David Goldblatt (29 November 1930 – 25 June 2018) was a South African photographer noted for his portrayal of South Africa during the period of apartheid. What differentiates David Goldblatt’s body of work from other anti-apartheid artists is that his lens did not focus primarily on the violence that took place during the apartheid era, instead it focused on how the people affected lived their everyday lives. He described himself as a “self-appointed observer and critic of the society into which he was born”. Goldblatt began photographing in 1948 and documented developments in South Africa throughout the period of apartheid up until his death in 2018. He died on 25 June 2018 in Johannesburg from cancer and his photographs can be viewed in various art museums and galleries. In 2006, he won the Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography. Below are some of this prestigious photographer's books that the Special Collection possesses.
The book is a multi-layered portrait of a photographer exposing the social flaws fault in Johannesburg during and after apartheid. It was published in 2010 by Roberto Koch and includes the photographs of Soweto, Joburg city and its suburbs during the 1950s till the 2000s. Interestingly, all photos taken during the 1950s till the 1990s are all in black and white. From the year 2000 onwards the photos are in colour. This collection consists of 2 volumes, one is the photographs and the other is a fictional novel.
David Goldblatt in Boksburg was published in 1982 as one of the earlier photobooks made in South Africa by the Gallery Press Cape Town. Boksburg was proclaimed as a middle class town on the eastern periphery of Johannesburg which was heavily dependent on black labour. It was during 1979 and 1980 that Goldblatt photographed and recorded everyday scenes in the streets, shops, clubs, churches, the municipality, homes, gardens as well as a cemetery using a fly-on-the-wall approach (a style of documentary-making used in film and television production).
The book was published in 2006 by Contrato, Roma and includes photographs exhibition that took place in Arles. It was published in connection with the exhibition. The book also has a chronology done by Alex Dodd about the life of David Goldblatt from page 230 till page 249 with the year from the 1930s till 2006.
Particulars is a second limited edition book of which 500 copies were printed, of these only 100 copies are signed and numbered. It consists of 27 black and white photographs which were mostly taken in 1975 a year before student protests. It is the longest awaited of any of Goldblatt’s books. Particulars is an exit away from the cruel history that South African had to endure. It was published by Goodman Gallery Editions in 2003.
Intersections is another departure in landscape format containing an important number of photographs in colour. It highlights the end of apartheid and has no overt sections, only blank pages that imply divisions and themes. Intersections is the term used by Goldblatt to use for the cross-currents of values, postures and people that he has investigated for more than 50 years. The book also features two essays and an interview thus confirming Goldblatt as one of the most perspective and moving photographers who ever lived.