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The 'Great Walk and More': Thupelo artists' Workshop 2010

Performing community through the Visual Arts in Cape Town, South Africa

N. Jade Gibson

- 1 Recent theory in the field of anthropology of art has argued artists and ethnographers use similar methods and techniques in their work (Schneider 1993, 1996, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010; Calzadilla and Marcus 2006; Schneider and Wright 2010), drawing in part on Gell's notion of art as a mediator of social relations (Gell 1998, 1996), and artists as negotiators of this practice. These approaches suggest a new and challenging mode of investigation into the working methods of contemporary artists. This still exploratory approach pushes beyond the limitations of traditional art historical aesthetic interpretation to investigate further into processes of artwork construction, and new modes of analysis, examining new and different methods of working, such as how artists may collect and categorise, (Schneider *ibid.*; Calzadilla and Marcus *ibid.*; Schneider and Wright *ibid.*). Contemporary visual art is often reified as a practice 'set apart' from society, in which a relationality of 'artefact qua artefact' (Berger 1972; Root 1996; Strathern 1990) establishes value within a rarefied art historical trajectory of aesthetic value (primarily Western derived) emphasising progression and innovation. Even public art may still appear to be on a stage 'apart' from the everyday, its esoteric meaning and self-referentiality separating audience from creator.
- 2 This paper looks specifically at a collective process of art-making, a Thupelo Artists' Workshop in Cape Town, South Africa, 2010. This was organized by Greatmore Art Studios in Woodstock in the middle of South Africa's World Cup, when South Africa played global centre stage, and international media images of beaches, mountains, wildlife and South Africa's diverse 'rainbow' population¹ filled television screens in bars and fan parks in-between soccer matches.
- 3 Thupelo Artists' Workshop has been successfully running since the 1980s (Koloane 1993, Pfeffer 2009, Gibson 2005, Triangle Arts 2007.) The name, Thupelo, is Sotho for 'to teach by example', based on the premise that artists come together for around two weeks to

work and learn from each other in a shared environment, encouraged to 'work differently' and explore, and consequently to expand horizons and possibilities in their work, as a form of 'creative diffusion'.

- 4 The 2010 Thupelo Artists' Workshop was different from previous Thupelo workshops, as it occurred as the lead up to, and part of, a Greatmore Arts Studios initiated two-day festival, 'The Great Walk and More' for local residents, many from historically and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, in and around Greatmore Street in Woodstock, a rapidly gentrifying area of Cape Town (see Visser and Kotze 2008). Thupelo workshop involved over twenty-five artists working together on-site, with many more artists and arts performers taking part in the festival itself. The culmination was to be artworks displayed in and around Greatmore Street, in which residents' stoeps (porches) were to become galleries for visitors on the day of the festival as they walked down the street.
- 5 As a participant artist as well as academic researcher throughout the Thupelo 2010 workshop process, and in several previous South African workshops² (see Gibson 2005, 2007, 2009), as Schneider (2010) might put it a, 'material participant' (Schneider 2010), through taking part in the artistic process toward the material realization of artworks, interesting questions were apparent from the start. First, what type of interactions would occur between residents of little or no knowledge of contemporary art, and practicing artists from around the world? Secondly, and as a corollary of this was, what role did visual art have to play in an economically deprived area – was this some form of 'elitist' or 'cultural' imposition, or were there clear benefits that were derived from residents interacting with contemporary artists and having artworks on their porches and, in some cases, in their houses? Thirdly, how did the ethics of process and practice of Thupelo workshop, with its specific history since the 1980s in South Africa, on the basis of 'to teach by example', play out as a collective creative process in South Africa in 2010? Finally, what type of material 'visibility' did artworks perform through the selection of themes, interaction with residents and the response to the final exhibition, in re-shaping social and cultural relations in the area, as well as within the context of the much larger World Cup 'Festival' in the City of Cape Town?
- 6 The paper breaks down as follows. Firstly, some background issues are outlined – the historical role of the visual arts in South Africa, Thupelo, Greatmore Art Studios and the 2010 Festival, and Greatmore Street and its residents. These provide the contextual framework through which Thupelo Workshop was not only 'played out', but as will become apparent from this paper, *embedded* local contexts in its processes of creativity and interaction towards the final outcome. I follow with elements of the experience of the workshop process, as a participant artist, to demonstrate how interactions between residents and artists developed towards final artists' works for the festival exhibition. Selected interviews during and over the two months after the festival with residents and artists are also drawn upon.

Art, Access and 'the Community' in South Africa

- 7 The art arena in Cape Town, South Africa in general, has historically been, and some would argue to still be, a place of controversy and contradiction. In the past, black artists were selectively limited in access to a tertiary fine art training, not seen as relevant under apartheid to a population deemed to be suitable for primarily menial and support labour (Pfeffer 2009; Koloane 1990; Rankin 1995; Gibson 2005, 2007; Powell 1993, 1997).

Alternative arts training centres were set up, such as the internationally funded Community Arts Project in Cape Town, which trained artists from the community and ran community workshops (Pfeffer 2009). In the 1980s³, art was viewed as a 'cultural weapon' in the anti-apartheid movement, an energetic major arts directive from the 1980s⁴ to the early 1990s that encompassed cultural exchange, learning and community activism, in which CAP was highly active. After the 1994 democratic elections and change of government, artists were now said to be 'free' to enter the contemporary avant-garde global art market – to make 'real art', not the protest art, 'fists, spears and guns' of the past (Sachs 1990; Bunn and Taylor 1988). However, with the change of government, outside arts funding was also reallocated towards meeting social improvement agendas such as housing, water and electricity. Alternative, affordable visual arts training centres were hard-hit, limiting resources for visual art education for those from disadvantaged backgrounds⁵. The Community Arts Project, for example, suffered badly, while the more 'elitist' art institutions, such as Michaelis Art School at UCT, flourished. CAP, without adequate financial support, limped along, changing focus, and name (to AMAC⁶) and then folded in the first decade of the new millennium.

- 8 Consequently, although social class and visual art interests (see Bourdieu 1984) are generally perceived as interlinked, the historical *racialisation* of access to art education remains an issue in South Africa, yet often viewed in terms of differences in cultural interests and economic access⁷. This leads one to question whether visual art is, or should be, irrelevant to the majority of citizens – or whether exposure to and training in visual art is a *right*, denied in the past to the majority of its population, to be encouraged and facilitated for those who might be interested or wish to pursue it – after all, this will be the pool from which artists will be drawn that will represent the South African art world in the future.

Greatmore Art Studios and 'The Great Walk and More' Festival

Figure 1: Greatmore Arts Studios, Greatmore Street

- 9 Greatmore Arts Studios have existed for over ten years⁸ in Greatmore Street in Woodstock. Studio space is provided for local and international artists of different backgrounds. The studios are also linked to the international Triangle Arts network (see Triangle Publications 2007). Greatmore regularly hosts local and international residencies, mentoring workshops, arts administration internships and other local and international workshops, including Cape Town Thupelo Artists' Workshop.
- 10 'The Great Walk and More' was a concept successfully proposed to the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund⁹, as 'an interactive Festival that showcased site specific and live art in the surrounding area of Greatmore Street'. There was a stated intention to 'raise a positive image of the Woodstock area and involve the local community in an attempt to demystify the art space'¹⁰. Since the workshop and festival took place during the first half of the South African World Cup, it was expected to draw in tourists as well as local visitors. A key component of the festival was to be the incorporation of a 'special' Thupelo Cape Town Artists' Workshop with the theme of 'Interventions' – the aim being to work towards displaying artworks on the porches of the houses of the local community, effectively turning Greatmore Street into a 'gallery' space.
- 11 Thupelo workshop ran from 9 June 2010 and ended with the festival on Friday 25 June and Saturday 26 June 2010. Around twenty-five local and international artists took part¹¹. Participant artists came from areas as diverse as Iran, India, USA, Barbados, Uganda, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Ghana and Serbia (and others), as well as a number from South Africa.
- 12 The festival included art works, live art performances, art installations and exhibition, sound installations, film projections, music and street performance. An additional exhibition, 'The Laboratory of Recycled Revolutions' curated by Isa Suarez, took place in Greatmore Arts Studios main exhibition space on the final two days. A staged music event

took place on Friday evening, starting with a parade of a local minstrels group, the 'Woodstock Starlites'. Music performances included a well-received Jazz group, 'Loud' from the local blind society, a Malay choir and many other performers¹². An additional tour and history of the Woodstock area was provided by Gabriel Arteros, using Greatmore's recently acquired 'Art Bus'.

- 13 At its culmination, the entire process – festival, Thupelo workshop, and exhibitions – were considered by its organisers to have 'far exceeded everyone's expectations'¹³. As a participant Thupelo Workshop artist, as well as participant observer, or what Schneider (2010) might term 'material participant', I focus on the Thupelo 2010 workshop process, exploring the multiple and multi-layered ways through which it operated in relation to art-making and local involvement. To do this, I draw from participant observation as a 'material participant', my own sketchbook/notebook documentation and photographs, and those of others that were 'collected' by Greatmore at the end of the workshop, as well as office documentation. Although drawing primarily on participant observation, I additionally draw on interviews (recorded and informal) with selected artists and residents during and up to two months after the festival ended.

Background to Woodstock and Greatmore Street Residents

Figure 2: Location of Woodstock in Cape Town, South Africa. GoogleMap Data 2012 AfriGIS

Figure 3: Sections of Greatmore Street, artists and children walking through on right hand side

- ¹⁴ Woodstock historically has been a 'mixed' area, due to Group Areas forced removals not having had full impact by the time of apartheid's demise (Visser and Kotze 2008). The population, particularly in 'lower' Woodstock, the area of Greatmore Street, consists of primarily 'coloured'¹⁴ residents, of a lower income bracket. More recently, Woodstock as a whole, being close to central Cape Town, has been undergoing rapid gentrification (see Visser and Kotze 2008 for a detailed description of Woodstock's changing demographics and gentrification). A number of up-market art galleries and new art studios have moved into the area, notably and visibly existing as cultural islands of contemporary art among its less affluent urban surrounds. Consequently the area is rapidly becoming known as a new Arts 'hotspot' and new eating venues have sprung up. For example, notable in its

immediate proximity to the lower end of Greatmore Street on Lower Main road, is the 'Biscuit Mill Saturday Market', with its very popular and relatively expensive 'health food' cuisine appealing to a primarily non-residential (mostly 'white') clientele.

- 15 Greatmore Street residents are primarily (in South African 'cultural' terms) 'coloured', of Muslim and Christian background, with some African residents from countries other than South Africa. Gentrification seems to have had little impact on the lives of Greatmore Street residents that I spoke to. For example, despite visitors to the Saturday Biscuit Mill Market parking their cars in a vacant area at the lower end of Greatmore Street, a sense of exclusion was conveyed, even self-exclusion, from residents. A group of women when asked if they went there, commented only that the Biscuit Mill was not interested in employing them, clearly seeing the venue only as a potential opportunity for work, not leisure.
- 16 Unemployment was expressed an important issue for residents, particularly in relation to the youth, many of whom get involved in alcoholism and drugs, including the highly addictive street drug 'tic'. School drop-out levels were also high. Concern was also voiced over the lack of local recreational facilities and social support for the youth. According to residents, several parents in the street were in prison, with their children cared for by other relatives.
- 17 Despite popular perceptions that economically underprivileged areas in Cape Town have a 'strong community', one resident of thirty years claimed that things had changed from the past, due to growing crime in the street, primarily due to drug use, and mistrust between people, who stay behind closed doors and burglar bars and 'don't know each other' - 'everyone is out for themselves'. This view was supported in varying degrees by other residents.
- 18 Even though Greatmore Art Studios had been part of the street for over ten years, with a sign 'Greatmore Art Studios' painted on the front, Greatmore Street residents had not personally interacted with the Art Studios. In fact, several residents were not aware Greatmore was an Art Studio, or had no idea what the studios did. Some thought the studios were offices of some kind, or viewing the studios as a 'private place, you can't just walk in... When you see the white people, you must know like... yeah, maybe we didn't fit in there... you won't bother, you know...Greatmore Art Studios, it should be noted, are particularly ethnically diverse, the last comment demonstrates the legacy of South Africa's apartheid past racialised 'separate development' and segregation perceptions based on race perpetuating into the present. The very presence of some 'white people' at Greatmore, and possibly also lack of any exposure to the art world, seemed to give rise to a perceived exclusivity, similar to these residents' sense of separation from places such as the 'Biscuit Mill.' Likewise, the majority of residents at Greatmore Street did not interact with the Cape Town visual art world, despite the increased number of galleries in the area. Most residents claimed to never have been in an art gallery in their lives, also notably expressed in terms of racialised 'culture', for example, 'Like I say, our coloured people, we're not into that...'
- 19 How then was one to 'undo' lived hierarchies and practices of exclusion, and rifts in a sense of community in Greatmore Street? If habituated practices (see Bourdieu 1977) of the apartheid past¹⁵ perpetuated racialised discourses of 'us' and 'them' in the present within invisible barriers of a sense of social exclusion between peoples, could Thupelo Workshop present some possibility for creating possible points of cohesion as entry

points beyond perceptions of 'white', or 'coloured' or 'rich' through, not discourse, but art practice itself?

The Thupelo Workshop Process: Inspiration and Exchanges

Figure 4: Artists from Thupelo Arts Workshop set out into Greatmore Street, not knowing any Greatmore Street residents (except Yvonne the Greatmore Studio caretaker)

- 20 The theme of 'Interventions' was the focus of the 2010 Thupelo workshop. The process of artistic exchange and learning was still, as in previous Thupelo workshops however, a major focus, and the theme itself open-ended in the choice of exchanges, sites, materials and outcomes. Artists lived in basic conditions at what was termed the 'Artists' Refugee Camp' (from the World Cup), in the Woodstock Community Learning Centre directly opposite Greatmore Studios, sleeping on pallet beds with curtain divides in three large shared rooms, with basic ablution facilities. Communal meals were provided, and an identical materials budget for each artist.

Figure 5: Section of 'Artist Refugee Camp' at the Community Learning Centre

- 21 On the first day, workspaces at Greatmore Art Studios premises were set up ad hoc in shared studios of up to five artists. A map had been created on the Greatmore notice board outside the main office by the Director and admin staff¹⁶, with photographs of houses and shops of members of the community who had agreed to take part. It was encouraged that artists speak with residents, who had been previously informed of the festival and asked to volunteer, to discuss possibilities. Introductions to Greatmore Street residents were further assisted by the Greatmore caretaker, Yvonne George, resident of Greatmore Street for about thirty years. An early 'walkabout' of Greatmore Street was undertaken by artists, involving initial conversations with residents, photographs and preliminary sketches. In many cases, early images and first impressions provided the initial steps for the outcome of later works. The following overview explores how the Thupelo creative process of exchange and exploration worked, not only in terms of artistic outcome, but as a gradual intertwining of the experiences of artists and residents with the varied creative outcomes of the workshop.

Figure 6: Early sketchbook images

Figure 6bis: And studio space, Jade Gibson

Figure 7: Photographs of Greatmore Street environment

- 22 Drawing from my sketchbook, for example, the obvious, almost oppressive presence of burglar bars and barbed wire along the street, was contrasted with the sheer numbers of pigeons flying carefree above rooftops, images developed in later work. As time progressed, the sketchbook shifts from seeming purely an observer from the 'outside,' to more intimate discussions with residents of Greatmore Street. Also apparent was a growing sense of community between Thupelo artists, with comments about life at the 'Artists' Refugee Camp,' conversations during communal meals, and getting to know the artists we shared studio space with.
- 23 Time pressure is part of the impetus that provides Thupelo with its buildup of momentum, or 'energy' described by those artists who have participated, in which ideas

are shaped quickly and spontaneously (see Gibson 2005). As the momentum of the workshop increased, there are notes on materials purchased or to be purchased, for planned artworks. Subsequently, there were more and more 'to do' lists, depictions of planned artworks and exhibition sites.

Figure 8: Local church bazaar

- ²⁴ Early in Thupelo workshop, a local church bazaar took place, run by the NOAH (Neighbourhood Old Age Home) house on Greatmore Street¹⁷. I attended with artists Jenny Parsons and Igshaan Adams. In one corner, an elderly gentleman, 'Brian', sold his paintings on cardboard – that might conventionally be termed 'naïve' artworks, for as little as 20 rand¹⁸ upwards. Jenny Parsons bought two of Brian's paintings. A discussion ensued about forms of local creativity in which Igshaan Adams suggested creating some means of acknowledging Brian's work and artistic creativity, and suggested creating a large reproduction of the work woven with material into the fence of the Community Learning Centre. This was eventually accomplished for the festival by Igshaan Adams, titled 'Through Brian's Eyes', using interwoven ribbons¹⁹ and plastic flowers.

Figure 9: Brian with artworks from 20 rand

Figure 10: Igshaan Adams and Jenny Parsons with church bazaar purchases, Jenny with Brian's painting

Figure 11: "Through Brian's Eyes" by Igshaan Adams, outside Community Learning Centre

Figure 12: Portrait of Elisabeth, 77, active Red Cross volunteer, NOAH house, Greatmore

IRANIAN PHOTOGRAPHER MOHAMMAD TEHRANI

- 25 Being inspired by the idea of exploring the creativity of residents' in the neighbourhood, I decided to interview pensioners at Noah's Old Age Home on their lives and creative pursuits. I was accompanied by Mohammed Tehrani who photographed the pensioners. One pensioner, for example, was Elisabeth ('Lizzie'), who was still active as a Red Cross Volunteer in her late 70s. He later exhibited her photograph, among others, as part of the Thupelo exhibition on the day of the festival.

- 26 The ongoing World Cup impacted on both artists and residents throughout the workshop. It permeated the media and streets. As each match approached, fans dressed in differently coloured gear, and vuvuzelas blew night and day, as South African became a temporary key player in the international arena. Although everyday life in Greatmore Street on the surface appeared much as normal, there was a growing excitement among adults and children, as the World Cup progressed. Some nights, often depending on which country was taking part, groups of artists attended local bars to watch football matches of interest. This influence was reflected by two artists who shared a studio, Ikechukwu Francis Okoronkwo from Nigeria, and Patrick Tagoe-Turkson from Ghana, who incorporated elements of the World Cup in their work that they had felt surrounded by during their stay, the symbol of international flags, both eventually creating their own versions of flags in their street exhibits at the festival.

Figure 13: Flag by Patrick Tagoe-Turkson from Ghana

Figure 14: Installation by Ikechuckwu Francis Okoronkwo, Nigeria

- 27 One artist, Lea Bult, from the USA, held an impromptu workshop on decoupage techniques during Thupelo. In true Thupelo 'learning by example' spirit, artist Veryan Edwards from Botswana incorporated the technique into one of her final exhibition works, 'Choose to Heal' which also explored her sense of woundedness in society, using bandages and red ribbon over barbed wire, and photographs.

Figure 15: Choose to Heal by Veryan Edwards

- 28 Artist Jenny Parsons had become interested in aspects of the immediate urban landscape and buildings. For one resident, she created a fake 'Broekie lace' shadow ('Broekie Lace Memory') on the outside wall, emulating the shadow of the overhanging ironwork decoration of the house next door. She then created a 'skyline' of Woodstock on the high side of the house wall adjoining a partially grass-covered area positioned at a junction half-way down Greatmore Street, where the children of the street played, particularly at football.
- 29 Jenny Parsons then decided to workshop a mural with the children from Greatmore Street, lower down on the same wall, helping them create body outlines of themselves which they filled in. The numbers of children grew rapidly from five to around twenty-five. The children also began to spontaneously add names and slogans to the walls and images, resulting in a colourful, kaleidoscopic representation of the youth of Greatmore Street.

- 30 **Figure 16 Children painting mural on play area wall, Jenny Parsons**

Figure 17: Section of Mural work workshopped by Jenny Parsons

- 31 In the corner of the same play area, however, was an unofficial yet permanent rubbish tip infested with large numbers of rats, with consequent health risks for the children. Jenny Parsons arranged for the rubbish tip to be removed by City Council. This was finally accomplished on the day before the festival, after repeated phone calls, and the claim of an 'international artists' World Cup workshop' and that it would give a bad impression to World Cup Visitors would attend. Afterwards, Jenny Parsons expressed the view that clearing the rubbish, as an environmental intervention, was one of the most successful outcomes of her creating artworks in the street. Residents were also enthusiastic about the change.

Figure 18: Rubbish dump in corner of children's play area

- 32 Yazeed Kamaldien, a photographer and journalist from Cape Town, also expressed the desire to 'honour the residents of Greatmore Street'²⁰. He created a postcard series with residents as central characters, and provided copies for the photographed residents. He claimed, 'this act of documenting them is saying that they are being remembered.'²¹

Figure 19: I 'heart' Woodstock, Yazeed Kamaldien

- 33 Yazeed Kamaldien also turned a local Greatmore Street House, that of the Forbes family²², into a gallery ('The Personal is Public'). He showcased 'ordinary objects' in the house that they 'valued' as aesthetic as one would do works of art in a gallery. Each had a label

depicting the title of the work, medium and price, emulating up-market art gallery prices. Yazeed Kamaldien claimed a number of aims through the work, including a comment on issues of 'personal and public in the contemporary media', and questioning values within consumer society, including the art world, through exploring 'how the mediocre can be classified as art'. He labeled and priced artefacts such as the Forbes' wedding photograph, a decorative fan on the bedroom wall, an image from 'Haj' Islamic pilgrimage, and the plastic kitchen wall clock, as 'artworks' with exorbitant prices. For example, a prized old family fishing rod was priced at R150, 000. Yazeed Kamaldien also labeled the painted wall of the hallway as an artwork, as Mr. Forbes was a professional house painter specializing in paint effects, and had painted the wall himself. The family then opened their house to the public, as a 'gallery' at the Great Walk Festival. Mrs. Forbes conducted a 'tour' of the gallery/house, identifying and talking about her 'artworks', culminating in the kitchen, with the kitchen clock as the final display. Other community members who had artworks also invited people into their homes on the day of the festival.

Figure 20: Mrs. Abeeda next to plastic wall clock 'artwork' (label just to left)

- 34 Mrs. Collins' family on Greatmore Street was annual Minstrels ('Kaapse Klopse') Carnival²³ participants. She spoke for a considerable time about her family involvement in the Carnival, being several generations, including women. In her front room was a newspaper photograph of her two children, dressed in their Minstrels Carnival 'Uniforms'. She was enthusiastic about the idea of reproducing the photograph on a mural on her outside wall. She and her children actively joined in the painting, along with other children. Mrs. Collins painted a large 'D6', of her own volition, the name of her Carnival Troupe, 'District Six', next to the image.

Figure 21: Mrs. Collins, her daughter and other children while joining in painting a copy of the photograph of her two children in the D6 Minstrels Carnival onto her wall

- 35 I returned later to find that Mrs. Collins had supervised the painting of the opposite wall of her front yard in my absence – with children painting images of themselves, their names, and decorative flowers on the wall area, exemplifying, I believe, the extent of personal ownership she felt over the process. I also created a 'twig sculpture' of a pigeon, as well as one of Mrs. Collins's daughter in her minstrel 'uniform'. We displayed the two, with the image of her daughter standing on the back of the pigeon, (titled 'Magic') on the stoep. I provided the children with coloured ribbons we had had donated for the workshop to decorate the porch, Ribbons, or 'colours' are a feature of Minstrels carnival – strips of material hung in public to show the thematic colours for the troupe for that year – and Mrs. Collins's family decorated the sculpture and yard with ribbons as well as World cup flags.

Figure 22: Children's wall painting, supervised by Mrs. Collins of Greatmore Street

- 36 Igshaan Adams also drew on the help of residents walking past to help him construct his reproduction of 'Brian's' artwork ('Through Brian's Eyes'), asking them to help weave, and claimed the interest and response was 'amazing' and also that they gained a sense of ownership over the work.
- 37 The artist, and activist previous political prisoner at Robben Island, Lionel Davis, also depicted the Minstrels Carnival, in order to 'honour the community'. He created a triptych, 'Kwai Lappies', to 'celebrate life in Woodstock and its environs, to pay homage to the Kaapse Klopse'²⁴ which he exhibited at the front of Greatmore Studios on the day of the festival.

Figure 23: Greatmore Studios, 'Kwai Lappies', on festival day, Lionel Davis

- 38 Roscoe Masters, another Cape Town artist, created what he termed a 'makeover' of the one local shop in the middle of Greatmore Street, painting a 'portrait' of the shopkeeper on the wall outside. He also 'made over' the room of a currently unemployed 21 year old young man, Wahid, painting the walls, adding a bookshelf, and including a portrait of Wahid, with the aim of creating a sense of acknowledgement and encouragement for Wahid. Wahid's friends, brother and himself had all come to witness the event, and had also joined in, along with himself, with helping paint. Wahid claimed that, a lot of local youth came to see the work, and that, 'It opened their minds up to a lot of stuff. This painting of me, myself, it gave me some kind of respect to others as well'. Being creative himself, and encouraged by this experience, and contacts he had made, Wahid went on to complete a photography mentoring workshop that he had been informed of at Greatmore, at a later month. This demonstrated the potential for festivals of this kind to have longer term implications, at least in opening up entry links into the art world²⁵.

Figure 24: Shop owner outside shop with portrait by Roscoe Masters

Figure 25: Wahid beside portrait by Roscoe Masters, South Africa

- 39 Due to local advertising, a continual flow of visitors came to the festival. Residents mingled with Capetownians and international visitors, viewing artworks and

performances, Greatmore Art Studios also being open to the public. Some residents who had artworks on their inside walls invited visitors into their houses. As one woman stated,

- 40 I think it was great... because we were all excited about it, because this never happened [in the area]... It was fantastic, because the people all enjoyed themselves... you know, the mixing of the people, it was fantastic, the neighbours, even the people who came from other places.
- 41 South African artist Lionel Davis, who had been a committee member for many years at Greatmore Art Studios, emphasised that for many residents it was their first time at an art exhibition, 'it must have been something new, and very challenging for people... just a whole bunch of curious people who were caught up in the magic of that moment... it was open to everybody.' It also served a purpose for Greatmore Art studios, he claimed, as, 'we had been there for more than ten years, and yet we had not engaged with the community of Woodstock.' For a number of residents, of all ages, it was their first time at a gallery exhibition.
- 42 Although it appeared that local artists with more previous exposure to community issues than international artists more readily and easily engaged with the local community, international artists also engaged with local people, sometimes socially as much as conceptually. Mohammad Tehrani from Iran socialized, staying as a guest with the family of the caretaker and was invited to meals with families at Greatmore Street. Bivas Chaudhuri of USA, India, created a design on the front of a house on the corner of Greatmore Street and Lower Main. He also painted the railings of the house, giving the house a 'face lift' as the resident put it. On the day of the festival he took the residents of the house on a tour inside the Greatmore Studios and Laboratory of Recycled Revolutions curated exhibition.
- 43 Other international artists responded in different ways in relation to the local environment and community. Lea Bult created removable 'fun' graffiti-style faces out of duct tape on street and building walls. Rob Moonen from the Netherlands created a sign for the Community Learning Centre, 'Challenge Yourself'. Sheena Rose from Barbados produced a short animation film based on photographs she had taken within local shops and on the streets around Greatmore Arts Centre. Philippe Kayumba from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Akansha Dhepe from India and Patrick Tagoe-Turkson from Ghana created performance pieces that took place in Greatmore Street on the festival day. Vervan Edwards from Botswana consulted with Muslim Residents to produce murals that reflected Islamic Art.

Figure 26: Performance by Patrick Tagoe-Turkson, Ghana

Figure 26bis: Performance by Akansha Dhepe, India

Figure 27: Performance Installation, Julia Raynham, South Africa

Figure 27b: House murals, Vervan Edwards, Botswana

Figure 28: Carnival Bird, Jade Gibson South Africa

PHOTOGRAPH BY NIKLAS ZIMMER, COURTESY GREATMORE STUDIOS

- 44 A large number of snap-shots of people who live around Greatmore Arts or passed by the studios were collated by Jill Trapper and Anne Sassoon (both from South Africa) who took photographs in the street outside. Those photographed were told they could come to the exhibition space and take their photographs home with them. This helped bring large numbers of people into the Greatmore exhibition space. Julia Raynham, also from South Africa, set up a bedroom on the corner of Greatmore Street and Main Road overnight, to interact with locals. Inspired further by the theme of Carnival and flight, the author created a giant 'Carnival Bird' which was paraded on the two days within the musical Greatmore street opening procession behind the Woodstock Starlites on Friday and again by children on Saturday.

Figure : Photographs of people who walked past Greatmore Studios, who were encouraged to collect their photographs on the day of the festival

JILL TRAPPLER AND ANNE SASSOON

Figure 29bis: *Idem*

- 45 Throughout the workshop artists also created drawings, paintings and sculpture and other forms of personal work in their studios. These were exhibited at Greatmore Arts on the Festival day. Street and interior gallery works conceptually fed into each other.

Figure 31: Work on paper, Patrick Tagoe-Turkson (left)

Figure 32: Studio work, Veryan Edwards

Figure 33: Charcoal sketch, of Bazaar, Jenny Parsons

Figure 34: Painting by Ikechuckwu Francis Okoronko

Figure 35: Abstract, Jill Trappler

Figure 36: Studio work, Bivas Chaudhuri, India

Figure 37: Studio work, Jade Gibson

Discussion and Conclusions

- ⁴⁶ With high rates of unemployment, crime, HIV (Karim and Karim 2002) and social inequality (Pressly 2009) in South Africa, what relevance does contemporary art have in a relatively impoverished area such as Greatmore Street? Could the festival and artwork be viewed as an elitist imposition, akin to Kester's (1995) suggestion that artists are generally middle-class²⁶ persons whose public art work, not contesting its often beneficial outcomes, is akin to modes of 'social reform' with communities defined as 'different'?

- 47 Concerning questions of 'value' in art, conceptual boundaries were challenged. Yazeed Kamaldien's turning of a resident's²⁷ house into a gallery for example, played on such concerns in true Duchamp-ian style, claiming 'anything can be art'. What constituted 'good' art, and consequently an art aesthetic, in the form of painting technique was also challenged through, for example, presenting Mr. Forbes' his hallway paint work as art and his description of his work as 'painting, decorating all my life. I am an artist'.
- 48 'Brian', whose work Igshaan Adams had reproduced, enthused by the encouragement, arrived at the festival to ask if he could exhibit his paintings alongside the work of the Thupelo artists. He consequently displayed them on the fence of the Community Learning Centre, next to Igshaan's representation. This implicitly raised questions over whether Igshaan's work was a 'copy' of Brian's work or a conceptual piece in its own right, through the authorship of the artist, from his perspective, also according to its size and use of materials, which Igshaan described as 'his' interpretation. Did the work's appropriation into a recognized artists' work give 'value' to Brian's work as it moved from the Church bazaar to art exhibition space²⁸?
- 49 In Yazeed Kamaldien's work as a whole, was the 'artwork' the household artefacts, the house or residents' lives? This was a concern Yazeed himself expressed, of being perceived as trying to 'put them on show'. Having themselves represented, or their houses displayed, to outside visitors, it could be argued, residents were in danger of appearing an exotic 'curiosity' (Karp and Lavine 1991).
- 50 Theorists have argued that public art is social process (Miles 1997, Kester 1999; 2005, Kwon 2002, Cleveland 2008) sited not only within specific spaces but incorporating complex engagements within specific communities (Kwon 2002). Here, as Schneider, Calzadilla and Marcus (Schneider 1993, 1996, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010; Calzadilla and Marcus 2006; Schneider and Wright 2010) suggest, artists acted as mediators of social relationships. Artists also not only worked within the domain of contemporary art, but also acted as social activists. The environmental health hazard of a rubbish dump was removed, fronts of houses, rooms and shops were 'made over' by artists such as Roscoe Masters and Bivas Chaudhuri incorporated within the process of installing artwork, and one young resident was inspired to take part in a later photography workshop. Such outcomes can be interpreted as part of the artwork itself, in the sense that contemporary public artworks often incorporate some form of social activism embedded within the work (Kwon 2002; Kester 1995, 1999, 2005, 2008; Miles 1997, Cleveland 2008). Kester suggests public art as a 'dialogical exchange and collaborative interaction (1999:19), and consequently a 'dialogical aesthetic' for evaluative frameworks, that 'resides in the condition and character of dialogical exchange itself' (2005).
- 51 The process also incorporated different understandings of aesthetics, artists moving between notions of a contemporary art gallery aesthetic, social action and local aesthetic values, along a trajectory of varying interrelationships. Such varied perspectives can be applied to evaluating how the creative process operates, not within a conventional art historical trajectory of progress and innovation, but as a means to manifest ways through which one can 'look' differently²⁹, in terms how art-making can negotiate and change conceptual boundaries, interpreted through multiple conceptual and aesthetic modes that draw on both art and anthropological understandings, not only within a fine arts aesthetic, but conjointly within and between social lives, *through* interaction, suggestively a 'thick' social aesthetics? Extending Geertz's (1973) analogy, this, for example, could include the conceptual framework of aesthetic value as understood by the artist, the

conceptual framework of aesthetic value for the his/her audience (in this case both festival visitors and participating residents) and how these construct the meaning of the artwork, on multiple levels, within negotiated and interwoven different frameworks of aesthetic interpretation and process within social lives, local creativity, and contemporary art.

- 52 Schneider (2010) argues that both artists and ethnographers often use similar research tools, such as photography, in their work. He suggests a more 'sensuous scholarship' going beyond text-based forms of representation, and to consider 'how artistic practice can extend anthropological knowledge, and vice-versa' (13). In being asked to interact with local residents to produce collaborative works, artists worked similarly to anthropologists in their exploration and research, albeit through material techniques, within processes of mutual interpretation and translation.
- 53 The author worked in a double role as both artist and ethnographer. This could be seen to complexify the research process. It is notable that for Schneider (2010), however, it was creating a mutual understanding between different disciplinary frameworks in collaborative work between artists and anthropologists, that presented 'one of the most difficult and complex challenges' (8), where joint discussions revealed 'fragmentary and contested notions of each other's practices' (8). Having a training in, and practical understanding of, both disciplines circumvented these disciplinary divides and in fact, in the author's experience, was beneficial. A material engagement as ethnography – in which the artwork itself became a form of ethnographic documentation within the festival process – and the critical distancing of the process, through its contextual theorizing, in creating this text, while understanding the experiential component in practice, enabled the author to draw on both understandings and arguably make use of what Schneider (2010) suggests as more 'sensuous' ethnographic techniques in anthropology. Such an approach not only further exemplifies theoretical arguments that anthropology is multi-sited in its methodology and approach (see Schneider 2010; Marcus 1998), but that so, too, is art (Kwon 2002; Kester 2005; Miles 1997).
- 54 Furthermore, South African social activists such as Albie Sachs³⁰ and Lionel Davis³¹ argue that art and creative expression are a basic right of human society, and that art education provides access to more opportunities, rather than imposing values. This is particularly when it is considered that, under apartheid, visual art training was not seen as relevant to its black population, due to racialised notions of 'different cultures' leading to social segregation and exclusion³². From this perspective, exposure to contemporary art concepts would not necessarily negate alternative 'local' forms of creativity, but could broaden local possibilities for creative expression, as well as providing access to art centres and galleries previously perceived as inaccessible, exclusive and elitist. Additionally, Thupelo also included artists from diverse backgrounds, including some who described themselves as 'from the community'³³ in social background, if not immediate location. Furthermore, as Greatmore Art Studios have been sited within Greatmore Street for the past ten years, was it not then part of the community, and as argued earlier in this text by artist Lionel Davis, its projects should also involve local people?
- 55 Residents I spoke with claimed that the festival was beneficial, and that they would like another in the future. Within Thupelo 2010 workshop, art literally came to local residents' doorsteps, turning the exteriors, and sometimes interiors, of their homes into a gallery space. This is an alternative to the efforts of state galleries and museums to

stimulate public interest in the arts by inviting the community to visit their premises, usually through school visits, in a space 'set apart' from locals' daily lives. As artist Igshaan Adams, who described himself as also growing up 'in the community'³⁴, put it,

56 '...given this history of Cape Town, I think that, before, definitely, "*art is for someone else – it's for white people, it's a white people's thing, it's not something that is part of our lives*" and, suddenly, it was part of their lives – it was in their homes, it was on their front stoeps³⁵, so there is maybe not that barrier between them and the art world anymore.'

57 Interactions occurred – whether between neighbours, between residents and Capetownians of different 'cultures', or between local and international visitors. There was a sense of increased engagement, interest, curiosity and openness to the art world for residents, as a result of 'The Great Walk and More' festival. One resident stated, 'Art to me wasn't really something to talk about, but now I think differently.' Some stated that if the festival were to happen again, they would like to be more involved in the creative process in producing the artworks themselves, and others suggested youth groups could participate. Several residents said they were now more curious about the art world and felt they could now go into a gallery³⁶. According to female residents I spoke with two months later, the children had been drawing with enthusiasm 'ever since'³⁷. At the least, a shift in perceptions of the art world being separate and exclusive had occurred, due to the fact that, instead of having to go to a gallery to see art, the art, and artists, had come to them.

58 Residents continually expressed a sense of feeling acknowledged through meeting people at the festival. Art-making and artworks during the workshop in the lead up to and during the festival event as a whole facilitated conversations, negotiated interactions and enabled a sense of self-expression and individuality for residents, as exemplified in the following excerpt (several voices compiled) from a group interview with three women who showed artworks along Greatmore Street, who claimed that meeting visitors from abroad, most who had arrived for the World Cup, made them feel 'important':

59 The neighbourhood, everybody was up here, even the people who came shopping at the mall [sic. Mill] ... They went upstairs into my kitchen, they went everywhere. It was nice. It was fantastic, a nice meeting. We met a lot of people, yeah... From different cultures. ... They were quite nice ... all of them... They would speak to you, greet you... There was an American girl... People from England... America... New Zealand... And Mexico, ya... Algerians... The soccer people, the fans, they were all here before they went to the stadium... I felt important...

60 Another woman claimed, 'When people come... they [the children] show them, 'this is my painting... You should have seen their faces... the excitement...' And another, 'we feel like now we are celebs because everybody will stop, and they will look ... who did this, and how did they do it, and you would explain what happened.' Likewise 'Lizzie', the elderly resident of NOAH home, who had her photograph taken and exhibited by Mohammed Tehrani, declared that it took her until 77 years old to 'get famous'. Providing *visibility* through the medium of focusing on artworks for those who chose to display them at their houses, in a world where residents were arguably marginalised in a gentrifying Woodstock and during global World Cup celebrations – arguably acted as a means of 'paying attention', enhancing self-esteem and new networks of interaction. Thupelo 2010 thus enabled different forms of exchange – between artists in their shared studio spaces, within a conceptual framework of open artistic interaction and exchange, as well as artistic and social exchange with local residents to create works within a festival context

that shifted residents' notions of exclusion and inclusion in the city. The Thupelo concept of 'to teach by example' thus occurred not only between artists, but also between the community and artists, both learning from and/or about each other.

- 61 Cities are made up of imaginaries and desires, places of the senses in as much as being constructed urban spaces (Urry 2004, Pile 2005, Biron 2009, Anderson 1983, Bridge and Watson 2004, Canclini 2009; also see Classen 1993, Seremataki 1994). There are points at which Bhabha (1994) claims, boundaries and edges come together, to form new hybrid arenas through which new identities may emerge. As Simone (2004) states, 'The city is the conjunction of seemingly endless possibilities of remaking' (9). People *perform* the city through their interactions, self-expressions and memories, through this, they become the city, a 'coming to awareness' of self, negotiated between individual and community. It has even been argued that cities can themselves be considered works of art (Biron 2009). Creative industries likewise have been argued as economically beneficial and facilitating improved networks and cultural understanding between persons in cities (Van Heur 2010). Interestingly, Cape Town was rated among the eight most creative cities in the world by Newsweek in April 2002 (Pirie 2007a, 2007b) and creative industries in Central Cape Town are flourishing (Pirie 2007b). The Great Walk and More Thupelo workshop in South Africa in 2010 also exemplifies how, as Garcia (2007) has argued, large-scale sports events can be used as a 'calling card' in the role of 'attracting audiences to their first time arts or other cultural experience and encouraging them to reach for more outside of the festival environment' (115).
- 62 Amongst images of beautiful beaches, mountains, wild animals, nature reserves interspersed with Bafana Bafana on screens in bars and restaurants filled with people, the residents of Greatmore Street during the World Cup were engaged with the role of another performance – the image of themselves, made visible, a process interwoven with the general festivity of the country. Through Thupelo Workshop 2010, shifts occurred *within* selves, *within* city spaces, *within* the meeting point between the boundaries of different social and cultural practices. Although depicting a transitory moment in time, the workshop consequently offers interesting approaches and ways of thinking about how art is not only perceived as a final product, but *done*, within a plethora of negotiations and processes that artists, and anthropologists, can be made aware of, in relation to the multiplicity of creative methodologies through which art, and anthropology, projects may be realised.

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NOTES

1. See Rassool 2000 concerning problematic 'culture' and heritage issues in South Africa.
2. The author also participated in previous Thupelo workshops 2009, 1999, 1998 which functioned primarily as artistic exchange. Gibson 2009 refers to the process of creating a collaborative temporary exhibition of artists 'Dis Nag' on slavery in the Cape, on the renaming of the Cultural History Museum in Cape Town as the 'Slave Lodge', and with workshops involving historians, archaeologists and artists, in which the author was a facilitator and a contributing artist.
3. Following the 1982 Gaborone conference, see Sachs 1990.
4. Although earlier activism took place in the Arts in the 1970s through organisations such as Vakalisa (Pfeffer 2009, Gibson 2005).
5. Interview with Lionel Davis, 2010.
6. Arts ad Media Access Centre, closed 2008.
7. Initiatives such as VANSa, District Six Museum and more recently Iziko National Gallery have attempted to address these issues over more recent years.

8. Since 1998. See 10 years at Greatmore Studios Cape Town, Greatmore Publication 2008, for more information.
9. By Greatmore's Director, Kate Tarrant Cross, Merle Van't Hullenaar and Isa Suarez (from Europe) as visiting Festival co-director.
10. Greatmore Art Studios 2010 Brochure on 'The Great Walk and More' festival.
11. These were selected through application as a result of advertising online by the Thupelo Committee. Many artists were linked to the worldwide Triangle network of studios and workshops.
12. See Greatmore Arts Studio 2010 catalogue.
13. Foreword by Kate Tarrant Cross, Director, Greatmore Art Studios 2010 Brochure, 2010
14. See Erasmus (2001), for theory on 'coloured identities'.
15. See Robins 2002, Banks and Minkley 1999; Miraftab 2007; Watson 1998; Field 2007; Christopher 2005 on socio-spatial legacies of apartheid.
16. Mishka Roberts, Gary Frier, Yvonne George, Artists' Coordinator Ghanaian artist 'Castro' (Kwaku Boafo Kissiedu).
17. St Agnes' Church, a monthly NOAH event.
18. Equivalent to around two euro each.
19. Donated by Weavewell, local factory.
20. Artists' personal statement, Greatmore Arts Studios 2010 brochure.
21. Recorded interview.
22. Who he knew through a personal contact.
23. See Martin 1999.
24. Greatmore Arts Studios 2010 Catalogue.
25. However, such links do require backup and continuity.
26. Although it is debatable whether all artists might be termed 'middle class' and what middle class means here, particularly in a socially transforming South Africa.
27. In fact, in his case, friends of his family.
28. Schneider 2003 suggests that all art is effectively appropriation. See Appadurai 1986 and Kopytoff 1986 on how artefacts move between contexts of value. Also see Clifford 1988 on artefacts and cultural exchange.
29. As Schneider (2010) asks 'from which vantage point such a critique is to be voiced? Are we to apply criteria of Western art schools and art criticism? And, further, *which* Western viewpoint will be privileged? (14-15).
30. Brief conversation following Albie Sachs' public talk at the University of the Western Cape, 2010.
31. Interview 2010
32. It should be noted however, that, during the anti-apartheid struggle, 'protest' or 'struggle art' was seen as a mode of resistance to be used in rallies and as a form of politicised media, particularly through alternative arts centres such as Community Arts Centre in Cape Town, which aimed to provide an arts education for all (see Pfeffer 2009)
33. 'Community is a complex term in South Africa, under apartheid equated with notions of race, and in practice largely continues to be perceived as such in South Africa today.
34. He himself became an artist, as he described it, effectively by 'accident', when the catering course at the college he applied to was full, and he had to make a second choice, and decided to study art.
35. Local word used for porch.
36. Although the latter may not actually occur in practice, this would be more likely to occur if further collaborative art workshops took place in the area.
37. Artist Jenny Parsons also described giving a little boy charcoal at the final exhibition when he asked how he could draw like the drawings he saw in the studio.

ABSTRACTS

In 2010, South Africa was centre stage with the advent of the World Cup. During this time, Greatmore Art Studios held a 'special' international Cape Town Thupelo Artists' workshop. Thupelo Artists' Workshop in Cape Town, 2010, this time culminated in a special combined street festival, 'The Great Walk and More'. Thupelo artists, including the author, as 'material participant', worked with local residents in and around Greatmore Street, an economically disadvantaged area, to turn the street into a gallery for the festival, with artworks displayed at houses. Thupelo Artists' Workshops have been in existence in South Africa since the 1980s. They operate as a space for both local and international visual artists of all backgrounds to work together under the rubric of 'learning by example'. Although arts institutions such as Community Arts Project (CAP) had worked with local communities in the 1980s in Cape Town, CAP has since undergone demise. Consequently, many argue, contemporary fine arts tertiary education has been limited to the more privileged echelons of Cape Town. In relation to recent theoretical approaches arguing that contemporary artists engage with ethnographic methods and negotiate social relations through their work, this paper examines the role artistic creativity played in reshaping perceptions of belonging and self, access to the contemporary art world and concepts, and in creating a visibility for local residents. The paper bears on questions of transition, space, society and personhood in a changing South Africa, as well as exploring Thupelo's continued relevance in 2010, and emphasises the relevance of considering the outlined processes in relation to artists working within community arts practices and art projects.

En 2010, l'Afrique du Sud occupait le devant de la scène avec l'organisation de la coupe du monde de football. Durant cette période le studio d'art Greatmore organisait un événement international avec l'atelier Thupelo artist de Cape Town. Cet atelier signait de son empreinte un festival de rue The Great Walk and more, Thupelo artistes, qui incluait l'auteur comme un participant, travaillait avec des résidents locaux proches du quartier de Greatmore, zone urbaine désavantagée et qui transformait la rue en galerie pour le festival, avec des expositions, souvent accueillies dans les habitations. Ce papier aborde le rôle joué par les activités créatives pour transformer les perceptions des gens envers les notions de possession et de conscience de soi, l'accès aux concepts et au mondes artistiques tout en créant une forme de visibilité pour les habitants du quartier. Cet article aborde les questions comme la transition, l'espace, la société et la notion de personne dans un contexte de complété transformation de l'Afrique du Sud.

En 2010, África del Sur era el centro de atención a raíz de la organización de la copa del mundo de fútbol. Durante este período, Greatmore Art Studio organizó un taller internacional "singular" de Artistas Thupelo de Ciudad del Cabo. Este taller culminaba con un festival de calle especial: "The great walk and more". Los artistas Thupelo –incluyendo el propio autor, en tanto que "material participante"– trabajaron con residentes locales en el Greatmore Street, una zona económicamente desfavorecida, convirtiendo la calle en una galería durante los días del festival, con obras de arte expuestas en las casas. Los talleres de los artistas Thupelos existen en Sur África desde 1980. Operan como un espacio para artistas visuales locales e internacionales con diferentes formaciones con la intención de trabajar conjuntamente bajo el lema de "Trabajar con el ejemplo". Aunque instituciones artísticas como la Community Arts Project (CAP) han trabajado

con comunidades locales en los años 80 en Ciudad del Cabo, su actividad ha ido decreciendo. En consecuencia, muchos consideran que la educación superior en Bellas Artes se ha ido limitando a las franjas más privilegiadas de Cabo Verde. En relación con las perspectivas teóricas más recientes que sostienen que los artistas contemporáneos incorporan métodos etnográficos y negocian relaciones sociales a través de su trabajo, este artículo examina el rol que la creatividad artística ha jugado en la reconfiguración de las percepciones sobre pertenencia e identidad personal (*self*), en el acceso a los conceptos y el mundo del arte contemporáneo, y en la visibilización de los residentes locales. El artículo aborda cuestiones como transición, espacio, sociedad y personalidad en el contexto cambiante de África del Sur. También explora la relevancia continua de los Thupelo desde 2010, y enfatiza la importancia de considerar los procesos mencionados anteriormente en relación a los artistas que trabajan en comunidades de prácticas y proyectos artísticos.

INDEX

Keywords: South Africa, visual art, Thupelo Workshop, public art, anthropology, performance, creative city, cities, art practice, creativity

Palabras claves: África del Sur, arte visual, taller Thupelo, arte público, antropología, espectáculo, ciudad creativa, ciudades, práctica artística, creatividad

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