Street Art and Mural Art as Visual Activism in Durban: 2014 – 2017

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTERS OF TECHNOLOGY IN FINE ART

Of

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Supervisors: Dr. John Roome and Ismail Farouk

Declaration

Street Art and Mural Art as Visual Activism:2014-2017

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Fine Art at the Faculty of Arts and Design, Durban University of Technology.

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

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Abstract

This research presents the theories pertaining to the real and imagined role of street art and mural art in current society, focusing on South Africa and Durban. This research also aims to improve my art practice by attempting to apply these theories. By investigating selected activist street and mural artists and movements, I have also aimed at learning from the work of those I admire. By extending my research beyond public two-dimensional art practice into the theories of African cities, cultural studies and white privilege, I have attempted to understand the socio-political factors involved in critical art making in the highly contested post-apartheid public space of Durban. I have discovered that my own belief in the value of street art and mural art in the public space, which this research aims to validate, does not appear to be encouraged or supported within the city of Durban, at large, which is reflected in a stunted street art and mural art culture. Within the context of post-apartheid Durban, a South African city in rapid transition environmentally, socially, economically and culturally, I would like to present street art and mural art as a pragmatic and effective means of cultural response.

In this research a practice-based qualitative methodology was used. This is accompanied by theoretical research to contextualize and inform the art practice. The action research comprised of artwork produced in public spaces. Typically, this process involved identifying an ecological/social/political issue which is the artwork's subject. The combination of practice- based and action research is the most suitable methodological approach for this study which essentially attempts to uncover knowledge pertaining to the function of mural art and street art in the world, more specifically in Durban.

My findings show that the foremost function of street art and mural art appears to be the transformation of the public space into a more convivial living environment. The major strategies identified in the theoretical framework in attempting to initiate conviviality through street and mural art include site specificity and participation. Despite a history of attempting to democratize art in South Africa, post-apartheid contemporary society still suffers as a result of restricting the functionality of art by continuing to focus predominantly on the gallery and museum systems. I have found that mural and street art potentially align with the informal functioning of much of South Africa's public space, encouraging an alternative to the western construction of public space.

In conclusion, I argue that street art and mural art can be used as an effective transformative strategy to break down the invisible social barriers present in post-apartheid South African cities, by repurposing the physical barriers of walls.

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Preface

The following conventions have been applied in this essay:

- Harvard system of referencing
- " ..." Quotations used for direct quotes in-text
- Abbreviations
- Titles are written in italics
- Illustrations are referred to by figure.
- I will use my artist name 'Mook Lion' when referring to all practical works.

Introduction

This research aims to investigate street art and mural art as visual activism in Durban: 2014-2017. This introduction serves to provide an overview of the study as a whole.

Background to the Study

My interest in this area of study stems from my active participation in hip hop culture since 2004. My chosen form of expression within this culture was graffiti art and through this, I developed an interest in exploring and participating within this culture in Durban, my city of residence. I have been charged for malicious damage to property on two occasions as a result of this active and often unsanctioned use of public space through graffiti. These personal events, among many others, highlight mainstream society's outlook and response to graffiti art and further cultivated my interest and questioning of this medium. I became interested in a career in visual art while oil painting for my matric art examination in 2007. As a result I enrolled at the Durban University of Technology's Fine Art Department in 2009. Gradually, I realized that I could combine my passion for the rebelliousness and potency of graffiti with academic fine art. In 2012, I completed my Bachelor of Technology. The title of my research was: *The Social Role of Mural Art, Street Art and Graffiti in the Work of Selected Artists*, in which the practical component of the study occurred in the public space. This dissertation is a further investigation of my previous research and a deepened questioning of the role that these artistic mediums have played, and continue to play, in the past, present and future generations. Both locally and globally; for myself and for others.

For the purpose of this study, street artists are defined as a new generation, who subvert the hegemony of the gallery in the art world and advertising in the public space, according to Pieter (2009: 5). The notorious and extremely popular British street artist Banksy (2010) defined street art as "[t]his hybrid form of graffiti, driven by a new generation using stickers, stencils, posters and sculptures to make their mark by any means necessary". Marschall (2002: 1) explained that the term mural art is "[d]erived from the Latin word *murus* meaning 'wall'" and includes any large-scale work attached to a wall including mosaics and mounted panels. More specifically,

the term refers to “[p]aintings executed directly on the wall”. In this study I am only concerned with murals and street art which occur in the public space. According to Thomas (2015: 1) “[v]isual activism can be understood as the use of visual forms to make visible what those in power prefer to keep invisible”.

The Research Problem and Conceptual Framework

I have found that my own belief in the value of street art and mural art in the public space, which this research aims to validate, does not appear to be shared by the eThekwini Municipality or the mainstream capitalist society, at large. Within the context of post-apartheid Durban – a South African city in rapid transition environmentally, socially, economically and culturally – I would like to present street art and mural art as a pragmatic means of cultural response.

In order to support this claim, theories of street art and mural art as activism, public art and activist art, the emotional and psychological values of art, as well as culture studies and the study of African cities have been selected. This literature has informed my art practice by providing ideas and strategies to making activist street art and mural art and by pin pointing the factors which validate the work’s worth.

Aims and Objectives

This research presents the theories which attempt to explain the real and imagined role of street art and mural art in current society, focusing on South Africa and Durban. This research also aims to improve my art practice by attempting to apply these theories. By investigating selected activist street and mural artists and movements, I have also aimed at learning from the work of those I admire. By extending my research beyond public two-dimensional art practice into the theories of African cities, cultural studies and white privilege, I have attempted to understand the socio-political factors involved in critical art making in the highly contested post-apartheid public space of Durban. This research also aims to provide current data on street and mural art culture in Durban which I identified as a research gap.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

- What is the activist potential of street art and mural art in Durban from 2014-2017?
- How have the current oppressive systems, including colonialism and capitalism, affected the functioning of our everyday lives and how can mural and street art be applied in response?
- How can street and mural art function specifically in a post-apartheid South African city characterized by informality and divisions?
- How have the selected activist street and mural artists responded to the prominent social, cultural and environmental issues of today?
- How have I reflected activism and transformation in my own art practice?

Context of the Research

This research is focused on street art and mural art as visual activism but public art, activist art and activism are also drawn on. Durban, from 2014-2017, is the locational and historical focal point of the study but selected examples throughout the world and history have been presented. The discourses which contextualize this study include art as activism, public art (focusing on mural and street art) and culture studies primarily from a local context but secondarily from an international perspective. Empirical research has been conducted in the form of public space art production and critical self and peer reflection. In addition to this, I have conducted interviews with members of the public, my art practice collaborators and activist art experts, which have been recorded audio-visually.

Rationale and Motivation

This study is motivated by the desire to create artwork which is functional by appropriately responding to the current socio-political climate of post-apartheid South Africa in Durban's urban space. I am additionally motivated by the lack of accessibility to fine art culture, as well as the desire to transform often neglected and uninspiring public space. In pursuit of this goal I have encountered many ethical and practical challenges. Through the acknowledgement and

exploration of my position of white privilege and attempting to apply critical self-reflection, I have aimed to promote social justice in all collaborations and interactions. The installation of unsanctioned street art in the public space is rationalized by the logic of Theodor Adorno, "[c]ulture in the true sense, did not simply accommodate itself to human beings; but it always simultaneously raised a protest against the petrified relations under which they lived, thereby honoring them" (1991: 86). I argue that street art and mural art could be an antidote to some of the challenges facing post-apartheid Durban today and contributes to the progression of critical culture.

Methodology

In this research a practice-based qualitative methodology was used. John Roome (2011: 1) defined practice-based research as "[r]eflection on, and analysis of, the process of creating a body of creative work". This is accompanied by theoretical research to contextualize and inform the art practice. An element of action research was also employed which is "…a cyclical process of conducting an investigation, taking action based on the results of that enquiry, followed by evaluation of the improvements in the situation under consideration" (Candy, 2006). All the information gathered was analyzed using a reflective approach with the intention of finding meaning which is relevant to my research questions. The combination of practice-based and action research is the most suitable methodological approach for this study, which essentially attempts to uncover knowledge pertaining to the function of mural art and street art globally and specifically in Durban. Roome describes the recent integration of art practice into academic research which has resulted in the practice-based methodology. He argues that the integration of theory and practice is the essence of creative research. "Art practice becomes more consciously theoretical and objective. Academic research is challenged to become practice-led and open to subjective insights" (2011: 6).

The action research comprised of artwork produced in public spaces. Typically, this process involved identifying an ecological/social/political issue which is the artwork's subject. The appropriate medium was then identified to most suitably explore the subject. Mural art was employed when the subject to be represented was not of an extremely subversive nature or

when a funding opportunity arose. Street art was employed when subversiveness was essential in responding to the subject. Funded mural projects involved lengthy administration including creating proposals that contained the selected site and permission documentation, selecting participating artists, creation of a proposed design and a budget. The application of these projects involved managing the artists, logistics, site owners and funders. Street art projects typically involved creating the artwork on paper in studio, followed by an installation process in carefully selected public spaces. The subjects were researched theoretically and through images during the design process. The artistic and activist strategies uncovered in the consulted literature pertaining to street art, mural art, activist art, the street art of the 2011 Egyptian revolution and the murals of Faith47 were applied to my art practice.

Sabine Marschall (1999: 70) claimed that "[i]t is methodologically very difficult, if not impossible, to establish and quantify the impact of murals… on people who see these works", yet she employed interviews as the central strategy in her research. I followed Marschall's methodological approach and gathered primary information through 19 unstructured interviews at nine sites. According to Candy (2006: 16), unstructured interviews are characterized by the interviewee developing the themes proposed by the interviewer (in the form of questions). The interviewees included members of the public, artists who participated in the projects, and selected experts in the field of public activist art. The interviews took place at selected sites of my artworks and at the site of Faith47's murals in Warwick Junction. A variety of public participants were chosen in terms of gender, age, social standing and ethnicity. I paid special attention to the interviewee's relationship to the site in question. Potential interviewees were also approached as they passed by the artwork. A letter of information, in either English or isiZulu, was explained to the participant and upon agreement the consent form was signed and dated. I encouraged the participants to share their opinions about the artwork through my prepared questions but allowed for impromptu questions in response to the participants answers. I recorded audio-video interviews, which have been edited into a documentary-style video artwork which forms part of the practical component of this study. This video piece was first screened at my final exhibition on the 9th of November 2017 as an artwork and finally uploaded to YouTube where it is available to the broader public. This video

piece, including the interviews, was the most useful methodological approach to presenting the artwork as an exhibition. The data gathered from these interviews was critically analyzed and used to gain insight into the meanings of the work to the specific interviewees, in an attempt to complete the action research cycle. I have identified an element of bias in my interview process, the participants who agreed to be interviewed were already interested in the artwork under investigation and were therefore inclined to provide positive information while those who were disinterested did not agree to be interviewed, limiting the recording of negative feedback.

The secondary sources were gathered through books, documentaries, journals and electronic databases. The literature sources were selected by online and library searches and suggestions from my supervisors and the interviewed experts. The credibility of my sources was ascertained by the frequency of the authors being cited during my literature review. This allowed the identification of seminal texts within my field of interest. I then referred to the sources in the reference lists of these seminal texts. I also asked the question posed by Shenton (2004: 64 in Roome: 2011: 32), "[h]ow congruent are the findings with reality?" This informed my practice-based approach to researching this topic.

Delimitations

The practical aspect of the study was limited by funding, as large-scale mural projects can be expensive and the sponsorship of murals often results in censorship of the artwork's content. The limited culture of street and mural art in Durban and consequent conservative government policies in this regard, restrict the potential vibrancy of the culture. I also limited the study to two-dimensional artwork excluding sculptures and other forms of public activist expression. A basic understanding of isiZulu severely limited the potential usefulness of this study as this is the most common language used in the urban space of Durban.

Outline of Chapters

This dissertation is comprised of four chapters. In chapter one, I will provide the theoretical framework of street art and mural art as visual activism and review the literature on this subject. This framework includes the theory of the emotional, psychological and social value of

art in general and the discourse of public art as activism. I will also look specifically at how street art and mural art contest the capitalist system. In contextualizing street art and mural art and this study, I will then explore the current theory on African urban spaces and more specifically, South African cities. This will lead to the theory on white privilege and its effect on this study. I then investigate the strategies of participation and site specificity and finally explore the communicative potential of street art and mural art.

Chapter two presents the shifting functions of mural art and street art historically, by highlighting examples of street art and mural art as visual activism locally and internationally. I will begin this survey by looking at Southern African rock art and then Mexican muralism. I will then bring my focus back to South Africa investigating visual activism more broadly. I then focus closely on examples of activist murals in South Africa before and after apartheid, observing the changes between then and now. Following this, I look specifically at the phenomenon of gentrification as a new position which mural art finds itself in today. I then present graffiti as a precursor to street art and finally explore examples of street art functioning as visual activism.

Chapter three investigates street art and mural art as visual activism in the work of Faith47's 2014 mural project in Durban and the street art and mural art of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. In comparing these two examples the question arises, why is there such a limited activist street art and mural art culture in Durban? While the Egyptian example clearly demonstrates how street art and mural art can function as activism.

Chapter four explores street art and mural art as visual activism in my own art practice. This chapter is divided into two themes. The first theme, Dissidence in Nature, explores the rebellious and creative power of nature within urban space. I will explore examples of my own art practice, which I would define as street art, and how these works reflect the rebelliousness of nature in the urban space. The second theme, Interconnections, examines murals which utilize participation and collaboration as a strategy for social and spatial transformation and/or activism. In this section, I explore and critique the application of these strategies in my own art practice. This theme also explores the interconnections and interdependencies between

humans, as well as between humans and nature. This theme is reflected primarily through the creative process and secondarily through the imagery.

In the conclusion, I reflect on the study as a whole, outline the research findings and present possible areas for further research.

Chapter One

Mural Art and Street Art as Visual Activism – Theoretical Framework and Literature Review.

Introduction

In this chapter I investigate the theory which is guided by my major research question: What is the activist potential of street art and mural art in Durban from 2014-2017? This theory has been provided to support my argument that street art and mural art are forms of visual activism. This theoretical framework will underpin the rest of the study, with certain theory revisited in the chapters to follows. I will also review the key texts which have informed and guided my research.

This study is located within the theory of street art and mural art as activism, public art and activist art, culture studies, the study of African cities and the theory of white privilege.

Working Definitions of Street Art, Mural Art and Visual Activism

It is vital in this study to understand the use of the terms 'street art', 'mural art' and 'visual activism'. It is also important to understand the subtle differences between 'street art' and 'mural art' as interlinked approaches to art making in the public space. According to the literature consulted, there appear to be ambivalent uses of the terms 'street art' and 'mural art'. Often modern murals are called street art and street art is often referred to as graffiti. The terms 'post-graffiti' (Wactawek, 2011: 30) and 'unsanctioned public art' (FaridaB, 2012: 3) are also used to refer to street art. The notorious and extremely popular British street artist Banksy (2010) defined 'street art' as "…this hybrid form of graffiti, driven by a new generation using stickers, stencils, posters and sculptures to make their mark by any means necessary". In an interview on the 16th of February 2017, Doung Jahangeer defined 'street art' as a revolutionary language that "[c]hallenges the sovereignty of the wall as a static object which belongs to

somebody". These definitions are helpful but are not inclusive enough for the purpose of this study. The defining characteristics of 'street art', according to my research of literature and through my own art practice include:

- The intention to communicate with a broad public (as opposed to graffiti which is done primarily for the ratification of those within the subculture).
- The unsanctioned installation of the work in the public space and therefore short production time.
- The use of any medium, including three dimensional and digital media. The most common techniques include stencils, wheat pastes (posters) and stickers.
- The use of the strategy of site specificity.

Marschall (2001: 1) explains that the term mural art is "[d]erived from the Latin word *murus* meaning 'wall'" and includes any large-scale work attached to a wall including mosaics and mounted panels. More specifically, the term refers to "[p]aintings executed directly on the wall". The defining characteristics of mural art, for the purpose of this study, according to my research of literature and through my own art practice include:

- The intention to communicate and or involve a broad public in the experience and or the creation of the work in the public space.
- The use of the strategies of participation, collaboration and site specificity.
- The use of acrylic paint and more recently spray paint as the major mediums.
- The sanctioned nature of the application of the work and therefore extended production time.

The Oxford South African Concise Dictionary (2002: 11) defined activism as "[t]he use of vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change". My use of the term 'activism' in relation to street and mural art is based on the idea that any original, non-commercial and independent artwork in the public space, is a form of activism, due to its alteration of the conceptual aesthetic of the public space. Joanne Sharp from the department of geography at the University of Glasgow (2005: 1020) claimed that, "…regardless of the scale and type of

intervention, the installation of public art within the urban fabric is inevitably a political exercise".

When exploring the central ideas and qualities of social activism, street and mural art clearly fit the description, supporting my claim that street and mural art are forms of activism. The activist and author Mohamed Imran Mohamed Taib (2006: 1) defined individual social activists as "[m]ediators between those who govern and those who are governed". He explained that activism is vital in achieving social transformation and "…a key feature of civic involvement in a democratic public sphere" (2006: 1). Taib (2006) explained that the application of critical thought in order to achieve some form of improvement is a key element of activism.

Taib (2006) provides what he considers the vital constituents of activism:

- An understanding of the historical context is vital in being an agent of social change. "The awareness that our present condition is shaped by historical factors and our present actions will determine the course of history in the future" (Taib, 2006: 3).
- A clear picture of the desired future.
- Narcissism must be avoided, with the clear goal of affecting change to be held and not personal advancement.
- A genuine concern for the well-being of people is key, which includes a willingness to become involved in other people's lives while being sensitive to the "[c]omplexities of human interactions" (Taib, 2006: 3).

The process of creating street or mural art, including the research required for the design, participation and communication with the public and the goal of creating a more convivial living space are all elements of Taib's definition of social activism.

The term 'visual activism' serves to differentiate art as activism from the other forms of activism. *Rage Against the State: Political Funerals and Queer Visual Activism in Post-apartheid South Africa* by Dr Kylie Thomas (2015), provided a short historical explanation of the term, which is useful in further understanding its nuanced meaning. According to Thomas (2015: 1) from the English department at Stellenbosch University, "[v]isual activism can be understood as the use of visual forms to make visible what those in power prefer to keep invisible". It

describes works produced by artists to raise awareness about particular social issues and forms of injustice, and to describe the work of activists who employ visual forms in order to protest and subvert the dominant order". Artists and photographers working against apartheid were the first South Africans to describe their work as visual activism. Documentary photography collective Afripix, who worked against apartheid, considered themselves activists, but only later was their work was labeled visual activism. More recently, Zanele Muholi, a South African activist who employs photography as her predominant medium to advocate queer rights, described her work as visual activism. Muholi has relentlessly documented the funerals of black lesbians who are the victims of hate crimes. She raised the public's awareness of this issue through her photographs and writing which is available online and at her exhibitions (Thomas, 2015). As a result of consulting this text and participating in a workshop with Dr. Kylie Thomas in 2015, I changed the terminology in my title from 'social activism' to the more nuanced 'visual activism'.

In comparing street art and mural art as approaches to visual activism, street art is more suited to radical activist action than mural art, as the ideas are installed without any possibility of censorship by the authorities. Even if the message or image is not subversive, the unsanctioned application of the work in the public spaces disrupts the capitalist construction of the public space and challenges the notion of private ownership. Murals are more suited for activism in the form of participation with the public but can also become controlled by the authorities who often fund mural projects and can push for their own interests to be represented. This approach can be more easily expressed in the saying 'he who pays the piper plays the tune' (in Jelinek 2013). However, I argue that both practices potentially serve the function of stimulating society and the public space and contesting the dominant order. In the case of street art, these aims are achieved through indignant protest. On the other hand, mural art is less aggressive and can assist social catharsis and healing.

The Emotional, Psychological and Social Value of Art

The research question explored under this sub heading is: What is the emotional, psychological and social value of art and what is the function of art in general? The theory arising from this

question relating to art in general can then be applied to street art and mural art. The writing of Ellen Dissanayake, an affiliate professor at the University of Washington, is the major source for the exploration of this question. This investigation also serves to validate the claim that even if the public viewer does not understand the intended social, environmental, or political message contained in an example of street or mural art, the work is still valuable. This argument also validates examples of street art or mural art, which do not contain clearly 'activist' content.

Art is a vital part of successful human existence, with major emotional, psychological and social value. In her book titled *What is Art For?* Dissanayake (1988) notes that art is unlike any other human activity and seems unnecessary initially. However, people from all over the world make and respond to various forms of art, which according to Dissanayake (1988: 62), suggests that art contains "[s]urvival value" from an evolutionary biologist's perspective. According to Dissanayake (1988: 64) art "…reflects the natural world of which we are a part". Humans instinctually associate emotional states to particular forms, for example the sadness which is triggered at the sight of the weeping willow. Repetition reminds us of the rhythms in nature as well as the rhythm of sex, resulting in a sense of pleasure in the viewer. While these examples are useful in explaining the potential emotional value of art they may not be in line with everybody's experience of these particular forms. Dissanayake (1988: 65) also claims that art is therapeutic, "[i]t integrates for us powerful and contradictory and disturbing feelings" and a temporary escape from the sometimes-tedious reality of our lives by allowing the viewer to participate in an alternative world. "It allows direct thoughtless or unself-conscious experience" which becomes scarce in modern living, and a means to access alternative emotional states outside of regular rational thought (1988: 66). Dissanayake (1988) argues that art develops and extends consciousness and self-consciousness as well as skills of perception. For example, the ability to understand ambiguity, which is one of the salient characteristics of modern urban living in South Africa. "Art is said to provide a sense of meaning, significance and intensity to human life that cannot be gained in any other way". In other words, art makes life seem worthwhile despite the challenges (1988: 70). The shared experiences of art also function to strengthen communities and social cohesion.

There are however opposing views on the value of art. In her paper *Should We Let Them Eat Art?* Candess Kostopoulos (2010: 131) explains "Plato's banishment of painters and poets from his ideal community in Book X of *The Republic"* Plato (in Kostopoulos, 2010: 131) argues that art is not valuable because it does not contain "[t]rue knowledge of reality," resulting in the misleading and corrupting of people by awakening them to feelings which are irrational. Although Plato argues that art morally corrupts the viewer, he is clearly aware of its power. Dissanayake's (1988) theory suggests that art is an essential part of convivial human existence. I therefore argue that street art and mural art potentially unlock the inherent emotional, psychological and social value of art by making this cultural expression accessible and present in modern urban life.

Public Art as Activism

In exploring street art and mural art as visual activism, it is important to establish the discourse around the more general field of public art as activism. Art in the public space in general has the potential to encourage social cohesion and a more communal use of public space. In her paper *Sanctioned and Unsanctioned Art in Public Space*, FaridaB compares more traditional forms of sanctioned public art with unsanctioned street art. FaridaB (2012: 3) explains that "[p]ublic space artwork has the generative seeds of greater societal openness and acceptance". She believes that having a heightened awareness of one's environment encourages the individual to be a more involved community member, creating a meaningful engagement with the world socially, spiritually and physically. Joanne Sharp from the department of geography at the University of Glasgow (2005: 1004) describes public art as "…not simply art placed outside… (it) is art which has as its goal a desire to engage with its audiences and to create spaces – whether material, virtual, or imagined – within which people can identify themselves, perhaps by creating a renewed reflection on community, on the uses of public space or on our behavior within them".

Art can also serve as valuable motivation for the individual. According to Alana Jelinek, a creative Fellow at the Arts and Humanities Research Council in England (2013: 11), "[t]he power of art is in recognizing the operation of power within us, which is expressed in our agency,

outwardly as stories told". She also states that "[a]s resistance, art may be the embodiment of individual agency, the creation of new, nuanced, more complex stories and the potential enactment of these stories in public, constitutive of the public realm (11)".

The value of combining art and life to creatively contest the dominant system is presented by the anti-capitalist author and activist John Jordan, in his essay *The Art of Necessity: The Subversive Imagination of Anti-Road Protest and Reclaim the Streets* (1998). Jordan's ideas are valuable for this research as he explicitly highlights the causes of the global social and ecological issues and the vital role that cultural expression can play in resistance to this. Jordan's theory supports my own thinking and art practice. Jordan is concerned with the deteriorating environmental and social order and argues that it is vital for human survival to contest 'Industrial society'. He believes that by 2040 the environment will be damaged beyond repair. Jordan claims that the poetic or creative analysis of this situation assists and forwards the scientific approach. "Separating art from politics and everyday life is a relatively recent historical phenomenon and one that has been very much located in societies that have taken on western cultural values – the same cultural values that are at the center of the global ecological and social problems" (130). Jordan identifies the core of the social and ecological situation, expressed above, as the popular value system and therefore, cultural interventions are required to challenge these values and suggest alternative options. The form of creative expression motivated by Jordan is what he calls 'direct action protest', which is continuous public and participatory site specific performance. The tactics of "[i]mmediacy, intuition and imagination" (132) and the element of risk involved in executing this kind of protest turns the intervention into a kind of ritual which creates a moment of magically high focus, an apex moment with the potential to shift consciousness. This expression of meaning resonated with my own experience of the application of unsanctioned street art as an act under high pressure and focus, which I was unable to articulate, and provides a conceptual framework for my own art practice in Chapter Four.

Street Art and Mural Art in Opposition to Capitalism

One of street art and mural art's most recognized activist qualities is its disruption of the capitalist system. Through the consultation of literature for this study I have found that capitalism and colonialism are cited as the major phenomena, which result in social injustice and environmental deterioration and therefore inspire the need for activism. According to Centre for African Cities researcher Rike Sitas (2010), consumer capitalist culture is pervasive and yet is largely responsible for the environmental, economic and social issues we are facing today. Thus, an investigation of the way in which street and mural art can subvert capitalism is vital in understanding street and mural art as visual activism.

The Communist Manifesto, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848, is cited as one of the most influential political manuscripts and analyses the flaws of the capitalist system. According to Shaw (1996: 507), Marx was concerned with the historic economic developments in society, "[t]he changes in modes of production and exchange and the consequent division of society into distinct classes and in the struggles of these classes against one another". Karl Marx (in Shaw 1996: 507) argues that capitalist economics, characterised by "[r]elations of production is the real foundation of society… on which rises a legal and political super-structure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness". Marx (in Shaw 1996: 507) claims that the legal system functions to "[s]anction the existing order", further explaining that the legal system is not autonomous because it indirectly serves the interests of the economic structure and therefore the ruling elite. Marx (507) explains that the highest form of production, which aids the progress of man will always be employed "…capitalism in particular is distinguished by its tendency to raise society to a productive level undreamt of before". This constant pursuit of wealth and commodity accumulation results in the employing class exploiting the working class and the environment. Marx also explains that "…the accumulation of capital is accompanied by an increase in the proletariat, maintaining therefore, an industrial reserve army of unemployed people…" (Marx in Shaw 1996: 509). Although Marx's critique of capitalism is old it informs and supports my opinion on the topic especially from an economic perspective. This system resulted in the commodification of art and the subsequent severing of art and culture from public life. This in turn disables the potential function and social benefit of

art and culture. Street art and mural art can subvert the capitalist system by affording art its potential functionality by:

- Being present in the public realm and therefore being public property.
- Avoiding commodification.
- Subverting the legal system, with specific reference to unsanctioned street art.
- Stimulating the imagination of the public and therefore encouraging the imagination of an alternative system.

Street art and mural art in opposition to capitalism will be explored more specifically under the next two subheadings.

Street Art and Mural Art in Opposition to Advertising

Advertising is one of the aspects of capitalism which street art and mural art most clearly challenge by providing an alternative visual aesthetic and message that is not driven by financial gain and which occurs in the public space. The New York street artist Swoon (in Wactawek, 2011: 86) explains the relationship between advertising and her work.

> "Advertising is always trying to place itself a million miles above us looming down with the shiniest, flashiest most disconnected depictions of beauty, just out of reach like the rest of its promises, and I find myself trying to get down below that, at eye level, where people are walking, and to depict the life that exists here at the bottom edge, our ordinary reality as it remains connected to the ground".

Both Dedord and Adorno (paraphrased by FaridaB, 2012: 6) believe western capitalism maintains its control by intentionally alienating the individual and creating a "fetishism of commodity".

> "It achieves these aims through the process of homogenization and trivialization, impressing the stamp of sameness on everything, attempting to drown out all forms of resistance in the oceans of images it provides and commodities it generates for desirable purchase".

Through mainstream media and advertising the majority is controlled by an "invisible minority" in terms of "[o]pinions, habits and ideas" (FaridaB, 2012: 10). The dominant capitalist ideology "…ensures that we remain in a paralytic state of pseudo-needs and desires and do not question the status quo". Advertising presents the consumer with a false sense of choice with regards to products, clothing and technology, thus creating an illusion of personal freedom. According to Banksy (2006), cities only allow things to exist if they are part of the capitalist system. He is anti-advertising because he feels it defaces our neighborhoods, by making people feel inadequate, and therefore compelled to consume. Street art and mural art are therefore a form of activism against the negative effects discussed above relating to advertising.

Street Art and Mural Art as an Alternative to Mainstream Cultural Outlets

Within the capitalist system, mainstream cultural products are created on mass. However, due to the need to generate income and the control of the industry by the ruling elite, the quality or honesty of the work is often jeopardized. Specifically within fine art, progressive, critical, aesthetic and relevant work is continuously being produced but is unable to reach the general public due to the work being confined to a gallery or museum. The belief that the general public are unable to appreciate or understand progressive cultural work is also a common occurrence, possibly due to the proliferation of mainstream culture which inevitably influences the cultural preference of the masses. A working-class audience is also unlikely to be desirable for a gallery due to the fact that they are not likely patrons of the work.

Street and mural art are alternatives to the gallery system and mainstream culture. FaridaB (2012: 19) argues that galleries and museums are no longer effective vessels for art in contemporary society:

> "Museums are now morgues, places to mourn a past life rather than celebrate a contemporary existence. Public space with its perpetual motion and incessant reinvention demands that the artwork it contains be dynamic, engaging, and a reflection of the tensions, dreams and aspirations that exist within it".

Street art exists within the public space but is largely removed from the monetary system, disrupting the norm of working for financial remuneration and offering an alternative based on

the sharing of ideas rather than financial gain. However, the reality is that the street artists must find other ways of generating income to sustain themselves within the capitalist system. I concede that galleries and museums provide a moment of focus on the artwork and are valuable in this sense but should not be the only option as an outlet for visual culture. This argument applies to other forms of cultural expression where an entrance fee excludes the majority, while approaches like busking and street magic are more inclusive and largely remain outside the often suffocating control of finance.

Mainstream culture is critiqued by the German philosopher and sociologist Theodor Adorno (1991) in his article *The Culture Industry*, where street art clearly presents itself as a useful opposition to the situation described in the article. Adorno (1991) uses the term 'culture industry' to replace the term 'mass culture', in order to clarify the control of the culture industry by the elite and not by the masses. He argues that the various cultural products created by the culture industry are created according to a very specific plan, with the goal of maintaining the status quo. Adorno (1991) refers to the culture industry as the voice of the master to be heard by the masses. He explains that the culture industry was developed as a new way to generate capital in the economically developed nations and argues that these cultural products have lost their efficacy. "Culture in the true sense, did not simply accommodate itself to human beings; but it always simultaneously raised a protest against the petrified relations under which they lived, thereby honoring them" (Adorno, 1991: 86). Adorno argues that the unique character of the subjects of the culture industry are an example of "interchangeable sameness" (Adorno, 1991: 89). "The concepts of order which it hammers into human beings are always those of the status quo" (Adorno, 1991: 90). According to Adorno (1991), the consumer welcomes these illusions and deceptions as they provide quick but short-lived escapism and instant gratification. "The power of the culture industry's ideology is such that conformity has replaced consciousness" (Adorno, 1991: 90).

Street art, which operates outside of the monetary system, without the possibility for censorship by authorities, has the potential to expose the public to honest culture, containing ideas and visuals which attempt to stimulate the viewer. I have found through the interviews at the sites of street and mural art in Durban, that the public are always more perceptive in their

readings of the work than I expected. These interviews are explored in chapters three and four. This has led me to believe that so called 'high art', in the form of street art and mural art, has a place in the public space, to perform the function of stimulating the consciousness of the public. However, both street and mural art can also be complicit in the capitalist system, especially when the strategies of participation and site specificity, which will be unpacked in the following chapter, are ignored. Mural art in particular can be used to reinforces the capitalist system, which is explained through the phenomenon of gentrification which I will unpack in Chapter Two.

Street Art, Mural Art and Public Space in an African City

Under the previous four sub-headings I explored the way street art and mural art contest the capitalist system. The geographic focus of this study is Durban and its urban public space. I have therefore decided to investigate the idea of public space, and more specifically South African urban public space, within the scope of street art and mural art. FaridaB (2012: 3) defined public space as "[a] place where 1. Economic activity is not obligatory; 2. The inherent plurality and diversity of society is ideally embraced and encouraged; and 3. Spontaneous interaction is possible". In an interview with the Durban based public space performance artist, architect and activist Doung Jahangeer on 16 February 2017, he referred to the city as a text, "[a]n experimental collaboration among writers, writers as you, as us, as the architect, as the urban planners, as the walkers, everybody is writing meaning all the time as we move through space". Jahangeer described street art as a revolutionary language, which exists in the margins of the text of the city, which challenges "[t]he sovereignty of the wall as a static object which belongs to somebody". The French Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1974) in Sitas (2012: 268) describes public space as "[n]ot as a dead, inert thing or object, but as organic and fluid and alive; it has a pulse, it palpitates, it flows and collides with other spaces". These descriptions of public space encourage the idea that the public space should be defined more democratically or collaboratively, encouraging individual and organic interventions, for example through street art and mural art.

Within the context of South Africa, it is important to pay special attention to the effects of the past on the urban public space of the present. Sitas (2010: 268) provides insight into South African public space stating that post-apartheid cities are especially complex, largely as a result of the Group Areas Act (1950), which dictated and defined spaces in terms of racial groupings. This means our public space is still heavily segregated and marked by inequality. The Cameroonian philosopher and political theorist Achille Mbembe and associate professor of literary and cultural studies at the University of Witwatersrand, Sarah Nuttall, edited an issue of the journal *Public Culture* focusing on Johannesburg, which is the major source for this section. Mbembe and Nuttall (2004: 359) add to Sitas' insight and highlight the 'polycentric' and 'divided' nature of Johannesburg with townships and 'security suburbs', which all relate to each other and create the complex metropolis. They note that previously divisions were based purely on race but now with the emergence of the new black elite there are also class divides. Globalization in post-apartheid South Africa resulted in new labour structures creating multiple economies. This influenced new divisions in the built environment characterized by increasing private space and an "[i]ncreasing demand for social and spatial insulation" (365) and a prominence of the excluded people in the fearful imaginations of the privileged. Mbembe and Nuttall (2004) claim that African cities, especially Johannesburg, have been relentlessly negatively represented by western scholars, who continuously employ tactics of othering and ignoring the connectedness of African cities to the rest of the world.

In addition to being defined by divisions, South African urban public spaces are also characterized by informality and provisionality. The Iranian professor of global and transnational studies at the University of Illinois, Asef Bayat (2013), wrote about the increasing informal operations taking place in the public spaces of the global south in his book *The Quiet Encroachment of the Ordinary*. He noted that this encroachment is done out of necessity by the unemployed, migrants, refugees and disenfranchised people who are seeking to improve their lives. This active use of public space challenges the functioning of western modern urbanization and state control. Bayat (2013) claims that the rapid growth in disenfranchised people is a result of economic globalization and that the advancement of informal operations is at the expense of the wealthy and the state. Abdou Maliq Simone, works as an urban studies

professor at various institutions around the world, including the African Centre for Cities at The University of Cape Town and the Rujak Centre for Urban Studies in Jakarta. In his article *People as Infrastructure* (2004) in the journal *Public Culture*, Simone investigates inner-city Johannesburg, uncovering that it is an urban space under rapid transition, post-apartheid, with truncated systems of civic organization and infrastructure. The complex social and economic relations, between heterogeneous residents with limited resources is what Simone calls 'people as infrastructure'. Simone (2004) claimed that infrastructure is generally understood as the physical elements of an urbanized space, which assist effective economic and social actions. "By contrast, I wish to extend the notion of infrastructure directly to people's activities in the city" (Simone, 2004: 407). Simone (2004: 407) goes on to explain the ways residents navigate this "[f]lexible, mobile and provisional" space without clear rules. Through improvisation and collaboration, the residents maximize the economic and social potential of their immediate environment and situation. Simone (2004) explains the way the government and city planners attempt to classify or compartmentalize the operations in the city to reduce unpredictable encounters and maintain their power and the status quo. This is an attempt to make the city more legible and therefore easier to navigate and control. According to Simone (2004), the authorities in Johannesburg have failed in this regard as a result of being unable to define the various and complex operations.

The critical question raised through consulting this literature is: How can street art and mural art engage and respond to these informal and provisional urban spaces? The provisional and informal nature of South African public space can be celebrated by the installation of street and mural art, which are both ephemeral art forms. Before the work becomes outdated and therefore no longer relevant, it fades, is cleaned by authorities, or the wall which hosted the work no longer exists at all due to a change in the physical environment, appealing for the application of new work. The ephemeral nature of street art in particular, is a vital aspect of what makes experiencing it valuable – a fleeting moment of independent aesthetic meaning and communication within a morphing city, which fades like a shooting star. This question will be further explored in chapter four which deals with my own art practice in Durban.

Space is a commodity within any city, those with the most funds control the public space and its aesthetic. Modern urban development occurs in African cities in pockets and are controlled by the elite class. With economic gain and not resident's well-being generally the focus, developers often aim for uniform styles, resulting in characterless and sterile environments. Reiss (2008) claimed these developments occur without opportunity for input from the public. FaridaB (2012) explained that these factors result in people feeling detached from such banal spaces. Another negative aspect of the capitalist construction of space is the ubiquitous, unused, wasted or abandoned space. While the competition for prime space is fierce, the by-product spaces of modern urban development is extensive and detrimental to our living environment, in the same way as the waste produced through consumerism is detrimental to the natural environment. According to Wactawek (2011: 115), street art "…transforms liminal socio-spatial sites into sites of action, communication and beauty". Street art and mural art point to more democratic use of public space where dialogue and debate are given the opportunity to occur. The informal and provisional nature of much of South Africa's urban public space provides the potential for street and mural art to further democratize our cities.

White Privilege

In the previous section the dividedness of post-apartheid South Africa's public space was highlighted. In continuation of this theme the question of the persistence of racism in South Africa will be explored by looking more specifically at white privilege. Sitas (2010: 271) claimed that since the end of apartheid there has been a breakdown between the arts and the struggle for social justice. However, "[t]he world is still marked by racial, economic and gender-based inequality. Global processes of neo-liberal capitalism have worked to entrench these inequalities on both a local and global level". Social justice, in the form of non-racism, is an essential part of any form of activism in contemporary South Africa. The effect that my privilege has had on my art practice was an issue raised during a master's critique session of my practical work. I had thought I was aware of my economic and educational privilege, but I had not considered that whiteness might have protected me when illegally installing street art in the public space. Almost instinctually, I believed the opposite. Initially I was defensive, and this response is constituted in the ideology of white privilege, which will be further reflected upon

in chapter four. The theorists I will refer to are Mohammad Shabangu, who is one of the founders of Open Stellenbosch which challenges white supremacy at the University of Stellenbosch; Samatha Vice, a philosophy professor at the University of Witwatersrand; and Richard Dyer a professor at the Department of Film Studies at King's College in London.

White supremacy began with the exploits of colonialism and continues today in the form of structural privilege, which benefits whites at the expense of non-whites. Richard Dyer's (2000) major point, which is reiterated by the other referred theorists, is the way whiteness has come to represent humanity in general; a race group which is unmarked and therefore enjoys privileges which are rendered invisible and the norm. All three theorists claim that marking whiteness and recognizing the associated privilege is the first step towards transformation and equality. Samantha Vice (2010) in her paper *How Do I Live in This Strange Place?* begins by highlighting the dividedness of South Africa, despite the attempts by the authorities and public to believe the opposite. Vice (2010: 323) claims that white people in South Africa are "[u]ndeniably a product of the apartheid system and undeniably still benefiting from it". The intention of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and then president Nelson Mandela, was for post-apartheid whites to actively enable the renegotiation of power. Vice (2010) claims that this never happened. Therefore, to be white inherently means to be tied to domination and oppression. The ideology of whiteness, which is pervasive and habitual and therefore extremely difficult to identify, is morally damaging for the oppressed and for the oppressors. Vice (2010) concluded that the appropriate response from white South Africans experiencing guilt and shame as a result of being aware of their privilege, was to withdraw from political life and practice a kind of humble silence. Mohammad Shabangu responded critically in his paper *Precarious Silence: Decentering the Power of Whiteness*. Shabangu (2017: 54) argued that white people should not feel guilty but should employ an "…ethics of responsibility to the renegotiation of the country's image in an attempt to curtail the unfortunate experience that is the result of whiteness being rendered invisible". Shabangu continued to argue that Vice's suggestion of silence would further entrench white privilege by maintaining its invisibility. In an attempt to squash any doubt regarding white privilege, Shabangu referred to Statistics South Africa's 2012 census results which revealed that the average income of a white household is

seven times that of a black household. The implication of this theory is that any white street or mural artist, concerned with activism, has a responsibility to engage with the ideas of white privilege in an attempt to renegotiate, what Shabangu calls '[t]he image of South Africa'. Street art and mural art as a vehicle for this renegotiation of power could be seen as the antithesis of Vice's suggestion of a political silence so sharply critiqued by Shabangu and in line with his suggestion. The theory of white privilege will be revisited in chapter four dealing with my own art practice.

Public Art and Participation

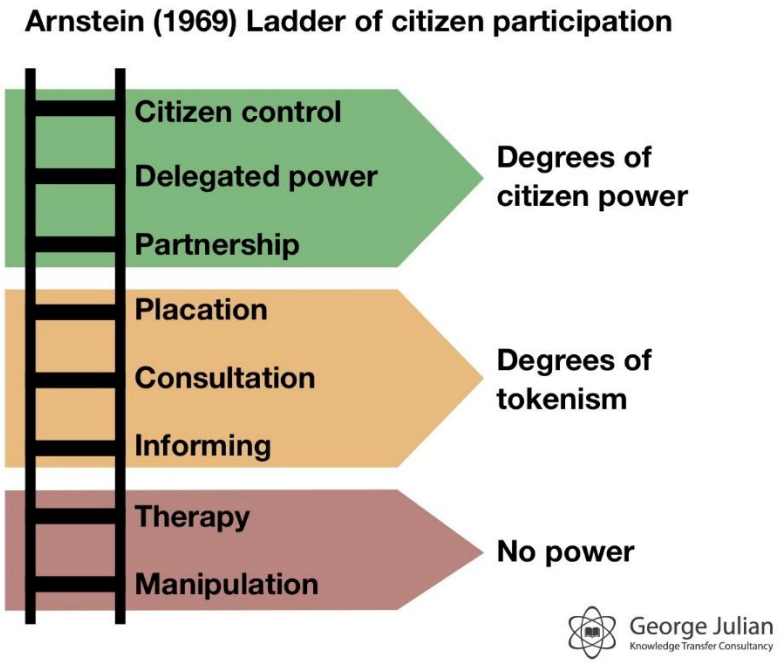
The transformative potential of public art, which involves the community, is the subject of extensive writing. The focus of this literature is on projects which are well removed from more traditional forms of visual art such as mural painting. However, the current literature on street art, mural art and graffiti mostly avoids specifically investigating participation or collaboration and the deeper meaning of the work to the wider public. Instead, the focus is rather on the creative expertise, the genre and location of the individual artwork, and the artist. The exception to this is found in artist and educator Basma Hamdy and the cultural activist, graffiti writer and author Don Karl's book *Walls of Freedom: Street Art of the Egyptian Revolution* (2014). This text briefly includes participation as a strategy and extensively explores the meaning of the street and mural art to the 2011 popular revolution and therefore the people of Egypt. Rike Sitas and Joanne Sharp from the Department of Geography at the University of Glasgow; Sabine Marshchall, Associate Professor of Cultural and Heritage Tourism at the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal; Claire Bishop who edited the book *Participation Documents of Contemporary Art* and Doung Jahangeer are the most valuable sources I found in my research of this strategy.

The inequalities present in capitalist society, including the effects of white privilege, especially in post-apartheid South Africa are challenged through the application of the concept of public participation. According to Bishop (2006), the idea of participation in art dates back to the Dada movement in the 1920s, where the Parisian public was intended to be included in the various creative manifestations. Sitas focuses on the transformative potential of participatory public art

in her article *The Possibilities for Participatory Public Art in Post-Apartheid Urban Spaces*. She summarizes her theory, which is key to my understanding of the value of participatory public art, stating:

> Participatory public art has three interconnected qualities: Firstly, it is art that thoroughly engages, questions and challenges uses and perceptions of public space and urban aesthetics. Secondly, it is art that fosters strong participation where citizen power is paramount. Thirdly, it is art that, as a critical social practice, holds a transformative agenda – the renegotiation of power – at its core. (Sitas, 2010: 267)

According to my own observations, it can be argued that South Africa's public space is generally occupied by individuals who are economically and politically disempowered, while the privileged minority typically spend their time in private vehicles and more private spaces. The inclusion of disempowered individuals in public artwork equals empowerment, validation, and an enactment of personal agency and control of the future. The following theory will try to support this claim. Arnstein (1969: 216) in Sitas (2010: 269) argues that the participation of the public amounts to the empowering of the public. Sitas explains that power structures and the status quo are maintained, even reinforced, when the work is produced on behalf of the people. Sitas argues that the participants need to be included in the decision-making process. This means the artist must leave their ego behind and embrace collective ownership of the work. It also requires a shift in the role of the artist from 'creative genius' to facilitator. This is articulated in Arnstein's Ladder of Participation (Figure 1):



(Figure 1) Arnstein, A. 1969. Arnstein's Ladder of Participation.

The urge to create art in the public space comes from the desire to include the public in the process and experience of visual art. This participation can be applied in varying degrees. FaridaB (2012) claimed that public art, which involves the community, validates their existence in their environment. On a very basic level, participatory public art encourages new approaches to participating in society in general and inevitably challenges "[u]nequal power relations" (Sitas, 2010: 268). The public is empowered by participation either as subject or as co-producer, sharing the privilege of creative production, which is often reserved for the dominant class. In this way it,"[i]s the bases for the integration of art and everyday life and a powerful force towards social and political change" (Kwon, 2002: 107).

The transformative potential for participatory public art has substantial counter arguments. According to Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation, street art, which characteristically does not include the participation of the public in the production of the work, functions to reinforce the status quo. However, the unsanctioned and subversive element of street art potentially empowers the viewer by providing alternative and uncensored visual content and ideas, often with the goal of critiquing the dominant order. It is also subversive due to the unsanctioned

installation of the work in the public space. The real-life application of participatory public art is challenging due to the very public nature of the work. The inclusion and unavoidable exclusion of certain people is amplified and disagreements are unavoidable. Joanne Sharp, Venda Pollock and Ronan Paddison from the Department of Geography and Geomatics at the University of Glasgow deal with this topic in their article *Just Art for a Just City: Public Art and Social Inclusion in Urban Regeneration.* Sharp et el (2005: 1004) argue that often the desire to have democratic inclusion involves tedious bureaucracy "…that any critical edge is lost and the resultant work must be bland, engaging everyone but offending no-one". According to Sharp et al (2005), a successful example of public art does not necessarily represent an ideal situation of harmony within the public space. The creation of a debate and the highlighting of difference is also a valuable part of the democratic use of public space. In an interview on the 16th of February 2017, Jahangeer explained the complexity of the term 'participation'. He highlighted the malleability of the word and how authorities use it falsely to create an illusion of a functioning democracy. Jahangeer (2017) argued that roughly 500 years of colonization have lead us to the situation where we need 'participation' and that this extended period of oppression and inequality cannot be quickly fixed because we call a project 'participatory'. Jahangeer argued that the privilege of knowledge and social standing is always present in this kind of relationship. "As soon as we open up the mouth and ask that person to participate, we demonstrate, we perform that power and that person knows it, because our body is a language and we can read that". Jahangeer explained how he approaches participation.

> "What we do is we put our bodies in the space. We render ourselves vulnerable to the point where that power imbedded in our privilege is not being seen any more in the face of the other. And let them ask the question, what are you doing? As soon as the question comes to us rather than we going to it, there is a reversal of the power of knowledge. Then, only can we start to think about participation". (Jahangeer,2017: n.p)

Participation in mural art can be a useful strategy for creating meaning and encouraging transformation. However, it depends on the specific context of the wall being painted. The following questions should be asked: Is there a clearly definable local community who could constitute the participants and who is going to be excluded? How are these participants going

to be approached and encouraged to participate and how much responsibility is going to be placed on them? How are the participants going to become invested in the mural? In my own experience, informal participatory murals have been more successful than murals commissioned by the municipality. Participatory murals with school groups have also been more successful when the art teacher assisted in facilitating the process.

Site Specificity

The term 'site specificity' appears regularly in texts dealing with contemporary public art, presenting itself as one of the key elements of activist public art. I have therefore decided to explore the nexus between street art, mural art, site specificity and activism. The Korean-American art historian and curator Miwon Kwon wrote the book *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity,* which is a key text on this strategy. Kwon (2002: 3) defined site-specificity as "…the cultural mediation of broader social, economic, and political processes that organize urban life and urban space". I define a site-specific artwork as one which reflects some aspect of the site historically, socially, aesthetically, conceptually or environmentally. An artwork also becomes site specific when the participation of members of the public who are in some way bound to the site are included. The term also refers to artworks which have been carefully tailored to fit a particular site and may not make sense, or be as impactful, anywhere else.

The strategy of site specificity is especially useful in the negotiation of localized identities. Kwon (2002: 8) stated: "For if the search for place-bound identity in an undifferentiated sea of abstract, homogenized, and fragmented space of late capitalism is one characteristic of the postmodern condition, then the expanded effort to rethink the specificity of the art-site relationship can be viewed as both a compensatory system and critical resistance to such conditions". The Austrian born muralist Eva Sperling Cockroft and art historian Holly Barnet-Sanchez from the University of New Mexico (1990: 5) explained site specificity and identity more specifically using the example of the Social and Public Art Resource Centre (SPARC) in Los Angeles. SPARC strived to facilitate murals, which made the public space reflect the people who use it. SPARC facilitated and documented community murals in the United States, focusing on

Chicano murals because they believed in the importance of "[e]ducational cultural affirmation" to combat media negativity. An example of work done by SPARC includes *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, which is 2435 feet long and included the participation of 215 youths.

Public space artworks, which are in no way site specific, cannot be considered examples of visual activism. Modernist examples of public art are typically sculptures, which are often abstract and totally non site specific – basically enlarged gallery works placed in the public space (Kwon, 2002: 64). These works generally appear outside financial or corporate centers. It is standard practice around the world to allocate one percent of large construction budgets for public art. FaridaB (2012) is critical of this style of public art, which avoids any specific meaning. It exists in the public space without commenting on the world. She feels it makes the general public feel inferior, due to its majestic size and positioning and their inability to understand the work. In this way no public dialogue is created since the audience was not taken into consideration. The average viewer is thus excluded and feels isolated. In this way it "can be considered cultural propaganda" (FaridaB, 2012: 4) and an extension of the high art system functioning to maintain the dominance of the capitalist elite.

When analyzing the site specificity of a work, the relevance of the work to the 'community' is often emphasized. Marschall (2002) describes the term 'community' as having no clear definition, with the meaning progressively broadening over time. She references Thornton and Ramphele (1988) who state that it refers to a group of people who have something in common. For example, "[c]ommon residence, geographic region, and shared belief, or claim membership in a common lineage structure, or are distinguished by similarities of economic activity or class position". Marschall also mentions the way the term is often abused in order to motivate for funding of projects where personal advancement of the facilitators is the major goal and not the development of the 'community'.

I have found two divergent opinions on the ideal relationship between the 'community' and the public space artwork from two of the most relevant writers with regard to street art and mural art as activism. Marshchall (1999) writes specifically about community murals in South Africa and FaridaB (2012) is writing about street art and traditional public art in general. Marschall

(1999) explained that modern cities do not possess homogeneous communities, so a unifying image of identity is nearly impossible. She argued that for a community mural to be successful, the identification and involvement of a relevant community is vital. Murals can be imposed on a community in the same way as a billboard, without representing the interests of the people. Through her research Marschall (1999) found that murals in rural settings were more successful in terms of representing the audience. This is because of their homogenous nature, which allowed for successful consultation and representation. Marschall also noted that artists working within their own communities were more successful than outside artists in creating murals which were well received and valued. FaridaB (2012: 3) claims, "…the greatest commonality between us is our distinctions and idiosyncrasies". She also states that public art should actively awaken people to their immediate surroundings, their communities, themselves and the esoteric. FaridaB (2012) argued that artwork in the public space needs to reflect the complex and ever-changing nature of society within the morphing modern city. Ideally, it should encourage people to engage with each other and with authorities. I argue that both opinions are valid and capture the major differences between the respective roles of street art and mural art. These opinions also point to the fact that the geographic context needs to clearly inform the approach to art making in the public space. Within a rural setting, engagement with some form of 'community' is vital and unsanctioned artwork would be disrespectful and arrogant. Within the urban context I argue that unsanctioned street art can reflect the lack of a homogeneous community by celebrating ambiguity and asserting ownership or identity in an anonymous space.

The Communicative Potential of Mural Art and Street Art

The communicative potential of street art and mural art is what enables these cultural practices to be useful as activism. The images an individual is confronted with on a daily basis, including advertising, various digital images, television and the media seldom communicate independent, unique, subversive or emotionally stimulating content. These images typically encourage consumption, fear and the status quo as Adorno (1991) illustrated in the section on street and mural art as an alternative to established cultural outlets. The motivation for disseminating street and mural art is to enrich the public space and share new ideas and approaches towards

social cohesion – which is a unique and meaningful form of communication within contemporary public space.

The influential political theorist, psychologist, educator and philosopher John Dewey (1934: 286 in Mattern, 1999: 54) claimed that art is "[t]he most effective mode of communication that exists" and "[t]he most universal and freest form of communication" and should be a vital aspect of democratic politics. Dewey argued that experiences of the social and physical world, which influence and inspire creative works, are in fact shared experiences, which he believed many people could relate to. Mattern (1999: 54-55) further explains Dewey's concept stating that "[a]rt, if closely tied to people's everyday lives, is a form of communication through which people learn about each other's similarities and differences, break through some of the barriers of understanding and awareness, and develop some of the commonalities that define community". According to Dewey, spoken and written communication symbolizes experience while viewing art is a form of direct experience. "Art can express meanings that are not accessible through words and it does this through the creation of new experiences" (Mattern, 1999: 57).

Dewey's ideas have been criticized for being exaggerated and not accounting for the real position of art in society. Mattern (1999) explains that the elitist nature of the fine art industry actually causes divisions between people and does not foster good communication and communal spirit. Art can also be emotionally damaging to the viewer, if it is racist or homophobic, for example. However, if Dewey's claims about the communicative value of art are considered within the scope of street art and mural art, then the closeness of art to people's lives, which Dewey discusses, could be achieved. The accepted fine art cannon that every viewer brings his or her own understanding and meaning to an artwork also questions the clarity of communication through art, as the message the artist intends is not necessarily the meaning the viewer extracts from the work. I think the value of art's communication, as Dewey argued, is the qualitative connection created between people as a result of art and other forms of culture.

The race and class segregation, which is undeniably present in Durban, arguably as a result of apartheid and the capitalist system, can be broken down through the creation of street art and mural art in the public space. I have found that through mural and street art projects I have accessed areas and people who and where I am societally pressured to avoid. By wishing to involve people and places that are typically excluded from the fine art culture, street and mural artists gain access to informal settlements, homeless people and refugees. The practice of working in the public space enables direct and real time communication between artist and audience, resulting in breaking barriers of race and class, which are omnipresent in Durban's public space. The audience and artist have the opportunity to engage with each other, allowing the audience to gain valuable insight into the artists character and identity and the process of their creation. The artist gains insight into the character of their audience for whom the work is created and, as a result, the process is beneficial to both parties. This form of communication or exchange is not as likely within the gallery or museum art system.

The response or meaning of an example of street and mural art to the 'community' can function as public political debate. Mattern explains,

> [t]he communicative significance of art extends beyond its textual meaning to include the active work that is ongoing in a social context in which its meanings are created, contested and changed; and to include the social relationships and practices that swirl around the art piece. (Mattern, 1999: 19)

Marschall (2012) argues a similar point claiming that the meaning of a mural changes over time as the community responds to the work by, ignoring it, actively disliking it by negative interference, or proudly claiming ownership of it. Kwon (2002: 80) explained the significant public art debate surrounding the artwork titled *Tilted Arc*, 1981, by Richard Serra. The work was removed in 1989 after a legal battle where an undefined community felt the work had a negative effect on the plaza where it stood. Kwon (2002: 80) claimed that the *Tilted Arc* debate "…reveals the extent to which public art discourse functions as a site of political struggle over the meaning of democracy".

Street art and mural art create meaning and knowledge through the language of visual art in the public space. The Jamaican born cultural theorist and political activist Stuart Hall (1997) writes about representation as the production of meaning through language (including visual art). He presents three theories, which explain how meaning is produced:

1. In the 'reflective' theory, language reflects the meaning, which exists within the object, person or event.
2. In the 'intentional' theory, language expresses exactly the writer's, speaker's or painter's intended meaning.
3. In the 'constructionist' theory, meaning is constructed in or through language.

Hall, maintains that currently the 'constructionist' theory is the most relevant. Hall claims that nothing in the 'real' world means anything to anyone until it is represented through language. By representing an object, idea, relationship, or social injustice through street art or mural art, people can connect this visual representation to their own mental concept of the subject matter and exchange their meanings through language, creating a discourse. Hall (1997: 44) explains that "[d]iscourse is the production of knowledge through language". This theory is useful in validating the claim that street art and mural art are meaningful.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I began by defining street art, mural art and visual activism. I then explored my topic broadly by establishing the emotional, psychological and social value of art in general and the discourse of public art as activism. I continued to look specifically at how street art and mural art contest the capitalist system. In contextualizing street art and mural art in this study, I explored the current theory on African urban spaces and more specifically South African cities. This led me to engage with the theory of white privilege as a way forward in attempting to reach social justice in South Africa. I then investigated the mural art and street art strategies of participation and site specificity and finally I explored the communicative potential of street art and mural art.

My interest in street and mural art as activism is simply due to the desire to make my art practice functional and useful. The theoretical investigation of street and mural art as activism

is an attempt to provide a framework for street and mural art's functionality and usefulness. The benefits or purpose of street and mural art are less quantifiable and more esoteric than other forms of activism. However, based on this theoretical framework, mural art and street art are presented as forms of visual activism with the main cause being the transformation of the public space into a more convivial living environment. This transformation takes place through the process of creation, including the strategies of participation and site specificity, and through the transformation of the aesthetic of the urban environment. Simultaneously through the stimulation of the shared consciousness of the public, the conformity and isolation encouraged by capitalism is contested. The ritualistic, intuitive and often unsanctioned nature of these public expressions potentially prompts the imagining of an alternative functioning of the dividedness of the South African city.

Chapter Two

The Shifting Functions of Mural Art and Street Art – Literature review, historic and geographic context.

In the previous chapter I explored selected theories pertaining to street art and mural art as activism. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a historic and geographic context to my art practice and research. I am also interested in tracking the shifting position of street and mural artists and how different socio-political climates were responded to locally and internationally.

Firstly, I look at the rock art of the indigenous Southern African San people as what could be considered the beginning of mural art in Southern Africa referring to David Lewis-Williams (1989). This is followed by an examination of Mexican muralism referring to Desmond Rochfort (1993) as a milestone in what could be considered mural art as activism. Next, I look at socially active art in South Africa focusing on muralism informed by Sabine Marschall (2002), with the intention of clearly situating my study in South Africa. I will then shift my focus toward street art starting with an exploration of graffiti as a precursor, theorized by Kristina Marie Gleaton (2012) and Amos Klausner (2011). Finally, I look at street art as social action, highlighting selected examples throughout history provided by Josh MacPhee (2004).

Art as Survival in Southern African San Rock Art

Paleolithic hunter-gatherer people from around the world painted the walls of their cave shelters and performed a vital communal function in their societies. The integrated position of the San Shaman artists in particular, reflects what I would consider the ideal position of the artist. For this reason, I will begin this chapter by exploring the role played by the Southern African San rock artists and attempt to use these findings to inform the imagined function of contemporary street art and mural art in this study. This example is also relevant in illustrating the earliest social position held by the artist in Southern Africa.

I conducted an interview with Ezemvelo National Park's trained rock art specialist guide, Absolom Zondo, on the 14th of July 2017 at the renowned Eland Cave in the KwaZulu-Natal

Drakensberg. John Wright, an Emeritus professor of history at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and Aron Mazel, an archaeologist at the Newcastle University, recorded over 1600 remaining painted images in the shelter, making it the most populated site in the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg. Visiting this culturally valuable site, added primary data and personal experience in informing my research on San rock art. Wright and Mazel's (2007) book titled, *Tracks in a Mountain Range*: *Exploring the History of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg*, informed me of Eland Cave and sited David Lewis-Williams, as the most accepted theorist in interpreting San rock art and is whose research I refer to in this chapter. Alan Woods, the Welsh Marxist political theorist, writer and activist who talks about Marxism and art, has also been used to theorize this argument.

Modern archeologists gained vital insight into the origins of our species through examining the rock art of the ancient civilizations from around the world, an art form that performed a vital social function. In a lecture titled *Marxism and Art* (2011), Woods asked the question: Is art necessary? Woods (2011) argued that the origin of our species begins with art. Art, which was generally painted on cave walls, was profoundly important to the Paleolithic cave people around the world. Hungarian Marxist art historian Arnold Hauser (1951) explained that the painting of animals in cave shelters was a part of the hunting process, a pragmatic means of procuring food. During this time "…art is in the service of life" (Hauser, 1951: 5). Archbishop Desmond Tutu (in Williamson, 1989: 7) supported this claim explaining that painting the walls of their caves was vital to the San people's survival, for them it was a matter of life and death. Woods (2011) described society during this period as "[p]rimitive tribal communism" which occupies the longest portion of our history.

In seeking a deeper understanding of the function of the San rock art, I will refer to David Lewis-Williams' well-respected theory on the subject. I will also refer to the interview I conducted at Eland Cave with Absolom Zondo on the 14th of July 2017. Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1989: 32) argued that the paintings are best understood within the framework of Shaman rituals. Through a trance dance involving the San community group, they were able to activate "[s]upernatural potency that resides in the songs and in the Shamans themselves. When this potency 'boils' and rises up the Shamans' spines, they enter trance". After the trance the

Shamans conveyed their experience of the spirit world to their people. Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1989) suggest that the painting was, in some way, part of this process. Absolom (2017) explained that power was stored in the paintings in Eland Cave as a result of the materials they used as well as what they represented. “These paintings are older than 2000 years. The red paint comes from eland blood and fat and iron oxide from the ochre stone. Eland hair was the fine brush”. The potency of the revered eland and the trance was stored in these paintings. According to Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1989), this potency could be accessed again allowing continued contact with the spirit world and therefore the survival of the San. According to Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1989), Shamans occur in many hunter-gatherer societies around the world and were often very separate from their people. However, the Southern African San Shamans were integrated and common, and the sites they painted were not reserved for access by only a few but were rather occupied spaces of daily life.

The fundamental difference between the San and the colonists’ lifestyles is highlighted by Lewis-Williams and Dowson in their seminal text *Images of Power* (1989). They explained that the first European settlers who came into contact with the San mistrusted them due to their lack of possessions and nomadic lifestyle, considering them animal-like with stunted intellect. Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1989: ii) claimed that “[b]ushman rock art has become recognized as one of the greatest achievements of humankind”. They argue that hunter-gatherer’s rock art’s intellectual and aesthetic complexity matches any contemporary western art. Absolom (2017) claimed that the San people, were chased out of their environment by black and white farmers who regarded them as stock thieves. While South African History Online (2011) stated that the hunter-gatherer way of life was infringed by the Khoikhoi herders and later by the Nguni and Sotho nations, but it was the European colonists who decimated the hunter-gathers with the use of guns and horses within two centuries of their arrival. Today violence continues against the San and according to David Lewis-Williams (1989) there is no clearly respectful term to refer to the marginalized indigenous people of Southern Africa. This is because they had no word to describe themselves as a whole. The terms Khoikhoi, San and Bushmen are all pejorative. I have used the term San as it is arguably the least problematic and is commonly understood.

Despite the massive difference between San rock art and contemporary mural art and street art, predominantly due to being on either side of the Neolithic Revolution, a comparison is useful in exploring the potential role of the mural artist and street artist in contemporary South African society. The most significant revolution, in terms of social development, according to Gordon Child (in Woods ,2015: n.p) is known as "The Neolithic Revolution", which marks the transition from hunter-gatherer to classist society with agriculture and fixed settlement, as well as divisions between rich and poor and the development of the state, armies and organized religion. This transition resulted in a change in the nature of art, from a "[c]ommunal ritual to private property" (Woods, 2011: n. p). Contemporary mural art and San rock art are both fixed to the 'walls' of the respective civilization's living space in a broad sense. While the San painted on natural surfaces, today street and mural artists paint on man-made structures. The egalitarian social functioning of the San also reflects the Marxist ideals associated with muralism. Muralism and San rock art reflect a focus on non-elitism and the placement of art within the functioning of everyday life. The egalitarian and environmentally harmonious social functioning of the San, who employed visual art which was applied to cave walls, as a vital social function could be seen as an alternative model for the problematic capitalist functioning of contemporary art, which was imposed on South Africa through colonization. While San rock art clearly performed a vital social function, I argue that mural and street artists could hold a similar social position occupied by the San Shaman artist over two thousand years ago.

Socially Active Mexican Muralism

Mexican muralism is the first example of mural art being used as a tool for the uplifting of the masses, as opposed to the earlier role of mural art which served the interests of those in power, which was the case with the renaissance frescoes in Europe. Mexican muralism is also the first example of critical ideas represented through the mural format. According to senior African American studies lecturer Paul Von Blum (1993: 463), Mexican muralism signifies the "[e]mergence of one of the most important developments in the history of political art". It is this active participation in society that makes Mexican muralism a valuable example in

exploring mural art as activism historically and highlighting the shifting role of the mural artist. According to Cockcroft and Barnet-Sanchez (1990: 6) Mexican muralism in the 1920's created a "[n]ew national consciousness – a role quite similar to that of the religious murals of the Italian Renaissance although directed towards a new form of social cohesion". The Renaissance murals represented the shared ideals of the powerful and the powerless, while the Mexican murals supported the popular revolution against the ruling class, the clergy, and the colonial powers.

Mexican muralism aimed at conveying social and political messages to the public. Jose Clemente Orozco in (Rochfort, 1993: 9) claimed that "[t]he highest, the most logical, the purest form of painting is the mural… it cannot be made a matter of private gain, it cannot be hidden away for the benefit of a certain privileged few. It is for the people". The Mexican muralists played a vital role in their society, in direct opposition to the prevailing role of the artists in the west, who may have expressed critical ideas but were removed culturally and intellectually from the general public. According to Clement Greenberg, the American art critic (in Rochfort, 1993: 8), western modern art had "[r]etired from the public altogether" and was pursuing "[a]rt for art's sake".

The Mexican muralist movement was influential in the establishment of a post-colonial new national identity. Desmond Rochfort's book *Mexican Muralists* (1993), focused on the work of Jose Clemente Orozco, David Siqueiros and Diego Rivera as the leading artists of the movement. Rochfort explained that initially these artists depicted the trauma of the 1910 civil war. As Mexico began to stabilize, the muralists began depicting Mexico's new identity. This involved reviving the indigenous cultural aesthetics of Mexico which had been subjected to 400 years of colonial subjugation, predominantly by the Spanish. This aesthetic transition occurred gradually. The initial murals clearly represented European aesthetics and themes, despite the artists' intentions of representing a unique Mexican style. Rochfort (1993) claimed that they lacked the artistic maturity to synthesize their new ideas with their art practice, which was informed by their European education and artistic influence. Gradually, the artists began delving deeper into the country's past in an attempt to redefine its new identity. In this way the artists were attempting to heal the damage done by colonialism. According to Frantz Fanon (in Rochfort, 1993: 83), "…colonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present

and future of a dominated country… it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it".

The Mexican muralists played an active role in negotiating Mexico's post-colonial identity. However, there were obstacles which required alternative activist strategies. According to the research fellow from the Ciudad University in Mexico, Alicia Azuela (1994), the prominent mural artists, excluding Rivera, terminated their mural painting contract with the state shortly after the initial murals because they felt the new government had betrayed the ideals of the revolution. They created an independent newspaper called *El Machete* which they used to distribute their opinions and political cartoons. Azuela (1994) claimed that the artists felt it was through this newspaper that they gained political maturity and successfully reached the masses with socially conscious public art. The mural artists formed their own trade union which solidified them as a political collective. They released the newspaper *El Machete* and a manifesto which stated, "[w]e repudiate so-called easel painting and every kind of art favoured by ultra-intellectual circles, because it is aristocratic, and we praise monumental art in all forms, because it is public property" (Rochfort, 1993: 39). This manifesto cemented muralism as a movement and a vital part of the Mexican revolution.

Alicia Azuela, in her article *Public Art: Meyer Schapiro and Mexican Muralism,* provided viewpoints which question the validity of Mexican muralism as visual activism. One of the main discrepancies discussed is the relationship between the artist and the state patrons, who often had their own political interests in mind when commissioning the work. This kind of work could be accused of being propaganda. The actual accessibility of the murals was also a concern, since the works were generally painted within government buildings. Raising the question of how often ordinary citizens would access these sites? According to Mayer Schapiro (in Azuela, 1994: 58), the value of revolutionary public work is gauged by its "[h]onesty, its vigour and its ability to stimulate change". Azuela concluded that

> [o]wing to its expression of sincere hatred of oppression and a fundamental sympathy to the masses, Mexican muralism has achieved its ultimate end by serving as a constant stimulus to mobilise on behalf of change. (Azuela, 1994: 59)

Mexican muralism served as a model for the public arts programme used in the United States as a part of the New Deal. During this period of economic hardship, muralism provided state funded employment to artists and allowed art to be liberated from the confines of the gallery and the museum to serve the masses (Azuela, 1994). According to Von Blum (1993), the tradition of socially critical murals was continued in the United States due to the strong influence of Mexican muralism. Von Blum (1993: 464) claimed that **"**[s]everal political murals of that era generated dramatic censorship battles, suggesting that broader audiences created by the mural format were far more threatening to established interests than privately held paintings or prints with comparably strong political content".

It appears that Mexican muralism is the most celebrated example of mural art as activism. A brief comparison with South African muralism, explored in the next section, can be used to highlight the differences between the two movements and how Mexican muralism was so successful. South Africa's mural history is similar to that of Mexico in that both countries suffered under colonialism (and apartheid in South Africa) which influenced and informed the majority of the early murals. Both movements were most productive after breaking the chains of oppression, where the murals served as a form of catharsis. The mural movement in South Africa was never as cohesive and competitive as the Mexican counterpart, possibly due to a lack of state patronage. It did, however, still perform an underrated role in the transition out of apartheid. Post-apartheid South African muralism occurred much later than Mexican muralism and included participation and involvement of communities, which became popular in various forms of more recent public art around the world. This development, in further considering the publics' relationship to public art, might not have happened without the foundations laid by Mexican muralism. The successful aesthetic transition made by the Mexican muralists to reflect indigenous styles, for me, suggests that South African mural and street artists should also strive to create a site specific aesthetic.

South African Visual Activism

A brief exploration of traditional art as activism in South Africa is provided as a context and comparison for the main focus of street art and mural art. This comparison highlights the

interconnected nature of all forms of visual activism but suggests that mural and street art are more useful approaches.

Township art emerged during the early years of apartheid in South Africa. Practicing artist and lecturer at Durban University of Technology, Themba Shibase, in his dissertation (2009) argued that township art, which is associated with black artists working under the oppression of apartheid around the 1950s and 1960s, was a form of visual activism. The optimism contained in the early township artworks characterized the form of resistance to the oppression of the apartheid regime. Protest art or resistance art occurred after township art. The Culture and Resistance conference in Gaborone in 1982 was the point when the role of art as a form of resistance to apartheid was clearly identified and decidedly pursued, marking the beginning of resistance art.

The artist, poet, activist and ANC member Dikobe waMogale Martins presented his paper titled *The Necessity of Art for National Liberation* at the Culture and Resistance Conference: Culture is a Weapon of Struggle (1982). The conference encouraged its participants, which consisted of various cultural workers, to become active members in the liberation struggle. According to Martins (1982: 103) in Judy Seidman's book *Red on Black: The Story of the South African Poster Movement* (2007)

> …art must teach people, in the most vivid and imaginative ways possible, how to take control over their own experience and observations, how to link these with the struggle for liberation and a just society free from race, class and exploitation. (Martins 1982: 103)

Martins also motivated cultural workers to ensure their work was accessible and relevant and should strive to reach the broadest audience possible. The thinking was to harness the powerful optimism contained in cultural practice towards social development and justice. Martins stated

> [a]rtists will have to face up to and challenge the prevailing power structures, by raising the level of consciousness, by expanding the boundaries of visual and conceptual experience… in this lies a unique power: 1 – The power to pose alternatives and induce people to think; 2 – The power to combat the specific form that cultural apartheid takes within the sphere of artistic production and in cultural apartheid in general; 3 – The power to look at the

> dominant ideology of the ruling class critically and expose its real function; that of exploitation, discrimination, and oppression, and thereby to assist the people's struggle. (Martins 1982: 106)

The content of the paintings after this conference began depicting the realities of the oppressed communities living under apartheid and were less optimistic than the earlier township art style. However, township art and protest art which ended up in galleries, continued throughout the struggle without significant state intervention. Sabine Marschall (2002) argued that this clearly demonstrates its ineffectiveness as a political agitator. In defense of township art and resistance art, Shibase (2009) explained that the art market during apartheid, which was controlled by the white minority, played a major role in influencing the nature of the work produced by oppressed black artists. These artists depended on the sale of their work for their living and therefore were pressured into creating work that would not critique their patrons.

In contrast to the above situation, many politically active visual artists focused their energy on the production of protest banners, resistance t-shirts and political posters, while mural art played a minor but underrated role in cultural political action. Mural painting and political graffiti were handled seriously by the apartheid police resulting in arrest. Protest work in the public space during apartheid included quick graffiti (which I would define as street art), depicting political slogans, banned symbols such as the ANC flag and illegally installed political posters and banners – especially in Johannesburg and Cape Town (Marschall, 2002).

South African Muralism as Activism

The question which informs this section is: How has mural art reflected activism in South Africa historically? The history of mural art in South Africa is explored by Sabine Marschall in her book *Community Mural Art in South Africa* (2002) and begins with the indigenous San people who painted the walls of their cave shelters and continues with the various African traditions of decorating the homestead (Marschall, 2002: 1). Afrikaaner Nationalist murals were commissioned by the apartheid government to celebrate Afrikaner culture in the 1950s and 1960s. According to Marschall (2002) the first example of a politically motivated mural in South

Africa's public space was painted in Pageview, Johannesburg in 1979. The mural was facilitated by Joachim Schonfeldt and painted by twenty racially mixed young "Revolutionaries". The mural protested against the forced removals of the Asian residents when Pageview was declared a white area. Before the mural was completed, ten of the artists were arrested and detained over-night. Another example of a politically motivated mural provided by Marschall (2002), was painted in 1982 by students and their lecturer. According to Marschall (2002: 45), "[p]erhaps better than any other mural this painting sums up the spirit of the time: Angry protest, determination and optimistic belief in the future". The mural depicts the image of Hector Peterson, famously photographed by Sam Nzima. The image clearly represents the 1976 Soweto Riots which was a turning point in South Africa's history. Resistance to the increasing state repression and violence became more focused and radical and according to Williamson (1989: 8) "…melted the oppressive ice which had frozen South Africans…". Marginalized township youth became progressively politically aware and active and so began the Black Consciousness Movement. These examples demonstrate that mural art did function as activism during apartheid, although on a small scale.

The function and form of mural art changed after apartheid in South Africa. Marschall (2002) explained that the resurgence in mural art, internationally, was part of the Civil Rights Movement during the socially turbulent period of the late 1960s and 1970s. These murals often aimed at questioning social and political norms and represented the interests of marginalised groups. In South Africa, community murals emerged and were associated with the community art movement of the early 1990s in South Africa. This movement was as a result of the post-apartheid government, which ruled that art and culture was a basic human right and not a luxury. The government applied pressure to fine art institutions to include and educate the general population in fine art culture. Community murals clearly matched this rubric and represented values such as "…non-racism, gender equality, reconciliation, respect for human rights and equity…" Marschall (2002: 1). Marschall (2002: 3) defined community murals as "…non-commercial murals designed with the involvement (to widely varying degrees) of, and addressing the local community (that is, local residents, users of a building, passers-by)". Marschall identified Community Mural Projects as the most active mural company operating in

Durban. This organisation was founded by the academically trained Terry-Anne Stevenson and Ilse Mikula, together with the informally trained Thami Jali (who is the subject of one of my murals explored in Chapter Four). The murals painted by Community Mural Projects caught my attention as a school boy, planting a seed of interest in my sub-conscious, which only rose to the surface after participating in graffiti culture and effectively resulted in this study.

Aggressive Graffiti as a Precursor to Street Art

Although I am not focusing on graffiti in this study, due to its lack of communication with the broader public, it is essential to briefly examine it as a forerunner to street art historically and to my own art practice. This example of graffiti also highlights a new social position occupied by the street and mural artists. According to political hip hop pioneer, Krs One (in Reis, 2008), graffiti started at the "birth of human consciousness". To leave their mark on their environment is something which is natural or instinctual to humans. In Cooper and Chalfant's influential New York graffiti book, *Subway Art* (1984), "Taki 183", a delivery boy from 183rd Street in Manhattan, was the first graffiti writer to gain real fame through his extensive tagging. This inspired his peers to seek the same notoriety and soon graffiti writing became a vocation in New York City. The competition for public recognition, or fame, began with the focus on subway trains which carried the graffiti writers' names or artworks from one side of the city to the other.

The aggressive and cryptic nature of graffiti is a result of the socio-political situation the artist experienced in New York in the 1970s and 1980s. Independent curator and writer Amos Klausner in his article *Bombing Modernism* (2011) argued that modernist architecture and society in the United States claimed to strive towards creating a better living situation for all. Instead, through the development of massive housing projects, the working-class citizens were isolated from the rest of the city. According to Kristina Marie Gleaton's master's thesis at the University of Minnesota, titled *Power to the People: Street Art as an Agency for Change* (2012), working class communities in New York were uprooted and shifted around in order to make space for commercial real estate. This resulted in a generation of oppressed teenagers, lacking education and facing negative attitudes and limited opportunities for economic empowerment.

Gleaten (2012) suggested that this unsettling was an intentional move to weaken these communities in order to avoid uprising. Klausner (2012: 2), concluded that "in retaliation they shaped an honest reflection of their lives from a fundamentally post-modern lens that pitted them against larger forces that had denied them individual value and cultural identity". The harnessing of the power of words through graffiti lettering, allowed these inner-city youths to transform their situation from being oppressed to "Kinging the line" (dominating the train system visually). According to Cedar Lewisolm, who curated a street art exhibition at the Tate Modern (in Gleaton, 2012: 10), "[d]ispossessed young people in New York in the 1970's and early 1980's channeling their frustrations and boredom into making visual art – not music, not sport, but art – is unprecedented". The iconic documentary *Style Wars* by Tony Silver and Henry Chalfant (1983), is a notable source on hip hop culture in 1980's New York and served as an almanac for graffiti culture in Durban. In the more current graffiti documentary titled *Bomb It* (2008), Jon Ries claimed that graffiti is the largest art movement in history, in terms of numbers and geographic spread. However, the majority of the mainstream art world still refuses to recognize graffiti as a valid art movement. The Thames and Hudson *Dictionary of Art Terms* (2003: 104) define graffiti as "[w]ords or drawings (often obscene) scrawled or scratched on walls, usually in public places".

The graffiti movement radically forged a new art form beyond the control of the gallery and the capitalist system. Its aggressive, cryptic and non-communicative nature, when experienced by the alienated general public, is a result of the context out of which the movement grew. Most importantly for this study, it laid the foundation for street art. According to Gleaton (2012: 13) "[g]raffiti is linked to hip hop while street art is inextricably linked with a caring sharing 'no logo' anti-capitalist rebelliousness".

Street Art as Social Action

Although street art has only recently become popular around the world, especially on social networks, there is a strong historical tradition of socially engaged street art from around the world. I will briefly explore the various examples I have found, focusing on the way street art was used to affect some form of social change. I will explore in more detail the street art of the

2011 Egyptian revolution in chapter three, as it appears to be the strongest example of the functioning of street art as visual activism. The contemporary nature of this example also adds relevance to this study. The artist and activist Josh MacPhee's book (2004) *Stencil Pirates* is a valuable source on this topic. MacPhee (2004: 12) claimed that street art was used in the 1970s in Nicaragua and Mexico to protest against dictatorship, colonialism and inequality. The stencil technique was applied in both examples. Street art was also used to protest against the oppressive apartheid system. In Sue Williamson's (1989) book, *Resistance Art in South Africa*, she maintains anti-apartheid resistance in South Africa was communicated through stencils and graffiti. As a result of increasing press censorship during the 1970s and the 1980s, messages of resistance moved onto the urban walls with messages including "Free Mandela" and calls for "Peoples Power". Humor was also used, with statements attacking then Prime Minister P.W Botha such as "P.W., the sky is falling on your head". Williamson (1989) claimed the punishment for graffiti could be up to two years in prison for a first-time offender.

New York was the street art capital of the United States with leftist politics being transferred from communist newspapers onto the streets in the 1970s. During this period the public space hosted a vibrant mix of art disciplines including, traditional graffiti, stencil work and academically-trained fine artists interventions (MacPhee, 2004). According to David Sheff in *Rolling Stone Magazine* (1989,) Keith Haring was one of the earliest artists to work in the street when he began drawing socially critical images with white chalk in the New York subway system in 1982. Haring, in Sheff (1989), described his action as "[t]his chalk white fragile thing in the middle of all this power and tension and violence that the subway has". Banksy's documentary *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (2010) presents contemporary street art as a counter cultural global movement. The film provides the viewpoints and work of artists from around the world, including Andre, Zeus, Swoon, Neckface, Sweet Toof, Cyclops, Shepard Fairey and Ron English. The documentary highlights the significant role played by the internet in making the movement coherent; this ephemeral art could now be shared with a world-wide network of artists and audiences (Banksy, 2010). These examples of street art show that this approach to art making in the public space has been utilized as activism around the world since the 1970s and continues today.

From Subversion to Gentrification

Today, mural art has also taken on a new function – that of assisting the process of gentrification of urban areas around the world. According to Ethan Pettit (2015) in his presentation on Ted Talks, gentrification amounts to the transformation of working class neighborhoods into bourgeois professional neighborhoods. Through the increase in property value, working class locals can no longer afford the rental. Mural art is often used as part of the process of gentrification, making the previously depressed area 'trendy'. This means that murals are not always an activist cultural practice. The use of mural art as a means of controlling or manipulating the working class has a long history, dating back to the Renaissance murals that assisted in controlling the masses ideologically by promoting Christianity, for example. Mural art has also been used as a political persuader throughout modern history and the world, including South Africa during apartheid. This exploitation of the power of mural art continues today with the phenomenon of gentrification. I argue that working class citizens may be intellectually and spiritually inspired by the murals that suddenly occur in their neglected neighborhoods. Yet these murals aid in making these areas attractive to the wealthy, who then displace the local residents.

The street and mural artist Blu, from Bologna, Italy provides an interesting example of gentrification, which clearly articulates the phenomenon. Blu erased two of his own iconic murals in Kreuzberg, Berlin as a form of protest against the recent gentrification of the area. These murals moved me the first time I visited the street art hub of Berlin in 2009. On my return in 2015, the murals were dramatically cloaked in black paint. In his article "Kill Your Darlings: The Auto-Iconoclasm of Blu's Iconic Murals in Berlin" (2015), Lutz Henke described how he assisted Blu with the task of blacking out these artworks to the boos and tears of the onlookers who clearly loved and admired the murals. Henke (2015) claimed the mural, depicting a businessman chained by his two gold watches, came to represent "[t]he dreams of society". After World War II, Kreuzberg was unattractive for developers, resulting in an abundance of derelict buildings used for squatting and cheap rent, attracting displaced people, immigrants and artists. This was a fertile creative and alternative environment, out of which

Blu's iconic murals emerged along with an abundance of other street and mural art (Henke, 2015).

It seems the thriving art scene in Kreuzberg was a result of the freedom afforded by the city official's neglect. Once the city attempted to control and capitalize on this creativity the magic of the period was lost. This concept is further explored in Chapter Four as an idea that informed my art practice. Henke describes the new Kreuzberg as

> …an artificial artistic amusement park. This zombification is threatening to turn Berlin into a museum-like city of veneers with preserved, once fleeting art forms as taxidermic attractions for those who can afford the rising rents". (Henke 2015: 294)

Henke (2015: 294) argued that Blu's mural, which successfully critiqued capitalism, can be seen as a 'simulacrum' of the entire process of gentrification in Berlin where the artists "[f]ound themselves in the paradoxical situation of being their own nemesis, perpetually contributing to their own displacement". By erasing his mural, which due to the ephemeral nature of the medium was destined to disappear, Blu ensured the image gained even more power as a monumental public statement against capitalism and more specifically gentrification.

Conclusion

I began this chapter by presenting the rock art of the San People. This example highlighted the central social position occupied by Southern Africa's indigenous artists. Mexican muralism forged a new position for mural art, as a liberator for the masses. Following this international example I brought my focus back to South Africa, investigating visual activism broadly, but finding street art and mural art as the most useful approaches. I then focused closely on examples of activist murals in South Africa before and after apartheid, observing the way it changed. The birth of hip hop culture and graffiti in New York was my next point of interest and where the root of my own interest in public art forms originated. Finally, I presented graffiti as a precursor to street art and looked at examples of street art functioning as visual activism.

This chapter has provided a historical and geographic context to my research and has shown the functions of mural art and street art, shifting over time. These changes in function appear

to be a result of artistic development, shifting power structures and forms of oppression and the influence of specific locational contexts. It appears that mural art and street art have been used to combat various oppressive forces including capitalism, colonialism and religion as well as assisting in creating more convivial urban spaces. It has also been shown however, that murals have also been used to assist oppression through propaganda and ideological control. More recently street art, which is typically unsanctioned, has become a useful option for the functioning of art as activism within the current restrictive capitalist system. Based on the evidence provided in this chapter, mural art and street art appear to be useful approaches in reuniting art in a functional and potentially effective way with modern society. It has also been shown that authority's resistance to these art forms can be expected as they pose a threat to oppressive systems, particularly capitalism and colonialism. With this in mind, I argue that contemporary capitalist society suffers as a result of restricting and inhibiting the functionality of art.

Chapter Three

Visual Activism: Faith47's Murals in Durban's Warwick Junction and the Street Art and Mural Art of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

In the previous chapter I explored street art and mural art as activism historically and geographically. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate contemporary examples of street art and mural art which reflect visual activism.

Firstly, I will investigate the South African mural and street artist Faith47, focusing on her 2014 murals located in Warwick Junction, Durban. This example was selected due to Faith47's international success as a street and mural artist, and because it occurred in Durban, the geographic location of my research. This example also functions to present the tensions and struggles in attempting to categorize another artists work as visual activism. Primary data gathered through interviews with Faith47 and her audience at the site of her murals will be used to unpack what I considered the activist nature of this example. Selected literature dealing with Faith47's work will also be explored to further contextualize this example.

Secondly, I will focus on the street art and mural art of the Egyptian revolution. This example has been chosen because current evidence suggests that it is the most powerful and involved modern use of mural art and street art as activism. Karl (in Hamdy, 2014: 260) supports this view, stating "[g]raffiti (street art) has never been more powerful than it is in Egypt today. It encapsulates the essence of what this revolution is – for the people by its artists". A valuable source on this topic is *Walls of Freedom: Street Art of the Egyptian Revolution* (2014), edited by artist, designer and educator Basma Hamdy and the cultural activist, graffiti writer and author from Berlin, Don Karl. The book contains the writing of selected artists and theorists, exploring the relationship between the street art and mural art and the 2011 popular revolution and the people of Egypt. While Faith47's section focuses on a specific mural project, the Egyptian revolution example explores street art and mural art as an active and vibrant culture with an abundance of practitioners and examples. Both examples occur within the context of the African city, allowing for geographic contextual comparisons. The selected artworks will be critically analyzed as texts,

placing focus on the process and context of production, with the intention of uncovering how these examples reflect visual activism through street art and mural art.

Faith47's Mural Project in Warwick Junction, Durban

I will begin this section by providing a background to Faith47 and her work. Faith47 was born in 1979 and currently resides in Cape Town. She is arguably the most successful South African mural and street artist, being included in the 2016 book *Street Art Today: The 50 Most Influential Street Artists Today*, edited by street art facilitators Bjorn Van Poucke and Elise Luong. She painted a series of murals in Durban's Warwick Junction in 2014, which applied some of the activist ideas identified in the previous chapters. I interviewed her while she was working in Durban, where I gained valuable primary information and insight into her work process and what she considers the meaning and value of her work. I also interviewed members of the public who constitute her audience, uncovering examples of the public's response to her work. This primary information regarding mural art in Durban makes Faith47 a valuable example for this research. According to McMaster (2009), her work is in dialogue with the people and places she visits, "Faith's awe with the world and quest for inspiration comes from a closeness to universal humanity".

Faith47's only art training was through the graffiti culture where she developed a love for traditional graffiti lettering and working in the public space. Faith47 (in McMaster, 2009) said "I've got an appreciation for the grimy and raw side of graffiti. I appreciate the anti-social nature of it, as I find this world quite twisted. There are a lot of value systems and ideas of good and evil that are, to me, unfounded or warped". Faith47 (in Matthew, 2012) claimed that graffiti and street art "[a]dd to the fabric of a city and its culture… when you are painting in the streets you are investing in your community". Faith47 (in Matthews, 2012) explained her motive for working in the public space by asking,

> [w]hy should we restrict ourselves to white walled galleries when there are cities with aching grey walls… cities need a human touch… not adverts and billboards… we as people need to see what other people are thinking and feeling… not what the advertisers would like us to be thinking and feeling…. (Faith47 in Matthews, 2012:n.p)

Faith47 believes that the process of interaction is the essence of humanity. By working in the public space she aims at starting this process but intends for the viewer to bring their own understanding and ideas to her work (McMaster, 2009).

South Africa plays an influential role in Faith47's work. She has a deep love for the country and its people but is very aware of the problems post-apartheid South Africa faces (McMaster, 2009). She highlighted the way inequality in wealth results in violence because "[a] hungry man is an angry man" (Faith47 in McMaster, 2009). Faith47 completely embraces the ephemeral quality of mural art and street art. She actively chooses spaces which are already degenerating. She enjoys the fragility of her work in these spaces and feels it is a metaphor for the impermanence of life. To witness an artwork in the public space before it has degenerated, or been removed, is a sacred and special moment to be treasured (Gregory, 2011).

I am now going to focus on Faith47's process in creating the murals in Durban's Warwick Junction. The six murals she painted in Warwick Triangle in 2014 were sponsored by the Union of International Architecture Conference. Faith chose to work in Warwick Triangle because of the energetic and dynamic informal trade occurring in this space. By working in this environment Faith47 explained the way she began to recognise the functioning systems which initially appeared to be chaos, reiterating AbdouMaliq Simone's (2004) ideas around what he calls 'people as infrastructure', explored in chapter one. She argued that it is important to value and protect this kind of trade (*A study of Warwick Triangle at Rush Hour:* 2014). In my interview with Faith47 on the 21st of July 2014, in Warwick junction Durban at the site of her murals, she explained the political process involved in selecting the portrait subjects for this work. She consulted the various market committees who wanted the committee leaders to be represented while she was considering the aesthetics of the individual people and not political hierarchies.

Faith47 employed the strategy of site specificity by using people who work in Warwick Triangle as the subject matter, abandoning her current more symbolic artistic trajectory. In my interview with Faith47 she explained, "I wanted the works to be something that they could feel represented them and also something that they could embrace and take ownership of after I left". The patterning which makes up the background of the murals draws inspiration from a combination

of Indian mehndi/henna body art and Zulu fabric design – representing the cultural diversity present in Warwick Junction. “I have just developed a technique over the years. At the moment, what I’m working with is a very limited pallet or colour range and a tiny bit of spray paint, mostly acrylic and a lot of water. I like the works to look like they are really old, as if they have been there for a long time, so I often let it blend into the background a lot”. The ‘Stowaways’, a Tanzanian community who live, often informally, in the inner-city of Durban and who are recognized for their graffiti-like writing or poetry, appeared to have added to Faith’s murals. During the interview, I found that Faith added these ‘poems’ herself to acknowledge the presence of the Stowaways in the area. I think this addition would have been more successful if she invited the Stowaways to add their poetry to the mural themselves employing at least some level of participation.

(Figure 2) Faith 47, 2014. **Sea Power.** Acrylic and Spray Paint. Photograph by Luca Barausse, Durban.

When I asked Faith if she considered her work visual activism she surprised me stating

> [n]o, definitely not. I used to be more interested in having something to say. When I started painting, there was a phase when I did the Freedom Charter Project, those works were really based on having a message. I have really moved away from that. So now I am telling an internal journey. Its more about stories, their imagery and what it brings out in people but not trying to have a specific message, it's more malleable and interpretable. (Faith47, 2014:n.p)

I do not wish to force Faith 47's work into the category of activist art with which she does not identify. Instead this example illustrates the inevitable tensions created when attempting to theorize and categorize an artist's work. Faith 47's understanding of the term visual activism is not as broad as the definition I have used in this study. While this mural does not promote a clear message it attempts to stimulate the consciousness of the audience. Faith claimed that attempting to make mural art 'politically correct' through the strategy of participation diminished the critical value of the work. She admires the penetrative power of individual expression through murals within the anonymous city which is what I would consider is the activist quality of her work. Considering South Africa's apartheid past and the current theory of white privilege, I felt compelled to ask Faith about how she feels about being white while the Warwick Junction audience is almost entirely black – an issue I grapple with in my own art practice. She explained that she intentionally ignores race and gender and places all emphasis on the work. This response is in-line with the white privilege theory that it is easy for white South Africans to ignore race as we do not wish to acknowledge that we have benefited from racial discrimination. This raises the question: When commissioning a mural, is it more important to employ an artist rooted in the mural site or an experienced and accomplished outsider artist?

It is also possible to critique Faith's murals in Durban for lacking the strategy of participation motivated by Sitas (2010), Arnstein (1969) and Bishop (2006) in Chapter One. However, based on the interviews with regular users of Warwick Junction and my own perception, I argue that these murals are still successful mostly because of the use of site specificity. In an interview on

the 25th of August 2016, in Warwick Junction with Sam Stephan Kanugu, a Tanzanian ex-patriot and a past chairman within the Stowaway community who occupies Warwick Junction daily, he explained

> …I remember there was some people who came to do these pictures. It was marvelous for us, because it was something inside our lives, that is why we asked them in order to write some messages on top there, SEA POWER, MINE TIME NO MATTER, HOW LONG YOU ARE HERE. That picture is a tiger. You see, our life, we living like a tiger and we are living like an animal, because we got no house, we got no place to sleep, no place to cook… Sometimes we got no food, we can survive a full day without eating, but we do believe in God. (Sam Stephan Kanugu, 2016:n.p)

When I asked Kanugu how this mural could help him, he claimed, "[t]his painting, they give us hope, you see, and more pain". Kanugu (2016) also explained that tourists were attracted to Warwick Junction to take photographs of the murals and the Stowaways, potentially providing them with tips.

(Figure 3) Faith47, 2014. **Mr Singh**. Acrylic and spray paint. Photograph by Faith47, Durban.

In another interview on the 25th of August 2016, in Warwick Junction, Fahiem, who occupies Warwick Junction every day, claimed that it was the murals which attracted him to the space. Faheim claimed that the murals inspire him and remind him of the people from the past. He interpreted the representation of the Warwick Junction trader Mr Singh (Figure 3) as an image of Mahatma Gandhi, claiming, "[t]he Indian people have a life today because of Gandhi". In another interview on the 25th of August 2016, in Warwick Junction, Busisiwe Mpofana, an intern at *The Post* newspaper and who commutes through Warwick Junction daily, claimed that she enjoyed viewing Faith's work on her way home. She also believed that the murals carried a historical reference. She was drawn to the representation of Ma Dlamini, who according to Faith47 (in *A study of Warwick Triangle at Rush Hour*: 2014) is a strong wise woman who is outspoken in the market. Mpofana (2016) explained that she related to the image of Ma

Dlamini (Figure 4) carrying mealies. “When I look at this one I just miss home, I miss my gran…” I noticed that Mpofana became emotional and nostalgic at this point during the interview, due to the stirring of what appeared to be fond memories.

(Figure 4) Faith 47, 2014. **Ma Dlamini**. Acrylic and spray paint. Photograph by Kierran Allen, Durban.

By developing an understanding of Warwick Junction through research, interviews and intuition, Faith47 was able to create incredibly site specific murals. Faith’s use of the wash and limited palette integrates the murals into the space, assisting the site specificity and creating a historical impression. The work looks as though it has been present in the area for a long time and truly belongs. The representation of the traders does not appear to be clearly interpreted by the interviewees but may have assisted in making the work site specific on an intuitive level. The representation of the traders could also be seen as the recording or creation of new or recent history in Warwick Junction. This notion of the value of recording recent stories or history will be further explored in the following section dealing with the mural art and street art of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. Poucke and Luong (2016) claim that Faith47’s work evokes

humanity's collective memory by using imagery which references religion or spirituality. This applies to the Warwick Junction murals which also include representations of a cheetah and an Nguni cow. They also argue that Faith attempts to transcend all forms of individual identity. In this way Faith's murals could be seen as the creation of a kind of collective identity based on collective memory and intuition, rather than stereotypes, for the people who use Warwick Junction regularly.

The aim of investigating Faith47's murals in Warwick Junction was to illustrate the transformative potential in this specific work and also resulted in highlighting the challenges in attempting to label this work activist. In the consulted literature, Faith47 expresses her objection to the capitalist construction of space, suggesting that street and mural art are a potential antidote for this. Her decision to work in Warwick Junction and stated admiration of the informal nature of this market suggests that she values this alternative, or less western functioning, of urban space. She also claims that street and mural art can be a form of communication between citizens, which appears to have been validated by the interviews I conducted with her audience. Much of the transformative success of these murals relies on the successful application of the strategy of site specificity. It is useful to reiterate Korean-American author of *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity*, Miwon Kwon's (2002: 8) broad explanation for the virtues of site specific art, provided in Chapter One. He states that

> "[f]or if the search for place-bound identity in an undifferentiated sea of abstract, homogenized, and fragmented space of late capitalism is one characteristic of the postmodern condition, then the expanded effort to rethink the specificity of the art-site relationship can be viewed as both a compensatory system and critical resistance to such conditions".

The next example in this chapter focuses on the street art and mural art of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. This section examines the activist and the extensive culture of street art and mural art, specifically in Cairo. This example differs from the first in that it looks at the work of many artists who were all working towards a similar goal. The revolutionary context of this example

means that the work is more clearly activist, while Faith47's murals would be considered more transformative.

The Street Art and Mural Art of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution

(Figure 5) Military police beat protestors near Tahrir Square, 20 November 2011. Photograph by Mostafa Sheshtawy.

The street art of the 2011 Egyptian revolution is the strongest and most current example of the functioning of street art and mural art as activism I have found during this research. Chad Elias (in Karl and Hamdy, 2014: 8) shares a similar sentiment, stating "…it is the graffiti artists who successfully fused aesthetics and politics (as well as theory and practice) in their work, emerging as among the most powerful creators of revolutionary culture".

I will begin this section by providing the historical context out of which the activist street art and mural art of the 2011 Egyptian revolution emerged. According to Shazy (in Hamdy and Karl, 2014) the Egyptian people have been oppressed since the beginning of their long-recorded history. Not surprising, but without deviation, the Ancient Egyptian working class has been represented as a subservient people through Hollywood films and state funded art and

literature which glorifies the elite. This assists in the maintenance of the status quo. Shazy (in Hamdy and Karl, 2014) argues that the Egyptians have always been critical and rebellious with the first example of a labour strike and critical art taking place in Ancient Egypt. Hamdy (in Hamdy and Karl, 2014) argues that the 1919 Egyptian revolution against British colonial rule triggered a renewed interest in Egyptian folk art. The pursuit for an authentic Egyptian style continued in the 1950s when artists rejected the European aesthetic, which was favoured by the Egyptian upper class who considered Egyptian folklore culture to be inferior and relevant only to the poor and ignorant. The pursuit for an authentic Egyptian style and an art form of relevance to the everyday Egyptian continued through the street art and mural art of the 2011 Egyptian revolution.

The socio-political and economic climate of the time is provided by Hamdy (in Hamdy and Karl, 2014). Under the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian people suffered various grievances, including low wages and increasing food prices. Keeping Egypt in a continuous state of emergency extended the power of the police, suspended constitutional rights and legalized censorship. Adding to this pressure, Egyptian society was extremely divided by religion and class. Hamdy (in Hamdy and Karl, 2014) claims that this is a result of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism resulting in the marginalization of the Coptic (Christian) Egyptians, abuse of human rights and cultural censorship. The public space prior to the revolution was characterized by presidential propaganda and advertising used to maintain ideological control of the people. A culture of "…interpersonal censorship and surveillance that had become incorporated into the routines of everyday life" (Elias in Karl and Hamdy, 2014: 90). All of these factors prompted the 2011 Egyptian revolution.

Street art was in the midst of the conflict between the protesters and the authorities, acting as the voice of the revolution. According Soueif (in Hamdy and Karl, 2014) the revolution took place in Egypt's urban public spaces, especially Cairo, where protesters attempted to overthrow the oppressive system, maintained by the army and the police and create a new order based on peace and equality.

"And when the street art of the revolution appeared it reaffirmed that certainty a million-fold. For it did what only art can do: Art shows you your own feelings, your own thoughts and impulses, articulated, transmuted, given form. And it shows you in the act of mutual recognition, that you and the collective are one" (Soueif in Hamdy and Karl, 2014: 5).

(Figure 6) Ammar Abo Bakr in action, September 2012. Mohamed Mahmoud Street. Photograph by Hassan Emad Hassan.

The street art of the 2011 Egyptian revolution provided an opposing voice to the state-owned media, which cast the revolution and the protestors in a negative light. Elias (in Hamdy and Karl, 2014) claimed that the state media aggressively disseminated false and simplified information which represented their interests promoting fear and passivity from the public. The street art, in opposition to this, encouraged a public debate about the living conditions in Egypt. Social media was also widely employed to spread an alternative voice to the oppressive mainstream media.

In exploring the activist role of social media, Sophie Williamson (2017) highlighted the Mosireen collective, based in inner-city Cairo, which utilized the power of the camera and the accessibility of YouTube and "[c]ontinues to play a key role in envisioning Egypt's future". The collective combats media censorship and government oppression by representing an independent citizen perspective of the politics on the street. Williamson (2017) describes this new form of media as 'citizen journalism' where untrained individuals with mobile phones document the revolution on the front lines. The Mosireen collective have also created a workspace, utilized by film makers, aspiring citizen journalists and activists. They are also famous for the facilitation of public film screenings in Tahrir Square, representing revolutionary content including citizen journalism. The collective has published significant revolutionary events including the massacre of 28 Coptic Christians who were marching peacefully and the violent attack of a female protestor by Egyptian soldiers. In January 2012 they became the most viewed non-profit YouTube channel in the world. Elias (in Hamdy and Karl, 2014: 91) discussed the efficacy of both street art and social media as agents of social change and concluded "[i]f video footage of army brutality inspires outrage among revolutionary Egyptians, the painted memorial in the streets serves to give existential weight to the martyrs' deaths (Figure 7) and a mnemonic value that the electronic image seems to lack".

(Figure 7) Ganzeer, March 2011. **Martyr Islam Raafat, 18 years old**. Stencil, acrylic and spray paint. Photograph by Midan Falaki.

The nexus between street art and the Islamic faith during the revolution gave rise to a new aesthetic and functioning of visual art. The street artist Ammar Abo Bakr employed verses from the holy Quran in an attempt to expose the Muslim Brotherhood political party of using Islam to gain political power (Hassan in Hamdy and Karl, 2014: 190). Hassan argued that Islamic street art also attempted to expose the alliance between the security forces and the Muslim Brotherhood, who claimed the revolution as their own. The Islamic street artists of the Egyptian revolution supported a more progressive application of the faith, Hassan (in Hamdy and Karl, 2014: 190) argued that combining street art and the Quran is a powerful tool to distinguish right from wrong. Other stylistic influences of the Egyptian street art included Pharaonic, Coptic and western street art aesthetics. The combination of all these styles and the addressing of issues, including the corruption of the justice system, celebration of martyrs and indigenous/informal art, women's rights and the critique of ultra-conservative Islamic practices all assisted the formation of a new Egyptian identity.

The claiming back of Egypt's ancient and culturally valuable history also assisted in the formation of a new national identity, based on Egypt's ancient history and represented on the walls of the city as murals. Lisa Lau (2017), a linguistics junior at Boston University explores the power of living history, manifested through murals in Cairo. Lau claims that this expression of history is more beneficial to the Egyptian people than the traditional western museums, which do not encourage interaction with the general public. Lau (2017) specifically focuses on the murals painted on Mohamad Mahmoud Street by the art school professors Ammar Abu Bakr and Alaa Awad (Figure 8). Lau (2017) argued that "[r]eleasing history from the determination of a dominant narrative pretending to be the only one and returning it to living society, to the imagination that reinterprets and re-enfolds history into daily life and the community can lead to empowerment".

(Figure 8) Alaa Awad, 2012. **Mural of the Wailing Woman.** Acrylic. Mohamed Mahmoud Street, Cairo.

These historically themed murals contain powerful activist qualities. Lau (2017) argued that history could be understood as a 'communal narrative', a shared story that ties people together and that the most valuable position for history, in terms of influencing society, is in the imagination of the people. Rappaport (1995: 798) in Lau (2017) claims that "[i]t is very clear that stories… have a powerful effect on human behaviour. They tell us not only who we are but who we have been and who we can be". The use of pharaonic motifs, imagery and concepts combined with representations of current affairs connected these valuable cultural resources with the current revolution and the people. "Thus by suggestion the murals have the capacity to re-instill Egyptians with a sense of their dignity and their right to seek justice" (Lau, 2017). The use of historical references as a strategy towards the creation of new identities appears to be common among the activist mural examples I have explored in this study.

Mohammad Mahmoud Street, where Ammar Abu Bakr and Alaa Awad painted their murals, was the site of violent revolutionary clashes between November 2011 and February 2012. The artists were painting during these clashes, occasionally putting their brushes down long enough to throw stones with the other protestors. The painting process also included an element of

participation, where discussions and debates were held between the artists and the public. In this way these mural sites became sacred for the revolutionary Egyptians. Prayers by Islamic and Coptic Egyptians were performed at these sites and when and the murals were threatened by authorities, the people defended them. This point highlights the connectedness of the street art and mural art to the revolution.

Portraits of martyrs were a vital part of these murals and Lau (2017) explains that this is an example of the simultaneous representation of personal and collective stories. The artists were in this way writing their history as it happened, creating a continuous narrative from the ancient past to the present. This assisted in the enhancement of the viewers' understanding of their history, validating their own present life and their own personal role in creating history and enhancing a sense of personal agency.

Various forms of what could be broadly considered street art became ubiquitous as the different stages of the revolution played out, especially in Cairo. The walls became contested democratic spaces where a full spectrum of standpoints were expressed. Certain walls became layered with contributions, alterations and erasures from various artists, activists and oppressors. This perpetually shifting dialogue of public imagery came to represent the ambivalent nature of the revolution itself. Currently the revolution has failed in creating a new system. Husseiny (in Hamdy and Karl, 2014: 155) argues that overthrowing a corrupt regime is simpler than transforming the society that created it. She claims that "[s]ocial inequality and gender inequality are deeply rooted in our cultures", but art is essential in motivating the public to continue pursuing freedom and justice.

The murals and street art of the Egyptian revolution reflect activism by creating a sense of unity among protestors by publicly and creatively articulating revolutionary ideals to which many people related. The murals and street art combatted state propaganda and media by representing an alternative revolutionary perspective on social and political events. The role of citizen journalism was also an important factor in this regard. The street art and mural art also contributed to the creation of a new Egyptian identity by addressing various issues associated with ultra-conservative Islamic practices. The combination of various religious and historical

visual elements specific to Egypt were also synthesized in the street and mural art, advancing this new identity. By claiming back Egypt's valuable history from stagnant western museums into the imaginations of the public through the murals and street art, a new sense of personal agency was created through an awareness of the past.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I began by looking at mural art as activism by exploring a specific mural project in Durban by Faith47. This example presented a challenge as Faith 47 did not consider her work to be activism. However according to the definition of activism I have used in this study this example clearly reflects of visual activism and highlights the challenges in attempting to categorizing another artists work. I then looked at street art and mural art as a collective activist movement in the 2011 Egyptian revolution. In comparing these two examples the question arises: Why is there such a limited activist street art and mural art culture in Durban? While contemporary post-apartheid Durban is a space with socio-political and economic unrest, it is arguably far more stable than the climate in the Egyptian example. Perhaps this suggests that these activist cultures arise out of a necessity? Maybe the disenfranchised people in Durban perhaps do not have the means to create revolutionary street art and mural art? This comparison also highlights the disconnectedness of Faith47 to Warwick Junction, a privileged outsider working on behalf of the underprivileged 'other', which often appears to be the case in South Africa. I argue Faith47 has managed this problematic relationship exceptionally well, and her work still qualifies as activism. Alternatively, she could have avoided this situation by working in one of the many developed and opulent parts of Durban, such as Umhlanga Rocks. She also could have employed the strategy of participation but perhaps the undeniable penetrative power of her artistic vision may have been compromised.

Chapter Four

A Critical Reflection on My Own Street Art and Mural Art as Activism

In the previous chapter I explored the activist nature of Faith47's mural project in Durban and the street and mural art of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. In this chapter, I will reflect on selected examples of my own practical work with the intention of aligning these works with visual activism. I will pay special attention to the relationship between my work and the theory of art as activism, cultural studies, participatory art, site specificity and the theory of African cities. I will also analyze the data gathered through interviews with selected members of the public and experts within the field of art as activism in Durban in an attempt to uncover the meaning of my art practice to my interviewees. This method has been used in an attempt to determine the activist nature of my art practice. The practical work has been organized into two themes, Dissidence in Nature, which generally focuses on examples of unsanctioned street art and Interconnections, which focuses on participatory and collaborative mural projects. These themes have been used to highlight connections between the different examples of the practical component of my study.

After graduating in 2012 with my Bachelor of Technology degree, I found myself focusing on commercial murals in order to make a living. This research was a pragmatic approach to making meaningful artwork in the public space with personal educational advancement and not monetary remuneration as the key motivator. The practical work explored in this chapter promotes various social and environmental causes, with the unifying element being the investigation of street art and mural art as activism, as well as the two themes mentioned above.

Dissidence in Nature

Dissidence in Nature is explored as a theme, which connects examples of my practical work. Initially I did not clearly identify Dissidence in Nature as a theme as my choice of topics was intuitive at first. Only through reflection have I been able to identify the distinctively discursive

formation, which makes up the essence of this theme. The theorists I will refer to, in the exploration of this theme are primarily Doung Jahangeer and secondarily Katherine Ball, Stuart Hall and John Jordan. Ways of understanding the African, and more specifically the South African city, is provided by Achille Mbembe, Sarah Nuttal, Doung Jahangeer, AbdouMaliq Simon and Asef Bayet.

Through the exploration of this theme I argue that the inevitable and powerful resistance of nature to the expanding imposition of the built environment as a part of the constant pursuit of modern progress, validates the necessity for cultural dissidence, specifically through street art, in the urban environment. In other words, the 'natural' biological tendency to disrupt the physical structures of the current system suggests that dissidence is an essential or 'natural' constituent of creativity, especially within the built environment.

The relationships between authority and power, urban spaces and creativity lie at the center of the investigation of this theme. In an interview conducted under tollgate bridge in Durban on the 16th of February 2017, the Durban based public space performance artist and activist Doung Jahangeer, used the concept of Dissidence in Nature as a metaphor for street art and graffiti. Jahangeer's explanation of this concept supported my own thinking and prompted me to arrange some of my work within this theme. Jahangeer (2017) highlighted the liminal in between spaces; the spatial borderlines where nature prevails and our control of space fails. He claims that "[i]n those spaces of in between, in the invisible presence of absence, you find there consistent throughout, it harbors creativity". In one sense, authority truncates creativity. Therefore in the spaces of limited control creativity in nature and culture flourishes. However, it is the lack of authority or power, which makes these borderline spaces potentially vibrant. In this sense, power and authority still influences creativity. In an alternative view, power and authority provide the creative energy (artistic or natural) with something to fight against, or navigate around, creatively. This friction between creativity and control is at play when gentrification occurs. Liminal, undesirable and abandoned spaces breed creative responses. Commercial interests suddenly recognize the value in these newly activated spaces and attempt to capitalize on this created value. With renewed commercial interest comes control and the creative moment is often lost.

Dissidence in Nature is not restricted to inspiration for creative transformative cultural practices or as a beacon for potential creative spaces, it can also be applied directly as an activist strategy. In *A Handbook for artistic stratergies in real politics* (2014: n.p) the scientist and activist Katherine Ball, from the United States of America, is interested in the biological potential to disrupt or create 'inertia' within harmful hegemonic systems. She lists various examples of biological happenings, which break down or disrupt infrastructure and therefore the system. "Ink cap mushrooms breaking through roads, raspberry crazy-ants short circuit electronics… sulphur-reducing bacteria corrodes oil pipelines, and termites devour money". Ball proposes to utilize these natural phenomena as an alternative to traditional forms of protest. She highlighted the effectiveness of contaminating a problematic system, which results in a kind of 'inertia' and paranoia and therefore a general ineffectiveness in the functioning of the contaminated system. Ball proposes to carefully act in the grey area between legal and illegal action and emphasizes the importance for rigorous self-reflection with regard to remaining ethical. Ball claimed that everybody who participates in the global discourse is guilty of biological harm. "It is not a question of being or not being a saboteur, it is a question of what kind of a saboteur we want to be" (n.p). Ball's emphasis on self-reflection in order to remain ethical is an approach I tried to employ in my own art practice, especially with regard to unsanctioned and participatory work. However, she also highlights what she considers the necessity for dissidence.

The Strangler Fig

(Figure 9) Mook Lion, Tyran Roy, 2014. **Strangler Fig**. Spray paint and acrylic. Bulwer Road, Glenwood, Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion.

This mural, titled *Strangler Fig*, (Figure 9) is an example of the powerful potential for creativity embodied in the strangler fig tree to break the current oppressive system represented by the wall. In exploring the potential activist nature of this mural, I will begin by investigating the subject matter which is represented. The potent rebelliousness of the strangler fig represented street art and graffiti metaphorically for me. Three years after this mural was created, this metaphor was reiterated by Jahangeer (2017) and then became a theme, which now connects this mural to other examples of my art practice. The strangler fig tree, which is ubiquitous in Durban's urban spaces, aggressively attaches itself to the built environment. The strangler fig sapling is germinated from leaf clusters, which gather together in gutters and various

opportune infrastructural spaces. In nature these trees crack rocks in cliffs and suffocate host trees with their enormous hydraulic strength (Hankey, 2003). Within the built environment the same power is exerted with significant structural alterations to the urban fabric.

The strangler fig's appropriation of urban space was the subject matter for this mural, which was a collaboration between Tyran Roy and myself. The outer wall of the KZNSA gallery in Durban's green and trendy suburb of Glenwood, was the location. However, this mural is not an example of dissidence in one sense, as the mural was commissioned and part of the International Architecture Conference which took place in Durban in 2014. It was completed within the constraints of the system on a wall which hosts new murals regularly, failing to claim new urban territory – a quality I admire in the strangler fig. I created the design and together we painted the mural using a combination of acrylic paint and spray paint. I focused on the fig tree and Tyran painted the cracking wall.

This mural represented the strength and rebelliousness of nature in Durban. It attempted to stimulate the imagination of the viewer, appearing as though the physical wall was being crushed. It is a theme that I have never encountered in popular media or mural art in Durban and therefore is valuable in the creation of new meanings in the urban environment about the tension between the built environment and nature. The Jamaican born cultural theorist and political activist Stuart Hall (1997) writes about representation as the production of meaning through language (including visual art). This theory was explored in Chapter One in the section investigating the communicative potential of street art and mural art. In the 'constructionist' theory, which Hall promotes, meaning is constructed in or through language. Hall claimed that nothing in the 'real' world means anything to anyone until it is represented through language. In this case, the phenomenon of the strangler fig in the urban environment is represented through the language of mural painting. Now that this phenomenon has been represented, people can connect this visual representation to their own mental concept of the strangler fig and exchange their meanings through language creating a discourse. Hall (1997: 44) explained, "[d]iscourse is the production of knowledge through language". I interpret this mural as an example of the powerful potential for creativity, embodied in the strangler fig tree, to break the current oppressive system represented by the wall.

Cape Town's Baboons

(Figure 10) Mook Lion, 2015. **Baboons #1.** Acrylic and wheat paste. Kloof Street, Cape Town. Photograph by Mook Lion.

This project reflects visual activism by attempting to highlight the lethal management of the Chacma baboons in Cape Town and the control of the divided public space by the elite. I will begin by explaining my rationale. The Chacma baboon's natural habitat is constantly decreasing and deteriorating all over South Africa. The lethal 'management' of baboons includes culling and aggressive fencing. Baboon Matters Trust (2016) argued that humans are in fact the root of the problem. They suggest a re-evaluation of our management of our waste and consumption and control of space, which causes the majority of the conflict. They also highlight the necessity for educating the public and pushing government to implement laws protecting the baboons.

I deeply admired the dissidence of the Chacma baboons in Cape Town. I felt the popular representation of the baboons as a nuisance to humans was deeply unjust as their natural habitat is decreasing rapidly due to urbanization. I also noticed the competition for space

around Table Mountain, resulting in the displacement of the baboons and disenfranchised people by the powerful. I responded to the baboon situation by mimicking their disregard for the control and ownership of urban space in Cape Town. I did this by illegally superimposing a representation of the baboons on the walls of the city (Figure 10, 11, 12). In this way, the theme of Dissidence in Nature was reflected methodologically. Each poster was hand painted and installed with wallpaper adhesive. I noticed the abundance of legal murals and illegal graffiti in Cape Town and felt that critical unsanctioned or dissident street art was missing. This also informed my choice of medium.

(Figure 11) Mook Lion, 2015. **Baboons #1**. Acrylic and wheat paste. Cape Town. Photograph by Mook Lion.

In my interview with Jahangeer (2017) he referred to the city as a text, "[a]n experimental collaboration among writers, writers as you, as us, as the architect, as the urban planners, as the walkers, everybody is writing meaning all the time, as we move through space". This metaphor is useful in exploring street art as activism and will be used often in this chapter. With

this idea in mind, I was attempting to write the baboons into the text of the city, attempting to highlight their mistreatment and the control of urban space by the elite. I installed the posters in the public space without authorized permission in broad daylight and never encountered any intervention by the authorities. This experience highlighted the fragility of the fabric of control of the urban space which is perpetuated as being all-powerful, especially in Cape Town. The artist, activist and author John Jordan (1998) highlights this idea in his article, *The Art of Necessity: The Subversive Imagination of Anti-Road Protest and Reclaim The Streets*, which I explored in Chapter One in the section presenting public art as activism. Jordan is interested in combing art and life to creatively contest the dominant system. He explained that the element of risk, which I employed by working illegally, enhances a sense of focus, which assists in the shifting of the consciousness of the viewer.

I was meticulously selective of the surfaces I appropriated, choosing liminal spaces, spaces on the border of the text of the city, spaces which no one was proud of or personally responsible for, according to my own judgement. This careful selection of space assists in the avoidance of legal intervention. These spaces also assist the artwork aesthetically, usually having various textures of neglect or the opposite stark desolateness of grey-washed public infrastructure. As a writer of text or meaning in the city, simply by moving through space, it is important to control one's body language when installing unsanctioned street art. By employing a confident posture while installing the posters, I was attempting to make it appear that my work was authorized.

(Figure 12) Mook Lion, 2015. **Baboons #1**. Acrylic and wheat paste. Cape Town. Photograph by Mook Lion.

In addition to the more obvious environmental message conveyed through this work, it also touched on the invisible social and economic divides that exist in South African cities. The out-of-place image of the baboon in the urban environment references South Africa's divided urban space, and my own and potentially other's feelings of alienation in certain public spaces. Mbembe and Nuttall (2004: 359) highlighted the 'polycentric' and 'divided' nature of Johannesburg with townships and 'security suburbs', which all relate to each other and create the complex metropolis. This theory was introduced in Chapter One in the section dealing with African urban spaces and supports this reference. To conclude, this project aims to reflects visual activism by attempting to highlight the plight of the baboons and the control of the divided public space by the elite.

Racialized Baboons

(Figure 13) Mook Lion, 2015. **Racialized Baboons**. Spray paint and wheat paste. Cape Town. Photograph by Mook Lion.

The image of the baboon, which I was working with as an environmental issue and as an example of the Dissidence in Nature theme, could take on a new meaning within the context of racism and the tropes of white privilege (Figure 13). I will continue by asking the question: How has white privilege affected my experience of installing unsanctioned street art? Being a visitor in Cape Town forced me to question my assumed right to aesthetic and conceptual agency in the public space, which is a position I developed through doing traditional graffiti. Do people want to see my interventions in the urban environment? Perhaps they prefer being surrounded by blank walls? Considering my privilege as a white, institutionally educated male, do I wish to continue my historical trajectory of cultural imperialism, expressed in the theory of white privilege, through my street art? Working in Durban, however, provides a sense of ownership as it is the place where I grew up and live. Does this give me the right to contribute to the text of

my city of residence? This questioning, in the context of my own art practice, has been heightened as a result of this theoretical exploration.

In South Africa, I belong to a minority group in our population. I had considered myself aware of my race and privilege. In public spaces I often feel excluded, alienated and guilty. In these situations, I have often felt that my whiteness has its disadvantages. If only I was black, perhaps I could get away with more interventions unnoticed? During a master's critique session, it was pointed out to me that perhaps I would have been arrested immediately for putting up these posters if I were black. In accordance with the theory of white privilege, this suggestion surprised me. I had not considered that my white skin might have protected me when illegally installing street art in the public space. As mentioned in Chapter One, this marking of my whiteness by my peers resulted in me researching the theory of white privilege. Mohammad Shabangu (2017) and Richard Dyer (2000) both emphasized the way whiteness has come to represent humanity in general, a race group that is unmarked and therefore enjoys privileges which are rendered invisible and the norm. This clearly accounts for my lack of acknowledgement for the extent of my own white privilege.

(Figure 14) Mook Lion, 2017. **Remember Your Privilege**. Spray paint, stencil and wheat paste. Umgeni Road, Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion.

The privileges associated with economic advantage as a result of being white are blatant. However, the emotional and psychological privileges of whiteness are more difficult to recognize having never personally experienced what it means to be black. While benefiting from white privilege has enabled my art practice in terms of education and opportunities, being white provides the aspiring activist street artist with the challenge of navigating this privilege. In my approach, I have actively tried to collaborate with ethnically and culturally diverse artists in an attempt to promote a sense of cultural diversity. Working with a mixed racial group has appeared to negate any race based negative intervention from the public or the authorities of all race groups. Perhaps it was my whiteness that provided protection in these situations. In this way, my privilege has made me more confident to work in an unsanctioned manner.

(Figure 15) Mook Lion and participants, 2015. **Racialized Baboons**. Spray paint, stencil and wheat paste. Stellenbosch University, Western Cape. Photograph by Mook Lion.

Shabangu (2017) suggested that making whiteness and the associated ideology of privilege visible and to engage sensitively as equals in a dialogue with others, can be an antidote for destabilizing white privilege. In some ways this approach was used in the above examples of street art as a response to the racially charged assault of black Stellenbosch University students by white students, which I will now reflect on. Dr Kylie Thomas, lecturer at the Stellenbosch English department, organized a public intervention on the university campus. She asked me to participate in facilitating the intervention.

I employed the stencil and spray paint technique in creating these baboon posters. Without authorization the posters were installed outside the arts faculty building at the University of Stellenbosch. Students were then encouraged to post their own messages onto the wall relating to the protest. Eckhard Smuts, who was teaching a course in the English department at the time titled, "Intruder Alert: Baboons, Boundaries and the Space of Nature in South African Writing", happened to pass by the intervention. In an interview on the 13th of March 2015, Smuts explained the prominence of the baboon in South Africa's literary and cultural history and the way they have been "[r]oped in for racist purposes". He was totally amazed at seeing his own ideas represented on the wall outside his class.

(Figure 16) Mook Lion, 2015. **Baboons #2**. Spray paint, stencil and wheat paste. Stellenbosch University, Western Cape. Photograph by Mook Lion.

In an article published on the Stellenbosch University website by Rippenaar-Moses, Thomas (2015.n.p) explained that "[t]he baboon is a highly charged symbol that we want to forget about in some ways. In viewing Mook Lion's work (Figure 15), we are forced to confront this terrible and very shameful history instead of just making it disappear". The intervention prompted a generally positive response from the students and staff who were all eager to contribute their message, while others felt uncomfortable. Thomas claimed that there is a lack of historical consciousness at the university and felt that the teachers were responsible for facilitating open and public dialogues around issues of discrimination. "It is not only black people who can feel uncomfortable in this building or at this university. Anyone who is against discrimination will feel uncomfortable in this buildng or at this university" (2015).

Still Free

(Figure 17) Mook Lion, 2016. **Still Free**. Screen print and wheat paste. Durban North. Photograph by Robyn Perros.

The divided nature of the South African public space is critiqued in the wheat paste poster project titled “Still Free”(Figure 17). This project also aimed at repurposing advertising spaces as sites for independent critical thought through visual representation in the form of unsanctioned street art. This image highlights the meaninglessness of spatial restrictions to the natural world and is represented with the image of a seagull flying over a security fence. This combination of symbols clearly represents the Dissidence in Nature theme. However, it was the bus bench advertising spaces, which are ubiquitous in Durban, which inspired this project. These bus benches are attractive sites for a street art intervention for various reasons. Firstly, it is a space which is pragmatically designed to house outdoor images, and therefore the intervention would appear official, decreasing the likelihood of the removal of the posters by authorities, as well as remain protected from the weather to a certain degree. Both factors promote relative longevity, which has been a problem with all my wheat paste posters in the past. The accepted image holding function of the space, made the unsanctioned application of the posters appear more “official” and therefore an easy target for street art. According to Reis (2008), the idea to use mass transit systems to get your message out was invented by the early New York City graffiti artists. This approach has since been adopted by advertisers. This project aimed at claiming these spaces back as a site for independent critical thought through visual representation in the form of unsanctioned street art.

The process I employed in the production of the posters went through a series of phases. I began by doing a pen and ink drawing which I then digitalized in the program Adobe Illustrator. The design was then printed onto a transparency and exposed onto a large silk screen. I printed the image in three layers, beginning with the sky background where I tried applying the inks in a painterly manner, experimenting with thinning and splattering. The orange and red wall, beak and feet were printed next and finally the black outline. I printed 30 editions onto 80 gram paper. I installed the posters using wallpaper adhesive alone around central Durban, Glenwood, the beachfront and Durban North, working during the day.

The image of the flying seagull and the security fence came to me by chance and intuition. I have been working with the symbol of the security fence since 2009. The seagull image was a result of a painting commission. I was paging through my reference images and the two images

suddenly connected conceptually, although without any specific meaning or cause. The images represent polar-opposites, freedom and restriction. Analyzing the meaning now, it is the redundant nature of the wall to the seagull and the meaninglessness of spatial restrictions to the natural world, that attracts me to the image. I intentionally used the colours of the old South African flag, to signify the persistence of the divided nature of South Africa. Simultaneously, there is a sense of optimism embodied in the soaring seagull.

(Figure 18) Mook Lion, 2016. **Still Free**. Screen printed wheat paste. Botanic Gardens Road, Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion.

Mamboosh

(Figure 19) Mook Lion, Sphephelo Mnguni, Ewok, Samora Chapman, 2015. **Mamboosh**. Spray painted wheat paste. Warwick Junction, Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion.

The exploitation of the black working class continues in South Africa over 20 years after apartheid. The Marikana massacre is a powerful example and symbol for the oppressiveness of our current system. Cultural responses including Rehad Desai's documentary *Miners Shot Down* (2014) have not been available to the masses. According to Tromp (2015: 13), whose article was published in the Sunday Times on the 11th of October 2015, the documentary has been successful internationally, being screened at 76 film festivals, in 39 countries and receiving 19 awards. However, Desai has been unable to screen his documentary on South African television. According to Desai (in Tromp 2015: 13), the SABC was waiting for the results from the commission of enquiry and Etv claimed to be in possession of their own footage of the

massacre. This unsanctioned activation (Figure 19) in the public space was an attempt to combat what could be considered an example of cultural censorship.

I will begin by exploring the activist qualities of the 'Mamboosh' project by presenting the context provided by De Villiers (in Dlangamandla et al 2013). On Thursday the 16th of August 2012, 34 miners were shot dead by a "[c]ombined Police task force" at the Lonmin platinum mine in Marikana in the North West province. Over 70 miners were wounded. The miners were mostly rock drill operators who were on a strike in support of a demand for a substantial increase of their monthly salary up to R12 500.00. The National Union of Mineworkers, which was founded by Cyril Ramaphosa in 1982, was rejected by the miners who chose to strike independently. 3 000 men gathered on a granite *koppie* on the day of the massacre carrying traditional weapons. The striking miners had become frustrated and violent, killing two policemen, two mine security guards and seven mineworkers, leading up to the massacre. The Police operation was intended to disarm and disperse the strikers (De Villiers in Dlangamandla et al 2013: 1).

The event drew attention to "South Africa's post-apartheid social order". The incident was the most

> …lethal use of force by the South African security forces against civilians since the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 and questioned how this could happen in a supposedly inclusive constitutional democracy with an open economy and a sophisticated labour relations system. (De Villiers in Dlangamandla et al, 2013: 2)
>
> It's hard to overestimate the impact that scenes once associated with apartheid will have now that they are replayed under a black, democratic government. Marikana has shown that a black life, 18 years after racism was supposed to have been banished, still counts for very little, and that the inequality between rich (mostly white) and the poor (mostly black) has remained largely unchanged. (Gumede in Dlangamandla et al, 2012: 2)

(Figure 20) Tokoloshe collective, 2014. **Remember Marikana**. Spray painted stencil. Cape Town.

The iconic image of Mgcineni 'Mambush' Noki, with the green blanket, outstretched fist and traditional weapon, photographed by Leoni Sadiki, has come to represent the Marikana massacre. After watching the documentary *Miners Shot Down* (2014) by Rehad Desai, I was deeply disturbed by the willingness of the wealthy and powerful to exterminate the working class with the power of the South African police force. I was also deeply moved by the courage of the miners, especially Mambush, and immediately knew I wanted to honour his life through unsanctioned street art. Shortly after watching this documentary I saw the Tokoloshe collective's stencil in Johannesburg and Cape Town, "Remember Marikana" (Figure 20). This spray painted stencil employed the same image I had imagined using. This image is also on the cover of the book *We Are Going To Kill Each Other Today: The Marikana Story* (Dlangamandla et al, 2013).

In early August 2015, I was approached by "Ooops", one of Durban's graffiti and street art pioneers, who wanted to create a street art campaign to commemorate the Marikana massacre and refresh the discourse around the incident. Ooops created 44 small posters of Mambush using the stencil technique on newspaper. Each poster commemorated the loss of life during the strike including police, security guards and miners. Ooops asked me to create a large-scale image of Mambush as part of the campaign. I was honoured to be a part of this project because it was an injustice which sickened me and a powerful image to publicly represent. It was also an

opportunity to explore street art as activism with a very clear cause. By adopting the same symbol for our activation, we were adding to the protest which was already present in the public space of South Africa, but which was missing in Durban.

Mambush was born in Thwalikhulu, in the Transkei in 1982, while his mother was still mourning the death of his father, who was also a migrant mine worker. Mambush acted as a mediator between the miners, the police and the media during the strike. He won the respect of the striking miners, addressing 3 000 men and defying the armed police force (Saba in Dlangamandla et al, 2013: 29). I chose to make my version of Mambush life size and decided to also employ the stencil and wheat paste technique because it is less risky and easier to install in the public space. I attempted to make my image as simple and as bold as possible as I felt my earlier work with this technique was too detailed, which had detracted from the impact of the work when viewed in the public space. Banksy is the master of this simplified stencil imagery, which influenced my own aesthetic and communicative decision. The inevitable deterioration of the poster image also reflects the way in which this story, like many others in our history, withered away – losing its impact in the media and in the minds of the general public over time.

The initial installation process was collaborative. The team included: Ooops, Samora Chapman, Sphephelo Mnguni and myself. It was Sunday the 15th of August 2015 with the following day being the anniversary of the Marikana massacre. This use of time specificity was an attempt to add meaning and potency to our campaign. We aimed at spreading our posters around central Durban, targeting the CBD, Berea, Glenwood, Morningside and Umbilo. After this initial installation process, I continued installing the large Mambush posters with just Sphephelo Mnguni.

(Figure 21) Mook Lion, Sphephelo Mnguni, Ooops, Samora Chapman, 2015. **Mamboosh**. Spray painted wheat paste. Joe Slovo Street, Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion.

In an attempt to gauge the communicative effectiveness of our campaign we interviewed Lindokuhle Dladla, who I approached at random on the 16th of October 2015, at the site of one of the Mambush posters near the CBD of Durban (Figure 21). Dladla happened to be a first-year philosophy and political science student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Dladla explained that he regularly used the space as it was where he caught his bus to campus. He assumed that the poster was created by the homeless people who inhabit the area. He recognised that the poster represented a "freedom fighter" because of the outstretched fist of Mambush. He explained that he related to the image because he was also an "African or black" and was also facing his own struggles. When I asked him what image he would find most relevant to the site in question he explained that he would do something which motivated the government to

assist the homeless people in the area and something which would inspire the homeless to help themselves.

In seeking the opinion of an art activist expert, I scheduled an interview with Jan Jordaan, the director of Arts for Humanity, at the site of another Mambush poster in Berea Durban on the 17th of July 2016. Jordaan's NGO focuses on art, poetry and human rights employing advocacy and education. Jordaan (2016) explained that he was alerted to the fact that the poster referred to the Marikana massacre. "I really believe that one of the main functions of the arts is to make visible that which is invisible". He argued that the plight of the homeless and the working class is invisible and the Marikana incident amplifies this situation. He also argued that art often remains invisible and therefore "[t]hat which art represents remains invisible". Jordaan claimed that street art should represent the people in the vicinity of the work and allow people to get to know 'The Other'. He explained the value of the 'Experience' of art and the functioning of art as an antidote for censorship.

(Figure 22) Mook Lion, 2015. **Mamboosh**. Spray painted wheat paste. Natal Command, Durban. Photograph by Samora Chapman.

In an article published online by News 24 titled “Marikana Graffiti Adorns Abandoned Durban Church”, (Figure 22) journalist Jeff Wicks (2015) identified the intended reference and highlights the strategy of site specificity in the intervention. Wicks explained that the derelict chapel is the last remains of the Natal Command Military Base and claimed is “[p]rotected as a heritage site, the chapel remains as immovable in stone as the memory of the massacre…” Wicks continued, noting the similarity between this work and the work of the Tokoloshe stencils, which he described as “[a]n underground social movement”.

These two interviews and the published article suggest that the image of Mambush clearly represents the oppression of the black working class in South Africa, even without an explicit understanding of the Marikana reference. It is an example of an unsanctioned visual representation of an event in South Africa’s recent history which arguably, the authorities would prefer to be forgotten. The published article in News 24 is evidence of this project reviving the discourse around this historical event. However, we could have improved on the campaign by installing more posters in the public space, strengthening the communicative potential of the work.

Interconnections

The theme Interconnections examines murals which utilize participation and collaboration as a strategy for social and spatial transformation or activism. This strategy was investigated theoretically in chapter one, however, in this section I am interested in the application of these ideas in my own art practice. I have grouped the artworks which apply these theories under the theme of Interconnections. The interconnections and interdependencies between humans as well as between humans and nature is the central idea represented. This theme is reflected primarily through the creative process and secondarily through the imagery.

I have found extensive writing on the transformative potential of public art which involves the community. The writing of Rike Sitas, Sabine Marshchall, Claire Bishop and Doung Jahangeer are the most valuable sources I found in my research of this strategy.

According to Claire Bishop (2006) who edited the book *Participation: Documents of Contemporary Art,* the idea of participation in art dates back to the Dada movement in the

1920s where the Parisian public was intended to be included in the various creative manifestations. In participatory art the process of production is socially valuable, sometimes more than the final product. Bishop (2006: 12) claimed that the three main aims of contemporary participatory art are to:

- Instill personal agency in selected participants.
- Promote shared or collaborative authorship resulting in non-hierarchical cultural production containing positivity.
- Combat the alienating effects of capitalism resulting in a strengthening of community by enabling "[a] restoration of the social bond through a collective elaboration of meaning".

Jahangeer (2017) explained the complexity of the term 'participation'. He explained the malleability of the word and how authorities and facilitators use it falsely to create an illusion of a functioning democracy. Jahangeer (2017) argued that roughly 500 years of colonization have lead us to the situation where we need 'participation' and that this extended period of oppression and inequality cannot be quickly fixed because we call a project 'participatory'. Jahangeer argued that the privilege of knowledge and social standing is always present in this kind of relationship. "As soon as we open up the mouth and ask that person to participate, we demonstrate, we perform that power and that person knows it, because our body is a language and we can read that". Jahangeer (2017) continued to explain how he approaches participation.

> "What we do is we put our bodies in the space, we render ourselves vulnerable to the point where that power imbedded in our privilege is not being seen any more in the face of the Other. And let them ask the question, what are you doing? As soon as the question comes to us rather than we going to it, then there is a reversal of the power of knowledge. Then, only can we start to think about participation".

Interdependence

(Figure 23) Mook Lion, Dre, Drew, Giffy, Robyn, Trent, Sandy, Fiya One, Yasmin, Lee, 2016. **Interdependence**. Acrylic and spray paint. Essex Road, Umbilo, Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion.

An informal collaborative and participatory mural project can be seen to represent an alternative approach to the dominant capitalist functioning of art in society. While developmental art projects are common in South Africa, they are usually backed by a sponsor. The artists and participants involved in this mural (Figure 23) who represent various ethnicities, ages and genders reflect the unity expressed in the imagery and participated in an informal manner. I will begin the exploration of the activist strategy of participation and collaboration applied in this project by looking at the process. This mural took place on the outer wall of the Green Camp Gallery Project, down the road from the apartment in which I live. Green Camp is a creative green hub, which encourages community participation and utilization of the previously abandoned space through culture and urban farming. The mural is based on a design by Dre Thyssen, a fine art student and street artist, which we adapted and developed together to fit the wall and communicate the idea of interdependence between all life forms on earth. We used the imagery and the strategy of collaboration and participation to convey and reflect the idea of Interdependence. Our participants included:

1. Drew Carey – Dre's cousin, who assisted with preparation of the wall and background painting.
2. Gifford 'Giffy' Duminy – An established street/mural/graffiti artist.

3. Robyn Perros – Mixed-medium artist, photographer and writer.
4. Trent Sukdeo – Graphic designer and graffiti/street artist.
5. Sandesh 'Sandy' Jugmohun – Calligraphy artist, graphic designer and street artist.
6. Fiya One – Graffiti/mural/tattoo/street artist.
7. Yasmin Faeirie – Fine artist.
8. Lee Ernest Makwachure – Junior school student.

Essentially, this mural was a collaboration between Dre and myself with the involvement of participants in the project. Dre and I created a framework, which our participants could easily add to or embellish by adding 'characters' and natural elements to the scene. Dre focused on painting the impala while I rendered the branches extending in place of the impala's horns. Sandy added the text around the impala's head and the rest of our participants added 'characters' that inhabit our framework, which represents an imagined convivial living space. The mural was coordinated organically, with some participants being invited and others getting involved by chance. The project was an informal initiative with the majority of the materials supplied by Dre and myself. The participants worked with acrylic or spray paint according to their preference. The painting took place over a few days with the bulk of the participation taking place alongside an event at the Green Camp.

(Figure 24) Dre Thyssen, Lee Ernest Makwachure and Yasmin Faeirie working on the **Interdependence** mural. Essex Road, Umbilo, Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion, 2016.

In an interview on the 14th of April 2017, with artist, photographer and writer, Robyn Perros, who participated in the painting of the mural, the physical act of painting 'in my body' became more meaningful to her than the image on the wall itself. Initially Robyn expressed only limited investment in the project because she was not included in the initial planning process and only came to participate by chance. However, she became more invested as the mural transformed. Primarily through the physical act of painting, she expressed how the mural now represents for her a '[l]ived experience" and is therefore meaningful. "The image as a physical object in a sense is meaningless, except as a trigger for the memories it stirs in me of the lived social experience shared at this site; an experience which has in turn been carried out into the world in different forms". Robyn also mentioned the feeling of pride and nostalgia she now feels when she passes by the mural site on the way to Green Camp. While this depiction of interdependence would be idealistic and naïve in a gallery context, I feel it functioned well within the depressed and industrial setting of Umbilo.

The World of Stowawayz

(Figure 25) The Albert Park Stowaways including Kaya and Zombie, Matthew Ovendale, Mook Lion, 2016. **The World of Stowawayz**. Acrylic. Albert Park/Bayhead, Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion.

The inclusion of marginalized individuals in public artwork equals empowerment, validation, enactment of personal agency and control of the future. Arnstein (1969: 216) in Sitas (2010: 269) argued that the participation of the public amounts to the empowering of the public. Sitas claimed that power structures and the status quo are maintained, even reinforced, when the work is produced on behalf of the people. She argued that the participants need to be included in the decision-making process, which means the artist must leave their ego behind and embrace collective ownership of the work. It also requires a shift in the role of the artist from 'creative genius' to facilitator. I will explore the implementation of this theory in the project "The World of Stowawayz" (Figure 25).

The social position occupied by the participants of this project is theorized by Asef Bayat, the Iranian professor of Global and Transnational Studies at the University of Illinois. Bayat wrote about the increasing informal operations taking place in the public spaces of the global south in his (2013) article *The Quiet Encroachment of the Ordinary*. He noted that this encroachment is done out of necessity by the unemployed, migrants, refugees and disenfranchised people who are seeking to improve their lives. This active use of public space challenges the functioning of western modern urbanization and state control. Bayat (2013) claimed that the rapid growth in disenfranchised people is a result of economic globalization and that the advancement of informal operations is at the expense of the wealthy and the state. The Stowaways, who we worked with on this project, are a Tanzanian community who live, often informally, in the inner-city of Durban. They are an example of disenfranchised people as theorized by Bayat. Samora Chapman and I interviewed Sam Stephan Kanugu, a Tanzanian and a past chairman within the Stowaway community in Durban. Kanugu (2016) explained,

> "[w]e came here to take ship in order to go over-seas… without the ocean or sea we can't go anywhere. That is our way to get a life. Because from where we were born we never get a chance to go to schools, but we do believe, when we take ship here, in Africa, to go to Europe, we can get a chance to get an education, because we do believe that education is a key of our life".

I collaborated with Matthew Ovendale, who is doing his master's in fine art, focusing on the social and political aspects of public art, and who began working with the Stowaways as part of his research. According to Ovendale (2016), the Stowaways are a transitory community who realize their vulnerability and are therefore compelled to write on the walls of their environment as a way to validate their fragile existence – a form of self-actualization. In an interview, Kanugu (2016) explained,

"Stowaways, we like to do some graphics, because we want to leave some memories. Because we do believe, we can be here no more. Sometime, maybe after two weeks, I can go and take my ship, to go overseas, you see, so if my young brah (brother) they gonna come maybe after two years, when he come here he gonna found my name on the wall, he can feel so happy and he can say, even my brah, he passed here. Okay, so even me too, I am gonna go over-seas".

This prolific hybrid and unique form of graffiti or street art, found in the inner-city of Durban, first attracted my interest in collaborating with the Stowaways (Figure 26).

(Figure 26) Stowaway graffiti/street art. Photograph by Matthew Ovendale, 2016.

Matthew Ovendale developed a relationship with the Stowaways and Sam Stephan Kanugu through various creative research projects. Ovendale invited me to participate in a mural project with the Stowaways to be co-facilitated by Kanugu. Ovendale introduced me to Kanugu whose openness and willingness to work with us enabled this informal participatory mural project and inter-cultural experience. After our introduction in Warwick Junction, Kanugu and some of his friends took Ovendale and myself across the CBD to the proposed mural site. The site happened to be a wall of one of their living spaces under a bridge beside a freight train track within reach of the Durban harbour. I was introduced to some of the community members while Ovendale was greeted as a longtime friend. Ovendale and Kanugu proposed the mural painting idea which appeared to be well received. We arranged to return the following day with materials and a ten-kilogram bag of maize meal.

Ovendale and I aimed for a project based on equal engagement, attempting to avoid holding the position of exploitative privileged facilitators or 'saviours' and apply Arnstein (1969) and Sitas' (2010) theory of participation. This project was unusual because the mural site is not clearly within the public space, it is more of an industrial infrastructural space which has been transformed into an almost private space. The very insular closeness of the Stowaway community is also relatively rare in Durban. Despite this, I think the theory of participatory public art still applies to this project.

The Stowaways' reverence for the sea and the ship as liberators is reflected in their street art poems and tags in the streets of Durban. Variations of the words 'Sea Power', 'Hope 2 Sea' and the image of the ship are essential elements of their artistic vocabulary. It was no surprise then that a ship was our first mural and was based on a drawing by Kaya (Figure 27), who is commonly accepted as the most skilled artist amongst the Durban Stowaways.

(Figure 27) Kaya holds up ship drawing (mural reference). Pen and koki. Albert Park/Bayhead, Durban. Photograph by Matthew Ovendale, 2016.

Beds were shifted, the wall was cleaned and the painting commenced. Kaya led the painting, while myself and others added and assisted. Initially, it was a challenge for me to resign control of the mural but eventually I began to enjoy the position of assistant. Many of the Stowaways used the paint to write their names and symbols in and around the main ship image. Initially, I felt this was ruining the mural but realized it was the Stowaway style and I managed to avoid imposing my ideas.

(Figure 28) The Albert Park Stowaways including Kaya and Zombie, Matthew Ovendale, Mook Lion, 2016. **Stowaway Ship**. Acrylic. Albert Park/Bayhead, Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion.

The second mural, "The World of Stowawayz" (Figure 25), was far more ambitious in terms of effort and detail. It was completed over a few sessions where a routine was developed. We would pick up Kanugu and his friends from Warwick Junction, then purchase ten-kilograms of maize meal as a contribution to the community. Together we lugged the materials from the car to the bridge where we were working. Kaya coordinated the workflow with various assistants participating for a period and occasionally I coordinated the participants, if Kaya was engaged elsewhere. Intermittently we had to jump out of the way of a freight train as it thundered through our mural site. While we were painting there was a crew making fires by melting various flammable plastic objects, such as crates and buckets mixed with processed wood such as pallets and planks. On these fires, massive communal meals were cooked including spaghetti sweetened with sugar and condensed milk, or maize meal which was cooked in a plastic packet with spinach or a tomato-based source. The meals were laid out on the train track and between twenty and thirty people, including Ovendale and myself, enjoyed the meal. At the end of the day, a few individual paintings were done by the Stowaways before Kanugu insisted that we take the materials home with us.

(Figure 29) Ovendale pretends to cook. Photograph by Mook Lion, 2016.

(Figure 30) Artists paint as a freight train passes by. Photograph by Mook Lion, 2016.

With this project, more than any other I have been involved in, the process of production, involving participation and collaboration was the most important aspect of the work. For Ovendale, the murals were a vehicle for cross-cultural dialogue which was beneficial for both parties. He felt it was a form of catharsis and an antidote for his own white and privileged guilt. Judging from the enthusiasm of the participants and the amount of cellphone photographs taken by the Stowaways, at the very least, memories were created. I did not conduct formal interviews with the participants because I feared it would transform the collaborative relationship into one of unequal power relations associated with the researcher and the subject. The togetherness, cohesion and generosity of the Stowaways has remained with me.

The stereotype that all poor black foreign males in the inner-city of Durban are extremely dangerous is perpetuated extensively in Durban and I believe that this project contested this stereotype. I was once warned by South African Police to vacate Albert Park because of “The dangerous Tanzanians in the area”. According to Hall (2006), stereotyping fixes the meanings that are given to groups. Opening up stereotypes involves representing people or groups of people in more diverse ways and therefore opening up potential identities, which are seldom seen. Hall (2006) continued, explaining that closure in representation naturalizes the meaning of images or stereotypes and disguises the active process of representation. To contest stereotypes means to investigate the motives behind the representation of the stereotyped

group. My experience of working with the Stowaways completely contradicted the negative xenophobic stereotype that is popularly perpetuated. This is the most valuable lesson I took away from this project.

The unequal economic and race relations between Ovendale and myself and the Stowaways makes negotiating an honest and equal relationship very difficult. By presenting our creative experience within the current art and culture system, which would publicly contest the negative stereotype, we inevitably stand to benefit far more, continuing our trajectory of privilege. This could be a result of our position of inclusion and the exclusion of the Stowaways from Durban's 'public' and the current capitalist system. According to Bishop (2006: 11), "[l]eft-wing theorist Walter Benjamin argued that when judging a work's politics, we should not look at the artists declared sympathies, but the position that the work occupies in the production relations of the time". With this in mind, I argue that the production of the painting with the Stowaways under a bridge was an action in stark contrast to the 'production relations' of today. However, if Ovendale and I go on and sell the photographs of the work in a gallery claiming all the profit then we would still be working within the current white privileging system. Subsequently, I have continued working with the Stowaways on other mural projects and continue to acknowledge the shared authorship of the works we have already created. The process of production, which utilized the strategy of participation with the marginalized Stowaways, resulted in a valuable cultural experience for both parties.

(Figure 31) Stowaways and I posing with a Brazilian flag. Photograph by Matthew Ovendale, 2016.

Portraits of Street Artists by Street Artists

(Figure 32) Daniel Nel, Matthew Ovendale, Pastel Heart, Kev 7, Sakhile Mhlongo, Dane Stops, Mook Lion, 2014. **Portraits of Street Artists by Street Artists**. Acrylic. 27 Hunter Street, Durban.

This mural (Figure 32) was about affirming individuals, some of whom are marginalized, in the public space. By representing everyday public space artists – as opposed to the rich or famous as commonly depicted in advertising – we attempted to highlight the valuable role played by local people in writing history as it happens. This idea was theorized by Lisa Lau (2017) who claimed that public and contemporary expressions of history are more beneficial than traditional western museums, which do not represent contemporary general public. This mural also represented the value of inter-personal relationships in an urban space characterized by informality. This idea is theorized by AbdouMaliq Simon in his paper *People as Infrastructure* (2004), which I explored in Chapter One. According to Simone (2004), the complex social and economic relations between heterogeneous residents with limited resources is what Simone calls 'people as infrastructure'. He claimed that infrastructure is generally understood as the physical elements of an urbanized space, which assist economic and social actions. "By contrast, I wish to extend the notion of infrastructure directly to people's activities in the city" (Simone, 2004: 407). The content and the process of this mural reflected the idea of collaboration within the South African urban space. This mural is an example of artists in Durban relying on each other and their own creativity and personal agency to survive and thrive in the shifting and provisional space of inner-city Durban.

To provide evidence for these claims I will explain the context and process of this project. This was one of three murals, which formed a parallel project of the 2014 Union of International Architects World Congress in Durban. I facilitated and initiated the project which involved creating the proposal, selection and management of artists and materials and selection and permission for the mural sites. I gathered a group of artists including:

Daniel Nel – Mural and fine artist.

Matthew Ovendale – Fine artist and art facilitator.

Kev 7 – Street artist, graffiti artist and graphic designer.

(The late) Pastel Heart – Graffiti artist and street artist.

Sakhile Mhlongo – Mural artist and fine artist.

Dane Stops – Fine artist, street artist and graphic designer.

(Figure 33) Sakhile Mhlongo. Photograph by Samora Chapman, 2014.

In a series of meetings, we collaboratively drafted designs which had to be approved by the city and the owner of the selected site. We decided we wanted to do a portrait wall as this would allow each artist the chance to express their own style through the portrait discipline. The wall would also be unified through the common subject matter of the portrait. Initially we

considered doing portraits of engineers on the outer wall of their workshop, which I had identified as a prime mural site. When I approached the owners of the business with our idea they rejected it outright. They didn't want their workers painted on their wall in case one of the individuals got fired and the business would be stuck with their image. To me, this indicated the exploitative attitude of the owners of this workshop towards their workers. At the next design meeting we decided to paint portraits of people who were creative in the public space. Each artist would select a public space artist, conduct an informal interview with them and request a collaboration. Our intention was to acknowledge their contribution to the vibrancy of Durban's public space and extend our artist network in Durban and at the same time experiment with a new form of collaboration.

I took this idea back to the engineering workshop, which once again was against our idea. They were only interested in having something which represented their business on their wall. I took my proposal to a few different sites until I got permission from Kashmiri Motors. The owner paid little attention to the design and very quickly signed the permission slip. No agreement was made with the building owners with regard to how long the work would remain on their wall. In early 2016, the mural was erased with only the photographic documentation remaining.

We created a loose design for this mural but only definitively mapped out the composition on site. We arranged the order of the portraits which would appear on the wall according to the layout of the wall and the shape of the reference images. We had a debate about whether to work in black and white or colour. The team was evenly divided on this decision and I made the call to work in colour as I felt it would highlight the different aesthetics embodied by the involved artist. The mural was completed over a few days.

(Figure 34) Artists paint into the evening. Photograph by Samora Chapman, 2014.

In an article by Samora Chapman in online culture magazine Mahala.co.za each artist explains their connection to their selected artist:

> Wendy Esterhuizen has almost covered every square meter of the alley between Stamford Hill and Umgeni Road in lower Morningside with what seems to be stream of consciousness patterning. Thanks to her, Durban now contains one of the most unique streets I have ever come across, anywhere in the world. I first encountered this special place while working in the area on a miserable overcast day. It was like I was looking at a safe-haven for all misfit street demarcations. Rogue zebra crossings, itchy parking bays from a dream. When I met Wendy for the first time, it turned out that there was a reason for why every colour and shape lay where it did. I was moved by her work and her thoughts and asked if I could paint her portrait as a tribute. She replied that 'It better be on TV'". (Daniel Nel in Chapman 2014: n.p)

> Guy Deco Dlalisa started performing football freestyle moves on the streets of Durban in 2009, after being inspired by the great freestyler Chris Njokwana. His talent (and that of his crew the Durban Freestyle Footballers) was soon noticed by the Durban municipality, which

commissioned them to perform at AFCON 2009. Guy and his crew also took part in South Africa's Got Talent, where they showcased their skills on a national platform. The Durban Freestyle Footballers have a distinctly African flair in their performances, but they also incorporate international styles in lure of their dreams of traveling abroad. Training is rigorous, allowing only a day's rest a week while they hone their skills searching for a sponsor and the opportunity to represent South Africa internationally. (Matthew Ovendale in Chapman 2014)

I went looking for the guy who performs with those weird magic sticks at the traffic lights on Goble Road, but he wasn't there. That's when I saw Lauchlan, and when I met him I found that he had a crazy story. He was an armature winder, but he got injured and couldn't work, so he started busking to support his family. Music had been a lifelong passion of his. Now it's his livelihood. (Pastel Heart (in Chapman 2014)

I took a long walk along the esplanade one day, with the idea to get a picture of one of the ladies selling curios… but then I met Alie and I liked his brightly coloured landscape paintings. He's from Malawi and makes a living selling his canvases. So I told him about the project – that I wanted to paint a mural of him – and he agreed. (Kev 7 in Chapman 2014)

Mdu plays umtshingo (a traditional Zulu instrument), which was taught to him by his grandfather. He has been playing it for 16 years and he busks all over Durban, sometimes travelling to other cities to play. (Sakhile Mhlongo in Chapman 2014)

I chose to paint Ewok because of the influence he has had on the Durban graffiti scene – for the years of hard work and dedication has given to the culture. It also serves as a personal gesture of gratitude, Ewok was one of the first graffiti artists that I bit my style from! (Dane Stops in Chapman 2014)

I chose to paint Thami Jali because he is one of the original mural painters in Durban, pioneering community mural art in the early 90s. I enjoy his style and respect him as an artist. I met and painted a mural with him and discovered he is a genuine and cool gent. (Mook Lion in Chapman 2014)

We decided to write a short explanation of the artist next to their painted image on the wall to explain the portraits to the public. It was the first time I had included informative text in a mural. It turned the mural into a kind of public archive of public artists. The inclusion of the text providing direct information does not leave as much room for the viewers interpretation, rather focusing on providing information.

(Figure 35) The mural site. Photograph by Samora Chapman, 2014.

Samora Chapman, Sphephelo Mnguni and I interviewed Sthabiso Mthembu, who was informally employed as a security guard at the site of the mural, on the 16th of October 2015. Mthembu recognized Mdu Unico, and admired Sakhile's technical skill in capturing Mdu's likeness. Mnguni took over the interview in isiZulu as this is Mthembu's first language.

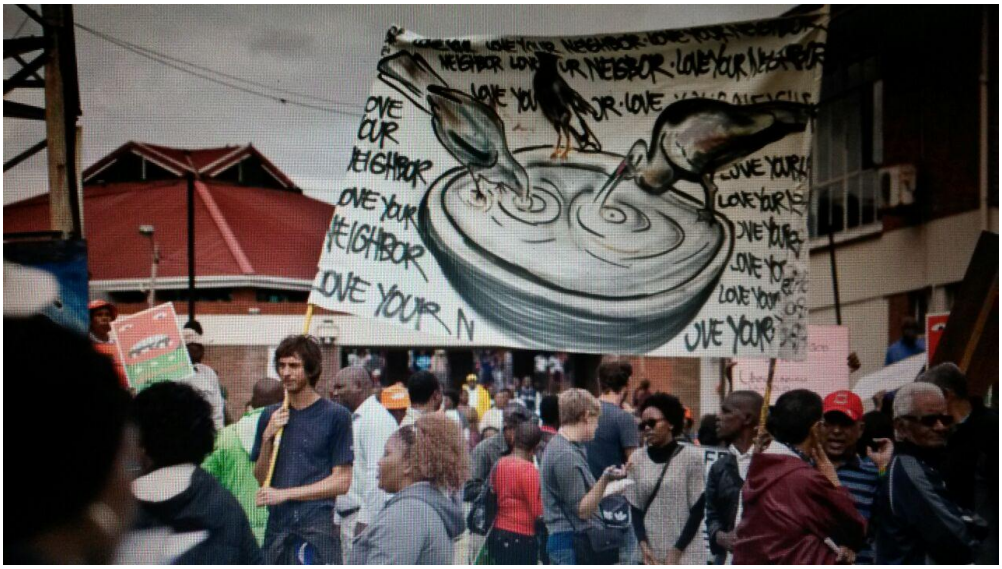
Mthembu claimed that when he viewed the mural from a distance it removed the stress from his mind. He explained that this stress is part of the reason he lives on the street. Mthembu told us that he once received payment from tourists who wanted to take photos of the mural. Mthembu's recognition of Mdu Unico in the interview highlighted the value of recording living history as it happens.

The collaborations between the artists represented in the mural, and the artists who painted the mural, benefited both parties. The paintings proudly became profile pictures on social media, exposing the painters' work to the represented artist's network. The mural served as a kind of public validation for those represented, who for the most part were marginalized individuals. The mural painters enjoyed the interesting and unique reference images of artists. Both groups of artists gained exposure of their skills in the public space. The subsequent erasure of the mural in 2016 reflects the transient and marginalized status of mural art in Durban and therefore all those involved. The interview with Mthembu reflected the emotional value a mural can have for marginalized individuals who often inhabit the public space.

Birdbath

This mural (Figure 39) was created in response to xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals and attempted to promote sharing, tolerance and peace amongst the various ethnic groups living in Durban. In providing evidence for this claim and exploring the potential activist nature of this work, I will begin by providing the context. The first wave of xenophobic violence in South Africa occurred between May and June 2008 with 62 people killed, 670 wounded and about 100 000 people displaced, according to Baruti Amisi et al (2010) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. A general hostility towards African foreign nationals continued around South Africa including Durban with renewed intensity in 2015 when seven people were killed, foreign national shops were looted, and thousands of people displaced and seeking refuge in temporary camps around Durban (Wicks, 2015). On the 16th of April 2015, I participated in an anti-xenophobia march through central Durban with roughly 10 000 other supporters (Figure 36). Despite feelings of anxiousness, the march was festive and filled with optimistic positivity and compassion – a brief and insular moment of unity across racial and social divides. According

to journalist Samora Chapman (2015), a smaller less organized group of xenophobic protesters clashed with the police and intimidated participants of the main peace march. These clashes never progressed to serious blood shed but rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons were employed by the police, highlighting the violence and prominence of xenophobic attitudes.



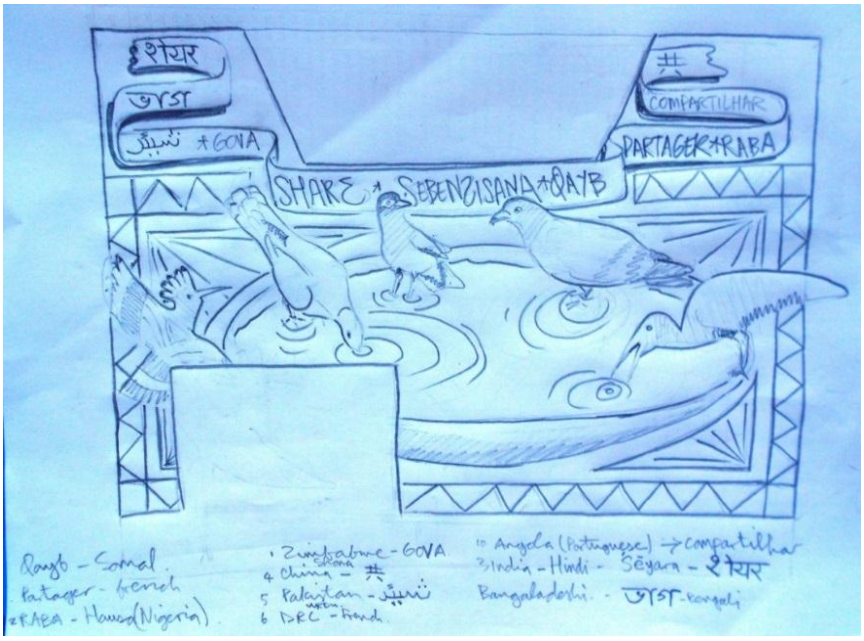
(Figure 36) Mook Lion, 2015. **Birdbath**. Spray paint on canvas. Curries Fountain, Durban. Photograph by Robyn Perros.

The next point presents some of the causes of xenophobic attitudes in South Africa. Amisi et al (2010) highlighted the perpetuation of xenophobic attitudes by South Africa's leaders. Beginning with Prime Minister Jan Smuts in the 1930s and continuing post-apartheid with Home Affairs minister, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, after 1994, who both warned of the dangers of a potential 'invasion of aliens'. More recently ex-President Thabo Mbeki denied the existence of xenophobia in South Africa, avoiding any preventative action. Amisi et al (2010) argued that xenophobic tendencies are to be expected. Urban studies professor David Harvey (1989: 13-14, in Amisis et al, 2010: 2) claimed that "[t]he response is for each and every stratum in society to use whatever powers of domination it can command (money, political influence, even violence) to try to seal itself off (or seal off others judged undesirable) in fragments of space within which processes of reproduction of social distinctions can be jealously protected". Other causes cited by Amisi et al (2010) include a lack of rights and structural exclusion of immigrants in South

Africa, an exaggerated perception of the influx of immigrants and the exploitation of cheap migrant labor by the wealthy.

A public artistic response to xenophobia in Durban felt like a responsibility for the artists I was working with and myself. After a meeting with the Our Space Murals crew including: Kev 7, Sakhile Mhlongo, Sphephelo Mnguni, Tyran Roy, Fiya One and myself, a proposal was created and sent to our correspondent at the Ethekwini municipality.

(Figure 37) Proposed mural site on Cathedral Road, CBD Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion, 2015.



(Figure 38) Proposed mural design. Photograph by Mook Lion, 2015.

The design (Figure 38) was based on a banner I carried with another protestor I met at the 16th of April 2015 peace march (Figure 36). Our design attempted to promote sharing, tolerance and peace amongst the various ethnic groups living in Durban in direct response to the xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals. Images of various bird species found in Durban sharing the peace and refreshment of a pool is the metaphor we chose to convey our message. Birds are a symbol of peace and freedom and therefore enhance our message. The word “Share” was included on the scroll at the top of our design and translated into: isiZulu, Somali, French, Hausa, Shona, Chinese, Urdu, Portuguese, Hindi and Bengali with the intention of including and acknowledging the various cultures of the people occupying Durban currently. We chose the site for our proposed mural as it is within the Durban CBD and within the Dr Pixley KaSeme Street area, where much of the xenophobic conflict took place (Figure 37). It was a wall which had had a mural on it previously, however was whitewashed at the time. The artists had all agreed to work on the mural pro-bono but we needed the materials, scaffolding and official permission from the municipality. Unfortunately, the support of the municipality never materialized and as time passed the urgency faded and the project was forgotten. This highlighted the restrictions of attempting to practice sanctioned activism, where administration and politics make immediate action almost impossible.

In 2016 the street and mural artist Giffy secured a mural site where the landlord was willing to pay for the materials. The new mural site on Helen Joseph Street in the heart of Glenwood, lacks the site specificity and dynamism of the initial inner-city site. Giffy and I agreed to use the Birdbath design from our rejected anti-xenophobia proposal. We invited Dane Stops, Fiya One and Sphephelo Mnguni to paint with us. The mural was painted over a few days with each artist coming in to paint their own bird within the bird bath scene which I painted.

Angus Joseph, who has participated in activist art projects in South America and Europe, was interviewed at the mural site on the 12th of December 2016, when the mural (Figure 39) was still in progress. Joseph appreciated the natural theme of the work and claimed that the defense of water was the apex of activism in defense of nature globally. He warned that now "[n]ature has been spoken for" and people may feel that nothing more needs to be done. He noted that as an activist work it lacked a clear call to action, but "[r]eminds us that the residents of this neighbourhood don't only have four limbs". He said that he hoped the mural will encourage people to pay more attention to nature. Joseph did not interpret the anti-xenophobia reference at all. The word 'share' expressed in various languages was not included in the mural at the time of the interview which is one of the major indicators of the murals message. Once the theme was pointed out, Joseph argued that due to the 'separation complex', where humans see themselves as disconnected from the rest of the natural world, people would be unable to understand that they were represented as birds. This mural caused Joseph to question his preferred 'call to action' approach to activist art and acknowledged the potential of more subtle statements contained in the birdbath mural.

Victor Mpofu was born in Zimbabwe and came to South Africa in 2006 to earn a better living. Mpofu does wire and bead artwork on Bulwer Road in Glenwood, just up the road from the "Birdbath" mural (Figure 39), where I interviewed him on the 16th of February 2017. Mpofu explained that he was on his way home after work when he noticed the mural and recognized the word 'gova', meaning 'give' or 'share' in Shona. He saw the other words and realized they all meant the same thing. 'Share' in English, 'asiphane' in isiZulu and 'qayb' in Somali. Mpofu explained the importance of sharing skills and ideas as an artist and not discriminating. He also

spoke about how the mural reminded him of the sharing of a meal from a single bowl in rural Zimbabwe.

(Figure 39) Giffy, Dane Stops, Sphephelo Mnguni, Fiya One, Mook Lion, 2016. **Birdbath**. Acrylic and spray paint. Helen Joseph Road, Glenwood, Durban. Photograph by Mook Lion.

Victor Mpofu's reading of the mural was so close to the artwork's intended message that it enhanced my belief in the communicative potential for mural art. However, this mural could have been more powerful if it was executed at a site more closely connected to the issue of xenophobia – this resulted in the mural lacking site specificity. Participation with victims of xenophobia in the process of production could also have added value to the mural. Aesthetically, the colour choice could have employed more contrast, resulting in a more powerful finished artwork. Regardless of these downfalls, the imagery and message contained in this mural is what prompted me to include it in this Interconnections chapter. The successful rendering of this mural in Durban's public space, despite lacking municipal support, also makes

this project meaningful as an independent gesture from local artists in support of xenophobia victims.

Conclusion

In this chapter I began by exploring the unsanctioned street art projects that constitute the practical component of my study, within the theme Dissidence in Nature. The first project directly reflected this theme by representing the strangler fig. The next project protested the violence against the Chacma baboons in Cape Town and touched on the control of urban space by the authorities. This project developed and the symbol of the baboon was used to confront racism and white privilege in response to a violent incident at Stellenbosch University. The next project responded to the abundance of empty, advert hosting bus benches in Durban, which I appropriated with the image of the seagull flying over a security fence, exploring social and urban divides. The final street art project explored in this theme, attempted to bring the Marikana massacre back to the public's attention by representing the iconic image of Mamboosh in Durban's public space. The next theme, Interconnections, focused on murals which utilized the strategy of participation and collaboration. In the first mural within this theme, the imagery and the strategy of collaboration and participation were used to convey and reflect the idea of the interdependence of humans and nature. The next mural project was an informal cultural exchange with the Tanzanian community in Durban known as the Stowaways, where the strategy of participation was thoroughly tested and relationships were created. Following this investigation, I then explored the collaborative mural which I have titled "Portraits of Street Artists by Street Artists". This was a collaborative mural which emphasized the value of informal inter-personal support systems within Durban's urban space, with the street art network as the example. This project also highlighted the value of recording everyday history as it happens. The final mural project was a response to xenophobic violence in South Africa and Durban and included the use of Somali, Shona, isiZulu and English as well as the strategy of collaboration.

These projects have all attempted to highlight injustices within South African society, with the intention of utilizing the communicative potential of street art and mural art to effect some

form of change. Some of the projects appear to be successful on some level in this regard, according to the evidence provided. However, in the cyclical processes of research and practice I have become more aware of my own role in the oppressive system I have attempted to contest. This enhanced personal awareness is one of the major outcomes of this research and will be utilized in the activist projects I pursue in the future.

Conclusion

In my first chapter I explored street art and mural art as activism theoretically. I found that art in general is beneficial on an emotional, psychological and social level. However, these benefits cannot come to fruition if people do not come into contact with art. I also found that theoretically street art and mural art can be useful in contesting oppressive systems including capitalism and colonialism. The capitalist system, which is regularly cited as the root of the current social and ecological problems, is subverted to an extent by street art and mural art's central ideas of sharing, social justice and the importance of some form of community. The investigation of street art and mural art as activism is an attempt to uncover the functionality of this approach to art-making. The foremost function appears to be the transformation of the public space into a more convivial living environment. The major strategies identified in the theoretical framework in attempting to initiate conviviality through street and mural art include site specificity and participation. In exploring the theory on South African cities, I found that these spaces are characterized by divisions and informality and that street art and mural art responds to both of these phenomenons, potentially breaking down these social barriers and aligning with the fluidity of informality.

Historically, the literature has shown that broad definitions of mural art have performed a vital social function since the beginning of recorded history. I also found that the role or social position of the artist and more specifically street art and mural art has shifted in a non-linear way. It has shifted between liberator and oppressor and from communal practice to individual commodity generation. The literature has also shown that street art and mural art have been used to combat various forms of oppression around the world including capitalism, colonialism, dogmatic conservative applications of religion and oppressive governments. For this reason, the application of street art and mural art can be threatening to those in positions of power.

Researching the contemporary street art and mural art examples of Faith47's mural project in Durban and the street art and mural art of the Egyptian revolution, raised the question: Why is there such a limited culture of street art and mural art in Durban in comparison to Egypt? This

chapter also highlighted the common position of the South African mural and street artist working in a space as a kind of outsider, which is not an ideal position, and that an element of participation has the potential to remedy this situation.

Upon reflecting on my own art practice, I found that nature is dissident. The rebelliousness of nature within the restrictive urban environment validated and inspired my own urge for cultural dissidence through street art. I found that many of my projects were on some level successful in bringing certain injustices to the attention of the viewer, which I found through my interviews. I realised that the message contained in my street art and mural art can be enhanced and extended through the application of the film medium. I discovered this through presenting my film (2017) *Footnotes in the City*, as the culmination of my practical study. One of the most vital conclusions I have found in this study is the value of self- reflection and an awareness of my own role in the current oppressive system.

The value of this study lies in the potential to encourage this type of art practice in education and influence governmental policy on the treatment of sanctioned and unsanctioned public space art. Further research within this field could be productive if a similar exploration was conducted within a more focused geographic area, for example a case study of the transformative potential of street and mural art within a single neighborhood, including participation and interviews.

In conclusion, I argue that street art and mural art can be used as a transformative strategy to break down the invisible social barriers present in the post-apartheid South African cities by repurposing the physical barriers of walls. Despite these social barriers, South African urban spaces, which buzz with creatively applied informal trade, shifting and complex social relations, are attractive to me as sites for street art interventions. I personally experience urban social divides, where certain areas, which arguably make up the majority of the inner-city, feel off limits for me. The breaking of this social spatial norm, by intervening artistically is a form of activism in itself. The potential for people of various ethnicities and social strata to relate to the universal language of visual images inevitably encourages social cohesion. Hall (1997) explains that to belong to the same culture means to share conceptual maps or systems of

representation, which can be referred to through language. This means that the specific meaning or cause attached to the street art or mural art is unlikely to be interpreted completely accurately by the majority of the people who experience it, especially those who are not part of the fine art culture. Hall (1997) also highlights the shifting, elusive and contextual nature of meaning, this suggests that every person has the opportunity to draw their own meaning from artworks in the public space. Therefore, the stimulation of the public's imagination could be seen as the most valuable quality of street art and mural art as activism.

Appendices

Appendix A – Letter of Information

Title of the Research Study: Street art and mural art as visual activism in Durban: A case study 2014-2017.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Daniel 'Mook Lion' Chapman, M Tech fine art student at DUT.

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Ismail Farouk, M Tech: Fine Art and John Roome, D Tech: Design

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: The aim of this study is to reveal the social role of mural art and street art in Durban. This interview aims at gathering the opinions of the public towards specific artwork in the public space.

Outline of the Procedures: This interview is taking place at the site of the artwork in question, a variety of participants will be chosen in terms of gender, age, social standing and race. Potential interviewee's will be approached as they pass by the artwork where I will request an interview.

1. After reading the information letter and asking any questions, you may agree or disagree to participate.
2. You may remain anonymous if it would make you feel more comfortable.
3. If everything is clear you will be asked to sign the consent form.
4. Once the form has been signed the interview will start with questions
5. The interview may move away from the questions into a discussion.
6. The interview should take around 10 minutes.
7. I encourage you to share your opinions; this is what is valuable to my study.
8. I will record the interview with video which will be edited into a documentary. The documentary will be played at my final exhibition as an artwork and finally uploaded to YouTube where it will be available to the public. If you wish to remain anonymous, the interview will be used as data for my research and you will not be included in the documentary.

Interview questions

1. How often do you use this space?

	I am a local resident	
	Regularly	
	Irregularly	
	My 1ST time	

2. How do you feel about having this artwork on the streets?
3. Do you visit art galleries?
4. What is the difference between having art here, instead of in a gallery?
5. What do you think this mural is about?
6. Can you relate to anything you see in the artwork?
7. What other images would you consider relevant for this site?

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: If the participant feels the questions are uncomfortable or offensive they may withdraw from the interview at any time.

Benefits: The participant may benefit from the interview by gaining a deeper insight into the artwork and the artists involved. The researcher will benefit by gathering valuable data regarding the public response to artwork in the public space.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: The participant may withdraw at any point of the interview, even if they have already signed the consent form. Severe non-compliance from the interviewee may result in the interview being withdrawn from the study.

Remuneration: The participant will not receive any remuneration for the interview as there is no budget for this.

Confidentiality: The participant may remain anonymous, in which case only their voice will be recorded and used as data for my research, anonymous participants will not be included in the documentary. The questions are not of a confidential or private nature. If the participant is unwilling to provide an opinion then they will be withdrawn from the study. The gathered data will be stored on my personal computer.

Research-related Injury: Not applicable. Interviewees will not be placed at risk of injury.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Please contact the researcher (071 4200 343), my supervisor Dr. John Roome (0836622645) or Mr. Themba Shibase (0848416449) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

General:

Your participation is entirely voluntary. The approximate number of participants to be interviewed is 50. A copy of this letter of information will be issued to all participants. You may request this letter of information in isiZulu if it will assist your understanding.**CONSENT**

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, _Daniel 'Mook Lion' Chapman_____ (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____ _____ _____ _____

Full Name of Participant **Date** **Time** **Signature / Right Thumbprint**

I, _____ (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

_____ _____ _____

Full Name of Researcher **Date** **Signature**

_____ _____ _____

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) **Date** **Signature**

_____ _____ _____

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date Signature*Please note the following:*

Appendix B – Letter of information isiZulu

INCWADI YOLWAZI

Isihloko salesifundo: Ubuciko basemigaqweni kanye nemidwebo yezindonga ehlweni lomphakathi eThekwini: A case study 2014-2016.

Umhloli: u-Daniel 'Mook Lion'Chapman, umfundi we-M Tech e-DUT.

Abahloli abakhulu/Abaqikelele isifundo: u-Themba Shibase, M Tech: Fine Art kanye no-John Roome, D Tech: Design

Isingeniso esifushane nenhloso yalesifundo: Inhloso yalesifundo ukuthola indima edlalwa ubuciko bezandla emigaqweni yase-Thekwini, ikakhulukazi indima edlalwa imidwebo yasezindongeni.

Uhlelo: Lokuhlola okuhambisana nemibuzo kuzokwenzeka indaweni lapho ekuzobe kwenzwelwa khona ubuciko bezandla, abantu abazofaka isandla ngokuhlukana kwabo kulokuhlola bazokhethwa ngokobulili, iminyaka, nokuthi bakuphi ngokwezinga lempilo kanye nobuhlanga babo. Ngizocela ukubuza abantu imibuzo ngesikhathi bedlula lapho engizobe ngenza khona ubuciko bami ezindongeni.

1 Emvakokufunda lencwadi, kuyilungelo lakho ukuthi uyavuma noma uyenqaba ukufaka isandla.
2 Awuphoqelekile ukuzidalula ukuthi ungubani umuthanda.
3 Umangabe yonke into ikucacela, uzobe usucelwa ukuthi usayine iphepha.
4 Uma usuqede ukusayina leliphepha, kuzoqala isigaba sokubuzwa imibuzo.
5 Isigaba semibuzo kungenzeka sishintshe ekubeni imibuzo kuphela kepha sidlulele nasezingeni lokuthi sixoxisane.
6 Imibuzo izothatha imizuzu eyishumi kuphela.
7 Ngiyakugqugquzela ukuthi uphonse imibono yakho, lokhu kuzongisiza kakhulu kulesifundo.

8 Isigaba semibuzo sizoqoshwa ngomshini, phecelezi ”ikhamera” bese kucutshungulwa konke okuqoshiwe khona kuzolungela umbukiso. Umbukiso uzodlalwa ekugcineni sekuqedwe yonkinto nezinhlelo futhi sizowushicilela emoyeni ngomuxhafazo lapho khona nomphakathi uzokwazi ukufinyelela kuwona. Uma uthanda singayifihla imininingwane yakho nawe uqobo, kuphela sisebenzise izwi lakho.

Imibuzo (ukuhlola).

1. Uyisebenzisa kangakanani lendawo enalomdwebo?

Ngingumhlali wakulendawo	
Ngokujwayelekile	
Isikhashana	
Ngiyaqala	

2. Uzizwa kanjani ngokwenziwa kwalomsebenzi wobuciko bezandla emgaqweni?
3. Uyazivakashela izikhungo ezibukisa imisebenzi yobuciko bezandla?
4. Kuhlukengani ukuba nalomsebenzi langaphandle, kunale boniswa ngaphakathi ezikhungweni zobuciko bezandla?
5. Ucabanga ukuthini ngalomdwebo mawubona? Naba Kancane.
6. Imiphi eminye imidwebo ongathanda ukuyibona kulendawo?

Ubungozi noma ukungaphatheki kahle kubasizi (kovuma ukubuzwa imibuzo): umangabe imibuzo obuzwa yona ungahambisani nayo noma ingakuphathi kahle, uvumelekile ukungayiphenduli.

Ozophuma nako noma ozokuthola: lovuma ukubuzwa imibuzo uzothola ulwazi olubanzi nolujulile mayelana nobuciko bezandla kanye namaciko abandakanyekayo kulomkhakha. Umhloli noma lobuza imibuzo uzothola ukwazi kancono ngokuqoqa ulwazi olubalulekile oluthintene nobuciko bezandla indaweni yomphakathi.

Izizathu ezingenza ukuthi obuzwa imibuzo ayekiswe kulokuhlola noma isifundo: Obuzwa imibuzo angayeka noma inini, nomangabe sebelisayinile iphepha. Umangabe lobuzwa imibuzo engasebenzisani nomhloli noma nomfundi ngendlela efanelekile, kungaze kufinyelele ekutheni ayekiswe.

Ukukhokhelwa: asikho isabelo semali esiqondeni nalemibuzo ngakhoke lobuzwa imibuzo ngeke akhokhelwe.

Ukuzifihla: Igama lalobuzwa imibuzo lingafihlwa, kuqoshwe izwi lakhe kuphela lisetshenziswe njengo lwazi kulesifundo sami, futhi lobuzwayo ngeke abandakanywe embukisweni oqonishiwe. Uhlu lwemibuzo aluqukethe izinto eziyimfihlo. Umalobuzwa imibuzo engathandi ukufaka uvolwakhe, lokho kuzoholela ekutheni akhishwe kulokuhlola noma kulesifundo. Lonke ulwazi oluzoqoqwa luzofakwa kumxhafazo wami phecelezi i-computer.

Mayelana Nokulimala Kuloluhlelo: Akudingeki lokho. Lobuzwa imibuzo ngeke abekwe endaweni enobungozi.

Abantu ekumele uthintane nabo umangabe uhlangabezana nezinkinga:

Xhumana nomfundi/umhloli (071 4200 343), umuntu ongiphethe/u-supervisor Dr. John Roome (083662245) noma u-Mr. Themba Shibase (084 8416 449) noma i-Institutional Research Ethic administrator ku-031 373 2900. Izikhalazo zingabikwa ku-DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otien ku-031 373 2382 noma dvctip@dut.ac.za.

Okunye:

Awuphoqelekile ukufaka uvolwakho, okwenzayo kuwukusiza kuphela. Balinganiselwa kumashumi ayisihlani (50) abantu abazobuzwa imibuzo. Bonke abazobuzwa bazothola incwadi efana nale.

INVUME

Isitatimende semvumelwano somsizi/obuzwa imibuzo ekuhlolweni kulesifundo:

- Ngiyavuma ukuthi umhloli/umfundi _Daniel 'Mook Lion' Chapman_____ ungichazelile yonke into ngacaciseleka, ngithole isithombe esicacile nezimpande zalesifundo, nokuthi sihamba kanjani, izinto engizophumanazo, kanye nobungozi balesifundo- (Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____,)

- Ngifunde lokhu okungaphezulu ngabanolwazi ukuthi kungani (Incwandi Yolwazi), futhi ngabanolwazi ngakho konke okubandakanya lesifundo.
- Ngiyazi ukuthi lesifundo, zizobandakanya nezinto ezithanda ukuba imfihlo njenga nobulili bami, iminyaka, unyaka engazalwa ngawo, ukusayina/ukucikica, nezifo kodwa konke loko kuzoba imfihlo masekucutshungulwa esifundweni (report).
- Kokudingekayo kulesifundo, ngiyavuma ukuthi lonke ulwazi oluqoqwe umhloli noma umfundi luzocutshungulwa ngomshini, phecelezi i-computer.
- Kungenzeka ngikuhoxise emibuzweni noma inini, ngaphandle kokubandlulula, ngimise imvume yami nosizo lwakho kulesifundo.
- Ngibe nethuba eleningi lokubuza imibuzo, ngikulungele futhi ngizimisele ukusiza kulesifundo.
- Ngiyaqonda ukuthi ulwazi olusha olungase luqhamuke oluqondeni nokusiza kwami ngemibuzo, nami ngizokwazi ukufinyelela kulona noma ngizokwazi ukuluthola.

_____ _____ _____ _____

Amagama Aphelele **Usuku** **Isikhathi** **Cikica lapha**

Alobuzwa imibuzo (Isithupha/Thumbprint)

I, _____ (igama lomfundi) ngiyavuma ukuthi konke okungaphezulu kufundiwe, kwacaciswa kulobuzwa imibuzo futhi uyabazi ubungozi balesifundo esingaphezulu.

_____ _____ _____

Amagama Aphelele Omfundi **Usuku** **Cikica/Sayina**

_____ _____ _____

Amagama Aphelele Afakazi

(Mekudingeka) **Usuku** **Cikica/Sayina**

_____ _____ _____

Amagama Aphelele Omzali/Omgadi
(Mekudingeka) **Usuku** **Cikica/Sayina**

Appendix C Mural Authorization and Release

This mural authorization and release agreement is made on_____ (Effective Date) between Daniel 'Mook Lion' Chapman, an M Tech: Fine Art student at the Durban University of Technology, student number 20904585 and the property owner listed below.

.

For good and valuable consideration, the parties agree:

1. This agreement begins on the effective date.
2. During the term of production, you will grant the involved artists access to paint, at a mutually-agreed time and date, the external wall of your business or private home.

_____ _____ _____

Site Owner Name (Print) Signature Date

Phone Number & Email

_____ _____

Artist Name Signature

_____ _____

Mural site address

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16th of February 2017, Doung Jahangeer

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