



Figure 9: Chinese photographic archive (Wang 2004)

9

PROGRAMMATIC PROPOSAL

The project is introduced as a working machine for documenting the everyday events of the park and surrounds through the use of the Joubert Park photographers

9.1. PROGRAMMATIC INTENT

Photographic archive

The intent was to re-establish a strong identity within the public realm by blurring the lines between open public and enclosed public space; between architecture and landscape and between observation and participation, especially with people within the context of Joubert Park (Da Costa & Van Rensburg 2008). Re-establishing an identity should be done while incorporating strategies of replacing sites of lost memory and contested heritage into the city's fabric by creating an architecture that marries the intangible and the tangible of the past with the immaterial and tangible of the present. Furthermore, the project should contest the notion of the classic museum and seek to find a means of memorial creation that can become integrated with the current city fabric.

The intervention will take the form of a device for recording the site and the people who animate it by becoming a tool for photographic exploration. The photographers will become the main keepers of the pavilion with Janus Boshoff (a photographer who specialises in this form of photography), creating large and small-scale images that are printed on a variety of media. These artworks will then, in turn, be exhibited within the park as well as in the Johannesburg Art Gallery, forming a link between art created in the park and art displayed to visitors and inhabitants of the area.

In this way the photographers will be enhanced as the capturers of individual and collective memory and identity of the people and visitors of Joubert Park. The new form of photography introduced will aid in uplifting their skillset, making them specialists while drawing photographic enthusiasts from across the country.

The intervention will also act as a recording device to archive the changes experienced in the park throughout its transformation. The information captured can be used to investigate the positive reactions and pitfalls of urban changes taking place, allowing the built form, the people and the city to be archived for future retrospection and learning.

According to O'Brien (2016), over time these images of the city will become "an abstract canvas of fragments" that can be seen as blurs, presence and absence of light and the repetition of elements. With a shorter the exposure, the image will be crisper – a method that will capture a single moment with more precision. The method of exposure for each event or moment will be determined by the artist. The capturing of moments of the daily public realm is the curation of moments of collective memory.



Figure 9.1: *Crossroads* by Jak Baruh (O'Brien 2016) An image of the layering of time in a city depicting transience at a crossroads in Rome.



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Figure 9.2: *East Village* by Justin Borucki (Geffin, 2014)
An example of wet-plate photography representing a shorter exposure time for a clearer image

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Figure 9.3: Example of an old pin hole camera (Falco 2012)

The main type of photography used in the device is called wet-plate photography. Different subjects, for example a portrait or an event taking place in the park, will require different exposure times. The photographer will use his artistic discretion when determining the quality of the picture required using various types of exposure. A basic example of this would be long and short (figure 8.2) exposure times. Various substrates can be used to imprint the images, for example glass or steel plates, as well as on an array of scales.

The plates are dipped or covered with collodion, which is commonly known as liquid light, and are exposed to light to develop an image. This process may also be used on three-dimensional objects, which could give rise to sculptural forms that are printed with images, as in the example of pieces by ShiKai Tseng (figures 7.4 & 7.5).

The phases of creating remain the same for all objects, including three-dimensional, paper or metal. In the process, the object needs to be sensitised, exposed and developed. These processes are described in detail below.

- Sensitised – using chemicals that are light sensitive known as collodion or liquid light, which contains silver nitrate.
- Exposed – using various exposure times different types of images can be created, forming graphics that depict movement through the blurring certain aspects of the frame captured or images that depict clear and crisp detail. This is relatable to the shutter speed on cameras.
- Developed – The process of developing these images occurs in a dark room using chemical solutions

commonly known as developers, stops and fixers. After the chosen plate is processed using these baths they are dried and varnished with lavender oil or a similar substance.

Equipped with large volumes and small boxes, the photographers will have access to a variety of pinhole cameras in order to capture images on varying scales covering various time frames. These camera boxes will take various sizes and forms, from large rooms down to hand-held boxes to capture the portraits of the people of





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Figure 9.4: *Photo Vases* by ShiKai Tseng (Tseng 2011) An example of ceramic vases coated in light-sensitive layer and exposed to light through the use of a pin hole box with multiple holes.

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Figure 9.5: *Photo Vases* by ShiKai Tseng (Tseng 2011) Vases shows with their corresponding pin-hole cameras.



9.2. PHOTOGRAPHIC CASE STUDIES

International case-study

Silver and Light

Ian Ruhter is an American photographer who became disinterested in the mundaneness of contemporary photography and decided to revert back to historical ways of image capturing using silver and light (Ruhter 2016). He took to wet-plate photography and reintroduced it in a way that is larger than life. He created a gigantic camera using a big black box and a lens that were transportable by truck across the country.

His artworks were exhibited in galleries across the United States and a growing appreciation for this form of photography is once again growing due to his and others' efforts at reintroducing this 'backward' form of photography.

"It was so beautiful in my hands. I create this with silver and light... Every image is a one of kind captured moment in time. I didn't just build a camera, I built a time machine." - Ian Ruhter, 2012



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Figure 9.6: Ian Ruhter in his truck (Silver and Light 2015)

Figure 9.7: The larger than life camera (Silver and Light 2015)

Figure 9.8: An example of an image using glass as a substrate (Silver and Light 2015)

Local case-study

Alternative Print Workshop

Based in Johannesburg Alternative Print (APW) is owned and run by Janus Boshoff and Dennis da Silva. The company specialises in analogue photographic printing using a variety of media (see images 7.9 - 7.13) on a range of substrates. (APW, 2016)



Figure 9.9: Salt print (Da Silva N.d.)



Figure 9.10: Cyanotype print (Unknown N.d.)



Figure 9.11: Van Dyke Brown print (Da Silva N.d.)

When trying to find photographers who use wet plate photography in Gauteng I was surprised at the lack of information I could obtain. Eventually, after a discussion with a very enthusiastic photographer who owns a speciality store, I found a name. Upon calling Janus Boshoff, the head of photography at City Varsity in Newtown and a Master's student in photography at WITS, his passion for his craft was evident. It wasn't however, until I went to visit his studios the following week that the full extent of this love of photography became clear.

While drinking carefully-made tea and coffee, we discussed the process of wet plate photography and the struggles that exist in trying to get the correct equipment and understanding of the skill in South Africa. He was then on his way to Germany for a course in wet plate photography so that he, and his partner, could better understand the process and begin teaching it in South Africa.

The sadness in his voice was clear when discussing the current state of photography as an art and a profession in South Africa. It is degrading and heart-breaking that a profession that is so skill intensive has been diminished by the presence of cell phones and

social media and I couldn't help but recognise the similarity between the struggles of the street photographers of Joubert Park and this qualified photographic professional. It was then that I realised that the challenges are prevalent for all individuals in the industry, irrespective of their location or level of education.

"When telling someone I am a photographer, the response is always the same. 'Oh, another photographer'." – Janus Boshoff, 2016

The examples of wet plate photography that Janus had on hand consisted of images printed onto glass using liquid light. These images were incredibly clear and detailed in relation to the small scale they had been printed on. These glass images require the same type of skill and development procedure as the tin-type wet plate photography that this project also explores (see figure 7.14).



Figure 9.12: Platinum Palladium print (Boshoff, n.d.)



Figure 9.13: Lith print (Boshoff, n.d.)



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Figure 9.14: A portrait by Janus Boshoff using glass. Images indicating the negative and positive of the image based on the background colour.

Figure 9.15: The studio with Janus Boshoff at Alternative Print Workshop.

