

# DWELLING IN THE CEDERBERG

AS A MEANS TO EXPLORE

PHOTOGRAPHIC, LAND AND SOUND ‘SCAPES’



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## ABSTRACT

Through the act of dwelling, this thesis investigates how a bodily experience of space can be mapped through photographic, land and sound ‘scapes’, and in doing so be responsible for the creation of place. The ‘scapes’ I speak of here can be seen in the three chapters that form the structure of this thesis: the first being an investigation into the grain of the *image*, the *photographic* scape (Chapter 1); the second being an exploration into the grain of the *voice*, the *sound* scape (Chapter 2); and the final scape, that acts as an intertwining of the grain of the *image* and *voice*, is the grain of the *landscape* (Chapter 3). I explore the notion that landscapes are narrated by means of our movement through them and that by means of dwelling within and walking through landscapes, the very grain of the landscape becomes the subject of research in a practice-based study. This thesis investigates my engagement with photography and sound as a means to explore the grain of the landscape as a temporal, enigmatic, sculptural form, with which we are inevitably entangled.

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*Imagine a film of a landscape shot over years, centuries, even millennia.  
Slightly speeded up, plants appear to engage in very animal-like movements,  
trees flex their limbs without any prompting from the winds.  
Speeded up rather more, glaciers flow like rivers  
and even the earth begins to move.  
At yet greater speeds, solid rock bends, buckles and flows like molten metal.  
The world itself begins to breathe.*

(Timothy Ingold, *The Temporality of Landscape*, 1993)

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## PREFACE

The written component of this thesis presented here serves as the theoretical companion to the body of practical work I created for the fulfillment of this degree. The theories and ideas expressed in this dissertation stem from the act of making photographic images intended to exist as objects in space, as well as the manipulation of sound recordings to be experienced in a site-specific manner. Due to this, it must be made known to the reader that the folder, Beyond the Grain, found in this hand-made box contains the list of figures referenced in this thesis with digital reproductions of the original artworks. The referenced sounds can be found on the memory stick also placed in this hand-made box. The reader is encouraged to listen to the sounds through a pair of headphones as to eliminate any external noise.

## INTRODUCTION

My ephemeral footsteps trace the path I traversed along a sandy riverbank winding its way through Heuningvlei in the Cederberg region. The river weaves itself above and underground where it disappears under pockets of fynbos to reemerge again amongst rock formations sculpted by centuries of wind and water. I am struck by the abundance of plant life, with their luminescent colors standing stark against the sheer sandstone cliffs I had just trekked through. The desolate cliffs create a boundary between this lush oasis and the otherwise rugged terrain of the Cederberg. I have spent the past three years intermittently dwelling in different locations in this region, walking through this landscape with my large format camera and hand recorder. Exposing portraits of places onto silver halide crystals as I slide each film holder into my camera and release the shutter. Each frame revealing remnants of human presence, a presence that shapes this landscape with its sociocultural and historical narratives. Narratives I have been afforded the opportunity to hear from persons whose families have lived here for generations. With each passing sunset, I become more aware of this presence; how landscapes are elegies to those who moved through and within them in the past. Also, how my own creative practice involves a restorying of a language of the landscape: a language that emanates from centuries of human interaction with these places. And yet despite this, as ephemeral as my

footprints are along the riverbank, so too are my photographic prints of places in the Cederberg. They too will eventually fade away and cease to exist. What will, however, remain, beyond all visible human presence, is the *grain of the landscape* itself.

The grain of the landscape is explored in my creative practice through an integration of the photographic and sonic, where light is understood as the indispensable matter with which we paint to create photographic images, and sound waves are understood as traces through which we can access a 'language of the landscape'. Whether these photographs are abstract or representational images, they hold an indexical relationship to the object/subject they are exploring. This thesis investigates the Cederberg landscape as a site where various social, historical and cultural discourses can be traced, or mapped, through sound and photographic scapes. By immersing myself in this transitional area, where I am a stranger to the space, I started my own research process with the intention to facilitate a conversation with the landscape. I also envisaged this conversation as a space where traditional ideologies surrounding the 'genre' of landscape and photography can be tested and challenged. It is from this conversation with the Cederberg landscape that I wish to investigate how sociocultural ideologies can become embedded in a given place.

Rosalind Krauss speaks of the photograph being “a type of icon, which bears an indexical relationship to its object” (1985: 203). She uses the terms “*trace*, *imprint*, *transfer* and *clue*” to unpack her understanding of photography as a medium, where referentiality remains at its core (1985: 212). Krauss expands on Roland Barthes’ notion that a photograph is analogical in nature and as such is a “message without a code”; where she argues that meaning is created when juxtaposed against an exterior referent (Barthes 1977: 154; Krauss 1985: 212). It is through the documentation of “*traces*, *imprints*, *transfers* and *clues*” (Krauss 1985: 212) that I wish to investigate the conversation between the space I am photographing and the sociocultural layers it is made up of.

The ability of a photographic image to expand the visual mapping of space through an investigation of place gives insight into the affective bond that is formed by persons with specific sites.<sup>1</sup> In his book *Landscape and Power*, W.J.T. Mitchell speaks of “landscape as a dynamic medium, one that is itself in motion from one place or time to another, that circulates as a medium of exchange” (1994: 2). Places have complex dimensions that are constantly in flux, which reveal historical and cultural texts that have been ascribed to them. This is seen in the rooibos biome in the Cederberg area,

which is the focus for this study, as it is an expansive region that reveals rich historical and cultural texts that have over time created a sense of place and, for some, displacement.

### i. Background

During my undergraduate studies, I became intrigued with the notion of borders and territories in the Western Cape and how they function to segregate, rather than amalgamate, certain communities. Through the site-specific photographic documentation of certain places, I became more aware of the affective bond that persons have with the places they inhabit, and how this bond with their surroundings becomes a site of exchange where the landscape can be a reflection of cultural identity.<sup>2</sup> This reflection stems from the viewpoint that interpretations of the environment are not intrinsic but are rather socially constructed notions that we attribute to landscape. We can see this in the drawing of maps from a scientific point of view, insofar as a cartographic depiction of an area adopts methods of representation that depend on a selection of locations’ names, bordering off areas, highlighting ‘key’ features in the terrain and noting the geographical elements of the area.

<sup>1</sup> The difference between ‘space’ and ‘place’ will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> This thesis looks at landscape with an awareness that cultural identities are shaped by landscape, and landscape by cultural identities, and it is from this awareness that I investigate landscape as a culturally created phenomena that is experienced by means of embedding myself within a given locality.

The notion of mapping a given space with borderlines and topographical features creates a tension in the viewer when they are then physically immersed within that space. When one looks at a map of an area and then moves through or dwells within it, the 'link' between the map's 'surface-scape' and the landscape that surrounds one are two alternative viewpoints that do not necessarily correlate. It is as if you see two landscapes that are independent of one another, yet the map's intention is generally to create an account of location and bestow an experience of site-specificity to that area. I argue that this discord of viewpoints is due to the concept of 'landscape' being a cultural phenomenon. Mitchell argues that "landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture; it is both a represented and presented space, both a signified and signifier" (1994: 5). We create meaning and place it onto given landscapes and perpetuate the cycle by repeatedly insinuating representations onto it.

Landscape, as a culturally created concept, arises from the secondary representations that we impose on it. We write, paint, draw, record, photograph and create music about it, furthering the subjective perspective that representing landscape creates. Preceding these secondary representations, however, stands the landscape itself: "a physical and multi-sensory medium (earth, stone, vegetation, water, sky, sound and silence, light and darkness) in which cultural meanings and values are encoded" (Mitchell 1994: 14). The rooibos plant is such an example, as it is an object that is part of

the "physical and multi-sensory medium of landscape" and is encoded with "cultural meanings and values." The rooibos plant holds significant meaning for the people who inhabit the environment that it grows in. This meaning derives from the historical and cultural texts that have been inscribed upon it. This plant is endemic to the Cederberg biome and is an object of great sociocultural dispute.<sup>3</sup> Through a photographic and sonic exploration of the area it grows in, I aim to investigate various narratives that explore the affective bond that persons inhabiting the area have with the places they occupy; as well as how the notion of landscape, being a culturally constructed phenomenon, aids the idea of sense of place.

Before this study commenced I had never been to the Cederberg region before and only had visual clues of what the area looked like by viewing it through digital interfaces, such as Google maps. This reverts back to the notion of tension felt when looking at a map of a place and then dwelling within it. The engagement with maps as a means of superficially surveying the area informed my decision to physically traverse and document the area through photographic and sonic means. The space I found myself in, and that I documented as part of my research process, was extremely different to the one the map made me envision and led me to expect. This reframed my

<sup>3</sup> This sociocultural dispute is unpacked further in *The Invisible Presence of Whiteness* (Chapter 1.2), found on page 17.

perspective on the idea of mapping from a conventional form of cartography to an abstracted method of mapping. Movement, traces and sounds act in such a way that the environment is envisioned and experienced through multi-sensory media.

In this thesis, I explore the notion that landscapes are narrated by means of our movement through them and that by means of dwelling within and walking through landscapes, the very grain of the landscape can become the subject of research in a practice-based study. Katrín Anna Lund unpacks this notion by arguing that, "from the perspective of those who dwell in them, landscapes are woven together by a plethora of narratives" (2012: 225). In this thesis and in my creative practice, I explore the notion of the grain; specifically, with reference to the role of photography and sound as a means of visualisation and narration. I do this by employing the concept of a 'scape', where 'scape' denotes a specified type of scene, such as a moonscape, cityscape, seascape, etcetera. The notion of 'scape' is used as a structuring device to unpack the three discourses I am investigating.

The 'scapes' I speak of here can be seen in the three chapters that form the structure of this thesis: the first being an investigation into the grain of the *image*, the *photographic* scape (Chapter 1); the second being an exploration into the grain of the *voice*, the *sound* scape (Chapter 2); and the final scape, that acts as an intertwining of the grain of the

*image* and *voice*, is the grain of the *landscape* (Chapter 3).

## ii. Chapter Outline

### *Chapter 1: The Grain of the Image*

The notion of the grain is embedded in my choice of medium being specific to analogue photography. The way in which I photograph with a medium and large format camera informs my practice, insofar as the act of walking through and photographing the landscape involves a unity between my body, the tripod and the camera. My body and the camera become a single entity when traversing the terrain in the Cederberg, the one informing the other's movements and choice of location for the specific frame being captured. The choice to photograph in black and white, using these two cameras, is integral to my research, as it informs the manner in which I photograph and print. A hand-made silver gelatin print, made from a negative, differs from an image taken with a digital camera in the sense that the tone and texture of the silver gelatin print produces a unique grain. This grain can be attributed to the chemical composition of silver halide crystals that form a light sensitive emulsion. The variation of size of these crystals affects their light sensitivity and thus the amount of grain visible when printing (Alexander 2015: 30). Kaja Silverman's writings in her book, *The Miracle of Analogy or The History of Photography, Part 1* (2015), speaks to this process of making photographic images, as she writes about photography as:

"the vehicle through which we learn to think analogically. It is able to disclose the world, show us that it is structured by analogy, and help us assume our place within it because it, too, is analogical. A negative analogises its referent, the positive prints that are

This chapter will look specifically at how my photographic scapes, created in the form of silver gelatin prints, glass plates coated in liquid emulsion and digital prints converse with the landscape in order to reveal so-called 'texts' that, I argue, are ingrained in space. It must be noted here that the digital prints were the result of printing a negative in the darkroom until an exemplary print was reached, which was then taken to the printer to replicate digitally. This was done as I did not have the means or the facilities to print to the scale that I desired by hand. I also look at the notion of being in conversation with landscape, which stems from Katrín Anna Lund and Karl Benediktsson's book *Conversations with Landscape* (2010), in which they explore the metaphorical quality of conversation to unpack the ideologies surrounding the concept of landscape. This is done in the subchapters *Conversing with Light: Ingrained Place* (Chapter 1.4) and *Reminiscent Light: Intentional Seeing* (Chapter 1.6).

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<sup>4</sup> The notion that photographic images are documents of truth is rejected in this thesis and as such adopts a post-structuralist way of thinking that, as Liz Wells states in *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, "challenges the idea that there is a fixed and stable human subject or that knowledge can be certain" (2015: 363).

The notion of the grain in relation to the photographic image as not only a visual remnant but also one that is ideological, in that it has discourses of representation and "truthfulness" attached to it, will be discussed here.<sup>4</sup> This will be done by looking at the history of representing landscape photographically in the subchapter *A 'Passive and Silent' Landscape* (Chapter 1.1). Following on this discussion, I give a brief history of the Cederberg area in *The Invisible Presence of Whiteness* (Chapter 1.2), to create an informed context for the research taking place in this thesis. It is from this background on the area I investigate and the concept of landscape in relation to photography that I discuss the work of two female photographers, namely Beatrix Reinhardt and Sally Mann, in the subchapters *Tracing Histories in Beatrix Reinhardt's Battlefields of KZN* (Chapter 1.3) and *A Thousand Crossings: Sally Mann* (Chapter 1.5).

Reinhardt and Mann both deal with the concept of landscape by looking at site-specific places where harrowing historical events unfolded in such a way that they render a poetic visual narrative. The manner in which Reinhardt and Mann investigate landscape photographically links to my practice in that it involves looking at the role of human presence in landscape, whilst capturing sites that are actually devoid of humans. In their work, this tension between absence and presence offers a disparate perspective on the very idea and visualisation of landscape. It must be noted here that these two photographers were chosen because they are female photographers, not because I wish to

investigate the concept of landscape from a Gender Studies point of view, but rather due to the fact that, in my research of photographers dealing with the concept of landscape, I found that research on female photographers were severely underdeveloped in relation to their male counterparts. Thus, my choice to look at the work of Reinhardt and Mann in relation to my practice stems from a personal desire to contribute to academic writings and investigations on female photographers working within the field of landscape photography. From the discussion of the grain of the image, and its focus on the role of the photographic to my practice, I move on to discuss the role of the grain of the voice in relation to the use of sound in my practice; as well the role of the 'voice' in exploring the concept of the grain of the landscape.

## *Chapter 2: The Grain of the Voice*

In this chapter I approach the landscape as more than just a physical entity through which I walk and map by means of sound recordings and photography. I approach it as an entity that has, in some way, a voice of its own whose grain allows us to access place through an auditory dimension. This chapter focuses on the role of sound in relation to my practice by looking at my bodily experience of places through sound waves. I explore how these sounds were recorded through the use of a professional zoom hand-recorder and a contact microphone; furthermore how these two devices allowed an extension of listening to occur under the section *Listening Devices: A Means*

*to Decipher Surroundings* (Chapter 2.2). I investigate how sound is not only perceived by the body but also generated by the body's movement through a space; motivated by Salome Voegelin's view that "sound maps the world not as borders and nations but as dynamic trajectories of individuals moving, being moved and remaining in place" (2011: 144). In this chapter I aim to extend beyond the sense of sight in exploring the enigma of landscape through sound recordings. I do this by looking at the ephemeral nature of sound and the concept of landscape. In the same way that you cannot hold a sound in your hands and study it, you too cannot hold a landscape in your hands. Due to this chapter's focus on the experience of sound in a given landscape, a phenomenological approach to bodily experience is employed and also discussed in more detail in *My Body as the Site of Interchange* (Chapter 2.1).

The notion of the grain of the voice is explored in this chapter by looking at both the metaphorical voice of the landscape and the voice of persons I had conversations with. The notion of the grain is twofold here again, in that it looks at both the timbre of the voice, as well as the ideologies surrounding landscape as a medium. I expand on the investigation of the sound in relation to landscape by looking at Lotte Geeven's two sound installations, *The Sound of the Earth* (2013) and *Singing Sands* (2019), in the section *The Singing Grains of Sands* (Chapter 2.3). Her two installations record sounds from deep within the earth's core and the sound produced from grains of sand moving down

dunes. I discuss Geeven's work, as she expands on the notions surrounding landscape and creates sound installations that explore the very grain of the landscape. I explore the notion of the grain further in *A Land of Sonic Textures* (Chapter 2.4), where the concept of textures of place is looked at in relation to my sound recordings; and how places can be heard and felt through that I move onto my final chapter: *The Grain of the Landscape*.

### *Chapter 3: The Grain of the Landscape*

In this chapter, an emphasis is placed on the cultural phenomena of landscape as the 'site' where the act of photographing and collecting sounds begins to weave together. I investigate the notion that human presence is entwined with landscape and, as such, they inevitably shape one another. I begin this chapter by looking at the role of my walking body in collecting sounds, photographing the landscape and, in all, how my body shapes and responds to a given landscape by my movement through it (Chapter 3.1, *Mapping Grains through the Walking Body*). Following from this discussion, *Gathering Horizons in Landscape and Photography* (Chapter 3.2) explores the concept of the horizon as a means to understand how the idea of the grain acts as a threshold where ideologies surrounding landscape and sonic and visual remnants touch one another. With this understanding of the horizon and its expansion of perspective, I move on to analyse my sound installation in *Wait Until You See* (Chapter 3.3). The element of time is explored in relation to my practice by looking at my installation's

integration of sound and image - an integration that, I argue, allows for the immersion of the viewer in the experience of the grain of the landscape. Following on this, I look at my three glass pieces, *Beyond the Grain i, ii* and *iii* and how the ability to see through the grain of the landscape as caught on the glass surface potentially allows for an experience where the viewer feels themselves to become part of a ghostly landscape. In this final subchapter, *A Ghost Landscape* (Chapter 3.4), I investigate how the enigma of landscape and the notion of the grain are realized in the exhibition space. Seeing how this thesis forms part of an integrated study, which comprise of both a theoretical and practical component, the literature used to motivate my study will now be addressed.

### iii. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Due to the nature of my study investigating discourses surrounding photography, landscape, and sound, I apply a diverse range of theories that corroborate with one another in such a way that they motivate my own work, as well as the three artists I discuss. That being said, this study employs three integral texts throughout, namely: Katrín Anna Lund and Karl Benediktsson's book *Conversations with Landscape* (2010), Liz Wells' book *Land Matters: Landscape, Photography and Culture* (2011), and finally Christopher Tilley's book *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (1994). I refer to Lund and Benediktsson's writings to create a theoretical

framework that motivates my study's understanding of landscape as a medium not a genre, as well as a surface of forms with which we are entwined. Their focus on the metaphorical aspect of conversation in relation to the concept of landscape substantiates my practice's investigation into the medium of landscape as more than just a physical entity through which we traverse. Wells' text is employed to explore the ways in which landscape has been represented photographically and how these representations question discourses surrounding landscape. Wells investigates the social, cultural and political aspects involved in visually representing land as landscape, and as such informs this thesis throughout. Roland Barthes' essay, *The Grain of the Voice*, is employed in this thesis, as it serves as the foundation of which my twofold understanding of the grain emerges. Barthes theorises the idea of the grain, which is found in the spoken (or singing) voice, and unpacks the concept to speak not only of the timbre found in voice but also to speak of the indescribable essence that is bound to language. There are additional texts that motivate my study in my respective three chapters, and as such will be addressed accordingly.

The writings of Geoffrey Batchen in his book *Burning with Desire* (1999) were employed to motivate this study's post-structuralist view of the medium of photography in my first chapter. This view is important theoretically, insofar as my practice understands the concept of landscape and photography as something that does not hold a fixed meaning or state. Batchen's writings offer a

break from the restrictive discourses that surround photography as a medium. He reads against the grain of most academic writings on photography, which fixates on the technological aspect of the medium and its relation to identity politics, and focuses rather on the desire to create an image photographically.<sup>5</sup> Rosalind Krauss' view that photography should be examined through the concept of the trace is also integral to my practice and as such informs the manner in which I approach photography in this thesis (Krauss 1985). Moving on from my first chapter's focus on photography, I focus on theories surrounding the sonic aspect of my work and phenomenology. A phenomenological approach is adopted in this thesis and as such engages with texts that investigate the writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, with focus being placed on bodily awareness and perception; whilst the sonic aspect of my work employs the writings of Salomé Voegelin in her book *Listening to Noise and Silence* (2011), where she investigates sound through a phenomenological lens.

The second chapter of my thesis investigates my practice's use of sound and the approach I employ to collect sound waves. A focus is placed on the act of listening and bodily experience

<sup>5</sup> It must be noted that in my research I engaged with 'key' texts that are said to be seminal to photography, such as: Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* (1980), John Tagg's book *The Disciplinary Frame: Photographic Truths and the Capture of Meaning* (2009), Joel Snyder's article 'Picturing Vision' (1980) and finally John Berger's book *Ways of Seeing* (1980); however, these texts do not motivate my practice's investigation and the manner in which I approach photography as a medium.

in this chapter and as such Voegelin's book *Listening to Noise and Silence* (2011) is used to frame my understanding of sound as a means by which the body is invited into an experience of landscape. Voegelin speaks of sound "challenging, augmenting and expanding what we see, by producing the reality of lived experience", supporting my exploration into sound having the ability to expand on the visual (2011: 12). Her phenomenological approach to sound is intertwined with Tilley's phenomenological approach to landscape; as such these theorists' writings form the foundation of which my second chapter investigates sound in relation to a bodily experience in landscape. The exploration of sound in my practice also saw research being done into the textures and qualities of sound and as such looked at the writings of Steven Connor. Connor speaks of "sound diffusing in all directions", which "unlike light goes around corners" (2005: 129). Following my second chapter's focus of these investigations, my third chapter comprises of an amalgamation of the theories dealt with in Chapters 1 and 2, with a focus being placed on the act of walking.

My third chapter makes use of the two previous chapters' theoretical framework, with focus being placed on the role that walking played in my own practice. As such, Katrín Anna Lund's article 'Landscapes and Narratives: Compositions and the Walking Body' (2012) is used to motivate for my practice being a means to understand landscape as something that can be narrated through movement. As Lund states, "walking narratives

are composed through the connections and disconnections of the walking body with the surroundings, creating a narrative landscape of absences and presences" (2012: 225). The notion of the horizon is employed in my subchapter, *Gathering Horizons in Landscape and Photography* (Chapter 3.2), and here I adopt Hans Georg Gadamer's philosophical view that the horizon "characterizes the way one's vision is gradually expanded" and allows a limitless sight of what is unknown (2004: 301).<sup>6</sup>

Whilst the theorists addressed in this thesis motivate this study's investigation into landscape, sound and photography, the key terms used throughout this thesis need to be addressed to create clarity for the reader as to how these specific terms motivate my practice's study – which is done in the following section.

#### iv. Key Terms

Space is understood as an abstracted concept, which is used to reference a location that is not tied to a set of human relations or grounded in meaning or objects, whereas place is understood as something that was previously space.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) was a German philosopher who was influential in the development of 20th century hermeneutics (Malpas 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Yi Fu Tuan's book *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977), Edward Relph's book *Place and Placelessness* (1976) and Anne Buttimer's book, *The Human Experience of Space and Place* (1980) are the specific texts referred.

However, with the attribution of meanings and human experience, what once was considered space becomes place. This understanding stems from the writings of the humanist geographers Yi Fu Tuan, Edward Relph and Anne Buttimer.<sup>7</sup> With this understanding of space and place, this study goes on to frame dwelling as an act that involves a passage of time, where the human body experiences space in such a way that it becomes place. The notion of dwelling arises from Timothy Ingold's discussion of a 'dwelling perspective' in his article 'The Temporality of the Landscape' (1993), where he uses the term to describe landscape as "enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves" (1993: 52). It is through this experience of dwelling that the notion of embeddedment develops, where this study adopts the understanding of embeddedment as the act of being deeply ingrained in place in such a way that it supersedes the experience of dwelling. It is through this act of embeddedment in place that I argue the patina of place can be felt.

My understanding of patina stems from the definition provided by the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, which defines it as "the impression or appearance of something" (2010). I unpack the notion of patina further by viewing the visual constituents of a terrain (such as the rock formations mentioned in my opening paragraph) as signifiers of a passage of time, where the effect of

that passage affects the experience of place. These five terms function together to help understand and situate my practice. These terms also resonate with and support one of the main concepts used throughout this study, namely that of *mapping*.<sup>8</sup> The term mapping is not used to reference a conventional form of charting or organizing space analytically by means of geographical visual features with a focus on the names of locations, but is rather used to speak to the manner in which I map places in the Cederberg by means of my photographs and sounds.

#### v. Research Methodology

This written theoretical component of my thesis is the result of a practice-based approach to research, which employs Estelle Barnetts' view that "knowledge emerges through material processes" (2007:6).<sup>9</sup> Practice-based research is understood as a method where the result of theory and ideas

<sup>8</sup> The term 'mapping' here is used to speak of the site-specificity of the sounds and photographs and how they function in relation to one another to make sense of the landscape I am exploring. In the same way a conventional map is a means to make sense of a terrain through visual representations, my sounds and photographs are represented in such a way that they offer the viewer an unconventional map that makes sense of my surroundings and how I experienced the Cederberg landscape.

<sup>9</sup> Leora Faber's text, *On Making: Integrating Approaches to Practice-Led Research in Art and Design* (2010), also served as a seminal text with regards to research that focuses on practice as research and investigates this as a recent development within the South African Context.

emanate from practice, not vice versa (Barnett 2007: 6). Thus, the theories and ideas that are fleshed out in this written component of my thesis emerge from my practice's investigation into how an act of dwelling and embedding oneself in a space (specifically the area of the Cederberg) can result in the creation of place. Furthermore, this approach allows me to investigate how an ingrained act of being in place allows for the documentation of traces and narratives (through the sonic and photographic) in such a way that the grain of the landscape is rendered. I chose to create three hand-made boxes – of which each holds the written component of this thesis, a memory stick containing the sounds referenced in this thesis, and 6 glass plates printed with liquid emulsion – in order to offer various means of support to this practice-based research project.<sup>10</sup> The three hand-made boxes serve as a handbook, or guide, of sorts that helps to navigate the practical work that was completed for this study.

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<sup>10</sup> Two of the boxes contain 6 plates, where the third box contains an extra 3 due to the glass being cut by hand and breaking in the process (as seen in Figure 27 [*Beyond the Grain ii*]).

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE GRAIN OF THE IMAGE: A PHOTOGRAPHIC ‘SCAPE’

Walking through the harsh sandy terrain that is scattered with burnt bushes cutting and poking my legs, I find the place that I walked past the previous morning. I have been trekking through a valley in the Cederberg mountain range for a couple of days, returning to some places where the light illuminates a scape before me, altering the way the forms in the landscape had appeared the day before. I had spent hours traversing this valley observing how the light plays subtle tricks on your perception of the land. How the textures of scattered rocks could change from once appearing soft and smooth to gritty and rough. I place my tripod down in-between a line of rooibos bushes that are no more than gnarled twigs sticking out of the dry ground. Removing the large format camera out of its bag and placing it on the tripod, I begin the process of adjusting the legs and camera's body until it sits level in the bumpy soil. I open up the viewfinder to see the ground glass before me revealing a cluster of trees on the horizon set between a mountain range that is aglow with soft hues of pink from the sun that is beginning to rise. Not being able to see the detail in the reflected image before me, I throw a blanket over my head and the camera to block out all the light.

This chapter examines how my photographic scapes, created in the form of silver gelatin prints (Figure 1), glass plates coated in liquid emulsion (Figure 2) and large scale digital prints printed from a film negative (Figure 3), converse with the landscape in order to reveal texts ingrained in space. In order to understand the complexity of landscape as a medium an overview of the history thereof needs to be addressed; thus, the emergence of landscape photography in relation to the discourses that are inherent in this medium and the preconceived notion of landscape as a ‘genre’ will be analysed. In addition, a brief history of the Cederberg area will be offered, with specific focus on issues of ownership and belonging. This is done to create an informed context for the research taking place in this thesis. Due to this chapter using the metaphorical quality of conversation with place, Yi-Fu Tuan’s theories in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977) will be employed.

The mode of embedding myself within a space draws on Tuan’s argument that “space” is more abstract than ‘place’; what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it

better and endow it with value" (2011: 6). Through a method of embeddedment in a space, my photographic scapes (in conjunction with my sound installation) aim to reveal a conversing with land that speak of time passed; as well as current disputes that can be seen in the imprints left behind by colonisation. Following from this understanding, two of Beatrix Reinhardt's works from her series, *Battlefields of Kwa-Zulu Natal*, will also be discussed. As mentioned in my Introduction, my own research is rooted in the practice of female photographers who deal with landscape, and Beatrix Reinhardt's photographic series plays an important role in situating my own practice.

Reinhardt's photographic exploration of the battlefields in Kwa-Zulu Natal expands on the visual aspect of photography by incorporating historical and geographical text, as well as an embossing of a piece of flora. I chose this series of Reinhardt, as her work invokes a romanticised representation of landscape, whilst simultaneously questioning the history that these representations were made out of and offers an interesting point of departure for my work. Liz Wells, Kate Newton and Catherine Fehily explore this idea of female photographers testing the boundaries of the 'genre' of landscape through photography in their book *Shifting Horizons: Women's Landscape Photography Now* (2000). This text is used to understand how my own practice involves a rendering of landscape that potentially creates new ways of seeing and listening. Such photographic representations are, as Wells, Newton and Fehily argue, important, as "historically

women have not taken a prominent place within landscape tradition"; and as such the male gaze that dominates landscape representations has "influenced the language of landscape to an extent that renders it difficult for women to find a new symbolic in terms of perception and representation of place" (2000:10). The absence of humans in Reinhardt's photographs, her choice of form and layout, and the manner in which she approaches landscape will be discussed to outline how she questions the role of photography in landscape representations. Proceeding from this discussion, the concept of being in conversation with landscape is looked at in relation to my photographic prints; and the manner in which I converse with light through a photographic lens to speak of the patina of place.<sup>11</sup>

The idea of having a conversation with landscape stems from Katrín Anna Lund and Karl Benediktssons' book *Conversations with Landscape* (2010), where they use the metaphor of conversation to explore issues surrounding the concept of landscape, such as its "hidden ideological complexities and diverse meanings" (2010:1).

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<sup>11</sup> I adopt the understanding of patina as a concept which gestures towards the experience of place through the visual impressions left behind by the passage of time, such as the visual components of the landscape i.e. the surfaces of rocks or the textures of sand. I see the impressions left behind as traces through which we can access the site-specificity of place and engage with the sociocultural and historical layers that make up a given place. I unpack this concept further in Chapter 1.6.

The concept of landscape has only recently been investigated (when viewed in relation to the history of landscape as ‘genre’) beyond its previous representations as an “objective and passive surface of forms” (Sauer 1996: 5), which “is viewed as a visual scene or as a frame around a picture” (Thorgeirsdottir 2010: 17). In this thesis, I read and engage with landscape as both a text and live sculptural form that is dynamic in nature and constantly in flux, which Mitchell speaks of “as a medium of exchange, a site of visual appropriation, a focus for the formation of identity” (2010:2). Stemming from this understanding of landscape as something which is fluid and not in a static state, I employ post-structuralist theory to frame my approach to photography and landscape as something that does not have a fixed meaning or state. Specifically, I draw on the notion that a photograph’s meaning is dependent on the context out of which it derives. As Geoffrey Batchen states in his book *Burning with Desire*, “there is never neutral ground where the photograph is able to speak ‘of and for itself’, where it can emit some essential, underlying ‘true’ meaning” (1999: 6). From this understanding, I move on to analyse three photographs from Sally Mann’s Deep South series (Chapter 1.5).

Mann’s approach to creating photographic images that render the southern landscape in North America denotes photography’s ability to convey a complex narrative in a mere series of frames. Her employment of various analogue photographic techniques to create work is drawn on in my practical; and as such the

analysis of her work attempts to offer a disparate approach to conversing with landscape, supporting the notion that “conversations between humans and landscapes are almost never conducted from a neutral position” (Benedisktsson and Lund 2010:8). As mentioned in my introduction, in the *Chapter Outline* (ii.) of my first chapter (found on page 4), the choice to analyse Reinhardt and Manns’ work does not wish to investigate landscape and photography in relation to gender, but rather seeks to place emphasis on the lack of visual analyses done on female photographers working with landscape as subject matter. Following the study of Mann’s three photographs, I end the chapter by looking at my glass pieces in relation to my printed works to unpack the concept of *intentional sight* and the manner in which my work is contingent on light (Chapter 1.6).

Before we can begin discussing the current manner in which we read and engage with landscapes (specifically through a photographic lens), in relation to the discourses I investigate in my thesis, a brief background to landscape photography needs to be addressed, as well as the manner in which it has been dominated by the male gaze.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> It must be noted here again that I do not investigate landscape with a focus on the role of gender in representations of landscape but rather wish to highlight the context out of which dominant landscape representations occur.

## 1.1 A ‘Passive and Silent’ Landscape

With the invention of photography and the possibilities it created to document the world around us, landscape photography emerged as a means for nineteenth-century explorers to record expeditions into the ‘wilderness’, as well as ideas surrounding conquest and land ownership. Landscape photographers valued a photograph’s ability to communicate a deictic relationship to a scene, and thus landscape as a ‘genre’ in photography was established. Due to this notion of landscape as genre and not a medium within itself, it took time to gain artistic recognition. Liz Wells notes in *Land Matters: Landscape Photography, Culture and Identity* (2011) that landscape as subject and not as backdrop did not occur until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and even then the ‘genre’ of landscape as subject was inferior in the hierarchy of academic painting (landscape as a subject was first explored in the form of painting).

Landscape photography was thus embedded in the ideology that landscape was not a subject on its own made up of layered historical, cultural and social discourses, but rather functioned as an aesthetic backdrop to such discourses. It was with an objective and ‘straight’ photographic approach, along with the placement of photographs in museums and exhibitions, that landscape photography was framed with the ideology that what was shown in a frame was merely a scene containing an arrangement of forms bereft of the context they

were created in.<sup>13</sup> This seen in the landscape aesthetic that dominated Northern American art photography in the 1970s.

An influential exhibition that exemplifies the importance that formal qualities and aesthetics held at the beginning of landscape photography is *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape*. This exhibition gives insight into the role that the discourse of photographic modernism had in creating a specific way of viewing and interpreting landscape photography. *New Topographics* was curated by William Jenkins and was held at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, in 1975. It consisted of ten photographers, of whom only one was female, and showed various landscape formats that supposedly aimed to minimize the context of the image in an attempt to place emphasis on form. This enforced ideology by institutions established landscape photography within the arts as a ‘genre’ that should be read through a formalist lens. As Martin A. Berger says in his article ‘Overexposed: Whiteness and the Landscape Photography of Carleton Watkins’ (2003:1), “photographs were simply thought to possess the potential for offering more objective depictions of the material world than might be attained through other modes of representation”.

<sup>13</sup> The ‘straight’ photographic approach spoken of here was typical amongst modern American photographers and placed an emphasis on “photography’s ability to provide apparently accurate records of the visual world” through its topographical intent (Wells 2015: 15).

It was with this notion that the apparently stylistically neutral images were analysed by critics for their purported 'objective' and 'scientific' representation of various landscapes.

Landscape photography emerged at a time where the photograph was perceived to be a scientific document that depicted a truthful scene, devoid of subjectivity. We know now, given the innumerable academic writings on photography and its discourses, that it is in fact not a document of 'truth' no matter how 'pure' the intentions of the photographer to capture a seemingly objective scene.<sup>14</sup> The lens obscures what is captured by it; it is as if a veil has been cast over the frame forcing you to see what the photographer wants you to see. It is also important to note that there is a degree of violence in the act of photographing; we *take* or *capture* an image. Susan Sontag's book *On Photography* (1977) speaks of this undertone of violence, which denotes the subjectivity that is inherent in viewing or taking a photograph. Even though the landscape photographs shown in *New Topographics* resisted any trace of

opinion or judgment in their work, they are inevitably informed by the histories and personal identities of the photographers.

Landscape photography's history reveals an attempt to simplify renderings of land as merely aesthetic or documentary through an objective lens; when in fact they should be seen as an art of space and *place* that reveals ineffaceable traces of sociocultural and historical discourses. Wells maintains this notion in saying, "photography fitted itself as an instrument of topographic documentation, contributing to travelogues, visual ethnography and geographical surveys" (2011: 266). She goes on to explain that it was "assumed that photographic seeing was unmediated, that photographers responded directly to what was observed with limited latitude for interpretation" (2011: 266). This perspective of landscape neglected to recognize that it is human presence that creates landscape; in absence what is represented is merely a geographical area. This human presence inevitably suffuses a photograph of land with a subjective perspective that is informed by an ideological way of seeing. In this thesis, I aim to challenge the ideology of landscape as a 'genre' and highlight photography as a vehicle through which a conversation with places can occur. Seeing as how the landscape in the Cederberg is the site of research, a brief history of the area and current demographics needs to briefly be discussed in order to create a context for this study.

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<sup>14</sup> As stated in my introduction (on page 5), I oppose the idea of photography as a document of truth and as such adopt a post-structuralist viewpoint that meaning cannot be fixed or stable, resulting in the idea of truth never being established. This idea is supported in the writings of three authors that write on the idea of photography as a subjective medium, such as: Martin Lister's, *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture* (1997), Allan Sekula's *The Invention of Photographic Meaning*, in *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works 1973-1983* (1984) and John Tagg's, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (1993).

## 1.2 The Invisible Presence of Whiteness

Within the context of this study the Cederberg's rooibos scape can be read as a metaphor for the affect that the inequalities and prejudice of colonialism have on persons inhabiting the area. The historical discourses embedded in the land reveals how it (landscape) is an "instrument of cultural power" (Mitchell 1994: 2). It must be said that this thesis will not investigate the *history* of this area and the wrong doings of previous generations, but rather it aims to conduct an *investigation* into how the landscape itself reveals these histories and sociocultural texts by being embedded in various places in the area. It is through this embeddedness that space becomes place and a visual mapping of liminal sites occurs through the photographic and sound scapes in my practice.<sup>15</sup> It must be noted that rooibos is not the focus of this study but rather a departure point from which this study took place.

The Cederberg area is known for its cultivation and farming of the rooibos plant, which has through generations created a unique culture of its own. When looking at the history of rooibos as a commodity, its production is dominated by white male farmers as a result of colonialisation.

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<sup>15</sup> For the purpose of this thesis I explore liminal spaces that are thresholds of ideologies and places, which are constantly moving from one state of existence and experience to another.

This is not to say that the current white farmers are to be held liable for the previous generation's unethical misconducts, but rather that the demographics of the area reveal the affect of these misconducts, and as such denotes sociocultural discourses. The statistics of the population in the area are made up of 15 percent white, 5 percent black and 80 percent coloured, yet white farmers own 93 percent of the rooibos land (Kruger and Associates 2009:45). Non-white farmers make up a small percentage of the production of rooibos and even then they cannot breach the market as the established farmers dominate it. Zimitri Erasmus speaks of racial identities in her book *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town* (2002), where she discusses notions of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa. She speaks of blackness, whiteness and colouredness existing as cultural, historical and political identities; and that 'being' colored, white or black is not a category but rather a cultural identity. I mention this as it is important to note that landscape in South Africa is made up of an entanglement of different racial identities that inform the manner in which landscape is accessed and represented. I am highly aware that I am a white middle class female representing a landscape that is made up of multiple racial identities.

I am also highly aware that the socio-political and cultural history of the Cederberg landscape does not begin with the colonial frontier of Europeans; and that it was through the settlement of the Trekboere that the 'empty land myth' was realised

(Mitchell 2001: 436). Laura J. Mitchell speaks of the empty land myth in her article, 'Traces in the Landscape: Hunters, Herders and Farmers on the Cedarberg Frontier', (2001), where she speaks of the history of human presence in this landscape being evident for "at least the last 10 000 years and possibly as long as half a million years ago" (Mitchell 2001: 433). Research has shown, through archaeological, documentary and ethnographic data, that indigenous populations (such as the San and Khoikhoi) of the vast Cederberg region held a strong sense of territory and moved through the terrain systematically responding to climatic changes (such as rainfall and perennial springs) and resources. Mitchell notes that this movement through the landscape by indigenous populations "engendered both cooperation and conflict"; however, she goes to note that whilst it is likely that specific territories were contested among these populations in the pre-colonial era, it was with the arrival of the European settlers that "individual land claims and land ownership arrived in the region" (2001: 434).

The discourses present in researching landscape in the current socio-political context of South Africa, with the current state of land claims and land retribution, is the product of "loss of black land rights occurring through a protracted and complex process of direct coercion and indirect pressures spanning more than three centuries", as Ruth Hall states in 'Reconciling the Past, Present, and Future: The Parameters and Practices of Land Resititution in South Africa' (2010: 18). It is with this

awareness that I research the concept of landscape in the Cederberg region through sound and photographic scapes, where my research is inseparable from the current socio-political state of land in South Africa. It must also be made aware to the reader that my creative practice employed analogue processes with an awareness that the history of this medium is entrenched with that of imperialism. Jane Lydon explores this history of photography and imperialism in her article "Behold the Tears": Photography as Colonial Witness', where she investigates the power of the photograph in "communicating ideas about Indigenous peoples" (2010: 234). Even though Lydon's article's scope is that of the Aboriginal people of Western Australia, the same employment of photography as a means to document 'empty land' and indigenous people, as a means of ownership and power, can be seen in the history of colonisation in South Africa. She speaks of:

"Photography expressing a complex range of contemporary ideas about race, human difference and society. In the contest over their shifting meanings, such images map the complex pattern of acknowledgement and denial, recognition and myopia that has characterised the colonial relationship." (2010: 250).

I am also aware, as mentioned before that the history of landscape, seen in the representation thereof, is dominated by the white male gaze. John Stathatos' article 'A Conditional Presence: Women Landscape Photographers in Europe' (2000) supports

this viewpoint. He demonstrates this in his research into early photographic landscape representations in Europe where his study revealed, "women appear to be entirely absent from the 19th century landscape" and that investigations into "other national photographic histories prove equally unrewarding" (2000: 105). It is important to touch on this invisible presence that shapes the history of landscape representation, specifically in South Africa; as his research encourages further investigation into representations of landscape that disrupt the historical male gaze found in photographic landscape representations.

This sociocultural dispute denotes Berger's viewpoint of "the role of whiteness as an invisible structuring presence in virtually all products formed in societies that privilege white identity" (2003: 4). This viewpoint that "whiteness is an invisible structuring presence" exemplifies the history of landscape as a medium that has been 'seen' through a white male gaze and what the gaze has been on has also been 'conquered' by the white male.<sup>16</sup> The subjugation of the Cederberg area and the naming of the Aspalathus linearis plant as 'rooibos' signifies that "language guides our understanding of the material world and conditions and delimits the way we may think" (Berger 2003: 10). It is through the 'rooibos' name flooding the vernacular

that a cultural superiority is established in endless rotation. Barbara Fawcett's post-structuralist viewpoint, which holds that language is crucial to the production of meaning and the manner in which knowledge and power are executed to enforce certain social practices, exemplifies the notion that language acts as a guide to our understanding of the world (2012: 2). This sociocultural dispute denotes that the history of a place is inherent in the land and can be revealed through the medium of photography and sounds recordings, as also seen in my practice.

I would argue that my approach to landscape, by accessing it through the ground glass of my cameras and exposing the visual information before me onto silver halide crystals, has the ability to render my surroundings in such a way that the notion of the grain conveys the twofold complexity of exploring landscape as a medium. My practice involves an entanglement with the narratives at play in the places where I find myself embedded, in such manner that I do not attempt to frame the full complexity of landscape as a means to uncover the sociocultural and historical discourses embedded in the landscape, but rather to use the mode of photography and sound installation to create a visual and sonic map that speaks to the patina of place as experienced by me and those who shared their experiences of the landscape with me.

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<sup>16</sup> This is not to say that landscape was not seen by those who were not white males, but rather that the representation of landscape, in the form of visual and textual renderings, was predominantly done by them.

Sarah Nuttal's view on entanglement, with a focus on South African landscape, is important here, as she explores this

concept as a “condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with” (2009: 1). What is most intriguing of her understanding of entanglement is the element of intimacy that is gained, which can derive from a place of resistance. Nuttall views entanglement as a means to investigate certain sites (which were once thought to hold separate identities and histories) as spaces where identities and histories intersect and interlink (2009: 11). Most importantly, Nuttall explores this concept as one that can speak of the complexity of a set of social relations that are in ensnarled with one another, whilst simultaneously gesturing towards a human foldedness (2009: 1). In line with this idea, one can also argue that photography has the ability to embody the discourses it is tracing: as Batchen states “as an index the photograph is never itself but always, *by its very nature*, a tracing of something else” (1999: 9). The grain of the image and its denotation to the ideologies surrounding landscape as genre and the medium of photography can be seen in the conversation had with places such as these. Beatrix Reinhardt’s photographs of the Battlefields in Kwa-Zulu Natal speaks to this notion, as her series employs various visual techniques in conjunction with photography to curate a narrative that speaks of the history of places.

### 1.3 Tracing Histories in Beatrix Reinhardt’s Battlefields of Kwa-Zulu Natal

Liz Wells speaks of photography having the ability to tell

a story and, in doing so, contribute to the construction of histories that are tied to particular sites (2011: 262). In Reinhardt’s investigation into the landscape of Kwa-Zulu Natal, where over the span of seventy years various areas endured one momentous battle after the other, she seeks to question photography’s ability to speak of a place’s history and in doing so create a ‘restorying’ of history (Reinhardt 2019).<sup>17</sup> The landscape endured a human interaction with it, which would go on to shape the history of South Africa. The battles which were fought here challenged the British Empire’s presence in South Africa, and in doing so speaks to a history of South Africa that is found across the country, not just in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Her series is made up of 35 archival inkjet prints on Hahnemuhle paper, where an oval shaped photograph sits at the top of the page, with text placed in the bottom right corner with coordinates of where the photographs were taken, the battle that took place and the date of the battle, and finally an embossed image sits on the bottom left corner of a piece of flora that comes from that particular site.

For the purpose of this analysis, I will only be focusing on two of these works, namely Nr. 25: *Battle of Wagon Hill* and *Caesar’s Camp* (Figure 4) and Nr. 10: *Battle of Fort Mthonjaneni* (Figure 5). It must be noted that I will not discuss the battles that took place

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<sup>17</sup> Battle of Ithaleni, Spioenkop, Nyezane, Isandlwana, Blood River/Ncome, Fort Mthonjaneni, Helpekaar and Willow Grange are a few examples of the battles fought here (Reinhardt 2019).

here, nor the history that unfolded and shaped this landscape (as this falls outside of the scope of this study), but rather focus on Reinhardt's approach to these specific places through a photographic lens and her use of framing, layout and text to speak of the medium's ability to render traces that tell stories of places.<sup>18</sup>

The manner in which Reinhardt approaches landscape in this series of photographs and presents them as a final work speaks to Wells' notion that "part of the pleasure of viewing images is the noting of rhetorical devices and strategies deployed by photographers as visual narrators" (2011: 262). The angle at which she photographs and then frames her images in an oval shape functions as a visual strategy, which emphasises her experience of landscape. A low angle is employed throughout the series, guiding the viewing experience in such a way that we feel as though we are lying down on the earth and viewing the landscape through the foliage and landforms that emerge out of the ground. This is seen in the two works Nr. 25 and Nr. 10, where our visual experience of the landscape begins from an angle where we confront with the physicality of it, whilst simultaneously being grounded by the closeness of the camera's angle. This shift in perspective from the conventional

angle of eye level at which we normally survey an area, to grounding us almost within it, begins to challenge perceptions of space and place and the manner in which we view landscape. The additional historical and geographical information, in conjunction with the embossed flora (Figure 6), begins to transform the photograph from one of space into one of place.

Reinhardt's manipulation of depth of field is also effective in focusing the viewer's experience of landscape to view it in a specific way. In Nr 10, for example, the shift in focus from the foreground to the background begins to blur in such a way that we become mesmerized by the texture and form of the wet grass. The viewing experience begins to unfold that the small oval 'windows' into the landscape challenge and constrain our perspective of the landscape. The visual information in the background and even the middle ground is blurred to the point where the grass emerging out of the earth becomes the only matter that is significant. The depth of field in, Nr. 25, is also effective in the focus being placed on a thin grass blade in the foreground against a blurred background of a dry and withering terrain. Her framing and choice of angle in these images, as well as the rest in the series, supports my earlier discussion of the horizon in relation to photography and landscape; and its ability to signify a vision of landscape that is constantly unfolding. The oval shape of her photographs also supports this notion, as the elongated form extends the horizon in such a way that it stretches across the landscape. The choice to frame her prints

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<sup>18</sup> I am aware that this work is meant to be read in relation to one another and as such supports the narrative aspect that this series possesses; however, for the purpose of this study and length I will only discuss the two examples mentioned above.

in an oval shape does well to speak of the sense of nostalgia that is linked to photographic representations of landscape.

The oval shape to frame photographs was used a great deal in the early explorations of landscape though photography; and as such is used by Reinhardt to speak of this nostalgia that is inherent in photographs of landscape.<sup>19</sup> The different framing techniques employed here begin to speak to the shift of perspective seen in the choice of camera angle and depth of field. Her use of text and the information she decides to present to the viewer creates an interesting interplay between the absence of humans in her photographs and the evidence of human interaction in the text. By providing the viewer with the date the battle took place, the coordinates of the site where she photographed the landscape and lastly the name of the battle site, she begins to frame a narrative around these places. We begin to read the visual clues in the photograph in relation to the information given to us in the text. The manner in which Reinhardt provides the viewer with additional textual information in conjunction with the photographs creates a platform for extending the photographs beyond the visual. Whilst Reinhardt's above exploration moves beyond the visual by means of adding text to the photographic image (thus adding another discursive

layer to the photographic surface), my work seeks to extend the visual by means of sound – an idea I will return to later in this thesis.

Reinhardt's photographs of the various battle sites in Kwa-Zulu Natal offer a disparate perspective on landscape and, in many ways, resonates with the notion of visual mapping as seen in my work. It could be said that she maps out these battlefields in this series in the same way I map out places in the Cederberg photographically and sonically. She does this by making sense of the sites through the curation of a photograph, text containing historical and geographical information, and an embossed piece of flora from the site. In combining these three elements together on page, in conjunction with other pages that function in the same way, she presents the viewer with a visual mapping of sorts that reads as a narrative of the traces of historical actions found in landscape. Her work reflects Wells' view that "history turns space into place", as the historical actions that transpired in these various sites (which are referenced in the textual information) alters the viewer's perspective from the site being a space in a terrain to a place grounded in a historical narrative (2011: 19). The manner in which Reinhardt approaches these sites, and presents them to the viewer with different visual materials and information, offers a different perspective of this landscape; as well as supports Wells' notion that "human action contours the landscape, and stories told give meaning to it" (2011: 19).

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<sup>19</sup> This nostalgia refers to photographs of landscape that are devoid of human intervention in the form of buildings, roads, crops, structures etc.

In the same way that Reinhardt is narrating landscape through

this series and exploring traces of past events that shape the landscape today, my work explores traces in the Cederberg landscape. Human figures are noticeably absent in her photographs, yet the viewer is confronted by a landscape that was shaped by human interaction – this creates a viewing experience that is beguiling, whilst it also creates a tension between the evidence of human interaction referenced in the textual information and the absent-human presence hinted at in the photographs. This interplay between absence and presence in her series speaks to the tension that is created in my own work, where the voices in the sound installation allude to human presence in the landscape, yet, when viewing the photographs of the landscape, there is an absence of human bodies. The enigma of the landscape as rendered in Reinhardt's series speaks, I believe, to the grain of the landscape I explore in my work. She does this by confronting us with a snippet of landscape, viewed from a grounded, close-up angle, and with the addition of historical and geographical information.

The tangible trace of the landscape, seen in the embossing of the piece of flora, begins to speak to the idea that humans are forever entangled in, and in conversation with, landscape. In embossing a piece of flora, which grew out of a terrain that has experienced multiple human actions upon it, she reflects Wells' notion that "marks in the landscape reflect histories, and trigger recollections that may not necessarily be reassuring" (2000: 11). She activates the surface of her print and, in

doing so, creates a physical link to the landscape represented in the photograph and the text. Reinhardt renders a landscape of Kwa-Zulu Natal by means of engaging with the historical narratives that shape these places, as the narrative quality of her work unfolds in such a way that a shift in perspectives of space and representation of landscape in South Africa emerges. Whilst she does this through a series of photographs, geographical and historical texts, and embossings, my work shifts the perspectives of space and landscape by means of an amalgamation of sound and photography. In that the absence of human bodies in my photographs, juxtaposed against the voices found in the sound installation, aims to challenge the representations of landscape that 'paint' landscape as a distant backdrop against which our daily lives unfold. In conjunction with my sound installation, my photographs seek to guide the viewer into an experience of landscape where their own bodies become entwined within the ghostly landscape suspended in glass.<sup>20</sup>

#### 1.4 Conversing with Light: Ingrained Place

As mentioned in the introduction, in my *Chapter Outline* (ii.) on page 4, the notion of the grain is embedded in the analogue processes that are used to create the photographic scapes in my thesis. As maintained in this thesis, the grain's denotation

<sup>20</sup> This is discussed in depth in *A Ghost Landscape* (Chapter 3.4) found on page 60.

is twofold: it speaks of the visual remnants in the surface of the image, as well as the ideologies that surround photography and landscape as a medium. However, in this chapter I specifically focus on the former quality – that is the grain found in the silver halide crystals of analogue photographic processes.

Susan Sontag's approach to photography exemplifies the notion of the grain as a signifier of the discourses surrounding the medium in the arts. She does not see photography as an art form per se, but rather as a *method* by which art can be *made*. This position on the medium creates a framework for the manner in which photography, in this thesis, functions as a vehicle through which conversation can evolve. The photographic scapes do not function as a form of truth or as objective scenes that are independent of their context. But rather they function as scapes, which speak of the current sociocultural disputation in South Africa, more specifically the Cederberg. Thus, these photographic 'scapes' depend highly on the context in which they were created and as such are subjective capturing of places.<sup>21</sup> A 'language of the land' can be used as a deciphering device to unpack the sociocultural discourses seen in the codes and traces ingrained in the Cederberg region.

These disputation can be read through a 'language of the land' that

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<sup>21</sup> My photographic scapes also depend on the context in which they are viewed, such as the site-specific place they are shown in.

is communicated through photographic scapes, in conjunction with sound scapes. The 'language of the land' emanates from the idea that landscape speaks to those who engage with it and critically examine the context that these discourses have derived out of. This idea stems from Benediktsson and Lund's book, *Conversations with Landscape* spoken of earlier, where they speak of conversation sparking response, not silence and that it is through this conversation that meaning appears (2010: 2). Where meaning here is understood in terms of a language that is fluid in the same way that liminal spaces are fluid. My interaction with the language of the landscape through a photographic lens and sound recordings, seeks to explore the "symbolic meaning and iconic significance of landscape" that, according to Benediktsson and Lund, can be "read" as a text in order to uncover the politics of culture" (2010:5). It must be noted that this idea of the 'language of land' is linked to the post-structuralist view that meanings are context-specific and as such are never fixed but rather fluid, which is reflected in Liz Wells writings in, *Photography: A Critical Introduction (Fifth Edition)*, where she speaks of post-structuralism as "challenging the idea that there is a fixed and stable human subject or that knowledge can be certain" (2015: 363). The meanings that are derived from this language I am exploring in my work is heavily dependent on the context out of which it stems. I approach the landscape as an entity that is a live sculptural form that, when engaged with through activities (such as conversation through photographing, recording sound and walking), can reveal

vestiges of past conversations held with landscape by others.

The language of the Cederberg's land is read through the traces that are left behind in places. I chose to work with these site-specific places in the rooibos-growing region of the Cederberg, which spans a vast area of the Western Cape, as these locations serve my research interest of mapping liminal spaces. Here, liminal spaces can be understood as a means by which to explore the spatiotemporal aspect of landscape, as they are spaces that function as a *threshold*. Edward Casey's writings notion towards this idea of liminal spaces functioning as an in-between or edge that allows the experience of landscape to occur by means of crossing thresholds (2007: 6). He speaks of the edges of liminal space as non-limiting and non-delineated, insofar as these edges act as porous entities that evoke a particular experience of place. Casey's two concepts of the "Salient and Subtle Edge" are employed here, as they speak of the physicality of an edge that announces itself and defines boundaries, as well as the ambiguous subtle edge found in the liminality of the horizon respectively (2007: 91). Landscape theorist Jackie Bowring notions towards the idea of being in liminal spaces as being in "a place where things become intensified and condensed" (2004: 52). The tangible aspects of my environment, the terrain, the atmosphere and the weather, allow the intangible aspects to be evoked; as Donald Getz states: "meanings are attached to experiences" (2012: 224). By exploring liminal spaces in the Cederberg, which

function as thresholds for experience of landscape, traces of meaning are evoked. The process of visual mapping in my photographic images resonates with James Corner argument that mapping is an act of "gathering, working, assembling, relating, revealing, sifting and speculating" an environment into a visual form (1999: 219). My photographs can be read as visual maps, which enabled me to render the grain of the image in such a way that it speaks to the conversation with landscape that my thesis is concerned with exploring.

Visual mapping is obtained by moving through the landscape as a means to "schematize and translate it into an image, into a system of thoughts" (Paz 2015: 98). Anita Paz's concept here of creating a "schematized system of thoughts" through visual mapping emphasises the notion that "landscape is a social product", which through representation "reflects and reinforces contemporary political, social and environmental attitudes" (Wells 2011: 1). I approach mapping as a practice by which I make sense of my surroundings, where the act of photographing and collecting visual information is the manner in which I make sense of the landscape I walk through. The idea of a photograph being a trace speaks to my practice of mapping as a visual tracing of grains.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The role of mapping in my practice and my approach to it is discussed in more depth in the Chapter 3.

We translate and represent land graphically and textually, and in doing so “particular landscapes tell us something about the cultural histories and attitudes” (Wells 2011: 2). The process of mapping through my photographic prints is a means by which I gather visual information around me; where my images are scapes that allow me to orientate myself in the places I find myself walking through (I delve more into the act of walking as a means to map in the following two chapters). The three scapes dealt with in this study – of sound, land and photography – aims to create a ‘system of thoughts’ that are the result of conversing with places that are riddled with complex narratives past and present. I am of the opinion that it is through the mode of embedding myself in these places, and my engagement with these narratives, that the language of the land creates a sense of experience.

My practice involves communicating a sense of experience through the capturing of moments of light as a means to emphasize the language of the land. From the release of the shutter to imprint a trace of a scene before me onto film, to the moments in the darkroom, it is the enchantment of light that allows a denotation of the language of the landscape to transpire. This is seen in my silver gelatin print, *River Shadow* (Figure 7), where the light is manipulated in such a way that the rocks appear luminescent, creating an elusive forest in the background. The processing of the film enables me to control the tone, contrast and grain of an image, thus creating a manipulation of the light in the scene to emphasize elements

that were the cynosures in the land. The printing processes is where I begin to paint with light, blocking the light from a rock emerged in water to keep its pearl grey tone; or allowing more light to peek through onto a dense forested area to reveal entangled branches and wispy leaves. I see the use of analogue processes as a means by which to translate light into a visual language that converses with the viewer on discourses represented in the frame. This language is solely dependent on light and the way in which I choose to paint with it to create a scape that represents an experience of embeddedness; as well as reveal the vestiges in the landscape that are exposed through the process of space becoming place. Analogue processes inform this visual language in an influential manner from the semblance of the image to the way in which I photograph.

Robert Heinecken is of the opinion that there is a “vast difference between *taking* a picture and *making* a photograph” (Grundberg 2006).<sup>22</sup> This is reflected in my own practice, as when ‘taking a picture’, I am informed by the way the elements before me catch light in a certain way; or how the narrative at play evokes traces in the land. It is in the darkroom when I am ‘making the photograph’ that these elements and narratives are emanated by painting with light and manipulating tone. This way of producing prints is

<sup>23</sup> Robert Heinecken (1931-2006) was an American artist who called himself a ‘paraphotographer’ and created photographic images without the use of a camera (Musuem of Modern Art 2019).

a multi-stage process that is variable in nature. This influences the way I move through the land and view it through a viewfinder.

This amalgamation of an immersion of camera and body in a place enforces the notion that, "it is an experience of being present and, by one's presence, contributing to the formation of the landscape and to its unique tonality", as stated by Arnold Berleant in *The Art in Knowing a Landscape* (2012: 69). The notion that the human presence makes landscape, in relation to the medium of photography, is an interesting one, as the act of photographing strips the fluidity of presence in that the frame taken in that moment speaks to something in the past and as such something that is no longer present. When taking a photograph, we are seizing a single moment in the ebb and flow of this presence. We are, in many ways, breaking it down and reconstructing it to represent a frame where we are 'seeing' not through the conventional mode of sight but rather through an *intention* of sight. This tension between the human presence creating landscape and the act of photographing seizing this presence creates a dynamical relationship between what is absent and present in the frame. Based on what is represented in the frame, it creates a questioning (even if unconscious) of what is not seen in the frame; what carried on moving with the ebb and flow of presence that informed this moment frozen in silver halide crystals on a film negative. The absence of the human body in my photographic scapes, in relation to the soundscape emitting various voices, also

creates a tension in the viewing experience.<sup>24</sup> These frozen moments in time create a way of seeing that is intentional through its illumination of the vestiges found in the land.

It is this intentional way of seeing that makes the work of Sally Mann so beguiling in nature. Her photographic prints engage with subject matter in such a way that the more you delve into them the more they start to reveal traces and narratives that are present. The 'experience of being present' and immersed in a place can be felt when viewing the work of Sally Mann. Her three photographs, *Untitled (Bridge on Tallahatchie)* (Figure 8), *Untitled (Concrete Grave)* (Figure 9) and *Untitled (Emmett Till River Bank)* (Figure 10) from her *Deep South* series (1998) explores issues of race, heritage, culture and identity in the south of the United States of America. This series has a significant influence over my work and the manner in which I engage with landscape photographically as a female subject.

### 1.5 A Thousand Crossings: Sally Mann

The works of Sally Mann emanate from her immersion in the American South and the traces that its historical discourses reveal. It is through an engagement with these discourses

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<sup>24</sup> This idea of human presence and absence in the sound installation and photographs is fleshed out in Chapter 2.

that Mann explores issues of race, identity and heritage in the current sociocultural context of North America in her photographic images and writings. Mann's photographs and the methods she employs to create them serve, in the context of this study, as an exemplification of the ability of photography to convey complex topics and narratives in a series of frames. Mann speaks of her photographs as "silver poems of tone and undertow" that are "elegies to the fraught heritage of her southern homeland with its history, identity, race, and religion" (Greenough 2018: 22). Mann's photographs of the southern landscape, taken over a period of time, is analyzed here in relation to this thesis's exploration of land as a medium, which reveals a nexus of ideologies regarding history, identity and the land.

Mann speaks of living in the South as an experience, which nourishes and wounds; that identifying someone as a Southerner "is always to suggest not only that her history is inescapable and profoundly formative but that it is also imperishably present" (Mann 2007: 110). This conflicting notion of her history being 'imperishably present' is strikingly evident in her work. Mann's ability to convey a scene of land that is so captivating in its stillness and silvery smooth tone and yet so vehement in speaking of unjust happenings denotes the ability of photography to convey traces in the land left from happenings in the past. When travelling through Georgia, where she began her *Deep South*, series she experienced a landscape different from the images taken in Virginia; this new place "was infused

with a sense not of a personal, private history, but a more conflicted, public, and national one that has inscribed itself on the present landscape" (Greenough 2018: 39). In the same way that Mann travelled to different locations in the South to explore the different public histories present in landscape, I travelled to different locations in the Cederberg to explore how the landscape is infused with a history that affects a nation as a whole.

Mann speaks of her "place and its story as given, it remained for (her) to find those metaphors, encoded, half-forgotten clues within the southern landscape" (Mann 2015: 37). Her work employs the power of metaphors and narratives to intensify the stories told through the land. It is her enduring sense of place that makes her works so evocative of a time once known whilst also evoking a sense of presence in the now. Her series of work that was created on the south, *Deep South* and *Last Measure*, can be seen as portraits of landscape. This idea of portraits of landscape contends against the ideology of landscape as a 'genre', in that portraits of places alludes to the idea that a representation of land holds the same human presence and complexity that a portrait of a person would have. This human presence that makes landscape more than just a geographical area is conveyed in Mann's photographs from her *Deep South* series, *Untitled (Bridge on Tallahatchie)*, *Untitled (Concrete Grave)* and *Untitled (Emmett Till River Bank)* (1998). Mann says she was seeking the earth "to give up the ghosts" ingrained in the landscape of the deep South (Greenough 2018: 42).

Sally Mann works with the medium of photography as an art form to capture moments that speak of issues regarding race, identity, culture and heritage. Her use of analogue processes is key to the research in this thesis, as I argue that her employment of these processes contributes greatly to the narratives told. This can be seen in the three silver gelatin prints chosen for this analysis: *Untitled (Bridge on Tallahatchie)*, *Untitled (Concrete Grave)* and *Untitled (Emmett Till River Bank)*. These three images, with the rest of the series, amalgamate to convey a narrative that is ingrained in the landscape. Mann was "looking for images of the dead as they are revealed in the land and in its adamant, essential renewal" and in doing so chose to convey the inhumane death of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till, an African American who was brutally murdered in 1955 when visiting his family in the Delta (Mann 2015: 120). Her photographs are absent of human bodies, even though they speak of the presence thereof. In the same way my photographs are absent of human bodies in order to speak of the presence that these bodies occupy in a more ethereal and elusive way.

The manner in which Mann frames the scene in *Untitled (Concrete Grave)* alludes to Till's death and the common practice in the South to bury people in concrete graves above the earth (Greenough 2018: 43). As Greenough states, the "human-shaped concrete coffin seems casually placed underneath a giant tree" (2018:43). The sheer, almost mundane, ordinary element of the scene captured in this photograph speaks to the concept of patina

that I explore in my work. In the same way my photographs attempt to trace the visual remnants, or grain, of the landscape to speak of the patina of place, Mann renders the patina of places in the deep South. The patina of the places of Till's final hours is seen in the poetic manner in which Mann frames the landscape to signify the passage of time, and how that passage of time has an effect on the landscape of the South. Mann's photographs spoken of here function as a form of tracing this presence, in the same way my work attempts to trace the history of entanglement between human presence and landscape.

The photographs of the *Concrete Grave*, the *Bridge on Tallahatchie* and *Emmett Till River Bank* form an elegy to Emmett Till and all those that have suffered racial prejudice.<sup>25</sup> Mann traced the footsteps of the murderers from the moment of Till's abduction to the place where his body was pulled out of the river (Mann 2015: 120). What resulted is a compulsive series of images that divulges traces of sociocultural discourses that are still present in the land. Even if the context of these images is

<sup>25</sup> Emmett Till, a fourteen year-old African American, was brutally murdered on the 24th of August 1955 in Mississippi, United States of America for allegedly flirting with a white woman at a country store. He was kidnapped from his uncle's house by the woman's husband and brother and taken to the Tallahatchie river where he was ordered to take off his clothes and beaten nearly to death on the riverbank. The two assailants gouged his eye out, shot him in the head, tied barbed wire around his neck which they attached to a 70 pound (31.7 kilograms) cotton gin fan to weigh his body down in the river (HISTORY 2019).

unknown to a viewer, the titles of the photographs are enough to create a strong narrative along with the formal qualities of the print. The use of collodion wet plate processing creates deep tones in the shadows, which make the highlights in the prints appear bright.<sup>26</sup> This navigates your viewing experience through the frame. *Bridge on Tallahatchie* does this with its glowing highlights in the foreground drawing your eye to the metallic yet powdery surface of the river's water. The form of the strong reflection of light in the water thins out through the middle ground to the background where the bridge emerges amongst dense forest on either side. The light falling on the water below the bridge creates a thin strip of light that reinforces the structure of the bridge above it. Sarah Greenough writes adeptly on Mann's work, specifically the photographs discussed here, in her essay *Writing with Photographs: Sally Mann's Ode to the South, 1969-2017*. She describes *Bridge on Tallahatchie* as an "odd picture that might grace the walls of the local chamber of commerce" (2018: 42). Greenough goes on to describe the foreground having a "skeletal branch (that) reaches in from the left like the scrawny-fingered hand of death" and the residual chemical

streak "evoking a teardrop moving through the emulsion" (2018:42). This poetic description of Mann's work speaks to the photographic image's ability to render a scene that is "at once ordinary but charged, beautiful but horrific" (2018: 42).

The way that Sally Mann reads the light and then plays with it in these images adds a heightened sense of experience and place. Her work here reinforces the idea that "places and landscapes have served as vehicles for representing the humans past and present who have been indelibly shaped their interactions with and impact upon the land" (Faust 2018: 131). Mann's interest in the history of a place and the power of narrative and metaphor results in powerful images of landscapes that supersede the aesthetic quality they hold. They speak of time and human presence in a poetic way that entices you into a conversation with the scene before you; carrying you from the density of the shadows into the luminescent highlights and silvery tone of objects to tell you the story of the place. Sally Mann's role as a female photographer, working in analogue processes, who explores landscape as a medium through which we can read histories and the affect thereof, informs my work. From both a technical point of view, as well as from a female photographer's point of view, her work empowers me as a female photographer to explore landscape through a female gaze, offering a disparate rendering of South African landscape. Her ability to paint with light and speak of the entanglement of humans and landscape photographically, influences how I read the light falling on the

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<sup>26</sup> The collodion wet plate process was first introduced in 1851 by Englishmen, Frederick Scott Archer, and involves a photographic process where the plate has to stay wet while photographing up until it is developed. The collodion substance, comprised of ether, grain cotton and alcohol, is poured onto a glass or tin plate allowing the silver emulsion to adhere to the surface of the plate. It is then submerged in a bath of silver nitrate, making the plate light sensitive and ready to be exposed (Taubman 2006: 29).

Cederberg terrain; as well as the ways in which a photograph can embody this entanglement. I attempt to capture light that is reminiscent of human presence in landscape, light that illuminates the histories and grain of the landscape.

### 1.6 Reminiscent Light: Intentional Seeing

It is not the forms of the landscape before me that asks me to stop and contemplate it, it is the way the light falls upon it. This is especially true of my photograph *At Sunrise* (Figure 11), the scene that was described in the opening of this chapter. The trees that are illuminated by the morning sun and the texture of the mountains is completely different when the midday sun washes over it. Where the trees appear like luminescent ghosts against the darker foreground of the rooibos crop, at midday I find them lifeless and uninteresting. This film negative was the result of an accumulation of experiences of how light can illuminate places differently in this valley. I had seen this moment too late the previous day and set out the following morning when dawn was breaking with the intention of photographing this moment of light dancing between the trees. I had set up my camera early, wanting to be ready for the fleeting moment where the trees become alive with the glowing silver light that had me mesmerized the first morning. Knowing that this moment is only visible for a few minutes each day creates a sense of reverence for this place. To me, the grain of the image and the various textures it creates emphasizes this reverence for landscape in its ability to render

tones of black and white in such a way that the photograph functions as more than just a capturing of light. It functions as a visual channel, I would argue, through which conversations with landscape can move and converse with other photographs.

My photographs are simultaneously renderings of conversations with landscape and in conversation with those renderings. What I mean by this is that, whilst each photograph is in itself an experience of landscape through an exploration of the grain thereof, it is also in conversation with my other photographs that fill the exhibition space. My prints aim to function in the space as a means by which a conversation and the language of the land can continue. When viewing *At Sunrise* in relation to my glass plates (Figure 12) a conversation between my photographic scapes occurs. Whilst the glass plates allow you to see *through* the grain of the landscape, the grain in *At Sunrise* rests in the weight of the paper, and as such depends on the paper's material form to render grain in a certain way. There is an interplay between these different grains suspended in the sculptural form of *Glass Piece* and the opaque two-dimensional form of my prints hung against the walls. Being able to see through the grain of the landscape (in the glass plates), to the grain of the landscape in the print *At Sunrise*, allows an amalgamation of grains to occur in such a way that new landscapes are forever forming through the viewing experience. The angle at which you look through *Glass Piece* alters the landscape's forms and textures exposed onto the pieces of glass.

The texture of the burnt bushes and gritty rocks shifts with every movement of the body viewing it. It can appear smooth when the soft tones of the mountain in *At Sunrise* are placed behind it, whilst the gritty texture can intensify when viewed in conjunction with the grainy surface of the rooibos crops in the foreground of *At Sunrise*. This interplay between textures and the grain of the landscape speaks to Tilley's notion that "spatial and textural stories are embedded in one another" (1994: 31). Moving through spaces in the Cederberg generates 'spatial stories' that are forms of narrative as a means to understand landscape, in the same way that moving through the exhibition space creates new 'spatial stories' (Tilley 1994:28). These 'spatial stories' that are formed through movement and rendered in my photographs and soundscape are reshaped and reformed when the viewer walks through the exhibition space and views the work. The different places photographed in my work, and thus the different textures of place, begins to speak to one another in the exhibition space; as Tilley states: "places are always 'read' or understood in relation to others" (1994: 27). The various choices of scale in my prints and the different materials they are printed on inevitably informs the manner in which they are read in relation to one another.

The different surfaces onto which I print my photographs, namely glass, light sensitive photographic paper and Calisto Satin paper, renders landscape differently and in doing so creates a varying viewing experience of the grain of the photograph.

The scale at which my photographs are printed onto these different surfaces in relation to one another is another crucial aspect to the manner in which they begin to speak to one another. There is an interplay between the larger glass installation (that is suspended in such a way that you can move around it) and the smaller glass pieces (that are fragments from a negative). The smooth and transparent surface of the glass plates creates a broken photograph of landscape that attempts to evade a viewing experience that is harmonious. In the same way that conversations with landscape can be disharmonious, the viewing experience of the works on glass is too. The different-sized glass pieces, each revealing a segment of the photograph, speaks to the grain of the photograph in such a way that it attempts to challenge the ideologies surrounding landscape. In making the sculptural glass works, I attempt to convey the fragility of landscape in South Africa as a cultural medium through which power is exerted. This is important given the fact that the specific landscape I am investigating, namely that of the rooibos biome in the Cederberg, is loaded with an historical legacy of fragmentation and disempowerment, as noted in Chapter 1.2 *The Invisible Presence of Whiteness*. Inasmuch as this landscape is experienced as fractured by some human subjects, I wish to give some sense as to how such fragmentation can be visually imagined.

Glass is fragile in nature and can chip and crack if the slightest pressure is placed onto it incorrectly. Having each individual

piece suspended to create a 'whole' image, in such a way that you can walk around it and look through it to my prints on the wall, attempts to speak of the shifting nature of landscape. The different surfaces onto which I print my photographs, namely glass, light sensitive photographic paper and Calisto Satin paper, renders landscape differently and in doing so creates a varying viewing experience of the grain of the photograph. The way the light falls and fills the space changes the way the plates are read and as such are never static renderings of landscape, but rather renderings that transform landscape with each viewing experience and change of light. This continuous changing of landscape in the viewing experience supports Tilley's view that "landscape is a particular way of seeing" (1994: 24). The fragile and elusive images printed onto the glass pieces begins to disembody the landscape and in doing so begins to converse with the landscape that is embodied in my photographs printed on paper. There is an interplay between the ghostly grain in the glass and the solidified grain of the paper prints. They speak to the patina of place as individual moments of an experience of landscape; where the concept of patina stems from an understanding of it as an impression or appearance that delineates the effect of time on landscape. I unpack this notion further as a concept which gestures towards visual remnants that signify the passing of time and how the effect of that passage materializes on the surface of objects and terrains. It is the history of entanglement revealing itself through the surface of a terrain, where visual traces are revealed.

through which we can access the grain of the landscape. In the same way you cannot hold a landscape in your hands and analyse it as a whole entity, the fragmented glass plates held in your hands deny you to view landscape as an entity, which you can frame and contain. They allow you to hold a shard of landscape in your hands, where the grain of the image traces the affects of human presence in the Cederberg region.

### 1.7 Conclusion

The idea of *conversational light* was used to discuss the conversation that occurs between my photographs on the different materials I printed on, as well as the manner in which I engage with landscape as a live sculptural form. The ghostly grain of the glass and the grain in the photographs printed on paper begin to form new landscapes through the viewing experience. The element of sound in this study is crucial to the experience of landscape and the manner in which I photographed and rendered landscape in the Cederberg; and as such will be discussed in the following chapter: *The Grain of the Voice*.

# CHAPTER TWO

## THE GRAIN OF THE VOICE: A SOUND ‘SCAPE’

All around me sound waves emanate from the landscape. Collective reverberations charge the soil, the rocks and the plant life with subtle vibrations that interweave into a soundscape. There is a constant inundation of sounds that flow away from their sources and bounce off other resonances within the Biedouw Valley that I am embedded in.<sup>27</sup> A landscape of sound wraps itself around me with moments of subdued tones made discernible by gentle ripples of sonic waves, fading in and out, leaving behind impressionable traces of an immersive bodily experience. This occurrence between self, sound and my camera as I walk through the landscape of the Cederberg region, as an ingrained act by which to navigate and map space, I argue is responsible for the creation of place.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> As referred to earlier under *Key Terms* (iv.) in my introduction on pages 9-10.

<sup>28</sup> Space here is understood as an abstract notion that is not yet defined, which through the act of dwelling, experience and embeddedness becomes place; this is elaborated on further throughout this chapter.

In this chapter I approach the landscape as more than just a physical entity through which I walk and map by means of recording sounds and photographing. I approach it as an entity which has a voice of its own. The landscape generates and carries sounds, which act as traces, allowing us to access place through an auditory dimension. In conjunction with an investigation into the sounds generated by the landscape a focus is also placed on the role of the human body in creating sounds in landscape. I look at how sound is not only perceived by the human body but also generated in its movement through a given space. It is through this sonic experience of landscape that the grain of the voice is explored. When speaking of voice I refer to both the human voice, as recorded in the various conversations had with persons, as well as the metaphorical voice of the landscape, heard in the sounds emitted from the landscape. With regards to grain I specifically refer to both the timber of the voice as well as the ideologies surrounding landscape, sound and photography. According to Dewsbury and Cloke, landscape encapsulates “embodied practices of being in the world, including ways of seeing but

extending beyond sight to both a sense of being that includes all senses and an openness to being affected" (2009: 696). This chapter seeks to extend beyond the sense of sight to explore how sound recordings and conversations act as traces through which I access another dimension of experience of the Cederberg landscape.<sup>29</sup> Emily Thompson's concept of a soundscape is employed in this study, as she speaks of this concept as "an auditory or aural landscape, which like a landscape is simultaneously a physical environment and a way of perceiving that environment; it is both a world and culture constructed to make sense of that world" (2002:1). The perceiving of environment, where the bodily experience is where perception occurs, allows for an investigation to take place into the different textures and shapes that sounds reveal.

This speaks to Roland Barthes' idea of the grain of the voice, where the grain refers to both the timbre of the voice and the ideologies surrounding landscape, photography and soundscapes (2009). Barthes uses the notion of the grain in his essay, *The Grain of the Voice*, to expand on the idea of the timbre found in voice, specifically in the singing voice; he employs this concept to speak to the "materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue" (2009: 270). He makes use of this concept

in such a way that it gestures towards the twofold dimension of voice: what you hear (the timbre) and what is being said (the grain). I expand on Barthes' understanding of the grain to speak of the twofold aspect of the grain in relation to my study; to unpack both the surface level of the grain, what is being heard and seen on a 'superficial' level, and that what is being communicated through the heard and seen component of my prints and sound installation. The notion of the grain denotes the timely experience of landscape and the effect of the passage of time in creating my final works. It allows a visual and audio analysis to transpire where the textures, shapes and forms are analysed in conjunction with the ideologies surrounding my visual and audio work. This experiential component of my work inherently looks at phenomenology in relation to landscape.

A phenomenological approach to landscape is drawn on in this chapter, where "phenomenology involves the understanding and description of things as they are experienced by the subject" (Tilley 1994: 12). More specifically, I draw on French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's view that the "human body provides the fundamental mediation point between thought and the world, in which the world and the subject reflect and flow into each other through the body that provides the living bond with the world" (Tilley 1994: 14). It is my bodily connection and embeddedness in space that allows the act of walking and listening to take form. The creation of place is aided by this entwined act of walking and listening.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Where the previous chapter focused on the sense of sight rendered in my photographic prints, this chapter seeks to focus on the sense of sound as a means to expand on the experience of landscape.

Tim Cresswell's understanding of place as "a meaningful site that combines location, locale and a sense of place" (2009: 1) is employed to unpack the mapping of sound in terms of the significance of various locations be it independently or in relation to one another.<sup>31</sup>

This chapter unpacks ideas surrounding an auditory experience of landscape by firstly looking at *My Body as the Site of Interchange* (Chapter 2.1) where both a visual and an audio experience take place.<sup>32</sup> This stems from Christopher Tilley's understanding in his book, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments*, that "the body constitutes a way of relating to, perceiving and understanding the world" (1994:14). The role of *Bodily Perception* (Chapter 2.1.1) and *Embodiment and Habit* (Chapter 2.1.2) is discussed in relation to my experience of landscape and how it informs the manner in which I collect sounds and photograph.

<sup>30</sup> The role of walking in relation to my practice is unpacked further in Chapter 3.

<sup>31</sup> For example, one of my conversations with Annette, an elderly women living on Elandsberg farm outside of Clanwilliam, in the winter of 2017 took place inside a sand cave which she had been visiting since she was a child; where other recordings were made by placing a device at a spot a 80 footsteps from the foot of my tent heading north.

<sup>32</sup> Even though the body's senses of smell, touch and taste influence my experience of the landscape, it is the link between sight and my photographs, and hearing and my sound installation that are explored and focused on in my practical work's final outcome.

Following this, the two recording devices I employed in my practice are analysed with regards to their role in collecting sounds in *Listening Devices: A Means to Decipher Surroundings* (Chapter 2.2). I look specifically at their different recording abilities, as the *Zoom hand recorder* is limited in only recording airborne sound waves, whereas the *contact microphone* is only able to record sound waves that travel through objects. I term these two devices, *listening devices* and unpack the notion of listening as a means of actively engaging with the world through an auditory dimension. I investigate the role of these listening devices in relation to my sound installation and the manner in which they expand on my experience of landscape. Following this discussion, I investigate two sound installations by Dutch multimedia artist, Lotte Geeven, in *The Singing Grains of Sand* (Chapter 2.3). Her two sound installations *The Sound of the Earth* (2013), where she records sounds from one of the deepest holes in the Earth, and *Singing Sand* (2019), where she records the sound of sand shifting down dunes in various remote locations around the world, push the boundaries of conventional representations of landscape.

It is from this investigation of sound, in relation to rendering *textures of place*, that I end the chapter by looking at *A Land of Sonic Textures* (Chapter 2.4). In this final subchapter I analyse the various textures found in the grain of the voice in terms of both the timber found in human voice and the grain found in the voice of the landscape. The significance of places in

my work, and the experiences found therein, is understood through my body by means of a *bodily experience*; it is the motion of my feet meeting the earth and pushing off again in a given direction, or lying in the sand in-between rooibos crops in unity with the horizontal orientation of landscape that allowed the experience of a sonic landscape to exist. It is also the site where conversations occur with other bodies that experience place(s) differently to me. These experiences resonate with Ingold's understanding of a phenomenological approach to landscape, which prompts an "awareness of how people are forever moving in and through landscapes, but also how the landscape itself is simultaneously on the move" (2010: 5).

## 2.1 My Body as a Site of Interchange

The human body is entrenched in landscape, where landscape is in the constant motion of reshaping and forming itself. Benediktsson and Lund speak of this idea in saying that we, as humans, are "tangled up with the *temporalities* of constantly unfolding landscapes" (2010:6). This temporality is rendered in the temporality of sound and its impalpable state; as Voegelin states, "the spectre of sound unsettles the idea of visual stability and involves us as listeners in the production of an invisible world" (2011: 12). In the same way that we cannot hold and study a landscape in our hands, we cannot hold a sound in our hands. This is also true of an experience of landscape through the human body. The body brings sound into effect by means

of its movement through a scape of sound and its awareness of the exchange that results from this. The flux of voices, sounds and reverberations in relation to the human body in landscape here aids the experience of spaces evolving into *places*. Brandon Labelle notions towards this idea in saying that "a place is generated by the temporality of the auditory" (2010: xvi). Hence, what is essential to this experience of 'unfolding' soundscapes and landscapes is the human body as the site where the grain of sounds is materialised. Thus, the body is a tangible essence which structures experience that are often intangible in nature.

The position of my body within a given landscape is essential to the kind of understanding and experience that is brought about when I move through a landscape. It is noted here again that human presence makes landscape, in its absence the language of the land ceases to exist making what is represented merely a geographical area.<sup>33</sup> It appears obvious but it is the presence of my human body walking through the Cederberg terrain that allows for a phenomenological understanding of landscape to occur. The human body, and more specifically my body, lies at the crux of the embedded experiences of

<sup>33</sup> As stated in my introduction, landscape is a culturally created concept due to the secondary representation we impose on it, such as the paintings, songs, poems, photographs etc. we create in an attempt to render a specific experience of landscape. Human presence is undeniably at the crux of the culturally created concept of landscape and as such is inextricably linked to it.

landscape. In speaking about a phenomenological approach to landscape the importance of habit, embodiment and bodily perception are addressed in the next section to understand how bodily awareness informs the manner in which I collect sounds, map them and finally create a sound installation.

### 2.1.1 Bodily Perception

Merleau-Ponty's writings on bodily perception offer insight into the use of my body to navigate space and make sense of my surroundings. His concept of 'bodily perception' points towards the idea that our perception of the world is a bodily phenomena, in that the orientation of our bodies to the world is inextricably linked to our perception of it, which looks at humans as *embodied perceivers*. In his book, Merleau-Ponty, Taylor Carman's discusses this bodily phenomena of perception in saying that "we experience our own sensory states not as mere states of mind, but as states of our bodies" (2008: 80). He calls this "the bodily point of view" and expands on it by stressing the importance of abandoning an understanding of our bodies as machines or objects for an understanding of the body as an "embeddedness in and direction toward the world" (Carman 2008: 92). Our embeddedness in the world, and understanding of our bodies being in constant engagement with it by means of our direction towards it, is drawn on when I collect sounds in the landscape. My body brings the sounds in the landscape into focus by means of my perception towards

it. As Merleau-Ponty states: "I am aware of my body via the world just as I am aware of the world through the medium of my body" (as quoted in Carman 2008: 107). This bodily awareness derives from a perceptual consciousness and allows an experience of space to occur that is grounded in the body.

Perceptual consciousness is understood by Tilley as "not just a matter of thought about the world, but stems from the bodily presence and bodily orientation in relation to it, *bodily awareness*" (1994: 14). He argues that the ability of the body to move in different ways and to perceive is what allows for the experience of space to occur; it is in the human body that the experience of landscape is grounded (Tilley 1994: 16). This phenomenological approach to the moving body through landscape is adopted in this study and is seen in my sound installation. It is a mapping of sounds collected over a period of two and a half years in various locations; which aims to speak simultaneously of the experience of my walking body and its ability to utilise the sense of sound in such a way that I am able to render it into an intangible form of experience: my sound installation.

Before I move on to discuss the phenomenological approach I adopt in my practice and the sounds I employ in my practice, I will first give a brief overview of my sound installation in relation to the concept of a soundscape. My sound installation stems from various soundscapes I experienced in the Cederberg. As mentioned on page 35 in my discussion of Emily Thompson's

definition of a soundscape, it is a way of perceiving an environment through the sound components of that environment (2002: 1). Hence, the sounds that were recorded and fill the exhibition space, in my sound installation, originate from soundscapes I experienced in the various locations of the Cederberg area. Each sound stems from a different geographical point in the Cederberg and as such creates an intangible map; where the map is comprised of sound waves, which represent various locations, instead of the conventional mode of mapping which represents geographical features visually.

The main sound installation, *Wait Until You See* (2019), is comprised of an array of speakers in a confined room where all light has been blocked. I place the speakers at different points and heights in the room in such a way that the viewer becomes immersed in a soundscape. My soundscape consists of an array of sounds, ranging from: sounds of water (Sound 1), the echo of bird calls against a corrugated iron roof (Sound 2), my feet rhythmically moving through different terrain (Sounds 3 and 4), human voices (Sound 5) and sounds recorded by the contact microphone buried underground (Sound 6) or submerged in water (Sound 7). The sounds are played intermittently and at different volumes to create an aural experience that envelops the viewer. The soundscape is accompanied by a projection of one of my negatives on the back wall, where the light is adjusted in such a way that there appears to be no image at first, however, as your eyes begin to adjust the details in the negative

become more and more apparent. The abstraction of space that occurs in my sound installation stems from the different experiences of sound in various locations I found myself in.<sup>34</sup>

For example, there is the sound of water flowing through a river bed in the Biedouw Valley which is layered over the sound of me walking over a rocky track 100km away from the river (Sound 8). The different sounds with their various frequency levels signify an abstract idea of space; in that the highest frequency to the lowest frequency contains a space between them, filled with other varied frequencies. My prints hint at this notion of abstract space in my sound installation, as the visual components of the landscape seem to want to anchor certain sounds to locations in prints. Such as the *River Shadow* (Figure 7) scene of a riverbed where water is seen flowing in the bottom of the frame, to the sound of water in my sound installation (Sound 9). However, no sound recordings were made at this specific location.

These spaces between sounds in my installation aim to speak of my bodily experience of different places that involved a motion through space, which resulted in me arriving at a point where the space I was dwelling within became *place*. This motion through space, and the accumulation of time

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<sup>34</sup> I discuss my sound installation in further detail in my Chapter 3, under the subchapter *Wait Until You See*.

that is involved in space becoming place, is rendered in my photographic images, where a type of congealment of places is referenced. Cresswell's understanding that "experience is at the heart of what place means" supports humanist geographers new notion on place that "we, as humans, are in-the-world — how we relate to our environment and make it place" (2009: 2,4). This epitomises the phenomenological approach I take to landscape, where the different experiences I have emanate from my bodily awareness of the environment I am embedded in. The difference between space and place here in relation to landscape phenomenology and the body can be understood by looking at current humanist geographers' understanding: while space is abstract, place is where the world is felt and experienced (Cresswell 2009: 4). The experience of the world by a subject can be analysed by looking at the idea of embodiment.

### 2.1.2 Embodiment and Habit

The concept of embodiment and habit in relation to a phenomenological approach to landscape and the human body are intertwined when speaking about the experience of the world by a subject. Patricia eMoya reviews and expands on Merleau-Ponty's Embodiment Theory, and the role that habit plays in understanding the world around us, in her article *Habit and Embodiment in Merleau-Ponty* (2014). The theory explores bodily conduct and intellectual conduct as being in unity with another, which results in the body becoming a form of embodied

consciousness (eMoya 2014). Merleau-Ponty uses terms such as the *lived* body to explain how it relates to *lived* space; it is through this relation, according to eMoya, that we see "habit bearing a direct relation to the form of dialog between environment and subject" (2014: 2). The importance of this theory to my research lies in the concept of the body being in conversation with the environment around it through actions such as walking (which, when often repeated, can become a habit or ritual of sorts).

Habitual movements through landscape create place, where places are not static and fixed but can rather be seen as constantly being reshaped by ideas, people and narratives. These habitual movements by the human body through landscape play a fundamental role in the experience of landscape; as Joyce Brodsky says, "experience is the result, the sign, and the reward of the interaction between organism and environment", which she understands to transform "interaction into participation and communication" (2002: 104). The conversations that occurred between the landscape and myself, and between myself and others, involved a bodily awareness, which revealed textures present in the grain of the voice. Whilst my body is the site of interchange, where self, surroundings and others are negotiated, it is the listening devices I utilise, which allow an expansion on the act of investigating traces to occur; in such a way that the grain of the landscape can be rendered in my exhibition space. The two listening devices, namely the Zoom hand recorder and the contact microphone, function in the same way my

camera does in representing my investigation into landscape, in that my camera is the visual apparatus which renders my investigation that depends on *sight*, while the listening devices are the means by which I render an *aural* experience of landscape that stems from *listening*. These listening devices act as aids through which I can relay the experience my body had when interacting with the physical grain of the landscape.

## 2.2. Listening Devices: A Means to Decipher Surroundings

The two recording devices I employed to record the grain of the voice enabled me to create a sound installation, which navigates the viewer through an auditory experience of landscape by means of mapping sounds. I term these *listening devices*, as they allowed me to collect an array of sounds, some of which the human ear is unable to hear, as well as sounds that speak of the textures of place.<sup>35</sup> I utilised three different types of listening devices to capture sounds and the conversations had with persons: namely a contact microphone, a Zoom hand recorder and my smartphone's built-in recorder. Each of these offered different auditory experiences of landscape, allowing an extension to occur beyond the visual ideologies, or grain, of landscape; as Voegelin states, "the spectre of

sound unsettles the idea of visual stability and involves us as listeners in the production of an invisible world" (2011: 12). Her notion that "sound invites the body into experience" is seen in the manner in which I activate sound in my practice as a means to enhance and expand on the visual traces found in my prints (2011: 14). This invitation into experiencing through sound, I would argue, is achieved through listening.

Listening is described by Voegelin as an activity and as a means through which we engage with the world (2011:3). It is important to note that listening is different to hearing, insofar as listening is a conscious act by which we use our bodies' hearing apparatus to move through spatial structures and in doing feel the textures therein (Voegelin 2011). These listening devices became an extension of my body through which I could actively interact with the land through the act of listening. In her chapter, *Listening*, Voegelin explores the idea that "listening discovers and generates the heard", and in doing so creates a "sonic life-world that we inhabit" (2011: 4&11). It is through a form of active listening, where I am highly aware of my surroundings through sounds guiding me and drawing my attention to the visual landforms, that I record and map the places I walk through. This listening does not begin and end when immersed in the physicality of the landscape; it continues when I play the recordings back to myself through my headphones, when I go through the process of selecting sounds that map these places I experienced and finally when the various sounds fill the

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<sup>35</sup> I discuss my sound installation in further detail in my Chapter 3, under the subchapter *Wait Until You See*.

exhibition space. It is through the practice of listening that an auditory experience of landscape could be rendered in my sound installation. As Voegelin states, “the auditory is generated in the listening practice: in listening I am in sound” (2011: 5). This idea of being *in* sound through the habit of listening is reflected in my phenomenological approach to landscape, where through the mode of walking I am *in* the landscape. The listening practice I adopted saw sounds first reaching my ears, which resulted in the listening devices being used to render this auditory experience. The first listening device is the Zoom hand recorder.

### 2.2.1. Sound Waves Moving through the Landscape: The Zoom Hand Recorder

The Zoom Recorder was the main listening device I employed when recording conversations with persons or capturing sounds emanating from the landscape. This recorder, with a zeppelin placed over the recording prongs, allowed for a greater range of sound frequencies to be recorded, as well as the ability to focus on a specific frequency.<sup>36</sup> In the same way different apertures, shutter speeds and film speeds render different textures, the Zoom hand recorder allows a focus to placed different frequencies that speak to the grain of the

landscape. Furthering the idea that my sound installation is able to expand the visual experience of landscape, rendered in my prints. This listening device’s ability to only capture airborne sound waves, and thus sounds moving through the landscape, allows for one acoustic dimension of landscape to be recorded, whilst the contact microphone is limited to recording sound waves that move within the landscape.

### 2.2.2. Sound Waves Moving within the Landscape: The Contact Microphone

The second listening device, the contact microphone, is physically placed onto an object or buried deep within the ground to record sounds reverberating through an object. This is done through a piezo disc, which is roughly the size of a five rand coin and three millimeters thin, which is smoldered onto wires allowing sounds to be collected through the piezo disc’s surface.<sup>37</sup> While a contact microphone has the limitation of not being able to pick up airborne sonic waves, but rather reverberated sounds that cannot be heard by the human ear, this device allowed me to expand upon the aural experience of the landscape, insofar as I could record sounds which travelled within the earth. The contact microphone opens up a channel of interaction that

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<sup>36</sup> The zeppelin is placed over the recorder’s prongs to reduce the obstruction of sound by wind.

<sup>37</sup> Musicians typically use piezo discs on a string instrument (such as a guitar or violin) or pick up the vibrations running through it.

conveys the inception of the grain of the landscape. What is heard above the surface and falls on human ears, could be said to be the accumulative result of the inaudible sound waves moving beneath the surface. This listening device, allows me to render sonic waves that otherwise would go unnoticed.

A whole network of sound is unearthed through this device's ability to render hearable the sounds that move beneath the ground's surface, or sounds that move through objects (like rocks, plants and sand) in a given environment. I place this device on various surfaces, buried deep beneath the ground to gather emanations of the land and placed within bodies of water (such as rivers and dams). Voegelin's view that the "listener is entwined with the heard" and that it is from this bond that their sense of the world is constituted, is seen in this listening device's capacity to capture sonic waves that we cannot normally hear, yet these waves make up a complex layer of the sonic landscape that we have at our feet (2011: 5). The contact microphone's placement next to a river underground is juxtaposed against the placement of it buried atop a mountain in my installation. The distance between locations, whether great or minimal, traced sound waves into a map (rendered in my sound installation), in an attempt to render a topography of an embedded auditory experience. Voegelin's states that "there is no place where one is not simultaneous with the heard", as "however far from its source, sound sits in one's ear", supporting my investigation into how sound can speak of the textures of places (2011: xii).

Furthermore, it speaks of how my various sounds are entangled with my prints, as both speak of an experience of place through my body and how these experiences are entangled with the landscape. These experiences of the landscape, however, are not always harmonious and seemingly serene, which is signified in the frequency that the contact microphone records.

The frequency at which some of these sounds are emitted from a given location do not fall delicately on the ear. Their range in frequency and the manner in which the sound vibrations gather through the microphone into a speaker causes your skin to rise and, in my experience, places the listener on edge. When first hearing the sound, a scene or object does not come to mind. It is an emotive experience, which does not allow you to pinpoint the sound or make sense of it in a visual realm, but rather allows you to listen to the current of sonic waves pulsating through the earth. These vibrations signify a flow of energy that we unconsciously respond to; an aural experience, which envelops your body through the contact of skin with earth or an object in a landscape.

Voegelin's view that sound unsettles the idea of visual stability, spoken of earlier, can be seen when viewing my prints *You've Heard these Sounds Before i* (Figure 13) and *ii* (Figure 14) and listening to certain sounds in the installation where the contact microphone recordings play, such as Sound 10. The grainy and blurry texture of the print and the composition of the riverside make it such that the viewer cannot really

decipher the scene before them, in the same way they cannot pinpoint the sounds of the contact microphone to a tangible source. The blurry graininess plays with your eyes' focus and in doing so creates a viewing experience that does not give you a framed landscape you can decipher but rather gives you traces of it. Some of the sound waves that the contact microphone records, such as Sound 10, could be argued to be disharmonious. They speak to the twofold notion of the grain I explore in my practice. Whilst the contact recordings potentially cause a shift in experience of landscape (in that they generate sounds that are not typically associated with certain objects or movements), other segments of the sound installation ease us into a movement of sound that is mellifluous, such as the gentle sound of water moving along a riverbank (Sound 11).

The dominant auditory perception of landscape is painted as a harmonious experience, which is imbued with a rhythmic 'chanting' of land. The sound of wind moving through grass and trees, the buzzing of insects, the flow of water and bird calls seem to occupy representations of natural landscape.<sup>38</sup> Sauer speaks of this representation of landscape in saying that "landscape was up until the 1980s usually understood in fairly straightforward objectivist terms as a silent and passive

surface of forms sculpted by the historical efforts of nature and humans" (1996: 5). A focus is placed on the absence of human presence in these representations and as such, creates a scene of landscape which draws a veil over the cultural, historical and social context out of which landscape emerges.

Whilst my photographs are absent of human bodies, the traces of their presence can be found in both the photographic prints and their voices in the sound installation. This can be seen prints such as *Swemklere* (Figure 15), where the swimming clothes left hanging on the branches of a tree to dry, act as a trace of human presence in the landscape.<sup>39</sup> I would argue that the two listening devices employed in the exploration of sound in space in the Cederberg challenge the perspective of landscape as genre; which sees the landscape as a backdrop to daily activities that can be confined and encompassed in a frame, and in doing so rather investigates the landscape as medium. A medium through which we read and listen to narratives embedded within land, which are revealed through both the spatiality of sound and my prints. The two listening devices allowed me to render sound in such a way that I could create a soundscape, which envelops the viewer in my sound

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<sup>38</sup> Natural landscape here refers to the romanticised representation of landscape that appears to be devoid of human intervention and the ideologies that create it.

<sup>39</sup> This title is in Afrikaans and translates to 'swimming clothes'. I use Afrikaans titles for three of my works, which is influenced from my childhood upbringing in an Afrikaans household. The two other works are translated and discussed on page 56.

installation in such a way a land of sonic textures is experienced.

### 2.3. The Singing Grains of Sand

Lotte Geeven is a Dutch multimedia artist who creates sound installations that investigate sonic phenomena in relation to the site they originate from. Geeven's two projects, *The Sounds of the Earth* (2013) (Sound 12) and *Singing Sand* (2019) (Sounds 13, 14 and 15) will be discussed, in relation to my work's investigation into the ability of sound to render an experience of a soundscape that signifies the enigma of landscape. Geeven's interest in creating site-specific installations, which are amalgamations of sound, sculpture, photography, render a portrait of place. She investigates the relationship between identity and place and is interested in the way we shape and perceive our world (Geeven 2013). Her sound installation, *The Sounds of the Earth* (2013), investigates the manner in which we perceive the world, as it involved Geeven travelling to the Czech Republic/German border to record sounds at the bottom of the deepest hole in the Earth (Prudence 2014).

This borehole, called the KTP super-deep borehole, is nearly nine kilometers deep and as such descends "through the lithosphere into geological strata where two landmasses merged over 300 million years ago to form the supercontinent Pangea" (Prudence 2014). Due to the distance being so great, standard microphones were not an option; and as such, "sonic transducer

data and geophone recordings were analysed and remapped into audio frequencies by software" made specifically for this task (Prudence 2014). This transcribing of sonic information to create Sound 12 is interesting when compared to the recordings made by the contact microphone in my study (Sound 10). In the same way you cannot visually identify what generates the sounds in my contact recordings, you cannot recognise what causes the sounds recorded in the geological strata. What is meant by this is when you hear certain sounds, such as the sound of a water droplet falling into a larger body of water (Sound 16), you can identify the sound as such and conjure a visual of it.

Whereas in Geeven's sound installations and my contact microphone recordings the source of the sound is indistinguishable. The indiscernible nature of these sounds offers a disparate perspective on the medium of landscape and emphasises this thesis' notion of landscape as a live sculptural form. Geeven's use of a seismograph creates a visual representation depicting the range of frequencies found in the recording (Figure 16).<sup>40</sup> The juxtaposition of the seismograph weaving fine ink threads with the sound playing creates a viewing experience that involves both listening and sight to engage with it fully. The isolation of the seismograph in the exhibition space, as seen in Figure 17, allows the audio

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<sup>40</sup> A seismograph is used to measure and record the details of earth quakes.

component of the installation to fill the space to such an extent that it becomes the main component of the work. The audio frequency at which *The Sounds of the Earth* (2013) was recorded, and the manner in which Geeven captured the sound, differs from the process that resulted in *Singing Sand* (2019).

*Singing Sand* is a project that Geeven is currently working on, which investigates the sonic phenomenon of singing sand that only occurs in remote locations around the world, more specifically locations in deserts. Her project looks at what is called acoustic sand, where the shifting of grains of sand down dunes generate sounds that hum, buzz and cause vibrations reminiscent of bees buzzing or the deep sounds of a didgeridoo (Voon 2017). I have made a selection of three sounds of singing sand from locations in Oman, Kazakhstan and Namibia, as she currently has recordings of singing sand in twelve locations. The selection made for this analysis can be heard in Sounds 13, 14, 15 respectively. The current representation of the locations and sounds on her website, in conjunction with her diagrams for the sound machines (seen in Figures 18 and 19), is worth mentioning; as she makes use of an aerial photograph of the location, with the name of the closest town and country of the location at the bottom of the photograph and the geographical coordinates of the site where the sand was collected (as seen in Figure 20).<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The website can be accessed at [www.singingsand.org](http://www.singingsand.org).

To access the sound of the singing sand in a given location you have to click on the coordinates above the aerial photograph. The experience of listening to the sounds generated by moving grains of sand, in conjunction with delineated co-ordinates and an aerial photograph of the remote locations, offers a different and captivating perspective on these places. You are simultaneously pulled so deep into the grain of the landscape through the immersion in an aural symphony of shifting sand, whilst being made highly aware through the aerial photograph that your current geographical location denies you to fully comprehend the grain of the landscape you are hearing. The shift in frequency between these different locations of singing sand emphasises furthermore the ability of sound to speak to the patina of place.

The notion that the physical grains of sand can signify and speak to the site-specificity of place through sound exemplifies my practice's investigation into the grain of the landscape. The exploration of singing sand in Geeven's sound project speaks to the notion of the grain I am investigating in this thesis and the ability of sound to weave a land of sonic textures.

#### 2.4. A Land of Sonic Textures

The rhythmic sound of my feet meeting the earth and embossing themselves within the sand, maneuvering over rocks and shrubs creating different traces in the terrain, leaves behind the presence of my dwelling.

Shifts in texture can be heard underneath the weight of my body: from walking through silky sand that reveals a degeneration of what once was greater pieces of rock, to the crunch of contact with shrubs, whose leave are so dry they disseminate into fragments that disperse with the wind. The sound my body creates by brushing against shrubs and soft rooibos needles is one of the many moments recorded to create a map that is derived from a lived sonic environment. In their book *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies*, Adams, Hoelscher and Till explore the notion that textures of place "refers not only to surfaces, processes, and structures but also to communication acts and the multiple contexts that create and are constituted by place" (2001: xiv). In the same way that the textures of place can be seen in my photographic prints, they can be heard and felt in the sounds mapped in my sound installation. The textures of place here speaks of the ability to feel a place through its surfaces, shapes and forms; as Adams, Hoelscher and Till state, "places can be felt like the weave of a cloth" and how we are a part and parcel of that weave (2001: xxvii).

Textures of the landscape rendered and felt through an immersion in my sound recordings, which, when combined with viewing the photographic prints, attempts to create a viewing experience that challenges that viewer to that which has *not* been heard or seen. This is done through the approach of representing locations that speak to the patina of place in both my prints and sounds; as a place is equally dependent on traces of presence

that speaks of past experiences. Tilley speaks of "geographical experience beginning in places, reaching out to others through spaces, and creating landscapes or regions for human existence" (1994: 15). The absence of the human body in the prints in relation to their voices echoing in the exhibition space speaks to Labelle's concept of "the echo turning sound into sculpture, making material and dimensional its reverberating presence" (2010: 7). The echo of these voices present in the landscape, yet absence within the capturing of it photographically, brings the original event back as a reshaped and refocused essence. The texture that the sound of an echo signifies speaks to this reverberation that human presence has within landscape. It creates different layers of textures in its movement from its origin to a horizon; perpetuating sound waves and expanding them to the point where they disrupt the linear relation of origin to object.<sup>42</sup> The trace that an echo creates becomes suspended within the ambience of the sounds filling the exhibition space and in its suspension creating places that speak of different textures.

These places signify a textured landscape that speaks of a duality of terrain that is simultaneously rough and smooth. The literal use of grain found in a film's emulsion and translated when hand printing a photograph can be applied here: in that a fine grain translated within a photographic print renders

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<sup>42</sup> Object here being the recordings taken through the various microphones.

a smooth surface, whilst a larger grain in the film emulsion renders a texture of grittiness. These textures (or grains) also speak of the ideologies ingrained in landscape, landscape as a “material ‘means’ like language or paint, embedded in a tradition of cultural signification and communication, a body of symbolic forms, capable of being invoked and reshaped to express meanings and values” (Mitchell 1994: 14). Mitchell’s understanding of landscape as being a semiotic structure exemplifies the significant metaphorical value of textures found in sound renderings, more specifically the different grains in the spoken word of persons. The difference in grain I found in my conversations with persons divulged their sense of place and the vast scope of narratives at play in this region. Sound is used as a means to locate, to orientate ourselves in an environment, however, it simultaneously denies us to understand it using the language of space (Connor 2005: 134).

Steven Connor references to the texture of sound in his analysis of it not providing the contour of things, such as their position, form and size. He goes on to say it rather gives us “the sense of their quality and relationship to us: their texture, density, resistance, porosity, wetness and absorptiveness” (2005: 133). The relationship of sounds to us and their sense of quality spoken of here is crucial to the manner in which sound is approached when dwelling in a given space, as well as the textures these sounds convey. The exchange that occurs between self and sound depends on their intangible quality.

We cannot hold a sound in our hands that represents the smooth texture of marble, but I argue that we can experience the grain of it through listening. Connor’s description of the different qualities of sound as being wet, porous, absorptive and differing in density speaks to the spatiality and movement of sound. Of how sound has the ability to permeate space: it can roll down a cliff and flow into a valley where it branches out and floods pockets and crevices, weaving a blanket out of sonic waves that collects threads of sound along the way. The weaving of sounds in the exhibition space, as a means to speak of the patina of place, emphasises Adams, Hoelscher and Tills’ understanding that “the shape, feel and texture of a place each provides a glimpse into the processes, structures, spaces and histories that went into its making” (2001: xii). To speak of the duality of the textures of place explored in my work I will discuss my print *The Day the Rain Came* (Figure 21) in relation to specific sound recordings of water.

When viewing *The Day the Rain Came* (Figure 21), where the soft mist envelopes the mountain with rooibos crops at its feet bordered off by a line of shrubs and trees, the grain of the image is entangled with the grain of the voices in the sound installation. To elaborate on this I wish to discuss the sound recorded underwater (Sound 7) and the sensation of sight when engulfed by mist. The sound the contact microphone collected when placed under water in the river is soft and almost out of focus, as if cotton was placed in your ears; whilst the sensation of

sight when enveloped in mist resembles that of having a blanket thrown over your head and being able peek through the gaps of the woven threads to make out what is in front of you. In the same way your sight is out of focus and obscured, your hearing is too. I would argue that in viewing this print in conjunction with sounds of the movement of embodied water woven into it, expands on the visual experience of viewing the work. In doing so, it supports Voegelin's notion that "sound fleshes out the visual and renders it real" (2011: xi). The sound of water here begins to 'flesh out' the experience of viewing a print that captures soft rain enveloping a landscape, where the visual texture of misty rain that is seen, is also felt through the act of listening to the texture of water filling in your ears. The variety of textures, shapes and forms found in *The Day the Rain Came* could be said to be in conversation with those found in the exhibition space. The sense of quality revealed in sound (that Connor speaks of) can be seen in the wet, absorptive, porous, dense and light qualities that are evident in the visual aspect of my prints.

## 2.5. Conclusion

In looking at the *My Body as the Site of Interchange* (Chapter 2.1), *Listening Devices as a Means to Decipher Surroundings* (Chapter 2.2), *The Singing Grains of Sand* (Chapter 2.3) and *A Land of Sonic Textures* (Chapter 2.4), I investigated the sonic phenomena of landscape. Sound has the ability to expand the visual and in doing so offers another dimension of experience

of landscape. I would argue that through the act of listening, in conjunction with the utilisation of listening devices, the grain of the landscape can be accessed and rendered in such a way that it speaks to the textures of place. It is from this understanding of landscape as a medium and live sculptural form, through which we can access traces of sociocultural narratives by means of walking, listening, collecting sounds, mapping these sounds into a soundscape and photographing, that I move onto my final chapter: *The Grain of the Landscape*.

# CHAPTER THREE

## THE GRAIN OF THE LANDSCAPE: A LAND ‘SCAPE’

The lights of the darkroom flood the space with an orange glow, allowing me to see the image that is slowly appearing on the glass plate sitting in a bath of developer. The photograph of the burnt terrain of the Algeria valley is being constructed in pieces on various sizes of three millimeter glass. Coated first with a thin sheet of gelatin, and then a layer of liquid emulsion, the glass plates are then exposed to my large format negative. The developing process is slow on this wintry day, the chemicals are attuned with the languid rhythm of life outside. Each plate is processed individually, affording me a glimpse into a piece of the moment that is suspended in silver halide crystals. I am mesmerised by the texture of the burnt trees, rocks and lone mountain gradually forming before me. The plate turns from an opaque white to black in such a way that it appears as if the glass image is inverting the developing process: changing from a positive to a negative. Once they have undergone the process of fixing and washing, I am able to hold them up to the light to see through the ghostly grain of the landscape sitting on the surface of the glass.

The choice of this chapter's title; *Grain of the Landscape*, seeks to place emphasis on the cultural phenomena of landscape as the 'site' where the act of photographing and collecting sounds begins to weave together. This chapter also seeks to emphasise the notion that landscape is constantly in flux and entwined with human presence. I begin with *Mapping Grains through the Walking Body* (Chapter 3.1), where I investigate the walking body and its role in collecting sounds and aiding the photographic process, as the experience of the landscape is more immediate when walking through it. The notion of the grain will be unpacked here by looking at how my act of walking allows an experience of landscape to occur where the grain of the landscape is traced through footsteps. I investigate how the walking body and the landscape shape each other, and how my sound installation and photographs speak to this relationship. Following this discussion, *Gathering Horizons in Landscape and Photography* (Chapter 3.2) is explored by looking at the notion of the horizon in landscape and photography; furthermore, I explore the concept of the horizon as a means to delineate how this idea of the grain acts as a

threshold where ideologies surrounding landscape and visual or sonic remnants can be explored. Hans Georg Gadamer's philosophical view, that the horizon "characterises the way one's vision is gradually expanded" and allows a limitless sight of what is unknown, is further explored here (2004: 301).

There is nothing new in looking at the notion of the horizon in relation to landscape and photography; however, I attempt to use this notion to delineate how my practice aims to expand on ideologies surrounding landscape in South Africa through my practice's employment of photography and sound. Following from this discussion, I delve into the various constituents that make up my main sound installation, which is titled *Wait Until You See* (2019). It is in this subchapter, *Wait Until You See* (Chapter 3.3), that I look at the element of time in relation to my practice, the indispensable role that light plays in my installation, and the manner in which the specific placement of the various speakers in the room creates a viewing experience that envelops the viewer in a soundscape that speaks to the grain of the landscape. It is from this discussion that the three glass pieces from my practice, namely, *Beyond the Grain i*, *Beyond the Grain ii*, and *Beyond the Grain iii* (2019), will be discussed in relation to the viewing experience of the spectator in *A Ghost Landscape* (Chapter 3.4).

I will look specifically at how the above-mentioned glass pieces function in the exhibition space as a means by which the human body is inserted into a ghostly landscape printed on glass;

and how this spectral landscape notions towards my practice dealing with the enigma of landscape. I explore the idea that the human body becomes *embodied* in the landscape through the viewer's interaction with the glass pieces: by picking them up, holding them in their hands and moving with them through the space to see *through* the grain of the landscape to the bodies moving behind it and my other photographs curated in the space. The fragmentation of landscape that occurs in these three works and the relationship they have with one another (as well as with the sound installation) is discussed here. The manner in which the grain of the voice and the grain of the image weave together in the viewing experience to form new landscapes and horizons concludes this chapter. Before I begin to discuss the manner in which the grain of the landscape functions in the exhibition space, my approach to the landscape by means of walking through it will now be addressed.

### 3.1 Mapping Grains through the Walking Body

In using my walking body as a means to explore landscape, I seek to understand how landscape is narrated through tangible and intangible traces, and how sounds emanating from the landscape act as a means by which we can decipher narratives.<sup>43</sup> It is from this experience that I use the act of walking to collect sounds into my sound installation that speaks of the patina of place, as well as trace landscape visually through my photographs. Tilley speaks of walking as "a process of

appropriation of the topographical system as speaking is appropriation of language: it is a spatial acting out place" (1994: 28). When I walk through the landscape in the Cederberg I am essentially acting out place by exploring how landscapes are both lived *in* and *through* bodies. My bodily experience of landscape is mapped through sound in the creation of my sound installation, and through my photographic prints.<sup>44</sup>

As stated before, my sound installation is an attempt to map places that speak of a bodily experience of landscape, be it mine or the persons I conversed with.<sup>45</sup> This bodily experience involves walking and can be linked to the idea of psycho-geography. This concept originates with the Situationists, more specifically the Marxist theorist Guy Debord, of the 1950s and 60s and describes "the effect of a geographical location on the emotions and behaviors of individuals" (TATE). The techniques of *dérive*, aimlessly drifting through a space, and *détournement*, the "ironic rearrangement of pre-existing elements", are linked

to psycho-geography; and seeks to "challenge and subvert art, forms of cultural expression and the urban environment" (Barnard 2004:108). Psycho-geography has since been developed as a means to create work which stems from exploring locations through the act of walking. It is through the mode of walking that landscape is narrated and a gathering of horizons occurs through my body's experience of it. Tilly speaks of how "in the process of movement a landscape unfolds or unravels before an observer" (1994: 31); the specific movement of walking through the landscape as a means to experience it is crucial to how the collection of sounds and the act of photographing occurred.

The manner in which I approach the practice of mapping was addressed in the previous two chapters, however it must be emphasised that the approach is unconventional and idiosyncratic, as it involves an abstracting of space by means of an intangible sound installation, and a tangible visual rendering of place by means of photographic prints. In the same way a conventional map functions as a means by which we make sense of our surroundings by focusing on the geographical aspects of an area, my mapping of sounds, and places photographically, function as a means by which I make sense of the area I am embedded in. The site-specificity of the sounds and photographs, and the collaboration they have with one another in the exhibition space, aims to create a visual and sonic representation of the Cederberg landscape in such a way that space is transformed into place. The act

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<sup>43</sup> Narratives here refers to both the conversations had with persons living in the area, such as my conversation with Annette from Elandsberg (discussed on page 53), and the narratives that emerge through a language of the land, where the sounds emanating from the landscape act as a language through which we can access narratives, such as the sounds recorded under ground through the contact microphone.

<sup>44</sup> The concept of mapping in relation to my work was addressed on page 10 in my discussion of *Key Terms* (Chapter iv.) used throughout this thesis.

<sup>45</sup> This was previously discussed on pages 19 and 43.

of walking through landscape is imperative to the manner in which I approached representing it sonically and visually.

By means of walking, the landscape and the body become entwined entities that converse with and shape one another. Katrín Anna Lund speaks of "the materiality of the landscape (being) shaped through the movement of walking, not prior to it" (2012: 225). Lund also notions towards the idea that from the "perspective of those who dwell within them, landscapes are woven together by a plethora of narratives and are shaped by the way in which they extend themselves beyond all spatio-temporal horizons, into unknown territories in a way which goes beyond place dynamics." (2012: 225). The bodily position, and thus perspective, of the walker in the landscape is of great importance to the temporal expansion that occurs when walking, which Tilley argues is the result of phenomenological walking. He speaks of this mode of walking as being different to "space-time walking", as it involves a conscious act through which the walker actively explores their engagement with landscape. The walking body allows different perspectives to be gained and the narrative of landscape to be explored through a bodily awareness. Psycho-geographical walking, or phenomenological walking, is the conscious act through which I explore my, and others', involvement with and experience of landscape. It is the means by which I trace out space through sound and photographic renderings; and in doing so create an abstract and intangible mapping of places.

This again comes back to the idea of my body being the locus where an interchange of sound, experience and conversations with land and persons occurs. I record localities of places and inevitably the grains found therein by means of this exchange. I converse with landscape when I walk through a given space in the Cederberg, by engaging with both the sonic and visual components. This conversation, however, is suffused with tension in the beginning of the act of embedding myself within a space. It is the unfamiliar and discombobulated aspect of conversation that was spoken of earlier in Chapter 2. I do not know this place yet; it is a space that I am not yet entangled in. My surroundings blend into one another, not yet distinguished through experience, the ingrained act of embeddedness and the sharing of stories. The people that I engage and walk with invite me into the landscape and, in doing so, aid my immersion within it. They share with me how this place speaks to them, such as my experience with Annette in the Autumn of 2017 on Elandsberg farm (roughly twenty kilometers from Clanwilliam).

In our conversations, Annette shared her family's history with the area, dating back to her birth, and how her family has owned the land surrounding their farm for three generations. I walked with her up to a plateau, where she identified numerous plant species along the way to her favourite site: a sand cave residing in the side of the mountain we had just traversed over. She imparted with me how she had been coming to this spot since she was allowed to wander the farm on her own. The cave's

walls are made up of waves of different colored sand (seen in Figure 22), which Annette rubbed off with the palm of her hand to show me how the sand falls onto the floor, from where the wind blows it out across the terrain below. This sand cave is one of the elements that influences the terroir of their rooibos tea, as it alters the soil's composition. This information changes my perception of the landscape I am looking out over; it becomes suffused with the different narratives Annette is sharing with me. This is an example of how our bodies become the site where their stories start to untangle; we walk through their land together weaving the past and present.<sup>47</sup> They share stories with me that reveal the intricacies of place and how traces of the past are present, yet seemingly invisible. When walking and conversing with land on my own, a different experience inevitably occurs.

Using my body as the site where experiences occur enables a focus to be placed on the unfamiliar, disharmonious and awkward aspects of conversations with landscape and people when either walking through it, or talking to people. There is at times a bodily resistance that occurs between my body and the landscape. This resistance can best be described by looking at Paul Adams' discussion of bodily resistance in his essay, *Peripatetic imagery and peripatetic sense of place* (2001).

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<sup>47</sup> This is not to say that their stories do not exist without my experiencing of them, but rather to emphasise that our bodies are the site where an interchange occurs.

By looking at two different modes of walking in Western society: *light peripatetic walking* and *dark peripatetic walking*, Adams unpacks the twofold experience of walking through a given landscape. He describes *light peripatetic walking* as "a rhythmic harmonisation, [that] produces a heightened sensitivity to the environment as well as a heightened or special sense of self"; and secondly *dark peripatetic walking*, which notions toward an "ominous excursion" where the walker is finding *their* feet and balancing on the edge of falling in or out of comfort with their environment (2001: 193, 196). These two modes of walking are apt in describing my experiences in the Cederberg; as the first and second time I walked through (and in) the Biedouw Valley I experienced the terrain divergently, according to these different modes of walking. My first venture in 2017 leaned more towards Adams' *dark peripatetic walking*, where my feet and body were unaccustomed to my surroundings in such a way that I was walking on the edge of the area being a *space* or a *place*. Whereas when I returned in 2018 I experienced the area as a *place* and felt my body ease into a rhythmic comfort.

These different types of 'walking' in landscape by people, such as the light and dark peripatetic walking of Adams, reflect how people's conversations with landscape offer different perspectives and experiences of places; and how traces of the past are revealed in these conversations.<sup>48</sup> These are felt through the reverberations enveloping my body and the diversity of grains in voices I encounter in conversations. The reverberations

I speak of here aim to reference the vibrations found in the living sculptural form that is landscape. It echoes Tilley's notion that "to understand a landscape truly it must be felt" but in order to convey these sensations it has be spoken and written about; it must be represented (1994: 31). His understanding of the experience of moving through a landscape by means of walking builds on Adam's tension of bodily resistance, as he writes that "in movement on a path through the landscape something is constantly slipping away and something is constantly gained" (1994:31). This movement depends on the tactility of landscape that involves physical sensations and impressions felt through the walking body, where I use sounds to guide my steps.

The soft echo of water moving along rocks and sand creates a constant harmonious rhythm, which other sounds either pierce through or synchronise with, heard in Sound 11. I use these sounds as a sensory device to navigate between fynbos, over rock infested hills, along the valleys of a mountain range and over them. I am highly aware of my body in this space, the imprints I am leaving behind and the sound resonances I am creating by moving through it. The sounds I listen to work in unison to expand the spatial structures that my body is experiencing when walking. Voegelin develops this idea of sound extending spatial

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<sup>48</sup> I use the idea of 'walking' as a metaphor for how narratives unfold, how conversations have a starting and finishing point in the same way that walking does.

awareness, and in doing so, extends bodily awareness (2011). In her writings she says, "sound fleshes out the visual and renders it real; it gives the image its spatial dimension and temporal dynamic" (Voegelin 2011: xi). This idea of sound expanding on the visual is crucial to how my prints and sound installation are entangled; whilst simultaneously speaking to the notion of the horizon "granting a depth to the concept of landscape beyond vision" (Benediktsson and Lund 2010: 7). The idea of the horizon in sound, landscape and photography is analysed in relation to the idea of landscape as a cultural phenomenon that is made up of narratives from shifting perspectives, as well as landscape being a sculptural form that is constantly being formed.

### 3.2 Gathering Horizons in Landscape and Photography

The walking body allows a gathering of horizons to occur, through which the grain of the landscape is accessed. Benediktsson and Lund view the idea of the horizon as a means by which the concept of landscape can be challenged and investigated beyond vision. They view landscape being simultaneously tangible and intangible, as something that is not merely 'seen' but conversed with (2010: 7). In the same way the notion of the grain is twofold in my thesis, the notion of the horizon in sound, photography and landscape is too: it speaks to the literal visual horizon of a landscape, as well as to the gradual expansion of one's understanding and shift of perspective when investigating it. The concept of the horizon

here seeks to emphasise how my practice creates new ways of seeing and listening, which challenges the boundaries of conventional representations of landscape in South Africa. I employ the concept of the horizon here as it “takes landscape away from the often romantic and rather static association with place” due to its “implication of movement and constantly shifting positions,” according to Benediktsson and Lund (2010: 8). It also signifies the conversing with light spoken of in my first chapter. The manner in which the light falls on the landscape before me asks me to engage with it differently and as such renders the horizon differently. I will discuss three of my photographs, namely: *Donker Maan* (Figure 23), *The Day the Rain Came* (Figure 21) and *Twee Bossies* (Figure 24).<sup>49</sup>

The horizon can appear harsh and as if it splits the earth in two, as seen in my print *Donker Maan*, or it can begin to blur the line between ground and sky, as seen in my print *The Day the Rain Came*. The stark horizon in my print *Donker Maan* is such, as it was taken during full moon in the early hours of the morning and was exposed to capture the highlights in the sky. In underexposing this scene of a crop of rooibos bushes with fresh tyre tracks running between them, the dark and dewy texture of the sand in relation to the sun rising on the horizon of the field

is emphasised. The horizon line in my print places focus on how the ground extends from beneath my feet to a point where it stops abruptly and the morning sky begins. The dramatic shift in tone and texture potentially allows your eye to trace the contour of the horizon and along the fine details of the dusky bushes emphasised by the illuminated sky. As such, the horizon acts as the place where the change in tone and texture, found in the sky and ground, begin to converse with one another. This perspective of the horizon ties back to the phenomenological approach to landscape spoken of in Chapter 2, as this is the result of “vision that happens through bodily immersion rather than detached observation” (Benediktsson and Lund 2010: 6).

This way of seeing landscape through a photographic lens allows me to explore the concept of the horizon as “not a fixed limit but an invitation to go further” (Benediktsson and Lund 2010: 7). The horizon in the landscapes I photographed made “it possible to perceive more than what is directly sensed” and as such created a new way of seeing landscape that challenges the ideologies surrounding landscape as ‘genre’ (Vessey 2009: 535). The framing choices I made, which placed the horizon at different levels in my photographs, creates a viewing experience that offers different perspectives of landscape and ways of seeing. It speaks of the distance that is alluded to in my photographs. When viewing *Twee Bossies*, *Donker Maan* and *The Day the Rain Came*, for example, the various placements of the horizon in the frame functions in different

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<sup>49</sup> The titles *Twee Bossies* and *Donker Maan* are in Afrikaans and translate to ‘Two Bushes’ and ‘Dark Moon’ respectively.

ways to speak of the importance of the human position in the landscape. The different positions of the horizon line implies movement and in doing so signifies a shifting of perspectives that gathers horizons. There is an interplay between the sky's marble texture and the dense grainy shadows of the field in *Donker Maan* that enhances the stark shift from ground to sky.

The inability to fully see the details in the shadows of the foreground, due to underexposing, was an intentional decision. I knew that this would allow me to print the foreground in such a way that the black tones begin to envelop the landscape, where the horizon would act as an anchor to make sense of what you are seeing. The gradual expansion of vision that is spoken of in relation to the concept of the horizon, is seen in my print; as the longer you observe it the more your eyes adjust to gather more visual information to make sense of the photograph. The horizon spoken of in *The Day the Rain Came*, functions in opposition to that of the *Donker Maan*. This is said, as the transition of the horizon is subtle, due to the shift in tone and texture caused by the mist rolling down the mountain blurring the point where the horizon begins and ends. The different horizon lines, formed by textures and tones, seen in my prints begin to speak of the different perspectives, narratives and representations that constantly form and shape landscape.

In speaking of the presence of a horizon in my prints, it must be mentioned that the absence of a horizon is just as

important to discuss. The juxtaposition of some of my prints containing a horizon (as mentioned above) and others not containing a horizon at all (such as *Swemklere* [Figure 15] for example) is significant to the viewing experience and the relationship my prints have to sound and to one another. In viewing my photograph, *Twee Bossies*, in conjunction with the sound installation, the illusion of space is created. This is due to the horizon's ability to enchant the viewer into the allusion of distance, because while the photograph captures and represents distance two dimensionally, it does not allow you to fully comprehend the space the photograph was taken in. The depth of field begins and ends on the paper or glass's surface, however the sound installation alludes to the vastness of space through the recordings of echoes and the rhythmic sound of my feet gathering horizons through its movement in the landscape. The ability of sound to fill a space also signifies this allusion. As Voegelin states, "sound narrates, outlines and fills, but it is always ephemeral and doubtful" (2011: 5). This interplay between the absence and presence of horizons in my photographs speaks to Wells' view that, "unlike the relatively unbounded experience of looking, the photograph defines and frames, suggesting particular ways of seeing" (2011: 56). My approach to photographing a scene with a horizon in view involves a particular way of seeing, and as such seeks to emphasise the enigma of landscape through its illusion of space.

I expand on this notion by viewing the notion of the horizon as a

liminal space in landscape. I would argue that the concept of the horizon acts as a threshold through which we access narratives and gather new modes of understandings of landscape. By means of *intangible* sounds and *tangible* forms in the landscape, the horizon functions as a space where ideologies surrounding landscape and photography can be challenged and explored. The horizon is a space in landscape that acts as a threshold for further exploration and a site that cannot be reached or fixed. If you were to attempt to reach a horizon that seemed in your grasp by traveling to it, you would fail by the perspective you would have gained once in the place you thought it lay. The act of photographing in the Cederberg involved my body gathering horizons by walking through the landscape and engaging with it physically. The constant shifting of perspectives caused by my feet rhythmically connecting and disconnecting with the earth in a forward motion allowed me to visually render this bodily experience of landscape in such a way that it expands on the concept of landscape as a mere backdrop to human activity. The different perspectives from which I photographed all involved my body moving from one horizon to the next; where my body moved towards a liminal space on the horizon, from a space that had become *place* through the motion of my body walking through it, to the next liminal space on the horizon. Through acting out place by means of walking, I engaged with landscape in such a way that the grain of the landscape was traced and rendered in my sound installation and photographic prints. This can be seen

most evidently in my sound installation, *Wait Until You See*.

### 3.3. Wait Until You See

The disembodied voices emanating out of the darkened room are subdued by the sound of water moving through a riverbed. The sound emerging from the back of the room from which you entered engulfs your body in an experience of sound that shifts in texture and weight: from that soft trickling water to the sound of water moving in a torrent of rhythmic chaos. You can feel the shift in the weight of the water on your skin as you become more immersed in the room, your eyes gradually adjusting to a light subtly illuminating the wall on the opposite side of the room. The light beams are so faint that upon entering the room the light source went unnoticed. New sounds begin to emerge out of the dark corners of the room; from a distance you cannot visually comprehend, yet your bodily immersion in the room begins to negotiate the distance between you and the source of the sounds. The segments of disembodied voices, speaking of their experiences of places in the Cederberg, fades in and out between other sounds circulating from various points in the room. The odious sounds recorded through the contact microphone give way to the sound of my feet rhythmically traversing a rocky terrain, which then fades into the sound of bushes rustling as a body brushes past them. All the while your eyes are attuning themselves to the light on the opposite wall where the amorphous light begins to slowly shape itself

into a square. The darker the space around the square becomes, the more detail your eyes start to see; the image starts to take form with its different tones, shapes and textures revealing a scene of a riverbed with a canopy of entangled branches casting shadows on the water and rocks below it. You are seeing something that was always there; from the moment you entered the room and became submerged in the soundscape, the projector was painting an image with light.

My sound installation, *Wait Until You See*, manipulates light and sound in such a way that time and space begin to converge through the viewers' bodily immersion within a place, which is articulated spatially by means of sonic and visual elements. Ros Bandt writes about sound "inhabiting space, filling height, width and depth with its presence" (2006: 353), which surrounds and immerses the viewer in an experience that can be felt through their skin. The most integral dimension to this experience in *Wait Until You See* is that of time, which sees the human body responding to the manipulation of light and sound depending on the amount of time that has passed. To fully comprehend my sound installation's manipulation of light, and how the human body is able to perceive light, the viewer has to give over to the current of time. The manipulation of light can be seen where the dimension of time is realised and conveyed. Mikkel Bille and Tim Flohr Sørensens write about light in their article 'The Anthropology of Luminosity: The Agency of Light', in which they explore the materiality of light and its role in our experience

of the world (2007). They speak of light being "inhabited, manipulated, and used socially, as a way of creating interpersonal relationships and connecting people and things" (2007: 266).

The manner in which your eyes have to adjust to the light emanating from a source in the darkened room speaks to this idea of light being able to connect people to things, more specifically people to places and experiences of those places. Katherine Sorrell investigates light as "creating atmosphere, highlighting and sculpting areas" in such a way it begins to "influence not just how you look at them but also how you feel about them" (2005: 58). Whilst the light projecting the image on the wall doesn't change, the manner in which you perceive that light does and in doing so speaks to this idea that light is influential in how we delineate and feel about spaces. The manipulation of light in conjunction with that of sound is integral to the manner in which my installation converges time and space.

The manipulation of sound through the use of different speakers placed at various heights and locations in the room speaks to Voegelin's view that "sound re-invests and invents spaces" (2011: 131). The various locations of the speakers in the room play with the space's contours in such a way that the four walls of the room begin to push and pull according to the sound's volume and vibration. It is through the viewer's immersion in the space, that the space begins to play with time and connect places through a manipulation of light and

sound. This manipulation signifies the enigma of landscape and how it is human presence that creates landscapes. In the same way that my sound installation, *Wait Until You See*, involves a viewer's bodily immersion to access the grain of the landscape, my glass plates involve the viewer's engagement for the spectral aspect of landscape to transpire.

### 3.4. A Ghost Landscape

The viewing experience of my work and the physical engagement with it by the viewer, is where the spectral aspect of landscape begins to unfold. The placement and curation of the different glass pieces in the space, allows the various bodies moving through the space to become *embodied* in the grain of the landscape. This perspective of one viewer seeing through a landscape suspended in glass to another viewer on the other side of the piece speaks to the entangled relationship humans have with landscape; and how human perspective brings the concept of landscape into effect. Benediktsson and Lund explore this in saying, "a mountain and a landscape is not one and the same thing, but when gazed at by a human, the mountain becomes part of the landscape" (2010: 49). The participation of the viewer with my work seeks to expand on the notion of the gaze bringing the concept of landscape into effect; as well as place a focus on the role that human presence plays in the formation of landscape as a concept. This is done through the placement of the glass plates in the hand-made box as such that

the whole image cannot be seen. The angle at which they are placed does not afford the viewer to see the photograph printed on them unless they remove the plate from the hand-made box.

This interaction that the viewer is required to make in order to view the work attempts to dismantle the allusion of distance that is inherent in landscape representations. The viewer is able to hold a fragment of the landscape in their hands, feel the gelatin of the liquid emulsion and the weight of the glass, whilst looking through the landscape. In being able to see through the landscape, the illusion of distance begins to disintegrate. The viewer becomes confronted with the landscape they hold and the distance that is implied therein, in both the photograph's depth of field conveying distance, and the lack of distance between their skin and the plate's surface. It is through this process of interaction that the viewer inserts themselves into the landscape, as they can see through the grain of the landscape to their skin pressing against the plate, as seen in Figure 25. Vilém Flusser delineates the notion of distance in relation to images in saying they negotiate space and in doing so create a distance between us and the world, in his book *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* (2000:10). The space in the landscape, rendered in the glass plate, begins to negotiate with the space of the gallery. This is seen in the grain of the image shifting depending on how the plate is held up to the light or held against the skin of your hands. Before I unpack this further, I will first elaborate on how these three hand-made boxes

were made and the manner in which they function together.

The three hand-made boxes each contain a glass work made out of fragmented pieces of a landscape, namely: *Beyond the Grain i* (Figure 26), *Beyond the Grain ii* (Figure 27), and *Beyond the Grain iii* (Figure 28). These three works were made by using the same template, see Figure 29, where each arrangement of glass plates were exposed to a large format negative, see Figure 30. The outcome was three glass works that each have the same template with a cohesive image printed onto them. It is from this cohesive template that various glass plates from each piece were taken and shuffled around in such a way that three fragmented landscapes remained. As such, each work is an amalgamation of shuffled plates creating a fragmented landscape. These were then placed into the three hand-made boxes, of which all contain this written thesis. The inability to construct a unified photograph of the landscape without the other three hand-made boxes attempts to question the ever-shifting nature of landscape and our engagement with it. The small-scale nature of these glass plates in relation to the larger plates and photographic prints can be attributed to my own attempt to render visible the fragmentation and dislocation that occurred between my body and the space I found myself in when dwelling in an area; where the shift in detail and grain size in the photographic image (due to the increase in scale) begins to speak to the notion of being pulled into the very grain of the landscape whilst simultaneously being resisted by it. Specifically,

I ask how a given landscape can be seen as the accumulation of sociocultural and historical narratives, which are forever shaping and reforming our perspectives on it. My approach to making this work also sought to accentuate the enigma of landscape and the grain found therein. There is an eerie element seen in the grain of the glass plates that implores the viewer to inspect the photograph at a closer angle. The ability to see through the photograph forces your gaze to drift both over and through the surface of the glass, and as such causes your field of focus to constantly change. The tactility of the glass and the drifting of your gaze through it allows the act of moving through the space with a segment of landscape in your hands to transpire.

The tangible nature of the glass and the ability to move and interact with it in the exhibition space begins to speak to the intangible nature of sound found in my sound installation. The various sounds you hear in the space begin to interact with the fragmented segments of the glass plates. In the same way that the voices in the sound installation are fragmented (in that only certain snippets of the conversation are played, as heard in Sound 17), the glass plates reference this fragmentation too. The sounds begin to suffuse the surface of my prints and thus alter the viewing experience; Voegelin speaks to this effect of sound in saying sounds are like ghosts, that “sink around the visual object, moving in on it from all directions, forming its contours and content into a formless breeze” (2011: 12). The sounds and the photographs start to raise questions in relation

to one another, such as when viewing *Moon River* (Figure 31) in relation to hearing the sound of water heard in Sound 11.

The viewer/listener may begin to speculate whether these sounds are connected to the place photographed here. The *heard* texture of the water begins to inform the *seen* texture of the water, and vice versa. The sound of water in Sound 11 begins to interweave with the movement of the water, seen in the soft ripples and the mirror-like surface of the river. There is a softness to the way the water moves in Sound 11, which when heard in relation to Sound 18 creates a shift in perspective of the texture of water. This sound recording of water is discordant and alludes to a body of water thrashing against another body of water, generating a different texture of sound that does not correlate with the silky texture of water in *Moon River*. The visual experience of my photographs is expanded upon in this way – the implied stillness of this riverside scene at dawn, with its evocative tones emphasising the aura of this time of day, is questioned by the boisterous sounds that interweave in my sound installation. This viewing experience maintains Voegelin's view that, "the listener is entwined with the heard, their sense of the world and themselves is constituted of this bond" (2011: 5). It is through this analogy of sound and image in my work that the viewer begins to weave together a grain of landscape in such a way that they construct new landscapes in the exhibition space. The physical interaction of the viewer with my work, in conjunction with listening to my sound installation, places the viewer in a

position where their perspective enables them to see through landscape in such a way that they become embodied within it.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The viewing and listening experience of my work in the exhibition space is where the grain of the landscape is realised and felt. It is the place where the grain of the image and sound are woven together in such a way they form new ways of seeing and listening to landscape. In the same way I acted out place in walking through the Cederberg terrain, so too does the viewer when they walk through the exhibition space, forming new landscapes from their different perspectives and engagement with my work. The concept of the horizon is fleshed out in this interaction with my work, as there is never a fixed perspective of landscape due to the ability to see through the glass plates and move around with a segment of a photograph. The fragmentation of my glass plates causes the viewer to become embodied within the landscape, and in doing so speaks to the entanglement that we, as humans, have with it. It is through the act of listening to the different voices that emanate from the landscape, and the engagement with my prints, that the grain of the landscape is felt, seen and heard.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis serves as the theoretical companion to the practical work created for the fulfillment of this degree. The ideas and theories presented throughout this written component function to motivate my practice's investigation into how an act of dwelling and embedding oneself in space, where land, sound and photographic 'scapes' are explored, can result in the creation of place; furthermore, how this leads to one being embedded in place in such a way that the very grain of the landscape is seen, *heard* and *felt*. This notion that the grain of the landscape can be seen, *heard* and *felt* was fleshed out in Chapter 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

The concept of the grain of the landscape being *seen* was presented in Chapter 1, where the grain of the image was explored. This chapter argued that the twofold denotation of the grain references both the visual remnants of silver halide crystals and the ideologies surrounding landscape and photography as a medium, and as such provided a brief background to the history of landscape representation photographically and the demographics of the Cederberg area. I argued that the grain of the image functions as a visual remnant, through which the very grain of the landscape is accessed by means of my photographic 'scapes', created in the form of silver gelatin hand prints, glass plates coated in liquid emulsion and large scale

digital prints. A focus on the metaphorical aspect of conversing with landscape served to motivate my practice's investigation into whether texts, narratives and traces ingrained in place, could be rendered firstly through a photographic lens, and secondly through the actual making of a photographic print by hand. The discussion of Sally Mann and Beatrix Reinhardts' work supports this thesis's photographic exploration of landscape as a medium, which renders sociocultural and historical narratives in such a way that what appears to be a mundane scene of landforms, is transformed into a poetic elegy to those who have dwelled there. The discussion of visible grain of the landscape followed into a discussion on the audible grain of the landscape in Chapter 2, in which the notion that the landscape can be *heard* was interrogated.

My second chapter, *The Grain of the Voice*, investigated the role of sound in my practice and how the sounds I make use of in my sound installation were collected. I argued that through my approach to landscape as a live sculptural form (which has a voice of its own) I could access the grain of the voice of the landscape. Through a distinction between the voices of persons I conversed with, who lived in the area I was embedded in, and the voices of the landscape, the role of absence and presence in my work was explored. The absence of human bodies in my

photographs and disembodied voices in my sound installation, argued for the concept of landscape as a culturally created phenomenon, which is experienced and created through the human body. I argued that sounds are not just perceived by the human body but also generated and realised by the body's movement through a landscape. I unpacked this notion further in saying that the textures of place can be felt and heard through a bodily experience of sound. Lastly, I argued that the grain of the landscape can be *felt* through my practice's integration of sonic and photographic renderings of landscape as a medium.

My third chapter, *The Grain of the Landscape*, served to place emphasis on the cultural phenomena of landscape as the site where the act of photographing and collecting sounds begins to weave together. Through a discussion of the act of my walking body through a given area in the Cederberg, as a means to trace the grain of the landscape, I argued that the concept of landscape is entwined with that of human presence; as well as delineated that the human body and landscape shape one another. I argued that this enigmatic relationship is rendered in my sound installation, *Wait Until You See*, and my glass plates; where the glass plate's transparent surface allows the viewer to look through the grain of the landscape and in doing so embodies the viewer within the grain of the landscape. I unpacked this exploration of the enigma of landscape further by looking at the notion of the horizon, in both my photographs and sound installation, as a liminal space (or threshold), where ideologies

surrounding landscape in South Africa are expanded upon.

Whilst it could be said that this study investigated a topic that has been fairly exhausted within the South African context, that of photographic landscape representations, I would argue that there are still avenues for further exploration within the field of photography in relation to landscape. Whilst I was not interested in investigating photographic representations of landscape in relation to the male gaze, over the duration of this study I have become increasingly aware of the lack of research conducted into female photographic representations of landscape, both historical and contemporary. I would argue that a study into female photographic representations of landscape could be effective in providing new knowledge and profound insight into the field of photography and landscape studies; in that female historical photographic representations could see new knowledge arise in how landscape was experienced by not only the white western male. I found it ironic that even though the topic of landscape in relation to photography is extensively researched, the research conducted is dominated by photographs taken by white western males; and where research concerned female representations it saw references being made to this dominant group. Furthermore, over the duration of this study I have become interested in the possible outcomes of research conducted into minority groups living in site-specific places and how they experience landscape.

Through this exploration of land, sound and photographic ‘scapes’ in the Cederberg region, I have created a body of work that employs the notion of the grain as a means to trace sociocultural and historical narratives that are embedded in places. In this written companion to my practical work I have motivated that my photographic works and sound installation explore the grain of the landscape as a temporal, enigmatic, sculptural form, with which we are inevitably entangled.

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# BEYOND THE GRAIN

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Clara Babette. 2018. *Two Silver Gelatin Hand Prints Drying*. Photograph.

Figure 1



Clara Babette. 2019. *Glass Plate Coated in Liquid Emulsion. Photograph.*

Figure 2



Clara Babette. 2019. *Digital Prints in Studio*. Photograph.

Figure 3



Battlefields of KwaZulu-Natal  
South Africa  
**Battle of Wagon Hill and Caesar's Camp**  
January 6th 1800  
Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902

-28° 35' 15.27"N 29° 45' 55.50"E  
Beatrix R. Reinhardt  
#NY11105 03 September 2013

Beatrix Reinhardt. 2013. Nr. 25 *Battle of Wagon Hill and Caesar's Camp*.  
Archival inkjet print on Hahnemuhle paper. 46.2 x 60.3 cm.

Figure 4



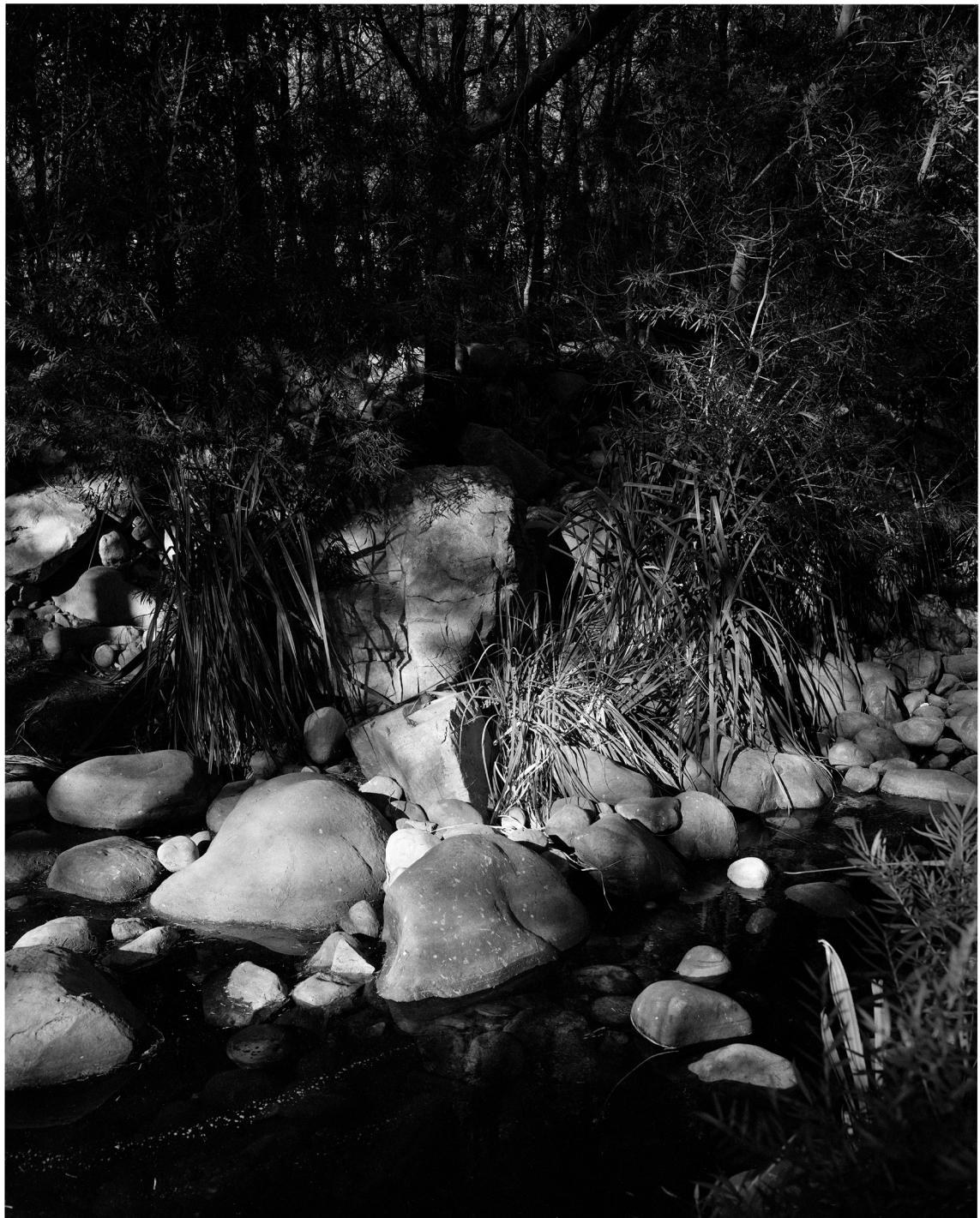
Beatrix Reinhardt. 2013. Nr. 10 *Battle of Fort Mthonjaneni*.  
Archival inkjet print on Hahnemuhle paper. 46.2 x 60.3 cm.

Figure 5



Beatrix Reinhardt. 2013. *Samples of the embossed images on each sheet.*  
Archival inkjet print on Hahnemuhle paper. 46.2 x 60.3 cm.

Figure 6



Clara Babette. 2018. *River Shadow*. Silver Gelatin Handprint.

Figure 7



Sally Mann. 1998. *Untitled (Bridge on Tallahatchie)*.  
Wet Plate Collodion Print. 93.98 x 120.65 cm.

Figure 8



Sally Mann. 1998. *Untitled (Concrete Grave)*.  
Wet Plate Collodion Print. 96.5 x 120.7 cm.

Figure 9



Sally Mann. 1998. *Untitled (Emmett Till River Bank)*. Wet Plate Collodion Print. 96.52 x 120.65 cm.

Figure 10



Clara Babette. 2018. *At Sunrise*. Silver Gelatin Handprint.

Figure 11



Clara Babette. 2019. *Glass Plate. Photograph.*

Figure 12



Clara Babette. 2018. *You've Heard these Sounds Before i.*. Digital Print.

Figure 13



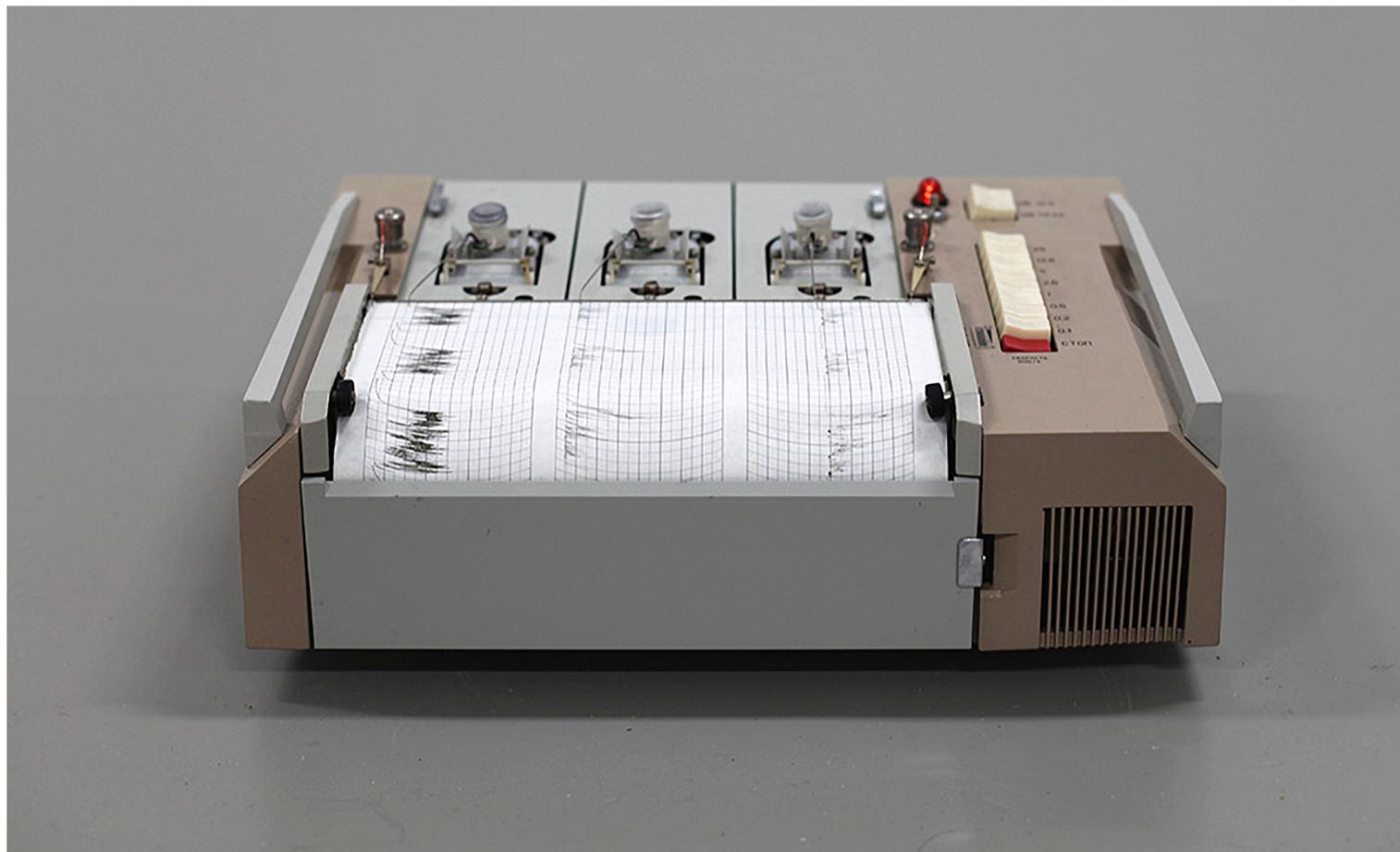
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Figure 14



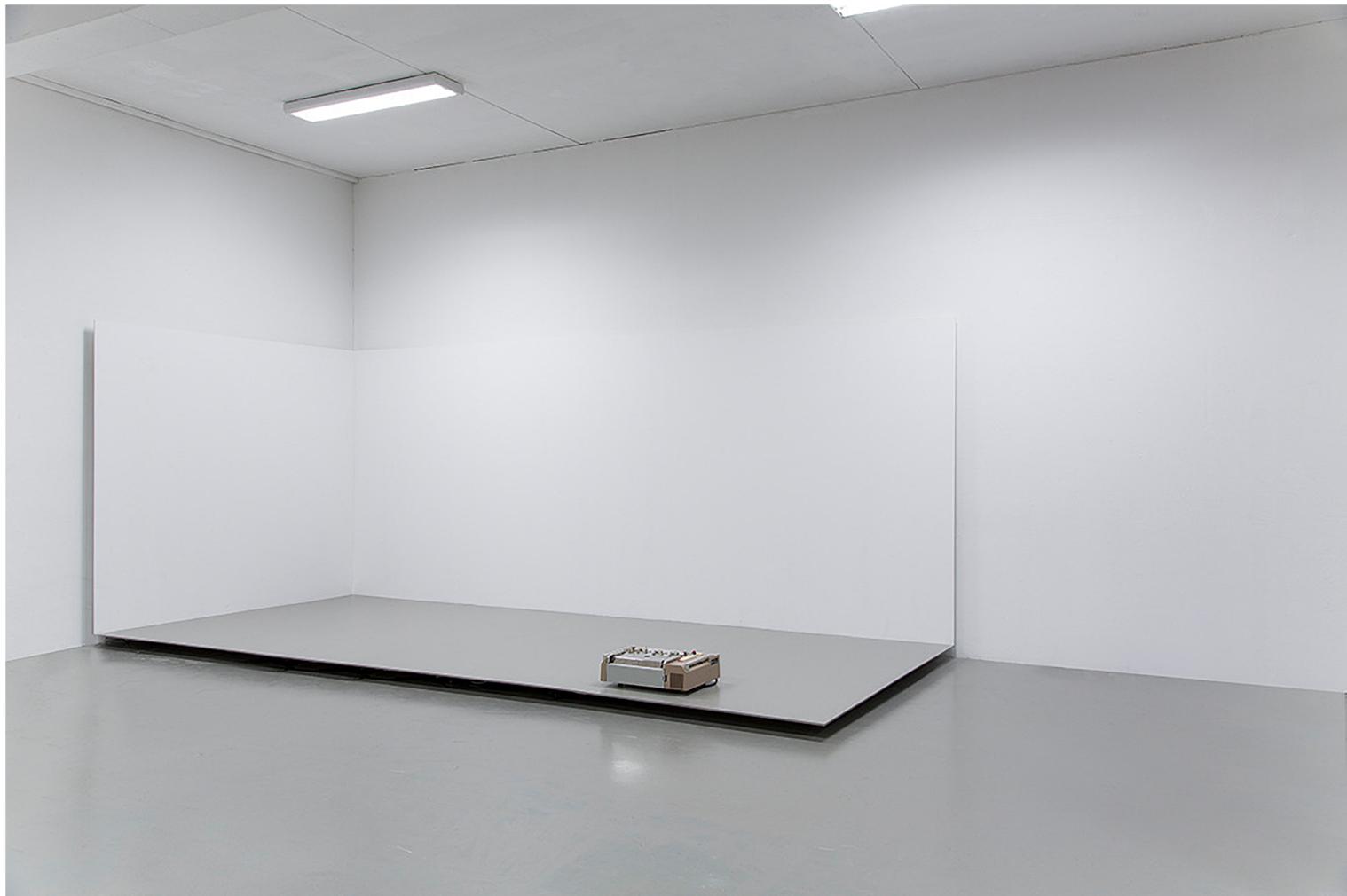
Clara Babette. 2018. *Swemklere*. Digital Print.

Figure 15



Lotte Geeven. 2013. A seismograph registering the sound. Photograph.

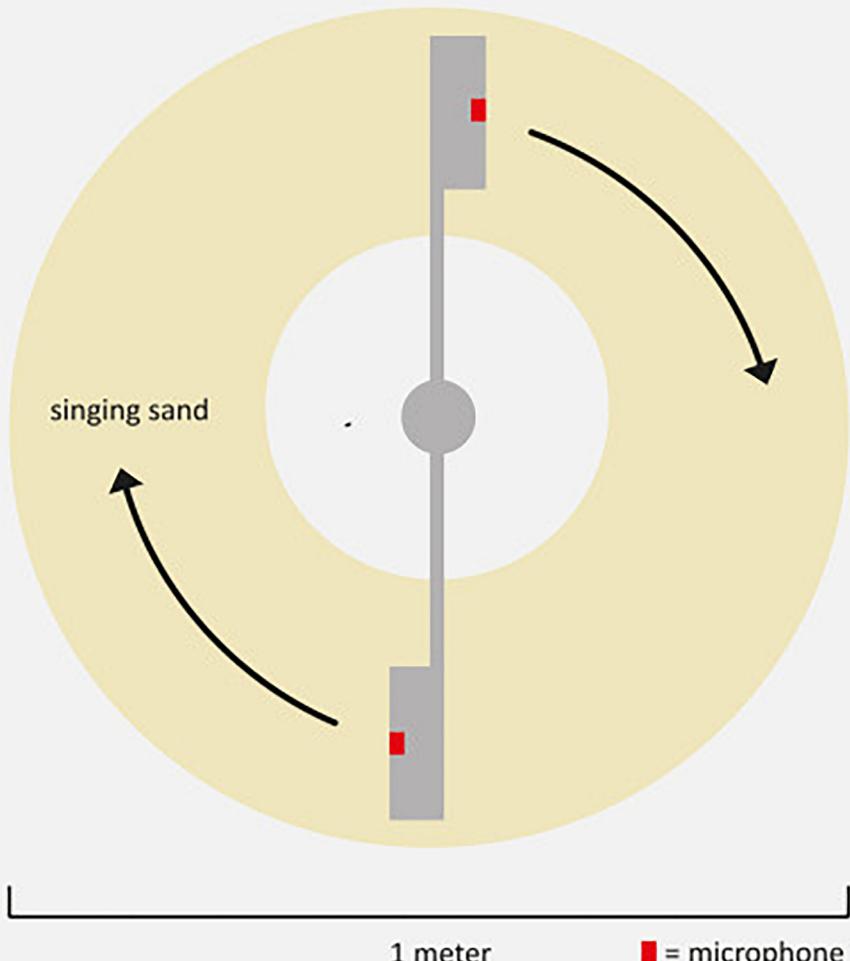
Figure 16



Lotte Geeven. 2013. Photograph.

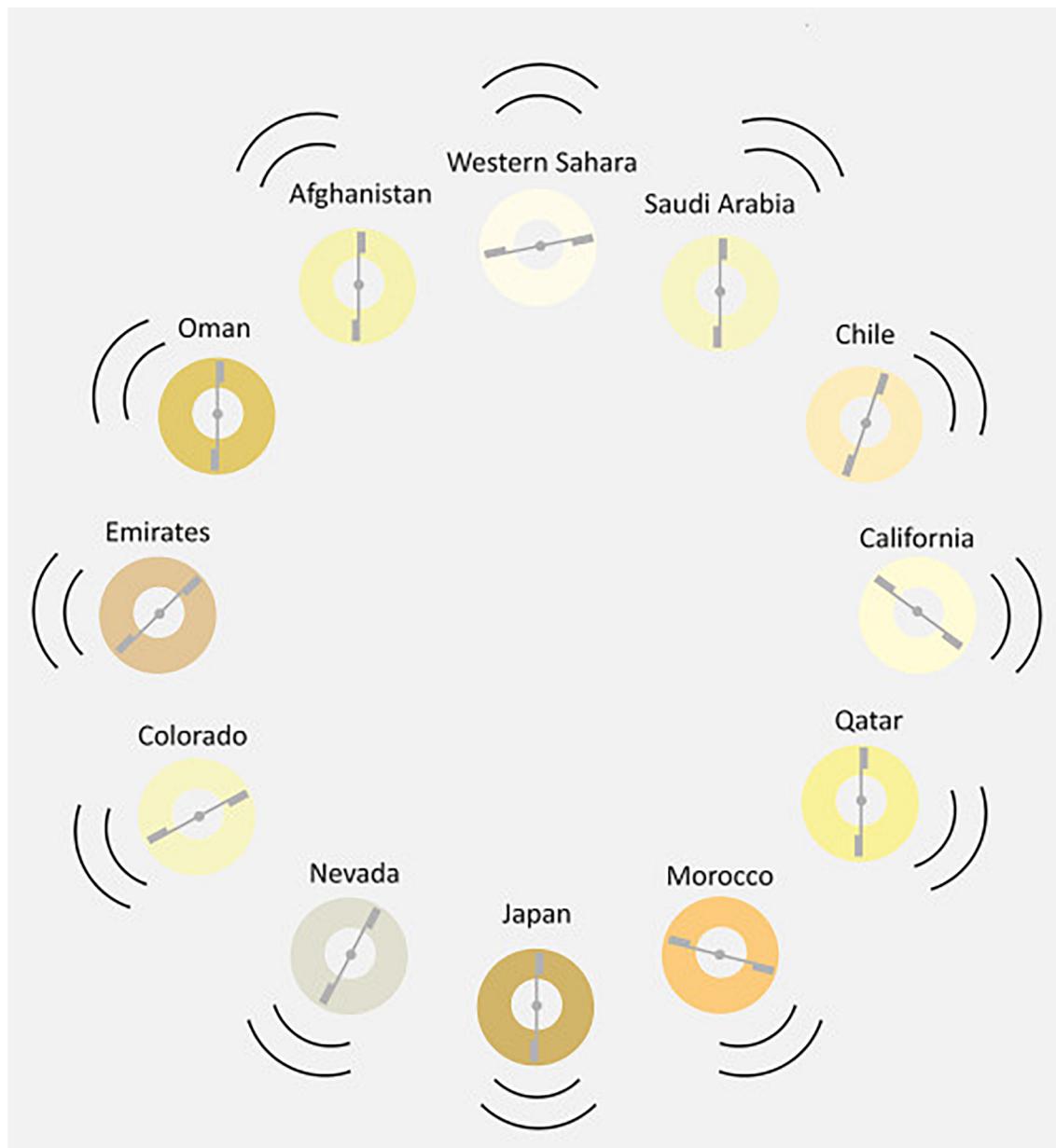
Figure 17

Rotating blades push the sand forward  
and make it sing.



Lotte Geeven. 2017. *The Sand Machine*. Diagram.

Figure 18



Lotte Geeven. 2017. *Rendering of Sand Machine. Diagram.*

Figure 19

► N 18° 26' 14.9", E 53° 2' 28.6"

# THE SAND MACHINE

Help collect acoustic sand from the few remote areas on this planet where the sand sings, whistles, booms and roars. This rare sand from all over the world will be sounding together in a public artwork.

THE SAND MACHINE

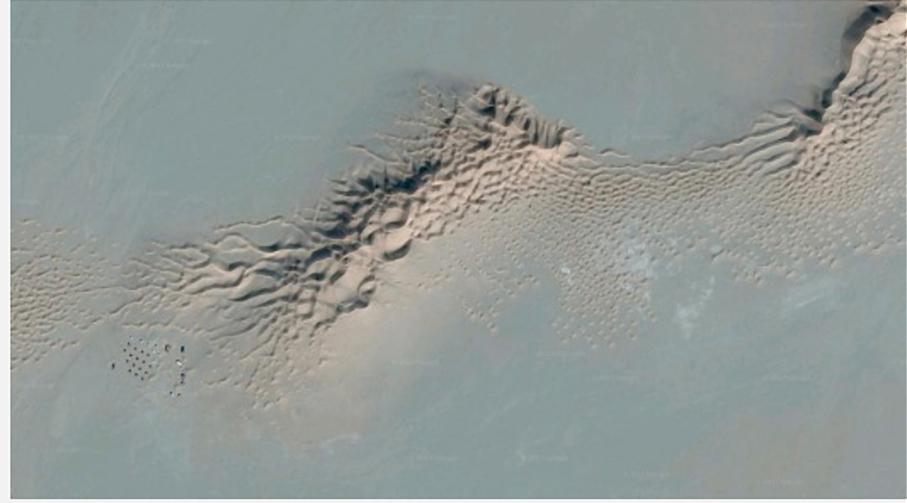
COLLECT SAND

LOCATIONS

CONTACT

CREDITS

FAQ



أقرب بلدة (Nearest town: Ubar)  
استكشاف الموقع (Explore location)

Project by [Lotte Geeven](#)

Lotte Geeven. 2013. A seismograph registering the sound. Screenshot.

Figure 20



Clara Babette. 2017. *The Day the Rain Came*. Silver Gelatin Handprint.

Figure 21



Clara Babette. 2017. Sand Cave. Digital Photograph.

Figure 22



Clara Babette. 2017. *Donker Maan*. Silver Gelatin Handprint.

Figure 23



Clara Babette. 2017. *Twee Bossies*. Silver Gelatin Handprint.

Figure 24



Clara Babette. 2019. *Hand Pressing Against Glass*. Photograph.

Figure 25



Clara Babette. 2019. *Beyond the Grain i.*  
Glass Plate Coated in Liquid Emulsion.

Figure 26



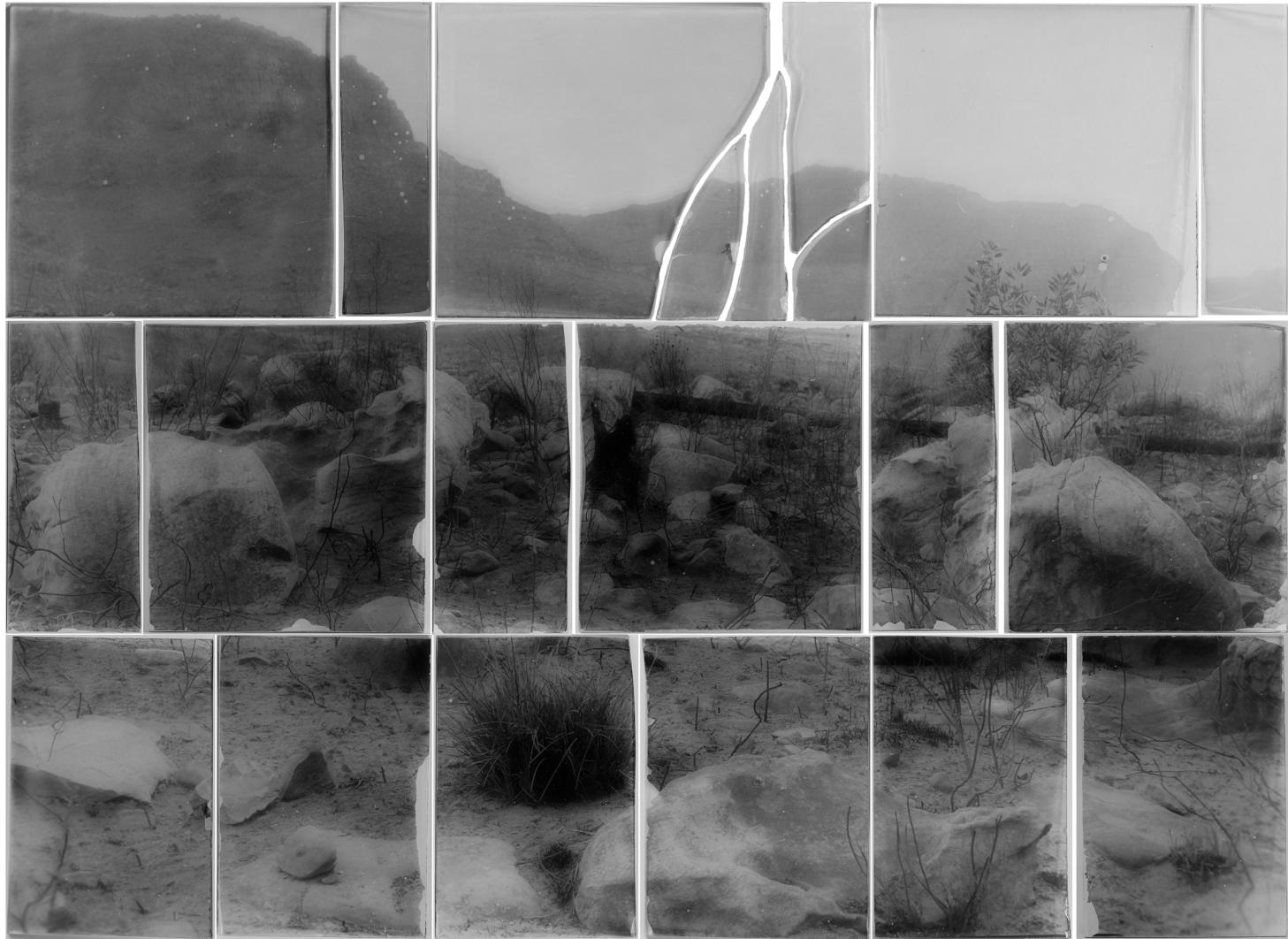
Clara Babette. 2019. *Beyond the Grain ii.*  
Glass Plate Coated in Liquid Emulsion.

Figure 27



Clara Babette. 2019. *Beyond the Grain iii*.  
Glass Plate Coated in Liquid Emulsion.

Figure 28



Clara Babette. 2019. Template for *Beyond the Grain*. Photograph.

Figure 29



Clara Babette. 2019. *Bossie Large Format Film Negative*. Photograph.

Figure 30



Clara Babette. 2018. *Moon River*. Silver Gelatin Handprint.

Figure 31