

Another Image of 'Community' at the South End Museum

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Abstract

This paper considers some of the curatorial devices used in exhibitions at the South End Museum in Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth). The South End Museum, which opened on 3 March 2001, is modelled in several respects on the District Six Museum in Cape Town: it, too, is an urban-based, self-defined 'community museum' constituted around the histories of the apartheid Group Areas Act and the implementation of forced removals. Like many post-1994 museums in South Africa, the South End Museum relies on photographs for their displays, whilst also making use of maps, a mural and reenactment. The paper considers the ways in which these different displays touch, recall, reflect and activate one another. Keeping in mind that the notion of 'community' in South Africa bears the burden of being raced by its apartheid and colonial pasts, and abiding by the spectrality that is constitutive of the image, the paper grapples with the haunted space of 'community museums' in the Eastern Cape. While the South End Museum deploys some of the same curatorial devices as the District Six Museum, and deals with related histories of forced removal, South End, it is argued, brings the relation between race, indigeneity and 'ruin' within 'community museums' into fleeting focus.

Key words

community museum, race, indigeneity, ruin, South End, Eastern Cape, photography, image.

Introduction

Ariella Azoulay writes that photographs aren't merely representations, and that they are usually misconstrued as such because of their indexical nature. For Azoulay, thinking of photographs in this way is important because 'representation annuls the excess and lack that were inscribed in the photograph, subordinating it to one,

supposedly factual, point of view'.¹ Azoulay's provocation is instructive when considering the South End Museum in Port Elizabeth,² legible within a South African post-apartheid museum landscape as a 'community' museum. In this museum, the mobilisation of images of South End and its destruction does not merely index the fact of forced removals, that a particular 'community' was forcibly removed; it also, and at the same time, constitutes the complex legacies of colonial and apartheid histories, as well how these legacies manifest in notions of 'community', particularly in stories of forced removal in the Eastern Cape.³

The South African story of forced removals has become iconic through representations and the imaging of District Six in Cape Town and Sophiatown in Johannesburg. The South End Museum deploys this narrative, particularly as staged in the District Six Museum, and draws on it as a model for exhibiting the 'community' of South End. Several of the displays utilise similar motifs and techniques. My reading will suggest, however, that visual devices in South End Museum's exhibitions of the destruction of *this* suburb refigure the genealogy of forced removals and simultaneously loosen the ground on which an idea of 'coloured' resides. This concerns both what became of the land from a 'community' forcibly removed and the different kinds of recourse to 'indigeneity', and thus, when taken together, a different relation to the archive through which 'community' emerges as an object. While I am aiming to look at what exceeds an indexical approach to images at South End Museum and what is different in it to 'community museums' like District Six, this is of course not to suggest that District Six is entirely determined by the indexical.

Central to the South End Museum, as mentioned above, is an idea of 'community', and I'd like to clarify how I engage with the term. Jeremy Brent offers a productive point of departure when he writes that the 'paradox of defining community as an objective structure is that as soon as one tries to, it ceases to have a verifiable existence'. Instead, Brent suggests, 'community' is dynamic in its 'incompleteness'.⁴ It does not precede something like 'community action' but is instead created by the people who claim it as a base for such action.⁵ Most significantly and important for the discussion below is that its 'lack of "authority of presence"', its 'spectrality', is still powerful and could be understood as being constituted by three elements, which Brent names as 'trace, "impossible presence" and supplement'.⁶ This is what I want to take hold of as a point of departure, that 'community' can carry a trace or several traces. In addition to this is the spectrality of the notion of 'community' and its 'impossible presence'. As Brent puts it: 'Any definition of community is supplementing it, adding to its meaning'.⁷

1 A. Azoulay, *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography* (Verso: London, New York, 2012), 223.

2 Port Elizabeth was renamed Gqeberha in March of 2021. While conducting my PhD research, from which this paper draws, the city was referred to as Port Elizabeth in the South End Museum exhibitions. This is so in the scholarly work that the paper engages. It is purely on account of these reasons that I use the previous name, Port Elizabeth.

3 The research conducted for this paper was done roughly ten years ago. Although there weren't any major changes during a visit four years ago, this might not be the case currently.

4 J. Brent, 'The desire for Community: Illusion, Confusion and Paradox', *Community Development Journal*, 39, 3, 2004, 220.

5 Ibid..

6 Ibid., 220.

7 Ibid., 220.

For Brent, a part of the trace borne by ‘community’ appears in the form of racial exclusion, which can affect how people decide to act collectively in and as ‘community’. The notion of ‘community’ in South Africa, after apartheid, carries the trace of racial categorisation, registration and legislation.⁸ The South End area was declared ‘white’ under the 1950 Group Areas Act and approximately 11 000 people were forcibly removed from South End between 1963 and 1975. The removals that took place during the 1960s and 1970s affected areas which were seen as ‘mixed’.⁹ The removals in South End took place over several years but its destruction is mostly ‘spoken and written off as one, single moment of rupture’.¹⁰ Besides a mosque, church and the old Seaman’s Institute, residents’ homes and businesses were razed to the ground. We can say then that the exhibitions in the South End Museum have to contend with ruin in the literal sense, in having to do the work of imaging destruction and what was destroyed. I want to argue, however, that ‘ruin’ has more to offer than simply this literal meaning.

Here, I would like to invoke Eduardo Cadava’s notion of ‘Lapsus Imaginis’. Cadava is worth quoting here at length:

... the image of ruin tells us what is true of every image: that it bears witness to the enigmatic relation between death and survival, loss and life, destruction and preservation, mourning and memory. It also tells us, if it can tell us anything at all, that what dies, is lost, and mourned within the image – even as it survives, lives on, and struggles to exist—is the image itself. This is why the image of ruin—again, speaking for all images—so often speaks of the death, if not the impossibility of the image. It announces the inability of the image to tell a story: the story of ruin, for example... The image tells us that it is with loss and ruin that we have to live. Nevertheless, what makes the image an image is its capacity to bear the traces of what it cannot show, to go on, in the face of this loss and ruin, to suggest and gesture toward its potential for speaking. In other words, the fact of the image’s existence—and here I refer only to an image worthy of the name ‘image’, to an image that would remain faithful to the ruinous silences that make it what it is—ruins the ruin about which all images speak—or at least seek to speak.¹¹

What does this mean for the South End Museum’s work of reconstituting an image of ‘community’ by means of something which ruins what it intends to show, or at the very least cannot be expected to show anything but a trace of what is ruined? The

8 As Ciraj Rassool writes, ‘its parameters are the very essence of contestation’. C. Rassool, ‘Community Museums, Memory Politics, and Social Transformation in South Africa: Histories, Possibilities, and Limits’ in I. Karp, C. Kratz, L. Szwaja and T. Ybarra-Frausto (eds.), *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 314. See also J. Thumbran, ‘Separate Development and Self-Reliance at the University of Pretoria’, *Kronos: Journal of Southern African Histories*, 43, 2017, 117-125. Thumbran shows the way ‘community’ is at the heart of apartheid’s discourse. Positioning ‘community’, the destructive force of apartheid is already at work, though in a way apartheid could never fully contain.

9 N. Roux, ‘Double Vision and Suspended Conversations: Reconstituting Landscapes of Memory in Port Elizabeth, South Africa’, *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 42, 1, 2019, 64.

10 *Ibid.*, 64.

11 E. Cadava, ‘“Lapsus Imaginis”: The Image in Ruins’, *October*, 96, Spring 2001, 35-36.

notion of 'ruin' is generally defined as both the disintegration of something, typically a building, though also, as Cadava suggests, of an image, but it is also accepted as the 'remains' of such disintegration or destruction. In the museum in South Africa, remains would almost always refer to the physical remains of people who have been variously named but have now settled on self-identifying as 'Khoi'. How this complex of ruins, remainders and, via Brent, traces, comes to impress itself on the images of 'community' in the South End Museum is the direction in which I am moving, with increasing focus on an impossible image of 'Khoiness'.

Raced removals

It is estimated that as many as 70,400 people were forcefully removed from their homes in Port Elizabeth. Besides South End, the people of Korsten, Central, Fairview, Salisbury Park, Veeplaas, Dowerville, Sidwell, Bethelsdorp and Kleinskool were victims of the Group Areas Act. Forced Removals were a direct effect of the Group Areas Acts of 1950 and 1957, 'which mainly targeted people classified as "coloured" and "Indian", and mostly occurred after the 1960s'.¹² The victims of the forced removals were displaced into Korsten and Gelvandale for 'coloureds' and Malabar for 'Indians'. However the larger majority of forced removals occurred during the 1950s and affected mostly 'African' residents, who had long been separated from other groups, while at this point, in Port Elizabeth, there was no real entrenched segregation between 'whites', 'coloured' and 'Asian' populations.¹³

It was under the National Party and the apartheid state that South Africa underwent a 'systematic bureaucratization and normalization of race'.¹⁴ Before 1948 only two racial categories were used by the colonial administration, with 'natives' and 'coloureds' falling into one category. During this time race was 'a matter of history'¹⁵, with descent taking precedence over appearance, though there were many ambiguities in the order of classifications. When the Nationalist government came to power in 1948, they wasted little time in attempting to create order, which the Population Registration Act of 1950 was intended to perform. Every single person in South Africa whether 'black' or 'white' would be classified. This Act was a sign of what was to come, an incessant obsession with racial purity and preserving 'white' minority control. With the Population Registration Act the category of 'Native' changed to include all 'indigenous Africans' whereas before 1950 some 'Africans' were included in the 'mixed' or 'coloured' racial categories, namely 'Bushmen, Hottentot, Koranna, Namaqua'.¹⁶ By the time the 1960 census was conducted a 'coloured' person was defined as 'All persons not included in any of the three [other] groups' where 'Africans

12 C. Beyers, 'Land Restitution in Port Elizabeth: Anatomy of a Relative Success', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38, 4, 2021, 827-845.

13 Ibid..

14 D. Posel, 'Race as Common Sense: Racial Classification in Twentieth Century South Africa', *African Studies Review*, 44, 2, 2001, 87.

15 Ibid., 91.

16 A. K. Khalfani and T. Zuberi, 'Racial Classification and the Modern Census in South Africa, 1911-1996', *Race and Society*, 4, 2001, 161-176 (168).

were defined as aboriginal races or tribes of Africa, and Asians as natives of Asia and their descendants.¹⁷

Although the Group Areas Act only entered into legislation in 1950, the state had long been concerned with the close living proximity of ‘coloureds’ to ‘whites’. In the late 1930s the Department of Health appointed a committee to investigate ‘what it called “irregular” settlement on the fringes of municipal areas.’¹⁸ The general view articulated in the report, submitted in 1939, was that all ‘blacks’, and particularly ‘coloureds’, should be segregated from ‘whites’, horrified that ‘Europeans were found to be occupying premises and living cheek by jowl with non-Europeans.’¹⁹ In May 1948 the National Party came to power with a manifesto that expressed their commitment to urban segregation, giving ‘the idea if not the practice of compulsory segregation a cohesion and comprehensiveness’ which it did not possess before.²⁰

The terrain that the apartheid state came to create reached far into the future of a post-apartheid social landscape where efforts of reversing the effects of the Native Land Act and the Group Areas Act still constitutes a constant ‘struggle’. The Urban Development Framework stated that the urban landscape should be ‘spatially and socio-economically integrated, free of racial and gender discrimination and segregation and enabling people to make residential and employment choices to pursue their ideals’, but this vision is far from being realised.²¹ This racial re-mapping of South Africa, both in relation to its people and the land, inherited from the apartheid state, is still central to how many, or even most, South Africans make sense of themselves, informing where and amongst whom they belong. In South Africa, this is how ‘community’ was produced, through violence and destruction, death and loss. A sense of ‘community’ emerges here as what can be ‘seen’ as constituted spatially and temporally and, more importantly, in and by destruction and ruin, which marks the images of ‘community’.

A ‘community’ for the museum

My concern here is specifically with the use made of images, primarily photographic images but also an image of ‘community’, the South End Museum offers the public. Elizabeth Edwards and Sigrid Lien productively suggest that photographs in museums, including what and how they do what they do there, have been significantly ‘under-analysed’, partly because of an absence of ‘thinking-photographically’ in relation to display practices and meaning making in museums.²² I offer here a reading of the visual in the exhibitions in the South End Museum, aiming to ‘think photographically’ with and about them.

17 Ibid., 168.

18 A. Mabin, ‘Comprehensive Segregation: The Origins of the Group Areas Act and Its Planning Apparatuses’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 2, 1992, 413.

19 Cited in A. Mabin, ‘Comprehensive Segregation’, 413.

20 A. Mabin, ‘Comprehensive Segregation’, 420.

21 C. Newton and N. Schuurmans, ‘More than Twenty Years After the Repeal of the Group Areas Act: Housing, Spatial Planning and Urban Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa’, *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 2013, 580.

22 Edwards and Lien, ‘Museums and the work of images’, 3.

Museums in South Africa are haunted by colonial and apartheid pasts. In many museums, this is both what they display and what conditioned their emergence. 'Community museums' in South Africa, largely inspired by histories of forced removal, which in turn was so fundamentally defined by race, are always in danger of reifying its inscriptions by these pasts. It is this legacy that has led both to a difficulty in reconstituting the idea of 'community'. Nonetheless, 'community' was also a way of mobilising people in the struggle against apartheid, especially during the 1980s.²³

Within this context, 'community museums' have the potential to renew 'the politics and ethics of collecting and representation, especially as it refigures the archive and experiments with new ideas of community'.²⁴ Taking seriously this potential in the work of the District Six Museum, Premesh Lalu shows that 'community museums' open up an opportunity to rethink and rework the relationship between museums and archives. To this end, Lalu engages the work of the District Six Museum in terms of "recalling community", both as a way of remembering 'community' and recalling a 'community' in the physical sense of gathering together.²⁵ For Lalu, the District Six Museum recalls this 'community' and mediates its return to 'an imaginary site and then to the site of forced removals' and as such 'recalls the effects of apartheid and the scars it left on both bodies and landscapes'.²⁶ At the District Six Museum the archive and the 'community' are in a process of co-constituting each other, as Lalu puts it, in that 'the very process of recalling community is to involve oneself in refiguring the archive'.²⁷ To refigure archive and 'community', the museum would need, as Lalu stresses, to recognize the tensions and fractures of this process of 'recalling'. This would mean an 'unsettling' and, as Lalu puts it, a 'suturing' of the meanings of 'community', and producing archives that are 'not sources of power or mourning but ones that deliberately generated a public sphere that would meaningfully deepen the practices of democracy'.²⁸ As Leslie Witz, Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool argue, 'community museums' are not only spaces in which there can take place 'contests over the framing of the past in the public sphere', they are also one of the sites where we can 'analyze and understand these contests'.²⁹ With these issues in mind – 'recalling community' and contestations over meaning of community that are sometimes put on the table, as it were, or in the exhibitionary frame for consideration – I want to turn now to a book, *South End [As We Knew It]* and *South End the Aftermath: Where They Are Now*.

23 C. Rassool, 'Contesting 'Museumness': Toward an Understanding of the Values and Legacies of the District Six Museum' in B. Bennett, C. Julius and C. Soudien (eds.), *City, Site, Museum: Reviewing Memory Practices at the District Six Museum* (Cape Town: District Six Museum, 2008), 73.

24 P. Lalu, 'Recalling community, refiguring the archive' in B. Bennett, C. Julius and C. Soudien (eds.), *City, Site, Museum: Reviewing Memory Practices at the District Six Museum* (Cape Town: District Six Museum, 2008), 158.

25 *Ibid.*, 161.

26 *Ibid.*, 164.

27 *Ibid.*, 164.

28 *Ibid.*, 162.

29 L. Witz, G. Minkley and C. Rassool, 'South Africa and the Unsettling of History' in *Unsettled History: Making South African Public Pasts* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 15. This isn't of course the only place such claims have been made. More generally it has been argued that the concept of the 'community museum' should 'build on the idea of community as a site for contestation and struggle'. C. Camarena and T. Morales, 'Community Museums and Global Connections: The Union of Community Museums of Oaxaca' in I. Karp, C. Kratz, L. Szwaja. and T. Ybarra-Frausto (eds.), *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Durham: Duke University Press, Durham, 2006), 327.

The 'development' of an image of 'community'

In 1988, the Port Elizabeth Museum launched a project called 'South End Recall', briefed to collect photographic and other objects for an exhibition on South End. According to former residents the project was aimed at celebrating the memory of South End before their forced removal.³⁰ This short-lived project could be read as the stimulus for the publication of the 1997 *South End [As we knew it]*, written by three former South End residents and edited by a professor in the History Department at the then University of the Transkei. Yusuf Agherdien, Ambrose C. George and Shaheed Hendriks were all born in South End and grew up on its streets. At the time the book was published, Agherdien was an inspector for the Port Elizabeth Municipality, George had retired from teaching and Hendricks was an English teacher at a High School in Port Elizabeth.

Describing the mood and feeling of the residents in South End once the removals had been announced, they write that in many instances 'the eviction notice was a death notice', that 'many died of a broken heart long before the bulldozers and removal trucks arrived'.³¹ Representing what they remember of the forced removals, the three write that the Group Areas Act 'caused the death of many of the old folk'. For them the difference between what happened at District Six and the removals in South End is the fact that the land in District Six remained largely undeveloped while South End was redeveloped to such an extent that there is no land for victims to reclaim. The writers admit that this is not a definitive history of South End but rather a historical record of it and that the photographs in the book are valuable in lending 'an air of immediacy and humanity to some of the narratives' and 'ensures that faces and places will be preserved forever for posterity'.³² These antecedents of the South End Museum put in place the focus of the museum and the visual landscape which would come to constitute its desire for 'community'.

The book consists of eight chapters starting with how South End came into existence to its destruction by the apartheid state and in between what is seen to define or give meaning to the idea of a 'community'. The first chapter, 'South End, Port Elizabeth: Historical Background' focuses on the arrival of the settlers, and it narrates the beginnings of South End, listing the different ethnic groups who resided there: 'Indians, Malays, English, Afrikaners, Chinese, Greeks, Portuguese, St Helenians, Khoikhoi, Xhosa and Fingoes'.³³ It is notable that the designation 'coloured' is not used.

Chapter two, 'Cultural Diversity: Forerunner of the Rainbow Nation' looks at religion, at the different churches in South End. A notion of 'tolerance', presented as the antithesis to apartheid, is emphasised in giving meaning to the idea of a 'South

30 P. Kadi, 'The Group Areas Act and Port Elizabeth's Heritage: A Study of Memorial Recollection in the South End Museum' (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of the Western Cape, 2007). Another suggestion under the brief of this project was to erect a plaque that would commemorate the demolition of the last house in South End.

31 Y. Agherdien, A. C. George and S. Hendricks, *South End [As We Knew It]* (Port Elizabeth: Western Research Group, 1997), 7.

32 Agherdien, George and Hendricks, *South End*, 7.

33 *Ibid.*, 8.

End Community', constituted through diversity in the neighbourhood. Very closely linked to this is chapter three, 'Education: Church and State Schools' which looks at how the first schools in Port Elizabeth were founded by the churches in the area, the first in 1824 by the London Missionary Society. It also deals with racial politics in education which intensifies through the founding of state schools.

In 'Sport and Recreational Activities', chapter four, the writers document social events in South End and how these were very much linked to sport. Sport in South End is also looked at in terms of race and how even here segregation was enforced. Social events mostly took place in halls, 'open' spaces where things like weddings and dances were held. Chapter five, 'Down Memory Lane' attempts to bring across what made South End unique. Offered in this regard are landmark businesses and shops whose owners were 'known by all'; and listed as well-known South End relics are a mosque, a church, a cross in a church yard and a fig tree. After the destruction of South End this cross was taken to the northern suburbs to where 'coloured' people were removed.

The titles of chapters six and seven, 'The Group Areas Act: Proclamation and Implementation' and 'Destruction of South End: Forced Removals from the 1960s', indicate straightforwardly the concerns of these chapters. The former describes the general atmosphere and responses of the 'community' when the Group Areas Act was proclaimed. Particular attention is paid to the political protests that arose around the proclamation of the Group Areas Act. The Anti-Coloured Affairs Department movement and its umbrella body, the Group Areas Action Committee, were involved in a number of protests against this legislation. The Smuts government of 1943 established the Coloured Affairs Department to separately administer this part of the population, to which Anti-CAD was a political response. Many of the leaders in the Port Elizabeth branch are memorialised in the South End Museum. Chapter seven deals with the aftermath of losing the battle against the state, specifically the torture of waiting for the eviction notices and the unbearable sadness that so many experienced. The book includes a South End Street Directory dated 1964/5, as well as a street map of South End dated 1965.

One can claim, as Kadi does, that a link clearly exists between this book and the museum.³⁴ Indeed this book can be read as a blueprint for the establishment of the South End Museum. The museum is informed by the book in terms of its headings, its text and the authoritative voice of the ex-residents, but I would propose that their relationship be understood as one in which an 'image of community' is developed between them. *South End [As We Knew It]* presents itself as an image of a South End 'community', an image that shifts as it is comes to be 'developed' in the museum. Invoking a relation between the book and the museum of 'development', saying that the museum 'develops' the image the book offers, I mean to suggest that their

34 See Kadi for a detailed discussion of *South End [As We Knew It]* and *South End, the Aftermath: Where They Are Now*. She focusses on absences in the books and the museum, and begins a productive discussion connecting both books to the museum despite trustees of the Museum and authors of the books claiming otherwise. P. Kadi, 'The Group Areas Act and Port Elizabeth's heritage: a study of memorial recollection in the South End Museum' (Unpublished MA dissertation, Nelson Mandela University, 2007).

relation recalls the making of a photograph as light is impressed onto a surface leaving a latent image. The life of a photograph does not end with its 'development' – and one has to think of those that remain latent and are not 'developed' – and what this relation brings into relief is a consideration of photographs as objects that 'occupy spaces, move into different spaces, following lines of passage and usage that project them through the world' and 'cannot be fully understood at any single point in its existence but should be understood as belonging in a continuing process of production, exchange and meaning'.³⁵ If the book and the museum contain traces of the other, this relation of 'development' through which an image of 'community' is developed nonetheless leaves a 'spectral presence' through the 'passage' of this image.

The South End Museum is situated inside – or rather it is – the Seaman's Institute, which was not designed to be a museum. The Seaman's Institute building had its foundation stone laid in 1897 and the Seaman's Institute officially opened in 1900.³⁶ The discreet rooms and the staircase to the second floor give one the spatial orientation of a home or house. The exhibitions are displayed in these different rooms or chambers. It is in this way that the museum assumes the structure of a book with many of the displays drawing their themes directly from the chapters of *South End [As We Knew It]*, staging a kind of double-edged, repressive and resistant history that recalls *inboekseling* and the longer genealogy of forced removals and the control of the movement of black people well before the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the destruction of neighbourhoods like South End.³⁷

As one enters this old building the foyer already does some work in preparing the viewer for what is to come through an 'Introductory Room' (see Figure 1), doubling the book. The walls that lead into the first official exhibition room are covered with newspaper clippings, a sort of historical wallpaper that also forms the basis of the *South End* book. These articles range from coverage of the declaration of South End as a slum, to the 'glory days' of South End, which is a kind of retrospective of a 'community that once was', and then also its destruction at the hands of the apartheid state. Also displayed as part of its 'Introductory Room' are newspaper articles covering the destruction brought by the flood of '68. This was the flooding of the very river which gives 'South End' its name as the place south of the Baakens River, a flood which happened while the forced removals were in process.

To the side, a 'Preamble' to the exhibitions is offered and next to this is an image of the building, 'the institute', the museum. Here in the beginning of the viewer's journey, the museum building itself is also on display (see Figure 2), implicitly engaging with the museum as an institution itself. It also names itself here as a 'community museum'. The articles and images are part of the very structure of the walls in this

35 E. Edwards and J. Hart, *Photographs, Objects, Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London: Routledge, 2004), 4.

36 M. Harridine, *Port Elizabeth – A Social Chronicle to the End of 1945* (Port Elizabeth: E. H. Walton Packaging Ltd, 1996).

37 The word *inboekseling* is never mentioned but seems present in the relation between the book and the museum. It pertains to forced labour after the abolition of slavery in South Africa and it condenses multiple meanings: primarily to be registered, booked in or, more literally, in-booked, written up, or simply to be written or captured in colonial regime of knowledge and power. 'In the Eastern Cape, in the nine years between 1786 and 1795, well over 2,504 hunter-gatherers or Khoikhoi were killed by commandoes, and at least 669, mostly children, were forced into servitude as *inboekselings* and were thus legally obliged to work for colonial farmers until the age of twenty-five'. C. Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 42.



Figure 1. Sidney Prince, South End Museum tour guide in the 'Introductory Room' of the South End Museum. Photographed by the author in 2011, in Port Elizabeth, with a digital camera.

vestibular part of the museum, arranged and attached to the walls in such way so as to render the walls invisible, images of ruin and images in ruin, the slow decay of the newspaper articles and images recalling the materiality of the buildings which constituted South End as well as what is so powerfully felt to be lost with its demise. The newspaper articles and images also recall a violent cutting which fragments the whole; the cuttings image the 'community', but they also figure it: the community is, like its images, torn apart, forcefully removed, pasted.

The photo-scans of newspaper clippings work in one sense as evidence to show that there was destruction and that something was destroyed, giving access to the 'truth' of this past; they date an event that happened during a particular time during apartheid. But if this was all the image of 'community' did and is able to access then we could not read or find here what Cadava calls 'the possibility of a gesture'³⁸ here, as I have been suggesting, of a 'community in ruins' encountering the difficulty of visually representing removal itself. A 'desire for community' is not available in such an evidentiary or indexical reading of 'community', internal to which is both a notion of removal and of race.

38 Cadava, 'Lapsus Imaginus', 60.



Figure 2. This photograph of the 'Introductory Room' includes an image of the museum building and a brief contextualisation of the history of the building and the establishment of the museum. Photographed by the author in 2011, in Port Elizabeth, with a digital camera.

The 'Introductory Room' leads into the 'South End Hero Room', which also serves an introductory role in some sense based on three rather out of place display boards. These are situated among other boards which expound on the political lives of activists from the Eastern Cape, namely, Molly Blackburn, D. S. Pillay, Omar Cassem, Frank Landman, Raymond Patrick Uren and Dennis Brutus. These three display boards encapsulate other exhibitions that form part of the museum. The 'Cape Malay community', 'Indian community' and 'Chinese Community' introduces histories of groups who resided in South End (see Figure 3). This fragmentation, separation, not only visualises the Group Areas Act but is at the same time antithetical to the retrospective claim that South End was as South End Museum and *South End [As We Knew It]* would have it, 'cosmopolitan' and 'harmonious'. It also indicates the pressure of a national historical narrative of diversity and inclusion, one which only registers difference at the level of the mark of race, and then reifies that through the rhetoric of tolerance and inclusion.

As I will suggest below there are also strategies at work aimed at reconstituting 'coloured' as an ethnic rather than a racial category, visually refiguring 'coloured' as 'Khoi', strategies that can be understood against the background of the violently produced and reproduced image of the 'Khoi' through colonial legacies of scientific research. 'Khoi' appears here, in the museum, among other brief descriptions, including 'fishing', 'poetry', 'sport' and 'music'. These social and cultural acts are shown as



Figure 3. This photograph shows display boards which function as a snapshot of some of the 'communities' who had been the focus of some exhibitions at the museum before being abandoned in favour of an exhibitions dedicated to the 'Khoi' which occupies the entire room. Photographed by the author in 2011, in Port Elizabeth, with a digital camera.

what is commonly legible as 'community', inserting the 'Khoi' into this life of a 'community', as central to the South End museum's representation of forced removals, as the 'first people' of this region and South Africa more broadly.

The last supper

Within the 'South End Hero' room, to the right once one has entered from the foyer, one encounters another room. Here the museum stages a particular moment in the story of forced removals in South End in a recreated family dining room in a 'South End home', and projects a reenactment of this scene onto a Perspex screen hanging from the ceiling (see Figure 4). A crucial part of the way this works is that the South End Museum already has the feel of a house or home. The video recording shows a family gathered after the father has called a meeting to discuss a letter that demands they leave their home. It is meant to convey the distress, confusion, sadness and fear of having to leave against their will for a place that constitutes the unfamiliar, isolated from the urbanity of their lives up to that point.

The projected reenactment presents an attempt to visualise the individual experience of being forcefully removed from one's home in South End but does so by putting to work a moving image, a film, using not archival footage, although of course



Figure 4. This room is both background to the projector screen and a simulacrum of a South End dining-room which no longer exists. Photographed by the author in 2011, in Port Elizabeth, with a digital camera.

they are producing a new archive, but a scene scripted and acted in the present, a present nearer to the one in which the public is viewing it than to the past being re-enacted. At the edge of this private space, where the projected scene invites the public to enter visually and imaginatively, there is an orange rope that keeps the public at a remove, unable to physically enter. More than simply a practical matter of 'look but don't touch', the scene of anticipated removal and its moving image work in a concerted way to conjure an untouchable object. While the next room and to a lesser extent the 'Introductory Room' create the effect, through walls overpopulated with still images, of the pluralisation of destruction, this 'family scene' negates or works against the archival conservation of the past.

The arrangement of the display, the room, the Perspex screen and the reenactment projected onto it all raise multiple questions of and for the museum, this one and others. This reenactment, the way it is staged and projected, the way the public is separated from the scene, and asked to see but barred from any tactile experience of it, productively opens up ways to think of the spectrality of 'community' and the ways in which temporality usually functions in museums. If museums, including this one, often reify a linear sense of time, the public viewing this private scene is offered an experience of its undoing.

Narratives of families being ripped apart and separated on the basis of whose skin is lighter and whose is darker, under the Population Registration Act, are tragically

common in South African histories, including narratives of people who decided to embrace being racially reclassified to escape the reach of apartheid legislation. This exhibition shows the ways that the political marks this family who have received orders to leave an area deemed 'white'. The reenactment pays particular attention to the emotional impact of the declaration of the Group Areas Act and forced removals and their grief of having to leave friends and familiarity behind. The museum-going public is offered in this private room in a public institution an image of a father communicating verbally to his family what has been communicated to them in writing, that they must leave their home.

The rope closes off the private domain of the family's personal encounter with the forced removal notice. This space is 'occupied' only by the apparitions which appear on the Perspex screen and a spectral encounter between the people, the Group Areas Act and the destruction of South End. This spectral encounter and the apparitions are placed in this staged 'dining room' setting, among other artefacts, the table, the chairs, the pictures on the wall. More than simply marking a divide between what must be remembered so that it does not haunt – a laying of the past to rest – I want to try to understand this projection of a private scene within a room of a public institution into which the public cannot pass, as a 'return', in the way that Schneider has set this term to work. Here, following Schneider, in reenactment the 'then and now punctuate each other' and the image of reenactment, whether moving or still, always contains something of the future.³⁹ What 'returns' in this exhibit, I want to suggest, is the past re-created, and what remains in this staging and projecting is an 'image of ruin'.

Standing at the edge of this room one's attention is drawn initially to the technology at work, to the projector, the hanging screen and even to the anterior scene of the making of the short film, to the acting and directing of the scene being projected in the present, and to the ways these technologies interact with and in the room and its props to make the reenactment visible. One sees the technological conditions of seeing first. Very soon however this is overshadowed by the lure of the moving image, as is almost always the case with the cinematic image. One's attention is then shuttled between the image and the means by which it is shown, both of which are in a sense exhibited. What is visually interesting about this scene into which one is both invited and kept from physically entering is that one is already seeing something on the screen before the film starts, one sees the dining room through the screen but also on it, and then, as if returning again, things *move* on the screen as the film plays.

The technological apparatuses can be and are overshadowed here by the image they create but not forgotten; if this were the staging of a personal memory one would be tempted to say that one is asked to remember the material and technological conditions of memory itself. But it is never fully memory. In general, reenactment cannot retrieve a lost object; it is a new object that is produced and what 'was once an external object transforms into an image'.⁴⁰ This reenactment cannot retrieve the South

39 R. Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (Routledge, New York, 2011), 22.

40 B. Nichols, 'Documentary Reenactment and the Fantasmatic Subject', *Critical Inquiry*, 35, 1, 2008, 76.

End ‘community’ or offer any truth about how people lived or how residents actually responded when these notices were received. One might say instead that it is a ‘spectacle of people attempting to explore the past’.⁴¹ Or rather that what is exhibited is a technologically mediated exploration of the past and, through this, museum-time and museum-space are both exposed as constructed or, rather, fictional.

Mapping ‘community’

The viewer moves past the Community Hall up the stairs to the other exhibitions, but the hall is accessible if it is not being used for educational programs or any other functions. This room, although functioning as a Community Hall, is still used for display. The walls have large photographic prints, reiterating themes in the two rooms that precede it, including scenes of daily activities of people moving around on the street of South End, an aerial view of the place and photographs of particular streets and buildings (see Figure 5). The captions that accompany these photographs do not include the photographer. Instead they carry descriptions of where the photograph was taken and what was occurring in the photograph, so that even those images that are peopled don’t include the names of individuals.

The Community Hall also includes a map (see Figure 6), an imaging device also used at the District Six Museum. This 1965 map of South End appears in the book, *South End [As We Knew It]*, and in the ‘Hall of Memories’. Although the old residents of South End do not have the same opportunity of writing onto the map as in the District Six Museum, this does lend an openness to what can be inscribed onto the South End Museum. The past is imprinted onto the map through the images above it and the present and future is mapped onto a ‘South End’ through the performances, events and educational activities that occur in the Community Hall. The map does not act by itself; it is activated through a relation to the large prints but also, and quite significantly, by a painted copy of a photograph, taken on one of the streets in South End, sourced from the Eastern Province Herald newspaper (see Figure 7). The map is also important here: ‘Unlike, for example, Sophiatown in Johannesburg, where the old street grid was maintained, the street grid of South End was completely erased and rebuild [sic] after the removals’⁴². The photograph, of which the mural is a double, was taken in 1966 on Rudolph Street, South End. The South End Museum is located at the end of the street. The reproduction was painted by Christopher du Preez, who was the acting director of the Red Location Museum and a South End Museum board member.

41 A. Cook, ‘The Use and Abuse of Historical Reenactment: Thoughts on Recent Trends in Public History’, *Criticism*, 46, 3, 2004, 494. As a counter-point and as a limit to such an argument, although the actors are just that, actors, and not ex-residents of South End, their play in the scene asks us to consider ‘historical actors as human beings rather than as incidental by-products of material conditions, the bearers of some abstract historical spirit, or as passive vehicles for the self-articulation of discourse’, while simultaneously, ‘and to some extent conversely’, as Cook argues, ‘they also force participants and audiences to consider the material, environmental, and cultural constraints under which all lives are lived’. *Ibid.*, 491.

42 N. Roux, ‘Double vision and suspended conversations: Reconstituting landscapes of memory in Port Elizabeth, South Africa’, *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 42, 1, 2019, 65. See also N. Roux, *Remaking the urban: Heritage and transformation in Nelson Mandela Bay* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2021).



Figure 5. These are enlarged images of street scenes and building in South End on the walls of the Museum's community hall. Photographed by the author in 2011, in Port Elizabeth, with a digital camera.

Kadi reads both the mural and the narrative of South End in the Museum as being characterised by the concept of 'infantilization'.⁴³ For Kadi, the idea of South End is constituted through childhood memories of a safe, multicultural 'community'. Comparing the South End Museum to the District Six Museum, she asserts that in both of these 'communities' destroyed by forced removals, memories are constituted by childhood activities where the personal is somehow divorced from the political. For her, the mural animates this idea of 'infantilization' in the South End Museum. However, as Cadava reminds us, 'rather than reproducing, faithfully and perfectly, the photographed as such, the photographic image conjures up its death ... the photographic event reproduces, according to its own faithful and rigorous *rigor mortis* manner, the posthumous character of our lived experience'.⁴⁴ And furthermore, 'what structures the relationship between the photographic image and any particular referent, between the photograph and the photographed, is the absence of relation'.⁴⁵ My point is not that 'infantilization' does not operate within the museum but that there are other ways of reading these images.

43 Kadi, 'The Group Areas Act and Port Elizabeth's Heritage'.

44 E. Cadava, 'Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History', *Diacritics*, 22, 3/4, 1992 (Commemorating Walter Benjamin), 89.

45 *Ibid.*, 89.



Figure 6. This street map of South End is painted onto the floor of the community hall. It is surrounded by the enlarged images shown in Figure 12. Photographed by the author in 2011, in Port Elizabeth, with a digital camera.



Figure 7. The mural on the wall behind the stage, in the community hall. It is a reproduction of a black and white photograph which was taken in 1966 on Rudolph Street in South End. Photographed by the author in 2011, in Port Elizabeth, with a digital camera.

The mural is a painted reproduction of a black and white photograph taken for the newspaper. One is tempted to read into this ‘colouring’ an attempt to firstly show that South End was a vibrant place, lively and happy, playing with the category of ‘coloured’. I would like to gesture towards one more possible reading. I want to suggest that the ‘colouring’ of the photograph through painting it in this way stages ruination, particularly if we consider the two technologies in terms of their practice and process and, in turn, the relation of these to time, the time of photographing and the time of painting. If the photograph would be seen as indexing race in black and white, this painted reproduction, its scale and the ways in which one can always see the coloured paint protruding from the surface, testifying to it having been put there. Something of this mural contains the ruination of race as natural, at least in the way in which photography has been used to ‘evidence’ this. Of course, the photograph is also an inscription; light inscribes the image onto the surface being used, and as I have already suggested photographic images age, wilt, fray, ruin as objects. But here it is the painting that points to this. What this reproduction stages is the reproducibility of the photograph, ‘reproducibility as a mode’⁴⁶ and how this, as Cadava writes, ‘deconstructs [the] value of authenticity’.⁴⁷ This allows for a reading of this mural beyond its representation of cultural values.

As Harley reminds, a map is not a ‘value-free’ image, maps are ‘not in themselves either true or false’.⁴⁸ Harley draws attention to the violent history of both the making of maps and the violence produced by what they image, from the expansion of empires to the rise and creation of nation states, and the role of maps in the creation and control of class and its relation to property and capitalism. He focusses on three conceptual ways of approaching maps, namely, as a ‘kind of language’, which leads him to understand maps as constituting a ‘cartographic discourse’. Secondly, he suggests iconology as a way of getting at a ‘deeper’ and ‘symbolic’ level of how maps operate within society. Thirdly, he wants to proceed from the perspective in which ‘map knowledge is (as) a social product’.⁴⁹

It is at the symbolic level that maps articulate their power most convincingly as we find when we consider their appearance in paintings and, alternatively, the deployment of ‘artistic emblems’ in decorative maps, which are ‘embedded in the discourse of the map’. Maps, including those elements of mapping that are meant to be decorative, come to ‘symbolize cultural and political values’.⁵⁰ This includes attaching ‘racial stereotypes and prejudices to the areas being represented’.⁵¹ Harley wants to drive home that a map is always ‘a political symbol’, that they are not a language of protest but of power, and that they ‘desocialize’ the area that they represent, that ‘they foster the notion of a socially empty space’.⁵²

46 Cadava, ‘Words of Light’, 95.

47 Cadava, ‘Words of Light’, 96.

48 J. B. Harley, ‘Maps, knowledge, and power’ in D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels (eds.), *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 278.

49 Ibid., 279.

50 Ibid., 279.

51 Ibid., 299.

52 Ibid., 278.

While one might question these ideas from within the South End Museum, Harley is productive to think with and against here because he allows us to reflect on how the South End Museum map does more than offer a visual scene of the street-landscape of South End. It is the symbolic power that he bequeaths to maps that I want to hold onto. The map does not contain any of the South End houses, as if to accept that the museum cannot represent personal loss (although this is attempted in another part of the museum through reenactment); instead, it foregrounds places where people gathered together, spaces of ‘community’ if you like, like the very hall in which the map appears. I do not disagree that the idea of South End, and probably District Six, are partly constituted by childhood memories, but something more takes place in the relation between the mural of the children, the map on the floor and what transpires in the interaction and encounters in the Community Hall.

Not visible in the photograph above is that standing at the opposite end of the hall, opposite the stage, one’s line of sight moves from the map to the mural, the one an extension of the other. They are two axes, the one reducing South End, the other enlarging its young residents. We can for a moment see the painting as a ‘decorative emblem’, as an image that would be legible, at least in Port Elizabeth and arguably the wider Eastern Cape, of children playing in South End. It places playing children on the empty map, but at the same time one could read the map as being contained in the painting of the children, if we allow that the ball in the painting is a cartographic globe, but also South End as the world – at least the immediate world of the people who lived there – being carried away. It is out of reach but in ‘sight’, like the projected family scene. In a sense this image could be understood as the ‘desire for community’ that Brent points us to.

Archives of Khoiness

This hall is where the museum launched its book and exhibition on the life of David Stuurman, *Rogue, Rebel or Revolutionary? The Life and Times of Khoi Leader, David Stuurman 1773-1830*, to which I turn below. It appears that because the South End ‘community’, unlike the District Six ‘community’, cannot return to the geographical site, the museum is the imaginary site which must serve as reminder of the destruction of the ‘community’. It would appear that instead of functioning, as the District Six Museum does, in ‘recalling’ ‘community’, the South End Museum recalls something else, its destruction. On the surface, the displays in the South End Museum, the fragments of family photographs, newspaper reports, photographs and memorabilia of sports clubs could be seen as commemorating South End and reifying an uncomplicated existence of a ‘community’, given particularity by where they lived and were forced to leave. But ‘community’ here is also given life again and again by its demolition; its visual existence in the museum is validated by its disappearance elsewhere.

In the displays that I mentioned earlier of the grouping of ‘communities’ who would have been in South End, a ‘coloured community’ is not included. The racial category of ‘coloured’ emerged in the nineteenth century to refer to people who were considered to be neither ‘Native’ nor ‘European’. Its initial iteration in South Africa

saw the word deployed as a category used to denote former slaves and Khoisan who had been baptised, as well as Muslim and Christian groups who were of slave and Khoisan origin, and would often also have European and Asian ancestry; it included immigrants to the Cape such as African Americans, people from the Caribbean and West Africa, Muslim traders and descendants of Mozambican slaves, brought to the Cape and indentured as 'Prize Negroes'. Some may have been of Makua-speaking Muslims of northern Mozambican origin.⁵³

It is by the twentieth century that the category 'coloured' begins to congeal into the designation that so many wanted to and still aim to undo and/or resist.⁵⁴ It came to its meaning 'of a mixed, creole, mainly Afrikaans-speaking population, hemmed in as people had been by race classification, and apartheid laws on group areas, education and amenities.'⁵⁵ Ciraj Rassool reminds us that in the ambit of this racial construction it is a European lineage that tends to be highlighted as opposed to African origins which are also part of how this group was circumscribed into what was understood as 'mixed'. But of course, what is highlighted or given significance modulates, shifts and reorganises itself over and across time. Many people who were considered Khoisan adopted Afrikaans as a language as they were absorbed into the economy of the colonial rulers, while some became part of Bantu-speaking 'communities.'⁵⁶ On its website the South End Museum uses the term 'coloured community' twice, both times in relation to the Khoi. Notably they state: 'Unfortunately, the Khoi no longer exist as a separate ethnic group, but their gene pool does live on in the present-day Cape Coloured population.'⁵⁷

Perhaps one of the scenes on which these dynamics have impressed themselves most powerfully was the launch of David Stuurman's image. Stuurman was born in the Eastern Cape in an area very close to Port Elizabeth. He was one of the leaders of the rebellion against the colony in the Third Frontier War of 1799-1803. He was captured and sent to Robben Island from which he escaped twice. After the final arrest Stuurman was exiled to Sydney as a 'convict labourer'. This is where he died and where his remains remain lost. The relation here to the themes of the previous section is clear and there is a shared 'impossibility of return'. But a different aspect also appears here.

53 C. Rassool, 'The Politics of Non-racialism in South Africa', Paper presented at Dissensus, the Annual Winter School in the Humanities held in Hout Bay, Cape Town, and hosted by the Centre for Humanities Research, University of the Western Cape (6-10 July 2019), 5.

54 The category 'Coloured' was both a source of anxiety and what plugged a hole in apartheid's discourse. The existence of 'coloured' people threatened not only the racial purity apartheid tried to preserve but the very idea of race itself. Apartheid ideologues wanted to claim that someone can only belong to one race, that race is proper to either a person or a group. It needed to foster, as Colette Guillaumin argues, a belief that there 'are supposed to be two races, one white, the other black, each exhibiting its own characteristics and its own nature, and another race, completely different, without any relation to the preceding ones, a pure product in and of itself. Institutionally separate, the "coloureds" constitute the "other" race, the third element that renders any questioning of the system irrelevant'. C. Guillaumin, *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology* (Taylor and Francis e-Library, first published 1995 by Routledge, 2003), 137-138. That a group revealed that someone could in fact be a descendant of more than one race presented a problem that required the stabilisation of 'coloured' as an 'independent entity'. *Ibid.*, 135.

55 Rassool, 'Politics of Non-racialism', 6.

56 *Ibid.*, 9.

57 https://www.southendmuseum.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11&Itemid=10.



Figure 8. This glass and wood display case is part of the 'Khoi' exhibition with objects described as being used by the 'Khoi' people. Photographed by the author in 2011, in Port Elizabeth, with a digital camera.

Further along on the top floor, where the sports and music exhibitions are, is a room which has undergone some changes over the period I have visited the museum. When I first visited the institution at the end of 2010 this room was a sort of haphazard dumping ground, a place to fulfil the demands of inclusivity. It included various small displays that consisted mostly of display-boards showing groups who resided in South End, named here as the 'Malays', the 'Chinese', the 'Indians' and the 'Khoisan', the latter being the first to be shown when entering the room. Other than the 'Khoisan', who now occupy this room, the 'Malay', 'Chinese' and 'Indian' representations exist on one display board. This exhibition room changed with the launch of the David Stuurman book on 5 October 2011 accompanied by an exhibition on 'Khoi' life.

All the items on the program for the event, except for the serving of the food and the location of the David Stuurman and 'Khoi' exhibition, occurred on the stage in the Community Hall. The keynote addresses, the reading from the book and 'Khoi' dance were all staged with the mural as background and on the South End floor-map as the perspective from which this was all 'seen'. The displays in the exhibition room upstairs do not differ much from those that attempt to represent ethnicity in other museums. There are various objects described in terms of the function they served for the 'Khoi' – tortoise shells used to store cosmetics and perfume, various decorative items, eating utensils and bows and arrows (see Figure 8). One of the display boards is titled 'Khoikhoi way of Life', which continues the ethnographic descriptive representation. Relying on painted images from the eighteenth and nineteenth cen-



Figure 9. This glass and wooden display cabinet is also part of the ‘Khoi’ exhibition at the South End Museum. It displays a rope and two gourds interspersed with books on the Khoi and histories of the Eastern Cape region. Photographed by the author in 2011, in Port Elizabeth, with a digital camera.

turies it tells the reader that these show examples of the ‘Khoikhoi’ huts, with another pointing out how the decorative items on display were worn and used by ‘Khoikhoi’ women and men. Another display board lays out a timeline (see Figure 9), titled ‘The Life and Times of David Stuurman’, which intersects events in Stuurman’s life with that of Sara Baartman and the wars and resistance against the colonialists.

This timeline differs slightly from the one that appears in *Rogue, Rebel or Revolutionary*, which includes ‘World Events’, incorporating the Boston Tea Party, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in Egypt, the abolition of the slave trade in Britain, the Battle at Waterloo and the end of the Napoleon War, and last but significantly, 1826 as the year the first photograph was taken. It places Stuurman if not the ‘community museum’ on the globe the children are reaching for. In this timeline this ‘event’ occurs after the death of Sara Baartman in 1815, the arrival of the British Settlers at the Bay, but before the death of David Stuurman in Australia in 1830. By 1826, however, David Stuurman is not in South Africa any longer – the museum has no photograph of him. An old colonial map of South Africa points to areas in which the ‘Khoi’ and ‘Xhosa’ were residing.

In this room, dedicated to the ‘life and times’ of Stuurman, is a glass case that displays a number of objects, books written about the ‘Khoi’ and the wars in the Eastern Cape during colonialism, calabash gourds which are captioned as serving the purposes of holding liquids, either beer or water. and an ‘Indigenous rope made from fibrous plants’. As the caption explains: ‘The Kouga mummy was bound with a similar rope

around the ankles'. There is also a 'Carrier sling' which was used 'for carrying children, among other things'.⁵⁸ The display of books includes Noel Mostert's *Frontiers, The Khoisan Rebellion in the Eastern Cape 1788- 1803* by Susan Newton-King and V.C. Malherbe, *A History of the Frontier Wars* by John Milton, *The Hottentot Venus* by Rachel Holmes and *The Heart of the Nation: Regional and Community Government in the New South Africa* by Frances Kendall. At that point the museum's own publication was not part of the display case, although most of these titles appear in the reference list to *Rogue, Rebel, or Revolutionary*. Literary and archival knowledge production is put on display here, transformed to function visually. The books are put into conversation with the calabash gourds and most significantly the rope. This is where the David Stuurman exhibition touches the 'death-notice' reenactment discussed earlier. Through exhibiting these objects here, the museum is implicated in the long history of forced removal as an institution which orders and produces particular kinds of knowledge.

There is a large body of scholarship that problematises the brutal exploitation of the 'Khoi' and 'San' people. The 'Khoi' and 'San' were homogenised into a single group through colonial discourses of primitivism and scientific racism, reifying the 'Khoisan' as 'the Bushmen', who were actually a diverse group of people who spoke different languages.⁵⁹ They have a contested history of visibility fraught with colonial ideas of racism and imperial expansion. James Drury was the taxidermist at the South African Museum in Cape Town, and created the first life-casts of the 'Bushman'. Walter Rose, in his biography of Drury, *Bushman, Whale and Dinosaur*, writes that 'of all the exhibits at the South African Museum, there is no doubt that the groups of Bushmen in the ethnological section attract the greatest attention'.⁶⁰ There were a number of Museum expeditions from 1907 to 1923 in search of 'pure' 'Khoi' and 'San' people and in the 1960s the museum's guide book read that 'the casts in the first show case represent Cape Bushmen, and are a unique record, as these people are now practically extinct'. The inclusion of the 'Bushman' in this biography of a scientific practice speaks to how the image of the 'savage' 'Bushman' endured well into modern South Africa and how a museum exhibition and its creation produced particular visual cues associated with the 'Khoi' and 'San'. An important difference between this exhibition and the now defunct exhibition at the South African Museum is that the former is intended for and curated by people who identify with being 'Khoi', but this alone does not rework the ways in which eighteenth and nineteenth century renderings of Khoi-life has produced particular notions of 'the Khoi'.⁶¹

Rassool stresses that to think of race after apartheid it is important to look at how it is 'reproduced' in museums. The end of apartheid ushered in a discourse of

58 Captions accompanying the display of the rope and the sling.

59 P Skotnes, 'Introduction' in P. Skotnes (ed.), *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of Bushmen* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1996), 17.

60 W. Rose, *Bushman, Whale and Dinosaur* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1961).

61 I have in mind the eighteenth century aquatint by Samuel Daniell which is used on the cover of *Rogue, Rebel or Revolutionary? The Life and Times of Khoi Leader, David Stuurman 1773-1830*.

diversity that ‘saw the reworking of notions of race and ethnicity as the basis of unity, notions which were sometime expressed in the language of culture.’⁶² More significantly for my reading here, racial categories inscribed through the oppressive structures of South Africa’s past have been reclaimed and reframed based on ‘distinctions between indigeneity and settler foreignness.’⁶³ Rassool thus suggests revisiting the museum as ‘an epistemic site ... where race and tribe were made epistemologically, and also one of the sites where race and tribe are being unmade.’⁶⁴

I want to think here about the process of unmaking but also remaking in the South End Museum. The South End Museum, in a sense, goes on their own expedition to find David Stuurman, a ‘Khoi’ fighter of the Eastern Cape, to create and return him here. The research for the book and the exhibition on the ‘Khoi’ and David Stuurman as their ‘last chief’ was done by a tourism consultancy company called Linga Longa. In the introduction to the research brief for ‘The life and times of David Stuurman’ they write: ‘In ancient times they were decimated by the darker skinned Africans from the more desirable lands. In modern times they lived in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, and were partly exterminated by the Dutch and English settlers in that area. They also contributed greatly to the ancestry of South Africa’s coloured population, while other groups of Khoisan were absorbed into the expanding Bantu-speaking populations, most notably the Xhosa.’⁶⁵ In the ‘Forward’ to *Rogue, Rebel or Revolutionary?* Errol Heynes writes that ‘coloured’ people ‘carry Khoi DNA and are descendants of the indigenous first peoples of South Africa – in this way, the Khoi can never become extinct in South Africa.’⁶⁶ It appears that from the outset ‘colouredness’ or ‘coloured’ identity is associated with being ‘Khoi’, privileging a ‘Khoi’ heritage over the hybridity sometimes accorded through ‘mixed’ African, European and Asian descent. In this passage here, in laying out the rationale for their research, the brief already points to an originary ‘first’ status. In other words, outside of race. By extension, as ‘descendants’, to be ‘coloured’ is to carry origins which are broken apart, ruined by both settler and African.⁶⁷

Contrary to the rest of the exhibitions which mobilise photographs rather profusely, this exhibition, centring around David Stuurman, cannot offer any photographs of the ‘Khoi’ fighter. In their brief the researchers claim that they located an image called ‘Afrique Australe’, of a ‘Khoi’ man, dated 1824.⁶⁸ Transportation records from the Cape indicate that only two ‘Khoi’ men had been sent to Australia during

62 Rassool, ‘The Politics of Non-racialism’, 1-2.

63 Ibid., 3.

64 Ibid., 3.

65 South End Museum, ‘The Life and Times of David Stuurman’, Research Brief, September 2005 - March 2006, Linga Longa, Port Elizabeth.

66 A. Shelver and B. Krige, *Rogue, Rebel or Revolutionary? The Life and Times of Khoi Leader, David Stuurman 1773-1830* (Port Elizabeth: Yithethe maAfrica, 2011), 11.

67 My argument here differs, or perhaps expands on Adhikari’s, who understands the ‘Khoisan’ revivalist movements as a ‘fear of African majority rule and a perception that, as in the older order, coloureds were once again being marginalised linked to a common refrain in coloured “communities” that “First we were not white enough and now we are not black enough”’. M. Adhikari, ‘Hope, Fear, Shame, Frustration: Continuity and Change in the Expression of Coloured Identity in White Supremacist South Africa 1910-1994’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 32, 3, 2006, 468.

68 South End Museum, ‘The Life and Times of David Stuurman’.

that time and that they were David Stuurman and Jantjie Piet. According to the researchers the photograph could possibly be David Stuurman because 'at the time of his death he was 5.3 tall with black hair and dark brown eyes, and he was lame in the right leg'.⁶⁹ It is a peculiar claim to make as one of the first photographic images was taken by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce in France in 1826.⁷⁰

For Azoulay, to think or speak of the photograph that was not taken, one needs not cinematic or literary imagination, but civil imagination. Civil imagination, she writes, 'is reading the possible within the concrete'.⁷¹ I want to suggest that this is perhaps what is attempted here by the South End Museum and this might be kept in mind even if one of the effects of this appropriation of 'Khoi' is to authenticate and autochtonise 'coloured' identity. If we can assume from the textual historical narrative that no such colonial photographs were taken of David Stuurman, this may constitute new visual historical possibilities for creating an image that does not dislodge 'Khoi' from History but places them quite centrally in the present.

This book and exhibition complicate an understanding of forced removals as emerging only during apartheid. It also brings the South End 'community' narrative into the realm of restitution, reactivating a more explicit politics around land and indigeneity. But the different instances of reenactment in the museum are important in producing this effect as it makes what are seen as 'stages' of history coincide in the present, activating that future which is always present in the past, a temporality that the image gives us. This folding of time comes alive in the doubling of the rope, the orange one which appears at the dining room scene and the indigenous rope which appears in the glassed cabinet in the David Stuurman and 'Khoi' exhibition.

This doubling articulates a complex relationship between 'coloured' and 'Khoi'. As Schramm argues in a discussion of claims to indigeneity, the 'active claim to the dead as ancestors is an important element of constituting descendant communities *in the present*'. Suggesting that 'the substances of indigeneity' – her focus is body casts, human remains and DNA – 'do not have an a priori meaning, but derive it through processes of identification and appropriation by which both ancestors as well as descendants come into being – not as fixed stable entities, but as relational subject positions enacting postcolonial indigeneity'.⁷² Here, the two ropes insert ruin at the heart of the desire for community. Through the presence of the rope in both reenactments, the death-notice and the remains of the Kouga mummy – symbolised by the indigenous rope – articulates 'community' as always 'vanishing' while simultaneously flashing into visibility through ruin, as it is mobilised through the image, in the South End Museum.

69 Ibid.

70 S. M. Smith, *Photography at the Edge of Sight* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 1.

71 Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 234.

72 K. Schramm, 'Casts, Bones and DNA: Interrogating the Relationship between Science and Postcolonial Indigeneity in Contemporary South Africa', *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 39, 2, 2016, 132-140.

Conclusion

Lalu argues in relation to the District Six Museum that there is a relation between a 'community' recalled and its archive, that to intervene in the one is at the same time to invoke and intervene in the other. In the South End Museum, the archive of a 'community' forcibly removed is extended beyond apartheid to the colonial by setting to work the marker of 'Khoi' in the museum. This constellates the 'community' recalled by the museum – the 'community' both remembered and gathered together – in a particular way and in a way that is not the same as at the District Six Museum.

While there is an established discourse that is critical of any claims to autochthony as a myth supported by colonial archives comprised largely of images, what I want to hold onto is the potential productivity of the South End Museum's reinsertion of the history of the dispossession of the 'Khoi', their forced removal, into the present. To recall community in a way that departs from apartheid's notion of 'community', and that of British colonialism on which apartheid elaborated, the South End Museum would need to both recognise and exhibit the tensions and fractures of this process of refiguring the archive. This would mean having recourse to an archive that resists notions of the 'Khoi' produced largely through museum objects and visual representations, thus unsettling the meanings of 'community' tied to these mythical images of a 'lost' or 'vanishing' people. This is a problem that the South End Museum runs into by mobilising indigeneity in the ways set out above. It inherits and displays without always refiguring the ethnographic, colonial archive, which is attended and shaped by concepts that adhere to that archive. But that is not all that it does.

Read as an 'ensemble of the archives' needing new vital connections to contemporary society, the South End Museum, like many post-apartheid museums, images indigeneity without necessarily seeing its repetitions and recognising its complicities with the colonial museum and the colonial archive, as well as the conventional distinctions between object and papers that are drawn between them. At the same time, reading the performance of 'Khoiness' as reenactment keeps a productive tension alive in the David Stuurman exhibition, even though, along with the exhibitions of sport heroes and musical bands and other forms of recreation, he is asked to represent a trace of 'community' and the 'Khoiness' of coloured. The reenactment that forms part of the work of this exhibition produces something new, in the sense that 'the real' of being 'Khoi' cannot be retrieved, even if there is some way that we can know what that means outside of the constructions given to us by the archive. Following Schneider, reenactment orients itself, simultaneously, toward the past, the present and the future. Re-enactment does not just bare the trace of the past but returns to the past in acting on it in the present, refiguring the archive through which the past has come to the museum and thus the 'community' recalled. Within this process, as was shown above, the image of reenactment in the South End Museum, whether moving or still, always contains something of the future, and within this temporality there is the possibility that something new may emerge. Read along these lines, rather than simply dismissively, the museum might be seen as staging not only the past but the work of reenactment. Such reenactments are of course always also history

lessons, but also lessons in remediating an archive, even if the relation between archive and 'community' is left unelaborated. This can be criticised as the museum's blindness to its complicity, or even as blind repetition but it can also be read as a leaving open, as the work of the future included in what is exhibited.

The three elements to which Brent draws attention – trace, impossible presence and supplement – all point to the spectrality of the idea of 'community', that it is in constant shift and can take different forms, that it is uncontained. I have also drawn here on Cadava, for whom the image exhibits a trace of the thing it is asked to show. For Cadava, the image cannot show the thing itself, and this is what he calls the 'impossibility of the image'. Like Brent's notion of spectrality, Cadava's trace provided a point of focus in my reading of the South End Museum, specifically in its intent to image the South End 'community', an impossible undertaking. But, via Brent, this 'community' actually comes into being through this imaging, here in the museum; the 'community' is called into being but with the tension that the trace of the 'community' recalled emerges in and as images of reenactment.

To recall through reenactment does leave open the ever-present possibility of images being taken as representations, even as representations of autochthonous community, but also, as I have argued, the possibility of reading into them the exhibition of the work of refiguring, reenacting and acting on an archive, which unsettles 'community'. In imaging, the museum also, following Cadava, ruins. What remains of this ruination is a desire for a 'community museum' which can display the complex 'relation between death and survival, loss and life, destruction and preservation, mourning and memory',⁷³ a desire to survive above all as a 'community' the archive of which must be destroyed for it to come into being.

73 Cadava, 'Lapsus Imaginus', 35-36.