The Department of Visual Art **University of Johannesburg 4th Year Exhibition FADA** Gallery 2016



Julia ALUNNI PASQUALI

My body of work focuses on movement and the dilemma that is cultural liminality. The artworks reflect a sense of being in between one place and another in terms of my own cultural identity. I do this by allowing personal objects and memories to show through in my work by utilizing a photographic technique called Van Dyke Brown in order to capture imprints of sentimental items. These items being exposed directly onto high quality paper enable me to explore drawing over the images, resulting in the works becoming layered with meaning.

My use of passport emblems and images reflect location, as well the use of perforation in order to display data within and on top of the artworks. These perforations include passport insignia and geographical coordinates, all indicating locations and tethering them to memories that I feel have helped shape my sense of cultural identity.

These artworks are essentially my own attempt at piecing together a new, hybrid identity for myself by drawing on the past in order to do so.























































### Danika BESTER

#### Insecure

The grotesque body becomes forgrounded within my studies, as it represents a loss of boundaries and distinct borders. Thus, it becomes a body that consumes excessively and uncontrollably, a body captured in a state of constant change.

This body has become the focus of my own practical work, as it represents a deeply situated loss of self, due to the effects of the abject and the grotesque.

These themes, together, appear to be conjoined and construct a space, that allows for the understanding of the role of the grotesque body in contemporary visual culture.

I attempt to explore this body by creating an installation, which projects the fundamental characteristics of the grotesque body within a constructed secondary reality.





#### Nazeerah JACUB

Being a young Muslim female of Indian origin in South Africa the concept of 'confinement' has a great impact on my identity and the subtleties within the beliefs of my culture. Within my artworks I have focused on location as an element that helps to define ones cultural identity. Using the Mus'Allah (Prayer mat), in this instance, symbolises a space that belongs to the Muslim woman which she occupies during prayer. By placing it on the floor it serves as an act to claim and demarcate a space. This is not just any space, this space represents the architecture of mosques within the historical context of Islam. The space represented herein is one allocated to men only particularly within the mosque setting. Once such space is known as the Mihrab (Prayer Niche). The act of recreating the three dimensionality of the *Mihrab* and *Mus'Allah* allows a woman to claim this 'public' male designated space for herself within her own prayer niche which is situated outside the confined domestic space of her home. Moreover the materiality of the artwork portrays the sensitivity surrounding these ideals and the prohibited territories with regard to women in Islam. I have chosen to create this *Mus'Allah* onto a soft silk-like fabric. The silkiness of the materiality carries connotations of women.





#### Melissa MAGUA

My research investigates the role memory plays in structuring ones identity, but more importantly, involves examining the way in which memories can be reconstructed according to an individual's experience. The idea to explore my personal identity is done by inserting myself into the past in order to understand the compilation of influences it has had on my present. In addition, my research also examines family memories and histories that have been passed down to me, but I have never experienced. These are explored through reconstructed photographs.

I have chosen to use sources derived from personal photographs that have been passed down to me as reference material in order to form the basis of my paintings. I have therefore chosen painting as the main medium for the formation of my works as well as photographic prints transferred onto canvas. In addition to painting, I also include the physical material of lace curtaining throughout my body of work. This is critically examined as a memory I have from my grandmother's house and subsequently a pattern that creates a dialogue between used photographs from the past and a distinct memory from my childhood.





#### Kelly MCLOUGLIN

In western society, it has become widely accepted that beauty equates to femininity. Although the idealisation of feminine beauty has changed over generations, there has been one constant, being that the embodied idealised feminine form is vibrant and youthful. With the accessibility of diverse media, the notion of beauty has become perpetuated, as we are persistently mass-fed portrayals of effervescent young women. As women begin to age, they are ,in turn, faced with the conflictions of aging and losing grip on longevity, critically grappling with their appearance. Many women of an older generations may feel pressured into trying to attain a look that is youthful and vibrant. In turn, women of the younger generations may begin to fear the aging process, rendering the inevitability of aging distressing. My work aims to challenge the ideals placed on feminine beauty by primarily exploring the skin and how it behaves as one ages. My work is a hybrid of youthful and aged skin, using portraits of myself with older skin overlapping my own. Using Photoshop, I have created a skin that is ultimately one that is a combination of both aged and youthful flesh, flowing in and out of a space which is both youthful and aged.





#### Rankin MOSTER







#### Mikylah SPANENBERG

My artworks revolve around the cyborg and use the cyborg in a metaphoric and symbolic way instead of using the literal imagery of the cyborg. The reason why I use the cyborg concept in my work is to comment on my personal beliefs of how I, and perhaps the majority of humanity, perceives cyborgs. Throughout my works I have used myself as a signifier for the human race as a whole. My body of work is framed by the confrontationional and complex relationship between humans and technology. The transitions in my works demonstrate the concept of the evolved and developed human through the imagery of the female figure transforming into a cyborg. My work speaks of both the positive and negative aspects technology has on humanity in today's society, as well as the dependency we have on technology. I also speak about how cyborgs are often considered to be 'perfect' when, in fact, technology has many flaws. This integral relationship of dependency is not only for humans on technology but also technology on humans. My works comment on my own views of the current state of humanity in this cyborg age, and how we are all considered to be cyborgs based on the way we live and interact with technology in our daily lives.





#### Nicole SWARTZ

My practical work questions the general trend on social media as to why different kinds of women seem to all aspire to look the same through make-up. It further questions whether or not this is to please the 'male gaze' and whether women aspire to look the same or try to establish a uniform standard of beauty, in order to level the 'playing field' in competing for the approval of men (or other women)? My video pieces and paintings represent notions of beauty through accounting for the excessive application of makeup and the construction of one's beauty, which to a large extent has been informed by a 'viral' understanding of what is considered beautiful. These 'viral'make-up conventions therefore serve as digital representations of beauty, which are made available for the masses to view through the fast-paced influx of images on social media. I have employed Cindy Sherman's act of re-representation through applying make-up according to contemporary pop-culture standards and through challenging notions of the gaze. Furthermore, I have also utilised Nancy Burson's conception of 'homogeneous' understandings of beauty in present pop culture in my video pieces and paintings which re-represent established beauty standards in a critical manner.











## **Kivishan THUMBIRAN**

My work explores my visions of Dystopia. I photoshop and digitally manipulate images of animals to depict the various sub genes of Dystopia from technological to political and ecological. I use animals as my images, because I believe that humanity will either be wiped out or, at least, be the cause of Dystopia. I then draw out the animals in ballpoint pen on a white background. This leaves the animals' imagery open to new contexts to fill that background. To fill that white background of my drawings with another Dystopian space in the form of an installation. The space consists of hanging elements - the drawn animals, a ground element which consists of astro turf and large wall sized prints which, together, create the Dystopian space. All of the elements work together to create the missing background of the drawings. In the prints the animals are present but in the form of black silhouettes. This reverses the condition of the original drawings. The ground bubbles and oozes with the pestilence of pollution eluding to an ecological Dystopia and the astro turf is a synthetic solution to the world we have destroyed through pollution. I also make an appearance as the human figures on the printed landscapes.





#### Lynette VAN TONDER

#### Fragments

My art practice is in search of personal and collective identity as a white female artist living and working in Johannesburg. After a social event connecting artists and curators held at Nugget Square, the decision to focus my research on inner city identity based on life in and around Nugget Square, was secured. Life inside the square is a world apart from that which is encountered outside the four walls. It is this dichotomy that intrigues. Research Google maps of the area downloaded bit by bit, in fragments, rendering squares containing map and others left blank. Memories were invoked of an old family kaross, which linked to my past artistic interest in things covered and uncovered. A lateral progression tied motley maps to a methodology of squares sewn together, creating a layered, safe space of comfort and belonging. My normal methodology is challenged by the creation of maps through printing and mark making via stitching, which I normally avoid. This tenuous methodology delivers an unexpected and rewarding meditative quality. The link between maps, memory, stitching and identity awakens a desire to be connected, covered and comforted in a city that sometimes offers little of either, especially to women.



# Extract from the speech at the opening of the 4th Year exhibition 15 November 2016, by David Paton, Senior Lecturer in the Department.

Good evening everybody and congratulations to the 4th Year students whose works are exhibited here tonight.

This has been the year in which the *#FeesMustFall* protests have been most vociferously heard, not only here at UJ, but all over the world, as the legitimate grievances of the student body have made their mark and their voices strongly heard.

Parents, members of the public, even staff and some students have, with credible argument, stated that university campuses have not been the most appropriate place for the battle to take place: Parliament, the Chamber of Mines, Bank Head Offices and Luthuli House being far more appropriate spaces in which the legitimacy of the call to abolish fees should be made.

What we must not lose sight of is the fact that university campuses have been the most protean spaces of dissent and revolution the world over: Think of the 1968 Paris student demonstrations, the protests in Berkeley and my own battles with police dogs and 'mellow yellows' on the Wits Campus in 1985. Also, *#Fees Must Fall* is part of a wider set of socio-economic and identity struggles, one of which is for a so-called 'decolonised curriculum'.

In March this year, UJ Student Representative Council's Tshepo Moloi argued that in order for the education system to be "decolonised", the curriculum needed to reflect the struggles of black African students, going on to state: "what we are saying is that we want

to see ourselves in these degrees we are lectured on." Tomorrow, this Faculty will begin to unpack some of the thorny issues of curriculum transformation by taking stock of our current curricula and what strides we have made in Departments to, amongst other things, examine "the extent to which the traditional boundaries of our disciplines can be expanded beyond the existing parameters to incorporate the context and knowledge of Africa and more broadly, the South."

Whilst these conversations continue in universities countrywide, the work of our 4th Year students exists here and now as a showcase of student ideas and responses to the gritty, grubby world in which we live. Perhaps at no time in the recent past has senior student work been opened up for scrutiny, interrogation and criticism.

In each body of work here, the student must not only recognise themselves within their content and in the spaces this academy has provided but must also activate their individual voices so as to be clearly heard within the noise of both the socio-political world as well as the world of social media where the twittering classes reside.

These students present us, as their audience, with a challenge in which we must, in turn, recognise them; the legitimacy of their struggles to make headway within this gritty, and semantically dirty world, from within the cocooned, clean and supportive space of this white (and black) cube. As from next year, you will have to jostle, along with the smart graduates of our sister institutions for spaces which will be far less supportive. You will all have to be more reflective of the *realpolitik* into which you insert yourselves. We, as a Department, have faith that you are ready for this real world and, it is hoped, that your survival through or even avoidance of some of the more strident and violent student actions this year has stood you in good stead to confidently begin to pursue your careers.

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