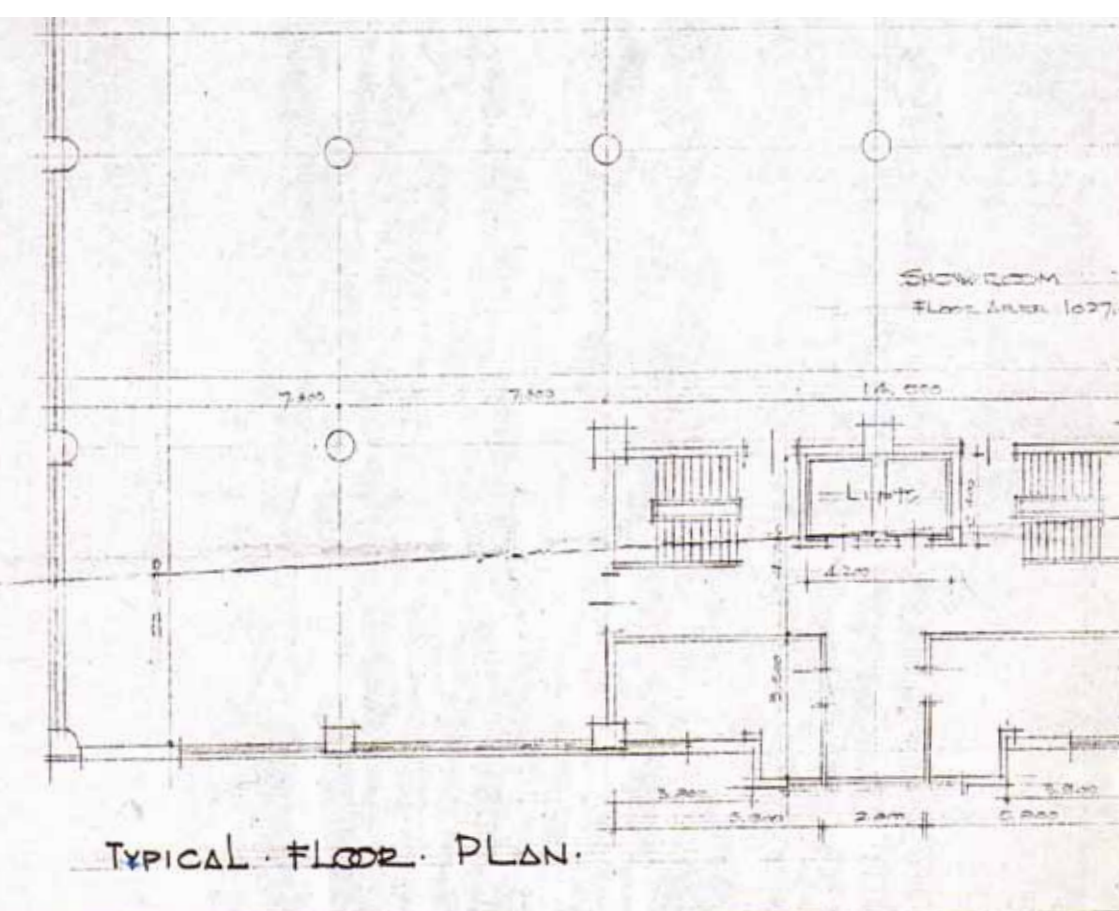
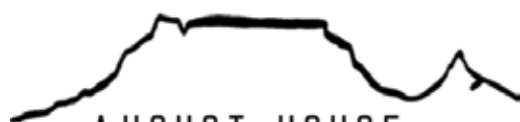


August Portals

AUGUST 2021 META FOUNDATION SCOTT ERIC WILLIAMS





STING BUILDING ON STANDS 17.18.19.20.21. DOOR
FOR AUGUST PROPERTIES (PTY) LTD.



AUGUST HOUSE
& CAPE TOWN
COLLAB

a cultural exchange

 Restaurants

 Petrol

 Groceries



In the early stages of the commission for this zine I felt it was important to read Kim Gurney's book, "August House is Dead, Long Live August House!" I think of myself as a capable Googler but there wasn't much archival material online about August House. In fact, I had to use DuckDuckGo to find the book.

Gurney's book became my go to – not just because of my love affair with the archive as a departure point for artistic output and not just because I'm a sucker for the crossover between art and urbanism but... On page 7 Gurney and I meet at a shared metaphor.

A light bulb switches on above my head as she writes, "The studios are portals to that invisible and unspeakable domain of fluxes, intensities and becoming". My own fascination with portals began in my childhood where a friend and I would use, "open up a portal on them" as the superlative form of "opening up a can of whoop-ass". The fascination never ended and I remain an avid Sci-Fi fan. This fascination culminated (in some ways) in the PORTALS_ exhibition at the

Gallery University of Stellenbosch in 2019 on a Mellon Fellowship.

The PORTALS_ exhibition combined the media of wheatpaste, woven shoelace sculpture, performance, zine and video. The exhibition imagined a scenario where the power to insert portals into public space resides in the hands of someone as lowly as a municipal worker or manual labourer. At its heart it was a futurist and urbanist experiment in its use an afrospeculative scenario to explore possibilities of equitable access to public space by those who access the cities as predominantly cheap labour.

Thus, there was something quite organic about deciding to draw from Kim Gurney's research even though I had no idea that her book on this Johannesburg atelier would speak to me like it did. I originally heard Premesh Lalu introduce the book at its launch and I was struck by his parallel between August House and the building from the movie, "The Yacoubian Building". The poetry with which Lalu developed this comparison left such an impression on me that I trawled the internet looking for a pirate copy of the movie.

Found, watched, don't task for a copy. Gurney's writing on page 6 makes me feel as if we are sitting at a table together, drinking cappuccinos somewhere and she is reading my mind.

It says, "The floor selection buttons keep to the architectural logic of the building: B-G-1-2-3-4. The numbering above the lintel, however, obeys no such rules. It runs all the way to 14. An extra ten imaginary floors denote the building's mysterious dimensions." This paragraph gave me a fitting visual cue. Just like *Lulu* – I feel that there was an equally cinematic and urbanist clue that would lead me in putting together a zine about August House.

The movie, "Being John Malkovich", employs a similarly absurd concept of hidden floor number 7½. Actress Octavia Spencer appears only once in the movie to stop an elevator in the Merton Flemmer building abruptly and pry open the doors of the elevator between floor 7 and 8. John Cusack's character then has to clamber out of the gap in the doors to his low-paying job interview on this obscure floor. Later in the movie

Cusack discovers a portal into the body of Hollywood actor John Malkovich behind a filing cabinet situated in offices on this floor. This portal grants temporary access into Malkovich's body in an "in-body/"out of body" sort of experience where one is a different version of oneself/Malkovich and once one has exited the Malkovich portal one is forever changed.

The mood of the movie and the use of this particular portal is perhaps in keeping with the jarring contrasts between the city of Johannesburg outside the studio and the environment inside – something which many of the resident artists of August House bring up in their interviews with Gurney. I had to put the book down for a while after reading Bié Venter's interview. If you're going to pick up the book there is a paragraph or two that is so candid in its recounting of violence that it could be triggering.

I felt that Gurney's interviews were a way of foregrounding the artists who occupy space in the building and capture their thoughts on navigating the city as artist. This navigation has been dramatically reconfigured between

2020 and 2021. On 3 April 2020, The Financial Times posted an article which alludes to this recartography of cities.

The article written by Arundhati Roy was titled 'The pandemic is a portal'.

Besides the most immediate rerouting of our lives in the form of lockdowns which have forced most of us to stay home there is another redirection which has been aggravated by the pandemic. The pandemic had such a marked effect on people's livelihoods and amplified inequalities that there was spike in protests and civil unrest.

One can easily recall the USA protests for racial justice which culminated (in one way at least) in the co-naming of Centre Street in Lower Manhattan to Black Lives Matter Boulevard. In September/October 2020 Nigeria the End SARS protests reached a climax forcing Nigerian authorities to disband the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) which had engaged in brutal crimes often perpetrated in / as an extension of illegal road blocks. More recently, (and without

discounting any other protests which happened during this period) on 12 July 2021 mass riots accompanied by the looting of, shopping malls and other business property, broke out in Johannesburg and Kwazulu Natal. Unrest escalated with the destruction of city infrastructure such as blockading of highways and major arterial routes such as the N2 and the N3. At the height of these riots Taxi drivers blockaded some roads to curtail the looting. In turn, residents of some areas set up their own roadblocks in fears that their properties would follow as plunder. At the same time the Western Cape experiences a rash of taxi violence which takes the lives of just under 80 Capetonians (dated 16 July 2021). Thousands of Cape Town citizens who are dependent on road transport to get to work are left destitute in its wake. As Arundhati Roy puts it in her article, "deep distress was growing long before this tragedy occurred."

The point of regurgitating these events is not to rehash any media driven sensationalism. Instead, the concept of the portal seems apt when we consider the absolute absurdity of

reality and the rerouting which has occurred while we are waiting for a change of circumstances. There are...

re-routings in our physical interactions with people, reroutings in our drinking habits, reroutings of our online routines, reroutings of policies which govern our lives, reroutings of the physical road and rail for the daily commutes of regular, working South Africans.


This is not a new “normal”. These are incredibly abnormal/critical times and they are very hard to deal with. “Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to “normality”, trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists.” Roy seems to take on an encouraging tone when she says that, “Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.” She doesn’t venture an answer to what that other side might look like either. It’s true – everyone feels like there’s a tipping point before

some major climax. We’re in that place/state academics love to refer to as liminality. We are collectively holding our breath. Waiting to exhale – as it were. As one of my friends put it recently, “This is a nightmare and we’re all waiting to wake up”. Who knows what’s on the other side of this mess.

At the beginning of the pandemic one journalist decided to list the most useless careers during a pandemic. Needless to say, the arts ranked high on the list. As an artist I felt the need to reassess my usefulness for about a week after reading that article. Fortunately, Roy’s article hints at the role artists need to play without calling on us explicitly. “We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world.”

It’s at this crossroads where we rejoin the current cohort of artists associated with August House in their 2021 Cape Town collaboration. Artists are usually at the forefront of imagining



A close-up photograph of a hand reaching towards a wooden box. The hand is positioned at the top of the frame, with fingers slightly curled. The wooden box is made of light-colored wood and has a lid that is partially open, revealing its interior. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

My artworks are portals to radical
trans-cultural
- gender
- national } FLUIDITY

My artist studio is a portal
to the antechamber of a
trans-cultural
- gender
- national } reliability



Message

Add-Ins



Reply



Reply to All



Forward

Respond



Delete



Move to Folder



Create Rule



Other Actions

Actions



Block Sender



Safe Lists

Not Junk

Junk E-mail



Follow Up



Mark as Unread

Options



More options

Click here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of some pictures from this message.

From: ThalentE Khomo [thalentekhomo@gmail.com]

To: Scott Eric Williams

Cc:

Subject: Re: Reminder - August House Zine content



Message



TH2_6503.jpg (4 MB)



TH2_6503.vjpg.jpg (10 MB)

Hello Scott,

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS:

1. My work introduces people to different worlds which I like umhlaba wakamhlaba a world
2. my artist studios where my work comes alive and i recreate the ideas that are given to me

Thank you



thalente test shoot 021101.jpg



lucky.jpg



Find
related "
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tures in this message.

d within worlds.
by the source.



I BELIEVE THAT ARTIST LIVE IN THE FUTURE.
WE ARE TIMETRAVELERS. WE PULL IDEAS
AND IMAGES FROM ANOTHER TIME WHICH
IN OUR PRESENT TIME ARE PERCEIVED AS
FUTURISTIC OR NEW.





MY STUDIO IS MY TIME MACHINE BY
WHICH I ~~ACCESS~~ ACCESS MY IDEAS
FROM THE FUTURE.

new possibilities of survival and rebirth in disruptive ways. Artists have long been potent leaders in non-conformity. They've enacted resistance, rebellion, and disruption to normative and exploitative systems. Artists have control over the futures they choose to imagine.

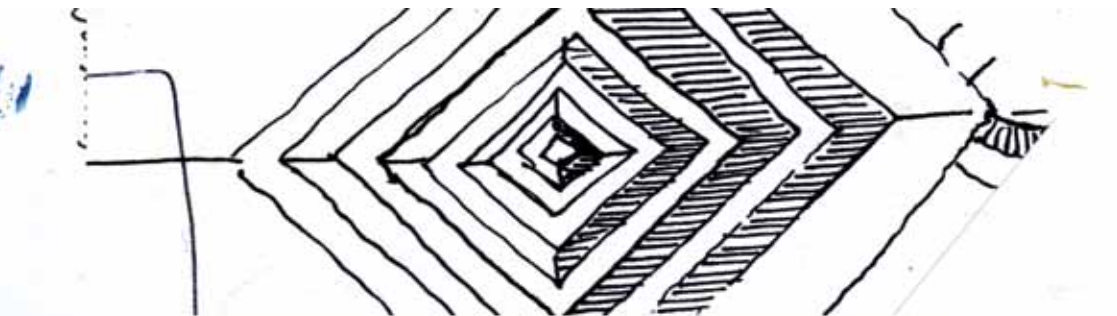
So, it seemed a fitting idea to present a glimpse of how these particular artists are doing that - how they are capturing the transition between places and states. I've decided, just like Kim Gurney, to foreground the artists at August House as much as possible in this zine. To this end, I've asked each of the willing participants 2 questions: "How are your artworks a portal?" "How is your studio a portal?" I've juxtaposed their responses with their artworks. In some instances I've inserted them into their artworks. I've put other alongside their works in ways that might echo postures and patterns. In some instances, the artworks did that on their own.

Some of the contributing artists speak of navigating urban spaces through their work; others among them consider the spiritual plane. Artists have always treated the

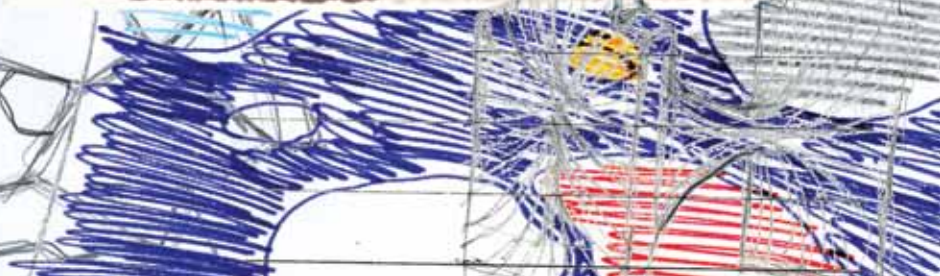
atelier, the studio as a space for testing ideas. This space of experimentation is one of tension, wrestling, uncertainty. Precarity and instability has been the artist's ever present companion and life partner.

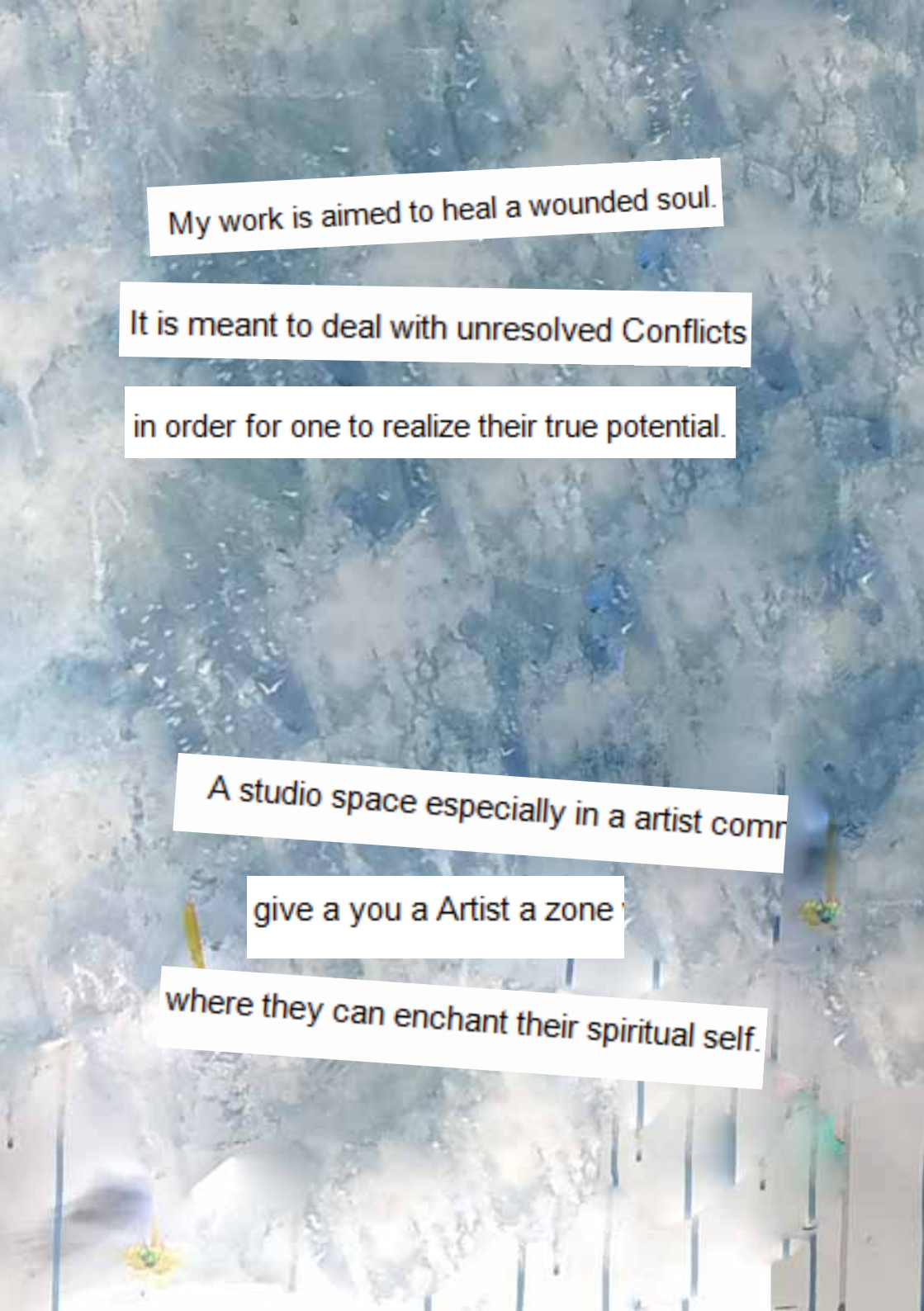
And so...in light of this current collective precarity...and artists' prior experiences... perhaps artists have a role after all... in this in between space... in dreaming, hoping and projecting along with everyone else about what comes next and the versions of ourselves we are beyond this moment in time.

Scott Eric Williams, 2021



LEVER DU SOLEIL
Hôtel des Cinémas, Menton





My work is aimed to heal a wounded soul.

It is meant to deal with unresolved Conflicts

in order for one to realize their true potential.

A studio space especially in a artist comm

give a you a Artist a zone

where they can enchant their spiritual self.



Benjamin
2008





A quick google search describes a portal as doorway / gate or other entrance that is a large and imposing one.

I feel that that's my intention with my work, to create a doorway / gateway that is imaginary, one that engages with the viewer of an - other space, imposing on our ideas of reality and space.





I feel that because I'm engaging with a concept of the void, an notion that is vast and at times vague, there feels to be potential to engage with an array of ideas and concepts all linked together, all culminating in a rabbit hole of concepts. In that sense, I feel my studio, or rather studio practice is a portal.

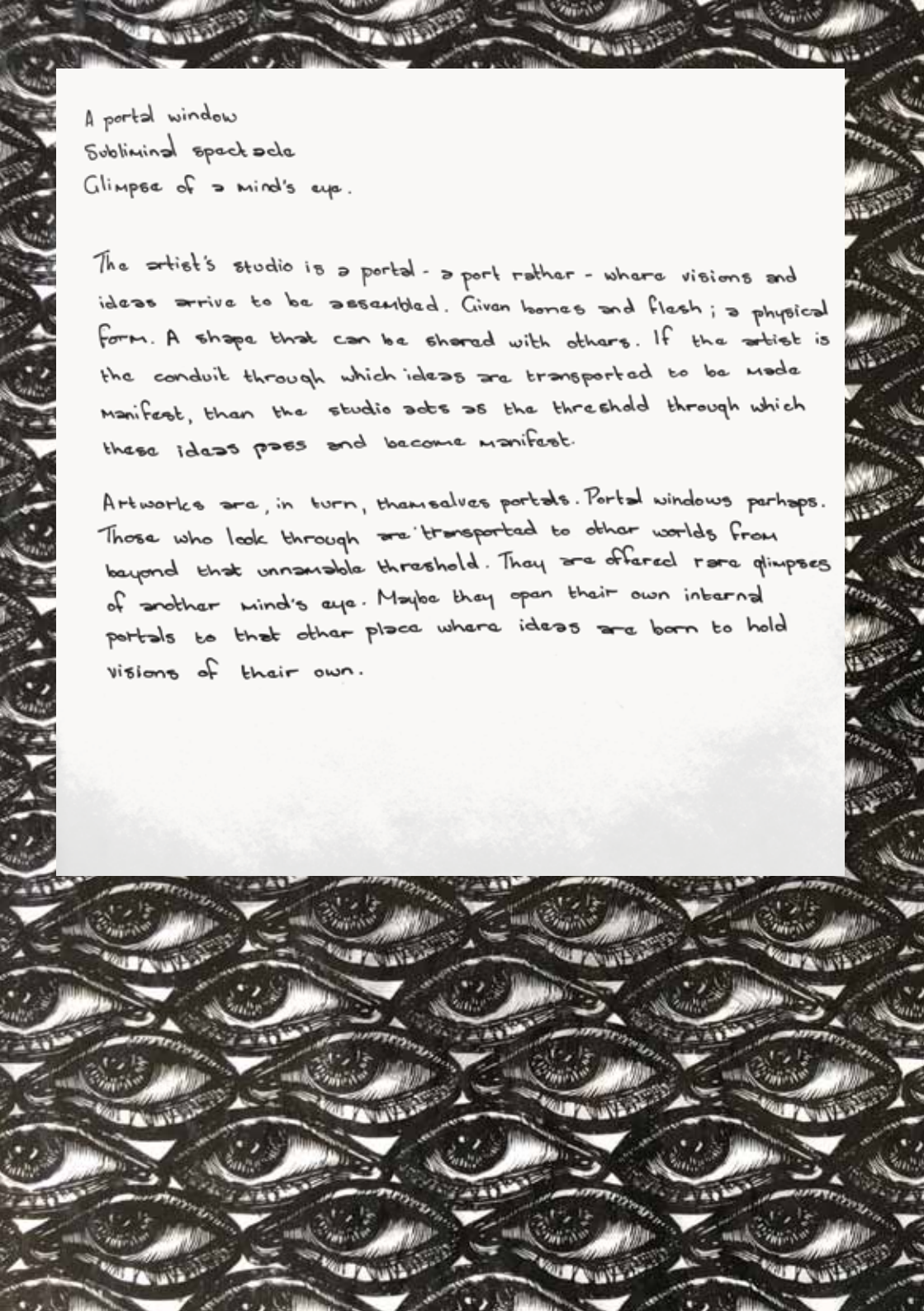


How are your artworks a portal?

My process of making the artworks is a portal into emotions, thoughts and ideas. This translates into textures, marks, colours and tone within the work. So essentially the artwork is a manifestation of the journey within this portal, which shifts and changes in an organic way.

How is your artist studio a portal?

My studio is a space that facilitates a portal towards myself, where I can go within and be present. A space of no distractions and unnecessary thoughts. Here I can centre myself, acknowledge where I'm at and allow that to come through in my work and process.

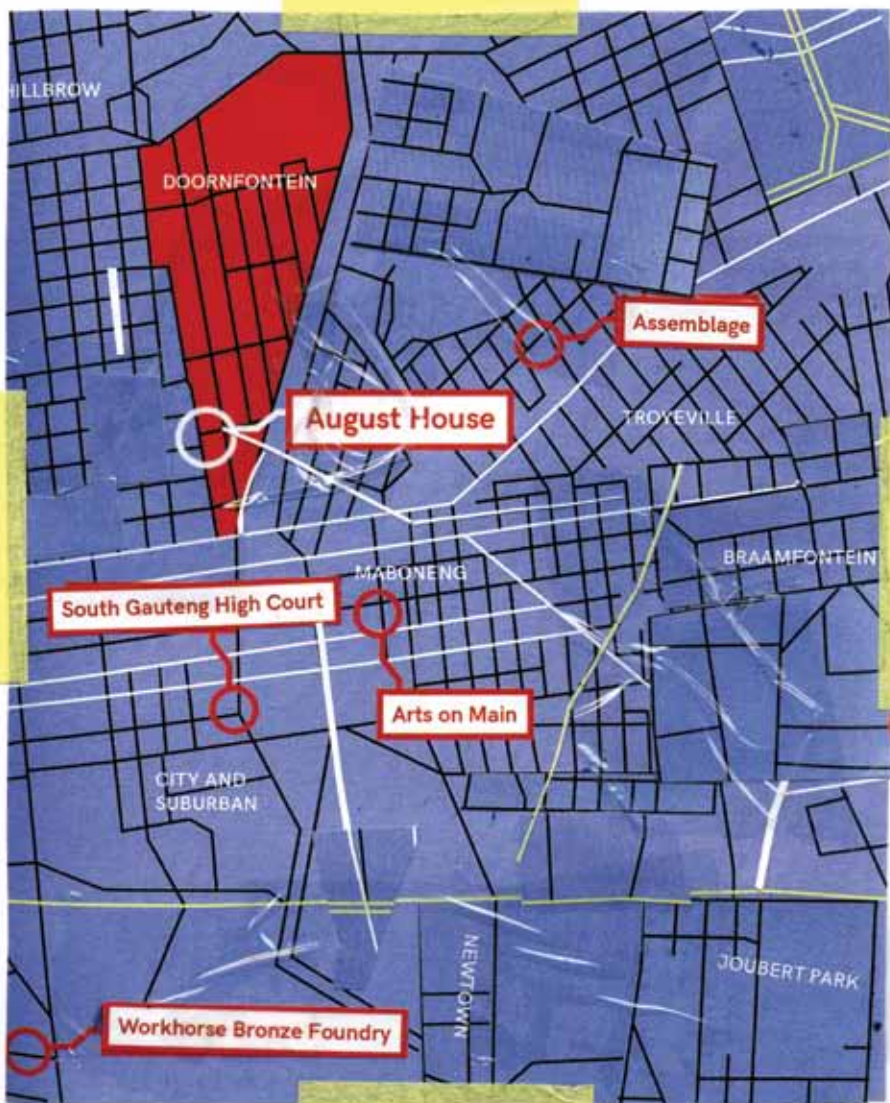


A portal window
Subliminal spectacle
Glimpse of a mind's eye.

The artist's studio is a portal - a port rather - where visions and ideas arrive to be assembled. Given bones and flesh; a physical form. A shape that can be shared with others. If the artist is the conduit through which ideas are transported to be made manifest, then the studio acts as the threshold through which these ideas pass and become manifest.

Artworks are, in turn, themselves portals. Portal windows perhaps. Those who look through are transported to other worlds from beyond that unnamable threshold. They are offered rare glimpses of another mind's eye. Maybe they open their own internal portals to that other place where ideas are born to hold visions of their own.









Scott Fric email

3.1 How are your artworks a Portal?

→ The work produced are an extension of my own intangible thoughts that maybe aren't articulated from core/meaning some way one feels easier to communicate in such manner (art works)

3.2 How is your artist studio a Portal?

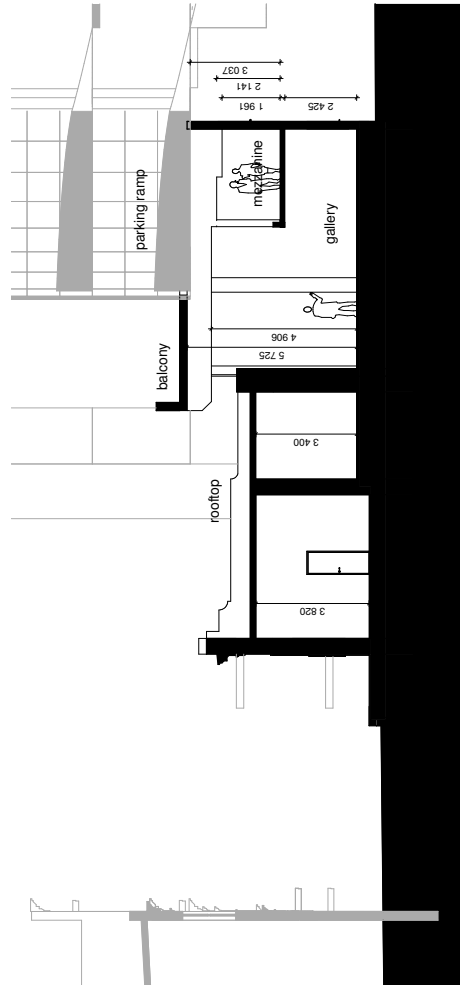
→ A space given to express via creatively without the thought of limitation in terms of making a mess or considering size of art works.

Artwork as portal? - as gateway into the
head space of the maker - a chance to access
inner thinking of another in a non-linear way -
I think that the creative process of attempting to
extract the images and worlds from your subconscious
thinking and bringing them into reality - requires
the transcending of internal boundaries - Even if
the work engages with images from the real world -
to transfer inner images into a new created
reality requires moving through or creating a portal
to allow this transferal. this "portal" tends
to be linked to the process of "making" -
transfer through procedure.

I step into my studio, closing the door
behind me, often locking it - and slip into
a private work world, where what's in my
head and the work I am currently fighting with
become my reality. Books, paper and quiet
space to draw is all that is needed to
slip into other realities.
August offers the absolute luxury of being alone -
my other work space is at the university where no
matter how you focus you are always conscious -
of the presence of students - enquiring and reading -
- never chance to lose the sense of responsibility.



The AVA Gallery is based in the heart of Cape Town, having occupied its current premises at 35 Church Street since 1971. It is the oldest non-profit art gallery in Cape Town. Here contemporary visual art production is promoted through regular exhibitions showcasing all media – from painting through to ceramics, photography, installations and performance – by established and emerging artists. In its choice of artists, the selection committee endeavours to promote the discursive and experimental nature of contemporary art. In doing this the AVA seeks to make important contributions to the ‘open texture’ of South Africa’s art community.



Front Door

1 Contemporary Space

Front Desk

2 Courtyard

Based in heart of Cape Town, Eclectica Contemporary sees itself as an African gallery with an international vision. We celebrate the diversity and depth of art making on our continent while aiming to contextualize it for a growing global market.

Desk

3 Passage

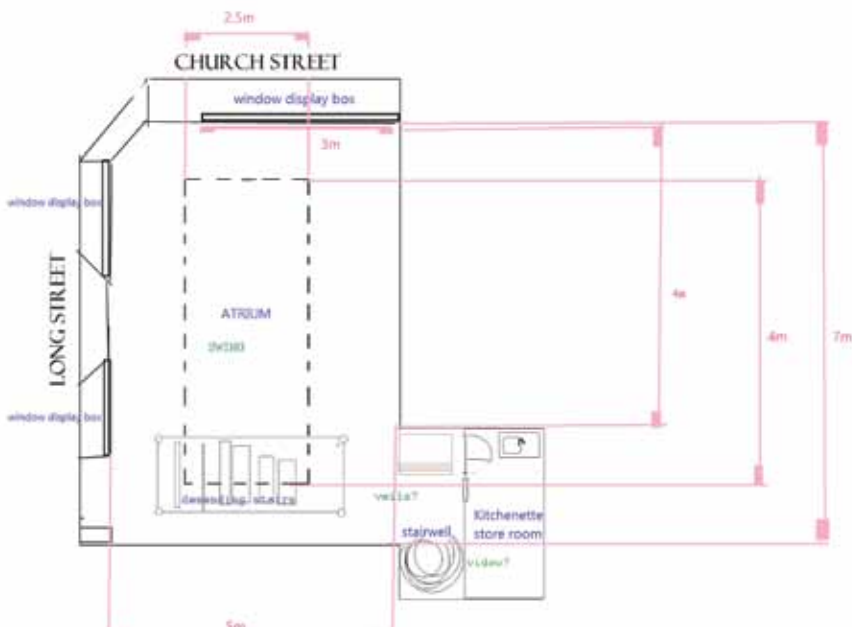
4 Design Space

5 Kitchen

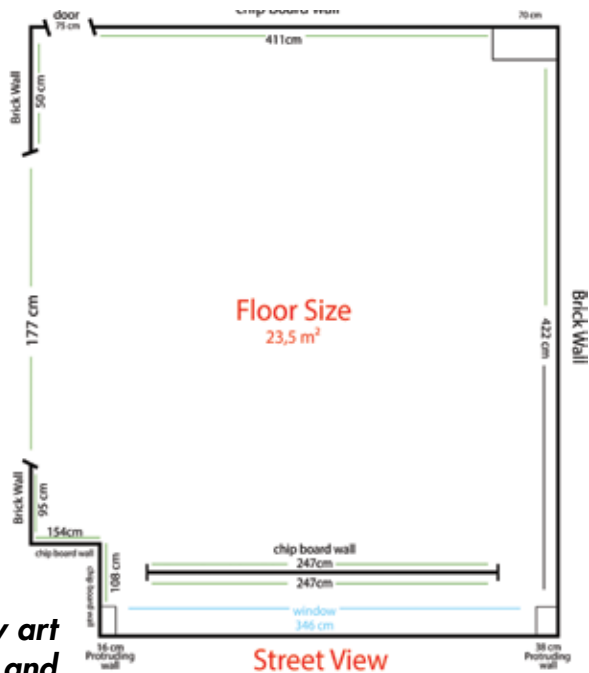
6. Print Space

Eclectica Contemporary gallery has a dedicated space for African design. alongside our mid-century modern furniture and a collection of prints for every curious collector.

Nel is an artist owned and directed gallery at 117 Long Street in the center of Cape Town. Nel profiles artists from Cape Town, South Africa, the rest of the country, artists from the rest of the African continent and a sprinkling of artists from further afield. Started in November 2019 and still owned by Luan Nel, himself a practicing artist, art writer, competition judge and curator, the Nel gallery is uniquely placed to cater to a variety of art buyers, cultural adventurers and are open to exchange and collaboration in the field of Visual Arts. His includes performative discourses. With having only experienced four months of its existence in a pandemic-free society, the gallery has adapted rather intuitively to the current status quo by providing an online presence for artists on various platforms yet still catering to the need for an actual physical exhibition space where paintings are hung on walls and performance art takes place regularly.



In the case of performative work, a suitable recording is made and beamed out on the relative social media platforms. Nel also showcases art considered museum work as the need for this kind of exhibition space has increased since the start of the pandemic. With Luan Nel directing, events like book launches and also a number of exhibitions, often register on Queer radar. This malleability is key to Nel's survival and future. The aim remains to provide a mirror to society, to break down the hierarchies that never served everybody, break down the old monoliths like patriarchy in its many guises, to seek new narrative and build on a more environmentally aware, equal and just future. nelart.co.za



WORLDART is a contemporary art gallery established in 2004 and situated in Cape Town. The artists we collaborate with generally pursue an urban contemporary aesthetic and to that extent we focus on work influenced by street art, urban environments, graffiti, pop culture, graphic design and illustration. WORLDART has distinguished itself as a pioneer in its consistent programming of significant emerging and established local artists. Our objective is to build an international platform from which their work can be introduced to a wider audience. To achieve this, we have in recent years participated in art fairs in London, Miami, Munich, Sydney, Johannesburg and Cape Town.



August Portals
META Foundation X Scott Eric Williams
2021

- 6 *Roland Gunst aka John K Cobra***
- 8 *Thalente Khomo***
- 10 *Vivien Kohler***
- 14 *Percy Maimela***
- 16 *Nyakallo Maleke***
- 18 *Mmabatho Grace Mokalapa***
- 20 *Fatima Tayob Moosa***
- 22 *Michele Rolstone***
- 26 *Navel Saekamela***
- 28 *Diane Victor***

Foldout posters - Sam Nhlengethwa

Architectural drawing pg30 - Wolff Architects
Edited artwork pg16 based on photograph by Anthea Pokroy
All artwork images courtesy of the artists

@meta.foundation
@scottericwilliams

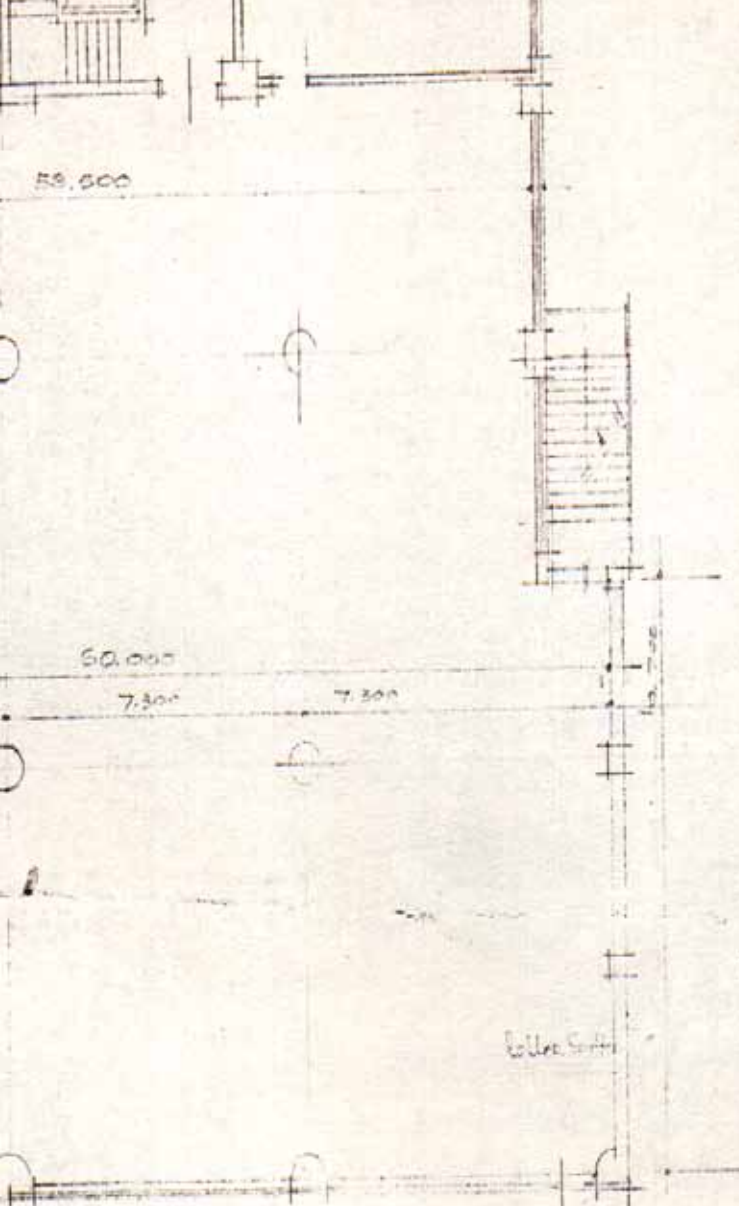
augusthouse.co.za
scottwilliams.co.za

The August House//Cape Town Collab is an exploration of art institutions and their role in our communities. The project takes an historical approach but is firmly rooted in contemporary practice. Through this collaboration we wish to think about our local creative industries, their histories and to reflect on the ways the creative community has had to navigate a cultural exchange in a time of great disturbance. Cultural platforms, such as August House in Johannesburg, the Association for Visual Arts (AVA) in Cape Town and commercial galleries throughout the country, play an important role in the visual arts eco-system, each providing artists with a different but necessary element in the furthering of their careers.

August House, currently one of the largest studio spaces in South Africa, houses 50 artists from varying geographical locations, working across various mediums and in different stages of their careers. The META foundation reached out to a number of spaces in Cape Town to participate in a collaboration that aims to broaden the audience's awareness of the ecosystem as a whole, drive diversity within the landscape and expose artists to new audiences.

Curator Carlyn Strydom, META foundation Director Sara Hallatt and Artist Vivien Kohler have conceptualised the project that will see approximately 30 artists, from August House, participating in exhibitions across the Cape Town CBD between July and August 2021. The project is partnering with the AVA, WORLDART, Nel Gallery, Eclectica Contemporary and Alliance Francaise du Cape on a series of exhibitions that are both independent and collective. Artists participating in the collaboration include some well-known artists such as Sam Nhlengethwa, Diane Victor and exciting emerging talents such as Thalente Khomo and Navel Seakamela.

It is through such collaborations that the META foundation believes we can show the importance of collaborative work for the growth of a healthy arts industry.



ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE CHECKED ON SITE

DWG. NO. AUG88/S1

SCALE 1:100

DATE Jan 89



PHILLIP EPSTEIN

DR ARCH (HARD) ARCH (S.A.I.M.A.)

ARCHITECT

115 WILLIAM ROAD

PHONE