

Ways of Moving: everyday experiences traversing a fragmented cityscape

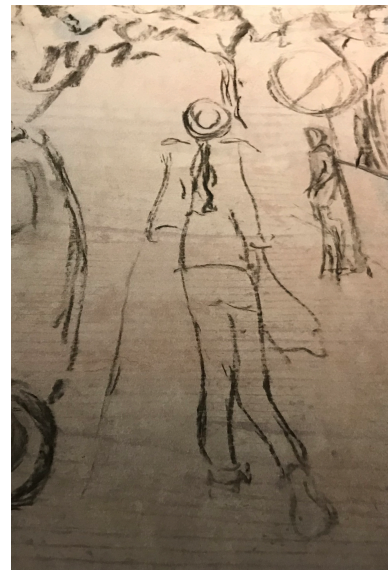
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Abstract

In *Private Moments, Private Wastelands*, V.S. Naipaul¹, describes ‘South Africa with its many groups, its many passions, its biding tensions’. Locally, he eloquently articulates the layers of differing values and ideologies of the seemingly disparate individuals within Johannesburg’s society. Somewhat disparaging of Soweto, he leaves his visit to the city unresolved as to what holds her together, offering only flagging hopes hung on the images of Mandela.



Morning Glory, Kliptown
(photo by Nkwanyana)



Woman and Taxi, Joburg CBD
(drawing by Kornienko²)

This study considers Johannesburg’s transit infrastructure as a system of threads traversing the city. The premise, that despite the end of apartheid’s spatial control much of the city’s patterns of human flow and dysfunctional development remain entrenched. For people travelling, whether to and from work or play, these patterns reflect boundaries and are defined by systems of road and rail that are at the same time both disjuncture and interconnection.

¹ Naipaul, V. S. (2010) *The Masque of Africa: Glimpses of African Belief*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

² From photo by Solam Mkhabela.

In whose place?
Confronting vestiges of the colonial landscape in Africa

The starting point of this study is Soweto and the ongoing consequence of apartheid's spatial distancing. The work is a visual exploration of human experience with the infrastructures of transit through the physical and emotional relationships to these structures of (dis)connection. The portraits become a collaborative process that reflects the diverse knowledges and experiences that Thabang and Kristen bring together to focus on the everyday human consequences of boundary in Johannesburg's retained legacies of extraction, colonialism, apartheid, post apartheid - capitalism.

This study asks the question, what is the reciprocal human experience of such urban boundaries as fear, distance, decay, cost, exploitation and how does this inform ideologies/values and thus the social constructs of our own and shared realities of the city? This focus on meaning points to the notion of boundary as symbol which opens the doors to both past and future. The study seeks to challenge perceptions of place and people, to see the extraordinary in the ordinary in such contrasts as the Metrorail and Gautrain.