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University of the Witwatersrand, Wits School of Arts

Safe as houses: Art and (in)security

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Fine Arts by Dissertation.

Johannesburg, 2014.

DECLARATION:

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts in Fine Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Amber-Jade Geldenhuys

day of , 2014

ABSTRACT

This practice based research project engages with the theme of safety and security through the conceptualisation and production of sculptures and drawings. The exhibition takes the form of an installation which is the primary source of interrogation into the broad topic of increasing securitisation in the contemporary urban environment. The components of this research project include 1) a body of practical artwork which explores the theme of safety and security in Johannesburg and 2) a dissertation which locates this exploration in theoretical, critical, historical perspectives. There is a particular focus on two other securitised cities namely São Paulo and London in relationship to the work of artists Marcelo Cidade and Mona Hatoum respectively, specifically sculpture/installation, which engages thematically and materially with notions of power, surveillance and security that responds to their immediate surroundings. The Johannesburg security context and works by the design team Dokter and Misses are analysed and finally a documentation and critical reflection of my own creative work produced in the context of this study.

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