

ASHLEY WALTERS

UITSIG

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Aerial photograph of Uitsig, 1945. Image courtesy of GIS Department, City of Cape Town.

UITSIG

A photographic investigation into the landscape, structures and objects of Uitsig and the surrounding areas of Parow Industria, Ravensmead, Cravenby, Belhar and Eureka.

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ABSTRACT

This project considers the landscapes, spaces, structures and lives lived in the suburb of Uitsig on the periphery of the Mother City of Cape Town, and in so doing argues for a consideration of those who not only lived during apartheid, but who live after its demise. In addition to questions of photographic representation, the project also addresses ideas of space, and unarticulated injuries and trauma. Photography is well suited as a medium through which to consider these difficult questions, for in its very inception the medium is one of simultaneous absence and presence.

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PREFACE

I remember seeing Paul (*figure 1*), a family friend and photographer, at every gathering, birthday party or special occasion. Paul photographed all of our family events and parties. I was fascinated by the images he took and enjoyed going through our photo albums. In my home these were considered precious objects and looking through them became a special thing to do when family and friends came to visit; this was the only time I could look at the photographs and revisit the moments captured therein.

Until recently I had not seen those photo albums for over a decade. My grandparents hid the albums in old suitcases that stood on top of their wardrobe, suitcases that belonged to my grandparents when they got married and first moved to Uitsig (see *figures 2 & 3*).

They still keep all their precious objects, important documents, photographs and souvenirs in those suitcases, ready to leave at a moment's notice. This speaks of a sense of impermanence and an anxiety about being removed and suggests spaces and lives of "inbetweenity"¹ and ambiguity.

¹ "Inbetweenity" is a term used by Siona O'Connell (2012: 62) to describe bodies and spaces that occupy a space that is neither here nor there, that doesn't fit into classification systems but has the potential to disturb conventional tropes of knowing and being.



Fig 1 - Paul standing in front of our family house, circa 1977.



Fig 2 - Family house in Uitsig, circa 1973.



Fig 3 - Walters family standing in front of their house in Uitsig, circa 1974.



Fig 4 - My grandparents, my cousin and I sitting at our confirmation table in the lounge. 2000.

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The suitcases on top of the wardrobe contained all of the important documents, photographs, memories and souvenirs that my grandparents acquired during their trips around the country and their stay in Uitsig. The suitcases seem symbolic of the many unanswered questions and mysteries in our family; my grandparents are reluctant to speak about the significance of the contents of the suitcases and always lock their bedroom door when they leave, even though I'm still in the house. In the glimpses I've had of its contents, I do remember seeing a number of intriguing objects in those suitcases. These include the original house plans from before my grandfather expanded the back area of the house; a pair of binoculars; brass sculptures from Swaziland; and an old twin lens reflex camera, amongst other things. I assumed the camera was a gift, as no one in our immediate family knew how to operate it – not that anyone was allowed to figure out how it worked as it was considered too valuable to play around with. From a child's point of view it looked like a more complex camera than the one Paul used. I often imagined myself using this camera to take photographs of my family and showing my friends. I treasured the imagined moments of the family coming together to share the experiences I had captured.

Importantly, the most significant thing I remember from every celebration or gathering is not the event itself but the traces thereof that exist through documentation: a photograph or series of photographs that tell a specific story. I viewed the photographs as if I had no experience of the event itself. I imagined how my friends would look at the images for the very first time. I allowed the photographs to tell a story. Each time I looked at those images I remembered a different story. There are many secrets in my family and I think I started to believe in the photographs more as telling a kind of truth than as a way of trying to remember my past. It seems as if I am searching for something – which I struggle to name – between the spaces of Uitsig, articulated in the silences of my family. The idea of a photograph proved to be more tangible, unchanged in relation to my experience of an event. It was only later in high school at about fifteen, when my mother gave me my first 35mm compact camera, that I myself became a kind of documenter. This was at a time when Paul had stopped photographing family events and I took on his role as photographer. I have been documenting my family ever since.

I was raised by my maternal grandparents (*figure 4*) who formally adopted me shortly after my birth and I have lived in Uitsig ever since. I have never met my father and don't

know who he is. My mother (*figure 5*), who gave me up for adoption, has remained on the periphery of my life. When I was a child my mother married Ioannis Kalamitsos, a Greek national. My half brother, Panagiotis Kalamitsos, was born in Greece and my younger half sister, Serafia Kalamitsos, in Cape Town. Since then my mother has moved back and forth between Greece and South Africa. Although I don't recall seeing much of her in my early childhood, by the age of 15 I began to visit her in Cape Town, where she lived at the time. The relationship between my mother and grandparents has remained estranged until recently. Subsequent to her husband's death, my mother and two half siblings have now returned from Greece and moved into my family home in Uitsig.

Due to my strict upbringing, I never had the opportunity to physically explore Uitsig when I was growing up. While my friends freely roamed the neighborhood, I was kept behind closed doors and felt like a prisoner desperately yearning to escape the confines of his cell. At the time I never really understood why I was being confined.

My cousin, Grant Marsh, who ran away from home at the age of 16 to live with his biological mother, my aunt, was also raised by our grandparents. We thought of each other as brothers. Every day after school we had to return home immediately. We were not allowed to have sleep overs or stay at a friend's place. The only time we were allowed our freedom was when we attended youth camps, school trips, church functions and family gatherings. Even so, we were still not allowed to venture around the community. Only later, when we were in high school and my cousin started to rebel, did my grandparents loosen their grip on us and allow me to spend more time with my friends. It was only then that I realized why my grandparents had wanted to keep us at home all the time: my grandfather was worried about the gangs and violence in the area and wanted to protect us, and with good reason. For most of my time at high school I was terrorized by the "glue koppe" (glue heads, a gang who sniffed glue). A boy in my class tried to mug me on my way home from church whereas on another occasion a boy stabbed me in my leg. Here in Uitsig, like many parts



Fig 5 - My mother posing with my brother and sister, circa 1993.

of the Cape Flats, if you don't study and work hard it is easy to fall into joining a gang. I can confidently say I'm glad that my grandparents raised me the way they did because they influenced the person I am today.

Thinking about Uitsig as a place of confinement I later started observing the spaces, structures and people of Uitsig, a small community situated between informal townships, industrial zones, open spaces, a cemetery, the main road and a railway line, with the constant noise of airplanes landing nearby an inherent part of the landscape. My photographs act as visual symbols, revealing clues of homes and, by implication, bodies and lives.

I decided to photograph the thing closest to me, which I had not been able to properly explore as a child – I decided to photograph my environment, family and community. As much as this project is a portrait of Uitsig and its community, as an insider and someone who lives there, it is also a portrait of me. In this case the use of the word *family* refers to both my blood relatives and the community I grew up with. Through my photographic investigation I hope to show an intimate “portrait” of Uitsig and its neighboring areas.



Fig 6 - Guy Tillim. *Vigilantes unopposed by the police set fire to homes in Crossroads*. A squatter township near Cape Town. May 1986.
From the book *Beyond the Barricades*.



Fig 7 - Roger Meintjies. *The Muslim leader Moulana Faried Essack tries to stop police from removing an African National Congress flag draped over the coffin of slain ANC member Ashley Kriel in Langa township, Cape Town*. July 1987.
From the book *Beyond the Barricades*.

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UITSIG and its precedents

My masters project is a photographic investigation into the land, spaces, architectural structures, objects and community of Uitsig and the neighboring areas of Parow Industrial, Ravensmead, Florida, Cravenby, Belhar and Eureka, and the interaction of these communities with the landscape and structures that exist in these places.

In my studies I have seen a number of photographic essays that are located in or touch on areas of the Cape Flats. Many from the apartheid era depict the Cape Flats as an area of conflict, war and suffering – these include depictions in “struggle” publications such as *Beyond the Barricades* (1989) (as shown in figures 6 & 7). Photographers of the apartheid era were often concerned with exposing the severe poverty and crime and activities connected to the struggle against apartheid. The photographic “struggle” representations of the Cape Flats have often been from the perspective of outsiders (often “white”) and seldom from the perspective of the people who lived there. When it comes to the representation of the Cape Flats and “coloured” people, several photographers come to mind. These include Paul Alberts, Bryan Heseltine, George Hallett, Cloete Breytenbach, Clarence Coulson, Jackie Heyns, Gavin Jantjes, Wilfred Paulse and David Goldblatt.

In the post-apartheid era other representations have emerged from the Cape Flats. David Goldblatt made individual photographs of the Cape Flats that appear in his books *South Africa: The Structure of Things Then* (1998) (figure 8) and *Intersections Intersected* (2009) (figure 9). Other stories include photographic books by David Lurie such as *Cape Town Fringe* (2004) and Chris Ledochowski's *Cape Flats Detail: Life and Culture in the Townships of Cape Town* (2003) (figure 10). According to Goldblatt (in Ledochowski 2003: unpaginated), "In this project he [Ledochowski] wanted to get away from the obvious and the sensational, from the gangs and the overtly political". While Lurie's work tends towards sensational images of gang life, Ledochowski's book has been more useful to me in that it attempts to present a less stereotyped image of the Cape Flats and its people.

The Cape Flats was created by politics, and yet is so much more to the people who live there. However, while Ledochowski immersed himself in the people, life and space of the Cape Flats, he remains to some extent an outsider. I feel that what I offer as a photographer is my uniquely embedded² view of this place. I was born in Uitsig; I am a product of this place. What is important to my work is that I have lived in this area my entire life, I am involved in this community and I know it



Fig 8 - David Goldblatt. *The Apostolic Multiracial Church in Zion of South Africa*. Crossroads, Cape Town, 11 October 1984.

From the series *South Africa: The Structure of Things Then*.

intimately. The idea of working with this particular space is to show a place, its spaces, objects, structures and community, social behaviors and living areas from the inside. In photographing Uitsig from the inside I offer a view of a different kind of reality in Uitsig.

² When I use the word "embedded" I mean in its true sense: according to the Collins Shorter English Dictionary, to embed is "to fix or become fixed firmly and deeply in a surrounding solid mass." I mention this because I do not want my embeddedness to be confused with embedded journalism, which usually refers to photojournalists who are attached to military units in times of war.



Fig 9 - David Goldblatt. *At Kevin Kwanele's Takwaito Barber, Landsdowne Road, Khayelitsha, Cape Town in the time of AIDS*. 16 May 2007.
From the series *Intersections Intersected*.



Fig 10 - Chris Ledochowski. *Lounge, Lavender Hill*. 1992.
From the series *Cape Flats Detail: Life and Culture in the Townships of Cape Town*.

UITSIG: A portrait of a place and other portraits of place

I began to think about a portrait of a place.³ Several photographers have shot a portrait of a place to speak about the identity not just of the place, but also of the people who live there.

There are many international examples of this practice, including Robert Adams' *Colorado* series (1973-74) (figure 11), Joe Deal's *Albuquerque* series (1973-74) and Nicholas Nixon's *Boston* series (1974-75). These examples were all included in the exhibition *New Topographies* (1975),⁴ which spoke about the characteristics of a place in the context of American photography, with particular reference to landscape and structures. This groundbreaking exhibition had a great influence on the way many photographers viewed place and has influenced my own formal photographic language.

I looked to several "portraits of a place" as local precedents. These included Jodi Bieber's *Soweto* (2010), Mikhael Subotzky's *Beaufort West* (2009) (figure 12), Pieter

³ My understanding of a "portrait of a place" refers to all the elements and conditions that define a place, such as the people who live there, cultural practices, religion, politics, socio-economics, the space they inhabit, the architecture, the landscape (whether man made or natural), etc.

⁴ *New Topographies: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* was exhibited in Rochester, New York in 1975. The show was curated by William Jenkins, who selected eight American photographers: Robert Adams, Joe Deal, Nicholas Nixon, Frank Gohlke, Lewis Baltz, Henry Wessel, John Schott and Stephen Shore, and the German photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher.



Fig 11 -Robert Adams. *Denver, Colorado*. 1973.
From the book *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape*.

Hugo's *Messina/ Musina* (2008), and David Goldblatt's *In Boksburg* (1982). Goldblatt's *In Boksburg* (figure 13) is the seminal portrait of a place in South Africa. In his introduction, Goldblatt speaks about his need to "explore something of my own background in the life and values of middle class white urban society" (1982: unpaginated). Goldblatt felt that Randfontein, where he was raised, "was still too painfully close to photograph with the intimacy and dispassion" (1982: unpaginated) he sought so he chose Boksburg, a similar town. The book contains black and white photographs of street corners, residents engaged in recreational, work and domestic activities and special occasions. It also contains pictures of landscapes, structures and objects.

Similarly, Mikhael Subotzky's *Beaufort West* and Pieter Hugo's *Messina/Musina* are portraits of a place in a particular time and context. In an interview for the book *Messina/ Musina*, interviewer Joanna Lehan (Hugo and Lehan 2007: unpaginated) says "the precedent to shooting small towns in South Africa is David Goldblatt's *In Boksburg*" and asks Hugo if this influenced his approach to photographing Messina. Hugo (2007: unpaginated) responds:

With Goldblatt's *In Boksburg* he takes a very clear political stance. That book was shot in black and white at a time when we were living in an apartheid state. Now we're in a completely different era, a different place. The complexities have become far more nuanced. There is no longer an obvious aggressor or oppressor.

Jodi Bieber's *Soweto* (figure 14) shows a portrait of a place that is different to earlier studies of Soweto by Peter Magubane. Whereas Magubane's representation of Soweto is locked into the rhetoric of the struggle, Bieber's *Soweto* shows a more contemporary, nuanced view of the place. Photographs include structures, objects and people engaged in recreational and work activities, many of which attempt to counter stereotypical representations. Photographing my family home set a kind of precedent for me to photograph other spaces with the same intimacy. I had to look at the familiar in new ways and to look again at the objects and spaces I had grown up with. I had to look with new eyes.



Fig 12 - Mikhael Subotzky, *Offering to the ancestors, Kwa Mandlankosi*. 2006. From the series *Beaufort West*.



Fig 13 - David Goldblatt. *Saturday morning at the Hypermarket, Miss lovely legs competition*. 1982. From the series *In Boksburg*.



Fig 14 - Jodi Bieber. *Orlando West Swimming Pool, Orlando West, Soweto*. 2009. From the series *Soweto*.

UITSIG methodology

This body of work, titled *Uitsig*, examines life close to home. I wanted to work with a particular space with which I was familiar. And in so doing set up a binary between the past and present, a place I could revisit and see things new. I chose to photograph my own family home and then moved on to photograph other family homes in Uitsig. I began to examine the concept of home, a house, a place of living, and how having lived in this particular place and time has shaped who I am or who I have become.

I have explored the traces of both private and public violence and how it has influenced both private and public space. I wanted to offer a vision of Uitsig that was uniquely my own. In previous projects, such as *Dark City* (2011), I looked more generally at structures on the Cape Flats. In this project I decided to literally start in my own backyard, photographing the spaces that I inhabit. I first photographed the house, the backyard, then the garden, the street, Uitsig, Ou Uitsig, the flats, maisonettes and other structures, community halls, libraries, sporting and recreational event venues. Thereafter, I moved out in ever-widening circles so as to encompass some of the areas that surround Uitsig, including Ravensmead, Cravenby, Eureka, Belhar, Airport Industria and Parow Industria. It is my view, looking from the inside out.

UITSIG

The word *uitsig* is a point of departure into my investigation of people and places in this area. The Afrikaans word *uitsig* has three main meanings: firstly, it implies seeing that which is out of sight or hidden; secondly, *uitsig* can refer to a prospect or a view, to look onto or over a city or landscape – a particularly important definition in terms of this body of work, and which I will discuss further in relation to notions of landscape; thirdly, the meaning of the word *uitsig* is to show one's persona or display one's character. This is also relevant in that this work shows something of whom I am. Conversely, the word *insig* implies insight or looking in on oneself. This project, about the place Uitsig, is both concerned with looking outward and inward. I will discuss this again later in this document.

It is an interesting observation that when Uitsig, a suburb that is home to 12 000 people, is entered into the Google search engine, the wine farm Constantia Uitsig appears. This wine estate is located in Constantia, one of Cape Town's wealthiest suburbs. It is worth noting that the suburb of Uitsig does not appear in the search results at all, nor does any combination of "Uitsig", "suburb", "town" or "history" bear fruit. The Internet search for *this* Uitsig, the better off sibling, reveals property prices that run into the millions.⁵ On the face of it, it would appear that these two Uit-

sigs have little in common and that the thirty kilometers that separate these two suburbs situate them poles apart. Yet, much like a photograph that can simultaneously obscure and reveal a kind of truth, this observation speaks of the obscuring of some lives and the illumination of others.

The absence of the other Uitsig, my Uitsig, in Google's search results is mirrored in the gaps and spaces of the tourist-friendly identity so closely tied to Cape Town, the Mother City of South Africa. In this Uitsig that is bordered by the airport, industrial areas and the working class suburbs and with a view – an *uitsig* – of Table Mountain, is a landscape that hints of injury and of palpable violence, inherent in the historical construction of the area. Uitsig articulates a separation of bodies, homes and dreams and is a ghostly reminder, articulated through the photographs, of the ramifications of a past that have not yet subsided into the apparent safety of the history books.



Fig 15 - Aerial view of Uitsig, 2013.

⁵ There is little mention of the area's own legacy of forced removals, of families who were displaced from Constantia as a result of the Group Areas Act of 1950.

UITSIG on the Cape Flats

Uitsig, as shown in *figure 15*, is a small suburb on the Cape Flats near the airport in Cape Town. It is surrounded by Belhar cemetery to the south, Ravensmead to the north, De La Rey Road to the west and Eureka to the east. Uitsig was intended as a “coloured” township when it was designed in the late 1960s. It is a space of “inbetweenity” bordered and bounded by particular and significant markers. From Uitsig, one can see Table Mountain, which frames the city and is eloquently described by Heidi Grunebaum (2011: 90):

Beneath the shimmer of cloud that blows across its flat-topped summit, Table Mountain stands as its own primordial monument at the center of the city. It is located at the core of the city’s white economy within a ring of still predominantly white middle class suburbs clustered around its base. At once a geological and symbolic center, Table Mountain is fixed in a topographical relationship of proximity to the central city and its “suburbs” and a psychological relationship of distance to the outwardly radiating urban peripheries: the “township” ghettos of the Cape Flats where social and political economies of forced resettlement, enclosure, exclusion and

historical erasure from the shadow side of the city's development. In many ways Table Mountain and its relational perspectives of distance and proximity to the city's center is a metaphor of the city's history. From the "back" of Table Mountain, a looking from the localities of ghetto "townships" of the Cape Flats is structured historically through a psychology of distance and disavowal.

While the Cape Flats designates a relatively flat geographical area between the Table Mountain chain at its western end and the Hottentots Holland range to the east, it is more complex than this. Through the mechanism of the Group Areas Act of 1950, and still today, the Cape Flats connotes an area where "black" and "coloured" people have lived, and continue to live.⁶ Areas that were "white" during apartheid, such as Plumstead, Pinelands and Strand, which are on the geographical area that is the Cape Flats, were not considered to be a part of the Cape Flats. The Cape Flats seems to start at the M5 highway and extend to the sea in the south, Maccassar and Eerste River in the east, and Parow in the north. "White" areas, such as Zeekoevlei, Pinelands and the low-lying areas of Somerset West, are not generally considered part of the Cape Flats, although they occupy very

similar and adjacent terrain. Although the history of segregation and forced removals dates back to before apartheid, when the Cape was first settled by colonists under the Dutch East India Company in 1652 and later by Great Britain in 1806, segregation was cemented and made official government policy under apartheid.

The National Party, under the leadership of D.F. Malan, instituted racist laws to preserve white supremacy when the scale of segregation and forced removals intensified (Christopher, 1994: 65). In an attempt to separate citizens of South Africa based on race, the South African government passed significant legislature (such as the Prohibition of the Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950 (SAHO & African History, 2012)). This did not prove effective enough in separating "non-whites" from

⁶ Following the writing of Frantz Fanon, I struggle with racial categories. Having lived my entire life as a "coloured" man, I will therefore refer to racial terms in this manner throughout this catalogue as a deliberate comment on the classification of people according to their skin colour. During apartheid the South African government used the description of "white", "black", "coloured", "Indian" and "Asian" to separate the different racial groups. The term "coloured" referred to people of mixed race and people of San heritage. The use of the terms "coloured", "black" and "white" makes reference to an older system of racial classification that I do not condone. Thus, my use of the latter words in this paper refers to the views of others and not my own.

⁷ The Group Areas Act enforced the segregation of different races to specific areas within the urban locale of any given town or city. Non-whites were restricted in their access to ownership and the occupation of land to a specific statutory group such as District Six, Cape Town. South African History Online, SAHO.

“whites only” areas and on the 27 April 1950, the apartheid government passed the Group Areas Act⁷ (SAHO & Christopher 1994: 105). According to this act “non-whites” were removed from the city to purpose-built suburbs on the Cape Flats (Christopher, 1994: 105). According to Arendse and Gunn (2010: 8), Cape Town was declared “whites only” in 1966, and by 1982 60 000 people had been relocated to other areas throughout the Cape Peninsula.

In order to accommodate “coloured” people displaced by the Group Areas Act, new suburbs or “coloured” townships were created. According to Bank and Minkley (1999: 8-9) “model coloured villages” were built on the “fringe” or “liminal” spaces of Cape Town: the Cape Flats. These so called “fringe spaces” – or spaces on the edge of the city, with its diverse demographics – significantly shaped the subsequent histories of the city (Bank & Minkley, 1999: 9). The Cape Flats was initially predominantly known as a “coloured” area and consisted of “coloured” housing estates, often made up of blocks of flats (see *figure 16*), and other structures such as maisonettes,⁸ free standing homes, schools, police stations and, occasionally, clinics.

“Townships” became known as black African spaces and consisted of, for example, Langa, Nyanga, Gugulethu and, later, Khayelitsha. Although “coloured” and “black” South African spaces were both townships by description, these “fringe spaces” were separated from “whites only” areas that were racially fixed by the label “suburb” (Bank & Minkley, 1999: 9).

Apartheid-era urban planning has had a profound effect on the geography of Cape Town. During the preliminary stages of the development of the Cape Flats in the 1950s, urban planners designed the layout of townships not only to separate “white” people from “coloured” people and, in turn, “coloured” people from “black” people, but also to exert power and control over each area. Highways, railways, rivers, open fields and industrial areas were used as “buffer zones” to separate the different racial groups (South African Government News Agency, 2013: online). According to Haroon Gunn-Salie (personal communication, October 4, 2013), “coloured” townships were built with a more open design that allowed easy access for both the police and its people, who travelled to and from the city district. By contrast, “black” South African townships such as Langa were built with only two entry points at either end of the community. This design provided police with control during raids or inspections.

8 A maisonette (from the French diminutive of *maison*, house) is a self-contained accommodation often occupying two floors of a larger house and having its own entrance. (Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged: 2003)

Sub-standard housing was hastily built and poorly constructed to accommodate the thousands of families that were forcibly displaced. Subsequently the enormous backlog for low-income housing led to overcrowding, high instances of room-letting and the rise of informal backyard dwellers⁹ (Arendse & Gunn, 2010: 8). Backyard dwellings are informal structures (which include Wendy houses)¹⁰ and shacks set up in the backyards of private or public properties. In 1993 Cape Town had a housing backlog of approximately 40 000 units, which escalated each subsequent year with the increase of the population and migration from rural areas to the Cape Flats (Williams, 1996-2011: online).

Today the Cape Flats area is home to more than 3,7 million inhabitants¹¹ and “consists of a large number of “coloured” and “black” South African townships designated as such by the apartheid government under the Group Areas Act (Williams, 1996-2011: online). Since the official end of apartheid in 1994 the South African government has initiated programmes such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to alleviate poverty by providing low-income housing for people living on the Cape Flats (Arendse & Gunn, 2010: 9). This has partially addressed the problem of homelessness and migrancy, but the need for housing continues to grow exponentially.



Fig 16 - *Dark Figure*. 2011.

9 Backyard dwellers sublet a piece of ground or informal structure from an owner or tenant. Although these structures are informal and consequently illegal, NGOs like the Hanover Park Backyard Dwellers Organization (HPBDO) have taken it upon themselves to gather and record information that might assist organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, National Housing Commission and government.

10 The Collins Shorter English Dictionary defines a Wendy house as “a small model house for children to play in”. In South Africa a Wendy house is a wooden structure often associated with backyard dwellers.

11 2011 Census – Cape Town Profile (December 2012). Compiled by Strategic Development Information and GIS Department, City of Cape Town, using 2011 Census data supplied by Statistics South Africa.

UITSIG in relation to my family's history

My grandmother sometimes spoke of Uitsig before they moved to it and it was locally known as “*Wilmot se bos*”, consisting mainly of bush and farms. Most of the farmers who lived in the area herded cows, chickens, pigs and sheep. My grandfather, Daniel Walters, was born in the same year the Second World War began, 1939. As a young man he worked on a farm locally known as “*Kat se plaas*” in Montana that was approximately twenty minutes walk from where they lived [D. Walters, personal communication, August 29, 2013].

My grandfather recalls that the “coloured” people would walk long distances to buy milk from *Kat se plaas*. He remembered that if one wanted to gather wood for cooking and keeping warm during winter, local people had to pay the farmers a fee to enter certain areas of the bush that surrounded each farm.

“*Blikkies*” was the first primary school built in *Wilmot se bos* and was made from corrugated sheet metal. It was only later, when the area was named Uitsig, that the school was rebuilt and named C.L. Wilmot Primary School (figure 17). Two generations within our family attended the school, including my mother, aunts, uncles and myself. Uitsig currently has four public schools: C.L. Wilmot Primary, Uitsig Primary, Uitzig Secondary School and Tygersig Primary.

According to my mother, Vanessa Kalamitos, my grandparents married in 1962 and lived in a “self-made home”¹² in Clarkes, Cape Town, previously known as Clarke Estate.¹³ My grandparents are reluctant to talk about life before they arrived in Uitsig. Many residents were relocated here as a result of urban development and the building of council houses under the Group Areas Act during apartheid (Christopher, 1994: 105). My grandparents moved to Uitsig in 1971, having bought their house from the council. It was one of the first four houses completed in the latter part of Uitsig. The housing development of Uitsig that forms part of district five¹⁴ was contracted to the Murray & Stewart Construction Company.¹⁵



Fig 17 - School, Uitsig. 2010.

12 A “self-made home” refers to an informal housing structure found in many shantytowns or informal settlements. According to the Department of Human Settlements an “informal settlement exists where housing has been created in an urban or peri-urban location without official approval.” (The National Upgrading Support Programme: <http://www.upgradingsupport.org/content/page/part-1-understanding-your-informal-settlements> [Accessed: September 10, 2013])

13 Due to the shortage of official housing many “coloured” and “African” people erected wood and iron structures on land that was either privately or state owned; such people were called “squatters”.

14 The Cape Peninsula is currently comprised of four distinct areas: the western and eastern seaboard, and the southern and northern suburbs. Today these areas are divided into six districts, each governed by a separate municipality. The northern suburb that includes Uitsig and its neighbours falls under district five.

15 During the development of local districts under the Group Areas Act the two major contractors were Murray & Stewart Construction (which later became Murray & Roberts Construction), responsible for building houses, and Dura Construction, who were contracted to build flats.



Fig 18 - Abandoned House, Cravenby. 2013.

My grandmother, Isabel Walters, born in 1941, remembers the old abandoned house in Cravenby from the time she attended a catholic school in Clarkes. A “white” farmer and his family had lived in the house when the area was still largely farmland, but many farmers left the area after the relocations of the Group Areas Act. My grandmother recalls that everyone in the community used to refer to the old house (as shown in *figure 18*) as a *spookhuis*, or haunted house (I. Walters, personal communication, August 29, 2013). Today, the windows are boarded up and the walls are covered in mould.

According to my grandfather, other areas that had previously been farms are Cravenby, Belhar cemetery, the University of the Western Cape, Elsie’s River, Nooitgedacht, King David Country Club near Montana, Manenberg (Varkies Vlei), Gugulethu, Freedom Park Airport, Welcome Estate, Parow Industria, Eureka and Uitsig. He also mentions that Cape Town International Airport was bush area where “white” people lived. Langa and Bokmakierie are amongst the oldest townships built and Silvertown, Kewtown and Athlone were built slightly later. When the Group Areas Act came in, the farmers had to leave their farms because the council needed the land to resettle “black” and “coloured” people. The dominant families of the region

were the Krywagens and Braaf families, after whom the area “Braaf se Bos” was named. The two families were in a constant feud with one another and the city council over ownership of land.

Like the old farmhouse in Cravenby, many old buildings remain in the different neighbourhoods today, having become permanent marks on a landscape that bears the traces of a history long past. Two examples are the church my grandfather attended while growing up in Clarkes and the Roman Catholic school that my grandmother went to. According to my grandfather, when farmers lived on this land they would visit Ganie’s Store (figure 19) on a regular basis to purchase basic foodstuffs. This cash store still exists today in Ravensmead, but its environment has changed markedly from the 1950s.

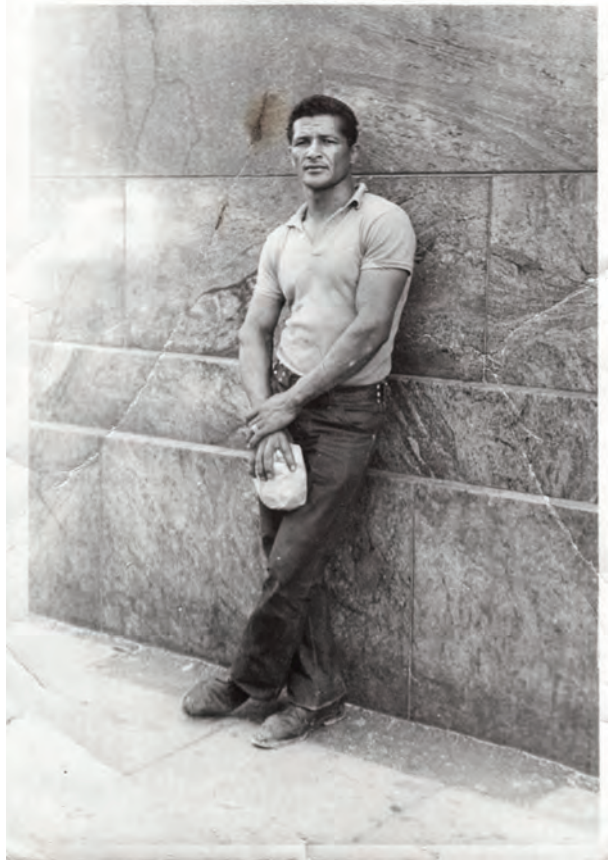
My grandfather worked as a builder for various construction companies in the late 1950s (figure 20). One of the projects he worked on was the building of Tygerberg hospital¹⁶ under the supervision of Dura Construction and the Julius Cohen Construction Company. Many sub-contractors were employed to complete the interior of the hospital, which officially opened in 1976. Other jobs my grandfather held during his career included loading goods on planes at D.F. Malan Airport (today Cape Town International Airport) and doing mainte-



Fig 19 - Ganie's Store, Cravenby. 2010.

nance work at the University of Western Cape (UWC). It was only after he had moved to Uitsig that he started his own business, making and installing burglar bars, gates and fencing, which he continued until his retirement. Today he still makes improvements around the house and is constantly renovating and changing things. In addition to the burglar bar business, he applied for a permit to sell certain goods such as fish, groceries and

¹⁶ “Tygerberg hospital is the largest medical facility in the Western Cape and was commissioned in 1972 as an academic hospital for the University of Stellenbosch’s Health Science Faculty.” (Western Cape Government & South African Government Information)



*My grandfather Daniel Walters on a construction site in Cape Town,
circa 1956.*

cigarettes and thereafter opened a mobile tuck shop from home. While my grandfather was designing, constructing and installing burglar bars and fencing my grandmother kept the books and ran the mobile tuck shop. I worked in the shop after school and on weekends. Through the business my family became well known and respected in the Uitsig community.

Things have changed since my grandparents retired and as they became more religious we had fewer visits. Although several of my family members live in close proximity to my grandparents, they have only recently begun to acknowledge one another again. This estrangement was caused by longstanding schisms and disagreements that my grandparents are reluctant to discuss and by the separations enforced by apartheid-era resettlements. As I contact other family members to photograph them, my project in Uitsig has begun to bring the family back together as these family members come into contact with my grandparents again. This concept of a kind of newfound family, which in fact was always there, is a strange thing to get used to after years of separation.

THE STRUCTURES, landscape and people of Uitsig

The landscape,¹⁷ the built environment and architecture influence the way we think, behave and interact with one another. In no place is this truer than in Uitsig, with its apartheid-era urban planning. According to James Corner in *Recovering Landscape* (1999), referencing M.J.T. Mitchell's essay "Landscape and Power", landscape architecture¹⁸ is not just a reflection of culture but is more an active instrument that influences modern society. In Uitsig the landscape and urban planning was used as an instrument to produce and influence the way that people live.

The formations of the land, the built environment and architecture during apartheid were idealistic and ambitious in terms of urbanization and industrialization. One example of how site influences human behavior and interaction is the idea of how space can be utilized to exert power. Michel Foucault demonstrates this theory in his essay "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" (1967: online).

¹⁷ Looking at a long history of philosophy, cultural geographers and artists who think, write about and make landscapes, many different ideas of what landscape could be exist. It is an enormous topic beyond the scope of this document. It is important to note that there is no definitive definition for landscape.

¹⁸ The Oxford English Dictionary defines a landscape architect as "one whose profession is the arrangement of land for human use and enjoyment involving the placement of structures, vehicular and pedestrian ways and planting."

While Uitsig, a “coloured” township, was constructed differently to a “black” township such as Langa, the urban planning of Uitsig was also built to influence the behavior of its inhabitants. For example, Uitsig was built right next to the industrial area of Parow Industria to serve as a workforce for the factories there. While Uitsig, unlike Langa, had more than two entrances and exits, it is also surrounded by “buffer zones” of arterial roads, railways, the airport and industrial areas. The many arterial roads that surround Uitsig gave apartheid-era authorities the opportunity to seal off areas in times of urban unrest. This was often the case on nearby Modderdam Road¹⁹ during the apartheid era.

Following these descriptions, Uitsig becomes central to an investigation of the relationship between spatiality and social ordering within the representation of Uitsig and its structures, objects, landscape and people. My Masters submission thus focuses on a land-

scape of structures, community and violence that is demarcated by cultural constraints and socio-economics and is influenced by the modernist ideology of apartheid.

The Cape Flats has not historically been seen as a space of “whiteness” and, even though it has been home to many “black” people, it is still predominantly associated with “coloured” people (O’Brien, 2012). Furthermore, although not all the residents of Uitsig were forcibly removed from areas such as District Six in the city centre, it is no coincidence that the area is exclusively home to people who are not “white”.

The idea too that the Cape Flats is exclusively home to the “coloured” community is a flawed one, given that the area is vast – as is the tenuous lumping together of people who are different on many levels. “Coloured” means different things to different people; there are differences in terms of language,²⁰ ways of life and social aspirations, often brought to the fore when discussing who lives “below, or above, the line” (Erasmus, 2008: 175). The idea of racial labeling implies that identities are fixed and timeless. These identities are fraught with many complexities, with Mohammed Adhikari (2009) asserting on the one hand that the construction of a group identity is due to the primacy of self-identification, whereas Vivian Bickford-

19 In 2013 the name of Modderdam Road was changed to Robert Sobukwe Road.

20 I was raised by my grandparents in an Afrikaans-speaking household and completed my schooling in Afrikaans. However, when I visited my mother during high school I was not allowed to speak Afrikaans to her and we communicated in English, I think because she didn’t want to respond in Afrikaans and be reminded of her past. She always reminded my siblings and me that she had had a horrible childhood. Most of the people that live in Uitsig speak Afrikaans, but many other languages are spoken on the Cape Flats – including all of South Africa’s eleven official national languages and many others.

Smith (in Adhikari, 2009: 15) argues that it is a “dialectic process of imposition by the ruling establishment from above and ‘coloured’ initiative from below.” During apartheid the South African government used the descriptions of “white”, “black”, “coloured” and “Indian” to separate the different racial groups. The term “coloured” referred to people of mixed race or people of San heritage.

The Cape Flats spans a region of approximately 500 square kilometers and is largely a mixture of suburban townships, informal settlements, unoccupied wetlands and farmlands. In the 1870s, most of the Cape Flats was unoccupied or used for farming (Pinnock, 1982; O’Brien, 2012). Certain parts of the Cape Flats, such as Epping Forest, were state land, whereas other areas, like Matroosfontein, which was privately owned, was home to the first official housing development in 1899 (Pinnock, 1982; O’Brien, 2012). Urban development soon followed in Elsies River, which was still farmland in the 1970s. The Divisional Council bought the land because of its location close to the industrial labour zones and charged weekly rental fees of one rand (Pinnock, 1982; Budlender, 1975). The surrounding areas, mainly bushland, formed part of the Elsies River district and later became known as Uitsig and its neighbours.

Like many other small communities in the Cape Metropolitan district there are subtle nuances in terms of the physicality and structural layout of Uitsig, which the outsider may not immediately grasp.

Uitsig and surrounding areas contains structures and spaces such as housing estates, flats, maisonettes, duplexes, Wendy houses, backyard shacks, informal settlements, council and privately owned houses, as well as churches, mosques, government schools, sport and recreation centers, community centres, libraries, police stations and clinics. There is also some industry, including factories and retail areas, from mobile tuck shops and *spazas* (home shops) to formal businesses (shopping centers). The structures in Uitsig generally range from one- to three-bedroom single- and double-story houses, single-story duplexes (a housing structure that is comprised of two separate family units that share a common central wall), four-story flats and RDP houses.

Uitsig consists of private, public and subsidized housing. Private housing refers to accommodation or property (usually a house or flat) owned by an individual or non-government legal individuals. Many families who currently live and own private housing in Uitsig were displaced during the expansion of the industrial labour zones around Epping

Forest and later Elsie's River (D. Walters, personal communication, August 29, 2013).

Public sector housing consists of three- to four-story flats that are managed by the local council and government. In these cases the housing authority (the government or council) owns the building. These types of accommodation were established to provide affordable housing for low-income people and are locally referred to as "flats" or "*fletse*". These flats are scattered over a vast geographical area and are differently configured from one local district to another. Due to the lack of housing and jobs in many parts of Cape Town, residents often rent out a room or space in the backyard from whoever lives on the ground floor. Although the council does not permit residents living in public housing to sub-let, this is often not addressed head-on as the demand for housing is more pressing than the issues surrounding illegal sub-letting. The same goes for informal settlements and backyard dwellers.

According to Louise Cobbett (2009: online) the biggest problem with backyard dwellers is the landlord-tenant relationship. In this case the landlords – the legal tenants of the housing provided by the council – may charge the families living in the backyard more than the rent they themselves pay to the council. Furthermore, the legal tenants themselves

often don't pay their own rent. This is difficult to regulate, because the backyard dwellers are not legal tenants.

The third type of accommodation found in Uitsig is subsidized housing, in which both private and government entities receive subsidies to rent accommodation to their tenants. In this case the housing authority is not the landlord. Subsidized housing is often rented to people with low incomes and includes houses, maisonettes and duplexes. Maisonettes and duplexes are one- or two-story houses with separate entrances that often accommodate two or more families.

The different housing types and ownerships are separated geographically in Uitsig, which has influenced the community and created segregation between different social and economic groups. As a result Uitsig has split into two predominant areas, Uitsig and Ou Uitsig (Old Uitsig). This is a chronological classification that refers to when each part of Uitsig was developed. The government-owned housing estates in Ou Uitsig consist largely of blocks of flats and maisonettes that were developed before the privately owned areas. The difference between these two areas is in part due to who owns their land and who does not.

The Community Residential Units (CRU) programme, funded by the national government in 2008 by the City of Cape Town,

was aimed at improving and upgrading 7700 council rental units in selected areas of the Cape Flats (City of Cape Town, 2013: online). The estimated date of completion of the project is in 2013-14 (City of Cape Town, 2013: online). These units form part of phase one; the rest of the City's rental units will be upgraded over the next few years as the national government makes more funds available. In addition to the renovation of each residential unit, the surrounding areas are upgraded through various interventions such as road works, parking areas, fencing and tree planting (City of Cape Town, 2013: online).

Since November 2011 I have photographed housing developments in many areas around Uitsig, where construction companies have been contracted to build and to improve the basic living conditions of low-income households. This project includes extant flats, municipal houses or duplexes subsidized by government or council. *Figures 21, 22 and 23* show how, section by section, one block at a time, residents are temporarily moved into cargo containers. These containers are often grouped and stacked on top of each other in pairs due to the limited available space. One family will live in a container for approximately six weeks during the renovation process. Each apartment, house and duplex under construction is painted inside and out, and



Fig 21 - Community Residential Units Project, Upgrade of Social Housing, Uitsig. 2013.



Fig 22 - Community Residential Units Project, Upgrade of Social Housing, Eureka. 2013.



Fig 23 - Temporary Housing during the Upgrading of Social Housing, Eureka. 2013.

everything – doors, gates, railings, windows, light fixtures and bulbs, taps, geysers and electrical wiring – is replaced.

According to Joubert (2009: online), “Uitsig is home to 12000 people, almost 90% of whom are coloured”. Although the majority of people living in Uitsig are “coloured” people, some minorities include Somalis who have businesses in Uitsig but live elsewhere, and immigrants from Tanzania who sublet from council tenants. As I am exploring Uitsig and its surrounding areas, this includes informal settlements housing largely mixed populations, including “coloured” and “black” South Africans and “immigrants” from other parts of Africa. Many Uitsig residents work in industrial areas such as Airport Industria and Parow Industria. Airport Industria employs people in distribution warehouses, courier warehouses and other activities connected to the airport and neighbouring Parow Industria is home to factories for PEP Clothing, Simba, IQ Foods and Coca Cola, amongst others. People in Uitsig also work in retail and local shops such as Spar and Shoprite. Occupations range from seamstresses in the textile industry, to mechanics, carpenters and nurses in medical facilities such as hospitals and clinics. Others work as teachers, police officers, domestic cleaners, security guards, machine opera-

tors, catering staff, cashiers, shopkeepers and other professions.

Mrs. Fortuin, our neighbour, works at Pep Clothing. She walks to the factory every day, which is approximately ten minutes away from her house. Children at school used to tease anyone whose parents worked at Pep Clothing. Here the stereotypes and discrimination is not confined to the area in which people live, but also extends to where they work. Considering the socio-economic standards and living conditions in the community some school children would rather become merchants, drug dealers and shebeen owners, as it is the easiest, fastest, and in many cases the only, way to make a living in this place. In many cases I think that young people’s dreams and aspirations are influenced by where they live on the Cape Flats. When I asked a friend of mine in primary school what he wanted to be in life, he said he wanted to be a drug dealer. I was confused and shocked and wondered why anyone would want to be a drug dealer. Only later did I realize that it was probably all he knew or understood. The same can be said of my cousin, who now lives with his family on the premises of my grandparents’ home. From a young age he wanted to be a security guard, because that is what his father did for a living.

Uitsig has high levels of unemployment. According to Joubert (2009: online), “Officially the unemployment rate is at 40%, but it is probably higher.” Unemployment is linked to poverty, which in turn connects to other social problems such as alcohol and drug abuse. Like many other areas on the Cape Flats, Uitsig is home to a ravaging drug epidemic, particularly amongst low-income households. The main drugs in Uitsig are “tik”²¹, “unga”²², “mandrax”²³ and “dagga”,²⁴ which are all relatively cheap. The biggest problem is tik, and people resort to crime and prostitution

21 Tik (Crystal Methamphetamine) is a highly addictive stimulant when smoked and leads to an increase of confidence, energy and libido, amongst other effects. See also: http://www.drugcentre.org.za/druginfo_tik.html

22 Unga (Also known as whoonga and wunga) is a psychoactive drug that allegedly contains antiretroviral drugs used in the treatment of HIV (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whoonga>). See also: <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/unga-joins-tik-as-cape-drug-of-choice-1.408575#.Ume9p5T-LOA>

23 Mandrax (Methaqualone) is a sedative-hypnotic drug that affects the central nervous system and causes depression, insomnia and toxic psychosis. See also: <http://www.drugaware.co.za/mandrax.html>

24 Dagga (*Cannabis sativa*) is a light depressant that can cause a lowered libido, amnesia and, in cases of excessive use, possible brain damage. <http://www.drugaware.co.za/dagga.html>

25 *The “Americans” in South Africa*. CritCrim.org: Critical Criminology Information and Resources. <http://critcrim.org/node/163> Last Accessed: 21 October 2013.

26 The 26s and 28s live mostly in “0u Uitsig”, whereas the 27s live in Uitsig. The 26s gangs often associate themselves with the “Hard Livings”, the 27s associate themselves with the “The Americans” and the 28s with the “Mongrels”. Several members of the 27s gang went to the same school as I did, and were my friends until they took up gang activities.

to feed their addictions. According to Rafiek Louw (in Joubert 2009: online):

“You want to understand Uitsig, you repeat: ‘A quarter for the daughter and the gram for the mam’ and you know daughters are tiking with their mothers, and you understand our Uitsig,” says Briessies. “Or: ‘Hop op die pieppie want niks is vernietie [Jump on the penis cause nothing comes for free].’ Then you know a lot of people here have but their sex to pay for tik.”

A number of powerful gangs operate in and around Uitsig. They are connected to various illegal activities that are associated with drug and alcohol abuse, violence and organized crime. The gangs include the “Hard Livings”, “The Americans”²⁵ and the “Mongrels”, who are all connected to the prison number gangs (see Steinberg 2004) such as the 26s, 27s and 28s.²⁶ Sam is an old school friend of mine who lives with his mother and sister at the *Three Sisters* flats in Uitsig. Everyone looked up to him in school, including me – if you were friends with him and had any problems with bullies he would deal with them. Sam is now a member of the “The Americans” gang and is feared by many in the community. Most of the time he sits on the side of the road near to where he lives and watches people as they pass by. We greeted each other until recently, but the only response I get from him now is

an angry stare. Once part of a gang it is not easy to get out and this is where the tension between gangs and me exists, because as a photographer I have become an outsider.

Turf wars develop between gangs, which in turn leads to an increase in violent crimes in the area.²⁷ Because of the lack of facilities and institutional structures like regular police patrols and police stations,²⁸ libraries,²⁹ hospitals³⁰ and clinics in these communities, residents often establish alternative ways to render the necessary infrastructure and social support. This includes traveling to other districts in pursuit of medical, educational and policing services. In order to provide protection and services to the people of Uitsig, Community Policing Forums (CPF) have been set up and people enter into partnerships with Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Alongside these formal activities are the illegal but highly organized gang syndicates. A complex relationship that is subtly intercon-

nected exists between the people of Uitsig, organizations, social groups and gangs. An example of this complex relationship exists between community leaders and members of the Community Policing Forum, who often have a family member who belongs to a gang. In my experience³¹ with situations like these, individuals from the Community Policing Forum and the gang member rec-

27 See for example: <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/girls-execution-3-teenagers-arrested-1.35893?ot=inmsa.ArticlePrintPage-Layout.ot> and <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/slain-teens-knew-their-killer-mom-1.1366789#.UmP8WJT-LOA>

28 The nearest police station and clinic is in Ravensmead, approximately 2km from Uitsig. Residents from Uitsig often have to walk to Ravensmead or other neighbouring areas to use the services provided by these places.

29 There is a library in Uitsig that contains very few books and functions largely as a soup kitchen. It is not adequate for purposes of learning.

30 The nearest hospital is Tygerberg Hospital, which is 4km from Uitsig.

31 During the course of this project I made contact with CPFs and met with them regularly, sometimes going on patrols. It was during these encounters that the complex relationship between gang and community members became apparent to me.

ognize the others' position and respect his or her status within the community both at home and on the streets.

The representations in the media show Uitsig as a place drug riddled, poor, ruled by gangs and violence, but Uitsig is so much more than this. What this picture does not reveal is the love, care and affection of Uitsig. This care and affection is not just between the people but also between the people and the space. Many people are proud of their homes and regularly make improvements to them. People also insure that the spaces around their homes and communal areas are cared for. What the stereotypical representation does not reveal is the picture of ordinary people living ordinary lives in ordinary spaces. It does not show the sense of community that I have experienced in Uitsig. Many people in Uitsig are committed to the upliftment and improvement of the area and freely volunteer their time in order to make a contribution to this community.

Despite the gangs, violence and crime in Uitsig there is a sense of community that comes from the activities many partake in. My grandfather belonged to a federation that ran pigeon racing competitions. At the end of each race members would gather at someone's house and have a braai before checking their pigeon racing clocks to see who had won. Other activities include going to church, late marching band rehearsals, playing netball, soccer clubs, etc. The Uitsig sports field is home to the Trinatarians soccer team, who play regular matches against opposing teams within the Cape Metropolitan District. Although Uitsig does not have a home cricket team, other teams often use the field for tournaments. The act of doing something with the community or in a group of people from the same general area, often competing with other teams, creates a sense of unifying the collective. A member of the group or the community experiences a sense of belonging through this.

UITSIG in relation to landscape and space

My focus in this body of work deals primarily with the landscapes, spaces, structures and objects I have found in Uitsig and surroundings areas. The word “landscape” emerged in the 16th century, particularly in relation to Dutch painting. Here the word “landscape” was not the same as “land”. When the term was introduced into English it did not mean the view itself, but a picture of it (Jackson, 1984: 3). Landscape thus refers to a representation rather than the land itself and implies some form of construction, through paint or other media and through an interpretive act on the part of the artist. According to W.J. Mitchell (1994: 2)

Landscape as a cultural medium . . . has a double role with respect to something like ideology: it naturalizes a cultural and social construction, representing an artificial world as if it were simply given and inevitable, and it also makes that representation operational by interpellating its beholder in some more or less determinate relation to its givenness as sight and site. Thus, landscape (whether urban or rural, artificial or natural) always greets us as space, as environment, as that within which “we” (figured as “the figures” in the landscape) find – or lose – ourselves.

As mentioned before, the word *uitsig* implies looking out onto, a prospect, a view or a landscape. It is for this reason that I'm interested in notions of landscape. When considering Uitsig there is not much there to aspire to in terms of the conventional notions of landscape that one might recognize in painting; there is more that is quotidian than sublime. Conventional landscape painting is normally associated with open, rural spaces and the picturesque of mountains, valleys, the sea and uninhabited land, but contemporary notions of landscape include the urban space and cityscape. In Uitsig the spaces are small, urban and contained. The open public spaces are run down and contained by vibracrete walls or broken fences – yet Uitsig too constitutes a landscape.

In this sense I am interested in the idea of the constructed view in relation to Uitsig. While these photographs are not digitally manipulated (except for exposure and colour correction) there is sometimes a feeling of

the constructed and the theatrical in these images. In addition, while the photographs are in some sense a “document”³² of the place where I live, on another level they are an overt construction. They are my construction, or interpretation of this place, this landscape that is Uitsig.

My exploration of the landscape, spaces, structures, topography and details of Uitsig through the use of photography allowed me to also observe the community. As much as this speaks about a place, it also speaks about the people who live here and how they live. This is thus not a conventional photo documentary essay on the people of the Cape Flats area. Instead I evoke a sense of place through its spaces, structures, objects and people. As the photographer I construct my own portrait of this place by focusing on specific visual forms that appeal to me, based on my own experience of the place. Just as a painter chooses what to include or omit in their composition, so too do I construct my composition. Through careful observation, attending to how light is falling and looking actively I create my own landscape within the space.

Because I grew up and still live in Uitsig I am an insider. But my role as a photographer makes me an observer rather than a participant, and through this I become dis-

32 Because of the relationship between the “real” and the photograph, a photograph is always in some sense a document regardless of how constructed it is.

“Document’ means ‘evidence’, and may be traced to *documentum*, a medieval term for an official paper: in other words, evidence not to be questioned, a truthful account backed by authority of law. And documentary photography, as a genre, has invariably rested within this frame of authority and significance.” (Clarke, 1997:145)

While my work is in some sense a document of Uitsig, I do not consider it to be documentary photography.

tanced, an outsider. I am an insider-outsider. My identity – to myself and the community – changed from being a son, brother, uncle, cousin, friend and community member to being a photographer. This was evident in the photographs I took, which reflected an intimacy with the spaces in which I live, but a distance from those who live close to me. This distance speaks of my relationship to the community and especially to my family, as I was involved in but removed from the family space.

My removal, or distance, also refers to a physical removal from Uitsig, at the age of fifteen I went to live with my mother over the school holidays. Although my grandparents did not like the idea, they allowed me to go and I had my first experience of the world beyond the barricade, away from Uitsig. My mother being married to a Greek national meant that I was now exposed to a different language, music, food and culture. I no longer had the authoritative figure of my grandfather always telling me what I was or was not allowed to do. My mother was the opposite, encouraging me to be independent and allowing me to travel. The more I stayed with my mother and half siblings in Cape Town

the more I became estranged and further removed from the people and spaces of Uitsig. At this time I started to think about the differences between families and place and I started to engage more with the people and spaces around me.

While being an observer rather than a participant implies passivity, for me I feel that the opposite was true. In this process I went from being passive, inactive and compliant in my family relationships to being active and more demanding. I became much more conscious of things I had seen unconsciously for many years and started to confront issues within our family and the community. While still an insider I was also able to see things anew, as an outsider might.

Having studied fine art at university and by practicing photography, I have gained critical insight into how to look at things differently in order to better understand through visual interpretation. My gaze became more active and conscious as I photographed Uitsig. As previously mentioned, *uitsig* can mean landscape. The opposite of *uitsig* is *insig*, which translates to looking inwards or inside oneself or a place. With this in mind I set out to photograph the community as a “kind of documenter”,³³ as

someone who knows the layout, the intricacies and the intimacies of the place and understands how it functions. This approach often requires persistence and revisiting a location to photograph it more than once to uncover hidden elements or traces of violence or history. In a letter dated 7 October 1890, Claude Monet wrote to his friend Gustav Geffroy:

I am hard at it; I am adamant about doing a series of different effects (stacks), but at this time of the year the sun sets so quickly that I can't follow it... I am becoming so slow in my work that it exasperates me, further I go, the more I see that it is necessary to work a great deal in order to achieve what I am looking for: 'instantaneity especially the 'enveloppe' [sic], the same light spreading

everywhere; and more than ever, things that come all at once disgust me. Finally I am more and more driven by the need to realise what I feel, and I vow not to be weak, because it seems to me that I am making progress.³⁴

My gaze as the photographer is like that of the painter, who's making is more actively constructed. I constantly assess and interpret the world through the camera lens, like a painter considering a painting in a frame. Through this shift in looking, like the landscape painter, the photographer who is embedded in a community or situation becomes an outsider, removed from the landscape. As much as I am a part of Uitsig I am also *apart* from Uitsig, looking from outside when photographing, revisiting a site in the same way a painter revisits their canvas and often going back several times to photograph a particular image or capture a different effect of the light. Each moment photographed under different light at different times of day reveals something different, something new. I am constantly in search of an in between space that places me, the photographer, neither here nor there.

³³ By "kind of documenter" I am referring to the retention of certain aspects of the documentary impetus, in that this body of work uses some of the conventions of documentary. However, I simultaneously distance myself from social documentary and its manifestations of the apartheid era. In this work, I actively acknowledge my own subjective position and am not attempting to show any "truth" beyond my own subjective one.

³⁴ National Gallery of Australia. Michael Lloyd & Michael Desmond *European and American Paintings and Sculptures 1870-1970 in the Australian National Gallery* 1992 p.72. Available: <http://nga.gov.au/International/Catalogue/Detail.cfm?IRN=29073> [Accessed October 28, 2013]

PHOTOGRAPHING UITSIG

Lantana Street, Uitsig, 2013 (figure 24) shows the outside of my grandparents' home in which I grew up. Taken from a slightly elevated viewpoint, the image shows a house painted white with green trimmings. In the centre of the image is a slatso-paved path, which leads the eye towards the front door of the house. On both sides of the path is a garden enclosed by hedges and patches of lawn that have been neatly trimmed around the edges. There are two trees on the left hand side: one which we call the 'family tree' and have all our names engraved on it, and the other under which our dogs are buried. The bench underneath the tree is where my grandparents often have their breakfast. The plants that have been chosen are largely succulents and drought resistant shrubs. This says something about the availability and expense of water and the poor quality of the soil on the Cape flats. In spite of the difficulties associated with gardening in this environment my grandfather has made a beautiful garden and in the past has won local garden competitions. He collects rainwater for irrigation and used to keep the droppings from his racing pigeons to improve the soil. In the centre of the lawn on the left is a pyramid of tyres, starting with a tractor tyre below and ending with a wheel rim on top. The wheel rim is used as a water bath for birds. The tyres



Fig 24 - 3 *Lantana*, Uitsig, 2013.

have been painted with enamel paint in the colours green, white and yellow. Running along the path on the right is a set of green cement posts with yellow paint on top. Leading towards the house, on the wall on the right side of the path, are a series of rocks that have been painted bright pink. Behind the *Strelitzia Nicolai* (banana tree) is the dwelling in which my aunt, her daughter and grandchildren live. My grandfather's garden is an oasis on our street, Lantana road. The gardens of the neighbours on either side of my grandfather's house are barren and dry as can be seen in a photograph of *Mathew's birthday* (figure 25), which is the garden next door. What the photograph *Lantana road* reveals is a different picture to the stereotypical representation of the Cape flats. Here we see the house proudness, the neatness, the trimmed hedges, the

renovations, and the well-kept garden in spite of challenging circumstances. This image reveals the care and affection for the place that is our home. And this in turn shows affection for Uitsig.

What I'm trying to show in this photograph is a more complex, nuanced picture of Uitsig. That being said one is still reminded that surrounding the garden oasis is the threat of a sometimes-unforgiving environment and this is signaled by the foreboding sky.

Grandparents' Bedroom, Uitsig, 2013 (figure 26) is a colour photograph that shows my grandparents' bedroom shot in natural light. On the left hand side is a glass door with light emanating through it into the bedroom and shining partially onto a bed, which is in the foreground. The large bed is covered with a floral duvet and two yellow pillows on the left. On either side of the head and footrest are white metal bars with gold décor. Behind the bed towards the right, in the background, are two large wardrobes with a set of three wooden shelves stacked above. On top of this are three old white suitcases with maroon trimmings. Between the glass door on the left and wardrobe on the right a white shelf is mounted in a corner of the room. Beneath the white shelf some handbags and white plastic bags are hanging from it. On the right side of the room hangs a cream shaded curtain. The

light shining through the glass door onto the bed leads the eye towards the center of the photograph and then towards the wardrobe in the back.

The suitcases are pivotal to sketching a particular way of life, for they signal not only the anticipation of holidays, but also the collection and containment of the residuals of life. As I mentioned in the preface, these suitcases hold objects, trinkets and mementoes with no apparent monetary value, but which are crucial in terms of the inscription of the lives, dreams, hopes and regrets of their owners. They seem insignificant, yet the decision to put them out of harm's way – on top of the wardrobe – suggests a profound desire to keep *something* safe, even if that *something* remains intangible. The suitcases stand guard over the marital bed and, while they could simply be there as storage, they also speak to me of migration, of a latent fear of having to flee or move at short notice. It seems that forced removals, though apparently left in the past, are still very much part of my grandparents' consciousness. My grandparents are very protective of the contents of the suitcases and don't allow anyone near them. The contents of the suitcases make reference to wanting to keep everything important together, including our family. There is still a fear of being removed and



Fig 25 - Mathew's Birthday, Lantana Road, Uitsig. 2013.

separated from the rest of the family and although our family did not stay in contact with each other they still lived close by, which was a source of comfort for my grandparents.

Even the few school friends I had had to abide to my grandfather's rules if they wanted to visit me at home. These rules included greeting your elders, removing your hat when you entered the house, not swearing and not being allowed to enter any rooms other than the lounge, kitchen and bathroom. Nowadays I move freely through the streets with my camera, exploring and recording this environment that is mine and yet not mine. This



Fig 26 - Grandparents Bedroom, Uitsig, 2013.

curious, distant intimacy is, I think, reflected in my photographs. Photographing Uitsig became about a need to capture the landscape, spaces, structures, objects and people around me, to capture change and to simply remind myself of who I was.

Isabel, Lantana Road, Uitsig, 2013 (figure 27) shows a teenage girl in profile. She is sitting on a bed, separated from the viewer by a transparent embroidered net curtain

known by many as “Terylene”.³⁵ A book is on top of a pastel green pillow on her lap and she is wearing a knitted cap and pink tracksuit jacket. The girl is my cousin, Isabel, doing her homework. She lives with her siblings and parents – my aunt and uncle – in a structure built by my grandfather in the backyard of my family home.

In the foreground a wooden cross is suspended from the ceiling, and what appears to be a white curved horizontal bed railing edges in at the bottom of the photograph. The ceiling close to her head suggests that she is sitting on the top of a double bunk bed. In front of her to the left is a light bulb suspended from the ceiling. Behind her is a set of wooden cupboards and shelves that contain all manner of unidentifiable objects.

This quiet image conjures up an intimate space that suggests religious practices, indicated by the cross and further suggested by a bridal veil – the veil used by young girls on the celebration of their First Holy Communion. This is relevant because my grandmother was raised as Catholic and Isabel shares her name. She is separated from the viewer by the silence implicit in the photograph and articulated through the veil, which simultaneously obscures and reveals her. It sets her apart, appearing to shield her, both a protection and talisman.

35 The Collins Dictionary (online) defines “terylene” as “a synthetic polyester fibre or fabric based on terephthalic acid, characterized by lightness and crease resistance and used for clothing, sheets, ropes, sails, etc.” <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/terylene>

The idea of what a family means to me has shifted from what I understood it to be during my early childhood. Family life for me has been a complex negotiation.

Growing up with my grandparents it was difficult for me to accept their beliefs and traditions. When my mother had me at the age of twenty-one she could not afford to take care of me and left me with her parents. She carried on with her life and got married. I do not feel close to my mother now, and find it difficult to communicate with her. There was a lot of pressure and expectation from both my grandparents and my mother for me to succeed in everything I did. However, no one attended parent school meetings, my graduation or even, occasionally, my birthday. I remember waiting for my mother to show up during my birthday parties at my grandparents' house from a very young age. When the pressure became too much I started performing poorly in school and failing my subjects. I started keeping my own secrets and no longer told my family everything that I did. To this day I don't think they have much idea of what I do other than taking photographs.

My relationship with the spaces and community in which I live has been equally complex, which is why I chose to photograph my family, community, and the traces of violence in Uitsig. Exploring issues in the community

shifted as I came to understand it as a kind of external family inherited by living in this particular area.

Monster, Ravensmead Annual High School Fair, Ravensmead, 2013 (figure 28) is a colour photograph that shows a funfair with a large mechanical purple octopus in the center of the image that appears to be hovering over the grass. On the head of the purple octopus is a blue crown-like bonnet, decorated further with a smaller yellow octopus and other sea creatures. An old steel fence in a wave-like pattern surrounds the octopus. In bright neon pink a large sign heralds the name of the ride, "Monster", enticing would-be-visitors to spend their money on a ride.

The tableau is highlighted by two floodlights that form part of the front-facing structure, with a space for entering and exiting. It is this sea creature that beckons, with each of its arms extending to hold several blue fish like carts in which two people can sit. Through a series of twists and turns on the grass floor, the octopus engages in a strange dance with its occupants, each cart just avoiding collision with its neighbours in a carefully mechanised choreography. For me, this is reminiscent of the well-rehearsed routine in which each resident of Uitsig knows their place and rarely moves out of their predetermined roles – here in Uitsig you finish high school,



Fig 27 - Isabel, Lanatana Road, Uitsig. 2013.

find a job in the local industry, move out of the house and into the backyard or start your own business. If you are lucky you might get an opportunity to study further, but for many young people living on the Cape Flats, being in a gang is a way of life.

The surrounding space in the photograph is somewhat calmer, with only a few figures in the distant background and two standing in the foreground. On the left side a man stands with his back to the viewer. On the right side, behind the steel fence, is a man in a black and red tracksuit jacket and a woolen cap, staring into the distance. It is twilight, and with the

neon sign extending its particular glow, the image is foreboding and ominous, paradoxically at odds with the notion of a funfair. This image conjures up unidentified dangers lurking in the area, dangers that speak of the inhabitant's inability to name and tame the monsters in the dark. This echoes my own sense of outsidership and infers silences and absences. The double reading of the "Monster" sign speaks of the multiplicity and complexity of Uitsig. Here mothers are scared of their drug-abusing children, the so-called "tik-monsters". School children are murdered and no one dares speak out, because they fear the gangs who are involved and they know that being seen with the police is a big no-no.

In this project I realized that I could combine images from my imagination with existing images of physical, external objects and landscape to create new spaces within old spaces. My recollection of these particular spaces is figuratively superimposed on images of the strange and the unusual. I take ordinary daily situations and make connections between fact and fiction, drawing out the spectacular in the ordinary. Thus, an ordinary chicken in a basin of water prior to cooking is photographed in such a way as to make the ordinary seem extraordinary. *Dinner, Lantana Road, Uitsig, 2013* [figure 29]

shows a stainless steel kitchen basin half-filled with water. In the water is an uncooked chicken. For me the image of the chicken in the water becomes representative of a kind of violence only visible to the local inhabitants. Some people were interested in buying pigeons for eating so my grandfather selected pigeons that were no longer used for racing and showed me how to remove their heads with a knife. After removing the heads of the first two it was up to me to do the rest. Thus, the images from my imagination and from my past experiences of Uitsig are projected onto this banal, plucked chicken. This in turn points to the violence inherent in this place, without resorting to stereotypes and documentary depictions of such violence.

On the left of the kitchen sink in the photograph is a stainless steel bowl, spatula and yellow Tupperware container on top of a glass oven tray. Above the sink is a wooden breadboard behind two stainless steel taps and on the top right corner is a recycled yogurt container on top of which rest a metal bowl with a green sponge scourer and leftover pieces of green soap. The frying pan that edges into the left of the frame hints at an earlier breakfast perhaps, and also suggests an imminent Sunday lunch of roast chicken. While this composition echoes many kitchen sinks around the globe, specific visual cues



Fig 28 - Monster, Ravensmead Annual High School Fair, Ravensmead. 2013.

University of
speak of a particular place and time. For example, I find that it isn't difficult to conjure up the smell of *that* green soap. It is a hardy, no-frills kind of smell. This bar of green soap, which comes in large blocks, is used equally for laundry and personal hygiene in many homes across the Cape Flats, where socio-economic determinants decide how wages are used. As is illustrated in this image, the remnants of this bar of soap are not destined for the trash bin; on the contrary, it finds itself an indistinguishable sticky mess at the bot-



Fig 29 - *Dinner, Lantana Road, Uitsig*, 2013.

³⁶ "Slain teens knew their killer – mom". Four teenage boys were shot dead in a Wendy house in Uitsig. According to Adam Alexandra "we are fighting a losing battle – we can talk to the kids but they are not the ones who order the hits [on people's lives]. Some of these gangs operate like an army where troops are sent out by a general." Written by Neo Maditla.

"Gang violence in Manenberg: can it be stopped?" Gang violence in Manenberg escalated in May 2013 and continued for three months, bringing the community to a complete standstill. 27 people were killed and 50 injured, leading to the closure of 14 schools in the area. Written by Ian Hanson.

"The Cape of bad dope: Gang warfare in South Africa is out of control – and set to get worse as a key leader leaves prison." Written by Mike Cohen.

"Gang violence forces South African students to stay home" "The South African authorities temporarily closed 16 schools following a surge in gang violence in the Cape Flats, keeping 12, 000 children at home." The Sunday Times.

tom of an empty yoghurt tub, its future use seemingly indeterminate.

The lines of the tiles and the stained grouting on the walls and the sink lead one's eyes towards the central focus of the photograph, the uncooked chicken. In my family home this is how the Sunday chicken roast is defrosted, lying partly submerged, seemingly naked, vulnerable and isolated. It is this detail of the image – the chicken – that is the *punctum* spoken of by Roland Barthes (1990: 27), which he describes as "that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)."

The dead chicken, its pale, plucked skin hinting at injury and bruising, speaks of vulnerability and the possibility of decay. It speaks of death within an environment of barely submerged and endemic violence, if recent newspaper headlines are any indication.³⁶ In a community where death – metaphorical and otherwise – is constant, the image of the dead chicken makes these markers visible. I find the image shocking, because although it is ostensibly a banal domestic scene, its brutality reveals unarticulated trauma hovering within and above the frame. This in turn signals a rupture and a tear beyond the image, extending into the rest of the house, the streets, the block and the larger spaces of Uitsig and its surrounds.

During this masters' I became interested in the different stages of the developing process of landscape and urban renewal. Photographing both the internal (domestic and in-between spaces) and external landscape (structures, buildings and landmarks etc.) becomes a way of appropriating the self.

Temporary Housing During the Upgrading of Social Housing, Eureka, 2013 (figure 30) was shot from an elevated point of view at night and shows several containers stacked one on top of another in rows. To the right and perpendicular is another set of stacked containers. Most of the containers are blue and white. Next to each set of containers is a metal staircase that leads to the container on top. Beneath the row of containers are two parked cars, one white and one red. To the bottom left of the photograph a group of people stands around a fire. In the background behind the containers a strip of lights illuminate the rest of the buildings and houses in the surrounding area.

These containers are used as temporary dwellings to house those moved from coun-

cil housing while their homes in Eureka are renovated. The area is known as a Temporary Relocation Area (TRA). This temporary housing exchange is on the one hand an apparent promise of a better future, but the image also reveals the sense of foreboding echoed in the previously described images, and it doesn't signal to what it is precisely that these people will return. The fact that these are shipping containers speaks volumes in terms of the Cape's own historical legacy of the slave route and the historical transportation of people. Cape Town is a port city, and in this it speaks of movement, views and vistas reflected in the image of the containers.

These containers conceal the intangible ramifications of these removals, and I wonder about telephone numbers, change of addresses and unfamiliar sights and sounds. They reveal, again, an "inbetweenity" and disposability of certain lives and bodies through the acceptability of using a shipping container as home for certain people who happen not to be "white" or "wealthy".

METHODOLOGY:
how I went about this
visual research and some
technical information.

My research is based on archival, library and traditional academic research, as well as interviews with community leaders and family. Information on the land and types of structures in the area was collected during my field research and photographic expeditions. I struggled to find sufficient official documentation on the history and development of the Uitsig community, so I supplemented this with newspaper articles and interviews from Uitsig residents. I also collected photographs from my family archive and photos of the built environment and cultural and community practices in and around Uitsig.

I established verbal communication and relationships through social interaction and introductions from people I knew. I also attended community police forums and community safety forums (CSF), patrolled with neighborhood watches, sat in on marching band rehearsals and attended different religious services and family functions such as baptisms, birthday celebrations and matric balls.

I explained my project and how the images would be exhibited to the people that I worked with. In return for access to their personal stories I provided each person I photographed with a printed copy of the image to commemorate their efforts and involvement with the project. These photographs are usually valued by the families who receive them,

as they often have little access to the printed “professional” family image, although most have cameras on their cell phones.

While I do not wish to make too much of the technical side of this project, it is probably useful for the reader to have some sense of the technical aspects behind the project and a brief sense of the visual research methodologies employed:

initially I started photographing on a large format 4x5 film camera. This required a certain level of coordination and setting up, which was impractical for the situations I was working in and the kinds of images I wanted to produce. Some of the places I photograph in are dangerous and I needed a more portable medium that would draw less attention to itself and to me as a photographer. Using a film camera proved to be less accessible to the people I worked with, as they couldn't see the images immediately. With a digital camera I was able to give the people I was photographing an immediate sense of what I was doing in their spaces.

For this project I photographed with a full frame 35mm DSLR³⁷ camera. From a financial point of view, digital made it easier to experi-

ment with different processes and ways of making a photograph than film would have allowed. Immediate access to the digital images gave me more control when photographing under varied light sources. I shot with natural light and available artificial light such as incandescent light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and light-emitting diode (LED) lights. Unlike the 35mm equivalent film camera, the full frame digital camera minimizes colour noise when shooting under extremely low light conditions and provides a good quality raw file for printing. This was important as many of my photographs were shot in low light.

Much of the photographic representation of the Cape Flats has been in black and white, which is often associated with the social documentary project in South Africa and was not an association I wanted with my work. This is not a document of a space in the conventional understanding of documentary imagery. I chose to photograph in colour because the human eye sees in colour – much of my home environment is bedecked with saturat-

³⁷ Digital Single Lens Reflex camera.

ed colour so this mode seemed appropriate for my work rather than the desaturated palette of, for example, David Goldblatt's images. Colour helps bring significant structures, spaces, objects and moments into sharp focus in relation to the landscape or background and also allows me to make visual connections between things. There has also been an argument, advanced by writers such as Okwui Enwezor (2010: 102) in relation to Zwelethu Mthetwa's work, that colour offers the sitter more dignity by not historicizing or making nostalgic.

The former [black and white] tends to mediate, thereby historicizing, positioning, and freezing its subjects in the past; while the latter [colour] is consumed with the immediacy of the image, the encounter with the real, and thus tends to position its subjects in a shifting contingent present.

This was certainly part of my thinking when I made the decision to shoot in colour. I would not say that my palette is very exaggerated, as these colours already exist in Uitsig, but I recognize that the colour may sometimes appear heightened and constructed. However, the only interventions I make in postproduc-

tion are to adjust for colour and exposure.

I printed some of these images on a large scale, 112 x 78 cm, and the smaller images at 61 x 40,6 cm. The large images provide more detail and often show landscapes, which work well at this scale. The smaller images generally depict quieter spaces, objects and people and are connected to a sense of intimacy. The works are framed so as to draw away as little attention as possible from the image itself.

Finally, I shot an enormous number of photographs over the two years of this research. Clearly, these could not all be on the walls of the MA exhibition space. I thus present the fuller body of work that I envisaged in this document. The book layout shows relationships, both formal and conceptual, in ways that operate differently to images on the walls. I plan to continue to work on this project in the years to come and in the future would like to publish a book about Uitsig. Given the art historical precedents for this kind of portrait of a place, such as *In Boksburg*, *Messina /Musina* and *Beaufort West*, the book seems an appropriate medium through which to explore this project further.









Hedge, Lantana Road, Uitsig. 2013.





Grandparents Bedroom, Uitsig. 2013.









Sissy, Eureka. 2013.







'Henrietta Se Spaar Met Allied', Lanatan Road, Uitsig. 2013.





Dennis, Renovating the Bedroom, Lantana Road, Uitsig, 2013.





Pirate Skull Mask, Ravensmead Annual High School Fair, Ravensmead. 2013.





Jane's Tricycle, Lantana Road, Uitsig, 2013.







Wheelchair Basketball, Uitsig Community Multipurpose Centre, Uitsig. 2013.





Backyard, Christmas, Lantana Road, Uitsig. 2013.













'Kos Koepon' Ravensmead Annual High School Fair, Ravensmead. 2013.











Entrance, Ravensmead. 2013.























UITSIG Conclusion:

This journey through Uitsig has been illuminating in many ways, as I used my camera – as spectator, participant and photographer – to ask questions and search for answers about my past, home, family and neighbourhood. *Uitsig* visually explores the land, spaces, architectural structures, objects and community of a particular place and its people. It speaks of the relationship of the embedded photographer, who is both insider and outsider, to reveal violence that is inherent to this place. The questions it raises around family, belonging, space and injury are complex, and it has become apparent to me that *Uitsig* represents a particular point in a representation of a story, one which has multiple pasts, entry and exit points. In thinking about this and the way forward, I know that Uitsig will continue to be the focus of my lens, allowing me to think further about ways of life in the post-apartheid landscape.

Uitsig, a small, ordinary, non-descript area bordered and bounded on many levels, matters, for it compels us to think about our pasts and our futures in different ways. It urges us to consider a writing of a different narrative about the Cape Flats, one which is not rooted in apartheid-era documentary photography, but which engages with the here and now.

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