

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INTERROGATION OF AFRIKANER CULTURE  
AND IDENTITY IN THE WORK OF SELECTED ARTISTS

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AND IDENTITY IN THE WORK OF SELECTED ARTISTS

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted previously  
for any degree or examination through any other institution.

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March 2015

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the work of Andries Botha (1952) and Marlene de Beer (1957) in the context of Afrikaner nationalism. Anthony Smith's theory of ethno symbolism (2010) and writings on nationalism by Montserrat Gibernau (1996, 2004a, 2000b) are used as a theoretical framework for an analysis of Afrikaner culture and identity, in the form of Afrikaner nationalism.

A qualitative research methodology was used, within an art historical, theoretical and practice led investigation into the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity. A reflective approach clarified and made meaningful concepts which relate to both my theoretical and practical work, which are interlinked.

De Beer makes use of cultural symbols, in interrogating the position of the female in Afrikaner identity and culture, in the context of South African history. Botha interrogates masculinity and patriarchy in Afrikaner culture and identity through a reference to his father and events and imagery from South African history.

A personal exploration of Afrikaner culture and identity, in the context of my family history and life experiences, reveals a persistent questioning of Afrikaner culture and identity, resulting in the formation of an individual identity. Arising from this research, it is evident that there is a need for further research into the possible formation of a multicultural identity post 1994 in South Africa.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, Roselee Maurel, my inspiration and reason for all I do in memory of my sister, Vidette Hoffmann.



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## INTRODUCTION

This research will investigate the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the work of Andries Botha (1952) and Marlene de Beer (1957) in the context of history, language, literature, religion and politics. In the context of contemporary South Africa, the work of Marlene de Beer and Andries Botha provides an investigation of the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity which will inform my work. The artists were chosen for investigation as their work questions the validity of Afrikaner culture and identity developed under apartheid. This research will add to the relatively limited literature on the work of Botha and de Beer.

Botha, de Beer, and I grew up under apartheid in South Africa. The effects of the transformation of South Africa from white minority rule to a black-controlled democratic state has had a profound influence on the ethnic psyche of Afrikaners and on the discourse about the position of the Afrikaner in post-1994 South Africa (Visser, n.d.). This research is important to my art practice which consists of an exploration of Afrikaner culture and identity in the context of my family history and life experiences. By investigating Afrikaner culture and identity I intend to gain a better understanding of my cultural heritage, in the context of my art practice.

This research will investigate the development of Afrikaner culture and identity and Afrikaner nationalism under the influence of the Afrikaner *Broederbond*, especially the FAK, *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies) which acted as an umbrella organization for Afrikaner cultural groups (Boddy-Evans, 2012).

In this investigation a qualitative research methodology was used, within an art historical, theoretical and practice led investigation into the interrogation of

Afrikaner culture and identity. In this context qualitative research “allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture and to discover rather than test variables” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:12). This research will involve a reflective approach, which will clarify, and make meaningful, concepts that relate to both my theoretical and practical work.

Primary research was in the form of face-to-face interviews with Andries Botha ([andries@ion.co.za](mailto:andries@ion.co.za)) and Marlene de Beer ([marlenedb@dut.ac.za](mailto:marlenedb@dut.ac.za)). The participants were selected because of their expertise in the field of study. A Purposive sampling strategy involving “handpicking supposedly typical or interesting cases” (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2006:163) was used in the selection of the participants. Secondary sources of information were obtained from books, journals and electronic databases.

Artworks were read as texts. Formal, historical and theoretical approaches were used in the analysis of all texts. An inductive form of analysis was used “whereby observations of particular cases may be generalised to a class of cases. Inductive reasoning emphasizes after-the-fact explanation; theory emerges from careful consideration of the evidence (data)” (Leedy, 1997:164).

I kept a critical, reflective research journal throughout the three years, documenting my art making process. By doing this I was able to reflect on formal and conceptual concerns. This journal was a source of information for my practice and did not only record my journey, but also informed and guided it.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The Introduction will serve to give an overview of the content of my research, explaining how and why I am researching this particular topic.

Chapter One establishes the historical and theoretical context of the development of Afrikaner culture and identity. Chapter Two consists of an investigation of the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the work of Andries Botha and Marlene de Beer. Chapter Three investigates the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in my art practice. The Conclusion summarizes and evaluates the findings of this research, and highlights areas for further research.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE FORMATION OF AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

This study is an investigation of the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the work of Marlene de Beer (1957), Andries Botha (1952) and my art practice. It is thus important to identify and understand the elements of Afrikaner culture and identity, through an investigation of their historical formation in the form of Afrikaner nationalism. Anthony Smith's theory of ethno symbolism (2010) and writings on nationalism by Montserrat Gibernau (1996, 2004a, 2000b) will be used as the theoretical framework for an analysis of Afrikaner culture and identity, in the form of Afrikaner nationalism. Ethno symbolism "is a school of thought in the study of nationalism that emphasizes the importance of symbols, traditions, values and myths in the creation and continuation of modern nations" (Banton, 2004:807-14). Smith's theory was chosen as a theoretical framework because it offers "fresh and illuminating insights into pre- modern forms of collective cultural identity such as those embodied in *ethnies*" (Guibernau, 2004b:125). *Ethnies* are "named human populations with shared ancestry, myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a known territory, and as sense of solidarity" (Smith in Guibernau, 2004b:126).

"The process of identification with a specific culture implies a strong emotional investment able to foster solidarity bonds among the members of a given community who come to recognize one another as fellow nationals. They imagine and feel their community as separate and distinct from others" (Guibernau, 2004b:136).

This is relevant to an investigation of the influence of myths, symbols, traditions, significant historical events, religion, language, gender and politics,

on the formation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the form of Afrikaner nationalism over the past three centuries.

## **Identity and Culture**

Identity has always been part of being human. Charles Taylor (1994:33), states that “Identity is who we are, ‘where we’re coming from’. As such it is the background against which our tastes and desires and opinions and aspirations make sense”. Mistry (2001:2) explains that by constructing culture as part of a social system enables us to tie the ideals of politics (policies) to a nation’s historical baggage, while educating the aspirations (vision) that a society imagines itself to be. This is supported by Williams (1981:13), who describes culture as “the signifying system through which a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored”. Taylor (1994:6-7), in discussing the relationship between personal identity and culture, argues that:

People are unique, self-creating, creative individuals and are also ‘culture bearing’. The cultures they bear differ depending on their past and present identifications. Part of the uniqueness of individuals results from the ways in which they integrate, reflect upon, and modify their own cultural heritage and that of other people with whom they come into contact.

There is an intimate relationship between identity, culture and history, which directly influences one’s personal identity. In discussing the relationship of identity to culture and history, Kathryn Woodward (1997:301) writes “Identity provides a way of understanding the interplay between our subjective experience of the world and the cultural and historical settings in which that fragile subjectivity is formed.” Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon (1999:4) support this view and believe that culture consists of intangible aspects of societies such as common values, symbols, morals, customs and beliefs.

Afrikaner cultural identity was formed over three hundred years and is still being affected by changing events and historic settings.

Identity is a part of our everyday lives. It is an important element in basic communication and in our relationships with others. Identity is a key aspect in defining who we are, and how we relate to other people. Who we are, or the 'self', is defined by every interaction we have and every situation we encounter. Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex (1999:4), in discussing personal and group identity, assert that:

Identity is both a psychological and a sociological term. It may provide a definition, an interpretation of the self that establishes what and where the person is, in both social and psychological terms. On the one hand it helps the individual to produce order in his or her own individual life. On the other hand it helps to place that individual within a group or involves 'identification' with a collectively.

In the case of the Afrikaner, personal identity was subordinate to group identity. South Africa's population consists of a diversity of people of African and European descent. My descendants are Dutch, German, Scottish, Belgian and French. However, despite this diversity, South Africa is not a multicultural country due to the effects of colonialism and Apartheid. Sardar and Van Loon (1999:123) in defining multiculturalism, explain that:

Multiculturalism is the common notion that describes diverse races living in pluralistic harmony. It sees diversity as plurality of identities and as a 'condition of human existence'. Within this pluralist framework, identity is regarded as the product of an assemblage of customs, practices and meanings, and enduring heritage and a set of shared traits and experiences.

This pluralistic harmony is a work in progress in South Africa, post 1994. Terry Eagleton (in Mistry, 2000:58), writing from an Apartheid era perspective, said "In the case of the apartheid law, if politics is what unifies, culture is what differentiates". Baines (in Mistry 1994:4) explains that the

post-apartheid South Africa state finds itself having to reconcile the tensions implicit in the pursuit of nation building and in adopting some form of multiculturalism. The first imperative strives to construct a new identity. The second concerns the need to acknowledge cultural diversity and accommodate the identities of cultural or ethnic minorities.

Identities in the contemporary world derive from a multiplicity of sources; from nationality, ethnicity, social class, community, gender and sexuality. These sources may conflict in the construction of identity positions and lead to contradictory fragmented identities (Woodward, 1997:1). This concept is relevant to the situation in South Africa, which has a history of fragmented identities, due to colonialism and racism; both of which are associated with the formation of Afrikaner identity.

Culture, language, politics and religion proved extremely useful for Afrikaner mobilisation, and for the development and reinforcement of group consciousness and collectivism. For example, culturally, *Braaivleis* (barbeque) is a re-enactment of how the *Voortrekkers* (pioneers) cooked their meals in the field; this has become a standard practice amongst city people. The term originated with Afrikaans speaking people, but has since been adopted by South Africans of many different ethnic backgrounds (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007:29). *Braavleis* is now a social custom in South Africa which has become part of a new South African identity.

## **Language**

The Afrikaans language has played a crucial role in the formation of Afrikaner culture and identity. Vestergaard (2001:24) states that:

The promotion of the Afrikaans language was one of the most important features of the nationalist Afrikaner movement, and it became a vehicle for mobilizing a pan-South African Afrikaner identity at the start of the

twentieth century. During Apartheid the government turned Afrikaans into the official language of the state.

Guibernau (2004a:136), in discussing the cultural dimension of nationalism, notes that “communication among fellow-nationals requires the use of a shared language”. Afrikaans is derived from several Dutch dialects spoken by the mainly Dutch settlers of what is now South Africa. It developed as an independent language during the 18th century. It was previously referred to as Cape Dutch (a term also used to refer collectively to the early Cape settlers) or *kombuis taal*/kitchen Dutch (a derogatory term used to refer to Afrikaans in its earlier days). Afrikaans is geographically the most widely spoken languages across race in South Africa. Afrikaans was linked with Afrikaner nationalism, and had a profound effect on the social identity of Afrikaners (Moodie, 1975:47).

The Afrikaans Language Monument (*Afrikaanse Taalmonument*) (Figure 1) dedicated to the Afrikaans language, opened on 10 October 1975 as a powerful symbol of Afrikaner nationalism. This monument is located on a hill overlooking Paarl, Western Cape Province, South Africa. It commemorates Afrikaans being declared an official language of South Africa, separate from Dutch. In addition, it was erected on the 100th anniversary of the founding of *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* (The Society of True Afrikaners) in Paarl. This cultural organization helped strengthen Afrikaners' identity and pride in their language (Boddy-Evans, 2014). But since 1994, Afrikaans has had to find its place among ten other official languages and it has been replaced by English as the official language of command in the army and the police. In television broadcasts, it now has to share airtime with programs in the other official languages (Vestergaard, 2001:26).





Figure 1 - Jan Van Wijk. 1975. **The Afrikaans Language Monument**. Paarl, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

## Symbols

The national flag and national anthem were used as important political and cultural symbols in the development of Afrikaner nationalism. Following the Anglo-Boer War (1899 to 1902), up to the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the British Union Flag was the national flag in the four British colonies that became South Africa. Finally, a compromise was reached that resulted in the adoption of a separate flag for the Union in late 1927 and the newly designed flag was first hoisted on 31 May 1928. The design was based on the so-called Van Riebeeck, or *Prinsevlag* (Prince's Flag), that was originally the Dutch flag; it consisted of orange, white, and blue horizontal stripes. *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika* (The Call of South Africa) was the national anthem of South Africa from 1957 to 1994. This became the Afrikaners' national anthem for all practical purposes, whilst specific folk songs became an integral part of popular culture. Afrikaans music was primarily influenced by Dutch folk styles, along with French and German influences, in the early

twentieth century (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007:290). South Africa became a republic in 1961 (Thompson, 1990:160). Vestergaard (2001:24) explains that, with the end of Apartheid, the changing status of national Afrikaner symbols reflects a general de legitimization of Afrikaner national history. This is apparent on the banks of Blood River, where a new monument to commemorate the Zulu victims of the battle has been erected, alongside the monument celebrating the Afrikaner victory over the Zulus in 1838.

The *Voortrekker* Monument (Figure 2) serves as a symbol of the oppressive system of apartheid and past Afrikaner power. Paradoxically, the *Voortrekker monument* is also a monument in honour of the *Voortrekkers* and their struggle against oppression and colonialism. The commemoration of the Battle of Blood River is the primary reason for this monument's existence (Vestergaard, 2001:23).



Figure 2 - Gerard Moerdijk. 1937. **The Voortrekker Monument**. 40 meters high, with a base of 40 meters by 40 meters. Pretoria.

## Politics and Culture

The *Afrikaner Broederbond* (Afrikaner Brotherhood) was a secret, exclusively male, Afrikaner Calvinist organization, dedicated to the advancement of Afrikaner political, cultural and economic interests. It was founded by H. J. Klopper, H. W. van der Merwe, D. H. C. du Plessis and reverend Jozua Naudé in 1918. It was known as *Jong Zuid Afrika* (Young South Africa) until 1920, when it became the *Broederbond*. Its strong influence within South African political and social life, sometimes compared to that of the Freemasons, an international order established for help and fellowship between members, which holds secret ceremonies (Soanes, 2001:327). The *Broederbond* came to a climax with the rise of apartheid, which was largely designed and implemented by *Broederbond* members (Pirie, Rogerson, and Beavon, 1980:97). Between 1948 and 1994, many prominent figures of South African political life, including all leaders of the government, were members of the *Afrikaner Broederbond*. The relative concentrations of *Broederbond* members to total White and total Afrikaans populations indicates the influence of the organization throughout South Africa (Pirie, Rogerson, and Beavon, 1980:97).

During Apartheid the development of Afrikaner culture and identity was under the influence of the *Afrikaner Broederbond*, especially the FAK (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies) which acted as an umbrella organization for Afrikaner cultural groups. The aim of these organizations was to further Afrikaner nationalism in South Africa, maintain Afrikaner culture, and develop an Afrikaner economy and to gain control of the South African government. These organizations had an influence on the Afrikaner's thinking on the subject of Apartheid (Boddy-Evans, 2012). However, as Mads Vestergaard (2001:21) explains:

While most Afrikaners benefited enormously from Apartheid economically, they had to comply outwardly with the prevailing Christian

nationalist credo. As a result, generations of Afrikaners grew up in a social space where the boundaries of identity were sharply drawn. If they failed to embody the 'good Afrikaner', they could not only lose their material privileges, but also be ostracized from their communities, churches or workplaces.

Afrikaans writers and artists such as André Brink (1935-2015) and Breyten Breytenbach (1939), who used literature and art to oppose the system of Apartheid, were ostracized. A group of Afrikaners formed part of the struggle against apartheid, resulting in suffering and exile. Along with Ingrid Jonker (1933) and Breyten Breytenbach (1939), André Brink (1935) formed an anti-apartheid literary resistance movement, known as *Die Sestigers* (The Sixties). Writing in Afrikaans, they protested against the government's apartheid policies through the use of controversial content that undermined Apartheid policies. Breytenbach's novel *Kennis van die aand* (*Knowledge of the night*) (1973) was the first Afrikaans book to be banned by the regime. Breytenbach studied fine arts at the Michaelis School of Fine Art at The University of Cape Town and became a committed opponent of the policy of apartheid. He left South Africa for Paris in the early 1960s. When he married a French woman of Vietnamese ancestry, he was not allowed to return. *The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act* (1949) and *The Immorality Act* (1950) made it a criminal offence for a white person to have any sexual relations with a person of a different race (Davis, 2012).

According to Benjamin Weil (1995:75) Apartheid separated cultures intellectually and socially. The global and national segregation of South Africa created by apartheid resulted in white, South African artists being unable to identify with indigenous colleagues or contemporary Western developments. All South Africans were left with an uncertain sense of identity.

With the fall of the Apartheid regime, South Africa upholds a range of basic rights that were denied during apartheid, such as the abolition of

discrimination, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the freedom to travel and live wherever one wishes (Vestergaard, 2001:22).

## Historical Events

Historical events have been used as a powerful tool in the formation of Afrikaner nationalism. Guibernau (2004a:137) explains that the selective use of history provides nations with a collective memory; events and experiences allow people to increase their self-esteem by feeling part of a community. Nations construct features that make them special and superior. "History contributes to the construction of a certain image of the nation and represents the cradle where national character was forged" (Guibernau, 2004a:137). Smith (in Guibernau, 2004a:126) argues that:

Collective cultural identity refers not to a uniformity of elements over generations but to a sense of continuity on the part of successive generations of a given cultural unit of population, to shared memories of earlier events and periods in the history of that unit and to notions entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture.

The Great Trek was one of the significant events in South African history that had a strong influence on the formation of Afrikaner identity. The Great Trek was an eastward and north-eastward migration away from British control in the Cape Colony during the 1830s and 1840s by *boere* (farmers). Leach (1989:17) claims that the Great Trek (1838) was a focal point in Afrikaner history, an event which gave the *volk* (nation) its first sense of direction. Commonly known as the *Voortrekkers*, these pioneers were exposed to primitive living conditions and several warlike situations (Cock, 1991:30). The *Voortrekkers* differentiated themselves as a separate entity by showing the drive and courage to explore and conquer new frontiers and unknown territories and to harness new land and nature. They were attempting to form

an authentic collective identity through an expression of courage and will. It involved a major period of exploration, discovery and movement into a new world (the darkness) (Hill, 1992:9).

Giliomee (in De Beer, 2006:33), in discussing the Afrikaner diasporas and the Great Trek, said that the frontier burger who left the Cape colony in 1836 did so as “they saw little hope of ever being considered anything but the white outcasts of the British Empire”.

Another historic event that played a significant role in the formation of Afrikaner identity was the Battle of Blood River (1838). As a child I was taught to believe that, at *Die Slag van Bloedrivier* (The Battle of Blood River) (1838), my ancestors prayed to God for His support in this confrontation with the Zulus and, in return, they would always obey, follow and thank God. Following their victory they believed that they were God’s chosen people and that He had given them the strength to triumph over the Zulus. Guibernau (2004a:139) argues that:

Before the eighteenth century, the right to rule was legitimated by appealing to God’s will, royal blood or superior physical strength and these reasons were premised upon the belief that legitimacy came from above, rather than from the ruled.

## **Religion**

“The first Dutch and French settlers landed at the Cape, the most southerly part of the country, in the middle of the 17th century. In time they became known as *Boere* (farmers), and later as Afrikaners” (Leach, 1989:1). The term Afrikaander was never used by Afrikaners themselves, but was a pejorative term used by outsiders, especially in English colonial literature, to denote Afrikaners. Afrikaner was the term used for self-identification and mobilisation, especially in the Cape Colony, since the first Afrikaans Language Movement in the 1870’s (Du Toit, 2008:567). According to Faber

(1990:57) many of these immigrants were followers of Calvinist Protestantism, whose members had found themselves in the position of a persecuted minority. They had to defend themselves by means of armed resistance against Catholic-inspired repression before fleeing from Europe. Du Toit (1983:923) states that:

The Calvinism originally introduced by the first settlers in due course became a constituent feature of later Afrikaner society and thinking, is a cornerstone of the Calvinist paradigm of Afrikaner history.

The origins of Afrikaner nationalism and Apartheid, imposed by the National party governments on South African society under Apartheid, have often been attributed to a stubborn strain of Calvinism (Du Toit, 1983:920). But what is of considerable importance to the Calvinist paradigm is that the small number of settlers who arrived in the first few decades of settlement were not just, in some general sense, Christians or Protestants, but were specifically Calvinists (Du Toit, 1983:922). MacCrone singles out the French Huguenots of 1688 for mention in this connection when he states that “the character of their religion was strictly Calvinistic; they had actually suffered persecution in their own persons for its sake” (MacCrone in Du Toit, 1983:922).

When these immigrants found their independence in their new country cut short by the arrival of the British at the end of the 18th century, the continuing threat of annihilation was reinforced (Leach, 1989:1). The British proceeded systematically to intensify the threat through a policy of Anglicisation, the emancipation of the slaves and the equalisation of mixed-race people with White people (seen as unacceptable and in conflict with the laws of God by the Calvinistic *Boere*) (Faber, 1990:57).

## Myths

Today, the Afrikaners still cherish and honour the victory over the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River. As a family we went to church every year on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, to thank God for saving the Afrikaner. This day was also vowed to be a Sabbath day. My parents taught me that the Afrikaner *Volk* would not have been here today if it wasn't for God's mercy and help. The *Voortrekkers* had a strong Calvinistic identification with Christianity, based on an historical myth that they were the chosen people of God; chosen to civilise and bring light to Southern Africa which was seen as a place of darkness. The Afrikaner's identification with the idea of being a *uitverkore volk* (chosen people), as ordained by God, had a direct influence on the shaping of Afrikaner nationalism and identity. Simultaneously, an idealistic paradigm was constructed by the Dutch Reformed Church, preaching that the Afrikaner people had a Christian, civilising mission to perform in South Africa (Leach, 1989:29).

Afrikaners believed that they were a distinct people, occupying a distinct fatherland, and endowed by God with a distinct destiny (Steyn, 2001:29). The Afrikaner had a sense of having a special destiny as a chosen people, in the land that they were opening up for white settlement. The *Voortrekkers*, in the face of seemingly impossible odds, won the Battle of Blood River after making a covenant with God. In times to come this event would play an important role in uniting Afrikaners spiritually and it remained a crucial component of Afrikaner identity (Steyn, 2001:33).

The emergence of Afrikaners as a distinct, self-aware group in colonial society was an historical process in its own right which was retrospectively mythologised and politicised in various ways. This creation of myths is central to Smith's (1986) ethno symbolist theory regarding the origins of national identity. Woodward sees Afrikaner identity as a flawed identity



because, as she explains, in the past identity had been created in manipulative, deliberately simplified ways (Woodward, 1997:304). For example, religious stories that show how communities are chosen by God, and the moral authorization this provides, have been invoked by the Afrikaners of South Africa (Woodward, 1997:307).

## **Colonialism and Afrikaner Nationalism**

Primary fears relating to survival and separation were instilled in the Afrikaners, because of their history of persecution and their experience of forced and traumatic separation from Europe. Since complexes form around traumatic events, discrimination, feelings of oppression and inferiority at the hands of another offending group (Singer and Kimbles, 2004:7), it can be argued that these negative experiences were instilled as a persecution complex in the Afrikaner's collective psyche. This complex resulted in the Afrikaners feeling threatened, or persecuted. In order to escape British rule, the *Boere* started the Great Trek from the Cape to the North in 1838, across the challenging and uncharted interior of South Africa, in pursuit of a dream of white Afrikaner independence (Jacobs, 2005:20 and Landman, 1994:3). Afrikaners became a part of the European diaspora in Southern Africa. Woodward (1997:304) explains that:

Diasporas are the result of the 'scattering' of peoples, whether as the result of war, oppression, poverty, enslavement or the search for better economic and social opportunities, with the inevitable opening of their culture to new influences and pressures.

In the case of the Afrikaners this led to the formation of a laager identity to protect their culture from outside influences. The *Voortrekkers* (pioneers) had originally consisted of several Afrikaner groups who settled in different geographical areas (Leach, 1989:29) in Southern Africa south of the Limpopo River. Over time, they declared themselves independent *Boer* (farmer) republics. The British, under the military leadership of Lord Carnarvon,

aimed at bringing about a united South Africa through federation under the British flag. This led to the annexation of the Transvaal, the subsequent First Boer War (1880-1881) and the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) (Van Jaarsveld, 1978:30-31, 41).

Colonisation and its consequences have played a key role in the formation of Afrikaner identity. Colonialism is a policy of acquiring and maintaining colonies, especially for exploitation (Hanks, 1990:164). The Afrikaner has been the colonized and the colonizer. After leaving the Cape colony and establishing *Boere* republics in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, the Afrikaners were colonised during the Anglo Boer war (1899-1902). Thousands of *Boer* women and children perished in British concentration camps. Giliomee (in De Beer, 2006:33) quotes an unknown British writer in describing how the British rationalised their treatment of the Afrikaners:

We have conjured up for ourselves a fantastic and outrageous image which we call *Boer*. This savage being was hideous in form, unkempt and unwashed, violent, hypocritical, a persecutor and assassin of the English. Once the Boers had been defined in those terms, it was not too difficult to put Boer women and children in camps in shocking conditions.

The *Boer's* fierce defence of their newly found independence and their drive to assert themselves as a *volk* (nation) was clearly evident in these wars. Narratives of the Great Trek, Blood River and the suffering of women and children during the Anglo-Boer War were resurrected in the Afrikaners' consciousness in order to create a common sense of history and heritage. This clearly reflects the role of "myths, symbols, traditions, heroes and holy places studied by ethno symbolism" (Guibernau, 2004:127) in the formation of Afrikaner nationalism.

When the British colonised South Africa, the alien British culture and English language was forced on indigenous and Dutch people. De Beer, in discussing Afrikaner identity and colonialism, quotes Antone and Hill (1992),

who explains that a disruption and confusion in belief and identity, due to colonisation, can last for many generations. This leads to not only the loss of belief and faith of cultural beliefs, but also cause a loss of identity and the sense of self of the individual. These negative experiences cause 'internalised racism', which is handed down over generations and acted out on members of other cultural groups, or on people from the same culture, as demonstrated by the Afrikaner (Antone and Hill in de Beer, 2006:34).

South Africa has a long history of colonialism. Afrikaners, the offspring of the Dutch who colonized South Africa, have a history of being both the oppressor and the oppressed. The Dutch settlers to the cape fled Holland because of religious oppression. The Afrikaner oppressed indigenous people when they colonised Southern Africa and were subsequently oppressed by the British. The Afrikaners then oppressed all South Africans under Apartheid (1948-1994). Zoja (2004:87) states that collective trauma that befalls people is remembered for generations and becomes the core around which a cultural complex forms. Every time the complex is activated, repetitive memory and emotion reappear and evoke the primal trauma.

When the *Boere* lost the Anglo-Boer War (1902) and signed over their independence and sovereignty to the British, the stage was set for the recovery of themselves as a *volk* (nation). Following the Anglo-Boer War Afrikaners could only realise, maintain, and protect their cultural identity through separation and isolation, which became entrenched in the ideology of a social structure and order that, in turn, was central to Afrikaner cultural identity (Hill, 1992:163-167).

After the Anglo-Boer War, the Afrikaners were a defeated, uprooted, poorly educated, and impoverished *volk* (Alberts, 2005:33-39). Their language, culture, and sense of belonging were threatened (Giliomee, 1981:78). In a society in which urban and capitalist values predominated, the Afrikaners were not only from a rural origin and the poorest White group, but were also

perceived as culturally backward and lacking in sophistication (Giliomee, 1979:111). The Afrikaner feared that the general state of the Afrikaner was threatening the *volk's* survival (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007:290). Giliomee and Mbenga (2007:279) state that:

Their survival required movement into unknown territory, in the form of rapid urbanisation and the accumulation of capital. Ultimately the dislocation caused by rapid urbanisation at a comparatively late stage, as well as the Afrikaner's poverty and desperate search for work in urban areas, fed a sense of dependency, inferiority, and a lack of self-confidence.

This deepened their sense of insecurity and subsequently led to the reinforcement of deep psycho-social fears and resentments in the Afrikaner psyche (Leach, 1989:30). In Jungian terms this severe lack of self-confidence results in excessive nationalism (Ramos, 2004:108).

Guibernau (2004a:140) noted that "The political aspect of national identity, when applied to the nation-state, focuses upon those state's strategies – often referred to as nation building – destined to foster a cohesive, loyal and, up to a point, homogeneous citizenry.

The National Party, founded in 1915, was an Afrikaner, ethnic, national movement, committed to helping poor Afrikaners. The *Volkskongres*, (People's Congress) of the *Dutch Reformed Church* stressed that attempts to rehabilitate poor Afrikaners had to be seen as 'fair and healthy' towards other population groups in South Africa (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007:282). After various parliamentary debates, it was decided that the focus on Afrikaner poverty was fair, just and Christian, as it had sufficient elements of "justice and fair play and fruitfulness for the future" (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007:288).

The Afrikaner middle-class was attracted to a strategy of ethnic mobilisation in order to overcome the deep feelings of insecurity and social inferiority

(Leach, 1989:30-31). The ethnic mobilisation of the *volk* necessitated the creation of a strong social order and structure, within which the core of the Afrikaner's political and cultural identity could prosper. This was achieved by the reinforcement of shared cultural symbols such as the *Voortrekker Monument*, which embodied a common sense of history and heritage, a distinct language and an overriding religious structure (Thompson, 1990:160). The *Voortrekker Monument* reaffirmed the belief that Afrikaners were 'God's chosen people'; it helped to shape their common sense of purpose and their perception of themselves as a 'spiritual entity' in South Africa (Landman, 1994:15).

The social order was further entrenched by official policies and laws when the National Party came into power in 1948. Through legislation, the National Party played a major role in the fulfilment of the Afrikaner's economic and political autonomy as well as cultural goals, and subsequently in the eventual triumph of *Afrikanerdom* (Afrikaner) (O'Meara, 1983:255). The National Party introduced the ideology of Apartheid and its attendant laws designed to protect disadvantaged Whites, particularly White *Afrikanerdom*, through the rigorous separation of racial groups (Lambley, 1980:3).

Giliomee (1979:160-176) describes how the Apartheid system benefitted whites, and more particularly the Afrikaner, when he states:

The Afrikaner nationalist struggle culminated in the unexpected victory of the Nationalist Party in 1948. The most immediate result was a host of statutes constituting a legislative basis for the implementation of apartheid. Aided by economic protectionist measures, Afrikaners progressed rapidly. Under the Nationalist Party the civil service was Afrikanerized; job reservation was implemented to protect unskilled and semi-skilled white workers; and public corporations promoted Afrikaner economic development, and Afrikaner capital benefitted from government favouritism through the allocation of mineral concessions and government contracts.

The aim of Apartheid was for Afrikaners to remain a separate race, whilst enjoying their position of privilege (Giliomee, 198:89-90). Through discrimination by means of the Apartheid policies, the Afrikaner's social order took the form of a final ideological solution for survival (Faber, 1990:58). Afrikaners rallied around their archaic anxieties and distortions in the form of Afrikaner nationalism, and its inhuman, destructive Apartheid policies. These separatist Apartheid policies, fuelled by fear, were intended to ensure survival by warding off the 'Devouring Other' (Hill, 1992:164).

The Afrikaner child was taught the Afrikaner system and its values, as well as the standards and expectations for individual achievement within *Afrikanerdom*, and was exposed to a reality which supported these values (Thompson, 1990:198). Afrikaners experienced little that was not associated with a nationalist perspective; at home, in Afrikaans-language schools and universities, in Dutch Reformed Churches, in social groups, on radio and television, and in books and newspapers. The government enforced a remarkably strict censorship on every item coming into South Africa, whatever the medium (Lambley, 1980:199, 252).

Under Afrikaner nationalism, South Africa was a white supremacist society, legally structured along the axis of race, with a legacy of deeply troubled intercultural and interracial relations (Steyn, 2001:xxi). Opposition movements such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) were banned, because they were labelled as a threat to the safety and survival of the Afrikaner and their cultural heritage. It was only during the 1970s that the ANC began applying an effective strategy of popular mobilisation and mass protests against apartheid (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007:307). The reaction to this violent political resistance, as well as what was seen as domestic terrorism by the Apartheid Government, took the form of military protection against a secondary Black population that was poor and without rights (Cock, 1991:33). The Afrikaner nation reverted to violence and destruction in the

suppression of these threats. “Afrikaners often justified their actions in terms of patriotism (‘I did it for *volk* and *vaderland*’)” (Laurence, 1990:42).

As a coloniser the Afrikaner imposed his language on other people; in addition the Afrikaner attempted to keep his identity and culture pure through Apartheid. Cloete (1992:42) explains that:

It was in the name of identity that the Afrikaner created and enforced particularly vicious laws to ensure that there was no possibility of ‘racial contamination’. And, for the moment, the word Afrikaner still symbolises for the majority of South Africans, a sinister signifier of suppression.

The effects of the transformation of South Africa from white minority rule to a black-controlled democratic state has had a profound influence on the ethnic psyche of Afrikaners, and on the discourse about the position of the Afrikaner in post-1994 South Africa (Visser, n.d.). The role of the Afrikaner in South African politics has been threatened since the end of apartheid, creating a sense of depression within the Afrikaner community. The demise of apartheid profoundly shifted power relationships in South Africa. The Afrikaner no longer has the power to oppress other cultures. With the end of apartheid many Afrikaners face an identity crisis, wondering what to do and where to go from here. The end of Apartheid has made it necessary for Afrikaners to establish a new sense of identity in a new nation (Vestergaard, 2001:28). Vestergaard (2001:28) explains that:

Afrikaners will have to apply themselves imaginatively to the task of establishing who they are in the new South Africa. In the process they will have to free themselves from a part of their history and work to create a new one.

## Gender and Patriarchy

In addition, in providing a theoretical context for an analysis of the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the work of Botha, de Beer and my art practice, it is important to acknowledge the role of patriarchy in the formation of Afrikaner identity. Afrikaner masculinity has been constructed and promoted with an emphasis on “independence, resourcefulness, physical and emotional toughness and of being moral and God-fearing” (Morrell 2001a: 15). It has been a hegemonic masculinity which has been reproduced through heroic narrations and visual representations until the present day (Connell, 1995). Afrikaner masculinity was connected to metaphors such as the farmer or *Boer*, the pioneer, the trekker and the heroic warrior (du Pisan 2001, 1997). Writing during Apartheid, Leatt, Kneifel and Nürnberger (1986:81) argue that “It is this myth-making quality of Afrikaner nationalist ideology which has made it so powerful and dynamic a force in South African life, as well as giving it an enigmatic quality in today’s world.” Commenting on Afrikaner women and their resistance to colonization Giliomee (in de Beer, 2006:126) states that:

Afrikaner women were a driving force behind the trek; *Voortrekker* women had made their presence felt as early as 1838 when a British force annexed Port Natal. The commander reported that opposition to British rule was particularly strong among Afrikaner women. Although they had experienced great want and insecurity, if any of the men begin to droop or lose courage, they urged them on to fresh exertion and kept alive the spirit of resistance within them.

The influence of the Boer woman is unique. She was the comrade of her husband, sharing his lot on his expeditions. Destined to be the bearers of culture and civilization, Afrikaner women were given the responsibility of ensuring that the racial purity of *Afrikanerdom* was preserved. The *Trekker* and his wife developed a sense of self-reliance, liberty and purity. These virtues were the corner-stone of the *Volkskarakter* (people's character) and in this the woman was more passionate and resolute than the man. “Such



virtues constituted the framework of a sexist ideology that was invented by the Afrikaner patriarchy, and perpetuated by Afrikaner nationalist and women's organizations" (Stander and Willemse, 1992). Stander and Willemse (1992) explain that:

The role of the Afrikaner woman was central to the survival of the Afrikaner *volk*. Reproduction was her primary duty. She was regarded as the mother of a family, and she was expected to raise her children with a passionate love for the *volk*. The Boer woman was willing to give her life for her people as well as for her child. The true Boer woman is always the mother of her people, sparing no thought for herself; for her no ideal is higher and holier than that of the welfare of her people - for that she lives, for that she would die.

During the Anglo-Boer War the *Boere* asserted themselves with desperation against the British. They suffered the loss of 26 000 women and children in the British concentration camps that were set up across South Africa during this time. This war, at a time when their nation was almost destroyed, became pivotal for Afrikaner cultural identity (Faber, 1990:59). The great suffering and privation that the Afrikaans women were prepared to endure baffled men, both *Boer* and British (Giliomee in de Beer, 2006:126). This sacrifice is commemorated in the form of a sculpture of a woman and children (Figure 3) by Anton Van Wouw, as part of the *Voortrekker Monument*, built in 1938.



Figure 3 - Anton Van Wouw. 1938.  
**Detail of woman and children at Voortrekker monument.** Bronze Sculpture. 4.1 metre. Pretoria.

Afrikaner Nationalism was fixed in religion, consisting of strong expectations regarding adherence to group membership. The strongest guarantee for the survival of the Afrikaners depended on adherence to the laws of the patriarchal Father-God; and unquestioning obedience to the authority of his church–state apostles and captains (Faber, 1990:60). This adherence denotes a patriarchal society, in which the male is considered superior and the female inferior. Cloete (1992:45) explains that the Afrikaner's attitude towards women reflected, and still does reflect, the sentiments and practices of a patriarchal society. In this patriarchal society "Women have most often

been identified as consumers rather than producers of Afrikaner culture and are seen as confined to the domestic sphere” (Du Toit, 2003:155).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a discussion of the influence of myths, symbols, traditions, heroes and holy places, framed by Smith’s theory of ethno symbolism (Gibernau, 2004:127), on the formation of Afrikaner nationalism, as a context for the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the work of Marlene de Beer and Andries Botha in Chapter Two. Under Afrikaner nationalism, identity was prescribed by Apartheid laws and influenced by state ideologies. As a result, a number of South African artists today investigate how historical circumstances formed their identities, and are in search of new possibilities of identification. The artist Berni Searle (2000:13), for example reveals that:

Looking back, I am able to question the processes by which I have been identified and the ways in which this has framed my identity, as well as how I have identified and continue to identify myself.

South Africa's contemporary artistic production questions what it means to live in our present world and how to cope with historical burdens (Klein, 2008:14).

## Chapter 2

### The interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the work of Marlene de Beer and Andries Botha

This chapter will focus on an investigation into the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the work of Marlene de Beer and Andries Botha, in order to provide a context for a discussion of my art practice.

#### Marlene de Beer (1957)



Figure 4 - Jolante Hesse. 2012. **Marlene de Beer**. Oil on canvas. 50 x 70 cm. (Online).

Available:

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/photo.php?fbid=278290115528307&set=a.278290105528308.74324.100000419621984&type=3&theater> (Accessed 21 June 2012).

Marlene de Beer (Figure 4) is a Durban based artist who was born in Pretoria, South Africa, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1957. De Beer is currently a lecturer at Durban University of Technology (DUT) in the department of Fine Art and Jewellery design. She is registered for a PHD in Visual Art (Jewellery) at Stellenbosch University. Her father, Beyers Boshoff, was an Afrikaans writer and her mother, Isabella Boshoff (born Maritz), was a housewife. She is one of five children and an identical twin (De Beer, 2012).

De Beer grew up under apartheid in South Africa, within a culture where she never felt at home and from which she has always felt alienated. De Beer attended *Die Afrikaanse Hoer Meisieskool* in Pretoria, and matriculated in 1975. These feelings of alienation grew stronger, until she eventually rejected her Afrikaner cultural identity due to its patriarchal identification with Christianity. She was, and still is, critical of the dogmas of the Afrikaner which provided them with a mythical vision, excluding those who did not conform. De Beer rejects the Afrikaner's belief that women were, and still are, treated as vehicles for the production and maintenance of the identity of the *volk* (De Beer, 2012). In this context Du Toit (2003:155) explains that "crucial for the formation of Afrikaner nationalism women were seemingly acquiescent supporters of a male-constructed ideology". 'Volksmoeder' (nation's mother) ideology was proclaimed by Afrikaner nationalist men (Du Toit, 2003:155).

After completing high school, De Beer wanted to study art, but her parents refused to support this career choice, believing that it would not lead to a viable career. She reluctantly registered and qualified as an oral hygienist at the University of Pretoria, after which she moved to Durban in 1978. To dull the boredom of cleaning teeth, she became a competitive canoeist and completed numerous *Dusi* canoe marathons as a creative outlet (De Beer, 2012). The idea of a canoe race down the *Umsindusi* and Umgeni (*Mgeni*) rivers was born

during World War II, when Ian Player devised the idea of formalising a race downriver from Pietermaritzburg to Durban (The Dusi Canoe Marathon, 2014). De Beer campaigned for women to be allowed to compete within their own right. It provided her with an opportunity to challenge patriarchal beliefs that did not allow women to paddle the marathon on their own. In 1992 De Beer read an article in the *Mercury* newspaper about the Jewellery Design programme at Durban University of Technology and decided to enrol; she believed that it might provide her with a way to work creatively and make a living at the same time. She enrolled in 1993 and completed a National Higher Diploma in Jewellery Design and Manufacture in 1999 (De Beer, 2012).

In 2006 she completed a Master's Degree in Fashion at Durban University of Technology. Rejecting her culture led to an identity crisis. This encouraged De Beer to interrogate her cultural identity in order to understand her heritage and make peace with her culture (De Beer, 2012). The title of her dissertation was *Journey of Awareness: a demonstration of Identity through design*.

De Beer explains that “the motivation for this transformative inquiry forms part of a holistic de-fragmentation of my personal and cultural identity in an attempt to construct meaning and authenticity through design” (De Beer, 2006:5). Even though the transformative inquiry was a cathartic process, feelings associated with a rejection of her cultural heritage and identity remain. The use of childhood memories contributed to a healing process (De Beer, 2006:5). However, the interrogation of her Afrikaner cultural heritage led her to discover disturbing acts by Afrikaners, which Weaver compares to the devastating effects of Hitler's attempt at the purification of the German nation during World War II (Weaver, 2011).

De Beer could not return to practicing the beliefs and culture of her forefathers. She deconstructed her identity through a process which she described as a decolonisation of the self (De Beer, 2006:32). De Beer says that she felt deceived by her culture, community and family, where as a child one was not

offered a choice and had to conform to the patriarchal authority of the Afrikaner family, church and *volk* (nation) (De Beer, 2006:146). I can associate with these feelings as I experienced a similar situation, growing up with the rules and regulations of the *NG Kerk* (Dutch Reformed Church) and stubborn, narrow minded parents who demanded obedience. De Beer states "...I had rejected my culture many years ago...I was going to have to explore where I came from in order to find out who I am" (De Beer, 2006:142). In the context of contemporary South Africa, the work of Marlene de Beer provides an interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity through a personal journey of creating an awareness (De Beer, 2006:5).

Her Master's degree practical submission, titled ***Die pad is lank en swaar***, consisted of a body of artefacts including sculptures cast in bronze, stoneware ceramic pieces, various pieces of silver jewellery and vitreous enamelled pieces with gold and glass bead detail (De Beer, 2006:5). De Beer explains that "the body of artefacts is a concrete manifestation of my exploration of identity and was produced as an intuitive expression of memories and emotion" (De Beer, 2006:5). The memories are of personal experiences within a specific cultural and historical context (De Beer, 2006:5). De Beer explains that her creative process and reflection on her practice provides her with a dynamic and symbolic method of reconstructing identity (Moletsane, Mitchell, and Smith, 2012:351).

The series ***Trekosse (Die pad is lank en swaar)*** (*Trek* oxen. The road is long and hard) (2006) (Figures 5-10) and ***Boere Madonna*** (2006) (Figures 11-16) have been selected for discussion to illustrate the use of cultural symbols and the female's role of service and suffering within the Afrikaner community (De Beer, 2006:58), in an interrogation of Afrikaner identity and culture, in the context of South African history.

## ***Trekosse (Die pad is lank en swaar)***

In the series titled ***Trekosse (Die pad is lank en swaar)*** (2006) (Figures 5-10) consisting of a series of bronze sculptures of oxen, de Beer interrogated issues of Afrikaner culture and identity, based on the role of the oxen during the Great Trek (1836) (De Beer, 2006:57). She modelled the oxen using soft moulding wax (De Beer, 2006:89). *Trek* literally means to pull, or to migrate. *Die pad is lank en swaar* means the road is long and heavy, or difficult. The oxen are metaphors for the Afrikaner psyche during the Great Trek and are symbolic of the long and difficult physical and psychological journey that the Afrikaner has travelled to unknown territories, faced with colonisation and oppression by the English (De Beer, 2006:58). De Beer investigated significant historical events and Afrikaner culture order to interrogate her background (De Beer, 2006:65). At a subconscious level the Great Trek references De Beer's move from Pretoria to Durban, when she travelled into unexplored territories in the decolonisation of the self, and the search for a new identity. My situation was similar, as I moved from Vanderbijlpark to Durban.

De Beer listened to traditional Afrikaans folk songs and read Afrikaans poems as a methodology through which she could re-identify with her Afrikaner culture (De Beer, 2006:59). She created each sculpture according to three word rhymes which formed part of a poem she wrote, titled *Die ossewa* (The ox wagon) (2006) (De Beer, 2006:61). She impressed the words from her poem into the sides of the wax sculptures of the oxen (De Beer, 2006:62). De Beer (2006:59-60) states "The following is a copy of my poem that I composed, and that manifested as a three dimensional and concrete poem in the form of sculptures of *trekosse* with their names 'branded' onto them":

*Die pad is lank en swaar  
Verlore verlate en vergete.  
Geknou gekneg geknelter  
Verraai verdraai en versmaai  
Jou donner jou bliksem jou wetter*



*Geduldig gedienstig gedaan  
Geslepe gesoute geliefde  
Fluks flink en flenters  
Hardkoppig hardnekkig halstarrig  
Beduiweld bedonnerd bedruk  
Swaar baie swaar en bitter swaar.*

Each of the bronze oxen is different in appearance, referencing a specific experience during the Great Trek. De Beer was able to associate with these experiences, because of the memories of her upbringing that led to the rejection of her cultural identity. De Beer wrote in her poem that the oxen are *geduldig* (patient), *gedienstig* (serving willing and selfless) and *gedwee* (submissive and meek), *getroos* (comforted) and *tevree* (satisfied) (De Beer, 2006:60). De Beer highlights the idea of the oxen being forced to drag a heavy load (De Beer, 2006:66). This references the fact that her culture is like a burden to her; it confirms her feelings of being forced to belong to a community and culture with which she doesn't want to be associated.

The title of each work such as **Flenters** (Figure 7) (tatty, broken and beyond repair), **Beduiweld** (devil possessed) (Figure 8), **Bedonnerd** (grumpy) (Figure 10) and **Bedruk** (oppressed) (Figure 9), expresses emotions that vary from anger and resentment to depression (De Beer, 2006:85). These emotions reference de Beer's relationship to, and rejection of, her cultural heritage. De Beer explains that she identified with the oxen because of their exposure to hardship and the making of these sculptures formed part of an attempt to understand and define her identity (De Beer, 2006:94).

In the series **Trekosse (Die pad is lank en swaar)**, consisting of ten sets of oxen, de Beer interrogated the female's role of service and suffering within the Afrikaner community (De Beer, 2006:58), and cultural memories of growing up in a dysfunctional community and family within a specific historical context (De Beer, 2006:57). De Beer describes her Afrikaner family as being dysfunctional because of the effects of colonisation. De Beer, in discussing the relationship between identity and colonialism, quoted Antone and Hill (1992), who explain

that a disruption and confusion in belief and identity, due to colonisation, can last for many generations. This leads to not only the loss of belief and faith of cultural beliefs, but can also cause a loss of identity (Antone and Hill in De Beer, 2006:34).

***Trekosse (Die pad is lank en swaar)*** serves as a paradox: the Afrikaner has a history of being the oppressed (by the British during The Anglo Boer War) only to become the oppressor (of Africans, Indians and Coloureds during the apartheid era). De Beer's personal association with the oxen relates to what she describes as a journey of self-discovery (De Beer, 2006:58). De Beer used oxen (males) as a metaphor for female suffering and personal experiences, growing up in a patriarchal Afrikaner society. By moulding a penis for each ox she interrogated Afrikaner identity and culture in which men were seen as leaders and the head of the house. This use of the masculine image of the ox as a metaphor for female suffering appears to be contradictory. However, in discussing this, De Beer (2014) explained that oxen have been castrated, which diminishes their power, but not their strength; in other words, they become subservient and serve as beasts of burden. It is in this context that de Beer uses the ox as a metaphor for Afrikaner women. De Beer explains that she feels a kinship with *trekosse*, as she can relate to their stoic acceptance of their role of serving and suffering. Although the oxen could be considered as potentially powerful animals, they have been rendered powerless through the process of neutering, thus condemning them to a life of servitude (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2010:82).



Figure 5 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. ***Trekosse (Die pad is lank en swaar)***. Bronze sculptures. 10 cm x 6 cm. Durban.



Figure 6 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. ***Trekosse (Die pad is lank en swaar)***. Bronze sculptures. 10 cm x 6 cm. Durban.



Figure 7 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. **Fleeters**. Bronze sculpture. 10 cm x 6 cm. Durban.



Figure 8 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. **Beduiweld**. Bronze sculpture. 10 cm x 6 cm. Durban.



Figure 9 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. **Bedruk**. Bronze sculpture. 10 cm x 6 cm. Durban.



Figure 10 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. **Bedonnerd**. Bronze sculpture. 10 cm x 6 cm. Durban.

## **Boere Madonna**

**Boere Madonna** (2006) (Figures 11-16) consists of a series of cast bronze sculptures depicting a *Voortrekker* woman as a Madonna. The figurines were displayed in ceramic shrines to which text had been added (Figure 12). The making of these sculptures assisted De Beer in the interrogation of her Afrikaner identity (De Beer, 2006:115) through an investigation of the position of the female in Afrikaner culture. The *Boere* Madonnas are a symbol of the suffering and service of Afrikaner women.

De Beer says that her Master's study was auto ethnographic (De Beer, 2009:77). De Beer (2012) explains that an auto-ethnographic approach includes reflexivity and narrative inquiry as "stories that create the effect of reality, showing characters embedded in the complexities of lived moments" and the sense of "connected lives across the curve of time" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000:744).

The shrines were constructed by bonding leather-hard slabs of clay and creating recesses within which the *Boere* Madonna's were placed. De Beer used copper and iron oxides to enhance and accentuate the textures on the stoneware (De Beer, 2006:127). Heart shaped impressions acted as representations of the feminine and related to love and nurturing (Figure 13). De Beer used letter punches to impress specific words into the clay (De Beer, 2006:129) such as *Pyn en Smart* (Pain and Grief) (Figure 13), *Offerande* (Sacrifice) (Figure 14) and *Sy laat haar* (She lets Her) (Figure 15). The words relate to Afrikaans lyrics, poems and personal experiences (De Beer, 2006:130). The relative roughness of the stoneware shrines is symbolic of the innate hardiness and resilience of her female forbears, with whom De Beer strongly identifies (De Beer, 2006:129).

De Beer did not intend the sculptures to act as feminist statements, but rather as agents in a healing process (De Beer, 2006:132). De Beer says that her journey of awareness was a holistic journey of personal defragmentation (De Beer, 2009:81). One of the *Boere* Madonnas is placed on top of a sculpture of the *Voortrekker Monument* (Figure 16). This symbolised the end of de Beer's personal and cultural oppression (De Beer, 2006:148).

The use of the iconic image of the Madonna served as a universal acknowledgement of women (De Beer, 2006:147). The shrines relate to the sculpture of a woman and children in the *Voortrekker Monument* (Figure 2). De Beer moulded *Voortrekker kappies* onto plastic Madonna figurines with soft wax (De Beer, 2006:117). These figures were then cast in bronze. The use of the *kappie* alludes to the term *Kappie* commando, a group of women who covertly offered resistance to British rule and oppression, well after the end of the Anglo Boer wars (De Beer, 2006:159). The Madonna is a Roman Catholic religious icon. However, De Beer says that the Madonna doesn't relate to De Beer's Calvinistic cultural background and she doesn't subscribe to any specific faith (De Beer, 2006:115). The *Boere* Madonna rather represented painful experiences of Afrikaner women and children caused by the British scorched earth policy during the Anglo Boer War. The use of the Madonna, which is associated with suffering and loss within the Catholic religion, referenced the great suffering and privation Afrikaner women were prepared to endure in defence of *die Volk* (the nation) (De Beer, 2006:126).

De Beer personalised the face of each Madonna to convey the existence of individual women within a perceived uniformity. She explains that the individual becomes lost, colonised or re-colonised when grouped within a specific community or family. **Boere Madonna** served as a visual metaphor of De Beer's decolonisation of her personal and cultural identity (De Beer, 2006:119). The Madonna also served as a metaphor for the expression of her experience of being a daughter, wife and mother within a specific cultural context (De Beer, 2006:119). De Beer explains that her memories included



negative experiences of the role of the Afrikaner women, eulogised as a *volksmoeder* (nation's mother) and obedient wife or daughter, within a patriarchal family and community (De Beer, 2006:121).

De Beer believes that the image of the *Voortrekker Kappie* represents single minded perseverance which relates to her Afrikaner identity and personal memories of oppression (De Beer, 2006:122). De Beer began to understand and define her identity, as part of a process of critical transformative inquiry, by researching the role of the Afrikaner woman, within the context of The Great Trek and the Anglo Boer war (De Beer, 2006:122). She explored memories of sayings such as *eerder kaalvoet oor die Drakensberge* (rather barefoot over the Drakensberg). This saying originates in The Great Trek as the Afrikaner travelled over the Drakensberg with ox wagons and oxen. Commenting on Afrikaner women and their resistance to colonization, Giliomee states that women expressed their fixed determination that they would rather walk over the Drakensberg barefoot than to yield to British authority. The women would rather die in freedom, as death was dearer to them than the loss of liberty (Giliomee, 2004:169).

De Beer sees this statement as a resolute, stubborn and single minded characteristic of female members of her family and community, enabling them to persevere over time in the face of overwhelming difficulties and challenges (De Beer, 2006:123). These sayings helped her understand and come to terms with many negative personal experiences and attitudes (De Beer, 2006:124).

The creation of individual *Boere* Madonnas and shrines, each depicting specific messages, enabled De Beer to express deep seated personal emotions and memories in a specific cultural context. This provided De Beer with a creative and transformative method with which to interrogate, deconstruct, reconstruct and redefine her identity as an Afrikaans speaking



female, who grew up within a patriarchal, Calvinistic community dominated by nationalism (De Beer, 2006:127).



Figure 11 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. **Boere Madonna**. Bronze sculptures on Ceramic shrines. Variable dimensions. Durban.



Figure 12 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. **Boere Madonna**. Variable dimensions. Detail.



Figure 13 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. **Boere Madonna - Pyn en Smart**. Bronze sculpture on Ceramic shrine. 12 cm x 4 cm. Durban.





Figure 14 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. **Boere Madonna - Offerande**. Bronze sculpture on Ceramic shrine. 12 cm x 4 cm. Durban.



Figure 15 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. **Boere Madonna – Sy laat haar**. Bronze sculpture on Ceramic shrine. 12 cm x 4 cm. Durban.



Figure 16 - Marlene de Beer. 2006. **Boere Madonna**. Bronze sculpture on Ceramic shrine. 12 cm x 4 cm. Durban.

De Beer's recent work, towards her doctoral studies in Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University, is created from a feminist perspective (Figures 17 and 18). Her proposal is titled *A visual and textual restorying of the diary of Susanna Catharina Smit (1799-1863)*. De Beer (2014) explains that:

This study will draw on the personal diary and life of the *Voortrekker* woman Susanna Catharina Smit, in order to explore the entanglements of 19th century ideologically constructed gendered subjectivities. The rationale of this study is to re-appraise the subjective position of Susanna Smit, by means of a restorying, from De Beer's 21st century perspective as an Afrikaner woman. The restorying will be contextualized within both the historical, sacred, and patriarchal Afrikaner myth of being a chosen people, and the representation of women's embodied identities as being that of wife and mother in service to the *volk* (nation) and ordained by God.



Figure 17 - Marlene de Beer. 2014. **Untitled**. Neckpiece: Porcelain, Gold lustre and cotton. Height: 14cm (excluding cotton), width: 6cm, depth: 6cm. Ring: Porcelain and gold lustre. Height: 7cm, width: 6cm, depth: 4cm. Collection of the artist.



Figure 18 - Marlene de Beer. 2014. **Divinity**. Porcelain and embroidery cotton. Height: 25cm, width: 15 cm, depth: 4cm. Collection of the artist.

**Andries Botha (1952)**



Figure 19 - **Andries Botha**. 1994. ADA Magazine. Durban. (Online). Available: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/photo.php?fbid=427835543945234&set=a.105029196225872.7886.100001563758496&type=1&theater> (Accessed 2 September 2012).



Andries Botha (Figure 19) was born in Durban, KwaZulu Natal (South Africa) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1952. His mother was Alice Sandell, born in Norway. His father was Andries Johannes Botha, born in Molteno in the Karoo, South Africa. His father was Afrikaans and his mother English of Norwegian descent. Botha's father grew up in the Dutch Reformed Church which Botha attended as a young boy. At the age of seven, Botha made the decision not to attend church. Botha doesn't know the religion of his mother. Botha doesn't attend any church currently and isn't religious (Botha, 2013).

Botha's home language was Afrikaans. He attended an Afrikaans primary school, Dirkie Uys, from Grade One to Standard One when his parents were divorced. He then attended Port Natal Primary School until Standard Five. Thereafter he attended and finished matric at George Campbell High School. His education has been in Afrikaans and English. After matriculating Botha completed a BA (Fine Arts) at the University of Natal (Botha, 2013).

Botha sees himself as an Afrikaner. He interrogates Afrikaner culture and identity through sculptural installations. He has won several national awards, including the Volkskas Atelier Merit Award in 1987 and the Cape Town Triennial Merit Award in 1988 (Botha, 2012c). Botha won the Standard Bank Young Artist Award in 1991, combining wood, metal and rubber amongst other materials in a large scale sculptural tableaux. Botha was honoured to be the first South African to be included in a post-apartheid biennale when his piece documenting the pages of one man's pass book titled, **For Thirty Years Next to His Heart**, was included on the Fourth Havana Biennial in Cuba (Williamson, 2000). He won the National Vita Art Award in 1992. He has exhibited internationally. He was invited to exhibit at the Beaufort Triennial in 2006 and exhibited in Brittany and in the Canary Islands during 2008 (Botha, 2012c).

Botha has become increasingly responsive to the fragile co-existence with other life forms and sensibilities. He has, throughout his creative career, tried

to unravel the mystery and responsibilities attached to the idea of co-existence. As part of this search, he has given significant time to exploring the relationship between creativity and other forms of citizenship. Part of the relationship that evolves out of his philosophy of give and take has resulted in Botha committing his life to being within a teaching and learning environment (Botha, 2012). Professor Michael Chapman (1992:79), discussing Botha's struggle to locate himself, noted that:

We read of his 'political position' – the pull between Afrikaans roots and English liberalism, his disillusionment with white South Africa in the face of Black Consciousness as reflected in his juxtaposition of materials (the metals of the industrial world and the wattle of traditional Zulu activity), in his disjuncture of images such as biblical journeying and floods, Afrikaner myth and history, symbols of African antiquity.

Botha was a Senior Lecturer in Sculpture at the Durban University of Technology from 1975 - 2013. His consistent support of the visual arts in the community started with the founding and chairing of the Community Arts Workshop (1984-6). His continued commitment to this process is now evident in his NGO Create Africa South Trust (since 2002), *Amazwi Abesifazane Trust* (registered in 2008) and the Human Elephant Foundation (2009) (Botha, 2012c).

The work of Andries Botha is centered on an interrogation of Afrikaner identity in the context of South African history. Botha, in particular, interrogates the role of the Afrikaner male in the context of Afrikaner identity, specifically Afrikaner nationalism and patriarchy. MacKenny (2000) states that:

Deeply concerned with his heritage as a white Afrikaans male brought up in the apartheid era, Botha constantly questions his identity in terms of his historical, geographical and political context. Reading both the body and the land as contested territory with sub-texts of past violence, Botha utilises the metaphor of the map to link the two. A concern with memory and the 'archiving' of physical and emotional information has become a consistent theme.

## **(dis)Appearance(s) (2007)**

The exhibition titled **(dis)Appearance(s)** (2007) (Figures 20-29) has been chosen for discussion as it illustrates Botha's interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity, in the context of South African history. Valerie Leigh (2007:7) provides a synopsis of **(dis)Appearance(s)**:

To Botha the South African land and its history have been the inspiration of his art. Consequently the exhibition has reference to specific events in South African history and also to the nature of its peoples. Through metaphor and allegory he deals with various aspects of these concerns in the exhibition. I refer to the hats and head gear. These as metaphors, convey varying aspect of gender, content regarding positions and actions in society, thoughts regarding positions and actions in society, thoughts regarding periods of South African history, vulnerability in respect of gender, societal position and changing times and fortunes.

**(dis)Appearance(s)** (2007) is made up of a number of works. A large-scale installation titled **History has an Aspect of Oversight in the Process of Progressive Blindness** (2004) (Figures 20-22) is "an intriguing compilation of curios and figures from Natal and Zulu colonial history in a display cabinet facing rows of empty chairs on one side, and serried ranges of busts on the other" (du Toit 2008:565). There are several studies of Andries Botha's deceased father, including a sculptural installation titled **Afrikaander circa 1600** (2006) (Figures 23-25). **My Father** (2007) (Figure 26), consists of a detailed pastel and conté portrait of his father. The death of his father is used as a strategy to interrogate Afrikaner culture and identity, particularly masculinity, by focussing on the white Afrikaans male. The **Boerekappie** (Sunbonnet) series (Figure 28) and **Hat** series consist of "detailed pencil drawings of the traditional headgear of Voortrekker women and allusions to P.W. Botha's sombre fedora" (du Toit 2008:565). The **Monument** series (2007) consists of pen sketches of monuments in memory of Afrikaners who died in the Anglo Boer War (Figure 29), together with scenes from the anti-apartheid struggle. Chapman (Botha, 2007) states that:

For all the sorrow of memory that is evoked there is, paradoxically, optimism. The frozen past yields to the creativity of the future. There is no glorification in stone of old authority. Rather, this exhibition invites us all to participate in the making of meaning. To participate in an art of imagining.

**(dis)Appearance(s)** is an intriguing and disquieting look at things forgotten. Botha looks at how we erect symbolic markers in the landscape and then ignore them. He focuses on the ordinary everyday objects that we pass by and brings them into our view in a subtle, yet intense way. Through a variety of media he pays attention to the consequences of the presence and absence of masculinity within an emotional and historical narrative. Some of the works explore the tenderness of relationships whilst others note the conflictive nature of a society at war with itself (Botha, 2007). Botha (2007) explains that:

I would like to see myself as operating in many domains as a creative person: one domain is the manufacture of objects, the other is responding as creatively as I possibly can to the emotional and societal context in which we live.

The work titled **History has an aspect of oversight in the process of progressive blindness** (2004) (Figures 20-22) consists of a display cabinet containing wax curios and figures from Natal and Zulu colonial history, facing rows of empty cow hide covered chairs on one side, and a series of full scale wax portrait busts on the other side. The installation is large scale (3160mm x 1300 mm wide x length variable). It is constructed from bold materials such as rubber, mild steel, wattle (exotic South African wood), brass, galvanised wire. It comprises six chairs covered with cow skin, an electrical/mechanical rotation device, one ball and claw display cabinet, forty eight wax curio portrait busts, forty eight wax full scale portrait busts, approximately fifty five ash building blocks, a metal support structure and one standing fan (Botha, 2012). Botha (2007) explains that:

I have tried to make a work which transcends the normal visual narrative, storytelling, that which never abandons the power of the imagination. It is a narrative with persistent melancholia that wishes to define the lessons of history as truth. I think that such a narrative should suggest and feel rather than instruct, or reason.

Botha believes that a three dimensional work needs to emit an alchemy that invokes the subtext or subliminal, that which we cannot comprehend. He explains that the subject of **History has an aspect of oversight in the process of progressive blindness** is “our flawed humanity, that which comes close to classic tragedy, that which is oblique, hidden, denied, that which we discover within ourselves when we are momentarily elated or unashamedly celebratory, mostly in pursuit of our own baser purposes in life at the expense of another life” (Botha, 2012b).

Leigh (2007:7) interprets the work in the context of history when she says that it refers to a colonial period, with the portrait busts referencing issues of authority and patriarchy. The white male portrait is of Sir Theophilus Shepstone who was responsible for allocating land, “specifically for blacks in the then Natal during the confusion following the migration of black peoples there”; hence the title that refers to the way in which historical decisions impact on future generations (ibid). Leigh (2007:7), discussing the symbolic nature of the work, notes that:

Allegorically the work has many suggestions. The seats suggest that viewers look at history as in a cinema. The wall is built with the same kind of blocks as are used for sub-economic housing now. The display cabinet is such as people used to have in their homes to display special objects at a particular period in our social history. The suggestions bring to mind specific cultural, historic and social associations.

The work consists of “repetitions, ruptures and citations. It is a text, and a reading of a text, with history holding the position that Botha’s father does in other pieces” (Robert, 2007). In amplifying the installation, through the use of a breeze block wall dividing two similar but distinguishable scenes. Botha

homes in on “that moment in a text where repetition is difference, either in the form of a slight shift in meaning or simply as a temporal displacement” (Robert, 2007). This provides a reading of the work through a number of simultaneously contradictory narratives.



Figure 20 - Andries Botha. 2004. **History has an Aspect of Oversight in the Process of Progressive Blindness.** Mixed media. Variable Dimensions.



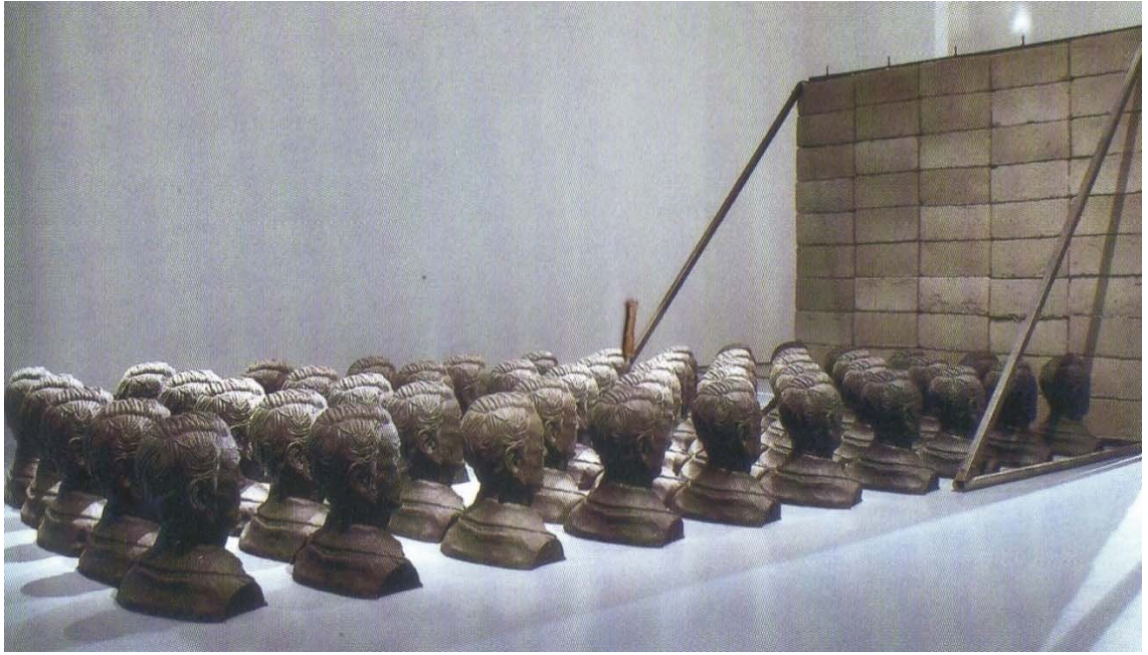


Figure 21 - Andries Botha. 2004. **History has an Aspect of Oversight in the Process of Progressive Blindness.** Mixed media. Variable Dimensions.



Figure 22 - Andries Botha. 2004. **History has an Aspect of Oversight in the Process of Progressive Blindness.** Mixed media. Variable Dimensions.

**Afrikaander circa 1600** (2006) (Figures 23-25) is a sculptural installation occupying a space of 2.5 x 3 x 4 metres. The presentation is museum-like and permits the viewer to look into an inhabited interior. The installation suggests an early twentieth century poor-white home with middle-class aspirations. The floor is made of linoleum. Hanging on the corrugated iron walls are paintings of traditional South African landscapes, one of which is inserted into one of the three windows. Chapman (2007:22) observes that:

The figures are enclosed in a corrugated-iron dwelling typical of the economically dispossessed, in the near past the white Afrikaner, now the working-class African or coloured person.

The installation is furnished with a standard lamp and a bulky table. The table is halfway between a kitchen table and a writing desk. Behind the table is a rocking chair. On the rocking chair sits a figure holding an antelope head. On the table lies a sculpture of a man's head, supported by a small woven cushion embroidered with beads. The negative shapes between the beads form letters that spell out words in Zulu and English associated with masculinity (Du Toit, 2008:566). Botha (2012) explains that the pillow on which the head rests was embroidered, using black thread/beads on black cloth, by a Zulu woman. The words on the pillow, such as masculine, nurturer, rapist, lover and torturer, describe male behavioural traits. Botha (2012) describes **Afrikaander Circa 1600** as:

...essentially a biopsy into the heart of masculinity that I have taken a personal perspective on, I have assumed that the essential building block of male behaviour is formulated around your primary role-model: your father. From that relationship, in ever concentric circles that emanate from there and embraces cultural and social contexts, geography of an emotional and physical nature, the preconditioning that shapes masculinity is fraught.



Leigh (2007:7) believes that:

Afrikaander Circa 1600 does two things particularly. It looks at the idea of 'Afrikaander' – as people who have played a role in South African history. Secondly it is a work made to honour the artist's father and to present the idea of father and son relationships and thoughts surrounding masculinity.

The head on the table is a wax cast from a mould of Botha's father's head, lovingly painted as if he is sleeping (Figure 25) and is "strongly associated with Botha's recently deceased father and Botha's portrait studies of him. Indeed, it is actually based on a death mask of his father and cast in wax, thus literally embodying the contradictory presence of the beloved but authoritarian father figure" (Du Toit, 2008:569). The bust, now detached from its pedestal, makes possible references to representations of historical figures such as the Strijdom monument in Pretoria may well have been the most potent representation of Afrikaner power at its peak (Du Toit, 2008:570).

The image of the male figure in the rocking chair is made from mild steel, covered by untreated *Nguni* cow skin. Felt is placed under the cow skin to replicate the feeling of flesh. Botha is a vegetarian; as a result the process of covering the figure was particularly trying since the wet skin gave off a bad odour (Botha, 2013). The skin was stretched, formed and sewn with *riempies* (thongs). The figure in the *riempies* rocking chair converses with the head on the table. It is apparent that Botha intended that the viewer enter this piece and become part of the environment.

In the context of **(dis)Appearance(s)** the relationship between the sculpted portrait head of Botha's father on the table, and the portrait studies of his father is emphasised. Du Toit (2008:566 - 567) notes:

Afrikaancer Circa generates further questions rather than providing potential answers. What can a displaced head on a table or a swaying figure in a rocking chair (with an antelope head on its lap), taken either separately or in conjunction, have to say about 'masculinity'? Rather than seeking a definitive interpretation, we would do better to follow up

the divergent suggestions and evocations woven into this installation wherever these might lead.

Du Toit (2008:567) believes that “Botha’s title, ‘*Afrikaander circa 1600*’ is clearly an allusion to Afrikaners and to Afrikaner culture and history, though it also has an alienating effect”. Afrikaander was a derogatory term used by outsiders, especially by English colonial authors, to describe Afrikaners. Today the term ‘Afrikaander’ is out dated and a lingual oddity – a museum piece (ibid). “**Afrikaander circa 1600**, refers to a date when there could not have been Afrikaners in any sense. In 1600, there was as yet no trace of any settlement or colonial establishment at the Cape” (Du Toit, 2008:568).

The portrait/head on the table makes reference to a bust on a pedestal, suggesting power and status. The sculpted male head refers to monuments to Afrikaner nationalism such as the Strijdom head and the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria (Du Toit, 2008:568).

The sculpted head on the table seems vulnerable. There is a suggestion of an attempt at tender care. It lies partly on, but partly beside, the black woven cushion; almost as if an attempt has been made to make it more comfortable. In its design and placement the cushion functions as part of a mourning ritual. Botha confirmed this when he described the cushion as a symbol of comfort in a time of grief (Botha, 2012a).



Figure 23 - Andries Botha. 2006. **Afrikaander circa 1600**. Sculptural Installation, Found Objects, Mixed Media. Variable dimensions.



Figure 24 - Andries Botha. 2006. **Afrikaander circa 1600**. Sculptural Installation, Found Objects, Mixed Media. Variable dimensions.





Figure 25 - Andries Botha. 2006. **Afrikaander circa 1600**. Sculptural Installation, Found Objects, Mixed Media. Variable dimensions.

Du Toit (2008:571) the question “who, or where, is the ‘Afrikaander’ in this installation?” His response to this question lies in an interpretation of the work in which:

The antelope head on the lap of the swaying figure may also point in a different direction – the figure might be seen as a *kapater*, a castrated buck. If so, the ‘Afrikaander’ as *kapater* would indicate that the man-like but inhuman creature has been emasculated, just as the sculpted head has been removed from its monumental context. That brings us back to Andries Botha’s own diagnosis: ‘*Afrikaander circa 1600*’ is a reflection on the Afrikaner’s masculinity, in a situation where the monuments have fallen and the archetype proves castrated (du Toit 2008:571).

Thus du Toit (2008:571) concludes that the installation “presents a kind of Afrikaner Diorama in a post-apartheid perspective reducing Afrikaner nationalism and power to historical relics”. However Botha has sympathy for his ‘Afrikaander’, evident in the way in which the sculpted head (which also represents his own recently deceased father) is supported by the cushion.

Botha points to the demise of “Afrikaner nationalism, and the once mighty and pitiless ‘Afrikaander’ with whom it is associated”. ...”the work of mourning and repentance must go on. That, according to Mitscherlich’s psychoanalytic political theory, is the condition for coming to terms with a catastrophic history and for the possibility of a new beginning” (du Toit, 2008:571).

**My Father** (2007) (Figure 26), consists of a detailed pastel and conté portrait of his father, who died on 12 January 2007. This portrait is the point of origin for **(dis)Appearance(s)**. A pen and ink drawing titled **Tussen Burgersdorp and Molteno** (Figure 27) is a substitute for the journey to Molteno in the Karoo, Botha’s father’s birthplace, that father and son had planned, but never took. With this portrait, Botha reveals a desire to re-establish his relationship with his father (Robert, 2007).

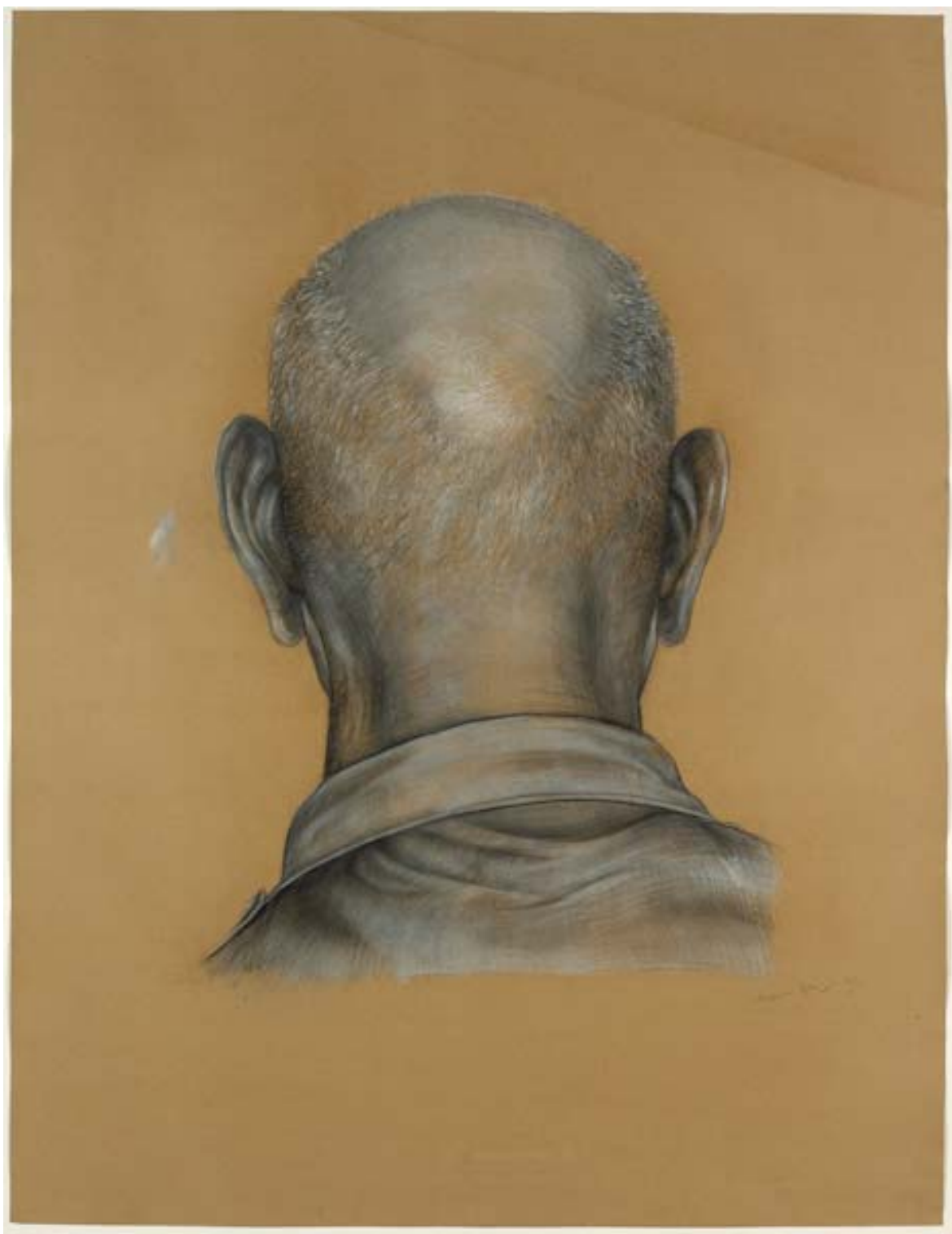


Figure 26 - Andries Botha. 2007. **My Father**. Pastel and Conté on paper. 168 x 131 cm.

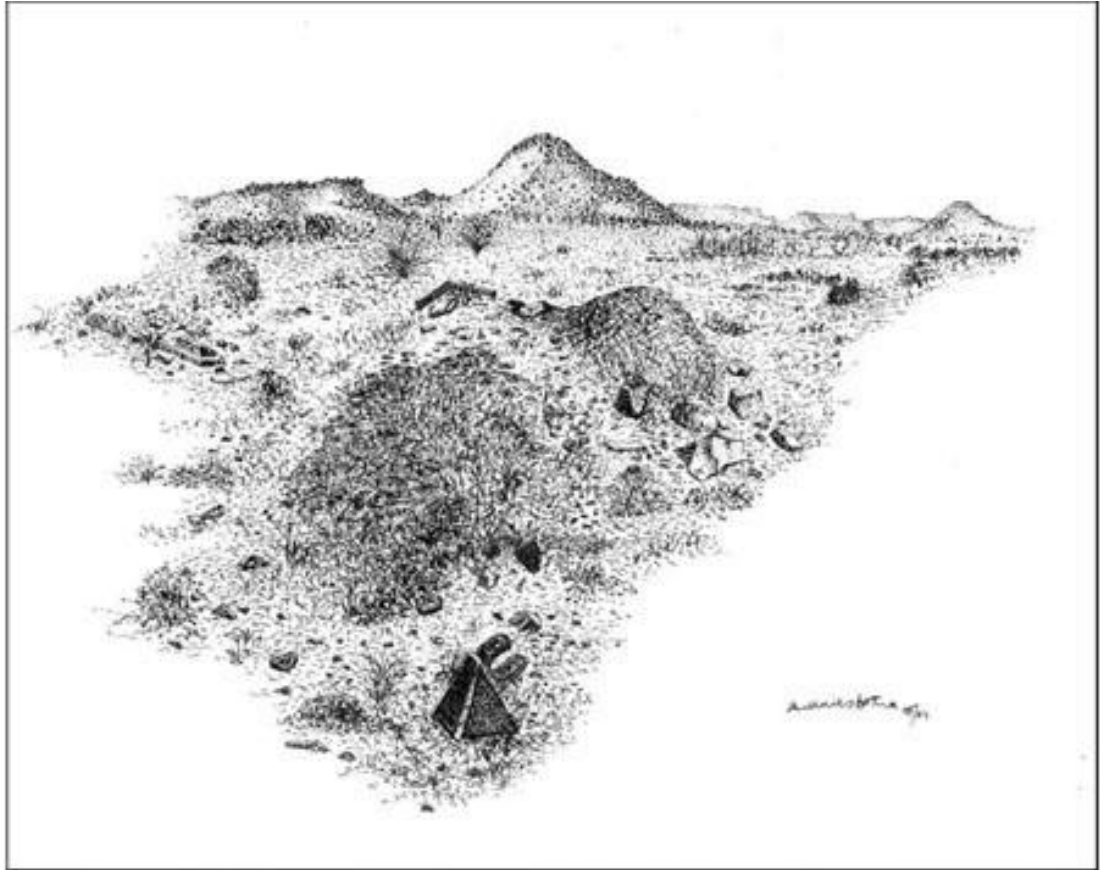


Figure 27 - Andries Botha. 2007. **Tussen Burgersdorp and Molteno**. Pen and ink.  
38.6 x 45.4 cm.

The **Boerekappie** series (Figure 28) consists of renderings of the bonnets worn by *Boer* women which bring a sad respect and profound love into **(dis)Appearance(s)**. They also literally bring women's hands and work into the exhibition; the renderings are done in appliqué by Jane Zietsman and embroidered by Jane Guffley, Janine Zagel, Sue Hobbs, Jill Lowe, Colleen Robert and Linda Shorten. This stitching in contemporary time is an emotional homage to the silent and historically unrecognized labours of women; it resonates with Botha's instruction that "We need to live our lives closer to home, pay attention to the particular and acknowledge that our lives are shaped more by the idea of collectively and less by individuality" (Botha in Robert, 2007). The emphasis on the feminine references issues of patriarchy in Afrikaner culture and identity, as discussed in Chapter One and evident in de Beer's **Boere Madonna**.



In discussing the work, Leigh (2007:7) says that:

The *kappie* is a markedly feminine symbol suggesting the head-covering necessary for women because of the South African sun, because of fashion, because of a certain submission. It is also a symbol connected with Afrikaner women of the great Trek period. Botha has chosen to remember the concentration camp period and the head gear worn by women then and the vulnerability and pain experienced by them then. The *kappie* in this context is a powerful metaphor of vulnerability and dignity.



Figure 28 - Andries Botha. 2007. **Boerekappie**. Applique on fabric by Jane Zietsman. 40.5cm x 40.5cm.

In the **Monument series** (Figure 29), Botha juxtaposes pen sketches of historical sites from the South African War, such as the Jacobs Concentration Camp (Figure 29).

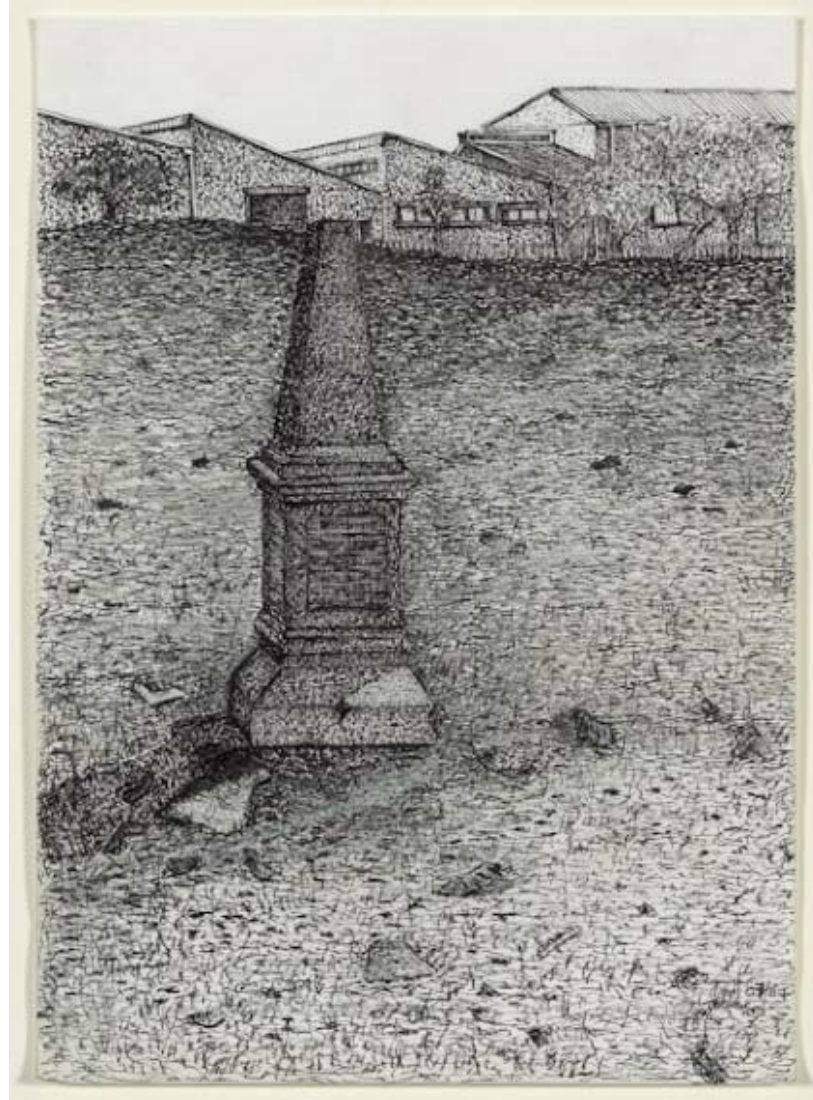


Figure 29 - Andries Botha. 2007. **Jacobs Concentration Camp Site**. Pen and ink on paper.  
48.8 x 37.7 cm.

## Conclusion

In the series **Trekosse** (*Die pad is lank en swaar*) (*Trek oxen. The road is long and hard*) (2006) (Figures 5-10) and **Boere Madonna** (2006) (Figures 11-16) de Beer makes use of cultural symbols, in interrogating the position of the female in Afrikaner identity and culture, in the context of South African history.

In the exhibition titled **(dis)Appearance(s)** (2007) (Figures 20-29) Botha interrogates masculinity and patriarchy in Afrikaner culture and identity. The death of his father is used as a catalyst for this interrogation. Both De Beer and Botha reference events and imagery from South African history in their interrogation of Afrikaner cultural identity.

## CHAPTER 3

### AN INTERROGATION OF AFRIKANER CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN MY ART PRACTICE



Figure 30 - Tyler Dolan. 2013. **Nicolé Maurel**. Digital photograph. Photographed in my studio at Durban University of Technology. ML Sultan Campus. South Africa.

This chapter investigates the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the context of my family history and life experiences. This interrogation forms part of a critical transformative inquiry, which explores the death, rebirth and growth of my personal identity through art practice. This process is explained by Goduka (1999:1), who says that through writing and telling our stories we use the power of narratives to deconstruct and reconstruct new identities, in order to begin to heal.

## Section 1: Formative influences

This section will outline my upbringing and previous art practice, both of which had a formative influence on the creation of visual artefacts in my interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity.

I was born Nicolé Hoffmann (Figure 30) on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1981 in Vanderbijlpark (Gauteng) during the apartheid era; in 2001 I moved to Durban (KwaZulu Natal) where I presently live.

Vanderbijlpark was predominantly Afrikaans. In terms of the Group Areas act (1950) White, Black, Coloured and Indian people had to live within prescribed areas. As a little girl, I was part of an Afrikaans family, culture and *volk* (nation). I was educated at an Afrikaans primary and high school. As a child I did not have the opportunity to make friends with, or get to know, other races and cultures. I lived in a cocoon where only Afrikaners existed. It was, and to a degree still is, unacceptable to mingle with other races within the Afrikaner home.

I married Gervais Francois Maurel (Figure 31) on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2008. He is a cultural hybrid. His father is French Mauritian and his mother Afrikaans. We had our first and only child, Roselee Maurel (Figure 31), on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2011.

My father is Wessel Hoffmann and my mother is Petronella Hoffmann, born Vermeulen. My father was born and grew up in Hillary, Durban. My father studied to be an electrician after school and was sent to Vanderbijlpark on a course where he met my mother. My mother was born and grew up in Vanderbijlpark. She was a grade two teacher. My father fell in love with her and moved to Vanderbijlpark to marry her. I was their first born. Four years later, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 1985, my mother gave birth to my sister, Vidette Hoffmann.





Figure 31 – Marilyn Barnard. 2014. **Gervais Francois Maurel, Roselee Maurel and Nicolé Maurel**. Digital photograph. Durban. South Africa.

When I was six years old Vidette drowned, on New Year's Day, in our swimming pool. I found her floating in the water. I always blamed myself for her death. I couldn't deal with this tragedy. This resulted in feelings associated with anger, loneliness, loss, sadness and emptiness. As a result my art practice has always been filled with darkness, metaphors of death and a sense of melancholy. However, with the birth of my only child, Roselee, I was reborn and now have a purpose in life.

In 1989 my mother gave birth to my baby sister Renalda Hoffmann. She lives in Ballito (KwaZulu Natal) with my parents. My father always spoke about relocating to Durban, but my mother only knew Vanderbijlpark and was

scared to relocate. My parents eventually relocated to Durban in 2001 and I followed them.

It was only at the age of nineteen, when I started studying Fine Arts at the Vaal University of Technology, that I experienced being the 'Other' or different, within the context of race and language, particularly in terms of Black people and the English language. However, this experience wasn't a shock to me, because I had always been considered different within my own community and home. As a teenager I started noticing and questioning things in society that disturbed me, such as apartheid. This alienated me from my Afrikaner culture and identity. It was difficult for me to make friends and fit in with Afrikaners.

I matriculated at Transvalia High School in 1999 with Art, Biology, History, Typing, Afrikaans first language and English second language as subjects. As a child I was particularly interested in music, history and art. I was fascinated by South African history and the history of art.

I had a privileged childhood. I was exposed to numerous activities such as art exhibitions, theatre, ballet, modern dance, performance, television and cinema. I was sent for classical piano lessons when I was eight years old. I completed grade four Classical Piano through UNISA in 1996; my interest shifted to Fine Arts at the age of sixteen. However, music has remained a passion and influence in my life.

At the age of sixteen I was given ancestral photographs by my aunt that sparked an interest in my family history. I have been interested in them ever since. I discovered, and was particularly interested in, significant Anglo Boer War sites in primary school. I belonged to a Land Service Group (Scouts) from Grade one to Grade eight. We visited significant Anglo Boer War sites and cleaned the graveyards. In Grade Eight I travelled to Egypt with this group, which was a significant event in my life. I was fascinated with

Egyptian history and also studied Egyptian art in first year Fine Arts at the Vaal University of Technology.

I studied Fine Arts at Vaal University of Technology in 2000 for one year. I was forced to discontinue my studies and start working due a lack of finance. It was very difficult to come to terms with this new reality after having experienced a privileged childhood. My father could not pay for my first year Fine Arts studies and I had to wait seven years for my results. It was hard to see my father struggling to get a job and earn a living. The seven years were traumatic, wanting to be an artist, but having to work in a corporate environment. I had a strong desire to complete my Fine Arts studies. I felt very bitter and upset with my father, because I had studied and worked very hard in my first year. I felt depressed that I couldn't obtain my results. However, in employment I gained communication, computer, sales, reception and administrative skills. My father eventually secured work in Sudan and I registered for second year in Fine Arts at Durban University of Technology in 2007. I have been studying full time ever since, in order to further my skills as an artist and to fulfill my ambition of becoming a Fine Arts lecturer.

I started to interrogate my Afrikaner culture and identity in the third year of my Diploma, by experimenting with ancestral photographs through drawing and painting (Figure 32). Using ceramics I made a series of wings as a metaphor for a freedom from the constraints of religion and culture (Figure 33), especially the Dutch Reformed Church and its ideologies.





Figure 32 - Nicolé Maurel. 2009. **Ancestral Journeys**. Charcoal and wool on white fabriano. 2 m x 1 m. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 33 - Nicol  Maurel. 2009. **Liberty** (Detail). Glazed porcelain. 15 cm x 30 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.

I completed a Bachelor's Degree in Technology: Fine Arts in 2011 at Durban University of Technology. My work consisted of an exploration of my Afrikaner culture and identity through ceramics, embroidery, drawing and decoupage techniques. **Totsiens** (2011) (Figure 34), **OranjeBlanjeBlou. Wie is ons dan nou?** (2011) (Figure 35) and **Die goeie ou dae?** (2011) (Figure 36), were created during a very significant time in my life during which I fell pregnant and gave birth. It was a time when I was letting go of the past in order to create a new identity and family. The work titled **Oranje Blanje Blou. Wie is ons dan nou?** (2011) was acquired by the *Amazwi Abesifazane* Voices of Women Museum collection, that celebrates the significance of creativity and narrative in recording women's memory.





Figure 34 - Nicolé Maurel. 2011. **Totsiens**. Ceramics, decoupage, bitumen and rope. 1 m x 1 m. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 35 - Nicolé Maurel. 2011. **OranjeBlanjeBlou. Wie is ons dan nou?** Ceramics and embroidery. Each doll is approximately 65 cm x 39.5 cm x 11 cm. Collection of Andries Botha, Amazwi Abesifazane Voices of Women Museum.





Figure 36 - Nicol  Maurel. 2011. *Die goeie ou dae?* Charcoal on Fabriano. 59.4 x 84.1 cm.  
Collection of Anthony Starkey.

In 2010 I spent time in the Karoo town of Aberdeen working with visual artists from the township. This was part of a Community Ceramics Workshop arranged by arts activist Hilary Graham to provide individuals with skills towards becoming self-reliant. During my stay in Aberdeen I assisted in teaching clay, glaze and firing techniques.

In February, 2014, I had an exhibition at the KwaZulu Natal Society of Arts Gallery, in collaboration with photographer Tyler Dolan and Charlene Matiwane, one of the artists from the Aberdeen Workshop.

## Section 2: *Diens: Plig*

This section will provide a discussion of the exhibition titled *Diens: Plig* submitted in partial compliance for a Masters degree in Fine Arts. The exhibition interrogates Afrikaner culture and identity in the context of my family history and life experiences through a series of five projected digital collages (Figures 37-41), an installation of visual metaphors (Figures 42-55), a series of drawings based on a performance (Figures 56-67) and a video of a performance (Figures 68-71). *Diens: Plig* refers to the forced conscription into national service of all white males of school leaving age, for a two year period, under Apartheid. *Diens: Plig* was chosen as the title for this exhibition, because the term represents the central belief of Afrikaner nationalism, service to the *volk*. It also references the demands made on me during my childhood, living under apartheid in a patriarchal society and having to abide by the rules and regulations of the Dutch Reformed Church.

My work interrogates the influence of Afrikaner culture and identity on my upbringing as a white Afrikaans speaking South African female. The influence of culture on personal identity is highlighted by Taylor (1994:6-7) when he states that:

People are unique, self-creating, creative individuals and are also 'culture bearing'. The cultures they bear differ depending on their past and present identifications. Part of the uniqueness of individuals results from the ways in which they integrate, reflect upon, and modify their own cultural heritage and that of other people with whom they come into contact.

In addition, my art practice questions the contradictory rebellious, authoritarian and conformist nature of the Afrikaner. I identify with the rebelliousness and strong yearning and struggle for freedom, which are prominent in Afrikaner culture and identity. There are numerous recorded events in the history of the Afrikaner that reveal this yearning for freedom. Commenting on Afrikaner women and their resistance to colonization,

Giliomee (2003:169) wrote that Afrikaner women expressed their fixed determination to walk over the Drakensberg barefoot rather than yield to British authority. The women would rather die in freedom, as death was dearer to them than the loss of liberty. As a young woman seeking to develop a personal identity, I relate to my female forebears and their yearning for freedom. However, due to the Calvinistic upbringing imposed on me by my parents, I wasn't free to express my own point of view and feelings. According to Faber (1990:57) the first Dutch and French immigrants were followers of Calvinist Protestantism, whose members had found themselves in the position of a persecuted minority. They had to defend themselves by means of armed resistance against Catholic-inspired repression, before fleeing from Europe.

In the body of work titled ***Diens: Plig***, visual metaphors are used to investigate the death, rebirth and growth of my personal identity; who I am and where I am coming, the background against which my aspirations make sense (Taylor 1994:33).

## **Digital Collages**

I chose to work with projected digital images, because their ephemeral quality reflects the dynamic, shifting nature of culture and identity. Craig, Griesel and Witz (1994:56) explained that:

Culture is not regarded as something with which one is born, but is being learned...it is therefore important that you do not think of culture as being static. Rather it is dynamic, being subtly or radically transformed or changed over time by the actions of people.

The digital collages (Figures 37-41) are centered on an interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity within the context of South African history and political change, particularly the demise of Afrikaner nationalism. The digital collages represent a critical transformative process in understanding and

interpreting the past and the present. This is done through an investigation of Afrikaner nationalism, which has undergone dramatic changes throughout its history. Visual metaphors are used to interrogate Afrikaner culture and identity in the context of the history and myth of the Great Trek. Farmers started the Great Trek from the Cape to the North in 1838, across the challenging and uncharted interior of South Africa, pursuing a dream of White Afrikaner independence (Jacobs, 2005:20 and Landman, 1994:3). It is important to note that a contemporary Great Trek is taking place. Afrikaners are moving to other countries, due to their belief that black majority rule and affirmative action policies are discriminatory.

The digital collage titled **I'm at your bedside with a bucket full of lies.** (2014) (Figure 37) is site-specific. In an attempt to reconstruct a fragmented personal and cultural identity, the Karoo landscape is used to connect me to historical events and my ancestors who lived in the Karoo. This work references The Great Trek (1838) and the second Anglo-Boer War (1899 - 1902), which are regarded as two of the major historical events in the formation of Afrikaner cultural identity (Laubscher, 2005:309). In discussing the relationship of identity to culture and history, Kathryn Woodward (1997:301) wrote that "Identity provides a way of understanding the interplay between our subjective experience of the world and the cultural and historical settings in which that fragile subjectivity is formed." During the Anglo Boer war the Afrikaner's fierce defence of their newly found independence, and their drive to assert themselves as a nation, was clearly evident. This war, at a time when the Afrikaner nation was almost destroyed, was central to the formation of Afrikaner cultural identity. The Afrikaner constantly had to prove and protect their potency in the face of threats to their survival (Faber, 1990:59).

In this work an image of two of my ancestors, who were sisters, is placed within a Karoo landscape. The windmill symbolises the claiming of land and settlement, which is a crucial part of Afrikaner identity. Silhouettes of thorn



bushes reference the harshness of the environment and the struggle to develop it. The ox and cow heads symbolise both the males and females who participated in the Great Trek, referencing movement and adaptation in the formation and change of Afrikaner cultural identity. The setting sun serves as a visual metaphor for the end of Afrikaner domination.



Figure 37 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. **I'm at your bedside with a bucket full of lies**. Digital Collage. Variable dimensions. Durban. Collection of the artist.

A Christmas and New Year's greetings card, given to me by my aunt, was the starting point for the digital collage titled **HY wat BEVEEL (He who commands)** (2014) (Figure 38). The card contained text and images of oxen and wagons which referenced religious myths and beliefs, particular to Afrikaner culture and identity. The card is dated 1938 and commemorated the centenary of the Battle of Blood River (1838). The text reads:

God's blessing will be with thee, we will stand, praying, in front of Him. His commands will be obeyed, and therefore His blessings will pass, this is the heart's wish bestowed amongst Him this *eeufeesjaar* [centenary].

The text highlights the importance of obeying God in return for His blessings. This references the historical role of religion in the formation of Afrikaner culture and identity, particularly the vow to God at the Battle of Blood River. "Religious stories that show how communities are chosen by God, and the moral authorization this provides, have been invoked by the Afrikaners of South Africa" (Woodward, 1997:307). Leach (1989:29) explains that:

The Afrikaner's identification with the idea of being a *uitverkore volk* (chosen people) as ordained by God, had a direct influence on the shaping of Afrikaner nationalism. Simultaneously, an idealistic paradigm was set out by the Dutch Reformed Church, informing the Afrikaner people that they had a Christian, civilising mission to perform in South Africa.

As I grew up I was taught to believe that at *Die Slag van Bloedrivier* (The Battle of Blood river) my ancestors prayed to God, asking Him for victory over the Zulus; in return they would always obey, follow and thank God. Following their victory at Blood River the Afrikaners believed that they were a distinct people, occupying a distinct fatherland, and endowed by God with a distinct destiny (Steyn, 2001:29). In times to come this event would play an important role in uniting Afrikaners spiritually and it remained a crucial component of Afrikaner identity (Steyn, 2001:33), reflecting Smith's theory of ethno symbolism that emphasizes the importance of symbols, traditions, values and myths in the creation and continuation of modern nations (Smith in Gibernau, 2004).

In this work images of ox wagons and oxen reference the crucial role of The Great Trek and The Battle of Blood River, in the formation of Afrikaner identity. The Great Trek here symbolises the movement from the known to the unknown, constant adaption and change; whereas de Beer in the series titled *Trekosse (Die pad is lank en swaar)* (2006) uses bronze sculptures of oxen as a metaphor for the suffering of women during the Great Trek (1836).

In *HY wat BEVEEL (He who commands)* (2014) (Figure 38) the image of a black woman holding a white child refers to the contradictory relationship between blacks and Whites in Afrikaner culture; the woman is seen as both my great grandfather's nanny and the inferior 'Other'. In the religious context of the Christmas greeting card, the image can be read as a Madonna and child.

The image of the Victory Peace Angel monument refers to the crucial role of the Anglo Boer War in the formation of Afrikaner identity. On 7 November 1923 at Graaff Reinet, the bronze figure of the Victory Peace Angel mounted on a high pedestal, was unveiled in memory of Graaff Reinet men who died in the Anglo Boer War. The Victory Peace Angel symbolises the sacrifices made by Afrikaners in the Boer war resisting British colonisation (Graaff-Reinet, 2013).

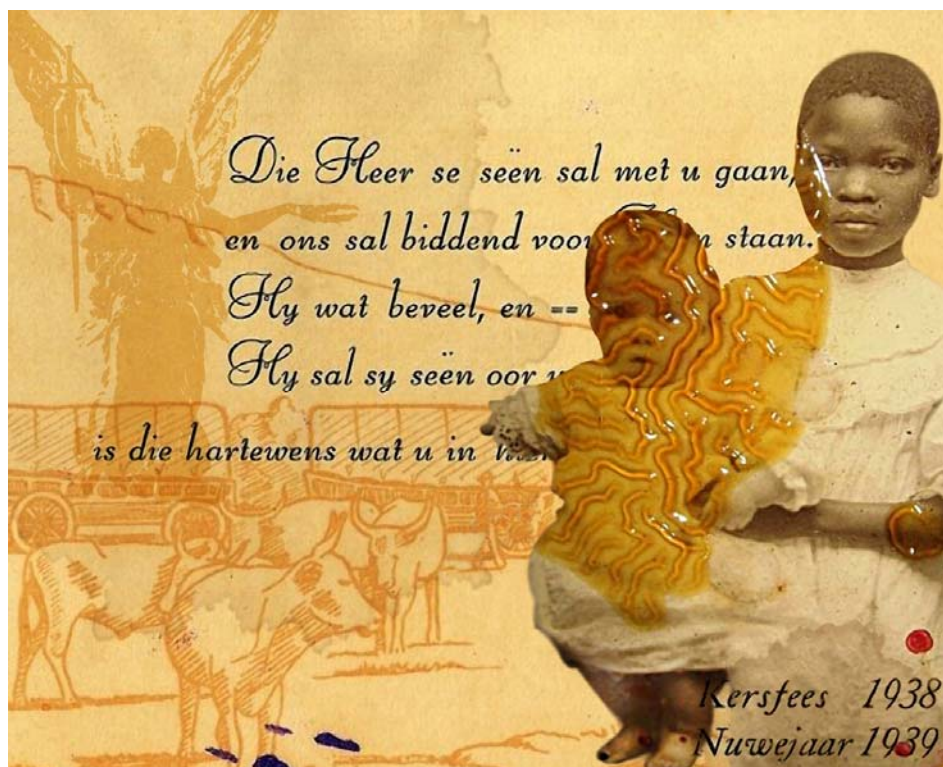


Figure 38 - Nicolé Maurel. 2014. *HY wat BEVEEL. (He who commands)*. Digital Collage. Variable dimensions. Durban. Collection of the artist.

The digital collage titled **Erase the ones I love the most so I can bleed in peace** (2014) (Figure 39), focuses on the questioning of my Afrikaner culture and identity and the formation of a new identity. This questioning is emphasised by placing images of my daughter and husband on the outside of the fence encircling the Dutch Reformed church in Graaff Reinet.

As in most *platteland* towns, the Dutch Reformed church is in an elevated and prominent position in Graaff Reinet. The image of the Dutch Reformed church references the dominant role religion played in the development of Afrikaner identity. As a child and teenager I was expected to attend meetings at the Dutch Reformed Church and was compelled to follow the teachings of the Bible. It was therefore important to investigate personal experiences of the Dutch Reformed Church, in order to better understand my Afrikaner cultural heritage and the reasons for questioning it.

The image of the ox skull superimposed on my husband's face references the role of masculinity in the development of Afrikaner identity and the colonisation of Southern Africa. The bullet marks specifically references the loss of power and masculinity by the male Afrikaner post 1994. Post 1994, the demise of Apartheid has led to the undermining of the Afrikaner male's sense of strength and control and, ultimately, his sense of identity. This visual separation from the influence of the church references the creation of a new identity which separates myself, my husband and my daughter from the influence of my family. The process of boiling and drying the ox skull was emotional; it formed part of a self-reflective process that focussed on a reflection of the death of my Afrikaner culture and identity, specifically my religious beliefs.



Figure 39 - Nicol   Maurel. 2014. **Erase the ones I love the most so I can bleed in peace.**  
Digital Collage. Variable dimensions. Durban. Collection of the artist.

The digital collage titled: **Fall down, never get back up again** (2014) (Figure 40), is a site specific interrogation of my Afrikaner culture and identity, located in the landscape on the road outside Aberdeen. The shape of the mountain resembles Table Mountain, referencing the birth of the Afrikaner nation; the sunset is symbolic of its death.

This work contains ghostly images of Afrikaner women with long white dresses and ox skulls as heads, floating in the sky, above the mountains. I empathise with Afrikaner women's rebellious yearning for freedom and resistance to colonisation and oppression, in my reconstruction of a fragmented personal and cultural identity. The ghostly images of Afrikaner women serve as a visual metaphor for the loss of women and children in the British concentration camps that were set up across South Africa during the Anglo Boer War (Faber, 1990:59). The Afrikaner's history of persecution, and their experience of forced and traumatic separation from Europe, instilled in them primary fears relating to survival and separation. Complexes formed around traumatic events, leading to feelings of oppression and inferiority at the hands of another group (Singer and Kimbles, 2004:7).

The ox skulls reference the death of Afrikaner nationalism and the loss of masculinity. One has to ask the question whether the Afrikaner nation will survive the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Will the Afrikaans *Boere* lose their farms? Will the Afrikaner be able to stand up and rise again? Post 1994, with the death of Afrikaner Nationalism and uncertain identity, many Afrikaners face an identity crisis, wondering what to do and where to go from here. In the context of Black majority rule and affirmative action, the white Afrikaner is struggling to come to terms with a new reality. The tarred road is a visual metaphor for movement and a contemporary Great Trek in which Afrikaners are moving to other countries in order to escape their perceived oppression. However, despite this, there will always be memories of the past. Throughout history, the Afrikaner's narratives of the Trek, Blood River and the suffering of women and children during the Anglo-Boer War were resurrected in the Afrikaners'

consciousness, in order to create a common sense of history and heritage (Malan, 1964:131-132). This phenomenon is clearly explained by Smith's concept of *Ethnies*, "named human populations with shared ancestry, myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a known territory and a sense of solidarity" (Smith in Guibernau, 2004:126).



Figure 40 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. **Fall down, never get back up again**. Digital Collage. Variable dimensions. Durban. Collection of the artist.

In the digital collage titled **Requiem** (2014) (Figure 41), an image of the town of Aberdeen in the Eastern Cape refers to the city of Aberdeen in Scotland, after which it is named. My great grandmother on my father's side of the family was Scottish which is ironic, because my Afrikaans ancestors suffered great turmoil during the Anglo Boer War and Afrikaans women and children died in British concentration camps. This irony is symbolic of the clash between my family and me. There has always been a constant fight against beliefs imposed on me by my family; this resulted in a longing for the freedom to find, and be, myself. The reason for my rebellious nature is unknown. My father revealed to me that even at a very young age I always asked the question, why? I have memories of my parents as being loving, but conformist and authoritarian.



A ghostly image of a wagon, used during the Anglo Boer War to carry the dead, is a visual metaphor for the Afrikaner who became powerless, fragile and weak, leading to an identity crisis. The ANC shirt that I wear references black majority rule. The year 2013 was significant, as the organisation celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The ANC shirt and the setting sun serves as a visual metaphor and a requiem for the death of first black president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, who died in 2013.

The succulent aloe, covering my face, is a feature of the Aberdeen landscape. It is a resilient plant in a harsh environment which symbolises the resistance and resilience of the Afrikaner, in establishing a national identity. However, the aloe in this image is withered and dry indicating a lack of fluids and decay; this refers to the withering of Afrikaner identity and power.

The Scottish fabric of my skirt symbolises my multicultural identity and makes a reference to my great grandmother, who was Scottish. My ancestors are Dutch, German, Scottish, Belgian and French. Afrikaners became a part of the European diaspora in Southern Africa. Woodward (1997:304) explained that:

Diasporas are the result of the 'scattering' of peoples, whether as the result of war, oppression, poverty, enslavement or the search for better economic and social opportunities, with the inevitable opening of their culture to new influences and pressures.

Identities in the contemporary world derive from a multiplicity of sources; from nationality, ethnicity, social class, community, gender and sexuality. These sources may conflict in the construction of identity positions and lead to contradictory fragmented identities (Woodward, 1997:1). This concept is particularly relevant to the situation in South Africa which has a history of contested identities.





Figure 41 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. **Requiem**. Digital Collage. Variable dimensions. Durban.  
Collection of the artist.

The creation of the digital collages were part of a process of questioning Afrikaner identity and culture, through the use of site specific landscape and family related persona, in the reconstruction of a contemporary personal identity.

### ***Diens: Plig***

An installation titled ***Diens: Plig*** forms part of the exhibition titled ***DIENS: Diens: Plig*** This installation consists of metaphors including a yoke and chain (Figure 42), a wagon (Figures 43-44), a wedding gown train (Figures 45-46) and doll (Figures 47-49), a clay sculpture of a Dutch Reformed church on a pulpit with embroidered cloth (Figures 50-51), commemorative cup

(family item) (Figures 52-53) and personalised clay cup based on the family item (Figures 54-55).

I made a conscious decision to ask for my father's assistance in making the wagon, as part of the construction of my new identity. This decision relates to Botha's interrogation of male behaviour which is formulated around the primary role-model of the father figure; and "from that relationship, masculinity is shaped" (Botha, 2012). Like Botha, I explored my patriarchal relationship with my father by including him in the healing process.

The wagon was constructed using found objects, including a family chest, circular pieces of wood from a cable drum, and a rusted steel chain. The wooden yoke was carved by my father from a piece of found natural timber. The wagon, yoke and rusted steel chain references The Great Trek, which formed a crucial role in the formation of Afrikaner culture and identity. The Great Trek was a focal point in Afrikaner history, an event which gave the nation its first sense of direction (Leach 1989:17). This event clearly illustrates Smith's concept of *Ethnies* (Smith in Gibernau, 2004) discussed in Chapter One. Commonly known as the *Voortrekkers*, these pioneers were exposed to primitive living conditions and several warlike situations (Cock, 1991:30). The *Voortrekkers* differentiated themselves as a separate entity by demonstrating a drive and courage to explore and conquer new frontiers and unknown territories in order to harness new land and nature. They were striving to discover an authentic collective identity through an expression of courage and will. It involved a major period of exploration, discovery and movement into a new world (the darkness) (Hill, 1992:9). This is reflected in the title of the installation, ***Diens: Plig***. This relates to De Beer who utilises images from the Great Trek, such as oxen (neutered males), which serve as a metaphor for female suffering and personal experiences growing up in a patriarchal society.

Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), in defining culture, explained the use of symbols in the context of culture and identity:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action.



Figure 42 - Nicolé Maurel. 2014. **Yoke and Chain**. Installation Sculpture. Approximately 2 m x 500 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 43 – Nicólé Maurel. 2014. **Wagon**. Sculpture, Family Chest, mixed media. Approximately 4 m x 2 m x 1.5 m. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 44 – Nicolé Maurel. 2014. **Wagon** (Detail). Sculpture, Family Chest, mixed media. Approximately 4 m x 2 m x 1.5 m. Durban. Collection of the artist.

**Wedding gown train** (Figures 45-46) was constructed using a foraged net and collaged elements including fabric, paint, text, ancestral photographs, embroidery, sewing and knitting. In clothing, the term train describes the extended portion of a dress that trails behind the wearer. The bridal train is traditionally long and flowing and was used symbolically to cover the tracks of the bride and the groom. This references the beginning of a new life, family and identity. **Wedding gown train** is a visual metaphor for the erasure of my past and the beginning of a new life, family and identity. The wedding train is associated with celebration: however, here the dirty and abject wedding train is a visual metaphor for the soiled past of the Afrikaner.

The doll (Figure 47-49) represents a moment of purity in this murky past, the birth of my daughter Roselee. The white wedding dress worn by the doll is a visual metaphor for the celebration of a new individual identity and family. The embroidered word



'boycott' on the apron speaks of the global rejection of Apartheid which was central to the consolidation of Afrikaner culture and identity.

The doll's head was replaced with a small squirrel's skull found at Hluhluwe in KwaZulu Natal; the image is a visual metaphor for the death of my Afrikaner culture and identity. KwaZulu Natal is significant in the formation of my new identity, because of my move from Vanderbijlpark during apartheid, to Durban in the post-apartheid era.

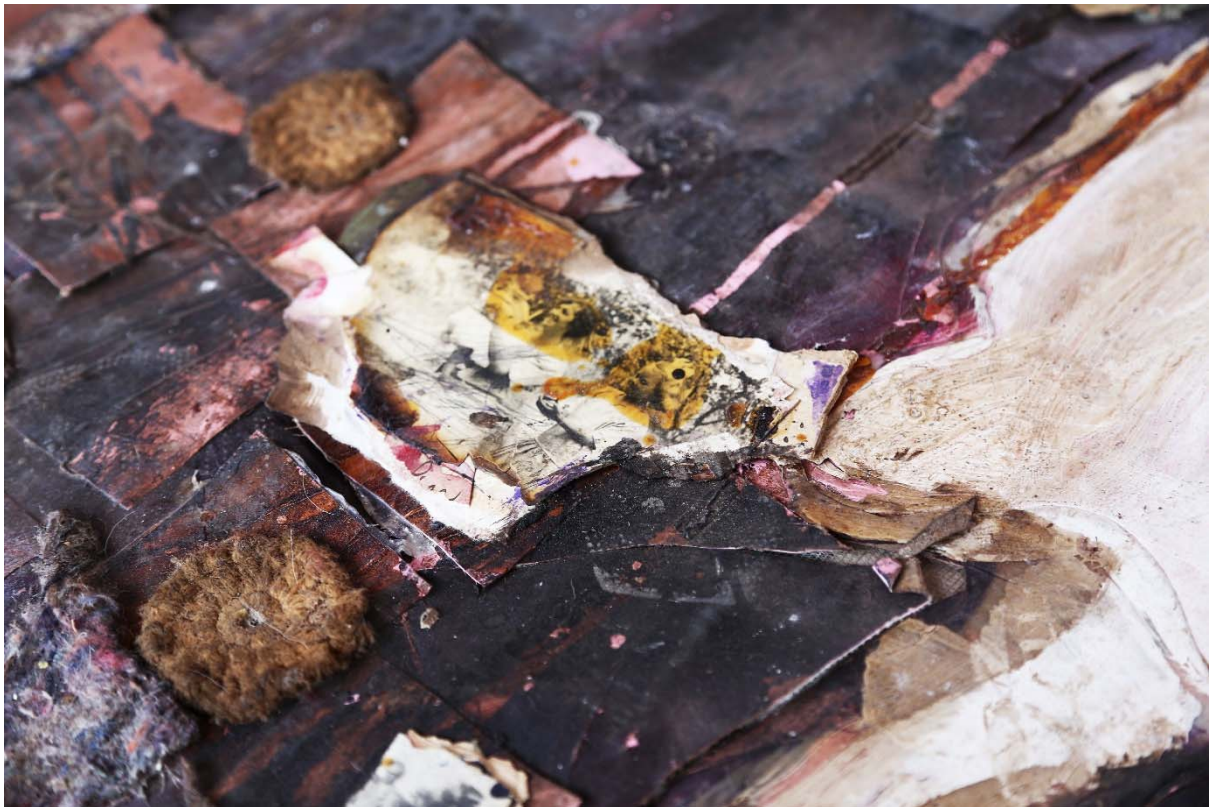


Figure 45 - Nicolé Maurel. 2014. **Wedding Gown Train** (Detail). Mixed Media. Approximately 6 m x 2 m. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 46 - Nicólé Maurel. 2014. **Wedding Gown Train** (Detail). Mixed Media. Approximately 6 m x 2 m. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 47 - Nicólé Maurel. 2014. **Doll** (Detail). Found objects, embroidery, wood glue and bitumen. Approximately 25 cm x 7 cm x 4 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 48 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. **Doll** (Detail). Found objects, embroidery, wood glue and bitumen.  
Approximately 25 cm x 7 cm x 4 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.





Figure 49 - Nicol   Maurel. 2014. **Doll** (Detail). Found objects, embroidery, wood glue and bitumen.  
Approximately 25 cm x 7 cm x 4 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.

In **Dutch Reformed Church on pulpit** (Figures 50-51) the clay sculpture of a Dutch reformed church represents the Afrikaner myths and religious beliefs which resulted in the separation of culture and race; only white Afrikaners were allowed to attend the Dutch reformed church. Afrikaners are struggling to move beyond the idea that the only way to maintain and protect their cultural identity is through separation and isolation. The concept of separation became entrenched in the ideology of a social structure and order that, in turn, was central to Afrikaner cultural identity (Hill, 1992:163-167). The smoke fired, burnt, surface of the ceramic sculpture references the death of religious myths, in the context of the Dutch Reformed Church. All South Africans now possess equal rights.



Figure 50 - Niclé Maurel. 2014. **Dutch Reformed Church on pulpit**. Clay Sculpture. Approximately 1.75 m x 500 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 51 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. **Dutch Reformed Church on pulpit**. Clay Sculpture. Approximately 1.75 m x 500 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.

An historical **Commemorative Cup** (family item) (Figures 52-53) and a **Personal Commemorative Cup** (2014) (Figures 54-55), based on the family item, are placed at the entry point of the installation in order to create a conceptual dialogue with the title ***Diens: Plig*** in the context of Afrikaner cultural identity. The historical cup commemorates the centenary of the Battle of Blood River (1838-1938).

The historical ceramic cup is placed upside down in order to focus on the word *Diens*, written on the bottom of the cup. *Diens* means service. This relates to the title of the exhibition: ***Diens: Plig*** which references obedience, the following of commands and authority, all of which illustrate the Afrikaner's passionate relationship with God. This is demonstrated by the Afrikaner's belief that God helped them triumph over the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River.

The historical cup (Figures 52-53) has been a family heirloom for many generations. It was made by the de Sphinx pottery in Maastricht, Holland. My ancestors bought this cup at the *Uniewinkels* (Union shops) in Pretoria to celebrate the centenary of the Battle of Blood River (1838) in 1938. On one side of the cup is an image of oxen and wagons, *Voortrekkers*, horses, sheep and grassy fields, located in a rock strewn mountainous landscape of the Drakensberg in KwaZulu Natal. On the other side is an image of the Voortrekker Monument. In-between the two images are the dates 1838/1938 separated by a burning candle. A chain surrounds the candle and dates. Below the chain is a pair of ox horns.

As a response to the historical commemorative cup, I created a **Personal Commemorative Cup** (Figures 54-55) that speaks about how I have broken away from *diens* (service) to the Dutch Reformed church and the Afrikaner *volk* (nation). This personal cup contains an image of a thistle, the floral emblem of Scotland, which references my Scottish great grandmother. I have never belonged to, or followed, a particular group. I have always stayed true to my heart and followed my dreams and hopes. I have constantly had to stand up for myself. I have not served anyone, or any organization, and I do not belong to any church. I've created my own individual personal identity through an interrogation of my Afrikaner identity for over 20 years. The Thistle symbolizes the origins of my identity on my maternal side and highlights



the duality (English and Afrikaner) and ironies of my identity which I have had to reconcile, in the formation of a personal identity.



Figure 52 - Nicolé Maurel. 2014. **Commemorative Cup**. Family Item. Approximately 5 cm x 5 cm.  
Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 53 - Nicolé Maurel. 2014. **Commemorative Cup**. Family Item. Approximately 5 cm x 5 cm.  
Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 54 - Nicolé Maurel. 2014. **Personal Commemorative Cup**. Family Item. Approximately 30 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 55 - Nicól  Maurel. 2014. **Personal Commemorative Cup**. Family Item. Approximately 30 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.

## ***Nasleep (Aftermath) (2013)***

A series of large scale drawings executed on the gallery wall, are based on preparatory drawings from a documented performance titled ***Nasleep (Aftermath)*** (2013) (Figures 56-67). The title refers to the feeling of release from Afrikaner culture and identity that I experienced in the aftermath of the performance. The wall drawings were done immediately before the opening of the exhibition for examination in November (2014) and thus are not included in this version of the dissertation.

The performance focussed on South African history, particularly the Great Trek and the struggle against Apartheid. Curries Fountain Sports Ground was specifically chosen for the performance because of its historical importance as a site of protest against apartheid. In addition, it symbolises the unification of a community against oppression. This provided a site rich with meaning for my interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity. Currie's Fountain historically has come a long way from being a supply of water to early settlers, to a site for political and trade union protest marches, non-racial sports, entertainment and religious events. It continues to be used as a venue for entertainment, religious, sporting and political events.

Curries Fountain as a site of struggle was brought to my attention by the research done by Leonard Rosenberg of the Durban University of Technology. This research consisted of an historical documentation of events at Curries Fountain titled *Curries Fountain. Sport, Politics and Identity* (Rosenberg, Moodley and Vahed, 2013:6).

At the centre of the performance is the heroic figure of the *trekboer* referencing mythmaking and the shifting qualities of Afrikaner culture and identity. This movement from one space to the next forced the Afrikaner to constant adaptation; physical adaptation through geographical transformation of landscape and social adaptation through human contact. The concept of motion, the *trek* of the Afrikaner and my personal journey, is the central frame for the creation of the drawings based on the performance to get across the idea of movement and struggle.



In the performance I adopted the dual persona of an ox and a *trekboer*, in order to question and deconstruct the assumed superiority and blind beliefs represented by the *trekboer* figure. I also focus on this theme in drawings. The *trekboer* figure was used by the Afrikaner Nationalist project to unify and stimulate an ideology of whiteness and superiority. The use of such a figure is highlighted by Smith (in Gabernau, 2008) in his study of nationalism.

De Beer, in her symbolic use of oxen, references the idea that Afrikaner culture and identity was like a burden to her. It confirmed her feelings of being forced to belong to a community and culture with which she didn't want to be associated (De Beer, 2014). In the 1930s the Afrikaner's survival necessitated movement into unknown territory, embodied in rapid urbanisation and the accumulation of capital. But ultimately the dislocation of rapid urbanisation, as well as the Afrikaner's poverty, servitude, and desperate search for work in urban areas, fed a sense of dependency, inferiority, and a lack of self-confidence (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007:279). Today Afrikaners are struggling to come to terms with a new reality. The effects of the transformation of South Africa from white minority rule to a black-controlled democratic state has had a profound influence on the ethnic psyche of Afrikaners, and on the discourse about the position of the Afrikaner in post-1994 South Africa (Visser, n.d.).

The performance focussed on the struggle against oppression. A decision was made to explore visual metaphors, using the medium of drawing, as a direct response to emotions experienced during the performance. I pulled the wagon around Curries Fountain Sports ground, like an ox, with the yoke around my neck. I felt the pain of the animal. In the context of my personal narrative/history, the *trekboer* figure referenced my move from Vanderbijlpark (Afrikaans and apartheid era) to Durban (predominantly Zulu and post-apartheid era).

The pulling of the wagon around the field was a visual metaphor for the struggle experienced by the Afrikaner and oxen during the Great Trek. De Beer highlights the idea of the oxen being forced to drag a heavy load (De Beer, 2006:66). I ended the performance with the taste of steel in my bones. The wagon was heavy and the yoke hurt me. It took days to recover from this experience. The emotions experienced during the performance reinforced my admiration for the suffering and *diens* (service)

of the Afrikaner women and served as a reminder of the sacrifice people of all races made in the struggle against apartheid. But most of all, in the aftermath of the performance, I experienced a sense of release from negative emotions associated with Afrikaner culture and identity.



Figure 56 - Tyler Dolan. 2013. ***Nasleep (Aftermath)***. Digital photograph. Photographic documentation of performance. Curries Fountain. Durban University of Technology. ML Sultan Campus. South Africa.



Figure 57 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. **Nasleep (Aftermath)**. Preparatory drawing. Charcoal and pencil on white paper. 20 cm x 10 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 58 - Tyler Dolan. 2013. **Nasleep (Aftermath)**. Digital photograph. Photographic documentation of performance. Curries Fountain. Durban University of Technology. ML Sultan Campus. South Africa.



Figure 59 - Tyler Dolan. 2013. **Nasleep (Aftermath)**. Digital photograph. Photographic documentation of performance. Curries Fountain. Durban University of Technology. ML Sultan Campus. South Africa.



Figure 60 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. **Nasleep (Aftermath)**. Preparatory drawing. Charcoal and pencil on white paper. 30 cm x 15 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 61 - Tyler Dolan. 2013. **Nasleep (Aftermath)**. Digital photograph. Photographic documentation of performance. Curries Fountain. Durban University of Technology. ML Sultan Campus. South Africa.

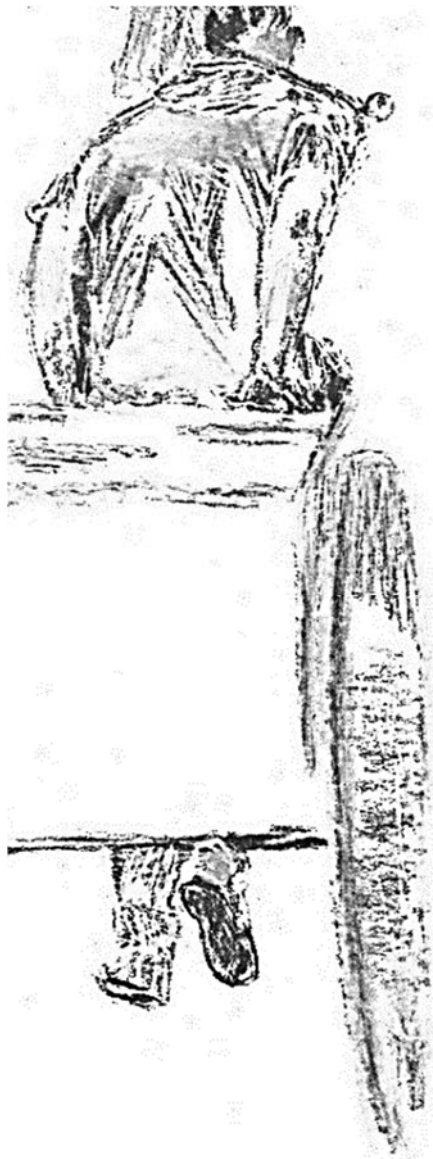


Figure 62 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. ***Nasleep (Aftermath)***. Preparatory drawing. Charcoal and pencil on white paper. 30 cm x 15 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.





Figure 63 - Tyler Dolan. 2013. **Nasleep (Aftermath)**. Digital photograph. Photographic documentation of performance. Curries Fountain. Durban University of Technology. ML Sultan Campus. South Africa.



Figure 64 - Tyler Dolan. 2013. **Nasleep (Aftermath)**. Digital photograph. Photographic documentation of performance. Curries Fountain. Durban University of Technology. ML Sultan Campus. South Africa.



Figure 65 - Tyler Dolan. 2013. **Nasleep (Aftermath)**. Digital photograph. Photographic documentation of performance. Curries Fountain. Durban University of Technology. ML Sultan Campus. South Africa.



Figure 66 - Tyler Dolan. 2013. **Nasleep (Aftermath)**. Digital photograph. Photographic documentation of performance. Curries Fountain. Durban University of Technology. ML Sultan Campus. South Africa.

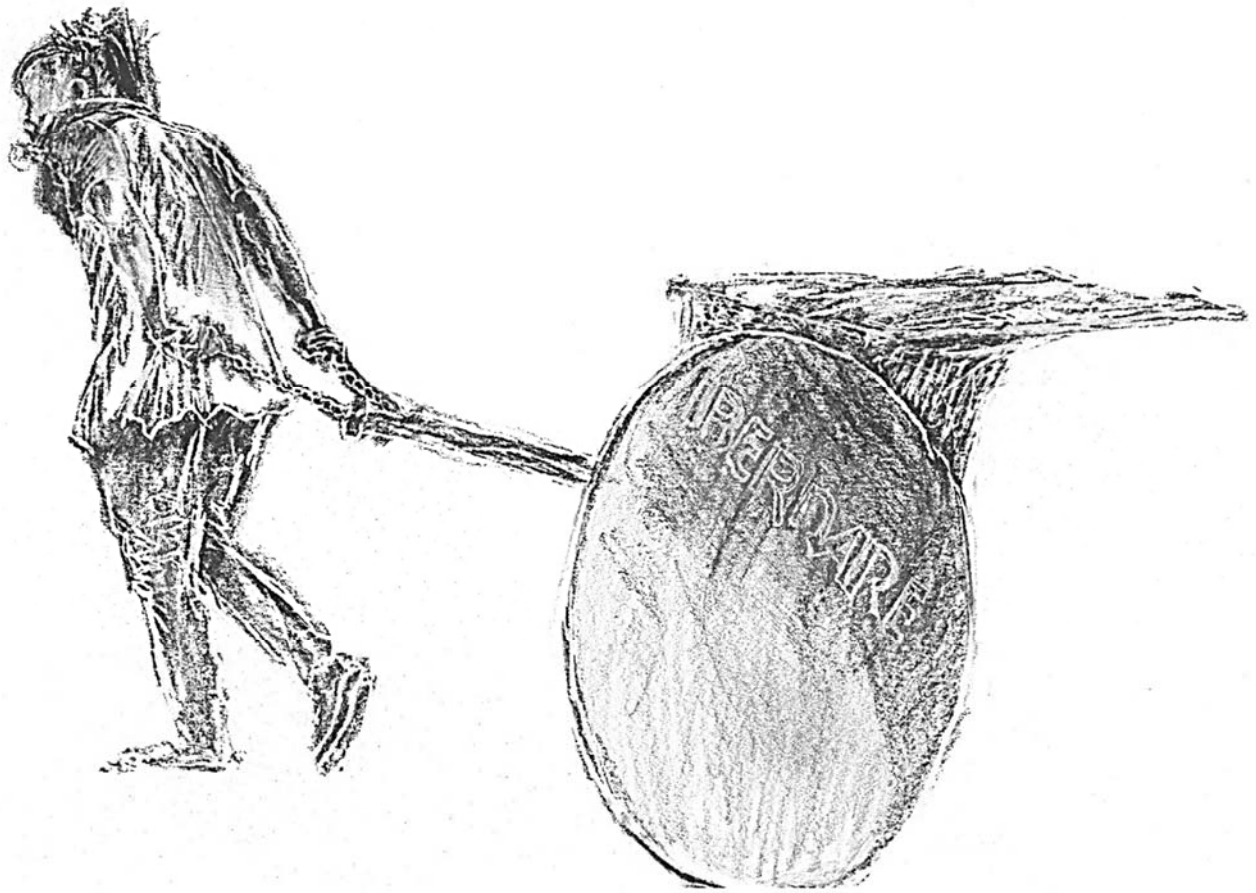


Figure 67 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. **Nasleep (Aftermath)**. Preparatory drawing. Charcoal and pencil on white paper. 20 cm x 20 cm. Durban. Collection of the artist.

### ***Suikerbossie (Sugarbush)***

The performance titled ***Suikerbossie (Sugarbush)*** (2014) (Figures 68-71), consists of an interrogation of my Afrikaner culture and identity in the context of 20 years of democracy in South Africa, which provided a point of reflection for my ambiguous relationship with my Afrikaner identity. I wrestled with the following question: What does 20 Years of Democracy mean to me as an Afrikaner?

***Suikerbossie (Sugarbush)*** (2014) consists of images of political and sporting events held at Curries Fountain that provide an historical context for 20 years of democracy. The images were sourced from research on the history of Curries Fountain done by

Leonard Rosenberg titled *Curries Fountain. Sport, Politics and Identity*. (Rosenberg, Moodley and Vahed, 2013). Leonard Rosenberg kindly gave permission for the use of Curries Fountain historical documentation.

Photographic documentation references the role of Curries Fountain in hosting events that enabled a gathering across racial. Currie's Fountain became a symbol of social and political resistance against apartheid and racism, and reflects the role of sports as a vehicle for the mass expression of national unity and a non-racial democratic society (Rosenberg, Moodley and Vahed, 2013:6).

The song *Suikerbossie* (Sugarbush) (1936), composed by Fred Michel, and sung by David de Lange, was chosen as the title and the soundtrack for the performance as it represents the nonconformist, untamed traits of Afrikaner identity with which I identify. The soundtrack was taken from a 1936 version of the song by David de Lange. This soundtrack was chosen to create an historical and authentic feel to the performance. Prior to the political influence of the FAK (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies) on Afrikaans Culture in the late 1930's, *Boeremusiek* was a wild, untamed genre full of influences from across the continent. Afrikaners saw De Lange, a poor white mineworker, as being an embarrassment to establishment Afrikaans culture and his records were banned by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) (*Suikerbossie*. Sugarbush.1936).

The performance consists of clips of me in my wedding dress (a reference to my marriage and newfound identity), wrestling with a yoke and chain (a reference to my struggle against, and questioning of, Afrikaner culture and identity). The oxen's skull and doll which form part of the installation titled ***Diens: Plig*** were used in this video. The skull and doll serve as visual metaphors for my Afrikaner cultural heritage; they symbolize the constant struggle against apartheid and my Afrikaner culture and identity. Interspersed are clips of historical events held at Curries Fountain, illustrating the non-racial struggle against Apartheid and providing a context for a reflection on 20 years of Democracy.

20 Years of Democracy has brought about a metamorphosis of my personal identity. I have been struggling against Afrikaner myths and beliefs, such as the Afrikaner as

the chosen people and the authority of the patriarch. 20 years of democracy has brought about a multi-cultural environment, in which I am currently feeling comfortable and happy. 20 Years of democracy has resulted in a situation where I am able to freely associate with people of all races and cultures. This situation is very different from that which existed when I grew up during apartheid.



Figure 68 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. **Suikerbossie (Sugarbush)**. Video Still. 1 Minute and 38 Seconds.  
Photographer: Tyler Dolan. Photographic documentation: Leonard Rosenberg. Music: David de Lange - *Suikerbossie (Sugarbush)* 1936. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 69 - Nicól  Maurel. 2014. ***Suikerbossie (Sugarbush)***. Video Still. 1 Minute and 38 Seconds. Photographer: Tyler Dolan. Photographic documentation: Leonard Rosenberg. Music: David de Lange - *Suikerbossie (Sugarbush)* 1936. Durban. Collection of the artist.



Figure 70 - Nicol  Maurel. 2014. ***Suikerbossie (Sugarbush)***. Video Still. 1 Minute and 38 Seconds.  
Photographer: Tyler Dolan. Photographic documentation: Leonard Rosenberg. Music: David de Lange - *Suikerbossie* (Sugarbush) 1936. Durban. Collection of the artist.





Figure 71 - Nic  le Maurel. 2014. ***Suikerbossie (Sugarbush)***. Video Still. 1 Minute and 38 Seconds.  
Photographer: Tyler Dolan. Photographic documentation: Leonard Rosenberg. Music: David de Lange - *Suikerbossie (Sugarbush)* 1936. Durban. Collection of the artist.

## Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to investigate the interrogation of Afrikaner identity in the work of Andries Botha, Marlene de Beer and my art practice. The artists were chosen for investigation as their work questions the validity of Afrikaner culture and identity developed under apartheid. This research added to the relatively limited literature on the work of Botha and de Beer.

Chapter One provided a discussion of Smith's theory of ethno symbolism (Gibernau, 2004:127) which revealed the concept of ethnies based on myths, symbols, traditions, heroes and holy places; this concept provided a theoretical framework for a discussion of the formation of Afrikaner nationalism, as a context for the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the work of Marlene de Beer and Andries Botha. Under Afrikaner nationalism, identity was prescribed by Apartheid laws and influenced by state ideologies.

A number of South African artists today investigate how historical circumstances formed their identities, and are in search of new possibilities of identification. This research gave me the opportunity to question the processes by which I have been identified and the ways in which this has framed my identity; as well as how I have identified, and continue to identify, myself.

Chapter Two consisted of an investigation into the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the work of Marlene de Beer and Andries Botha, in order to provide a context for a discussion of my art practise.

An analysis of Botha's exhibition titled **(dis)Appearance(s)** (2007) (Figures 20-29) demonstrated that Botha is "Deeply concerned with his heritage as a white Afrikaans male brought up in the apartheid era,[and]... constantly questions his identity in terms of his historical, geographical and political context" (Mackenny 2000). In his questioning of Afrikaner culture Botha places an emphasis on issues of masculinity (patriarchy), in the context of South African history and his relationship with his father.

In his interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity Botha reduces “Afrikaner Nationalism and power to historical relics” (du Toit 2008:571) and points to the demise of “Afrikaner nationalism, and the once mighty and pitiless ‘Afrikaander’ with whom it is associated” (ibid). Botha’s work is an act of mourning, a “condition for coming to terms with a catastrophic history and for the possibility of a new beginning” (ibid).

De Beer’s series **Trekosse (Die pad is lank en swaar)** (Trek oxen. The road is long and hard) (2006) (Figures 5-10) and **Boere Madonna** (2006) (Figures 11-16) illustrate the use of cultural symbols in interrogating issues of Afrikaner identity and culture, in the context of South African history. De Beer’s work reflects an Afrikaner woman’s 21st century perspective contextualized within both the historical, sacred, and patriarchal Afrikaner myth of being a chosen people, and the representation of women’s embodied identities as being that of wife and mother in service to the *volk* (nation) and ordained by God (De Beer, 2014).

Chapter Three investigated the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the context of my family history and life experiences. This interrogation forms part of a critical transformative inquiry, which explores the death, rebirth and growth of my personal identity through art practice. This process is explained by Goduka (1999:1), who says that through writing and telling our stories we use the power of narratives to deconstruct and reconstruct new identities, in order to begin to heal.

Section One outlined my upbringing and previous art practice, both of which had a formative influence on the creation of visual artefacts in my interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity.

Section Two provided a personal interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity which was contextualised by a discussion of my family history, my upbringing and previous art practice; all of which had a formative influence on my interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in the form of the exhibition titled **DIENS: PLIG** (SERVICE: DUTY).

The exhibition interrogates Afrikaner culture and identity in the context of my family history and life experiences through a series of five projected digital collages (Figures 37-41), an installation of visual metaphors (Figures 42-55), a series of drawings based on a performance (Figures 56-67) and a video of a performance (Figures 68-71).

***Diens: Plig*** refers to the forced conscription into national service of all white males of school leaving age, for a two year period, under Apartheid. ***Diens: Plig*** was chosen as the title for this exhibition, because the term represents the central belief of Afrikaner nationalism, service to the *volk*. It also references the demands made on me during my childhood, living under apartheid in a patriarchal society and having to abide by the rules and regulations of the Dutch Reformed Church.

My art practice interrogated the influence of Afrikaner culture and identity on my upbringing as a white Afrikaans speaking South African female. I questioned the contradictory rebellious, authoritarian and conformist nature of the Afrikaner. I identify with the rebelliousness and strong yearning and struggle for freedom, which are prominent in Afrikaner culture and identity.

Botha, de Beer, and I grew up under apartheid in South Africa. Theoretical readings and the investigation into the interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity by Botha, de Beer and myself has confirmed that culture, language, politics and religion were used to ensure service to the Volk and the reinforcement of group consciousness and collectivism. This hindered the development of a personal identity within Afrikaner culture. Research has revealed that post 1994 and the emergence of black majority rule, the Afrikaner, without the protection of political and cultural dominance, is struggling to come to terms with his culture and identity. The effects of the transformation of South Africa from white minority rule to a black-controlled democratic state has had a profound influence on the ethnic psyche of Afrikaners and on the discourse about the position of the Afrikaner in post-1994 South Africa (Visser, n.d.).

South Africa has a long history of colonialism. Afrikaners, the offspring of the Dutch who colonized South Africa, have a history of being both the oppressor and the oppressed. The Dutch settlers to the Cape fled Holland because of religious oppression. The Afrikaner oppressed indigenous people when they colonised Southern Africa and were subsequently oppressed by the British. The Afrikaners then

oppressed all South Africans under Apartheid (1948-1994). Zoja (2004:87) states that collective trauma that befalls people is remembered for generations and becomes the core around which a cultural complex forms. Every time the complex is activated, repetitive memory and emotion reappear and evoke the primal trauma.

As a coloniser the Afrikaner imposed his language on other people; in addition the Afrikaner attempted to keep his identity and culture pure through Apartheid. Cloete (1992:42) explains that:

It was in the name of identity that the Afrikaner created and enforced particularly vicious laws to ensure that there was no possibility of 'racial contamination'. And, for the moment, the word Afrikaner still symbolises for the majority of South Africans, a sinister signifier of suppression.

This research has made an important contribution to the current debate regarding the future of Afrikaner culture and identity in the context of a multicultural nation. In the case of the Afrikaner, personal identity was historically subordinate to group identity.

An analysis of my art practice revealed a persistent questioning of Afrikaner culture and identity, resulting in the formation of an individual identity. I have been struggling against Afrikaner myths and beliefs, such as the Afrikaner as the chosen people and the authority of the patriarch. 20 years of democracy has brought about a multi-cultural environment, a situation where I am able to freely associate with people of all races and cultures. This situation, very different from that which existed when I grew up during apartheid, has provided a space for a metamorphosis of my personal identity through an interrogation of Afrikaner culture and identity in my art practice.

Arising from this research, it is evident that there is a need for further research into the possible formation of a multicultural Afrikaner identity post 1994 in South Africa. South Africa's contemporary artistic production questions what it means to live in our present world and how to cope with historical burdens (Klein, 2008:14).

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