I am also here: Invisible Insurrections in Temporary Autonomous Zones – a haunting.

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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

Signature: Signed by candidate Date: 31 October 2012

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT

The research investigates experiments with the socio-political functions of public art interventions and suggests that these actions are temporary ruptures which create 'invisible insurrections' in a context of hyper-surveillance.

Some elements of the paper draw from Hakim Bey's poetic anarchy, "Temporary Autonomous Zones", and uses his theories to think through the potentially explosive overlaps between public space, live performance, and insurrection. By first locating a history of Worker's Culture in the South African context, the research locates itself within a particular context of class struggle. Reading Augusto Boal, and his Invisible Theatre, the research calls in Theatre of the Oppressed methodologies in an attempt to find a more suitable language, both abstract and concrete, to articulate the need for building solidarity.

The study is also considers the demarcations between theatre, performance art, and live art, and how to sit comfortably between these practice as research methods. To this end, through Mark Fleishman, the research proposes "dwelling" as a mode of performance for the public live art space especially in relation to revealing what is not visible in marginalised terrains. Here, the paper thinks through the possibility of reappropriating invisibility in the system as a cloak for haunting.

Themes discussed in the research include insurrection as opposed to revolution; the scope of cultural work in general and the possibility of an emergent worker's culture in the present; the possibility of liberated zones inside the matrix as it is currently mapped; memory-being-made in relation to the archive; in/visibility in connection to ghostlikeness and haunting; collective precarity in system; and the importance of passing moments of 'seeing each other' to building solidarity in our search for more human ways of being together.

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For mama, without whom I am a lost thing without a raft.

Chapter One: Introduction

"Culture is about making images of ourselves that tell us more about our lives".

Frank Meintjies

In search of a critically conscious, decolonial performance tradition I begin first with the context that necessitates it. In South Africa the majority of people are suffering at the hands of a kleptocratic government and the one percent, the owners of the means of production. There is a Marxist tradition in South Africa that has informed practical national politics and society's relation to work. This tradition was influential in the overthrow of the apartheid regime and the coming into power of the vanguard of the revolutionary movement, the African National Congress (ANC), together with its comrades in the tripartite alliance, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). This overthrow followed the predetermined path of the "two-stage revolution" (Nash, 1999) This "two-stage revolution" involved first the developing and empowering of a black bourgeoisie and only thereafter, a revolution of the working-class, overwhelmingly but not exclusively black in its make up. I suggest that this 'revolutionary' premise has led to a continued false dichotomy between the essentially inextricable nature of race and class in the South African context.

It is my contention that the new black bourgeoisie, a political intelligentsia evolved into an economic intelligentsia, laid the foundation for the entrenchment of racial capitalism under the guise of (a neoliberal) democracy. Based on a dogma which places the racialised relations of power in a superior position to class relations, the black bourgeoisie has ensured a deepening alienation of the human from the world around them. The calls for black economic supremacy and the pleas to support black-owned business e.g., do so on behalf of the black middle-class at the expense of radical anti-capitalist critiques, completely invisibilising, for example, informal traders. The impossibility of the black worker participating in the fruits of a democracy which necessitates the exploitation of the same worker so that the ruling class, still and always the rich, remain in their condition of supremacy, is a contradiction which supports the claim to alienation (Nash, 1999).

In South Africa today, we find ourselves in a post-TRC society struggling to unravel itself from what Phumla Gqola terms 'rainbowism':

> A decade ago it became necessary to stress unity, sameness and 'rainbow nation' identity as crucial markers of being South African […]. 'Rainbowism' was central to shaping identities in a post-apartheid South Africa; the mere evocation of the identity 'rainbow nation' in the print and electronic media, as well as popular culture, also worked to silence dissenting voices on the (then) state of race and racism in South Africa, thereby moderating more radical anti-racist critiques of a society in formation [...]. (2014: 1)

Almost 30 years since the birth of our democracy, there has been an inexorable degradation of the 'rainbow' utopia. The process of identity-making has shifted, and radical black conscious, pan-Africanist, anti-capitalist, and intersectional feminist politics have come to the forefront of a decolonial moment driven by black youths who are awakening to the 'trauma of freedom' (Misimanga, 2015). This trauma is the manifestation of continued black subjugation, landlessness, and dispossession in a country with a constitution that upholds that all are 'born free'.

According to Alude Mahali (2014: 3) "blackness, history and memory are embodied – the predicament is … in the body". It is this black body, with its intuitive understanding, that must dwell in the world in order to build (Ingold in Fleishman, 2012), it is this body that must tap into its capacity to "recreate the whole world" (Reznek, 2015: 144). We have a "concrete obligation to intervene in the present", to respond to the task at hand, "the task of being free" (Fleishman, 2016: 75).

This research investigates experiments with the socio-political function of public art interventions as a mode of resistance through solidarity-building and suggests that these experiments are insurrectionary actions which create 'Temporary Autonomous Zones' (Bey, 1985) while avoiding detection from state surveillance. This qualitative study uses the 'practice as research' (Fleishman, 2012) methodology, where the researcher asks themselves questions, and attempts to unpack them through a variety of performance and multi-media modes. Here, I am interested in the notion of dwelling, with Mark Fleishman, with the research question, and then anthropologically, in terms of

the landscape, with Tim Ingold, and allowing the field to reveal itself to me, if perhaps still in opaque ways.

The research exists within the politics of work from an anti-capitalist framework paying particular attention to notions and experiences of precarity. In today's society, "fully developed capitalism is characterised by the fact that its organisational principles are at work in the whole society" (Neumann, 2014:135). All workers – employees, self-employed, freelancers, precariats – are understood "as variable capital of capitalism, regardless of the type of employment contract or compensation available to [them]" (Neumann, 2014:137). Further, people have little choice but to accept the conditions of "flexibility, mobility and social insecurity" (Bednarek, 2014:172), moreover it seems "precarity becomes a condition of life" concerning every aspect of existence. In contemporary capitalism the employment, and therefore the socio-economic condition, of workers is generally unclear. From one month to the next, it is uncertain whether you will find employment or whether you will be adequately remunerated if you do. All workers are inherently precarious, subject as they are to the vicissitudes of competition, abundance and lack. "Because within this system (labour) is structurally used without adequate compensation we can speak of systemic economic exploitation" (Abbing, 2014: 92). My research is concerned with disruption in this context through a cultural activism lens.

Investigating the specific physical ache brought about by separate gestures of work involved in different occupations, the research experiments with public space, and how work and workers are made in/visible in the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality.[1] The thesis production inserts the archive of existing workers into the cityscape as a haunting, a ghostlikeness, a present absence, much like Avery Gordon's conception of this idea as explicated in Fleishman (2012). This is used as a reflective, self-reflexive, and subversive device, suggesting something about the common suffering of workers everywhere, in an effort to build solidarity. This solidarity, constituted only in the interzones of liberated "bad lands and no-go areas" (Bey, 1985: 100) where we become visible to each other, has, I argue, true insurrectionary potential.

[1] To clarify, the term 'experiment' in this thesis, indeed in this research, refers to the researcher's intention to connect with others in the public in the hope that solidarity is built. I use 'experiment' to talk about an unfinished project, an investigation into the possibility of this solidarity.

Freirean pedagogy holds that a critical consciousness "is not restricted to the reality of either the oppressor or the oppressed, but a consciousness of humans in an ongoing process of self and collective liberation mediated by the world" (Rosatto, 2006: 179). There exists within this critical consciousness an imagination outside of the oppressor-oppressed binary - contextualised by the current reality of neoliberal capitalism - which is itself the struggle towards liberation. A critically conscious performance practice opens up the possibility for the body to interpret for itself, beyond the utterance, that which cannot be said. I am interested in how a present body mediates between its knowing and the enunciation of its knowledge.

Worker's Culture – an abridged history

In the late 1970s and 1980s in South Africa, trade unions collaborated with cultural producers in the creation of theatre productions that dealt specifically with the struggle of workers. These plays reinforced the principles of the movement, such as worker unity, and were woven into protest action and mobilisations. Later, the work dealt not only with worker's right's issues, but also with the broader context of institutionalised apartheid and the problem of becoming free, materially, and psychologically.

The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) had reintroduced politics into theatre, believing that black liberation could be achieved through the cultural struggle. When the apartheid state banned, arrested, and murdered members of the BCM, and the rest went into exile, there was a vacuum which was quickly filled by "new formations concentrated on grassroots political activities, local level issues, labour disputes, and community action" (Fleishman, 1991: 63). This was the era of unionists and neo-Charterists, who championed non-racialism as central to democracy. This new militant and organized working-class emphasised that collective mass defiance through visible protest linked to the armed struggled, would bring about freedom from institutionalised racial oppression (Fleishman, 1991).

In the wake of the 1976 Soweto uprisings, there emerged theatre groups in search of a performance language that could encapsulate the struggle. Often these groups worked specifically in black performance (Hauptlfleisch, 2007). This required a further breakaway from colonial influence in theatre, and instead an invitation to

experiment with diversity and fusion, to allow song, dance, music, percussion, poetry, theatre, and spectacle to be a tool for resistance (Larlham 1991). This fusion was a result of industrialisation and consequently the migrant labour system, because black workers brought to urban centres their cultural practices which "operated as a defence against the harsh conditions of their lives" (Fleishman, 1991: 51).

Among these groups was *Junction Avenue Theatre Company (JATCO)* established in 1976 by a group of white students at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). This group included Malcom Purkey, William Kentridge, Ari Sitas, Steven Sack and Astrid von Kotze amongst others. *JATCO* was preceded by another Wits-based group, *Workshop '71*, a non-racial group founded by Robert Mshengu Kavanagh. When *Workshop '71* closed down some of the black members, like Arthur Molepo and Ramolao Makhene, joined *JATCO*. Their key objectives were the "double agenda of opposition and training" (Hauptlfleisch, 2007: 15), particularly of black performers who, until the late 1980s, had historically no access to tertiary education, especially performing arts education (Hauptlfeisch, 2007). As early as 1979, members of *JATCO* collaborated with unions in the creation of 'worker plays' that focused on themes such as working conditions, dismissal disputes, exploitation of domestic workers, and a living wage (Larlham, 1991).

The worker plays were mostly performed outside of working hours in community halls, churches, and yards. This was a step towards taking theatre to people, in places where they had already gathered, at their convenience. Most importantly, it was clear that the plays should be workshopped with and performed by working people themselves for other working people, towards their collective liberation (Von Kotze, 1984). Like Bertolt Brecht (cited in von Kotze, 1987: 92), "[they had] in mind a people that [was] making history and altering the world itself", people involved in discovering their own languages of expression and how they might influence the ideals of the political leadership.

Consequently, and in parallel, there was a proliferation of worker's culture in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) triggered by the formation of the *Culture and Working Life Project* by Ari Sitas at the then Natal University's Sociology department in 1983. That same year workers fighting for the recognition of their union, the Metal and Allied Workers Union, at the Dunlop tyre manufacturing company, approached the project about making a play to platform their issues. The goal was to communicate the material conditions of

workers. The play was created through a workshop process with workers of varying levels of skill, and the style incorporated physical theatre, animalification, gesture, mime, sound, song, ensemble work, and multi-media elements. The starting point for creating the work was the commonality of workers' experiences which was their suffering as exploited labour.

In 1984, after a series of strike actions, the Durban Worker's Cultural Local was born as an arm of the coalition of trade unions in KZN. The Local continued to make plays around themes of migration, disenfranchised street cleaners, and obstacles to mobilising for class struggle, incorporating new styles such as mask-work and puppetry. Like *JATCO*, the Dunlop Play and other workers cultural initiatives hoped to build a sense of community through shared experience in the hope of instilling a new sense of identity.

Workshop theatre as a method of creating plays was key in worker's theatre. According to Mark Fleishman: "Workshop theatre [particularly in its historical dimension] is essentially protest theatre" (Fleishman, 1991: 158). It arose as a method that experimented with collective praxis and complemented the politics and ideologies of the growing mass movement in the 1980s. "Workshop theatre offered the potential for democracy" (Fleishman, 1991: 64). Equally as important, the form offered itself as a tool for retaining and dispersing oral history and memory by documenting current events from the perspective of the marginalised. For Fleishman (1991: 64, 65), these events, or stories, were presented less as chronological facts and more as "bundles of meaning, relationships, and themes across the linear space of a particular time… (to) errors, inventions and myths… (that) lead… us through and beyond facts to their meanings". As such, workshop theatre was a way in which people could grapple with their socio-political positions in history and begin to speak of their experiences themselves (Fleishman, 1991).

In 1985, the State of Emergency was declared amidst growing civil unrest. The suppression of political activities saw cultural resistance increasingly applied as a tool for struggle. The "public protest, marches, dances and impromptu speeches, poems and presentations became part of an ongoing *spectaculum mundi*, a passing show of mass feeling and resistance" (Hauptlfleisch, 2007: 16) forcing the government to censor and ban subversive media. On the 1st of December that year, organised labour joined forces to create the Congress of South African Trade Unions. The federation identified culture as

one of its core functions, and thus a cultural desk was established. Plays were of great value in articulating and spreading the need for liberation for all. By this time mass gatherings and small meetings would have poetry, playlets, and songs woven into the program performed to an accidental audience of other workers who had come to be part of the action or discussion (Von Kotze, 1987).

Concomitantly, *Medu Arts Ensemble* – meaning 'roots' in sePedi to denote the underground nature of the movement – was active in Gaborone from 1977/78-1985. The collective was formed as a response to racial apartheid in South Africa and was a vehicle for the external movement to spread anti-apartheid messages, "driven by the will and undying resolve of the masses on the inside" (Phalafala, 2020). In line with the ANC's aims, the cultural work of artists affiliated with the movement was aimed at developing insurrectionary potential in the townships of South Africa. *Medu* articulated the urgent need for radical transformation in South Africa and neighbouring countries fighting for their independence i.e., Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique (the so-called frontline states).

The members of the collective referred to themselves as cultural workers. This was to clearly define themselves as workers, no different from, for example, nurses or teachers. They rejected the concept of the artist elite who saw their position as being above the common people. They instead felt it was critical that the artwork, the cultural products, and their contribution to shaping culture, emerged from/for the community in which it was embedded. More than anything, it was important the work be easily understood by anyone (Takac, 2019). Though the collective pushed for a nonracial liberation politics, their work foregrounded the struggles of workers, majority of whom were classified black by law. They believed that true liberation from colonialism, imperialism and apartheid would need the actions of everyday working people, a group which artists belonged to.

Medu believed that the purpose of their art was to contribute to the resistance against racial apartheid, according to Dikobe wa Mogale Martins in a paper delivered at the Culture and Resistance Festival (1982) titled The Necessity of Art for National Liberation, to "teach people in the most vivid and imaginative ways possible how to take control over their own experience and observations (and) link these with the struggle for liberation". *Medu* posters were on the one hand to inform people of events and give

direction about actions, and on the other hand, to build a sense of community by sharing common ideas through slogans. *Medu* was built on anticolonial and pan-Africanist ideals which emphasised that the black majority would be the primary actors of their own liberation. The collective hoped to contribute and affect this culture of liberation. Liberation culture is about "exploring and expressing perceptions and understanding lived experience" (Seidman, 2020) towards imagining alternative worlds. This culture should be from and for the community in which it is embedded. The collective believed that by building self-awareness and self-image and creating networks around communities in similar situations, people could find and share new ideas about how to move forward to freedom (Seidman, 2020).

Without the tactic of cultural activism in the liberation movement, workers had limited methods through which to analyse their conditions. With the advent of cultural work, the hierarchies of exploitation were made apparent, especially through sharing and reflecting experiences. Specific attention to workers' culture was an effective tool for education and mobilisation, but that thriving culture of the 1980s has been unable to sustain itself under the reign of democracy. We can immediately attribute this decline of worker culture to political and economic causes. With the new dispensation of power, worker culture was muzzled or made obsolete as a political tool. Because the worker theatre movement especially was so tied with unions, when the ANC came to power, with COSATU and the SACP along as the tripartite alliance, it was important to rein in any possibility for dissenting voices. Most notably, with the lifting of the cultural boycott, there was suddenly an influx of especially Western cultural influence from cultures of commodity in a rapidly globalising world.

Despite the above, however, cultural work continues because of a subconscious drive for workers and cultural practitioners both to take control of their own creative power, to do this together, building solidarity through finding better ways to share our common struggles (von Kotze, 1987). Cultural work "does not struggle against curved lines, angles, numbers, or figures; theatre struggles with the unexpected one wishes to know, and it struggles with people" (Boal & Epstein, 1990: 32). What is perhaps necessary is to reconstruct workers' culture within the context of today's struggle, and perhaps this is happening already. As decolonisation has neatly (re)slotted into the

political and academic lexicon, it is important to consider what it would mean to contribute to the revival of worker culture.

> Because, even if we are culturally deprived as workers, we demand of ourselves the commitment to build a better world. Because we cannot abdicate, hand over the responsibility of this world to others. There are too many intellectuals, teachers, politicians and bosses ever ready to "civilize" us and reap all the harvest for themselves. Because we have been culturally exploited time and time again: we have been singing, parading, boxing, acting and writing within a system we did not control. So far, black workers have been feeding all their creativity into a culture machine to make profits for others. (Worker's Cultural Local, 1986: 69)

From the perspective of this research, we are workers engaged in cultural resistance, informal traders cum freelancers on stages and street corners. Our work is embedded in the culture of our community, responds to it, emerges from it, and aims to create dialogue between people in the community. The artwork is an instrument for the people in the community. The artwork, and the tools to create it, are shared with the community. The tools refer to all that cultural workers have at our disposal, encompassing all disciplines and dimensions of culture and culture-making. This includes and is not limited to fine artists, performing artists, creative artists, interactive media artists, those engaged in literature, pedagogy, and critical theory.

Our work operates in and emerges from the free zone. Removed from the action of social censure, our work becomes a place of research and experimentation regarding its critical and liberatory functions – social inquiry, activism, subversion, deconstruction, intervention, transgression, imagining, reconstruction, and provocation. Our work poses critical questions about the paradox of freedom under capitalism. Our work responds to the violence of the system's commodification of our work in the first place. Our work responds to the impossibility of the task at hand, to aid in the destruction of the current system – the whole gamut of political society, from governments to unions to companies and the greed of individuals in power – and to simultaneously reconstitute dreamlabs, or imaginariums which are communities collectively devising and experimenting with alternative modes of being. Our work is a fledgling flight, a delicate experiment with the temporary autonomous zone.

Chapter Two:

Temporary Autonomous Zones - a definition

> Revolution is closed, but insurgency is open. For the time being we concentrate our force on temporary power surges, avoiding all entanglements with permanent solutions. The map is closed, but the autonomous zone is open. Metaphorically it unfolds within the fractal dimensions invisible to the cartography of control.
>
> (Bey, 1985: 97)

Hakim Bey (1985) theorises around what he terms the "Temporary Autonomous Zone" (TAZ). Troubled by the generally accepted notion that the oppressed are doomed to never exercise autonomy for solidarity between themselves, he wonders whether it is not possible to carve out a free space precisely for this experiment. The idea of the Temporary Autonomous Zone "arises first out of a critique of Revolution and an appreciation of Insurrection… second from the historical development of … the 'closure of the map' [and] third… the concept of *psychic nomadism*" (Bey, 1985: 97). Finding the notion of revolution stale and wanting, he speaks instead of insurrection as an experimental mode where the Temporary Autonomous Zone might be found. For him, uprisings are always marked by a return to the bureaucracy of the state, whereas insurrection, being a word used to denote failed revolutions, is perhaps never trying to succeed at revolution in the first place. Instead, insurrection causes enough disruption, camaraderie, and solidarity that where it takes place a temporary autonomous zone emerges. Insurgency is open, porous, and adaptable. Insurrection in this sense is concerned only with 'temporary power surges', free to go off as they please, avoiding detection from the state and the whole mechanism of contemporary capitalism.

Bey writes about a net of islands, human settlements, in the 18th century that lived deliberately outside of the law – pirate utopias. By doing this, he hopes to gather evidence by "extrapolating from past and future stories about 'islands in the net'" to support the possibility of a "free enclave… in our time" (Bey, 1985: 93). He writes about "sixties-style tribal gathering, the forest conclave eco-saboteurs, the idyllic Beltane of the neo-pagans, anarchist conferences, gay faery circles, Harlem rent parties of the twenties, nightclubs, banquets, old-time libertarian picnics" (Bey, 1985: 99). These are Temporary

Autonomous Zones, “nomadic war machines” (Bey, 1985: 96) which attack hegemonic epistemologies, and whose defence is invisibility. The TAZ has no concrete definition or exemplar in history and therefore remains unrecognisable, thus it’s power of invisibility. The TAZ might be a “proto-bolo”, from the author P.M. in the fictional *bolo’bolo,* which rejects the “mundanity of negativity (and) counter-cultural drop-out-ism” (Bey, 1985: 119). Bey asserts that “as soon as the TAZ is named, (represented, mediated), it must vanish, it *will* vanish… to spring up again elsewhere, once again invisible” (Bey, 1985: 95). For Bey, the TAZ is a suggestion to the reader, a provocation of poetry. The TAZ is specifically not defined, and more mused around. “In the end the Temporary Autonomous Zone is almost self-explanatory… understood without difficulty […] in action.” (Bey, 1985: 93) By no means is he advocating that the TAZ replace all other organising and mobilising strategies, and methods. He merely puts forward the TAZ as an additional tactic.

In the chapter, *Waiting for Revolution*, Bey describes the tragic trajectory of most movements as “revolution, reaction, betrayal, the founding of a stronger more oppressive State” (1985: 94). This is the narrative of linear time constructed through history. Contrary to “revolution (which) attains permanence or at least duration”, insurrection, or uprising, is a temporary event, or series of events, that “springs up and out of Time” (Bey, 1985: 94). Uprisings cause a glitch in the matrix of what Bey calls the “Simulated State”. For Bey the neo-liberal capitalist state is a machine that regulates itself through automated information and communication systems, subtly affecting the behaviours of the general population. Although it is omnipotent and omnipresent, “it is riddled with cracks and vacancies” (Bey, 2009: 95). Tired of the same protest strategies which inevitably end with a violent altercation between the people and the police, the State’s guard dogs, Bey suggests the Temporary Autonomous Zone as a way to think through doing insurrection in our context of advanced surveillance and weapons technology. His primary concern is avoiding detection and therefore confrontations that could possibly lead to martyrdom and collective demobilisation. Instead, the strategy will be to “refuse to engage in spectacular violence, to *withdraw* from the area of simulation, to disappear” (Bey, 1985: 95) thus avoiding the meaningless violence of the State. The Temporary Autonomous Zone is a “tactic of disappearance” (Bey, 1985: 114).

> The Temporary Autonomous Zone is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State can crush it.
>
> (Bey, 1985: 95)

We live in a context of globalisation, in a world "without a frontier" (Bey, 1985: 97). Borders are abstract grids which demarcate political interest, more than culture. The all-seeing eye of capitalism has reached its tenterhooks into every corner of the planet and everywhere is taxed – the map might be more the territory than *terra firma*. However, the map is and remains the abstraction, a geography that is too complex to ever reveal itself completely. Therefore, "the map *cannot* be accurate" (Bey, 1985: 97). Bey explains the art of 'psychotopology' as "looking for spaces (geographical, social, cultural, imaginal) with potential to flower as autonomous zones" (Bey, 1985: 98). Although the Temporary Autonomous Zone is "freed of time and place" (Bey, 1985: 99), pyschotopology spatio-temporally localises it to ensure relevance and responsiveness.

Psychic nomadism, rootless cosmopolitanism, urban nomadism, nomadology, driftwork are some terms Bey brings forth in relation to a "multi-perspectived post-ideological worldview to move rootlessly from philosophy to tribal myth, from science to Taosim" (Bey, 1985: 99). Deleuze & Gauttari (1986) theorise around "the war machine" where psychic nomadism is used deliberately as a method to undermine both physical and ideological surveillance. Psychic nomads, claims Bey, need, and apparently desire, Temporary Autonomous Zones to remain hidden, such places as "camps of black tents under the desert stars, interzones, hidden fortified oases along secret caravan routes, liberated bits of jungle and bad-land, no-go areas, black markets, and underground bazaars" (Bey, 1985: 100). He cites drifter anarchists moving from one uprising to the next carrying the spirit of the Communes in Europe as exemplifying the practice of revolutionary nomadism. This constant search for insurrection becomes an "end in itself, a way of *always occupying an autonomous zone*" (Bey, 1985: 111).

As Bey himself admits, some have critiqued the idea of the Temporary Autonomous Zone as "nothing but a work of art" (Bey, 1985: 116). His response is that although the TAZ may use artful or creative methods which contribute to the coherence

of the project, it is also more than that, it is perhaps the only "possible time and place for art to happen for the sheer pleasure of creative play" (Bey, 1985: 116). The TAZ, as mentioned previously, refuses mediation and representation, and thus promotes the idea that "the artist is not a special sort of person, but every person is a special sort of artist" where art is "a condition of life" (Bey, 1985: 116). [2]

Where Bey seems to suggest that a tactic that might be employed to prolong the existence of the temporary autonomous zone is to disappear entirely from society, I would argue remaining visible, in this way at least, contributes more to radical imagination and cultural production. It is important to avoid unnecessary conflict with state security, Capital's guard dogs, which inevitably always leads to violent altercations. It is also important to keep a public engagement with those who own the means of production, ensuring the continued growth of liberation culture. Further, I would argue that temporary autonomous zones are everywhere, even now, in existence; that just as soon as one is detected by state surveillance, another one springs up. A conversation, a classroom, a march, an artwork, indeed everywhere, the new world is trying to find footing in the still dying husk of the old. I suggest that the realm of cultural production, for cultural workers gone political, is itself a temporary autonomous zone where affective creative resistance can be done. Cultural activism can be used as a "collective capacity" which has the disruptive potential to "establish new coordinates… remapping the space between bodies" (Kuryel & Fırat, 2013: 49).

Invisible Insurrections

It is most likely that the increasing material on pressure on marginalised people's lives is what will drive them to action. More specifically, how marginalised people feel about

[2] Here it is my duty to make a critical political intervention. Hakim Bey is a known paedophile, and this systemically sanctioned by the anarchist spaces he has moved through in the years. This tendency towards what in particular circles is called 'Man-Boy Love', is evident in his writing, including this on Temporary Autonomous Zone. In my context as a South African citizen, this is understood as statutory rape. I am deliberately choosing not to include any quotes which may be triggering. Self-described anarchist historian and writer Robert P. Helms describes Peter Lamborn Wilson (psyeudonym Hakim Bey) as a predator using "anarchism in an ethically warped, opportunistic way by pretending that adult-child sex is a natural freedom". He sharply concludes that it is not. Allthough I'm unsure of this 'separate the thesis from the man' rhetoric, I have found the concept of the TAZ useful in trying to find language to articulate the space of political activism I hope to occupy with my art. Scholars Timothy Miller, Simon Sellers, Antje Schuhmann, also theorise the TAZ. For critiques of the TAZ see John Armitage. For Robert P. Helm's full opinion piece on Hakim Bey and pederasty visit: https://libcom.org/library/leaving-out-ugly-part-hakim-bey?page=2.

their circumstances, their anger, dissatisfaction, sadness. Kuryel & Firat (2013) concur with Simon Critchley's supposition that politics and philosophy begin from a feeling of disappointment, "(provoking) an experience of injustice or… a feeling of anger" (2007: 232). According to Critchley (2007: 232) rage is the "first political emotion, it is what moves the subject to action, it is the emotion that produces motion, that literally e-motes". The political landscape operates in the ephemeral realm of signs, symbols, spectacle, and actions. Objects, bodies, and actions are saturated with feeling – saturated with anger, and with hope. For Kuryel & Firat (2013), the precarious generations – the unemployed youth, the freelancers, the underpaid, the temporary workers, the volunteers – [are] "the new global actor" (43). As a young precarious worker navigating the harsh conditions under which to make cultural work, I sought to find a way to platform myself and give a public hearing to the issues I am concerned with.

I came across Augusto Boal's Invisible Theatre where performances are carried out in public spaces i.e., streets, shopping centres, restaurants, trains, parks etc., disguised in such a way that the spectators believe them to be unstaged happenings. A benefit to this kind of performance done in informal public settings was that the largest and most diverse audience possible was reached. Boal (1990) noted that he was not the inventor of invisible theatre, that "rudimentary forms of invisible theatre, or partial invisible theatre techniques have always existed" (32). In the early days, the invisible theatre focused on raising awareness around class oppression, but later the themes expanded to include racism, ageism, sexism, and homelessness. Invisible theatre dealt with diachronic truth, the fact that even though the intervention was staged, it still happened to people every day. That even though the performer was not the character they were portraying, this kind of person with similar struggles definitely did exist. Like all theatre of the oppressed tools, the invisible theatre was meant as a weapon of liberation for the marginalised and silenced (Boal & Epstein, 1990).

Part of the Theatre of the Oppressed arsenal, where theatre practice is used to engage social issues and underlying oppressions, invisible theatre attempted to reveal oppression in everyday interactions. At the time of its development in Argentina, there came into power a repressive dictator government. Thus, invisible theatre developed as a method of public participatory action that avoided altercations with police. Invisible

theatre never “[intended] to violate the law; it [intended] to question the legitimacy of the law” (Boal & Epstein, 1990: 32). The significance of this, and other tools, was juxtaposing concepts of legality versus legitimacy, to question all oppressive laws and customs.

Invisible theatre developed in the early 1970s after Argentinian performer, Oscar Mosatta, borrowed the concept of performance ‘happenings’ from the New York dadaists and surrealists. ‘Happenings’ were an early performance art form developed in the 1950s in America in the post-war era. Like in invisible theatre, the performance events were issue-based and intervened in the public arena outside of traditional theatre or gallery spaces. However, unlike invisible theatre which depends largely on real-world improvisation and fundamentally invisibility, ‘happenings’ were scripted anarchy attended by an audience in the know. Boal (1974: 111) clarifies that “invisible theatre must not be confused with the happening, which is an unusual theatrical event”, instead for him invisible theatre is a tool for the oppressed to better understand their conditions collectively. Of key interest is the necessity for Boal’s invisible theatre to remain that way:

> To demand a permit for an invisible theatre event [is] equivalent to making it visible, that is, destroying its very theatrical form. In order to continue as such, the invisible theatre has to be a clandestine theatre. If it becomes "visible," the spectator takes a passive role rather than [a] much more productive one as a true protagonist of the event. In short, the invisible theatre cannot be subject to the same rules which limit conventional theatre.
>
> (Boal & Epstein, 1990: 28)

Historically, in South Africa performance art as distinct from theatre did not formally exist until the late 1980s/90s. Although we could argue that the marches and public speeches that accompanied them were instances of live performance, as a development of a form of performance, choreography and fine art, it is only in the last few decades with artists such as Steven Cohen, Samson Mudzunga, Robin Orlin, Tracey Rose, Mamela Nyamza, and others, that this mode of cultural resistance was taken up more deliberately. Subsequently, these artists have contributed to redefining the body in

performance “as a stage/screen/canvas/site for history, politics, culture, economics, race and social issues” (MacKenny, 2001: 15).

Performance art manifests as action/s, interventions in the public realm where the body becomes an “experiential site” with “the performance artist [exhibiting themself] becoming both the subject and the object of the work” (MacKenny, 2001: 15). Here the body becomes a site of subversion, self-reflection and self-reflexivity, contradiction, adaptation, dreaming, defiance and resilience, remembering and responding, being and belonging, seeing and being seen, visibility and invisibility, a macabre mirror or memory or prophecy. Pertinent questions about “the socio-cultural understandings of the body, what it represents/means and what it 'is', how it means, who determines the explication of that body, the manner in which it is presented as well as how it is received or 'seen' and issues of… ‘the gaze’” (MacKenny, 2001: 15) come to the fore. Writing about the Infecting the City Festival, festival director Jay Pather (2018) elucidates how in South Africa the body and the city, or site, are used as metaphor for land and country, constitution and order, and disruptions of gender. For all their spectacle and disruptive potential however, live art interventions are nevertheless always a temporary occupation of space (Pather, 2018).

Having settled on playing with the ideas of an invisible theatre that experiments with the new lexicon of the performance art tradition in contemporary South Africa, it was important to locate where I had witnessed this before, if only in my spatial-temporal context. I looked at artists, or cultural workers, who understand themselves to be political bodies and researched how they practice their art in service of their political ideals. I found myself drawn to the work of Ismail Farouk and his contributions to anti-xenophobic resistance (Trask, 2013); Mamela Nyamza and her work on the alienation of neo-liberal capitalist culture in South Africa especially as it involves queer identities (Berry, 2017); Sethembile Msezane’s *Public Holiday Series* which centred around the absence of the black female body in memorial culture (Dee, 2016) through conceptual, architectural and violent erasure; and Donna Kukama’s critique of socio-economic class stratifications in post-apartheid South Africa and how these play out through the materiality of society’s values system (Peschke, 2015).

In 2008, following wide-spread xenophobic violence in South Africa, Ismail Farouk, a Johannesburg based performance artist, collectively curated a Trolley Pusher Protest

with migrants from Joubert Park. *Trolley Works* was an innovative artist-led asset-mapping project to develop a comprehensive profile of the informal trolley pushers and related economic activities in the greater Joubert Park area. By mapping the informal economic activities and the organically generated diversity, the intervention aimed to bring about awareness of the potential role of migrant-controlled business in contributing towards the economic and cultural regeneration of the inner city of Johannesburg (Trask, 2013).

Mamela Nyamza, working in dance and physical theatre locally and globally, deals with race, gender, sexuality, identity, precarity, and labour, in relation to community. Her work is informed by her personal experiences of subjecthood in neo-liberal capitalism. In *De-Apart-Ha*te, Nyamza, balancing on a rainbow-coloured bench on a seesaw mechanism with Aphiwe Livi, exposes the power dynamics amongst South African citizens, and also in relation to the state. Religious symbolism is used to expose the pervasiveness of oppressive and divisive forces that infiltrate the community. Her work is about "unsteadiness and anxiety", conditions of the alienation of capitalist society caused by "shifting, shuffling, re-adjusting discomforts as well as personal and collective battles against intolerant systems" (Nyamza cited in Berry, 2017). Nyamza unveils the reality of institutionalised and socialised 'apartness' (Berry, 2017).

For performance artist, Sethembile Msezane, public holidays have always held great significance. Since Heritage Day 2013, Msezane has conducted public art disruptions on most South African public holidays. The performances relate to the historic context of each particular day bringing dialogue through art out into the public arena. In these performances she stands on a white plinth in a designated location that speaks back to the issue and history of the holiday. Concerned with the absence of the black female body in memorialised public society, the plinth temporarily memorialises the absence of this body. On June 16, 2014, Youth Day, Msezane performed at Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown, Soweto, shedding light on unresolved educational issues affecting the youth. Later that year on Women's Day, 8 August, she took to the plinth, this time in Langa, to honour women both past and present in the guise of her great grandmother, Gog' MaShange (Dee, 2016).

German-based South African multi-media artist, Donna Kukama, draws her inspiration from performances of the everyday. Disillusioned with the format of formal

spaces and platforms, Kukama works in “real spaces that (…) border between fiction and reality” placing herself in “real life situations, doing almost ordinary things” (Krouse, 2013). She is interested in experimenting with “strangeness” in the public realm where “real people” are. These experiments usually take the form of ephemeral public interventions which blur the boundary between fiction and reality. According to her blog, she uses this ephemerality to explore invisibilities resulting in “performances, texts, public interventions, buried objects, soundings, drawings, or nothing” (Kukama 2020). Kukama’s (2020) work shifts rapidly between “storytelling, public announcements, noise, monuments” proposing alternative ways of being through a committed search for marginalised vocabularies that can tell us more about ourselves. Here, “existence (is) a tool for writing” (Kukama, 2020).

Tony Cliff (2009) believes that public space, shared space, is enriched by public art that engages the site, people, and culture. I am particularly interested in public space as a temporary autonomous zone, an undefined space where for a period of time anything is free to happen. This finds expression in Lopes (2016: 45):

> Space here can be understood as a metaphor for time: for different times we have experienced, for the memory of moments we have lived through, and the possibility of recording them in a non-linear and non-consecutive way. In suggesting another knowledge system with which to frame our perception, each of the artists’ works represents the constant attempt to capture the while, the being in the middle, the in-between.

My thesis performance is an experiment with this notion. I blur the socialised boundaries between public and private space by creating a “precarious home… in the middle of the city” (Kuryel & Fırat, 2013: 46). This ‘precarious home’ is a street-vendor stand in the style of buskers often found in city centres in South Africa. It acts as a soapbox or make-shift stage gathering an accidental audience of people who happen upon the site. This “performative and affective encounter” establishes a new set of rules, or reality, that can effectively contest the nature of the relationships between people that are otherwise obscured (Kuryel & Fırat, 2013: 47). Stephen Shukaitis writes that “affective resistance is about working from […] intensities of care and connection, of constantly rebuilding the

imaginal machines from them, rather than considering interpersonal and ethical concerns as an adjunct and supplement of radical politics" (Kuryel & Fırat, 2013: 47). In the vein of Donna Kukama,

> I use performance as a strategy that allows me to invent as well as to apply methods that are outside of what is predictable or expected, and as a medium of resistance against already established 'ways of doing'. The resulting work often takes on experimental forms that deliberately apply 'undisciplined' methods as a strategy for inserting my voice and presence in public, as a form of 'historical record'. I weave unrecorded histories with fictional narratives and personal stories to present 'living monuments' within larger socio-political settings. These often fragile and ephemeral moments of encounter are to be understood as gestures of poetry with political intent, carrying with them the weight to destabilize existing canons regarding the ways we memorialize or write histories.
>
> (Kukama, 2020)

Like Kukama I am concerned with community and the possibility of solidarity amongst us (Peschke, 2015). I am especially interested in the geographically and conceptually marginal spaces, the bad lands and no-go areas. I am interested in how remembering is done there, here. I am interested in how we tell our stories, and whether we still might recognise ourselves in the old methodologies. I am interested in sampling these and remixing them, a dj with the public landscape as my deck, attempting to articulate them for this time. By telling our stories, especially to ourselves, and in some ways continuing the practice of the oral history tradition, I wonder if we might not be able to recover our voices as working people on the margins of a machine with no imagination. I wonder if we might be able to reappropriate this marginality, this deliberate silencing of us, this relegation to invisibility, as a slippery tactic in the ongoing struggle to economic and total freedom. I am interested in poetic gestures of solidarity as a way of speaking to each other about ourselves.

Chapter Three

The archive as a haunting – a method

In 1984, Astrid von Kotze reflected on the context from which worker theatre was emerging, explaining how the quality of life in the townships had utterly deteriorated. With mass unemployment, high levels of school dropouts, life was impoverished, violent and repressive. The Durban Cultural Worker's Local writes (1986: 68):

> In the bus-queues, in the train stations during those endless hours of commuting we long for rest, for a home. But for most of us there is no home. We arrive at our shack, our hostel, our compound to live through new worries.

Now in 2021, the City of Cape Town is a deeply segregated city where the issues of apartheid spatial planning persist today, exemplified by a drone shot of a wealthy area in contrast to an economically disadvantaged area next door. The majority of the city's working-class lives in peri-urban areas known as the Cape Flats or the townships. Historically, these areas were created to hold the migrant labour population that serviced the city under apartheid. The city centre and surrounding districts to this day house mainly white suburbs and maintain the conditions of systemically coerced migrant labour and rampant and skewed capital accumulation. This lack of significant economic redistribution remains a site of much contestation, "its tensions are material, tangible, and spatial" (Pather, 2018: 20).

Writing about her then new play for the Johannesburg Book Review online, *At Her Feet*, Nadia Davids (2017) speaks of "a figure able to evoke the mysterious, the ghostly, a body that could hold history and tell its stories, narrate the unsaid, speak the unspeakable that… only the body… knows, remembers, can tell." For her, memory-making and performance are inextricably linked. The ephemeral nature of live performance has the ability to evoke memory in the present. The urgency to engage with practices of remembering in the South African context has to do with the lack of material change in people's lives since the advent of democracy. The need to remember then becomes less about the past than it is about the present, "as if current extremities need context and points of reference so that some logic can explain the continued systemic abnegation" (Pather, 2018: 29). It is in this context that my research takes place.

Concerned with “how to make the archive speak in unspeakable ways” (Fleishman, 2012: 3), the research focuses on the landscape of the Cape Town Metro defined by “an architecture of erasure, a concrete covering over of the material traces of memory” (Grunebaum, 2007: 213). Recently known as the Mother City, Cape Town is now a motherless city in Mbembe’s ‘postcolony’ (2001). To resist forgetting, indeed erasure, the research is an intervention on memory-being-made, especially concentrated on present histories. Present histories are in this case counter-narratives that privilege marginalised groups and experiences.

Dwelling and Haunting

I think I can at least attempt to begin from here. To pick up the debris that has been made of our archive. To curate ourselves this archive that, existing in three phenomenological spaces, is of us and for us and from us. To foreground our already existing knowledge, embracing that there are multiple ways of knowing, in curating this archive. To privilege ourselves as knowers in the present context and thus to legitimise ourselves, or rather to contest the site of legitimacy itself. To state, vehemently, that we are sites of knowledge production, that we are writing our own present to archive our own histories. To embrace not only multiple ways of knowing, but also multiple ways of writing the archive.

‘Venus in Two Acts’, an essay written by Saidiya Hartman (2008), describes her process of engaging with the archive of slavery as it involves the jetsam of black life, especially black girl life, scattered across the Atlantic. The black counter-historical project fails, according to Hartman, because these interventions are already marginalised and remain unstable. Black historical projects, grasping at methodologies “to reckon with the precarious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance”, are branded “insurgent” and “disruptive” (Hartman, 2018: 12, 13). The lives that these projects are exhuming elude representation, instead “[collapsing] under the pressure of inquiry” (Hartman, 2018: 6) remaining opaque, sometimes invisible. This project of delicate retrieval, which she places firmly within the black counter-historical project, is predicated on an impossible question: “**Who is Venus?**”

> There are hundreds of thousands of other girls who share her circumstances and these circumstances have generated few stories. And the stories that exist are not about them, but rather about the violence, excess, mendacity, and reason that seized hold of their lives, transformed them into commodities and corpses, and identified them with names tossed-off as insults and crass jokes. The archive is, in this case, a death sentence, a tomb, a display of the violated body, an inventory of property, a medical treatise on gonorrhea, a few lines about a whore's life, an asterisk in the grand narrative of history.
>
> (Hartman, 2018: 2)

Through my research, I reiterate the above for the present time, widening the scope further than black girlhood to include black life in general, but specifically of working-class, or working, people. Here, Venus is all of us, in the past and the present affected by both. I am also playing with the assertion that 'the archive is a tomb'. In the context of present-day Cape Town, where the visibility of workers' lives and experiences is in fact a nuisance, I suggest that the presentation of these workers, as moving human sculpture, or monument, is an assertion of *the archive as a haunting*. That is, the archive in the present, the present history or memory-being-made, the counter-narrative which is a part of the black counter-historical project. As Lopes (2016: 51) writes:

> In spite of the historical process of silencing founded in the colonial era, the production of Afro-descendant artists proves to be a terrain underpinned by counter-narratives that spring up at the edges, through the cracks and crevices. These counter-narratives emerge in the hollows, in spaces full of productive contradictions, of ambivalences that are created, dismantled and recreated in a constant cycle of movement; counter-narratives that are expressed by subjects, the owners of a porous, dynamic, living, vibrant subjectivity that is sensitive to the cultural, social and political context from which it emerges; counter-narratives expressed by a complex identity that continues to confront forms, images and discourses the issues relevant to the present day.

Through Avery Gordon, Fleishman (2012: 16) explains haunting as "a state in which that which is not there, that which is past or lost or missing or simply not clearly visible manifests as a 'seething presence'". In another time, reflecting on the seminal *Shadows*

by Andy Warhol, Peggy Phelan (2004: 573) quotes Wallace Stevens' description of the paintings: " the nothing that is not there, and the nothing that is", and later, "the presence of absence". Ghosts, like shadows, are that presence manifesting as absence. When we interact with a ghost, we make visible that which has been invisible. In their unsettling strangeness, ghosts are "pregnant with unfulfilled possibility, with the something to be done that the wavering present is demanding" and "[t]his something to be done is not a return to the past, but a reckoning with its repression in the present" (Gordon, 2008: 184, 183). For Gordon, we must necessarily reckon with the haunting "*out of a concern for justice*" (Gordon, 2008: 64). Here I note eery relations with the recent Phoenix Massacre of working-class black people in Durban, which becomes relevant in relation to Hartman's assertion that:

> It is much too late for the accounts of death to prevent other deaths; and it is much too early for such scenes of death to halt other crimes. But in the meantime, in the space of the interval, between too late and too early, between the no longer and the not yet, our lives are coeval with the girl's in the as-yet-incomplete project of freedom. In the meantime, it is clear that her life and ours hang in the balance. (2018:14)

My research is interested in remembering what, or rather who, is being made absent now, who is being written out of memory, who is on the invisible margins, and how we make ourselves visible to each other in ways that do not endanger us or give away our strategy. The point is to see each other, without being seen, and attempt to respond ethically, authentically, and intimately. This seeing and being seen is an act of solidarity. This solidarity is insurrectionary in that these potential connections for mobilising (even domestic) transgression are made in temporary zones, and as such do not remain visible long enough to be captured by the eye of state surveillance. After Fleishman (2012: 17), I believe that the form of engagement appropriate for the post-colonial body is one that "[tends] towards disruption and discontinuity, and ultimately [dissolves] back into fragments".

The research draws from articles by relevant theorists, and video footage, interviews and photographic archives of relevant performance artists. The primary

research however is the curation and performance of public art interventions done by me, the practitioner/researcher. I use the 'practice as research' method to gather data and tentatively approach conclusions, while acknowledging that the work, the research, is never finished. The experiments are necessarily, and justly, temporal as I negotiate the indeterminacy of public space in atmospheres of transition and speculations of transgression. The research calls to be received within a context of opacity and continual emergence.

At the current moment, practice as research eludes fixed definition, but generally involves research through performance, performance methodologies, and where the output involves a performance presentation. Practice as research is not just limited to this, but will be discussed as such considering the scope of the research. This suggests that in some instances performance is the best vehicle to engage with the presented ideas and therefore performance practice "can be both a form of research and a legitimate way of making the findings of such research publicly available" (Painter, 1996: n.p.) . Painter (1996) goes further, asserting that in such a research method, there need be no correlation "assumed between the apparatus of research and the written word". For Fleishman (2012: 34), "performance as research is a series of embodied repetitions, in time, on both micro (of bodies, movements, sounds, improvisations, moments) and macro (of events, productions, projects, installations) levels, in search of difference". Here I would add that practice as research is also in search of sameness, or what remains the same, or similar, if performance even can be. My practice as research method is specifically in search of likeness, or commonalty. At its core, practice as research is involved with searching, beginning from an impulse that is then explored "durationally, through repetition, in variable and indeterminable directions" (Fleishman, 2012: 37). Fleishman proposes that through repetition we are better able to see difference, to clutch at it as we attempt to translate something of the research to others:

> If the 'event' of [Performance as Research] is a runaway train, beyond the 'threshold of perception', and if the researcher is hanging on trying desperately to make sense of it, or trailing behind trying desperately to catch up, then how do we make the knowledge of the event conscious? How do we make it visible to ourselves and to others? If [Performance as Research] is anything, it is the desire to make conscious,

> to become aware from within the midst of the endless process of becoming and then to attempt to translate this for others through a variety of modalities. (2012: 39)

There is no true translation of this kind of performance research, only this desperate clutching. Even from inside the process, engaged in practice as research, I am only able to send out signals, images, feelings, poetics, of a strange site I am never fully able to grasp. What is to grasp is all around me, perceivable only by *being there*. It is a task even to "take thought" (Fleishman, 2012: 53). This is the context in which the research intends to be experienced.

I depart from the anthropological perspective developed by Tim Ingold, expressed in Fleishman (2012: 43), of "the body-in-the-world". This understanding of dwelling holds that the world and the perceiver dwelling in that world cannot be separated. We dwell, and as a consequence of dwelling, we build. As opposed to the commonly held supposition that we build so that we may dwell. Fleishman expounds, "we build forms, not as a consequence of having had thoughts but as a consequence of dwelling, of being in the world, of being in action" (2012: 43). Regarding his own practice, Fleishman (2012: 44) speaks of "[dwelling] in the landscape over time in order to learn how to build there". I am interested in appropriating this method of dwelling, using performance practice, to investigate whether unexpected modes of solidarity, indeed other marginalised working people, will reveal themselves to me so we might engage collectively in a process of building to resist erasure in the present. I will speak about this as dwelling and *being there* interchangeably.

Performance Art and Live Art

In my research process I found myself slipping back into traditional theatre-making modalities (these will not be discussed in detail for want of space), especially in terms of conceiving story as having a beginning, middle and end as opposed to being a series of affective experiences. I found this problematic because it seemed to me that the theatre-making and performance or live art space were fundamentally opposed in two ways. Firstly temporally, and secondly in respect to the relationship with the audience. Firstly, though both forms involve duration, one often has a set duration while the other may

vary depending on concept*, being there*, and consequent improvisation. Related to story, the time of the theatre is mostly fictional representing the time of the story which can range much longer than the actual theatre event. The time of the performance art event is mostly real, lasting conceptually and actually as long as the event itself continues in real time. Secondly, the theatre audience is also set, having bought tickets and reserved seats – the number of people in a theatre are finite. Of course, theatre can be performed site-specifically, but it remains a site-specific theatre piece. Performance art, though it can be exhibited in a theatre, often defies the logic of the container, preferring a public space, where engagement with the general population is porous and spontaneous. "Performance remains a compelling art" because of its capacity to transform the performer and the audience (Phelan, 2004: 575). This is because the contract between the performer and the audience are peculiar. In performance art, the majority of the audience is often unaware that they are an audience until they are able to confirm it for themselves. Sometimes, they remain unsure and take that home with them. In the theatre, the audience is definitely aware that they are an audience. Questions around complicity, intervention and agency 'slap different'[3] in public space than in the defined actor-audience relationship familiar to theatre. Because the event can be transformed in unexpected ways by both performer and observer enacting agency, Peggy Phelan (2004: 575) suggests that the performance art moment can be seen as "the point where the aesthetic joins the ethical" in a profound experiment with the "unpredictable force of the social event" which surely involves both.

Increasingly, the term Live Art, has become popularised in the South African context to refer to a performance art mode that is more about sensitivity to sites, gentleness in responding to these sites, and gestures of survival and solidarity that still express the futility of the attempt, but are nevertheless committed to the attempt. Live art is primarily concerned with the socio-political realm. Nomusa Makhubu (2019) speaks about this as an impulse to "question volatile identities through spatial politics, and to locate them within the incoherence and incongruence of postcolonial urban spaces" (20). She proposes that artful resistance is a "radical intellectual creative language" (20) that

[3] When something slaps in a new unique way. Something cool but out of the usual. – urbandictionary.com

can assist us in wading through the mess of history. Live art as a cultural strategy pushes against the socialised boundaries of what is and is not possible. It emerges from the "developing crossover of 'art', 'performance art' and 'theatre' practices,' which gives 'rise to increasingly explicit concerns for the 'integration', 'intersection' or 'hybridisation' of arts practices in time-based 'live' work" (Keidan, 2006: 10). By evoking placelessness, live art locates its work within the politics of place and belonging. Keidan (2006: 10) poses that,

> Live art is synonymous with practices and approaches that cannot be accommodated or placed, whether formally, spatially, culturally or critically: practices and approaches that could be understood as being placeless simply because they do not necessarily fit or often belong in the received contexts and frameworks art is understood to occupy.

As I indicated above, my research is interested in performance art practice as a method of dwelling. Dwelling there I hope to find – in Peter Brook's 'empty space' (1968) of silence both inside and outside my body, in the relationality between my body and the environment – gestures of solidarity, likeness, or commonality. It is important for me to remember the central principle from which movement emerges. Fleishman (2012) quotes Laban, "before there is movement, there is a body in space – a body that has orientation, dimensions, inclinations, that by virtue of just existing occupies and produces space." After that, the performer, in this instance improvising, responds with movement to the present moment. I use a fusion of tools from the Western and African Oral traditions especially a spontaneity in the present that remains alert to the environment. I am guided by the principles of the primacy of the body in space, and also the devaluation of verbal text. In this improvisational space, installed inside duration as Bergson suggests, I attempt to "think true duration" (Bergson, 1907: 325). I attempt to move from within the flux, or liminality, of *being there*, of being present with others specifically in the "crucial arena" of the "face-to-face encounter… in which the ethical bond we share becomes manifest" (Phelan, 2004: 577). There, in the eye of the storm where "all is movement and change" (Fleishman, 2012: 40), experimenting again with the insurrectionary potential of deliberate in/visibility, I attempt to make myself visible to those who might recognise me as like, or recognise themselves through me. On the cusp

of engaging with my final project, below is an explication of the series of practice as research projects that led me to this point.

thrashing. – minor project

In this first project, the MA Minor Project, I began by theorising around busking. I saw busking as all performances of labour done in front of the public i.e., street vendors, shoe-shiners, streetsweepers etc. This allowed me to theorise around the 'artist' as a worker, more specifically as a 'cultural worker'. This was to place myself in the thick of working-class issues. From here I sought to find the physical, linguistic, and aesthetic characteristics of a contemporary progressive, and radical movement. I tried to house queer, feminist, anti-capitalist critiques under a black working-class aesthetic. This led to the curation of an insurrectionary street performance called *thrashing.*, encouraging questioning for accountability towards mobilising transgression. I assert that the performance itself, as an intervention into the socio-political stasis produced by neoliberal democracy, became a "temporary autonomous zone" (Bey, 1985) exploring ideas around civil disobedience, and responding to the increased surveillance of working-class communities in South Africa through military deployments and other policing strategies.

The process to create *thrashing.*, articulated my suggestion about the insurrectionary potential of performance art and specifically as an accountability and solidarity-building measure. I sought to contribute to the culture of insurrection by creating a character of 'a movement' whose purpose was to experiment with defensive installations that the movement could use, especially against the police. I saw the character as an assemblage – a thing that can be one and can also be many, that can be assumed by anyone. Thinking through the notion of 'free space', I imagined the space of overlap between the multiple, often conflicting sects of the movement as a unifying space, as the actual 'ground' – as temporary autonomous zones. In this space of experimentation, I hoped to find a character in myself which emerged from this ground. I saw the character also as an archive of the ground at the point where anti-capitalist, black consciousness, and queer feminist politics overlap.

In trying to find a way towards curating the character of a movement what I instead found was the essential and personal nature of the individual's claim to politics. The parts I assemble to mean insurrection show themselves to the public as a set of codes to be demystified. But never can they be demystified according to my key, which no-one can know except myself. So, the public gets busy coming to their own understanding, drawing parallels from their experiential viewpoints, formulating opinions which say more about them, individually, than about any naïve notion of the movement. Instead, what I found on the floor, of the scrapyard, the train tracks, the tarred street, was not the movement at all, but a traumatic encounter with self and a return to my body's memory of the inescapable fact of itself. Which is femme, which is black, which is always subordinate, subjugated, raped. Laying on the floor, assuming a position like a chalk outline on the tarmac, I became victim/survivor, which I have always been. I the moment of the body's dying, or remembering, or resurrection - it is unclear which.

Xobula Inxeba – medium project

My Medium Project, *Xobula Inxeba*, focused on precarity and the rural worker, specifically the informal trader, street vendor, and the migrant worker, to place class struggle in the context of post-TRC South Africa in a village in the Eastern Cape. The context is one of neoliberal class exploitation by the politicians and the national bourgeoisie in the guise of development. What the looting of funds has meant, in particular areas, is sub-par development agendas and practices which have opened up the rural areas to criminality and corruption. This together with the egregious persistence of the apartheid drug-industrial complex in black and coloured communities, has led to a steep spike in addiction, murder, trafficking, and large-scale drug operations. This story is about a casualty, or collateral damage, which articulates the impossible position of precarity, the oscillation between employment and unemployment, development and regression, especially in relation to the social and political effects on individual bodies and communities. I am interested in this tragedy of the 'common man', of the everyday, and of the margins.

The story is familiar. It is a story about intimate violence. A boy from the neighbourhood that our female protagonist has lived in all her life strangles her one

morning. Strangely, intimately. Meanwhile her husband, a long-distance truckdriver, is on the road on his way back to her. The story unfolds, the tragedy of it. How they met, what they have gone through, what they have had to go without. They speak in isiXhosa, the common tongue of Qumbu, the village they belong to, that the storyteller belongs to. The language of the story is written in a confessional mode towards a heightened text which moves between that delivery and a more casual one. The characters share a monologue, the storyteller's costume moving back and forth between them in various stages of dress.

There is a makeshift trolley, created by attaching two costume rails together. The trolley is approximately three metres in height and looms above both performer and audience. There are two adjustable metal frames in the back and front of the structure with short protruding rods on either side for hanging, as well as a metal base on wheels. On the metal base stands a wooden chair frame with a square grey blanket, a CD player, a black crate, blue washbasin with a red terrycloth, and pink plastic bowl. From the front frame hangs a road sign from a particular place on the N2, a national road, in the Eastern Cape. The sign points in two different directions – to Qumbu and to Mthatha – and locates the world of the work, or the world of the storyteller, precisely.

There are other things on the trolley, becoming a stand of sorts, no longer just a costume rail although that remains part of its function. On the front frame there are strings for more hanging parts: three picture frames with family members now ancestors; a white ceramic teacup; a feather duster; a small angel made of cotton, cardboard and bits of wire that hangs from the road sign – a knick-knack on a rear-view mirror like a St. Christopher of the road. From the rods hang full costume for a rural Xhosa couple and a steering wheel on one side; and on the other side a black umbrella, a red loudhailer, and a red checked travel bag carrying a placard made from cardboard with the text "all that we've lost/the bodies it's cost". Threaded through the front frame is a single naked lightbulb that is practical in two senses, to make the set able to light without the luxury of theatre lights and to suggest a domestic setting. The back frame is dressed in a massive rainbow flag – the colours that have come to symbolise queer politics and communities – that acts as a screen for projection, shadow, and to create different adjustable dimensions on stage.

This makeshift trolley is the centre piece of the work and is dressed, undressed, rolled around, and reversed to cut the stage in half, diagonally and also to create a backstage. The trolley has the ability to hide and to reveal, creating a private in the public that exposes the public's general familiarity with that private. This is an assertion by the storyteller that the private or personal is political. The trolley is a functional object, but it also serves to locate us within the politics of street-vendors, hawkers, buskers, hustlers. This trolley is a moveable structure in the style of street-vendors' stands in urban areas in e.g., Cape Town CBD in South Africa, who necessarily hustle to make ends meet. This storyteller, hawker, busker, hustler, necessarily hustles to make ends meet, navigating the precarity of working on a place with wheels, a temporary occupation of space that could be moved or dismantled by police at any moment.

The red checked travel bag, sometimes called a 'Ghana Must Go' bag, and at home shrewdly referred to as a 'no problem' bag, locates us in the politics of migration. This is a bag, similar to the crate, that many people across the African continent have used while migrating, short and long term, formally or informally, and in various other precarious migrations on the margins. In my own childhood in Qumbu in the Eastern Cape, my mother and grandmother would wake up early every few months while we were sleeping, and drive on the busses that went to Durban, to come back laden with 'oo-no-problem' filled with stock for the shop and our home. Buying in bulk and carting goods across great distances is something familiar. This small encounter with the urban – moving between the rural home setting to stock up in the city and once again retreat – already sets into play the politics of migration.

The wooden chair frame locates the work in the domestic, the private home setting, a dining room and the place where they would sit sometimes. By removing the seat, the frame of the chair is used as an object on which to balance, to navigate the precarity of a teetering structure. Or perhaps, to navigate a structure which seems solid, but upon further investigation is a highwire with jagged corners for resting places. The chair frame is the neoliberal capitalist state and again locates us specifically, in the politics of work and our general tendency as labouring bodies towards precarity, that delicate balancing act. The teacup, the bowl, the duster, the basin and cloth, the blanket all belong to this domestic world. We imagine her small house in the village. Where she

washes, cooks, eats, where she sleeps; the objects that she makes use of throughout the day.

There are three story spaces: his, hers, and the storyteller's. Both of theirs are located in real time, while the storyteller's is in the liminal space from which they are doing the telling. Each of their worlds are temporary. Firstly because the stand will eventually be taken down, secondly because the story moves between worlds, rendering them visible and then again invisible.

There are three main 'movements' distributed and revisited throughout the piece. The first is the chicken routine, the second is the washing routine, the third is the extended strangulation routine. Each of these are presented as variants of the same motif throughout the piece, thoroughly explored as languages. But these are only her movements. His fits neatly next to her world. He sets up the stage for his scene, sits in it, and then disassembles it to set up the crime scene. This is less a fourth movement, than a coda, or a place to return to.

In the chicken routine, the storyteller moves between embodying a chicken clucking happily at being fed, and the woman who moves around the yard feeding. This ease and bucolic joy is explored sonically in the play between the staccato of the piano, and the sound of corn hitting the base of the plastic bowl. The washing routine is just that. She washes behind the rainbow screen, using the washbasin and cloth, back lit so that her shadow is a silhouette on the linen. She sings softly, humming, no song in particular; she is in private in this public. The strangulation is exhausting. It is shown four times in the piece and each time it becomes a little bit longer. At first it is the teacup slipping out of her hands. Then it is her and the chair which she uses as an opposition; it strangles her until she is collapsed on the blanket on the ground. Finally, it is all that and more as she uses the frame to find different ways to rest which become lewd presentations of the violated body from various perspectives; she sinks through the frame. Throughout this movement the chair creaks precariously, we are unsure whether it will break. The piano is dissonance and dark notes.

Another visual, or performance motif, which also becomes a kind of routine, or ritual, is the 'setting up of the crime' scene. When she takes off her clothes preparing to wash, she flings them over the trolley, so they land haphazardly on the other side, setting up the crime scene. Another time he sets it up, carefully, like one treats a crime scene.

He also creates the dimensions for his world as he speaks, holding the steering wheel sitting on the chair driving through the Karoo. The piano is a Zim-esque melody with a hop to it, but that's also sombre somehow in that style of his. At the end of the piece, it is this male protagonist that sits on the edge of the world just beyond the light in a liminal *somenowhere* getting to grips with what it means to accept, to make peace, to understand, or not. Defeated he is comforting himself, "masixole, sixolele", the same sombre melody continuing long after he has finished speaking.

There are two ambient tracks used throughout the piece. The sound of traffic on rural highways; and a gusty winter snowstorm. The rural traffic connects the characters – he on a highway somewhere and she in the village at home. The winter storm is played during the extended strangulation routine, a misty morning turned tragedy, it sounds like a scream, or whine, something shrill and piercing.

The piece was created for the immersive realm of public performance where the set becomes a temporary installation, and the body animates the objects of the world to create stories which might be familiar. The piece was performed in a physical theatre style and experimented with duration and risk. The choices around set, costume, and props spoke to the overlapping politics of migration, rural womanhood, and the degradation of the quality of rural life. However, the form was too theatrical a vehicle for the kind of actions I hoped to embark on for reasons previously discussed. I resolved that in the third and final experiment I would return to live art, to dwell in public in the commons and see what gestures of solidarity might reveal themselves to me there.

I am also here – thesis production

Now I am a busker, or street vendor, experimenting with the socio-political and economic functions of public art interventions (in a pandemic). I attempt to use the 'soapbox' as a tool to interrogate in/visibility, to share information, to witness, to reflect, to disrupt, to dwell, to imagine alternative presents. The models of protest at hand are outdated and tired, and what needs to be done is too vast with too many levels of betrayal too intricate and complex to easily move past. The work of this stand hopes to institute a temporary autonomous zone where actions and ideas can be explored publicly towards mobilising transgression. The busker arrives, evokes, and disappears; in this

instance this invisibility is used as an insurrectionary tool. Even in a context of Covid-19 and consequent limitations around physical distancing, mask protocol, hygiene codes etc., I still want to show up to do the work of connecting and mobilising.

I will embark on twelve different interventions of twelve different workers one might find in a community, this a mapping of the journey these workers might take. These workers show up in various public spaces. Using costume and embodiment I experiment with 'the method', doing one action of work which might be invisible, exploring that action over a durational period. I move between here and there on the physical ground, connecting through movement the different sites of struggle in Cape Town. I go to where people are, the taxi ranks, the shopping malls, the neighbourhood, the highway, at times connecting with existing collectives and organisations in these sites for recommendations on curation. I stand on street corners, in public transport, at the park, across Cape Town and experiment with the public to suggest something about invisible work, done in private, which in fact connects us all.

Using costume, I move between characters, literally putting them on. Deliberately genderqueer, I move between these roles fluidly, locating themselves specifically at each point between. Like Butler (1990: 17), I believe that gender is an "ongoing discursive practice.... open to intervention and resignification". My gender is "'in-between' positions and never fixed" (MacKenny, 2007: 17). I am aware of inhabiting all roles, and beyond that, I am aware of myself in the spaces between putting on each character. I attempt to make us all visible in this instance. We are also made visible by the possible audience member who finds us familiar.

At first, I am rural woman ePhillippi, and then eMfuleni, feeding the chickens using a pink plastic bowl, kernels clucking against the container; then I am nurse washing with a brown terrycloth in Mowbray and Belville; then a prisoner who is also a psych patient at the V&A Waterfront walking aimlessly around with three picture frames with family members. Next, I am a photographer taking pictures in front of a rainbow flag at the Grand Parade in the CBD, inviting the public to be captured, or made visible; a flight attendant holding a tray of glasses at a busy intersection in Claremont; a body in bondage in Observatory. There are other interventions: a sex worker crawling on the Seapoint promenade; a bank teller sleeping on a single bed frame at the Salt River Circle; a homeless person, busking with tragic mask at the N2 and R310 freeway. Finally, a

shadow in bondage, a haunting, a moving sculpture on the Cecil John Rhodes plinth at UCT shrouded in black, crying out in agony or moaning or silent.

These actions happen on moveable structures in the style of street vendors in urban areas who necessarily hustle to make ends meet. This storyteller, hawker, busker, hustler, necessarily hustles to make ends meet, navigating the precarity of working on a place with wheels, a temporary occupation of space that could be moved or dismantled by police at any moment. The stand, here a crate, is used as an object on which to negotiate the instability of a teetering structure. Or perhaps, to navigate a structure which seems solid, but upon further investigation is a highwire with jagged corners for resting places. The socio-political landscape is the neoliberal capitalist state and again locates us specifically, in our general tendency as labouring bodies towards precarity, that delicate balancing act.

The interventions are performed in a physical theatre style which experiments with duration and risk. This is to talk about the lives we lead also as experiments in duration and risk especially in relation to the neoliberal capitalist state. The work plays with time, slowing things down by sitting in one moment for an extended period or speeding things up by playing with fast rhythms and repetition. The work is thinking about the accidental audience member who will not stay, who can't, busy as they are navigating their own precarity. Maybe the still posture of a body is what is familiar in the moment they catch, or the franticness of an action or gesture. The action is a kind of slice of life, the audience happens upon the moment now and their seeing temporarily makes it visible. The action is not yesterday, or last year or in the future; the action is now, painfully present. This is happening now, somewhere this is happening. Each of their worlds created by the action are temporary. Firstly, because the stand will eventually be taken down, secondly because the action moves between visibility and invisibility.

Technically, the work is interested in light and shadow. At the beginning of the action, it is still daylight in the real world, the work making use of the natural light, but gradually the sun sets, and the shadows set in. They are thrown against the wall of the publics and across the vendor's stand. They become haunting presences that are visible only sometimes and perhaps only to particular audience members, the ones who are there at that time who are familiar with the world of the action. The shadows, and also

the liminality from which the action is being enacted, haunt the city with their action, this archive a haunting. They do not die there at the margins, the shadows or the actions.

In these experiments with the notion of my work as a series of invisible insurrections I have experienced both solidarity and rejection. As the prisoner, having decided to intervene in a private space housing multiple upper echelon commercial ventures, I was immediately surveilled, policed, and ushered out. My co-conspirator was informed by the V&A's security that we were trespassing and breaking multiple bylaws by firstly intervening in the space without permission, and secondly by filming. I negotiated this by moving to different spaces in the vast shopping complex whenever I felt the current site was getting too hot (mostly exemplified through the arrival of more and more security). I could hear them on their walkie-talkies, briefing each other, warning each other of this person in an orange jumpsuit who seemed poised to jump off onto the concrete, or into the water. Eventually, one of the security guards knelt down in front of me, to be eye-level with me, and pleaded softly like your sister who knows what punishment will be dished out when your parents come back from work, "ndiyakucela sisi, ndicela uhambe."[4]

I experienced a moment of being made visible then, in the way I propose in this paper. She came down to my level to conspire that I should leave because surely trouble was coming. I could hear them behind me as I exited the Waterfront, not through the gift shop as per their suggestions, but through the crowd of friends, and kids, and parents, and workers, all with their own history and relations to the material of the orange jumpsuit. At one point, a man breaks out in song at me, sending his message reverberating throughout the site, "Senzeni na?"[5]. He is walking with his two kids, and I think of something: what are the implications of abolition towards rehabilitation and reintegration on children? There is no scope to even begin to engage with this in this paper, but there it is, a question emerging from the field in the moment of research.

Now I am a rural woman eMfuleni and I notice how everyone keeps remarking how pretty she is, me, behind a mask. She looks like a young wife, but now she is a chicken and the passing audience knows she is not a chicken even as she descends face-first into the pink plastic bowl with kernels for pecking. It's a performance, I hear them

[4] "Please sister, please go."
[5] "What have we done?"

conclude, as a few of them promptly whip out their own devices to start recording, live-streaming, sharing. “Wenzani lo mama?” asks a woman my mother’s age, dressed also like me in this instance, “o – upha iinkhukhu”.[6]

At another intervention, this time in Belville as a nurse, my co-conspirator and I experience another run-in with security. But this time is different. We are at the taxi rank at peak hour in one of the busiest suburbs in Cape Town. There are Blacks[7] here; this is a space for Blacks coming and going gathering to wait to be ferried from home to work and back again. This time when the security intervenes on us, my co-conspirator is quick to explain that this is a Master’s project for the prestigious University of Cape Town, and also that nothing illegal is happening here. Although the security still insists on reporting it, always into a walkie-talkie masking the top-cop, they do not rush me to finish. In fact, when the traffic officers arrive, they demarcate the performance space by parking in relation to me to control the bus traffic in the interim. It is at this point that a crowd gathers, and I experience again another moment of being made visible, of looking up and witnessing the accidental audience, now co-conspirators, recognising me, or something about me. They begin to talk to each other over me, pre-empting and hypothesising – what will happen, and what will she do? They recognise me! She’s a student, they say, she’s wearing a white dress, a navy-blue cardigan and sensible shoes – she looks like a nurse, but we know she is not nurse! We are in cahoots with her! I am washing, and they recognise themselves! Commenting to each other that of course I must wash my underwear and my underneath, even here in this public, because that is how we were all taught to wash. “Uzo-pasa, shem, hayi-shem uzo-pasa!”[8]I posit that something happens there in the public realm, that I have been experiencing real moments of solidarity through recognition, familiarity, likeness.

My friends, comrades, and co-conspirators live stream these interventions on Instagram and in this way archive them. The collected footage then becomes an online repository for the work, which is curated as an interactive mapping of invisible insurrections in various sites of struggle. I still want to play in that thick space in the

[6] “What is the woman doing?” … “Oh – she’s feeding chickens.”
[7] Blacks here refers to the Black Consciousness understanding of the term, which includes all oppressed people of colour.
[8] “You’re going to pass, shame, you’re going to pass!”

margins, questioning notions of freedom of movement, access to goods and information, access to the economy, redistribution of wealth, censorship and expression, socio-ideological alternatives, and the coming insurrection.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

Self-conscious Cultural Production – a clutching

I am telling stories as affirmation that the tragic characters in these narratives are finding ways to survive despite their historically determined conditions. There will be no government intervention, either for the tragic characters or the cultural worker labouring to archive these present histories. The government is a limited imaginational machine, in fact it has no imagination. I am inserting myself in a different currency and grammar that is not yet named and never quite visible, and so whose value forever remains intangible.

In a process of creating, I consider the fact of collective meaning-making – how a message, like action, happens in the spaces between bodies which makes it visible. Meaning is created between the storyteller and the witness. The parts I assemble to mean insurrection show themselves to the public as a set of codes to be demystified – this is the nature of their stickiness. The public gets busy coming to their own understanding, drawing parallels from their experiential viewpoints, formulating opinions which tells them about themselves and others. What I find on the floor, of the scrapyard, the train tracks, the tarred street, the whole cosmology of public space, is a traumatic encounter with self and a return to my body's memory of the inescapable fact of itself. This fact is constituted in the body's relation to signs and symbols carrying feeling saturated with story.

The disruption takes place in a neo-liberal landscape where the potential for solidarity is waylaid by policy and social contracts which strictly survey and police public space. The cultural worker, in this instance a storyteller who is also a street-vendor, ruptures notions of the public and the private, to assert again that the private, the domestic, is political. The performance suggests that we do not leave the domestic when we venture out into the public, that instead our private is a part of what constitutes our entire social life, which is also economic and political. This encourages an agency of intimacy, or an intimacy of agency in the collective as we move between place and space, bodies and community – "what is contested is not just the space of the city and politics, but also the space between people" (Kuryel & Fırat, 2013: 47).

This storyteller's stand sets the tone for a Temporary Autonomous Zone. Firstly, this storyteller is only concerned with insurrection in the first place, having moved through a failed uprising myself. I am interested in the moments of contention between the solidifying of each cycle of the vanguard's power. I am interested in short bursts of electroshock administered to the system, to see it shimmer and glitch and become transparent, if only for a moment. The hope is that that moment is not only visible to me, the storyteller, but actually becomes visible as each passer-by stops to witness, immediately shrouded, to that individual at least for now, as they decide to walk away. The hope is that the shimmer has made visible something about the precarity and violence of navigating contemporary capitalism, and that image or text stays with the passers-by and does something – whatever that something is.

Secondly, I am a cultural worker who carries their tools and wares from home to street. On the street I assemble a vendor's stand, inspired by the trolley-pushers who set up their stands on either side of me. A shapeshifter by profession, I am a hustler like everyone else working on these streets, surviving precarity. The politics of geography locate me, and the stories emerge from within the landscape of workers moving between home and street, between village and city, between the familiar and the foreign. The stand is visible only in the complexity beyond the naming of the map, in the place where collectives are constituted, IRL[9], in the subtle conspiring of people in public spaces trying to evade police and security. The stand is visible only to those who loiter, it is a space of loitering, of wandering aimlessly around, strolling past, or meandering through. I am telling stories about us, clutching at the rags of capitalism's train as it marches forward. I am holding up a watery reflection for your attention, should you have the time or the energy to stop and witness. But this is not a demand. The geographies of migration and placelessness locate me also.

Thirdly, by its very nature, this vendor's stand is a nomadic device. It allows the easy transport of all that is needed in its creation, physically a structure that contains itself, like a suitcase with false compartments. The portability of the stand makes for a quick getaway for those days where the permit has expired or not applying for the permit is an act of refusal fundamental to the story being shared that day. It is not often that the

[9] In Real Life – urbandictionary.com

stand will show up somewhere twice, but if it does, the context of the day and the improvisations therefore will make sure the storytelling is always spontaneous and new. Ideologically, in terms of content, there are many issues which gnaw at me and keep me up at night; all these issues will eventually be platformed at the stand. Sometimes they will be presented together, next to each other, fitting neatly, other times juxtaposed as contradictions with no tidy resolution. As much as possible, I do not want to present dogma as truth. Rather, to be an ideological adulteress, staying open, porous, and affected.

Liberation from apartheid produced a phase before freedom. This phase is messy and difficult, defined as it is by capitalism's need for resources and territory but no longer people. This state of precarity is visible the world over across class, occupation, and identity. I am working against this by making connections between polarised realities or ideas or experiences that elucidate the nature of our collective struggle to build solidarity and commonality.

Collective and participatory modes of cultural inquiry have the ability to critique the status quo, characterised by neoliberal policies which favour the interests of capital over people, and create "temporary autonomous zones" for the imaginative reconstruction of more human ways of being together. Cultural workers – artists, educators, and critical theorists who understand the nature of their work as being of political significance – have a crucial role to play in evolving the notion of insurrectionary culture. This culture has the power to hold to account the so-called revolutionary vanguard of capitalist politicians that are currently in office, while simultaneously constituting an alternative mode of being where it finds room to flourish.

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