, we can already sense the need to provide proofs-of-life that follow the aforementioned relation. The image hereto produces an effective + affective visual accompaniment that allows a frame of articulation within the operation of the nation-state.

Philosophically, this relationship provides us with some more context that articulate the difference between an idea and a concept. Deleuze and Guattari note the concept as something which *articulates* an idea. Concepts are tentacles of ideas, reaching to make tangible what the idea attempts to eulogise. Concepts then, are made tangible through forms such as writing, drawing, and orating [1994; 16]⁶.

This *singular* totalising framework becomes an important tool to see *through* codes of perspective and composition, and superimposition.

⁶ see Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. 1994. *What is Philosophy?* New York. Columbia.

What happens, then, when we are confronted by two (or more) differing totalising frameworks? What does the individual do to make sense of the larger distributions? The language of the internet, may help us here.

The *hyperlink* becomes a bridge that allows us movement from one framework to another: from one “webpage” to the next.

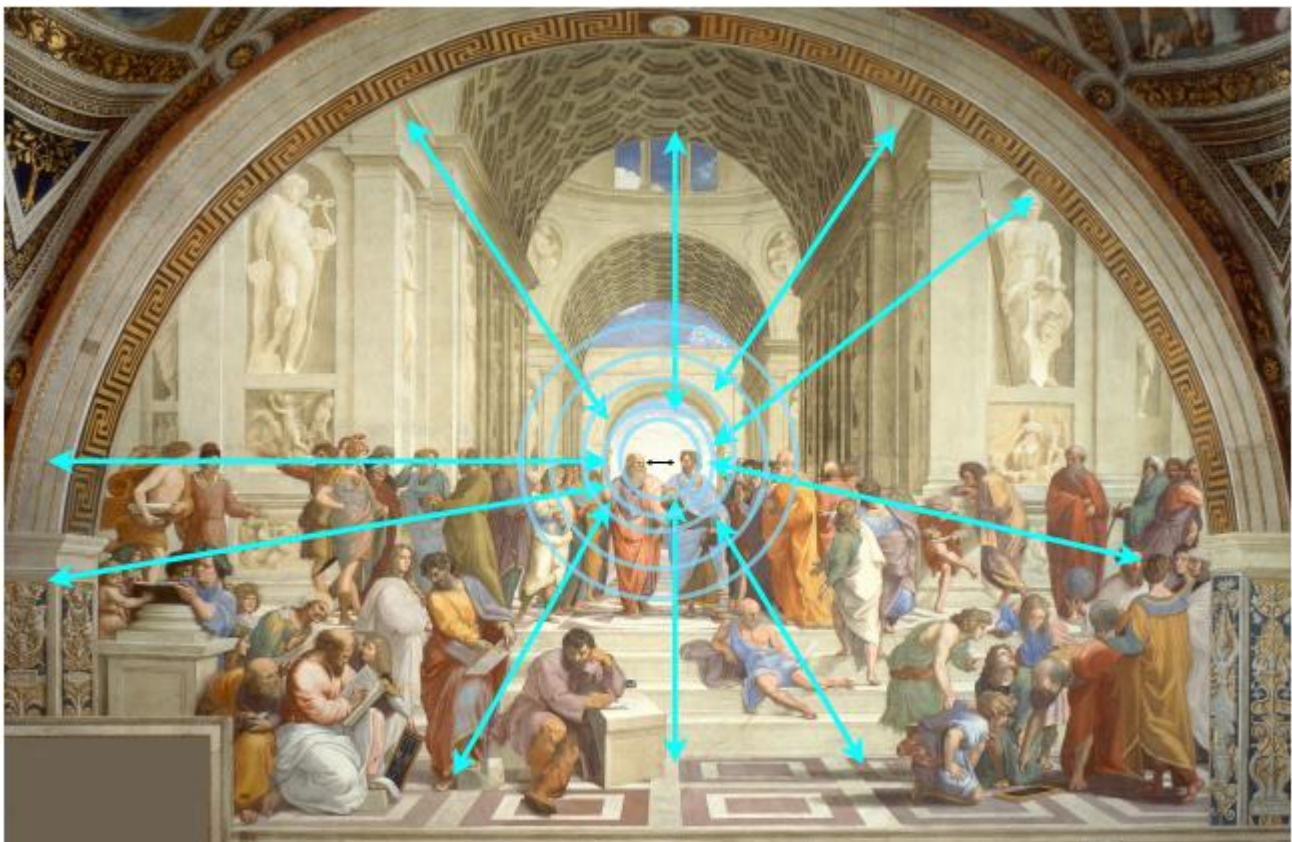
Every fascist regime is also one of aesthetic rule“ [Mogorosi [2021: 24]

The individual has *perceived* agency and *perceived* will in determining how one moves from one direction to another. The process of understanding this process is multi-directional. It is not determined on the geo-location of a consolidated, larger place. I often find that *multi-directional-speculation* is a powerful artistic tool outside hegemonies of a religious nationalist nature - programs which aim to dissolve the individual in favour of the larger distribution. Foucault calls this operation, a *Despositif* [1978; 5].

But what are the ideological markers of this idea? Foucault thinks of this as a range of *public* institutions holding strong sociological and moral ethics [1978; 5]. The power of these ethics is drawn from clear aims of social reproduction to keep the very same institutions sustainable. If institutions are dictators of decorum, the principles of these institutions are its dictums.

These institutions include: political parties, pre-school, primary, high schools, technical colleges, universities, public + private libraries, border gates, families, marriages, municipalities, town councils, media news stations economic conferences, art galleries, auction houses, radio. By extension, the image's distributive paths are duplicated through public institutions, socially reproduced through private moments with family, friends; increasingly gathering increased pathos through each exchange.

COMPOSING THE ASSOCIATIONAL



Both above: Raphael. *The School of Athens*. 1508-1511 AD. Fresco. 500cm x 770cm. Stanza Della Segnatura. Britannica. Accessed: 6 November 2023.

When we think back to the playing field as *being* empty, we got to see the playing field is a place that was communicated through the line and drawing – the invention of a context. We saw this contextual field becoming a field of psycho-philosophical power by consolidating a set of ideas and ethics. When images, symbols are invented from within this frame, images assume a new kind of power - drawn from the power of the framing device itself.

The production of this associational relationship becomes tighter via close proximity with the referent. The closer the objects to this convergence of power, power is thus *transferred through* visual and textual osmosis. These codes become a shared languages as noted earlier by Ranciere.

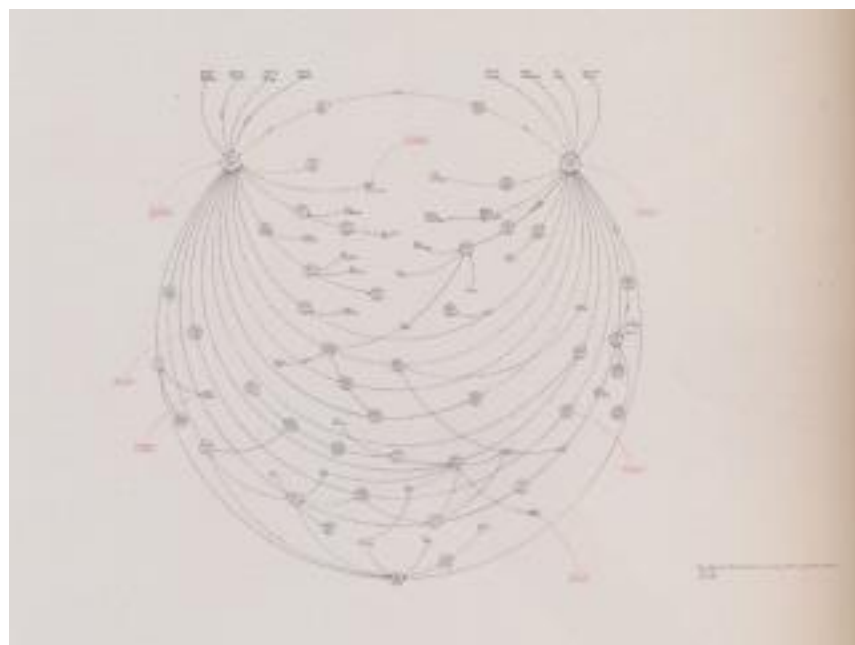
Gqola [2021; 16] references bell hooks' thinking around the law *from which* justice could be extrapolated - doubling up as a mapping technique through *hook's* phrasing of *white-supremacist-capitalist-patriarchy*⁷. With *hooks*, the power of this phrase lies in the fact that these fields are interlocked due to the closeness of the mythological all-knowing white God-like figure which is central to the mythology of salvation towards the rest of the world. Similar to the West's Enlightenment's philosophical + religious mission to civilize the world. This philosophical mythology locates itself art-historically and semiotically through the centralisation of figures who have white skin, and by extension situate the figure with darker skin on the compositional fringes of the painting. Very often this body is *situated* within the schools of Dutch, Greek, or Italian High Renaissance paintings and architectural sites: for example, within the vaulted pillar – socio-political architectures that connote legal and/or mytho-constitutional institutions.

The *white-supremacist-capitalist-patriarchy* body produces an image of a socio-racial, economic, and gendered mytho-body-ethos from which public institutions can readily duplicate. The term *white-supremacist-capitalist-patriarchy* articulates a specific species-econo-body as a consolidated philosophical location and model. It is the specificity of this body-corpus that underwrites the ethos of universality - a common thread when looking at Christian missionary doctrine in South Africa specifically. *hooks* names and thus concretises this interlocking system precisely to de-centralise its centrality in the ontological field. By placing these body-ethics in direct relation to one another, *hooks* bring us back to understanding institutional power intricately linked through close proximity towards a tight knit Despositif.

The production of this image denotes an interlocking formalisation of body and place and process. Visually, the language of legal practice, formalised attire, reading, debate are coded through the teachings of decorum at institutional levels.

⁷ bell hooks. On Interlocking Systems of Domination. 2019. YouTube. Accessed 2 April 2023

The need for teaching “proper” action lays the foundations towards the need for the continuous re-education of ideological, conceptual and philosophical moulding of bodies, especially geared towards those who do not adhere to the same methods of decorum [Gqola 2021; 49]. This need for a “re education” of bodies outside the totalising frame of reference demand, a practice of discipline *into* a carefully constructed frame of operation [2021; 49].



Mark Lombardi, 1999, *Gerry Bull*, Space Research Corporation and Armscor of Pretoria, South Africa, c. 1972–80 (5th Version). Pencil on paper. Socks-Studio. Accessed 20 May 2023

Gqola enunciates this assembling process, as “forms of making through synthesis [2021; 60]. People whom are schooled in this method become *disciples* of the education.

Another process of making the associational is through ideological convergence. Here, we need to encounter the writings of American lawyer Derrick Bell. In the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* [1954], a legal case which ended the continuation of racially-segregated schools, Dr. Bell worked through Prof. Wechsler’s determination that a legislative body should be involved in what he called a “principled appraisal” not fixed to “historical meaning”. Further stating that “principled analysis”, “history’s subtle hand”, and “reason” should shine through the demands of a particular moment [1980; 520].

The legal dilemma here that Prof Wechsler articulated is that the issue here is not that state-segregated schools was *not* a matter of segregation, rather of what he termed “associational rights” - that when the state denies freedom of association [which is an act that is universal for all racial matters of free association], it would be a difficult to undertake a smooth transition⁸. Professor Charles Black’s response

⁸ *ibid* pp. 521

was that if the *Ne...ro* race's case for being in equal standing does not displease whites, then the position of equality of "whiteness" needs to be reviewed⁹. This proposes a stinging revelation that if we are serious about producing racial equality, then white bodies ought to sacrifice what Professor Black terms "racism-granted" privileges for whites¹⁰. This is where a resolution becomes emergent for Prof. Bell - that the need for *interest-convergence* is vital. This ideological enunciation – similar to hooks appraisal) posits that a standalone juridical position that effaces the societal status of white bodies is not sufficient to produce racial equality, but that racial equality will only be achievable when interests of both black and white are in line with each other¹¹.

I bring this case up for two articulations, one sitting comfortably within Simone's articulation of *intricate territorialization* - that shared interests are not just necessary, but vital for the building of "harmonious" communities. Second, which troubles me deeply, is the continued possibility of consolidation of these separate interests as a method to keep a binary ethos of separation alive. This second proposition reminds me of the articulation of Project Apartheid in South Africa as a policy of "good neighbourliness" expressed by Hendrick Verwoerd¹².

Without taking into account the white-supremacist ethos which underpinned this notion of good neighbourliness, it seems like an attractive proposition: building together, but with space apart? Who wouldn't want that? In reality, we see the consequences used by the state to enforce this ethos when people want to determine their own paths: law, fines, arrests, the police force, German Shepards, Hippos¹³. These sets of tools are called an apparatus by Giorgio Agamben, despositif by Michel Foucault, and a sociogram by Jacob Moreno.

These three ideas are similar in that they attempt to describe a diagrammatic form of governance – an idea brought forward through Dr. Ahmed Veriava's PhD thesis *The South African diagram: the governmental machine and the struggles of the poor* (2014).

⁹ *ibid* pp. 522

¹⁰ *ibid* pp. 523

¹¹ *ibid* pp. 523

¹² Hendrick Verwoerd's speech on good neighbourliness was aimed at legitimising Apartheid away from a racial policy to a language of the separate but (not-so-equal) relation. Thereby constructing a two-part fragmented society.

¹³ *Hippos* were armoured personnel carriers developed by Thales. Commonly referred to as a *Casspir*. The APC came with bulletproof glass, metal bodies, and large wheels used to carry members of the army on the ground. The APC could withstand external bullet fire.

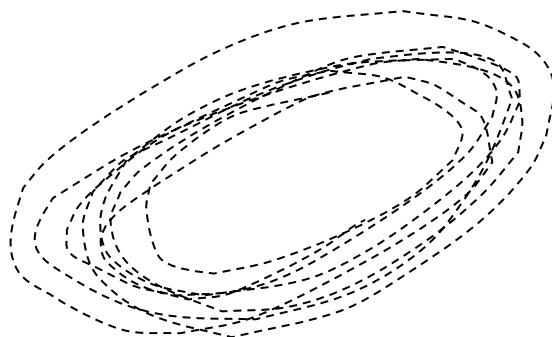
The meaning of the diagrammatic here aims to make sense of the entanglements of institutions (often *of* the state) and the *people* (the public consisting of many individuals). There are key differences here. First, between Foucault and Agamben's descriptions:

Foucault's description articulates this diagram as "a mechanism of power" [1978; 5]. Foucault locates this as the fundamental link between power, access, knowledge and sexuality. These linkages demand continuous re-negotiation. For this paper however, I am interested in the linkages between knowledge and power. Foucault's notion of the despositif is of a governmental nature. It is an organisational approach towards dealing with forms of life. It is a response to any particular historical moment [2009; 2]. It is formulated on seeing the relations between the concrete networks of architectural buildings, municipal housing, municipalities, revenue services, malls, waste treatment centres, substation, archival museums that we can observe relations that allow the invisible despositif to cautiously unveil itself [2009; 7].

"Apartheid really was a sinister project, a project of malnutrition *and* wealth, certainly not only as an economic, but as a mental and cultural process of accumulation *and* erasure.

By being in the presence of this space, do you become more alerted to the magic of literature and imagination as escape? If you're on the outskirts of this maddening architecture, all that imagination is replaced by violence. I must be going crazy, does this mean that by just being in the orbits of many imaginations, I am able to break through this plateau of poverty? Have I achieved something that only my parents, and by extension of the community of Thokoza had been dreaming of only 27 years ago? Was I also caught up in the dream that I? assumed was real?"

Mokoena, P. 2020. A Schematic Meditation on Maptextual Geographies: Geocentricity and Power. Unpublished





George Mahashe. U406 Pavilion Prototype 2. 2023. HH Campus.UCT. Cape Town. Accessed 10 March 2024.

Giorgio Agamben's thinking around the apparatus springs from the same well as Foucault's thinking of the *Despositif*, but takes a different route. Agamben tracks these conceptual, diagrammatic + organisational dialectics from Greek philosopher Hippolyte, and German thinker Hegel.

Dialectics, for the purposes of this project I do not intend on expanding. In the interest of Agamben's descriptions however, we find prevailing similarities of these dialectics. Between Foucault, Agamben, Hegel and Hippolyte. That is: the question of what an apparatus is not a philosophical question, but rather a question of praxis [2009; 8].

This praxis-notation comes from understanding the origins of the Holy Trinity, the triangular relationship between father, son and Holy Spirit in Christian theology. This understanding is inaugurated from an economy of the religious, derived from the Greek term *oikonomia*¹⁴. In this framework, the *biological* father can entrust his *biological* son to carry out the ontological tasks the father himself is tasked through

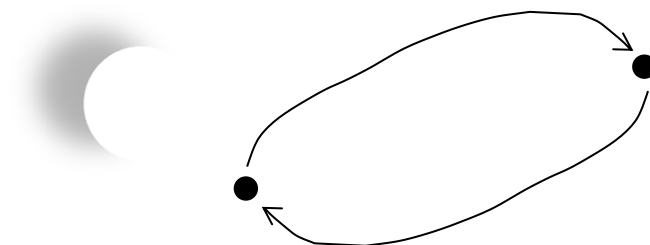
¹⁴ Leshem, D. (2016). Retrospectives: What did the ancient Greeks mean by *Oikonomia*?. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 30(1), 225-238.

the contractual *spirit* of the relationship between father and son [2009; 9]. This Greek conception of *oikonomia* is actualised through the home, and is extended paternalistically through forms-of-life and its institutional triad [2009; 9]. To this end, the action of keeping this ideological triad functioning through social reproduction is a praxis of interlocking moral duties of the son brought by the father responsibility towards the omnipresent “Father” – articulated as the “Holy Spirit”.

Jacob Moreno enters this conversation through the field of sociology. He notes that the practice of *sociometry* is a “measurement of social relations:- *all* measurements of *all* social relations” [2012; 14]. Moreno also points out that the form of the sociometry is not an exact science as this praxis is based on continually shifting socio-cultural, psycho-political, geo-economic, macro and micro relations aggregated data.

As we know the three conceptions of apparatus are attempting to undertake a programmatic understanding towards patterns of movement to understand the shifting modalities of mobilisation and critical resistance against totalising frames-of-life. People who are at the synaptic ends of these institutions become constitutive extensions of this machinery. The person and the institution become indistinguishable from one another.

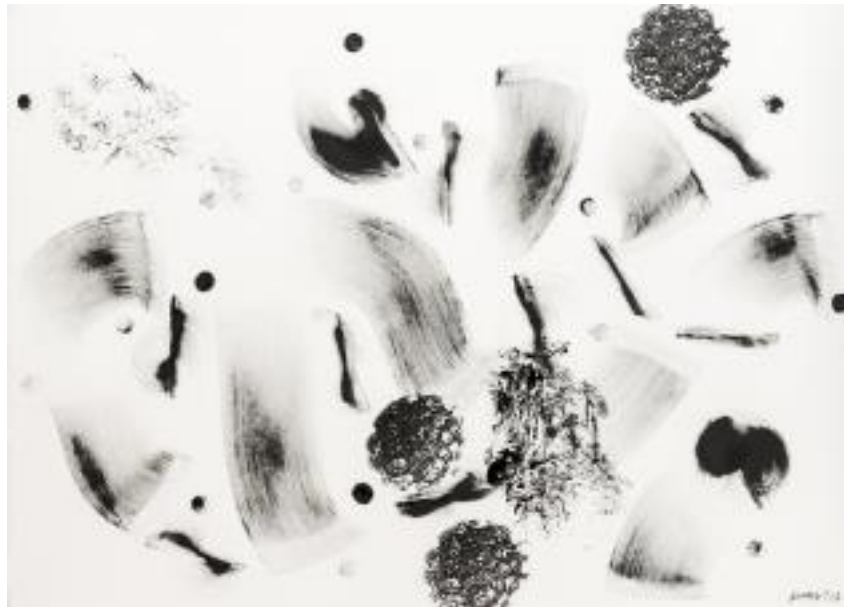
Through this blurring, ideas, frameworks, concepts, and moral directives are passed through the administrative synapses of the institution via the individual. The relationship becomes syntactic.



This is what I call an *internet-ology*, a feedback loop that allows the institution and the individual to work together as seamlessly as possible, not for the purposes of attaining associated power, but rather to just keep the relationship sustainable – the institution feeds the individual and the individual feeds the institution, providing a revolving door of constant synaptic and bodily feedback. This economy is the functive. Being at the synaptic ends of an institution, allow us to make sense of our proximity towards place, and what we may leave behind, and what we are in close proximity to.

Thinking through the Marxist idea of *primitive accumulation*, Ahmed Veriava draws us to a process of movement of labour. He states that one becomes “free labour” by being removed from one’s *social* function [2013; 185]. One can quickly see that the convivial social proximity between others, versus the distance with others could be one of the many factors why an institutional apparatus works so efficiently - it is its ability to *efficiently* invent this distinction. Expanding the distance between people, brings them closer to the operations of the machine.

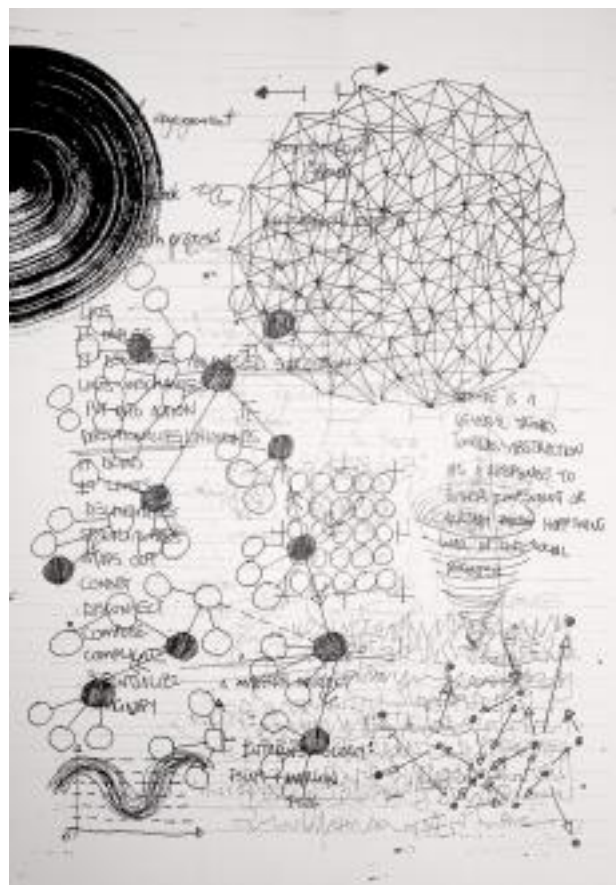
The despositif can intervene as a mediator between social relations between an individuals to another.



Kemang Wa Lehulere, *Monnatsela 4*, 2017. Ink on paper.
Aspire Art. Accessed 21 November 2023

When looking at Raphael's *School of Athens* for example, the visuo-compositional apparatus *mobilises* associations by *placing together markers of "enlightenment"* in the form of the pictorial: localised architectural buildings; directional gazes; staircases: and the centrality of two figures who have locked eyes. Close *visuo-intellectual-proximity* **decides for the viewer** the best logical path to take to understand where the locus of power in the image, thus in the governmental administrative strategy. The viewer has no choice but to understand that this is where intellectual, institutional, and social power reside.

So too then, the locus of power reflects back to the viewer where the 'authors' of this power sit. These two figures provide the key to knowledge from which the public can unlock. The story of transference and convergence is coded throughout the painted. The lines of power are implicitly referenced repeatedly by the architectural elements of the painting. Authorisation of this story takes place *around* the two central figures of the painting. The reinforcement of this legitimisation of authority takes place through the religious text that retells this story. The narrative and its accompanying interpolations are duplicated through the academy, the church, the court, word-of-mouth, music, entertainment events, political posters and the like.



Pebofatso Mokoena, *Situational Visions: History Drawing 01*, 2023, photocopy collage on paper, courtesy of Pebofatso Mokoena Studio

Pebofatso Mokoena, *Situational Visions: History Drawing 02*, 2023, photocopy collage on paper, courtesy of Pebofatso Mokoena Studio

CUT & PASTE



Bogosi Sekhukhune. *Dream Diary*. 2015. Video. Mail&Guardian. Accessed 10 March 2024

There's something to be said about the overlapping images that we often see in the public realm. When one is capacitated to read a complex field of images, one can feel the sensations each image produces.

I recall having this experience while working on the Kathorus Documents in my Honours year in 2020. On each page, I felt each colour, line and mark made on each page. These sensations emerged as compositional + emotional cues towards the next layer of images that would enable the next layer.

Assemblage in this instance, is an accumulation of a carefully constructed compositional logic. This logic informs a set of readings of a placetime that produce many subjectivities of subject matter in one field. Somewhere behind the images themselves, the composition hides, seeking to be felt, never seen.

The methodology of cutting and pasting is incredibly familiar to those who use Adobe Photoshop - the function of ctrl+c and ctrl+v (the digital functions to cut and paste data from one place to another). Cutting and pasting images provided alternative ways to deterritorialise the singular image, the singular narrative - demanding more nuanced and open-minded subjectivities to extrapolate intimate meanings from these compositions.

These fields are difficult to read because the images are not folded into one field. Instead, one layer becomes a holder of many voices. For me, this is an assemblage.

When I realised that assemblage-making's origin in the tradition of South Africa is not the same as Europe, a realisation struck me. That my feelings of difference stemmed not from having only one perspective of my father's general interest of the political, but rather that when the dispensation of the so-called post-apartheid State [as state-of-mind] came into being, the intimate relations between quotidian life and politics were closer than I could ever anticipate.

I also realised that when I was born in the early 90's, African-American Soul music of the 80s was an important soundtrack to one's lived experience in the township. I realised that when musicians were sampling older melodies from Black musicians in the 60s and 70s, sampling, "chopping" became a staple of synthesising musical and sonic references through sound + history.

Making the relationship of binary thinking inhospitable, allows the reader to make the dichotomy of fact or fiction untenable, but rather allowing fact and fiction to co-exist - inferences, metaphors, metonyms, and other spatio-textual and spatio-visual methodologies of bringing together as this allows crucial forms of relation-making, through associations, opposed to separating.

What is at their disposal, because it is the most efficient way to build with what those have, the need to invent exists on a more abstract level of intellectual thought, where privilege is necessary as it affords one time to think and ponder. Black people in South African townships have borrowed from the Brancusi's of the world, architectural symbols of luxury such as the Tuscan method, furniture from Italian renaissance, Brutalist stadium designs, Greek buildings to connote power, and judicial heritage. The township is a sensorial building. The question then becomes, "well what do you build with these

materials with different tensile strengths,
temperature resistances etc”, to begin with
the location of the “machismo starchitect” is brought back to actually
negotiate his way
around the materials, and not to plan utopian visions, because there
is no main material
point to a township, it’s a complex web - an
internet-ology of uses.

The idea of sampling references from different sonic registers, and inventing anew from the ‘raw materials’ of the past thus becoming an important propositional form for me, and by extension my larger creative praxis. I was stuck at the question of how would I continue to write with the township. Was it a place where the remnants of previous colonial powers of spacetimeplace still stood?

Bogosi Sekhukhuni once stated in an interview that a nation’s *public consciousness* is inextricably linked to the Presidents that are chosen in the election cycle¹⁵. That presidents are the natural consequence of the everyday public discourse. It seems like an obvious observation now - but at the time, this observation hit me like a ton of bricks. This articulation allowed me to zone in on relations between the literal contradictions in my own quotidian life. Through these contradictions, I began to realise the closeness of ideas, politics and relationality. The brilliance of this statement allowed me to understand politics not as only political, but that *politic as dialogue* was possible, outside of what I thought of politics as literal political practice. That as a black youth, I could *invent* relations exist against that which already exists.

Images become powerful tools, then, in constructing one’s relational politic¹⁶. These visual worlds become one’s signal map for orienting oneself around the world. Equally, images that are made *for* the individual *through* the apparatus are powerful precisely because the apparatus can only describe institutional paths. When one has the capacity to locate both operational paths, one gains a different methodology to negotiating one’s geo-environmental subjectivity

¹⁵ Leiman, Layla. 2015. <https://mg.co.za/article/2015-01-07-artist-turns-to-the-internet-to-explore-the-web-of-identities/> .[Online]. <https://mg.co.za/article/2015-01-07-artist-turns-to-the-internet-to-explore-the-web-of-identities/>. Accessed: 10 March 2024.

¹⁶ See Mnisi, Kagiso. *In Conversation: Sekhukhuni’s Realpolitik and Virtual Real* Contemporary&. 2014. <https://contemporaryand.com/en/c-and-magazine/texts/sekhukhunis-realpolitik-and-virtual-real> . [Online]. Date Accessed 28 October 2025

When it comes to the visual arts, these images become dematerialised codes into the material world through linguistic tools such as the metaphor, allusion, and the metonym. The visual becomes textual, thus morphing toward becoming a legislative force capable of animating governmental apparatus.

The workings of this apparatus can be read at the intersection of critical *knowledge production* and academic legitimacy through the work of Okot p'Bitek. In his monumental text *Artist as Ruler* [1980], the author states that “thought systems” are *invented* by the imaginers of a society [1980; 39]. In Okot’s words this society is called an *institution* [1980; 21]. I’m inclined to think that these imaginers are interregnum practitioners between two [or more] philosophical points of interest in-between the socio-political, the psycho-social, and the socio-economic registers across the world.

“Men live in organisations called institutions” (p'Bitek; 1980; 21)

I think that Crenshaw and Bell were onto something when they stated that shared interests often form the basis for communal and community building [in Dr. Bell’s conception, must come at the cost of another’s racial trajectory]. In this instance, place does not matter much. Intersectional praxis becomes a theoretical bridge for the potential of shared communal action, political activism, social resistance, giving way to collaboration rather than competition.

So how do the relationships between artist and image work in the landscape of the ideological and philosophical terraform? We would need to name what this terraform is, and how it functions from the individual out onto the external. To do this work, we shift our focus to Gayatri Spivak’s notion of the memory body.

In an interview with Steve Paulson, Spivak notes of her intellectual relationship with Derrida as “engaging the Deconstructionist tradition”. Spivak recalls her teacher, Paul de Man, telling Frederick Jameson, that Jameson can only deconstruct what he knows, because he knows it intimately¹⁷. It is this closeness of experience of knowing and feeling becoming psychic material. The place in one’s mind-body-spirit that is felt so deeply, and inscribed within the context of one’s recollection of events. Visual and sonic senses of an experience are inscribed, through the brain *onto* the psychic material.

¹⁶ intimacy-interview-gayatri-chakravorty-spivak/. [Online]. Accessed 10 March 2024.

¹⁷ Steve Paulson. Los Angeles Review of Books. 2016. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/critical->

This kind of intimacy puts forward a number of propositions towards knowing. The consequence of such knowing can allow an individual clearer *being* - and even clearer action. Intimacy here means that an individual can strive can know something about themselves or their environment only by being close enough to it. Proximity is the fundamental rule of this game. It is the same kind of intimacy that unveils itself in Simone's *intricate* territorialisation theory - those things function precisely because of the proximity to people, places and needs. This is important because the implication is that even in contexts where different socio-cultural norms exist, close proximity allows for a constant renegotiation of the lines (terms and forms) of engagement. The result? Intimate assemblages.

We return to Sekhukhuni speaking about sampling being a "legitimate artistic device" and by sampling, we may create more space for ourselves to express our complicated quotidian situations. This does not mean that an assemblage of images (or text) produces doubt and/or removes authenticity¹⁸.

Can it be said that a move away from creating ideological instruction to *(de)assembling* images can be held as an artistic counter-argument? As gesture that complicates a singular narrative perspective on an event, refusing to ground oneself onto a singular location? Choosing to invent disparate visuo-syntactic sensibilities?

As stated earlier in chapter 1, we can understand that images are a powerful method of relational communication. They are a more direct method, inscribing ideas to psychic material. Prof. Gqola's ideas around **[re]making someone** through means of imagination, repetition, performance, enforcement and violence is a powerful citation to the larger project of disciplining dissenting bodies outside of the hegemonic playing field [2021; 49].

It is these symbolic gestures that effectively construct a *version* for those who associate themselves close enough to the apparatus of intimate domination.

¹⁸ Inggs, A. *Using the Internet as Mothership Blueprint*. Asymptote Journal. [No date].

ZONE 2: KO'SPOTONG

Square Formats Don't Work on Circular Tectonics



Above left: George Benson. *While The City Sleeps*. 1986. Album Cover. Warner Bros. Accessed 10 March 2024

Above right: Chaka Khan, *Chaka Khan*. 1982. Warner Bros. Album Cover. Accessed 10 March 2024

“No distance, no circumstance will replace
you. We meet, oh we meet in the now
through thoughts and dreams.

Love is a crocodile, dear one,
fasting, fasting”

[excerpt from Angifi Dladla's poem *PHRRR*, 2010]

Here, the question of life continues to offer an important frame to think through ways of living through regimented segmentations. Here, the question of what form-of-life is or may be, became an intriguing one. In what forms was this life possible particularly for a black body?

I have been asking this question in the philosophical sense for a long while now. From an incredibly young age, I had always felt a sense that the philosophical boundaries framing what a black body was continually limiting. From an external lens, I had felt that these inscriptions themselves were always written onto the body corpus of literature who in turn constructed the black body. The black body was always a footnote in the relational mythologies to white bodies. The knowledges of Blackness were always *peripheral*. Any black body that attempted to move away from that place “blackness” [lower case b] was never “black” anymore. Blackness [with a capital B] was always a signified frame.

This entanglement blew my mind.

THE DESIRE TO LIVE IS A POLITICAL DECISION! [Vaneigam 1972; 2]

A form-of-life is in fact a sociological framework on how to live. The principles of engagement with the life force are its ideals. The way of life that one constantly strives for to live through the best of what this thing we call a life-force [or God] has to offer. This framework is larger than the individual precisely because the framework is a holder for ideas, and as Carl Jung has so eloquently stated, **people don't have ideas, ideas have people** [Jung 2015; 333].

The indeterminacy of building cosmologies of ideas could be a powerful *conceptual* effort to provide opportunities for awkward social mobilities and institutional reconstitution. Through the associational proximity to nationalism, race, gender, class and religion, we see the geography of languages such as “first-world” and “third-world” aim to re-inscribe the importance of place as primary.

Here, the linkage between language and forms-of-life produced the ideation of a black spot. In the Apartheid South African socio legislative framework, C.J. Jooste put forward a framing document that outlined the ideological, academic undergirds, theories and methods of divisive policies through the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs [SABRA]. Contextually, SABRA was established in 1948 as a response to the implementation of the left-orientated South African Institute of Race Relations [SAIRR]¹⁹.

These functioning axes often call the question that once a black body is disciplined it automatically removed from the axis of black thought and bright into a different axis of being with a set of already established notions of cleanliness, that black people are not ideologically in the space of cleanliness

In the framing document, Jooste directs us to two aims of SABRA, the first is to use the scientific method to engage “problems” “which tend to undermine or hinder the implementation of the principle of separate development”. The second aim of SABRA was to “educate” local and international peoples of the territory, people of the principles, theory and practice of separate development in South Africa.

It is a chilling document to peruse, let alone read.

The languaging of the word “problem” in these documents means that in the eyes of

¹⁹ see Padraig O' Malley. *Political Organisations in South Africa as at 1991: South Africa Bureau of* ¹⁸ Racial Affairs. [Online]

SABRA, “problems” had emanated from the geographical place where black people *physically* resided. The keyword here is reside, as this word connotes not only a physical and social locale. That everywhere knowledge may be produced by black minds was an incalculable equation to resolve. In SABRA’s academic and ideological conception, black problems” within the largely resolved socio-cultural calculus needed to be repressed by the policy of separate “development”. This ideological spot has always bothered me, because it was construed as an *adversarial* figure, never as a possibility of collaborative efforts between ideological and conceptual playing fields.

I never knew quite how to articulate *what this feeling* was. Never having the words to articulate this feeling of isolation even when surrounded by people everywhere. Was this place a place of power? Powerlessness? Was it a place where semiotic poverty was peaking? produced? deconstructed?

Just recently, in a conversation with colleague and artist Londiwe Mtshali, I relayed to her what I thought what black was, and how it is currently operating in in the context of a metropolis such as Jo’burg. I had relayed to her that I thought that black was a place, and a medium. A place where the economic calculus of a black, body was functional is a divisible operation. A method which continuously reduces the scale of value in relation to the *white* population, whose institutional devices of bond [Veriava 2013; 329]. Mtshali responded by stating that in the imaginations of white institutions, any place where a black body goes, the mark of blackness will still follow.

Hard to image disciplined
black bodies on their own
religious accord, the
associational quality on
black bodies is always
adjacent always towards
(but never quite) either
part of the ideal project
man, it is precisely
because of this
philosophically + located
origins of the faith’s
orientations and
disciplines on life.

In Michelle Wright’s 2015 essay, titled *Physics of Blackness*, the author reminds us that during the Atlantic slave trade, Blackness was not a scientific discovery, but rather a politically and economically motivated project [2015; 2], but what is this Blackness? Wright further articulates that in order to understand the nature of this loaded question, one must attempt to understand the philosophical project [phenomenology] of Blackness, it is not a question of what, but of how, where and when [2015; 3].

This locational device of how [method], where [space] and when [time] is a brilliant lens to understand the methods-of-operation towards a black spot, and its continued rhythmic operation. I lend this method from Wright to underpin how

music may function as a vehicle for relational, intellectual and educational connection.

There is a recurring call and response here. That is that one must always push beyond the limits of Western territorialisation. This theme calls on black bodies beyond the unstructured. Those whose geographical home is often distanced from the location of his/her/their familial lineages are located on the spectrum of the most disorganised, and need “education” to reach a state of converged enlightenment - according to SABRA.

Semiotically, this has major bearing on the orientational axis of the meaning of blackness, as an ideological, conceptual and philosophical mark. Black bodies are placed on this axis of the non-being.

This political mist became the overlord, and everyone who became involved in civic, social, economic, racial, legal, psycho-social matters had to be politically conscientised. This political intervention made the political realm the ideological meeting place. Ultimately, citizens of the township “graduated” here, and made their way into the civic and political realm. The political field was the place at which close socio political, socio-economic and sonic ties were made and kept.

In an interview with Ntate Motsielwa, former Chairperson of Thokoza Civic Association, Ntate relates to me about the blackouts of Thokoza was not political, but social, in that the civic structures were formed as a protest about rates, electricity, sewage, water and rates. Ntate began underlining historical and contemporary relations of individuals working through the civic lens to engage in social issues. The civic ground is where State also related to me that when the delegation that he had been a part of disagreed, part of the discussing team had been taken away from the discussion table and then being arrested [Interview with Ntate Motsielwa; 2023]



Ko'Spotong is an origin point

Ko'spotong refers to a restaurant with various locations in Johannesburg. At the same time, Ko'spotong as a Sesotho vernacular that refers to a township vernacular that translates to "the spot". Ko'spotong is a place of gathering where members of the community at street level share stories with each other. This is also the place that music and the sonic intermingle.

Ko'Spotong is a public register of philosophical thought through the lyrics of the songs which inhabit this place. When one becomes a spectator, one is not, as de Certeau would say, reading this city-space in a universe that it expanding [de Certeau, 1988; 91], but rather one may read it as a complicated assemblage of moving situations on one ground. in which many intelligences are at play - whether political, social, religious, gendered, and even classist. In this context, the spot refers to three modes of engagement: First, as a literal place where physical bodies can physically engage, with their senses, secondly, as a historical conception derived from the town planner's office. Thirdly as a conceptual framework where social proximity, and knowing others where one lived took place.

The point of blackness being located at the places of the most disorganised in the eyes of the Apartheid state (a perceived example of order, painted blackness, as undeserving of the most fulfilling forms-of-lives brought by the very same Apartheid state. This painted an incredibly bleak picture that states that Black people had no place in the institutional construction of the nation of South Africa. The apparatuses had already constructed this state-of-mind. That is not to say however that in the failed reaches of this white supremacist fallacy, black people did not already find ways to commune above and beyond these legislative axes. People that were kept within this regulatory system for an inordinate amount of time often become docile beings. Beings the relied on the machine's operational timeline as one's own.

In 1950, the Suppression of Communism Act, No. 44 of 1950 was legislated by the National Party [NP] passed. This law codified the term "communistic" and made the South African Community Party [SACP] illegal. This act endowed the Governor-General, at the time, Barry Gilder with the right to declare a political party "unlawful" at any time if they were "found" pursuing 'communistic' goals. [Horrell, 1978; 414]. It follows to say that communistic goals are preventative measures towards communing of black bodies, depriving the black body a means of communicable avenues to share information, and build organised structures of mobility on the peripheries of the main centres which held their own semiotic and visual aesthetic.

The terms 'Communist aims' were vague, and frequently those who did not consider themselves "Communist" were already complicit, some arrested by the simple act and gesture of communing with family, friends and neighbours [Dugard, 1978, 155].

In 1976, the Suppression of Communism Act evolved to the Internal Security Act. by this time, the law's impetus focused its energies on those 'endanger the security of the State or the maintenance of public order' [Dugard, 1978, 155]. This of course meant, anyone who did not comply with the methods of operation that aligned with the ethos of the Apartheid state: a state of separate development.

The technologies of the township are an incredibly visceral and hard place to be precisely because it was always meant to be a design "off-cut".

Cities were portrayed as the go-to space. The inverse became true: the starting point, where people often left, became the township.

Ironically this semiotic restructuring of the city of Johannesburg and its relation to its periphery (in this case Thokoza) became a measure of managing black bodies, placing black bodies on linear capitalist timelines of work: early mornings late evenings. The possibilities of communing only became realities during the weekends.

The private register of colonial spatial planning enabled specific frequencies of movements of people. Those who heard that frequency, but chose to set their own town were always at odds with the apartheid rhythm, always against the colonial baseline that was made for difficult, and sometimes very schizophrenic noises.

A Sensitivity to Sound



Above Left: Joan Armatrading, *Square the Circle*. 1992.

Album Cover. A&M. Accessed: 10 March 2024.

Above right: Spyro Gyra, *The Collection: Digital Master*. 1991.

Album Cover. GRP. Accessed: 10 March 2024.

You might be asking *how does language coalesce with sound?*

It is through what we name that we can begin to understand. It is critical to understand that language orients the viewer/reader through its associated meanings. Those who are in control of its etymological, linguistic, historical properties are very capable of directing the ontological machine, its ideas and uses. These ends can liberate, revolutionise, or be used for nefarious ends towards subjects and/or objects alike.

In Jacob Dlamini's 2009 *Native Nostalgia*, the author mentions South Africa's political mythology's role of the rat and how this rat, colloquially termed *igundwane*²⁰. *This term* signifies both a rodent, as well as someone who crosses the proverbial and politically charged picket line (2009, 66). This is an incredibly layered contextual framework in itself for thinking through how a politically charged apparatus might use one of its tools for successful implementation. Dlamini spells out that the 'rat' in this instance would be "marked for death". Usually through torture, necklacing, police detention, hacking to death.

²⁰ *igundwane* is an isiZulu translation of the English word for a rat. The translation for this word in SeSotho is *tweba*, and *roto*.

This utterance of a rat points to an example of how text can be enunciated into a proverbial articulation of the relation between individual and place. Taken further, we can understand that characteristics associated with the object in question are **inferred** onto the characteristics of the individual and the individual's place.

This relation can be seen through the prism of the black body within the context of the spot. In the context of the Apartheid state, the black spot became a geo-legislative tool to articulate a place. **Always within** the context of the location - **never beyond** the universal notion of the Nationalist project. In this way, the black body would be faced with two options: stay within the location geographically, or legislatively, become a criminal in crossing the geographical line, or in the words of Edouard Glissant become errant and nomadic, not having real centre of solid reference point to start the movement [1997; 20]

Movement, in this instance is read as a material sense, the physical act of being able to move one's body from one place to the next. The idea of being errant, however, provides another path to walk through this universalised world: and that is of song, and of lyric.

These sonic modalities are psychological vehicles that are able to bridge the perceived gaps between sonic experiences and lyric literature. Taking the *Sunday Playlist* is the vehicle through which to move. The lyric becomes literature that the emcee, writer, songwriter, ghost-writer, often writes. As Louis Chude-Sokei points out, that the Rastafari conception of lyric is tied to the idea of "word-sound" [2008; 48]. This conception of word-sound has a locational site of "power". It is not an interlocutor of the actual language, but instead its power is located closer to the **sounding of the sung text**, more powerful than the actual lyric or the local intention. [2008; 48]. Sound and lyric become song when brought together. The song becomes a larger compositional assemblage when an image is attached to the song. Songs articulate sets of relationships.

When we begin to understand the relation between music and context, we can begin to understand music histories, particularly the often-intelligible paths and pathos of music history as a fielded-vehicle. One that carries messages from the 'subterranean ground' upward into de Certeau's version of the universal city. When we listen to Sade. we can listen the lyrics, we can also listen to the arrangements of the instruments.

I am no musician, producer or sound engineer, but I am interested in the philosophical project of song and lyric, and how that may influence the ways black people visualise sonic concepts.

Lyrics, thus, provide philosophical frameworks about ways-of-life, ways of-living, how to act socially, what to look out for, how to/how not to love. These relationships provide insight to how the lives of black people function in and out of the black public register, constantly struggling between social death, forms-of-life and triple consciousnesses. The sonic register is a philosophical ground from which semiotic, literary, clothing, and (human) cultural acts and musical genres all come together. This register is a participatory act, whether it is being made consciously aware of or not, what do I mean by this?

Ko'spotong is a place, a zone, not quite a Zone of Non-Being

The Fanonian idea complex of a zone of non-being is a place of permanent tension [1965; 27]. I prefer this description at the moment as it pulls those who are in its throes in constant hyper-flexible movements, this zone is articulated as being in between place, between two or more forms of semiotic life. I would think of this “place” rather as an indeterminate form of non-ground, a place was cultural, artistic inventions of life with local raw materials are often cut off. This indeterminacy allows for the capitalist timeline to function in its place - a Monday to Saturday work-week, Sundays for church, and back again. The same timeline that my father still finds himself in every working day.

Fanon's zone is not arid, instead *made void* of its grounding process of life, leisure and rest precisely because the project of industrial expansion often creeps to take a little more space in the name of making a living from a fair wage, a fair wage that is increasingly becoming less economically viable to make and keep life.

The meaning of a zone here is profoundly complex. Not only is at once subterranean in relation to the philosophical and conceptual dominant white hegemonic thinking, nor is it static. The black spot is a roving tool black people become grounded, to be communal. Ko'spotong is the origin point for a lot of intellectual thinking in the township. It is so because the hegemonic order always anticipates the gathering to take place in one place.

“Confinement is the most consistently applied form of legal punishment, as is exclusion from public participation [Gqola 2021; 24].”

This way, the black spot affect how one negotiates the lines, and how one can either become errant, or traveller. Gqola points us to the thought that what we think as the public sphere, is less physical and more *conceptual*. In this lens, being an errant figure is a complex place to be in indeed. The figure that is errant is in constant flux as to which is static: the figure or the ground, what has shifted? The figure or the ground?

Tumi Mogorosi's thought-complex about ontological location-making of Blackness as a constant refusal against the performative act of making Blackness visual *onto* the register of what he calls "an assumptive logic of agency" [2021: 9].

I had felt that feeling many times before. Walking into Sebotsa, Mokoena, Mapatane, Sentsenyana, Bodibe, Mokoena, Shilakwe, Khumalo streets an unsettling and complex feeling of a social semiotic death arose in my gut. Many liquor stores opening up as a consequence of trying to make a living. Internet users saying that men from the township ain't shit - it hurt. Seeing dreams get crushed via the most unhelpful architectural undergirds toward seasonal migratory trips to the city; hearing politically charged xenophobic rhetoric amongst the sounds of Sade and Boyz 2 Men - that hurts.

Anyone who didn't immerse themselves on this register of blackness would not be perceived as safe enough to enter and engage personally. This place is an indeterminate zone where music/sonic/ sound and its processes intermingle. This "zone" emerges as a decolonial option that traverse subterranean grammars of colonial urban planning, sonic as decolonial option to the colonial logics of (as Michelle M. Wright enunciates as *spacetime* [2015; 4].

This place ke mo 'spotong!!!

Between Records and Hearings

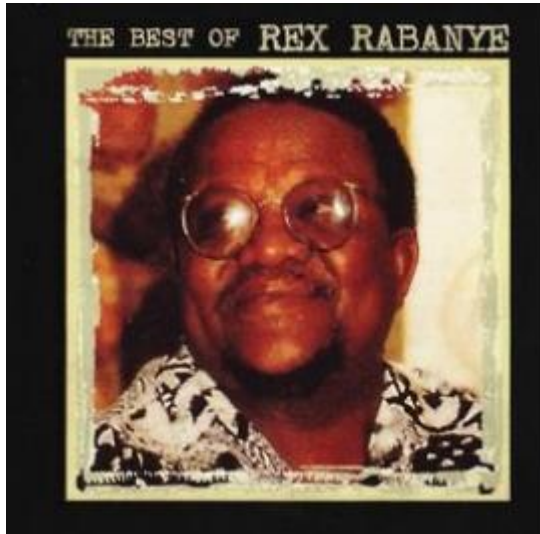


I overheard a conversation where my parents recalling there was private and public censorship on the name Nelson Mandela while they were growing up. One couldn't say Mandela's name in public or there would be retaliation. You could be called a rat, or a co-conspirator against the national order. I am convinced that my parent's generation's emotional and iconic link of the idea of Mandela was deep. The yearning to free a messianic figure from a prison for thinking freedom.

Thinking Mandela as a free body gave way to producing a direct psychological pathway engaging with their shared sense distribution. These feelings experiences extended to their children, subconsciously teaching their children how to self-censor themselves in turn.

It wasn't until I began seeing coded language at work during Trevor Manuel's finance speeches in the early 2000s. I learned that the energies of politico-socio-economic speeches hold incredible weight as a singular interlocutor of a public narrative. I also learned that most of this underlying jargon carries immense meaning for the workings of forms-of-life. These codes often go unheard.

That hurt me on a level I had not engaged in a long while - politico emotionally. The relationship between political, psychological, social and ultimately self, cemented the idea of hurt looping around the *oikonomia* (the management of the household) of the family. Digging in this memory-archive, it finally clicked that the pandemic of silence here is not only socially and political tied, but intensely emotional.



Above left: Rex Rabanye. *The Best of Rex Rabanye*, 1986.
 Album Cover. Gallo Records. Accessed 10 March 2024.
 Above right: Mahotella Queens, *Izibani Zomgqashiyo*. 1964.
 Album Cover. Gallo Records. Accessed 10 March 2024.

It was the line between silent, *being silenced* and being able to enunciate, that was always hard for me to understand and speak on it.

To those of us who grew up, and continue to grow up like this, puts us at a significant disadvantage. It is difficult for those who are within this value programmatic to explicate themselves out of this situation. Explaining this level of psychological clarity as a social and emotional relations in this dossier, in text is a huge task. It calls for coming to terms having grown up with this background, and subconsciously bringing it into close intimacy with the apparatus. Realising the destruction this silence has caused as the results of social death architecture and censorship, these cues, affect our nervous systems. This process of erasure of these cues becomes embodied. That is to say, the signifying gestures become experiential, something to be *experienced*.

Politics was always at the centre of our lives, our conversations, our actions. When we were growing up, everything emanated from the centre of politics, and so we grew up politicking in ways big and small - never *really* understanding what it meant instead to collaborate with others for the attainment of a larger goal, whether or not in politics. We never received an alternative political education - an education of building healthy emotional bodies, precisely because the emotional black whole had one massive problem on the horizon - the *emotional* black **hole**. In this thinking, we run into the paradox between thinking, feeling and moving.

The implication of the idea that Black speech often resides outside of a frame of recognition places music in a counterrevolutionary position that foregoes the townships colonial urban planning genesis in favour of a meandering process whose predictions of the transcendental - here... listening becomes a form of engagement with the lyrics that are predicated on articulating directional, philosophical and conceptual positions.

the historical
record is the
sonic record
encircled

Tumi Mogorosi's sense that the sonic is a gateway to touch [2021: 11] is an important assertion here. Mogorosi posits that in between the argument for primacy is between language and feeling, it is not through binary thinking that we can begin to suture both these realms of practice [2021: 11]. When the music is predicated to a historical moment or time, either in politics - a gesture that moves from, and goes *towards*. This linguistic turn is as much as geographical turn as it is an ontological turn. The orientational gesture *towards and fro* is an important move to be aware of as a method of auditory echo-location²¹.

Louis Chude-Sokei's engagement with the soundings of expansion and contraction through the soundings of the Big Bang make for, and Sokai writes the West's "obsession" in lateral time, that is, of cause and effect ground the project of linear thinking with the universe. Thereby allowing only one kind of universal thinking through time and thus of movement, upward or downward²². This method of teleological timeframes mirror and further echoes relations with ourselves and others in colonial, and neo-colonial playing fields. Repetition produces an echo [2009; 46].

Sokei makes use of the Big Bang and the galaxy as a teleological metaphor for bringing us closer to understanding the role of reverberation, allowing us to re-interpret the Big Bang as the initial moment where "Creation" begins [2009; 47]. Everything else follows from that moment, not necessarily only in one direction, but in many registers. Cosmically, meaning that black wholes, anticyclonic storms, infrared light, gamma rays, light speed, dark matter, and gravity all function at different velocities and pressures on any unit of metric measurement. As telescopes see further and further into the Andromeda galaxy, we become increasingly aware that existence is not the result of linear happening, but that the Andromeda galaxy as we know it holds its existence by these cosmic happenings happening parallel to each other, that is as Michelle Wright calls "*epiphenomenal time*" [2015; 4].

²¹ I use the term echo-location not as literal sonar technology, but as a methodology that attempts to articulate a gesture that repeats its shape. In his text *Dr Satan's Echo Chamber* [2009],

²² Chimurenga. 2019. *Festac '77*. Afterall Books/Chimurenga: New York/Cape Town

Wright states here that Modernity's approach towards thinking about time lies in the scientific process of cause and effect, she continues to say that while cause and effect is a perfectly reasonable method of articulating process, using it alone is detrimental to understanding intersectional *processes*, and at other times do not lie on one central notation of time and happening [2015; 5].



Above left: The Temptations, 1990. 1974. Cover. Gordy. Accessed 10 March 2024.

Sonically, “Creation” here means the moment in which two or more registers, bodies, ideas or sounds coalesce, collide, meld to form a larger atomised container that holds the complex immensity of symphony and music. Cosmically, as the Big Bang is the central event through which we understand the conception (and by extension the death) of the Andromeda galaxy, every geo-cosmological event is therefore an **echo** from the moment of the Big Bang - the sound of *the* Big Bang is the “primal sound”. From this moment of Creation (capital C), Sokei further

points out that parallel to the event of the Big Bang, the space *around* the cosmological and sonic Event, still exists: silence [2009; 47]. This cosmological Quantum Indeterminacy (Qi) relation conceptually establishes a dialectic of sound and silence [2009; 47].

This relationship has incredibly deep ethical, philosophical and socio-poetic resonance, particularly in spaces where people increasingly find it increasingly difficult to express themselves. It is an entry point for thinking ontologically through this notion of the *epistemological echo*. In deepening our understanding beyond the dichotomous relationship between sound and silence, we approach the echo. *What is an echo? What do we mean when we say an echo?* Sokei points out that the echo is a trace of said creation, a spatio-semiotic marker [2009; 47]. Mogorosi calls this the DeAesthetic-[2021; 17].

“... orientation towards the shouting silent requires that we retune our ears to a different frequency. Audibility requires repacking for easier, clearer consumption [Gqola, 2021; 107]”.

The relationship between audibility, listening and traceability is central in helping us draw out a template of what the notion of a black spot is. The tool that we are to use is language. When Luther Vandross sings the lyric “**Stop! Celebrate!**”, lyrics come from Luther, an author who is the director of a literary command that comes from one black body to, and is listened to by another. In another instance, if the voice comes from a white body, the phrase “Stop!” is an incredibly loaded command, especially to a body who has literally heard that word mutate into violence onto another black body.

Taking South Africa’s longstanding oral tradition into account, the sonic practice of retelling story echoes into sounds where a family or individual’s history is retold and rearticulated - particularly when the family is in close proximity to each other. It is no wonder then, that the lyric within the musical arrangement is the instrumental carrier of socio-political, socio-historical, and psycho-social Black life through the act of retelling sonic epistemes. The lyric in this instance often articulates itself outside the “*assumptive logic of agency*” [2021; 9]. This particular logic is in itself an undergird to the production of an object-subject aesthetic axis, often espoused in Western aesthetic tradition. The assumptive logic of agency is often the central point of departure for the production of speech about the visualisation of the subject-object axis [2021; 19]. Lyrics that are written out of this undergirding immediately provide for us an alternative field of literature. Mogorosi calls this field a *space of dislocation* [2021; 17]. The lyric is not just a philosophical echo-chamber that utters forms-of-life. The lyrics also speak critically about scenarios *beyond* the paradigmatic silence which the assumptive logic of agency cannot see, hear, let alone listen to.

I begin to think about the Apartheid National Broadcaster’s attempts at scratching into pressed vinyl records with a nail as a means of institutional erasure to disassemble the sonic arrangement of political messaging to the Black public.

It always feels extremely jarring that the location of the black body is always placed *inside* these mechanics - and not at the centre of its locational ability, not at what Mignolo calls a “locus of enunciation”²³. It is this locus of enunciation as a participatory politic against being unheard that allowed geo-physical conceptualisations like the black spot to flourish, thus providing another method of blurring, traversing and reformatting the subterranean grammars of colonial urban planning. In the Kathorus Document’s *Sunday Playlist*, the commemorative gesture of compiling and building a playlist of music exists another spot towards allowing

²³ See Mignolo, W. D. 1999. I am Where I Think: *Epistemology and the Colonial Difference*. Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies, 8(2), 235-245.

the webpage to function outside of its “normal” geographical paradigm. Synthesized with the visual apparatus of an album cover on YouTube, “*hearing*” becomes both a sonic and visual vehicle of memorialisation.

“He who feels it, knows it more” Bob Marley and the Wailers [1990]

Back to Ko’spotong, in her text *Home is Where the Music is*, Dr. Uhuru Phalafala refers to South African jazz musician Zim Nqawana’s assertion that every note has a social connotation (2021; 3). A meaning that exceeds the same linear conception of time that Wright and Chude-Sokei have mentioned. What Nqawana begins to articulate here is a methodology of deep listening - that this process allows us to tease out a “vibrational tonality” (2021; 3). Ko’spotong is one such tonality.

This communal tonality is a moment in the township (otherwise can be known as after-tears, or a party), where members of a family invite their friends and family to hang out, to chill and to connect with those in their circle. This communal moment allows space for music to become a central focus of the messages of the people. When shebeens become the place for this gathering, music is played extremely loudly, and that is where the inebriated begin speaking about philosophy, family histories and biblical scriptures while using the sonic as a field in which to dance and connect with those around them. It is here that people begin to show their love. Epiphenomenal is at full work here as the field of sonic, familial, physical, and the performative co-exist and produce a tri-cosmic harmony, communicating with the living dead, the living and those who are to come (Phalafala 2021; 3). The sonic rhythms and the lyrics of these songs become “technologies of divination”, as they continuously refuse to bend to the will of the separatist, colonial spatial-architectural project that constructs the black body’s existence in continual tension.

These technologies allow the black body to dance out of sync through bodily *feeling*, refusing to exist in stasis. The ability to exist in the spot, and still be able to exist outside of it is a form of what W.E.B. du Bois calls double-consciousness²⁴.

KO’SPTONG IS A PARA-ONTOLOGY

²⁴ See Du, W. E. B. (2006). Double-Consciousness and the Veil. *Social Class and Stratification: Classic Statements and Theoretical Debates*, 203.



Scan of Pebofatso Mokoena's sketchbook [2021], by Naadira Patel for SOFTWORK. 2024.

ZONE 3: BEIRUT

Sights to Sites, Citations and back again.

In conversation with my father and sister's father-in-law, I set out to figure out the origins of the politically charged moment that is 1989 and 1993. It emerged that the unrest twice morphed into a moment of political instability and uncertainty. The first is an underlying act of patriarchal dominance. Legend has it that a Xhosa taxi driver (whose name eludes the archival records) had an affair with the wife of a Zulu acquaintance, who also happened to work as a taxi driver. As the Zulu husband (whose name eludes the history books as well) found out about this, he retaliated by 'silencing' the offender - the place where this incident took place, is unknown. What is fascinating is that this happening started in Katlehong and not in Thokoza. After finding out about the killing of the Xhosa taxi driver, friends of the slain Xhosa taxi driver avenged the murder. It is still unclear as to how many avenged murders had taken place in the period between 1989 and 1993.

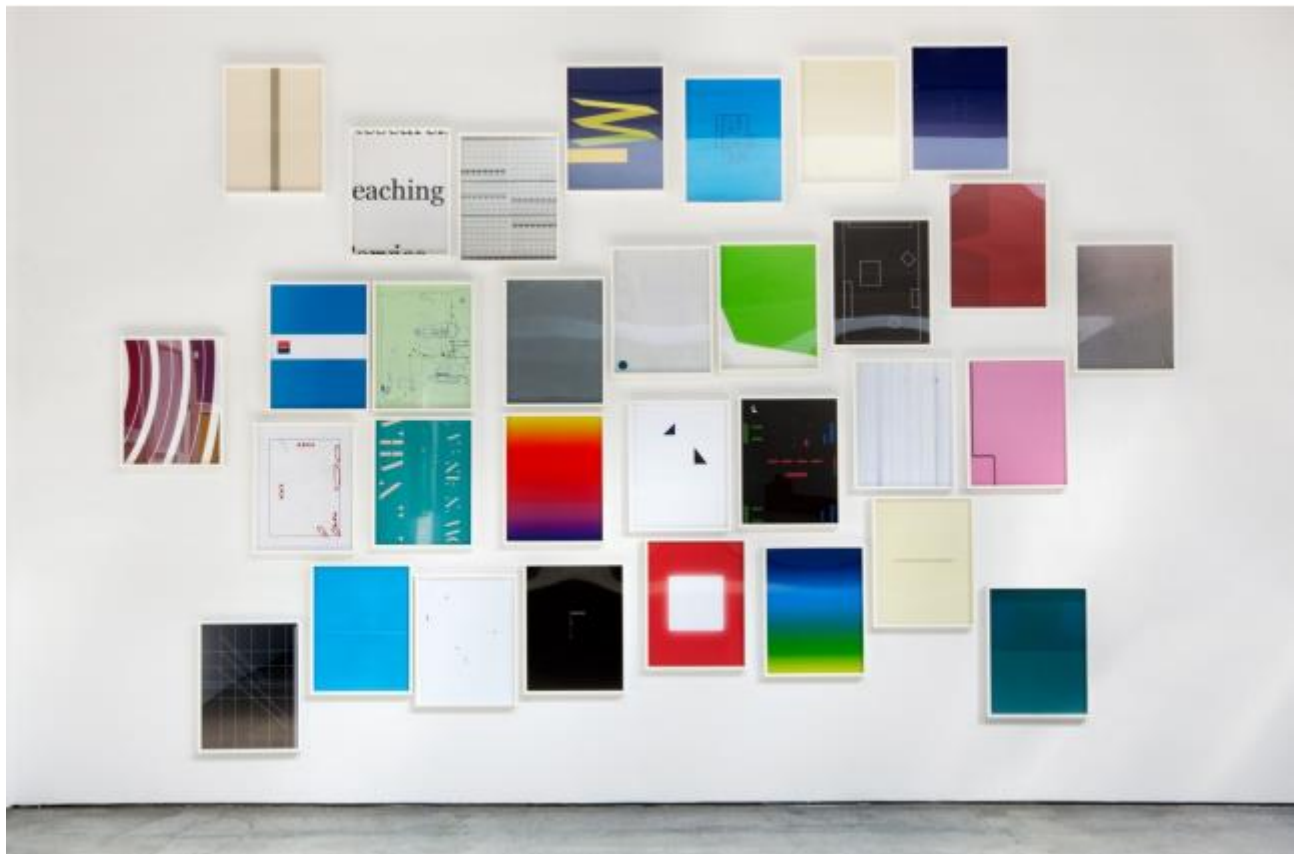
The separation between understanding a metanarrative fiction in relation to a way-of-life is made through the practice of writing. The literal, metaphorical, and the allegorical are literary vehicles making metanarratives *visually* plausible. This is the *functional* source of a logical function - from *a* to *b*.

On speaking further to how this occurrence expanded into a time and place when the fate of democratic elections was almost derailed, my father recounts the day he asked a fellow colleague on how the violence began: he recalls the commuter saying that a member of the Inkatha Party based in Mshayazafe hostel had started this unrest by attacking African National Congress members in Phola Park, never referencing any steamy extramarital affairs - no origin²⁵.

It must be noted that these relationships are about inhabiting space – something the psychotically methodical Hendrik Verwoerd was very adept at restricting. As Prime Minister of South Africa from 1958 to 1961, his infamous 1950 speech shines forth as a defence of Apartheid. He states that *the* method of good-neighbourliness – a way of producing state-sponsored social distancing, disengaged overt and covert strategies that resembled anything close to being intimately close to each other - the forbidden arms of social cohesion. Here, the literal/written directs the physical. The metaphorical affects the imagination. Allowing for the making of highly authoritative universal logics in the above context extend the processes of hyper-stratification. Mogorosi calls this “dominant outlooks” [Mogorosi 2021: 23].

²⁵ In speaking with Rev. James Mokholela and Diale Mokoena before dinner whilst I reminiscing on how they managed to live through this time.

What Mogorosi is pointing out here that nothing is new under the colonial sun. However, what Mogorosi points out further is that the key to the *making* of these terminal models of aestheticization, lies in understanding and building visual understandings of philosophical and religious doctrine. A point of convergence that concurrently produces a moment of expansion from one point of view into another is an intensely politico-exploitative exercise. The main point of view (POV) that privileges this exercise a singular point of view, is the one that negates multivocal utterances [Mogorosi 2021: 23].

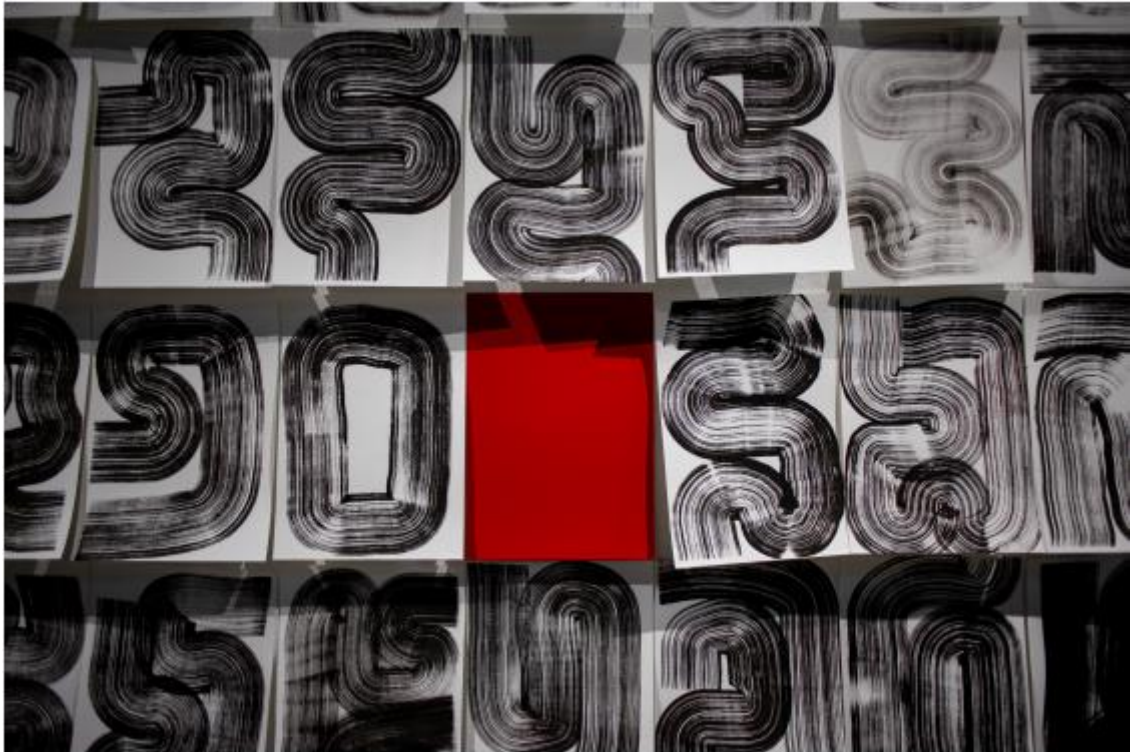


Walid Raad. *Appendix XVIII: Plates 63-257*. 2012. 31 archival inkjet prints mounted on sintra 31 plates, each: 16 1/2 x 21 5/16 in. (42 x 54.2 cm) frame: 22 1/4 x 17 3/8 x 1 1/2 in. (56.5 x 44.1 x 3.8 cm overall dimensions variable, Edition of 7, 2 AP. Paul Cooper Gallery. Date Accessed: 10 March 2024

Images, then, become their own network. It is as if they call *on* and *to* other images. Images are predicated on their pictorial enactments. It is possible to see and track the history of the referential *functions* that make up the compositional playing field. Images are an experience - a state of **proof**. Images and sounds, together function as ideological, ethical, philosophical, poetic, sonic semiotic, literal, iterative directives towards the production of Mogorosi's assumptive logic in the mind of the individual. It is this logic that always attempts to build itself in the mind of the individual. This is to say that if we are to think through the lens of a playing field as stated earlier in the essay, we may begin to truly recognise the relationship between the larger interoperable entanglements of the apparatus that run within the image's operating system. When the discipline of a certain practice is considered as a field,

the field holds space for the apparatus. The apparatus in turn produces space for the production and management of forms-of-life. This in turn provides space for speculative rumination of a dialectic.

INVENTING INTERNET-OLGY



Internet Drawings. Photograph courtesy Rebecca Boulet for The Point of Order. 2023.

What would it mean for an artist to build a praxis towards their individual human expression? What do sophisticated architectures/ frameworks/ethos allow for artistic expression to flourish? Does this structure mean that artist needs to build processes for images to come to life and to “do” things in the real world? Can one still think of oneself as an artist when the artworks themselves cease to function like artworks, but function like orientational devices beyond concretised lines of intellectual mobility?

How would this practice look like?

(After many failed attempts to locate Tabita
Rezaire... I gave up)

How would the practice function?

“Dude! Prof. Gqola has already written a whole book on this. Get with
it”

What would be the fuel to allow the practice to run on its own, without
the artist’s constant intervention?

Is this even possible?
Perhaps Marechera would say yes.
Would the artist always need to be present?
Perhaps Okot p'Bitek would write a play about this that can be
performed until the next day's sunrise.
What mechanisms would need to be in play in order for this machinery to
even "live"?

I'm sure Ntate Koloane would smile, share a laugh and proceed to draw out
the idea until 10 in the evening at the Ba Factory. The very same
machinery he helped invent.
What art-historical movements/schools would need to be in close proximity
to the artist's practice in order?
Rampolokeng would have something to add, for
sure...

I am curious in thinking about these questions, as they propose a way of looking at
the world from my locus outward. Thinking about what does it take to allow the
artistic *practice* to function as a vehicle to further the embedded ideas within the
artwork, how can an artistic practice make space for those whose centres are
located at a different field of ideological cosmologies? Is building arts *practice* a
viable option for being able to express complex visual relations with my community,
who might not have a direct connection to something scholars in the University
context term an *arts practice*?

Some of these questions have popped up
in a walkabout of my MA exhibition with
first year students:

As I continued paying attention to the
multitudes of textual, sonic,
autobiographical, historiographical,
historical, socio-political, psycho social
and technological information, the
capacity to articulate these forms of
relationships emerged as a central critical
axis from which to articulate these
registers.

"What kind of relationship is
proposed when the viewer
becomes an active participant
in re-remembering very deep
historical, socio political, sonic,
and textual memories?", and
to that end... "What kind of
relationship would I, Pebofatso
Mokoena as the artist want to
have the work do **with** the
viewer?"

Writer and artist Nyakallo Maleke mentioned something about invention when
they visited the exhibition, sharing her thoughts on the sketchbooks on show.
They got me thinking that perhaps an arts practice is just the spirit of trying to
make sense of the work with the materials at one's disposal.

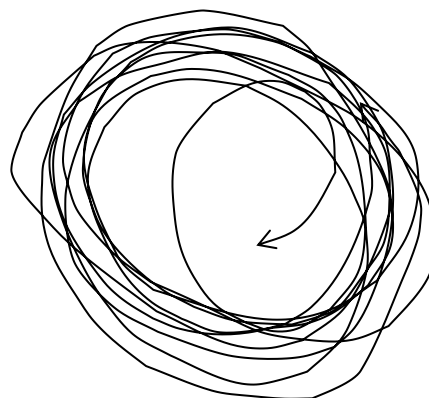
To understand that maybe the materials with which we are sensorially attached to, is the very same material that can be transformed into modes of expressing our concerns, fears, doubts and joys to the worlds we inhabit. That the process of inventing precedes the process of making. It doesn't have to involve building a large machine to *make people* understand, it could just be a method for oneself to share with others - that invention is a practice is *making* space.

I continued to ruminate:

"Making it" is not the same as actually making the thing creatively. It is in fact, a philosophical question. The "making it" here, denotes having reached a certain place where the art market's attention has now fixated its spotlight on the very place in which one is directly in, it is a place, not a process.

"Making it" has huge implications on one determines one's own character within this art-world, because one tends to extend one's expression of their character onto one's actual character (these two expressions can be in wild opposition). Emotionally this takes a huge toll on how we show up for our work in a gallery, at an art fair, or even Ko'spotong, where one can very easily turn one into a sociopath precisely because of the gap between the artist as artist, and human being as artist, and human being in relation to human beings.

The sketchbooks are a place where I could find a language to talk about this complexity. The format of the sketchbooks holds everything from diagrammatic forms of making to sketches of anxiety, and notational diagrams. The idea of the "notational diagram" sits uncomfortably in between what may be termed as "text" and "image". I would argue that this *is* my despositif, my method of internet-ology. Being able to shift quite quickly from reading a diagram, to reading a symbol, to reading a text simultaneously.





Sbongiseni Khulu, and Riona Ramanundh
looking at *The Internet Drawings, TPO, 2023*

“Having a practice that is situated in the art world is a strange thing, isn’t it? There seems to be a pervasive place when one has “made it”. When one has “made it”, that is where all the problems emerge, particularly in relations with those outside of the discipline where the person has “made it”.

The artist who has a relation with people who are close to who the true individual nature of the artist can easily lose this root of their own character, especially when they are reckoning with the modes of complex aesthetic fields of power and control.

There is precedent here, Walid Raad and the ATLAS group, Thulile Gamedze, the Otolith Group, CCDU, Forensic Architecture, Title in Transgression, DGI, House of Invade, W.E.B. du Bois have put forward visual propositions to inventing languages of expression that demand close critical engagement.

Living in this delineated space is not only a difficult task, but is also a treacherous path. It is as though the opiated moment such as a solo exhibition becomes its own time, with its own orbit, and landscape towards the manufacturing of a life *within* this framework **only**. In reality, it is a hyperlink to the next creative moment in spacetimeplace. An artist must be privy to the fact that being an artist in this project-machinery/art world is akin to being at the mercy of the machinery’s modus operandi, its seasonal time-scapes, its ebbs and flows.

What do I mean? As I critically witness and experience my own warped subjectivity towards this unsettled place, my thinking around being able to make art, *in spite* of this machinery was a key driver in being able to figure out what are the apparatuses that drive my work beyond just the artwork.

Moments of '*making sense*' of what ideas are connected to whom is an important exercise to undertake for an artist. The artist can understand the entanglements, baggages and agendas that are located within the relationships of artist, artwork, viewer and institution, within ethical, philosophical, and conceptual frameworks. For the artist, it is important to understand these relationships as images and symbolic values already implicated by the one who makes the marks on paper:

One's external character is nothing more than a ploy, a character in the game of aesthetic power, a mode of semiotic communication that one occupies a specific echelon from which one's historical trajectories have been continuously entrenched by the very same apparatuses that feedback the whisper of "you're certainly more sophisticated than". A communication that continues to both upends and solidifies these visuo-historical grounds.

It is clear that people visually consume these semiotic and historical associations, without question. This recognition demands serious inquisitions on one's understanding of an artist's position in the larger field of art history, and the machines which continue to feedback its above associational semiotics:

Layers of emotional burden and internal strife plague the internal body with manners of one's external character. I have felt this disjuncture many times. This strange relationship has caused some problems with the way I related with people. Being in the spotlight of the "famous" makes the possibility of living in a golden cage very real.

The spotlight is squarely on you. It feels like one is the machismo-starchitect of the moment, the belle of the ball. It is, however, only for the moment. The only way is to dissociate from these internal mechanisms is to allow for this feeling of doubt to creep in. To be suspicious of it. Yes, it is a great thing to celebrate others, but in the contextual politics that curate this moment, especially being black is an extremely dangerous place to be, in this instance, a lack of knowing is detrimental.

The art world is of course, a strangely fraught place where representational politics, symbols, insidious institutional power, cultural resistance, contractual control, slickness, charm, perception, courtship, seduction, community and emotional slights of hand are all the play, and are all the fun to those well-versed in the coded languages of power and courtship. Those who have money often can jump incredible institutional hurdles with a couple of "donations" that talent can't simply make in 7 exhibitions, unless you're 'territorially connected'.

In a turn away from art-world territories, I use this territorial connection to form the base introduction of the *Kathorus Documents*. These documents demarcate a larger proposition about how the “real” township of Thokoza is extended into the imaginary of an art-world public.

HOW DO IDEAS CONSTRUCT THE NETWORKS OF THIS ENVIRONMENT?
HOW DO THE IDEAS INFLUENCE THE THINKING PROCESSES OF PEOPLE
ON THE GROUND?

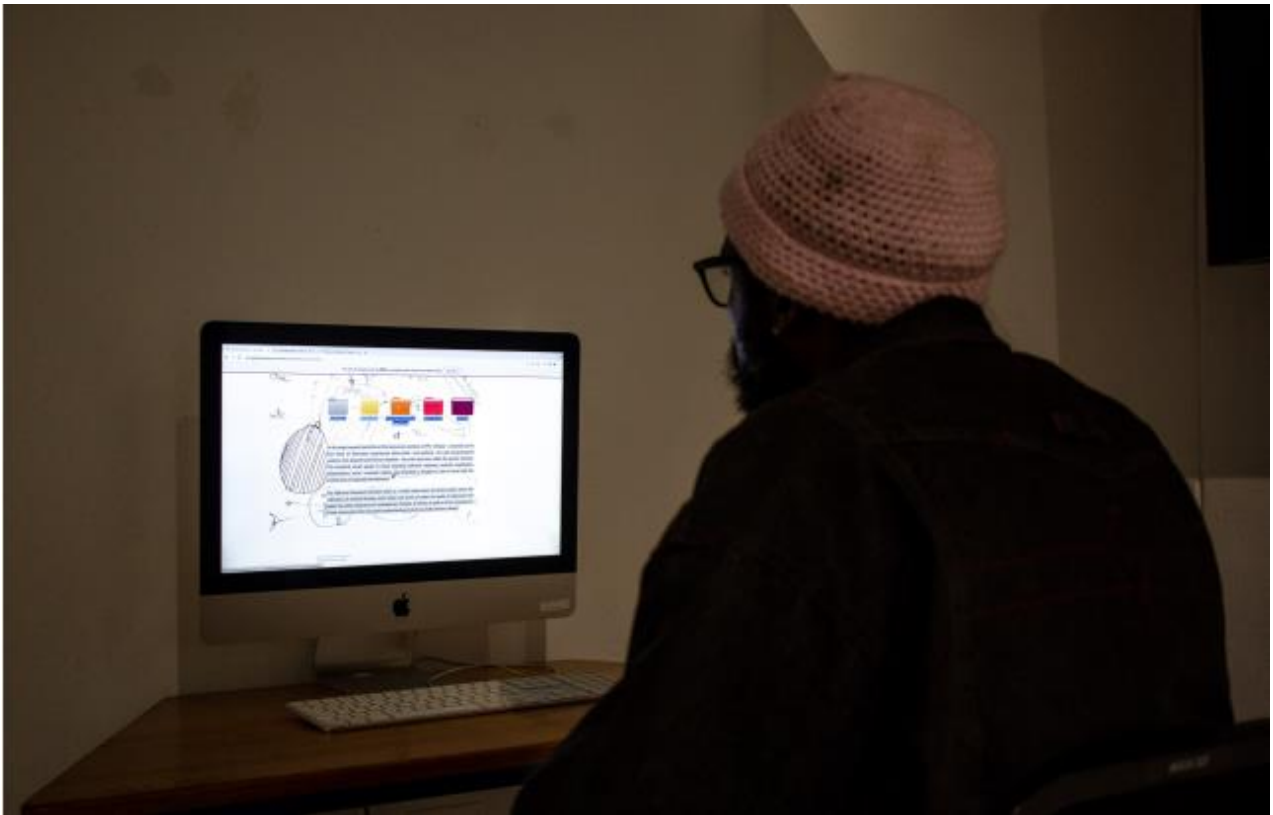
If things are static, does it mean that they are not at work? No. It is precisely because they do not move that the message is ever-present.

The video *Notes on Internet-ology* was first positioned as a proposition to reassemble the uses and languages of a) the internet as a coded language, b) the language of animation through Microsoft PowerPoint, c) ink drawings on paper, d) sketchbooks, and e) photocopy collage. These languages functioned as multiple vehicles to convey different kinds of registers from which the idea of a *system of ideas* would be communicated. The dot and the line are vital processes in the construction of an artistic framework from which a drawing can function.

It is also the dynamic where the sketchbooks find their language.

Here, the practice of drawing is fundamental to understanding associational aesthetics. For this projects, drawing is more than a recording of information on a piece of paper as someone who might want to write a report might say and do. Instead, drawing is a gesture of relational building the understanding that things and feelings don't exist in isolation - that there is a relationship between two or more happenings - and in systems thinking, this is probably the most fundamental rule.

To begin from the *Internet Drawings* is to start thinking through the medium of drawing. Mediums such as: gesture and line weight. The diagram becomes an important method for the constructions of the drawing. The colour red in the composition provides a strong entry point for the viewer. An understanding of a historically political use of colour as a tool of the creative arts is necessitated: Associations are made when the viewer is open to making the proximal relationship between colour and politics. In the political sphere, deep political references such as: the communist regimes of Mao, the South African Communist Party, COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions), EFF (the Economic Freedom Fighters), the USSR (Russia/Soviet Union) and China's current flag. At a closer, more creative reading, the colour red is an entry point referencing the colour found in a number of albums covers found in South African music artist's album covers such as Mpharanyane and Rex Rabanye.



Toby Ngomane engaging with the *Kathorus Documents*. Photograph courtesy. Rebecca Boulet for TPO. 2023



Naadira Patel looking at *A Few Notes on Internet-ology*. Photograph courtesy Rebecca Boulet for TPO. 2023

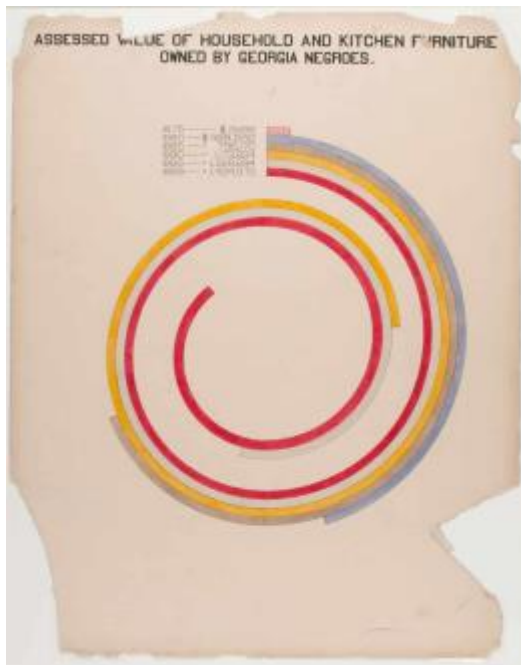
The Kathorus Documents online site functions as the meta-intersectional nexus of the exhibition. The site becomes a place from which images, internet languages, archive material, songs and self-portraiture coalesce. It is functional praxis. As Haroun Faroucki describes, the images can now “do things in the real world”²⁶. If we bring Lacan back into the sphere, we can note that symbols have re-acquired a new source of energy in the contemporary world of image-making. Where then, does the artist locate their practice in relation to this energy? What role does it play? It is not necessarily a place to make images anymore.

The video articulates points of relation between people and the contexts these points of reference manifest. In this way the work attempts to critically visualise and further understand how proximal distance is read as critical dissonance - precisely because of the *relation* distance given to one dot in relation to another. In this case, football formations are an important metaphor for engaging political formations. The keyword here is **contextual form**.
Interoperability between languages of colour, form, line weight?

The dot, the line, the reds, blues, and greens are my apparatus.

- When football is used as a metaphor, how are the relations being articulated? (What are the gestures that are used to make this effect). Through the image? The aim of the goal post, the coded metaphors of the goalkeeper, the goal, the defence, position, what relations does the use of metaphor have both in the functional uses of language both academic and informal (people on the streets.)
- What agendas are being pushed from the images; we are aware that operational images exist through the consequences that they affect.
- The drawings articulate the process of the methods of diagrammatology. What is the importance of the diagrammatic as a means of making ideological, creative connections that can be articulated to the viewer? What in this case does the swooshes articulate, the unseen, or the intellectualised? Are the drawings the arrows from which make the unreadable seen
- what is the difference between the visualised and the readable?

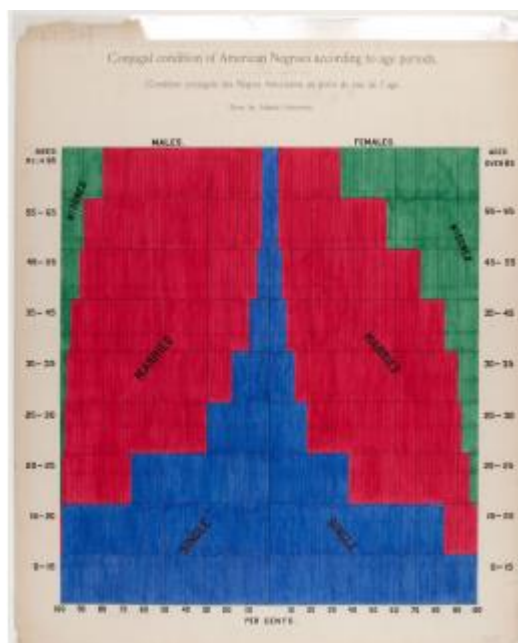
²⁶ Farocki, H. (2004). Phantom images. *Public*.



William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963), One of 58 charts and graphs compiled for the 'American Negro' display at the Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900. Ink and watercolour, 710 × 560 mm. Library of Congress. <https://drawingmatter.org/w-e-b-du-bois-visionary-infographics/>. Date Accessed: 12 November 2023



William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963), Paris, 1900–1900. Ink and watercolour, 710 × 560 mm. Library of Congress. <https://drawingmatter.org/w-e-b-du-bois-visionary-infographics/>. Date Accessed: 12 November 2023



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Orientalisms of being able to trace a line in the proverbial/metaphorical ground from which people operate from (is this the nature of a system? that necessitates and calls for organisations, preparation, and anticipation of future problems to solve). In this case, what would it mean to be groundless? especially inside the image, who and what lives inside the image? how do the relations between images breathe? is it all just symbolic?

Institutionality and Governmentology



Above: El Lizzitzky. *Beat the Whites with A Red Wedge*. 1919. Lithographic Poster. Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Daily Art Magazine. Accessed 10 March 2024

The apparatus, despositif is a calculus, that always aims to logically account for one's visual gestures towards as metaphor for a miniature version of nature, or the creation of it.

South Africa's post-Apartheid juridical systems are predicated on a dense assemblage of law and ethics facilitating relationships between intimate family as social institution to larger, more abstract socio-political institutions, and back again. Post-Apartheid South African jurisprudence here has an important role to play in either solidifying or destroying social institutions.

*There is a vernacular adage in the township that says: **Batho, ha ba ho tseba, se ba tswere file ya hao.** Loosely translated, it means **People who know who you are, know who you are.** It is a chilling ontological saying that speaks volumes about what kind of relationships neighbours have with each other. It opens up another avenue to think about one's complicated relationship with neighbours in the township. This adage draws us closer to Foucault's idea of a Panopticon. This method of sighting is in fact a method of surveillance. One's locus of enunciation.*

In the same vein, architecture takes on the veneer of spatial interface, precisely because of its uncanny ability to cue its subject's walking directions within the "new" regime.

Due to the ambiguities of the permanences involved in the manifestations of the architectural building, buildings tend to **contain** ideas through these tensions through their external and internal designs, feng-shui and so on, while uniforms of the staff create space as theorised by French writer Michel de Certeau, which turn containers of peoples' projections of history.

People are physically incapable not able to pass through the built environment unless it becomes necessary, vital even, to literally break the walls down. Mentioned in chapter 1, Simone's theory of *intricate territorialisation* outlines how meaning appears in intimacy, whereas the Panopticonic administration itself becomes active only as a spatial, systematic and compartmentalised reading of space. In this relationally, the building acts as a mechanism of containing the public assemblage which is permanently fluid and low-key produces its methodology towards meaning-making. These relationships become lines which separate those who are 'in the know' to those who are outside of it. Those who are outside of the know, are considered dead to those inside it.

Death drive and erasure read as historiography. The destruction process is perceived as silence in the archives, where traces and echoes of horror murmur. How do echoes work? Does the echo become a bridge to listening to history? Can we draw traces between the absence of father figures in black families to the way juridical institutions write laws that affect socio-political arenas?

Can we read the death drive into cases of missing dockets in police stations? What does (de)territorialization of the process between gentrified spaces, dense space means poor, (that of the destitute) but this breaks down then people are gathered to celebrate at dinners or street parties, or to commemorate the recently departed at a funeral or at an after-tears.

The square is a form of rationalisation. In this instance, the circle becomes a visual shape as well as a methodological approach that aims to think about the nodal. The nodal being a vessel of situated action within, being able to make from the internal - an internal processor, but also devoid of the external square, the rigid frame that refuses to negotiate its square-ness. A shape that refuses to acknowledge ledge that in order to function more efficiently, it must adapt to the needs of the circle, and not the other way around. We, the spectators of this game of *Square Pegs in Round Holes* have seen the effect, the pathology of the square reformatting, "redistributing", removing...

the circle,
the dot,
the black spot.

...

the triangulation

According to de Certeau, the idea of the city has always been conceptualised as a place that is and was articulated in three ways – first, as a rational space which represses the ‘pollutions’ that undermine the purity of mathematical and scientific practice. In this case, “pollutions” would make reference to those who did not adhere to the spirit of the city.

The square format finds itself employed as a strategy to efficiently build the greatest number of structures to house scab labour. 4 rooms, an outside bathroom - a practice of the rigidity of action, of leisure, of thought, of repetition.

The city is therefore conceptualised as a method of flattening data records into synchronised ‘blocks. These make accessible a heightened perspective of the city and its operations: the voyeur, has an immediate ‘advantage’ in seeing, and reading a particular city, and thirdly, as a place where the individual becomes anonymous, taking place through the practice of breathing existence to the city through its image of the city on paper²⁷.

This state of ideas becoming ungovernable allows the *permeability* of concepts to be rethought, reworked, and reconstituted as part of undoing particular frames which are hegemonic, and thus the process of aestheticization within objects such as painting, sculpture, music, television, popular culture become much less readable as a singular form, instead fixed identifications shatter into concomitant image notational devices, that are part of a past - soon to be raw material of the next critical age. Born from the ashes of the previous “real” dispensation Mogorosi calls, the *widened perceptual encounter* (2021: 22).

We often attribute architecture to the building of physical environments, or otherwise *the built environment* and in contrast neglect the power, ability and strength of the discipline’s drawings, plans and intentions. These intangibles often last longer than one’s lifetime.

We find ourselves back towards visiting Mogorosi’s thought-complex once again.

²⁷ Certeau, Michel de. 1988. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles. Pp. 94-95

We see here that Mogorosi thinks of the idea of ontological field assumes that of the living, the *line* delineates that which is living from that which is dead (Mogorosi 2021: 11). This happens when bodies are placed in and around objects that symbolise “life” items such as trees, fresh earth, plants, no obvious signs of an office, the sun, space around the frame, and clothing the subject wears when the image is captured and then framed.

The architectural profession also tells people where they must go, tell us when and to where to buy household products, it holds beaurocratic documents, and in the case of RTLM Radio in Rwanda, and the SABC in South Africa’s Apartheid episode – is a place that enunciates sequestered messaging from its own iron tower.

circle + square, deep philosophical, influence of urban spaces, separation and mapping, urban states square - governmentology, square, judicial shapes, the shapes of the judiciary

At the construction of the Rainbow Nation, deep thought was given to how to end a potential civil war and reconcile the country politically, which have always been tied to the centres of ethnicity by the rules of the Apartheid regime’s policy based on obscenely racial and spatial calculations. It becomes important to understand this incredibly complex relationship first: What was Apartheid? What were its tools, processes and mechanisms?

Institutional and administrative procedures therefore contain languages that define themselves through the articulations of movements of contemporary populations, and movement cultures through processes of computational data.

This data forms a base that produce sociograms that aim to solidify existing movements from A to B. These data-making practices are in a constant push-pull between surveillance and fugitivity - where map-making, [re]territorialisation, coloniality, decoloniality and [re]territorialization routinely take place in the social and artistic field²⁸. It is a dense field to be entangled with.

²⁸ Mignolo. W. 1998. *The Darker Side of The Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization*. University of Michigan Press. Ann Arbor. Pp. 222-225



Kitso Lelliot, watching *A Few Notes on Internet-ology: Hypothetical Diagrams on Forces 1-17*. 2023.
 Photograph courtesy Rebecca Boulet for *The Point of Order*. 2023.

We shall attempt to reckon with these ideas further along the road - through the idea of the associational - to curate images in such ways that the viewer is able to interpret and interpolate very particular feelings that either rhyme or complicate visual history. For me, at the core of understanding semiotics: there are deep associational impulses at play when people visualise and are visualised into surroundings. Environments are the architectures that human bodies exist.

Images are then seared into these associational impulses, from which proofs-of-concepts can be coded for computational reading and perusal. For the eagle-eyed amongst us – these readings are often weaponised for more nefarious ends - one of the clearest examples is the Brooke's slave ships diagrams that visually represented, relegated, and thus *visually* legislated.

When these images are reproduced, visual legislation is produced in becoming an accessory to the larger machine of associational image- and *knowledge-production*. Therefore, a sensorial + visual register people point to as racial, economic, gendered, philosophical, social happenings follow. Levels of power that govern, and those powers are made *visible* through registers of the diagrammatic, these powers are often the tools of the machismo-architect. We are often unaware of the power of the architect's house of ideas, the

bibliography from which the architect speaks.

This is the referent.

What role does the *visual arts* play in allowing the signs to manifest into the minds of the people who assume them as the one true set of rules that govern particular worldviews? The visual arts are often not thought of as a conceptual-philosophical framework because we often think about these circumstances from a purely socio-political lens. We apply this lens to how we can solve the issues of violent (gender + class based) *pluri-crises* through democratic process. South Africa is at a socio-political, geo-economic, intra-, inter-, continental, semiotic and conceptual-philosophical juncture. From the inception of the “Rainbow Nation”, the primary impulse of the creation of this new nation was built on the ideas of a non-racial, non-sexist utopia. A place where we can all forgive the injustice past happenings of deep economic, spatial and geo-transportational lines which had been drawn by the white-nationalist Nationalist Party and (preceding forms of “ownership + government”).

But the question is if one can even be non-racial, non-sexist etc. Is it possible to not have a bias? Attainable?

Symbology, of colours and signs and symbols, iconography, image making are methods of constructing an image, image are colonial objects, especially when they are forced through institutions such as media outlets, none more so than we see in social media outlets. Now the things are that there are always people at the helms of organisations which produce this image, more subtly than most is the national flag. It affects the way that institutional work arranges itself alongside the ethics of a larger more solidified body of authority. Can be construed as a high art, or fought through a war, but alas a war, is not only physical, it can be cultural, semiotic (a war of signs and symbols - a symbology), socio-political, religious, economic, psychic, spatial (as seen in the Apartheid constructions of the bantustans vis a vie Black Spots), sociological. As seen in the drawing of W.E.B. du Bois, as he attempted to bridge the gap between the visual arts through the diagrammatic and the sociological effects of black life in the United States. But even more so, in the definition of masculinities (the languages of war, and economies). Audre Lorde Uses of the Erotic in conversation with Lyotard's thoughts on the libidinal economy would help here, especially when trying to even articulate what on earth is going on with South Africa poisonously high rape statistics.

This project could then be read as an exercise in belief - are these images believable enough for you to engage in voluntarily?

Is it a matrix? Are you able to suspend your capacity for reason for *just* long enough to live in somebody else's image field logic, similar to what you are doing reading

this text right now?

Are you willing to be *even more* open-minded to engaging with something that makes you see something twice? thrice? once the same, and another differently?

For figures such as El Lizzitzky, this lens allows us to continue interrogating what an *internet-ology* may be when images manifest themselves beyond the field of images alone, but instead function through shapes, forms and colours.

Criticality in this sense *becomes* the ability to understand these associational cues and one's proximity to the images as vital to the way we understand and articulate our own complex subjectivities. They may be a vital force to rebuild anew, to reconstitute, to ameliorate. To even go as far as to reorientate our emotional, physical, psychological and neurological wiring – to produce a *positive internet-ology* of our own consciousnesses.

“Leisure”.

The call of institutional violence is constitutive. There always seems to be an incredibly specific consequence of destruction towards particular images, icons, and/or buildings which hold specific symbols, and “energies”. These semiotic cues respond in a critical manner to the ideas and circumstances of the fact that we are bound together as human beings regardless of our insistent call to escape. It is both the process of critical distance from the hierarchical, to the emotional social bonds that bind where and how we all share and articulate the complex institution of life, articulated through codes derived and inscribed through the wealth of our collective experience.

\\

The machine is about making knowledge, it's about knowledge production. The machine produces knowledge through its architectural system, its public transport systems, its reading of history, and its political players, its social players, and its economics actors. The machine produces knowledge because it maps out and visualises.



The Desert of the Rea_l

and not by others, we enter, as Morpheus has so
thought that deter_mine for_m
s-of-life by ourselv_e_s,

Once we escape the internet-ological lines of

agai_n ... and the feedback loops continue.

to tell ourselves narratives in order to feel safe

the true horrors beyond the Theatre that we need

pieces, de_materialised, and now we are realising

the i_m

age has been shattered into a _million

now it is the de_m

aterialised i_m

age, the *feeling* -

i_m

ages, thereafter it was the _moving i_mage, and

Narratives used to rule the world, then it is just

different, are also different spiritually.

assu_m

ptive brain tells you that those who are

you need to i_mpose it upon _me, as your

way you think it works for you - so don't think that

It's all a ga_me.

For_m

e, God does exist, just in the

subscribe to this.

m

ade witness through the nu_mber of people who

legiti_mising these processes, and ways of life are

legiti_macy, another part of this project of

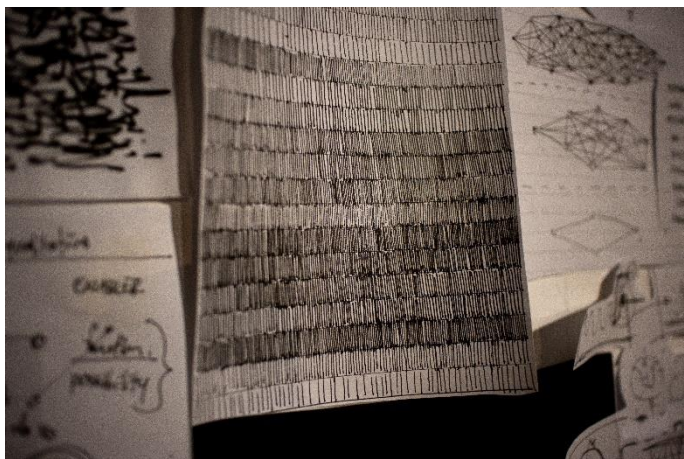
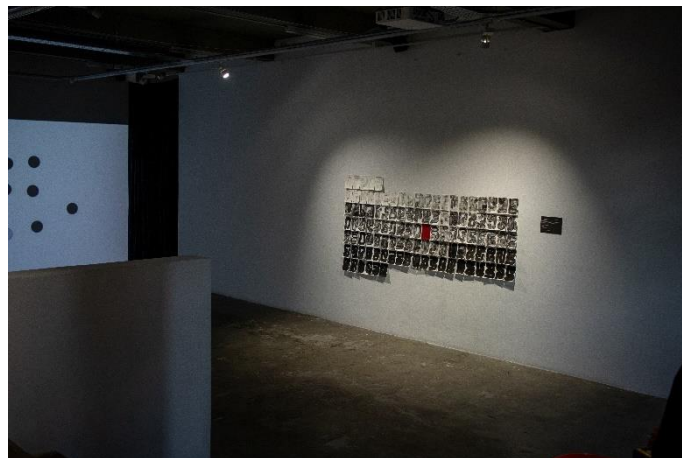
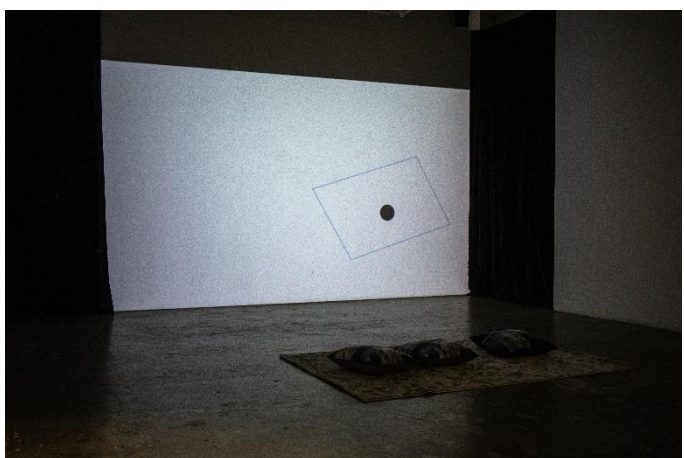
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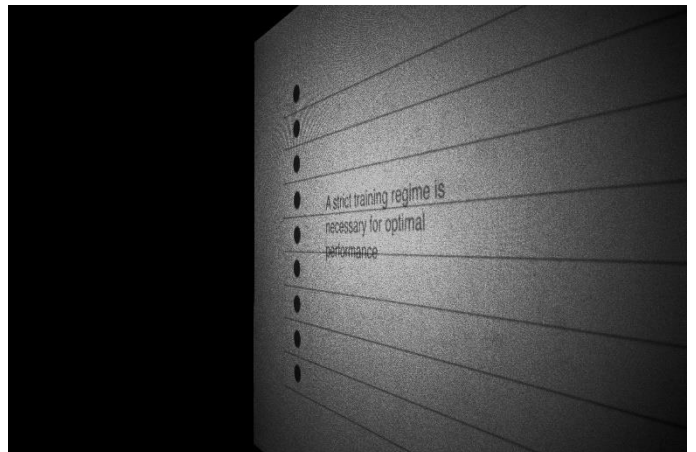
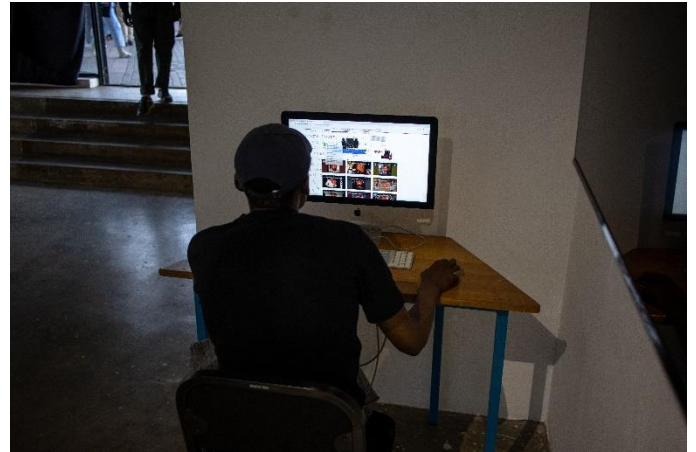
unicated _make for even _more

The place_ment of these i_m

ages, and where these _{axis} becomes unreadable.

Documentation of the Exhibition: *A Few Notes on Internet-ology*





Exhibition photographs courtesy of Rebecca Boulet for The Point of Order, Wits University, 2023

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APPENDICES

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