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# **SEPARATE AMENITIES:**

TOPOGRAPHICS OF RECREATIONAL SPACES IN SOUTH AFRICA

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This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The body of photographs discussed in this document examine the way in which the landscape was constructed to enforce separation, in the form of separate amenities, during the time of apartheid in South Africa.

This project is situated within the context of a long history of representation of the landscape, but I will position my practise within the more recent political history of apartheid during which separate amenities were created. Referring to David Goldblatt's interpretation of structures with regards to his representation of the South African landscape I will examine both the political and structural history of these locations. Through this process a sense emerges that the ideologies that gave rise to the construction of separate amenities were rooted in the idea of the *other*, and a view emerges of how the landscape was altered to implement control and enforce segregation.

My practise is situated within the notion of the landscape as a construct and I view my images as photographic constructs which foreground the ideologies of those who created these spaces. The philosophy of segregation inherent in apartheid reflects elements of control, fear and power: elements which today act as evidence of a time and *modus operandi* of the creators of that system.

## INTRODUCTION

Michel Foucault said:

A whole history remains to be written of spaces - which would at the same time be the history of powers. (1980: 149)

This project is a photographic investigation of recreational spaces in South Africa. These structures are investigated in terms of the structuring of the landscape as a means of shaping the separate amenities of the apartheid era. These separate amenities created a system of total segregation of races in South Africa in terms of daily social interaction, with facilities such as buses, restrooms, walkways at train stations and even beaches divided into sections for 'white' and 'non-white' groups. The structuring of recreational amenities, in terms of their organization, design and the ideology which that design performs, constitutes the main focus of this body of work in order to reflect on how the landscape was constructed to facilitate separation. This document examines my approach to representing the constructed landscape through the photographic image and takes inspiration from both the *New Topographics* exhibition (1975)<sup>1</sup> and the Düsseldorf School.<sup>2</sup>

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1 *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-altered Landscape* was an exhibition curated by William Jenkins at the International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, Rochester, NY in January 1975. Participating artists included Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Henry Wessel, Jr., Bernd and Hilla Becher, Frank Gohlke, Joe Deal, Nicholas Nixon, Stephen Shore and John Schott. It is seen as a landmark exhibition in the history of landscape photography, as the altered landscape became the main focus within these photographs.

2 The Düsseldorf Staatliche Kunstakademie has produced a number of photographers in recent decades that have redefined photography, especially in regards to the landscape. Under the tutelage of Bernd and Hilla Becher these artists include Andreas Gursky, Thomas Struth, Thomas Ruff, Candida Höfer and others.

In the first chapter I examine the notion of the landscape as a construct by briefly referring to the development of landscape as a genre, from early Dutch and English representations and Romanticism to the contemporary interpretations of landscape photography today. I am in no way attempting a comprehensive survey of this complex and dense field of study, as that is beyond the scope of this document. Instead I will briefly plot the shift in how the landscape was represented from the sixteenth century to about 1885, when, as a reaction to the industrial revolution, artists moved away from representing the landscape as idyllic and untouched, and increasingly moved to incorporate the built environment into their imagery.

In the nineteenth century, the medium of photography, influenced by landscape painting, became a new vehicle for the representation of the landscape. The advent of modernism in twentieth century photography, particularly as it was practised in the United States, celebrated the camera and moved away from the painterly aesthetics of the nineteenth century. I will contextualise my body of work by focusing on those artists who used photography to break away from this painterly trend after 1914. I do not intend to provide a survey of the history of landscape as a genre, but rather to point to a history of the representation of the constructed landscape in regards to my own practise.

In order to shed light on my own work, which deals with the seemingly embedded values within the landscape of those who constructed it, I will examine a number of artists' works. Ansel Adams was a leading figure in the move away from pictorialism towards a 'straight' photography, yet, as I will demonstrate, he continued the tradition of depicting an unspoilt, sublime landscape.

I will then examine how the photographic representation

of the landscape evolved towards a focus on the built environment and, by definition, the constructed nature of the landscape. In the 1970s, a shift occurred away from the values of Ansel Adams' era, which led to a more 'truthful' portrayal of the landscape as a construct. Disregarding notions of beauty and pure nature in their images, I will examine the works of artists like Stephen Shore and Robert Adams from the *New Topographics* exhibition. Finally, I will examine the more contemporary works by Andreas Gursky as an example, in relation to my practise, of how the camera can be used to reveal the constructed nature of the landscape through the construction of a photograph.

In chapter two I will situate my practise within the context of the first chapter by examining the historical context in which separate amenities were created in South Africa. The structuring of the landscape can, in my opinion, be used to political ends, such as to enforce separation, and I will briefly discuss the laws and political climate in which this happened. From the Reservation of *Separate Amenities Act* of 1953 to 'petty' apartheid, these elements enabled a level of social engineering that led to spaces of incongruity and, ultimately, failure.

David Goldblatt's imagery from *South Africa: The Structure of Things Then* (1998) will be briefly examined in relation to representations of the South African landscape within the context of the history of apartheid and the structuring of the apartheid city. I wish to use Goldblatt's views on structures within the South African landscape to demonstrate how recreational spaces, specifically the separate amenities built during apartheid, can express the embedded values and philosophies of those who created them. Through this landscape constructed for political, social and psychological reasons, a view can be obtained of how the land was used to implement

control, and an idea of the ideologies and fears of its creators emerges.

Finally, I will discuss my own photographic practise in the context of this complex history. I will discuss both the technical and creative choices I made in the construction of my images. This process has led me to examine the lasting effects of this structuring of the land and I will demonstrate how, through my process of constructing a photographic image, the notion of the constructed landscape has emerged.

Without romanticizing the landscape, as done in the work of earlier photographers such as Ansel Adams, I have attempted to take the distanced view of a surveyor, in an attempt to comment, in a clear and unemotional way, on how these areas were viewed, chosen and initially set out by apartheid planners. This approach has resulted in formally constructed images, which in turn bring up questions of how these spaces are understood today in light of their political history.

The physical alteration of the landscape for political reasons has led to the creation of structures, which psychologically affect those who engage with them. My images comment on the fact that, despite the failure of apartheid, the structuring of the landscape has had a lasting affect on both the landscape and its people, as reflected by the current functioning of the apartheid-era separate amenities. These are displaced locations built for displaced people, which today stand as anachronisms and seem strangely out of time. The above quote by Foucault perhaps best describes the history of former separate amenities in South Africa, a history of spaces and powers. In the present, these spaces reflect 'how the residues of the past remain visibly inscribed in spatial practices' (Enwezor 2008: 38).

## CHAPTER 1

### THE CONSTRUCTED LANDSCAPE

In describing landscape as a genre, Liz Wells writes:

There is a key distinction between 'land' and 'landscape'. In principle, land is a natural phenomenon, although most land has been subjected to extensive human intervention. 'Landscape' is a cultural construct. (1997: 295)

The concept of the landscape as a genre dates back to early Dutch landscape painting from the sixteenth century onwards. Before this period landscape was used purely as a setting for human activity. In the seventeenth century, with the rise of the Dutch and Flemish schools, the term *landscape* obtained meaning in an art historical context; it became a genre of art. It is important to distinguish between landscape as a genre in fine art and the landscape as a physical construction. The definition of landscape, as a noun in an artistic context, was first referred to in English not as a view, but as 'a picture of it' (Jackson 1984: 3). Landscape, as a verb, usually refers to the alteration of an area by physically changing or constructing it, as in, for example, landscape gardening.

In the eighteenth century the representation of the landscape by artists changed in response to the political and social climate in England and the rest of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Within Romanticism,<sup>2</sup> artists aimed to capture the emotions

1 In England, views on the natural environment changed in line with a new style in the structure of the landscape. For instance, the practice of landscape gardening, which was in essence the reordering of nature by aristocratic patrons, was in turn represented within the genre of landscape painting.

2 Romanticism in art originated in the second half of the eighteenth century in Europe. It evolved partly in reaction to the Industrial Revolution and 'placed new

evoked by nature, through their depictions of the landscape. The Romantic idea that God, or spirituality, could be directly experienced through nature formed an important aspect of representations of the landscape through the Sublime<sup>3</sup> and Picturesque.<sup>4</sup> Bright observes that in adopting Dutch landscape painting, the English school also incorporated '...the increasing emphasis on technological achievement...' (in Wells 1997: 295).

By the nineteenth century, landscape painting's response to the socioeconomic shifts and destruction of the natural environment was not to expose it, but rather to depict an 'antidote for the visual and social consequences of industrialisation, offering a view of nature as therapeutic, a pastoral release from commerce and industry' (Wells 1997: 296). In England and elsewhere in Europe this arose from a nostalgia for an unspoiled nature, often represented in scenes of idyllic pastoral life, as in the works of Thomas Cole.

According to Simon Wilson: ...the nineteenth century saw a remarkable explosion of naturalistic landscape painting; partly driven by the notion that nature is a

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emphasis on human psychology and expression of personal feeling and on interest in and response to the natural world' (Tate: online). Artists of the time such as Caspar David Friedrich and William Turner, sought to evoke strong emotions in the viewer, such as terror and awe, through their aesthetic experience. These emotions were especially relevant in depicting the landscape, where the viewer was confronted with the notion of the sublime in untamed nature.

3 The Oxford English Dictionary defines the sublime in terms of nature and art as 'affecting the mind with a sense of overwhelming grandeur or irresistible power; calculated to inspire awe, deep reverence, or lofty emotion, by reason of its beauty, vastness, or grandeur' (1992).

4 'Theory of the picturesque developed by writers William Gilpin (*Observations on the River Wye* 1770) and Uvedale Price, who in 1794 published *An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and Beautiful*' (Tate: online). At one extreme was the Sublime and at the other the Beautiful, the most peaceful, even pretty sights. In between came the Picturesque, views seen as being artistic but containing elements of wildness or irregularity (ibid).

direct manifestation of God, and partly by the increasing alienation of many people from nature by growing industrialisation and urbanisation. (2008: 117)

From around 1850, as society transformed in response to the industrial revolution, notions of the landscape underwent a drastic change as the land was transformed by industry and people flocked to the cities for work. Those who had previously lived in close contact with nature now moved to overtly confined and constructed spaces. During the upheaval of the industrial revolution, land was fundamentally altered and the term *landscape* could be used for both the natural - meaning the pure, unspoilt utopias of early landscape painting - and the constructed elements of the land created through human intervention.

Representations of the landscape underwent a change as the awe-inspiring grandeur of the sublime was now no longer confined to pristine nature, but extended to the effects of industrialisation upon the land. English landscape painters such as Joseph Mallord William Turner and Richard Parkes Bonington included in their paintings the depiction of structures such as fences that demarcated property, signs of industry such as factories and mines, elements that controlled the movement of people in order to secure private property and the roads that moved people between these structures.

Writer and theorist John Brickenhoff Jackson said that:

...landscape is not a natural feature of the environment but a synthetic space, a man-made system of spaces superimposed on the face of the land, functioning and evolving not according to natural laws but to serve a community...(1984: 8)

This change in the conception of landscape arose parallel to

shifts in recreation that emerged during the mid-nineteenth century. As workers fought for and gained more free time and higher wages, new social classes emerged and the commercialisation of recreation began. Leisure became a consumer activity in which capitalism sought to use 'free time' in order to stimulate the economy by selling products apparently needed for recreation. Thus, recreation became more hobby- and activity-based. With workers in cities spending less time in nature, the need to artificially create 'natural' spaces close to where they resided became important. In order to incorporate nature into this system of recreation, parks were created close to or within residential areas in Europe and the United States. With the rise of the automobile, however, recreational destinations in the form of resorts, national parks, swimming pools, fairgrounds and beach resorts started to appear.

Another consequence of the industrial revolution in Britain was the formulation of new class structures in society. While grand gardens and parks were being designed for the affluent, the new working classes, who had left their rural traditions in the countryside, had to contend with small gardens and allotments for recreation and the growing of food. Eventually recreational spaces were created in these poorer areas, which, in my opinion, led to a further division between the classes, as these spaces were designed to contain people within the boundaries of the areas in which they were resident.

In *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing*, Orvar Löfgren writes:

...the eighteenth-century pioneers of modern tourism developed the kind of virtual reality called the picturesque: a certain way of selecting, framing, and representing views. It taught tourists not only where to look but also how to sense the landscape, experience it... (1999: 19)

Landscape painting, especially that of the English school, had an influence on the aesthetic appearance of sites of recreation. This led to parks and gardens being designed after the styles of landscape painting (Wittenberg 2004: 126). Along with these changes in the interpretation of landscape, photography, offering the unparalleled ability to record 'reality', seemed to offer a new way of representing the landscape. While 'landscape photography has largely inherited the compositional conventions of landscape painting' (Wells 1997: 296), it also threatened painting as the predominant medium with which to represent the landscape. Advances in photography led to it becoming the primary medium through which society began to interpret the landscape.

The viewing public had learnt from landscape painting how to 'view' nature as a picture and its aesthetic was also used in the design of recreational spaces; now this way of seeing was incorporated and extended into landscape photography.

In contemporary society, landscape has taken on a meaning beyond that of an aesthetic term. Landscape has increased in significance beyond being simply a genre and, as W.J.T. Mitchell describes it, has evolved into a cultural construct that can be used as an instrument of power:

Landscape is not a genre but a medium...[it is] a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both a represented and presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a package and the commodity inside the package. (1994: 5)

Mitchell believes that the landscape is a social, mental and physical construct. It can be argued that the social, political and psychological factors that attend this construct inherently

form a part of it, as these components fundamentally influence the construct of these landscapes by those in power. There are many examples in history that show how a system of spaces and structures has been produced and used by political powers to control and maintain populations and ideologies. It is the study of the constructed, recreational landscape created by the system of apartheid which forms the basis of my work and which I will examine further in chapter two. The remainder of this chapter will deal with how photography evolved to contextualise the constructed landscape.

## ANSEL ADAMS AND THE SUBLIME

As economic prosperity allowed more Americans more leisure time, conservation efforts coalesced around areas prized solely for their beauty and recreational potential. Photography (itself an increasingly popular leisure activity) helped generate public affection for these sites, establishing a sense of them as pristine, pure and edenic. (R. Adams *et al* 2010: 35)

The celebrated modernist photographer Ansel Adams photographed the pristine Yosemite Valley in the United States from his childhood. Unlike the pictorial photographers prominent during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Adams consciously moved away from the blurry painterly aesthetics, which were popular at the time, towards what he and others like Paul Strand called 'straight photography'. Adams, together with Edward Weston and others, formed Group *f64* in 1932, which 'became synonymous with the... interest in the philosophy of straight photography: that is, photographs that looked like photographs, not imitations of other art forms' (A. Adams 1985: 110).

This new aesthetic was a break from pictorialism and emphasised 'clarity of the lens, and [that] the final print gave no appearance of being manipulated in the camera or the darkroom' (Turnage: online).<sup>5</sup> Adams said they wanted to 'stem the tides of oppressive pictorial photography and to define what we felt creative photography to be' (A. Adams 1985: 110). He stated in his autobiography that he 'detested

the common pictorial photography that was then in vogue and also questioned the more sophisticated work' (ibid). This philosophy led Adams to abandon the textured photographic papers typical of the time and to attempt to record reality as seen by the human eye, through recording as much detail as possible in the negatives.

Group *f64* and other key figures in the movement away from pictorialism played an important role in the development of American Modernism. This modernist trend in photography chose to create images in sharp focus, with a new degree of abstraction and contrast, as opposed to the pictorialist techniques employed to make photographs resemble paintings. This departure was well received by many photographers of the day who had become interested in representing the landscape in a different manner.

Adams and Group *f64* viewed their approach as 'pure' and in their manifesto defined it 'as possessing no qualities of technique, composition or idea, derivative of any other art form' (Heyman 1992: 53). Despite this statement I would argue that today we can view these images as examples of the sublime, inherited from nineteenth century landscape painting, reinterpreted through the photography of Adams and his peers.

In photographing the landscape, Adams aimed to capture the grandeur of nature in all its magnificence. In the foreword to *Sierra Nevada: The John Muir Trail*, he urges '... that factual, informative qualities be submerged in favour of purely emotional interpretative elements' (A. Adams 1994: 121). Biographer William A. Turnage describes his work not as 'realistic documents of nature' (Turnage: online), but images that 'sought an intensification and purification of the psychological experience of natural beauty' (ibid). He goes on to say that Adams created a sense of the sublime magnificence

<sup>5</sup> Ironically, techniques 'such as burning and dodging, as well as the Zone System, a scientific system developed by Adams, is used specifically to manipulate the tonality and give the artist the ability to create as opposed to record' (Turnage: Online).

of nature that infused the viewer with the emotional equivalent of wilderness, often more powerful than the actual thing' (ibid).

Despite Adams' formalist aesthetics and the commitment to capturing 'reality' which characterises his landscape work, emotional experience is nevertheless always implicit in his images, indicative of his belief in the sublime qualities of nature. Turnage describes Adams as 'the last and defining figure in the romantic tradition of nineteenth-century American landscape painting and photography' (Turnage: online). He goes on to explain that Adams was:

...the direct philosophical heir of the American Transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and John Muir. He grew up in a time and place where his zeitgeist was formed by the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt and 'muscular' Americanism, by the pervading sense of manifest destiny, and the notion that European civilization was being reinvented - much for the better - in the new nation and, particularly, in the new West. (Ibid)

It was in this context that Adams created images like *Half Dome, Merced River, Winter 1938*. In this image he captures the natural splendour of the Half Dome, one of the most prominent sites of Yosemite National Park. While the image seems to represent unspoilt nature, by this time in the United States millions of tourists had started to use cars to visit state and national parks. Although the first parks of this kind were established in the nineteenth century to preserve the country's most dramatic natural areas, the government, in the twentieth century, increasingly encouraged the public to use them for recreation. The carefully managed space of the Yosemite National Park had at this time already become a constructed space transformed



Ansel Adams. *Half Dome, Merced River, Winter 1938*. Gelatin silver print, 8x10".

by the presence of the tourists who flocked in their thousands to visit the park, stay in the five-star hotels, get married and shop.

These aspects of the site are purposely not shown in Adams' image(s). The limited access to Yosemite National Park, the fenced-in and closely monitored area and the very change in function of the space from natural environment to a *park* for recreational tourists, is invisible. These changes were taking shape during Adams' explorations in Yosemite but he chose to exclude these elements from his images in favour of the idealised landscape. In all of Adams' work there are virtually no traces of the people, camping facilities, roads, vehicles and miles of boundary fencing around the park.



Screen capture of the Yosemite website.

Ironically, today Adams' view of the Half Dome in Yosemite has been appropriated for marketing purposes on the Yosemite website. When Susan Sontag wrote *On Photography* in 1977 she commented on the connection between photography and tourism, saying that 'travel becomes a strategy for accumulating photographs' (1977: 9). She saw it as 'a picturing of the already pictorial' (Larsen 2006: 243) and thus what was once seen as indicative of the sublime power of God and nature has today been relegated to the realm of the picture postcard.

Adams and his peers, the 'straight' photographers, chose to ignore the constructed landscape by perpetuating the ideals of the sublime. While a formal shift occurred in Adams' work away from nineteenth century pictorialism and Romanticism, he still maintained a romantic view of nature as pure and unspoilt. There are complex links between Romanticism and modernism, which go beyond the scope of this document, but it could be said that Adams' images reflect aspects of this shift. Despite exploiting the characteristics of the camera such as optical clarity and the ability to visually capture a moment, his work still maintained romantic ideals of the purity and grandeur of nature. The influence of Adams' success on his work, especially later in his career, might have led to his continued

representation of the sublime landscape, but is also perhaps indicative of society's craving for this idealised scenery.

Henri Cartier-Bresson once said: 'the world is falling to pieces and all Adams and [Edward] Weston photograph is rocks and trees' (Turnage: online). It could be argued that Adams' representation of nature was heir to that of the Romantic landscape painters. Whereas painters like Joseph Mallord William Turner and Caspar David Friedrich looked to nature in response to industrialisation, it was within 'the optimism of post-war America' (Pappageorge 2001: 2) that Adams created his most memorable images. Perhaps Adams' images of mighty nature reflected the new might of the United States, which, post-war, had arisen as the leading superpower in the world. Romantic depictions of the sublime have been used in response to a political climate in the past, from the revolution of 1789 in France through to the industrialisation of the English countryside, both of which prompted yearnings in society to return to a simpler way of life. Adams' images, while proclaiming the might of God and in turn a 'Nation under God', also nostalgically reflected on a simpler life closer to nature. As Deborah Bright states:

[Ansel] Adams hoped his photographs would restore a lost experience of nature that had become corrupted by the post-war burgeoning of family tourism and its commercial amenities, rapid suburbanization, road building, and resource development. (1992: 5)

## NEW TOPOGRAPHICS AND THE ALTERED LANDSCAPE

In Ansel Adams' work there was an emphasis on the unmanipulated photograph, which dominated modernist photographic aesthetics into the 1960s. However, in the United States a shift occurred in line with the tumultuous political climate of the 1960s and it was within this new context that Stephen Shore made an image, at the same location that Ansel Adams had worked at decades before, entitled: *Merced River, Yosemite National Park, California, August 13, 1979*.

Shore was part of the landmark exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* in 1975.<sup>6</sup> This exhibition defined a new style in landscape photography, which represented the contemporary landscape in a clear, matter-of-fact way by including, and in fact focusing on, the constructed and built environment. In the introduction to the exhibition's catalogue, curator William Jenkins wrote about the absence of style in the works on exhibition by referring to Edward Ruscha's *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations* (1963) as early inspiration:

The pictures were stripped of any artistic frills and reduced to an essentially topographic state, conveying substantial amounts of visual information but eschewing entirely the aspects of beauty, emotion and opinion. (R. Adams *et al* 2010: 25)

This was a departure from the work of Ansel Adams and photographers like him who depicted the landscape as



Stephen Shore. *Merced River, Yosemite National Park, California, August 13, 1979*. C-print, 36 x 45".

sublime. Shore was instead looking at the ordinary everyday life of the American vernacular.<sup>7</sup> John Szarkowski, who 'made the connection between the photographic and cultural vernaculars' (*ibid*: 15), perceived that:

Photography, the quintessential vernacular medium (being useful, descriptive, legible, accessible, and so forth), was also the medium best suited to record for posterity those objects designed in a vernacular mode. And somehow, in carrying out its quotidian descriptive tasks, photography achieved some greater truth. (*Ibid*)

<sup>6</sup> Curated by William Jenkins at the International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, Rochester, NY, January 1975. Participating artists included Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Henry Wessel, Jr., Bernd and Hilla Becher, Frank Gohlke, Joe Deal, Nicholas Nixon and John Schott.

<sup>7</sup> In architecture the vernacular refers to domestic and functional rather than monumental buildings. In a similar vein, the term has also been used to describe photography of the everyday usually produced by non-professionals.

This new view of the landscape focused on the elements of urban sprawl, the destruction of nature and how contemporary society now functioned within this landscape. With a young generation losing faith in the political and economic structures of the time these images created an unpretentious panorama of average, everyday life, in what Robert Hirsch has described as a method 'for photographers who sought to return to the landscape aesthetic without the romantic notions of the picturesque or the sublime' (ibid: 256). These changes also led to a critical eye being cast on documentary photography and its claim of representing the 'truth'. The *New Topographics* exhibition represented a shift where, for the first time, focus was on the structures within the landscape, composed in the camera through what might be described as a 'deadpan' style. This reassessment of photography's role led to the emergence of a new objectivity in photography, with Britt Salvesen reflecting that 'if the medium's objectivity was socially constructed, it was perhaps socially necessary as well' (ibid: 22). Thus, in attempting to represent the landscape in an objective, straightforward fashion that included both nature and the man-made within the frame, these photographers sought to represent a landscape devoid of the grandeur of Ansel Adams' time.<sup>8</sup>

At first glance Shore's image of the Merced River displays a traditional landscape, showing the Merced River in Yosemite National Park. An ordinary outing of an American family is captured in an ostensibly awe-inspiring setting. The title of the photograph does not mention who the people are, and whether they are a single family or individuals is unclear. However what

the title does name is the location thus informing the viewer that this landscape is in a national park and one might thereby assume that this is a recreational scene and the people in the photograph are visitors to the park. Without the title and the people within the frame the representation of the landscape might at first have been interpreted as similar to the work of Ansel Adams, but the location is where the similarity ends. In Shore's image the perspective of the camera is distanced and the image is taken from an elevated position, rendering the people very small within the frame. The family (if it is such) appears to be unaware of anyone else who might be out of frame, or of the photographer himself; a distant observer who seems as if suspended above the Merced River. It is as if the image depicts a space that the photographer is not a part of, from which he is somehow removed.

As viewers we cannot see the car or the road that the family used to get to this location, nor can we see the boundary fence defining the boundary of the park, but we feel it must exist. I would argue that Shore's intention was to capture an image of a family in a seemingly idyllic natural spot, directing the viewer to read the title and become aware of the location, one of the largest national parks in the United States. Shore, it appears to me, is aware that ideas about nature have evolved over recent times and awareness now exists of how we have altered the landscape. The fact that this is a national park means that although it is supposed to contain and protect nature it is also a public amenity visited by large groups of tourists. It is nature as we know it in contemporary society: controlled, fenced-in, safe and often restricted by an entrance fee.

These are spaces of controlled access, where visitor numbers and environmental factors fluctuate between seasons, and they are outside of the everyday spaces inhabited by modern society. Had Shore gone to Yosemite at a

<sup>8</sup> There were many other photographers not part of the *New Topographics* exhibition, like Edward Ruscha and Walker Evans, whose approach also had a profound influence on the medium up to this point, but their work goes beyond the immediate scope of this document.

different time he might have found this same space deserted, transformed once again into an idyllic American landscape, to make reference to Adams once again. In the absence of man-made structures, Shore has used people to comment on the utilisation of the space. The ambiguous nature of Shore's image poses questions about how we define nature today, and of how we use recreational spaces and nature.

Shore seems to be commenting on how far removed we are from nature. In this seemingly natural environment we witness a family in all their suburban splendour, from the child taking a photograph of his sibling hesitantly testing out the water (a photograph within the photograph) to the stroller on the edge of the river; this family seem almost alien to the space they are visiting. Shore's image reveals the cracks in our constructed ideas of nature, which are a simulacra, a fantasy of what we think nature ought to be.

Shore's image references Ansel Adams' image through the similarity of their titles in reference to the same location. It is, in my opinion, a tongue-in-cheek, postmodern reference, which self-consciously undercuts Adams' use of the sublime. Shore's image is an exemplar of the change in function of photography, from a depiction of the modernist grandeur of nature and landscape to a focus on the landscape as a construct. It draws our attention to the everyday family situated within the landscape (a landscape made familiar through Ansel Adams' images) and in so doing asks questions about our role in contemporary society and how we view and experience nature today.

John Brinckerhoff Jackson said:

No landscape can be exclusively devoted to the fostering of only one identity. Our imaginative literature abounds in descriptions of the delights of living in harmony with

nature... But we sense that these visions are not true to human nature as we know it, and that these landscapes can never be realised, and that this is why many of us find utopian speculations unprofitable. (1984: 12)

This quotation seems to apply to Shore's image as he represents the landscape in a clear, unsentimental way using the concept of the American family holiday as an intrusion on the landscape. This dislocation alerts us to preconceived ideas of what this landscape is and how ideas about nature are constructed.

Robert Adams was another of the *New Topographics* photographers and is best known for the bodies of work entitled *The New West* (1968-1971) and *What We Bought* (1973-1974). These images were a study of the ravages of urban sprawl in Colorado, the suburban background of Ansel Adams' West, and depicted the new American landscape of tract housing, shopping strips and concrete-block churches. His use of harsh bright midday sun led to images that were printed 'to distil the brilliant Colorado sunlight to a virtually nuclear intensity that, even as it glared down on the poor things it exposed, seemed to envelop and, occasionally, succour them' (Pappageorge 2001: 2). This was not the same approach as Ansel Adams', who spent days at one location in Yosemite waiting to immortalise the perfect moment on film. Instead, Robert Adams created images devoid of any preconceived ideas of beauty, nostalgia or sentimentality, thereby attempting to dispel the romantic notions of the American West.

Robert Adams has acknowledged being influenced by Timothy O'Sullivan (1840-82). O'Sullivan worked as a survey photographer for the United States Geological Survey Agency and is remembered for taking unpretentious images of nature and pre-industrialized land without referring to

the conventions of landscape painting which were standard practice at the time. Robert Adams referred to O'Sullivan's images as having an 'architectural method of picturing nature' (ibid: 2) and it can be asserted that O'Sullivan's occupation as a survey photographer led to the functional and almost scientific nature of his images. With this approach in mind, Robert Adams produced unpretentious images devoid of notions of the sublime that were dominant in much American landscape painting and photography of the nineteenth century.



Robert Adams. *Newly Completed Tract House, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1968.*

Another of the *New Topographics* photographers, Lewis Baltz, is quoted as having said of his own work: 'I hope that these photographs are sterile, that there's no emotional content' (Green: 1984: 166). Perhaps Baltz best sums up how many have perceived the *New Topographics* imagery. Baltz's work, along with the other photographers from the *New Topographics* exhibition, was pivotal in the shift towards representing the landscape in a deadpan style, working in an objective, distanced and detached way.

In 1978 John Szarkowski posted his own idiosyncratic survey of the '60s and 70s, 'Mirrors and Windows'. In this scheme, Baltz's pictures were mirrors, reflections of the maker; those of [Robert] Adams, Gohlke, Nixon Shore, and Wessel were windows, disinterested views of the world. (R. Adams *et al* 2010: 57)

While Ansel Adams wanted to portray the 'wonders of the natural world' (A. Adams 1994: 121) in the form of a sublime unspoilt landscape, the *New Topographics* photographers chose a much more critical stance: Baltz, in the sterile counter-aesthetic of nowhere reflecting the complete lack of emotion in these landscapes; Stephen Shore focusing on the everyday American vernacular through his subtle reflections on society; and Robert Adams, through the harsh constructed landscape replacing nature in the form of urban sprawl and the rise of the consumer nation. This shift in representation of the landscape, which some might interpret as a kind of resignation of what the constructed environment had become, influenced many artists to ask new questions about the changing landscape.

## ANDREAS GURSKY AND THE CONSTRUCTED IMAGE

The *New Topographics* became a major influence on a whole generation of photographers, including Andreas Gursky.<sup>9</sup>

Gursky's ...mammoth colour photographs - in physical appearance everything that [Robert] Adams' small black-and-white prints are not - dilate on the general subject of material culture in the spare presentation-style that [Robert] Adams' work defined so persuasively more than twenty-five years ago. (Papageorge 2002: 9)

Andreas Gursky trained at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf<sup>10</sup> under Bernd and Hilla Becher in the 1980s. The school has a strong history of landscape painting and includes graduates such as Joseph Beuys, Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke, as well as being influenced by the 1920's Neue Sachlichkeit,<sup>11</sup> which was taken especially seriously by the school at that time. The Becher's and their 'anonymous sculptures',<sup>12</sup> as they called them, were a major influence on their pupils, including Gursky and a number of other artists working with photography, such as Thomas Ruff, Thomas Struth and Candida Höfer. One

9 This correlation has been acknowledged by the 2010 exhibition entitled *Der Rotte Bulli: Stephen Shore and the Düsseldorf School of Photography*, curated by Christof Schaden, NRW-Forum, Düsseldorf. Bernd and Hilla Becher, both at that time teaching at the Düsseldorf School, also took part in the *New Topographics* exhibition of 1975.

10 Formerly known as the Düsseldorf Staatliche Kunstakademie.

11 New Objectivity 'was a German modern realist movement of the 1920s', which 'was part of the phenomenon of the "return to order" following the First World War'. It includes realist painters like Otto Dix and George Grosz, but also the blend of reality and art in the photomontages of John Heartfield (Wilson & Lack 2008: 144).

12 The title of their 1970 book, *Anonyme Skulpturen: Eine Typologie technischer Bauten* (Art-Verlag Press: Düsseldorf), which depicted typologies of industrial structures.

important consequence of the influence of the *New Topographics* exhibition was that many of the Bechers' students started depicting the landscape in colour, influenced by Stephen Shore. These artists' works are characterized by an aesthetic that on first reading purports to be a document of 'reality', but many of the images are highly constructed views in which scenery is altered, imagery is manipulated and situations are staged in order for the photographers to present their own interpretation of these scenes. While Stephen Shore and the *New Topographics* photographers attempted complete objectivity, many of the photographers associated with the Düsseldorf school are defined by a new style of a heightened level of 'reality', where the engineering of the artist is evident. This work ranges from the stark, constructed images of postmodern globalisation and nature in the work of Andreas Gursky to the libraries and churches photographed by Candida Höfer and the representations of museums of Thomas Struth. Artists from the Düsseldorf School have in this way opened up a new interpretation of the landscape by representing its constructed nature through their manipulation of the photographic image.

One of Gursky's early images, *Ratingen Swimming Pool, 1987*, depicts a pool in Ratingen, Germany. The image is composed with a frontal view and makes use of strong parallel lines. It is an early example of the repetition and geometry that Gursky would become known for, where conceptions of boundlessness and infinitude are used in order to, as Caroline Levine describes it, create an 'awed distance' (2002: 9) in his work. Gursky intentionally composed the image at such an angle to produce straight horizontal lines, with the edge of the pool lined up parallel to the benches in front. This composition draws attention to the angular shape of the pool that dominates the middle ground.

A characteristic of Gursky's work is the unnerving structuring

of space, whether natural or artificial, which creates a sense of unease in the viewer. Gursky's rigid, formal, parallel structuring of rivers, roads, swimming pools, mountains and all the other elements of our globalised society and redefined sense of nature speaks to the overall constructed nature of the contemporary landscape. This limitlessness and distant awe, as Hermanson says citing Gilbert-Rolfe, stems from 'an idea which is not interested in being an idea of nature, but one which replaces the idea of nature' (2011: 4).<sup>13</sup>

*Ratingen Swimming Pool*, as is often the case in Gursky's images, was taken from an elevated, distanced position and thus shows the people as tiny figures within the landscape. They appear to spend little time examining their own encroachment - architectural, technological, and personal - on the natural world. In their determined, oblivious way, the people in his photographs make clear that there is no longer any nature uncharted by man' (Ohlin 2002: 11). While Stephen Shore's image shows a meandering river carving its way through the forest, Gursky's image shows an angular pool, constructed from concrete and framed by paving. The generic manicured lawn and trees of the laid out park contrasts the seemingly natural forest of Shore's image. Yet these two spaces function in much the same way. People visit Yosemite to be closer to nature and visit the Ratingen swimming pool to experience a version of nature as well, albeit a more overtly manufactured one.

It is a fantasy of paradise - albeit a distorted one that contains and controls nature - which the public visits. Both

<sup>13</sup> Hermanson describes the contemporary sublime as a reassessment of the relationship between beauty and the sublime. Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe in *Beauty and the Contemporary Sublime* (1999) says that the sublime as understood in early landscape painting couldn't exist in nature today. He observes that 'technology has subsumed the idea of the sublime because it, whether to a greater extent or an equal extent than nature, is terrifying in the limitless unknowability of its potential...' (Gilbert-Rolfe 1999: Introduction).



Andreas Gursky. *Ratingen Swimming Pool*, 1987. 42½ x 51½".

these images have a sense of resonance with the viewer: we feel as though we have seen these spaces before. It may not be the same pool or park that we have visited, but in some way they feel familiar. The reason for this is that all these spaces are manufactured by society for a specific reason, in this case recreation.

As Juha Suonpää says, citing John Urry's *Consuming Spaces*:

Nature is seen as romantic, as long as it is not overtly natural. Indeed, the romantic gaze based on the admiration of untouched nature presupposes a system of conventions that has to be free of visual pollution. (2008: 76)

Society does not seem to want to be confronted with a 'wild', uncontrolled natural space, which in contemporary Western culture is rarely experienced. Instead, a controlled, manageable

nature in which the scenery, sun and water can be enjoyed without threat is most desirable. Shore's image also represents constructed and controlled space, albeit in an aesthetically appealing environment one could identify as 'nature'. It is a space that is representative of an idea of 'wild nature' and has thus taken on a generic construct of what we imagine 'true nature' to be.

It is not known to what level Gursky digitally manipulated *Ratingen Swimming Pool*, but its formal qualities create a kind of heightened 'reality'. Gursky and others from the Düsseldorf School create images of the landscape that point to its constructed nature, but their photographic constructs represents a different kind of 'reality'. Of his latest exhibition, Gursky said: '...this is my interpretation; I am not interested in an objective view of the world' (Ure-Smith 2010: 11). Gursky's interpretation of the world seems to challenge the seemingly objective works of the *New Topographics* photographers. Levine, citing Galassi, states that 'although Gursky's work can seem reminiscent of American photography, his *adherence to a ruling pictorial scheme* distinguishes him from the Americans and marks a crucial debt to the Bechers' (2002: 15). Gursky's imagery seems to ask, what kind of nature have we created for ourselves? It seems that 'rather than man responding to nature's forces, he has created a new nature' (Hermanson 2011: 4), a constructed nature.

In this chapter I have examined the notion of the landscape as a construct by referring to the development of landscape as a genre, from early Dutch and English representations and Romanticism through to the contemporary interpretations of landscape photography. I have done this in order to shed light on my own work, which deals with the embedded values within the landscape of those who constructed it.

The photographers mentioned in this chapter map the

representation of the landscape as one in constant flux, with one characteristic being a shift towards representation of the altered landscape, which in turn reflects on the values of society and those who design and construct these landscapes.

## CHAPTER 2

### DAVID GOLDBLATT AND THE STRUCTURE OF THINGS

It is not about architecture, it is about structures...  
- David Goldblatt (Kesting 2009: 36).

In my own photographic practise I have been observing and working with recreational spaces in South Africa. Here I have perceived how the landscape has been constructed according to a political agenda that supported the ideologies of the then National Government (1948-1994), and how the values and vision of those who built it are reflected in these constructed spaces. While Andreas Gursky evokes notions of the constructed landscape through formal composition and manipulation, David Goldblatt has examined the structuring of the landscape as reflective of those who created it.

In his 1998 book, *South Africa: The Structures of Things Then*, David Goldblatt writes:

Gradually I came to see structures and their form as expressions of value. If it is a truism that all structures are necessarily the outcome of choices made by their makers, and is therefore an expression of their maker's values, the quality of that expression is as varied as the people who made the choices. (1998: 10)

In this volume Goldblatt includes a number of images of Dutch Reformed churches. He photographed these as he became aware of their architectural variations over the years. From the coming to power of the National Party in 1948, with their Afrikaner Christian values and staunch nationalism, to the



David Goldblatt. *Dutch Reformed Church, Swellendam, Cape*. 9 April 1993. (Built 1901).



David Goldblatt. *Gereformeerde Kerk. Totiusdal, Waverley, Pretoria, Transvaal*. 25 September 1983. (Built 1959).



David Goldblatt. *Dutch Reformed Church, Quelerina, Johannesburg*. (Built 1984).

failure of apartheid during the 1970s and 1980s, the design of these structures had transformed and, according to Goldblatt, expressed the rise, triumph and decline of the Afrikaner in South Africa. The first churches were tall Gothic structures, steepled and spired and strongly vertical as Afrikaners strove for a sense of self after the Boer war - a time when many were destitute in the wake of the scorched earth policy of the British military. Then follows an architectural transformation in the time of the triumph of the National Party, as expressed in churches built along modernist principles, with strong triangular shapes and bold vertical lines proclaiming their

triumph. Finally, as the imminent failure of apartheid became apparent, the churches changed to a more inward-looking design, protective as opposed to bold, more insular as the Afrikaners clung to power.

In my opinion, Goldblatt's images do show the structure of things *then*, but also the structure of things *now*. Similarly, in my own photographs of recreational spaces in South Africa, I feel I cannot investigate the spaces of the past without examining the forces of the political, structural, social and psychological forces that have shaped, and continue to shape, South Africa today. I would argue that these spaces display elements of what Neville Dubow's introductory essay to Goldblatt's book refers to as: '...another sort of violence of a more covert kind, a violence done to the social landscape' (1998: 22).

My investigations into the constructed recreational landscape has been conducted not so much through the observation and photographing of a particular style of architecture, but rather through an observation of the structure of the spaces themselves. Recreational spaces in South Africa seem to display the 'vulgarity, the spiritual impoverishment, the banality of the dispirited structures we had erected' (ibid) as part of the apartheid city. Dubow feels that although Goldblatt's images depict the physical elements of bricks, iron and concrete, they are actually about the 'ideological structuring' of space, the 'structural violence that was necessary to maintain the institutionalised fabric of the apartheid society' (Dubow 1998: 24).

## APARTHEID AND RECREATION

When speaking about power and its relationship to space, we have to understand that the spatial organisation of a city, a neighbourhood or even a country can be used as a means of maintaining, or even enhancing, the power of the established order. (Newton 2009: 4)

W.J.T. Mitchell's definition of the landscape as an instrument of cultural power and the representation of it as a construct can clearly be understood in terms of apartheid spatial ordering. Apartheid spatial planning serves as a prime example of spaces that were produced by those in power to control and manage populations. Exploring the construction of recreational spaces in South Africa today it is impossible to avoid the legacy of apartheid, which permeates the very essence of these landscapes. In South Africa, apartheid marked an unprecedented period of social engineering during which the use of land and power became pivotal. This structuring of the landscape and its subsequent consequences has not only affected virtually all spaces, but also the people within these spaces. During the course of this research I became interested in questions such as: How did recreational areas shape the identities of those who visited them? How did recreational spaces reflect the attitudes of those who created them? How do these recreational spaces function today?

In South Africa this physical restructuring of the landscape for the purposes of the exclusion of people belonging to specific racial categories can be traced back to the first European settlements. However, it was the *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act* of 1953, under the auspices of the newly elected National Party, which was the official starting point for

the structuring of recreational space.<sup>14</sup>

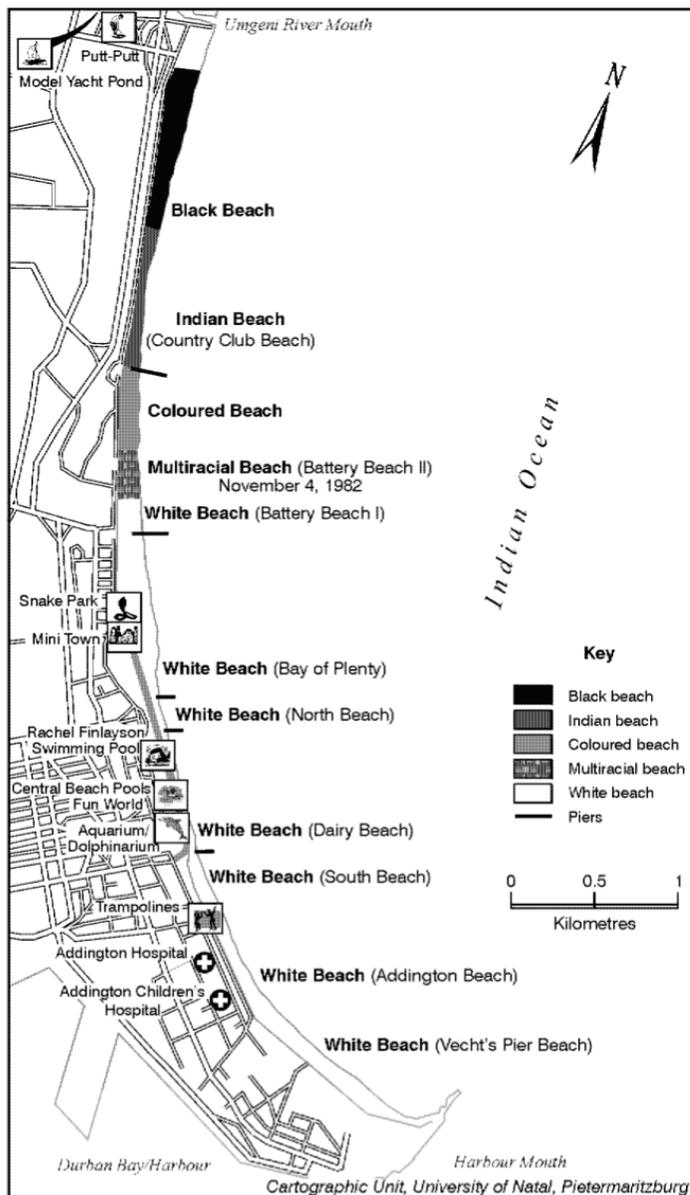
The *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act's* aim was:

To provide for the reservation of public premises and vehicles or portions thereof for the exclusive use of persons of a particular race or class, for the interpretation of laws, which provide for such reservation, and for matters identical thereto. (1953: 328)

This law, known as Act Number 49 of 1953, provided for a system of total racial segregation in South Africa on every level, from buses to restrooms and even separate walkways at train stations. This meant that local authorities had to build double the facilities for different racial groups. This type of structuring has had a lasting effect on urban and societal structures and how these spaces are negotiated today. Among the many areas that were racially segregated were beaches. Beaches at that time consisted of mostly natural coastline, and few formal facilities were on offer. From this point on all major beaches close to urban areas were divided up into sections for 'black', 'white', 'coloured', 'Indian' and even 'Chinese' groups, as seen in the following diagram:

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<sup>14</sup> 'The *Reservation of Separate Amenities Amendment Act*, number 10 of 1960, empowered local authorities to implement beach segregation (Dixon & Durrheim 2001b: 436). Further legislation 'empowered any person in charge of 'public premises', which were defined so as to include the seashore, to reserve such premises for racially exclusive usage. Finally, the *Sea-shore Amendment Act*, number 38 of 1972, empowered the Minister of Agriculture to confer control of the beaches to local and provincial authorities. Although beach segregation was not uniformly implemented throughout the country, political pressure from central government, among other factors, ensured that by the early 1970s beach apartheid had become widely entrenched' (ibid).



Durban beachfront, 1982 (it is worth noting that a 'multiracial beach' referred to a beach for 'black', 'coloured' and 'Indian' groups, but not 'white').

According to Preston-Whyte:

In this racially prejudiced political environment, black, Indian, and coloured South Africans wielded little political power, were comparatively impoverished, and were not regarded as appropriate seaside tourists. Instead, the disparity in cultures was viewed as threatening or distasteful... (2001: 584)

This was part of what is known as 'petty apartheid', which constituted the policies of everyday life, as opposed to 'grand apartheid', which separated races on a larger scale through the *Population Registration Act* and the *Group Areas Act* of 1950. Petty apartheid empowered local authorities to enforce segregation on a local level. This was done through the enforcement of legislation like the *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act*, number 55 of 1949, the *Immorality Amendment Act* of 1950<sup>15</sup>, and the previously mentioned *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act* of 1953, which led to the construction of separate amenities for different racial groups. Petty apartheid might at first be perceived to be insignificant compared to the all-encompassing laws of grand apartheid, but it was these lesser laws effecting people's everyday lives that created a psychological divide between races and constructed a sense of particular people being the *other*.

Mooted as separate development to the benefit of all, a clause in Act 49 stated that not all facilities had to be 'substantially equal', which led to the best locations, close to cities and with the best facilities, being reserved for the 'white'

<sup>15</sup> The *Immorality Amendment Act* of 1950 forbade 'unlawful racial intercourse' between different races. This act was enforced on a social level through separation. The location *Maiden's Cove* (image 11) is a reminder of this. A fence was built to keep homosexuals (also illegal under apartheid) of different races apart.

population. Recreational facilities set aside for the rest of the population were usually situated outside of municipalities, and were 'either ill-suited for recreational use or downright treacherous' (Dixon & Durrheim 2001b: 436).

Through the *Group Areas Act* and *Population Registration Act* of 1950, 'all citizens had to be classified by race, and placed accordingly in the landscape' (Burger 2008: 48). These laws, combined with the work of apartheid town planners, meant all townships had to be situated far outside of the main business and residential districts and were laid out according to military requirements in order to control the populations during times of potential unrest. This structuring was implemented to keep races separate not only residentially, but also socially. Physical geographic obstructions were used to create barriers, which enforced this system of segregation, separating not only racially different residential areas but recreational spaces as well. These buffer zones included man-made and natural barriers. The use of barriers to keep people separate has been employed since the earliest times of colonial settlement: The Dutch East India Company wanted to create a barrier between the Khoikhoi and the Dutch settlers in the form of a trench between Salt River and Liesbeeck River, right up to False Bay; in the seventeenth century, Jan Van Riebeeck had bitter almond trees and a variety of brambles and thorn bushes planted to create boundaries along farms, including his own in Wynberg, to keep out Khoi herdsmen and their cattle.<sup>16</sup>

Although segregation through planning, during the colonial era, had already become evident, it was not yet uniformly implemented nor driven by specific laws. It was only two centuries later under apartheid that the geographical

16 An example of both natural and constructed barriers can be seen in the image entitled *Oudekraal* (image 5), a site chosen for its rocky outcrops and isolated cove, which was further separated by a fence.

restructuring of the landscape, in order to physically divide space, became part of the ideological system of the National Party in 1948. This restructuring was such a massive undertaking that it physically changed the landscape to the extent that it is still evident today. Townships, intended as flimsy 'temporary' residences for those removed from the 'white' cities, were built with limited access and within the confines of natural and constructed buffers to ensure maximum control.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, recreational spaces were constructed within these 'natural' buffers, which ranged from rivers and vegetation to 'rock outcrops and breakwater piers' (Dixon & Durrheim 2001a: 1). Among these 'natural barriers were *races* themselves' (ibid) where, for instance, a 'coloured' or 'multiracial' beach would be placed between the 'black' and the 'white' beaches to keep these separated.

Examining these spaces, mostly built during the 1970s and 1980s, the architectural leitmotifs of these structures start to emerge. According to Julian Cooke:<sup>18</sup> '...[the] 80s architecturally is the flowering of post-modernism. Free from the constraints of rationalism and functionalism and exploring the newly discovered palette of architectural history - and of the commercial strip, Las Vegas and all' (J. Cooke, personal communication, June 12, 2011).

With racially divided departments of 'own' affairs<sup>19</sup> in control of their own recreational areas, but bound by apartheid law, new facilities were built that completely segregated all races. According to Franco Frescura, 'a number of 20th century totalitarian regimes adopted Modern Movement architecture as a

17 Examples include Soweto, KwaMashu, Mamelodi and Gugulethu townships.

18 Editor of *Architecture South Africa: Journal of the Institute of South African Architects*.

19 Established in 1958, the Department of Coloured Affairs was created as a smoke-screen to seemingly bestow powers on the 'coloured' communities, but was in fact used to create further racial divisions.

strategy towards the suppression of ethnic minorities and the creation of a faceless centralised government' (Frescura 2006: Prologue). Frescura, a self-admitted hater of the modernist movement in architecture, goes on to claim that:

...these efforts were often assisted by architects themselves who, oblivious to the more self-evident changes in post-modernist thinking, have naively colluded with their client's ideology and, encouraged by the financial rewards made available to them, continue to deny that their work might be subject to ideological interpretation. (Ibid)

As Julian Cooke (personal communication, June 12, 2011) explains: 'This was the time when the Nationalist government was trying to make look legitimate [the] 'black' and 'coloured' local government, and I guess money was available to the city and/or province to build these facilities, which would show they had equal facilities to 'whites'. According to Joe Olivier (personal communication, June 23, 2011) of the Department of Sports, Recreation and Amenities, this was most likely done in order to persuade the 'black' and 'coloured' population to stay in their designated areas instead of going to the 'white' recreational sites. Thus, during the last few decades of apartheid, structures were commissioned by the National government resulting in what can best be described, as Preston-Whyte said, citing Ley, as a 'blueprint for placelessness, of anonymous impersonal spaces, massive structures and automobile throughways' (2001: 585). An example of this can be seen in images like *Silverstreamstrand* (image 12), reserved for the exclusive use of the 'coloured' population on the west coast during apartheid. Residents from Atlantis and Mamre had to use the bus in order to get to the beach, which was

far from their residential area. This was in line with township planning, where amenities were built a long distance from any other infrastructure in order to control the movement of the visitors. Both *Monwabisi Resort* and *Mnandi Resort* (image 2 & 3), despite being built for the residents of Khayelitsha, were accessible only by bus or taxi as the majority of the population could not afford their own private transport.

There was a marked difference in the way the 'black' and 'white' populations viewed recreational spaces. While the 'white' community perceived these areas as 'care-free spaces' (Dixon & Durrheim 2001b: 2), they became sites of political struggle through civil disobedience for the 'black', 'Indian' and 'coloured' communities. Segregation of seemingly natural spaces and, absurdly, the ocean, for recreation led to mass demonstrations during the late 1980s. As the anti-apartheid struggle intensified, peaceful protests occurred, championed by the Mass Democratic Movement under the banner 'All of God's beaches for all of God's people' (Smuts and Westcott cited in Dixon & Durrheim 2001b: 438). These acts of what were seen as civil disobedience took the form of families and political activists using beaches they were forbidden to use. An example of this is when Archbishop Desmond Tutu visited the 'white' beach of Strand in protest against the *Separate Amenities Act*, which would eventually be repealed in 1989.<sup>20</sup> Most of the sites I have photographed for this project were constructed during this period in South Africa's history. The structures left behind in the landscape illuminate not only the intentions of its creators, but also its consequences.

The spatial-political intervention in South Africa has had wide-ranging consequences, where '...the restructuring

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<sup>20</sup> The images entitled *Harmony Park Pavilion #1* and *#2* (image 7 & 10) depict the formerly 'coloured' Harmony Park beach, a short distance from what used to be the 'white' beach of Strand.

in physical land use terms, together with the movement of population, profoundly affected the appearance and organisation of the city, with serious implications...'(Christopher 1987: 195). The limited space in Cape Town and the Cape Peninsula and the forced relocation of 'black' and 'coloured' populations to the Cape Flats produced a unique structuring of segregated beaches on the False Bay coast during apartheid.

In False Bay I photographed the former separate amenities of Strandfontein Pavilion, Harmony Park Pavilion and Maccassar Resort, previously classified for 'coloured' recreation; and Monwabisi Resort and Mnandi Resort, classified for 'black' recreation. Even the beaches of Cape Point were divided into Buffels Bay ('white'), Platboom ('black') and Bordjiesdrif ('coloured').<sup>21</sup>

The discrepancy between the areas selected for the 'white' population, as opposed to other racial groups in the Cape Peninsula, were marked. Vivian Bickford-Smith, in quoting a 1969 guide to recreation in the Cape by Shirley Parks, comments on the typical types of locations provided for 'Coloured and African visitors': Sunset Beach, previously set aside for 'coloured' recreation was 'mostly covered at high tide'. Melkbos had 'no shelter, water, or a bus service, and there may be a dangerous undertow' while the 'coloured' area in Hout Bay had 'no sandy beaches, the land fell steeply to the sea and was lined with slippery boulders'. Parks concluded that 'no bathing or even paddling is possible' (1999: 170). This stood in contrast to the best beaches, which were set aside for the 'white' population.

Unusually generous amounts of money were invested by

21 According to Jim Hallinen from the Heritage Department, City of Cape Town, the police enforced separation in Buffels Bay (image 18) and Bordjiesdrif, in close proximity to each other, while the 'black' beach of Platboom was situated on the other side of the peninsula.



An apartheid notice on a beach in 1976 near Cape Town, denoting the area for whites only.

the National Government and used by the 'own' affairs departments to build the areas I have photographed.<sup>22</sup> The structuring of these recreational landscapes illustrates a concerted effort to restrict people to particular areas of supposed enjoyment by separating different racial groups and by structuring a landscape that psychologically enforced a sense of the *other*, of being outside of 'normal' society.

If to 'segregate is to deny recognition' (Enwezor 2008: 29), then these spaces are indicative not only of the anxiety created within the 'white' population by the *other*, but also of the fact that they were designed to enforce the idea that these two worlds were fundamentally different and incompatible. Through physical and structural segregation a psychological

22 According to Joe Olivier (personal communication, June 23, 2011).

divide was created which enforced these ideas. This landscape stands as evidence today of the political philosophy of those who implemented it. It can be said that all landscape is political, from the occupation of much of the world by European powers in the colonial era, to wars over resources both natural and human. Apartheid, though, has made the landscape 'an entirely unique specimen of the historical failure of moral imagination' in South Africa (Enwezor 2008: 34).

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## WORKS/PROCESS

The word *topographics* is defined in the dictionary as 'of or relating to the arrangement or accurate representation of the physical features of an area' or '(of a work of art or an artist) dealing with or depicting places, buildings, and natural prospects in a realistic and detailed manner' (Oxford Dictionary of Current English: 1992).

In this body of work I represent the constructed landscape through the constructed photographic image. Using this approach to representing these spaces my intention is to show that it is society that constructs the meanings attached to the landscape; those who created separate amenities had a specific ideology by which they created this landscape. The land by itself does not have meaning, but one can attach meaning to it through ones' interaction and, in this case, alteration of the landscape.

My interest in photographing former separate amenities stems from my interest in the constructed landscape, and how either physically, politically or psychologically this intervention often leads to failure. In my past work I have been drawn to these landscapes unconsciously, and it was only through researching these spaces that the true intention of their creation became evident. This awareness has allowed me to focus on how the landscape has been shaped and used, and how that allows for a better understanding of these recreational spaces and the society that created them.

The way in which I have chosen to represent these recreational landscapes stems partly from my own process of finding and experiencing these sites and partly as a reflection on the ideologies of those who created it. Using a distanced and elevated viewpoint, similar to a surveyor's, I wish to cast my gaze over spaces that I view as flawed by their political past.

This distanced view is taken in order to critically reflect on this landscape. In photographing these places I want to portray a sense of being removed from the scene, as a dispassionate outsider looking in. Being part of a new generation of South Africans, removed to a certain extent from the political past, this method of representation reflects my own experience of these former separate amenities. The landscape I represent is a construct in itself, fashioned by me in the camera. I cannot pretend that this is an objective approach, yet I have chosen to maintain an 'objective distance', and I use a language that purports to observe these sites as neutrally as possible. Some examples include *Monwabisi Resort #1*, (image 2) which was taken from a very high perspective, as well as others like *Oudekraal* and *Harmony Park Pavilion #1* (images 5 & 7).

The medium of photography seems to me best suited to a realistic and detailed depiction of the constructed recreational landscape. I began by photographing what I, for lack of a better term, referred to as 'middle' spaces. These can be defined as spaces which seem to function outside of 'normal' society and which seem to fluctuate in function. I realised that in trying to understand these sites for myself, they all exuded a strangeness and unfamiliarity. It was while visiting Maiden's Cove (image 11) that I first realised that this strangeness was, in fact, a manufactured one. Situated between Clifton and Camps Bay, Maiden's Cove was one of the few beaches on the Atlantic seaboard previously reserved for the exclusive use of the 'coloured' population. During apartheid, a fence was erected between Maiden's Cove and Bachelor's Cove (a beach used by the homosexual community) as a means of keeping these two groups separate.

With an awareness of this place's history, a sense of unease came over me. I have felt this in many of the locations that I became interested in photographing. Surrounded by some

of the most valuable real estate in the country, I asked the question: Why is Maiden's Cove, right in the middle of this seemingly ideal stretch of coast, so different? In walking down into the cove you lose sight of the horizon between the rocks. You are suddenly cut off from the world, you cannot see or be seen. It dawned on me that those who first mandated this as a 'coloured' beach must have observed this. This area is completely surrounded by big boulders, and is inaccessible from all sides but the gated entrance. I realised how this must have been seen as a perfect site to keep those it was intended for within its confines. It is impossible to walk over to the previously 'white' beaches on both sides, and at the same time it is hidden from the 'white' beachgoers on the neighbouring beaches. This made me wonder how many times I, as a child, was perhaps blissfully unaware of the 'beach around the corner' on our many sun-filled holidays. How far up the coast, whether it was from Durban or Port Elizabeth, were the beaches for the rest of the population?

In the first chapter I discussed how landscape is constructed both physically and by artistic representations of it. I wanted to understand how these decisions were made with regards to Maiden's Cove and the other sites I photographed, and for what purpose. In researching these sites I found that most were structured in such a way as to contain whoever entered them and to enhance a feeling of being the *other*.

In his book, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (1997), Kevin Hetherington talks about:

...spaces of alternate ordering, an ordering based on a number of utopics that come to being in relation to a tension that exists within modern societies between ideas of freedom and ideas of control or discipline. (1997: x)

These 'ideas of control or discipline' within the wider history of the South African landscape were expressions of apartheid. It is my intention to not only document the landscape and its construction, but also to come to my own understanding of it. In the early stages of this project, as a continuation of my previous work, I had intended to use digital manipulation to alter the landscapes. I wanted to multiply and rearrange certain elements, such as concrete picnic tables and floodlights, to draw attention to the landscape as a construct through exaggeration and other forms of manipulation. However, I found that these recreational spaces did not lend themselves to this way of working: the land was often so overtly constructed that it was unnecessary for me to reconstruct it digitally. I wanted to distance myself from these sites with a more hands-off approach.

After some experimentation I decided to photograph these spaces with a large format 4x5-inch view camera. Following a more unmediated approach and using a slower and more reflective device such as the view camera has aided me in structuring my images. A view camera is a bulky and unwieldy piece of equipment that takes time to set up and to create a photograph with. It is therefore necessary for me to have a far clearer idea of my composition and intention before taking the photograph than with a hand-held camera. Because of the nature of the camera and the way one is forced to work with it, composing the image became a more deliberate act. Composing on the camera's ground glass screen also led to an increase in the rectilinear nature of the compositions. Thus, I started to compose along the vertical as well as the horizontal axis of the frame, using a predominantly frontal perspective with strong parallel lines - as can be seen in *Harmony Park Pavilion #2* (image 10).

This camera also allows for maximum depth of field, which

allowed me to keep the entire scene in sharp focus. Thus, there is unlimited depth of field, which allows the viewer's eye to roam between different points of interest. This creates and enhances relationships and juxtapositions between the structures and natural environment within the images. An example of this can be seen in *King's Beach* (image 13), which depicts a waterpark at the beach with the industrial harbour in the background.

For the purposes of this document I will discuss in more detail two representative examples of spaces I have photographed, namely *Monwabisi Resort #1* and *#2* and *Harmony Park Pavilion #1* and *#2* (images 2, 17, 7 & 10) both situated in False Bay, Cape Town.<sup>23</sup>

Monwabisi translates as *'The one who makes us happy'* from the Nguni. Monwabisi Resort was designed by architect Graham Parker for the City of Cape Town, and established in 1986 as a recreational amenity for the 'black' population. The resort is situated near the township of Khayelitsha, which was originally created as a dumping ground for those affected by forced removals and as a temporary migrant location. Harmony Park Pavilion was built in 1989 by what was then the Coloured Affairs Department.

The resorts were built when the *Group Areas Act* of 1950 and the *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act* of 1953 were still being enforced despite the emergence of growing opposition. Both Monwabisi and Harmony Park were built just before South African beaches were desegregated in 1989.

From 1964 onwards the Strandfontien Forest Reserve was

divided up into areas for separate recreation. Mnandi Beach was set aside as a 'Bantu' area, initially making it the only recreational beach designated for the 'black' population in the Cape Peninsula. Similarly, Harmony Park was designated as a 'coloured' recreational area and is located on the False Bay Coast, wedged between the then 'white' beaches of Strand and Gordon's Bay. Today it is directly situated between Greenways Golf Estate in Strand and the Harbour Island yachting complex close to Gordon's Bay. David Goldblatt took a photograph in this location in 1983, which shows the then border between the beaches of Strand and the 'coloured' beach where Harmony Park Pavilion would eventually be built.

Monwabisi is situated between Wolfgat Nature Reserve and the Maccassar dunes, where white limestone and calcrete cliffs



David Goldblatt. *Racially segregated beach areas and the boundary between them. Strand, Western Cape. 16 April 1983. Silver gelatin print on fibre paper. 44.5 x 56cm.*

<sup>23</sup> I have visited more than thirty recreational spaces in South Africa for this project, ranging from resorts, parks and beaches around the Cape Peninsula, Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth, Hartenbos, and greater Johannesburg. These images focus mainly on beaches, as this is where many formal recreational structures were built during apartheid, and because of their typical recreational function.

on both sides of the beach create a natural barrier. This made it a favourable location for a separate amenity, as it was easy to contain people within a confined area, trapped between cliffs, sand dunes and the ocean. The whole resort area is fenced in against the coastline of False Bay, preventing movement into the *fynbos* and dune area beyond. The level of controlled access, which one might not necessarily associate with a beach, was very much part of its construction. Harmony Park is also fenced in, but seems more accessible as it was previously designated a 'coloured' beach and functioned as a buffer between the 'white' and 'black' areas.

As you enter Monwabisi you are greeted with a big colourful rusty sign with the word 'Monwabisi' written on it. It is designed in an over-the-top decorative style in cast iron with red 'flags' cut from steel. The buildings are face-brick and concrete and surround a artificial tidal pool. In a 2004 situational study of Monwabisi, the area is described as 'formerly disadvantaged' (Berner 2004: 9) and the architecture as



Architectural detail from Monwabisi Resort, 2010.

'colourfully painted...and not arranged clearly. Many different shapes, like walls, roofs and pergolas create quite a confusing... environment' (ibid: 98). Interestingly, the same architects built Muizenberg Pavilion, just a short distance away and previously sectioned as a 'white' recreational area. It can be presumed that this similar structure was built to keep the 'black' population in Khayelitsha and off the 'white' beaches. The patronising design elements, which seem completely out of place in the natural landscape, were supposedly built in order to create an element of fun and fantasy. However, it seems that that these design elements were intended to 'beautify' a wild natural area that was in fact hostile to recreation due to the presence of strong winds and currents.

Both Harmony Park Pavilion and Monwabisi Resort are situated in the Cape Flats, known for its windy and sandy conditions.<sup>24</sup> The dunes were flattened in order to create space for recreational development. Because of the wind and a lack of maintenance, dunes have started to reform around the buildings, to the extent that large parts of the abandoned structures have been buried beneath the sand, as can be seen in Monwabisi and Macassar. Berner observed that the '...design [of the site] shows poor planning which results in the current usage. Many facilities inside the resort are aligned to the wrong side and open to the road and not to the sea' (2004: 106). High walls were built to act as windbreakers, but as the structures have deteriorated they have become a safety hazard.

The same study on Monwabisi reveals the logic behind the structures created for school children who visited from Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain: 'The camping area is more

<sup>24</sup> A large percentage of those affected by forced removals in the Western Cape ended up in the Cape Flats, one of apartheid's dumping grounds from the 1950s onwards, as it was viewed as an unfavourable residential area for the white population.



Architectural details from Harmony Park Pavilion, 2010.

secure for the children as they can't run around and vandalize' (Berner 2004: 98). This kind of robust construction alludes to township planning, wherein strong structures and fenced-off

areas were built to create a sense of control, both physically and psychologically. This can be seen in the concrete tables and stools, concrete swimming pools, brick walls and high mast floodlights, similar to those used in the townships.

The buildings surround what is rated as the second largest rock pool in the southern hemisphere, as well as an artificial beach created by a breakwater built to minimise strong currents. The rock pool was constructed without a proper flow of fresh water and has become 'a source of disease' according to Berner (2004: 109).

A report from the *Cape Times* of January 6, 2010, states: 'The treacherous sea at the Monwabisi resort near Khayelitsha claimed three more lives yesterday...'. One of many reports marking the resort as one of the most dangerous beaches in the area, it was recorded that on one day five people drowned there. It seems that this is due to the breakwater that was built to create a calm cove. The build-up of sand within this area has created an artificial beach next to the rock pool, which harbours extremely strong currents. This has led to over fifty people drowning over the past fifteen years at Monwabisi (Raymond 2005: online).

By comparison, Muizenberg, a 'white' beach during apartheid, is renowned for its safe swimming conditions. A few man-made structures such as quaint, colourful wooden changing 'houses' dot this and other beaches like St. James, also previously designated as 'white', and which still resemble the Eurocentric recreational design of colonial times, strikingly different from Monwabisi. Preston-Whyte describes this early spatial structuring as follows:

The dominance of British culture meant that seaside leisure spaces were shaped in accordance with the cultural tastes and preferences of this group. The strong cultural

attachment to Britain was everywhere evident in Victorian and Edwardian architecture and in the seaside attractions that had gained popularity in Britain. (2001: 584)

The notion of the *pavilion* in resort architecture, which finds its origin in British seaside architecture such as that in Margate and Blackpool, was vaguely referenced in structures at Monwabisi Resort, Strandfontein Pavilion and Harmony Park Pavilion. The term 'pavilion' was used to describe what were usually highly decorated spaces of entertainment, with structures reminiscent of the fairground tent, usually shaped with peaked roofs. This modern version of the British seaside style resulted in structures that resemble the past colonial structures in form only. Instead of the original fairground aesthetic, the use of heavy materials like face brick and concrete dominate the environment. The relationship with township planning, with the use of tower floodlights and concrete ablution blocks, is evident in all three of these locations. This pavilion style of architecture seems to disregard the social, historic, and architectural environment of its surroundings, and has led to spaces that appear starkly out of place and alien. Harmony Park, on the other hand, encompasses a structure built entirely from concrete except for the wooden pier, which extends out into the ocean towards Gordon's Bay. All traces of the natural elements have been erased in favour of a modernist vision of curved concrete pools. The pools in Harmony Park were built to tame the rough currents and the result is a sense of imminent flood pouring over the concrete walls. Visitors are forced to stay within the small body of water in the pool. As at Monwabisi, the City of Cape Town have set up a temporary police station within the resort to try and curb the high levels of crime, which according to Joe Olivier (personal communication, June 23, 2011) started escalating after the own affairs departments were disbanded

and the facilities were left unmaintained.

Both the names of these resorts and the pavilion structuring of Harmony Park Pavilion and others like Monwabisi and Mnandi, are used to create the false idea that these are fantasy resorts reminiscent of Coney Island or Blackpool. This is merely a fleeting psychological construct and seems to go contrary to the design of the structures and their function, namely, to contain and pacify those within the space. Designed to keep people away from the 'white' beaches of Strand and Gordon's Bay, the name Harmony Park is ironic, as it masks its tumultuous history. Less than two kilometres away are the beaches of Strand - still a mainly 'white' Afrikaner suburb - where the beach protests of the 1980s took place. On the other side, next to Harmony Park, is the exclusive Harbour Island complex with luxury apartments and mooring facilities for yachts. The property developer's website describes the 'serene almost rustic ambience' the 'luxury yachts' and 'stretches of romantic beach.' Designed as a modern day gated security development by the ocean, with yachts, and complexes named after exotic tropical destinations like 'Antigua Island', 'St. Tropez' and 'St. Marco', it is in itself a prime example of fantasy architecture. A quote on the website states: 'Because location is everything.'<sup>25</sup>

Monwabisi, and most of the locations I have photographed, are isolated most of the time and the small number of people shown in these images is typical of most days. This is due to its seasonal nature, as it is only busy during public holidays. Tod Papageorge, citing Lewis Baltz referring to Robert Adams' images, said people seemed to be '...representatives of a larger category of equally anonymous individuals...engaged in activities so banal as to dispel any tendency on our part to particularize [them]' (2002: 7). In Robert Adams' work,

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25 [www.harbourislandproperties.co.za](http://www.harbourislandproperties.co.za)

the bright, almost blinding light freezes the small figures in position and they become part of the landscape and go almost unnoticed. Following Robert Adams' example I have mostly excluded people in my images in order to focus on the structure of the recreational landscape, which seems to me to have been built with very little consideration for the people who were expected to use it, and by extension comments on how the construction of place has also been used to construct an identity of the *other*.

David Goldblatt's images have been said to be 'eventless', to have a feeling of 'inertia, as if the landscape and things and people in it are suddenly fixed and immobilized' (Enwezor 2008: 31). Similarly, the reason I avoid narratives in my practice is to maintain my distanced viewpoint and draw attention to the landscape's structure rather than what is happening at that location at the time. Form and line become central to the composition and create a tension that helps to focus attention on the constructed nature of the space, and by extension its social functions. Examples of this can be seen in images like *Monwabisi Resort #1 and #2* and *Harmony Park Pavilion #1 and #2* where, despite the presence of police and homeless people in the area, I have chosen to focus on the structuring of the landscape.

I have mostly tried to take the position of a distanced, dislocated observer of these spaces - this is both a physical and intentionally critical distance. Situating myself outside looking in reflects the estrangement I have experienced in these locations. At Monwabisi, for instance, I positioned the camera at a very high vantage point looking down on the scene in order to isolate the middle ground, and include the entire breakwater. *Harmony Park Pavilion #1* is similarly viewed from a high perspective with the pier diagonally pointed towards Gordon's Bay. This sense of isolation is important for me, as I

am removed from the space, a silent observer, and the angle of view enhances a sense of disconnection from the space.

This choice of perspective stems partly from the process of how I arrived at these areas. Firstly, examining the locations on satellite imagery and Google Earth I have maintained a view similar to that of a surveyor or planner. This imagery acts as a map of cognition to help me understand the spaces. 'During the apartheid years, mapping and photography played an important role in the establishment and control of segregated areas' (Burger 2008: 48). These maps 'pictured areas by physically colouring areas in black or white spots on the paper' (ibid). These dots were used to depict the races with all the best locations chosen for the white population, both for agriculture and recreation. "These 'black spot' areas were recorded through aerial photography and then rephotographed after the black farmers were removed" (ibid). Similarly, these coloured dotted maps were used to set out different recreational areas as well.

This led to the creation of the work entitled *False Bay* (image 1). In my research I was unable to find maps that illustrated the planned segregation of the beach resorts along the False Bay coast, despite reference made to it during interviews with architects and city planners. The conclusion was that these maps, along with much other documentation of these resorts, disappeared as the own affairs departments were disbanded at the end of apartheid. I decided to obtain the latest high definition aerial footage of the False Bay coast from the Department of Land Affairs, and combined the individual images into a panoramic aerial view. This view depicts the resorts of Strandfontein Pavilion, Mnandi Resort, Monwabisi Resort and Macassar Resort. This stretch of coast, notorious for dangerous swimming conditions, was divided into sections for 'black' and 'coloured' recreation during apartheid.

In viewing aerial maps of these resorts - seen from above - I

became aware of how they physically resemble Thomas More's Island of Utopia, the ideal of an unreachable destination. More constructed this concept of an ideal society, protected and safe. In his 1516 book *Utopia* he described how the 'founders' demonstrated their mastery over nature when making the island, by disconnecting it from the rest of the continent. Many of the fears reflected in *Utopia* can similarly be linked to the fears held by the National Party during apartheid. Limited individual expression and a large degree of uniformity through laws that regulated the private decisions of individuals, and design of structures of isolation to protect what they had, are all traits of the system of apartheid. These dystopic recreational spaces, constructed in line with the political ideals of the apartheid government, reflect the ideology of the minority under the guise of a utopia.

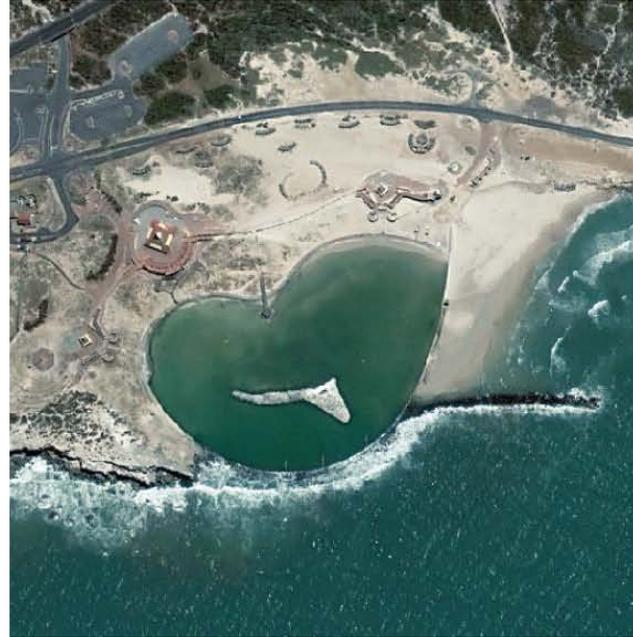
By often using an elevated viewpoint and distance, it was my intention to set up a relationship between viewer and



Wood cut for the 1516 first edition of Thomas More's *Utopia*.

image, as if from a surveyor or planner's viewpoint. This was done in order to comment on how these areas were initially viewed, chosen and set out by apartheid planners. As Hilla Becher indicated in an interview in 2002: 'while photographing, I noticed that if one stands up high, the object one is photographing becomes integrated into the background, which opens out' (Ziegler 2002: 98). In other words, the angle of view helps to situate the human-made structures within the broader environment by minimising background distractions and rendering the scene in an unemotional way. In the same way, one of the *New Topographics* photographers, Joe Deal, spoke of photographing housing projects from a hill so that he could view the structures as part of the landscape and he 'could get more distance and there was a feeling of greater objectivity in doing that' (Adams *et al* 2010: 30). Similarly, this approach would often lead me to photograph these sites from outside, as in the examples of *Mnandi Resort*, *Maiden's Cove*, *King's Beach* and *Green Point Stadium* (image 3, 11, 13 and 14). By consciously adopting this distanced approach and thus foregrounding alienation, my intention was to evoke a sense that the area is being surveyed. It could be argued that putting the viewer into a position of supposed power is problematic, but I feel it allows for an understanding of the land/power relationships.

Dislocation from these spaces is further enhanced by the use of light. Most of my images have been taken in overcast conditions, in what seems to look like a *foreign* light. The South African landscape is often represented in bright sunlight and it is unusual to see overcast representations of the landscape. David Goldblatt was never quite satisfied with the tonal qualities of his images compared to the 'subtle gradations of work' in Europe (Goldblatt 1998: 9), but he 'began to realise that trying to emulate those qualities I had been false to our



Clockwise from top left: aerial views of Maccassar Resort, Monwabisi Resort, Strandfontein Pavilion and Harmony Park Pavilion.

light' (ibid).

Goldblatt goes on to explain that the hard South African light, with its deep shadows and highlights, became essential to his 'sense of place' (ibid). He uses this light as a tool in a way similar to Robert Adams when he portrays the tract housing in Denver, Colorado, in what Lewis Baltz called 'the relentless light of perpetual noon' (Pappageorge 2002: 2). Bernd and Hilla Becher also employ light very effectively in their photographs of industrial structures, but they use overcast conditions. Hilla Becher describes it as '...that diffuse but steady light under a slightly clouded sky that keeps any shadowing, with all the emotional associations such might evoke, to a minimum' (Fried 2008: 305-6). This subdued light creates images with lighter shadows and a limited range of contrast.

I shot Monwabisi on a cloudless day, as opposed to the overcast conditions I used in most of my other images, to obtain unlimited blue sky reflected in the water. This was done to create a sense of vastness. In the case of Monwabisi these lighting conditions were suitable. However, for the most part I used the opposite lighting conditions, and through doing this I wished to emphasise the lack of sense of place and foreignness that these sites seem to evoke. In not viewing these locations as typical, or of what many people understand the South African landscape to be, the question is asked of where South Africans fit into this landscape. I did not want to associate these images with the 'sunny sky' holidays perpetuated by the tourism industry during apartheid. Nor did I want to maintain the then view of these separate amenities by a large number of the white population during apartheid, where beaches were purely seen as spaces of enjoyment and inequalities were conveniently ignored.

This is a formal decision - my interpretation of the complexity and reality of these sites. Martin Parr said, '...you can

see clearer, if you like, without the emotions of shadow and sunlight.'<sup>26</sup> In attempting to represent these landscapes in a new or unfamiliar way I have tried to emphasise the constructed elements of the landscape, these failed recreational spaces, from an objective distance.

These spaces were built and functioned for a small period in history according to a strict ideology before the system of apartheid crumbled. They remain, but inscribed within them lies the philosophy of their creation. Created to fulfil the practical need for recreation and thus supposedly to be places of enjoyment, these sites obscure a political ideology of enforced separation, which when one becomes conscious of it, illuminates the constructed nature of the landscape. The examples of Monwabisi Resort and Harmony Park proclaim this: Monwabisi, outside of any major residential area and enclosed by bush and dunes, which isolate the space, and Harmony Park, now wedged in between 'white' areas of affluence. The construction of the landscape expresses the political and psychological factors that led to its creation. The ideology within which these separate amenities were constructed sought to enforce a sense of complete separateness, physically, socially and psychologically. All these elements led to spaces of control to pacify those within it. It is, in my opinion, a violent spatial structuring used to construct a specific notion and identity of the *other*. Although built in a beautiful natural environment, these are the most unnatural of places.

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26 The Genius of Photography, Episode 2, BBC, 2007.

## CONCLUSION

In chapter one I explored the landscape as a construct by examining changes in the tradition of landscape painting due to the industrial revolution's alteration of the landscape. I ascertained that landscape has always been a cultural construct but that its representation has undergone dramatic shifts, especially in regards to the built environment.

The shift away from the sublime in nineteenth century landscape painting led to a new way of representing the landscape. Although photographers like Ansel Adams still incorporated ideas of the sublime in their work, they did initiate a move towards a more 'straight' aesthetic in photography. Artists associated with the *New Topographics* exhibition introduced a complete rejection of the sublime through distanced objectivity and a focus on the built or constructed environment. More recently, artists like those from the Düsseldorf School have shown that the construction of a photographic image, either in camera or through digital techniques, can help represent the constructed landscape as it exists today.

By integrating these new notions of a constructed landscape with David Goldblatt's notion that structures can express the values of those who built them, I have examined how former separate amenities express the structuring of separation. I have done this by examining both the architectural and political history within which these sites were created. By examining both the political and structural history of these locations, an idea emerges of how these spaces were constructed based

on the idea of the *other*. Through this construct a view can be obtained of how the landscape has been altered to implement control and enforce segregation.

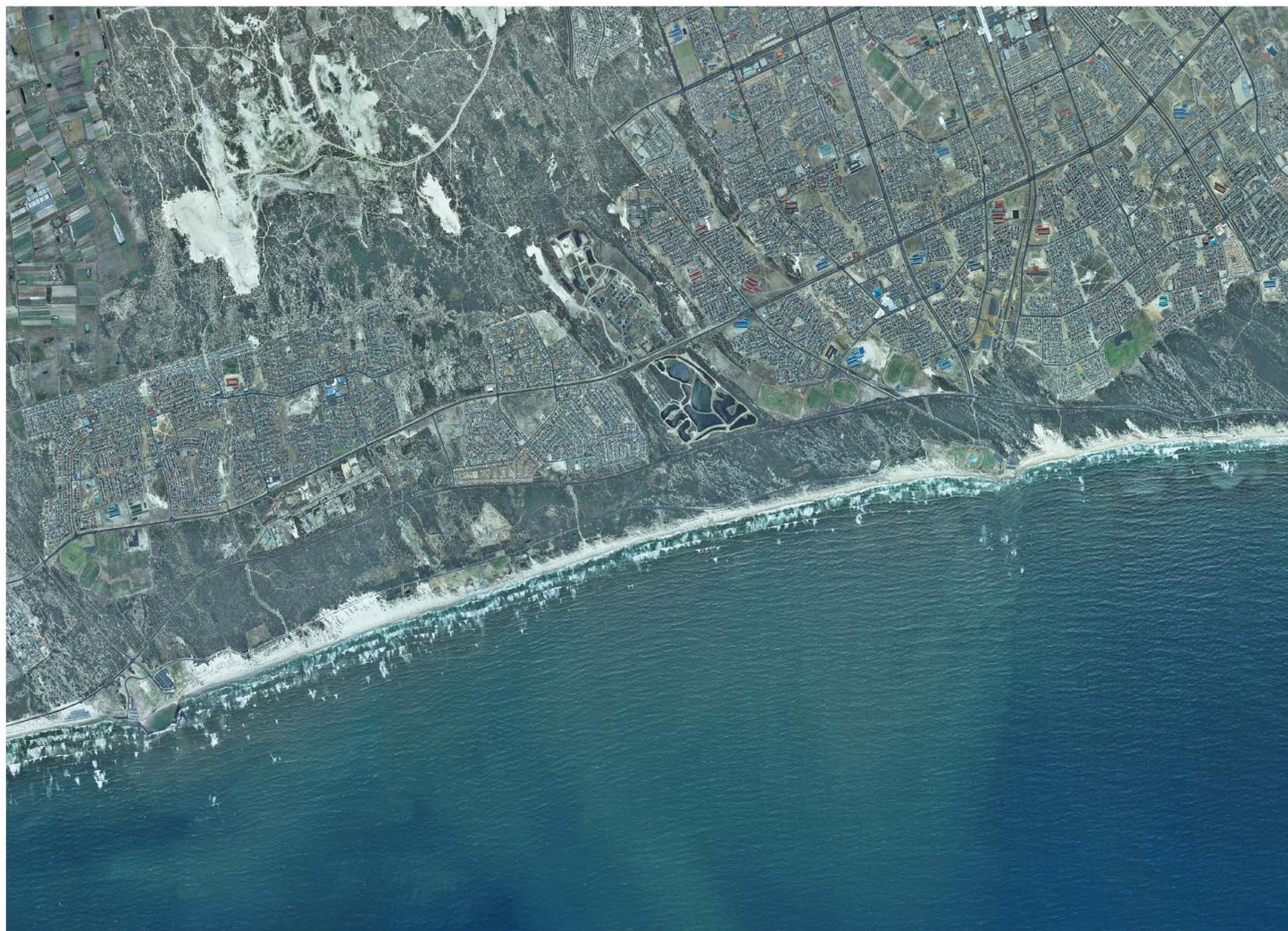
In my process I represent this construct by using elements of the work of Stephen Shore, Andreas Gursky, Robert Adams and others by adopting a distanced approach, similar to that of a surveyor, by using a subdued light that is not associated with recreation in South Africa, and by avoiding narratives by not picturing people within the landscapes. In my images I attempt to foreground the intentions of those who created these spaces by representing the structured landscape in a dislocated manner. I have employed these techniques in order to comment on both the constructed nature of this recreational landscape and the failure of the political project that engineered these separate amenities.

This philosophy of segregation reveals elements of the control and fear of its creators and performs today as evidence of a time and *modus operandi* of those who constructed these separate amenities. While Goldblatt's images of churches can be interpreted as 'memorials to conquest, to faith, to an ideology of racial superiority' (Dubow in Goldblatt 1998: 23), these recreational spaces seem to characterise ruin - not simply in terms of physical disintegration, but also as ruins of modernity that reflect a period of failed ideologies. There is no nostalgia in my images for this time of segregation, nor for its structures. Instead, these images reveal a past and a present that attempt to elucidate the failed system that was apartheid.



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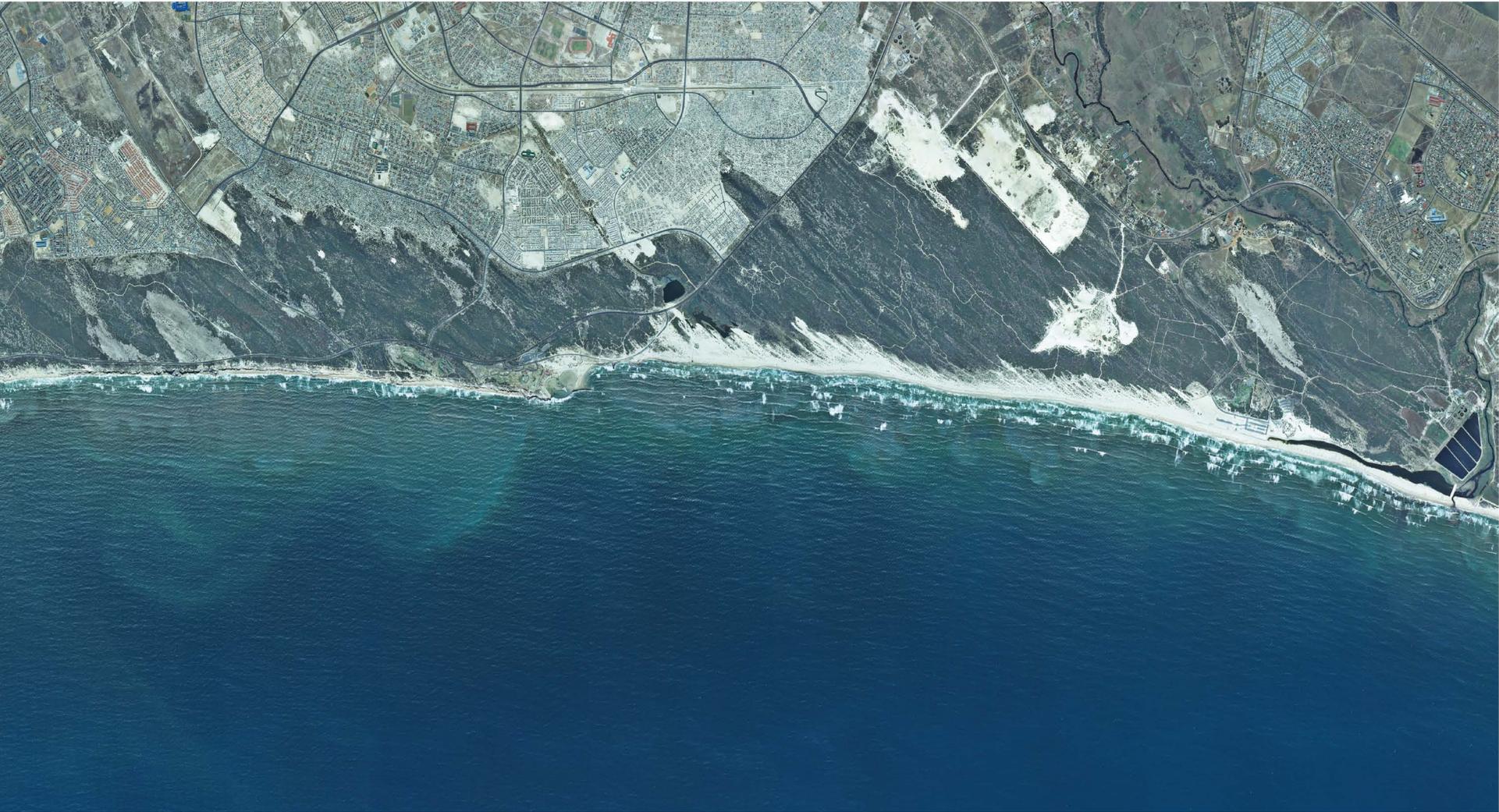
**WORKS**



### 1. **False Bay**

This aerial view depicts the former separate amenities of Strandfontein Pavilion, Mnandi Resort, Monwabisi Resort and Macassar Resort. This stretch of coast, notorious for dangerous swimming conditions, was divided into sections for 'black' and 'coloured' recreation during apartheid.

Original aerial footage courtesy of the Department of Land Affairs.



## 2. **Monwabisi Resort #1**

Monwabisi Resort, which translates as 'The one who makes you happy' from Nguni, was reserved for 'Bantu' recreation in the Cape Peninsula during apartheid. The breakwater was built to prevent drowning in the treacherous False Bay currents. It was unsuccessful.





### 3. Mnandi Resort

Previously reserved for the exclusive use of the 'black' population under apartheid, Mnandi ('Very nice' in Nguni) beach was sectioned off for 'Bantu' recreation for the growing township of Khayelitsha.



#### 4. **Wild Waters**

Facing north towards O.R. Tambo International Airport, this water park in Boksburg was reserved for the use of the 'white' population during the apartheid era.



## 5. **Oudekraal**

Despite being previously reserved for the exclusive use of the 'white' population during apartheid, Oudekraal, situated between Camps Bay and Llandudno, was often illegally used by 'coloured' families at this time.



#### 6. **Green Point Common**

This area of Green Point was reserved for the exclusive use of the 'white' population during apartheid. This site was used as a grazing area for the cattle of the Huri-!Xai Quena and Kurin gai-Quena tribes during pre-colonial times. Recently it was inhabited by homeless people, who were removed in order to make way for the 2010 FIFA World Cup Stadium.



### 7. **Harmony Park Pavilion #1**

Harmony Park, built in 1989, was reserved for the exclusive use of the 'coloured' population of the Cape Flats during apartheid. It is situated between the Greenways golf course in Strand, and the Harbour Island yacht facilities.





#### 8. **Strandfontein Pavilion**

The largest tidal pool in the southern hemisphere was reserved for the use of the 'coloured' population and under apartheid was designed to service the populations of Mitchells Plain and Strandfontein.



#### 9. **ATKV Pretpark**

The ATKV (Afrikaans Language and Culture Association) still owns a substantial part of Hartenbos today. The facilities were reserved for the exclusive use of the 'white' population during apartheid.



10. **Harmony Park Pavilion #2**

Situated 2,5 km from the previously 'white' beaches of Strand, Harmony Park was reserved for the use of the 'coloured' population during apartheid under the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953.



### 11. **Maiden's Cove**

Situated between Clifton and Camps Bay, Maiden's Cove was one of the few beaches on the Atlantic seaboard reserved for the exclusive use of the 'coloured' population. During apartheid, a fence was erected between Maiden's Cove and Bachelor's Cove (a beach used by the homosexual community) as a means of keeping these two groups separate.



## 12. **Silwerstroomstrand**

Reserved for the exclusive use of the 'coloured' population on the West Coast during apartheid, this view faces the bus terminal used to transport residents from Atlantis and Mamre to the beach, in order to control the movement of the visitors.



### 13. **King's Beach**

The industrial port of Port Elizabeth was used as a buffer zone between the beach reserved for the 'black' population to the north, and all beaches south of the coal depot which were previously reserved for the exclusive use of 'white' people under apartheid.



#### 14. **Green Point Stadium**

The stadium is situated on Green Point Common, which was reserved for the exclusive use of the 'white' population during apartheid. In 1968 the Cape Town New Year Carnival was banned from the Green Point Stadium as it was seen as a 'coloured' activity.



### 15. **Soetwater Resort**

Occupying a narrow strip of land between the sea and Slangkop lighthouse, Soetwater resort was reserved for the exclusive use of the 'coloured' population during apartheid. This resort was more recently used to provide shelter for people during the xenophobic attacks of 2009.



16. **Shareworld Resort**

Facing westwards from Soccer City and surrounded by the Crown Mines dump, this area was originally intended as a water park for the exclusive use of the 'black' population of Soweto during apartheid. Shareworld was never completed.



**17. Monwabisi Resort #2**

This picnic area in Monwabisi was built in 1986 as a recreational area for the 'black' population of Khayelitsha.





### 18. **Buffelsbay**

Formerly reserved for the exclusive use of the 'white' population during apartheid, the three neighbouring beaches at Cape Point in the Table Mountain National Park were previously separated into 'black', 'white' and 'coloured' beaches. One of the commemorative crosses to honour Bartholomew Dias was erected overlooking the previously 'coloured' Bordjiesrif beach, situated next to Buffelsbay.



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