

# Kerry Bystrom and Sarah Nuttall

## INTRODUCTION

### Private lives and public cultures in South Africa

*This introductory essay considers how we might forge a critical language to discuss an emerging constellation of cultural production in South Africa: that which focuses on the work of 'intimate exposure' in order to shape a public–private sphere, which in turn forges forms of citizenship unavailable, or submerged by, a history of segregation. We ask the two following questions in order to better understand the dynamics of desegregation and re-racialization in twenty-first century South Africa: what is at stake in the dynamics of private exposure, particularly, but not limited to, the work of contemporary artists, be it exposure of the self or exposure of the lives of others – out of aggression or tenderness, as a gesture of ordinariness or excess, in relation to strangeness or love? Moreover, how do new dramas of secrecy, confession and exposure map onto or circumvent the staging of these issues during the apartheid years, which, itself layering over the scars of the colonial period, provide the subterranean foundation across which recent events play out? Addressing these and other questions takes us through a series of debates animating the current global and South African cultural studies.*

**Keywords** intimate exposure; autobiographical acts; logics of enclosure; public–private sphere; structures of feeling; inequality

We begin with two concerns of and about this time, the 'now'. The first is about the need to forge a critical language to discuss an emerging constellation of cultural production in South Africa. One important strand of contemporary culture is focused on publicly interrogating the so-called 'private' domain of bodies, sexuality, friendship, home spaces, and other forms and sites of intimacy. Even as the almost-twenty-year-old African National Congress (ANC) government consolidates a new 'official culture' (Mbembe 2012) deeply invested in controlling representations of private life – a tendency that crystallized in the recent ANC response to the artistic portrayal of the presidential phallus, to be discussed below – artists and other culture-makers have increasingly turned to personal offerings of the self and private experience

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in the public realm.<sup>1</sup> Among other qualities, their work is routed through performances of the self and the articulation of personal experiences, stories and images as well as private or interior spaces in which subjectivity gets shaped; it focuses on and circulates through feeling and affective life; it is profoundly invested in objects, commodities or 'things'; it is about movement and mobility; it tends to embrace vulnerability, risk and recombination rather than following a predetermined aesthetic or political arc. Cultural production in this vein ranges across traditional artistic genres and the spectrum of public cultures. How can we talk about this work, in its relation to global trends and in its local specificity? Why has this become the emerging edge of contemporary culture and what possibilities does it open?

The second concern is about how to engage in the task of 'desegregating' (Nuttall 2009) public space and political discourse. Far from becoming the 'rainbow nation' envisioned in 1994, South Africa since its first democratic election has seen an entrenchment of material inequality and in many, though not all sectors, an accompanying re-racialization and balkanization of society. As foreshadowed by our reference to the abovementioned 'official culture', the ruling ANC cannot be separated from these developments. The renewed salience of race in the democratic society dates to the shift between Nelson Mandela and his successor Thabo Mbeki, who saw 'racial reconciliation' as fundamentally entwined with (a still desperately needed) economic transformation and under whose watch the Black Economic Empowerment project was unfurled (Habib 2004; Gevisser 2007)<sup>2</sup>; it has been channelled in new directions through current President Jacob Zuma's Zulu-inflected populism and the popular if controversial former President of the ANC Youth League Julius Malema's race-based political programme (Forde 2011). Within such a context, the rhetoric of non-racialism cherished in the past by the ANC and broader anti-apartheid social movements seems out of place, or out of time. Yet, political and theoretical responses that continually focus on what has failed in the democratic transition and emphasize class- and race-based divides between people as gaps that remain largely unaltered, important though they may be, seem to do little. How then can we envision moving into a different future? Through what critical vocabularies or grammars might real as well as imagined practices of desegregation be possible?<sup>3</sup>

In this special issue, we address these questions as we begin to chart the complex and sometimes unstable links that tie them together. We ask, to what extent do current art works and emerging cultural forms invested in the private or interior – and particularly in displays that we term *intimate exposure* – participate in the dynamics of re-racialization and/or desegregation noted here? What is at stake in the public exposure of the private lives of others, be it out of aggression or tenderness, and be they politicians or ordinary citizens, strangers or lovers? How does that shift, and what can be gained, when we expose our own bodies, selves and spaces to the world? How do new dramas of secrecy, confession and exposure map onto or circumvent the staging of

these issues during the apartheid years, which, itself layered over the scars of the colonial period, provide the subterranean foundation for recent events? What kinds of 'working through' (Labuscagne 2013) of the present does it allow?

Addressing these questions takes us through a series of debates animating current global and South African cultural studies. As our contributors grapple with the meaning of, and the possibilities opened by, the manifold forms of making private lives public that have circulated in South Africa since the end of apartheid, we also engage with wider discussions about the public and political life of feeling and the meaning of the self and the role played by objects or 'things' in shaping senses of the self. Furthermore, we track the continuing usefulness of the politics of identity and difference around which much of postcolonial studies have been based, especially in contradistinction to theories of 'entanglement' (Nuttall 2009) and 'mutuality' (Mbembe 2009), and suggest that the work of 'theory from the South' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2011) may considerably complicate supposedly global paradigms developed for the North American context.

## I

What do we mean by 'private life' or 'the private'? These are capacious and flexible signifiers, encompassing a wide range of meanings that shift and sometimes contradict each other as they move across contexts. In his influential *Publics and Counterpublics*, American cultural theorist Michael Warner identifies no less than 18 common Western definitions of privacy, most but not all understood in contradistinction to notions of 'the public' or 'the public sphere' (2002, pp. 29, 30). We will approach these terms through two broad lenses that emerge from this list. One comes from originally Roman conceptions of the *res publica*, which defines 'the public' as 'almost solely a spatial concept, meaning anything open, such as the outside wall of a house. Modern culture', Warner continues, 'has redrawn the spatial distinction, adding new layers of meaning to the term public, but preserving the idea of physical boundaries' (2002, p. 26). The private, as the obverse of the public, then means that which is inside the walls of the home, or that which is architecturally separate from the space of public life. The second lens pertains to the interior architecture of the self. As Warner puts it, the private is that which is 'related to the individual, especially to inwardness, subjective experience and the incommunicable' (2002, p. 30). This can include notions of selfhood or subjectivity (our personal histories, who we *really are*) as well as affective ties between selves and those who are closest to them. It speaks to notions of desire, for other people and for other things, or to be a different kind of person than we understand ourselves to be, and is often keyed to the

shifts and flows of feeling (see also Berlant 2008).<sup>4</sup> We add to these two lenses a third, that of the body and bodily functions. As Warner links the private with the 'genital or sexual' (2002, p. 30), we broaden this dimension to include other aspects of the (raced and gendered) body that can be covered or unclothed, such as the skin itself.

These categories of privacy overlap, just as the notions of public and private themselves cannot be separate or dichotomous. (Indeed, exploring the connections between and mutual imbrications of public and private – while nevertheless retaining a sense of distinction between them – lies at the heart of this special issue.) However, approaching the private from the perspective of inner lives, bodies and interior spaces, helps us begin to chart the distinct kinds of intimate exposures that surface in contemporary South African culture and the way they become entangled in public debate. Intimate exposure, a term introduced by Kerry Bystrom, in her contribution to this issue, indicates a set of diverse acts that involve revealing inner aspects and places of the self and self-making; these may be acts of self-exposure or exposure of the private lives of others. Such acts involve numerous risks (see McGregor and Nuttall 2007, 2009). On one hand revealing personal spaces, images, stories or feelings in public or physically inhabiting new zones invites misunderstanding and rejection, and on the other focusing attention on the intimate, private or domestic can mean a turn away from urgent political and economic issues. They can also play into colonial and apartheid forms of spectacular exposure, seen for instance in the scandalous exhibition of the body of Sarah Baartman or in countless Immorality Act trials.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, and particularly when considered in light of the secrecy, repression and censorship that formed a large part of the matrix of the apartheid society and has emerged in reconfigured forms today, it may be in such acts of exposure that new ways of living together are being invented and inhabited.

### *Inner lives*

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 1996–1998) was one critical space for ushering inner lives into public culture. The Commission offered in its public hearings and through the intense media coverage that accompanied it the spectacle of individual subjects narrating in harrowing detail the traumas they suffered during apartheid. Doing so, the TRC at least temporarily inaugurated a 'public–private sphere' where people previously defined as separate could imagine and feel their way into a shared public culture through empathetic engagement with people victimized by the apartheid regime (Bystrom 2010; see also Ndlovu 2013).<sup>6</sup> At the same time as the TRC, a set of influential autobiographies and other first-person narratives exposed for public view not only non-conventional experiences of apartheid but also modes of pain and resistance that emerged when apartheid ended – thus, broadening the range of issues approached through intimate exposure.

Examples of what Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl-Ann Michael term ‘autobiographical acts’ (2000) include Mamphela Ramphele’s *A Life*, Njabulo Ndebele’s personally inflected essays, Charlene Smith’s autobiographical account of her own rape *Proud of Me*, and the personal testimonies about living with HIV published by Edwin Cameron and Adam Levine. Such texts also gesture towards a flowering of expression and interest in ‘the ordinary’ as opposed to the ‘spectacular’ aesthetics that oriented the anti-apartheid struggle (Ndebele 1994).<sup>7</sup>

This is not to suggest that the public revelation of inner lives is new in South Africa. Well before the TRC, alongside colonial and apartheid manipulation of spectacular exposures, *Drum* magazine featured personal stories and a rich tradition of South African autobiography flourished. Blake Modisane’s *Blame Me on History*, for instance, published in 1963, can quite be seen as a radical form of intimate exposure. Yet, such cultural work would become blocked out by critical frameworks foregrounding the collective struggle, and the forms that representations of interiority and intimacy took in the past have not yet been fully excavated. Since the life of culture is always a life of sedimentation, made up of reservoirs of meaning that can be lost through amnesia or reactivated into an indefinite future, the TRC can be read in some sense to reanimate such earlier if critically and politically underplayed modes of address.

Almost 20 years into democracy and in a political climate often marked by suspicion, subterranean deal-making and a confrontational brand of identity politics, it can seem as though memories of the TRC are the ones that have faded. Yet the personal voices it foregrounded and the cultural constellations that emerged alongside it can also be seen to have opened into distinct avenues of expression – particularly as they intersect with global trends such as the explosion of tabloid media cultures and the foregrounding of personal testimony associated with broadcast giants like Oprah Winfrey, the phenomenon of reality television and the appearance of new genres of digital life writing seen in blogs, Facebook profiles and YouTube. Arjun Appadurai (1996) notes that such global genres circulate everywhere but gain currency and luminosity at particular places and in particular moments. In contemporary South Africa, such modes of intimate exposure suffuse diverse media forms and can speak in different keys to a variety of publics. They seem to be crucial in addressing both the challenges of the unfinished democratic transition and the aspirations and desires of the ‘born free’ generation.

To take the example of television: in his article for this special issue ‘Fixing Families Through Television?’ Thabisani Ndlovu draws attention to the circulation of inner lives in South African talk television. Surveying a number of different examples produced by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and E-TV but focusing specifically on the SABC TV series *Relate*, Ndlovu explores talk television as a forum for members of South Africa’s poor black communities to voice their personal struggles and particularly their

family traumas. Telling life stories on TV can function as a form of healing for participants, he suggests, even as it intersects with the SABC's projects of nation-building and profit-making in complex ways. Pointing to many aspects of the series that deserve criticism, and along lines similar to both the TRC and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, Ndlovu also reminds us that *Relate* addresses issues and constituencies historically ignored in mainstream, English-language media – confronting the closures of public life as it brings the psychological and economic concerns of some of South Africa's most marginalized communities to the fore. In this way, it turns 'private' family stories into sites for re-negotiating public culture.

At the seemingly opposite end of the television spectrum, but equally trading in the currency of inner lives, is the new crop of South African reality TV shows, including Kenny Kunene's show *KK – So What*, the twin sisters and YFM DJs Hlelo and Ntando Masina's *Blame it on the Fame*, and even a promised show starring three of Nelson Mandela's granddaughters (Wyck 2011). Here, interest in the daily arguments, insecurities and shopping sprees of South African celebrities speaks to powerful desires for an upwardly mobile lifestyle that democracy was meant to provide. If giving such access helps to consolidate the celebrity's very status as celebrity, then gaining access to the inner lives of the people featured on TV may allow viewers to perpetuate a fantasy of freedom – both legal and material – through the workings of psychic substitution in the context of consumer culture. Yet it may also work to integrate diverse South Africans into a more shared youth culture that scrambles previously reified racial divisions.<sup>8</sup>

While further removed from the frame of the real appealed to these examples from television, contemporary literature and performance is often equally invested in revealing and exploring aspects of an affective inner life. Gabeba Baderoon, a poet raised in a 'Coloured' section of Cape Town, provides for this special issue a selection of poems and commentary rooted in her own family history and especially the fraught but intense relationships between parents and children. At the same time as she offers her intimate perspective on apartheid displacement and the ways in which people inherit and deal with pain in daily life, though, Baderoon also sheds light on the drawbacks of 'revelation' and the importance of privacy and secrets. The barriers to access seen in 'Fanon's Secret', for instance, are key here. Baderoon's section simply entitled 'Poems' speaks to a complexly patterned movement between exposure and concealment, between sharing and shielding, between searching for connection and acknowledging distance.

Such dynamics also inform visual culture, where artists like Berni Searle have achieved recognition by making their own racial and gendered identities and histories into their material without necessarily sacrificing opacity or promising full and easy access to the 'other'. Searle's 'Traces', for instance, engages in her 'Coloured' heritage by creating silhouettes of her own body in the spices traded across the Indian Ocean world and tied up with the economic

viability of slavery in the Cape colony. Further examples of this turn to self-reflexive and intimate forms in visual art include Terry Kurgan (whose work is also included in this special issue and will be discussed below), Penny Siopis, Usha Seejarim, Mary Sibande, Senzeni Marasela, and – as Zethu Matebeni argues in her article in this issue ‘Intimacy, Queerness, Race’ – Zanele Muholi. Muholi, a well-known black lesbian activist, creates work that crosses between different forms of intimate exposure. Her earlier works – most famous for sparking controversy at Constitution Hill when former Minister of Arts and Culture Lulu Xingwana denounced them as immoral and pornographic – include transgressive representations of queer black life and portraits that capture the violence suffered by lesbians in South African society. They constitute what Kylie Thomas (2010) calls an ‘intimate archive’ of lesbian life. While referring to this larger body of work, Matebeni points to a different kind of intimacy in Muholi’s *Caitlin*, a composite photograph that depicts Muholi and her white lover Caitlin in what seems to be the aftermath of consensual sexual intercourse. Bringing her own inner and joyful *sex* life into public as she exposes largely occluded routes of desire, Matebeni suggests, Muholi may inspire other forms of self-disclosure and spark needed discussion about spaces and forms of female sexuality.

### *Bodies*

*Caitlin*, Matebeni persuasively argues, is also a work that challenges the way black, female and queer *bodies*, in particular, have been overwritten by others in the oppressive political projects that mark South Africa’s history. If bodies with this conjunction of identities are often the most repressed in contemporary society, then those with the separate markings of race, gender and sexuality remain subject to differential treatment and are positioned unequally in struggles for access to resources. Race remains the most salient marker in a society composed on the ruins of a regime built on racial discrimination, where the body was perceived through a grid of politics and aesthetics obsessed with whiteness; discussions of skin, hair and clothing, never mind the body parts generally covered over by clothing and their activities, inevitably bear the traces of these historical racial coordinates even as these coordinates are reconfigured. Yet, gender and sexuality have also been topics of great public interest and the body itself, as an intimate sign and fleshy creature, and particularly as vulnerable or wounded flesh, has become a master trope of art and popular culture in the democratic period. Its activities (including but not only its sexual activities) are widely publicized and closely monitored.

Lurid exposed bodies of others and their exploits – rather than the self-exposures described in the previous section – can be seen in South Africa’s tabloid culture as well as in the recent debates about pornography. *The Sun*, which has the largest newspaper circulation in the country, features outrageous

love dramas and sex scandals, amidst highly localized stories with riveting and disturbing elements, drawing on melodrama's mock fright and over-the-top acts.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, though, when a pay-TV satellite broadcaster, TopTV, applied for three channels to air pornography on South African television, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) denied them the right to do so. Jubie Matlou, spokesman for ICASA, announced in January 2012 that 'it was decided that women's right to dignity outweighed TopTV's right to freedom of expression, and the rights of viewers to receive porn on TV'. The Family Policy Institute welcomed ICASA's decision, describing it as 'socially responsible'. Institute Director Errol Naidoo said it was a 'bold decision' that placed the health and welfare of the family above the profit motives of irresponsible broadcasters. Yet it was a complex decision, and one that undercut, in favour of women's rights, South Africa's desperate need, too, for more permissiveness. South Africa is a society emerging from a concatenation of many repressive structures, including forms of psychic and sexual repression, in ways that notions of 'wounding' do not always get at sufficiently. Pornography in this context can work to make sex ordinary, and so may signify in ways quite different from other contexts. Also surprising about the decision was the implicit notion (as in the case of the Zuma's painting to be discussed below, where the president applied to have his naked image 'removed' from a website) that in a digital age one can still prevent forms of seeing and looking; it seemed to disavow the fact that the age of secrecy is almost over. In South Africa, such debates must be read then in the context of apartheid's conservative religious aims to repress the body, sexuality and sexual encounters of all kinds. Rita Barnard points to the apartheid regime's dependence on censorship and the issue of pornography in her essay for this issue, approached from a different perspective below.

Another vector of public discussion that brings together bodies, sex, and the dynamics of secrecy and exposure is tied to the AIDS pandemic, where the vulnerable body has surfaced as a key figure.<sup>10</sup> If the ANC under Mbeki was slow to recognize and appropriately treat the weakened bodies it governed, this was in part because of the way global characterizations of HIV and AIDS overlapped with profoundly racist colonial and apartheid visions of black hypersexuality (see Hoad 2007). Yet, as Neville Hoad (2007) reminds us, the knowledge of shared bodily risk or corporeal vulnerability that resulted from an acknowledgement of the danger posed by HIV may also be the grounds for a grassroots 'cosmopolitanism' extending across social boundaries. As we will see in more detail below, this is a possibility that Cobi Labuscagne in her contribution to this special issue also links to the body made vulnerable through crime.

One of the most striking recent dramas of the body in public unfolded as we were writing this Introduction. It involved the exhibition, at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg, of artist Brett Murray's controversial portrait *The Spear* which depicts President Jacob Zuma with his genitals bared. The painting

attracted immense outrage from the ANC as well as from the public. The art community was split between those who defended Murray, who said the work 'is an attempt at humorous satire of political power and patriarchy within the context of other artworks in the exhibition', and those like Rehad Desai of Arterial Network South Africa, who took the position that 'this is part of the context of 300 years of dispossession and colonialism which stripped people of their humanity and dignity. Tens of thousands of men were physically stripped naked when imprisoned for pass laws. Our hoary past has a lot to do with the psychological and emotional response to this piece of art'. Multiple wounds surfaced in the visceral and widespread resistance to the painting.

Sarah Nuttall, in her essay entitled 'Skin Surfaces', looks closely at the Zuma painting and an earlier painting which depicted Mandela's corpse and produced a very similar set of responses. She also explores perforations for routings through the body other than those that rely on notions of wound and flesh. She considers how Johannesburg artist Mary Sibande creates 'sealed' figures, and explores a rubric of cladding, with a particular interest in surfaces made so shiny as to blur and challenge the distinction between raced human skin and the more self-consciously plastic dimensions of the mannequin figure. Nuttall also explores the notion of skin surface as a place where meanings can be unmade, a re-compositional place, then, in which 'depthlessness offers the possibility of congealing into meaning or image or of receding again in a more fugitive epistemological terrain'.

### *Interior spaces*

Muholi's exhibitions bring topics from the *bedroom* into public culture in multiple and overlapping ways – her images convene publics discursively through critical commentary and they literally invade and transfigure the public space of the exhibition hall or Constitution Hill. Other artists focus on what might be seen as concerns of the *kitchen*. Usha Seejarim's surprisingly beautiful iron flowers and other whimsical sculptures made out of cleaning supplies such as used mops present the question of housework with fresh eyes. Along similar lines but much more present in public culture has been Sibande's representations of domestic servitude. Her *Queen Sophie* billboards, featuring the black female figure cast from her own body and dressed in fantastically altered maid's uniforms, were mounted in 19 locations across the city of Johannesburg from June through September of 2010 – turning public spaces into forums for discussing the question of domestic service, still largely invisible in South African discourse, still remaining as something like *dirty laundry*. Critics like Alexandra Dodd (2010) have pointed out that whereas the domestic servant is traditionally expected to disappear into the background, to become invisible, Sibande's Sophie takes up space in the room/city, and becomes hypervisible. Interestingly, this intervention into public discourse is a kind of 'autobiographical act', since Sibande's engagement in these topics is

through her family line: her mother, her mother and her great grandmother were all domestic workers, and it is from their experience she speaks.

Revealing inner lives and foregrounding bodies here blurs common boundaries between public and private through a kind of spatial itinerancy, where things perceived to be properly confined to the home or domestic life surface in public spaces and become knitted into public discussions around these surfacings.<sup>11</sup> Sibande's billboards suggest that this model can be taken further, as intimate exposures – at least temporarily – reconfigure public built environments to include aspects of the home or the domestic realm.<sup>12</sup> Different examples of intimate exposure discussed in this special issue take similar routes, creating structures through which members of the public can enter into living spaces marked off as private. Allowing for what Meg Samuelson (2008) has called, in a slightly different context, 'walking through the door and inhabiting the house', they focus on exploring and exposing geographies of dwelling and work from there to contest forms of balkanization in South African society. The divides at stake might be those between South African citizens of different genders, races and ethnicities, or class positions; or, as cities such as Johannesburg receive increasing numbers of African migrants, those between South Africans and foreign nationals – the palpable hostility around which flared out in the xenophobic riots of May 2008.

One of the most commented-upon features of post-apartheid geography is the increasing securitization of the landscape, seen in the predominance of gated communities in the suburbs on the edges of South Africa's major cities.<sup>13</sup> Scholars from Richard Ballard (2004) to Achille Mbembe (2008) have plumbed the logic of enclosure seen in such gated communities and shopping districts. In a work that straddles memoir and fiction, writer Ivan Vladislavic shows in *Portrait With Keys* (2006) the difficulty of and the necessity to break down the walls surrounding private and domestic life, often understood as white life, and gestures to the potential power of creating new spatial itineraries that move between public and private zones as well as different neighbourhoods of the city (Graham 2008). In her article for this special issue 'Crime, Art and Public Culture', Cobi Labuscagne explores an intervention by the celebrated visual artist Jane Alexander that also engages with and unsettles conventional ideas about securitization, segregation, fencing and guarding. Labuscagne focuses on Alexander's installation 'Security', as it functioned within the 2010 Johannesburg Art Fair. Even as the installation thematizes the problem that obsessive securitization poses for democracy, Labuscagne argues, the location of the installation and its workings within in this particular Art Fair space invited spectators to engage differently with notions of bodily safety and privacy, to challenge their preconceptions, and to rethink the nature of the city spaces they inhabit.

On the other end of the gated community are informal settlements located in former township areas and the precarious shelters found in city centres. Marked by poverty and typically associated with violence, these places have

often been considered no-go zones for people with means to avoid them; urban legend is that GPS devices from South Africa at one point even put skull-and-crossbones symbols on roads in such areas. Yet the story is much more complicated, and there is a clear need to reframe such stark cognitive maps and their moral and affective hierarchies. Kerry Bystrom, in her article included here 'Johannesburg Interiors', brings into view a series of different media works that do this by opening homes and other intimate spaces in marginalized areas of the city. These include Kgebetli Moele's novel *Room 207* (2006), which invites a public readership on an imagined house tour of a flat converted from an old hotel room in Hillbrow, and Christoph Gurk's performance project *X Homes Johannesburg* (2010), which brought South African and international spectators to theatrical spectacles inside private homes in Hillbrow and Kliptown. Juxtaposed to these works is Terry Kurgan's participatory art project *Hotel Yeoville* (2010), which turned public physical and virtual space into a zone of intimacy as it asked both South Africans and African nationals living together in Yeoville to reveal aspects of themselves through a range of digital interfaces and online applications. Such projects, Bystrom suggests, at the very least move towards desegregated urban imaginaries.

Kurgan's own comments on and a selection of images from *Hotel Yeoville*, situated as part of her wider oeuvre, is included in a dossier of her work prepared for this special issue. Entitled 'Private Lives/Public Culture', this dossier combines images from earlier and much more autobiographically focused exhibitions such as *I'm the King of the Castle*, about the forms of desire that flow between mothers and their children, and *Lost and Found*, about the fugitive memories left out of carefully sculpted family albums, with Kurgan's introspective narrative voice and the domestic or personal images created by participants in city projects like *Hotel Yeoville* to evocatively trace the development of an artist thinking and working precisely at the seam of public and private cultures. It further explores how sharing photographs and narratives through social media can allow us to claim public presence and to 'perform (and form)' mobile identities and communities.

## II

If a number of our contributors suggest that the turn towards private life might create a space for imagining the kinds of democratic relations dreamt of in the transition moment of the early 1990s, then this stance goes against a general disparagement of the ascendance of 'the intimate' in the public life of modern Western societies – especially as it plays out in the context of neoliberal global capitalism. As noted previously, the concept of the private or private life is often defined in opposition to the public, so at a very basic level (and despite

powerful attempts to overturn such definitions by the women's, civil rights and gay rights movements in the latter half of the twentieth century) it is precisely what does not belong in public circulation. Not only is the private the other of the public, but also it is its abject other: devalued because of its association with women's voices and the unpredictable realm of feeling or emotion (Warner 2002, p. 24, Illouz 2003, Berlant 2008). As Warner points out, the 'bracketing' of private concerns and private lives from the public domain and the hierarchization of public over private is one of the abiding ideals of modern Western democracy, from the eighteenth century up through John Rawls' 'veil of ignorance', which posits the need to screen off personal identities and desires in order to pursue a disinterested common good through rational discourse (2002, p. 40).

Many important questions have been raised about the desirability and indeed the practicality of such models, from fields such as feminism, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, postcolonial theory and critical race theory. But, as Barnard reminds us in her essay for this issue 'On Public and Private in J.M. Coetzee', this tradition of thought has raised important critiques of the public or political life of intimacy – including the threat posed to privacy itself by the logics of neoliberal capital. Surveying South Africa's most internationally celebrated novelist's position as 'private' artist and 'public intellectual' along with his wider engagement with the entwined zones of the public and the private, particularly in his texts *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship* (1997) and *Diary of a Bad Year* (2008), Barnard rescues from within Coetzee's oeuvre a sense of the need to defend a 'private' that should not be pried open to a market bent on consuming it; even as she shows how this 'private' only exists in a state of dynamic tension with public exposure. This analysis of a transnational and even global South African text – one written from Australia about the politics of former US President George W. Bush among others – also, if implicitly, asks us to situate the South African case both within and against theoretical and political debates originating in the North. How do such debates help us parse post-apartheid South Africa, which is and is not a modern Western democracy? Conversely, how might the specific history of this country and theory coming from or generated about the global South complicate critiques of public intimacy?

### *The political life of intimacy*

Among the critiques of something like intimate exposure, four stand out. First, parading stories and images of inner lives and interior spaces is said to degrade the integrity of private life by turning feelings into money and subjecting everything to the logic of the market. Second, it erodes the dignity of exposed subjects and encourages immoral engagements in public discourse by turning audiences into voyeurs, taking an unwholesome pleasure in the pain or the seedy travails of others. Third, it undercuts the classical functioning of the

public sphere by introducing feeling, identity and particularity into shared debate. Finally, it de-politicizes structural violence by transforming underlying social issues into questions of individual pathology and psychology. If the consequences of poverty are understood in terms of personal trauma, they become subject to a different, and individual rather than collective, remedy.

Looking at the figure of Oprah Winfrey, whose corporate empire of sentiment seems to embody many of the evils cited here and is translated into South African culture through a variety of indigenized forms including local talk shows like *Relate*, sociologist Eva Illouz (2003) both lists and provides compelling counterarguments to these criticisms. Following Alexander Nehemas, she notes that commodification, instead of being an absolute evil, can bring with it forms of polyphony that open up ethical debates in unexpected and democratizing ways: 'the open-endedness, polysemy and undecidability of television content derives precisely from the commercial desire to reach audiences. Commercially driven ecumenism makes the text offer a multiplicity of points of view in an open-ended moral structure. This openness in turn enables people to engage in moral deliberations when attending to the meaning of a television text' (2003, p. 221).

She similarly undercuts the argument against voyeurism by reminding us that sharing and witnessing pain, for instance, often has healing functions which a focus on voyeurism elides (2003, pp. 215, 216). On the issue of the quality of the public sphere, Illouz suggests that rather than degrading public discourse, sharing intimacies creates a potentially more vibrant public sphere of 'voice, not discourse . . . voice is opposed both to silence and to a form of speech predicated on the assumption that neutrality represents a higher form of morality' (2003, pp. 223, 224). Finally, she suggests that the sentimental stories of trauma highlighted by Winfrey – the *voices* that she elicits and disseminates – do not necessarily represent an apolitical undermining of questions of structural violence but show the 'interface between individual and political problems' (2003, pp. 228–230). They may act as a hinge rather than a blinder.

We will return to this last point shortly, but should indicate here that Illouz strongly critiques Winfrey for emptying out the felt and lived experience of misery by revaluing it; making it a phenomenon that helps us lead better lives. As she puts it, 'Winfrey's democracy of suffering is unappealing, not because it is voyeuristic, emotional or commodified – rather, because it negates the very phenomenality of the experience of suffering and attempts to mechanically substitute the glamour of vanquished suffering for the disquieting spectacle of intractable misery' (2003, p. 235). Such criticism might apply to *Relate* (though Ndlovu suggests that *Relate* does indeed speak to questions of 'intractable' poverty) and even to the TRC as a spectacle that 'mechanically substitutes' the glamour of reconciliation for the reality of misery. Yet her comments also help us to see beyond this critical reading of the TRC to its healing function and the public sphere of 'voice' that it convened. Such

counterarguments become all the more appealing as we discard Winfrey's paradigm equating intimate exposure with the sharing of pain, and look at other narratives of inner lives, bodies and interior spaces. Here, where the problematic narrative of overcoming suffering is not the affective hook, the notion of a poliphonous democracy of voice flips into a positive model – one with the potential of creating a 'public–private sphere' not about emptying out the public realm or creating eddies of difference but about finding points of intersection denied through the historically specific experiences of colonialism, segregation and apartheid.

We have not yet fully addressed the issue of the substitution of individual remedy for collective transformation, and with it perhaps the most nuanced and sophisticated critique of the public life of intimacy: Lauren Berlant's conception of the 'intimate public sphere' (1997, 2008). In *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (2008) and *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (1997; written before but about a later period than *The Female Complaint*), Berlant poses the 'intimate public sphere' as a community of market circulation in which members *feel* a sense of belonging, commonality and shared aspirations with other members. Looking at the intimate public sphere created by and for women in nineteenth and twentieth century America, she notes:

By intimate public I do not mean a public sphere organized by autobiographical confession and chest-baring, although there is often a significant amount of first-person narrative in an intimate public. What makes a public sphere intimate is an expectation that the consumers of its particular stuff already share a worldview and emotional knowledge that they have derived from a broadly common historical experience... its consumer participants are perceived to be marked by a commonly lived history; its narratives and things are deemed expressive of that history while also shaping its conventions of belonging; and, expressing the sensational, embodied experience of living as a certain kind of being in the world, it promises also to provide a better experience of social belonging.  
(2008, p. viii)

The intimate public of women in this earlier period can be seen as something like but not equivalent to Warner's (2002) notion of a 'counterpublic', where women find ways of validating their experiences and create coping strategies for the trials of life as a subordinate subject.

Berlant points to some serious problems with the intimate public sphere in these historical contexts, and her criticisms only become more intense as she moves towards the present day. She suggests that the intimate public sphere even when created by subaltern subjects is something 'juxtapolitical' rather than political, in the sense that it aims not at changing the conditions that create the subordination of the group but rather at making individuals feel

better with the lot that they have. It ‘produces more movement within a space than towards being or wanting to be beyond it’ (Berlant 2008, p. 12). Berlant also traces the way the ‘intimate public’ of women created through sentimentalism, under pressure from the neoconservative agenda in the USA beginning in the Reagan era, transforms into a wider national intimate public sphere in which all questions of social justice are subsumed by issues like ‘family values’. Here, talks of feeling, trauma, sexuality and interiority in the public realm magnetize attention and provide an alibi for not addressing structural inequalities, with the result of ‘downsizing citizenship to modes of voluntarism and privacy’ (1997, p. 5).<sup>14</sup>

Berlant’s is a brilliant reading of North America, and a host of examples suggest that her concerns have traction in contemporary South Africa. One case we have already raised is the former Minister Xingwana’s response to the Muholi exhibition at the Constitutional Court. A second and even more clear-cut example is the aforementioned furor raised by the ANC and President Zuma himself over Brett Murray’s painting *The Spear*. Here, and notwithstanding the very real wounds opened by the painting and representations of it in the media cited above, the ANC seemed to use debates over Zuma’s physiognomy and more general stereotypes of the black body to distract from important political issues at stake in Zuma’s re-election campaign. Berlant fundamentally critiques neoliberal capitalism while exploring in some depth the creative rearrangements of selfhood and desire it provokes. What she does not sufficiently deal with, and what the South African case allows us in some respects to open up, is whether there are ways of pursuing social transformation within the current hegemonic system. We consider in this issue how something like an intimate public sphere in the context of a divided democratic South Africa can create structures of feelings that bind groups of people together in socially generative ways. Given the way emotion can act, as Sarah Ahmed (2004) points out, as a kind of ‘glue’ sticking people together, are there not certain ways to value its entrance in the public domain?

### *South African frames, or, thinking from the South*

Cultural studies in contemporary South Africa must be viewed through the frame of a global neoliberalism whose currency is (often) feeling and which ties diverse locations into a web of common desires, political flows and structural inequalities. Yet, as our other contributors emphasize, it should also be explored through its own discrete historical frame, which requires special attention to building thick connections between groups of people whose lives were legally defined as separate during the 50-year period of apartheid and the hundreds of years of various forms of colonialism that preceded it, and through social and cultural theory formed in response to it. As cultural analyst Preben Kaarsholm puts it, ‘in order to engage with the paradoxes of the public sphere in post-apartheid South Africa one must . . . begin by considering the ways in

which the public sphere has been fragmented historically, and against this background look at the possibilities that exist for overcoming fragmentation' (2009, p. 412). Such a trajectory might lead to different conceptions of and uses for intimacy in public culture than that seen in US-based models, including its potential value in desegregating the public realm – thus, constituting part of the project that we indicate with the terms 'thinking' and 'theory from the South'.

Kaarsholm, writing at the end of the Mbeki era, characterizes the South African public (he refers specifically to the 'public sphere' but the point can be extended to public life as a whole) as radically fragmented, both notionally and materially: 'The unfolding of the public sphere – available to all citizens – is held back in South Africa first of all by class division, poverty and extreme inequalities of access to wealth, resources and power' (2009, p. 412). These include, he notes, access to print and electronic media. Such material inequities are grounded in and compounded by the social imaginary instituted by colonialism, segregation and apartheid in which diverse groups consist of 'separate publics' (2009, p. 412). Apartheid obviously instituted an unequal material distribution in all forms of life, including access to voice within the public realm that was reconstituted on a nationwide level in 1994. Apartheid also imprinted the idea that people of different races should live separately, having little to no insight into the lives of others – a fact which reduced the capacity to imagine any kind of togetherness.<sup>15</sup> The ANC policy of non-racialism and a wider United Democratic Front mobilization against apartheid in the 1980s worked to undercut such forms of absolute separation but not always in ways that allowed thick bonds of understanding and feeling to form. We have already referred to Ndebele's famous protest against the spectacular nature of opposition culture, which, in focusing on exteriority and extreme struggle, contributed to an undervaluation of inner lives and interior spaces and to an inability to imagine others and otherwise.

The ANC government and, as noted earlier, the TRC as well as a variety of loosely allied cultural initiatives, initially tried to rectify the stratifications of the public sphere. However, as scholars like Carolyn Hamilton (2009) make clear, the transition to democracy failed to set up permanent structures for real public deliberation and the promise of democracy was in many ways shut down. 'By 2007', Hamilton notes, 'the idealized public sphere in the nascent South African democracy was faltering' (2009, p. 361). She explains further:

the post-repressive-regime South African government has actively convened a public sphere bristling with institutions and policies designed to facilitate public discussion. However, certain apartheid legacies and contemporary political compromises have facilitated the reach of power into the convened public sphere, leading to a corralling of public deliberation and the attempted silencing of critical voices.

(2009, p. 370)

Critical discussion about the major issues facing the country has suffered from being channelled through the rigid structures of ANC party procedures as well as from attempts to curtail, even if ultimately unsuccessfully, public access to state information and freedom of speech issues relating to artistic production. This at the same time that millions of citizens become more and more frustrated at their continued exclusion from public life and the power and resources that should be located there. Such a failure to consolidate a broad-based public has contributed to a turn, during the Zuma administration, towards a form of compensatory cultural nationalism aligned with Zulu identity and specifically Zulu masculinity quite at odds with the ANC's official non-racial and gender-neutral ideology. This ethnic particularism combines with the modes of repression and censorship discussed above within what Mbembe (2012) calls the new 'official culture'.

Critical discussion has in turn shifted into what Hamilton theorizes as 'capillaries of public deliberation' (2009, p. 365). She argues that:

[m]uch public deliberation takes a far more capillaried form, often outside [the] convened space [of the public sphere] and even outside the sequestered spaces of counterpublic spheres, in areas not conventionally regarded as sites of deliberation. Many different ideas are presented and debated in public, through articles, books, films, performances, artworks, speeches, advertising and so on.

(2009, p. 366)<sup>16</sup>

It is particularly important for our argument that these capillaries are spaces where the 'self' enters into public culture:

In the aftermath of situations which crush the individuality of the self, explorations of subjectivity, affect and a new interiority become essential... performances, novels, art and film introduce affect and subjectivity into public deliberation because of the grave difficulties of the negotiation of the self in contemporary South Africa. These are issues that cannot be screened out of public deliberation, but which the formal public sphere as currently set up cannot easily accommodate.

(Hamilton 2009, p. 368)

Hamilton suggests here that rebuilding the self, the internal, subjective life of individuals and their emotional dimensions, is a crucial aspect of democracy that must take place in public or between people. Such a process, we would argue, not only helps individuals navigate the challenges of political transition but also becomes a way for the self to connect to other selves, seeing where individual experiences and desires mesh and where they differ.

The suggestion that it is in art and other forms of public culture that the revelations of the self may knit together a desegregated national public or (more

likely?) smaller, decentered publics is reminiscent of Ndebele's investment in the 'ordinary' cited earlier and an important 'Southern' counterweight to critics such as Berlant. Ndebele continued to explore aspects of this position as he adapted his thinking to the needs of democracy. Quite early in the transition he advocated a need to increase 'personal thinking' in the public realm. Such thinking holds the potential to make democracy accountable to the needs of its citizens, to revise and usefully deepen and complicate a 'public domain that is used to the dramatic and huge brushstrokes of political posture'. The invocation of the autobiographical form produces forms of 'niggling truths habitually denied officially' (2007, p. 244). Self-exposure of this kind, he maintains, is or can be:

harder than the act of unmasking others. It allows for the public sharing of vulnerabilities as the basis for a restoration of public trust (against public hypocrisy) and makes possible a world of new, interpersonal solidarities that extend into broader, more affirming social solidarities.

(2007, p. 245)

Even as it allows us to take in a broader field than self-exposure, the object of Ndebele's comments, Nuttall's theory of 'entanglement' overlaps with Ndebele's concern for looking to the intersections between people, in their ordinary lives, and understanding the dense weave of routine and dream that binds people together into 'interpersonal' and 'social solidarities'. The 'intimacy' here is not that feeling of emotional envelopment called forth by personal testimony (Berlant's 'chest-baring'), but rather a measure of closeness – sometimes uncomfortable closeness – that comes from the knowledge that lives (even the lives of strangers) are bound together by the very structures and closures of society. This kind of entanglement is not always welcomed, to be sure, but it does constitute the basis of contemporary South Africa. Many of the essays in this issue explore these forms of making visible or working through a set of social arrangements that are felt to be anachronistic and in need of reinvention in the present.

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Leading on from the above, the essays in this issue express multiple views on and approaches to the theme of private lives and public cultures in South Africa. The issue includes research articles (in this order) by Bystrom, Labuscagne, Ndlovu, Matebeni, Nuttall and Barnard focused on issues from houses and kitchens to skin, security, sex and television. Barnard's article, which explores Coetzee's thoughts about the role of the artist in relation to the public and private, leads into the self-reflexive and creative approaches to the theme seen in Kurgan and Baderoon's contributions to our volume. These

contributions in turn open into probing response essays, written to address this project as a whole, by Simon Gikandi and Andrew van der Vlies.

Much of the writing that follows explores the ways in which exposures of inner lives, bodies and private spaces – be they of the self or of others – engage what Labuscagne calls ‘working through’ the present. While it is true, Labuscagne writes, that South Africans’ ‘capability’ in navigating the present might well be hampered by both the remnants of apartheid and the compromises reached within the post-apartheid period, ‘lives are lived pragmatically together in ways both intimate and radically divided’. Complex configurations of intimacy and strangeness give rise to forms of rewriting the ‘now’ that involve working through its contradictions. This working through happens on different registers, and it is essential given the way contemporary South Africa remains haunted by its past and by new and evolving forms of violence and repression. It is not a process of inventing self or society anew from a clean slate, but of confronting and building from the rubble of existing lives, bodies and structures, of digging through ‘entangled’ time frames, excavating possibilities from the past even in the process of dreaming up futures. In the sense we discuss it in here, it is aimed at constructing new publics, precisely through an immersion in formerly hidden stories and images of private lives that run alongside and into each other, sometimes separate, but often close enough to touch.

One logic of working through, and one particularly tied to forms of self-exposure, is that of a personal engagement with recent or historical wounds; dealing with the manifold traumas and hauntings of South Africa and in the world that impact people on a profoundly local and often embodied level. Here we see individuals engaged in necessary psychic labour. This is exceedingly private work but it often takes place in genres always already public, destined for a wider audience. For this reason it cannot be merely a personal gesture, but also a way of entering into public dialogue, making room for that which has been repressed. Confronting psychic and physical wounds in public involves a complex interplay between healing the self and lodging collective claims or demands, with many stops along the way.

There is also the method of working through the present by finding a place for the self within the confines of racial and capitalist modernity, participating in youth culture and forging new forms of self-fashioning. Here, an investment is made in producing imaginaries that are flexible and eminently contingent. They produce forms of African modernity which, as Michael Watts (2005) has written, derive as much from zine cultures and metropolitan imaginings as from memorialization projects, psychic wounds and fugitive underground worlds. Such youth cultures adopt elaborated stylistics of sensation and singularization and invest in the body’s capacity for sensation and in its presence and powers. The forms of selfhood projected are compositional and the self is approached as if it were a work of art. Through this process of

singularization, new publics are created out of shared tastes, desires and objects.

Other examples work through the present not so much by excavating individual histories or current desires but by looking at the ways people do or do not come together in the current social landscape. They show how, by exploring domestic zones or private spaces, spaces of familial, friendly and sexual intimacy, archives of connection can be opened – and the project of desegregation approached. This often involves charting unexpected encounters, or even enabling them through a deliberate re-routing of civic space. Such cognitive re-mapping of space, by changing everyday habits and imaginaries, can also be a way of constructing new publics.

If these readings stress on the productive possibilities of intimate exposure as against the secrecy, repression and segregation of apartheid and its new manifestations, there are other logics of private life and public culture also in play that cannot be brushed aside: collective and individual projects and ways of being in the world that have disinvested in processes of working through their place in time, history and political life; processes of representing certain forms of private life and intimacy to valorize the self, and to demonize others; and using the invocation of the private to re-route political discourse, and ground it in the status quo. Intimate exposure can indeed be a form of narcissistic self-engagement, or turn into closed ‘identity politics’ where feelings and experiences speak only to others with the same feelings and experiences. Nevertheless, we and the majority of our contributors point to what we might call a ‘public private sphere’ that has been shaped since the end of apartheid by stagings of and engagements with the vulnerabilities and intimate lives of ourselves and others as a discursive and sometimes physical space where conflicts play out, unforeseen dialogues are being created, and prior states of ‘entanglement’ are revealed that may allow us to re-imagine the social. Here, we suggest, we may find visions of ‘the now’ that open into real and meaningful democracy.

## Notes

- 1 The term ‘official culture’ can gesture to a form of controlled discourse generated by and supportive of the ANC government, but also to an increasingly ossified and conservative culture which disavows the radical undertow of forms like satire, or the public exposure of sexualized bodies in art galleries. This is a change from the Mandela and Mbeki eras, where satire and parody, as well as say, public expressions of gay sexuality or countercultural work, were accommodated, and even responded to with humour and largesse at times. While the new official culture does not map directly onto the oppressive cultural policies of the apartheid state, it does overlap in certain ways with the prior regime – for instance in the turn to

ensorship of information deemed to compromise the ANC's image, around which new social movements such as the Right to Know campaign have developed.

- 2 See Adam Habib (2004), who argues that 'the dilemma which constitutes the South African present is "the need for redress without reliving race"'. Habib comments on the fact that the racialised character of redress in turn racialises citizens' relations with the state and with other citizens.
- 3 As Nuttall argues in *Entanglement*, new theoretical paradigms and critical vocabularies outside the entrenched model of critique are necessary to address contemporary South Africa. She notes that:

the system of racial segregation in the political, social and cultural structure of the country paradoxically led to forms of knowledge production and cultural critique that mirrored, if only metaphorically, the socio-political structure, provoking ultimately, a form of segregated theory. This was an intricate and often local process which also intersected with, and was influenced by, studies in postcolonial theory which invested a great deal in notions of difference as a means of undercutting the earlier universalisms of colonial thinking.

(2009, pp. 31, 32)

- 4 In her contribution to this issue, Rita Barnard draws on political theorist Jeff Weintraub to illustrate the private through two dimensions that intersect with those we note here: one concerned with concealment (as opposed to visibility) and one concerned with individuality (as opposed to the public concerned with collectivity). The thematic of concealment can be seen to map onto the notions of private spaces and bodies, while that of individuality is tied with the architectures of inner subjectivity and selfhood.
- 5 Sarah Baartman, 'the Hottentot Venus', was an indigenous South African woman brought by the French biologist Georges Cuvier in the nineteenth century to Europe, where she (and her genitals) was displayed even after her death. The Immorality Acts, which forbade any form of sexual encounter between people designated to be of different races, were among the earliest and most often revisited of South Africa's segregation laws. See Matebeni's contribution to this issue for more on how they both connect to current debates.
- 6 Joseph R. Slaughter (2007) makes an even stronger case tying together the TRC and the creation of a South African public sphere, arguing that the TRC was the state's effort to constitute such a realm. Scholars such as Richard A. Wilson (2001) and Meg Samuelson (2007) have criticized the way in which the TRC tried to shape the trajectory of the personal narratives that it elicited to the end of an incomplete and sometimes harmful 'reconciliation'; others such as Mark Sanders (2007), though, also point to the ways in which

the voices featured in the public hearings in particular opened new possibilities for understanding justice and social connection.

- 7 Njabulo Ndebele writes about the prevailing aesthetics of protest literature:

Subtlety is to be avoided: what is intended is spectacular demonstration at all costs. What matters is what is seen. Thinking is secondary to seeing. Subtlety is secondary to obviousness. What is finally left and what is etched deep in our minds is the spectacular contest between the powerless and the powerful.

(1994, p. 46)

He continues:

South Africa . . . is a very public society. It is public precisely in the sense that its greatest aberrations are fully exhibited. One effect of this is the suppression of deep-rooted individual as well as social fear. But not only fears are suppressed: the deepest dreams for love, hope, compassion, newness and justice, are also sacrificed to the spectacle of group survival . . . The entire ethos permits neither inner dialogue with the self, nor a social public dialogue.

(1994, pp. 49, 50)

- 8 Here see Nuttall's (2004) work on *Loxion Kulcha*.  
 9 On Thursday, 31 May 2012, for example, the two front pages stories in *The Daily Sun* were that Mugabe was moving his cows to South Africa, and 'Teacher Bullies AIDS Girl':

The only way the girl could explain her absence from school was to confide in her teacher that she regularly went to the clinic to collect her ARVs. But he betrayed her confidence, mocking her in public and calling her 'a special child with a well-known illness'.

- 10 On the topics of sex and secrecy within anthropology, see Preston-Whyte (2003) and the IV IASSCS conference hosted by WISER on this topic in 2003. Unfortunately, cultural studies has not yet followed anthropology's lead on these topics.  
 11 For more on the idea of public bedrooms and public kitchens, in relation to notions of servitude, see Ally (2009).  
 12 Many of the artworks we discuss here are involved in the work of making private space public – but there are of course other, competing logics at work in the production of 'citiness' in Johannesburg in particular. For example, one could think of the ways in which public spaces in the city, driven by commodification, are embedded in the private. A public space like Arts on Main in the inner city in fact belongs to an individual, who

puts it to use for the public. So, public space here belongs to an individual who uses it to constitute a kind of citiness, a signal expression of publicness.

- 13 On the way, gated communities make up the 'edge' of South African urban spaces, see Bremner (2011).
- 14 Berlant specifically argues that:

The political public sphere has become an intimate public sphere . . . the intimate public sphere of the US present tense renders citizenship as a condition of social membership produced by personal acts and values, especially acts originating in or destined towards the family sphere . . . contemporary nationalist ideology recognizes a public good only in a particularly constricted nation of simultaneously lived private worlds.  
(1997, p. 5)

- 15 This is a point that Barnard (2001) addresses beautifully in an essay on South African poet Jeremy Cronin, where she also reminds us of the work of the anti-apartheid struggle to counter this tendency.
- 16 Kaarsholm similarly points to the development of a post-apartheid 'political culture and political system' that pushes contestation and 'critical public debate' outside the domain of electoral politics into more informal realms, including that of cultural production (2009, p. 412, 413).

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