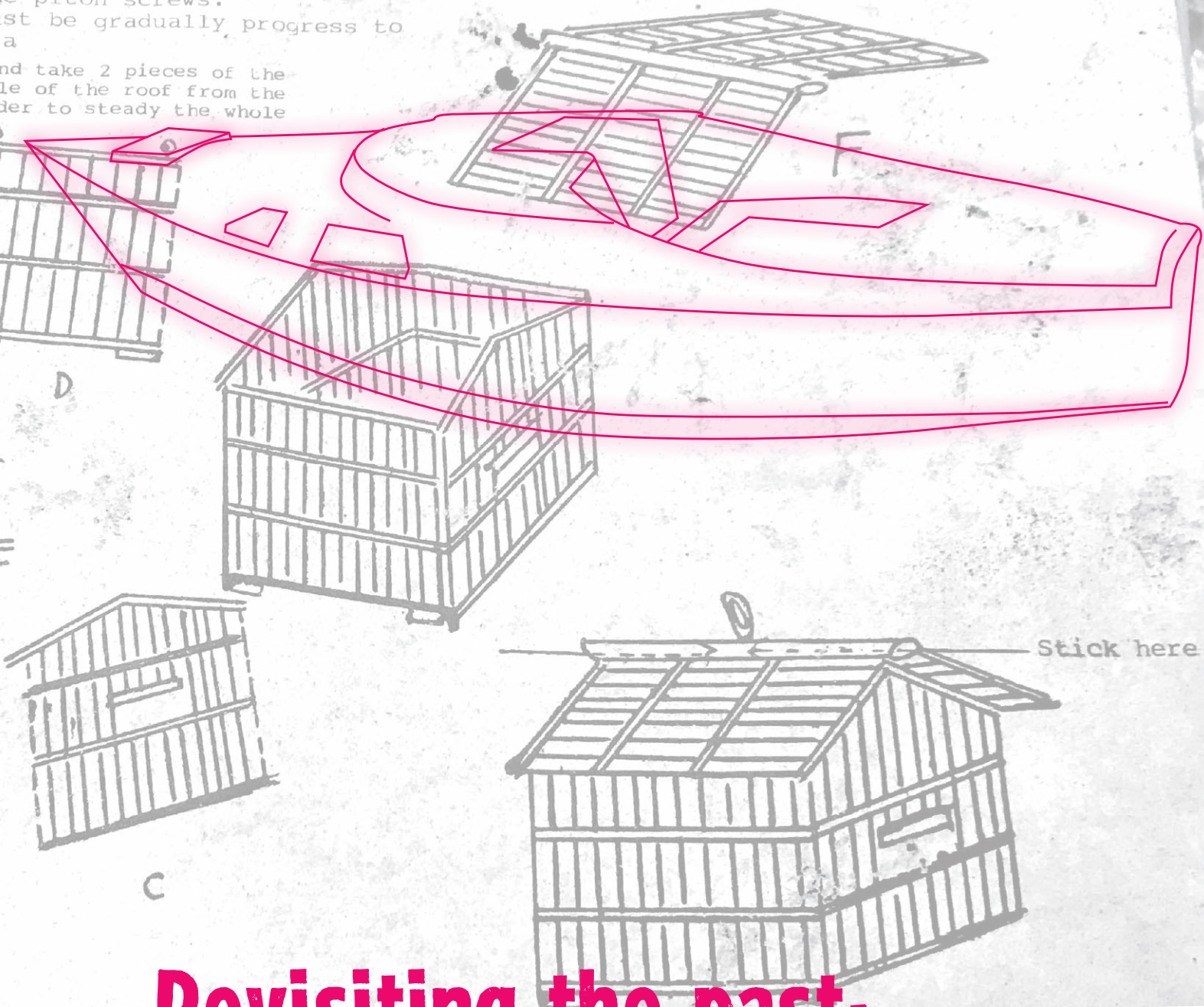


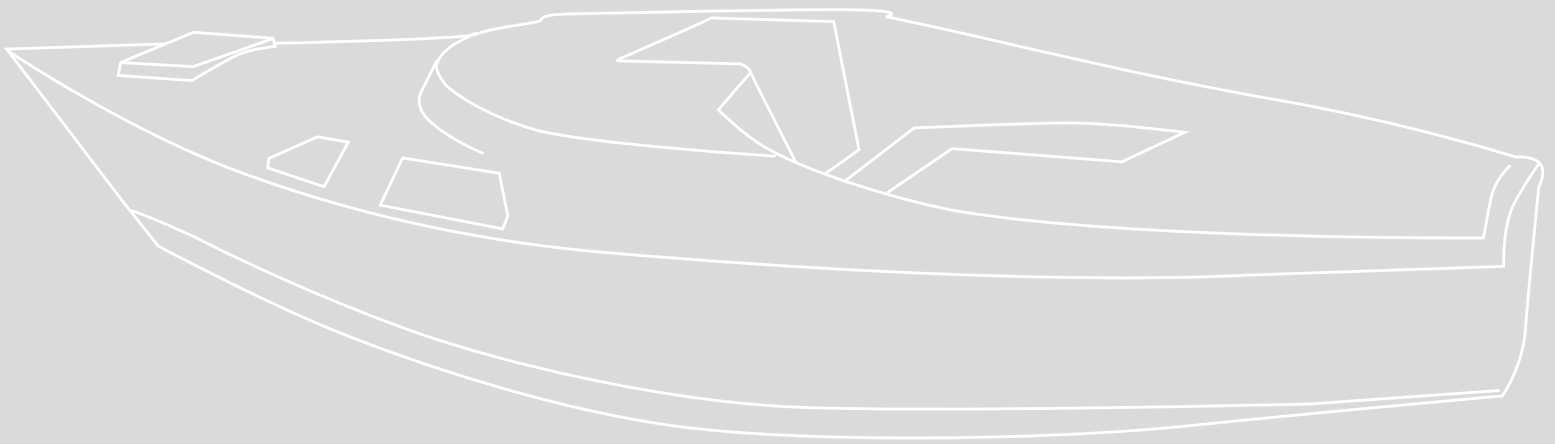
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Revisiting the past:

Archive, memory and the passage
of time in the installation artworks of
Penny Siopis and
Manuela Karin Knaut

Manuela Karin Knaut-Bührmann



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Abstract

“Found objects” – stray objects found on the street and on flea markets, heirlooms and personal mementoes – evoke memories of bygone events in the observer. The memories prompted can be individual, as when walking stick reminds the observer of happy family excursions of childhood, or collectively, as when a military helmet speaks more broadly to the war that the South African Apartheid state had incited on the border to Angola and the tragedies and social dissensions this caused within the country. In artistic installations that employ found objects, past and present jostle for attention as their physical presence evokes memories of the past and their juxtapositions create new meaning within a specific space and time context. This study poses the question of how installation art interacts with found objects and how this engagement speaks to the fluidity of memory and the process of archive. It does so in relation to the installation artworks by South African artist Penny Siopis that speak directly to the notions of archive, memory and the passage of time. Similarities of conceptual interests and work processes are juxtaposed with installations by Manuela Karin Knaut, made and exhibited in Germany and elsewhere from 1999 to 2017, as well as work produced during a two year period in Johannesburg (2015–2017).

The dissertation does so by working out two separate strains of theory that underlie the dissertation: that of installation art and, in relation to it, that of memory and archive. It first examines the historical development of installation art, initially beginning with Marcel Duchamp and Kurt Schwitters and leading up to the present, in order to ascertain the five most critical characteristics of installation art: space, materials, the observer, senses, time. It then investigates critical aspects of memory and archive within the frame of South African history, as a basis on which to explore more deeply Siopis’s four most important installations: *Reconnaissance*, *Charmed Lives*, *The Will* and *Sympathetic Magic*. I trace how

Siopis's work with personal, inherited, loaned and found objects change over time and how they speak to her own personal memories of the past as well as those of a more shared, South African history. I examine how Siopis places found objects into relation with each other in such a manner that new connections and meanings are created and that personal and collective memories are made accessible and understandable.

The dissertation then turns to an examination of archive and memory in my installation *Displacement*. This installation poses questions about identity, belonging and one's place of being in the world by examining my own place in Johannesburg. By engaging the interrelation of found objects from South Africa and Europe, mementoes and loaned objects, it investigates how we see ourselves in the present and what shapes our perspectives towards others. How do our memories, both personal and social, mark how we remember the past, how we understand the present, and how we imagine the future? By including a boat as the biggest found object I have ever used, the installation engages and examines the space between travelling and arrival, between being at home and being a foreigner, and the disjuncture of being displaced. Varied objects in the installation point metaphorically to the tensions between being a foreigner and familiarity and intimacy.

The dissertation is a deeply personal and creative engagement with Penny Siopis's installation work. It is thus written in a narrative form, to capture the personal investment that is necessary in the accumulative process of finding miscellaneous objects of significance. The story traces the unfolding relationship between Siopis's art and my own, pointing to similarities and showing how the biographical influences the making of art and in this case complex installations. Of particular importance to my own work is how Siopis deals artistically with South Africa, the country in which I am currently placed as migrant, observer and artist. The artistic language she uses is very similar to my own and yet carries very different meanings relative to those it carries in relation to my own German, European context.



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I am submitting this dissertation under my full name, Manuela Karin Knaut-Bührmann. In the dissertation, I refer to my artwork under my artist pen name, Manuela Karin Knaut.

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Foreword: My ticket to Johannesburg

Johannesburg, one of the most misunderstood cities on the planet, was never on my list of dream destinations that I hoped to visit as travelling artist and installation object and art collector. Everything I had heard about it was connected to crime, violence and restricted movement. Its rich seam of gold had attracted gold diggers and prospectors from around the world in the late nineteenth century, and had lead not only to a war with Britain but had initiated the pernicious migratory labour system which flourished in the years prior to and under Apartheid. After the democratic elections of 1994, the allure of the City of Gold led to an influx of migrants from across the continent of Africa, transforming the old modernist city into an African city, but one with a reputation of crime, violence, occupied and hijacked buildings and joblessness.

In April 2015, the full might of the city's daunting reputation forced itself into my field of vision, forcing a confrontation and encounter. Here I was, in Johannesburg, and reminded myself of my principle of seeing an opportunity in every imponderability and inconvenience of life. Even as a child I collected things I found on the wayside, inspiring me to transform and create something anew, learning at an early age to think the unthinkable, to allow for space in life for the surprising – knowing and hoping that I would experience that which others from my precise German ancestry would not countenance because of their fears, carefulness and simple lack of interest.

Just as the possibility of living in Johannesburg for a few years had opened up in my life, Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse won the distinguished Deutsche Börse Photography Prize with their comprehensive documentation of Ponte City and I was able to see their exhibition held at the MMK3, part of the Museum for Modern Art in Frankfurt, Germany (Subotzky and Waterhouse 2014; Bakharev, Muholi and Sassen 2015). At the time the fear-inducing juggernaut of Johannesburg and Ponte City seemed far away, as I looked with awe and sheer astonishment at their monumental photos of the former vertical slum on the southern tip of Africa (see Figure 0.1). My mind filled with warnings given in travel guides and online magazines, newspaper articles and documentaries, describing the inner city of Johannesburg as dangerous and to be avoided. While these warnings to well-situated Europeans triggered fear and some amount of aversion, they also awoke a curiosity and interest in this new situation, one that would allow me to explore the world and its being far beyond my existing European comfort zone. I felt an urge to see this new world, one and at the same time unknown and exciting. It began to have a pull on me. Johannesburg suddenly became real, my attention caught by the challenges of its social and political conflicts and contradictions. The more I saw and considered these works by Subotzky and Waterhouse and read about the city, I imagined myself moving through the vibrant and challenging nature of the streets of old modernist Johannesburg. It seemed to lure me, coming within my reach as I began with the arrangements for relocating to Johannesburg.

With the decision to prepare my possessions for the trip to South Africa, I began to imagine a shift in my working process as an artist, opening up new possibilities and dimensions. After many years practicing both as an artist and a teacher in Germany and other parts of the world, I began to feel a growing need to focus more closely on the underlying theoretical and sociological aspects or allusions in my practice. This necessitated me to step back from my artworks and studio and to gain a distance, to evaluate my creative practice. The opportunity of

finding myself in a new context in Johannesburg created the ideal opportunity for me to formalise this endeavour, by undertaking the challenge of a masters degree at the Wits School of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

As I began my artistic journey in South Africa, I was confronted with a wide range of reactions to my intention of creating art and of studying for a degree here. One of the persistent ones was that I found myself classified as mother to my children, as wife to my husband, as a foreigner or as an expat, but not as an artist and collector and as a person in my own right. This was quite a new experience for me, to see how my very being and doing seemed to challenge a number of my counterparts in their conceptions of personhood.

Figure 0.1
Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick
Waterhouse, *Ponte City*, 2014



This experience of people who felt the need to categorise and label me was quite unlike any I have had elsewhere in the world. It can be jarring to experience on one's own body the effects of someone's immediate and insistent need to classify others and attempt to contain what they are allowed to experience and how they should be. I was confronted with the claim that I could not possibly understand what is happening in South Africa, that I was approaching it with a tourist's gaze, that my collection was solely one done through the lens of a privileged outsider who was going to disappear again, and that all I was collecting was exotica. In some ways, I felt judged on the basis of my perceived inability ever to be loyal to the very country of South Africa; and on the basis of my being white. And yet in this situation of hyper-awareness of social and historical context, I was not recognised as a person with my own history and context as someone who had grown up and developed into an artist in a country that was marked by war and the Holocaust, communism and national division.

And yet, this experience was not the only one I had. Many people were very open to my work, immediately understood me as artist, enjoyed challenging and confronting each other and themselves, valued my creativity and allowed me to participate in theirs. It was this contrast that illuminated the limited, protective reaction of the first group even more strongly.

This raised numerous questions for me: Why did I trigger this reaction in some of my counterparts, and in which ones? Why were they so challenged by my presence? Why this need to impose on me a colonial mindset? Why this defensiveness towards incomers, as if they were just there to take and not to give or even to learn from? And, more critically, how does this experience speak to the nature of South Africa, its history and social being? How does it speak to the very objects I was collecting, and to the memory and archive that I was trying to grasp in them?

It was clear to me from the beginning that both my practical and theoretical research would focus on installation art. This decision seemed absolutely sound

when I discovered the installation work of Penny Siopis, an eminent South African artist known more readily as a painter. I was surprised to see that her multi-layered, profound installations have had much in common with my own ways of thinking and of creating installation work. Memory and the archive seemed so central to both of our ways of creating and it seemed that a dialogue with her could be a fruitful direction for my theoretical investigations.

The research undertaken is presented in narrative form in order to be able to reflect on the accumulative process of finding things of significance and tracing their relationships to the biographical mode of making in my art. This recombination of the biographical with the influences on me from the complexity of the world and my engagement with it has also shaped my written work: in particular, its focus on tracing the connections between Penny Siopis and myself, and our similar strategies of focusing on history, memory and the present. ●

BIRDS OF SOUTHERN AFR



1 Setting the scene: In dialogue with Penny Siopis

Having moved to South Africa in October 2015, I began to use the opportunity of living and working here to connect the concerns I had explored in my earlier installation artworks with my response to my new environment. Over the last 25 years, collecting found objects and sorting and re-ordering them formed the basis of my artistic practice. In numerous installations in Germany and internationally, I created site-specific works that dealt with the notion of “memory” (see Figure 1.1). With memory always being activated in the lived present, the sensory reactivation of the past also takes place in the present. In my installations,

Figure 1.1
Manuela Karin Knaut,
nomoresorrow, 2012



I worked with myriads of selected items and found objects that have a special biographical meaning for me, for example, walking sticks, drawers, wooden boxes, sailor dolls or specific books (see Figure 1.2), as well as others that have more generic readings, such as a standard lamp, a cake platter, typewriters, a child's scooter, a doll, a hand cart or a music box. Across the board, the array of objects I collected carry their own “historical relevance” even before I reuse and recontextualise them through my artistic interventions.

Shortly after my arrival in South Africa, I discovered the work of Penny Siopis, a painter and installation artist who had just had a large retrospective exhibition for her work at the Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town. The after-effects of this obviously significant exhibition were evident

Figure 1.2
Manuela Karin Knaut,
Wanderlust, 2015



in the press and discussions in artistic circles which led me to conversations with other artists. It was surprising for me to discover that Siopis worked with very

similar materials and similar modes to my own installational practice. Penny Siopis is an obsessive collector of found objects and artefacts and includes a wide range of these in her own works. It was also interesting to see that she – a white, female artist with European roots – has been anchored in the South African arts scene for decades, playing a large role not only through her own art but also through her academic and curatorial engagement (Artsy.net. 2017; Law 2005; NLA 2013; O'Toole 2015; SAHO 2017; Siopis 2017; Smith 2004; Stevenson 2017a).

After closer inspection of Siopis's oeuvre, I was surprised to realise that she is best known for her painting rather than for her installation work. My development as an artist had also begun with painting, so I was aware that these two artistic modes can merge and often be in a productive dialogue with each other. Thus inspired by my first encounter with Siopis's work, I searched for more information, particularly on her installation works, soon to discover that, to this point, there is no specific publication that focuses exclusively on her installation work or gives an overview over her installation practice. This omission gave me courage to further pursue a focused engagement and research on this aspect of her work.

From the beginning, Siopis manner of allowing found and borrowed objects to speak for themselves and to create connections between each other, allowing them literally to form a dialogue to tell stories about themselves, fascinated me (Osthoff 2009). A particular case in point was her *Sympathetic Magic*, a site-responsive installation of found objects exhibited at the Wits University Art Galleries in Johannesburg in 2002 (Penny Siopis, pers. comm., 9 September 2017; Law 2014, 129–135). A captivating aspect about this exhibition was how it spread over multiple floors of the art gallery and how the artist let the installation and the space communicate with each other. Materials towered above the viewers, requiring them to walk around and through them and even adopt a bent-over posture in order to experience the structure to the fullest. Diverse objects were used,

some previous, of a high monetary and cultural value, other flea market kitsch, rubbish, souvenirs, and others specifically borrowed from university art gallery collections, yet most of them had some personal value and direct connection to the artist's biography. Furniture, books, children's toys, stuffed animals and Wellington boots were piled up in the most impressive manner, creating a fascinating world laid out in such a way it required viewers to walk through it. The unorthodox, even disrespectful manner of casually stacking and weaving the materials together, placed in relation with each other through the artist's intentional hand, evoked disparate thought processes and told stories, speaking directly to me and fascinating audiences. Siopis's work hit me in my innermost core, where desires, dreams, fantasies and ideas develop, where my own stories and memories of my childhood and that of my daughters' dwell.

My research interest in Siopis's work grew from the desire to examine her already famous installations, fitting them into a holistic framework within South African art and in relation to other installation styles that had previously influenced my work. Yet more than that, I wanted to see them in relation to my own concerns and artistic work.

No artistic path develops on its own or in isolation. A creative work is always the result of an interplay of many impressions and influences that shape an individual biography. Many artists have consciously and unconsciously influenced my own work and perceptions. Significant amongst these are Christian Boltanski (see Figure 1.3) and Chiharu Shiota (see Figure 1.4). Christian Boltanski, born in France in 1944, is an internationally respected contemporary artist who works with objects and photographs and the main proponent of the "Evidence Collection" and "Individual Mythologies" movements (Ketterer Kunst n.d.). His installations focus not only on the erection of permanent monuments, but on active "remembrance", i.e., a culture of memory focusing on that which is alive in the face of that which is lost (Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein 2009, 2). He creates remembrance



Figure 1.3
Christian Boltanski,
Flying Books, 2013

and memory pictures through the collection, archiving and installation of old photographs, often in combination with discarded items of clothing that touch on the existence and loss of an individual. Chiharu Shiota, in turn, became internationally known through her monumental works using thread. She uses her art to investigate the connections between past and present, object and memory. Born in 1972 in Osaka, Japan, Shiota studied at various art schools, including the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig where she was particularly influenced by Marina Abramovic. She now lives and works in Berlin (Blain Southern n.d.; Elderton and Blake 2016). Both Boltanski and Shiota engage with archive and memory in their work. Even though Boltanski, Shiota, Siopis and even I myself confront the same subjects, each one of us has a completely different and unique way of dealing with them. This is obviously due to the completely different



Figure 1.4

Chiharu Shiota, *After the Dream*,
2016

cultural and social environments and socialisations of each of us. In our far flung origins, we have different life stories, biographies and fates that become visible when we take account of age difference, gender roles and our understanding of art. All these features play into the expression of a creative work. Thus, while we share our engagement in the subject of memory and a fascination with collecting, sorting, organising and story-telling, our expressive vocabulary is as different as are our mother tongues. Our stories differ from each other, just as Shiota's and Siopis's collections differ, just as Siopis's and Boltanski's materials differ, and just as Siopis's and my own personal histories, the mainspring of artistic story telling processes, differ.

Many installation artists, including Siopis and myself, work with objects as archives, with meanings located in materials, while specifically connecting their statements to the present. This kind of installation work consists of a forensic-like reconstruction and documentation of fictional and real fates, personal stories and biographies. Within this, found and personal objects are used in order to focus on particular stories, traumas and their own lexicon of memories, played off against the backdrop of history and collective memory. For these artists, the critical reflection on the political and social worlds they live in is paramount in a seamless interplay between art and life, making art of the very “stuff” or material residue of lived experience.

As mentioned earlier, this research is written in the form of a narrative, reflecting an accumulative process of finding things of significance, tracing their relation-

ship and similarities to how I make sense of the biographical and how it influences the very making of my art. These biographical influences or influences that I find from the world are recombined in my own work, be that in installations but also here in my written work: seeing the connections between artists, using similar strategies and focusing on history, memory and the present. ●



2 Engaging the notion of installation art

Installation art in a wider historical context

The term “installation art” is a word that, since the late twentieth century, has been applied to an ever widening array of artistic practices and creations, leading to it becoming a somewhat vague and interchangeable term. In order to investigate the term and concept, I give a short description of my own practice to illustrate the aspect of installation pertinent to my own work and possibly, by extension, to the work of other artists whose ideas resonate with mine.

My own development as an artist began with the making of two-dimensional pictures that, over time, incrementally grew and expanded into whole rooms. In hindsight I can recognise that this was not an accidental process, that there was a clear trajectory behind it as I attempted to engage the significance and physicality of the world and my involvement in it, and as I was successively being influenced by contemporary works seen in museum shows.

After my initial schooling and during my university studies, my personal drive was based on the need to create work using the traditional mediums of drawing and painting. Later, producing larger-format paintings, as well as collages and photographs, though these were more hesitant in manner, still contained by the restriction of their format and innate flatness. In the late 1990s, my work took the first tentative steps into the world of installation, largely inspired by visits to major exhibitions such as the documenta in Kassel, Germany, as well as a very impressive Robert Rauschenberg retrospective in 1998 in the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Germany (Solomon Guggenheim Foundation 1998). I began by allowing

collages to grow into the room and inviting the viewer to turn pages, remodel the exhibit or carry objects around; instead merely of hanging up framed pictures, I stood them on the ground, leaning them against the walls of the exhibition spaces. In time, partly owing to improved workshop conditions, I grew a desire to build my creations, for them to expand.

Shy little excursions into space soon grew into confident incursion and the exploration of whole gallery spaces and large-scale museum floors. I finally managed to engage my passion and playfulness in these installations, inviting the viewer to enter my world and become part of it. This confidence in retrospect was inspired by artists such as Gregor Schneider, Dieter Roth, Kurt Schwitters and, foremost, Christian Boltanski.

My personal development from painting to installation seems to have been very similar to that of Penny Siopis. In a personal conversation, she described how

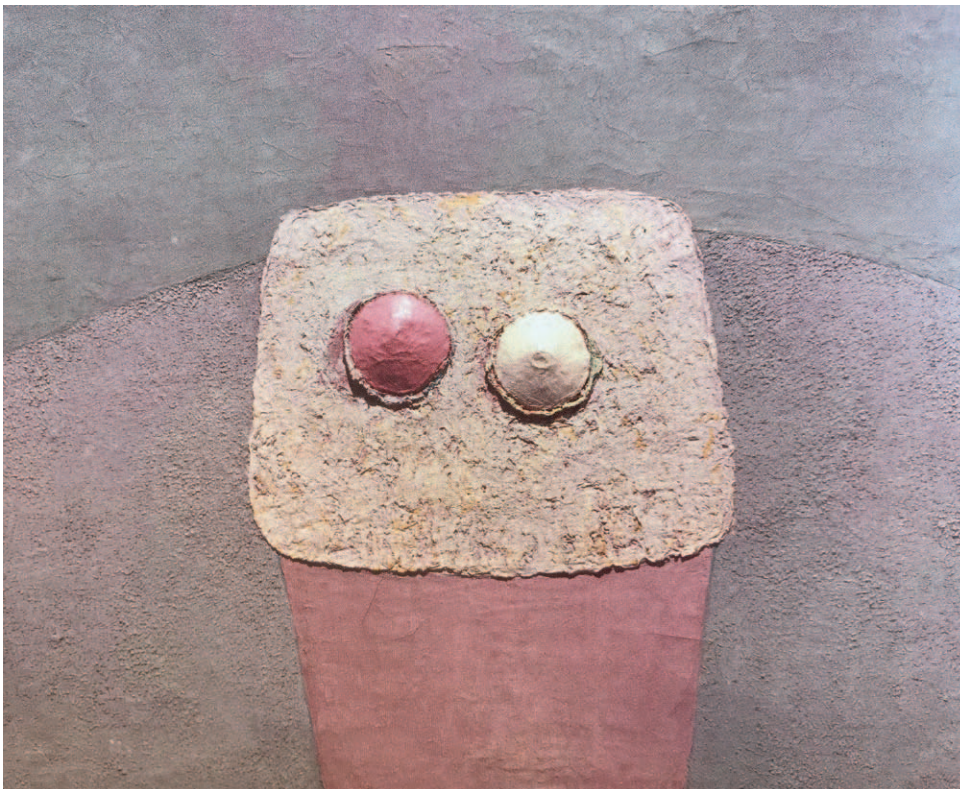
early in her career she created paintings through almost sculptural application of thick paint, thus going beyond the two-dimensionality and flatness

of the classic painting

(Penny Siopis, pers. comm., 9 September 2017) (see Figure 2.1).

In addition to the thick paint, Siopis also used small decorative accessories that are usually applied in cake decorations. The use of these was not arbitrary. Siopis, born in Vryburg, South Africa, in 1953,

Figure 2.1
Penny Siopis,
Queen Cakes, 1982



spent time watching her mother decorate cakes in the family bakery (Penny Siopis, pers. comm., 9 September 2017). Similar to the *Cake Paintings*, Siopis's *History Paintings* also showed allusions to an installation-style work: they looked like the piling up of numerous objects and small figures and found objects on a vertical surface (see Figure 2.2). In these images, the artist painted and created installations with paint. The *Cake Paintings* and the *History Paintings* marked an important



Figure 2.2
Penny Siopis, *History Painting: Patience on a Monument*, 1988

development in the direction toward three-dimensional work in Siopis's artistic development, but it took until 1994 before she undertook and presented her first installation.

Siopis presented her first installation in 1994, as part of the exhibition *Private Views* that was shown at the Standard Gallery in Johannesburg (see Figure 2.3). It marked a turning point in her career. She described the change in her work as follows:

Figure 2.3
Penny Siopis, *Private Views*, 1994

I was always interested in objects as carriers of meaning beyond themselves. But it was not until my Standard Bank show, *Private Views*, in 1994 that I started working with installation, a form that grew from the assemblages, which in turn grew from the collage of my history paintings (Siopis and Olivier 2014, 110).

This was only the beginning of Siopis's fascinating career as an internationally renowned installation artist. Over the next decade she was to develop and exhibit many important installations, in South Africa as well as worldwide (see Appendix 1 and 2).





Figure 2.4, Penny Siopis, *Snare*, 2004

Penny Siopis's installations were as if she was translating a painting into a three-dimensional collage stretching horizontally across the wall (see Figure 3.7). Others extended into space to include the whole room in which they were being presented, creating experiential rooms into which viewers could walk, often to be surrounded or confronted by found and borrowed objects, furniture and sections of scaffolding (see Figure 2.21). In this manner, Siopis created "worlds" of experience with impressive, space-filling installations such as *Snare* (see Figure 2.4) or *The Archive* (see Figure 2.5), inviting the viewer to enter the work with all their senses. Without doubt, the depth of experience made possible with installations differs substantially from that of a two-dimensional painting or even a conventional sculpture. Myriam Gämperli describes this difference in the depth of experience as follows:

Figure 2.5

Penny Siopis, *The Archive*, 2002



There is an essential difference whether the viewer looks through the window or walks through it. To look through a window in this context means to be able to view the artwork only from the outside, one dimensional, only with the visual sense. Carrying this comparison further means that walking through the window allows the viewers to immerse themselves bodily into the artwork and experience it with all their senses (Gämperli 2011, 58).

Gämperli's insight was a decisive and ground-breaking discovery for my own understanding and creative process. I wanted to entice the viewer into physical space, away from the traditional, illusionistic zone of the wall, away from the norms of pictorial space that had for many years held me and other artists in thrall. I wanted to expect more from myself, as well as the viewer: in some way I wanted to challenge, to obligate them to take part, to pull them into my artistic thinking and realisation. This insight added to my growing passion for installation art and for the installation artworks created by other artists. I began to focus more and more intensely on this format as central to the liberation of my creative production.

At present, where Penny Siopis's installation art has been analysed in the literature, it has been seen within the frame of her art more widely, thus always in relation to her painted art. There is no publication that examines her installation art as an oeuvre in itself, for what it expresses in comparison and perhaps even in contrast to her paintings (Penny Siopis, pers. comm., 9 September 2017, Johannesburg). Clearly it makes sense to see Siopis's work as a whole; her artistic endeavours do not change simply because she uses a different medium. My argument here for focusing only on installation art is, however, that her engagement with the themes of memory, archive and history is much more intensive in her installation art and in her use of found objects than in her two-dimensional art.

Coming to this insight, I realised that it sat within a significant trajectory of artworks produced in this mode. It seemed imperative to look back in history to

understand its genesis and how installation became central to innovative forms of art making. It became necessary at this point to step back and look at the artists who paved the way for our current understanding and reception of installation art through their often courageous, challenging and unusual creative works.

Marcel Duchamp: Ready-made and twine

In Paris and New York, a century back in time, a significant and influential milestone for installation art was, without doubt, Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) who radically questioned the contemporary definition of art, thereby laying the foundation for installation art. He consciously moved away from painting, challenging the notions of skill, towards “ready-mades”, everyday objects removed from their original use, re-contextualised in the haloed gallery space and declared as art. In this manner he paved the way for the avant-garde, disrupting perceptions and changing the ground rules for much of twentieth century art (Rosenthal 2003). His influence is still deeply pervasive to this day. His *Bicycle Wheel* (1913) (see Figure 2.6) consists of a wheel



Figure 2.6

Marcel Duchamp, *Bicycle Wheel*, 1913

Figure 2.7

Marcel Duchamp, *Bottle Rack*, 1914

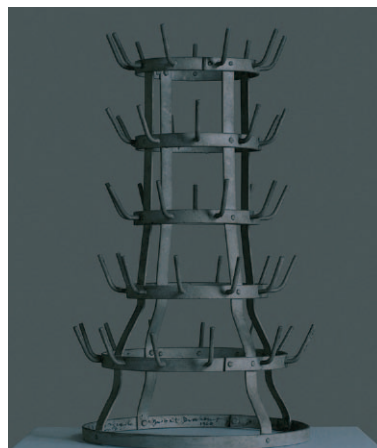


Figure 2.8

Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917



and the front fork of a bicycle fitted on top of a wooden stool, his *Bottle Rack* of 1914 bought at the Parisian Bazar de l'Hôtel-de-Ville department store was placed on a plinth and signed, thus declaring it art (see Figure 2.7). The famous *Fountain* (1917) (see Figure 2.8), a urinal placed up-side-down on a plinth, shows how Duchamp, never shying away from scandal, was of the opinion that even the choice of an object can be a work of artistic expression. He explained that a ready-made is an everyday object deliberately chosen without aesthetic preconception by the artist, not an object created by the artist. He had the remarkable opinion that the role of the viewer was as important if not more so than the role of the artist: "An artwork exists when the viewer has observed it. Until then it is only something that was made, and can disappear without anyone knowing anything about it ..." (Kunstzeiten.de. 2017).

Decades before the Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota created her now famous thread constructs (see Figure 2.9), Duchamp irritated the world's art going public with the use of kilometre-long threads in 1942 in New York in his work *The Twine* (see Figure 2.10). His spanning of string through the space, crea-

Figure 2.9
Chiharu Shiota,
The Key in the Hand, 2015



ting an almost impenetrable web, made it difficult and then impossible to view the panels displaying the artworks. This interference with the exhibition process was completely unheard of at the time, the disruption compounded by children who had been invited by the artist

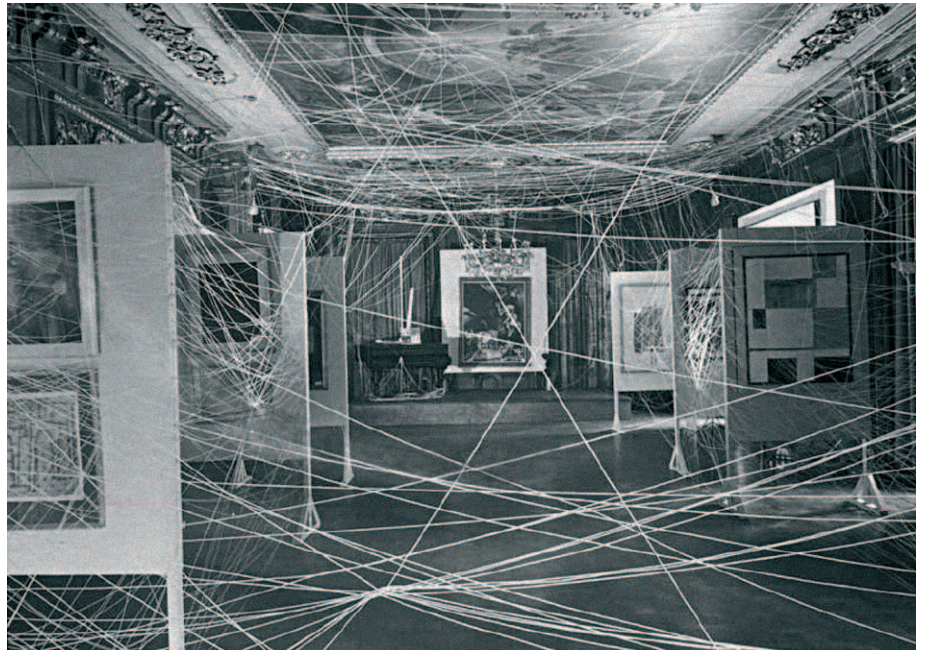


Figure 2.10
Marcel Duchamp, *His Twine*, 1942

to play catch and chase balls at the exhibition opening. The seamless space and ability to view works was challenged by this intervention, forefronting the very nature of the traditional gallery space, highlighting its symbiotic role with the presented art objects.

One of Duchamp's last works was the diorama-like room object *Étant Donnés* (see Figure 2.11) made of an installation of over 100 separate objects arranged in a closed-off room behind an old Spanish wooden door was originally set up in Duchamp's studio in Greenwich Village, New York, and was only made accessible to the public when permanently installed at the Philadelphia Art Museum in 1969 after his death (Cotter 2009). A frustrating and fascinating aspect of the work is that the whole scene is only visually accessible through two eye holes in the door. By reducing the viewing angle to two small peepholes, the observer cannot step into the scene, only observe this curious tableaux. Duchamp questions the approach to two-

Figure 2.11
Marcel Duchamp,
Étant Donnés, 1946–1966



dimensional art (Bahtsetzis 2005, 186ff) and emphasises his rejection of “retinal art” in a 3D installation that can be grasped by the visual sense alone.

Duchamp, an obstreperous artist all his life, delighted in creating confusion by challenging perception and convention. He summarised his approach to art at a symposium in Houston in 1957 when he stated that “the creative act is not just performed by the artist alone”, but also by the viewers who, as they grapple with the work, their own background and the questions they bring with them, make and complete the artwork. Only “the viewer makes the connection between the artwork and the environment by deciphering and interpreting its deeper properties, thereby adding their own contribution to the creative act” (Duchamp, cited in Nemecek 2017).

El Lissitzky: Proun Room

The Russian artist El Lissitzky (1890–1941) inspired architects, painters and designers of the following generations with his ground-breaking works. Born in Rus-

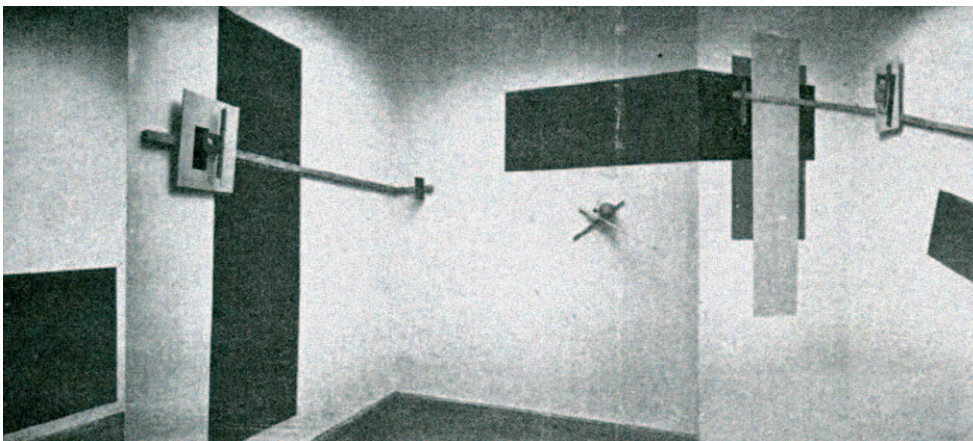


Figure 2.12

El Lissitzky, *Proun Room*, 1923

sia, he studied both in his home country and in Germany. He taught in Russia, and exhibited and was engaged in artistic and creative circles in both Germany and Russia. He died in Moscow at the age of 51. In his *Proun Room* for the Great Berlin Art Exhibition of 1923 he set up his constructivist pictures and reliefs in a truly innovative manner (see Figure 2.12). The rooms contain a mix of art and architecture that exploded the standard picture frame, melting parts of the picture into the immediate architectu-

ral surroundings. Hereby he created a destabilised perception of the world, a space with vaguely mysterious objects, geometric forms and figures, partly painted, partly moulded. They seemed to charge the room dynamically, demanding activity from the viewer, blurring the boundaries between a real and constructed world.

Kurt Schwitters: *Merzbau*

In the same year as El Lissitzky, the poet and artist Kurt Schwitters (1887–1948) began his room-filling artwork *Merzbau* in Hanover, Germany, one of his most influential pieces. Schwitters was born in Hannover and studied and produced there until his art was declared unacceptable by the Nazi regime and he went into exile in 1937. Released from internment in England in 1941, he lived in London and North Eng-

land, where he also passed away. The *Merzbau* was an assemblage of reliefs and sculptures built into his apartment. The installations constructed elements in such a way that viewers were able to walk into it exploring its disjunctures and continuities. For over a decade from 1923 onwards,

Schwitters worked on the

piece that he also called “cathedral of erotic misery” (Haus der Kunst 2001) (see Figure 2.13). It is historically undoubtedly one of the key works

of installation art and has had a continued and profound influence on subsequent generations of artists. The most arresting aspect of Schwitters’ work, then as well

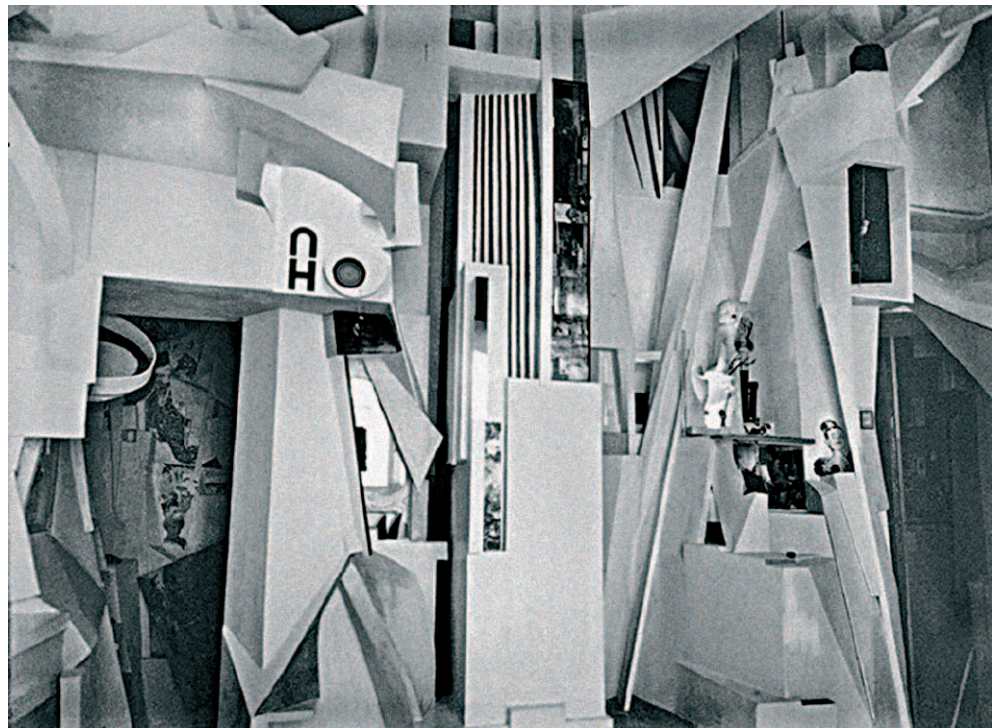


Figure 2.13

Kurt Schwitters, *Merzbau*, 1932



Figure 2.14

Gregor Schneider, *Raum 10, Kaffeezimmer*, 1993



Figure 2.15

Rachel Whiteread, *House*, 1993

as since, was the manner in which the installation extended beyond the space within which it was being created: it “... overflowed the boundaries of his studio” (Lüddemann

2016). Schwitters described his use of space and materials as a collage:

My goal is [a] total artwork, which encompasses all art forms into a unified whole. First I married all art forms together: I collaged poems from words and sentences in order to create a rhythmic drawing; I collaged images and drawings so that sentences can be read from them; I hung pictures so that, apart from the painterly effect, they also form a sculptural element. I did this



Figure 2.16

Phyllida Barlow, *demo*, 2016

in order to smudge the borders between the art forms (Schwitters, quoted in Szeemann 1983, 322).

The influence that Schwitters exerted with his *Merzbau* on later artists can be traced through many works of installation art. Collage-like, labyrinthine buildings can be found in works by Edward Kienholz and Ilya Kabakov, and later in works by contemporary artists such as Gregor Schneider (see Figure 2.14), Rachel Whiteread (see Figure 2.15) and Phyllida Barlow (see Figure 2.17)¹, to name but a few.

While Duchamp, Schwitters and El Lissitzky set the initial ground rules for an evolving installational practice in the early twentieth century, the artistic engagement with interior spaces and installation as an art form burgeoned in the 1960s and 1970s. This was also at this time that the terms “installation” and “environment” art are coined and set down. It is without question that the origin of twenty-first century installation art lies in the works of the avant-garde, the happenings, environments and performances, in the works of the

¹ Gregor Schneider, born 1969 in Rheydt, Germany. Rachel Whiteread, born 1963 in Ilford, United Kingdom. Phyllida Barlow, born 1944 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, United Kingdom.

Minimalist Art movement of the 1960s and 1970s and in the works that critiqued institutions and the location of specific works in the 1970s (see Schlüter 2008). Several of the artists seem to have had a critical impact on the development of installation art in this period, particularly in America and Europe.

Allan Kaprow: “Everything is art, art is everything”

Allan Kaprow, working mainly in New York, was hugely significant in the avant-garde movement and the initiation of what was to become known as environmental art. Born in 1937 in California, United States of America, he studied in New

York and then taught at various American Universities, longest at the University of California in San Diego. He passed away in 2006 in California. In 1957 Kaprow described his work in the following manner:

I just simply filled up the whole gallery ... When you opened the door you found yourself in the midst of an entire environment ... The materials were varied: sheets of plastic, crumpled up cello-



Figure 2.17

Allan Kaprow, *The Happening*, 1962

phane, tangles of Scotch tape, sections of slashed and daubed enamel and pieces of coloured cloth ... five tape machines spread around the space played electronic sounds which I had composed (Kaprow, cited in Martinique 2017).

Today, Kaprow is seen as the father of “The Happening”, a collage-like art form melding together all areas of art, dissolving the boundaries between active and passive observation, allowing for a maximum of openness in the creation process. The declared goal of a “Happening” was to widen the traditional understanding of art, to draw the viewers actively into the event, to free their creative powers

and thereby to tie art into daily life (Haus der Kunst 2006; Ursprung 2003) (see Figure 2.17).

Kaprow's influence on installation art lies in particular in the manner in which he broke open the structure of the work, emphasised the role of the viewer to enter the work process, experiencing the nature of the work, allowing ever greater openness, and enmeshing daily life and routine into the artwork.

Edward Kienholz: Light, sound and the smells of a pub in *The Beanery*

Edward Kienholz (1927–1994), an American artist born and educated in Washington and working in California, came to the fore as a representative of the young branch of installation art in the 1960s. A significant aspect of Kienholz's artistic positioning was his distinction between wooden reliefs, which he first made in the 1950s, and “environments”, which he saw as room-filling installations. Characteristically his stage-like arrangements were filled with life-size plaster figures and everyday objects found objects collected at flea markets. The use of a thick layer of gloss and paint was used as a way of fusing his found ob-

Figure 2.18

Edward Kienholz, *Roxy's*, 1962





Figure 2.19
Edward Kienholz,
The Beanery, 1965

jects into a unity, giving them a cohesive meaning. Effects created by light and sound played an important part in creating an emotive context (Schuler 2006). His art challenged viewers' values and taboos, as in his exhibition *Roxy's* (1962) (see Figure 2.18) where childhood memories and teenage explorations of sexuality are evoked while in his work *Back Seat Dogde '38* adult sexuality and taboos are forefronted (Kippenberger 2010). In the late 1960s he developed the radical notion of a *Concept Tableaux*, a written and framed description of an artwork that would only be produced on commission.

Kienholz intensively utilised the possibilities of light, sound, space and even olfactory influences in order to create an overwhelming holistic experience. In his famous installation *The Beanery* from 1965 he created a walk-in artwork that allowed the viewer to experience his favourite pub in Los Angeles inclusive of old

smoke and beer smells (Cumming 2009) (see Figure 2.19). While Schwitters and El Lissitzky worked with simpler technical opportunities and optical and technical methods of their time, Kienholz initiated a generation of artists that used excessive objects, masses of paint, media and materials as a kind of installation, drawing on unlimited resources and initiating overwhelming emotionally charged and sensory experiences. In retrospect, one can also see Kienholz as an important impetus for central tendencies of contemporary art, such as those coming to fruition in Jonathan Meese, Thomas Hirschhorn and John Bock. Similar to Kienholz, they draw on the anarchic and grotesque in their work, draw in masses of materials, use them in a somewhat irreverent manner by overstepping boundaries as acts of provocation.

Installation art from the 1970s

From the 1970s onwards, the term “installation art” came to be used to refer to artworks that engaged viewers holistically, with all their senses. An installation is often temporary in nature, and engages viewers in such a way as to make them part of the art. It uses a multitude of objects and materials ranging from everyday objects to animals and particular light settings (Martinique 2017). The term is now used more broadly to capture art that places sculpture, objects, paintings, film and other items in space and in significant relation to each other. Not the individual items themselves, but their relationships with each other within a larger context is crucial to create a visual and conceptual coherence. Through its collage-like expansion into space, an installation not unlike its predecessors can be said to allow a viewer access into the artwork in a subjective, sensual manner, enabling artists to communicate in an embodied manner through their work.

A milestone in the establishment of installation art within the art-historical canon was undoubtedly the Venice Biennale of 1976. Its curator, Germano Celant, achieved more than any before him to initiate a subsumed modernist spatial art

show by the name of *Ambient Art*. The unique aspect of this globally acclaimed Biennale was the manner in which he curated different art forms of painting, photography, architecture and design in relation to each other. He achieved a

remarkable and brave coup by bringing together historical reconstructions of famous room installations from the early 1920s – such as El Lissitzky's *Proun Room* and rooms by Kandinsky, Mondrian and Schlemmer – for the first time in one location, creating an overview of installation art that made visible its complex genesis. Works from artists from the 1960s such as George Segal, Allan Kaprow, Christo, Andy Warhol, and Michelangelo Pistoletto (*Sello* 1976) were also exhibited and he expanded the Biennale into open-air spaces around the city actively embracing a wider public.

Installation art of the 1980s was marked in particular by the emergence of the installation artist Ilya Kabakov (1933–) with his



Figure 2.20

Ilya Kabakov, *The Man who Flew into Space from his Apartment*, 1985

“total installation” (see Figure 2.20). To him this was a “completely worked room” (Kabakov 1995) that becomes a capsule for the viewer, thereby turning into a representation of the state in which modern humanity finds itself:

I built my world from all this, grew it, created it, and I live inside my capsule. My room, though, is only the outer, material expression of another capsule – the inner world of my imagination, the mass of problems I live with every day. This capsule is my second body (Kabakov 1995, 37).

He followed this with:

The installation as model of the world is just this capsule, having found its “plastic face”. It is the outer shell a person can’t remove, and through which alone he can see the inner and outer world (Kabakov 1995, 37).

Kabakov sees the total artwork as a way for viewers to enter into the inner world of the artist, and to experience this world through their own senses and bodies. This points in some ways to my own work, defined by a similar understanding of showing my inner life through my art. Here again I think of Siopis’s installations that engage and tell of private things, of family stories, through the presentation of memory objects, thereby allowing and evoking a certain intimacy.

Not only is it exciting that installation art has now become an integral part of contemporary art, but also that large installation works are increasingly becoming part of private collections as a matter of course. Installation art, therefore, also has a catalytic effect on the art industry. As early as the 1980s, large art exhibitions, biennales and even art fairs embraced the distinct trend of installational presentation forms, incorporating representative works into their exhibition repertoires. Two of the most important global exhibitions, the documenta in Kassel (Germany) and the Biennale in Venice (Italy), paid tribute to installation art long before the term itself became accepted in the general art vocabulary. The Belgian curator Jan Hoet (1936–2014) achieved a successful and impressive show with the documenta 1992 which featured many installation pieces, including that of Kabakov. Jan Hoet included these as a “personal and conscious positioning to contemporary society” (Wagner 2017).

Against this background of the beginnings and emergence of installation art, it is exciting and challenging to view the possibilities for its future development. We live in an age of 4D and 5D effects where observers experience on-screen action with more senses than ever before. Artificial rain, wind machines and vibrating chairs induce physical sensations. Where the cinematic set-up is appropriate, scent is sprayed at appropriate moments to create a fifth dimension. The evolving

virtual reality world breaks the limits of the possible, opening experiential worlds that a few years ago would have been thought of as pure science fiction. This area of multimedia art is developing rapidly, offering us entirely new and overwhelming possibilities of creative expression. Just as George Orwell's vision of the future, located in 1984, has become history from our point of view, new, currently unthought-of channels of multi-sensory experiences will open up the bounds of installation art. Within this broad swathe of the fluid developments that have led to this enormous variety in the types of installational art, many artists have found a new way to make and express their worlds.

Siopis's work can be centrally placed within this context of installation art, with her use of and expanse into space, pulling in multitudes of objects and using the relationships between them to create meaning, employing light and light effects, moving images and film. Similar to Kienholz and others, she draws on found objects to point to, conjure up, reconnect and critique the past, the present and the self.

Characteristics of installation art

What becomes very clear when engaging the literature (see, e.g., Bahtsetzis 2005; Bishop 2005; Gämperli 2011; Houston Jones 2016; Lüddemann 2016; Petersen 2015; Schlüter 2008; Rosenthal 2003; Rebentisch 2002) is that installation art is a complex and many-layered phenomenon confronting art theory with its rapacious transformation and its history of challenging boundaries perceived as confining. Historians and theoreticians have attempted singular definitions to clearly capture its ever morphing characteristics. British art historian Claire Bishop voices the difficulties of doing so: "Today, almost any arrangement of objects in a space can be described as installation art, ranging from a conventional exhibition of paintings to a number of sculptures cleverly arranged in a garden ... Installation art has become a catch-all term that points to its staging but ends up in near meaninglessness" (Nedo 2017). The production of installations increased

markedly in the 1990s, and with it came a growing acceptance of the form. The vast variety of practical techniques and methods all captured in the term “installation” has widened to such an extent that it is difficult to keep an overview (Bahtsetzis 2005, 5). Yet, it is remarkable that there was little theoretical research and analysis of this art form. Peter Osborne (2001, 147) captured this at the turn of the century: “Installation is now the globally dominant form of art. Yet oddly – perhaps symptomatically – its concept remains untheorised” and many have rather simply described aspects of installation art. Sotirios Bahsetzis argues that the difficulty of capturing the essence of installation art lies exactly in the nature of the art: the “main characteristic of the art form ... is a near continuous crossing of the borders of form and of definitions of art” (Bahtsetzis 2005, 5).

Katharina Schlüter’s discussion of installation art demonstrates the many layers of the phenomenon:

Installations are intermedial works, connected to viewer, location and context, which manifest in the mental and physical perception of the observer as complex systems within accessible, relational and contextual spaces. In that way, installation artworks always have specific spatial qualities that imply specific viewer roles and allow the observer to process the internal pattern of the artist (Schlüter 2008, 75).

Following on Schlüter’s succinct description, I identify five factors that feature repeatedly in installation art. It is these factors that I suggest to use for a more precise description and identification of installation works. On my way to identify these five traits, I find it useful to begin with the simplest, most general definition on offer to see what aspects are seen to define it, for an understanding that viewers who walk into my installation will have. The *Collins Dictionary* (2017) explains installation art as “an art exhibit often involving video or moving parts where the relation of the parts to the whole is important to the interpretation of the piece.” This definition draws out that installations often play with a multiplicity of materials and with the relationship between them. I will explore this aspect

first, and then four additional characteristics that this definition crucially misses: space, the viewer, the senses and the body, and the dimension of time.

Significance of space, space as medium

Space is the main factor in installation art as is its perception. Its critical role has recently been demonstrated in the highly topical show *Moving is in Every Direction*, shown at the Hamburger Bahnhof by the Museum for Contemporary Art in Berlin, Germany, in June/July 2017 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 2017). The exhibition manifests space as a vital element, a fact that the curators underlined with an almost laughably simple quote by Allan Kaprov from 1958: “Environments must be walked into” (Gebbers und Knapstein 2017, 5).

Figure 2.21
Penny Siopis,
Sympathetic Magic, 2002

A principle characteristic of installation art is the utilisation of and



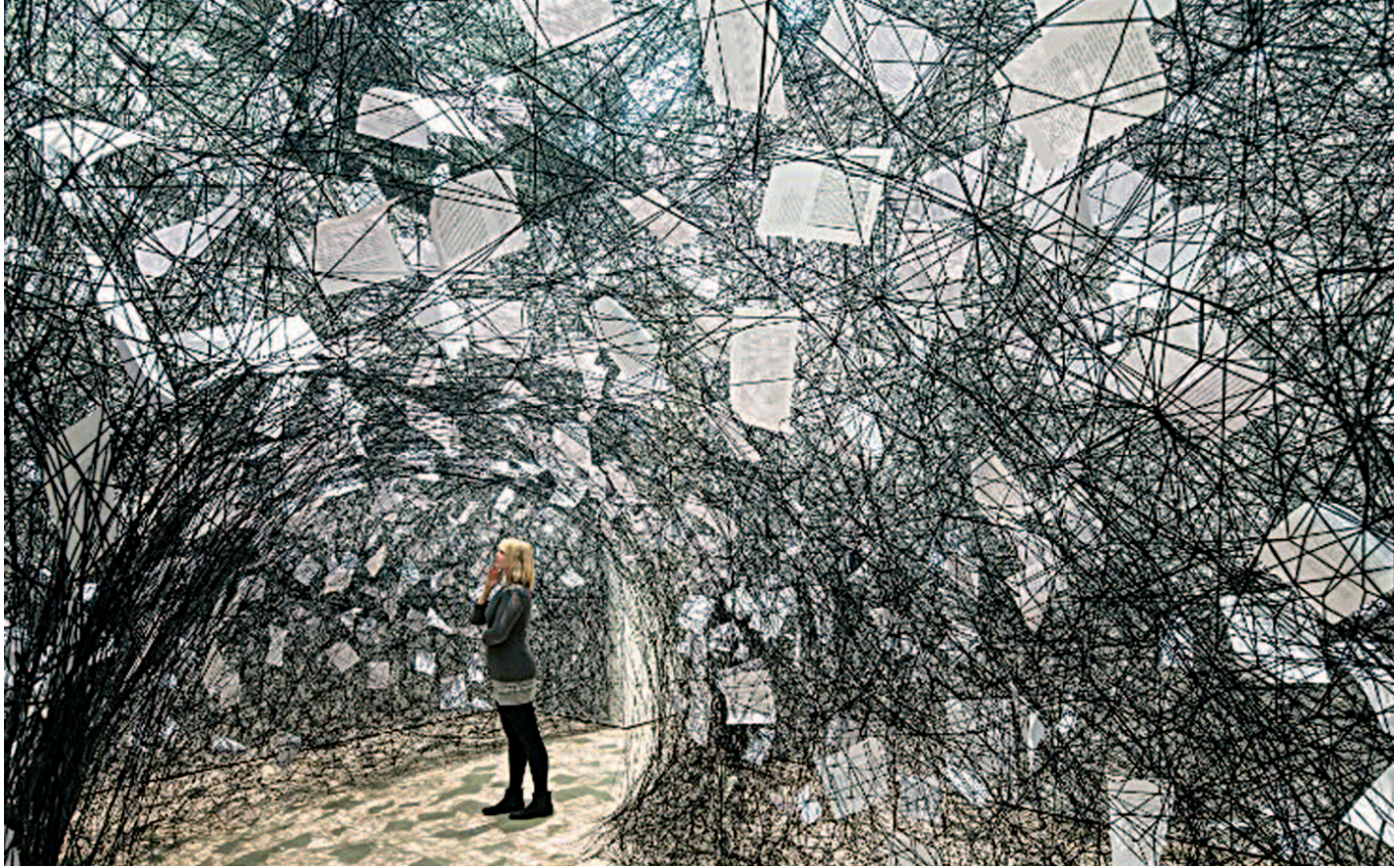


Figure 2.22

Chiharu Shiota, *Love Letters*, 2013

spread into real space. In contrast to painting, the experimental use of real space expands installations by a further dimension, consciously leaving behind planarity and moving towards true spatiality. Petersen describes this as follows: “One does not experience an installation by seeing ‘into’ a picture space, separate from one’s own space. The viewer stands within the space of the work itself, surrounded by it and thus positioned as a living presence within the scene of the work, a bodily participant” (Petersen 2015, 55). This reminds me specifically of Siopis’s installation *Sympathetic Magic*, in which the viewer observes from all angles since the installation stretches up over multiple stories, including a staircase (see Figure 2.21). Chiharu Shiota works in a similar manner: creating internal rooms with the help of a special rigging arrangement of threads that consciously direct the viewer’s movements (see Figure 2.22).

Here we have to distinguish between built interior rooms and outside public spaces. In terms of interior spaces, we also have to differentiate exactly whether we are talking about a generic exhibition space or a space created by the hand of the artist. Rooms and spaces created by installations do not have to be properly

built constructions, but can be hinted at and created with the use of fabrics and other materials, such as Shiota's thread riggings or Siopis's nets and cloths, or the use of light effects (see *The Snare* in Figure 2.4). Lähnemann describes the use of these different types of space in the following way: "Installation art is characterised primarily through its relationship to space, moving between the transparent, open relationship with the existing space or exhibition space and the space internal to the installation, which is independent of the exhibition space" (Lähnemann 2011).

In installations in outside spaces or in public spaces, the artist poses completely different questions to the viewer: questions about what is private and what is public, questions about trust and curiosity, about courage, and about the viewer's openness to engage in communication all play a crucial role and are central characteristics for how this type of installation art is perceived.

Materials and media

The understanding of the materials and media employed in installation art has changed drastically. While the use of found or everyday objects, in the work of Duchamp and Kienholz, was initially used so as to be seen as a form of protest culture, today this is now naturalised, seen as acceptable practice (Kearney 2013; 2016).

As evidenced in Siopis's work, there is no limitation today on the use of materials object and media in installation art. Almost anything can be utilised: natural as well as artificial objects, painting and sculpture, current media such as film, animation or different kinds of photography, live performance art, sound and audio. There are no borders in installation between art and life, as everyday objects find their place in installations. Christian Boltanski, for example, has used large bundles of used clothing and shoes in his installations (see Figure 2.23). Traditional building materials, such as wood, steel, cardboard or con-

crete, unusual everyday objects can be taken out of their normal context and repurposed to become visual material within installations, incorporated to become something unexpected and even irritating. Installations therefore often play with moments of irritation, often enhanced with the use of sound, light or video. Materials often allow the development of narrative structures that draw viewers into the experience, as in Penny Siopis's *Charmed Lives* or *Sympathetic Magic*.

Where Siopis's use of objects is innovative and idiosyncratic is in the objects and documents she borrows from archives and collections. She places these in relationship to objects from her own life and inherited objects as well as with found and collected objects. The combination of these different types of objects is a striking trait of Siopis's installations, and is instrumental in her strategy of "communication through objects". She also often reuses the same objects in installations after installation. This form of work requires a nimbleness and openness in an artistic practice where not everything can be planned. Siopis reacts to what she finds: she has to engage in the moment, possibly changing her plans or throwing them out altogether, rethinking and putting her own objects into new and innovative relationships. This openness makes Siopis such a fascinating artist and academic, retaining this openness through the years of her artistic and academic career, allowing the new to emerge and opening herself up to constant change.

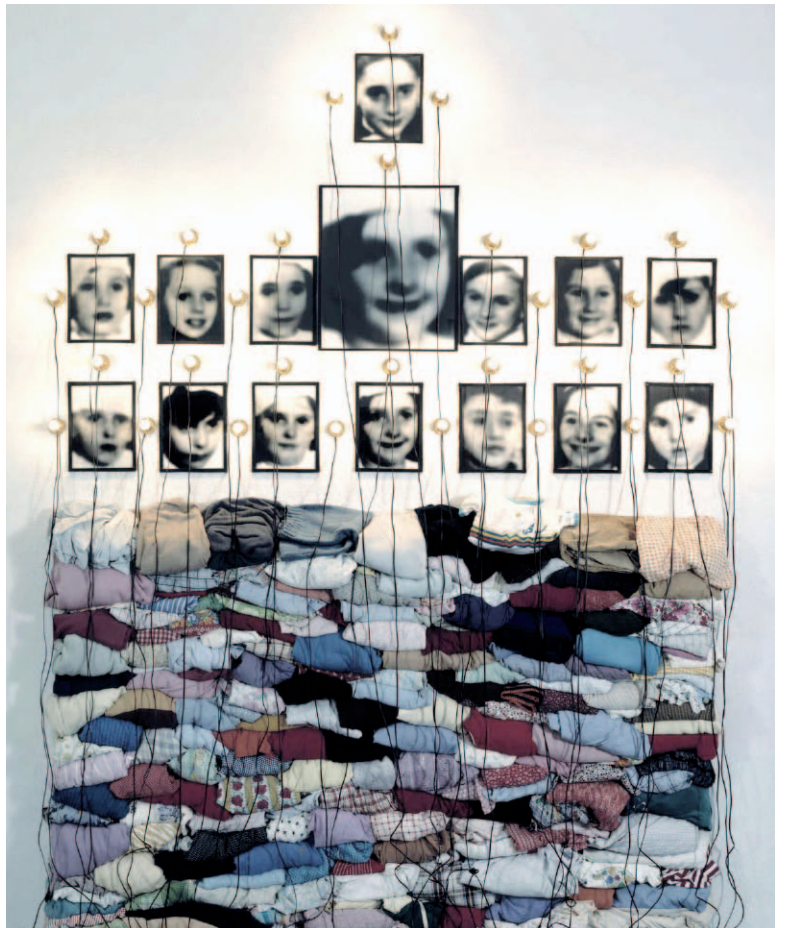


Figure 2.23
Christian Boltanski,
Installation Untitled (Reserve), 1989

Role of the integrated observer

The spatiality of an installation means that the installation creates a special context that a viewer can approach holistically and sometimes even enter and be surrounded by. This presents a new immersed observational quality and differentiates installation art from classical two-dimensional pictorial conventions or the dioramic. There are different ways in which artists use space to draw the viewer in, engage them purely optically or physically.

Observing how installation art has developed over time, it is possible to describe it as a staggered process with the following steps. In early installation art, viewers were only allowed to view the installation from a certain point of view. They were not allowed to enter the room nor to touch things, as for example in Duchamp's work *Étant Donnés*. In the next stage, viewers were assigned a more active role: they were allowed to enter and cross the entire room and to study and view the work from all sides and angles. In contrast to a two-dimensional picture, the three-dimensionality of the artwork meant that the viewer was able to perceive the work in space. In a third step, viewers were given the most active role or as many of their senses as possible were engaged. They were allowed to experience all objects in a room with all senses, sometimes even to move objects in space or to recombine them in the room. This can be seen as a continuation of the Schwitters' and El Lissitzky's attempts to dissolve the fixation on singular, inward-looking objects and open up an artwork towards the experience of a whole aesthetic situation (Bahsetzis 2005, 256). It becomes clear here that the intensity of a viewer's experience increases exponentially with the range of opportunities for engagement with the artwork (Blumenkranz 2010, 37).

Claire Bishop describes the role of the active observer:

Installation art therefore differs from traditional media (sculpture, painting, photography, video) in that it addresses the viewer directly as a literal presence in space. Rather than imagining the viewer as a pair of disembodied eyes that survey the work

from a distance, installation art presupposes an embodied viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision. This insistence on the literal presence of the viewer is arguably the key characteristic of installation art (Bishop 2005, 6; emphasis in original).

Bishop's words point directly to the next characteristic of installation art, the senses.

Senses engaged

As mentioned previously, engaging the senses is an essential attribute of installations. These artworks consciously avoid working with only one isolated sense: they rather speak to the multi-sensory aspects of sensory reception that is fundamentally tied to an "... active perceptive human physique ..." (Hinkes 2017, 312). Thus, in contrast to paintings that appeal only to sight, installations draw in the observer by appealing to the senses of sight, touch, smell, hearing and even taste. As Anne Ring Petersen argued: "installations are large-scale artworks for the viewer to enter, accommodating contemporary demands for spectacular, aesthetically staged events and sense-provoking cultural experiences" (Petersen 2015, 9). Though viewers are not able to touch, move or rearrange individual objects in Siopis's installations, her works still engage many senses. Stuffed dead animals, dusty books or old finds from attics, old storerooms and garages, bring in, whether planned or not, their own aesthetic appearance and an inherent olfactory experience into the exhibition situation. The same applies to my installations, where discarded furniture, drawers and old floor lamps all exude their own historic and distinctive smells.

By appealing to the senses of viewers, the border between space and artwork, viewer and space disappears, and a possibly irritating openness and unexpectedness appears in its place. Gämperli argues how the integration of the senses in this kind of artistic arrangement enables viewers to have particularly intensive experiences:

Space is not only experienced physically, but also with senses in imagination and memory. Sensory experiences are direct and immediate, while imagination and memory are indirect, temporally removed. Therefore, the experience of an installation is stored and contained as a new experience (Gämperli 2011, 58).

Emanuelle Moureaux argues that experiencing installations through means of the senses means that they also address the emotions of viewers: “It is challenging to define installation. It has the essence of sculpture, architecture and sometimes poetry. The prime incentive of installations is to give the audience a three-dimensional spatial experience through emotions” (Moureaux 2015, iii). To view an installation through the senses thus means to allow oneself to be immersed into the environment, the created rooms and experiences, drawing both on one’s personal reading and engagement with objects and the effects of light and smell, as well as simultaneously attempting to “read” the artists’ intentions.

Time as medium

When we speak of time and its meaning in the context of installation art, we have to be aware, the topic of time in art is a wide and unmanageable field of study. One can approach the concept of time through philosophical, aesthetic, economic or sociological theories but this would still not enable us to penetrate its inordinate complexity. Time is an all encompassing matrix, the most studied subject in creative art. Why is this?

Time surrounds us from the first to the last second of our lives, yet is not really fully comprehensible. It exists a priori, elapses whether we want it to or not, scares us, plagues us and sometimes does not move fast enough. At other times it moves too fast and we wish we could give permanence to a moment as it is at its most wonderful. Time incorporates everything that is unexpected and mysterious. Time has something monumental and unfathomable, it has occupied human imagination for millennia. Although little is more objectively measurable than time, it is

very difficult to understand and explore individual experience of time. Time is ambivalent: on the one hand, there is the clear pulsation of objective time; on the other hand is the fact that everyone experiences time in a different way, as an expression of personal experiences. Anette Naumann captures this in a very apt manner:

There are therefore two main differentiations of time: objective time, and experienced time, as defined by Augustine. I could equally call it the scientifically measurable versus the subjectively experienced time (Naumann 1998: [2]).

Petersen proposes that installation art can represent the phenomenon of time in many different ways:

It can press it together, expand it, speed it up, put it on standby or fragment it. Installations can cross-cut in time or sample it; they can emphasise time's transience or the subjective experience of existential time, etc. As a genre, installation art is so diverse that it can seem impossible to generalise about its way of organising time, except for one thing: that reception time stretches out into a duration, a temporal situation (Petersen 2015, 199).

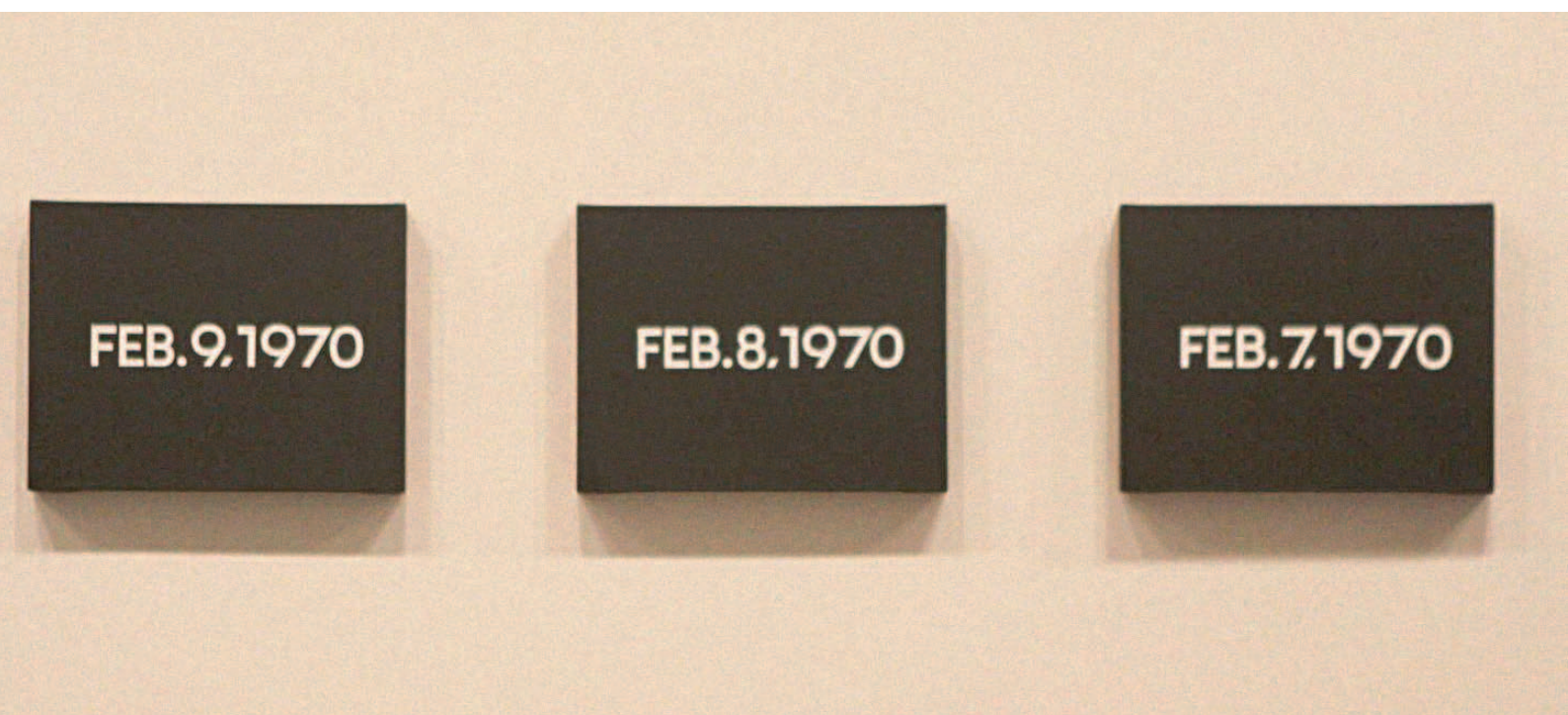
It is a special quality of an installation that a range of timelines are placed in relation to each other. While the viewer sees the work in the present, the artwork can create connections between history and current events. A further special quality of installation art is that it is ephemeral: many installations are only accessible to the public for a limited amount of time and are then dismantled or even destroyed due to cost of storage or other reasons. Even world famous artists such as Phyllida Barlow (Kunsthalle Zurich 2017) or Gregor Schneider (pers. comm., 7 May 2015, Venice) have to dismantle or store their monumental installations or room constructions after large exhibitions, providing a challenge for conservators. Penny Siopis told me in a personal conversation (9 September 2017) that she completely dismantles all her installations, storing the objects in her own private archive. Thus, even as she is building an installation, she is conscious that she is only creating it for a certain period, a brief moment in time.

The ephemeral nature of installation art brings to the fore the fact that it has an intense relationship with the archive. When installations can no longer be experienced in their physical form, one has to work with archival documentation and reference material, photos and videos, to reconstruct them. The immediate experience of an installation in relation to the memory of it as an event is therefore an important part of the overall construction of the installation. A painting, which is much easier to manage from a conservation point of view, can be preserved in its whole, a fixed aesthetic perception, while installation works can only survive for a short period and thus become an acute witness to their social and political ties.

The factor of time plays an important, even determining role in installation art doing so at four different levels. We can look at *historical time*, the time in history when a work was created: there is a big difference whether a work was created in 2017 or 200 years ago. The time when a work was created is also mirrored in its expression and sets clear connections to its social, political and cultural context. The *creation period* defines the time that the artist requires to produce the work. Depending on the artwork, it can play a critical role whether the

Figure 2.24

On Kawara, *Date Paintings*, 1990s



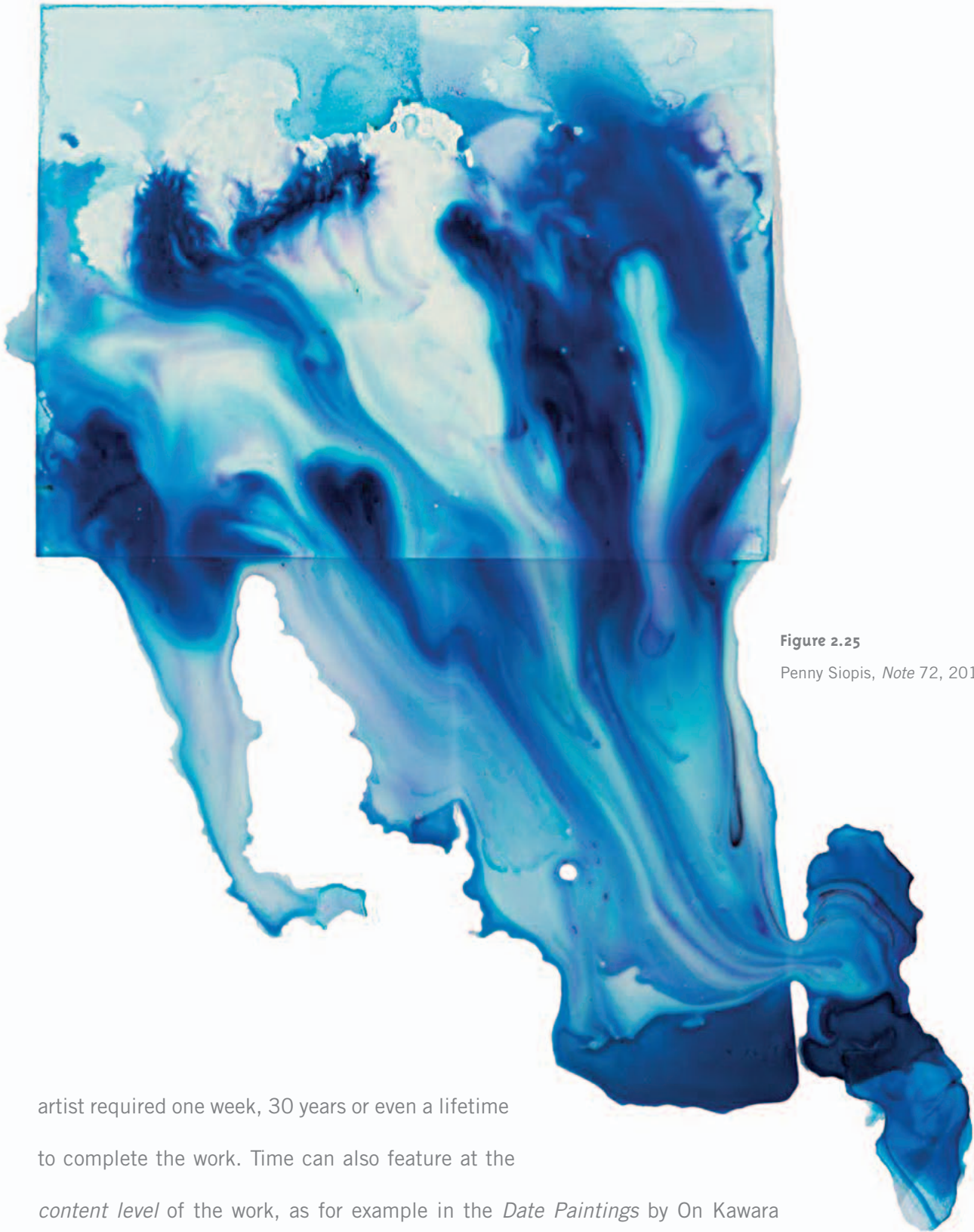


Figure 2.25
Penny Siopis, *Note 72*, 2016

artist required one week, 30 years or even a lifetime to complete the work. Time can also feature at the *content level* of the work, as for example in the *Date Paintings* by On Kawara (1932–2014), a Japanese conceptual artist who lived and worked in New York (see Figure 2.24). And finally is *reception time*, the period it takes a viewer to look at and take in an artwork. Looking at a work for just a few moments obviously means something different from slowly meandering through an accessible installation, experiencing it and spending time in it. The intensity of experience is tied to the time spent actively perceiving the work.

Penny Siopis's recent work speaks to the importance of the creation period. During a 2017 residency at the Maitland Institute, Cape Town, she shows time to be an elementary factor in the production process of large-scale paintings (Speakes 2017a; 2017b; Siopis 2017). For these she poured litres of glue onto the canvas, mixing in small amounts of ink and then moving the canvases to create flows of ink and glue – just like the flow or trickling passing of time. The final painting only visible and fixed after several hours, sometimes days, when the glue and ink mixture has settled and dried in its final form and a visual record of a frozen time. In this instance, the element of time plays a crucial and visible part in Siopis's new way of working (see Figure 2.25).

The speeding up of societal and technological processes over the last decades has seen a dramatic increase since the 1980s in art exhibitions and artworks in which artists confront and integrate the phenomena and subject of time. Past experienced time is dragged back to be re-experienced in the new light of the day. The illumination of transience and the flow of time reawakens a viewer's memories, and connect the artist's personal memory to collective memory. There is a clear connection here to Penny Siopis, because her content also deals with time, in the sense of a critical intercourse with contemporary themes (Greslé 2015; Kühl 2010). The history of installation art is a history of change that – how could it be otherwise? – is closely connected to changes in viewing practices, in aesthetic perception, and even in political and social contexts that have taken place over the past century. Artistic and societal developments are without doubt mutually influential. Like no other art form, the form and construction of installation art draws in viewers, pulls them in and lets them become part of a new whole, part of its time, part of its reactionary moment in history. ●



3 Memory and archive in Siopis's installation works

If walls (chairs, lamps, cutlery, or bowls) could talk, what tales they would tell?

(Siopis, cited by Smith 2005)

This chapter presents a critical analysis of four installation works from Penny Siopis's oeuvre. I am consciously limiting myself to these four works as they deal directly with the subjects of memory and archive. Her installations and works that engage with the themes of shame, gender and sexuality, as for example *Pinky* *Pinky and other Xen* (Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, 2002) or *Three Essays on Shame* (Freud Museum, London, 2005) will not be part of the current discussion (see Appendix 1 for an overview of Siopis's installations). The four works analysed here were produced over the time period from 1997 to 2014, the year of Siopis's major retrospective. This is also the period during which Siopis created most of her installations and where a development in her installation work is clearest. In conclusion the chapter discusses Siopis's current installation work, suggesting that her present concerns have close ties to these earlier works.

When we talk of memory and archive it is necessary first to broadly define the mechanism and character of this subject area. Memory as a concept in the social sciences was shaped in particular by Maurice Halbwachs ([1941, 1952] 1992) and Pierre Nora (1989) who explored how narratives, traditions and artefacts are invested with the collective memory of nations, thus becoming critical for the building of shared national identities. Halbwachs proposed that the meanings of

memories of the past, hooked onto objects from the past, have more to do with the present than with the past. Nora, in turn, showed how the remembrance of certain parts of the past necessitated the forgetting of others, thus pointing to the way in which collective memories are shaped and contextualised. Halbwachs' and Nora's views open up queries regarding the complexity of how Siopis, and I myself, use memory in our works: How do they reflect our personal memories? Or collective memories? How are our personal memories influenced and shaped by collective memories? And how do collective memories become personal?

Archives were long considered the repository of that which defined a nation and a state, containing definitive traces of the past that could be mined for fact and for truth, in the sense of historian Leopold von Ranke who searched for objectivity in the writing of history. This understanding of the archive began to be broken up with decolonisation in Africa and Asia: the attempt to write national histories of the newly independent states that did not place the colonial into the centre required historians to engage with new types of sources, in particular oral sources. These sources were very different in nature from the written sources previously assumed as sole repositories of true knowledge, and brought with them a deep debate in historical disciplines about the nature of fact and truth and the way they were being used in the Western creation of, definition of and control over knowledge (Day 2008).

In South Africa, the experience of totalitarian Apartheid demonstrated that its seemingly rational and scientific approach to history excluded and distorted, and that the traces it mined were not neutral, but produced or "figured" a biased history by the processes involved in their archiving (Hamilton et al. 2002). An archive is thus not neutral; it needs to be interrogated in term of who collects, for what reasons and aims, what is collected and, even more critically, what is discarded, dismissed and ignored. This choice of what traces are kept and which ones become the refuse of history are critical for Siopis's understanding of history: that

which is retained to represent the past in the future is definitive for what “version of the past gets to be remembered, which memories are privileged, and what the loci are for the production of memory” (Nuttall 1998, 1). Or, as Foucault has indicated, an archive “is not simply an institution, but rather the law of what can be said, the system of statements, or rules of practice, that give shape to what can and cannot be said” (quoted in Hamilton et al. 2002, 9).

Breaking down the master narrative of Apartheid and beginning to conceptualise that which could come in its place was a process that took place both in academic circles as well as in public life through the 1990s and 2000s as Penny Siopis was creating her installations. The recognition that previous history writing had refused to acknowledge certain traces as being part of history now led to the attempt of writing alternative accounts of the past, those that would address the distortions of past versions. For this writing, new sources for and of the past, new traces, new archives had to be found: where some authors began to excavate oral histories (Denis and Ntsimane 2008), others such as Njabulo Ndebele or Andre Brink (in Nuttall 1998) investigated how fictional narratives could allow a new approach and understanding of the past, and how these narratives could begin to sketch new possibilities for the future. Historians in turn began to investigate “the particular processes by which the record was produced and subsequently shaped, both before its entry into the archive, and increasingly as part of the archival record” (Hamilton et al. 2002, 9). In this manner they attempted to excavate how the record changes over time, and to identify what is missing or what has been cut from it. In a similar manner, Siopis began to engage with historical objects or objects that stood as metaphors for the past, to pose questions about the stories and histories that have been written and to investigate what objects that are discarded say about the histories that we tell each other and through which we define ourselves, a point that will be taken up again in the detailed discussion of Siopis’s installations.

Memory is a critical basis for this engagement with the past: memory indicates that there is not one single version of the past, but many aspects and perspectives that flow into it; that there cannot be one hegemonic version, but that positionalities have to be recognised, acknowledged and integrated. Memory, however, brings in its own set of complexities: memory can be fragile and crumbly; it is by definition selective and suppresses as much as it remembers (Brink 1998, 36). It can distort, and it can adapt to and react with new contexts to create new forms and shapes of memory (Yow 2005). One form that memory can take is nostalgia, a theme that Jacob Dlamini (2009) interrogated recently in a study of the expression of longing for the days of Apartheid. His stories shows that nostalgia often includes a selective remembrance of the past that can include the projection of a measure of order onto the past that might not in fact have been there or experienced at the time. His work also shows that this positive memory of order and structure in the past says more about the disordered and insecure socio-political as well as economic present than about the nature of the past. Penny Siopis's objects can similarly evoke a notion of nostalgia in the viewer – especially the objects that she uses in her *Will* project from 2014. They may remind the observer of bygone times, reading certain newspapers, paying a certain amount of money for bread, playing with certain toys. By invoking nostalgia and pulling in the viewer, she also immediately confronts the viewer with the question of what these objects and this positive association with them mean in the present and for those in a projected society of the future.

We use memory as recognition of the present. We use memory to allow or initiate renewal and change. Memory aids affirmation of self, and in some ways endows us with identity. We only really know who we are when we know where we come from. Memory is always marked by individual mood and state, and changes with time. In order to remember an action, an experience has to be completed, which is why memory tends to involve a sense of loss (Kunsthalle Düsseldorf 2012).

The contextual connection between memory, but also the interaction with the loss of memory, has been a central interest to me as an artist. There are myriads of ways in which to engage with the subject of memory in art. A particularly fruitful one is the exploration of archives and the employment of archival strategies, as used or incorporated in the works of Penny Siopis.

The archive has a role in art at a variety of levels. On the one hand, it plays a large part in museology: one clearly defined task of the museum is to preserve, research, publicise and exhibit material and transmit the immaterial traces of humanity and its environment. On the other hand, the archive has as important a role in the work of contemporary artists: the act of searching, discovering, excavating and, finally, documenting and comparing, thus engaging with archive, connects those working artistically and creatively in the act of representing the past in the present, and involves its reconstruction and re-contextualisation. Hal Foster alludes to its connection to installation art: “archival artists seek to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present. To this end they elaborate on the found image, object, and text, and favour the installation format as they do so” (Foster 2004, 4). There are no limits to artistic imagination and interpretations in work with archives and archival methods: dusty old Super-8 projectors, discarded display cases or hand-printed photographs, post cards, letters and documents of all kinds can be used, yet at the end of the day the objects are used as a form of expression so that it is unimportant whether they are genuinely archival in nature or whether they have been invented by the artist (ArtSpace Editors 2014).

The art critic Dieter Roelstraete goes further than Hal Foster and calls the “retrospective historiographical working method a methodological complex that is a characterising sign of current art” (cited in Sand 2012, 117). He points to Walter Benjamin, who considers this archaeological working method in the face of one’s own history to be indispensable:

If one wants to approach one's own buried past, one has to act like someone who digs. Most of all one has to be willing to keep returning to the same topic again and again – to spread it out as one spreads earth, to turn it over as one turns over the earth. Because “topics” are nothing more than layers that only reveal worthwhile results after thorough searches. The pictures that, broken apart from their previous connections, can, as gems in the sober chambers of our later insights, be placed like torsos in the galleries of collectors (Benjamin, quoted in Sand, 117).

If we look at the work involving the archive in contemporary art, we discover a range of interesting positions in addition to that of Penny Siopis. David Houston Jones (2016) examines a number of approaches in his recent publication, *Installation Art and the Practices of Archivalism* (2016), some of which are located in archives, others that use archives, and others again that draw on archival techniques and practices. He also scrutinises society's compulsion to ar-

Figure 3.1
Penny Siopis, *Reconnaissance*
1900–1997, 1997. Detail



chive everything. Using Boltanski's work, amongst others, as example, he exposes how art that works with the archive deals with current questions of human remembrance and ethics. Although he does not mention Siopis by name, the connection to her work is particularly strong for me. It is clear therefore in the instance of *Reconnaissance* where Siopis's interplay of personal and historical objects allows a critical view on the history of South Africa (Kühl 2010). As Smith says about Siopis's work: "These piles of objects not only represent memory but ... also a 'politically loaded disarray'" (Smith, cited in Kühl 2010, 19–20) (see Figure 3.1).

Okwui Enwezor's publication *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* (2008) brings together leading contemporary artists who use archive materials in the creation of their work. Enwezor specifically looks at the sense of Otherness with which artists such as Tacita Dean, Christian Boltanski, Thomas Ruff and Andy Warhol deal with the subject of archive, ranging from the falsification of biographies to the bizarre collection of objects and found or anonymous photographs and film materials. In this he takes up Jacques Derrida's analysis (1997) of the archive as a place through which power is effected by the control over historical objects and writing. The artists he analyses excavate these inert objects to bring them into creative relationship with other objects, creating new types of possible meanings.

The work of South African contemporary artist Kemang Wa Lehulere shows the topicality of the artistic confrontation with memory and the work with found objects. Wa Lehulere, who has recently been chosen as artist of the year 2017 at the Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle Berlin and honoured with a large solo show, deals intensively with memory and its direct connection with objects and items and their stories. Born in 1984 in Cape Town, Wa Lehulere belongs to those internationally recognised artists whose work starts from South Africa's forgotten history (Kunz 2017, 9). He combines art genres such as film, dance, theatre, performance and



Figure 3.2

Kemang Wa Lehulere, *Bird Song:
My Apologies to Time*, 2017

music with drawing, painting and installation. He plays with different media, achieving a large space for associative chains. Through the use of specific historical objects and found pieces (such as old Apartheid-period school furniture or old Bibles), he connects meaningful points in order to allow history to be carried over into the present (see Figure 3.2). His reference to archives highlights the dearth of material collected regarding black authors and artists during Apartheid times (ArtMag by Deutsche Bank 2017). He throws a critical light onto this lack, becoming an archaeologist of lost biographies in the vein of Benjamin.

Our increasingly frequent habit of translating reality into digital media in the last decade or two also changes our understanding of the archive. We live in an age where technology changes and develops at an increasing speed and exposure to media becomes constant. Overwhelming masses of historical data, pictures, sounds, information and films are becoming available, downloadable and usable at any time. Archiving can be done easily from the desktop and saved directly to a data cloud. Everything is documented, everything seems to be of permanent importance.

But are we not overwhelming ourselves with material? Where is the differentiation between important and unimportant, when every day more and more photos and documents are saved? And when the majority of our memory is stored in digital form? Are we not losing our skills to remember in this way? Our own private archive consists mostly of hard drives: the treasure troves of photo albums

and hand-written letters and diaries are becoming a rarity. The dematerialisation of data and the externalisation of collective memory has gained in importance, something that has had a direct effect on contemporary art production. Because, or perhaps despite of this, the collecting, cataloguing and searching, specially in the archaeological sense of digging with hands or in the archival sense of putting in order, has taken a central position in much creative work.

Siopis's work focusses on the archiving of memory as well as the artistic reflection on individual and collective history. Here it becomes clear how memories that are based in individual experience can begin to carry social meanings. I am interested to investigate how memory and archive run through Penny Siopis's work by focusing closely on four of her more extraordinary installation pieces: *Reconnaissance 1900-1997* (1997), *Charmed Lives* (1998/1998 and 2014), *The Will* (1997–) and *Sympathetic Magic* (2002). A number of questions guide my investigation of Siopis's engagement of memory and archive in these four installation works: How does Siopis use the five central characteristics of installation art in her works? How do they engage both personal and collective memories? How do the works reflect personal memories? How collective memories? How are Siopis's personal memories influenced and shaped by collective memories? And how do collective memories become personal in her work? How do the found and loaned objects stand as metaphors for the past in her work? How do they pose critical questions about the stories and histories that have been written? What stories do these discarded objects reveal about the histories that we tell each other and through which we define ourselves?

Reconnaissance 1900 - 1997 (1997)

The installation *Reconnaissance 1900–1997* was first shown in 1997 at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg. At first glance, it seems like a tableau set up to catalogue and archive a great number of diverse and different objects (see

Figure 3.1 above). Hundreds of the most disparate everyday objects, some small and others large, some souvenirs and other utility objects, are displayed on a large, black stage-like area. The first impression is of an over-sized flea-market table, where a bunch of disused and old basement finds are for sale. We find objects of the anti-Apartheid struggle, a First World War gas mask, plaster replicas of Greek statues, a South African Defence Force helmet (which her husband had used as a soldier on the Angolan border), or books and framed photos (Law 2014, 127–128). In the background, we can see a large black and white photograph, dated to 1940, of the Metro Theatre cinema hall that used to be run by Siopis's grandfather in Umtata, the capital of the former Bantustan of Transkei in south-eastern South Africa. The photograph, which seems to be mounted on a flat board, seems to give visual stability to the loosely arranged objects, but also provides a contextual frame for the display (see Figure 3.3).

In contrast to the other installations by the artist, the objects are seemingly sorted by subject with the piles loosely spread across the black cloth. One pile seems to contain everything a child needs for school, ranging for books

Figure 3.3

Penny Siopis, *Reconnaissance*
1900–1997, 1997. Close-up view





Figure 3.4
 Penny Siopis, *Reconnaissance*
 1900–1997, 1997.
 View of school books



Figure 3.5
 Penny Siopis, *Reconnaissance*
 1900–1997, 1997.
 View of masculine pile

to pencils, from paint to spinning tops. There is a pile of mannequin hands, a pile of shoes, a pile of leather goods or one with knives and pangas. One pile seems very feminine, red in colour and containing glass marbles, a doll's head, a ball of wool, a book. Another seems very masculine, with a compass and ruler, ethnographic drawings and hourglass, possibly referring to a nineteenth century explorer (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5). In the historical context of South Africa, they clearly take reference to the way the country and its society have been shaped by colonialism and the gendered nature of this rule. There is enough space between each of the piles to reveal the black table surface. Despite the different kinds of objects, there is the impression of an orderly situation, a museum-like atmosphere. We get the impression that these are the memory remnants that have been left behind by a long life and that now need to be sorted and sifted. What will remain, what discarded? This assemblage gives the impression that the sorting process has come to a halt, though possibly only a temporary one.

Figure 3.6
 Penny Siopis, *Mostly Women and Children*, 1996



The scene also reminds me of a glimpse of a museum curator engaged in the task of sorting and preparing a collection of items for an exhibition. The spaces that have been left between the piles suggest that the person sorting the items wants to provide for the possibility of adding or removing further items; the impression is that this is not the final arrangement yet, that other orders could be imposed. The effect is quite different from Siopis's other installations (see, for example, *Mostly Women and Children* in Figure 3.6) where she has piled up, tied together, or spread around large masses of materials seemingly without regard for the type of material or context.

A website commentary on Siopis's work states the following:

To Penny Siopis each found object has its own past, and once played a role in someone's life. Possessions embodies [sic] people's personal memories and experiences, but have also become a part of the wider social history and symbolism (NLA 2013).

This commentary is a good introduction for approaching *Reconnaissance*. Most of the objects shown in this installation came from Siopis's mother's and grandmother's possessions and therefore represent an explicitly family-focused view of times gone by. Siopis took possession of these objects when she travelled to Australia to visit her mother shortly before her death. Siopis describes her feelings at the time:

Looking at all these things in piles on the floor I thought, "This is another version of seeing a life flash before your eyes." I was aware that my mother's life included her mother's life, and our lives – her children. The date in the title [1900–1997] stems from the idea that a person's memory covers something like one hundred years, because you inherit the memories of people who have come before you (Siopis, quoted in Atkinson 2005, 72).

Is it the fault of global uncertainty, a fearful approach to the future, that the past, the act of looking back, has taken such a central role in art today? Have artists not always picked up memory metaphors, turning them into witnesses to

their contemporary view of the world? The way in which an artist deals with the present and its connection to the past is an individual technique of engaging memory which helps prevent the loss of one's own memory and identity, one's own history or even to rediscover it in the work of the artist. Penny Siopis's work raises the question as to what extent it is indeed possible for such objects to conserve the memory of a past life in an old-fashioned way, without digital support.

Since most of the objects in *Reconnaissance* stem from her mother's life, their arrangement into piles poses the question whether the artist has not quite processed this loss and whether what looks like a categorisation of memorial objects is not a form of documenting her own helplessness. There is a sense of insecurity in the installation that suggests that Siopis did not yet have clarity on how she wanted to proceed with these items when she created the piece in 1997. Within the tableau, she seems to be displaying to herself and to the viewer not only the remaining remnants of a life, but also and critically the transience of a rich, lived life. Jennifer Law describes Siopis's use of abandoned objects as giving "material form to psychic loss, referencing the catastrophic severance of the object from its (original) collector" (Law 2014, 128). In her capacity as an artist, Siopis attempts to give new life to the objects through her actions, to make them part of a new story. *Reconnaissance* is a significant step in that direction.

While authors such as Olivier (2014b), Kühl (2010), Kearney (2013), Greslé (2015), Williamson (1989) and others foreground the socio-political history of South Africa as context within which to place this installation's meaning, I rather see a direct link to her own personal life and her personal history. *Reconnaissance*, in my view, tells an eloquent story of the different roles that Siopis embodied at that point in time: as adult daughter, as mother, as wife. For me, these roles come to the fore much more strongly than Siopis as female South African artist enmeshed in a specific historical landscape, even as it is clear that personal history can never be separated from socio-cultural and political influences. In my view,

Reconnaissance is a turning point for Siopis and her artistic work. On the one hand, she presents a large volume of personal memorial pieces that she processed and displayed in a slightly hesitant and equivocal format. Her own history and that of her family is the subject here: it hints at interpretation, understanding and a deeper immersion into the complex subject of memory, a process that does not seem concluded yet; instead an aftertaste of indecision seems to remain. Framing and stabilising, possibly even protecting, the tableau with a large reproduction of an image of the family cinema in Umtata, Siopis seems to hope for protection and shelter from the buffeting of life, which she was now exposed to and expected to master on her own, without her mother's support. Trauma, insecurity, loss, all this is tangible in the work. The work in my mind seems artistically unresolved at this point, but *Reconnaissance* marks the starting point for further, much stronger, installation works that portray a clearer emotional and intellectually poised approach that begin to carry the distinguishing marks of the artist.

Charmed Lives (1998/1999, 2014)

In 1998, a year after *Reconnaissance*, the installation *Charmed Lives* (see Figure 3.7) was shown at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg and again the following year at the Museum for African Art in New York.² The title *Charmed Lives* refers back to the artist's maternal grandmother who also features as the narrator in Siopis's video installation *My Lovely Day*.

At first glance, the old, used objects in *Charmed Lives* would point the uninitiated viewer to its geographic context and origin: a country with a colonial history and most probably African. This is suggested by objects such as a tropical colonial helmet, a military fur cap, souvenir items from Cape Town's Table Mountain

² *Reconnaissance* was also shown in Palo Alto in 1999. For this exhibition, Siopis ordered the construction of a large, three-dimensional frame in place of the grid-like wooden structure. Here too a barrier prevented viewers from stepping up close to the installation.

or other objects specifically alluding to the South African freedom struggle. A closer inspection would reveal to the initiated viewer a number of objects that Siopis had used in previous installations, such as *Sacrifices* at Wits University (1998) or in *Reconnaissance*.

A closer study of the installation invites viewers to create connections between the work and their own personal talismans. Studying

the work, one is quickly pulled into the piece, feeling the urge to look more closely at individual items beguiled by them, to pick them up and to glimpse and conjure what lies beneath. The eye jumps back and forth and tries to find connections, a storyline. The installation, covering a wide wall, reminds me of Penny Siopis's early history paintings, large, opulent and detailed with thickly applied paint, that almost took on almost sculptural form. In some ways, *Charmed Lives* may be seen as a three-dimensional version of such a history painting.

Viewing *Charmed Lives* from a distance, several large coloured sections stand out: where the upper-left part is dominated by light, innocent-looking white and crème tones, the middle of the work takes on shades of brown, interrupted only by a few eye-catchingly red items: red children's wellington boots, red plastic necklaces, or large red pieces of fabric hung up as background for the installation. The far right side of the installation is dominated by shades of military-green. There are camouflage nets that Siopis incorporated again in her later installations *Snare* (2004) as well as individual items of military memorabilia: the steel helmet of her now deceased husband, other military caps, a pair of binoculars, a munition



Figure 3.7

Penny Siopis,
Charmed Lives, 1998



Figure 3.8

Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998.

Detail of white areas

chain for automatic guns. The colour scheme, obviously carefully planned and coordinated by the artist, reveals Siopis's story-telling hand. The lighter colours to the left relate mainly to her childhood and positive family memories, symbolised as well through the use of dolls and children's toys (insert Figure 3.8). Almost central in the installation is a woven basket that carries the words "Home is Best", right next to ice skates that still shine and that might have been used by the artist herself. Moving towards the right as we read the installation, the atmosphere turns darker, more dismal and menacing. Our view is pulled more strongly into the artist's stories, with their undoubtedly auto-

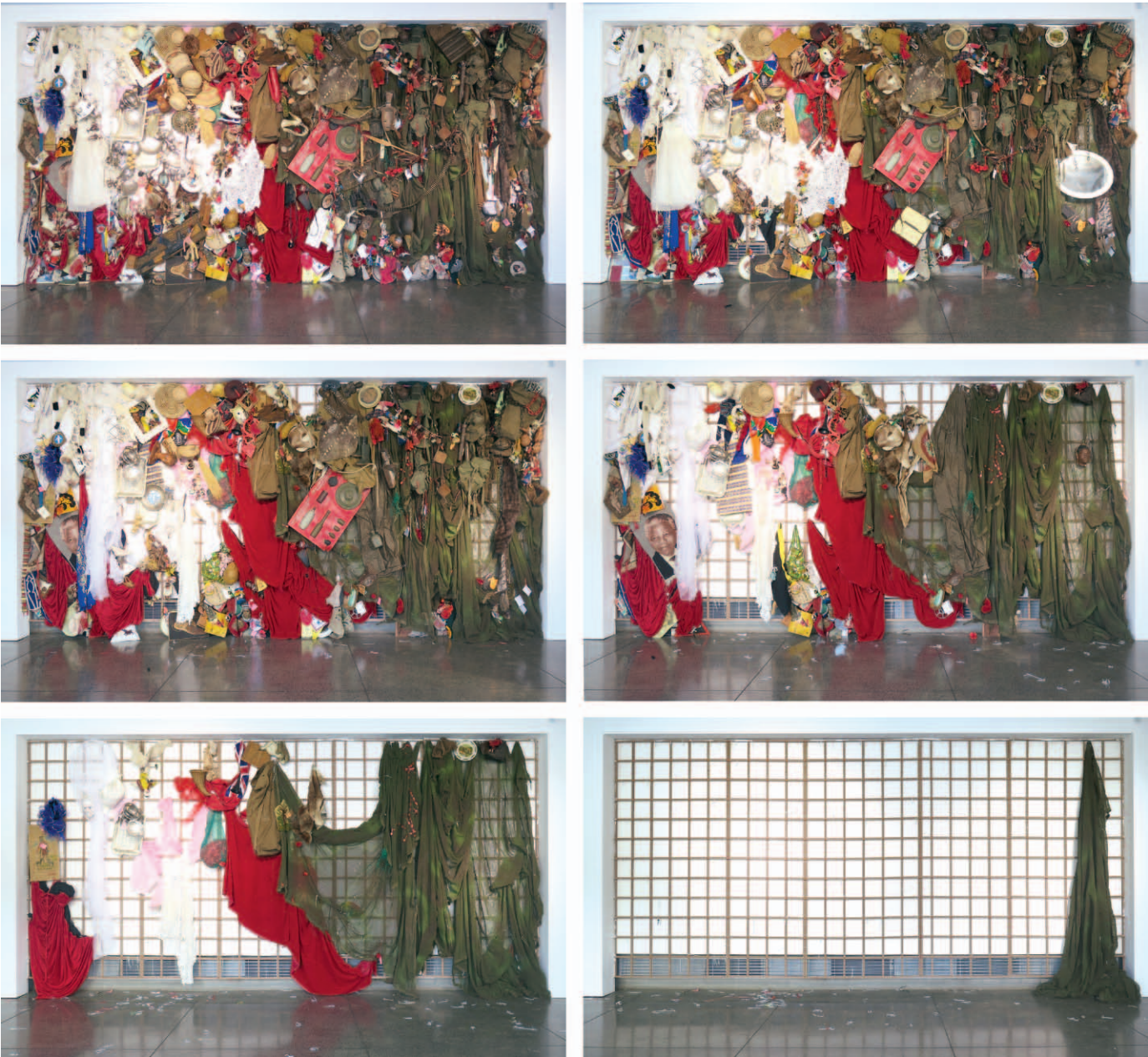
biographical significance. The model ship in the centre of the installation seems to play a particularly critical role: I see myself placed into the role of the traveller, carried along on a ship through Penny Siopis's life, moving from light, innocent and happy days of childhood to dark, depressing experiences of adulthood. The fact that the military objects in the installation had all been used by her husband during his time as soldier in the border war between South Africa and Angola bears witness to the everyday presence of this war during the Apartheid years, particularly to South Africa's white population – but also to a feeling that these objects, even though they are not in use anymore, can still carry an undercurrent of violence and aggression.

Charmed Lives is proof that the artist wishes to engage in and share memory through objects, to speak as it were through objects. The installation's artistic arrangement and overlays, and its thematic and colour-coordinated display of

pieces reflect the unmistakable way of Siopis's accumulative display in both her paintings and her installations: it evokes in an excessive low relief an autobiographical map of memories and life markers, a detailed object-oriented diary of a life, full, complex and vivacious alongside allusions to dark days and conflict and oppression.

During my research, Siopis provided me with a revealing photo series taken successively with a time-lapse camera of the de-installation of *Charmed Lives* that uncovers the layered process of its construction. Layer by layer, piece by piece,

Figure 3.9 a–f
Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998.
De-installation process



the series shows the process of how hundreds of objects are carefully removed, packed away and re-archived (see Figures 3.9a–3.9f). As the lowest layers of objects are removed, cable ties become visible by which the items had been attached to large pieces of fabric stretched over a wooden grid-like base. Siopis uses a similar kind of wooden scaffolding in many of her other installations to form the large underlying structure onto and over which she works. In *Charmed Lives*, the lowest layer of coloured fabrics creates a basic sub-division that underlies and frames the final installation, similar to how washes or underpainting works in the complex layering of a painting.

Charmed Lives reveals biographical details of Siopis's life story, her personal life but one located in the context of South Africa: a life with highs and lows, in which war, violence and fear exist alongside life-affirming experiences of private and personal happiness. There are witnesses of impressively detailed traditional African craft; there are items of private remembrance pointing to childhood, perhaps her own or that of her son; but there are also pointers towards the problematic aspects of a life during Apartheid and of the difficulties of the emerging, democratic South Africa.

Reading *Charmed Lives* from an archive point of view, it seems that the installation has left behind the insecure categorisation of *Reconnaissance* and is able to create connections that are informed by the deep richness of the objects selected and the memories they invoke. Siopis overlays, knots, arranges and curates into an optically overwhelming scenery: she creates an opulent “history painting” that is only contained by the sober and stabilising white gallery wall and the cool, impersonal marble floor. *Charmed Lives* appears like a family album, overflowing with family photos, mementoes, postcards and entrance tickets, so full that its covers no longer close. Families pull out albums like these from the book case over and over again with deep care and respect. As they flick through the albums, they are amazed, laugh and dream, wallow in reminiscences and take a trip through past times. As we see those albums, we too are taken along on their

journeys of remembrance by our own connections (see chapter 5 for a discussion of photographs).

Charmed Lives is a work of layers and tiers. The layers remind me of tree rings, used to calculate the age of a tree: as Siopis adds layer upon layer and more and more objects find their way into the artwork, the layers start to represent deposits of time. Once the work was finished, viewers were only able to see the surface, the outer skin of the lived life it represents, the exterior of this very intimate and personal story. The layers point to the fact that the full truth of this life is not openly revealed, that it has hidden histories and multiple memories that can only be comprehended in times as each object was removed, one by one.

As I view the installation, I cannot but wonder about all the different discoveries that each viewer must make as they explore the complexity of the piece. When I look at the display plate showing Nelson Mandela, I see a rather iconic, abstract idol of a time that was quite abstract to me in distant Germany, an idol of the South African resistance struggle that did not mark my own childhood in any significant way yet is vivid and significant to most South Africans. The children's Wellingtons reverberate much more easily with my own life, my own children having worn boots like these to kindergarten every day. Some of the small dusty dolls could have come from my parent's house. Through her choice and arrangement of objects, Siopis evokes chains of associations, or of vivid memories. In an interview with Achille Mbembe, she explained that she does not differentiate between the personal meaning of an object and its socio-historical meaning: for her, not only do people form objects, but critically "encounters with objects produce subjects" (Mbembe 2005, 125).

Penny Siopis reconfigured *Charmed Lives* again as part of her retrospective at the Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, in 2014. Here she braced her wooden base with two tall pillars (see Figure 3.10). In contrast to the single-sided presentation of the work in 1998 and 1999, viewers at the Iziko Gallery



Figure 3.10

Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*
at Iziko Retrospective, 2014.

View from the front



Figure 3.11

Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*
at Iziko Retrospective, 2014.

View from the back

were able to look at the installation from the back (see Figure 3.11). Even though Siopis used the same items as in the previous manifestations of *Charmed Lives*, the installation seems quite different here. Shades of green now dominate while white and cream-coloured elements seem diminished in size. Also, the vertical orientation seems to constrain the installation and it appears denser. Its height and the sheer physicality of the attached objects give the impression that the work could overwhelm or fall on to the viewer. These changes demonstrate how an installation lives and responds to new contexts and the challenges of the present in an innovative manner. Reflecting back on the 1997 Johannesburg version, the objects read differently in 2014, as their proximity changes, as the lighter shades become more recessive and as the historical material seems to be more foregrounded. The visual syntax of the work is fluid even if the pieces used remain the same, so the piece embraces the notion of flux rather than the fixed notion of re-creation.

With *Charmed Lives* Siopis has taken a step towards a clearer expressive style and an increased sense of liveliness. It shows a clear movement towards aesthetic habits as a result of working from a mainly archive-dominated presentation of found objects and collections, to a looser interpretative use of these objects that creates connections between them. In this installation, Siopis initiates conscious visual narratives, an aspect that did not come to the fore in *Reconnaissance*. Siopis here is still attached to the surface-like structure of her installation, closer to her history or cake paintings, thus not actively creating a third dimension, a space that surrounds the viewer, a departure from *Reconnaissance* is tangible, making *Charmed Lives* a strong and distinctive statement in her oeuvre.

***The Will* (1997 – ongoing)**

One unusual work stands out in Siopis's artistic oeuvre, especially in the context of her installation work: *The Will*, Siopis's artistic testament or legacy on



Figure 3.12

Penny Siopis,
The Will, 1997–.
Three balloons



Figure 3.13

Penny Siopis, *The Will*, 1997–.
Stuffed monkey



Figure 3.14

Penny Siopis, *The Will*, 1997–. St Escrava Anastacia

which she has been working since 1997 (Law 2014, 127–137). A legally valid document and artwork, *The Will* is in a constant state of accretion, change and development. By 2002, her list of objects to be bequeathed to “friends, family and to ‘people I don’t like’” (Siopis, cited in Bauer 2002) already consisted of over 500 items.

This work, engaging Siopis’s themes of “time” and “transience”, is of central importance to the theme of archive and memory. Jennifer Law (2014, 136) explicates:

Siopis’s Will is the ultimate time piece ... Like history, the self as historical subject may only be perceived as a rationalised unity in retrospect; indeed, at the moment of death, history itself appears to die with the individual, only to be reborn outside of time as memory.

The *Will* Project reminds me of a message in a bottle: you throw a message – a statement, a plea for help, a love note – into the ocean, sending a message, offering a piece of yourself. You hope and wait ending a message, in the continuous present or possibly the distant past for an answer, for a reaction by the person in the future who opens your bottle and reads the message. Tension, hope and anticipation build up. Giving a gift is similar: you send off a message and do not know what effect it will have on the recipient. It can be a wonderful, generous or pointed gesture that can result in unexpected ways. In a personal dis-

cussion with Penny Siopis, we compared this passing on of her *Will* objects to the spreading of seeds where one hopes that they will one day become a beautiful flower or bear fruit. Since Siopis's *Will* objects will only be received after her death, she will never know how her objects will affect their recipients.

The defining aspect of this installation is that it inherently engages with the archival act of registering these objects both as part of Siopis's life's work but also as a legacy, as objects itemised in a will. Initially collated they will in time be dissipated in many directions, to specific owners and destinations in an expansive special field. The inheritance Siopis speaks of in this work does not refer to her collection of valuable large-format paintings, even though these will certainly have a large monetary value. It does not refer to jewellery, valuable porcelain or other objects classically considers to be inheritable items. Siopis's inheritance relates rather to a jumble of used and second-hand objects, even rubbish, such as a discarded stuffed monkey or deflated balloons her son found on the kerb (see Figures 3.12–3.14). What marks these objects as valuable is that she has reused them over and over again in her installations, thus granting them a certain measure of fame and asserting their significance to the artist herself, though this is not precisely specified. The fact that Siopis uses “immortal junk”, as Charlotte Bauer calls it (2002), reminds me of Duchamp's ready-mades that only became works of art through his intervention and declaration (see Chapter 2).

It is certainly no surprise that Siopis began her *Will* collection in the year that she actively had to face the subject of inheritance after her mother's death. Her installation *Reconnaissance* presents a large number of inherited family heirlooms, presenting herself in the role of an archivist and archaeologist digging in the past. She had to assess her mother's possessions and decide which to discard and which to accord value to. In my view, the roots of the ongoing *Will* project lie in her way of dealing with inheritance, bequest and transience (see also Schaschl-Cooper, Hobbs, van Gelder, and Engel 2004).

The wish and desire of the artist to keep memories alive through objects can also be an attempt to immortalise herself, to keep the conversation about her alive beyond her death. Charlotte Bauer notes this context: “to insulate ourselves against the fear that when we die, we will leave no trace, but simply dry up like puddles in the sun”. Siopis’s immortalisation is one that not only makes a statement, but leaves open questions as to how they will be received – answers that Siopis cannot possibly steer or foresee. Siopis herself sees the distribution of her *Will* objects as a resolution: “the corpus will dissolve and the fragments disperse. They will be shot into a new world” (cited in Olivier 2014, 116).

All *Will* objects are marked in a special way but are stored amongst all the other objects and found items that Siopis uses in her installations. The artist therefore does not leave her material archive to a matter of chance; quite the opposite, she herself carefully oversees the storage and identification of objects, with the support of her assistants, and works as archivist of her own inventory (Penny Siopis, pers. comm., 9 September 2017).

Siopis’s comprehensive collection of objects and artworks clearly shows the connections and experiences of her artistic and personal life. The work will be concluded at her death, yet the objects in the collection will live on. The manner in which Siopis deals with the finite nature of her own life in this work is reminiscent of Boltanski’s collection of human heartbeats.³ The intensive interest in archiving and preserving objects, but opening them up to new memories and meanings, greatly shapes this work: “The installation presupposes an end through its own fragmentation. It will continue living as a memory; at the same time the

³ Boltanski has preserved a recording of his own heart beat together with the documented heart beats of thousands of volunteers on the uninhabited Japanese island of Teshima, including my own which was recorded and archived in the context of a Boltanski exhibition in Wolfsburg, Germany. The heart beat of each individual volunteer carries on beating notionally even after their death, mirroring reflecting Boltanski’s basic idea of art as a reflection on life, death and memory.

objects, having been dispersed, will acquire new meanings that have the potential to continue to evolve forever” (Law, in Smith 2005).

A comparison of *The Will* to Siopis’s other installations in which she deals with memory, archive and heirlooms shows how it is marked by an archival, museum-like element of presentation. Siopis varied the format of this presentation in the two exhibitions where she showed *The Will*, at the Gertrude Posel Gallery in Johannesburg in 2002 and in her retrospective at the Iziko Gallery in 2014: while in Johannesburg she exhibited all objects on individual plinths of varying heights, encased in glass cases shown in a precious manner. She significantly loosened the rigour of this presentation in 2014. Showing selected *Will* objects on open shelves, accessible from both sides, without the protection of glass cases or lids, thus considerably shifting the reading of these being valued or irreplaceable objects. She thus consciously plays with the nuances inherent in different forms of presentation. Yet in both exhibitions, the museum-like presentation of the objects challenges, consciously irritates and confronts the viewer. Siopis opens up the question as to what or which objects are precious, or significant and worth being put onto the plinth of history. Her presentation critiques and questions assumptions of that being archived and the truths and knowledges it in time legitimises.

In many ways, however, *The Will* seems to lack the ephemeral, spontaneous character of *Charmed Lives*, for example. As in *Reconnaissance*, the archival hand of the otherwise so expressive and emotionally led artist dominates. While it is very likely that these objects hold memories, connections and meanings for Siopis herself and while they may evoke certain associations in the viewer, their presentation on plinths makes them seem like a line-up of individual and separate items between which it is hard to decipher or discover any specific connection, any story, any history. Viewers may be tempted to “read” the objects purely on the basis of the labels displayed alongside them. Seasoned observers of Siopis’s work may attempt to “read” them as visual narratives, the stories she weaves into

her other work. Yet viewers are forced to interpret individual or private meanings on the basis of their own stories, leaving me with the feeling that too much is left unspoken or only hinted at, unresolvable and carrying echoes of insignificance.

The death of her husband in 2012 has had a substantial impact on Siopis's life, as she records in an interview with Gerrit Olivier (2014b). This life-changing rupture will surely lead Siopis to introduce significant and captivating innovations in her future installations.

Sympathetic Magic (2002)

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the installation *Sympathetic Magic* from 2002 fascinated me from the very outset. Its familiarity may lie in the fact that Siopis's building style here strongly resembles that of my own works. Most

Figure 3-15

Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*,
2002. View of upper staircase





Figure 3.16

Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*,
2002. View of African art

of all, though, it is the visible and tangible energy that the artist has expended on this work that attracted me. I can literally feel the whirlwind Siopis must have created in the Gertrude Posel Gallery when she built this installation. I can sense the nervousness of the museum employees as Siopis “grabbed” valuable items from the gallery’s permanent African art collection for inclusion in her installation – using them in a respectful and yet fresh and unapologetic way, something that they had not seen before. She mixed memory pieces from her own private collection with those from the gallery collection, linked private items with old university furniture, valuables with flea market kitsch, found objects with souvenirs. In this way Siopis created a large-scale installation that carried her unmistakable signature, spread across multiple floors of the gallery including the staircase (see Figure 3.15). The installation was designed such that there was a co-existence and congruence between individual areas, integrating the space into

the action and making it part of the work. The arrangement and incorporation of the spiral staircase linking the upper and lower galleries allowed for the physical immersion of the visitor, thereby evoking a series of multi-sensual experiences.

Different areas in the installation were devoted to specific themes. Large traditional museum cases held valuable historical African collection pieces, yet they were wrapped in and protected by white fleece material (see Figure 3.16). There

is a sense that the artist packed three-dimensional material quotes from African history in cotton wool both protecting and obscuring it. With this

Figure 3.17

Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*,
2002. View of body parts
and boarded-up cabinet



act, she pointed to the objects' fragility and the risk of them getting lost or being disregarded. She proposed the necessity of wrapping the history and heritage of her homeland in cotton wool, to cosset it from the hardness of real life, padding it and attenuating and blurring the harsh realities of history. She challenges us with the proposition that history has to be nuanced and told more empathetically; that our view on it has to change. Kearney noted:

In this series of installations not all things were treated in the same manner. Different objects were framed in particular ways in terms of how they were presented in the

installations and in the accompanying catalogue. Siopis makes use of different framing devices to distinguish and thus construct different meanings for the objects. The pile and the cave of objects (broken old things) are distinguished from the display of the painting as a single object, and also from the African artefacts (lying on their sides and buried under batting) and other objects displayed in the vitrines (Kearney, 2013a, 60).

Without using any words or explanations, Siopis challenges the taboos kept by South African society, employing strong visual assertions, juxtapositions, questions, provocations and play – taboos around sensitivities regarding South African history and issues of belonging.





Figure 3.18
Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*,
2002. Side view of *The Will*

Figure 3.20
Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*,
2002. Detail on stairwell



Equally provoking is a cabinet case filled to the brim with mannequin body parts (see Figure 3.17) that alludes to the South African history of museum dioramas, of people's represented as cultural objects. As an outsider, in particular one with German origins, I see detached limbs, mannequin heads, legs, scary faces. My first association is with the pictures I know in association with the Holocaust – Auschwitz, Birkenau, pictures of mass graves – but also with pictures of civil war and other crimes against humanity. Bodies and limbs, discarded like rubbish, like useless, left-over material, without soul or value for others. This depressing impression is strengthened by the two large planks that are nailed across the cabinet suggesting that the content is blocked off from view, as if it was a building site where entry is prohibited and only looking is allowed. The very next case is boarded up altogether (see Figure 3.17). One is tempted to catch a glimpse of its hidden content and looks for possible opening between the boards.

Siopis does not make it easy for the viewer: cotton wool on the one side and rough boards on the other, both obscuring the view of the observer in very particular ways. It points to the way in which ambiguity is incorporated in much of Siopis's work: nothing is ever as it seems. Both history packed in cotton wool or brutality and coldness have a place in her worldview.

Siopis also displayed several of her *Will* objects in the large glass cases as part of the *Sympathetic Magic* installation (see Figure 3.18). The format in which the artist presents this strange collection is of special importance here. Siopis presents what may seem worthless kitsch in the eyes of the observer on museum plinths of varying heights, giving the objects new value, lavishing them with the importance and attention normally bestowed to valuable and rare collector's items. The plinths and the security glass of the exhibition case create value that stands in contrast to how Siopis portrays objects in the main installation around the staircase (see Figure 3.19) (see Kearney 2013). Here she carelessly stacks

and arranges furniture, typewriters, stuffed animals and floor lamps into a cupola-shaped construct around the stairwell. It looks as if a whirlwind has swept through the gallery and deposited the remains of the artists' old objects and used furniture around the staircase: a storm blew up the dust from the recesses of the dark and



Figure 3.19

Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*,
2002. Back view of the stairwell

usually quietly bourgeois gallery; the detritus of history swept under the carpet, now exposed (see Figure 3.20). I recognise the carpet, a symbol or metaphor for this disruption, among the multitude of objects in this installation. Around it and tied directly to it are many smaller and larger pieces from Siopis's own collection pieces already seen in her previous installations: a Mandela poster and a rugby ball, old suitcases, Chinese lanterns, books and deflated play balls, used kids' toys alongside African crafts. The objects seem to be an optical

potpourri, references from many stories, tangible witnesses from the artist's life. They are much like pop-up pages from a history book that one feels compelled to read through, a book whose story captivates us and demands our focused attention. Again the metaphor of the family album seems to be bursting with personal memories and snapshots, with successful photos and blurred ones, with shabby bleached-out Polaroids from the 1980s and old, valuable family shots created carefully with a plate camera and long exposure. All these found objects are entitled to exist alongside each other in a non-hierarchical manner, creating a compelling and complex mosaic.

Siopis takes a strong position with this installation. In 2002, a time when public life was dominated by a confrontation with conflicted memories and histories from the Apartheid years it poses questions of the meaning of history. Use of African artefacts, curio objects and local craft carry close connections to other cultural signifiers interleaved into the archive. Siopis evokes equivocal questions regarding which evidence is to be accepted as definitive and legitimate traces of the past toward a new historical interpretation in the future. Her aesthetic interventions and actions play with the power that is assigned to the archive in general (Mbembe 2002). Who is allowed to select, compose and circulate a certain version of historical events and propose it as legitimate truth? Indeed, the real question is whether it is possible to only have one true history? The African artefacts of this installation, carefully protected by cotton wool and thus cared for, respected, possibly glorified, stand here as metaphor for the question of how history, artefacts and evidence are dealt with in the wake of the first democratic election of 1994.

For me *Sympathetic Magic* is clearly one of the strongest works in the artist's oeuvre. In comparison to her previous installations, a striking feature here is that she seems to create a work that is detached yet uncoupled in space. She leaves the wall behind and allows her works to extend into the room, giving it space to

inhabit and “breathe”. She integrates the viewer in a way not previously seen in her work. These installations unify all the characteristics that underline Siopis’s aesthetic and textual expression: they unite the emotional with the academic, contain notions of order and disorder, and push at the limits while simultaneously being delicate and thoughtful.

This unorthodox handling of the material portrays a refreshingly unencumbered manner of dealing with a difficult history and gives attention to the complexity of the contested politics of representation. This is Siopis’s true strength as an artist

and social commentator: she creates a well-tempered chaos in the midst of almost unbearable order and calm that reflects her mastery as an artist to

both illustrate and abstract current representation, piece by piece, through the arrangement of objects in space, directing our view and allowing individual insights and new approaches to history. New approaches and critical new views of history, of lived life and of the present, derived from how Siopis inserts herself into the history of her country, South Africa. She dares to insert herself as an artist to be part of history, and embraces the controversy of this presumption; she takes the risk again and again as she pushes the envelope. As a German artist, I can

only intuit the strength that these border-crossing activities demand. Pushing the limit like this is, in the end, what makes Siopis into the nationally and internationally respected artist that she has come to be recognised.

Current work

Since her first installation in 1994, Penny Siopis has created a wealth of well-received installations and exhibited them nationally as well as internationally (see Appendix 1). More recently her creative focus has moved towards painting

Figure 3.21

Penny Siopis,

Restless Republic Mass, 2017



again (Stevenson Gallery 2016), displayed in an installation-like context, as evidenced in her work earlier this year, during a residency at the Maitland Institute, Cape Town (Maitland Institute 2017) and in her exhibition *Restless Republic* at the Stevenson Gallery in Cape Town in 2017 (Artsy.net 2017; Stevenson Gallery 2017b) (see Figure 3.21). Her installations over the last 20 years have always effected an enormous power and tension in space. The new manifestation of single figures and objects placed in relation to her more conventional fluid glue paintings seems to be more of a superfluous add-on; while the objects do speak to the images to create a narrative, they can in no way compete with the sheer expressive intensity of her previous installations.

Penny Siopis is currently preparing an installation entitled *Welcome Visitors: Relax and Feel at Home for Prospect New Orleans*, a city-wide triennial of contemporary art in New Orleans, United States of America, to open in November 2017 (Prospect New Orleans 2017) (see Figure 3.22). Here she is again working with a variety of found objects and items from her own collection, souvenirs and kitsch. The installation focuses on the ubiquitous notion of “Zuluness” as a generalised but also stereotypical historical term for black South Africans (Penny Siopis, pers. comm., 9 September 2017).

Together with the local curators, Siopis chooses objects that reference the life and work of Louis Armstrong, who instantiated the “Zulu King” of the 1949 Mardi Gras Parade in New Orleans. Siopis thus picks up in her installation the manner in which “Zuluness” is also often taken as definition of the “African” in the USA. Typical for her work is the critical undertone with which she picks up and questions this fraught subject of identity and race and recognition of identity in colonial and Apartheid South Africa. She re-harnesses her method of displac-



Figure 3.22
Penny Siopis, *Welcome Visitors: Relax and Feel at Home*, 2017

ing previously accepted facts and objects from the plinth of history and examining them in the sobering reality of everyday life; and of lifting everyday banalities – such as kitsch, flea market buys and surprise finds – onto those very plinths, loading them with re-purposed value and meaning. With this highly current and as yet unfinished installation, Siopis picks up on previous installation works that clearly reference African and South African subjects and sensitivities. She once again works with subjects that relate to the meaning and structure of the archive and its violability as well as incorporating personal and collective memory in relation to history.

Walter Benjamin's thoughts about a drawing of the Angel of History have accompanied Penny Siopis over many years: the angel located at the interstices between present, future and past, able only to look backwards at the “piling of wreckage upon wreckage” (Young 2015, 68; O’Toole 2015)⁴. Her installations with found objects are ultimately a reflection on this view of the past and on whether and how it retains a hold over society and what spaces there are to break away from it.

⁴ Penny Siopis developed these ideas into the picture *Piling Wreckage upon Wreckage* (1989), now part of the collection of the Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town, South Africa.



Die Maats

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Oliver D
Puppets

4 The resonance of things

My practical work is directly linked to the issues investigated in the theoretical component of this master's dissertation. Inevitably insights gained through researching and the writing of the dissertation have had an influence on my thinking and making process. The final installation in my studio in the city of Johannesburg reflects the personal interactions, insights and experiences gained during my stay thus far in South Africa. As with my previous work, I have embraced objects, redolent with specific or broader significance as well as ones that and seemingly appear to be purely random in choice. I have collected them directly off the streets, acquired them on flea markets or bought them in shopping centres, swapped them or acquired them accidentally. Since this accumulative process is fluid and somewhat unpredictable, so is the final nature of the installation shaped by contingency and a certain inability to be in total control, open to chance and the moment.

My installations thus embrace this tension between precision and fluidity. My work process is often initiated by a few found objects that attract my artistic interest and come to act as triggers or catalysts for larger scale searches. In *No Place like Home* (2012) (see Figure 4.4), for example, one of these objects was a model building from a toy train set from the 1960s or 1970s, a chance find I made at a flea market. It kindled memories of my own childhood and how my father and brother played with a toy train set: to me an epitome of childhood in

the 1970s and led to a systematic acquisition strategy. The defining mark of the aesthetic impact of these models lies in their amassed presence. The same happened with old floor lamps of which I ended up collecting 40 different ones. I used them all in an expansive and labour-intensive installation in 2014 that engaged the subject of remembering and forgetting, based on numerous interviews I undertook with old women in Germany suffering from dementia. In my many engagements with these women, I tried to encourage them to recall their life memories, at times using a few prompts to re-ignite aspects of their forgotten past. Some only spoke single words, others captured longer memories, but the stories that emerged attested to eventful lives of a generation for which the Second World War was the defining element of their biography. Loss, grief and fear determined a large part of their memories, but also simple childhood songs, prayer fragments or biblical psalms learnt off-by-heart long ago. There were not many memories that the women were still able to retrace: it felt as if their stories were running through an hourglass into oblivion right in front of my eyes. In the installation, entitled *The Old Ladies*, each of the 40 installed floor lamps was linked to an MP3 player and a loudspeaker that continuously mixed and rendered the stories of the interviewees in a permanent loop. The narratives were played at very low volume levels in a large, darkened room, so that visitors had to consciously move close to each lamp in order to hear each personal testimony. The installation by implication raised the question as to what will happen when this generation is silenced forever, what will be remembered when its stories are no longer told. Memory mainly lives in a complex network from exchange to exchange, this interaction reliant on a medium of dissemination, be it through language, signs, gestures or even objects (Moller 2010) (see Figure 4.10).⁵

⁵ The project was nominated for the Visitor's Prize of the town of Nuremberg in line with its Blaue Nacht 2014.

At present, my focus as an artist collector lies in finding fragile images in the form of random and lost or abandoned Super 8 mm films made decades ago as private, personal recordings of everyday life. I generally acquire them wherever I find them, without knowing their content. I am also driven to find abandoned suitcases, witnesses of travel and metaphorical displacement. Private letters, discarded photos and diaries reveal the emotional, personal, sociological and historic setting of time past, giving me a glimpse of the city and its past, a city in which I now find myself in the present. My installation creates symbiotic relationships and complex proximities that begin to suggest new meanings as objects accumulate. A broad biographical and cultural narrative begins to emerge from these complexly positioned objects, talking both to the duration of my stay and the nature of the city which I have come to inhabit, the accumulation of objects and photographic material forming an album that the viewer can leaf through, page by page.

The field of tension between chaos and order, fluidity and structure is immanent, not only in global events, this city and our lives, but also in my own composite artistic creation. This tension runs through the questioning nature of the installation work of many artists, creating connections between autobiographical, social and political states, which influence the inherent geographical and social reading of installation art.

Beginnings: Collecting, sampling and presenting as autobiography

My interest and passion for collecting found objects, for dealing with historically loaded objects, developed in my childhood. The house in which I grew up in the 1970s in Germany was built by my grandmother during the Second World War just as my grandfather was called to duty as a soldier. To this day it still houses his carpenter's workshop and the furniture he had manufactured when on furlough from the army. Both my mother and my grandmother had a deep need for

reflection in their lives, in particular in dealing with feelings of guilt and grief after their father and husband went missing towards the end of the war. His carpenter's workshop was rarely used and if, only for private purposes and with a great deal of respect and honour. The furniture he had made before his death was tended carefully, and it was absolutely out of the question that it would ever be replaced by "modern" furniture. A few family photos, in a hand-carved wooden case or in expensive leather albums, were saved for future generations. This sense of carefully tending possessions extended to items of daily usage, so that everything my parents had acquired since their wedding in the 1960 – ranging from radios to cameras, record players and hair driers to razors – were protected, cared for and, if necessary, repaired, rather than discarded. They were only thrown out if no part could possibly be in any way reused. Some pieces from this stash were stored in my grandfather's workshop, providing spare parts for repairing other broken items.

These objects exerted a fascination over me: I wanted to try them out, dismantle them, sort them and play with them. For my older siblings, in turn, this was simply "old stuff", too close to their own lives to exert any appeal, too evocative of a possibly stultifying childhood; yet for me it was quite different. I was sufficiently removed on an emotional level, and amply inquisitive, to want to reach back and capture the unknown magic of the past. From the age of 15, I decided to make my room into a museum. I got rid of all my toys and distributed the vintage and historic objects from my parents and grandparents across the shelves. Adding old family books, musical instruments and photos, thereby curating my first exhibition. This is where my passion for museum-like conditions and an interest in the past started. During my studies I came across the principles of museology, firing my interest further and becoming an essential aspect and basis for my creative work. I thus seemed able to overcome the weight of my family's inheritance, the traumatic memories of the misery of war, in a fresh and playful manner by creating new connections and finding new ways of being in the world. The objects that

I had carefully chosen spoke to each other. Alternative stories developed that had space for the new. In a quite literal way, the heavy lid of history was lifted, and fresh air and new perceptions and attitudes were able to penetrate the cobwebbed and oppressive family chapters.

After a long campaign of begging and pleading, my grandmother finally allowed me to use my grandfather's workshop, hallowed furniture, original wood and unfinished pieces, albeit with strict restrictions and admonishments (see Figure 4.1). I was permitted to restore the furniture, but not alter it in any way; other materials, however, I was permitted to draw on as basis for my first installations. Here I built my first hut, constructed only from wood, within the interior space of the house. I never felt awkward using woodworking tools such as hammers or saws, as my father had always encouraged me to use tools from an early age. The hut was the first accessible installation located within our historic family workshop. I so loved the space. It evoked a refuge, a time machine and a laboratory of opportunity, all at the same time. Unfortunately, there are no photographs of the installation itself. Yet, looking back I can see the genesis of the same working methods, interests and interpretations that are still anchored in my work now, three decades later.



Figure 4.1
Manuela Karin Knaut,
Grandfather's workshop

Building rooms within rooms, creating new interior spaces within other overarching spaces, manifesting closeness and strangeness within a building are signature characteristics of the internationally acclaimed German artist Gregor Schneider, winner of the Golden Lion at the 2001 Venice Biennale, who has been a significant influence on me. In his youth, he too converted his parental

home bit by bit by building interventions into the house, thus creating an accessible work of art. Schneider's work achieves new realities within space, new stories in old rooms and buildings by erecting actual structures and designing space – an ability that is a constant source of fascination for me (see Figure 2.14).

At secondary school I had the fortune of experiencing that art and life do not need to be separated from each other. My art teacher, the highly regarded Dieter Himmelmann who had studied under Arnold Bode (initiator of the *documenta* global art show in Kassel), inspired us scholars to break through the mental barriers we held in the parochial inner-German frontier region and to build a creative revolution. Words like “environment” and “installation” were part of his daily vocabulary. He rejected any kind of restrictions to his creative work. He declared a dusty and abandoned potash-mining villa an art house. He opened a new view on historical, social and artistic content, not only for us students but for the whole region, generally a cultural desert, thus opening up a new view for and of ourselves. Present and past were not mutually exclusive anymore; instead, the interface between them allowed the imagination of new worlds. This coincided with the political opening in 1989 of the inner-German border, a border I had stared at in a bewildered fashion for the first 19 years of my life from the kitchen window of my parents' house. This radical, yet peaceful change harboured distinct possibilities of change in conceptions and understandings. I picked up and built on Himmelmann's ideas again during my art studies. My interest kept returning to the subject of memory: objects, forgotten and found, dusty and lost, as fertile soil for the new.

Penny Siopis's work too shows a clear and significant looking back into childhood, which is deeply reassuring for me and which I find essential here. Achille Mbembe describes Siopis's engagement with childhood in *Time and Again*:

In Siopis's work, childhood has always been represented as a time of bliss and rupture, a primary fountain of creativity, of traumas witnessed or experienced, muddled up in the unconscious with pleasure and innocence. It is also a time of

imaginative investments and attachments, of distance and proximity. It is a bank of memory images that keep crowding her mind during the creative process, wanting to be let into the painting, the film or the drawing (Mbembe 2014, 38).

Knowing how childhood experiences can contribute towards building freedom-loving, creative and attentive thinking adults, I studied for a degree in Fine Arts at the Justus Liebig University in Giessen, Germany, during the 1990s with the aim of becoming an art educator, choosing art education, painting and photography as my majors. For twenty years I worked as a teacher and arts educator at state schools, university and a variety of other educational establishments. What always drove my teaching was the wish to plant a seed into the hearts and minds of my students that they might become self actualising and experience life through the lens of creative freedom, in the same way that my art teacher had enabled in me.

Memory-related installations and artworks

Throughout my studies and working life, I continued my own artistic endeavours. After having restricted myself to the artistic language of painting for many years, I began to take my work into a new dimension in the late 1990s. Small collages led to larger wall-based pieces. After creating my first multiples I finally discovered the ideal format that I had been searching for: “installation”, thus returning to the format I had explored in my childhood. By working with and within space, and by creating experiential opportunities for viewers that go well beyond the flatness of the wall, I now felt able to express what is really important to me. This artistic and practical work, which is complemented by my theoretical investigation, speaks the language of integration I have sought for such a long time.

The following pages display some of my past works and installations. They illustrate how the aspects of archive and memory have been central to my work over the past decades.



Figure 4.2

Manuela Karin Knaut, *It's been too long*
Photo collage object on wooden box, 2012
Studio exhibition, Braunschweig, Germany



Figure 4.3

Manuela Karin Knaut, *No Place like Home*

Installation for Wolfenbüttel, 2013

Artgeschoss, International group exhibition, Wolfenbüttel, Germany



Figure 4.4
Manuela Karin Knaut, *No Place like Home*
Site-specific installation, 2012
Rastede Castle, Rastede, Germany



Figure 4.5 Manuela Karin Knaut, *nomoresorrow*, Detail
Site-specific installation; books, lamps and natural rubber bowls, 2012
Wie lange dauert Glück, solo exhibition in
Rastede Castle, Rastede, Germany



Figure 4.6

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Sundays in the 70s*
Mixed media on wood, 30x30x5cm, 2012
Studio exhibition, Braunschweig, Germany



Figure 4.7

Manuela Karin Knaut,

Unvernünftige Räume (installation series)

Children's huts in gallery space, 2012

Zu sehr country?, Galerie im Stammelbachspeicher, Hildesheim, Germany



Figure 4.8

Manuela Karin Knaut, *erzähl mir deine Geschichte*

Wall installation with 9 discarded metal shelves, 2012

Zu sehr country?, Galerie im Stammelbachspeicher, Hildesheim, Germany



Figure 4.9

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Unvernünftige Räume* (installation series)

Children's huts in gallery space, 2012

Vom Spiel mit den Dingen: unvernünftige Räume, Malerei, Rauminstallation, Objekte/

Einzelausstellung in der Galerie Artlantis, Bad Homburg, Germany



Figure 4.10

Manuela Karin Knaut, *The Old Ladies*

40 standard floor lamps with sound installation, 2014

Blaue Nacht, Künstlerhaus K4, Nuremberg, Germany



Figure 4.11

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Wanderlust*

Installation with light boxes and walking sticks, 2015

BS 8 Group exhibition at the Galerie der Bildenden

Künstler des BBK Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main, Germany



Figure 4.12

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Dear Diary*

Installation with old ladies, suitcases and model houses, 2017

Solo exhibition, Ponte City, Johannesburg, South Africa



Figure 4.13

Manuela Karin Knaut, *History Drawers*

Installation with filing cabinets, lamps and found objects, 2017

Studio display, Johannesburg, South Africa

A new world

It feels imperative for me to place my current work into the context of my new environment in South Africa. I have based myself in a studio situated in gritty downtown Johannesburg where street markets abound and run-down buildings are being refurbished while others are hijacked. Daily life around me abounds, the colours, scents, impressions and, even more strongly, the interactions with so many different people and cultures presents me with an overflowing source of human encounters and artistically valuable material. I have been in collection mode for nearly two years now as I research, photograph, question and discover a new life and context in southern Africa. I collect a wide variety of ordinary and unusual objects that slowly flow into my current works. This approach to working in my new surroundings links directly to the challenge of attempting to understand the complexity of the past of this country, this city and the present where I find myself as an outsider, attempting not only to look in, but also to engage to what ever degree is possible (as in my recent work *History Drawers*, see Figure 4.13). My intensive engagement with Ponte City and the surrounding suburbs of Berea and Hillbrow led to the opportunity of conceptualising an exhibition in Ponte City itself, in response to an invitation by the initiators of the *Dlala Nje* project who aim to improve the negative perceptions of the inner city and to create educational opportunities for children living there (Dlala Nje 2017). I staged the solo exhibition *Dear Diary* of works inspired by and relating to Johannesburg and Ponte City that included an installation in the core of the building as well as an exhibition in an apartment on the 51st floor (see Figure 4.12 above). This intensive and enriching collaboration will be expanded on in 2018.

In many ways the comprehensive and extremely varied work of Penny Siopis offers an appropriate focus for theoretical reflection on the subject of “time traces, memory and archive”. To place my own socialisation, shaped by German and European artistic influences, into a completely new context in order to illuminate

it from new angles, and attempt to integrate and weave into it a personal and theoretical relationship with a multitude of new influences is challenging and seems very apposite and relevant to my own art practice and personal endeavour.

The ongoing installation in my studio has been central to my master's research and presentation. The installation includes a multitude of objects that I have accrued from a variety of places, encounters and experiences during my time in South Africa. It is shaped by multisensory forms that can be experienced by the observer. Found objects, collectables, borrowed family items, photographs, film material and writings all forming a complexly layered piece overwhelming both in scale and potential contents, firmly located within its South African context and my experience of the complexities of this place at this time. Over months the room has filled up, has grown and changed. Thus a summons, a diary of my time in Johannesburg, is growing, piece by piece as I try to grasp the bigger picture of a puzzle without edges. ●



5 My studio installation *Displacement*

Studio R1, 1 Eloff Street, Johannesburg CBD

Displacement

Art and life cannot be separated. The past is fertile ground and the basis for all creation and shapes the thinking in the here and now. One's own work, one's own actions to a large part reflect lived reality. This thought has been the basis for the present installation work, informing the work process and the physical manifestations of the installation made as a submission for my master exhibition. The realisation of the installation directly engages the nature of "memory" and the process of "archive", already central issues to the works produced in preceding years in Germany, but issues that continue to inform the work undertaken here in South Africa. My examination of Penny Siopis's installations has strengthened my commitment and desire to further my engagement with installation and inspired me to delve deeper into the process of memory, the structure of archive and the socially constructed notions of self and history.

My installation transforms Studio R1, in 1 Eloff Street, Johannesburg, into a collision of objects, video projections and photographs that tie together into a dense reflection of the individual in a globalised world. It broadly speaks to the central question of the identity of humanity in the beginnings of a fraught twenty-first century: How do we see ourselves, and what determines our perspective towards others? My installation engages with this question and investigates how

my own memory marks my understanding of past, present and future and sense of place. In my picture or internal worlds, the borders between personal and collective memory, inside and outside, fiction and reality, dissolve. I allow the observers to place their own selves mentally into my own history, to try it on themselves, and find their localised reality in relation to it.

I made the very conscious decision to build the installation in my studio, in an intensive and undisturbed process over a number of months, and to make this process visible and tangible in the exhibition itself. The installation reflects on my own insecurity that I have felt, my own notion of displacement in relation to others. I wanted to be located right in the middle of town, in order to expose myself to the advantages and disadvantages of the realities of downtown life and to feel them in the security and insecurity of my own body. I cannot hide the fact that particularly the first few weeks in my studio were not easy for me, seemingly isolated in a strange and new world, with preconceptions to overcome.

My studio is located in the Johannesburg CBD, immediately next to the Faraday Market, one of the main muti markets for African religious and medicinal products, and the Faraday taxi rank, a hub at the Rissik Street off-ramp from the M2 highway. From morning to evening, there is life, power, noise, movement and restless activity. The building is located in an area that experienced severe urban decay in the last decades, but is slowly undergoing a process of urban renewal – a process that is reflected in the history of 1 Eloff Street itself. Originally a car dealership, the building was taken over by a retail department store and then by the ANC Women's League as a shelter for women and children. Mismanaged, it became a night shelter in which people who needed a place to sleep could rent a mattress for a minimal fee per night (Geoff Jardine, pers. comm., 14 October 2017). The current owner acquired the building in 2015 and subjected it to a comprehensive renovation process to create residential apartments as well as offices, shops and artist studios. As an early tenant of one of these studios while

the renovations were still ongoing, my first experience of the city was shaped by this building, its location within the jostle of the city and the urban renewal it embodied and represented.

The title of the installation, *Displacement*, encapsulates the intermediate state between travelling and arriving, between being home and being a stranger. It embodies a place, between home and abroad, a place one does not seek out but suddenly wakes up in. When I am displaced, I find myself in the wrong place: with a boat in the city but going somewhere, in the middle of an encounter that challenges my perceptions and constructs of reality. Clearly understanding that, as a German, the opacity of this continent, this country, this city, will only yield as I consciously put myself into a situation where, metaphorically, I am turned inside out. As long as my openness to the unfamiliar, the unusual helps me, there will always be small steps forwards. This “displacement” speaks to my desire constantly to reinvent myself in new places, to place myself anew, to reassure myself in a world that is subject to constant change and transformation.

My cultural, artistic and theoretical engagement has involved many small, yet often cumbersome and time-consuming steps over the last two years, having started in front of the Subotzky and Waterhouse photographs before I even arrived. After a preparatory visit to Johannesburg and Wits University in August 2015, I submitted an application for admission to the master's programme at Wits and for a study permit once I had moved to the city. While waiting nine months for these processes to be completed, I rented a studio at 1 Eloff Street in Johannesburg. I actively sought and started to collect found objects, not least the largest one, the boat, for my exhibition; I engaged with other artists, musicians, dancers and photographers; I documented my routes, meetings, daily irritations and inspirations photographically; I attended an intensive Zulu language course; and, in terms of my artist career, I continued to produce art and participate in exhibitions in various towns around South Africa and Europe.

Most of my previously realised installations were prompted by the material collected and used as their initiating source. That means that I found objects that resonated with my ideas, that evoked images in me, that lured me toward engaging new experiences and finding new stories. My painting process works similarly: I find a painting base, whether it be canvas or found papers, cardboard or posters at the roadside. I try to keep the creative possibility as open as possible without fixating on specific content. I let my subconscious speak before I take the next step, and actively and only then consciously make decisions about material and paint. I work in an “open” state of mind, with a freedom beyond linear thought, in something akin to a dissociated or trance-like state.

The studio installation realised as part of my Master’s dissertation is conceptualised in a similar way. Since the start I collected small and large objects, objects that had been abandoned, sold, given away or rejected. These stray objects once had a use and now awaited being discarded or reclaimed, recognised as having the capacity for a new use, a new owner, a new life. These objects also include those collected and bought on my travels more broadly in southern Africa; they are a result of these travels but, more importantly in my eyes, capture aspects of the life and energy of South Africa and its people. Objects like metal bowls, porridge whisks, small grass brushes or everyday soaps might not hold any attraction for many South Africans, but for me as a migrant and observer hold a freshness and vibrancy that reveals something about what it means to make and live here. I documented these finds with the date and a photograph, thus creating an explorer-type diary that details my experiences and life through South Africa from a creative/artistic perspective.

Even at an initial stage, my collection centred on the notions of memory and archive. I had brought one of my old lamp shades from Germany as an object of continuity. In Johannesburg I acquired old suitcases and wooden boxes, private 8 mm films and photos of unknown provenance, slide projectors and other miscellaneous

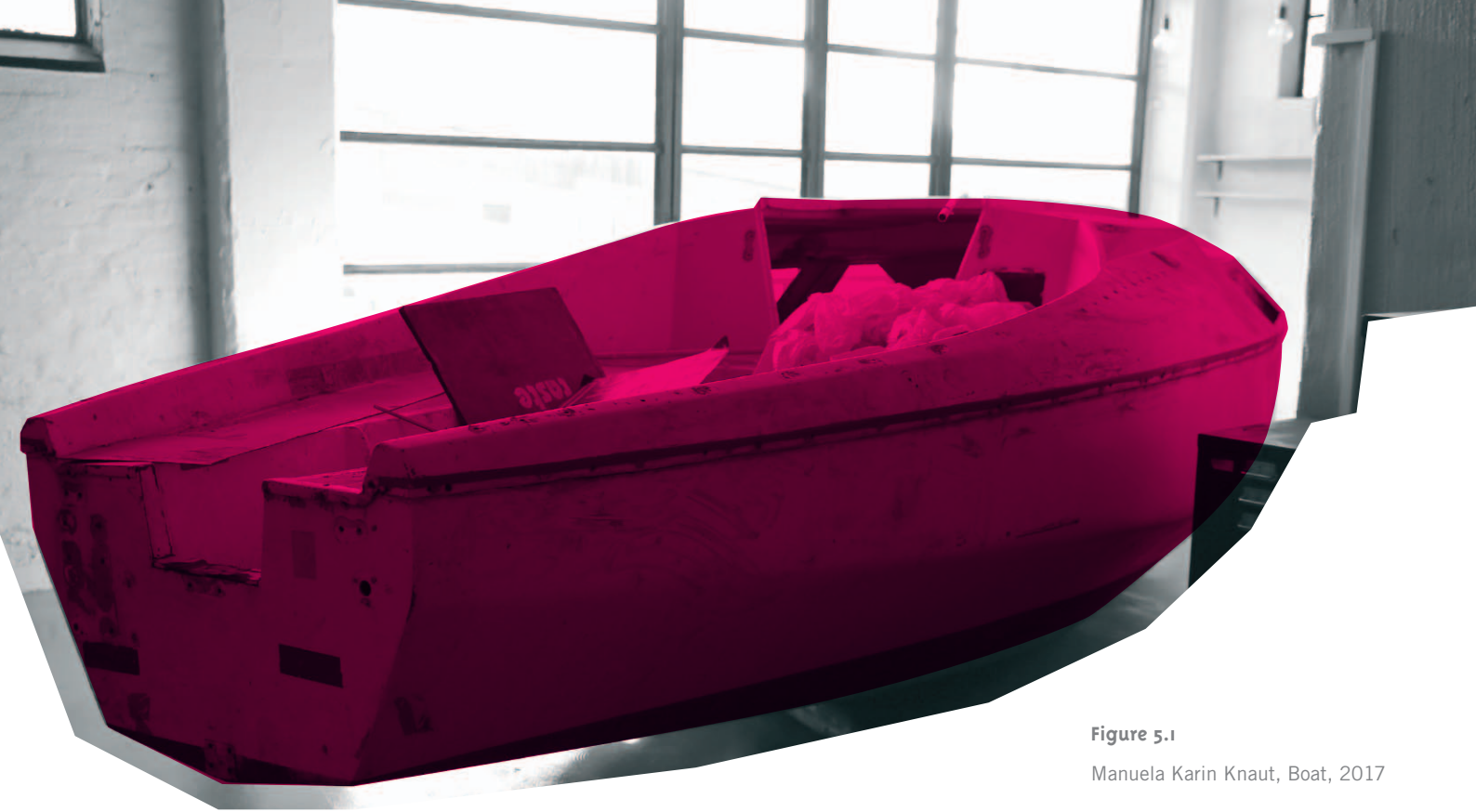


Figure 5.1
Manuela Karin Knaut, Boat, 2017

objects. The most defining and far-reaching decision for my project was that of making a boat the central object and metaphor of my installation (see Figure 5.1). The boat, located in midst of an African city, in the confines of a first floor studio that can only be accessed through a vehicular ramp, is irrational in itself: a compounded metaphor for displacement. Why thus a boat? The boat has been emblem of protection as well as mobility, travel and movement for hundreds if not thousands of years. I do not have a particular affinity for water, nor has the notion or presence of a boat or ship ever featured highly in family history, especially not larger ones with sleeping quarters and superstructures or even house boats. Yet they have always held a great fascination for me.

This is a modest vessel, not a luxury yacht for drinking champagne in the sunset. It is a rudimentary boat, a means of transport from one place to another. Boats as accommodation, while travelling long distances, evoke for me a sense of challenge and exhilaration. To have a table, a bed, not on safe land but to set up home somewhere on the high seas contains within itself the tension between mobility and immobility, conjuring up both an image of freedom and untetheredness as well as one of risk and being adrift.

The nature of water and the dramatic effects of tides clearly play a role in sailing, yet for me are of lesser importance; central rather is the combination of motion together with the possibility of precariously dwelling and surviving on the boat. At this point the circle closes in relation to my previous installations, namely my engagement with “irrational spaces”. These are, as described above, always dwellings of a different and unusual kind. Many of the huts and homes of my previous installations also had a mobile character: built on wheels, for example, or including a raft, as in *Vom Spiel mit den Dingen: Unvernünftige Räume* in Bad Homburg, Germany, in 2012.

The first time that I used a boat in an installation was in an international exhibition in Wolfenbüttel, Germany (Artgeschoss 2014). I placed a floating installation in the moat of the residence of the Baron of Wolfenbüttel, a waterway that by definition would be isolated and inaccessible for a boat. Placing it there immediately threw up questions regarding how it got there and the innate meaning of the mispositioned or constrained boat. Launched with great organisational effort, the boat was then piled with artworks, picture frames, wooden boxes, suitcases and trunks from my collection and floated around on the moat, in front of the chateau, for ten weeks. It was conceived as the last “delivery” of art for Baron Anton Ulrich, a dedicated art collector who resided in the chateau in the eighteenth century.

In my installations, it was often not possible for the observers to enter the dwellings: the “irrational spaces” were not accessible, as in the case of the boat that could not be reached. In some works, I installed viewing holes or slits that played with the curiosity or adventurousness of the viewers, but did not allow them a real physical access. I kept the viewers at a distance even as I invited them into spaces to listen to the stories of the “old ladies”; despite revealing intimate details of the lives and sufferings of these old ladies, I did not provide photos or writings to corroborate them. All images of the women only took form in the minds

of the viewers and listeners. The listeners own images mixed with external ones, and eventually became part of a collective memory. Actual experiences meshed with imagined and dreamed-for experiences. In the minds of the viewers, reality and that wished for flowed into each other and created new stories, the viewers thus becoming protagonists within the context of my installations. Most of my installations move within this fluid myth-laden field creating tension between reality and imagination, the personal, the social and the historical also clearly engaged in the installation presented with this dissertation.

In relation to the notion of displacement, we need to take the question of “why a boat?” one step further. Johannesburg is one of the largest cities on the planet that is located neither near the sea nor any significant river or waterway. This makes it even more incredible and irrational that a 6-metre-long fishing boat should have found its way into the centre of Johannesburg in a high-rise building. Though organisationally complex, it was not an impossible journey, inspired among other things by Werner Herzog’s film *Fitzcarraldo* from 1982 where an ocean steamer was pulled across a mountain range to serve as set for a unique opera performance in the middle of the Peruvian jungle. The image of a boat is also very current in the media and creative work of different artists in my homeland of Germany and in Europe. These allude to the overloaded boats on which thousands of hopeful refugees leave the African mainland to try and find their luck and new lives in Europe. It is only possible to estimate the numbers of those who have lost their lives on this undignified and dangerous journey. The so-called flood of refugees Europe is dealing with in the last few years is sad evidence of the seemingly unbridgeable realities of life in Europe and in Africa, a field of tension between two poles that shape my life: Europe, Germany, my home and fatherland, my roots, on the one hand, and Africa, my current life, my home and place of creativity on the other. The tension between these two has intensified as I have been working on this project, demonstrating the multivalent associations

that are located in a boat: the dichotomies of reading that what is naked survival for migrants aiming to enter Europe could just as well be associated with leisure and entertainment for wealthy South Africans spending their weekends on Vaal Dam or cruising around the Cape. Many artists have used the boat in current exhibitions as an evocative symbol of this drama within society, particularly at the recent *documenta 14* in Athens, Greece, and Kassel, Germany, this year.

Displacement can be thought of on three levels in my project: a global level, a local level and a personal level. Globally displacement is framed by a politically destabilised world, one in which migrants confront European assumptions, but also one in which accepted democratic values and systems are under debate and threat. Locally displacement speaks to xenophobia, economic inequality and impoverishment, violence and family instability, but also related to continuing rural to urban migration. In particular Johannesburg, as not only a regional centre but the economic hub within southern Africa, is affected by these tensions and strains. Demonstrations and service delivery protests around the country illustrate the concrete sense in which poorer citizens are often homeless or promised the meagrest of homes – feeling a constant sense of displacement. On a personal level, displacement characterises my own life, as an international migrant who has recently arrived in Johannesburg. Even as my migration to South Africa is of a significantly different nature from that of rural South Africans moving to Johannesburg's shanty towns, or of people from Central Africa seeking refuge in the country, I too have clearly felt my limitations and have been confronted with cultural, language and social incomprehensibilities when trying to find my feet in this new place. Used to a complete freedom of expression within creativity in art, which is now taken for granted in Europe and which I assumed not only as a given but as completely essential for artistic production, I soon realised that even the simple choice of objects was in itself a political act in South Africa and had to be done consciously and carefully: what Madiba image I chose, for example, whether

it was depicted on a souvenir plate for tourists or on an ANC poster, made a statement about me and my political and social understanding of the world, and this country in particular. Even more so, the mere fact that I chose a Madiba image raised questions about my right as a foreigner to use this image. Only slowly did I come to understand the politics of representation that were involved in my own creative decision and art making.

All this might contribute to the reading of this boat, built and used for a long time in South Africa, now the centre of my work, connecting South African history, a European point of view and world events in a multivalent and exciting manner. The subject of flight and displacement does not, however, play a central part in my work, even if there is a hint of it here. I am conscious of the fact that this installation is also a sum of the experience, and my own story is of course shaped by social circumstances, things heard, experiences felt. It is clear to me that there can never be complete separation between the artwork and where it is made.

Searching and finding

For several months, I searched materials for my installation that related to social context, memory and archive. I browsed around flea markets, followed up on tips from colleagues and friends, and discovered interesting junkyards and dark basements. It also proved to be the right decision to transfer my place of work to the inner city of Johannesburg.

The fact that the building in which I work has resembled a building site for two years, with little improvement, proved to be a positive experience even though, at times, the working conditions could be quite trying. Power failures, the disconnection of the water supply to the building, or incessant noise from the building operations or from activities on the street served as background and contextual music. Indeed, exactly on the weekend before the week I had set aside to finalise the installation, the entire inner city of Johannesburg was stripped of all electri-

city supply when professional cable thieves removed kilometres of underground cables, a condition that took two weeks to rectify. The CBD was paralysed, shops could no longer conduct business, and the lucky few with a generator helped out others if they could. After ten days without electricity, I resorted to borrowing a generator from friends in order to operate the electric saw and drill, the deadline for my installation having crept up uncomfortably close. It felt like madness but, as I have found out, a situation not out of the ordinary in the daily life of this African metropolitan city where crisis after crisis is handled on a everyday basis. And yet, the length of the power failure did start to drain the equanimity of artist friends and workers, and usually relaxed workers, musicians and entrepreneurs started to get a bit tense and ratty.

I was looking for wood, for window frames, an old chair, lamps, etc. I found my first materials right in front of my door. The workers, jacks-of-all-trades who could do anything from plumbing to welding, advised me where to find second-hand building material in town and pointed me to hidden junkyards along the edges of the CBD, which proved to be real gold mines (see Figure 5.2). As I had become confident speaking isiZulu, I engaged in conversations about what I was looking for and the prices I was prepared to pay. Often I was met with prodigious friendliness and helpfulness; and in some situations, understandably, with incredulity. Finding the material was often more difficult than what I had previously experienced in Germany where the old furniture of entire apartments might be placed on pavements on special refuse collection days. In South Africa, the recycling mentality is very different: everything can be used by someone, be it for their own personal use or because second-hand dealers will buy metal, wood or plastic for small sums of cash. The refuse of one person means survival for the next. Collecting refuse in South Africa is a hard reality for many thousands of people who can earn some money in this way, and is an activity that is generally respected.

Here I was in Johannesburg, searching as I had so often done before, but this



Figure 5.2

Manuela Karin Knaut,
Junkyard, 2017

time everything was different. I found three old metal filing cabinets from South African offices that represent the archive in its essence. One of them was hidden between old bath tubs and toilet bowls, a fantastic find (see Figure 5.3). I did not look for the cabinet; in some ways it found me. After it caught my eye, I searched for more such cabinets, eventually finding several in the basement of a former film and television specialist (see Figure 5.4). Every one of their squeaky, stiff metal drawers tells a story. Dusty shadows revealing the shape of the former contents of the drawers reflect a former life, finished and faded acts of long forgotten times (see Figure 5.5).

These cabinets are the memory sticks and external hard drives of past times. Which information, stories, personal fate or secrets had lived in these drawers? Every time one opens a drawer, possibilities open up, the pages of a new chapter of a dusty book are revealed: an idea is glimpsed that wings its way higher and higher.



Figure 5.3

Manuela Karin Knaut,
Junkyard with toilets, 2017



Figure 5.4

Manuela Karin Knaut, Basement, 2017

Similar filing cabinets can be found all around the world, still in use today: how diverse the contents of their drawers must be! My fascination for drawers is not new, and in previous work in Germany I added content to drawer installations (see Figure 4.4). And so, parallel to working on the boat, my cupboard installation entitled *History Drawers* emerged.

Figure 5.5

Manuela Karin Knaut,
Office cabinet in junkyard, 2017



Partially open drawers invite the viewer to find and explore interior spaces. For this it is not necessary to be able to open the drawers. Rather, the installation plays with the viewers' curiosity and with their intent and desire to explore more. Each viewer has to imagine the contents of the mysterious drawers the mind's eye, in the imagination. This archival context and situation is supported by ubiquitous office lamps that I found several years back and have since used in many of my installations. I also use bar clamps, a memento from past work, with which I emphasise the ephemeral, transient character of my constructs.

The display of an old cake stand, witness of long bygone times, functions here like a reflection and place holder of the family get-togethers I remember from my childhood: they were only used, and proudly so, at special occasions. Now a relic from the past, they are able to act as a signifier to reflect on and re-engage the spirit of happy family gatherings, back in time and thousands of miles away.

Figure 5.6

Manuela Karin Knaut,

History Drawers, 2017. Detail 1



History Drawers is documented in this dissertation only in the form of pictures (see Figures 4.13 and 5.6-5.7). It belongs to my memory and archive series, but not to the *Displacement* exhibition, as it would have been too dominant in terms of space and content and would have distracted from the boat.

Going through life with open and inquisitive eyes, ideal situations often take place per chance. One such coincidental and exhilarating change occurred as a



Figure 5.7

Manuela Karin Knaut,
History Drawers, 2017. Detail 2

result of my regular trawling through Johannesburg over the last two years accompanied by photographer friends, on a mission to find new and exciting spots in town and to document these for my work. From this developed an opportunity for photographers to visit the now defunct Alhambra Theatre,⁶ closed over 20 years ago, and to photograph it before renovations began. When I saw the props still in the building, they immediately began to speak to *Displacement*. I contacted the new owners of the theatre and they kindly gave me permission to borrow some of the props for my installation. The old chandelier in the interior of the boat had lit up the stage of this iconic inner city theatre for many years – and has thus become the first exhibition piece that I ever borrowed for an installation. Also from the Alhambra theatre is the small desk lamp and some books (see

⁶ The Alhambra Theatre, located in the New Doornfontein district of Johannesburg, was designed by architect S.V. Mann and opened in 1921. It was acquired by the Johannesburg Operatic & Dramatic Society and, in 1981, by Pieter Toerien, who both used it for its original purpose of stage performances. It was closed in 1994 and the building has since stood unused. In September 2017 it was acquired by new owners who “plan to ... convert it into an arts learning & training centre” (Roe 2017).



Figure 5.8

Manuela Karin Knaut,
Items on loan from the Alhambra
Theatre, 2017

Figure 5.8). And a red, moth-eaten curtain discarded on a pile of junk at the theatre became the exterior decoration of my boat. This curtain, which had framed so many stories and performances and had given them a dignified appearance, now forms a flounce around the edge of the boat (see Figure 5.16). Showing how objects can provoke memories, I could literally feel and sense the redolence of these chosen objects the moment I handled them.

Uncertain journey: Working with found photos and film footage

Photography has always had an important place in my artistic work. During my studies I had immersed myself deeply in analogue photography, yet the technical and creative possibilities of digital photography complemented my rather spontaneous and expressive method of working more smoothly. I attended a number

of different courses at art schools in Germany, developing a technical know-how that allows me to use the medium expertly in my own work. The skill includes the technical handling of digital cameras, post-production enhancement and development with specialist programmes such as Photoshop and Lightroom and the ability to cut, edit and process videos. Yet I use this expertise for results that are quite different from those achieved by professional photographers. For me the focus is on calculated coincidence, on the imperfect picture, on mixing my own images with those of other people. As in my paintings or in installations, my photography is marked by layers and overlays. I have always been fascinated with adopting private, abandoned photos, influenced by the careful treatment that the few surviving photographs in our family are granted. My siblings and I treat our parents' albums, filled with photos of their marriage and our childhoods, with great respect. At each family meeting we immerse ourselves in them; they offer opportunities for sharing stories and re-evoking memories of past times. When I saw similar private photos at flea markets in Berlin, London and Paris in the early nineties, I struggled to understand how family histories could be lost in this manner and offered up to the public with such disrespect, memories devalued and turned into junk. I began to collect these photos, individual ones and entire albums, storing them in large boxes – black and white photos and colour photos, of good quality and bad, wherever I was, in Germany or abroad. To this day I collect photos, and my album repertoire now spans continents and reflects my travels around the world.

I use the photographs to tell stories, stories of experiences, of things that took place and of things that could still take place, of fateful lives that become “real” when I select them for a story (see Figure 4.2). In this body of work I become the director of entire family dramas, defragmenting viewing patterns, interrupting sight axes, exaggerating, omitting, overlaying, cutting out, sewing or tacking together, sticking on and tearing off. Although I approach the pictorial material with great respect seeing the private lives entrusted to me, I manipulate the physical-

ty of the photographs in a fairly brutal and inconsiderate manner: I connect, pull apart and tell new stories, all in an attempt to make the invisible visible. I tell stories that are open-ended, that leave space for the viewer's own imagination to flower, sometimes simply by placing photographs of very different origins next to each other as though this was their natural order of being – the same method that I follow in my installations.



Figure 5.9

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Heimat*, 2017

In South Africa, adding to my photographic collection has been significantly more difficult than in any other place I had previously visited. It has been particularly difficult to find private photos of black individuals. Several reasons might play into this, though a lack of readily available cameras, and the fact that photographs were a luxury only taken at special occasions surely played into

it. Thus highly prized and rare, these photographs hardly make their way onto flea markets or into junkyards. The few original photos that I have of black South Africans I received from a good friend who knew about my search and provided me with some photos she discarded when sorting out the collection she had inherited from her mother. I mixed the photographs and developed new organising strategies – sorting all that depicted some kind of umbrella, for example, or combining new family constellations (see Figure 5.9; see also Volume 2).



Figure 5.10

Manuela Karin Knaut,
Film reel, 2017

fragile nature of life, portrayed in such a dramatic and distinct way as the images pass by.

On a technical level I deal with the film material similarly to the photographs: I first digitise them and then process them by means of photo editing programmes. Here there is no technical or creative limit: I overlay, slow down or speed up, I change colours and lighting, work with screen shoots and include individual photographs into spliced recreations.

Most of the 8 mm films that I found in South Africa were obtained by coincidence when I opened a dusty box in the musty corner of a dark basement room in

Apart from the photos, I also collect film reels. Working with found Super 8 und 8 mm films is similar to working with photographs, yet more tension is involved as, unlike with photographs, one cannot immediately see what is on a film. The tension can become palpable when, with great effort, a film is spooled onto a reel in the studio and made ready for viewing (see Figure 5.10). The moment when these moving pictures spring to life and their protagonists start to move is always very special. It is a moment when life enters my studio, but also one that calls for the humbling contemplation of the transitory,

the inner city of Johannesburg (see Figure 5.4). At the time I was searching for a working projector. A television journalist had pointed me to this shop, museum-like in appearance and run by a specialist and aficionado. When I showed him what I had found, he spontaneously gave me the whole box and thus set me off on a time machine, travelling back sixty years in time. It turned out to be amazing: the films captured children learning to walk, graduation ceremonies at Wits in the 1970s, beach holidays in Durban and Cape Town, weddings and diverse garden parties. These are undeniably scenes from an unequal South African past that must be painful to view by those who stood on the other side of the racial divide, those prohibited from swimming at Durban beaches, those who were at best allowed to work in the amusement parks, but never to experience the entertainment themselves.

The films give evidence of a deeply divided land. I too grew up in a divided country, but the division of Germany, under which my family suffered for so many years, cannot be compared to the separation caused by Apartheid. Apprehensively I wondered how I, as a German, could tackle this material. The question was not one of the critical re-appraisal of political content, but one of tone: I felt that I could not possibly find an acceptable tone. I thus deal with this film material in the same way that I dealt with the letters I found, the old lamps, the armchair or the picture frames: I don't judge the past of these materials, but take them up, combine them in a seamless way, to tell new stories founded on the old ones. I work with the photos in my role as an observer, as story teller, as poet, as artist. I looked at the film material from a distance, guessing at the stories that might be hidden behind the happy and light-hearted events depicted. I observe but I do not judge. I work with these finds as an outsider, as a forensic pathologist dissects a body. I try to express the content of the past in the present by handling it very consciously, without judging or pointing fingers at anyone – celluloid ghosts, all most probably dead by now, now inevitably seen through the harsh projected light of the present.



Figure 5.11

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Screen shot video projection 1

When I processed the old 8 mm films, I first digitalised most of them and then selected a few that stood out for me. Soon the faces that appeared in the films looked familiar. I combined events from these bygone times with video sequences that I had recently filmed in Johannesburg. In a strange and significant way, this juxtaposition amplified both the sense of disjuncture and of continuity, key elements in my installation. A sense of temporal, social and

Figure 5.12

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Screen shot video projection 2



cultural displacement now also emerged from the edited film footage: I combined the impossible, connected that which the apartheid regime had painstakingly separated over many years, in an attempt to question and shift borders of reality, of the past, and of private histories within these film sequences (see Figures 5.11 and 5.12).



Figure 5.13

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Detail window and video installation

By screening the film within the boat, decorated with a single chandelier that has clearly seen better days, lends the interior a curious aura. The fact that this film projection can be viewed only from one point, through a small side window, emphasises the sense of privacy, of something hidden and not intended to be seen by a wider public (see Figure 5.13). This might evoke a sense of cu-

riosity, but also one of guilt at clandestinely viewing something that has hitherto been kept private. Thus are stories of the past linked to the present. The looped sequences remind us of a memory that is repeated over and over again in our troubled minds before we slip into the oblivion of sleep where the subconscious takes over the principal role. In the film, series of moving pictures are layered, one on top of another, in graphic and irritating sequences that impress themselves on the mind's eye. The film sequences evoke a sense of life and a presence, and at the same time allude to the ephemeral nature and fragility of memory. The very nature of truth and memory is put into question as the images of this celluloid journey take us to an unknown destination and time, with an unresolved and indistinct outcome for the spliced lives of their randomly found protagonists.

Fear of one's own courage: Makeshift gondola

There it is – my boat. Every time when I open the door to my studio, I get a little fright. I am surprised at the sheer size and physical presence of this former floating colossus, a far cry from earlier installations, instigated by a mere toy. I walk around it; it still smells a bit of brackish water; I am a little in awe of it and marvel at myself. I get the same sense of fear and exhilaration when, momentarily dipping into the unconscious, I take a big brush and cross through the work I had taken hours to produce on a canvass standing in my studio. Did I really do that? Yes, I am responsible for this enormous “thing” in my studio; it talks to me, it challenges me, it pushes me to my limits – physically, because of the sheer size and the weight, the scale and the huge dimensions, emotionally, and mentally. I pace up and down, a bit despondent and even scared of my own ambition, my own courage. This feeling is not unfamiliar. It re-connects with what I described at the beginning of the narrative, in the shift

from Germany to Johannesburg. So here
I am, having landed in Johannesburg,

Figure 5.14
Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*,
2017. Detail starboard



Heimat

Immer wenn
du denkst
es gibt
nicht mehr,
kommt von
irgendwo
am liebsten
per

DRIFT OFF
AND WALK ON
THE ROAD,
YOU MAY
BE KILLED.



Figure 5.15

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*,
2017. Detail shack

standing in a studio in the inner city: stranded with my boat, manifesting the absurd with a seaworthy vessel, 700 km from the sea, a metaphor of my own displacement and the start of a complex journey engaging my past and the present. Is this the beginning of the journey? Is it its end?



The boat looks as if it had been catapulted, full force, through the wall into my studio. Neon advertisements flicker in my mind's eyes, the noise from the street invades the studio through the window. But here in my studio, life seems frozen, a film on pause. A strange mixture of past and present activates the space. I feel caught in a cultural slipstream as the bow of the boat faces the window and the city beyond in such a fierce manner, cutting into its context, that one gets the impression

that this is just a quick stop before the surging journey continues (see Figure 5.14). This visual axis directs the viewing sequence of the installation – from the bow to the stern. One can feel the energy that flowed into creating this scene. There is an almost threatening tranquillity and an obviously faded grandeur that



Heim

Kehrw
Daily
NOW PLANNED

JOBURG BEER
SUPERIOR QUALITY



Figure 5.16
Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*,
2017. Detail shack entrance



emanates from the little “colossus” of the outsized object in the middle of the room, a sense of tension and action that is captured in the splatters of paint and scratches on the floor. It is transferred on the viewer upon entering the room. One can see that someone has worked here – sawing, stapling, driving in screws. The scaffold on the stern of the boat, its manner of construction and the material used, reminds me of my previous installations, a series of “foolish rooms”: a playful mixture of a spontaneously constructed Wendy house, a tree house and a hiding place in the forest all in one. But here in the inner city of Johannesburg it suddenly takes on a completely new meaning: it carries a cross-reference to the simple shacks in a township or to a typical shebeen, those informal casually constructed roadside pubs serving home-brewed beer and simple, wholesome food. The reference is strengthened by the building materials, obviously originating in South Africa: pieces of wood, used sheets of corrugated iron, parts of a door, dismantled furniture, sheet metal with faded writing, and even election poster boards are all utilised in the construction of this shack (see Figure 5.15). A shack, a shebeen on a boat? A structure through which the wind may blow, but which nevertheless offers some protection and comfort with its roof and walls. A shelter that one would like to enter. A semblance of a door to the shack transmits a first expression of welcome and hospitality. All that is missing is a staircase or some other way of entering the boat (see Figure 5.16). As in a shop or restaurant, the visitor is welcomed by a pink neon sign above the door: it carries the hand-written, uniquely German term “Heimat”, impossible to translate, just as “Wanderlust” defies expression in other languages. “Heimat”, the place where one is born and where one grows up. “Heimat”, the place where one knows one’s roots to be, where one’s family and clan are from. “Heimat”, the place where

warmth and protection lie, where one is understood, where one’s idiosyncrasies are known and accepted. Heimat, here?

Figure 5.17

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*,
2017. Detail photographs

On a stranded boat in the middle of an African metropolis? I attempt to understand the complex meaning of the word.

Framed photographs on the walls tell stories of past events and faded memories (see Figure 5.17). A few dim lights, again citations from past installations, carefully illuminate this area of the boat, which reminds me a bit of a theatre stage. One expects or anticipates that something is about to happen. On one side there is a mix of African souvenirs and traditional muti. An official notice with the word “Kehrwoche” and an image of a broom – the cleaning rota for the public areas of a residential building, an image of the bourgeois order in German apartment buildings – seems to be almost a provocation in this somewhat untidy room. The small brush, traditionally presented in African houses like a portrait or picture on the wall, seems but a snippy answer to the German command. Dried herbs from African muti markets fill the room with scent, creating a tense sym-

Figure 5.18

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*,
2017. Detail *muti* and brush



biosis between objects of clearly African provenance and those of German origin (see Figure 5.18). The eye jumps between the known and the unknown, a strong ambivalence that irritates but also sparks curiosity, placing into question the well-trodden pathways of seeing. Is there such a thing as a typically German object, or a European one? Are there things that are quintessentially South African? And what happens when these objects, loaded with different cultural meanings and carrying clichéd meanings, suddenly come into contact with each other? Can they travel together? “Heimat” is proposed as the opposite of displacement, the state of being home, of wanting to stay, but also of craving to go travelling again – all of this alluded to in the installation. Indeed, where do I belong, in this world of South Africa that offers me so much openness and opportunity and yet throws up borders and restrictions, both in socio-political and in artistic terms? And can my “Heimat” be moved to yet another place, without me losing myself and being respectful to the new place I find myself in?

Objects of everyday use, such as typical South African enamel crockery or porridge whisks, made from hand-carved wood and looped wire and available at every corner, meet with dusty mementoes that have obviously not been used for a long time. A dancing rattle meets a camera, a shooting target is juxtaposed with a jar of discarded films, and a typewriter stands on top of an old radio. In a hidden corner, the new South African flag can be spotted next to a Shanghai bag and a grass brush and hidden behind a large bunch of muti herbs. Letters and documents lie around, inaccessible because of they stacked in parcels and tied with ribbons. We might feel hesitant to read them, because they seem personal, and yet the way they look lets us know instinctively what they say: they are silent witnesses to happiness and to despair. Notebooks, diaries and scrapbooks with cut-out newspaper articles are stacked on a small worn side table. An old telephone seems like a disconnected link to a time long gone. Newspapers, books and magazines from bygone days both attract and repel. And then there are saplings



Figure 5.19
 Manuela Karin Knaut,
Displacement, 2017.
 Detail chair



Figure 5.20
 Manuela Karin Knaut,
Displacement, 2017.
 Detail stage light



Figure 5.21

Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Detail sleeping quarter

ords to the here and now. Not everything on the boat is past, old and dead material: the future lives where trees take root and life carries on. This is not the end of the journey. It is but a temporary stop on a journey with an uncertain destination.

On the bow is a type of look-out: an old velvet armchair stands here, a sign of dignity and elegance, perhaps even superiority, from times gone by (see Figure 5.19). Perhaps it derives from some rich household. And yet here it is, worn, stained and discarded, seemingly exposed to the elements, but re-installed. On the bow stands a disbanded and battered stage light from the old Johannesburg Alhambra Theatre, lighting up the way into the future, in the direction in which the ship is heading (see Figure 5.20). Yet there is little space for the passenger: sacks of maize meal, South Africa's traditional staple crop, are stacked up, blocking the way. And everywhere, inside and out, is an ubiquitous array of toy buildings from a model train set, found objects that are accompanying me from previous installations. What has happened here? Who was sitting here and might come back again? Who is making the decisions on where the boat is heading? It remains unclear.



Figure 5.22

Manuela Karin Knaut,
Wanderlust lightbox, 2015

Paint splatters and splotches attest to recent attempts of hiding traces, of painting over memories, of giving what is old a new lick of paint. Close by a reading lamp and a collection of dusty books suggests that someone was living and reading here, perhaps returning a few minutes later. A faded moth-eaten velvet cloth, attached roughly and in a makeshift manner, frames the entire outer edge of the boat, a flounce that offers a faint reminder of Venetian gondolas transporting tourists and locals through the narrow canals of the Italian art metropole. Is this installation ready for the long way to Venice, to the Biennale of 2019? The destination sounds enticing, even though the journey would probably not be able to take place by sea.

Inside the shack, a chandelier dimly lights up the rather bare living and sleeping space. Traditional grass sleeping mats cover the floor, creating a little comfort; a collection of personal items invites the viewer to stay a little while (see Figure 5.21). And yet the scene is uninviting, even surreal: something does not seem to fit. Searching for a confirmation of known patterns, we as viewers are thrown back onto ourselves and our own ability to interpret. A video installation, projected into the sleeping quarters, manifests the feeling of movement, the flow of time. Like a film, past, present and future run past before our eyes, carry us along and make us part of the action.

Displacement is framed by the proximity of two lightboxes displaying a series of photographic transparencies. The first lightbox, at the entrance to the exhibition, displays a photograph from my previous installation *Wanderlust* in which my parents, my sister and I are on a family hiking holiday in the 1970s (see Figure 5.22).

The second lightbox, built for my *Dear Diary* exhibition in Ponte City in May 2017, captures an everyday street scene in the inner city of Johannesburg against the backdrop of Ponte City. The two lightboxes stand in contrast to each other: on the one hand the challenging and enticing context for my creative engagement of the last two years; on the other, my German origins, my „Heimat“, my point of departure. Both are pivotal to the central themes engaged in *Displacement*.

Also in the frame of the installation are a few mixed-media pages from my *Dear Diary series* (see Figures 5.23). They bring together the past and the present, juxtaposing them, each posing questions to the

Figure 5.23
Manuela Karin Knaut,
Dear Diary, at *Displacement*, 2017



other. Throwing a different light on the theme of displacement, they are of particular importance to *Displacement* and have very consciously been placed here.

From the interior of the boat, the viewer hears the sonorous voice of Delight Munamati, a singer whom I first heard performing gospel songs during a church service in a crowded and stuffy corrugated iron shack in Berea, a densely populated suburb of Johannesburg that is particularly affected by crime. I was captivated by the tones and insistence of her voice and asked whether she would consider choosing and recording several songs for my boat, that they could accompany me on my journey. With fervour and dignity she performed for me, just as she does every Sunday. I will take her voice and our conversations along on my journey, in my memory and in my thoughts, intermingling with my memories of the smells of the city, the laughing of people in its streets and all the noise and clamour within it.

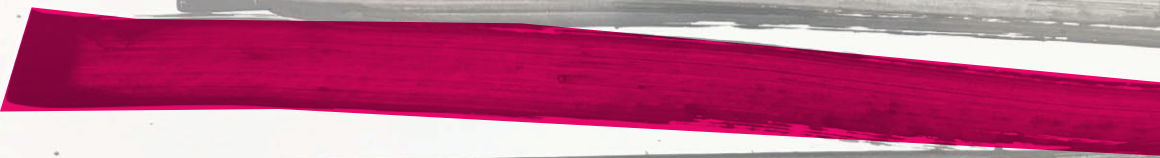
Displacement is not a book that has been completed, ready for the printer, or a painting finished and released for framing. It is an interim result, an ongoing project still being built, allowing change and inviting conversation, over and over again (see Figure 2.24). *Displacement* is also a collision of and interaction between contrary powers, of wishes, fears and hopes. It is placed somewhere between dream and reality, between memory and future: a place where everything seems possible.





Figure 5.24
Manuela Karin Knaut,
Displacement, 2017

ГР



6 Conclusion

This dissertation is a very personal approach to the installational works of South African artist Penny Siopis that deal with the themes of memory and archive. I posed the question of how found and collected objects used in artistic installations can make statements about personal and collective memory.

Drawing on the work of Kurt Schwitters, Marcel Duchamp, Allan Kaprow and others, the dissertation begins with a historical sketch of the theoretical framework that forms the backdrop for present-day installation work. Based on an extensive literature analysis, I then propose and describe five of the most important characteristics that mark installation art: space, materials/media, the role of the integrated observer, the senses and time. The dissertation then discusses Penny Siopis's four most important installation works – *Reconnaissance 1900–1997* (1997), *Charmed Lives* (1998/1999, 2014), *The Will* (1997–) and *Sympathetic Magic* (2002) – in terms of these characteristics and analyses the installations critically in terms of how they reflect on archive and memory.

In the second part of my work I first examine my own installations and artworks that deal with the theme of memory and archive, highlighting in particular the autobiographically inspired manner in which I collect and sort objects. I then describe *Displacement*, the installation that I created for the Master's degree, in detail. Here too I reflect on the process of collecting and connecting objects that flowed into this installation. Built over a period of several months in 2017 in my downtown Johannesburg studio, *Displacement* reflects critically on my slow arrival in the city, my immersion into the particularities of its pulsating life, but also my confrontation with the adversities of this African metropole. It shows the insecurities I often felt in dealing with local habits and behavioural patterns, the slow

process of feeling at home, marked by tensions, expectations and difficulties. But it also shows the overwhelming power and energy that life in Johannesburg entails for my artistic creativity. *Displacement* is a very personal narrative, a story, a love letter to the raw, inaccessible, dangerous, wonderful, energy-laden and warm City of Gold which has absorbed me, shaken me, pushed me away and embraced me. *Displacement* is the place where many different powerful forces act, where energy is created by friction, where nothing stands still: a place where being at home and being different rub up against each other, where desire for the elsewhere exists side by side with the feeling of being at home. Yet *Displacement* is only a momentary picture: it will soon be dissembled. But this does not mean the end of the installation: the objects have made only a stopover in my studio, used by my hands in my language. They will continue to live, passed on like the heirlooms in Penny Siopis's *The Will*: triggering memories of my installation, these objects will themselves become "displaced". The boat will travel through the city to end up in Ponte City, a serendipitous turn that life has taken, conquering my initial fears of the building. Some objects will stay with me, accompanying me into my next phase of artistic creativity in new and different contexts, reminding me both of their displacement from South Africa and of feelings of being at home. Others will remain in the building where my studio is located, as part of a permanent installation to be built in 2018. And yet others will be passed on to colleagues and friends; even Penny Siopis will receive some of my collected items, something we have already discussed with great anticipation. It will be interesting to watch whether I will spot one or the other of these items in her future works. In this way, the continued life of objects creates a matrix: they become metaphorical for networks and memories of artistic creativity. It is indeed possible to communicate through objects.

It has been a powerful experience to be able to find the interface between my own work and that of Penny Siopis in my need to understand the nature of

archive, history and memory: to understand the way they intersect, specifically in relation to the nature of place and one's national origin. It allows me to grasp at the importance of one's sphere of reference and how it brackets one's way of interpreting the world and objects. It has been both a challenge but also very insightful to negotiate my place within a South African society filled with tensions and to interrogate my position in relation to its history and the effects it has had on present-day society, politics and the arts.

Both Penny Siopis's work and my own investigate the nature of memory and archive through our use of found and collected objects. Resurrected from the past, these objects challenge the viewer to question what society assumes as given and takes for granted, what it treasures and what meanings it ascribes, and whether these meanings are inevitable. This form of installation art entices viewers in a casual, non-confrontational manner to engage with the complexities of memory and archive, keeping history alive and placing themselves within it. ●

Appendices

Appendix 1: Penny Siopis – Documentation of all installation artworks

Figure A.1

Penny Siopis, *Private Views*, 1994
Crates for moving installation.
Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa



Figure A.2

Penny Siopis, *Women and Children First*, 1995
Tableau installation of found objects, including resin casts from South African museums and copies of mannequins from the Gwangju Folk Museum
Gwangju Biennale, People's Republic of China



Figure A.3

Penny Siopis, *Permanent Collection*, 1995
Site-specific installation. Mannequin parts coated with "exotic" foodstuffs on wooden scaffolding over vitrine, mirror.
Taking Liberties: The Body Politics, 1st Johannesburg Biennale,
Johannesburg, South Africa



Figure A.4

Penny Siopis, *Mostly Women and Children*, 1996
Site-specific installation of found objects including resin body casts on loan from local museums and face casts from the anatomy department at Wits University
Faultlines: Inquiries into Truth and Reconciliation, Castle of Good Hope, Cape
Town, South Africa



Figure A.5

Penny Siopis, *Spectre*, 1997
6th Biennale of Havana, Havana, Cuba





Figure A.6

Penny Siopis, *Sacrifices*, 1998

Site-specific installation of found objects

University of the Witwatersrand Art Galleries, Johannesburg, South Africa



Figure A.7

Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998

Detail. Installation of found objects

Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa



Figure A.8

Penny Siopis, *Reconnaissance 1900–1997*, 1997

Detail of hands. Installation of found objects

Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa



Figure A.9

Penny Siopis, *The Will*, 1997

Detail. Found objects, Various exhibitions



Figure A.10

Penny Siopis, *Zombie*, 2000

Three tableaux of found objects

Gallery in The Round, Standard Bank National Arts Festival,
Grahamstown, South Africa

Figure A.11
Penny Siopis, *The Archive*, 2002
Installation of found objects
Tropen Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands



Figure A.12
Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*, 2002
Site-responsive installation of found objects
Wits Gertrude Posel Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa



Figure A.13
Penny Siopis, *Snare*, 2004
Site-specific installation of found objects
Kunsthaus Baselland, Muttenz, Switzerland



Figure A.14
Penny Siopis, *Three Essays on Shame*, 2005
Site-specific installation with sound, found objects and paintings
Freud Museum, London, United Kingdom



Figure A.15
Penny Siopis, *Pinky Pinky comes to Cape Town*, 2007
Installation, bead and wire, 135x45cm, 160x45cm, 110x40cm
Artist's Collection





Figure A.16

Penny Siopis, *Personal Collection*, 2014

Site-specific installation

Time and Again, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa;
Wits Arts Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa



Figure A.17

Penny Siopis, *Boundary Thing 1 & 2*, 2015

Installation with found objects

Artificial Facts – Boundary Objects, Kunsthaus Dresden, Dresden, Germany



Figure A.18

Penny Siopis, *Restless Republic*, 2017

Site-specific installation of paintings and related found objects, changed 4 times during the exhibition

Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa



Figure A.19

Penny Siopis, *Welcome visitors: Relax and feel at home*, 2017

Site-specific wall-mounted installation

Prospect New Orleans, New Orleans, United States of America

Appendix 2: Penny Siopis – Curriculum Vitae (from Stevenson 2017a)

Born 1953, Johannesburg, South Africa

Lives in Cape Town

Education

1979 Postgraduate course in painting, Portsmouth Polytechnic, England

1976 MA Fine Arts, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa

1974 BA Fine Arts, Rhodes University, South Africa

Selected solo exhibitions

2017 *Restless Republic*, Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa

2016 *Penny Siopis: Films*, Erg Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

Incarnations, Institute of Contemporary Art Indian Ocean, Port Louis, Mauritius

2015 *Still and Moving*, Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa

Time and Again: A Retrospective Exhibition, Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa

2014 *Penny Siopis: Obscure White Messenger*, Brandts Museum, Odense, Denmark

Time and Again: A Retrospective Exhibition, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2011 *Who's Afraid of the Crowd?* Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa

2010 *Furies*, Brodie/Stevenson, Johannesburg, South Africa

2009 *Red: The Iconography of Colour in the Work of Penny Siopis*, KZNSA Gallery, Durban, South Africa

Paintings, Michael Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa

2007 *Lasso*, Michael Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa

2005 *On Stains*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

Three Essays on Shame, the Freud Museum, London, UK

Passions and Panics, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2003 *Shame*, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa; Kappatos Gallery, Athens, Greece

2002 *Sympathetic Magic*, Gertrude Posel Gallery, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

The Archive, Tropen Museum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Pinky Pinky and other Xenis, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2000 *Zombie*, Invited Artist, Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa

Flesh Colour, Gasworks Artists' Studios, London, UK

1998 *Charmed Lives*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

1994 *Private Views*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

1990 *History Paintings*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

Invited Artist, Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown; Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

1987 *Pictures Within Pictures*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

1983 *Recent Work*, Market Theatre Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

1982 *Cakes*, NSA Gallery, Durban, South Africa

- 1980 Hiscock Gallery, Portsmouth, England
 1979 British Council Centre, London, UK
 1978 Hellenic Centre, Port Elizabeth, South Africa
 Collector's Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

Selected group exhibitions

- 2017 *The New Parthenon*, Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
A Painting Today, Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016 *Gestures and Archives of the Present, Genealogies of the Future: A new lexicon for the biennial*,
 10th Taipei Biennial, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan
South Africa: The Art of a Nation, British Museum, London, UK
I Love You Sugar Kane, ICA Indian Ocean, Port Louis, Mauritius
Air: Inspiration-Expiration, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
The Quiet Violence of Dreams, Stevenson Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa
Home Truths, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015 *After Eden/Après Eden - The Walther Collection*, La Maison Rouge, Paris, France
Boundary Objects, Kunsthau Dresden, Germany
The Film Will Always Be You: South African Artists On Screen, Tate Modern, London, UK
 16th Dresdner Schmalfilmstage Film Festival, Kunsthau Dresden, Germany
Angels with Dirty Faces, Galerie Les Filles De Calvaire, Paris, France
Unfinished Conversations, Beirut Art Centre, Lebanon
- 2014 *Thinking, Feeling, Head, Heart*, New Church Museum, Cape Town, South Africa
Chroma, Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
Parle pour toi: reprises, montages, histoires, Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris, France
Public Intimacy: Art and Other Ordinary Acts in South Africa, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts,
 San Francisco, USA
Ngezinyawo: Migrant Journeys, Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2013 *Between the Lines*, Former Tagesspiegel Building, Berlin, Germany; Michaelis Gallery,
 University of Cape Town, South Africa
Imaginary Fact: South African art and the archive, South African Pavillion,
 55th Venice Biennale, Italy
Possessions (film programme), Jeu de Paume, Paris, France
Suspicious Mind: Artists' exploration of mind and matter, Michaelis Gallery,
 University of Cape Town, South Africa
- 2012 *Fiction as Fiction (Or, A Ninth Johannesburg Biennale)*, Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
Trade Routes Over Time, Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
Not My War, Michaelis Galleries, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Prism: Drawing from 1990-2011, Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo, Norway
The New Worlds and the Old I: Traffic of Legends, Khiasma, Les Lilas, Paris, France
Mine - A selection of films by SA artists, Dubai Community Theatre and Arts Centre, United Arab Emirates
 University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa
Subject as Matter, The New Church, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2011 *What we talk about when we talk about love*, Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
Neither Man Nor Stone, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Hantologie des colonies (film screening), École nationale supérieure des Beaux-arts, Paris, France

- Water, the [Delicate] Thread of Life, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Appropriated Landscapes, Walther Collection, Neu-Ulm/Burlafingen, Germany
- Space, Ritual, Absence: Liminality in South African visual art, FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg, South Africa
- Mine - A selection of films by SA artists*, Iwalewa-Haus, University of Bayreuth, Germany
- 2010 *PEEKABOO - Current South Africa*, Tennis Palace Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland
- This is Our Time*, Michael Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
- The Beauty of Distance: Songs of survival in a precarious age*, 7th Biennale of Sydney, Australia
- Wild is the Wind*, Savannah College of Art and Design, Gutstein Gallery Savannah, Georgia, USA
- In Other Words*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2009 *Self/Not-self*, Brodie/Stevenson, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Test Patterns: Recent video work from South Africa*, San Francisco Camerawork, San Francisco, USA
- For your eyes only*, Den Hvide Kodby, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2008 *Disguise: The Art of Attracting and Deflecting Attention*, Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- Make Art/Stop Aids*, Fowler Museum, Los Angeles, USA
- Black Womanhood: Images, Icons and Ideologies of the African Body*, Hood Museum, New Hampshire; Davis Museum, Wellesley, Massachusetts; San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, USA
- Personal Poetics*, 3rd Guangzhou Triennial, China
- 2007 *Desirealities, L'oeil en cascade*, Paris, France
- Apartheid: the South African Mirror*, Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, Spain
- Afterlife*, Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- Bound*, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, England
- About Beauty*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- Cape' 07*, International Biennale, Cape Town, South Africa
- Impossible Monsters*, Art Extra, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Lift Off II*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2006 *Figuring Faith: Images of Belief in Africa*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Second to None: South African Women Artists*, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- Migrations*, Belfast Exposed, Belfast, Northern Ireland
- Women: Photography and New Media*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa
- 2005 *Crusaid; Art for AIDS*, Royal College of Art, London, UK
- Etchings, Print Center of New York, USA
- Out of Place*, FLAC, Centrum voor Kunsten en Kultuur in Gent, Belgium
- Heimat als Idee/Homeland as Idea*, Basis Gallery, Frankfurt, Germany
- 2004 *New Identities: Contemporary South African Art*, Museum Bochum, Bochum, Germany
- Art from Greece*, Feria Internacional de Arte Contemporáneo, Arco, Madrid, Spain
- Art Athina*, International Art Fair, Athens, Greece
- The ID of South African Artists*, Fortis Circustheater, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- Art Unlimited*, MCH Messe, Basel, Switzerland
- Mine(d)fields*, Kunsthau, Basel, Switzerland
- Staged Realities Family Ties*, Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- Resistance,

- Reconciliation, Reconstruction*, MTN Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Democracy and Change, Klein Karoo Nationale Kunstefees, Oudtshoorn, South Africa
- 2003 *Group Portrait South Africa*, Tropen Museum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Kwere-Kwere: Journeys into Strangeness, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Literally and Figuratively, Michael Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2002 *Once Were Painters*, Klein Karoo Nationale Kunstefees, Oudtshoorn, South Africa
AIDS and South Africa: The Social Expression of a Pandemic,
 Davis Museum and Cultural Centre, Wellesley College, Boston, USA
- 2001 *Africas: The Artist and the City*, Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Arte, Barcelona, Spain
Sample EP: Art of the Eastern Cape, Gertrude Posel Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2000 *Kwere-Kwere: Journeys into Strangeness*, Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town;
 Gertrude Posel Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Secure the Future: Artworks for AIDS, XIII International AIDS conference, Durban, South Africa;
 Harvard AIDS Institute, Boston, USA
- 1999 *Le Mémoire*, Villa Medici, Rome, Italy
Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art from South Africa, Museum for African Art, New York; Austin
 Museum of Art, Texas; Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University; Palo Alto, California;
 University of Arizona Gallery, Tucson, USA
Truth Veils, Gertrude Posel Gallery, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
Lines of Sight: Perspectives in South African Photography, South African National Gallery,
 Cape Town, South Africa; Bamako Festival of Photography, Mali
- 1998 *Discoveries and Collaborations: 7th International Festival of Photography*, Fotofest, Houston, USA
Bringing Up Baby: Artists Survey the Reproductive Body, Standard Bank National Arts Festival,
 Grahamstown; Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town; Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg,
 South Africa
Democracy's Images: Photography and visual art after apartheid, BildMuseet, Umea, Sweden
Eye Africa: Photography of a Continent, Grande Palais, Paris, France; Castle of Good Hope,
 Cape Town, South Africa
Holdings: Refiguring the Archive, Graduate School of the Humanities and the Social Sciences,
 University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1997 *Contemporary Art From South Africa*, The National Touring Exhibitions, Oslo, Norway
Individual and Memory, 6th Havana International Biennial, Havana, Cuba
Alternating Currents, 2nd Johannesburg International Biennale, Electric Workshop,
 Johannesburg, South Africa
Lift Off, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1996 *Gay Rights, Rites, Rewrites*, Gertrude Posel Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Earth and Everything: Recent Art from South Africa, Arnolfini, Bristol, UK
Simunye: Ten South African Artists, Adelson Galleries, New York, USA
Faultlines: Enquiries into Truth and Reconciliation, The Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town,
 South Africa
Don't Mess with Mr In-between: 15 Artists from South Africa, Culturgest, Lisbon, Portugal
- 1995 *Black Looks White Myths*, Museum Africa, Africus – 1st Johannesburg International Biennale,
 Johannesburg, South Africa
Taking Liberties – The Body Politic, Wits Galleries, Africus – 1st Johannesburg International
 Biennale, Johannesburg, South Africa

- Vita Art Now*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa
- Objects of Defiance / Spaces of Contemplation*, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- Panoramas of Passage; Changing Landscapes of South Africa*, Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa; Meridian Center, Washington DC, USA *Siyawela: Love, Loss and Liberation in Art from South Africa*, City Museum and Art Galleries, Birmingham, UK
- Mayibuye Africa*, Bernard Jacobson Gallery, London, UK
- Eight from South Africa*, Center for the Arts, San Francisco, USA
- Beyond Borders*, 1st Gwanju Biennale, South Korea
- On the Road: Works by 10 Southern African Artists*, Delfina Studio Trust, London, UK
- Panoramas of Passage: Changing Landscapes of South Africa*, National Arts Festival, Grahamstown; Meridian Center, Washington DC, USA
- 1994 "Trackings" - History as Memory, Document, Object, Art First Gallery, London, UK Displacements: South African Works on Paper, 1984-1994, Block Gallery, Evanston, USA Art, Society, Reflection, 5th Havana International Biennale, Cuba
- 1993 "Incroci Del Sud" Affinities: Contemporary South African Art, XLV Venice Biennale, Palazzo Giustinian Lolin, Fondazione Levi, Venice, Italy; Sala 1 Gallery, Rome, Italy; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- Absent Bodies/Present Lives, Leeds City Art Gallery, Leeds, England
- Southern Cross: Contemporary South African Art, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- 1992 Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France; Alliance Française Gallery, Durban, South Africa
- 1991 *Vita Art Now*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa
- Cape Town Triennial*, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- Pictures as History*, Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Albany Museum, Grahamstown; Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Painted People, Painted Space: Works from South Africa*, Zaire, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, Newtown Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1990 *Art From South Africa*, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK
- South African Women's Mail Art, SOHO 20 Gallery, New York, USA
- 1989 *The Portsmouth Collection*, Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth, UK
- 1988 *Detainees Parent Support Committee Exhibition* (DPSC), Market Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Vita Art Now*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa
- Cape Town Triennial*, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1987 *Culture in Another South Africa*, CASA Foundation and the Anti-Apartheid Movement, Oosterkerk, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- 1986 *Volkskas Atelier Award Exhibition*, South African Association of Arts, Pretoria, South Africa
- 1985 *Tributaries*, Africana Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Women Artists in South Africa*, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- Tactile – An Exhibition for the Blind and Partially Sighted*, Durban Art Museum, South Africa
- Cape Town Triennial*, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1984 *Inaugural Exhibition*, South African Association of Arts, Pretoria, South Africa
- 1983 *Natal Lecturers Exhibition*, Studio Gallery, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Works on Paper*, Jack Heath Gallery, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

- 1982 *Cape Town Triennial*, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
 1977 With Gillian Maylam and Rose Hogge, Settler's Museum, Grahamstown, South Africa

Film screenings

- 2016 *The New Parthenon*, Art Basel Miami Beach Film Sector, Miami, United States of America
 2014 *Penny Siopis: Obscure White Messenger*, Brandts Museum, Odense, Denmark
 2012 *Penny Siopis - Films*, Kinothek Asta Nielsen, Frankfurt Main, Germany
 2005 *My Lovely Day*, Documentary film on Africa, AEGIS (Organization of European Interdisciplinary Studies on Africa); University of London Birkbeck Collage, University College London; SOAS University of London, UK
 2004 *My Lovely Day*, Tate Modern, London, UK
 2003 *My Lovely Day*, Greek State Television, Greece
 2000 *Verwoerd Speaks: 1966*, Bild Museet, Umea, Sweden

Awards

- 2016 Arts & Culture Trust Lifetime Achievement Award, South Africa
 2015 Helgaard Steyn Prize, South Africa
 2002 Klein Karoo Nationale Kunstfees: Best Visual Artist Award, South Africa
 1995 *Vita Art Now*, Quarterly Award Winner, South Africa
 1991 *Vita Art Now*, Special Merit Award, South Africa
 1988 *Vita Art Now*, Quarterly Award Winner, South Africa
Vita Art Now, Merit Award, South Africa
 1986 Volkskas Atelier Award, South Africa
 1985 Cape Town Triennial, Merit Award, South Africa

Fellowships & Residencies

- 2017 *Open Studio/Open Form*, The Maitland Institute, Cape Town, South Africa
 2008 Athens School of Arts: Visiting artist residency, Delphi, Greece
 2006 Ampersand Foundation Fellowship Residency, New York, USA
 2001 Alexander S Onassis Foundation Fellowship, Greece
 2000 Swedish Exchange Fellowship, Umea University, Umea, Sweden
 Gasworks Studios, London, UK
 Artist in residence awarded by the Dutch Ministry of Culture & Education in association with the Tropen Museum / Royal Tropical Institute of the Netherlands and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunste, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
 1998 Civitella Ranieri Foundation International Fellowship, Umbria, Italy
 1995 Delfina Studio Trust Residency, for africa95 Festival, London, UK
 1992 Artist in residence, Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa
 Visiting Research Fellowship, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK
 University Council Overseas Fellowship, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
 1986 Cité Internationale des Arts residency, Paris, France
 1978 British Council Scholarship for Overseas Study, South Africa

Collections

21c Museum, USA
Afrox, Johannesburg, South Africa
Anglo American Corporation, Johannesburg, South Africa
BHP Billiton, Australia
Chase Manhattan Bank Art Collection, New York, USA
Constitutional Court of South Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa
Durban Art Museum, South Africa
Durban University of Technology, South Africa
Gencor, Johannesburg, South Africa
Gordon Schachat Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa
Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa
Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, University of the Free State, South Africa
MTN, South Africa
Museum of Modern Art, Stockholm, Sweden
Nedcor, Johannesburg, South Africa
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum of Art, Port Elizabeth, South Africa
The New Church Museum, Cape Town, South Africa
Peter Stuyvesant Collection, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Pretoria Art Museum, South Africa
Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa
Rupert Museum, Stellenbosch, South Africa
Sandton Civic Gallery Collection, housed at Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa
Sasol Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa
Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington, DC, USA
South African Broadcasting Corporation, Johannesburg, South Africa
Standard Bank, Johannesburg, South Africa
Trust Bank, Johannesburg, South Africa
University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa
The Walther Collection, Neu-Ulm/Burlafingen, Germany
William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley, South Africa
Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa
Wits Institute of Social and Economic Research (WISER), Johannesburg, South Africa
World Bank, Washington, DC, USA

Appendix 3: Picture credits

- 0.1 Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse, *Ponte City*, 2014. Photographic exhibition. MMK3, Museum for Modern Art, Frankfurt, Germany.
- 1.1 Manuela Karin Knaut, *nomoresorrow*, 2012. Books, lamps, wax, natural rubber bowls. Site-specific installation. *Wie lange dauert Glück*, solo exhibition in Rastede Castle, Rastede, Germany. Photo by Thomas Ammerpohl.
- 1.2 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Wanderlust*, 2015. Installation with light boxes and walking sticks. *BS 8 Group* exhibition, Galerie der Bildenden Künstler des BBK Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 1.3 Christian Boltanski, *Flying Books*, 2013. Installation, Ex Biblioteca Nacional, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Photo courtesy of www.buenosairesconnect.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/boltanski.jpg
- 1.4 Chiharu Shiota, *After the Dream*, 2016. Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi, Japan. Photo by Kazuo Fukunaga.
- 2.1 Penny Siopis, *Queen Cakes*, 1982. Oil on canvas, 90x130cm. Private Collection. Olivier 2014, 78.
- 2.2 Penny Siopis, *Patience on a Monument*, 1988. Oil and collage on board, 180x200cm. William Humphreys Gallery, Kimberley, South Africa. Olivier 2014, 81.
- 2.3 Penny Siopis, *Private Views*, 1994. View of crates for moving installation. Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa. Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 2.4 Penny Siopis, *Snare*, 2004. Site-specific installation of found objects. *Mine(d)fields*, Kunsthaus Baselland, Muttenz, Switzerland. Foto courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 2.5 Penny Siopis, *The Archive*, 2002. Installation of found objects loaned from Dutch institutions with South African archive holdings. Tropen Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Foto courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 2.6 Marcel Duchamp, *Bicycle Wheel*, 1913. Metal wheel mounted on painted wood stool. MoMa Learning. www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/marcel-duchamp-bicycle-wheel-new-york-1951-third-version-after-lost-original-of-1913
- 2.7 Marcel Duchamp, *Bottle Rack*, 1914. Galvanised iron bottle dryer, approx. 64x42cm. *Numero Dec No 7*. Photo by Philippe Fragnière. www.numero.com/en/art/ready-made-marcel-duchamp-Robert-Rauschenberg-Foundation-taddhaeus-ropac
- 2.8 Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917. Glazed ceramic with black paint. © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris / Estate of Marcel Duchamp.
- 2.9 Chiharu Shiota, *The Key in the Hand*, 2015. The 56th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy. Photo by Sunhi Mang.
- 2.10 Marcel Duchamp, *His Twine*, 1942. John D. Schiff, Installation view of First Papers of Surrealism exhibition, showing Marcel Duchamp's *His Twine* 1942. Gelatin silver print. Gift of Jacqueline, Paul and Peter Matisse in memory of their mother Alexina Duchamp, Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA.
- 2.11 Marcel Duchamp, *Étant donnés*, 1946–1966. Interior view of the Waterfall and the Illuminating Gas. Tableau, mixed media assemblage. © 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris, France. www.toutfait.com/issues/issue_2/Notes/pop_2.html
- 2.12 El Lissitzky, *Proun Room*, 1923. Great Berlin Art Exhibition, 1923, Berlin, Germany. Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. www.monoskop.org/EI_Lissitzky#mediaviewer/File:EI_Lissitzky_PROUN_Room_1923.jpg
- 2.13 Kurt Schwitters, *Merzbau*, 1932. Installation, mixed media. Hanover, Germany. Photo by Wilhelm Redemann, 1933. © DACS 2007. www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2012/07/09/in-search-of-lost-art-kurt-schwitters-merzbau/
- 2.14 Gregor Schneider, *Raum 10, Kaffeezimmer*, 1993. Constructed space. *Haus u r*, Unterheydener Street, Mönchengladbach-Rheydt, Germany. www.kulturstiftung.de/museum-abteiberg-erwirbt-das-kaffeezimmer-von-gregor-schneider/
- 2.15 Rachel Whiteread, *House*, 1993. East London, Great Britain. © Rachel Whiteread. Photo Sue Omerod.

- 2.16 Phyllida Barlow, *demo*, 2016. Installation. Kunsthalle Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland. Photo Annik Wetter.
- 2.17 Allan Kaprow, *The Happening*, 1962. Lehmann Mushroom Caves, 8 West Channel, St. Paul, United States of America. Minnesota Historical Society. www.twincities.com/2014/10/06/were-you-at-the-st-paul-mushroom-caves-happening-in-1962/
- 2.18 Edward Kienholz, *Roxy's*, 1962. Walk-through tableau, mixed media, dimensions variable. Re-constructed in 2010 at David Zwirner Gallery, New York, United States of America. Photo by Cathy Carver. www.contemporaryartlinks.blogspot.co.za/2010/05/edward-kienholz-roxys-david-zwirner.html
- 2.19 Edward Kienholz, *The Beanery*, 1965. Assemblage. Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2013. Photo Ed Jansen. www.flickr.com/photos/de_buurman/8551937169
- 2.20 Ilya Kabakov, *The Man who Flew into Space from his Apartment*, 1985. Installation: six poster panels with collage; mixed media, room dimensions 96x95x147 cm. Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée d' Art Moderne, Paris, France. Photo from Kunstkritikk. www.momentc.blogspot.co.za/2011/03/ilya-kabakov-man-who-flew-into-space.html
- 2.21 Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*, 2002. Site-responsive installation of found objects. Wits Gertrude Posel Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa. Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 2.22 Chiharu Shiota, *Love Letters*, 2013. *Matrix: Textiles in Art and Applied Art from Gustav Klimt to the Present*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany. Photo by Marek Kruszewski.
- 2.23 Christian Boltanski, Installation Untitled (Reserve), 1989. Clothes, black and white photographs and lights. Photo by Rubell Family Collection, Contemporary Arts Foundation, New York, United States of America.
- 2.24 On Kawara, Installation view of *Silence – On Kawara*, 2015. Guggenheim Museum. Photo by Joe Vitale/New York Observer.
- 2.25 Penny Siopis, *Note 72*, 2016. Glue and ink on paper, 50.5x41cm. Frieze London, Stand G8, London, Great Britain, 6–9 October. Stevenson Gallery. www.artsy.net/artwork/penny-siopis-note-72
- 3.1 Penny Siopis, *Reconnaissance 1900–1997*, 1997. Installation of found objects. Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa. Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.2 Kemang Wa Lehulere, *Bird Song: My Apologies to Time*, 2017. Installation, mixed media. Deutsche Bank KunstHalle, Berlin, Germany, 24 Mar 2017–18 Jun 2017. © Kemang Wa Lehulere.
- 3.3 Penny Siopis, *Reconnaissance 1900–1997*, 1997. Close-up view. (See Figure 3.1). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.4 Penny Siopis, *Reconnaissance 1900–1997*, 1997. View of school books. (See Figure 3.1). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.5 Penny Siopis, *Reconnaissance 1900–1997*, 1997. View of masculine pile. (See Figure 3.1). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.6 Penny Siopis, *Mostly Women and Children*, 1996. Site-specific installation of found objects, photographs, resin casts. Faultlines: Inquiries into Truth and Reconciliation, Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town, South Africa. <https://pennysiopis.com/mostly-women-and-children/>
- 3.7 Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998. Installation, found objects. Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa. Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.8 Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998. Detail of white areas. (See Figure 3.7). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.9a Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998. De-installation, Stop-frame 1. (See Figure 3.7). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.9b Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998. De-installation, Stop-frame 2. (See Figure 3.7). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.9c Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998. De-installation, Stop-frame 3. (See Figure 3.7). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.9d Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998. De-installation, Stop-frame 4. (See Figure 3.7). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.9e Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998. De-installation, Stop-frame 5. (See Figure 3.7). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.

- 3.9f Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998. De-installation, Stop-frame 6. (See Figure 3.7). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.10 Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 2014. View from the front. Installation. *Time and Again* retrospective exhibition, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa. Photo Mario Todeschini, courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.11 Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 2014. View from the back. (See Figure 3.10). Photo Mario Todeschini, courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.12 Penny Siopis, *The Will*, 1997–. Three balloons. Part of *Sympathetic Magic* (see Figure 2.21). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.13 Penny Siopis, *The Will*, 1997–. Stuffed monkey. Part of *Sympathetic Magic* (see Figure 2.21). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.14 Penny Siopis, *The Will*, 1997–. St Escrava Anastacia. Part of *Sympathetic Magic* (see Figure 2.21). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.15 Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*, 2002. View of upper staircase (see Figure 2.21). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.16 Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*, 2002. View of African art (see Figure 2.21). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.17 Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*, 2002. View of body parts and boarded-up cabinet (see Figure 2.21). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.18 Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*, 2002. Side view of *The Will* (see Figure 2.21). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.19 Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*, 2002. Back view of the stairwell (see Figure 2.21). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.20 Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*, 2002. Detail on stairwell (see Figure 2.21). Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- 3.21 Penny Siopis, *Restless Republic Mass*, 2017. Glue, ink and found objects on canvas, 25x26x22cm. Installation of found objects and paintings. *Restless Republic*, Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa, 2017. Photo courtesy of Artsy.net. www.artsy.net/show/stevenson-penny-siopis-restless-republic
- 3.22 Penny Siopis, *Welcome Visitors: Relax and Feel at Home*, 2017. Installation of found objects. *Prospect New Orleans*, November 2017, New Orleans, USA. Photo courtesy of Prospect New Orleans. www.prospectneworleans.org/p4-artists-1/2017/5/24/penny-siopis
- 4.1 Manuela Karin Knaut, "Grandfather's workshop". Artist's house, Braunschweig, Germany. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 4.2 Manuela Karin Knaut, *It's been too long*, 2012. Photo collage/object. Mixed media on wooden cigar box. Studio exhibition, Braunschweig, Germany. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 4.3 Manuela Karin Knaut, *No Place like Home*, 2013. Installation for Wolfenbüttel. Artgeschoss International Group Exhibition, Wolfenbüttel, Germany. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 4.4 Manuela Karin Knaut, *No Place like Home*, 2012. Found objects, site-specific installation. Manuela Karin Knaut soloshow, Rastede Castle, Rastede, Germany. Photo by Thomas Ammerpohl.
- 4.5 Manuela Karin Knaut, *nomoresorrow*, 2012. Books, lamps and natural rubber bowls, site-specific installation. *Wie lange dauert Glück*, solo exhibition in Rastede Castle, Rastede, Germany. Photo by Thomas Ammerpohl.
- 4.6 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Sundays in the 70s*, 2012. Mixed media on wood, 30x30x5cm. Studio exhibition, Braunschweig. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 4.7 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Unvernünftige Räume*, 2012. Installation with children's huts in gallery space. *Zu sehr country?*, Galerie im Stammelbachspeicher, Hildesheim, Germany. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 4.8 Manuela Karin Knaut, *erzähl mir deine Geschichte*, 2012. Wall installation with 9 discarded metal shelves. *Zu sehr country?*, Galerie im Stammelbachspeicher, Hildesheim, Germany. Photo by Gerd Druwe.

- 4.9 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Unvernünftige Räume*, 2012. Installation with paintings and children's huts in gallery space. *Vom Spiel mit den Dingen: unvernünftige Räume*. Solo exhibition, Galerie Artlantis, Bad Homburg, Germany. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 4.10 Manuela Karin Knaut, *The Old Ladies*, 2014. Installation with 40 standard floor lamps with sound installation. *Blaue Nacht*, Künstlerhaus K4, Nuremberg, Germany. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 4.11 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Wanderlust*, 2015. Installation with light boxes and walking sticks. *BS 8 Group* exhibition at the Galerie der Bildenden Künstler des BBK Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 4.12 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Dear Diary*, 2017. Installation with old ladies, suitcases and model houses. Solo exhibition, Ponte City, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copyright Karin Manuela Knaut.
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- 5.1 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Boat arrives at Studio R1*, 2017. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 5.2 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Junkyard*, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2017. Photograph. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 5.3 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Junkyard with toilets*, Johannesburg, 2017. Photograph. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 5.4 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Basement*, Johannesburg, 2017. Photograph. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 5.5 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Office cabinet in junkyard*, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2017. Photograph. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
- 5.6 Manuela Karin Knaut, *History Drawers*, 2017. Detail typewriter. (See Figure 4.13). Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
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- 5.10 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Film reel*, 2017. Johannesburg, South Africa. Photograph. Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.
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- 5.14 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Detail boat in room. (See Figure 5.11). Photo Motlabana Monnakgotla.
- 5.15 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Detail shack. (See Figure 5.11). Photo Motlabana Monnakgotla.
- 5.16 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Detail shack entrance. (See Figure 5.11). Photo Motlabana Monnakgotla.
- 5.17 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Detail photos. (See Figure 5.11). Photo Motlabana Monnakgotla.
- 5.18 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Detail muti and brush. (See Figure 5.11). Photo Motlabana Monnakgotla.
- 5.19 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Detail chair. (See Figure 5.11). Photo Motlabana Monnakgotla.
- 5.20 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. Detail stage light. (See Figure 5.11). Copyright Manuela Karin Knaut.

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- 5.23 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Dear Diary*, 2017. Detail. Mixed media on cardboard, 30x40cm.
Part of *Displacement*. (See Figure 5.11). Photo Motlabana Monnakgotla.
- 5.24 Manuela Karin Knaut, *Displacement*, 2017. (See Figure 5.11). Photo Motlabana Monnakgotla.
- A.1 Penny Siopis, *Private Views*, 1994. View of crates for moving installation.
Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- A.2 Penny Siopis, *Women and Children First*, 1995. Tableau installation of found objects, including resin casts from South African museums and copies of mannequins from the Gwangju Folk Museum, Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, People's Republic of China.
www.pennysiopis.com/women-and-children-first/
- A.3 Penny Siopis, *Permanent Collection*, 1995. Mannequin parts coated with "exotic" foodstuffs on wooden scaffolding over vitrine, mirror. Site-specific installation for *Taking Liberties: The Body Politics*, 1st Johannesburg Biennale, Johannesburg, South Africa. Standard Bank Art Collection.
www.pennysiopis.com/permanent-collection/
- A.4 Penny Siopis, *Mostly Women and Children*, 1996. Site-specific installation of found objects including resin body casts on loan from local museums and face casts from the anatomy department at Wits University, for *Faultlines: Inquiries into Truth and Reconciliation*, Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town, South Africa.
- A.5 Penny Siopis, *Spectre*, 1997. Detail. 6th Biennale of Havana, Havana, Cuba.
Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- A.6 Penny Siopis, *Sacrifices*, 1998. Detail. Site-specific installation of found objects.
University of the Witwatersrand Art Galleries. Photo Goodman Gallery Editions. Kearney 2013, 55.
- A.7 Penny Siopis, *Charmed Lives*, 1998. Detail. (See Figure 3.7).
Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- A.8 Penny Siopis, *Reconnaissance 1900–1997*. Detail, hands. (See Figure 3.1).
Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- A.9 Penny Siopis, *The Will*, 1997–. Detail. Part of *Sympathetic Magic*. (See Figure 2.12).
Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- A.10 Penny Siopis, *Zombie*, 2000. Three tableaux of found objects. Gallery in The Round, Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa. Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- A.11 Penny Siopis, *The Archive*, 2002. Installation of found objects. Tropen Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- A.12 Penny Siopis, *Sympathetic Magic*, 2002. Detail on stairwell. (See Figure 2.21).
Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- A.13 Penny Siopis, *Snare*, 2004. Site-specific installation of found objects.
Kunsthaus Baselland, MuttENZ, Switzerland. Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- A.14 Penny Siopis, *Three Essays on Shame*, 2005. Site-specific installation with sound, found objects and paintings. Freud Museum, London, United Kingdom. Photo courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- A.15 Penny Siopis, *Pinky Pinky comes to Cape Town*, 2007. Installation, beads and wire, 135x45cm, 160x45cm, 110x40cm. Beaded figure made by Kennedy Mwashusha. Artist's collection.
- A.16 Penny Siopis, *Personal Collection*, 2014. Site-specific installation. *Time and Again*, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa; Wits Arts Museum Johannesburg, South Africa.
Photo Mario Todeschini, courtesy of Penny Siopis.
- A.17 Penny Siopis, *Boundary Thing 1 & 2*, 2015. Installation with found objects. *Artificial Facts – Boundary Objects*, Kunsthaus Dresden, Dresden, Germany. Photo David Brandt.
- A.18 Penny Siopis, *Restless Republic*, 2017. Site-specific installation of glue and ink paintings and related found objects; changed 4 times during the exhibition. Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa. www.omenkaonline.com/penny-siopis-restless-republic/
- A.19 Penny Siopis, *Welcome Visitors: Relax and Feel at Home*, 2017. Site-specific wall-mounted installation. *Prospect New Orleans*, New Orleans, United States of America. Photo Mario Todeschini.
www.prospectneworleans.org/p4-artists-1/2017/5/24/penny-siopis

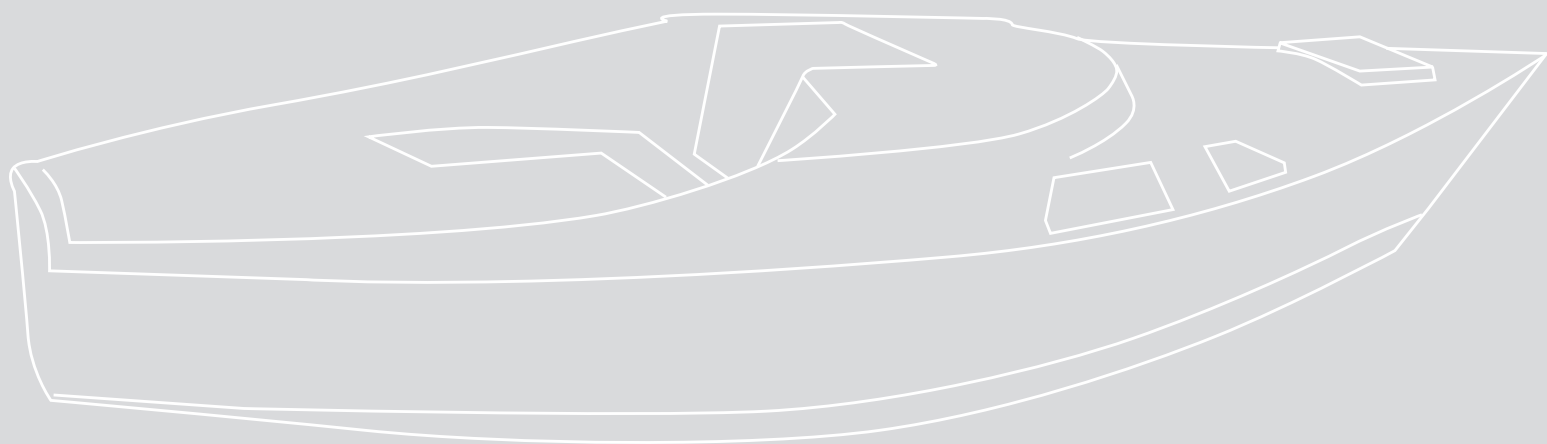
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Videoprojection,

duration: 14.30 min

Manuela Karin Knaut, 2017

Title: Give me wings, my beloved country

Singer: Delight Munamati

Songs:

Ngihambile emhlabeni

Nkulunkulu

Matambudziko

Kuhleke

Book design: Matthias Löcker, www.arte-fakt.info

Printed in Germany

15" sticks thro
P/S These piton screws
select for use cot
Re : Press down the top
balance stick into
different two sides
bird cages.

“Displacement: A boat in a city. In a studio on the first floor of a concrete building in downtown Johannesburg. Going nowhere and yet always on its way. Between travelling and arriving, between being at home and being a stranger, between being and becoming. In a city that challenges me, sometimes uncomfortably so, and yet entices me to reinvent myself, to place myself anew” (Knaut 2017).

Having recently moved to Johannesburg, South Africa, Manuela Karin Knaut was deeply inspired by the manner in which Penny Siopis, a South African painter and installation artist, deals with the themes of archive and memory – themes that fundamentally underlie and shape Knaut’s own art. In this dissertation, Knaut first traces the roots of installation art, identifies its characteristic traits, and analyses memory and archive. She then examines how Siopis uses discarded, inherited, loaned and found objects in her installation art to create stories that speak to her own memory and to collective memories in South Africa, and places this in comparison to her own creative practice and art.

In her Masters exhibition, Manuela Karin Knaut uses historically significant objects that she has stumbled over by chance or that she has deliberately gone out to find to ask questions about the relationship between the past and the present, and the process of moving between them into the future. Her installation is a signifier that acts on many levels, inviting viewers to embark on an intensive exploration of their own inner worlds: an exploration of how personal memories and collective archives collide, of how inside and outside dissolve, of how fiction destabilises reality where everything seems possible.



B