

# Presentness, Memory and History: Thabiso Sekgala, “Homeland”

---

MARIE-HÉLÈNE GUTBERLET

South African photography has developed out of the relationship between both the socio-political history and the culture of remembrance of South Africa and the history of documentary photography. The photographs that have emerged in this geo-political context have been disseminated throughout the world and have become a part of the collective global memory in an unparalleled way, giving us reason to believe that it is these pictures, and not historical facts, that define how we see South Africa’s history. Against the backdrop of the conference *How History Enters Photography*, it thus seems appropriate to investigate contemporary South African photography in relation to both the history of photography and the history of remembrance through photography.<sup>1</sup> In this essay, I will describe this relation by focusing on the body of work “Homeland” by the young South African artist photographer Thabiso Sekgala, who died violently in October 2014 and to whom this essay is dedicated.

I came to know Thabiso 2010 while preparing the exhibition project *Shoe Shop* held in Johannesburg in 2012. I was quite familiar with South African photography, but it was only while being in the country that I became sensitive to its dimensions and conditions for remembering apartheid and the eventual reconciliation after 1994. I learned to see pictures not only for what

---

1 The conference was held in June 2012 at the University of Frankfurt. See: <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=4400> (accessed 6 April 2013).

they depict but also for the impact of their visibility, accessibility, distribution, the general disregard for, and the separation of audiences. Whilst there was a general but diffuse acknowledgement of apartheid and resistance movements in Europe and the United States – triggered by images –, public audiences in South Africa were missing, as South Africa became more and more isolated politically and culturally. I came to see the work by South African photographers which, if not directly referring to the history of the country, as nonetheless characterized by the idea of an entanglement of aesthetics and politics, beauty and violence. As a curator and scholar living in Germany and working abroad, I profited a great deal from my discussions with artists and cultural workers and their generosity in sharing their views and beliefs. I would like express my gratitude to Jodi Bieber, Doung Anwar Jahangeer, Rangoato Hlasane, Thenjiwe Nkosi, Cedric Nunn Musa Nxumalo, late Lesley Perkes, Jürgen Schadeberg, Thabiso Sekgala, Samantha Simons, Penny Siopis, Cara Snyman (to name but them), who allowed me to see so much more.

The question of how history enters photography implies first and foremost that photography is a kind of vessel (or a surface, or mirror) for history in which something is captured that can be visually substantialized. Photography is thus conceived as a medium for recording visual facts, whether staged or otherwise; it produces a visual document. Viewed from this angle, history becomes accessible in a setting where real circumstances, events, currents, upheavals and so forth are recorded and stored in the medium of photography.

The reverse question, how photography enters history, is much easier to answer than the first. With the passing of time – in other words, with the growing distance in time and space between the context in which the picture originated and the moment of beholding – virtually every photographic image becomes a historical document of an event, an aesthetic attitude, a world of objects and technology. Not only does this distance continue to grow, it helps us to realize that a picture is a historical time-image as well as an object-image. Because the question of how history enters photography is much more complicated, we should first clarify a number of terms that may seem convenient, but whose meaning remains vague. I am talking about “event”, “incident” and “document”. Not only do we need to discuss them, we also need to explore who defines when an incident becomes a historical event and when a photograph becomes a document. Before we do this, we should

acknowledge that not only the meaning of the terms "photography" and "history" are in constant flux, so is the substance denoted by these terms. But how are these two things interconnected? In my opinion, the relation between photography and history is defined by a decisive element that we have not mentioned so far: the resonance of photography in history and vice versa.

In his methodological text *Archaeology of Knowledge* (*Archéologie du Savoir*, 1969; English translation by Edgar Allan, 1972), Michel Foucault distinguishes between "document" and "monument". For our analysis of the quality of relations between history and photography, this distinction could prove useful for describing the transformation that documents (and for me, photographs belong to this category) undergo, which has far-reaching consequences for the meaning of the content within the document. The hermeneutic potential of transformation is thus carried over in the distinction between material and content, between apperception and object and between designed form and found form. We also find it in the shift in what is visually perceived both over the course of time and in accordance with the changes in historical understanding – something which Stephen Greenblatt describes as "resonance". Greenblatt states, "By resonance I mean the power of the displayed object to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which it may be taken by a viewer to stand." (Greenblatt 1990: 11, Karp/Lavine 1991)

According to Greenblatt, resonance refers to the transfer of perspectives from or beyond the individual work on display, that is the transfer of a specific photograph into a social context where it can then be reinterpreted and renewed, again and again.

Both Michel Foucault and Stephen Greenblatt associate a specific document with a social perspective and with possibilities of interpretation that depend on changes in society. They also argue that, within an extended interpretative context, the specific work exhibited – the object in this case is the specific photograph and the medium of photography as a category – is fundamentally adaptable in a historiographic sense. This history of adaptation thus informs the understanding of photography within its own history, while it also informs the history of remembrance in the form of photographic substitutes.

## WITNESSES, ICONS AND MONUMENTS

The history of South African photography and its stylistic developments are remarkably closely tied to the country's political history. To this day, the pictures of South African history play a prominent role in how the country sees itself and how it is seen abroad. Borrowing from Greenblatt, we can sense the resonance beyond formal boundaries that makes the complex cultural dynamic in which the picture was taken palpable and that charges the picture with a kind of energy that is still perceivable in the moment of viewing.

The history of South African photography begins in the middle of the nineteenth century, with studio portraits of a new colonial upper class, with documentary pictures and, as John Peffer expresses it in his book *Art at the End of Apartheid* (2009), with “pseudo-ethnographic images of ‘natives’ for the commercial market” (Peffer 2009: 242). To this, Peffer adds, “photography was part of Europe’s new arsenal of technological advancements during the age of empire.” (ibidem) It was in the 1960s that serial photography – journalistic/documentary as well as artistic – evolved in South Africa in reaction to the increasing spatial, social and political stabilization of the apartheid regime (ibidem: 251). During this time, Jürgen Schadeberg, Peter Magubane, Bob Gosani, G.R. Naidoo, David Goldblatt and other photographers took pictures of everyday life. Their motifs showed apartheid’s hair-raising rhetoric and politics as well as the harsh reality of its conditions, unmasking the official propaganda-oriented media through their photographs (Weinberg 1989). They thus worked on two fronts because “they were critical of systematic oppression, and they redefined the basis for imagining a different South Africa” (Peffer 2009: 262).<sup>2</sup>

Schadeberg and Goldblatt, especially, had a decisive influence on the educational development of the next generation of photographers – Schadeberg in the context of the magazine *DRUM* in the 1950s and 1960s

---

2 Peffer refers here to the work of the agency Afrapix, which was founded on the model of the Magnum Photos Cooperative. See also *ibid.*, p. 254, among others. Also: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/afrapix-timeline-1978-1991> (accessed 28<sup>th</sup> January 2013).

(Schadeberg/Humann 1991), and Goldblatt as a founder of the highly respected photography school Market Photo Workshop 1989<sup>3</sup> (MPW), where the technical know-how of photography was taught and exhibitions were organized in its show room. Internationally well-known photographers such as Jodi Bieber, Zanele Muholi, Lolo Veleko, and Guy Tillim went to the MPW, along with Thabiso Sekgala, who had his first major exhibition at MPW in 2011. As a member of the younger post-apartheid generation, Thabiso was not only connected with the photography scene through the MPW, he also knew the history of South African photography and was personally acquainted with older photographers and their works.

The scope of resonance of Sekgala's photographs becomes evident by looking at a group of pictures that have a high level of resonance and that could be categorized as "struggle photography" (Peffer 2009: 254). My goal is to show the relevance of the photographic image as a historical document and to discuss its transformation from a "document" to a "monument" (Foucault).

In the mid-1970s, Masana Sam Nzima was a journalist and amateur photographer for the paper *The World* in Soweto. On 16 June 1976, he took a picture of twelve-year-old Hector Pieterse, who had been shot on the sidelines of a demonstration of secondary school students against the Bantu Education Act in Soweto.<sup>4</sup> Altogether Nzima took six pictures showing Mbuyisa Makhubu, an older fellow student, carrying the fatally wounded Hector Pieterse accompanied by Hector's sister Antoinette (fig. 1). Whereas Hector Pieterse may not have been the first young person to die in this strike, he was the first to be in a photograph that became well-known around the globe (Peffer (2009: 55).

---

3 See: <http://www.marketphotoworkshop.co.za/> (accessed 1 January 2013).

4 For more on the Bantu Education Act from 1953, respectively the "segregation law" later called Black Education Act, see Clark/Worger (2004); Byrnes (1996); Giliomee (2009).

*Fig. 1: Hector Pieterse Memorial; on the right: Sam Nzima's picture of Mbuyisa Makhubu carrying Hector Pieterse accompanied by Hector's sister Antoinette, Soweto, June 16, 1976.*



Photo MH Gutberlet, September 7, 2010, all rights reserved.

In contrast to the photographs of the student strikes taken by Peter Magubane, which show the political slogans and the militant anti-apartheid attitude of “To Hell with Afrikaans!” Nzima’s photographs concentrate on the drama of the dying child. The distraught faces and dramatic gestures of Antoinette and Mbuyisa create an iconic image of the Black people’s fight for freedom. I believe it is important to stress that the more explicitly political pictures have less resonance without this emotional intensification, although they are more aligned with the justified demands of the Black Consciousness Movement founded in the late 1960s.<sup>5</sup> According to Peffer, these pictures have entered history as snapshots of the fight against racism and segregation and have thus become icons of the resistance movement. Because they were published, however, they also served the South African security police as a resource to identify and arrest political activists (see Peffer 2009: 259). After the publication of his photograph in *The World*, Nzima was questioned by

5 The Black Consciousness Movement can be compared to the Black Power Movement in the US; see here especially the writings by Biko (2002); Gibson (1988). See also Ndlovu (1999).

the security police. He left Soweto, only to be harassed by the police again in Bushbuckridge, where he lived (in today's Northern province of Limpopo). In 1978, the newspaper *The World* was banned, and it was not until 1998 that Nzima reacquired the copyright for his pictures of Hector Pieter-son.<sup>6</sup> According to a wall text in the Hector Pieter-son Museum, Mbuyisa Makhubu (who carried the wounded Hector) also had to flee. He went first to Botswana then Nigeria, where his trail was lost.

The subject of the photograph is immortalized by the Hector Pieter-son Memorial, the first of its kind to be dedicated to the student uprising. Erected in the late 1990's on Khumalo Street, Orlando Soweto, it stands only a few hundred metres from where he died. Hector did not belong to the core group of politically active young people. As such, he may not be representative of those involved in the struggle, but over time, he has become synonymous with the 566 people killed during the 1976 uprising. In 2001 the Hector Pie-ter-son Museum was built directly next to the Memorial. It has housed a per-manent exhibition since 2003, and one room is devoted to the victims of 16 June 1976, where the names of those who were killed that day are listed (see here Hlongwane 2008).

Today, many tourists from South Africa and abroad come to visit the memorial. They walk through the grounds, look at Masana Sam Nzima's photograph of Hector Pieter-son, contemplate the flowing water that repre-sents tears, and take pictures. Many selfies taken at the Hector Pieter-son Memorial can be found online. They say "I was here", "I know about it", "I am a witness of this place". The image of Hector Pieter-son represents an attitude toward and a transformation of the meaning of this photograph. It enables today's visitors to enter history. In the process, the picture itself also under-goes a significant change. The picture that once transformed viewers all over the world into witnesses of a historic event – while also unintentionally feed-ing information to the security service – is becoming less of a visual stimu-lant to memories and more a means for viewers to link themselves with events of the past, thereby using photography to stage a post-apartheid reality

---

6 For more on this, see <http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/masana-sam-nzima> and Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, *Story of a Photograph – Sam Nzima*, <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/pmh01a.html> (both accessed 18 January 2013).

that in turn monumentalizes the earlier struggles. History enters this particular picture precisely in the moment when the document – where the intensity of the visible past can still be felt – becomes part of visitors’ self-portrayal today. In the course of monumentalization, traces going back to the historical core of the document are wiped out, and it becomes not much more than a decorative accessory of post-history.

There are many of these iconic, highly symbolic “struggle pictures” in South African photography. This picture genre fits well with a specific kind of contemporary politics and with a kind of aesthetics of memory and memorials; it also serves the needs of a post-apartheid national and international middle class. It is significant that the exhibition courses in museums like Robben Island and District 6 in Cape Town, the Apartheid Museum, Museum Africa and Constitution Hill in Johannesburg (see Combes 2003), as well as the Hector Pieterse Museum in Soweto rely primarily on photography. The walls of all these museums, inside and out, display large black and white prints that virtually jump out at the viewer.

Photography plays an important role in the context of post-apartheid exhibitions for several reasons. First, we can argue that photography, including private photography, was the most prominent medium in South Africa during the twentieth century and thus one of the most important visual sources of the past.<sup>7</sup> One project in particular, the Black Photo Album/Look at Me 1890:1950 by the photographer Santu Mofokeng for example, testifies a systematically repressed and ignored pre-apartheid black middle class. Thanks to Mofokeng’s project, it is now finding its way into public consciousness again.<sup>8</sup>

The style of South African photojournalism can also be described as being rich in symbolism, full of contrasts and having the tendency to address the viewer directly. The style reflects the political extremes found in the apartheid situation and living conditions. Its simple and crude ideology was free of any nuances and produced an unequivocal symbolic pictorial language to

---

7 See the exhibition “Aufstieg und Fall der Apartheid: Fotografie und Bürokratie des täglichen Lebens”, Haus der Kunst, Munich, 15 February – 26 May 2013.

8 A series of 80 plates is available on Santu Mofokeng’s webpage at: <http://cargocollective.com/santumofokeng/black-photo-album> (accessed 29 January 2013). This is probably the largest collection of private photographs in South Africa. For more on this, see Peffer (2009: 248,275).

catch the viewers' attention. The harsh political contrasts nourished a way to see things in hard black and white contrasts – with not much space for in-betweens, ambiguities and complexities. The aesthetics of contrast then is enhanced by the light conditions found in South Africa due to its southern location and slanted sunlight. Sunlight does not come directly from above, so everything photographed seems illuminated from the side and glowing from within, giving all motifs a three-dimensional almost sculptural character.

In the context of South African apartheid, photography has represented a specifically political and aesthetical image of history from the start, in so far as the historical event is already a part of history. Any given pictorial motif and any given scene is inherently contaminated by the *mise en scene* of apartheid, and in its own way, by the particular quality of light in South Africa.

After the apartheid regime collapsed in 1994, what consequences did this have on the historical content of photography? What is happening with these events in photography today? How do our experiences in today's historical constellations enter contemporary photography?

The prominent use of historical photography can be understood as exposing and distancing while simultaneously monumentalizing. Current references to the history of apartheid are more likely to be based on our relationship to pictures than to the historical events that they depict. Thabiso Sekgala, in his photographic body of work "Homeland" proposes an alternative, which is to trace our current relationship back to the places where historical events occurred, thus allowing us to look closely and see not only the change that has taken place, but also to sense the temporal dimension of this change.

## LANDSCAPES AND INTERIORS

Thabiso Sekgala created "Homeland" between 2008 and 2011. The series is rooted in the current spaces and landscapes of a country that is immersed in its history. Although an untrained eye may not be able to notice or realize this, it should be obvious that the major impact of colonialism and of "grand apartheid" on all areas of life cannot just dissolve into thin air in 20 years. The term "grand apartheid" describes the most intense phase in the 1960s and 1970s, when racial separation, the separation of places of residence and the founding of homelands have been enforced. Sekgala turns his camera on

simple, direct scenes – solitary buildings, objects and people he captures on location – people and things that at first glance seem to lack any particular relevance, but whose picture makes their existence acknowledgeable. His view is comparable to the films and photographic works of William Kentridge, Jo Ractliffe, Claude Lanzmann, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Abderrahmane Sissako or Hartmut Bitomsky<sup>9</sup> and is directed at details beneath the immediacy of the landscape, in which we presume a hidden historical dimension. These artists and filmmakers see themselves as “archaeologists of a knowledge” of which landscape is a part. They strive to address the invisible past under the visible surface. Sekgala’s photographs show a similar motivation. They transform the viewers into detectives who question both the motif, the motivation to take the picture and themselves.

Why are the roads in South Africa in such a good condition?

---

9 See, for instance, the films William Kentridge’s *Felix in Exile* (1993); Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah* (1985) and *Sobibor, 14 octobre 1943, 16 heures* (2001); Straub and Huillet’s *Trop Tôt, Trop Tard* (1982); Abderrahmane Sissako’s *En attendant le bonheur* (1995); Hartmut Bitomsky’s *VW Komplex* (1989); and Jo Ractliffe’s exhibition and book project *As Terras Do Fim do Mundo/ Lands of the End of the World*.

*Fig.2: Thabiso Sekgala, Road to Pankop, former Bophuthatswana*



From the series "Homeland" (2010), courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

What is the story behind these strange landscapes that look like abandoned industrial ruins, or parched land that was hastily abandoned? As in the works by the artists and filmmakers mentioned above, the landscapes Sekgala captures are neither innocent nor natural; they are historical crimes scenes in transformation.

*Fig.3: Thabiso Sekgala, Landmark, Troya, former KwaNdebele*



From the series “Homeland” (2009), courtesy of the artist’s estate and the Goodman Gallery.

Sekgala lifts away their indefinable surface appearance and reveals the political landscape and map of the past that lies beneath: the stones marking the border of the former homeland (KNG: KwaNdebele Government).

Or a bus stop from a past public transportation system (fig. 4).

*Fig. 4: Thabiso Sekgala, Erasmus Busstop, former Bophuthatswana, from the series "Homeland" (2011)*



Courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

Sekgala documents the rural areas of South Africa, the new provinces of Northwest Province and Mpumalanga and the former homelands of Bophuthatswana and KwaNdebele. The homelands were introduced in 1958 as part of the apartheid regime's strategy to force the non-white South African population out of the cities by relocating them to rural areas. Urban life was to be exclusively reserved for whites; non-whites were expected to identify with the land and were only meant to enter the cities to work. This system forced the migrant workers to travel weekly, if not daily, to work in the cities and then return to their artificial living areas. Some were forced to travel up to eight hours one way. The homelands and the pass system through which people's movement was controlled may have been abandoned when apartheid was abolished, but they are still inscribed in the landscape and in people's lives as a territorial order and system of reference. David Goldblatt's *The Transported of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey* (1989) is a particularly important photographic series in this context. It shows people in a bus

on their several-hour journey from Pretoria to KwaNdebele after work (see Goldblatt 2013)<sup>10</sup>.

Sekgala's Erasmus Busstop appears to be a direct reference to Goldblatt's *Transported*. In this picture, Sekgala picks up the trace of the travelling workers and gives them a potential place of arrival and departure, thus connecting different places and bridging the twenty years between Goldblatt's work and his own. Although the homelands stand for forced mobility and forced labour, over the decades they have become reality. Despite their roots in apartheid, people of all ages refer to them as "home-home". The transformation in the territorial understanding has been inevitably inscribed in reality, radiating like pathological symptoms into the present.<sup>11</sup> Sekgala writes, "At

---

10 In the publisher's announcement, it says: "After *On the Mines*, *The Transported of KwaNdebele* is the second of David Goldblatt's books re-designed and expanded by the artist for Steidl Publishers. Dating originally from 1989, it talks about the workers of an apartheid tribal homeland for blacks, KwaNdebele, which has no industry, very few opportunities for jobs, and is a long way from the nearest industrial- commercial activity of white-controlled Pretoria. Workers from KwaNdebele catch buses in the very early morning, some as early as 2:45 am, in order to be at their workplaces in Pretoria by 7:00. At the end of the day they repeat the journey in the other direction, to get home at between 8 and 10 pm. Goldblatt takes us on their bone-jarring journeys through the night, which is a metaphor for their arduous struggle toward freedom itself. In photographs devoid of sentimentality and artifice, the grim determination of these people to survive and overcome emerges in almost heroic terms. Brenda Goldblatt, filmmaker and writer, interviewed some of the bus-riding workers who endured not only these journeys but a civil war precipitated by the apartheid government's attempt to foist a kind of independence on KwaNdebele; a condition which would have made the workers foreigners in the land of their birth, South Africa, and thus deprived them of their limited right to work there. Interviews with contemporary (2012) bus-riders fill out the account. Phillip van Niekerk, former editor of the *Mail & Guardian*, provides an essay on KwaNdebele, its place in the logic of 'grand apartheid' and its half-life in post-apartheid South Africa. See: <http://www.steidl.de/flycms/de/Buecher/The-Transported-of-KwaNdebele/2833345258.html?SID=L Duj55H1cbb8> (accessed 19 February 2013).

11 See Jo Ractliffe's term "landscape as pathology" in her work on the Angolan-South African border territory: Kathleen MacQueen/Ractliffe (2012:184). See

Easter time and Christmas, but even in ordinary conversation they (the people) make a direct connection to a rural 'origin' even if never having been born there and situating themselves firmly in contemporary urbanism."<sup>12</sup>

The "Homeland" series includes several portraits and photographs of interiors in addition to public spaces, buildings and landscapes. The interiors – with their small old-fashioned furniture, fabrics and washed-out colours – have an air of charity shops and flea markets.

*Fig. 5: Thabiso Sekgala, Johanna Mthombeni, Londing, former KwaNdebele, from the series "Homeland" (2009)*



Courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

Sekgala notes:

"The photograph of the girl and the lampshade [...] made me think of how my grandmother came with furniture given by her employers in the city. My grandmother used

---

also Santu Mofokeng series of 17 photographs called "Poisoned Landscapes" (2008), <http://cargocollective.com/santumofokeng/poisoned-landscapes> (accessed 3 February 2013).

12 See press release from 29 March 2011 in The South African Art Times.

to work a lot in the suburbs of Johannesburg – we call it ‘the kitchens’ – like for a white madam, whatever, in the city. They would always bring things that they would get from their work places, the leftovers from Missus and Baas. When people renovate their houses, there are always these things that they get. For me this image talks about how items from the urban areas came to the rural areas” (Sekgala 2012:202).

The practice of white employers giving their old clothes and household goods, including furniture and drapes, to their black employees is one of the narrative elements that, once we become aware of it, can easily be found in films, books, everyday life and interiors everywhere. J.M. Coetzee, for example, describes this practice of giving old things away in his novel *Life and Times of Micheal K* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1983). In Coetzee’s story, the recipients are not interested in the old junk given to them by the whites, and they toss it in the ditch. We do not have to search far to find traces of things in movement from a white to a black/coloured context of use, and from an urban to a rural context, while arts and craftworks travel in the other direction and find their way into cities, museums and modern kitchens.

The art historian Walter Grasskamp writes in his article “Ohne Worte” (Without Words, 1980) about the objects depicted in documentary photography:

“Of course, the history of these objects is not in these pictures; it lays inherently beyond the reach of a snapshot. However, for the perception of historicity and historical change, photographs (such as these) are valuable, because they – and here the mixing of media is allowed – are able to talk about history in a much more accessible way than many a historian.” (Grasskamp 1980:23 – my translation)

*Fig.6: Thabiso Sekgala, Semotlase, former Bophuthatswana, from the "Homeland" series (2009)*



Courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

*Fig.7: Dodo, Londing, former KwaNdebele, from the "Homeland" series (2009).*



Courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

Landscapes changed by history, interiors furnished by past practices with moving objects, houses functioning as homes in the artificial context of the homelands, young people living in these rural areas of South Africa today – Sekgala situates his pictures as interfaces between the pictorial world of the half-deserted areas of the present and the self-portrayal of a youth that defines itself through its mediatized global attitude toward life.

*Fig. 8: Thabiso Sekgala, Road divide Gauteng and Northwest Province, Hammanskraal, from the series "Homeland" (2011)*



Courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

History rises to the surface in photographed objects and details – such as the British-looking school uniforms, which are reminders of the colonial past and the apartheid education system, or the faded lamp shade or a t-shirt. It is a light contemporary surface that requires a sense of history regarding the era depicted, combined with a knowledge of the history of photography, to let its complexity emerge.

Sekgala's photographs are silent time-images. They neither monumentalize their motifs, nor do they create a distance toward them; they "make the historicity of the world of objects palpable" (Grasskamp) and make the case for their awareness. Unlike the loud and sensational photographic portraits of the times that denounce the inhumane living conditions of a bureaucratic apparatus of hate, Sekgala's photographs display conditions that are inwardly directed, sunken and given over to a slow forgetting. As such, they act as intersections where nostalgia and remembering intermingle with moments of struggle and a longing for the future. The traces of the past are embedded within them, and it is up to us, the beholders of the historical resonances they catalyze, to become detectives in the game of appearance and disappearance, the visible and the invisible, and to determine how this relates to our knowledge making.

## Thanks

The series "Homeland" consists of approximately 40 pictures. My gratitude goes to Thabiso for the time and work spent together. I would like to thank the Goodman Gallery taking care of the artist's estate for their generous support and their agreement on the reproduction of the photographs in this volume.

## REFERENCES

- Biko, Steve ([1978] 2002): *I Write What I Like*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Byrnes, Rita M. (1996): *South Africa: A Country Study*, Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress.
- Clark, Nancy L./Worger, William H. (2004): *South Africa – The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, Seminar Studies in History, London: Pearson Education Limited, pp. 48–52.
- Combes, Annie E. (2003): *History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa*, Durham: Duke University Press.

- Foucault, Michel ([1969] b1972): *Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Edgar Allan, New York: Pantheon Books.
- Gibson, Nigel (1988): *Black Consciousness 1977–1987; The Dialectics of Liberation in South Africa*. Online. Available HTTP: <http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/gibson.%20final%20edit.pdf> (accessed 23 January 2013).
- Giliomee, Hermann (2009): “A Note on Bantu Education 1953–1970”, in: *South African Journal of Economics* 77(1), pp. 190–198.
- Goldblatt, David (2013): *The Transported of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey*, New York: Aperture 1989 / Göttingen: Steidl.
- Greenblatt, Stephen (1990): “Resonance and Wonder”, in: *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 43 (4), pp. 11–34.
- Hlongwane, Ali Khangela (ed.) (2008): *Commemoration, Memory, Mapping and Heritage*, Johannesburg: Hector Pieterse Museum.
- Karp, Ivan /Lavine, Steven D. (eds.) (1991): *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, London/Washington: Smithsonian Books.
- MacQueen, Kathleen/Ractliffe, Jo (2012): “Silence as an act of recovery”, in: Lien Heidenreich-Seleme/Sean O’Toole (eds.), *Über(w)unden. Art in Troubled Times*, Johannesburg: Jacana Media, pp. 182–197.
- Mandela, Nelson (1994): *Long Walk to Freedom*, New York: Back Bay Books.
- Ndlovu, Sifiso Nxolisi (1999): *The Soweto Uprisings: Counter-memories of June 1976*, Randburg: Ravan Press.
- Peffer, John (2009): *Art at the End of Apartheid*, London/Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Schadeberg, Jürgen/Humann, Klaus (1991): *DRUM – Die fünfziger Jahre – Bilder aus Südafrika*, Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard bei Zweitausend-eins
- Sekgala, Thabiso (2012): “Where is home?”, in: M.-H Gutberlet/Cara Snyman (eds.), *Shoe Shop*, Johannesburg: Jacana Media, pp. 200–203.
- Weinberg, Paul (1989): “Apartheid – a vigilant witness. A reflection on photography”, in: Willem Campschreur/Joost Divendal (eds.), *Culture in Another South Africa*, New York: Olive Branch Press, pp. 60–70.