VISUAL STRATEGIES IN VIDEO ART:

THE SIMULATION OF TRAUMATIC MEMORIES

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SUMMARY

TITLE

VISUAL STRATEGIES IN VIDEO ART: THE SIMULATION OF TRAUMATIC MEMORIES

SUMMARY

This was a practice-led study, in which I critically engaged with my own video artwork alongside the video works of three other artists. Selected works of Penny Siopis, Anders Weberg, Maja Zack and mine deal with the notions of memory and trauma. I investigated which visual strategies and techniques derived from film theory are employed in video art to simulate traumatic memories from war conflicts. This research analysed specific theories of Gilles Deleuze and Sergei Eisenstein to identify how certain film strategies are used in video art to simulate grievous historical events. I explored the way that these events shape postmemory, as theorised by Marianne Hirsch and Cathy Caruth. The theories of Susan Sontag and Jean Baudrillard describe how memory relies on imaginative investment and interpretation, creating a simulation of the past, in which affect takes precedence over accurate and factual portrayal of traumatic events.

LIST OF KEY TERMS

Affect; trauma; postmemory; crossfade; montage; narrative; Gilles Deleuze; Sergei Eisenstein; practice-led research; simulacrum

OPSOMMING

TITEL

VISUELE STRATEGIEË IN VIDEOKUNS: DIE SIMULERING VAN TRAUMATIESE
HERINNERINGE

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie was 'n praktykgeleide studie waartydens ek my eie videokunswerk
tesame met diè van drie ander kunstenaars krities ondersoek het. Gekose werke
uit my eie stal, diè van Penny Siopis, Anders Weberg en Maja Zack handel oor die
begrippe herinnering en trauma. Ek het ondersoek ingestel na die visuele strategieë
en tegnieke voortspruitend uit filmteorie wat in videokuns aangewend word om
traumatiese herinneringe van oorlogkonflikte te simuleer. Hierdie navorsing het die
spesifieke teorieë van Gilles Deleuze en Sergei Eisenstein ontleed ten einde te
identifiseer hoe bepaalde filmstrategieë in videokuns gebruik word om smartlike
historiese gebeure te simuleer. Ek het die wyse nagevors waarop hierdie gebeure
post-herinneringe modelleer, soos deur Marianne Hirsch en Cathy Caruth
geteoretiseer. Die teorieë van Susan Sontag en Jean Baudrillard beskryf hoedat
herinneringe op verbeeldingryke belegging en interpretasie steun om 'n simulasie
van die verlede te skep waarin affek voorkeur kry bo die akkurate en feitelike
voorstelling van traumatiese gebeure.

LYS VAN SLEUTELTERME

Affek; trauma; post-herinneringe; kruisdowing; montage; narratief; Gilles
Deleuze; Sergei Eisenstein; praktykgeleide navorsing; skynbeeld

TSHOBOKANYO

SETLHOGO

DITOGAMAANO TSA PONO MO BOTSWERETSHING JWA BIDIO: KETSITSO YA DIKGOPOLO TSE DI TLETSENG MANOKONOKO

TSHOBOKANYO

Seno e ne e le thutopatlisiso e e eteletsweng pele ke tiragatso, moo ke dirisaneng ka tshekatsheko le tiro ya me ya botsweretshi jwa bidio ke e bapisitse le ditiro tsa bidio tsa batsweretshi ba bangwe ba le bararo. Ditiro tse di tlhophilweng tsa ga Penny Siopis, Anders Weberg, Maja Zack le tsa me di samagana le dintlha tsa kgopolo le manokonoko. Ke sekasekile gore go dirisitswe ditogamaano le dithekenini dife tsa pono tse di tswang mo tioring ya difilimi mo botsweretshing jwa bidio go etsisa dikgopolo tsa manokonoko a dikgotlhang tsa ntwa. Patlisiso eno e lokolotse ditiori tse di rileng tsa ga Gilles Deleuze le Sergei Eisenstein go supa ka moo ditogamaano dingwe tsa filimi di dirisiwang ka gona mo botsweretshing jwa bidio go etsisa ditiragalo tse di botlhoko tsa hisetori. Ke tlhotlhomisitse ka moo ditiragalo tseno di bopang segopotso sa morago go ya ka tiori ya Marianne Hirsch le Cathy Caruth. Ditiori tsa ga Susan Sontag le Jean Baudrillard di tlhalosa ka moo kgopolo e ikaegang ka peeletso ya ikakanyetso le thanolo ka gona, e etsisa dilo tsa maloba, moo e leng gore ditlamorago e nna tsona ditlapele go feta pontsho e e nepagetseng le ya nnete ya ditiragalo tse di bakileng manokonoko.

LENANE LA MAREO A BOTLHOKWA

Ditlamorago; manokonoko; segopotso sa morago; Tsenyomodumo ka go ntsha o mongwe (crossfade); monthaje; kanelo; Gilles Deleuze; Sergei Eisenstein; thutopatlisiso e e eteletsweng pele ke tiragatso; kemedi/seemedi

CONTENTS

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My research stems from my earlier studies in multimedia and digital visual art which I completed at Unisa in 2014. My third-year exhibition comprised of video work, photographs, and installation art that comments on the continued violence that women and children suffer in situations of conflict and unrest internationally. My ideas were initially inspired by my conversations with my mother around war history and our predecessors. Because of the ethical and nostalgic value that we both place on our mother-daughter bond, I dedicate this study to her.

The above undergraduate research included my first successful explorations into video art, and I chose to specialise in this medium for my master's studies. My passion for the medium, and my dedication to my lecturing work in multimedia and video editing through which I am privileged to have insight into a young academic community, all contributed greatly to my own artmaking practice. I am motivated to broaden my knowledge in the subject to share with my students.

Herewith, I acknowledge the input, dedication, and time that my parents invested in my education. I am sincerely grateful for my mother's willingness to share her knowledge and family history of the South African War with me, which has inspired this body of work. It is with great appreciation that I mention the hard work of my supervisors Mrs Leana van der Merwe and Dr Gwenneth Miller, whose devoted contributions supported this project to great extents.

I am indebted to my friend Dr Nathani Lüneburg for her support throughout this journey. Another note of thanks goes to my sister Dr Lieza Odendaal for her inspirational academic guidance and assistance in the making of the video. I would also like to thank Mandy Conidaris for editing my dissertation and my catalogue.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UNISA   University of South Africa

SAW   South African War

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In this study, it is my intention to identify visual strategies from film theory which can be applied in the production of video art to depict the simulation of affect, specifically emotions related to traumatic memories. The affects that I refer to in this study are different from traumatic memories experienced directly, rather they are carried forward from one generation to the next, specifically here through matrilineal conversations.

My research focuses on a critical and formal analysis of three video artworks that deal with the portrayal of traumatic memories. These are *My Lovely Day* (1997) by Penny Siopis (b.1953), *Mamo/ Mother: Senses and memories of motherhood evoked by visiting Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in Poland July[1] 2008* (2008) by video artist Anders Weberg (b.1968), and *Mother Economy* (2007) by Maja Zack (b.1976).

The above artists use digital technologies, sound, and visual strategies to create affective responses in the viewer, and to portray trauma as a critical aspect of human identity as formed by memory due to catastrophic historical events. In this regard, my own practice explores visual techniques, and filmic strategies and tropes that simulate the affect of traumatic memories within the scope of the South African War (SAW) concentration camps. The SAW, sometimes referred to as the Anglo-Boer War, took place between 1899 and 1902.[2]

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[1] Commonly referred to *as Mamo* or *Mamo/Mother.* Hereafter in this thesis referred to as *Mamo*.
[2] Modern and critical writers like Liz Stanley (2006:1) and Louis Changuion (2003:7) refer to the war as the South African War because it involved the South African population in its totality. Some writers argue that the term Anglo-Boer War was too emotive and denied the perspectives of black Africans who suffered equally (Stanley 2006:1). My intention is to write my thesis from a critical perspective and not to deny the traumatic memories of any group in South Africa. As a result, for the remainder of my research I refer to the war as the South African War (SAW).

The memories of the camps were transferred to my mother from her female predecessors, and she has passed them on to me. Our conversations around the context of familial traumatic memories from the SAW concentration camps, and my own reflections thereon, form the basis of my art practice. My artmaking is rooted in the intolerable experiences of women and children from the SAW concentration camps. Yet it also addresses the problem of continuing violence experienced by women and children in world-wide conflicts, and the pivotal role that women are compelled to play as so-called beacons of strength.

My mother showed me her family Bible and a family journal with women's testimonies and letters from the war. Susanna Helena (née Pretorius) Uys was married to my great-grandfather, who was a Boer soldier in the SAW. Susanna Uys, her two children, and other women and children were hiding in a cave on the farm Twyfelhoek in the then-Orange Free State. In August 1901, the women and children were captured and taken to the Standerton concentration camp. In December, Susanna gave birth to Matthys Johannes Uys, who died soon afterwards, due to illness and malnutrition in the camp. In August 1904, Susanna died because of her hardships in the camp. My great-grandfather later remarried and had a second son who became my grandfather on my mother's side, also named Matthys Johannes Uys. I will argue that the memories passed on to me by my mother have become part of my postmemory and are part of my cultural history as a South African woman.

Stemming from these conversations with my mother, I experimented with film strategies, such as montage and narrative, to interpret conceptually and through artmaking her distressing recollections from the SAW concentration camps. The matrilineal bond plays a significant role in two of the video artworks analysed in this study – *My Lovely Day* and *Mother Economy* - as well as in my own body of work, entitled *Twyfelhoek*.

In these artworks there is a patent presence in the stories between grandmother, mother, and daughter[3] in the context of historic conflicts. Although the artwork *Mamo* does not have an overt maternal voice, the sound throughout of the child calling for its mother suggests the existence once of the child's female predecessors.

In a broader context, deep bonds between small family units reverberate in ongoing traumatic stories of camps and displaced people across the world today. The generation born after monumental traumatic events is referred to the 'hinge generation' by Hoffman (2005:198), who argues that their stories can transform history and turn the past into myth. As I was not there to directly witness life in the SAW concentration camps, the visual portrayals in my own video artwork reflect my imaginings of the pain and turmoil of others.

1.2   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In support of the primary premise of matrilineal postmemory, I will investigate the trauma theories of American writers Marianne Hirsch, Cathy Caruth and Allin Young. While it is impossible to remember someone else's past, the term postmemory is used by Hirsch (in Alina Safaru 2018:18-19). The difference between direct memory and postmemory is that people who were there to experience the traumatic event remember more specific detail (direct memory), as opposed to the hinge generation to whom the stories are retold. Postmemory is constructed by the next generation through such stories and their own imaginings, and not through direct lived experiences. Hirsch (2008:107) describes postmemory as projected and as an imaginative investment in the past. Thus, traumatic memories that one has never experienced become reimagined simulations.

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[3] There is a tradition to retell the versions of our mother's stories within the context of their culture (Stephens 2005:1).

The second premise is based on the idea that such traumatic memories can be virtually constructed in video art. Therefore, another objective of my research is to investigate various film strategies that could simulate generational traumatic memory. Because film theory is such a broad topic, I focus on two particular theories, namely montage and narrative. More specifically, I investigate the theory of Soviet film director and theorist Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein (1898-1984) and the work of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1955). Deleuze has studied cinema extensively by analysing the films of Eisenstein. To support my aim of explaining how traumatic memories can become a reproduction of perceived reality in video art, I further rely on Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulation, as well as Susan Sontag's theory regarding the pain of others.

Baudrillard explains that, as time passes, memories from historic events can become inaccessible in their truth, and unlocatable by the current generation's imagination. In this context, Baudrillard further theorises that memories from tragic historic events are sometimes represented through the re-enactment and reproduction of disturbing images by means of sound and image tracks (Baudrillard 2006:48-49). Sontag (2003), who is also a critical voice in the reproduction of images of pain, explains that photography can evoke mixed signals that seem "terrifying, unbearable or quite bearable". When photographs are used to create visual art, the images might not evoke the true reality of the suffering of war, but rather may look staged, and even beautiful or sublime (Sontag 2003:54). Thus, my objective is to investigate whether my recreation of the SAW using film strategies has the potential for symbolic recollection of memories and trauma in video art, and which meanings are attached to these visual devices.

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

The affect created in video art through the application of visual strategies in filmic language becomes a potent art medium to symbolically evoke the traumatic memories of the SAW concentration camps. However, as mentioned earlier, postmemory is not a first-hand experience, thus video art based on postmemory cannot be a truthful and accurate portrayal of reality. Yet in my own video art practice, it needs to evoke the crux of an interpretation of narratives of the trauma. Hirsch (2008:106) states that, as the generation of survivors from traumatic events die, their stories become eroded. As a result of not being present at the actual traumatic event, later generations develop an imaginative investment with traumatic history.

Since neither I nor my mother were born when the events in the SAW concentration camps took place, the knowledge that I have gained is based on oral information transferred to me through both my mother's layered translations, and documentation such as written testimonies, photographs, books, monuments, and museums. Therefore, my video art practice has been influenced by objects, secondary recollections, and visual strategies, mediated by the analysis of filmic language in theory and in other art works. These strategies construct the concept of recollection and imaginative reordering akin to the simulacrum (Baudrillard 2004:366). Here, Baudrillard (in Rivkin & Ryan 2004:365) explains that people know of wars through the witnessing of controlled images[4]. Because the hinge generation was not present at the event themselves, their knowledge is merely based on the visual perceptions of broadcast media and not the actual witnessing of true reality (Rivkin & Ryan 2004:365). According to Baudrillard (1994), we do not have access to an objective truth or 'the real' anymore, and it is potentially problematic that video art suffers the same predicament, a statement which my study will investigate.

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[4] Susan Sontag also writes extensively about the same topic in her book Regarding the Pain of Others (2003).

This study also determines whether it is important to show the 'real' or actual events or whether affects and emotions have more significance in the context of video art. Following this, the formal and conceptual analysis of other artists' video works, as well as the outcome from my video work, will in part address the problem of the simulacrum of postmemory.

The individual postmemory of members of the hinge generation (Hoffman 2005:198) is constructed by fragments of their own imagination, as well as stories, visuals, and narratives transferred down from the previous generations of their families. These memories become unstable and exist in-between the real and the imagined. Thus, video art can also contribute to a broader conversation about violence, war, and trauma. Even though the artist has a personal investment in describing their predecessors' suffering, their portrayal will have different meanings between cultures. I substantiate this statement from Sontag's (2003) theory, that not all people remember in the same way.

Sontag (2003) highlights Virginia Woolf's reflections on war in her 1938 publication *Three Guineas*, where Woolf distinguishes between men and women in times of war and conflict, stating that for most men there is some glory and satisfaction in fighting, but that women experience conflict differently (Sontag 2003:1). Woolf stated her opinion that no one could believe in the abolishment of war, and that all wars and their victims are generic (Sontag 2003:2,5). Similarly, Louise Changuion (2003:7), in reference to the collection of the SAW photographs from the war museum in Bloemfontein, writes that the photographs have a universal message, and that the true victims of all wars are the innocent, especially women and children. The same persists in contemporary conflicts. Thus, my research highlights the predicament of women in war, where a tension remains between the construction of the women as shelter (enabler), of captive (disempowered), and caught in-between (passive receptor).

The problems of translating this relationship had a substantial impact on the filmic, photographic and installation process of my art practice.

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTION

The main questions to be addressed in this study are:

- Question 1: Which visual strategies are employed in video art to simulate memories from traumatic events that took place in history, and to what extent is there an overlap between collective and individual memory?

- Question 2: To what extent can filmic strategies like crossfading, cross-montage and extreme close-up shots be used as a tool for abstraction that symbolises war conflicts?

- Question 3: How do selected video art techniques simulate grievous historic events, and evoke the intolerable tensions experienced as unimaginable and unthinkable in specific art works?

- Question 4: To what extent can postmemory transfigure 'historical fact' (assumptions of collective memory) but still act as universal affect? Furthermore, is the production of affect the main concern in the depiction of traumatic memories in specific video art examples?

- Question 5: What potential do family heirlooms, found family objects, storytelling, photographs, museums, places, and historical landscapes have in influencing individual postmemory, affect and imagination?

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The first premise of this study is based on traumatic memories that are retold through matrilineal generations. This study analyses how these traumatic memories are simulated through video art by applying certain visual strategies based on film theory. Therefore, traumatic memories and the affect that is created through visual strategies are addressed in the literature review. This will be followed by a brief background of the development of video art and how it relates to film language. In the final section of the literature review, film theory and strategies, such as montage and narrative, will be discussed in more detail, as these components will be used to analyse the artworks of other artists as well as my own video art.

The desired outcome of my practical work will be to explore how traumatic memories are simulated to engender an affective response in the viewer. Therefore, fragments of the imagination are induced through filming techniques like narrative and montage. To portray traumatic memories and postmemory, artists can utilise the medium of video art as a time-based medium that displaces memories and history. Video is a medium that can hold treasured memories that remind us of places, historic events, and people that are dear to us (Shandler 2009:150). Thus, I include film theory and film criticism in my theoretical framework and apply it to the analysis of video art. Film theories, terminologies, and practices are used by both traditional and avant-garde film makers and theorists in order to describe how meaning and affect are created.

The theoretical framework of this study is based, amongst others, on Baudrillard's theory of simulation and perceived reality (1983, 1994, 2004), as well as Sontag's theory regarding the depiction of pain (2003), and her opinion that visual images cannot suggest the true reality of the suffering and pain of others (Sontag 2003:54). I also include Deleuze's (1925-1995) (1986, 1993) theories of the moving image and time, where he describes the portrayal of

systematic meaning and sensible narrative through the use of "the privileged image" in a cinema montage sequences.

Deleuze extensively analysed and wrote about Eisenstein's montage strategy and how this contributed to emotions and affect in his films. I will implement the theory and technique of montage to portray systematic meaning and to create a sensible narrative of traumatic memories in my own video work, where pivotal cuts and privileged moments - or clashes - convey emotions and affect. Cross fading is used in my own work as an interruption, but also as an important tool in creating affect and imparting credible trauma.

As Deleuze's thoughts about the moving image and time are influenced by the ideas of Henri Bergson[5] (1859-1941), I also explain the fundamental ideas of Bergson's original theory of time and movement in the literature review. Bergson and Deleuze's concept of the deconstruction of time is also relevant to the relation between the past and the present in experiencing traumatic memories.

Cathy Caruth (1995:5) analyses the transference and representation of shared memories and their objectifiable truthfulness and accurateness. She comments that, because the reaction to a traumatic event, such as war, is in many instances delayed, repetitive, delusional, and emotionally invasive in nature, the relevant traumatic historical events are not always accurately or truthfully presented or retold. The knowledge of traumatic events of the past can become eroded over time when communicated from one generation to the next. Also, the past can become mystified because of a fear of the present (Berger 2008:11).

Secondly, Bergson's idea of the ripple effect of movement also has a connection to the repetitive nature of traumatic memories, where the remembrance of such

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[5] The influence that Bergson had on Deleuze is evident in three of Deleuze's writings: an article titled *La conception de la difference chez Bergson*, (1956), excerpts titled *Mémoire et vie: textes choisis*, (1957) and a book *Bergsonism*, (1966) (Bogue 2003:12).

memories may involve a persistent appearance of hallucinations after a sudden or catastrophic event. The experiences of remembering trauma can continue to be intrusive to human psyche, as trauma is an overwhelming experience that is often delayed and uncontrolled (Caruth 1996:12).

Baudrillard (2004:366) explains that, through simulation, all that is reality is liquidated and becomes an artificial resurrection of symbols and signs, meaning that simulation masks or hides the difference between true or false, or between real and imaginary. The real and the imaginary also applies to instances of postmemory. Individuals who experience postmemory remember through filling in the gaps with their imagination, and through empathy for their predecessors' past experiences, sometimes displacing the present. In some instances, postmemory can even overshadow the lives of the current generation, because the events of their predecessor's lives appear to have been more significant than their own circumstances (Vicars et al. 2013:112).

Furthermore, Hirsch (2008:105) explains that there is a growing interest in the shared memories and stories of war, displacement, and genocide that are preserved through several supplemental categories that have become vital to transmit treasured memories of significant historic events. These include storytelling, heirlooms, photography, films, novels, performance, archives of oral history, the erection of new memorial sites, and contemporary museology. These categories, which embody the repetition and transfer of knowledge, fill in the gaps of memories and facts that became confused and eroded through generations. The sharing of stories and heirlooms also plays a significant role in the reconstruction of memories in the video artworks that are analysed in this study.

When considering Baudrillard's orders of simulation and Sontag's theory regarding the pain of others, it would seem that there cannot be a distinction

between true memories or false memories of traumatic events in video art. Based on the theory of simulation, as well as the visual strategies used in film, an interference with the principle of reality develops - although the visuals in the video are representations or simulations of concentration camp memories, they still remind us of the reality of war and suffering in modern society, and the ongoing effects of trauma on post-generations.

1.6   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study combines a practice based, visual art project with a theoretical component. The research is led by the practice, which informs the thinking and writing contained in the dissertation. The visual component will produce new insights into the subject, as well as into my own video artwork and that of other artists. As the research is practice-led in nature, it establishes new knowledge which is significant for the practice (Candy 2006) – in other words, the focus falls on combining theoretical and practical research to advance knowledge within visual art practice. Since my practice is a form of research, this study recognises the practical component as a fundamental part of the theory.

The study is founded in the unique characteristics of video art as medium through its investigation of the moving image as a medium to depict memory and trauma. Yet, by being part of an advanced academic research process, my own practice is sustainably entrenched by the conceptual, historical, and theoretical underpinnings of the medium, as well as by the conceptual ideas constituting the crux of my creative work. This research study is thus a practice-led project that indicates the interconnection between practice and theory, since both form significant parts of the other, but with the creative research leading the theoretical investigation.

Visual art practice was undertaken to produce a creative output that will become an integral part of the research process. The outcomes are documented as part

of the research process in the format of a textual analysis or explanation. This is done in order to demonstrate my critical reflection and to support the position of the art practice within my theory. The theoretical component of the study will mostly be literature-based and will also be informed by the research findings of my art practice.

The research conducted here will be practice-based and practice-led. My practice-based research will include a qualitative investigation of existing literature and of existing video artworks that have a relation to the topic of traumatic memory and war. My own video art will have the output and consequences of practice-led research, where the research will provide an understanding of the practice (Candy 2006) and processes, as well as assisting me in answering my research question.

I have consulted the Policy on Research Ethics of UNISA (2016). I have taken accountability for the internationally recognised morals and principles that UNISA promotes, to uphold ethical research standards. These values are based on autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. All participants rights and dignity are respected in my research and I undertook to conduct research that is beneficial for society.

1.7   OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: The aim of the first chapter is to outline the problem statement, research question and aims and objectives. It also contains the theoretical framework, research methodology and outline of the chapters.

Chapter 2: This chapter comprises a review of the literature, including an in-depth discussion of Deleuze's theory of montage and narrative.

Chapter 3: In this chapter I apply a formalistic art analysis and critical film analysis to the video works of three artists who use digital technologies, sound, and filming elements to imply human identity in the instance of memory due to catastrophic historical events in human history. These works are *My Lovely Day* (1997) by South African artist Penny Siopis, *Mamo/Mother: Senses and memories of motherhood evoked by visiting Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in Poland July 2008* (2008) by Anders Weberg, and *Mother Economy* (2007) by Maya Zack. During my analysis, I will investigate which visual strategies and symbolic meanings are employed by the artists that encourage the simulation or suggestion of traumatic memories.

Chapter 4: This chapter incorporates an analysis and conclusion of my own video artwork based on a practice-led investigation. My discussion is informed by my literature review, theoretical framework, and research methodology. I will also apply the knowledge gained from analysing the works of the three selected artists (discussed in Chapter Three) in the evaluation of my own practice. This will serve to delineate which visual strategies and filming and editing techniques I applied in an attempt to symbolically suggest collective traumatic memories of the SAW concentration camps.

Chapter 5: In this chapter, a conclusion is formulated about the study. This includes a core discussion along with the new insights I gained on both theory and practice, and finally considers the successes and limitations of the study. I will also deliberate on potential future avenues of research which arise from the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 TRAUMATIC MEMORY AFFECT AND VIDEO ART

The idea of inter-generational memory and postmemory is explored by Marianne Hirsch[6] (2008:105-106), who states that the descendants of survivors of monumental traumatic events can develop a deep connection to the survivors' remembrances of the past without having experienced the event themselves. She further proposes that as a result of this, such descendants namely, the survivors' next and subsequent generations can experience the recollections of traumatic events profoundly (Hirsch 2008:106). According to Hirsch,

> Postmemory describes the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right (Hirsch 2008: 103).

Hirsch (2008:105) observes that memory has become a significant topic of interest among second-generation artists, writers, and publishers[7]. These works have been described as having a "syndrome" of "belatedness" or "post-ness". Hirsch (2008:106) names this syndrome "postmemory". Ellen Fine (1988) refers to it as "absent memory", whilst Celia Lury (1988) and Alison Landsberg (2004) term it "inherited memory", "belated memory" and "prosthetic memory". These different terms have in common the critical assumption that, in certain cases, and despite not having been subjected personally to the events, the following generation can become so deeply bonded to the disturbing history of their predecessors that a connection in memory to immensely traumatic

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[6] Marianne Hirsch has written extensively about the relationship between memories of those who survived the Holocaust and the memories of generations after, that is, the children of Holocaust survivors. Her term 'postmemory' refers to something that is not experienced directly by past generations (Dorian Stuber 2013: 1).

[7] These works include films, novels, and memoirs like *War Story, Losing the dead, Fifty years of Silence, Daddy's War*, and scholarly works like *Children of the Holocaust* (Hirsch 2008:105).

circumstances may be carried over to them, and even to subsequent generations (Hirsch 2008:106).

Only in the latter part of the 20th century have the lasting effects of trauma on family generations been examined. Collective traumatic experiences can permanently damage the collective psyche of a society. Throughout history, trauma has been an inherent aspect of humanity; and individuals may become fixated on trauma and even live traumatised lives. Likewise, even members of entire societies that have been exposed to terrible events, such as the Holocaust, may experience similar patterns of individual trauma (van der Kolk et al. 2004:487).

By sharing myths and participating in rituals, people of different cultures and spiritual beliefs have the ability to make collective sense of their worldview. Rituals usually include symbols and the displaying of emotions that connect people to each other; while myths are imparted to explain their collective identity. Both of these may be connected to trauma (Young 2007:339).

According to Young (2007:340), Freud's theory of the mythic potential of collective traumatic memory still has relevance and is valuable in gaining an understanding of collective memory today. According to Caruth (1996:12), Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* is a fictional narration of the historic past of the Jews and is used as a prototype to explain the trauma of a group that relived historical events. Here, Freud theorised that there were two significant Moses characters in Judaic history[8]. The first freed the Hebrew slaves from Egypt, and imposed the religious code called ethical monotheism[9] that was to be brought into practice by the Hebrew nation.

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[8] In Caruth's (1996) version, she explains that the second Moses was originally an assimilation to the volcano god named Yahweh. Only later was a Yahweh priest, also named Moses, compared to the original Moses.
[9] Ethical monotheism is a religion that Freud traced back to the pharaoh Akenathan (Young 2007:340).

The Hebrews were distraught by this austere monotheistic code, and as a result they assassinated Moses (Young 2007:340).

Two generations later, the group's memories of the murder had become vague and repressed. Only once the group's descendants united with the monotheistic Semites,[10] who also had a leader named Moses, were these repressed memories recalled - a phenomenon that Freud named "the return of the repressed". Centuries later, ethical monotheism returned to the group's unconscious, as did the collective guilt of their repressed traumatic memories around the murder of Moses (Caruth 1996:14 & Young 2007:340).

According to Young (2007:342), the discourse now known as trauma theory is a subject that returned in the 1990s as a result of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*.

> Trauma theory picks up where Freud left off – the genealogy is explicit – and makes the transgenerational phenomenon described in *Moses and Monotheism* our template – that is to say, the means with which we might collectively engage our own collective traumatic past in order to fully grasp our unique historical condition. Our collective trauma is the Holocaust.

The Hebrews' post-traumatic reaction to their crime against Moses is "the return of the repressed". This concept is related to the remembering of trauma and not to actual first-hand experience of trauma. Although the generation of Hebrews who murdered Moses were perpetrators and the generation of Jews who lived through the Holocaust were victims, in the crucial sense both groups were traumatised, and in both groups, there is the transmission of trauma across generations (Young 342:2007).

The latency of trauma can be compared to a wound that is inflicted on the mind; but unlike a bodily wound that can heal over time, the traumatic wound of the mind only becomes apparent later in life, unexpectedly, in nightmares and

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[10] Also known as Medianites (Young 340:2007).

through repetitive actions. This means that latency is the truth of trauma in its belated address by the conscious mind (Caruth 1996:4).

Although it is true that humans have the capacity to cope and adapt, the memory of a traumatic experience can influence cultural, social, biological, and psychological experiences. The effects of traumatic memory are the outcome of an unavoidable nerve-racking event that makes the individual selectively concentrate only on its reminders and renders life experiences of the present colourless (van der Kolk et al. 2004:488).

Since trauma and conflict have the potential to open new readings in an artwork's context, art historical methods that define art in terms of a representational and signifying function are challenged in the analyses of works that deal with trauma. The depiction of trauma and its affect is defined beyond the scope of language and representation (Bennett 2005:3) and leans towards the emergence of affects. Art confronts the difference between simulation and the reality of trauma and violence. In a narrative film with a realist interpretation and character development, we tend to feel an emotional response when the character suffers. With contemporary art, in many instances, this proves otherwise (Bennet 2005:7). In the video artworks discussed in this dissertation, there is rarely a character with whom we can identify, nor is it easy to read the artist's own experiences of trauma. Rather, an engendered direct affective sensation emerges in the work.

Geoffrey Hartman (Bennet 2005:9-11) proposes that there is something like secondary trauma that exists in the context of images that portray traumatic memories. A viewer who sees graphic images can vicariously experience a milder shock of the trauma as opposed to the experience of the primary victim. An image in a work of art may trigger an instantaneous affective response and has the potential to mimic sudden trauma.

2.2   THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIDEO ART

Due to the scope of this study, I will not describe the history of video art in extensive detail, but rather emphasise how moving images provide artists with a tool to visualise the passing of time. When we take a photograph, we capture a split moment of time. Video footage has the capacity to be digitally edited - cut, looped, dissolved, erased, layered, and played in slow or fast motion. Consequently, it is a medium that has the capacity to override the barriers of past, present, and future (Rush 2007:8).

Following the above statement, one can also bring into consideration Rush's (2007:13) explanation that video art emerged from an environment of anti-war protests made increasingly visible through home television. According to Bruce Kurtz (in Berger 2011:166), the direct audience of television has created a culture obsessed with the present. Rush (2007:13) maintains that since the characteristics of television create an experience of immediacy, present tense, involvement, and intimacy, video art is an ideal medium of experimentation to embrace, critique and create awareness of the complexities of time. Rush (2007:8) explains:

> the language of Video art is borrowed from film; the traditional designation for speaking or writing about Video art is "to film" rather than "to video".

With video editing software, scenes can be layered, blurred, or juxtaposed. Video has the ability to instantly capture moving images, places, and events, be shared online, or displayed in a gallery. Video can be stored and archived (Rush 2007:8-9). In addition, the scale of the video projection, be it on the wall of a factory or on the small screen of a tablet, has the ability to alter its conceptual meaning.

Video can convey meaning, set the mood, and produce autobiographies in a linear or non-linear format. It is a technological medium that provides the

contemporary visual artist with a tool to express their ideas (Rush 2007:8-9).
With video art, artists have access to the same medium and technology that
influences social and cultural trends and beliefs (Rush 2007:7-8). The qualities of
film have become a device to influence society that may be applied by artists,
documentary filmmakers, choreographers, and political activists (Meigh-Andrews
2013).

In conclusion, the theory and terminology of film language and film criticism is
equally valid for the creation and analysis of video art, as the same technology
used in film can be manipulated for video art as a means of artistic expression
and of simulating narrative and time. In the section that follows, I explain
pertinent visual strategies and film theory in more detail.

2.3   MONTAGE

Since montage and narrative[11] are the specific visual film strategies investigated
in more detail in this dissertation, the following section includes a discussion of
film technique that concentrates on these two cinematographic language
methodologies.

The term *montage* refers to a succession of fixed shots, or cuts, rather than the
movement of the camera. Alternatively, the phrase *assemblage* can be used to
describe montage as an arranged composition that includes moving images and
cuts, as an indirect reference to time (Deleuze 1986:29-30). Unlike other
artforms such as painting, sculpture and photography, where a certain pose is
frozen or static, cinema sets images to movement. As Deleuze describes it, the
essence of cinema is not dependant on the individual photo or still image. Rather
it is like several snapshots that are arranged equidistant from one another and

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[11] Narratology developed during a time when cinema theory and linguistics flourished. Modern
narratology combines the literature of Anglo-American inheritance with Russian formalist and
French structuralist approaches (Leo Braudy & Marshall Cohen 2004:445).

transferred to a framework that constitute a film. With equidistance, an impression of continuity is generated and through this, movement can be created or disintegrated[12]. According to Eisenstein (in Deleuze 1986:29), montage is the whole of the film. This means that the film must be seen in its entirety, from the beginning to the end. Since montage also includes continuities, cutting, and false continuities, the whole of the film relies on the moving image and time; and montage creates the relationship between the moving image and time.

Deleuze's thoughts about the moving image and time are influenced by the ideas of Henri Bergson[13] (1859-1941), who clarifies that there is a flow of matter in movement: in other words, there is always a chain reaction of events, and within this chain reaction one needs to consider the previous or original action that caused the chain reaction (Ronald Bogue 2003:12,14).

An example would be the sound of a church bell. The origin is the metal bell which has a rope hanging to the ground, and which is suspended from an arc. An individual must pull the rope to make the bell swing. The chain reactions would be firstly the clapper of the bell slamming against the metal sound bow, followed by sound waves echoing through the air, and finally our ears receiving the sound waves' vibrations. But the sound of the bell has an impact on our senses in other ways too. For example, as the sequence and rhythm of the bell's resonating sound proposes a deconstructive idea of time, so our hearing the sound of the bell will remind us of the time.

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[12] The movement of cinema should not be confused with the movement of dance or mime, which is the passage of one movement to the next - this analysis is rather a synthesis of movement which brings on a transition between forms which in their value perceive movement (Paola Marrati 2003:7-8).

[13] The influence that Bergson had on Deleuze is evident in three of Deleuze's writings: an article titled *La conception de la difference chez Bergson* (1956), excerpts titled *Mémoire et vie: textes choisis* (1957), and a book *Bergsonism*, (1966) (Bogue 2003:12).

Thus, in an event or instant of time where a vibration occurs, an instant ripple effect is caused, and movement continues (Goddard et al. 2012:16). Bergson calls this the origin of movement, and for every movement there is always a first origin. To Bergson the universe is an open, vibrational whole and each thing - be it a still frame, picture, or sound - has a past and future. It is Bergson's "time-space flux of a vibrational whole" on which Deleuze builds his theory of cinema (Bogue 2003:3).

Deleuze further elaborates on Bergson's philosophy about movement taking place within space. Bergson explains that the easiest demonstrable way to create the illusion of movement in space would be to project a series of snapshots on a cinema screen. These snapshots, replaced in quick succession, will then create such an illusion. The cinema projector itself becomes the tool[14] that creates the illusion of movement, and when time is sliced into a rapid sequence of static moments the human mind comprehends movement. Even more so, these combined images become a single homogenous concept where each still is not perceived as a still photograph but as an immediate motion or movement-image (Bogue 2003:21-22).

In Eadweard Muybridge's (1830-1904) well-known photo-cinematic stills of the galloping horse (fig 2.1), we see singular moments of the horse's hoofs touch the ground, one by one[15] .

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[14] In my own video works, any digital screen monitor, as a cinema projector, can become the tool to portray the moving image.

[15] The moving image emerged in the late 19th century when Etienne-Jules (1830-1904), a scientist and physician, and Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904), an artist, were the pioneers of instantaneous photography or "chronophotography" (Michael Rush 2007:14). In Muybridge's sequence of photographs *The Horse in Motion* (1878), we can see the discrete movement of a running horse. Muybridge set up a row of cameras and attached a string to their shutters. The strings were placed across a path, past which the horse would be running. As the horse ran across the strings, the shutters of the cameras were triggered, each taking an image of the horse's movement at 1/200th of a second. When the images are placed next to each other, the sequence resembles the rapid movement of the running horse (Rush 2007:15).
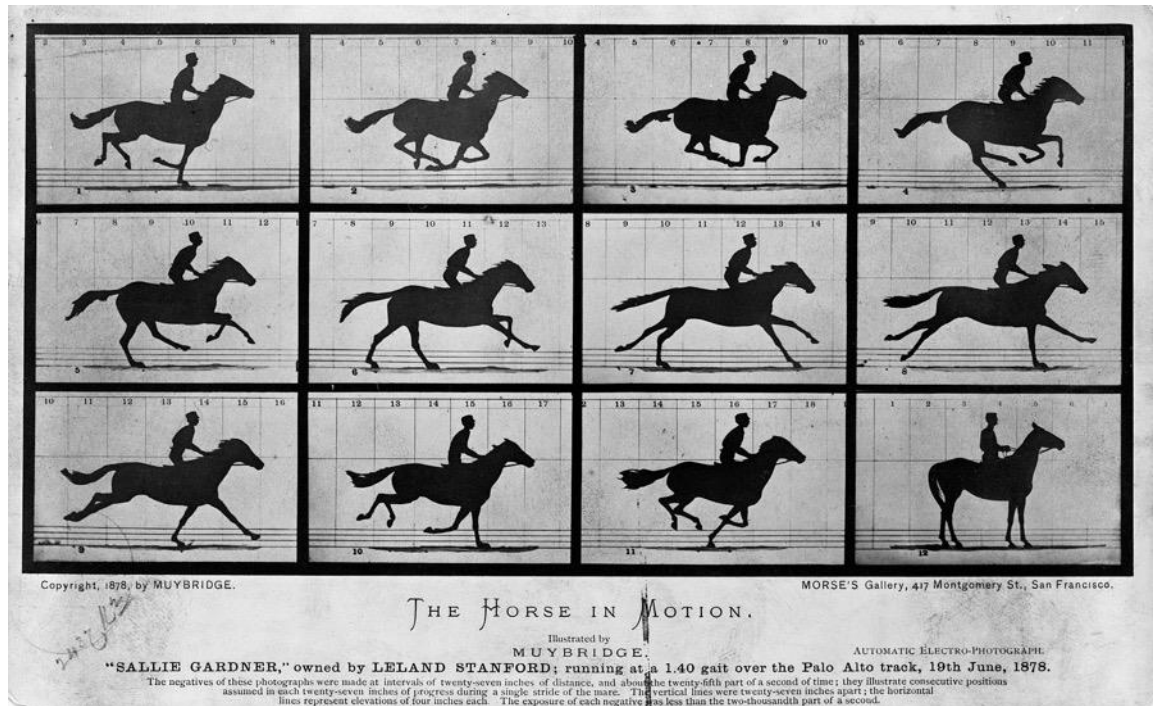
Figure 2.1, Eadweard Muybridge, *The Horse in Motion* (1879).

But, for Deleuze, these successions of the horse in motion are mechanical and post-dialectical, and in this specific sequence no pose has privilege over another (Helen Gross 2013:121). Deleuze realized that duration and succession are the essence of movement, and time can bring forth something new. Stemming from this understanding of movement-image and time, Deleuze developed the idea of privileged moments and ideal poses (Gross 2013:121).

For Deleuze, the experiment of the horse in motion is connected to a modern science that aims to produce an intelligible syndication and quantitative measurable analysis to movement. Therefore, in his second dissertation on movement, he elucidated the qualitative properties of cinema (as opposed to a quantitative analysis) where he uses the term "privileged instants" (Gross 2013:121) An example of this would be his study of the film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), directed by Sergei Eisenstein, where Deleuze notices that continuous movement becomes interrupted with privileged moments or ideal poses.

In the film's well-known *Odessa steps* scene, singular instants or privileged moments in the montage create an effect of paroxysm, crisis, and intensity (Bogue 2003:22-23, Felicity Coleman 2011:Sp). Here, a woman who is standing at the top of the Odessa steps is shot by soldiers. She falls against her own baby's pram, and as the baby and pram lurch down the steps, camera shots from different angles are juxtaposed in the sequence in rapid succession to create the effect of climax or crisis in the narrative, thereby simulating the disturbing concept of war (fig 2.2).

Montage correlates differently to the natural continuity of time and movement and generates a new reality of time and movement. For example, instant new images in the Odessa steps scene interfere with the illusive continuity of time and movement. Accordingly, with the privileged images or singular instants, something remarkable or unexpected is created at any moment and sits in its own new reality of time. Deleuze's assertion here potentially answers Bergson's question in relation to the movement of image and time: "How is something new possible?" (Bogue 2003:22-23, Coleman 2011:Sp).

Figure 2.2, Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). Video stills.

Montage reveals the onset of duration, and Deleuze approaches duration in montage by analysing the application of montage as developed by the Soviet State Institute of Cinema[16]. Typically present in the style of the Soviet school, the whole in montage is a total dialect and expansion in the sequence. Time unfolds in the sequence in leaps and starts, with contrasting images to shock the viewer (Bogue 2003:4). In my own work, I apply the Soviet montage strategy by applying cuts in the video sequence then rearranging it in the montage sequence to create the effect of trauma and disturbing memories. The montage is further layered into long cross fades that stand for layers of trauma, history, and memory.

Structuralist and semiotic theorist Christian Metz (2004:65) explains that cinematographic language includes all of the artistic effects of a film to tell a story. He argues that the semiotics of cinema consist of "montage, camera movements, scale of the shots, relationship between the image and speech, sequences, and other large syntagmatic units …"

Montage is a strategy or technique which could be applied to filmed or photographed reality to transform it into a meaningful story or art form. American director David Wark Griffith (1875-1948) pioneered many modern cinematic techniques, including montage, and used this visual device to produce systematic meaning through the coherent narrative of sequence in an effective rhythmic pattern. This came to be known as cinematic language. Griffith used the camera's total range of shots - close-ups, long shots, and panorama - and combined them into a fluid integration so that the montage could form the narrative and create systematic meaning (Braudy & Cohen 2004:1).

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[16] The Soviet State Institute of Cinema was the first film school in the world and was established on 1 September 1919 in Moscow. Filmmaker Vladimir Gardin was the director of the film school. Lev Kuleshov joined the school's faculty and held workshops where he developed film concepts, amongst others the 'artificial landscape'. Specialities of study at the Soviet Institute included film direction, screen writing, acting, and set design. Some of the most well known teachers included Sergei Eizenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Ivan Ivanov Vano (Peter Rollberg 2016:789).

To Eisenstein, the shot and its successors in a montage could be referred to as an emotional collision or conflict, having a potential energy. This is due to each shot's difference in its angle or distance (close-up versus far shot), illumination (dark versus light), movement (left versus right), volume of objects in the shot (small versus large) etc. Eisenstein (in Braudy & Cohen 2004:2) maintained that just as different words in a sentence combine to create meaning, so the conflict of shots combine in montage to create meaning. Several modes of montage were developed by Eisenstein to produce emotional and visual resonance in film that will be explained in the sections that follow.

(1)   Rhythmic or temporal montage

With rhythmic or temporal montage, shots are out of realistic temporal or spatial order. Shots are juxtaposed which contain different pace in movement and direction in each frame[17]. In the above-mentioned Odessa steps scene, tension is created through repeated actions and conflicting movements in the frame. The sequence incorporates quick cuts and rapid movement between long-shots and close-ups to awaken a disturbance in the audience's emotions. Although not all the action and emotion are shown, the alternation between the screen direction and the rapid movement between shots accentuates the effect of violence. As the action accelerates, the timing of each shot in the sequence becomes shorter (Ian Aitken 2001:3, Elspeth Kydd 2011:204 & Robert Edgar et al. 2015:196).

(2)   Metric montage

With metric montage, shots of different lengths in time are juxtaposed. The length of shots can be determined by musical time signatures, a technique which

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[17] An often-quoted example of conflict in temporal montage is the above-mentioned scene of the 'Odessa Steps' from Eisenstein's film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925).

is popular in music videos - shots that are shorter in time force the audience to abbreviate what they see. Furthermore, shots with varying camera angles and distances, such as those that combine a sudden close-up with a long-distance shot, can create tension (Aitken 2001:31 & Edgar et al. 2015:196).

(3)   Tonal montage

Tonal montage involves editing techniques to establish the emotional atmosphere and mood of a scene at a specific time during the film. This can be achieved on a set through dimmed lighting or fog to create a sombre mood, or accentuated lighting for a pleasant mood, in a similar manner as tonal variation in music (Ken Dancyger 2007:20 & Edgar et al. 2015:197).

(4)   Overtonal montage

Overtonal montage may be seen as an extension of tonal montage. Whereas tonal montage produces a specific tone at a specific time in the film, overtonal montage builds a definite mood or atmosphere throughout the entire film. An overtonal montage develops once there is a conflict between metric, rhythmic, and tonal montage. Overtonal montage generates an interplay between emotions, ideas, and places, which can create a specific emotional affect within the audience, such as communicating the notion of abuse, of overwhelming power, or of exploitation. (Dancyger 2007:20 & Aitkin 2001:31).

(5)   Intellectual montage

In dialectical or intellectual montage, two unrelated ideas are juxtaposed in the sequence to create a new thematic idea. Eisenstein theorised that when two shots with radically different diegetic content are juxtaposed, the viewer assumes or can explain the meaning of or relationship between the two images

in terms of a concept that holds symbolic meaning. This strategy is applied in Eisenstein's films, especially, at moments of drama or emotional climax; for example, in his film *Strike* (1925), non-diegetic shots of cattle being slaughtered are cut into scenes of workers being massacred, thus enforcing the concept of the mistreatment of groups from post-revolution Russia. This technique is used to charge and emotionalise a sequence (Edgar et al. 2015:196; Dancyger 2007:20 & Aitkin 2001:32).

(6)   Linear continuity and the artificial landscape

The Russian filmmaker and theorist Lev Kuleshov investigated how the impression of reality of a landscape could be reflected or reconstructed through an artificial landscape or creative geography. This can be achieved by taking camera shots from various locations and at different times, and then editing them together to appear as if everything in the narrative took place in a continuous place and at a continuous time. Further, to achieve the effect of linear continuity, the shots should be taken along a consistent orientation line, and the actors' movements should match the spatial cues within the sequence. In this way, a contiguous space is suggested for the duration of the edited sequence. With continuity cutting, film can transcend space and time and give the story a coherent structure (James Goodwin 1993:34 & Edgar et al. 2015:184).

Owing to the fact that the theoretical framework of this dissertation relies on the deconstructive theory of simulacrum and simulation, Metz's opinions - which rest on the semiotic tradition of Ferdinand de Saussure – are significant here. Metz denied the comparison between film language and natural language and the analogy between shot and word. For Metz, the shots in a montage are equivalent to a sentence and not to a word; and he argues that, within the film chain, the organisation of shots supports the view that film can be a language (Braudy & Cohen 2004:4).

2.4 NARRATIVE

The analyses of narrative are related to the structure of communication, and the same structure is also applicable to film language, except that film has a different relationship to the real world. Although film has a specific language which is unconnected to how we see the world in reality, the goal in film is to let the audience believe that what they see is real. The language of film has been constructed and contextualised to produce its own unique language to create meaning, namely a highly structured form of narrative. In film theory, narrative analysis relies heavily on the structuralist revolution from the 1960s; and in 1966, Roland Barthes made a number of clear connections relating to narrative and the reality of the world (Edgar et al. 2015:39-44).

In *Film Language: From Film Technique* - his contributing article to Braudy & Cohen's publication (2004:7), Vsevolod Pudovkin explains that a cinematographic film consists of a greater number of separate pieces that are divided into sequences to create a sensible narrative. Storytelling and narrative have been part of human culture for millennia, and narrative format has developed into cinema. The structure of a narrative is what grabs a viewer's attention (James E. Cutting 2016:1713). Stories, either in the form of plays, poetry, or literature, are the reconstruction of life experiences in the form of narrative.

In the early part of the 20th century, narrative in film emerged from the style of Hollywood storytelling and film directing, which consisted of a structured chain of events easy for an audience to follow and understand (Cutting 2016:1713; Pramaggiore & Wallis 2008:75). However, these 'rules' have been modified - or even rejected - to accommodate other alternatives of presentation in art films or independent films (Pramaggiore & Wallis 2008:75).

The following section elaborates on such alternative narrative techniques - including narrative structure, narrative form, diegetic, and the *syuzhet* and *fabula* of the diegetic narrative - as well as the phenomenon of non-narrative that is often used in avant-garde and structuralist film.

(1)   Narrative structure

Narrative tells a story by showing a sequence of actions in units of acts. The most popular patterns of narrative in film have either a three-act or four-act structure (Cutting 2016:1713). In the three-act structure, the first act serves as an introduction to the story or its characters. This flows to the second act, which includes a change that affects the situation, or a turning point, also known as the climax of the story. In the third act, or final act, all the loose strands of the film are tied together to form the closure or resolution of the story (Pramaggiore & Wallis 2008:68).

> [Drama] is complete, and whole. . . . A whole is that which has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning supposes nothing wanting before itself; and requires something after it; the middle supposes something that went before; and requires something to follow after; the end requires nothing after itself; but supposes something that goes before."—(Aristotle in Upton 1746:67-68).

Aristotle's idea of the three-part structure has come a long way in the tradition of storytelling and is fundamental in helping the viewer to follow how the story unfolds.

(2)   Narrative form

The narrative form refers to choices made regarding when and how to organise places and characters within a film's sequence. Narrative is a structuring device that informs the viewer of how a story unfolds and develops. It gives the viewer insight into the parallels and motifs of the story, followed by an interpretation of

the theme (Pramaggiore & Wallis 2008:61-62). Narrative is not a cluster of events and random elements. Rather, it is the representation of an ordered series or string of events put together in a linear format to create logic for the causes, consequences, effects, and reasons of the story (Pramaggiore & Wallis 2008:62-63).

(3)   Diegetic in narrative

The implied world of a story includes a setting or place, characters, sounds and events, collectively known as the diegetic. In a diegetic film, the details are orchestrated in a systematic way to bring to the viewer meaning and understanding around the flow of events within the sequence, which will usually improve the viewing experience. For example, the storyline in a diegetic film will generally include the portrayal of a character that needs to overcome some obstacle or challenge (Pramaggiore and Wallis 2008:63-64).
However, a story may also be non-diegetic by having a narrator. In this type of narration, the voice does not belong to a character in the film but is a background voice telling the story[18]. Such a non-diegetic narrator may sound objective. Non-diegetic narration can frame the diegetic and provide information within the story from a specific vantage point. It can also enhance the mood of the story (Pramaggiore and Wallis 2008: 64). In my own video art production, I rely on non-diegetic subscripts. The text was compiled and written as a metaphor for a mother's sorrow, loss, and anguish.

(4)   Syuzhet and fabula of the diegetic

Stories are the cause of events that, in reality, have taken place over days, months or years. Braudy & Cohen (2004:4) explain that: "reality does not tell stories. It is only when shots are organized according to repeatable, recognizable codes that they become discourse and are capable of telling a story".

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[18] This is achieved by using a voice over.

Within a film diegetic, the time of the story is compressed to form the running time or on-screen time, where certain occurrences of the story are left out and others are portrayed on screen (Pramaggiore and Wallis 2008: 64). Seymore Chatman (2004:445) calls this the "double time structuring", which includes the story time and the discourse-time. From Russian literary theory these selected occurrences of time are known as the syuzhet and fabula (Cutting 2016:1714).

The syuzhet is the selection of visuals that is explicitly shown on the screen. The fabula incorporates the backstory of the narrative. Many fabula events are eliminated from the screen to compress the on-screen time. Yet enough of the fabula is incorporated into the syuzhet to create a chronological structure. It is also common to incorporate flashbacks, flash-forwards, or parallels into the narrative act. The syuzhet can begin at any time: the beginning, middle, or end (Cutting 2016:1714; Pramaggiore and Wallis 2008:64).

The SAW is a historical event that took place between 1899 and 1902. Many incidents had taken place during the war up until the British authorised the burning down of Boer farmsteads and the relocation to concentration camps of the families who had lived on these farms. My visual art practice concentrates on implying the experiences of the women and children in the concentration camps rather than attempting to inform the viewers of the historical events preceding the establishment of the British concentration camps. To this end, I have removed prior events of the syuzhet from the on-screen time and focused only on the fabula of the concentration camps. Using perceived flashbacks and flashforwards can also be a method to symbolise the experience of remembering the past. These choices and effects will be discussed in more detail in Chapters Three and Four.

(5)   Non-narrative

The practice of allusion in visual art developed from the position of anti-allusion in structuralism and anti-narration. In post-modernism, allusion assumes that the viewer knows the meaning of images (Weibel 2004:2). For example, video artists from the 1990s onwards assumed that, due to their ongoing consumption of mass media, viewers already had a 'memory library' of visual experiences and had been visually conditioned through the media and dominant ideology. Viewers could attach meaning to images that suggest the allusion of an event, place, or subject, and their interpretations would not necessarily be part of the narrative structure or logical story (Weibel 2004:2).

Therefore, all that is needed to create meaning and understanding in a work of art are traces of symbolism, glimpses of obvious reality, or concealed references. References are assumptions retained by the author and the viewer. An aesthetic of the *given* has become a dogma in visual culture where the narrative is based on assumption and presumption. By using the practice of allusion in a non-narrative artwork, not much has to be explicitly revealed to make the story comprehensible. A core aspect of allusive narration is that it has a higher degree of complexity in its visual vocabulary. Thus, methods of allusion allow the artist to regulate narrative and non-narrative (Weibel 2004:3-4).

Bergson and Deleuze (in Paola Marrati 2008:72) say that we "*perceive in things"* (my italics), which means that our conscious perception is not a mirror reflecting the world around us. When we look at a work of art, we are influenced by our personal and cultural assumptions concerning civilisation, beauty, truth and taste, and these assumptions can also obscure and mystify the past (Berger 2008:11).

According to Catherine Elwes (2008:78), theories of psychoanalysis and Saussure's structural linguistics convinced artists like Peter Gidal (b. 1946) and Malcolm le Grice (b.1946) that narrative structure in film and television was the appropriate vehicle to disseminate repressive cultural ideologies. These British avant-garde filmmakers believed that family entertainment was used as propaganda and was rooted in psychosocial pleasures and voyeurism (Elwes 2006:78). With a voyeuristic gaze of spectatorship, film offered a window into an imaginary world where viewers passively identify with a character on the screen. Simultaneously, they are also aware of the ideological message hidden in the narrative. In an attempt to avoid narrative that was determined by power relations and structures based on difference - like black versus white, or male versus female - structuralist materialist filmmakers of the 1970s, such as Gidal and Le Grice, focused on the essence of film. These included the processes of the medium like celluloid, time, light, camera angles, movement, editing, cuts, cross dissolve and fading. Through these techniques, film merely became an optical phenomenon that aimed to avoid the influence of narrative and voyeurism (Elwes 2006:79).

An example of a non-narrative work that avoids all storylines and objects is Gidal's *Room Film* (1973). This film has no storyline, and the objects are out of focus. The emphasis was rather to comment on the consumption of images and the film was said to have a hypnotic affect. Viewers became aware of their breathing and of other spectators next to them when they engaged with the work. The idea of structuralist films like *Room Film* (1973) was to make the audience aware that traditional narrative is charged with images that are politically swayed and used to influence their thoughts, which *Room Film* (1973) is not (Elwes 2006:79).

What later developed from structuralism is that artists realised that images are not transparent, and that the language of film and the moving image can be loaded with ideological precedents. Audiences are heterogeneous with different genders, ages, and ethnicity; therefore, their conception of images would be determined by their unique backgrounds and histories (Elwes 2006:79).

2.5   SIMULATED REALITY

In his investigation of the strategies of marketing and advertising, Baudrillard (2004:367) concluded that reality is being replaced by codified sign systems and that what we see is being controlled by signs of status and self-identity. He argued that, since the time of the Renaissance, cultural history is being reconceived by simulacral regimes of signification, replacing the reality of the world.

According to Baudrillard (2004:369), the creators of Disney Land use illusions and phantasms to create an imaginary world that serves to lure in multitudes of people to delight in a world of fantasy and microcosms. Disney Land uses an excessive number of gadgets, characters, and beautiful visuals to create an enhanced phantasmagorical effect that encourages the crowds to experience pleasant feelings of inherent warmth and affection. Baudrillard (2004:369) further theorised on this phenomenon by explaining that a stark contrast in emotion develops as soon as the individual exits from Disney Land and is confronted only by the solitude of the parking lot and a single gadget - the motor vehicle.

Baudrillard (2004:370), further defines that the charm of Disney Land lies in allowing us to realise that the real world we live in is based on concealed reality and that it interferes with the principle of reality. Effectively, the real world and real cities that we live in are based on the simulation of perceived ideas, influenced by propagated ideologies: socialism, capitalism, and Marxism. We

have been conditioned to want more and more, or to achieve things that are not based on reality but on a perceived reality, which Baudrillard refers to as the "hyperreal" (Baudrillard 1983:25). The hyperreal is without atmosphere, it is conceived or perceived in a system of signs and symbols that stand for an idea. Thus, the third order of simulation is the generation of the real without an original - a copy of a copy - based merely on a symbolic concept. What influences us is the simulated poetic charm, nostalgia, emotions, and inner feelings, or a concept of magic, which is an abstraction of the real. Subsequently, reality disappears with simulation (Baudrillard 2004:370).

In my video art, I simulate traumatic memories through the use of visual strategies such as montage, narrative, and other cinematic techniques derived from film language. These visual techniques are not applied to depict true reality, but rather to create a symbolic and conceptual interpretation of circumstances in the SAW concentration camps. The suggestion of memories are merely my imaginings of occurrences, rather than factual memories based on reality. The visuals in my artistic practice are generated from my own perception of that reality, derived from my gradual research, which became increasingly intimate and meaningful. This included listening to the memories my mother shared with me; reading stories, historical writings, and poems; scrutinizing photographs and journals; and visiting war monuments and historical graveyards.

Post-generations do not have first-hand experience of the traumatic events that occurred in the camps almost 120 years ago, therefore they become immersed in the collective memories, history and stories of their family. Thus, the visuals in my video are a simulation of reality, making the signs and visuals a symbolic hyperreality. Hugo Münsterberg (cited in Braudy & Cohen 2004:405) argues that cinema is not concerned with representing physical reality, but is shaped by the imagination of the viewer, freed from space and time.

CHAPTER 3: VIDEO ART SIMULATING TRAUMATIC MEMORIES

Chapter Three focuses on determining the visual strategies which Siopis, Weberg, and Zack apply in their video artworks to simulate traumatic family memories from war conflicts. This analysis draws on the trauma theories of Hirsch, Caruth and Young; and identifies the aspects of narrative and montage in film theory, as described in chapter two. Here, I build a discussion around the ways that the artists use such strategies as tools for abstraction to stand in for the intolerable tensions of unthinkable catastrophes. Also, how collective memory and individual memory overlaps and how family heirlooms and stories contribute to our own construction of imaginative memories.

3.1   POSTMEMORY IN *MY LOVELY DAY*

Siopis' art practice has an interdisciplinary nature that encompasses global and local issues ranging from anthropology, colonialism, post-colonial discourse, women's studies, psychoanalytical theory, sociology, history, and personal memory (Smith 2005:3). Besides video, Siopis uses various mediums and techniques which include painting and sculpture, and she often exploits readymade and found objects. However, in 1997, film has become an essential part of her work (Young 2015:45), and it is here where my research focus lies.

Siopis (in Smith 2005:4) explains that she has an imaginative investment in objects that are influenced by her Greek ancestry and Catholic upbringing, making her sympathetic towards people and things. "Things" and "signs" of someone's life hold interest for her as visual metonymies. In an interview with Sipho Mdanda's, Siopis comments:

> If one thinks of 'relevance' as using one's imaginative capacities as fully as possible to present a social scene, then I am as a I always was: an artist engaged in a social world imaginatively re-worked […] History creates ways of looking as well as making, and sometimes what becomes visible later was invisible, but present, earlier (Smith 2005:4). [19]

Post-1994, autobiography became a strong element in her video work. Siopis' idea of "things" and "signs", imagination and ways of looking at history is demonstrated in her video artwork *My Lovely Day* (1997)[20], which reveals the constructed nature of memory. For Siopis, this video is located within the framework of her family, specifically her relationship with her grandmother Dorothy Frangetes[21] (1896-1967) and her mother Anna Siopis. The work uncovers how these bonds inform our individual sense of belonging. We inherit our family members, and they bear our history before our birth. As such, they encompass and exceed our individual lives (Siopis 2005:93-95).

Siopis combined sequences of spliced and montaged clips from her own collection of home videos that had been filmed by her mother (Young 2015:48), considering this collection to be the equivalent of "found objects" or "readymades". In the opening and closing scenes of the video, a fragment from the song *My Lovely Day*[22] is played, and this was taken from a small audio clip of a recording made by her mother in 1955, two years after Siopis was born (Siopis 2005:93-95).

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[19] Interview with the artist by Sipho Mdanda (2004), www.goodmangallery.com (Smith 2005:4)
[20] Siopis video work, *My Lovely Day* (1997) has received international and critical acclaim and was exhibited at the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale. It was screened at Tate Modern as part of a conference titled "Art Identity and the unconscious in the Age of Transnationalism". It was also exhibited at the Zeits Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in 2018, where the exhibition was titled *Penny Siopis, This is a True Story: Six Films* (1997-2017).
[21] Siopis' grandmother came from a Victorian English upbringing and her grandfather was Greek. Siopis grandfather had a small cinema in Smyrna and the young family almost lost everything when the city was burned down during the Greco-Turkish conflict.
[22] The original song *My Lovely Day* came from a stage musical *Bless the Bride* (1947). The show opened in London and was performed 886 times by Lizbeth Webb and Georges Guetary. In the musical, the bride and groom sing this song as a duet in celebration of their wedding day. (http://www.45worlds.com/78rpm/record/db2302).

In *My Lovely Day* (1997), a montage of found film and anecdotes of time, history, and memory are assembled to form a continuous or sequential narrative. Family videos and mediated storytelling are constructed and negotiated to become a simulated reality of Siopis' childhood memories of her grandmother, influenced as well by her own perceptions and experiences. This is done through a first-person narrative of her grandmother 'telling' the story of her life, presented as phrases in overlaid subtitles. Siopis undertook extensive research to produce the textual subtitles. Embodied in postmemory, these were drawn from her grandmother's writings on old postcards and Siopis' own memories from conversations with her grandmother. Siopis (Yates 2018, Young 2018:48) says:

> I also use the quality of my grandmother's story – her precise words, her laconic style, her expressive economy – to recover something of my own remembered experience" (Siopis 2005:93).

In addition to being personal and private, these memories and their meanings are also constructed with scenes that relate to culture and tradition, indicating the overlap of collective and individual memory, as probed in research question two. Through engaging with family albums or photographs - and in this instance family film recordings - memory may be seen as a structure of feelings in the act or performance of remembering (Kuhn 2010:2); and here, Siopis has used family videos, postcards and mediated storytelling.

The artwork also becomes a vehicle for Baudrillard's theory of simulation. In the constructed and fictional landscape that simulates Frangetes' world, the concept of violence along with historic aspects of the 1922 Greco-Turkish war[23] in Smyrna

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[23] The once wealthy Greek city Smyrna was occupied by small minorities of Greeks, Jews, and Armenians. The war defined the concept of ethnic conflict because of the violent acts against Greek and Turkish civilians from both sides. In 1922, the city of Smyrna erupted into flames. Thousands of Greek, Armenian and Ottoman Turk refugees had to flee the city, many jumping into the sea to escape the flames. Nearly 100,000 people died in the flames. After nine days the fire was extinguished, and this marked war. Subsequently, the international community decided on a population exchange whereby Greeks and Turks were forced to leave their homes (Christopher Kinley 2019).

are articulated with text subtitles that mediate the ferocity and trauma of the war. Baudrillard (in Ryan 2012:49) explains these strategies as restaged versions of traumatic events, calling it "artificial memory". This statement is reinforced by Siopis' (2005:69) method in that where she could not include a direct reference between the image and textual narrative, she chose images that stood closest to her memory. Through this, images became metonymic, namely having a referred connection with an event or feeling. Other images become mnemonic triggers for the artist, bringing forth discrete memories of her own past experiences or feelings. Siopis also explains how she experienced an emotion of heightened sensitivity when, for the first time, she saw certain images associated with vague remembrances of her grandmother's stories.

In *My Lovely Day* (1997), Siopis reveals her own and inherited memories of three matrilineal generations: Frangetes' first-hand experiences of war and displacement; Anna Siopis' video footage and singing; and the artist's written research from family memoirs. The portrayals are sometimes confusing and non-linear in narration, as discussed in 2.4 (5). The artist stresses that this strategy is significant because although memory and history are not at variance, there are always gaps and silences in memory (Siopis in Yates 2018). From Hirsch's (2008:107) observation of memories from post-Holocaust generations, there are gaps in knowledge from the aftermath of trauma, so inherited memories are fragmentary and imaginative in nature (Siopis 2005:93).

Siopis constructed the cut sequences with the non-diegetic narrative of her grandmother's story, revealed in subtitles at the bottom of the screen, layered over the montaged video images. The subtitles suggest that Frangetes is remembering the way her grandchildren would beg her to tell them stories about where she grew up. Although the memories she shared with her grandchildren are the central motive of *My Lovely Day* (1997), Frangetes is not explicitly introduced as a character in the narrative structure. Instead, her story

is simulated with non-diegetic text, as discussed in 2.4 (3). Even though there seems to be some correlation between the visual content of the frame and the text, this is not usually the case.

In accordance with the above statement, some instances Siopis (2005:95) created a close correlation between the images and texts, especially in the scenes where the grandchildren are playing in the garden and pool. For the rest of the film, connections are more tenuous and sometimes even false, such as where reference is made to her grandfather's Metro theatre in Umtata. In fact, the building was not her grandfather's theatre, but the missionary house of John Moffat in Kuruman (fig 3.1).

In the video introduction, Frangetes frames the diegetic by stating: "After all my travels, that I should land up in this God-forsaken place!" Here she refers to her loss of citizenship and relocation to South Africa. The film portrays this as a linear unfolding of Frangetes' narrative about her traumatic journey from Europe to South Africa, revealing that this migration also represented her loss of family life and identity (Siopis 2005:97).

In Umtata he built the Metro cinema himself. Before, he did travelling shows all over the world.
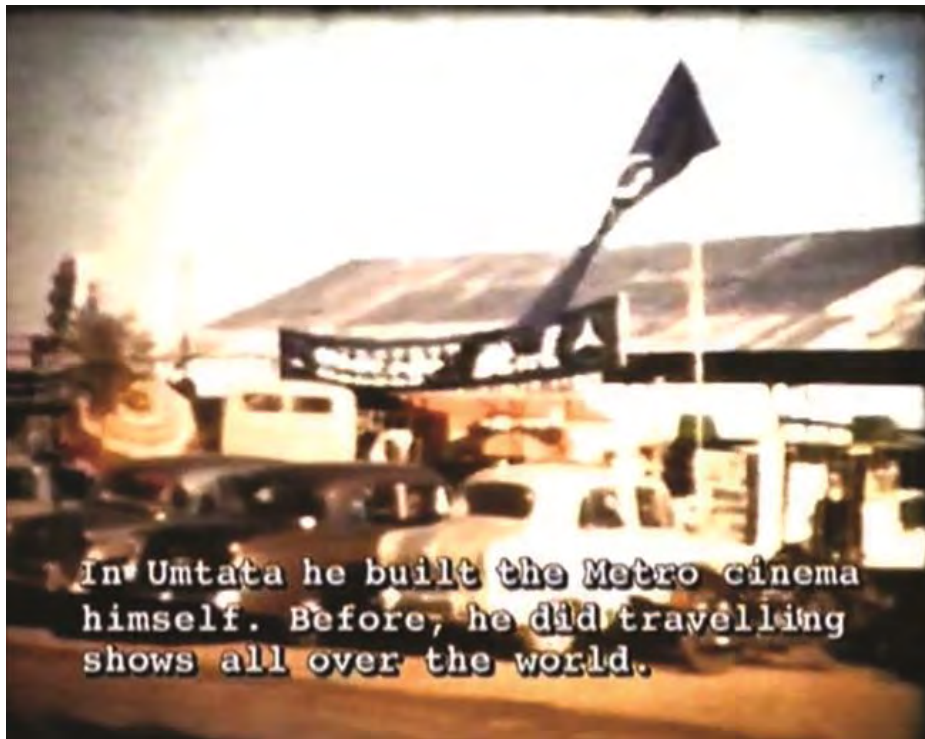
Figure 3.1, Penny Siopis, *My Lovely Day* (1997). Video Still.

From the layered text and images in the video it is established that, due to the Greco-Turkish war, Frangetes and her children were evacuated to a small island village. The subtitles translate her traumatic reality she and her small children hastily had to leave Smyrna, as people were being massacred there. During their stay in the village, Frangetes' six-month-old son died, and she tells how she kept a picture of her dead child lying in his coffin. He had been buried on the island in a graveyard lined with cypress trees. She describes that subsequently, she always experienced traumatic associations between tall black Cypress trees and his death.

Frangetes' trauma and loss of home is implied in the video. When the diegetic shows the scene of several people dancing wildly at a party, with a hint of the British flag in the middle ground of the shot (fig 3.2), Frangetes' subtitles equate these South African civilians to the Turks who had committed barbaric acts. And she calls South Africans heathens and uncouth animals. The scene then cuts to that of a young girl in her bathing suit dancing in a garden, which is synchronised

with the text, "But you play as if nothing is happening around you" (fig 3.2). Later in another sequence, children are playing at dressing up and she tells them that they are "acting like imbeciles".

Siopis combines shots with different content and aesthetic quality, and different lengths in camera angles with altering pace and time. These are strategies of rhythmic, tonal, and metric montage, (as discussed in 2.3), through which she creates an overtonal montage that becomes a metaphor for the layers and fragments of remembered history.

Figure 3.2, Penny Siopis, *My Lovely Day* (1997). Video Stills.

From his observations of silent cinema, Eisenstein (in Aumant 1987:147), developed his theory of intellectual montage. Here, the found films used in Siopis' work are an example of this, because the actual film images and the subtitles of phrases from memory are combined conceptually and metaphorically to create an association with or an assumption of Frangetes' traumatic memories. The phrases are layered onto the images in a way that is dislocated from both implied realities. As a technical and conceptual strategy, it responds to the unimaginable and unthinkable in this specific artwork, which address question 3. Throughout the sequence of *My Lovely Day* (1997), Siopis uses cuts and transitions to reorganise the narrative form and alternate between places and characters. This video editing technique results in the contrasting footage

between Frangetes' subtitle narration that exposes her traumatic experiences and light-hearted experiences of her grandchildren's care-free play. Siopis lays bare her grandmother's turmoil through the montaged juxtaposition of the non-diegetic anguished subtitles.

A visual clash is created after the first minute of the video, where subtitles emphasising aspects of the Greco-Turkish war, its fires and murdered civilians, are layered over a sequence of filmed images that crosscuts between shots that pan, in this order: over a steep rocky mountain cliff, a tranquil rock-pool, a graveyard, and finally a waterfall (fig 3.3). The portrayal of a steep and jagged cliff implies near-fatal height and danger; and the comparison or collision of unrelated images also constructs a metaphor and intellectual affect for life and death, as water signifies life, whereas a graveyard stands for burial, death and laying to rest.
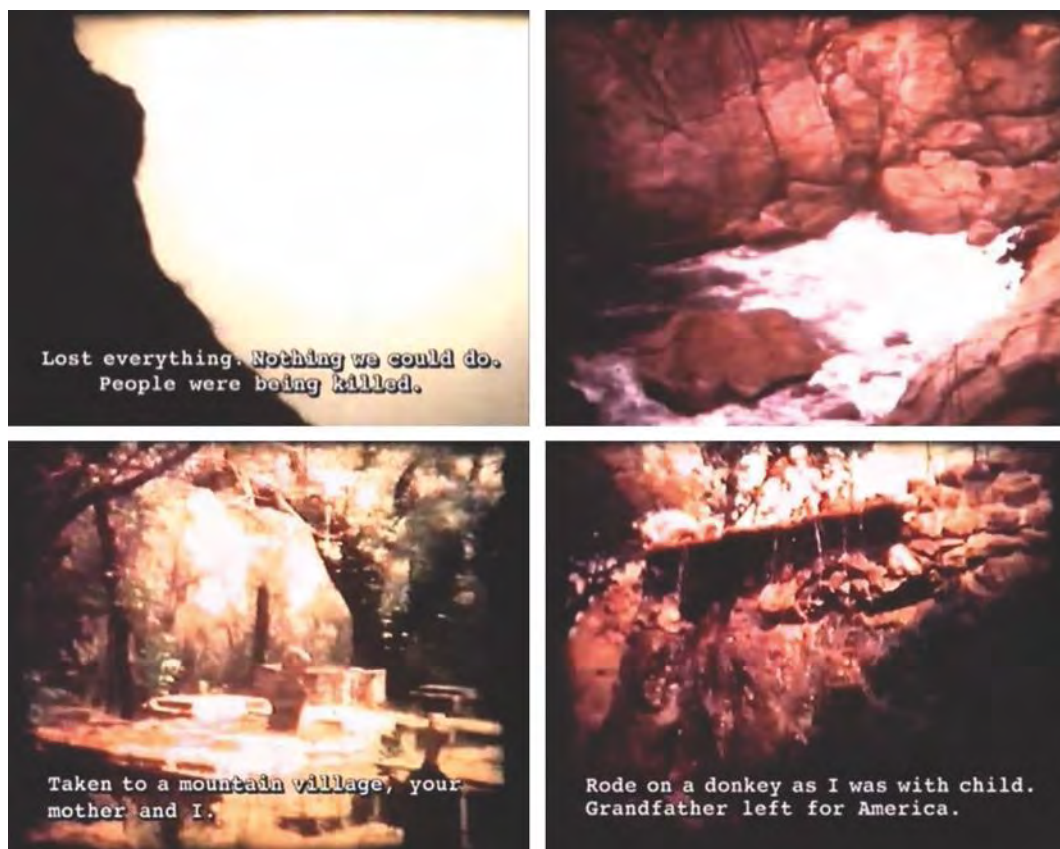
Figure 3.3, Penny Siopis, *My Lovely Day* (1997). Video Stills.

I would argue that not only do Siopis' choice of images create a conflict in the sequence, but also an intellectual montage as theorised by Eisenstein (in Edgar et al. :2015:196), as there is a colliding relationship between the shot and non-narrative text. It is the text that generates a language for the 'found' or 'readymade images'. The phrases that seem to be random memories build up to affect of tension, since the horrific recollections of killings and death are not explicitly or truthfully portrayed, while the unrelated images become symbolic and metaphoric in intellectual interpretation. This addresses my fourth research question of searching for instances where the production of affect is a main concern.

An example of this is where the subtitles referring to the loss of Frangetes' baby are layered over an image of children walking towards the camera in a medium shot. This is followed by an unrelated shot containing the silhouette of tree branches and a landscape in the background that is indistinguishable and out of focus, appearing almost like a mystical fantasy landscape (fig 3.4). In the fourth chapter, my own work shows how I have interpreted this influence.

Figure 3.4, Penny Siopis, *My Lovely Day* (1997). Video Stills.

At the two-minute point of the video, the tree scene cuts to a background image. The text continues with Frangetes describing the photograph of her dead baby - "Lying in his little coffin", "a beautiful baby". Ironically, the image is not of this coffin, rather the montage cuts between medium and close-up shots of a black, seemingly heavy, steel object anchored to the ground (fig 3.5 – 3.7). Could it be a chimney or furnace? This filming strategy creates an abstraction, addressing research question two, that symbolises the turmoil experienced at losing a child due to war conflict. Such mixed signals between subtitles and images exaggerate the contrast between steel, fire, soot, ash, and dust, and the beautiful baby in his small coffin. This visual strategy also relates to Sontag's (2003:54-55) statement regarding the reproduction of images of pain, namely that images representing situations of terrifying or unbearable anguish or conflict should not be beautiful. This observation is further substantiated by Baudrillard's (2006) theory of how our visual perceptions of tragic memories can be controlled with sound and image tracks.

Figure 3.5, Penny Siopis, *My Lovely Day* (1997). Video Still.

Figure 3.6, Penny Siopis, *My Lovely Day* (1997). Video Still.

Figure 3.7, Penny Siopis, *My Lovely Day* (1997). Video Still.

The title of the film fore-fronts the idea of "Lovely", but is contrasted throughout by Frangetes' voice communicating grief, mourning, anger, insults, accusations, complaints, and reproaches to her husband for being temperamental. When the images become specifically South African, Siopis produces further instances of intellectual montage through layering sequences of South African traditions, cultures and festivities with texts that express her grandmother's condemnation of these celebrations. Over a sequence which shows an ox wagon and traditional Afrikaans *Volkspele* (folk dance) (fig 3.8), the subtitles indicate Frangetes' disgust with "their" obsession with origin, ironic, because of her own ongoing mourning of her loss of identity and her sense of dislocation from her motherland.

Frangetes specifically finds "silly parades on the main road" unbearable, and that the parades accompanied by marching reminds her of "terrible things". Although from the images in this montage, it may be assumed that Siopis is referring to Afrikaner traditions, she (2005:97) refutes this interpretation, explaining her intention that the celebration of the 1961 Republic Festival shown in the film refers less to the dreadful history of apartheid, and rather to the two World Wars, as well as the mutilations and monumental turmoil that Frangetes witnessed as a young girl. However, it could still be argued that, through this montage, Siopis inevitably connects the violence of apartheid with that of the World Wars.

Figure 3.8, Penny Siopis, *My Lovely Day* (1997). Video Stills.

In a similar manner to structural and materialist filmmakers who focused on processes, celluloid, light, duration, and dissolves (Elwes 2006:78), Siopis incorporates sequences with dust, scratches, sprocket marks, flashes, over exposure, saturation, accidental camera jumps, and odd camera angles. Siopis (2005:97) states that through these strategies she wanted to emphasise and experiment with the "materiality of the film as object or artefact", which reinforces the idea of "furtiveness" and "fugitive" in memory.

Experimental and structuralist film also introduces the possibility for the language of the moving image to become a vehicle for ideological precedents, as becomes evident in *My Lovely Day* (1997). Here, the images that portray themes of 1950s and 1960s South African, white, middle-class, family life show an ironically uncomplicated society. Thus, Siopis' strategies of narrative reveal the ideological weight of her old family footage. The 'way of seeing' in her grandmother's lifetime would be suspect in present times. By interspersing these uncomplicated and familial moments with imagery and narratives of trauma, she simultaneously critiques this ideological viewpoint.

In recreating her own investment in her grandmother's memories, Siopis cuts and restructures the non-linear footage to create a meaningful pattern to the narrative structure. Although the films had been captured by Anna Siopis more than thirty years after Frangetes' traumatic ordeals, Siopis has allowed the film to unfold in a chronological order. The viewer is able to recognise the timeline of Frangetes' life, starting with her displacement from Europe, leading through the different places of her migrancy, to South Africa, where she eventually found herself. In this way, the narratives of the three matrilineal generations are shown as an intertwined continuum rather than as three separate stories. This approach also serves to elucidate the phenomenon of postmemory, showing how certain traumatic cultural events that one's forebears were subjected to affect the life responses and memories of second and third generations.

The written memoirs from Siopis' grandmother and the found film that was shot by her mother is part of the artist's individual memory. However, these memory objects also open an interpretation of a terrifying historic event that was experienced by a collective Greek community. Thus, the video does not only symbolise the artist's individual postmemory, but also the collective postmemory of an entire displaced Greek population which answers question one.

Conclusion

Siopis' imaginative investment in art objects and stories from her ancestry can be explained by Hirsch's, Hoffman's and Caruth's theories of the imaginative qualities of memory. As discussed in chapter 2.1 and applied in the above section. The comparative discussion of the above shows how the gaps in postmemory may be filled with stories and visual impressions in the imaginations of the hinge generation. The inclusion of the film as family heirloom simulates her grandmother's turmoil creating an emotional affect and nostalgia. This strategy involves the manipulation of images to signify the pain of others, as alluded to by Sontag (2003). Thus, the visual and filmic strategies observed in this analysis demonstrate how the production of affect through specific filmic devices can depict traumatic memories.

3.2   MEMORY AND PLACE - *MAMO/MOTHER*

Anders Weberg is a new media and installation artist who works with digital technologies in video and sound. He uses filming elements to imply human identity in instances of memory, violence, and loss. Some of his videos also reveal his fascination with consumerism, consumption, media, and mass culture. Weberg uses the mediums of audio, visual media, and mixed genres to experiment with ways of narrative expression (Weberg n.d).

In 2008 Weberg filmed and edited the video artwork *Mamo/Mother* (2008) ('Mamo' is an informal word for 'mother' in Polish). The video is two minutes thirty seconds in length and was filmed using a Nokia N82 Black mobile phone. The subtitle of the video is *Senses and memories of motherhood evoked by visiting Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in Poland July 2008*. In 2011, *Mamo* (2008) was exhibited at the Shoah[24] film collection in Arad, Romania. The Shoah film collection, formed in 2009 by Wilfried Agricole de Cologne, serves as a media art and peace initiative and its exhibitions give artists a platform to address the collective trauma and totalitarianism of the Holocaust (ENGAD Engaged Art Directory 2020, Weberg n.d).

Describing one of his later videos, *Rafael Anton Irisarri – Displacement* (2015), the artist explains that he uses montage to juxtapose layered scenes, tempo, and colour, to express the narrative of his emotions of loss, longing, memory, and distance. The same filming techniques and means of expressions are also evident in *Mamo* (2008). Weberg further indicates that he collects footage from various places during his travels and this contributes to his expression of displacement[25] (www.self-titledmag.com).

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[24] The word *Shoah* means catastrophe in Hebrew. It relates to the nearly six million Jews that were killed in WWII (http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/en).
[25] Although the artist is currently living in Malmö in the south west of Sweden, he does not disclose whether his family were displaced there as a result of the Holocaust (Weberg n.d).

For *Mamo* (2008), Weberg captured video footage of the gas chambers, barbed wire, electric fencing, and guard towers of Birkenau, the concentration camp where inconceivable acts of violence were perpetrated against Jewish civilians. Weberg has cut, juxtaposed, blurred, and layered these shots in his editing process, creating abstract images that become metaphors for memories of the grievous facts of the Holocaust. This is of particular value for my second research question where I search for tools of abstraction that symbolise war conflict. Just as an image begins to focus, to be identified as a certain structure, it is transformed with cross-dissolves and overlays of colour and abstract shapes (fig 3.9). The only sound narration is the echoing voice of a child crying "Mamo" in different intonations. The images and the audio are composed and combined to evoke an estranged landscape where the viewer imagines a surreal and chilling journey.

Figure 3.9, Anders Weberg, *Mamo/Mother. Senses and memories of motherhood evoked by visiting Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in Poland July 2008* (2008). Video stills.

The subtitle of the video adds to its significance. The naming of Birkenau instantly associates to the concentration camp and its role in the horrific history of the Holocaust[26]. By stating that 'memories are evoked' when visiting Birkenau, Weberg could be suggesting that monuments and historical sites can influence and institutionalise our memories, as argued by Kuhn (2010:1); but could also imply the individual grief of the artist when he visits this site as an embodied person.

Throughout the sequence, blurred landscapes, historical structures, shadows of abstract shapes, and barbed wire and fencing are crossfaded and creating a geographic space that resembles a fantasy or mythic landscape (fig 3.10). Through the non-narrative structure or allusion of *Mamo* (2008), Weberg experiments with the possibilities of light, tone and layering on shots from the historical site to create a symbolic gesture of the monumental traumatic memories of Birkenau and the Holocaust. This strategy points to question two of this study where filmic strategies are used as a tool for abstraction that symbolise conflict.

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[26] In late 1941 masses of Jewish civilians were transported from the ghettos of Poland to concentration camps. By 1942, Jews from all over Europe were also transported to the mass killing camps located in Poland. These camps included Chelmon, Majdanek, Sobibor, and Treblinka; but the largest camp was Birkenau in the Auschwitz complex of camps. The number of mass killings was immense, and in Auschwitz in 1944 as many as 12 000 Jews were killed daily (History.com staff 2009).

Figure 3.10, Anders Weberg, *Mamo/Mother. Senses and memories of motherhood evoked by visiting Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in Poland July 2008* (2008). Video still.

There is no visual protagonist in the video. Human presence is revealed by the echoing voice of a child. Neither is there a clearly structure three-part narrative but a non-narrative, as explained in section 2.4 (5). Instead, the viewing experience is regulated with a technique of allusion, where it is assumed that the viewer understands the film's meaning through the visual and acoustic clues, which here incorporate the blurred images of Birkenau and the ghostly calling of the child. Wiebel's (2004) assertion that the viewer, who has been conditioned by mass media, instinctively knows what is intended by an image's content. This suggests that brief projections of visual semblances can evoke topics, places, and subjects of historic events.

Through testimonies, art, film, photographs, and academic studies of traumatic memories around the Holocaust, the Western world's imagination has become well-acquainted with the Holocaust (Gheith 2007:159). Thus, it is possible for a viewer to interpret the video's images and audio, however unstructured they may seem.

Although the narrative is not explicitly shown or spoken, the story is comprehensible. *Mamo* (2008) is an example of a post-structural, see section 2.4 (5), and avant-garde work that evoke a supposé [27] of aesthetic allusion, which presumes that the viewer knows what meaning the landscape and architecture hold (Gheith 2007:159).

Schutt & Berry says (in Vicars et al. 2013:112) that when we visit historical places in the present, we use our imagination to create memories from the historic past. Through this, we encounter an experience of postmemory that connects us to family or community stories which have become part of our identities. The blurred landscapes also relate to Caruth's (1995:5) statement that the truthfulness and accurateness of such memories are questionable.

The first frame of *Mamo* (2008) is an extreme close-up of a barbed wire strand that is attached to an electrical component and cement wall. The melancholy background reveals a green but deserted countryside in lush but cool tones (fig 3.11). Here, the audio consists of isolated sounds of a connected base speaker and a train rumbling on its tracks.

The video goes black, and then cross dissolves onto an architectural structure at Birkenau that could be either living quarters or the infamous gas chambers. This scene dissolves into a shot of textured concrete, and here begins the slow, echoing chant of "Mamo". The layering of abstract shapes and unrecognisable images over the landscape creates an eerie affect, further emphasised by over-exposed, white flashes layered and cross faded into the montage. The visual hints of the camp and the desolate landscape later become blurred and translucent, suggesting fragments of postmemory.

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[27] A word in French that means something is true but there is no evidence for it.

The video continues with slow cross fades and extreme close-up shots, which reveal quick glimpses of certain aspects and structures of the concentration camp that builds up tension and anticipation.

Figure 3.11, Anders Weberg, *Mamo/Mother. Senses and memories of motherhood evoked by visiting Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in Poland July 2008* (2008). Video still.

Later in the video, the vivid colours of the camp contrast with the juxtaposed cross-faded layers containing distorted and unidentifiable shapes and shadows. The child's voice develops a sense of urgency and desperation as "Mamo" is repeated and echoed while the video recording continues its search over the abandoned landscape. In the final scene, the filming takes place from a window that overlooks the tracks of an empty railway. This scene dips to black and the audio of rumbling train wheels and the echoing of "Mamo" continues. Then slow shadows move horizontally over the montaged layers of the camp fence, and the video dips again to black with just the rumbling of the train in the background.

Weberg uses tonal montage to create an overall atmosphere of despondency through both his choice of cool colour tones, and his editing technique in handling the stark light and shadow contrasts (fig 3.11). Also, while filming, he captured flashes of light which he inserted into his footage through the video editing process to suggest the emotions of loss and sadness (Weberg 2015). Where the fade to black may mean there is closure at the end of the film, the white light illuminating some of the scenes creates an ambiguity, leaving the viewer with questions: does the video end with a death or is the footage pure imagination (Swinney 2018). The over-exposure of scenes to almost white suggest the phenomena of imagination, faded memory, and postmemory.

Stemming from my research on montage in chapter two I would say that the sound accompanying the images creates a rhythmic and metric montage. The echoing cry of the child and the rhythm of the train on the tracks imparts not only the idea of the daily repetition of the mass killings at Birkenau, but also the notion of the continued imprint of traumatic collective memories from one generation to the next.

In the final scene, moving shadows flow horizontally over layers of glimpsed images that represent the site of the concentration camp: out of focus shots of the railway track, the guard towers, and the barbed wire are juxtaposed, and camera movement and panning are visible for a few split seconds (fig 3.12). The video then dips to black, with the sound of the child's voice and the train still echoing in the background.

The slow movement of the montage relates to time and history, and how memories can gradually change with time. Shots and stills of the sequence have a painterly sensibility that reminds of abstract expressionist painting (fig 3.13). This is different to a structuralist filming technique because it has strong ideological content.

Many of the shots in *Mamo* (2008) are out of focus and portray minimal clues of the artefacts and architecture of the concentration camp.

Figure 3.12, Anders Weberg, *Mamo/Mother. Senses and memories of motherhood evoked by visiting Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in Poland July 2008* (2008). Video still.
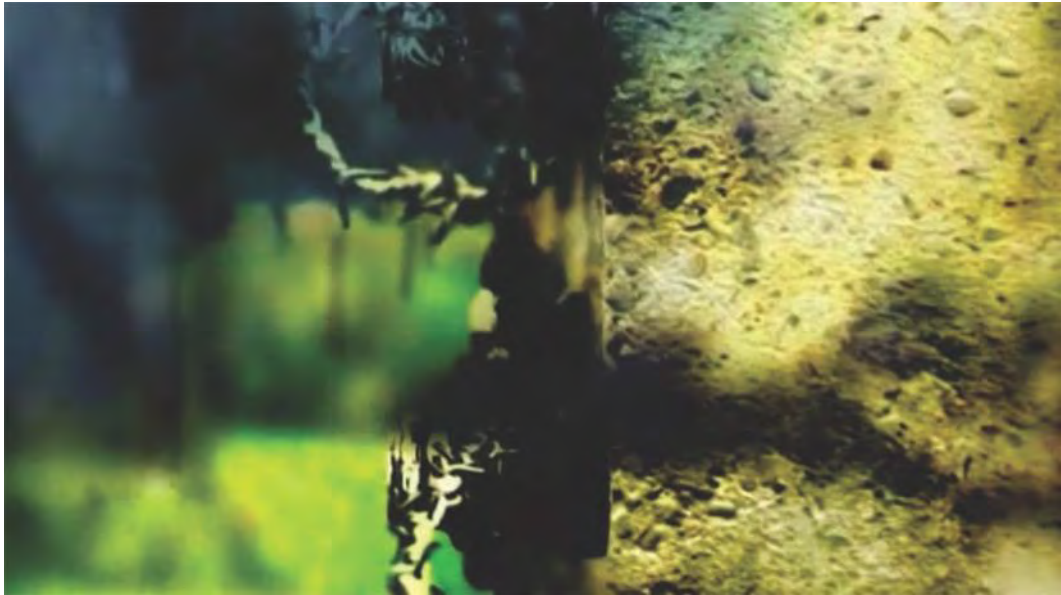

Figure 3.13, Anders Weberg, *Mamo/Mother. Senses and memories of motherhood evoked by visiting Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in Poland July 2008* (2008). Video still.

It is my opinion that *Mamo* (2008) follows neither the arc path of narrative, nor a story or a plot. Instead, Weberg uses an elusive technique of narration, where the scarcely recognisable images become indirect references and allusions. Weibel (2004:4) remarks that "a story is something other than a script", meaning that a script usually has certain rules or codes. Codes include dress, behaviour, and language; and in daily life, we experience ongoing subtleties of articulation in code. Weibel (2004) use the words "allusive script", that can be applied to Weberg's work. Events or emotions are not explicitly shown or spoken. This creates the opportunity for viewers to be affected individually and to make their own assumptions.

Conclusion

Weberg's aim is to make the narrative more profound and reflective (Weibel 2004:4). As discussed in chapter two Weberg experiments with the creative landscape to create a continuity of place and time. Weberg abstracts his landscape creating a personal simulation of his own postmemory; and furthermore, due to the site and its iconic elements, the video would resonate with a wider Jewish community, thus generating an overlap between individual and collective memory.

Weberg uses filmic strategies such as distortion, blending of bright and desaturated colour, slow camera movement, crossfading, and extreme close-ups, as a tool for abstraction to allude to grievous historic events, answering question two. His specific montage strategies simulate the intolerable experiences of the Holocaust, which remain unimaginable and unthinkable. This technique also refers to Baudrillard's (2006) observation of how simulations of events can be re-enacted through sound and images to create disturbing visual representations of memories from tragic historic events.

3.3   THE AFTERMATH OF TRAUMA IN *MOTHER ECONOMY*

Maya Zack (1976-) is an Israeli-born artist who is concerned with the notions of memory, testimony, and commemoration, which are each connected to her collective and cultural family history (Aya Lurie 2010). *Mother Economy* (2007) is an experimental video artwork that suggest an imaginative meditation on the remembrance of the Holocaust.

The work has a choreographed narrative that portrays a day of domestic activity of a bourgeoise German-Jewish housewife, just prior to World War II. Although she appears to be attending to family chores in her home, such as sewing, cooking, and tidying up, she is also obsessively documenting the possessions of her absent family members (Rosenfeld 2008). The narrative insinuates a double timeframe of history. It begins by bearing witness to a Jewish family woman's daily duties, although there are hints of the looming devastation of World War II, and its specific dangers for her community. The second message, represented by allusions to the catastrophic events of the Holocaust, conveys a premonition of the aftermath of the traumatic loss of family members (Lurie 2010).

Similar to Siopis' *My Lovely Day* (1997), Zack's work also has autobiographical characteristics which link to finding the 'self' and identity. The work has its roots in a journey she undertook with her father and sister to visit the house that had been her grandmother's childhood home in Košice, in present day Slovakia (Lurie 2010). They were denied access to the house by the current neighbour, who was not Jewish. Zack explains that this inability to go into the home inspired her to create an artwork that would simulate her own imagination and conceive the life and memories of the Jewish people who had experienced the trauma of the war and the Holocaust. The purpose of the resulting video, *Mother Economy* (2007), is to fill the gaps of memories that had been forgotten and become a simulation of the past (Prinz 2009:218-219).

Zack created an artificial landscape, or as Kuleshov would refer to it (Goodman 2013:34), a 'creative geography', to conceive the impression of the home of a Jewish family leading up to World War II. She constructed the set in a warehouse in Israel to resemble a small European apartment consisting of a kitchen, living room and dining area (Rosenfield 2008). The warehouse was situated in the Golan Heights on a plateau near the sea of Galilea, overlooking the west of the Jordan River Valley. Originally, this area had been part of Syria until it came under siege by Israel in 1976. In 1981, it was unilaterally annexed by Israel. Thus, the significance of her filming at this site relates to the ongoing conflict and violence around Jewish identity and belonging today (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2020).

This specific studio site also intensified Zack's ability for self-reflectiveness, which aided her in heightening the perceptions of both artificiality and the unrealistic in the video (Prinz 2009:218). The idea of a recreated landscape in this studio symbolises artificial memory, simulated reality, and imagination, as suggested by Baudrillard (2010:49). In the studio, the real is reproduced by the artist's memories and experiences of her Jewish culture, her family heritage, and their testimonies: Zack's fathers' parents had been sent to Auschwitz, had survived, and then relocated to Israel.

To simulate the time, history and place, Zack incorporated certain props into the set as visual clues for the Jewish community and culture. These include a Hanukkah Menoraha, pair of candlesticks featuring the Star of David, and the *Judische Rundschau*[28] (Fig 3.14), (a German-Jewish community newspaper published in Berlin) which falls to the floor in one scene. These cultural objects

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[28] This newspaper is signifacant in positioning the narrative of Kristallnacht. The last copy of the Jewish newspaper *Judische Rundschau* was issued on the 8th of November 1938 the day before the Kristallnacht (Berlin Global 2014). Also known in English as the *Night of Broken Glass*, Jewish homes, businesses, schools and synagogues were vandalized. On this night 100 Jews were killed and 30 000 men were sent to the Nazi concentration camps. After Kristallnacht violence against German Jews worsened significantly (Onion, Sullivan & Mullen 2018).

also become 'guardians of testimony' and memory, and remind us of the connections between her work, Jewish culture, and the Holocaust (Lurie: 2010; Rosenfeld:2008). This observation answers question one: this visual strategy simulates traumatic events from history and shows that there is an overlap between individual and collective memory.

Figure 3.14, Maya Zack, *Mother Economy (*2007). Video still.

Another observation is that the objects and props in the video represent family belonging and identity. In *Mother Economy* (2007), the family members' overt absence, as well as the way their belongings are held up and carefully scrutinised by the mother, is so poignant that the unexplainable horror and consequence of the Holocaust begins to resonate. Rosenfeld (2008) explains that the intention is for the viewer to believe that these possessions are those of the absent family. The mother copies the framed, sketched portraits of family members that hang on the wall into a notebook with a thick black marker; and using the same marker, she also traces around trophies, shoes, cigarette ash and other personal items belonging to the family. Her actions reflect the way we commit persons and events to memory when looking through old family photographs and their personal belongings.

By using metric montage (fig 3.15), Zack places further prominence on the absence of family members - especially the children - in the sequences. Medium and close-up shots that vary in time and distance are juxtaposed. These portray belongings and sketched portraits, as well as showing the mother picking up items from the floor and sketching them into her notebook, encapsulating the idea of her solitude, the children's absence, and the war. Coins fall from the pockets of a pair of short breeches, and with the black marker, she traces the coins as they lay on the floor. From this angle there is a jump cut in the sequence to a black and white sketch of a young boy. This creates an intellectual relation between the fallen coins and the young boy, and perhaps in the sketch he is wearing the same breeches? In the montage that follows, a close-up shot of her notebook shows a black and white drawing of a young girl, and on the opposite page, the mother is drawing a pair of ballet shoes. This image then jumps to a medium shot where she is holding a pair of ballet shoes, has slipped one onto one of her hands, and with this hand and shoe mimics ballet movements in a mirror. Next, in a medium camera shot, she walks through the apartment and trips over a tennis racquet. This shot juxtaposes back to her notebook, this time showing a drawing of a young boy holding the tennis racquet, while she is sketching the racquet on the opposite page.

Zack's use of objects in this video is an example of post-structuralist theory, namely how an object derives its value from a system of ideological beliefs and influences in the world around us. The allusions to objects in the video suggest that the young children of the family took part in sporting and cultural activities, which represents the structure and activities of undisturbed family life. But the children's absence, and especially the way the mother is obsessively documenting their possessions, implies a catastrophe. In this way intolerable tensions experienced as unimaginable are evoked, pointing to question three of the study.

Figure 3.15, Maya Zack, *Mother Economy (*2007). Video stills.

Other signs and codes that alert the viewer relate to Jewish bourgeoise culture in pre-World War II Berlin. The mother's dress style and feminine acts are codes that become metaphors for the role of the young Jewish housewife of that period. The absence of her family members, and the way that traces of their belongings are revealed in the video, articulate the catastrophic horror and traumatic memories of the Holocaust. A speech in the background on a 1936 model Korting radio suggests a mediation of Holocaust remembrance. Zack explains that what interests her is "to think about objects as signs that we give meaning to" and how she uses the objects to make meaning (Lurie 2010, Prinz 2009: 217 & Ivry 2008).

Mother Economy (2007) is divided into sequences that allow the viewer to understand the story in terms of its narrative structure, narrative form, and diegetic. In the first act of the narrative, taking a bird's-eye-view, the camera pans over the apartment to establish the place and setting of the story. We see a small living room with two chairs, a low table, and a lamp. The living space is divided with a bookshelf that creates a separate space for a dining area containing a round table with chairs. In the adjacent space, the camera pans over a worktable where we see the hands and forearms of the woman guiding thick white cloth through a sewing machine. This introductory sequence ends with a title card where 'Mother Economy' is written on the top left in English, and the bottom right in Hebrew.

In the second part of the narrative structure, more of the diegetic is disclosed. It introduces the character, the absent characters, as well as the setting, place, and historical time of the story. The protagonist appears as a conservative, feminine figure, dressed neatly in a white lace-trimmed blouse and a black skirt, a spotless white apron tied around her waist, wearing a string of light pink pearls, while her luxuriant hair is elegantly groomed. This style code represents the fashions of the 1930s, which for women was a period of customary norms and bourgeois upbringings (Lurie 2010). Zack explains that she has chosen a slim but tough-looking woman to represent the persona of the young Jewish mother, who also could have the appearance of a teacher or clerk (Ivry 2008). This not only could allude to her household chores, but also to the work she is undertaking in an attempt to safeguard and document the family memories.

The parallels and motifs of the narrative form unfold in a series of actions performed by the mother, such as sewing, cooking, tidying up, and finally setting the dinner table. But the linear system in which she pedantically performs her industrious homemaking tasks also reveals a second narrative - that of her absent family. In terms of film theory, the mother's performance, which is

explicitly shown on screen, would be the syuzhet. The lives of the missing family members form part of the fabula, as the viewer is given certain visual clues to their stories and background (Cutting 2016:1714). Lurie (2010) observes that their absence becomes evident through her obsessive documentation, calculations, sketching, sorting, and cataloguing of their possessions, all undertaken with an almost horrifying precision, and pointing to the shocking realisation that their absence is framed by the traumatic consequences of the Holocaust.

For the duration of the first ten minutes of the video, the montage in the sequence has a slow tempo; the shots are mostly longer, and the viewer develops a sense of emotional sympathy for the woman and her aloneness. The music and occasional staccato radio news broadcasts gradually build up tension in the mood and atmosphere in the narrative. Once she reaches the kitchen, the pace of the montage increases, and the rhythm of the sound also becomes more urgent and frantic, creating a climax in the narrative structure. As opposed to her slow, elegant movements in the first part of the narrative structure, now her hands move quickly as she writes down information and makes calculations on an abacus. She laboriously squeezes dough through a meat grinder and searches for a pot between the clutter of other suspended utensils in the kitchen.

Suddenly the pace of the video slows down again as she places a Kugel[29] into the oven and patiently waits for it to bake. Once out of the oven, using a large compass and pie chart, she carefully measures the Kugel into differently-sized slices, and then cuts it with a long bread knife pulled from a test-tube containing oil. Her cutting action appears laborious, like sawing through wood rather than slicing a soft cake.

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[29] A traditional Jewish pastry or noodle casserole (Prinz 2009:219).

The strategy of change in movement, pace, and tone in the sequence relates to Zack's imagined memories of her family who survived the Holocaust. Although her grandparents, who lived in Czechoslovakia, were sent to Auschwitz only towards the end of the war, before that time they lived in constant fear (Rosenfield 2000). In *Mother Economy* (2007), the housewifely practical acts of measuring, calculating, and taking inventory wholly immerse the mother in her home. She seems indifferent to the way that catastrophe is building up outside (Lurie 2010). Through her home chores, she represses thoughts of the approaching threat of losing her home and being sent to a concentration camp. The everyday act of baking in a conventional family kitchen is made strange through the inclusion of items that are normally reserved for a science laboratory, and her use of other out-of-place objects, such as an abacus to measure ingredients to bake a cake. The way in which she documents, bakes, and calculates is abnormal, both foretelling and echoing the horror and inhumanity of the killing camps of the Holocaust.

As opposed to exhibiting the expected traits of motherliness - which are caring, nurturing, and creating comfort and order in the home - here, the mother's actions reveal an unusual strangeness. In an almost chaotic environment, she makes calculations, does irrational chores, and randomly sews abstract patterns onto a white cloth bearing burned cigarette holes. She seems to be transfixed by a hole in a stocking, and then draws on herself with the marker, creating an affect of confusion, discomfort, and tension.

These scenes are juxtaposed in a metric and rhythmic montage which emphasise the idea of the vulnerable state of this woman – and by extension, her community - how her day-to-day existence is in peril, along with her looming defencelessness. Zack (in Rosenfeld 2008) further explains that the acts of the character compel the viewer to look beyond the archetype of the frugal Jewish mother, and to focus rather on Jewish survival in a threatening world.

She is quoted in Prinz (2009:218), arguing that "there's this tension between the mother who is supposed to nurture, and on the other hand, she's this calculating machine".

In the final act, there is an underlying tone of sadness and mourning. The pervasive emptiness in the home remains unchanged and she continues to find herself alone. She has baked a perfectly round Kugel that is placed in the centre of her finely-decorated dinner table set for five people (Fig 3.16). In the diegetic, the table remains empty and no one returns home to sit at the dinner table and enjoy the Kugel. This element of absence articulates a presentiment of mourning, which alludes to the trauma around the realisation of the Holocaust and the harrowing memories which will persist throughout coming generations.

Figure 3.16, Maya Zack, *Mother Economy (*2007). Video still.

Conclusion

Zack uses several visual techniques to suggest the tension of war as an intolerable experience. She reveals how her own postmemory evolved by creating a visual concept in her mind of how her Jewish ancestors experienced the intolerable tensions of war, which points to question three. Further, through reconstructing the small pre-war apartment in the Golan Heights, she shows the potential that landscape or place has to influence the simulation of historical life in video art, addressing question five. Her behaviour seems unusual, a strategy that in an abstract sense symbolises her being in a state of abnormality and unimaginable tension, pointing to question three. The objects in the apartment relate to Jewish culture as well as standing for the artist's own identity, indicating the overlap between individual and collective memory, which refers to question one.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have undertaken a formal and technical analysis on the video artworks of three artists to identify the visual strategies applied in video art to simulate the affects produced by traumatic memories from grievous historic events. I have deliberated on the possible meanings and symbolism alluded to in these works through the artists' use of objects, imagery, and various editing and filming strategies. These techniques and visual strategies specifically imply traumatic memories that are carried over from one generation to the next through matrilineal conversations, stories, and objects. Thus, the traumatic memories specified in this study are different from an individual's memories of a direct experience.

The purpose of my analysis is to investigate which strategies using digital technology are best suited to create an affective response in the viewer. Specifically, this emotional response would be associated with critical aspects of human identity and memory in relation to catastrophic historic events. In the

next chapter, I will discuss how I have experimented with the identified visual strategies in my own body of practical work, which also deals with matrilineal postmemory and trauma.

The following observations noted in the video works of Siopis and Weberg answer the fifth research question: what potential do family heirlooms, found family objects, places, and historical landscapes hold to influence individual postmemory, affect, and imagination? Siopis relies on her grandmother's memoirs and the found film footage captured by her mother to simulate her own imaginings of what her grandmother had experienced during the Greco-Turkish war. Weberg uses different angles of an actual historic landscape - Birkenau - to create an abstraction using crossfading, distortion, and metric montage with long, medium, and close-up shots, to symbolise the chaos and unthinkable experiences of the Holocaust.

Both Weberg and Zack edited the colours in the montage. Desaturation of colours, white overlays and vignettes all symbolise how generational memories can become distorted, faded, and influenced by imagination.

A deliberate combination of visuals with strategic text subtitles is a film technique that Siopis uses to suggest her grandmother's turmoil at losing a child, as well as her trauma around displacement. Instead of text, Weberg incorporates the echo of a child's voice calling for its mother in different intonations as a technique to evoke a sense of intolerable tension, similar to that which must have been experienced by the inmates of the extermination camp at Birkenau. Zack also relies on audio sound effects to reinforce the aloneness of the young Jewish housewife, and the absence of her family members who do not return to join her at the dinner table. Both Zack and Weberg used film strategies such as the alteration of camera distance, several modes of montage, and the artificial or reimagined landscape as tools of abstraction to symbolise war conflicts.

Although the historic memories that are simulated in these video works involve distinct population groups who lived through different aspects of war conflict, the memories themselves have been shared in a similar way between generations of separate families, which explains the overlap between collective and individual memory. Furthermore, because the memories are shared through the maternal line, they serve to highlight the universal predicaments of women thrust into a war situation. The identification of maternal strength during intolerable events relates to Virginia Woolf's statement (in Sontag 2003:1-5) that "it is mostly women who are the true victims of all wars".

A main research question in this study refers to the extent to which historical fact can be transfigured in video art. Sontag (2003) explains that, although the reproduction of images of war can evoke mixed signals that seem terrifying to the viewer, such images should indeed portray the unbearable terror of war, as all wars are terrible. Siopis, Weberg, Zack, and I as the artists whose video works are discussed during this research, all represent the "hinge generation" (Hoffman 2005) who did not directly experience the grievous historic events. Hirsch (2008) uses the term postmemory to describe the memories of the hinge generation, stating that these memories have an imaginative investment that can become reimagined simulations because they are constructed with stories and images. The strategies used in video art to reconstruct the traumatic experiences of the generation before us become imaginative, akin to what Baudrillard (2004) terms the simulacrum.

Thus, I argue that, although it is impossible to recreate the unthinkable suffering of others, the video artist can rely on the affect generated through the use of specific visual strategies to construct a simulation of grievous historic memories.

CHAPTER 4: POSTMEMORY AND SIMULATION IN THE NARRATIVE OF TWYFELHOEK

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss my own art practice, which here consists of a video artwork titled *Twyfelhoek*, (2020) a gallery installation, and still images. My work deals with the simulation of memories from traumatic history. As discussed above, the memories I explore in my work are understood as a form of postmemory - memories experienced by generations after, known as the 'hinge generation' (Hoffmann 2005:198), as theorised by Hirsch (2008), Caruth (1996) and Young (2007).

My artmaking is practice-led and is influenced by auto-ethnology[30] and informed by theory. Therefore, I continually engage with critical thinkers who have done extensive writing on film language, simulation, and traumatic memories. Deleuze's (1986,2003) and Eisenstein's (2004) theories of cinema are applied in the analysis of *Twyfelhoek* (2020)[31] to see to what extent film strategies like montage and narrative could contribute to simulating the unimaginable and unthinkable elements of grievous historic conflict. As discussed in previous chapters, my proposition is that since traumatic memories from historic events are inaccessible as truth, an artist is not able to portray the pain of others factually. This idea is supported by the theories of Baudrillard (1983) and (Sontag 2003). However, the experience of listening to narratives of family and engaging with cultural sites does evoke a personal and emotional interpretation that reverberates with the past and finds an echo in ongoing human disasters.

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[30] By describing and analysing my personal experience whilst artmaking I apply an auto-ethnographic approach.
[31] Twyfelhoek (2020) available at:
https://vimeo.com/user58624313/review/512824027/db5d7ccca5

The video works of Siopis, Weberg, and Zack analysed in this study are related to collective and individual memories evoked by the intolerable experiences of their predecessors. When I filmed and edited *Twyfelhoek* (2020), I was influenced by the visual techniques of the above artists to see which strategies would work best to simulate traumatic memories and evoke an affect of anxiety, tension, repulsion, shock, and stress. In my own video art, I experimented with montage, cross fading, narrative, camera angles, memory text, and creative landscapes which answered certain questions of this study. Although it has been established that such memories and the subsequent video work have no claim to 'truth' and can be described as simulated, I nevertheless aim to find which film techniques do simulate affect, war conflicts, the unimaginable, and the unthinkable reality of trauma.

4.2   MOTIVATION FOR THE PRACTICE

My initial motivation for this study was the connection I felt with the stories that my mother had told me. We were always close. At the time that I started this study, I was living with her and saw her becoming older and more fragile. I was moved to try to capture the stories that were passed on between the generations of our family. Often in the evenings, we would sit together in her living room paging through the black and white photo albums from her childhood. My mother grew up on the farm *Twyfelhoek* in the Free-State, hence the name of the video artwork. On the same farm there is a cave where the women and children would hide during the SAW to avoid being taken to the infamous concentration camps. Her remembrances from the farm would often lead to her memories of the cave, as well as the testimonies about the war and the camps written in a family journal and in the family Bible. Therefore, the figure of the mother plays a central role in my work to convey how postmemory is carried forward between matrilineal generations.

In relation to *My Lovely Day* (1997), Siopis (2005:93) argues that it is only when we have experienced the loss of a loved one that we start to explore our ideas of 'self' in relation to family. With this in mind, during my artmaking process I realised that I could draw a connection between our family memories, or postmemory, and my own lived adult experiences. From the conversations with my mother, I embarked on a sentimental and even obsessive journey, to explore my identity and my place of belonging within my family history. Siopis (2005:93) also wrote that family, like community, is an imagined abstraction that provides in many ways a model for belonging: "Family encompasses and exceeds our individual lives. We inherit our older relatives. They are as it were, always already there and bear a history for us before we are born".

Siopis's explanation around the abstraction of the family unit and a model for belonging points out how postmemory can transfigure historical fact. My response to this engagement with my mother's stories provided me with a similar model for belonging in my family unit. The bond between a family unit and memory is also similar to how Zack (in Ivry 2008:3) explains her interest, after her grandmother had died, in imagining and recreating her grandmother's pre-Holocaust home.

The differences between cultures, the individual stories of closed family units, and a visual conception of postmemory can differ from person to person (Vicars et al. 2013:112). In my *Lovely Day* (1997), Siopis addresses memories of the historic conflict that her grandmother suffered and implies this with found footage that belonged to her mother. Similarly, Weberg's narrative in *Mamo* (2008) focuses on the affect of emotions evoked when he visits the extermination camp at Birkenau. Zack created a space that shows how she imagined a German Jewish family unit would live prior to World War II.

Siopis's memories are personal as she relied on found images and memoirs that belonged to her family. Although her video portrayal is mostly influenced by individual memory, it still informs the viewer of the Greco-Turkish war that displaced an entire society. This statement addresses the extent to which is there an overlap between collective and individual memory. Similarly, *Twyfelhoek* (2020) represents a memory shared between the generations of small family units, but also comments on the collective remembering of grievous historic events that affected a larger South African population. Furthermore, the analysis of the video works in Chapter Three, as well as *Twyfelhoek* (2020) in this chapter, remarks on global collective memories of wartime violence that continues to be perpetrated against women and children.

In my video art practice, I am not concerned with representing the factual reality of events in the concentration camps of the SAW. Instead, I use film strategies to convey the unbearable tensions of the women interned there who, on one hand had to be figures of strength, yet on the other, were helpless witnesses to their children's suffering or death. I also attempt to articulate my own experience of imagining by interpreting family memories of the historic conflicts that have been passed down through generations. In creating *Twyfelhoek* (2020), I acknowledge that descendants of survivors of traumatic historical events have only a mediated knowledge through relayed, repeated, or reported narratives (Caruth 2005:15).

4.3   VISUAL RESEARCH

Domingo Martinez Rosario (2017) argues that there are three principal strategies that artists use when dealing with memory in video art. The first is the appropriation of photographs, home movies and old films. These items have the potential to activate emotions, nostalgia, and melancholy to the viewers' attention. Secondly is a critical engagement with history, as memory is

influenced by our present circumstances. The third strategy is to represent temporality and time by combining photographs and films from different times. Media objects such as photographs and film are directly associated with family history. Furthermore, these images, places, and stories from traumatic events become ingrained in the minds of children of the next generation and become a prevalent background of their own experiences during their lives. These principal strategies are used in the video works of Siopis, Weberg, and Zack, as well as in my own work.

As victims of the war, most of the possessions and heirlooms of our family were lost during the scorched earth policy. The lack of these family items made me rely on research and my own imagination for my memory creation of the camps. In a similar manner to the artists on whose video works I conducted my research, I was moved to visit monuments, museums, and graveyards as I wanted to see the remaining evidence of the tragic history of the concentration camps. These 'pilgrimages' would further contribute to how I imagine the suffering and turmoil of the women and children in the camps. I read Afrikaans poems[32] and novels[33] that were written of the SAW; and studied photographic compilations[34], investigating the photographs in detail. These inspirations and sources of memory were structured and re-constructed in my artmaking process, resulting in the video artwork *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

I directed and filmed the work using a performer wearing a recreated garment that I conceived of - a black costume that resembles conventional Voortrekker attire, yet is similar to the distinctive black dress that was worn during a widow's

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[32] D.J Opperman, *Die groot verseboek* (1964).

[33] J H Breytenbach *Die Betekenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, (1949), *Die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog, II*, (1949) and *Gedenkalbum van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, (1949). AC Martin, *The Concentration Camps 1900-1902: Facts, Figures and Fables* (1975), JC Otto, *Die Konsentrasiekampe*, (1954), J.L Hattingh, *Die Irenekonsentrasiekamp,*

[34] L Changuion, F Jacobs and P Alberts, *Suffering of War: A photographic portrayal of the suffering in the Anglo-Boer War* (2003), A Grundling & B Nasson, *Die oorlog kom huis toe, vroue en gesinne in die Anglo-Boereoorlog* (2013).

mourning period[35] in the Victorian era. The bonnet is a traditional accessory known in Afrikaner culture as the *Kappie* (fig 4.1).

In addition to creating *Twyfelhoek* (2020) I experimented with other formats and mediums, using the video footage and the black dress as starting points. This led to a range of outcomes. One was a sculptural installation using a mannequin to pose and restructure the costume worn by the performer in *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Afterwards I created a series of *in situ* installations of the dress at different times of day and at different locations. I photographed these in the late afternoon and in early morning at sunrise and decided that the late afternoon light created the most suitable atmosphere for the subject of traumatic memories. Finally, the photographs and dress were installed at the UNISA art gallery with the video work (2020, 2021). A digital print from one of the photographs was exhibited with the rest of the installation.

4.4   ARTISTIC PROCESS

My video artwork comprises a montage with a three-part narrative structure. It was assembled and edited with historical photographs and recorded video shots of ritual-like performances by the performer dressed in the recreated garment described above. Every element in the video has a symbolic meaning.

The work straddles aesthetic genres: part documentary, part performance, and part assemblage. It serves as a metaphor for autobiography because it is constructed and influenced from traumatic memories shared within my family and is simulated according to my own visual interpretation. Therefore, since as

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[35] By the mid-19th century, family mourning became a coded public sign. After Queen Victoria became a widow at the age of 45 in 1861, she wore black dresses and jewelry as a sign of her mourning until her death in 1901. Many widows, especially those from industrial middle classes, from Europe to North America, followed her example. It became the custom for a respectable widow to wear a mourning dress for at least two and a half years after her husband had died. Widows wore veils, skirts, outdoor bonnets, capes, and jewelry. By the 1930s, the use of black in mourning started to decline, except in Catholic countries (Bloomsbury Fashion Library [Sa]. Sv "Mourning Dress").

the artist, I am third generation removed from the SAW, *Twyfelhoek (2020)* is an example of resembling trauma in a simulated form through postmemory, rather than a result of a direct remembrance of the traumatic experiences. This makes my personal memories spatially and temporarily different from those of my deceased family members (Vicars et al. 2013:112). The scanned, historical photographs from the SAW incorporated into the montage refers to a documentary-style genre, as they are evidence of the daily existence of the civilians in the camps - the tents that they had to live in, how they dressed, the crockery and cutlery that they used, images of the deceased, and how burials were attended.

I captured digital video footage of several historical cemeteries, including - but not exclusively - those from the SAW. After my experiences of visiting these memorial graveyard sites, I concur with (Vicars et al. (2013:112) when they explain that these visits "are often accompanied by a feeling of familiarity, belatedness and a sense of absence or gaps as well as a quest for emotional truth". I noticed that I experienced feelings of anger, loss, emptiness, and empathy, not just for the victims of the SAW, but also for victims of past and continuing situations of conflict, especially the continued violence against women and children. I felt a certain desperation to discover my identity and my position within my family history, especially in connection with my mother's memories from the farm Twyfelhoek.

Figure 4.1, Antoinette Odendaal, *Lijkwade* (2020).

The Kuleshov filming technique of spatial composition and creative geography, described in Chapter Two, is a technique that is also evident in *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Similarly, in *Mamo* (2008) and *Mother Economy* (2007), Weberg and Zack used different shots and video angles in their sequences, from different locations and places, to create artificial landscapes with linear continuity. In *Twyfelhoek* (2020), I incorporated footage and photographs of different landscapes to create a linear continuity of the places and times of the stories throughout the three parts of the narrative.

The first part of the narrative simulates the conversations between me and my mother. More than fifteen years ago, my mother and father visited the farm Twyfelhoek. The images of the landscape and cave are photographs that my father took during that visit (fig 4.2), and the cave shown in the video still in (fig 4.3) is one of those photographs. In the video editing process, I animated the still images so that it seemed that the camera was panning over the landscape. In this way, I made use of Kuleshov's creative landscape strategy to simulate my mother's memories of the farm and reconstruct the way I imagine she may have encountered it. In the second part of the narrative, I also use a creative landscape technique to indicate postmemory and imagination by constructing a simulation of a moment in a tent during the war.
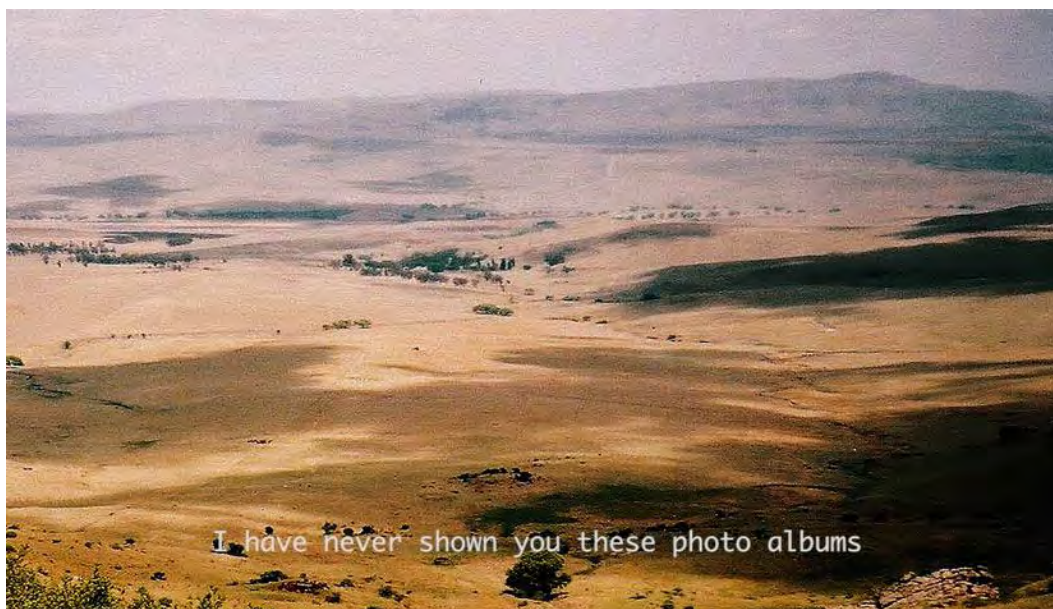
Figure 4.2, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.
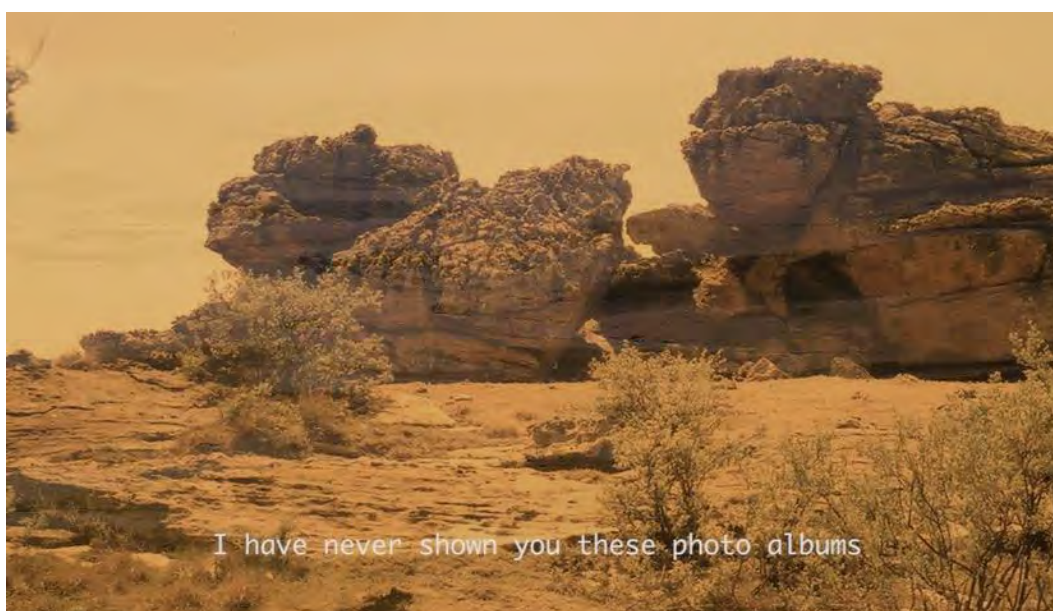
Figure 4.3, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

In the second act, at three minutes of the video, the mother is reading a passage through her family Dutch Bible in the tent. The Dutch Bible shown in the video is my mother's, and in the back is written a testimony of a child's death in the Standerton concentration camp in December 1901. I did not include all the video footage from the scene in the tent, but in the unedited raw video footage (fig

4.4) this Bible, seen lying on the corner of the wooden table, is one of the few belongings that remain in our family from that time. In a number of scenes in the tent, I also included a pair of steel scissors[36] (fig 4.5) that my mother had owned before I was born, and that she would use when doing needlework and sewing. In this image, the steel scissors cutting the material symbolise the violence of war and the real possibility of death. Scissors embody opposite symbolisms, such as creation and destruction, and can also allude to cutting the thread of life which may point to both birth and death simultaneously (Cirlot 1971:280).

Figure 4.4, Antoinette Odendaal, unedited raw video footage (2019).

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[36] In the Encyclopedia of Symbols (1994:835), the symbolic value of scissors is an attribute to Atropos, the Fate with the task of cutting the thread of life. They also symbolise the probability of sudden death.

Figure 4.5, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

Relics and souvenirs, like my mother's steel scissors and the family Bible, can create an impression of a bygone era that seems more enchanting and real than ours is today. These items can become an embodiment for longing for the past (van Zyl 2018:59). In the same way that "things" - heirlooms, found objects and souvenirs - make Siopis (2005:4) sympathetic towards people, the few heirlooms and photographs owned by my mother fostered in me an emotional, personal longing and sympathetic relationship to her objects.

After thoroughly investigating the artefacts and belongings in the historical photographs of the SAW concentration camps, I collected similar items - such as woven baskets, steel kettles and pots - and curated a collection of these objects inside the white tent (fig 4.4). This *mise-en-scène* resembles my imagining of how the inhabitants of the SAW concentration camps attempted to retain their familiar existence during their period of incarceration. Here, my selected cultural items are used in the same way as Zack when she reconstructs a specific Jewish culture in a recognisable historical era. Lurie (2010:[Sp]) calls the cultural items in Zack's video, *Mother Economy* (2007), "guardians of testimony".

In the final compilation of the video, I noticed that the linen of the tent is clean and white. Despite the space being cramped and small, the clean, white interior with home items becomes symbolic of a place of safety, and the care and nurturing of a mother (fig 4.6). It is also a place for prayer and contemplation, where homely activities such as sewing, creating, healing, and mending can take place, safe from the elements and the war raging outside. This emphasises the overlap between the safety that is provided by the tent and by the mother.

Figure 4.6, Antoinette Odendaal, unedited raw video footage (2019).

For the final part of the narrative, I filmed a scene in a memorial commemorative graveyard in Bethulie in The Free State with the woman in the black dress. This visual strategy also shows the potential of a landscape to influence memory and imagination. The solitude of the woman wandering in the graveyard indicates her empty emotional and physical space left by the loss of her family members. Similarly, Zack used this strategy of a mother by herself to emphasise the absence of the rest of her family, while suggesting that they have been murdered and will never return.

To conclude, my visual research informed my practice to create a video installation that simulates the overwhelming experiences of Boer women during the SAW. As recommended by Rosario (2017), I studied history books of the SAW with many photographs and illustrations, especially those related to the camps, and used them as visual references for my own artwork. I further incorporated the notion of creative landscapes, a recreated traditional black costume, and other everyday objects of that time – including my mother's Dutch Bible and sewing scissors - to simulate my imagining of the situation. By combining personal memories with historical photographs and commemorative sites, an overlap is created between collective and personal memory. Finally, my artmaking process also reflects the findings of my research in Chapter Three about three other video artists whose works concern family intergenerational memories of traumatic historic experiences – Siopis, Weberg, and Zack - which influenced my choices of certain filmic strategies, like crossfading, montage, camera angles and narrative to symbolise war conflicts.

4.5   APPLICATION OF VISUAL AND FILM STRATEGIES IN TWYFELHOEK (2020)

For *Twyfelhoek* (2020), I was influenced by and experimented with the filming and cinematic strategies used by Zack, Weberg, & Siopis to achieve effects that evoke strong emotions. In this section, I detail the visual and film strategies used to simulate traumatic memories in *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Strategies here include narrative, montage, layering, crossfading and dissolve, long pauses, experimental editing, juxtaposition, and creative geography. These relate to specific effects and affects in my own practice that address the research questions of this study.

The scanned photographs used in my video were captured by war photographers whose images are evidence of the reality of the war, whereas the video recordings and digital editing strategies were constructed to show my postmemory. As such, a tension is created between the aged images from the

SAW and the contemporary feel of digital technology. Thus, the photographic and still images in the video artwork penetrate both a fictional and documentary genre simultaneously, complicating past and present, and confusing truth from fiction. Similarly, the layering and crossfading of the images in the montage adds to the conception of how individual memories in the present stand in contrast to historic memories, confusing the real with the remembered. These techniques express fragmentation of memory and how it could be reconstructed or simulated to become an affect in the present.

In film, certain occurrences of a story are left out and others are compressed to form the running time or on-screen time, also called the syuzhet and fabula (as explained in section 2.4 of the literature review). The detailed history of the SAW would be referred to in film language as the fabula. In *Twyfelhoek* (2020), a large part of the fabula of the SAW was eliminated from the on-screen time, leaving the syuzhet to emphasise and simulate the trauma that women and children experienced in the camps.

The syuzhet can also begin at any time of the narrative: the beginning, middle or the end (Pramaggiore and Wallis 2008:64; as well as Cutting 2016:1714). Neither the diegetic structure nor the syuzhet of *Twyfelhoek (2020)* follow a specific order and temporal continuity. This strategy is used to echo the gaps and myths of simulated and traumatic memories as well as the imaginative qualities of postmemory. It also leaves the viewer to imagine the incomprehensible horrors that took place.

In the beginning of the video a flash forward strategy is used, suggesting that my mother is telling me the stories of her childhood memories and the traumatic experiences that family members suffered during the SAW, in the current moment. Similarly, in *My Lovely Day* (1997), Siopis also used a flash forward technique where she combined selected video footage with memory text of her

grandmother, implying that she is telling her the history of the Greco-Turkish war in the present moment. Flash forward techniques enforce the idea of revisiting overwhelming inherited traumatic memories of the past and the imaginative effects that they continue to have in the present (Hirsch 2008:107).

Also, at the beginning of the video, I have strategically inserted a photograph that my father took of the cave (fig 4.6), and deliberately did not add a description to indicate that this was the cave where the women and children were hiding during the war. This confuses fact and fiction by indicating my personal interpretation of how I imagine my mother's stories and memories. Ironically, because this cave is not labelled as such in my video, the viewer is not aware of its significance, therefore obfuscating an important aspect of history. Siopis used this same strategy at the beginning of *My Lovely Day* (1997). Although there is no real footage of the Greco-Turkish War, the text on the images denotes her grandmother's turmoil and how the artist envisions it. Also referred to as memory text, this strategy is more common with poetry as it has a metaphoric quality that symbolises timelessness, memory fragments and the imagistic qualities that relate to dreams and fantasies (Kuhn 2010:2). Using flash forward and memory text is a visual strategy that shows how the traumatic past could be simulated, as probed in my research questions.

In the second part of the narrative, or second act, the diegetic establishes the setting, time, and place of the SAW. This part of the sequence also represents the climax of the narrative form to simulate the mother's loss, anguish and feeling of displacement after she has been resettled to the concentration camp. In these scenes of the intimate, small space inside the tent, I included mostly close-up shots of a woman's hand, sewing machine, needle, scissors, and a small table (fig 4.7). The meaning of a close-up can dislocate and isolate an image from the objective world, and also emphasise tension and create anticipation between the close-up's content and that of the succeeding shots (Eisenstein in Jean

Antoine-Dunne & Quigley 2004:6). Weberg also uses this strategy in *Mamo* (2008) (fig 4.8). Here the viewer only sees a close-up of the sharp ends of barbed wire over a distorted landscape and grey wall, so that anticipation is created in the viewer. Zack similarly relies on close-up shots in *Mother Economy* (2007), where personal items of family members and hand drawn portraits are juxtaposed between the mother and how she interacts with these objects. Zack also incorporated this visual strategy at the climax of the narrative, which amplifies the shocking realisation that the missing family members might never return.

Figure 4.7, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

Figure 4.8, Anders Weberg, *Mamo/Mother. Senses and memories of motherhood evoked by visiting Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in Poland July 2008* (2008). Video still.

(Fig 4.9) show a cinematic contrast between objects that are still part of her life versus family members who succumbed in the concentration camp. She unpacks a dainty, knitted doily and framed photograph, and places them on a table. The portrait that is cropped out of the frame symbolises the deaths and loss of family members. There is a strong emphasis on the delicate patterns of the white doily. Here, the cinematographic decision creates a strong motive of how the doily is still part of her life but that the people in the photograph have now merely become a distant memory. The doily then cross-montages over a family photo album (fig 4.10) which underlines her loss of and longing for family members and friends who are no longer part of her life.

Figure 4.9, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

I created an intellectual montage by placing the family photo album scene (fig 4.10) in the footage prior to where she is working on a sewing machine (fig 4.11). Metaphorically this represents her healing process and how she deals with her mourning. Looking down at her from a bird's eye view, a feeling is created of being present in her personal space.

Figure 4.10, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

Figure 4.11, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

The accompanying audio in these scenes consists of emphasised sounds of the sewing machine and the scissors cutting linen, which create a psychological shift that hints at the danger from death and disease that threatens the lives of the children in the camps. The visuals combined with these background sounds contribute to the contrasting ideas of the caring mother in the face of the threat of violence. Similarly, the audio in *Mamo* (2008) of the child's desperate echoing voice emphasises the absence of the motherly figure and evokes the unimaginable and unthinkable experience of the abandoned child.

In (fig 4.12) a close-up shot tightly frames only the chest and hand of the woman at a ninety-degree angle where she is working at her sewing machine. We are drawn into her personal space but cannot see her face. Therefore, we are not able to read her emotions from a facial expression as with a conventional close-up shot, but instead we are left to read emotion through interpreting other visual clues, such as sounds, composition, lighting, and mood.

Figure 4.12, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

Further, the screen that is split in two in this shot echoes the severity of the conflict of the war and the suffering of women in the camps. The stark verticality of the sewing machine as a man-made cast iron object, which seems heavy, rigid, and inflexible represents the violent masculinities of war. The needle penetrates the delicate, soft, white linen, which is an ambivalent symbol, expressive of not only creation but also destruction. In the chiaroscuro frame, the man-made object has an ominous presence above the gentle, feminine hand and white linen of the nurturing mother. This scene explores how gender difference is institutionalised (McClintock 1995:353), specifically within the context of the SAW, where it is the Boer men who are active in the political frontline, fighting the war. By contrast, the women were expected to have a spiritual, nurturing, and supportive role in the conflict (McClintock 1995:358). The strong linear and vertical structure of the sewing machines steel needle is repeated at the end of the video where the woman walks towards the camera, the tall vertical monument in the background. This image affirms the influence of male dominance in the conflict (fig 4.13).

Figure 4.13, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

The monument is the shape of an obelisk, a form seen in the design of many Afrikaner monuments, in turn influenced by European nationalism and architecture. McClintock (1995:374-375), describes such architectural structures as fetish objects of nationalism that represent the phallic icon of male dominance. In a contemporary sense, the woman in the background of the shot also signifies how gender difference in terms of the *Volksmoeder* was constructed under Afrikaner nationalism, namely, being keepers of tradition, encouraging the *volks'* morality, and by attending only to the home and her family's spirituality (McClintock 1995:377). The above observation also blends in with Woolf's explanation (in Sontag 2003:1) that men are seen as heroes in war situations as opposed to women, who experience the intolerable tensions of grievous historic events.

At regular intervals during the sequence, I have purposely layered and cross-faded the wide shape of the dress worn by the woman with images from concentration camp tents (fig 4.14). This strategy comments on the similarity between the mother and the tent that both provide shelter, warmth, and protection. This strategy does not attempt to be a mirror of real appearance, as

Baudrillard (1983:3) explains, instead this type of simulation informs the notion of hyperreality. As such, the motherly figure symbolically becomes a beacon of strength, but ironically is also tortured by the unavoidable and intolerable situation of helplessness. This technique evokes the intolerable tensions experienced by the mother as unimaginable.

Figure 4.14, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

In the final act of the narrative, the diegetic and the non-diegetic text establish the aftermath of the war. The sequence is portrayed in colour to be representative of the present and to indicate my recent visits to these specific memorial sites. The woman in the black dress is still present in these scenes to convey how memories become part of our identity. The fading evening light in the final scenes create a dramatic effect on the mood of the scene, contributing to the sombreness of traumatic memories. The lighting produces a tonal montage effect, where the video footage and the juxtaposed photographs have the same tone in lighting. The faded daylight also comments on the fading of trans-generational memories.

Up to this day there is still a lot of debate about the truth and accurateness of the stories of the SAW (FJ Pretorius 2010:34). This is why the images in the video rely on simulation, interpretation, and imagination. The visual strategies which I employ attest to this approach. Hirsch (2008), Hoffman (2005), and Baudrillard (2006) state that, as time passes, memories can become vague, artificial, mythical, exaggerated, and forgotten, leaving only a simulacrum in the suggestion of traumatic memories in video art.

When analysing Eisenstein's films, Deleuze noted that in the sequence there are static moments that create the illusion of successive movement, and that for every still image a past memory is created as well as an expected aftermath. In the montage, certain unplanned nonrepresentational images were created. I used layering, varying opacity and cross dissolves as tools for abstraction to symbolise war conflicts. These layers and cross-fades brought about abstract images that became privileged moments and ideal poses in *Twyfelhoek* (2020), which symbolise the formlessness of terror and the uncertainty that women experience from war conflicts (fig 4.15 – 4.18).

Further to this, these pivotal moments also relate to how traumatic memories can become simulated through imagination. Through these privileged moments, which are influenced by Eisenstein's montage technique, in my own video the intended effect is to disrupt the time-space span by creating images in motion to resemble a sense of the unrepresentable in traumatic experiences. Moreover, as a video art technique, I used cross-over montages where one scene merges into the next to simulate the incomprehensibility of the concentration camps and traumatic memory.

Weberg also uses overlays, cross-dissolves, and glimpses of images in *Mamo* (2008) in a similar way (as discussed in Chapter Three) to suggest the chaos and incomprehensibility of the exterminations that took place at Birkenau. His

strategy echoes the disintegration and fading, but also the possible manipulation of history and memory when postmemory becomes more distant (Baudrillard 2006:49). Furthermore, the main concern is to produce the affect of uneasiness when traumatic memories are implied, thus also acting as a universal affect.

Figure 4.15, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

Figure 4.16, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

Figure 4.17, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

Figure 4.18, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

In the final part of the sequence, a single camera shot portrays the woman
walking towards the camera lens (fig 4.19). In the following shot of the montage
(fig 4.18), I used digital techniques and created a simulation where the woman
disappears from the frame, leaving an empty void with only decaying leaves
blowing in a whirling wind. The special effects, the dissolving woman, the

animated leaves, and the wind create metaphors for the fragmentation and eventual disappearance of individual stories in the meta-narrative of history. This technique also makes evident the simulated nature of my personal envisioning of events and becomes metaphoric for the way I acknowledge the incomprehensibility of the horror of being detained in a camp where death was inevitable. This technique also shows how film strategies like crossfading can symbolise war conflicts.

Figure 4.19, Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020). Video still.

In the three-part narrative of *Twyfelhoek* (2020), a new reality of time and continuous movement is created through the digital editing software that I use, where digital video clips can be paused and cut. These cuts can be rearranged to create a different illusion of continuity within the timeline, and therefore they interrupt the natural expectation of the continuity of time. In the three-part structure of the narrative, the story begins in the present moment where my mother is telling me the stories. The second part of the narrative moves back in time to suggest the woman's actual experience in her tent. In the third part, the historic figure walks through a graveyard that was erected long after the war.

This is metaphoric for how distant memories can become subjected to myth creation and imagination, and how historical fact can become transfigured.

Traumatic memories from catastrophic historic events, like the internments in the SAW concentration camps, are too unthinkable to imagine or portray. In *Twyfelhoek* (2020), I use layering and cross-montage strategies to create an aesthetic representation to symbolise such memories, as the images generated this way become indiscernible, and thus more able to convey the unrepresentable. According to Miller (1997:39), the images created by the cross-montage strategy become abstract images of obscurity rather than clarity (Miller 1997:39). Montage is used here to express the idea of the mystery and myth of memories that become faded as they are told from one generation to the next. Baudrillard observes that in the deconstructive node of post-modern reality, simulations are increasingly replacing reality, subsequently making the original referent disappear (Rivkin and Ryan 2004:365).

When Bergson (in Bogue 2003:3) theorises that the still frame has a past, present, future, and origin, so postmemory could have similar characteristics: the war conflict is the origin of postmemory and the lived experiences of the victims. During this chain of retelling memories of traumatic events, we all reimagine and remember in different ways as we cannot experience the pain and turmoil of others (Sontag 2003:70-71) but can only simulate the traumatic memories to evoke the intolerable tensions of war. I experimented with different camera angles, props, landscapes, and varying digital effects to reveal how postmemory can transfigure historical fact, but also act as universal affect. I disrupted the traditional three-part narrative of storytelling in order to symbolically imply and emphasis how memories are transferred between generations.

4.6 GALLERY INSTALLATION

The gallery space where the works are installed is wide and bare, mimicking the wide-open spaces of the former camps, and emphasising a sense of desolation. The camps were without the necessary resources like sustainable shelter, food, and medicine; and the women and children were also exposed to extreme and unbearable weather conditions.

The black mourning dress worn in the video is exhibited here as a sculptural installation (fig 4.20). Its manner of presentation suggests a garment displayed in a museum, which echoes the idea that artefacts symbolise memory, commemoration, and remembering (Kuhn 2010:1). In this way, memories are made tangible through their association with objects. I handmade the dress, and that process refers to my own 'memory-work', how my postmemory was constructed through my personal interpretation of my mother's stories and my imagining the grievous history.

Figure 4.20, Antoinette Odendaal, Installation of *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Figure 4.21, Antoinette Odendaal, Installation of *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Figure 4.22, Antoinette Odendaal, Installation of *Twyfelhoek* 2020.

After much experimentation, in the final installation space the dress has been raised on a pedestal like a monument. Although in the video the woman in the black dress represents an individual in a specific setting that the viewer may relate to one-on-one, here, as a monument, the dress exemplifies the universal suffering of all mothers who must endure unimaginable societal conflicts throughout time. The bottom of the skirt refers to a camp tent and is held fast to the floor with ropes and rocks (fig 4.20). This sets up an opposition as, although the elevation of the dress represents the notion of the mother as a column of strength to the weak and suffering, simultaneously she stands bowed being also trapped and helpless in an unbearable situation. In my imaginings, this installed dress evokes the intolerable tension that a mother would experience in a SAW concentration camp.

The video is projected behind the dress (fig 4.21 – 4.22) and is accompanied by an audio installation (fig 4.22). I have also installed still images from the video (fig 4.23) as photographic works. These comprise cross fades that were used in the montage of *Twyfelhoek* (2020) as a tool for abstraction to emphasise the unimaginable. The linear placement of the digital prints is interrupted by random breaks and mispositioning (fig 4.24), representing the in-between moments that symbolise the disruption, violence and chaos embodied by war conflicts.
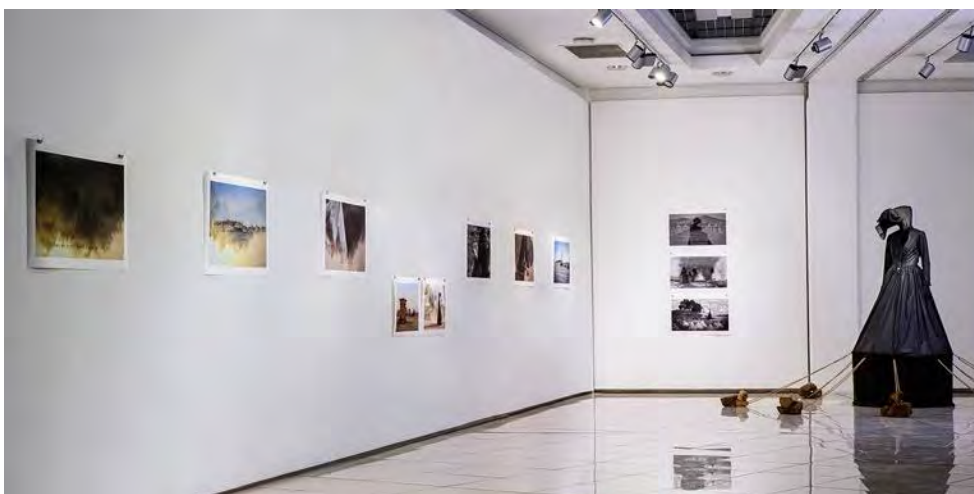

Figure 4.23, Antoinette Odendaal, Installation of *Twyfelhoek* (2020).
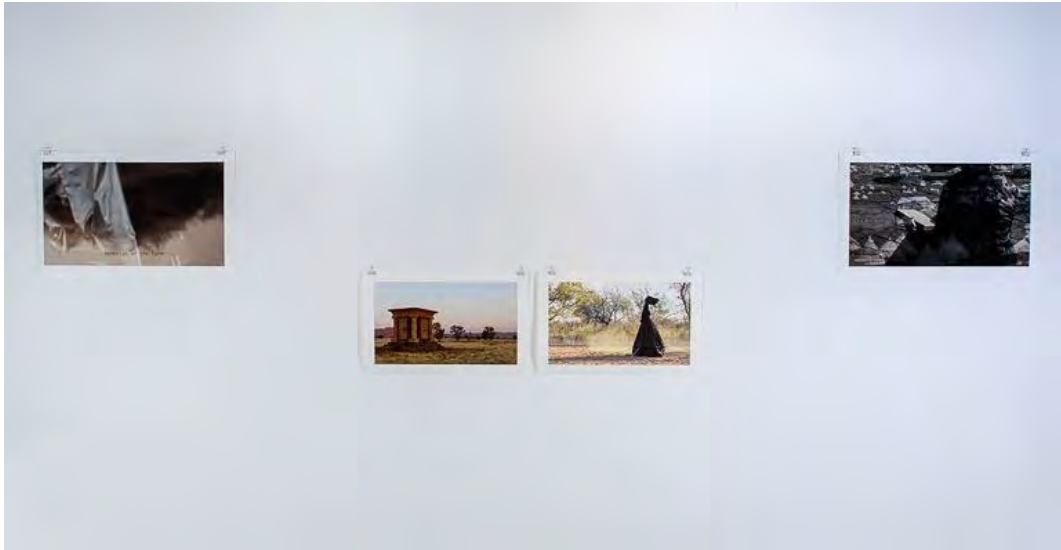
Figure 4.24, Antoinette Odendaal, Installation of *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Figure 4.25, Antoinette Odendaal, Monument (2020).

Figure 4.26, Antoinette Odendaal, *Monument* (2020).

The centre right image (fig 4.25) is one of the *in-situ* photographs of the dress installation I took in the late afternoon when considering different ways to transform the dress. Here, the arms of the dress are tied behind the back evoking the powerlessness of the mothers in the camps, as inevitably, many children succumbed to disease and malnutrition. The centre left image (fig 4.26), one of my photographs taken on a research trip, shows a monument[37] erected by the British after the war to commemorate the many who had died at the concentration camp in Bethulie in The Free State. The two photographs are of the same scale and are placed at the same height. This implies giving equal cultural status to both: to the intimacy of the dress created by my postmemory experience of imagining a mother in the SAW concentration camp, and to the anonymous post-war, public monument built to commemorate the real struggle and sacrifice of innocent civilians in the SAW.

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[37] This specific monument does not have a plaque to indicate why and by whom it was erected, but I was given that information by the curator of the Bethulie museum who accompanied me to the original site of the camp.

4.7   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I described the visual strategies that I used in my video artwork *Twyfelhoek* (2020) to create a simulation of the traumatic memories of the SAW that had been retold in my family. By considering the visual filmic strategies used by Siopis, Weberg, and Zack to represent grievous historic events that evoke the intolerable tensions of war, I experimented with different camera angles, props, landscapes, and varying digital effects to uncover the way postmemory can transfigure historical fact while acting as a stimulant for experiencing affect.

To achieve this, I used layering, opacity, keyframe motion, cropping, colour adjustments, cross-dissolving, and time manipulation during the digital editing process to simulate my personal imagining of women's suffering in situations of war conflict. In addition to this, I disrupted the traditional three-part narrative of storytelling to imply how memories change when they are retold from one generation to the next, as well as suggest the disruption and chaos caused when people lost their homes and possessions and were displaced to the camps.

Finally, family stories and heirlooms, photographs, and my viewing of both public monuments and the historic landscape of the SAW all intensified my postmemory imaginings, allowing me the ability to simulate the unknowable memories of a woman who had been incarcerated in a SAW concentration camp.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to see which visual and film strategies may be employed in video art to simulate traumatic memories from historic events. Furthermore, it was my intention to establish whether these simulations could act as universal affect, and if there is an overlap between collective and individual memory. My findings were that the motherly figure plays a significant role when traumatic memories are shared between generations. Although these memories are imagined differently within small family units, they are part of historical conflicts that involved a larger population. Therefore, the overlap between individual and collective memory makes it possible for video art simulating traumatic memory to serve as universal affect.

In this study I have researched and applied the visual and film strategies of camera angles, camera movement, creative landscape, personal imagination of memories, film props, rhythmic and temporal montage, metric montage, tonal montage, overtonal montage and intellectual montage. I have also established that the three-part narrative structure could be revised and rearranged to create a symbolic envisioning of memories that are shared from one generation to the next. These types of memories also become vague, mythical, and faded as years go by.

I have applied my theoretical and visual research of montage and narrative to the analysis of three other video artworks from artists who also deal with this topic. These are the video works of Penny Siopis, Anders Weberg, and Maya Zack. Weberg mostly relied on audio, crossfading, layering, extreme close-ups, and opacity as a tool for abstraction to symbolise war conflicts. Siopis relied on found film, written notes, and her own experienced memories of her grandmother's stories to suggest the intolerable tension of her grandmother's suffering when she lost both her home and a child during the Greco-Turkish war.

Because Zack was denied access to her grandmother's childhood home, she was compelled to recreate an apartment in which to film her video work, to render the traumatic situation of its inhabitant, a Jewish mother pre-Holocaust and the agonising tension she is experiencing because of her family's absence. To create this affect, Zack relied on audio, rhythmic, and intellectual montage.

Being influenced by these artists, and with my knowledge of Soviet montage theory, film strategies, and narrative, as explained in Chapter Two, I created a video artwork with moving images, still shots, an audio soundtrack, and text subtitles to simulate the traumatic memories of the SAW concentration camps. These simulations are influenced by the stories that have been shared between matrilineal generations in our family. As few family heirlooms or photographs exist, I had to rely on research trips to public monuments, museums, and the landscape to fill the gaps of my imaginings around both the conditions in the SAW concentration camps, and the women and children who experienced the suffering in these camps.

I used a performer wearing a black dress that I created, and photographs of concentration camp tents sourced from photographic compilations of the SAW. These were layered using cross-montage to show that the mother and the tent both stand for shelter, safety, and comfort. Furthermore, the cross-fades and layers created abstract imagery that symbolise the intolerable tension that the mother had to endure that have been experienced by later generations as unimaginable and unthinkable memories. The abstract images created by the cross-montage strategy express the mystery and myth of memories that become faded when told from one generation to the next. These become images of obscurity rather than clarity (Miller 1997:39).

5.1 CORE DISCUSSIONS

As stated above, the core discussion of this dissertation was to establish which visual strategies in film language are applied to video art to simulate traumatic memories; and more specifically, which visual strategies can be applied to simulate the trauma of the SAW concentration camps, as these memories are part of my identity as a white, female Afrikaner.

I began by investigating the workings of traumatic memory and how descendants of survivors connect to their precedents' recollection of traumatic memories by engaging with various supplemental genres, including the memories shared by my mother, published literature and poetry, and undertaking research trips to public monuments and museums. Since these genres can become institutionalised by ideology and feminist cultural memory, it was necessary to consider how such memories can be transmuted into myth and artificial memory.

My research was strongly influenced by Baudrillard's theory of simulation and artificial memory to prove the simulative qualities of traumatic memory in video art; and it pivoted on certain film strategies based on Soviet film theory and language to clarify which visual strategies in narrative and montage generate the simulation of traumatic memory. Since montage can become a vehicle for simulation, I applied rhythmic, metric, tonal, overtonal, and intellectual montage to convey the idea of traumatic memory, both conceptually and metaphorically. I explored various avenues of narrative and their creative application in video art as metaphors for remembering the past. I also considered the theory of the artificial landscape to be symbolic of artificial memory.

I applied the above theories both in the analysis of three video artworks that rely on digital technology to simulate traumatic memory, and for the creation of and theoretical explanation for my own video artwork.

5.2   NEW INSIGHTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate how personal and shared memories of trauma could be simulated in video art using certain visual strategies based on film language. In this study, research was led by practice which informed the thinking and writing of the study. Essentially practical research was combined with literal theory to advance knowledge in the practice of making art and to advance knowledge within visual art practice.

The theoretical insights in this study included traumatic memory as posited by Baudrillard's theory of simulation and film language from the Soviet Film School, especially Eisenstein's theory. As the study is concerned with traumatic memory, I also investigated the literary works of Hirsch, Hoffman, Caruth and other researchers who deal with memory, postmemory, and new media in art. This led to a novel analysis of considering how traumatic memory is simulated using visual strategies like montage and narrative in the video works *My Lovely Day,* (1997) by Penny Siopis, *Mamo/Mother: Senses and memories of motherhood evoked by visiting Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in Poland July 2008* (2008) by Anders Weberg, and *Mother Economy* (2007) by Maya Zack.

These same theories were applied to my video artwork *Twyfelhoek* (2020), regarding insight into the research question. As mentioned, my own video work comprised, in part, of personal discussions with my mother, and reference to written family heirlooms. However, acknowledging that my own constructed memories have been influenced by ideology and daily life experiences, I also

applied secondary sources to serve as a supplementary genre in constructing a video work that simulates traumatic memory.

I designed and sewed a garment for the performer to wear in the video and collected various props to construct a set that is representative of a small concentration camp tent. These artefacts had significant metaphoric meaning relating to our family's traumatic memories and postmemory. A symbolic artificial landscape was created in the video by applying footage shot at various locations - including memorial graveyards, monuments, and museums - to acknowledge the notion of artificial memory and simulation. Through the digital editing process, flashback and flashforward were integrated into the narrative structure to represent memories that are retold, and the now. I also used cross-fade, dissolve, opacity, and experimented with various methods of montage and succeeding shots to simulate the artificialness and myths relating to memory. Even though the works that I have analysed in my discussion served as a rich source of inspiration, my own creative work has produced new ways of producing the simulation of traumatic memory.

5.3   SUCCESSES AND LIMITATIONS

Success was achieved in this study through posing the research question that led to my focused investigation around how traumatic memories are simulated in video art using film language. I have found that memory studies is a vast and popular topic that is still being debated. Thus, great potential exists to explore this topic further in new media art practice.

Making an independent film solely relying on my own resources proved challenging, as many difficulties presented themselves. In recent video art productions that I have witnessed, artists make use of a professional production crew who assist them with the creation of technically beautiful and successful

works. One example of such is the art video *In Vitro* (2019) by Larissa Sansoure, who exhibited at the Danish Pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale. A number of successful avant-garde and independent film makers have built up teams of professional actors, production managers, producers, and editors. In the future, I would like to work in collaboration with other experienced filmmakers to benefit from their professional knowledge and expertise.

5.4   POTENTIAL NEW AVENUES OF RESEARCH

My mother has a large collection of photographs, slides, and film that have the potential to be converted into a memory work that would constitute a family autobiography. Most of these photographs and recordings were taken by my father and grandfather before I was born. They have been packed away for a number of years. I was intrigued when I viewed them and, just as Siopis experienced emotions of heightened sensitivity when she saw certain images from her mother's video recordings for the first time, I was intensely moved on observing images of family members that I had never seen before.

A promising avenue for my own practice-led research would be to explore the creation of a new media artwork reflecting an autobiography of memories. Here, I could use found photographs and film, recordings of my mother's voice, as well as digital video recording tools to capture conversations between us around family memories. This research could include investigating the affect of melancholy when applying visual and audio family heirlooms to video art productions.

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Twyfelhoek

Antoinette Odendaal

CONTENTS

Cover: 1. Antoinette Odendaal, installation of *Twyfelhoek* (detail) (2020).

Above: 2. Antoinette Odendaal, installation of *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Twyfelhoek (2020) available at: https://vimeo.com/512824027

memories of the farm

INTRODUCTION

Twyvelhoek (2020) includes a gallery installation that consists of a video artwork also titled Twyvelhoek (2020), several printed video stills, photographs and a black dress that stands on a pedestal. The black dress is the same garment that is worn by the actress in the video. The gallery installation is part of the partial fulfilment for the Master of Visual Arts that is also accompanied with a dissertation titled Visual strategies in video art: the simulation of traumatic memories.

My work deals with the simulation of memories from traumatic history. The memories I explore in my work are understood as a form of postmemory - memories experienced by generations after, known as the 'hinge generation' (Hoffmann 2005:198), as theorised by Hirsch, Caruth and Young.

My artmaking is practice-led and is influenced by auto-ethnology   and informed by theory. Therefore, I continually engage with critical thinkers who have done extensive writing on film language, simulation, and traumatic memories. Deleuze's and Eisenstein's theories of cinema are applied in the analysis of Twyfelhoek (2020) to see to what extent film strategies like montage and narrative could contribute to simulating the unimaginable and unthinkable elements of grievous historic conflict. My proposition is that since traumatic

Left 3. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

4

memories from historic events are inaccessible as truth, an artist is not able to portray the pain of others factually. This idea is supported by the theories of Baudrillard and Sontag. However, the experience of listening to narratives of family and engaging with cultural sites does evoke a personal and emotional interpretation that reverberates with the past and finds an echo in ongoing human disasters.

The video works of Siopis, Weberg, and Zack analysed in this study are related to collective and individual memories evoked by the intolerable experiences of their predecessors. When I filmed and edited Twyfelhoek (2020), I was influenced by the visual techniques of the above artists to see which strategies would work best to simulate traumatic memories and evoke an affect of anxiety, tension, repulsion, shock, and stress. In my own video art, I experimented with montage, cross fading, narrative, camera angles, memory text, and creative landscapes which answered certain questions of this study. Although it has been established that such memories and the subsequent video work have no claim to 'truth' and can be described as simulated, I nevertheless aim to find which film techniques do simulate affect, war conflicts, the unimaginable, and the unthinkable reality of trauma.

My initial motivation for this study was the connection I felt with the
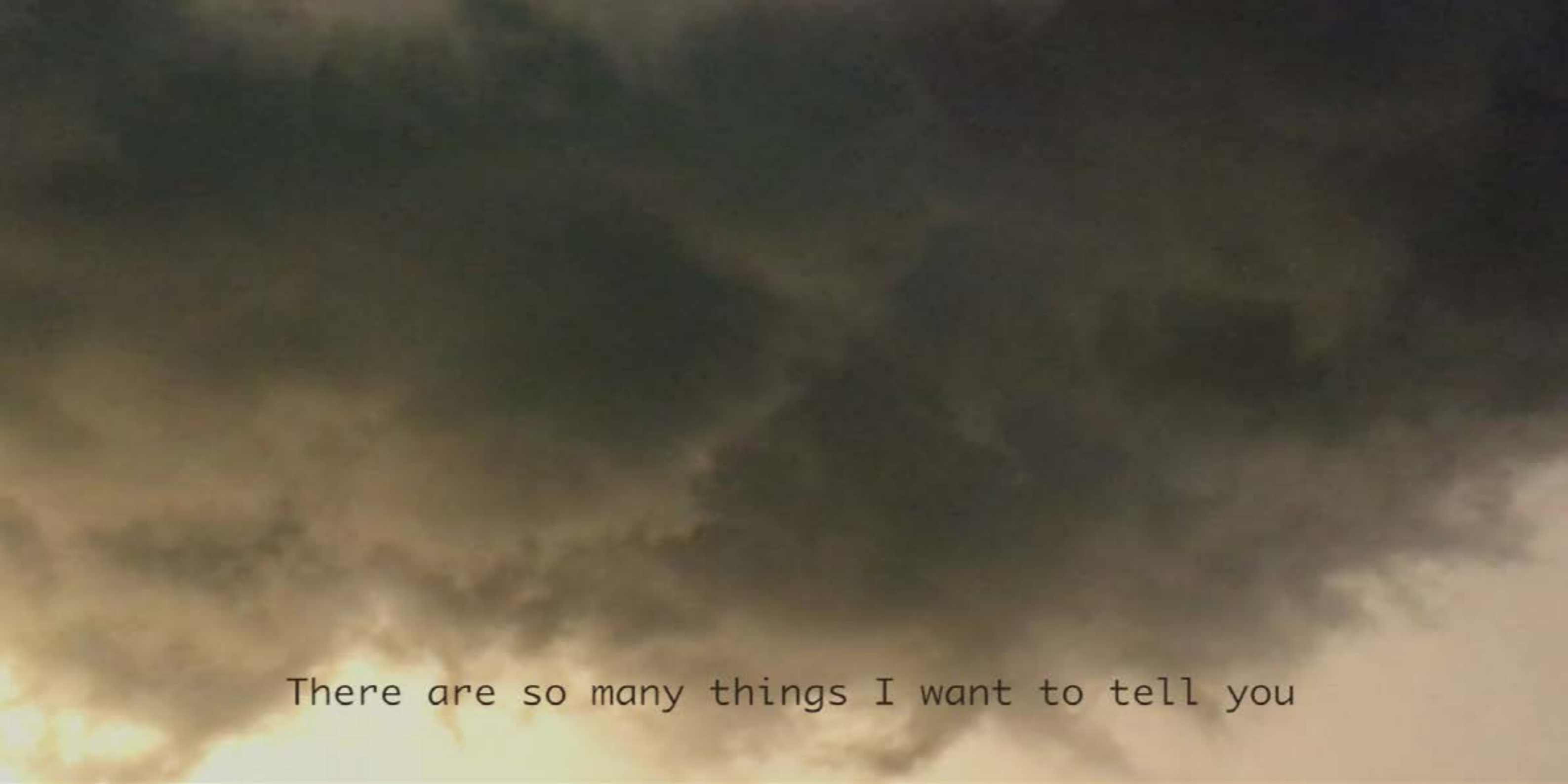
PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

stories that my mother had told me. We were always close. At the time that I started this study, I was living with her and saw her becoming older and more fragile. I was moved to try to capture the stories that were passed on between the generations of our family.

Often in the evenings, we would sit together in her living room paging through the black and white photo albums from her childhood. My mother grew up on the farm Twyfelhoek in the Free-State, hence the name of the video artwork. On the same farm there is a cave where the women and children would hide during the South African War (SAW) to avoid being taken to the infamous concentration camps. Her remembrances from the farm would often lead to her memories of the cave, as well as the testimonies about the war and the camps written in a family journal and in the family Bible. Therefore, the figure of the mother plays a central role in my work to convey how postmemory is carried forward between matrilineal generations.

Twyfelhoek (2020) represents a memory shared between the generations of small family units, but also comments on the collective remembering of grievous historic events that affected a larger South African population.

Following 4. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

There are so many things I want to tell you

I have never shown you these photo albums

5. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

6. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Furthermore, *Twyfelhoek* (2020) remarks on global collective memories of wartime violence that continues to be perpetrated against women and children.

I am not concerned with representing the factual narrative of the SAW. Instead, I use film strategies to convey the unbearable tensions of the women interned there who, on one hand had to be figures of strength, yet on the other, were helpless witnesses to their children's suffering or

death. I also attempt to articulate my own experience of imagining by interpreting family memories of the historic conflicts that have been passed down through generations.

In creating Twyfelhoek (2020), I acknowledge that descendants of survivors of traumatic historical events have only a mediated knowledge through relayed, repeated, or reported narratives (Caruth 2005:15).

7. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

8. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

VISUAL AND FILM STRATEGIES

In the second part of the narrative, establishes the setting, time, and place of the SAW. This part of the sequence also represents the climax of the narrative to simulate the mother's loss, anguish and feeling of displacement after she has been resettled to the concentration camp. In these scenes of the intimate, small space inside the tent, I included mostly close-up shots of a woman's hand, sewing machine, needle, scissors, and a small table.

The meaning of a close-up can dislocate and isolate an image from the objective world, and also emphasise tension and create anticipation between the close-up's content and that of the succeeding shots (Eisenstein in Jean Antoine-Dunne 2004:6).

A cinematic contrast between objects that are still part of her life versus family members who succumbed in the concentration camp is illustrated in the second part of the narrative. She unpacks a dainty, knitted doily and framed photograph, and places them on a table. The portrait that is cropped out of the frame symbolises the absent family members. There is a strong emphasis on the delicate patterns of the white doily.

Here, the cinematographic decision creates a strong motive of how the doily is still part of her life but that the people in the photograph have now merely become a distant memory. The doily then cross-montages over a family photo album which underlines her loss of and longing for family members and friends who are no longer part of her life.

I created an intellectual montage by placing the family photo album scene in the footage prior to where she is working on a sewing machine. Metaphorically this represents her healing process and how she deals with her mourning.

Looking down at her from a bird's eye view, a feeling is created of being present in her personal space.

A close-up shot tightly frames only the chest and hand of the woman at a ninety-degree angle where she is working at her sewing machine. We are drawn into her personal space but cannot see her face. Therefore, we are not able to read her emotions from a facial expression as with a conventional close-up shot.

10. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

11. Antoinette Odendaal,video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).
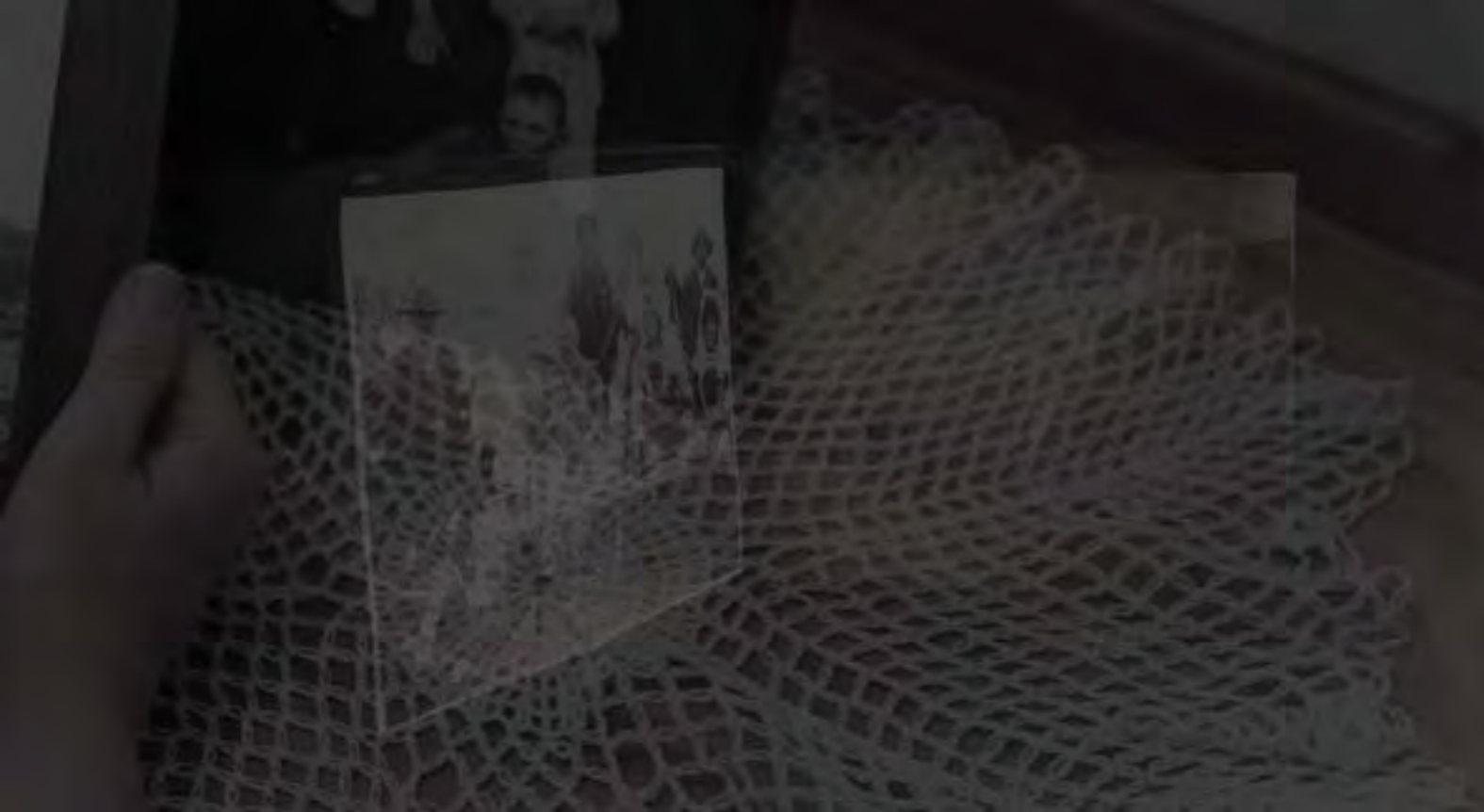
12. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

13. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

14. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

15. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

16. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

17. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Instead we are left to read emotion through interpreting other visual clues, such as sounds, composition, lighting, and mood.

Further, the screen that is split in two in this shot echoes the severity of the conflict of the war and the suffering of women in the camps. The stark verticality of the sewing machine as a man-made cast iron object, which seems heavy, rigid, and inflexible represents the violent masculinities of war. The needle penetrates the delicate, soft, white linen, which is an ambivalent symbol, expressive of not only creation but also destruction. In the chiaroscuro frame, the man-made object has an ominous presence above the gentle, feminine hand and white linen of the nurturing mother. This scene explores how gender difference is institutionalised (McClintock 1995:353), specifically within the context of the SAW, where it is the Boer men who are active in the political frontline, fighting the war. By contrast, the women were expected to have a spiritual, nurturing, and supportive role in the conflict (McClintock 1995:358).

At regular intervals during the sequence, I have purposely layered and cross-faded the wide shape of the dress worn by the woman with images from concentration camp tents. This strategy comments on the similarity between the mother and the tent that both provide shelter, warmth, and protection. This strategy does not attempt to be a mirror of real appearance, instead this type of simulation informs the notion of hyperreality (Baudrillard 1983:3). As such, the motherly figure symbolically becomes a beacon of strength, bu[1]t ironically is also tortured by the unavoidable and intolerable situation of helplessness. This technique evokes the tension experienced by the mother.

In the final act of the narrative, the diegetic and the non-diegetic text establish the aftermath of the war.

The sequence is portrayed in colour to be representative of the present and to indicate my recent visits to these specific memorial sites. The woman in the black dress is still present in these scenes to convey how memories become part of our identity. The fading evening light in the final scenes create a dramatic effect on the mood of the scene, contributing to the sombreness of traumatic memories. The lighting produces a tonal montage effect, where the video footage and the juxtaposed photographs have the same tone in lighting. The faded daylight also comments on the fading of trans-generational memories.

_____
1   A story includes a setting or place, characters, sounds and events, collectively known as the diegetic. In a non-diegetic narrative the film has a voice over or text.

I have never shown you

Previous 18. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

19. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

20. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

21. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

22. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

PRIVILEGED MOMENTS AND IDEAL POSES

When analysing Eisenstein's films, Deleuze noted that in the sequence there are static moments that create the illusion of successive movement, and that for every still image a past memory is created as well as an expected aftermath. In the montage, certain unplanned nonrepresentational images were created. I used layering, varying opacity and cross dissolves as tools for abstraction to symbolise war conflicts. These layers and cross-fades brought about abstract images that became privileged moments and ideal poses in Twyfelhoek (2020), which symbolise the formlessness of terror and the uncertainty that women experience from war conflicts.

Further to this, these pivotal moments also relate to how traumatic memories can become simulated through imagination. Through these privileged moments, which are influenced by Eisenstein's montage technique, in my own video the intended effect is to disrupt the time-space span by creating images in motion to portray a sense of the unrepresentable in traumatic experiences. Moreover, as a video art technique, I used cross-over montages where one scene merges into the next to simulate the incomprehensibility of the concentration camps and traumatic memory.

In the final part of the sequence, a single camera shot portrays the woman walking towards the camera lens (fig 4.19). In the following shot of the montage (fig 4.18), I used digital techniques and created a simulation where the woman disappears from the frame, leaving an empty void with only decaying leaves blowing in a whirling wind. The special effects, the dissolving woman, the animated leaves, and the wind create metaphors for the fragmentation and eventual disappearance of individual stories in the meta-narrative of history. This technique also makes evident the simulated nature of my personal portrayal of events and becomes metaphoric for the way I acknowledge the incomprehensibility of the horror of being detained in a camp where death was inevitable. This technique also shows how film strategies like crossfading can symbolise war conflicts.

Traumatic memories from catastrophic historic events - like the internments in the SAW concentration camps - are too unthinkable to imagine or portray.

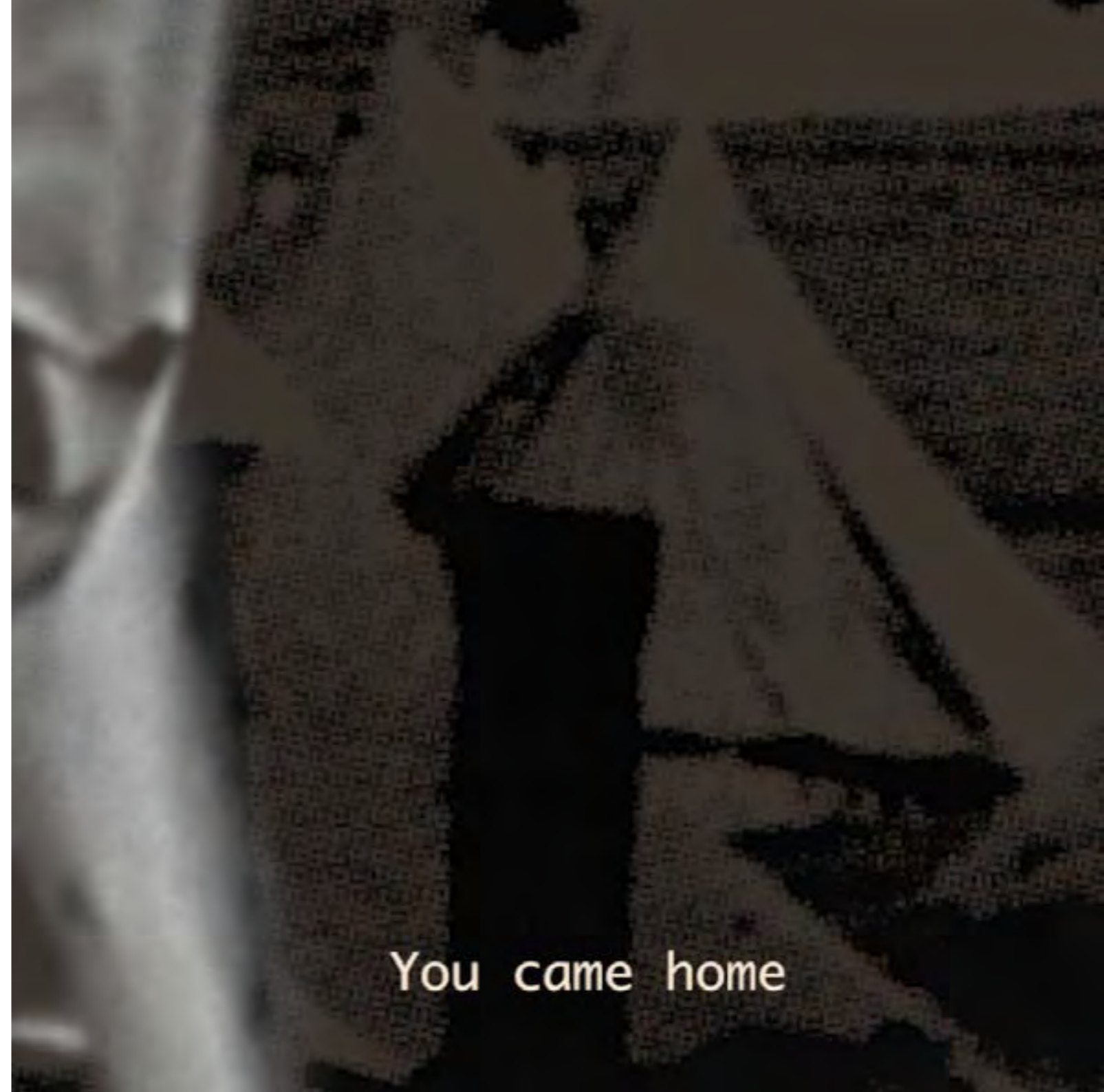23. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

24. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

25. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Right 26. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

You came home

27. Antoinette Odendaal,
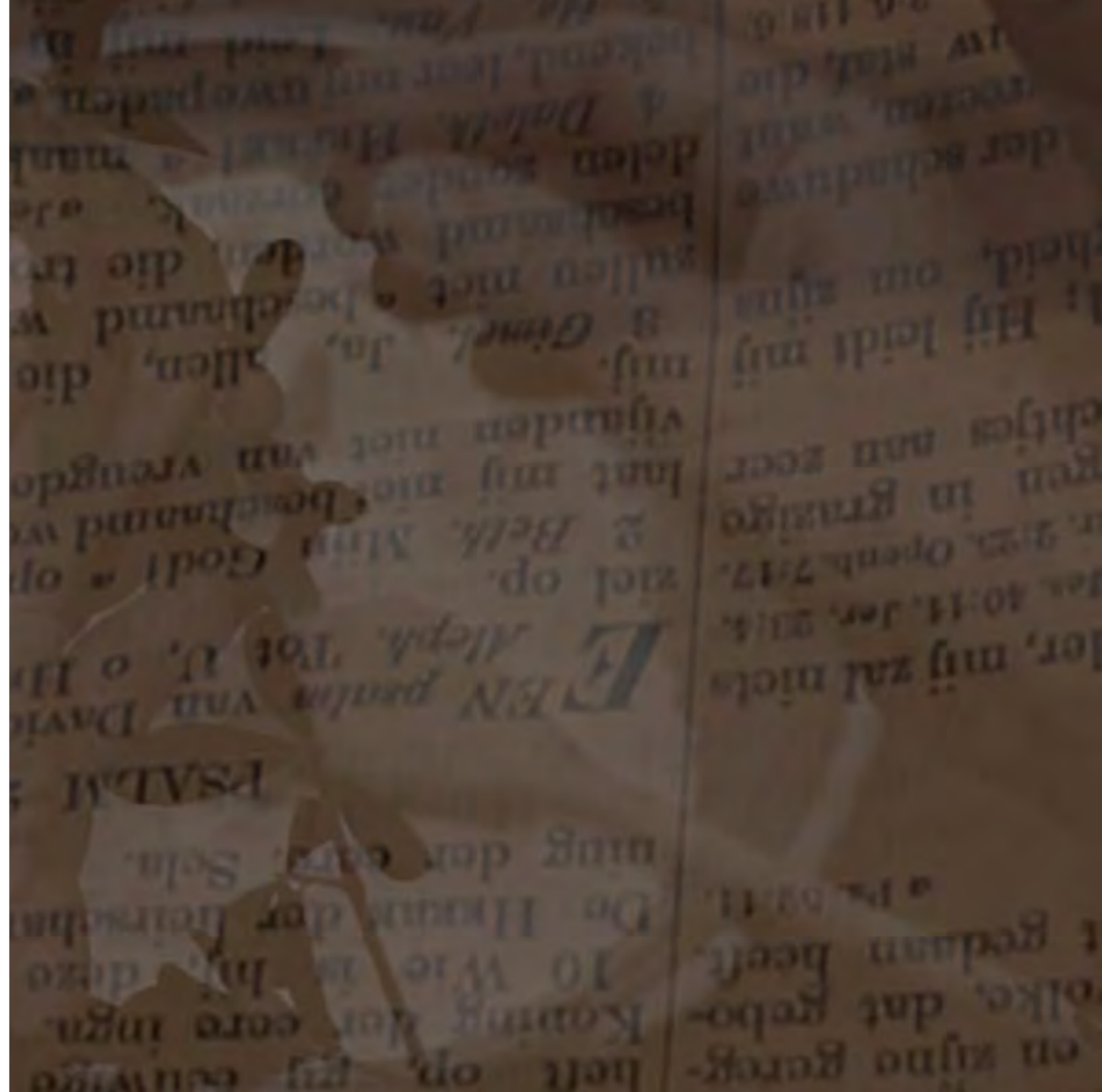video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

28. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

29. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Right 30. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

31. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

I have never shown you

32. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

33. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

34. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

35. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Right 36. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

memories of the farm

In Twyfelhoek (2020), I use layering and cross-montage strategies to create an aesthetic representation to symbolise such memories, as the images generated this way become indiscernible, and thus more able to convey the unrepresentable. The images created by the cross-montage strategy become abstract images of obscurity rather than clarity (Miller 1997:39). Montage is used here to express the idea of the mystery and myth of memories that become faded as they are told from one generation to the next.

When Bergson (in Bogue 2003:3) theorises that the still frame has a past, present, future, and origin, so postmemory could have similar characteristics: the war conflict is the origin of postmemory and the lived experiences of the victims. During this chain of retelling memories of traumatic events, we all reimagine and remember in different ways as we cannot experience the pain and turmoil of others (Sontag 2013:70-71) but can only simulate the traumatic memories to evoke the intolerable tensions of war.

I experimented with different camera angles, props, landscapes, and varying digital effects to reveal how postmemory can transfigure historical fact, but also act as universal affect.

Following 37. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Previous 38. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

39. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

40. Antoinette Odendaal, video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

41. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

42. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

43. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Right 44. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

Following 45. Antoinette Odendaal,
video still *Twyfelhoek* (2020).

GALLERY INSTALLATION

The gallery space where the works are installed is wide and bare, mimicking the wide-open spaces of the former camps, and emphasising a sense of desolation. The camps were without the necessary resources like sustainable shelter, food, and medicine; and the women and children were also exposed to extreme weather conditions.

The black mourning dress worn in the video is exhibited here as a sculptural installation. Its manner of presentation suggests a garment displayed in a museum, which echoes the idea that artefacts symbolise memory, commemoration, and remembering (Kuhn 2010:1). In this way, memories are made tangible through their association with objects. I handmade the dress, and that process refers to my own 'memory-work', how my postmemory was constructed through my personal interpretation of my mother's stories and my imagining the grievous history.

After much experimentation, in the final installation space the dress has been raised on a pedestal like a monument. Although in the video the woman in the black dress represents an individual in a specific setting that the viewer may relate to one-on-one, here, as a monument, the dress exemplifies the universal suffering of all mothers who must endure unimaginable societal conflicts throughout time. The bottom of the skirt refers to a camp tent and is held fast to the floor with ropes and rocks.This sets up an opposition as, although the elevation of the dress represents the notion of the mother as a column of strength to the weak and suffering, simultaneously she stands bowed being also trapped and helpless in an unbearable situation. In my imaginings, this installed dress evokes the intolerable tension that a mother would experience in a SAW concentration camp.

The video is projected behind the dress (fig 4.21 – 4.22) and is accompanied by an audio installation (fig 4.22). I have also installed still images from the video (fig 4.23) as photographic works. These comprise cross fades that were used in the montage of Twyfelhoek (2020) as a tool for abstraction to emphasise the unimaginable. The linear placement of the digital prints is interrupted by random breaks and mispositioning (fig 4.24), representing the in-between moments that symbolise the disruption, violence and chaos embodied by war conflicts

The centre right image (fig 4.25) is one of the in-situ photographs of the dress installation I took in the late afternoon when considering different ways to transform the dress. Here, the arms of the dress are tied behind the back evoking

the powerlessness of the mothers
in the camps, as inevitably, many
children succumbed to disease and
malnutrition. The centre left image
(fig 4.26), one of my photographs
taken on a research trip, shows a
monument erected by the British
after the war to commemorate the many
who had died at the concentration
camp in Bethulie in The Free State.
The two photographs are of the same
scale and are placed at the same
height. This implies giving equal
cultural status to both: to the
intimacy of the dress created by my
postmemory experience of imagining
a mother in the SAW concentration
camp, and to the anonymous post-war,
public monument built to commemorate
the real struggle and sacrifice of
innocent civilians in the SAW.

46. Antoinette Odendaal, installation
Twyfelhoek (2020).

VISUAL RESEARCH

As victims of the war, most of the possessions and heirlooms of our family were lost during the scorched earth policy. The lack of these family items made me rely on research and my own imagination for my memory creation of the camps. In a similar manner to the artists on whose video works I conducted my research, I was moved to visit monuments, museums, and graveyards as I wanted to see the remaining evidence of the tragic history of the concentration camps. These 'pilgrimages' would further contribute to how I imagine the suffering and turmoil of the women and children in the camps. I read novels that were written of the SAW; and studied photographic compilations, investigating the photographs in detail. These inspirations and sources of memory were structured and re-constructed in my artmaking process, resulting in the video artwork Twyfelhoek (2020).

I directed and filmed the work using a performer wearing a recreated garment that I conceived of - a black costume that resembles conventional Voortrekker attire, yet is similar to the distinctive black dress that was worn during a widow's mourning period in the Victorian era. The bonnet is a traditional accessory known in Afrikaner culture as the Kappie.

In addition to creating Twyfelhoek (2020) I experimented with other formats and mediums, using the video footage and the black dress as starting points. This led to a range of outcomes. One was a sculptural installation using a mannequin to pose and restructure the costume worn by the performer in Twyfelhoek (2020).

Afterwards I created a series of in situ installations of the dress at different times of day and at different locations. I photographed these in the late afternoon and in early morning at sunrise and decided that the late afternoon light created the most suitable atmosphere for the subject of traumatic memories.

50. Antoinette Odendaal, Antoinette Odendaal, *Lijkwade* (2020).

Finally, the photographs and dress were installed at the UNISA art gallery with the video work (2020, 2021). A digital print from one of the photographs was exhibited with the rest of the installation.

51. Antoinette Odendaal
Lijkwade (Series of 8)
(2020).

52. Antoinette Odendaal
Lijkwade (Series of 8)
(2020).

53. Antoinette Odendaal
Lijkwade (Series of 8)
(2020).

54. Antoinette Odendaal,
Monument (2020).

55. Antoinette Odendaal,
Monument (2020).

56. Antoinette Odendaal,
Monument (2020).

57. Antoinette Odendaal,
Monument (2020).

66

58. Antoinette Odendaal, *Verlate* (2020).

59. Antoinette Odendaal, *Verlate* (2020).

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List Of Illustrations

1.   Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (detail) (2020) mixed media installation
Photograph by Vaughan Swanlund

2.   Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020) Mixed media installation
Photograph by Vaughan Swanlund

3 - 44. Antoinette Odendaal,video still from *Twyfelhoek* (2020)
HDV 1080p, widescreen, 10 minutes 15 seconds
Filmed and edited by Antoinette Odendaal

46.   Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020) Mixed media installation
Photograph by Vaughan Swanlund

47.   Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020) Mixed media installation
Photograph by Vaughan Swanlund

48.   Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (2020) Mixed media installation
Photograph by Vaughan Swanlund

49.   Antoinette Odendaal, *Monument* (2020).
Photographed by Antoinette Odendaal

50 - 57. Antoinette Odendaal, *Lijkwade (Series of 8)* (2020).
Photographed by Antoinette Odendaal

58 - 59. Antoinette Odendaal, *Verlate (series of 6)* (2020).
Photographed by Antoinette Odendaal

60.   Antoinette Odendaal, *Tot-stof* (2020).
Photograph by Nico Kruger

61.   Antoinette Odendaal, *Twyfelhoek* (series) (2020)
Photograph by Vaughan Swanlund

Acknowledgments

Curriculum Vitae

Antoinette was born in Pretoria on the 6th of August 1981. From 1995 to 1999 she attended school at High School Overkruin where she received schooling in fine art and art history. In 2014 she completed a degree in multimedia and digital visual arts at the University of South Africa and received a distinction for visual arts and communication. In 2015 she completed a BTech degree in Graphic Design at the Tshwane University of Technology.

After her studies she was employed as a graphic and multimedia designer and in 2017 she became a contract lecturer in graphic design at the Pearson Institute of Higher Education. In 2018 she got the opportunity to curate the Adriaan Boshoff museum at the Orient Boutique Hotel from planning to inception. The permanent exhibition consists of 140 works of art and each work was analysed and catalogued. In 2019 she returned to lecturing which is her true passion, and currently works at three different brands of the Independent Institute of Education (Varsity College, Rosebank College and Vega School). She teaches Video and Editing, Web Development and other graphic design modules. She also has her own company,

Dreamcatcher Digital Art, where she does social media and digital marketing management and website development.

After completion of her Master of Visual Arts, she plans to exhibit at numerous group exhibitions. She also plans to further develop other craft skills in visual art, including drawing, painting and sculpture.

Previous 60. Antoinette Odendaal, *Tot-stof* (2020).

Back cover 61. Antoinette Odendaal, installation of *Twyfelhoek* (detail) (2020).