

RODAN KANE HART

FORMS S | W
NIROXPROJECTS SPACE

Parisian-style boulevards in Casablanca and Dakar, Portuguese forts and castles in Accra, a German Lutheran church in Windhoek; each African city echoes European influence in its own way. No country in Africa, however, reflects the influence of European architectural forms more than South Africa. Our urban centres brim with columns, pediments, and arches reminiscent of colonial architecture, exclusionary structures constructed in Edwardian and Neoclassical style.

Identifying, exposing, and dissecting noteworthy ideological constructs underpinning urban forms in South Africa has long occupied Rodan Kane Hart. Having lived in both Johannesburg and Cape Town, Hart's work explores the subject of spatial perception within the complex and ever-changing structures of our cities. By adopting a series of architectural and design approaches, he attempts to read, understand, and investigate the physical and historical contexts of these sites.

The exploration of spatial perception is, in turn, an investigation of atmosphere and, ultimately, place identity.

In South Africa, a long history of oppression and segregation remains apparent in the colonial structures that occupy our cities. As Hart notes, "the contentious histories of both Johannesburg and Cape Town have attempted to be erased with time and by *au courant* rule, yet these governing ideologies leave their marks tangible in the physical make up of the constructed city".

Hart's most recent exhibition, 'Forms S | W' (2014) at NIROXprojects in Johannesburg CBD, depicts an intimate observation of colonial traces found in built forms in South Africa. His characteristically robust style softens here, manifesting in beautiful charcoal drawings and 35mm black and white photography. These images

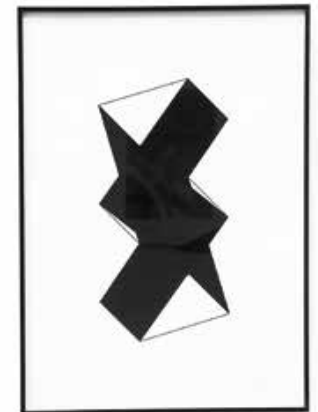
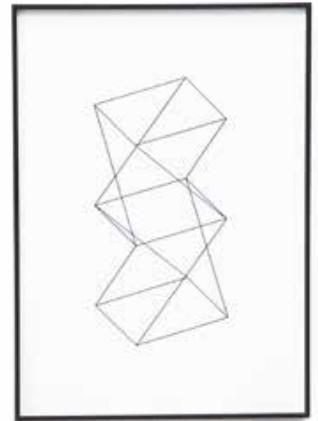
depict architectural and natural forms found in the English cities of Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool & London, juxtaposed with depictions of Cape Town and Johannesburg. Figurative representations hang alongside abstracted ones and, walking through the gallery, I often found it difficult to guess which city each image represented.

'Forms S | W' (2014) marks Hart's third solo showcase in just two years. Following on from 'Structure' and 'Pattern Language' (both 2013), the exhibition comprises of an entirely new body of work. On the walls are Hart's photographs, drawings, and a series of striking lithographs. Populating the floor space is a number of small sculptures on plinths, rising up from the ground like tiny buildings themselves. These structures consider the conceptual incentives that are revealed when constructing tectonic forms and how a better understanding of these incentives allows for a more complex reading of urban localities.

Using sculpture as a lens through which to view historical and spatial contexts, Hart creates shifts in context, which in turn become generators of experience. The collapsing and flattening of similar 3D shapes, sculptural forms that investigate the language of form and structure, result in graphic lithographs in black and white that themselves explore the construction of form through line and shape.

'Forms S | W' was on display at the NIROXprojects space, in the Arts on Main complex in the vibrant Maboneng Precinct, Johannesburg from 12 – 31 March 2014

FAY JACKSON



RIGHT Rodan Kane Hart, 4-8, *Line, Shape to Form, 2014*. Lithographic Series of 12, 297 x 420 cm. Courtesy of the artist