

Josh Ginsburg and Daniel Zimble | Josh Ginsburg and Daniel Zimble in Conversation on David Goldblatt

- Welcome back everybody, it is my great pleasure to once again introduce Josh Ginsburg, who you've all met before and Dan Zimble. Josh is the director of my foundation, A for Arts in South Africa. A4 is a free to public not-for-profit laboratory for the arts of Southern Africa, we've worked together for the past 10 years and in 2015, conceived A4 and finally moved it into its physical home in 2017. Josh holds a BAC in electrical mechanical engineering from UCT and a master's in fine art. Dan Zimble is a graduate of Columbia University's MFA Film Programme in Screenwriting and Directing. He co-wrote the award-winning Show Max Comedy series, Tali's Wedding Diary and has served as head writer for two seasons of SAFTA winning telenovela Isithembiso.

He is a brilliant screenwriter, his feature documentary Goldblatt, screened at local and international film festivals, headlining Paris Photo 2018 and Photo London in 2019. His previous work includes human rights research at the Cape Town Think Tank, the Centre for Conflict Resolution, he holds BA Honours in archaeology and anthropology from Oxford University in England. Today they will discuss David Goldblatt and the contribution he made to the South African cultural landscape. Thank you Josh and thank you Dan for joining us today, we are really looking forward to your presentation, I'm now going to hand over to you.

- Thank you, Wendy. Thank you Wendy, thanks everyone. It's a pleasure to be here again and you know having now done a number of these, these zoom exchanges, I can say confidently that they are confusing at best to be speaking to many hundreds of people that you can't see. But I've convinced myself that there's one pleasure and that's that I can wear my slippers while being in public, so tonight I'm feeling good. It is a pleasure to have my dear friend Dan here with me today and the plan is to think through again, work we did together, addressing and thinking through the life and work of David Goldblatt and ultimately a film that Dan made that surveyed 70 years of image making, like extraordinary work of David's.

But I want to begin first by acknowledging Wendy and the sort of incredible opportunity that she's given us to even have this opportunity in the first place and I suppose the remarkable platform that she's created in South Africa, to think through the arts and try and understand a broad base of applications for it. And recognising the potency of creative practise in lieu of how it catalyses inventive thinking brings people together and constructs a sort of opportunity for something rich for some preferred future.

And it's a great honour for me to lead A4 and to bring that vision of Wendy's to the ground and David and his work have been integral to that process almost from day one. And my plan today or our plan today is to look at it from a array of perspectives, what I'm going to do first is kind of do a brief summary or summary's not even a good summation of that. Really just like a trajectory through a range of different essays of David's in the interest rarely of just sharing a visual world helping you the audience somehow get a sense of what David was looking at and

how he pictured it. To be fair, these pictures are incredibly detailed, they deserve attention, they deserve care.

And today I'm going to be moving through them at pace, which is not the preferred mode, but it feels under the circumstances necessary to sort of just blast you with as many pictures as I can within reason. And then to encourage you after the fact to take your time either with the pictures in an exhibition format of which there are routine exhibitions in fact, there is a fantastic exhibition of David's work at the Goodman Gallery in London at this moment, looking at work from the Johannesburg series, which I will touch on.

But exhibition is one form, but the book, the book is as vital to David as anything and I'll be highlighting that now. But books are available and accessible and I encourage you to buy one or many of these books and spend time with these pictures on your own, 'cause the intimacy of the pictures in the book is something quite different to sort of swift movement that I'm going to offer. Once I've sort of covered or created a bedrock for the conversation, then Dan will introduce us to some of the ideas and the sort of origin of the documentary that we worked on together that he directed.

And then I've got a series of images and quotes as does Dan that will function as prompts for us to kind of interact and think through some of the key points of that documentary and David's work. Now it's been some time to be fair, although on the one hand I kind of live in and around David's work consistently, both in A4 and actually at home and in mind, it's been some time since we've sort of rolled up our sleeves and and looked at it again and I must say it is revealing and it's inspiring and it's challenging and so I look forward to in about 20 minutes time, Dan and I kind of manoeuvring through that again.

Perhaps just the last thing to say, if I get into the images this I suppose I may be speaking for you, but I feel confident that this is something shared that David and the work he did is not only a cultural sort of asset and a necessary and urgent coordinate of trying to make sense of life in South Africa, but it is also a very personal journey. David was of Jewish descent family of Lithuanian origin, he was a man who somehow spent the majority of his life trying to locate himself here, trying to make sense of this landscape and this place.

And although the conditions are entirely different, I must say that, I suppose trailing that query, there's a lot in there that resonates and trying to make sense of this place, which is home South Africa and trying to make sense of it through creative work is something that he's afforded me and us and again a privilege to have had this proximity to him and his work and for it to live on effectively through the work we do. So with that, I think I'm going to jump into, Dan, if you can just hold on a second, I'm going to share my screen, just let me know that you're seeing what I'm hoping you're seeing and then perhaps if you want to just turn off your monitor, if you choose until we return. Are you seeing the picture of David walking through the fence?

*Slides are displayed visually.*

- Yes. Here we go great. Okay, so quickly I'm going to skim through a bit on A4, it feels important to contextualise some of the work and how we negotiated the work of David. So as Wendy mentioned, A4 is a free to public, not-for-profit laboratory for the arts, a laboratory in our terms means a site for experiment, we experiment with effectively three tiers with artists and creative practitioners, Dan being one.

How can we provide a framework for practitioners to be ambitious and try things that they wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to try? We experiment with arts, which is to say, how does art function in a public domain? What do we know about how it functions? How can we think more deeply about understanding the impact it can have and to so that it can have the the sort of, yeah, it can reach as far as possible. And thirdly, we experiment with the institution, we don't take it for granted, we think deeply about why we exist, if we should exist and in what iteration we could exist in a obviously very volatile cultural, social, political landscape.

Within A4 we have a free to public library, we have an exhibition space, we have an archive of beautiful artworks, we run processes of all different kinds from exhibitions of course talks, workshops. I wonder if these, I'm going to give these images a moment. Kids programmes, it's a place for people to meet, it's a place for people to test, listen and hear. We think a lot about direct contact with artworks, 'cause I'm sure many of you will agree that art often has a very, well, if this isn't like a sophisticated cultural framework around it, it can feel quite alienating, it can feel like there's either a language or a sort of money piece that allows access to it and we believe that artists pursue their inquiries, often uncertain as to what exactly they're doing or why.

And that if we interact with artworks that way we will glean a great deal of value, so encouraging people to make contact with, to discuss debate and then of course to just interact with or be around. And then there's other pieces too, we're interested in how the arts intersects with other disciplines, be it the sciences or the literary. And this final slide from A4, this is our wonderful archive of artworks and appropriately concludes with a piece of David's tracing the removal of the road sculpture from UCT, which we will discuss in a little bit more detail later.

So with within a force framework, we've interacted with David's work in effectively three different formats. The first was an acquisition of artworks and this was again linked to Wendy's recognition, the relevance of this work and the importance of functioning as a custodian, protecting this history through the photographs and making those photographs available to the public. So for about a year and a half, we engage in a really detailed research process which involved addressing as many images as possible and long exchanges with David trying to understand how he did the things he did, what were the important thematic and how we would make a collection of elements that would stand the test of time.

Thereafter as Dan will articulate and as well discuss, there was this opportunity through Lisa at the Goodman Gallery to work with some archival footage of David that had not sort of been realised as a documentary and then to re-shoot or to follow David and try and understand him in

the contemporary and to make a documentary film which Dan was directed scene, which we will also touch on later. And then later following David's death, we made an exhibition at A4 that effectively picked up on the thesis of the documentary and played it out through the images alone, so really even three opportunities to look and think through the practise acquisition, the documentary and exhibition.

Okay, so now I'm going to blast through a number of images and again, I'm going to move at pace in the interest of time, but please do make the time to kind of look at these carefully and through these books when you have a chance, so the first thing to say is that the book is absolutely principle to David's practise. Exhibitions come way later in his career. The book on the other hand, is a place where he could not only store but share and was really important to him that things that this was a sort of, it was information, it was a repository, it needed to get out, it needed to be communicated.

And so the first important book that he makes is *On The Mines* in 1973 and there's an introductory essay about Nadine Borman and there of course, but *On The Mines* surveyed what he said with a dying minds of . David grew up in Randfontein, which is I think Northwest of Johburg, very much a mining environment. So the landscape, both of the mine dump and the remains and active mining sort of tech would be present to him, but of course also the forces of labour and the sort of poorly distributed economy would also have been part of his day-to-day. And so this essay was divided into three parts, the surface we surveyed the mechanics, the shaft sinkers where he follows miners down below ground and a series of portraits where he looks deeply at the particular people on on the mines.

This picture happens to be one of my favourite actually, David says of this image that well each piece of Johburg was dug up by a black man with a spade and there's something very eerie about this, like bones. Here we see a miners bunk, concrete bunks, tiny and brutal, but then, you know pictures later would be set up against the image like this, which is a white mine boss's bathroom with a dirty bath in the clean bath, the dirty bath when he came off the mine and then immediately into the clean bath, so the kind of disparity made visible.

And this again for me and Dan and I will hopefully talk about this, the shaft sinkers, which is the subset within mines where he follows the miners is underground, just somehow captures so much of what I believe was innate in almost all of David's work. A kind of desire to connect, to be present, the real time of it in this instance, these ghost life figures blasting the earth hundreds of kilometres below ground, well kilometres below the ground, but David present to it. Yeah, quite a thing. The next major project was *Some Afrikaners Photographed* and this was published only two years after *On the mines* and probably is the most sort of celebrated of his projects and also the most infamous and I think the reason for both, it kind of drives us into the centre of what makes David such an incredible and important character.

So the Afrikaner presented something of a, he had an ambivalent relationship to the notion of Afrikaner on the one hand, he speaks so warmly of their connection to land, old history, family

values and on the other it was obvious and imprison to him that almost innate racism, antisemitism had pervaded those communities. And so this project sought to try and like picture of a people without overly determining who they are and he had learned to learn Afrikaans at his father's shop and Randfontein and he was curious and he wanted to know more and so he began to just sort of almost intuitively photograph Afrikaner people and ultimately combine them in a quite extraordinary survey. This picture is one of the most famous of all Goldblatt pictures and I think you can understand why this real gentle touch of this young boy with his nurse maid and her on him and the tragedy, as David would say of this picture is that this young boy would become a young man and at that point this relationship would not be tolerated.

So within Afrikaners there are these beautiful pictures, these lush gentle instances of like I said, like a people connected to a place, but then of course there's also this evidence of power and the concerns associated to that power. Actually, wait, gimme me a reel back a second. This is a really important picture. Leon vessel, this man in the middle who was of course an MP politician and a minister was also the first person within the MP to publicly apologise as part of the truth and Reconciliation commission for Apartheid.

He went on to become a social justice, to forward social justice initiatives, so a kind of hero's journey, but at the time of this picture, that was not the case. Here again, a kind of ill ominous sense of Afrikaner power and the nationalist power. You know this picture features in the documentary quite extensively and there's a kind of sense of their physical prowess that I think also arrested him. And then of course the other side of the story here is a plot owner with his young family and clearly not Afrikaner power that we had just seen a minute ago.

These are people running lean and sort of top brass Afrikaner politicians didn't like this take, they didn't like the interpretation of the Afrikaner as being this. And by the same token, the other extreme didn't appreciate the fact that someone would go out and make a book about Afrikaners, when in fact there was this sort of horrific institutionalised racism at play.

So David somehow managed and willingly to acknowledge the complexity of peoples and actively sought out to render that complexity. In this instance, he speaks of like this sort of cutting glare of this policeman on the right and I caught him by surprise and in some sense he felt kind of almost invaded by this look, but at the same time identified with the people in the bus line and said, "You know he was in fact being protected by this policeman and his gun."

In 1982, quite like almost depleted at the implications of Apartheid David makes a quite unusual choice and he heads off to Boksburg, Boksburg is a small town, much like Randfontein and he's determined to kind of make a portrait almost like a self-portrait in a way of the town or at least that's how I read it, self-portrait of his life. And Boksburg is this life is going on just swimmingly while much of South Africa is burning in fact, it's the state of emergency and okay also love this picture this young boy, I've also seen this as a kind of self-portrait it's not, but just this sort of trepidation of this young boy having to sort of run into battle, he doesn't look at all like he's up for it.

This image was in our exhibition right up front and I must say I saw many, not just one or two, but many middle-aged white people recoil at seeing this picture and the reason was that they recognised themselves in it. They saw this mundanity, they recognised life passing in the eighties and yet other things completely were happening and I think this is the power and the brilliance of this essay is that stages this life, while others were staging a completely different reality. In the seventies, David produced a quite amazing body of work called Particulars and what's equally interesting about it and again, hopefully we'll touch on it, the book was only published in 2003 and that's quite a thing 30 years later.

Particulars did an odd thing it took these very detailed close up shots of people in and around Johburg and it becomes a really intimate inquiry and I think even though he would never claim it to be a political gesture, there is something ingrained in it of a time when people were not allowed this level of proximity. David, with his lens peering into people's lives, into their bodies to try and understand the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of them through these incredibly detailed images. It sits quite outside at that time of the work he was doing, which would to some extent, the Council Wide was only published later and hats off Delinda Garvan who picked up this process and produced one of the most astonishing books.

Then in 2010 he produced this other book and there are books by the way that I'm omitting I'm just doing a quick summary in 2010, he produced TJ, which is actually a survey book of images from 48 to 2010 and many of these pictures or at least this sort of trajectory are the images that are currently on show in London through the Goodman Gallery. And here you just see the diversity of people and context that he was interacting with, this image of these young boys holding their dompas, it's so gentle is an intimacy between the lens of David and these young people and so often that's the case there and we will discuss that.

This picture also very famous image of David's where you see black people walking one way to public transport and white people in their cars in the other direction. If anyone who spent any time in Johburg, I imagine that something of the scene is common, I kind of love it, I find it just gentle and beautiful people using the city in a different way this man using the shade of a billboard. This picture, I just recall David speaking of the testosterone behind that there, which I would never have noted, that's exactly something. There's always an energy in the picture, there's always something that's compelled in not only to make it but to keep it, I think when you think about that, in this case, this young, beautiful, gentle woman in the foreground and this sort of masculine energy caged behind.

This picture was taken soon after this young man's arms were broken in custody in this picture we will discuss, David shot this woman to photograph this woman at least in 1972 and returned to that site 25 years later I think it is, to take this picture. And then this photo just kind of amazingly is in the Kentridge home, so William Kentridge still lives in this home, but at the that time there was a child and this picture was taken there. But I think it's important just to see the sort of the scope of what he was doing, trying to make sense of this place in which he lived and

then lastly, I'm just going to cruise through this, which is the structure of things then.

This book was published I think in 98, concluded in 94 and was premised on the idea that structures of buildings, architecture, hold and represent the values that we hold, that we build in our own image and that by studying the structures of our place, we could study or come to know something of the values we hold. There's a follow on book from this, which I won't touch or show images from, but also highly recommend that was published I think in 2018, got the Structures of Dominion and Democracy, which surveys an equivalent sort of trajectory, but following 94 and looks at sort of corruption and state capture and the kind of dissolution of the dream of South Africa.

But it really is an fascinating way to look negotiate by just looking at architecture, look at this brutalist scale, this sort of owed to power and then of course where miners would be bunked in high density or sort of really feeble attempt at solving our housing problem or an Afrikaner monument or this structure, which I just absolutely love. I'm not entirely sure what it is, but its forms just unusual and quite stunning and lastly just two images that are not from that set, but maybe lead us into some of the things Dan and I will talk about.

This is an image, what our sort of computers almost direct action following xenophobic attacks. To be Frank, I don't remember, I think this is 2008, David photographed this group of people and more recently that picture I showed you in the archive of students demanding the removal of Cecil John Rhodes's sculpture from the front of the UCT and it being agreed to. And then David documenting or noting this moment in this potent way and I can say of this picture, which is just really funny, in fact it's in the documentary too, he said he saw everyone's hands go up and he really didn't understand what was happening.

He thought it was almost kind of religious and then later recognised that in fact everyone was taking a photo and from that wondered where they're seeing this moment or were they mediating. So with that, I'm going to stop here and ask Dan to join us again and just to reiterate, that is like a quick survey and the intention is just to give you that sense of the visual world that David sat in and maybe to prompt us to start.

Well, I'm going to let Dan come in, but this is a picture we found in David's archive, we looked at this image a moment ago, you know, but it's always fascinating to see the things that weren't used and to try understand what motivated the decisions made, so effectively the process and the documentary was very much that it was, yes, there are the pictures, but what motivates this? How do we understand the man behind these pictures? So Dan, can I hand over to you to sort of yeah, just give us some opening remarks on, on the document?

- Yeah, absolutely. Hi everyone, I can't see you, but I assume you can see and hear me. Josh, can you hear me?

- Yeah, I can hear you.

- Okay, great. So as Wendy mentioned, I'm a screenwriter and a director and I living in and working in South Africa at the moment and together with Josh, Josh is, I directed the film, but truly we made the film together and it was a great and and special experience to take the opportunity to make something about, I think a man we both regard as a great South African and a great artist and a great chronicler of our collective history here.

I thought I'd just tell you briefly about how I came to the film and what that early process was, it really started as an editing project, the Goodman Gallery had quite a large archive of footage on David Goldblatt. It had been shot by Cliff who's a documentarian, a very talented documentarian. And for one reason or another, it hadn't resolved into a finished documentary film and so they were sitting on an archive and Josh discovered this and I had recently come back to South Africa from, I suppose eight years I think in New York and was looking in a way for something to reconnect me to Johannesburg or to South Africa in general.

But Johannesburg, which is where I'm from, I was born there and my whole family's from there, also a Jew of Lithuanian descent whose people had come via, I suppose Liverpool and then into Cape Town and then up to Johburg in response to a gold rush that had kicked off in 1886. So immediately having grown up, seeing some of David's images, I think I'd probably grown up knowing one or two images from some of Afrikaners one or two images from on the mines and then I think it was in 2004 as an undergraduate in the UK and I saw an exhibition of his at the Modern Art in Oxford and it was an incredible experience.

There's something in the film, there's a moment where David speaks about his intention really only to communicate to South Africans or at least his feeling that South Africans alone can really understand the content of his pictures and his intentions in the making of the pictures. And that's what was striking to me, standing alongside other students who are from the UK or elsewhere, was just how deeply locating it was to look back at the period of history and a place in time, namely South Africa during apartheid, which is when I grew up, I was born in 1982, so I had 12 years of what am I getting it right?

- Yeah.

- 94.

- Yeah.

- Yeah. So I had 12 years of living during apartheid and I suppose I felt instantly connected, instantly complicit. I felt a lot of complex feelings and I also, especially being able to kind of relate the images to people who had no context, there was a feeling of complicity in that because the fact that I was so familiar with the bizarre state of affairs in South Africa at the time, I suppose was an indictment of sorts. But anyway, I was back in South Africa, I was keen to make TV and film and Josh and I started looking at this archive.



Also in the archive there was some tremendous footage by Greg Marinovich who was one of the Bang Bang Club, a group of photographers who really were on the front lines. They were at all the sort of moments of pitched conflict and I suppose the sorts of scenes and events that David tended to shy away from the Bang Bang Club and other press photographers, they were right there capturing those moments, which made it the newspapers and travelled around the world as part of, I guess anti-apartheid advocacy and the like.

So there was a lot of footage from Greg and we had access to that and I guess I had started combing through all the footage and I started trying to find some fanatics and a way of assembling a film. And more and more as I went along, there was a lot of good stuff, but it was apparent that David was coming in and out of the Goodman Gallery, he was still working. As a man of 85 years old, he was still taking regular trips, crisscrossing the country from Johannesburg to Cape Town to Limpopo in his Isuzu bakkie and with all of his gear, he was making books with Gerhard Steidl, he was preparing huge exhibitions and it started to feel crazy that we wouldn't pick up a camera and document him in this incredibly frenetic period of work for him, but also as a man of 85, no one was sure how much longer the sort of pace could keep up.

So we then put together a pitch for the film and we went to Goodman Gallery and lo and behold we found ourselves, I don't know if you were there for that pitch, Josh, but we found ourselves sitting opposite David himself, who was known to me and certainly is known generally as quite a brusque, quite a guarded man, certainly upon first meeting him. And I thought the pitch was going quite well until I realised he had dozed off in the middle of my pitch and I took that as a sort of soft form of ascent because later, you know we were allowed to make it and with Wendy's generosity and the Goodman Gallery's generosity, we ended up making the film.

I'd say David maybe tolerated the idea more than positively endorsing it, but he let Josh and I and Kyle, who's a cinematographer, move along with him on his journey as he continued relentlessly crisscrossing the country in pursuits of various images and various projects, some of which are still uncompleted. So I thought what I'd do, that's the sort of general background and I thought what I would do is just read something in fact, it's good that I read it rather than say it because I think it'll get at the approach of the film more precisely and offer a few lenses through which to watch the film if you haven't already watched it and we hope you do. And if you have already watched it, hopefully this chimes with what you've seen and perhaps even deepens things that you've seen.

Okay, so we set out to make a portrait of David Goldblatt and the portrait we hope to make and this was daunting of course, because he's one of the great portraiture photographers. So to certainly tune the camera on him, it felt like a really big and difficult task and so we divided it up after combing through his work and combing through the footage we had, we began to understand the film or the telling of the film as David in Tryptic. We had three images of Goldblatt that we distilled for ourselves in front of make the portrait and I'm going to move through each of them in turn. The first was Goldblatt the cartographer and we had this in bold on

our wall, you know on our big sort of planning wall, our mind mapping wall Goldblatt, the cartographer. This is Goldblatt as a map maker, someone who is an unflinching observer and a seer of things and the historical chronicler of our history of all of South Africa's history.

This is David with his tools and instruments, his many cameras and tripods map in hand driving transects across the country and his famous Isuzu bakkie, his project intersections, which Josh, I dunno if you mentioned Josh, but I'll talk a bit about it now, it's the case and point here. David had set out to photograph at literally every latitudinal and longitudinal point of intersection within South Africa's borders.

There are 122 of them, and this was rigour almost at the point of absurdity, somewhere along the way, David did abandon the project and he took it up again, more thematically, I think it wore him out finally trying to sort of hit every 122 points of intersection. But the attempt, the impulse to complete it, reveal something important I think a desire to chart all, to see all, to know all and through his lens, to imbibe and recall all of this country, it's people, its places and to make the ultimate portrait of it, that's the first version of David.

The second part of the Tryptic is Goldblatt the miner, we like the idea of him, I suppose, being cast in one of his most famous photographic subjects, a miner who bores his way below the surface of things in search of their inner functioning, their core, their truth, like the cartographer the miner reflected for us something of David's work ethic and his relentless effort to lay simple truths bare. To capture this idea we kept in our project wall, one of David's famous photos and Josh, I dunno if you're able to put it up.

- Yeah.

- It's a vast and barren Karoo landscape and hammered into the middle of it is a small sign, an advertisement that reads, "Boorgat is die antwoord." which means bore hole is the answer. This becomes a prescription, a truth to David's process, to dig, to mine, to borrow beneath the often compacted surface of things into the essence of things. In David's book for the exhibition, Keith, Kin and Kaya, he talks about his impulse to photograph and to capture the essence of things.

This is what he says and this is verbatim, "First is the raw impulse to photograph, it begins with something in the external world, the real world outside my own inside it draws me on, it has an isness." This was a term that David spoke about a lot, an isness. "A quality of being that holds me in that I want somehow to distil in photographs, it is the isness of what I find here in South Africa among my compatriots and in this place that I've tried most consistently and urgently to photograph." so that's two.

Then the third and final image in this Triptych is that of the wanderer, Goldblatt the Wanderer, the man on the walkabout as his friend and writer critic Iva Powell described him, this is Goldblatt as a man in transit, out of sight, away from his responsibility as a chronicler, he's a loner in search of an elusive moment of inspiration, possibly even of communion. In the time I

spent with him on the road, this showed itself most powerfully in relation to land. In the essay by Michael Stevenson, markers of presence from regarding intersections, that book where you're trying to photograph at every intersection, David remembers a train ride through the Karoo and he said this, "I vividly recall travelling through the Karoo, I felt a close contact at the place because when standing on the balcony of the train I assume, despite the cold dust getting in my eyes, there seemed to be no barrier between me and the passing land."

In rare moments, David spoke of a longing he had to take a photograph of the land that might be free from political commentary, that was his life's work. A photograph of land in its pure essence without any trace of the things we build on it, the claims we make on it land that is not politicised and that does not in some way reflect an uneven relationship between capital and the labour organised on it. This longing for the unencumbered and the lyrical clash for him I think, with David's sense of responsibility as a chronicler, a truth seeker, a vigilant observant, a critic in his own words he said, "The price of Liberty's vigilance, that is liberty does not come without responsibility, without its own burden." it almost became the film's title. In fact, we were toying with the idea of calling the film the Price of Liberty. In fact, I think Josh, it was the price of vigilance.

- Yeah, exactly.

- So the price of liberty being vigilant, but what is the price of being a chronicler and being a vigilant chronicler? How does that sort of impact your process and impact your life's work? But we felt, anyway it was a bit heavy handed and maybe overly heroic, but the phrase remains a fitting epithet to David who saw his work as his responsibility, one motivated always by care and concern and a deep love for this place. Okay, that's the end of the read, so I hope that kind of contextualises it without being too oblique. But Josh, I'll hand over to you.

- Okay, sure. Thanks Dan. Again it's like so special actually to kind of reconnect with these ideas and maybe an interest of everyone, I'll just reiterate those things. There's the deep miner, the wanderer and the cartographer and these were lenses that we used to try and understand, obviously something that is none of those things and again, to maybe just point to that fact you just described now that that line that he routinely used the price of liberty is vigilance. And Danny mentioned that there was this tension, ongoing tension and I think that was when I remember at least there was these hours and hours and hours of footage and of course David, as you say, like just moving and going and us tracking him and him being sort of like reluctantly bringing us along for a while.

But I think when things started to turn was when we started to wonder after what was missing and perhaps what we weren't seeing, because David's such an incredible articulator of the work done. His narrative is so clear and decisive, it became really even difficult to in any way, not so much knock him off balance, but to get around the side, you totally controlled the environment, but it always did feel like there was something else, something else was happening. And I think crudely, not crudely, but bluntly, it was this poetic line, this recognition that there was more than

the story, but beyond the story, beyond the justification of taking the picture and connecting it to an urgent political end, there was also something else there and something deeply personal and I think what you described now touches on that this aspiration to somehow merge with the environment, become part of it.

You know we discussed earlier, I mentioned earlier this sort of and he says it openly, he envious of Afrikaners, envious of Afrikaners he also said he is envious of Africans of black people for the same reason that this was their land. And somehow the work he did presented a framework or at least this was the thesis of the film, I think was that it presented a place for him to release into a personal poetic journey of presence and immediacy. But Dan, I want to just maybe go here, where am I? Hold on. Okay, this is not a David picture. This is actually, it's still from the film, it's exactly not a David picture, it's a picture from the 1972 riots, 76 riots, apologies.

And this would be an exemplar of a photojournalist moment right at the heart of a crisis and he says in the form early on he says, I'm a read here "I wasn't on the scene at the riots or the focal points of political life and I gradually realised that events themselves were, to me much less interesting than the conditions that led to the events, I was looking obliquely at things." So we think about those pictures of Boksburg and we think about this, how how did that affect things? Do you think this conception of the bleak, like where does that fit in?

- Yeah, I guess it should be unpacked a bit as you rightly say this still image, which is from some stock footage that we put into the film. I think it must come from the eighties state of emergency and it was a time of course when every newspaper was deploying its core of press photographers to take these images in a moment of great instability for the apartheid governments in fact, as the world was paying more and more attention and there was real work being done by that press corps in trying to use images to kind of destabilise it.

I mean it is a form of activism and if you speak to someone like Paul Weinberg and certainly his circle of Peter Magubane I think was photographing for the Soweto and at the time these were very courageous people, Greg Marinovich, courageous people serving on the front lines. And so in fact, something that David contended with, he's someone who started photographing long before, of course these pitched moments of conflict, he started photographing the forties, didn't he? Am I'm making that up.

- He was no, he was born in 1930, became officially a photographer in his mind in 1932, but he was photographing from when he was 16.

- Right yeah, yeah.

- So you're actually right, the forties, you're right.

- I dunno why 49 is the date that sticks in my mind at the time he took, you know his first photograph or started taking photographs in general. But David often got some flack from other

photographers and people who were certainly activists and used photographers for avoiding these moments of pitched conflict and for standing as they sort of accused him on the sidelines. And so that's the thing that needs to be qualified and it needs to be unpacked because David has made some of the most sort of powerful and I suppose important images of apartheid outside of the moments of pitch conflict.

He was able to kind of achieve a look at life as it carried on outside of the riots or inside people's living rooms or as people mow the lawn and in that way they're incredibly enduring. So he spoke about looking obliquely at things, meaning I wasn't at the scenes of the riots, but in fact it's those images of often the absurdity of the apartheid system or the cruelty in small and simple ways of a system that we all lived under that are deeply enduring and unsettling, but also have a kind of humanism as you've said Josh and I think carry huge heft and impact when you look at them because the subjects are, I suppose they're so directly captured and so human and yet often their contexts or their situations or they're sort of condition within the society just seems abnormal or strange or I suppose so dislocated from present.

- I want to point to Dan just in light of that because, you know I swing over here sort of haphazardly, but it's interesting to think about this idea of the point of contact. On the one hand that riot has seem, relative to this perception of like there being sort of the bleak as you described it and you sort of staging that differently. And it's interesting to think that the pictures he took, I mean this is the woman that he reshot with the baby on her breast that we looked at earlier, some 20 years later, that actually the pictures were almost all of 'em had direct contact with people, they were brokered.

Yeah, it was like real exchange, there was real curiosity, there was a real interaction and maybe that's a segue to say that he spoke at times of the camera being a licence. I think he said like a mechanism that allowed him to do things that would otherwise be impermissible or simply not easy at that time to like spend two years in Soweto or follow up on one or another lead. I want to like jump here with that in mind, we went with him to Fietas on one of these such missions, where it did feel like it was a serious subject, but a curious person actually actively trying to like sort of, allow himself the opportunity to explore and maybe you want to speak to this exchange perhaps 'cause it's another one of those direct he's I Abraham style in the background, unexpected man that we met and that David ended up building a relationship with and making this picture, but it formed quite an important part, at least for me, of watching him at work from beginning to end.

- Yeah, certainly in terms of process and in terms of interest, you know we arrived looking at architecture and we ended up finding a subject who David became very interested in because I think of the hard experience that this man Ibrahim had lived through, just to give some context, Fietas under the group areas act was declared a white area, whereas it had previously been a black and Indian and Coloured area.

And so it was a site of forced removals and not only were were people removed, I think in

waves, buildings were also destroyed, I mean the place was flattened. And I think David's particular interest in page view as it is known today is how some of the architecture still reflects a kind of, I suppose an oriental idea, almost some sort of memory of a population that is no more but a bit of bastardised memory. And he was interested in photographing the sort of effacement of their population, their disappearance and their commemoration in the strangest, I suppose almost most of ways.

So that's why we went there, we went with Achmat Dangor, who is the author I think of Bittered Fruit and another book that doesn't spring to mind right now and we met Ibrahim who was 28 and I think he was a prison gang member and he was heavily tattooed and he was 51 years old and he had spent 22 of those 51 years in prison. And for David that, you know he was a sort of, I suppose an example of someone who had been completely dilapidated by the system and by having been on the wrong side of it and but it was, sorry, sorry Dave.

- I want to point here just to some exactly what he was talking about because you know, David came here as Dan mentioned, to try document these decals on the building and there's in fact one on that building back there and then found Ibrahim here cleaning this lot and Ibrahim would like clean the area as a way to sort of just make tips from people. So it was unexpected, but it turned into a photo of the architecture plus the man and I just love this picture because both of these guys are kind of doing what they need to do.

You know there was something about David just also just doing his work in and amongst other people, there's a neutral encounter and to me there's something sort of very much about process here, about performing this inquiry that in some sense both men are doing equitably, I don't even know what's next. Well let's just jump here, Dan I'm sort of alive to the time, so I figured I'd just like sort of skip through a couple things and see what happens. This maybe is where realistically we'll conclude because we really don't have much time and it's the question of the artist, Dan's already spoken to this sort of the elusive what David may be yearning for relative to what he felt was demanded of him.

The vigilance of accounting for these atrocities and ensuring that this archive was created or preserved and shared and at the same time, a man in the midst of that wanting as Dan mentioned, just to, how does he say it? He says like, like Edward Weston not care a dam about who owned the land, who and how they got it, but you can never quite evade that question here. So this is just hysterical because this is Sean asks in the interview, asks David "What do you feel about being an artist?"

And Lily David's wife perks up from the back and says she says "I just want to remind you. that when I was putting in your place the other day." I know you can all read, but it's just good for me to read it and shouting at you, you said, "But you know, I'm a world renowned photographer." and this joke kind of like persisted. He'd routinely sort of rip himself off as an artist and in some way, maybe Dan, you know he kind of had a distaste for the idea of an artist, it didn't quite fit squarely with him. Do you want to like, speak to that?

- Yeah, I mean I think he was forged as a photographer and as a documenter in a time where art wasn't really the most pressing thing to make. You know he was making books that kind of recorded a bit of South African history that he felt was urgent for the rest of the world to see and it was urgent to be captured and and chronicled. And so the fact that later on in life he really did become a darling of the contemporary art world, I think it was a bit of a joke to David, I mean he participated absolutely. He never quite located himself there because I think he was still trying to chronicle and he still felt the sort of burden of responsibility to South Africa to make work that mattered and make work that woke people up and if not woke people up, at least could be accessed by future generations of South Africans who might be interested in their own history.

So yeah, he would often joke about being an artist and he would joke about he would joke that, his art really left no time for anything else. But in fact David spent a great deal of time continuing with the structures project towards the end of his life. I mean, he was majorly concerned during the Zuma years with corruption and chronicling that and documenting that. For example, we went and saw, he photographed here, Josh has pulled it up, the chief's house in the Limpopo had been burned down by the local community and the community had burnt it down because the chief had basically set himself up as the intermediary between the community and Anglo Plat who had jobs and the chief was the man who could give you a job if he liked you.

And ultimately, you know this community was up in arms, stormed the house, burnt it down and for David, this was an example of the frustrations like the burning resentments and frustrations and structural problems still present in the country at the time, that's what he was most concerned with photographing. But I think as Josh says, I'm Josh, I know we're flying close the.

- Yeah, keep going.

- You know we also had the benefit of going out to the Karoo with him and there's a bit of footage I think I put it to him, "Are you fond of the Karoo?" and he says, "Am I fond of it? No, I think I'd put it a bit more strongly than that, I love the Karoo, I love this land." and I think between the projects, David kept returning again and again to Lanesburg in the Karoo trying to photograph these copies and he was trying to find the unencumbered photograph until the end of his life and I think that sort of.

- I just love that that as you say that I love this place. Like how much of this place I've learned to love through that lens like strolling around those copies, which would just as easily be passed by unnoticed loved dearly, you know inspired for it's like and perhaps there's two things, we've got literally two minutes, so I just want to point to this picture again and yes, there's the burnt out hut in the background and the political motivations Dan spoke to, but this scene in the film is quite a hair raising scene.

David mounts his car from the ladder at the back and like I mean his body is just able to make it, but he's determined. But this scene itself, he sits on the roof and issues instructions to Dan as to

where to place the car and it's actually hysterical and it's really important to remember that within all the sternness by this stage, where at first he was quite reluctant to us being around, I think he saw us as a hill by the end we were like part of the team, but it was like team Goldblatt. And and that's I must say is one of the great joys of the last while not only to be able to sort of pursue something personally along with Daniel who's my greatest friend, but also to do it in the shadow of a man like this who eventually effectively brought us in to what I'm not sure, but in nonetheless.

And maybe the last thing I want to show is just touch on the exhibition and for now other reason but maybe to conclude something and that was in the wake of of David's death, we mounted an exhibition that attempted to speak to some of these points that Dan and I have now thought through is like what happens if we just disrupt this archive, what if we take pictures out of their essays and we put them alongside pictures from 10 years formal or after what happens when we did things that allowed us to try and track or tease out aspects of the poetic and David Goldblatt that perhaps he hadn't been inclined or desired himself or maybe desired, hadn't been inclined to share. And there's this line that I found in the text that I just want to read 'cause it actually comes from him seeing the end of the film.

So it says here, okay, "David's recent passing brings these questions to the fore in a different way, rather than asking what is missing, perhaps more pertinent is asking what have we missed? What were we not able to see? That has become now visible what new learnings are possible now that his archive is complete, this exhibition deviates from the convention of presenting David's images bound by the original essays, rather to show uncouples images from the chronological and contextual sources and seeks unexpected relationships across decades and series. David spoke regularly of his desire to have new eyes to see beyond the bounds of his accrued knowledge and experience.

Picture Theory, that's the name of the show, is an attempt to bring new eyes to Goldblatt offering space to wonder through the photographs as one would a landscape seeking out new resonances that might compel one to stop and make a picture, he described making pictures not taking it. I'm not sure what David would've said about this experiment, I hope it would be something similar to his remark following the premier screening of the film, I don't not like it." I think that is quintessential of David, it's like, "Yeah, well I don't hate it." that's as good a compliment as I ever get.

Anyway, with that, I just want to, you know we're literally 10:01 Dan always a total pleasure. Like, thank you for making time for this. Like, there's so much more to be done here and I think if nothing else, I think we'll both say that there's things that need to be followed up on. Wendy, I understand you actually wanted to say a couple things.

- Yes, thank you Josh. So Josh and Dan, I just wanted to thank you so much for that wonderful insightful and very interesting presentation. Now I remember David so fondly, he always had that sweet smile whenever he greeted us and his blue eyes were always twinkling and, you



know the lunches Josh and the times that we spent with him were so really precious. He was a giant in the South African cultural landscape, capturing the very essence of South Africa, really documenting apartheid South Africa.

I loved the tenderness of the young woman that you showed earlier on, where she was holding the leg of the young boy and in fact, just to say to the people who are watching our audience, I actually bought one of those pictures for each one of my children as well as another photograph, Barnell , which is a dancing couple, because these two photographs really I feel like sum up a feeling in my own childhood. The Road Must Fall Photograph is another incredible landscape capturing a moment in South African history, so when we think of David, the price of liberty is vigilance, what is missing?

New eyes, all these things do indeed sum up David a true legend, a world renowned photographer. You know as he said, a truly wonderful photographer and a wonderful man. So thank you Daniel and thank you Josh for sharing this hour with us and giving our audience an insight into the wonderful photographer, David Goldblatt, a wonderful man. Thank you everybody for joining us this afternoon and on that note, I'll say thank you and goodnight and goodbye, good afternoon. Thank you, Josh.

- Bye everyone, thanks so much.

- Thanks Dan.

- Thanks everyone.

- Bye-bye.