

pumflet

art, architecture and stuff

Rondehuis



Introduction

For pumflet:rondehuis we react to the theme 'Freespace' as set by the curators Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara (Grafton Architects) for the Venice Biennale 2018. Two points within the curatorial statement resonates with the spirit of the proposed pumflet intervention:

The first statement is 'We are interested in going beyond the visual, emphasizing the role of architecture in the choreography of daily life.'

The second is 'It is examples of generosity and thoughtfulness in architecture throughout the world that will be celebrated in the 16th International Architecture Exhibition. We believe these qualities sustain the fundamental capacity of architecture to nurture and support meaningful contact between people and place. We focus our attention on these qualities because we consider that intrinsic to them are optimism and continuity. Architecture that embodies these qualities and does so with generosity and a desire for exchange is what we call Freespace.'

We imagine occupying the SA pavilion with what appears to be nothing upon entering the space. At the end of the room would be a subtle but effective signal that draws the viewer into another space. The confrontation with the empty room would at first disorient the viewer, unsettling the visual sense as the expectation for something to look at is utterly disturbed. The viewer will be drawn to the empty walls, lit softly but consistently. Once closer to the walls the viewers would notice a selection of minute images placed at a considerable distance apart from each other. The viewer would walk through the room not necessarily finding other images

but stumbling upon some images by chance. The size of the images would be 2cm by 2cm square format prints - the size of an instagram

pic. The images would be commissioned photos by South African architects and photographers with the brief that the buildings that they represent in the image should be an example of an oppressive space, psychologically or experientially. The miniaturisation of oppressive spaces confronts one with the reality of the impact of these buildings whilst resisting the trap of glorification that large scale print-out does.

In contrast, the space at the end of the room would be occupied by the 1.5:1 size projection of one image, a photograph of a woman building her matjieshuis in the Richtersveld. The atmosphere of this space is quiet and contemplative, it should be comfortable and viewers are invited to listen to a radio conversation discussing the image. The space would be designed to comfort, through the design of natural light, soft furnishings and interior natural landscaping.

The pumflet would be available to read in the space and copies would form part of the design and setting of the space. Below is the transcript of the radio interview as broadcasted in July 2017 by Nama FM radio and hosted by Chalwyn Thomas for Voetpaaie met Chalwyn:

Chalwyn

Afrikaans:

Die Richtersveld word jaarliks deur duisende toeriste besoek om die natuurlandskap te kom ervaar. Maar nie net dit nie, ook om meer te kom leer van die Namakultuur. Die vraag is hoe goed ken jy jou omgewing en kultuur. Is jy trots

om 'n Richtersveld te wees of nie? Ja, en dan baie toeriste sien ons landskap en omgewing uit 'n ander oogpunt uit. En baie male dink ons as ons toeriste sien wat in die veld rondwaal en fotos neem dan dink ons net: Wat neem die mense hier op die kaal vlaktes? Ek sien dan niks. Ek het onlangs 'n foto van 'n rondhuis waar 'n vrou besig was om die huis te herstel

op my facebook blad Voetpaaie met Chalwyn geplaas wat ek vanaf Ilze Wolff se facebook profile afgehaal het. Dit is 'n foto wat in 1991 in Sandrift geneem is en dis hoe sy die foto ontleed het. Ek het met haar kontak gemaak en gevra wat is so uniek van hierdie foto en hoekom het jy dit op jou facebook profile gesit? Ons is nou al so vir.. ek en Ilze Wolff is nou al vir so 'n jaar bevriend en ek het die geleentheid gehad om saam met haar verlede jaar so 'n kort toer in die Steinkopf omgewing rond te toer en so 'n paar dae terug het ek afgekom op die foto en bietjie gepraat met haar oor die foto en hoe sien sy die foto. Hoekom likes jy dit so baie? Vertel die foto 'n storie vir jou? En dit was haar terugvoering vir my ten opsigte van hierdie foto:

English:

The Richtersveld is visited annually by thousands of tourists to experience the natural landscape. But not only this, also to learn more about the Nama culture. The question is how well do you know your environment and culture? Are you proud to be a Richtersvelder or not? Yes, and then many tourists see our landscape and surroundings from a different point of view. And if we see tourists who are wandering around the field and taking pictures, we think: What do people take here on the bare plains? I do not see anything. I recently posted a picture of a woman who was renovating a round house on my facebook page: Footprints with

Chalwyn, which I collected from Ilze Wolff's facebook profile. This is a picture taken in Sandrift in 1991 and that's how she analyzed the photo. I contacted her and asked what is so unique about this picture and why did you put it on your facebook profile? Ilze Wolff and I have been friends for a year now and I had the opportunity to tour with her last year. It was a short tour of the Steinkopf area and so few days back I came across the picture and talked a bit to her about the picture and how she saw the picture. Why do you like it so much? Does the photo tell a story for you? And this was her response to me regarding this photo:

Ilze.

Hi Chalwyn this is Ilze Wolff here phoning in from Cape Town. I am very interested in the Namakwaland. You might have noticed my profile picture on facebook is a picture of a woman building a matjieshuis in the Richtersveld. It's a photograph taken by Paul Grendon in 1991. Now, that photograph has become a kind of a mantra for me. I've got it up on my wall in my studio and I've got it as my facebook profile picture and it really is part of the way I think about culture and the way I think about architectural culture in South Africa. The woman in the photograph is building a house but what stands out for me in that picture is that instead of building the house like we would normally do by first building the walls, inserting the windows, putting on the roof, and then afterwards moving in with your furniture and all your worldly belongings, this woman is building around her worldly belongings. She's building around her resources with the resources available to her. I find this a fascinating way of making architecture because it is a way

of thinking about how do we imagine space in a new way. How we imagine architectural space, how we inhabit space. I think that in a way it is an example of how we should be building, how we should be occupying architectural spaces. Rather than imagining spaces as this neutral and kind of empty space we first should imagine our resources that we have at our disposal, the belongings that we bring and how we would inhabit and then build around that. Not the other way round as we usually do.

The other thing that I find compelling about this image is that she's building with strength, and she is building with creativity. You'll notice in that photograph that she is in a kind of a very intent pose, you know she's, you know her body language is all about "I'm doing this", you know? And the photographer, Paul

Grendon has framed this image in a very particular way by foregrounding her house with her belongings inside that, behind that is her building the house by first bending one of the reeds or the structures that she will be building the matjieshuis, and beyond that you see the infrastructure: the water tower, the kind of modern technology and the composition is very beautiful for me - how this whole thing sits within the landscape.

I just had a chat with you today and you said that this photograph is taken in Sandrift and you basically recognised the landscape from that and I think the next step for me would be to think about having a conversation with that woman if she is still alive and she is still able to chat about the design of that structure because I think for me architecture, working as an architect we often think architects are a particular kind of person, particular kind of body, mainly male, mainly white

and we don't think that architecture and creative space making could come from the very people around us. I have this picture up on my studio wall and on my online profile as a kind of a homage to her and I think that I would really like to meet her and have a conversation with her so maybe that's a challenge to you to help me find this woman.

Finally I think I would just like to thank you for doing what you are doing. For pointing out our heritage and our cultural landscape in a way that we validate it properly. That we take note of it, that we acknowledge it. I'm just always fascinated by the kind of architectural space that we make, that indigenous people, that people from South Africa have made that have often been neglected in scholarly circles in a kind of thinking around modernist space. Now this photograph is, incidentally, taken in 1991 which is 25 years ago and I would really like to frame this project, this photograph, as a modernist project as a

contemporary architecture as a building of our time. And we often get confronted with the idea that this kind of architecture is of another time, of an older time and I want to resist that narrative. So.. Ja I mean that is my take on the project that you are doing and I think you are doing a much broader project than I am doing. Your project encompasses so much more than a focus on architectural space. You are thinking about the natural landscape, you are thinking about the kind of social histories, the family histories - I am just getting this from the tour that you led us on during our visit to Steinkopf almost a year ago to the date (last year). Thank you very much for that, by the way. And just from that tour, from the feedback that I got from the small group of people with us, I got an understanding that not

only is there a love for this landscape but there is a deep understanding and a deep appreciation and a deep sense of spreading that passion for this particular world. So I'm here, I'm with you on that and I just wanted to share with you my take on it, my small take on it, linking it to this photograph of the woman constructing the matjieshuis, taken by Paul Grendon. Thank you very much for inviting me to share my views and I hope we can talk more.

Thank you and bye bye!

end of transcript

Proposed exhibition contents:

1. +- 100 x commissioned photographs by selected photographers and architects depicting images according to the brief.
2. miniature print outs of the photographs for the exhibition.
3. appropriate walling and lighting system for display of photographs and the enclosure of the space.
4. enclosed room with comfortable acoustics for quiet contemplation and viewing of photograph.

List of photographers:

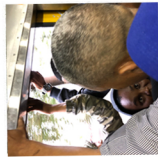
1. Lady Skollie (Laura Windvogel)
2. James Nash
3. Rory Williams
4. Rory Williams
5. Lindsey Appolis
6. Lindsey Appolis
7. Shakeelah Adams
8. Clint White
9. Anthony Stricker
10. Alex Coetzee
11. Ilze Wolff
12. Ilze Wolff
13. Thireshen Govender
14. Lindsey Appolis
15. Amélie de Bonnières
16. Anthony Whitaker
17. Lindsey Appolis
18. Rory Williams
19. Jason Wiggin
20. Leanne Brady
21. Chaze Matakala
22. Lerato Maduna
23. Lerato Maduna
24. Anthony Whitaker
25. Anthony Whitaker
26. Bayo Windapo
27. Dumi Mparutsa
28. Thireshen Govender
29. Thireshen Govender
30. Thireshen Govender
31. Michael Tymbios
32. Marijke Tymbios
33. Michael Lewis
34. Sisonke Mgwebi
35. Heinrich Wolff
36. Shazia Ebrahim
37. andstudio
38. andstudio
39. Anthony Leggett
40. Masixole Feni
41. Caitlyn Johnson
42. Kristi Vlok
43. Bayo Windapo
44. Kristi Vlok
45. andstudio
46. Mariana Alves
47. andstudio
48. David Johnson
49. Ahmed Alkayyali
50. Jason Wiggin
51. Nathan Eisen
52. Bayo Windapo
53. Lindsey Appolis
54. Daniel Malan
55. Jodie Allemeier
56. Trevor Dean
57. Daniel Malan
58. Jason Wiggin
59. Ilze Mari Wessels and Kayla Armstrong
60. Thireshen Govender
61. Maria Wolff
62. Thireshen Govender
63. Barry Christianson
64. andstudio
65. Alexandra Bohmer
66. Cheryl Traub-Adler
67. Ilze Mari Wessels and Kayla Armstrong
68. Ilze Mari Wessels and Kayla Armstrong
69. Anthony Stricker
70. Tashca Titus
71. Alex Coetzee
72. Ilze Mari Wessels and Kayla Armstrong
73. Rese Boshoff
74. Alex Coetzee
75. Calvin Gillmer
76. Thireshen Govender
77. Calvin Gillmer
78. Thireshen Govender
79. Alex Coetzee
80. Meghan Ho-Tong
81. Meghan Ho-Tong
82. Lady Skollie (Laura Windvogel)
83. Masixole Ncevu
84. Calvin Gillmer
85. Cheryl Traub-Adler
86. Daniel Malan
87. Calvin Gillmer
88. Calvin Gillmer
89. Sisonke Mgwebi
90. Calvin Gillmer
91. Sisonke Mgwebi
92. Ncedisa Nkonyeni
93. Cheryl Traub-Adler
94. Shreya Daffney
95. Jason Wiggin
96. Jason Wiggin
97. Daniel Malan
98. Anthony Stricker
99. Jason Wiggin
100. Koos Groenewald



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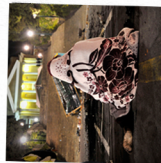
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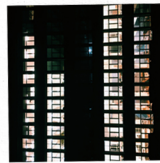
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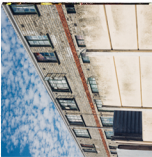
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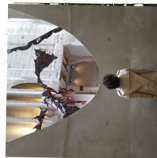
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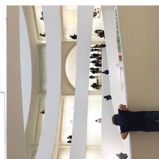
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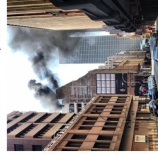
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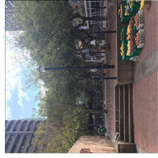
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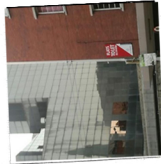
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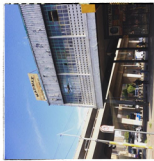
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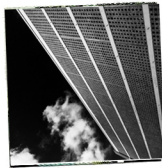
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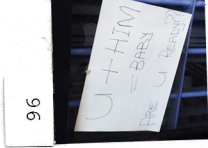
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Motjieshuis, Smdrift

Paul Grendon

1991

Pictured here are Katrien Motjiet (builder)
and Chairmaine Vries (inside). Source: Cho



Glwyn Thomas, 2018.

Pumflet: art, architecture and stuff

Pumflet: art, architecture and stuff is a publication series exploring the social imagination, stories of neighbourhoods and reflecting on histories of the present. Pumflet's aim is to publicise research-in-process and to conceive of interventions in space and public culture based on research. It is a collection of conceptual art interventions and a collection of correspondence art practices.

Pumflet was started by architect Ilze Wolff and artist Kemang Wa Lehulere. Wa Lehulere is an artist who through the process of developing an artistic practice in the mediums of sculpture, drawing, performance and film, has also simultaneously developed a vocabulary to articulate the emotive atmosphere of the South African city past and present. The term 'social imagination' comes from this vocabulary. Wolff is an architect who through her practice with Wolff Architects and Open House Architecture is concerned with finding new wisdoms on how to intervene ethically, creatively and imaginatively through architectural spatial practice, in a place like South Africa with its legacies of past and contemporary spatial violence.

Pumflet, then, is in a way a continued digging and reflecting on the imagination of the collective, with ideas around restoring some 'deleted scenes', consequences of forced removals, hyper capitalist urban development and the impacts of state power of the land and the landless.

April 2018 open call:

We invite you to submit your photograph of an oppressive space. We invite you to join the conversation around space, freedom and non-freedom. We invite you to challenge, with us, the oppressive bureaucracies, which through their indifference, stifle public conversations on the unfreedom experienced by architecture and doing so, the articulation of ways out. We invite you to search with us for more antidotes.

credits:

ilze wolff (pumflet co-founder, research, content, planning, pumflet design & layout)

heinrich wolff (general support)

meghan ho-tong (exhibition coordinator, assistant pumflet design & layout)

lauren oliver (administration & event co-ordination)

alex coetzee (production and model)

open house architecture (media)

wolff architects (production and support)

with special thanks to:

all the photographers (who are individually named inside the pumflet)

chalwyn thomas (Steinkopf resident, researcher and radio interviewer)

paul grendon (photographer 'Matjieshuis sandrift')

kemang wa lehulere (pumflet co-founder)

Photograph captions and further information are available digitally via @wolffcapetown or #pumfletrondehuis on instagram.