



**Migrations**

*Photographich representations of biography, place and  
entanglement in contemporary South Africa*

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*Photographic representations of biography, place and  
entanglement in contemporary South Africa*

Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree  
Masters of Visual Arts in Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
at the Stellenbosch University



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## **DECLARATION**

By submitting this thesis/dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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## **OPSOMMING**

Die volgende tesis fokus op die lewensverhale van vyf vrouens, elke een oud, wat afkomstig is van verskillende agtergronde en in Stellenbosch Suid Afrika gewoon het as migrante gedurende 2014 en 2015. Dié tesis raamwerk volg 'n praktyk gedrewe studie wat gelyktydig fokus op vorme van verteenwoordiging in twee modaliteite: portuur fotografie, stadsbeeld en landskap; biografiese narratief en lewensverhale. Die werk lê klem daarop om alternatiewe maniere te vind waarop migrante se subjektiewe teite deur wyse van fotografie en narratief uitgebeeld kan word, asook die verkenning en wyse waarop spasie, plek, geheue en agentskap bergryp kan word. Teoreties behels die studie 'n kritiese en verkennende aanslag tot die begrip van verstrengeling soos dit gekonseptualiseer word deur post-koloniale kultuur teoretikus Sarah Nuttall en Achille Mbembe, asook die kritiese refleksie op migrante soos verteenwoordig deur Edward Said. Dit word eerstens beryk deur te ky na spesifieke antropologiese en kulturele studies wat migrasie aanspreek; tweedens deur die selektiewe voorbeelde van Suid Afrikanse gedrukte media; en derdens deur die analisering van spesifieke foto-gebaseerde kunswerke wat subjektiewe ervarings van migrasie deur middel van rekord narratiewe en fotografiese dokumentasie uitbeeld. Die praktiese navorsing is die gids vir die teoretiese tesis; alby is dus verstrengel wat sodoende op die teoretiese inhoud in die vorm van navorsing aanbieding uit brei.

## **ABSTRACT**

The following thesis focuses on the life stories of five migrant women of the same age, coming from different contexts and backgrounds, who all lived in Stellenbosch, South Africa during 2014 and 2015. The thesis frames a practice-led study focusing on forms of representation in two simultaneous modalities: photography as in portraiture, cityscape and landscape; and narrative as in biography, life story. This work aims to find alternative ways to represent migrant subjectivities by means of photography and narrative, also exploring notions of space, place, memory, and agency. Theoretically, the study entails a critical and exploratory approach to the notion of ‘entanglement’ as conceptualised by post-colonial cultural theorists Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe, and the critical reflection on migrant representation by Edward Said. This is achieved firstly through specific anthropological and cultural studies addressing migration; secondly, through selected examples from the South African printed media; and thirdly, through the analysis of specific photo-based artworks which address subjective experiences of migrancy by means of recorded narratives and photographic documentation. The practical research is understood as the guide to the theoretical thesis; both are thus themselves entangled, which extends the theoretical content into the form of the research presentation.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*Stranger if you, passing, meet me, and desire to speak to me,  
why should you not speak to me?*

*And why should I not speak to you? (Walt Whitman, 1900)*

The following research is “as much about being human as it is about being a migrant” (Sigfrid, 2013:6). The research focuses on the experiences of five migrant women in Stellenbosch and their representation through my practice in two simultaneous forms: photography as in portraiture, landscape and cityscape; and narrative as in biography, life story, achieved through a process of dialogical collaboration over time. This study is a reflection on diverse migrant stories from different cultures, backgrounds and contexts, women of the same age who find themselves in the same space.

For that to be possible, the theoretical part of this study critically reflects on the concept of entanglement addressed by post-colonial English and cultural theorist Sarah Nuttall and post-colonial cultural theorist Achille Mbembe. In this research, entanglement refers to a space of overlapping histories and times (Mbembe, 2001:14), which seeks to recognize sameness rather than difference (Nuttall, 2007:1) For that reason the research also delves into anthropological studies on migrants’ narratives, which, from my point

of view, take the concept of entanglement as their starting point and represent as well what post-colonial cultural theorist Edward Said mentions as, studies which are driven by wills of, “co-existence and humanistic enlargement of horizons...” (2003: XIV)

The thesis also investigates the theory of entanglement itself framed in the post-colonial South African moment, and related specifically to my own practice. By referring to cityscapes and landscapes, the research also encompasses an exploratory approach to movement and space based on the life stories of the five migrant women who collaborate in this study and on the theory of entanglement. From my experience, there is a continuous movement in the life of a migrant and this movement allows encounters and demands creativity. This continuous search is driven by a necessity for ‘home’. As human beings, we are always adapting and learning to be in different spaces, but we are also, always accommodating to those spaces in order to make them ours and to belong to them, as philosopher Michel De Certeau

(1984) said, by filling them with our desires and expectations; writing our history in them. There is something that this space can tell us, and is in the attempt of understanding the art of the everyday; the trajectory of a life path that we can suggest a tiny expression of what makes us human and what makes us to become entangled. This explanation highlights the importance of space in the practical work in relation to the life stories.

The practical work named *Migrations*, which drives this research, concentrates on the life stories of five migrant women by means of photographs combined with spoken and written narrative in the form of life stories. And it is this practice, the starting point of this study, which was in part, also produced as a response to how migrants have been depicted recently in South Africa. Therefore as part of the theoretical approach of this paper I critically analyse two articles published in the *Mail and Guardian* (a weekly South African newspaper), during 2015. In the same sense, the theoretical approach also explores specific photo-based artworks from South Africa, which

are concerned with human migration, and which are linked to my practice. In doing so I aim to find alternative ways of representing migrant's lives by means of photography and narrative. Hence, this study will also investigate representation, notions of documentary photography, portraiture, analysing these different visual ways of combining photography and narratives. Thus I argue for the possibility of achieving a more profound, collaborative and engaged approach when representing migrancy in South Africa through photography and narrative.

Throughout the theoretical investigation, the practical work will be addressed; its origins, process and transformation into images and narratives in the form of a book and a projection. I will briefly discuss the reasons for my approach; which are entangled with my own history.

## MY BACKGROUND

My interest in this particular research area stems from my own background and experiences. I was born in Ecuador, which is a post-colonial country that attained independence from Spain in 1822. Ecuador is a small but culturally diverse country in the North-western part of South America, named after an imaginary geographical line; the Equator<sup>1</sup>. The country's complex current social situation is related to its abundant natural resources<sup>2</sup> and the history of its extraction<sup>3</sup>.

My personal history is closely entangled with this national narrative of the exploitation of Ecuador's natural resources by colonialism and by global corporate superpowers. I am the second eldest daughter of an Ecu-

dorian family with indigenous (Cañari-Inca) and European roots. In 1999, Ecuador lived through one of the major economic crisis in the country's history. According to an investigation conducted by FLACSO University, since 1999, Ecuador became the first country of the Andes Region in which the majority of the population predominantly migrated to the United States, Spain and Italy to accomplish 'the European and American dream'. Some of my family members went to Europe and the United States, looking for opportunities. My father's sisters, who travelled to Italy and Spain 15 years ago, were among the quarter of the population who left the country during that time. They moved permanently to these countries where they became illegal and could not come back home until their papers were arranged, only in 2009.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Oxford dictionary, the equator is an imaginary line drawn around the earth, equally distant from both poles; dividing the earth into northern and southern hemispheres and constituting the parallel of latitude 0°.

<sup>2</sup> Ecuador's natural resources are largely made up of mineral and oil deposits.

<sup>3</sup> Oil has been largely exploited by multinational companies in a similar way to resource-exploitation during colonial times. The communities located in the oil deposits' area, haven't received any benefits. Their culture wasn't respected and their spaces were damaged. For that reason, dependence on the capitalist system increased as well as contamination of their water and soil, illustrated by disasters like numerous oil spills caused by Texaco between 1967 and 1999. Even the large amount of resources and wealth. They are accumulated in few hands. Mineral resources are likely to be exploited at a large scale for the first time in the history. This is causing the forced removals of hundreds of communities in the mountains and in the Amazon Jungle and the mountains and the contamination of their territory (Acosta, 2009).

One of them was separated from her children for seven years. Today, they are still in Europe. As Ecuadorians in the Diaspora, their history is entangled with a history of movement and displacement.

## RESEARCH CONTEXT

As I write this, after being awarded a scholarship, I have the opportunity to live in Stellenbosch, South Africa; also a post-colonial country that has attained democracy 20 years ago. South Africa is a complex country where it is extremely hard to understand relationships between people from different cultures. According to South African historians, Hermann Buhr Giliomee and Bernard Mbenga, “everyone in South Africa is descendant from a migrant” (2007:8). Nuttall explains that South Africa is a country born out of processes of mobility and a space where social boundaries are constantly being reinvented through encounters and violence (2008:24). With its conflicted history, during apartheid<sup>4</sup>, people were considered migrants in their own country.

<sup>4</sup>Apartheid as a system was obsessed with separating the citizens of South Africa on a racial basis. This was done to foster ‘white’ superiority and to entrench the minority ‘white’ regime at the expense of the black majority. Different acts to bring about the separation of ‘races’ were designed before apartheid. This intention was futile since there were many urban areas where ‘black and white’ South Africans lived side by side. On 27 April 1950, the apartheid government passed the Group Areas Act and racial segregation was institutionalized. This Act enforced the segregation of the different ‘races’ to specific areas within the urban locale. It also restricted ownership and the occupation of land to a specific statutory group. This meant that ‘black’ people could not own or occupy land in the ‘white’ areas statutory group. While the law was supposed to apply in reverse, essentially, the land under ‘black’ ownership that was appropriated by the Government for use by ‘whites’ only. During this time, many neighbourhoods around the country were forcibly removed to the margins of the cities where several spaces were created to allocate them. (SAHO 2015)

This system created the *dompas*<sup>5</sup>, by which people were forced to cross borders of ‘racial’ separation in their own country. Despite the separation, people needed one another. The apartheid system ended because of this mutual dependence. They were entangled because they were living in the ‘same’ space, and depended on each other; this form of entanglement is acknowledged but it is not the focus of this research. With this backdrop, Ryszard Kapuscinski, a Polish journalist known for his stories woven around the world and his passion for encountering different cultures based on experiences of being there, comes to mind. In his book, *The Other* (2008), Kapuscinski claims that, “just as a bad childhood leaves its marks on the whole of a person’s later life, so a bad historical memory has an effect on later relations between societies” (2008:49). For me, Stellenbosch is a place of transition, a town in which the divided socio-economic structure is a living testimony of the historical objectives of apartheid. It

is a town where this ‘utopia’ of a racially divided society was born. It is a town of hidden worlds very near one yet far from another. Stellenbosch is a colonial town. From walking here, it is still possible to see the houses where slaves used to live. It is also a town where entire neighbourhoods were forcibly removed from the centre during apartheid. These shady and undignified origins have left a residue in the atmosphere of the town; elements of nostalgia, violence, ‘division’ and ‘order’, mixed with ‘beauty’ that is simultaneously and consistently expressed.

In her book *Entanglement* (2009), Nuttall describes an experience of space in South Africa thus: “The new South African city is still a space where nightmarish divisions may be witnessed and where the fear of crime delimits dreams of truly public space” (Nuttall, 2009:37). After reading her work, I began to understand the difficulties of the context I was living in as an ‘outsider’ and as an art student. It became vital for me to relate, contact, and activate my

<sup>5</sup>The everyday name (trans. ‘stupid pass’) for the reference/identification book that all ‘black’ South Africans had to carry during apartheid when they move out of their ‘homelands’.

visual language, photography. My interest in challenging settled ways of representing people grew. In this case, it was from encounters with immigrants I met in this town. In the process of discovering this public space and moving around it, my interest in it was stimulated as well; resulting in my decision to also work around it. Therefore, it was crucial to me to discover this new space through relationships with people who also live in this space and could give me another understanding of this region through experiences woven in the journey that represents knowing a person who is in a transition as I am; a migrant.

Stellenbosch presents to me these barriers and boundaries: language and a complex history among others. All the women who kindly accepted to collaborate in this process and myself are currently 28 and 29 years old and we all found ourselves in a transitional period of our lives in Stellenbosch. These women have opened their houses to me, having travelled from far. They are telling me their personal stories and reflections about their history and about being here.

On that account, this study questions migrant representation in South Africa based on the theory of entanglement by asking:

*Is it possible to challenge migrant representation through photography in the form of portraiture, cityscape and landscape and narrative in the form of biography and life story, through a process of collaboration with five migrant women in the context of contemporary South Africa?*

## PROCESS AND INTENTIONS

In the practice of human contact and relationship, through a delicate process, I want this project to be based on, “the mutuality of being human rather than classifications and distinctions” (Sigfrid, 2013:5) I want to encounter part of a generation of women that find themselves in the same space (i.e.2014/2015 in Stellenbosch at the same time of their lives (i.e. at age 28 and 29 years old), in order to:

1. Listen to and understand the diverse stories of migrants and refugees in the South African town of Stellenbosch, and through portraiture and narrative in the form of life stories, visually and textually share these stories charged with subjectivity.<sup>6</sup>
2. Understand photographic migrant representation through history, especially in the South African contemporary printed media, and art practices that relate to my own, and challenge established ideas about

portraiture and documentary photography in South Africa.

3. Discover this richly complex space born from an extremely conflicted history and doing so from my perspective and from the gaze of four migrant and refugee women of my generation.

For these objectives to be reached, it was necessary to:

4. Discuss the concept of entanglement based on cultural and anthropological approaches to migration and the post-colonial time.
5. Visually analyse images and narratives found in the history of migrant representation, in the South African media and in two particular photo-based artworks by South African artists Terry Kurgan and David Southwood, respectively.

<sup>6</sup>Ethical approval was granted by the Department of Visual Arts to achieve this purpose.

## STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

In order to build this research, the information up to this point forms the introduction. The first chapter focuses on the concept of entanglement, making use of the theories of Mbembe and Nuttall. Both as mentioned above, have delved into this concept. I will specifically discuss this concept to develop my creative practice based on human relations and ‘overlapping histories and times’; addressing as first contemporary anthropological studies, particularly as outlined by Anne Sigfrid (who I have already cited). Sigfrid is an anthropologist who has done ground-breaking research on migration and its representation by means of life stories of migrants from different contexts and backgrounds, who all experience similar situations. I will also refer extensively to Susan Ossman, an artist and anthropologist who has made her home in France, Morocco, the UK and the USA. Ossman was inspired by her own experience of being a migrant. She explored migration and life stories of different migrants around

the world who all entangle in a similar path of serial migration. I will also mention the relationship between contemporary art and anthropology. Throughout this chapter I will refer to the complexities around representation; using postcolonial authors such as Said, who, in his work *Orientalism*, studied the representation of the Arab world by the western gaze and its political and social connotations. I will briefly discuss notions of John Tagg’s books *The Burden of Representation* (1993) and *The Disciplinary Frame* (2009) to understand the history of representation, especially in documentary photography. Tagg is a photography historian and theorist. Finally, concepts about space will be addressed, referring extensively to De Certeau.

The second chapter will discuss photographic migrant representation through history, delving into Tagg’s reflections on representation in documentary photography. In discussing briefly the history of documentary photography and migrant representation, I will present Dorothea Lange’s famous and controversial portrait, *Migrant mother of Seven* (1936).

Consequently, I will discuss representation in the South African media. For that, two pages of the South African newspaper *The Mail and Guardian* will be analysed as well as photographic projects of two South African artists: Terry Kurgan's *Hotel Yeoville* (2010) and David Southwood's *Memory Card Sea Power* (2011-2013). Through their respective photographic approaches, I will discuss the relationship between image, text, representation and collaboration in these participatory projects. In discussing the potential of portraiture as both a photographic and narrative genre, I will briefly present and analyse Rineke Dijkstra's portraits of *Almerisa* (1994-2012) as it relates to migration, negotiation and representation. At the end of this chapter I will discuss the way I have started my creative process and how I have drawn the relationship between portraiture, narrative, cityscape and landscape.

In the third chapter, I will refer to narratives based on the life stories shared during the encounters I had with the women who collaborated in this process.

I want to focus on the importance of these stories as portraits and generators of meaning regarding experiences of migration in themselves. But, these narratives cannot be separated from the photographs as the practical work proposes a deeper approach where personal history shares equal weight and significance as the images. I want to reflect on the concept of collaboration, the relation between contemporary art and anthropology, and how these life stories illuminate spaces that create sense in this town for these migrants' lives, as well as mine. This is because these spaces are becoming part of my story in this town and region too. In presenting these narratives, I will discuss whether these life stories challenge migrant representation in relation to what was discussed in previous chapters. Stellenbosch, as a space, will be described by the collaborators and the author as well as other spaces, which appear in the narratives. The third chapter will be followed by a conclusion.

This paper will shift in voice choices, using mostly academic conventions in the first and second chapters. The third chapter will contain several fragments of the life stories, even though fragments will be present in all chapters. Italics will be used when writing these fragments. The autobiographical voice will be strongly present throughout the entire document.

**CHAPTER 1**

**ENTANGLEMENTS: BEING MIGRANT**

This chapter discusses migrant representation, reflecting on post-colonial theorists such as Nuttall, Mbembe and Said, focusing firstly on the concept of entanglement which Nuttall describes as something that speaks about sameness<sup>7</sup> rather than difference, a condition of being, “...twisted together, intertwined, involved with...”(2007: 1), “entanglement”. It is a term, which may gesture towards a relationship or set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle, but which also implies human foldedness.” (2007: 1). Secondly, the chapter advances Said’s claim in his book *Orientalism* (2003), that there exists the possibility of approaching a different human group with a deep desire of understanding and coexistence. And that this possibility is profoundly different from trying to approach a different culture for purposes of “self affirmation, belligerency and outright war” (2003: xiv), as it was during colonial times. In answer to his idea, examples of these studies (first mentioned) will be briefly discussed from the anthropological gaze, reflecting on anthropologists who have used the life story as a method to represent migrancy. These studies are also related to the concept entanglement and migration.

<sup>7</sup> According to the Oxford dictionary, sameness means the quality of being the same, identity or similarity.

As the practical work is presented as photographic portraiture, cityscapes and landscapes, and narratives in the form of biography and life story, this chapter will refer to concepts of ‘representation’ and ‘place’, life story as a method, and the relationship between contemporary art and anthropology, as critical methods towards alternative ways of representing migrant subjectivities in South Africa.

## **ENTANGLEMENTS IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: CONTEMPORARY ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES ABOUT MIGRATION AND INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES**

Journalist and historian, Jacob Dlamini explains what it means to be here today: “Right now, ‘to be’ in South Africa is to take up the historical imperative ‘to become’. It is to enter other identities without necessarily abandoning the groundedness of one’s received identity.” (2013: 12) To be able to enter other identities requires understanding and complicity, which can only emerge by encounters. In these encounters difference appears but also sameness. In this research, the notion of entanglement wants to address this common and similar territory that speaks about the shared human condition, without forgetting that every human being is different and has a unique way of seeing, living and understanding the world. Dlamini refers to the act of enter other identities, which demands to try and feel what is to be other than ourselves, or what is

to be in a different person’s feet for a moment.

In a similar way to Nuttall, Mbembe writes that people are entangled in history and time. In other words, our lives depend on other people’s lives no matter how different we might seem from each other, our lives are connected. Mbembe has commented on “the time of entanglement” in contemporary post-colonial Africa, explaining that the postcolonial time, “encloses multiple durées made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another, interpenetrate one another and envelope one another: an entanglement.” (2001: 14)

A way of understanding the concept of entanglement can be found in the public sphere, how paths are crossed and stories encounter in the space, through histories and movement the South African space is slowly transforming, what before might have been borders, today become spaces of encounter. For Mbembe the present is a “...vulnerable space, that precarious and elusive entry-point through which, hopefully, a radically different

life might make its appearance.” (2001: XVI)

Post-colonial theories brought several shifts in the social sciences, decolonizing knowledge and ways of seeing and representing giving origin to new generations of aware social scientists and artists, aware of their history but sometimes hopeless as part of a capitalist system born from oppression. In the most recent introduction to *Orientalism*, Said offers a powerful explanation of the difference between colonial wills of understanding a different human group, and those which attempt to create empathy and a profound understanding of the human condition:

...there is a difference between knowledge of other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for the own sakes, and on the other hand knowledge - if that is what it is- that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency and outright war. There is, after all, a profound difference between the will to understand for purposes of

co-existence and humanistic enlargement of horizons, and the will to dominate for the purposes of control and external dominion. (2003: XIV)

I will briefly comment on two anthropological studies by Anne Sigfrid and Susan Ossman that both present a collaborative biographical approach, to provide a context for my research, and which serve as an example of Said’s observation.

According to Sigfrid, migrancy is a concept encompassing a variety of different people and individuals who all move for different reasons. In her book *Being Human, Being Migrant. Senses of Self and Well-Being* (2013), people’s stories entangle in repetitive experiences, even in the physically distant realities and contexts of the participants in her project. The research she carried on was framed in the social sciences, particularly in Anthropology. Her work proposes that migrant experiences tell us about the human condition, pointing out that “multi-sensorial perceptions and experiences of well-being, self, other and

humanity are challenged when people move between shifting social and cultural contexts.” (Sigfrid, 2013:1) For her, migration involves multiple ways of movement, through history; it has become the experience of being human. Whatever the reasons for migration, the practice of migration is part of our deep needs, as stated by Mbembe: “if you look at origin myths of African people, there is no one of them that is not about migration, there is no exception, everyone, when they explain their origins, explain it in terms of moving from one place and going to another.” (Mbembe 31 April 2015, Stellenbosch)

“We are all displaced in some way”, were also the words of Mbembe, though movement is part of human ontology because it allows us to transcend specific life-worlds, while Sigfrid explains “...a life-world is a horizon of all our experiences that creates a background against which identity and meaning emerge and are decided” (2013:2). Migration processes allow us to profoundly transform our relationships, not only with other cultures but also with our inner self. It makes possible an entanglement

of times resulting in histories overlapping in the most amazing ways. Thus movement transforms our life-worlds. Sigfrid highlights individual migrants’ everyday experiences recognizing how these experiences are conceived and perceived from a position in between that calls for a critical delving into distinct and overlapping life-worlds, social structures, moralities and identities. (2013:12). This explanation expresses the relation between her way of understanding migrants’ life-worlds as an entanglement of presents, pasts and futures emerging from the act of moving as a migrant.

Susan Ossman also applies a collaborative approach in her study. In her book, *Moving Matters* (2013), she studies the serial migrant, as she considers herself one. She refers to herself as a person who has lived in several countries, calling each one, at some point, home. Her study challenges categories and classifications without ignoring the power of identity as she writes her experiences, as well as the experiences of different serial migrants, around the world. The point that joins these stories together is the path,

a similar migratory trial, an entanglement.

Both, Ossman and Sigfrid use ethnographic methods in which the 'life story' is central. The concept of ethnography<sup>8</sup> is briefly but powerfully explained by Joao Biehl, a Brazilian anthropologist, who states: "Ethnography is not just proto-philosophy, but a way of staying connected to open-ended, even mysterious, social processes and uncertainties – a way of counter-balancing the generation of certainties and foreclosures by other disciplines" (2013:590).

Like Sigfrid, Ossman also applies the biographical or life story as a method, which allows empathy with the person whose life one wants to understand. Biehl states that life stories do not simply begin and end. They are stories of transformation: they link the present to the past and to a possible future and create lasting ties between subject, scribe and reader, an entanglement (Biehl, 2013:592). Whilst listening to her or his words and by being there, one becomes part of the life story

of a person. Also, by telling one's life to someone, it allows that person to enter one's own history. This might also represent an entanglement of times, histories and spaces which might be generated by an encounter with a person's narrative, and the artist, the viewer in front of an image might also become part of the story, an encounter that might create empathy. At some point, one becomes part of this life story and vice versa. Photography as a means of storytelling also has this ambiguity; it allows imagining what is not in the frame, why wasn't it captured, how a photographic transaction took place. So it also elicits questions, like the life story is for an ethnography about a person's experience, photography, in this research is also part of a narrative, that doesn't have a start or an end, what lies between the images, embracing its unfinishedness can open meanings to the viewer, to the reader. Entanglements in time and space can appear in the life stories of different human groups – in this case migrants who share stories – and collaborative or dialogical processes can also

<sup>8</sup>In-depth written description: Method used in the Social Sciences to describe a human group.

create awareness of sameness among people who inhabit similar spaces and are of the same generation, but who don't know each other.

The history of migration is boundless since the contemporary world is the result of endless migrations and encounters. Most of the historically documented journeys were made by Europeans looking for expansion, and wealth often resulted. This has impacted the contemporary world with its complexities of misunderstandings, inequalities and fears between cultures. How many paths were not registered because these were not recorded in the 'official History', and because these were non-western paths?

Ordinary people's lives and journeys that might look as common and non-relevant can reveal entanglements<sup>9</sup>. 'Entanglement' in this research wants to address empathy and sameness among migrants coming from different contexts and backgrounds who happen to find themselves in the same

town, and part of the same generation.

For Nuttall, as mentioned previously, entanglement refers to human 'foldedness' within a complex set of relationships. For Mbembe, the post-colonial time is a time of encounter of difficult histories, a time of pasts and presents, of transition as well; he refers to it specifically as an entanglement. In the images that form part of my practice, it might be possible to witness the complexities of contemporary South Africa represented by its spaces but also, by addressing a person's history and transition, entanglements might also be revealed. Migration processes allow us to profoundly transform our relationships, not only with different human groups but also with our inner self. Movement transforms our life worlds, and for that, a certain creativity is needed. This creativity might be what Mbembe (2001:15) describes as 'meaningful acts'. In post-apartheid South Africa, such acts can never be separated from their context; the space becomes witness of en-

<sup>9</sup> According to the Oxford dictionary, entangle means to be deeply involved especially in something complicated; "embroiled in the conflict"; "felt unwilling entangled in their affairs."

tanglements, as Nuttall (2008:11) observes:

Entanglement offers, for me a rubric in terms of which we can begin to meet the challenge of the “after apartheid”. It is a means by which to draw into our analysis those sites in which what was once thought of as separate – identities, spaces, and histories come together or find points of intersection in unexpected ways. It is an idea which signals largely unexplored terrains of mutuality, wrought from a common, through often, coercive and confrontational experience.

Migrants, coming from different backgrounds and contexts, can draw experiences of South Africa from another perspective to South Africans; their stories enable different readings of the city, seeing the space with a different gaze. People coming from far do not share South African social dynamics, the opposite meaning of what Nuttall explains as “the complexity of people’s lives and the sometimes abstract and general categories we use to describe

them...” (2008:29). By listening to different stories of migrant women, there is a possibility of reading the space from a point of view which might highlight on-going transformations and entanglements that otherwise would not be possible to see in this town and region. In trying to depict the lives of migrants, including that of my own, I do not intend an account of tragedy, which we see every day in the media when migrants are depicted. Rather, I aim for one of desire, of hope about life, found in the movement that make life possible.

While discussing migration, a strong awareness of capitalism and globalization must be present. Through market and slavery, they have created forced migrations, concentrating the wealth in a minority. A history of inequality and exploitation has put migrant workers in similar situations around the world. There is an imaginary relationship between countries, which sell goods to one another everyday. Ironically, at the same time, there are several restrictions for people to enter different countries. Migrant journeys were not and are still not always voluntary. The need for workers

among the powerful countries, and the unbridled consumption I am part of, are responsible for maintaining exploitation on different levels to this day. And this disastrous system also entangles people; it is just a matter of consciously asking, Who are the ones building the goods we use, or Who are the ones cultivating the food we eat? But even if that is entangled to this study, it is another story.

Coming back to migration, the increasing and continuous movement in the world shows how societies and cultural groups – even the efforts of fascist and racist systems – are never separated; realities are overlapping in the most incredible ways. Throughout history, they are always entangling and learning from each other in repetitive processes. Today, with globalization, it is even more so. People on the move challenge the ways of thinking of the places in which they arrive. They influence and transform these places and its people. Sigfrid's work, *Being Human Being Migrant. Senses of Self and Well-being*, was done through a process of collaboration where different anthropologists wrote on each chapter also in

collaboration with migrants telling their life accounts. In anthropologist Barbara Pinelli's chapter, the life of a Togolese woman is narrated, highlighting how fantasies and desires for the future make possible a vital dimension, which acknowledges that migration is a process with no end. Rather it is a process of becoming and being human that continues across space and time. (2013: 18)

This reflection on Sigfrid's work takes this discussion back to "the time of entanglement", which is a post-colonial time, Mbembe (2001:14) explains, incorporating "multiple durées made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another, interpenetrate one another and envelope one another: an entanglement." Mbembe reflects on post-colonial contemporary Africa as such a time of entanglement, where the past, the present and the future are appearing at every moment, but not discretely. These 'temporalities', as he names them, weave through African realities, simultaneously. He relates entanglement with displacement, not just referring to it as 'transit' or 'dislocation', but also

pointing out the close relationship between subjectivity and temporality. He explains the post-colony as "...a combination of several temporalities" (Mbembe, 2001:15), but these temporalities have contradictory significations to different actors; there is not one history, but histories, meaning that everyone in the world has her or his own lenses through which to see the world. As a result, everyone has a unique story woven with other's histories.

For Mbembe (2001: 14), the time of entanglement has three characteristics. Firstly this time "...is not a series but an interlocking of presents, pasts and futures, each age bearing, altering and maintaining the previous ones." Secondly, "...it is a time made up of disturbances, of a bundle of unforeseen events..." In that, it may or may not result in chaos and on unpredictable facts and behaviours on the actors. Thirdly, it is a time that is irreversible. These entanglements can be heard through the very languages we speak; we are borrowing accents, creating and transforming our languages and creating these too, as entanglements.

For Mbembe (2001:9), the peculiar historicity of African societies, the reason of their being, and their relation to solely themselves, are rooted in a multiplicity of times, trajectories and rationalities that, although particular and sometimes local, cannot be conceptualized outside a world that is, so to speak, 'globalized'. For this, dealing with the historicity of African societies requires more than a simply giving an account of what occurs within the continent itself and its relation with other continents. It compulsorily requires a critical delving into western history and the theories that claim to interpret Africa

Contact with difference has a painful history when talking about relations between Europeans and other cultures. In their own terms, the western world built an image of itself as the unique and valid culture while the rest of the world was defined as the 'other', regardless of their concepts and knowledge. Therefore a large number of working relations were created and some remain to date, where humans are mistreated. Capital interests have a way of

silencing the many stories of migrant workers. The world became what it is today by separating humanity into categories and classes. In this research, I will not pay any attention to any of these categories. I want to discover this space (Stellenbosch) by learning from the individual stories of women who come from different contexts but who are entangled in the idea of ‘generation’. Although this method is used by the humanities, where it is known as ‘cohort generation sample’<sup>10</sup>, I did not base this study on this application. I am aware of several methodologies which are employed to gather data from different human groups, but my approach to the women who collaborate in this research is made by affinities, coincidences and encounters, which I found did not fit within anyone of those accepted methods.

Despite this, as photography and narrative provide the form of presentation within my creative practice, shared with endeavours like visual anthropology for example, it is impor-

tant to reflect on the delicate historical issue of power relations around representation between different cultures. Phillip De Boeck, an anthropologist, who worked for six years in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), talks about this in a very profound way.

In his book, *Kinshasa, Tales of the Invisible City* (2004), De Boeck (2004:7) states, “Both the camera and the pen are, in a way, ultimately colonial tools, ordering, categorizing, and thereby creating reality in their own image. Each in their own way, photography and writing take possession of the world, freeze it in images and representations, and often kill its vitality in the process.”

But while photography might have been co-opted as a colonial tool, for as long as I have practiced photography, this role has also been challenged, and photography has demonstrated itself to be an introspective and shared process, an art charged with subjectivity provided by intimacy and shared ex-

<sup>10</sup> “A cohort generation is a group of people born during a limited span of years who share a common and distinct social character shaped by their shared experiences through time.” (Miller, 1999:34)

periences. Mbembe (2001: xvi) describes art as a form representing a sensory experience,

“...of our lives that encompass innumerable un-named shapes, hues and textures that ‘objective’ knowledge has failed to capture. The language of these genres communicates how ordinary people laugh and weep, work, play, pray, bless, love and curse, make a space to stand forth and walk, fall and die.”

In Sigfrid’s, *Being Human, Being Migrant. Senses of Self and Well Being* (2013), Anthropologist Naoko Maehara delves in the life account of Naomi and her migration from Japan to Ireland. Her experiences of suffering are expressed as not being able to re-emplacing and re-experiencing past places, the disruption of embodied knowledge and the lack of future vision. These aspects are later challenged through her narrative and the creation of a photographic diary in which, it is possible to witness how Naomi is gradually able to appropriate her new surroundings as part of her own ongoing life while she accommodates her

body to the new place and achieves a sense of continuity from the past into the present and future possibilities. (2013:19). In this case photography is a company in life, that can represent a transformation, it is also done through a delicate process of collaboration in which researcher and subject become authors.

So photography, despite and because of its history closely entangled with colonialism, also represents a sensorial experience: the colonial project has produced hundreds of images where people have been silenced or strongly misrepresented by countries institutions and people who did not understand and respect their way of being in the world. This is the case of migrants who arrive in contexts that are deeply different to what might be otherwise familiar. Even through a sensory experience, as stated by Mbembe and reinforced by Maehara’s example can also reflect meaningful acts that can express what it means to be human.

Throughout history, migrants have been represented without agency and dignity; it is a daily affair to see in the newspapers images

of immigrants suffering all over the world, because of their status of invisibility as ‘non citizens’. Examples of this will be addressed in the next chapter. Migrants are often seen without identity and history. The world labelled them as ‘other’ and as a danger regardless of their cultural background; their knowledge and strengths are rendered invisible. As for the state, as for colonial and oppressive practices, people should be always part of a group and studied for the sake of western ‘knowledge.’ For that reason, as part of the world’s history and in terms of colonial discourses of power, humans were divided into categories, with no respect for deep and different concepts. We became part of groups defined by those who hold power. As Tagg (1988:11) writes, different cultures were, “... subjected to a scrutinizing gaze, and forced to emit signs, yet cut out of command of meaning. Such groups were represented and wishfully rendered as incapable of speaking, acting or organizing for themselves.”

De Boeck (2004) also supports Tagg’s observation by saying that historically established

relationships of power were centred on the image, which was used as a colonial tool.

For myself, using photography in South Africa as a means of representation was a challenge, and the only way I could start this commitment was through relationships. In this regard, Biehl cites Deleuze, stating that creating is a very solitary act. He does not believe in the act of ‘giving a voice’ by telling someone’s life. In his view, in creating we are ‘thrown back to ourselves’, but it is in the name of that creation that the author has something to say to someone (2003:591). For Deleuze, “... we are not left to an endless self-reflexive and paralyzing mode of inquiry, our work rather will stand “...in contrast to the “orderwords” of the control systems we inhabit. Only the act of resistance resists death, whether the act is in the form of art or in the form of a human struggle.” (Deleuze in Biehl, 2003:591)

In sum, some forms of art that attend to people’s own struggles, as visions of themselves and others, create holes in the dominant discourses, including those of colonialism and the state-system. Through their move-

ment and ambiguity, life stories evidence how they are irreducible to a single narrative (Biehl 2003). For Biehl (2003:592), life stories evidence “the very fabric of alternative world making.” Life stories are, in the practical part of these study, written and visual.

Returning to entanglement, this term encompasses people who ‘overlap’; this is a space that shows sameness rather than difference. In this study, it is represented by the time, the personal history and the meaningful, but at the same time, it presents a challenge to notions of space. As Ossman (2013:37) states, “...moving subjects challenge static social orders and settled ways of thought.”

In anthropological theory there exists numerous researches on the paths, borders, and flows of migration of specific human groups. Sigfrid (2013) explains that in studies of multiculturalism, there has been a shift of interest towards the roles of individual agency and consciousness. As such, this research project also wants to expose individual stories that shape the migrant

experience and human circumstances, whilst demonstrating the notion of a human sensibility shared in a specific locale and within history.

Talking about a shared humanity challenges old practices of categorizations and divisions used in art and social sciences when representing the human, for example, dividing people according to their origins, the country they come from, their culture or their “class”. Mbembe states that no history must be addressed as ‘cut’ from a whole historical context. Anthropologist Kiven Strohm (2012:102) supports this, stating that

“we should consider presuming, or better, presupposing equality. It might be objected, and fairly so, that the ideal of equality is precisely that, an ideal, and thus presupposing it risks masking and obfuscating existing political inequalities and, in turn, disregarding power asymmetries within the ethnographic fieldwork relationship

Being aware of what is cited above, and of

my privilege as a student with a bursary, as a photographer and a researcher, I want to challenge assumed ways of seeing and categorizing seen as typical of the western gaze. I argue therefore that equality must not be presumed; everything must be explained and discussed in the photographic encounter. Equality is always present in the discussion around human subjectivity.

I would now like to turn to a discussion of the photographic encounter as a site of the historical representation of difference. Because of my combined training in anthropology and visual arts, I am aware of the concepts and methodologies that have been employed in this area in relation to the visual during colonial times. I am also aware of the historical co-optation of anthropology by colonialism and its studies of different cultures. But it must be remembered that history, acknowledgment and the formation of new generations of post-colonial artists and social theorists have also produced profound studies of human groups.

Contemporary art practices that employ pho-

tography to engage notions of representation, and anthropological studies which employ life story as a method both strive for a collaborative encounter and process. Strohm (2012:99) states that “new ways of seeing” are necessary for this new approach to artistic practices that employ ethnographic collaborative methods, as they can contribute to the process of decolonizing knowledge.

As previously mentioned, photography’s own history has long been linked to uses as a ‘colonizing’ power. The lens was used in order to control and classify people that were seen as deeply different, whose language wasn’t understood, and to whom the colonial photographer did not relate; he or she was there just as an observer, so his or her practice in the attempt of knowing a different human group of his own was generally not as a participant.

Referring to contemporary representations of migrancy in the South African media, social scientist Marietta Kesting (2014: 471) describes its ambivalent qualities as “...on the one hand, documenting and codifying, on the

other hand, creatively representing.” Kesting’s observation critically questions documentary photographic practices currently at work in South Africa. Therefore, a necessity was born in me to approach neither an image nor a representation, but a history; a person with past, present and future. Hence the creative process encompasses photographic representation, but also the trial and challenge of writing a life history of transformation, which implies a relationship and a process of collaboration.

In the context of post-colonial social sciences, ‘participant observation’ as well as the knowledge of the language is considered compulsory for those who want to understand and work with/in a particular human group. In the case of this study, it is to understand an account of a person’s life. So the postcolonial social researcher takes years to try and understand a person, then the gesture of a culture. Even though I believe any approach is truthful or finished, it is always an interpretation, offered through particular lenses to see the world, to ask, to listen and to live. The social sciences, particularly anthropolo-

gy, seeks for an ideal completeness in the approach to a human group which, in the case of a life, remains necessarily open-ended. Today, a multidisciplinary shift is ongoing, thus art and anthropology borrow one from another in regard to the human experience. There are several overlaps: artists describe situations as ethnographers, while anthropologists are increasingly using more visual tools to support their studies. This might also represent an entanglement, but it is also a necessity and a demand of a dignifying representation which is intended to be understood as a representation wherein the person represented would know where his or her image will end up, and wherein he or she accepts it or not. Further, a person should have the right not to be represented, but to self-represent. Even though my approach in this case is that of an artist-photographer, I want to listen to an experience and to build a relationship with the participants of my creative practice through a collaborative process. But, as in life, in art there is a sense of ambiguity, there is a sense of incompleteness that exists in approaching the history of a per-

son and building a photographic narrative.

Coming back to the social sciences and the work of Sigfrid and Ossman again, I would like to pick up on Sigfrid's notion of the 'life-worlds' of migrants, as described in her book *Being Human Being Migrant. Sense of self and well-being* (2013). In her words, "nothing can enter or appear in our life-world except what is lived. As such, the life-world is always intimately linked to the individual person's historicity..." (Sigfrid, 2013:2). This perspective informs the entire narrative of her book and focuses on individual migrant experiences as they are constituted in the intersection of individual historicity and social environmental configurations and relations.

Through personal narratives of migrant and refugee human beings from different contexts (voluntary middle class and forced refugees), Sigfrid and the various Anthropologists part of her publication try to understand how situations of alienation and discrimination can be repetitive, even if the people she worked with came from different contexts

and experienced different circumstances in their transition. Though they did not share the same origin, context and situation, they shared experiences in the new inhabited space; they represent an entanglement. Sigfrid (2013:2) states that "beyond the significant differences, there are similarities that illuminate their shared and equivalent experiences as humans as much as migrants." To achieve this, in her chapter, she delves in the experiences of a Tamil refugee woman living in a marginal space of the city (a tunnel), she explores how living in this 'in between' territory can also connect and change (Sigfrid, 2013:18), she does this recognizing differences as well as the aspects that are common and mutual which she explains "based on an understanding of a shared humanity" (Sigfrid 2013:2).

Sigfrid wants to connect different experiences through stories charged with subjectivity; it is within subjective experience that messages about relations and meanings are kept. It is crucial to know that the relations she analyses can be relations with the self as well as with the environment, regarding people and spaces.

Recalling Mbembe, I understand ‘the space in-between’ as a complex and essential part of this investigation. In his interpretation, displacement in Africa does not only refer to transit, and it is a characteristic of the post-colonial time of entanglement: “There is a close relationship between subjectivity and temporality – that in some way, one can envisage subjectivity itself as temporality.” (Mbembe 2001:15) For Mbembe, the post-colony is a combination of times, histories, and these subjectivities, an entanglement. It is complex because of its significance in the South African context: it is experienced in a post-apartheid period where these several temporalities are overlapping in unexpected and sometimes violent ways.

Space is also a sign of physical division that remembers that tragic past, which might have remained static in some cases while lives create histories in the same territory. Being ‘in-between’ also exposes that area of the self, the space in-between life and death, material world and spirituality, wanting in this work

to be expressed in time and space. This sense of being far from home, trying to understand, to start, having the difficulties related to social and sometimes economic realities, experiencing violence due to an “unresolved history” (Nuttall, 2007:87) of the country.

The term ‘in-between’ has largely been depicted in cultural and social studies as a state of liminality and the borderline, often being associated with contemporary geographical, economical and political questions around citizenship, visibility and invisibility. It can also be a status of margin or boundary, related with gender, spirituality and ritual transition. ‘Migration’ is also deeply related to this concept because is often understood as a transition: most of the time, one knows that will go back home, so the life is lived in this transitory space until the time to go back home arrives. At other times, the possibility of going home is uncertain, or home is now the new living world. ‘In-between’ can represent a liminal state of marginality, of longing, and desire. It can also refer to the act of being in the middle of a situation, in-between

the history of a place. In this case, it is the new inhabited space of Stellenbosch, South Africa, Africa, in this 'time of entanglement'.

Migrants' experiences of everyday life capture a human disposition of movement and change and the position of living in between or on the borderline of differently figured life-worlds. Sigfrid (2013) For Mbembe (2001:15), "... a life world is not only the field where individuals existence unfold in practice; it is where they exercise existence – that is, live their lives out and confront the very forms of their death." Therefore, migrants in this in-between space shape their lives in order to create a living space. But the issue of citizenship, the power of the states and their 'imaginary' borders seem to have achieved to separate countries and their people. The current politics are inhuman; immigrants without citizenship are considered criminals. Words like 'alien', 'outsider', and 'foreigner' are part of the language of the state.

Even though, Mbembe (2000: 261) suggests that borders are being challenged by reflecting on "Africa as a place" and "Africa as a territory", claiming that, "other ways of imagining space and territory are developing." New ways of integration are emerging. These new forms, are taking place, "on the margins of official institutions, through sociocultural solidarities and interstate commercial networks. This process is the basis for the emergence of alternative spaces that structure the informal economy, contraband, and migratory movements", as seen in markets, mosques and churches, which seem to elude notions of 'state' (Mbembe 2000:262). Mbembe's reflection on borders is, in my opinion, a reflexion on the time of entanglement in post-colonial Africa.

Migrants want their newly inhabited space to become their temporary home. Every time I have been away from home for a significant time I feel this need for a home, even a provisional space, where one is able to settle, to build something that belongs to one, and somewhere where one belongs.

Social interaction is needed to achieve this purpose, recalling Amaranta's<sup>11</sup> assertion: "*I think home is not the place, it is the people...*"

Anthropological studies state that identity is individually created, but it is defined and learned in social interaction and performance, rather than being inherited or prescribed. This expresses why relations are necessary to shape self-identity. Migrant identities are transformed in the course of the migrant's own journey and a feeling of searching might awake, by need, or by resistance, allowing migrants to find new spaces of sense for their lives in the new inhabited space. I am very interested in how migrant women like me relate to public space, and how spaces become valuable in building their own stories. In this way, paths, cityscapes and landscapes are also part of a life story and become part of our portraits in the practical work.

Individual paths as intimate spaces of migrants and shared by a diverse group of mi-

grants are a subject in Ossman's *Moving Matters* (2013), where a migrant is described as "a person who has lived in several countries, calling each one at some point home." She explains how serial migrants must negotiate a world of territorial frontiers and legal restrictions as they move from one country to another, using border-crossings as moments of self-clarification (Ossman, 2013: 1). They can become experts in settlement and adaptation. Coming from all over the world, Ossman found their entanglement in a repetitive path, one of serial movement. In the project, she studies a diverse and growing population to understand how paths of serial movement produce specific ways of life, and to highlight the constant tension between global fluidity, movement and the power of nation states. (Ossman, 2013) Her reflections on migration and social diversity explain how taking mobility as a research point change our understanding of subjectivity, politics, social life and connections among people that otherwise can be seen as profoundly different.

<sup>11</sup>Amaranta is one of the participants in this research

She supports this reflection by stating that, “We tend to describe different kinds of travellers, figures like the cosmopolitan, the nomad, or the immigrant, rather than attending specific migratory trails” (Ossman 2013: 1).

Her study challenges linear forms of knowledge production and reflects on how deeply entangled narrative is to space: as we move through our history, we are always negotiating space and place. The collaborators in her research are people living all over the world who share narratives of life and space, including even and despite the long distance, which separates them. The similar experiences of the participants in her research were revealed to me while reading fragments of their life stories; I was surprised by identifying myself while reading some of the serial migrants’ experiences where places of transit, like airports, train stations and bus stations were pointed out as meaningful and desired spaces in the lives of serial migrants. (Ossman 2013)

A story, whether is oral or written, is a form of interaction and negotiation; it allows the

encounter of different worlds in one time, forming entanglements. Michel de Certeau (1984: xxi) stated that, “...the act of reading makes the text habitable, like a vented living space. It transforms another person’s property into a space borrowed for a moment by a transient.” Recalling Biehl (2013: 592), a life story is formed by constant mobility, interaction and transformation. A life story is a story of transformation, being able to read or listen the story of someone makes this person part of one’s history for a moment. As De Certeau (1984: xxi) further elaborated, “Readers fulfil the messages with their internal voice, their accent reflects their own history... as do pedestrians, in the streets they fill with the forest of their desires and goals.” It is for that reason, a view also supported by social scientist Robert L. Miller (1999: 74-75), the life story as a research method is popular in the social sciences because it is ‘holistic’ on two accounts: “...firstly, biographical data range across time. The respondents who are telling us about their biography or family history do so in the present, but this biographical or family history ranges over the past.” There-

fore the interest and central point must be for Miller, “his or her movement along their life course. Secondly, the biographical perspective centres itself midway between social structure and the individual as social actor...”

Reflecting on Ossman again, she studies a common sense of movement, regardless of origins or destinations. Her reflection on the life stories of the participants of her research allows her to understand important moments in their lives, finding sameness among the participants’ life stories. She focuses on a shared pattern of movement and settlement and how it leads people to use borders to punctuate their life stories. Mbembe (2001:73) has commented about the “world time” in which a multiplicity of flows is entangled. In this intermeshing of temporalities, several processes coexist, causing people to view the world in increasingly similar ways, whilst also creating new differences and diversities. Interconnectedness in the contemporary world is unavoidable and must be recognized and articulated. Spaces illustrate interconnectedness in their streets and public spheres where anonymous

people walk crossing each other, but these spaces are not only connecting people: people connect with the self through them. As English theorist Kathleen Kirby (1996:17-18) notes, “Space can form a medium for reconnecting us with the material while preserving fluidity to subjective boundaries. It brings together the quantifiable and the qualifiable, the material and the abstract, the body and the mind, the outside and the inside.”

The desire to join the lives of different women who find themselves in the same place at the same time, through images and narratives, comes from a need for contact and relationship in a complex space where human relations are difficult. It is also a feature of South African spaces that historical ‘racist divisions’ are a physical part of the design of the cities, making mobility and connection among people a challenge. The history of the place and its structure make relations even more fragile. But South Africa also represents one space where people from across the African continent and elsewhere are arriving, converging and settling, and this fact will inevitably cre-

ate new meanings and produce ways of being and relating. This fact will also make new spaces to be born. Mbembe (2000:262) has pointed this out, suggesting that new ways of imagining space and territory are emerging and they are taking place, “on the margins of official institutions, through sociocultural solidarities and interstate commercial networks.”

According to the African Centre for Migration and Society,

Within the next fifteen years, the majority of African peoples will live in cities. The result of failing rural economies, global economic integration and international migration, the growth of the continent’s urban centres is generating new social configurations and patterns of power, authority and belonging (Scott, 2011: 2).

The end of apartheid in South Africa and conflicts elsewhere, coupled with changing modes of production and political reforms put more people on the move for the most diverse reasons ever in the history of Africa.

For some migrants, these new forms of mo-

bility offer the promise of moving out of poverty, for others it represents the opportunity of a peaceful life. Here I am referring to the case of refugees who flee the political and social conflicts in their countries. For others it promises an opportunity to start a new life or to have a formal education (Scott, 2011).

Southern Africa’s economy and society have been shaped by human mobility and several and complex efforts to control it. Diversity and migration expose the tension of sharing the country as well as its opportunities. Johannesburg is a city built on mining profits, it is very near the country’s borders, and experiences migration inflows since years ago. A 2012 study on Johannesburg shows that:

..... 90 percent of the residents of Johannesburg’s inner city areas – Hillbrow, Joubert Park, Berea and Yeoville – come from elsewhere. Built speculatively to house European immigrants in the mid-twentieth century, they were abandoned by their former white residents, landlords, and building owners as apart-

heid crumbled and they became the destination for Africans from across the region – South Africans from elsewhere in the country, Congolese, Malawians, Nigerians, Senegalese, Zambians, etc. These groups are members of mobile diasporic networks who rely on varying levels of (in)visibility for their survival (Bremner 2012:210-211).

South Africa is the most ‘developed’ country in Africa yet presents an extremely complex history that has left deep wounds in society and the relations among different cultures cohabiting the ‘same space’. One such tragic sign was in 2008, when a wave of ‘xenophobic’ attacks swept through South Africa leaving sixty-two people dead. Almost 100 000 ‘foreigners’ were forced out of their homes in fear of their lives (Dodd, 2010: 7). Today, South Africa is the African country with the majority of economic migration in the whole continent, whilst having 25% of people unemployed due to a serious lack of ‘formal education’, a legacy of colonialism, apartheid and the capitalist system we live in. Then again, in

April and May 2015, another wave of ‘xenophobic’ attacks happened around the country. This painful fact makes me rethink borders as an invention of colonialism. As Mbembe (2001:87) stated, even the efforts of post-colonial countries, which perpetuate the dogma of borders’ inviolability, creating forms of extreme ways of separatism, and regionalism. Borders are been challenged by migration and the necessity of movement within societies alters the way in which space is organized and established according to the state.

## **MY OWN PRACTICE**

Fully cognisant of the unequal power relationships that exists with regard to representation in photography, my approach to Manuela, Verónica, María Inés and Amaranta (fictional names, used to protect their identities) has been reached through a very delicate process where I told them all about this project, wherein they shared their stories over time, and wherein their portraits are a testimony to the way in which we relate and the space where our encounters are held, accepted by them and rebuilt as many times as necessary until they agree about how they want to be seen. The narratives accompanying the images are their life stories, which have been analysed by them again and again, and changed as often as necessary, with the premise of telling the story of their life as they want it to be read.

Urban- or cityscapes and landscapes represent their everyday paths in the town of Stellenbosch and the Western Cape region, those areas that form part of their own narratives or those they have invited me to visit together for the sake of obtaining a better understanding of their stories, or just for having a journey together or finding places that are forming their personal map of this new living space as well as in mine. At this point, it is important to reflect on the important relation between space and memory. According to Hannah Ewence (2013:163),

a contemporary historian,

People give meaning to what is otherwise an abstract location, a point on a map, a structure at the intersection of coordinates, random space. But people do not simply invest a place with significance: the process is reciprocal, with place becoming a part of the identity of those who interact with it.

This quote is just one interpretation, because what a place represents to a person will be fully understood only by the persons themselves, not by anyone else. As such, this research also explores the idea of a space understood as part of one's own life story and how these new spaces can become familiar and belong to us after living in them for a while. Even if they are public spaces, they also become private and can reveal, even if only in tiny ways, gestures about our inner self as well as about the space itself.

For De Certeau (1984:100), movement enables to understand that everyone has "...an individual fundamental way of being in the

world." Spaces reveal that "...forests of gestures are manifest in the streets, their movement cannot be captured in a picture, nor can the meaning of their movements be circumscribed in a text" (De Certeau 1984:102). In that sense, any photographic representation of the space is nothing more than that, an interpretation. The text also is the response of an encounter; hence the life of Amaranta, María Inés, Verónica and Manuela will never be fully understood by anyone else but themselves.

According to De Certeau (1984:117), space is private – owned – while place is collective: "...space is a practiced place...in relation to place, space is like a word when it is spoken." Streets are transformed into spaces by walkers. The author mentions as an example that cemeteries transform the place where human bodies lay motionless. There are many spaces as there are existential experiences (De Certeau 1984:117 and 118). Thus, one moment in a migrant's life is an experience of place and its transformation into a meaningful space.

So, my creative practice represents the answer I can give with what is in my hands now, to the question: how to challenge dominant tropes of migrant representation? I do this through a collaboration with four migrant women, addressed in the form of photographic representation combined with narrative biography/ life story. As such, it also raises questions about collaboration, agency, representation, human mobility, and entanglements in contemporary South Africa.

Narrative and photography are always approaching stories of particular contexts or human groups, but when the person is in constant movement and the space is broken due to a difficult history, there is no context to study. When the inhabited space is deeply fragmented, there are no spaces of encounter. So they have to be created or sought far away from home, creating a constant movement. To start this project, I approached migrant and refugee women who kindly accepted to be part of this process. They generously invited me to their

houses. During these visits I learned their stories. I accompanied and photographed them in a long and delicate process. Stellenbosch is a transitional space for me as well as the women who collaborated in this project; the women know they will go back one day, or perhaps not. Therefore I asked myself, ‘Why not focus this study on a shared experience, on shared memories, shared space? I started to search for a visual and narrative form that can entangle our stories to a collective history. The women’s stories were developed through various interviews, conversations, visits, and journeys. In these life stories I found that besides the fact that we are all not women from South Africa, we don’t speak the mother tongues of our new space (isiXhosa and Afrikaans). In the friendships woven in this shared time, I realized that we were all born between 1985, 1986 and 1987, so we are all 28 or 29 years old now, all living in Stellenbosch – even though Kayamandi, Cloeteville and Idas Valley<sup>12</sup> are not considered by some people part

<sup>12</sup> Neighbourhoods that were created in order to accommodate ‘black’ people during apartheid. These spaces are also where people, who used to live in the centre of the town before 1950, were sent after the forced removals that happened due the group areas act declared in that year.

of Stellenbosch itself. I had heard people talking about these spaces as ‘foreign’; some people confessed that they have never been there, and even advised me not to go there, ever. But the proximity and dependence of these spaces don’t allow me to talk about them as separated, even if it’s a long, almost impassable road and train tracks which divide them.

Therefore in this culturally invented point of intersection called ‘generation’, and in the space we share as migrants, our stories will entangle. It is there that our lives get even more crossed. So my practice will take migration, generation, and space as a shared experience and as a creative point where our stories will intersect.

In doing this project I wanted to reflect on how movement produces forms of life and spaces of entanglement. I wanted to understand how migrants from different contexts relate to Stellenbosch; how a shared historical time (generation) and a space (Stellenbosch) can entangle workers, students, artists, from different countries, with different stories. In the act of listening to a life story through a series

of encounters with these women, I wanted to understand how this shared landscape, even its history and division, creates a sense of union that can be understood through space; the inhabited space, the visited and walked space. At the same time, ideas, beliefs, senses, opinions, ideologies, experiences can be shared by a group of women that can – or not – know each other through their stories and memories. Perhaps this can point to a symbolic exchange, an entanglement created by the space, as well as by this imaginary place called generation, which overlaps realities coming from far and encountering in this small town. The idea of displacement, of transit, part of the time of entanglement as evoked by Mbembe (2001:15) and Nuttall (2008:11) earlier, points out that Africa today is a space where pasts, presents and futures overlap in unexpected ways.

According to Ossman (2014:58), “immigrants live in between; their displacements are set between two countries, two ways of life. Their stories progress through either / or propositions, alternating presence and absence, here to there.” Being ‘in between’ was explained

previously as a state of borderline, liminality, it can be related with genre, citizenship, visibility or its absence. In culture, it can explain a very deep transformation of the self.

It can be also an emotional state because ...whether migration is carefully planned for years or undertaken suddenly in the dead of night; departures from one's place of origin and arrivals in a strange, new environment characterize the immigrant experience. In literature and film, public opinion, or scholarly debates, the move from one country to another is depicted as a singular, often difficult rite of passage (Ossman, 2013: 60).

An individual path is portrayed by exposing inhabited public spaces, crossed streets, visited spaces, neighbourhoods that we, migrants, turn into 'ours' after being there again and again. Focusing on generation, memory and space, rather than social classifications or distinctions typical from the western gaze

can open possibilities and allow entangling different paths into one story. Consequently, a diverse and open group of women from different origins and destinations, allows to avoid linear ways of understanding, "recognizing commonalities among people who might otherwise seem profoundly different, separated by that very striating work of the state that cannot be challenged by any nomadic formation..." (Ossman 2013: 142). So, ethos<sup>13</sup> is recognized but is no longer definitional (Ossman, 2013), reflecting on a variety of cultural, national or 'class' origins.

It is difficult to be in the position I am, an artist and student, with a relative privilege, and so, I have been constantly wondering if the ambitions of this project are realistic; is it possible to register this time of entanglement, this time of overlapping histories and times in Stellenbosch, Western Cape? As Mbembe states, trying to understand Africa involves a "critical delving" (2001:9) into

<sup>13</sup> According to the Cambridge dictionary, ethos is the set of beliefs, ideas about the social behaviour and relationships of a person or a group.

the history and dynamics of the west and its attempts to represent it, challenging linear forms of knowledge. And above all understanding that, “every age has contradictory significations to different actors” (2001:15). In sum, every human experience time and history in a particular and unique way. According to Miller, the biography is unique in allowing us to view an individual in the context of her or his ‘whole’ life, from birth to the point at which we encounter him or her (1999:9).

To achieve a dignifying way of representing a person, my practice springs from a collaborative process with Amaranta, María Inés, Manuela and Verónica, where their life stories have been written as an integral aspect of the early part of this process. To accomplish this, a series of free writings and interviews were done, as well as accounts written up after conversations and during journeys, visits and encounters. In the process of this project therefore, I have connected with different contexts and stories which entangle in generational and public space. The path to achieve this goal comes from a friendship, from lis-

tening; the photographs then give the story an identity and humanity behind the words. The dignity by which people are depicted is one of the major concerns of this project.

**CHAPTER 2:  
HOW TO CHALLENGE MIGRANT REPRESENTATION  
THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY AND NARRATIVE?**

Through my practice, I aim to challenge the rapidness and superficiality of traditional documentary photography in the media (photojournalism), as well as the identification photograph in the passport. As Kesting (2001:1) points out, both ways of practicing photography serve to document and codify the human experience in specific ways, which I suggest are generally reductive. The primary aim of this study is to embody and record my encounters with four women who inhabit a shared experience of migrant subjectivity, as well as to understand and practice new ways of representing migrant subjectivity through two parallel and simultaneous forms: photographic as in portraiture, cityscape and landscape; and narrative, as in biography, life story. Taken together, these various modes represent a time of overlapping histories and experiences; an entanglement.

To explore the relationship between the ‘reductive codification’ of photography and my interest in an ‘entangled’ approach in more detail, I have selected three pairs of projects that each offer different methods and strategies of documenting the realities and or experiences of migrants. By placing them in a critical dialogue with each other, I can pay attention to their respective methods, and offer an interpretation of the effects of each selected example. In order to achieve this goal, while briefly discussing the history of migrant representation and expanding into photographic practice more

generally, I will consider Dorothea Lange's historical portrait *Migrant Mother of Seven* (1936) in relation to traditional photojournalistic practices. I will focus on the contemporary situation that I have experienced in South Africa; a country that has a large migrant population, and where the representation of migrants in the media has been characterised by abused and wounded bodies, particularly in recent times, covering the past "xenophobic" attacks which happened of May 2015.

First, I will visually analyse two images and their texts published in the South African weekly newspaper, *Mail and Guardian* during May 2015 in relation to photographer David Southwood's *Memory Card Sea Power* (2014); a photographic essay presented in the form of a newspaper. Secondly, in relation to Southwood's work, the media images and my own practice, I will briefly analyse *Hotel Yeoville* (2010); a participatory project by Terry Kurgan. Excerpts from an interview I conducted with Terry Kurgan about her project *Hotel Yeoville* will be presented, offering critical reflections on notions of documentary and rep-

resentation. In contrast to this, I will briefly comment on how two Ecuadorian migrants have represented themselves in the Diaspora through personal examples, demonstrating the relationship between selected photographs of two of my family members who have lived in Spain and Italy for almost 15 years, and my own photographic practice.

Finally, I will discuss portraiture and its poetic possibilities. I will also look at Rineke Dijkstra's project *Almerisa* (1994-2012), which in another way, apart from Kurgan or Southwood, also challenges media documentary photography through her practice in which empathy and affect are discussed by her and her subject, Almerisa. At the end of this chapter, I will describe the characteristics of biographical and autobiographical writing as a powerful tool of self-representation in this project, referring to the concept of collaboration applied in this research by focusing on my own photographic approach. The voice of Philip De Boeck will be strongly present in this chapter, as well as those of Tagg, Said, Mbembe and Nuttall.

**A GENERATION OF MIGRANT  
WOMEN IN STELLENBOSCH**  
**Brief discussion on the history of  
documentary photography, its relation  
to colonialism, and Dorothea Lange's,  
*Migrant Mother of Seven* (1936)**

By reviewing the history of documentary photography one understands that it is entangled with the history of photography as a method of surveillance and control of the society in which it operates, commonly embodied by the oppressed subject. According to John Tagg (1988), documentary was born in response to a particular moment in history, a moment of economic crisis in Western Europe and in the United States<sup>14</sup>. The initiators of modern documentary claimed not to be aware of its power and capacity to represent through the history and background of the photographer and the institution that was supporting the production of documentary photography at the time. Consequently, when documentary photography was in its formative state, its 'gaze'

was influenced by colonialism and categorization. As such, as Tagg (1988: 9) points out, ...an emergent formation of institutions, practices, and representations which furnished means for training and surveilling bodies in great numbers, while seeking to instil in them a self-regulating discipline and to position them as dependent in relation to supervisory apparatused through which the interventions of the state appeared both benevolent and disinterested.

The necessity of documenting difference in order to (attempt to) control it was done with the help of photography in colonial times. As De Boeck (2004: 26) states, "...once the internal other was domesticated, his alterity defined, labelled and then eradicated; the state embarked upon the same homogenizing, sanitizing and environmental protect in its colony."

<sup>14</sup> The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic depression in the 1930s.

Though colonization aimed to homogenize society, a division in all its spheres was carried through in this process. The colonial project categorized and classified every aspect of life. For this purpose, de-contextualized representations were used. The photographs of colonial subjects were images of divided human groups; divided from other peoples and from their contexts. Hence, these images did not pay any attention to the perspectives and concepts of these subjects, thereby invalidating forms of seeing and acting in the world that were not part of a western attitude. As Mbembe (2001:145) has suggested, for African cultures before colonialism, "...there was no representation of the real world without a relation to the world of the invisible." Colonialism started a battle of self-affirmation and to achieve it, different ways of seeing and living in the world were invalidated. Therefore,

...the difference between metropolitan prospero and colonial caliban, between self and other, culture and nature, rationality and irrationality, man and woman, writing and

speech, knowledge and ignorance, modernity and tradition, or peace and war..." was and is constantly generated in this European speculation (De Boeck, 2004: 28).

In this way, institutions were created to support the state in controlling populations by having an inventory of citizens and non-citizens. Once again, photography was an ally. The emotionless identification photograph was an invention of that time. English and cultural theorist Lili Cho (2009: 279) describes the relationship between the passport photograph as a cipher of citizenship, and the citizen-subject thus:

The diasporic subject's difference challenges the homogenizing stipulations of national citizenship and illuminates the contradictions of citizenship. These contradictions turn on feeling. Citizenship is both bonded by affect and, in the instance of its visual manifestation through the passport photograph, hindered by it. The injunction against emotion in

passport photos projects a fantasy of a passive, transparent, and readable national subject.

Documentary photography was born out of this process of codification and classification. Hence, the characteristics of young documentary photography were entangled with colonial practices. In a later stage, the ‘documentary’ form was established, more or less as it is known today: as a communication tool, aiming to contain ‘truth’ and to ‘inform’ as far as possible, distant realities from the context of the photographer in order to demand attention from the states. Therefore, photographs were looked ‘at’, and the presence of the photographer in the scene was ignored. What was not in the frame was not important. Since the photographer’s image did not appear in the photograph, the photographer was not there. He<sup>15</sup> was invisible and the aim was to show the world realities far from his own. Removed or not, he was the result of that time and an in-

strument of it and he was always there. Power relations were inevitably at play.

The relation between early ‘documentation’ and the more modern ‘documentary’ is undeniable. Tagg (2009:34) evocatively describes this ‘protective and impartial’ mask thus:

...the relation of documentary to the longer histories of documentation, record keeping, and discipline; without attempting to unpack overdetermined processes of investment in pictures of misery, the power of horrors, and the pleasures of the paternalistic gaze; or without remarking what escapes, resists, or scores through the limits of the rhetoric of transparency and the regime of documentary truth.

Recent studies of Ariella Azoulay, a theorist of photography and visual culture, discuss the

<sup>15</sup> The photographer in this section is referred as he. In modern documentary photography, this discipline was practiced mostly by men.

relation and exchange between the photographer, the subject and the viewers. In *The Civil Contract of Photography* (2008), Azoulay extends the possibility of questioning and examining the complex intertwined roles of the several participants that she identifies in the photographic image as ‘an entanglement’, wherein the photographer, the subject and the viewers encounter each other.

For Azoulay, it is possible that a photograph turns into a political space, where it might be able to rehabilitate the citizenship of those who had been wrested from it, opening possibilities of political action based on philosopher Hannah Arendt’s political thought as explained in philosopher Julia Kristeva’s book *Hannah Arendt: Life is a Narrative* (2001). Kristeva (2001:19) suggests that “only by becoming a ‘who’ that acts within political space creates a memorable narrative.” Within the context of the citizenry of photography, there is a civil contract between all the actors who take part in the photographic encounter; the photographer, the subject and the viewers or users of photography count, as each one of them ne-

gotiates his or her position within what Azoulay calls ‘this civil political space’. As such, the civil contract of photography is what entangles each participant in a civil relationship of rights and responsibilities. Azoulay (2008:16) pays important attention to the agency of the photographed person, as well as in the necessity of viewers to ask themselves what the demands of this subject of photography actually are.

In the case of my practice, the photographic encounter is born from a relationship, so it is reinforced when the agreement is reached between photographer and collaborator to be able to start photographing and thus create the story. The viewer enters into this relationship after the process is complete, or has been brought to a mutually agreed conclusion. So the viewer is, in this way, a guest that is able to interpret the story created by the images and texts. But, it must be acknowledged that the photographic stories address individuals who do not enjoy South African citizenship. Perhaps the photographs can be seen as Azoulay suggests then, as presenting the possibility and

creating awareness of the existence of scenarios and situations that are ‘outside’, marginalized or in a difficult space, despite my previous assertions that I don’t believe in the act of ‘giving’ a voice. Like Deleuze, I believe that the creative process is often a very solitary one and by creating it in collaboration, a relationship is woven together. And as it is woven, the resulting story does not claim to fully represent the portrayed person but rather, it reflects the dynamics of the relationship as process. In the act of sharing this work, the viewer becomes part of this relationship, albeit for a moment.

An Internet search for historical images of migrants using the search word ‘migrant’ delivered, in the first instance, the very well-known image of a migrant woman in the United States during the Great Depression. The image was from Dorothea Lange’s *Migrant Mother of Seven*, part of a series taken in 1936, when documentary was in its formative stages. One image (see fig. 1) has come to represent this series; it could be described as canonical. In this image, the woman’s gaze is distant, introspective. She is not looking at the camera.

Her hand rests on her face near her mouth, two children turn their heads away; a small baby sleeps in her arms with a dirty face. The original image is shown in photo theorist, documentary photographer and writer Michelle Bogre’s *Photography as Activism* (2012). It has a text on the right side, written by hand with red letters, ‘not for commercial use’. Below, it says “destitute pea-pickers in California; a 32 year old mother of seven children. February, 1936.” (Bogre, 2012:35).

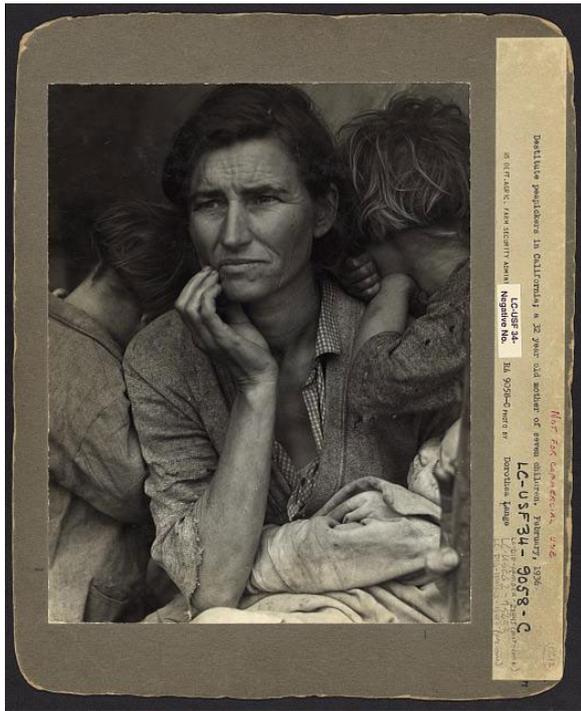


Fig 1. Dorothea Lange. *Migrant Mother of Seven*. (1936). Silver gelatine print converted in digital file. 18 cm. by 23 cm. Collection: Washington Dc, © Library of Congress File. Prints and Photographs Reading Room. [Online] Available: <http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsca.23845/> [Accessed 18-07-2014].

This historical and controversial image became an icon of the economical and environmental depression in the United States during the 1930s, where a group of photographers were assigned by the Farm Security Administration (FSA)<sup>16</sup> to photograph rural areas of the United States hit by the crisis. According to Bogre (2012:36), the image of the *Migrant Mother of Seven* became part of the collective memory, even if it was created in the frame of political propaganda. The group of images resulting from this commission shaped the collective, and according to Bogre, the “... cultural understanding of the depression, of poverty and for the need of government intervention.” The intention was supported by the idea that, if urban North Americans could see the realities of rural Americans, they would support Roosevelt’s programs (Bogre 2012:36), but it also became an example of how an image can become so essential to a point that the identity of the person is

<sup>16</sup> Originally created as the Resettlement Administration (RA) in 1935, formed as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s efforts to fight the Depression and move farmers from poor rural areas devastated by the economical and environmental crisis of the 1930s into a more economically viable work (Bogre, 2012:35).

unknown, forgotten and ‘unnecessary’.

In this image, the context is invisible. Without a name, a history, the retouched image shows a suffering woman whose history does not matter. The photograph was retouched by removing the migrant mother’s left hand for aesthetic purposes. This fact unveils this image as an icon of documentary photography, disrupting as well, the veil of ‘veracity’, which used to cover documentary photography and in some contexts still does.

The migrant mother’s identity was revealed 40 years later as Florence Thomson. She said that Dorothea Lange had promised her that she will never sell the image and that she would send a copy of it to her; which she never did. Lange did however go on to sell the image and benefited financially considerably by doing so. The famous photograph did not represent her, as Thomson said, “I never get anything out of it.” Lange’s version is different. She said, “I did not ask her name or history...She seemed to know my pictures might help her, and so she helped me. There was

a sort of equality about it. I knew I had recorded the essence of my assignment” (Lange cited in Bogre, 2012:38). The image turned into a symbol of that moment in history in the United States, hence it communicated a factual happening and created awareness of the Depression. But what about Florence Thompson, her image turned into an example of a harsh world of alienated labour and commercial exploitation at every level. But in another context this photograph became an icon of how representation and communication are tools of the capitalist system, transforming everything into commodities to be sold. This image led me to the printed media, as it was one of the images that shaped the history of photojournalism.

## **Representation of migrants in the South African printed media**

Following this tradition of simplistic and de-contextualized representations, the contemporary images I have been looking at in 2014 and 2015 in print and digital media are not very different. Migrants coming from other countries to South Africa are represented as a threat, without agency, identity and history. They are always running; never aware of being photographed, whether wounded or dead. The images are everywhere and are “truly awful to contemplate”, to echo Said in the introduction to his book *Orientalism* (2003). Said was referring to the images that represent Islamic people around the world (2003: xv); the images that have shaped the way in which they are seen today around the world. We see a similar situation with the photographs of the Farm Security Administration (FSA). They shaped the understanding of depression, poverty, and rural environment in the places reached by the media.

The above discussion led me to consider South African printed media, where I found some images and narratives that I saw necessary to analyse. I will focus in the way in which migrants are represented in one South African newspaper, specifically in two illustrated articles published on facing pages in a single issue of the *Mail and Guardian* (April 30th to 7th May 2015).

## Visual analysis of two articles of April 2015

*Mail and Guardian*

(April 30th to 7th May)

The title of the first article by Mmanaledi Mataboge and Qaanith Hunter is ‘*Gatvol Zuma leads riot act to illegals*’. It has a subheading with the words, ‘It’s no more Mr Nice Guy as the president defies his naysayers to crack down on border hoppers’. The section header, ‘Xenophobia’, converts the report into an almost-normalized violence by not showing any particular sensitivity: the images and the narrative below are shown like ‘another’ subject of debate between states.



Fig 2. Mmanaledi, M. & Hunter, Q. 2015. Gatvol Zuma leads riot act to illegals. *The Mail and Guardian*, April 30 – May 7:3.



Fig 3. Mmanaledi Mataboge, Qaanith Hunter. Photograph part of the article, Gatvol Zuma leads riot act to illegals. (2015). *The Mail and Guardian*. April 30 – May 7: 2. [Online] Available: <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-04-29-gatvol-zuma-turns-on-african-leaders>

In the photograph, seven men are sitting on a pavement; their bodies make a curved line, one behind each other.

The image was taken from a high camera angle, looking down onto the sitting men, some of whom have their hands on their faces. None face the camera directly; they seem vulnerable. It is a sunny day in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, an area largely inhabited by ‘foreigners’ as described in the newspaper.

The police and the defence force soldiers are in front. It is stated below the photograph that they will check on their identity documents. From one side, soldiers and policemen chat amongst themselves, whilst some of them point towards the sitting men with guns. From the other side, the photographer points to them as well, but with a camera instead to take the shot. The reaction of those nearer to the camera is to turn their head or cover their head with their hand, as is the case of the third man, perhaps to remain anonymous. Or perhaps the sun is too bright. From the third person, their heads are not turned. It is possible to see the profiles of three of

the men, even recognize them. They are not aware that are being photographed. Their permission to take the image was not sought.

Below the image, the text addresses the reaction of the government to the attacks. It states: “Don’t kill them but deport them, shut them down at South African borders and confine refugees to camps.” (Mataboge and Hunter, 2015) According to these words, the state addressed people like objects to move or ‘shut them down’. In this case the representation of the people in the media doesn’t matter. Echoing Kesting (2014:472), they are considered “...second class citizens in the modern nation state...in addition to their “negative” visibility, migrants in South Africa often lack full citizenship rights in their ‘host’ country”.

It is also explained that searches and deportations are a daily occurrence; a method of reinforcing previous systems of border and illegal migration control. The responses of neighbouring countries to ‘Xenophobia’ are mentioned as well as regarding the reactions of the government to fight

against the anger of its citizens. It is finally stated that the policies of deportation and persecution might create more fear. The text also mentions that seven people including South Africans died during the recent attacks in Durban. Statements of Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini that “foreigners must pack and go” are mentioned again. President Zuma’s assertion that “brother countries in Africa contribute to xenophobia by having their citizens in South Africa” is supported with Somalia as one example, whose citizens in South Africa are described as an extra responsibility; Tanzania, on the other hand, is described as a passage where ‘they’ don’t stay. (Mataboge and Hunter 2015)

No information is provided about the people in the image above. They are depicted as criminals, out of their context, as a kind of representation which doesn’t belong to them. A similar phenomenon was noticed by writer and art historian Simon Watney (1996:74), writing about the media and its depiction of HIV in the 80s: “...certain representations belong to the world and not to the self”. This

representation takes ownership of their images and situation in order to fill a page in the newspaper and create imagery of migrants as a danger, as a threat. Said mentioned that for the system, non-western cultures are always represented as outsiders (2003:71). Yet this situation seems to represent a case of being doubly ‘outside’; alienated by a non-western culture, and within a non-western culture. The text exposes harsh government policies in response to the attacks. It is explained that new migration policies are taken up to make life uncomfortable for those planning to come to South Africa. The image plays a role in perhaps causing more fear among migrants. Even diplomatic words are expressed in the following way: “If we put refugees in camps, it will discourage others who are considering coming here” (Mataboge and Hunter 2015). There is no sensitivity expressed towards the realities far from South Africa and no appreciation of what is causing people to move from their homes. The authors are ‘invisible’; they are just reporting information. As the image in the newspaper, the language in the text is representing a state structure (South Africa),

perpetuating the image of the migrant as a criminal and a burden for the country. As claimed by Said, this language, referring to western systems of representing the Orient, and which we can apply to Africa, is not accurate. It is also not trying to be accurate. It is working to create an image of an outsider (in this case, an African outsider) that thousands of families see from their homes on the TV and on the newspapers as separate from them (Said, 2003:71). In this way, an image can create what Watney (1989:84) describes as, "...an ideal audience of national family units, surrounded by the threatening spectacle", a spectacle of 'the foreign' and 'the criminal', without acknowledging the whole picture and their own position in the system.

As Said insisted, all things in history are made by human beings, even history itself. Boundaries, are also made by humans, and as all aspects in life, they are given roles and meanings, their validity is acquired, and that is how the words 'foreign', 'alien' or 'abnormal' were born and are still in practice by the state, and sadly by some ordinary people (Said, 2003:54).

As I write this document, on the TV, Internet and news papers the refugee crisis is shown. I can not avoid to mention that the world is witnessing a masse migration from the middle east and some African countries to Europe due to war and political hardship. People's attempts to run away are very hard and painful, and we see it through the media every day. Migrants are, in most cases, seen as a problem, as a burden, their value is forgotten by the different states involved. I comment briefly on this delicate issue, because, to be able to discuss it properly involves a very deep and complex historical analysis, which is related to this study but could turn the discution too broad.

The second page of the same newspaper includes an article by Fatima Asmal entitled, *Stay or go? Foreigners in catch-22* (review), with the subheading: ‘In the refugee camps around Durban, the bleak ironies of migrant life unfold on Freedom day’ (Asmal 2015). It is illustrated with a photograph of a Burundian man wearing the South African football jersey, taken by Rajesh Jantila.

He is standing amongst tall grass; there are no buildings in the immediate vicinity. It appears to be the outskirts of the city. Behind him, we can see what it seems to be a refugee camp.

He is looking at the camera, he has one hand in his pocket, and the other is holding a leather folder.



Fig 4. Asmal. F. 2015. Stay or go? Foreigners in catch-22 (review). *The Mail and Guardian*, April 30 – May 7:4.



Fig 5. Rajesh Jantila. Photograph part of the article Stay or go? Foreigners in catch-22 (review). (2015) *The Mail and Guardian*. April 30 – May 7: 4. [Online] Available: <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-04-29-foreigners-deliberate-whether-to-stay-or-go-amid-xenophobic-attacks>

The frame shows half of his body. Below the photograph a text says: “No peace: Burundian stalwart Anicet Bigirimana says the UN High Commissioner for refugees needs to step in to help deal with the Xenophobic crisis.” (Asmal 2015)

The female journalist tells the story of going to the camp in Phoenix, located in north-west Durban, accompanied by her son and nephew. She describes her attempts to interview someone there. She also mentions having been there before “for another article” (Asmal 2015).

She describes people being reluctant to talk. The official who is ‘not authorized’ to talk, discusses people who have gone home and the ones who have been reintegrated into South African society. He explains that of those remaining, 99% are Malawian. Two Malawian men approach her to talk; their names appear as Hanif Phiri and Willard Jali. It is not stated whether these are fictitious names. Phiri explains his situation and his fear of the attacks, the reason for him not leaving but staying in South Africa, and the situation of Malawi and his parents. He asks the journalist to take his

contact details in case there are any job opportunities. There is a sense of engagement between the journalist and people she interviews. Asmal gets closer; a small part of her life about her son and nephew who went to the camp with her appears in her accounts. The journalist is surprised and says “a job?” (Asmal 2015). On the other hand, Jali mentions why he wants to leave South Africa. He explains how he was attacked during the night and ran away with nothing on him. A pull-quote highlights concern, even desperation: “What are we going to do in this country, the people don’t want us here.”(Asmal 2015)

Asmal writes about going to another camp, accompanied by an official. She describes the various activities in the camp and the presence of volunteers. The official explains that “the people from Malawi want to leave but the people from Mozambique, Burundi and Zimbabwe want to stay”.

The presence of officials is not explained in the text, but it is mentioned by Asmal that an official accompanies her to walk around the camp.

Finally, the person who appears in the image above is mentioned. His name is Anicet Bigirimana and a bit of his story is revealed, including his age, and the time he came to South Africa. His words appear again; they are used in the pull-quote. The interest of the journalist is evident through the act of returning to the camp. Her engagement with the people reveals some compassion and the will to communicate their situation. She mentions there is a live band in the camp. As she leaves, the band is playing the Bob Marley song *Three Little Birds*. As she listens, the band sings: “Don’t worry about a thing, cause every little thing is gonna be alright” (Asmal 2015).

She finishes by reflecting on the man who asked her for a job and her son saying that maybe someone in the family could give him a job. She also reflects on the song before the article finishes. Hope is present in the description of the ambiance, the music and the possibility of people finding ways to exist and resist struggles.

## **PHOTO-BASED ART PROJECTS REFLECTING ON MI-GRATION**

### **David Southwood's** *Memory card sea power*

Whilst analysing these selected newspaper articles, I was referred to a project by South African photographer Dave Southwood, called *Memory Card Sea Power* (2014). It is a photographic essay in the form of a newspaper, made in collaboration with writer Sean Christie, characterised by the use of bold typography that highlights impressionistic words and expressions, and function as 'word-images'. Southwood and Christie record and depict the lives and struggles of several Tanzanian men who arrived in Cape Town by ship. They travelled there as stowaways, and now live as homeless people on the city's foreshore.

Southwood's work uses the language of the newspaper as a critical reaction to media reportage on migrants and immigration. All the encounters of the writer with the subjects are dated and described like a diary, which starts in 2011.

5 metres wide

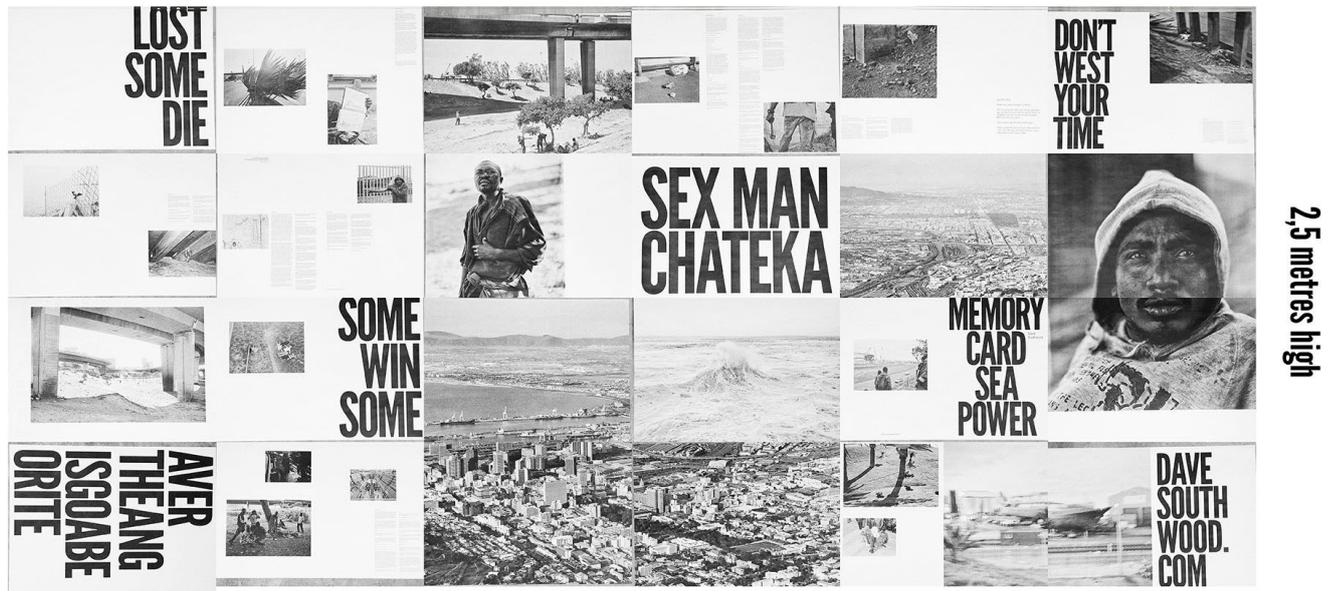


Fig 6. David Southwood & Sean Christie. *Memory card sea power*. (2014) Newspaper printed in black ink. Unfolded view of 12 A1s. 2, 5 m high. Self-published art work. Cape Town. © Southwood 2014 [Online] Available: <http://davesouthwood.com/> [Accessed 30-05-2015].

I saw this powerful work on the 2nd of July 2015. I was at home with my friend Eunice, who has made her home in Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Her comments were very valuable to me. She said that when she was living in Dar es-Salam, there were a lot of stories about stowaways, and their desire to leaving the country was so powerful that they tried several times until they managed. She said she never imagined that they were also in Cape Town and that the situation depicted in the artwork was very touching for

her. She read the whole 'newspaper' immediately and found the text very interesting. She laughed, was surprised and she was sad. She commented on the relationship of the artist, the writer and the Tanzanian men they were describing. She commented on one portrait by saying that was very sad; she said that she never imagined their lives to be like that. The stories she had heard about them in Tanzania were so different and this newspaper showed her a reality of which she had heard a lot, but from other perspectives.

There are small, black and white photographs of drawings and words on a wall. Next to it, large text is placed. The ‘newspaper’ starts by telling, from the perspective of a gardener, about unknown people who live under the bridge between Oswald Pirow Street and Hertzog Boulevard. He says these homeless men give him work, saying that they are “tsotsis, drug smokers...” (Christie in Southwood 2011) It is mentioned that the city’s new mayor is coming. The gardener receives orders from the City Improvement District’s security that he must get rid of the bridge men before the arrival of the VIPs. It is mentioned that he could communicate with them because his father was from Tanzania. This is immediately followed by a description of the way the men occupy the space and live, with an image supporting this description, with the words sanity, ‘mess’, ‘shit’. One of the texts describes the security person saying, “Mr Gardener, your friends shit everywhere” (Christie in Southwood 2014). There is a description of the Mayor addressing the people in a public event. He talks about Cape Town as a more inclusive space, and greets them in

English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. It is described that the Tanzanian men arrive at the scene, which security notices. It is said that the media was there, so they didn’t want “a scene” (Christie in Southwood 2014). Following the mayor’s speech about division and apartheid, it is mentioned that the Tanzanian men continue to prepare their lunch.

The ‘newspaper’ shifts from the voices of the writer to the voice of the space and words of the Tanzanian men, sometimes as conversations, sometimes as large text, like oversized news headlines. On the fourth page, I see in big letters: **SOME WIN SOME** (their words).

In the first images of the space, the Tanzanian men appear small next to the bridge; they are variously sitting, lying down, cooking. The third image, placed next to large text, shows them on the grass basking in the sun. They are not recognizable; they look like shadows. It is said that it is winter. The next image shows them next to the crowd who assist at the public event. They are behind the assistants. It is possible to see their backs with their

bags. They are still unseen as their faces are still invisible.

In one of the texts, Christie describes the first photographer's call, explaining the collaboration process. Southwood states that he has been visiting the "underpass" (Christie in Southwood, 2014) for two years and wanted to do a collaboration with a writer. The photographer becomes a subject himself. The image next to this text represents one of the Tanzanian men. His name is not mentioned. Shifting the voices of the writer and the photographer, the writer describes the space as well as the walk-around he did with the photographer. The photographer's voice appears briefly, describing situations in this new space in order to introduce it to Christie, situations that he might have learned from the Tanzanian men. These written texts on the walls of the space are mentioned often: "the power of the sea forever and ever. Sea men life; no story, only action. Today Africa tomorrow Yurope [sic]" (Christie in Southwood, 2014).

The writer describes the relationship between Dave (the photographer) and Adam, who is one of the Tanzanian men. The use of the words like 'alien speak' appear, which in my opinion might represent the experience of the writer as he encounters a migrant (unfamiliar) reality or perhaps, it is just the use of the language which I cannot get used to. Christie describes asking Adam about the meaning of "THEANG ISGOABE ORITE". Adam explains that this is not Swahili. They are surprised to learn that that these words are the lyrics of Bob Marley's song, *Three Little Birds*, spelled out phonetically as they are uttered; it is accented, vernacular English, a powerful example of the entanglement of language described in the previous chapter. A second entanglement is also present: the coincidence that this same song of hope also appeared in the *Mail and Guardian* article cited by Asmal above.

My experience of this work is that as the voices of the men increase, the images of what is written are created in the mind, but the photographs sometimes represent what it is not

described. No direct relationship necessarily exists between the images and the text. Most of the time, each works on its own; a juxtaposition prompting another interpretation. One powerful image is a portrait of a man looking directly at the camera.

He looks exhausted, he also looks sad. But he also is represented in a dignifying way. He is standing, looking at the camera. His left hand is touching his stomach.

A description of the situation of the Tanzanian men is offered. They are described in relation to 'illicit' drugs and 'trolley pusher' jobs. The description of a man taking drugs is given and it is not clear if this person is the man portrayed. The writer describes the conversation, alternating his voice with the voices of the men. Adam, who is one of the Tanzanian men, is the translator. Names and words are put in the text in order to protect identities, which shows consideration from the authors.

A story of movement, of desire, of struggle is told through the words of the Tanzanian men. Their voices are amplified on the



Fig 7.

following pages where the writer explains the first attempt to listen to their stories. At first, they lie, and then the truth is strong and heart-breaking. There is death, drugs and struggles. There is also the fight to survive and to leave, and there is also love; it is conveyed through the name of the daughter of a Tanzanian man tattooed on his shoulder. Christie also describes the relationship between Southwood and one of the men, using this man's own words in the text.

In this way, the authors successfully communicate a level of empathy with these men.

Images of a landscape in movement, denoting motion, passage, the space of the encounter is shown, and the encounter itself

is described. It is a brief life story of Daniel Peter, another Tanzanian man; the reason for his journey is recounted in very broken English, and his drawings on a diary and a photograph of the diary itself powerfully describe this journey. The writer is frank, expressing his doubts about this story, but his empathy is clear. This is a touching life story, even if it is perhaps not entirely accurate. However, this intervention on the part of the writer into this story, ‘truthful’ or not, feels a little too strong. It results in the story feeling broken, which in turn creates doubt in the reader, myself. But it is a moment of sincerity, of self-conscious reflection on the part of writer and photographer, as they trying (and perhaps fail) to imagine such a traumatic experience in reality.

The photographs of the city of Cape Town and the expansive ‘power’ of the sea may represent a metaphor of the conflicted feelings experienced by these Tanzanian men.

There is desire to survive and a desire of the unknown and the big city. But these photo-

graphs also represent spaces, which the photographer and the writer know as home, their town; it is possible that these encounters will allow them to see these familiar vistas differently.

There is an image of the huge city again; a city where one can get lost. Further on is the sea; an image of capital power and urban life. In big letters again it says, “DON’T WEST YOUR TIME” (Christie in Southwood 2014).

This text appears next to an image of the city of Cape Town, the photograph also shows its roads and streets, the train station, buildings, houses, the malls, the sea. It is a portrait of the

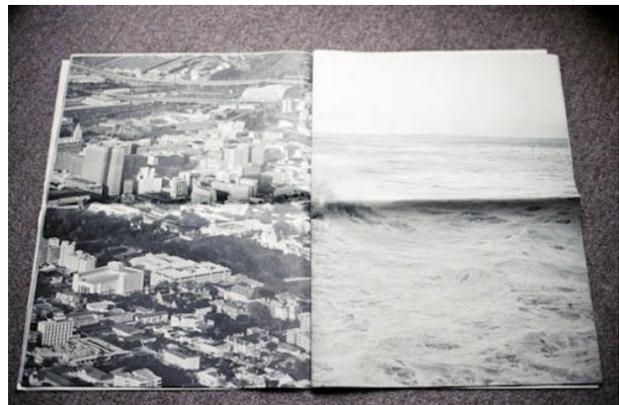


Fig 8.



The writer explains his feelings about the city by describing how it is to have met these men. He reveals that he misses Adam, and that some of his friends think he is dead. There are photographs of the city and the sea again. On the next spread Southwood's website address is typeset on the right-hand side, broken into single syllables running the full height of the page. On the left-hand page, we see a photograph of a plant blowing in the strong winds next to the road.

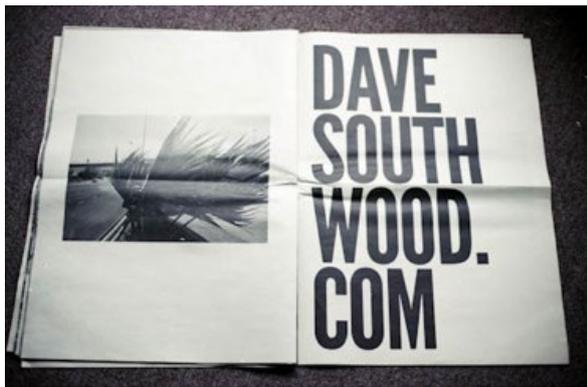


Fig 10.

The photographer and the writer's experiences of going back to see the graffiti are described, together with the process of them copying these graffiti. It is revealed that these graffiti are the phrases laid out in oversize type that are such a strong visual feature of the 'newspaper'. The Tanzanian men arrive and

explain their struggles and losses through the graffiti. For example, 'Junior No more', means that one of the men, known as Junior, had passed away. Two letters next to a number are the Initials of a person next to an ID number so they won't forget it. (Christie in Southwood 2014). This represents a very strong aspect of this project; the voices of these men are present in written texts, and the significance these texts have to them is faithfully recorded and acknowledged, which for me demonstrates a sincerity and integrity in the positions of Southwood and Christie.

Finally you can see the Tanzanian men in their 'home'; sitting, walking, and standing next to a tree. The detail of one of the man's eye is shown, shining in the next page. A last visit is described but the power of the narrative left open-ended as Adam re-appears and the life under the bridge, as it is told, continues. The last date of the diary is the 28th of July, 2013.



Fig 7-11. David Southwood & Sean Christie. Detail of *Memory card sea power*. (2014) Folded view of newspaper printed in black ink. A1. Self-published artwork. Cape Town © Southwood 2014.

To be in South Africa today is to witness realities that overlap in the most difficult ways. After reading and looking at Southwood's work of art in the form of a newspaper and the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper articles, the voices of the participants vary quite considerably. In the first article by Mataboge and Qaanith (2015), we listen to the 'official' voice of the state; a punishing voice. Even in the image, it is possible to see the strong power rela-

tionships, the state as an obedient voice of the capitalist system where the human is put beyond the capital. *The Mail and Guardian* article by Asmal (2015) is gentler. In that article it allows the voices of migrants to appear, and the depiction of Anicet Bigirimana is a respectful one. His name and voice are mentioned. The relationship between this article and the project by David Southwood and Sean Christie is the narration of the author's subjective expe-

riences. They both appear on the scene. They do not give a reason for their being there but they are interested in reflecting the point of views of migrants, who are by contrast, silent in the first article.

In Southwood's project the voices of the Tanzanian men resonate; their photographic representation is carried out with deep compassion and understanding. And perhaps that is why it is more distant than the written story where they are represented in a deeper and stronger way, because their voices and meanings appear in the narrative. In other words, the photographer took images of the Tanzanian men as long as he was allowed to. For me, the most important aspect of *Memory Card Sea Power* is the sincerity of the authors in revealing the photographic and authorial transactions at work, the power relations and the choices and situations they went through to be able to present a story, including their own ignorance about migrants' life worlds. They were also interested in documenting a powerful story, that is not only a South African one, but a story of the world; a story of movement and displacement.

Through a long relationship of more than four years between the authors and the participants of *Memory Card Sea Power*, the work revealed a world that I didn't know existed by bringing awareness of this reality that happens nearby, yet we don't notice.

Accepting the authors' approach as demonstrating integrity and sensitivity, there should also be the possibility – the freedom – of being or not being represented, of allowing or not allowing one's representation in all kinds of photographic encounters. But represented by who and for whom? That is always the question in today's photographic practices. As photographer Allan Sekula observed, "Documentary is forced painfully to perform its own powerlessness" (2013: 20). As such, in Southwood's and Christie's work it is possible to appreciate the strength of the narrative to say what is not visible through the images. The authors' voices are equally weighted in relation to the Tanzanian men's voices in the story. The voice of the city and the sea is also represented through images. There are also silences. I refer to the images that were not taken as the 'silences' but they also show a careful

approach. These silences are mostly depicted in the section where Southwood wants to portray Juma, representing how he approached the process of portrayal in his work.

The newspaper format is a very accessible one, bringing contemporary art ‘down to earth’. In the news there is an imposed order that is completely challenged in Southwood’s piece: *Memory Card Sea Power* can be read in any order, and it can be folded back in any order as well. It can be displayed as a set of posters. As an everyday piece, *Memory Card Sea Power* can be understood not only inside the gallery space, but in any space. And at the same time, it left me with strong feelings of awareness of my own practice, my position as a photographer and the compromises it can imply.

The history of documentary photography has constructed an image of the immigrant without self-determination, whose identity is invisible in our imagination. Everyday on the television or in the news, we see migrants crossing borders, being arrested, deported or

in the middle of a painful journey. As South African art and cultural theorist Alexandra Dodd (2010:8) suggests, “As the subjects of documentary reportage, they are made to stand in a generalized way for violence, injustice, suffering and deprivation”. In other words, migration is treated and shown in a very sensational way. Fears are perpetuated and fake ‘others’ are created through these images. Dodd (2010:8) elaborates further:

They are caricatures, not only disconnected from their history, but also from the histories of those who consume their images. While these images are important in catalysing the reactions of government and aid organizations the way in which they manifest is through public conversations that deny immigrants any real identity or agency.

As we can see, South Africa is a hugely cosmopolitan country. Unfortunately, the media around the world wants the people to understand Africa through a reductive lens, which from one side perpetuates the paternalistic vi-

sion of Africa and on the other side, over-exoticises its image, showing a static Africa that remained ‘back in time’. This contradiction is summed by De Boeck (2004: 23) citing writer, poet and literary critic Édouard Glissant, saying, “We see a lot of Africa on television – AIDS, massacres, tribal wars, misery... But in fact we don’t see Africa. She is invisible.”

### **Terry Kurgan’s project, *Hotel Yeoville***

In 2010, South African artist Terry Kurgan developed a relational and participatory project called *Hotel Yeoville*. It was in response to the wave of ‘xenophobic’ violence that was witnessed in South Africa in 2008 and is still experienced. The project also questioned the superficial and charged media documentary photography that exposed this event in the most violent way. Kurgan (2013:30) explains her work as

... a public art experiment: a multi-platform project that I directed and produced over a period of 3 years in collaboration with a large and diverse cast.... Yeoville, an old, working class suburb on the eastern edge of the inner city of Johannesburg... Yeoville is now largely inhabited by micro communities of immigrants and refugees from many parts of the African Continent. Isolated and excluded from the formal

economy and mainstream South African society, their dominant engagement is with each other and with home in faraway places.

The project consisted of a series of probes and interventions, a research process, the launching of a website and an interactive exhibition housed inside a new library. The project was developed along circuitous and repetitive trajectories of research, planning and exhibition in a process that welcomed audience participation in a space of active and playful production. Kurgan (2013:30) explains:

The exhibition installation was comprised of a series of private booths<sup>17</sup> (such as story booth, directory booth, video booth, photo booth, journeys booth), in which visitors were invited to document themselves through a range of interactive digital interfaces and online social

media applications; thereby bringing various forms of personal expression and intimate experience into public circulation. All the content produced populated the real world, physical space that the project occupied and then was subsequently mirrored virtually on a web site.

Participatory and relational projects turn the audience into actor-participants. Experience and social interaction take precedence to documentary or observation.

According to Kurgan (2013: 10), “*Hotel Yeoville* was forged on the premise that we do have time for each other’s stories, and that we are capable of enjoying each other’s differences.”

In this way, Kurgan managed to represent migrants in a very respectful way, which artist and intellectual Olu Oguibe describes as “the triumph of good memories over the pain and hopelessness of loss” (Oguibe in Dodd, 2013: 7).

<sup>17</sup> According to the Oxford dictionary, booth is a small, temporary tent or structure at a market, fair, or exhibition, used for selling goods, providing information, or staging shows.



Fig 12. Terry Kurgan. *Hotel Yeoville*. (2013) Photographs of the installation of Hotel Yeoville (2010) Johannesburg. Published book (Fourthwall Books 2013: 78 and 79)

Oguibe's words apply to Kurgan's participatory work and express how this participatory project depicted stories which are not sensational. The images resulting from Kurgan's work are, as she says, performative. They embody the enormous value that photography has as a tool of self-representation. Kurgan's work presents authentic stories where migrants show themselves the way they want to be seen. The *Hotel Yeoville* project has a great impact as immigrants represented themselves

through a very accessible voice and powerful images through portraiture and video that have been shown around the world.

Through its results, it is maybe possible to witness what Mbembe (2001:xvi) describes as 'meaningful acts' by which people resist death; acts that are different to everyone, shaping the contemporary world and its overlapping temporalities and multiple histories. But aren't some documentary photography projects also a means by which to represent these meaningful acts that Mbembe describes. In an interview with Kurgan (February 2015), I asked whether it is possible for some documentary

photography projects to represent meaningful acts in terms of migrant representation in South Africa. She said,

Recently this theme... you know, another whole wave of xenophobic violence in Johannesburg and in Cape Town... I think that the media still focus on the crises, on attacks of foreigners. I think all that the media do is report on locals attacking foreigners, burning their stores and so on. There is very little attention been paid on to the quite large number of people coming here from other places, and engaging with South African society in the most positive ways, so I think the media is still perpetuating that abject under threat, and still fuelling the fire.

The images in the everyday media are threatening and unwelcoming. They generalize and perpetuate the situation. Kurgan's idea was to respond to this through art. In her work, she sets up the conditions of possibility – technical, spatial and imaginative – for migrants to represent themselves, yet she remains very

cognizant of the pitfalls of participatory of 'collaborative' practices:

I am very aware of the complexity of participatory projects, there are two sides of the process, there is me as an artist and the fact that you are inviting people to participate in their own representation, doesn't necessarily make things equal between you and them. You are still coming from citizenship, education, middle class, privilege, and people are watching carefully to look for opportunities, in relation to what you have brought there, so there is a very strong sense when I am working like this of the aesthetic and the social narratives of the project, and I see myself as the photographer, in this case, you know I created the frame, I produced the circumstances, within which people press the button, they decide when to press the shutter, you know that was still not the same as a selfie, not

the same as taking a photograph of yourself. Those images are all made in the context of a frame [that] I myself and my colleagues have created. Very complicated questions are raised when you work the way I do, and many issues, problems, that you work with. (Kurgan, February 2015)

Assisted by a big team of collaborators, Terry Kurgan did what was within her control; which was to create a welcoming space for migrants and non-migrants to share their stories. She is very interested in the inequality of the photographic transaction.

When I asked her about documentary photography, she said:

I think I read today that something like 1, 8 billion photographs are uploaded every single day to various social media and platforms and I sort of wonder who is looking at them, [it's] just so much. I think documentary photographs have a job to do and again, you know, context... Context produces a great part of the

meaning. Who is viewing the photographs, where? I think context is everything. I think it is an important category of photography, you know that brings attention to things that are happening in the world to people that are far away, you know, we all watch things in real time, that is important. (Kurgan, February 2015)

Kurgan's work may very well challenge migrant representation in South Africa through this participatory and collective project which not only gave migrants living in Yeoville some tools to produce self-portraits, but also provided a space of creation and a space for sharing that emphasised the common desires of Yeoville's inhabitants. As explained above, the project was multidisciplinary as it used photography, installation, video, digital and virtual media, writing and so on. This all that happened in a public, community library and 'mirrored' on a website, and later produced as a book publication. This project is, for me, very significant in the South African context.

The multidisciplinary character of Hotel Yeoville takes me to the messages printed alongside the self-portraits in the book. These consist of self-written messages of participants, again combining photography and writing generated from a participatory method of

creation. In my opinion, these results echo Kesting (2014:15), able to resonate in a “... much broader public and political spheres...” than the media. An example is this image (see fig. 15) which is a product of the photo booth. It represents Godfrey, a young Congolese man

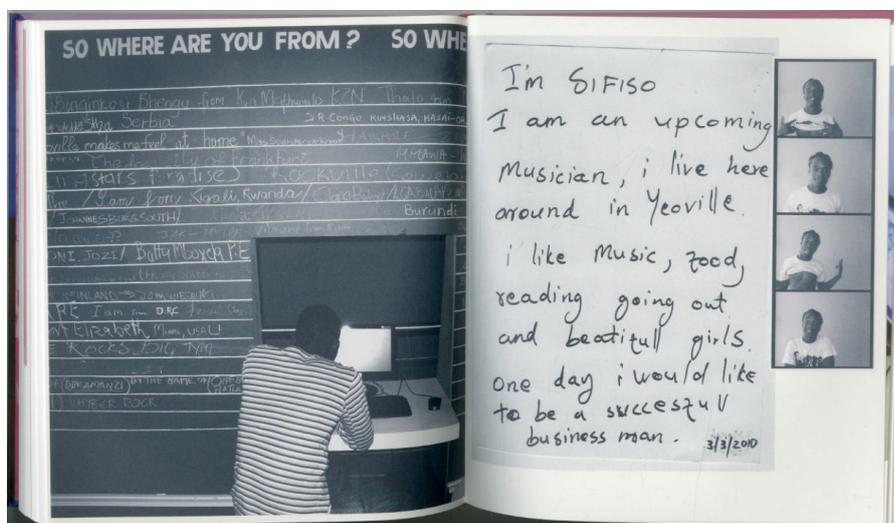
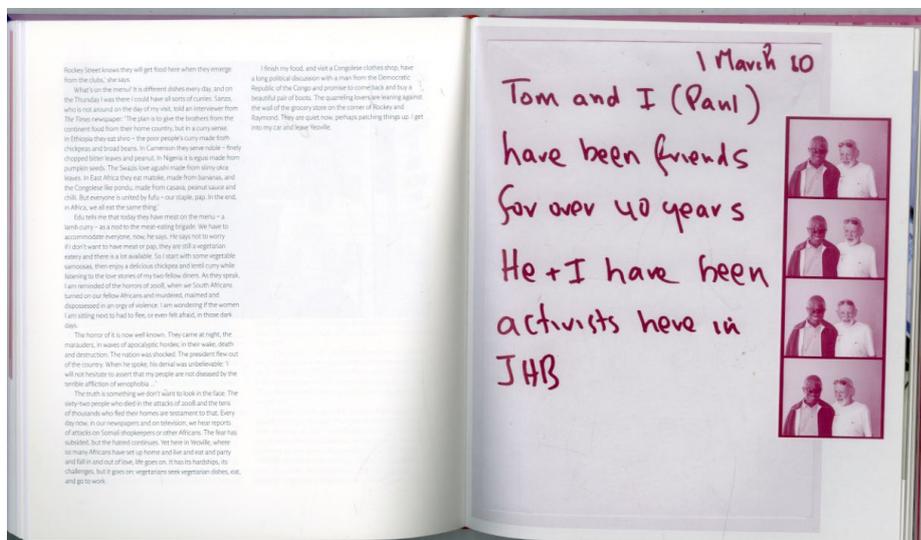


Fig 13-14. Terry Kur-gan. *Hotel Yeoville* (2013) Photographs of the installation of Hotel Yeoville (2010) Johannesburg. Published book (Fourthwall books 2013: 128-131)

who expresses that “Hotel Yeoville opens a space for me to feel at home. Feel at home is everything about smiling, listening, receiving and giving...”<sup>18</sup>

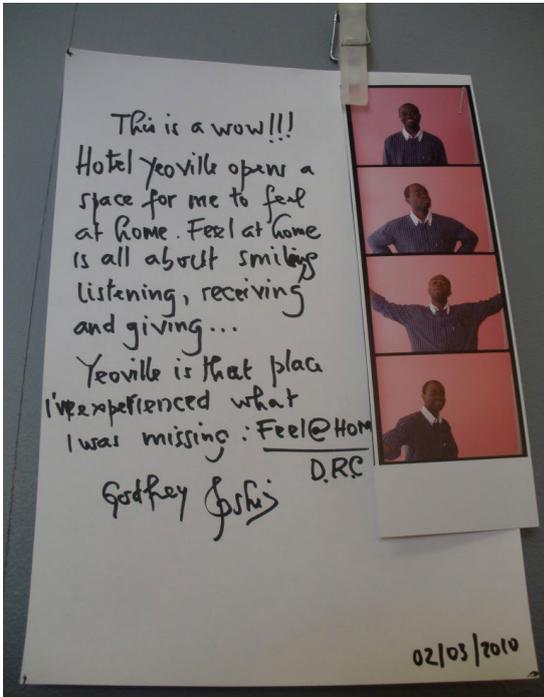


Fig 15. Terry Kurgan. *Hotel Yeoville*. (2010)  
Detail of the installation. Dimensions variable. [Online] Available: <http://todoinjoburg.co.za/2010/05/hotel-yeoville-a-digital-space-to-call-home/>

This discussion takes me to the ‘story booth’ where life stories of the participants of *Hotel Yeoville* were registered. The story booth had a sign saying, “Welcome to the story booth. Everybody has a story. Every story matters and every life counts. Tell us your story. They have to be short. But otherwise there are no rules. Just tell it from the heart in any way you want to.” (Kurgan 2013:193) The story had to be written, guided by some questions which the participants chose to use or not. The questions were related to memory, childhood, love, place, home, etc. There was also the possibility of telling poems, dreams, journeys, and so on. In analysing the stories, it is powerful to find one which reminded me of my own life and practice, as the question was so similar to one I asked Amaranta, Verónica, Gabriela, María Inés and Manuela, about their first memory. In this story, a woman called Dineo is the narrator:

<sup>18</sup> <http://todoinjoburg.co.za/2010/05/hotel-yeoville-a-digital-space-to-call-home/>

“My first memory is all about colour and texture and smell. It is still with me 25 years later as powerfully as it was when I experienced it. I think I must have been 2 and a half years old and I remember vividly sitting alongside my big father and his old, green Toyota and driving to the hospital to visit my mother and my new baby sister...” (Kurgan 2013:212).



Fig 16. Terry Kurgan. *Hotel Yeoville*. (2013) Photographs of the installation of Hotel Yeoville. Johannesburg. Published book (Fourthwall books 2013:212 and 213)

ing this story to highlight the kinds of stories shared. But her intervention and presence remains subtle, barely visible.

This story profoundly challenges reductive representations of migrancy, and creates powerful ties between the reader and the author. Kurgan, the author of the project, gets ‘lost’ in this process; we focus on Dineo’s voice, her story. Yet, we remain aware of Kurgan’s role as facilitator of the platform that created the possibility for stories to be shared, and she certainly has a significant role as editor, choos-

As I was discovering my new environment (Stellenbosch) and learning about the country, as well as media and photographic practices which not only served to document but engage participants by means of collaboration and participation, I started to critically confront my own practice as a photographer in my new circumstances. I wanted to be present and I wanted to substantiate the flourishing

relationship between Amaranta, Verónica, María Inés, Manuela and myself. Consequently, I began searching for images of migrants from my own context. Immediately, I thought about my aunts; my father's sisters who travelled from Guayaquil, the biggest city in Ecuador, to Spain and Italy 15 years ago, during the difficult times in our country. On the 24th of June 2014, I saw the representation of my aunts on Facebook (see fig.17 for link). They had few family snapshots from the past. In one snapshot my aunt Ursula, who



was still very young, was sitting in a public space, with a landscape behind her. In another photo, she was next to my mother in the public space of Genoa, Italy, the city where she still lives.



Fig 17. Ursula García. Family snapshot (2012) Digital photograph. Dimensions variable. [Facebook] 20th August. [Online] Available: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=456991487657297&set=pb.100000393481340.-2207520000.1443354528.&type=3&theater> [Accessed 21-07-2014]

Fig 18. Daniela García. Family snapshot (2002) Colour printed photography, 10X15 cm. Collection: Cuenca-Ecuador. García Freire Family. Courtesy of Gyna Freire. (Freire 2015)

Another image represents my two aunts, Sonia and Cecilia, and my cousin at the airport. These photographs made me think about their experiences as immigrants in Europe.



Fig 19. Cecilia García, Family snapshot (2012) Digital photograph. Dimensions variable. [Facebook] 16th July. [Online] Available: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=364818786931967&set=pb.100002115456058.-2207520000.1443355062.&type=3&theater> [Accessed 21-07-2014]

Looking at these images, I thought about the experiences that I was starting to have in South Africa with María Inés, Amaranta, Verónica, and Manuela and saw some connections. I saw a narrative that was being created by the journey; the searching for spaces, the necessity of showing places where one belongs, of visiting, and of representing journeys. Being far away, I understood my aunts' attempt to discover the place where they were living as 'outsiders'. Every image had a particular affect, carried by its representations of family, visiting friends, family members, and descriptions of memories. So, I decided to relate that with the work I was starting here as well, guided by Ossman's (2013: 1) idea that movement and borders represent "moments of self-clarification" in the life stories of serial migrants with whom she collaborates. I too wanted to register these places of self-clarification, places of sense, places where memories are accentuated and awakened.

<sup>19</sup> According to Ossman, a serial migrant is a person that has lived in several places calling each of them, at certain point, home.

With regard to portraiture, which has been a method as well as an important point of reflection in this process, it is necessary to elaborate on the way in which the state and the controlling institutions portray the citizen and the non-citizen. Cho (2009:281) analyses the burden of migrant representation through passport photographs and their disconnection with expressiveness as well their use as dehumanizing objects. She also analyses the relevance of the identity of the migrant subject, which is made invisible in the identification photograph. She speaks about the relation of migrant identity and home, suggesting that “in the Diaspora, the notion of identity as something that might be grounded in an idea of home is highly mediated through representation and narrative.” She states that the only way of representing this invisible home is through representation and narrative. In other words, to describe home, one must represent it or tell it as a story.

## **POETICS AROUND PORTRAITURE POSSIBILITIES**

When approached with informed consent and the establishment of deep relationships, it is my opinion that documentary photography can produce results that address the complexity of subjectivities, as well as inevitably entail and infer the artist’s concerns and personal history. As De Boeck (2004:8) suggests, the images which the artist or the writer produces are the results of the author’s gaze; his or her lenses to see the world, his or her own background, experience and history.

Just the approach and the possibility of telling stories in which it is possible to witness a relationship, the process and the time that took for the story to be shared represents an entanglement of times and histories. There is a reason why you approach certain people and why you encounter a person. This is something that theory can’t explain. It is the possibility of being attentive to the world and its people and the possibility of establishing relationships that can last until death. That is the

case of Rineke Dijkstra, an artist whose work mainly focuses on photographic portraiture in *Almerisa* series.

Dijkstra deeply challenges migrant and refugee representation by doing portraits where the subject is conscious of the purpose of the photographer. There is an agreement, an informed consent and the subject addresses the camera directly.

In her series *Almerisa* (1994-2012), we are introduced to the titular Almerisa Sehric, who the artist approached in a refugee centre for Bosnian Asylum Seekers in the Netherlands in 1994. The project took place over many years, with Dijkstra and Almerisa<sup>20</sup> meeting on many occasions. In the series, Almerisa is photographed at various stages of her life. In the first instance, she is a 5 year-old child. Then she is photographed as a girl, becoming a teenager, then as a woman, and as a mother.

Dijkstra explains in an interview, which forms part of her exhibition, how the work started. “It was a commission to photograph children of asylum seekers just to draw attention to the situations these kids were in...” (Dijkstra, June 2012). As a metaphor, he or she is saying ‘I am here’. This is very characteristic of traditional documentary photography, yet it is challenged by Dijkstra in the act of repeatedly returning to Almerisa, who also tells her story of being photographed. In her work, the series of images evidences the passing of time and the development of the relationship over many years; an entanglement where histories transform and overlap in a very compelling way.

<sup>20</sup> Although it is conventional to refer to authors by their surnames, I will refer to ‘Almerisa’ as this is the both the title of the work and the name of the individual portrayed



Fig 20. Rineke Dijkstra. *Almerisa*, Asylum Centre Leiden, Leiden, Netherland (March 14, 1994) Chromogenic print, 94 x 75 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York and Paris. © Rineke Dijkstra. [Online] Available: <http://blog.art21.org/2012/08/02/on-view-now-arresting-development-rineke-dijkstras-retrospective-exhibition/#.VgsIGM5QDTNa>

What I found unusual in this project was the possibility of listening to Almerisa's own experience of participating in the work. She explains that she met Dijkstra two weeks after arriving in the Netherlands. She didn't know



Fig 21. Rineke Dijkstra. *Almerisa*. (1994-2012) Ongoing series. Chromogenic prints, 94 x 75 cm. Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York and Paris. © Rineke Dijkstra. [Online] Available: Dijkstra: <http://www.shospace.co.uk/tag/rineke-dijkstra/>

how to speak Dutch. She explains how, upon seeing two other Bosnian children being photographed, she started to cry. She thought she was not going to be photographed. Dijkstra asked her why she was crying. She said she wanted to be in the picture. Since then, they have had a relationship lasting more than 20 years, in which the artist photographs her every two years.

Dijkstra describes the process of coming back to Sehric<sup>21</sup> six months after the first portrait was taken; she had called the refugee centre and they gave her Sehric's number. Dijkstra called the number, and since then, they have become friends. For Dijkstra, the series shows a little girl coming from a foreign country (Bosnia), developing into a 'Dutch woman'. Sehric relates that Dijkstra always took her picture in her home, and she could choose the outfit she felt most comfortable wearing. In her words,

“The best way that I can describe the photo sessions with her, was like therapy, we always sit there, and we were talking about everything, what is going on in my life, what I was doing, with who I was hanging out and some kind of difficulties that came at my path with boys or at school, and if she thought that she saw a pose that she felt was expressing myself very well, then she was, “ok, hold on don't move”, and then I was “ok

but”, and then click, “ok, you can go on”. Rineke always catches the right picture, where you really could see who I was at that moment, I saw myself growing, from a girl that came from Bosnia in a strange country, with a different language, the only thing that I had the same were my parents, and everything else was all new for me, so now when I look at the pictures, I think how lucky I am to have something like this whole series of me growing up to be an adult with my own babies” (Sehric, October 2012).

Both Dijkstra and Sehric mention the chair that is always present in the portraits. Dijkstra states that by using the same element, it is possible to see, that these elements “are responding to each other, they have an effect on each other.” (Dijkstra, June 2012) Sehric talks about the chair as a metaphor of her life. She observes that when she arrived in the Nether-

<sup>21</sup> From this section, I will refer to Almerisa as Sehric, because part of an interview carried on with her by the Guggenheim Foundation is quoted.

lands, she was sitting on a plastic chair and her feet couldn't reach the ground; everything was unstable. By the last image she is sitting on a wooden chair with her feet on the ground and she has given birth to her first child; "...it is amazing". (Sehric, October 2012)

For all that, *Almerisa's series* of portraits tell a story without using text. Together, the images tell the story of a woman with a name. But they also tell the story of being human and of being a displaced woman. It is a story of transformation. Listening to Almerisa Sehric is indispensable to understand the photographic encounter. This piece changed the way I look at photography and opened up to me the possibility of this tool as a bridge to really come to know a person and, at the same time, to better understand and know oneself. Almerisa echoes Kristeva's (2001:19) words when she says, "One immortalizes one's self by becoming a 'who' that acts within political space, thus giving rise only to a memorable narrative". Recalling Azoulay (2008:16), the photograph in this case can be also a 'political space', understood as a place of visibility. In

the case of migrants, being 'real' is a desire but it can be also a problem. As humans, we also have the choice to remain out of sight.

In the same way, through narrative, there is the possibility of building a representation, which by this medium can be shared but never complete. A year ago, I read a novel called *Mr. Gwyn* (2011) by Italian writer Alessandro Baricco, which changed the way I see portraiture and made me think about the possibility of creating stories through narrative and photography. This book is about a writer who stops writing novels, then starts looking for another job. Then, he realizes that he can't stop writing. It is not his choice; he cannot but describe and represent the world around him with words. He tries different types of occupations. Finally he finds the one; he wants to become a copyist of people. He starts portraying people through words. To achieve this, he begins with one person who then refers him to another and so on. He does several portraits of people whom he asks to be with him for an entire 24 hours, inside a room that he has prepared with precise lighting. When the per-

son leaves this room, he or she realizes many things about themselves. In a world ruled by the myth of rapidness, ease, chaos and by the flux of information and consumption in which there is no time to look at one another, this writer praises slowness and attention, which represents a struggle. *Mr. Gwyn* is a character from the past. In the contemporary world, he would represent an obsolete figure that admires humans in front of him just as they are and uses hours to write their portraits as a whole, complex and precious map; an entity. May be that is what Almerisa Sehric is for Rineke Dijkstra; also a part of herself.

In relation to my work, a portrait is not only the person or a face. It is also what is around this person; their context. For *Mr Gwyn*, individuals won't be characters but stories. They become maps, cities, moments and situations. Their representation is not direct and realistic, even though they can recognize themselves in these narratives.

There is an intense demand for relation, connection, patience and time in Mr Gwyn's process. I wanted that to be my process too; a slow process of knowing a person more than only 'a migrant'.

## NARRATIVES

### Process of writing the life stories of five migrant women in Stellenbosch

Four months after I finished reading Baricco's book, on the 28th of March of 2014, I woke up in Stellenbosch for the first time. Due to fear that the media and the people induced in me about moving in the spaces of South Africa's cities and towns and its divided neighbourhoods, it took me more than three months to discover this place. During the first month, I was moving in a very cautious, shy and nervous way, leaving home at 8 am, walking to town, to the University, returning at 5pm. The walk to and from the house I was living in was around 30 minutes each direction to reach campus, and once I got home, I wasn't able to leave again as it would be dark. I was feeling that my hands were tied because of the impossibility of coming back after six. Little by little, I started to understand the dynamics. From talking to people, I discovered the possibility of taking taxis and the trains, which for many was almost 'impossible' and very 'risky'. I walked the town aware of this.

In the street, I approached people; trying to build relationships in order to understand South Africa through them. In the street market of Stellenbosch and afterwards in Bellville and Cape Town, I found something of the sounds of South America and its informal trading everywhere in the public space. At the beginning, I used to go to Stellenbosch or Bellville's market almost every day or week and just sit; feeling a little more at home. I have heard migrants commenting the same:

*On the 3rd of May 2015, an Eritrean man went to Bellville. He bought a coffee and a traditional Somalian cake as breakfast. He walked all over the place and finally had lunch in an Ethiopian restaurant, where he stayed until three. Then he took the train back to Stellenbosch.*

*On the 7th of May he said to me, "I go there every time I want to feel at home."*

Moving in the city is a possibility that documentary filmmaker Werner Herzog explains as 'pure life'. He says that "the world reveals itself to those who travel by foot." (Herzog, November 2012)

This teaches us the intuition to have the right voice and to ask the right questions. In her ethnography about mobility, anthropologist Megan Jones (2013: 42) asks, “How might motion complicate our ideas about ourselves and others, and offer up new ways of thinking and relating”? She offers that a way – the ‘how’ – of moving is capable of creating “...convivialities that cannot flourish within sealed car interiors”. I was feeling that way; being used to walking the city I come from and using public transport to move everywhere, yet I was told I couldn’t do the same here. By listening to this ‘advice’, I would have lost so many possibilities and relationships that have opened windows onto worlds which have taught me so much on this journey. According to De Certeau (1984: 98), the walker makes spaces exist and even emerge. “...he (or she) moves them about and invent others, since the crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements, ...the walker transform each spatial signifier into something else.”

In the public spaces and transport of Stellen-

bosch, Cape Town and their surrounds, I met the women who collaborated with me in this process. I felt these public spaces needed to be experienced by everyone, even if only in a small way. Through them, I began a process of self-reflection into my motivations and sensibilities, and my history and origins.

I recall Dlamini (2013: 12) explaining what means to be here today. He said: “Right now, ‘to be’ in South Africa is to take up the historical imperative ‘to become’. It is to enter other identities without necessarily abandoning the groundedness of one’s received identity.” Part of my experience was understanding that the way I look defined me, and I wanted to break this definition. I did not feel the narrow definition described my identity, which is necessarily entangled with my own ideas about ‘home’ and ‘hybridization’. As Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl Ann Michel state , “... race becomes a master signifier that flattens out the complexities of identity formation” (in Dlamini 2013:3). To begin, I felt the need to share my feelings about this new space I was living in.

So, a necessity was born in me to say, ‘I am something that you don’t see; something that this mask I was born with does not allow me to tell you’. Language was another complication. In the need of connection, there was also a need for recognition and self-seeking. *Maybe that is why I encountered women of my age, like a mirror.*

Dlamini (2013:11) notes “how our lives are entwined with others”. It is appropriate here to recall Nuttall’s notion ‘entanglement’ again, this time as an imperative to think through those processes and impulses that speak to ‘sameness’ rather than difference. In this way, entanglement describes a condition of being “...twisted together, intertwined, involved with...”, “which may gesture towards a relationship or set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle, but which also implies human foldedness” (Nuttall, 2007: 1).

Collaborative methods used in today’s visual arts and the social sciences, particularly in anthropology, aim to find “...new ways of representing” the artist’s own experience and other

people’s experiences (Pink, 2004:13). In the sense of understanding a culture, photography does not have any real voice. Its complicity with existing power relations is obvious. Even if it can break with this, and speak to mutual consent and sincerity, it is still a negotiation that reveals a microscopic part of the complexity of a person; not even a grain of sand of the complexity of a human group. I am as aware of that as I am aware of my relative privilege as a student, an artist, a person who has a bursary, to be in this broken space.

An encounter can change our lives forever. Jones (2013: 47) takes this one step further, suggesting that intimacy allows us “...to imagine what it might be like to be other than ourselves; to enter into someone else’s life.” Yes, we are all part of this crazy world and our hearts are beating; creating a huge sound together. But it is a sound we cannot hear. Is it possible to even imagine being in another person’s shoes? I think it is not, at least not entirely, as it is not possible to fully represent someone or to know a person entirely. We all have different, highly personal lenses through

which we see life, but we can make our individual attempts to resist death through our creative, and hopefully meaningful, acts.

I met Gabriela, Amaranta, Verónica, Manuela and María Inés by approaching people in public spaces or transport without knowing anything about the space in any detail. I followed my instinct; how I responded depended on how I felt in that particular moment. This affirmative (rather than an intellectual or strategic) engagement characterised the development of these relationships over time. As you get to know another person, many aspects are revealed over time. As Jones (2013:37) observes, this process “...demonstrates how many aspects of experience and knowledge are not visible, and even those that are visible will have different meanings to different people”. To my mind, this echoes the overlapping temporalities that Mbembe was describing in reference to post-colonial Africa. These echoes can be heard again in the situations where I met and came to know Manuela, María Inés, Verónica and Amaranta.

**Manuela**

I arrived here on the 27th of March, 2014, the same day Manuela, a woman from Harare, Zimbabwe also arrived; not from 'Zim', as she always refers to her country, but from Strand, a coastal town very near to Stellenbosch, where she used to live with her ex-husband. She used to come by train every day to Stellenbosch to work but, for different reasons, she ended up living here. I met her in the train on Thursday 15th of May, 2014. I was coming from Cape Town and we were sitting together. She was reading. I had an idea that I had met her before, so I asked her about her book. We started a conversation, and we decided to meet again. On the 31st of May 2014, I called her to ask her if we could meet. During that meeting, I learned a bit of her story which I thought was worth sharing. Then I explained to her the idea of this project. At that time, it was very new. She agreed. Since then we have met often. We have visited many places around Stellenbosch and the Western Cape, as well as each other's homes.

**María Inés**

With María Inés, it was different. I met her at the Stellenbosch market in the early days, around the middle of April of 2014. I was walking around trying to understand a little about this new space in which I found myself. As I mentioned before, I was always going to sit there. One day, I saw María Inés and the familiarity was immediate. I felt comfortable in that area that I consider the nearest to my own context of Ecuador. I was living nearby in a backpacker's lodge for almost a month, so I passed the market every day. We started to greet one another, and then she invited me to her house to eat and after some meetings, I asked about the idea of this project. She accepted. Since then, we call each other almost every day.

**Verónica**

I first met Veronica through the accounts of María Inés, who talked to me about her several times. Then one day, I was eating in the park, and there was Veronica sitting next to me. I said hello and she replied. Then I asked her if she was from here. She said

“No”. I also said I wasn’t either. Immediately, I asked her if she wanted to meet in order to talk about the project. We met the following week in a coffee shop and she agreed. We met often in the same park as well as in different places. Only later I did realise that she was the same person María Inés had been talking about.

### **Amaranta**

I met Amaranta at the end of 2014. She was in a club in Stellenbosch. She was sitting at the table next to me and my husband. I noticed her accent and I asked her if she was from South Africa. She said, “No, I am from Spain”. Since that day, we started to see each other. The third time we saw each other, I asked her if she wanted to be part of the project and she agreed.

To know a person’s history awakens an empathy that drives us to understand that person in a deeper way; I think it is true to say that we all want to live a dignifying life. As parents,

siblings and children, we are looking to love and be loved, to be understood, healthy and happy. Through our relationships with the space that surrounds us and with the people we find in our paths, we develop a personal agency and establish a community that connects us, which makes us dependant on each other at the same time. It is possible to be one community thanks to our surrounding communities, an entanglement which is strongly echoed in the African humanist philosophy of ‘ubuntu’<sup>22</sup>.

Apartheid history makes it very hard for migrants to find spaces here where we can feel a sense of belonging. The structure of South African towns and cities carries the legacy of apartheid policies of ‘separate development’ and little has been done to fix this. As visual and forensic artist Kathryn Smith comments, “South African cities have never been truly democratic as they were built either by colonialists or by the apartheid government to deliberately ‘break apart’ diverse communities.

<sup>22</sup> Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”; literally means that a person is a person through other people.

The legacies of ‘class’, ‘race’ and economic divides are a constant struggle for South Africans” (Smith, September 2015). Therefore, a search emerges from a will to find, locate, identify this imagined but desired space, which is necessarily far from touristic maps which “... show how to know the places. It is like entering a room with directions of what to see and what not to see. What is important or what should remain invisible. Maps co-exist with tours; they depend on each other.” (De Certeau 1984: 119) The touristic map is colonial. It separates and segregates. It is a commodity for sale from the capitalist system.

In relation to my photographic practice; the map is created by the participants of the project. The act of traversing the region, informed by their gaze, also challenges this touristic and colonial map. By extension, it offers new ways to understand and practise representation and self-representation. First it was necessary to meet my possible collaborators, and ask them about the possibility of participating in this process, through listening to them, engaging, travelling and finally pho-

tographing them and the places found in their life stories.

In these life stories, the experiences of Manuela, Amaranta, Verónica, María Inés and myself are represented. Thus, it has been a process of reviewing the histories and present experiences of four migrant women of my generation living in this town, and then turning the gaze onto myself. To achieve this, I employed both biographic and autobiographic methods, which Miller (1999: 9) describes as ‘holistic’ because they can show not only aspects of one’s own life but can also illuminate certain aspects of the society one is part of or is trying to become part. As Miller (1999: 9) explains, individuals have “... their own history of personal development and change as they ‘process’ along their life course...considerable amount of time passes as they move along their life course. In this respect, historical events and social change at the societal level impinge (trespass) upon the individual’s own unique life story.”

As such, the present is “a lens through which past and future are seen” (Miller, 1999: 13). Between five to seven interviews were made with

each woman in the course of a year.

The interviews were a combination of structured, unstructured and spontaneous. This means that while I arrived at the interview with a set of questions in hand, the questions would sometimes change during the interview. Similarly, some relevant stories don't come from formal interviews at all, but from informal conversations during visits and journeys undertaken together. A chance encounter can spark a memory or a conversational flow. So, a form of participant observation<sup>23</sup> was also employed. The visits took place in the women's homes, in the streets of Stellenbosch, Cape Town, Muizenberg, Strand, Gatesville, Coetzenberg, Bellville, in my home, and in public transport (i.e. trains and taxis).

However, I believe that true 'participant observation' as a method requires more time as well as the knowledge of the language, which I don't have. So, although this work took some of its characteristics, English is not my first

language nor is it the first language of the collaborators. So we were mutually communicating in our somewhat 'broken', shared language of English. Amaranta, Verónica, Manuela and María Inés also created some written texts. María Inés wrote hers in her mother tongue.

At the same time, the process by which images were produced took many months. At the beginning, no photographs were taken until there was an agreement. Then, little by little, I began to photograph, always asking for consent before doing so. Many times the answer was no. So, some images weren't taken and some of those that were taken, I was not permitted to show, which I respect. That was the case with María Inés, who is a Muslim woman. In some photographs, she appears without a scarf; she did not want me to show these images in public.

<sup>23</sup> Participant observation is a method of the social sciences in which the anthropologist wants to be part of rituals and cultural practices of a human group: to feel them, embodied them, try to understand and interpret them in his or her study. (Guber:2004)

The photographic representation of some places described in the various narratives was made during journeys to these places we undertook together. In some cases, the representation was recreated, meaning that the photographs of the spaces was done when I visited these spaces alone after I was told about them. That was the case with Bellville Taxi Rank, the *Redeemed Church* in Stellenbosch, Salt River, Kuils River, Somerset West, and the church in Durbanville. So, the photographs of the spaces have been informed by their temporal inhabitants. I am a temporal inhabitant as well, and my reading of the space and this region is informed by these four temporal inhabitants. To challenge what De Boeck (2004:39) explains as the "...imperialist obsession with mapping and labelling..." in the sense of the colonial map and city, I decided to guide the practical work through the stories produced through encounters, interviews, conversations and journeys, in order to co-create our own reading of the region, a reading of meaning and home-making. I want to achieve the entanglement logic of

Mbembe when he suggests that mobility is the only way we can put together experiences that "apparently have nothing to do with each other" (Mbembe, April 2015). De Boeck (2004: 20) explains that "...plural meanings and social imaginary significations..." are present in every sphere; from home to the public space. In sum, every way of existing counts, and by moving we can witness different significations and meanings of these overlapping worlds, which coexist in this time of entanglement.

Memory is an important part of the process because at the end, most of the life stories tell the past of Amaranta, Gabriela, Verónica, María Inés and Manuela. Contemporary historian Lindsay Dodd (1999:47) observes that

...in oral history, memory becomes not simply a source for the investigation of the past but an object of studying its own right. The way that memories are narrated, connected to each other and to other events, the way that they differ in the telling depending on who tells and to whom,

the way that they struggle against and absorb parts or wholes of collective or public memories...telling the life story has a big impact in the interviewed.

Memory is alive in each of us. It is transforming us and we create memories every second. It is an unconscious practice, and it is evocative to a living context and shared practices. Art might also be a shared practice; Mbembe (2001: xvi) suggests that forms of art represent a sensory experience

“... of our lives that encompasses innumerable un-named shapes, hues and textures that ‘objective’ knowledge have failed to capture. The language of these genres communicates how ordinary people laugh and weep, work, play, pray, bless, love and curse, make a space to stand forth and walk, fall and die”.

Listening to a life story account has also an impact on the interviewer and on the reader. I recall Biehl’s (2013:592) assertion that life

stories do not simply begin and end. They are stories of transformation; they link the present to the past and to a possible future, creating lasting ties between subject, scribe and reader; an entanglement. While listening to his or her words and being present, one becomes part of the life story of a person. Telling one’s life to someone allows that person to enter in one’s history as well. By seeing the images, the viewer becomes a guest of the encounter between the portrayed person and the photographer.

In this chapter, I briefly reviewed the history of migrant representation and its complex power relationships through examples and attitudes over time, including *Migrant mother of Seven* by Lange, and by analysing two articles found in *the Mail and Guardian* in 2015. I also analysed Dave Southwood’s *Memory Card Sea Power* and Terry Kurgan’s project *Hotel Yeoville* as examples of work which challenges documentary conventions, using images, text and participation in the context of contemporary South Africa. I presented some of my family’s photographs, and Rineke Dijkstra’s work as reflections of time. Baricco’s *Mr Gwyn* offers

the possibilities of narrative and the imaginary through literature, both of which have influenced my practice, which I described by way of how this project began.

After all, I still ask whether it is possible to challenge migrant representation through photography and narrative through processes of collaboration? Is it possible to create a piece of art during ‘the time of entanglement’? The answer I can propose is through my creative practice whose process and methodology was explained here, but which will be fully addressed in the following chapter.

**CHAPTER 3:**  
**MIGRATIONS: A GENERATION OF FIVE MIGRANT**  
**WOMEN IN STELLENBOSCH**  
**WRITING LIVES**

*On the 14th of May 2014, I was buying fruit and I was asked the question, “What is your story”? I didn’t know what to answer. This made me think about the possibility of knowing a person’s story, the depth to which I can know a person’s life and how this could change my view of that person and my understanding of him or her.*

Recalling the examples discussed in Chapter 2, particularly *Memory Card Sea Power*, *Hotel Yeoville* and *Almerisa*, these works are critical to explain my choice to shift between ‘voices’ in this thesis, from theoretical analysis of the various processes that have informed *Migrations*, to my use of impressionistic prose and first-person narratives, which embody the sensibility of the practical component of my work.

Dave Southwood’s *Memory Card Sea Power* is presented in the form of a newspaper. Most of the time, the text is next to the images, which are mainly cityscapes, landscapes, traces and portraits of the Tanzanian men. Often the photographs do not represent what is written next to them, especially when they sit alongside portraits. In an interview conducted with Southwood, he explains that this procedure was done in order to protect the identities of the Tanzanian men (Southwood, September 2015). The newspaper format presents the work in a more accessible and familiar way; most people have seen a newspaper, which arguably makes the art piece more democratic than an exhibition in a gallery, or even a published book. The text is a combination of voices between the authors (Southwood and writer Sean Christie) and the Tanzanian men. It flows poetically with the images. The photographs are very respectful of these men as it is possible to appreciate that the authors went as far as they were permitted to, which is also evident in the text. For me, it represents a sincerity and awareness on the part of

the authors.

The choice to present the work in the form of a newspaper is, for Southwood, related to the story he is telling in collaboration with Christie. It is the story of an alternative world existing in the margins of the city that Southwood depicts with compassion for, and careful understanding regarding the living conditions of these men. The newspapers were exhibited under several bridges in Cape Town, which also demonstrates Southwood's commitment to all the stages of his work, and raises questions about the audiences *Memory Card Sea Power* reached. In relation to migrant representation, this work directly challenged the representation of migrancy in printed media. It also challenges the simplistic view of photojournalism as the piece was completed over four years, rather than moments or days. The relation with the Tanzanian men continues, as shown in the text where the story stays open-ended, just like the lives of the stowaways. Southwood explained that the story reached a big audience, as well as being published online (Southwood, September 2015). This is a well-told story that brings awareness

about a particular reality, and because of the way it was presented; it is also a story about the spaces we create to tell and to share our stories.

In the case of Kurgan, her approach to migrant representation in *Hotel Yeoville* is completely different. Perhaps it is driven by the will of telling stories, and the necessity to create the conditions that make it possible, even pleasurable, for migrants to communicate subjectivities that the media completely silences. Her participatory project was addressed in detail in Chapter two, but what is of interest at this point is the form Kurgan chose to publish the photographs and life stories presented as part of *Hotel Yeoville*. As people were invited to represent themselves, the stories and images were posted on the Internet just after they were created. But they were also presented in a series of exhibitions, which were part of Kurgan's project. The images took the form of prints hanging just as they were presented in the library which hosted Hotel Yeoville. A book was published presenting the entire process, woven with Kurgan's artistic path and choices

of engagement with Yeoville and notions and experiences of migrancy. In the book version of *Hotel Yeoville*, the voices of the team who supported the creation of the space, as well as theorists reflecting on migration and migrant representation in South Africa are also present. The book also contains the stories and images that formed part of *Hotel Yeoville*, and a 'skills directory' of Yeoville inhabitants. Therefore, the choices of Kurgan are related with her practices and her position as an artist. The book in which she presents the project is very compelling and represents a significant contribution in the sense that it created not only a platform and archive of alternative stories about migrancy but also contributes to the space of Yeoville in which the project was hosted. It was a physical space, which transformed the area during that time. As mentioned, it also encompasses a directory of skills where migrants living in Johannesburg could present who they are and what they can contribute to South Africa. The capacity of communication and invitation is very broad in participatory projects, in the sense that the primary audience are also the participants,

bringing the project far from the 'cold' space of the gallery.

In the case of Dijkstra, who also inspired my creative approach, the presentation of the *Almerisa* series is very different from the two examples cited above, as it is presented in a gallery space. A series of prints of *Almerisa's* portraits are presented in galleries all over the world, which is fair as long as Almerisa agrees with it. The fact that it is an ongoing series is what is challenging in Dijkstra's work. It is an unfinished relationship evident in the interview with Almerisa Sehic that forms part of the exhibition. This interview disrupts the gallery as a space to share the photographic encounter, as with *Memory Card Sea Power*. This also fundamentally challenges migrant representation as Almerisa reveals her feelings of being photographed and her feelings about the story these photographs tell through time.

I feel the three forms are presented in a very committed and conscious way. I was inspired and learnt from the three of them. In their own way, each challenges migrant

representation in both the South African and global art contexts, as well as everyday platforms, as Southwood and Kurgan presented their work in public spaces beyond the gallery. Each of these artists presented their work in very respectful and profound ways. I find it unproductive to compare them beyond acknowledging their respective methods and qualities as they are very different, other than to say that they all offer profound reflections on acts of entanglement in photography, and the fact that they address migration in different contexts.

I continue to believe that time is an important ally in these photographic processes. Mass media and capitalist systems lacks the time, and perhaps even the will to reflect on each other, listen to each other's voices, and genuinely regard each other.

Having discussed the complexities of migrant representation in these works by employing the conventions of critical academic analysis, this chapter signals a shift in voice, which will also, sometimes, bring back the academic voice to discuss the choices of form and ex-

hibition of *Migrations*, which is the practical body of work I created in collaboration with Amaranta, Verónica, María Inés, Gabriela and Manuela, as part of this research. I begin by offering a brief description of a walk around the space where we live (Stellenbosch), from a first-hand, lived experience as a 'migrant subject'. This will provide an entry point into parts of the stories of the five migrant women (including myself), who are the focus of this project. These stories are told through images and texts which attempt not only to represent the lives and times of these migrant women in South Africa, but also to represent a space of overlapping histories and places which might be understood as an informed interpretation of this time of 'entanglement'. As such, *Migrations* is concerned with developing critical strategies to challenge simplistic representations of 'migrant' subjectivities through personal encounters, photography and narratives in the form of life stories.

Stellenbosch 19 October 2014, Stellenbosch 18 May 2015

*I wake up at 7:30 in the morning. I stay quiet for some minutes then I prepare coffee. I clean the house; arrange my equipment and I leave the flat where I stay in Stellenbosch, which is located in the middle of the University campus in an area full of students. I pass through a residence of girls, a big clear building. On a very simple designed church is written 'Dutch Reformed Church'. It is a very different church from the churches that exist where I come from, which are fully decorated and visible in the space. Inside, you cannot see an empty space. As I walk past, I see a big street surrounded by trees and behind those trees, there are old and huge buildings, which are the faculties, which before were named after apartheid leaders and now are recently taking down their sculptures and plaques, but that is another story.*

*The sky is very blue as is often the case in this little town and the students are still very few at this time. As I get to another street, I see another straight church and more University buildings, and as I pass through Andringa Street, I remember a story about an old neighbourhood, which was a very vibrant one and of which nothing remains, but that is also another story.*

*As I walk, I see the laundry where I wash my clothes and my new home where I can say 'I feel at home'. I see the Mosque and in front of it, in the middle of a parking, is a man called Sheikh Muhtar who feeds the pigeons that even eat from his hands. I see another church next to the Mosque, and then I see: two malls, one MacDonald's, one Burger King, one Debonair's pizza, one Roman's*

*pizza, one Hungry Lion, two Pick & Pays, one Food Lovers, one Checkers, and just one small fruit market and one Somalian shop in a 15 minute walk. I turn to the right and arrive at a big sidewalk where people walk and on the road next to it; cars drive past fast, covering busy faces with its windows. Next to me, people are coming from home to work in the centre; very few are going in the same direction I am going. I see them; some greet me, some not. I try not to catch attention, but sometimes I do. It is very rare to see an 'Ecuadorian lady' walking in that direction. I stop in a salon shop, where I see plantains for the first time; the food that I have been missing for long. I ask where they come from? Immediately the man in the shop says, "How do you know them?"*

*I say, "This is the main food in my country!"*

*Oh and how do you prepare it?*

*Many ways: you can cook it, I mean, boil it, fry it with eggs, with cheese etc.*

*I can see a client is going out with her daughter, she just had her hair done, and she smiles at me, the hairdresser as well. I say, "Thanks so much", I go. I continue walking; I pass several buildings, which are used as student accommodation. They stay in flats and the majority come from far. In this part of the town, the rent is not very expensive. I see some fisheries and two petrol stations. The path gets bigger and bigger. It is now a big road, which in the centre of*

*the town is called Bird Street. When I reach Kayamandi, it becomes a huge and almost impassable road for walkers. If you take this road you get to Cape Town. To get to Du Toit, the taxi rank where I take a taxi to Bellville, I have to cross it, I can't see any robot, but I see many people passing it fast, running. So a bit afraid of been crushed, I pass and I find Du Toit, a very big terrain where there are not only taxis but there are businesses of second hand clothes, fruits, saloons, etc. Next to this space, the train rail waits for a fast train, which will take people to their working places, and bring them back before it gets dark. In that way, people will always be at home early without risking staying in their work spaces during the night when there is no transport. So this big road, plus the train rails, a big empty grass space and another road divides Kayamandi from Cloetesville. At the same time, Cloetesville is divided by two big roads and big vast grassland from Idas Valley, but that is another story.*



Fig 22. María García. *Sheikh Muhtar*, image part of *Migrations* (2015) Scanned negative. Dimensions variable.

Collection: Cape Town, Artist's own (García 2015)

In the divided spaces of this little town, five lives exist and weave, maybe internally and historically. In the space of this paper, these five women share their voices and those are the stories which will shape this chapter. The complete stories are accounted in the practical body of work completed as part of this research project. In the following section, I will

just share some relevant fragments in relation to migrant representation or, what remains ‘out of the frame’ when the media or the government refer to migrants. In this case, it is their history and position in the world.



Fig 23. María García. *Untitled photograph*, image part of *Migrations*. 2015. Scanned negative. Dimensions variable. Collection: Cape Town, Artist's own (García 2015)

Each story begins in a different space and time and continues in a different but shared part of Stellenbosch. To begin, I recall the words of Verónica, who explained to me the way she used to gather with her brothers and sisters in her childhood and youth to tell stories:

*Panangokhala,*

*And the people answer,*

*Tilitose*

*Everyone must listen*

*And the people answer,*

*We are together.*

**Manuela, María Inés, Verónica, Amaranta  
and Gabriela**

Manuela's story starts on January, 7 1986. She describes it in a text she wrote in the middle of this process when she came to me and said, "I wrote that story". In her words,

*I don't remember very well but they said that my mom didn't feel pain at all. In the hospital, they didn't believe she was pregnant. They said I was very tiny, maybe that is why she didn't feel pain. It is written by mistake in my passport 1987, but for real, I was born on the 11th of January 1986. I was born in a family of three; two elder brothers and I'm the only girl and the last born. We lived in a small location in the capital city of Zimbabwe, which is Harare. My mother Elizabeth is originally from Zambia but her family moved to Zimbabwe when she was still a kid. My parents were still married when my father Ambrose passed away in 1994. I was still very young and I understood nothing about death. At times I would sit around waiting for my father to come back of which he never did...*

Amaranta's story starts on the 31st of December 1986 as she describes it:

*I was born in Pontevedra on December 31, 1986. My mom is originally from a tiny little town of Lugo, in Galicia; a tiny, tiny little town next to the sacred Riviera. My father is from Ourense city, but his story is a bit more*

*complex... They said that I did not want to get out, that whenever she pushed, I jumped and the doctor said, "But she is jumping, she is jumping". And my mom was screaming, the doctor was my mother's friend and the nurse as well because she worked in the hospital, so it was like that, "but make me a caesarean" and the doctor, "no, you must push", "you must do a caesarean", so it lasted long hours until the doctor decided to practice a caesarean, so it was through operation. And I was born on December the 31st, and my aunt gave me the first bottle with the 12 chimes at 12, every year in Spain with the 12 chimes we have a grape, and my aunt says every year, "there was just one year that I didn't take the grapes and was the year I was giving you the bottle when you were born..."*

For María Inés, her story starts on the 28th December, 1985. She describes it as:

*"First of all, I am María Inés from Malawi, TE Mulumbe Tambo number two. I am the second last born in my family. I was born on the 28th of December, 1985. We are 9 kids in my family. I don't have a mother actually. My mother passed away in 1988 when I was 3*

*years and some months. She left me and the last born, my sister Margaret, when she was starting to grow. She was nine months that time. So I grew with my mom's sister..."*

Verónica describes the beginning of her story in the following way:

*"I don't know about the pregnancy of my mom; how she was, I don't know. But I just saw the pictures, when I was like two to three years old. I was with my other relatives, we were together, like three children, and I just saw the photos. I was very happy. I was a little bit fat and my face was different. I was short. I just saw the pictures in my mom's album and I took them. It was long time ago; maybe they are still in Malawi.*

*I don't know the story of my name. I asked and they said it was just the name my mother gave me. We know the meaning of it, in Chichewa it means Chikumbutso, but they call me in English because Chikumbutso just fits for boy.*

*I was born in Malawi in Lilongwe; it was 14, June 1987. I grew up with my grandparents because my mother was busy when I was born. Maybe when I was one year only, I went to stay with my grandparents until I grew up. That*

*time my grandfather was working at the police, so we were staying in Lilongwe. Maybe after six months we went to another area like Blantyre. After staying there, we move to another place like that until he got retired.”*

Recalling previous discussions about the nature of life stories, they do not simply begin or end; they are stories of transformation, and as I encountered with the histories of these women, I go back to my own. After asking myself the question, “What is your story?” I write:

*My name is Gabriela; I was born on the 23rd of March 1986, in a small town in Ecuador called Cuenca. I was born in a clinic called La Paz, which means peace. My mom’s name is Gyna Cumandá Freire Solano. She is a small, thin lady; a hard worker and a peaceful woman. She is always busy, likes to walk in the sea. She has short dark hair and she wears glasses. She was born in a family of seven in a neighbourhood called “el Vado”, just in the middle of the old city. My father’s name is Miguel Fernando García Durán. He is a tall man; a bit fat, has a strong character, and a hard worker. He was brought up in a big family of aunts, uncles and*

*cousins but no sisters until the age of 18 when he went by bus and by horse to meet his father who left when he was 4. Then he knew he had 4 sisters in other city called Guayaquil. About 20 years later, two of his sisters migrate to Europe because of the economical crisis of Ecuador in 1999.*

I suddenly find my story entangled to a story of deep transformation. The story of my aunts who migrate to Europe in 1999 take me again to the stories of María Inés, Verónica, Manuela and Amaranta. When we are asked about our history, the answer travels back to our parents and we describe them.

In describing her mother, Amaranta said:

*My mom’s name is Concepción, everyone calls her Conchi. She is a good friend, always happy; looking on the positive side of everything. She has short hair and she always had since she was very young. She is shorter than me, a little bit more plump but not too much. She has brown hair and has a lighter complexion than me. I took after my father. The lips are the same as mine; just the teeth are a little more twisted. The nose is smaller, and this nose is from my father. She works in*

*the hospital with paper work.*

And the story of María Inés continues like this when she explained what the lady who took care of her as a mother meant for her,

*I remember as well that every month-end, when she got her salary, she took me and my sister's daughter, because my sister also passed away and left one small girl. That time she was 3 years and some months. So every month-end, she took us shopping. When we came back, like Sunday, we went together to church and Saturdays she sent me to fellowship because that time I was a singer. I was a praise worship singer, so I used to go there for Saturday training. Then Sunday when the service was on, we sang there like the praise team, so I was very glad when I went with her because when we came back from the church, she used to tell me, "Ohhh you sing very nice and you got a nice voice". So I was very proud because of that.*

Manuela describes her mother as the person who is now taking care of her son. In her words:

*My mother never got married again and she managed to raise the six of us, including her mother. It was very tough for my mother as a*

*single parent but she tried her best and she put us all in the best schools. My mother never gave up. She was so strong and she gave us the best life any mother could give to her children. She gave us the best she could, even if she was a single mom. I don't have many memories about her as a friend because in my culture, you talk about those issues, girls' issues, with your aunt but she was a great mom, always there. I love her so much. Now she is taking care of my little boy and she is doing it perfectly. She is just like me. She is a fat lady and a hard worker. She does business; she sells things, like a shop.*

For Verónica, her mom

*... is getting old now. She does not look the same. Now she puts on glasses but before I came here, she didn't wear glasses. She is tall and fat, has a dark complexion. She has short hair but before, she had long hair then she cut it. She is a hard worker. She is a businesswoman and she's got a shop in the house. In the morning, she sells something from the shop. Later in the afternoon, she goes training netball for women. I don't remember that much about my mom; she wasn't there. She was working and I was raised by my grandparents. My mom didn't see me very much*

*but I remember she was good. She is good, now I talk to her more. She likes sports; that is her favourite, she used to play basketball, she was a professional player.*

The stories continue through conversations and interviews, and grandparents are mentioned in all.

Manuela said:

*I used to remember we used to go to the field together to pick up like pumpkin leaves, maize, we used to go together and I used to remember. Now I can remember all she has done. She was a very strong woman. I would wake up in the morning when I want to go to school and she had already done the whole washing, like hand washing all our clothes, cook. She used to cook for us, oh please, María, I don't want to remember about my grandmother, and it is just too much. I never had time to mourn her properly, I don't know. She passed away in 2011. Every time that I go home, my mom and I, we have to revisit my grandmother's grave and my grandfather's grave. We are always there to clean it, but this time, I don't know what happened, I never went there.*

*I don't know what happened I just didn't go in December.*

And Amaranta shared about herself and her grandmother:

*During the weekends and in summer, we used to go to my grandparents' house. There, I have a lot of memories. I loved to see my grandmother cooking and learn the way she cooked. My grandfather used to do simpler things, so with him I was not really engaged but with my grandmother yes and she liked a lot medicinal herbs. So I remember going with her for walks to the field to pick the herbs that she later used for her teas and stuff...*

Fragments of the stories of the past continue in Appendix 1.

### **Process of the photographs and the book**

After his brief introduction into the personal pasts of Verónica, Amaranta, Gabriela, María Inés and Manuela, I would like to explain the decision to make a book to contain all the stories and photographs. It was agreed by all that the book is a more intimate way of sharing the visual and

written narratives. It was also the choice of María Inés, who is Muslim, not to put any of the images of her story in a different format other than a book. Hence, it seemed most intimate and respectful form to put their words and the photographs together in this way. Therefore, the practical work combines each story and the images in one book. It is also as a way of putting the five stories into one whole story, remembering ‘the time of entanglement’ understood in this project in relation to the space and the generation.

The images in the book can be described as falling into five different ‘registers’, namely photographs-within-photographs; portraits, written narratives, visual narratives and city/landscapes, which I briefly describe below.

### **Photographs within photographs:**

This way of describing parts of their lives addresses how the story was woven. It also reveals the process by showing images of family and loved ones who are part of their personal archives, and the visual narrative is achieved through a process of collaboration. Where the photographer is not just me.



Fig 24. María García. *Verónica describing when she was younger*, image part of the book *Migrations* (2015)

Photograph within photograph. Scanned negative. Dimensions variable. Collection: Stellenbosch (Verónica 2015 García 2015)

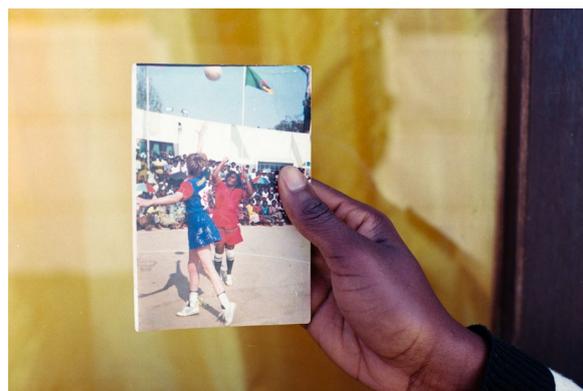


Fig 25. María García. *Verónica’s mother playing netball for woman*, image part of the book *Migrations* (2015)

Photograph within photograph. Scanned negative. Dimensions variable. Collection: Stellenbosch (Verónica 2015 García 2015)



Fig 26. María García. Page of *Migrations*. (2015) Photo book. 1of 5. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable.

Collection: Stellenbosch- Cuenca, Artist's own (García 2015)



Fig 27. María García. *Manuela's son*, image part of the book *Migrations*. (2014) Photograph within photograph. Scanned negative. Dimensions variable. Collection: Stellenbosch- Cuenca, Artist's own (Manuela 2015 García 2015)



Fig 28. María García. *Manuela in Zimbabwe*, image part of the book *Migrations* (2014) Photograph within photograph. Scanned negative. Dimensions variable. Collection: Stellenbosch (Manuela 2015 García 2015)

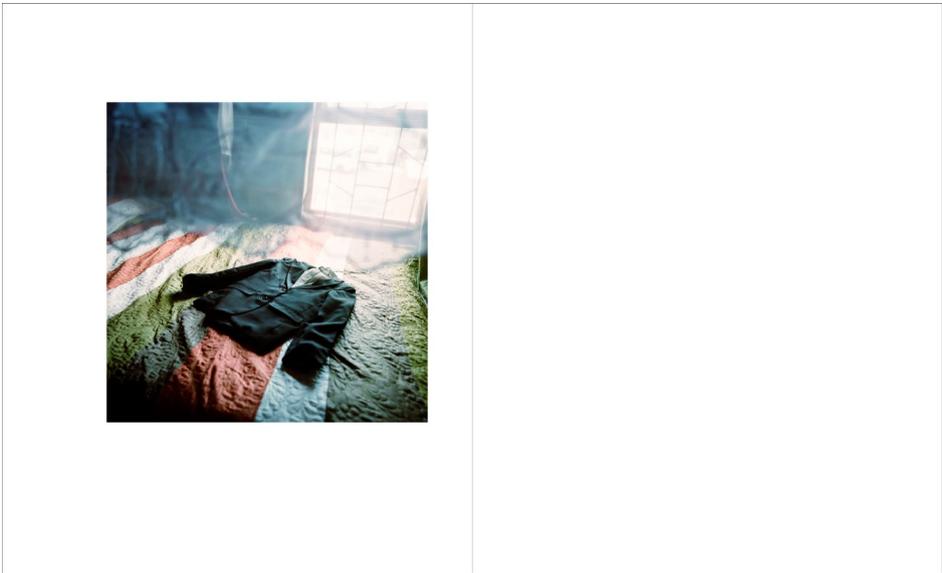


Fig 29- 31. María García. Portraits part of *Migrations*. (2014) Details of the photo book. Silver Gelatine Prints. 8 X 10 In. Collection: Stellenbosch- Cuenca, Artist's own (García and collaborators 2015)

**Portraits:** These three portraits, which are also part of the book, were taken in this form to challenge the traditional way in which migrants are represented in the media and in the passport photographs. That is the reason why these photographs were done using a horizontal frame, which references a cinematographic frame alluding to the fact that these portraits are mostly stilled moments in an ongoing and complex experience. The choice of black and white reflects on memory. In these specific portraits, which are woven with the text, the gaze of these three women is directed at the person who will see the portraits and read the stories, and where there was a previous arrangement of when and how the photograph was going to be taken.

The use of colour photographs for the more spontaneous images as well as for the spaces and details of these spaces eludes transformation. The use of colour also means that these spaces are new spaces for me. I am getting to know them. They are also creating a story, a

narrative about place in Stellenbosch and in our lives.

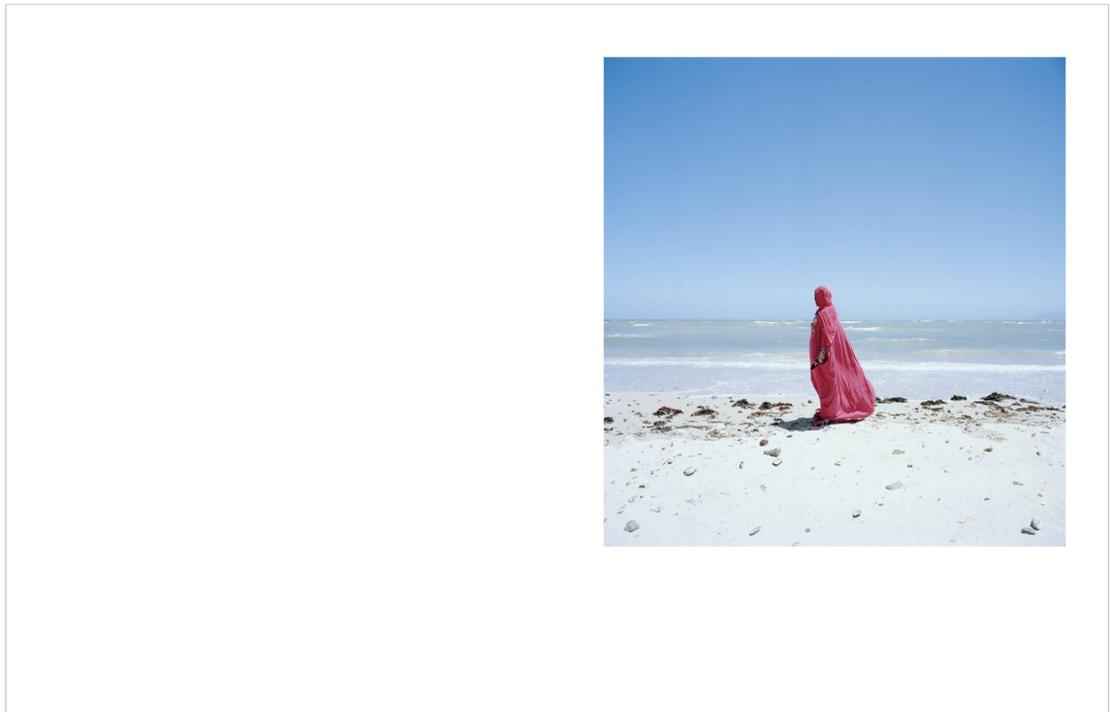


Everything was fine until I started having problems in my marriage, but it was only in my marriage, outside marriage was very sweet but inside marriage it was tough, I would say very very tough, until I found help, then I left and now I have picked up the pieces of my life, I am still moving, but overall, I would say I love South Africa very much, despite all the things that have been happening, despite the xenophobia thing that happened in 2008 and 2011, I still like South Africa.

In Strand, the people, the mixture of people, you can just feel comfortable with it because everyone is minding their own business. You don't feel as if you are being left out or neglected. You just keep on with your stuff, you keep your friends, you have your friends, then you also have family visiting you. You also have people surrounding you. So every day, you just come from work, you meet different types of people, you socialize, and you interact. So I think that in Strand where I was staying, I became part of them. It wasn't very hard I am someone who likes talking to people, meeting new people, knowing them better and going myself to them and so, yeah, it was quite an experience. I would say that in Strand there is diversity because there are a lot of people there different people, different tribes, and different races. You get to know different people. I mean, we speak different languages but still you can see that people are happy together. You don't have racial discrimination because they don't select people. Everything is just cool, everyone is cool with everyone. It is in Strand where I found the church forward in faith Ministry. It was my husband's church and is also the church of his family. I had to go with them and it was a family thing. The church is more like our church, so it wasn't difficult for me because most of the people are Zimbabweans there.

## Written Narratives

The book will also present some of the hand written narratives created by Amaranta, Manuela, Verónica and María Inés:



Part of the book where María Inés is describing her marriage and birth of her first son, translation of a fragment of the hand written text on the left.

Fig 32-34. María García. Pages of *Migrations*. (2015) Photo book. 1 of 5. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable.

Collection: Stellenbosch- Cuenca, Artist's own (García 2015)

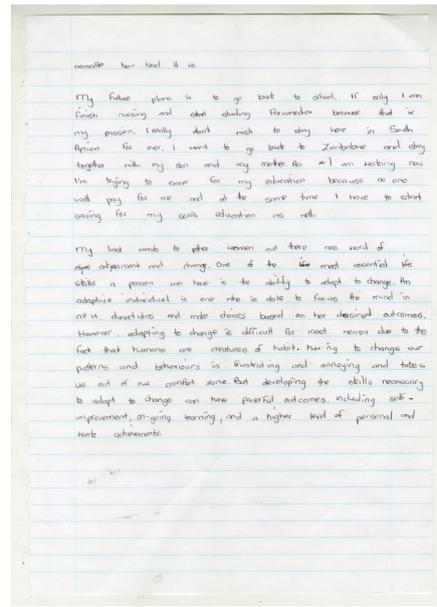
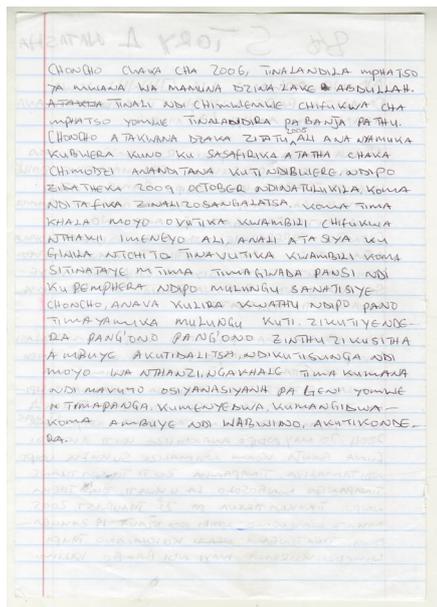
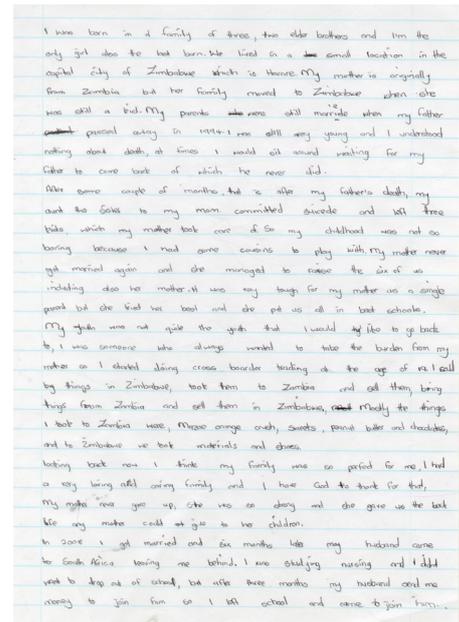
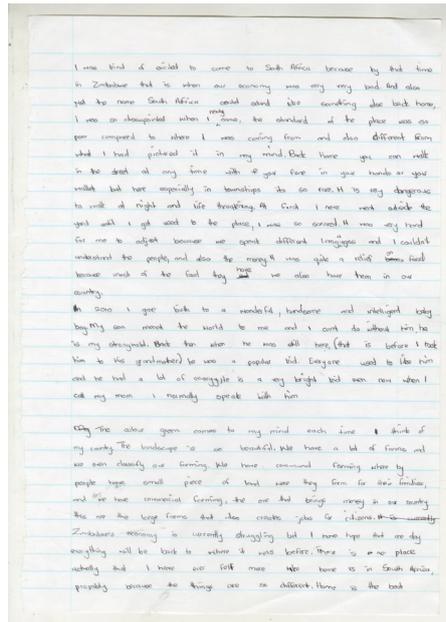
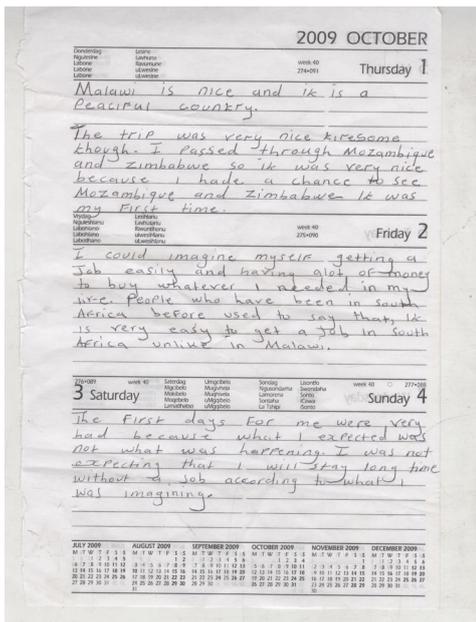


Fig 35-39. Manuela, Verónica and María Hand written narratives. (2014-2015) Details of photo book

Migrations. Dimensions variable. Stellenbosch (García 2015)

## Visual Narratives

One part of the work will be concentrated in the images and narratives entangling one another. While the second part of the book will only contain images that entangle with one another, representing the stories of Manuela,

Amaranta, Gabriela, Verónica and María Inés woven together. The part also represents a visual narrative about spaces which appear in their life stories. In this part of the book, the images will not be accompanied by text. The following images are part of these visual narratives.



Fig 40-43. María García. Portraits part of *Migrations*. (2014-2015) Details of photo book 1 of 5. Scanned colour negatives. Dimensions variable. Collection: Stellenbosch- Cuenca, Artist's own (García 2015)

**STELLENBOSCH:  
URBAN SPACE AS DEFINED  
BY MIGRANT NARRATIVES**

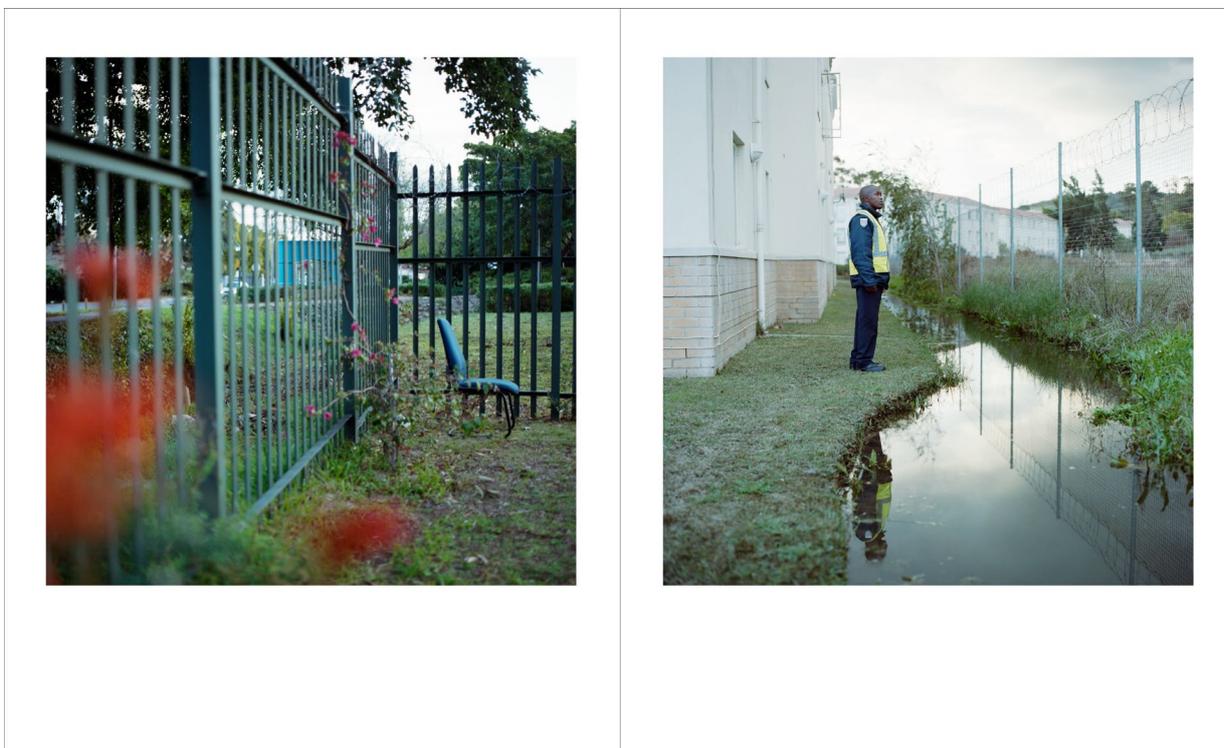


Fig 44. María García. Page of *Migrations*. (2015) Photo book. 1 of 5. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Collection: Stellenbosch- Cuenca, Artist's own (García 2015)

As mentioned previously representations of and ideas about space are a very important aspect of this study. Therefore, in the process of narrating these stories, the spaces in which events and experiences occurred was a constant question. Hence, in this section, spaces of Stellenbosch and some parts of the Western Cape are described by Manuela, Amaranta, Verónica, Gabriela and María Inés. Consequently the imagined space and Stellenbosch defined by migrant narratives tells stories of how home is experienced and remembered, about how South Africa or faraway places are imagined by migrants, or how the transition of coming here was experienced, and what was found on arrival.

The imagined space

Manuela tells,

*In 2008 I got married and six months later my husband came to South Africa, leaving me behind. I was studying nursing and I didn't want to drop out of school but after three months my husband send me money to join him. So I left school and came to join him. I was kind of excited to come to South Africa because by that time in Zimbabwe, that is when our economy*

*was very bad and also just the name South Africa could sound like something else back home. Leaving Zimbabwe was hard, at that time, it was very hard. I was staying with my sister in law and then I said I must go. I remember I really don't like good-byes. I used to go to Zambia, but in this case, I didn't know for how long I would stay. So, it was very uncertain.*

Verónica explains how she imagines the UK after the accounts of people who have gone there, and then she tells how it was for her before coming to South Africa.

*Malawi is a beautiful country; good people. We don't care if we are staying with people from different countries. We love each other but the problem in Malawi is the economy. Our economy is poor, so, it is like people leave Malawi to go to other countries, even the people who go to nursing school when they finish; some people go to the UK, they say the in UK, there is money. You go to the UK and look for an old person, like a very old person. They need someone to look after them; to bath them, to feed them, everything. They say they get money. Also people that come here, for example, me I came here in South Africa because I was trying to make business in*

*Malawi. My business just went down because it was very small and I took also some money to help the family, so me I thought that, “ok, if I can go to South Africa, if I can find a lot of money, then I can go back and start the big business, maybe it can be nice”. Malawi is beautiful but you can’t stay there without doing anything. You can’t enjoy Malawi. It is better if you do something; something that can help you to find money and then it is nice. My last days in Malawi, I planned to come here as a secret. I didn’t tell anyone because I was afraid that the journey was not going to happen. So I just came. The only person who knew was my mom. She gave me the money, and then when I was here, I called my grandparents to tell them.*

More fragments of the imagined place can be found in Appendix 2.

Stellenbosch as defined by migrant narratives  
And Amaranta continues talking about Stellenbosch,

*On February 4, 2013, it is now my third year here, that is 2013, 2014 and 2015. I arrived with the taxi of the international office and first*

*saw the township when we were coming down the road and it was strong to see that. And then as we got to Stellenbosch, there was a Rugby game happening in Stellenbosch and I noticed, all the girls wearing the same t-shirt and all the boys as well, and I said to myself, “I am in an American movie”. I arrived at Academia, the Residence. I didn’t know where my room was, and the guy who took me there did not know either. “What is this?” so he left me at the front desk and I was feeling very hungry. It was almost dark and I wanted to eat something, so I went outside to where the gentleman who was at the gate was and I asked, “do you know where can I go buy something now, tell me about a supermarket or something around here?”, and he said, “you don’t want to go out of this residence now!” and I said, “yes I want” and on top of that my English was very bad then, well it was getting dark, it was around quarter past seven, and I said, “but I am hungry, I would like to buy something”, then he told me, “it is not safe for a woman to walk alone at night in this country, you must get used”. So I said to myself, “shit”, there was a tiny little shop there in Academia where I could buy a packet soup and popcorn, and with*

*that I went to my room, wondering “Where am I?*

About her first impressions of South Africa, Manuela said,

*The first days were so hectic; I was scared, it was a new place, new people, and new language. It was very hard, I will say because I wouldn't even go to the shop and buy bread because of the stories that you are hearing from people that there are thieves that can rob you. I was afraid to go anywhere, I had to be inside the house, and I couldn't speak the language. I couldn't communicate very well with the people; the language is so different I couldn't hear them. They couldn't hear me, so it was very bad. Over time, people started coming. Even if I didn't understand them, they were so friendly and also I could make hair and they wanted their hair done, so they would come to me to make their hair. So I became so settled down, so comfortable with the people, so everything begun to fall in place. They began to teach me their language. I began to understand them, bit by bit and I just fit in. Naturally, I just fit in with the people.*

More fragments of Stellenbosch defined by migrant narratives can be read in Appendix 3.

### **SPACES OF SENSE:**

**Cityscapes and Landscapes:** These consist of spaces in Stellenbosch and in some parts of the Western Cape, which I documented as part of my own journey and the life stories of the women who agreed to be part of this process. In some cases, we travelled to spaces that were significant for different reasons; everyday shopping, religious observation, leisure and so on. Some of the spaces mentioned in the life stories were re-created, meaning that some photographs were taken after I read about them through transcribed and translated interviews and conversations. According to De Certeau (1994:109), “The memorable is what can be dreamed about a place.” I include some of the ‘recreated’ here as examples.



Fig 45-46. María García. Cityscapes part of *Migrations*. (2014-2015) Photo book. 1 of 5.

Dimensions variable. Stellenbosch. (García 2015)

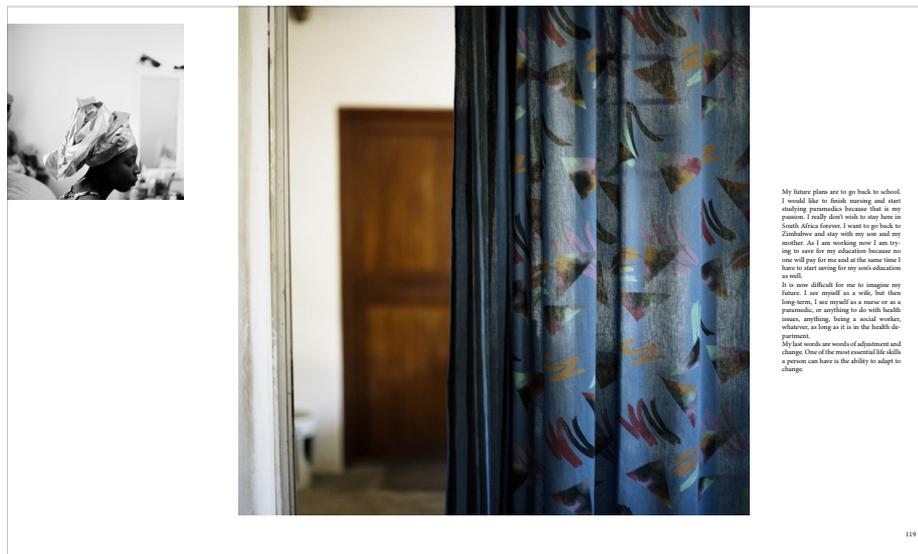


Fig. 47. María García. Page of *Migrations*. (2015) Photo book. 1 of 5. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Collection: Stellenbosch- Cuenca, Artist's own (García 2015)

**Places in Stellenbosch or out of it part of Verónica, Amaranta, Gabriela, María Inés and Manuela's narratives.**

Places in Stellenbosch or out of it: part of Verónica, Amaranta, Gabriela, María Inés and Manuela's narratives.

In Stellenbosch, Manuela refers to Idas Valley saying,

*In Idas Valley, where I am staying now, the people with who I am staying right now, they are very nice, they are very kind people, they like talking, they are not rude, they respect people, so I think I am comfortable here. I love Idas Valley so much, I feel safe when I am here, I am not afraid of anything, and I think the people also are nice. They are very nice to each other, even though you get the minority that doesn't know how to talk, but the majority are nice, I have never had a problem here in Idas Valley, even with the people that I am staying with I don't have any problem, they are nice.*

María Inés expresses,

*In Stellenbosch, at the mosque I feel much better, more than even at home. There is not anything, nothing special, except for that garden, just the*

*botanical gardens and the beach. I also feel very good in Idas Valley, when I go to visit somebody, I really like it.*

And Verónica says:

*When I saw Kayamandi for the first time, I was surprised because is different from Malawi, because it was just a room, me I didn't expect that, maybe I thought it was gonna be a house maybe, two bedrooms, like where I used to live in Malawi, when I saw the rooms, the bed there and the cooker next to it, like in the same room, so it is bed and kitchen everything in one room and I was surprised. I was also happy because of the people I found, it was a big house with different rooms and there were a lot of Malawians who stayed there, so I was happy. The house was for all Malawians, it was in Costorand.*

About the place she likes the most, she says:

*The place I liked the most is Devonvallei because there is a lot of land there and is quiet and it is beautiful, when they plant grapes and when the grapes become right, it looks beautiful and natural and quiet. If you are in the other side, if you see the views is nice. Here in Stellenbosch town, I like to go to the botanical gardens, it is*

*nice, and there are a lot of trees. Yes is very nice to sit down there. I went there with my friends Rose and Ben, we sit down there, we grabbed the mangos and ate, it was very nice, and I wish I could go again it was nice and quiet. We just walked, when we got there, first we sit down, there is a small park there, we sit down and we took photos, and we walked around there and we went to that restaurant, we just looked at it, we didn't sit down but we discussed that one day we must come here and sit down and drink some coffees, it can be very nice. And we went to the other side where we found that mango tree and we grabbed the mango and sit down and ate. This mango is different than the one in our country because in our country we have two different mangos, we have big mangos and we have small mangos, and the taste is different, I like the mangos from my country, they are very sweet, here I also like them, their smell is nice, very nice. I also like Paradise Club and Du Bod.”*

More descriptions and accounts can be found in Appendix 4.

Some spaces were photographed in the company of Manuela, Amaranta, María Inés and

Verónica, with the exception of Devonvallei, which I visited alone.



Fig 48-49. María García. *The Mosque in Stellenbosch.*

*Home.* Cityscapes part of Migrations. (2014-2015)

Details of photo book. 1 of 5. Dimensions variable.

Stellenbosch. (García 2015)



Fig 50. María García. Devonvallei. Cityscapes part of *Migrations*. (2014-2015) Details of photo book. 1 of 5.

Dimensions variable. Stellenbosch. (García 2015)

Fig 51. María García. Home. Cityscapes part of *Migrations*. (2014-2015) Details of photo book. 1 of 5. Di-

mensions variable. Stellenbosch. (García 2015)

Fig 52. María García. Home. Cityscapes part of *Migrations*. (2014-2015) Details of photo book. 1 of 5. Di-

mensions variable. Stellenbosch. (García 2015)



The recreated and non-recreated spaces were also put together in the visual narrative part of the book.



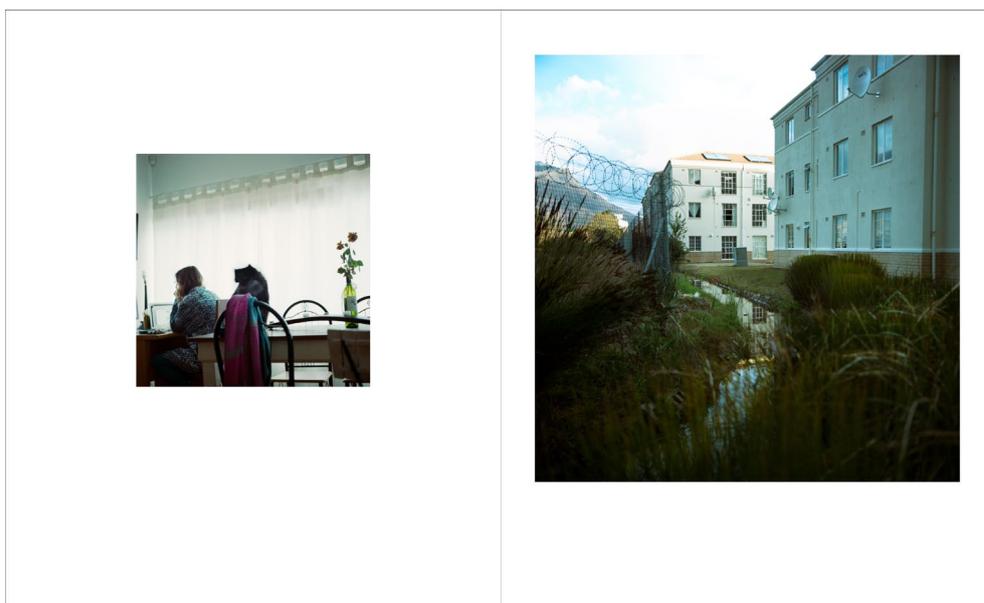
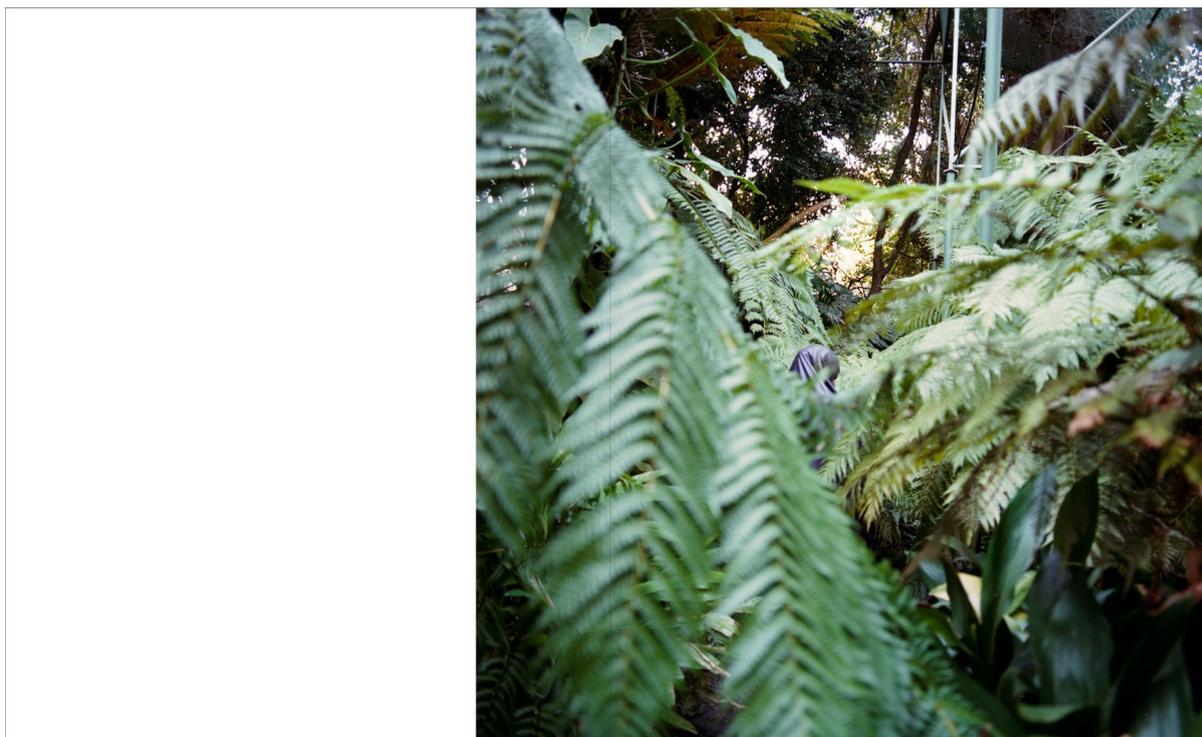


Fig 53- 55. María García. Pages of *Migrations*. (2015) Photo book. 1of 5. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable.

Collection: Stellenbosch- Cuenca, Artist's own (García 2015)



After reviewing the process of my practical work and some examples of the final form it has taken, I insist that the stories are an integral part of this study, since they resulted from encounters with the five women and were edited by Amaranta, Verónica, Gabriela, Manuela and María Inés themselves. They represent not only the present but the past of these five migrant women. Parts of the stories are presented in this chapter. The remaining fragments are presented in Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4. In the same way, some photographs are presented in this chapter and the rest of the images and stories are fully 'visible and readable' in the practical body of work in the form of a book and an audio-visual projection.

Having touched on the aspect of 'voice' throughout this study, I also decided to use some of the recordings of conversations and interviews from the creative process and weave them with the images, which are part of the book.

This process was only followed with the voice recordings of four of the five women, because one of them did not want to be presented in any other form apart from the book.

Considering the recorded voice as audio, it occurs to me that the sound recordings, some of them in the home language of Amaranta, Verónica, Gabriela, Manuela and María Inés, and taken together with the images, represent a time of overlapping histories and moments to which Mbembe (2001) refers.

Their voices are strong and charge the work with a profound subjectivity, as it is possible to listen to their accents, their struggles, their laughter and their doubts. From this, I came to realize that listening can create empathy. I recall Mbembe (2001) again, who states that, forms of art represent a sensory experience of the life of a person that can not be expressed through objective knowledge, as these sensory experience manifest itself through innumerable un-named shapes, hues and textures.

Together these shapes, hues and textures form a language, which communicate how people live, and make live emerge. How people struggle to survive also finding moments of happiness while resisting death. Creating through their agency spaces to manifest and unfold their various ways of living.

## **THE PROJECTION**

The projection, which will accompany the book, represents the process by which some conversations and interviews were recorded, with the original intention for them to be transcribed as life stories. The project extends the methods used in the book, where combinations of voices (words) are used together with images, sometimes addressing what is begin described, and sometimes not. Some stills from the projection piece are included below.



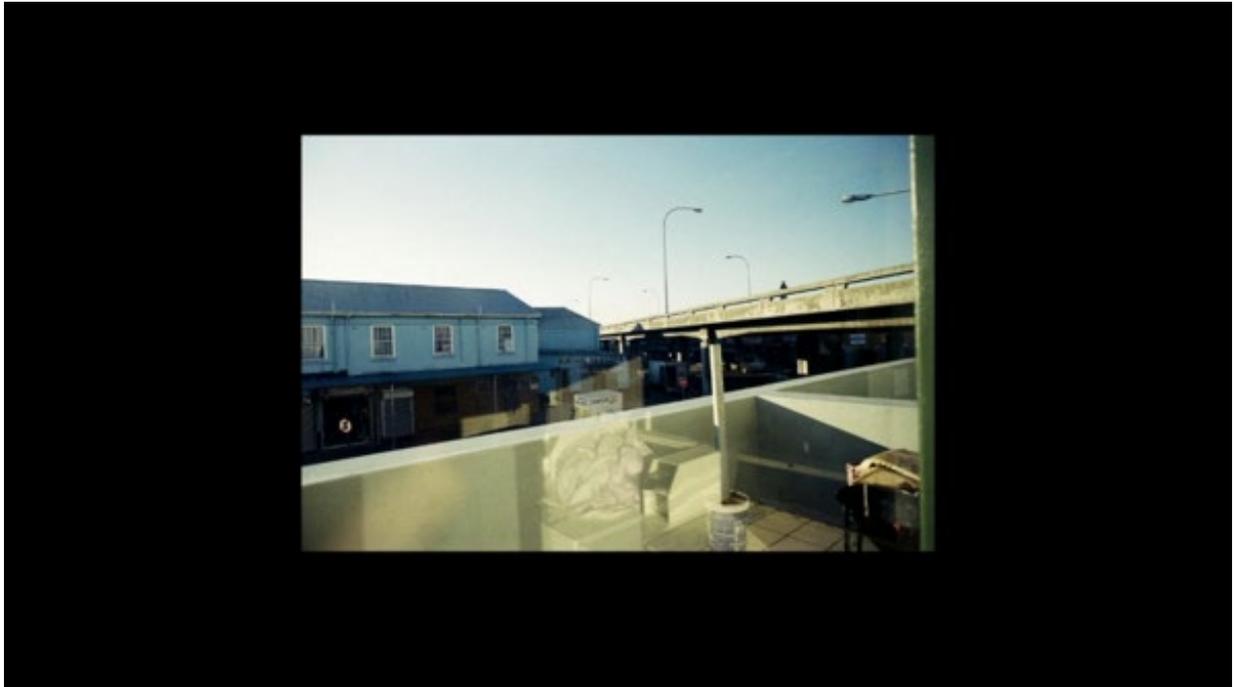


Fig. 59- 65. María García. Stills of *Migrations*. (2015) Audio-visual, HD Projection. Collection: Stellenbosch-Cuenca, Artist's own (García 2015)

**CONCLUSION:**

The process of this research has been very moving in many ways. The aims of this study were to listen and understand diverse stories of four migrant women in Stellenbosch, South Africa, and find appropriate visual forms to share these stories of charged subjectivities. I chose to do this through photography in the form of portraiture, cityscape and landscape, and narrative in the form of biographies, life stories, in the form of a book and an audio-visual projection. Part of this endeavour was to critically reflect on questions of representations, with a particular focus on migrant identities and experiences. For this purpose, it was necessary to understand the concept of entanglement in contemporary South Africa, based on theories of Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe. It was necessary to find expressions and interpretations of these 'entanglements' in different anthropological studies addressing migrant subjectivities, which is the present in the work of Sigfrid and Ossman, both of whom write stories of migrants from different backgrounds and contexts who find themselves entangled in space, movement and experiences. It was also neces-

sary to research instances of entanglement in contemporary South Africa.

The concept of entanglement explained by Mbembe and Nuttall provided me with an understanding of what it means to be entangled; the very experience of it, not only as an intellectual idea. To be entangled is to be alive on the same planet, to be human, to be affected by change, by movement, by affection and by encounters. Therefore, to be human implies the urge to resist death, and to resist death is to search for a place to be alive; a place in the world. And through art, in this case photography and narrative, the focus was in this entanglement, which addresses sameness rather than difference and which offer new, emergent ways of inhabiting spaces in contemporary South Africa.

As Mbembe (2000:261) assures us, "other ways of imagining space and territory are developing." New ways of integration are emerging. These new forms are taking place, "on the margins of official institutions, through sociocultural solidarities and interstate commercial networks. This process is the basis for the emergence of alternative spaces

that structure the informal economy, contraband, and migratory movements.” (Mbembe, 2000:262) In my work, I found the truth in Mbembe’s (2000:262) examples of markets, mosques and churches as spaces which seem to elude the states themselves. His reflection on borders is an accurate reflexion on the time of entanglement in post-colonial Africa.

Mbembe and Nuttall’s concept of entanglement also explains what it means to be in post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa today; a place where different experiences of life, times and histories are encountering one another, emerging and merging every second. The contribution of the research in this area is to bring attention to migrants’ subjectivities related to movement addressing particular anthropological studies which involve narratives of a diverse group of individuals coming from different contexts and backgrounds but who entangle in the ways they move, and in what they experience by moving and settling. In this way, they might represent entanglements of histories, times, spaces, and ways of moving. It was also important to put notions of these

studies in the context of Said’s words referring to studies of human experiences, which are done with careful understanding of their experiences. In his words

...there is a difference between knowledge of other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for the own sakes, and on the other hand knowledge - if that is what it is- that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency and outright war. There is, after all, a profound difference between the will to understand for purposes of co-existence and humanistic enlargement of horizons, and the will to dominate for the purposes of control and external dominion. (Said, 2003: XIV)

As my practice is photography, this question was implicated in the photographic representation of migrancy and could not have been addressed fully without mentioning my entanglement with migration, represented

by the images of my family in the Diaspora. These family images helped to shape the structure of the practical work, *Migrations* and its relation with meaning, place and space.

There are as many public and private spaces as there are innumerable understandings of them. This study addresses the poetry which emerges from these various spaces through images, and photography as a way of representing different spaces (De Certeau, 1984). As a whole, these spaces can form entanglements, which might not be the case in actual space, but which is desired in the practical work. Even though there is still a lot to be said in terms of space and place in South Africa, particularly in Stellenbosch, this approach insinuates a tiny gesture, a feeling of movement, space and place.

Hence to talk about South Africa as a place and to represent it through photography, it was necessary to describe the ways in which non-western societies have been represented during colonial times and during the formation of documentary photography. To do so,

with the intention of better understanding photographic representation of migrants in history, I offered an analysis of an emblematic and controversial image: Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother of Seven* (1936). My finding is that the printed media produces images which might have created awareness in the political space at a particular time of history, but at the same time, these images remain superficial to the human experience. Like the image of the migrant mother, today millions of images are produced for the sake of 'creating awareness'. At the same time, they are moved and supported by institutions, which through combining interests and stories most of the time, represent the interests of the latter. In this area, the contribution of this research is necessarily limited, as the concepts around representation are broad, and all linked to context. Even though my awareness and understanding of how migrants' representations, and the connotations thereof, have been constructed, there is still a lot of research to be done in this area as such representations continue to flood global media and visual landscape. I wonder, as Kurgan does, who is looking at those

images? (Kurgan, April 2015). And I also question why?

Focusing on the South African contemporary printed media, it was and it is still alarming to see and to read such reductive representations of migrant subjects who only appear mostly when they go through situations of violence or when the state declares its position about their 'illegal' presence in the country. But in the middle of the media of horrors, fears and voices of a punishing state, I found light in an article written by Fatima Asmal which showed empathy, compassion and careful will for understanding the migrant condition; leading me to question the South African civil position on migration and the South African history as a possibility of empathy with the migrants' experiences.

Remembering Watney (1996:74), migrants are not represented for themselves but for the world in the media; creating fears and shaping their image within South Africa and outside. Said (2003) also comes to my mind, claiming that a fake representation could create im-

aginaries about a human group, which can create conflicts and even wars. Therefore, the contribution of this part of the study is given in relation to creative processes, which entangle with the printed media and the use of narrative and form.

The disciplinary boundaries are very thin and porous; they are always borrowing from each other to create repetitive (as in mirroring, echoing) and challenging forms, which might also represent the time of overlapping histories and moments mentioned by Mbembe and Nuttall. I reviewed art projects which have attempted to represent migrant subjects in a complex way, such as Dave Southwood portrayal of a group of Tanzanian stowaways in *Memory Card Sea Power*, with writing by and Sean Christie. The newspaper format represents a critical approach to media. One of the principal contribution of this piece is the reflection of a complicated relationship between the photographer (Southwood), the writer (Christie) and the Tanzanian men they photographed and wrote about. *Memory Card Sea Power* is a story that silently inhabits the city and they bring it to the viewers and the

readers in the form of a story in a newspaper; a newspaper which commonly expresses state's interests and stereotypical images. This time, it is representing a story of struggle and the conflicted relationship between story-tellers and the people whose story is being told, which is entangled with the story of a place in South Africa. As such, Southwood's work is also a representation of an entanglement. Challenging migrant representation by means of photography and narrative was possible for Southwood and Christie. It was very interesting to realize how powerful the written narrative alongside images can be, and how it is capable of expressing stories that photography alone is far from achieving. I have found that time is an ally in this work; Southwood took four years to produce *Memory Card Sea Power* with such careful compassion and understanding which are reflected in his images.. Despite its success, there is still a lot to be discussed and done about migrant representation by means of photography and narrative.

Another approach to migrants' stories is found in Terry Kurgan's *Hotel Yeoville*, which

made me realize that participatory projects resonate in a very loud and broad way, providing opportunities for migrant individuals to self-represent, for them and for different publics, in a friendly and welcoming way. The stories told in that project are also achieved with careful understanding which strongly challenges simplistic representations, as is the case of Dineo, who tells the account of her first memory through her own voice and acknowledging that it will be shared. This memory is entangled with the story of Gabriela in one part of *Migrations*, who also expressed that the most wonderful event in her life was to see her new-born sister. I found that *Hotel Yeoville* is a project that will stay in the minds of those who participated in it as it gave people coming from other countries and the 'nationals' an opportunity to express feelings about place, memory, home and dreams.

Analysing Dijkstra's position in *Almerisa*, I come back to the issue of time, as the project took 20 years and it is still on going. For me, *Almerisa* represents what it means to go through the state of becoming a person; from

a child to a woman, and the different spaces we all go through the process of becoming and transforming. The contribution of Dijkstra and *Almerisa* to this thesis is that their experience is entangled with the practice of South African artists Southwood and Kurgan by bringing awareness to the challenge of documentary photography as a transforming space, and all happen to address migration. When time is an ally, relationships rather than projects are created.

In that sense and in the sense of my own photographic and human practice, I saw it necessary to come back to a history, and not to an image, because to know a person's history challenges the way in which media depicts people, its superficiality and its coldness. Therefore, I referred to a book (Mr Gwym by Baricco) that I read some years ago. It is a book which describes the possibility of portraying a person through the spaces he or she inhabits. This supports my creative process and the questions I have about place, which came from a necessity of getting to know the place I found myself living in for the first time, and finding a space to relate and to be

creative.

The most important aspect of the practical process are the relationships from which life stories emerged. The spaces and the memories about them and about relationships were present and loud. Even if the answer to the question about migrant representation was supported and inspired by examples given in the second chapter, it was my own practical proposition entitled *Migrations*, which provided the answer I could most vividly give to the question. Hence, in my practice, the way I challenge migrant representation is through awareness and deep willingness to understand a person's history, rather than just photograph her. In this way, I met four women with whom I share both a generational space and a living one, and many historical moments which create awareness of entanglements in diverse histories and times. That was the case with the memorable moments in the life of Verónica and Amaranta in South Africa, in which both share that they found the partners they currently live with, here. In the history of María Inés and Amaranta, both remember being

with their grandmothers in the field, picking vegetables and medicinal herbs. Among other shared historical experiences, Gabriela and Verónica both remember the showers they used to take in their grandparents' houses. As explained before, in reviewing the history of a person, it is possible to find coincidences, which might represent entanglements, shared experiences. In conversations about space, it is also possible to see that all the women's narratives mention the Botanical Gardens or Bird Street in Stellenbosch or the beach as an important place in their lives. Listening to Amaranta, Gabriela and Verónica, the place where they feel safe is the home in which they now live. María Inés feels so safe at the Mosque and says it is "more even than at home", while Manuela says she loves Idas Valley and she feels welcomed there.

I believe migrant representations are being challenged by acknowledging histories, which lie behind the images that are seen every day in the South African media, highlighting migrant's subjectivities in relation to movement and place. In portraying Manuela, Gabriela,

Verónica, Amaranta and María Inés and their real and imagined spaces, a visual archive that sets itself apart from one that categorizes, labels or imposes, is created. I believe the images are gentle. They tell one entangled story of five women who were living in Stellenbosch during 2014-2015. They also tell a story of movement and the story of public and private spaces in South Africa in 2014-2015, which represents an archive about a path; a trajectory of a person living a transition.

First, the contribution of the practical work is to share alternative stories about migrancy in South Africa. Secondly, it creates awareness of spaces that are sometimes charged with prejudicial ideas, and put them together in order to create an alternative map which represents the lenses and choices of an individual person's attempt to addressing meaning and subjectivity.

Even when all that is said, I still believe that there are many stories to be told in a form which challenges migrant representation in the South African media from within, through careful processes where the storytellers sin-

cerely engage with the human condition enabling a shared process rather than an impositional or declarative one.

Finally, I recall Deleuze in Biehl (2003:591) once more, and his idea that the creative act is a very solitary one. I don't believe in the act of giving a voice, and even so, it is in the name of my creation that I have something to say. Verónica, María Inés, Gabriela, Amaranta, and Manuela will always be the only ones capable of fully understanding, telling their own stories and representing themselves.

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1: CONTINUATION OF  
THE FIRST PART OF THE STORIES  
OF AMARANTA,  
MANUELA, GABRIELA,  
VERÓNICA AND MARÍA INÉS:**

When María Inés tells the story of her marriage proposition, her grandfather appears in the narrative.

*...Then in 2005, Ali proposed me to get married by him, and I told him, "I must go and tell my parents" and then he said "No, no problem I will go myself to tell your parents". He came to tell my parents. Of course, that time my grandfather didn't want to me to marry, because at that time my grandfather was still alive. So my grandfather is the one who told me, "No don't marry that Muslim guy". Then my father, my sisters, my mother said "No, leave her. She is already finishing education".*

Verónica lived with her grandparents and remembered this about them:

*My grandparents, they are old now. When I was small, my grandmother, she never put something on her hair. She only had short hair. Now her hair is grey and the teeth are coming out; you*

*know she is getting old. They like children. The time I was staying together with them, we were like maybe fifteen children in the house. They like children very much. If it is the time to take a bath, they call all of us, "everyone must come here", and we go one by one in the bathroom. ... Grandmother likes to talk and t shout. You know with the children, if she says, "Hey. Don't do this". If you don't listen, they took the stick and slap you. It was good living with them and they liked me very much.*

Gabriela also remembers:

*me and my sister going to my grandmother's house, eating there, having baths, and then chatting with my grandmother, preparing food together and playing in the garden. One special memory is me after bath, with my grandmother; she was covering me with cologne saying that she used to buy the product at the market, and it helps to keep away colds and bad eyes.*

These lives might have entangled even before South Africa, but they represent different contexts and situations in the world as well. While telling about historical events in their

lives, I heard Manuela say:

*My youth was not quite the youth that I would like to go back to. I was someone who always wanted to take the burden off my mother, so I started trading at the age of 19. I would buy things in Zimbabwe, take them to Zambia and sell them, bring things from Zambia and sell them in Zimbabwe. We took cloths and shoes. A wonderful event happened in my life at that time. I remember I went to a concert; it was a church concert with our Gospel artists. There were a lot of them. It was wonderful. When I got home, my voice was worse. That was back home. It was way back, maybe 2004, I think.*

Another wonderful event is the birth of her son. In her words:

*On the 13th of April, 2010, I gave birth to a wonderful, handsome and intelligent baby boy. My son Denzel meant the world to me and I can't do without him. He is my stronghold. Back then when he was still here, that is before I took him to his grandmother, he was a very good kid. Everyone used to like him and he had a lot of energy. He is a very bright kid. Even now, when I call my mom, I normally speak with him.*

*Giving birth was an experience that I would like to have again, because you know, I went to the hospital, around 1 o'clock in the night, then I gave birth 10 o'clock in the morning, and holding that little beautiful thing, it was so awesome. It was so fantastic; I would still remember that day. I couldn't even do anything except to stare at him. He was the best thing that ever happened to me. Till now, he is the best thing. The experience was, you know, even if they say it is so painful but with the excitement, you don't even feel the pain. You don't. It was natural. It was the best experience I would ever imagine in my life; to imagine you giving birth to a life. Holding the baby in your arms, breast feeding more of it. I was scared of course because I had never taken care of a kid before. That was my first kid. I was scared, but you know when you start doing all the things; just imagining I was the one who was carrying this thing inside me and now the baby is out. I didn't even want to see him crying. I didn't even want to do anything else but I just wanted to put him to bed, breast feed him, bath him and all the likes, but ah, it was so beautiful. When you become a mom, everything changes. It is never the same; you grow. There is a feeling of*

*pure and deep love that I have never experienced before. Then to buy food, you don't think about yourself anymore. Everything is about the baby, even to buy clothes. When you breast-feed, it is like giving this love through the milk.*

Another birth was described by María Inés, in her words,

*When I was in form 4 I met Ali. This was on the 20th of May in 2004. He told me that he wanted to marry me but that he wanted me to finish my school first. When I finished, we got married on the 21st of August 2005. I was 19 at the time we became one body; as Mr and Mrs Kalim. In 2006, our family received the gift of a baby boy whom we called Abdulla. We were very happy for this gift. That boy was born on the 26 of May 2006. We were happy for this because it was the first time. No matter I was young and that I didn't know how to take care of the child but God is a good God and I learned, bit by bit. Up to now, my son is growing up. Now he is 8 years old. Oh my friend, to give birth was very hard. It was natural and it was very painful. I gave birth in a clinic in Casungu District. That time I was staying in Casungu District, so I gave birth there. I remem-*

*ber I went there on Wednesday, at 8 o'clock in the evening and I gave birth on Thursday 8:45. Since that night up to Thursday morning, I was feeling a lot of pain and it was not easy to give birth. If I remember that pain, I couldn't imagine having a second baby because that time I fainted 3 times. When the baby was coming, I fainted until the big Doctor there was the one who forced me to grab the head of Abdul, because, that time the head was already out. So that big Doctor is the one who grabbed that head and just pushed, then the baby came out. I was happy to see the baby, I knew anytime I was going to have the baby, but I didn't know what kind of a baby. I didn't know if it was going to be a girl or a boy. But me, at that time, I wished to have a baby girl but I got a baby boy. I am glad for that because he is my father too.*

Verónica said,

*...the most wonderful event for me as a child was only to do the hair. I started when I was little. Even if it was not perfect, I enjoyed it. I used to do it until I must know. It was not nice before and I couldn't sit down. I said, "No, I want to know this thing". If I did it even if it was wrong, I never gave up. If someone came, I*

*said, "Sit down" and I did it. Now I know that it is always coming nice.*

And Gabriela tells about this memorable experience:

*...when I was 5, I saw my mom was pregnant, I don't remember her telling me so but I remember one day sleeping with my sister, she came, knocked the door and said, "I broke my waters, I must go". We imagined something was broken in the kitchen, I didn't know she was going to give birth. The next day, I remember we went to the hospital to see Natalia; my youngest sister. She was tiny and had a big haematoma in her leg due to my mom falling before giving birth. I saw her smiling. She was very nice and had very nice eyes. Since that day, we went to live with my grandmother because my father wasn't there...*

For Amaranta, the story of her father entangles with hers and her childhood's memorable events,

*My father's side is very complicated. Well, my grandfather was deaf and my grandmother was 20 years younger than him. My father never met them. He met his father but not his mom. When my father was less than a year, just about born; they had a neighbour. They lived in Ourense city*

*and they had a neighbour who had Tuberculosis. She did not have family, so my grandmother decided to take care of her and in doing that, she got sick and died in a few months. So my father was less than a year old and they had other four children. So, my grandfather who was deaf couldn't work and take care of them at the same time. It was impossible and above that, he was old. There was not a way.*

*So, the older sister was already 18 and she got married and moved to another city. My father never met her. She has a kind of a relation with my other aunts but my father never met her. My aunt is now insisting that they should meet but my father said, "If she was never interested in me, why should I want to meet her". So my aunts, the older ones moved with my grandfather. They took him to the Basque Country and they were established there. They looked for a job and they took care of him because he was very old.*

*And then my uncle who is older than my father joined the circus of Ourense; a circus that was very famous. Well, my uncle was there; he was one of the clowns of the 'Muchachos Circus'. So my uncle had three daughters; two of them twins and other younger one but all of them are*

older than me. So yes, we had a nice relationship with them but not very close. So, since I was small, I have memories of always going in summer to the 'Muchachos Circus' in Ourense because my cousins had also joined the circus. They were acrobats. They studied at the same time but they continued to be part of the circus. I have this thing; when I was small; all the kids in Pontevedra were similar. If there was a red-head, it was "wow a red-head". Suddenly, I arrived in summer to that pool and each child was a different colour, for that was amazing

The thing with the Muchachos Circus was like, it was a little village within Ourense city and it had its own bank, its own money, its own everything. It worked completely different and independent from the rest of the country. They used to travel around the world and each time there were kids living in the street without families, they took them and give them a place to stay. Of course, there were kids from all over the world. In fact, they had all the churches you can imagine: the Catholic Church, the Evangelic Church, the Muslim one. So for me, it was an experience. In fact, I always went with my

best friend and being very small, I remember a Muslim child took us to visit his church. We had to take off our shoes and then we went to the synagogue. So you said, "this is strange" because we were raised with the Catholic culture. I remember that when they came to Pontevedra, I used to take my friends and said, "the one who is jumping there is my cousin"; I was very excited. Well, my father was a year old and could not join the circus. So, he went to live with his two aunts; one never got married and the other one was married and her husband died young. So he went to live with his aunts and the children of one of them. All of his cousins were older. So, my father has two aunts as mothers and the cousins as fathers who always spoiled him very much. Suddenly, all were older and a dwarf came to the house. So everyone welcomed him.

## **APPENDIX 2: THE IMAGINED SPACE CONTINUATION**

For Verónica,

*Before coming to South Africa, I went to 'Lake of stars'. It was the first time. Yhooo, people from different countries came to Malawi. I don't know who organized this. It takes place in the*

lake. For example, they are doing this only the Sunbelt hotels; the ones that are near the lake. So they call it 'Lake of stars'. They invite a lot of musicians from different countries and a lot of activities like acrobatics and others happen there. They make it for three days and it is non-stop. They do this near the lake; here is the lake and there they make the festival. It is a festival. So when the people from outside the country come, they build tents; a lot of small tents, and they sleep there. They sell everything, food for example. If you go, they give you something to put in your arm. The first time I went was like, "I am in heaven". They make it for three days. If you go for the first day, you pay from there and if you go from the second day, you pay from there. I went for the last day because it is expensive. I couldn't manage to pay for the three days. It is non-stop; they start on Monday and finish it on Wednesday. If they put music, they say, "now it is time for someone else to perform" then they call another one. The first time I went there, I was with my sister and my sister she's got a baby, a three month old baby, and we just put the baby on the floor and we danced. Yhooo, that day was very nice. If I hear that, "ohhh Lake of

Stars" I wish I could go there. It was in 2008.

Before coming I was doing saloon; business for salon. That is what I was doing and when I go back, I am going to continue. I could imagine myself getting a job easily and having a lot of money to buy whatever I needed in my life. People who have been in South Africa before used to say that it is very easy to get a job in South Africa unlike in Malawi.

For Gabriela, South Africa was much unknown. In her words:

...after José came back to Ecuador, we got married in January 2014, and after 3 months, I was awarded a scholarship to go to South Africa. I never wanted to imagine that much about South Africa. I heard a lot of stories but I did not want to create my own. I didn't want to have prejudices. When I talked to friends who have lived in South Africa, very few I met, they said, "don't go there, because you will have to live surrounded by fences, and you won't be able to move around". After the images I saw about South Africa, I was thinking more in a very special place because of its people. I saw a lot of images of Johannesburg and Cape Town and

*I was very curious about the place; about the sea as I never lived near the sea. Of course I thought about the historical facts but I was very open because of what I came to do as a photographer.*

The story of María Inés says,

*After my son was born, I stayed with my sister because Ali came here in October 2008. , So, I was staying with my sister up to 2009. I was doing my business. I was selling clothes but you know after you get married, you are supposed to stay and take care of the baby together. Even if I was managing doing my own business, sometimes I thought about him and I missed him. It is like that; you know human beings.*

*In 2009, I travelled from Malawi to come to South Africa. He sent me some money to make a passport and for transport. So me, I travelled from Malawi up to here on the 21 October 2009, I reached here in Stellenbosch in Cape Town, South Africa, , , and I have stayed here for almost 5 years and some months...*

And Amaranta tells,

*My parents were in a state of “what is happening?” Of course “I am going to South Africa, what is this?” I was still with my ex-boyfriend. He was also in a moment of “I don’t know”. So*

*it was very hard and very strong psychologically. And then I could present the thesis in December, and while I was doing that, the stress started, I needed to begin organizing everything to come here. And before coming, I passed through Lisbon; it was a very strange feeling. In fact when I get on the plane, after saying good-bye to my parents and my ex-boyfriend, my head was saying “I won’t see you again”. He never worried about many things. For example, working for the government as he was, you can ask for a permit and say “during two years, I don’t work and then I come back”. He never even thought about it. When there is something that does not work, you will know. So, when I get on the plane, I said, “Now I relax”. I travelled from Lisbon then Dubai and when I get on the plane again in Dubai, I saw the map. The plane was in Dubai going farther instead of coming back, and I said, “What are you doing?” and that is how it was.*

María Inés tells her experience,

*When I arrived, I was struggling in different ways because at that time, my husband was working with Somalians. So when I reached here, his boss told him to go to Khayelitsha to work there in Khayelitsha. So some people told*

my husband “Don’t go to Khayelitsha because Khayelitsha is a difficult place, they are going to kill you or either they are gonna kill your wife and your son”. So my husband refused to go there, and his boss told him, “If you refuse to go to Khayelitsha, I am going to fire you”. So when he fired my husband, we were struggling. From December 2009 until October 2010, we were not working. We were struggling to get food, even money to pay rent, but most of the people; Muslim people were the ones who helped us, especially Andreja. She is staying in Cloetesville and she is the one who first took me to other people. She said, “She is from Malawi, she is struggling for a place and money for living” and people started helping me and my family up to October 2010. We started doing our own business. Since then our life started to change because from that day, we started to afford to pay rent, and to buy clothes, food and whatever we needed. In 2011, life started going better and better until we bought a car; a Mazda 62 6. After that, our business is still going ok but we have some problems through our business.

And I thank God because now we are better compared to how we were in 2009 and 2010.

At that time, it was very miserable. But now we thank God for that. I encourage other people who are in trouble now; no matter you are working but you will meet with problems but don’t give up. Just work hard, and go ahead with what you are doing until God answers. And now I thank all people who helped us that time when we were struggling very much. We still appreciate everything they have done for us.

### **APPENDIX 3: STELLENBOSCH DEFINED BY MIGRANT NARRATIVES**

Amaranta continues describing her first impression of Stellenbosch:

*In Stellenbosch at the beginning, a place that called my attention was Bird Street because the rest was like, very “European”. That street has a bit more chaos and is more interesting. It is very funny that it is completely different and I remember that girl I went to live with told me, “In this street we can walk, in this one we cannot”, and I said, “What is this that is in this street?”*

*When I arrived, I remember the path from the residence to the University; the big birds there, so I said, “I am in Africa.” And all the fences that had a sound, well I thought it was the fences but it was an insect’s sound in the trees. But well that path and also the Oude Libertas Saturday market, now it seems like too fancy but at that time I went after two or three days I arrived, I was very impressed with it. I met a Malawian guy who was selling things and since then I keep this (a small craft piece).”*

*I thought Stellenbosch’s surroundings were beau-*

*tiful; the place indeed. I started to see how much racism exists and I didn’t like that at all. That was very strong for me, but well.*

Continuation of Manuela’s narrative:

*It was in Cape Town, in Khayelitsha, my husband was there but I didn’t stay long. The experience was just the same, even in Khayelitsha is worse because of the history of Khayelitsha. Even to death, you know people say bad stuff about Khayelitsha. So Khayelitsha was even worse, little by little, but we didn’t stay there for long. Then we moved to Strand.*

*I thought this place is beautiful but the first days I was homesick and wanted to go back. I was so disappointed when I newly came. The standard of the place was so poor compared to where I was coming from and different from what I had pictured in my mind. Back home, you can walk in the street at any time with your phone in your hands or your wallet but here, especially in townships, it is so rare. It is very dangerous to walk at night and life-threatening. At first, I never went outside the yard until I got used to the place. I was so scared. It was very hard for me to adjust because we speak different languages and I couldn’t understand the people and the*

money. It was quite a relief on the food issue because most of the food they have we also have in our country.

In April 2014 I arrived to Stellenbosch. I immediately went to live in Idas Valley. I thought it was a beautiful place; many things are happening here, the place is divided. When you see Bird Street, there are just 'black people' then you come to this area and the majority are whites. In Zimbabwe, a white person can be the neighbour of a black person.

Verónica talks about her journey and first days. In her words:

*Travelling, I passed through Mozambique and Zimbabwe, so it was very nice because I had a chance to see Mozambique and Zimbabwe. It was my first time. I came to South Africa on the 16th December 2009. The journey was good. I liked it when I saw the buildings here because they are different to those in our country, and the town is beautiful and smart. I was very surprised, even when I saw something from the shops I wished I could buy it at the same time; I was saying "look at this". I was busy and I called daily to Malawi to speak with my friends because the first days, I was remembering Ma-*

*lawi. That is why I used to call Malawi every day. The first days for me were very hard because what I expected was not happening. I was not expecting that I would stay long time without a job according to what I was imagining*

*The first month I went to the beach. I was feeling bored because it was too much wind and I didn't swim and I didn't like it. When I got back home, I was just staying in the house and some people, if their boss asked, "can you find someone who can clean my house today", they told me and they took me there and when I got there, I felt bad because I didn't have experience.*

*You know I clean of course but I made mistakes and the boss said, "Oh I understand you because you don't have experience, like next time you must do the right thing". And later if someone wanted to do her hair, I would do her hair, like that. After three months, I did that and then I found a 'sleeping job' in Devonvallei but I didn't like the man but I worked because I just wanted experience, I worked there for eight months and I was busy looking for another job. I liked working for them but the pay was very little. I left it because of the money. Then I found another 'sleeping job'. It was better than the other one;*

*it was here in Dalsig area. After that, I worked in a Restaurant; it was my third work. But the business is going down, is not like before, because the customers are now scared to go there. I feel maybe one day, they are going to close.*

#### **APPENDIX 4: SPACES OF SENSE**

Continuation of Manuela's narrative:

*The Redeemed Church in Stellenbosch, I used to say, "The Redeemed Church is the only place I really feel I belong there". Now it is quite different, my honest opinion, I feel like the church is more for students than for working people. So most of the time, I feel like left out. Yes sometimes, because most of the times, they are praying for the studies. I am not even studying and they will be praying for studies, and I say, "Ok, now they are praying for students, what about me? I am working, I am not studying".*

*I don't have a place where I want to go and relax. The only place that I am thinking when I come from work is my small bed. I like sleeping a lot. When I come back from work I would just change, sleep and then I would say no, I will make food when I get up, let me sleep first. Most*

*of the times I am at home but when I want to relax, when I want to have a quality time, then I go to Somerset West. My sister-in-law stays there. We don't go out; we just stay indoors watching movies. When we want to go to town, maybe we will go and just buy some food and come back.*

*In Stellenbosch, I think the most beautiful place is the Botanic gardens. I love nature. I love gardens. I haven't gone around very much but I love that place. I went there with a lady from the place I was living before; if I was alone I wouldn't even know it. The mango tree there reminds me of Zimbabwe. There are a lot of mangoes in Zimbabwe. Other quiet places similar to Zimbabwe can be the Eikestad Mall and, some parts of Kayamandi as well. You know in my country, everything seems broken. If it breaks, nobody repairs it.*

And Verónica continues to express this about the place:

*When I want to be on my own here in Stellenbosch, because we have a lot of parks, I can go there, especially to the botanical gardens. If I want to think or read a book and do something on my own, I can go there. The place where I*

*feel more comfortable in is my place, my home, because I am not scared. But the place I like the most is Waterfront, I have gone there with friends and it is beautiful. It is entertaining*

*Oh but one day I went to a party in Bellville. It was a party where there were a lot of Malawians. In Bellville, next to Russell store, we ate, drank and danced. It was very nice. I also went to a party in Kayamandi the end of the year 2014. I didn't like it very much because people were drunk. I didn't drink; I just danced. Bellville is a nice place. I can find the food what we eat at home. You can find things at a cheaper price. It is busy. When I want to eat our food that I cannot find in Stellenbosch, I go to Bellville.*

And she tells about the most wonderful event that has happened for her in South Africa:

*In South Africa, the most wonderful event is that I met Macdonald. Yes it is the most wonderful. We used to chat like friends. I was shy the first time. It was in his house in Kayamandi. He used to stay with a friend of mine I just came to see. You know sometimes, it is happening like this. If you used to chat very close, sometimes*

*you can tell to each other that, "I like you or I love you". It just started. It was the first time to stay together with a boyfriend and I learned a lot. I know him; I know what he likes and what he doesn't like...*

For Amaranta, to meet her partner was also one of the most wonderful events here. In her words:

*A wonderful event in my life was Marta's wedding. It was very strong because it was a long time that I haven't seen my friends. So we went to Israel and we enjoyed Marta's wedding. It was very, very strong and it was amazing. I cried like a Magdalena. And also coming here was very strong, and realize how many people are there that I love so much and they love me as well, I even want to cry. Here, meeting Lucas was one of the most beautiful things that happened to me...*

And a place where she feels at home:

*The first place I said, "I feel at home" was this place. It was very strong, we moved, and Lucas had to go to a conference to the United States. He left and I stayed with all the boxes here. I went to sleep and I woke up in the middle of the night and I was alone at home, with all those boxes*

around me. It was the first night here. I went to the toilet and I came back to the bed and I felt at home for the first time because before, I was living in other person's house or with a woman who did not make you feel at home. She paid the rent and we did not have any contact with the owner, we just paid to her. So that night, I was very excited and I said, "I feel at home, finally after 5 months".

And when I want to be on my own I come home; it is like my cave. I am not very attached to the places. To me, as long as Lucas and Cucumba are there, I am fine. It does not matter where I am, if it is in this house, it does not have to be this house. I have something that when I feel something emotional, I am not feeling ok; I don't need to be on my own. I need to be surrounded by people that I care about or that I feel comfortable with. So when something happens to me, something very bad, like when I had a car accident; I needed to be with friends or with Lucas. So, as long as they are there, the place does not matter. That is what I learned here. In Spain, I had a place in my grandparents' house, ten minutes walking in the middle of the bush. In fact, there was a stone which is very comfortable

to sit. It is in the middle of the mountain. There is nobody and that is the place. In Stellenbosch, I always go to Jonkershoek and to Ginos. Those are, the places where I always go, that is why I think they can be part of my story.

For Gabriela, the new neighbourhood where she moved in December 2014 is a place where:

... We feel more at home. We could finally say, "Ok this is our house". The Mosque in front was a place for my husband to pray and the calls for Salaat were very peaceful. We met a lot of friends in this new space. Sheikh Yusuf is one of them and his family. Near the Mosque, I also met Khulut. I was waiting for Jose and I greeted her. She invited me to wait in her car as it was late and while I sat there, she gave me ice cream. Since then, we met several times, she and her husband Ali invited us to their place to eat. When José was not here, Khulut invited me several times to visit her. She came as well. We also went to pick olives in an olive farm and then we prepared them. When she gave birth to her 4th child, we took care of the three older ones. That happened on the 30th of May 2015.

*Another place would be Bellville. Bellville is a place where you can feel that there are more opportunities. There is more energy there, I don't know. It is more similar to my country, like busy, noisy and the food, you can buy food from different places, when I go there, and I feel freer.*

For Manuela, Strand is a place where she feels at home. In her words:

*In Strand, the people, the mixture of people, you can just feel comfortable with it because everyone is minding their own business. You don't feel like I am being left out or I am being neglected. You just keep on with your stuff; you keep your friends, you have your friends, then you also have family visiting you. You also have people surrounding you. So every day, you just come from work, you meet different types of people, you socialize, and you interact. So I think in Strand where I was staying, I became part of them. I just became part of them so it wasn't very hard for me. I am someone who likes talking to people, meeting new people, knowing them better and giving myself to them and so, yeah, it was quite an experience. I would say in Strand is more diverse because there are a lot of people there: different people, different tribes, and*

*different races. You get to know different people, I mean, we speak different languages but still you can see that people are happy together. You don't have racial discrimination because they don't select people. Everything is just cool; everyone is cool with everyone. It is in Strand where I found the church Forward in Faith Ministry, It was my husband's church and is also the church of his family. I had to go with them and it was a family thing. The church is just more like our church, so it wasn't difficult for me because most of the people are Zimbabweans there. So it was one language, you can imagine just going to a place where there is all the people speaking your language. It was so exiting you know; "Finally I feel like I am back home". Finally, I met people who I can talk with, without any fear, without maybe saying the wrong things. I will be speaking the same language with them, so the church was very fantastic, I will say.*

*At that time, an event that I enjoyed the most happened. I went to a church; it was an all-night prayer. It was so nice that I danced the whole night. I sang and I couldn't even speak in the morning. My voice was gone. The church was in Koeberg near Salt River. That was so*

*phenomenal, so amazing because seeing the way I was dancing, I couldn't even look to anyone. I just couldn't do it. I was just in my world you know. Somewhere that you could even feel, "no I am not talking to anyone". It is just me and me alone...*

2015, Interviews and conversations to build a life story to Verónica. Sound register. Stellenbosch, 2014-2015

2015 Interview with Terry Kurgan about *Hotel Yeoville*, representation, documentary and portrait to Terry Kurgan. Skype, computer recorder. Stellenbosch-Johannesburg. 16th of February 2015

## **APPENDIX 5: LIST OF INTERVIEWS**

2015, Interviews and conversations to build a life story to Amaranta. Sound register. Stellenbosch, 2014-2015

2015 Interview with Dave Southwood about *Memory Card Sea Power*. Sound register. Cape Town. 11th of September 2015.

2015, Interviews and conversations to build a life story to Manuela. Sound register. Stellenbosch, 2014-2015

2015, Interviews and conversations to build a life story to Gabriela. Sound register. Stellenbosch, 2014-2015

2015, Interviews and conversations to build a life story to María Inés. Sound register. Stellenbosch, 2014-2015

