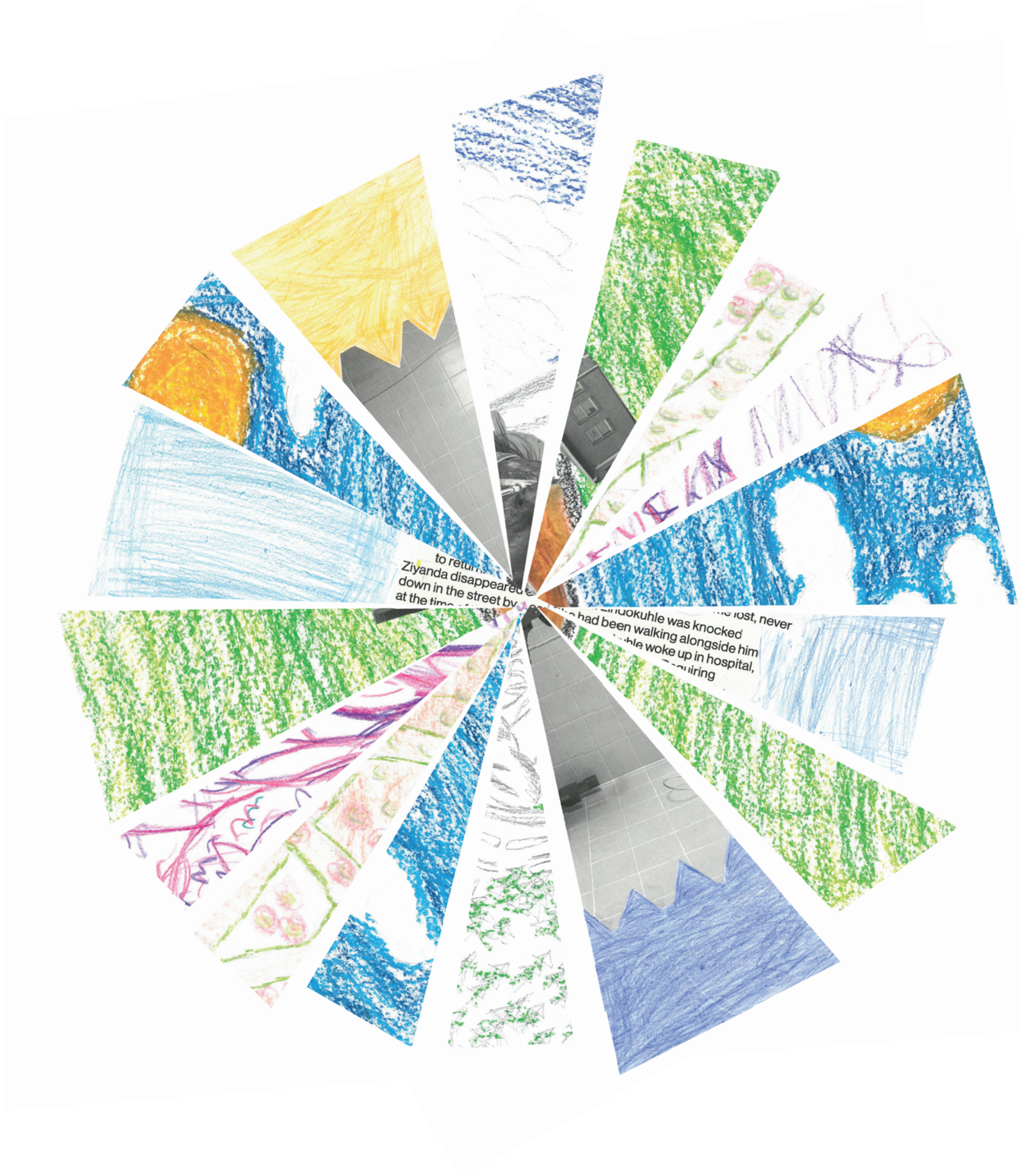


Lalela x A4
Tell It to the Mountains

Contents

Lalela Hout Bay	**4–9**
Lalela Masiphumelele	**10–17**
Lalela Philippi	**17–25**
Snapshots and sentences	**26–31**





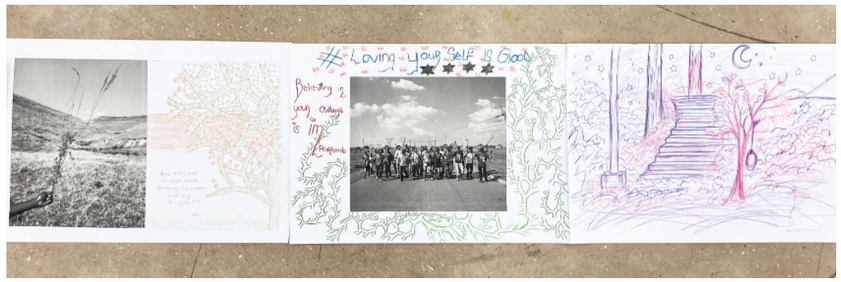


Over a series of three workshops with youth and facilitators from Lalela's programmes in Hout Bay, Masiphumelele and Phillipi, learners engaged with Lindokuhle Sobekwa and Mikhael Subotzky's Tell It to the Mountains at A4 Arts Foundation, producing collages and drawings with images and text from the exhibition and accompanying wayfinder.

With thanks to the Lalela facilitators: Rowan Roman and Terri Dennis (Hout Bay), Chuma Nozewu (Philippi), Nwabisa Ndogeni (Masiphumelele), and Firdous Hendricks.

Lalela Project provides educational arts for at-risk youth to spark creative thinking and awaken the entrepreneurial spirit. Through Lalela's arts curriculum and critical messaging component, the project ignites imagination and teaches children how to map and manifest their dreams and goals, launching the possibility of a different future for themselves and their communities.

A4 Arts Foundation is a free to public, not-for-profit laboratory for the arts. Inviting practitioners to innovate and iterate, the foundation offers the support of its curatorial studio. A4 contributes toward building a confident and resilient arts public through sharing the tools and technologies found in artistic practice. With an open attitude to what constitutes artistic and curatorial work, the foundation is invested in making processes visible.



Lalela x A4 — Tell It to the Mountains Workbook (2022)

Design — Lucienne Bestall
Editor — Sara de Beer

© A4 Press at A4 Arts Foundation

This workbook was made on the occasion of Lindokuhle Sobekwa and Mikhael Subotzky | Tell It the Mountains
October 21, 2021 – January 20, 2022

"The man driving the car has albinism, and often, in my culture, people with albinism face a lot of challenges, and people can be discriminated against. What is interesting to me is the people in the car with him have accepted him. Maybe they are his family, or maybe they know him well, and he is driving them."









"Being here, I know that my culture is important and I can celebrate it."

Dear Learners

On behalf of the team at A4, I want to thank you so much for interacting with Tell It to the Mountains, an exhibition by Lindokuhle Sobekwa and Mikhael Subotzky.

This felt like a true collaboration. We came together as organisations (A4 x Lalela), and as people who love art – our team, Lalela's team and you, the students who make this all possible – to make artworks inspired by Lindokuhle and Mikhael's exhibition. We also looked closely at the curator's role in exhibition-making, and at the curatorial strategy of the horizon line that was created for Tell it to the Mountains.

A4 is interested in investigating how the skills that are learned in arts education are useful and influential beyond the discipline. When we learn about art, we may learn a set of technical skills that are related to making art, to 'becoming an artist', whatever form that may take. But we also learn other, more invisible things that relate to the ways that we are able to work in the world, whatever form of work we may be doing.

As artists and arts workers, we ourselves might not even know, at first, where we are going with an idea, but we trust ourselves enough to follow the process, knowing that we will gain new skills along the way. Engaging with art may perhaps teach us to remain open to new ideas. We may be encouraged to pursue a path that others may be inclined to shut down, to look for opportunities that may not appear obvious to others, and to follow our curiosities even when doors appear to close or when others don't understand our initial intentions.

Perhaps most importantly, learning about art teaches us that making mistakes is okay, even necessary, to the learning process. That sometimes, we make a mess. Being kind to ourselves and to others, showing compassion to that 'inner artist' in each of us, helps us to try again. Artists and arts workers are tenacious people. They show commitment, see things through, and become excellent problem solvers along the way.

I hope this collaboration will continue long into the future. As a laboratory for the arts that is free-to-public, A4 is a facility here for you, and I hope that you feel welcome to make use of our library's resources as well as our exhibition programme.

The stories you shared inside of the exhibition – about where the images felt familiar or how they spoke to you – taught us a lot, and we were able to share this with the artists. This was a co-creative process.

I look forward to seeing you again soon,

Sara
Editor, A4 Arts Foundation

Thanks to Lindokuhle and Mikhael for letting the students cut up, collage and use photo-copies of their photographs to create these new works inspired by the horizon line.





"Those are graves. When there isn't money to make the kind of grave you find in a city, we place the stones to know where our ancestors are buried. That could be my grandmother in that picture standing at the graves. I feel like I am looking at my grandmother when I look at this picture."













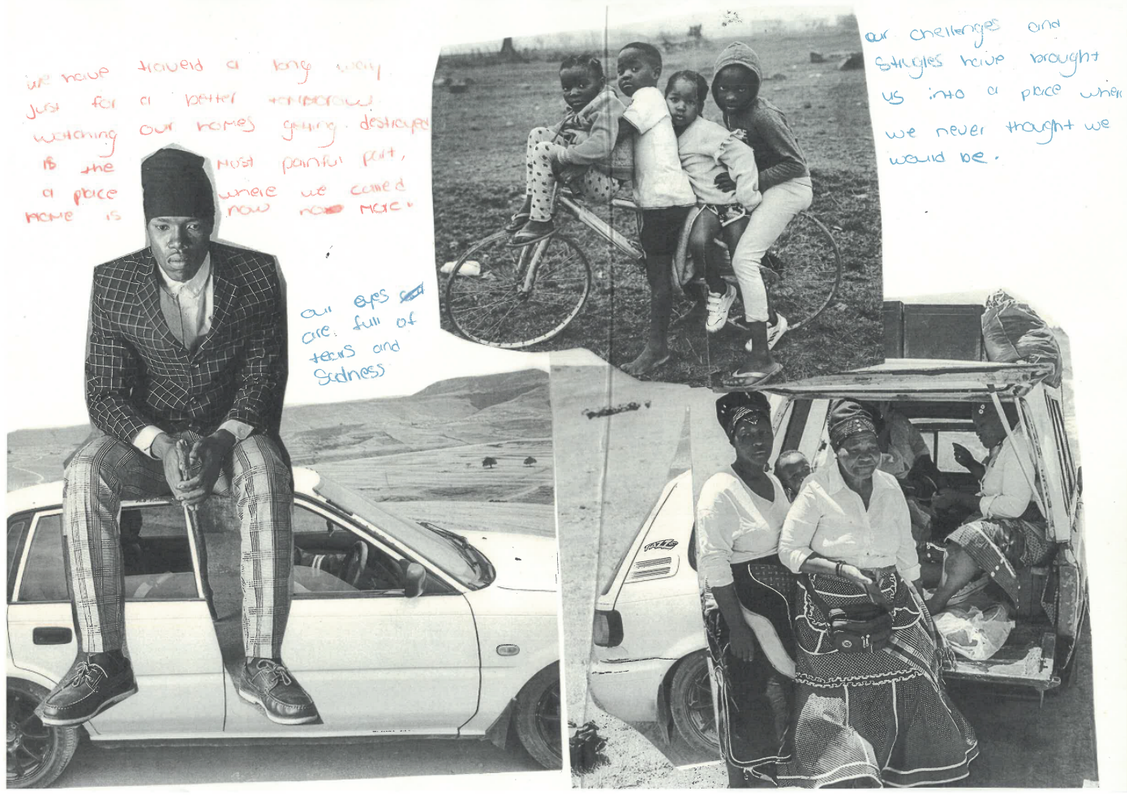


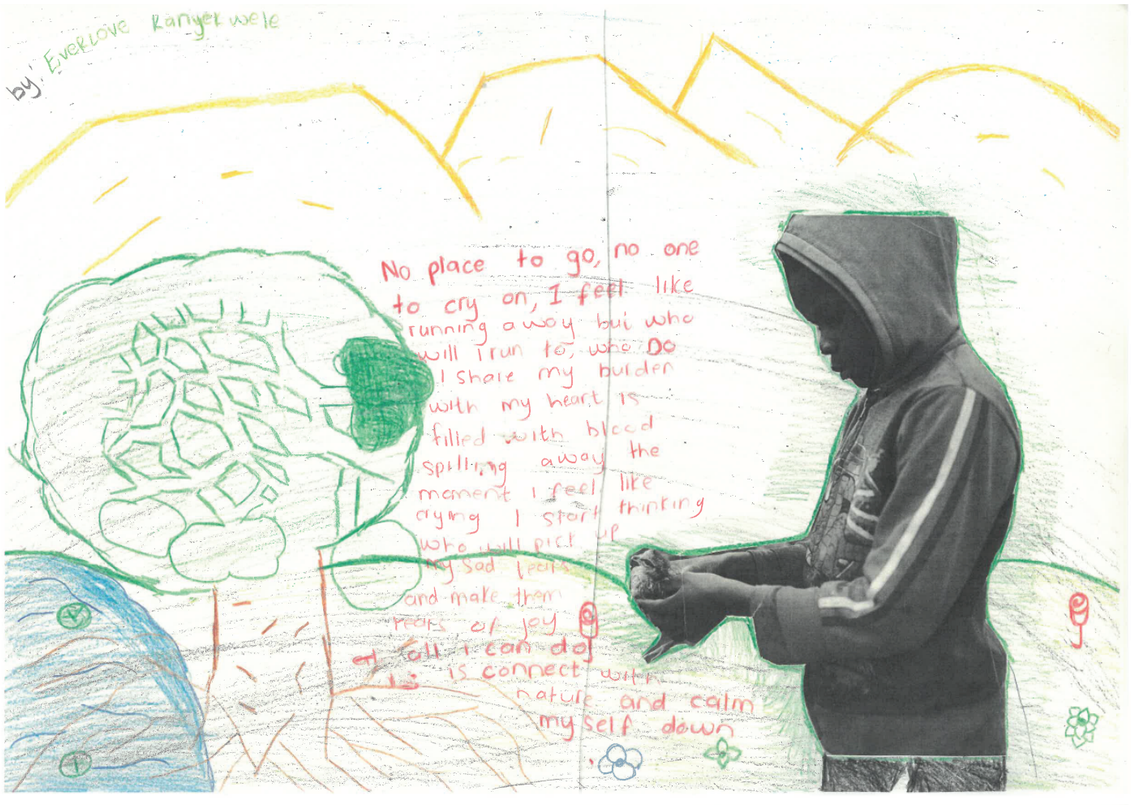
"We are also brothers of sisters."

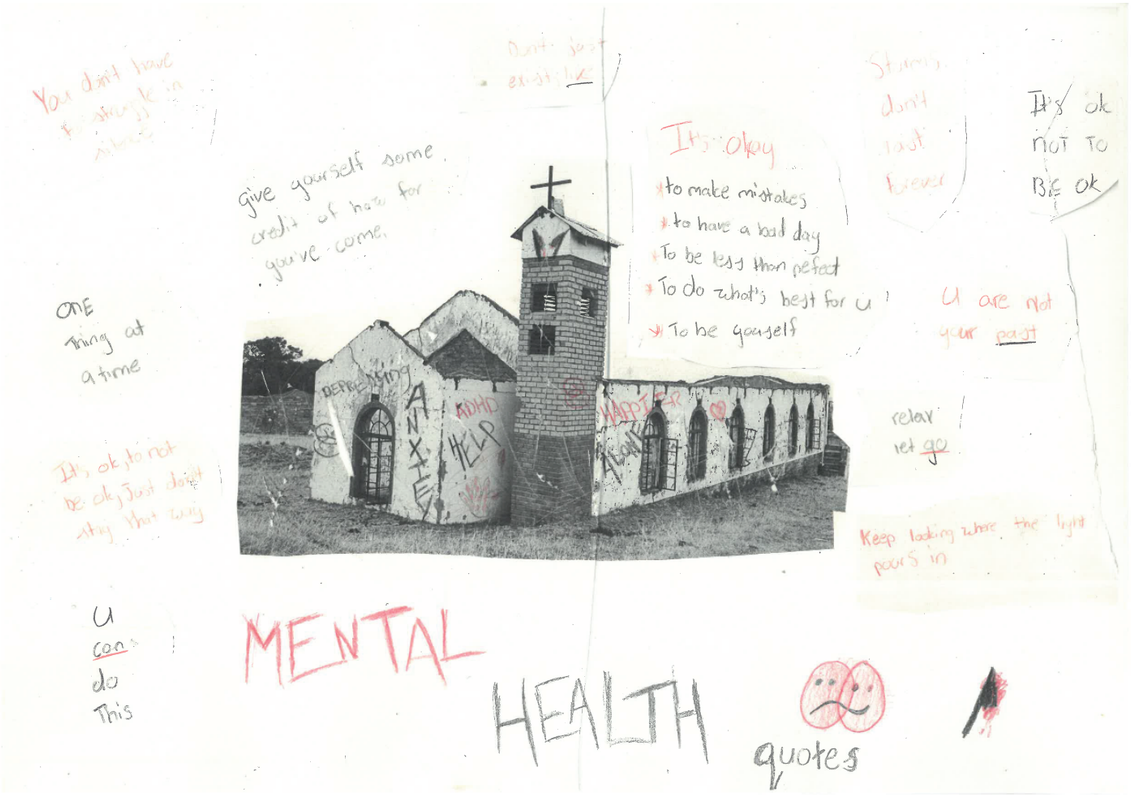
"I can relate to this image because I know these women are going to a ceremony, and this is familiar to me."



















"The boys' clothes are cut because they are going to their initiation, and when you come back you are no longer a boy – you are now different."



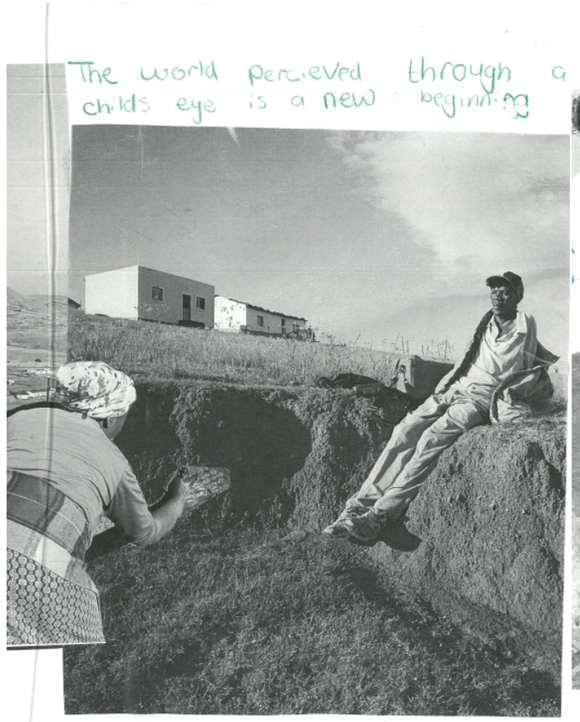


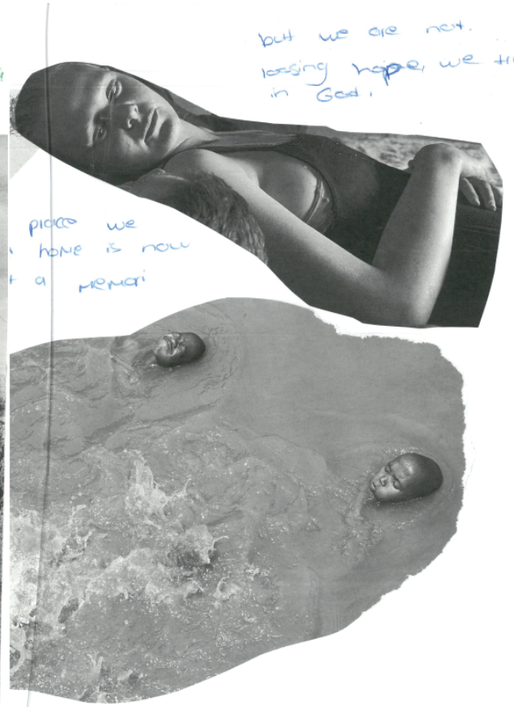


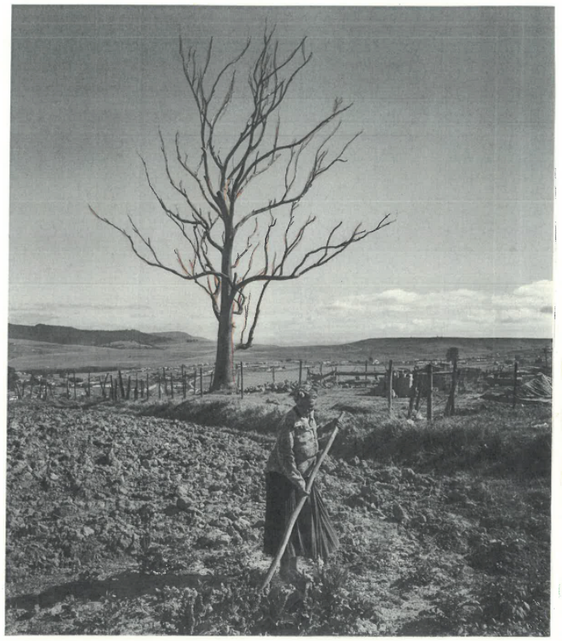
“The photograph of the boys’ faces, swimming, we all swim in the river just like that when we are home or where we grew up with our grandparents, and what isn’t in the picture is the animals and things that we make from the clay – even when we are young, we are making art.”

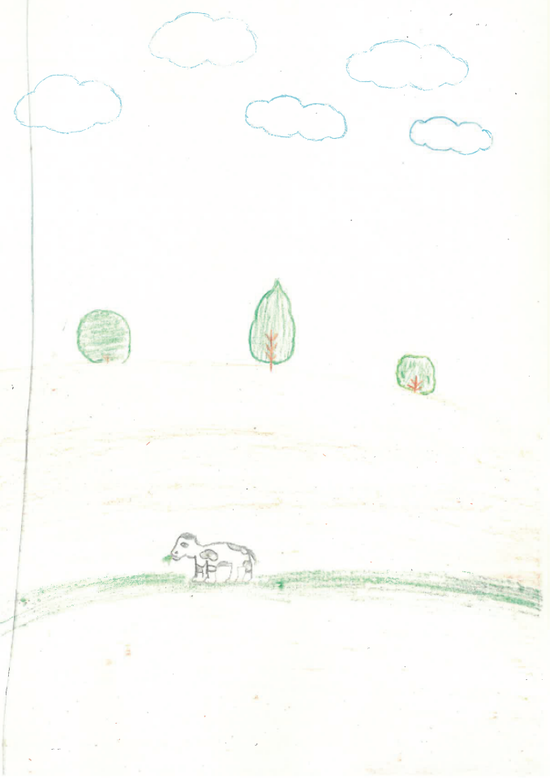






















"As young women, all of us have a sister, a cousin, or a friend who has had these struggles that Ziyanda faced, and we know what happens to women in these kinds of places."





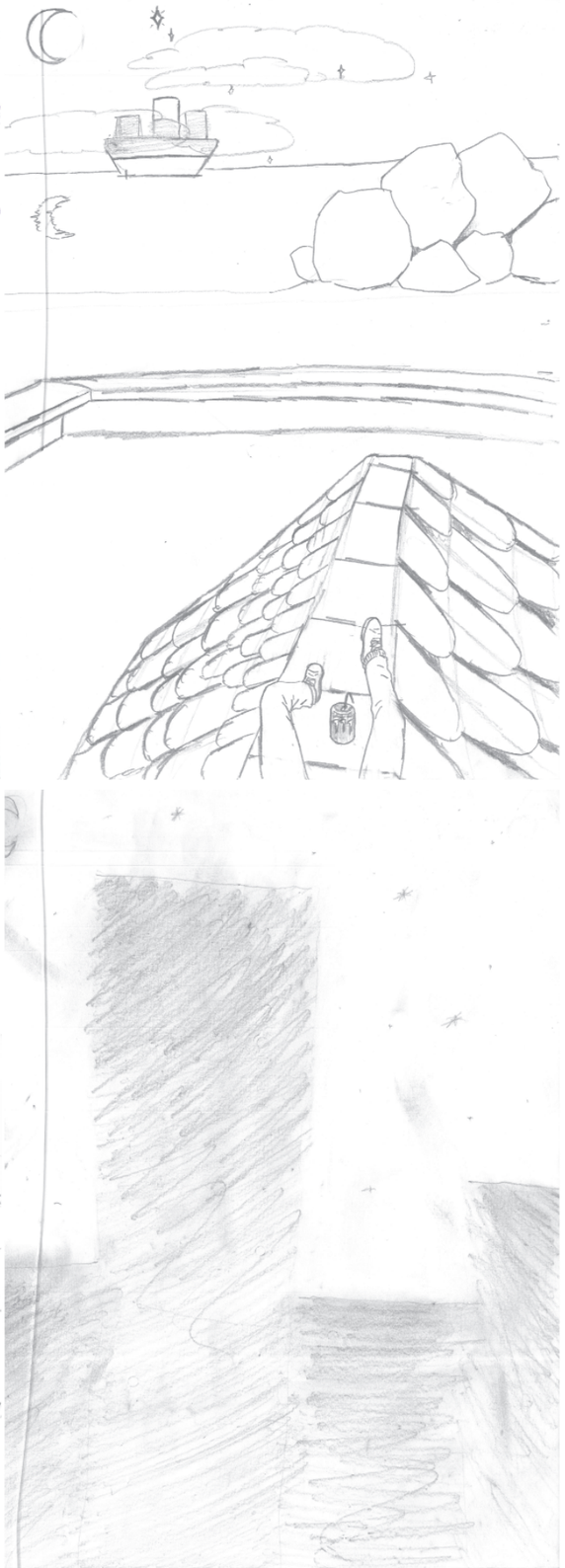


“He is saying that families must talk so that they can heal.”









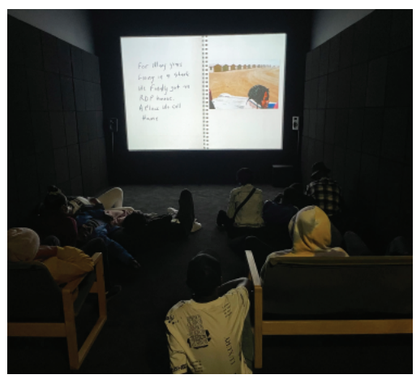




"This photograph is us*; it's home."*









Snapshots and sentences







"I was listening to the artist talk about his tree, and while I was listening I looked out the window and I saw a tree there in the street, and that was special."



Lindokuhle Sobekwa recalls a story about the inzinvanva, the ancestors:



Sobekwa

Mthimkhulu
Umngqameko



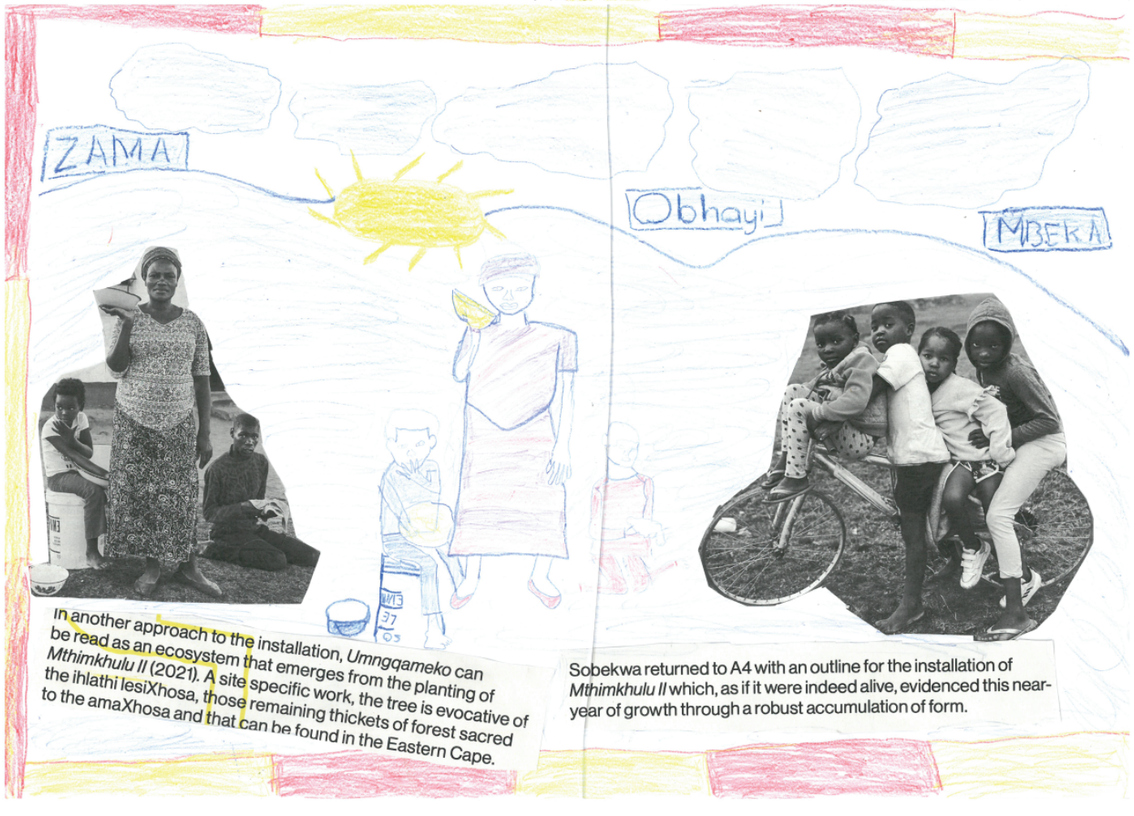


Lindokuhle Mikhael

meko



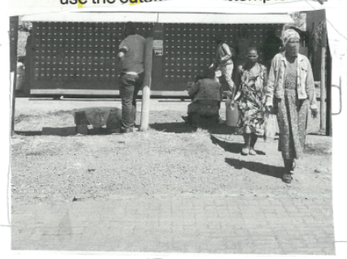
Most often, Sobekwa finds himself having to tell his story – modulate his practice – for English speaking audiences, his home language of isiXhosa unaccounted for in these exchanges. Thembinkosi Goniwe became an interlocutor and conversation partner during Sobekwa's residency (A4, October–December 2020). Over three conversations the two practitioners (Sobekwa then stationed at A4, Goniwe between Johannesburg and Makhanda) explored Lindokuhle's work in isiXhosa, code switching where it was comfortable, or felt necessary, including into English. In consultation with the practitioners, it was decided the audio would not be translated for the purposes of the exhibition.



In another approach to the installation, *Umngqameko* can be read as an ecosystem that emerges from the planting of *Mthimkhulu II* (2021). A site specific work, the tree is evocative of the ihlathi lesiXhosa, those remaining thickets of forest sacred to the amaXhosa and that can be found in the Eastern Cape.

Sobekwa returned to A4 with an outline for the installation of *Mthimkhulu II* which, as if it were indeed alive, evidenced this near-year of growth through a robust accumulation of form.

The prompt for *I carry Her photo with Me* was a family photograph that evidenced the disappearance of Lindokuhle's sister Ziyanda. Searching for her daughter, the children's mother removed Ziyanda's face from the image that she might use the cutout in her attempts to find her child.













Devasted Auntie
After Ziyanda's News



Family trip to Ziyanda's Funeral

I can also relate into losing someone you love. Many people in my past in under seven years. other family members of mine died very young and it led me into crying my self to sleep. All the the I always think they are looking over but they are standing right beside and to protect me I love my family and I don't want to lose them anymore.



watching the family tribes coming together

JOLA

Mpondomise

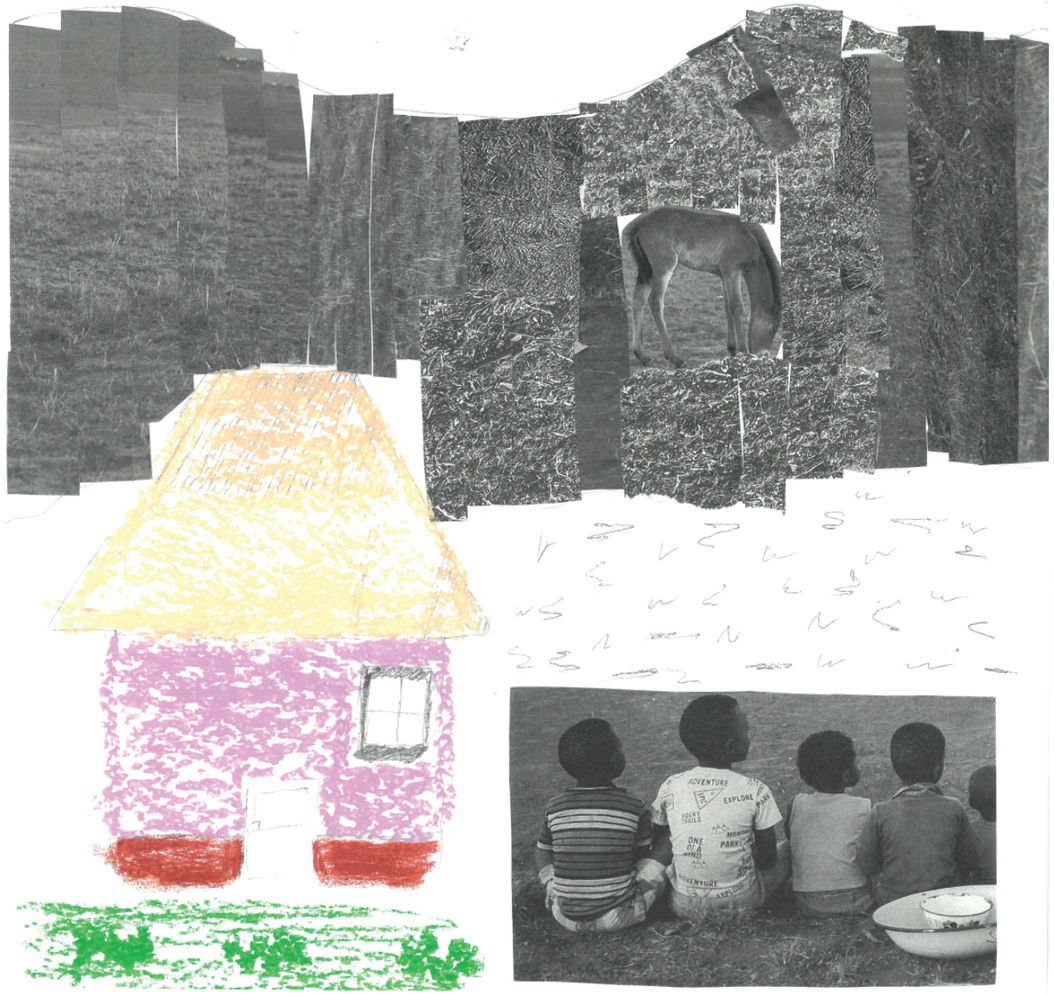
Cala

Gatyana

Qonce



This lady is abusing this substance this is called Substance abuse





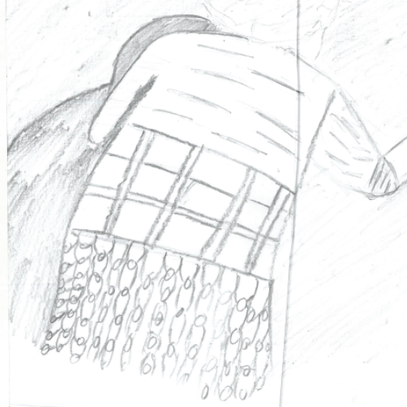


if we argue not to do so. When we write, for instance, the sentence we inscribe on the page reminds us to be mindful that any meaning is always a construct, a working thought or experience. That construction, once we become aware

attention to subtleties, to nuances. We are forced to open up the images for other possibilities, to think of both the observable and invisible.

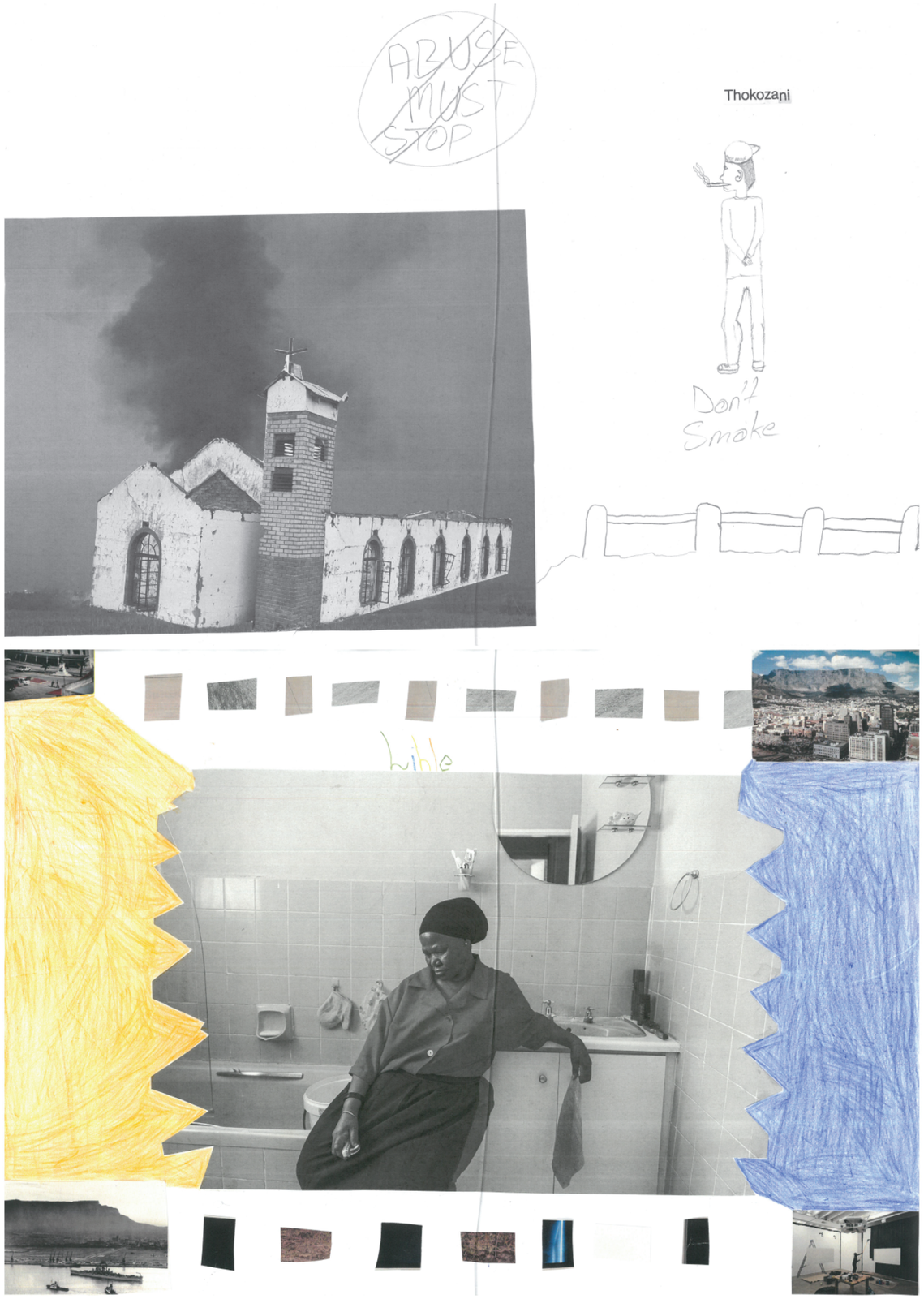
forces us to end our engagement with an image quickly, especially after capturing our prey: meaning or message.

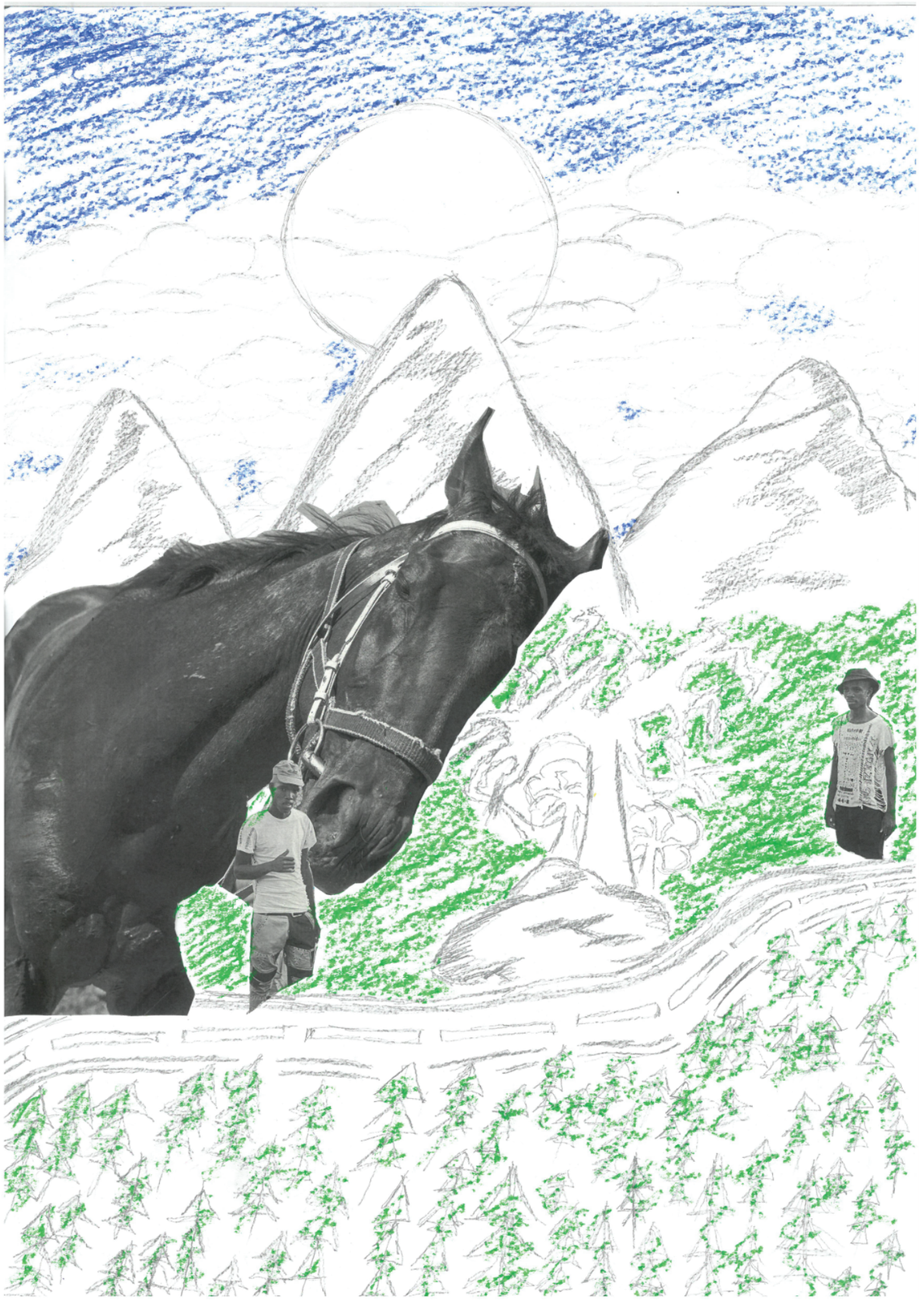
Most often, Sobekwa finds himself having to tell his story – modulate his practice – for English speaking audiences, his home language of isiXhosa unaccounted for in these exchanges. Thembinkosi Goniwe became an interlocutor and conversation partner during Sobekwa's residency (A4, October–December 2020). Over three conversations, the two practitioners (Sobekwa then stationed at A4, Goniwe between Johannesburg and Makhanda) explored Lindokuhle's work in isiXhosa, code switching

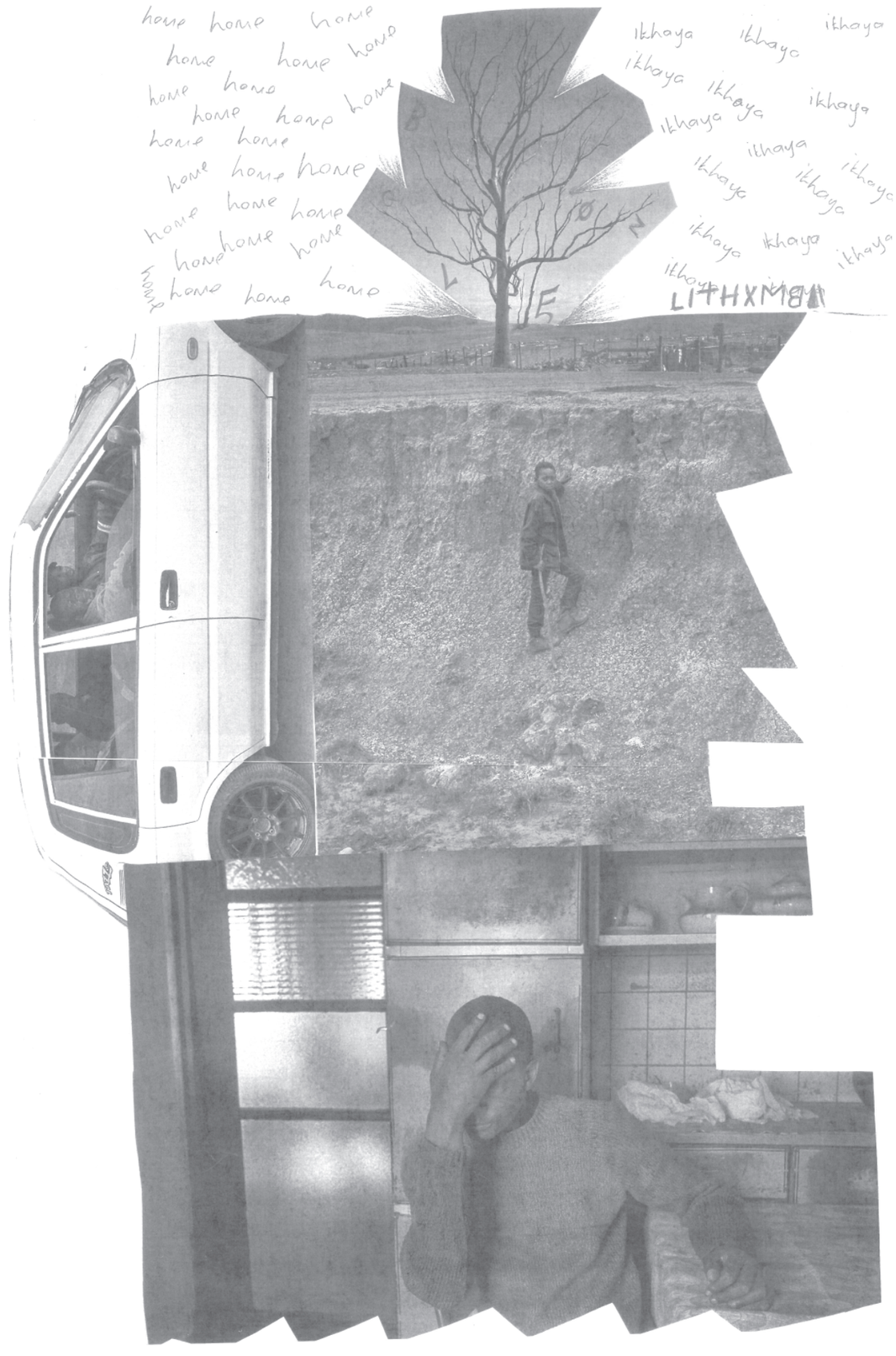


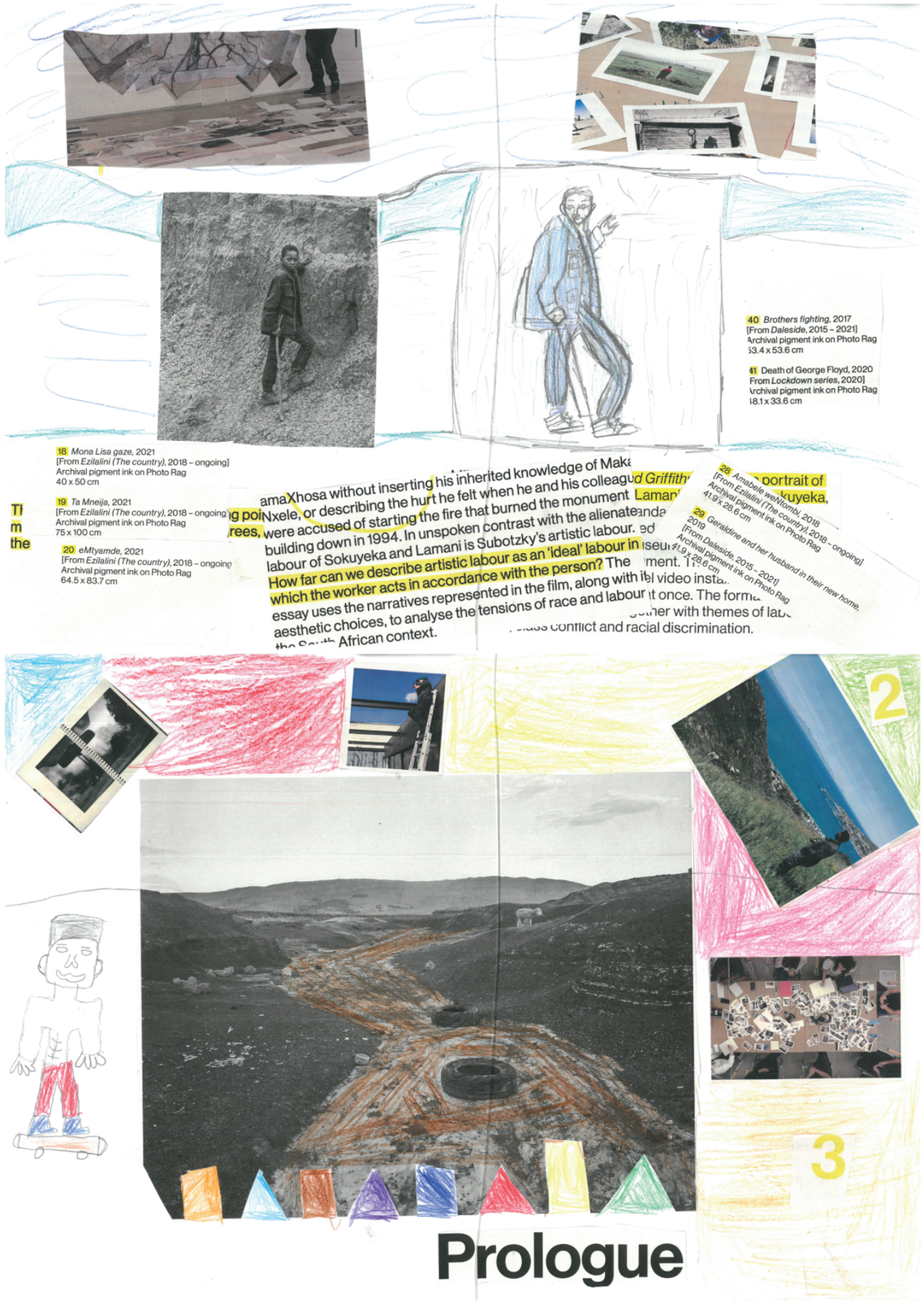
ps me understand that artworks are not just that standing there in front of us to look at and consume; also an extension of those who make them and an n of us to those people who make them and are in them. In other words, what I want to make of this conversation is that we are creating connections between us, whether via



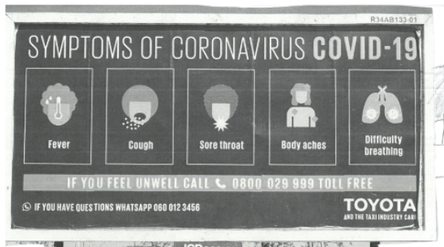

ABUSE MUST STOP
Thokozani
Don't Smoke
bible




home home home
ikhaya ikhaya ikhaya
LITHXMBI


40 Brothers fighting, 2017
[From Daleside, 2015 – 2021]
Archival pigment ink on Photo Rag
53.4 x 53.6 cm
41 Death of George Floyd, 2020
From Lockdown series, 2020]
Archival pigment ink on Photo Rag
18.1 x 33.6 cm
18 Mona Lisa gaze, 2021
[From Ezilalini (The country), 2018 – ongoing]
Archival pigment ink on Photo Rag
40 x 50 cm
19 Ta Mneija, 2021
[From Ezilalini (The country), 2018 – ongoing]
Archival pigment ink on Photo Rag
75 x 100 cm
20 eMtyamde, 2021
[From Ezilalini (The country), 2018 – ongoing
Archival pigment ink on Photo Rag
64.5 x 83.7 cm
amaXhosa without inserting his inherited knowledge of Maka
Nxele, or describing the hurt he felt when he and his colleagu
were accused of starting the fire that burned the monument
building down in 1994. In unspoken contrast with the alienate
labour of Sokuyeka and Lamani is Subotzky's artistic labour.
How far can we describe artistic labour as an 'ideal' labour in
which the worker acts in accordance with the person? The
essay uses the narratives represented in the film, along with
aesthetic choices, to analyse the tensions of race and labour
the South African context.
portrait of
kuyeka,
Lamani
28 Amabele weNtombi, 2018
[From Ezilalini (The country), 2018 – ongoing]
Archival pigment ink on Photo Rag
41.9 x 28.6 cm
29 Geraldine and her husband in their new home,
2019
[From Daleside, 2015 – 2021]
Archival pigment ink on Photo Rag
41.9 x 28.6 cm
conflict and racial discrimination.
2
3

Prologue













meko

DLAMINI

Thokozai

Lindokuhle Sobekwa recalls a story about the inzinyanya, the ancestors; that they have forsaken the cities – of Johannesburg and the area of Thokoza where he grew up – because the children of the Eastern Cape arrive there to become lost, never to return.

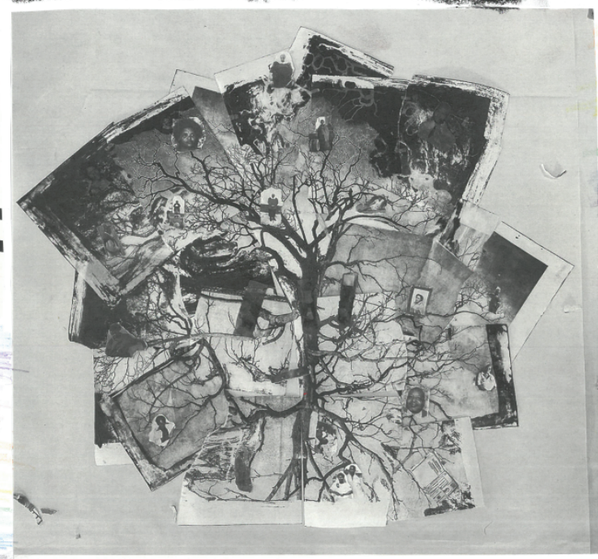
Ziyanda disappeared on a day that Lindokuhle was knocked down in the street by a car. She had been walking alongside him at the time of the accident. When Lindokuhle woke up in hospital, his back was broken and Ziyanda was missing. Requiring multiple surgeries, he remained in hospital for three months.

THEY Are TALKING about Ziyanda

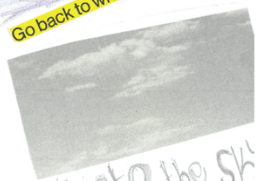


ROOTS OF SELF DISCOVERY

I carry Her with Me



Go back to where you started, home.



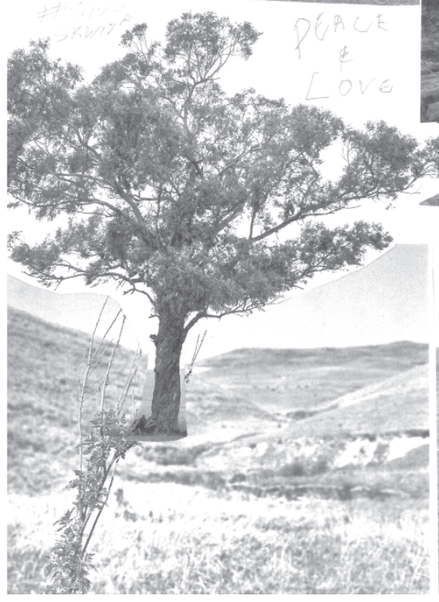
Look into the Sky

Tell It to the Mountains, and know where you came from.

travel your road, Searching for her & become the best VERSION OF HER!!



PEACE & Love

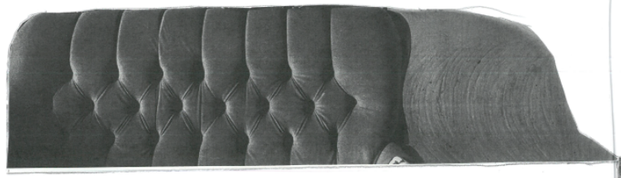








meko





Sobekwa invites his earlier work into conversation with more recent projects, that he might trace the thematic line that carries through his photographs. In consolidating a new series, he extends considerations of fragmentation to his archive of images. Reflecting on his own sense of 'unbelonging' when

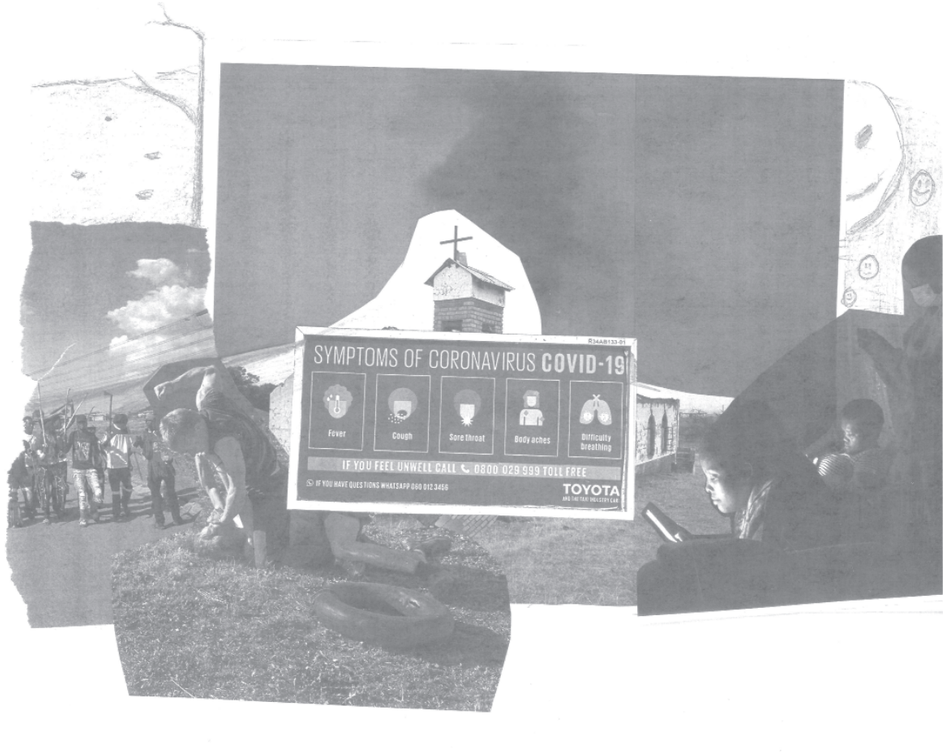






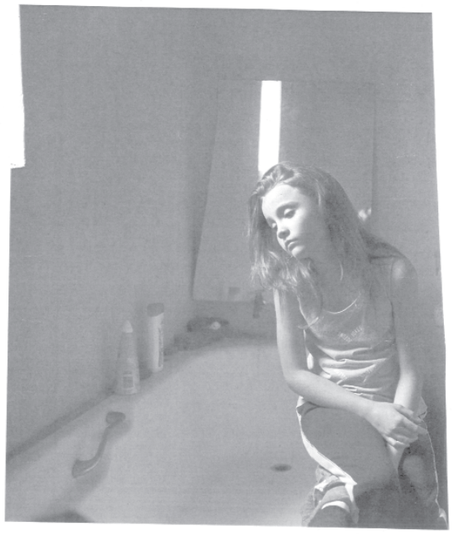


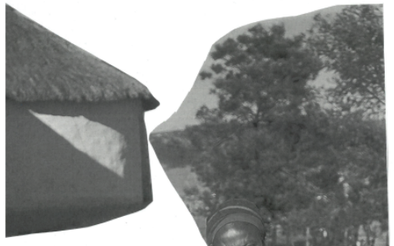
visiting his familial homestead in rural Transkei – far from his home in Thokoza, Gauteng – Sobekwa finds echoes of this estrangement transcribed on the landscape. Such estrangement appears implicit in past projects too, among them the artist's series on *nyaope* and the low-income suburb of Daleside, as well as his elegy to an absent sister, *I carry Her photo with Me*, which marked Sobekwa's first photographic pilgrimage to his ancestral homeland.



Speechless!!!!!!













We are forced to open up the images for other possibilities, to think of both the observable and invisible.

Interpretation forces us to end our engagement with an image quickly, especially after capturing our prey: meaning or message.



















