

# COMMUTE WITH INTUITIVE INSTINCT

BRUNDYN+



**ABOVE** Mocke J van Veuren and Theresa Collins, *Minutes 2010: time/bodies/rhythm/Johannesburg*, 2014. Video Still. Courtesy of the artist and Brundyn+, Cape Town

Currently showing at Brundyn+, Cape Town, 'commute with intuitive instinct' is a collection of video and installation works curated by Portia Malatjie. The title of the exhibition is an adaptation of a line from the prolific jazz composer and poet Sun Ra's *Differences* (1980). In the poem, Ra contemplates "[communing] with intuitive instinct." As Malatjie posits, "The idea of communing conveys the sense of becoming one with the environment; being aware of one's surroundings, and conjoining the physical and mental spaces that we inhabit".

Space, whether within a city, nation, or continent, is an elaborate edifice that affects not only our navigation through it, but also our perceptions of it. 'commute with intuitive instinct' follows Lefebvre's notion of space as a social construction, and brings together various artists who have attempted to interpret these spaces; to read them, and to make sense of them.

Henri Lefebvre asks us, "To what extent may a space be read or decoded?" Every space is riddled with signifiers of social/historical/political ideology. It's mapped out in the streets; it's built into the brickwork. These so-called "codes" are deeply entrenched, and Vaughn Sadie and Selo Pesa's work, *Inhabitant*, attempts to identify them through an analysis of the interaction between inner city subjects (or inhabitants) and their surroundings.

Bofa da Cara explores colonial occupation of Africa by the West. The representation of the 'dark continent' as primitive and exotic is skilfully woven into a short, slick animation that questions the nature of such illustrations, and seeks to challenge them. *My African Mind* and *My European Mind: Rebranding Europe* investigate the attempted organisation of society by imperial powers, and the resulting subjugation and classification of indigenous people.

This allusion to the dark continent is echoed in Thenjiwe Nkosi's *Le Tchad: True Heart*, which directly references Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' (1899). Presented as a video diary of her travels to Chad in 2008, a time when the country was undergoing intense political turmoil, we see Nkosi attempting to reconstruct her identity in order to adapt to her surroundings.

Assimilation isn't always voluntary. Mocke J van Veuren and Theresa Collins' *Minutes 2010: time/bodies/rhythm/Johannesburg* utilises time-lapse to investigate the rhythms and pulses of various spaces in Johannesburg, which are often characterised by how, when, and why different people are permitted to occupy them. The frenetic hive of the Bree Street taxi rank is juxtaposed against suburban spaces, such as the Linden swimming pool, and we are reminded that the rhythms of a space aren't only produced by socio-

political constructions, but also through our perception of them.

Gilad Ratman plays with this perception, particularly in relation to the feeling of being rooted to the ground. *The Days of the Family of the Bell* humorously inverts the meaning of space, preferring to explore its outer limits as such. Ratman transcends Newtonian physics in a video work that presents us with an illusory scene where the performers seem to defy gravity.

The exhibition as a whole considers the non-neutrality of space, in relation to occupation, representation, and perception. Control is another space-related contention, explored by Michelle Moraneng in *Removal to Radium*, a retelling of a previously overlooked narrative of forced migration and dispossession through archival writings and video installation.

Nick Cave presents us with an abstract exploration of psychological space. The performers in *Gestalt*, dressed in Cave's exquisite Soundsuits, appear to be sequestered in a clinical white cube and observed, alluding to the idea of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon and Michel Foucault's theorisation of how modern subjects have internalised mechanisms of surveillance.

**FAY JACKSON**